



MASON-DIXON STARGAZER STONE

NEWLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol.2 no.5

PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE NEWLIN TOWNSHIP AREA OF THE BRANDYWINE VALLEY

Executive Committee -- President: RoseLynn Malarek, Vice-President: Muriel George, Secretary; Diane McGowan,
Treasurer: Sandy Reber, Members: John O'Neal, Kate Roby, Kathy Conway

From the President's Desk

Good news! Our new webmaster, Diane McGowan, who is also our secretary, has been sprucing up our website (www.newlintwphistory.org) with more information. You can now find our previous newsletters, mission statement, contact list, and our new email address –

newlintwphistoricalsociety@gmail.com -- so you can now easily contact us with comments, questions, or, even better, contribute information on anything relating to Newlin history. Diane is new to designing websites, so this is on-the-job training for her, and we gratefully appreciate her efforts. More information on the website will be added as time goes on. Onward and Upward is our unofficial motto!

As usual, Newlin had one of the largest voter turnouts in the immediate area on Primary Day. One reason, of course, is that Newlin residents care about participating in the democratic process, but another thought is that it's a chance for folks to see some of their neighbors and catch up on the news. We don't have a shopping center, school, post office, or church in the Township, so

the Township Garage on Election Day also serves as kind of a social center. I've worked as a clerk on the Newlin Election Board for several years, and it's always a pleasure to see and meet our voters. Last Tuesday, I spoke with some of you, inviting you to join the Historical Society. The responses were generally the same – *too busy, I can't take on one more thing!* Understandable, but here's the good news. Joining the Society will not require any of your time, effort, or energy. The seven of us on the Executive Committee do all of the work – organize the two open meetings we have per year, find the guest speakers, build the website, maintain our Facebook page, write the articles, do the interviews, and prepare the newsletters. Your membership will give us much needed moral and financial support. Of course, we would love to have active members participate in gathering and documenting historical information pertinent to Newlin, but we will settle for your moral support! At the end of this newsletter, you will find forms for membership and donations. We are very grateful to those who have joined and to those who have made contributions.

Now it's time for me to get off the soapbox and introduce a very special article. Ruth Thompson will celebrate her 100th birthday on June 8, 2019. That is reason enough to feature her in this newsletter, but Ruth's story is much more than longevity, which many of you already know. Two of our EC members, Muriel George and Kathy Conway, interviewed Ruth recently, and part of their interview follows. The conversation was taped, transcribed, and written by Kathy. Enjoy reading about a very accomplished Newlin resident.

Best wishes to all, and enjoy your summer.

RoseLynn

Celebrating a Newlin Centurion: Ruth Smedley Thompson
Excerpts from an Interview of her Memories

As told to Muriel George and Kathy Conway and written by Kathy

PROLOGUE -- Ruth Smedley was born June 8, 1919 in West Grove, PA, the daughter of Byron Smedley and Elizabeth Sharpless. She lived with her family on a farm on Lamborntown Rd. off Rt. 926. Ruth was only 11 when her father passed away. Along with her mother and sister, she moved in with her aunt in West Grove. She graduated from Avon Grove High School, Class of 1937, and later from Goldey-Beacom College. She worked as a secretary for a mushroom company for a few years then became secretary to the principal of Avon Grove High School. The secretary she replaced at Avon School happened to be Ray McKay's mother. (Ray McKay was a recent speaker at the Newlin Historical Society.) She married Harold Earle Thompson in June 1942, and then moved into Newlin Township. Ruth has served in numerous township positions throughout the years. She was the tax collector for approximately 30 years, served as auditor, was on the Planning Committee, and was Newlin Committee woman for decades. The Newlin Township Historical Society interviewed Ruth to preserve some of her memories. This article is just a small piece from the interview. We hope to share the rest of her stories on our website soon. This portion is about how she came to Newlin, and we are glad she did, and highlights some of her township positions. We wish her Happy 100th birthday, June 8th.



IN RUTH'S OWN WORDS
Early Days

I moved onto the farm when I married Harold (Bud) Thompson in 1942. He was working for Lukens Steel as well as doing farm work and operating a butcher shop with his family. His mother Iva Thompson and father Harry Thompson had the farm, and the three boys - Harold, Kenneth, & Floyd - had to help run the dairy farm. Harry was very busy running the farm and butcher shop. He would buy "monkey" calves, young males that aren't needed on the dairy farms, butcher them, and sell them as veal. He sold veal to stores in Kennett Square, Coatesville, Parkesburg and other areas.

When my father in-law Harry realized his eldest son was getting married, he counted on him to help with the farm, so Harry offered to fix up this old house on the farm that the men threw field corn in



LITTLE STONE HOUSE - FEB. 8, 1942

and used like a corn crib. It had window frames but no glass. My husband Bud said "Oh, No Dad," when my father in-law asked me if we wanted him to fix up that building for us to live in, but I clapped my hands and said, "Yes, yes! Oh good! That's perfect!"

So, Harry Thompson hired Seal Thorne to remodel this small white house on the corner of Green Valley/Hill Top View Rd. Mr. Thorne was a well-known carpenter in Unionville who lived in the corner house of 82 & 842. It is currently the white house with bright blue shutters.

My house was remodeled to add a kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. A new stairway was built between the old part and the new addition which had a second story and an attached garage with a laundry room. Everything was new! As the construction went on. my father in-law Harry asked me how I liked it. I replied that I would love to have a fireplace, so he had one built for me. He had Burnett Wilson (Buck and Doe Farm manager) help build the fireplace.



Service Time

I got into politics because my father-in-law was on the School Board, and an influential man in the Township. The Newlin Township tax collector in the late 1940s was Earl Freeman, who was cousin to both Harry and Iva Thompson because a set of brothers married a set of sisters. The Freeman's lived on Hill Top View Rd. where the Peter Weygandt's live now. The Thompson's also



owned property way back over the hill which has since been subdivided. Earl Freeman was getting married and leaving the area, and a new tax collector was needed. Harry asked me if I wanted to be tax collector. I thought I would try this job of tax collector, so I said, "I think I could do that." I collected both the township tax, and school tax. There was no door to door work. People filled out forms. There were two books with two duplicate slips, and when a person paid, I marked the receipts. This was a few years after 1945, and I had two young kids at the time. Because I was handling the money, I was bonded, and I went to the bank to deposit the money. I had two bank accounts – one for Newlin Township and one for the Unionville schools. Once a month, I sent the money to the school. I did all the recording by hand as to who paid and how much. There was a per capita tax of 3-5 dollars per person. There was a per capita tax for township and a property tax. I kept this job for about 30 years. After that, I ran for Township Auditor since I knew very well how those books were audited after being tax collector all those years.

I then took on a second job of Committee Person (Supervisor). Once again, my father in-law asked me to take this job, and he got me on the ballot. The main Supervisor back then was Clayton Lied. They called him Clay. He lived up Stargazer Rd. on the last farm before you get to W. Bradford. It had a little bit of a lane with a barn & a house. I was Supervisor for several decades. I don't remember the exact dates when I held these positions.

If you are wanting to know about government... this is a side thing. The farmers around here met on the store property in Unionville that belonged to the Crossman's. It was a store and now it's an apartment house. It is across the street from the corner store/Catherine's Restaurant. They met on the front porch, or inside when it was cold. When they met, they used to call it "Congress." They would meet after work or on lunch breaks, and they would share information. The group included the Thompson's, Burnett Wilson, and some of the other farmers -- Sutherland's, Murphy's, Chamber's, Wickersham's, Bernard's -- all the locals. They would know everything that was going on in the neighborhoods.

This is a snippet of Ruth's interview. We will post more on our website.

Ruth still likes to know what goes on in Newlin and tries to attend local events. She still lives on Green Valley Rd and keeps an eye on the traffic. If you know Ruth please stop in and wish her a Happy Centurion Birthday Year.

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