



Old Morlatton Village MESSENGER

The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County

Volume XVIII

Number 1

Spring 2010

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Here comes the SUN !!! Again with the pop culture references, I just can't help myself.

I hope everyone fared well over the winter. Between holidays and storms, the Board conducted a strategic review with a consultant paid for with a Technical Assistance Grant secured through the PHMC in late '08 (that's PA Historic & Museum Commission for those of you who don't speak alphabetese). They are the folks who had to close a number of historic sites including the Daniel Boone and Conrad Weiser Homesteads. Their actions sent a chill down our collective spine, forcing us to take a look at the long range prospects for our collection of structures.

In 2016 it will have been 300 years since Mouns Jones set the date stone in the river side wall of his house. Shortly thereafter is the 300th anniversary of the founding of Amity Township. We plan to become a focal point, a community resource, during the commemoration of those events.

Several factors have come into play in the board deciding to set more modest and, we believe, a more effective course:

- A few of our Board members have been working with the township to improve parking and circulation at the complex in Douglassville.
- Last summer, we tried to open the buildings on a regular basis. It was difficult to schedule volunteers.
- Historic house museums are typically poorly attended, under funded and under staffed.
- The Greenway built a trail access at the eastern end of the Douglass Mansion.
- The visitors we happened to meet were curious and interested. Some were regular visitors to the site, either accessing the trail or the river or just walking the grounds. Some just wandered back and wondered what it was they'd found.
- We have received several donations designated specifically for Douglass and have secured a match for restoration. There is a small grant for signage which we have not yet used.

At the February meeting, the Board decided to position ourselves as a self-guided open-air museum of historic structures in a park-like setting. Doing so will require signs highlighting interior and exterior architectural elements; detailing the history of each of the buildings and of the people who lived and worked there; directional signs from nearby roads as well as from the trail; signs indicating the trail access, parking and information about the Trust itself. Additionally, we will restore the façade of the Douglass Mansion and have even discussed window treatments to complete the presentation. We believe this is an excellent way to inform the public about our treasures. Please share your thoughts.

Additionally, the web site now has a link to the archive being developed and the site itself is being updated.

Finally, Julia Clemons remembered the Trust in her will. We are deeply grateful and will put the resources to good use.

Matthew Barnhart

Dedicated to maintaining and preserving historically and architecturally significant properties

IN PRESERVATION WE TRUST

2009 was a great year for preservation!

Even in the most precarious of economic times, our campaign for the DeTurk Cabin Restoration was quite successful. This is just amazing to me, given the state of many historic sites in this area. We raised \$ 78,000.00 in donation and grant money and were able to complete 90 percent of the work before winter. We will finish things up in the spring. Here are a few before and after photos.



Ground level kitchen doorway
19th century millstone stoop
18th century stone door-sill



Replacement oak hood outlookers
over restored kitchen doorway
jambs and lintel



Severely termite
damaged kitchen
summer beam



Kitchen summer beam reinforced with
inserted channel-beam and fiber glass
rods and reset on kitchen fireplace
lintel

I can hardly wait to tackle our projects this spring! We have an aggressive agenda planned for the Morlatton Village this year. We will soon begin a campaign to help fund the work. Here is what we have planned:

Bridge Keepers House

Last year we had John Bowie Associates, a nationally reputable historical consulting firm, identify the weakness in the structure that is contributing to the collapse of the foundation.

While it would be easy to tackle this problem with a chewing gum and Band-Aid approach, he has recommended a comprehensive approach that will allow this structure to stand another 250 years. I believe that the founders of this organization would be proud of that approach. We will address the drainage that has caused the problem over time.

We will repair and replaster the inside of the chimney so that we can safely burn in the fireplace in years to come, and use the building once again. The biggest concern is repairing the foundation before the next flood, which could be catastrophic.

Mounce Jones House

The resurrection of this building formed the cornerstone of The Historic Preservation Trust. While in a state of good structural integrity, it has passed the line of charm toward neglect. We will be repairing rotted doors, window frames, and shutters. Some shutters went missing after the 2006 flood. We will be replacing some common store hardware with the historically correct hardware on the doors. A fresh coat of paint maintaining the historical color will complete this preservation maintenance cycle. We will be giving this building the respect that it deserves given its history and influence to the Preservation Trust..

The Parking Plan

Parking has always been an issue at the Morlatton Village, because there is none!

Last year, our executive director was able to have a trailhead installed from the Thun trail next to the George Douglass Mansion. It has brought many inquiring souls off the trail to explore the Morlatton Village. On any day of the week we have vehicles unloading bikes to access the Thun trail. Amity Township has also been working on the "Leaf Creek Trail Study" which will link a large part of the township to the Morlatton Village with a hiking and biking trail. This is moving forward and has highlighted the need for parking in this area! The Trust is proposing a parking area for the wooded lot owned by the Amity Township across from our White Horse Tavern. Parking would benefit Thun Trail users, Amity residents, and the Preservation Trust! This is a win for everyone and would

be a destination for township residents using the Thun Trail and fantastic exposure for the Morlatton Village that most Amity residents do not even know exists!

The intent is also to open up the view shed down to the Mounce Jones House and BridgeKeepers house so they are visible from the White Horse Tavern. This will create a park like setting for our jewels for all to enjoy!

Preliminary discussions with Amity Township have been favorable although we will have to find the funding. They supply the land; we supply the funding for stone. We need this. It is the key to everything we want the Morlatton Village to become!

Hazzah for 2010!

The Devil is in the Details...

is often said of many projects. This was no exception when it came to determining the roof style to be placed over the lower door of the DeTurk Cabin. There were two schools of thought for this roof restoration. The original had long since decayed and was not there, so we had to rely on old photos and the physical clues present in the structure which would lead us to a historically correct recreation of which type of roof was originally there.

A hood roof similar to the roof on the upper doorway in the front of the building or a shed type were the two options. There was limited physical evidence to go on, other than the size of the roof support, "outlookers", which typically protrude from a stone wall to hold up a roof over a doorway. Some old photos existed showing the last roof to have been a shed type roof.

Our property committee wrestled many times about this detail and how we should decide to go with a particular roof style. What would have bored some to death was very engaging, for our committee. Passions for both styles were discussed with each of us throwing down our best arguments. In the end it was decided that we would go with the shed type roof as last seen in the oldest photo we had. It would also have had a wood shingled roof given the size of the two outlookers which we knew were original.

A tiled roof was not original to DeTurk and would have been too heavy for the size of the outlooker supports for this roof. Here are some photos of how it was and how it will look once again.

We all shook our heads, then hands, and we look forward to the next "interpretation".

Scott Stepp



Circa 1909-1911. The outlooker remnants over the east ground-level kitchen door



Circa 1929-1930
Earliest showing the shed hood (or any hood)



Circa 1930-1940

MEET A NEW BOARD MEMBER

Martha Richardson is originally from Muhlenberg Park. She is a graduate of Penn State with a B.S. in Secondary Education in English and Journalism and a M. Ed. as a reading specialist K-12. She has taught at Penn State Main Campus and is retired from the Muhlenberg School District. She is presently an adjunct lecturer in the education department at Albright College.

Martha lives in Temple with her husband Barry Kyper, a retired school administrator. They have two children Meg in Pacifica, CA and Matt in Venice, CA and one grandson Niko age 7.

After being away for 15 years Martha came back to Reading when her children were small. She has lived in Texas, Wyoming, California, Colorado and four years in Bologna, Italy.

Her hobbies are reading, writing, cooking, knitting, gardening, and avoiding housework in whatever way possible.

Her mother, Margaret K. Kline, was very active in the Trust back in the 60's and 70's and worked very hard in the original projects of restoration at the Mouns Jones site. Martha happily recalls waiting on tables at the White Horse Inn for two years during the Fair in the mid to late 1970's.

SPRING LUNCHEON

The fourth annual Spring Luncheon will be held Saturday, May 8th at the White Horse Inn. There will be two seatings: 11:00 am and 1:00 pm.

Menu
Chutney Chicken Salad
or
Brandywine Crepes
Spinach Pear Salad
Dessert Buffet
Coffee and Tea

Dr. Helen May will play the harpsichord.

There will be an array of plants for sale from beautiful hanging baskets, bedding flowers, and vegetable plants to unusual shrubs.

The buildings, the oldest in Berks County, will be open and historians on hand to answer questions.

Tickets are \$25.00 and can be obtained by mailing a check, made out to the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, to Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, P.O. Box 245, Douglassville, PA 19518. Please include a stamped, self addressed envelope. Questions? Call Anne Coldren 610-987-9249.



E-MAIL

Become a better informed member of the Trust by sharing your e-mail address with us. Doing this not only will keep you current on the latest happenings it will also help us reduce our printing and mailing expenses **and** the pictures will be in color! Every little bit helps. Please send the information to Priscilla Walsky at walskyinvest@verizon.net or call 610-372-3807. Thank you.



FUND RAISER

As a fund raiser raffle tickets are being sold for the lovely hand appliquéed and hand quilted quilt in shades of rose and blue on a creamy background. The quilt will fit either a queen or king size bed. It is shown on a queen size bed. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5 and can be purchased from any board member and at the Spring Luncheon **or** you can mail your request together with a check payable to the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County to Priscilla Walsky, 1724 Reading Blvd., Wyomissing, PA 19610, and your stubs will be filled out and deposited in the raffle box. Please include a telephone number. The drawing will be at the annual meeting in June. You will receive a receipt to insure that your request and money have been received. Thank you for your support.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

With daffodils and crocuses poking through the ground and the snowy months gone by, take a moment to remember the beautiful Christmas Tea at the lovely home of Susan Fetterolf and Jeff Gorrin. The weatherman didn't cooperate too well but that didn't dampen the festive spirit that pervaded the area.

The tea table was laden with its usual array of delicious cookies and tea sandwiches and tempting jams, jellies and breads were sold to happy guests. Thank you Susan and Jeff for a very successful tea.



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White Horse Inn pre-restoration 1971. Notice the three chimneys, the Victorian era porch and the double entry doors. See this image and many more by visiting the online archive. A link to the archive can be found on the Trust's website www.historicpreservationtrust.org