

*The Friends of Old Saint Thomas*  
*at Ivy Mills*

Volume 19, No.1  
e-mail: [fost@fost.us](mailto:fost@fost.us)

NEWSLETTER

Spring/Summer 2012  
[www.fost.us](http://www.fost.us)

### Mass at Ivy Mills in May

Before St. Thomas the Apostle Church was built, parishioners attended Mass and received the sacraments in St. Mary's Chapel in the Willcox home. On Sunday, May 20, eighty FOST members and guests gathered in this historic setting for Mass celebrated by our pastor Rev. Francis Groarke.

The original wooden altar, Willcox chalice and paten, and what is likely the original St. Thomas the Apostle Roman missal were loaned by the Archdiocese for this special event. Also on display was the wooden tabernacle once used in our church and likely at Ivy Mills. These sacred artifacts remind us of those who came before us – unpretentious, dedicated Catholics whose faith was an intrinsic part of their lives and with whom we will always have a connection. The spirit of those early Catholics was with us as Father reminded the congregation we are all part of the Ivy Mills legacy, and just as our forbearers discovered: the road is not always easy, the obstacles may be many, but faith endures.

Thanks to Father Francis for officiating, to Maria McAnulty and Kathy Davoine for providing the beautiful music, and to all our guests for being a part of this memorable event. An informal reception followed the Mass.



### 2012 Tours

You too can immerse yourself in your Saint Thomas heritage. The free tours of the Willcox Homestead and St. Thomas Historic District start Sunday, June 24, and continue on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month through October. The two family-friendly sites are open 1PM to 4PM (last tour at 3:45). Our volunteer guides take you through the centuries, and offer numerous photo opportunities.

Start at either site, but chronological accuracy will take you to Ivy Mills first. Stroll through the grounds and family cemetery there, and explore some of the outbuildings.

At Saint Thomas, a small 19<sup>th</sup> century country church, design details are striking. Outbuildings with their own uses are unlike today's. The two cemeteries (Saint Thomas in the front, Saint Mary's in the back) were opened in 1856; the headstones and markers tell

the tale of the families and pastors who came before us. See especially the veterans' gravesites, marked with American flags in war-medallion holders.

The history and preservation stories of St. Thomas at Ivy Mills parish are yours for the asking.

### 2012 TOUR SCHEDULE

Free guided tours

*Ivy Mills Homestead & Saint Thomas at Ivy Mills*  
*Historic District*

**4<sup>TH</sup> Sunday of each month**

**June through October**

1:00 PM to 3:45 PM.

June 24, July 28, August 26,  
September 23, October 28

### Brownies Visit Old Saint Thomas

Two stories came together on March 12, 2012. St. Thomas Brownie Troop 51377 celebrated American Girl Scouting's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary by visiting the parish Historic District. The girls had earned money by selling pies, and decided on their own to donate it to FOST. They took a guided tour of the 1852 church and the 1874 rectory, thus learning about parish history. They had fun with toys from FOST's 19<sup>th</sup> century toy collection which children their age would have played with when the old church and rectory were built. They shared facts about Girl Scout history which each Brownie had researched. Great fun for all!

### In Memoriam

FOST was saddened by the death of member Anne R. Fox earlier this year. Anne was one of the first members of FOST. A Guide *Emerita* since 2010, Anne was one of the initial FOST/Ivy Mills Guides and her gentle manner and dedication were an inspiration to all.

### Help Needed

**URGENT NEED** for **Guides**: Training provided, no prior guide experience necessary. Tour dates to suit your schedule. **Gardeners**: At your convenience, as little or as much time as you choose. Light work.

**Vigil Candle**: Light the vigil candle in the 1852 church once a week; entails use of a step ladder. Please call Bette Popiel at 610-358-4835.

**The Friends wish to thank the following for their financial support from April 16, 2011 through April 15, 2012**

M/M Robert Archer	M/M Daniel Donovan	M/M Samuel J. Lewis, III	M/M Fred Reichle
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Brownie Troop #51377	Mr. Alexander Guidotti	M/M John McManus, Sr.	M/M Lawrence Taylor
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M/M Arthur DiNicola	M/M Charles Kramaric	M/M Walter Picher	
Mrs. Anne M. Docherty	M/M Anthony Latini, Jr.	M/M Philip Popiel	

***REQUESTS***

As summer draws near it is important for us to remind visitors that humidity and moisture are extremely detrimental to the 1852 church. When visiting, if you open windows or notice windows already open, please be sure to close them carefully when leaving.

The search for **old church bulletins** continues. FOST is interested in collecting any old St Thomas *Bulletins*, regardless of year or condition. If you have one or more, please leave them in an envelope addressed to FOST on the table in the rear of the 1852 church.

***NOTES & DATES***

- As a good neighbor, FOST participated in the Chester Heights Fair on April 28. This year's event benefited Chester Heights Camp Meeting which recently suffered two devastating fires
- St Thomas School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Heritage Day - March 8
- St Thomas/Ivy Mills Guides breakfast meeting in the 1874 Rectory - June 9
- St Thomas School 4<sup>th</sup> Grade at Ivy Mills - June 13
- Tours start June 24

**YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

**Memberships and the Honor and Memorial programs are the PRIMARY SOURCES OF INCOME for the Friends.** The monies derived from these programs enable **FOST** to continue to care for and maintain the 1852 church, 1874 rectory and outbuildings. Please consider joining **FOST** today. Fill out the membership form and mail with your check to the address listed below. Participating in the Memorial and Honor programs honors or memorializes individuals. For donations of \$25 or more, individuals or groups may enroll the name of a living or deceased person in the Old Saint Thomas Memorial Book, displayed on special occasions. Recipients are notified by mail, and donors receive a receipt.

*The Friends of Old Saint Thomas at Ivy Mills*  
**PO Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017**

Family Membership \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Membership \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*For Donors only: Please check one*

*Receipt sent to all members and donors*

\_\_\_\_\_ The donation is in **MEMORY** of \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acknowledgement Card to** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address** \_\_\_\_\_

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## NEWSLETTER

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### **Before Ivy Mills: From the Old World to the New**

*In past newsletters we have detailed the circumstances of the founding of our parish in the Willcox home and the subsequent growth of the Catholic community at Ivy Mills. A question often posed during FOST Tours is "Who were the first Catholics to come here?" A brief review of New World colonization answers the question and describes the situation before Ivy Mills came to be. The following paragraphs are excerpted from the Guide Notes for Ivy Mills/Old Saint Thomas Guides.*

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Being aware of the chronology of Europeans' coming to the western hemisphere helps us to understand the differences among the New World colonies of the three principal European nations (Spain, France, and England). The Spanish came first, to the South; then the French to the North; lastly, the English to the Middle colonies, including Pennsylvania. Founding differences still affect those areas, even after 500-plus years.

**The Spanish:** Following Columbus's arrival in 1492, the Spanish were the first to attempt colonization and exploitation of the new lands. Disappointed not to find India with its highly valued spices and fabrics, they were elated to find instead enormous quantities of gold and silver, but part of their endeavor was to bring Christianity (not yet divided into Protestant and Catholic camps) to the peoples living here at the time. The Spanish first concentrated their efforts in South and Central America and later worked their way north to Florida and points west. Franciscan missionaries accompanied them.

The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) was founded in Spain in 1540 and for a time was the dominant missionary order. The Jesuits accompanied mid-16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish adventurers as they explored the New World. Jesuits were present at the founding of St. Augustine in Florida in 1565, were in New Mexico in 1598, and by the 1690s had founded numerous missions in the Southwest. Spanish military and political leaders were much less committed to the welfare of Native Americans than the Jesuits were. Colonization and evangelization results, outwardly successful, actually established a highly unjust social system for Native Americans in both North and South America.

**The French:** French explorers and fur traders first came to Canada at the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The French goal was aimed more toward commercial exploitation, chiefly furs, though every colony in New France was to include Catholic evangelization. The missionary Recollect order came first to Canada to evangelize Native Americans who were essential to the fur trade. French Jesuits came in 1611. These Jesuits developed special relationships with Native Americans, learning their language and caring for their needs along with evangelizing them. The church was very close to the seat of power in Canada, and until 1663 the church was "the practical master of Canada" and the Jesuits were a major part of the church's presence there. That closeness was a significant element of English Protestant colonists' hatred of Canada, and of their repeated attempts to absorb, if not conquer it.

**The English:** In contrast to the limited vision of both the Spanish and the French, whose main aims were economic exploitation along with evangelization, the English sought settlements, well after English Protestants had separated from Rome. In North America there was an abundant supply of commodities including timber and fur that were in scarce supply at home. After initial abortive efforts, the English approach stressed family and community settlements. This tactic was safer, made settlements easier to govern and, in the long run, yielded a richer amount of those desired commodities than either the French or Spanish approach. It should be added that the English were less concerned with evangelization of Native Americans than the French and Spanish were.

The English first settled in Virginia (1607, Church of England), then Massachusetts (1620, Pilgrim Separatists; 1630, Puritans), then Maryland (1634, Catholic). English Jesuits were among the first settlers to arrive in Maryland. Motivation in each of these colonies was minimally for evangelization, and the Protestant founders of Virginia and Massachusetts were uninterested in religious toleration. The colony of Maryland was founded as a commercial enterprise, but to attract settlers, the notion of religious toleration was added: "religion was not to get in the way of man's other pursuits." Lord Calvert was Catholic, and had thought toleration would bring flocks of Catholics investors and settlers, but few actually

invested or settled. Maryland began and continued under varying religious rules, with Protestants eventually forcing a change, so that Maryland adopted the Church of England as the established church in 1692, putting Catholics there at risk of losing everything. **“An act to prevent the increase of Popery in the Province”** was passed in 1704, making the practice of the Catholic faith very difficult in Baltimore and environs. Consequently, the Jesuits moved to Bohemia in northern Maryland to escape the close scrutiny of the colony’s leaders. From Bohemia Manor the Jesuits continued their outreach to Catholics in Pennsylvania where William Penn’s colony was founded on much stronger principles of religious toleration.

To understand the need for toleration in the colonies, it is necessary to consider the situation in Europe and especially in England. There, persecution of persons who refused to join the Church of England (known here as the Anglican or Episcopalian Church) was the norm. To refuse to attend C of E services or to refuse to pay the tax levied in its support, or to conduct or attend any other religious services was against the law and punishable by imprisonment, flogging or other physical abuse, or confiscation of goods and property. In France, the German principalities and other small jurisdictions on the Continent, similar penalties were inflicted on recalcitrant believers.

William Penn’s solution was to found a colony in the New World on the basis of faith in Christ, which included toleration for all denominations. Because of his family’s relationship with King Charles II (Penn received the colony from the king in payment for a debt owed to Penn’s late father), Penn was in a unique position to provide a safe haven for his fellow Quakers and others subject to persecution in England and on the Continent.

Thus, at its founding, the dominant religious group in Pennsylvania was the Society of Friends, although Catholics and other Protestant groups were welcome. But it was decades before the policy of religious toleration was fully accepted by many Quakers. In Philadelphia, strife between them and Anglicans lasted until well after the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and Catholics faced difficulties until after the mid-1730s.

In Concord Township a different sentiment prevailed: there is no known evidence of sectarian strife. St. John’s Episcopal Church, founded in 1702, had harmonious dealings with the local Quakers and twenty years later when Catholics Thomas and Elizabeth Willcox arrived, the same cordial atmosphere prevailed.

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## FOST Notes

The mini-series **“Political Animals”** featuring Sigourney Weaver aired this past August on the USA network. Some scenes were filmed at Ivy Mills, shown in the last episode as the main character’s long-time family home. FOST Committee members were among guests invited to bring a favorite dish, enjoy the evening, and view the final episode on an outdoor screen there.

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In 2011, **FOST** was one of the eleven historical/cultural groups in western Delaware County which formed the collaborative group within Concord Township Historical Society **“Legacies and Lessons, Western Delaware County Presents the Civil War at 150”**. At an October luncheon at the Union League in Philadelphia, **History Affiliates** recognized it with a “History in Pennsylvania (HIP) award as the year’s outstanding all-volunteer program.

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**Volunteers** have a positive impact on our ministry. Their willingness to donate time and talent is crucial to our success. FOST hosted a **“Thank You” breakfast** on October 27<sup>th</sup> in the 1874 rectory. **More volunteers are always needed!** Call Bette Popiel at 610-358-4835 to see how you can help, or visit [www.fost.us](http://www.fost.us) for detailed information.

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**FOST** is in the process of raising funds to move forward with the goal of air conditioning the 1852 church. A **Christmas ornament** depicting the 1852 church has been reissued. This lovely memento is solid brass with a 24K gold finish, attractively packaged, and includes a brief history of the church.

**The cost of this unique ornament is \$15.00**, and it will look perfect on your Christmas tree. It makes a lovely gift for parishioners, students/alumni, couples married in the old church.

**Ornaments will be sold in the social hall after all Masses on the first two Sundays in December (1&2 and 8&9).** You can also order on line at [www.fost.us](http://www.fost.us) or obtain an order form in the church narthex. **For pre-orders, pick-up is the same as December sale days.**

**Please help FOST by joining or by participating in the Honor & Memorial Program. See details in the brochure in the Narthex or on-line at [www.fost.us](http://www.fost.us). Or simply make a donation. Send to: FOST, P.O. Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017. Thank you!**