



Cedarcroft, East Marlborough Township, 1859

The Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

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Waterloo Mills Historic District and Preserve A Preservation Success Story

Nestled in heart of the Mainline is the historic village of Waterloo Mills. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 21, 1995, the village is located in Easttown Township, the home of Chester County’s newest historical commission. Milling here began in the late 1700s and continued into the 20th century. The village, as small as it was, had a blacksmith/wheelwright shop, a post office and farms. Through the efforts of the Brandywine Conservancy and the Haas family, the village has now been preserved. Nearly 170 acres of meadows, woodlands and fertile marshes – all, like the village, preserved – surround this historic setting. A mile of Darby Creek, which powered the mill, is also protected, as its millpond just north of the mill. The Conservancy maintains this historic and environmentally sensitive landscape, calling it Waterloo Mills Preserve.

The history of Waterloo Mills began just before 1798, when a mill was constructed to harness the waters of the

Darby Creek. It is natural that the development of the various entities making up the village – the farm, mill and wheelwright/blacksmith operation, occurred roughly in the same time period, for they relied heavily upon one another. Their juxtaposition along what would



The grist mill and most of the other buildings in the district, are used as residences. The preserve manager lives here.

become known as Waterloo Road created a sense of community, both visually and socially. Visually, all of the historic district’s buildings exist in a linear yet compact arrangement along the road. With no other buildings built after the 1800s, the closeness of these buildings and the activity associated with them created the hamlet that became known as Waterloo Mills.

In terms of National Register criteria, the district makes evident America’s broad patterns of history

The Chester County Historic Preservation Network is an affiliation of local organizations and individuals dedicated to protecting and preserving Chester County’s historic resources and landscapes through education, facilitation, and public and private advocacy.



The Historic District and 190 acres are owned and managed by the Brandywine Conservancy.

In the 1830s, the village was nicknamed “Cabbage-town” for the excessive prices fetched for the grain. “Cabbage” was the nickname for dollars at that time. A 1940 history of Waterloo Mills (Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club Quarterly) claims that “older folks” still refer to the village as Cabbage-town. Between 1853 and 1867, the township’s first post office operated from the mill. In 1877, owner Allison Alexander refitted the mill with improved rollers in an effort to compete with western flour milling. Like many millers during this period, Alexander also operated a wintertime ice business using its millpond. The mill was fitted with a modern turbine system. Although these are now gone, the milldam and pond remain. Alexander is also believed to have constructed the bank barn just north of the mill. Today the mill has been converted into a residence and is used by the preserve manager.

The village blacksmith was operating in Waterloo Mills as early as 1834. While the original shop is now gone, the present shop, just across the street from the mill, was constructed in 1891. The combination of the blacksmith and wheelwright no doubt became an important service to the surrounding farms. Today a small business operates out of the building. Remnants of the blacksmith operation can be found throughout the building.

Overall the district’s architectural resources are an exemplary collection of buildings constructed in the vernacular tradition. They are an outstanding record of a certain time, place, social and vocational activity occurring throughout the 19th century.

(Criterion A) and particularly the history of agriculture in Chester County between 1798 and 1909. The district’s superb vernacular architecture survives, helping to explain the county’s agricultural history, and thus is significant under Criterion C.

While this landscape was probably farmed in the early 1700s, then owner Mordecai Davis did not construct his house until around 1800. His farm expanded in the first decades of the 19th century to include a large barn (now a ruin), a springhouse, blacksmith shop, and tenant house. The farm demonstrates the successful enterprise that characterized so many of Chester County’s farms throughout the 1800s.

Darby Creek in the 1800s had over 100 mills. By 1798, Richard Thomas was operating a grist mill here. The mill was just 2 miles from the Conestoga Road, which provided direct access to Philadelphia. It is believed that the mill became know as “Waterloo” sometime after 1815, in honor of the Battle of Waterloo.

The Chester County Ledger

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Direct all queries to: The Editor, CCHPN, P.O.Box 174, West Chester, PA 19381. Letters to the Editor and articles for the *Chester County Ledger* are welcome. There is no guarantee, however, that submissions will be published. No such submissions will be returned. The CCHPN does not necessarily endorse the content of advertisements herein.



Chester County Historic Preservation Network Volunteer Recognition Celebration - Summer 2007

Wednesday, June 27, 2007
Hilltop House, Easttown Township Municipal Building
566 Beaumont Road, Devon
Arrive by 5:30pm for the tour, the picnic starts at 7pm

All are invited to come out to our annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration, honoring the accomplishments of Chester County's Historical Commissions and HARBs! We hope every historical commission and HARB will be represented.

This year we'll also be touring the Waterloo Mills Historic District and Preserve, and our celebration and picnic will be held at Hilltop House, the municipal building of Easttown Township.

- Learn about this historic mill village and the preservation efforts of the Haas family and the Brandywine Conservancy! Tour the mill, houses, barn, and blacksmith shop with knowledgeable guides!
- A roll call of the attending Historical Commissions and HARBs will give them an opportunity to present their challenges and successes!!
- We will also be presenting our first ever Preservation Awards!

All should park at the township building. Shuttles will run every 15 minutes or so, delivering folks to the historic district and returning them for the picnic.

**Map and directions
on the next page!**

Come on out for a picnic on what will surely be a beautiful summer evening of "munching at the mill!"

Registration Fee: \$15 for adults, \$5 for children. Please mail your registration form below by June 22, 2007. Payment can be made at the door, but advanced payment is preferred. Thanks!

Workshop Registration Form

Please fill out and send this registration form indicating the number of people attending to the Chester County Historic Preservation Network, P.O. Box 174, West Chester, PA 19381. For questions and directions, please call Dr. Elaine Husted at 610-469-1243.

Please R.S.V.P. by June 22, 2007

Name:

Organization:

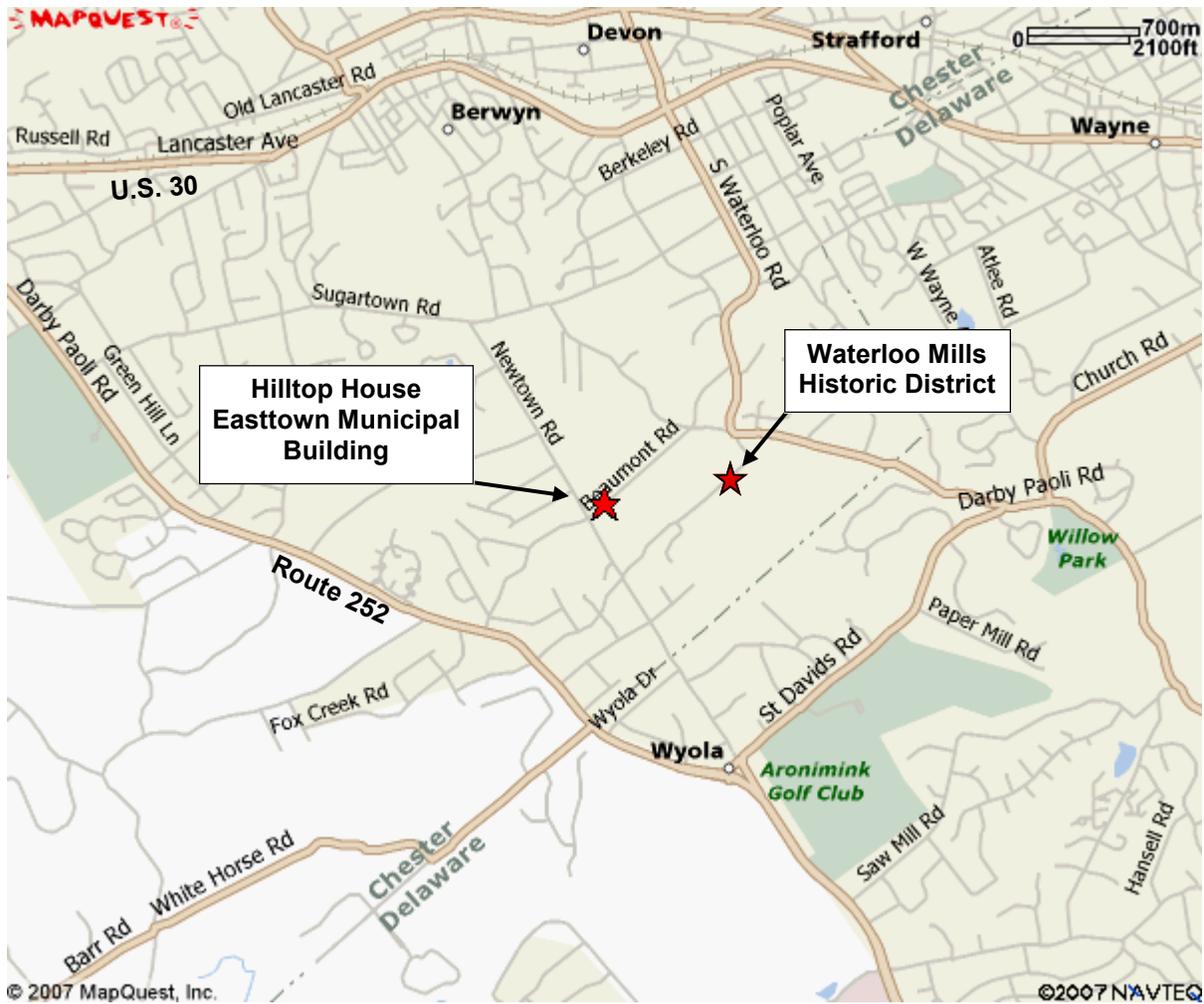
Address:

Phone:

Email:

Number of Adults: _____ Number of Children: _____

CCHPN Summer 2007 Celebration of Preservation Volunteers



Directions from the North: Route 202 and Route 30: take Route 252 south toward Newtown Square, exit and take a left onto St. Davids Road, take a left on Newtown Road and head north, and turn right on Beaumont Road. The Municipal Building is on the right.

Directions from the South: Route 3, West Chester Pike: take Route 252 north at Newtown Square, and veer to the right onto Newtown Road heading north, and turn right on Beaumont Road. The Municipal Building is on the right.

Though vernacular, each display the changing architectural tastes and needs of the time. For example, Richard Thomas incorporated the “Penn Plan” concept into the design of his 1804 house. Such plans were often used for small residences and tenant houses in rural Chester County. The Alexander Barn, c. 1890 is a fine, intact example of the Pennsylvania Barn. It is architecturally significant as an example of the continued influence of such barn design long after the first “Pennsylvania” barn types were built. The mill is one of the few surviving and relatively intact mills on the Darby Creek.

Waterloo Mills Historic District has 17 resources, including 12 contributing buildings, three contributing structures, and one contributing site. The most visible resources are the Davis/Gallagher farmhouse, c. 1800, the mill, c. 1798, and the blacksmith/wheelwright shop, constructed in 1891.

In the early 1900s, the mill and blacksmith shop ceased operating, and the property became a

“gentleman’s farm.” This was often the case for such properties near Philadelphia’s burgeoning Mainline. Some of this land was sold for residential development. In 1926 the remaining 60-acre parcel was sold to Otto and Phoebe Haas, of the Philadelphia chemical giant Rohm and Hass fame. Later John C. Haas inherited the property. He and his wife Chara purchased additional acres on the south side of Waterloo Mills Road in 1968 and, in the early 1980s, donated a conservation easement to the Brandywine Conservancy. In the mid-1990s, the Conservancy accepted a gift of much of the property from the Haas’s that included the heart of the village. Additional land forming what is now the Preserve was acquired from land undergoing development south of the district. In 1995 the Brandywine Conservancy completed the National Register nomination for the property, and soon after, the Waterloo Mills Preserve became a reality.

- Robert Wise

Meet the CCHPN Board

As the CCHPN grows and evolves our board changes and we gain new faces. We have decided this year to make an effort to introduce our board members; those who have been here awhile and those who are new.

Robert Layman

I am the Township Manager for Westtown Township. I hold an MA in Political Science from Marquette University and completed course work for an MPA from Penn State

I became involved in historic preservation during my tenure as manager of North Coventry Township. There I worked with the Historical Commission, assisting them in their many accomplishments. These included the adoption of a Historic Preservation Ordinance and the obtaining of a designation on the National Register for Pottstown Landing Village.

In comparison to the other members of the Board, my resume, as it relates to Historic Preservation is rather sparse. My value probably comes from the fact that I am a local official with close relations to the Township Board of Supervisors. In this way I am able to assist the Network in relating to the various local governments. Historic

Commissions are normally established by a municipality’s governing body and to be effective, it is necessary for them to be able to relate to their goals. In this, I hope that I am of some help.

Peter C. Benton, AIA

I am a Senior Associate of Architecture and Preservation Planning at John Milner Associates in West Chester, where I have worked since 1984. I am a registered architect with thirty years’ experience in the design and execution of architecture, planning, and preservation planning projects. Over the past seventeen years, I have had primary responsibility for preservation planning at JMA. I am experienced in planning for historic sites, heritage areas, historic communities, and scenic byways. I am a graduate of the University of Virginia and the University of Pennsylvania.

I live in Birchrunville, West Vincent Township, with my wife and two sons, and have been active in the Network since its founding in the late 1980s. I also serve on the boards of the Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, and Preservation Action.

Town Tours and Village Walks 2007 Schedule

It's that time of year again! Time to come out and explore about the wonderful nooks and corners of historic Chester County. Come on out for the fun and a little leg-stretch!

- June 7 West Chester's South High Street Corridor
- June 14 Kennet Square Historic District: Northeast Quarter
- June 21 Marlborough Village
- June 28 Historic Bridge Street, Phoenixville
- July 12 Mortonville, East Fallowfield
- July 19 Historic Goshenville
- July 26 Nantmeal Village
- Aug 2 Kimberton - Valley Dell
- Aug 9 Historic Yellow Springs
- Aug 23 The Village of Pughtown

For more info, call Chesco Parks and Recreation at 610-344-6415, or the Chester County CVB at 610-719-1730.

March 2007 Workshop Wrap-up

The CCHPN held its annual spring workshop on March 10. John Snook of the Brandywine Conservancy, Todd Pohlig of Pohlig Builders, and Robert Wise of Wise Preservation Planning, gave an in-depth presentation on Historic Resource Impact Studies. The workshop was highlighted by a breakout session featuring a planning and design scenario based on a recent project completed by Mr. Pohlig in Lower Merion Township. Attendees enjoyed the event and found it useful.

A big thank you goes out to the Brandywine Conservancy for once again hosting this well-attended event.

Workshop on the Web: The PowerPoint presentation element of the Workshop and the impact checklist will be posted on www.cchpn.org!

Chester County Historic Resources Atlas: an update

The Chester County Historic Resources Atlas is a countywide partnership initiative between the Chester County Commissioners, the County Parks and Recreation Department, the County Department of Computing and Information Services - GIS, the Chester County Historic Preservation Network and the respective municipal Historical Commissions.

Each municipal Historical Commission reviews and updates the old historic resource site survey that was conducted between 1979 and 1982. All resources, fifty years or older, are added to the list. Bridges are also included. After field checking, Mark Mattie, the GIS specialist in the County Parks and Recreation Department, enters the data in order to create a draft that is proofread by the municipality. The final product is a municipal, indexed atlas that identifies each historic resource by its tax parcel number, street address and its resource number. The colored coded maps are overlaid on aerial maps with property and municipal boundaries. Mark Mattie continues to enter data and the field checking will resume upon the employment of a County Historic Preservation Officer.

On Wednesday, June 27, 2007, the Chester County Historic Preservation Network will honor

the following Historical Commissions at their volunteer recognition event in Easttown Township for completing their municipal historic resource atlases.

- Downingtown Borough
- East Bradford Township
- East Nantmeal Township
- London Grove Township
- Londonderry Township
- Malvern Borough
- Upper Oxford Township
- Wallace Township
- West Caln Township
- West Nottingham Township

Any Historical Commission who completes their atlas by June 27th will be honored at the event. All municipalities that are working on their atlas will also be recognized. Please call 610-942-3616 with your updated information to ensure that the County Historic Preservation Network has an accurate list.

- Jane L. S. Davidson

Invasion 1777!

Speeding home on the superhighways now crisscrossing Chester County, most drivers are unaware that 230 years ago this same land was the scene of terror and mayhem. The mightiest power of the eighteenth century had invaded the heartland of a fledgling rebellion to capture its capital city – Philadelphia.

General Sir William Howe landed 17,000 troops just south of Chester County at the Head of Elk in Maryland after a tortuous six-week journey from New York. American General George Washington was ready to defend his capital with over 11,000 Continental and militiamen. The British troops scoured the lands, taking supplies by force and destroying property without regard to whether the owners were rebels or Tory Loyalists.

In one month, skirmishes, marches and counter marches, massacres and the bloodiest battle of the Revolutionary War scarred the farmsteads and hamlets of Chester County (which included what is now Delaware County). America's first 9/11 surprise attack occurred in 1777 when Howe secretly outflanked Washington at Brandywine Creek. While the Continentals left the field to the British, they had stood up well against the highly disciplined English troops. Washington and Howe challenged each other repeatedly with feints and maneuvers throughout the month. The opposing forces lined up for a second major battle only five days later on the ridge above the Great Valley, only to be thwarted by a hurricane-like downpour now called the Battle of the Clouds. Atrocities, such as the Paoli Massacre, sparked hatred which impacted the later battles at Germantown and Monmouth.

While Philadelphia was the main prize, Chester County was valuable a center of not only agriculture but industry with many iron foundries and mills. After

Philadelphia was occupied by the British and Washington made his winter encampment at Valley Forge, Chester County became a hotbed of conflict. American forces, including the county militia, harassed British foraging parties forcing them to conduct supply expeditions using thousands of troops. The hostility of the surrounding countryside was one of the factors which led the British to abandon their occupation of Philadelphia the following summer.



Historic Waynesborough was initially built in 1724 with subsequent construction in 1735, 1790, 1853, 1902, and 1965.

Photo by Ned Goode, HABS, 1960.

Chester County abounds with Revolutionary War sites open to the public: from parks such as Valley Forge, Brandywine Battlefield, and the Paoli Massacre; to Early American homes such as Waynesborough, John Chadd's home, William Briton 1704 House; to restorations of early farm and industrial centers, such as the Mill at Anselma and Hopewell Furnace. A number of these sites will be hosting 230th anniversary events. For further information, check out: <http://www.ushistory.org> and the Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau historic attractions: <http://www.cccvb.org/pyvhist.asp>.

- Bruce Knapp

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Check out our website at
www.CCHPN.org

It's full of useful information for Historical Commissions, HARBS, owners of historic properties, and anyone else who wants to help preserve our heritage.

Save the Dates! Upcoming CCHPN events:

Summer Volunteer Recognition Celebration **June 27**

Picnic, Tour of Waterloo Mills Historic District, Easttown Township. Details inside!

Fall Presentation #1 **September 27**

Topic: Demolition by Neglect

Fall Presentation #2 **November 29**

Topic: Sears Houses in ChesCo

Check out our website for more information.

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P.O. Box 174
West Chester, PA 19381

PLEASE FORWARD

Please come and join us for the

Summer Picnic 2007

Celebrating the achievements
of our Historical Commissions and
HARBS

With a tour of
Waterloo Mills Historic District

June 27, 2007
Easttown Municipal Building PA