

# Solebury Chronicle



*A newsletter of the Solebury Township Historical Society*

## Join our popular History Walk

Saturday, October 11, 9 - 11 a.m.  
Narrated Walk on Armitage Road

Stroll along another of Solebury's bucolic roads. Led by historian Willis Rivinus and Society Board member Rhoda Renschler, we will learn about the historic and current uses of this rolling countryside. Visit a farm that breeds racing horses, learn about the "Turkey" farm, see where poet John Greenleaf Whittier lived, and enjoy amazing views across fields to New Jersey. At the conclusion of the walk, refreshments will be served at a wonderful home overlooking the Delaware with some amazing history.

Parking will be in a field off Sugan Road just north of Armitage Road (watch for signs).

This is a rather long walk - approximately 2 miles one way; vans will be available for those who want rides back to their cars following refreshments.

This event is free for Society members; \$5 for guests. Reservations are not necessary, but questions can be directed to Elaine Crooks, 215-297-8447 or soleburyhistory@comcast.net.



**Eighth Annual  
New Year's Brunch**  
Thursday, January 1, 2009  
Holly Hedge Estates

Invitations will be mailed in mid-November. Make your reservations promptly for this popular event.

## Society Annual Dinner Meeting

Sunday, November 16, 5-8 p.m.  
Cradle Valley Farm, 6454 Meetinghouse Road

**This will be anything but a boring annual meeting!** First, the venue. We will meet in a historic barn at Cradle Valley Farm on Meetinghouse Road - a barn which has been restored to accommodate private concerts. And a concert we will have! A pianist from the Bucks County Music Conservatory will entertain us with music that is in some way tied to Solebury and surrounding areas.



Some of our more famous residents produced, performed or wrote the most beloved show music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Enjoy music from *Show Boat*, *Camelot*, *My Fair Lady*, music of Gershwin, and more. And learn a little about these famous residents.

This will be a pot luck dinner, and we ask that guests bring a vegetable, salad, main course, or dessert for 6. Wine and other beverages will be provided. There will be a brief meeting to conduct necessary business. This is a members-only event. Reservations are not necessary, but questions can be directed to Elaine Crooks, 215-297-8447 or soleburyhistory@comcast.net.

## Calling for Nominations Honored Citizens Awards

Each year the Society recognizes Solebury residents, past and present, who have significantly contributed to the township with the Honored Citizens of Solebury Award. Solebury's character today reflects the aspirations of residents over three centuries, and its future will be determined by our current citizenry.

The Society accepts nominations from the Solebury community at large. The criteria are broad: 1) past or present Solebury resident, 2) over 18 years of age, 3) contributed substantially to the community, and 4) of high moral character. Persons nominated can be current residents as well as deceased and historic persons. The awards will be presented at the Society's annual New Year's Brunch. Deadline for nominations is November 1, 2008.

For more information or a nomination form, call Elaine Crooks, 215-297-8447 or email soleburyhistory@comcast.net.

## Presidents Message

Your Historical Society is moving forward by leaps and bounds!

First, we have hired our first employee. **Mary-jo May** will serve as our Administrative Director on a part-time basis. Mary-jo is the former Development Director for Bucks County Audubon Society and currently holds that position on a part-time basis with the Bucks County Conservatory of Music in Doylestown. She lives in Buckingham Township, just across the street from Solebury and has been involved in community activities for many years. Mary-jo will be helping us with programs, fund-raising events, grants and membership. She is working with the new Grant Committee, chaired by Beth Carrick, to explore grant opportunities, as the board accesses our needs.

The concept of a mini museum in the lobby of the Township Building was brought before the Solebury Township Board of Supervisors at their July meeting. **Cris Blackwood** and I presented details of the plan and a rendering of the lobby space drawn by **Jim Underberg**. The proposal is to create a changeable display of historic artifacts, photographs, maps, etc., that would be changed twice a year. Each new display would be heralded with an opening reception and lecture. The display would then be available for viewing during regular business hours. The Society selected this location because it is a public building, handicapped accessible, with ample parking and good security. We are in the process of forming a committee: WANT TO HELP? Please give me a call at 215-862-5033. We anticipate our opening display and first reception to be in early '09.

The Archival Committee, under the able leadership of **Joan Fitting**, has been working diligently to organize and categorize our extensive library of books and research data. **Beth Carrick** has developed a computer database of all of our holdings, so now it's much easier to find material related to a specific time, event or place.

The Events Committee is working on a full schedule of fall programs (see Calendar) and planning is underway for new events in 2009.

Society member **Gayle Goodman** has kindly offered to facilitate a board retreat in October during which time we will re-visit our goals and objectives and set priorities for the future.

Speaking of the future – the future of your Historical Society and the services it provides – is bright. Thanks for being part of it.



Solebury Township Historical Society  
Drawer 525  
Solebury, Pennsylvania 18963  
215-862-5033  
soleburyhistory@comcast.net

### Board of Directors

Sally Grant-Jagoe, *President*  
Joan Fitting, *Vice-President*  
Elaine Crooks, *Treasurer*  
Donneta Crane, *Secretary*  
Mary Jackson Powell, *Corresponding Secretary*  
David Benner  
Beth Carrick  
Gwen Davis  
Don Harris  
Martha Harris  
Patricia Petrie  
Rhoda Renschler  
Franca Warden

**Administrative Director:** Mary-jo May

## Calling for old photos

Do you have old photographs that depict life in Solebury Township in the 1900s? Perhaps pictures of your historic house, picnics in the yard, school activities, canoeing on the canal, skating on a pond or the river, fishing....etc. People, places and activities of Solebury. If so, would you be willing to let the Society borrow them just long enough to scan them into the computer? We can scan color and black & white photos, slides and even negatives. And for a small charge we can give you a CD with your photos.

We can also scan original deeds, licenses, articles from magazines/newspapers, and the like.

If you don't want to leave the photos with us, you can call to arrange a time and we'll scan them on the spot. Call Elaine Crooks (O) 215-297-0885; (H) 215-297-8447, or email soleburyhistory@comcast.net to make arrangements.

These photos and documents will be archived on disks and also printed and filed with our house and village archives, which are available to residents and historians for research. And who knows – maybe someday we can publish a historic photo book of Solebury Township.

## *Doylestown Building & Remodeling*

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# Highlighting Solebury's National Historic Landmarks

*This is the 2nd of a series of articles describing the three National Historic Landmarks in Solebury Township.*

## The Honey Hollow Watershed

Among Solebury Township's three National Historic Landmarks, the Honey Hollow Watershed is perhaps the most unique. The 650-acre watershed is the *only* agricultural National Landmark in the nation.

Comprised of five farms along Route 263 and Creamery Road, the Honey Hollow Watershed is the first small upland watershed in agricultural use and multiple private ownership to demonstrate that cooperative local action, supported by Federal technical assistance, is a practical method of achieving national goals in soil, water and wildlife conservation, and flood prevention. As such, it has served as a prototype for conservation of thousands of similar small watersheds throughout the nation.

The history of the watershed in regard to conservation began in the 1930s, when the owners of the farms along Honey Hollow Creek observed how their fields were washing away. The change from cultivation done by horse drawn equipment to tractors and large machinery had caused serious sheet and gully erosion on the upland farms, while siltation struck those on the downslope. It was obvious that the erosion must be checked, and that no individual landowner could correct the situation. A combined effort was required or the land would be ruined for agricultural use. The five owners of the farmland in the Honey Hollow watershed took their tale to the regional office of the newly formed Soil Conservation Service. The Regional Director, Dr. J. P. Jones, agreed to provide technical assistance, and the landowners agreed to work together to carry out the soil and water conservation practices prescribed for each tract. Within the next two years terraces and diversion ditches had been constructed to control runoff on steep slopes, long dense hedges had been planted to check erosion and provide waterlife habitat, and several ponds were built and stocked with fish.



*In the 1930s farmers in the Honey Hollow Watershed worked with federal agencies to better manage the soil and water within the watershed.*

Almost overnight the "Honey Hollow Project" attracted attention from high levels in the Department of Agriculture, as well as farmers across the country seeking ways to improve their land. Vice President Henry Wallace visited in 1944, and came back other times. Louis Bromfield, novelist and conservationist, was also a good friend of the project. The Watershed still retains all the conservation measures adopted in the late 1930s, terraces, contour-plowed fields, diversion ditches, wildlife hedges, ponds, and treelands.

Beginning in the 1940s many government agencies and farmers visited the watershed to learn about the conservation management techniques. It seemed only natural that part of the watershed should be devoted to conservation education, and so, through the efforts of several of the farm owners, the Honey Hollow Environmental Education Center was born and continues to educate the public to this day.

Recognizing the significance of this watershed project, in 1969 the National Park Service gave the Honey Hollow Watershed it's highest honor, naming it a National Historic Landmark.

While the Landmark status was awarded for agricultural conservation, most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century houses and barns on those 5 farms still survive today. Built of fieldstone in the Pennsylvania tradition, all of the sturdy structures are simple in design and construction.



The original section of the Isaac Pickering house on Tuckamony Farm (owned by the Crooks family since 1925) was built in 1747 (left side). It was doubled in size to accommodate a growing family in the 1780s. A stone bank barn, believed to have been built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, still stands and serves as the offices of the Bucks County Audubon Society, which operates the Honey Hollow Environmental Education Center on more than 100 acres within the watershed.

In keeping with the significance of this historic agricultural area, some 1500 contiguous acres of land in and around the watershed are now preserved through gift and conservation easement.

*Note: No one correctly guessed that the "Do you Know" picture in the last Chronicle is a house on Tuckamony Farm, in the Honey Hollow National Historic Landmark.*



## Excerpts from “There Was a Time When...”

*There Was a Time When* is a booklet produced by the fifth and sixth grade Social Studies Enrichment students of New Hope-Solebury Elementary School in the 1981-1982 school year. Following an archaeological dig at the schoolhouse, the students conducted interviews with some of the former students and teachers at the school.

The Society found a copy in the schoolhouse and decided to reproduce it. You can purchase a copy from the Society for \$10. The following are excerpts from the students' interview with Maude Cathers.

*Maude Cathers went to school in a little schoolhouse near Lumberville. She started teaching in 1922, right out of high school. She taught at the schoolhouse in Carversville from 1922 - 1938, and at the Solebury Village schoolhouse from 1939 - 1954. She then became principal of the Elementary School in 1954 until her retirement in 1969. Maude died just a few years ago.*

**Question:** Is it true that if you were bad you had to sit in a corner with a dunce cap on?

Mrs. C.: Well, no, I never did that. And I don't remember children being punished that way. I think some of them would have liked it. I guess that's the reason I never did it: when I taught school I sort of liked to take care of it right there.

**Question:** Could you send them home if they were bad?

Mrs. C.: I never sent a child home. I just thought if they came to me, it was my job to do something about it. I wasn't very good at giving up. I usually could win.

**Question:** Would you have been able to do that if you wanted to, though?

Mrs. C.: Oh yes, I think some of them would love to have been sent home, to get away from me. In fact, one little boy, one time, didn't have his work done at recess time, and I had said that no one goes to play unless the work is finished. And he was tricky, he started to walk out with the rest of them. I said, "You can't go". And he said, "I don't like you". I said, "Well, I don't blame you. You know, if I were you, I wouldn't like me either. Now, you just work hard and get away from me". But I never sent children home, even when I was principal. If they were sick, that was different, but not for punishment, because I think it's important that the teacher take care of it, and I think teachers can. I felt the worst children always need loving the most. When I was principal, if a teacher would send a child down to me, I said, "There are two things - you either need a loving or a spanking. Now, which do you want"? And most of the time they wanted the loving. Because lots of them, I think, when they got real perky, they just needed some love. I've called parents and asked permission to spank. And, as soon as the parent would say yes, I didn't have to do it, 'cause they're liable to get one when they get home.



**Question:** How was trash disposed of?

Mrs. C.: We didn't have an incinerator. When I went to school, there wasn't that much paper, because we had slates and slate pencils, but later, when there was the chance to use paper, I think we saved it and used it to start the fire in the stove, the kindling logs. We used coal. In the little stone school, the coal cellar was underneath, and there was a stairway, and the boys used to bring it up in buckets.

**Question:** What kinds of things did they do to get punished? Mrs.

C.: Well, no one was eager to do anything to get punished. You'd get your report card every month, and I think parents were very strict. I know, my father and mother would have been most unhappy if I had not had a good mark in — they called it "behavior". And I had great respect for my parents and for the teacher, and I didn't do anything to get punished. I knew the rules; you have to learn the rules.

**Question:** On pleasant days, did you ever have parties?

Mrs. C.: I don't remember parties when I went to school. The teacher was very busy. But I liked to give parties for my children because they were all so good. We had Valentines Day parties and all kinds of holiday parties, and we used to make ice cream in the classroom, and they'd always like that.

**Question:** You said that you didn't get any school holidays .

Mrs. C.: Well, yes, Christmas and Thanksgiving, but no extra days. I think we went to school the day after Thanksgiving and we went to school, probably, the day after Christmas. Because we were out early in the year, in May sometime. The boys, especially, had to help their parents on the farm. Boys had to work on the farm, and so the parents didn't want the school to continue too long.

A black and white advertisement for Tuckamony Farm. The text is arranged in a grid-like fashion. On the left, it says "Choose and Cut CHRISTMAS TREES & Fresh Holly". In the center is a circular logo with "TUCKAMONY FARM" around the perimeter and a Christmas tree in the middle. On the right, it says "Since 1934" at the top, "OPEN Wed-Sun, 9-5 beginning 11/28" below that. At the bottom, it provides contact information: "Malcolm, Elaine & Lars Crooks", "6320 Upper York Road", "Solebury, PA 18963", "215-297-8447", "Fax: 215-297-0685", and "email: tuckamony@comcast.net".

Choose and Cut  
CHRISTMAS  
TREES  
&  
Fresh Holly

TUCKAMONY  
FARM

Since 1934

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Malcolm, Elaine & Lars Crooks  
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Fax: 215-297-0685  
email: tuckamony@comcast.net

# Fun, Food, Family and Friends – the Annual Members' Picnic

Society members who gathered on September 14 for our annual picnic were treated to an idyllic setting and sunny hot weather. The stunning 18<sup>th</sup> century stone barn on Esteburne Farm provided some welcomed shade, and the bucolic view of rolling pastureland lured guests to sit together and share stories in the company of friends, old and new. A delicious picnic dinner and lively music rounded out the perfect day.

Many thanks to our gracious and generous hosts, **Gerry and John Merriam**, for sharing their beautiful and historic property with us.



*Sally Jagoe (right) thanks our hosts, Gerry and John Merriam*



*Sally Jagoe (right) with Dick Carlson, who will host next year's picnic at Rolling Green Farm.*



*Elaine Crooks, Events Committee Chair, with husband Malcolm, enjoy the music.*



*Champion griller Bill Winters and Mara Crane worked efficiently together to grill the burgers.*



*Mike & Ruth Ann Wilson (standing) with Willis Rivinus and Dick Ann Boal.*



*Board members Don and Marty Harris*



*Lyle Rickerts, band leader, plays the dulcimer*





## Schoolhouse open for research

The Society is pleased to announce that our office and library in the Solebury Schoolhouse are open on a regular basis on **Wednesday afternoon, from 3 to 5 p.m.** The library has numerous books on the art and history of Solebury and neighboring communities, attendance and grading records for most of Solebury's schools from the 1920s - 1950s, copies of research on numerous historic properties in the township, and much more. Stop by at your convenience. We hope to extend the open hours in the near future.

## Postcards help tell the story

Sally Jagoe and Ted Nichols (New Hope Camera) have been busy collecting old postcards of Solebury Township – sometimes bidding against each other on Ebay! But the collection is taking shape, with nearly 50 postcards collected so far. While the originals will be carefully archived, the Society felt it important to save them digitally. Ted has graciously offered to scan the postcards he has and provide us with a photo CD. Elaine Crooks will scan those the Sally has collected. Then copies will be printed and placed with the corresponding property/village file.

*Super volunteer Dick Carlson has been diligently marking on our Solebury Township tax map the status of the research on historic properties in the township. Different color-headed pins are marking properties for which (1) historic research completed by Ned Harrington, (2) historic research in process, and (3) historic research completed by Heritage Conservancy. Soon you'll be able to look at the map and instantly know the status of historic research on your property. The Society has contracted with Heritage Conservancy to get copies of all their research on Solebury properties. These will be added to our other files, so that some day we will have complete records on all historic properties in the township.*



*This 1950s postcard is of Appledore, the Holmquist School for Girls, now the inn at Hotel duVillage, on Phillips Mill Road near River Road..*

5157 Comfort Road 215-297-8220

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## With Gratitude . . .

Members are the backbone of our organization. We are deeply appreciative of the support of the residents listed below who have renewed their membership or joined the Society **since the last newsletter**.

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Axel & Carola Braun                  | Robert A. & Maria McEwan               |
| Gregory Burch                        | John J. Merana                         |
| Elizabeth Chardon                    | Mehmet Unsal Calis and Scott O'Connor  |
| Frank Chicarelli                     | Dr. & Mrs. Robert Ozols                |
| Tim and Millena Coffey               | Janice Parry                           |
| Georgiana S. Coles                   | Art & Gail Pasquarella                 |
| Joseph Werzinski and Brendan Corbaus | Mary Powell                            |
| Marne Dietterich                     | Anthony Prestipino                     |
| Jack & Claire Donohue                | Dr. Gerhard and Barbara Raabe          |
| Dave & Rene Dubnanski                | John V. Rees                           |
| Ruth Campbell and Joseph Duffy       | Roger & Ginny Riedley                  |
| John & Susan Eichert                 | A. Peter Gopaul and Gary Philip Rogers |
| Joan & Don Fitting                   | Patricia Savadove                      |
| Doug & Jill Fonte                    | Herbert & Susan Sandor                 |
| Lois W. Carbone and Charles Garefino | Suzanne & Edward Sanson                |
| Dr. Philip & Valerie Gerbino         | Dorothy & Joe Schillinger              |
| Lewis Baratz and Guy Glass           | Maureen Short                          |
| Diane Grabowski                      | Dr. William & Karen Stanell            |
| Lola & Robert Haddow                 | Anne C. Stephano                       |
| Bill & Peggy Hecht                   | Bob & Barbara Straton                  |
| Ziz Husenaj                          | Tim Hartman & Ron Swidor,              |
| Ronald Dabney and Lawrence Jahns     | The Lexington House                    |
| Joseph Kubiak                        | Robert & Lorraine Topolin              |
| Dr. Linda Kuehl                      | August & Donna Turturro                |
| Lisa Leydon                          | Grey, Lisa & Gabriella Warner          |
| David Linehan                        | Billy Williams                         |
| Linda & Bill Low                     | Joe & Bridget Wingert                  |
| Richard & Jeannette Lynch            | John & Joan Winterbottom               |
| Bill & Jane MacDowell                | Charles & Pat Worth                    |
| John & Christine Marcy               | George A. Yarnall                      |
| John Kovacs and Dennis Marsaglia     | Skip & Judy Yerkes                     |
| Melvyn & Rochelle Mason              | Ted & Charlotte Zanidakis              |
| Robert J. Mathieu                    |  |

Every effort has been made to publish a complete and accurate list of memberships received since the last newsletter (May 2008) and up to about September 15, 2008. We regret if there are any omissions.

## HELP WANTED

The Society is proposing to organize a bi-annual **Celebrate Solebury Day**, with crafts, music, games, costumes, etc. If you would like to serve on the organizing committee, please call Mary-jo May, 215-297-8565, or email [soleburyhistory@comcast.net](mailto:soleburyhistory@comcast.net).

**George A. Yarnall**  
Financial Advisor

**RAYMOND JAMES**

Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., Member NASD/SIPC  
362 West Bridge Street  
New Hope, PA 18938  
(215) 862-8844  
[George.Yarnall@RaymondJames.com](mailto:George.Yarnall@RaymondJames.com)

## Many Thanks . . .

The generosity of so many folks help the Society throughout the year. We deeply appreciate the support of our friends and neighbors:

**John and Gerri Merriam** for hosting the Society's annual picnic and donating wine.

**Phillips Liquors** of Stockton for donating some of the wine for the picnic.

**Bill Winters** for taking on the job of grilling the burger and hot dogs.

**Jon Atkin, Doylestown Building Group**, for expertly covering the hoses to the air conditioner at the school-house.

The **advertisers** in the *Solebury Chronicle* who help offset the cost of producing the newsletter. These are local businesses, and we urge your patronage.

(Call 215-297-0885 or email [soleburyhistory@comcast.net](mailto:soleburyhistory@comcast.net) to place your ad in the next *Solebury Chronicle*.)



## Need a perfect Holiday Gift? Beautiful Notecards of Solebury

Boxed set of notecards featuring the Solebury Post Office. High quality cards and envelopes. Box of 6 cards; \$13.

Boxed set of ten notecards featuring five of Solebury's cherished historic sites drawn by Solebury artist Jim Underberg. Box of 10 cards; \$11.

To purchase, stop by the schoolhouse on Wednesdays between 3-5 p.m., call 215-862-5033, or email [soleburyhistory@comcast.net](mailto:soleburyhistory@comcast.net)

## Security through Endowment

An Endowment Fund helps to secure the future of an organization. Won't you consider a donation or a bequeath to the Society's Endowment Fund? We would be happy to provide you with a copy of the Endowment Fund resolution which clearly states its purpose.



Solebury Township Historical Society  
Drawer 525  
Solebury, PA 18963

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Upcoming Events
  - Honey Hollow National Historic Landmark
  - Annual Picnic photos
  - Collecting old photos
  - Excerpts from *There was a time when*
  - Thanks
- 

## Upcoming Events

**Saturday, October 11, 9 a.m.**

Walk along Armitage Road.

**Sunday, November 16, 5 - 8 p.m.**

Annual Meeting. Pot luck supper.  
Musical entertainment.

**Thursday, January 1, 2009, noon - 3 p.m.**

Annual New Year's Brunch  
Holly Hedge Estates, Rt. 263, Solebury  
*Watch for your invitation in the mail.*

## Do You Know?

This photo was taken at an National Historic Landmark in Solebury Township. Do you know which Landmark?

Extra points if you know what the object is!



Call 215-862-5033 or email [soleburyhistory@comcast.net](mailto:soleburyhistory@comcast.net) with your answer. You may win a prize!