



Hunt-Pollock Mill,
Downingtown, 1752

The Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

September 2006

Volume 9, Number 3

Our Website CCHPN.org Is Up Please Come and Visit!

The CCHPN would like to take this opportunity to give you an in-depth, page-by-page tour of our new website: www.cchpn.org. It is filled with

information, links, and contacts to aid members of historical commissions and HARBs, preservation professionals, historic-home owners, and everyone else in our county who cares about preserving our historic resources. Please visit our website and send us any feedback to help us make any changes to meet your needs better.

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

The Home page welcomes visitors and introduces the CCHPN and the website.

Help for Historic Property Owners (located under the masthead) provides technical information specifically



A Screenshot of the Home page.

prepared for property owners, addressing how to list resources in local and state inventories and identifying sources of technical information for rehabilitation and restoration projects. Links are provided to many other web-based resources. If we have not fully covered these topics, please let us know of additional links we can add.

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Photograph of Hunt-Pollock Mill, Ned Goode, H.A.B.S., 1959.

Help for Historical Commissions and HARBS (also located under the masthead) provides technical information about the implementation and development of regulations and ordinances, information on the economics of preservation, and updates on preservation strategies around and outside of Pennsylvania.

About Us provides background information about our organization, mission, and board members. You can email any of our board members by clicking on their names.

Become a Member provides information on joining CCHPN, and an online membership application is available.

Chester County Heritage is an educational page with a narrative on the history of the county with information about the types and number of historic resources. The page also includes educational components for schoolchildren. The content for this page is still be developed.

Preservation Primer presents a discussion on why historic preservation is important. Information on current preservation issues and how to get involved in your community is also available.

News is a running list of news items of interest to the Chester County preservation community. We will be reviewing the available sources of information to keep this updated. If news occurs in your community that we do not catch,

please contact us so we can get that information on the website. This includes preservation alerts, calls for support on a preservation challenge, and other items that may be of interest to our members.

Calendar provides a listing of events held by us and by our partners. We will do our best to keep this updated, but if we miss something happening in your community or by your organization, please let us know.

Chester County Ledger Newsletter provides a access to our current newsletter and back issues in a printable PDF format.

Bulletin Board is a link to a website that provides a forum to chat about current preservation issues.

Search Archives allows website visitors to perform a keyword search of the website.

Contact Us is a quick link to the contact information for the organization and our board members.

Our goal is to support community preservation activities by raising the level of expertise of our members and everyone else in the preservation community. The more we know and the more help we can get, the more we can preserve our heritage.

- Matthew E. Roberson
Editor

The Chester County Ledger

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The Chester County
Historic Preservation Network

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Direct all queries to: The Editor, CCHPN, P.O.Box 216, Chatham, PA 19318. 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.



*Wharton Esberick House
and Studio, Malvern, 1926*

Chester County Historic Preservation Network

Fall 2006 Meetings 1 & 2

Architectural History Series

Please come out this Fall and join us for the continuation of our series of presentations on the architectural history of the region.

Meeting #1

A Return to Simplicity: Colonial-Revival Style
September 28, 2006

Co-sponsored by the Phoenixville HARB

Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area
(the former Central Lutheran Church)
204 Church Street, Phoenixville
7 pm – 8:30 pm

Please come early to view the Historical Society's exhibits!

Jeff M. Groff, Executive Director of Wyck Historic House and Garden, Germantown, will speak on the Colonial Revival style. See page 4 for more information.

Jeff Groff has a B.A. from Bates College and received an M.A. degree from the Winterthur Program of the Winterthur Museum and the University of Delaware where his thesis topic was "Green Country Towns: The Development of Philadelphia's Main Line, 1870-1915."

He is the Executive Director of Wyck, a National Historic Landmark house and garden in the Germantown section of Philadelphia which was owned by nine generations of the Wistar-Haines family. He has also served as Registrar and Assistant Curator at the Philadelphia Maritime Museum and then as Director of the Osterville Historical Society on Cape Cod. He was founding Co-Chair of the Tri-State Coalition of Historic Places, a regional collaborative over 200 historic sites, and is currently President of Philadelphia's Historic Northwest Coalition.

He writes and lectures on country house architecture around Philadelphia and social history.

Meeting #2

Early 20th Century Architecture
November 16, 2006

St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley
(National Historic Landmark)
2495 St. Peters Road, Malvern
7 pm – 8:30 pm

George Thomas will speak on early 20th-century architecture. He is a cultural and architectural historian practicing with Susan Nigra Snyder in CivicVisions, LP, a consulting practice based in Philadelphia.

George E. Thomas has a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in Art History, was a Samuel H. Kress Fellow from 1971 to 1972, and received a B.A. from Dickinson College.

CivicVisions uses research, analysis, and design to create urban and institutional identity for communities and colleges. Dr. Thomas's research investigates how regional history is expressed in contemporary life. For the last 25 years Dr. Thomas has been a national pioneer in the preparation of documentation for National Register Historic Districts and individual listings as a means of securing historic tax credits for rehabilitation projects. Recent projects have included certified rehabilitation documentation for historic mills in Philadelphia and in Oella, Maryland, as well as automobile centered historic districts and 20th-century resorts in the Pocono Mountains. Dr. Thomas is presently supervising a Getty Grant for the restoration of the historic core buildings of Haverford College and serves as the historical consultant for the University of Pennsylvania and Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges.

A Return To Simplicity: The Colonial Revival Style

After World War I, Philadelphians embraced colonial quaintness as an antidote to earlier opulence and formality and as a buffer against a changing world. What arose in the design of houses and their interiors, one author termed *simplicity de rigueur*.

The Fall 2006 lecture on September 28th will explore the “cult of simplicity” that was characterized by the “Pennsylvania farmhouse” style, Colonial and Federal style interiors and antique furnishings. In the 1920s and ’30s design took inspiration from the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum, the

restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, and collectors such as Henry Francis duPont. Architects like R. Brognard Okie; Tilden, Register & Pepper; Willing, Sims and Talbutt; Mellor, Meigs & Howe; Edwin Brumbaugh; and Wallace & Warner presented historically correct exteriors, with interiors that were comfortable and quietly elegant but designed for modern life. In Tredyffrin Township 18th century farmhouses and mill buildings were purchased and expanded, old-fashioned gardens were laid out, and country life took on a new meaning.

- Jeff M. Groff

Directions to the Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area:

Traveling north on Route 202, continue to Route 29 - Great Valley exit. At the end of the exit ramp, turn right onto Mathews Road and continue several hundred yards to the next light. Turn right onto Route 29, crossing over 202 and then under I-76. At the light, turn right, staying on 29 to Phoenixville. At Route 23 take a left and then an immediate right onto Main Street. The Historical Society building is on the left at the intersection of Main and Church Streets.

Directions to St. Peter's Church of the Great Valley:

Traveling north on Route 202, continue to the Route 29 – Great Valley exit. At the end of the exit ramp, turn right onto Mathews Road and continue several hundred yards to the next light. Turn right onto Route 29 North and continue across 202 to the first traffic light. Turn right onto Swedesford Road and travel exactly 1.0 mile to Church Road on the left. Turn onto Church Road and continue 0.8 miles to St. Peter's driveway on the left.



Three Decades of Achievement: Chester County Historic Resource Identification from 1976 to 2006

During the mid-20th century, economic and social changes occurred in Chester County that influenced the composition of its historic resource landscape. In the 1950s large corporate conglomerates began purchasing family owned businesses and factories. The post World War II mindset of the country largely ignored the value of historic preservation, and this influenced the new owners as they expanded facilities on these properties. In the 1960s municipalities adopted Zoning Ordinances that spurred much development along major transportation arteries. As a result, by the 1970s many historic resources were lost and citizens voiced concerns about retaining vestiges from their local heritage.

Chester County Historic Sites Survey

In the midst of the country's Bicentennial patriotic fervor in the mid-1970s, the Chester County Redevelopment Authority held a public meeting in Downingtown that was seminal in approaching efforts to preserve the county's historic resources. At this meeting it was suggested that money be utilized to identify historic buildings and structures using Chester County's Community Development Block Grant funding from Housing and Urban Development. The National Historic Preservation Act, which enabled such a survey to take place, had been passed by the United States Congress in 1966.

At the same time, similar historic surveys were beginning elsewhere in Pennsylvania, which made it one of the first states to undertake such an initiative. The Commonwealth's Historical and Museum Commission brought an expert from Canada to teach six regional coordinators on historic survey methodology.

The Chester County Commissioners assembled a partnership with the Chester County Historical Society, the Brandywine Conservancy and many volunteers to organize the proposed Chester County Historic Sites Survey. This survey, conducted between 1979 and 1982, would include all of Chester County except for the Boroughs of West Chester and Downingtown, which would have their own survey projects initiated around this time.

Volunteers attended meetings to learn how to identify historic resources, fifty years and older, and

specific Architectural Styles prevalent in Chester County from William Penn's "Penn Plan" to Twentieth Century Sears Roebuck and Company Bungalows. They were taught how to (1) complete Architectural Inventory Forms (AIF); (2) take architectural photography; (3) log photography; and (4) prioritize the property's historical significance (in some cases).

The Chester County Historical Society has retained the AIF collection, photographs, photograph negatives, and inventory evaluations from the survey, while the Brandywine Conservancy plotted the identified resources on United States Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangles. A representation of completed Pennsylvania Historic Resource survey forms from each municipality was sent to the Bureau for Historic Preservation as one of the project's final documents. Today, a complete blue line set of the USGS site survey maps, a complete set of the historic resource inventory evaluations, the Downingtown Historic Resource documents (1,050 forms) and project analysis and a copy of the West Chester survey are housed at the Chester County Department of Parks and Recreation.

The paper documentation of the Chester County Historic Sites Survey was utilized with great success by commercial consultants, engineering firms, state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, real estate brokers and associates, residents, legal counsel, appraisers, mortgage companies, and banks throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Municipalities especially found the data useful in preparing local government documents, e.g. Comprehensive Plans, Zoning Ordinances and Open Space Plans.

As early as June of 1982, it was apparent that the survey data would eventually be more useful in a digital format. In that month, a Chester County representative attended an enclave of professional preservationists organized by the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation in partnership with the University of Delaware to discuss how computers could be used to document historic resources. However, computing capacity at Chester County through the 1980s was not sufficient to realize the digitization of the Historic Sites Survey data. The computing capacity of the Chester County government and its respective

agencies grew through the 1990s. Even so, it was not until the establishment of a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program at the Parks and Recreation Department, now the headquarters for the Heritage Preservation Coordinator/County Historic Preservation Officer, that the capacity to create an adequate digital historic resource identification system could be realized.

Chester County Historic Resources Atlas

In 2004, the Chester County Parks & Recreation Department Historic Preservation Coordinator enlisted the efforts of the County Department of Computing and Information Services - Geographic Information Systems Department (DCIS-GIS) to assist in the creation of a GIS-based Chester County Historic Resource Atlas. This project, besides being the first digitization of existing Chester County historic resource data, also verifies the original survey data and updates, on a county-wide scale, the inventory of buildings, structures, sites, and objects, fifty years or older, since the original survey.

During the original survey, USGS topographic maps from 1927 were utilized to identify possible historic buildings, as any structures on those maps, if still extant, would have been over 50 years old at that time. To each of these sites, a three-part, historic resource ID was assigned, designating the county, municipality, and individual site. A transparent tax parcel map at the same scale was then overlaid on the USGS maps. On this, the historic resource identifications of parcels with resources were plotted.

A problem with the old data was that the maps used were of a very small scale (showing a large ground area). This made many of the tax parcels on the transparent overlay so small that the lines representing them may have actually been wider than the parcels at that scale. Any slight misalignment of the overlay would have translated to a large misalignment of parcels with resources on the ground, causing many resources to be identified as being on an incorrect tax parcel.

Since the period of the original survey there have been vast improvements in methodology utilized in the study of geographic data, notably the development of GIS. GIS is a collection of computer

hardware, software, and digitized geographic data for capturing, storing, updating, manipulating, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information. "Layers" within GIS display and store attributes for one geographic feature (such as tax parcels or historic resource parcels) independent of other features, meaning that any number of features can be displayed or overlaid in any combination. Features are not limited to graphic data. GIS allows each feature to have virtually limitless attribute data stored and associated with it. These attributes are information about a geographic feature, mathematical and textual, which are linked to the feature by a unique identifier. Relationships between attributes can be



These rowhouses, 121-127 South Union Street, Kennett Square, were documented by Jane L. S. Davidson and photographed by Frederick Mullison in June of 1989.

analyzed and manipulated graphically or through the data tables.

For this Historic Resource Atlas project, updated GIS atlases of the county's parcels produced for the Chester County Bureau of Land Records were distributed to the Historic Commissions of all municipalities. Through voluntary efforts and the invaluable knowledge base of the members of these Commissions, field checks were made of the old historic resources inventory while cross-referencing with the new tax parcel maps. Changes and updates in the assignment of UPI numbers to historic resources were made accordingly. The Historical Commission volunteers also noted any structures from the previous study that had since been destroyed. They also added

buildings, sites, and structures that matured into the 50-year category since the period of the original survey.

Atlas Applications

The resulting product of the Chester County Municipal Historic Resources initiative is a Historic Resources Atlas for each Chester County municipality. These volumes are submitted to the Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and as the original survey data, will continue to have numerous uses, including, but not limited to, the following applications:

1. Chester County Municipal Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Plans.
2. Municipal Comprehensive Plans.
3. Municipal Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances.
4. National Register of Historic Places applications.
5. Federal Highway Administration – Section 106 Reviews for bridges and highways.
6. Army Corps of Engineers – Section 106 Reviews for all water- related projects including bridges and subdivision approvals.
7. FCC – Section 106 Reviews for cell towers.
8. Federal Banking – Section 106 Reviews for bank facility changes and ATM machines.
9. HUD – Section 106 Review for utility installations and federal housing rehabilitation, etc.
10. Zoning Hearing Board's special exceptions and variances.
11. Appraisers' property reports.
12. Mortgage applications.

13. Bank loans.
14. Act 167 Pennsylvania certified Historic Districts.
15. Investment Tax Credits for rehabilitation of certified historic resources.
16. Pennsylvania State Historic Resource Survey forms.
17. Chester County agricultural easement applications.
18. Development subdivision applications.
19. Pennsylvania Department of Transportation projects.
20. Pennsylvania DCNR projects and applications.
21. Pennsylvania DEP permits.

It is with great appreciation that the Department of Computing and Information Services, Geographic Information Systems Division joined with the Chester County Department of Parks and Recreation, the Chester County Historic Preservation Network and the respective municipal Historical Commissions to update and computerize Chester County's historic resources.

Our County is one of the three original Pennsylvania counties established by William Penn in October 1682. It deserves a high-quality historic geographic document for perpetuity. Further information on historic properties may be obtained from the County Heritage Preservation Coordinator or the respective municipal Historical Commissions.

- Jane L. S. Davidson
Heritage Preservation Coordinator
- Mark A. Mattie
GIS/Mapping Analyst

Semi-Annual Historic Research Workshop *October 16, 23, & 30, 2006*

Jt is that time of year again. 2006 is fleeting past us rather rapidly. The semi-annual historic research workshop is divided into three evening sessions, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. on October 16, 23, and 30, 2006, at the East Goshen Township municipal building, 1580 Paoli Pike, West Chester. The workshop is **free for members who serve on municipal Historical Commissions or Historical Architectural Review Boards.**

Sponsored by the County Parks and Recreation Department under the auspices of the County Board of Commissioners, the program provides an educational opportunity through documentation on historic properties in Chester County's communities. Ms. Jane L. S. Davidson, Heritage Preservation Coordinator and

County Historic Preservation Officer will teach conducting primary resource research methodology and strategy, tracing deeds, creating historic property files, completing Pennsylvania State Historic Resource Survey forms, and using the documentation for municipal planning.

Since substantial material will be distributed at the workshop, one must reserve a space by calling Ms. Davidson, 610-344-6923 or send an E-mail, jdavidson@chesco.org. Bring a three-ring notebook and you must be able to attend all three evenings.

- Jane L. S. Davidson
Heritage Preservation Coordinator

The Chester County Ledger Bulletin Board

Check out our new website at:

www.CCHPN.org

Look for technical information for members of HARBs and Historical Commissions and home owners; news and events; and back issues of *The Ledger*. Visit and give us feedback on how the site can better meet your needs.

Any time is a good time to join the Chester County Historic Preservation Network!

We need you!

Annual Membership dues:

Individual: \$15.00

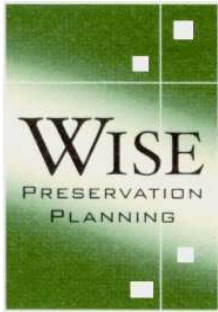
Municipal: \$75.00

Corporate: \$150.00

Benefactor: \$500.00

Please send checks to the address below.

All contributions are tax-deductible.



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We have a **new mailing address**. We apologize if these changes cause any disruption. We should be staying at this one for a long time to come:

Chester County Historic Preservation Network
PO Box 174
West Chester, PA 19381

The Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County
Historic Preservation Network
P.O.Box 174
West Chester, PA 19381

← **Note New Address!**

PLEASE FORWARD

Please come and join us for the

Fall 2006 Meetings for our
Architectural History Series

Colonial-Revival Style
September 26
Phoenixville

Early 20th-Century Styles
November 16th
East Whiteland Township