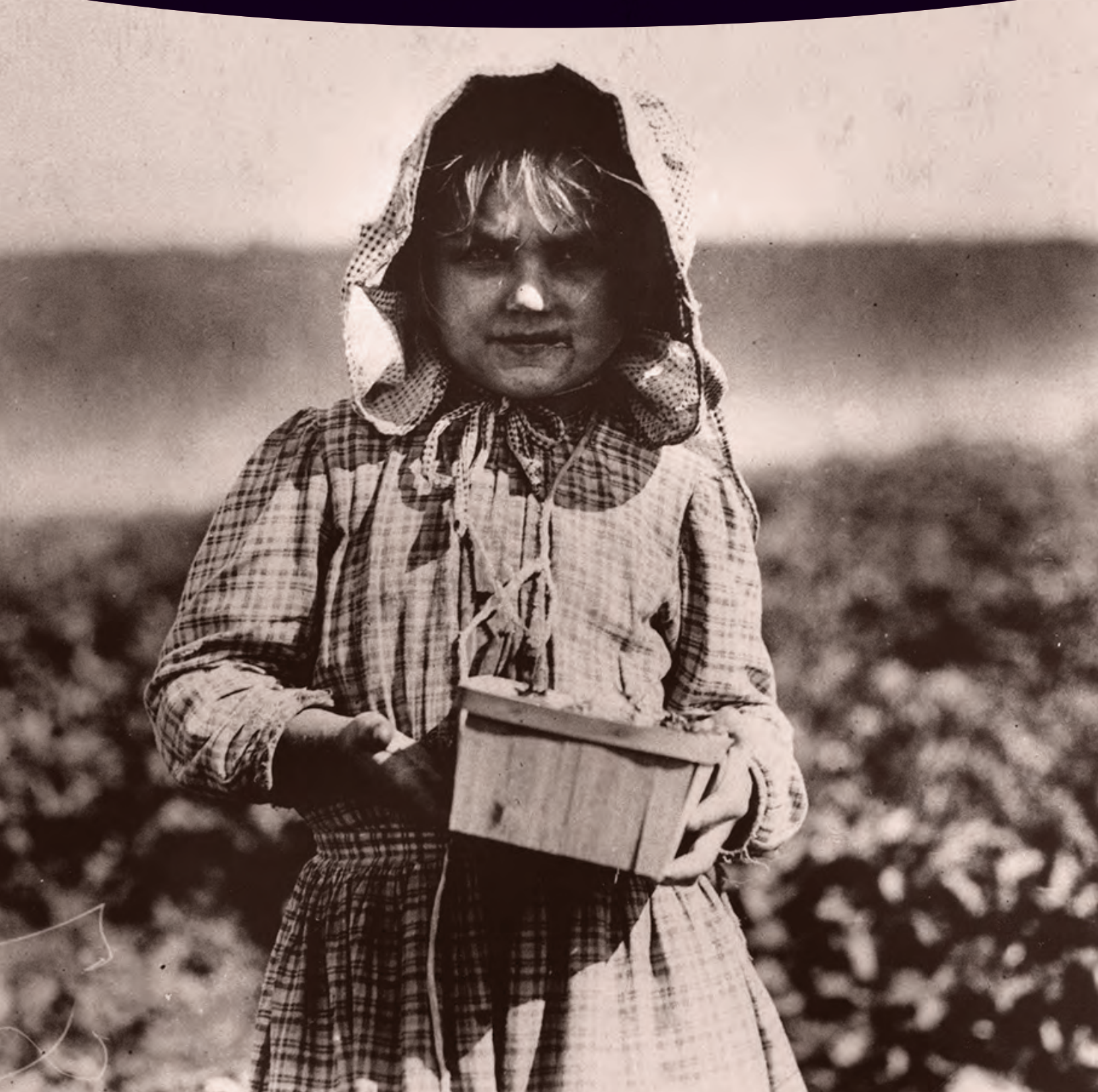


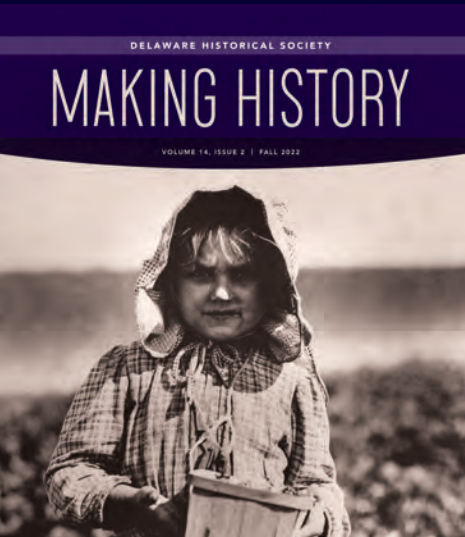
DELAWARE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MAKING HISTORY

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 2 | FALL 2022



Upcoming Programs	2
New Hires at DHS	3
Mitchell Center for African American Heritage	5
National History Day	7
Read House & Gardens Gathering	8
Guest Writer	9
Read House & Gardens	11
Education & Inspiration	13
Executive Director	15
Collections & Access	17
DHS Loyalty Circle	18
Hall of Fame Inductee	18
Special Thanks to Members & Donors	19



Cover: Alberta McNatt on Chester Truitt's farm at Cannon, Del. Alberta is 5 years of age and has been picking berries since she was 3, often from sun-up to sun-down. Cannon, Delaware. May, 1910. Documented by American photographer, Lewis W. Hine. This image is part of our Primary Source Set on child labor in Delaware. This set and others will be available on our website in January.

Delaware History Museum
 Mitchell Center for African American Heritage
 Old Town Hall
 Research Library
 Willingtown Square
 Read House & Gardens

dehistory.org

David W. Young, Ph.D.
 Executive Director



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I've had the honor of serving as the Executive Director since 2018. I will have presided over 5 annual meetings and many great programs. My favorite memories are of efforts supporting Delaware teachers—including showing the film *Harriet* to them and the ability for people to access our education packets on the dehsitory.org website. I've seen the Mitchell Center for African American Heritage become a community hub and embraced as a center for discussions about equity and justice in America. The Read House & Gardens in New Castle is now an innovative platform for community engagement and thoughtful consideration of what a National Historic Landmark can mean to many different stakeholders. DHS Research Library is now offering greater access to its collections and images. All while improving the care of our buildings and artifacts.

We live amid wonderful changes in the museum field: confronting challenging history, understanding that historic sites can't afford to be neutral, deploying technology to allow greater access to collections and resources,

and embracing the energy of multiple voices in discussion about sustainable ways to engage communities and make history useful.

DHS embarked this year on strategic planning in a process that embraced all of these aspects of our work. Thank you for taking part along with nearly 300 participants who offered thoughtful suggestions in our surveys and comments. The plan will guide goals and priorities for the next few years.

After November 30, I will retire to pursue other opportunities to write, research and participate in public history projects. DHS is primed to continue the momentum of our recent achievements. I thank you for all your support and hope you will continue to join DHS to move ahead as it continues to make Delaware history impossible to ignore.

"To everything there is a time and a season;" our Executive Director moves on to his next assignment. The Delaware Historical Society has been privileged to be led by Dr. David Young. David led the agency with grace and dignity. His passion for the job is infectious. He has grown the organization from what it was four years ago to the flourishing organization that it is today. He has increased diversity and inclusion for the organization with greater outreach to the community. Included in his many accomplishments is the staff he leaves behind. He has created a cohesive unit that will carry on the mission of DHS. David is a winner and DHS has benefited from his considerable talents and skills, experience, passion, and determination to get the job done. Thank you, David.

-Stephen Kingsberry, Chair, Board of Trustees

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

DECEMBER

1 | Papers Worthy of Patronage: Black Feminist Research Methods and the Digital Humanities with Dr. Kristin Moriah

Thursday, 6 – 7:30 p.m.
504 N. Market St., Wilmington, DE
Register online via: weblink.donorperfect.com/PapersWorthyofPatronage

Mary Ann Shadd Cary was a trailblazing Black feminist, activist, journalist, and educator whose achievements can be traced from Delaware, Washington, DC, and across Canada. Dr. Moriah will discuss her work on the first-ever edited collection on pioneering thinker Mary Ann Shadd Cary that centers innovative scholarly work from a broad range of interdisciplinary perspectives.

As we approach the 200th anniversary of Shadd Cary's birth in 2023, this collection will shine a new light on the importance of her work and the creative and scholarly work she has inspired.

3 | Holiday Market with YW Marketplace

Saturday, 12 – 4:30 p.m.
504 N. Market St., Wilmington, DE

DHS will host ten local and YW Marketplace vendors in the Copeland Room for a holiday market.

10 | The Spirit of Christmas in Historic New Castle

Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
42 The Strand, New Castle, DE

As part of an annual townwide tradition in Historic New Castle, the Read House & Gardens will open its doors free of charge during The Spirit of Christmas in Historic New Castle. Beyond the Read House, visitors will find carolers on the streets, private residences open for viewing, and refreshments available for purchase.

10 | LIT for the Holidays

Saturday, 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.
42 The Strand, New Castle, DE

A modern holiday tradition continues with installations by artists from near and far. Don't miss the grand illumination of this year's displays with a magical evening at one of America's most beautiful historic houses. Grab a drink and explore the interiors or settle down next to crackling fire in the gardens with local food and music. Like the generations before us who saw and decorated the Read House & Gardens through the lenses of their own times, the artists and community who come together at LIT for the Holidays help us find new ways of seeing this National Historic Landmark.



17 | Pre-Kwanzaa Celebration

Saturday, 1 – 3 p.m.
504 N. Market Street, Wilmington, DE

The Jane and Littleton Mitchell Center for African American Heritage invites families to come together to prepare for *Kwanzaa* observances through making art, experiencing performances, and learning the history of this African American tradition.

Kwanzaa is an African American and pan-African celebration centered on valuing family, community, and culture. Created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor of Africana Studies, this seven-day cultural festival begins December 26 and ends January 1.

This is a pay what you wish event.



17 | Community Planning Meeting for the Read House & Gardens Landscape

Saturday, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
42 The Strand, New Castle, DE
Register via: readhouseandgardens.org/landscape

Join the third of four community stakeholder meetings on the future of the Read House & Gardens landscape! Our partners at DAVID RUBIN Land Collective will present speculative design ideas for community feedback. This project, launched in August with funding support from the State of Delaware, aims to make the complex cultural landscape at this National Historic Landmark sustainable for future generations through a sensitive dialogue between preservation and contemporary design. We hope you'll add your voice to the diverse group of stakeholders helping us activate thousands of years of history, both visible and invisible.



NEW HIRES AT DHS!

Rick Stowell was recently hired as the DHS Foundations and Grants Manager. He grew up in California and started his undergraduate work at UCLA. His writing career began with an internship for the L.A. Weekly where he was an event reporter for the local rock music scene. He completed his education at Rutgers College and since then has lived in Paris, New York City, and Florida. He currently lives in southern New Jersey on a property he and his wife, Kim, call Dead Man's Dollar Farm. If you are looking for him, a great place to start is his greenhouse.

Rick got his first teaching job at a community college in 1988 and spent more than 30 years as a teacher of literature and writing. What no one mentioned at the time he was hired was that his program was grant-funded, and he was the person responsible for maintaining the grant. "You learn in a hurry when your job depends on it," he said. Throughout his career as a teacher, grant writing continued to be an important part of his responsibilities. After retiring from teaching, Rick continued his writing career, self-publishing three successful novels. He continues to write and publish fiction and maintains a rock history website. He has three grown children with strong family ties.



DHS welcomed **Bryttany Ewers** as the new Administrative Assistant in early August. Bryttany graduated from the State University of New York at Fredonia in May with her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with minors in English and Criminal Justice.

Bryttany was born in Jamaica and moved to upstate New York when she was 9 years old. An interest in attending law school at Widener University drew her to Delaware where she lives with her aunt. Bryttany's interest in the law was spurred by work in various positions at real estate and corporate law offices while she was in college. She is especially drawn to nonprofit work and hopes to one day run her own nonprofit organization.

Bryttany takes her role as the first point of contact for many visitors and callers seriously. She strives to represent DHS as a friendly and open environment and wants people to know that she's ready to help them get to the resources they seek.

Debbie Harper joined DHS mid-August as the Read House & Gardens Curator of Education. She comes to us after a long tenure as Senior Curator of Education at Winterthur where she left behind a large footprint of tours, exhibitions, and programming, including Yuletide. You may also recognize her from her 1992 *Delaware History* journal article on the preservation movement in Old New Castle, which remains the authoritative resource on the topic. Debbie worked briefly at the Read House 30 years ago, curating an exhibition on historic preservation.

She describes what she enjoys about museum work, "I love the connections I can facilitate among collections, stories, and people past and present. There is nothing more satisfying than to hear a visitor say,



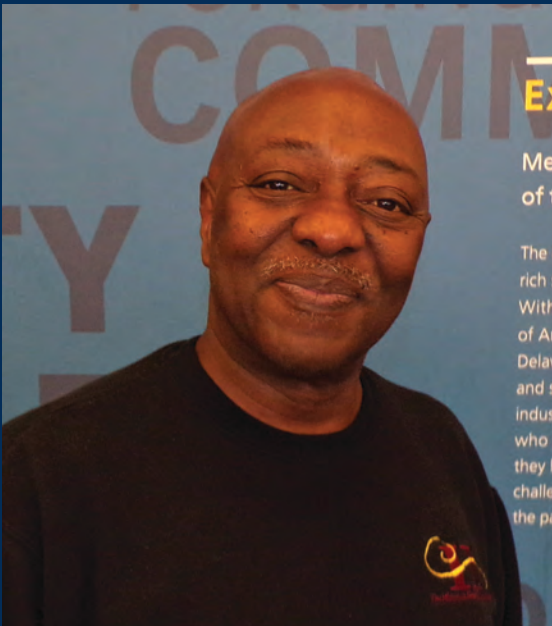
‘Wow, I never thought about it that way before!’ and to realize that someone’s world view has just shifted, has just expanded, and I played a part in that.”

Debbie’s undergraduate degree is in music and still enjoys singing. She lives in Kemblesville, PA with her husband (and frequent museum volunteer), Al. They have two grown daughters, Janice and Audrey.

DHS welcomes **Ashley Mills** as the new Director of Buildings & Grounds. Ashley brings a wealth of facilities management experience from his previous position as Facilities Manager the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California. He also served as Facilities Manager at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre and the Wilma Theatre in Philadelphia. Before working in facilities management, Ashley was a Master Electrician for live regional theatre, setting up and running the lights for plays, and dance performances throughout New England. Ashley’s career has always centered around non-profit organizations. He gets satisfaction out of serving the community through them.

Ashley will help us with many building and gardens projects, support completion of the Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response Plan and guide his Board committee and our staff on long-range planning for our buildings as outlined in the new strategic plan. A fascination with how systems work drives his curiosity and success in his field. He commented that DHS has some very interesting buildings and he’s eager to get to know them better.

In his leisure time, Ashley enjoys indoor rock climbing, cooking, and baking. Originally from Canada, he now calls Bear, Delaware home. He is eager get to know all about the First State and its history.



Happy Retirement, Thomas!

After enjoying his endearing nature, easy laugh, and expertise in a seemingly endless array of DHS building and maintenance issues for nearly 24 years, DHS bid a very fond farewell to Thomas Jones.

Thomas began delivering papers at age 13 and hasn’t stopped working since. After a long career in the upholstery business and numerous other positions, Thomas began a job with Downtown Visions which led him to DHS. He wasn’t sure he was a good match for the job but credits a heartfelt pep talk from then Executive Director Barbara Benson with giving him the confidence to persevere. According to Thomas, “Through the years, every executive director has supported me and given me countless opportunities to learn new skills. Every morning, I wondered what the day would bring. It’s been wonderful!”

Thomas fondly remembers the kindness and friendship of his many colleagues over the years and says he will take his time and weigh his options regarding what to do next. *Thank you for everything Thomas, we will all miss you!*



Who is Buried Alongside Peter Spencer?

DHS JOINS THE SEARCH

by Ivan Henderson

Delaware Historical Society staff members, Diamante Cornish and Alan Parkes, are engaged with the City of Wilmington, Mother African Union Church, and several community partners in a search for the identities of the people who were reinterred alongside Peter Spencer (1782-1843) and his wife Annes in the crypt within the modern Peter Spencer Plaza in downtown Wilmington. This was the original location of the Union Church of African Members, established by Reverend Spencer and others in 1813 as the first, wholly independent Black denomination in the country. In the 1960s and 1970s, the church sanctuary was demolished, and an unconfirmed number of individuals from the original cemetery were disinterred and placed within the crypt

along with the Spencers. It is commonly acknowledged that the remains of Reverend Spencer and his wife, Annes, are interred there, but the names of the others have yet to be confirmed. When Debra Martin, Historic Preservation Planner for the City of Wilmington, spoke to us about this project I understood immediately its potential alignment with ongoing efforts at the Mother African Union Church, whose members and leaders consider the history, legacy, and philosophy of Peter Spencer a large part of their foundational strength.

Since starting at the Delaware Historical Society and taking over the directorship of the Jane and Littleton Mitchell Center for African American Heritage, I have rediscovered the importance of Peter Spencer and many of his contemporaries whose legacies endure to this day in Black churches across the state, region, and country. The founding of these churches, their incorporation as businesses, and the vital role in African American community life these institutions have played for centuries is rightly linked to the names of the visionary leaders whose words and actions led the way. At the same time, the sustaining of those original visions of black religious freedom—indeed, the sustaining of many aspects of culture as we know it—has been the responsibility of countless generations of Black communities connected by their beliefs, common points of ancestry, and resiliency in the face of historic struggle. Those unnamed contemporaries of Peter Spencer who were buried alongside him represent that sustaining force, and are being paid new attention through our work.

This project would be appropriate for the Mitchell Center for African American Heritage and Delaware Historical Society staff to take on in any year, but the potential impact is significantly increased by the ongoing relationship-building we have engaged with Mother African Union Church prior to my time here, and since I have been here. For the past six months, our staff members have engaged as thinking partners with the Peter Spencer Heritage Hallway group and other officials at the Church as they plan to revamp the look and function of exhibition space within the church which highlights the history and philosophy of Peter Spencer, while also linking it to the generations of worshipers and community servants who have called that church (and all churches born from Spencer's activism)



Alan Parkes and Diamante Cornish



home. Also, through museum programming and promotional partnership, we highlighted both the occasion and the importance of the annual Big Quarterly gathering this summer, as we have in years past. For these reasons, our conversation about this new project with Reverend Whitaker and leaders at Mother Africa was productive and based in part upon positive, consistent progress in the development of our relationship to this point.

The fact is that we are not certain *who* is buried there in Peter Spencer Plaza; indeed, we may find that there is no “there” there, in terms of new information to be shared with the broader community. Still, this inquiry and research is an important stage in the pursuit of justice for all people, especially those whose identities history may have forgotten. It also happens to be a potentially critical step in the growth and development of two staff members who are emerging in our field. We strive at the Mitchell Center for African American Heritage and DHS to maintain readiness to pursue these opportunities to advance our collective knowledge and understanding of Black History. Our role in our statewide cultural and historical ecosystem depends upon our continued efforts to build, renew, and reinforce relationships with partners like Mother Africa and the City of Wilmington.

NOT A MEMBER?

In addition to unlimited free general admission, benefits of DHS memberships include invitations to members-only programs and discounts on museum store purchases and special event tickets. All members also receive complimentary subscriptions to the *Delaware History Journal*, Delaware's journal of scholarship since 1946, and our magazine, *Making History*.

And don't forget, a DHS membership makes a great gift!
Visit dehistory.org/membership to learn more!

scan here!



NATIONAL HISTORY DAY IN DELAWARE

by Rebecca Fay



Last spring DHS hosted the first in-person National History Day in Delaware state contest since 2019. Students throughout the state competed to represent Delaware at the national contest in June 2022. The theme of *Debate & Diplomacy in History* inspired students to conduct research and create projects on topics like Shirley Chisholm, Summer of Love in Haight Ashbury, the debate over lobotomies, seatbelt mandates, and much more. Below we have provided an excerpt from the 1st place Senior division research paper entry by Harry Murphy, an 11th grade student at St. Andrew's School in Middletown, DE.

"Freedom At the Cost of Dishonor:"

Diplomacy for a Doomed Ethnicity, Debate Over Bartering Human Misery,
and the Schacht-Rublee Plan to Emigrate Jews from the Third Reich

In the theater of diplomacy, human welfare rarely takes absolute precedence over the nation-state: in other words, diplomacy is often a complex calculus between economy, politics, and morality which does not always result in maximizing human life. With the Kristallnacht pogroms in 1938, the Nazi's dogged pursuit of German Jews towards "Final Solution" was long underway, yet diplomatic efforts to emigrate Jews from the Third Reich were unsuccessful, and at times non-existent. Hitler sneered that he would send the Jews "even on luxury ships" as Western nations hesitated to open their borders, and German Jews were left to a prosecutorial fate until American diplomat George Rublee met Nazi Economics Minister Hjalmar Schacht to architect the Schacht-Rublee plan—a final diplomatic attempt that aimed to liquidate one-quarter of Jewish-owned assets into an emigration fund composed of foreign loans to increase Nazi exports. The Schacht Rublee Plan was an ambitious last stroke to attach economic value to an ethnicity in the clutches of genocide.

To read more scan,
the following QR code:



To learn about NHD, please visit:
dehistory.org/learn/national-history-day

“There Never Was a Night Like This”

by Brenton Grom



Lynne Howard, Ivan Henderson, Vice President for Programing & Director of the Mitchell Center for African American Heritage, & Don Brown

Much like the vibrant Read House & Gardens of today, sparkling personalities were the secret ingredient in its preservation more than a century ago. Lydia and Philip Laird were just 25 and 32 when they restored the house with a vision for bringing people together through historical imagination. Prohibition laws were no obstacle.

After months of sleuthing and list-making by staff and trustees, descendants of the relatives and friends who appeared in Philip and Lydia’s guest register in the 1920s and 30s came together for a magical evening in mid-September. They shared photographs and memories, and we learned new things about the people who once shaped this property as owners, employees, and guests.

Board Chair Stephen Kingsberry presented Peg Laird, a niece of Lydia and Philip Laird, with the first annual DHS Board of Trustees Distinguished Service Award for her dynamic tenure as chair.

In the words of Charles Owens, a party guest in 1927, *“there never was a night like this!”*



Guests seen mingling from the back door

Left: David Craven, Marty Laird, Scott Laird, & Brenton Grom, Director of the Read House & Gardens

Middle: Guest register p. 8 (March 18, 1927)



ALL ROADS LEAD TO HISTORY

by John Sweeney

Our guest writer, John Sweeney, is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Delaware Historical Society. He is the former editorial editor at *The News Journal*.

Lately, when I am stuck in I-95 traffic, I start thinking of how much of my life I spent driving up and down that road. I can't count that high.

I began traveling on it long before it was finished. When I was in the Air Force in North Carolina, groups of airmen would pile in cars and drive home on 95 for an occasional long weekend. We would make time on 95's completed sections, but then we had to slow down when we came to a gap in the highway. They were all too frequent. Speed traps were everywhere on local roads and being in the military didn't win you any breaks.

We often wondered what would happen when Interstate 95 was completed.

A lot, as it turned out.

Most of it wasn't expected. People delighted in the idea of crisscrossing the country and suburban homes with lawns. But nobody pictured hollowed-out downtowns, divided neighborhoods, or long-distance commuting. All we wanted was to get home for a weekend. We weren't anticipating a historical shift.

Highways and even roads are like that. They are built for one thing, then something else happens.

Take the Kirkwood Highway. The road was supposed to link the small college town of Newark and the big city of Wilmington. As Carole E. Hoffecker notes in her book "Corporate Capital: Wilmington in the Twentieth Century," engineers just planned to give a little boost to the traffic on the two-lane country road known as Capital Trail. "When the Kirkwood Highway was finally completed some 20 years after its planning," Hoffecker wrote, "the results were quite different. It became the magnet for an instant strip city of retail sprawl surrounded by equally planless residential sprawl."

Some call it sprawl. Others call it home. With the coming of the G.I. Bill after World War II, federal government-backed mortgages made suburban living possible for thousands of working-class veterans and their families. You can praise the "home-of-your-own" dream or lament the inherent racial discrimination in many of these mortgage programs, but the fact is that long strip of asphalt between Wilmington and Newark changed Delaware history.

Roads bring big changes even when they are planned. My favorite story is the tale of T. Coleman du Pont's "Boulevard." More than one hundred years ago, du Pont proposed building a highway from the southern end of Delaware to the northern end. With a 200-foot right-of-way, it would include every type of land transportation known -- cars, trollies, horses and buggies, and walking lanes. Once completed, it would be run by a non-profit organization, an early transportation authority. And, best of all, he promised to pay for it himself.



DuPont Highway, ca. 1920

Top left: Aerial view of Kirkwood Highway, 1956



DuPont Highway, ca. 1917

➤ Want to see more images like these? Visit our digital collections site at digital.dehistory.org to access a rich variety of digitized material related to the history of Delaware. New items are added regularly, so check back often!



Well, things didn't work out that way. One of his problems was the suspicious nature of some Delaware politicians and residents in Sussex County. Back then, many Delawareans had a hard time imagining why a paved highway was needed. Dirt roads were good enough.

But they weren't and Coleman du Pont clearly saw that. Rain and snow caused most of Kent and Sussex roads to be unusable. The condition of the roads forced farmers and businesses to depend on the railroads, which, in turn, charged as much as they could. Even The New York Times noted how isolated from the rest of the world southern Delaware was.

Despite political opposition, legal challenges, rising costs, and inevitable design changes, the DuPont Highway today runs from the length of the state: U.S. 13 from Wilmington to Dover, and U.S. 113 from Dover to Selbyville.

Coleman du Pont had a hunch that good roads would bring southern Delaware into the modern world. He was right. What he didn't see was the effect his road would have on state politics, houses, factories, family vacations, and, especially, gas-and-go stops.

We shouldn't be surprised. So the next time you're driving on I-95, Kirkwood Highway, or Coleman du Pont's "Boulevard," you're not just on a road. You're driving on history.

Scan the following QR codes to view **Building I-95: A Community Divided**, a virtual program discussing the history of the planning, development, and impact of Interstate 95 in the City of Wilmington, Delaware.



“*Plus ça change...*”:

MANAGING CHANGE AT A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

by Brenton Grom

The thing about gardens is that they grow. If you tend to a building, you can keep its architecture looking more or less the same for generations, even centuries. But even the best-tended gardens continue to mature. Tree canopies unfurl, microhabitats shift, and plantings reach the ends of their lives. The more things stay the same, the more they change.

People change too. We can hardly resist altering our environments. Gardeners tinker with their private gardens from year to year, and communities often rethink public parks once every generation or two.

When we announced plans in August to renew and transform the Read House & Gardens landscape for the next generation, no one knew exactly how that would look. There’s no such thing as restoring it to “the way it was,” because so many people have shaped it across time.

That includes DHS. A 1990s restoration campaign used photographs from the 1880s and 1900s to recapture elements of the Couper family’s gardens, whose 1847 design is mostly undocumented. It’s hard to say what had already changed during those years under the stewardship of Richard George, John Beath, and Aaron Roz, African American gardeners who must have been key players in managing its natural evolution.

Meanwhile, thousands of years of Lenape culture and prosperity are documented underground, nearly erased from memory along with the strife introduced by Dutch settlers.

George Read I and his wife Gertrude are mostly invisible too. They made continual improvements, including grafted apple trees and a wall along the river bank to mitigate flooding. George II had even grander ambitions, but a shortage of funds meant that most of today’s enclosed garden remained a utilitarian space until William Couper purchased it.

The idea of history as pleasure blossomed under Philip and Lydia Laird in the 1920s. Their pool, arbors, and yacht basin—all gone or fading now—created private retreats for invited guests. Today,

Laird swimming pool, 1949





David A. Rubin (left) in Land Collective's Philadelphia studio

through Lydia's generosity, the gates are open to all. Perhaps we'll want to hang onto that feeling of entering a magical space carved out of history—a space worth leaving your home to come and experience.

Funded by the State of Delaware, we've partnered with the award-winning firm of DAVID RUBIN Land Collective to turn these questions into a plan. The wisdom of our contemporary Read House & Gardens community is built into the process through a series of meetings with community, staff, trustees, and advisors of the Read House & Gardens and Mitchell Center for African American Heritage.

As they've done at Newfields (Indianapolis Museum of Art), Winterthur, the National WWI Memorial, and elsewhere, Land Collective's design acumen is helping us weave together the complex fabric of Read House & Gardens history. We look forward to finalizing a design concept early next year that will make this landscape socially, financially, and environmentally sustainable for years to come.



LGBTQ+ HISTORY



Delaware's rich LGBTQ+ history and activism are often overlooked, but they can provide promising insight into a past that helps Delaware navigate continued struggles. Recognizing how such histories can inspire students, the Education & Inspiration team is working to bring Delaware's LGBTQ+ history to life with a new Primary Source Packet. Collaborating with CAMP Rehoboth in Sussex County, and continuing work that started in June 2020 with an LGBTQ+ research project, we are creating resources for teachers and students that features newspapers, oral histories, pictures, and more to highlight the importance of the state's LGBTQ+ communities and history.



Images provided by Murray Archibald, CAMP Rehoboth

LESSON PLANS AVAILABLE NOW!

Featuring eight lesson plans for students in grades 3-12, the Liberty in our Grasp lessons utilize the historical society's primary sources to teach about enslavement in Delaware. Designed and field tested by Delaware teachers, for Delaware teachers, these lessons will help educators meet the requirements of House Bill 198, that mandates that teachers in grades K-12 incorporate Black History into the curriculum. All lessons meet Learning for Justice's Teaching Hard History Framework as well as Delaware State standards and are offered free of charge. Visit our website at dehistory.org/liberty-in-our-grasp to view and download the lessons.

"Liberty in Our Grasp" lesson plans were developed through a partnership between the Delaware Historical Society and the Hard History Project with financial support from the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs and M&T Bank.

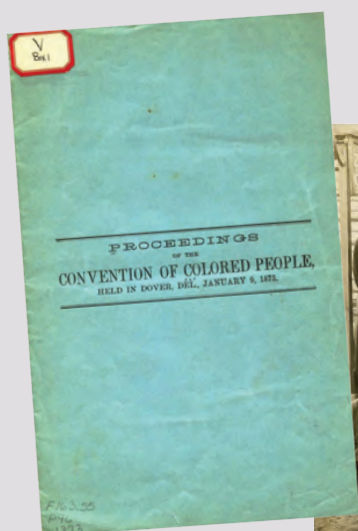


PRIMARY SOURCE SETS



In January, the Education & Inspiration team will launch a new webpage dedicated to primary source sets. These primary source sets will be valuable to educators throughout the school year, covering topics that tie Delaware to national and international history. The primary source sets can be used in several ways; as individual warm-up or exit ticket activities or part of a more sustained class lesson, incorporating think-pair-shares, gallery walks, or any other group or pair activities as well as whole-class discussions. Each set provides an overview of the topic that the sources represent and includes questions designed to encourage students to do their own historical interpretation. We are excited to offer this resource for teachers to incorporate into their lessons throughout the school year.

>> While you wait for the new Primary Source Sets, scan the following QR code to view our available Primary Source Packets!



The Lessons of Berlin's Public History

REFLECTIONS ON A RECENT TRIP TO GERMANY

by David Young

Berlin is a city where the scars of history are visible. At nearly every corner one confronts layers of memory of the horrors of the Holocaust, ruins recalling the catastrophic period as capital city of the militaristic and Nazi regimes, and the divisions resulting from Cold War power politics and repressive regimes. Today, 30 years after it became the capital of a reunified Germany, the enormous investment in the museums, monuments, and markers—the memory infrastructure—shows why Berlin is considered the “Rome of Public History.” The layers of its history are brutal and tragic, and the efforts to reveal them are compelling.

I was honored to represent the Delaware Historical Society at the 6th World Conference of the International Federation of Public History in Berlin this August. The conference had originally been planned for 2020, but the Covid pandemic delayed the international gathering twice. 200 presenters from around the world submitted—and then resubmitted—proposals about issues facing the field such as decolonizing artifacts, interpreting difficult and shocking history, monument and culture wars, and the role of that new ways of telling history provides opportunity to consider diversity, agency, and authority in an age of rising xenophobia.

I spoke at the conference about applying “effective public history” to our work in Delaware. My session addressed DHS’s work on the “Unequal Justice in Delaware” project and the challenges and opportunities the collaboration with multiple partners presents. The session covered challenging topics in memorializing tragic events and my colleagues presenting came from universities in the Netherlands, Spain, and South Africa. The conference, like the city itself, combined personal and scholarly approaches to digital public history, community engagement, and repatriation of artifacts wrongfully taken from other countries. In many ways the city itself was the main topic.

The conference plenary was held at Checkpoint Charlie—location of Cold War confrontations at the Berlin Wall. Now it is a neighborhood with retail shops where once stood barbed wire and watch towers. I had the opportunity to visit with local museum leaders who are hard at work engaging the layers of history so that people swept up in global political changes do not have their histories erased. In Berlin this includes Jewish citizens, Germans who resisted the Nazis, as well as East Germans whose schools and churches created communities even amid Cold War efforts to suppress them.



The Mirror Wall Memorial located commemorates the deportation of the Jewish people of Berlin

Brass plaque commemorating Dorothea Less, one of the 6,000 Stumble Stones located in Berlin

Berlin's public history offers examples which Delaware might consider. One community art project originally begun in the 1990s, the *Stolpersteine*—Stumble Stones—bears witness at locations where someone killed during the Nazi regime had previously lived. Brass plates placed into the street with a name and dates now total over 100,000 in Germany and nearly 6,000 in Berlin. My American neighbor had recently installed two in June and we visited those markers. This once crowd-sourced commemoration project has evolved into its own foundation that coordinates research and marker installation ceremonies that recall a person, names them, and expands the public memory infrastructure. In a city with memorials and monuments to Soviets, Cold War resistance fighters, Jewish, Gypsy, and Homosexual victims of Nazism, among many others, the most powerful monuments may well be these small stone markers that give agency to individuals who may otherwise be forgotten. Once you see one *Stolperstein*, you notice them all through the city.

The Jewish Museum in Berlin was profoundly moving because the intentional architecture pushes one to reckon with the void of memory and catastrophic loss of the Holocaust. The layers of history and the combination of art, public installations, and historic artifacts really jolts one in ways I can only begin to describe. The doors in the museum are purposely heavy, the sounds of metal in one gallery can be heard in others, and there are very few level floors to stand one, so that one is reminded that all in the world is not stable. And yet, people move on and engage with the history as part of life in the city.

My wife and I joined historians attending the conference to see the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Five hours there and we could have stayed longer. The site uses its buildings and watch towers as exhibition stations. I spent an hour in one absorbing the kiosks displaying interviews about just how much the town knew the crimes going on in the camp. The provocative interpretation grew from honest research in ways engaging, compelling, and experiential—putting one right there. This was at once depressing and inspiring because the hard work of making difficult history useful is especially critical now with the reemergence of anti-Semitism and political attempts to censor honest research into what happened in the past.

In presenting to the conference about work in Delaware, I learned a lot about how museums can do better to ensure that victims, witnesses, and bystanders all face the past with applications in the present and future.



Middle: David Young presenting at the 6th World Conference of the International Federation of Public History
Right: IFPH Conference poster

"SHOESHINE, SIR?"

by Kathleen Butler

Growing up in the Southbridge area of Wilmington in the 1950s offered few options for children trying to make money, according to DHS Trustee Gregory Chambers. He said, "You could either gather rags or broken bottles to be recycled and paid according to their weight, or you could shine shoes." At the age of 10 in 1959, Chambers chose to shine shoes. After purchasing his own shoe-shine kit, he would walk from his home in Southbridge to fourth and Market and work his way up Market Street all the way to 44th street. On particularly successful days, he would take a bus back to Southbridge.



Gregory Chambers, DHS Trustee

Chambers would recite his mantra "shoeshine, sir?" countless times as he made his way up Market Street. He recalls in those days there was an array of clothing and grocery stores, restaurants, and car dealerships along with a great deal of foot traffic up and down the busy street. A smart polish and shine on your shoes were the mark of a well-dressed and successful person. It was especially important for the many salesmen Chambers encountered on his journey.

For the low price of just 15 cents, Chambers would not only shine your shoes, but he would also offer a bit of entertainment. He learned to brandish his shine cloth with style, pop and flourish and always added a bit of spit to enhance the shine. Though he was shy as a boy and still considers himself an introvert, Chambers learned that by engaging his customers in conversation and getting to know a bit about them, he built himself a very loyal customer base.

The valuable lesson of engaging with customers and really listening to people has served Chambers well throughout his life. He majored in Behavioral Science in college with an emphasis on psychology and sociology. His career is a string of accomplishments where his special gifts of engagement and communication took center stage. He served as a community relations liaison between the Wilmington Police Department and the community, eventually supervising others in this role throughout the city. He was Director of Community Affairs under Mayor Bill McLaughlin. Gregory was appointed by Mike Castle and worked as the Equal Employment Opportunity Affirmative Action Administration for 24 years before retiring in 2009. From 2009 to 2020, he worked at the Delaware River and Bay Authority and retired as the Senior Human Resources Business Partner.

Chambers remembers his days shining shoes on Market Street fondly and is grateful that he was able to discover the thread that carried him through a hugely successful career and a very happy life at such an early age. And to this day, he never passes up the opportunity to stop and enjoy a good shoeshine.



Pictured is a shoe-shine stand that was originally used at the Hotel Oliviere at 100 West 7th Street (torn down circa 1968/69) and then moved to the Amtrak station in Wilmington. The item was owned by Vereen T. Lolley (1931-2012), who worked at the stand when it was at the Amtrak station. The station underwent renovations circa 2009 and Mr. Lolley took the bench home with him. It became part of the DHS collection in 2013.



Delaware Historical Society Loyalty Circle Formed

The newly established Delaware Historical Society Loyalty Circle honors and celebrates donors who have given to DHS for at least 20 years. The first Loyalty Circle induction and reception was held on November 10th at the home of Linda and Steve Boyden. It was an honor to present inductees with a bronze Loyalty Circle pin and express our deep appreciation for their longstanding friendship and commitment to DHS and the uniquely Delaware stories we tell.

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One of the Delaware Historical Society's most loyal and committed friends, Anne Canby, was honored with induction into this year's class of the Delaware Women's Hall of Fame. Anne was the first woman to lead both the Delaware and New Jersey Departments of Transportation. She also served as the Treasurer of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and was a Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U. S. Department of Transportation. In addition to her remarkable accomplishments in public service, Anne served as a Trustee at DHS for four years and was Chair of the Board of Trustees for three more. She remains a vital part of the DHS family as an active member of the Mitchell Center for African American Heritage Advisory Council and continues her support of all the ways DHS expands its impact and makes Delaware history impossible to ignore.

Congratulations Anne, on this most well-deserved honor!





Stephen Kingsberry
Chair, Board of Trustees

Recording history is everyone's business. History is past events; as well as memory, discovery, collection, and interpretation of these events. History is an academic discipline that describes, examines, and questions events. Historians debate history and its usefulness and perspective to the problems of today.

History can provide a sense of identity. Identity plays an important role in empowering individuals to exercise their rights and responsibilities fairly and equitably in society today. It is our sense of identity that makes us who we are and shows us how we are different from everyone else. It is only through history that can we really see who we are in

relation to the people and events that came before us.

History teaches values. By looking at stories of individuals, we can test our morals and attitude. Looking at people who have faced and overcome adversity can be inspirational. We learn from past atrocities such as conflicts and attack of others, especially those who are different from us. All people and cultures are living histories. The languages we speak are inherited from the past. Our cultures, traditions, and religions are all inherited from the past. We even inherit our genetic makeup from those who lived before us. Knowing these connections provides a basic understanding of the condition of being human.

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