



# HISTORIA

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER, 1993

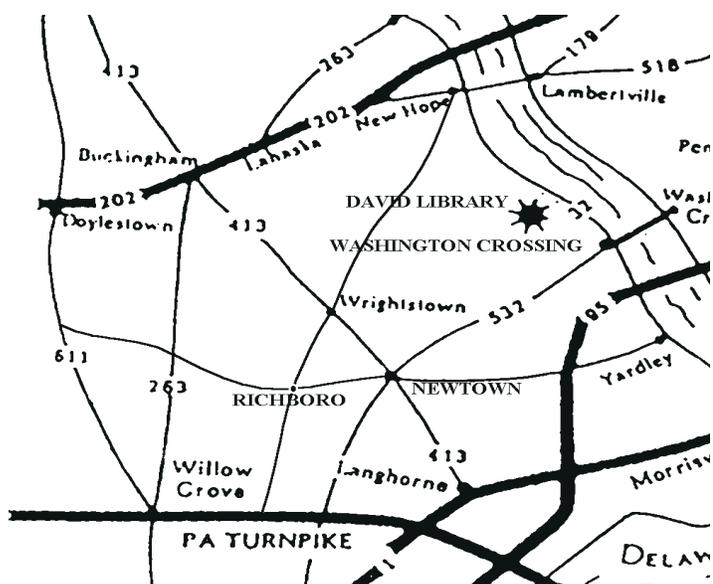
## SEPTEMBER MEETING TO FEATURE TRIP TO THE DAVID LIBRARY

The September meeting of the Northampton Township Historical Society will be held at the David Library



of the American Revolution located at Washington Crossing. The library is a privately endowed foundation that is one of the leading research centers devoted to the study of the era of the American Revolution (circa 1750 to 1800) and to the support of

related programs. The facilities include the research library, a conference center, and a residence facility for visiting scholars. The library, which is opened to the public, was established in 1959 by Sol Feinstone, a well known collector of Americana. I am sure you will enjoy your visit to the library for our meeting. Information on the program and arrangements for transportation are in this month's president's letter. The easiest route to the library from Richboro is via route 332 East to Newtown, then continue on route 532 to route 32 at Washington Crossing. Turn left (North) on route 32 and the library entrance is about one mile on the left.



## NEWS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

This summer has really flown by and it is time again to get together at our first meeting on Wednesday, September 22, 1993, the last day of summer.

Douglas has planned an excellent meeting and I do hope that you really enjoy it. The meeting will be held at the DAVID LIBRARY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION in Upper Makefield at 8 p.m.

This being our first **away** meeting we have made some plans to run this meeting smoothly.

1. A map is enclosed for you to follow if you would like to drive there yourself. Be there no later than 8 p.m.

2. For those people who do not like night driving, please park your cars next to the garage at the Fleuhr Funeral Home parking lot. Douglas, Chris., JoAnne, Eileen and Doris have offered to pick you up in their cars. WE can use other volunteers too. If you would like to be a driver than meet us at the Funeral Home also, at 7:20. We will depart in a group at 7:30 on the dot.

3. Upon arriving at the David Library on Rt. 32 about 5 minutes north of the painting at Washington Crossing Park, enter the driveway and go behind the building to the first large parking lot. Enter the library by walking between the buildings and go past the redwood picnic tables. Enter the door and turn to the right.

4. We will enjoy the library from 8:00 p.m. to 8:20 p.m.

5. We exit through the same door and pass the picnic bench again and enter the door on the right (nearest the parking lot). This is the main entrance. We will go up the stairs to the second floor. Here Ms. Huret will introduce the film that we are about to see. The film is "Ten Days that Changed the

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# A PHYSICIAN'S FEET IN TWO TOWNSHIPS

By Dave Gauntt, President Warick Historical Society

Milan Kirby's 18th-century manor home greets you before you cross the Neshaminy bridge heading west on Almshouse Road into Warwick Township. According to Dr. Martha Lindsay Jarmon, of Richboro, and Mary Lindsay, of Calgary, Alberta, the Mearns Manor House is about all that is left of a once bustling commercial complex. Dr. Martha Jarmon and Mary Lindsay lived in the Mearns Manor House with their brother, Thomas, and their parents, Dr. Thomas Lindsay, and wife Elizabeth. The house, as they report, was built by Robert Mearns in 1814 - the barn in 1812. These are the only remaining buildings of a once proud business enterprise.



**Mearns house from around the turn of the century. This is now the front of the house and faces Southeast almost parallel to the current Almshouse Road**

Dr. Thomas Lindsay had a practice in Richboro (or Addisville, as the area was previously known) for 52 years. Incidentally, Martha enlightened me on where Richboro got its name. The area around Poorhouse Road and Second Street Pike was previously called Addisville because that was the name of the closest town. When the area built up it took its name from a Doctor Rich, who was a prominent doctor in the area at that time. Dr. Jarmon added that Jack Frey used to be the Constable of Richboro and lived at Second Street and Bustleton, with a stop sign in front of his house. "We used to laugh. He was the Constable and that was his stop sign, boy, and my dad got many a ticket from him. He would say, 'I don't care if you are my doctor, that's my stop sign there and you're not going to speed past it.' He'd chase everybody in a Lincoln and they would say, 'How come the constable of Richboro can afford a Lincoln?' Dr. Jarmon related. "Of course he made his money in his machine shop, but he would say, 'Well, the Constable comes from Richboro, what do you expect?' He took pictures of everything - every accident. God only knows what ever happened with them," Martha added.

"During the Second World War, Dad was too old to go and the only competent hospital around was Abington Hospital, where he went for his baby deliveries. The hospital was pretty desperate for staff, during the War, so a lot of people volunteered to be nurses aides. During one particularly difficult delivery the lady bled and bled. He had a terrible time but finally got everything under control and wanted to thank a particularly cool customer behind a mask who knew everything he needed and performed exceptionally well. He knew she wasn't a nurse, but a volunteer, and he said, 'You were a real great help, you can have a job with me any time you want.' She laughed and said, 'Oh, I'm a neighbor of yours, Dr. Lindsay.' To which he asked, 'What's your name?' She replied, 'Tyler,' It turned out it was Mrs. Tyler. She volunteered down there for many years during the War," Martha said. "Of course, Dad was kind of taken aback at offering the local multi-millionaire a job."

It was during this period that the Lindsays moved to Warwick Township. Dr. Lindsay acquired the property on the Neshaminy Creek in the 1940s in an unusual manner, as related by daughter, Mary Lindsay. He had been attending to a certain elderly woman of apparently meager means, at no fee, until her death. In her will, she bequeathed the contents of a "bank lock box" to the kindly doctor. In this box was the sum of about \$26,000, reputed to be the ill-gotten gains of her rum-running nephew, who had asked to use her deposit box, and who was never heard of after prohibition days. With this sum, the doctor was able to purchase the Mearns estate.

When the Lindsays bought the house, it had a large surrounding Victorian porch which was so decayed that it was soon torn down. Years before, a large wooden addition on the northwest side of the house was also torn down. It was in this addition that the pioneer anthropologist, Robert Mearns Yerkes, was born and lived his early childhood. Yerkes' work with primates was later furthered by Dr. Leaky and Jane Fosse. The house has a large central hall leading to a grand staircase with a living room, that originally was two rooms, on the right.

Elizabeth Lindsay, the doctor's wife, was a patron of the Arts and hosted Philadelphia Orchestra musician engagements and summer vacations at the manor house. The quartet concerts were very formal affairs, hosting up to 80 guests, and took place in the large living room housing two grand pianos. It was not unusual, either, to hear the musicians playing informally in the surrounding woods while they summered at the cabin by the Little Neshaminy. People like Pearl Buck, the Hammersteins, Mrs. Tyler and artist, Ed Quinn were visitors to the home. "Mother loved the arts and was a member of the Philadelphia Art Alliance," Mary related. "Jim Ernst, son of Max Ernst, came out to the house for privacy to paint pictures. Once, as he was painting the caretaker's house, mother came up to chat with him. His comment was 'the way to get rescued on a desert island is to paint a picture. Critics will come from nowhere.'"

As related by various residents, Dr. Lindsay was known by virtually everyone in Richboro. Dr. Martha Lindsay Jarmon, daughter of Dr. Lindsay, related that the Lindsay family had two excellent cooks from Richboro. Bessie Search and her sister were “maiden sisters of George Search.” The Searches whose family originally lived in the Bennett-Search House on Twining Road and Second Street Pike, now owned by the Cromptons, were living on their farm on Worthington Mill Road. Martha related that George Search’s wife, Edna Richardson Search of Langhorne, had served her tea on a tray used by George Washington and the Marquis de Laffayette. Washington and Lafayette had stayed in Edna’s ancestral home, the Richardson House in Langhorne, during the Revolutionary War.



#### **Mearns? family pose at the Southwest corner of the home**

Dr. Lindsay was one of the very few physicians in the area and as such was “on duty” seven days a week. As reported by both Martha and Mary, a big reason for the move to Warwick was to gain a little respite in the evening from the office duties in Richboro. This wasn’t completely successful because the turn in the road at the bridge in front of the house saw many accidents and so many victims came to the door for help that the family kept a red carpet in the foyer to hide the blood stains. Thirty years ago a new bridge was built and the road straightened out in front of the house, leaving the house an angle to the new roadway. This new construction also buried the remains of the mill.

Dr. Martha Jarmon wrote an essay on the property and mill while attending the George School in Newtown, forty-odd years ago, and has graciously agreed to share it with us. Martha’s sister, Mary, took time to contribute her recollections during a phone conversation in July. We are much indebted to these daughters of Dr. Thomas Lindsay, a forty year resident of the manor house, for the record that follows.

Part of a William Penn land grant in 1684, the property saw the erection of a grist mill before the Revolutionary War, probably between 1750 and 1777 under the ownership of Sa-

muel Faires. The property changed hands in 1777, 1782, and in 1790. Robert Cummings sold the property to Robert and William Mearns in 1801, starting over a century of prosperous ownership by the Mearns family. According to the deed, the purchase included a grist mill, tannery, oil mill (flax seed), mill-houses, dams, sluices, barkhouses, grinders, tan vats, and more. Quoting the essay, “Under the new management, the independence of the surrounding community prospered. The mill was a trading center...provided employment for rent-farmers, and served as a trade school for their sons.” Martha gave as an example of the flourishing trade, the following ad from the Pennsylvania Correspondent: “Jan.1, 1807. Thirteen dollars per thousand will be given for flour cask staves of best quality - and in proportion for those that are inferior by Robert and William Mearns, Mearns Mill, Warwick Township.”

Tradition of the area and of the Mearns family is that the mill provided flour and feed for George Washington, the Continentals, and their accompanying cattle and horses encamped in and around Hartsville in August, 1777. Hard evidence being absent, the fact that most of the Township (as well as the Mearns family) were Irish or Scotch-Irish and highly sympathetic to the Revolutionary cause, and that 11,000 troops consume a lot of food and feed in two weeks, lend considerable credence to that tradition.

The mill, itself, was three stories high and very well built, with massive cornerstones that were dovetailed to give strength to the walls and corners. The under-shot waterwheel was fourteen feet in diameter, coming almost to the second floor. A dam on Jacksonville Creek contributed auxiliary water from Northampton Township during dry periods. Martha noted in her essay that traces of the elaborate system of millraces for the main mill, lower mill, oil mill and saw mill were still visible in her childhood.



**The Mearns Mill, which is no longer standing**

The mill was most prosperous from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War. Some appreciation of the economics can be realized from the Mearns Ledger of 1795-1812. Hired hands were paid \$10- 12 a month. Prices are confusing since the records show that although from 1792 the dollar was the official medium of exchange, the English system coexisted and prevailed here at least until 1812.

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## PHYSICIAN FROM PAGE 3

So, on ten dollars a month, a man paid nine English pennys for a pint of whiskey, 16 pennys for a pound of butter, two shillings for 14 pounds of buckwheat flour, three shillings for a bushel of potatoes, two to five shillings for a doctor fee, and 15 shillings for a pair of boots.

What's it all mean? We're not sure. To further add to the confusion (then and now) the ledger shows that on Jan. 14, 1812 Robert Mearns purchased for Jane Lacey two shares of The Bank of Philadelphia for \$125, 46L, 17d - a mix and match monetary system that left the door wide open for the unscrupulous. The above transaction also points out the diverse roles of Robert Mearns. Here he was financial advisor as well as miller and farmer. The ledger also shows his transactions as banker, druggist, medical aide, family advisor, and social worker. The mill complex also served as a general store dealing books, patterns, velvet shoes, laces and silks, as well as serving as a stockyard. The Doylestown Democrat, in December, 1827 noted that "nine hogs fatted at Mearns' mill on the Neshaminy were brought to Yardley's store on Thursday last and weighed 4091 pounds. The weight of the largest was 547 pounds."



**A view of the Southwest side and original front of the home. Today this is the side, facing the creek.**

Before the railroad, wagons left with mill products every day for Philadelphia, returning with items from shopping lists of locals. The railroad brought more efficient transportation, and more people. More people brought more farms and more work for the mill, but more farms and the clearing of the moisture absorbing forests meant spring floods and summer drought. Without a reliable source of power, in 1884 the mill was permanently shut down. Around the turn of the century it was torn down and the stone was used to bolster repairs of Almshouse Road. Thus, one of the most prosperous business complexes in Bucks County was killed, ironically, by the progress (or over-progress) that fed it.

Speaking of progress, Martha Jarmon's mother, Elizabeth Lindsay, saw the Wright Brothers fly in a little town in Ohio when she was a little girl. Her grandfather poked his bony finger

in her shoulder and said, "Remember this, this is important." Her mother recalled this as Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon in 1969. She saw the beginning of air travel and space travel during her life and only mentioned it casually in passing. It obviously didn't seem important at the time. Think about it. What can you record for future generations that doesn't seem important now? Remember the bony finger and look into your experience. Your great-great-grandchildren will love it.

## PRESIDENTS LETTER FROM PAGE 1

World".

6. At 9 p.m. we shall have our meeting in this same room then at 9:20 go downstairs to the exhibit. After you enjoy "Private Yankee Doodle and his Baggage" you are free to leave.

Because of a Christening, I was unable to attend the wonderful summer concert that the N.H.T.H.S. supported. Bill Blumhardt said that the attendance was better than usual and that it was an outstanding concert. I think that each and everyone of us should thank the Lions Club when you meet a member because they do such a fantastic job with these concerts. It really is a shame that more people do not attend when there is so much space.

Bill Blumhardt is the chairperson of the Living Tree Award for 1993. Please start sending him names of those people that you think should be considered. The person does not have to be a member of the N.H.T.H.S. but must be a resident of Northampton. I am sure there are many out there that we have over looked. We also need three committee members to join Bill and Ruth Smith, last years chairperson. Please volunteer, an organization can not be the best unless people are active. Bill will be having his first meeting during the last week of September, so call me 357-7833 if YOU are interested.

Remember one of our goals is to invite new members. The wonderful newsletter that Douglas Crompton has prepared has helped. They were placed at both the library and Township office so our new residents would be aware of our meetings.

Please mark these dates down so you know the 1993/1994 schedule:

1st meeting	September 22, 1993	7:30p.m.
2nd meeting	November 17, 1993	6:00p.m.
3rd meeting	December 5, 1993	3:00p.m.
4th meeting	March 23, 1994	7:30p.m.
5th meeting	May 25, 1994	7:30p.m.

Very truly,

Jean Gallagher

## MAY I INTRODUCE

### Florence Leedom

Florence is the present Treasurer of the Northampton Township Historical Society and has been a member since 1974. Florence and her husband live in a home which was originally the Parsonage for the North and Southampton Reformed Church. The oldest part of the house was built in 1814 and a 27 foot addition was built on the Northwest end about 1839. In 1885 a cyclone struck the house, breaking windows and tearing off roof timbers. Florence enjoys bridge and helping her husband in the limited law practice which he still maintains.



The Leedom's home, above damaged in 1885 and below in 1974

### Eleanor Ewing

Eleanor is the present Corresponding Secretary of the Northampton Township Historical Society. Eleanor was born in Virginia and came to Holland, Bucks County, about five years ago. She relocated from the San Francisco Bay area of California in order to be close to her daughter and two grandchildren who live in Princeton, NJ. Eleanor has two other children, five other grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Most of her energy goes into maintaining her 1819 stone schoolhouse and creating and maintaining the beautiful gardens surrounding the house. In her spare time she enjoys weaving and is secretary of the Bucks County Weaving Guild. Additionally she enjoys bridge, walking, reading and exploring the many back roads and admiring the many beautiful old stone buildings of Bucks County.



Eleanor's house in 1974, from "Winds of Change"

### A FEW THINGS TO THINK ABOUT.....

The November meeting of the N.H.H.S. is our annual dinner meeting. It will start at 6PM and our featured speaker is Ralph Thompson who will speak on the "Early History of Bucks County". This will include the period of 1650-1800. The officers will be supplying the meats and beverages. Others are welcomed to bring their favorite dish. Mark your calendar!

Because we are not having the barn sale this year we need to find an alternate fund raising activity. Jean has suggested a "kitchen and garden tour" as a possible activity. This would be in the spring. Anyone who may be interested in participating please contact Jean or one of the officers. In addition we welcome any ideas in regards to fund raising. It would be nice to have a barn sale again, if we can find a new location for it.

The N.H.H.S. needs a home! Yes it would be very nice if we had our own facility, as does The Newtown Society. Many of our members have items, either historic to the area, or antiques, that they would like to donate to our society. This would only be possible if we had a facility in which we could house and display them properly. In the past we have had opportunities to acquire a property and for one reason or another turned them down. In one case we were offered a house by a builder, in another a residence in Tyler Park. That is now past history and today we are again looking for a possible residence. Unfortunately as time goes on the likelihood of us finding one is diminishing. If you know of a possible location please let us know. In many cases builders purchase land to build developments and are "stuck" with an old building on the property. Since our resources to outright buy a property are limited this would more than likely have to be a donation. It is probable that the resources that we do have, both monetary and physical would be put into upgrading and restoring the property that we would acquire.

This newsletter needs articles!! I was lucky to get the fine article from Dave Gauntt this month for without it we would have a rather thin newsletter. If you have an interesting story that you can tell, jot it down! We can edit it, if necessary. Also we can include pictures, which WILL be returned. I need articles for the November issue which will go to press the first week in November. I can always use stories though and if (hopefully) I get too many they will be used in future newsletters. Information on future tours, events, or activities or anything that would be of interest to our society would also be welcomed. Send articles to:

Doug Crompton 1269 2nd St. Pike Richboro, PA 18954

**THIS WAGON RETURNED HOME**

*By Doug Crompton*

At around the turn of the century Cameron Spencer would ride with either his mother, Martha or father, Lincoln, on their two seat “side bar run about” carriage. Their farm was located near Spencer road above the corner of Jacksonville and Almshouse roads. The large house in which they lived has since burned down.



**Cameron Spencer with his mother Martha about 1900 in the carriage. Picture is thought to have been taken in front of the Jacksonville School**

Cameron Spencer is the uncle of Dr. Cameron Wilson, being his mother’s sister’s husband. The carriage was later sold to the Craven family and was passed from father Jimmy to son Harold. Dr. Wilson became aware that the carriage still existed in 1948 when he saw it in the Craven barn on their farm South of Richboro.

Harold Craven’s widow, Tess, sold the carriage and other belongings to the Amish a couple of years ago. It ended up at Martin’s auction and was bought by a women from Syracuse, NY. She later returned it to the auction and it was then that it was spotted in a field, at the auction, by Dr. Wilson. He purchased the carriage and it is now back in Richboro.

Dr. Wilson plans to restore it but probably not actually use it. The Spencer initials are painted on either side of the carriage and it is in remarkably good shape considering it’s travels. The original straw filled cushion is still in



**Dr. Cameron Wilson, named after his uncle, Cameron Spencer, poses with his new (old) carriage, at his residence in Richboro**

place. Catalogs of the time show that the carriage originally sold for about \$15 and was made at the Braithwait Company in Philadelphia. Dr. Wilson remembers his Uncle saying “he would go to Doylestown to dance and not return until 2AM”. Quite a long trip at that hour to the Spencer farm!



**Manufacturers name plate from the “Spencer” carriage**



**Black Bear Hotel picture card taken from the publication “Winds of Change” published by the N.H.H.S. in 1985. Copies of this fine publication are still available. It is interesting reading and provides invaluable reference material.**

# NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**55 Township Road, Richboro, Pennsylvania**

**1993 OFFICIERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

President	Jean Gallagher	357-7833
Vice President	Doug Crompton	355-5307
Recording Secretary	Eileen Zolotorofe	598-3065
Treasurer	Florence Leedom	357-3121
Corresponding Sec.	Eleanor Ewing	860-5288
	Joanne Kerridge	355-2193
Director	Bill Blumhardt	357-3260
Director	Chris Fleuhr	355-8712
Director	Ted Robinson	357-6820
Social Committee	Dorris D'Ardene	968-5507
	Eileen McAdams	364-6924
Historia Editor	Doug Crompton	355-5307

Historia is published quarterly by the Northampton Township Historical Society. The Society meets four times each year at the Northampton Township Cultural Center, Upper Holland Road, Richboro. Anyone is welcomed at our meetings. Meetings start at **7:30 P.M.** with refreshments, general meeting, and a featured speaker.

### Meeting Dates for 1993-94

September 22	General Meeting
November 17	Dinner Meeting 6PM
December 5	Living Tree Award 3PM
March 23, 94	General Meeting
May 25, 94	“ ”

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL CLASSIFICATIONS

PATRON:	Extra support for the society	\$25.00
FAMILY:	All members of one family	\$10.00
SINGLE:	Adult individual membership	\$5.00
SENIOR CITIZEN:	Age 65 years or older	\$2.00

This will be your membership for the calendar year of 1993 (January 1993 to December 1993)

NOTE - If this application is received after October 31, 1993 a 1994 membership will be issued

Please consider a contribution of more than the minimum membership to help defray increasing society costs.

Please pass a copy of this application onto others who may be interested in our society.

Send to : **Northampton Township Historical Society**  
**469 Twining Ford Road**  
**Richboro, PA 18954**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

1994L

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

DUES ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to serve on one of our committees ? : Y \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe \_\_\_\_\_

Please give us your ideas for speakers at future meetings : \_\_\_\_\_

Your comments and suggestions are welcomed : \_\_\_\_\_