

Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

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February 2013

Enlist!! Enlist!!

Troops are now being raised for service.



Come join the "Cause" in this
interactive program on
The American Civil War

Presented by re-enactor Mike Jesberger

Learn about the life on the
march, in camp, and in battle.
Youth recruits are welcome!

Monday - Feb. 11
at the 1895 Schoolhouse,
Skippack Pk. and School Rd.
7:30 p.m.

Light refreshments to follow.

Market Day Revisions - At the last WVHS board meeting, it was decided to continue with the autumn Market Day - without the society-sponsored flea market. The Society will rent out spaces outside as usual, but the Society will focus on their food concession and on a membership information/activity booth and building tours. It was also decided to have a Sunday rain date.

Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
Serving Ambler, Lower Gwynedd, Whitpain communities
Volume 14, Issue 6

Recent Discoveries

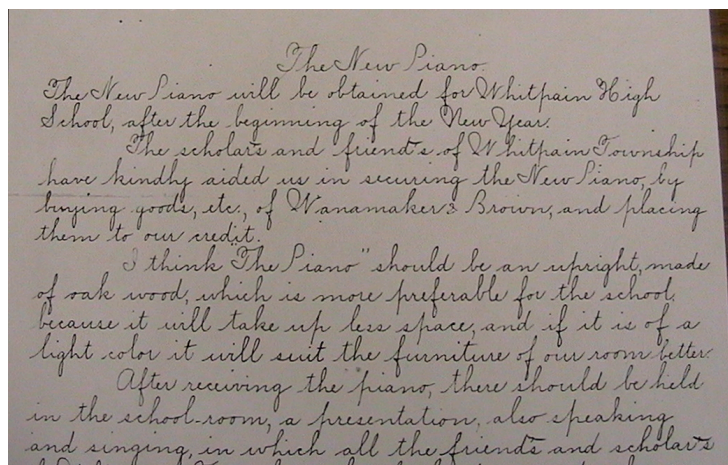
The family of Bertha M. Beideman recently donated her diaries to St. John's Lutheran Church. She was a life-long resident of the Center Square area and member of St. John's. She attended the Whitpain High School in its earliest years. Among the diaries were several notebooks of school work. **Bob Whittock** suggested that the historical society might be interested in copying the school related materials.

One notebook included the daily schedule for a high school student. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday a student would spend the morning on etymology, reading, geography, history, philosophy before recess. Arithmetic, spelling, and writing would precede lunch. In the afternoon grammar, geometry, mental (puzzles), and civil government were followed by a recess before algebra, physiology and bookkeeping. What a busy day! Today's school day is usually divided into four to six periods with fewer recesses.

A sample arithmetic problem from Bertha's notebook: If 1085 bushels of corn grow on 32 acres of land, how much can be produced on 124 acres?

Another: What is the amount of timber in a log 40 feet long? The radius of one base of the log is 6 feet, and the radius of the other base is 3 feet.

A mental problem: Divide 35 oranges between James and Joseph so that James may have 15 more than Joseph. How many oranges had each?



Industrial drawing was also practiced. This consisted of drawing to scale and perspective.

Included among the papers were several essays by Bertha. One was her valedictory speech for her graduation from Whitpain High School in 1897 after two years there as a student. She was one of six graduates. Another was an essay about the upright piano that was earned by the community through charges at Wanamakers. Several current members have

wondered whether the school had a

piano, an organ, or any musical instrument in its early years.

A third essay was presented at a school reunion in 1929. Bertha recounted how she was unable to pursue her dream of going to college, but she rather remained at home with "necessary work" after her father died. She married Edmond C. Rezer in "St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Centre Square" in 1903.

Bob Whittock, who grew up in the Center Square area, shared more of Bertha's family history. Bertha's husband, Ed Rezer, had a delivery route for Wanamaker/Gimble with Bob's father. The Rezers lived on a farm located on Rt. 202 southwest of Skippack Pike - where a Wawa was opened in the last couple of years.

Thanks to St. John's for accepting these valuable papers and to Bob Whittock for sharing them with us.

Pennsylvania Farm Show

by Peg Johnston

After years of promising myself a trip to the annual Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg, I made the trip this year on a Hagey bus trip. What an event!

The show is huge but easy to navigate. Agriculture is Pennsylvania's biggest industry, and it is extremely diverse. (See butter carving at right.)

State agencies are also represented. I stopped at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission booth where I learned that current projects includes documenting and preserving agricultural related structures. We have seen in our area examples of preservation and reuse of agricultural building as well as their loss.

Eating is important element of the Farm Show. I settled for deep-fried winter vegetables and a chocolate milkshake - and brought home an apple dumpling - all products of Pennsylvania.

I recommend the Farm Show - held each January - as an excellent mid-winter day trip.



More Remembrances of Dot Conard

The Society has received several generous donations in honor of **Dot Conard**. All recognized her dedication to historic preservation and her willingness to encourage and help others.

From **Judy and Skip Baigis**: *Dot was one of the most regal ladies we've known. She was beautiful, sincere, and smart. Our historical society benefited from her genuine qualities and her faithful participation.*

Dot worked hard to have The Cloot, a Conard family home, listed on the National Registry and encouraged the successful application made by the 1895 Schoolhouse.

Remembrance of Rose Notoris by Frank J. Russo, Jr.

Rose Notoris, a lifelong Ambler resident, passes away on January 10. How each of us remembers her may differ, but we can all agree that she was a special person.

To me, she was an aunt and mentor. I credit her with the beginnings of two of my lifelong pursuits, local history and collecting antiques.

She was a mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, and friend to many. Her lifetime passion was food. My earliest memories of her was in the kitchen on Mattison Avenue where she would be cooking one of her signature recipes. She was featured in cookbooks, exhibited at the Smithsonian, and worked with two UPenn doctoral candidates who were researching immigrant eating patterns.

Ambler residents remember her smiling face at the Montgomery County Information Center on Butler Avenue where she dispensed county information and dog licenses.

I remember as a child playing school at her house. I would grow up to become a teacher. She drove me to local historical landmarks such as Hope Lodge, Graeme Park, and Valley Forge. She introduced me to Lucinda Iliff who at the time lived in Mary Ambler's house. These were the beginnings of my love of local history. By 1975, she was there as a founding member of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. She was on the very first Board of Directors. She served as our first Hospitality Chair, a position she held for over ten years.

In the early years, she helped host membership teas, cocktail parties, house tours, and flea markets. We all remember Rose serving food at our monthly meetings and our annual Flea Market. She played an integral role in the the development of our Society. Her family has honored her life by their many contributions to the Society.

Worth Checking Out

* Ambler has been without a grocery store for more than a year. Work on an Ambler Food Coop is proceeding with enthusiasm. It has an excellent web-site at www.amblerfoodcoop.org which documents the group's plans and progress.

* Montgomery County Community College's Fine Arts Center on the Blue Bell campus is hosting a show by WVHS member **Fred Kreichet** and his daughter Heidi. Work includes "Artistic Bond" Sculpture and ceramics by the pair. The show is on through February 15 with a gallery talk this Sunday, February 3 at 2 p.m.

* The Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center in Pennsburg has an active schedule of exhibits and workshops. Their web-site is at www.schwenkfelder.com

Monday, February 11 - Monthly Meeting at the 1895 Schoolhouse. Program: Enlist!!
Enlist!! - The American Civil War presented by Mike Jesberger

Sunday, February 17 - Open House at the Schoolhouse, 1 to 4 p.m.

Thursday mornings - Schoolhouse Open from 10 to 12 a.m.



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