



# Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

[www.cchpn.org](http://www.cchpn.org)

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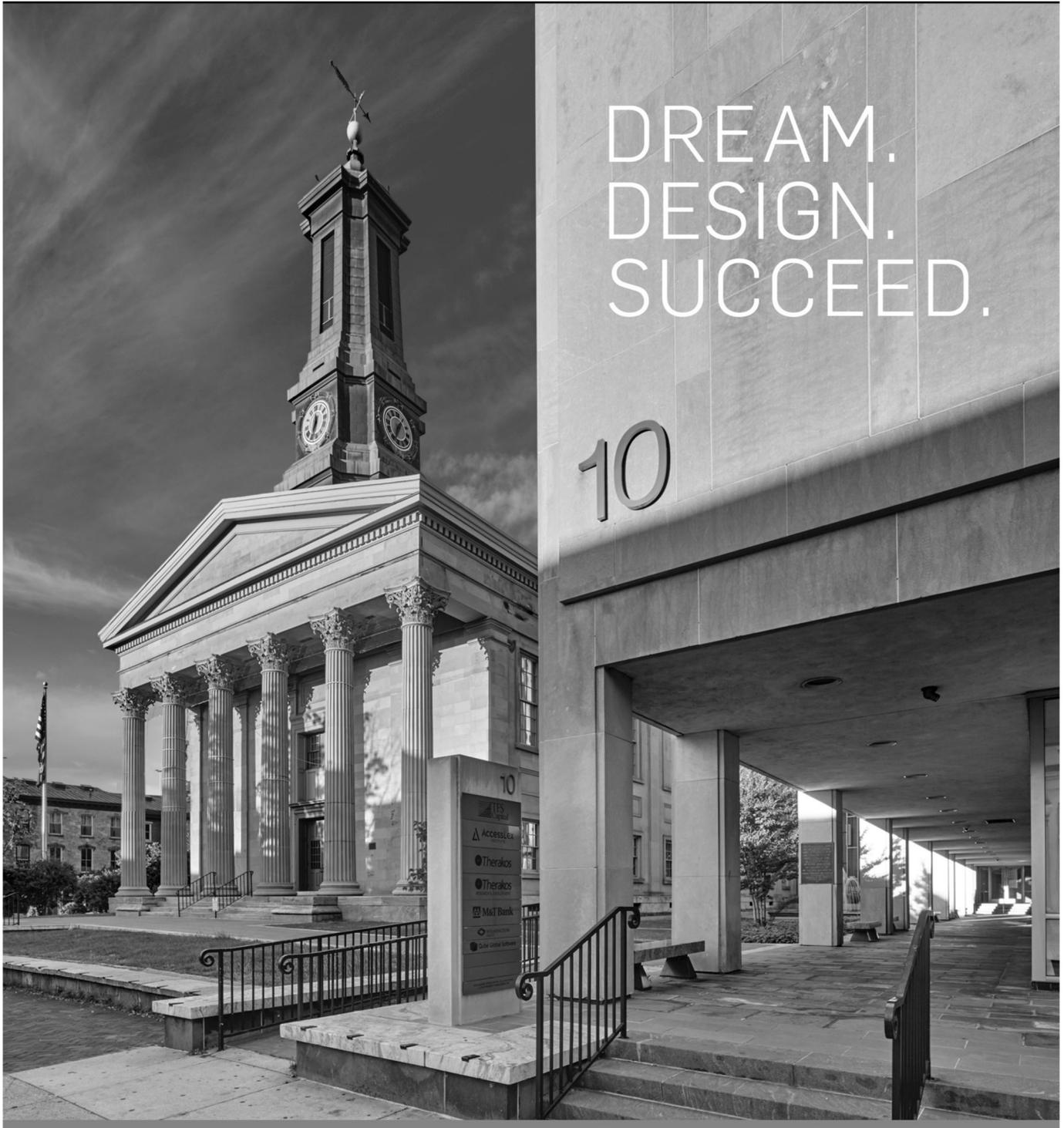
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October 2021

## A New Beginning



*Kimberton Boarding School and Village Circa 1835. Painted by John R. Peirce, 1963.*



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## THE PRESIDENT’S LETTER:

### The Importance of Stories



*James B. Garrison*

In my last column I wrote about the importance of “place” and how a sense of place and context enhances the understanding of stories. I’d like to discuss the idea of “story” more deeply, since it is the primary take-away from the experience with an historic place. Historic Preservation has always stressed the importance of the tangible artifact – a building, an object, or a place. These have some immutable qualities that are not open to interpretation, but most impressions are actually the result of a story that is attached to the historic resource..

Events happen, that is fact, but how they are recorded is story. Even eyewitness accounts can vary greatly, but certain facts remain. That a person lived or died is fact. An event may or may have not left a physical imprint on the place so it might totally be recalled from story. It is up to interpreters and historians to separate the immutable facts from the story. They provide the context for how the story has evolved, since once something becomes “history” it becomes part of a broader narrative.

Landscapes3, the comprehensive plan for Chester County lists “Preserve the stories of our cultural heritage and connect them to our residents and our future” as an objective for the goal of preserving our historic resources and landscapes. This objective requires that both the tangible evidence be protected and the intangible stories be shared and interpreted. As the story of our region, and of our nation, becomes more nuanced and inclusive, it is incumbent on us, as being leaders in historic preservation to understand, and act upon the objectives spelled out in Landscapes3.

We have the opportunity coming up in 2026 with the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, to reconsider our heritage and the principles that were behind that document. It is not “rewriting history” but expanding our understanding through a broader examination of what has come down to us in places, objects and stories. The Centennial and Bicentennial were as much about their times as recalling the events of 1776. This observance will be no different, and by being more inclusive will hopefully increase the multi-faceted role historic preservation plays in our current lives.

The Network is a key member of the Heritage Coalition which will be strengthening the ties between our municipalities, local non-profits and our partners at the county, state and federal governments. The Coalition is a large presence in making our regional plans for the 250<sup>th</sup>. The focus isn’t about having everyone tell the same story, but is more about opening up to new voices so our history is truly a shared resource.

**James B. Garrison, CCHPN President**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<u>PG.</u>	<u>ARTICLE AND AUTHOR</u>
3.	President’s Letter—James B. Garrison
4.	A New Beginning—James B. Garrison
5-7.	Juneteenth Festival 2021—Beverly Sheppard
8-10.	Conflict Archaeology and the 1777 Philadelphia Campaign in Chester County— Wade P. Catts
10-11.	Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP)—Rob Williams
12-13.	Introducing PA-SHARE—Shelby Splain
13-14.	Welcome CCPC’s New Heritage Coordinator— Dan Shachar- Krasnoff
14.	The Heritage Task Force Meets “America 250”- Beverly Sheppard
15.	15th Rebecca Lukens Award Recipient Karen Marshall—James B. Garrison
16-20.	Advertisers

**CCHPN  
MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of CCHPN is to connect local governments, organizations, and individuals in their efforts to protect, preserve, and promote the historic resources and cultural landscapes of Chester County through communication and education.

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## A New Beginning

By: James. B. Garrison, CCHPN President

This issue of the Ledger is about transitions. The Network would like to thank Jane Dorchester for her work in bringing a level of professionalism and meaningful content to the publication as she moves on to other pursuits. We have a temporary editorial group for this issue and are looking forward to a new editor for 2022.

This issue celebrates new voices and connections. The county-wide Juneteenth celebration sets the stage for even bigger, more inclusive events as we move toward the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026. You will note a piece from our Heritage Coalition which is part of the planning committee for the 250<sup>th</sup>. The Chester County Planning Commission and the Network welcomes Dan Shachar-Krasnoff from St. Louis. Dan succeeds Karen Marshall who retired this year, but will remain an important part of the Network. We all thank her for her years of service to the County and congratulate her as the Rebecca Lukens Award winner from the National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum.

We are looking forward to the next generation for the Ledger as a place to strengthen our partnerships with local, county and state governments to promote historic preservation and the appreciation of our cultural heritage in Chester County. There are so many great places with stories to tell. The Kimberton Village National Register Historic District is one such place. Kimberton has strong connections to the Abolitionist movement, the Underground Railroad and education for girls and women at the French Creek Boarding School. The celebrated local artist John R. Peirce created a bird's eye view of what it may have looked like in 1835. The monumental painting hangs in the lobby of the historic Kimberton Inn.

### **CHESTER COUNTY LEDGER**

#### **Mission Statement**

As the official newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network (CCHPN), the purpose of the *Chester County Ledger* is to raise awareness of Chester County's history and historic character, to encourage the public to preserve the physical evidence of that history, and to educate the public and members of municipal historical organizations in best preservation practices.

## Juneteenth Festival 2021

### Journeying Toward Freedom: Remembering the Past, Embracing the Present, Creating the Future

By: Beverly Sheppard, Heritage Task Force Chair



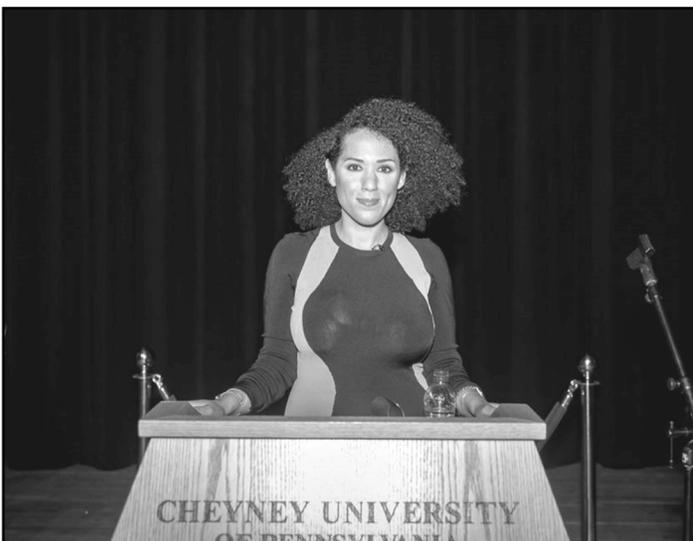
Greg Thompson, executive director of Voices Underground, with poet Joshua Bennett. Photo Credit: Voices Underground.

From ice cream socials and theatrical performances to an evening of prayer and a culinary feast, Chester County's Juneteenth Festival 2021 showcased our county's continuing commitment to social justice and equality. The Festival took place from June 12 until the end of the month and engaged communities across the county. More than thirty separate programs, including three keynote events, drew hundreds of residents and visitors to celebrate the nation's first recognized celebration of the end of slavery in the United States.

In a stunning piece of timing, on June 17, President Joe Biden signed into law the official designation of June 19 as a federal holiday, giving national recognition to a day commemorating emancipation. The proclamation added to the excitement throughout the Juneteenth weekend.

The keynote events brought nationally-known speakers and a remarkable culinary event to Chester County. Poet Dr. Joshua Bennett sold out the historic Open Air Theatre at Longwood Gardens on a beautiful summer night. His performance, poetry, and moving interview with Greg Thompson, Executive Director of Voices Underground, set a tone of love and compassion amidst the continuing struggles for justice and equality, encouraging the audience to "Continue the Journey." Following the program, guests were invited to an illuminated fountain performance, titled "Freedom."

Caroline Randall Williams highlighted the June 19<sup>th</sup> program at Cheyney University with her biographically-grounded stories of the pain at the heart of the Black experience. She was joined by the winners of the "I Matter" poetry competition for young writers. Created and launched by 14-year-old Isabella Hanson, the project



Speaker Caroline Randall Williams. Photo Credit: Voices Underground.



Winners of I Matter poetry competition on stage at Cheyney University. Photo Credit: Voices Underground.



Dinner with chef Elijah Milligan at Lincoln University . Photo Credit: Voices Underground.

was established to give young people a way to process the pain they experienced in witnessing the violence and injustice disproportionately by Blacks.

The beautiful rural setting of Lincoln University served as the background for an inventive and delicious three-course dinner, prepared by Chef Elijah Milligan and his team. Milligan is the founder of Cooking for the Culture, a culinary team that spotlights African American chefs. His current project, the Greenwood Supper Club, continues to feature brown and black chefs. The evening’s menu, a first course inspired by the sea, and a second course inspired by the land,

referred to the routes taken by runaway slaves. Throughout the evening, the concept of gathering together for a shared meal, supported the underlying theme of reconciliation.

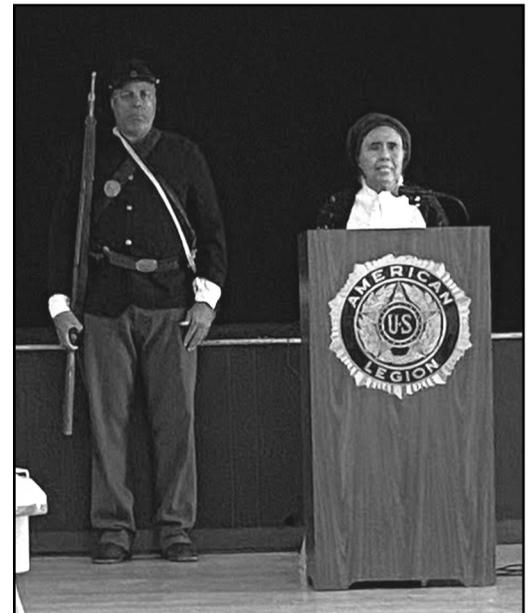
Community-based programs extended the celebration with locally-based events. The Juneteenth Festival as a whole illustrated the power and reach of a major collaborative project. Events were held in Coatesville, Phoenixville, West Chester, Kennett Square and at Lincoln University, and Cheyney University. The two universities were especially fitting sites as Cheyney, founded in 1837, is the nation’s first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and Lincoln University became the first degree-granting HBCU.



United States Colored Troops: Agents of Emancipation. Photo Credit: Beverley Sheppard.



Lighting the Way Workshop American Legion Hall. Photo Credit: Beverley Sheppard.



Always Free: Oni Lasana as Mary Ella Grandberry. Photo Credit: Beverley Sheppard.

Several county-based museums and history centers and even cemeteries also hosted programs, including Longwood Gardens, the West Chester History Center, the Kennett Underground Railroad Center, Historic Kennett Square, the Kennett Heritage Center, the Charles Melton Arts and Education Center, and the Passtown Cemetery, Bucktoe Cemetery, Longwood Cemetery, and Chestnut Grove Cemetery.

To add to the celebration, the full schedule of Town Tours and Village Walks, presented by the Chester County Planning Commission and extending through the summer, have all been designed to continue the themes of abolition, the underground railroad, and the continuing campaign toward social justice in the county.

The Juneteenth Core Steering Committee – Alex Parham, Greg Thompson, Beverly Sheppard, and Ravonda Dalton-Rand -- were joined by an amazing group of incredibly hardworking community leaders and countless volunteers, every one of whom is responsible for the clear success of a first-time event. Plans for 2022 are just getting underway.



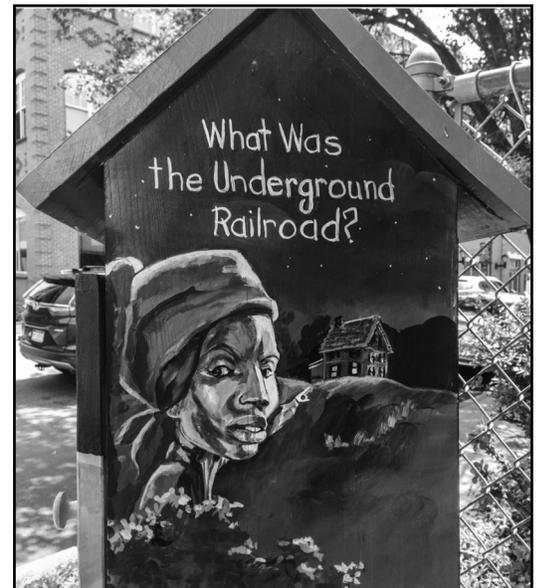
Kennett Underground Railroad Center. Photo Credit: File photograph.



Kennett Underground Railroad Center. Photo Credit: File photograph.



Ice cream social. Photo Credit: Beverley Sheppard.



Little Library at Kennett Underground Railroad Center. Photo Credit: File photograph.

**“Manys the Bones of the Poor fellow that Lies Buried not very Deep...”:  
Conflict Archaeology and the 1777 Philadelphia Campaign in Chester County**  
By Wade P. Catts, President and Principal, South River Heritage Consulting

The late summer of 1777 in southeastern Pennsylvania witnessed a military campaign which resulted in the capture of Philadelphia by the British army. Major engagements between American and Crown forces occurred at Brandywine and Germantown, with maneuvering in the Great Valley, the aborted Battle of the Clouds, the disaster at Paoli, and the destruction of the French Creek Industrial Complex. The military actions during this campaign involved tens of thousands of soldiers supported by larger numbers of livestock, and hundreds of wagons. The fighting and moving of these two forces dramatically affected the colonial settlement of the region, leaving scars and physical evidence that in some cases took decades to recover from, and remarkably can still be discovered through archaeology.

Fields of conflict, including battlefields, campsites, field fortifications, industrial sites, hospital sites, and burial sites, are the locations of temporary actions superimposed on preexisting cultural landscapes. Studying battlefields requires a unique combination of military history, archaeology, and landscape assessment. Knowledge of the historical development of the place the battle occurred is critical in understanding the event and the subsequent changes that may have taken place.



Ground penetrating radar (GPR) at the French Creek Continental Industrial Complex in East Pikeland Township succeeded in locating several principal elements of the site, including the head race (to left), the graining mill (center), and the stamping mill (right). The image above shows what's 95 cm beneath the ground. Photo Credit: Wade P. Catts.

In Chester County, the landscape traversed by the armies had been settled for nearly a century. That cultural landscape was formed and affected by a variety of human-generated actions, such as transportation systems, agricultural development, milling, settlement patterns, and population change. These cultural changes exerted influences both before and after the battle. The scene of military action is a thin veneer of a single violent event, superimposed on this ever-changing cultural landscape, but its presence is discernable and recoverable, if archaeologists are given the opportunity to do so and the various townships are cognizant of the potentials and willing to commit to collect the data.

For more than thirty years, the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force, The Chester County Planning Commission, The Delaware County Planning Department, the local historical societies, and the various township historical commissions and boards have worked diligently to identify, interpret, promote, and protect the county's Revolutionary War resources. Principal among these resources is the Brandywine Battlefield. Including the areas of fighting, maneuvering of the armies, retreat and encampment, the Brandywine Battlefield covers 35,000 acres in two counties and 15 municipalities. For the purposes of preservation and interpretation, it is important to note that no formal archaeological survey of the entire Brandywine battlefield has ever been completed. Instead, there have been only small-scale archaeological investigations linked with private developments and public projects. There is little or no concerted coordination for these surveys, as each is reliant on the townships governing bodies and management plans to determine whether they are needed, necessary, or required.

**FOUND THE BONES OF  
BRANDYWINE VICTIM**

Supposed to be Those of a British Soldier Who Died on Battlefield.

Special Telegram to THE TIMES.

West Chester, May 9.

Brinckley Haley, of this place, unearthed the bones of a supposed British soldier while at work to-day in excavating for a driveway on the premises of Mrs. Freeman, in East Bradford township, and not far distant from the battlefield of the Brandywine. The grave was located close by Sconnettown School House, and contained a few of the bones of a human being, alongside of which lay an old Revolutionary musket. The musket was accidentally struck by a pick of one of the workmen and broken, but Mr. Haley took possession of the barrel and a piece of flint from the lock.

The grave is right on the line of Cornwallis' march with the British army to the Brandywine battlefield, after having crossed Brandywine creek as Jefferis' Ford, and the supposition is that this soldier had either died of disease or from wounds received in a skirmish with the Americans.

The relics taken from the grave were taken home by Mr. Haley, and a further inspection of the spot where they were found will be made.

Battle-related archaeological data is both extremely resilient and extremely fragile. Even after an interval of more than 240 years conflict artifacts are present in the region's fields, forests, and the manicured lawns, but development actions (stripping topsoil, for example) can forever erase this below-ground evidence. The historical archaeology of battlefields and military actions is, in essence, forensic archaeology, attempting to reconstruct battle actions through the physical remains. Battlefield studies apply Edmond Locard's Exchange Principle that "every contact leaves a trace." Archaeologists have long applied this principle and are trained to look for and interpret the past through the material remains that are left behind. Combining the physical remains of the battle with the documentary record and topography, archaeologists strive to reconstruct the events of a military engagement. Studies of battlefields revealed that considerable amounts of battlefield debris, such as lead shot, buckles, buttons, entrenchments, and burials, do survive and can be useful in determining the course of the battle. Archaeologically, metal detection should not be done haphazardly or without a research reason or purpose. If metal detection is undertaken, it should have an archaeological purpose and should seek to record every object found as precisely as possible, usually by digital mapping, and those recovered artifacts must be cataloged and curated. Further the archaeological information should be disseminated for historians and others to use for battlefield interpretation. These artifacts are a unique data source that can offer new interpretations of battle actions or augment existing battle stories.

Published in *The Times* (Philadelphia) in May 1900, this anonymous article underscores the very real potential for discovery of battlefield burials on the Brandywine Battlefield.

A very important element of battlefields are the potentials for discovery of human remains. While in some cases, including places like the Old Kennett Meeting or the Birmingham Friends Meeting, we know where some of the dead are buried,



Careful analysis of lead bullets recovered on battlefields allows archaeologists to learn whether the balls are dropped or fired, their caliber, and where firing lines and target lines were located. Photo Credit: Wade P. Catts

in many other places we have no information regarding the locations of burials. An historical context developed in 2019 by Robert Selig and Wade Catts for the treatment of the Revolutionary War dead and wounded on battlefields (not hospitals) found that there were a range of factors affecting burials, including location of the battle, the weather and the time of year, who controlled the battlefield after the fighting, how much time was available for battlefield cleanup, and the character of the surrounding civilian community. The title quote for this article is from local historian Amos Brinton, who in 1895 wrote in that on the Brandywine battlefield human remains continued to be found fifty years after the fighting (c1827), with some of the dead discovered "...Buried in Gullies along the Road side to be washed or Ploughed up when

the Road menders [road crews] come...."

Where it can be protected, recovered, and studied, there is still much to be learned from the archaeological record of the Revolution in Chester County.

## **Commission Assistance Mentoring Program (CAMP)** By: Rob Williams, Chair, Tredyffrin Historical Commission

Since I became Chair of the Tredyffrin Township Historical Commission (TTHC), I sought to learn how neighboring commissions and HARBs operate. No sense in re-inventing the wheel. I thought, surely there are many smooth-running groups that I can mimic. Some of those groups are other municipal historical commissions and HARB's. The National Association of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) also offers classes and guidance based on their national reach with organizations of all different sizes. The CAMP (Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program) training is another resource. What I discovered is many of us who lead historic preservation groups are all on a journey. Some are well down the path with smooth operations. Some are just forming. Or re-forming, as is the case for Tredyffrin.

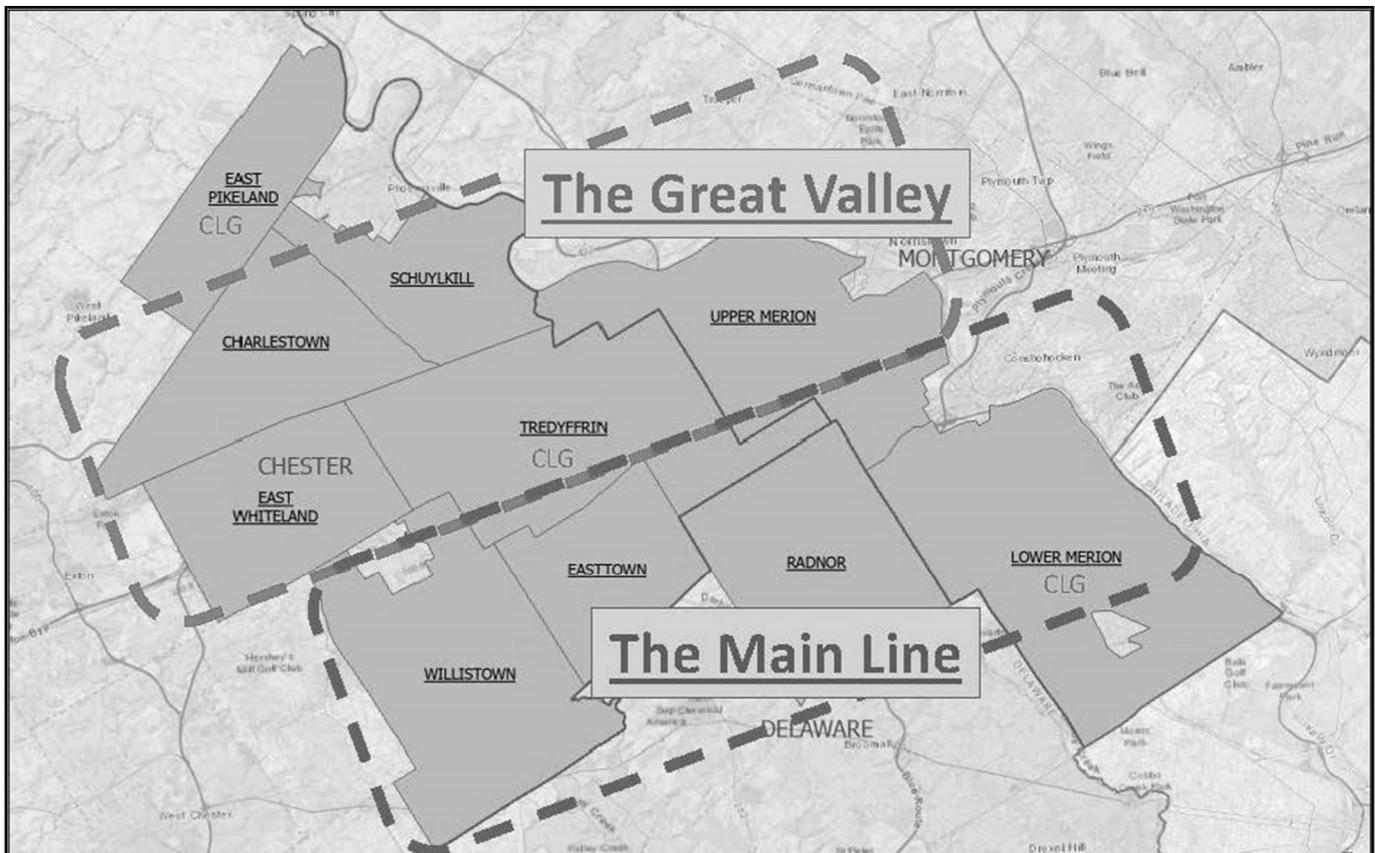
The TTCH has six relatively new members, the most senior joined in 2018. Without a good onboarding process, our members' knowledge of preservation purpose and practices is spotty. The Township is also recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO), a legacy of the HARB in the 1990's. In 2019, when the SHPO revitalized the CLG program statewide, they did a quick survey of Tredyffrin's existing practices. It became clear that our historic resources survey needs an update, and our ordinance requires renewal.

Lots to do. Where to start? As a former program manager for a manufacturing firm and now an MBA instructor for a local university, I saw step one to be the education of the members. We need a common grounding in the core theory of historic preservation and contemporary best practices. Lucky for all of us, there is a national membership association dedicated to helping historic commissions and HARBs - the NAPC ([napcommissions.org](http://napcommissions.org))! The NAPC CAMP® brings practicing professionals to your community with a training curriculum tailored to your needs. Fortunately, our CLG status enabled the township to apply for a grant to cover most of the modest cost of the CAMP program.

Now, who should we train? The six commissioners, of course. Tredyffrin Supervisors – yes, invite them. Add in the Planning Commission. Who else can help with our preservation mission? The school district, the library – yes, invite both. And invite the local history group, Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society. Several of the local non-profits and “Friends of…” groups could help - invite the Tredyffrin Township Preservation Trust, Valley Forge Park Alliance, and Friends of Old Eagle School. Did we think broadly enough? This is when I remember a powerful lesson from one of our public meetings. Tredyffrin residents on the north side of the township expressed very different views than where I live on the south side. When I looked a map of our township, I discovered we had two histories.

Truly we hold two fundamentally different ways of viewing the historical contexts for our immediately surroundings. Up north, Tredyffrin covers a section of the low lying “Great Valley”, once a regional agricultural basin running from the Schuylkill River on the east to Downingtown out west. To the south is the historic Lancaster Pike and the “Main Line”, centuries-old transportation thoroughfares running from Philadelphia to Lancaster and beyond. These corridors were full of toll houses, villages, whistle stops and commercial enterprises serving wagons, rails, and automobiles.

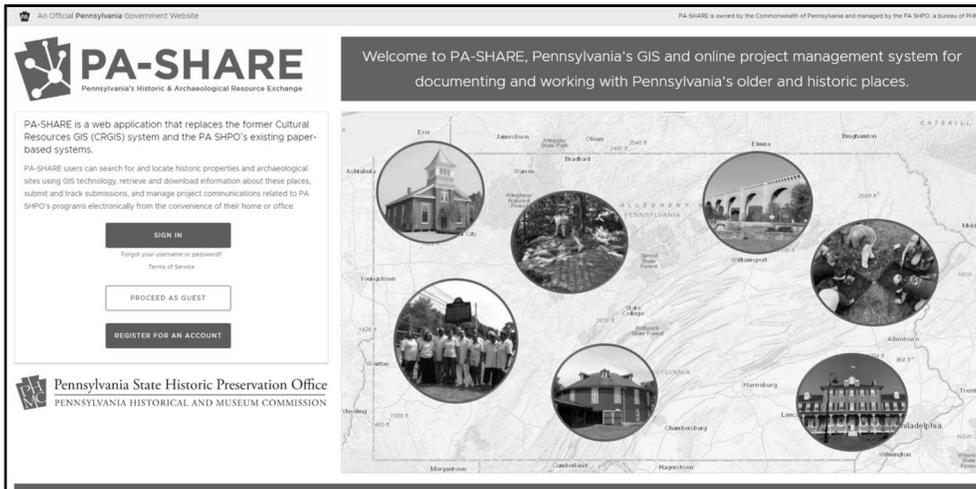
Tredyffrin shares a history along these routes. To preserve our historic contextual story, we need our neighbors. Ten townships from Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties were invited to the Tredyffrin CAMP (see map). While we are all at different points along our preservation journeys, there is great opportunity to share knowledge, resources, and policies and practices. Twenty-five representatives from a wonderfully diverse community of important stakeholders attended virtual training sessions July 26th and July 10<sup>th</sup> (correct dates?) with the four NACP trainers. As much as we learned from the trainers, I think we gained by getting to know one another across our region. In the next edition of the CCHPN Ledger, I will share the what our group learned at our summer CAMP.



Map showing the 2021 NACP CAMP participants. Photo Credit: Rob Williams.

## Introducing PA-SHARE

By: Shelby Splain, Education & Special Initiatives Coordinator, PHMC



**Did you know that CRGIS has been retired and replaced with a new state-of-the-art system called PA-SHARE?**

PA-SHARE, short for Pennsylvania's State Historic and Archaeological Resource Exchange, was launched in February and replaced CRGIS as Pennsylvania's online GIS database of older and historic places.

Landing page of PA-SHARE where visitors can sign in using a free account or paid subscription.

With PA-SHARE, you can do those things, but it is so much more than just a map-based inventory

of historic and archaeological sites and surveys. PA-SHARE is a sophisticated online data management system hosting all PA SHPO program areas and is a primary tool for the public, agencies, and our partners to make informed decisions, efficiently move through processes, and more easily collect historic and archaeological resource information.

### PA-SHARE does three important things.

First, you can explore PA SHPO's database of historic places, search for projects and historical markers, and read reports using PA-SHARE's powerful search and map tools. Anyone can access a National Register nomination or historic context; if you purchase a Pro or Business account, you will have access to PA SHPO's digitized legacy data. This means no more trips to Harrisburg to conduct research in the PA SHPO archive.



Screenshot of the search tool in PA-SHARE showing the various layers of information available including professional reports, historical markers, National Register nominations and historic contexts.

Second, you can submit information about a historic place or Environmental Review project, request a Determination of Eligibility, send in a nomination for a Historical Marker or a Preservation Success Story through PA-SHARE.

Third, PA-SHARE has a handy mobile tool called Surveyor. This app can be downloaded to your mobile device and streamlines survey work when you're collecting data, photographs and map locations for dozens – or hundreds – of resources at a time.

You can find PA-SHARE at [share.phmc.pa.gov/pashare/landing](https://share.phmc.pa.gov/pashare/landing). Use the Guest sign in option for your first time to see what the system has to offer and then consider signing up for the free Basic user account to enjoy

more of what PA-SHARE has to offer. You can learn more about PA-SHARE, what this new system can do and how to use it at [phmc.pa.gov/PA-SHARE](http://phmc.pa.gov/PA-SHARE). These pages include FAQs, step-by-step instructions, subscription options and more to help you become familiar with this new tool. PA SHPO also has a PA-SHARE Help Desk that can be reached at [pashare@pa.gov](mailto:pashare@pa.gov).

The screenshot shows the PA-SHARE web application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Submit', and 'Search' buttons. The main header area displays 'RESOURCE Middle Pickering Rural Historic District' and the resource ID '1987RE00798: Listed District - Building'. Below this, the 'Resource Overview' section contains a table with the following data:

Resource Number	Resource Classification	Resource Restriction
1987RE00798	District	No
Master Eligibility	Individual Eligibility	
Listed	Listed	

Below the table, there are sections for 'Location Description', 'Summary of Significance', and a metadata table:

Date Created	Created By	Date Last Edited	Last Edited By
	Legacy User	03/30/2020	Susan Landis

To the right of the table is a map showing the geographic location of the district. A legend titled 'District Resource' is visible, listing various categories with checkboxes: NHL, Listed, Eligible, Not Eligible, Undetermined, Demolished, Above Ground Survey, and Certified Local Government. The 'Above Ground Type' is listed as 'Building'.

Screenshot of the search tool in PA-SHARE showing details about the Middle Pickering Rural Historic District.

## Welcome to CCPC's New Heritage Preservation Coordinator

By: Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, CCPC Heritage Preservation Coordinator

I'm Dan Shachar-Krasnoff and I joined the Chester County Planning Commission as the Heritage Preservation Coordinator in May. Having come from St. Louis, it has been exciting and challenging familiarizing myself with Chester County—approximately 760 square miles, with 73 municipalities and nearly 700 properties or districts determined eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The astonishing success of preservation in Chester County would not have happened without the dedicated work of my predecessors, Jane Davidson and Karen Marshall. Their work would not have been successful without the vigorous preservation advocates who have labored to value and preserve their communities. Advocating for historic resource appreciation and protection, the Chester County Historic Preservation Network has fostered the creation of more than 50 historic commissions, committees, and societies.

The mix of historic resources and open space in Chester County is magnificent. Historic farmsteads, crossroads and towns abound in all areas of the county. In the Midwest, where I am from, extant buildings dating from the 1830's are rare, I have been awestruck by the number of 18<sup>th</sup> century structures still standing. Well-developed heritage themes help build understanding of the social and cultural environment in which the historic resources exist. Seeing the early furnaces of Hopewell and Joanna and the ruins at Warwick informs the large-scale iron and steel production that today and which thousands during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Quaker heritage of egalitarianism and social consciousness has been highlighted by this summer's Town Tours. Agricultural endeavors continue to be an important component of Chester County. Unlike many rural areas of my native Missouri, generally, historic farmhouses in Chester County remain occupied, not replaced by mid-century ranch houses or trailer homes. The passionate stewardship of the Revolutionary War history in Chester County is also impressive. Great efforts have been made and are ongoing in order to understand and interpret the

Philadelphia Campaign of 1777 - Battle of Brandywine, Battle of the Clouds, and Paoli Battlefield. One example is planning implementation of the Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan and subsequent Strategic Landscapes Plans through a Chester County Vision Partnership Program grant funded multi-municipal project addressing heritage outreach and pedestrian connectivity, Brandywine Battlefield National Historic Landmark Heritage Interpretation Plan. This Plan identifies heritage centers, interpretive sites, and thematic and physical linkages. It is considered a model for future heritage planning.

My previous work in preservation did not allow the opportunity to promote and explain the history around us. It is exciting to help promote the value of the historic built environment. The creation of Heritage Centers that are starting to proliferate in Chester County provides the opportunity for the public to learn about its multi-faceted history.



View of Warwick Furnace, Warwick Township. Photo Credit: James Garrison.

The fast-changing nature of the American economy and society means special care must be taken to ensure the unique characteristics of places, which are the gift from previous generations, are valued and protected. New construction nationally has become indistinguishable from one place to another. Standing in a new residential subdivision or commercial development in the eastern part of the country, one often cannot discern characteristics that distinguish it from another development in the South, Mid-West, Mountain states or West Coast.

This reality lends greater relevance on historic preservation initiatives. I am excited and honored for the opportunity to partner with the Chester County Historic Preservation Network to celebrate and preserve Chester County's unique historic character.

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## **The Heritage Task Force Meets “America 250”**

**By: Beverly Sheppard, Heritage Task Force Chair**

The Heritage Task Force will become a key partner in Chester County's preparations for the celebration of America 250 in 2026. The goals and challenges to both entities are remarkably well aligned. The formation of the Heritage Task Force emerged for the growing need to identify and support the financial and interpretive needs of our non-profit history-based organizations. These same organizations are critical to creating a compelling and sustainable visitor experience throughout the upcoming celebrations. Building the capacity of historic sites to be visitor-ready to support heritage tourism and community pride leads the list of goals for both the Task Force and the 250<sup>th</sup> Commission.

The work of the Heritage Task Force is already underway, identifying a robust list of history-based sites across the county and preparing a comprehensive survey to assess the financial and organizational capacity of each. This groundwork will support financial, interpretive, and marketing planning going forward. Plans for the 250<sup>th</sup> are beginning as well, appointing a Chester County Commission for America 250, identifying interpretive themes, sharing in the site assessment, and developing essential partnerships. The parallel work of both entities offers an extraordinary opportunity to renew public engagement with our history and to reflect on the role of the Chester County, past and present, as we examine the continuing journey to “form a more perfect union.”

## 15th Rebecca Lukens Award Recipient, Karen Marshall

By: James B. Garrison, CCHPN President



Resilience, leadership, courage and strategic outlook are the traits of America's First Female Industrialist, ironmaster Rebecca Lukens. These same traits are present in the impactful work of Karen Marshall, Heritage Preservation Coordinator for Chester County.

In the 14 years that Karen has worked for the County, she has served both in the Parks and Recreation Department and for the Planning Commission. During her journey, Karen strengthened relationships between residents, historical commissions and organizations; resulting in the completion of many preservation projects in the 73 municipalities of Chester County. Her leadership has invoked the protection of historical integrity in buildings, landscapes and the cultural identities of the communities she has served. This dedication helped lay the foundation for the Appreciation Chapter in Landscapes3, Chester County's comprehensive plan.

Most recognizable may be Karen's leadership as the 'Town Tours and Village Walks Lady'. Each summer she worked with municipal historical commissions and the Chester County Historic Preservation Network to organize free educational walking tours through historic districts and villages in the county. But her work also sees her take on the roles of a historian, researcher, educator, interpreter, mediator and advocator of our built history.

Another project that Karen is very proud of, is her facilitation of the Frick's Lock Stakeholders; a private and public partnership that restored and preserved the historic Frick's Lock Village in East Coventry Township. From this partnership sprouted the development of a trailhead for the Schuylkill River Trail. Karen also worked on the team for the Chester Valley Trail signage, ultimately providing an interpretation of the culturally significant sites for trail users.

Karen's work perfectly aligned with ironmaster Rebecca Lukens when she became a founding member of the Iron and Steel Heritage Partnership team. As a team member, Karen helped craft the preservation plan and driving tour maps to protect and recognize the iron and steelmaking heritage of the region. In doing so, the partnership preserved the same valuable heritage resources that influenced the success of Rebecca Lukens' steel mill operations over 200 years ago. Karen explains, "Rebecca Lukens clearly never said never and was an amazing example of the personal motto that one of my early mentors inspired me with, 'It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive. Just get out there, roll up your sleeves, try to have a sense of humor and get to work!'"



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The Chester County Historic Preservation Network

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