



Coventry Forge Inn (log), 1717,  
South Coventry Township

# The Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

June 2005

Volume 8, Number 2

## The Rebirth of the Historic Richards-Jones Barn

In the early 1700s, a Welshman named Rowland Richards settled in what is now Tredyffrin Township. Around 1730, it is believed that Griffith Jones constructed a barn to shelter livestock, store a burgeoning yield of crops, and thresh wheat and other grains. The barn helped these early residents survive in the vast, undeveloped wilderness of Chester County.

Nearly fifty years later, the farmstead in which the barn was located sheltered high-ranking military officers in our nation's struggle for independence. The British used the property as a headquarters during the important "Philadelphia Campaign." From here they launched their surprise attack on General Anthony Wayne, defeating Continental troops in what became known as the "Paoli Massacre." Months later, the Continental Army stayed there during the long winter at

Valley Forge. In 1781, an immense log barn was built, possibly on the foundations of the earlier barn, which may have suffered neglect and damage during the war years. The new barn was built in the English Lake-District style.



The Richards-Jones Log Barn was dismantled in 2000 and awaits repair and reassembly, possibly in 2006.

In the nineteenth century, many farmers replaced older log barns with stone structures, the Richards-Jones Log Barn was simply enlarged (1803) with a stone portion. Suburban development caught up with the area in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, and new houses were built on the land surrounding the barn. No longer used, the barn fell into disrepair.

In 1999, the barn was brought to the attention of the township's Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB). According to barn experts, it is one of the earliest extant log barn structures in the mid-Atlantic region. At HARB's recommendation, a study by John Milner

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

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*Photograph of Coventry Forge Inn by Ned Goode, H.A.B.S., 1959.*



*The cribbing of the barn reveals much about how the structure was used.*

Associates, Inc., of West Chester, was undertaken to explore options for the Log Barn. In 2000, the executor of the estate (the owner having passed away), applied for a demolition permit. The township approved the demolition, yet,

after an “11<sup>th</sup> hour” appeal by the HARB, the township made funds available (as a loan) for removing and storing the barn. The estate agreed to donate the structure and the National Park Service agreed to store some logs of the barn at Valley Forge. In November of 2000, having completed an extensive structural documentation, the firm 18<sup>th</sup> Century Restoration, Inc. carefully disassembled the barn and secured it for storage.

In 2001-2, the HARB formed a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization called the Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust. In addition to supplementing the HARB, the Trust’s purpose is to preserve and protect historic, cultural and environmental resources, principally in Tredyffrin Township, for the benefit of present and future generations and to educate the general public about the preservation and protection of historic, cultural, and environmental settings. Our fundraising activities include a popular fall and spring lecture series and sales of merchandise. On September 25, 2005, we will be

holding the Trust’s first annual house tour. To learn more about the trust and the Richards-Jones Log Barn, visit: [www.tredyffrinhistory.com](http://www.tredyffrinhistory.com).

Currently, the Trust is raising money to rebuild the barn. The Trust has secured a location for the barn at the new Wilson Park, developed a management agreement with the township, and hired Frens and Frens, LLC, Restoration Architects, and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Restoration, Inc. to undertake historical research, assess current conditions, prepare a schematic design, and prepare cost estimates for the repair and rebuilding of the structure.

Thanks to successful fundraising, our finances have greatly improved: in less than a year, we have gone from owing \$25,000 to the township and having less than \$10,000 in the bank to being debt free and having nearly \$70,000 in cash! Of course, an additional \$300,000 to \$350,000 will be needed to undertake the repair and rebuilding of the barn.

When complete, the Trust will make a very rare building type accessible to the public. The “Friends of the Log Barn” will host tours, reenactments, lectures, and permanent and temporary exhibits about Tredyffrin’s important place in American history. The Trust is very excited about rebuilding the barn in the Master-Planned, new and heavily used Wilson Park. The County is also considering it as one of the historic “Gateways” into Chester County.

- Robert J. Wise

*(Portions of this article were previously published in The Chester County Ledger)*

The Chester County Ledger

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Direct all queries to: The Editor, CCHPN, P.O.Box 216, Chatham, PA 19318. 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



# Chester County Historic Preservation Network Summer 2005 Picnic and Tour at The Richards-Jones Barn Site

Wednesday, June 22, 2005  
6:00pm-8:30pm  
Teegarden Park  
Berwyn, Tredyffrin Township

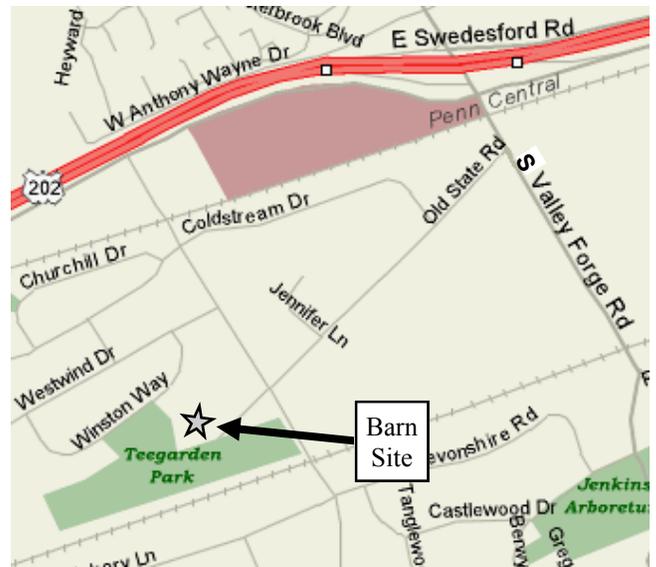
Rain date:  
June 29, 2005

The Tredyffrin HARB and the Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust invite you to the annual CCHPN summer picnic. Teegarden Park is adjacent to the site of the Richards-Jones Log Barn and Sir William Howe's Revolutionary War headquarters.

- ✓ LEARN about the exciting reconstruction of the Log Barn from Wesley Sessa, from 18th Century Restoration, Inc.!
- ✓ LEARN about other preservation efforts in Tredyffrin!
- ✓ TOUR the grounds of the Log Barn site!
- ✓ BRING YOUR CHILDREN and GRANDCHILDREN to join Debbie Estep in Colonial-Era fun and games!
- ✓ PARTICIPATE in our Silent Auction!

Picnic tables will be available, but you may bring your own chairs and blankets.

Registration Fee: \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members, and \$5 for children for food and beverages.



*Directions: From US 202 North, take the South Valley Forge Road exit and turn right at the end of the ramp. Then take the second right onto Old State Road and continue 0.7 miles to Teegarden Park*



## Picnic Registration Form

Please R.S.V.P. by June 15, 2005

Please send this completed registration form, indicating the number of people attending, to the Chester County Historic Preservation Network, P.O. Box 216, Chatham, PA 19318. Walk-ins are welcome, but registration helps us plan for the food. For questions and directions, please call Bob Wise at 610-722-5818.

Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Number of Adults and Children Attending:

## The Network Goes to the Supreme Court

The Chester County Historic Preservation Network's Pro Bono, Counsel of Record, Alfred W. Putnam, Jr. of Drinker, Biddle and Reath, Philadelphia, has been representing our preservation efforts relative to Chester County's Ten Commandments Plaque located on our Courthouse. Our argument, presented in Federal Circuit Court prevailed and the Freethought Society chose not to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Subsequent to our successful case we were contacted by the Attorney General of Texas to present a friend of the court argument, an *Amicus* Brief, to the U.S. Supreme Court in the case Van Orden versus Perry.

This case was very similar to our Chester County case; the Plaque in Texas is a freestanding monument on the National Register-listed grounds of the Austin State Capitol. Van Orden, a disbarred lawyer and self proclaimed pauper found this plaque to be most "unwelcome" during his weekly jaunts to the law library and chose the same path as the Freethought Society, stating that the existence of the plaque constitutes a government endorsement of religion. Van Orden's path was similar; heard in the Federal Circuit court in New Orleans and then appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court. Perry is Governor of Texas and Chairman of the State Preservation Board, defending the historic monument as a historic resource.

Thus the stage was set for the March 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing before the U.S. Supreme Court. CCHPN was permitted one seat to view the argument and Alfred

gave this seat to me. Arriving late on the Metroliner I queued for a taxi with 20 minutes remaining prior to the hearing. The driver, seeing Chester County on my literature and the stress on my face, chose to discharge his other passenger on the street and whizzed me thru traffic to the courthouse, stating that he had once lived in West Chester and loved it!

The security was out in force with over a thousand protestors on the steps, press and cameras everywhere. I opted for assistance from the Court police and was sent marching up those famous steps in due course, through two rounds of security checks and finally, after locking my life away in a locker, was in line with a real *mélange* of invited guests of the court. Two cases pertaining to Ten Commandment Plaques were on the docket, first Van Orden versus Perry and immediately following McCreary County versus the ACLU of Kentucky, the non-historic argument. The tone in the line just heated the air surrounding the guests, with one man was talking to no one and stating that "God was everywhere;" "God founded our country." We were seated in the subtly majestic courtroom under the gaze of U.S. Marshals watching every move we made. With the ring of a buzzer, the hearings were off and running. This layman anticipated a very organized testimony of all case representatives, but was delighted to experience a Supreme Court Justice free-for-all after the first attorney was sworn in and began to speak. The queries of the justices were mind boggling and thought provoking: Justice Scalia remarking that your client could just look the other



way; Justice O’Conner asking what portion of the Supreme Courtroom frieze would be inappropriate and how would it be removed or covered up; Justice Ginsberg asking if we only used the less religious commandments relating to U.S. law and removed the others, could that be satisfactory; Justice Kennedy asking if already we had gone too far with all plaques in the nation; and Justice Thomas saying nothing and gazing at the ceiling. The questioning was spontaneous and referenced back and forth on merits of each case. There were over 50 *Amicus* Briefs presented to the Justices and, in addition to the two cases, only one *Amicus* was permitted to testify: the Bush Administration’s Counsel, who referenced the Chester County Historic Preservation Network in several instances. Our organization was a thread of reference during the two hours of argument.

Just as it began, it was over. Everyone remained seated, seeming to attempt to absorb all that they had witnessed. Then all that remained of the day were transcripts of the hearings. As guests departed the courtroom, 5 to 4 was heard over and over again. And we still await the decision of the court, expected in June, prior to the summer recess. I leave you with the summation of our argument that we fully anticipate to prevail:

“In the present case, the Capitol grounds were a part of the Capitol and the monument part of the grounds when the Capitol was listed on the National Register. As such, it is much like a notch in an old gun butt. One does not “preserve” the gun butt by

removing the notch. To the contrary, the notch is part of the history of the gun. Eliminating it does not “restore” the gun; it changes it—for the worse—by eradicating a part of its history....

“Nor have they unleashed untrained persons to make haphazard decisions without parameters or guidance. The Department of the Interior has established extensive criteria that govern federal, state and local preservation decisions. There are specific instructions for ‘how to evaluate a property within its historic context,’ including a long list of areas of significance. By applying the same criteria to religious buildings, markers and objects, preservationists seek to ensure, insofar as is possible, that what future generations view accurately reflects the history it purports to represent. With all due respect, the decision to allocate such determinations to preservationists and curators is the right decision. But even if it were in doubt, it is a decision this Court should respect. The Texas State Preservation Board acted within the authority given to it by the people of Texas....”

- Mary Sue B. Wiedmer

## Silent Auction at the Summer Picnic

The CCHPN invites you to come and bid in our annual Silent Auction at the Summer Picnic in Teegarden Park. Dinners at local restaurants and accommodations at local Bed and Breakfasts will be featured. Along with local crafts and plants. Please come and support the CCHPN!

## Chester County Invites you to the Town Tours and Village Walks, 2005

The nostalgic delights of our historic villages are yours to discover as you spend lovely summer evenings on the FREE evening Town Tours and Village Walks. Designed to evoke memories of life in simpler times, they are an experience to share with family and friends.

Your guides some in period dress, are experts in local history and architecture. They bring to life the people who lived and worked along the streets you will travel. For years, they have researched old records to learn about the historic buildings in their neighborhoods. Highlighted are properties, both residential and business, revealing the fabric of three

centuries of domestic, social and industrial life in our region, one of William Penn’s first named counties.

Here, homes are lovingly restored and show the charm of small town life in the Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian and twentieth century styles. Many of these, along with designated Historic Districts, are part of this summer’s tour itineraries. In Pennsylvania, Chester County has a significant number of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Observe the preservation and adaptive reuse of our period architecture – to inspire ideas for your own lifestyle.

Discover how our waterways and mills – French Creek, the Schuylkill River and branches of the Brandywine – influenced life in our valleys and along our early toll roads. Tales, great and small, told of the characters that lived here will intrigue and amuse.

Take “A Stroll Around the Square” in West Chester; walk where General George Washington passed with his troops in Parker Ford during the Revolutionary War and hear about details of the Paoli Massacre in Malvern; see Historic Sugartown, a hidden gem in Willistown; explore the iron industry in Lukens Historic District and Main Street in Phoenixville; be fascinated by village life in Cedarville, Fairville and Marlborough Village. Be a part of the Kennett Square historic streetscape with its many stories; stand in awe of Zion Lutheran Church with its famous 1791 organ and Bonnie Brae Park west of Phoenixville; and absorb the traditional leadership roles of women in Historic Yellow Springs through the centuries.

Partnerships have been established to withdraw facts from filing cabinets to share stories and folklore

with neighbors and all the visitors – we welcome you to our FREE summer-long program. Many of our restaurants will feature “Early Bird” Specials for pre-tour suppers or other dining values after your Town Tour or Village Walk.

The Town Tours and Village Walks program is sponsored by:

The Chester County Board of Commissioners  
Chester County Parks and Recreation Department  
601 Westtown Road, Suite 160  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990

The Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau  
400 Exton Square Parkway  
Exton, PA 19341

The Chester County Historic Preservation Network  
P. O. Box 216  
Chatham, PA 19318

### Schedule and Tour Reservation Telephone Numbers

For exact starting times and locations, please call the number listed with each weekly tour.

Light refreshments follow each walk.

Don't forget to wear comfortable shoes!

June 2	A Stroll Around The Square, West Chester	610-918-7348
June 9	Historic Sugartown	610-640-2667
June 16	Lukens Historic District	610-384-9282
June 23	Kennett Square	610-444-7790
June 30	No Tour	
July 7	Phoenixville	610-935-7646
July 14	Zion Lutheran Church and Bonnie Brae Park	610-933-1770
July 21	Parker Ford	610-495-5443
July 28	Cedarville	610-323-1694
August 4	Paoli Battlefield	610-644-2602
August 11	Historic Yellow Springs	610-827-7414, Ext. 16
August 18	Fairville	610-388-7323
August 25	Marlborough Village	610-347-2237

## 2005 Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards Announced

presented by Preservation Pennsylvania, Inc. in partnerships with the  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

### *Award in Education*

#### **Chester County Parks and Recreation, Town Tours and Village Walks (Chester County)**

Countywide annual program - a partnership of Chester County Parks and Recreation, Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau, and Westtown Township - providing free summer guided historical walking tours for residents and visitors. 2004 marked the tenth year of this popular program under the direction of Jane L. S. Davidson, Heritage Preservation Coordinator for Chester County.

### *Awards in Government*

#### **Charlestown Township Supervisors, Charlestown Woolen Mill Stabilization Project (Chester County)**

Preservation commitment by the Board of Supervisors to save and restore this economic heart of Charlestown Village and incorporate it in plans for a trail system along the Pickering Creek.

**West Chester Borough Councils (Chester County)** In recognition of 25 years of aggressively and creatively working to retain and enhance the historic character of the Borough of West Chester.

The other two government awards will be given to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Erie County.

## Schedule of Upcoming CCHPN Events

### **June Picnic 2005**

Come to the Historic Richards-Jones Barn Site to learn about log-barn construction, eat good food, and play historic Colonial-Era games!

### **September 2005 - Autumn Meeting #1**

*Architectural Styles Series:* English Colonial and German Colonial. West Chester restoration architect, Dale Frens, of Frens and Frens, LLC, Restoration Architects, will present the program at the East Goshen Township municipal building, tentatively scheduled for September 28th.

### **November 2005 - Autumn Meeting #2**

*Architectural Styles Series:* Georgian, 1720 - 1780; Federal, 1780 - 1820; Greek Revival, 1840-1860. Speaker and location to be determined.

### **Spring Workshop 2006 (March)**

*Architectural Styles Series:* Post Civil War, 1865 - 1900, including Gothic Revival, Carpenter Gothic, Second Empire, Italianate, Queen Anne Revival, Period Revival, and Italian Villa. Speaker and location to be determined.

### **September 2006 - Autumn Meeting #1**

*Architectural Styles Series:* Arts and Crafts period up to 1930: Sears Roebuck and Co., houses, Arts and Crafts, Beau Arts, Bungalow, Richardsonian, Shingle style. Speaker and location to be determined.

### **November 2006 - Autumn Meeting #2**

*Architectural Styles Series:* Post World War II, G. I. houses, Cape Cod, Ranch, Modernism plus tract housing. Speaker and location to be determined.



### **Announcing a New Preservation Tool!**

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Enables communities to write their own  
historic district design guidelines  
at a fraction of the cost of  
consultant-prepared guidelines

For more information, please contact:

**FRENS and FRENS, L.L.C.**

*Restoration Architects*

120 South Church Street · West Chester, PA 19382

Telephone 610.430.7730 · Fax 610.430.7621

Website [www.frensandfrens.com](http://www.frensandfrens.com)

Email [info@frensandfrens.com](mailto:info@frensandfrens.com)

***Available in Autumn 2005***

## The Chester County Ledger Bulletin Board

Attention  
Historical Commissions and HARBs!

Please send your updated address information to Linda Saunders at the address below.

Any time is a good time to join the Chester County Historic Preservation Network!  
We need you!

Annual Membership dues:

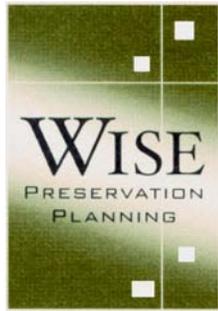
Individual: \$15.00

Municipal: \$75.00

Corporate: \$150.00

Benefactor: \$500.00

Please send checks to the address below.  
All contributions are tax-deductible.



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Historic Preservation Network  
P.O.Box 216  
Chatham, PA 19318

PLEASE FORWARD

Please come and join us for the  
Summer 2005 Picnic at the  
Historic Richard-Jones  
Log Barn Site

Wednesday, June 22, 2005  
Teegarden Park  
Berwyn, Tredyffrin Township

(Details Inside)