

Whitpain Farm, Part II

A Haunting Tale

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WISSAHICKON VALLEY HISTORICAL
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The 1704 Room

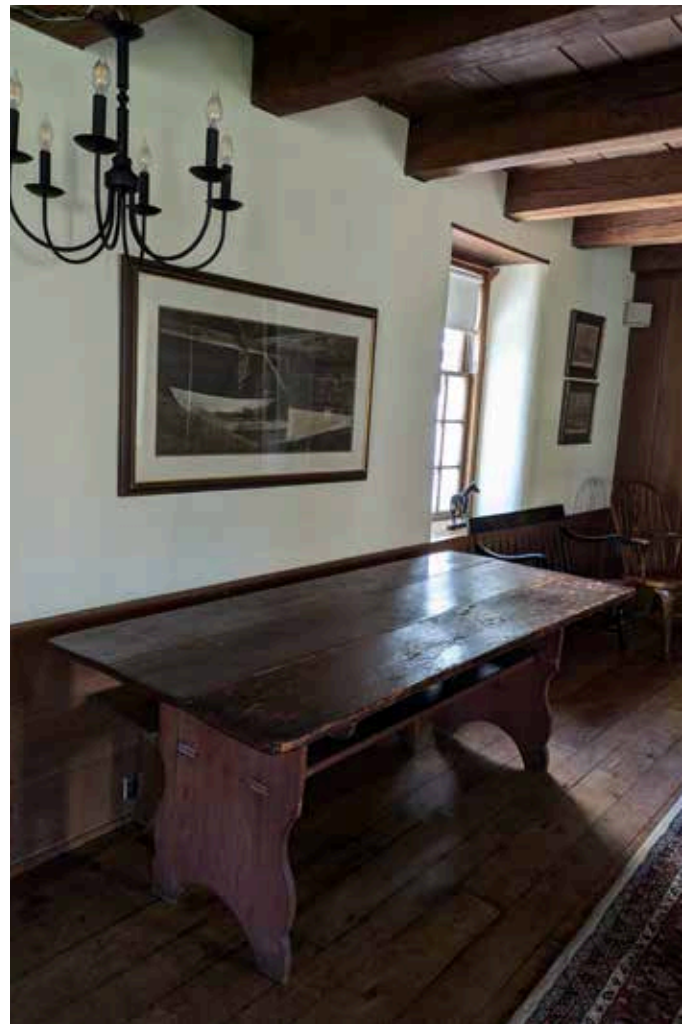
Whitpain Farm, today a retirement community, covers over 100 acres along Skippack Pike, across from the Pophoc Creek Park. Its Manor House, used as the residents' meeting space, was built in 1704, and it has been enlarged with several additions, although it looks authentic, inside and out.

At one end of what is now the Manor House's living room, called "The 1704 Room," a large walk-in fireplace reflects some of the history of the property. It has been rebuilt, complete with a bake-oven and a heavy wrought-iron chain and rod to hang a cooking pot. The rod can adjust to position the pot over the fire or for serving. A hand-made straw broom adds to the fireplace décor.

Of special interest in the 1704 Room is its dining table. Tradition says that it is original to the house and has been passed down to each owner. It boasts a brass plate, stating that it was dedicated to the Plymouth Meeting Historical Society in 1982.

Throughout the Revolutionary War and after, George Bisbing owned the Manor House for 33 years. To the 1704 Room, he added a room, a stylish library with a corner fireplace. A thrifty fellow, to save firewood, he burned cornstalks. And legend says that he used the tombstones of enemy Hessian soldiers to line the fireplace chamber. As a result, each night, the ghosts of the Patriots' dead foes visited his hearth, and when he met his death, his own ghost joined them.

Author Carol Kalos is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Its mission is to preserve the history of Ambler Borough, Whitpain Township, and Lower Gwynedd Township, and its headquarters and museum are on Skippack Pike at the 1895 School. It sponsors a monthly speaker series; events are free and open to the public. For details, go to www.WValleyHS.org.



Original table