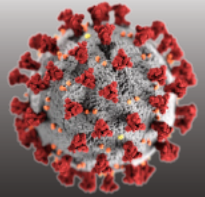




The Challenge

PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

PO Box 564 ■ Flourtown, PA 19031 ■ 215-233-4600 ■ www.springfieldhistory.org



October 2020

COVID-19 Community History Project

Are you familiar with the folklore “March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb?” Historically and perhaps more accurately, the saying has been used in reference to weather predictions. Although with the harsh way daily life was altered in March 2020, it could be claimed that it felt as ferocious as a lion. The swift and abrupt regulations to aid in fighting/controlling the virus changed much of how we conduct our daily lives, from business to interactions with friends and family.

A key component of the Springfield Township Historical Society’s mission is to document the history of local individuals, families, businesses, organizations, and institutions. It was with that premise in mind that the COVID-19 Community History Project was developed.

In mid-March, in what is probably a similar story to many of you, the Society closed its doors, sent staff to work from home, wished everyone well to remain safe and

healthy, and began to learn the interworking of virtual, well, everything. During one of the first virtual board meetings, the topic of how to document the changes being seen in the area was discussed. After this meeting, Board Members and the Archivist worked for weeks to create a cohesive study and collecting plan that would document how the pandemic affected the Springfield Township community on a personal level. The result became the **COVID-19 Community History Documentation Project**. The ongoing project incorporates a questionnaire to collect personal activities during the stay at home orders, a visual storytelling component which allows the community to share photographs in and around the Township, as well as an object and ephemera collection for items that were made in response to the pandemic. The goal of the project is to document residents’ experiences and create a repository of resources for future researchers.

Community Participation

We are extremely grateful to the community members who stepped up and shared their images and experiences. Until we are further along with the project, the images collected are not yet searchable in the collection on the Society’s website. However, the images can be viewed on the Society’s Facebook page, under *#quarantinedinspringfieldtwpmontco*. In addition to photographs, the Society received Township community and business emails, window signs, and school projects referring to various activities of the pandemic, as well as COVID-19 testing instructions. The full list of donations follows this article.

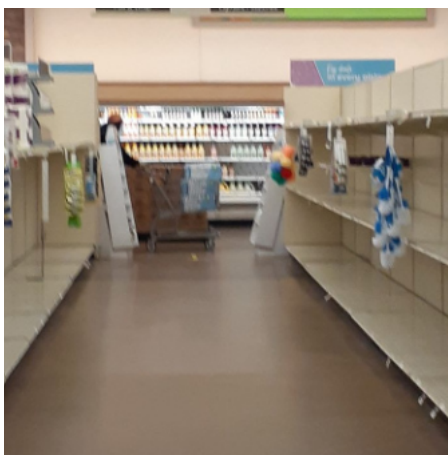
One of the largest components of this project outside of visually documenting the pandemic is the COVID-19 Commu-

nity History Project Questionnaire. The questionnaire focuses on life during the stay-at-home orders for non-essential personnel which were in effect in Montgomery County from March 23 — June 5, 2020. The checkbox survey inquires about the changes that are occurring in our daily lives and asks simple questions about how we were spending our time at home.

When asked to sum up their new normal, participants overwhelmingly shared how they were enjoying having more time with those in their households through sharing meals and having a relaxed schedule, but they were also recognizing the increase of technology in their day-to-day lives. One participant summed it up as “Virtual Learning, Virtual Office, Virtual Hugs” and another by sharing their situation “2 adults (working) and 2 teens (school) at home

all day has proved to be quite the experience with space and virtual settings” These statements along with others, makes it unsurprising that nearly every participant but one listed *Zoom*, the video conferencing software, as at least one option for how they’ve stayed connected with family and friends.

Several participants shared how social distancing was also taking its toll with missing milestone events, such as graduations, or not being able to hug a family member during a funeral service. One of the participants stated “How we interact socially has been altered for now, and into the foreseeable future.” Nearly three-quarters of participants expressed the thing they are missing most, and the thing they are most looking forward to once the stay-at-home orders were lifted was physically being with



GIANT – *No toilet paper, no paper towels. Paper products were difficult to find during this pandemic at Giant and other stores.*
PHOTO BY GINNY BENNER

family and friends. “The thing I noticed most about this pandemic is how it has eroded the relational nature of being human” stated another participant.

Many remarked on the challenges of what were once simple daily tasks, such as going to the grocery store, have become something more complex. When the participants left home to do in-person shopping, the primary place they went was the grocery store. Almost all responders went shopping in person at **Giant**, and those who ordered online used **Amazon Prime/Whole Foods**. Other local businesses such as **Acme**, **Captain Andy's**, and **Oreland Hardware** were named as well.

All but two people responding had ordered delivery or take out from our local restaurants. Mexican cuisine and pizza seemed to be the most popular, with **El Limon** mentioned 11 times and **Oreland Pizza** six! Many of the participants stated how much they are looking forward to being able to go to a restaurant again.

While varied, the responses showed that many people spent time outdoors. Whether it was for gardening and yardwork, walking/running, hiking or other exercises, all respondents shared that they spent time outside. One partici-

pant shared their excitement that they could grill while at home due to the nice weather.

There is Still Time to Participate

If you haven't already done so, please consider filling out the questionnaire. While you are out in town or just walking down your residential street, please continue to take photographs. The **COVID-19 Community History Documentation Project** is an ongoing endeavor. While the stay-at-home orders may be over, we are still living through continually changing times. With your help, we can preserve and document these changes.

Also please note, that while the archives does not have public open hours, we are actively available and can assist you virtually or by appointment. Please feel free to contact us with questions regarding the **COVID-19 Community History Documentation Project**, if you would like to see the full results of the questionnaire to date, or any other research needs. We have assisted several community members with their questions. In addition, we are also accepting donations by contactless drop-offs by appointment, and have received several donations.

COVID-19-Related Items Received:

Maureen Baskin – Photograph, *Liam and Abby Baskin (Flourtown) standing by Springfield Township High School message board, April 1, 2020.*

Ginny Benner – Photographs, *Images of the grocery store during the pandemic showing new signage and procedures, along with empty shelves*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 27, 2020.

Jaime Bedard – Photographs, *Various images of family activities such as new puppy and sewing masks for workers at Chestnut Hill Hospital.* 2020.



MASKS – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including N95 masks, being in short supply, sewers unite to make supplies for health care workers in the region. Sydney Kempner and her mom work with Philly Mask Task to make masks for Chestnut Hill Hospital using fabric squares, plastic coated metal garden ties, sewn in for a closer fit around the nose, and ties made of tee shirt strips.

PHOTO BY LISA KEMPNER.



PUBLIC WORKS – *Norfolk neighbors in Flourtown thank our Public Works Department.*
PHOTO BY JIM (MOOSH) MUSCIANO.

Andrew Birkelbach – Photographs,
*Various images around the township
during quarantine:*

- *Springfield Township High School Parking Lot Empty, March 20, 2020 at 2:30PM.*
- *Empty Liquor Store Parking Lot in Flourtown, March 21, 2020.*
- *Closed Fields at Springfield Township Middle School on March 20, 2020.*
- *Henry R. Chiamonte Park in Oreland, PA. March 22, 2020.*

Visit ***springfieldhistory.org*** or click this link to participate in our COVID-19 Community History Project Questionnaire:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1JtYDamfl>

[PvEy-S9bRZRq3Gv-mSKCGVYiQmwKCt-tow/viewform?edit_requested=true](#)

- *Parked Buses at Springfield Township Middle School. March 20, 2020.*
- *Empty Planet Fitness Parking Lot in Flourtown, PA. March 21, 2020.*
- *Back Parking Lot of Springfield Township High School. March 20, 2020.*
- *Closed Baseball Fields at Springfield Township High School. March 20, 2020.*
- *Christmas Lights in Oreland, PA. April 11, 2020.*
- *Abandoned Courts Without Hoops at Connor James McKelvie Park in Oreland, PA. March 27, 2020.*

Christopher Boccella – Photograph, *The line for entry at Giant Food Stores in Flourtown*, April 26, 2020. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Kerry Boccella – Photograph, *Cake delivered by Frank Maletta, Jr and family, Erdenheim*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 19, 2020.

Lisa Chelian – Photographs, *8th Grade celebration and teachers appreciation sign*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Caroline Covelli – Photographs, Various images around the township during quarantine:

- *Flourtown Giant*, March 12, 2020.
- *Ronan and Rhys Covelli, "writing messages of hope to neighborhood,"* April 4, 2020.
- *Social distancing with grandparents dropping off Easter treats*, April 12, 2020.
- *Fishing at Cisco Park*, April 19, 2020.

Coleen Covington – Photograph, *Chestnut Hill Meals on Wheels*, April 2020.

Emily Croke (Springfield Township Director of Parks & Recreation) – Photograph, *Closed playground, Wyndhill Park, Wyndmoor PA*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Flourtown Country Club – Photograph, *Reopening of golf course following CDC guidelines*, May 1, 2020. Posted on Facebook, May 12, 2020.

Jennifer Ford – Photograph, *Visit to Sandy Run Park, Oreland*, March 15, 2020. Posted on Facebook, April 27, 2020.

Nicole Adams Grabus – Photograph, *Portrait to document homeschool class*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 28, 2020.

Angela Henry – Photographs, *Various images from around the township showing signage, empty shelves, and closures*. April 2020.

Lisa Kempner – Photographs, *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) sewn by donor and daughter Sydney Kempner*, April 7, 2020. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Jennifer Kriska – Photograph, *Rainbow Scavenger Hunt*, March 18, 2020. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Amy McClelland Manchester – Photographs, *Various images from area including empty Germantown Ave., hand-washing station outside Killian's Hardware, locked fields, and closed signs*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 27, 2020.

Bridget Mancuso – Photograph, *Chalk messages at residence in support of RN mom*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Jennifer McCaslin – High School English class final assignment "Springfield Township in Image and Text," June 2020.

Jim (Moosh) Musciano – Photograph, *Norfolk neighbors in Flourtown thank our Public Works Department*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Kara Naudascher – Photographs, *Various images of family activities including making rainbows, lighting a lantern to support health care workers, and son's birthday quarantine car parade*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 27, 2020.

Moria Ottenbreit – Photographs, *Images of quarantine activities: looking for our bus #30 and feeding ducks at Hillcrest Pond*, April 6, 2020. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

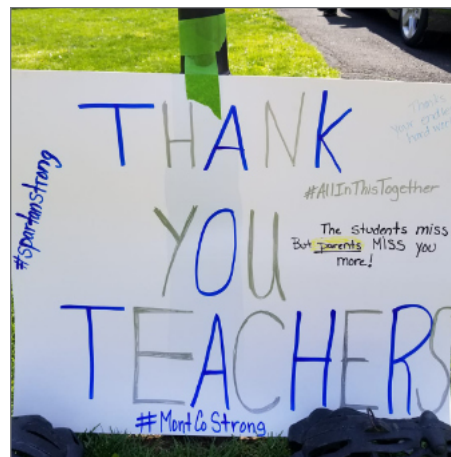
Joe Randa – Photographs:

- *Weekly food delivery preparation for families in need at Springfield Middle School*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.
- *Joey wearing his mask and social distancing while fishing at Cisco park with Rex late April on a nice day*. Erdenheim, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Kim Wein Seslow – Photograph, *Ella Seslow celebrating her 13th Birthday in quarantine*, Erdenheim, April 25, 2020. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Carl Stranberg – Photographs, *Various images of Keri Stranberg 8th Grade Celebration with teachers, classmates, friends and family driving around honking and celebrating*. Oreland, April 25, 2020. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.

Robert Wilmot – Photographs, *Flourtown Fire Company (x2) and Citizens Bank door sign*, undated. Posted on Facebook, April 26, 2020.



THANK YOU TEACHERS SIGN – 8th Grade celebration and showing love to our teachers! Homeschooling effective March 16, 2020 and counting.... Clive Road, Oreland. PHOTO BY LISA CHELIAN.



WYNDHILL PARK, WYNDMOOR, PA – Springfield Township closed the playgrounds. March 16th. PHOTO BY EMILY CROKE, PARKS & REC DIRECTOR.



ZOOM MEETING – History in the making. In April the Springfield Township Historical Society Board of Directors had its first ever Zoom meeting.

COVID-19-Related Correspondence (emails) From Township/County Officials:

Al Comly – Montgomery County Preregistration for COVID-19 Test to be done at Montgomery County Community College, June 12, 2020

From Montgomery County SAFER

Notifications, Subject: Door/Window Signs for Businesses, May 1, 2020, includes attachments to signs “Required You MUST Wear a Face Mask or Covering to Enter” and “Mask Up, Montco” in both English and Spanish.

Cindy Hamilton –

- **Township Commissioner Jeff Harbison**
- **Subject:** (Wyndmoor Email List)
COVID-19 in Springfield, dated April 11, 2020.
- **ReadyMontco Alerts - Subject:**
Important Message from Montgomery County Commissioner Dr. Val Arkoosh, dated April 16, 2020.
- **Township Commissioner Jeff Harbison**
- **Subject:** (Wyndmoor Email List) Covid-19 in Springfield, dated April 17, 2020.
“Statement Regarding Number of Covid-19 Cases in Springfield Township” Originally posted on the Township website.

**IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR AN ACTIVITY TO DO
OUT AND ABOUT THE TOWNSHIP,
CHECK OUT THE SPRINGFIELD
TOWNSHIP HISTORY
SCAVENGER HUNT.
AVAILABLE SOON
TO DOWNLOAD
ON THE
SPRINGFIELD
TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
WEBSITE.**

