



Old Morlatton Village MESSENGER

The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County

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CHRISTMAS TEA WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2007



The Bunn House in Douglassville, home of Robert and Jeanne Sharp, will be the site of the annual Christmas Tea.

This was the home of the well known premier master carpenters of Berks County, Jacob Bunn and his son John Bunn. The large body of their work encompasses the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and can be found throughout Berks County and parts of Chester County. Notable early examples are the Fisher Mansion, St. Gabriel's Chapel and Ridgewood Farm.

This house consists of an early c. 1760's stuccoed stone section in the rear, two and a half stories with two rooms on each floor. The slightly banked cellar is very interesting with its barrel vaulted root cellar and well/spring, all indicators of an earlier vintage than the rest of the house.

The main section of this beautiful house was built by master carpenter Jacob Bunn about 1790. The late Georgian front addition of clapboard sheathed

logs features a beautifully fashioned front entry with fluted pilasters, fanlight, and raised panel door. All six over nine windows are crowned with wooden keystone centered cornices.

The crowning feature of the home is a truly magnificent carved and paneled second floor parlor. The room features dentil moldings and pitch pedimented windows with a mantel and overmantel flanked by a pedimented cupboard. These rich and rare architectural details in a second floor parlor are a Bunn trademark and can be seen in the Fisher house in Oley and the Hain house near Wernersville. A Bunn characteristic was a very elegant upstairs parlor or master bedroom with ornately carved fireplace and flanking cupboards.



Behind the main house is a charming summer kitchen. With an incised date of 1804 and the initials JB this full two and a half story structure appears to be earlier than the date incised. John Bunn and

his cousin Hannah Brower married about this time and the building was obviously remodeled and made into a small but comfortable home with its simple but elegant English style fireplace, mantle and flanking cupboards on the second floor. It was perfect for a newly married couple and later ideal for the grandparents when the son's family grows and inherits the farm as did son John.

Susan Miller-Speros

Dedicated to maintaining and preserving historically and archetecurally significant properties



MEET YOUR PRESIDENT JOHN HIBSCHMAN

1. What initially sparked your interest in the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County?

Discussions over the years with Jim Elliott, past Trust president, and Priscilla Walsky, long time board member, in the context of my interest in history and Eastern Pennsylvania history in particular.

2. How have the historical buildings affected the areas in which they are located?

I believe that they greatly enrich the areas in which they are located by providing a tangible link to the past architecturally and culturally.

3. How significant is the historical interest in the community?

The general community has little interest in history. However, there is significant interest among a relatively limited group of persons that can be expanded to others by contact with the Trust's historical programs and buildings.

4. Do you receive support from local organizations?

The local communities do provide support. We have established a good working relationship with Amity Township with respect to many matters of common interest. We have also over the years received significant project grants from Berks County and the Greenway Association that have helped the Trust fund maintenance projects and develop plans for the use and preservation of the Morlatton area.

5. Do you feel the buildings have become a tourist interest?

The buildings have not become as much of a tourist interest as I would like. We have not been able to promote them enough to the tourist industry and open them enough on a regular basis to accommodate casual travelers. However, we are working on this and, I believe, making significant progress in that direction with activities we sponsored at

Morlatton last summer and this fall. I believe that the Keim reunion held at the Keim Farmstead a few weeks ago was a significant event in bringing that property to the attention of the public. The members of the Trust have worked very hard to open buildings to the public for specific events and upon request.

6. What is your greatest challenge?

My most significant challenge is broadening the base of support for the Trust, both in volunteers and funding. The Trust has much work to do to preserve and maintain the buildings and needs more workers and funding to support that work. As in many organizations, a very small nucleus of dedicated volunteers does most of the work, and I constantly fear the group will burn out without having replacements to step forward. It is an unfortunate fact that we are all getting older and there are not many younger persons stepping forward to fill our shoes. Finding future volunteers and dedicated members is as much of a challenge for the future as finding funding sources.

7. As President, what is your goal looking forward?

My goals are to find funding sources and members to provide support for the hiring of a professional staff.



CHRISTMAS JOY DANCE AND SONG

Begin your holiday season **Sunday afternoon, November 25**, at 4:00 pm in the White Horse Inn with a celebration of eighteenth century dance and song. The festivity will begin with a demonstration of dancing by the Amity Colonial Dancers followed by candle lighting and carol singing. Cider and cookies will be served. Leave the hurly-burly of the twenty-first century and enjoy the ambiance of a slower, simpler time. It is the perfect way to begin the Christmas season.



THE KEIM FAMILY REUNION

October 13 and 14 was the perfect weekend for the Keim family reunion. Upwards of 300 family members came from all points across the United States to find and strengthen their roots through conversation and visits to the two Keim cemeteries. Crafters plied their wares throughout the farmstead while the Oley Boy Scout Troop sold grilled hotdogs and beverages.



MOUNS JONES FAIR REVISITED

The weather couldn't have been nicer to welcome back the Mouns Jones Fair. Faint whiffs of wood smoke coupled with the colorful autumn plants decorating the area plus the craft vendors and reenactors created a festive atmosphere. Plenty of hotdogs, barbeque and drinks were available at the Bridge Keeper's House. Many, many jars of delicious homemade and unusual jams, jellies, marmalades and chutneys were sold while the bake table did a thriving business. Inside the Mouns Jones House the Living Historians were busy preparing mouth watering food in the open-hearth fireplace and beehive oven. Up in the White Horse Inn desserts were served coupled with a special presentation by the Amity Colonial Dancers.



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DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday, November 29th 4:00 pm
Christmas Joy at the White Horse Inn

Wednesday, December 5th
Christmas Tea– 411 Old Philadelphia
Pike, Douglassville

Wednesday, December 12th 5:30 pm
Board Meeting, White Horse Inn

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* The winner of the “Courthouse Steps” *
* quilt was Phoebe Hopkins. *
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Editor –Priscilla Walsky
Contributors –John Hibschman, Linda
Hughes, Susan Miller-Speros
Photography –Tom Keim, Larry Walsky

