



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

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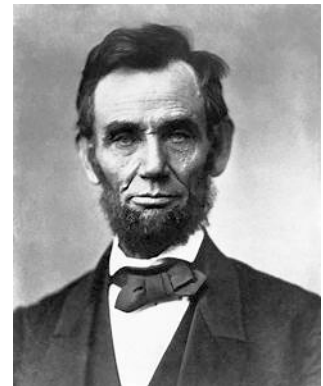
February 2019

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Please join us for the
February 11 at 7 p.m.
meeting of the
Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
at the 1895 Whitpain Schoolhouse on Skippack Pike

The Words of Abraham Lincoln:

The Emancipation Proclamation,
the Gettysburg Address,
and the Second Inaugural Address



presented by Russ Bellavance
who will lead a review of these documents
that are so deeply a part of the American Experience.

Please check your e-mail if the weather is bad. Or call 215-646-6541.

The announced program for February about Woolworths and the Five and
Dime Stores will be rescheduled.

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2019 Marks Upper Dublin Township's Tricentennial

Our neighbors in Upper Dublin Township are celebrating the 300th anniversary of the township's incorporation this year. It became an official political unit in 1719.

The first celebratory event is Winterfest on Friday, February 1 from 7 to 9 p.m. with a chili cookoff and sneak preview of Saturday's activities. On Saturday, February 2 from 4 to 8 p.m. there will be ice and light shows, carriage rides, food trucks, and S'mores - followed by fireworks.

The Tricentennial Celebration continues throughout the year with a parade in May, dinner and dancing in June, Autofest in September, and a Fall Fest in November.

The following is from Wikipedia: Edward Tanner was granted land by William Penn in the Province of Pennsylvania and named it "Upper and Lower Dublin." Lower Dublin was incorporated into the City of Philadelphia following the passage of the Act of Consolidation in 1854. The "Upper" portion has continued to exist around the original survey for the laying out and naming of Susquehanna Road. Upper Dublin Township was established in 1701, when William Penn ordered a survey of all townships in the Commonwealth. It was first settled in 1698, and incorporated in 1719.



Mark Your Calendar

Friday and Saturday, Feb. 1 and 2 - Upper Dublin Winterfest - see details above.

Thursday, Feb. 7 - Heritage Conservancy program featuring aerial photos of area - at Aldie Mansion, 85 Old Dublin Pike, Doylestown - 7 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 10 - Maple Sugaring Festival - at Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association's Four Mills Reserve - 12 to 3 p.m. - Register at wwva.org/maplesugar or call 215-646-8866.

Monday, Feb. 11 - WVHS monthly meeting at the 1895 Schoolhouse

Wednesday, Feb. 13 - Wissahickon library-Blue Bell - program - Who Was Harriet Tubman - 7 - 8 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 19 - Ambler library program Civil War Medicine by Mutter Museum speaker - 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 19 - Fort Washington Historical Society meeting - "Share Your Story or An Object's History" - 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 23 - Wentz Farmstead - program: Winter Chores - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 24 - "1619: The Story of American's First Documented Africans" by Ric Murphy at the LaMott Community Center, 7420 Sycamore Ave., LaMott (a section of Philadelphia) - pt@usct.org for details

Monday, March 11 WVHS monthly meeting - Program - A Refresher Course on Ambler History by Bernadette Dougherty



Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown is celebrating its 95th anniversary this year. Check its website for special events - some with special pricing.

From the President's Desk - Russ Bellavance

As you know, Whitpain Township has been tremendously supportive of the 1895 Public School over the past several years, spending both time and significant amounts of money to preserve the structure of the building and to improve its safety and comfort. We are pleased to announce that we have just received our first financial support from Ambler Borough and Lower Gwynedd Township as well. We asked Ambler for \$750 to go towards new display materials in our redone museum and we asked Lower Gwynedd for \$6,200 to go towards the cost of air-conditioning the building as a future phase of our renovation project. The Lower Gwynedd Board of Supervisors and the Ambler Borough Council were very receptive to our requests and have funded them in full. We thank them for their dedication to maintaining and improving our local history museum.

Latest News on Lindenwold Castle, Ambler

MaryLou McFarland shared the following link to the latest on the long discussed and debated future for the Lindenwold Castle (home of Dr. and Mrs. Mattison) also know as St. Mary's Children's Home. Click on the link below to open the article.

https://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/news/2019/01/29/ambler-st-marys-villa-sage-mattison-goldenberg.html?fbclid=IwAR05GBI95mNa3_bM8KyDs0Zi_6cTAV3F4N2t7HdQhhW8NqlclAW1gEdXzM8

Loss of Lower Gwynedd Historic House

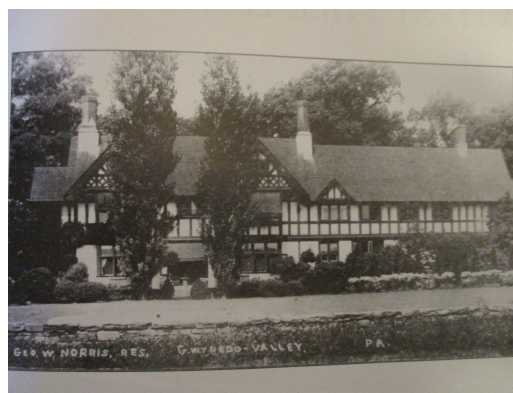
"Gypsy Hill" was built in the very early 1900s by George Norris on Gypsy Hill Road. The 48 acres estate extended from Evans Road to Brushtown Road. Over the years, numerous houses were built along Gypsy Hill Road. For some years the mansion was occupied by the Brothers of Charity before becoming again a private residence. It was demolished this fall and will be replaced by a set of luxury townhouses.

According to *Lower Gwynedd Township - A Pictorial Guide on Some of Its Older Buildings* Gypsy Hill was named for the gypsies who used to camp in the area.

By chance, the recent donation of the flyers for the auction of property belonging to the Ingersoll family focuses on the house and land in Penllyn area. The Forest Hill development now covers much of the land.

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, there are several historic properties for sale along Penllyn Pike in Lower Gwynedd.

In the March newsletter we will feature an article by WVHS member and volunteer Yen Ho wrote for a Temple University course. She researched how properties come to be listed on the county, state, and national Register of Historic Places and why some important properties aren't listed as well as what being listed means.



An interesting example has been recently featured in the Philadelphia Inquirer - the Painted Bride Art Center's building in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Historical Commission recently rejected an application to historically certify the landmark building following lengthy testimony from the public and advocates on both sides of the issue. Approval of the designation would have placed the building and all proposed changes to it - including demolition - under the historical commission's protective jurisdiction.

Those opposing the historical designation - largely the Art Center and its supporters - argued that certifying the building would significantly reduce the value of the property on the real estate market. This is a reminder that there can be varying and strongly held feelings about historic sites.

Membership Reminder

The WVHS membership booklet has been mailed to those who have sent in their 2018-2019 membership dues. Thanks to vice-president Mary Lou McFarland for assembling and mailing the booklet. If you didn't receive one, please check that you sent in your membership dues. Dues can be sent to WVHS, P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002-0096 or handed to any board member.

If you change your e-mail address during the year, please advise us so we can update our list and you won't miss any news from WVHS.

Please Share Your Memories/Stories of Spring

We had some fun and interesting memories of winter activities that were shared in an exhibit with some winter artifacts (wooden sled, metal ice skates) from our collection. Now we are looking for spring memories. Many spring memories involve waiting for the fields and gardens to warm up and dry out. We have heard that asparagus and strawberries were grown at several sites in Whitpain and then transported to Philadelphia via the Gwynedd Train Station.

Spring also meant a change in sports. Softball and baseball as well as track and field often competed with spring rains and mud. Spring cleaning involved some interesting and challenging jobs. Please e-mail any stories to pegathome6@yahoo.com.



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