



# THE GREATER HARRINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY GAZETTE

Preserving the Past for the Future to See

Harrington, Delaware

Our 46th Year

Spring 2023

## Welcome New Members

Bryant Bell, *Wyoming*  
Frances Benson, *Harrington*  
Carla Benson-Green, *Dover*  
Heather Crouse, *Harrington*  
Deweese Davis, *Greenwood*  
Phyllis Masten, *Harrington*  
Nick Morris, *Berlin MD*  
Kenny & Nicole Shinn, *Harrington*

## In This Issue

Curator's Corner  
Harrington Heritage Day Events  
New Member Spotlight  
Help Wanted - Looking for Great  
Volunteers  
Self Guided Walking & Driving  
Tour of Harrington

## Upcoming Events

June Kid's Day at the Caboose  
July Delaware State Fair &  
Kid's Zone  
August Harrington Heritage Day  
October Day Time Cemetery Walk  
Antique Road Show  
December Wreaths Across America  
Santa At the Caboose

## Business Meetings

First Thursday of Each Month  
7:00 p.m. @ the Annex  
*Bring a Friend!*

## Special Meetings

First Thursday of  
July, October, January, April  
7:00 p.m.  
*Bring a Friend!*



## Museum Hours

1st Sunday – 1-5:00 p.m.  
3rd Sunday – 2-4:00 p.m.  
Other Days by Appointment

## President's Message

*Linda Spires*

Isn't it nice to know that our Museum is not just filled with "stuff" to see, but it is a place where history is experienced and brought to life. This was so clearly evident as we hosted two significant exhibits over the last few months.

Partnering with the Smithsonian Institute and Delaware Humanities to present Crossroads: Change in Rural America was a delightful experience. Many visitors and local and State dignitaries came to see and learn about our rural heritage and the evolving legacy we are challenged to leave for future generations.

The Black History Month exhibit was a unique presentation of a few select Harrington family histories, as well as a chance to meet and talk with Ralph Tildon, a native Harringtonian who was the first black man to enter and graduate from West Point. Also, Don Blakely joined with us and shared his collection of memorabilia celebrating the Tuskegee Airmen who hailed from Delaware and served in WWII. It was emotionally moving to hear families share their ancestors' lives with each other, to see the pride in their hearts and on their faces as they talked about their distinctive accomplishments and contributions to our community. Many family members related that they've never been prouder to be a Harringtonian.

Kudos to Doug, the Board (and their spouses and families), and the many members who worked so hard to make all these events possible.

On a different note, Billie, Michelle, Viva and I want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to continue to serve you and the Society for another term. There's lots to be done and many new activities and adventures ahead. For those of you who have not been attending our meetings or participating in our activities, we hope you will come on back and join with us as we go forward. I don't think you'll be disappointed!

Looking for ways to escape the summer heat?  
Plan to visit the famous Greater Harrington Historical Society Museums is a fan favorite thing to do among residents and visitors.



## NEW – EXPANDED SUMMER HOURS

Visit the Greater Harrington Historical Society Museums  
Bring a Friend ~ Come See What's New

~ *Special Summer Sunday Hours – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.* ~  
Always Free Parking and Free Admission

June 4, 11, 18, 25  
July 9, 16, 23, 30  
August 6, 13, 20, 27

*The Greater Harrington Historical Society*

Address: 108 Fleming Street, Harrington DE 19952 ~ Telephone: (302) 398-3698

Website: [www.ghhsociety.org](http://www.ghhsociety.org) ~ Email: [info@ghhsociety.org](mailto:info@ghhsociety.org)

## What A Busy Year It's Been!

*Doug Poore, Curator*

This past year, the Greater Harrington Historical Society accomplished several milestone events. It all started with an email in December 2021. Crystal Trust, a grant organization out of Montchanin, Delaware, gifted the society a grant in the amount of \$100,000 to restore the tower and caboose at the railroad complex. What a gift! Combining this grant with others from Longwood Foundation for the amount of \$20,000 and the funds from Welfare Foundation for \$10,000, GHHS was able to replace the cover over the caboose, sand blast, repair rust and repaint the exterior of the caboose, new roofs on the tower and watchman's shack, and repair and paint the walls inside the tower. The complex was rededicated at the Heritage Day festivities on August 27, 2022. During this ceremony, one of our own members, Ed Kline, was recognized for his 30 plus years of dedication to the organization.

While the railroad complex work was ongoing, the organization was given permission from our friends at Delaware Humanities to utilize a portion of our COVID-19 funding to digitize 18 years of the Harrington Journals that are in our collection. Once completed, these were placed on our website. Hoping to complete the program, GHHS applied for and received \$18,000 from Delaware Humanities in October of 2022 allowing us to digitize the remaining 22 years of the Harrington Journal, with the project completed in March of 2023, and now all of these editions are available on our website. Did we mention how much we love Delaware Humanities!

GHHS received yet another grant to repair the foundation board and batten and bricks that had suffered water damage at the church. During the repair phase it was discovered the rain gutters were the culprit behind the water damage, so they were replaced as well. This \$10,000 grant was given to us by Delaware Preservation Society. Thank you!

While all of this was going on, behind the scenes members helped at various events and at our booth at The Delaware State Fair. Thank you to everyone that helped.

One of our biggest events ever held at GHHS began with an invitation back in May of 2021. Delaware Humanities, did we mention they are amazing!, offered the organization the opportunity to host a traveling Smithsonian Museums Exhibit, highlighting rural America, called "Crossroads", in the Fall of 2022. A tremendous opportunity for our organization. After some planning, and temporary removal of some exhibits, several members volunteered to move and assemble to display. Then on Friday, November 18, 2022, the exhibit opened with a private event for members and invited guest. Over 100 people joined us for the night, and it was a huge success. The display remained until January 2023.

Realizing we would have an open space starting in February of 2023, a decision was made to reach out to our African-American community, offering to partner with our citizens to tell the story of our local African-American community. And what a history we found! Ralph Tildon, a citizen of Harrington, was the first African-American from Delaware to attend West Point Military Academy. Ella Ralston was one of Delaware's first African-American Midwives, working with Dr. Chipman to delivery several of our local citizens. A special event in late February was held and over 80 people from across the area joined us to celebrate Black History Month.

Very recently we used a grant to have both our facilities and collection management evaluated. These results are due in mid-June. The hope is to use these reports to improve our processes and support the museums expansion efforts.

During all of these happenings, artifacts continued to come in from all around, the museum continued to be open, and we have welcomed new members. All of which has served to strengthen our organization and keep us excited for the future. GHHS is striving to be open every Sunday, involve more members in the role of docent, complete an inventory of all three buildings and continue to grow.



### Priceless Treasure, Antique or Loveable Curiosity?

**Coming Soon ...** GHHS Hosts *Antique Road Show!* Bring your treasures, anything collectable, unusual, historical or unique, and find out what they're worth from professional appraisers!

All proceeds go towards museum services and programs.

**Get all the details -- Watch FB and your email for more information!**

## Member Spotlight

### New to Harrington, Delaware

*Billie Humphrey, Vice-President*

*Being new to Harrington back in 2007, I wanted to feel part of the community. Harrington reminded my husband and I of his hometown in Oklahoma. Morrison had grain elevators, railroad tracks on the outskirts of town, a water tower, one bank and one small grocery store, a wonderful hardware store, and several churches. Morrison, however, did not have a state fair!*

*Once retiring from full-time work, we both wanted to be someplace quieter where we could garden, have friends and feel part of a community. As many of you know, small towns consider you “new” for many years. I understood this, but never realized how long it took before you became a member of the community.*

*I started attending the Greater Harrington Historical Society to learn more about the community I joined. The members of GHHS welcomed me and explained some of the basics of Harrington. I soon learned Harrington had a rich history that wasn't obvious from my first impression. For instance, the importance of Clark's Corner, the coming of the railroad, early manufacturing, canning, forestry, farming, contributions to America's war efforts. The history was rich, but mostly unknown to the newcomers. After each meeting, I would drive home and think, “Wow! I didn't know that!”*

*I became more and more interested in what makes Harrington and the Mispillion 100 unique and very American. Once it was a thriving town with industry, passenger rail service, a newspaper, abundant retail options (a shoemaker, clothing store, soda fountain, movie theatre, luxury hotel). If you needed more, just catch the passenger train to Dover or Philadelphia even New York. Harrington seemed to have it all. Then, change came. You native Harringtonians have witnessed these changes throughout your life.*

*The 21st century is bringing even more change to our community and many new residents. The teens don't remember Burton's soda fountain, Reese's theatre or Wheeler's Park with the carousel and monkeys. And that's sad.*

*It's up to us, the members of GHHS to preserve these memories. I invite you to bring a friend to our monthly meetings and encourage them to bring their friends. Harrington will never return to the small town of the 20th century, but we can build on its history to become a better community for today's newcomers.*



**Saturday, August 26, 2023**

### Schedule of Events

9:00 a.m. Heritage Day Parade Begins  
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Museums & Soda Fountain Open  
TBA – Charlotte Hutson Harringtonian Award Presentation, Norman Barlow Pavilion



**The GHHS Needs Your Help!**  
We need volunteers to help make this signature Harrington event the best ever. There are so many ways you can help. Help with the parade float. Help as greeters in the museums. The church museum is one of the oldest structures still standing in the city, 147 years young! Help at the welcome table. Help with selling raffle basket tickets. Help at the Soda Fountain. Help at the caboose and tower. Help with setting up and taking down. Three hours of your time is all that is needed. Join us and have fun as we celebrate and make some Harrington history!

**Harrington Heritage Day – August 26**  
**Two Shifts, 9-12 & 12-3**  
**Total of ~20+ volunteers between 3 museums**

### Interested:

Leave a Message at 302-398-3698 or email [info@ghhsociety.org](mailto:info@ghhsociety.org). Thank You!





**NEW Special Meetings - With Guest Speakers!**

Local historians are featured as speakers, offering presentations on a wide variety of subjects based on extensive research.

Invite a Friend!

**July 6, 2023, 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Mr. David Tabler, "Small Wonders: 10 Facts From Delaware History that May Surprise You"  
Location: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 190 Raughley Hill Road, Harrington, Free & Open to Public, Books Available for Purchase

**October 5, 2023, 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Mr. Todd Harra, *Historic Funeral Customs*

**THANK YOU FOR BRINGING A FRIEND!**

Invite, Invite, Invite

If you have a friend whom you think might be interested in Harrington history, invite them!

**Invite** them to a Meeting!

**Invite** them to an Event!

**Invite** them to Join!

Share This Newsletter with Them!

Share the Informational Brochure with Them!

Every guest will receive a GHHS welcome bag and the member bringing the guest receives a great goody bag too.



**When the museums are closed,** feel free to take a historical self-guided walking and driving tour of the rich history of Harrington. The tour includes 20 stops and

has an audio option for your enjoyment. Find the downloadable map at [www.ghhsociety.org](http://www.ghhsociety.org) or type [Harrington Historical Tour - Clio \(theclio.com\)](http://Harrington Historical Tour - Clio (theclio.com)) in your browser. This tour is fabulous!



If you haven't already done so, please be sure to renew your 2023 membership. The GHHS is a non-profit organization, therefore all dues and donations are considered a tax-free contribution. Please help keep

the GHHS strong with your continuing membership. We appreciate your membership and support.



**HELP WANTED**

**We're Looking For Great Volunteers**

If you love Harrington history, sharing your knowledge, working with amazing people, exploring and preserving stories of the past, or being involved in an organization that makes a difference, then GHHS has a volunteer opportunity for you

Our volunteer ambassadors:

- Enhance the visitor experience at all three museum locations
- Help the curator and archivist catalog collections
- Provide behind-the-scenes support
- Welcome and guide our guests at special events
- Assist with educational programming

If this sounds of interest to you, please email [info@ghhsociety.org](mailto:info@ghhsociety.org) and put "Great Volunteer" in the subject line or call 302-398-3698. The GHHS would not be the cultural and community resource it is today without its loyal and committed volunteers. Please consider a fulfilling vocation donating your time to help keep Harrington history alive and well in the 21st Century. Thank You!



**Immediate Needs**

**Public Relations Team** – 2-3 People, Explore outreach to local Harringtonians and merchants.

**Fundraiser Team** – 2-3 People, Assist Board in raising funds to cover the expenses of the Society through existing and future projects.

**Kid's Day at the Caboose – June 10**  
8 Volunteers, 10:00a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Delaware State Fair – July 20-29**  
Ten Days, Two Shifts Each Day, 12-4 p.m. & 4-8 p.m.

**Harrington Heritage Day – August 26**  
Two Shifts, 9-12 & 12-3  
Total of ~20+ volunteers split between 3 museums

**Interested:** Contact Any Board Member, Leave a Message at 302-398-3698, email [info@ghhsociety.org](mailto:info@ghhsociety.org)