



EAST HOUSE



A 1760s log cabin at the Montco Campus with a George Washington legend

As residents leave BBCC along Morris Road, they pass two historic white farmhouses at Montgomery County Community College on the right. The “East House,” just after the college’s Morris Road entrance, has several additions, a mansard roof, and a long history, beginning in the 1760s.

Part of that house is a log cabin, and, according to *Whitpain . . . Crossroads in Time* (1977, page 203), another old section dates to 1790. Today the building boasts several additions and a Washington legend: Someone there grafted a pear tree onto an old oak stump (120 years old!) that “bore exceptionally large and delicious fruit.” While riding in the area, Washington, a fruit lover, ate one of the pears and declared that it was luscious.

By the 1860s, the property was owned by Jacob Walker, who tilled a prosperous 72 acres and fathered eight children. One of his daughters married James Bernhard, and that couple farmed the land from 1880 until 1910. Then they sold to Mr. and Mrs. O. Brown, who sold in the 1930s to relatives of the Strassburgers (the owners of Normandy

Farm on the northwest corner of Morris Road and DeKalb Pike). Mrs. Strassburger’s sister and her husband, Alexander D. Thayer, bought land on the southeast corner to add to their large Gwynllan Farms, which Montgomery County finally purchased in 1969 to become the community college. Today the lovely old farmhouse with its very-old history is still serving the college.

Carol Kalos, a resident of BBCC, is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. It offers programs to promote and preserve the history of Ambler Borough, Lower Gwynedd Township, and Whitpain Township. Its museum on Skippack Pike at the “1895 School” is open by appointment: info@WValleyHS.org.