

Whitefield Historical Society House and Garden Tour

June 20, 2009
10 AM to 3 PM



Merigold Farm, hooked wall hanging by Paula Benne

A self-guided tour to celebrate the incorporation of the plantation of Ballstown as the town of Whitefield on June 19, 1809, it highlights the many architectural and landscape styles used by local residents from 1770 to the present. We are indebted to Carolee Withee for selecting the gardens and to Christi Mitchell for her architectural expertise and for visiting and describing all the houses. Only houses marked with *** are open for viewing, but you are welcome to walk onto the land to look at and photograph the exteriors of all the other properties listed.

THE HOMES AND GARDENS YOU WILL BE VISITING ARE PRIVATE AND YOU NEED TO EXERCISE CARE TO PROTECT THE PROPERTY AND YOURSELF. PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE OR CARRY FOOD ON THE PROPERTY.

***House open ***Garden

1. 587 Townhouse Road, Merigold Farm, c. 1850s

A great example of the “romantic” revivals that were popular in the mid 19th century, this house combines a Gothic dormer with Italianate bay windows. The house gets its name from Arthur Merigold, a veteran of the Spanish American War. If interested, ask to see more of Paula’s hooked rugs. *Tom and Paula Benne*

2. *26 Boynton Lane, Benjamin Labaree House, c. 1810**

This Federal style cape is in excellent condition and has not been updated, other than electricity and plumbing. The house has original windows, twin parlors, beautiful woodwork and an intact summer kitchen. Possibly the most authentic early 19th century house in Whitefield. *Elizabeth and Richard Conrad*

3. 442 Head Tide Road, William Fowles, 1820-1830

Although William Fowles owned the land in 1798, the builder of this house is not known. William’s children predeceased him and it is likely that, after his death in 1826, his heir either built or remodeled the old house into this traditional Greek Revival twin chimney cape. Note the classical recessed doorway and side lights. *Karen and Bill Mitman*

4. ***625 Head Tide Road, Cathedral Church and Monastery, 1983/2008**

Established on land long in the Wright family, the berm house (hermitage), cathedral, amphitheater, pinewood theater and gardens that make up this complex are intimately integrated into their surroundings and have a minimum impact on the landscape. The earth-fast house (1983) is built into the slope of the bank above the Sheepscot River and only the windmill and skylight are visible from the driveway. A Russian fireplace that absorbs heat from the wood burning stoves, and the surrounding earth keep the temperature in the house from dipping below 52 degrees. A bank of southwest facing windows and two skylights fill this “underground” house with light. The Cathedral (2008), designed by Bishop Wright, is also surrounded with earth berms and the roof is covered with sod. The interior features post and beam construction that is both beautiful and inspirational. This complex is “off grid”, utilizing wind and solar power for electricity and earth for heating and cooling. In touring the grounds note the beautiful gardens. PLEASE NO SMOKING. *Bishop Douglas Wright*

5. 743 Wiscasset Road, John Woodman, Sr., c. 1770s

This low-posted center chimney cape was built by John Woodman, Sr. soon after arriving from Byfield, MA in 1769. It does not face south as other early capes do because it was moved from across the road. John Sr. was a cooper by trade, but he also ran a sawmill and tanned hides. *Glory and William West*

6. 714 Wiscasset Road, John Woodman, Jr., House, 1801

One of three two-story houses known to be in Ballstown, this elegant Federal style house features beautiful interior paneling and a formal front entrance on the east side where the Wiscasset Road originally passed, much closer to the river. Also known as the Pilgrim Tavern, it is reputed to have been a stagecoach stop. As the house would indicate, John Jr. was one of the wealthiest gentlemen in town. *Bo and Susan Gallup*

7. *403 Wiscasset Road, Oliver Peaslee III, c. 1825**

Located on land surveyed in 1767 for Oliver Peaslee (the oldest of five brothers who came to Ballstown), this gracious Greek Revival home built by a second generation Peaslee, Oliver III, reflects the family's rising fortunes: woodwork in the front parlors, the unusual newel posts and the recessed front door. Note the set kettle in the former summer kitchen used to heat water for laundry, etc. Oliver, Sr. became a well-to-do, influential lumber baron. *Ann and Malcolm Weiss*

8. 373 Wiscasset Road, Oliver/Ezekial Peaslee, c. 1770

Also on the land surveyed for Oliver in 1767, this center chimney cape reveals its age by its south-facing position (to take advantage of the sun) and by the four windows over the front door which provided light to the narrow entrance hall. Whether Oliver or Ezekial built the house is unknown, but it is earlier than the house next door. The greenhouse was added by present owners, *Sandy Brown and Rick Mattucci*

9. *340 Hilton Road, Benjamin Fowles House, c. 1800**

Built by Benjamin Fowles on land once owned by Samuel Ball (for whom Ballstown was named) this center chimney cape suffered a serious fire in 2005 causing considerable damage. Rather than abandon this historic structure, the current owners were able to save the frame and construct a contemporary house on the existing footprint. The new structure utilizes green technologies such as pseudo-slate roof made of recycled tires. *Tony and Marianne Marple*

10. *268 Hilton Road, Abraham Choate, Jr. House, 1790s**

This Federal style cape shares the same floor plan with other early capes (small entry leading to two front rooms and a large kitchen across the back with a cooking fireplace and an encased staircase), but the high-studded first floor, ceiling moldings, feather-edge wall board and handsome fireplace surrounds announce this as the home of a prominent citizen. Abraham Choate, Jr., who built the house, was a timber merchant who was important in town affairs for over forty years as assessor, selectman and town clerk. Much town business was carried out in this house. In fact the first Town Meeting after incorporation of the town was held here. The dormers are a later addition. *Ron and Pam Kenoyer*

11. 433 East River Road, Tullock House, c. 1835

This cape is differentiated from traditional capes by its "A" frame dormers, which provide added space on the 2nd floor and an interesting front facade. In the summer in the early-mid 20th century it was the scene of much merriment, including swimming at the "Ole Swimming Hole" on the Sheepscot River behind the house. It has been in the same family since 1857. *Dr. Robert Hutchinson*

12. 461 East River Road, William Kincaid House, c. 1802

This is a classic center chimney cape with a well maintained mid-19th century New England barn and milk house. The low height of the eaves and the sparse ornamentation mark this as an early house. The barn, originally located north of the house, was moved to its present location in 1902. *Katherine Morse*

13. 556 East River Road, Timothy Ware House, 1858-1860

This farmhouse was built by descendents of Obed Ware, an 18th century settler. It is one of the few Italianate style houses in this section of Whitefield, indicated by the bracketed hoods over the window and decorating the barn. The house was first built as a cape. The second floor and the entire barn were added three decades later. *Christi and Drew Twain*

14. * 661 East River Road, Preble/Carlton House, 1770/1810**

The one story ell of this house (facing the road) may be the earliest residential structure in Whitefield. Jedediah Preble, his wife Isabella and their 10 children lived in this single room with a central fireplace and an unfinished garret. The front two story house, although constructed in the Federal style by Samuel Carlton, Jr. sometime around 1810, also shows Greek Revival influence in the Grecian columns holding up the mantle in the southwest parlor. Be sure to look at the impressive front stair hall. The attached shed connecting the house to the 19th century barn was a popular modification of farmhouses after the Civil War. A blacksmith shop was also on this property. *Nerf and Millie Sabatine*

15. * 324 South Hunts Meadow Road, Withee Garden**

Stretching along the front of the house is a large, colorful, sunny perennial garden. There are also 3 shade gardens. Points of interest include the cistern with water fountain, the stones by the gazebo and the lavender beds. *Carolee Fields Withee*

16. 154 South Hunts Meadow Road, Mooney Farm, early 19th century

This early 19th century house features full-length sidelights next to the door, high posts, a broadly overhanging roof and a long ell which housed a summer kitchen and a woodshed. A large New England style barn, together with a small milk house, suggests a considerable farming operation. The house was occupied by Patrick Mooney, Irish immigrant, in 1835 and remains in the family. *Ed Mooney*

17. * 96 Hunts Meadow Road, McLaughlin Garden**

Perennial and annual, sun and shade gardens are adorned with charming whimsical objects. This garden was designed for a working woman to easily maintain. *Terrie McLaughlin*

18. * 457 Hunts Meadow Road, Lucia Robinson House and Garden, 1980/1990**

This massive solar saltbox with a bank of windows on the southeast and an earth berm on the north, was built in 1980. The 3 story hexagonal addition was built in 1990. A deck and pergola grace the east side. Perennial gardens and a culinary herb garden around the house, heirloom vegetables, twig fences and a Japanese water garden on a lower level complete the scene. *Lucia Robinson*

19. 333 Vigue Road, Stone House, c. 1840

This unique house was built by John Field, a farmer who emigrated from Ireland in 1822. Patterned after the traditional stone cottages in his native Ireland, the walls are constructed of fieldstone but the edges of the doors and lintels over the windows are quarried granite. The foot-thick walls provide deep window seats at nearly every window inside. The dormer was added in the 20th century. This gracious house is still in the Field family. *Avery Dunn*

20. * ** 23 Grand Army Road, Briggs Turner House, c. 1840**

The full length side lights flanking the front door and the interior trim date this house to c. 1840. It has been lovingly restored by the present owners and features cased corner posts, wide floor boards and wainscot in the front parlor. Note the grand staircase in the front hall and the "coffin door" in the ell. Briggs Turner owned a sawmill on the river at the bottom of Grand Army Hill and the large barn features timbers probably sawn at his mill. The corner of Grand Army Road and the Mills Road was known as Turner's Corner. The garden, developed by Tim, features stone walls and gravel walkways and a shady spot for enjoying wildlife. *Tim and Martha Chase*

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

A. ST. DENIS CATHOLIC CHURCH, 298 Grand Army Road

Built in 1833 on the site of an earlier wooden structure, this brick church served the Irish Catholic immigrants who began settling here in the early 1800s. The bricks were made from local clay and in the bricks next to the door on the right you can see the initials of some of the parishioners who made them. The brick tower replaced an earlier wooden one in 1862. Walk through the Churchyard Cemetery where the earliest parishioners are buried, the counties of their birth in Ireland carved into their gravestones. The earliest burial is 1819. Behind the church is the rectory. Across the road is St. Denis Hall, the site of a convent and school which partially burned in 1922. *National Historic Register, 1976*

B. WHITEFIELD TOWN HOUSE, Historical Society, Townhouse Road

Built in 1843, this building houses the town office in the lower level and the Whitefield Historical Society in the original upper level. Historical artifacts and photographs, as well as the Bicentennial Quilt and Paula Benne's hooked rug will be on display during this tour. Historical books will also be on sale here.

C. CALVARY BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH, 150 Grand Army Road

This building was built by volunteers from the church and the local community after the original church was destroyed by fire in 1972 while undergoing renovation. It was dedicated in 1980. Behind the building is the youth center, where young people of all religious convictions are welcome to gather. You are invited by the pastor go in and visit this beautiful sanctuary. More information about the church and the history of its congregation is available at the church. Restroom available.

D. ARLINGTON GRANGE, 22 Grand Army Road

Built in 1885 by Civil War Veterans, it also housed the North Whitefield High School. In 1918 it was purchased by the Arlington Grange. On the first floor, the exterior walls feature the chalk rail that ran under the black boards which are still present behind the paneling. On the second floor, a magnificent stage curtain designed in the 1930s is still intact. Note the ticket window on the first floor near the stairs. Movies, plays, dances, debates and recitals were put on here. The 1909 Centennial Celebration was held in a tent on the grounds of this building. Please do not block the driveway. Restroom (privy) available.

E. COUNTRY FARMS RESTAURANT, 9 Mills Road

Formerly the Knights of Columbus Hall, it was moved from its site below St. Denis Church and was remodeled into a restaurant. Enjoy lunch on the deck at this popular eating place. Restrooms available. *Stephen Chase Smith, Prop.*

F. KINGS MILLS UNION HALL, 901 Town House Road

This building was built about 1901 by the Whitefield Fish and Game Club and the Whitefield Grange 101. It was the site for plays, minstrel shows, dances and the famous Game Suppers. The upstairs houses a hall and stage, not currently open to the public. The Whitefield Grange 101 merged with the Arlington Grange in 1969. The WFGC survived until 1974. Today the hall is owned by the Kings Mills Union Hall Association which is committed to its restoration. Restroom (privy) available. *National Historic Register, 2007*

TICKETS are \$10 in advance and \$12 on the day of the tour.
They will be available at

Whitefield Town House (B)
Arlington Grange (D)
Kings Mills Union Hall (F)

RESTROOMS are available at

Calvary Bible Baptist Church (C)
Country Farms Restaurant (E)
Kings Mills Union Hall (F) Privy only
Arlington Grange Hall (D) Privy only

LUNCH is available at Country Farms Restaurant (E) or, if you take the road through East Pittston to Hunts Meadow Road, at Moody Mansion Restaurant in the village on the left (G).

The Arlington Grange and Union Hall will be offering refreshments.

PAULA BENNE, who made the hooked rug shown on the cover, will gladly show you more of her creations when you visit her house (#1). The original will be on display at the Whitefield Town House.