

Preservation of Historic Winchester



PHW's Membership Newsletter

Winter 2017

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Looking Back at the 40th Holiday House Tour By Sandra Bosley

Like many things in 2016, the 40th annual Holiday House Tour held any number of surprises and proved to be an uphill battle for most of the year. There were enough freak accidents, miscommunications, and last minute changes to try the patience of anyone. Combined with an exceptionally small volunteer leader base this year, there were several points at which the Holiday House Tour was almost cancelled.

Despite the odds, we persevered. Like a Christmas miracle, on deadline week the last pieces fell into line. We began to fill the last docent and decorator spots. Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society and Braddock Street United Methodist Church both agreed to share their respective holiday open house and musical programs with House Tour visitors this year. After a few tense days watching the skies, even the weather cooperated for the tour, aside from some wind.

What we did not expect was the influx of visitors. This year likely set a record for advance ticket sales with 359 tickets sold at PHW, Kimberly's, The Winchester Book Gallery, Wilkins' Shoe Center, and the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center. That number does not include sales that



Winchester Little Theatre provided the costumed carolers again this year. Here is the group led by Kendra Getaz outside the Reader and Swartz home.

came through the Bough and Dough Shop, at the door of the houses, and online through PayPal over the Friday-Sunday of the event. We believe we topped 400 visitors again this year.

We were unaware it was potentially a high water mark for attendance and we were caught off guard preparing for crowds at some locations, particularly at Selma. The Dick family was exceptionally gracious in light of the difficulty of directing people to enter through their front doors, and we cannot express our thanks to them enough.

On a more humorous note, a few Preview Party visitors on Saturday evening got an unintended peek into the Samuel Noakes House along with the Levi Wickham House. Dr. John Chesson was a good sport about the unexpected guests who got a look at some literal dirty laundry. No harm was done and we all had a laugh about it at the end of the night.

We are especially indebted to all the volunteers who stepped up to lend a hand and recruit friends at a critical point, especially John Flood and Vonderene Swigart. The Sunday docent team at the Wickham House, consisting of Barbara Dickinson, Carrie Luebcke, Mari Kofalt, Amy Kump, and Beverly McHale, also deserve a standing ovation for taking on the task of running the house “on their own” Sunday and participating in the carefully orchestrated key exchange from the Preview Party group on Saturday to the Sunday tours. Likewise, we are grateful to the Braddock Street United Methodist Church and the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society for opening their doors to our guests for their own nearby holiday tours and musical programs.

As always, so much of the success of the Bough and Dough Shop rests in the artisans for providing unique and high quality goods, the Winchester Little Theatre volunteers who set up the lobby and check out areas, Nathan Windle for his outstanding greenery arrangements, and John Barker and Patrick Rodgers for taking on checkout duties. We are also very pleased PHW had five Shenandoah University business students helping out at the Shop for their last activity of the semester with us.

Our thanks for the many sources of fresh greenery go out to Nancy Murphy, Mary Riley, Cheryl Crowell, Donna Downing, Howard Lewis, and Lynne Caldwell. Start thinking now if you have some evergreens in your yard that you may need trimmed late in November and early December. We are always looking for magnolia, holly with berries, and nandina with berries.

Overall, we were satisfied with the outcome of the 2016 Holiday House Tour, while knowing there is plenty of room for improvement in 2017. If you helped in any way that weekend, as an owner, a docent, a decorator, a bow-maker, a shopper, an advance sale location, a sponsor, an artisan, a door greeter, the designated emergency Costco gopher, we are grateful for your contribution of time and talents. It really takes a village to make a Holiday House Tour.

Mark your calendars now for the 41st Holiday House Tour and Bough and Dough Shop on December 2 & 3, 2017! ◆

What Works – Cataloging the PHW Research Materials

By Sandra Bosley

For the last few years, we have been quietly working on better organizing our collections of slides, negatives, photographs, and research materials of Winchester's buildings and PHW's activities. While we are not an archive in the sense of the Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives at the Handley Library, taking care of the work done by our volunteers and staff for over fifty years is a priority. The task initially felt endless and overwhelming. Here is how I have been working on the process of making sense of PHW's collections.

The Initial Materials Survey

We had several types of collections when I began in 2005 – none were completely sorted or documented. There were books, magazines, photographs, negatives, 35mm slides, and other collections (notes, documents, drawings, maps, etc.) in addition to the usual paperwork any organization accumulates. I needed to get an idea of what we had before formulating a plan of what to do with it.

The Library Collection

Due in large part to our move out of the Kurtz Building in the fall of 2006, the only collection ready to be catalogued was the book and magazine library. Duplicates, out of date materials, and items that had limited applicability to PHW's mission were removed from the book collection at that time under the watchful eyes of George Schember, Howard Kittell, and Mary Riley. Thanks to prior PHW staff, I found several card catalogs from the 1980s and 1990s to use as a starting point for setting up again at the Hexagon House.

The PHW library does not use any formal cataloging system like Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress. Books are grouped by topic – Winchester, Frederick County, Revolving Funds, Paint Colors, etc. This works primarily because we have a very small library, about 50 linear feet of shelf space. We started a LibraryThing account to help keep track and make our library holdings available to researchers online before they stopped by the office.

During the LibraryThing cataloging, I identified a number of books that had been checked out or lost. As the missing books were almost always high value items, I decided the days of the PHW library circulating were at an end. Researchers may still use the sources at the office or request photocopies or scans for research, but our library budget (zero) meant we could not keep replacing lost copies of things like [Images of the Past](#).

The next round of weeding took place after the Hexagon House was open for the Holiday House Tour in 2015. The old particleboard shelves were retired to storage closets and the books were used to stage the house. When it came time to reassemble the library it was also the perfect opportunity to go over the collection again and pull more outdated and unused books from the main shelves, particularly with ten years of knowledge about what the books

contained and if I had ever pulled them off the shelf to answer a question. Some books could be replaced with updated versions to better reflect preservation today (particularly relevant to the tax credit process and resource guides). Some known outdated materials are still here, waiting for a newer upgrade. The library will never be “finished,” but it is more in line with our educational goals and needs today than when I started the process at the Kurtz.

The Obsolete Materials—Slides and Negatives

After the books were mostly under control, I next investigated our two obsolete collections – 35mm slides and negatives. Both collections became stagnant in the early 2000s as Power Point and digital photography became the norm. Previous efforts had been started to organize the slides by street, so that was the logical place to continue the work. Unlike the books, slides were stashed everywhere from filing cabinets, cardboard boxes, envelopes, slide carousels, and loose in desk drawers, in addition to the ones already in archival holders in binders. Adding to the pressure was the knowledge some of the slides were unique – no negatives or photographs existed in our collections – so finding out what we had any making them accessible became a top priority. (While we still have and use a 35mm projector, we know it won’t last forever!)

I experimented with a few digitization options before finding a suitable hardware and software combination. Most slides were digitized with a special slide/negative scanning widget on a Windows XP laptop with Paint Shop Pro 9 as the importing software. This technology was already outdated at the time of the scanning so the pressure was on to complete the slide digitization before any hardware or software failed. Fortunately, the laptop, widget, and software made it through the process with relatively few hiccups and are on hand just in case a few more slides should pop up in the future.

The negatives, on the other hand, were fresh, uncharted territory. Some were kept with the matching photographs, so they could be identified and labeled easily. Most were not marked at all, and like the slides, negatives would fall out of any number of unlikely places around the office, including one batch discovered in the Hexagon House attic. Unlike the slides, the negatives were largely duplicated in the photograph holdings. In the few cases where the negatives appeared unique, new photographs were printed from them.

Spring Cleaning Sale!

Help PHW with some spring cleaning around the Hexagon House! Storage space for some nifty architectural salvage items and other PHW-related goodies is filling up and we need to do a liquidation sale.

Some items we have ready to go to new homes now include window sashes with historic glass (two, six, and nine light sashes), books, posters, maps, and more!

If you are looking for something specific, drop us a line at 540-667-3577 or phwinc.org@gmail.com to see what we might have.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC WINCHESTER AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

Nominations should encompass work completed or expected to be completed within the past calendar year (ending in May 2016). You may nominate an unlimited number of projects and nominate your own projects. See a list of past winners at www.phwi.org/awards.php. Nomination should be submitted **before May 8, 2017** for best consideration for a 2017 award. Return forms to PHW, 530 Amherst St., Winchester VA 22601.

Nominations may be submitted for the following categories:

- o Lucille Lozier Award: For the renovation of a significant structure retaining 75% of the historic architectural fabric.
- o Katherine G. Rockwood Revolving Fund Award: For outstanding renovation of a Jennings Revolving Fund property.
- o Elsie M. Rosenberger Award: For the unsung volunteer or volunteers who selflessly contributed to the activities of PHW.
- o Ben Belchic Award: For significant contribution to understanding Winchester's history.
- o Carroll M. Henkel Award: For outstanding leadership for historic preservation in the Winchester-Frederick County area.
- o Patron's Award: For that person or business who has been an outstanding supporter of the goals and programs of PHW.
- o Award of Merit: Houses or buildings whose renovation contribute to improving the character of their neighborhoods and maintaining the overall historic fabric of the city.

Nominee: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Briefly describe the project/activity for which the individual/organization is being nominated. Please include before and after pictures, if available, for rehabilitations.

For archival storage, both slides and negatives were placed in Print File archival quality holders grouped by project. The holders are clear, three ring binder compatible pages, which can be handy if you need to locate a specific image.

The Photographs

By far the most difficult task was getting a handle on the printed photographs. Like the slides and negatives, photographs were tucked hither and yon across the office. Most were of buildings, but PHW events were intermingled in those photos. Only a tiny portion had any kind of identifying information attached to them. Similar to the other sorting efforts, I first separated the house photos from the event photos, then further broke those down by street or type of event. One entire shoebox was filled just with the Kurtz Building images. The building photographs have subsequently been scanned and the physical copies added to the Historic District files. PHW's 50th Anniversary celebration in 2014 brought the push to complete scanning most of the event photos (minus Holiday House Tour images) to use in the slideshows projected on the wall at the Taylor Pavilion. The event photos have been sorted as best as possible by the event in question and placed in discrete envelopes, using some sleuthing from the old event files to pin down dates and locations. Our "people photos" are being housed in Carroll Henkel's former toolbox, a gift from Linda Ross to PHW.

With the slides and most photographs digitized and the digital copies backed up on CDs and DVDs, we needed a way for people to find and use them in their research. The images were first uploaded to Picasa starting in 2009, but we have since moved all images to Flickr for online hosting. The image collection, like the library, will never be a "complete" project, but you can now browse our collection of PHW events, exhibits, and buildings in the Winchester Historic District by street. There is a search feature on Flickr you can try with some key words to find both PHW's photos and others' images around town—try searching for a street name plus Winchester to see what you can find!

What's Left to Do

Currently the pamphlets and newspaper clipping collections are the "final frontier." As you may guess, until recently there was no unified storage solution for the newspapers. Most were in file folders, but in 2005 we also had multiple banker boxes helpfully marked "Old Newspapers" and similarly vague file folders with names like "Old Stories" and "Misc. Clippings." Assembling the stories into a usable collection is like working with a hundred jigsaw puzzles whose pieces were thrown into six different boxes and given a good shake. The initial sorting through the clippings started about 2009 and continues today.

One of the highest priorities was photocopying the original PHW scrapbooks from the 1960s, which were beginning to deteriorate from the non-archival quality paper and rubber cement used to create them during PHW's first ten years. The original scrapbooks have since been retired to our long term storage so they are no longer handled during research requests. Now, when a file is used for research, any original newspaper clippings are copied and

replaced to prevent further damage to other papers stored in the same folder.

Is It Worth the Effort?

Yes. Researchers on Handley High School, the Chamber of Commerce, and building enthusiasts interested in Mesker facades, George F. Barber houses, JCPenney, and other commercial buildings have found the Flickr albums useful. Likewise, individual house researchers have benefited from the consolidation of all our house history and images in one file folder instead of scattered in three or four locations. It might not be loud, showy, fast, or glamorous work, but it certainly fulfills PHW's mission to extend and preserve the knowledge of the area's past for the generations to come. ◆



John Barker and Sandra Bosley present the proceeds from the 2016 Bough and Dough Shop to Karen Majarov and Vonderene Swigart of Winchester Little Theatre. A little over \$800 was contributed to the Restoration Campaign. Thank you for shopping with us for the Theatre!

Call for Help: Virginia Historic Bridge Survey From Preservation Virginia

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is re-evaluating their Historic Bridge Inventory. Preservation Virginia is reaching out for help identifying bridges that could be considered eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register. PHW is extending this call to our readership for help in identifying any local bridges that may qualify. The Historic Bridge Inventory lists only one bridge in Frederick County, a concrete closed spandrel arch bridge on Rt. 672 crossing the Opequon Creek built in 1917. There are no listings for Winchester City, Clarke County, or Warren County.

The basic requirements for consideration are that a bridge should be administered by VDOT, 50 years old or older, and meet at least one of the criterion for consideration as a historic

structure (bridges usually qualify under feats of engineering, but may also be associated with a significant person or event, or for outstanding design elements). **If you know of a bridge that may qualify**, you will need: location, route number, stream crossing, VDOT structure number (if known), or name, as well as an explanation of why the bridge should be included.

The bridge survey is time sensitive. Please submit your responses **before Friday March 31, 2017**. Information may be emailed to PHW at phwinc.org@gmail.com, or hard copy information dropped off in person or by snail mail to 530 Amherst Street, Winchester, VA 22601. If you have questions about the bridge survey or would like to submit your bridge directly to Preservation Virginia, please contact Lisa Bergstrom by email at lbergstrom@preservationvirginia.org. ♦

Kurtz Building as a Case Study for Clowser House

If you have been following the story of the efforts to preserve the Clowser House in Shawneeland, Frederick County, you may have seen they were recently offered the chance of a lease to stabilize the property. While not the first choice for the Clowser committee, the lease is a step in the right direction.

PHW's executive director Sandra Bosley has been following the progress and assisting the committee with information. It appears her work archiving and reviewing the paperwork of past PHW projects has come in handy for the Clowser group. The Kurtz Building was similarly leased to PHW during the initial efforts to stabilize that building. We have shared some of the experiences and agreements concerning the Kurtz with the Clowser committee. We wish them the best of luck as they continue the work to save the historic home of one of the county's pioneer settlers. Stay tuned for the outcome of the March 8 Board of Supervisors decision! ♦

About Us

Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc. (PHW) is a non-profit organization founded in 1964 dedicated to preserving the history and architecture of Winchester, Virginia. PHW hosts the Holiday House Tour, special lectures and workshops, membership events, and a quarterly printed newsletter. We also maintain a non-circulating library relevant to local history and architecture.

Are You on PHW's Email List?



We produce a free e-newsletter every Friday. If you like this newsletter, why not sign up to get new content in your inbox every Friday afternoon thanks to MailChimp? Just enter your email address on the phwi.org website, our Facebook page, the direct signup link <http://eepurl.com/-Q4X5> or via scanning the QR code. You never know what we'll write about next!



Preservation of Historic Winchester

Hexagon House ♦ 530 Amherst St. ♦ Winchester, VA 22601

NEWS

Winter 2017

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UPCOMING EVENTS

March 11: Saint Paddy's Celtic Fest activities happening in downtown Winchester 11 AM-10PM. Get details at oldtownwinchesterva.com.

March 19: An Afternoon of Colonial History at the MSV with the French and Indian War Foundation between 2-5 PM. More details available at frenchandindianwarfoundation.org.

March 31: Deadline for Virginia historic bridge submissions to Preservation Virginia—see page 6 for details.

May 8: Submit a nomination for a 2017 PHW Award—see insert for details.

June: PHW Annual Meeting and Awards. Date and location TBA.

June 30: Deadline for new Bough and Dough Shop artisan jury submissions. Form available online at www.phwi.org/events/2017juryform.pdf

December 2 and 3: Holiday House Tour and Bough and Dough Shop at the Winchester Little Theatre.

ARE YOU A PHW MEMBER?



Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc., is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Winchester's architectural heritage. PHW depends on income from membership and contributions to achieve its goals.

All contributions above membership are tax deductible.

Join today by completing this form and returning it to PHW, 530 Amherst St., Winchester, VA 22601.

___ Individual \$30 ___ Family/Business \$55
___ Corporate \$100 ___ Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

GET YOUR NEWS BETWEEN NEWSLETTERS;
FIND PHW ON:

