

DURHAM

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

Historical Society

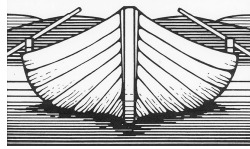
DURHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

2022 was another tough but rewarding year for the Society. With COVID finally waning, we were able to work on projects that had been “hanging fire”. Two of the larger projects involved grants that we had applied for in 2021 and were fortunate enough to have them awarded to us. One was a \$3000.00 grant from the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM). The money was put to good use by contracting with John Harbove of Shangri-la Productions.. All the old mismatched and inefficient incandescent bulbs were replaced with museum quality LED bulbs and a computerized system that will allow us to make changes in the lighting intensity to match with the natural light changes due to weather. In addition, special lighting features that highlight particular areas of the mill were installed and some special effects concerning the water wheel were incorporated.

The second project is well underway and was prompted by the Society’s mission to offer historical information to local students. We realized that the rich history of our area could be shown with a more sophisticated approach than what we were formerly using. We decided to contract with Amy Hollander, a local archivist/museum professional, to put together a computerized presentation of the past five hundred years of history here in Durham. This includes things that occurred prior to European colonists moving to the area. The program is designed to be used as a stand-alone presentation but it can be also used as a visual aid for stand up training. The program has an additional feature of being able to be divided into five separate presentations that can more easily be matched with the portion of history that students may be using. We will be installing a large screen TV in the part of the mill used for presentations and this will enable visiting presenters a better medium to use than the old fashioned movie screen we had formerly used. Financing for this project was provided by a \$4000.00 grant from the Lehigh Valley Foundation and by generous contributions from local supporters of the Durham Mill.

For the past 20 years +, the Society has sponsored guest speakers to present lectures on local historical topics. Although there was an almost three year hiatus in these presentations due to the COVID epidemic, we were happy to resume presentations in 2022. The first was done by **Jeff Finegan**, a local expert and author of four books on George Washington. Jeff is well known in historic circles so we were not surprised to have a crowd of about 50 people who came to hear him speak on a Sunday afternoon earlier in the year. We were treated to an excellent presentation on the colonial art of horning, creating powder horns, combs and other implements out of horns from cattle and other ungulates. **Frank Willis** impressed upon the



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audience how animal horns were used to produce these items before the invention of plastic. In August, the Society was privileged to have **Dave Bretz**, a local surveyor, give a presentation on colonial era surveying here in Durham. His talk was accompanied by pictures of old surveying monuments that can still be found in the township. The audience was also treated to a marvelous display of antique surveying instruments, including those that were used in surveying the Mason Dixon Line which marks the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland. The fourth presentation took place in October and featured **Carla Cielo**, a resident of New Jersey and an accomplished historic preservationist. Carla had completed a survey of 18th and 19th century barns found in Holland Township and explained to the audience the differences between the types of barn structures and the efforts that are being made to preserve these important examples of country architecture. I am proud to report that attendance for these sponsored lectures has been higher than we formerly experienced with three of the four attracting between 40 and 50 people. The remaining lecture had about thirty but attendance was limited because of a Philadelphia Eagles' football game that was scheduled at the same time.

Lest you think that all we do is present programs, let me report that we also had the Society's offices repainted and are currently gathering together a variety of recently donated items to be formally placed in a computerized database. Through generous contributions by local individuals, the Society has come into possession of a variety of items ranging from Native American artifacts to a collection of cannon balls manufactured here in Durham, to antique farming tools and instruments used in the mill including sophisticated items for balancing and leveling the grinding stones.

Society members completed two clean-up projects where we picked up trash along Durham Road from County Line Road to Rt. 212. Also in partnership with the Durham Township EAC, trees and shrubs were planted along the retaining wall of the township's parking lot and the façade of the wall was painted to blend in better with the surrounding area. The Society worked at Durham Day this year and conducted tours of the mill for nearly 70 individuals.

All in all it was a very good and busy year for the Society and we look forward to even more accomplishments in the next year. We feel the partnership that has developed with the township is a strong one and we are appreciative of how much can be accomplished because of it.

Respectfully submitted,

David Oleksa, President