

# The Wall Paper

Spring 2015

Volume XIII Number 20

---

## **CAMP WILLIAM PENN 150 YEARS AGO**

[Ed. Note: In recent newsletters, we discussed the forming and operation of Camp William Penn during the Civil War. This article portrays life in the Camp in the spring of 1865 as the Civil War winds to its conclusion, 150 years ago.]

*Camp Inspection Report*  
Daily Reports, National Archives

---

30 January 1865  
General Comments:  
Camp covered with ice and snow  
Thermometer at 12 noon, 30, Clear

---

*Letter of Lucretia Mott to Martha  
Mott Lord*  
Tuesday, May 2, 1865

---

Roadside 5 mo. 2<sup>nd</sup>. 65

I told Edwd. he need not write you today, as I shd. send a letter, - & here it is 3 oclk. & none begun - so many little things to take our attention. - Anna H. came out this mornng. & of course you want to sit awhile, & hear & tell some new thing - Then the last Regiment went off from Camp W.P. & marched thro' our grounds - with the band & much hurrahg., &  
(Continued on page 2, col. 1)

THE RICHARD WALL HOUSE  
HISTORICAL MUSEUM

~  
OPEN  
FOURTH SUNDAY  
OF EACH MONTH  
1 - 4 PM  
~

GROUPS BY APPOINTMENT  
215-887-9159

## **STUDENT DOCENT PROGRAM**

By Jack Washington

Students from Cheltenham High School have been recruited by Mr. Mark Hoff, Chairman of the Social Studies Department, to give tours of the Wall House on selected Sunday afternoons. The students receive several hours of training in the history of the Wall House and the organization of tours. Participating in recent training sessions have been Julian Morein, Ivy Chen, and Isaac Smoler-Schatz. They will be working with Commission members using the newly revised Student Docent Handbook. Their willingness and interest should be applauded. Will you come and take a tour with them?

## **CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER**

Some rays of sunshine are enveloping the Cheltenham Township Historical Commission as we emerge from the dark winter season.

Louise Cohen, chair of the Education and Public Program Committee, arranged for the public an outstanding one-act play at Curtis Hall on February 12 [Lincoln's birthday]. This presentation, *Mr. President, I am Frederick Douglass*, was the annual Black History Month offering of the Commission underwritten by the Jenkinstown Lyceum. Thank you Mrs. Cohen and the Board of the Lyceum.

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Tom Wieckowski, old versions of the Student Docent Handbook have been amalgamated into an updated version that is easier for the high school students to follow when they are giving Sunday tours. This revision corrects, combines, and expands editions previously compiled by Steve Conrad and the late Dottie Spruill. Tom digitized the handbook, making it easier to modify future editions. The short turn-around time from start to finish speaks volumes of his dedication to the project. Thank you Tom. The project also underwent review by Mary Washington and David Rowland of the Old York Road  
(Continued on page 2, col. 3)

*Camp William Penn: Continued*

takg. off caps, & biddg. Goodbye! All lookg. so nice & happy – as I felt for the poor fellows – in the hope that the war is over – & over in the right way – by the Slaveholders' surrender.

There are few left now, & we hear the camp is to be broken up, or at least changed to some other purpose – There were never more orderly, unoffending men, than the thousands gathered under Col. Wagner from the first – And he has always thought so much of them, & treated them well.

~~~~~  
[Ed. Notes: Martha was Lucretia and James' daughter. She married George W. Lord, a clerk in the Bank of North America, who was subsequently in the wool business. They married in 1853.

"Roadside" was Lucretia's residence on the west side of Old York Road just above the city line, today's Cheltenham Avenue.

"Edwd." is Edward M. Davis, Lucretia's son-in-law, a cotton and silk merchant who developed the surrounding countryside into country estates for the wealthy businessmen of Philadelphia. Davis owned Roadside and the property on which the two Camp William Penns were constructed.]

~~~~~  
**Cheltenham Township  
Historical Commission**

~~~~~  
**Chairman: Jack Washington**  
**Vice-Chair: Thomas**  
**Wieckowski**  
**Financial Secretary: Timothy**  
**Esposito**  
**Museum Curator: (Vacant)**  
**Newsletter Editor: Thomas**  
**Wieckowski**

## **Local Connections: Letters of a Camp William Penn Soldier**

"Tillman Valentine didn't know the hard times he'd face when he enlisted in the Army that morning of June 30, 1863."

Thus begins an engaging article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* about the rediscovered rare letters of a soldier trained at Camp William Penn as it opened. Far away from the seat of the war, the quiet, verdant countryside of Cheltenham must have lured the new soldiers into a state of tranquility that would soon be cruelly shattered. Valentine was part of the initial influx of black citizens who responded to patriotic appeals to join the new venture in the Cheltenham Hills. The engaging letters continued through a siege at Morris Island in South Carolina in late 1863 and to Florida in 1864.

"[I walk ahead] of my men knowing that god is able and willen to answer my prayers which is for him to spare me to see my family again."

Valentine did survive the war, though injured in the head in South Carolina. The article relates how the letters were discovered in a pension file by researcher Jonathan W. White of Christopher Newport University. Valentine's first wife submitted the letters to support her application for a pension long after the war was over. Professor White knew first hand the importance of the find as he had served during college as an intern at the Camp William Penn Museum in La Mott.

"I feel my self a man and is if I ought to be a man and as if I ought to act as a man," wrote Valentine on a "lone some moment" during the war.

Professor White is publishing the letters in a forthcoming April issue of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. The newspaper article can be found on page A3 of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* of Monday, February 9, 2015.

~~~~~  
*Chairman's Chatter Continued*

Historical Society to ensure historical accuracy.

Students from Cheltenham High School began tour guide training at the Wall House on January 25. (See related article on page 1.)

The Old York Road Garden Club will again be working in the Colonial Herb Garden. As a prelude to their initial spring efforts, the club will be taking a "behind-the-scenes" tour of the Wall House in March.

While the rays of sunshine may be shining somewhat on the Historical Commission, the current lack of appointees to the body inhibits implementation of additional open dates and fund raising programs. In this vein, Township Commissioners Ann Rappaport and Drew Sharkey may help publicize the need for additional active members. If you would be interested in furthering the work of the Historical Commission, please contact your Commissioner or the Township Manager's office to indicate your interest.

Also, on the last page of this newsletter is information about the Friends of the Wall House. Even if you cannot commit to joining the Commission, you can help with the work of the enterprise by supporting the Friends. An application is included that you can use to forward a donation to the Wall House. Thank you for your support.

*Jack Washington, Chairman*

---

# The Spring Tour of Historic Olde Wyncote

Sponsored by:  
Cheltenham Township Historical Commission  
and  
Wyncote Civic Association



Olde Wyncote was at the center of Cheltenham Hills, the first outpost of the Gilded Age. This guided tour will cover approximately one square mile of Olde Wyncote, including the Victorian Wyncote Historical District and the immediate surrounding area. Included in the tour are locations that were significant in the Colonial era, the Revolutionary War era, Civil War, and the Gilded Age. Residences of famous historical figures will be noted. Participants will be escorted on a small tour bus by a local historian, and have a tour brochure with information about the various locations that will be highlighted. The tour will be approximately one and a half hour in length. It will conclude with a visit to All

Hallows Church to see the Curtis Tiffany window and a reception sponsored by the Wyncote Civic Association at the church. Join us for this historical visit to the enchanting past of Olde Wyncote.

**Saturday, May 16, 2015, 9:00 am to 11:00 am**

*The director of the program and tour guide will be Thomas J. Wieckowski. A resident of Wyncote, Tom is the vice-chair of the Cheltenham Township Historical Commission, the vice-president of the Old York Road Historical Society, and the author of Making Marathon: A History of Early Wyncote published by Infinity Press, 2009.*

## Reservation request for the Spring Tour of Olde Wyncote

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Office \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Cheltenham Township Historical Commission.

Mail to: FRIENDS OF THE WALL HOUSE  
c/o Cheltenham Township  
8230 Old York Road  
Elkins Park, PA 19027-1589

**\$25 per person**  
**\$20 per person for Friends of Wall House**  
**# persons in your party** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total amount included** \_\_\_\_\_

## 50/100 Years Ago

by Mary Washington

*Save the Date*

**THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2015 – 7:30 PM  
CURTIS HALL**

### **THE SPRING PRESERVATION LECTURE “PRESERVING THE PAST”**

The annual Historical Commission Preservation Lecture will feature Mr. Bruce Stocking. Bruce is active in preservation work in the Delaware Valley and is the historian of the W. S. Hancock Society, celebrating Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, hero of Gettysburg.

Info: Contact Louise Cohen at 215-635-3168  
or [dccohen@juno.com](mailto:dccohen@juno.com)

*Times Chronicle, April 29, 1965*

“Cheltenham Township officially will honor the memory of Ralph Morgan, civic and philanthropic leader, this Saturday when it will formally re-name the eight-acre tract of land adjoining the Jenkintown-Wyncote station of the Reading Company as the ‘Ralph Morgan Memorial Park.’ . . . Program details are being handled by the Wyncote Men’s Club, of which Mr. Morgan was a former president. . . .

For esthetic reasons, and because it gives many commuters their first view of Cheltenham Township generally, the tract has been extensively landscaped and is maintained in a natural state.”

*Times Chronicle, March 6, 1915*

“The two meetings of the Wyncote Bird Club were held as usual at the Cheltenham Hills Hall and were of unusual interest. . . .

Mrs. W.B. Noble, vice-president, opened the meeting by announcing that William Porter had won the prize of \$3 for his splendid rustic martin box.”

### **BE A FRIEND OF THE WALL HOUSE** Help to preserve the rich history of Cheltenham Township

Benefactor, \$100.00 \_\_\_ Sponsor, \$50.00 \_\_\_ Patron, \$20.00 \_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Office \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Cheltenham Township Historical Commission.

Mail to: FRIENDS OF THE WALL HOUSE  
c/o Cheltenham Township  
8230 Old York Road  
Elkins Park, PA 19027