



Historically Speaking

Publication of the Upper Darby Historical Society
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Saving the Lower Swedish Cabin

In January of 2007 the Society received a letter from Robert F. Lewis, former principal of Beverly Hills Junior High School, detailing a bicentennial project in connection with the Lower Swedish Cabin. Following is an edited version of his letter.

It was prior to the bicentennial year when the Upper Darby League of Women Voters invited me to attend one of their meetings. During the course of the meeting I made it known that the Upper Darby School District had declared that each school in the district would be required to carry through on a project to celebrate the two hundredth birthday of our nation. I mentioned that my intention was to locate some historic site in the township that was in a state of neglect and have the students work to restore it to respectability.



After the meeting, one of the ladies told me that she thought the Swedish Cabin located along Darby Creek near the Clifton Heights border was one historic site I might investigate. This possibility interested me so I decided to follow-up on her suggestion. In attempting to get permission from township authorities for our school to engage in such a project, I learned of two problems; a Swedish historical Society was planning to have the cabin moved to Governor Printz Park in Essington, and there may be a squatter living in the cabin.

Disturbed at the probability of Upper Darby losing such a valuable historic property, I met with Mr. Joseph Loeper, then Upper Darby Director of Parks and Recreation. I pleaded with him to use his influence to keep the cabin in our township. Mr. Loeper agreed and was successful in having the cabin retained

in Upper Darby, and Beverly Hills Junior High was given permission to begin improving the cabin site as our bicentennial project. Mr. Loeper had township workers clear the interior of the cabin of all furniture, electrical appliances (stove, etc.), personal property, clothes, rugs, etc. Mr. Loeper and I inspected the property making sure it was proper for our school to proceed. Fortunately, removal of the squatter became a non-problem since he was ill and confined to a hospital.

I asked Mr. Lawrence Umstead, Chairman of Beverly Hills Junior High Social Studies Department to arrange a schedule which would enable each class to visit the cabin and work on its improvement at least one time during the school year. Mr. Umstead became the driving force for the project. In addition to doing an excellent job on scheduling, he produced a work plan for specific improvements to be accomplished by the students as follows:

walls over the years.

- a) Making chinking from straw and earth and using it to repair eroded places between the logs.
- b) Weeding and trimming the grounds
- c) Removing multi layers of paint which had been applied to the inside of the log
Planting herb, vegetables, and flower gardens.
- d) Systematic digging for artifacts

Swedish Cabin (Continued from Page 1)

I learned that King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden was coming to the United States to honor our bicentennial year. Being proud of the job our teachers and students had done, I wrote to the King and invited him to visit both the cabin and our school.

The King's secretary responded saying that King Carl's schedule was full so that he would be unable to accept our invitation. However, the King would be attending a program at Governor Printz Park and I would be welcome as a participant.

In preparation for the occasion I asked Mr. Lee Urwiler, one of our teachers, to take a series of photographs of the cabin. We then had our Industrial Arts Department make glass-encased frames for the enlarged photographs. There was a brass plate attached to each picture frame containing descriptive information designed to make the picture meaningful to a viewer.

When I presented our gift to King Carl at the Governor Printz Park ceremony, as a gift from our school, he seemed genuinely pleased and publicly announced that the pictures would be displayed in one of Sweden's museums.

I sought and obtained permission for our school band to perform at the ceremony. I cannot remember whether Mr. G. I. Streit, Director of the band, chose not to participate or whether he took the entire band or just a part of it for the occasion. Mr. Urwiler, also voluntarily made a slide presentation of the bicentennial project and produced an accompanying auditory tape and chose a student to do the narration.

In August of 1980, when I resigned as principal of the Beverly Hills Junior High School in order to join Superintendent Michael Maines' staff, at his request, I left all project memorabilia with the library.

I sincerely hope that I have not misrepresented any of the phases of the project described above. I have honestly presented them as they exist in my memory.

Without written records, relics, and artifacts there is no history—only hearsay, speculation, or lore. This letter is an attempt to provide your organization with a small amount of factual written material and the hope that you would incorporate it in any comprehensive history of the Lower Swedish Cabin you produce.

The late Dr. Lynn M. Case, Professor Emeritus, University of Pennsylvania, (Beverly Rorer's father) documented the restoration and wrote a short history of the cabin titled "A Swedish Log Cabin—three Centuries of History on Darby Creek." ♂

Upper Darby History

This article is taken from Thomas DiFilippo's book "The History and Development of Upper Darby Township." The book is available at Sellers Library and through the Upper Darby Historical Society for \$10.00.

Wilderness to Industrial Development 1800-1850

(Continued from Fall 2007 Newsletter)

"A picture of growth, changes, and events that occurred during the nineteenth century, followings. The information came from tax records and newspaper accounts. Interspersed is comparative history and a biography of people who influenced the changes.

1807

"Jonathan Evans died leaving his property, today where the high school is, to his sons William and Jonathan, Jr. William then sold his share to his brother. Jonathan Evans obtained the property through marriage to Sarah Kirk. The property had passed from Penn to Joshua Fearnie in 1684, then to Josiah Fearnie in 1692, then to Samuel Garrett in 1717 and finally to Joseph Kirk and wife Ann Hood Kirk in 1723. The Evans homestead, built about 1693, probably by Josiah Fearnie stood for many years at the site of the present high school. Five generations of Evans lived in it. Before it was demolished in 1950, it was used as an administration building for the school district.

1808

"The Mount Pleasant Methodist Church was formed. In 1808 John Thomson an engineer, who owned 160 acres near Morton, assisted in designing and improving the Philadelphia, Brandywine and New London Turnpike, now the Baltimore Pike. The road was originally laid out in 1701. It later was called the Delaware County turnpike. The turnpike was incorporated by act of Assembly, March 24, 1808, for a road forty miles long. During 1810, the company built nine miles, with a road bed twenty-one feet wide, laid to a depth of fifteen inches with broken stone, at a cost of \$3,500 per mile.

1812

"Two hundred soldiers returning from fighting in the War of 1812 camped on Darby Hill (Upper Darby).

1813

“In 1813 James Madison was the President of the United States. He was preceded by George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. There were eighteen states; Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and Louisiana were added to the original thirteen states. The population of the country was approximately ten million. About 900 lived in Upper Darby. The War of 1812 was still going on and in 1813 Commodore Perry defeated the British fleet in Lake Erie. Coffee was selling for \$.35 per one hundred pounds, butter for \$.25 per pound, and laced boots for \$2.25.

“In Upper Darby not much had changed since 1793 except a new generation of land owners appeared. Some families were buying additional land, others were selling and moving further west. The Hibberd family holdings decreased from 565 acres in 1793 to 234 acres in 1813. The Kirk family had doubled their land, now owning one hundred acres, and Thomas and Joseph had inherited Samuel’s property. In 1793, three Levis’ owned 228 acres, whereas in 1813 six owned 422 acres. Two new Lobb children became landowners increasing the family holdings from 466 acres to 522. James Pyott sold all but thirty-seven acres of his original 230 acres. Whereas John Sellers owned 375 acres in 1793, in 1813 the ownership was divided among four other family members. Benjamin West and John Davis had sold large portions of their land. Sarah Harmon Lawrence Howard, John and Mathais Tyson, and James Williamson were either dead or moved from the township after having sold their combined 520 acres.

1816

“The Delaware County Horse Society was founded. They insured horses against theft and recovered stolen horses. John Sellers Jr. was the originator, and he was joined by Stephen Pancoast, Benjamin Garrett, John Hibberd, David Cornick, Abram Powell, Benjamin Owen, John Lobb, Thomas Lobb, Samuel Levis, Thomas Ashand and Abraham G. Hunt. They met twice a year in March and September at the neighboring taverns. In 1893 the Society disbanded.

Mill ownership had changed since 1804. James Bonsall owned a grist and saw mill, Thomas Garrett a tilt mill, William Levis and son owned a paper mill, John Mathews a paper mill, and Nathan and David Sellers owned grist, paper and saw mills. Several owners built tenement houses for employees. There were twenty-five in the township and William Levis and son owned fourteen.” ☞ *To be continued in spring 2008 Newsletter.*

Where Pennsylvania Began

Submitted by Tom Smith

Pennsylvanians Should Commit to
Memory Four Early Names:

Every Pennsylvanian should know the place name Tincum. Tincum is Pennsylvania’s equal to the New England Plymouth Colony. It was known as “Tincum Colony.”

Darby, above Tincum, was first known as “Head-of-Tidewater.” Darby Creek served as Pennsylvania’s “first interior route.” Permanent European settlement at Darby reaches back to the 1660’s.

Chester was first known by the name “Opland.” William Penn landed at Anglicized “Upland” in October 1682. Penn renamed the place “Chester.”

Marcus Hook reaches back to the 1660’s. The seafaring marine history of Marcus Hook equals the historic chronicles of early Philadelphia and Chester docks.

Acquisitions

The following items were recently donated:

Sue Colburn donated 43 books on local history to our library; **Dorothy A. Rice** donated leather gloves; **Connie and Tom DiFilippo** donated needlepoint seat covers; **Barbara Marinelli** donated five children’s books, Dear America Series; **Kathy and Bob Clarke** donated nine handkerchiefs and four cotton gloves; **Eamon Rago** donated various railroad related items; **Mrs. Jackson** donated Linen Dress c1886 worn by Elizabeth Flowers Sommers, whose father operated the general store at Garrett Road and Burmont Road (where Scotts Market used to be located).

Thank you all for your generous donations, they are very much appreciated.

Restoration Award

May is designated Preservation Month in Upper Darby. Anyone may be nominated for restoring or renovating an old home. It may be for private use or one that has been adapted for business use. If you know of someone who you would like to nominate, call 601-924-0222 for a nomination form. The nominations may be mailed to the Society at P. O. Box 2935, Upper Darby, PA 19082.

Review of Fall Festival

By Bev Rorer

The weather was good, but all of Bob Clarke's hard work on publicity must have fallen on deaf ears, since no papers in our area printed the information. We did get 250 visitors, but that was less than usual. We thank Liz McDonald who sent students from the Honor Society of the High School who were a great help.

This year we added a new feature—the antique carousel organ. Bill and Ruth Kromer brought this organ from Wayne and we all, including the neighbors, enjoyed the Um-pah music. Parents held children up at the back to watch the workings.

Always a favorite was the Garrettford/Drexel Hill Fire Company with their 1937 Ford fire truck. Unfortunately, after a few rides, it overheated and had to “go home.” We appreciate their loyal support and their patience with the children and parents who took a ride around the neighborhood.

The food table, hosted by Mary Ellen Scott, did a brisk business. The “Attic Treasures” table was busy and the pumpkin table was filled with children painting their unique decorations. This year's small pumpkins came from Fred Funk. Fred was a fellow teacher in Upper Darby with Kathy Clarke and myself.

Pat Todd supervised the cornhusk doll making. She enticed the boys by making “Action Figures!” This year the photographs of children in costume were taken on hay bales as the wagon, which was no longer safe, had been sent to another owner. Biting the apples, popcorn, bubble makers, and children's games rounded out the fun. Special thanks to Lori Clark and her daughters for taking charge of several areas, especially the main gate and picture taking.

The house tours ran non-stop and we are pleased with many first-time visitors. Thanks go to Bill McDevitt who portraying Dr. George Smith made him come alive in his office.



Photos: Left: Bite the Apple; Above: Antique Carousel organ; Boys writing with quill pens, Heather Sciubba having photo taken on hay bails with lantern & Cailynn Hunt having her face painted.

Christmas at Collen Brook

By Bev Rorer

This annual party was a special occasion thanks to chairman, Margie Johnson. She and her volunteers arranged the festive decorations and the "Early American" food. We were appreciative to Barbara Marinelli who, with the help of Mary Ellen Scott, along with Jim Manley and his family members, set up the tables and decorated. Barbara introduced a new feature, mulled cider over a fire on the lawn. Barbara, in early dress, greeted guests with a warm cup of cider.

The entertainment this year again featured Udi Bar-David, with his daughter, Erika on the violin. Udi plays cello in the Philadelphia Orchestra and Ericka, who is 14, had been accepted (in 2007) into the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra as the youngest member. Udi loves to share the fact that his 1706 cello is older than Collen Brook. Their music was magical!

New Members

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Carolyn and Glen Cressman, Lansdowne

Helen Mangelsdorf, Secane

John Palmer, Exton

Richard Palmer, Glenside, AZ

Richard Votta, Drexel Hill

Keith Richards, Drexel Hill

Diane Brodie, Drexel Hill

Marianne Geary, Upper Darby

Karen Inverso, Marple

James Johnson, Drexel Hill

Joe Mac, Drexel Hill

Nicole Sciubba, Upper Darby

Traci and Eric Soltycki, Drexel Hill

Jean Waldman, Upper Darby

Shawndelle Watson, Clifton Heights

Peg Witte, Morton

Send in your Email Address

The Society is collecting members email addresses so we can notify you of upcoming events and also of an event cancellation due to inclement weather or the like. Email your address to us at info@udhistory.org. Your address will be kept in confidence and not shared with a third party.

Review of the Fall Tour

We had a very good response for our tour of Arlington Cemetery and their Mourning Museum in October. The Mourning Museum has a collection of English and American mourning art. It may be that it is the only museum dedicated to this subject and offers a look at the rituals of the past. It contains paintings, needlework, books, jewelry, etc. There was a custom of willing money for the purchase of mourning rings and other jewelry with the idea of having a large number of mourners on hand to pray for your soul. The bribe of jewelry insured a crowd. One section displays artifacts and collectibles from George Washington's funeral. The cemetery tour was conducted by Tom DiFilippo, Local Historian and Lori Clark made up a pamphlet detailing the monuments of interest and a map of the cemetery. With Tom as our guide, the tour was interesting and enjoyable.

Dedication of the Garrett Historic Marker

The dedication of the new historic marker at the Thornfield property at Garrett Road and Maple Avenue took place on Friday, November 16, 2007, at 10 A.M. Despite the cold the event drew a sizable crowd. Robert E. Seeley, who was responsible for the new historic marker and is a Garrett descendent, was in attendance along with a representative from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Also attending were Upper Darby's Mayor Ray Shay, State Senator Ted Erickson, Representatives Mario Civera and Nicholas Micozzie, the Rev. Graham, Minister, of the Incarnation H.S. Church, Margaret Johnson, President of the Upper Darby Historical Society, many Society members, and numerous members of the community and press. Carolyn and Walter Isard, owners of Thornfield were also present at the dedication. The Garrettford School Fourth Grade Students attended and sang several songs.

Interview on History of Upper Darby

The Society's Vice President, Barbara Marinelli, was interviewed on Saturday, December 1, 2007 on 90.1 Temple Radio by Dr. Jean Moore. Barbara spoke at length on the history of Upper Darby. The interview was arranged after the publication of the fall newsletter so we were unable to give advance notice.

The President's Quill

William Penn's "Holy Experiment" in the colonies needed practical implementation as well as spiritual insight. While Penn sought funding and recruits throughout Europe, William Markham, his Deputy-Governor, received the government from the Duke of York's representative. Among their many duties, Markham and the commissioners carried out Penn's proprietorship, had land surveyed, and negotiated for land purchases with the Indians. Note: WP granted no more than 5000 acres to any one investor because he did not want a serfdom in Pennsylvania as existed in Europe. Although Chester City was the original choice for the County Seat, negotiations with the Swedes, who had already established a community in Upland, did not go well. The southern boundaries were not established and the Port of Philadelphia was more desirable. Philadelphia became the final destination.

Time Line:

- 1680: *May.* Petitions Charles II for a colony in America
- 1681: *January-February.* Crown officials draft the charter for WP's colony.
March 4. Receives his charter to Pennsylvania.
April. Appoints William Markham as deputy governor of Pennsylvania. Writes "Some Account of Pennsylvania," his first advertising pamphlet.
Spring. Begins work on his constitution for Pennsylvania
June. Begins lobbying to secure the lower counties (Delaware) from the duke of York.
July. Announces his plan of land distribution in Pennsylvania.
July-August. Publishes a Map of Pennsylvania. Takes his first land-selling trip to Bristol.
August. His deputy-governor arrives in Pennsylvania.
September. Writes to planters in Maryland, claiming the northern quarter of that colony.
September-October. Sees his first settlers and land commissioners off to Pennsylvania
October. Writes a letter of friendship to the chiefs of the Delaware Indians.
- 1682: *January-April.* WP and Thomas Rudyard complete the first constitution and laws for Pennsylvania. The Free Society of Traders founded.

April. Publishes his "Frame of Government and Laws Agreed upon in England."

July. His agents conclude their first deed with the Delaware Indians.

August. Receives the deeds to the lower counties (Delaware) from the duke of York. Sails for America on the "Welcome." Visits various sites.

December. His first Assembly convenes at Chester.

Twenty-three ships arrive in 1681-2; the colony grows rapidly.

- 1683: *January-May.* Quakers begin meeting in Philadelphia; the Philadelphia County Court is established; distributes large numbers of Philadelphia lots. His second Assembly approves a revised "Frame of Government."
Summer. Acquires his country manor *Pennsbury*, in Bucks County.
August. Tries to buy Susquehanna Valley lands from Iroquois but is blocked by New York.
September-November. Sends Markham to England to defend Pennsylvania's boundary with Maryland. Germantown surveyed. Tries to collect his quitrents (a fixed rent).
- 1684: *March.* The Welsh Tract surveyed
April-May. Decides to return to England to defend his boundary against Lord Baltimore.
May. Lord Baltimore leaves for England. The Assembly passes an excise tax, which WP suspends.
July. Philadelphia's waterfront residents protest WP's city land distribution policy.
August. Prepares to leave for England; appoints Thomas Lloyd president of the Provincial Council.
October. Lands in Sussex, England.

Information taken from "William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania 1680-1684" A Documentary History from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. For further information about William Penn visit the Delaware County Historical Society.

2008 Historical Society Calendars

Don't forget to pick up your 2008 Historical Calendar. They may be purchased at Seller's Library or by calling the Society at 610-924-0222. The cost is \$5.00 and, if you are local, we will deliver it to your home.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

by the Upper Darby Historical Society and other local historical organizations

SPECIAL EVENTS

Early Days at Collen Brook: Life on the Farm

Saturday, June 7, 2008, 1:00 to 4:00 P.M.

Rain Date Sunday, June 8, 2008

Collen Brook Farm, Marvine Road and Mansion Avenue, Drexel Hill
*Sheep Shearing - apple butter making - blacksmithing - beekeeping with a live exhibit - demonstrations of farm tools and early Indian tools - 18th century games for children to play - children's picture taking in colonial dress - storyteller - **Max the horse** - items to buy - refreshments - strolling fiddler - tours of Collen Brook house and grounds*

Spring Tour

Information to follow in next newsletter

Pea Soup Supper

Sponsored by the Friends of the Swedish Cabin

Saturday, March 15, 2008

5:30 P.M. punch and nibbles - 6:00 P.M. Supper

Supper features "bottomless" bowls of pea soup aka "Artsoppa" with Swedish breads, cheese, dessert and coffee or tea

A program of music will follow and a raffle for quilts and other items.

Members \$12.00 and Non-Members \$15.00

Lansdowne Presbyterian Church, Greenwood & Lansdowne Avenues, Lansdowne, PA

Send your check payable to the Friends of the Swedish Cabin

and mail to Bob Scott, 316 Owen Avenue, Lansdowne, PA 19050

For more information or reservations call (610)-327-8064 or (610) 449-3577.

Seating is limited, so please reserve by March 1st.

Annual Meeting of Members

Sunday, April 13, 2008, at 2:00 P.M.

Held at Incarnation Holy Sacrament Episcopal Church

3000 Garrett Road (corner of Garrett and Riverview), Drexel Hill

Election of Officers and Board of Directors

There will be a program following the meeting

Collen Brook Sunday Tours

Tours of Collen Brook House and Grounds, at Marvine and Mansion Avenues, Drexel Hill, every Sunday, May through October from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.

Executive Board

President – Margaret Johnson
Vice President – Barbara Marinelli
Recording Secretary – Anne Livingston
Corresponding Secretary – Beverly Rorer
Treasurer – Mary Ellen Scott

Solicitor

William McDevitt

School District Facilitator

Elizabeth McDonald

Historical Preservation Consultants

Amy and Daniel Scanlon

Archivist

Barbara Marinelli

Grants

Ellen Cronin

Newsletter Editor

Anne Livingston

Editorial Staff

Mary Ellen Scott



**Board of Directors
2005-2008**

Elizabeth Colozzo

Kathleen Clarke

Robert Clarke

2006-2009

Thomas DiFilippo

Daniel Scanlon

James Manley

2007-2010

Margaret Johnson

Thomas Smith

William Hill

Tours of Collen Brook Farm, Marvine and
Mansion Avenues, Drexel Hill, every
Sunday, May through October, 2 to 4 P.M.



Upper Darby Historical Society
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Dated Material

