



## White Picket Fence Marks a Whitpain Founder's Grave

BY CAROL KALOS, PRESIDENT, WISSAHICKON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Last month's issue of the *Stroll* described Prophecy Creek Park. Across from the park, near Narcissa Road, Blue Bell residents traveling east on Skippack Pike see, high on the hillside, a rectangle of white picket fence. The enclosure protects the gravestone of Ann Whitpain McCarty.

Ann Whitpain (probably not a relation to Richard Whitpain, our township's namesake) married Tom McCarty, and in 1704, the couple became the first settlers in Whitpain Township.

She prophesied that if she were buried on their land, today's Whitpain Farm, a spring would appear at the site. Tradition says that Prophecy Creek and the park's lovely pond appeared to fulfill her prediction.

According to *Whitpain Township: A Tricentennial Reflection* (2002), her gravestone, "probably indicates the oldest private burial ground in the township [and Montgomery County]. The monument is an excellent example of colonial memorial sculpture, with its winged grim-faced cherub at the top and floral decoration along the sides. The barely visible inscription reads, 'Here lyeth ye body of Ann, late wife of Thomas McCarty, who departed this life March 21 ye year of our Lord 1714/1715. Age 57.'"

In October 1777, following the American Revolution's Battle of Germantown, Hessian soldiers, fighting on behalf of the British, chased Washington's troops along Skippack Pike. Fifty of the unlucky Hessians lie buried along the hillside with Ann. Then Whitpain Farm's next owner stole the invaders' tombstones (their inscriptions visible until the 1920s) and used them to line the streams leading to his new springhouse.

*Author Carol Kalos is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society, this year marking its 50th Anniversary. With its mission to preserve the history of Ambler Borough, Whitpain Township, and Lower Gwynedd Township, it sponsors monthly speakers at its museum and headquarters at the 1895 School. Free and open to the public. For details, go to [www.WValleyHS.org](http://www.WValleyHS.org).*



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Pictured above: Dr. Slauch, Dr. Glenn Wolfinger