Gunkle’s Mill Wheel Reconstruction

Photos of the wheel construction by Jeff Dore.
The dream of a new wheel for Gunkle’s Mill, est. 1793 has become a reality. The project was started by the Historical Commission in 2019. The project is spearheaded by commission chairman, Jeff Dore and the work was done by Ben Hassett of B.E. Hassett Millwrights of Lynchburg, VA. The wheel specifications are: Water Wheel - 16 ft. in diameter, Style of wheel-overshot (fed at top), wheel weight - 2000 lbs., shaft size - 4 inch diameter by 8 ft. long, shaft weight -300 lbs, buckets -72 buckets that are 4 feet wide, max wheel speed-13 RPM, connection - direct shaft to a 12 ft. iron gear that drives an 8 ft. drum driver for the mill wheels. Materials of construction: steel that is powder coated to minimize corrosion. Wheel horsepower: at 250 gallons per minute of water flow and 70% efficiency, the wheel will produce about 50 HP. There have been 2 major construction phases - first for the civil work and then for the building of the wheel itself. There are still some things to finish like stonework on the pier. Future projects may lead to reinstalling a wheel to grind grain.

Photos of the wheel construction by Jeff Dore.
The K. D. Markley elementary school on Church road was built in 1939 under the Works Progress Administration, (WPA). In the mid to late 1930s, the School District of East Whiteland Township (the school district at that time) began to consider consolidating many of the local one-room school-houses and older primary school buildings of the area. Around 1938, the school district purchased farmland along Church Road near Swedesford Road in East Whiteland Township, Malvern and hired architect James G. Ludwig of Upper Darby, PA to design an elementary school. Construction began in 1939 on the school known as East Whiteland Consolidated School. The first principal of the school was former teacher Miss Kathryn M. Donahue, later to become Mrs. Kathryn D. Markley. Housing first through fifth grade (and later kindergarten), the rectangular shaped school was constructed on a quadrangular lot fronting Church Road in the Colonial Revival style of gray stone construction. It contained a center, pillared entrance with double-loaded corridor, symmetrical wings, and a wood cupola a top a pitched shingled roof. Currently, the facility, expanded many times, houses the administration offices of the Great Valley School District. The Historical Commission is working with the school board and architectural firms to ensure that the original facade is incorporated into their plans for future expansion.

About the Works Progress Administration.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA; renamed in 1939 as the Work Projects Administration) was an American New Deal agency, employing millions of job-seekers (mostly men who were not formally educated) to carry out public works projects, including the construction of public buildings and roads. It was established on May 6, 1935, by presidential order, as a key part of the Second New Deal.

The WPA built traditional infrastructure of the New Deal such as roads, bridges, schools, libraries, courthouses, hospitals, sidewalks, water-works, and post-offices, but also constructed museums, swimming pools, parks, community centers, playgrounds, coliseums, markets, fairgrounds, tennis courts, zoos, botanical gardens, auditoriums, waterfronts, city halls, gyms, and university unions. Most of these are still in use today.
Best places to live on the East Coast:
East Whiteland Comes in at #29.

What is your idea of the perfect place to live? A burgeoning city with an energetic social scene? What about a quaint town with access to gorgeous and secluded stretches of nature? Or do you look for nationally-recognized public schools and well-educated neighbors?

When it comes to living on the East Coast, there are hundreds of places that can potentially fit the bill. According to the website report by Stacker, East Whiteland comes in at number 29.

Stacker compiled a list of the best places to live on the East Coast using 2020 data from Niche. Cities, towns, and suburbs in the following states were considered: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia. No more than 10 locations per state were included.

East Whiteland is one of the most affluent communities in the country, where residents are highly educated. It has a low crime rate, as well, which makes it attractive to families. The township has over 200 listed historical properties. Read the entire report here: www.stacker.com/stories/5948/best-places-live-east-coast

Above: The historic Whitehorse Tavern.

About the East Whiteland Historical Commission

The goal of the East Whiteland Township Historical Commission is to raise awareness of our township’s history and to encourage the preservation of our cultural character and the physical evidence of that history.

The Historical Commission has been instrumental in identifying historic properties and in spearheading efforts to protect the Township’s historic resources. Although many of these resources are located in developed areas, future development and change could continue to threaten the historical sites.

Integration of these structures into the community’s changing landscape is the key to preserving the historic resources.

Commission Members
Jeffrey Dore, Chair
Theresa Schatz
Sylvia Baker
Nancy Dore
Nicholas Groch
Mark Keilbaugh
Peter Spengeman, Secretary

Contact the Commission
We encourage public participation in our efforts. You may contact the Historical Commission through the township website at: www.eastwhiteland.org