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The Challenge

PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

Whitemarsh Hall *The Estate of Edward T. Stotesbury*

A Presentation by Charles Zwicker and Edward Zwicker

Thursday, December 4th, 2008 – 7:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Bethlehem Pike & East Mill Road in Flourtown, PA

Whitemarsh Hall, known as “the Versailles of America,” was one of the largest and most exquisite estates in North America.

Edward Townsend Stotesbury, one of the wealthiest Philadelphians in the early twentieth century, commissioned renowned architect Horace Trumbauer to build the one-hundred-forty-seven room mansion in 1916 on three hundred acres just outside Philadelphia. Whitemarsh Hall, which took five years to build at an estimated cost of \$10 million with all the furnishings, was a wedding present for his second wife.

Please join us for this presentation as STHS welcomes back Charles Zwicker and Edward Zwicker, who will present a history of this once-magnificent home. The presentation will include new photos and updated information, and will focus on Whitemarsh Hall's construction, heyday years of the 1920's, the multiple impacts of the Great

Depression, Stotesbury's death, and subsequent ownership during the last four decades.

STHS Board members *Charles and Edward Zwicker* authored *Whitemarsh Hall – the Estate of Edward T. Stotesbury*.

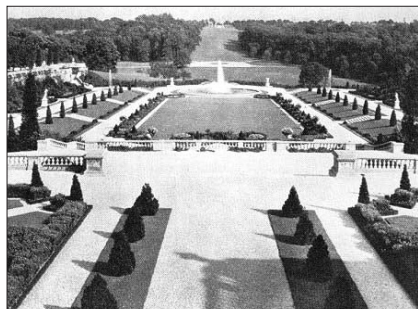
They actively research Springfield Township history and conduct presentations on topics of local interest. They have also authored Springfield Township, Montgomery County in conjunction with the Springfield Township Historical Society.

For anyone who remembers Whitemarsh Hall, or those who are interested in a part of Springfield Township history, this promises to be an exciting and educational program. The public is invited to

attend, and there is no charge for admission. Reservations are not required. Light refreshments will be served.

For more information call 215-233-4600

Views of Whitemarsh Hall



President's Corner

The Black Horse Inn was my topic of conversation in the last issue of *The Challenge*, where I recapped the building's long-running history, and the work done in the past several years to preserve and restore it. Since that issue there was a wonderful event held there at the end of September, *Heritage Day*, to celebrate these efforts with the public and to share in the vision of what the future holds for it. It was at Heritage Day that some people approached me with a great idea to further preserve the inn's history, the compilation of an oral history of the Black Horse Inn by those that remember it through its recent history!

The Black Horse Inn is over 260 years old, built around 1744 by Abraham Wakerly to serve farmers coming into Flourtown to have their grain ground into flour and meal, and later to serve travelers of the booming stage coach trade that ran between Philadelphia and Bethlehem. With the expansion of the inn in 1833 by Jacob Meninger it became one of the largest structures in the township at that time. For this reason it would serve the township residents in many capacities, both for public and private events. The McCloskey family would be the last proprietors of the inn, running it from 1880 until

1990. It is of this last period in the inn's history that current township residents will have many memories and stories.

Do you remember cattle grazing in the side yard of the inn, as late as the 1980s? How about the old wooden barn with the Black Horse weather vane on the roof that sat on Bethlehem Pike next to the inn? Ever enjoy a cold beverage at the bar with friends and neighbors? Did you have a meal there with your family in the dining room? Were you a friend or acquaintance of the McCloskey family who owned it through three generations?

A building by itself does not make history. The people and events that interacted with it define that. Regardless of your connection with the Black Horse Inn, no matter how large or small, we want to hear from you! You can contact the Society at 215-233-4600 or call me directly at 215-913-2778 to set up time for us to document your stories.

Please pass on the word about this project to your friends and family who may not be members of the Historical Society, as we want to include all those who have memories and stories of the Black Horse Inn for future generations to hear and enjoy!

Keeping the past in the present,

Ed Zwicker

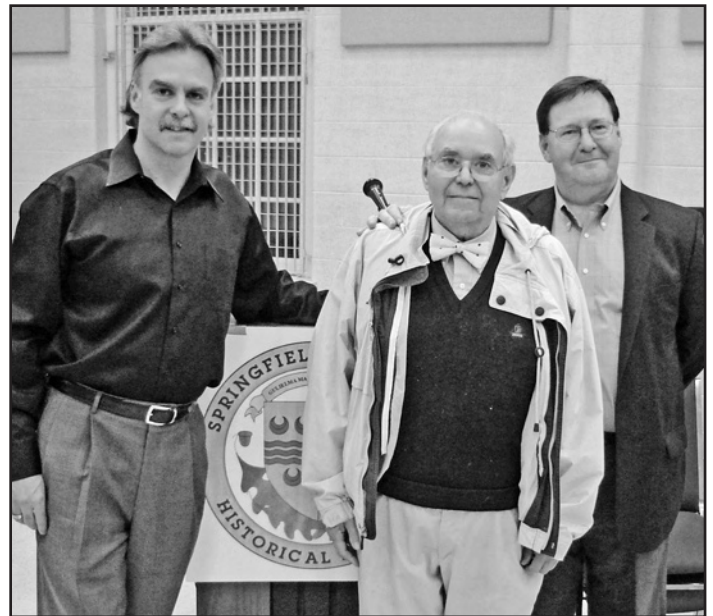
Community Day



Historical Society board members *Dolores Jordan* (left) and *Barb Coleman* offered information about society membership, our archives and upcoming events at Community Day presented recently by the Flourtown-Erdenheim Enhancement Association. Passersby enjoyed looking at pictures from our archives. The historical society's participation in Community Day was made possible by *Dan Helwig, Inc.* *Christine Smith*, an STHS board member, also assisted at the table.

Recent Donations

This past summer Chestnut Hill resident, *Andrew Jarvis*, donated a flat file drawer to the archives for the storage of site plans, building plans, maps, etc. Our existing flat file drawer was filled to capacity and was too small to accommodate many of our oversized flat items. The staff and volunteers of our archive are very appreciative of this much needed storage unit.



Ed Zwicker, president of the Springfield Township Historical Society, welcomed *Robert Skaler* (center) and *Tom Keels*, authors of "*Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square*" published by Arcadia Publishing Company to the historical society's general membership meeting. Keels and Skaler shared anecdotes about Rittenhouse Square's personalities and institutions as well as its history.

HERITAGE DAY AT THE BLACK HORSE INN

Visitors to *Heritage Day at the Black Horse Inn* on September 28th took a step back in time to enjoy colonial crafts and music, while looking ahead to the future. The event at the inn, a Flouertown landmark which is currently undergoing renovations, was planned by the *Black Horse Inn Advisory Committee*, the *Springfield Township Historical Society* and the *Friends of Historic Bethlehem Pike*, to celebrate the completion of the exterior renovations and the beginning of the last phase of fundraising for the inn's interior as well as to thank contributors.

Highlights of the festivities included making Native American and colonial-style toys and visits with re-enactors *Carl Closs* who portrayed George Washington; *Noah Lewis*, who did living history portrayals of Revolutionary War hero Ned Hector, and *Joe Becton* who appeared as a conductor on the Underground Railroad.

Seated on the porch of the inn, colonial musicians *Jan & John Haigis* entertained guests as they went inside to hear glass armonica player *Carolinn Skyler*, and look around the first floor, where there was information on the Black Horse Inn and other inns along Bethlehem Pike. A frame of a staircase has been built, and a pressed metal ceiling is in place enabling a visitor to envision what the interior will look like after it is completed.



At a podium on the side porch of the inn, speakers included *State Rep. Larry Curry* and historical society president *Ed Zwicker*, among others.

Zwicker and historical society vice president *Charles Zwicker* talked with visitors at an information table and historical society and Friends of Historic Bethlehem Pike members were among the many volunteers who helped at Heritage Day.

Curry presented awards to winners of writing contests for students at Springfield Township High School and Springfield Township Middle School. Winners of the high school contest – *Jenny Uehling*, *Lina Sorg*, *Rebecca Sherwood* and *Scott Vierick* – each read portions of Jenny's first place short story, "*Spying History*." The Springfield Township Middle School winners were *Aaron Caplan*, first prize; *Michaela Fallon*, second prize; *Kelli Bray*, third prize, and *Billy Sorg*, merit award.

Band musicians from the Springfield Township High School and Springfield Township Middle School, under the direction of *Chuck Gottesman* and *Marcy Klugman*, entertained guests between speakers and

continued on next page

REMEMBER WHEN

Over the next few months, we will be continuing to solicit story ideas featuring things that aren't there anymore in Springfield Township. Anyone with interesting stories or recollections on former eateries, entertainment venues and other commercial or institutional establishments is encouraged to call STHS at 215-233-4600.



**Join the
STHS**

Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

I would like to become a member in the following category:

☐ Individual/Couple _____ \$20 ☐ Student _____ \$5 ☐ Contributing* _____ \$40 ☐ Organization* _____ \$65

*These membership levels receive a 6" square commemorative trivet with a drawing of Springfield Mill (at the Morris Arboretum) by local artist Sally Yates.

Please make your check payable to **STHS** and mail this form with check to **STHS, PO Box 564, Flouertown, PA 19031**

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Springfield Township Historical Society
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WHITEMARSH HALL *The Estate of Edward T. Stotesbury*

Thursday, December 4, 2008 — 7:30 p.m.

*Presented by
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HERITAGE DAY *continued from page 3*

presentations. *Rich Lalena*, a town crier for historic sites such as Carpenter's Hall, brought a colonial style to announcing activities of the day.

The restoration of the inn is being funded by individual contributions now exceeding \$120,000, and state and federal grants. The grants include a federal \$150,000 Save America's Treasure grant; two \$500,000 Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grants and an \$85,000 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Keystone Preservation Grant. A feasibility study is now underway for raising funds to complete the renovations to the interior of the inn.



Members of the Heritage Day Committee were STHS board members *Cynthia Hamilton* and *Christine Fisher Smith*, township commissioner *Doug Heller*, and Friends of Historic Bethlehem Pike members *Ellen Swoyer Manning* and *Don Mitchell*. Hamilton is also a member of the Black Horse Inn Advisory Committee.

