

At Home

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Antiques, Home
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so much more . . .*

Saturday, October 1, 2005

BURLINGTON COUNTY TIMES

Section C

ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT





Photo courtesy of Whitesbog Village.

Elizabeth White (above) built her three-story home (top photo), which she called Suningive, in 1923 when she was 52. As soon as she moved in, she began to create her garden and eventually it surrounded the house with its perennial beds and flowering native plants.



photos/DORANN WEBER

Blueberry Baroness

Whitesbog celebrates Pine Barrens' history at the home of blueberry horticulturist & visionary, Elizabeth White

By Gail T. Boatman
Special to the BCT

When most people hear the name Whitesbog, they think of the blueberry festival, an annual event held the last Saturday in June that draws thousands of visitors to this tiny village in the Pine Barrens. But for many who love it, it is in autumn that this turn-of-the-20th-century company town really shines.

Less crowded, more peaceful and surrounded by the golden leaves of the swamp maples and the beauty of the ruby red cranberry harvest, it comes into its own in late September and October.

All day tomorrow, the Pinelands Discovery Festival in Whitesbog will celebrate the season and, introduce participants to the music, history, ecology and traditions of the Pine Barrens.



Elizabeth White was the first person to cultivate the distinctive blue fruit that grew wild in the Pine Barrens that we know today as blueberries.

What they will also find is the collection of buildings, clustered along sandy roads in the pine-scented Brendan Byrne State Forest, that make up the village of Whitesbog. Here Elizabeth White lived and worked.

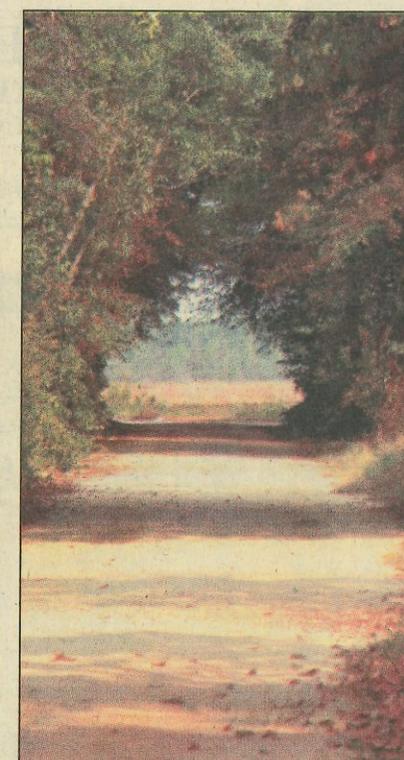
A visionary who had the intelligence, curiosity and common sense to make her dream a reality, White is the woman we should thank when we savor a topping of blueberries on our shortcake every summer.

She was the first person to cultivate the distinctive blue fruit that grew wild in the Pine Barrens. She accomplished this feat at Whitesbog, thereby creating an industry that remains today a linchpin of New Jersey's agricultural production.

See WHITESBOG C4



Cranberry bog at Whitesbog, Pemberton Twp.



Pinelands Discovery Festival

Where:
Historic Whitesbog Village, off Rte. 530,
southeast of Browns Mills

When:
Tomorrow, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission:
Free but there is a \$5 parking fee
Information: (609) 893-4646

Both Suningive (top photo) and the general store (right), as well as the workers' cottages and other buildings in the village will be open for tomorrow's festival.



Botanical Visionary: Elizabeth White developed early ecological sensitive gardens

WHITESBOG From C1

Until her discovery, Whitesbog and the J. J. White Company, which was owned and run by Elizabeth White's father, had been devoted solely to cranberry production. The blueberry and cranberry crops complemented each other, ripening at different times of the year, and both could thrive in the region's sandy acidic soil.

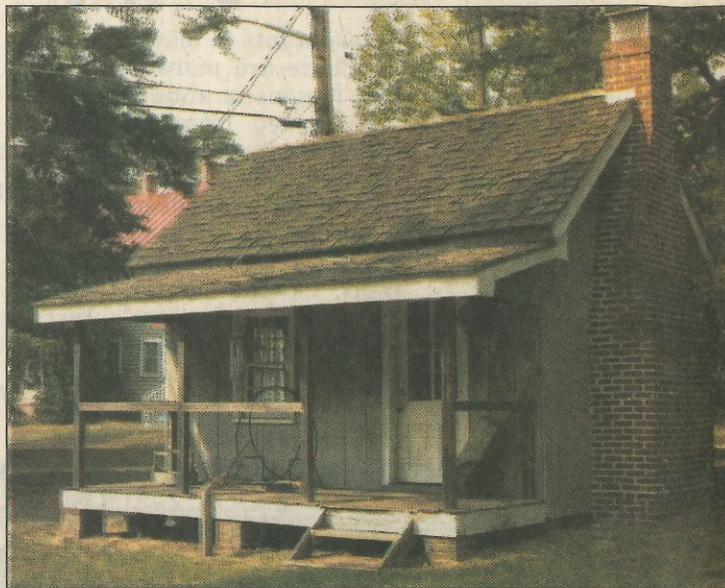
The house where she lived and the gardens and test fields where she worked are central to Whitesbog Village, as is the general store, where the company workers once bought their groceries, posted their letters and gathered to gossip.

The J. J. White Company was once the largest cranberry producer in New Jersey. At the peak of its success, it employed 40 full time workers and 600 migrant workers. Those who held permanent management positions were housed with their families in workers cottages in the village.

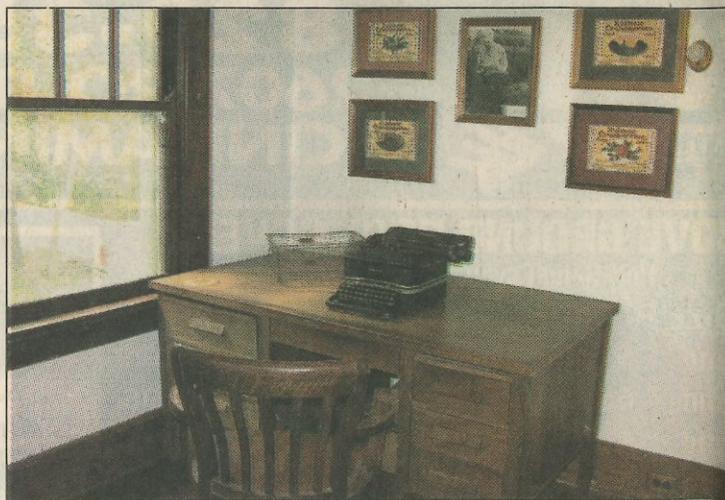
The migrant workers lived in two nearby communities that were set up for them. Most were Italians who came from Philadelphia.

Homesick, no doubt, for a country they would probably never see again, they named their new homes, Florence and Rome. Both are within walking distance of the village.

White built her three-story home, which she called Suningive, in 1923 when she was 52. As soon as she moved in, she began to create her gar-



Whitesbog Paymaster house.



Elizabeth White's office in her home, Suningive, at Whitesbog.

den and eventually it surrounded the house with its perennial beds and flowering native plants. "It was one of the first ecologically sensitive gardens," said Mark Ehlenfeldt, president of the Whitesbog board of trustees and a re-



photos/DORANN WEBER

search geneticist.

Filled with native plants that flourished in the acidic soil, the garden became quite famous and drew visitors from around the world, he said.

White cherished the views from the windows of her home and once said she imagined the cranberry bogs as her front lawn. The windows were specially made to rise into the wall above them so the view would be completely unobstructed.

She called it an upside-down house because the living room was on the second floor to take advantage of the view. "Elizabeth liked to see the sun, the moon and the stars from her windows," said

Theresa Earley, executive director of the Whitesbog Trust. It had an attached garage, highly unusual for a time when most people doubted the car was here to stay.

Both Suningive and the general store, as well as the

workers' cottages and other buildings in the village will be open for tomorrow's festival. When the state purchased the complex in 1967, most of the buildings were "falling apart," according to Earley.

Since the Whitesbog Trust was formed in 1982, steady progress has been made in restoring the village. Seven of the buildings have been converted to residences and are leased to private citizens. Several trails, open to the public, invite nature lovers and hikers.

Moonlight walks are scheduled throughout the year under the glow of a full moon. Tundra swan tours in February allow visitors to see the winter home of the tundra swan, who comes from the arctic each winter to feast on the cranberry bogs. All events are open to the public.

HEARING AIDS

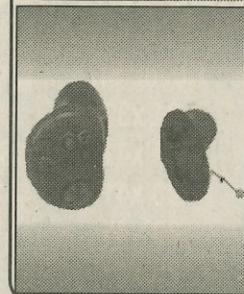
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