

Heritage Commission of Delaware County

What We Do

- The Delaware County Heritage is made up of 11 historically minded residents who are appointed by Delaware County Council to make recommendations to the Council on preservation issues in the County.
- Have a seminar annually on some aspect of historic preservation, we present awards to groups and individuals for their preservation efforts each May at a Council meeting.
- Oversee and make recommendations on County owned historic properties.
- Make recommendations to County Council on applications from historic sites for Community Development Block Grants.
- Act as a liaison between County Council and historic organizations in the County.

Information on seminars and awards are available at:

Delcopa.gov/Heritage

To get in touch with a member of the Heritage Commission,
contact the Planning Department at:

610-891-5200 or

DelawareCountyHeritage@co.delaware.pa.us



Forty-sixth ANNUAL PRESERVATION AWARDS

Sunday

May 5th, 2024

Presented by

Delaware County Council

and the

Heritage Commission of Delaware County



Delaware County Council

Dr. Monica Taylor, Chair

Richard Womack, Vice Chair

Kevin Madden

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Delaware County Executive Director

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Heritage Commission of Delaware County

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Judith Anastasi

Stephenie Bailey

Alan Derickson

Joshua Phillips

Samuel Pickard

Twyla Simpkins

Kelli Wilson

The Heritage Commission is a volunteer body appointed by County Council with a mission to encourage historical and cultural awareness and preservation within the County. It has been recognizing worthy preservation projects and individuals throughout Delaware County for over forty-six years.

A. RICHARD PAUL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Robert Seeley

Robert Seeley, a descendent of the Abolitionist Thomas Garrett, has been portraying his ancestor since 2005 at more than 100 events. He has made presentations at Colleges, interviewed on Temple radio, interviewed on TV podcasts and portrayed Thomas Garrett in videos and his voice is used in a Maryland museum display. He has been involved with the Wilmington Meeting House Preservation Society and the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation. His research was used by the Dept of Interior, National Park Service to recognize "Fernland Farm" (present day Arlington Cemetery-Drexel Hill) as a safe house on the Underground Railroad. He even pressed PHMC to rewrite the blue sign in front of the "Thornfield" house in Drexel Hill, which incorrectly stated it was the birthplace of Thomas Garrett.

Thirty-five years ago, Robert (Bob) Seeley started researching his family genealogy with a focus on Thomas Garrett (1789-1871). Thomas Garrett is credited with helping more than 2,700 slaves escape to freedom. Bob's research was used to create the Upper Darby Underground Railroad Trail Guide. In 2024 the new "Underground Railroad" stamp was announced by the United States Post Office, which Bob spent many years writing letters of support to make this happen.

He maintains the Riverview Farm Foundation Facebook page with all of his research about the Underground Railroad and the Garrett Family-www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057479318887. An oral history with Bob is at www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fvhHq0y4Mg.



A. RICHARD PAUL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Angela Hewett

Angela Hewett, the long-time serving President of Nether Providence's Historical Society, is credited for helping Merv Harris to establish the historical society and to prepare for Nether Providence's Tricentennial celebration in 1987. She is also a founding member of the Delaware County Historic and Preservation Network.

She is actively adding to the Leiper House art and archival collections and documents ongoing histories of the Leiper and Furness families. She is the "go to" person in Nether Providence for all things historical. She oversees the care of the Leiper house and is known for setting up for events, doing cleanup for both inside and outside of the Leiper house. She recruits and trains docents and works with local garden clubs for holiday decorating for public events and outside garden displays.

Angela has conducted extensive research into the Leiper family and has edited two booklets – a compilation of correspondence between Mr. Leiper and Thomas Jefferson and another of his correspondence with James Madison, both of which received Preservation Awards in the past.

Angela's long-term commitment has demonstrated her passion and dedication to preserving and sharing the history of Nether Providence and Delaware County.



46th ANNUAL PRESERVATION AWARDS

The Heritage Commission has been presenting these awards with County Council since 1978 to highlight National Preservation Month in May.

The Commission selects the award recipients from nominations submitted by residents and organizations throughout the County. They are selected for outstanding contributions to the preservation of our County's heritage in the following categories: Site Preservation, Publications, Special Programs/Projects, Individual Achievement, Historic Preservation Planning, Youth, the Leedom B. Morrison Heritage Award, and Legacy.

LEGACY AWARD– 100 YEARS

Delaware County Supply Company, Upper Chichester

SITE PRESERVATION

Nominations can include exterior and interior restoration, preservation, or rehabilitation of an historical structure and/or landscape in a manner that preserves the building or site's historical, cultural, and/or architectural significance. Projects are divided into the following sub-categories:

Residential Rehabilitation

This includes projects that rehabilitate a building, originally used as a residence, for residential use.

Restoration

This recognizes efforts to accurately depict the form, features, and character of a property or object as it appeared at a particular period of time.

PUBLICATIONS

Publications may include books, articles, magazines, videos, calendars, websites, etc. that present the heritage of Delaware County.

THE LEEDOM B. MORRISON HERITAGE AWARD

This Award recognizes preservation projects in the City of Chester that involve restoration, rehabilitation, or adaptive reuse of an historical structure or any other type of project that preserves the heritage of Chester City.

LEGACY AWARD

To recognize and award the efforts of long-standing members of the business community that have demonstrated good stewardship through the long-term care and maintenance of local historical buildings.

A. RICHARD PAUL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Named after longtime Heritage Commission chair and historian, this recognizes an individual that has spent many years contributing their time to the heritage of Delaware County. It is only nominated by Heritage Commission members.

In 2024, Delaware County Supply Company will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding. Located in Upper Chichester, the business has been in continuous operation in the same location since 1924. It has operated from the same mid-century storefront and office space since ca. 1950

Initially, the business operated as a lumber and coal yard with a siding along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. It continued to sell coal until the 1970s. Today they are a four-generation, family owned and operated building materials supplier serving the tri-state area. In 1966 they became a True Value Hardware store and carry a large selection of contractor building hardware in addition to lumber and custom millwork.

The current storefront, office and wood shop is a one-story mid-century contemporary commercial building built in multiple sections, the first built ca. 1950 in a mid-century modern style which remains today. Later alterations to the front façade have been in keeping with the original style, including the “Delaware County Supply Company” sign.

Delaware County Supply Company is the oldest business in continuous operation and the only known extant example of mid-century modern commercial architecture in the township. It was recently added to the Upper Chichester Historic Resource Survey in recognition of its architectural significance and place in the community.

Office in 1952 and 1927:



LEEDOM B. MORRISON HERITAGE AWARD

The Missing Piece: Rediscovering the Underground Railroad (UGRR) in the City of Chester

Yusef Miller, Twyla Simpkins (Yes Center)

Frustrated by the lack of references to Chester City in other publications and stories about the Underground Railroad, Yusef Miller embarked on a long process of discovering stories and places related to Chester's place in the route to freedom. He discovered paperwork, relics and artifacts that referenced locations and people in Chester, and presented his ongoing research at the J.L. Crozer Library in August 2023, which is available on YouTube.

History of the Underground Railroad in Chester Pa, by Yusef Miller
Aug 24th 2023, J.L. Crozer Library:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=fO20Tk55gLI

As part of Chester Made's Archeology and Identity Connecting People and Things project in 2018, some underground passages were identified by Historical Archaeologist Rebecca Yamin. Information on the project and a video of the tunnels is at:
chestermade.org/archeology-and-identity-connecting-people-and-things



SITE PRESERVATION Residential Rehabilitation

Ellis P. Yarnall House Concord Township

Robert and Robin Little

The Ellis P. Yarnall House is a c. 1820 house located at 764 Concord Road in Glen Mills and is a Concord Township Historic Commission Class 2 Historic Resource. The Ellis P. Yarnall House is an important historic resource to Concord Township, and the efforts on behalf of Robert and Robin Little to preserve the integrity of the house are essential to maintaining this site for years to come. This house is not only a wonderful testament to early 1800s Pennsylvania farmhouse architecture, but also home to one of the earliest families to settle in Delaware County. These two points make the Ellis P. Yarnall House an important resource to Delaware County heritage.

The Yarnall House was originally a 2 story farmhouse with 4 corner fireplaces, and sat on 20 acres along Concord Road. The house has two additions added c. 1860 and in 1998. The main façade is stone, with a rough stone foundation, and stone structural support system. Later additions were built using brick. The home still contains many original features, such as original fireplaces, wood flooring, doors, plaster walls, and hardware.

The Littles have been restoring and renovating the house since they bought it in 1996 and completed the renovations with the following projects in the past three years:

- Rebuilt basement doors to look like original doors and used forged black iron strap hinges.
- Rebuilt all exterior wood soffits and fascias.
- Replaced all shutters and hinges with new painted wood shutters, cast metal hinges and forged black iron shutter dogs.
- Removed stucco to expose stone and brick walls.



SITE PRESERVATION

Restoration

Middletown Preparatory Meeting Painting and Burial Ground- Middletown Township

**Middletown Township Historical Society;
Suzanne and Bob Redfern**

Middletown Preparative Meeting physically dates to 1702 and is one of the few remaining historic sites in Middletown Township. Middletown Township Historical Society considers the meeting an historical treasure and recognizes the importance of the meeting to Middletown and the township's Quaker history.

At the direction of the Middletown Preparative Meeting Board of Trustees, the Middletown Township Historical Society recommended a painting contractor for the job and arranged for a restoration carpenter to do the necessary repairs to the wood around the porch area. In addition, windowpanes were replaced. The president of the historical society was frequently at the site and was often contacted with questions from both the painting contractor and the carpenter. Middletown Township Historical Society served as benefactor, contributing all funds for the painting job and repairs to the porch.

Suzanne and Bob Redfern spearheaded the cleanup of the Middletown Preparative Meeting burial ground and began to research and record the names of those buried in this 1680s cemetery. By their leadership and dedication, the cemetery has now been cleared of invasive growth.

Headstones have been uncovered. Dangerous and destructive trees have been removed and a plan to continually maintain the grounds is in place.



PUBLICATION

The Battle of the Brandywine Video

Dr. Patricia Robinson-Linder

A professional video of the battle of Brandywine, the retreat and British pursuit and how the aftermath affected the local residents. Parts of Cyndi Charney's script was used and adapted by Dr. Patricia Robinson-Linder of Exclamation Production.

Exclamation created a beautifully executed educational video that speaks for itself. This was the highlight of Western Delco's Tea and Video Tour.

Please see the video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhApiJgVco8

