

ELFRETH'S ALLEY

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

If you were to turn the clock back 250 years to come to a place in time still existing now as it did then--you would be transported immediately to Elfreth's Alley in Philadelphia. It is exactly the same as it was when Benjamin Franklin duck-wallowed on its cobbled stones. It is Philadelphia's oldest street, a guide's finger-point from Independence Hall, and it is a nice place to visit in the late springtime--early summer. But don't tell its residents I said so. Elfreth's Alley is located between Arch and Race Streets and between Front and Second, placing it, if you don't know Philadelphia, just north of Independence Hall and toward the river. The street looks much the way it did in the period when our Revolutionary heroes and officials were visiting those who lived there. On summer Sundays, tourists walk its cobbles and sidewalks, and on one day of the year, the Elfreth's Alley Association invites the world to participate in the annual Elfreth's Alley Day. Again this year--on June 1, Saturday--you could enjoy the walk into the past. It is unique; it is a sort of colonial oasis amid the teeming commerce of Philadelphia, once the capitol of the United States. Some of its houses go back to the 1720's and they all show individual features--different doorways, various shutter styles, some houses built together, others singly; most with the connecting house--alleys with which houses

of Philadelphia, along the river areas, were linked. To live in Elfreth's Alley is to enjoy your own private side-alley, a worn marble stoop, a brick pavement and one's own hitching post. The people who live there are selfish of the place--unblameably smug about it--and in being so, maintain a true living-relic of the past; once when a souvenir shop was to be opened next door to the museum maintained by their association, they took up arms and successfully thwarted the attempt. Brave souls, these city dwellers! The Association maintains some homes along the street for visiting, and half the residents of the street open their houses to the public on Elfreth's Alley Day. It is to be recommended if you're making the fling in Philadelphia this summer--particularly if you're there this week-end. You'll see a fife and drum corps parading down Elfreth's Alley, see pretty dames in colonial garb, find the spinning balcony house; the blooming fig tree, and could even spot the little old lady who sits by her harpsichord crooning in her Bladen's Court garden along the alley. If you've a mind to see Colonial America as it was, then your destination on this weekend's first Saturday in June, is Elfreth's Alley in Philadelphia. It is the oldest continuing occupied residential street in the United States, and the way it's lasted, don't bet on suburbia. Those old Pennsylvanians knew how to put together cobblestones--and a brick house.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.