



Fall 2019

Knapp Notes

MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Please Join Us for 2 Very Special Events

Knapp Farm: Montgomery Township's Time Capsule

Sunday, November 10, 2019
1:00-3:00PM



Part 1 - North Penn Life in the 19th Century

Knapp Farm is the only Montgomery Township property on the National Register of Historic Places. But what do you really know about the history of this venerable old homestead now on the edge of a housing development in the shadow of Montgomery Mall?

Please join us for a special audio-visual presentation hosted by members of the Knapp family.

-  Hear about township life in the 19th century in the words of Florence Knapp, through conversations recorded in 1976 when Florence was 103.
-  See family artifacts and documents on view to the public for the first time.
-  Seasonal refreshments to follow.

Annual Holiday Open House at Knapp Farm

Sunday, December 8, 2019
1:00-3:00PM



Tours - Refreshments Holiday Cheer

Programs are **FREE & Open to the Public**
Donations Warmly Welcomed

101 Montclair Drive
North Wales, Pa 19454

Enter from Dekalb Pike
(Use light at Cheswick and make first left.)

MONTGOMERY BAPTIST CHURCH: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

As you drive through Montgomery Township on Bethlehem Pike (Route 309), you will notice an older two-story white church adjacent to a large cemetery just south of the intersection of Rt. 309 and Richardson Rd. It now houses the Crossroads Community Church at Montgomery. But prior to that, it was home to the oldest Baptist meeting in Montgomery County and the fourth oldest in Pennsylvania.

Montgomery Township's earliest settlers were Welsh and the majority were Quakers. The first Baptists to arrive were John and Sarah Evans, who came from Carmarthenshire, South Wales in 1710. The



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TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020

MTHS is an all-volunteer organization and we rely heavily on membership dues to support our activities. Please renew now and help us keep local history alive for future generations. Membership form enclosed, or you can renew online at www.knappfarm.org

Montgomery Baptist Church

(cont.)

following year, John and Elizabeth James, members of a Baptist church in Pembrokeshire, Wales, also settled in Montgomery. According to a history written by the Quaker historian Howard M. Jenkins (1897) "When Abel Morgan, the famous [Baptist] preacher of Pennypack and Philadelphia, learned of the arrival of his fellow countrymen, he visited the new immigrants, and preached at the house of John Evans. He continued to visit the neighborhood as often as occasion permitted, and baptized a number of persons."

By 1719, the tiny Montgomery Baptist Meeting had grown to 10 members. An account written

by a former pastor, the Reverend E. R. Clemens, describes the church's founding. "It was moved to them either to join with some neighboring church, as that of Pennypack being the nighest ... or to be settled in a church by themselves, upon which they consulted and concluded, by reason of distance of place and diversity of language, they understanding very little English, to be rather a church by themselves. This conclusion met with the approval of Abel Morgan, who himself being a native of Wales, was the most able and trusted of all the brethren in these parts. He was the first preacher to these few Baptists in Montgomery, and as far as this is concerned, may be said to be the



Grave of Ebenezer Owen
1735-1802

founder of the church."

In 1720, a log church was built on an acre of ground that Jenkin Evans later (1731) deeded to the congregation. A small stone church was then built to replace the log structure. By 1770, as detailed by James Williams in *An Eurdite Little Township**, [the church] "had a stove and two fire-places," and had acquired enough additional land to build a stable, schoolhouse and cemetery on the lot. But membership appears to have declined during the Revolution as...

"Marauding parties of loyalists and rebels discouraged Sunday church attendance, and members from Bucks County were harassed if they tried to cross County Line Road to Montgomery Township."

After 1790, membership rose again and in 1816 a new building, 55 feet by 50 feet with an interior gallery was erected. In 1883 this building was enlarged again: "the walls being raised, the length increased 15 feet, and a basement story provided." This is the building standing today and owned by Crossroads CC of Montgomery.

Jenkins also writes, "Theophilus Cornell, some of whose ancestors are buried in the graveyard at Montgomery, has recently [Note: written in 1893] left to the trustees of the church about \$12,000, the income of which

(excepting \$25) is applicable to (sic) maintenance of the church. A new parsonage has been built out of the accumulations of this fund."

Montgomery Baptist Cemetery contains many fascinating old tombstone and gravesites such as the graves of John (1684-1756) and Mary (1687-1762) Bartholomew, owners of the first tavern in Montgomery Township and the grandparents of Col. Edward Bartholomew and Capt. Benjamin Bartholomew, both of whom were members of the PA Constitutional Convention of 1776. Rev. Benjamin Griffith (1688-1768), who served as pastor of the Montgomery Baptist church for 48 years, is also interred there.



Grave of
Rev. Benjamin Griffith

**An Eurdite Little Township: A History of Montgomery Township* is now available for purchase at www.knappfarm.org.

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WHAT WERE THESE USED FOR?

When you live in a house for more than 150 years, things accumulate! And the MTHS Collections Committee is just beginning to sort through hundreds of photos, letters and artifacts that belonged to the Knapp family. Here are some recent "finds" that we have catalogued. Do you know how they were used in the 19th century? Answers will be posted on our Facebook page after the Nov. 10 program.

