



The Historian

A Man's Life – A Nation's History

A Newsletter for Friends of the Sanderson

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NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

Historic violins, mute for over 50 years, will sing again in Chadds Ford

The Sanderson Museum in Chadds Ford will open its 51st year on March 3, 2018 with their exhibit, "The Sanderson Strings, Singing Through the Years" which will feature the seven violins and two viola d'amores from the collection of Christian Carmack Sanderson.

Sanderson, a 1901 graduate of the West Chester Normal School (now West Chester University) and for whom the former Sanderson Hall was named, was a teacher and noted fiddler. His teaching career spanned 1901 to 1929 in small country schools.

Prior to the exhibit, the music room, laid out in the early 1970's, lacked focus on the very instruments that made Sanderson a local icon. In addition, an outdated environmental system threatened the integrity of the instruments.

In 2012, Museum Curator Chuck Ulmann spearheaded the research and fundraising for a state of the art HVAC system to better preserve the museum collection which includes original Wyeths, Civil War artifacts and letters as well as the vintage string instruments.

While most of the violins are well over 100 years old, their market value remains comparatively low. However, each violin illustrates aspects of violin making including truth in labeling and historic tariff acts, while others have associations with Sanderson's life as well as noted musicians such as the violin played by 19th century Norwegian concert violinist Ole Bull in Wilmington, DE on January 21, 1845.

Visitors to the museum exhibit will learn the difference between the terms violin and fiddle, and know why the antiqued Stradivarius label in their grandfather's 19th century violin is nothing to get excited about. They will also see one of Sanderson's violins which was found in three pieces, covered with dirt in a local barn, now expertly restored by Wilmington Luthier, Teal Wintsch in 2015.

Later, concerts will feature two of the restored violins which have not been heard since before Sanderson's death in 1966.

The three- year project and current exhibit was curated by former museum president Sally Denk Hoey of West Chester, who holds a Masters in Music from the School of Music at West Chester University. Hoey, who came to the museum in 1997, has long held the dream of hearing the violins sing again said, "These violins which were once heard by thousands of people were not meant to be mute."

ASK TO SEE

Chuck Ulmann, Curator

Chris Sanderson and the Old Fiddlers' Picnics, Part 2, and a Discovery!

I'm picking up where I left off; 1928 is the starting point where the Annual Contest of Lancaster & Chester County Old Fiddler's Association started to be held at Lenape Park.

Let's jump back to 1927 for just a minute. I was looking into a drawer in the library. What looked like a sign that Chris put on the front door when he was going to be away for a while was actually the cover of

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Ask to See from page 1

an Old Fiddler's scrapbook he had created. Inside it was the letter inviting him to participate and THE BUTTON! It was clipped to the letter! How many years have I looked at the cover and thought it was just a sign?!

Now to 1928. Chris and Dr. S. Lane Anderson from Newtown Square organized what turned out to be an annual Pocopson Valley Boys (PVB) event with over 500 participants attending. This was the start of having two Old Fiddlers Picnics in Chester County. Shortly after the start of the event at Lenape, John Gibney, the manager of Lenape Park, asked Chris to handle the advertising and other publicity functions. That included being the Master of Ceremony as well.

By 1931 almost 15000 people attended the Old Fiddlers Event in Parkesburg according to the Coatesville Record. Both picnics continued on with good crowds.

In 1932, Chris was asked to present an award to George Hensel, the creator of the first event in Parkesburg. It was in honor for the service Mr. Hensel provided to the Slumbering Groundhog Lodge of Quarryville in running the Old Fiddlers Event. The award was a wooden groundhog! Not a "measly little Punxsutawney groundhog but a Lancaster County product from the top of the Welsh Mountain in the Conestoga Valley and made from one of the few chestnut trees to which George Washington did NOT tie his horse!"

By this time the PVB started playing on radio station WDEL in Wilmington.

In 1933, the PVB held their 10th anniversary program in conjunction with the Lenape Old Fiddlers Picnic. Over 3000 people attended this program.

In 1934, no Fiddlers Picnic was held in Parkesburg. Several officers had passed away and the others were at a bit of loose ends (my opinion). The officers decided to visit an old fiddlers picnic in Damascus, VA

according to an article in the Coatesville Record. At the same time Chris and Dr. Anderson held the Old Fiddlers picnic at Lenape sponsored by the Old Fiddlers of Delaware County, Chester County and New Castle County.

In 1935, both Picnics were held and the Lenape Picnic continued to be held even after Chris passed away in 1966.

In 1937 the PVB Reunion and Old Fiddlers Picnic was held in a "monsoon" Chris explicitly thanked John Gibney for help in the bad weather. He also read a note from George Hensel about being unable to attend due to business and ill health.

We'll finish up the rest of the Old Fiddlers History in the next "Ask to See".



*A sneak peek at the Music Room's new set up thanks to volunteers Sally & Tom Hoey. Please be sure to see the invitation on the next page to attend the special opening event for **The Sanderson Strings Singing Through History** exhibit. You don't want to miss it!*



Join us as we celebrate the opening of our newest exhibit...

The Sanderson Strings

Singing Through History



Wednesday, April 18 from 5pm-7pm

Sanderson Museum

1755 Creek Road

Chadds Ford, PA

Light refreshments will be served.

Limited space available, RSVP today!

There is no admission to this event;
however donations are greatly appreciated.

Please **RSVP by Wednesday, April 11** to Mary Hewes at
executivedirector@sanderonmuseum.org or 610-388-6545.

Coming Soon: Hear the strings sing! Look for future information about a performance of the Sanderson Strings at a date and venue to be determined.

Christian C. Sanderson Museum
P.O. Box 153
Chadds Ford, PA 19317



Go Green and receive The Historian via email. Send your email address to executivedirector@sandersonmuseum.org. Thank you!



The Christian C. Sanderson Museum - A Man's Life, A Nation's History. An eclectic array of art, military memorabilia, presidential artifacts, local history and collectibles. History like you've never seen it before! Open March through November, Saturday and Sunday, 12pm to 4pm or by appointment.

Sanderson Museum
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Chadds Ford, PA 19317

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