

Welcome to Whitesbog Village & Farm History Trail

In 1857, James A. Fenwick began successfully growing cranberries here along Cranberry Run Creek. After his death in 1882, his son-in-law Joseph J. White took over the cranberry business and renamed it J. J. White, Inc. The farm spread to more than 3,000 acres and became known to local people as White's Bog. By the early 1900s, the White property was the largest cranberry farm in New Jersey.

Elizabeth Coleman White, J. J.'s eldest daughter, became interested in growing blueberries on the land between the cranberry bogs. From 1911-1916, Elizabeth and Dr. Frederick Coville, a USDA botanist who was researching blueberry cultivation, developed the first commercial blueberry crops here. They sold blueberries and cultivated blueberry bushes, planting the seeds for a billion-dollar industry.

In the 1920s, Whitesbog Village grew to include workers' houses, a general store and up to 600 workers during fall harvest. Lewis and Emlen Darlington, sons-in-law of J. J. White, controlled operations after he died in 1924. Advances in harvesting techniques led to a reduced need for workers and the village declined. In 1967, the village and nearby fields were sold to the State of New Jersey to be managed as a state historic site. The Darlington family still farms the cranberry bogs.

Open every day, the village is maintained by Whitesbog Preservation Trust in cooperation with Brendan T. Byrne State Forest. Visitors are invited to walk the trails, take pictures, visit the buildings, gardens, blueberry fields and cranberry bogs.

The general store is open Fridays and Saturdays, and occasional Sundays, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.



15 16 17 Old General Store, Two-Story Bungalow & Whitesbog Schoolhouse

The **old general store** 15 was moved here in the 1920s when the village needed a larger store and post office. It was converted into two houses and used as a private residence for employees. The **two-story bungalow** 16 is thought to have housed Dr. Frederick Coville when he stayed here to work with Elizabeth Coleman White to cultivate blueberries. The downstairs of the **Whitesbog Schoolhouse** 17 served as the one-room school from 1908-1918 while the teacher lived upstairs. The school closed in 1918 when students were bussed to a Browns Mills school. Currently these buildings are private residences.

18 Single Bungalows

Single bungalows were used by workers up until the farm was sold in 1967. The left bungalow is known as Jimmy's House after Jimmy Ortiz, a worker for J. J. White.

19 Cranberry Research Substation

This was built in 1918 as one of the first Rutgers Research Substations in New Jersey. Entomologist Charles C. Beckwith, director of the substation, studied insects that injured cranberries. This is a Sears Catalog House; the kit was brought by train and assembled on site. In 1927, cranberry research moved to a station in Pemberton and workers moved in here.

20 Triangle Blueberry Field

This is the original test field used by Elizabeth Coleman White and Dr. Frederick Coville. Blueberries grown here were assessed for vigor, berry size, color, taste and clustering habits among other traits.

21 22 Ice House & Boarding House

The **ice house** 21 stored blocks of ice cut in winter from the frozen bogs, ponds and reservoirs. The blocks of ice, separated by insulating layers of sawdust, would often last through the summer. Single female blueberry packers and primarily school teachers who worked here during their summer vacations stayed in the **boarding house** 22.

23 Village Green & Paymaster's Shed

Every morning, workers gathered in the **village green** to receive their daily assignments. Today, the information kiosk is located here and the space is often used for campfires. The **paymaster's shed**, possibly the oldest structure on the farm, was where pickers traded tickets for cash for use in the general store.



1 General Store & Post Office

The **general store** served Whitesbog's residents and workers from 1899 until the 1960s. It was the main source of supplies for residents and pickers. Goods were paid for by cash or the tickets issued to pickers. The storekeeper and his family lived above the store. This is the second store as the booming village outgrew the first one. The **post office** opened in 1923 and continued until 1957.

2 3 4 5 Workers' Cottages

These four workers' cottages were built around 1900. Each dwelling consisted of four small apartments with one room upstairs and one room downstairs. Cottage 2 is now an office space for the Whitesbog Preservation Trust. The Whitesbog Gallery 3 hosts the work of members of the Trust along with other local artists. Cottage 4 houses history exhibits while cottage 5 is furnished as a 1920s residence. The buildings are open to visitors Friday – Sunday.

6 Barrel Factory

Each year up to 20,000 wooden barrels, each capable of holding 100 lbs. of cranberries, were made here by a team of barrel makers, called coopers, who went from farm to farm. A rail link to the barrel storage warehouse next door made it easier to move barrels. The last barrel was made here in 1925 before the building was converted in 1937 to a Community Hall for the village workers.

7 Barrel Storage Warehouse

Built in 1911, all the barrels needed to ship a whole year's crop of cranberries were stored here. The barrels were moved across the road to the cranberry packing building for filling and shipping as needed. Today it is The Cranberry & Blueberry Museum.

8 Fire Suppression Water Tower & Pump House

This tower holds the water for the village fire hydrant system.

9 Cranberry Sorting & Packing Warehouse Ruins

The 600 ft., 3-section Cranberry Sorting & Packing Warehouse was the largest structure in Whitesbog. Only the ruin of the western section remains today. The first section was built in 1890. Fires destroyed two sections in 1961 and 1970.

10 Power House

This small brick building once housed two gasoline engines that produced power for the cranberry sorting and packing warehouse. When rural electric power came to Whitesbog in 1937, the engines were no longer needed and the building was converted to the superintendent's office. Today it serves as The Antique Engine Museum.

11 Demonstration Cranberry Bog

This is the oldest cranberry bog on the farm, built along Cranberry Run creek. Older varieties of cranberry plants grow here. It is used for educational tours to demonstrate historic cranberry picking methods. It is flooded seasonally.

12 Water Tower, Filter Building, Pump House & Generator

The water storage and fire suppression systems installed at Whitesbog in 1914 are still in use today. The system uses compressed air to pump groundwater up into the water tower. The tower is 85 feet tall.

13 Stage

This stage is used for seasonal performances during the Blueberry Festival and Fall Concert Series as well as for special events.

14 Company Workshop & Vehicle Shed

The **company workshop** (gray roof) was a combination repair garage and machine shop for making specialized equipment. It had a lathe, drill press, air compressor and gas welder. The **vehicle shed** (red roof) held vehicles and farm equipment.



24 Superintendent's House

This house was built between 1911 and 1912 for Joseph Haines who held superintendent position with J. J. White, Inc. until his death in 1945.

25 Darlington House

This house was built around 1916 for Emlen Darlington and his wife Mary White. Emlen was an entomologist and his collection of insect species is housed at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.

26 Suningive

Suningive was the home of Elizabeth Coleman White. It was built for her and named by her in 1923. She lived here until her death in 1954. Elizabeth's Gardens include many native plants of the Pine Barrens and holly trees. One of her original blueberry test fields was here. Her potting shed is located in the woods beside the house.

Please take only pictures, be aware of changing trail conditions and report any trail issues to the park.



BRENDAN T. BYRNE STATE FOREST

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State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
State Park Service
State Historic Site



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BRENDAN T. BYRNE STATE FOREST

WHITESBOG HISTORIC VILLAGE & FARM



INTERPRETIVE TRAIL GUIDE

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Cover Photos

Top: View of the superintendent's house looking towards the water tower and general store. (circa 1920) (Photo presented by Isaiah Haines Jr, courtesy of Whitesbog Preservation Trust.)

Middle left: Young girl brings blueberries to the packing shed during harvest. (1928) (Photograph by J. Horace McFarland, courtesy of Whitesbog Preservation Trust.)

Middle right: Elizabeth White in Suningive Garden arranging blueberries to highlight size. Photograph to be used for commercial advertising. (circa 1930) (Photograph by A. Jemison Beals, courtesy of Joseph J. White, Inc.)

Bottom: View of Rome village across from Rome Pond (circa 1920 - circa 1930) (Photograph courtesy of Whitesbog Preservation Trust.)