



Built 1807  
**HELFRICH SPRINGS GRIST MILL**  
 Peter Grim built this substantial stone structure in 1807. A waterwheel powered by spring water turned massive burrstones used to process grain into flour and feed grown on local farms. Grim resided in the brick home at the northwest corner of Mickley Road. Reuben Helfrich purchased the mill in 1872 since then named Helfrich Springs Grist Mill. Milling ceased about 1930.



Whitehall Historical Preservation Society Newsletter

**COMING EVENTS**

All speaker presentations are held at the Helfrich Springs Grist Mill, 501 Mickley Rd. Whitehall, PA 18052

**2026** CELEBRATE—EXPLORE—DISCOVER—SHARE—250 years young  
**HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA**

To celebrate this Semiquincentennial year, the *Whitehall Historical Preservation Society* will be presenting a series of speaker presentations based on a sequence of “From Past to Present” topics focusing on subjects that have influenced change and growth in America, highlighting their contributions to the Lehigh Valley and beyond. These themed topics include the Lenape people of Pennsylvania, Farming, Iron and Steel Industry, Railroads, and Cement Manufacturing.



We also would like to share stories of individuals from Whitehall Township who have played a “central role” in our history. The first of these individuals is *John Jacob Mickley*. Additional stories of ‘people of interest’ from Whitehall will be periodically added to our website, on social media platforms and future newsletters.

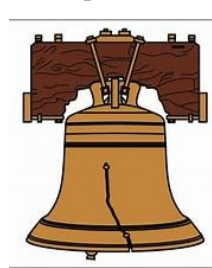
Furthermore, WHPS is scheduling group field trips to other historic sites with hopes to discover unknown and interesting facts about our local community. Hope you can join us.

For more information, see below or visit our website at [www.whitehallhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.whitehallhistoricalsociety.org) for a list of all our programs and events.

**The Liberty Bell Connection to Whitehall, By Karen Gensey**

Did you know that *John Jacob Mickley*, a farmer and soldier from Whitehall Township, transported the Liberty Bell from Philadelphia for safekeeping during the Revolutionary War?

Where was the Bell’s home in Philadelphia? In the tower of the “State House” later called “Independence Hall.”



What was special about the Bell? The “State House Bell” also known as the “Liberty Bell” was rung to commemorate the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8, 1776.

Why was it moved? Philadelphia was then the Colonial capital for the Continental Congress. It was suspected that Philadelphia was under imminent attack from the British after George Washington’s defeat at the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777. Fearing the invaders would seize the city’s bells to melt

down and transform them into cannon, the Pennsylvania Assembly ordered that public bells be smuggled out of the city and hidden—the Liberty Bell and church bells, 11 in all.

How was it moved? John Jacob Mickley and his 11-year-old son were in Philadelphia to sell their farm produce. Mickley volunteered his wagon to transport the Liberty Bell, loaded onto his wagon and disguised under a load of manure and hay to prevent suspicion if the British were to encounter

them. The other bell wagons converged forming a convoy and continued to Bethlehem, where Mickley's wagon broke down due to the weight of the load. The Liberty Bell was then taken the rest of the way on Frederick Leaser's wagon to Zion Reformed Church in Allentown where it was hidden under the church's floor boards along with the other 10 bells.

*How long was it hidden?* From September 24, 1777 to June 27, 1778 following Washington's victory.

*How heavy is the Liberty Bell?* 2,080 lbs.

John Jacob Mickley is buried at St. John Union Cemetery, Mickleys.



### **March 25, 2026-- Speaker Presentation--Past and Present of the Lenape People of Pennsylvania— Barbara "Bluejay" Michalski—7 PM**

Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania's Chief Barbara Bluejay Michalski, keeper of culture, was taught to keep heritage and culture alive. The Lenapes, the original caretakers of the Preserve's land, have their own unique story called "The Prophecy of the Fourth Crow." This story is about the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania's decades-long struggle to survive to keep their community and culture intact. The First Crow was the Lenape before the coming of the Europeans. The Second Crow symbolized the death and destruction of their culture. During the Third Crow, the people went "underground", hiding their identity. The Fourth Crow was the Lenape returning as caretakers and working with everybody to restore the land. Chief Bluejay will discuss how they have been maintaining the language and culture. The Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania has been preserving the land through the Rising Nation River Journey and the treaty of renewed friendship, and they have created partnerships with over 130 organizations which will take place again in the Summer of 2026. Written by Barbara Michalski



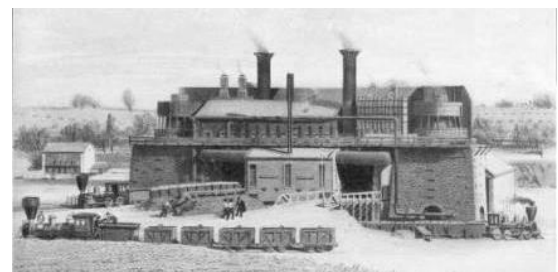
### **April 10, 2026— Senior and Veterans Expo— St. Luke's Sports Center—9 am to 12 noon**

Come out and see us at the St. Luke's Sports Center (Fieldhouse) located at 3321 7<sup>th</sup> St. in Hokendauqua for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual *Senior and Veterans Expo* hosted by Sen. Nick Miller and Rep. Jeanne McNeill. A wonderful opportunity to check out this new location for the event and see what your community has to offer "mature" individuals and those that have served our country. It's also a great way to meet new people and possibly run into friends you haven't seen for a while.

### **April 25, 2026— Historic Walking Tour of Hokendauqua—10 AM**

The village of Hokendauqua was established in 1854 to house the workers of the Thomas Iron Company. This company played a pivotal role in igniting the start of the American industrial revolution. Come take a stroll through the neighborhood and discover the historic significance that the Thomas Iron Company bestowed to this local community. See the housing in which its workers lived and learn which homes were once occupied by the Thomas Family. Find out what other businesses were operating at that time. What connection did the Thomas Iron Company have with the First Presbyterian Church and the building currently occupied by Growing Tree Child Care Center?

Reservations are required. The cost of the tour is \$5.00 per person, FREE to all WHPS members. Please call 610 776-7280 or 484 547-9692 (leave a message) to reserve your spot for this fantastic journey into the



past. The tour will last approx. 1½ to 2 hours. A rain date is scheduled for April 26. Further instructions will be given upon booking.

**April 29, 2026— Speaker Presentation--Past and Present of Farming—Garry Hunsicker—7PM**

The fertile soil is what initially attracted immigrants to the area of Whitehall Township and beyond. You can say it was the first major “industry” of that era (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century). Later, as discoveries were being made, farms were being sold for their use of mineral contents within the soil to be utilized in making iron followed by the manufacturing of cement.



Twin Maple Farms in Bath, PA located in East Allen Township, owned and operated by the Hunsicker family, remains steadfast. Garry is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation farmer of this 250-acre estate. His grandfather Earl moved to this area in 1938. Garry will share his knowledge and experience with us how farming has transformed over the years. Hope you will be able to join us.

**May 16, 2026— WHPS Spring Flea Market—8 AM to 1 PM**

Spring cannot arrive soon enough this year. I am anticipating warmer weather and planning for the Whitehall Historical Preservation Society’s Spring flea market. This is your year to declutter,



downsize and clean house of those hard to let go of items we tend to hang on to. We have a solution to your problem. Earn some money and set yourself free. Cost for a reserved 12’ x 20’ space is only \$15 (WHPS members pay only \$10); \$20 on the day of the event for all. Make the call today: 610 776-7280.

Leave a message and someone will get back to you. Location for this event will be held at 506 Mickley Rd. in Whitehall, behind the Peter Grim Homestead. (Rain Date: May 17, 2026).

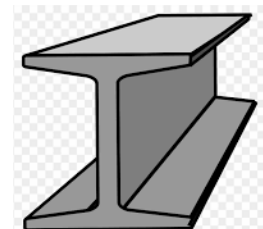
Refreshments will be available including an array of homemade baked goods. Help us spread the word. Tell a friend. **Hope to see you there.**

**May 23, 2026—History Expo 2026—Lehigh County Heritage Museum—10 am to 4 pm**

The Lehigh County Historical Society is hosting a “2026 History Expo” at the Lehigh County Heritage Museum, 432 West Walnut St. Allentown, PA 18102, to commemorate the birth of the United States, 250 years ago. WHPS has been invited to set up and display our information at this event. Come out and celebrate with us, our local history. The Allentown Band will present an open-air concert playing patriotic melodies. Tour Trout Hall, known to be one of the oldest buildings in Lehigh County, built by James Adam. There will be children’s games and workshops, reenactors, colonial-themed exhibits, special guests and more will be available for your enjoyment.

**May 27, 2026—Speaker Presentation--From Past to Present: Iron and Steel—Mike Piersa—7 PM**

This illustrated lecture will showcase the history of the iron and steel industry in the Lehigh Valley and how it helped shape the entire nation. Learn how the industry has shifted, where steel is made today, and what happened to key manufacturing sites. Utilizing images from the National Museum of Industrial History, Historic American Engineering Record, and other sources, historian Mike Piersa will connect the past and present in a journey spanning all 250 years of American independence.



Written by Mike Piersa

**June 3, 2026—Field trip—Bethlehem Steel Stacks and National Museum of Industrial History—10 AM**

Join us as we take a stroll on the sidewalks and trestle among the ruins of the Bethlehem Steel Works, led by WHPS member Eric Quimby, an experienced Bethlehem Steel guide. Hear Eric explain the history of this industrial enterprise; from it's opening to its closure. Learn the importance World War I and II had on the business, the former functions of the buildings and what it was like working at the plant.



Following this tour, we will visit the National Museum of Industrial History. Located in the old Bethlehem Steel Electrical Repair Shop. Its objective is to share America's industrial achievements and the successes of workers, innovators and entrepreneurs. A docent will guide us along the exhibits adding details to these displays.

If you would like to join us as a group, please call 610 776-7280 by May 27, 2026. There is an admission fee to the NMIH. Prices will vary. Further details will be given when your call is returned.

**June 24, 2026— Speaker Presentation--From Past to Present: Railroads within Whitehall Township—Keith Nonnemacher—7 PM**

I had become acquainted with Mr. Nonnemacher through his Facebook page "Railroads of the Lehigh Valley Past and Present". Keith is a railroad enthusiast and has had a fascination with them ever since he was a child. His father and other family members were employees of the Philadelphia-Bethlehem and New England Railroad.



Keith is excited to share his knowledge of railroads that have served Whitehall Township and their contributions to the growth of our community and the nation. This includes, but is not limited to the Ironton, Lehigh Valley, Reading, and CNJ railroads. His slide show presentation will be enjoyed by all railroad fans from the novice to the veteran. Hope you will be able to join us.

Follow Keith's FB page for his scheduled walking tours of various railroad sites to discover what ruins remain and the importance of the rail line(s) to the region and beyond.

**July 11, 2026—Easton Heritage Day at Downtown Easton—9 am to 5 pm**

In 1776, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July, Easton Center square was one of only 3 places that the Declaration of Independence was read to the public for the first time. On Heritage Day, a rendition of this historic occasion takes place. The first time I experienced this performance, it gave me goose bumps. Come out and enjoy your own experiences.

WHPS has been invited to set up and display our information at this event. The day will open with the Easton's Farmer's market, a 250+ year enterprise. Throughout the day you will see reenactors of the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and WWII. Demonstrations on how to make soap, blacksmithing, weaving and more will be available for your viewing.

Tour one or all of the historic homes Easton has conserved. The Sigal museum offers an exceptional look into our past with amazing displays and artifacts. A must visit. Go to [Heritage Day - Heritage Day](#) for more information.



**July 25, 2026— Civil War Encampment—A living history of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Regiment PA Vol. Infantry and Open House of the Helfrich Springs Grist Mill & Peter Grim House--10 AM to 4 PM**



This group of brave men, of the 153<sup>rd</sup>, enlisted from areas in Northampton County, among other locales including a few from Whitehall Township, and the states of New Jersey and New Hampshire. They are known to have fought desperately in the battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg in 1863. In 2011, friends, Neil and Kathy Coddington, who were representatives of the 88th PA Volunteer Infantry organized in Philadelphia and Rick Eisenhart, an envoy for the 1<sup>st</sup> Texas Infantry Regiment contemplated the idea of forming a troop to honor the soldiers who served in the Civil War from their own neighboring area for the Bethlehem PA celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Civil War. Reaching out to other reenactors who may appeal to their idea, including Gary Weaver and Chris Holub, the Unit was formed to support the anniversary celebration.

After the Bethlehem Celebration and several other anniversary events, it was decided to formally organize the 153<sup>rd</sup>. A meeting was formed in November of that year to discuss the matter. Thus, the reenactment unit for 153<sup>rd</sup> Regiment PA Volunteer Infantry was established the following month. It began with 10 recruits to educate the public on the duties, battles fought, hardships encountered and camp lifestyle of the valiant men and women of the 153<sup>rd</sup>.

For the past 13 years this not-for-profit group of volunteers has been “setting up camp” on the Grim house lawn displaying and presenting a “living history” of a civil war soldier. This event has been in conjunction with the open house of the Helfrich Springs Grist mill and Peter Grim House. Mark your calendar so you are sure not to miss this opportunity. This is a free event for all to enjoy.

**August 8, 2026—Field trip—Horner’s Cemetery—10 AM**

Known to be the oldest cemetery in Northampton County, Horner’s has laid to rest several founders, prominent individuals, doctors, squires, veterans of 4 wars and other important figures of Northampton County. Learn how the cemetery has gotten its name and hear the stories of these important people and how they helped cultivate this region and beyond.



Peggy Moser is the founder of the Horner’s Cemetery Historical Society. Their goal is to restore and maintain the memorials as well as the grounds. And to preserve, record, and share the history of Northampton County.

If you would like to participate in this scheduled event, please call 610 776-7280 by Aug.1 so that we have your contact information in case of cancelation/rescheduling and also to provide you with any further communication in addition to supplying our host a head count. This is a FREE event; however, donations are always appreciated.

**2026 OPEN Mill, Museum and House Schedule**



The Helfrich Springs Grist Mill and Peter Grim House located at 501/506 Mickley Rd. Whitehall is the place to explore and discover the history of Whitehall Township. We offer FREE self-guided tours of our museum, speaker presentations, and special events for your enjoyment. There are several opportunities for you to stop in. Our doors are open from 1-3 pm on: March 15, April 19, May 17, June 14, July 25 (10 am to 4 pm), August 16, September 20, October 18, November 15, December 13. See our

website [www.whitehallhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.whitehallhistoricalsociety.org) for all of our scheduled programs and events. Hope you can find the time to stop by.

**Passport to History Weekends--** The *Whitehall Historical Preservation Society* has been a proud member of the Lehigh Valley Passport to History since its inception. Passport to History is your portal to historical sites throughout Lehigh and Northampton County and beyond. It connects you with programs, events, tours, special activities and more. What better way for you to discover, explore, and share your local history. I encourage you to visit <https://lvhistory.org>. By clicking on one (or all) of the historic sites it will provide you with detailed information for that particular organization.



For 2026, the Passport to History's annual program has gone "seasonal". During this event, participating members open their facility to the public FREE of charge, with special activities, tours, and/or programs for all ages to enjoy. The following months are as scheduled: March 27-29, June 26-28 and September 25-27. Visit [Lehigh Valley Passport to History Weekends 2026](#) to learn which members are participating and what activities they have to offer. The **Whitehall Historical Preservation Society** will be open **March 29, June 28 and September 27 from 10 AM to 2 PM** for this occasion. Mark your calendar for the sites you want to visit. It's a great opportunity to discover and investigate your local history.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Whitehall Historical Preservation Society wishes to thank all those who have made the commitment to support us by becoming a 2026 member. Through your generosity we will continue to grow and develop this worthwhile organization.

Let us welcome 4 new members to the Society —Sheila, Panik, Carol Gible, Karen Poshefko, and Dennis Makovsky. I would like to invite all of our members in becoming more involved with the Society in any capacity, donating as little or as much time as you are able. We would love to hear of your talents and match you up with an activity that you would be comfortable for you. Contact Stephanie Tashner or Alice Lieberman at 610 776-7280. We will be happy to answer any of your questions.

If you have not had the opportunity to renew your membership (as indicated on the address face or SUBJECT heading of this newsletter) please consider mailing your check in today. If you misplaced your application, one can be downloaded from our website (Support/Membership) or you can simply place your name(s), address, telephone number, email information and membership level (Individual \$15, Family \$25, Sponsor, \$50, Patron \$100) on a piece of paper. Thank you for your continued support.

**Business Support**—We are proud to have the following resources support our Society. Please patronize these local businesses that are members of the Whitehall Historical Preservation Society:  
**American Fence and Flag**

## THIS AND THAT



### President's Message

Hope everyone is doing well. It was a rough winter for us all, but warmer weather is on its way. HIP, HIP HURRAY! Now would be a great time to open up your calendar and schedule your plans for some "FUN" events (and not just doctor visits). As we celebrate the birth of our nation, there are endless opportunities to explore and discover what this area

and beyond has to offer. You may be surprised what there is to learn about this region. We hope you will start by attending our speaker presentations, walking tour, and fieldtrips. Here are links to sites offering an array of additional attractive endeavors for you to pursue: [Lehigh Valley Passport To History](#), [Lehigh Valley Events | Festivals, Exhibits & Performances](#) | [Discover Lehigh Valley](#), [Lehigh Valley 250](#), [America250PA](#) | [Start Here](#), [America Did!](#), [America250](#). Please pass this information along to your family and friends.

In 2024-25, WHPS applied for, and has received a matching grant from PHMC for an ADA access architectural plan and maintenance strategy for the Helfrich Springs Grist Mill and Peter Grim House. With a unanimous approval and some help from Whitehall Township we are moving forward and seeking grants for the construction of said plans. This will allow ADA access into both historic buildings with minimal change to their appearance, updated parking to include handicapped availability, and additional lighting. We are excited about this endeavor and hope you are as well. More updates will be provided when known. If you have any questions, please call me or Howard Lieberman at 610 776-7280. Leave a message and we will get back to you.

I have come across this quote and wanted to share it with you:

“No matter what he does, every person on earth plays a central role in the history of the world. Normally he doesn’t even know it.” I heard this passage from the book, “The Alchemist” (I am an avid audiobook listener). I genuinely believe this quote to be true. The actions, reactions, choices, and decisions that we make are a reflection upon ourselves, but they may also impact the lives of others, directly or indirectly. As I think back over my lifetime, I ask myself, have I done anything to make the world a better place to live? My answer to that is: “I hope so.” Even though I haven’t made any discoveries, invented any cures, or broken any records, what I have to offer is to be kind, honest, and grateful. What is your “central role”?

If you have not done so already, please provide us with your email address. We do not share this information with anyone. It allows us to send reminders for our upcoming events, provide you with updated information about WHPS, and send holiday greetings. It also saves us time and money when sending this newsletter.

I hope to get to see you at one (or all) of our many events happening in 2026.

### In Memory of.....

Our friend and former board member **Frank Lacko**, has passed away peacefully on November 27, 2025. He had survived an amazing 91 years, of that he shared 69 years with his wife Sylvia. He was a beloved father of 2 and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Frank was a former employee of Lucent Technologies for 31 years before retiring in 1996. As a member of St. John the Baptist Church in Stiles, he often volunteered to help make pierogies. The Whitehall Historical Preservation Society was very fortunate to have Frank and Sylvia as members for over 20 years. Frank joined our board in 2005 and has helped the Society in so many ways. He took the lead at organizing our Flea Market fundraising event for several years. He has always been there to help at our Bingo fundraising events. Frank shared his talents and undertook a major project, constructing 24 storm windows for the Grist Mill. He and Bobby Miller have worked well to maintain both the Grist Mill and Grim House, performing the necessary tasks, way too many to mention, for their maintenance and upkeep. He will be missed. May he rest in peace.



Memorial contributions in his memorial may be made directly to the church or The Whitehall Historical Preservation Society, P.O. Box 39, Whitehall Township, PA 18052.

*Whitehall Historical Preservation Society*

*P. O. Box 39*

*Whitehall, Pa. 18052-0039*

**Visit us at [whitehallhistoricalsociety.org](http://whitehallhistoricalsociety.org)**

### **2026 WHPS Events Calendar**

**March 25**—Lenni Lenape of PA—Barbara Michcalski—7 PM  
**April 25**—Historic Walking Tour of Hokendauqua—10 AM  
**April 29**—Farming—Garry Hunsicker—7 PM  
**May 16**—Spring Flea Market—8 AM to 1 PM  
**May 23**—Participant—History Expo 2026--LCHS—10 AM to 4 PM  
**May 27**—Iron & Steel Industry—Mike Piersa—7 PM  
**June 3**—Field trip--Tour of Bethlehem Steel Stacks and NMIH—10 AM  
**June 24**—Railroads—7 PM  
**July 11**—Participant—Easton Heritage Day—9 AM to 5 PM  
**July 25**—153<sup>rd</sup> Volunteer Civil War Living History—10 AM to 4 PM  
**Aug. 8**—Field trip—Horner's Cemetery—10 AM  
**September 12**—Fall Flea Market—8 AM to 1 PM  
**September 30**—Cement Manufacturing—Stewart Gunther—7 PM  
**October 2**—CASH BINGO—St. Peter's--6:30 PM  
**Dec. 13**—Holiday Open House—1-3 PM

### **Board of Directors**

**Stephanie Tashner**—President,  
Newsletter editor  
**Justin Poccia**--Vice President  
**Alice Lieberman**—Secretary  
**Allen Handwerk**—Treasurer  
**Sharon Solderitch**--Fundraising  
**Terri Monroe**--Membership  
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**Anneliese Warnke**—Archivist  
**Pat Matthews**—Corresponding Secretary  
Event Support  
**Mike Harakal**—Event Support  
**Ethel Gery**—Event Support  
**John DeLeo**—Event Support  
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**Karen Gensey**—Historian  
**Bobby Miller**—Caretaker