

Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

www.wvalleyhs.org

November 2018

215-646-6541

P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002-0096

Vol 20, Issue 1

Join us for the November WVHS Meeting
at the Blue Bell Library
7 p.m. (Please note new time for meeting.)

November 12, 2018



Program:
**A Walking Tour of the
Cotswolds and
Cornwall**

presented by Russ and Jean Bellavance

The best way to see any foreign land is on foot, and the south of Great Britain is no exception. Join Russ and Jean in an exploration of the golden-hued villages of Cotswolds, and the rough stoned mining and villages of Cornwall. Discover the mysteries of Avebury Henge, its younger and smaller counterpart at Stonehenge, man-made Silbury Hill and the Ley Lines that connect them.

Travel from Mousehole in Cornwall, down the road to Penzance, and walk across to St. Michael's Mount island and castle. After a trip underground in a tin mine, climb to the top of Tintagel Castle, birthplace of King Arthur. For fans of British TV, walk along the cliffs of Poldark country and visit Doc. Martin's house.

Mark Your Calendar

Sat., Oct. 27 - Evans-Mumbower Mill - "Ghost of Henry Mumbower" - 5 to 8 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 3 - 1777 Encampment and Hope Lodge's 270th anniversary celebration - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 10 - Lower Gwynedd Veterans' Day Ceremony (see below)

Sun., Nov. 11 - Bells of Peace Veterans' Day commemoration of the end of World War I - 11 a.m.

Mon., Nov. 12 - WVHS monthly meeting - 7 p.m. at the Blue Bell library - see cover page

Sun., Nov. 18 - Hike the Mill Race - check out web-site www.wvwa.org

Tues., Nov. 20 - Fort Washington Historical Society - Clifton House - 7:30 p.m. Program: America in W.W.I by Steve Heck.

Sun., Dec. 9 - WVHS holiday party at the 1895 Schoolhouse - watch for details.

Lower Gwynedd to Hold 5th Annual Veterans' Day Ceremony

On Saturday, November 10 the 5th Annual Veterans' Day Ceremony will be held at Veterans' Memorial Park (at the intersection of Penllyn Pike and Bethlehem Pike in SpringHouse). The ceremony is scheduled for 10:30 and free parking will be available.

Members of Ambler's Daniel W. Dowling VFW and Boy Scout Troop #540 will participate in the ceremony. Music will be provided by Wissahickon Middle School Marching band and the Bethlehem Baptist Church's Men's Choir.

Recent Donations - and Stories Behind Them

Decorative roof tile from the original Trinity Episcopal Church - by Leopoldo Montoya

The original Trinity Episcopal Church on Bethlehem Pike was designed by architect Milton B. Bean - who designed numerous building for Dr. Mattison as well as public and private buildings in the area.

In the spring of 1898, Dr. Mattison and his wife announced that they would build a church for the mission out-reach of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Whitemarsh. The church would be in memory of their deceased daughter Esther Victoria and be located on Bethlehem Pike across from Lindenwold Castle. It would be called Trinity Memorial Church.

Stone for the church came from Mattison's Quarry which was a block away on Highland Avenue and Farm Lane. (It is now a park.) The estimated cost at that time was \$40,000.



The original plans called for a slate roof but were changed to tile - making it necessary to install heavier rafters. (The donated tile was from the original roof line - see photo at left. It was "thrown off" during the disastrous fire of 1986 - see right.)

By spring of 1900 work on the church was progressing under the direction of Leidy Heckler and his carpenters. The church was consecrated on Feb. 2, 1901 on what would have been Esther Victoria's eighteenth birthday.

After fire destroyed the original church in June 1986, the current church on the site was built in 1988-89.



Ambler Jr. Baseball sweatshirt - by Frank Russo Frank found it in a thrift shop. Watch for a special exhibit of local sports uniforms and equipment in the spring.

Two Auction Flyers for the Estate of R. Sturgis Ingersoll by Gail Cathey

Gail contacted us via our web-site after finding the flyers in a second-hand book. The two sided flyers contain details of the R. Sturgis Ingersoll properties as well as maps and hand-written notes and their proposed sale. The sale date was on July 18, 1974. The six parcels contained 182 acres in the Penllyn area along the railroad (at that time it was a Reading Railroad line) and include what became the Forest Hill housing community and a section of Penllyn Woods (WVWA). The Ingersoll family has a long history in Lower Gwynedd.

We plan to consult with Lower Gwynedd Township and the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association about the subsequent development of the area. Watch for a future article on the Ingersolls family history.

Update on Whitpain Public School Renovations

The inside of the 1895 Schoolhouse is looking fresh and bright after walls and ceilings were repaired and painted. Lighting fixtures and ceiling fans will be installed next. The wooden blinds (thanks to Quester grants in years past) will be rehung before exhibits can be reinstalled. Massive thanks to Joan Duxbury and Sally Zeller for managing this project and for their many hours of hands-on work at the schoolhouse.

The WVHS December holiday party is planned for the schoolhouse. It will give members a chance to check out the renovated building and expanded exhibit space. The museum will not be totally reassembled, but you will get a taste of what is to come. Mark your calendar for Sunday afternoon, December 9 at the schoolhouse. Look for details on our website, our new Facebook page, and in the Dec. newsletter.

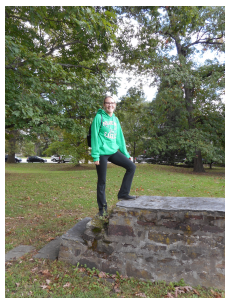
Over the next weeks there are several types of help that members can give. We will be setting up exhibits on all three floors - starting with the first floor where Ambler, Whitpain, and Lower Gwynedd communities will be featured. The artifacts and labels are provided; setting thing up can be interesting and there is always good company. Please call Peg at 215-542-7753 if you have an hour or so to share. We could also use a small three drawer dresser for storage of linens.

Gwynedd Friends Meeting Oct. Visit

Jim Quinn shared the history and influence of Gwynedd Friends Meeting at the Oct. 13 outing to the site. Mr. Quinn explained that the Gwynedd area was settled largely by Welsh immigrants in the late 1600s and early 1700s. Located in what is now Lower Gwynedd, the first meetinghouse on the site was built of logs in 1700. It was on the site of the current meetinghouse and was on a tract of land that had belonged to early Welsh settler Robert Thomas Evans who owned large tracts of land in the area including the the site of Gwynedd Mercy schools. Many of the early settlers came from the Snowdonia region of Wales and some came as indentured servants.

The Oct. 13th tour included a walk around outside. In the cemetery Mr. Quinn pointed out Mary Ambler's grave as well as that of members of the Lukens family (several very active in the Underground Railroad). During the Revolutionary War, the meetinghouse was used as a hospital for soldiers some of whom were buried in the cemetery.

Above Megan Diehl demonstrates the stone platform for mounting and dismounting from buggies and horses. The stone path leads to the meetinghouse.



A WVHS Presence on Social Media

WVHS had a table at Lower Gwynedd's PikeFest, Whitpain Community Day, and Ambler's Oktoberfest. This made for busy weekends in September and October, but the response was very positive. Several interesting contacts resulted. One was with Keith Siegel and his daughter Emma who expressed an interest in helping the WVHS have a presence on social media beyond our web-site. (The web-site has brought us numerous important contacts.) At its last meeting, the board decided that we should move forward on this issue.

Emma, a sophomore at WHS, is working to create our new Facebook page (It may be already active when you received this newsletter.) Look for us and don't forget to "Like" us. The group also discussed ways that we can extend our connections with the school district. Reaching out to younger generations will help ensure the future of the organization.

Street Names

Thanks to those who sent in stories of street names in the area. Mike Fondots mentioned that in the original section of Whitpain Greens (near Stony Creek Elementary) there are streets named for Revolutionary Generals (Pulaski, Daws, Sullivan, Muhlenburg) and explorers (Cortez, Balboa, Guiteras, Columbus).

While visiting Gwynedd Friends, members learned for whom Evans Road was named. Many streets in Ambler are named for early settlers. It is also interesting to note names that have changed over the years. The Schoolhouse is on School Road which was once called Wood Road. The above Ingersoll story suggests the origin of the street named Sturgis in Lower Gwynedd.

Memorial Service for Monica Ehret

Herman Ehret has shared that the memorial service for Monica will be held on Saturday, Nov. 10 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Foulkeways in Lower Gwynedd. Herman and Monica were stalwart members of Whitpain Historical Society and contributed positive energy to its merge with the WVHS.

WVHS Memberships Due - A gentle reminder that WVHS dues for 2018-2019 can be mailed to WVHS, P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002



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