

Whitesbog Preservation Trust

NEWSLETTER

4th Quarter

www.whitesbog.org

2009

Birthplace of the Highbush Blueberry - Historic Center for Cranberry Innovation



Holly Haven Inc.



Elizabeth White's Refuge for the Conservation of the American Holly Tree

by Rick Prickett, President
Whitesbog Preservation Trust

"Many people celebrate Christmas as the season for peace on earth, but for the noble holly tree this has been a time of year where the great stands of wild hollies along the east coast have been vandalized and over-exploited for holiday decoration."

Not far from Whitesbog, along Route 70 and next to Upton Station was a unique nursery that specialized in growing special varieties of American Holly and other acid-loving plants. Today only the white cinder block pump house and a row of 'Griscom' holly trees remain. In 1954-55 however, the complex consisted of four heated sash houses, two greenhouses, several potting sheds, the pump house and a ¼ acre lath house. According to June Vail, Holly Haven propagated up to 150,000 holly trees and other acid-loving plants a year from cuttings which were "sent by mail across the United States"¹. The plants Holly Haven Inc. sold included yew, bearberry, Franklinia, heather, blueberry bushes and many varieties of American Holly. In her 80s, Elizabeth White provided the business with her reputation and experience in selecting, propagating and selling the nursery stock to the public. She relied on others, especially June M. Vail who had been her trusted assistant to do the manual labor. Miss Vail arrived for work in March of 1945 at Whitesbog from the Horticultural School for Women located in Ambler, Pennsylvania. Photographs dated June 1955 depict local people such as Jack Cadbury III and Mark Cutts laying cinder blocks for the greenhouse and pump house, and Ada Pittman, Olive Taylor and Joe Snow planting the 'Griscom' holly trees still growing on the property today. Holly Haven Inc. must have been a dream come true for Elizabeth White, and a great collaborative



opportunity for those that had similar interests in the nursery trade.

This 6¼ acre property was acquired by Elizabeth C. White, June M. Vail and Jacob Homer (of Grassmere, New York) on July 28, 1950 from Abram and Bessie B. Brown, according to the deed book of the Burlington County Clerk's office. On May 24, 1951, the property was transferred by its owners to Holly Haven Inc., a New Jersey Corporation having its principal office at Whitesbog. Surviving mail addressed to Suningive (Miss White's home with her office on the first floor) includes bills, orders and inquiries for Holly Haven Inc. The Holly Haven business card portrayed it as a conservation nursery with Elizabeth C. White President, J. Homer Vice-President and June Vail Secretary.

During the fall of 1951 and the spring of 1952, a sales brochure called the "Description of Holly Varieties
(continued on page 2)



Jack Cadbury III (front) and Mark Cutts (back) laying block for the second greenhouse at Holly Haven Inc. The lath house is on the right and the sash house complex is on the left, June 1955.

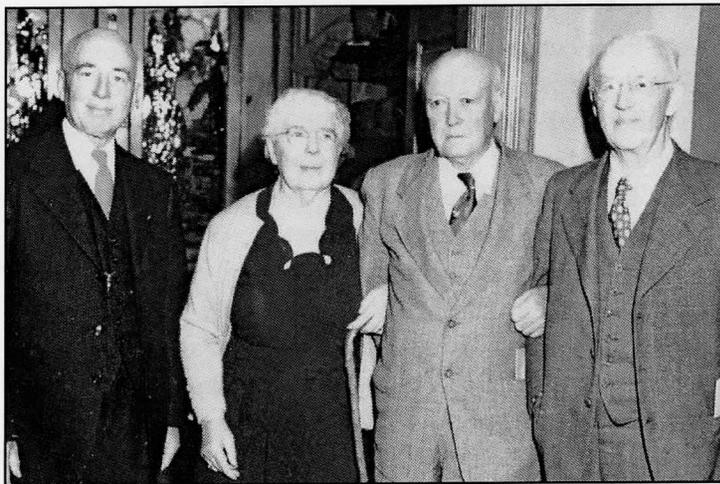
Offered by Holly Haven Inc.” was distributed to the public. The mimeographed advertisement offered the female varieties, Griscom, St. Mary, Sally, Farage, Mae, Manig, Clark, Hopkins, and Sarah Higgins and the male varieties, Slim Jim, Isaiah and Jim Higgins for 55-75 cents per plant. It stated “All of these have been critically selected because of their rich, dark-green foliage which does not burn readily with winter winds and which regularly produce abundant crops of attractive, red berries. All have the typical spiny holly leaf.” In a subsequent sales brochure the holly varieties are pictured with their descriptions as well as advice on their care. (This pamphlet can be found in the online version of this Newsletter at www.whitesbog.org.)

When Elizabeth White was asked during a 1941 Radio Garden Broadcast about growing her native hollies from seed she said the following. “My object is to furnish plants of the highest quality, and seedlings are unreliable. In the first place, holly trees are either male or female, and of course, only female trees bear berries. Holly seeds usually require two years to germinate and then the plants take their own sweet time about blooming – it may be five or six years. Until they bloom you just can’t tell the boys from the girls. There is also infinite variety in the quality of both male and female plants.”² Elizabeth White’s previous domestication work might have taken twice as long if this slow maturation was the case with the highbush blueberry, which in general takes less than half the previously described time to produce berries on the monoecious bush after cross-pollination. In an article written in December of 1949 about Miss White, *Soaring to Fame on Blueberries and Hollies*, it was reported that she “collected hundreds of

holly seedlings from Mass. to Fla., selecting and cross-pollinating the finest types.”³ It seems likely, however, that she relied on nature’s experimental test-fields to find most of her select holly specimens that would be cultivated on the farms, parks and gardens across America.

Dr. Harold Hume in his authoritative book on “Hollies” published in 1953 attributed to Miss Elizabeth the introduction of the varieties, Griscom, Farage and Clark, as well as that of the varieties Delia, Dorothy, Goldie, Laura, Mae, Makepeace and Sallie, not offered for sale in the first advertisement printed by Holly Haven Inc.⁴ Several prominent east coast holly growers recognized E.C. White’s contributions to horticulture by naming holly varieties after her. Wilfrid Wheeler, the owner of Ashumet Farm in Cape Cod, Mass., introduced the variety Elizabeth, and C.R. Wolf from Silica Sand Company Orchard in Millville, N.J. introduced the variety Miss White. Elizabeth White also named a holly variety after herself called ‘Betsy’.

Holly Haven Inc. is just part of the 60-year story in which Miss Elizabeth and J.J. White Inc. of Whitesbog learned how plants coexist with the acidic and infertile soils of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. Her hope was always to interest gardeners living on similar soils to plant native pineland species as a way to protect these species and enjoy their beauty. An early sales brochure from Joseph J. White Inc. asked that “New Jersey Garden Clubs Help Protect New Jersey Holly”. The brochure offered swamp magnolia, Pine Barrens gentian, sand myrtle, heather, climbing fern and holly for purchase, saying they had been grown from seed or cuttings. Elizabeth White wrote in the brochure “May their growth in other gardens give equal joy to that experienced in guarding their first development in mine.” Her garden at Suningive is a showcase of her philosophy.



The “Deans” of Holly, (left to right) C.R. Wolf, Elizabeth C. White, Dr. Harold H. Hume and Wilfrid Wheeler, November 14, 1952.

In view of Holly Haven, it seems ironic that Elizabeth White would write in her 1943 article on the *Plants of the New Jersey Pine Barrens* when talking about the use of native plants, "Someone will do it successfully after the war, but my hope of being able to furnish these plants on a conservation basis for such gardens has been quenched by advancing years, and by labor shortage."⁵ It is ironic, not only because Miss White started Holly Haven Inc. during the last few years of her life and was growing thousands of holly cuttings at Whitesbog, but also because she was in the middle of a three decade correspondence and friendship with a fellow holly enthusiast, Wilfrid Wheeler when she wrote the article. Over thirty years, White and Wheeler had visited each other's farms, exchanged holly tree cuttings and went on searches in the wild for the perfect holly tree specimens. The Boston Daily Globe reported in December 1943 that Wheeler was the first commissioner of agriculture in Massachusetts and that he "waged a single-handed fight" to save the holly there. Wheeler said that the commercial growing of holly would "offer the returning serviceman future security", and that he would like to "teach them what I have been able to learn through the years about these promising new cash crops."⁶ The article further reported that a holly farm near Wheeler's was vandalized and 50-60 female trees had been cut down and carted away in trucks, further illustrating the seasonal demand and blight of this beautiful tree.

In Wilfrid Wheeler's last letter to Elizabeth White dated April 16, 1954, he reflected on his visit to Holly Haven by writing "I feel that your little group are making wonderful progress and I am so glad to have had the opportunity to see it first hand. I am sure it will succeed and certainly, June is a wonder in all that she does."

Elizabeth C. White, 83, passed away at Suningive on November 27, 1954 as the Holly Haven facility was nearing completion. In her Last Will and Testament she cancelled repayment for any money loaned to Holly Haven Inc. and directed that her "common stock is to be distributed among directors and workers at Holly Haven Inc. in such a proportion as will best strengthen the organization, make it a profitable venture for the officers and workers and a contribution to the general welfare of the neighborhood."

Six years later, on December 13, 1960, W. Albert Jarvis, Ferdinand R. Genard and John W. Cadbury, III, Trustees in the Liquidation of Holly Haven Inc. dissolved the New Jersey Corporation and transferred the property to Cadbury for \$5,700. By 1962, Ole Larsen

of Lebanon Lakes had purchased the business and called it Holly Haven Farms. In a postcard to June Vail in Philadelphia, he said that Mrs. Pittman had referred him to her. He further said he was new to the holly business and that he "would like to talk to her and make her acquaintance."

Holly Haven, the showcase for Elizabeth White's lifetime effort in protecting, promoting and propagating the noble holly tree, is now mostly a memory, but the specimens she saved from annihilation continue to grow around the village of Whitesbog and in many memorial parks and gardens throughout the country. Her legacy also continues through the work of the Holly Society of America of which Elizabeth White and June Vail were charter members in 1947. ■

For more Holly Haven information, see the "online extras" of this newsletter at www.whitesbog.org, and page 7 of this printed version.

Please contact the Whitesbog Preservation Trust if you can add to the history of Holly Haven Inc. with your memories, photographs and documents that the "Trust" could record or copy into the archives that preserve the wonderful history of Whitesbog.

References

- ¹ Vail, June. 1985. Correspondence from June Vail to Sheila Cowing September 5, 1985.
- ² White, Elizabeth C. 1941. Radio broadcast on W.C.A.U. Philadelphia, October 10, 1941.
- ³ Platt, Polly. 1949. White soars to fame on blueberries and hollies. The Sunday Bulletin, Philadelphia, December 11, 1949.
- ⁴ Hume, H. Harold. 1953. Hollies. Macmillan Company, New York.
- ⁵ White, Elizabeth C. 1943. Plants of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. Bull. Amer. Rock Garden Soc. 1(3):53-56.
- ⁶ Banner, Earl. 1943. Cape Cod holly crops may be postwar asset. The Boston Daily Globe, December 24, 1943.



WPT Event Schedule

Reservations can be left on the main voice mail
at (609) 893-4646 or
WhitesbogPreservationTrust@comcast.net

January

2 Volunteer Workday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Have fun with friends, working in the gardens, repairing trails, restocking the General Store and working around the Village. Lunch provided.

2 Whitesbog Village Tour 1 p.m.

Stroll the Historic Village, learn about Whitesbog's role in history and visit Suningive, Elizabeth White's historic home, the worker's cottages and other buildings that speak to Whitesbog's heritage. \$5/person

30 Moonlight Walk 7 p.m.

Listen to the night sounds of the Pines, learn about Whitesbog and experience the seasonal changes of the Pinelands. All walks are 3-5 miles in length, weather and led by experienced leaders.

\$5/person, reservations required.

Tundra Swan Tours TBA

Get a closer look at these magnificent Arctic birds that winter in the Pinelands and learn all about their habits from experienced guides. Depending on conditions, the program will either be a walking tour or car caravan. The guides will also focus on other fascinating winter birds. Bring binoculars and cameras. **Dates and times to be announced. Just send us your e-mail address & we will let you know when they arrive.** \$10/person, reservations required.

February

6 General Store Re-opens 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Whitesbog General Store is open for another season, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and weekdays by special request.

6 Volunteer Workday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

6 Whitesbog Village Tour (see Jan.) 1 p.m.

27 Moonlight Walk (see Jan.) 7 p.m.

\$5 donation/person, reservations requested.

Tundra Swan Tours (see Jan.) TBA

March

6 Volunteer Workday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

6 Whitesbog Village Tour (see Jan.) 1 p.m.

20 The Pinelands Short Course at BCC

Sponsored by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission and Burlington County Community College.

27 Moonlight Walk (see Jan.) 7 p.m.

\$5 donation/person, reservations requested.

Tundra Swan Tours TBA

We are always adding new programs and events. Check with us often at (609) 893-4646 or on the web at www.whitesbog.org.



Dust off your Memories

The Whitesbog Preservation Trust has been recording memories of people who lived, worked or grew up on the Whitesbog farm. Starting several months ago, past residents of the villages of Whitesbog, Rome, and Florence, or people who were just acquainted with the owners of Whitesbog have come to Suningive to reminisce.

What do you remember about the brothers, Joe and Tom Darlington;

Tom's inventions; Elizabeth White and her gardens; June Vail; the General Store; the farm managers and others who played a major part in the history of Whitesbog? If you would like to participate in this oral history program please call the Trust office at (609) 893-4646. Get an old friend or two, and if you have old photos bring them along to share. We promise you will have a fun time.

- Janet Robbins, Oral history Co-chair -

WHAT'S NEW AT WHITESBOG ???

Answer: A blueberry field ready for planting, windows in the worker's cottages and more!

Next spring, there will be a new 'Whitesbog welcome mat' that will be hard to miss; J.J. White, Inc. will be planting blueberries in that huge cleared field next to the entrance road. Along with this, window restoration is nearly complete on several workers cottages that are among the first things a visitor sees when coming to the village (see photo on opposite page). With the completion of these restorations, we plan to open the first worker's cottage as Whitesbog's Visitor Center. We will be moving part of the office operations from Suningive to the heart of the village to greet and service visitors as they arrive. The Visitors Center will be open daily, come spring, with maps, guides, information for visitors, books, binoculars for loan, and will be a central location for meeting, sharing thoughts and launching new ideas. We are eager to hear your suggestions...and we would love to have everyone's help.

The move of day-to-day office operations from Suningive to the workers cottage will functionally free-up space for an archival library at Suningive. With archive training complete and a new scanner/copier available, the Archives Committee is ready to digitize our collection and carefully store each item in the Trust's care. The new library space will provide a secure place for the committee to work, a computer system to store and retrieve information, and ultimately, guided public access in a supervised and secure setting. ■

Dear WPT Members,

Our 2010 membership drive is well-underway. I'm pleased to report that we are way ahead of last year, with many past members returning and others increasing their support by renewing at higher levels of membership. Thank you so very much for your generous support of the Trust and all that we do here at Whitesbog, especially in these tough economic times.

Your membership enables us to continue all our restoration, preservation and protection efforts - around the village, in the archives and out in the gardens. Your membership supports the Trust's operations, powers our interpretive programs and public events, and demonstrates solid and steadfast community support, an element critical to governmental, corporate and private funders. Thank you so much.

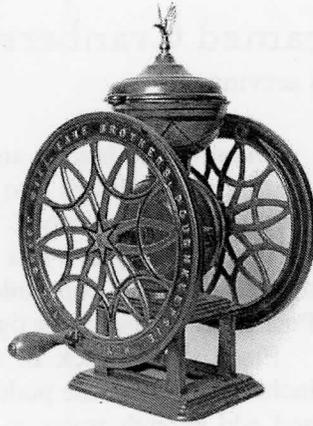
As a member, we invite you to volunteer at Whitesbog - consider serving on a committee, working in the new Visitor's Center, becoming a General Storekeeper, leading a Moonlight Walk, or joining us at the Blueberry Festival! If you have a skill to share or just a desire to get more involved - let us know - we have lots to do and some fantastic, fun projects in the works. We urge you to join us the first Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., (2nd Saturday in July) for Volunteer Work Day - its lots of fun and we even feed you lunch.

Remember, the Whitesbog Preservation Trust is member-driven and volunteer-powered! Your support and talents are really needed and greatly appreciated. I look forward to seeing everyone in 2010. Thank you again.

- Susan Phillips,
Executive Director -

A Special Thank You

The year is drawing to a close and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for supporting the Whitesbog General Store. To all the faithful store-keepers who kept us going and growing in 2009 - June Auch, Karen Cutler, Janet DeMauro, Juliette Elmore, Nancy Engle, Beth Gensel, Sharon Goodman, Joan Harden, Ro Hill, Phyllis Kelty, Esther Kubiczky, Bonnie Majeski, Ken Mayberg, James Michenfelder, Donna Montuoro, Irene, Robin & Ryan Murphy, Rick Prickett, Tyler Reynolds, Kristin Johnson-Reyes, Albertine Senske, Alice Surico, Mary Sweeney, Renee Williams and all our Blueberry Festival and Pinelands Discovery Day volunteers, including, but not limited to Jade & Carol Green, Janet Robbins, Michelle Tate & her Girl Scouts, and Robin's Aunt Pat - A MOST HEARTFELT THANKS!



Special thanks to Joe & Bonnie Majeski for getting us over the rough spots at the end of 2008-2009; Albertine, Bonnie, Donna, Irene and Kristin for the donations of period pieces and merchandise; Ellen Terry for the labor and materials for our famous Whitesbog preserve jars; and to Joe McKee for building display shelves.

One of the sales highlights this year has been our expanded book section. A special thank you to Cheryl Baisden, Karen Riley, Plexus Publishing and The Pemberton Township Historical Trust for helping us with this effort.

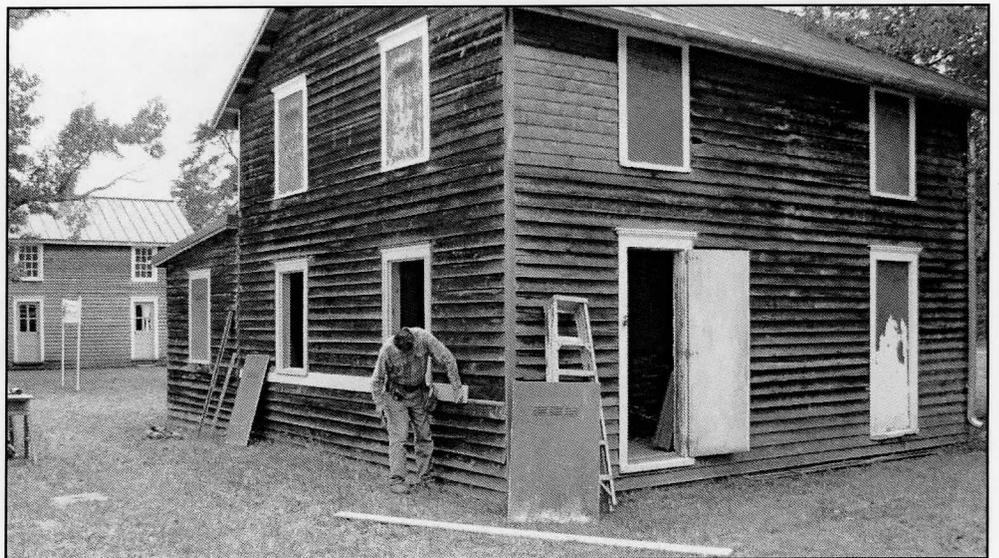
And as a final thank you, I want to thank Everett Robbins and Joe McKee for playing Jolly Old St. Nick, Sandy Sopher for being Santa's helper and Ellen Terry for the use of her picture printer at the General Store Winter Celebrations.

An extra special thank you to Clyde Snyder from Albright Electric who helped us to install our credit card machine. That little machine nearly doubled our sales in the past year and made shopping more convenient for our members and friends!

Next year, look for the General Store to be launched on-line along with our new website. We also hope to have Tru-Blue products and Brenda Darlington's famous piney recipe items on our General Store shelves. J.J. White Inc.'s new commercial kitchen is almost complete and it will be terrific to offer Tru-Blue's own home-grown products to village visitors in 2010.

Until then, remember - shop the Whitesbog General Store!!!!

- Steve Young, General Store Chair -



Al Morrison reconstructs window frames on worker cottages undergoing restoration.

Especially for the Holidays . . .
Elizabeth White's Steamed Cranberry Pudding

About 8 servings

Steamed pudding:

- 2 tsp. baking soda
- ½ c. hot water
- ½ c. molasses
- 1½ c. all-purpose flour, divided
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground cloves
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- 2 c. cranberries, cut in half
- butter, for coating pudding mold

Dessert sauce:

- 1 c. granulated sugar
- ½ c. (1 stick) unsalted butter
- ½ c. heavy cream
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- pinch of salt

Dissolve the baking soda in hot water. Pour the soda mixture and molasses into a large bowl. Add ½ c. of flour and mix until smooth. Add spices, cranberries and remaining flour, and mix until evenly moistened. Butter the inside of a 6-cup pudding mold or metal coffee can. Pour in batter and cover tightly.

Place a wire rack in a pot with a diameter about 4 inches larger than the pudding mold. Place mold in the pot and add enough water to reach halfway up the sides of mold. Cover the pot and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, and steam the pudding for 1½ hours, adding water if necessary.

Meanwhile, prepare the dessert sauce. Place the sugar, butter, cream, vanilla and salt in the top of a double boiler. Cook over simmering water, whisking occasionally, until smooth.

Serve the hot pudding with the warm dessert sauce.



2010 Board of Trustees Meetings

Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 27, Feb. 24, March 24

Annual Membership Meeting, April 25

Holiday Party, Dec. 19, 2009

Board of Trustees

Richard Prickett, President

Stephanie Schrader, Vice-president

John Joyce, 2nd Vice-president

Mark Ehlenfeldt, Treasurer

Christine Lipsack, Secretary

Ted Gordon Bart Amato

Joseph Darlington Diane Kelly

Jeffery Macechak

Staff

Susan B. Phillips, Executive Director

Program Coordinator (vacant)

Jennifer Rubeo, Bookkeeper/Assistant

Newsletter

Mark Ehlenfeldt & Susan Phillips – Editors

Committees – 2010

Buildings – John Joyce

Finance – Mark Ehlenfeldt

Fund Development – Susan Phillips

General Store – Steve Young

Marketing & Public Relations – Mark Ehlenfeldt

Interpretative Education & Archives - Ted Gordon

Landscape and Garden – Janet Robbins

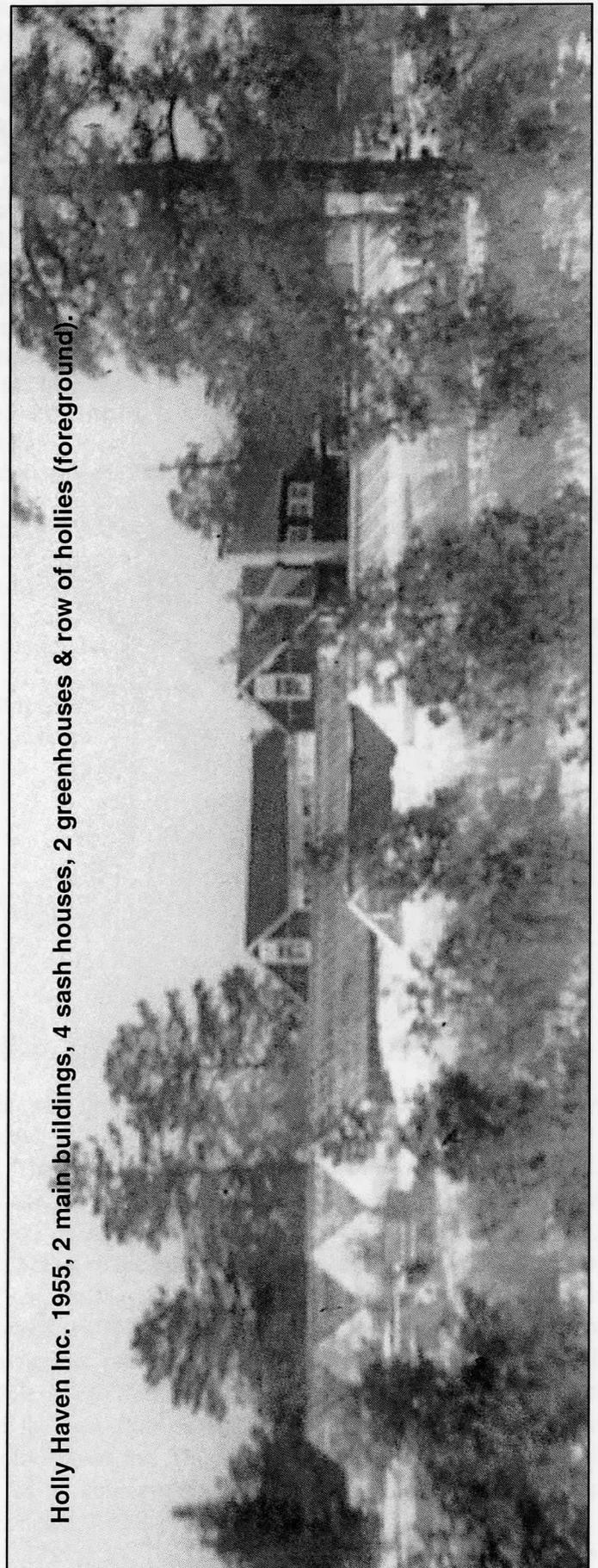
Membership & Nominating - Stephanie Schrader

Personnel – Rick Prickett

Events – vacant

If you are interested in attending the meeting of any Committee, please call the Trust office for the scheduled meeting time.

The Mission of the Trust is to restore, protect and enhance the land, sites, and buildings at Whitesbog, and to provide educational and interpretive programs and materials about the history, culture, and natural environment of Whitesbog.



Holly Haven Inc. 1955, 2 main buildings, 4 sash houses, 2 greenhouses & row of hollies (foreground).

Driving Directions:

From NJ Turnpike

Take Exit 7 to Rt. 206 South to intersection of Rt. 206, Rt. 38 and Rt. 530. (Landmarks - Vincentown Diner and White Dotte)

Turn East onto Rt. 530 and follow to mile marker 13. (Landmarks - You will go through the towns of Pemberton & Browns Mills, passing Burlington County College on the right.)

Turn left onto Whitesbog Road. Parking lot on the left.

From PA Turnpike

Travel to NJ Turnpike North and follow above instructions.

From 206 South

Travel North to circle intersection with Rt. 70.

Travel East on Rt. 70 to Rt. 530. (Rt. 530 is between mile markers 33 & 34.)

Travel West on Rt. 530 for one mile to mile marker 13.

Turn right onto Whitesbog Road. Parking lot is on the left.

From 206 North

Travel South to intersection of Rt. 206, Rt. 38 and Rt. 530.

Turn East onto Rt. 530 and follow to mile marker 13.

Turn left onto Whitesbog Road. Parking lot is on the left.

From Philadelphia

From Ben Franklin Bridge, take Rt. 38 East, crossing over Rt. 206 and onto Rt. 530 East.

Travel East onto Rt. 530 and follow to mile marker 13.

Turn left onto Whitesbog Road. Parking lot is on the left.

The General Store is across from parking lot. Trust Offices are approximately 1/8 of a mile down the crossroad to the right (at Suningive).



Visit our website: WWW.WHITESBOG.ORG or call: 609.893.4646

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