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Roebing & Barns Programs Coming

Bucks was one of William Penn's three original counties. Why was it named Bucks?

Richard Hough is credited with naming Makefield Township. Why was it called Makefield?

What were the original 5 Townships in Bucks County? When was Makefield divided?

Who was Emily Roebling and what is her connection to our local history? She was born Emily Warren in 1843 and is known for her contribution to the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge after her husband Washington Roebling developed Caisson Disease. When he became bed-ridden, Emily stepped in as the "first woman field engineer." She had developed an extensive knowledge of strength of materials, stress analysis, cable construction, and calculating catenary curves. She rode the first carriage across the bridge in May 1883. The Brooklyn Bridge was the longest-span suspension bridge in the world at that time and the first to be built with steel cables.

The Roebling family home was in Trenton, NJ, where the Roebling family's steel cable factory was located. Emily supervised the construction of a new family mansion in Trenton following the building of the Bridge.

There are many links from our area across the river to industrial Trenton. Featuring Carol S. Levin as Emily Roebling, the event is set for the Yardley Community Center and is co-sponsored with the Yardley Historical Association on Sunday, **March 18th, at 2 pm.**

On Sunday afternoon, **April 29th at 3 pm** the Annual Prickett Lecture will focus on historic area barns. Greg Huber, a barn and house historian, is author of **The Historic Barns of Southeastern Pennsylvania.**

The program is set for the David Library of the American Revolution on River Road, Washington Crossing. Reservations are required; call 215.493.6776 x100 or email rsvp@dlar.org

Learn about local barn styles. Barns tell stories about the region's settlement, farming, and history. Books will be available following the lecture.

Pricketts Rooted in Bucks & in American History

Clarence Prickett (d. October 2017) was born in Bristol in 1926, attended Friends Select School in Philadelphia, served in World War II and returned to marry his sweetheart in 1949. Laura Bachofer (d. 2010) was from Tullytown. She graduated from Fallsington High School, now Pennsbury.

They settled in Edgely, moved to Langhorne and then to Lower Makefield in 1962, when they purchased a farm with an operating antique shop. It was then Clarence entered the world of American Antiques and the Fine Arts and

founded C.L. Prickett Antiques, specializing in the finer examples of 18th and early 19th century American furniture and related decorative arts. During a career which spanned over 45 years, Clarence became one of the leading authorities in the field before retiring to Florida in 2006.

They had three children.

Laura and Clarence requested donations in lieu of flowers be made to the Lower Makefield Historical Society. Prickett Lecture funds are used to sponsor historical lectures in remembrance of the Pricketts.



Old Roelofs Road Sign Presented to LMHS

History Unearthed . . .

Several years ago LMHS member Tom Kubicka presented an old Roelofs Road sign he found to the group. It is presently on display along with other historical society materials in the Township meeting room on Edgewood Road.



I found the sign with a metal detector about 1992. It was under about one foot of earth and was lying flat immediately against the south wall of the remains of a house. The remains of the house, along with the remains of a barn, were in a strip of woods just south of the home on Roeloffs Road which was owned by Troy Vincent. The homestead was, I think, a dairy farm because I also found the very badly decomposed remains of several large milk cans along with a lot of what appeared to be metal parts of horse harness. The house appeared to be located right against an old road which ran east to west perpendicular to what is now Roeloffs Road. I think this because there appeared to be a double row of trees running from the

house to Roeloffs Road. In my opinion, the sign was attached flat against the wall of the house. I think this because of the position of the arrow on the sign and the location of the holes in the sign.

The sign probably fell off the wall sometime after the house was abandoned, lay where it fell and was slowly buried under ground formed by leaves which piled up against the wall and decayed. It appeared to me it was there a long time because it was under about one foot of dirt which even contained some tree roots. There was very little remaining of the house, only parts of some walls.

I have looked recently and nothing of what I describe is there any more.

***~ Tom Kubicka
Lower Makefield Township***



Roads Tell Stories About Township History

As work is underway on Interstate Route 95 which originally bisected Lower Makefield Township in the 1970's, it is worth looking back at the development of our road systems and the stories they tell.

Initially the plantations and farms in Lower Makefield were connected by a few unimproved roads. Many were impassible during parts of the year. Although William Penn planned for roads, his policies were not always carried out. Early roads ran northwest-southeast, paralleling the county's western boundary. They were important because they connected the Quaker Meetings and the county seats (then in Bristol, later in Newtown.) Stage coach routes from the 1730s led to river crossings and connected small villages including Oxford, Fallsington, Biles's Corner, Dolington, and Yardley and on to Bristol, Newtown, Morrisville, Burlington, Trenton, and Philadelphia. Some roads such as Dolington Road evolved from Indian trails and also connected local Meetings. Pathways changed over the years.

A 1749 Map of the Province of Pennsylvania shows important roads of the era along with many inaccuracies. One road began in Attleboro (now Langhorne) then merged with another just west of Yardley's Ferry. The second road (perhaps Route 332) began at Newtown. A third road began at Middletown and ended at the ferry at Trenton below the falls. Many of these byways became turnpikes, operated by private companies and are today state roads.

Stony Hill Road was in use before the American Revolution. It connected the two Meetings of Fallsington and Newtown and was a major north-south route between today's Edgewood (also known as Stradlington (c. 1760), Biles's Corner (c. 1798), Summerville (1830s), Edgewood (1860s), Woodside (1880s). The part known as the Roelof's – Fallsington Road in the 1920s was paved in the 1930s with Depression-era New Deal WPA monies; it was renamed Stony Hill Road at the same time. Stony Hill Road met the Oxford or Middle Road at Fallsington and is close to what is now Business Route 1, earlier known as the King's Highway. The route to Newtown was also significant as Newtown served as the County Seat 1726-1813.

Stony Hill Road crossed the major east-west stagecoach road from Philadelphia to Yardley's ferry and on to New York City. Now known as the Yardley-Langhorne Road, the "Flying Machine" route crossing Stony Hill contributed to the development of Edgewood Village with its tavern, blacksmith shop and livery and some tenant houses.

Big Oak Road was probably a wagon road following property lines so property owners did not have to be compensated for the taking of their land. Originally known as Swamp Road, the name was changed to honor a large oak tree located near a general store where the road intersected with Makefield Road.

Makefield Road connected the Quaker Meetings of Fallsington and Yardley.

Oxford Valley Road connected Oxford Valley and Woodbourne, today ending at the former Reading Railroad line.

Routes have been altered and re-aligned. Why is Heacock Road called that? Roelof's Road? Black Rock Road? These are Township roads, but there are also State roads and the Federal Interstate 95 here in Lower Makefield. All have stories to tell about times and people who have passed.



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Message from LMHS President Pat Müller

Heartfelt thanks to the the founders and to all who have supported efforts of the Lower Makefield Historical Society since its founding in 1979. Leaders such as Ralph Thompson gave us incredible research into the history of the Township. Kellee Blake, Karen Boyd and Pat Müller helped organize our archives now housed in part with our historical library at the LMT Building on Edgewood Road. Karen Boyd established our website at www.lowermakefieldhistoricalsociety.com

Joyce Anderson and other Board members have brought a variety of historical programs to us. Collaborations with the David Library of the American Revolution, the Yardley Historical Association, and the Lower Makefield Historical Commission enrich our efforts. Our goal continues to be to stimulate research and an appreciation of local history and culture in Lower Makefield and the greater Bucks County area.

We thank the Prickett Family, their friends, and our LMHS members for generous financial support.

We believe that our upcoming programs for 2018 promise to achieve our goals but need volunteers with fresh ideas and enthusiasm to learn more about the history of Lower Makefield Township and lead in coming years. Contact us with suggestions and volunteer to help with an event or project. Call Pat at 215-806-2802 or e-mail pmueller@earthlink.net or write c/o Box 228, Yardley.

Join us for our March 18th & April 29th
events!

