

Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

Volume 17, Number 2

May 2014

West Nottingham Historical Commission Invites You to Join Us for CCHPN's Annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration

Steve Brown, President
CCHPN

This year's Annual CCHPN Volunteer Recognition Celebration may bring back parent/child memories of a summer vacation. Those traveling from the northern part of the county might be asking, "Are we there yet?" after reaching West Chester. And the same question would probably come to mind when by-passing Kennett Square and Oxford. But oh what reward when arriving at the Nottingham County Park bordering the Mason-Dixon Line and Lancaster County!

The County Park is part of the State Line Serpentine Barrens, one the most unique ecosystems in the world. Serpentine, a geological outcropping of rare green rock, is found in only three small areas of North America. The rock is covered by a thin layer of top soil, supporting grasslands with plants found only on a few places in the world. Serpentine was prized as an unusual building material throughout Chester County's development and the park holds a number of old feldspar and serpentine quarries. Examples of serpentine buildings are found throughout the county.

In 2008, the park was recognized as a National Natural Landmark by the United States Department of the Interior. This program identifies and recognizes the best ex-

amples of biological and geological features in both public and private ownership. There are fewer than 600 sites that have passed the rigorous



evaluation process to be designated.

To preserve the ecosystem and character of the nature preserve, faithful volunteers use controlled burns and the chain saw to control unwanted vegetation such as Virginia pitch pine, post oak and multiflorous rose. Trail hiking through the barrens is encouraged and challenging, but that will require another trip to the 630 acre Nottingham Serpentine Barrens.

Please Note
Event information and the Registration Form for the 2014 Volunteer Recognition Celebration are on the last two pages of this issue.

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.

2014 Preservation Award Winners

Jane L. S. Davidson Preservationist of the Year Award

Dr. Walter J. Hipple

Historic Preservation Municipality Award

Birmingham Township

Historic Resource Atlases

Schulykill, South Coventry, Warwick, West Pikeland, & West Vincent Townships

Grace Under Fire Award

Easttown Historical Commission

2014 Volunteer Recognition Celebration Offers Two Special Programs

Karen Marshall, CCHPN &
Milt Diggins, *Historian*

As part of our annual celebration, two separate programs are offered this year. You may register for **one or the other program** on the registration form on page 7 of this newsletter.

4:30 to 5:30 pm: Herr Foods Inc. Factory Tour. Located just 5 minutes from our picnic site, Herr Foods will offer a private tour of their plant following your registration at the County Park. Herr Foods, founded in 1948 at Willow Street, Lancaster County, moved to Nottingham in 1951 following the destruction of their original site by fire. With the leadership of the Herr family, the business has grown into an award-winning small business supplying snack foods from the East coast to the Mississippi River. The modern and state of the art facility is entertaining and educational and shows you the most recent technology in the manufacture of snack foods.

— or —

5:00 to 6:00 pm: Two Kidnappings, One Mysterious Death, and a Community's Struggle for Justice. Local historian and author Milt Diggins will present at the park. Elkton slave catcher and kidnapper Thomas McCreary was well-known to Chester Countians before the Civil War. He had seized African Americans from Downingtown in 1848 and '49, and from outside Unionville in 1849. Pennsylvania had charged McCreary with kidnapping in 1849, but the Maryland governor refused to extradite him. McCreary's proslavery supporters insisted he was a slave catcher, but the people of Chester County knew him as a kidnapper.

On the last day of December 1851, McCreary abducted Rachel Parker from West Nottingham Township, claiming that she escaped from a slaveholder in Baltimore. Eight area residents rushed to Baltimore to intercept the kidnapper and attempt to rescue Rachel. A few months earlier a Maryland slaveholder, Edward Gorsuch, was slain when he attempted to recover his slaves in accordance with the legal steps outlined in the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

This was a dangerous time for a group of Pennsylvanians to enter Baltimore where they were assumed to be abolitionists entering the city to interfere with an arrest of a fugitive slave. After locating Rachel in a slave pen, Joseph Miller, Rachel's employer, signed a warrant for McCreary's arrest for kidnapping. The next morning Miller's body was found hanged from a tree outside Baltimore.

McCreary had already kidnapped Rachel's twelve year old sister a few weeks earlier near Peacedale and sold her to a slave dealer who sent her on to New Orleans. The Christiana treason trial was still in session when McCreary grabbed Elizabeth. The acrimonious aftermath of Gorsuch's death and that trial would influence the events that followed in Baltimore.

In the end, West Nottingham and Little Britain residents found themselves embroiled in the national debate over a slave owner's constitutional right to recapture his property and a state's duty to protect the rights of its citizens. McCreary's kidnapping trial was derailed and the state imprisoned Rachel Parker. What happened next was one of American's greatest and least known examples of a community's compassion in the face of hostility.

Chester County Ledger

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Direct all queries to: The Editor, CCHPN, 21 N. Village Ave., Exton PA 19341. 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 endorse the content of advertisements herein.

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Dr. Walter J. Hipple to Receive 2014 Jane L.S. Davidson Preservationist Award

Sali Cosford Parker, *Chair*
CCHPN Communications Committee

Dr. Walter J. Hipple will receive the 2014 Jane L. S. Davidson Preservationist of the Year Award in recognition for the crucial role he has played in maintaining the history and beauty of West Chester Borough.

Dr. Hipple has been a member of the West Chester Historical and Architectural Review Board since 1993, recently retiring as Chair. In addition to writing many of the Review Board's manuals and design guidelines for the West Chester historic districts, Dr. Hipple authored two books: "The Buildings of West Chester: A Self-Guided Walk in the Downtown District" and "The Buildings of West Chester: A Self-Guided Walk in the Northern District." He shared his expansive knowledge of West Chester history on a more personal level by serving as coordinator and a guide for the kick-off of Chester County's Town Tours and Village Walks, as well as through nearly 20 years of West Chester walking tours.

As founder and the first Director of the Honors College at West Chester University from 1979-1991, Dr. Hipple strengthened the foundations of academic excel-

lence, campus engagement and community engagement through a fostering of peer relationships. He and Mrs. Hipple have provided a home and academic support to students from many Asian nations for more than two decades.

Though retired from teaching at age 90, Dr. Hipple continues to serve as a member of the Review Board and as representative to the West Chester Planning Commission while actively pursuing independent research.

Dr. Hipple will receive the Davidson Award at the 2014 CCHPN Volunteer Recognition Celebration on June 25th being held at Nottingham County Park.

Congratulations, Dr. Hipple!

The Jane L. S. Davidson Preservationist of the Year is funded entirely by donations made in the late Ms. Davidson's name. If you would like to support the Jane L. S. Davidson Fund, please send your contribution to CCHPN, 21 N. Village Ave., Exton PA 19341.

Birmingham Township to Receive 2014 Historic Preservation Municipality Award

Sali Cosford Parker, *Chair*
CCHPN Communications Committee

Birmingham Township will be awarded the 2014 Historic Preservation Municipality Award at the upcoming CCHPN Volunteer Celebration event. The award honors the Birmingham Board of Supervisors, Historical Commission and Historic Architectural Review Board for their preservation efforts.

The first of Chester County's townships to be surveyed, Birmingham was surveyed in 1684, and settled that same year by William Brinton. Two years later, in 1686, Birmingham was organized as a municipal district. Brinton's Mill, containing a house, mill, granary and springhouse, dates from about 1720 and is a preserved complex. An unusual collection of structures from the 18th and 19th centuries lies within Birmingham Township and has been preserved through the efforts of the

of the township.

Almost 95 percent of the township lies within the boundaries of the Brandywine Battlefield National Historic Landmark, one of the largest battles of the Revolutionary War. Some of the most intense fighting of the battle took place in the township near the Birmingham Friends Meeting House and on land that is currently contained in two township parks. *Birmingham Hill and Footpath at Birmingham Hill* and *Sandy Hollow Municipal Park* were created to preserve the battlefield.



The common grave of British and American soldiers who fell at the Battle of the Brandywine is located in the Peace Garden in the burial ground behind the Birmingham Friends Meetinghouse (shown above).

Many artists, including Andrew and Jamie Wyeth who have called the Birmingham Township home, have captured Birmingham's pristine beauty on canvas.

CCHPN congratulates Birmingham Township for its stewardship of Birmingham's unique history!



Special Event: British and American troops will again engage at Sandy Hollow in Birmingham Township May 17-18, 2014 in a re-creation of the Battle of the Brandywine. www.brandywine2014.com

CCHPN Has a New Mailing Address

CCHPN
21 N.Village Ave.
Exton PA 19341

2014 Town Tours & Village Walks

Karen Marshall
CCHPN

Town Tours & Village Walks is a series of free summer strolls through historic neighborhoods, hamlets, villages and sites. This summer, you can explore Chester County's heritage on Thursday evenings, June 12 – August 21. Tours begin at 5:30 pm and generally last one hour. The last tour leaves at 7:00 pm unless daylight allows for additional tours. Each tour is sponsored and designed by our municipal historical commissions and organizations to inform, entertain and increase awareness of Chester County's rich heritage and historic landscape. A number of our sites offer a good selection of restaurants and shops to enjoy after your tour. Last year, over 2,000 Chester County citizens and visitors enthusiastically endorsed the assortment of historic evening walking tours! The program is endorsed by Preservation Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

This summer's focus is on the southwest quadrant of West Chester's historic district, East Pikeland's historic bridges, the Battle of the Clouds at Historic Yellow Springs, the history of the Phoenix Iron Company, the historic villages of Birchrunville, Fricks Locks, Romansville, Nantmeal village and the historic districts of Malvern and Oxford Borough. Historic fare tastings, special living history presentations and three brand new tour sites are all features of the summer programs.

IMPORTANT: There will be no preregistration after the first tour in West Chester. The one exception is tour #8, Malvern Borough. See brochure for details. Also, please remember for popular tours there can be a wait of up to 15 minutes.

WEATHER UPDATES: For information and weather updates, refer to www.chesco.org/planning or contact Karen Marshall, Heritage Preservation Coordinator, at 610-344-6923 or kmarshall@chesco.org.

**Tour 1: June 12:
Kick-off Celebration and Southwest Quadrant Tour**

Join us for the annual Town Tours & Village Walks kick-off celebration at the First Presbyterian Church of West Chester for greetings from the Chester County Historical Society, the Borough, and the County. You will next join your tour guide to explore the Southwest quadrant of West Chester Borough. This sector includes part of the town center, with its historic buildings and tree-lined streets of residences in the various styles of the 19th century. Each individual group tour is a specially designed and written tour with its own focus and itinerary. Registration for the tours and entertainment by the Lukens Band begins at 5:30 pm at the church.

**Tour 2: June 19
Bridging History in East Pikeland**

In this year's annual historic walking tour, volunteers will lead you on a tour of historic structures, bookended by two historic bridges on the scenic French Creek - the Kennedy Covered Bridge and the Hares Hill Iron Bridge. .

**Tour 3: June 26
Historic Yellow Springs: Redcoats and Raincoats!**

On September 16, 1777, 26,000 Continental and British Troops faced each other in the Malvern area when torrential rain poured down upon them - the Battle of the Clouds.

**Tour 4: July 10
Birchrunville: Mills and Mechanics**

Please note: parts of the tour involve very steep/difficult terrain.

Come and step back in time to a unique microcosm of a 19th century rural village in northern Chester County.

**Tour 5: July 17
Fricks Locks: The Village a Canal Built**

Fricks Locks Village began as a family farm in 1734 when Johann 'Hans' Grumbacker, a Swiss immigrant and Ana-

baptist, purchased land on the banks of the Schuylkill River. Enjoy the evolution of Fricks Locks Village from a small farming community to a flourishing village.

**Tour 6: July 24
"At Phoenix - It's the People That Make the Difference"**

The sign that once welcomed people to the Phoenix Iron and Steel Company site symbolizes the company's approach to hiring everyone who came to the town to find a job no matter their race, religion or ethnicity. This philosophy has become part of Phoenixville's DNA.

**Tour 7: July 31
Nantmeal Village: The "Sweet Water" Meeting on Coventry Road**

Stroll through Nantmeal Village, Welsh for "sweet water." Once a "quiet" Quaker settlement in the early 1700's, this now sleepy residential hamlet hides a colorful past illuminated for you on the Town Tours!

**Tour 8: August 7
Malvern Borough, 125 Years of History by Trolley!**

Come ride a trolley through the streets of Malvern Borough, returning you 125 years in the past to learn what the town was like at its incorporation. *Trolley reservations are strongly recommended.*

**Tour 9: August 14
Oxford Historic District Tour & Taste**

Experience the early Victorian architecture of Downtown Oxford and meet men and women in period clothing who were responsible for the founding of Lincoln University.

**Tour 10: August 21
Romansville: John Romans and his Village**

Most travelers who pass through Romansville have no idea of the historic value of this small village. The village, though quiet in appearance, had many industries and three inns. The Romansville Methodist Church and Romansville Quaker Meetinghouse, almost 165 years old, are featured on the tour.



2014 Volunteer Recognition Celebration

June 25, 2014, Wednesday
Nottingham County Park
150 Park Road
Nottingham, PA 19362

**Be sure to wear casual clothes
and walking shoes because the
ground may be uneven!**

Evening's Schedule:

4:30 - 5:30 pm Herr Foods Factory Tour
— or —
5:00 - 6:00 pm Historic Lecture at
Nottingham Park

6:15 pm Awards & Buffet Dinner

7:15 pm Dessert & Roll Call

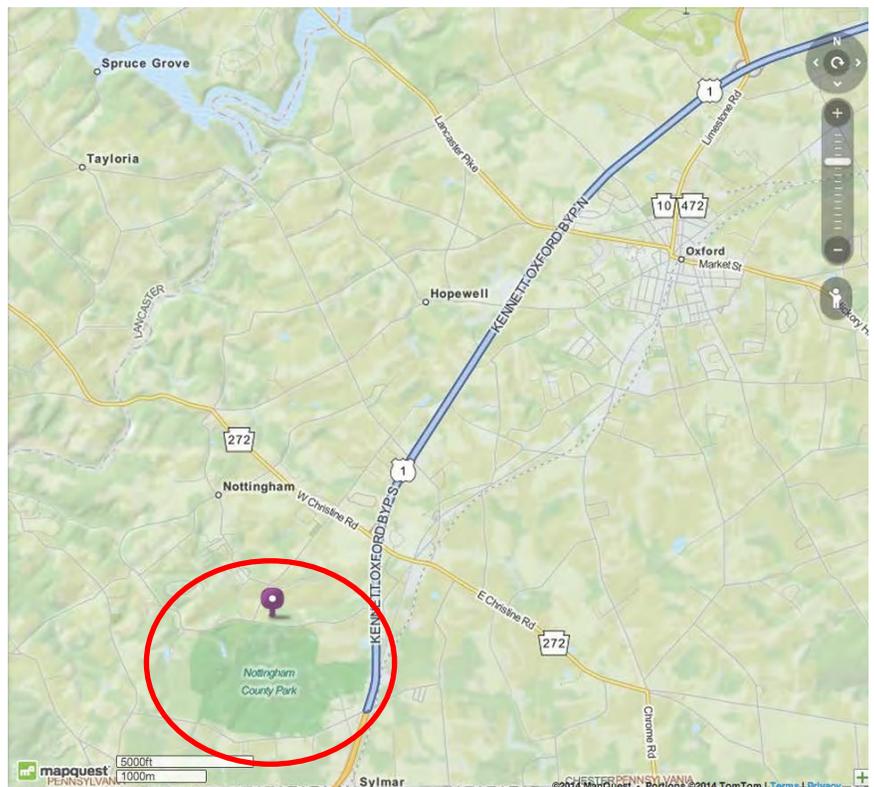
8:15 pm Closing

Fee: \$25.00 for all attendees

*Registration is by mail using the registra-
tion form on page 7 of this newsletter.*

*Special thanks to the members of
the Second United Presbyterian
Church of Oxford for catering the
CCHPN 2014 Volunteer Recognition
Celebration!*

Everyone is invited to come out to our annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration, honoring the accomplishments of Chester County's Historical Commissions and HARBs and other volunteer preservationists! We hope every Historical Commission and HARB will be represented!



Directions: Nottingham County Park is located four miles south of Oxford off the Route 1 Bypass.

- ⇒ **On Route 1.** take the PA-272 Exit toward Nottingham.
- ⇒ **Turn RIGHT** on PA-272
- ⇒ **Take the first LEFT** on Cemetery Road
- ⇒ **Turn LEFT** on Park Road

The Nottingham County Park Entrance will be on your RIGHT.

Volunteer Recognition Celebration Registration Form

RSVP by June 18

Municipality/Organization _____
 Primary Contact Person _____
 Email Address _____
 Street Address _____
 City/State/Zip Code _____
 Telephone _____

If you would like to include your membership dues with your registration, please check below:
 Individual (\$20.00)
 Municipality/Organization (\$85.00)

Total Payment Amount For Registration

Number of attendees: _____ x \$25.00 ea. _____
 plus membership dues, if any _____
 Total _____

Please indicate your choice

All Attendees	Herr	Lecture	None
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please make checks payable to CCHPN
 No refunds after June 20.

Mail form and check to: CCHPN, P. O. Box 174 West Chester, PA 19381. *Thanks!*



Recap - Spring Workshop: Working Effectively in Your Municipalities

Susan Marshall, *Vice President*
 CCHPN

The annual Spring Workshop was held on March 15th at the Chester County Historical Society. The 70 attendees were welcomed by CCHPN president Steve Brown who introduced the schedule for the day.

Karen Marshall, Chester County's Preservation Officer, discussed general guidelines for working with the public, reminding Historical Commissioners to give guidance, not opinions when working with the public. Next **Jane Dorchester**, Architectural Historian, outlined the "Dos and Don'ts" for hiring and working with consultants. Jane offered practical advice from knowing when to bring in a consultant to dealing with contracts, communicating with and understanding the expertise of your consultant.

Following the break, **Bob Wise**, Wise Preservation Planning, discussed historic resource impact studies, outlining the reasons for impact studies, how they are produced, and what historical commissions can expect.

Tom Scofield, AICP provided guidance on working effectively with your municipal leadership. He stressed the importance to Historical Commissions of creating written documentation, emphasizing leaving politics to the politicians.

Cory Kegerise, our Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) regional representative, spoke about how to gain and retain credibility with your municipal leadership. In addition, Cory discussed the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) Forum taking place in Philadelphia this summer.

FORUM 2014 brings together the NAPCs' local preservation training programs with the Statewide Conference on Heritage/Byways to the Past, presented annually by Preservation Pennsylvania and PennDOT. This unique partnership offers tours, workshops, and educational sessions about a variety of topics related to design review, cultural resource management, legal issues, and historic preservation planning in urban, suburban and rural settings.

Steve Brown closed the workshop with a case study. Mr. Caesar, an advocate of historic preservation, has to deal with Mr. Brutus, the Township manager, in a conflict over the destruction of a historic dance hall. What to do? See the CCHPN web site for the Case Study outline.



Chester County Historic Preservation Network
21 North Village Avenue
Exton, PA 19341

PLEASE FORWARD

*Please come and
join us for our*

**2014 Volunteer
Recognition Celebration**

**Wednesday, June 25
4:30 - 8:15 pm**

Nottingham County Park

Details on page 2 inside!

Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

Save the Dates!

June 25

CCHPN Volunteer Recognition
Celebration

July 16 - 20

Preservation Forum

presented by

Nat'l Alliance of Preservation Commissions
PHMC
Preservation PA
PennDOT

ROBERSON PRESERVATION SERVICES, Inc.

Historical Carpentry
Preservation Consulting
Building Evaluations
Sustainability

Matthew E. Roberson, President

610-620-4656 meroberson@gmail.com

If you would like to get more involved with the Chester County Historic Preservation Network, please contact a board member through the website, www.cchpn.org, or at one of our events.

We are always looking
for more volunteers!