



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

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Engraved:

The Meaning Behind 19th Century Tombstone Carvings

presented by Tammy Schane, Author and Historian



1895 Schoolhouse -
Skippack Pike in Blue Bell
Monday, October 10 at 7:30 p.m.
Public is invited. Program followed by light refreshments.
The WWI exhibit has several additions.

Mark Your Calendar

- Oct. 1 - Octoberfest in Ambler, 11 to 6 (WVHS will have a booth.)
Oct. 8 - History walk - at Camp Woods - sponsored by Wissahickon Watershed
Oct. 10 - WVHS monthly meeting, 1905 Schoolhouse, 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 13 - Presentation by photographer Matthew Christopher (author of Abandoned America: Dismantling the Dream and Abandoned America: The Age of Consequences), Montgomery Co.-Norristown Public Library, Norristown, 5 p.m.
Oct. 15 - Highlands - Early Heritage Day - 11 to 4
Oct. 15 - Wentz Farmstead (Mont. Co. Park off Skippack Pike) - "Harvest Hard Won" - 10 to 3
Oct. 16 - Open House at 1895 Schoolhouse and at Franklinville School, 1 to 4 p.m.
Oct. 18 - Fort Washington Historical Society - History of Willow Grove Naval Air Station, presented by Steve Heck - 7:30
Oct. 21 (10 to 7) and Oct. 22 (10 to 4) Valley Forge Quilt Show, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Valley Forge Rd. King of Prussia
Oct. 22 - Evans Mumbower Mill - Ghost of Henry Mumbower and Pumpkin Painting - 5 to 6 p.m.
Oct. 23 - Pie, Cider, and Owls at Four Mills Reserve, Wissahickon Watershed - 6 to 8 p.m.
Oct. 25 - Tea and Scones at Ambler library, 6:30 p.m. Buck Amey presents Ambler - Now and Then
Nov. 8 - Election Day
Nov. 14 - WVHS monthly meeting, 1895 Schoolhouse, Program: The U.S. Constitution: Interpretation and Current Issues, presented by Russ Bellavance

Thanks!

To **MaryLou MacFarland**: After several months of planning and editing, WVHS has a colorful, informative new membership brochure. Thanks, too, for the input from **Joyce Austin, John and Keiko Simon**. Copies of the brochure are at the Schoolhouse, Franklinville, Ambler borough, Whitpain township, Lower Gwynedd, and Montgomery County Historical Society.



To **Robert Whittock**: The Whitpain Community Open House was a great day shared by many visitors. Twelve community organizations opened their doors to share their history and work.

At left: Mont. Co. Canine Corp shared their members' skills at the Township building. At right, firemen demonstrated the features of the fire-engine.

To **Vicki Ochocki**: The brochure for the Whitpain Community Open House is fantastic! Vicki is responsible for





its graphic design and layout. It serves as a permanent reference of the Whitpain community. Copies are still available. Please consider patronizing the various advertisers

Another photo from Whitpain Community Day. At left: A visitor at 1895 Schoolhouse paints a "Certificate of Merit" for his mom.

Noting changes

Several properties along Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike are for sale. At least one of these has rich local history. In 1827, the Quakers split into two factions - the Hicksites and the Orthodox. This house was used as a meetinghouse for approximately 40 years - giving it the name Orthodox Cottage. Adjoining the property is a small graveyard that is still under the care of the Gwynedd Meeting.

On Butler Pike, the former Ambler Borough hall is in transition. The new owners have space rented to several professionals and new landscaping should appear soon. The long-in-planning Ambler Food Coop will hopefully be making a site decision in October. A brew pub is scheduled for the former long empty site next to Denny's Electric.



World War I Exhibit

Check out the World War I exhibit on the first floor of the 1895 Schoolhouse. The United States entered W.W.I in April of 1917. We have a number of documents as well as a uniform and trench-coat (wow, is that where the coat got that name? - yes, according to Wikipedia) in our collection. Bill Montelius (who presented a program about the Civil War for us a number of years ago) is sharing some wonderful artifacts from his WWI collection. We also have some sheet music of WWI era songs that were shared with us by the librarian at Springhouse Estates.

WVHS member Barry Johnson is still looking for local memorials for WWI veterans. In *Images of America - Ambler* by Frank D. Quattrone there is a photo of Lyman Rohr of Ambler who was killed in the second Battle of the Marne. Quattrone mentions a memorial bronze plaque in his honor at St. John's Evangelical. If anyone knows about the location of this plaque, please let us know.

Wissahickon School District Celebrates

Fifty years ago Whitpain School District, Ambler School District, and Lower Gwynedd School District officially joined together to form the Wissahickon School District. Plans for a celebration are being developed. Kristen Rawlings and Katie Meyer from the WSD recently spent several mornings at the 1895 Schoolhouse looking through our collection of documents and artifacts. If you were or know a former WSD student, please consider sharing some of your memories.

Congratulations to the Wissahickon High School which recently received a National Blue Ribbon award. Across the nation 329 schools were singled out for this award by the Department of Education after submitting an extensive application.

Parking Lot Rehab

More thanks to Whitpain Township for their work on the parking lot. They have begun the resurfacing of the entire parking area. It will progress in several stages. The last stage will join the lots of the Korean church/1916 schoolhouse with ours. Check for the progress at the October 10th meeting. The regrading and resurfacing should prevent more water damage around the entryway to the building. The driveway would have originally been gravel or dirt.



Our Own Story Corps

Often an event or artifact will bring back stories. Recently we have had several examples:

Arnold Palmer's death reminded several locals of the fact that he was a real gentleman but also that he designed the Blue Bell Country Club golf course. One member remembered bicycling to Merion Country Club to caddie and had stories to tell about some of the golfing greats.

The display of mid-century toys includes the roller skates donated by Ginny Sinn. Several members remembered ice skating on the Lindenwold pond which was part of Dr, Mattison's estate. Others remembered roller skating at the rink on Skippack Pike - which is now the Wissahickon library. All remembered spectacular falls!

We love gathering stories to go with our collections. Please share.

