

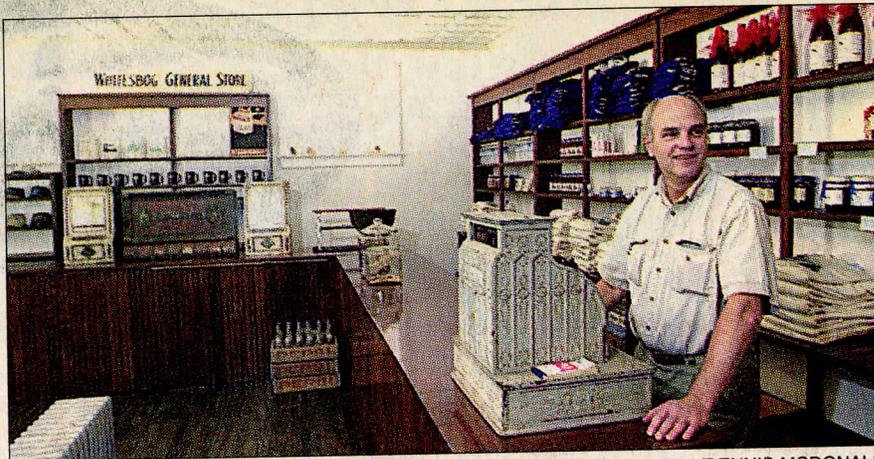
# Whitesbog store back in action

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PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP — The Old General Store in Whitesbog Village used to be the only place for miles where residents could buy dry goods, meats, fruits and other wares needed to carve out an existence in the rugged Pines.

That was more than 70 years ago, when Whitesbog was still a thriving blueberry and cranberry plantation for more than 600 seasonal workers, many of them Italian immigrants from Philadelphia.



BCT staff photo/DENNIS MCDONALD

**Stephan Thompson** sells souvenirs and blueberry and cranberry products at the Old General Store in the Whitesbog Village section of Pemberton Township.

Now reopened weekends year-round, the Old General Store of today offers wares slightly different than those sold in the early 1900s.

Among the goods are sparkling cranberry juice, blueberry honey, blueberry soap, bottled water, ice cream and Whitesbog guidebooks, T-shirts,

mugs and hats.

Whitesbog Preservation Trust directors say the volunteers who work at the store will be trained to offer guided tours for any inquisitive visitors who happen into the village. The

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trust maintains and operates the village for the state.

"We get a lot of people who just sort of wander in while exploring the Pinelands or maybe heard about the village and decided to check it out," said Whitesbog Preservation Trust Executive Director Stephan Thompson.

"The first question they always ask is 'What is there to do here?' Unless we had a tour going on or a special event, we'd really have no answer except to give them a map for a self-guided tour."

There's a lot to see, including the village's former barrel factory which is being restored as an agricultural museum, a restored workers' cottage, and the garden of Elizabeth White, plantation owner J.J. White's daughter and the cultivator of the modern blueberry.

The store itself was the subject of a major restoration by the state, Thompson said. A \$5,750 donation by the New Jersey Questers, a statewide historic preservation group, was used to buy interior shelving. Inside, visitors can still see the store's original blueprints, ice box, post office boxes and other artifacts from the original store, which closed in the early 1950s.

A 22-minute video presentation on the history of the village and its residents is available for

viewing in the store, which is open weekends from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

It is located in the heart of Lebanon State Forrest off Route 530.