

History of Newtown Exhibition (1681-2026)

Sponsored by

The Newtown Historic Association, Inc.



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Welcome to the *History of Newtown Exhibition* by the Newtown Historic Association. We are glad that you can join us on a journey through over three centuries of history.

Learn about Newtown's past through carefully chosen artifacts from our archives, many that were never before displayed. These items will give you a glimpse into our past, as you discover new things about Newtown's place in history.

This exhibit was designed and curated to coincide with America250PA, the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

We hope you will learn something new and take with you a deeper appreciation for the special place that Newtown has served in the foundation of our country's storied past.

David Callahan & Brian Rounsavill
Curators



NHA Archives & Collections

The Newtown Historic Association collections are showcased at the historic Half Moon Inn (Court Inn). The NHA also maintains the Callahan Research Center as the main facility for the research and study of local history.

The collections include deeds, wills, diaries, genealogies, photographs, directories, inventories and maps dealing with Newtown people, land, houses, farms, schools, service organizations, events and many other topics of interest. The collections are strong in the period 1725 to 1813, when the village served as the county seat. Edward Hicks, America's foremost primitive painter, is also well represented.

The collections are of particular value to persons interested in genealogical information of former Newtown residents, and the maps and deeds are of assistance to those studying land history or dating historic houses in the Newtown area.





Early Newtown

The 5,000 acres that originally comprised Newtown Township were part of the vast tract of land purchased by William Penn from the Native Americans on July 15, 1682.

The town was patterned to resemble an open fan surrounding a narrow rectangular piece of property called the town common, which ran along the Newtown Creek.

Newtown experienced significant growth and an influx of inhabitants when Newtown served as the county seat from 1725 to 1813.

Newtown was a strategic location during the Revolutionary War. General George Washington made his headquarters here after the Battle of Trenton, where he wrote two famous letters to Congress describing the victory at Trenton.





Early Newtown *(partial list of items on display)*

- William Penn Whiskey Decanter, 1981
- Large Grinding Stones (Metates)⁺
- Grinding Pestles (Mano)
- Large Cut Axe Head.
- Arrowheads
- Model of a Lenape Indian Wigwam
- Native American Decorative Seed Bead Bag, c.1885⁺
- Large Scraping Tool
- Native American Tomahawk, c.1940
- Small Cutting Tool
- Tomahawk Head⁺
- James Yates, Jr. House, Watercolor
- Deed from James Yates, Sr. to Daniel Doan (1702)
- 1723 Datestone from the John Atkinson, Jr. House
- 1703 Map of Newtown, c.1900
- Newtown Common Draft, 1796
- Model of the Court Buildings
- American Long Rifle (Replica), c.1910
- Lottery Ticket, 1761
- Revolutionary War Canteen, c.1775
- Cannon Balls
- Dispatch Box
- Powder Horn, c.1775
- Revolutionary Era Coins
- Revolutionary Era Paper Money (Replicas)
- Wooden Patch Box, Painted by Edward Hicks, 1818^{*}

⁺ On loan from personal collection.

^{*} On loan from Bucks County Historical Society.

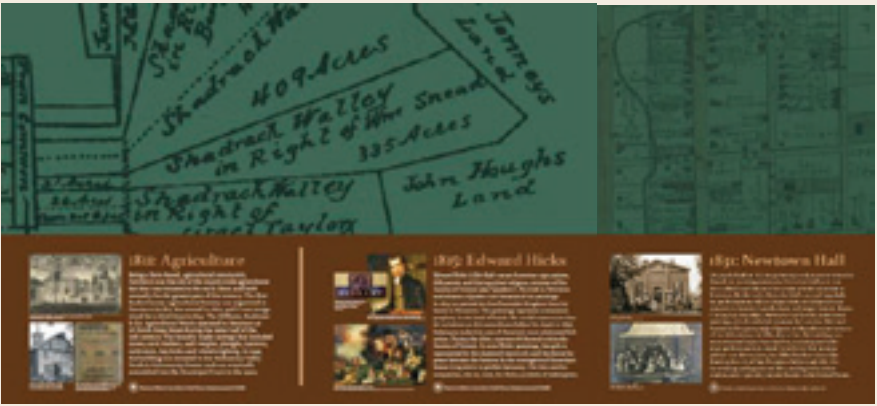


Business

During the period when Newtown served as the county seat, the rural Newtown community grew into a prosperous government center, leaving behind its origin as an essentially agricultural village.

Because a substantial amount of town business had revolved around the courthouse trade, taverns and inns became staples in the local scene. At the beginning of the 19th century, the town was well established as an active and affluent commercial center, supporting tradesmen and artisans in all of the traditional occupations of the time.





Business *(partial list of items on display)*

- Cash Box from the Newtown Hardware House, c.1900
- Newtown Hardware House Advertising Match Safe, c.1930
- Randall Carriage Works Plow Plane, c.1860
- Randall Carriage Works Carriage Sale, c.1890 & Employees, c.1897
- Brass Plate from a Newtown Giant Incubator, c.1905
- Advertisement from Strathie's Pharmacy, 24 South State Street, c.1940
- \$5 Banknote issued by the First National Bank & Trust Company of Newtown, c.1903
- Newtown Pharmacist Bottles & Pill Box, c.1920⁺
- Cocoonery Excavation Poster, c.1935
- Watts' Grocery Store Cash Box, c.1930⁺
- Dental Instruments from Dr. Howard A. Trego, c.1900
- Goodnoe's Farm Milk Bottle, c.1935
- Newtown Milk Bottle Caps & Butter Box, c.1938⁺
- Fabian & Son Fuel Oil Thermometer, c.1960
- Tin Smithing Tools of Charles W. Duckworth, c.1900
- H. M. Pownall Leather Sample, c.1900



Transportation

Newtown was the hub of an extensive road network during the 18th century. The first road from Bristol to Newtown opened in 1693. In 1703, it was extended from Newtown to Buckingham and, by 1745, it had reached Durham Furnace.

The Philadelphia, Newtown, and New York Stage Coach was operating in 1799. In 1872, the Philadelphia, Newtown, and New York Railroad Company was organized. In 1897, the Newtown electric trolley service began.

Today, we still use the road network in and around Newtown that originated, in part, before our European forebearers arrived here. Our main arteries today are the successors to a labyrinthine system of Native American trails that were in place when Newtown was founded.





Transportation *(partial list of items on display)*

- Stock Certificate from the Newtown Electric Street Railway Co., 1898
- Original Trolley Track & Spikes
- Ticket Book from the Newtown Trolley 1912
- Painting of Newtown Railroad Station, 2001
- Minutes Book of the Yardleyville and Newtown Plank Road Company, 1851-1905
- Ticket from Gate 2 of the Wrightstown & Newtown Turnpike Road Company, c. 1900
- Cash Box from the Newtown Tollhouse on the Wrightstown & Newtown Turnpike, c. 1900
- Coin Changer, c.1950
- Ticket for the Opening of the Newtown & New York Rail Road Company, 1878
- Stock Certificate for the Wrightstown & Newtown Toll Road Company, 1870
- Train Schedule for the Philadelphia, Newtown & New York Railroad, 1887
- Brass Baggage Tag for the Philadelphia, Newtown & New York Railroad, c.1890
- Philadelphia, Newtown & New York Railroad Lantern, c.1900
- Railroad Track & Spikes from the Newtown Railroad



Manufacturing

Demand for Newtown's products and services steadily increased during the 19th century, as Newtown became more widely known throughout the region. As the century progressed, the community remained a busy commercial and cultural center for the surrounding farms.

Notable manufacturing operations included the Excelsior Bobbin and Spool Works, now known as the Stocking Works, the China Company, and Lavelle Aircraft Corporation, which manufactured precision metal parts for military aircraft, NASA weather satellites, anti-aircraft missiles, the Lunar Excursion Module, and air purification filters for every Apollo mission.





Manufacturing *(partial list of items on display)*

- Excelsior Bobbin & Spool Works, Various Sized Wooden Spools, c.1910
- Label from the Newtown Canning Company, 1906
- Newtown China Company Coffee Pot, Mug Creamer and Bowl, c.1910
- Various Newtown China Company Porcelain Items, c.1920
- Gold-Plated and Stainless Steel 3” LD Clamp from Lavelle’s first contract in 1941
- Guest Pass for the Lavelle Aircraft Corporation Employees, Army-Navy E Award Celebration, 1945
- Commemorative Pin for the Lavelle Aircraft Corporation Employees, Army-Navy E Award Celebration, 1945
- Lavelle Farm Equipment Advertising Brochure, c.1955
- Yoke Assembly for the Lunar Excursion Module (LEM), c.1970
- Air Purification Cartridge Filter used in the space suits from the Apollo 13 Mission in 1970
- Tiros Weather Satellite, 1964
- TALOS Surface Launched Missile, c.1965-1970



Military

Many Newtown residents faithfully served our country through their military service, while some sacrificed their lives for our freedoms. We are fortunate to be able to display military uniforms from the following Newtown area residents:

World War I

- John R. Lauer (1889-1961);
U.S. Army Calvary



World War II

- Edward R. Barnsley (1906-1989);
U.S. Army
- William R. Campbell (1917-1985);
U.S. Coast Guard



Vietnam

- James A. Wolverson III (b. 1945);
U.S. Army National Guard





Military *(partial list of items on display)*

- World War I, U.S. Army Ammunition Cartridge Belt, c.1917
- World War I, U.S. Army Machine Gun Transit Chest, 1917
- World War I, U.S. Army Doughboy Combat Helmet, 1917
- World War I, German SP255 Artillery Shells, 1918
- World War II, U.S. Army Jeep First Aid Kit, c.1938⁺
- World War II, Model Artillery Shell Shipping Crate, c.1940
- World War II, U.S. Army Field Ration C Unit, c.1945⁺
- World War II, U.S. Army K Ration “Morale Series” Dinner (Lunch), c.1945⁺
- World War II, U.S. Army Aluminum Canteen, c.1940
- World War II, U.S. Army Field Binoculars, c.1945⁺
- Vietnam War, U.S. Army Combat Ground Troops Helmet, c.1967



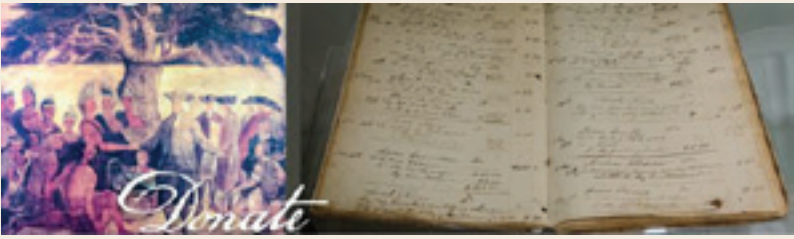
+ On loan from personal collection.



Other Items

- Bicentennial Bicycle, 1976
- Newtown Bypass Ground Breaking Shovel, 1992
- Brick Hotel Auction Bell, c.1900
- Post Office Door, c.1805
- Washington's Headquarters Door, c.1760
- Newtown Cornet Band Drum, c.1880
- Corn Sheller, c.1873
- Mould Board Plough, c.1871





We would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following:



Become a Member



The Newtown Historic Association is supported by over 250 people who hold either individual or family memberships. We also count many local businesses in our corporate membership. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in preserving, celebrating and sharing the history of Newtown.

Benefits include invitations to all NHA events.

*Thank you
for considering
joining us in
our mission to
preserve the
past and fund
our future.*

**We would love to welcome you
as a new member of the
Newtown Historic Association.**

FIND OUR MEMBERSHIP LEVELS AT

www.newtownhistoric.org



Half Moon Inn
105 Court Street
Newtown, PA 18940



**The Callahan
Research Center**
100 Mercer Street
Newtown, PA 18940