

# Greetings & News

150 years ago, the young America was on the tail end of decades of political strife that would result in the utter turmoil of a Civil War. In honor of this Sesquicentennial (the term for a 150 year anniversary for those who would have to look it up like I did), we have devoted this month's newsletter to the Civil War.

We'll take a quick peek at two projects we did that on buildings that were involved in the Civil War, both incredible testaments to dedicated preservation efforts by those who understand the importance of our built history. We'll also, as usual, delve into the Civil War in our articles – including a first-person account of the Battle of Gettysburg. And last, but certainly not least, we're shining our spotlight on Lancaster historian Randolph Harris, who specializes in the Underground Railroad, this month.

On a lighter note, Jonathan and I also review the book and movie *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*. Before you roll your eyes, let me note that you might be as surprised as I was (after I fact checked on my way home) at the historical accuracy of the movie. The movie brought together two "interests" for me – vampires and history. I am an avid paranormal book reader, I reward myself one "fun" paranormal book for every business book I read, and am always learning things from my "fun" books just as I do my business books. From a book where a vampire fought in the Civil War I learned this: Chuck does not like my new term for the Civil War and all I have to do is use "the War of Northern Aggression" in a coherent sentence to get him going. It never fails to give me the laugh I need.

Hollywood isn't just all about vampires and Abraham Lincoln isn't the only way our paths cross. Jonathan and I attended a marketing conference this month (where we had our picture taken with Leeza Gibbons) where I read an article about a town near New Orleans called Vacherie. Vacherie is also known as the heart of plantation tourism. They have four intact Civil War plantations (with all the out-buildings including the slave quarters) where scenes in *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*, *Django Unchained*, and *Interview with a Vampire* were shot. (Needless to say, I have added Vacherie to our "Must Visit" list of places.)

So what do Hollywood, Leeza Gibbons, vampires, Abraham Lincoln, and Civil War plantations have in common? Me.

Happy Reading!

All the best,

Danielle Groshong-Keperling



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# Preservation Spotlight

## Randolph Harris, Lancaster Historian

### What is your background?

The City of Duquesne, Allegheny County, Pa is my hometown. Many members of my immediate family live there still. It's not a viable community any longer. This one-time proud community attracted my grandparents, who were disaffected in their European home country due to poverty, autocratic government rule and lack of opportunity. They came to America, circa 1900 --- and I am extremely thankful they took that leap.

The entire Pittsburgh Region -- like the whole of industrial American -- pursued a social and economic path that was vibrant for only a very few years.

This heritage in the community where I spent the first half of my life has given me a lingering perspective. Don't take for granted anything that is unique to your own back yard, because you'll inevitably lose it, and you'll be sorry you did.

### What lead you to being a historian?

My parents and my Mom's sister and her husband, my Uncle Joe, traveled a lot in the 1950s and 60s. D.C. Williamsburg. Detroit. Canada. New England. Gettysburg. Florida. My Dad brought along a shiny new 8MM home movie camera to document our adventures, while Uncle Joe always carried his Kodak box camera. In motion picture and still images they captured some of my best memories and helped to create a more real and accurate record of my life, in my mind. They always stopped the car to read historical markers and were always fascinated by old buildings, grand and simple, crumbling or pristine. It didn't matter to them. They asked questions of each other, and of themselves. And I listened to them, and it made me also want to know about these places: Who lived there? When did they build that place? What kind of work did they do? What happened to their children?

### Why is history important to you?

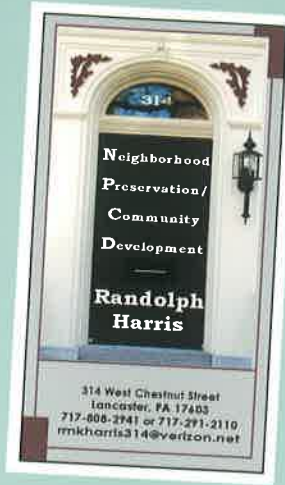
If you study where we've been, you can almost see the future unfolding before you. And that can have lots of advantages, if you are open to them.

You focus your work on the Underground Railroad, what lead you to that?

It came from the effort to save the Thaddeus Stevens Home and Office, the Lydia Hamilton Smith Houses and the Kleiss Tavern -- all contiguous and historically significant and inter-related buildings in Downtown Lancaster. The community was about to obliterate these enormously important buildings in order to gain a slightly larger footprint for its proposed Convention Center, circa 2000.



In May, Randy will be presenting on "Preservation through Local Zoning as Mandated by the PA Constitution" at the Central PA Preservation Society's monthly meeting.



This preservation effort I participated in as the Executive Director of Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County, resulted in the preservation of these buildings, but not without great consequence. But still, those efforts resulted in the preservation of those buildings and the hope kept alive for their full restoration and their ability to enhance our community's social and economic conditions.

### What have your biggest accomplishments been in your work on the Underground Railroad?

Helping to successfully defend the preservation easements on the Thaddeus Stevens Home and Office, the Lydia Hamilton Smith Houses and the Kleiss Tavern, and getting these properties and some 20 others officially recognized by the National Park Service of the US Department of the Interior as properties with an authentic connection to the Underground Railroad. This combined site in Lancaster is one of more than 20 properties I have researched and documented, on my own or in collaboration with other historians, and have secured the designation of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

### What was the most interesting/surprising thing you've learned in your work on the Underground Railroad?

That either I was asleep in my Pennsylvania and American history classes -- from grade school through college -- all in Pennsylvania -- or all of my instructors and/or the text books they used never portrayed the major significance of Congressman Thaddeus Stevens (1792 - 1868) to cause of civil rights.

My goal is to continue research in this field and to advance the notion --- that is very apparent to me -- that the Lancaster and York County region, linked at Wrightsville and Columbia, can and should rightly claim its place in American history as the most appropriate location on a national level to describe and interpret the earliest, if not one of the earliest, documented series of events that came to be called the movement known as the Underground Railroad.

# Window to the Past

## Gettysburg and the Civil War Through a 13-Year-Old Girl's Eyes *From the personal journal of Lydia Catherine Ziegler Clare*

At the time of the great Battle of Gettysburg, Lydia Catherine's family lived on the first floor of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Seminary Ridge, now known as Schmucker Hall.

"The spring and summer of '63 were days in which the citizens of our quiet village were much disturbed. Anxiety filled every breast. Farmers would flee with their horses to a place of safety and merchants would either ship their valuable goods away or securely hide them. So day followed day, each seeming to bring fresh trouble. The enemy were close at hand."

July the 1st dawned brightly. All nature seems to be offering praise to God for His manifold blessings. The members of our household were all up bright and early, for much was to be done for the comfort of the soldiers. But a spirit of unrest seemed to prevail everywhere. About eight o'clock an ominous sound was heard - a sound that struck terror to the hearts of all who heard it - it was the call to battle.

As we stood in the doorway watching General Reynolds and his force approach, I asked father how the soldiers would cross the high fence surrounding our garden. I did not have long to wait until my curiosity was satisfied, for

the General came at rapid pace, urging his men to follow, and the fence fell as if it were made of paper as the men pressed against it with crowbars and picks. I always had a desire to see something of a battle, so here was my opportunity. I quietly slipped from the house to the edge of the woods back of the Seminary, and was enjoying the awe-inspiring scene, when a bullet flew so near my head that I could hear the whizzing sound it made.

### A Common Soldier

The dying and the dead were all around us - men and beasts. We could count as high as twenty dead horses lying side by side. Imagine, if you can, the stench of one dead animal lying in the hot July sun for days. Here they were by the hundreds. All day long we ministered to the wants of the suffering, and it was night when we reached home, or what had been home, only to find the house filled with wounded soldiers. Oh, what a home-coming! Everything we owned was gone -- not a bed to lie on, and not a change of clothing. Many things had been destroyed, and the rest had been converted to hospital purposes.



### Schmucker Hall

Sitting on Seminary Ridge in Gettysburg, Civil War building Schmucker Hall (formerly the Lutheran Theological Seminary) was truly in the thick of it all during the Battle of Gettysburg. In our research on the building, we've uncovered the diary entry of a 13-year-old girl who lived in Schmucker Hall when the Battle of Gettysburg occurred. Her memories of the Battle are harrowing and well worth the read. To aid in the preservation of this undeniably important building, we restored 92 wood windows and replicated 24 interior rail and stile doors with fire rating. We also rebuilt Peace Portico and the rear porch using new rails and balusters to match existing. To read an article about this project, visit: [historic-restorations.com/about-us/what-people-say-about-us](http://historic-restorations.com/about-us/what-people-say-about-us)

### The Petersen House

Abraham Lincoln is the biggest Civil War icon of all and working on the house where he died after being shot across the street in the Ford Theater was a somber and hallowed experience for us all. At this monumental building we restored floors and windows, worked on staircases and porches, and fixed an assortment of "bandaid solutions" that had been done over the years. To read more about this project and the house history, visit [www.historic-restorations.com/portfolio/petersen-house](http://www.historic-restorations.com/portfolio/petersen-house).

# Preservation Highlights



The Petersen House

# Abraham *Lincoln*

Abraham Lincoln.....as seen through the eyes of Seth Grahame-Smith and Tim Burton.



*Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* is both a 2010 “mashup” novel by Seth Grahame-Smith (known for his novels that “mash together” history and modern fantasy) and a 2012 film by Tim Burton. Below are Jonathan and Danielle’s thoughts.

## Jonathan

I read the book and eagerly anticipated the movie premier. The movie not only followed most of the book, it was also accurate in their architecture, furnishings, and clothing for the time period of the movie. Obviously the book and movie are not based in any kind of reality (put away your garlic, crosses, and wooden daggers) and the movie had a lot of over-the-top action scenes (if you like that kind of thing, you’ll enjoy the movie even if you aren’t into history). I would recommend the movie for both history lovers and sci-fi/fantasy geeks. It’s a major score for you if you happen to be both.

Major moral of the movie? Dude, Lincoln is larger than life – he kept the Union together AND hunted vampires!

## Danielle

I didn’t read the book, though I was definitely intrigued by the combination of two of my favorites – vampires and history. Watching the movie with Jonathan, I learned a lot about Lincoln’s life that I didn’t learn in the condensed version I got in history class. Did you know that Mary Todd Lincoln was courted by both Lincoln and Douglas? I didn’t...until watching a movie about Lincoln as a vampire hunter. There was more than enough history in the movie to help me handle the action scenes.

I was impressed with how well researched the movie was. I loved the period architecture and the blending of historical facts with the “fantasy” of vampires. Who knew that the tide of the Civil War was turned because the Union Army started using silver bullets?

Things to know before you watch... None of these vampires glittered in the sunlight, they are far less “pretty” than their glittery cousins and were working towards much more sinister ends.

## Did You Know...

Someone once said you need a rational reason to convince politicians and the public to go to war, but you then need an emotional one to maintain the public’s support of the war through the devastation and gruesomeness to the bitter end. For the North and the South, the rational reason was the same: what was best for their economy.

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# EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

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After months of hard work, Chuck and Danielle are thrilled to announce the release of their first book! This is the first volume in a series of Preservation Primers this Father/Daughter author team is writing to address common concerns and questions about historic preservation and working on historic architecture.

**Preservation Primer #1**  
Avoid Common Mistakes that Cause Irreversible & Costly Damage to Your Historical Building's Architectural Integrity will help historic home owners

equip themselves with the information, tools, and resources they need to make sure their best intentions end up in the best results for their building. Chapter after chapter provides solid educational content, evaluation tools, preservation resources, and guidance on which restoration choices are best and why.

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## GET YOUR FREE COPY TODAY!

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Our primer will normally retail for \$24.95, but as an introductory offer you can get a copy for FREE, just call us at 717.291.4688 or email Karri at [ksensenig@historic-restorations.com](mailto:ksensenig@historic-restorations.com).

The emotional reason that carried the public’s support of the war was slightly different. The North’s emotional reason lay in the anti-slavery movement’s dedication to abolishing slavery in the United States. While the South’s emotional reason was rooted in the fear of being subject to a government they saw as tyrannical and in which they had not enough representation to protect their best interests, like slavery.