



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

www.wvalleyhs.org

P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002

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Vol. 15, Issue 8

April 2014

The Role the Northern Suburban Philadelphia Area Played in the Grand Scheme of the American Revolution

Presented by James Magaziner
WVHS member and Upper Dublin resident



**April 14, 2014
at the 1895
Schoolhouse
7:30 p.m.**

Visitors welcome.
Program followed by light refreshments.

News of Museum Collection - The following items have recently been shared with the Society and will be on display at the April meeting.

* 44 Newspaper Front Sections announcing important events of the 20th century - from Norman Schmid.

* Framed map of Ambler by Lee DeGroot based on research by Newton M. Howard and an article about Ambler's early days by Newton M. Howard that were shared by Martin Brown at the March meeting.

* Atlas of Montgomery County, Volumes A and B, 1935 from Herb Levy.



Little Leather Library Corporation by Peg Johnston

On a recent SEPTA ride from Philadelphia, I observed a young man engrossed in a small (2 1/2 by 4 inches) leather book. Using the privilege of age, I asked him what he was reading. He eagerly shared that he had bought the book (an edition of Thoreau) at a flea market. He had researched the books and found they were printed beginning in 1913. In the first year sixty titles - all in the public domain - were published and one million were sold in a little over a year.

On line, I found that the books were published in New York between 1916 and 1923. Over 25 million of the little books were sold or given as premiums. Whitman's ordered a total of 15,000 copies of fifteen Shakespeare plays to include with their product. Woolworth's (Frank - this is for you.) ordered and sold over 1 million copies of various titles for ten cents each.

The 3 by 5 inch books were first bound in leather, but during W.W.I the leather was replaced with with a synthetic bindings which turned out to smell bad in hot weather. During the war, a gift of ten books could be sent to soldiers and sailors overseas. Check Wikipedia for more information.



Update on St. Mary's Property

Upper Dublin Planning Commission hearing and meetings continue on the future of the St. Mary's property. Last week's Ambler Gazette carried a letter from Upper Dublin resident Naomi M. Sussman that suggested the property could be developed as an arboretum - perhaps with the support of the horticulture department at Temple Ambler. WVHS actually has a copy of an analysis of the property by Professor Val Libby of Temple Ambler. This is what we need - good ideas to work with!

From the President's Desk.

by Russ Bellavance

We have a lot of important information for this month's newsletter.

First, I am sorry to inform you that one of our most active members, Bill Missfeldt, died on Tuesday, March 18. Bill and Helen, who have been married for 61 years, have been living at Lower Gwynedd Estates since moving from their long time home off of Morris and Mt. Pleasant Roads.

Bill served the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society for many years and in many ways, including Treasurer, Board Member and Building Trustee for the 1895 School House. Bill and Helen have always been so active and giving, traveling all over the country (including visiting all 50 state capitals) and then sharing their adventures with their many friends. Bill was a true engineer and an inveterate tinkerer, and always seemed to know how things worked and how to fix them. We will miss his generous spirit. (At right, in 2009, Bill was honored for his service to the Society).



We are delighted to announce that the on-line museum collection data base project that we have been working on for about six months has now gone "live" and is available for use by both Society members and the general public. As you know, we have a very extensive collection of photographs, objects of historical interest, books and papers, but we have not known exactly what was in the collection. Now we will know, and the general public will also be able to benefit.

To see the data base, go to our website at www.wvalleyhs.org and click on the Museum Collection button on the left. You can then select the type of item you want or select the entire collection. To search, use the CTRL7 feature and enter your search word. We are still in the process of entering items, but many of them are already in. Many, many thanks to the team that developed and are implementing this large project, especially board members Peg Johnston, Emmy Simon and John Simon, and our good friend Krista Lewis.

As was announced at the February meeting and discussed in the March newsletter, your board has recommended that the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society agree to have the Historical Society of Whitpain merge into us. The HSoW's board had also recommended this merger to their members and the members voted in favor at their meeting last week. We will be asking our members to approve the merger at the April meeting.

As you know, we have been working closely with the HSoW for the past several years, and have seen the advantages of combining. There has already been a meaningful overlap in membership and our service area (Ambler, Lower Gwynedd and Whitpain) includes all of their service area. Our focus on local history has been very

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Serving Whitpain, Ambler, and Lower Gwynedd Communities

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similar, particularly looking at the changes since the days when the area was still rural, and we both have had a special emphasis on educational history. The HSoW owns the Franklinville School, which is a one room school of the sort that our 1895 School was designed to replace. They also have a collection of materials that will complement our collection.

Mark Your Calendar

April 6 - WVPL's Celebration of the Book - Library Benefit Brunch, 34 East Tavern on Butler Pike in Ambler, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Cost \$30. Attendees may bring 1 book for an informal evaluation.

April 12 - Sheep Shearing Day - Peter Wentz Farmstead. 2030 Shearer Road (off Skippack Pike east of the intersection with Rt. 363 - Valley Forge Road) - 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Free. This is a great event for families.

April 12 - Hope Lodge - Spring cleaning event - Bethlehem Pike in Fort Washington - 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. See their website for details.

April 14 - Monthly meeting at the 1895 Schoolhouse - See details on page 1 - 7:30 p.m.

April 20 - Open House at the 1895 Schoolhouse, 1 -4 p.m.

May 4 - Community Open House at The Highlands, 7001 Sheaff Lane, Fort Washington, 2 - 4 p.m.

May 10 - Plant and Attic Sale at Boxwood - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Great Mother's Day gifts!

May 20 - Joint outing for WVHS and WHS - details in May newsletter



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