



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002
October 2013

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October is a busy month!

Saturday, October 12 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Rain date: October 13

MARKET DAY

Volunteers and baked goods welcomed.
This is our major fund raiser as well as a
fun event.

Call 215-646-6541

Sunday, October 20 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Open Houses

The 1895 Schoolhouse, the 1916
Schoolhouse (both on Skippack Pike) and
Franklinville One-room Schoolhouse (on
Morris Road) will all be open
with activities and light refreshment.

Reminisce

Enjoy a Sunday afternoon, October 20,
touring Whitpain's historic Schoolhouses.
A great family event.

Franklinville One-Room Schoolhouse was built in 1857. It is maintained by The Whitpain Historical Society and located on Morris Road between Normandy Farm Estates and Normandy Farm Convention Center. It has applied for inclusion on the National Registry of Historic Buildings. Open 1 to 4 p.m. on the 20th with children's activities. Drive through narrow gate and park on the lawn next to the schoolhouse.



Our 1895 Schoolhouse was the first high school in the Whitpain area. It was built by parents who wanted a local school for their children. First through eighth grades were taught on the first floor; ninth through eleventh grades were taught on the second floor. The building is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Open 1 to 4 p.m. with children's activities and light refreshments.

The 1916 Whitpain Consolidated School is located right next to our 1895 Schoolhouse. An addition was added to the 1916 section in 1929 and served the Wissahickon School District for many years. It now houses the Blue Bell Korean Presbyterian Church. It has not been open to the public since 2000. Open to 2 to 4 p.m.



Busy Thursday Mornings

Several researchers have visited the Schoolhouse on recent Thursday mornings. Visitors seeking photos of vintage Ambler for a new restaurant and photos of Normandy Farm were successful in their searches. We've also answered e-mail requests for information and photos from North Carolina and Washington State as well as local researcher Theresa.

The Schoolhouse is open from 10 to noon Thursdays. On a recent Thursday **Peg Diorio** and **Emmy Simon** cleaned and updated the first floor display case. There are always jobs to do (textiles should be repacked every six months, background research on artifacts, accessioning donations). Consider stopping by.



Milestone Painting Project

We recently received permission from PENDOT to paint the milestone closest to the 1895 Schoolhouse along Skippack Pike. The milestones date from colonial times when they were used as mail addresses. Paint will help preserve the stone. At first we thought of having a school class take on the project, but it seems more appropriate for a family project. If anyone is interested in painting it with children in their family, please call Peg at 215-542-7753 to obtain the permission slip and directions.

With Sadness

With sadness we report the passing of **Margaret Cass**, WVHS member and SpringHouse Quester. **From Ginny Sinn:** Six years ago when John and I entered Spring House Estates Margaret found us and was calling us to have dinner with her on the spur of the moment. She knew I had been a Quester for years and this was a great topic for our conversations. Her inspiration for WVHS was wonderful, always thinking of ways to help the Society.

From John Simon: As Director of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society, I met Margaret Cass at a Society event in 2008. The Springhouse Questers have long supported the WVHS in many ways, and Margaret, as Grant Chairman of the Springhouse Questers, was looking for a new project to lead. Our discussions and efforts eventually led us to restore a historic stained glass panel originally installed at the Mattison mansion in Ambler but now was in dismal repair. Through the efforts and leadership of Margaret, and others, the panel was restored to the highest level and now is displayed permanently at the WVHS museum located at the 1895 Public School building. Our next major project was to install window blinds in the WVHS museum to protect the collection from damaging sunlight as recommended in assessments made by the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA). Again, Margaret led the path towards the ultimate completion of our goal. Margaret's efforts involved the mobilization of the persons needed to accomplish the task, and to provide the funding through the Springhouse and Pennsylvania Chapter's of the Quester's Society. Margaret was on task and took great interest in completing our projects carefully. Margaret was always kind to me, and I will greatly miss her.



Stone Wall Completed

The stone wall entry in front of the Schoolhouse is completed and grass seeded around it. The wall along School Road has also been stabilized.

The following is a portion of a letter to **Ron Cione** at Whitpain Township: "Thank you greatly for your work on restoring the steps and stone wall surrounding the 1895 Schoolhouse. The Society appreciates your efforts to help preserve this historic building for the community, and for the state and nation as it is on the PA Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. The WVHS consists solely

of volunteers whom receives no monetary compensation for their efforts, and we do our best to preserve the building as part of our mission for the community. So, it makes us especially grateful and relieved when we can get expert assistance, like from your team, to help us."

Member Notes

President **Russ Bellavance** was a guest speaker for Blue Bell 3rd graders last month. He presented a lesson about the Constitution.

Member **Leopoldo M. Montoya** has published a book entitled *Variations About Architect, Milton Bean* based on his research. Our library has a donated copy. Thanks!

Member **Art Driedger** was mentioned by several recent visitors as "an inspirational teacher" and motivator for their interest in history.

Make Your Calendar

October 12 (Rain date - October 13) - Market Day at the Schoolhouse

October 20 - Open house - See details on page 2 of this newsletter

November 11 - Monthly meeting at Montgomery County Community College, 7:30 in Room 105 of the Arts and Technology Center - Program: The History of MCCC. There is an easily accessible parking lot. Car pooling can be arranged.

December 8 - Sunday, 2 p.m. - Holiday party at the Bellavance's Home

