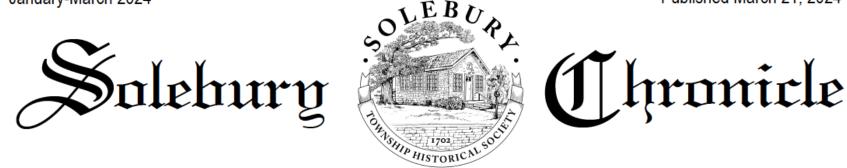
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A Newsletter of the Solebury Township Historical Society

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# **Greetings from the President**

I want to thank everyone for a great year in 2023! With a brand-new board, we reinvigorated the Historical Society and hosted several walks in Lumberville and events at the one-room schoolhouse. Our fall Lathrop Garden Party at HollyHedge Estate was one of the biggest successes in our history as both a fund- and important friend-raiser that brought our membership together again after several years. We capped off the year by partnering with Hewn Spirits in Lahaska for the creation of Solebury Rye which was distilled with a piece of Solebury's Columbus Oak.

2024 looks to be just as eventful. We've already hosted archaeology and house research talks and two ImpressionSIPS painting parties. Future events include a genealogy talk in March, a community sharing event in April and several walks in the spring and fall. Look for the return of our Annual Meeting in the fall as well as our signature Brunch at HollyHedge which will be January 5, 2025. Through your generous donations last September and your continued support this year, we will unveil our new website, increase our research hours at the schoolhouse and provide continued programming opportunities throughout the year.

It has been an honor to live in this community and to be a part of this dynamic organization. I look forward to seeing you all throughout the year.

-Marnie Newman Leasure

# **Solebury Rye Fundraising Success**

In keeping with their tradition of using rare, historic and reclaimed woods during the making of their small batch spirits, local distillery Hewn Spirits premiered their latest one of a kind limited release Whiskeys just in time for the holiday season. Hewn's founder and Master Distiller Sean Tracy was thrilled at the opportunity to get access to a precious piece of the Columbus Oak Tree which experts date back to the 1400's. The 100% Rye which was crafted with local grains, bottled at 100 Proof and aged in Hewn's used Bourbon Barrels was enthusiastically received and sold out within weeks. 50% of all proceeds were donated to STHS in early January and funds will be used to support existing educational programming and to enhance preservation and research resources.

A unique new blend of Solebury Rye is already barreled and awaiting a November release to once again support the STHS.





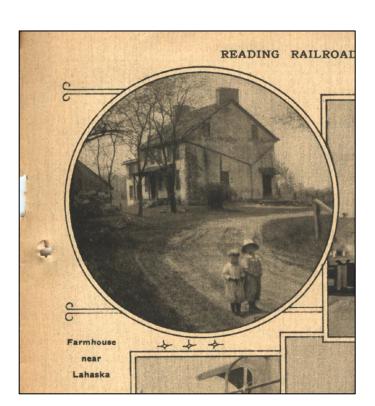
# Heritage Committee 2024 Goals and Digitization Update

The Heritage committee has big plans for the 2024 year with the main focus on using new software to catalog the collection here at the schoolhouse. This software will also facilitate our long term goal of digitizing archival material for easier access for researchers.

Our team of Chase, Judy, Pam, Russell, Wendy and Tim work to manage acquisitions, maintain the archive collection and create inspiration for events. In 2024, we plan to provide 3-4 events in the spring and fall, expand our hours of availability at the schoolhouse and continue to work on oral histories with folks in the community. If you have people in mind who would like to tell their stories of Solebury please contact us. And we're always happy to add people to the Heritage team! So let us know if you're interested.

Additionally, members of the Heritage Committee have been working on digitizing portions of our collection that are frequently requested or very useful for family names and research purposes. Chase Palmer has been digitizing and indexing our copies of the "Bucks County Traveler," "Bucks County Panorama", and "Bucks County Life." He is also giving us digital copies of these issues that we do not have, as well as digital copies of the Reading Railroad magazine.

The Bucks County magazines were published roughly from the 1940s to the 1970s. The Reading Railroad magazine was published for employees of the railroad from the 1920s to the 1960s. Digitizing these issues allows us to search for key words in the issues digitized, all from one search engine. The images on this page show some things that can be found very easily from searching. We can see a "Farm Scene in Lahaska" from the Reading magazine, an Article about the Solebury School and Ely Farm from Bucks County Traveler, and specific staff members from the New Hope Station and train crew.



BUCKS COUNTY TRAVELER, DECEMBER, 1951

## Ely Farm, Established in 1760, Now Solebury Prep School

During a blizzard on a February ownership until 1918 when Mr. delivered the old Ely farm, on Solebury Road near New Hope, to the Solebury School for Boys. The real Dutch stories. estate agent was the late George H. Ely, who had formerly owned the farm, and was now acting as agent for the present Michener owner. The Ely farm was established by an Ely in 1760, and it remained under Ely

day in 1926 papers were signed which George Ely sold it to the Singmasters. It was there that Elsie Singmaster wrote her famous Pennsylvania

Dr. Arthur Washburn, Julian Lathrop, Robert Shaw and Laurie York Erskine, all school masters, with the vision of a school which would answer all the needs of a boy in his adolescence, saw that the great stone



Solebury School was the old Ely farmhouse on Solebury Road, near New Hope, Pa.



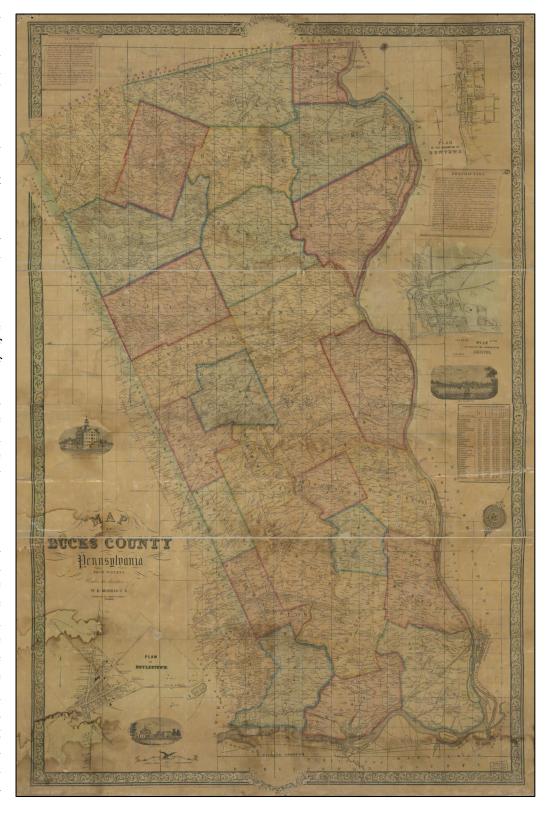
# Who's Behind those Historical Wall Maps of Bucks County? Part 1

If you have been in the schoolhouse lately, you might have noticed that we have a new framed wall map of Bucks County from 1850. This map, donated to the historical society from the Trenton Free Public Library, is a great research companion to our 1859 farm map of Solebury Township.

William E. Morris: The map was drawn from surveys under the direction of William Ellis Morris (1812-1875). It was published by Robert Pearsall Smith (1827-1898) in Philadelphia. According to the Hagley Museum, William E. Morris had quite an extensive history. "He was a civil engineer and railroad executive. He was born in Muncy, Pennsylvania, on January 29, 1812, and died in Philadelphia on October 15, 1875.

Morris spent the first years of his career on the state-owned railroad and canal system of Pennsylvania, serving as an appointee of Democratic administrations. From 1836 to 1838, when the Anti-Masons were in power, he worked for a number of private companies, including the Bald Eagle & Spring Creek Navigation and Union Canal in Pennsylvania, and the extension of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad west of Harpers Ferry under B. H. Latrobe (1806-1878).

When the Democrats returned to power in 1839, Morris returned to the Public Works, being named chief engineer of the Juniata and Western Division Canals and the Allegheny Portage Railroad. In this capacity he designed the Allegheny Mountain reservoirs to supply both canal divisions. With retrenchment caused by the state's default, Morris returned to the private sector, eventually serving as president of the Germantown & Norristown Philadelphia, Railroad from 1843 to 1853, of the Long Island Railroad from 1853 to 1863 and as acting president of the New York & Harlem Railroad from 1863 to 1864. He resigned the last position for health reasons in 1864 and retired to a consulting practice in Philadelphia."



Robert Pearsall Smith: According to the Library Company of Philadelphia, "Robert Pearsall Smith, son and brother of Library Company of Philadelphia librarians John Jay and Lloyd P. Smith, respectively, born in Philadelphia on February 1, 1827, was a premier map lithographer during the mid-19th century. Known for his salesmanship and ability to negotiate, Smith continued Philadelphia's tradition as a center for map publishing and printing. He married evangelist reformer Hannah Whitall (1832-1911) in 1851 and they had several children, including daughter Rachel Pearsall Smith.

Smith began his career in lithography in 1846 in collaboration with his father and brother in the operation of the Anastatic Office, which specialized in a form of transfer lithography. Within a year, Smith assumed the business and converted it into a printing and map publishing establishment, with several of his early maps lithographed by premier Philadelphia lithographer Peter S. Duval. In 1848-1849, he associated, but did not formalize a partnership, with Isaac Jones Wistar under the firm name Smith & Wistar, but Wistar soon left Philadelphia. In 1849, Smith moved his office to 15 Minor Street, later expanded to 17-21, i.e., 517-521 Minor Street employing a number of noteworthy lithographers, engravers and map colorists, including George Worley, Benjamin Matthias, William Bracher, George Eimerman, F. Fuchs, and Jacob Brunner.

In 1857, Smith entered into a partnership with Duval's former foreman, Frederick Bourquin, following the dissolution of P. S. Duval & Company. The men established a separate lithographic office from Pearsall's establishment at 600 Chestnut Street. The firm, known as F. Bourquin & Company or Smith & Bourquin, operated until 1865. In 1863, Smith added a third address of 410 Walnut Street to his operations that already included the Minor and Chestnut Street studios. A few years later, however, Smith left the lithographic and map publishing fields to assume a partnership in 1865 in the glass manufacturing firm of his father-in-law Whitall, Tatum & Company of New Jersey. He eventually became an evangelist, like his wife, for the Holiness movement in America and died in London, England on April 17, 1898."

More information about the Solebury Township Wall Map will be shared in the next newsletter.

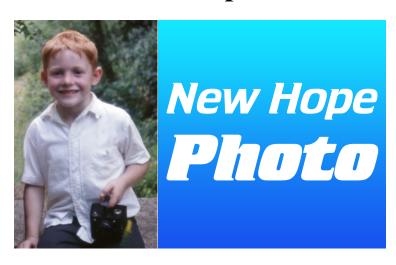
# **Solebury Township Trivia**

The snow drought is over! After only having 2.1 inches of snow for the winter of 2022-2023, our lowest season total for the last 100 years, we finally had some substantial snow this winter.

- 1) Do you know which two-year winter season was our snowiest?
- 2) Do you know which day was the snowiest day in the last 100 years?
- 3) Do you know what decade and where in Solebury Township this winter photo was taken?



# Thank you to Ted Nichols and New Hope Photo



We wanted to give a huge THANK YOU! to New Hope Photo for framing our historic wall map for us. It looks great and will help preserve our map for years to come.

Ted Nichols was born and raised in Carversville and has always loved Solebury Township, the rich history, the beauty of the area and the wonderful people. Photography has been a life-long interest. He was active as a Year Book and Press Club Photographer at New Hope-Solebury High School. New Hope Photo was established in 1984 to meet the photographic needs of the community. Over the past 39 years, New Hope Photo has evolved. In addition to traditional print services, they now offer scanning and archiving of photos, slides and negatives; video transfers from all formats of video tapes and movie films; photo restorations and fine art reproduction. They added custom framing services in 2015 and especially enjoy working with customers on special projects to protect, preserve and display items that are important to their family history and objects of historical significance to our community and beyond. The photo of Ted is from the day he got his first camera in 1965. He is sitting on the stone bridge on McNeil

# 110 Years ago In Solebury: The 1914 Farm and Business Directory of Bucks County

110 Years ago, "The Farm Journal" published a directory of farms and businesses in the county. This resource, which is available in our library, was an offshoot of the annual publication titled "The Farm Journal." It was founded and established in 1877 by Quaker farmer Wilmer Atkinson. Farm Journal magazine was a way to share practical advice to improve the livelihoods of farmers living within a day's horseback ride of the publication office in Philadelphia. The publication, which was sold for \$0.80 (equivalent to \$23.94 today) sold over 4,000 copies in Bucks County and listed many interesting agricultural facts for Bucks County, including:

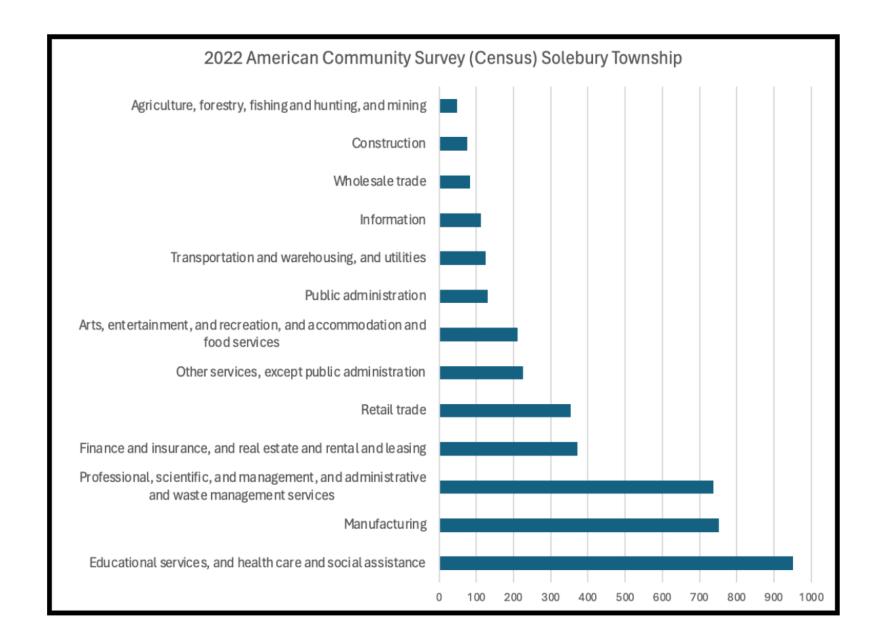
- There were 6,020 farms in the county, with the average size being 59 Acres.
- Of the men operating these 6,020 farms, 5,323; or 88%., are native-born Americans, and 677, or 11%, are foreign born; 20 are "colored" (an offensive term the publication used)
- The chief crops of Bucks County were corn and forage crops.
- According to the census of 1910, the value of all farm property in the county, including land, poultry, etc., was \$38,400,771. This gives an average of \$6,379 (equivalent to \$196,739.20 today) per farm.

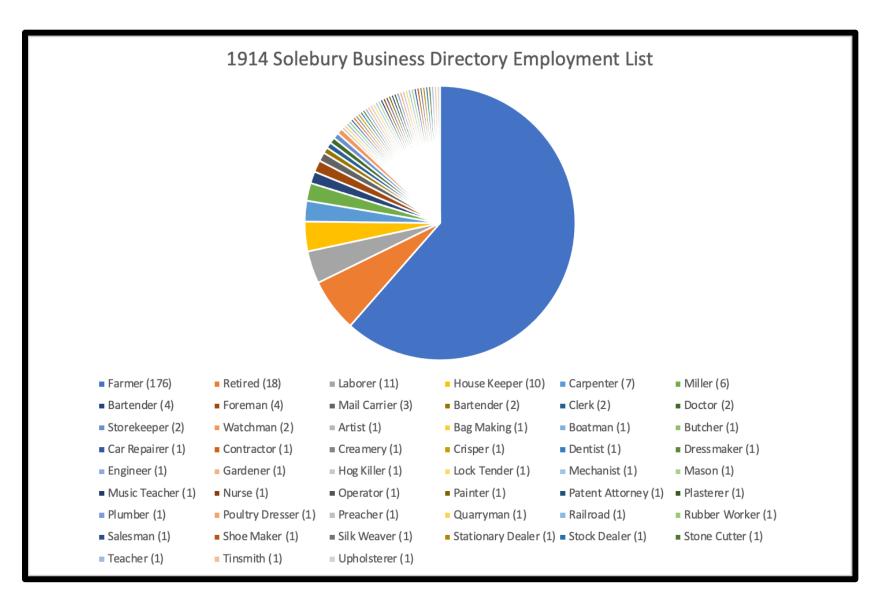
Some elements stand out as being very different from today, while others are still the same. These include the following facts from the 2022 Census of Agriculture:

- Number of Farms: Today there are 871 farms in the county, with an average size of 79 acres. The average number of acres per farm has gone up slightly in size, but the number of farms has fallen dramatically
- Racial statistics today are calculated differently than they were in 1914. It is interesting to see that the publication highlighted native Americans (white) and foreign born. The foreign born farmer population is not available today. The African American statistic is available, however, and the farm census reports that there are only 5 African American Farmers in the county. This was fewer than there was in 1914.
- Chief Crops: The chief crops of Bucks County are forage (hay/haylage): 20,050 acres, soybeans: 11,738 acres, and corn for grain: 11,711 acres.
- Average Farm Value: Today, the average value per farm is \$1,210,585, which is over 6 times the inflation-adjusted value from 1914. This shows how much land value has gone up in Bucks County over the last century, and the increase in cost of farm equipment.

The 1914 Directory also provides great insight into what the occupations were like for those in Solebury Township at the time. The pie chart on the following page shows the main employment for the township in 1914, according to the farm journal researchers. Continued on the next page.

Over 50% of people highlighted in the journal worked as farmers, which shows how important farming was for our community. If you read through some of the job titles, some interesting ones stand out. These include Lock Tender, Rubber Worker, Hog Killer, and Patent Attorney. The majority of these jobs were manual labor jobs and reflected Solebury's nature as an industrial township at the time. When you contrast this with the 2022 American Community Survey Census data for the township, you can see the rise of professional, educational, and healthcare workers. There are still a large number of people working in manufacturing, but the majority of workers are now working office or service jobs. Agricultural jobs are now very scarce in the township, despite the land use in the township being 36% agricultural use according to the 2014 Comprehensive Plan.





# **Impression-Sips**

The Solebury Township Historical Society (STHS) was thrilled to bring back the popular BYO Painting parties, Impression-Sips this February and March. Inspired by the works of the Pennsylvania impressionists, this season's featured paintings were Winter Creek, inspired by Edward Redfield and April in Jericho, inspired by Harry Leith-Ross. Under the direction of local Solebury artists, Melody Hunt and Sandy Vallely, Impression-Sips raises funds for STHS and fosters a strong sense of community with lasting memories, including an original, priceless piece of art.









# **Upcoming Events**

# March 24th: Family History 101 – Introduction to Genealogy

Want to help your Family Historian? Or want to BE your Family Historian? We'll look at beginning to build your family tree, including getting started with sorting out that old box of photos and memorabilia, finding information online, and making a game plan to share it all.



### **April 14th: Show and Tell**

Come and share your treasures, interesting artifact, or story with us. STHS archives team will share several pieces in our collection with you.

### April 28th: Cuttalossa History Walk

Approximately 1 1/2 hour walk down beautiful Cuttalossa Road. The walk will a provide a history of the valley with its mills, houses, and a final stop at what was the Hard Times tavern in 1830's.



### May 19th: Lumberville Canal and History Walk

This history walk will be along the Canal towpath discussing the early times of Lumberville before and after the Delaware Canal was built through the town in 1830's. The Gordon's Gazetteer of 1803 describes Lumberville as "a considerable market for lumber," hence the name.



### A Few Notes to Remember

- Registration is required for most events
- Please see our website for more information: <a href="https://soleburyhistory.org/event/upcoming-event/">https://soleburyhistory.org/event/upcoming-event/</a>
- Many events are free or discounted for Solebury Township Historical Society members
- Popular events, such as our walks, may fill up quickly. Please make sure to RSVP in advance to help secure a spot.

## Visit the Schoolhouse!

Are you interested in learning about your family or house's history? What about researching an historic organization such as the Solebury Farmers Club or the Bucks County Federation of Women's Clubs?

If so, feel free to visit with us to learn more about these topics and our collections. The Schoolhouse is now open weekly on Wednesdays from 10am to 12pm. Also we are open by appointment, call us at 215-297-5091 to schedule or send an email: <a href="mailto:soleburyhistory@gmail.com">soleburyhistory@gmail.com</a>.

# Interested in Volunteering?

The Society, like every non-profit organization of its type, needs volunteers to make its programs and social events successful. We appreciate any time that you can give and need your help. Here are some of our volunteer opportunities:

- Oral History Interviews
- Research Library/ Research Requests
- Board Members
- Communications
- Events Committee

If you are interested, call us at 215-297-5091 to or send an email to soleburyhistory@gmail.com

# Membership Renewal

Membership dues help the Society implement its mission of historic preservation through quality exhibitions, programs, and projects.

The following membership levels are available:

- Individual \$50
- Family \$75
- Supporting \$100

There are two convenient ways to join:

- 1. Online by credit card. *Note:* The transaction is handled by PayPal, but a PayPal account is not required.
- 2. Download and print a membership form to pay by check.

#### All Members receive:

- Invitations to lectures, receptions, exhibitions, and special events
- Free admission to our history walks and other programs

Programs supported by membership include:

- Archival acquisitions and storage
- Historic house research
- Oral histories
- Scholarships to worthy local students

# **Trivia Answers**



1) Our snowiest two-year winter season was the season of 1995-1996. The total for this season at the Trenton Weather Station was 76.5 inches.

You can see from the chart below that our snowfall fluctuates quite dramatically year to year. The Trenton site is the closest location to us that has historical data.

- 2) Our snowiest day, according to the Trenton Weather Station was January 23, 2016, when 16.7 inches of snow fell.
- 3) This photo was taken in January 1895 along Windy Bush Road.

Photo Credit: Lenape Camera Club. From the Collection of the Mercer Museum Library of the Bucks County Historical Society. (SC-29-01, 06-A-007. House at Windy Bush)

**Data Credit: National Weather Service** 

