In 1864 a group of civic leaders founded the Historical Society of Delaware, now known as the Delaware Historical Society, for “the elucidation of history, particularly such portions as may refer to Delaware.” In the 150 years since then, the Society has remained true to that mission, changing and growing over time.

The Society has always had a presence on Wilmington’s Market Street. After about fifty years in rented quarters, the Society purchased Old Town Hall in 1916, but did not move into the building until 1927. For many years, Old Town Hall housed the Society’s museum, library, and administrative offices. Throughout its first century, the Society’s collections focused on what was then considered important in the study of history—political, military, and economic history up to the Civil War. Activities consisted primarily of meetings at which members presented papers on historical topics, and then publishing those papers. The Society’s headquarters were open for the public to visit and do research.

Major change and growth began in the 1960s. By then facilities had become inadequate and a period of expansion began. In 1973, the former Artisan’s Savings Bank opened as the Research Library. The Read House and Gardens in New Castle, a historic house museum, came to the Society in 1975. In 1977, Willingtown Square provided additional offices and a small park. Finally, the Society acquired the Delaware History Museum in 1992.
The Society’s approach to history broadened as well, responding to changes in American society and the study of history. Collecting now focuses on all people and topics relating to Delaware, while a wide variety of exhibitions and programs appeals to people of all ages. Electronic media and traditional publications disseminate information on Delaware history in a variety of ways. In the 21st century as in the 19th, the Delaware Historical Society remains committed to “the elucidation of history, particularly such portions as may refer to Delaware.”

History is fluid, dynamic, ever-changing. As the old adage goes, history is hard to recognize when we are passing through it.

2014 marks the 150th anniversary of the Delaware Historical Society, and the organization has captured history’s dynamic qualities with the year’s theme “Where History Lives.” In reality, the year is a microcosm of the Delaware Historical Society’s previous 149. From lectures to publications, from a symposium to exhibitions, and from family days to Delaware Day, the Sesquicentennial year offers some First State history to all Delawareans. Those of you outside of Delaware can participate in activities virtually through the historical society’s website and social media programs.

Many, many historical society friends have invested considerable time, energy, and talent in planning for the organization’s milestone year. To all of them, I say thank you. Please spend some time with this edition of Making History. You will discover that history does indeed live at the Delaware Historical Society. I encourage you to be a part of this historic year by engaging with and supporting the Delaware Historical Society – your state historical society.

Scott W. Loehr, CEO
Exhibitions and Programs

Little Italy, Big Festival

The Historical Society will honor 130 years of Italian-American presence in Wilmington with an exhibit in the Willingtown Square Gallery to kick off the new year. Little Italy, Big Festival will examine the vibrant history of Wilmington’s west side, known as “The Hill” to early generations of Wilmington’s Italiani. Early settlers, businesses, cultural organizations, and the founding of Saint Anthony’s Parish will be explored along with the origins of the “mega celebration” Wilmington proudly calls its own, St. Anthony’s Italian Festival. This celebration is so popular that Italians from Italy are said to come to it! Rare photographs and memorabilia from the Society’s collections as well as materials from the Little Italy community will be on display through, appropriately enough, the Big Festival itself in June.

First Mass at Saint Anthony’s Church, March 28, 1926
(Sanborn Collection, Delaware Historical Society)

Mother’s Picnic, Italian Neighborhood House, 710 Lincoln Street, 1946
(Delaware Historical Society Collection)

Italian American Picnic in Wilmington, 1917
(Delaware Historical Society Collection)
Forging Faith, Building Freedom Opens

Forging Faith, Building Freedom: African American Faith Experiences in Delaware, 1800–1980, opened on September 26 with a joyous celebration. This exhibition reflects the contributions of many churches, individuals, and organizations in the African American community. Thank you!

7th Annual History Makers Award Program Honors Achievers in a Diverse Delaware

On the evening of September 12, the Trustees of the Delaware Historical Society welcomed 325 guests to the Chase Center on the Riverfront for an evening of celebration and inspiration as three remarkable individuals were named 2013 Delaware History Makers. The honorees – the eminent historian Dr. Carol Hoffecker, the Reverend Canon Lloyd Casson, and the late Father Roberto Balducelli – have each made extraordinary contributions to the First State and far beyond, and the awards generated an outpouring of respect and affection from all in attendance.

Keynote remarks by Governor Jack A. Markell reinforced the promise of Delaware’s future. With a foundation based on rich and diverse populations sharing histories and experiences, Markell spoke of working together to promote new models and technologies that will benefit all Delawareans while promoting the social and spiritual values that reinforce healthy, sustainable communities. The lively conversations of old and new acquaintances mixed with laughter, music, and thunderous applause as all paid tribute to the lives and accomplishments of the Society’s newest Delaware History Makers.

Honoree the Reverend Canon Lloyd S. Casson, The Honorable Jack A. Markell, and Honoree Dr. Carol E. Hoffecker

Left: Honoree the late Father Robert Balducelli; Right: Thank you to Co-chairs Niki Hawkins (left) and Melva Ware (right)
Read House & Gardens

Read House Hosts Collections Storage Workshop

On November 5 and 19, 2013, ten staff members and volunteers from cultural institutions in Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland participated in a two-part workshop at the Read House and Gardens. The participants first learned about creative and budget-friendly collections storage options and then applied the lessons to their own institutional collections storage challenges. Delaware Historical Society Objects Curator Jennifer Potts and Assistant CEO Michele Anstine participated in instructing the course, offering storage techniques used in the Read House and Delaware History Museum as examples. Funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services obtained by the Museum Studies at the University of Delaware, the workshop is part of a larger project designed to help sustain small cultural institutions in the region and promote collaborative learning among museum professionals, volunteers, and students.

Construction at the Read House in 2014

Between January and March 2014, the Read House will undergo construction. With a grant from Crystal Trust, the museum basement will be transformed into a space to accommodate student groups, meetings, and workshops. In addition, a first floor powder room will be renovated to meet current ADA standards. The renovations will promote a better visitor experience at the Read House and Gardens and will be unveiled in time for the busy spring school program season.
Stories from our Collections

Wilmington Life in Miniature: A New Acquisition

A modern miniature house is an exciting new addition to the Society’s collections. This new acquisition is the fourth of its kind to enter the Society’s collections, joining the ranks of the illustrious Civil War-era McComb Dollhouse and two other examples from the twentieth century. It has the distinction of being the most modern example to date. This new miniature house was donated by former Wilmingtonian, Laura Proctor, who not only owned it but also built it between 1991 and 1993.

The miniature house is an exact 1” to 1’ scale replica of Mrs. Proctor’s former home at 213 North Road in Wilmington. The original full-sized house was built in the 1920s in the Lindamere neighborhood, where the Proctors lived as the third owners of the house from 1980 to 1994. Mrs. Proctor became interested in miniature houses after attending a show about them and soon began making plans to build one of her own. Her project took shape over the course of two years in the wood shop at the Wilmington Senior Center, and when it was finished became a treasured family heirloom. Mrs. Proctor was also created most of the interior fittings and furnishings, which closely replicate what was in the house at the time.
Delaware Historical Society
by the NUMBERS

2014 marks the Sesquicentennial of the Delaware Historical Society!
Here are some fast facts about the Society’s 150 year history.

1864
Year the Delaware Historical Society was founded

23,000
Visitors to the Read House and Delaware History Museum each year

1946
First issue of our scholarly journal, Delaware History published

2,100
Number of titles in the serial collection

3,000,000
Number of items from Delaware’s history preserved in our collections

3
Dollar amount required for membership in the Society in 1864

30,000
Number of collection entries accessible via our online catalog, AskCaesar

34,892+
Number of items available in AskCaesar, our online public access catalog, with new entries added daily!

8,500
Unique visits to AskCaesar in 2013

500
Number of titles

5,000
Size of Society’s manuscript

50,000
Number of items in AskCaesar, our online public access catalog, with new entries added daily!
1895
Year women were first admitted as associate members of the Society

1927
Year Old Town Hall reopened after the Delaware Historical Society raised the money to purchase and restore the property

1986
Year first female president of the board Cynthia Hoagland was elected

22: Number of rooms in the Read House

1864.0001: Accession number of first item entered into the collection, alleged to be a piece of the boat in which George Washington crossed the Delaware River on Christmas Day, 1776, given by William Bringhurst

1975: Year Read House & Gardens was acquired by the Delaware Historical Society

74: Number of descendants who attended the Read House reunion in 2013

1725
Date of the oldest item in the Read House collections, a portrait of Catherine Van Gezel Ross, school of Gustavus Hesselius, which hangs in Mrs. Read's bedroom

2014
Year construction on the Center for African American Heritage begins

1864
Year required membership in 1864

2014
Year construction on the Center for African American Heritage begins

Volume 7, Issue 1  Winter 2014
150th Celebration at a Glance

JANUARY
History Lives Lecture Series
Abraham Lincoln in 1864
January 16, 2014
6:30 p.m.
Dr. John Stauffer, professor at Harvard University
Delaware History Museum

FEBRUARY
History Lives .... at the Old Courthouse
February 1, 2014
6:30 p.m.
Sesquicentennial Soirée

MARCH
History Lives Lecture Series
Frederick Douglass in 1864
March 13, 2014
6:30 p.m.
Dr. Wilson Moses, professor at Pennsylvania State University
Delaware History Museum

APRIL
DHS Annual Meeting
April 24, 2014
5:30 p.m.
Followed by a reception
Dr. Todd Croce, president & CEO of the Georgia Historical Society will speak on the state of public history.

MAY
History Lives Lecture Series
Lee & Grant in 1864
May 8, 2014
6:30 p.m.
Dr. Joseph T. Glatthaar, professor at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Delaware History Museum

History Lives ... in Odessa
May 18, 2014
1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
A gathering with a colonial theme with tours of the Historic Houses of Odessa, followed by dinner in the Old Bank Building.

Saturday Family Program: Encapsulating Our School
May 31, 2014
Delaware schools are invited to participate in a time capsule competition.

JUNE
History Lives .... at Fort Delaware
June 14, 2014
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
A family-oriented day. Take the ferry to Pea Patch Island and participate in period activities.

JULY
Saturday Family Program: Shopping the Sears Catalog at the Beach
July 19, 2014
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Join us for a look at how families spent their summers 100 years ago. Rehoboth Beach Historical Museum

AUGUST
History Lives .... at the Delaware Coast
August 23, 2014
1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
A day in Lewes focused on Delaware’s maritime history. Choose from a trip on the Cape May–Lewes ferry, tours of the Kalmar Nyckel, Overfalls Lightship, and Lewes. Followed by a seafood dinner.

SEPTEMBER
Saturday Family Program: Coming to America: Our Delaware Immigration Story
September 20, 2014
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Bring your family and your immigration story for a fun day of exploration.

OCTOBER
Recounting & Documenting the Delaware Civil Rights Movement Symposium with Delaware State University
October 2 and 3, 2014
Delaware State University Campus

DECEMBER
History Lives .... in Kent County
December 7, 2014
1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Celebrate Delaware Day in Dover. Tour the Dickinson Mansion, walk the Green to visit several significant buildings, and conclude at the Governor’s Mansion.
The Delaware Historical Society’s 150th anniversary will be commemorated with a array of programs and events with broad public appeal. These are a sample of some of the planned activities for the next four months. History Lives at the Historical Society - be a part of it!

**History Lives Lecture Series**  
**Abraham Lincoln in 1864**  
January 16, 2014, 6:30 p.m.  
Delaware History Museum  
Dr. John Stauffer, Harvard University professor, award-winning author, and noted historian, will discuss the life and influences of President Abraham Lincoln in our founding year of 1864.

**History Lives …at the Old Courthouse**  
**Sesquicentennial Soirée**  
February 1, 2014, 6:30 p.m.  
Dinner & Dancing / Valet Parking  
Black Tie Optional  
Various culinary stations created by the Wilmington Club  
Member $110 / Non-member $125  
Tickets on sale now! Call 302-655-7161 or visit dehistory.org

**History Lives Lecture Series**  
**Frederick Douglass in 1864**  
March 13, 2014, 6:30 p.m.  
Delaware History Museum  
Dr. Wilson Moses, Ferree Professor in American History at Pennsylvania State University, will discuss the life and works of Fredrick Douglass in our founding year of 1864.

**DHS Annual Meeting**  
April 24, 2013, 5:30 p.m., followed by a reception  
Delaware History Museum  
Dr. Todd Croce, president & CEO of Georgia Historical Society will speak on the state of public history.
Membership Listings and 2013 History Makers Award Support for the Delaware Historical Society

Due to timing issues with the production of the Winter 2014 issue of Making History, contributors will not be listed here, but will have a complete listing in the Spring 2014 issue. Many thanks to our many supporters.

History Makers Award sponsors are listed here, including table sponsors, since the event occurred in September 2013. They will be shown again in the Spring.

First State Stewards who entered through the membership process are included here. First State Stewards can also enter through the Annual Fund, and those extraordinary supporters will be recognized in the Spring issue.

Again, thanks to all of our supporters, members, annual funds contributors, foundations, corporations, individuals. We are a stronger, more relevant Society because of you.

Please call Wright Horne, DHS Chief Advancement Officer with comments or corrections, (302) 295-2393, or whorne@dehistory.org.

History Makers Award Sponsors
History Makers Premier Sponsor - $25,000 DuPont

History Makers Benefactor - $5,000 Aloysius Butler & Clark Glenmede Trust WSFS Bank

History Makers Leader - $2,500 The Brooks Fellowship Eastern States Group M&T Bank/Wilmington Trust University of Delaware Toni and Stuart B. Young

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Delaware History Museum | Research Library | Read House & Gardens | Old Town Hall | Willingtown Square
Letter from the Chair

History is not part of your life - it is your life!

As a member, you recognize the value in Delaware History, the newsletters, the discounts, the free or reduced admissions to our museums, gift shop, programs, and events.

However, as valuable to us as your membership is, memberships in the Delaware Historical Society do not pay all the expenses of a dynamic, growing organization. 

Today we are asking you to help support these ongoing activities:

• Educational programs for 15,000 Delaware schoolchildren.
• Care and management of the Historical Society’s three million objects reflecting our state’s history.
• The historic buildings of the Historical Society, including the Read House & Gardens, the Delaware History Museum, and Old Town Hall.
• Exhibitions, publications, events, workshops, and lectures for lifelong learners.

The Society relies on contributions to its Annual Fund to continue to build on its vision—a Society inspired and empowered by Delaware history to shape the future.

Please help the Historical Society continue its unique mission by going online to our secure website and contributing electronically at dehistory.org, or by calling the Delaware Historical Society Advancement Office at (302) 295-2392.

Again, thank you for your membership in the Delaware Historical Society. We hope to see you at our events and at our historic properties in the coming year!

Sincerely,
Glen Gray