

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1 WINTER 2013

Delaware
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Making History

NEWSLETTER

Skaters on the Brandywine, Henry Price, ca. 1870

Art Loop, February 1, 2013
City/County Building - 800 N. French Street
5:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Reception - www.dehistory.org

Letter from the CEO



This past year was one of remarkable accomplishment for the Delaware Historical Society as the organization continued to serve everyone engaged with its mission. In an effort to broaden its interpretive scope and audience appeal, the Delaware Historical Society mounted two special exhibitions in 2012: *A Circle of Friendship United by Ideals* (commemorating the centennial of girl scouting in America as well as the golden anniversary of Girls Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay) and *Delaware Yesterday, Delaware Today: 1962 – 2012* (a modern history of the First State through fifty years of *Delaware Today* magazine). The Society's two-year online catalog project wound down in November. The project resulted in the creation of more than 34,000 catalog records. Research Library users, both near and far, now have access to a multitude of Delaware Historical Society collections. Just go to www.dehistory.org and click on "Ask Caesar."

The Center for African American Heritage will become a reality due in significant measure to the awarding of a \$1 million challenge grant by the City of Wilmington to underwrite a portion of the project's capital expenses. Though its completion remains a few years off, a number of successful education programs enabled patrons to experience what is to come.

Education programs continued to be a trademark of the organization. Appropriately, with a theme of transportation, the historical society took its three-part Signature Series on the road to Dover and Milton to better serve its statewide membership. The historical society published a new book, *Read House: One Site, Many Stories*, giving readers a fascinating look at the Federal-era house museum through words and photographs. And, of course, teachers continued to avail themselves of nearly twenty education programs that bring Delaware history to life for their students.

I must recognize and applaud the vision and commitment of the Delaware Historical Society's Board of Trustees for its exemplary leadership. What a privilege it is to work with such dedicated professionals! And to you, the many supporters of the Delaware Historical Society, please accept my sincere gratitude for ensuring that the historical society is able to preserve and present the First State's history in first-rate fashion.

The past is prologue to the future. 2013 then will be another banner year. I look forward to experiencing with you all the Delaware Historical Society has to offer.

Scott W. Loehr, CEO

Inspirational Quilting Project Begins on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day

This year the Delaware Historical Society will work with Delawareans throughout the state to create a quilt commemorating the impact of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s teachings and principles. On January 21 historical society educators will teach students enrolled in YMCA Schools Out programs in all three counties about the life and work of Dr. King, inviting the students to reflect and create individual quilt squares that symbolize what Dr. King's teachings mean to them today.

The quilt squares will be sewn together by the Dover quilting group

A Stitch in Time, and historical society educators will report on the progress on the historical society's blog. An unveiling of the finished project will occur at the Delaware History Museum later this year. The quilt then will be displayed in communities throughout the state in successive months.

If your school, church, or community center would like to participate in the project during February please contact Kathryn Peterson at 302.295.2388 or kpeterson@dehistory.org.

Celebrating Black History Month Art Loop - February 1, 2013

Szymanski Photo Exhibit
from the Collections of the Delaware Historical Society

800 French Street, City/County Building
5:30 - 8 p.m.

Reception and Refreshments



Elks Lodge Marching Band on the steps of Howard High School, ca. 1940

Online Catalog



One of the Delaware Historical Society's most important initiatives in the past two years has been the development of its online catalog, Ask Caesar, into a robust, fascinating, and useful guide to the Society's collections. Ask Caesar helps the Society's fulfill its goal of making Delaware history available to all through the use of modern technology. Much of the catalog's growth is the result of a recently completed two-year project funded by grants from the Institute for Museum and Library Services' Museums for American program and Crystal Trust.

Ask Caesar now has approximately 34,500 records! While this is not 100 percent of the Society's holdings, it includes many manuscript and photograph collections, all of the serials, newspapers, family history books, rare books, and Delaware imprints, and a room-by-room guide to the furnishings of the Read House, among other treasures. The catalog includes nearly 1,200 manuscript collections, over 12,400 photographs, and over 2,200 serial and newspaper titles.

Cataloged items include Wilmington street cleaners, 1907; suffrage and anti-suffrage documents from the Emalea P. Warner Suffragist Collection, and a photo of children in a tree taken after a snowstorm in front of E. Arnold Greebaum's house in Seaford, February 1901.

Anyone, anywhere, at any time, can now explore the Society's collections. To use the catalog, begin by visiting www.dehistory.org. Then, click on the link to Ask Caesar. This page has three buttons. The Library Catalog contains published materials such as newspapers, books, pamphlets, and maps. The Archives Catalog includes manuscript and photograph collections. The Objects Catalog provides access to items in our museum collections. Within each catalog, the search bar allows researchers to locate materials on their topic of interest. The next step is to plan a visit to the Research Library to use the materials.

The grant funds allowed the Society to hire four dedicated librarians and archivists—Joelen Pastva, Heather Isbell Schumacher, Natalie Baur, and Jennifer Matthews—who spent

their days creating the catalog records. Their contributions will be appreciated by researchers for years to come!

Ask Caesar is still a work in progress and we are seeking funding to continue the project. In the meantime, visit often—there's plenty to explore!



<http://www.dehistory.org/AskCaesar.htm>



Exhibitions and Programs

Gospel Sunday at World Cafe Live

February 24, 2013

2 p.m.

500 N. Market Street, Wilmington

On February 24 at 2:00 p.m. the Delaware Historical Society will partner with the World Cafe Live at the Queen to present a Gospel Sunday brunch performance featuring the Harlem Gospel Choir. The program is the first in a series to complement the society's exhibition, *Forging Faith, Building Freedom*, scheduled to open later this year on July 11, 2013. Tickets for the performance include a brunch buffet option. They can be purchased at www.worldcafelive.com.



Delaware's Tapestry

The Boys Who Wore the Green:

Songs and Stories of Irish Civil War Soldiers including Delaware's Own

Given by Mike Plunkett, Director of Music at St. Patrick's Church, Woodbury, N.J.

March 14, 2013

4 - 6 p.m. Delaware History Museum Open House

6 p.m. talk begins in Old Town Hall

Like a beautiful woven tapestry, Delaware's history is complex and colorful. In 2013 the Delaware Historical Society will celebrate the state's rich and diverse past through a variety of programs, exhibits, and events. Mark your calendars for a special presentation on March 14: *The Boys Who Wore Green: Stories of Delaware's Irish Civil War Soldiers*, which weaves together the stories of Irish Delawareans who served in the Civil War with music inspired by Irish regiments. Refreshments will be provided by Catherine Rooney's.



Civil War soldiers, 1862-65, unidentified soldiers of Delaware Infantry, Third Regiment

Forging Faith, Building Freedom

Forging Faith, Building Freedom, a special exhibition opening in the Delaware History Museum in July, will explore Delaware's many contributions to the development of African American faith and religious institutions in the United States, part of the nation's ongoing quest for freedom and equality for all.

The exhibition will honor four remarkable Delawareans who led in the development of independent African American churches in the early 1800s: Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, Samuel Cornish, and Peter Spencer. In Wilmington, Spencer made history when he founded the nation's first independent black denomination in 1813 and the Big August Quarterly, the nation's oldest African American festival, in 1814. The exhibition will also explore the diversity of African American faith experiences, the role of the black preacher, and the role of religion in the African American community.

The Delaware Historical Society is actively seeking information and exhibition materials for this project. If you have anything to offer, please contact Chief Curator Constance Cooper at 302-295-2385 or ccooper@dehistory.org.

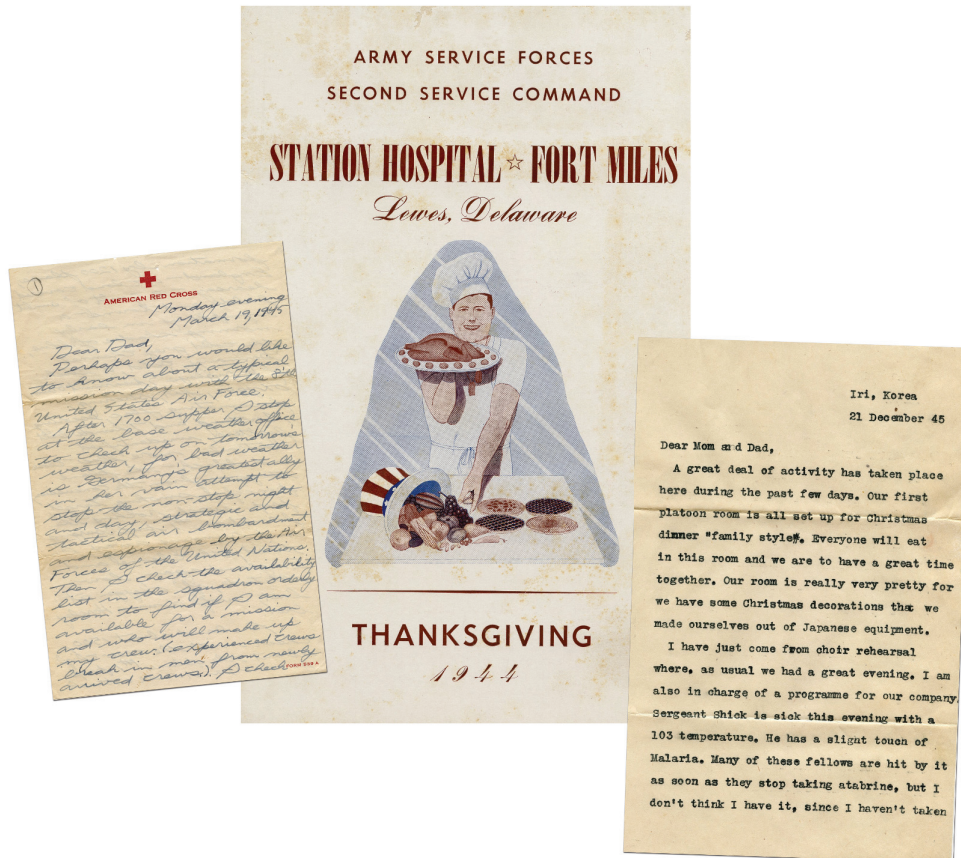


Two views of August Quarterly in 1939

Stories from our Collections

Preserving Your Veteran's History

Sandra O'Connell Minker



Each member of the armed forces brings home a personal story – one that is often not told or preserved. As veterans of past conflicts pass away, their letters and other documents often disappear while trunks and memorabilia are thrown out--and along with them, each family loses its own story. Consider creating a family veteran's history as a personal link to the past and as a means to preserve your own part of Delaware's history. Along with doing a family project such as a scrapbook or digital record, the letters, photos,

audio tapes, and other items could make a contribution to the Delaware Historical Society's collections.

Why does it matter? The history of World War II may not hold much interest until you know that Granddad hit the beaches on D-Day, flew missions over Germany, served on a destroyer in the Pacific, or landed on Guam. Learning that a great-aunt was a nurse in Korea or that Dad was in the jungles of Vietnam through the photos, letters, or tapes can make a connection to history that otherwise

might be lost. When we lose the individual stories we are in danger of losing the values that helped to make us free. We know who we are by understanding those who came before us.

A great way to begin is with the Veterans History Project (VHP). Created in 2000 by the Library of Congress, the VHP has more than 60,000 stories and photographs. It accepts memoirs and other historical documents from World War I through current conflicts. If your veteran is able and willing, this would be a great school or family project for a grandchild. Students need to be 10th grade or above to register online and conduct an interview. The guidelines for conducting an interview with a veteran are available at www.loc.gov/vets/pdf/fieldkit-2007.

For many families, their veteran's story is a bit of a mystery with many missing details. To do research on a veteran, it helps to have the Enlisted Record and Report of Separation form which contains service number, dates, unit, and occupational specialty. A major fire at the National Archives in 1973 destroyed many records, but it is worth making a request at www.archives.gov/veterans. Another resource is the history office for each branch of the service, which is responsible for maintaining combat information and unit histories. For veterans of WWII a helpful brochure, *Finding Information on Personal Participation in World War II*, is available at www.

A New Portrait



archives.gov/research/military/ww2/ww2-participation.pdf. The Korean War Project (www.koreanwar.org), created by the son of a veteran, is a comprehensive resource including database information on 2,100 units. A similar site for Vietnam (www.nam-vets.com) contains links to Online Units, Battles and Ops, and Resources. Many units from Korea and Vietnam as well as World War II have websites with photos and stories and ways to contact other veterans.

Nothing brings the past to life more than the actual uniforms, orders, log books, letters, or other items used in combat. If you have these items, they deserve to be preserved and may find a home at the Delaware Historical Society. Contact Dr. Constance Cooper, Chief Curator, at ccooper@dehistory.org or 302-295-2385 for more information.

Sandra O'Connell Minker is the widow of Ralph L. Minker, Jr. She is co-editor of *An American Family in World War II*, an award-winning book based on the Minker Collection of more than 800 letters and photos, housed at the Delaware Historical Society Research Library.

A fascinating portrait has been added to the Society's collections. A gift from the Jewish Federation of Delaware, this painting of two African-American girls, entitled *Sisters*, was created in 1955 by noted Delaware artist, Clara Stat Finkelstein (1885-1963).

Born in Russia, Clara Finkelstein immigrated to the United States as a child. Her family eventually settled in Wilmington, where she married Isaac B. Finkelstein, a local businessman and prominent supporter of the arts.

Clara Finkelstein came to painting relatively late in her life. She studied at the Wilmington Academy of Art from 1929 to 1932 and later became a charter member of the Studio Group, a group of women artists founded in Wilmington in 1935 that is still active. Clara Finkelstein worked in

a variety of media and was a painter, sculptor, and illustrator. She had her first solo exhibition of paintings with the Studio Group in 1939 and also exhibited her sculptures alongside other prominent Delaware women sculptors at the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts in 1940.

She was somewhat unusual in that she rarely parted with her work because her husband did not like her to sell it. As a result, much of her work still remains in the hands of private collectors, which makes this gift to our museum even more exciting. Unfortunately, we do not know the identity of the two girls or anything about the circumstances of the portrait's creation. If anyone has any information to add, please contact Jennifer Potts, Curator of Objects, jpotts@dehistory.org or 302-295-2389.

Telling Your Family Stories

On September 15, over 70 enthusiastic genealogists attended “Telling your African American Family Story: An Introductory Workshop” sponsored by the Delaware Genealogical Society and the Delaware Historical Society. Keynote speaker Shamele Jordon provided an inspiring introduction to the topic, while Syl Woolford presented a local perspective with an exploration of Wilmington’s East Side African American community as seen through the 1940 census. An introduction to photographic research and conservation by Jim Jones and an introduction to the Society’s Research Library by Chief Curator Connie Cooper provided additional resources. It was a great day for everyone who attended,



and plans are underway to continue the development of resources for African American genealogy. For more

information please contact Alicia Clark at aclark@dehistory.org

Annual Meeting April 25, 2013 5:30 p.m. Old Town Hall

The Annual Meeting of the Delaware Historical Society will take place on Thursday, April 25, at 5:30 pm. Following a short business meeting the historical society’s Collections and Access division will present and discuss interesting and notable objects, documents, and photographs from the Society’s collections. Please plan to join us for a special look at our historic collections.



Children in goat cart, 1905-1910, Snyder Collection

Celebrations!



Holiday decorations by Kuumba Academy, Old Town Hall



*Delaware Day celebrations,
December 7, 2012, Old Town Hall*



Delaware Historical Society Receives Grant from Crystal Trust

Crystal Trust has granted the Delaware Historical Society \$481,000 for Phase 1A of a master plan developed for the Read House and Gardens in 2012. The Read House and Gardens master plan includes relocation of educational classrooms from the third floor of the museum to the more accessible basement level. Mechanical and electrical upgrades are also part of in the master plan, which continues capital improvements begun with the 2009 exterior preservation of the Read House, partially funded by a Save America's Treasures grant. Phase 1A of the Master Plan will focus on initial steps to reconfigure the Read House basement and associated mechanical systems located in the space and is projected to begin in summer 2013.



Read House, photo courtesy of Priscilla Smith.

Sharing the Gift of History

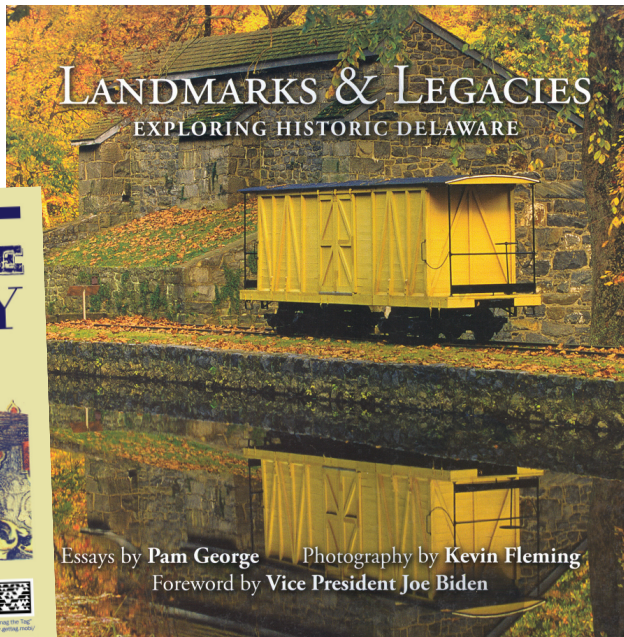
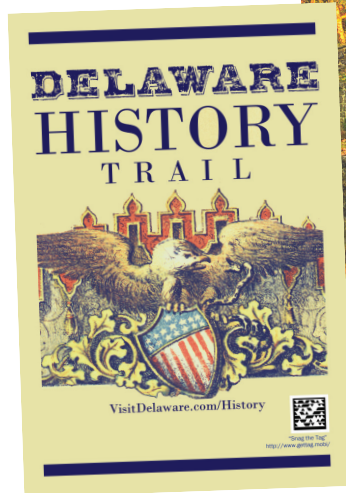
In 2012 the children of Howard and Shelley Kristol chose a memorable way to celebrate their parents' birthdays. Brothers Adam, Evan, Todd, and Drew Kristol and their spouses donated \$7000 to the Delaware Historical Society to develop an educational program for schoolchildren that will concentrate on the immigrant experience, with a special focus on their own Jewish heritage. With their donation, Howard and Shelley Kristol's children have honored their parents and selected a gift that will have an enduring impact on Delaware schoolchildren. The program is currently in development and



is planned to debut as an education program for teachers and third-

through sixth-grade students at the outset of the 2013-14 school year.

We're on the Trail!



Delaware History Trail

The state that started the nation invites you to explore the Delaware History Trail, a journey to experience the First State's historical treasures. The trail highlights significant locations statewide that have shaped the history of Delaware and our nation.

Explore Delaware History & Get your Passport

From the rolling hills of the Brandywine Valley to the sandy beaches of the Atlantic Ocean, this trail is just a starting point for travelers to take a step back in time and experience Delaware's rich historic past. We invite you to download the Delaware History Trail passport, complete the trail, and receive a limited-edition *Landmarks and Legacies* Delaware history book with engaging content on the history of Delaware, the locations featured along the trail, and outstanding photography by Kevin Fleming.

You'll visit gorgeous estates, historic sites, museums, and much more. Along the way, you'll get acquainted with famous figures from Delaware's past, from early pioneers to the creative minds driving America's Industrial Revolution. Come explore the trail and see what's so fascinating about Delaware history and heritage. Preview your journey at www.visitdelaware.com.

Letter from the Chair

The second half of 2012 was just as exciting as the first half for the Delaware Historical Society. September saw the opening of *Delaware Yesterday, Delaware Today: 1962 – 2012*. The exhibit will continue through March 2013. I encourage you to experience it.

The Master Plan for the Read House has been completed. It is an outstanding piece of work, and now the Buildings and Grounds Committee is considering the best course of action. A generous grant from Crystal Trust has enabled the initiation of these efforts.

Plans are well underway for the Delaware historical Society's Sesquicentennial Anniversary (150th Birthday), coming in 2014!!

As you can see, 2013 will be very active and exciting at the Delaware Historical Society!

Glen C. Gray, Chairman

★ ★ ★
www.dehistory.org



Friend us on Facebook!

Supporting the Delaware Historical Society

The Delaware Historical Society thanks the many supporters of the organization. Contributions to the Society come in many forms and from many sources: foundations, corporations, members, Annual Fund contributors, those making unrestricted gifts, those making in-kind gifts, governments, and many more. The Society is honored to have as many supporters as it does, and relies on them to help it fulfill its mission to explore, preserve, share, and promote Delaware history, heritage, and culture to strengthen our community through exhibitions, educational programs, publications, research resources, and outreach activities.

This mission is in pursuit of a vision - that of citizens inspired and empowered by Delaware history to shape the future, and of a historical society that, through the messages of our past, can be a transformative influence for Delawareans.

Again, thank you one and all!

Every effort has been taken regarding the accuracy of names. Any errors or omissions, which the historical society regrets, are the organization's responsibility. Please contact Wright Horne at (302) 295-2393 or whorne@dehistory.org.

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Borkee-Hagley Foundation
Crystal Trust
Fair Play Foundation
Longwood Foundation
Reynolds Rencourt Foundation
The Kenny Family Foundation

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The Delaware Society of the Cincinnati
Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Delaware

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Estate of Margaret Stafford

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Today, the historical society continues as the statewide, non-profit organization that explores, preserves, shares, and promotes Delaware history, heritage, and culture to strengthen our community through exhibitions, educational programs, publications, research resources, and outreach activities.

As the historical society continues to grow, as it continues to expand its programming to serve the increasing needs of Delaware and its citizens, it will be relying increasingly on its investment income from endowments to fund the initial start-up costs associated with these new initiatives. Therefore it is critical that the Society continues to add to its established endowment.

The Delaware Historical Society has numerous Planned Giving options. As you make legacy plans, please consider making a gift to the historical society. For more information, please contact Wright Horne, Chief Advancement Officer, at (302) 295-2393, or whorne@dehistory.org.

www.dehistory.org 



Think & Drink

Food & Beer Pairing

Mix a little history and great stories!

March 21, 2013

6 p.m. Old Town Hall

SAVE THE DATE!!!

- Short talk on the history on beer making
in Wilmington given by Hagley Museum & Library

- Short walking tour along Market Street given
by the Delaware Historical Society

- Beer tasting and
food pairing to be announced

For information: (302) 655-7161 or visit www.dehistory.org


Delaware
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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