



*Wood Barn, Lenape Vicinity,  
date of construction unknown*

# The Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

November 2007

Volume 10, Number 4

## Do You Have A Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalog House In Your Neighborhood?

Most likely, sitting quietly in your neighborhood, is a Sears Roebuck house! You may even find that you are living in one of the many models designed for the working population between the years 1908 to 1940. Simple in structure, available by mail order through a Sears Catalog, they bring a rich history to Chester County.

The presentation of the Sears Roebuck and Company houses will briefly set the stage as to what it was like to live in Chester County at the turn of the century. What were the activities and services being utilized by the people at that time? It was a time of change marked by transitions in transportation and industry. Lack of housing for workers was a significant issue for many communities.

The purchase of a "Modern Home" from Sears was an interesting process for the buyer as well as the workmen who built these "kit" houses. A variety of catalogs presented a large choice of house designs from which people selected the home of their dreams.

Each person attending is invited to send a digital photograph of what they believe to be a Sears Roebuck and

Company house to Bruce Knapp at [bknapp@paolibattlefield.org](mailto:bknapp@paolibattlefield.org). Some of these may well be included in the



*This house, above, known as the "Walton" model, was built at  
712 West Nields Street, West Chester.  
Below is the Sears catalog image for this model.*



presentation by Jane L. S. Davidson along with others photos selected to be posted for all to see. If time is a factor, bring your photograph with you. Perhaps you will be able to identify which of the 90 plus house

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

designs may be yours. The house you select to show does not need to be owned by you. The more examples of Sears houses in Chester County we can show, the more fun for all.

We need you to identify the location (municipality) of the house in your photograph.

- Bruce Knapp

## 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.*

### Ann Bedrick

I have no formal historic qualifications and although very interested in history I didn't excel in it in school! What I do have is an unquenchable thirst to go access as much of our county's rich history as I can. I live in my great, great, great, great grandfather's house and that is what set me on my journey through old buildings, artifacts, bridges and roads. It all started with "oh, what did Mom mom say - who did what and what happened- and why didn't I pay attention?" I found that the Abram everybody thought built our house was 13 years old, but his uncle AND grandfather were both named Abram and carpenters at the time and in fact ALL THREE could have built my house! I have tried to make up for my deficit in historic training as much as I can by attending seminars, working on our township's GIS, doing some property research , and "do it again" research –and realize I keep learning more and more as I go along- and how much more I still have to learn. I now have developed a passion for "Old Road Papers"!

I was formally trained in illustration at Moore College Of Art in Philadelphia and have done finished art newspaper and magazine illustrations for John Wanamaker, Hess's, Watt and Shand , Diamond's (Phoenix) and Joske's (Houston) Department stores- does anyone remember these stores? I have also done illustrations for Running Press in Philadelphia. For a while I could fantasize being "Brandywine School"! I love to draw anything – houses, people, animals and stuff! I'll draw anything you stick in front of me. Murals are really fun, I love working large!

I have a patient husband who I can sometimes rope into my raids on history and I'm very proud to say that I have a teen aged daughter that can be more than just distracted from her normal interests to actually be involved and interested in local history. My mother, who was a librarian at West Chester University and extremely interested and involved in Chester County history, has Alzheimer's now. I wish I could have told her the things she wanted me to see and appreciate about this county, sunk in after all. I hope to be able to continue where I know she would have wanted to go.

### The Chester County Ledger

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Published by:

*The Chester County  
Historic Preservation Network*

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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.



# Fall Presentation 2007 Sears, Roebuck, and Co. Houses Architectural Lecture Series

November 29, 2007

6:30 pm for House Visit  
at 712 W. Nields St., West Chester

7:30 pm for Presentation  
at East Bradford Township Building  
666 Copeland School Road

## Visit a historic, nearby Sears House!

Walk around an actual Sear Kit Home, shown at right, in the Eachus Dairy Historic District of East Bradford Township, right outside of West Chester.

Then come to the township building to hear Jane's talk.

**Jane L. S. Davidson**, CCHPN Board Member and retired Chester County Preservation Officer, will give a presentation of how these houses were developed, shipped and constructed, and how they served a specific housing market in Chester County.

This presentation is hosted by East Bradford Township Historical Commission.



*This two-story home, marketed as "The Princeton", was built in the western end of the Eachus Dairy Historic District of East Bradford Township. This model, listed in the Sears catalog in 1924 for \$3,073, featured six rooms, one bath, living room fireplace, built-in bookcases and an open staircase. The original plan included the porch hood, and the local owner added the pent roof to enhance the interpretation of the Colonial-Revival architectural style.*

*Directions to the Sears House:* Go to West Chester - From South High St turn west onto Price St. Continue past the first traffic light on Price St. to the stop sign on S. Bradford Ave (Rt. 52). Turn left onto S. Bradford Ave to first traffic light and turn right onto West Nields St (into strip mall). Continue on entrance road until you get to the service road behind the mall. You will see a sign on left side of the road pointing left to 712 W. Nields St. Follow this road to the parking around the 2-story white building. This is the restoration and adaptive reuse of the Sears House.

*Directions to East Bradford Municipal Building from Sears House Tour:* Turn left onto Bradford Ave until first traffic light (at corner of Strasburg Rd or Rt. 162 - about 8 blocks). Turn right onto Strasburg Rd and follow to traffic light at Hannum Ave/Downingtown Pike (Bus. Rt. 322) and turn left onto Downingtown Pike. Follow it (Rt. 322) to the fourth traffic light (one light after the Rt. 322 By Pass). Take right turn at light onto Copeland School Rd. Follow Copeland School Rd to E. Bradford Township Building (on left side of road, after ball park/basketball courts) just before Copeland School Rd makes a 90 degree turn.

Please come out this Fall and join us for the last of our series of presentations on the architectural history of the region, and  
Don't Forget to Bring Pictures of any Sears Houses in Your Community!

## Historical Commissions and HARBs Identify Their Proudest Accomplishments at June Volunteer Recognition

*Downingtown:* Revolutionary War redoubts were going to be bulldozed but were saved.

*East Bradford:* Working on incorporating their photo survey into their atlas.

*East Brandywine:* Historic survey data to the county & reviewing the draft now. Hoping to add protective ordinances.

*East Goshen:* Recruited, educated and retained “Beyond the Commission” volunteers for living history days and other activities as well as completing all their chains of titles for their historic resources inventory.

*East Nantmeal:* GIS survey. Helped other township members on heritage related issues. Developed the first Nantmeal Village tour, giving a Town Tour and Village Walk on July 26. Successfully, stopped PennDot from replacing a 20 ft. bridge – repairing instead.

*East Pikeland:* Became a certified local government. Prepared a Town Tour and Village Walk for August 2.

*East Vincent:* Almost completed the survey for the Historic Atlas.

*Easttown:* New Historic Commission, hosted June Celebration. Halfway through survey.

*Kennett:* The commission just completed their new History Resource Room in the township building. It houses all our historic surveys, artifacts, and files and are beginning a library.

*Londonderry:* Recruited two new members and are conducting research on their historic resources.

*Malvern:* Completed the Resource Atlas and published a book. Borough Hall has a history room.

*North Coventry:* Town Tours & Village Walks – documenting all the forge sites – it is said the hills used to look like they were on fire at night.

*Oxford:* Finished the Oxford National Register Historic District nomination and was listed on the National Register Feb. 2007.

*Schuylkill:* Nearly completed historic resource survey including barns, architectural resources. 80 years – Founders Day Celebration.

*Tredyffrin HARB:* Celebrating 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary, put out bookmarks. Beginning in September held an event almost everyday, also surveying previously unprotected properties.

*Upper Oxford:* GIS survey completed, getting second fire proof file case for resource files, third schoolhouse reunion of one room students.

*Upper Uwchlan:* Completed GIS survey & handed it in – thanks to Seth.

*Uwchlan:* In addition to GIS survey they photographed more than 200 historic resources & duplicated them for the zoning office, John Cadwallader House, and Township Office.

*Wallace:* Almost finished with GIS survey. Developing a safe home for a new donation of a 1747 Bible by William Birkitt – only 27 editions printed over the years in London.

*West Bradford:* Still working to keep ahead of the developers, have copies of history still available at the historical society.

*West Caln:* Finished Historic Atlas mapping.

*West Chester HARB:* Expanded the National Register District to 3,000 structures – almost the whole borough. Facing a demolition permit application for important historic property.

*West Nantmeal:* Received \$5,000 from PA DCED to videotape places in the township with a narrative. Finished the GIS map for the Historic Atlas Survey.

*West Nottingham:* Completed all deed research on 100 years & older resources. ½ done 50 and back.

*West Pikeland:* Assistance we give to property owners – over 200 properties – who own historic properties.

*West Whiteland:* 1744 Richard Thomas Mill – completing historic structures report – possible interpretation.

*Schuylkill:* Received Special Preservation Award to their surprise and are very pleased but noted that without Jane’s help they never would have preserved the school.

- Compiled by Kathryn Varhaes

## Volunteer Judges Needed For Regional History Day Competition

National History Day (NHD) is not just one day but a yearlong program that makes history come alive every day. It is an exciting way for students to study history and learn about issues, ideas, people and events. NHD invites students to undertake original research and interpretation of historical events. Students then express what they have learned through creative and original performances, media presentations, papers or three-dimensional exhibits.

The Regional History Day will be held at Immaculata University on Saturday March 15, 2008. Approximately 300 to 400 students will be participating. In addition to the competition, a History Fair will also take place where craftsmen and others who work or volunteer in the field of history or at historic sites can "show their stuff" for students, teachers and parents.

In order to accommodate all the students, many more judges are needed. As a member of an Historical Commission, Committee or HARB – **You Would Make an Ideal Judge.** The time involvement includes a short orientation to be held either February 16, 2007 for *experienced* judges and team leaders or February 23, 2008 for *new* judges. Both orientations will be held at 10:00 a.m. at the Chester County Historical Society. The actual competition for students is Saturday March 15 from 7:30 am to 1:30 pm.

**To Volunteer:** Contact Program Coordinator Carol Grigson at 610-269-5413. Her email address is [carol.k.grigson@verizon.net](mailto:carol.k.grigson@verizon.net)

The Regional History Day for Chester and Delaware Counties is the first step on the way to the State and National levels of competition for students in grades 6-8 and 9-12 and is modeled after science fairs. Locally, it is co-sponsored by Immaculata University and the Chester County Historical Society. There is a Junior and Senior Division. State Competition is followed by the National Competition to be held June 15-19, 2008 at the University of Maryland.

The 2007-2008 theme "Conflict and Compromise in History" asks students to view history through multiple perspectives. In some cases, the conflicts existed without compromise. In others,

compromise was reached before major conflicts ensued. In the end some conflicts were averted with compromises like treaties. More often, however, events in history reflect both conflict and compromise. Students may choose to focus on a conflict or a compromise, but if the topic includes one as well as the other, the student needs to address both sides of the theme.



NHD is more than a contest; it is reforming the way history is taught and learned. It provides teachers with an innovative teaching tool and fosters students' enthusiasm for learning. In addition to the contest, NHD offers teacher workshops, summer student academies, summer teacher institutes, curricular materials and other resources for educators.

NHD began in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1974 and expanded throughout the state and into surrounding Midwestern states before becoming a national organization in 1980. In 1992 NHD moved its headquarters to the Washington, D.C., area.

For more information on National History Day, go to <http://www.nationalhistoryday.org>. Information on the regional level can be found at <http://www.Immaculata.edu/HistoryDay>.

- Kathryn Varhaes

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Check out our website at

[www.CCHPN.org](http://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.

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## Save the Date!

**Spring 2008 Workshop      March 8, 2008**

**Topic: Demolition**

**Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford**

Do your **WINDOWS**  
rattle in the wind?

Do your **FLOORS**  
catch your socks?

Is your **PORCH**  
falling down on the job?

**YOU MIGHT NEED A  
CARPENTER!**

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## **MATTHEW E. ROBERSON**

Restoration Carpenter  
CCHPN Board Member

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On the web at [WWW.CCHPN.ORG](http://WWW.CCHPN.ORG)

PLEASE FORWARD

Please come and join us for our

Fall Presentation, 2007

**Sears, Roebuck and Co.  
Catalog Houses  
in Chester County**

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Site Visit and Presentation!

**November 29, 2007**

East Bradford Township Building  
Details Inside!