

The Half Moon

The Newsletter of the Newtown Historic Association



IN THIS VOLUME:

- NHA Receives a Bucks County Tourism Grant
- Highlights From Recent Events
- Information on Upcoming Events
- Boone Garden Update

Welcome

The Newtown Historic Association presents this newsletter to the Newtown community with the goal of providing news and information on related historic and preservation events and activities in our area. We welcome any suggestions for future articles.

Officers

Dan Griffin, President
Brian Rounsavill, First Vice President
Richard Speranza, Second Vice President
Mary Jo Garner, Recording Secretary
Caroline Bennett, Corresponding Secretary
Rich Seidner, Treasurer

Board of Directors

Keyna Crawford
Paul Gouza
Betsey King
Jeff Marshall
Geno Peruzzi
Amy Smith
Susan Thompson
Gina Tognini
David Walton
Honorary Life Director – David Callahan
Parliamentarian – Tim Potero

Callahan Research Center

100 Mercer Street
Newtown, PA 18940 USA
Research Center Hours:
Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
And also, by appointment

New Members

Gail Foley & Chris Culleton, Ardelle Dick, Patrick & Kris Shields, Jeff & Eileen Siddell, Linda Wolfenson



Upcoming Calendar

February:

- 2/2: **Annual Appreciation Dinner** from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Temperance House
- 2/4: **NHA Happy Hour and Frederick Douglas Returns to the Newtown Theatre** at 6:00 p.m. (Court Inn) and 7:30 p.m. (Newtown Theatre)
- 2/24: **General Meeting** at 7:30 p.m., Court Inn

March:

- 3/24: **General Meeting** at 7:30 p.m., Court Inn

April:

- 4/21: **Annual Business & General Meeting** at 7:30 p.m., Court Inn
- 4/26: **Annual Spring Cleanup** at 8:30 a.m., Court Inn

For further details, visit www.newtownhistoric.org.

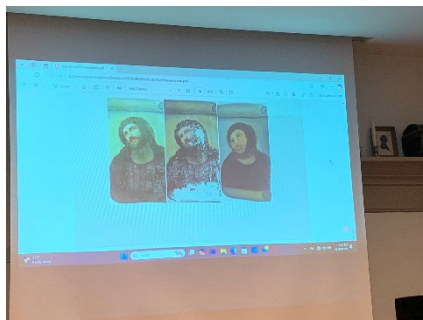
November General Meeting

Conservator and gold leaf specialist Paul Gratz gave an interesting and informative presentation at our general meeting on November 18th, 2024. The topic was "Painting Conservation Techniques and Materials," and the event was attended by approximately 25 people.

Gratz's presentation explained how the combination of modern techniques with Old World craftsmanship offers the finest in treatment for oil paintings, murals, and gilt objects. Truly skilled art conservation preserves as much as possible of the original art itself,

and therefore preserves its utmost value. Conservation treatment restores original radiance, color, and detail to treasured oil paintings and art objects, adding years of life and maximum value to even the most damaged artwork.

Paul Gratz



The NHA extends our appreciation to Carl Henry for securing Mr. Gratz as the speaker and introducing him at the meeting.

Carl Henry

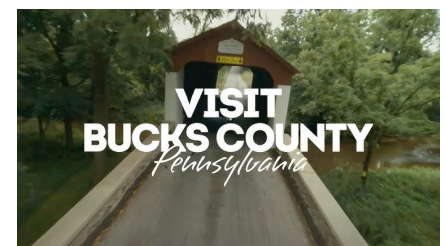


NHA Receives a Bucks County Tourism Grant

The Newtown Historic Association was recently awarded a [Bucks County Tourism Grant](#) in the amount of \$2,500.00 to build a permanent timeline museum exhibit at the Half-moon Inn showing 400 years of Newtown and Bucks County History.

The NHA has been a leading force in historic preservation, education and celebration of our heritage. The much-needed funds will go toward building supplies for the timeline exhibit and for a newly-developed web page for the America 250 Birthday Event occurring on August 8th, 2026, in Newtown. The web page will be used as a tool to promote the new museum to visitors from Bucks County and outside of Pennsylvania before and after the America 250 Event.

Both parts of this project, the timeline exhibit and the web page, will increase education and interest in preserving our history while increasing tourism. This exhibit will make the Half-moon Inn the only other historic museum outside of Doylestown and the only historic inn with a museum in Bucks County.



Newtown Holiday Cocktail Trail

The Newtown Historic Association was a proud participant in the second annual Newtown Holiday Cocktail Trail on November 23rd, 2024.



Organized by the Newtown Theatre and sponsored by NHA corporate member Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, Inc., ticket holders enjoyed sample-size holiday cocktails at a wide variety of Newtown Borough shops and our beloved historic Half-moon Inn (Court Inn).

John Pinzka and Dave Callahan



This event was a sold-out affair. We look forward to seeing you next year!

Karen Groff and Kathy Gonsalves



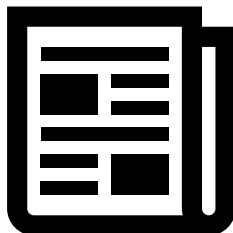
Do You Have Historic Items to Donate?

If you have historic items to donate to the NHA (pictures, letters, research on a property or family, furniture, etc.), please contact us at (215) 968-4004.

NHA Newsletters

If you would like to revisit previous newsletters, you can find them on the Newsletters page of our website:

<https://www.newtownhistoric.org/about-us/newsletters/>.



Corporate Members

We are proud to highlight our corporate members:

- A Love for Life
- ALP Supply Inc.
- DeFrehn Roofing Services
- Mary Dinneen, Realtor
- First National Bank & Trust Company of Newtown
- Gilded Home Furnishings Consignment
- Harold Beck & Sons, Inc.
- Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, Inc.
- Lin Bethman Auto Center, Inc.
- Newtown Business Association
- Wm. B. Parry & Son, Ltd.
- Anthony Petsis & Associates, Inc.
- SDG Holdings I, LLC
- Steele's Gulf Auto Repair, Inc.
- Stuckert and Yates
- T & T Tree Service
- Waitkus Design

New Acquisitions

- Book: To Vietnam and Back 1967-1968, in memory of Howard (Bud) Cook – Dolores Raisch



Annual Holiday Open House Tour

Photos: Neale Messina

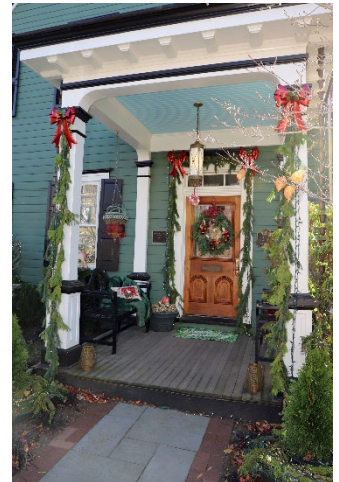
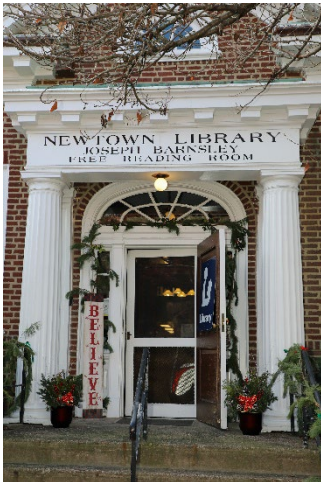
The Newtown Historic Association held our 61st annual Holiday Open House Tour on Saturday, December 7th, 2024. It was a cold and mostly sunny day, and visitors enjoyed their glimpses into some of Newtown's unique private residences, all dressed for the holidays. This year, six private homes and seven public buildings were open for the day.

The Holiday Open House Tour is a major fundraiser for the Newtown Historic Association, and this year's turnout was terrific. The NHA extends a big thank you to all who attended, volunteered, sponsored, and/or opened their home or building. It was a great day and a huge success!



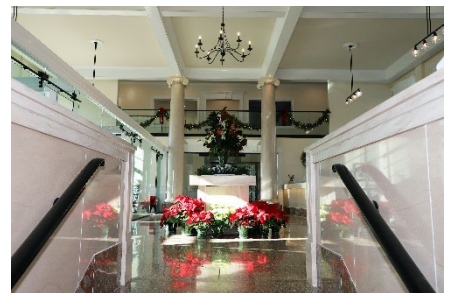
Annual Holiday Open House Tour (cont'd)

Photos: Neale Messina



Annual Holiday Open House Tour (cont'd)

Photos: Neale Messina



Annual Appreciation Dinner

The NHA annual appreciation dinner to honor those homeowners and public building stewards who participated in the 2024 Holiday Open House Tour will be held on **Sunday, February 2nd, 2025, at the Temperance House.** Cash bar begins at 6:00 p.m. and the dinner begins at 7:00 p.m.



During this event, the NHA will be recognizing six homeowners and seven public building stewards for their participation in the house tour.

The cost is \$55 per person. Tickets include a salad, plated dinner, and dessert, and are available on the NHA website at <https://www.newtownhistoric.org> or call Keyna Crawford at (267) 679-9287. Space is limited. **The reservation deadline is January 25th, 2025.**

NHA Happy Hour and Frederick Douglas Returns to the Newtown Theatre

On February 4th, 1864, Frederick Douglass visited Newtown and spoke at Newtown Hall, now known as the Newtown Theatre. On **Tuesday, February 4th, 2025** – exactly 161 years later – the theatre will welcome nationally acclaimed Frederick Douglass impersonator Darius Wallace to the theatre to deliver “Frederick Douglass! The Lion of Freedom,” a one-man show about the life of America’s greatest abolitionist.

Darius Wallace (“Frederick Douglas”)



A limited number of tickets are available for a **6:00 p.m. cocktail hour at the historic Court Inn**, 105 Court Street. Tickets for the cocktail hour are discounted for the members of the theatre or the Newtown Historic Association. The price also includes VIP seating at the theatre for the performance. All proceeds from the cocktail hour benefit the Newtown Historic Association.

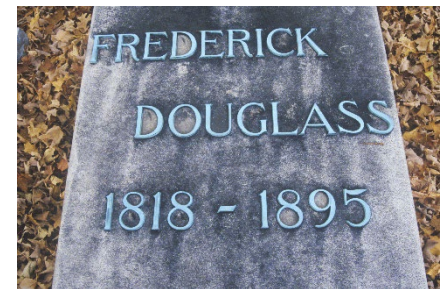
A percentage of ticket sales will support the [African American Museum of Bucks County](https://www.africanamericanmuseumofbuckscounty.org/). For 10

years, the AAMBC has honored the rich legacy of the African American experience in mobile exhibits that inspire pride in our heritage, share untold stories about the diverse journey of our people, and highlight African American contributions in art, music, literature, politics, sports, and culture. In Summer 2025, AAMBC will move into its permanent home at Boone Farm, a colonial-era homestead on Route 413 in Core Creek Park.

The show itself starts at 7:30 p.m. at the Newtown Theatre. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit

<https://www.thenewtowntheatre.com/events/2025/02/04/frederick-douglass>.

Headstone at the grave of Frederick Douglas, Rochester, NY



The Newtown Theatre



February General Meeting

Our February general meeting will be held at the Court Inn on **Monday, February 24th, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.**

In researching their new book, "Slavery, Friends, and Freedom in Bucks County," authors Pat Mervine and Joe Coleman have uncovered dozens of untold stories about Bucks County people and places involved with the Underground Railroad. They have been able to link Bucks County to daring escapes, challenges to the Fugitive Slave Act, and even an infamous Supreme Court decision, all of which made national headlines. The stories they will share during this meeting will take you back to the time when slavery and bounty-hunting were legal, and when people of both races found the courage, compassion, and conviction needed to make Bucks County a safe haven and Pennsylvania a free state. Their book, "Slavery, Friends, and Freedom in Bucks County," will be available for purchase at this event; the full purchase price of \$30 goes to the African American Museum of Bucks County's Capital Campaign.

Patricia L. Mervine enjoyed a 30-year career as a speech/language pathologist and assistive technology consultant in Bucks County schools. For her second act, Pat has become immersed in researching local history. Her first book on local history, "Boone Farm: Its People and Place in Middletown History," tells the stories of the twenty-one owners of the Boone Farm, a 1716 stone farmhouse on the banks of Core Creek. That property is soon to be the permanent home of the African American Museum of Bucks County. Both "Boone Farm" and "Slavery, Friends, and Freedom in Bucks County" are Pat's gifts to the African American Museum of Bucks County, a project she believes in with whole heart and soul.

Joseph Coleman retired in 2019 after teaching United States history in high schools in Pennsylvania and New Jersey for a total of 35 years. He is now teaching history at The College of New Jersey. He serves as the archivist for the Hulmeville Historical Society and wrote "Hulmeville Borough A History at 150" to help celebrate the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of Hulmeville. Joe was delighted when Pat invited him to help with this project and hopes to continue to support

the work of the African American Museum of Bucks County.



Slavery, Friends, and Freedom in Bucks County

**Patricia L. Mervine, M.A., and
Joseph Coleman, M.L.A.**

March General Meeting

Our March general meeting will be held at the Court Inn on **Monday, March 24th, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.** The presenter and topic has yet to be determined at the time of this publication, so please check the events page on the NHA website as well as your email. We will provide the details as soon as possible.



Annual Business Meeting and April General Meeting

The NHA Annual Business Meeting and April general meeting will be held in the Court Inn on **Monday, April 21st, 2025, starting at 7:30 p.m.**

The Annual Business Meeting will be conducted first. It will include the election of Directors and Officers for a new term. Also, there will be a review of the organization's events over the past year.

The Annual Business Meeting will be followed by the general meeting, which will be presented by Board members Mary Jo Garner and Keyna Crawford. The presentation topic is "Treasures in the Attic."

Annual Spring Cleanup

Our annual spring cleanup day at the Court Inn will be held on **Saturday, April 26th, 2025, beginning at 8:30 a.m.**

We are seeking volunteers to assist with the cleanup. No experience necessary. Please come help us and have some fun making the Court Inn shine again, especially those who are interested in helping with our buildings and grounds.

If you have any questions, please contact Paul Gouza at pgouza12@gmail.com.



Court Inn Improvements

The first-floor bathrooms at the Court Inn received much-needed attention. New toilets, fixtures, and pipes were installed. In addition, some smoke detectors at the Court Inn were updated.

The split-rail fence behind the Court Inn was repaired, and the large front door at the Court Inn was fixed (just in time to open for the Cocktail Trail participants!).

Boone Garden Update

The Newtown Historic Association owns the Boone Garden, a 2,100 square foot lot located directly across the street from the Half-moon Inn (Court Inn).

Plans are underway to improve the garden. The design includes a Newtown Heritage Walk sign that includes a history of the lot.

Proposed Newtown Heritage Walk sign (Brian Rounsavill, Researcher)

 **Newtown Heritage Walk**

The Boone Garden

The Boone Garden is an old property owned from 1 to Hill Street and Court Inn on the east corner of Court Avenue and Court Street, from the Court and Parking lot across the street from the Court Inn. Boone (1857-1892) resided on the lot in a small house that is now the site of the Court Inn. Boone owned the lot until he died in 1892.

Boone and his friend, Charles Landon Moore (1878-1938), purchased the Court Inn from the estate of the Boone family in 1914. The Boone family owned the lot until the late 19th century and moved to Pennington in 1892, where they lived on the lot at 1730 Hill Street, which is now the site of the Boone House.

The Boone Garden is originally located on the lot owned by the Boone family. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892.

The Boone Garden is originally located on the lot owned by the Boone family. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892.

The Boone Garden is originally located on the lot owned by the Boone family. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892.

The Boone Garden is originally located on the lot owned by the Boone family. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892.

The Boone Garden is originally located on the lot owned by the Boone family. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892.

The Boone Garden is originally located on the lot owned by the Boone family. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892.

The Boone Garden is originally located on the lot owned by the Boone family. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892. The Boone family owned the lot until they moved to Pennington in 1892.

Did You Know?

(From Newtown Borough Council Minutes by Reubin P. Kester, Volume 2 Bicentennial Publication of the Newtown Library Company)

The two chief concerns before Council in the early years were the building of sidewalks and the passing of ordinances. In handling these matters many meetings were held and many subjects were considered over and over again. For instance, the ordinances to control the running at large of horses, cows, swine, etc., were amended and re-amended so that Council was nearly two years in passing them. They finally added dogs to the list, but had trouble deciding whether the two sexes should be taxed and treated differently. Then someone proposed to include ganders. There was opposition to limiting the control to ganders, so after four months they decided to treat all dogs alike, and to change the word "ganders" to "geese." Thus we see again that legislation is always a matter of compromise.

