



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

www.wvalleyhs.org

WVHS, Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002

215-646-6541

info@wvalleyhs.org

Vol 19, Issue 6

Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
presents

Native American Paths of Eastern Pennsylvania

by Jim Tufano, Local Historian

The talk will focus on the Lenape people of the Delaware Valley who traveled far and wide on foot throughout Eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, eastern New York, and northern Delaware. These old footpaths served as the primary channels of trade and cultural diffusion for hundreds of years. These paths often became the roads and railroads of today.

Rescheduled

for March 12

7 p.m. at the Blue Bell Library

Open House - Sunday, March 18 - 1895

Schoolhouse - 1 to 4 p.m

Mark Your Calendar

March 3, Saturday - Spaghetti Dinner - Trinity Episcopal Church, Bethlehem Pike - sponsored by Boy Scout Troop 3 of Ambler. Support local troop and visit this historic church.

March 12, Monday - WVHS monthly meeting - at BlueBell branch of Wissahickon library- door open at 7 p.m., program begins at 7:30 p.m. See page 1 for details. Light refreshments - Carol Kalos and Natalie Macy and John Stoller

March 18, Sunday - 1895 Schoolhouse Open House - 1 to 4 p.m.

April 15, Sunday - Pancake Breakfast at Manor House at Prophecy Creek Park - sponsored by Rotary Club of Blue Bell 8 a.m. to noon, This is a good chance to see this historic building and to support Rotary and their work.

April 15, Sunday - Victorian Tea Party - sponsored by Historical Society of Fort Washington - at Clifton House - call Renee Webb at 215-643-4169 for details and tickets.

The 1895 Schoolhouse is open each Thursday morning from 9 to noon. There are usually 8 or so members there working on various projects. We also have visitors who have specific questions or enjoy visiting the museum. Please feel free to join us any Thursday morning.

Shopping in Ambler

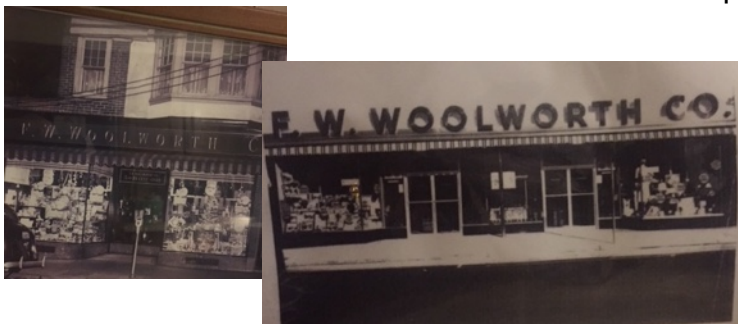
Volunteers Dot MacDermott and Marie Goldkamp recently worked with a badly deteriorated copy of the Ambler Gazette from 1968. (Newspapers are notoriously prone to breaking-down. Fort Washington Historical Society and the Upper Dublin library scanned and have available on-line issues of the Ambler Gazette from the first half of the 20th century.) The issue that Dot and Marie worked with was one in honor of Ambler's 75th anniversary. It was sponsored by many local businesses and had photos of early Ambler.



Ambler had many businesses up and down Butler, Main, Spring Garden, Bethlehem, Lindenwold, and other side streets. Some of them represented national chains - Woolworths, Howard Johnson's, but most were locally owned and managed.

As Thursday volunteers looked through the list, there were lots of memories and story to be shared. If there are stores and restaurants that bring back memories to you, please share them with us. They will be placed in the Ambler business files.

Below are several photos of the Woolworth's store



that was located on Butler Pike between Spring Garden and shared by Frank Russo. FW Woolworth came to Ambler in 1831. It was first located next to what is now Denny's Electric. Later Ambler photographer and historian Newt Howard had his camera store in the site.

(Newt's vast collection of photographs of local event and sites is held at the Montgomery County Historical Society in Norristown. Prints of a few are on display at the Ambler Theater. Woolworths built a larger store in the 1950's - which is



now Denny's Electric.

According to an recent article by Inga Saffron in the Philadelphia Inquirer, the main form of advertising for five and dime stores was their broad store windows. Luckily



Denny's has retained the windows and basic design.

According to Frank, both buildings had lunch counters. Up for an ice cream soda?

Next month's newsletter: a walk up and down Butler Pike in Ambler - then and now.

Centre Square Fire Company

Both the now empty fire house on Skippack Pike and the Merrill homestead on Bethlehem

Pike have served as practice sites for by their respective fire companies.



First the companies

broke through the roof of the buildings with axes to simulate a fire fighting technique. The holes were then covered for safety. Later the buildings were/will be demolished.

An open house is planned for the new fire house this spring.. The very modern building is a joint Whipain Township and community project. It is behind the previous building on Skippack Pike. (Photo from Centre Square Fire Company website.)

The company's first building was at the corner of Skippack Pike and DeKalb Pike at the time the company was organized in 1913. They had used their previous Skippack Pike building since 1954.

Ambler/Whitpain/Wissahickon Yearbooks Sought

Though we have a good selection of yearbooks from the local high schools in our library, we are looking to complete our collection. We would also welcome pennants or other memorabilia. Interestingly, we have more yearbooks from the early years; starting with the 60s the collection is far from complete. If you are looking for a good home for

any local yearbooks or other school artifacts, please consider donating them to our library/museum. We'll take good care of them and you can visit them anytime!

E-mail from Westmoreland County

We recently received an e-mail from the historical society of Westmoreland County, VA. They were seeking information about the migration from there to this area. Checking with a recently donated copy of *Penllyn Village: Lest We Forget*, we found a whole chapter on the migration. We were able to connect the society with some local historians.

Numerous families migrated from Westmoreland Co. at the beginning of the 20th century and established a close-knit community - always closely linked with the Bethlehem Baptist Church. A group of young black entrepreneurs formed The Enterprise Working Company. They purchased a tract of land along Trewellyn Avenue and helped young families build and own their own homes. Other families came north to join the community.

Westmoreland County is in the northeastern part of Virginia along the Potomac River.

Our library has a copy of *Penllyn Village: Lest We Forget*. It is a fascinating read. We are hoping to schedule a program for next year about Penllyn.



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