

THE JACOBSTOWN RECORD

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The Interpreter's Corner by Jim Wilson

For more than a year-and-a-half now the Henry Homestead at Boulton has been under major renovations as the Jacobsburg Historical Society works toward fulfilling its vision of creating the Museum of the Pennsylvania Longrifle. To date, most of the work has focused on major maintenance and repair of the overall structure and infrastructure of the Homestead to prepare it to house this one-of-a-kind museum. Old utility systems and fixtures have been replaced with state-of-the-art equipment. Museum quality, thermal pane replacement windows have been installed and window shutters are under restoration before being re-hung. Walls and ceilings have been well insulated and seams, doors and windows have been sealed and caulked. All rain gutters and downspouts have been replaced with maximum capacity copper piping. The stone foundation of the Henry Homestead has been repaired and re-pointed, bringing beautiful new life to the old stonework. The front porch flooring and joists are being replaced and the stone porch piers are under repair. Basement utility rooms, some previously with dirt floors, have been modernized into dry, useable and much-needed storage space. Soon the entire exterior of the Henry Homestead will be repainted in historically accurate colors and entranceways to the building will be made handicap-accessible.

While workmen have been busy renovating the structure and infrastructure of the Henry Homestead, craftsmen have also been busy meticulously renovating its interior spaces to house the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum. All four walls in the Log Cabin Room have been exposed, revealing the original log timbers of the circa 1740 cabin that William Henry III expanded into the Henry Homestead in the early 19th century. The log wall chinking has all been re-pointed, bringing to life a rustic yet vibrant look and spirit to the old Log Cabin Room. In this same room, the Victorian window moldings have all been replaced with rough-cut trim, which complements the natural log walls. A plywood sub-floor has been installed throughout the entire first floor of the Homestead and in the Log Cabin Room, the sub-floor has been overlain with beautiful, wide-board shiplap flooring. These floorboards were milled on-site from the many white ash trees that were toppled throughout Boulton during the onslaught of Tropical Storm Floyd in September 1999. Wall-to-wall carpeting will cover the Center Hall and Margaret Taylor Room on the remainder of the first floor of the Homestead and these two rooms will retain their Victorian charm, spruced up with a fresh coat of paint and trim.

The entire basement stairway has been re-engineered and the staircase replaced. The basement stairway sidewall has been exposed, revealing, perhaps for the first time in nearly 200 years, a portion of the stone foundation of the original log cabin that William Henry III added on to in building the Henry Homestead. This interior stonework, like the exterior stone foundation, has been beautifully restored, adding a hitherto unknown structural and artistic dimension to the stairway and to the Homestead. In the basement, shiplap flooring has been installed over the

sunken brick floor, bring the floor flush with the outside doorsill and making the basement handicap-accessible. The basement walls have been repaired, re-plastered and waterproofed, and drywall has been installed in the basement ceiling. The basement kitchen walls have been rebuilt, partitions have been added and a concrete kitchen floor has been poured to make the entire basement floor one level surface. A new kitchen sink, appliances and cabinetry will soon be installed and the basement restroom has been doubled in size and made handicap-accessible as well.

Additional renovations and construction at the Henry Homestead as we prepare it to house the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum include the excavation, repair and waterproofing of exterior foundation walls below grade; the installation of a telecommunications network, baseboard cableways, museum lighting system and a state-of-the-art security system; some tree removal, landscaping and much, much more. In the meantime, as renovation and construction work continues at the Henry Homestead, the actual museum storyline has been established, the Jacobsburg Historical Society's collections of firearms, gunmaking tools and equipment, and Henry family photographs, documents and artifacts are being identified for exhibits, and museum exhibit concepts and designs are being drafted. We'll take a closer look at actual museum exhibits in the next issue of *The Jacobsburg Record* as the Jacobsburg Historical Society moves into the home stretch of completing the Museum of the Pennsylvania Longrifle at the Henry Homestead. Stay tuned.....

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2002 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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|----------------------|---|
| October | Walk In Henry's Woods (Date to be announced) |
| October 17 | Annual Dinner and Meeting |
| October 19 | Fall Clean-up. Rain date November 2nd. |
| October 26-27 | Fur Trade Rendezvous |

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A LONG SHADOW

The passing of John Schlamp has brought fond memories of a family of Jacobsburg volunteers. John, his wife, Katherine, and his sister, Beatrice, all served the Society well.

John, as Treasurer, produced reports for each meeting, some by projector, making it easy to discuss them item by item. He also provided a meeting room at the Nazareth National Bank during the winter months. This required making arrangements with the security guard and being first in and last out to see to the opening and closing of the building. He also arranged for occasional Bank window displays.

A LONG SHADOW (CONT'D.)

John drove Katherine to the Homestead on Open House days. Oddly, he never stayed himself, but dutifully returned to take her home! Katherine saw to it that ample volunteers were on duty, and often provided floral decorations. Especially noteworthy were her Christmas trimmings for the traditional Community Open House.

Beatrice Schlamp assembled material for the Record over a period of many years, and saw to its printing as well. The Record then went to the John Schlamp basement where John and Katherine affixed address labels and sorted the publication into zones, as required by the Post Office. John then saw to the mailing and payment of postage. Beatrice (or "B" as she was known) also arranged Society bus trips, which provided members with an additional social program.

All of these duties were performed quietly and faithfully, and, unfortunately, mostly taken for granted. But they were responsible for steady progress and a continued interest in the Society. May the Schlamp Family long provide an example for years to come. Such active participation by dedicated members is essential if our Society is to fulfill its obligations.

R.P.L.F.

J. J. HENRY HOUSE CARPETS

It may come as a surprise to learn that the floors of both parlors in the J. J. Henry House are unfinished. This indicates that wall-to-wall carpet was always used. The idea is not as modern as we might think.

We do not know the age of the present carpet in the two parlors, but it is not the original, as the large "pocket" doors were a later addition. Originally the back parlor was a dining room. What type of carpeting would have been used when the house was first built?

One possible type was called Venition Carpet. This was woven in stripes of several colors, using hues of green, red, black and mustard. The patterns were called "Figures" and were given names such as the "Hartford Figure". By the 1700s, this carpet was being woven in America. One Connecticut weaver's draft book (1793 to 1824) lists thirteen figures. There is record of its having been woven in 24 yard lengths, being 27 to 42 inches wide.

Another type of floor covering was the Ingrain or Scotch carpet. This first appeared in the early 18th century. The body of this carpet consisted of two layers woven simultaneously on the loom. A pattern was formed when the top cloth became the bottom, forming pockets between the layers. This weaving method produced a figured pattern, and floral as well as geometric, were produced, the colors being reversed on the opposite sides.

Although first imported, it was being woven in this country by 1820. Few old examples remain as the material used was soft Merino wool. To protect these carpets, slippers were worn in the best rooms.

J.J. HENRY HOUSE CARPETS (CONT'D.)

The present use of Oriental rugs to cover the worn Victorian carpet dates from Dr. Stites' occupancy. He was an ardent collector of Orientals, as we can see. We must remember that J. Joseph Henry was familiar with Philadelphia, and had access to the newest and best the market could supply. Perhaps it will be possible, at some future date, to once again have period floor covering in these rooms.

OUT OF THE PAST

The following letter was addressed to the Virginia and Joe Lopresti in 1984 and was recently brought to our attention by Virginia Lopresti. We thought the membership would be interested.

12 Sept. 84

Dear Loprestis'

Aloha, once again. Hope I'm not bothering you with all these inquiries - I know you're both busy.

Question one: Is there currently, or will there be a book or other publication on the history of Jacobsburg? Also, where can one find publications on the history of areas around Jacobsburg, i.e./ Pen Argyl. Are there other historical societies in the area to include a Pennsylvania State Historical Society?

Question two: Do you know of any history or historians familiar with the Ross Common area on the other side of Wind Gap?

Once again - sorry to bother you, but I am truly interested.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*James A. Wilson
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Jim Wilson is currently employed by the Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center as a Heritage Education Specialist. He is also a frequent contributor to the Jacobsburg Historical Society Record.

Estelle Shedlauskas, Editor



The Jacobsburg Historical Society

Presents an A Historical Reenactment of the

American Fur Trade Era Encampment

“A SPECIAL HALLOWEEN at BOULTON”

October 26 & 27, 2002

At the Boulton Plantation – Belfast Exit off of Route 33

Go West to 402 Henry Road, Belfast, PA.

Sat. 10AM to 5 PM & Sunday 10 AM to 3 PM

The Rendezvous

A Pre-1840 Primitive Living History Camp is in the Program Area.

They portray Camp Life along with demonstrations of Knife & Tomahawk throwing, Primitive Archery, Black Powder Shooting, Primitive Fishing, and Baking Contest as well as Crafts, Trades and Traders of the Fur Trade Period.

Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum

On Display will be Rifles, Pistols & Smoothbores of the American Fur Trade, Accouterments of the Fur Trapper & Traders plus Trade Goods of all description.

John Joseph Henry House

Tour our 1832 Philadelphia Style Townhouse. All the collections, furnishings, books, paintings, house wares, etc. are ALL Henry Family Possessions. Take the Tour & see how an affluent 19th Century Family lived in Rural Pennsylvania.

The Gunsmith Shop

Observe our Master Craftsmen & their Apprentices Recreating the Henry Longrifles & Half-stock rifles of the Fur Trade Period. Bring along your family Heirloom rifle and have our experts tell you all about it and appraise it FREE.

The Blacksmith Shop

Hear the Ring of the Blacksmiths Hammer at work producing ironware for the Boulton Plantation and for YOU our Friends and Supporters. (see: the Gift Shop)

The Summer Kitchen

See our 18th & 19th Century Hearth Cooks in Action preparing Authentic dishes of early America. Maybe pick up a new Receipt (Recipe).

Gardens

Visit our 19th Century Gardens, both Formal Flower & Herb Gardens. Sit and enjoy.

Come Walk in Henry's Woods

View our 160+ year old English Elms, Oaks & Hemlocks along the Bushkill. Hike the 12.5-Miles of Trail in the adjoining Park in this beautiful Fall Season. Stop in at our New Boulton Visitors Center and say Hello to Jim Wilson.

Admission \$ 3.00 Adults
Children under 12 – Free
J.H.S. Members are always FREE

For Information Call: Mr. Jim Wilson
Boulton Visitors Center at 610-746-2809
email-jacobsburg@fast.net
Website – jacobsburg.com