

The King of Prussia Gazette

Preserving Upper Merion's Past to Enliven its Future

Volume IV, Number Two

Summer 2015

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Michael Morrison

THE HOLY GRAIL...WELL ALMOST!

Nothing excites me more than finding another puzzle piece that fits into the story of the historic King of Prussia Inn, so imagine my excitement when I recently received a call from Karen McCurdy Wolfe, Executive Director at the Historical Society of Montgomery County. Karen had received a phone call from a local storage facility asking if she was interested in the contents, including an old sign from the historic King of Prussia Inn! She immediately called me to see if I knew anything about it, and would we be interested. My reply was an overwhelming "Yes", we would most certainly be interested, and that we had been looking for that hanging sign for quite some time. You see, according to my research, there were actually two hanging signs at the King of Prussia Inn. We know this because while one sign had been sold in 1920, it was not recovered until 1960, when my grandmother found it and recovered it at auction. During that time however, we have photographs of a sign hanging there, like this one from December 13, 1951. We can only surmise that there were two signs, the second being created after the sale of the original. My feeling is that the original sign is hanging inside the doorway of the Inn, and its replacement has never surfaced.



The next morning, accompanied by fellow board member, Marianne Hooper, we opened the long-abandoned storage locker and to our shock and surprise, there it was, but not the sign we were expecting! Instead what we found was the large sign that was attached to the front of the building, and a 20th century addition. Along with the sign we discovered the front to the bar, which was yet another find from the same era but missing since the 550-ton structure was picked up and moved on August 20, 2000.

Were we disappointed? Absolutely not, and plans to restore and to conserve the sign for future generations are already underway. Our thanks to Beth McNeil at "A Storage Inn" on Henderson Road for taking the time to call Karen Wolfe, and thanks to Karen for thinking about us. We are very grateful for what you did to help preserve our rich local history. As I mentioned at our last meeting when we learned about donations to our Archive and Special Collections from 2014, people know that we exist, and that we care very much about preservation for future generations to enjoy. I am very proud of this effort, and the good people who make it possible. Thank you!

I would like to recognize Rob and Marlene Lowder as keepers of our local history. They have a local business called "Box Pack N Ship" at Courtside Square in King of Prussia. Along with allowing KOPHS to sell our books there, they are also collectors of wonderful old photographs and artifacts from our past. This kind of dedication is greatly appreciated by the Society, and having our books available at a public venue is very important to us. Thank you!

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The Town Crier—

updates from the Society...



OUR 2015 CHARTER MEMBERS

We acknowledge our Charter Members for 2015 and thank them for their support: Emma Carson, Dave and Marianne Furman, John and Shirley Funkhouser, Michael Morrison, Frank Luther.

The Society pays tribute to Ed Dybicz (1923-2015) as an honorary member for his many contributions to the Society and for his untiring efforts to preserve the history of Upper Merion.

INTERESTED IN WRITING?

The Society welcomes articles prepared by its members. Contact Frank Luther if you might be interested in writing and sharing an article for our publication.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Check the back page for the listing of our upcoming meeting dates and our special programs.

INFO ABOUT UPPER MERION

Is there a question you have about some aspect of the township's history? You can submit your question to us at info@kophistory.org and we will provide an answer in a future issue. Check out the King of Prussia Historical Society website at www.kophistory.org. And find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kophisory

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership campaign for 2015 continues! New memberships and renewals will be accepted at this time. Looking for a unique gift? Why not present a family member or friend with an annual membership for the King of Prussia Historical Society! We supply a gift card for you to present to the recipient.

Student/Senior (65+): \$35.00	Individual: \$40.00
Family Household \$50.00	Patron: \$125.00
Charter: \$250.00	

MISSION STATEMENT

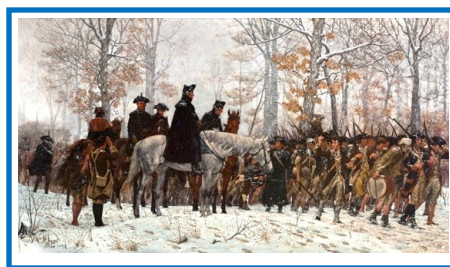
The mission of the King of Prussia Historical Society is to preserve and interpret the history of Upper Merion Township as relevant to its various neighborhoods of Gulph Mills, Gypsy Hills, Croton Woods, King of Prussia, Valley Forge, Abrams, Belmont, Town Center, Swedesburg/King Manor, Henderson, and Swedeland, as well as the areas of Rebel Hill, Port Kennedy, and Hughes Park. The Society's goal is to stimulate public interest and to support the township's heritage through educational programs and public events focusing on preserving the past and shaping the future.

OUR MAILING ADDRESS

Please note that our new mailing address is King of Prussia Historical Society, PO Box 60716, King of Prussia, PA 19406-0716

NEW TRUSTEE

We extend our congratulations to Janice Boyer, Gulph Mills resident and KOPHS member, on her being named to the Board of Trustees of the Historical Society of Montgomery County. Janice will be filling a two-year term.



THE ROAD TO VALLEY FORGE

(Presentation by Sheilah D. Vance, Esq. to the King of Prussia Historical Society, February 7, 2015, Christ Church (old Swedes), Swedesburg, PA)

The Road to Valley Forge is literally Old Gulph Road in Gulph Mills because General George Washington and the Continental Army marched from Gulph Mills to Valley Forge after spending December 13-19, 1777 in Gulph Mills and on and around Rebel Hill. William Trego's iconic painting, *The March to Valley Forge*, is of Old Gulph Road, with the old "Gulf" Mill in the background.

So what happened in our area leading up to the Road to Valley Forge?

Day 1, December 13: General George Washington and some 10,000 members of the Continental Army arrive at Gulph Mills and Rebel Hill in the snow after marching across Swedes Ford.

Day 2, December 14: Hardship plagues the Continental Army as hungry, cold, barely-clothed soldiers become even more sickly and make their own shelters because they have no tents.

Day 3, December 15: The Continental Army settles down a bit as they forage the area for food.

Day 4, December 16: The soldiers' tents arrive on a cold and rainy day as a group of British out foraging for food are captured.

Day 5, December 17: General Washington issues inspirational orders announcing the Continental Army's move to Valley Forge for winter quarters, and the Army

(Continued on page 4.)

EDWARD J. DYBICZ, 1923 - 2015

Edward Dybicz (Ed), age 91, of Swedesburg, Pa., passed away peacefully on Tuesday, February 17, 2015, at Mercy Suburban Hospital. He was the son of the late Joseph A. and the late Helen B. (Sojkowski) and the brother of the late Marie H. Lewandowski of Philadelphia. He is survived by many cousins and his three God-children, Roberta Nelson of Swedesburg, Alice Smedley of Swedesboro, N.J., and Elaine Parciak of Plantsville, Conn.

Newspaper reporter, historical writer, office worker, civic servant, and volunteer fireman, he was born July 14, 1923 in Swedesburg. Graduate of Upper Merion High School, Class of 1941, where he was class orator and editor of the school newspaper. Senior year he won first prize in the Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers High School Reporters Contest at Penn State College. He completed extensive courses of study in Foreign Area and Language at the University of Iowa at Iowa City, where he was a member of the Newman Club.

He served with the 114th Regiment, 44th Infantry Division, U.S. Seventh Army, European Theatre of Operations during World War II. He was a non-commissioned officer and holds the Purple Heart Medal, two Bronze Campaign Stars for the Northern France and Rhineland Campaigns, Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, European-African-Middle East Medal, and American Service Medal.

He was a staff member of the Conshohocken Recorder in 1941 and was a correspondent for the Norristown Times Herald for 30 years. He covered the papal visit to the U.S. of Pope John Paul II in 1979 and met the pontiff at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Lower Merion Township.

He was also a retired office employee of the Alan Wood Company of Plymouth Township. He was one of the original and the last surviving organizer of The Swedesburg Volunteer Fire Company in February of 1942 and served as its recording secretary for 27 years and as a director and member of the fire police. He is a life member of the com-

pany. He received the Eternal Flame Award and the Fire Police Award from the firehouse.

Mr. Dybicz served as vice-chairman of the Upper Merion Municipal Authority from 1953 to 1956. He was also retired from the Upper Merion Township Auxiliary Police and was chairman of The Upper Merion Township 1960 Clean-Up, Fix-Up, Paint-Up Campaign in which the township won an outstanding achievement award from the National Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

He was a historian and wrote the History of Swedesburg in 1962 when the community marked its 250th anniversary. His historical articles appeared in many newspapers and magazines. Due to his research, the name of Gen. Casimir Pulaski, commander of the American Cavalry during the American Revolutionary War, was added to the list of officers on the National Memorial Arch at Valley Forge National Historical Park in 1950. He answered historical inquiries for the Upper Merion Township Board of Supervisors in the late 1940's. For his historical writings he received awards from the Upper Merion Park and Historical Foundation, the Legion of Honor of The Chapel of the Four Chaplains and from the Montgomery County Fire Chiefs Mutual Aid Association. He was named "Mr. Upper Merion History" by the Upper Merion Board of Supervisors in September of 2005 and honored by the township senior organization. He was co-author of the Upper Merion Township chapters of the Second Hundred Years History of Montgomery County. He focused many of his historical articles on the ethnic contributions to the history of the United States. In September of 2007 he was honored as the "Upper Merion Township Library Friend of the Year" award in recognition and appreciation of his service to the library.

Ed was a member of Sacred Heart Church, Swedesburg, and a life member of its Holy Name Society. He was also an usher and collector. He was the Holy Name Society Man of The Year and served on the 100th anniversary committee for the church. He is a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 7878 of Upper Merion and V.F.W. Post 840, the 44th Infantry Division Association, D.A.V. Post 25 of Norristown, Mlotkowski Memorial Brigade Society of Fort Delaware, Montgomery County Historical Society, Valley Forge Historical Society, Montgomery County Fire Police, Upper Merion Township Auxilliary Police, Swedish Heritage Society of Swedesburg, Iowa, an emeritus member of the King of Prussia Historical Society and was a promoter of the Miraculous Medal Association of Germantown.

The information about Ed's life achievements was gleaned from his obituary, which he wrote on Super Bowl Sunday 2015, and published in **The Times Herald** on Feb. 19, 2015.

THE EDWARD J. DYBICZ MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

(This Award was created by the King of Prussia Historical Society on March 24, 2015 to honor the memory of Edward J. Dybicz, "Mr. Upper Merion History", for his countless contributions and efforts to preserve Upper Merion's rich local history.)

The Edward J. Dybicz Memorial Scholarship Award is presented annually by the King of Prussia Historical Society to honor Edward Dybicz for his accomplishments in preserving the local history of Upper Merion through his research and writings.

The Award, a book scholarship of \$500.00 will be awarded to a high school student who researches and prepares a paper and/or an audio or visual presentation pertaining to some aspect of the township's local history that relates to the geographical area of the Upper Merion Area School District. The culminating project should assure that the student was able to apply, synthesize and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding of local history. Work on the project should create a valid, equitable, and reliable learning experience for the student.

Criteria for judging will include the student's ability to effectively incorporate technology, the ability to plan a proposal for a project dealing with local history, demonstrate effective writing skills, demonstrate an ability to analyze topic specific research, evaluate appropriateness of sources, demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate orally, and have a positive impact about Upper Merion's history. In essence, the project should reflect the Society's goal of "Preserving Upper Merion's Past to Enlighten Its Future!"

Competition for this award is open to any senior attending Upper Merion Area High School or a student who is a resident of the Upper Merion Area School District who may be attending another high school or is homeschooled. Students may submit a senior project, an Eagle Scout project, a Gold Award project, or an independent project that deals with local Upper Merion history.

A proposal of the project must be submitted to the King of Prussia Historical Society by November 15 of the student's senior year. The final project must be submitted by April 1 of the following year. The winning student will present his/her project to members at the Society's May meeting.

Students are encouraged to use the resources of the King of Prussia Historical Society and the materials in the Local History section of the Upper Merion Township Library.

Judges for the competition will be the Awards Committee of the Society.

A check for the \$500.00 Scholarship Award will be forwarded to the college/technical school in which the student will be enrolled.



THE ROAD TO VALLEY FORGE

(cont. from page 2)

prepares for our nation's First Thanksgiving Celebration on Rebel Hill and Gulph Mills.

Day 6, December 18: General Washington and his army celebrate the nation's First Thanksgiving on Rebel Hill and Gulph Mills and prepare to set up camp at Valley Forge.

On December 19, around 10:00 AM, General Washington and the Continental Army leave Gulph Mills and Rebel Hill and march down Old Gulph Road to Valley Forge.

See **Six Days in December: General Washington's and the Continental Army's Encampment on Rebel Hill, December 13-19, 1777** by Sheilah Vance, an e-book prequel available on www.amazon.com for \$2.99.

Look for **Becoming Valley Forge**, a novel by Sheilah Vance, ISBN: 0-9824945-9-2, \$15.95, Trade Paperback, 520 pp; June 2015. This epic historical novel shows how the lives of ordinary men and women who lived in the shadow of Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, were changed forever beginning in early 1777, when the Revolutionary War battles came to their doorsteps, leading them and their loved ones to Valley Forge from winter 1777 through summer 1778. Robert, a former slave, lives as a blacksmith on Rebel Hill, with his patriot friend, Daniel. Their lives are changed forever when General Washinton and 10,000 members of the Continental Army descend on the Hill on December 13, 1777. An outraged farmer's daughter, Betsey, builds a network of women from the local area and the colonies to support the troops after her brothers, Fred and Allen, enlist and fight in the Battle of Paoli. She turns to her sister, Connie, who runs a brothel in Philadelphia that services many British officers during their occupation of the city, for help. Their paths converge in Valley Forge, where Washington's army, a young nation, and the fascinating characters in the book are forced to grow and become what we mean when we say "Valley Forge."





(Photo courtesy of Elizabeth J. Deuber, Spokane, WA)

STEPPING UP

Harry Deuber's Autobiography

(This work was sent to the Society by Elizabeth J. Deuber)

Much of my work, some say, has a hint of Appalachia in it. I suppose that's because, like Tony Bennett who left his heart in San Francisco, I left mine in Conshohocken and Gulph Mills, Pennsylvania, where I was born and raised.

I lived in Gulph Mills, Pennsylvania, when I discovered, at eight, I could draw Dick Tracy, Superman, Lil Abner, and other character, at the request and ooh's and ah's of my friends and relatives. I decided then, I wanted to be a cartoonist.

When I was sixteen, I entered a Disney contest, and won a trip to California, a tour of Disney Studios, and an invitation to audition for a position with them. Excited? I thought I was about to take my first big step in becoming a famous cartoonist. My parents, however, in nineteen forty-even, thought California was as far away as the moon. They declined the offer for me.

After that disappointment, I spent a lot of time creating hillbilly characters, and sketching designs in pen, ink and pencil. During a stint in the United States Air Force, the hillbilly characters were a hit with my Air Force buddies. While my pals hung around the table, watching, I enjoyed

creating cartoons as well as other detailed designs for them. Some officers noticed my pen and ink work, and eventually I was given the privilege of designing the logo for the 648 AC & W Radar Squadron.

In nineteen fifty-four, I was discharged from the Air Force in Spokane, Washington, where I met my wife Betty. We married that year and moved to Pennsylvania.

My first try with paints occurred in nineteen fifty-five, while I was laid off---at Christmas time---from the Jack Woods factory in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. To earn extra money I painted gigantic Christmas cards on sheets of poster board, and sold them for decorations in picture windows.

It was then that I discovered the versatility and richness of opaque watercolor (my favorite color medium), and suddenly had the urge to paint—paint—paint. While living in King Manor, Pennsylvania, I showed in one show and sold one painting.

In nineteen fifty-eight, I returned to Spokane with my wife and three children. (Our fourth child was born in Spokane in nineteen-sixty.)

While working a day job as a warehouseman, with Columbia Lighting, I bluffed my way into a nighttime job designing newspaper ads for Marshal Advertising Agency. My first published work was an ad for Diamond Bowl. About this time, I painted, Gulph Mills, the village of my childhood. I painted it from memory, because the construction of the Pennsylvania Turnpike had razed half the village. I gave the painting to my parents. They loaned it to the Conshohocken Historical Society Museum where it hung for several years.

The painting was so well received; I considered it a stepping-stone in my art career. I quit my job at Columbia Lighting, and bluffed my way into a full time for Marshal's AD Agency. Later I moved to a better paying job with Northwest Advertising, then onto Summers Frost Advertising Agency. After work, I spent the wee hours lettering butcher-paper-signs for grocery stores, and creating logos, such as: The Little Bull Restaurant; the Ziggy character for Ziegler Building Center, now Ziggy's; and others.



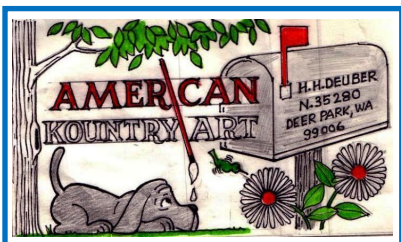
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Designing the Ziggy character was a giant leap for me. Not long after Vern Ziegler chose the character, he asked me to set-up an in-house advertising agency for his company, which I did, and have been in his employ for thirty years. (over forty years) During that time, the Ziggy newspaper ads have earned six national awards and two Spokesman Review awards.

Evenings and weekends, I kept painting, drawing, entering contests and promoting my artwork. One undertaking, that spurred me on again, happened in the early seventies, when the Bigfoot (Sasquatch) craze kept hounding my cartoon senses. I finally succumbed to the urge and designed three comic Bigfoot characters: Papa, Mamma and Baby. Those images were printed on T-shirts, stickers, and notebook paper folders, which were sold throughout the Pacific Northwest. Panels and plaques of Papa and Mamma Bigfoot decorated the walls and doors of the Bigfoot Tavern on North Division for many years. Later, Universal City Studios purchased all the Bigfoot items and displayed them in the museum in the movie, Harry and the Hendersons.

After that venture, I decided it was time to settle down and focus seriously on becoming a painter. I work in opaque watercolor, colored ink, black and white ink, and colored pencil. Most of my work contains a note of humor and is done in a series of two or more pieces, such as Bear Antics (opaque water color), On The Farm (opaque water color), Frontier Towns (colored ink), Help From Heaven (pen and ink), Wildlife (pen and ink); and others.



In 1988-89, I designed the historical mural layouts for the Deer Park Fair Association Centennial Project. I used colored pencil for

Colors of Pride, the Washington State mural, and painted, A Portrait in Color, the Deer Park mural with colored ink. (With the help of many people, the original art was enlarged and transferred onto boards then mounted on the Deer Park 100 year old Apple Orchard/fair building.)

From the very onset of my desire to be a cartoonist/artist, I've been drawn to contests. The challenge of the competition and the suspense of waiting for that special return letter give me a creative rush. Some of my winners: Overbearing won honorable mention in The Artist's Magazine Contest; A Gnome earned a fourth place winner in the Staedtler Marsgraphic 3000 Strokes of Genius Poster Contest. (I wore the T-shirt I won with Strokes of Genius printed on it, until it was threadbare.) The Christmas paintings have earned one first place honor and three-second place titles in Bill and Nancy's Santa House Contest.

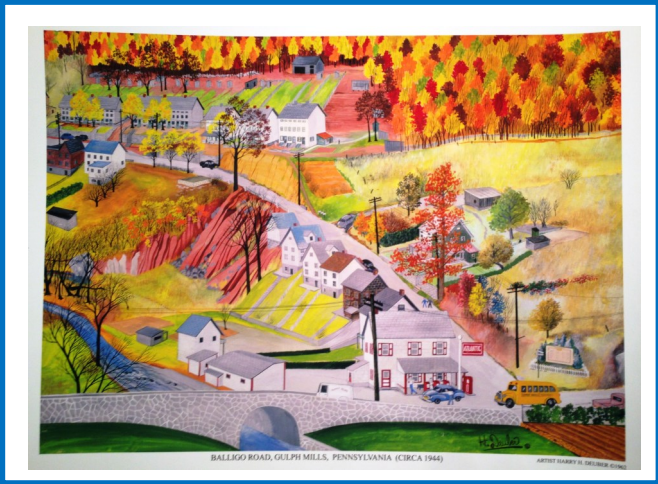
I have, except for a few lessons, studied painting and drawing on my own, because I'm determined to preserve my style.

When the painting, Gulph Mills, was returned to me after twenty or more years, I had no idea how I would react to it. First, a surge of nostalgia engulfed me as I scanned the image of the village, where I'd left my heart many years before. Then I noticed the callow brush strokes shaping the row homes, the family privies, and leaf-trees turning colors in the eastern woods. Blinking out the criticism, the fondness I feel for the village awakened and I finally understood why some folks say, "There's a touch of Appalachia in his work." It's a touch I like. It's unique; I want to keep it as I constantly strive to improve the hues, the values and the strokes.

STATEMENT: Over the years, it's been important for me to develop a distinguishable style that people can identify as a Harry Deuber painting. I've done this, by mixing cartooning (my first love) and realism with a dose of humor, which has developed into a tongue-in-cheek characteristic that dominates my work in opaque water color and colored pencil. My pen and ink wildlife illustrations, however, are serious and detailed.

I paint, primarily, for my own satisfaction, but there is nothing more fulfilling than watching viewers walk away from my work with either an amused or delighted expression on their faces.

(Harry passed away October 4, 2014.)



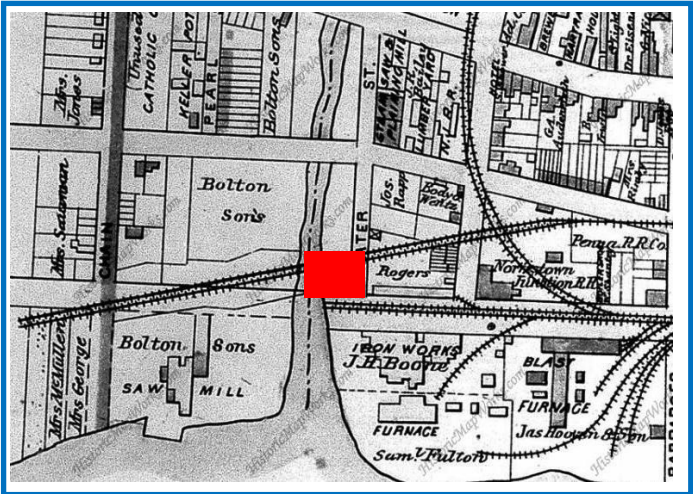
Harry Deuber's Gulph Mills, circa 1944
 Photo courtesy of Michael Morrison.



Harry Deuber's The Bal, circa 1944
 Photo courtesy of Michael Morrison.

There is no evidence to indicate whether Ned Hector is not buried there or not. As you read the research, you can understand why his burial place is a mystery. However, there is an interesting connection between the former Mount Zion Cemetery in Norristown and Roberts Cemetery.

An 1871 map of Norristown shows the location of Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church and Colored Cemetery between Chain Street and Water Street. The Schuylkill River is at the left of the map. The church moved to a larger building on Basin near Powell in 1853. In March 1884, Charles Y. Smith, undertaker, removed 190 bodies from the Negro Cemetery on Pearl Street in Norristown to "Red Hill". Only a few tombstones within a walled enclosure mark the Roberts family burials. Most of the other burials are unmarked.



The tracks of the railroad running through the lower right hand corner of the Bolton Sons property shows the area (in red) of the former Mount Zion Cemetery, where the cemetery was located before the move of the bodies to Robert's Cemetery at Red Hill. Notice the piece that has been allotted to the railroad. According to Noah Lewis, who portrays Ned Hector in re-enactments, there was a law that a railroad could not build over church or cemetery property, so the railroad went to the cemetery officials and had them hire undertaker Charles Smith to dig up and move the bodies so they could build the railroad. Conveniently, Jonathan Roberts had died in 1854 and appropriated two acres for the poor to bury their dead. There are no surviving records about the existence of the original cemetery due to a fire. The head/footstones did not move along with the bodies, and Noah speculates that they were tossed into the Schuylkill down near the sawmill.

MOUNT ZION CEMETERY AND THE ROBERTS CEMETERY
 (This article was researched by Marianne Hooper with information provided by Noah Lewis, Ned Hector reenactor.)

At a recent monthly meeting of the Society, a question was raised whether Ned Hector, a Colonial wagon master, was buried in the Christ Church (Old Swedes) cemetery. Ned lived in a log cabin on what is now Hector Street in Conshohocken; the street is appropriately named for him. No church records indicate that Ned Hector is buried at Old Swedes. The question then was whether he might be buried in Roberts Cemetery in "Red Hill" in Upper Merion. Red Hill was the area of Upper Merion that includes and surrounds the Valley Forge Shopping Center. Roberts Cemetery is located on the hill above 202 and behind the shopping center, behind Kehtron.



2015 Program Calendar

Subject to change; check the society's website or Facebook page for the most up to date information:
www.kophistory.org ~ www.facebook.com/kophistory or contact info@kophistory.org

No meetings in July and August

September 12 ~ 2:00 pm Karin Stocking: *Back to School with Miss Elizabeth Hawkesworth*

October 10 ~ 2:00 pm Young Historians: An Aerial Retrospective of Upper Merion

November 14 ~ 2:00 pm Alan Wood Steel

Sunday, December 13 ~ 7:00 pm *Saint Lucia Festival* (Holiday Celebration for Society Members)

Unless noted otherwise, meetings are held on Saturday at **Christ Church (Old Swedes) Hall,**
740 River Road, Swedesburg PA 19405

GPS coordinates [40.103498, -75.327288](#)



PO BOX 60716
KING OF PRUSSIA PA 19406-0716

A Commitment to Preservation!