



**General
Membership
Meeting**

*Monday,
April 10, 2006
7:30 PM*

at the 1895 Schoolhouse



**April Meeting
Program:**

*History of Whitpain
During the Battle
of Germantown
Presented by
Arthur Driedger*



**Hospitality
Mabel and Bob
Whittock**



**Wissahickon
Valley Historical
Society**
799 Skippack Pike
Blue Bell, PA 19422
215.646.6541

From the Desk of the President:

HAPPY SPRING!

Our March meeting was well attended and our program on Whitpain Township history was fascinating. We owe our gratitude to Bob Whittock, long time Whitpain resident and historian. Bob is a active member of our Historical Society and we are very lucky to have such important members.

We had many guests that evening, some of which will be becoming new members. The President of the Historical Society of Whitpain was in attendance; she enjoyed a visit to our museum upstairs.

We are in for a treat for our April Program Meeting. Our own historian extraordinaire, Arthur Driedger, will speak on the movement of military troops during the American Revolution in the Wissahickon Valley. Our area played an important role in the Revolutionary War and Art will illuminate this important era of our local history. Please plan to join us for this interesting program; please note the change of program from our original agenda.

Our May Program Meeting will be entitled, "Our Members Share", this show and tell program will feature our members sharing what they collect with us. Do you have a collection you are proud of? Did you read a good book you'd like to share with us? Are you a member of an organization and you'd like to share info with us? Then plan to be on the agenda and sign -up for a 5-10 minute share. Come on, we know you're passionate about something!

My thanks go out to all those members who volunteered to work on a Program committee for next season. I still need a volunteer to chair this committee.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Russo, Jr.
Acting President

Historic Preservation News

BROAD AXE VILLAGE: The “historic” village of Broad Axe will undergo a major renovation in the near future, if plans go as intended. The intersection of Butler and Skippack Pikes, which has been a dark and abandoned place for quite some time, will be renewed and get back the life it once saw at this busy intersection.



We welcome a fully restored Broad Axe Tavern to the corner. The tavern had been in operation since the mid 18th Century. The building will house a restaurant on the first floor and also feature office space on the upper floors. The tavern will connect to the shopping center in the rear and will be redesigned.

The two abandoned gas stations will be demolished and removed, with two banks to be erected on the sites. The proposed banks include Harleysville Bank and Commerce Bank.

In addition, paved sidewalks and fancy “period” street lighting will be installed, and landscaping will help to recreate the village atmosphere. Kudos on a well-designed plan.

KEASBEY AND MATTISON FACTORIES: Located in Ambler Borough since the 1880’s, the old factory site will become a condominium development. Just recently, Governor Ed Rendell awarded the Brownfield Action Team financial assistance to revitalize our community.

- The project will restore the exterior of the old Power House with the interior to be rehabbed to hold office space.
- On the old factory site, six, five-story buildings will be erected to house a 316 unit condominium complex called “The Crossings at Ambler”. Summit Realty Advisors and Westrum Development Co. are jointly planning the project and have jointly applied for nearly \$10 million in funding.

Unfortunately we will be losing our historic factory buildings; but what a boom to the Borough of Ambler this project will be!

LEWIS AMBLER HOUSE in Ambler Borough is being considered to be purchased with an Open Space grant. Andrew and Mary Ambler built the house for their son, Lewis, in 1844. Lewis operated the nearby fulling mill after his parents died. The house, which is a state of major deterioration, would benefit from this purchase.

MONTGOMERY HOSPITAL: Plans are afoot to move the hospital out of the Borough of Norristown and relocate it to the old Unisys property in Blue Bell. New street plans are in the works, meaning that the “historic” house (known as THE CLOOT) could be torn down or moved from its original site. The Cloot was the home of the Conard family, one of the earliest families to settle in Whitpain. We will keep our eye on this project.

SPRING HOUSE will be undergoing some changes along Bethlehem Pike. We will keep you informed as things develop.

April 2006 – General Meeting / Member’s Lecture “Historic Events in Whitpain During the Battle of Germantown”

This month’s meeting topic is being presented by one of Wissahickon Valley Historical Society’s own, Art Driedger. He will be lecturing on George Washington in Whitpain Township during the Battle of Germantown.

Photos displayed on the right are identified as (top to bottom):

1) **Portrait of General George Washington**

Currently at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York;
artist is Rembrandt Peale
Courtesy of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Germantown



2) **George Washington at Princeton**

Painting by Charles Wilson Peale, 1779
Courtesy of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Germantown

3) **The Chewhouse**

The British 40th Foot occupying the Chew House from which they resisted all efforts to dislodge them during the Battle of Germantown;
Courtesy of <http://www.britishbattles.com/germantown.htm>



4) **Battle of Germantown 1777**

After Howe had occupied Philadelphia, Washington attacked British troops at Germantown. The Americans planned a four-pronged attack. The morning was foggy, and American coordination broke down. As a result, the attack failed, and the American troops were forced to withdraw. Courtesy of <http://www.historycentral.com/revolt/Germantown.html>



WVHS Membership News

A **WARM WELCOME** and congratulations should be extended to our newest members:

► **MS. DONNA COGAN**

314 Euclid Ave., Ambler, PA 19002 • Tel: 215-643-8689

► **MR. LES KIRK**

33 E. Butler Ave., Ambler, PA 19002 • Tel: 628-2530

Other Membership Announcements

Please make these changes in your membership book

► **JUDY GRUBB** ... has changed her personal e-mail account to: grubbkane@comcast.net

► **HERB & FLOSS LEVY** ... have changed their phone number to: **215-283-7259**



If you have moved or changed any of your contact information, please inform us at your earliest convenience!

*Mary Lou McFarland, Membership Services at 215-542-9381
or e-mail: wvhs_newsletter@yahoo.com*



Wissahickon Valley Historical Society Calendar of Events ~ April 2006 and upcoming events!

- Mon., April 10..... **General Business Meeting****7:30 PM**
*“George Washington and the History of Whitpain During the Battle of Germantown”
(Open to the general public, members and guests)*
- Mon., April 24..... *Board Meeting*7:00 PM
- Mon., May 13 **General Business Meeting**.....**7:30 PM**
“Our Members Share” – An open meeting to share our collections or interests
- Mon., May 22 *Board Meeting*7:00 PM
- Mon., June 12 **WVHS Members’ Summer Picnic****6:00 PM**
(Location to be decided ... covered dish event)

**VISIT US ON THE WEB AT: <http://www.angelfire.com/pa5/wvhs>
or e-mail us at: wvhs_newsletter@yahoo.com**



Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
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