
Wissahickon Valley Historical Society ~ Volume 6, Number 2

The Valley Crier



Oct 2026.....Celebrating our 51st Year!

Huzzah for 250 Years!

October Events:

- ***Oct 4, Luncheon (Registration required)***
- ***Oct 12, Speaker Series and A Contribution***
- ***Oct 15, Dine and Donate***
- ***Oct 25, Franklinville School Open House***
- ***Society Year 2026-27, dues are due...***

Announcing the October Meeting Speaker: We will meet on Monday, October 12th, at 7 PM, as Jim Segrave-Daly narrates the story of “Daniel Morgan, Revolutionary Leader.” Segrave-Daly’s email describes him:

“localhistorygeek.” He is an active member of the American Revolution Round Table of Philadelphia, the Radnor Historical Society, and Delco’s America 250. As a history teacher, he has spoken nationally for more than

a decade. He reports that he has several great-grandfathers who served during the Revolution.

Daniel Morgan was one of the great military tacticians of the Revolution. His military career began as a recruit for the 1755 expedition to Fort Duquesne, and later he helped secure the victories at Saratoga and Cowpens. George Washington called him “a good and valuable officer.”



Virginian Daniel Morgan, leader of American Revolution frontier riflemen

Former Member Will Bring a Special Chair to October’s Meeting: Peg Krengel ran into former president Frank Russo at an antiques sale. She tells this delightful tale of how she found the chair, which she will donate to WVHS. She says, “I found the chair at a Second Saturday Sale at St. Thomas' Church in Ft. Washington. As an antique collector and former dealer, I immediately recognized its age and style. It was only when I was explaining it to one of the salespeople that I turned it over and saw the inscriptions. I immediately bought it for donation to the WVHS. The chair has much of its original paint, some of which has been chipped off. It shows the expected signs of wear on the stretchers between the front legs.

Because of its condition, it was priced at only \$2. As a member of the congregation, I felt obligated to give them \$20 and keep on going.” WVHS appreciates Krengel’s knowledge and generosity!



A special chair for WVHS! Find out its inscription at the October meeting.

October Franklinville School Open House: Come see our beautiful new exterior work-- paint and restored shutters. **Sunday, October 25**, 1-3 PM. The address is 1701 Morris Road near Normandy Farm. Look for the opening in the white rail fence.



Discover—What is this little ring?

Dues are due: The new WVHS Society Year began on September 1, so dues for the coming year are now due. The dues rate is the same as last year, but please consider “rounding up” because the historical society’s fixed expenses, such as heating oil, continue to rise. We are depending on our members’ generosity to help us balance the budget! Payments can be made electronically or by check. For details, please go to <https://www.wvalleyhs.org/join-us-2/m>.

Luncheon Tickets Sold Out: WVHS members have done their part to show appreciation to Marie and Tom Goldkamp, buying tickets to the WVHS Luncheon, to be held on Sunday, October 4, at the Whitpain Farm’s Manor House. Congratulations to the Goldkamps!



The Butler's Pantry at Whitpain Farm's Manor House

Dine and Donate: At Tannery Run Brew Works on Thursday, October 15, 4-10 PM. A portion of the night's proceeds will be donated to WVHS. Dine out and help our society at the same time. The address is 131 Butler Pike, Ambler, situated in a historic building with a story. Find out about the alligator!



Why does Tannery Run have a garage door?

September Meeting's Speaker Describes Militia Confusion: John Schwartz, a former Army Chief Warrant Officer, discussed the militia system in Pennsylvania during the Philadelphia Campaign of 1777, focusing on the townships in our area. The Continental Army was made of men from the militias. How did Washington find an army of 10,000 men, considering the sparse population? They came from all the thirteen colonies. Schwartz explained that, in the beginning, each town or township had its own militia, and in 1747, to coordinate, Ben Franklin started an "association." By 1776, civilians were called for a monthly rotation of duties in "classes," which were confusing because, based on a schedule, a soldier's officers and friends were rotated away to another group.



Speaker John Schwartz explains that General Washington led a Continental Army of about 10,000.



The 1896 Flag will hang in the second-floor classroom.

1896 U.S. Flag for WVHS: As part of the September meeting, the flag, framed in museum-quality glass, was presented for the first time. A description with the flag explains its background:

“This 1896 U.S. Flag was donated to WVHS by Mrs. Frances Scheibner of Ambler in 1994.

The 1895 Whitpain Public School was dedicated in November of that year. The ceremony included the unfurling of a U.S. Flag, hung from the flagpole in the front yard (*Ambler Gazette*, “Dedication of Flag to New H.S...,” 11-21-1895). Classes began in January of 1896, so an 1896 Flag would have flown here. The 1896 Flag, used until 1908, has 45 stars with the 45th star representing the admission of Utah to the Union.

Students everywhere began reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag in 1892 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’ arrival in America. Pennsylvania has required the pledge since 1949.

Donors for framing this flag were Marie and Tom Goldkamp, Abe Addonizio and Frank Russo, Donna and Joseph Langella, as well as the state Questers and a local Questers Chapter, COMO #81.

WVHS preserved this flag as its 1776-2026 *America 250* project.”

WVHS Seeking Funds for its “Match” Grant!: A Keystone Historic Preservation Grant, a “matching” grant of over \$8,200, will provide HVAC at the Franklinville School. (There is no HVAC presently!) **WVHS will match the grant by raising another \$8,200.** HVAC is needed before interior painting can begin.

Grant Manager Visits Franklinville School: In September, the Grant Manager for Keystone Historic Preservation Grants brought WVHS a sign to help promote the project. PHMC's Karen Arnold, PA's Keystone Grant Manager, and Megan McNish, [Eastern Region Community Preservation Coordinator](#), visited the Franklinville School to see the project site and to deliver this sign that announces the project.



WVHS is obligated to raise over \$8200 for the “matching” grant for the Franklinville School

Work Continues at Skippack Pike Toll Booth: Restoration is slowly making progress at the Toll Booth. Larry Mulligan and Joe Langella have braced the structure, so it can be moved.



Member Larry Mulligan, preparing to lift the Skippack Pike Toll Booth, so it can be moved to solid ground for restoration

Ambler Walking Tours for Fall: Ambler Storytellers, a committee of WVHS, take turns leading history tours of Butler Avenue. Appreciate new sites and hear their unusual stories! Tickets are \$10 and proceeds go to restoring the Train Station's Freight House, now in storage. Each participant gets a coupon from Tannery Run Brew Works. Tours are held on Saturdays, starting at 3 PM. Upcoming dates are October 10 and 24; November 7 and 21, and December 5. See the QR for details and to register:



Road Construction at Skippack Pike and School Road: Workers have removed part of the side yard at the 1895 School. If the intersection is closed, the driveway from Skippack Pike to the Blue Bell Korean Presbyterian Church is always open to the 1895 School's visitors.



The frame of the WVHS sign, designed by Raymond Gibby Ironworks in Ambler



Construction at School Road and Skippack Pike, September 1, 2026



Old culverts were ripped out and left as a strange configuration.



Workers unrolled heavy black material, a waterproofing membrane, to cover the soil along the new lane of School Road.



Workers added gravel on top of the membrane.



The intersection of School Road at Skippack Pike will be a lane wider than before construction.

Guess the Location? Do you know this historic building? Hint—It's datestone says "1858."



A photo of the Franklinville School, which hangs in the lobby at the Normandy Farm Conference Center.

Who gets to shape how we live? That question continues to drive debates over affordability, access, sustainability, and the identity and character of our neighborhoods. Historic preservation is an element of each of these issues! Local zoning ordinances play a part, but local activism is important!

WVHS Brings History to Lower Gwynedd Twp's *Fall Fest 2026*: On Saturday, September 19, dozens of area citizens stopped by the WVHS table to look at our vintage maps and chat about historic preservation in our area. Signing up to receive the *Valley Crier*, many will become new members, attending our monthly Speakers Series and other events. Officers Carol Kalos and Joe Langella staffed the table for the five-hour event.



Vice President Joe Langella, also a member of LG's Historical Advisory Committee, created the WVHS Lower Gwynedd history display and welcomed questions throughout the day.

Colonial Milestones: Help is still needed for a volunteer to visit and collect data about the markers in our area. The Whitemarsh Township Milestone, broken in half during road construction, is being repaired.



***Lifting a Colonial Milestone, "15 Miles to Philadelphia."
Daniel Kinnamon, a visitor at our September meeting, took
this photo in June 2012.***

Exterior Painting completed at Franklinville School: Verco Painting has placed the finishing touches on what turned out to be a big job. Besides just painting, much rotten wood was replaced. Come see the finished project at the October Open House (Sunday, October 25, 1-3 PM).



Front porch at the Franklinville School, freshly painted

Brown Bag Lunch Coming to 1895 School: Each person brings their own lunch, but WVHS will supply some beverages. A member will be the volunteer speaker/leader for the day. Our first Brown Bag Event will be held by former WVHS president Frank Russo, a mighty entertaining fellow. His topic will be “Whatchamacallits and Thig-a-ma-jigs: Unusual Objects of the 18th Century and their Usage.” Have lunch, learn history, and enjoy your day! The first Brown Bag Lunch is scheduled for Thursday, November 5, at 12 Noon.

Historic House at 1189 Union Meeting Road for sale: WVHS has a lovely painting of this old farmhouse, which features the original fireplace and woodwork.



The walk-in fireplace at local home built in 1714

Want to lead an Ambler Walking Tour? The Ambler Storytellers, a committee of WVHS, offer tours of Butler Avenue on Saturday afternoons during the fall and spring seasons. If you like history, this is for you! Training is provided and tour guides choose their tour dates. You can begin as an assistant. The tours offer a great way to have fun and to help the community save its historic landmarks. For details, please email amblerstorytellers@gmail.com



Amish and PA Dutch Studies and more: For readers interested in research pertaining to our area, see the website for Masthof Press & Bookstore. Their specialty areas are Amish, Mennonite, and Brethren History; Pennsylvania Dutch & Local Studies; Genealogy & Family Histories; and Children's Books & Fiction.

Announcing: For the Franklinville School and the 1895 School, WVHS Offers "Hours by Appointment." And we mean it! Please call or email the WVHS for a tour of our schools, both listed in the National Register of Historic Places: Info@WValleyHS.com

Montgomery County America 250, Calendar of Events:

<https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/explore-county/celebrate-america-250>

Helpers Wanted: WVHS needs help! Since the pandemic, we have been losing volunteers, and most of our group's responsibilities are completed by the board members. They need help! As part of the weekly "Volunteer Day" work sessions (or any time!), **the board is looking for those who can assist to**

- Write articles for *The Valley Crier* and *The Quill*
- Create exhibits at the three municipal buildings
- Create occasional displays for the two Wissahickon Valley Public Libraries
- Attend and report on municipal planning-committee discussions
- Accession new items and documents
- Re-fold the fabrics in the collection
- Set-up and take-down for events
- Present programming for children
- Dust, vacuum, wash floors, wipe stairs and woodwork, clean bathroom, wash outdoor benches, sweep the porch
- Find and communicate with speakers
- Send press releases

Volunteer Day has been changing: Due to summer schedules, please call or send an email before arriving. There are a variety of chores, including dusting, refolding fabrics, and cataloguing/accessioning new donations to the museum. For days and times (*they sometimes vary*), PLEASE email Info@WValleyHS.org.

History Treasures Wanted: Do you have items tucked away in your attic or basement that reflect life along the Wissahickon in decades gone by? WVHS is on the lookout for artifacts, photos, documents, or any pieces of history related to our area's past. Whether it is a family heirloom, an event t-shirt, an event program, or a vintage photograph of a building or landscape, we would like to hear about them! Help us celebrate our community's rich history. Please contact Info@WValleyHS.org.

Lost and Found at the Archives: Researchers are trying to find two items at the 1895 School. Please let us know if you know where these items are stored: a disc containing the Clara Beck photos and marble notebooks with notes from author Gay Talese.

WVHS Volunteer/New-Member Orientation: If you are a new member and/or want to help with an Open House, please plan to attend a short "training" session at a time convenient for you. RSVP to Info@WValleyHS.org.

From the Board of Directors Meeting, September 2026:

- When Karen Arnold visited Franklinville School, she speculated about why the school had a patio built as part of the 1930s addition. She said perhaps the gentlemen needed a dry place to stand when they went outside to smoke.
- “Witness Houses,” those standing during the American Revolution, will be honored at Ambler Borough Council on October 20, at 7 PM, and at Whitpain Township BOS on November 4.
- The board discussed ways to eliminate mud on the corner of the porch at the Franklinville School.

Calendar of Events for WVHS Society Year 2026-2027

- Oct 4 (Sunday), 12 Noon, LUNCHEON at Whitpain Farm’s Manor House
- Oct 12 (Monday), 7 PM, Jim Segrave-Daly, Historian, “Daniel Morgan: American Revolution Hero”
- Oct 15 (Thursday), 4-10 PM, Dine & Donate. Tannery Run Brew Works, Ambler
- Oct 25 (Sunday), 1-3 PM, Franklinville School, Open House
- Nov 5 (Thursday), 12 Noon, Brown Bag Lunch with Frank Russo, WVHS’s first president, at 1895 School on “Whatchamacallits and Thig-a-ma-jigs: Unusual Objects of the 18th Century and their Usage.”

- Nov 9 (Monday), 7 PM, Matthew Kalos, PhD, Brookdale College, “The Archaeology and Memory of the Paoli Battlefield”
- Dec 14 (Monday), 6:30 PM, Holiday Party
- Jan, No meeting
- Feb 8 (Monday), 7 PM, Show and Tell
- Mar 8 (Monday), 7 PM, Suzanne Johnston, DEd, “This Old Home” (Historic American Revolution buildings in our neighborhood)
- Apr 12 (Monday), 7 PM, Julie Lawson, Historian at St. Thomas Church, “Andrew Gilkeson and Gilkey’s Corner”
- May 10 (Date may change), 7 PM, Liz Bauer, DAR Museum, “Fashion and National Identity after the American Revolution”
- June 14 (Monday), 6:30 PM, Pot-luck Picnic and Corn Auction

We are a member-driven, all-volunteer, non-profit 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.

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