



HISTORY MADE PERSONAL

Historical Wyeth-Sanderson Map of Chester County

By Gene Pisasale



Standing tall on a wooden easel in the entryway of the Sanderson Museum is a framed map, its blue trim surrounding red, green and yellow highlights calling attention to the people, places and events which have made the 768 square miles of Chester County so special in the history of our country. Fifteen people and 45 places of interest are depicted, drawn by the artist Andrew Wyeth with historical references by Chris Sanderson.

The map was first conceived when the group Friends of the Brandywine discussed generating an historical map of the area. Rolund Grubb, President of the Friends wrote to Sanderson on October 19, 1935 indicating that he'd shared the idea with personnel of the Atlantic Refining Company, who'd expressed an interest in sponsoring the project. Although the company eventually didn't finalize their support, N.C. Wyeth agreed to make arrangements for its printing. A limited number of the maps were produced by the Beck Engraving Company of Philadelphia in 1937. Several copies from the first printing were recently donated to the museum and are available for sale to the public. The original can be found in the School Room on the second floor.

Of the historical personalities shown on the map, most notable are William Penn, Bayard Taylor and Major General Anthony Wayne. Penn received a land grant from the British Crown to fulfill an obligation owed to his father and established the first counties (Chester, Delaware and Bucks) in what was to become the colony of Pennsylvania. Bayard Taylor, author of "The Story of Kennett", world traveler, diplomat and minister to Russia and Germany is depicted in the upper right hand corner. Anthony Wayne fought with Washington's forces at the Battle of the Brandywine and other engagements of the Revolutionary War. William "Buffalo Bill" Cody is there too, a legend who fought in the Civil War, scouted the Western territories and frequently visited West Chester and Coatesville. Baseball great of yesteryear Herb Pennock, who was born in Kennett Square, pitched in five World Series and inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown stands proud on the left side, grinning with his ball held high.

The places shown are equally as fascinating. Wyeth skillfully sketched miniatures of Valley Forge, the Star Gazer's Stone (where Mason and Dixon made astronomical observations to delineate portions of the famed Mason-Dixon Line), the Lincoln (Coventry) Forge, second iron forge built in Pennsylvania (owned by Mordecai Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln's ancestor), Longwood Gardens and Brandywine Battlefield. Chris Sanderson often gave lectures about the Battle of the Brandywine to groups in the region. Signposts along the trail of history include the birthplaces of two signers of the Declaration of Independence (Thomas McKean and John Morton), a gathering place for escaped slaves on the "Underground Railroad" (now the Chester County Visitors Center), along with Phoenixville, where 75% of the cannons used by the Union to win the Civil War (Griffen guns) and the first cannon fired at the Battle of Gettysburg were made at the Phoenixville Iron Works in northeastern Chester County.

Chester County has blossomed over the centuries as a vibrant region with an abundance of resources, nourishing the development of numerous industries, artists, scientists and statesmen. Stop by and see this special drawing, as it stands, greeting visitors inside the Sanderson Museum.

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. Visit us at 1755 Creek Road (old Route 100), Chadds Ford, just north of Route 1, or at www.sandersonmuseum.org. Also open by appointment, call 610-388-6545. For information on the author of this article, visit www.GenePisasale.com.