



HISTORIA

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 4

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER, 1998

Annual Dinner meeting will feature a talk on the historic Moland House

The Northampton Township Historical Society's annual dinner meeting will feature a talk on the Moland House presented by Warren Williams, President of the Warwick Historical Society. The Society is currently restoring the historical house, located north of the intersection of Old York and Bristol Roads, in Jamison. The house is most famous for its use by General George Washington during the American Revolution. It was used as a headquarters and camp in the summer of 1777, when Washington and 11,000 of his troops spend thirteen days at the site. Mr. Williams will present a very interesting talk, including the history of the revolution during the period, the details of Washington's encampment at the site, and the Society's plans for the future of the property. The Society has engaged renowned historic preservation architect, John Milner, to oversee the restoration process, which is currently underway.

The meeting will start with dinner at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, November 18th at the Northampton Cultural Center, adjacent to the library, Upper Holland Road, Richboro. Please bring a salad, vegetable or dessert dish and enjoy a wonderful dinner and a great presentation with us. Visitors are always welcome.

The Moland House

*A history originally written
by Dave Gauntt
Warwick Historical Society*

There is a once sleepy little township in southeastern Pennsylvania that boasts the third longest encampment, in the state, of George Washington and his army - 11,000 strong. It has been little noted, and less touted for more than two centuries. Although no battles were fought here in the thirteen day period of the encampment, there were significant other occurrences.

Rampant development of Warwick Township, in Bucks County, has brought to light the contrast of the new and the old, as the old go under the bulldozer, eradicating the former rural landscape. One ancient house gives but one clue to its former glory as headquarters of George Washington and his Continental troops - a historical plaque. Washington and his army camped here for 13 days in August 1777.

On July 25, 1777, Washington, located near Morristown, New Jersey, received word that the British fleet under General Howe had sailed with about 18,000 men. Howe's strict secrecy about the destination left it a mystery, even to some of his own officers. Washington first guessed that the British were headed up the Hudson to assist General Burgoyne in cutting off New England from the southern colonies; but instead, the fleet headed out to sea. Even though it seemed odd that the British would subject their troops to the rigors of the sea when an overland march of about 100 miles would suffice, Washington concluded Philadelphia was the target. The second choice of Charleston, South Carolina, was highly likely; and if that were the case Washington would be free to strike north against Burgoyne. Washington marched



The rear of the Moland house before restoration began.

Please turn to page 5

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am deeply saddened by the death of John Leedom. John was a member of the original founding group, which included my father that formed the Northampton Township Historical Society. He was responsible for all of the legal documents and the bylaws that were drawn up for the Society. John was a great help to me and I will dearly miss him. I talked with Florence a few days ago and she is feeling much better. I look forward to seeing her at our meetings.

This will be my last president report as my term is up at the end of the year. It has been a pleasure serving the society as president but it is time for me to step down and let others serve. I feel the Society is in good shape both financially and in members, although I am disappointed in the number of members that attend our meetings and volunteer for board positions. We have had some very good speakers over the years and I encourage you to attend our meetings when you can. I will continue to edit and produce the HISTORIA and support the Society as much as I can and I will serve on the board as past president. Please give your continued support to our new board.

Mary Seader, our Vice President, has agreed to run for President and Roe Blumenthal, our Secretary, for Vice President. This leaves the position of Secretary open. If you would like to serve the Society and can take notes and type them for our four general and four board meetings a year, we would love to have you on the board. We also have a director's position open.

Our November meeting is our annual dinner meeting and begins at 6:30 PM. Members are encouraged to bring a vegetable or desert dish to the meeting.

Please note the meeting date change for our March 1999 meeting. It had been published as March 31 but is being changed to March 24!! Mark you calendars.



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV 16 - Historical Society of Southampton Meeting 7:30 PM - 357-2086

NOV 18 - Northampton Township Historical Society



John Baxter Leedom
2/5/18 - 9/16/98

The Northampton Township Historical Society and our community lost a valued and dedicated leader on September 16 with the death of John Leedom of Churchville. John, a lawyer and former district justice, was a founding member of our Society and served as our counsel for the past 24 years. John was always there to help and he seldom would miss a meeting or activity. He had intended to help at our Northampton Days booth, a few days before his death, but he was unable, due to his worsening condition. John had emphysema and even though it burdened him greatly in the last few years he continued to get out and do things. He was very active in the American Red Cross and continued to practice law part-time from his home.

John was born in Philadelphia and graduated from South Philadelphia High School in 1936. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1946. He served as a first lieutenant, Army infantry, in the European and Pacific theaters during World War II. He was wounded during the Normandy invasion in France, earning a Purple Heart and other commendations. After the war, John went on to earn his law degree at Temple University in 1951 and set up practice in Feasterville.

John is survived by his wife, Florence, another loyal society member. They were married 47 years. I always enjoyed visiting with John and it was a pleasure seeing him at our meetings. He always had an interesting story to share. We will miss him greatly. I know I sure will.

There was a funeral service for John on Saturday September 19 at the Fluehr Funeral Home. He was buried at West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Bala-Cynwyd.

Back issues of the HISTORIA are available on the web
The address is - www.crompton.com/bucks

ANOTHER FARM - GONE

A Tale of the Luff's Farming in Northampton Township

By Betty Luff

On Saturday, August 30, 1913, a family reunion was held at the James and Mary Ellen Luff farm on East Holland Road. It is recorded that after an enjoyable hour of exchanging questions all were invited to the tables spread under the trees on the spacious lawn where they did justice to the noonday meal.

Shortly after dinner, the 75 guests were assembled at the side of the big old house where a photograph was taken by Mr. William Randall of Newtown.

According to Mrs. Lida Luff, who was secretary for many years, her mother-in-law, Mrs. Ella Raab Luff, read the family genealogy, part of which follows:

“Our paternal grandfather, David (Lough) born in 1797, lived on Durham Road in Tinicum Township. His occupation was that of a tailor. He married Sarah Garris and their union was blessed with nine children, six daughters and three sons. By their toil and energy this family was successfully reared until all attained their majority and had chosen for themselves suitable occupations in life.”

Starting in 1849, the three sons, Alfred, Joseph, and Samuel all purchased farms in Northampton Township and all were known as diligent hard working farmers, as were their sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons. Many of the farms in Northampton Township have been owned at one time or another by one of this large family, but gradually one by one, most are gone to developers. The latest to disappear is the one mentioned above on East Holland Road. Purchased in 1860 by Samuel Luff, his son, James, took it over in 1901 and James' sons, Linford and Clyde, continued farming there until 1937. Gradually all of the buildings on this farm were demolished and on this 100 acres where no more than nine people had ever lived, hundreds live today. The development has been named “Stoney Brook Estates”, and each time I pass and see the one huge buttonwood tree remaining, I think about our ancestors who gathered under it in 1913.

Please turn to page 4



**James M. Luff farm, East Holland Road, 1912. When each son had their own horse.
Little white chicken coops - where each hen had her own little family in her own little coop.
Buildings demolished by Orleans Corp. For Stony Brook Estates.**

LUFF FARM from page 3

Today there are still numerous descendants of David and Sarah Luff, mostly still in Northampton Township. No tailors or farmers but hardly an occupation can be mentioned that hasn't be undertaken by a Luff.

Although some sprouts have been transported elsewhere, the roots of the main tree still have a firm grip in the Northampton Township soil where they were planted.

Some of you may wonder how the Historical Commission could let another old house go but when the Orleans Corporation purchased three adjoining farms in the 1980's, the plan called for all buildings on all three properties to be demolished. Only after the commission members along with Jeffrey Marshall, of the Heritage Conservancy, inspected the three properties did the Orleans Corporation agree that only the Adrian Cornell manor house should be preserved because of its outstanding historical significance.



Jim and Mary Ellen Slack Luff with children, Elsie, Clyde, Charles, Leonard, Linford, Alfred and Lynda. Taken in 1913



Copy of the original 1913, "Luff reunion" group photo. Taken at the James and Mary Ellen Luff Farm, East Holland Road, Northampton Township

MOLAND from first page

to the Delaware River at what is now New Hope, where on the 30th of July a courier reported that the British had been sighted off Delaware Bay. The next day Washington's troops were ferried across the river and marched down York Road toward Philadelphia. They camped one night at "The Crossroads," now Hartsville in Bucks County. The next day they marched into Philadelphia and camped. By the 8th of August the troops were creating terrible problems by fighting in the streets, taverns and brothels. They were ripping up fence posts for firewood and their latrines fouled the air creating "offensive smells" and were in general a "public nuisance" (sic). The citizenry was irate and asked Washington to leave. This suited him since he wanted to be situated in a more strategic position to move north or south as Howe's destination dictated. On the morning of August 10, Washington headed back toward Coryell's Ferry (New Hope). In the late afternoon he stopped for dinner at the Crooked Billet Tavern in Hatboro, topped off with a fine glass of Madeira wine, as was his custom. The army moved up York Road towards Coryell's Ferry. Upon reaching the Neshaminy Creek, a courier caught up with Washington and informed him the British Fleet had been sighted off what is now Ocean City, Maryland.



Front view of oldest section of the Moland house. The bay window has now been removed. Extensive restoration of this part of the house is underway.

The Commander-in-Chief decided to camp again at the "Crossroads at Neshaminy," at the junction of York Road and Bristol Road in Bucks County. It was a day's ride from Philadelphia and was open country with a sparse but friendly and sympathetic population of Scotch-Irish. It had adequate water and bathing facilities in the Neshaminy Creek. The nearby Moland House, the finest in the neighborhood, had been the home of former County and Philadelphia lawyer, councilor and justice, John Moland. The Commander-in-Chief always was well quartered.

(Interestingly, the daughters of John Moland were married to fairly high-ranking British officers, so he may have chosen the only Tory household in the neighborhood as his headquarters.)



A worker replacing the roof of the Moland house.

With Washington were his aides, among them, Alexander Hamilton, Charles Coatsworth Pinkney, John Laurens and Robert Hanson Harrison. Most of these men were children of prominent colonial patriots.

Joining Washington at his headquarters on August 19th was the young Marquis de LaFayette. Because of his immense fortune and connections as a personal friend of the King and Queen of France, LaFayette had been given the rank of General in the American Army by an American envoy while in France. Upon LaFayette's arrival in America, Congress found this arrangement unacceptable. He was offered a commission as a Major General - however he would receive no pay and have no command. On the day following this offer, LaFayette asked Washington to please give him a command as soon as Washington thought he was ready. LaFayette accepted his commission while at the Moland House. He immediately wrote to John Hancock, his first letter in English, stating he was delighted to join the Army and at last he felt like an American.

The next day at Moland, Washington received a letter from Benjamin Franklin stating that the Marquis was indeed, well-connected in France and did know the King and Queen, was very wealthy, and was "in a position to do us a great deal of good - and above all to keep him out of harm's way because his wife had just had a child and we don't need the young French Marquis killed in our cause."

Washington knew, however that LaFayette was itching for a fight. Washington sat down with LaFayette, in the Moland House, and had a conversation that LaFayette referred to for the rest of his life as "The Great Conversation." In it Washington said, in effect, that he was not in a position to give him a command yet, but he wanted him to "consider my

Please turn to page 6

MOLAND from page 5

headquarters your home while you are in our country, and I want you to look on me as your friend and father.” LaFayette had never known his father. Suddenly he felt no longer a stranger in a foreign land, but the adopted son of a national hero. He was heavily impressed.

With a letter of introduction from Benjamin Franklin, Count Pulaski joined Washington at the Neshaminy encampment on the 21st of August. Washington was not happy to receive another European nobleman looking for glory and demanding a command with all the accouterments of royalty, and sent him back to Congress. Fortunately, Congress approved him and he became one of the best generals in the army. He later lost his life at the Battle of Savannah.



Inside view of the oldest part of the house.

On the 21st of August, news that the British fleet was “high up on the Chesapeake” convinced Washington that Philadelphia was indeed the target, and preparations were made to move out.

Howe’s “strange route” as Washington called it, was caused by unfavorable winds driving his fleet south from Delaware Bay. At 4:00 AM on the 23rd, the Army marched out under the new “Stars and Stripes.” Unfurled at Moland, it was the first time American troops had marched under that banner.

With Washington on the way to meet the British at Brandywine were Majors General William Alexander, Nathaniel Greene, Marquis de LaFayette, Adam Stephen and Brigadier Generals Thomas Conway, Henry Knox, William Maxwell, John Muhlenberg, Charles Scott, Anthony Wayne, George Weedon and William Woodford, as well as future President James Monroe and future Chief Justice John Marshall. Henry Lee remained behind, however, awaiting Court Martial at the Neshaminy Presbyterian Church for disobedience of orders He was cleared.

And the Moland House today? It has finally been acquired by Warwick Township and is being restored to its 1777 condition through public and corporate donations.

Note: LaFayette thought so much of Washington and this country that he had a cask of American soil poured on his casket when he was buried. In March 1994 a representative of the Warwick Township Historical Society presented a Betsy Ross type American Flag to the French to be exchanged with the existing American Flag flying at LaFayette’s grave. An American Flag has flown at his grave since 1834 at the Marquis request in his will. The Betsy Ross Flag was flown at the Moland House before being taken to France and was accompanied by a certificate stating that fact



Architect, John Milner, inspects a door jam. Mr. Milner and his associate Mary DeNadai were engaged to oversee the restoration of the Moland house.

The Warwick Township Historical Society, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania has taken on the job of raising the funds, planning and restoring this priceless piece of history. When completed, the 18th century structures will be re-created to their appearance at the time of Washington’s 1777 encampment, and the subsequent additions will serve as classrooms, a library, museum displays, etc. It will be open to the public and situated in a 12-acre park.

YOU CAN HELP RESTORE THE MOLAND HOUSE.....

The annual membership fees go into our building fund. Members receive our newsletter and can attend special membership functions. Volunteer your skills, or learn one, to help us restore the house and grounds. Call 215-343-6852 for details.

Additional reference material

The Bucks County Historical Society Journal - Fall 1975
The thirteen days of August, Helen H. Gemmill
Washington’s Encampment at Neshaminy, William Beck, 1896



NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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HISTORIA is published quarterly by the Northampton Township Historical Society. The Society meets four times each year at the Northampton Township Cultural Center, Upper Holland Road, Richboro. Everyone is welcome at our meetings. Meetings start at **7:30 PM** with refreshments, general meeting, and a featured speaker.

Meeting Dates for 1998/99

November 18	Dinner Meeting	6:30 PM
March 24, 99	General Meeting	7:30 PM
May 26, 99	General Meeting	7:30 PM
Sept 29, 99	General Meeting	7:30 PM
Nov 17, 99	Dinner Meeting	6:30 PM

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL CLASSIFICATIONS

PATRON:	Extra support for the society	\$35.00
FAMILY:	All members of one family	\$15.00
SINGLE:	Adult individual membership	\$10.00
SENIOR CITIZEN:	Age 65 years or older	\$5.00

This will be your membership for the calendar year of 1998 (January 1998 to December 1998)

Note - Applications received after October 31 will be credited for the following year.

This application is sent with all editions of the HISTORIA. Please check your mailing label for the expiration year. Normal renewal time is in the first quarter of the year or when the March HISTORIA is received.

If your membership is current, please pass this application on to others who may be interested in our society.

Please consider a contribution of more than the minimum membership to help defray increasing society costs.

Send to : **Northampton Township Historical Society
PO BOX 732
Richboro, PA 18954-0732**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____

ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

DUES ENCLOSED: \$ _____

May we count on you to serve on one of our committees ? : Y _____ N _____ MAYBE _____

Please give us your ideas for speakers at future meetings : _____

Would you be willing to write an article for the HISTORIA _____

Your comments and suggestions are welcomed : _____