



# THE HILLTONE

HILTONIA ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER  
Winter 2003

## Historic Landmark in Hiltonia's Backyard, *Jennifer Leynes*

Our neighbor to the west, Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, has fascinated me since my husband and I moved to the area almost five years ago. The imposing stone hospital buildings, elegant gatehouse and residences visible from Sullivan Way have inspired both admiration of their beauty and concern at their abandonment and deterioration. My interest was heightened this fall when I was invited to join a small group from the Trenton Preservation Committee for a walking tour of the campus.

The New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum, as the hospital was first known, was founded in the 1840s at the urging of Dorothea Dix and other reformers concerned with the treatment of the mentally ill in the state and nation. Dix visited facilities across New Jersey and reported to the legislature about the deplorable conditions that she found. The assembly reacted swiftly, appropriating funds for construction of a hospital and establishing a commission to select a site and oversee construction.

The site selected for the hospital was then 2.5 miles outside of Trenton, on a 111-acre farm with views of the Delaware River. The commission determined to build the facility on a plan developed by Dr. Thomas Kirkbride, the superintendent of the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane.

Kirkbride's plan advocated construction of a central administration building flanked by wards for patients, each stepped back from the others to ensure good air circulation throughout.

The commission employed a prominent Philadelphia architect, John Notman, to design the hospital and a noted landscape designer, Andrew Jackson Downing, to plan the grounds. In 1848,



the main hospital was completed. At its center was a domed administration building with a classical portico flanked by four stone wings, each three stories high and nearly 120 feet long; the second range was stepped back 25 feet from the first. The hospital was enlarged several times during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, creating the imposing and rambling building visible today from Sullivan Way. The original 1848 wings are intact, although the central administration building was replaced by a contemporary brick structure, the Stratton Building, in 1973.

A second massive range of

wards, known as the Annex, was built in 1888-1889 to increase the hospital's capacity. Like the earlier main hospital, the Annex was a three-story stone edifice with central block and flanking wings. The building originally had a tower and turrets on the roof, all of which have been removed. Long wings were added to the rear of the building in 1907 to frame a large courtyard, which was enclosed in 1924 by a brick, Colonial Revival-style structure, the Congregate.

In the early twentieth century, the state constructed residences for doctors and nurses on the hospital grounds. The earliest dormitory for nurses was built in 1900; in the 1920s, two more dorms were added. Around the same time, 12 brick, Colonial revival-style houses were built for resident doctors; many of these are visible behind homes on Cornwall Avenue. The Commissioner and Superintendent also lived on the property; the Commissioner's House is a large dwelling with a wraparound porch visible from Stuyvesant Avenue, and the Superintendent's House now functions as a police substation off of Sullivan Way.

To the rear of the main hospital, a sizeable service area developed during the mid- to late-nineteenth century to support the

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Highlight on Hiltonians



The annual Hiltonia Halloween Parade was held on Sunday October 27, 2002 at the home of Jim and Betsy Frueh. Trenton Fire Company #8 once again led all the ghouls and goblins on a parade around Buckingham Ave and Kensington Ave. A fun time was had by all. Thanks to the Fruehs for hosting the event.

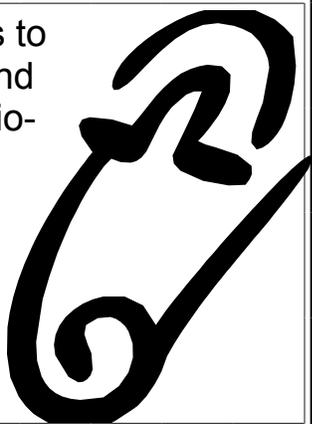
### Children's Holiday Party Fun and Educational

Sunday December 15, 2002 was the Hiltonia Children's Holiday Party. The neighborhood children learned how different cultures celebrate this holiday season. A surprise visit from Santa was a delight. Many thanks to Debby D'Arcangelo and Ed Dippold for planning and hosting the wonderful afternoon.

### Join the Fun

Any neighbor who would like to host the Neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt or any other neighborhood children's event, please call Melinda Chance, 393-2715 .

Congratulations to Doug Palmer and Christiana Foglio-Palmer on the birth of their daughter Laila Rose on November 12, 2002.



### Welcome New Neighbors

09/01 Charles Myers, 18 Cornwall  
09/01 Mark Edl & Janet Weathers, 108 Kensington  
10/01 Edwin Figueroa & Carlos Vargos, 205 Cornwall  
10/01 Sherrie Preische, 7 Cornwall  
10/01 Harriette Tomlin, 1466 Stuyvesant  
11/01 Peter & Carol Carmasino, 212 Buckingham  
12/01 Todd & Stephanie Jarrard, 119 Kensington  
03/02 MaryBeth Troy, 226 Renfrew  
04/02 David Razmus, 119 Renfrew  
05/02 James Brownlee & Peter Dutkevicz, 217 Cornwall  
07/02 James Gunsalus & Amy Hellickson, 109 Cadwalader  
08/02 Vincent & Sonja Myers, 1 Cornwall  
08/02 Kerry Haynie & M. Silberberg, 216 Renfrew  
08/02 Christopher Meola, 20 Cornwall  
09/02 Keith Greene, 111 Buckingham

We apologize if we missed anyone and welcome everyone to our neighborhood.

### Happy Birthday

Lamar Rabara Brokate	January 19
Victoria Woolfolk	February 2
Matthew Noggoh	February 5
Noah Autorio Reyes	March 2
Aonianna Montano	March 13
Connor Lewis	March 19
Christina Zeppenfeld	March 18
Bethany Chance	March 29
Lee Peyton	March 25
(Audrey Blackburn's Grandson)	
Samoa' Thomas	March 30



*If you have an occasion you would like recognized, please notify a member of The Hilltone Publishing Committee.*

**Congratulations**  
**2003 Hiltonia Association**  
**Board members.**  
**We appreciate your dedica-**  
**tion to our neighborhood.**

## Membership Record Set, Hiltonians Challenged To Do Better Yet

Congratulations (and thanks!) to all Hiltonians who paid their dues in 2002. We had a record 200 members join the Association last year! Neighbor Myrna Kushner has challenged us to increase membership by 20% -- to 240 members in 2003! Are we up for the challenge?

It is important to note that dues for 2003 remain at \$10.00 per adult. Because the Association carries a deficit budget each year and no longer has the beer pumping fundraising activity, membership dues is our only source of income. Although the Board opted not to raise the dues this year, it may be necessary to do so in the future.

Remember what our dues supports. Not only does the Association provide refreshments at meetings and neighborhood parties, it also makes donations to various organizations and worthy projects. Most notable of these are annual donations of \$200 to the Mayor's Children's Christmas Party and \$600 to Annette Lartigue's Summer Camp for kids in Trenton. And of course it funds this newsletter. The Association needs your help to continue this support.

Just think, if just one person from every household joined the Association, that would be over 300 members. Now, since many of our households have more than one adult in the home, can't we get at least 240 members for 2003?

Please join early. Membership forms and return envelopes are enclosed for your convenience. I am looking forward to a new record next year. Thanks for your help. *Cathe Frierman, President*

## Get Involved!

If you are interested in working with any of the Association committees please do not hesitate to contact one of the officers or the chair of the committee in which you are interested. We are always looking for new ideas and new neighbor-participants.

## Hiltonia Association Board

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*Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of The Hilltone. If you have a story to share, an announcement or an idea for an article, please contact a member of The Hilltone Publishing Committee.*

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## Ellarslie in the Spring

### January 11 - February 23, 2003

Woodcuts and intaglio prints by Wendell Brooks, sculpture by Michael Gyampo and Son.  
Opening Reception: Saturday, January 18, 7-9 p.m.

### March 1 - April 13, 2003

Sculpture by Gabriele Roos  
Opening Reception: Saturday, March 8, 7-9 p.m.

### March 23, 2003

H.M. Szenes Music Series features opera singer Deborah Ford, 3:00 p.m.

### April 19 - June 15, 2003

Ellarslie Open XXI  
Opening Reception: Saturday, April 26, 6-9 p.m.

### April 27, 2003

H.M. Szenes Music Series features John Burkhalter playing early American composition, including the work of Francis Hopkinson, New Jersey native and signer of the Declaration of Independence.  
3:00 p.m.

Museum Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 11-3; Sunday, 1-4; closed Mondays and municipal holidays.

Learn more about the Trenton City Museum and the Ellarslie mansion (past, present, and future) at the March 12 general meeting when director Brian Hill will be the featured speaker.

*(Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, continued from page 1)*

community on the campus, which had increased from approximately 200 patients around 1850 to 1,300 in 1907. The support structures were built primarily of stone and included the gatehouse on Sullivan Way, a stable (later adapted for use as a firehouse), shop building, bakery, and tailor shop. On the south side of Sullivan Way, adjacent to the Village Charter School, are the remnants of the first laundry complex; a brick laundry was added to the main service area in 1911. Other twentieth-century additions to the service area included the powerhouse and cafeteria.

In 1873, the state purchased the Brookville gristmill to provide flour for the hospital's bakery. This mill was located south of the Delaware and Raritan Canal; one mill building from this complex stands today on School Lane. Existing homes in the Brookville community were modernized and several new houses built for hospital staff; these residences are located along a lane east of the Village Charter School. A small brick schoolhouse was added around 1900, and the Brookville station on the Belvidere and Delaware rail line (no longer extant) served the hospital's transportation needs.

Today, the historic core of the hospital complex has remained surprisingly intact, with few additions and alterations occurring since 1930. The greatest change has been in the treatment of the mentally ill, which has moved away from long-term institutionalization and thus reduced the need for hospital wards on the scale of Trenton Psychiatric Hospital. As a result, the imposing stone hospital buildings and sizeable complex of support structures, which once housed a vibrant community, now sit virtually abandoned, their fate uncertain.

View historic photographs of the Trenton Psychiatric Hospital at <http://www.historicasylums.com> (click on "Trenton State Hospital").

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## Worthy Projects

### April

Food drive for the Trinity Cathedral Food Pantry

### May

Pedals For Progress: donating bikes along with a \$10.00 donation. Bikes will be distributed to different areas in South America. A receipt is given for the value of the bike and the \$10.00. Drop off will be in Lawrenceville.

### October

Outerwear drive for the United Way

### November

Sock drive donation to Annette Lartique who distributes them to the Rescue Mission.

Neighbors who are involved with organizations that might benefit from some help from our neighborhood or who would like to help with any worthy project should contact Melinda Chance, 393-2715.

# Trenton: The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of the American Revolution

Andrea Lehman

Think of the American Revolution and you probably think of Boston's Patriots, Philadelphia's birth of nationhood, or Virginia's founding fathers, but in reality, New Jersey saw more action than anywhere else. The Continental Army under General George Washington spent nearly half the war here, and the majority of significant battles were fought in the "Garden Colony." Two of those battles, or more appropriately, about a battle and a half, took place right here in Trenton.

A little background for those who don't know it all already: In late 1776, the Patriot prognosis did not look good. Defeats in New York coupled with inadequate supplies and the gathering winter had led to a demoralized Continental Army. What's more, many soldiers' enlistments were due to expire at year's end. After retreating across New Jersey and crossing the Delaware into Pennsylvania (taking all the nearby boats), Washington conceived a bold stroke.

After crossing the ice-choked Delaware throughout Christmas night, Washington's troops marched south to Trenton in different groups. You can check out their routes at [www.tencrucialdays.com](http://www.tencrucialdays.com), or follow the signs bearing a tricorn-clad patriot and the phrase "Washington Victory Trail," one of which is just down the hill on Sullivan Way (named for another Revolutionary War general). Arriving in Trenton later than they'd planned, the Continentals nevertheless surprised the sleeping and hung-over Hessians (German mercenaries) barracked there and secured a quick victory. Lacking the manpower to hold the town, however, the Patriots returned to Pennsylvania.

By January 2, the Continental Army had returned to Trenton, but British General Charles Cornwallis's larger British army was making its way here, too. Washington dispatched forces to delay the Redcoats, so that by the time the British arrived at Trenton, it was near dusk. The Second Battle of Trenton occurred at a bridge over the Assunpink Creek, near present-day Mill

Hill, but nightfall cut it short. With his back to the river, Washington knew he would be toast come morning, so while a detachment stayed behind burning fires to throw off Cornwallis,



the bulk of the army snuck out of town along a little-known, circuitous route (through Hamilton to Quaker Bridge Road) to Princeton, where another battle (and victory) was waged. The significance of the ten days that encompassed these three battles is not that the battles were huge victories or even huge affairs, but rather that they were much-needed victories at a time when the Colonial cause was nearly lost. Truth be told, the tide would be turned several more times before independence, but the victories in Trenton provided the first clue to the British that this might take a while. It's a testament to Trenton that, according to Convention and Visitors Bureau director Sally Lane, there are 19 other Trentons around the country, all named for our hometown and what went on here in the winter of 1776-77.

To learn more, visit the Old Barracks Museum and Trenton Battle Monument or take either of two two-hour walking tours. One, given the first Saturday of each month, visits the sights involved in those battles; the other, on Sunday afternoons April-October, covers Trenton history 1679-present, with an emphasis on those crucial ten days. *For further information contact the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Lafayette and Barrack Streets, 777-1771 recording, 777-1770 voice.*

**Old Barracks Museum.** Even before 1776, Colonials were tired of the Brit-

ish – more specifically, tired of quartering British troops. So a series of barracks was built to house soldiers during the French and Indian Wars, of which the Old Barracks (built in 1758 but since modified and reconstructed) is the only one remaining. The barracks are perhaps best known for housing Hessians – in actuality, mainly their wives and children – at the time of the Battle of Trenton. By 1777, with Trenton back in Patriot hands, it was used as a military hospital where new recruits were inoculated against smallpox. Different periods in barracks history are explored on tours led by guides in period clothing: the building's construction, its time as an induction center for new soldiers, its role in the Battle of Trenton, and its life as a military hospital. For kids (9-12) in need of mustering and drilling, there's a popular summer day camp. *Barrack Street. 609/396-1776, [www.barracks.org](http://www.barracks.org). \$6 adults, \$4 students 6 and above and seniors. Open daily 10 - 5, last tour 4.*

**Trenton Battle Monument.** George Washington stretches out his hand atop this 148-foot-tall, early Beaux Arts-style column, as if to say, "The Hessians are over there; point the cannons that way." Erected in 1893 on the site where Colonial artillery first fired on the Hessians, it contains an elevator to an observation platform. From high above this transitional neighborhood, you can see the same roads (okay, they're paved now) where all the action took place. A brochure is available, and interpretive signage is planned. Two bronze plaques are copies of the Thomas Eakins originals, which now reside at the state museum. *Broad and Pennington Roads, 609/737-0623 (Washington Crossing State Park). Free. Open Friday - Saturday 10-12 and 1-4, Sunday 1-4 (subject to change).*

*Andrea Lehman adapted this article from material she prepared for her chapter in Thirteen Colonies, a new Fodor's Guide coming out July 4, 2003.*