



DELAWARE **HISTORICAL**
& **CULTURAL** AFFAIRS

Saving Delaware History

HCA's 2023 Annual Report

New Castle Court House
Museum Interior, 2023

CONTENTS

A LETTERFROM THE DIRECTOR	. 1
JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION	. 2
Plantation Stories	
Descendant Community Engagement Group	
COOCH’S BRIDGE HISTORIC SITE	. 4
LGBTQ+ RESEARCH PROJECT.	. 5
NATIONAL REGISTER	. 7
Rockwood Estate	
Dauneport	
Prospect A.M.E Church	
Futuro House	
NEW COLLECTIONS OBJECTS .	. 8
CAPITAL PROJECTS.	10
PROGRAMS OF 2023	12
Archaeology Symposium	
Historic Trades Day	
William Penn Day	
Make a Splash	
Saving the Past, Shaping the Future	
History Revival	
Small Museum Association Award	
HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM	14
LOOKING FORWARD	15
STRATEGIC PLAN BY THE NUMBERS .	16
MISSION / VISION	18

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



2023 saw immense change at the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs (HCA). We welcomed new faces and said goodbye to ones we've known for decades, and began projects that will take us into brand new territories and expand our horizons. We shifted and took on new shapes this year, and we are ready to venture forth into the future because of it.

I am proud of the passion and perseverance shown by all members of our staff, and the willingness with which they take on new challenges and overcome obstacles on a daily basis. Our staff is driven and dedicated, which has brought us great success in the past year. Our Historic Sites and Collections teams spent hours gathering and transcribing documents for the Plantation Stories Project and LGBTQ+ history resource, as well as engaging with members of the community to ensure our approach was and continues to be socially informed and inclusive. Our historic interpreters dedicated their time to researching and presenting a wide variety of programs to the public throughout the year. Horticulture and Maintenance staff were consistently there when they were needed, assisting with major events like Historic Trades Day at John Dickinson Plantation, 18th Century Market Fair on the Dover Green, and the preservation and

restoration of our various sites, most notably at Cooch's Bridge. The State Historic Preservation Office supported the community in many ways, by assisting in the preparation of National Register of Historic Places proposals, working towards an accessible online application system for the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, and reviving the annual Delaware History and Archaeology Symposium, which hadn't held a meeting since before 2020.

As mentioned, we welcomed several new members of staff this year, on our Collections, Historic Sites, Business Services, and Communications teams. We are grateful to have such talented professionals as part of our organization, and look forward to the continued changes they will make and the new insights they will give. Unfortunately, we also saw the retirement of four staff members who had been with the State for a total of 120 years. We wish them all wonderful, well-earned retirements, and thank them for the years of dedicated service they gave to HCA.

Looking forward, we hope to steward more positive change and growth within our organization, expanding our narratives and reach to the public. We have many exciting projects ahead of us, and I am eager to see where the new year takes us.

Suzanne Savery
Director and State Historic Preservation Officer

JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION EXHIBITS AND EVENTS

Plantation Stories

The Plantation Stories Project is dedicated to researching, recording, and sharing the stories of the enslaved, indentured, free, and freedom-seeking Black individuals and families who lived, labored, and died on land over which the Dickinson family claimed ownership. The first iteration of the Plantation Stories Project was made public in late 2020, when the original spreadsheet was posted to the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs' website. The historic documents that have and will continue to inform the Project have been the basis for increasingly holistic interpretation and exhibits at the John Dickinson Plantation since the 1980s.

In 2023, staff at the John Dickinson Plantation worked with Government Information Center (GIC) staff to create a new spreadsheet, with improved navigability and aesthetics. Additions included methodology and glossary sheets as well as an improved linking system to designate familial connections. This enhanced spreadsheet launched to the public in October of 2023.

This Project's compilation of names and narratives is a work in progress. The Plantation Stories Project team will compile additional sources, continue research, and update the enhanced spreadsheet on an ongoing basis. The final product of the project will be hosted on the Division's website, where members of the public can easily search for and browse collected information. That virtual presence will also be updated as

research continues to shed light on more people and their stories.

Over time, hundreds of people were enslaved on land over which the Dickinson family claimed ownership. Although the people John Dickinson enslaved were freed in 1786, the plantation continued to be a place of enslavement as tenant farmers continued to enslave people and exploit them for their labor. As the Plantation Stories Project continues to expand, connections to modern descendants of the people featured in the project may be discovered.

The project's research team is working to find and record people's stories while recognizing their humanity and agency. The team also recognizes that the historic documents that inform this Project show a moment in time, a single instant in an individual's life. As a result, some information may never be found. There are people whose names only appear once. There are others who might be documented many times, listed in documents throughout their life, as a child and an adult, or as enslaved and then free. The Project team is dedicated to a methodical research approach, to ensure that all documents are interpreted as accurately as possible. This complex and thorough research is part of the Division's "Ending Erasure: Recognizing African Americans in the Cultural Landscape" initiative.



Descendant Community Engagement Group

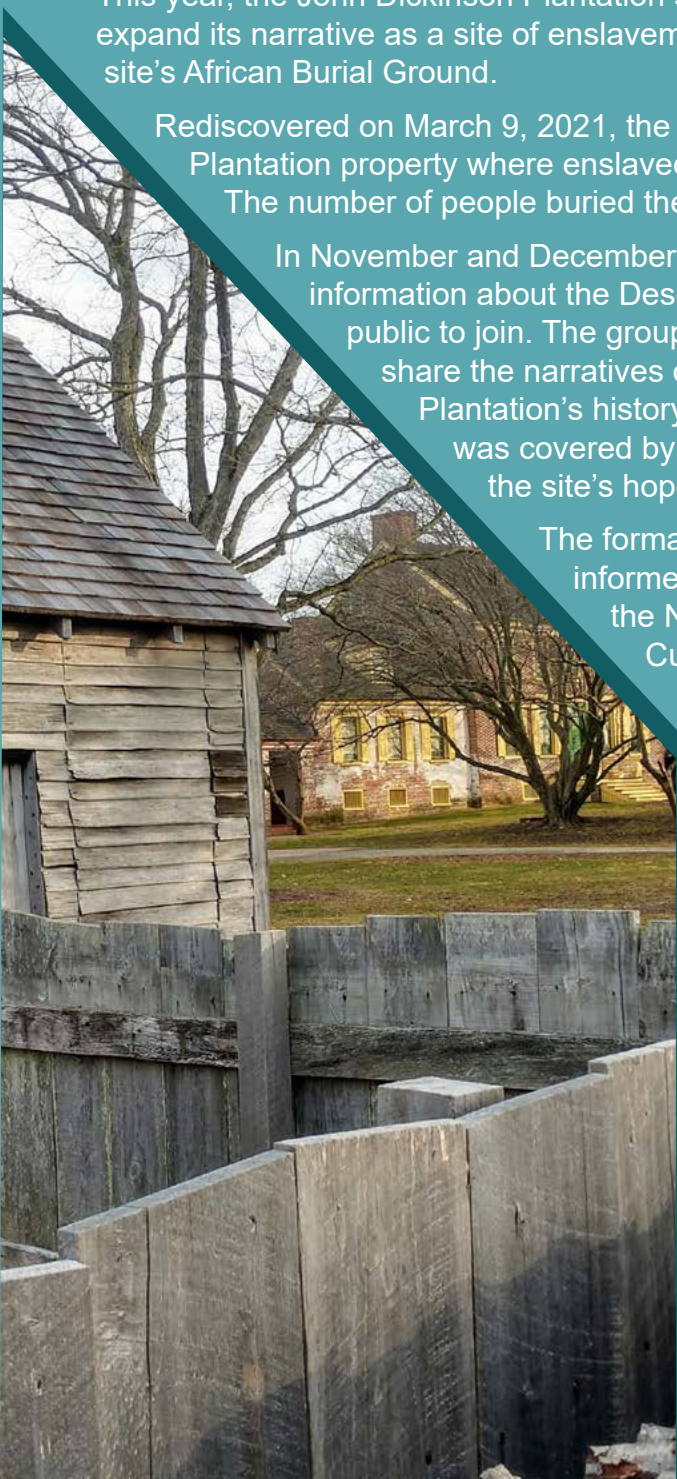
This year, the John Dickinson Plantation sought public engagement and insight on how to better expand its narrative as a site of enslavement, specifically in the management and interpretation of the site's African Burial Ground.

Rediscovered on March 9, 2021, the African Burial Ground is located on the John Dickinson Plantation property where enslaved men, women, and children were interred after their deaths. The number of people buried there is unknown.

In November and December of 2023, the HCA hosted two public forums to provide information about the Descendant Community Engagement Group and encourage the public to join. The group will work in tandem with HCA staff to fully and accurately share the narratives of African American people throughout the John Dickinson Plantation's history. In addition to members of the public attending, the event was covered by WBOC. Members of the press interviewed HCA staff about the site's hopes for the group looking forward.

The formation of the Descendant Community Engagement Group was informed by a rubric created by James Madison's Montpelier and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund in 2018, aimed at guiding museums and historic sites through engaging with local descendant communities in a way that encourages open communication and critique. The rubric also expands the definition of "Descendant Communities" to include the people whose ancestors were enslaved at a particular site, in a particular region, or anyone who has an interest in the history of the site. The traditional definition was overly narrow and only included those who could prove their ancestors were enslaved at a particular site. This excluded many and discouraged even more from participating and interacting with sites of enslavement because this type of genealogical proof can be difficult, if not impossible, to find in many cases.

HCA will provide additional public forums in 2024 to garner more interest and support for the Descendant Community Engagement Group.



COOCH'S BRIDGE HISTORIC SITE

Cooch's Bridge Historic Site received an \$800,000 grant from the National Park Service through the 2023 Semiquincentennial program. The majority of this funding is for improvements to the site to make it more accessible and accommodating to the public as Cooch's Bridge Historic Site transitions from a private residence to a public site.



Foundation repair work on Granary at Cooch's Bridge

While the grant had a maximum award of \$750,000, HCA received an additional \$50,000 to hire a consultant to update the Cooch's Bridge Historic District's National Register of Historic Places listing. The rest of the grant, along with matching state funds, will pay for projects such as adding a parking lot and pathways to the site, making its buildings ADA accessible, and archaeology work that will ensure any buried cultural resources on the site are undamaged by construction. An additional \$5,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation will partially fund exploratory archaeological investigation under the main house's kitchen in search of remnants of the structure that predates the house, built in the 1760s.

Improvements to the main house and outbuildings have been ongoing throughout 2023. The carriage house and granary were both lifted off their foundations and the brick foundations were repaired. After being returned to their foundations, structural work was completed on the interior of both buildings so that roof work could be safely completed, with new roofs for both structures. Repairs to the exterior walls, windows and doors of both buildings is ongoing and expected to be finished in the spring. Additionally, the concrete ramp leading into the granary was restored. Brick pathways around the main house were repaired to prevent tripping hazards. The smokehouse and icehouse had stucco removed from the walls to allow for repointing (the process of restoring mortar and repairing damaged bricks in laid brick). This work revealed evidence of various repairs and changes to the smokehouse's exterior made over centuries. All of this work was partially funded by funds raised by the Friends of Cooch's Bridge Historic Site.

While Cooch's Bridge Historic Site is currently open for tours at set times each month and by appointment (excluding the winter months, during which the site is closed to the public), it also hosted several programs throughout the year, including Masters of the Mountain: The Battle of Cooch's Bridge, a walking tour of the site given for the anniversary of the Revolutionary battle, the Friends of Cooch's Bridge Historic Site's 3rd Anniversary tours, and the Friends' second annual Juneteenth celebration.

Public meetings were held for feedback on the Interpretive Framework plan being developed for the site. The final draft of this plan was received by HCA in December for review with the intent to approve the final version in early 2024.

LGBTQ+ RESEARCH PROJECT

We Have Always Been Here

Since 2022, a small group of HCA staff have compiled stories, documents, and objects that tell the story of the queer community throughout Delaware's history. In September of 2023, HCA released a preview of project's online resource, with a full launch expected in 2024.

The online resource currently highlights a few of the coming stories like Barbara Gettings, an early advocate for LGBTQ+ rights, Edwina Kruse and Alice Dunbar-Nelson, a couple whose partnership was recorded in letters from 1907, and Legislative Hall and Legislative Mall, where the first bill granting rights to LGBTQ+ Delawareans was passed in 1997, as well as hosts the state's annual Pride Festival. In full, the project's online resource will compare the timeline of Delaware's queer history with the onset of significant events in the nation's queer history, such as the Stonewall Uprising of 1969 and the AIDS crisis of the mid-1980s, as well as share the stories of members of the queer community throughout Delaware's past. The resource is designed to be added to as more research is conducted.

Researchers worked directly with members of the LGBTQ+ community in Delaware to collect their histories and ensure the approach to the research was, and continues to be, holistic and diverse. The project as a whole contributes to HCA's commitment to researching and sharing inclusive histories, and embracing different perspectives and topics traditionally considered difficult.

We Have Always Been Here would not be possible without the help of Government Information Center (GIC), who designed the online resource's graphics and layout, as well as the help of local communities and organizations that aided in HCA's research efforts.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



DAUNEPORT

Listed September 8, 2022

Built in 1932 in New Castle County, Dauneport was the country home of heiress and philanthropist Amy du Pont. The structure was modeled after Mount Vernon, the historic plantation home of George Washington and his family, and serves a significant landmark in women's history, as the original plans for the house were designed by Mary McLaughlin Craig, one of the most prominent architectural designers of the 1920s and 30s.

ROCKWOOD ESTATE

Listed April 19, 2023

The Rockwood Estate Historic District in Wilmington was originally added to the National Register in 1976, but received an updated listing this year thanks to the work of the museum's dedicated volunteers. The amendment includes an updated inventory of 41 cultural resources including ancillary buildings, structures and sites. The volunteers' enhanced research chronicled the physical evolution of the house during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and enumerated examples of character-defining features, including Brandywine granite with contrasting quoins, window, and door surrounds, paired and elongated windows, and triple diamond-shaped clustered chimneys.

Rockwood Estate is a monument of the Gothic Revival period of architecture in the 19th century, and features the state's only known original 1850s conservatory.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROSPECT A.M.E. CHURCH Listed October 23, 2023

Prospect A.M.E. Church has been a pillar of the African American community in Georgetown since its construction in 1866. Working with a consultant and staff assistance, members of the congregation and clergy compiled research for the church's proposal to be listed and presented citing several documents from the early 20th century that outline various religious and social functions held by the church. The building has been expanded over the years to accommodate the congregation's needs, as documented on the building's façade with cornerstones bearing the year of each renovation and the name of the pastor leading the church at the time of its completion.



FUTURO HOUSE Listed December 26, 2023

Futuros were designed by Finnish architect Matti Suuronen, and were sold as prefabricated structures that could easily adapt to various climates and landscapes. Less than 100 of the structures were sold during the 1960s and 70s; by the mid-1970s, they were taken off the market. There are only 68 known Futuros in existence, and one of them made a permanent landing in Houston in 1977.

The house is owned by Robert Vincelette, who lives in it with his wife, and who submitted it for review to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places this year. The proposal was prepared by Stephanie Holyfield and Valarie Shorter, and was presented to the Delaware State Review Board for Historic Preservation.

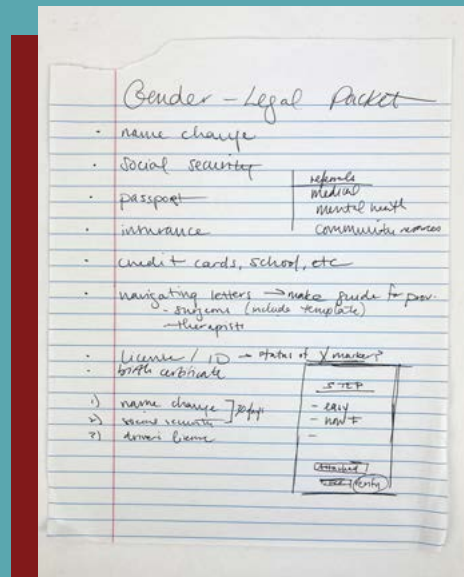
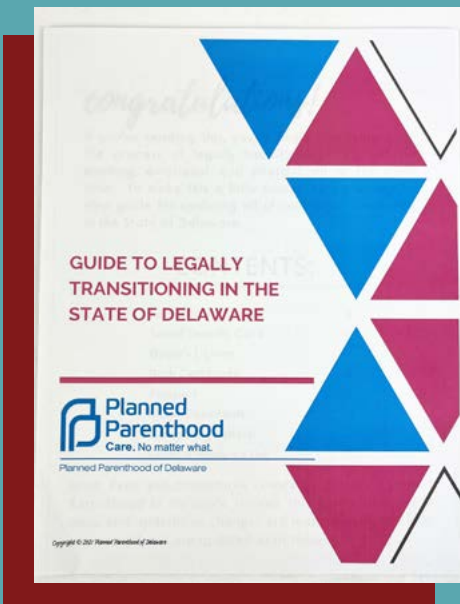


NEW COLLECTIONS OBJECTS

HCA accessioned 26 new objects into the State's historic collections this year, including various pieces of recent LGBTQ+ history as part of our ongoing research project. We thank the donors of these objects for their support of this and other projects, helping us tell a more inclusive and complete version of Delaware's history.

GUIDEBOOK: “GUIDE TO LEGALLY TRANSITIONING IN THE STATE OF DELAWARE

A legal guide for transgender¹ individuals seeking gender affirming care², published by Planned Parenthood in 2021. Since its publication, it has been updated several times to reflect changes in Delaware's legislation on gender affirming care and provide accurate, up to date information for the public. Another update to the guide is expected in the near future, as the current edition features protocol from the COVID-19 pandemic.



NOTE:

“GENDER - LEGAL PACKET”

The original outline for Planned Parenthood's guide to transitioning in the state of Delaware, written by donor Noah Duckett, a licensed clinical social worker who specializes in gender affirming care.

¹ "... persons whose gender identity, gender expression or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth." (American Psychological Association, 2023)

² A form of healthcare that includes, but is not limited to, medical, surgical, mental health, and non-medical services that helps an individual affirm their gender identity (Health and Human Services Office of Population Affairs, 2021)

STICKER

A circular sticker with rainbow stripes along its border and the Planned Parenthood logo at its center. These stickers are given out to medical professionals who complete training with the organization on gender affirming care and other LGBTQ+ topics.



QUEEN OF HEARTS SERIES: *RENAISSANCE*

One of a series of paintings by Rehoboth Beach artist and activist Murray Archibald, commemorating the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and the impact it had on the LGBTQ+ community. Archibald and his partner both survived the crisis, and have dedicated their lives to empowering those in their community.





Buena Vista's front porch, renovated this year

PLANNING AND DESIGN

Planning and design are underway for various projects at sites including Cooch's Bridge Historic Site, the Milford Museum, Dayett Mill, New Castle Court House Museum, The Lindens, Abbott's Mill and the Nassau School House.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Fenwick Island Lightkeepers House

Interior renovations of this building completed for use as a visitor center and for exhibits related to the Fenwick Island Lighthouse.

New Castle Academy

Originally built in 1799, the building served as a public school until 1930, and is currently leased by HCA to Immanuel Episcopal Church. A new HVAC system which includes central air conditioning was added this year to allow use of the building year-round.

Woodburn (Governor's Mansion)

Repairs were made to the back portico, including the installation of a new porch roof and restoration of its wood columns.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Buena Vista Conference Center

This historic home once owned by the DuPont family, is now used as a conference center. In 2023 work was undertaken including roof replacement, porch and carpentry repairs, and masonry work on the exterior of the building. Work on the various outbuildings related to carpentry, roofs and masonry also occurred.

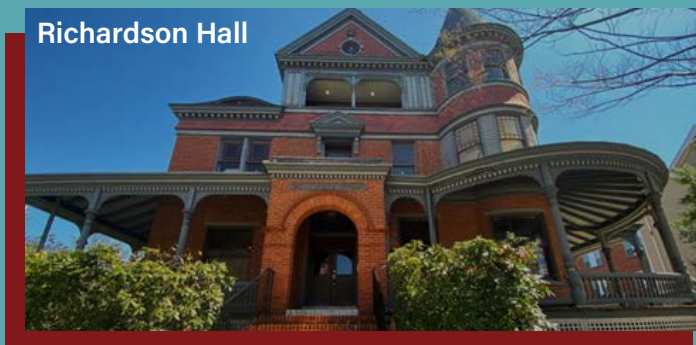
Archaeological work was done on an outbuilding known as the Playhouse, with artifacts found including toothbrushes and glass containers that once held various personal care products. These finds proved that the building was used as a privy when Buena Vista functioned as a private home.

John Dickinson Plantation

The historic site's trail connecting it to St. Jones Reserve is near completion, with minor fixes still needed to make the trail more resistant to rainwater buildup. Additionally, planning for the site's future visitors' center is ongoing.

Various

Upgrades and repairs were made to various other HCA sites this year as well, including the Zwaanendael Museum, the McCrone house, and the DeBraak facility.



Richardson Hall

Part of a historic district of Victorian homes near downtown Dover, Richardson Hall serves as the main administrative offices for HCA. Restoration work on the building is ongoing, with extensive work on the house's front porch beginning in late 2023.

Weldin House

Originally built in the 1700s, this Wilmington structure was expanded several times throughout the centuries, the most recent dating sometime during the 1940s. It is a prominent visual element along Philadelphia Pike, and is part of ongoing restoration efforts.

This year, construction moved from the building's exterior to its interior rooms, with final site work looking to be completed in 2024.

MOVING TO CONSTRUCTION

Darley House

Once the home of artist Felix Octavious Carr Darley, who illustrated books for iconic authors like Washington Irving, Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Charles Dickens, the building is undergoing an adaptive reuse project on its second floor. The design process for these efforts is set to finish in the coming months, with plans for construction expected in 2024.

Belmont Hall Pavilion

A historic Colonial home once inhabited by Delaware governor Thomas Collins, Belmont Hall has been the host of many events and organizations throughout its lifetime, currently utilized for educational tours and programs, as well as special events. A new pavilion is to be built in 2024.

PROGRAMS OF 2023

DELAWARE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff organized the 2023 Delaware Archaeology and History Symposium, which brought together nearly 50 professionals and enthusiasts to learn about archaeological research. The event was held on April 22 and hosted at the Old State House in downtown Dover. The once-annual symposium hadn't held a session since before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

HISTORIC TRADES DAY

On October 14, John Dickinson Plantation hosted their annual Historic Trades Day, which explores professions and handicrafts from the 19th century and beyond. Despite rainfall throughout the day, 66 patrons came to enjoy demonstrations from HCA staff, which included rifle shooting, fiber arts crafting, carpentry, and archaeological excavation performed by members of SHPO.

WILLIAM PENN DAY

To celebrate the anniversary of William Penn's first landing on American soil, the New Castle Court House Museum held a variety of programs throughout the day on October 28. During Tea with Mrs. Penn, interpretive staff portraying William Penn's two wives discussed their formative roles in American history, with refreshments provided by the local Mercury Café & Teahouse. In the afternoon, students from Delaware Music School's Suzuki Academy honors program performed iconic music from the Colonial era, including pieces by Handel and Bach.

MAKE A SPLASH

724 fourth graders and their teachers and chaperones attended the annual Make a Splash festival in April, hosted at the John Dickinson Plantation. HCA partnered with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control (DNREC) and the St. Jones Reserve to teach the students about American history and the importance of water conservation.

SAVING THE PAST, SHAPING THE FUTURE

In early May, 200 fourth graders visited the Old State House in historic downtown Dover to learn about the branches of the modern American government, as well as tour the state's first permanent capitol building. Partners for the event included the Biggs Museum of American Art, DelOne Federal Credit Union, DuPont Nature Center, First State Heritage Park, Killens Pond State Park, the Lenape Tribe of Delaware, Lewes Historical Society, and the St. Jones Reserve.

HISTORY REVIVAL

Multiple HCA sites participated in this adult education program spanning through August and September, with the New Castle Court House Museum and the Zwaanendael Museum hosting a variety of lectures on Revolutionary and maritime history. Partners for these lectures included the Lewes Public Library, the New Castle Historical Society, and the Mercury Café & Teahouse. The lectures were available to join both in person and virtually, and replaced the Chautauqua program in order to make HCA's programming more accessible to members of the public.

VERTIE LEE RECIEVES SMALL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION AWARD

HCA's Curator of Education, Vertie Lee, was the recipient of the 2023 Small Museum Association award, with which she was presented on February 21 at the Association's conference and banquet in Wilmington. The award recognizes the advancement of funding for, professional growth within, and / or the accessibility of information to the small museum community on a regional or state level.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

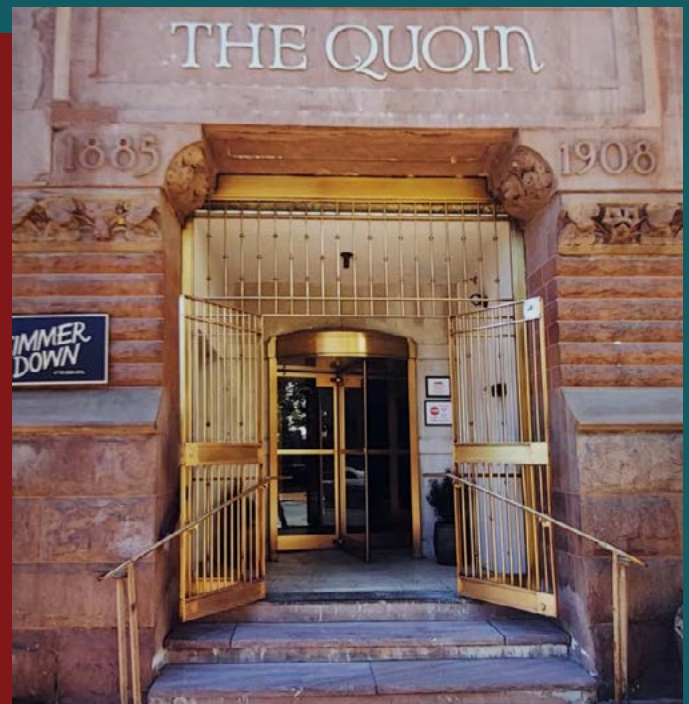
2023 was a year of change for the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)'s Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program. Staff worked with consultants to create an online application system for property owners interested in applying for the program.

Users will be able to submit applications through the online portal, check the status of their applications in real time and request technical assistance. The new system will also streamline the review process for the SHPO staff. The full launch of the system is expected in mid-2024.

This year, SHPO staff also assisted applicants in navigating the federal tax credit program's transition to an electronic submittal process.

Delaware's Historic Preservation Tax Program assists in preserving and rehabilitating historic buildings throughout the state, by providing state tax credits to help offset repair and maintenance costs. Eligible properties include those listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or buildings included as part of a registered historic district.

In 2023, 39 projects from 11 towns and cities across Delaware were submitted for review as part of the Tax Program, and a total of \$6.5 million in credits was awarded to successfully completed projects.



The Quoin Restaurant in Wilmington, DE

LOOKING FORWARD



In the year ahead, we plan to continue our progress towards our strategic goals, shedding light on the lesser told aspects of our shared history and working to make our museums and resources better accessible to the public. We hope to expand our programming and collections onto digital platforms so a wider range of the public can enjoy and learn from them, and to continue preserving history for future generations through our ongoing conservation efforts. We took on several new staff members this year, and we hope to steward them toward success and uplift them in everything they do; we look forward to the new perspectives they will bring to our organization.

Overall, 2023 was a year of positive change at HCA, and in the years ahead we plan for that positive change to continue.

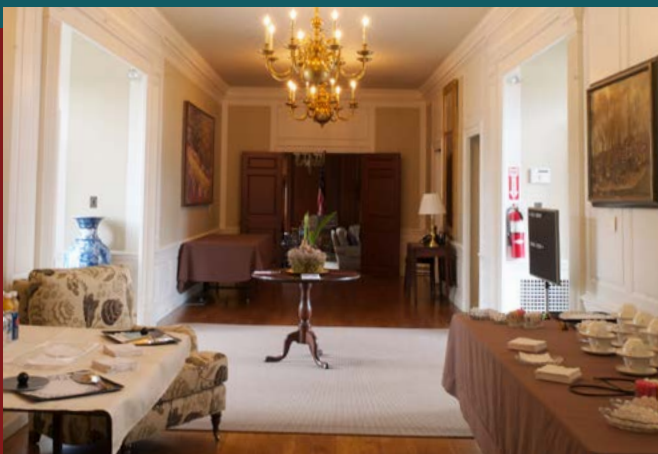


John Dickinson Plantation Garden

STRATEGIC PLAN BY THE NUMBERS

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

- Johnson Victrola Museum staff researched and developed 30 pamphlets on notable figures in the history of recorded music; more to come.
- Released a Story Map developed in partnership with the University of Delaware's Center for Historic Architecture and Design and Preservation Delaware entitled "Locating Delaware's DuPont "Colored" Schools."
- Buena Vista Conference Center hosted 152 private events with a total attendance of 4,114.
- On-site attendance for division's museums totaled over 27,200, with 82 virtual programs for 2023.
- Outdoor holiday tree installed and decorated by the Horticulture and Maintenance team at Woodburn, the Governor's Mansion.
- Staff organized 7 activities for the State Employees Charitable Campaign raising over \$1,500 for several charities including PAWS for People, Meals on Wheels, and the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition.



Entryway at Buena Vista Conference Center

VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS

- Unique page views on website from July 2022-June 2023 was 412,603. Over 40% of total page views were for the online World War I exhibition "Drawing America to Victory."
- Social media from January 2023 to November 2023 saw 104,543 unique impressions across Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter).
- Followers on Instagram and Facebook increased 18.9% and 7.6% respectively.
- Produced 12 monthly newsletters.



Smokehouse at Cooch's Bridge Historic Site

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION

- Monthly meetings of race and equity team with speakers.
- Diversity in Delaware History training series continued and offered to Delaware teachers.
- LGBTQ+ material added to the state collection.
- 20% of newsletter articles explored underrepresented perspectives in Delaware history, including those of African American, Native American, and LGBTQ+ communities.

STEWARDSHIP

- Horticulture planted 80 native trees at Belmont Hall, two for every one that was removed due to the 2021 tornado.
- Horticulture planted 1,000 tulips at Zwaanendael Museum and 1,000 annuals throughout HCA's sites.
- Horticulture and Maintenance assisted with 20 public events and holidays.
- Capital Projects team undertook capital projects at over 24 division properties, some with Preservation Maintenance team.
- Engaged in archaeological surveys at division properties.
- 39 projects from 11 towns and cities across Delaware were submitted for review as part of the Tax Program, and a total of \$6.5 million in credits was awarded to successfully completed projects.
- Developed collections care program for DuPont Schools and others.
- Business Services team handled over 3,500 transactions related to vouchers, purchase orders and invoices for fiscal operation of the division.
- Preservation Maintenance team responded to over 1,200 service calls to division properties in 2023.



Tulips blooming at Zwaanendael Museum



New roof installed at Buena Vista Conference Center

STRENGTHENING STAFF

- Cultural competency training for division managers.
- Reestablished the HCA Staff Recognition committee.
- 14 new staff members hired in 2023.
- Staff attendance at regional conferences such as: Preservation Delaware, the Small Museum Association, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums, and the Eastern States Federation and Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conferences.

MISSION / VISION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs serves Delaware residents and visitors by identifying, preserving, and interpreting Delaware history. Our activities foster strong communities, engaged citizens, economic vitality, and a deeper understanding of Delaware's role in world history. We do this in public trust for current and future generations.

VISION

Our audiences are actively engaged in learning (in many ways) and understand how Delaware history is meaningful to their lives. Our audiences are actively exploring a diversity of historical and cultural perspectives to inform and influence decisions about the future. Our audiences feel welcomed, valued, and encouraged to question and explore.

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs is a trustworthy, ethical, and reliable partner with organizations, agencies, and individuals with whom we have common goals. All division staff and volunteers will consistently make use of each other's knowledge and skills, building professional relationships across teams.

CORE VALUES

Communication: We are committed to an open, proactive, and thoughtful exchange of information and ideas that promotes trust and understanding in our internal and external relationships.

Professionalism: We are committed to conducting ourselves in a professional manner to co-workers, partners, and the public in order to be recognized as a reputable and reliable resource.

Creativity: We are committed to supporting innovative thinking and nurturing a creative environment. Our passion for history inspires us to risk-taking new approaches.

Knowledge: We are committed to the growth and professional development of staff and volunteers in order to ensure that all of our activities are strongly grounded in scholarly research, current and reliable best practices, and relevant laws, rules, and regulations.

Discourse/Dialog: We are committed to open debate and discourse on subjects relevant to the past, present, and future of Delaware.

Community Involvement: We are committed to actively listening to, and communicating, collaborating, and partnering with, the community in the development of our programs and services.

Stewardship: We are committed to the responsible management of the division's assets, seeking to exceed best practices.

Cooperation: We are committed to developing and maintaining trust and respect amongst co-workers, partners, and our audiences to provide a positive and collaborative atmosphere to achieve common goals.

RACE AND EQUITY

We strive to practice inclusive history. History is not a series of clean, happy stories. It is a combination of uncomfortable truths, differing views, and difficult narratives. At the John Dickinson Plantation in Dover, for example, we tell the story of the enslaved, indentured, and free Black men, women, and children who worked, and died on the plantation. We welcome the difficult conversations that come from interpreting the land of a founding father who wrote of freedom and liberty for all while holding human beings in bondage.

We struggle with how to tell Delaware's more troubling history. We are stewards of Delaware's history. This history includes stories of pain, courage, and defeat. We will not shrink from the pain of our shared history.

We are listening. We want people to be heard and to know that we are listening. Your voices will give shape to how we collect, interpret, preserve, and present history to the public.

We need your help. We can't do this on our own. We want to be an active participant in the force for change in our communities.

We are here. We will be undeterred in bringing forth diversity in our stories and we want all voices to be heard. We strive to be a safe place for difficult conversations and uncomfortable truths.

We promise to preserve and share Delaware history, commit to expanding the parameters of that history, and preserve the history of this movement for current and future generations.



Tulips blooming at Buena Vista Conference Center



Saving Delaware History



history.delaware.gov



[\(302\) 736-7400](tel:(302)736-7400)



[Visit Us!](#)

Acknowledgement of Support:

This report has been financed, in part, with federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20240.