On October 24th  Meet Our 33rd 
President Harry S. Truman and 
1st Lady Bess  

Special guests playing the roles of Harry S. Truman and his wife Bess will visit with us Sunday October 24th at 3 p.m. at the Lower Makefield Township building on Edgewood Road. Highlighted by his presidency, Truman had a long life as a common man and was an incredible person.

Truman was a different kind of President. He probably made as many important decisions regarding our nation’s history as any of our other presidents. However a measure of his greatness may also rest on what he did after he left the White House.

As president he paid for all of his own travel expenses and food. When he retired from office in 1952, his annual income was a U.S. Army pension reported to have been $13,507.72. Later he received a retroactive pension of $25,000 per year. After President Eisenhower was inaugurated, The Trumans drove home to Missouri by themselves, without Secret Service protection. In 1971, when Congress was preparing to award him the Medal of Honor on his 87th birthday, he refused and wrote, “I don’t consider that I have done anything which should be the reason for any award, Congressional or otherwise.”

FORT MIFFLIN: VALIANT DEFENDER OF THE DELAWARE:

“Located on the scenic Delaware River, Fort Mifflin was originally built by the British in 1771. It is the site of the largest bombardment the North American continent has ever witnessed. In 1777, during the American Revolution, a valiant five-week battle took place when the British Navy attacked Fort Mifflin on Mud Island. The British had the garrison of approximately 400 Continental soldiers surrounded from three sides. Attempting to open the supply line for the British Army already in the Rebel capital of Philadelphia, the British shot over 10,000 cannonballs at the Fort, causing the garrison to eventually evacuate. Over 150 Continental soldiers died as a result of the battle and led Thomas Paine to write: ‘The garrison, with scarce anything to cover them but their bravery, survived in the midst of the mud, shot & shells, and were obliged to give up more to the powers of time & gunpowder than to military superiority.’ This allowed General Washington and the Continental Army to repair to their winter quarters in a place called the Valley Forge. Too late in the season for British General Howe to chase them, the garrison at Fort Mifflin thus extended the war and allowed the American army time to regroup until the spring of 1778.”
Source: http://www.fortmifflin.us/
Twin Arches. One of 3 arched houses, circa 1700, in Lower Makefield Township, built on land owned by Richard Hough.


A stone cabin, circa 1740, believed to serve as slave quarters for Joseph White (1774-1783).

Glencroft, built in 1904 by John Kirkbride. Birthplace of Dr. Thomas Story Kirkbride.

For those who love the colors of fall, the sights and smells of the country, and who enjoy spending quality time with their family and good friends join us Saturday September 25th for

Harvest Day 2010

Buttonwood Park, Yardley Borough
The Octagonal Schoolhouse, circa 1930

Currently the Octagonal Center is being built in the southwestern part of Lower Makefield Township. Wonder why the name Octagonal?

In the early 1770's, a local deer hunter named Breisford constructed an Octagonal School on land donated by Thomas Yardley on the property where the new center is built. All that remains of the Octagonal School house is the name, the memory and maybe a few buried stones.

The stone 8-sided structure was considered very appropriate for classroom use allowing the maximum amount of light to enter at all times of the day. Oil lamps and candles provided meager light for young eyes and natural light was vital. There was a door in one of the sides and small windows were up higher (so outside views would not be distracting and because of the cost of glass). Heat was provided by a small stove in the center of the room and walls whitewashed to provide a cleaner, lighter and brighter environment.

The Octagonal School at Oxford Valley was the first of more than 100 built in the Delaware Valley from 1773 to the 1850’s. “Schools should be established for the young” according to the Colonial framers of Pennsylvania government. Originally, pupils were charged tuition but by the mid-1800’s free public schools were established in Pennsylvania with Township School Boards responsible for education.

In 1885, Lower Makefield had 9 schools with annual terms of 9-months and total expenditures of $5,647.63. Public schools in Bucks County were described as well conducted and liberally provided for with above average teachers.

Rectangular schools were another popular model and some schoolrooms were part of Quaker Meeting Places and in other buildings. In the early 1800’s the classroom was upstairs at the Schoolmaster’s House along Yardley-Langhorne Road. In 1905, at Edgehill School located on Big Oak Road a teacher’s salary was less than $100 per month. Oak Grove School was located on a treed park-like property now the site of the American Legion in Yardley. A 2-story elementary and secondary school on College Avenue in Yardley was built in 1874 and burned down in 1916. It had a separate entrance for boys and girls. The Yardley School, now Abrams Hebrew Academy, was built in 1917 for first grade through high school. In 1948 high school students were moved to a new school. The Pennsbury School District was formed in 1948. Each municipality, however, maintained its own elementary schools until the 1960’s.

Contributed by Pat Miiller

Lower Makefield Township Trivia:

Did you know that fifty years ago some roads were just dirt and some not even two cars wide…

“Trolley beds” were laid down the center of Langhorne-Yardley Road and Route 332

You could take a trolley from Trenton, NJ to Yardley or Newtown, to Washington Crossing or New Hope, to Newtown to Doylestown, or Bristol to Newtown or Yardley to Newtown. You could go from Easton to Trenton…and back again!
The Lower Makefield Historical Society
P.O. Box 228
Yardley, PA 19067

Lower Makefield Historical Society
Fall Program Schedule

- **Saturday September 25th Harvest Day** at Buttonwood Park, Yardley Borough
- **Saturday October 16th Fort Mifflin Day Trip**
- **Sunday October 24th Meet Harry S. and Bess Truman**
- **Join us on Sunday December 12th at 12 noon for our Holiday Brunch**
  **to be held** at the Old Library on Lake Afton

Programs are Free and Open to the Public
For details about these programs please visit our website:
http://www.lowermakefieldhistoricalsociety.com

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