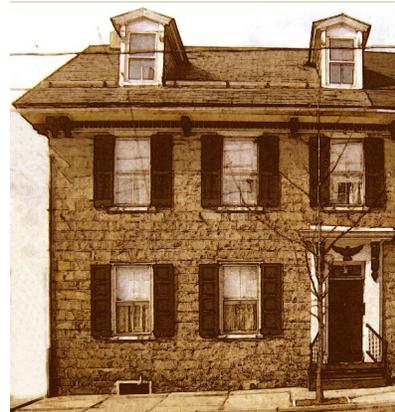


# The Biery House Herald

www.hcpa.org



Newsletter of the Historic Catasauqua Preservation Association Spring 2012

## Historic House Tour - July 1st

HCPA is excited to again host a tour of historic homes on Sunday, July 1, from 1 to 5 p.m. The legacy of Catasauqua's illustrious past can be seen in the elegant mansions and homes once owned by the leaders of industry. The houses retain many original architectural features: stained glass and leaded windows, original moulding, fireplaces, lighting fixtures and tin ceilings. The tour this year also features a display of WW II items, including a restored WW II English "Rod Brake" bike that the American Service men used in the air fields. Some of the properties on tour: 606 Fifth Street, 231 Bridge Street, 17 Second Street, 27 Front Street, 307 Bridge Street, Bethany Church and more.

The success of this biennial event depends on volunteers to help as docents on the day of the tour. We also welcome donations from businesses and individuals to help defray expenses. To volunteer call Janice at 610 266-0255 or e-mail [jelathrop@aol.com](mailto:jelathrop@aol.com). To make a donation send to: HCPA, 8 Race Street, Catasauqua 18032. Your support is appreciated.

Tickets are \$18 the day of the tour; \$15 advance sale. You can purchase tickets online at [www.hcpa.org](http://www.hcpa.org) or send a check for the number of tickets you want to HCPA, 8 Race Street, Catasauqua, 18032. Tickets will be held at the Biery House, 8 Race Street, Catasauqua for pick up the day of the tour.

~cut here

**Yes! I Wish to Support HCPA**  
Please accept my contribution



Member                    \$25  
 Senior                        \$15  
 Business                     \$50  
 Benefactor                 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

HCPA is a 501 ( c ) ( 3 ) non-profit organization.  
Memberships & donations are 100% tax deductible.

**Make check payable and send to:**

HCPA  
8 Race Street, Catasauqua Pa 18032

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## Lehigh Canal Towpath has a Resurgence of Interest

By Pete Ellis — volunteer D&L trail tender

A new wave of interest is brewing in the Catasauqua/ North Catasauqua area of the Lehigh Canal and Towpath. There have been several group efforts in the past few decades that have shown substantial interest in opening sections of the tow path trail. These groups and efforts have been - and continue to be - an inspiration as we build on their accomplishments. The Earth Day cleanups of the canal are a recent example.

A new trail maintenance group is being formed for the Catasauqua and North Catasauqua area with the help of HCPA and Canal Towpath trail maintenance volunteers from other areas. This new group will become a new chapter of the D&L Trail Tenders under the umbrella of the D&LNHC (Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor). The new chapter will require a “steering committee” consisting of Catasauqua and North Catasauqua volunteers who will organize the effort and be the decision making body. Dennis Scholl the D&L Outreach Coordinator will be available for guidance and training. Plans will come from the Steering Committee and the volunteers themselves, yet to be organized. Some ideas include uncovering the ruins of locks, clearing out some open areas for benches and picnic tables, planting new grasses and trees along the trail, landscaping and hardscaping trail head areas, developing interpretive signs with history and pictures of canal days, and promoting landmarks and historic areas in the boroughs. This area along the towpath of the Lehigh Canal is very rich in history!

Most of the Towpath Trail in the Catasauqua area — from Hanover (nee Catasauqua) Lake north to the Catasauqua/North Catasauqua line — is in pretty sound condition. The vegetation has grown in a little in some places and needs to be cut back, but a minor effort will bring it back to a 5-6 foot wide trail most of the way. The section from the North Catasauqua/Catasauqua line to the Hokendauqua Bridge is now open to hikers. It is a fairly well defined trail which needs more time and effort to level it out and widen it in some places. This has been kept open in the past several months by ‘unknown trail maintainers’; often, this section has been overgrown to the point of being impassable even to hikers. From there northward, the trail/towpath is again in very good condition up into Northampton.

One major development is that our long awaited restoration is coming closer to fruition. The funding appropriated by the Federal government over twenty years ago is still in an account waiting to be used. Unforeseen problems and issues have complicated the situation in many ways and have caused years of delay. The length of the trail in the North Catty and Catty area is currently divided into three segments by the D&L for funding purposes. Two of these segments are funded for the design phase and will be sent out for bids this spring. The last still has a couple snags including land ownership issues and major reconstruction of bridges above the trail location (the Hokendauqua and Pine Street bridges), and the design phase will probably not be bid until the issues are resolved and bridge work completed.

Starting the end of May, there will be speakers, slide shows, trail walks, meetings and promotions aimed at recruiting volunteers for this new chapter and its steering committee and moving work forward. There are all types of tasks to perform including computer work, communications, historical studies, sign development, trail development, collecting canal memorabilia etc. An information meeting is currently targeted for May 29th.

HCPA would also like to build a canal exhibit on the second floor of the Biery House. We will be collecting Lehigh Canal artifacts and memorabilia from the canal era and possibly borrowing artifacts from other canal organizations: the National Canal Museum and the Pennsylvania Canal Society both own substantial amounts of artifacts and memorabilia and are interested in loaning some of their collections to other museums to help spread the story about the Lehigh Canal.

For more information contact:

Keith Shannon, Canal Towpath Steering committee (732) 810-9610

Janice Lathrop, HCPA (610)-266-0255

Vince Smith, Canal Liaison Catasauqua Council (610) 266-1551

Nancy Knecht, North Catasauqua Administrator (610) 264-1504

Dennis Scholl, D&LNHC Outreach Coord. (610) 923-3548 X 225



**Joe Kane**

*Taken from Tales of a Pennsylvania Boyhood by Dr. James Sydney Stillman, Jr.  
Dr. Stillman, born in 1908, was the son of James Stillman (see Memorabilia below).*

Joe Kane taught most of the boys intown how to swim. He would meet groups of 4-6 boys on the tow-path of the canal. His equipment consisted of a sturdy 9-10 ft pole with two nails driven in the far end, a 12 ft length of braided line, and a 6 in wide belly-band. One end of the line was fastened to the far end of the pole and the other to the belly-band, snugly fitted around the prospective swimmer. Joe gave him a few simple instructions on how to move his arms and legs and guided him down the bank of the canal to the water. When the swimmer struck out, he felt the reassuring lift of Joe's belly-band. He swam down the canal a short distance while Joe walked on the towpath. Each boy had his turn. As he became more experienced, Joe provided less and less lift. It was done so gradually, it was not frightening. Eventually he would say you were able to swim without his help. My graduation ceremony was somewhat different. The loop slipped over the end of the pole. Joe's strong voice reassured me and told me to keep swimming. I did and found that I could swim by myself.

I can't even estimate the number of lives this public-spirited man saved by teaching boys to swim. However, his good deeds did not stop there. He was noted for the number of sinking swimmers he had rescued. He always answered a call for help. I shall never forget one. My mother and I were watching a thrilling silent movie in the "Nickelette", our local movie theatre, when the lovely heroine was drowning. In those unsophisticated days, everyone was horrified by the sight. Then from the back of the theatre, we heard Joe Kane's strong voice saying, "Hold on lady! I'll save you!" as he ran down the middle aisle toward the screen. No one jeered or laughed. They applauded the good man who was answering a call for help, automatically, as he had done so many times before.

## MEMORABILIA DONATIONS

In 1922, after WWI, a Committee of Citizens of the Catasauqua Chapter of the American Red Cross created a report called the Catasauqua Community Study. This report documented a wealth of information on the communities of Catasauqua and North Catasauqua related to the health and well-being of its citizens. You can view it from our website. The study was given to us by Daphne Holmquist, a granddaughter of James Stillman, who was at the time head of the local Red Cross Chapter and an officer of Crane Iron Co. The document was scanned for us by LCHM.

Larry Tate donated a late 1876 map of Catasauqua, Whitehall Historic Society passed along some documents related to Catasauqua including calendars from early businesses. Bernie Skripek donated four glasses inscribed June 20-21, 1969, 72nd Anniversary Four County Fireman's Convention, Catasauqua Volunteer Fire Department. Thanks to all for these donations.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are needed to set up memorabilia displays. Educators, historians, grant writers: interested in developing a school tour/program on life in Catasauqua from the late 1700's to the early 1900's? How about helping with summer activities such as maintenance of the Biery House & Summer Kitchen or tidying up the Mule Barn? We're planning for Fest O'Fall: can you help? Want to help pour brews at the Lehigh River Blues Jam? And your knowledge of Catasauqua's history will make you a great docent at 8 Race or the GTH during open house Sundays. We can also use help with our walking tour script. And let us know if you are interested in the new Canal TowPath Trail Tenders. **Call Janice at 610 266-0255** to volunteer for any of the these activities

Historic Catasauqua Preservation Association  
8 Race Street  
Catasauqua, PA 18032



Spring 2012



The Biery House c. 1826

### OUR MISSION

To encourage an appreciation of the historical and the architectural heritage of the borough; to encourage the preservation of the architecture in our historic districts and the borough at large as the houses and buildings are the tangible evidence of the events that made Catasauqua important as a contributor to the growth and development, not only of Pennsylvania, but also of the United States; to encourage the preservation of the architectural integrity of our neighborhoods and to foster pride of ownership in the houses and buildings in our historic districts.

### Our Board Members

Debra Mellish	President
Betsy Hillenbrand	Vice President
Janice Lathrop	Treasurer
Bob LeFevre	Museum & Gallery Director
Larry Mouer	Director
Keith Shannon	Director
Ray Smicker	Director
Brian Zettlemoyer	Director
Dave Bernini	Web Master

### Mark Your Calendars

- D&L Catty Towpath Trail Tenders meeting, May 29th, 7 pm. Call Keith Shannon @ (732) 810-9610 for location. All welcome.
  - Biery House & GTH open 1st&3rd Sun (May-Sept) 1-4pm
  - Lehigh River Blues Jam, St John Park June 14-17
  - 2012 House Tour July 1, 1pm to 5pm.
  - GTH 4th of July Program & 8 Race Open House July 4th
  - Fest O Fall, Sept 29
  - Business meetings are the first Tues of each month, 7pm
- Events are at The Biery House, 8 Race Street, unless noted otherwise.*

The Biery House is open by appointment by calling Janice at 610 266-0255 or Bob at 610 509-1048.  
Biery House and George Taylor House are also open 1st & 3rd Sundays, 1-4 pm May-Sept.

### Biery House Rental

Affordable elegance for any special occasion! Seating for up to 50 guests.  
Birthdays, Children's Parties, Showers,  
Christenings, Anniversaries, Small weddings, Rehearsal Dinners, Corp Meetings, etc.  
\$125 Fee includes tables, chairs, basic linens, kitchenette  
Call 610-264-9716 or 610-266-0255 or e-mail [eshillenbrand@gmail.com](mailto:eshillenbrand@gmail.com)

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