

Dues are due!!! It's a New Society Year!!!

Our WVHS year began on September 1st, so annual membership **dues are due**. There has been no dues increase for 2022-23 and checks should be made out to "WVHS" and mailed to Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002*. Or, credit card payment can be made online at the WVHS website:

www.wvalleyhs.org/get-involved/

*See the last page of this *Valley Crier* for our 2022-2023 membership form that you print, complete and return as instructed.

Wissahickon Valley Historical Society ~ Volume 2, Number 10

The Valley Crier 

WVHS is excited to be hosting many wonderful events in October. Please mark your calendar for October 15, 16, and 17, AND sign up for an Ambler History Walking Tour:

- **Oct 15 (Saturday) At Noon at the William Penn Inn, a Buffet Luncheon will honor WVHS Past President Russ Bellavance!** (Reservations Required by Monday, October 10). Payment of \$65 can be mailed to Box 96, Ambler 19002, or go online to www.WValleyHS.org/get-involved/ and scroll down to "Donate." *All proceeds will benefit a fund to install the much-*

needed air conditioning at the 1895 Public School. Please pass the word: **Sponsors are also needed!**

- Oct 16 **(Sunday 1-3 PM) Open House at the 1895 Public School, featuring a special Amchem exhibit.** Amchem began in Ambler as the American Chemical Paint Company. Its products are still manufactured today, and its former site has become the Ambler Yards. Years after the company's closing, today its employees hold such friendship that they still get together (this year, on October 15). WVHS boasts a fantastic collection of Amchem documents and memorabilia. Thank you to those who signed up to help as Open House docents: Jeannie and Russ Bellavance, Keith Carroll, Marie and Tom Goldkamp, Dorothy and Don MacDermott, Marty Kalos, and Sally Zeller. **Three more volunteers are needed from 1-2 PM.** To help, please email to info@WValleyHS.org
- Oct 17 **(Monday at 7 PM, Speaker at the 1895 School)** **Tom Wiekowski, PhD, Chair of the Cheltenham Historical Commission and Vice-President of the Old York Road Historical Society, will speak on his new book about three generations of the Barkers, influential 19-century bankers from Chelten Hills.** (Please note the location of this meeting!)

Tom states, "Family luminaries include Jacob, largest ship owner in the United States at the beginning of the 19th century and the financier of the War of 1812; Abraham, president of the Philadelphia Stock Exchange, co-founder of the Union League, and an ardent Abolitionist; Anna, a central figure in the Transcendentalist movement and wife of the co-founder of the

Metropolitan Museum of Art; and Wharton, US presidential candidate and international banker honored with knighthood by Czar Alexander in 1879 for constructing four warships at the Cramp shipyard in Philadelphia for the Russian navy. Abraham was a founder of Camp William Penn and Wharton served as an officer at the camp during his summer vacation from the University of Pennsylvania in 1863.”

- Oct 15, 22, and 29 (Saturdays at 4 PM) WVHS is offering **Historic Walking Tours of Ambler**, sponsored by the Ambler Storytellers.

Tours will cover the historic buildings in downtown Ambler. You will be surprised what you have overlooked and what you will learn! Tour guides will define what Ambler’s buildings looked like before they were modernized, and the tour will take about 1 ½ hours to complete. (Perhaps plan a dinner afterwards at your favorite Ambler restaurant?) Tours will begin at the Ambler Train Station, near the former Bussinger model train store. Tours are free, but a donation is requested. You must register in advance, and registration details will be announced soon.



Ambler Theater, one of many Butler Avenue locations on the WVHS History Walking Tour

WVHS makes it to TV! (The image lasted for only about ten seconds.) On September 14, WVHS feted the Centre Square Fire Company and Whitpain Township for safeguarding the colonial-era Milestone along Skippack Pike near the fire station. Food donations were provided by **Giant Foods, Pudges Steaks and Hoagies, Roma Bakery, and Whitpain Tavern.** Fire Chief Lee Miller and his firefighters offered indoor space for the event, attended by firefighters, township officials, community visitors, and a few WVHS members. The 250-year-old marker was moved about four years ago to protect it from road construction, and it was returned to its site in April. Firefighters made the arrangements, and a township crew's excavator lifted the precious object. At the celebration, *NBC TV10* was on hand, invited by the fire department. In an interview at the Milestone, televised that evening, President Carol Kalos described the history of the 1760s milestones (used to set postal rates for the Crown). Her "sound bite" explained that the milestone's inscription means "18 Miles to Philadelphia," the distance to the Philadelphia Court House, then located at Front and High Streets (now Market Street). (Montgomery County was separated from Philadelphia County in 1784.)



President Carol Kalos and Centre Square Fire Company's Chief Lee Miller present the Milestone, safely returned to its original site along Skippack Pike.

Fall Festivals Help WVHS Find New Members: One of the ways that WVHS identifies new members is through our local community festivals. The WVHS table shows off a few things from the museum, passersby stop to talk history, and soon WVHS is sending them the *Valley Crier*. Some visitors also realize they have items at home to donate to our museum. Vice President Joe Langella has taken charge of this year's events. On September 17, he was assisted by President Carol Kalos for part of the day at the Lower Gwynedd Fall Festival, and the two of them were on hand for the September 24th Whitpain Community Festival. Thank you to Joe and our festival helpers this year: Marie and Tom Goldkamp, Dot MacDermott, and Marty Kalos.



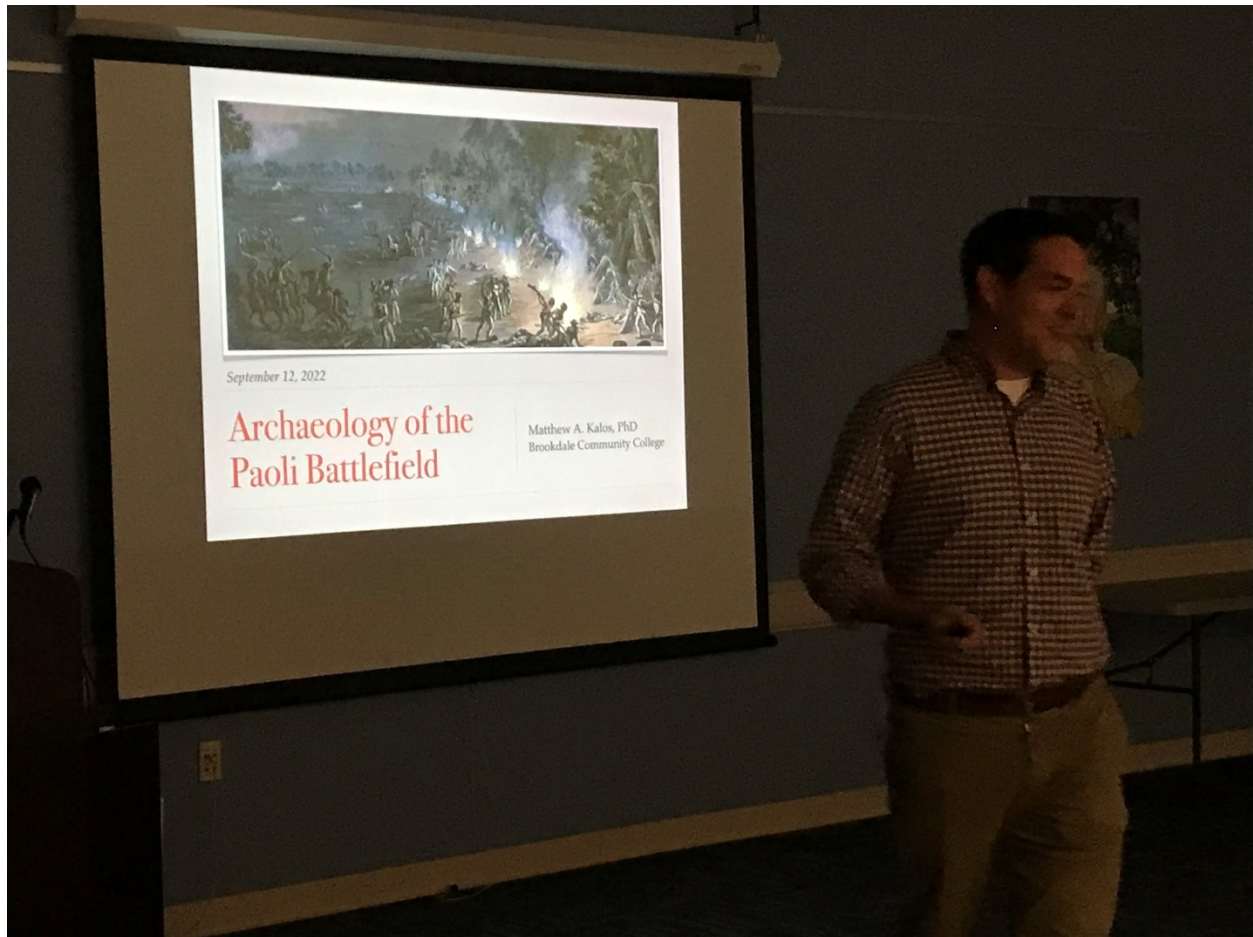
Vice President Joe Langella greets visitors at the Lower Gwynedd Fall Festival's WVHS table

WVHS September Exhibit at the Blue Bell Public Library: September followed a Back-to-School theme, showing off some of the WVHS museum's slates, lunch boxes, pencil boxes, and the like. The covers and pages from four vintage textbooks reveal the teaching of science, reading, literature, and social studies in the "good ole' days." The librarians report that their young visitors especially appreciate these displays, confirmed by the nose prints on the glass case by the end of the month.



WVHS displays its textbooks, pencil boxes, and more at “Back to School” at the WVPL in Blue Bell.

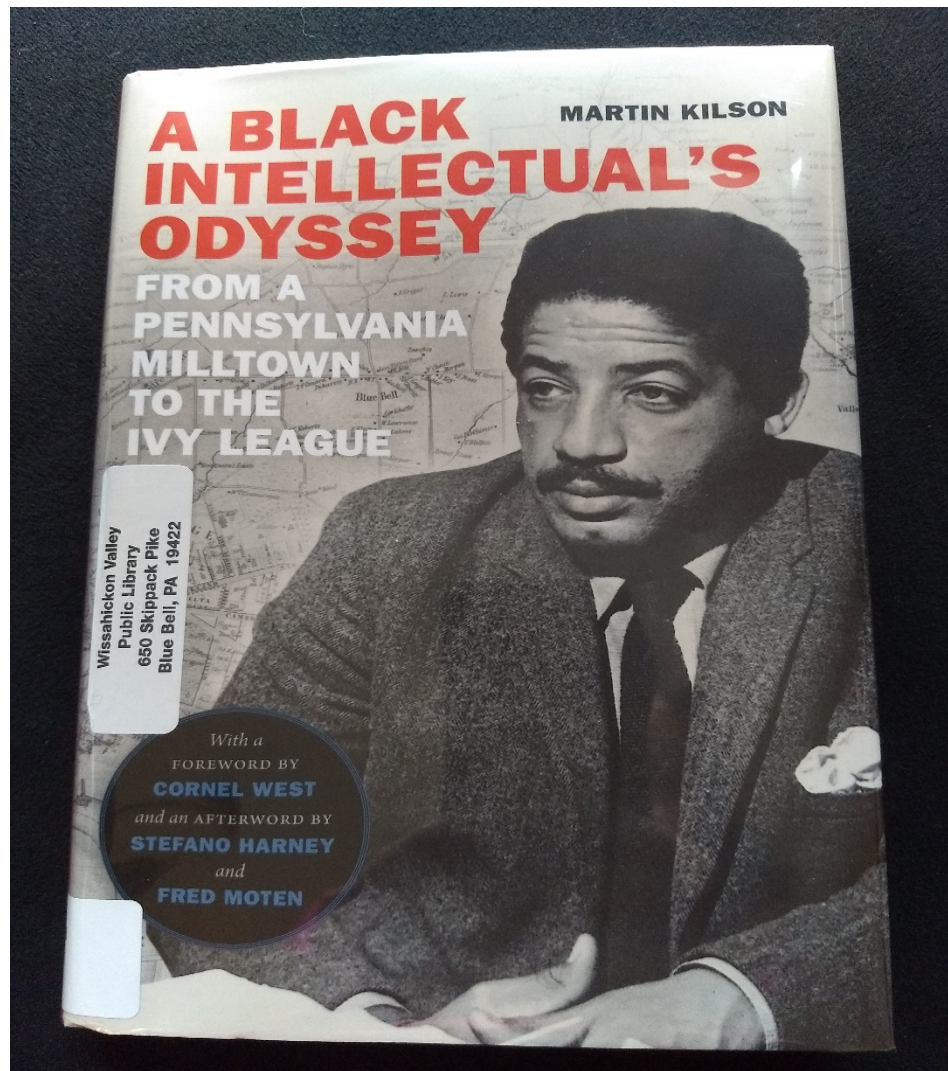
WVHS September Speaker: Dr. Matthew Kalos spoke about his archaeology dig to learn more about the Battle of Paoli, explaining how archaeology, as a subfield of anthropology, deals with human conflict, and how it can be used to “test” the written historic record for accuracy. He detailed why the battle happened to occur at this site, including the physical landscape, the residents’ religion, the political views of the local tavern owners and their clientele, and more. Kalos’s many maps and illustrations showed that the large Great Valley slants across southeastern Pennsylvania, acting as a “highway,” affecting both the natural resources and the economy of the area. He concluded by pointing out that the Paoli Battlefield has been a memorial ground to honor veterans of all American wars, noting that his favorite Paoli find is a Victorian-era “mourning button.”



Matt Kalos, PhD, presenting in September, part of our Speaker Series

A Book about Ambler History and the Minority Experience: The Wissahickon Valley Public Library has acquired a book written by Martin Kilson, who grew up in Ambler and who is the first Black hired as a Harvard tenured professor. The book jacket summarizes how “Kilson gives a sociological tour of Ambler as a multiethnic, working-class company town while sketching the social, economic, and racial elements that marked everyday life” for him during the 1930s and 1940s. Kilson includes the names of places and individuals you may know. Look for *A Black*

Intellectual's Odyssey: From a Pennsylvania Milltown to the Ivy League
(Duke University Press, 2021).



A local history book by an Ambler man, the first Black tenured professor at Harvard

“New” Parking Lot at the 1895 School: Thank you to Whitpain Township for giving us a smooth, safe parking lot to begin our society year! On September 16th, workers spread sealcoating and re-lined the parking lot. Looks great!



The newly sealed and painted parking lot at the 1895 Public School

Construction at Our Neighbors: A dumpster has appeared at the Blue Bell Korean Presbyterian Church next to the 1895 Public School. No news yet on what the project might be.



Work is being done next to the 1895 Public School

No News about the Ambler Train Station's Potential Freight-House Demolition: Could this historic building be moved away from the creek, which is causing the damage? Or will SEPTA tear it down? Former WVHS board member Bernadette Dougherty continues to work on this issue.



SEPTA may demolish the historic Ambler Freight House

Highlights from the September Board of Directors' Meeting: After a short business meeting, the group set aside time to discuss long-range planning. They focused on the mission statement, finances, and policies. Most of the conversation centered on our desperate need for funding because dues alone do not cover the society's very basic expenses, such as utilities and insurance. Discussion of these issues will continue at next month's board meeting. Increased financial support is critical.



WVHS Calendar for 2022-2023:

- Oct 15 (Saturday at Noon) at William Penn Inn. Luncheon to honor WVHS Past President Russ Bellavance (Reservations Required). An invitation was emailed.
- Oct 16 (Sunday 1-3 PM) Open House at the 1895 Public School, featuring a special Amchem exhibit
- Oct 17 (Monday at 7:00 PM) at the 1895 Public School. Tom Wiekowski, PhD, Chair of the Cheltenham Historical Commission and Vice-President of the Old York Road Historical Society: on his new book about three generations of the Barkers, influential 19-century bankers (**Note the location!**)
- Nov 14 (Monday at 6:30 PM) Jeff Marshall, retired President of the Heritage Conservancy and President of the Historic Barn and Farm Foundation of PA: on his book, *Barnstorming in Eastern Pennsylvania & Beyond*
- Dec 12 Holiday Party
- Jan No Meeting
- Feb 13 Show and Tell?

- Mar 13 Steve Tull, Vice President of AECOM: on Archaeology in Center City Philadelphia
- Apr 10 Speaker to be determined
- May 8 Josh Kasper, Assistant Executive Director, American War of Independence (AWI) Privateer Museum, Schooner Pursuit Historical Society: on Privateering
- Jun 12 Picnic

Welcome our Newest Society Members:

- Bob, Kim and Kevin Lawn
- Bridget and Michael Leary
- Romaine Hartshorn
- Jen Karpovich
- Destiny Miller
- Joyce Keller
- Scott & Heather Badami
- Daniel Myers
- Laura Kuzmick

WVHS works to promote and preserve the history of Ambler Borough, Whitpain Township, and Lower Gwynedd Township. We are a member-driven, all-volunteer organization. Although receiving funds from occasional grants, WVHS depends on our generous donors. No amount is too small. Please support us! Many people like to include a gift to charity in their will or estate plan to support causes that are important in their life. Please consider including a gift to WVHS to benefit the promotion and preservation of our local history for future generations. If you would like to discontinue receiving The Valley Crier from WVHS, please choose "Reply" and mention your request.

2022-2023 Membership Form (9/2022– 9/2023)

Member Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Membership Categories:

Individual (\$20) _____

Friend (\$100) _____

Family (\$30) _____

Sponsor (\$250) _____

Junior (\$10) _____

Fellow (\$500) _____

Make check payable to “WVHS” and mail completed form to: PO Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002

Interested in volunteering? We need your help! Tell us what activities suit you:

Archives _____ Library _____ Hospitality _____ Fund Raising _____ Tours (Docent) _____

Other _____

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