

# Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

Volume 16, Number 1

February, 2013

## A Tribute to Jane Louise Smoker Davidson

Mary Sue Boyle, *Chair*  
East Bradford Township Historical Commission

Yuletide Season 1974 my parents were having one of their famous Christmas Cocktail Parties at their “chalet” in Glenmoore—as always, a blend of business associates, friends

and wanted to meet you. You are studying art history?”

Thus, was the beginning of our decades-long relationship. We spoke many times over

the years about history, crafts, the family dynamics, title searching and restoring my farmhouse. I had the pleasure to work with Jane in her capacity as Chester County Historic Preservation Officer in the early 1980s. Jane gave me the low down on the semantics of National Register District Criteria and what was so special about the borough of Kennett Square. As a component of the Main Street Program, we drove the streets of Kennett, up and down blocks, sometimes 4 or 5 times; five people packed into a car viewing architectural similarities and unique characteristics of the area. By the end of the afternoon we had not been in an accident, had repeatedly



**Jane Louise Smoker Davidson**  
April 5, 1939 — December 15, 2012

*Sketch by Ann Bedrick, CCHPN Board Member*

The Chester County Historic Preservation Network is an affiliation of local organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting, protecting, and preserving Chester County’s historic resources and landscapes through education, facilitation, and public and private advocacy.

and family. Late in the evening the front door opens and in walk Jane and Lester; Jane in her 19<sup>th</sup>-century handmade Christmas finery and Lester, her consort, in velvet knickers and appropriate 19<sup>th</sup>-century haberdashery. Jane introduces herself and states that she wants my Mom on the Wallace Township Historical Commission: “we just came back from the West Chester Christmas celebration

held up traffic and received the evil eye from more than one pedestrian; but we had a mile square district laid out on paper....and as they say “the rest was history”.

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I am certain that Jane did not sleep.

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Quilting, knitting baby booties, authoring and illustrating books, making samplers and

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Direct all queries to: The Editor, CCHPN, P.O.Box 174, West Chester, PA 19381. Letters to the Editor and articles for the Chester County Ledger are welcome. There is no guarantee, however, that submissions will be published. No such submissions will be returned. The CCHPN does not necessarily endorse the content of advertisements herein.

period clothing, authoring cook books, more quilting, lecturing, researching genealogies, preparing historic-resource nominations, participating in Section 106 reviews, cooking, conducting day camps and history days; caring for 3 or more households simultaneously, always being there for her parents, in-laws, her Lester, Christina and Randy and never failing to marvel over her two grandsons, Hunter and Blaze. No one can fathom how she kept so many balls in the air!

Born in Fairfield, Lancaster County, in 1939, Jane attended Millersville University, graduating with a degree in English, Library Science and Social Studies. She married her sweetheart, Lester in 1961; Jane established libraries in Quarryville and Garnet Valley High Schools. Jane and Lester moved to the Downingtown area in 1965 and was appointed to Downingtown Historical Commission in 1975 and served from 1977 to 1980 as Downingtown Borough's Historic Preservationist.

Jane worked in the 1970s with Chester County Commissioner Earl Baker to celebrate the Chester County Tri-Centennial. Jane was instrumental in establishing a triumvirate of the County, Chester County Historical Society and the Brandywine Conservancy, in the 1980s, to achieve an inventory of resources throughout the county and suggest individual nominations and districts. The Commissioners created the Chester County Historic Preservation Office and appointed Jane Davidson to fill those shoes, the first Preservation Officer in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

This was the nexus of Jane's vision and timeline. With the 1980's survey complete she then turned to ways to protect and preserve these surveys and resources, and educate the public about the treasures of our nation. Jane catalogued information from each municipality in Chester County. She studied and recorded settlements and international influences on the development of our own Chester County architecture. Jane lectured to educate the general public on the richness of our County, and advocated for the protection of historic resources, especially those impacted by transportation related projects. Jane

worked with each historical commission in the county, teaching inventory maintenance, Federal preservation law and ordinance creation to protect their municipal resources. Jane used the county's Geographical Information System as a platform for inventorying the historic resources in Chester County and charged each municipality in the county to participate, creating the Chester County Historic Resources Atlas project that will forever remain a strong preservation planning tool and model for national preservation initiatives.

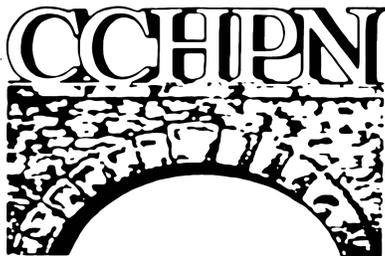
Acknowledged nationally for her experience and accomplishments, in 1992 President George Bush appointed Jane to the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, where Jane was involved with the restoration and documentation of Ellis Island.

Fleshing out her vision, Jane set about creating a Network of Historic Commissions in the county to work together to defend historic resources, share information and provide educational programs for the general public. In the mid-1990s, the Chester County Historic Preservation Network board was assembled and by the early 2000s the non-profit corporation was established and officers selected. The organization grows annually and has been replicated in surrounding counties. Simultaneously Jane set in motion the Town Tours and Village Walks program, allowing local historians to showcase the unique assets and tales of their special places in Chester County.

Jane and I worked tirelessly to protect the 202 corridor from West Chester, PA to the Delaware State line. We attended Section 106 meetings and Jane, always eloquent, forthright and factual, laid the law down, protecting the string of historic resources that were ultimately saved from demolition or other "adverse effects". In one conversation we had some time ago, Jane quipped "PennDOT probably had a party when they heard of my retirement".

In addition to President Bush's acknowledgement of Jane's achievements, in 2006 Jane received the President's Award from Pennsylvania Historic and Museum

continued on page 4



# Spring 2013 Workshop Make Your Community's History Come Alive

Saturday, March 9, 2013  
8 am – 12:15 pm

## Brandywine River Museum

1 Hoffman's Mill Road  
Chadds Ford, PA

### Fees

Municipal Member Passes\*: \$10.00  
CCHPN Member: \$15.00  
Non-member: \$20.00

\* Member municipalities get four passes per year.

Fees include workshop registration and light breakfast. Register early to ensure your spot! No refunds can be given. For more information, please call 610-344-6923

*Each attendee gets access  
to the Museum for the day!*

Join your peers to learn about the multitude of ways that your Historical Commission can spread the word in your community about its important history and develop strategies to preserve key historic structures that tell that story. Each presentation will be based on successful programs and projects within the County.

- 8:00 am **Meet and Greet** over coffee and pastries
- 8:40 **Welcome**
- 8:50 **Involving Everyone But the Kitchen Sink in your History**  
Event: *East Gosben Historical Commission*
- 9:25 **Developing a Regional History Audience:**  
*Oxford Area Historical Association*
- 9:40 **They Want To Demolish What?!**: *Franklin Township Historical Architectural Review Board*
- 10:00 ~ Break ~
- 10:15 **Finding Deep Pockets, Your Township Management Can Help:** *East Pikeland Township Manager*
- 10:45 **A Room with a View....Files, Folders & Artifacts:**  
*West Caln Historical Commission & Society*
- 11:00 **Now It's Your Turn** : Share your current challenges for event and project planning
- 12:15 pm **Adjourn and Closing**

This event is co-sponsored by the Brandywine Conservancy.



## Registration Form

RSVP by March 1, 2013

Municipality/Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 Primary Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to include your membership dues with your registration, please check below:

Individual (\$20.00)  
 Municipality/Organization (\$85.00)

**Make checks payable to CCHPN**

Names of Attendees - Municipality/Organization  
 Members *Up to four special passes per year, per municipality.*

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00  
 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00  
 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00  
 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00

Names of Attendees at Regular Membership Rate

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15.00  
 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15.00  
 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15.00

Names of Attendees at Non-Members Rate

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20.00  
 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20.00  
 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20.00

Total amount of check for registration fee(s)  
 and/or Membership fee(s) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form and check to: CCHPN, PO Box 174, West Chester, PA 19381. *Thanks!*

## A Tribute, continued

Commission and Preservation Pennsylvania. Over the years, she has received a constellation of awards, including:

- Patriotic Award - Women's Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Downingtown, Pennsylvania
- Congressional Medal of Merit, 1982
- Governor's Commendation, 1982
- Chester County Tricentennial Appreciation award, 1983
- Coatesville Main Street Award, 1987
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C., Distinguished Service Award, 1995
- East Marlborough Township Appreciation Resolution, 1995
- Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Certificate of Merit for Rehabilitation of County Bridge in Wallace Township, Chester County, 1996
- Daily Local News, West Chester, Pennsylvania, Woman of the Year
- Third National Conference on Women in Historic Preservation, Outstanding Woman in Historic Preservation, 2000
- Charlestown Township, commendation, 2002
- Chester County Daughters of American Revolution, Patriotic and Educational Service, 2000
- Pennsylvania Parks and Recreation Society, Special Events award for the 225th Anniversary programs, 2003

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Jane received the second Rebecca Lukens Award from the Graystone Society in Coatesville for her efforts in Historic Preservation and the National Historic Landmark designation of the Lukens National Register Historic District.

Jane's silent awards stand in perpetuity for our nation to appreciate:

- Paoli Battlefield
- Lapp Log House
- Ercildoun Historic District
- Hance House and Barn
- West Chester Boarding School for Boys
- Darlington Seminary
- Downingtown Log House
- William Ferguson Farm
- William Everhart Buildings
- East Lancaster Avenue Historic District
- Glen Rose Historic District
- Phoenixville Historic District
- Joseph Rothrock House
- Roger Hunt Mill
- General Washington Inn
- Hatfield-Hibernia Historic District
- Col. John Hannum House
- Covered Bridges of Chester County
- And the 312 National Register-listed Historic Resources and Districts in Chester County.

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All are welcome to the 2013 Spring Workshop!

Please pass along this information to anyone you know who may be interested. This newsletter with this registration form is available on our website, <http://www.cchpn.org/newsletters.htm>

We look forward to seeing you!

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Some years ago, while working with Ed Wampold to get Jane the treatment she needed with her personal struggle, Ed said “you know she will not be with us for more than a year”. I opted to never share that with Jane and she certainly proved to the medical community what a trooper she was and Jane was studied by the NIH for her resilience and perseverance for years.

Senator Earl Baker recalls:

“When Jane was appointed County Preservation and Historical Officer, she told me we were the first county in the country to have such an office, and she often was able to help others throughout Pennsylvania and the entire United States [understands] what we were doing and how they could emulate us.

I remember how proud she was when the noted historical writer David McCullough came here and recognized her role here five years ago.

I will miss Jane Davidson. I worked with her at Chester County and as a Senator and even when I entered the private sector Jane kept up with me. Once you were in Jane’s Army, you were in it for good!

Jane often used the following two words which describe Jane herself: she was a treasure, and she was an original. She was a treasure in what she gave to Chester County and she was original in her unique combination of talents in her profession and as a person.”

Jane knew William Penn’s goal was to make the three original counties, Chester, Bucks and Philadelphia, which constituted the newly established Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as the “seed of nation,” which ultimately came about a century after he spoke those words.

Jane helped us restore the original Courthouse to its original colors and design. When someone asked the Commissioners why the tower was changed from green to brown, we said, “Jane Davidson told us to.”

Steven M. Brown, AIA recalls:

“I have known Jane for most of my professional career as an architect working in the southeastern Pennsylvania region. Jane assisted our office with preservation issues on many projects. We became friends through her professional services, as she was one to create lasting relationships with her clients. As I grew as an architect, and living in this area my entire life, I became more aware of preservation through Jane and her circle of friends. I became involved with my township historical commission and Jane guided us through the County historic properties mapping exercise as well as being a resource whenever a specific issue needed a bit of her expertise. She invited me to become a member of the CCHPN board, and I only hope to continue her legacy of preservation throughout the County and beyond. I certainly do not have the knowledge base

that Jane offered, but I am a strong advocate of raising awareness and finding appropriate connections for those interested in preserving our history. Jane will always hold a special place in my life and will be ‘always a friend’. God bless her and all she has accomplished.”

Now Jane sleeps, a tired, worn General; but she is in the hearts and minds of her Army. As one of her foot soldiers I charge us all to advocate, educate and protect our heritage that has been fastidiously chronicled by our friend Jane L.S. Davidson. □

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## Jane L. S. Davidson: Pioneer, Leader, Mentor and “Always a Friend”

Bruce Knapp, *President*  
CCHPN

It is always too soon to lose a friend, a colleague, a mentor. But when that person was also both the founder and an active member of your organization, it can trigger moments of panic and insecurity. I know that I sometimes used Jane’s nearly eidetic memory and kindly patience as a crutch thinking *I could always ask Jane*.

But it didn’t take long to realize that Jane had anticipated this situation and, as usual, had a plan in place. And I, along with many others, was both a product of her plan and an implementer of it. Jane followed the age-old proverb: “*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.*” I knew what I had to do and I had the tools to do it.

Earlier this month, CCHPN’s board went on a “retreat” to discuss moving forward, an opportunity to review our mission, goals, achievements and challenges. The result was a reaffirmation of our basic mission and goals and an acknowledgement that we are stronger than we have ever been. The support of Chester County’s efforts and its Cultural Heritage Coordinator/Historical Preservation Officer is stronger than ever. We have more members: individual, municipal and non-profits. There are more Historical Commissions and ordinances in place than at any prior time. We have launched partnering efforts with other organizations. Our educational programs remain focused on the practical needs and challenges facing our County. We are being emulated by other counties and outside organizations in the Commonwealth and beyond.

In honor of Jane’s pioneering achievements in preservation, CCHPN is planning a publication dedicated to her work, including her hand-written plans with, of course, a time-line! We are gathering memories, experiences, achievements and accolades about Jane. So I am asking all our readers to send us recollections and to spread

the word to others. Please send them directly to the CCHPN address.

The Board has unanimously voted to rename our annual award, at our Volunteer Recognition Dinners, to an outstanding individual's contribution to historic preservation. It will now be called the "Jane L. S. Davidson Award for Individual Excellence in Preservation".

One of the lessons I learned from Jane was the importance of person-to-person dialog in an age when much interaction is conducted through e-mails. No matter how many e-mail blasts or electronic flyers are sent, personal contact and respectful listening creates an interaction that goes beyond words. Jane ended her communications with the phrase *Always a Friend*. She meant it and believed it. I am going to continue this practice in my future letters and communications. I hope future CCHPN officers will make it a tradition. □

*Always a Friend,*  
Bruce Knapp

## On the Spring 2013 Workshop

Karen Marshall, *Chair*  
CCHPN Education and Programming Committee

**J**n thinking about the losses that our County is dealing with of remarkable and visionary leaders, I was struck even more by the importance of the 2013 Spring Workshop topic: "Making Your Community's History Come Alive." One of the most important tasks each historical organization in the County faces is sharing the wonderful history that we are gathering through research and preservation of structures and artifacts with the public. Event and project planning can be overwhelming when first approached, but as we all know: if you break any task into workable phases it will get accomplished.

What the CCHPN Board believes will be special about this training is that we have asked your peers to share with you their experiences in getting the word out about Chester County's very special history. Each presentation will focus on an example that the Board has identified of an organization's work to develop a heritage program or project. It was a difficult selection process as the list is a long one. Finally we identified what we felt was a good representation of examples of heritage projects that are being conducted throughout the county.

We hope you will all join us on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, to hear from your peers and to share your ideas and challenges. We are hoping to also arrange for a special "sneak preview" at the Brandywine Conservancy but do not have final word on that yet so stay tuned!

I also want to remind everyone about the 4 passes to a workshop that comes with your 2013 municipal membership in the Network. This includes the cost of the workshop less basic costs such as food and honorariums. For this workshop, the cost will be \$10.00. When you register, please note on the registration how many passes you are requesting.

I look forward to seeing everyone. □

<p><b>Share Your Memories of Jane</b> for a planned future publication. Please send them to: CCHPN, PO Box 174, West Chester PA 19381 or <a href="mailto:ttvwcc1@yahoo.com">ttvwcc1@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><i>Jane requested that any donations in her memory be made to CCHPN as a tax-exempt contribution.</i></p> <p><i>Thank you.</i></p>
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## HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

The West Chester Downtown Foundation announces the Third Annual Historic Preservation Awards to recognize projects and individuals who have worked to preserve the character and history of the Borough of West Chester, Pa. Help recognize these individuals by submitting a nomination.

**Nomination Forms Available April 15th, 2013**  
**For full details visit [DowntownWestChester.com](http://DowntownWestChester.com)**

Awards Ceremony to be held  
the morning of October 22nd, 2013

## Local Students Prepare for Annual National History Day Competition

Mary Galligan, *Coordinator*  
*Southeastern Pennsylvania National History Day Competition*  
*Chester County Historical Society*

Peek through frosty classroom windows across Chester and Delaware Counties and you will find hundreds of students excitedly completing their



*Students from Conestoga High School turned their National History Day research about women in the workforce during WWII into a performance that earned them a place at the 2012 national NHD competition.*

National History Day (NHD) projects. Some are tapping away at computer keyboards producing short documentaries or developing websites; others are on the school stage practicing a performance; while the rest are creating an exhibit or writing a research paper. School wide history fairs, similar to science fairs, determine which students advance to the 24<sup>th</sup> annual Southeast Pennsylvania Regional National History Day competition. This year's event takes place on Saturday, February 23, 2013 on the campus of Immaculata University in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

National History Day is one of the many educational programs coordinated by the Chester County Historical Society (CCHS). Although the culminating regional competition lasts only a day, National History Day is a prestigious yearlong academic program proven to teach critical thinking skills and boost academic performance across all subjects. Enthusiastic students often participate year after year and begin researching as early as June. CCHS provides ongoing support and training in primary research methods to both students and teachers through classroom visits, teacher workshops, student internships, and webinars.

Our regional event is the third largest NHD program in the state of Pennsylvania (behind Philadelphia and Pittsburgh). It is only through the involvement of volunteer judges that the competition is possible. Approximately 100 community members receive training before spending half a day listening to the presentations of these young history scholars. Students use the written comments from the judges to refine their projects for the next level of the competition: the Pennsylvania National History Day contest held in May 2013. □

Would you like to spend a Saturday making a difference in the lives of students who will become our future historians, archivists, preservation proponents, and involved citizens? The Chester County Historical Society welcomes new National History Day judges! For more information and to register online go to [www.cchshistoryeducation.org/Judges\\_Registration.html](http://www.cchshistoryeducation.org/Judges_Registration.html) or contact Mary Galligan at [mgalligan@ChesterCoHistorical.org](mailto:mgalligan@ChesterCoHistorical.org)



Chester County Historic Preservation Network

P.O. Box 174

West Chester, PA 19381

www.cchpn.org 877-442-2476

PLEASE FORWARD

Please come and  
join us for our

**Spring 2013 Workshop**

**Make Your  
Community's History  
Come Alive**

**Saturday, March 9th  
8am - 12:15pm**

Brandywine River Museum  
Chadds Ford, PA

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For Technical Information on Historic Preservation  
and Contacts to help you with your historic house or  
with your preservation efforts, please visit:

**www.CCHPN.org**

If you would like to get more involved with the Chester County Historic Preservation Network,  
please contact a board member through the website, [www.cchpn.org](http://www.cchpn.org), or at one of our events.

We are always looking for more volunteers!