



Bristol Cultural &
Historical Foundation, Inc.
Post Office Box 215
Bristol, PA 19007

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



The Gazette



Published by Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation, Box 215, Bristol, PA 19007

VOL 33
No. 2

Sponsoring Historic Bristol Day - Third Saturday of Each October
BCHF is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, all volunteer organization.

FEBRUARY 2014

ANNUAL TEA, PROGRAMS, AND TRIPS HIGHLIGHT 2014 ACTIVITIES

Be sure to read the many details included and we hope to see you take advantage of these worthwhile events. Please respond to the membership request letters that have been prepared by our Membership Chairperson, Nancy Maren. We need your financial support to continue with our variety of activities. We welcome past members and extend greetings to our new members. Thank you for your help.

Mother Goose Tea

At the time of this writing, reservations were still available for the "Mother Goose" theme Tea, 3 to 5 p.m., Sunday, February 9, at BCHF headquarters. For current availability, contact Helen Younglove at 215 788-9408.

Meet Mr. Adams

On Sunday afternoon, March 30, America's second president, John Adams - in the person of Joe Doyle of the ActorsNet - will speak about his life and times. Mr. Doyle's first-person presentation will begin at 2 p.m. in BCHF headquarters. Light refreshment will be served.

\$3 per person admission will be collected at the door, there will be no charge for students. For further information, contact Helen Younglove at 215 788-9408.

We hope to see many of BCHF's members and friends at this event.

Trip Talk

BCHF's first bus trip of this new year is scheduled for Thursday, May 15, and the destination is Morristown, the county seat of Morris County, NJ. Morristown is rich with history. George Washington really did sleep there! Morristown served as his headquarters for two different winter encampments during the Revolutionary War.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has named Morristown one of its "Dozen Distinctive Destinations." Our May 15th itinerary includes visits to two of the town's many historic attractions and museums.

First, **Speedwell**, where Alfred Vail worked with Samuel F.B. Morse to perfect the telegraph. A variety of interactive displays takes visitors through the fascinating story of the development of the telegraph and explains how it all happened at Speedwell.

Second, **Macculloch Hall Historical Museum**, a Federal-style mansion which houses the nation's largest collection of original artwork by Thomas Nast, considered to be the "Father of the American Cartoon." Many of Nast's drawings, including his political cartoons, appeared in Harper's Weekly. It is said that his drawings were instrumental in the downfall of Boss Tweed, the powerful Tammany Hall leader. Nast's depiction of iconic characters, such as Santa Claus and Uncle Sam, are widely credited with giving us the recognized versions

we see today.

A hot, sit-down luncheon will be served at George and Martha's American Grille and will include a salad, entree (three choices available) with vegetables, dessert, and tea or coffee.

The all-inclusive price of this trip is \$90 for BCHF members and \$93 for non-members. To obtain a detailed flyer with reservation form, contact our Ways & Means Chairperson, Kathy Barniskis, at 215 943-0258. **Deadline is Monday, April 7.**

Our second trip this year is to Cape Cod, Sunday, Sept. 14 to Thursday, Sept. 18. The itinerary includes fully-escorted tours of Nantucket Island, Martha's Vineyard, the Hyannis area and Historic Sandwich, as well as a visit to the Heritage Museum & Gardens - - the largest public gardens in Southern New England. Trip price is \$655 pp double, \$635 pp triple and \$825 single, which includes transportation, lodging, 4 breakfasts, 4 dinners with one evening of entertainment, a meet & greet welcome, baggage handling, all taxes and meal gratuities, and driver and tour guide gratuities for the aforementioned items. A \$200 pp deposit will secure your reservation, with the balance due by July 24. Contact Helen Younglove at 215 788-9408 for complete information including an optional trip insurance form.

BCHF Calendar of Events for 2014

FEBRUARY Sun., 2/9/2014, 3 - 5 PM. Annual Tea; "Mother Goose" Theme. BCHF headquarters. \$20/ticket. Reservations accepted at 215 788-9408 beginning 9 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 11.

MARCH - Sun., March 30, 2 PM. "John Adams Speaks: His Life & Times." 1st person portrayal by Joe Doyle of ActorsNET. Light refreshment. BCHF headquarters. \$3 pp; students free. Call 215 788-9408 for info.

MAY Thurs., 5/15/2014. Bus trip to Historic Morristown, NJ. Guided tour of Speedwell where Samuel Morse invented the telegraph and Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, housing a collection of artwork by Thomas Nast, known as the "father of American political cartooning." Lunch at George & Martha's American Grill. \$90/BCHF member; \$93/non-member. Call 215 788-9408 for flyer/reservations. Deadline, April 7.

SEPTEMBER - 9/14 through 18, 2014 - 5 day/ 4 night bus trip to Cape Cod, visiting Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, Historic Sandwich and Hyannis. 4 breakfasts & 4 dinners, lodg-

ing, all taxes; meal, guide & driver tips. \$655 pp, double occupancy. \$200 pp deposit upon booking; balance due by July 24, 2014. Call 215 788-9408 for flyer/reservations.

OCTOBER - Sat., 10/18, 10 am to 4 pm. 38th Historic Bristol Day. Fee for House Tour & Tea. For details, visit the BCHF website given below.

NOVEMBER - Wed., 11/19, 7:30 p.m. BCHF's annual business meeting, incl. election of Board members. Program & refreshments follow. BCHF headquarters. Free. Call 215 781-9895 for info.

DECEMBER - Wed., 12/10 or Tues., 12/9. Bus trip to Harrisburg, PA. Visit the Governor's Mansion decorated for the holidays, PA Capitol building and PA State Museum. Lunch included. Plans to be finalized in February.

- BCHF Headquarters are at 321 Cedar Street, Bristol
- For current information about activities and events, check out our web site at www.bristolhistory.org.

Bristol Riverside Theater - 2014 Season

"Tuesdays With Morrie" - Jan. 28 thru Feb. 16, 2014/"Laughter on the 23rd Floor" - Mar. 18 thru Apr, 13

"Little Shop of Horrors" - May 6 thru June 8, 2014

Phone 215 785-0100 for tickets, dates and additional information.

THE GAZETTE is a publication of the Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation, Inc. - Harold Mitchener, Editor
Post Office Box 215 • Bristol • Pennsylvania • 19007 • 215 781-9895 • www.bristolhistory.org
Articles for this issue of *THE GAZETTE* were contributed by: Helen Younglove, Barbara Gerhard, Robin Simmers-Butrey, Mary Gesualdi, Jan Ruano and Harold Mitchener. Additional research by Carol Mitchener.
Art work - Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor

Learn A Little More About Morristown, NJ

Located on a route between New York City and Philadelphia gave Morristown an advantage. George Washington first came to the town in May of 1773 when he was traveling to New York City accompanied by his stepson, John Parke Custis and Lord Stirling. Washington was interested in furthering the young man's education at an institution in New York.

The town was settled around 1715 by English Presbyterians from Southold, NY on Long Island and from New Haven, CT. It was first called New Hanover.

The village and county were named for Lewis Morris, the first and then royal governor of the United Colony of New Jersey.

The Lenape Native Americans were the first-known humans in the region and they were followed by the Swedes and Dutch prior to the English.

The town is sometimes called the "military capital of the U.S. because of the strategic role it played in the American Revolutionary War.

Between January and May of 1777, George Washington and his army marched from victories at Trenton and Princeton to encamp near Morristown center. At that time, their headquarters was in Jacob Arnold's Tavern. Washington returned for a second time between December 1779 and June 1780. This time the army camped at Jockey Hollow and the headquarters for Washington and his officers was the Ford Mansion. Here Martha Washington came to join him and they shared the Ford Mansion with Ford's widow and children.

General Lafayette joined him in Morristown and told him of the French fleet coming to help. Lafayette also returned in 1825 on his "Farewell Tour" of America.

Benedict Arnold was court-martialed at Dickerson's Tavern. At that time, Washington assured him things

could be settled. As history shows, Arnold went on to betray the U.S. in his attempt to give West Point, NY to the British.

Looking around Morristown, a rather unique claim for the town is the first and oldest "Seeing Eye, Inc." dog training school. Here dogs are trained for those who are blind or visually impaired. That institution, founded in 1929, is the only institution in the world that may use that term "Seeing Eye". Other locations may do the same task but must use a different name.

Many towns of the size of Morristown are pleased to claim several well-known individuals as coming from their community; Morristown has many.

Alexander Hamilton courted Betsy Schuyler there. Betsy Schuyler was the daughter of a Revolutionary War general. Caroline C. Fillmore (1813-1881) wife of President Millard Fillmore was a native of that town.

Anna Harrison (1775-1864), First Lady of the U.S. as wife of President William Henry Harrison and grandmother of President Benjamin Harrison, was originally from Morristown.

Steve Forbes, editor-in-chief of *Forbes Magazine*, hailed from Morristown, having been born there in 1947.

Samuel F.B. Morse and Alfred Vail built the first telegraph at Speedwell Ironworks, a Morristown industry, January 6, 1838.

Thomas Nast, artist, had a home at Morristown and lived there for over twenty years.

Making of a list of the well-known sports personalities would take many more lines of this article. Morristown is "on the map" for famous personalities.

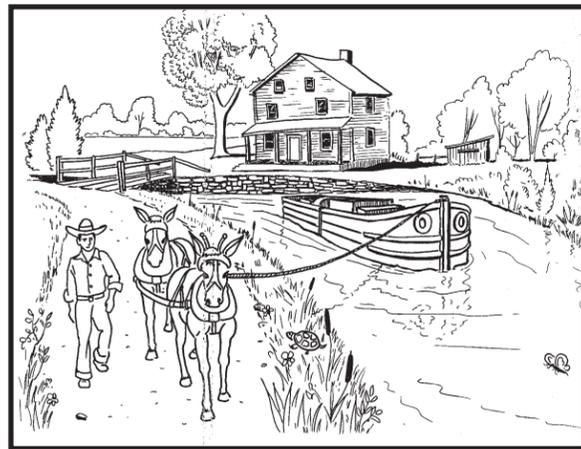
It is certainly worth a visit. (Read the article about a bus tour sponsored by BCHF on May 15, 23014 on pg 1)

The Children's Corner

The Large Group Instruction Room (LGI) at the Snyder-Girotti Elementary/Middle School was transformed into a "Please Touch Museum" of sorts on Historic Bristol Day (HBD). All of the children's activities followed the HBD theme of the Delaware Canal thanks to a traveling trunk loaned to the school by the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor and a guide written by Dennis Scholl, their Outreach Coordinator. With the help of Mary Lou Tantom, Bev Howley and Mary Gesualdi, teachers from Snyder-Girotti, children were able to explore the following items: a 19th century mule shoe and feed bag, a conch shell used to announce the arrival of the canal boats, a McGuffey primer reader used by first graders, a quill pen and ink well, arrowheads, anthracite coal, limestone and slag. They played games and toys similar to the children back in the mid-19th century such as: Jacob's Ladder toy, ball and cup and pick-up sticks. The children were able to dress in clothes worn by boys and girls in the 1850s.

Bristol resident Jim Kirk volunteered his time and woodworking skills to provide the children with everything they needed to build their own canal barge, including a miniature mule to pull it. Jim built a model of a canal lock. He demonstrated for the children how a canal boat would navigate through a lock.

Children had a unique opportunity to explore life along the Delaware Canal and understand the canals' importance to the growth of the American Industrial Revolution. Special thanks to Dr. Tom Shaffer, Bristol Borough District principal, for allowing the community to utilize the school facilities.



Artwork - Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor

Out Of The Past

The following items were excerpted from **February 1954** issues of THE BRISTOL COURIER.

2/1 - - BRISTOL SERGEANT REPORTED KILLED; MISSING SINCE '50. M/Sgt. Paul E. Riess, of 342 Jefferson Avenue, Bristol, reported missing in Korea three years ago, is believed to have died in action, the Army reported yesterday. A veteran of nine years service, Riess was with a medical company of the Second Division, Ninth Infantry Regiment, when he was reported missing in action. He joined the Army in May 1942 and twice re-enlisted.

16th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IS DUE AT BRISTOL THEATRE. The Bristol Theatre, Radcliffe and Market Streets, is sweet sixteen and the management is making special preparations for celebrating the anniversary. Sixteen years ago, the Bristol Theatre was built and dedicated to the policy, "Relax at the movies and add years to your life," and the Bristol Theatre must be Bucks' finest, according to Harry Fleisher, theatre owner.

2/2 - - BOROUGH COUNCIL PICKS TWO FOR AUDITOR POSTS. Appointment of two borough auditors, resignation of a member of council, and the adoption of two resolutions were among the items which occupied the attention of Bristol Borough Council, assembled in special session last evening. William Fallon and James Eagan were unanimously appointed as borough auditors. The resignation of Angelo Cianciosi, Jr., as representative from the Fifth Ward was accepted with regret. Borough solicitor, John Fullam, asked council to adopt a resolution authorizing the purchase of two Ahrens-Fox Model E-C fire apparatuses for \$33,396.

"Hey, Kids! Announcing the Re-Opening of GOODWILL FIRE HOUSE NO. 3 SKATING RINK, Swain & Mifflin Streets, Bristol, on Tuesday, February 2, 7:30 PM> Skating Tuesday & Thursday, 7:30 PM to 10:30 PM; Sundays, 2:00 to 5:00 PM. Prices: Nights, 60¢; Sundays, 25¢."

2/3 - - SCHOOL DIRECTORS PLAN TO SEIZE BEAVER ST. SITE. The Bristol school directors last night unanimously voted to start condemnation proceedings for a proposed school site after they were told that the Pennsylvania Railroad "renege" in an agreement in the land transfer. The site is at Beaver Street next to the railroad freight yard.

SENATOR EDW. MARTIN ACTS TO SAVE JOBS OF 6,000 WORKERS; PREVENTS TRANSFER OF KAISER'S WING CONTRACT. A long battle on the part of the Glenn Martin Plane Company of Baltimore, Md., to "pickup" the Bristol sub-contract and transfer the work to its own plant at Baltimore, failed when Kaiser last weekend successfully completed a "test period" of production, refuting charges that it was unable to keep up with schedules.

2/4 - - POMEROY STORE TO BE BUILT IN LEVITTOWN SHOPPING CENTER. Construction will begin within a month and the opening is scheduled for the end of the year.

"Special Dress Sale! First Quality. Fruit of the Loom. Street and House Dresses Sanforized - - Fast Colors. Regular Price - \$2.98. Special Below-Cost Sale Price - \$1.99. KANTER'S DEPT. STORE. 400 Mill Street, Bristol."

2/9 - - SWIMMING POOL PLANS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL. The plans were presented by Robert Pascale, 309 Washington Street, young son of councilman Nicholas Pascale who is sponsoring the pool. A copy of the plans has been sent to Harrisburg. The pool will be located in the lagoon area of

Bristol Memorial Park. It is being backed by the Bristol Recreation Board, the Mill Street Businessmen's Association, and labor unions. Numerous persons have volunteered free labor. Estimated overall cost, including the necessary buildings and equipment is \$68,000.

"For Better Breakfasts, Visit O'BOYLE'S Two Famous Restaurants. Rt. 13 & Beaver Dam Rd., and Green Lane & Farragut Ave."

"New 1954 Mercury Sun Valley Lets You See through the Top! Unique Plexiglas Transparent-Top Car Lets You See All the Scenery. Come in today and experience a new driving sensation. HAMM'S SALES & SERVICE, INC., Highway & McKinley St., Bristol."

2/12 - - KAISER GETS PART OF LEEDOM PLANT FOR CHANGEOVER. Kaiser Metal Products, Inc., Bristol, has leased 3,800 feet of floor space at the Thomas L. Leedom Company plant, to facilitate a changeover to production of a redesigned Martin B-57 jet bomber wing for the Air Force. The old model wings are still being constructed in the Canberra building on Radcliffe Street.

BRISTOL TODAY OBSERVED AT PHILA. HOME SHOW. Bristol had its day yesterday at the 1954 Philadelphia Home Show at the Commercial Museum. Other communities have already, or will before the show closes tomorrow, pointed with pride to their accomplishments.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE. 309 Radcliffe St. 3 apartments. Private baths and entrances. First floor apartment suitable for conversion to offices. \$12,000."

2/18 - - "Grand Opening Tomorrow and Saturday, February 19 and 20! Bristol's New RODGERS HOTEL, 106-108 Monroe Street. A 35 Room, Ultra Modern, Fire-proof Building. Complete Dining Room. Separate Modern Bar. Businessmen's Luncheon - 11 AM to 2 PM. Dinners a la carte - 5 to 8 PM. Owner-management - - Thomas and Lillian Rodgers."

"A & P . . . Never Have We Featured So Many Fine Meats Priced So Low! Rib Half Pork Roast - 50¢ Lb. Fresh Ham, Butt Half - 79¢ Lb. Tender Porterhouse, Boneless Top Round or Sirloin Steaks - 89¢ Lb. Fresh Ground Beef - 35¢ Lb. Veal Cutlets or Tenders - \$1.35 Lb. Lamb Chops - 85¢ Lb."

2/19 - - LBCAC CROWN CAPTURED BY FRANKLIN A.C. QUINTET WITH WIN OVER KAISER, 94-65. Franklin finished out its season with a mark of 15 wins in 18 games, compared to the runner-up's 14-4. Bob Strobele, the former Bristol school boy, and lumbering Grant Eckert, the Burlington import, were Franklin's bell cows. Strobele posted 25 points. Eckert wound up with 18.

"Spode China. DuBarry Pattern. 5-Pc. Place Setting - \$8.60. BAYLIES JEWELERS, 307 Mill Street."

2/24 - - \$300 BURGESS PAY SET; COUNCIL RAISES BUDGET. In order to balance the tentative budget, Bristol Borough Council agreed to renew the head tax of \$5 a person and do the same with the amusement tax. The tentative budget calls for a tax rate of 13 mills.

WARRIORS CAPTURE LBCL BANNER, Bristol Wins 86-73 over Southampton; Unbeaten in League. Bubby Loud, captain and rock-solid forward, lifted Bristol out of trouble with 30 points in his LBCL bow-out. Dick Crosby boosted his individual scoring championship total to 257 with a 22 point take, and Phil Attardo came in for another 17.

A Sincere Thank You

We want to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals and businesses that generously donated to Historic Bristol Day. Each year we publish an appeal for funds and each year we are not disappointed by the response. This event could not occur without additional funding. Thank you to all listed below. We also thank all our volunteers without whom we could not function.

Individuals

Andrew Accardi
Anonymous
Russell & Pauline Angerman
Luke & Mary Antonelli
Kathy Barniskis
Lillian Mitchner Bauserman
Delores Brown
Lucy Butterworth
Sarah E. Carter
Howard & Claire Collier
Vincent & Alice Cordisco
Ellanna Delaney
Ginny DiMaggio
Helen & Ted Dmytryk
Bob & Nancy Doyle
Sonia & John Foderaro
Monica Gallagher
Mark, Mary & Christina Gesualdi
Tom & Carolyn Hankerson
David & Jeanne Harris
Andrea Harvey
Dr. Joanne Elena Hullings
Nancy Jenca
Jodi & Mary Kehoe
Tom & Diane King
Sandra Klug
Joe & Anna Larrisey

Jane E. Magro
Arthur & Carol Mancuso
Donna & Donald McCloskey
Mary McIlvain
George W. & Dorothy McMurtry
Pat & Bill McNamarra
Marilyn Milbourne
Harold & Carol Mitchener
Rev. Thomas A. Morris, O.P.S.S.T.
Mary Jane & Isadore Morici
Paul Murray
Elaine Nelson
Eleanor & Tom O’Rielly
May Ridge
Nicholas Rizzo
Mary Anne & John Roach
Linda Rowan
Jan Ruano
Anthony Russo
Ralph & Joyce Sabatini
Yvonne P. Sampsel
Gloria L. Seacrist
Catherine M. Severi
Mary Sheppard
Mary Anne & John Smoyer
Leonard & Daniel Snyder
Joe & Pat Stallone
Violet Tranter

Marion M. Walter
Anne & Ted Walp
Carl & Bonnie White
Bob & Pauline White
Elizabeth Taddei
Helen Younglove

Business & Community Groups

Arkema
Bertucci Maren Associates
Bossler’s Wheel Alignment
Bristol Borough Council
Bristol Jewish Center
CBM / Bristol Fuel
W.R. Esposito, Realtor
Fidelity Savings & Loan Association
of Bucks County
First Federal of Bucks County
Great ID’s by Anne
Grundy Commons
Harris Comfort LLC
Lopez, Teodosio and Larken, LLC
Marvin Portney, Attorney at Law
Michael DiChristofars, CPA, CAFC
Radcliffe Family Practice
Senator Tommy Tomlinson

The Delaware Canal: A Way of Life

Bristol, PA - For nearly one hundred years, the Delaware Canal was integral to the way of life in Bristol Borough, Its economic influence on the Borough, as well as the greater commerce of Bucks County and Pennsylvania, was felt into the early 1930s. Learn about life on the Delaware Canal when Martha Capwell Fox of the National Canal Museum presents, THE DELAWARE CANAL: A WAY OF LIFE on Tuesday, February 11, 2014 at the Margaret R. Grundy Memorial Library, 680 Radcliffe Street beginning at 6:30 pm. Snow date is February 12, 2014). With actual silent film footage of the working canal, Ms. Fox will detail the life and travails of canal employees and their families. A third film, “Night Hawker,” more theatrical in nature, speaks to canal life with an anthropomorphic perspective. Seating is limited for this free event; register online at www.grundylibrary.org, or by calling 215 788-7891 ext 5 or ext 6.

This program is offered by Margaret R. Grundy Memorial Library, in collaboration with National Canal Museum in support of the PA Forward Pennsylvania Libraries initiative. Barbara Gerhard, Programming & Marketing Librarian of the Margaret R. Grundy Memorial Library, has shared this program information with us.

Tillie’s Basket Raffle

Our dear friend and BCHF member, Tillie VanAken passed away on May 24, 2012. She continues to be greatly missed by everyone. The VanAken family donated her collection of “Home Towne” pieces to BCHF. Tillie was very active on the Ways and Means committee and we felt she would approve of a fundraising raffle created with her collection. (Tillie had previously served as Vice President for several years and was elected President in 2002, 2003 and 2004. Tillie was also the Bristol High School Class of 1942 Valedictorian.)

A beautiful basket was made for the raffle including Tillie’s 13 “Home Towne” pieces, Bristol ornaments and Bristol Magnets. Raffle tickets can be purchased at any upcoming BCHF event including February’s Tea, and the 1st person portrayal of John Adams on March 30th. The drawing will take place at the March 30th program and the winner will be announced. Tickets are \$1.00 per chance or 6 for \$5.00, what a great deal! This is a nice opportunity to add to your “Home Towne” collection or start one for someone special!

Thank you to the VanAken family and we thank all those who support the raffle.

Robin Simmers-Butrey - Ways and Means Committee.

Thomas Nast Works on Display at Morristown, NJ

For centuries, people have recognized the importance of the “power of the pen” in world history. It is not too often that a reader thinks about the “power of a sketch or drawing”. Thomas Nast, a man who came to New York City with his family from the Bavarian section of Germany when he was only 6 years of age, is an excellent example of a person who influenced U.S. history with his drawings.

Thomas Nast was born on the 27th of September 1840 in Landau Baden, Germany, His father was a musician who did not agree with the conservative ideas of the government in that region and decided to sail to the United States with his family.

Young Nast did not like traditional school subjects but excelled in art. For awhile he did study at the National Academy of Design in New York City. At the age of 15 he became a draftsman for Frank Leslie’s “Illustrated News” and at the age of 18 was hired by Harper’s Weekly. That publication had been launched in 1857.

By 1860, Nast was sent to England for “New York Illustrated News” and also sent to Italy to cover Giuseppe Garibaldi’s revolt for the “Illustrated London News” and other American publications.

About this time, the American Civil War commenced and Nast supported the Union cause; he overtly opposed slavery and demonstrated this in several drawings particularly his “Emancipation” (1863) showing the evils of slavery and benefits of abolition. President Lincoln said Nast was “our best recruiting sergeant”. After Lincoln’s assassination, he also showed President Andrew Johnson as a “repressive autocrat.

It was after the Civil War ended that Nast began to distort and exaggerate the physical traits of his subjects and therefore played an important role in the development of “political caricature”.

One of the most influential political ideas that Nast showed in cartoons helped to be a major factor in the downfall of the New York City “political machine of Boss Tweed and the Tammany Hall.” He used the Tiger to illustrate this. He was offered \$100,000 to stop his editorial art against the “machine”. At that time he was being paid \$5,000 per year by the publication for which he was employed. The publishing company refused to have him cease his work and they lost their contract to provide school books for the public schools of New York City. Nast’s art was very influential in the political machine’s downfall. Nast’s caricatures of “Boss Tweed” helped to identify and eventually lead to his 1876 arrest in Vigo, Spain.

Nast used other animals in his drawings. For the Republican Party, he started the use of the “elephant”.

A Pickle In The Tree

Bristol is known for its “Ethnic Diversity” and not often is Poland mentioned. Around the Christmas holiday, sometimes for sale in displays of ornaments for the Christmas trees, can be found ornamental pickles which can be hung on trees.

An elderly Oregon lady tells of growing up with custom in her family. She relates that her “Polish ancestors hid a glass pickle in the Christmas tree and allowed the

The “donkey” was selected by him to portray the Democrat Party. About the same time, representing the total United States, he drew “Uncle Sam”. The one drawing that enhanced Christmas celebrations in the United States was the way he showed “Santa Claus”. Using Clement Moore’s poem, he portrayed many ideas from the poem in visual form - the sleigh, reindeer, jolly old elf, and more. He selected the North Pole as the location of Santa’s house. This he felt was in no country and Santa was for the “entire world”. He brought Christmas to a large audience through his engravings. Children loved his portrayals.

Nast married Sarah Edward on September 26, 1861 and they had five children; Julia, Thomas, Jr., Edith, Mabel, and Cyril.

It is a little known fact that Nast could not read nor write well. At first he would have his wife read items to him and he would draw. Later, as he became more wealthy, he would hire scholars to read to him from science, physics, history, Shakespeare, Dickens, Mark Twain and much more.

At the height of his career, he was paid \$20,000 per year plus \$150.00 per engraving that was published. The largest share of his income came from his lectures. He would rapidly illustrate his talks on large sheets of paper as he spoke. He was one of the earliest to use “chalk talks”. He acquired various real estate locations including one in Morristown, NJ where he lived for more than 20 years. His large house in Morristown had a value of \$100,000 and it was debt free.

In 1884, Nast changed sides and supported Democrat candidate Grover Cleveland for President. Cleveland became the first Democrat since 1856 to become President. Nast became known as a “presidential maker”, due to the influence of his drawings.

As leadership changed in the printing industry, Nast’s drawings were used less frequently and eventually disagreements led to his departure from those publishers. He tried to have his own publication, to give lectures and to paint in other media. A failure of the brokerage house of Grant & Ward in 1884 led to his savings being destroyed and he became destitute.

President Theodore Roosevelt appointed his old friend Thomas Nast as Consul General of Ecuador in early 1902. Nast moved to Guayaquil, Ecuador following his appointment. Within less than a year, “Yellow Fever” had claimed his life. His body was brought back to Woodlawn Cemetery in Bronx, NY for burial.

The immigrant boy from Germany helped to change many ideas in the minds of the American public and influence U.S. history with the use of his art.

child who found the pickle to be the first to open gifts.” As a child, she relates that her family could not afford one of the glass, hand-blown ornaments. In raising her own children, she decided to include this tradition in their Christmas celebration. They, in turn, continue with their families.

Do any of our readers practice this tradition? We would enjoy hearing from you at BCHF, P.O. Box 215, Bristol, PA 19007