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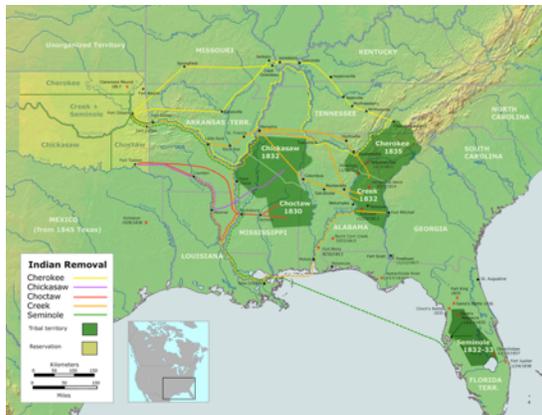
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January 2019
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Please join us for the
January 14, 2019
meeting of the
Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
7 p.m. at the 1895 Schoolhouse on Skippack Pike



Program:
The Trail of Tears
presented by Jim Tufano



The Trail of Tears refers to a series of forced relocations of the Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw nations to land west of the Mississippi in the mid-1800s.

Recently Accessioned Items

Electro-Art toy - from Marlene Scatena

Electro Art toys were made by Marx Toy Company. The company started in 1919 and produced toy vehicles (including in the 1960s, the Big Wheel) as well as toys and games made of metal, wood, and, later, plastic. Factories were located in Erie and Girard, Pennsylvania and in West Virginia. The electro-art toy will join the museum collections of toys that were used in homes and schools. Interestingly, the plug-in toy has a warning on the back which says “caution - very warm reflector back” and has no “off-on” switch.

Marlene also donated several nativity sets. We were able, with Marlene’s permission, to find homes for them in several local churches.



Victorian hair wreath

The framed wreath was bought in 1958 from Ross Gerhart, a local historian and antique dealer, who related that it had been made in honor of an Ambler woman and recently donated anonymously to the WVHS.



Victorian hair wreaths were created as a memorial for a single person or, occasionally, for several members of a family. Hair would be collected from members of the family after they died and saved in a “hair keeper” until used. Friends and living family members often contributed a lock of their own hair to be incorporated into the wreath as a token of love for the deceased. For that reason, many wreaths show varying color and textures.

Most wreaths are horseshoe shaped and, according to an article by the Sigal Museum in Easton, the wreaths were hung with the “open part of the horseshoe pointing heavenward.”

The wreath will be displayed on the second floor with exhibits about home life in the 1890s.

Mark Your Calendar

Friday, Jan. 4 - Mary Shelley presentation - Upper Dublin Public Library - 7 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 11 - A Visit from Queen Victoria - Upper Dublin Public Library - 7 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 14 - WVHS monthly meeting - 7 p.m. - 1895 Schoolhouse

Saturday, Jan. 26 - Making a Woman’s Cap - Wentz Farmstead - 9 to 3 - pre-registration

Through Feb. 1 - Made in Mont. Co. exhibit - at the Mont. Co. Historical Society building in Norristown.

All local libraries have museum/zoo/park passes available. They can be checked out for several days and can save lots of money.

WVHS Holiday Party

On Sunday, Dec. 9 WVHS members, Township and Borough representatives, and renovation contractors gathered at the 1895 Schoolhouse for the society's annual holiday party. The welcoming wreaths on the door were



contributed by Dot MacDermott. It was also a first chance to see the renovations of the past year.

Visitors were impressed with how bright and clean the Schoolhouse looks. December work included patching the wooden floor on the first and second levels. Not only does the floor look great, but it is also safer.

All of the wooden blinds are also

reinstalled. This makes for better temperature regulation as well as light control.

Continued gratitude to Joan Duxbury and Sally Zeller for managing the entire renovation project.



Upper right - Anne Marie Rudnick, Bev Hahn, Alma and Gary Fuess

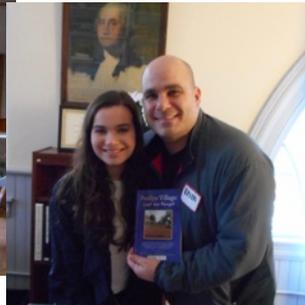
Center right - Bob Raines and Frank Russo (who will present our February program)

Above left - Pat Plumb, Bev Hahn, Neal and Pat Bradley (Neal is our extraordinary carpenter)

Below left - Judy Bagis, Carolyn Wollman, Marie Goldkamp, Judy Hahn, Ken Wollman

Below right - Emma Siegel (WVHS Facebook page manager) and her dad, Keith

Tasty food at the holiday party was provided by members and by a generous contribution from McCaffery's in Center Square.



Wishing everyone a happy and productive 2019. The January meeting will give members a chance to enjoy the renovated schoolhouse. Heat will be on and there is now hot water!

Ambler Theater Celebrates 90 Years

The Ambler Theater was opened by Warner Bros. on December 31, 1918. Built in the Spanish Colonial style, it had a ornate auditorium with 1,228 seats and a Gottfried pipe organ. Prior movies in Ambler had been shown in an opera house which had been designed by Milton Bean and was close to the railroad crossing.



The WVHS has in its collection a glass pitcher that was a prize given at the Saturday matinees during the 20s and 30s. The theater was a popular entertainment center for Ambler into the 1960s when television and the multiplexes rendered it no longer viable. From the 1970s until 1997 the theater was operated as a Christian cinema. The Christian group sold the theater in 2001 to businessmen who in turn sold the theater to the nonprofit Ambler Theater, Inc.

Extensive renovations were undertaken. Two black box stadium seated auditoriums replaced the orchestra seating area of the original theater. Renovation plans made serious efforts to match original materials and styles. The theater reopened on February 28, 2003.

The original 30 foot vertical neon sign had been demolished in the late 1960s. With a Keystone Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, an exact replica was built and installed in 2005. The auditorium with stadium seating for 265 reopened in 2007.

When one mentions living in Ambler, one often hears “I love the Ambler theater”. The entry way has a collection of Newt Howard’s photos of early Ambler on display. Our WVHS posters are often on display in their lobby.



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