

DURHAM

P E N N S Y L V A N I A

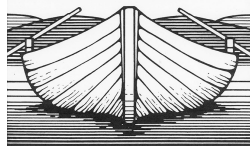
Historical Society

DURHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

It is with great pride that I share with each of you our Society's Annual Report for 2015. After a hiatus of close to six years, the Society is back in business and the state of our organization is strong. All former members were contacted about the plans for reorganization and all were invited to a formal meeting for that purpose. At the meeting, elections were held for a Board of Directors where David Oleksa was elected President, Manfred Marschewski – Vice President, Kathleen Connally – Secretary, Stephen Willey – Treasurer, Sharon Willey – Membership Chair. Also elected were Joe Kulick and Elfriede Marschewski as Directors. Later in the year, Sarah Snider was also elected a director. All directors were elected for varying lengths of time concerning their terms, to allow for “rolling elections” in the future, ensuring that both experienced directors and neophytes could learn from each other. Here are some of the most significant achievements for 2015:

- Community Programs – We started out our 2015 Community program series with a lecture by Kathryn Auerbach. Ms. Auerbach traced the growth of industry in the township and was able to point out that the Durham Furnace was not the only mainstay of the economy. Rather a handle making shop, tailor shop, general store and other assorted establishments supported the Durham populace. Through an excellent power point presentation, Ms. Auerbach kept the audience of more than 50, entertained and educated. Our second program involved the participation of members from 4 farming families in the area. A panel discussion was held with the members detailing how farming life had changed over the past 50 – 60 years. The audience of 45 people had the opportunity to ask the panel members questions and a lively conversation was enjoyed by all. The third presentation was conducted by Mark Fisher who addressed the topic of the milling industry in the area. Mark and his wife have refurbished a mill south of Durham and are milling locally grown grains into a variety of flours. The audience enjoyed both his presentation and the samples of “Bloody Butcher” cornmeal that he distributed to the attendees.
- Treasury – Our financial condition remains strong with over \$25,000 in our treasury. This is primarily due to the fiscal astuteness of our Treasurer and former President of the Society, Stephen Willey.
- Membership – We have attracted 72 new members through our public programs for a total of 122 members and we expect to see our numbers continue to climb.
- Captain Heinlein recognition – Through the efforts of Kathleen Connally and Sharon Willey, we've discovered the location of a long lost grave of a Revolutionary War hero here in the Township. Currently, the Society is attempting to contact the owner of the property to arrange the erection of a suitable monument to recognize Captain Heinlein.
- Ongoing Township photo history – We have been successful in getting citizens to bring old photographs of the township to Joe Kulick. We purchased a scanner and a laptop



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computer on which to store these scanned photos. Not only will these afford us the opportunity to establish a permanent visual record of the past, but we will be able to use these photos on our Facebook page and our website to keep them looking fresh and new as well.

- Website – We are close to begin work on an update to the Society’s website. Three professionals have been considered to do the work and one will be contacted shortly to begin the process.
- Goals for the upcoming year –
 - A. Continue the public programs – Currently considering a spring program highlighting the Lenni Lenape influence on the area and a summer program featuring 4 more farming families in a panel setting.
 - B. Finalize the Captain Heinlein monument project
 - C. Work with the Township to restore the Durham Gristmill to a more pristine condition. We will attempt to convince the Township to grant matching funds in this attempt and we will take the lead in in trying to raise more money from outside sources to assist in the endeavor.
 - D. Ensure the website and Facebook pages maintain an interesting and fresh appearance in order to show off the Society in its best light.

We’re off to a good start with the Society. We’ll have to do our best to build the membership and regain momentum for future projects and efforts. I would like to give my personal thanks to all the members of the board who have shared their time willingly and whose efforts have enabled us to move as far as we have during 2015.

Thank you,

David Oleksa, President