



Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

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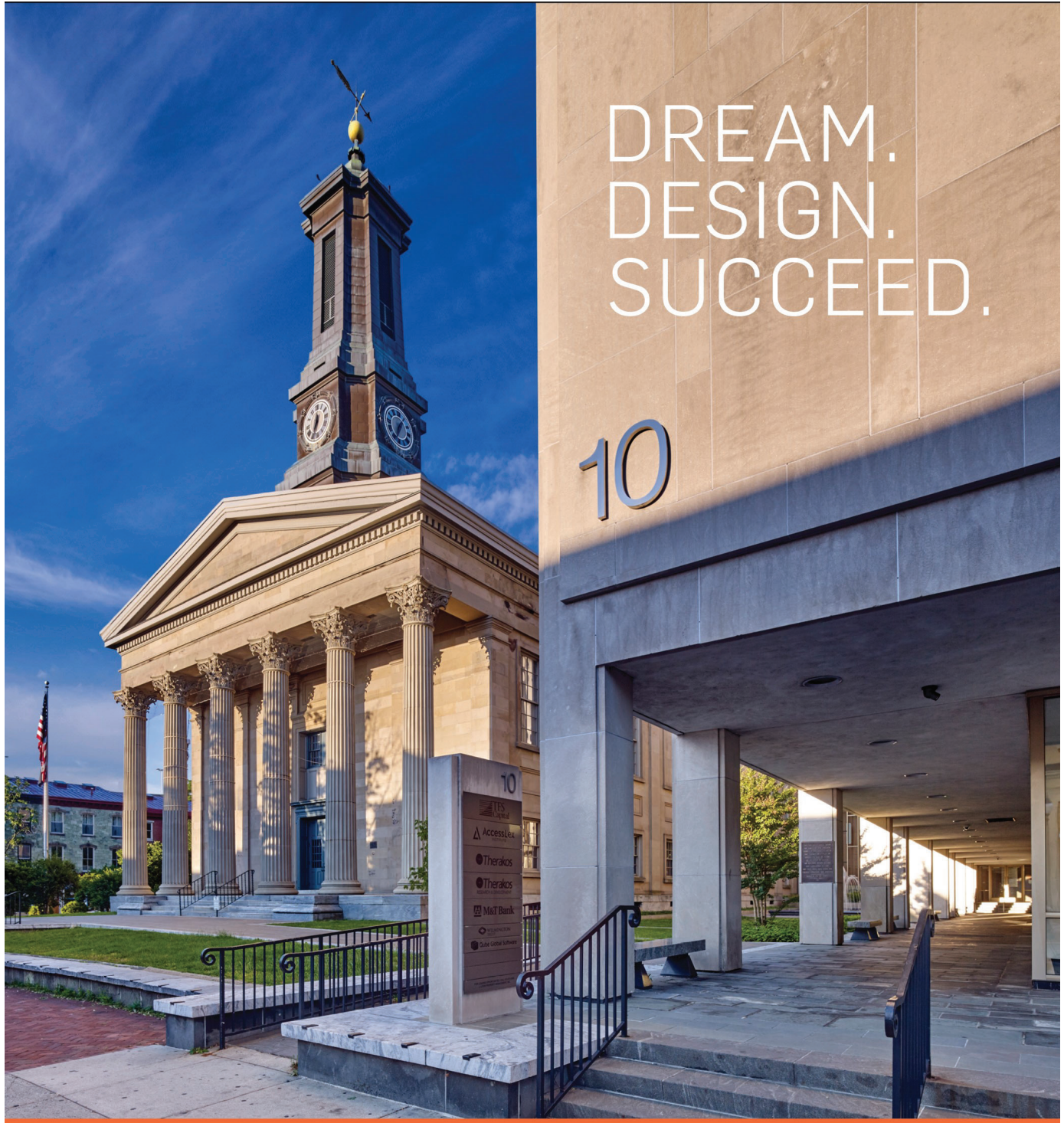
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Winter 2023

Chester County Celebrates the 245th Anniversary of the Battle of the Brandywine: September 11th, 1777



The historian Chris Sanderson with his handmade historic markers documenting the Battle of the Brandywine of 1777.



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James B. Garrison

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THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER:

Preserving Places and Ideas

A military battle is typically an event with a defined beginning and end. Many times the locations where battles occur are more by chance than strategy. No one expected the largest engagement of the Civil War to take place in the little town of Gettysburg. In the Revolutionary War, the Battle of the Brandywine in 1777 was the largest, but maybe not the most decisive battle of the war. It took place over a large area where the existing roads and landscape features defined the areas of maneuver and engagement. There are only a few areas left where one can really appreciate the scope and sequence of events, and that is largely the result of the continuous efforts of dedicated persons and organizations to preserve these landscapes.

Preserved battlefields become places of remembrance, sometimes for the individuals who fought there, other times for the causes they fought for. The Gettysburg Address is the most powerful, succinct statement about what the Civil War was about and it is closely tied to the place where the battle occurred. At the Brandywine, George Washington was attempting to use his army of citizen soldiers to engage the professional army of King George III. The outcome at Brandywine was not successful, but Washington learned things that led to ultimate victory. In addition to further training of the battered army while they were encamped at Valley Forge, a few months later, he rallied his troops around the ideas of liberty and independence. They went on to fight the war on his terms, not the enemy's, to victory at Yorktown.

The site of a great event is a stepping stone to personally experiencing it in a different time. Historic preservation seeks to protect enough context to promote understanding and interpretation based on a connection to authentic places and artifacts. Different times bring different interpretations. The evolving dialogue ensures relevance and engagement. In 1777, there were many differing opinions in southeastern Pennsylvania regarding the war and its probable outcome. The battlefield is a piece of the much larger story which began in 1775 and ended in 1783. It represents a testament related to a fixed point in time handed down to us now to aid our understanding.

Lincoln's words immortalized the Battle of Gettysburg as fundamental to the development of our nation. His words are timeless. The Declaration of Independence was written during a conflict to establish a new nation. It is not associated with a turning point in a war or any single event. It is an aspirational document still very relevant today. The significance of the Declaration of Independence doesn't start and stop at Independence Hall as a single time or place. As we work towards the celebration of its 250th anniversary, let's remember all of the people and places inspired by the document, and keep that history and spirit alive.

James B. Garrison, CCHPN President

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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Letter From the Editor

When I began to think about the theme of this issue – the 245th Anniversary of the Battle of the Brandywine – I knew that the major re-enactment would have taken place in September. The event drew a record number of not only spectators but a diverse group of regiments including cavalry and Highlanders, as well as musicians, craftspeople, and colonial “sutlers” (those who followed the army and sold provisions to soldiers).

I remember first writing about the battle when I learned that the dramatic and final encounter of September 11, 1777, did not occur in Chadds Ford – a place many tourists today assume to be the core battlefield site – but a small region of Chester County at the intersection of South New Street and Birmingham Road.

Much of what I have discovered about the battle can be credited to research of the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force (detailed in this issue) and other preservationists who work to ensure that the battle is understood by future generations and that there is still enough open space to explore it as a “battle of terrain,” as it’s been called.

Ironically, the loss of farmland around Chadds Ford in recent years has changed how the battle’s anniversary is celebrated. In the 1960s and ’70s, I am told, re-enactments were held in the fields and hills above the historic John Chads House. At the day’s end, re-enactors on both sides—British and Continental—liked to gather at the nearby Hank’s Restaurant, their muskets and swords set aside among those who sat at the crowded counter.

In contrast, both the 240th and the recent 245th battle anniversaries took place at Sandy Hollow Heritage Park in Birmingham Township. The 42-acre park was created in 2002, but much of the surrounding land was part of an earlier save initiated by Birmingham Township. The effort was perhaps typical of how preservation worked on the local level before the American Battlefield Protection Act was passed by Congress in 1996.

The save marked the beginning of a determined preservation effort—one that had not been seen since the 19th and early 20th centuries, when historians treasured Sandy Hollow as the site of the final and bloodiest encounter of that September day in 1777. Three such battlefield “enthusiasts,” as they were sometimes called, were Chris Sanderson, Amos Brinton, and Wilmer MacElree.

MacElree, a West Chester author and trial lawyer whose books described sites along the Brandywine, was said to rely on Brinton’s memories and family connections to document the Brandywine battlefield. For instance, one of MacElree’s published photographs in his 1912 book *Along the Western Brandywine* shows the 90-year-old Brinton standing along the banks of the Brandywine and pointing to the place where he remembered were the “posts” or remains of Chads’ Ferry.

Much like Sanderson, MacElree believed that the Brandywine battlefield was best explored on foot, especially along the Brandywine in and around Chadds Ford, which had been radically altered by “dam, bridge, and railroad embankments” MacElree wrote in 1912.

Thanks to free online sourcing, MacElree’s books can be easily read today while Sanderson is revealed through his idiosyncratic collection housed in the Chris Sanderson Museum in Chadds Ford. Among the items documenting the American Revolution is a 1787 edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica*; it was one of the first books to feature an entry about the Battle of the Brandywine. Framed newspaper stories also tell of Sanderson’s interest in battlefield preservation. I hope members of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network and readers of this issue will see how the preservation efforts of the past have continued today.

Catherine Quillman

About Our Cover:

The celebrated Chadds Ford historian and schoolteacher, Chris Sanderson is shown in front of a friend's Model A just prior to the 150th anniversary of the battle in 1927. Image courtesy of the Chris Sanderson Museum in Chadds Ford.

Sanderson famously never learned to drive – he got around by foot, bicycle, bus, train, or hitchhiking – but he was known to have created countless maps of the battlefield that he gave away as driving tours. As the cover photo suggests, Sanderson also tried to improve a state marker program that had begun in the 1900s but stalled in the 1920s. Around the time of the 150th anniversary of the battle in 1927, Sanderson created cardboard cutouts in the design style of the state's Keystone battlefield markers. He then placed them at sites that he felt were lacking such as in the middle of Kennett Square. Here the marker read "Where the divisions of Cornwallis and Knyphausen separated the morning of Sept. 11, 1777."

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.

East Bradford Township Adopts Design Guidelines for Historic Resources

Andrea Campisi

East Bradford Township developed as a primarily farming and milling community in the early 1700s. As a result, most of the surviving historic resources include farmhouses, barns and other agricultural-related outbuildings such as spring houses and silos, and former mill buildings. These historic resources and the remaining rolling hills, farm fields, and pastures contribute to the township's predominantly pastoral character.

A goal of the township's 2016 Comprehensive Plan is to preserve, protect, and enhance the integrity of historic and cultural resources and their accompanying landscapes, thereby promoting retention of the township's character. The township, through its Board of Supervisors, Historical Commission, and Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB), believes that the preservation and protection of historic resources is a public necessity that is in the best interest of the health, prosperity, and welfare of its citizens.

As a result, the township has developed a comprehensive historic preservation program to mitigate the negative effects of proposed changes to historic resources, to encourage the continued use of these resources and facilitate their appropriate reuse, to tailor protective measures to historic resources worthy of preservation, to encourage the preservation of historic settings and landscapes and to discourage the unnecessary demolition of historic resources.

Much of the historic preservation program is rooted in the township's Historic Resource Protection Standards contained within the municipal zoning ordinance. This ordinance requires review by either the Historical Commission or the HARB when either demolition or exterior changes are proposed to certain categories of historic resources.

To further enhance its existing historic preservation program and as required by the township's Certified Local Government (CLG) status, the township hired a consultant to prepare "*Design Guidelines for Historic Preservation*." The township also formed a task force to guide the project consisting of members of its Historical Commission, HARB, Board of Supervisors and township staff. The design guidelines are a historic preservation tool to help property owners make informed decisions when proposing exterior alterations or additions to historic buildings.

The design guidelines also relay the township's goals related to historic preservation and communicate to property owners what is expected as far as design, massing, and materials when changes are pro-



The recently restored homestead at Cope's Bridge Farm, as viewed from the Strasburg Road near the Cope's Bridge. Photo courtesy of Mark J. Lucas

East Bradford Township Adopts Design Guidelines , continued

posed to historic resources. The specific goals of the design guidelines as it relates to changes to historic resources are:

- To encourage preservation and minimize harm to historic fabric.
- To enhance the historic character of the historic resource or district.

Both HARB and the Historical Commission will use the design guidelines when they review exterior changes to historic buildings and new construction in historic districts to ensure that changes are consistent with the guidelines.

Funding to prepare the design guidelines was provided via a CLG grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The township has been a CLG since 2006. The CLG program is a partnership between municipalities, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service that promotes and supports historic preservation programs and policies. Designation as a CLG provides communities with access to training opportunities for both elected officials, staff and advisory board members, technical assistance and grant programs and demonstrates that the municipality follows best practices and views preservation as an integral part of its community and economic development.

In order to be a CLG, municipalities must have a historic preservation ordinance that at a minimum, requires the review and approval of proposed demolition of designated historic buildings and new construction in historic districts; a preservation commission or HARB to administer the preservation ordinance and the incorporation of historic resources and historic preservation strategies into the community's comprehensive plan. CLGs must also achieve ongoing performance standards to advance their preservation goals.

Throughout the work in preparing of the design guidelines document, the public was kept apprised of the process via both the township's website and Facebook pages and via the township newsletter. In addition, all meetings of the Design Guidelines Task Force were open to the public. The project took approximately one year and in December 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved the final document. The design guidelines document was prepared by the Frens & Frens Studio of patterh n ives, llc., a consulting firm based in West Chester. The firm has experience preparing design guidelines for several other municipalities in southeastern Pennsylvania in addition to towns in other states.

Please note: the "*Design Guidelines for Historic Preservation*" document is available for review on East Bradford Township's website as well as at the Township Building. Please contact, Andrea Campisi at (610) 436-5108 x110 or acampisi@eastbradford.org with any questions.

Andrea Campisi has served as the Director of Planning and Zoning for East Bradford Township since February 2020. Prior to her employment with East Bradford, Andrea served as the Senior Planner at Lower Merion Township in Montgomery County where she managed the subdivision and land development review process and also served as the staff liaison to the township's Historical Commission.



East Bradford native Gilbert Cope (1840-1928) took several photographs of Cope's Bridge on June 26, 1888. He stepped out of his carriage to take this one, looking towards the Strasburg Road from the unpaved North Creek Road. Cope, who grew up on a farm on the Strasburg, took up photography in the late 1800s as way to augment his genealogical research. In addition to being one of the founders of the Chester County Historical Society, Cope was best known as the co-author of *The History of Chester County* (1881) and for devising an ancestral chart that he marketed and sold to genealogists (and is still in use today.) Photo From the Gilbert Cope Collection at the Chester County History Center.

The Historic Districts in East and West Bradford Townships

By Catherine Quillman

Chester County has dozens of historic districts, defined as a designated group of buildings, properties, and landscapes that have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

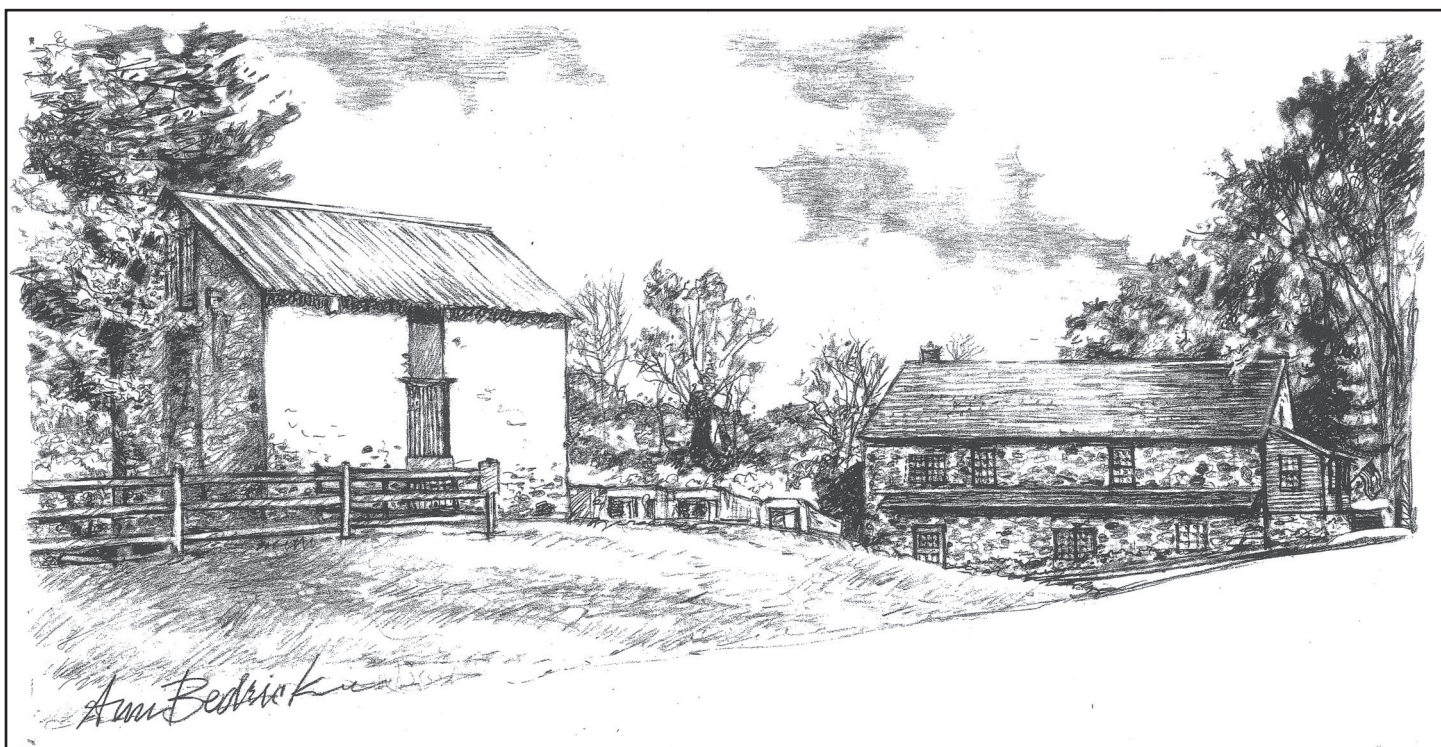
Most of county's historic districts are found in villages or communities with buildings of historic and architectural significance. Three historic districts in East and West Bradford Townships are particularly unusual – each is comprised of landscapes that recall the rural character of Chester County when it was known as the “Breadbasket” and “Butterbelt” of the colonies.

These districts are the Strode's Mill Historic District (1989), the neighboring Worth-Jefferis Rural Historic District (1994), and the Taylor-Cope Historic District (1987)

The relatively recent registered district – the Worth-Jefferis Rural District – spans East and West Bradford Townships and contains a surprisingly high number of historic resources. There are nearly 50 historic structures such as the vernacular stone farmhouses and old bank barns artists have long painted as quintessential Chester County.

Along with Strode's Mill, the district is historically tied to mills and Chester County's agrarian roots. Another unique connection: both districts played a role in the Battle of the Brandywine. In 1777, the former Jefferis' Ford was the second crossing point for the British during their infamous flanking maneuver. Many of the contributing homes in the Worth-Jefferis District were also found on the British route from Trimble's Ford.

Now called the British Left Hook (and detailed in the “document center” of chesco.org), the maneuver took Gen. Washington by surprise at Birmingham Hill, setting off a race from Chadds Ford to the region surrounding Birmingham Friends Meeting. The region is now protected as part of a 113-acre preserve.



A pen & ink scene by artist Ann Bedrick of part of the Strode's Mill Historic District. It includes the circa 1740 English barn, which once housed the longtime Strode scrapple business. After the roof collapsed, the building underwent selective demolition and is now owned by East Bradford Township and supported by the Friends of Strode's Mill. In addition to the current barn restoration – slated to be a future Heritage Center – the township is working on a trail project called the Restoration of the Plum Run. The project involves several groups including the Brandywine Conservancy and Brandywine Red Clay Creek Alliance

The Historic Districts of East and West Bradford Townships, Continued

Taylor-Cope Historic District

The third district associated with wheat trade and agricultural wealth – the Taylor-Cope Historic District (1987) – is confined to East Bradford. It was named for two colonial-era Quaker families whose farmland extended along the Strasburg Road outside of Marshallton (another Historic District). One of the most important structures in the district is c. 1724 brick homestead of Abiah Taylor. Said to be the oldest extant brick house in Chester County, the homestead stands opposite of the Natural Lands' Stroud Preserve and along the Taylor Run (which once fed the Taylor Mill).

The property's c. 1753 English-style barn – which has no threshing floor but dates to a time in workers broke the wheat down by hand in the fields– is considered the oldest barn of its type in the state. However, historians believe that the survival of both the house and the barn on the same private property may make the complex unique in North America.

The district is also named for the Cope family who operated a water-powered “factory” that made waterwheels and early farm implements in an area behind Cope’s bridge (listed separately on the National Register). The Cope’s Bridge is now the oldest stone-arch bridge in Chester County, but during the American Revolution it was made of

logs and reportedly saw much traffic by the militia drawn to Martin’s Tavern in Marshallton.

After the British occupied Philadelphia, members of the Continental Congress were said to have crossed the bridge on their way to the settlement of Lancaster, which became the colonial capitol for one day on September 27th, 1777. It was an event recorded by British officer John Montrésor’s journal as “the Rebel congress precipitately [sic] abandoned Philadelphia, owing to a false alarm.”



A historic photo of the Abiah Taylor homestead and barn by J. Max Mueller, a Chester County physician and amateur photographer who explored the Brandywine Valley from the years 1880 to 1895. From the photo archives of the Chester County History Center.



A 2001 view of the Abiah Taylor homestead and the property's c. 1753 English-style barn, which still retains its original crop storage area and farm stock stabling. Photo by the editor.

Caln Historical Commission Brings New Life to Forgotten Treasures

By Mark Evans, Caln Township Commissioner

Caln was the birthplace for much of what is now known as central Chester County, in fact its motto is “The Heart of Chester County”. The area was first settled in 1702 by David Settler (yes, “Settler”) and others from Calne, England who embraced Penn’s land along Beaver Creek, and named it for the hometown they left behind – Caln.

The most well-known of the more than 140 structures identified by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for having historical significance is Caln Meetinghouse, built in 1726 to accommodate the spiritual needs of a growing populace. “

Just 1/2-mile northeast of the Caln Meetinghouse stands the Spackman Farm, one of the most gorgeous estates to have ever graced the area. (Editor’s note: see “Items of Interest” in this issue.) Much like our township, Spackman Farm (listed as the Davis-Spackman farm on township documents) may not be a household name, but anyone who’s travelled the Kings Highway between Edges Mill in Caln and Bondsville Mill in East Brandywine is familiar with the pastoral beauty of its rolling hills and marvelous structures. To look out across its 129.5 acres of tranquility is like travelling back in time to a world untouched by modern growth and expansion.

The farmstead was established sometime between the years 1703-1762, after Penn’s virgin land was granted to Joseph Pike, who then sold it to the Parkes (who also owned the land in Downingtown now known as Lloyd Farm and Glen Isle). In 1785, the farm was purchased by Isaac Spackman and remained in the Spackman family for a single lineage record of 220 years.

Interestingly, the original east structure of the house bears a “1776” datestone, but there’s speculation that the house actually dates to 1767. The barn was built in 1804, and a 3-story springhouse also served as a 1-room schoolhouse. When Isaac passed in 1823, his son Thomas inherited the farm, and continued to work the land. He was also an abolitionist who helped escaped slaves along with his neighbors who included Dr. John K. Eschleman of and Glen Isle Farm. (Editor’s note: Information about the Underground Railroad in Caln Township is found at : <https://digital.klnpa.org/digital/collection/p17189coll7/id/47>).

Thomas did not live to see the cruel institution of slavery outlawed by our nation. He died in 1846, and the farm was inherited by his son, the second Isaac Spackman to hold claim to the land. But this Isaac lost interest in agriculture and moved to Philadelphia in 1880. This is where the story of Spackman Farm could have ended. Instead, it began the first chapter of women fighting to keep the farm alive. When Isaac forsook his birthright, Thomas’ daughter Amanda, a teacher at nearby Chestnut Dell School, chose to stay and remained on the land for another 44 years, until her passing in 1924. Isaac had already died, and his last remaining son quickly dealt the farm to NY investors.

Surely this is where we dolly back and run credits, but not quite: Spackman Farm’s story is one of resilience. After a decade outside of the family, 130 acres were sold back to direct descendants of the first Isaac – Penrose and Mary Davis. It seems that in the late 18th century Penrose’s great grandfather William Davis had married Thomas’ sister, Mary Spackman. And so, the legacy continued, albeit as Penncroft Farm.

By the 1940s, four generations resided at the old farmhouse. The 20th Century raced along, children everywhere left family farms behind, others marched off to war, technology changed the agricultural industry forever, and one-by-one farms fell to the bulldozers of development. Through it all, Mary Davis and her daughter Marian Davis Griffith held tightly to their family heritage. As Marian grew older, the land continued to be tilled, planted, and harvested by George Zynn and his sons.

Marian passed ownership on to her daughter Marianne Davis Griffith, who lived out the rest of her years at the farm she called home. The final wishes of the Griffith family – the last of the family members to occupy the farm – was for the land to be preserved for open space in perpetuity. So, Marianne sold the land to Caln Township in 2001, but held onto an 11-acre parcel surrounding the farmhouse until 2005 when her mother Marian passed. All of the estate is now in the care of the township.

In recent years a local farmer has worked the land, and the deep rows of corn visible from Bondsville Road might make you think nothing had changed. But over time Spackman’s 18th Century farmhouse, barn, and springhouse had fallen into disrepair. By 2020, the barn roof was in such a state that it appeared the building might not survive.

They say it takes a village, or in this instance, a township to get things done. In January 2020 the Caln

Caln Historical Commission Brings New Life to Forgotten Treasures, continued

Board of Commissioners welcomed three new members who all share a passion for preservation. One of them, Jane Kennedy, led the initiative to get Carver Court in Coatesville added to the National Register of Historic Places. Until 2020, only two of the five Commissioners could be considered “conservators” and so many preservation projects were put aside. Meanwhile, the Historical Commission, like the buildings at Spackman Farm, had fallen on hard times. Membership had been waning for years, and frustration over the inability to get things done had muted their voices.

That perfect storm led to where we are today – a strong Historical Commission accomplishing great things. Since 2020 their membership has nearly doubled, allowing the group to form sub-committees to tackle more than one initiative at a time. “An Ordinance with Teeth” was top of their list, and most of 2021 and 2022 was spent crafting a Historical Preservation Ordinance (HPO).

This summer, working in tandem with the Board of Commissioners and Township Solicitor at public meetings, the Commission softened the surface of some of those protruding “molars,” until they felt they had a document that would be palatable for everyone – just in time to make the deadline to be incorporated into the new Township Zoning framework.

To understand the magnitude of this, there have never been any historic preservation standards recognized by Caln – even the document creating the Edges Mill Historic District was rife with ambivalent language. The new HPO includes protections for Class 1 and 2 resources, provisions for adaptive reuse, and draws a hard line against both demolition and demolition by neglect. While intentionally not creating a HARB, the ordinance gives the Historical Commission the power to designate local resources of significance – not to mention, a seat at the table during potential development discussions, and charges the full Board of Commissioners (BOC) with final say on all matters, rather than leaving crucial decisions up to Zoning and Codes.

The new HPO includes carefully drafted language that protects the resources while not overly infringing on the rights of historic owners or their neighbors. For instance, there are no restrictions on interior renovations, only exterior, and allowances so neighbors can repair a drive or install a deck so long as it doesn’t exceed a specified square footage.

Another box checked off: the CTHC has now turned their focus back toward the Spackman Farm. This includes looking into a long neglected project titled “The King’s Highway Park Master Plan” – a township park-creation plan first vetted by the Township in 2007. The plan’s vision of transforming Spackman into a beautiful open space while maintaining a working farm on the western acreage is close to becoming a reality.

The BOC allocated a small slice of the township’s 2022 paving program to rehab the Spackman Farm driveway and parking area with grass pavers, and this fall those previously mentioned 11-acres of the Spackman grounds will be open to the public for the very first time.

Mark Evans is a Caln Township Commissioner and Secretary of the Township Historical Commission. He grew up in South Jersey but spent the most of his adult life in NY’s Greenwich Village before “retiring” to Chester County. Committed to breathing new life into Caln Township, he carries his mantra of Peace and Love everywhere he goes. Mark is a published songwriter and continues to enjoy a successful career in the arts.

The “Backstory” of Preserving the Battlefield By Catherine Quillman

The preservation network known as the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force, and its core planning member, the Chester County Planning Commission, has been the subject of numerous *Ledger* articles in the past. Our spring Volunteer Recognition Dinner also recognized the work of preservationists from 12 Chester County townships that are part of the Task Force. Why so many townships? That is explained elsewhere in this issue, but readers may want to understand how the Task Force got to the place where it is today. The “backstory,” so to speak, may be in order.

The Battle of the Brandywine may be the best historic example of the ups and downs of battlefield preservation. Indeed, compared to Gettysburg, which captured the attention of preservationists even before the

The “Backstory” of Preserving the Battlefield, continued



Scenes from the 245th anniversary of the Battle of Brandywine. Photos by Robert O. Williams/The Williams Group.

Civil War was over, the amount of preserved acreage and signage in the Brandywine Valley seems almost negligible.

Gettysburg is now a 3,965-acre national park and preserves a battlefield that had at least five times more soldiers than the Battle of the Brandywine. That transpired to generations of relatives who personally cared about memorializing the battles of the Civil War. The historian W. Barksdale Maynard suspects that the disparity between the preservation efforts of the Brandywine battlefield and Gettysburg has more to do with the fact that the Americans lost the Battle of Brandywine and “defeats rarely get commemorated.”

Perhaps complicating the history of battlefield protection is the long route it took to get to the present-day state of the

“front line.” The Brandywine Battlefield Task Force was organized in 1993 for the purpose of documenting a 10-square-mile area that officially became the Brandywine Battlefield National Historic Landmark on January 20, 1961.

Today there are more than two thousand National Historic Landmarks (NHL), 126 of which are in Pennsylvania. In the 1960s, the program was only beginning to take shape, and after the National Register of Historic Places program was established in 1966, historic landmarks were automatically put on the NHL list as well. As a result, the Brandywine Landmark – centered in Birmingham and Pennsbury Townships – was the first to be protected by both federal programs.

Unfortunately, it was a designation that was largely forgotten for more than twenty years – perhaps because the Landmark’s boundaries were not actually confirmed until 1977 (and then re-considered in 2010). A clerical error also caused unusual delays in getting recognition for the Landmark. Until it was corrected in the early 1980s, anyone looking for the Landmark in the National Register of Historic Places saw only a description of the Battlefield State Park, not the federal landmark designation.

Ironically, the Brandywine Battlefield saw the most development in the decades after it was designated a NHL, from 1961 to 1981. Those years also saw rapid growth for most of southeastern Pennsylvania and other areas on the East Coast. According to a recent survey by the National Parks Service, more than 100 nationally significant sites related to the Amer-



Scenes from the 245th anniversary of the Battle of Brandywine. Photos by Robert O. Williams/The Williams Group.

The “Backstory” of Preserving the Battlefield, continued

ican Revolution and the War of 1815 are now gone, and an additional 245 are fragmented by development and 222 sites are deemed “at risk” because they are in the path of development or in areas that are expected to see explosive growth in the next decade.

Today the Brandywine battlefield remains the only Revolutionary War battlefield designated as an NHL landmark – most are protected as state and federal parks—but the area of concern has also been expanded. A benchmark study conducted by the Task Force in 1989, for instance, focused solely on what is called the “core” battlefield site of 6,400 acres, or 10 square miles. Despite the 1989 study’s published findings, three housing developments were built in the area of study.

On the positive side, development pressures led to the realization that very few homeowners knew that they were living in the middle of a National Historic Landmark, and the Task Force worked to include an educational component to its projects. Meanwhile preservationists began to think of new ways to preserve the landscape. In the mid-1990s that included using newly available federal funding.

Thanks to the American Battlefield Protection Act, passed by Congress in 1996, the National Parks Service now has the authority to issue preservation grants through the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP). The grants have helped support research projects such as a 2007 study that examined the condition of 243 battlefields significant to the American Revolution and the War of 1812. Of these, only 100 sites in 2007 retained a “historic integrity” or enough open space to visualize troop engagement. The Brandywine battlefield was identified as one of only four intact – but largely unprotected – regions known as “battlefield landscapes,” earning it a “Class A /Priority 1” category.



Scenes from the 245th anniversary of the Battle of Brandywine. Photos by Robert O. Williams/The Williams Group.

The Congressional Patriot Act of 1999 was another preservation victory since it led to the protection of a 290-acre swath where the British formed a half-mile-wide column along Meetinghouse Road in Birmingham Township. The protected land is now called the Meetinghouse Road Corridor.

As many Task Force members see it, protection of the Corridor marked a significant and a far-reaching acknowledgment of the battlefield land. Previously, it had been up to the individual townships to follow through in protecting land and historic sites. By the mid-1990s other preservation groups became involved such as Preservation Pennsylvania, a group described as the Commonwealth's only private statewide nonprofit organiza-

tion dedicated to historic preservation.

In 1994, the group listed the Brandywine Battlefield as an “at-risk site,” and the battlefield was designated as the first Pennsylvania Commonwealth Treasure. The designation was soon followed by the first ABPP-funded study of the battlefield, and the creation of Sandy Hollow Heritage Park in 2002.

This past September hundreds of re-enactors and “living history” camp followers convened on the grounds to celebrate the 245th anniversary of the Battle of the Brandywine. The event drew hundreds of spectators from a wide region, according to the organizers, Brandywine2022.

The Rebirth of a Cannon

By Ann Bedrick

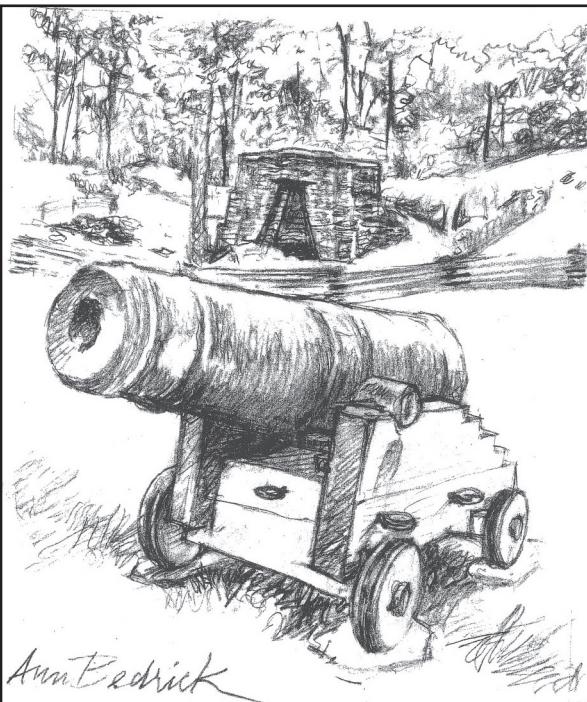
This past September, I finally met a cannon from the 1770s I could touch and hug - not to mention correctly identify as a Rutter & Potts Warwick Furnace Cannon!

Why hug this cannon? Samuel Potts, my 6th great grandfather, along with Thomas Rutter, his brother-in-law, were responsible for having it cast at their jointly-owned Warwick Furnace. There it was, this cannon where it was “born” and its “mother”, the furnace (at least the remains of it) in the background! This furnace was built in 1737 by Anna Rutter Savage Nutt, at her husband Samuel's “command” in his will, and it was called Anna Nutt & Co.

Anna was Samuel Potts' grandmother and my 8th great grandmother. This cannon has distinct markings of “P” for proven, “W+F” for Warwick Furnace and “403-4” code for its compensation of manufacture. This cannon I was hugging, was positively my family's.

I got to meet this treasure after a presentation introduced by park ranger Jay Erb and given by historian Dan Graham on September 25th at Warwick County Park. You can't speak of Iron and Steel in the Eastern half of Pennsylvania without mentioning Dan Graham. He is now working on a book about the complicated and elusive history of the Warwick Furnace, its cannons, and people from the Nutt family through all its 150 years of ownership by the Potts family, to subsequent owners venturing into agricultural and husbandry to fox hunting and to its current owners and their lavender fields and lavender products, art gallery and other pursuits.

The two cannons in the illustration of the excavation, along with its two other “siblings,” are pristine; two of them still contain 18 pounds of shot in them. The firing pin hole is clearly visible on the back of the one in the cannon illustration. These four cannons were excavated this past spring. They were “discovered” from the air with geomagnetic ground penetrating (GPR) technology on the Bentley Nature Preserve and French & Pickering Conservation Trusts' lands.



Just a note on my illustrations of the cannon – its mount specifically. The mount was constructed by Jeff Smith of a found, fallen old tree from a recent storm near the excavation of its “passenger”. Jeff is affiliated with the Natural Lands Trust. Jim Moore, also at the Trust, took the photograph that is the resource of the sketch of the “excavation of two cannons”. Ray Bentley is the person being helped out of the pit.

To find more information about the cannons or Warwick Furnace, look up the web sites of the following: French & Pickering Conservation Trust and Bentley Nature Preserve. Dan Graham can be contacted through Hopewell National Park; Jay Erb at the Warwick County Park; and Natural Lands Trust at Moore's Lane, in East Nantmeal.

To learn more about Warwick Furnace Farm and the family's lavender products and preservation efforts, visit <https://www.warwickfurnacefarm.com>

How the Cannons Were Discovered

If you didn't read last spring's newspaper coverage on the discovery of what the *Daily Local News* described as "four massive Revolutionary War-era cannons," you might have thought they were dug up by accident, perhaps by an earth-moving crew.

In reality, the four 7-foot-long cannons were found in the Warwick Furnace ruins after careful consideration. A local resident, Ray Bentley, commissioned a geophysical survey designed to detect magnetic forms such as the presence of large iron objects. An informal dig followed the cannon identification, led by a group that included Bentley, Jason Swinehart, a former Warwick Township Supervisor, and Jim Moore, a board member of the French & Pickering Conservation Trust.

Bentley knew the land because he and his brothers named the surrounding 108-acre natural park after their father. The Thomas P. Bentley Nature Preserve opened a few years ago and was the first land acquisition of its type by the Trust.

In addition to being what the Trust describes as mosaic of woods, open fields and wetlands, the preserve includes the ruins of the c.1738 Warwick Furnace. The furnace, as well as the neighboring Reading Furnace, supplied the bulk of Revolutionary War supplies including muskets for the Continental Army.

While the importance of the "Iron Furnace Country" in the American Revolution is well documented, it was a community story that prompted Bentley, a longtime Trust supporter and a neighboring landowner, to call for a more scientific approach. It took crews from two magnetometer technology firms and Dr. Martin Helmke, a geology professor at West Chester University, to complete the study and survey.

According to Daniel Graham, the author of numerous papers and books about the colonial iron industry, 19th-century historical accounts and community lore have suggested that several Warwick-made 18 "pounders" (cannons designed to fire 18-pound cannon balls) were buried in 1777.

One enduring legend told of a day in September, 1777, when a furnace bell was rung to call the neighbors to come and help bury the cannons. That story proved to factual when seven cannons were dug up in 1875; five more were found in 1895.

In the *Daily Local* story, Graham said that the neighbors acted quickly when they learned of a British advance – troops moving toward Philadelphia by way of the French Creek Valley. "The cannons were buried in the fields next to French Creek to keep them from falling into British hands," Graham said.

Brandywine Battlefield Heritage Interpretation Plan

As part of its educational mission, the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force made inroads in 2022 with its Brandywine Battle signage project, which has a particular process. A Task Force Steering Committee recommends each site and oversees the design and placement of each interpretive sign or marker. The Committee also works with local townships and historic groups to ensure that there is a connecting theme (see the list of Municipal Awards in this issue) and support on the local level. Indeed, this reflects a long-term outlook. When the Task Force was founded in the late 1980s, it operated much like an informal grass-roots organization. The Task Force now has a core group of members who are part of the Delaware and Chester County Planning Commissions, a connection that serves to ensure that future comprehensive plans and township zoning work in conjunction with battlefield preservation.

According to the Task Force, the signage program is the first step in creating an extensive interpretive plan. It will be augmented by a series of "Heritage Centers" (many of them kiosks) as well as signs marking the core boundaries of the Brandywine Battlefield. The latter signage is comprised of dark blue signs that announce that you're "entering" a National Historic Landmark (NHL), or the 10-square-mile area of the Brandywine NHL. The so-called "gateway" of any battlefield tour will be the Brandywine Battlefield State Park in Chadds Ford.

Although a major part of the funds for the signage was given by the PA Society of Sons of the Revolution, the Brandywine Battlefield Heritage Interpretation Plan is also supported by grants from the American Battlefield Protection Program and calls for a "connectivity plan" for historic sites and landmarks that are still preserved in the 35,000-acre battlefield landscape.

The expanded territory helps to explain why the Task Force is now comprised of an army of representatives in 15 townships and historic commissions in two counties (Chester and Delaware). In 1777, Chester County was a much larger territory and included parts of Lancaster County and Delaware County where the county seat, Chester, was based.

CCHPN Special Award Recipient for 2022: The PA Society of Sons of the Revolution and Their Color Guard

At CCHPN's Volunteer Recognition Dinner this past spring, Peter Morgan Adams of the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution was on hand to accept CCHPN's special award on behalf of the Society and its Color Guard.

The PA Society was recognized for their contributions to an educational program, The Brandywine Battlefield Interpretive Signage Program, that was launched in 2018. Thanks to Society's leadership and generous challenge grant of \$45,000, 15 historically accurate signs that tell the story of the Battle of Brandywine will be placed at significant sites throughout Chester and Delaware County.

Historians now see the battle as a complicated, multi-phase encounter and the turning point in the American Revolution that involved nearly 30,000 troops and lasted from sunup to sundown on September 11, 1777. The interpretive signs are considered the first step in laying the groundwork for visitors to follow a recommended driving tour to independently explore the 35,000 acre battlefield landscape which now includes historic villages, encampments, and homes plundered by the British.

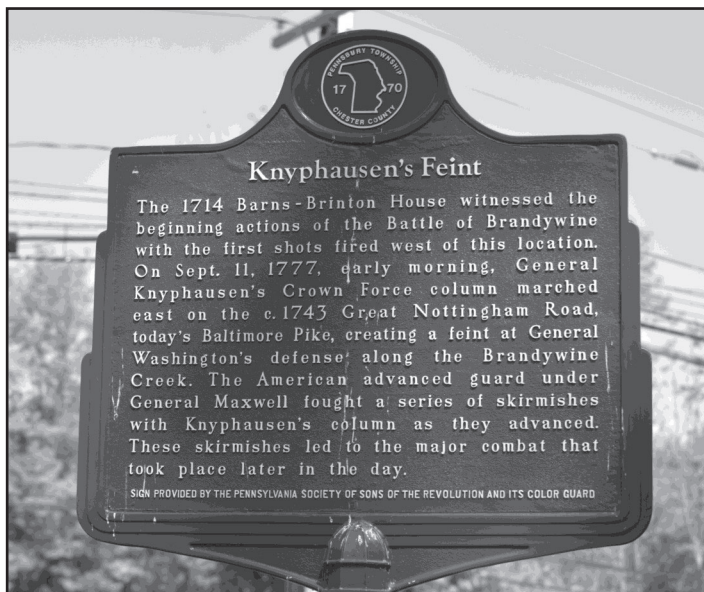
The most recent sign (pictured here) was placed this past May at the circa 1714 Barns-Brinton House. Named for two colonial owners, this authentic tavern house is managed by the Chadds Ford Historical Society but is located along U.S. Route 1 (the former "Great Road to Nottingham") in Pennsbury Township. Another recent sign was placed at the Church of the Loving Shepherd on S. New Street in West Chester. This sign describes military tactical maneuver known British Left Flank. It's likely that the British would not be in the region of the church if they had not split their forces and made a large loop above Washington's troops at Chadds Ford. One British column traveled New Street to engage the Americans at nearby Birmingham Meetinghouse.

In a *Daily Local News* article, Adams spoke about his organization's mission and how it dovetails with educational component of the Task Force. "We are a hereditary society formed in 1888 to honor and perpetuate the ideals, courage and sacrifice of our ancestors who served in the cause for freedom through the American Revolution," he said. "Our Society agreed to fund this project to educate the public

An example of one of the signs funded by the Pa. Society of the Sons of the Revolution. This one stands near the Barns-Brinton House in Pennsbury Township. The "feint" described on the marker is a reference to a tactic used by the Hessian general who commanded his troops to engage or "amuse" the Americans as a diversionary tactic so that Generals Cornwallis and Howe could make their infamous flanking maneuver.



Peter Adams accepts award on behalf of the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution and its Color Guard at the 2022 Volunteer Recognition Dinner (pictured with County Commissioners Kichline and Maxwell.) Photo by Jim Buczala



Municipal Historic Awards Given to 14 Townships

For the first time this year, numerous township representatives were recognized at CCHPN's Volunteer Recognition Dinner. The Municipal Historic Awards, which were confined to townships in Chester County, recognized the leadership and participation in the Brandywine Battlefield Interpretive Signage Program.

The following list describes the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force (BBTF) representative who accepted the award on behalf of the township group. The list also includes the theme of each township's signage project.

Chester County:
Birmingham Township
Birmingham Historical Commission
BBTF Representative: Kelly Fleming
Crisis on the Field of Battle, Sept. 11, 1777

East Bradford Township
East Bradford Historical Commission
BBTF Representatives: Mary Sue Boyle and Rich
Phifer
Jefferis Ford

East Marlborough Township
East Marlborough Historical Commission
BBTF Representative: Susan Beach
Sept. 11 '77 Great Valley Road

Kennett Township
Kennett Historical Commission
BBTF Representative: Denise Klein
Traversing the Red Clay Valley

Kennett Borough
Kennett Heritage Center
BBTF Representative: Lynn Sinclair
Crown Forces Encampment

New Garden Township
New Garden Historical Commission
BBTF Representatives: David Unger/Brian Roberts
Crown Forces Enter Pennsylvania

Newlin Township
Newlin Historical Society
BBTF Representatives: Bill McGowan/RoseLynn
Malarek
Quaker Sufferings

Pennsbury Township
Pennsbury Historical Commission
Chadds Ford Historical Society

BBTF Representatives: Lynn Luft/Judi Wilson
Knyphausen's Feint

Pocopson Township
Pocopson Historical Committee
BBTF Representatives: Ray and Don McKay
Crown Forces Flanking March

Thornbury Township
Thornbury Historical Commission
BBTF Representative: Randell Spackman
General Stephen's Stand Sept. 11, 1777

Westtown Township
Westtown Historical Commission
BBTF Representative: Gail Guterl
Crown Forces Left Flank

West Bradford Township
West Bradford Historical Commission
Friends of Martins Tavern
BBTF Representative: Cindy Prader
Trimblesville Historic District

Delaware County:
Chadds Ford Township
1704 House
BBTF Representative: Fran Jacobs
Battle of Brandywine Final Defense

Concord Township
Concord Historical Commission
BBTF Representative: Mark Gennaro
The American Cause Sustained

Thornbury Township
Thornbury Historical Commission
BBTF Representative: Ric Miller
An Exhausted Retreat

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

2022 Proclaimed The Year of Humphry Marshall

As the last issue of *The Ledger* highlighted, the Humphry Marshall 300 Committee has spent the year 2022 celebrating Marshall as a Chester County native son and 18th-century scientist and botanist who was the first American to publish a book on our native trees and shrubs.

The year's events included a tree giveaway and a lecture series sponsored by the Chester County History Center. Among of the year's highlights: in June West Chester Mayor Lillian DeBaptiste declared 2022 "The Year of Humphry Marshall," and as did West Bradford Township when township officials issued a proclamation at a township meeting in April. The Chester County Commissioners also acknowledged Humphry Marshall (1722-1801) by declaring April 30th to be the Humphry Marshall Day.



Picture here is a glimpse of the highly successful 300th birthday celebration held on October 9th in the village of Marshallton. The event took place along a blocked off road in front of the historic ruins of Martin's Tavern and included the dedication of the Humphry Marshall Township Park, an open area recently acquired next to the tavern.



The event involved dozens of volunteers including Sandi Johnson of the Chadds Ford Historical Society who spent the day cooking at the tavern's open hearth. Top: Malcolm Johnstone of the Cultural Alliance of Chester County, shown dressed as Humphry Marshall, was interviewed in front of a large audience by Mark Slouf of the Friends of Martin's Tavern.



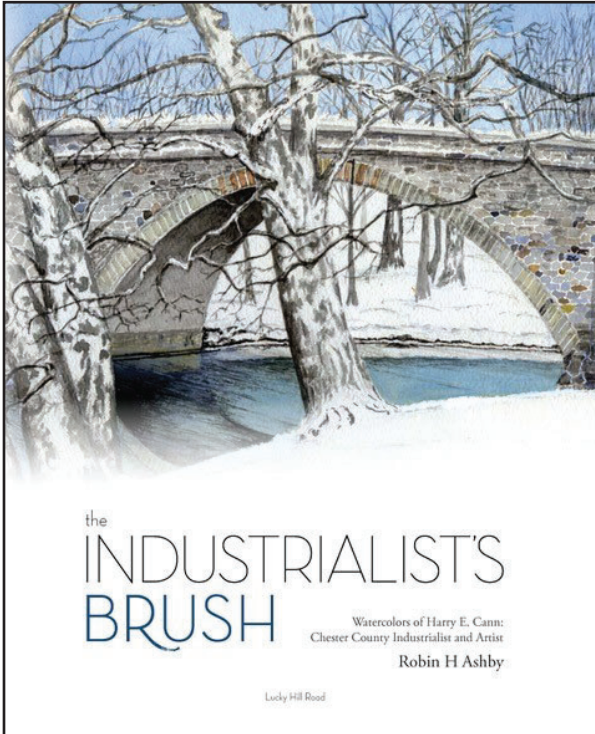
Caln Township hosted a Preview Event for
the Spackman-Davis Farm
 on Saturday, November 19th

This farm, located at 3401 Kings Highway, Coatesville, PA, has been preserved as Agricultural Open Space. To learn more about plans for this historic property, check out: the Caln Township website, or contact Mark Evans at mevans@calntownship.org.

In November, an outdoor community event and ribbon cutting ceremony was held the Spackman-Davis Farm in Caln Township. In the words of the event's organizers, it was a great way to celebrate the completion of major restoration projects such as a new barn roof and driveway. It was also an opportunity for people to learn about the history of the farm from the event's speakers and get a closeup look at the possibilities within the 11-acre section of the property. The ideas include a public recreation area for picnics and trails, while the barn or the farmhouse could serve as a wedding venue or as a community meeting space.

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

Downingtown Resident Honors His Late Grandfather, Harry E. Cann, with a book about his life and art



Caption for the included images. The book's cover image features a section of the 1952 painting "Cope's Bridge in Winter."

Robin Ashby, a Marshallton, Chester County native who now lives in Downingtown (where he serves on the board of the historical society), spent several years researching his recently published book showcasing his late grandfather's nearly 100 paintings, sketches, and holiday greeting cards.

The Industrialist's Brush: Watercolors of Harry E. Cann, documents the career of a man who took up painting while running an industry known as ESCO cabinets in West Chester. (The circa 1890s brick building is now an apartment complex called Sharples Works.)

The company is described in Chapter One, "The Making of An Industrialist," and highlights the many patents Cann obtained for his cabinet systems – mechanically refrigerated milk coolers that he first tested at his experimental farm just outside the village of Marshallton.

Ashby includes vintage family photos and a brief history of ESCO, short for Eastern Sales Co., in the 163-page illustrated book, but otherwise the book is an unusual document of a so-called "Sunday painter." Judging from the range of work Cann produced over the course of 30 years, he did not have the limited vision that often hampers the self-taught artist.

Indeed, with those works that depict covered bridges, bank barns, springhouses, old churches, and contour farming, among other scenes, it seems that Cann was aware that he was capturing quintessential Chester County and by extension, the former American way of life after World War 11 through the

1960s.

Many of Ashby's commentaries reveal why the late author Berenise Ball highlighted Cann's work in two wildly popular books, *Barns of Chester County* (1974) and *Chester County & Its Day* (1970). She felt that all Chester County residents should be proud of their history and could relate to what she called "Harry Cann country." Ashby similarly explains Cann's appeal today, observing, "Remembering the past returns some normalcy to a frenetic life."

Since the book was published a few months ago, Ashby said that more of his grandfather's paintings have come to his attention. Ashby set up a Facebook page for readers interested in seeing additional images from the book and to share their memories about historic Chester County. Visit

facebook.com/theindustrialistsbrush



Harry E. Cann painted the former home of the Humphry Marshall, the colonial botanist (and namesake of the village of Marshallton) in 1948.

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

2022 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner



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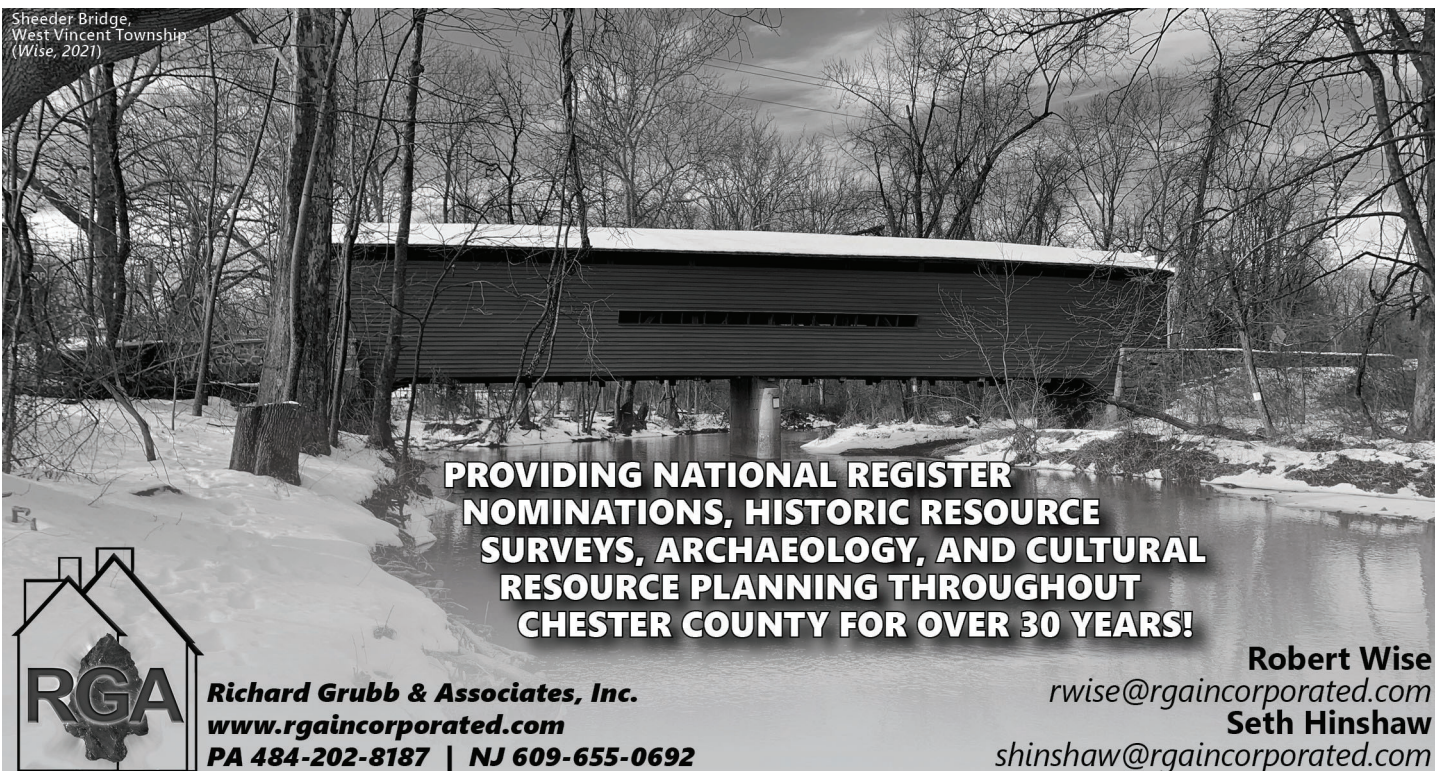
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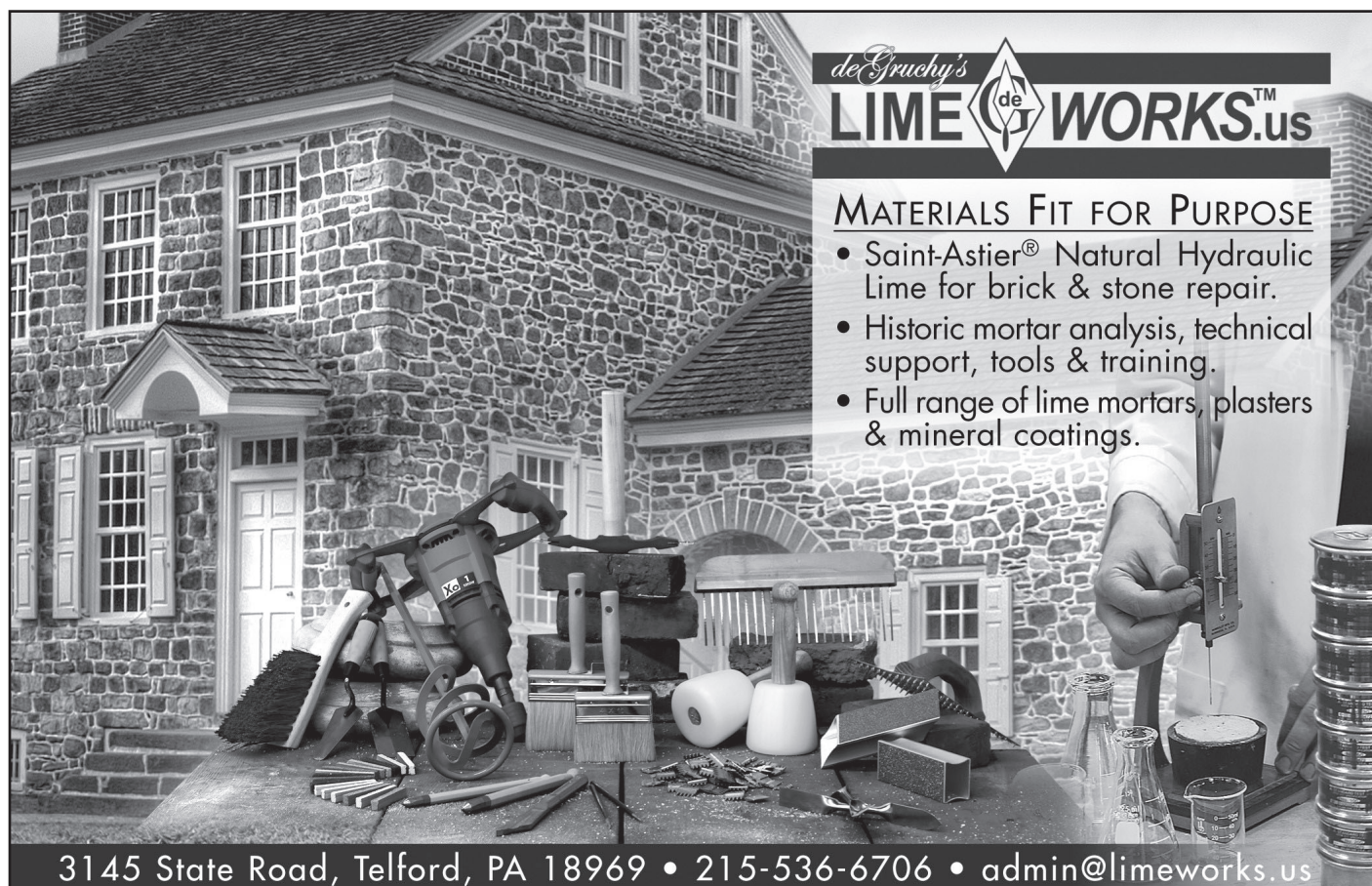
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