

# In the Spotlight

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## LIVING HISTORY



by Gene  
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### Newlin Township: A river runs through an historic region

The Brandywine Creek has seen numerous generations of Indians, settlers, businessmen and explorers roaming its banks. Along its west branch sits Newlin Township, named for Nicholas Newlin (1630-1699), who received a deed for land from William Penn. The Township's expanse includes parts of historic districts, structures on the National Register of Historic Places and a nature preserve. If you drive northward from Kennett Square on Route 162, you'll be passing through the township, which helped demarcate a boundary between two early North American colonies.

The township's website mentions the Lenni-Lenape Indians, who inhabited the area for centuries before European settlers arrived. One of their best known—a woman called Indian Hannah—lived in the region; she is buried on the grounds of what was once called the Embreeville Poorhouse, situated on property of the former Embreeville Hospital. Local artist Adrian Martinez did a magnificent re-creation of Indian Hannah in one of his paintings. Another woman who grew up in the vicinity, Helen Murray Sipala, lived in the house which is now the Newlin Township building. The Murray family's story is highlighted in Helen's booklet "Chester County, Newlin Township, Embreeville, Pennsylvania: A small spot in Chester County... A large part of our lives" which describes their time here from the mid-1930s into the 1950s, with photographs and narratives of the hospital, the nearby Potter's Field and other sites.

Mills were a critical part of colonial-era America, grinding corn and other grains, providing food for thousands and even creating the paper upon which the Declaration of Independence was printed. One of them—the Embreeville Mill—is a prominent feature of the landscape in Newlin Township, its mill race



"Indian Hannah" painting by artist Adrian Martinez.

flowing toward the picturesque Embreeville Bridge, a 220-foot concrete structure built in 1923 by the Dunleavy Brothers of Coatesville. A plaque on the inside of the bridge tells its story; the one for the Mill is just as interesting. Embreeville Mill was built in the mid-18th century; the township website mentions a 1756 deed listing a corn gristmill and sawmill in the village. Both structures are captured beautifully in a painting by artist Jacalyn Beam. Many of the buildings in the Historic District date to the period between 1822- 1842. The Mill operates today as a retail outlet; the company website notes it as a distributor of "animal feed, hay, bedding and supplies." The September 2021 floods along the Brandywine and other creeks damaged many structures. The Mill was out of operation for a while, but it is now open.

The township includes another interesting place—the Northbrook Historic District, spread across parts of Newlin, Pocopson and West Bradford townships. There are approximately 14 buildings in the district, most of which date to the 18th and 19th century, added to the National



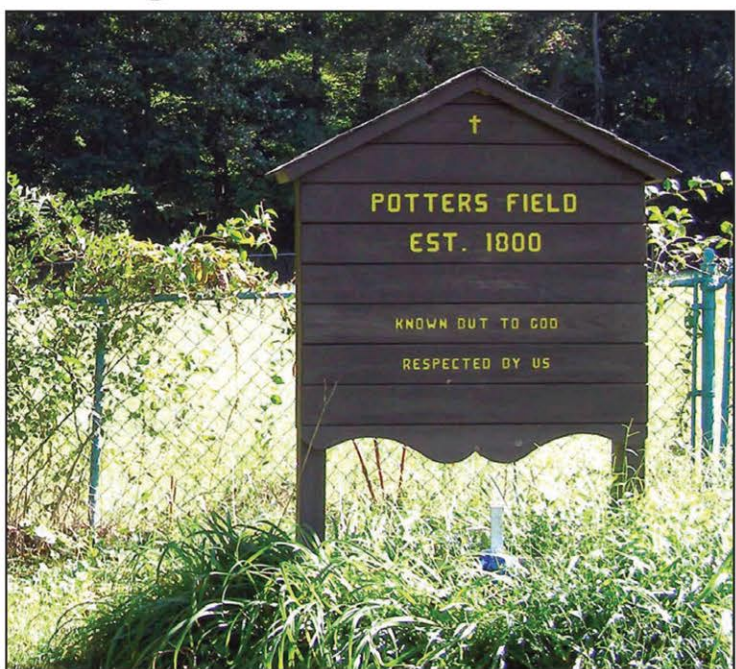
Indian Hannah historical marker in Newlin Township.

Register of Historic Places in 1985.

Newlin Township was the setting for two explorers— Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon—who came here in 1764 to resolve the long-standing border dispute between the colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland. This dispute actually led to armed conflict—dubbed "Cresap's War"—which raged from 1730-1738 as descendants of the Penn and Calvert families attempted to stake their claims for land in the region. Mason and Dixon were hired to survey the area to produce a line both groups could agree on. A stone marks their observation point. They stayed at the Harlan House (circa 1724), believed to be the first house constructed in the township. The journal of the two men (which includes a slight misspelling) mentions their stay: "Fixed on the House of Mr. John Harland's (about 31 miles West of Philadelphia) to bring

our Instruments to..." Other historic structures are nearby, including the Hayes Mill House (circa 1780).

This area has a few famous personalities, including the noted botanist William Baldwin (1779-1819), whose work on the plant genus *Cyperaceae* influenced many other botanists of his day. Baldwin's plant collections were later included in those of the Darlington Herbarium of West Chester University, Kew Gardens in London and the Los Angeles County Arboretum. Josiah Harlan (1799-1871) was an adventurer and world traveler who visited the little explored country of Afghanistan. His exploits are believed to be described in "The Man Who Would Be King" by Rudyard Kipling. Old timers will recognize the name of another King— King Ranch. The King Ranch in Texas is one of the largest cattle ranches in the United States. It has a place



Potter's Field sign denoting unmarked graves for patients from the Embreeville Hospital.



Helen Murray Sipala's home, now the Newlin Township building.



"Embreeville Mill" by artist Jacalyn Beam.



"Embreeville Bridge" by artist Jacalyn Beam.

in Chester County history as the owners purchased land in Newlin Township decades ago for cattle grazing. The Natural Lands Trust acquired some of this land and turned it into the ChesLen Preserve, which offers miles of hiking and nature trails just off Route 162.

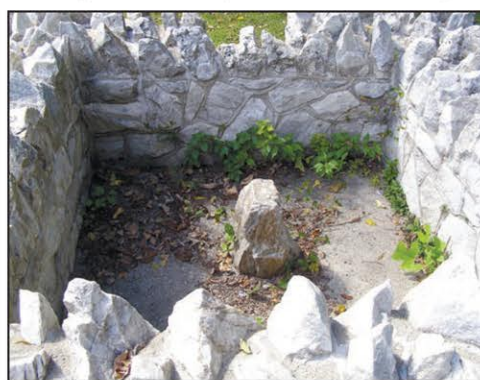
Newlin Township has a number of interesting places to see, historic sites to explore which will allow you a better understanding of the rich heritage of the region. For more information, please visit [www.newlintwp.org](http://www.newlintwp.org).

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William Baldwin, botanist.



The Stargazer's Stone where Mason and Dixon conducted their surveys.