



The Gazette



Published by Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation, Box 215, Bristol, PA 19007

Sponsoring Historic Bristol Day - Third Saturday of Each October

BCHF is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, all volunteer organization.

VOL 38
No. 2

FEBRUARY 2020

President's Corner

For 53 years (1967 - 2020) Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation has been active in Bristol Borough. Recently the Board of Directors elected its leadership for this year as follows: Harold Mitchener, President; Nick Rizzo, Vice President; Anna Larrisey, Treasurer; and Mary McIlvain, Corresponding Secretary. At our last board meeting, Nick Rizzo was pleased to announce that Mary Gesualdi would be co-chair along with him for Historic Bristol Day 2020.

Mark your calendar for Sunday, February 9, 2020 at 2 pm for a presentation on "Secret Codes of Slaves and the Underground Railroad by Linda Salley, President of the African American

Museum of Bucks County. Light refreshments will be provided. A \$4 donation is requested for adults; no charge for students. It is interesting to note that there are three houses on Radcliffe Street that were part of the Underground Railroad. Although Harriet Tubman guided slaves from the south, she never lived in Bristol. There is, however, a statue of Harriet Tubman located in Bristol's waterfront park. Several families in Bristol are descended from Harriet Tubman - the Ross, Davis and Taylor families.

Hope to see everyone for this very informative presentation.

Harold Mitchener, President

SMOOTH SAILING

BCHF hopes you'll join us on Saturday, May 30, as we sail on the East and the Hudson Rivers around Lower Manhattan on Hornblower's 2-hr. Jazzy Champagne Brunch Cruise. Sights to be seen include the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, the Brooklyn Bridge, the World Trade Center, and more. The cruise will feature a live jazz ensemble and DJ, unlimited mimosas, and an extensive buffet consisting of 10 cold items, 13 hot items, a turkey and ham carving station, and a dessert station, coffee, and herbal teas. A cash bar will be available.

When we're back on terra firma, our bus will transport us to the popular Chelsea Market, which occupies an entire city block in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan. The High Line, which was an abandoned, elevated railroad track converted to an urban oasis/greenway in 2009, passes through the 10th Avenue side of the building. The Market's anchor stores include Morimoto, Posman Books, BuonItalia, Anthropologie, the Buddakan restaurant, and Chelsea Market Baskets. Additionally, there is the Fat Witch Bakery, Amy's Bread, Chelsea Wine Vault, The Lobster

Place, Dickson's Farmstand, The Green Table, Davidovich Bagels, an Italian fresh pasta restaurant, as well as a variety of smaller stores selling cheese, artisanal salt and olive oil, chocolate, and flowers.



The cost of the day's excursion is \$155 for BCHF members and \$158 for non-members. Invite your relatives and friends to join you! Everyone is welcome!!

For a detailed flyer and reservation form, contact Ellanna Delaney at 215 788-4138. Reservations close on April 30.

Note: BCHF's cost for members is \$25 less than that of a well-known area travel company, whose itinerary does not include the Chelsea Market.

CORRECTION . . . to January Gazette

It was Bethanne Olczak who was in charge of vendors on Historic Bristol Day. Sheree Napoli's role was to provide refreshments and such to vendors and volunteers.



A Note from Ways & Means

Please attend our Sunday, February 9th program, "Secret Codes of Slaves and the Underground Railroad". Come at 2:00 and stay for light refreshments. See our Calendar of Events for details.

While you're here, consider purchasing one of our Bristol throws for \$50.00. They come in green, blue, and burgundy and have famous town scenes on them. What a cozy way for you or your family and friends to bundle against the wintery nights.

Save the date: April 26th, Annual Spring TEA, "Celebrating Our 25th Anniversary!"

Next Ways & Means meeting will be: Monday, Feb. 17th at 7 p.m.



Our 25th annual tea will be held on Sunday, April 26



The American Civil War 1861 - 1865

The war opened on April 14, 1861 when Confederate Troops bombarded Fort Sumter in the Charleston S.C. Harbor. The war's end came on April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Court House in Virginia when Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant.

Abraham Lincoln was president from 1861 - 1865.

Bristol had fewer than 3,000 people, but they sent one out of every seven of its men to the army or navy (493 soldiers and sailors). Of the almost 500 men, 43 were commissioned officers.

What were the occupations of the participants who were officers?

Farmers - 5, lawyers - 3, doctors - 10, hotel men - 2, clerk - 5, engineer on the Steamboat "Warner" - 1, store keeper - 1, student at Bonn, Germany - 1, banker - 1, merchants - 2, dentist - 1, Annapolis Navy Academy

trained - 2, Clergy of Episcopal Church - 1, machinist - 2.

Three officers died of wounds, five were wounded but recovered, and two died in the field from disease.

All men were important but the well-known were Captain Burnet Landreth, Michael Dougherty (who won the Congressional Medal of Honor) and Captain Henry Clay Beatty.

More Americans, considering both the Union and Confederate sides, died in the war from disease or bullets than in any other war in which Americans were involved. As a result of the war, President Lincoln freed the Slaves by the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863.

Sources, Doron Green - 1911, History of Bristol, PA America: It's People and Values: Wood, Biller and Gabriel Margaret R. Grundy Library Historical Files.

Early Air Travel

The Wright Brothers' First Flight was at Kitty Hawk, NC in 1903.

The first (airship) airplane to pass over Bristol was on the morning of June 13, 1910 at 9:30 a.m. Charles K. Hamilton was the pilot of the biplane. This was the first flight between New York City and Philadelphia. On his return journey, he passed Bristol at 11:33 a.m. The Pennsylvania Railroad had a train that acted as a guide for Pilot Hamilton. The speed of the plane flew between 55 and 60 miles per hour. People from Bristol lined the tracks, which were at the street level in Bristol, to see the

train.

Later Charles Lindberg's first trans-Atlantic flight was from New York to Paris in 1927.

Amelia Earhart flew from Newfoundland to Ireland in 1932.

By the 1950-1960's airplanes and jet planes replaced many trains in the U.S. and ships in the oceans for travel.

Sources: Doron Green - 1911. History of Bristol, PA America: It's People and Values: Wood, Biller and Gabriel

Note: The first meeting of the Historic Bristol Day Committee will be held on Tuesday, February 25 at 7:00 p.m. at BCHF Headquarters. All are welcome to attend.

TWO PROGRAMS SCHEDULED

That string you tied around your finger last month was to remind you of the Sunday, February 9, 2 p.m., presentation on “Secret Codes of Slaves and the Underground Railroad” by Linda Salley, President of the African American Museum of Bucks County.

Come, learn how a simple song with a hidden meaning helped escaping slaves to find their path to freedom, and how quilts were used to assist the escape of the enslaved through messages. Invite your family members and friends to join you.

Members of our ways & Means Committee will serve light refreshments at the conclusion of the program. A donation of \$4 per adult attendee is requested; there is no fee for students.

In the event of inclement weather, visit BCHF’s website, www.bristolhistory.org, or call 215 788-9408, for an update.

TRAIN TRIP IN OCTOBER

As announced earlier, the Ways & Means Committee has made plans for a trip to Boyertown, PA, on Saturday, October 3, which will feature a 2-hr. ride on the Colebrookdale Railroad, including a full-course luncheon in the Dining Car, plus a visit to the Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles.

The Railroad provides expeditions into what’s referred to as the “Secret Valley” - - one of the most scenic and historic regions in the Northeast. The passenger railroad, built in 1865 to connect travelers to ironmaking sites in Northeastern cities, declined in use for about 40 years and was even out of service for a while. In 2009, the Colebrookdale Railroad Preservation Trust was founded to begin investing in the railroad’s resurgence as a heritage line. Over four years, about 230 volunteers spent 100,000-plus hours and \$8 million contributed dollars to restore nine miles of track, 11 bridges, and several century-old mahogany passenger boarding cars. They also rebuilt passenger boarding stations in Pottstown and Boyertown.

Detailed flyers, containing cost and reservation information, will be available in early April. Stay tuned!

Don’t touch that string! It will serve as a reminder of the Sunday, March 29, 2 p.m., program entitled “Little Street, Big City: How Elfreth’s Alley Tells the Story of Philadelphia.” The presentation will be given by Ted Maust, Associate Director of the Elfreth’s Alley Assn.

Elfreth’s Alley is a historic street in the Old City neighborhood of Philadelphia, dating back to 1702, and is a National Historic Landmark. There are 32 houses on the street, which were built between 1728 and 1836.

Following Mr. Maust’s presentation, light refreshment will be served. A donation of \$4 per adult attendee is requested. As always, there is no fee for students.



The nostalgic Dining Car on the Colebrookdale Railroad where we will enjoy a full-course luncheon while traveling through the “Secret Valley”.



We’ll also be visiting the Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles on this full day trip.



THE FERRY TAVERN AND AARON BURR

Before the U.S. was established in 1776, a tavern was built (reportedly in 1750) along the Delaware River opposite Green Lane which was then known as Bloomsdale Ferry Lane. The yellow house along the river on Radcliffe Street was called the "Ferry Tavern". The ferry landing adjoined the property. In Colonial times, this was a major thoroughfare east and west. Within the building were bedrooms that could be rented. This ferry crossed from Bristol to NJ above Burlington. Presently, it is still standing and is a private home.

U.S. Vice President, Aaron Burr, and Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, in 1804 did not agree on many issues. They decided to solve their differences with a duel in Weehawken, N.J. Hamilton was killed and interred in Trinity Church Cemetery on Wall Street in New York City. Burr was never tried for his illegal duel and all

charges were dropped, however, it signaled the end of his political career.

Burr fled to New Jersey. He crossed the Delaware River from New Jersey to Bristol, Pennsylvania on the Bloomsdale Ferry where he rested for the night in a room at the yellow house (Ferry Tavern). From the tavern, Burr fled south. He traveled west to seek new opportunities and refuge from controversy.



A bust of Aaron Burr

In 1807, he was arrested on charges of treason. While he was eventually acquitted; he was left with heavy debt and few friends. He left the U.S. in order to avoid what would have been vigilante execution and other charges. He did not return to the U.S. until 1812 to practice law in New York City. He spent the rest of his life in obscurity.

Aaron Burr was born in Newark, NJ on February 6, 1766. He was educated at Princeton and also was in the Revolutionary War. He had two wives, Theodosia Bartow Prevost and Eliza Jumel.

Burr suffered a debilitating stroke in 1834, which rendered him immobile. In 1836, Burr died on Staten Island in the village of Port Richmond, in a boardinghouse that later became known as the St. James Hotel. He was buried near his father in Princeton, New Jersey.

The next time you are on Radcliffe Street near Green Lane, look for the large yellow house along the river and remember that Burr once slept there.



The former Ferry Tavern on Radcliffe Street near Green Lane

OUT OF THE PAST . . . continued from page 5

"FORREST C. SMITH, 527 Bath street . . . choice roasts of all kinds can always be found at our market. Cut to any size or weight, and sweet and tender. Steaks and chops to suit the most fastidious is our specialty. Poultry and game in season."

2/22 - - BRISTOL IN TROLLEY DEAL. Consolidations of Electric Companies Bring in Sight a Through Trolley from Philadelphia to New York. The prospects are very bright for Bristol to be soon connected by trolley with New York and Philadelphia.

LOCAL ELECTIONS. The elections on Tuesday were the quietest in the history of the borough. Democrats and Republicans alike remained away from the polls. The great surprise of Edward L. Leigh, the Democratic candidate, by 94 votes.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE:

A new platform has been placed around the passenger station. When the old planks were torn up, the workmen found about five dollars in nickels, dimes, quarters and pennies - the accumulation of years.

The first real touch of winter was experienced in Bristol on Saturday when this section was visited by a severe snowstorm. The flakes fell to a depth of about a foot on the level. Sleighing was started on Monday.

L.H. Stein's wholesale delivery wagon for the Armour Packing Company of Burlington broke down Monday morning after it came off the ferry at Bristol. Local expressmen came to the rescue and delivered the meat to Bristol butchers.

Residents of the borough received the customary notice from the Chief of Police to remove the snow from the sidewalks on Monday morning.

Out Of The Past

The following items were excerpted from **FEBRUARY 1900** issues of the BUCKS COUNTY GAZETTE

2/1 - - **BRISTOL BOOMING.** Never before in its history has Bristol ever enjoyed such an industrial boom as it is having today. Not a man, woman, boy or girl in the borough who desires employment need go without it. Families from the surrounding districts are being encouraged to move into the borough to take advantage of the exceptional opportunities offered for employment in the mills and factories of Bristol.

LOCAL HAPPENINGS:

The Gazette office thermometer registered five degrees above zero this morning.

The Round of Pleasure Club will meet this evening at the home of Mrs. John P. Lawrence on Penn Street.

There were 27 deaths in the borough during January. This is a greater number than usual, although there were no deaths from contagious or communicable diseases.

The Bristol auxiliary of the National Congress of Mothers will hold a monthly parent meeting on February 8 at 8 p.m. Subject: "Some Practical Results of Child Study." All are welcome.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE:

Miss Lizzie Kinsey lies in a helpless condition at her home on Radcliffe St. after suffering from a paralytic stroke received last week. A trained nurse is in attendance. The patient's whole body suffered from the stroke, with the exception of the head.

John Graham, age 22, fell into an air hole in the canal on Tuesday while skating from Tullytown on the 2-mile level. Cries for help brought to the young man's assistance David Neil who found the skater up to his neck holding onto the ice. The accident occurred a short distance above Grundy's Mill.

TOM THUMB WEDDING. The wedding ceremony of Mr. Tom Thumb and Miss Jennie June, which is to take place at the First Baptist Church this and tomorrow evening, promises to be one of the prettiest and most amusing entertainments ever given in Bristol. The participants are all small children, just about an interesting age, who, when dressed in their wedding costumes and carrying large bouquets of roses, will present a fine appearance.

BASKETBALL. Last night, the Bristol Yanigans defeated the Parksides of Philadelphia, 21 to 14, in an interesting contest. The locals appeared in new uniforms and celebrated the event by taking the scalp of the visitors. The game was played accord to Yanigan rules and little things like holding a man around the neck with both arms or scrimmages of the catch-as-catch-can order were indulged in by both sides. The Yanigans line-up: Wright, Allen, Louder, Stewart (Cline) and Clark.

"**NATIONAL LEAGUE BASKETBALL** at the Bristol Auditorium. Thursday, February 8, 8:15 p.m. Bristol vs. New York. Admission 15 cents. Reserved seats 25 cents. At James Wright's Store."

2/8 - - **AN INTERESTING REPORT.** Miss Louise Baggs, Superintendent of the Bristol public schools, made the following report for the school month ending January 9, 1900, at the monthly meeting of the School Board on Tuesday evening. Number of scholars enrolled - 780, greatest number present - 721, least number present - 531, average atten-

dance - 658. 20 Scholars are in the Bristol High School and the classes in all the departments are full.

"**HOTEL CLOSSON**, Cor. Mill and Bath Streets, at trolley terminus near R.R. station . . . Modern conveniences. Well furnished. Excellent table. Well stocked bar."

"**BLACK HORSE HOTEL**, Tullytown, on the turnpike between Phila. and New York. First-class accommodations. Henry Lovett, proprietor."

"**DELAWARE HOUSE**, cor. Radcliffe and Mill Streets. Mrs. S.E. Lincoln, prop."

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE:

The ferryboat William Doron resumed its trips yesterday.

The "Spinsters' Fortnightly Club" is arranging to give a public entertainment for the benefit of the Bristol Library.

The State Pure Food Inspector has been in town this week visiting the groceries for the purpose of learning whether the local merchants are complying with the food laws.

The river water that Bristolians are compelled to use for drinking and domestic purposes is again largely composed of mud. Every time there is a rain or wind storm causing a freshet, water customers suffer the consequences. It isn't necessary to leave home to enjoy a mud bath.

A skating carnival was held on LaRue's lake, Edgely, on Saturday evening last. The lake was brightly illuminated. There were some fine speed and fancy skaters present.

It is almost worth being sick to enjoy the delights of modern medical practice. Champagne is the top-notch remedy for typhoid fever and massage is the only sure cure for muscular rheumatism. For bronchial troubles, a delightful spray of perfumed antiseptics has been devised and, for insomnia, a learned practitioner has discovered that nothing is as good as a substantial meal just before retiring.

NOTE TO READERS. Bucks County finances for the year A.D. 1899 may be found in this issue of the Gazette.

2/15 - - **A SUCCESSFUL FAIR.** The fair and bazaar of Good Will Hose Company No. 3 came to a close last Monday night. It is estimated that about \$500 has been netted by the sale of articles, etc.

ANNUAL REPORT OF BOARD OF HEALTH. There were 33 nuisances reported and abated during the year 1899. They consisted mostly of defective and overflowing water closets and cesspools. Attention is called to the fact that there were two deaths from typhoid fever and one from measles. There were reported 13 cases of typhoid fever and 6 of scarlet rash. There were 122 births reported and 44 marriages.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE:

Bristol Division No. 107, Sons of Temperance, initiated four persons last Friday night and will initiate two more tomorrow evening.

Harry Ellis, who is employed by Frank Heltzman, the Washington Street butcher, nearly severed three of his fingers while cutting meat a few days ago.

The steamboat Columbia resumed trips yesterday.

Everybody should goto the Baptist Church this evening and hear the special address by Evangelist Ernest A. Boom on "The Chemistry of Salvation." It is something unique and is sure to prove interesting and instructive.

continued on previous page



**Bristol Cultural &
Historical Foundation, Inc.**
Post Office Box 215
Bristol, PA 19007



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

BCHF Calendar of Events For 2020

FEB. Sunday, 2/9, 2:00 p.m. Presentation on "Secret Codes of Slaves & the Underground Railroad" by Linda Salley, President of the African American Museum of Bucks County. Light refreshment. \$4 donation requested; no charge for students. BCHF headquarters. Info at 215 788-9408.

MARCH Sun., 3/29, 2:00 p.m. Presentation on "Little Street, Big City: How Elfreth's Alley Tells the Story of Philadelphia," by Ted Maust, Assoc. Director, Elfreth's Alley Assn. Light refreshment. \$4 donation requested; no charge for students. BCHF headquarters. Info at 215 788-9408

APRIL Sun., 4/26, 3 to 5 p.m. Silver Anniversary Tea. BCHF headquarters. Details in the March Gazette.

MAY Sat., 5/30. Bus trip to Manhattan for a "Jazzy Champagne Brunch Cruise" and free time at the popular Chelsea Market. \$155 for BCHF members; \$158 for non-members. For flyer/reservation form, call 215 788-4138. 14 SEATS REMAIN AS OF JAN. 10!

AUGUST Sun., 8/9 between 2 & 4 p.m. Annual Peach Social. BCHF headquarters. Details in a future Gazette.

OCTOBER Sat., 10/3. Bus trip to Boyertown, PA for 2-hr. train ride on the Colebrookdale Railroad, incl. full-course luncheon in the Dining Car, and a visit to the Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles. Cost and reservation info available in early April.

OCTOBER Sat., 10/17, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. 44th Historic Bristol Day. Details in a future Gazette

NOVEMBER Wed., 11/18, 7 p.m. BCHF'S annual meeting, incl. election of Board members. Program and refreshments follow. The public is invited. BCHF headquarters. Call 215 788-6912 for info.

DECEMBER Thurs., 12/3. Bus trip to Tarrytown, NY, for tour of the Lyndhurst Mansion, highly acclaimed for its holiday decor, lunch, and tour of "Sunnyside," the home of author Washington Irving. More info in future issues of the Gazette.

- BCHF Headquarters are at 321 Cedar Street, Bristol.

- For current information about activities and events, check out our web site at www.bristolhistory.org.

THE GAZETTE is a publication of the Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation, Inc. - Susan Watkins, Editor
Post Office Box 215 • Bristol • Pennsylvania • 19007 • 215 781-9895
www.bristolhistory.org • IG@bristol_historic_foundation

Articles for this issue of *THE GAZETTE* were contributed by: Helen Younglove, Carol Mitchener, Harold Mitchener and Kathy Barniskis. Photography by Boyertown Auto Museum, Coldebrook Dale Museum, Hornblower Cruise Line