



# HISTORIA

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 3

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2009

## Welcome to Northampton Days 2009

### September meeting to feature a talk by three Richboro natives

Dr. Cameron Wilson, Jack Kay, and Carl Eisele all born and raised in the area will tell stories and relate how life was in the early 20th century in Northampton Township. The meeting will be held on September 16 at the Northampton Township Library. Meet and greet with refreshments starts at 7 PM and the general meeting starts at 7:30. Come and enjoy some great stories of the past. All are welcome to attend.



Carl Eisele



Jack Kay



Dr. Cameron Wilson

## Remembering Grenoble

By Betty Cornell Luff

*Many of you who may be new to the township may never have heard of Grenoble or even Grenoble Road so you will enjoy Betty Luff's account of this small village that is no longer there.*

Since recently moving from the Holland area to the extreme north western part of Northampton Township, I have become curious about the Grenoble area. Apparently in years past it was know as the Mearns Mills. The mills were built sometime in the 1700's and may have supplied meal and flour to General Washington's troops when they were encamped along the Neshaminy Creek in 1777. The lower mill, located in Grenoble at the intersection of Walton and Grenoble Roads, continued in operation until World War I. The handsome stone building was the victim of arson in 1952 and now is completely torn down.



158. BUCKS COUNTY (PA.) VIEWS  
Chas. R. Arnold. Pub., Ivyland, Pa

OLD ROSS MILL, GRENOBLE, PA.

A new railroad line from New Hope to Hatboro was opened in 1891. At the time Charles F. Kindred owned two parcels of land totaling 241 acres in the area. He was also the purchasing agent for the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad and he had a grand train station built on his property. Originally he had to travel to Ivyland to board the train but it now stopped close to his home. This station also served as the Post Office, had two waiting rooms, an

Story continues on page 4

**NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Many of you will be seeing this newsletter for the first time as a result of visiting Northampton Days on September 13th. We hope you enjoy the newsletter and consider joining us at our meetings throughout the year. We also would love to have you as a member of our society. Information on joining the society can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

Sadly the society lost two members since our last meeting. Peggy Weir Allen and William Pollack. Our sympathies to both of their families.

At our August board meeting we had a presentation by Tobi Bruan of Bucks County Community College about their scholarship program. Later the board unanimously approved a perpetual "Legacy Scholarship" which will be awarded annually to a student in the BCCC Historic Preservation Program. This should start in the 2010 school year. More on this in an upcoming edition of the HISTORIA.

Again this year I attended the Richboro School Reunion and took pictures and video of the event. It is always so much fun to be in one place with so many elder residents and former residents of the area. Many great stories are told. The committee that has been running the reunions since 2001 has finally said they will not do it again. We are hoping a younger group that attended this year will take over the helm next time in 2011.

I am looking forward to some great stories told by three of our most knowledgeable community elders, Carl Eisele, Jack Kay, and Dr. Cameron Wilson at our September meeting. I hope to see you there.



**NTHS Meeting**  
**Wednesday September 16, 7 PM**  
**Northampton Township Library**  
 Memories from the Past  
 Carl Eisele, Jack Kay, and Dr. Cameron Wilson.

**Did you know?**

The entire collection of HISTORIA's (over 16 years) are available online and in color. Check it out at:

**[www.northamptontownshiphistoricalsociety.org](http://www.northamptontownshiphistoricalsociety.org)**

We need your input! Please consider writing and submitting an article for the HISTORIA. Your stories, reminiscences, and photos about "Northampton the way it use to be" are always welcome. Contact the editor listed on the last page of this HISTORIA.



**The 2009 Richboro School Reunion was held on May 29 at the Northampton Country Club. Shown are the organizing committee members, Anna Mae Finney Fretz, Betty Luff Castro, Betty Cornell Luff, Emma Walker Worthington, Chairperson, and her son, Freddy Worthington.**

Pictures of the reunion can be viewed at the NTHS website. A video is also available. Contact Betty Luff.



William Alan "Bill" Pollock died peacefully at his home surrounded by his loving family Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2009, after a brief illness. He was 83. Born in Chestnut Hill and raised in the Germantown section of Philadelphia, Bill was a resident of Holland for the past 37 years. He was the son of the late Louis and Mabel Tomlinson Pollock; and brother of Edith Benson and the late Joan P. Hastings.

A graduate of Germantown High School, Class of 1944, Bill also attended the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was a current member of the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association (DESA) and a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Bill retired from the Pollock-Popek Insurance Agency in 1991. Previously, he was employed with Allstate Insurance.

In addition to spending time with friends and his large extended family, Bill enjoyed many hobbies. He was a model train collector, especially of HO and O gauge trains. He enjoyed stamp and coin collecting, hunting, Boy Scouting, and was an avid history buff and Philadelphia Phillies fan.

Bill is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Rosemary B. Wolohan Pollock; and his three children, Louis W. and his wife, Jean, Karen Beth Pollock and Betty Anne DeBuono. He also is survived by eight grandchildren, Timothy R. and his wife, Ann-Marie, Tara R., Trisha R. and Todd R. Pollock, David and Andrew Donovan, and Ali and Bill DeBuono. He was a cherished uncle to his nieces and nephews; and a dear brother-in-law to Sally McMonegal.

In lieu of flowers, his family would appreciate donations in honor of his granddaughter, Tara R. Pollock, sent to National Kidney Foundation of Maine, 470 Forest Ave., Suite 302, Portland, ME 04101.

## Margaret (Peggy) J. Weir Allen

February 12, 1933 - June 23, 2009

Peggy was the daughter of the late Harold and Esther Weir. She was born in the farm home of Harold and Esther on Almshouse Road in Richboro. She attended the Richboro Elementary and Intermediate School and graduated from Council Rock High School in Newtown.



**Peggy and Bill Allen and Peggy's sister Doris taken just weeks before her death at the Richboro School Reunion on May 29, 2009**

She was a member of 4H and raised calves and chickens for her projects. She grew up on the farm and helped with farm work. On the farm we raised cows, steers, chickens, ducks, guineas, geese, horses, goats, dogs, and cats, banties and rabbits. Peggy loved animals. She enjoyed caring for them. She had a gift for connecting with animals and they had a way of touching her heart.

Peggy was a kind and gentle teacher. I remember her teaching me how to shift gears on our 1939 Ford sedan. She was 16 and about to get her license. She said that if I could shift the gears, I could drive the car, and she taught me. I was 8 years old. The farm was approximately 1/2 mile long, so we had lots of room to drive. Peggy did most everything on the farm, drove the tractor, backed hay wagons loaded with bails of hay into the barn, helped unload the hay onto the elevator, rode the combine to bag grain, and helped with the planting and picking of the fruits and vegetables. She milked the cows and the goat. She liked to cook and helped my mother with preparing meals and preserving all the fruits and vegetables. She liked to bake, too. She helped my father with his Market Route from 1953 to 1991.

Daddy told me that he could not have operated the farm without Peggy.

She married William Allen of Feasterville on May 16, 1953. They lived in Feasterville until the late 1970's when they moved back to the Farm in Richboro. Bill helped with the farm and kept the farm machinery in working order, spraying the corn, milking cows, etc. Peggy especially liked Beagles and during her married life, she and Bill had at least 18 dogs. During the years at the Richboro Farm, Peggy gave numerous Farm Tours to area school groups.

After our father died, Peggy and Bill moved to a farm in Port Royal, Pennsylvania. Peggy took much from the Richboro Farm with her: three horses, sheep, banties, dogs, bunnies and even a chicken house. She had a big garden and raised her animals and chickens, and had eggs to sell and give away. Peggy had a knack for growing things. Gladiolus and roses were her favorite flowers.

Peggy and Bill had no children of their own, but over the years they loved and guided many young people, sharing their love, kindness and compassion. My daughters Martha and Jill spent many weeks of their summer vacations at the



**Peggy with her little sister Doris and dogs Inky, Spotty, and Dottie at the back door of their home on the farm on Almshouse Road.**

farm in Richboro and later Port Royal benefiting from her knowledge of life and living with compassion for animals and people.

Peggy passed this life peacefully in her home in Port Royal.

There was a memorial service for Peggy at the Brown Funeral Home, Mifflintown, Pennsylvania shortly after her death and a memorial gathering at the North and Southampton Reformed church in Churchville on Saturday August 1, 2009. It was a wonderful gathering of family and friends and even past customers of the market route from as far away as Glenside.

# Remembering Grenoble

Continued from page 1

open fireplace, a chandelier and stained glass windows. The stone from the neighboring Cummings Quarry was used in building the station which, along with milk from local farms, provided much of the freight business from the area. The building declined after it became a non-agency station on July 1, 1930. It was torn down by the Reading Company in 1953.

In the past the village could be reached from Almshouse Road via Walton Road but the bridge crossing the Little Neshaminy has been closed for years. There are just a few scattered houses in the vicinity of the former village and the area has a wild, overgrown appearance making it hard to imagine that a bustling little community, complete with its own mill, train station, and post office, once existed at this location.

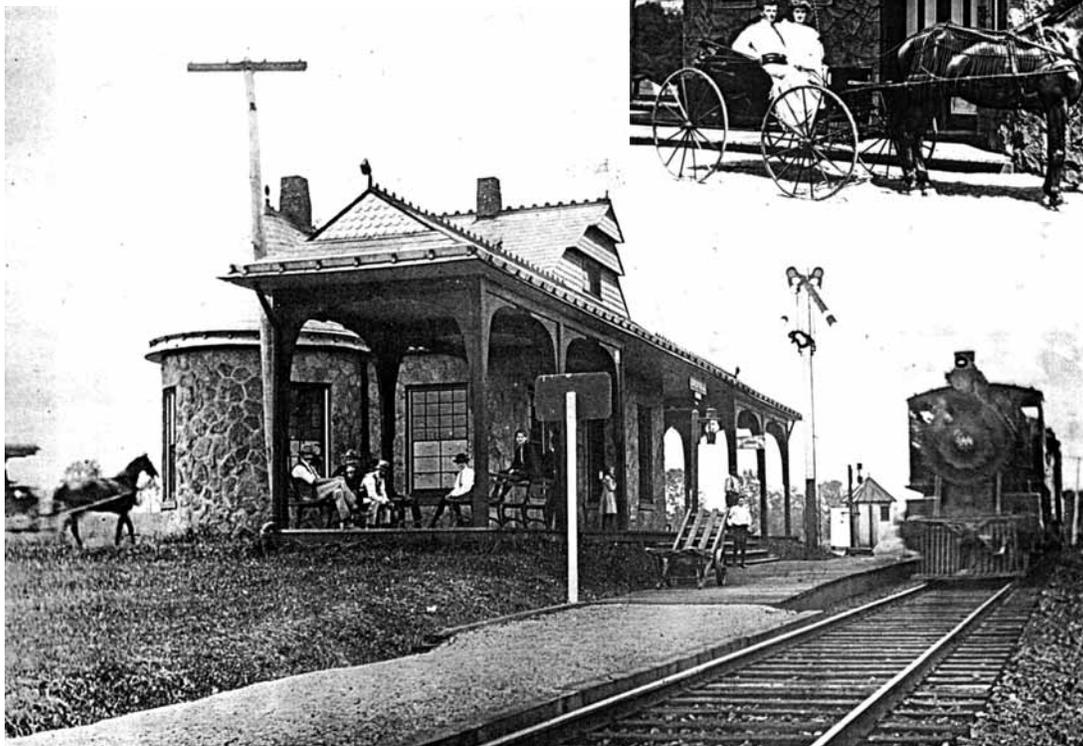


Many of you are familiar with the Arnold Brothers postcards. Newton Arnold was the photographer and Charles Arnold printed the cards on his printing press in Rushland. When Newton was seventeen he was



hired by this new railroad line which ran from New Hope to Hatboro. He served as Postmaster of the Grenoble post office when it opened in June 1891 and continued that post until 1918. Residents living in the area today have their mail served from Warminster rural delivery, although some prefer to go to the Rushland post office. The book "Place Names in Bucks County" by George MacReynolds stated that the naming of Grenoble was derived from a city in France.

Above shows an overgrown and desolate Grenoble today. Below, the majestic station and a couple posing in a carriage in front.



# My Memories of the Weir Farm

By Doris Weir Ladd

In 1900, John and Thirza Stackhous purchased a farm on Almshouse Road, 1/2 mile west of the intersection of Second Street Pike and Almshouse Road. There were 60 acres on the north side of Almshouse Rd. and 20 acres on the south side.

They had two sons, Harvey and Edwin. In 1904, a daughter, Esther was born in the farm house. She attended the Richboro School. She was my mother. She told me that there were five students in her graduating class. Esther grew up on the farm, and helped with the farm work.

My mother was introduced to Harold Weir of Hatboro, PA. by John and Bessie Gill. Harold and Esther were married on March 4, 1925 in the farm house on Almshouse Road.



**Richboro School class of 1921. My mother, Esther Stackhous Weir is in the 2nd row, 2nd girl from the left. There may have been other classes in this picture.**

My father had worked as a carpenter for Grover Krewson in Glenside, Pennsylvania, but now on the farm he was interested in growing and selling produce. In 1927 he started a Market Route in Glenside and Hatboro selling home grown produce to people that he had worked for in those areas when he was a carpenter.

When my dad advertised for help on the farm. Herschel Mac Donald responded to the ad. He lived in Tennessee. He came to the farm and helped for several years along with Sam Keen, who had formerly worked at Benner's Store in Richboro, later it became Luff & Traub.

The market route had grown and daddy needed a bigger Market truck. So, in 1935, Herschel helped my father design a truck to fit his needs and height. They requested a special storage rack for large wooden boxes to hold produce. Then

on the opposite side he wanted to put two stacked wooden crates with metal liners to hold fresh killed chickens and wooden crates holding 30 dozen each of cage free extra large, large, medium and pullet eggs. There were slates on the side to hold paper bags for produce. There was a tailgate and two upper doors on the back. In the summer, he loaded bags of fresh pulled corn on the tailgate. In the winter months it could be closed up. The truck was ordered from The Ford Motor Company. It was a 1935 with a V8 flat head engine. It was black and dark green. Daddy had gold leaf lettering painted on both sides. (Harold L. Weir Farm Produce Richboro, PA.)



**This picture was used on a calendar in 1984, that my Father gave to each customer on the Market Route. (L to R) Bill and Peggy Allen, Harold Weir Harry, Doris, and Martha Ladd. Jill Ladd in front.**

My brother, Harvey, was born in 1927. My sister, Peggy, was born in 1933. I was born in 1941. Harvey was also interested in photography and flying. For two years he flew for Piper Aircraft in Lockhaven, Pennsylvania delivering Piper Cubs around the United States. He also did aerial photography, wedding pictures, and photos for area residents. He took pictures for Jack Frye, who was the constable and he also worked on the farm and went on the Market Route with my father.

The Market Route expanded over the years to include customers in Hatboro, Willow Grove, Roslyn, Glenside and Abington. Daddy went door to door every Friday. He sold to Anthony's Market on Jenkintown Road, Casa Conti's Restaurant, and Trunk's Market, all in Glenside.

Customers would order chickens for delivery the following week. On Wednesday evening when the chickens went to roost, Daddy would catch the ones needed for the route. They were placed in crates and taken to a building called the truck

house. On Thursday morning, water would be poured into the farmer's boiler and heated by a wood fire underneath of it. The hot water was placed in another container that was used to scald the chickens. The chickens were killed, put in the scalding water and then the feathers were removed on a rotary electric picker and the pin feathers were removed by hand. The chickens were placed in cold water and then cleaned and either cut-up or cleaned whole as requested. They were placed in plastic bags and stored in the refrigerator.

During the day on Thursday, we picked the vegetables and fruit to sell on the route. My father grew potatoes, beets, asparagus, string beans, wax beans, lima beans, corn, tomatoes, strawberries, raspberries and rhubarb. He also purchased some vegetables wholesale, from Walt Strigel of Feasterville and later from Rotelli's in Spring House, PA. The Market Truck would be loaded with the fresh produce and approximately 100 dozen of cage free, brown eggs in extra large, large, medium and small sizes. The eggs were gathered and graded by my father and put in wooden crates each day.

Early Friday morning, when we had sweet corn in the summer, approximately 500 ears would be pulled and bagged and loaded on the tail gate of the Market Truck, to be sold fresh pulled that day. We left on the route by 8 a.m. and returned home around 10 p.m.

When I was 8 years old, my brother said that it was time for me to go on the route in the summertime. I loved it. Each Friday, I was allowed to choose a friend to go with daddy and



**Aerial view of the Weir farm looking southeast. The Wilson farm and orchards to the upper right, Ruckers greenhouses in the distance, upper left. The house (middle left) was called the "cemetery house" and was owned by Vince and Helen Diehl it was later torn down when they build a new ranch home.**

me. Friends who went with me were Judy Diehl, Mary Jane Gilbert, Sylvia Hinkle, Cathy Conner, and Kay Krause. It was an amazing learning experience. We sold potatoes by the 1/4 and 1/2 peck, beans and tomatoes by the pound, berries by the pint and quart. Corn was sold by the dozen, but we always gave a baker's dozen, 13 ears. I would enter the customer's home, show them the list of produce, write down their order, price the items, and add it up (no calculator). They would pay me and I would make change starting from the price of their order to the amount they gave me. Go to the truck and get their produce. The customers were dear friends. Daddy had some of the customers for over 50 years.

Peggy went on the route after the death of my brother, Harvey. Peggy enjoyed visiting with the customers. Daddy would tell her she did too much "Chinnin" and they would get behind on their time to be at the next customer.

My father had the route for over 60 years. Daddy retired the 1935 Ford Market Truck in the late 1980's. Peggy and her husband, Bill Allen took over the route with another Ford truck, until the summer after my father's death in 1991.

My daughter's Martha and Jill had the same experiences that I had on the Market Route. Martha went with Daddy and our friend, Doris Hardcastle in the 1935 Ford Market Truck and Jill with Peggy and Bill in the Ford stepvan.

The farm and the Market Route were ideal places to learn about farm life and making a living from a working farm. Many, many people worked on the farm and went on the route and assisted in the daily operation of the farm over the years.

For six years, I taught Kindergarten in the Council Rock School District. At the end of each school year, I brought my students to the farm. For the first three of those years, my father would pick us up in the 1935 Ford Truck at school and drive us to and from the farm. My sister Peggy would give a tour of the barn, chicken houses, Daddy would give us a straw ride, and we would have a picnic lunch. I think my parents, my sister and I enjoyed this as much as my students did. In the next two years a school bus brought us to the farm and in the sixth year it was on a Saturday. All my students and their parents came. What a special time!!!!

Our farm holds a very special place in my memory. My grandparent, Thirza and John Stackhouse, and my parents, Harold and Esther Weir passed away there. My parents were married in the farm home. My mother, my brother, my sister and I were born in the farmhouse. Peggy and Bill had their wedding reception at the farm. I am blessed to have had the experiences of growing up on the farm and to have a loving, hard working family. Unfortunately today no trace of that special place remains.

Thank you to Doug Crompton and the Historical Society for keeping these great memories and ways of living alive.



# NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 732, RICHBORO, PENNSYLVANIA 18954-0732

[NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org](http://NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org)

## 2009 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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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 Library, Upper Holland Road, Richboro. Everyone is welcome at our meetings. Meetings start at **7:30 PM** (refreshments 7PM), and include a featured speaker. For more information visit our web page or e-mail us at [nths@NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:nths@NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org) Past issues of the HISTORIA, in color, are available on our web page [NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org](http://NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org) The HISTORIA is edited by Doug Crompton. Articles are always welcome.

### Meeting Dates for 2009

September 16      General Meeting      7 PM Library  
November 18      Dinner Meeting      6 PM To be announced

### Board Meetings 2009

October 13  
Northampton Library 7 PM

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL CLASSIFICATIONS

This will be your membership for the calendar year of 2009 (January 2009 to December 2009)

INDIVIDUAL - \$15    SENIOR - \$10    STUDENT - \$10    SPONSOR - \$100    PATRON - \$250 (5 year membership)  
FAMILY - \$20    SUSTAINING - \$50    NTHS CIRCLE - \$500 or greater (Life membership)

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 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:     /     / 2009      Membership Classification \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ DUES ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

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 welcome : \_\_\_\_\_