

Saving THIS Old House



Kim Burdick, MA, MPA

HABS/HAER



Historic American Buildings Survey W. S. Stewart, Photographer Sept. 14, 1936

VIEW FROM NORTHWEST

Hale-Byrnes House, Also known as: Boyce House, Corner of DE 7 and 4, Stanton, Delaware

Photo taken for the Historic American Buildings Survey

Carita Boden

Mrs. Harry Clark Boden

“The Highway Commission decided to put a road right through it. I tried every way to stop that, and when I couldn’t, I bought the house and gave it to the DAR and they quickly turned it over to the Delaware Society for the Preservation of Antiquities.”

Mrs. Harry Clark Boden



Delaware Descendants of the Mayflower
Minutes: September 25, 1961

Assistant Chief of the Right of Way Division of the State Highway Department said that plans for design of this construction have not yet been completed, but that in his opinion, the building lies squarely in the path of a proposed road which will connect the new Interstate 95 with the Limestone Road (Route 41).

Meanwhile, the property now owned by Delaware bag Company is being vandalized and stripped of interior woodwork. The State Highway may not obtain title to the property for some time, presumably very shortly before excavations are begun, at which time it might well be too late for anything to be done to save the building. Meanwhile, the present owners could conceivably have permitted or authorized its demolition.

Respectfully submitted.
Richard L. Cooch. Secretary

1961

The Boyce House is now vacant and falling into disrepair. The committee to save it believes if it can be assured the highway department will not tear it down, money can be raised for its restoration.

N. Maxson Terry, speaking as an individual and not as chairman of the commission, said:

“I for one, am anxious that the building be preserved. It is important to save this house—since it is part of our heritage.”

However, Anthony Carroll of Dover was skeptical as to whether it is worth the \$35,000.

In the House of Representatives

March 28, 1961. 87th Congress. 1st Session

Mr. McDowell introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

A BILL to amend the Historic Sites Act to provide that the effect on sites, buildings and objects of historic value of projects involving the expenditure of Federal funds shall be taken into account in the planning of such projects, and to provide for the publication of a compilation of historic sites, buildings and objects.

For the purposes of this Act, a building, site or object shall be considered to be of historical value if it has cultural, aesthetic or architectural values.

1961

BILL FRANK

She Foiled the Bulldozers

There's been a lot of talk lately about restoring old and historic houses in northern Delaware.

But there's been mighty little done about these houses — except in the case of the Boyce House on the banks of the White Clay Creek, near the Stanton entrance to Delaware Park.



Everyone is planning, surveying, studying and discussing the restoration of old houses, but it remains for the Delaware Society for the Preservation of Antiquities to do something.

And the credit in a large measure belongs to Mrs. Harry Clark Boden of Newark.

Hers has been the loud clear voice for its preservation and restoration.

But for a while, it seemed as if she were crying in the wilderness or in the camps of Philistines who care nothing for landmarks or historic sites.

Monday afternoon, I kept an appointment with Mrs. Boden at the Boyce House, and I stood there watching the men put on a new roof—the first step in restoration.

In front of the house is a large blue and gold sign, proclaiming to all and sundry that a colonial house is being restored.

Let me tell you something about this house:

There's nothing definite about its age except that we are sure it had been built

prior to the American Revolution.

It is located on the banks of the White Clay Creek, opposite a landmark quaintly called Bread and Cheese Island—so named by the early Swedish settlers of the area back in the 17th Century.

It may have once been a Friends Meeting house or used by the Friends for meetings prior to the American Revolution.

It gets its name, Boyce, from the family that owned it up until recent times. The very early deeds are missing, and when some historical detective work is finished we may learn that it was either owned by the Ogle family, which had extensive holdings in that area many years ago, or by the Lewden family—another landed family of early days.

It has historical associations with the American Revolution because, according to the State Archives Department, it was in this two-story brick house that Washington held a council of war with his top echelon officers Sept. 6, 1777, during the maneuvers in that area that eventually led to the Battle of Brandywine at Chadds Ford, Pa.

The house began to deteriorate a few years ago and was doomed recently by the State Highway Department with its interstate highway plans.

Then came Mrs. Boden, marshalling protests and support. The house was finally purchased by the Cooch's Bridge Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, and turned over to the Delaware

Society for the Preservation of Antiquities.

Money was made available for restoration—and the architectural firm of Whiteside, Moeckel, and Carbonell was employed and the general contract given to DiSabatino and Ranieri, Inc.

The magnificent buttonwood in front of the house, at least 200 years old, will also be saved.

Eventually the grounds will be landscaped—and the old Boyce House will become a joy and pleasure, and available for meetings. It may even have a small museum, featuring the campaign of the Battle of the Brandywine.

Mrs. Boden hopes that groups of citizens and societies will pitch in and help to refurbish the house and even lend a hand with money.

When the restoration of the Boyce House is completed, what will it mean?

It could very well become the focal point of revived interest in the Battle of the Brandywine campaign, which began in the Stanton-Newark sector and shifted to Chadds Ford.

Some day when Revolutionary War Round Tables are organized here and the Revolutionary War becomes as interesting to people as the Civil War is today, the Boyce House will be the hub.

But as this restoration job continues, let's keep this in mind:

1. Restoration costs are more than peanuts.
2. It takes a lot of energy, imagination—and dedication.
3. Restoration of these houses is part of positive Americanism.

This is now the Hals-Byones House

A Voice out of the Past



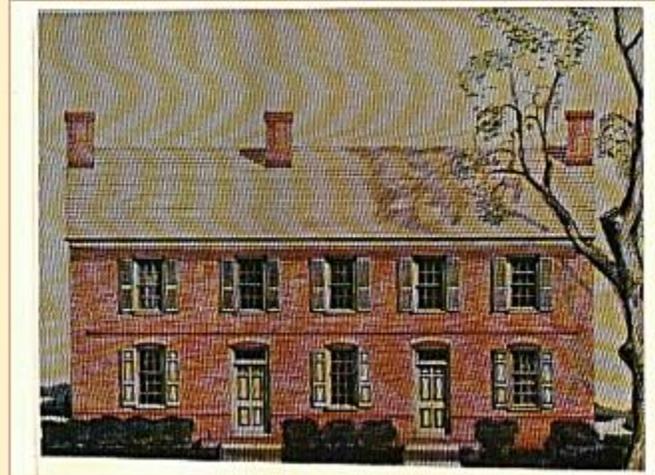
Bill Frank



Mrs. Boden remembered that an earlier “Delaware Society for the Preservation of Antiquities” had surrendered its charter in the early 1940’s after the death of Mrs. Henry B. Thompson who had been its leading light. Carita was instrumental in having the charter reactivated.

G. Morris Whiteside II

ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING



53

Plans for the restoration of the house were prepared by G. Morris Whiteside II, a well-known architect and President of our Board. The restoration was continued under the direction of Albert Kruse following Mr. Whiteside's death.

National Register information

The four National Register of Historic Places criteria are:

1. **Criterion A, "Event,"** the property must make a contribution to the major pattern of American history.
2. **Criterion B, "Person,"** is associated with significant people of the American past.
3. **Criterion C, "Design/Construction,"** concerns the distinctive characteristics of the building by its architecture and construction, including having great artistic value or being the work of a master.
4. **Criterion D, "Information potential,"** is satisfied if the property has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to prehistory or history.

Hale Byrnes Nomination Form: <http://focus.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/72000290>

March 1984

New Dilemma for Cherished Landmark

The Delaware Society for the Preservation of Antiquities has reorganized to help revolutionary Hale-Byrnes House.

For a number of years this landmark had good caretakers, was well-kept, and was the scene of many luncheons and meetings of patriotic and other societies. But those caretakers had to leave; state and federal funds dwindled; and the Delaware Society for the Preservation of Antiquities (DSPA) gave the property to the State of Delaware.

What now? For safety, the state's Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs has locked up the valuable antiques in a storage room in Dover. They have allowed the University of Delaware to use the building for occasional classes in American Studies. And the building is in need of many repairs.

Seeing its latest dilemma, a group of admirers of this landmark felt that its rescue was a part of positive Americanism. Led by Mrs. Boden's daughter, Kip Kelso Boden, and such patriotic citizens as Sarah F. D. Miller, they have revitalized the Delaware Society for Preservation of Antiquities (defunct again since 1976) with the following new officers: President, George M. Whiteside III; First Vice President, Kip Boden; Second Vice President, Sarah F. D. Miller; Treasurer, Milton L. Draper, Sr, and Secretary, Mrs. Milton L. Draper, Jr.

March 20, 1984

Excerpt to Colwyn S. Krussman From Morris Whiteside

We are in dire need of the old "Antiquities" by-laws and complete records in your possession. Will you please respond by an immediate search of your artifacts to help us?

2001

Minutes. Feb 15, 2001. As a result of the inspection by the Dept.'s Landscaping and Grounds Div., a warning barrier has been installed in front of the collapsing retaining wall until such time as the wall can be reworked. Those inspecting the property assured us the roof is in good shape. We were given names of persons in both departments whom we can contact with any problems or questions.

Minutes. Oct 9, 2001

There are two windows (back) where the mullions holding the glass in are completely rotted away. On one the glass slipped out of place and she was able to push it back up, but there is very little holding the glass in. Daylight is visible around the pane on at least one side. Another window (front) has a hole in the pane. The front door and its frame have some holes which are retaining water. Mrs. Smith's son has said he will make a donation of temporary repairs to these and will paint both frame and door. Please let us know any decision on the windows as soon as possible. There is a distinct possibility those panes of glass could fall at any time.

Thank you. Barbara White, Corr. Sec.

Ongoing Efforts



2008-2010

Doors & Windows Repaired & Replaced.

2010

DSPA-HALE BYRNES

Delaware-based 501c-3 nonprofit

Our Mission is to protect, preserve, and promote the buildings and grounds of the historic Hale-Byrnes House, an eighteenth century Quaker farmstead offering educational public programming.

Vision Statement: DSPA's vision includes the careful and accurate maintenance, repair, restoration, and historically sensitive renovation of the Hale-Byrnes House and grounds.

As the southern anchor of the White Clay Creek Wild and Scenic River designation, we aspire to remain a small but friendly, historically accurate and welcoming meeting place for families, Revolutionary War scholars, fishermen and eco-tourists.

Wild and Scenic White Clay Creek







December 9, 2011

To Marco Boyce from Craig Coburn, DELDOT

Marco,

We have come up with a design plan that addresses the ponding water at both the driveway entrance as well as the pedestrian entrance to the Hale Byrnes House.

In summary, the design calls for a proposed 6 foot wide hot mix berm to redirect drainage toward the proposed drainage inlet in the grass shoulder. There is also a proposed roadside swale (between the wall and the edge of the pavement) leading from the pedestrian entrance down to the proposed drainage inlet. The average depth of this proposed swale ranges from 4 inches (at the pedestrian entrance) to 9 inches (at the proposed drainage inlet), so that visitors to the Hale Byrnes House will still be able to park their vehicles at the pedestrian entrance as they have in the past. Finally, this proposed basin will carry all of the roadside drainage underneath the driveway entrance (via a proposed 15” Reinforced concrete pipe) to an existing swale at the north end of the Hale Byrnes property which outfalls into the nearby White Clay Creek. It should be noted that this design allows us to stay clear of the “historic” brick wall of the Hale Byrnes House.



Ongoing Efforts



October 25, 2015

Summer 2015

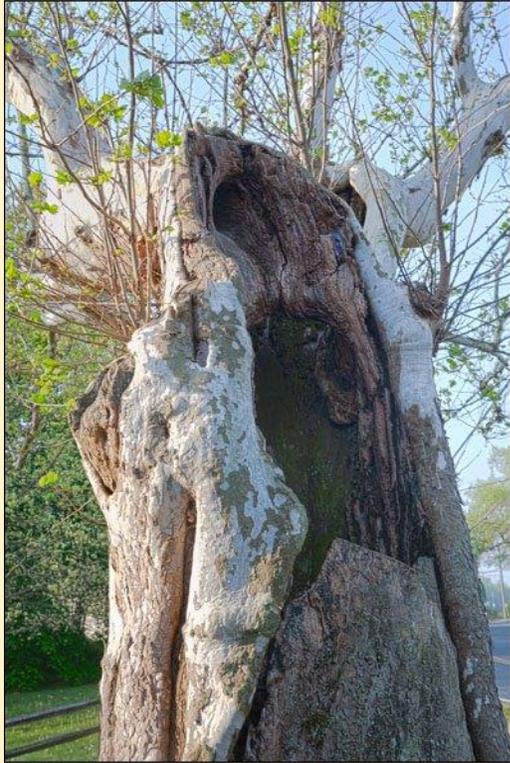
New Septic System & Leach Field



2015-South Attic Interior Attic Wall

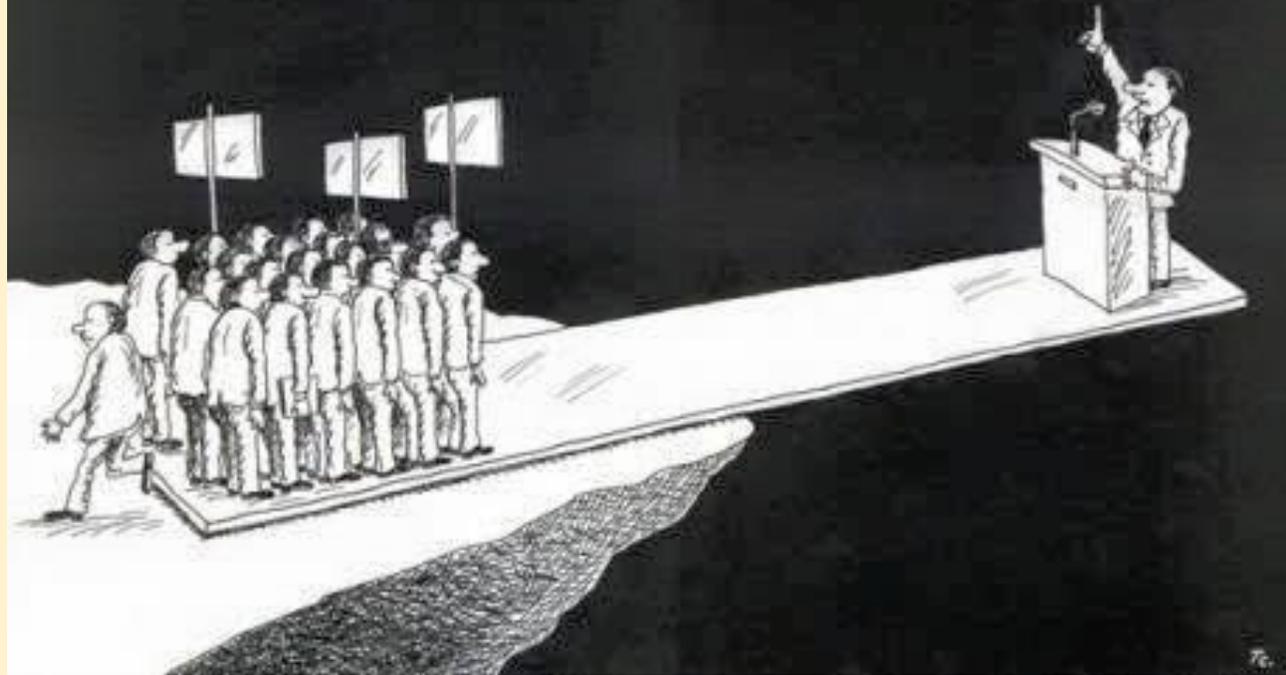


The Witness Tree



A contribution from the Tidewater Oil Company made it possible to save the old sycamore tree in front of the house. According to local legend, the generals waited for the council of war to begin in 1777.

**THE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW
THEIR TRUE POWER.**



Special Thanks to Donna Draper

*"Volunteers are not paid
-- not because they are
worthless, but because
they are priceless."*



2015

South Basement Fireplace Support Arches





IN LOVING MEMORY OF
OUR MEMBER

MRS. HARRY CLARK BODEN, IV

WHOSE DEDICATED EFFORTS
SAVED THE HALE-BYRNES HOUSE
FROM DESTRUCTION
AND WHOSE GENEROSITY TO THE
COOCH'S BRIDGE CHAPTER, NSDAR,
MADE IT POSSIBLE TO PRESENT
THIS HISTORIC BUILDING
TO THE
STATE OF DELAWARE



Preservation 50

[HTTP://WWW.NPS.GOV/HISTORY/LOCAL-LAW/NHPA1966.HTM](http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/NHPA1966.htm)

On October 15, 1966 the Historic Preservation Act created the National Register of Historic Places and the corresponding State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO).

Initially, the National Register consisted of the National Historic Landmarks designated before the Register's creation, as well as any other historic sites in the National Park system. Approval of the act, which was amended in 1980 and 1992, represented the first time the United States had a broad-based historic preservation policy]. The 1966 act required those agencies to work in conjunction with the SHPO and an independent federal agency, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), to confront adverse effects of federal activities on historic preservation

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_northern_New_Castle_County,_Delaware

National Register information

Status

Posted to the National Register of Historic Places on June 2, 1972

Reference number

72000290

Areas of significance

Industry; Commerce; Military; Architecture; Religion

Level of significance

State

Evaluation criteria

A - Event; C - Design/Construction; B - Person

Property type

Building

Historic function

Single dwelling

Current functions

Museum; Civic

Period of significance

1750-1799

Significant years

1750; 1772; 1777