



Jefferson Township Historical Society

Box 383 • Burgettstown, PA 15021

www.jeffersontwphs.com

---

## “UNDERGROUND RAILROAD”

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 2017**

The August meeting of the Jefferson Township Historical Society will be held on **Saturday, August 19, 2017 at 10:00 am** in the White Church building located in Eldersville on Fire Road across from the fire hall. If you are unsure where we are located, type into your GPS the address of 11 Fire Road, Burgettstown, PA 15021.

Guest speaker **Clay Kilgore** will be returning to do our August program. In March of this year, Clay talked about “Madonna of the Trail: More than just a Memorial to Pioneer Mothers.” This time Clay will be talking about the “**Underground Railroad.**”

Clay Kilgore is the Executive Director of the Washington County Historical Society. Prior to assuming the role of Executive Director in 2012, Kilgore served as the Society’s Curator for 8 years. Kilgore has also served as Historical Director at the David Bradford House and as a blacksmith at Meadowcroft. In addition, he runs a blacksmithing business, Old Plank Force, creating historical reproductions for reenactors and museums. Kilgore is a member of the Whiskey Rebellion Festival Committee where he is responsible for helping plan the historical street theatre and reenactments.

You do not have to be a member of the Society to attend any of our meetings. We welcome everyone, all ages. Please come and enjoy a good program, fellowship and refreshments.

**September 11<sup>th</sup> Service** Diane Huggins who is planning the September 11<sup>th</sup> service said that there would be iron workers and therapy dogs at the service. The service will be held on **Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:00** at the Memorial Site or in the White Church if it rains.

**September 16<sup>th</sup> program** **Bill Kerekes** will be our guest speaker for our September meeting. He will be talking about how he rebuilt the Phillis Log House and made it into his home. He thought it would be exciting to enter the next millennium living in a house that is more than 200 years old. In 1995, Kerekes bought the former Phillis farm log house that used to be in Cherry Valley. He immediately tore it down – log by log – with a crane and dump truck, numbering each piece with a metal tag and moved it to his property in Bulger. He has many stories to share of what he went through in rebuilding the Phillis Log House. You will not want to miss this interesting meeting. **See the enclosed flyer.**

**Saturday October 14, 2017** Our fall field trip will be a tour of the log home rebuilt by Bill Kerekes for his future home. It will be interesting to hear Bill speak at our September meeting and then tour his log home in October. We can car pool from the White Church. The address is 47 Verner Avenue, Bulger, PA 15019. The time will be 1 PM-3PM. Admission is free. Light refreshments served. RSVP/Questions-Call 724 947 5441.

**Saturday, October 21, 2017** This will be our regular monthly program and our guest speaker will be Chris Sedlak.

**Frank Chorba** He attended our July meeting and joined the Historical Society. He spoke about his interest in the history of Follansbee. He is the author of Follansbee Time Line. He lives in Overland Park, Kansas. He has given us his email address and wants contacted if you happen to have old photos of Follansbee. Is there anyone who has historical pictures of Follansbee? If so, please contact our Secretary, Peggy Strain, 724 947 9015 or [pegfarm7@verizon.net](mailto:pegfarm7@verizon.net) and she will get in touch with Frank Chorba. Do you have old photos or an historical passion that you care to share with the Society?

**Christmas in the Village** The dates are November 3, 4, and 5. The crafter applications have been mailed and a few have responded. If you are interested in helping or want your own craft table, please call Jean Baltich 1 304 748 6376

**Plans are to have a Christmas Party** Several places have been suggested, and the date will be December 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Thank you for the donation** The Jefferson Township Historical Society has received a donation in memory of Ben Strain from Blaine Sayre.



**Fort Vance Historical Society**

**Presents**

# **Saving History**

*A tour of Log Home that was  
rebuilt for the future.*

**Saturday-October 14, 2017**

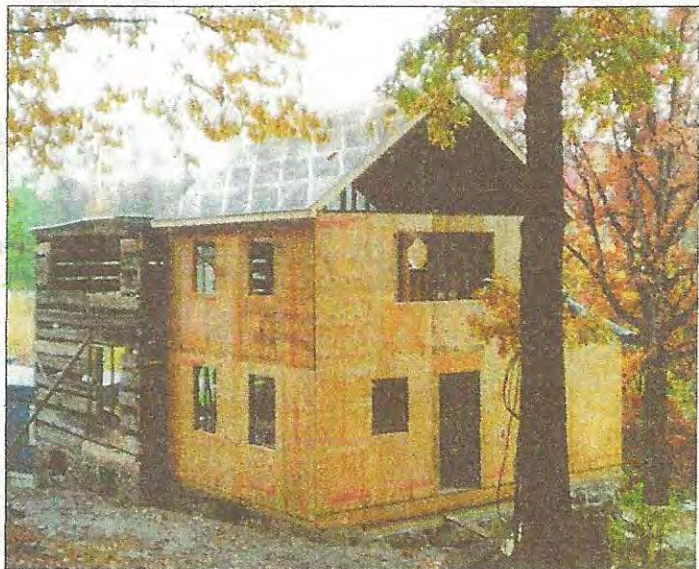
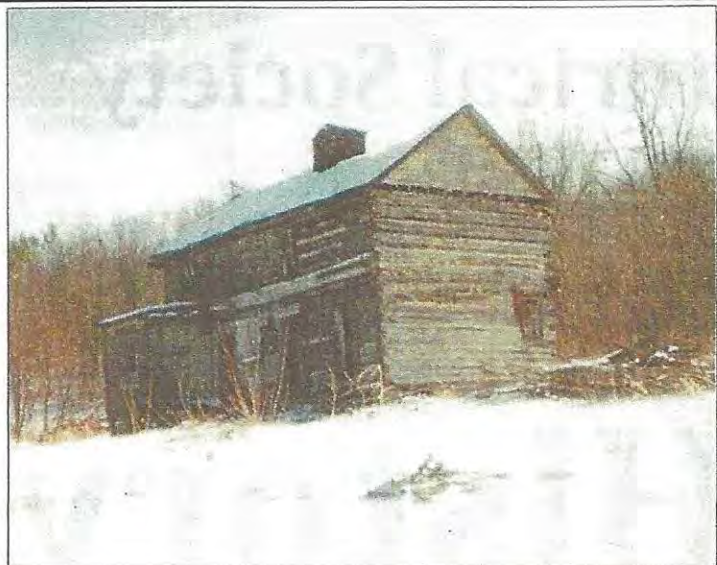
**1PM-3PM**

**Address-47 Verner Avenue, Bulger, PA**

**Admission is free. Light refreshments served.**

**RSVP/Questions-Call 724-947-5441.**





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** BEFORE IT WAS torn down, this is how the c Phillis farm house looked. DURING THE SECOND stage of rebuilding, the founda tion has been set and the walls formed. WITH THE SECOND story added, si rounded by plywood, this is how the house looks today.

## Bulger man rebuilds past for the future

By Judy Chestnutt  
The Record-Enterprise

Bill Kerekes thinks it would be exciting to enter the next millennium living in a house that is more than 200 years old.

But there's something more special to the particular house Kerekes wants to be living in by the year 2000.

He still has to finish building it. In 1995, Kerekes bought the former Phillis farm log house that used to be in Cherry Valley. He immediately tore it down - log by log - with a crane and dump truck, numbering each piece with a metal tag.

He stored the logs in sheds on his property in Bulger where he has been rebuilding the house with the help of a friend, Brian Ebel of McDonald.

Growing up in Bulger, Kerekes always knew of the Phillis farm.

In 1980, he heard James Creehan of Bethel Park bought the old house with the intentions of restoring it. For the first time in seven generations, the house was out of the Phillis family.

A remodeler by trade, Kerekes was

disappointed with that news. In the back of his mind, he always wondered how he would fix the house if given the chance.

"You always have a pipe dream, you know," he said.

A few years later, he read in the former Enterprise newspaper the Creehan family decided the house was in worse shape than they thought and couldn't restore it.

After Kerekes asked what the family intended to do with the house, he agreed to a trade. He would do remodeling work on one of the Creehan's homes in exchange for the old Phillis log house.

"I like old-time stuff," Kerekes said. "I work with wood, and I thought I could do something with it."

Kerekes always wanted to build his own house. That's why, after he got married, he bought land in Bulger and put a mobile home on it.

"I bought this property and mobile home with the idea of one day building something here," he said. "But, never in my wildest dreams did I think it would be that log house."

Kerekes said he wouldn't be able to afford the project if he wasn't a remodeler. A few friends and his son,

Jason, help him out.

Before he tore down the house, Kerekes made several sets of blue prints so that he could rebuild it as close to the original as possible.

One side of the house had caved in through the years. The house had an addition that was added about 100

years after it was originally built.

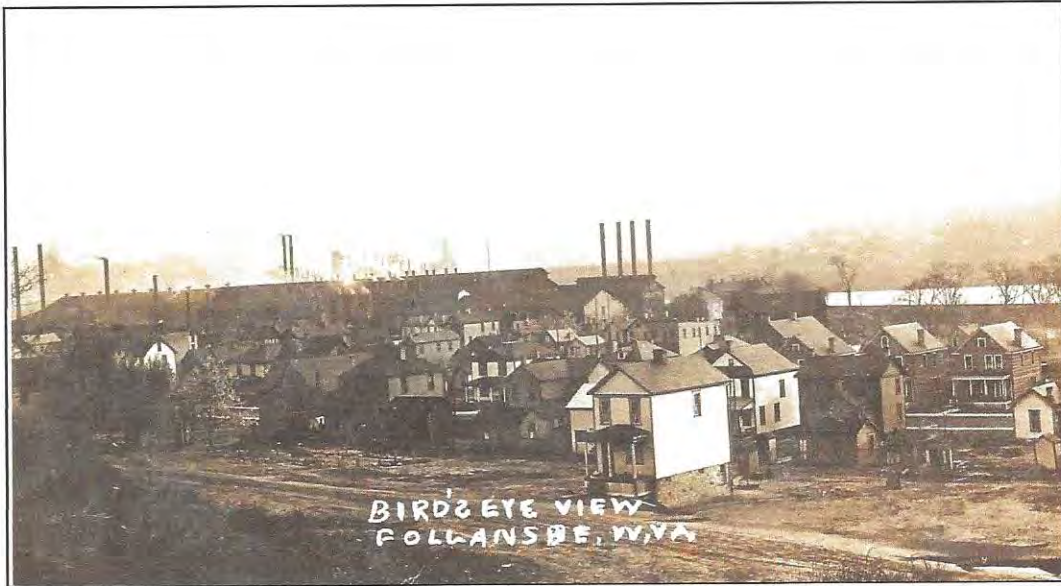
Because he wanted to use as much original wood as possible, Kerekes swung the addition around to the side of the house that had caved in.

"Someday, I hope to get it into 10 historical books," he said.

**Bill Kerekes Rebuilds Phillis Log House for his Own**  
**The Enterprise-November 12, 1997 Edition**

*Courtesy of Fort Vance Historical Society*





### **Follansbee, WVA.**

Fort Vance Historical Society is helping Frank Chorba in his search for additional photos to add to the historical timeline of Follansbee, WV. The timeline, up to and including the 1960's is located on the webpage [Follansbee Timeline](#) and is available to everyone. Please send a scanned photo with as much information as possible to [frank.chorba@washburn.edu](mailto:frank.chorba@washburn.edu). If you do not have access to scan your photo or post card, Fort Vance will scan the photo and return it to you. Contact Debbie Vraninin, 724-947-5441.

*Please share Follansbee's history with future generations.*