

Member Excursion to Old Eagle School

On Sunday 24 June 2018, Society members were invited to participate in our Annual Member Excursion, which this year took us to the Old Eagle School in Strafford. The current historic stone building was constructed in 1788 to replace the original 1768 log structure, served as a school until 1872, and was later used as a Sunday school and chapel. In the adjoining cemetery are some 70 graves, including those of many early settlers of the area, as well as several revolutionary soldiers who died during the Valley Forge encampment of 1777–78.

We were joined again this year by members of the King of Prussia and Radnor Historical Societies, and enjoyed informative presentations on the history of the building and grounds. Special guest Eugene Hough, Monument Education Preservation Field Specialist with the Heritage Guild Works Legacy Marker Program, conducted an impressive flag folding ceremony and provided a detailed overview of his Phase One preservation work on the historic Old Eagle School Cemetery Grounds. Afterwards, we gathered for conversation and refreshments, including delicious tea sandwiches and seasonal beverages.

Sincere thanks to Marianne Cook, Ashley White, Michele Hawk, and Tom Furey for speaking to our group, as well as to the other members of the Old Eagle School Board of Trustees and the volunteers who helped to make the event a great success.

The school is located on Private Way in Strafford, near the train station, and welcomes visitors on Sunday afternoons.

— *John O. Senior*



Old Eagle School, exterior and interior. Photos: © John O. Senior



Marianne Cook providing some historical background.

Photo: © Roger D. Thorne



Michele Hawk behind Eugene Hough, in uniform.

Photo: © Roger D. Thorne



Eugene Hough explaining the cemetery project. Photo: © Roger D. Thorne

Flag Folding Ceremony. Photos: © John O. Senior & Roger D. Thorne



The Old Eagle Schoolhouse is located on an acre of ground given to residents of the community by a German settler in 1765. This gift was in trust for “the general use and good of the neighborhood for religious, educational purposes and repose of the dead.” The current rubblestone structure was built in 1788, a year before George Washington became President. In the adjoining cemetery, there are graves of early settlers, as well as Revolutionary War soldiers.

The schoolhouse and cemetery have been held in public trust for the benefit of the community for over 250 years. Towards that end, the Old Eagle School hosts events such as the Spring Ice Cream Social, the Fall Spelling Bee and Christmas Caroling.

The upkeep of the property and maintenance of the schoolhouse are funded solely by contributions from the public. In 2016, the Trustees funded Phase One of a special three-phase project to repair and restore the gravestones in the cemetery. Funds are currently being raised to initiate Phase Two that will continue the preservation of this historical site. Inquiries about opportunities to volunteer and tax-deductible contributions can be sent to: The Old Eagle School c/o Jill Stanulis, 15 Princeton Road, Strafford, PA 19087

For more information, including a calendar of events, you may visit our website at www.oldeagleschool.org

— Provided by the Old Eagle School team

The 20' x 30' Legacy Marker Heritage Flag was provided as a gift to Eugene Hough from the Flag Lady in Wayne, Pa. with the expressed intent that the Flag visit as many locations in the United States and abroad as possible, to be unveiled and folded at Celebratory and Memorial services.

Hough, himself a veteran, has kept this promise, and to date, inclusive of the special flag ceremony conducted at Old Eagle School (OES), the Flag, under different banner heads, has been to eight states and been unfolded and folded by over 3350 participants including veterans, first responders, youth groups, and community residents.

At the time of this article's writing, the Flag had recently returned from North Carolina where the Flag visited various historical sites and a special flag unveiling and folding ceremony was held on Currituck Beach. As with the ceremony conducted at OES, all participants were issued white gloves, formed two facing lines, and participants reached across to shake hands and introduce themselves. Hough refers to this simple respectful act as the “Greeting of the Day.”

The Heritage Flag will continue to travel and recognize and promote the unique historical narratives of our communities, such as it did at OES Cemetery.

The Legacy Marker Monument Education Preservation program provides unique in-the-field experiential programs that can engage a wide variety of populations including students and recent projects working with veterans afflicted with PTSD and TBI conditions.

Should individuals, groups, or schools desire to conduct a Monument Education Program and/or Flag Ceremony in their community, please contact Eugene Hough at ehoughlegacymarker@gmail.com

— Eugene Hough