



The Oracle

SUMMER 2011

Number 93

Newsletter of the Dauphin County Historical Society

In the Months Ahead:

- **Sunday, Sept. 4 - CivilWar150** Lyceum-Dauphin County 1861, hosted by Simon and Margaretta Cameron, music by the Susquehanna Travelers, presentations by historians and authors Dr. Michael Barton and Todd Mealy, and re-enactor David Shuey, refreshments and mansion tours, 1:30-4:00pm.
- **Sunday, September 11 - Gallery Walk.** Mansion open noon - 5:00pm and Library open 1:00-4:00pm.
- **Tuesday, Sept. 20 - Third Tuesday program, *Little Known Facts of Harris-Cameron Mansion History*** with Susan Artman, 7:00-8:30pm. Dessert served at 6:30
- **Saturday, Sept. 24- Smithsonian Museum Day.** Mansion open 10:00am-4:00pm, free of charge to Smithsonian members.
- **Sunday, Oct. 9—Mansion open** for tours and Library open for research, 1:00-4:00 pm.
- **Wednesday, Oct. 12—Volunteer Appreciation Reception, 6:30-8:00pm**
- **Thursday, Oct. 13 — Fall bus trip** to Fonthill, Mercer Museum & The Pearl S. Buck House
- **Tuesday, Oct. 18 — Third Tuesday program, *Dauphin County Ghost Stories*** (Share your favorite local ghost story), 7:00-8:30pm. Dessert served at 6:30.
- **Sunday, Nov. 13—Mansion open** for tours and Library open for research, 1:00-4:00 pm.
- **Tuesday, Nov. 15— Third Tuesday program & book signing, *Harrisburg Broadcasting*** with Tim Portzline, 7:00-8:30pm. Dessert served at 6:30.

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From the Director's Desk ...

Dear Friends of Dauphin County History,

This is an exciting time to celebrate the history of Harrisburg and Dauphin County. One hundred fifty years ago, Harrisburg was well on its way to becoming the major troop training and supply distribution point for the Union Army, and Dauphin County native Simon Cameron was serving as U.S. Secretary of War. In March of 1861, the leading families of Harrisburg mourned the loss of one of their own, the Reverend Beverly Waugh, and the institution he had established, the Pennsylvania Female College. The college had been housed in the John Harris Mansion and when it closed, College Trustee Simon Cameron bought the mansion. Over the next several years, he transformed it into the National Landmark Victorian structure and community asset that survives to this day.

The mansion has always been the setting for programs, exhibits and events. The next four years will see increased activity as we commemorate a period of great significance in our country's history in a landmark home with a period of greatest significance to match.

Of course, we'll take a few detours into other eras, as we did on this past 4th of July and in our current exhibit on the native Americans of our region. However, many of our programs will be designed to help us celebrate and commemorate the lives of those who made history in our backyard and the nation 150 years ago today. We hope you will join us this fall.

Kathryn W. McCorkle

A New Independence Day Tradition

On July 4th, the Rev. David Biser (aka John Harris Jr.) and the Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion relived a significant moment in national and local history; the day in July 1776 when John Harris called the citizens of Harris Ferry together and read the Declaration of Independence to the assembled crowd from the front porch of his mansion. On this July 4th, John Harris Jr. was joined by several Revolutionary War era figures, including his daughter, Mary Harris, several citizens of the Harris Ferry region and a surprise guest, Ben Franklin, who was passing through the area and stopped in to visit with Mr. Harris for the day. The readings were on the hour from 10:00am to 2:00pm and were covered by all four television stations and the *Patriot-News*. Over one hundred people attended the readings and over half of the attendees took advantage of special holiday rates to tour the Mansion.



Mark your calendars for July 4th, 2012 and plan to join John Harris Jr. and Friends next year to celebrate the importance of July 4th in our history at the Mansion.

TOP LEFT-(l-r) Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion members Myretta Anderson, Connie Shover, Elizabeth Yoder, Howard Parker, Jimmie Groves and Ernest Kepner. Not pictured-Susan Artman, Michelle Grant

BOTTOM LEFT- (l-r) Reenactors Rick Gehlhaus, Charles Faust, Susan Jarrell, Margie Gehlhaus, Audrey Biser, Rev. David Biser, Richard Fox, Barbara Shaputis, Roger Mansfield

BOTTOM RIGHT-Spectators hear the reading of the Declaration



Historical Society of Dauphin County

Mission Statement:

The Mission of The Historical Society of Dauphin County is to collect, preserve, exhibit, publish, and promote interest in the history of Dauphin County for the education, enjoyment and benefit of the public.

Board of Trustees:

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Office Manager ~ Evelyn James

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**And a dedicated and growing
group of Volunteers**

**All staff are part-time. Hours
are arranged so that someone
will answer the phone Monday
thru Thursday, 10 am—4 pm.**

**If the person you need to
speak with is not on duty, he
or she will return your call at
the first opportunity.**

The Oracle is prepared and
edited by Howard Parker

HSDC to Host Free Civil War Lyceum

On Sunday, September 4th, the Historical Society will revive a mid-nineteenth century tradition and host a free "Lyceum" from 1:00-4:00pm at the Mansion. The Lyceum movement began in the United States in the 1820s as a form of adult education popular and was the precursor of the post-war Chautauqua movement. The Lyceum, a part of Dauphin County's ongoing commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, will feature family entertainment and presentations by historians and authors Dr. Michael Barton and Todd Mealy.

History Teller David Shuey will reenact the experiences of John Singleton Mosby during the Civil War complete with horse. Musical entertainment will be provided by the Susquehanna Travellers, who perform the music of the Civil War era.

Refreshments prepared using Civil War period recipes will be served.

The Lyceum is open to the public and admission is free.

For more information, call 233-3462 or visit www.dauphincountyhistory.org.



David Shuey portrays John Singleton Mosby

Free Fall 3rd Tuesdays: Mansion History, Local Ghost Lore & Harrisburg Broadcasting

The fall programs in the Third Tuesdays at the Mansion series feature an eclectic and fascinating mix of topics. On September 20, Susan Artman will present *Little Known Facts About the Mansion*. Susan is president of the Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion and a tireless researcher of the history and lore of the Mansion. On October 18, there will be an evening devoted to Dauphin County ghost stories. Share your favorite tale of local hauntings and apparitions. Why should Gettysburg have all the fun in October? The fall season comes to a close on November 15 with a presentation and book signing by Tim Portzline, author of the newly published *Harrisburg Broadcasting*.

The programs begin at 7:00 pm in the Harris-Cameron Mansion and are free and open to the public. A reminder that parking is available on-site and in the Pinnacle Health physicians' lot off River Street behind the Mansion. Light refreshments provided by the Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion will be served at 6:30 pm prior to the program in the Jean E. Pugh Dining Room.

Civil War Lyceum Program

Sunday, September 4, 2011

1:15pm—Susquehanna Travellers play on porch

1:30pm—Mansion opens

2:00pm—Dr. Michael Barton—*Civil War Coming?*
Clues from personal and newspaper accounts of the day tell us how the citizens of Dauphin County viewed the possibility and looming reality of the coming conflict.

2:30pm—Concert of Civil War Era Music by the Susquehanna Travelers

3:00pm—Todd Mealy—*Harrisburg-Antislavery City*
Stories from Harrisburg's past as an anti-slavery city near the Mason-Dixon Line.

3:30pm—Reenactor David Shuey—*John Singleton Mosby-Lone Cavalry Scout*

4:00pm—Presenter Question and Answer Session

Fall Bus Trip to Historic Bucks County

Historic sites in scenic Bucks County are the itinerary for HSDC's fall bus trip, which includes visits to Fonthill, the Mercer Museum, and the Pearl S. Buck House. Fonthill was the home of Henry Chapman Mercer, archaeologist, anthropologist, ceramist, and antiquarian, and served as the show-place for his collection of Moravian tiles. The Mercer Museum is another legacy of Henry Chapman Mercer. The six story concrete castle was built in 1916 to house Mercer's extensive collection of handmade items which had become obsolete in the machine age. The third stop on the tour is Green Hills Farm, better known as the Pearl S. Buck House. The noted author purchased the farm in 1933 and it was her home until her death in 1973.

The tour itinerary is based on suggestions submitted by participants in prior bus tours.

The 29 passenger bus will depart from the Weis store in Hampden Township at 7:15 am on Thursday October 13, 2011 and will arrive back at approximately 6:30 pm. Lunch will be at the Mercer Museum restaurant.

The cost is \$117 for members and \$129 for non-members. For reservations and information call 233-3462 or visit www.dauphincountyhistory.org.

Pennsylvania German Woodworking

Local woodworker Kari Hultman demonstrated Pennsylvania German-style letter carving and chip carving at the Harris-Cameron Mansion open house on Sunday August 14th.

The demonstration was the first of HSDC's Second Sundays Series. Watch for information on upcoming Second Sunday programs.

Benjamin Olewine III to be Honored at *Deck the Halls* Gala

Look for a record crowd at this year's *Deck the Halls* celebration as we honor Benjamin Olewine III and the Olewine family with the 2011 John Harris Award and recognize the family's many contributions to Dauphin County. For 200 years, the Olewines' business, political, and philanthropic contributions have made a lasting and positive impact on the city of Harrisburg and surrounding communities.

Deck the Halls will be held on Thursday December 1, 2011 from 5:30-7:00 pm in the Harris-Cameron Mansion.

As part of the celebration, an exhibit on the Olewine family history will be on display in the second floor exhibit room.

Watch your mail and www.dauphincountyhistory.org for further details.

Volunteer Appreciation Reception Planned

The vital and diverse contributions of HSDC's volunteers will be honored at a reception sponsored by the Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion on Wednesday October 12, 2011. The event will be held at the Mansion and will begin at 6:30 pm with light hors d'ouerves followed by a short program.

The program will include a presentation by Dr. Michael Barton on the importance of volunteers in preserving the history of Dauphin County and remarks by HSDC President Tom Gacki, Executive Director Kathryn McCorkle and Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion President Susan Artman. Mr. Gacki's remarks will include a special tribute to long time and dedicated volunteer Jane Anderson, who passed away this summer (see article below).

The program will serve as the kick-off for the Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion fall membership drive. All who contribute their time to the Historical Society of Dauphin County in any volunteer capacity are invited to attend and are encouraged to bring along any friend who is interested in becoming an HSDC volunteer.

D. Jane Anderson 1930-2011

On July 16th, with the passing of Jane Alexander, the Historical Society lost a woman who earned the title "Volunteer of the Year" twenty times over, and then some.

Jane was a volunteer photo archivist with the Society for well over twenty years, "retiring" in 2009 only when poor health forced her to do so. Jane put in two full days with us every week and, despite her volunteer status, was so indispensable to the Society's efforts that she was listed as a member of the staff in *The Oracle*. She meant so much to us that we continued to list and consider her one of our own long after her departure.

Jane's incomparable achievements on our behalf will be recognized at the Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion volunteer recognition reception on October 12th at 6:30pm. Please feel free to join us in honoring a true friend of the HSDC.

Former County Commissioner Nick DiFrancesco Joins HSDC Board

Nick DiFrancesco, President and COO of the Pennsylvania Association of Community Bankers and former Dauphin County Commissioner, recently became a member of the Society's Board of Trustees.

HSDC will gain much from Mr. DiFrancesco's extensive experience in government and business. We are pleased to welcome him to active involvement with the Society.

Historic Tours Benefit HSDC

Sheldon Munn, renowned local historian and tour guide, will conduct walking tours of four historic areas in the city of Harrisburg during the fall. The tours highlight the architecture of each area and the fascinating and colorful people who called the neighborhood home. Proceeds from the tours benefit HSDC and the Harris-Cameron Mansion.

The tours are on Saturdays and will visit Shipoke on September 24th, City Square on October 1st, the Capitol District on October 8th and the Midtown District on October 15th.

All tours begin at 9:00 am and last approximately two hours. The cost is \$8.50 per person (cash on day of tour).

For information and reservations, call 770-0235 or contact office@dauphincountyhistory.org.

The donation of almost all of the proceeds from the four spring walking tours, the first fall tour and the bus tour of Cumberland County Civil War sites held in June resulted in contributions of over \$2,000.00 to the Society. HSDC thanks Sheldon Munn for his continuing support of the society's mission and objectives.

Program Series to Highlight the Contributions of Women of Color

The often unheralded contributions of women of color to our nation and its history will be celebrated through a series of programs entitled *Women of Emancipation: Surviving the Past—Strengthening the Future*. The series consists of four programs spanning the period from the Underground Railroad through the mid-twentieth century to be held in the fall of 2011 and throughout 2012. The first program, sponsored by HERCO, will focus on the female slave experience and include a reenactment of the life of Jane Marie Chester, escaped slave, Harrisburg businesswoman and mother of T. Morris Chester. The program will also include musical performances and poetry readings. The program will take place on Sunday November 20 from 1:30-3:30 pm and include a light buffet "tea style" lunch.

HSDC is proud to serve on the planning committee for the series along with representatives from Women Connect, the PA DCED Office of Cultural and Heritage Programs, the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg, the Foundation for Enhancing Communities, the City of Harrisburg and the Dauphin County Diversity Taskforce.

Watch your email and mail for more information and an invitation. We hope you will join us.

Final History Center Exhibit Closes & New Exhibit Opens in Mansion

The final exhibit at the HSDC History Center in the former Dauphin Deposit Bank building on Market Street, *Heeding the Call*, has ended its run.

The Society thanks M&T Bank for providing the perfect venue for the History Center and for its generous support of the center during 2010 and 2011.

History Center exhibit materials will form the basis for a number of rotating exhibits in the second floor exhibit room in the Mansion.

The current exhibit shows the lives and customs of the Native Americans who inhabited the area along the Susquehanna River as well as their interactions with European settlers. The exhibit includes panels from the History Center and artifacts from the Society's extensive Native American collection.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DAUPHIN COUNTY

HSDC



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The official registration & financial information of The Historical Society of Dauphin County may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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Your Membership Contribution Benefits HSDC and Pays You Back

As an HSDC member, you receive:

One (1) Mansion Tour—Savings: \$8.00

**Unlimited Visits to the Alexander Family Research
Library—Savings: \$10.00 per visit**

**Discounts on purchases and HSDC sponsored
activities and programs—Potential savings: unlimited**

**Free subscription to *The Oracle* and *Susquehanna
Heritage* magazine**

**Family Members receive two (2) tour passes and free
library research for all members.**

**Heritage and above membership levels enjoy
additional benefits.**

We're always thrilled to add new members to our rolls. Please help the HSDC grow its member base by sharing the form on the right with a friend or neighbor.

We would also like to communicate with our current members more quickly and easily. Please help us do so by providing your email address to office@dauphincountyhistory.org and write "My Email Address" in the subject line. Thank you.

Membership Form—Please Join Today

Check Level Desired:

☐ Individual \$35

☐ Family \$45

☐ Heritage Circle \$55

☐ Haldeman Circle \$100

☐ Cameron Circle \$250

☐ Harris Circle \$500

☐ Penn Circle \$1,000

Name: _____

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**Thank you for
your support!**