

DURHAM

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

Historical Society

DURHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

It is with pride and pleasure that I make this annual report to our members. The year 2016 was a good and busy one for the Society. We were able to hold all of our monthly meetings in a timely fashion and demonstrated our presence within the community in a number of ways.

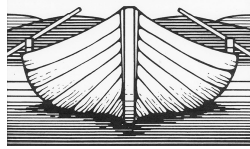
We began the year by contacting the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission explaining our concern over the proposed destruction of the Oscar Martin Bridge at the Rte. 611 and Rte. 212 intersection. This historical bridge (just one of two remaining that were designed by the noted local architect) is scheduled for demolition due to the proposed Rte. 611 widening. The bridge is especially important to historians because Mr. Martin incorporated into the structure, the original abutments that were used in a previous bridge which crossed Cooks Creek back in the 1700's.

The Society took it upon itself to attempt to incite more interest in preserving the Durham Mill. We felt that this structure is important to the Township and more should be done to stabilize the building and take preventative measures to avoid further deterioration. We made a \$5000.00 contribution to the Township for the purpose of building a fund to serve as seed money for the Mill's upkeep. This was added to the \$5000.00 the Township received from PennEast. In addition, we requested that the Township take the monthly rental fees received from the Post Office and add them to the fund as well. This was agreed to by the supervisors.

Continuing discussions took place concerning the Society's role in honoring Captain George Heinline, a local hero of the Revolutionary War. We have been in contact with a professor from Lehigh University who is in possession of ground penetrating radar equipment. She has agreed to make the search for Heinline's grave a project for her students in the fall 2017 semester.

Having become the recipient of many old pictures and documents concerning the Durham area, we purchased a scanner and Director Kulik preserved the materials by the use of digital technology. This will be an ongoing project for the Society and we will continue to encourage people to bring historic materials to us for preservation.

The Society took an active role in the attempt to make the Township a participant in the Wild and Scenic designation. Although we were unsuccessful in our attempt, we will continue to keep abreast of the matter. The Society did sign and submit a Memorandum of Understanding to the Lower Delaware National Wild and Scenic River partnership as a NGO (Non-Governmental Organization). In a similar vein, we took an active role in the fight against the PennEast Pipeline project. Even though the Township has declined to actively fight the project, we have requested "consulting party" status with PennEast through the offices of FERC and have periodically written to FERC with our concerns.



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In April, we presented a program about the Lenni Lenape. The program was conducted by Wesley Dunn from the Museum of Indian Culture. About 45 interested parties attended.

The Society was pleased to sponsor the efforts of Will Thoman, a local Scout who is attempting to earn his Eagle Scout rank. Will expects to be able to clean the historical area of the mill and create appropriate signage concerning the milling of grain as well as signage signifying the areas of the mill that had previously been part of the old Durham Furnace. Will also will tackle cleaning up the Post Office flower garden area, replacing the foliage with native species. This will be an ongoing project, probably extending into next year.

The Society was given a beautiful original painting by Linda Czech, a local artist. The subject of the painting is the Durham Mill. We decided to offer it on loan to the Township for display in the Municipal Building. We may use it as an object for sale in the future.

It was noted that the signage at the boat pavilion, contained spelling errors and an historical error as well. Through the efforts of Lois Oleksa, these errors were corrected.

In July, we held another program for the general public. Jeff Marshall, President of the Heritage Conservancy, spoke about the old homes in the Durham area. His presentation was attended by nearly 50 members in the audience.

The Society was honored to have a member of the local Boyer family present us with a family history. The document was copied and is preserved in digital format as well

We have continued in our search for a Web designer who could redo the current Website and make it more user friendly as well as more attractive for the general public.

In September, a small group of Directors met at the Township building and went through some files that had been in storage for some time. Pertinent information was separated from the dross and will be digitally copied.

Our membership has continued to grow over the past year and although we would like to see it grow further, we realize that only through continued visibility in the community will this growth be achieved.

In short, the state of the Society remains strong and I thank all the Directors and the membership for making it so. I would be remiss if I did not add my special thanks to Joe Kulik, who, after years on the Board has decided to step down. He will be missed although we hope we will continue to see him in his day-to-day job as well as at our ongoing program offerings.

Thank you,

David Oleksa, President