



HISTORIA

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 4

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER, 1997

BETTY LUFF RECEIVES 21st LIVING TREE AWARD

The Northampton Township Historical Society "Living Tree" Award was presented to Betty Cornell Luff at a special ceremony on Saturday November 8, 1997. This was the 21st presentation of the award by the Historical Society since 1974. The Living Tree award was created to honor township residents who have shown a sincere devotion to the township and its residents by their service and volunteer efforts.



Jean Gallagher presents the Living Tree Award to Betty Luff as Township Manager, Bruce Townsend and Society President Doug Crompton look on.

The ceremony was attended by Betty's friends and family. Jean Gallagher, Chairperson for the Living Tree Committee, presented the award and introduced the speakers, Bruce Townsend, Township Manager, Virginia Geyer representing the Historical Commission, Peggy Luff DeYoung, Betty's daughter, and Esther Neeld, her sister. Mary Seader presented a small evergreen tree and displayed the plaque of all past Living Tree recipients. Pianist, Kass Quinn, played a number of selections, which were enjoyed by all. At the close of the ceremony everyone walked to the West Side of the library where an evergreen was planted in Betty's honor.

More pictures and story on page 3

DINNER MEETING WILL FEATURE TALK ON WILLIAM PENN



Loretta Treese an Archivist from Bryn Mawr College will present "The Storm Gathering: The Penn Family and the American Revolution" at our November dinner meeting. Most Pennsylvanians are familiar with the story of William Penn. Few may realize that Penn's descendants played an important, and increasingly unpopular, role in the coming of the American Revolution to Pennsylvania. Drawing upon the Penn family correspondence and contemporary records, Ms. Treese tells this fascinating story, focusing primarily on Thomas and John Penn, two of the last members of the Penn family to figure significantly in Pennsylvania's affairs before the colonies declared independence in 1776.

Ms. Treese has a Masters in American History from Villanova University. This is our first talk presented courtesy of the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Congratulations to Betty Luff who was presented with the Living Tree Award last week. Jean Gallagher, Chairperson of the Living Tree Committee did a wonderful job making the event happen. Thanks also go to committee members, Mary Seader, Doris D'Ardenne, and Regina Tisone. Regina and her husband donated and delivered the nice evergreen tree we planted in Betty's honor.

Former board member, Paul Smyrl suffered a stroke on October 17th that has effected his speech. His wife reports that he is doing well in his convalescence. I am happy to report that Bill Smith and Jim Burtt are home and doing well after recent surgery. We wish you all a speedy recovery!

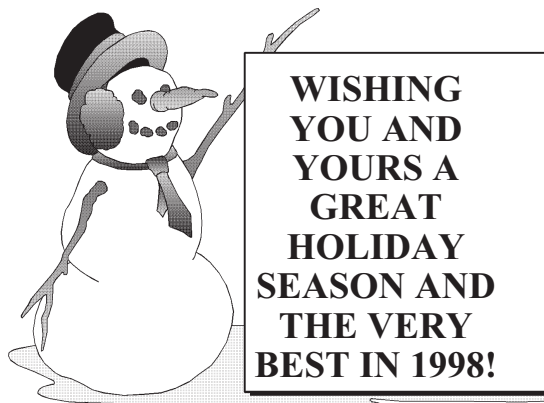
The November meeting is our annual dinner meeting. The board and the Society provide the meat dishes as well as coffee, tea and juice. Members are asked to bring a salad, vegetable or dessert dish. Our speaker, Lorette Treese, is provided by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council and she will speak on William Penn. We hope to see you there.

It was 25 years ago this fall that the first meeting of our Historical Society was held at the Addisville Chapel in Richboro. 150 residents showed up at this preliminary meeting to see if enough interest existed to establish a Society. Considering the population of Northampton at the time, that was an overwhelming response and the our Historical Society was born. The actual formation of the Society occurred in early 1974 so our 25th anniversary will be celebrated next year.

If you need a holiday gift I remind you that the Spread Eagle prints are available at the Crafters Gallery on Almshouse Road in Richboro. Proceeds of the sales will go towards the preservation of the facility once it is moved in the spring.

This issue of the HISTORIA brings to a close the 1998 season and the fifth year of its publication. I wish all of you a safe winter and the best for the holidays. See you again at our first 1998 meeting in March.

Angela J. Coyle



Diane Amadio, Ways and Means Chairperson poses for a picture at our "Northampton Days" table. Her daughter, Gracie and John Leedom accompany her. Gracie gave out candies to the many visitors that past our table and the authentic dress was a real hit with the crowd.



Jim and Lorette Burtt show off the Spread Eagle print on display at "Northampton Days" celebrating the 275th anniversary of our township.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov 17** - Historical Society of Southampton Meeting - 7:30 PM 357-2086
- Nov 19** - Northampton Township Historical Society Dinner meeting - 6:30 PM - Speaker - William Penn
- Nov 22 - Dec 7** - "Twelve Trees" Holiday Display Elkins Gallery, Mercer Museum
- Dec 2** - Victorian Christmas Ornaments Course
- Dec 5-6** - An Intimate Evening at Fonthill Candlelight Holiday Dinner and Tour
- Dec 9** - Holiday Open House, Mercer Museum - 7-9 PM
- Dec 15** - Historical Society of Southampton Christmas buffet 357-2086
- Feb 15** - Finding the history of your old house Spruance library - 2-4 PM
- Mar 25** - Northampton Historical Society, meeting, 7:30 PM

LIVING TREE AWARD from page 1

Betty Luff has been a lifelong resident of Northampton, born May 22, 1924 when a doctor was called to a farm two miles north of Richboro. She was the 4th daughter of John and Margaret Cornell. The Cornell's lived on a farm rented from their parents on Worthington Mill road.

When Betty was ten years old her parents bought a house in Richboro for \$3500. That house is now the barbershop. She remembers when there was little traffic on Second Street Pike. She learned to roller skate on the Pike. Something you could never do today!

During the war she worked at Reading Terminal in Philadelphia, riding there on the train for free.

On September 22, 1943 she married Vincent Luff at a quiet living room ceremony. They lived on the farm where Vince was born near Upper Holland Road (Now Pheasant Run development) until 1967 when they moved to Bluebird road.

After Moving from the farm Betty became interested in quilts and decided she would like to make one each year. She was a founding member of the Historical Society and has served on the Historical Commission for many years. Betty has contributed invaluable to the documentation of the history of the township. In her research she discovered that Luff had been spelled Lough, that she was a descendent of James Carrol and Sarah Dungan and, that her ancestors cleared the land and opened the roads in Holland around 1690.



Historical Society President, Doug Crompton assists Betty Luff in planting a tree in her honor on the Northampton Township Library grounds. Jean Gallagher, Living Tree Chairperson looks on.



Betty Luff is joined by her family at the tree planting ceremony on the Library grounds

Post-Its

By Dave Gauntt

Splitting Northampton Township in two is Second Street Pike, one of the original Post Roads from Philadelphia to New York. Colonial postal carriers, as well as postmasters, plied those roads in all weather, in all seasons, and in good times as well as bad. Much as some complain about the mail today, the mail of old didn't arrive as promptly or dependably as even the worst examples of today's delivery system. In fact, there was no official system at all. America's first postmaster was Ben Franklin, who recognized this acute need for some sort of organized system of postal delivery and so, organized one.

To demonstrate the normal processes involved in Colonial days for sending correspondence I can give an example from my own family's history. In 1753, two of three brothers in Burlington County, New Jersey, moved to South Carolina, leaving the eldest brother to his inheritance of the family estate. The resulting distance between the brothers (in more ways than one, I'm sure) made future face to face meetings rather improbable. This left the written word as their only contact with each other. The letters that resulted over the next 25 years were apparently so valued by the Northern family that they were squirreled away and have been saved to this day.

The first striking thing about the letters is their number. There are nine. Perhaps many didn't survive the two and a half centuries of storage. Perhaps they were short on words, or just too busy making ends meet to concern themselves with correspondence. Perhaps this is only normal for adult males - who knows?

But that is not the only striking thing about these letters. The subject matter and method of delivery reveal much about the times they lived in. Consider this. What do you think it took to send a letter from the deep South to the deep woods of New Jersey in the mid-18th century? First, one had to be able to read and write - skills not acquired by most of the population of that day. Being Quakers, this family stressed education. Next, one had to have the means to write, meaning working pen, ink and parchment. The parchment was so valuable in those days, my 9th great grandmother would write return letters in the spaces between the lines of letters she had received. (She was either extremely frugal or very poor - I suspect both)

Once written (on one side of the parchment) the letter was carefully folded and sealed with sealing wax and marked with a personal seal in the hot wax. This was as much to keep the letter in a compact form as it was to secure privacy. On the outside was written the addressee per se: Samuel Gauntt, Burlington County, New Jersey. That's it!

The letter, in this case, was given at some future date to a Joseph Kershaw, a neighbor or tradesman who happened to be traveling the 70 miles downriver to the port of Charleston.

There it was deposited with an Aaron Lowcock, probably at some tavern by the docks to await a ship leaving port, traveling north. If the ship were not destined to a port near Burlington County, NJ, there would be a mid-ocean transfer to another ship, hailed by the Captain for exchange of postal packages. This would continue until, with luck, a ship would be making port in Philadelphia. There the mail would be dropped at another designated tavern, in this case with a Benjamin Shoemaker, at the docks for future pick up.

On occasion, farmers would travel a few days to Philadelphia to purchase or sell provisions. From diaries of family members in the 19th century I can say this was not a frequent occasion. Therefore in the 1700s, I'm sure the letters could have sat in the tavern for up to 6 months at times. Someone of the family, or a neighbor perhaps would happen by the tavern or other designated place of business, one day and inquire if any mail existed for Burlington County in "Ye Jerseys." They would pick it up and if it were not for themselves, would at least bring it to the city of Burlington to another tavern, or perhaps to a traveling minister of the gospel for delivery on his rounds.

Eventually, the letter, in 1755, finds its way to Samuel Gauntt in what is now Jobstown, NJ. He opens the cherished parchment from either his brother, Israel or brother, Zebulon (apparently the only one received from either brother in a year). In it he reads: (Copied verbatim)

"having the oppertunity to send ye a fue lines it being ye first time sence we come home to let ye know that we a rived safe home and found all well which we are all in reasonable helth at preasent hoping that this may find ye Samuel Gauntt and thy famely and father and mother in ye like helth & all our friends and bretheren which we remember our kind loves to you all. hoping that you may not for git to send us when time and oppertunity may per mit. Zebulon, Esther, and Isreal Gauntt"

Basically this letter, that probably traveled erratically all over the eastern continent for months, said only, "We're safe and healthy and hope you are the same. Please write."

A later letter (the next one, in fact) dated 1762, after telling that his family is in good health and that he has five children, and that his brother, Israel and his wife are well, Zebulon drops the bombshell that their sister, Dorothy, is dead after 24 days of illness. From there he goes on about every day business, demonstrating that life and death were on equal terms in those days.

I find it interesting, that as difficult as it was to send a letter, the typical correspondence was as trivial as many local phone calls today. Merely, something to "let you know I haven't forgotten you" - and this little sketch was written to do the same.



NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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WEBSITE: <http://www.resuba.com/bucks> EMAIL: nhhs@crompton.com

1997 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------|
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| Vice President | Mary Seader | 355-4467 |
| Secretary | Rosemarie Blumenthal | 396-0485 |
| Treasurer | William Smith | 357-8831 |
| Membership | Fred Holzwarth | 357-4899 |
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| Social Committee | Doris D'Ardenne | 968-5507 |
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| Director | John Leedom | 357-3121 |
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| Director | Regina Tisone | 860-9819 |
| HISTORIA Editor | Doug Crompton | 355-5307 |
| Send articles to: | 1269 2nd St Pike | |
| | Richboro, PA 18954 | |

HISTORIA is published quarterly by the Northampton Township Historical Society. The Society meets four times each year at the Northampton Township Cultural Center, Upper Holland Road, Richboro. Everyone is welcome at our meetings. Meetings start at **7:30 PM** with refreshments, general meeting, and a featured speaker.

Meeting Dates for 1997/98

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| November 19 | Dinner Meeting | 6:30 PM |
| March 25 | General Meeting | 7:30 PM |
| May 21 | General Meeting | 7:30 PM |
| September 30 | General Meeting | 7:30 PM |
| November 18 | Dinner Meeting | 6:30 PM |

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL CLASSIFICATIONS

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------|
| PATRON: | Extra support for the society | \$35.00 |
| FAMILY: | All members of one family | \$15.00 |
| SINGLE: | Adult individual membership | \$10.00 |
| SENIOR CITIZEN: | Age 65 years or older | \$5.00 |

This will be your membership for the calendar year of 1997 (January 1997 to December 1997)

Note - Applications received after October 31 will be credited for the following year.

This application is sent with all editions of the HISTORIA. Please check your mailing label for the expiration year.

Normal renewal time is in the first quarter of the year or when the March HISTORIA is received.

If your membership is current, please pass this application on to others who may be interested in our society.

Please consider a contribution of more than the minimum membership to help defray increasing society costs.

Send to : **Northampton Township Historical Society**
PO BOX 732
Richboro, PA 18954-0732

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____

ZIP: _____

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DUES ENCLOSED: \$ _____

May we count on you to serve on one of our committees ? : Y ___ N ___ MAYBE ___

Please give us your ideas for speakers at future meetings : _____

Would you be willing to write an article for the HISTORIA _____

Your comments and suggestions are welcomed : _____