



**General  
Membership  
Meeting**

*Monday,  
February 13, 2006  
7:30 PM*  
at the 1895 Schoolhouse

**This Month's  
Program**

**"African-American  
Women in  
Pennsylvania  
During the  
Civil War"**  
*Celebrating Black  
History Month*

**Hospitality**

*Michelle Schwartz  
and  
Josphine Sawicki*

**Wissahickon  
Valley Historical  
Society**

799 Skippack Pike  
Blue Bell, PA 19422  
215.646.6541

**A Happy  
Valentine's Day  
to all!**



We started off the New Year with a surprise! Our January Meeting topic was the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth and the program speaker was a "no-show" (we hope he is okay, and nothing serious happened). What

transpired after discussing regular Historical business was, well let's say, it was quite unique. The meeting began with a pot-luck of mini-comments and discussions and then evolved as contributions from our membership began to pour out. We are so lucky to be such a knowledgeable group. A lot of fun was had by all.

*We hope this month's stories will be just as fascinating!*

Our February meeting will be a lecture on African-American Women in Pennsylvania During the Civil War, celebrating African-American History Month. February is also President's Month. You can catch excellent shows on cable/satellite TV on the History Channel.

In other news, we recently received word that member, Robert Virkler (aka BOB) recently suffered a stroke and is in Abington Hospital. Bob has suffered many health issues over the past few years. Bob is a great asset to WVHS — he is the ever-present volunteer and is always there when we need him. He serves on the Board and is our Librarian. We all wish Bob a speedy recovery and we hope you will be able to join us soon.

We hope to see you at our February Meeting. Please remember, we need all of you to support us.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Russo, Jr., Acting President

## Growing Up In Ambler in the 50s and 60s: “Remembering Brandenburg’s” — by Frank Russo, Jr.

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Every school-age child feels like they died and went to heaven when they entered a stationary store. A student’s dream world. In the 1950’s and 1960’s, Ambler had Brandenburg’s.

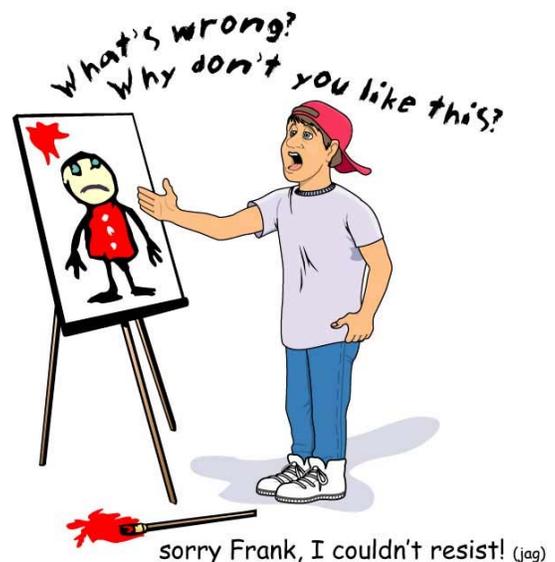
Brandenburg’s Stationery Store was located in a turn-of-the-century building, which is now occupied by Open Dialog, a card and stationary store. The original building housed Carrie Heiss’ Dry Goods Store.

Brandenburg’s carried all your school or office needs. In those days, fountain pens were a school and office necessity. Brandenburg’s carried a full line from Schaeffers to Scripto and all at prices you can afford. Notebooks, binders, filler paper, memo pads, pencils, crayons, etc. were also available for purchase.

When you entered Brandenburg’s you were greeted by a friendly and pleasant staff. They were always helpful to kids who wandered in looking for just the right fountain pen to make the school year a success.

During the 50s and 60s, I was taking art lessons at school and special classes that were taught in a home on Stuart Lane. My art teacher was Miss Marietta Gowdy. She required me to purchase art supplies at Brandenburg’s, including small tubes of oil paints, watercolors and pastels. I would spend hours searching for the right shade of a color she would request. Interestingly, the tubes of oil color paints were all different prices depending on the color. I was never much of an artist but I enjoyed the experience. I actually won first place for one of my paintings in an Ambler art contest held in 1963.

I could rattle on and on ... Brandenburg’s held a special place in my memories of growing up in Ambler.



## WVHS Membership News

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► **BOB VIRKLER** has made another trip to Abington Hospital this past week. He suffered a stroke last week and is trying very hard for a speedy recovery. Your get-well cards may be sent to him at home at:

**429 Elliger Avenue, Fort Washington, PA 19034-1301**

► **NEW MEMBER** Please add the following new member to the WVHS into your membership book:

**Ms. Joyce C. Collom, 510 Wilson Drive, Lancaster, PA 17603; Tel: 717-393-2289**

► **LEI BARRY & TAD MAHAN** ... have moved. Please change their information as follows:

**150 Country Club Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446; Tel: 215-605-7024; E-mail: Lei@LeiBarry.com**

► ***If you have any changes*** to your address, phone number or e-mail address, please contact Mary Lou McFarland, Membership Services, at 215-542-9381 or via e-mail at [cmcpreserve@hotmail.com](mailto:cmcpreserve@hotmail.com) or e-mail the WVHS Newsletter at [wvhs\\_newsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:wvhs_newsletter@yahoo.com)

## The Samuel J. Levick Story — by Judy Baigis

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While organizing the library I came across a pristine, leather-bound edition of the *Life of Samuel J. Levick*. His Philadelphian family, through marriages and friendships, had local connections. Page 378 refers to our own Penllyn.

Approaching, but not encroaching upon, Woodlawn Farm is the collection of beautiful homes (it would be a misnomer to call it a village), known as Penllyn. This settlement takes its name from the station on the North Pennsylvania Railroad (now a part of the Reading system), around which it has grown up. In the year 1848 was published a map of Montgomery County, and many of the subscribers to said map chose *home names* for their places, to be engraved upon it. George Spencer, Jr., called his home “Penllyn,” as the house stands on the site of the one erected by his great-great-great-grandfather, Edward Foulke, who came from Wales in 1698. This Edward Foulke traced his ancestry—far back—to Rhirid Flaidd, Lord of Penllyn, so there seemed to be appropriateness in the name.

When, in 1855, the railroad station was erected upon part of his farm, it was named Penllyn; the euphony of which was acceptable to the neighbors, though some found difficulty with the orthography, but on being told that it was *good Welsh*, they soon learned to spell it correctly.

*Thank you, Frank Russo, Jr., for donating this book to WVHS in 1978 so that in 2006 we find ourselves benefiting from the history therein.*

### **Other worthy information on Samuel J. Levick:**

Buried at Merion Meeting Burial Ground, which lists the following information:

Levick, Samuel J.

Date born: August 30, 1819

Date died: April 19, 1885

Son of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Levick

Secretary of the SPCA. Traveling minister.



[http://www.free-thoughts.org/Levick/Samuel\\_J\\_Levick.htm](http://www.free-thoughts.org/Levick/Samuel_J_Levick.htm) and <http://www.qhpress.org/quakerpages/>

## A Special Thanks...

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What makes the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society special? It's our members — their generosity helps support our organization and helps preserve our most valuable asset, our local history. We'd like to acknowledge the following people who, during our membership dues drive, gave above and beyond:



*Mark Ashton*

*Lei Barry and Tad Mahan*

*Joyce Collom*

*The Croke Family (with a matching  
gift from Johnson & Johnson)*

*Peg and Jim Johnston*

*Peg Kregel*

*Floss and Herb Levy*

*Gloria and Bob Myers*

*Joanne and Bernie Olszewski*

*Frank J. Russo, Jr.*

*Emmy Simon*

*Greg Smith*

*Bob Virkler*

*Bette and Bill Young*

***Hats off to all of you! Thank you!***



## **Wissahickon Valley Historical Society** **Calendar of Events ~ February 2006 and upcoming events!**

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- Mon., Feb. 13..... **“African-American Women in Pennsylvania.....7:30 PM**  
***During the Civil War”*** (*Celebrating Black History Month*)
- Mon., Feb. 20..... *Board Meeting* .....7:00 PM
- Mon., March 13..... **“The History of Whitpain” .....7:30 PM**  
*(Presented by Wayne Huss)*
- Mon., March 20..... *Board Meeting* .....7:00 PM

**VISIT US ON THE WEB AT: <http://www.angelfire.com/pa5/wvhs>**  
**or e-mail us at: [wvhs\\_newsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:wvhs_newsletter@yahoo.com)**



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