

The Biery House Herald

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Newsletter of the Historic Catasauqua Preservation Association Winter 2013

MEMORABILIA

HCPA was happy to receive the following donations:

Copy of Our Town, the 1853-1953 anniversary book, from Patricia Backus of Holidaysburg, PA.
27 items of Catasauqua memorabilia from David and Wendy Burcaw of Nazareth, PA.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Information for the George Taylor property article in this edition came from a 2012 study that is available on the borough website. We hope to have the author, Thomas Jones, present his research and recommendations in either May or June. Watch for an announcement.

The LV Blues Jam is coming up Father's Day weekend, and HCPA will again be serving beverages. Join the Second Story Blues Alliance and the Borough of Catasauqua for a weekend of blues. This year will include national acts in addition to our wonderful local and regional bands.

Next year marks the 100 year anniversary of Catasauqua's Old Home Week Celebration. Please contact Mayor Schlegel or HCPA (debmellish@gmail.com) if you would like to help us plan a 2014 event in honor of this historic event.

CANAL TOWPATH TRAIL TENDERS

Follow their activities on Facebook – Delaware & Lehigh Trail Tenders-Catasauqua/North Catasauqua or contact Keith (keithshannonpa@gmail.com). While checking out the bridge work in North Catty, note the remains of the guard lock. History of the bridge sections can be found at <http://www.historicbridges.org/bridges/browser/?bridgebrowser=pennsylvania/lehigh/>

~cut here

Yes! I Wish to Support HCPA
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HCPA is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.
Memberships & donations are 100% tax deductible.

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CATASAUQUA OLD HOME WEEK-1914



Several of these arches were built and placed around town



The 1914 Old Home Week logo

99 years ago, Catasauqua held a week-long event to celebrate its good fortune and the 75 year anniversary of the “first blast” at the Crane Iron. It invited to town all those folks who had lived and worked here for a reunion with many opportunities to enjoy each other and what the town had to offer and to honor those who helped make the town a success.

Everyone was involved in preparing for and participating in the events. A steering committee of 30 was formed at a town meeting which then chose four officers to oversee 200 committee members serving on ten planning committees. Mementos were sold to raise funds: remember the watch fobs and smiling cat logo? Themes were defined for each day featuring schools, fraternal & civic orgs, churches, sports, fire companies, etc. There were parades with floats and bands, school classes in costume, social & civic organization parade groups and reunions, performances and concerts, sporting competitions, food concessions, picnics and dinners. Many speeches were given by current and past residents, sharing their memories and offering thanks. A carnival was setup on the grounds of the Crane Iron Works, businesses provided tours, stores were decorated and displayed memorabilia, churches put on concerts and dinners.

Homes and streets were draped with bunting; flags were flown everywhere. Arches were erected throughout town marking entrances and gathering areas for activities. The borough's health department prepared by doing a thorough cleanup of distressed and unsanitary properties. Newspapers published schedules of, and reported on, each days' events. The week ended with fireworks on the 4th of July. The event provided the impetus to document the history of the town - two histories were published in 1914 - and to improve the St John Street Park, creating much that still stands today.

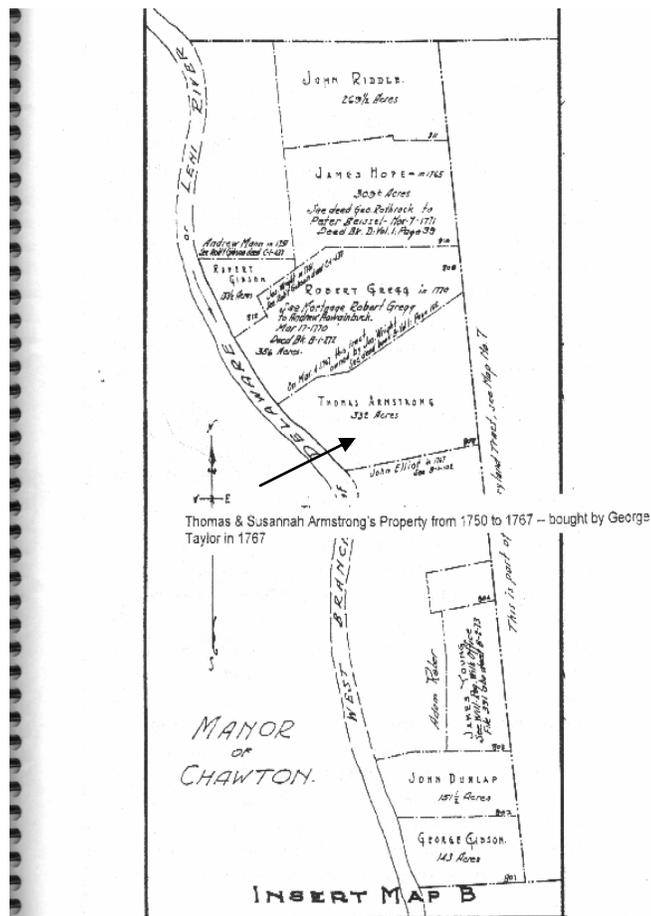
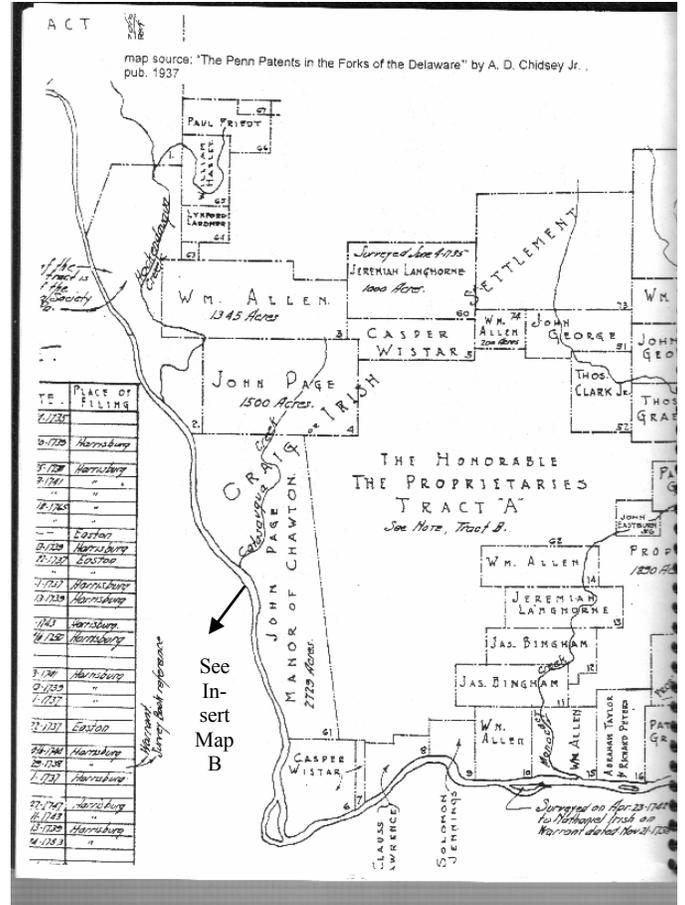
On the first day of the festivities, the Austrian Crown Prince Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated, which led to WWI. Five years later at the end of WWI, since the town did such great job with Old Home Week, they staged a second celebration, this time to welcome home those returning from the war: WELCOME HOME CELEBRATION - 1919.

Anyone who would like to help with a 100 year anniversary celebration of OLD HOME WEEK in 2014, contact Deb Mellish at 610 231-0603 or debmellish@gmail.com or Mayor Barbara Schlegel at 610 262-1466.

Early History of the Lands Which Would Become the George Taylor Home-Farm in Catasauqua

Going back almost 300 years takes us to the days of the Indians, Wm Penn lands, and the wave of Scotch-Irish immigration that coincided with the famine in Ireland in 1726-8. One group of Scotch Presbyterians from Ulster Ireland (aka Ulster Irish, Scotch-Irish or Scots-Irish) arrived in Philadelphia and, led by Colonel Thomas Craig, proceeded northward to the Forks of the Delaware around 1728 (see References below). They established three Irish settlements on the north branch of the Delaware River at Mount Bethel and another, the Craig Settlement, on the west branch (ie Lehigh River), in what is now Allen township, Northampton county, near Weaversville. The Craig or Irish settlement extended from the Monocacy on the east to the Hockandauqua on the west. The settlement lands included the Manor of Chawton owned by Sir James Page of London (See MAP to the right) and other holdings. The whole of Chawton Manor was a 2,723-acre tract of land deeded by William Penn's daughter, Letitia, to John Page in 1731. This settlement antedated the settling of Easton, Bethlehem, and Nazareth.

In 1750, Thomas Armstrong, a member of the colony and an elder in the settlement's Presbyterian congregation, and his wife Susannah, purchased a 331 acre parcel of land from the estate of John Page upon which he established a farm (See map on left).



This plot was located along the Lehigh River extending east, and was the property later purchased by George Taylor in 1767 on which he built his home. Armstrong was also of historic interest. He was appointed as a Justice by the Colonial government of PA in 1752 and assisted with setting up the "County Town" for the newly created Northampton County, which became the City of Easton. The Armstrongs built a home and barn. The barn was dated to ~1760 in the 1914 History of Catasauqua, but it could have been as early as 1752. Lehigh St did not exist at that time. Front St did, and extended across Catasauqua Creek passing just in front of the barn and homestead, and where George Taylor later built his home. The barn was incorporated into the Taylor Farm and remained standing into the early 1900s. The land in front of the home to the river was farm and grazing land. Today, the land behind the home would have extended from the creek up past 14th St on the east, paralleling Race St, and down to Franklin St on the south: mostly all of south Catty, including St Mary's Cemetery.

References:

A Feasibility Study of the George Taylor House and Property by Thomas E. Jones, Historic Preservation Planner, 2012 (The maps were reproduced from this study.)
 USGW Archives, History of Northampton County <http://files.usgwararchives.net/pa/northampton/history/local/heller/heller03.txt>
 Horner's Cemetary Historical Society: <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=252205>
 Craig Settlement history: http://www.billdraper.net/html/body_craig2.html

Historic Catasauqua Preservation Association
8 Race Street
Catasauqua, PA 18032



Winter 2013



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

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JOIN OUR BOARD

Volunteers are needed to serve on the Board of Directors. The board meets the first Tuesday of each month and has various programs throughout the year. There are many opportunities for contributing: developing history and/or educational programs, expanding the museum, chairing events, property maintenance, and securing project grants for improvements, to name a few. For additional information, call Janice at 610 266-0255 or contact any current board member.

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