

LAUREL HILL MANSION NEWS



JOIN THE FUN

There are many fun and exciting events planned for the 2025 season at Laurel Hill Mansion but to make them truly memorable we need you! There are lots of ways to participate. You can help with a single event or join a committee. Events where help is needed include the Spring Tea, a Family Fun Free Museum Day, Concerts, and an Art Opening, to name but a few. Interested? Contact Christine Smith at c.smith@wfgp.org.

Message from the President

As I come to the end of my term as president of Women for Greater Philadelphia, I think about all the people who have helped me with all the ups and downs that I have encountered. There are too many people to thank personally, but you know who you are. Over the past several months my health challenges have necessitated me being less involved in activities at Laurel Hill Mansion, but I know that we continue to move forward in many ways. Whether it's planning for exciting events, welcoming new members, making sure that the mansion is ready for visitors, and still being "the small house with the big heart".

My hope for the years to come is that we continue to welcome visitors and new members, and fill the many important committees with enthusiastic and idea generating members. Keeping the history of Laurel Hill Mansion alive is more important than ever for both adults and especially the children who need to know the history of our country. Laurel Hill Mansion is an integral part of Pennsylvania history that should not be forgotten. My hope for our organization is for us to continue to become more visible in the city of Philadelphia as we approach the 250th anniversary of our great nation.

Barbara Frankl, President, WFGP

Spring and Summer at Laurel Hill Mansion
Visit the Laurel Hill Mansion events page for more information
www.lhmpp.org

May 2025

Saturday, May 3, 2025 from 12:30 p.m. - Play Chess at Laurel Hill Mansion
Thursday, May 8, 2025 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - Plein Air Painting Day
Fridays, May 16 - June 13, 2025 10:00 a.m. to 1:00p.m.
Plein Air Painting Workshop 5 Fridays Fairmount Park Historic Houses
in collaboration with Cerulean Arts
Saturday, May 17, 2025 from 12:30 p.m. - Play Chess at Laurel Hill Mansion
Sunday, May 18, 2025 2 to 4 p.m. - The Spring Tea at Laurel Hill Mansion
Friday, May 30, 2025 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - Plein Air Painting Day
Saturday, May 31, 2025 WFGP Members Meeting 10:30 at Laurel Hill Mansion

June 2025

Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:30 p.m. - Play Chess at Laurel Hill Mansion
Saturday, June 14, 2025 10:30 to 3:30 - Plein Air Painting Day
Saturday, June 21, 2025 12:30P.M. - Chess at Laurel Hill Mansion
Thursday, June 26, 2025 12:30P.M. - Plein Air Painting Day
Saturday, June 28, 2025 Wawa Welcome America 2025 Free Museum Day

July 2025

Saturday, July 5, 2025 12:30 p.m. - Play Chess at Laurel Hill Mansion
Sunday, July 6, 2025 10:30 to 3:30 - Plein Air Painting Day
Sunday, July 13, 2025 2:00 P.M. - Mimi Stillman Duo in Concert
Friday, July 18, 2025 6 to 8 P.M. - Opening Reception Timeline Exhibition
On view until October 17, 2025
Saturday, July 19, 2025 12:30 p.m. - Play Chess at Laurel Hill Mansion
Friday, July 25, 2025 10:30 to 3:30 - Plein Air Painting Day
Sunday, July 27, 2025 2:00 P.M. - The Wister Quartet in Concert

August 2025

Saturday, August 2, 2025 12:30 p.m. - Play Chess at Laurel Hill Mansion
Thursday, August 7, 2025 10:30 to 3:30 - Plein Air Painting Day
Sunday, August 10, 2025 2:00 P.M. - Principally Harps! – in Concert
Saturday, August 16, 2025 12:30 p.m. - Play Chess at Laurel Hill Mansion
Sunday, August 24, 2025 2:00 P.M. - Allen Krantz in Concert
Saturday, August 30, 2025 10:30 to 3:30 - Plein Air Painting Day

Links to learn more

[CHESS](#)

[CONCERTS](#)

[PLEIN AIR](#)

[SPRING TEA](#)

[TIMELINE EXHIBITION](#)

The 2025 Women for Greater Philadelphia Women's History Month Honorees



Lauren Cristella
Women for Greater Philadelphia
ALMA JACOBS AWARD



Erike De Veyra
Women for Greater Philadelphia
MARION CARSON AWARD



Elena "Ellie" Marie DiLapi
Women for Greater Philadelphia
CAROLYN ANCKER AWARD



Dr. Jeannine A.H. Payne
Women for Greater Philadelphia
BETTE YOUNG AWARD

On Sunday, March 30, 2025 these four extraordinary women graced Laurel Hill Mansion with their presence as recipients of WFGP Awards. They were asked four questions by moderator and WFGP board member Nancy Warner. The answers given were intelligent, thoughtful, insightful, and heartfelt. It was a privilege to be there. Guests were able to interact with the honorees at the reception following the panel discussion.

Four Questions

Stereotypes

Stereotypes exist. Shirley Chisholm said “We must confront not only stereotypes others hold but also the stereotypes we hold ourselves” and Eleanor Roosevelt said, “A woman is like a teabag. You don’t know how strong she is until you put her in hot water.”

What stereotypical expectations and assumptions have you encountered during your career and how have you managed them?

Future

There have been many hard fought battles to expand the rights of and opportunities for women. Today women play different roles throughout their lives. In the little over 100 years since women in this country won the right to vote, we have seen some uneven movement towards equality for women. However, recent events in law and society at large appear to be focused on limiting women’s roles.

What actions will ensure that women’s rights and roles are not restricted or stymied in any way?

Mentors

When Odysseus left for the Trojan War he asked his friend, Mentor, to serve as counselor to his son, Telemachus. Thus, the word mentor came to mean a wise and trusted advisor.

Were there wise and trusted advisers you found helpful in your career? If so, was your association with your mentor/s formal or informal? How was having a mentor beneficial to you?

Education

In education, STEM programs emphasize science, technology, engineering, and mathematics however in the past few years reading and arts have been added to create the acronym STREAM, science, technology, reading, engineering, arts, and mathematics. The focus of STREAM education is no longer based on fact memorization. Instead, it’s about giving kids the freedom to think creatively, read and write, experiment, and construct things on their own.

Do you feel that transitioning from STEM to STREAM will better prepare students to face the future and some of the challenges you have faced?



Women's History Month Event Photographs



The WFGP Women's History Month Committee, Rosemarie Retacco, Christine Smith, Nancy Werner, and Smokie Kittner would like to thank both the honorees and the audience for their enthusiasm, thoughtfulness, and forthrightness. You were inspiring. We also want to say welcome to our new committee member Judith Robinson. We hope everyone will visit often and that as WFGP members, friends, and interested parties we can engage in an ongoing dialog.





QUOITS, ANYONE?



From Ancient Greece to Laurel Hill Mansion

When I first heard the word “quoits”, I could feel my brain initiating a ‘search function’ to identify its meaning, yet to no avail. I had nothing. Is this word the name of a food, a structure, or an organization? Nein, no, nada.... Soon after, I discovered quoits was a game popular in colonial America, traces its origin back to ancient times, and is still played today. Why is it important to include this herein? Answer: Because Laurel Hill Mansion was the site of Quoits Society activities in the late 1820’s (WFGP website; History).

The game of quoits dates back 2,000 years to ancient Greece and the original Olympic Games. Simply described, quoits involves tossing iron rings onto a stake from a predetermined distance. Quoits arrived in colonial America with colonists who brought it with them from England. It was a highly popular game with colonial children who fashioned the rings from strips of leather, chords, or willow branches. For individuals with sufficient resources, a more robust version involving three-pound iron rings was employed. Horseshoes could also be used, and this version subsequently branched into a separate game now known with the eponymous name, Horseshoes (Potter, Teresa; Colonial Children’s Games, Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute).

During the late 1820s, after Dr. Philip Syng Physick - famously known as the Father of American Surgery - purchased Laurel Hill Mansion in 1828, his sons hosted Quoits Society activities at the house. Perhaps, they also had access to the table-top version of quoits which was mass produced after the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth-century.

According to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania’s online records, the Philadelphia Quoit Club was “a small, exclusive gathering of members of the Philadelphia elite formed in 1829” (Source; <https://discover.hsp.org>. Summary, Philadelphia Quoit Club Minutes). Given that Dr. Physick was so well known and prosperous during this period, it is quite possible that this, indeed, was the club whose members enjoyed the views and fresh air around our Laurel Hill Mansion at the invitation of the Physick brothers.

Submitted by,

Mona L. Fiorentini, PhD, MHA, MS

WFGP Board Member



Meeting friends for coffee has long been a popular pastime.

European coffee houses emerged as early as the 1500s in port cities like Venice and Vienna. The satisfying beverage was introduced by various traders from Africa and even by invaders like the Ottoman Turks.

Philadelphia opened its first coffeehouse in 1703, with dozens more operating within the City limits by the mid-1700s. Philly's best-known coffee house was the London Coffee House that once stood at Front and Market Streets. In addition to coffee houses, there were taverns, ale houses and many other public spaces that accommodated patrons of all kinds. However, coffeehouses were preferred centers of commercial activity, especially for traders and merchants engaged in buying and selling products and cargo, and exchanging trade currencies from dozens of countries.

In many major world cities, coffeehouses took the names of foreign cities to attract ship captains and merchants wanting to do business along specific trade routes. Merchants and patrons could get trade information and post advertisements in a wide range of periodicals and newspapers available at the coffee houses. Auctions were often a regular feature too. Some long-ago coffeehouses evolved over time to become major trading centers or insurance and banking centers. Lloyds of London, founded in 1680, had such origins. In New York City, the Merchant Exchange Coffeehouse, located on Wall Street near the East River wharves, would form the Bank of New York after the American Revolution.

Rebecca Rawle's second husband, former mayor, and Loyalist, Sam Shoemaker, no doubt patronized various Philadelphia coffeehouses to conduct business with West Indies and European traders, although he also maintained an office near his Arch Street home, not far from the pier and docks he owned on the Delaware. All would be confiscated in the early days of the Revolution and so he headed to safety in New York City. His contacts and knowledge of merchant operations were used to help the British cause. The merchant coffeehouses in New York were numerous and the best of them were centered around the wharfs off Wall Street where Sam and Rebecca would also take up temporary residence.¹⁾

- 1) The "Journal of the American Revolution" explores Patriot and Loyalist activities in the article "Society at Auction: Coffee-house Culture in Occupied New York." https://allthingsliberty.com/2016/11/society-auction-coffee-house-culture-occupied-new-york/#_edn1



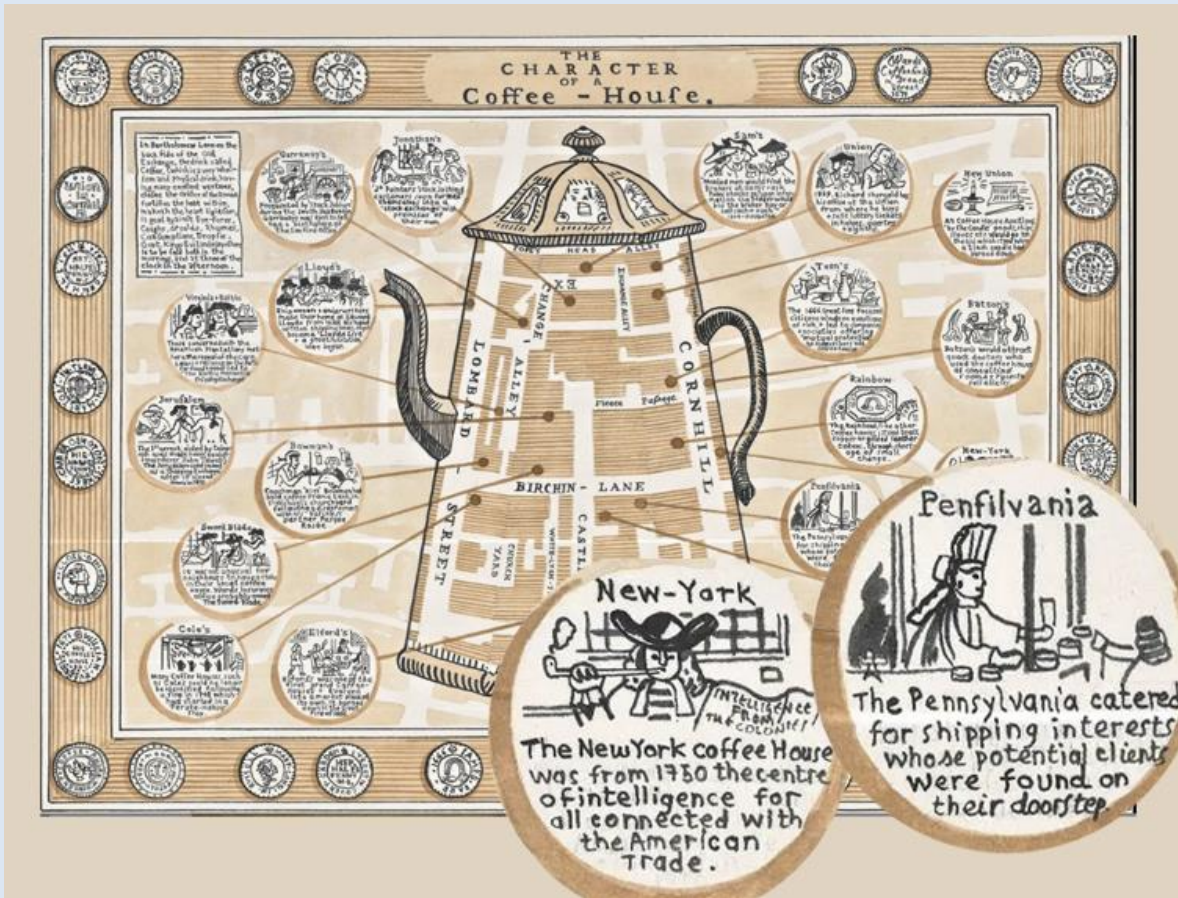
In 1783, some five years after fleeing Philadelphia, Rebecca and Sam evacuated their apartment at 18 Wall Street in New York City. Rebecca returned to Philadelphia; Sam sailed to London with son Edward after settling his legal affairs with Rebecca and his eldest son Benjamin. It was Sam's second voyage to England. As a young man in 1754, he sailed across the sea to meet his merchant father's long-time associates and to forge new ones. Thirty years later he would meet up with these old friends and again make new ones in London.

Before leaving New York, Sam promised Rebecca he'd maintain a diary of his days away. A transcript of this diary is at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and it provides priceless details about the culture and habits of Americans in exile.

In London, Sam boarded rooms offered by widow Mrs. Carr, at 26 Grace Church Street, not far from one of London's oldest landmarks, the Leadenhall Market. Also nearby was the Royal Exchange in Cornhill (former home of Lloyd's), a district where dozens of merchant coffee houses were ensconced. Two of these coffeehouses were patronized almost daily by Sam — the Pennsylvania Coffeehouse and the New York Coffeehouse. Here he'd read the international newspapers, meet various ship captains to exchange packets of letters from friends and family, create or resolve bills of sale, and arrange to ship goods and gifts back to Philadelphia.

Very little is known today about American coffeehouses in Europe. By the early 1800s, some London-based coffeehouses became more specialized mercantile centers while others became obsolete. The Pennsylvania Coffeehouse merged with the Carolina and New York operations and eventually vanished altogether.

This whimsical map of late 18th century coffeehouse locations in the heart of London's trading district is a helpful guide. The winding alleys and ancient street names survive to this day however. An in-person self-guided tour of the district is easy to arrange via Google maps, but no quaint coffee shops, this area today is a tony shopping district.



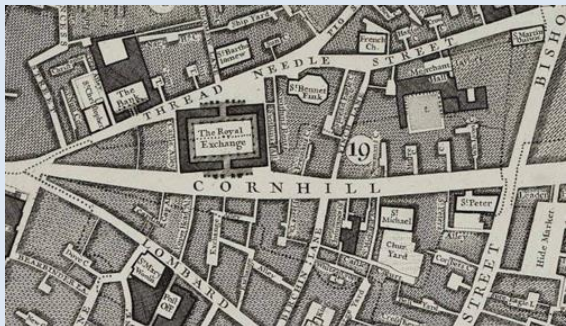
This whimsical map of long-ago London's mercantile coffeehouses was created by cartographer Adam Dant. Published on weblog "Spitalfields Life," by The Gentle Author, on April 21, 2018.

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2018/04/21/the-map-of-the-coffee-houses/>
<https://i0.wp.com/spitalfieldslife.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Coffee-Houses.jpg>

The Pennsylvania Coffeehouse was located on Birchin Lane, off Castle Court in the Cornhill District of old London. The New York Coffeehouse was close by, also off Birchin Lane. Both coffeehouses were a block or two away from Grace Church where Sam and son Edward rented rooms and boarded with widow Mrs. Carr.

Where is the coffee pot in relation to modern day London map? If you tip the pot as if pouring into a coffee cup, CornHill is actually a horizontal position. See here:

Anita McKelvey, Former Fairmount Park House tour guide and site historian, Anita McKelvey, is a founding member of the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides.



Cornhill (formerly also Cornhil) is a [ward](#) and street in the [City of London](#), the historic nucleus and financial center of modern [London](#), England. The street runs between [Bank Junction](#) and [Leadenhall Street](#)

At the May 31, 2025 10:30 a.m. Women for Greater Philadelphia members meeting at Laurel Hill Mansion we will be electing board members for the 2025 -2029 term.

To be eligible to vote your membership must be current.

Join or renew your membership at

www.womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org/pages/membership.

The Nominating Committee is currently seeking recommendations for our next slate of Directors and Executive Committee members. Whether you would like to nominate yourself or someone whose leadership you admire, this is an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on preserving one of Philadelphia's most treasured landmarks while helping our organization grow and flourish. Email nominating@womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org with names.

The slate of nominees for the WFGP Board of Directors and Executive Committee will be published thirty days prior to the members meeting at

www.womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org/pages/2025_slate.html

Spring Tea at Laurel Hill Mansion Sunday, May 18, 2025 2:00 - 4:00
\$30 Women for Greater Philadelphia members, \$35 non-members
[More information and tickets here](#)



Women for Greater Philadelphia, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation of volunteers.

www.womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org