

2015 S. Paul Teamer Award Recipients

Since its inception in 2012, the S. Paul Teamer Award for outstanding contributions to the Society has been presented to recognized recipients at the Society's Annual Meeting in January. Due to adverse winter weather conditions, the Society's 2015 Annual Meeting in January was cancelled, and the award presentation was postponed until the May 2015 public meeting. The board was pleased to announce the names of the next three recipients of the award: **Barbara Fry** (posthumous), **Mary Robertson Ives**, and **Clarissa Dillon**. These three generous and intelligent women have all made significant contributions by providing well-researched articles that support their individual interests, by making valuable presentations at Society meetings, and in many other ways.

An avid historian and prolific writer, Barbara Fry authored some thirty-eight articles for the *Quarterly* spanning the years 1983–2001. Barbara contributed articles on a variety of subjects, but researched the history of her Trinity Presbyterian Church in Berwyn in painstaking detail and wrote comprehensive histories in 1991 and 1993. Barbara also wrote of life's adventures with her husband C. Herbert Fry on a variety of topics including train travel, memories of the Valley Forge Music Fair, toys from Christmases past, a 1902 cookbook, sleigh rides, games, quilting, what is in the "Archives," and long time local businessman Frank Stauffer. Sadly, Barbara passed away in 2003.

Mary Robertson Ives authored twelve articles spanning the years 1984–2001 and wrote on a variety of topics including the Great Valley Presbyterian Church, Paoli road names, "Prissy" Robinson's grave, a Berwyn Chapel in Argentina, train travel across the United States in 1955, World War II service in Iceland in 1943-44, Valley Forge Music Fair memories, the Cilley Shop, the joys of sleigh riding down Cassatt Avenue—and the long walk back up—and other vivid accounts of life in the Great Valley.

Clarissa Dillon, Ph. D., has authored four articles including "Eighteenth Century Housewifery," "Loyalty in Revolutionary Pennsylvania," "Birth-to-Breeching: Childhood in the World of William Penn," and most recently, "Eating Locally in Colonial Tredyffrin and Easttown" in this issue.

You are strongly encouraged to visit our website to explore the wonderful articles that these remarkable women contributed to the *Quarterly* and which are available there in digital form. Use the Search feature to locate them.

— Heidi Sproat

Barbara Fry

Barbara McGuire Fry was a native of Binghamton, NY. She loved music, and she loved reading. Barbara was always interested in a good story, especially one about history.

Soon after WWII while a student at Syracuse University, Barbara met a young fellow Syracuse student named Herb Fry, a combat infantryman recently returned from Europe. The relationship bloomed, and upon their graduation in 1950, Barbara and Herb were married, and they moved to Philadelphia where Herb had been recruited by consulting firm Peat Marwick Mitchell.

In 1953 the Fry's: Barbara, Herb, and now one-year old Jim, moved into "Easttown Woods," Berwyn's first postwar housing development. Jim and his three siblings yet to arrive (David, Joel, and Ann) would complete their educations in the local schools, and Barbara, always interested in the workings of local government, often attended school board meetings. At one of these meetings she became acquainted with school board member Bob Goshorn, a mainstay of the TE History Club in the 1980s and '90s.

Barbara and Herb joined the History Club in the late 1980s, and she became a prolific contributor. Barbara wrote, or contributed to, 38 articles in the *History Quarterly*. In the confusion left by the sudden



Barbara Fry, 1996. Courtesy of Herb Fry

death of then Club president Bob Goshorn in 1995, it was Barbara who coordinated all the careful sorting and cataloging of the History Club's archives—a Herculean feat. And it was through Barbara that the Club's archives were granted storage privileges at no cost to the Club in the T/E School District Educational Services Center on First Avenue, Berwyn, until that building was razed in 2011.

Barbara had also begun a definitive history of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Berwyn's first house of worship, and had completed fourteen chapters of her book—and assembled draft material for six additional chapters—before a debilitating illness curtailed further research. Years later Herb completed Barbara's research, and in 2012 published her book, *Trinity Remembers... A 150th Anniversary History of Trinity Presbyterian Church of Berwyn, Pennsylvania, 1863–2013, including an account of life in the village that grew beside it*.

Barbara courageously fought her illness until her death in January 2003.

— Roger Thorne

For more about Barbara, you might want to read “In Memoriam: Barbara McGuire Fry” in *History Quarterly* Vol. 40 No. 2 (April 2003) p. 71

Barbara and Herb Fry also put together a noteworthy collection of historic photos, showcased in our last issue, and now a part of the Society's growing Image Collection.



Barbara Fry, dressed in her Valley Forge Quilters dress for a demonstration at the King of Prussia Mall George Washington's Day celebration, February 20, 1986. Courtesy of Herb Fry

Mary Robertson Ives

Mary Robertson Ives vividly remembered moving to the Great Valley in 1922 as an 8-year-old from Wisconsin with her father James Robertson, her mother, and her younger sister Janet. Her parents had purchased a dairy farm on the south side of Swedesford Road near what was then called Valley Store (now the intersection of Route 29 and Swedesford Road) in what is today the Penn State Great Valley campus.

The two girls began attending primary school in Paoli at what had been the historic General Jackson Inn, located on the Lincoln Highway across from its intersection with Chestnut Road. But after a couple of years, their mother transferred the girls to the Friends School in West Chester, from which they then continued on to West Chester High School. Mary recalled how on each school morning, Mrs. Robertson would drive her girls from the farm to the PRR's Frazer station. Mary recollected: “At Frazer we caught a train on the PRR's West Chester & Frazer branch, a steam engine and 2 passenger cars. This short line began in Malvern, with stops at Frazer, Immaculata College, Morstein, Greenhill, Fernhill, and finally the main West Chester station at Biddle Street.” Mary graduated from WCHS in 1932.

She attended business college in Philadelphia, and worked as a secretary for a Center City firm. She also became a Red Cross volunteer prior to WWII, and when war broke out she volunteered for active service with the Red Cross. In 1943 Mary was sent to Iceland, an important staging area for the Allied invasion of France, and remained there until late 1944, when she returned to the States. While in Iceland she met and married Dr. Ives. Regrettably the marriage did not last long after the war, and she returned to the family farm and resumed her employment in the city.



Mary Robertson Ives, May 2008. Courtesy of Roger Thorne

Her father died suddenly in 1956, and Mary and her mother remained on the farm for more than a decade. But she recalled: “In the mid-1960’s, when plans were announced for what became the Great Valley Corporate Center, mother and I decided that this was no place for us to stay for long. Then, when the decision was made to build Route 202, which would bisect our farm, my mother and I sold the farm and moved to Paoli.”

She remains the oldest member of the Great Valley Presbyterian Church, where she served for decades as its historian. Mary joined the TEHC in the late 1970s, and contributed greatly, writing eleven articles in the *Quarterly*. She remained a faithful member and attendee of the Society even after moving to Tel Hai Village in Honeybrook. I spoke and visited with Mary often over the years, seeking her recollections of this area in those long ago times, and enjoying her gentle spirit.

But now, in her 100th year, the light of her razor-sharp memory is almost extinguished, and I miss her stories and her friendship.

— Roger Thorne



Mary Robertson Ives, c. 1943
Courtesy of the Mary Robertson Ives Collection

Clarissa Dillon

Dr. Clarissa F. Dillon grew up in Chicago, and after earning a political science degree from Bryn Mawr College, she taught elementary school for 31 years, first in Illinois and then for 24 years in the Radnor school district. During those years she also earned a master’s degree from the University of Chicago, and her Ph. D. from Bryn Mawr College, writing her dissertation on women and 18th-century kitchen gardens in eastern Pennsylvania—all while teaching school and raising her son. Since 1973 Clarissa has been active in “living history,” and is today one of the foremost authorities on 16th through 18th century English and Colonial American cooking and household industries, as well as a kitchen and kitchen garden consultant at many of the prominent historic homes in the Delaware Valley—including nearby Historic Waynesborough.

As an historian, Clarissa brings her research, practical experience and insights to life into both her presentations, and to her prolific writing pertaining to cooking, domestic medicine, housewifery, economics, culture, morals, gardening and the women of the 18th century. As a member of the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society since 2006, she has made presentations on an eclectic range of subjects, including “From Birth to Breeching: Childhood in Colonial Pennsylvania;” “How The Civil War Influenced The American Revolution;” and “Loyalty in Revolutionary Pennsylvania,” and she has written four substantial articles for our *Quarterly*.

Whenever Clarissa comes to speak to us, as she did just last November on the subject “Eating Locally in Colonial Tredyffrin and Easttown,” she appears looking the part of, as she describes it, a “successful, middling sort of Chester County farm wife.” And whenever I see her, I cannot help but chuckle over remarks she made to a *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter writing an article about Dr. Dillon a couple of years ago:

On days when she’s doing a program on medicinal plants or cheese-making or other domestic subjects from the Colonial period, she is apt to wear her “work clothes” – a “short gown” covered by a well-used apron, made of linen and hand-sewn by herself. But because, as she states, “I only get dressed once a day,” Clarissa used to mortify her teenage son by wearing her “work clothes” as she drove him here or there. He’d say, ‘Oh for God’s sake, Mom, you look like a baby in that bonnet!’. (by the way, it’s not a bonnet. It’s a cap.)

And I’m told that occasionally, on her way to “work,” she’ll stop to do her personal banking ... and there receive more than a few strange glances. Somehow, I don’t think she minds.

Last year Dr. Dillon traveled to Calgary, Alberta, to receive the 2014 Annual Schlebecker Award from the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums, recognizing “her significant contributions to the field of living history over many years, her valuable presentations at regional and annual meetings based on her research into the domestic arts of the 18th century, and her mentorship of a new generation of historians.”

We are very proud that Clarissa is an active member of our Society and are pleased to recognize her important contributions

— Roger Thorne.