

## **Overview**

### **Delaware County Public History Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan**

In May 2009, the Delaware County Planning Department entered into a contract with Heritage Consulting Inc. to begin work on a year-long project called the Delaware County Public History Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan. The purpose of the project was to improve the effectiveness and impact of the more than 80 historical organizations throughout the county. In order to achieve this goal the study identified six goals:

1. Assist communities in strengthening their local historical groups' and sites' ability to communicate their heritage to the public.
2. Promote scholarly research to re-frame the county's diverse history into a more inclusive interpretation that reflects all periods, peoples, and geographic portions of its past.
3. Actively seek grants and other types of funding to develop new scholarship, programming, exhibits, educational models, digitally based mediums, as well as continue historic preservation efforts and general upkeep of historical societies and sites.
4. Work with the Delaware County Intermediate Unit (DCIU) and Delaware County Historical Society (DCHS) to integrate local history into elementary and secondary school curriculums, emphasizing themes, people, places, and events in compliance with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for History.
5. Develop partnerships with other cultural and commercial entities to present history in conventional and unconventional spaces.
6. Partner with the Brandywine Conference and Visitor's Bureau to establish a more organized method of presenting the county's history as an economic draw for heritage tourism.

#### **Funding for this study**

This project was funded in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development, under the Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program and Community Revitalization Assistance Program. The final report was prepared in accordance with the County of Delaware's Community Development Block Grant Program, with funding received from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

#### **Existing conditions**

Delaware County PA has a diverse population of historical organizations. The 80 organizations include historical sites, historical societies, preservation organizations, historical commissions, and historical architecture review boards (HARBs). All of these organizations have different missions but work to promote public history and its associated activities within the county.

There are four major countywide organizations that participated in this study. These included the Heritage Commission of Delaware County, the Brandywine Conference and Visitor's Bureau, the Delaware County Planning Department, and the Delaware County Historical Society. The four countywide organizations each have different functions and missions. Public history in Delaware County is highly decentralized among the 80 public history organizations.

### **Project components**

The project included an online survey (80% response rate) and interviews with 40 of the 80 history organizations to determine current conditions. Focus groups were also held to gain further insights as part of a SWOT analysis. The outcome of the surveys and focus groups gave us insights about how these history organizations cooperate and collaborate now and opportunities in the future. School leaders were also interviewed to discuss specific challenges associated with increasing the use of historic sites by local schools for class trips and other educational programming. Included in the implementation plan is a chapter with specific recommendations to improve the integration of local history resources into school curricula. Additional research was conducted about the specific links and relationships between public history and community and neighborhood revitalization to highlight the hard and soft economic impacts of revitalization, especially tourism.

### **Recommendations**

The Study's Recommendations are divided into early action (activities occurring during the study period), short-term (1-2 years), mid-term (3-5 years), and long-term (5-10 year) projects. All of these projects are designed to improve the effectiveness and impact of public history and its associated activities within the county. Our recommendations identify new opportunities for public history interpretation and specific ways that organizations can engage new audiences while highlighting recent trends and changes in audience preferences.

Key to the implementation of the recommendations is the formation of the Delaware County Heritage and Preservation Network, which was organized in December 2009. The DCHPN is open to all ([www.dchpn.org](http://www.dchpn.org)) and hosts a web site, list serve, and is serving as the convener for projects as an outgrowth of the Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan. A complete report which includes all findings can be found at [www.co.delaware.pa.us/planning/historicpreservation/publichistory.html](http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/planning/historicpreservation/publichistory.html).

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11/2010



## **Executive Summary**

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Delaware County has many wonderful historic sites and organizations dedicated to the history of the county operating throughout the region. These vary from groups whose focus is countywide like the Delaware County Historical Society, to groups operating on a municipal-scale like historical commissions, Historical Architectural Review Boards (HARBs), historical societies, and to historic sites that keep alive the story of one family, individual or building.

Even though all these groups strive to achieve their varying missions ranging from promoting historical research to historic preservation, many of the organizations, especially municipal scaled or smaller site-specific organizations, need some improvements or guidance. Many of these organizations share common problems but do not have the expertise or funds to fix them.

The purpose of the Delaware County Public History Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan is to improve the effectiveness and impact of the more than 80 historical organizations throughout the county. The goals of the year-long project are:

- Determine how best to remedy the underutilized nature of historic organizations throughout the county;
- Address how the historical organizations can better cooperate and coordinate efforts to present a more inclusive interpretation of our history that reflects all periods, peoples, and geographic portions of the county;
- Better preserve our irreplaceable public history resources;
- Make history available to the public as an educational tool with better efficiency and success;
- Help foster revitalization.

Heritage Consulting Inc. surveyed 80 historical organizations in Delaware County as part of the Delaware County Public History Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan in fall 2009. Rather than focus on the more developed organizations that have sophisticated funding streams and staffing to implement activities, the Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan are targeted more towards volunteer-managed and dependent organizations.

### ***Feasibility Study***

Participation in the Study employed a variety of forms that built upon one another as the project progressed. Participation began with a survey of the historical organizations. Sixty-one historical organizations participated in the surveys, a remarkable 80% response rate and indicative of the enthusiasm for public history in Delaware County. In addition, the consultants conducted 40 one-on-one interviews with a variety of historical organizations including: Historic Architectural Review Boards, historical commissions, preservation organizations, historic sites, and historical societies. The purpose of the interviews was to complete the survey instrument and gain more background information and depth about organizational capacity of the historical organizations within the county. Following the surveys and interviews, seven focus groups were held with 40

individuals, representing all the varying sites with similar types of sites grouped together. The focus groups helped amplify and give further detail about many issues already identified from the 61 surveys and 40 interviews conducted in fall 2009. The seven focus groups provided an excellent overview of the differing needs and opportunities ahead for both the staffed and volunteer-run organizations.

### ***SWOT (Strengthens, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis based on Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups***

#### *Most significant strengths*

Forty-nine organizations that identified themselves as historic sites, historical societies, or preservation organizations responded to the survey. Of those 49 organizations that responded, 31 operate or control an historic site. These sites are located throughout the county, and many sites have more than one building at their locations. All told, there are more than 138 historic buildings in the care of the historical organizations in Delaware County. The buildings are mainly homes of Quaker settlers and include ancillary structures such as barns, summer kitchens, ice houses, and workshops. Seventy-seven percent of the sites report that the sites themselves are well maintained, and this was confirmed by site visits.

Delaware County historical organizations are better off financially than many of their peers in the region. Unlike what the consultants have found in other areas in this region, 18 of the 49 organizations surveyed had formal endowments or tens of thousands of dollars in working capital.

Of the 31 sites, 24 are unstaffed and 11 have at least one full or part-time staff. Seven of the eleven staffed sites had endowments or board-designated funds that function as endowments. Prudent management over the years at 11 of the volunteer-run sites has allowed them to create investment accounts of \$10,000 to more than \$150,000. Organizations with investment earnings are better prepared for the future. These sums allow the organization a myriad of options for how it manages its site, when to make repairs, or undertake restoration projects. A 2002 study of the IRS 990 tax returns of the 275 historic sites in Philadelphia and the surrounding four counties indicated that less than 33% of these organizations had endowments of any size.<sup>1</sup>



Newlin Crist Mill Staffed Site

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<sup>1</sup> Donna Ann Harris, *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*, Lanham MD: AltaMira Press, 2007, 11.

Seventy-nine percent of all Delaware County historical organizations are managed solely by volunteers. This is a high percentage and is both a weakness and a strength. For example, many of the historical organizations are small, but this may be a strength because they are not saddled with staff salaries and expensive overhead costs that require constant fundraising. Due to their small sizes, the organizations are potentially nimble and could respond to opportunities when presented.

There is high interest in collaboration among historical organizations based on surveys and interviews, and this is a great strength from which to work for future endeavors. The historical organizations are eager to learn from each other and from outside experts and are open to new opportunities for shared activities, tours, and programming. Competition with other sites in Delaware County did not appear to be an issue except around dates for fundraising and programming events. Making the existing informal relationships between the historical organizations into formal joint programs should be encouraged. This could benefit the sites that wish to cooperate.

### *Most significant weaknesses*

The local historical societies are the most fragile organizations reviewed. Only four of the eleven historical societies have sufficient locations to store their tangible pieces of the past, their collections, and many resort to keeping their objects and archives in Board Members' attics and basements. These collections are held in the public trust and need to be available to researchers.

All of the local historical societies surveyed have some type of collection:

- Manuscripts,
- Books,
- Maps,
- Archives, or
- Objects.

These collections are not catalogued or accessioned, so many of these organizations do not know what they own and therefore do not know how these objects should be stored to mitigate current or future damage. These objects were given by donors with the intent that they would be maintained or used by the public. The public cannot use or enjoy these collections because they are stored in many locations not open to the public.

The lack of appropriate locations for storage or use of these collections is perhaps the greatest weakness revealed by the entire survey and interview effort. It does not appear that the collections entrusted to historical societies without places to house them are being appropriately managed by their well-meaning stewards. Historical societies associated with municipalities must make their storage needs known to their local elected officials.

There are more than 80 historical organizations in Delaware County, and more are being started each year. One quarter of the organizations surveyed started in the last 10 years alone, and about nine organizations hope to incorporate and obtain tax exempt status so that they can begin raising money to restore their sites, create preservation organizations, or start historical societies. The organizers of new historical organizations are all well intentioned individuals who feel that a new entity is critical to their efforts.

All of these emerging organizations need assistance. There is particular concern about those who wish to save historic sites because they are continuing the time-tested method of saving historic buildings by buying them or leasing them in order to save them from deterioration or destruction. These newly emerging organizations must be educated to understand the uncertain road ahead in setting aside these structures as museums based on the experiences of their peers. Other alternatives to museum use are recommended for these sites to consider because of the great concentration of small and struggling historic sites that already exist within the county.

Past generations of historical organizations in Delaware County have saved many of the oldest homes in the county and opened them as historic sites. By and large, these sites tell the same story because they are homes of pre-Revolutionary War Quaker settlers. While each house is indeed unique, these sites have done little to differentiate themselves. If joint programming between these sites is a desired result, then a review is necessary of all of these sites to parse out how interpretation can be better coordinated so that the stories being told can reflect broader themes and engage new audiences. More information can be found in the Interpretation Chapter of this report, page 65.



Although the historic sites seem well maintained, all of the 31 historic site organizations identified have deferred maintenance concerns. Less than half (45%) of these organizations had cost estimates for work they are contemplating, but the remaining half had not yet obtained cost estimates for needed work. While the sums needed to restore these buildings were more than \$22 million dollars, which includes two projects over \$10 million dollars each, there is more concern regarding the sites that have yet to obtain costs for their repair and restoration needs.

The local municipalities own many of these sites, so it is unclear how restoration projects would proceed or be funded. Volunteer-run organizations that manage historic sites they do not own, and lack endowments, will almost certainly not have the capacity to raise funds to make these expensive repairs, so it will fall to the municipality to undertake work. Otherwise, deterioration will continue. These sites will need assistance to identify reputable contractors to provide cost estimates to the municipalities, and then the organizations must advocate for scarce public dollars for restoration.

Forty-eight percent of the organizations surveyed do not have formal budgets. The lack of budgets indicates that their revenues fall below the threshold of \$25,000 when a tax return would need to be filed with the Internal Revenue Service. Although these small budgets were noted earlier in the Strengths Section because they allow these organizations to be nimble and respond to opportunities, these small budgets are also weaknesses because the organizations have limited capacities to undertake the work that their missions dictate.

Despite the fact that there are 80 historical organizations in Delaware County, there is no clear individual leader or organization that can drive the variety of changes needed on behalf of the history community. The Delaware County Heritage Commission was suggested as another logical group to take this role as well as the County Planning Office. In discussions with both of these entities it became clear that both have narrow administrative charges or missions, and these entities are unable to take on this leadership role.

Several individuals identified the Delaware County Historical Society as a leader. The Delaware County Historical Society maintains two large historic buildings, which include a research facility/library. The Society operates the library, runs a highly successful educational program called Passport to History, and offers occasional tours and seminars that help advance their mission with a very small staff and volunteer corps, and thus have limited capacity at this time to take on the wide span of needed additional projects.

Even though many of the changes needed fit within the missions of the various countywide organizations, all that is needed does not fit entirely into any one existing organizations mission or expertise. Each countywide entity is able to achieve their different missions but with limited staff, no one entity can achieve the diverse variety of needed improvements.

The interviews also revealed at least five attempts in the past to develop a leadership structure for coordinating the historical organizations in the county. Some of these attempts failed outright; others worked for several years but eventually failed due to lack of interest or power struggles. Overcoming so many failed attempts is indeed daunting. Based on the superb attendance at the Kick Off Meeting, the great enthusiasm shown to the survey, and general interest in collaboration, the time is ripe to try again. The Implementation Plan, which is the second half of this project (see recommendations page 89), will suggest a consortium model of leadership that might be used to provide the organizational infrastructure to any cooperative or collaborative effort for the Delaware County historical organizations.

### *Most significant opportunities*

A great number of the weaknesses noted above can be mitigated through an aggressive effort to provide training and technical assistance to the historical organizations over time. The fact that more than 40 organizations rated that they wanted more training and technical assistance is an opportunity. The creation in December 2009 of the Delaware County History and Preservation

Network List Serv can help to spread the word when training opportunities are available in the region.

Survey respondents noted that additional group training was desired in the following categories:

- Volunteer Recruitment,
- Fundraising,
- Marketing and advertising, and
- Collections management.

Volunteer recruitment, specifically reaching out to new age groups, was the most sought after training. While collections management was low on the list, it should have had higher urgency given the space needs, collections management, and storage of the majority of historical societies.

Training would help to build the organizational capacities of these nonprofit organizations. A commitment to ongoing training and coaching would be necessary on the part of the organization's board to raise its profile in the community and engage a broader audience. It is uncertain how many organizations would wish to make a concerted effort to engage in on-going training.

Another opportunity to strengthen public history in Delaware County is to provide training for historical organizations with regards to school programming. While so many historic sites have a desire to work with local schools, only 32% do currently. The Pennsylvania Standards for History are the baseline curriculum standards that any local school district must teach according to state law. More than 70% of the volunteer-run historic sites are unaware of these standards and do not have educational programs that meet these standards.<sup>2</sup> Training organizations to tailor to these standards and to outreach to the schools would help increase school visitation to sites and increase awareness about the sites. More information can be found in the Inclusion of School Programs Chapter of the report, page 60.

Staffed organizations are clearly the engine that attracts the vast majority of visitors to Delaware County. Though in the minority of Delaware County historical organizations, these 11 staffed organizations should be promoted and supported because they have the organizational infrastructure to raise funds, maintain buildings, and promote their sites and organizations. They offer quality visitor experiences and programming. The volunteer-run sites could be linked thematically to these tourist engines so that they could capture some spillover visitation if new tours and themes were developed with cooperation from the staffed sites. To gain more hours that volunteer-run sites are open to the public, emphasis should be placed on shared tours or joint history projects so that more sites will be open regular hours or both Saturday and Sunday during the good weather season.

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<sup>2</sup> There is a chapter on the challenges of utilizing local historical resources in local school curricula.

## *Final thoughts*

Delaware County has some superb historic sites and organizations sprinkled throughout the county that deserve to be better known, not only by the residents, but by the region as a whole. The consultants were impressed with the energy and enthusiasm seen for the data-gathering phase of the Study. The Implementation Plan phase of this work will develop ideas for ways to tie together these sites and expand the interpretive story line for the county. The interest in cooperating and collaborating is a very positive sign. The historical organizations will be best served if collaborative programming occurs to forge a bold future for Delaware County.

## ***Recommendations***

The information from all of the surveys, interviews, and focus groups were used to help craft the following recommendations and realistic Implementation Plan for Delaware County historical organizations. The issues surrounding interpretation and working with the schools is expanded in individual chapters, which include possible ways to address the issues.

The Delaware County Public History Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan includes a list of recommendations that address the needs and desires of the historical organizations identified during the surveys, interviews, and focus groups and are comprised of the following topics;

- Information Sharing between historical organizations
- Collaboration
- Technical Assistance
- Collections Management
- Interpretation Update
- School Tours
- Tourism
- Capital Repair
- Implementation

These recommendations focus more on the volunteer-managed and dependent organizations rather than the organizations with more resources.

Throughout the Feasibility Study, it became clear that the most effective means of achieving all of the identified recommendations would be the creation of a new consortium organization comprised of the representatives from the various historical organizations. This chapter includes an Action Plan that describes how this consortium addresses all the specific needs. In addition, it outlines the consortium's development as an entity through subsequent years and how the consortium could implement the project-specific recommendations in the short-term (one –to two years), mid-term (three to five years) and long-term (five to ten years).

The Action Plan (page 87) emphasizes early implementation and short-term tasks to occur within the next two years. There are early tasks for the Delaware County Planning Department staff including fostering the creation of this new consortium, called the Delaware County Historic and

Preservation Network. Even though this consortium appears to be an effective tool to address the needs, the project specific recommendations could also be implemented by individuals or groups of individuals to better strengthen their organizations.

## *Action Plan*

### *Early action items*

Beyond the scope of the original project, a Project Steering Committee was appointed to vet ideas and offer advice at critical portions of the year-long project. Public meetings throughout the project were also incorporated beyond the original scope to inform the historical organizations in the county about the project's progress. All of these meetings included a training component for the volunteer managed historical organizations. Topics included volunteer recruitment and fundraising. A list serve, called the Delaware County Historic and Preservation Network, was set up by one local historical society to foster communication between the history advocates. This Network has a website ([www.dchpn.org](http://www.dchpn.org)), which includes a directory of all 80 historical organizations and a shared calendar to promote individual events of the member organizations.

### *Short-term recommendations 1-2 years*

The interviews and focus groups conducted in the early part of the project identified the need for a coordinating entity for the 80 historical organizations. Most of the short-term projects revolve around the expansion of the Delaware County Historic and Preservation Network into a viable consortium of organization that is able to implement projects identified in the recommendations. The Recommendation chapter (page 81) explains how the DCHPN could be organized and provides advice on Board and Project Team membership, budget development, communications, and initial projects.

Other short-term recommendations articulate a variety of tasks for the Delaware County Planning staff members to help and support the development of the coordinating entity and the organizational development of the historical organizations in the county. These projects include posting more information about public history on the website, publishing articles, promoting the already completed maintenance guide, and consolidating lists of contractors and speakers and making the lists widely available to the historical organizations.

A series of topical meetings or training workshops that the Planning Department can host to further public history in general and the efforts of the DCHPN is also identified. Meetings are needed with the staffed historic sites to explain their potential roles in the development of the DCHPN projects. Other meetings are needed to explain and promote the issues described in the chapter of this report on expanding school tour visitation to historic sites (page 60) in Delaware County. A similar meeting is needed with the volunteer managed historic sites to assist them in understanding how to upgrade interpretation at their sites. Collaboration between the Historic Architectural Review Boards and Historical Commissions and other organization could be the subject of another topical meeting. Finally it would be beneficial if the County Planning Staff

would host a meeting between municipalities and their historical societies to articulate the needs for safe and environmentally adequate space to store collections, which are being and stored by society board members in their attics and basements. The County Planning staff should host coordinating meetings between sites and elected and appointed officials to advance public history in the county.

An implementation task calendar organized by month for the first two years is provided as part of the Recommendation chapter.

#### *Mid-term recommendations 3-5 years*

The mid-term recommendations consist of specific project ideas culled from the surveys, interviews, and focus group reports. Project teams, consisting of volunteers from various historical organizations who are most interested in specific topics, should be created to implement these activities. Most of the projects require grant funding in order to be implemented. Projects serving multiple historical organizations are more likely to receive such grants. Volunteers interested in pursuing projects need to identify likely funding sources. Each project description includes a list of likely funders based on the foundation/agencies giving interests.

Collaborative projects including development of theme tours as noted in the Interpretation chapter of this report (page 65) will broaden the presentation of the rich 400 year history of Delaware County.

There are millions of dollars of building restoration and planning studies needed, and DCHPN should encourage the use of Community Development Block Grants for renovation work. Another project is to consider advocating for Delaware County Council to invest matching grant funds over five years to restore these historic sites.

Building on meetings and training programs held in the previous years, internships could be developed with local college students in the education department or retired teachers to help volunteer managed sites to upgrade their lesson plans and attract more school field trips to their sites. Historical societies and historic sites were interested in having access to lists of consultants and speakers on local history topics and crafts.

Finally the DCHPN at three years old would need to articulate its future and boost its organizational development through training or technical assistance projects.

#### *Long-term recommendations 5-10 years*

The development of the DCHPN organization as a viable nonprofit entity with the ability to apply for grant funds without seeking partners as applicants is important for to the success of

many of the long-term recommendations. Joint projects between the historical organizations would be encouraged including demonstration or pilot projects. As a county wide advocacy organization, the DCHPN can be a forceful advocate for local historical societies to identify storage needs of their collections by hosting educational workshops, mentoring programs with other historic sites, and assisting these organizations to inventory, catalogue, and store their collections in appropriate facilities and boxes.

The DCHPN can also foster collaborative programs through mentoring between the staffed and volunteer sites or between the volunteer sites themselves. Theme tour programs are an especially ripe area for exploration as explained in the Interpretation chapter (page 79). Better quality interpretation is necessary at many of the volunteer sites, and jointly funded applications are needed to support technical assistance to these sites. Other joint projects include the creation of a Delaware County Heritage Weekend, designed to showcase many of the sites and organizations across the county that would be open and promoted widely (for a description of the Delaware County Heritage Weekend, see the Recommendation Chapter page 115). This would be an ideal project to partner with countywide entities, like the Delaware County Historical Society and the Brandywine Conference and Visitor's Bureau.

### *Conclusion*

There are many exciting projects contained in this Implementation Plan. Committed volunteers and organizations are crucial to moving public history forward in Delaware County. The Delaware County Historic and Preservation Network can be an effective coordination entity, building on the success and public response of the list serve and website ([www.dchpn.org](http://www.dchpn.org)). Patience and careful planning will be required to ensure the success of the many exciting new initiatives.

## Beyond Colonial: Expanding Stories, Promoting Revitalization

Delaware County Public History Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan

Jill Hall, Alexander Balloon, Donna Ann Harris, Rich Paul



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## What is public history?

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- “Public history” is the use of historical knowledge and artifacts by the general public.
- Public history engages a community’s shared past in a conversation about the future.



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## Introduction

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**JILL HALL**

**SENIOR PRESERVATION PLANNER,  
DELAWARE COUNTY PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT**

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## Facts About Delaware County

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- 550,000 People (5<sup>th</sup> Largest in PA)
- Founded 1789
- County Seat: Media, PA
- Area: 191 sq miles



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## Why is Public History Important in the County?

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- Important historic buildings to preserve
- Non profit organizations struggling to survive
- Volunteer run organizations with modest budgets
- Organizations lack access to technical assistance



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## Purpose of the Public History study

1. Determine how best to remedy the underutilized nature of historic organizations throughout the county;
2. Address how the historical organizations can better cooperate and coordinate efforts to present a more inclusive interpretation of our history that reflects all periods, peoples and geographic portions of the county;

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## How was this project funded?

- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development
  - Funding from Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program and Community Revitalization Assistance Program
- County of Delaware's Community Development Block Grant Program,
  - Funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

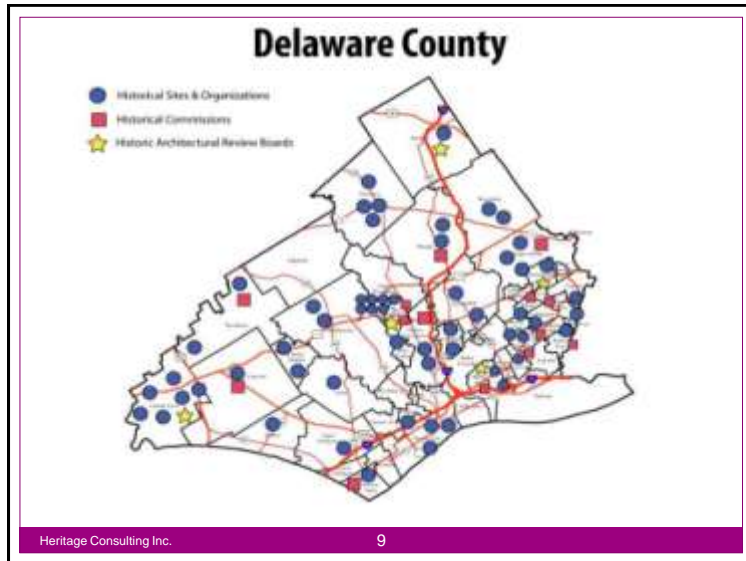
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## More Purpose....

3. Better preserve our irreplaceable public history resources;
4. Make history available to the public as an educational tool with better efficiency and success, and
5. Help foster revitalization.

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A Project Steering Committee

Public meetings with training sessions

**Additions to the scope of work**

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### What kind of history organizations are there?

10

- 14 historical commissions
- 5 historic architectural review boards
- 1 preservation organization
- 60 historic sites and historical societies

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### Expected outcomes of project

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- ▣ Assist sites to communicate their heritage
- ▣ Promote more inclusive scholarly research
- ▣ Identify funding for new scholarship, programming, exhibits, education, upkeep and preservation of sites
- ▣ Assist DCHS to integrate history into elementary and secondary school curriculums
- ▣ Identify partnerships with other cultural and commercial groups to present history
- ▣ Partner with Brandywine CVB to better promote heritage tourism

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## Public History Study components

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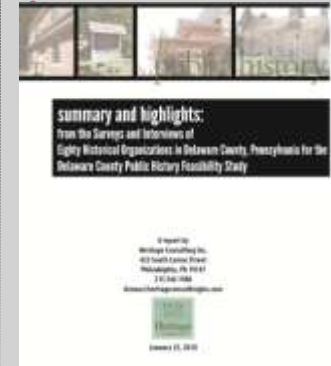
**ALEXANDER BALLOON**  
CONSULTANT  
HERITAGE CONSULTING INC.

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## Surveys and interviews

15

- 80% Response Rate
- Understanding Existing Conditions
- Purpose



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## Project Design

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- Public Involvement Very Important
- Phase 1: Multi-method Approach
  - Surveys & Interviews
  - Focus Groups
  - Public Meetings & Training Workshops
- Phase 2: Analysis, Recommendations, and Implementation

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## Focus groups

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- 40 participants
- Idea-Sharing
- Purpose



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## Public Meetings and Training Workshops

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- Volunteer Recruitment & Retention 9-8-09
- Fundraising for Volunteer-Managed Non-profits 1-26-10
- Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance 3-22-10
- Final meeting 5-24-10



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## 80 History Organizations

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## What we learned

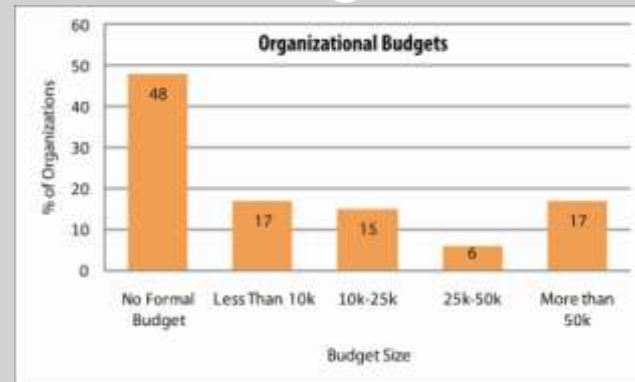
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## Small and volunteer managed

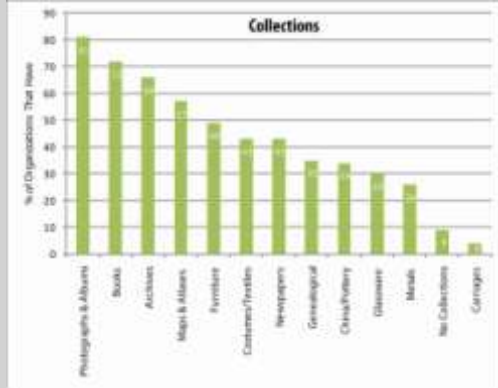
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### Collections concerns

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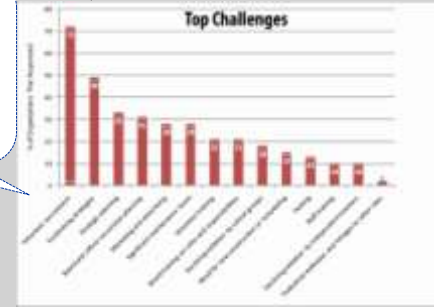


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### Need for training and technical assistance

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Volunteer Recruitment  
Fundraising  
Strategic Planning



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### Collaborative opportunities

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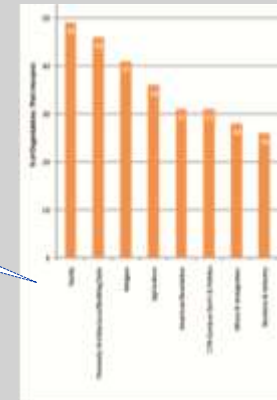
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### Stories told now

24

• Limited Stories

- Family
- Domestic Architecture
- Religion
- Agriculture
- American Revolution



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## Biggest strengths

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- Great interest in public history
- 138 buildings at 31 sites
- Volunteers manage 21 of the 31 historic sites
- Endowments and working capital
- High interest in collaborating



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## Biggest weaknesses

27

- 77% run by volunteers
- 4 of 11 historical societies have no site to store their collections
- Collections not inventoried/catalogued or available to public
- 9 new organizations being planned



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## Biggest weaknesses

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- 138 buildings at 31 sites
- 22M is needed to fix historic sites
- 15 of 31 sites don't have repair estimates
- 14 sites owned by municipality
- 45% don't have formal budgets
- General need to rethink interpretation of sites
- 45% of volunteer run sites are not open regular hours
- Stories told at sites are more or less the same

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## Biggest threats

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- No existing organization to take on implementation projects
- 5 past coordination attempts
- School programs need to comply with PA standards for history



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## Biggest opportunities

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- Training programs can overcome many of the organizational capacity weaknesses
- Create a new coordinating entity
- Staffed organizations are biggest tourism drivers
- Joint tours to involve both staffed and volunteer sites/organizations
- Joint projects: coordination and cooperation

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## Public History is economic development

31

- Tourism contributes more than \$760 million dollars of economic activity each year within the county
- 205,660 visitors to historic sites in Delaware County
- 78% of all leisure travelers in the United States include a heritage activity in their trip.



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30

Public history has hard and soft impacts for the county



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## Public History creates jobs and tax revenue

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- 4.6% of ALL jobs in Delaware County are linked to tourism.
- This is 9,600 people who depend on tourism to go to work every day.
- \$102 million in local tax revenue
- \$81 million in retail sales
- \$116 million in food and beverage sales



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## Public History builds community

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- Public History encourages revitalization in older, existing communities
- Public History builds strong communities through:
  - sense of place
  - sense of identity
  - sense of evolution
  - sense of community
  - sense of ownership



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## Delaware County Historic & Preservation Network

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- [www.dchpn.org](http://www.dchpn.org)



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## Recommendations

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 PRINCIPAL  
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## Implementation of DCHPN

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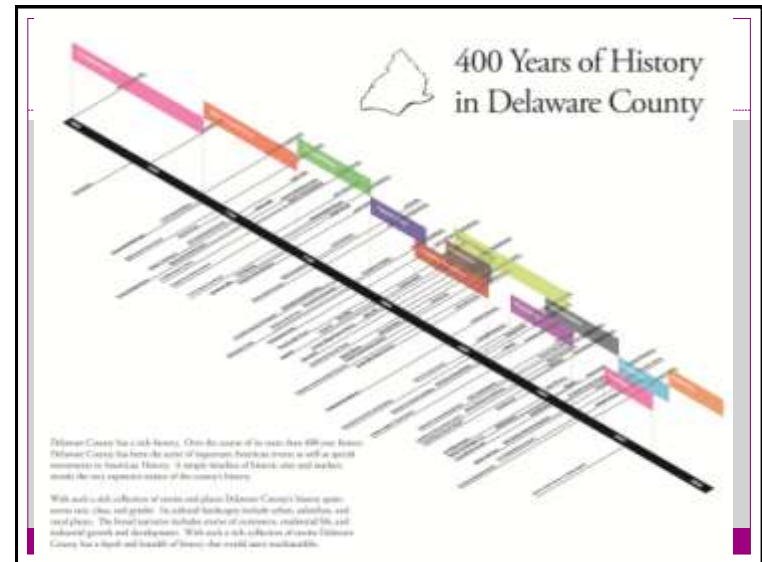
- Formation of a new nonprofit organization to help implement project ideas from this study
- Who should be on DCHPN? EVERYONE
- Who will run it? All Stakeholders
- How will work? A democracy, then a board and working committees
- Where is the money? You have to raise it

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### DCHPN Timeline

Early Action Steps	Short Term 1-2 Years	Midterm 3-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Steering Committee	Establish Coordination Organization	Create Project Teams	Funding for Joint Projects
Training Workshops	Planning Department as Cooperator	Develop Funder Plan & Approach	Major Collections Upgrades
Website & Website dchpn.org	Planning Department Support Activities	Volunteer Site Collaboration	Historic Site/Org Mentoring
	Disseminate Data and Findings	Theme Tours Staffed Sites	Major Interpretive Upgrades at Volunteer Sites
	Quarterly Training Sessions	Capital Repair Fund for Historic Sites	Joint Purchasing
		School Lesson Plan & Program Development	New Scholarship Award County
		Speaker's Bureau	

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### Potential theme tours

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### Potential 2 day tour

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### Potential theme tours

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### Potential Projects

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## Potential Projects

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## The Future of Public History in Delaware County

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## Impact

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**A. RICHARD PAUL**  
**CHAIR**  
**DELAWARE COUNTY**  
**HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

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## So what's happened since?

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- Three meetings of DCHPN
- Presentation by Chester County Historic Preservation Network
- Creation of mission statement
- Report published and distributed
- Presentation by Pennsylvania Historical Society
- Workshop: Social Studies Curriculum Beyond the Classroom: Local Historic Sites and Education
- Current Efforts: All HARB meeting, Technical seminar in fall

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## Impact on Local Historical Organizations

- Provided valuable data
- Identified needs
- Helped address most important need: Communication
- Provided a guide that can always be referenced
- Key Point: Individuals must continue to implement



## Contact us!

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## Questions?



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