

The Graystone Society brings you the newsletter of the National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum in the Lukens National Historic District.

## Property

### Brandywine Mansion Restoration Phase One Completed

If you have been down South First Avenue recently, you may have noticed some big changes happening at Brandywine Mansion.

The Lukens Store, which had been attached to the original building since the early 1920's, has been removed, giving a renewed prominence to the original house.



Before the store was removed, objects and documents inside were identified, cataloged and removed, and the architectural features of the store were noted and recorded. This process was facilitated by having actual former store employees on hand to identify objects. Many items were later put on display during the Ice Cream Festival in July.

The next step was environmental remediation, and then the store was carefully separated from the main building and demolition could take place. The general contractor for the job was Wesley Sessa, and demolition was done by Mayer Pollack Steel Corporation. The whole process took about two months.



The next step in the restoration will be the creation of a Historic Structures Report, by Frens & Frens Restoration Architects. This report will describe in detail the structural envelope of the building: floors,

roof, walls, chimney, windows, etc. The results of the report will drive the actual restoration process, which will begin as funding becomes available.



## Events

### Exciting Lineup Set for Fall Lecture Series

The Graystone Society 2009 Fall Lecture series will present two interesting speakers tackling very different topics:

Our first lecture on October 1 features **Dr. Tonya Thames Taylor** who will present on *Women in the Workforce*.

Dr. Taylor is a longtime historian and political analyst. She is a professor of history at West Chester University, whose expertise includes the American South, Violence in America, American History, African American History, White Culture and U.S. Law. Dr. Taylor's chosen topic of *Women in the Workforce* is very appropriate considering our connection to Rebecca Lukens, Americas's first female industrialist.

Our second lecture on November 5 will bring **Al Giannantonio** to speak on *The Baldwin Locomotive Works*.

Mr. Giannantonio is a member of the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society, and has a vast store of knowledge concerning this iconic company that had an important relationship with Lukens Steel and the Pennsylvania Railroad.



A Rio Grande Railroad 4-6-6-4 locomotive having its wheels applied in the Baldwin Erecting Shop in 1941

### The Panic of 1857

The Panic of 1857 abruptly ended the boom times that followed the Mexican War.



Dr. Charles Lukens

In 1854, Dr. Charles and Isabella Lukens (Rebecca's daughter) had renamed their company the Lukens Rolling Mill in Rebecca's honor. They renovated and updated the old mill by installing a rolling mill 60 inches wide, and two heating furnaces. This increased their annual capacity to 1,000 tons of plate iron.

The financial panic of 1857 created trouble for the entire nation's economy. Dr. Lukens noted in September of 1857 that the banks were bewildered, and that demand for plate was down, as were prices. Late in the year the mill was actually idled for a time. They ran the firm at a loss to preserve market share, but it was several years before production fully recovered.

Dr. Lukens called the panic of 1857 "A long night of Egyptian darkness." Lukens was a basically sound company and survived the panic to expand production during the Civil War, when they broke with Quaker tradition and started supplying manufacturers with plate for military products as they supported the effort to end slavery.

## History

Corner

### Be a part of the Graystone Society!

It's easy — go to [www.lukensnhd.org](http://www.lukensnhd.org) and click on the **Donate, Join** or **Sponsorship** tabs or call today 610-384-9282.

We can't do it without you!

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**Events**

**Coatesville Rotary Ice Cream Festival**

This year's Ice Cream Festival was held on Saturday, July 11<sup>th</sup> on the grounds of Graystone Mansion. The event was sponsored and conducted by the Coatesville Rotary Club and benefitted the Rotary's charitable giving program.

The Ice Cream Festival was followed by the traditional fireworks display put on by the City of Coatesville.

**Programs**

- Upcoming Events  
 in the Lukens National Historic District**
- September 23, 6:30 pm — Slide show by  
 Eugene L. DiOrio:  
*Southern Sojourn: The Upper South:  
 Cincinnati, Nashville, Durham & Richmond*
  - October 1 — Fall Lecture # 1  
 Dr. Tonya Thames Taylor  
*Women in the Workforce*
  - November 5 — Fall Lecture # 2  
 Al Giannantonio  
*The Baldwin Locomotive Works*
  - November 29 — Volunteer Day  
*Collections Management*
  - December 12 — Santa, Holiday House Tours  
 and Food Drive
  - March 2010 — Fourth Annual  
 Rebecca Lukens Award Ceremony



Items from the Lukens Store on display during the Victorian Ice Cream Festival.

**A few words with . . .**

**Charles L. (Skip) Huston, III**

Charles L. "Skip" Huston, III serves on the Board of the Huston Foundation and the Stewart Huston Charitable Trust, and is a former Lukens Steel Vice-President and Board Member.

He has always had a keen interest in the history of the early steel industry in America, which makes him ideal as a member of the Graystone Society Board of Directors. He believes that the work being done by the Society will have long term positive effect on Coatesville as well as the surrounding area.

"The Historic District is an oasis in the center of Coatesville, a place of profound historic significance and of interest to people of all ages," he said. "The creation of the National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum is like throwing a pebble in the water — the ripples travel out and eventually affect the entire region.

This can be a tremendous benefit to everyone. "The vision of The Graystone Society can make the Historic District a focal point, a place where people come to visit and assemble," he said, and be the nucleus for the development of the City and beyond."

**Programs**

**Iron and Steel Task Force**

The Chester County Iron and Steel Task Force was established recently to address the lack of comprehensive planning for our area's iron and steel sites. The goal is to link all of the sites on the Iron and Steel Trail and cross promote them as a cohesive unit.

Chester County has one of the richest concentrations of historically important iron and steel sites, all within a very compact area, but until now there has been little coordination among them. The task force, headed by Karen Marshall, Heritage Preservation Coordinator of the Chester County Parks and Recreation Department, is determined to rectify the situation.

There is currently only one tourism sign on the entire Iron and Steel Trail. The task force is going to assess all sites to determine where more signs should be erected, as well as deal with issues like parking, site ownership and access.

For the first time all sites will be included: Iron and steel production, mining and charcoal production. In addition the task force will work not just in Chester County, but in the adjoining Counties that have significant sites, including Bucks, Berks, Montgomery and Lancaster Counties.

**Interested in the**

**SS United States?**

The SS United States is still the largest ocean liner ever built completely within the United States. She was built between 1950 and 1952 in Newport News, Virginia, being sponsored by the federal government in order to have a large, fast ship that could quickly be converted to a troop transport in the event of war.

The Lukens Steel Company has had a long relationship with the Newport News Shipbuilding Company, but it is not currently



known if any Lukens steel was used in construction of the United States. Because it was built to Navy specifications, Lukens regular sales records

would not include this information. Research into this is continuing.

The SS United States captured the Blue Ribbon for trans-Atlantic speed on her maiden voyages in 1952 on both eastbound and westbound crossings, records which have never been challenged and remain in place. The liner was withdrawn from service in 1969 and has been docked in Philadelphia since 1996.

Efforts are under way to have the SS United States placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Unfortunately, if these efforts fail, this historic ship faces the very real possibility of being sold for scrap.

To join the effort to save the SS United States, visit <http://ssunitedstatesconservancy.org/SSUS/blog/>.



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