



Wissahickon Valley

*historical society*

Ambler  
Lower Gwynedd  
Whitpain

## \*\*\*Coming Events\*\*\*

Open House at the 1895 Schoolhouse

Sunday, April 16 1 to 4

May Monthly Meeting

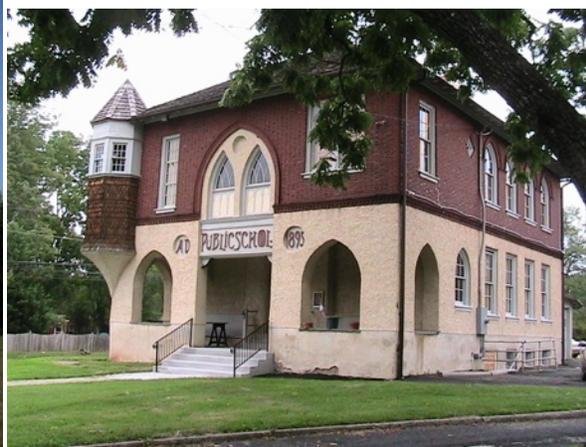
at the Blue Bell library

Monday, May 8

Program: Alexander Hamilton, Architect of the  
American Financial System

Open House at the 1895 Schoolhouse and at the  
Franklinville School

Sunday, May 21 1 to 4



## **Mark Your Calendar**

Sunday, April 16 - Open House - 1895 Schoolhouse - 1 to 4 p.m.

Tuesday, April 18 - Continued Conditional Use Hearing for the Mattison Estate (St. Mary's) - Upper Dublin Township Building - 7 to 10 p.m.

Tuesday, April 18 - Fort Wash. Historical Society - Remembering WWI

Saturday, April 22 - WVHS Spring outing - Please see details on page 5

Saturday, April 22 - Sheep Shearing Day - Wentz Farmstead - 10 a..m.

Monday, May 1 - WVHS board meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 6 - WVHS Market Day - 8 to 2 p.m. - Details: see below

Sunday, May 7 - Fort Washington Historical Society's Victorian Tea - call 215-646-0858 for details and reservations

Monday, May 8 - WVHS monthly meeting at the Blue Bell library - 7 p.m. Program: Alexander Hamilton, Architect of the American Financial System.

## **Market Day Information**

The annual WVHS Market Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 6 from 8 to 2. This is a major fund raiser for the group and there are several opportunities to participate. There will be flowers and vegetable plants for sale - just in time for Mother's Day and spring gardening.

There will be the traditional bake sale and lunch sale inside the 1895 Schoolhouse. This will be a chance for visitor to see the first floor museum as well as purchase treats. Baked items are welcome and can be dropped of on Friday, May 5 in the late afternoon, on Saturday morning when you come to shop, or by arrangement (call 215-646-6541)

We will have a book sale on the porch. Donations can be dropped of on Thursday mornings from 9 to 12 or by arrangement (call 215-542-7753).

Sales spots are still available. Though we no longer have our society's flea market, the WVHS will have a table of items to be recycled/repurposed. If you are downsizing, consider taking a space for yourself or with a friend. Details are on the WVHS web-site.

If you are able to help with set-up (Thursday, May 4 or Friday, May 5) and/or clean-up (Saturday afternoon, May 6), please call 215-646-6541.

Watch for announcements about the Market Day on the Ambler Savings electronic sign board - thanks to Joan Duxbury.

## **Display Case Set up at Whitpain Township Building**

The WVHS now has display cases in the Whitpain Township Building as well as Ambler Borough Building and Lower Gwynedd Township Building. Displays in each site are changed every couple of months. Currently Ambler's display features Ambler schools, Lower Gwynedd's display focuses on Sallse.

If you would be interested in "adopting" (choosing and setting up the display) either the Ambler display case or the Whitpain display case, please let us know.

## **Bob Whittock Named Whitpain Township's Honorary Historian**

Our own historian Bob Whittock was honored on March 7 by the Whitpain Township Board of Supervisors when he received a proclamation naming him Whitpain Township's Honorary Historian. Bob was born and has lived in Whitpain for his whole life. Bob is our go-to person about Whitpain history - especially Whitpain schools, the village of Centre Square, the Centre Square Fire Company, St. John's Church, and Boehm's Church. Since his retirement, he has been organizing and writing these histories. Bob served on the Township's Comprehensive Plan Committee - representing the senior community and the historic perspective. Congratulations, Bob.

Photo at right: Bob with Joan Duxbury (WVHS board member), and Ron Cione (Whitpain Township - Director of Public Works)

## **Two Fun Anniversaries this Year**

The bicycle is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year. In 1817, Karl von Drais of Mannheim, Germany, patented the Draisine, a wooden, two-wheel, pedal-less and chain-free vehicle that has been credited as the first bicycle. Doesn't sound too comfortable. This year numerous travel operators are offering special tours - by modern bicycle, of course.

The first Golden Books were offered for sale in 1942 - 75 years ago. Many of us remember them being offered in the checkout lane at grocery stores for 25 cents - and later for 39 and 49 cents - a piece. It was a delight to pick up each new book and read them with our children - usually over and over. According to Wikipedia, Pokey Little Puppy is the best selling children's book of all times.

## **From the President's Desk**

by Russ Bellavance

It's April and we have a couple of exciting opportunities - especially on Saturday, April 22 - which also happens to be Earth Day.

The first is our April program. How many times have we driven by the corner of Morris Road and Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike and wondered about the open space on the southwest corner? How often have we driven by the Haas estate at the corner of Morris Road and Lewis Lane with its charming log cabin and wished we could see inside?

Our outing on the 22nd will be our chance - so don't miss it. (Please call numbers on first page to let us know that you will be joining us.)

I hope you also save some energy for the evening because you will have another opportunity to see and hear Dr. Stephen R. Phillips, the University of Pennsylvania's own Indiana Jones. Dr. Phillips presented a program for us on Medicine in Ancient Egypt, and we all enjoyed it very much. I recruited him for my church to present his program entitled CSI: Ancient Egypt, Forensic Anthropology 101. This program will be held at Pleasantville United Church of Christ, 3424 Limekiln Pike, Chalfont at 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 22. Admission is free and all are welcome.

This has been a busy year already for me presenting programs. Among them have been presentations on the Declaration of Independence, on interpreting the U.S. Constitution, on Our Fractured Republic, and on our collection of old property deeds under the title "Every Deed Tells a Story."

In addition, I did a radio interview on Presidents' Day about the role of the President under the Constitution. It was so enjoyable that I plan to develop a program based on that topic for the WVHS for next year.

The reason I am mentioning this is that you may not know that some of us have programs that we are willing to present to outside groups at no charge (though we certainly accept contributions to the Society). We have presented in schools and to church groups, Women's groups, and Quester groups. If you have a group that might be interested in visiting our facilities or in having a program presented at its venue, please contact me at [rcbellavance67@gmail.com](mailto:rcbellavance67@gmail.com).

## **Wissahickon School District Celebrations Continue**

A display of Wissahickon School District history was featured in Ambler Savings' large display case. During March the exhibit moved to the Wissahickon-Blue Bell library. Plans are to move it to the high school next. Several items from our collection are included in the display.

If you are a Wissahickon alumni, check out the Wissahickon School District's website's new "Alumni" section. You can join the Wissahickon Alumni Network and receive updates on activities and volunteer opportunities. Volunteer opportunities include serving as a mentor, guest speaker, hosting a job-shadower or intern.

WHS Hall of Fame inductees have been announced and will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on October 6, 2017. This will be a community event.

## **Background for April Outing**

Yost Cabin: The following is from *Whitpain Township - A Tricentennial Reflection - 1701-2001*:

"Whitpain's famous "Yost Log Cabin," dating from the early 1700s and originally located on Yost Road close to North Wales Road, survives as an example of the early type of (European settlers') dwelling in the area. Consisting of only one room, the cabin, whose hearth is located at its stone end, indicates Swedish/Swiss influence because it was not built entirely from logs."

In the 1960s, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Spacht donated the deteriorating structure to Mrs. F. Otto Haas, who wished to preserve the original cabin. In 1970 the cabin was moved from Yost Road to the the southeast corner of Lewis Lane and Morris Road on the property then own by the Haas family. It was meticulously restored.

The current owner of the property has generously offered to let us visit the site and to tour the cabin. It is a great photo opportunity and a unique chance to see some Whitpain history.

Mrs. Dunning, who will be our host, has also invited us to her home. It, too, is at the corner of Lewis Lane and Morris Road.

According to Whitpain: Crossroads in Time, the house (known as the Haas House) dates from the early 1800s. It was originally a tenant house for the Wertsner estate. When owned by S. Wilson Fisher in the late 1800s, the house was much enlarged. The Haas family added a greenhouse. A barn and stable were added over the years as well. A full copy of the Crossroad's article will be available on the 22nd.

Look for a fall 2017 or spring 2018 visit to the Manderley Farm site mentioned in our previous newsletter. A last minute conflict necessitated a change.