



The Oracle

SUMMER 2012

Number 95

Newsletter of the Dauphin County Historical Society

In the Months Ahead:

- **Sunday, June 24—Tropical Storm Agnes Program & Exhibit** with retired Allied Pix photographers Jim Bradley & Pete Rekus featuring photo display and slide show of photos from the Allied Pix archives, 2:00 pm.
- **Wednesday, July 4—Second Annual Independence Day program** at the Mansion featuring hourly portrayals of Thomas Jefferson reading the Declaration of Independence from the front porch, kids activities, refreshment stands, museum shop & historical book sale & 1/2 price Mansion Tours, 10:00am-2:00pm.
- **Saturday, July 7—Historic Bus Tour** with Civil War Historian Sheldon Munn of Mechanicsburg, Camp Hill, Lemoyne & Harrisburg featuring the sights, troop movements, personalities of the 1863 Confederate Invasion. Cost of the tour includes hand-outs and lunch at Fire Mountain All-You-Can-Eat-Buffer. The cost is \$60 per person payable in cash on the day of the tour. Motor coach leaves/returns-Radisson Hotel Parking Lot closest to McDonalds on Routes 11 & 15. For reservations call Sheldon Munn 770-0235. 9:00am-3:00pm.
- **Sunday, Aug. 12—Second Sunday Program and Art Exhibit** featuring oil painting demonstrations by local artists Kathy Corr and Patty Toth, Mansion open for tours. Library open for research, 1:00-4:00 pm.

Inside This Issue:

August 2nd Sunday	2
Civil War Diaries Online	3
Graydon Endowment	2
July 4	2
Letter from California	2
Louise Owen	2
New Board Members	2
Spring Activities	3



From the Director's Desk ...

Dear Friends of Dauphin County History,

WE CAN USE A FEW GOOD FRIENDS

The Historical Society is no different than any other small not-for-profit with more mission than money. We count on volunteers to fill the gap when staff can stretch no further. And, the Society is fortunate to be able to count on a group of creative and committed volunteers in every aspect of our operations. Just to name a few of the many recent volunteers with whom we cannot "give without": Glen Dunbar, who now maintains the John Harris Sr. gravesite; Daniel Beneventano, research library intern who is transcribing records and is on the top of our list for introduction to a multitude of tasks; and Board member Erik Fasick, the man behind the special exhibit and program on the 40th anniversary of Hurricane Agnes on June 24th.

Special thanks goes out to the small, but enthusiastic, group of volunteer "Friends of the Mansion," whose mission is to bring more activity and more visitors to the National Landmark Harris-Cameron home. The Friends, or should I say the "Friendraisers," plan and produce mission-based events, including the recent Victorian Tea and the upcoming Independence Day celebration. They provide refreshments for programs. They are on hand to give tours during Second Sunday open houses and they are on call for other events and efforts. In short, we always have a "Friend" when we need one.

The Friends are actively seeking new members and the Historical Society is actively seeking new volunteers, especially volunteers who are interested in giving an hour or two every week or so to help us give tours of the mansion. The perks are few, but the satisfaction is great.

So, if you have an interest in history (notice I said interest, no experience required), a few hours to spare, and a desire to join a great group of Friends of the Mansion or the Historical Society, give us a call at 233-3462, fire off an email to us at office@dauphincountyhistory.org or contact us via our website, dauphincountyhistory.org or on Facebook at [facebook.com/dauphincountyhistory](https://www.facebook.com/dauphincountyhistory).

We'll greet you with open arms and great appreciation.

Kathryn W. McCorkle

Tropical Storm Agnes—Fortieth Anniversary



The lives of many Dauphin County residents were forever changed by the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Agnes. The 40th anniversary of this devastating event will be commemorated with a program and exhibit at the Mansion on Sunday June 24th at 1:00pm.

The event will feature:

- Retired Allied Pix photographers Jim Bradley and Pete Rekus recounting their experiences covering the flood.
- A gallery exhibit of their work.
- A slideshow presentation showing hundreds of Agnes images selected from the Allied Pix photo archives housed at HSDC.

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

Parking is available on-site and in the Pinnacle Health physicians' lot off River Street behind the Mansion property.

WANTED: Your Agnes Memories

In conjunction with this event, HSDC will launch an oral history project to record and preserve the stories of those of those who witnessed, or experienced firsthand, the events surrounding those days in June 1972. If you are interested in participating in this project, or if you would like more information on the upcoming event, contact Erik at agnesflood@verizon.net or the Society office at (717) 233-3462.

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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Curator ~ Stephen Bachmann

Librarian ~ Ken Frew

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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

Join Us at the 2nd Annual Independence Day Celebration & Reenactment

Wednesday, July 4th

10 am—2 pm



Thomas Jefferson reenactor reading the Declaration of Independence from the front porch of the Mansion at 10, 11, 12, 1.

Refreshment Stands

Fun for Kids

Historical Book Sale

Museum Shop

Admission to the activities on the Mansion grounds is free. Mansion tours will be available at the reduced rate of \$4 for adults, \$2 for children.

Presented by the Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion

August 2nd Sunday to Feature the Art of Painting in Oils

Local artists Kathy Corr and Patty Toth will offer visitors a rare opportunity to observe the art of painting in oils on Sunday August 12th from 1:00-4:00 pm at the Mansion. In addition to the demonstration, an exhibit of the artists' work will be on display. Both artists paint in the realistic style.

Parking is available on-site and in the Pinnacle Health physicians' lot off River Street behind the Mansion property.

A Letter from California

We recently received a letter from Paul Straede of California accompanied by a generous donation in the name of Ramsey Davenport, a volunteer in the Alexander Research Library. Mr. Straede had contacted the library in an attempt to find information on members of his family who resided in Harrisburg before 1901. According to Mr. Straede, due to Ramsey's efforts, "my extended family size has grown extensively compared to the small group represented prior to my working with the HSDC."

Mr. Straede went on to say, "The talent, efforts, time and follow-up by the HSDC team—volunteers included—is the best!" He requested that his donation be used to purchase new materials for our library collection.

File Cabinets and Yearbooks Needed

The Alexander Research Library is in need of 4-drawer, legal sized file cabinets.

The library high school yearbook project still needs donations. Yearbooks from all Dauphin County schools for any year are most welcome.

Contact HSDC librarian Ken Frew at 233-3462 or library@dauphincountyhistory.org.

You Can Help Make It a Glorious Fourth!

The Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion need your help to make the July 4th event another rousing success. Volunteers are needed to:

- Help with setting up and staffing the refreshment tables.
- Help with the children's activities.
- Help with the sale of items from the museum shop.
- Greet visitors in the Mansion.

You can also donate new or used history-themed books for the book sale. Books may be dropped off at the HSDC office.

Call 233-3462 to volunteer or to request additional information.

Graydon Descendent Bequest

Charles Latham, Jr., the last surviving descendant of the Graydon family, bequeathed a \$248,000 endowment to HSDC. Mr. Latham, who passed away in 2010, was a history teacher who was deeply interested in his forebears' contributions to the formation of Dauphin County and the city of Harrisburg. Over the years the Latham family donated many objects related to the Graydon's time in the area in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Welcome New Board Members

HSDC welcomes **James J. Franklin, Esq.** of McNees, Wallace & Nurick LLC and **Joe Macri**, Vice President, M&T Investment Group, who joined the Historical Society of Dauphin County Board of Trustees in April.

HSDC Archivist Retires

Long-time archivist Louise Owen retired from her position at the Society at the end of May.

Louise took on the monumental task of organizing and entering into a database the documents in HSDC's archives. Her efforts made the thousands of documents much more accessible to researchers. She will be missed by all who love Dauphin County history.



A “Titanically” Successful Spring at HSDC



Krisha Scofield, Shawn Connor, David McCorkle and Captain Edward Smith aka local attorney **Bill Warren** enjoy the Edwardian elegance at the Titanic-themed event **A Night to Remember** held at the Mansion on April 14th.



The recently restored portrait of Alexander Graydon was a highlight of the **Graydon Family Exhibit** in the Mansion which featured the contributions of the family during the early days of Dauphin County and items owned by the family during that period.

Civil War Era Diaries to be Available Online

As part of The People's Contest, a collaborative Civil War-era history project of Penn State, the Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, PHMC, and public history institutions, HSDC is having the diaries of Redsecker Isaac Young and Sallie Simonton digitized and made available for online viewing. R. I. Young was a Middletown native who kept a diary of his daily life from 1860 to 1863 while a student at a private school in Ellington, Connecticut. Harrisburg resident Sallie Simonton, wife of Dauphin County Judge John Simonton, kept a diary in 1865 that includes a description of the celebration at the end of the war.

In 2010, HSDC first participated in the project, which focuses on the northern home front, by making dozens of our collections available for inclusion in an online catalog of archival resources held by organizations throughout Pennsylvania. For more information on The People's Contest, to see which HSDC collections were included in the project, and to view the diaries once they are digitized, visit peoplescontest.psu.edu.



If you did not have the opportunity to see the **Mary Sachs Exhibit** in the atrium of Strawberry Square this spring, the exhibit will be back in the atrium for the entire month of October. Pictured above is a wedding gown on loan to HSDC by Ellie Allen. The gown was worn by Ellie on her marriage to Heath Allen in 1947.



An elegant young guest shows her approval of the **Tea and Conversation** hosted by the **Friends of the Harris-Cameron Mansion** on May 11th.

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:

Unlimited Mansion Tours—Savings: \$8.00 per tour.

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*.

10% Discount on meals & non-alcoholic beverages at the historic Mount Hill Tavern.

Advance notice of special programs and events.

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

☐ Full-time Student \$15

☐ Family \$45

☐ Heritage Circle \$55

☐ Haldeman Circle \$100

☐ Cameron Circle \$250

☐ Harris Circle \$500

☐ Penn Circle \$1,000

Payment Method:

☐ Check Amount: \$ _____

☐ American Express

☐ VISA

☐ MasterCard

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

____ Home ____ Work

Email: _____

Please detach and send
with payment to:

HSDC
219 South Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17104

**Thank you for
your support!**