



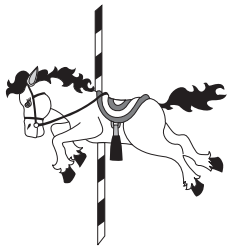
HISTORIA

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER, 1995

NOVEMBER MEETING FEATURES THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF CAROUSELS



Mr. Michael Holt, proprietor of "Carousel World" at Peddler's Village in Lahaska will bring a portion of his museum collection in slide form to the November 15th dinner meeting of the Historical Society. Mr. Holt plans to focus his talk on the evolution and history of carousels in the United States and, more specifically, he will talk about the lovely carousel that is still in operation at Carousel World. All are

invited to join in the fun as we learn about these whimsical icons that have offered pleasure to many, young and old. This month's meeting is a "covered dish" supper. Please bring a salad, vegetable or dessert. Meats and beverages will be provided. The meeting will be held at the Senior Citizen/Cultural Center located at 25 Upper Holland Road, Richboro (next to the township library). All are welcome, and, if a ride is needed, kindly call 598-3065. Please bring a friend!

SPREAD EAGLE PETITION DRIVE A SUCCESS

The petition drive to save the Spread Eagle Inn and prevent another gas station from being built in Richboro has had overwhelming support. We have over a thousand signatures as of November 1. The Inn, known as the White Bear in history books, was named after a tavern at the foot of the London Bridge in England. A Revolutionary War volunteer troop, the 48th Militia Regiment, led by Enoch Addis, met at the Bear. In 1838 a meeting was held at the White Bear to discuss the issue of Negro suffrage and to ask their support against it. In a newspaper article of April 23, 1937, Adolph Munch purchased the Inn for \$7400 from Hiram S. McCool who had owned and operated the hostelry for 28 years. It was described as three stories with eighteen rooms, first and second story porches, a large second floor hall, a barroom on the first floor, and a combination stable, hay shed and other smaller buildings. Since then the White Bear has gone through many changes. The most recent being a modernization and failed restaurant. Because of this many see the current structure as much less historically significant. In spite of this the White Bear or Spread Eagle remains an icon of Richboro whose loss would forever change the look and feel of our town. Please help us in support of our cause!

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROSANNA SLACK

By Rosemarie Blumenthal

This article was written based on a videotaped interview of Rosanna Slack in January 1995 by Doug Crompton. Rosanna will be honored at the November 15 general meeting of the Northampton Historical Society for her many years of support and service.

Rosanna Slack has been actively involved in the Northampton Township Historical Society since it was founded in 1973, even though she moved from the Richboro/Ivyland area 70 years ago.

The Northampton Rosanna remembers as a child was quite different from the sprawling suburbia we see today. For the daughter of a multi-generational farming family, Northampton was a rural community, where running water, electricity and central heat were a luxury and horses were the primary means of transportation.



Rosanna at the January interview in her home.

Rosanna was born in the house owned by her mother's parents, Abraham Alexander and Julia Van Horn Slack, on November 25, 1908. She was the middle of five children born to Leonard and Anna Fetters Slack, with two older sisters and two younger brothers. Dr. Powell delivered all five Slack

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope that you can attend our November dinner meeting. We will have a presentation on carousels by Michael Holt of "Carousel World" at Peddlers Village. It should be a very interesting presentation. The annual dinner meeting starts at 6 P.M. The general meeting and presentation will not start until after 7 P.M. so please feel free to arrive anytime during the first hour for dinner. This is an informal dinner and all are welcomed, members and non-members. Please bring a friend.

I would like to sincerely thank Joanne Kerridge, our Corresponding Secretary, for her service to the Society over the past two years. Joanne and her husband Charles are contemplating a move South and need some time to get ready for that. Thanks for all your help with the HISTORIA. Joanne collated, stapled, addressed, stamped and mailed all of our HISTORIA's to date.

Fred Holzwarth, a relatively new member, has volunteered to become our new membership director. Membership had been included in the Corresponding Secretary's duties. I am changing the Secretary's position back into a single title now held by Rosemarie Blumenthal. Fred's duties will be to receive membership applications and maintain a current and accurate membership list. He will provide mailing labels for the HISTORIA. Welcome aboard Fred!

Thanks to Fred Stewart and Scott Thomas who have accepted the position of co-trustees for the Bill Blumhardt bequest to the Society. They will receive the money, invest it, and give quarterly reports on it's status.

If you have not yet signed the petition for the Spread Eagle please do so at our meeting or one of the many locations throughout Richboro where they are located, including Solly's farm store and the Richboro Atlantic station. We have over a thousand signatures to date and we expect to get many more. The community seems to be united against the possibility of a gas station on that corner. If you can help to acquire more signatures blank forms are available. Please contact me or Diane Amadio.



Northampton Lions 38th Annual Spaghetti Dinner

Saturday November 18 - 4 to 8 P.M. at the North and Southampton Reformed Church, Bustleton and Bristol Road, Churchville. \$7.50 donation for adults and \$3.50 children under 12. For further information contact Fred Stewart at 355-5259.

FRENCH CONNECTION IN WARWICK

by Dave Gauntt (WTHS)

A delegation from the French Embassy in Washington DC visited Warwick Township, the Moland House in particular, on Friday and Saturday, the 13th and 14th of October. Their intent was to prepare the way for a pending visit from the French Consul-General, Monsieur Claude Fay, on October 31. Monsieur Fay has pledged support for the effort to secure and renovate the site of Lafayette's entrance into the Revolutionary War - the Moland property in Warwick Township. A wine and cheese reception was held at the Gayman home, (General Green's headquarters) across the road from the venerated Moland house and an impromptu visit to the property followed. The Warwick Township Historical Society hosted a breakfast at Jenny's in Peddler's Village on Saturday morning for the group.

The French dignitaries consisted of the Minister of Veteran's Affairs and two members of a group called "Souvenir France," an organization formed in 1870 to seek common ground and promote cultural exchange between our countries. All seemed extremely interested in the project.

On October 31, the French Consul General did indeed come to Warwick and, pausing in the rain in front of the Moland house, declared, "So this is the house. I'm so very glad to come here...This building is very important for American history and maybe for the Western World." He has pledged his support for the project and is planning a black tie fundraising dinner in Washington, DC and another in Wilmington, DE.

How did this come about? A member of the Warwick Township Historical Society took it upon himself to visit the President of The American Friends of Lafayette in Newport, Rhode Island and addressed the plight of the "Moland House" and its significance to the French. The impression was strong enough to prompt the American Friends of Lafayette President to invite Warwick Historical Society representatives to the annual meeting of the Lafayette Society in Brandywine, PA on June 9, 1995. By then, the Moland House video had been produced and was shown along with an extensive oral presentation at the meeting.

The French Consul-General was present, having been invited by the American Friends of Lafayette, and was so moved by the presentation that he immediately asked "What can we do about this?" The immediate answer given was that much funding was needed. His response was "I can help you get that."

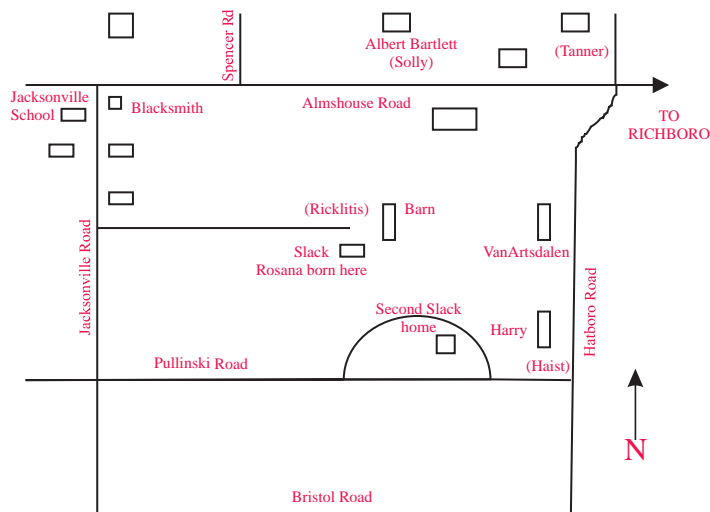
The American Friends of Lafayette, presently based at Lafayette College, may have a presence in Warwick Township in the future. The Society of Cincinnati will certainly have one when the building is habitable. All this hinges on the successful acquisition of the property by Warwick Township this year. That outcome is dependent on a voter referendum on November 7th and a clear title. Meanwhile, Warwick Society members continue to clean up and secure the property in anticipation of its salvation. This small group (growing larger by the minute), has pursued this admirable goal for over a decade, and is achieving what seemed an impossible dream in 1985.

ROSANNA INTERVIEW from page 1

children at home. Rosanna barely remembers the house, a land-locked stone dwelling set well off Jacksonville Road. All the roads in the area were dirt back then.

The Slacks usually entered the farm from Almshouse Road in Richboro (see map below). “We had a right-of-way from that farm to Jacksonville Road, to what then was New Road (later Pulinski Road) to Hatboro Road, and to Almshouse Road,” she said. “We had right of way to all those farms as an exit. I think they’re lost because they have not been used for so many years, just the one that they maintained out to Jacksonville Road.” Rosanna said you could never see the house from the road because it was completely surrounded by trees. “Mother always said it was like living under an umbrella, there were so many trees.”

The house was sold when Rosanna was four years old to Frank Vanartsdalen, and her family moved less than a quarter of a mile away to Pulinski Road. “That was a lonely old house,” said Rosanna. “No conveniences in it at all. No indoor plumbing, no central heat.”



The Slack residences and farm in Northwestern Northampton Township. This area bounded by Almshouse, Jacksonville, Pulinski and Hatboro roads is about one square mile or 640 acres. Names in parenthesis are current owners.

“I tell you we didn’t have much company in the winter,” she added. “It just was too uncomfortable. My brother said, we were disadvantaged but we didn’t know it. Practically everyone was in the same boat. No one had central heat. No one running water or any of those things.” There were stoves in every room except the one where Rosanna slept. “They were a godsend and they were an awful job to take care of,” she said. “If you knew how to work your stoves you could get a good bit of heat out of them.”

Most people living in the area had shallow wells. “A lot of Richboro would be without water in the dry season, and at the hotel which now is the Spread Eagle (then it was the White Bear) they had ... a well that never ran dry,” she said. “And sometimes half of Richboro came to get water from that well.”



The house where Rosanna was born. Now owned by the Ricklitis family. Entrance is by a 1/2 mile lane from Jacksonville Road.

Rosanna recalled that alongside the well at the White Bear was a hay scale. “When people from all around, went to town with a whole load of hay to sell, they would get it weighed there,” said Rosanna. “One time (the owner of the hotel) said ‘Let me weigh you.’ And he did. He got the right weight!”



The second Slack home on Pulinski Road. Stone cabin in center and newer addition at left.

The oldest part of the Slack house on Pulinski Road was a stone cabin, which Rosanna thinks dates back to the early part of the 18th century. In that section was a walk-in fireplace and a beehive oven that was taken out after the Slacks moved in. Her mother cooked on a kitchen range that burned wood in the summer and coal in the winter. There was a reservoir on the side of the stove where the family could heat well water, which would be used for weekly baths in a wooden tub. “Now let me tell you, it was a lot of work,” said Rosanna. “To do the laundry was an awful job. You had to go to the well to get your water.”

Please turn to page 4

ROSANNA INTERVIEW from page 3

The Slack children entertained themselves in the evening by playing games. "For dinner, the light was set in the middle of the dining room table," said Rosanna. "And after dinner we sat around there and did homework, and then we could play games. And we played a lot of different kinds of games," she said. "We played Parcheesi, we played checkers ... Name it we played it! That was one thing they got for us. We could have the games to play. I remember Father had a man come to see him on business one evening and we were having a hilarious time playing Parcheesi. He said 'I don't remember it being that much fun!' Well, my older sister sent everybody home; she cleaned the board when she went around if she possibly could!"

The Richboro W.C.T.U. held an interesting meeting at the home of Mrs. Anna Slack on Saturday afternoon. The Department of Franchise was presented. A paper on suffrage was read by Mrs. Ella Bennett, current events were given; Jesse Slack recited and Miss Julia Slack favored with a piano solo. It was decided to sew one day for the Red Cross. After discussing arrangements for the rally, the meeting closed with singing.

From the Hatboro Public Spirit August 4, 1917

When it was time to retire for the evening, a kerosene lamp would be taken up to the bedrooms. "And then of course you turned that out and it was black night."

"We didn't have electric as long as we lived there. We moved from there in '25," said Rosanna. But Mr. Slack did get a telephone. "I can remember when they put the phone in," said Rosanna. "We hadn't had any phone for years and then they came around and they wanted to put it in. So finally Dad agreed for whatever cost it might be, I think he had to get the poles," she said. "Well there was some argument when they came and it was peach season and we had a wonderful peach tree in the corner of the garden. Dad said, 'Oh well, help yourself to the peaches.' So they put the poles in! 'I forget how many people were on that line," she added. "There must have been at least 10, and it was sort of what they called the divided line. If it was in use, you couldn't use it. Those on your share of the line, you heard their bell ring and they heard yours ring." Each house had a different ring.

Rosanna said the house was well-furnished and had beautiful fireplaces. Subsequent owners have made some changes. "For instance, all the way across the front of the main part of the house was a porch. A good, deep porch. ... And in the summer we practically lived on that porch." Back then you could see

fields clear across to Almshouse Road to the house behind what is now Tanner's Store. "These people were farmers," said Rosanna. "They made their living from what they raised on the ground. They couldn't allow a lot of this ground to go to waste for hedgerows and trees and things like that."

Transportation for the Slack family was by horse and carriage. "We didn't have an automobile until the early 1920s, when one sister who was teaching got a Model T. We had horses because we used horses entirely," said Rosanna. "That was our means of getting around. Father at one time dealt in horses. He went to St. Louis one time; I think he bought mules that time. He would bring in a carload of mules and then have a sale, sometimes he would get horses and sell them. They'd come in to Ivyland because the railroad came up at that time (it even went as far as New Hope) and had a private sale, and auction sale, to sell these animals."

"We always had a dog, and cats," she added. "We had cows and horses. Sometimes only enough cows for our own use; that is, maybe two cows so you can have them freshened and have milk the year-round."



Rosanna at the barn door



Rose (Rosanna) and Jesse Slack

In winter, when there were bad snowstorms, Rosanna's father would take all the area children to school by hitching a bobsled to his horses. Sometimes he would use the roads, sometimes he would cross fields. "We put straw in the bottom, and everybody had buffalo robes in those days, and of course you had blankets galore because your houses were cold, the barns were cold. Then we would go up the lane up to Vanartsdalens, and out onto Hatboro Road to Tanyard Road," she said. Sometimes her father would cut through the Addis property to Almshouse Road, and take Almshouse Road into Richboro, gathering up kids for school along the way.

The coldest winter she could remember was in 1914. "We went through the fields for months because the roads were not cleared out. It was just too much work to try to clear them out.

Please turn to page 5

ROSANNA INTERVIEW from page 4

They didn't have machinery to do it." Her father would travel to Brownsburg to a coalyard that received coal from barges that came down from the coal mines.

When her father went to market to sell his goods, he traveled York Road, Second Street Pike or Bustleton Pike, depending on where he was planning to sell. Sometimes commission houses would take the farmers' produce and sell it and then remit to them what was left after commission fees. Her father was usually gone for three days, two days for travel and one to sell the goods. "In Philadelphia then, practically every neighborhood or practically every block had a Mom and Pop store at one of the corners. And he sold quite a bit to one Mom and Pop store. That man's name was Slack. Everybody thought they were related, but they weren't at all," she said. The people who shopped at the store knew when he was coming and would show up to buy his goods.



Richboro School picture, 1923. Rosanna is second row from front, third from right.

The first stone road was at Ivyland, "and from there there was a stone road came on down to Hatboro and on down to York Road – Willow Grove," she said. "Down toward Richboro, the first stone road was at the upper end of the cemetery" (on Almshouse Road). "And going out New Road towards Second Street Pike, Second Street Pike was the first stone road," she added. "And going down Hatboro Road, it was mud road all the way!"

For a time, she said, mail was picked up in Richboro. Then, delivery was switched to Ivyland. "We were about halfway between the two towns," said Rosanna. When delivery was switched to Ivyland, mail was brought right to the farm. "We may as well have gone to Ivyland to get it," it seemed so far away, she said.

Rosanna's father sold the farm in 1925 and the family moved to Hatboro. The previous year, she had finished 11th grade. She completed her fourth year of high school in Hatboro and then went to business school, where she received a teacher's certificate. "After that, I went to school to get a degree, because it was getting to the point where if you didn't have a degree you might as well forget about the teaching," she said. She graduated from New York University and spent the next 42 years teaching, mostly in Philadelphia, before retiring in 1969.

While Rosanna has lived in Hatboro for a much longer period than her early years on the farm, she has kept close ties with Northampton and still thinks of it as home. "Mother and father had started their married life there. Of course, father lived there all his life until we moved here. Mother had gone there as a bride. She very wisely adopted the neighborhood, and they adopted her."

Rosanna was one of the original Society members and she is always there to help. She worked at the barn sales at Bill Blumhardt's. Bill related to me many times the fine support that Rosanna gave him at the sales. Rosanna did much of the printing for the Society in her kitchen at her home in Hatboro. When I first learned that Rosanna had not been a resident of Northampton since the 1920's, I was very surprised. She is always present at our meetings and activities, always pleasant and willing to help. It is a great pleasure to be able to honor Rosanna. Congratulations! We hope to see her for many years to come at our meetings and activities. Also many thanks to Roe Blumenthal for helping me out and writing a fine article.

Doug



RICHBORO THE WAY IT WAS

This luncheonette was located between the Exxon and the Schoolhouse Shopping Center on 2nd Street Pike. This now vacant property combined with the Exxon property may be made into a car wash in the future.

NEW STATE LAW COULD HAVE FAR REACHING EFFECTS

As a result of actions initiated by historic activists in Warwick, State Senator Greenleaf, R-12, spearheaded a bill through the Senate, signed by Gov. Ridge on October 31, 1995, that now allows second class townships to acquire poorly maintained land and structures of the Colonial and Revolutionary periods for the purpose of preserving them. The law, which was drafted by State Rep. David Steil, R-31, is retroactive to Nov. 1, 1994 in order to include the Moland house in Warwick. This legislation replaces a prior archaic state law which prohibited townships from acquiring historically significant property before September 3, 1783 - the date a peace treaty was signed between Great Britain and the United States. This new law could have far-reaching impact on historic preservation throughout Pennsylvania.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday November 12 - Distinctive Inns Harvest Tour, New Hope area. Tickets \$12 - Info 215-598-3100

Monday November 20 - Southampton Township Historical Society - Ms Susan Taylor - "The Delaware Canal" 7:30 P.M. at the township auditorium.

November 18 thru December 3 - daily - Twelve Trees of Christmas - Mercer Museum

Friday November 24 - Log House Warming 1- 4 P.M. - Mercer Museum

Saturday December 2 - Trinity Church, Solebury - House Tour and Christmas Bazaar - 10 A.M. - 4 P.M. - 215-297-8769

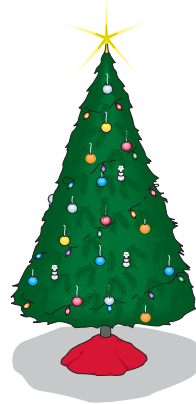
Friday / Saturday December 8,9 - Fonthill by Candlelight - 6:30 and 8 P.M.

Sunday December 10 - Holiday Festivities for the Family - Noon - 4 P.M. - Fonthill and Moravian Pottery and Tileworks

Tuesday December 12- FREE Holiday open house - Mercer Museum

Wednesday thru Saturday December 13-16 - Enchanting Holiday Evening Tours at Fonthill - 7-9 P.M.

Doc Wilson's 'Living Tree' Replaced



The summer caused havoc with the pine tree that was planted in honor of Dr. Cameron Wilson this past Spring reports Eileen Zolotorofe. Several months of high temperatures and the lack of rain certainly played a major role in the final demise of the little tree. She had stopped several times to water it, but it was in vain! However, by the time that you have this paper in your hands, the dead tree will have been removed and a new white pine, purchased by the Historic Society at Gasper's in Richboro, will have been planted by Eileen and her husband, Don. The next Living Tree Award will be presented in April 1996. Please let Doug Crompton know if you would like to serve on that committee, or if you have a nomination to present.

From time to time we get nice letters. Here is one from the Ivyland Historical Society

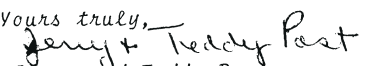
Dear Doug,

Please include us in your recent petition to save the Spread...We tried to encourage Joel and Marie a few years ago to get it on the Conservancy and we offered to do the paperwork. Wish it had been done at that time. I worked for Charlotte Weber when I was young and have fond memories of Richboro. Our house was one that was torn down on Almshouse Rd. My Aunt Rita Boyles had a notion shop next to the Spread where Miller insurance is now located.

We are from Ivyland and always involved in a futile effort to promote preservation. We are the only folks who work with Jeff Marshall at the Conservancy,.We remember the way Richboro was years ago.

We enjoy your newsletter and we are on the mailing list. We copy it for family & friends who have moved away.

Dave Gauntt is an inspirational person and told us to make ourselves known to you. We admire the job that you and your group is trying to do in the name of preservation.

Yours truly,

 Jerry and Teddy Post
 106 Gough Ave.
 Ivyland, PA 18974
 672-2617