

THE ENGLISH FAMILY FARM
Liberty Corner, Bernards Township

June Kennedy's Narration
May 17, 2004

Given at the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission Awards

For more than two and a half centuries, The English Family Farm has been in continuing use. It was settled in 1740, witnessed the revolutionary War, hosted the French Encampment of 1781, served as the first manse of the Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church for 36 years, thrived in its dairy business with the arrival of the railroad in 1872 and its almost 70 acres of gently rolling cultivated fields have remained intact while Bernards township developed around it.

This is a bucolic and refreshing scene to view in today's high-tech and fast-paced world – grazing cattle in the meadow, a community of chickens, well-kept accessory buildings, woods that supplied lumber for an addition to the pristine farmhouse in the 1860s.

This respected agricultural holding has contributed to the life of Bernards through involvement in daily activity. English family members and their extended relatives have participated in events in the Township, County and State governments.

Residents have a true affection and respect for this property. It gives them a sense of history, stability and continuity. Eight generations have worked this land. It is one of the few remaining farms in Bernards.

Structures include a 19th Century frame barn complex to the rear of the farmhouse, with a carriage shed and carriage barn, privy, two large two-story barns, a corn crib, two chicken coops, a pig pen, and an ice house. The ice house is one of very few in the country and was an integral part of the dairy business. There are 150 chickens, 10 cows, an herb and vegetable garden, produce stand and resident farmer. The farm produces beef cattle, pork, hay, eggs and vegetables. Its location is on Valley Road, Liberty Corner, with an 11 acre grazing meadow across the road, through which runs the Harrison Brook. On Allen Road is the woods, used as a summer pasture.

Jacob Castner settled in Annin's Corner, now called Liberty Corner and built the first home on the farm. The Rev. James T. English married into the family and became first pastor of the Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church in 1837. Today the adult children of Woodruff J. English, great-grandson of Rev. English, own the farm. Last December Bernards recognized the importance of this site by placing an historic marker on the property which reads "French Encampment 1781". It is located within the Liberty Corner Historic District, entered into the NJ State and National Registers of Historic Places in 1991.