



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

WVHS, Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002

www.wvalleyhs.org

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215-646-6541

Wissahickon Valley Historical Society Annual Picnic

Please join us for our annual picnic on
Monday, June 12, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.

Pat Plumb's home
910 Valley Rd.
Blue Bell, PA 19422

The society will provide baked ham and
soft drinks.

Please bring a side dish or a dessert that
is easy to serve.

Extra chairs would be welcome.

We will also hold a "corn auction".

Please bring a wrapped item of value (?)
or interest to be auctioned.

The fun is in seeing what you get.



RSVP to Jeannie Bellavance ASAP so we can
plan for the number of guests.

215-643-5048

or [Bellavance@verizon.net](mailto:bellavance@verizon.net)

We hope to see you there!

Wissahickon Valley Historical Society - serving Whitpain, Lower Gwynedd, and Ambler

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Mark Your Calendar

May 31 - June 3 - Center Square Fire Department's Carnival - on Reeds Field - just north east of Reeds' Store on Skippack Pike

June 7 - Free concert by Ambler Symphony at historic Hope Lodge, Wednesday, 7 p.m. Bring your own picnic and chairs.

June 8 - Annual Strawberry Festival at SpringHouse Estates. 10 to 2. SpringHouse Questers have been strong supporters of the WVHS. The Thursday morning work crew is planning to go to the festival for lunch.

June 12 - Wissahickon Valley Historical Society annual picnic - Monday at 5:30 p.m. See cover page for details.

June 17 - "Slim the Lineman" program at the Historical Society of Montgomery County, 1654 DeKalb Street, Norristown, Saturday, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Please note: There will not be Open Houses at the 1895 Schoolhouse or Franklinville this month since the regular date falls on Father's Day. Next Open House is July 16.

Display Cases at Whitpain, Lower Gwynedd, and Ambler

WVHS display cases are now located at the Whitpain Township, Lower Gwynedd Township, and Ambler Borough buildings. The displays are changed every two to three months. Currently Ambler's display features restaurants and food stores from Ambler's history. Lower Gwynedd's newly installed display is about AmChem. Whitpain's recently set up exhibit is about the 1895 Schoolhouse and features some of the recently work by the Township on the building.

Thanks to Sally Zeller and Joan Duxbury for taking on the Lower Gwynedd case. Peg Johnston is responsible for the Ambler case. Anyone interested in the Whitpain case?

Report on Market Day - from President Russ Bellavance

We held our annual Market Day on Saturday, May 6. Thank you to all the volunteers who worked hard to prepare for the event. The Market Day weather has not been our friend for the past few years which has held down both vendor participation and crowd attendance. On the other hand, many who did attend took the opportunity to view our museum - which is a real plus. We netted about \$450. The board will be discussing whether to try to re-energize the event (and somehow control the weather) or to substitute some other other annual fund-raising activity. We welcome the thoughts of all members on this question.



WWI Commemorations

WVHS member Barry Johnson chaired the Pennsylvania World War One History Symposium at the United States Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle on

May 13. Four scholars spoke on various aspects of WWI history. Each presentation was recorded and can be seen on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6xU1>.

Barry also is the author of *Remembering the First World War, 1914-18* which was published in Pennsylvania Legacies, Spring 2017. This issue focuses on Pennsylvanians in WWI.

Barry would like to receive any photos or stories about family members who served in WWI as well as any WWI memorials. These would be included at ww1cc.org/pa and go into the National Archives in 2019. Barry's e-mail = johnson52@comcast.net.

A Favorite WVHS Museum Item

Young people who tour our museum are almost always drawn to the typewriter - a lot like a computer keyboard but not exactly. They wonder how one deletes mistakes and which is the "send" button and where the printer is.

Another item that they are intrigued by is the stereograph. One looks through a pair of eye pieces at two side-by-side nearly identical images. An illusion of three-dimensionality is produced when the viewer looks through the special lens.

A young visitor commented that it reminded him of the new virtual reality glasses (see below) . Slightly older viewers are reminded of a View-master.

A recent Inquirer newspaper feature related some of the details and history of the stereograph.



The earliest photographs are attributed to Louis-Jacques-Mande Daguerre who worked in the early 1830s. Joseph Saxton soon duplicated the process in the United States. Several other photo processing techniques were developed during the mid-1800s. One of these was the stereographs. It was cheaper than other techniques and allowed Americans to "view" natural and man-made wonder of the world as well as comical and familiar scenes.

Well into the 20th century, stereographs and sets of images were found in family living rooms. Stereograph was also recommended by some eye doctors to help train one's eyes to focus in unison.

There are also examples of other types of early photograph in our collection. We have a daguerrotype from the Civil War era. We also have hundreds of black and white photos of local sites, 1895 Schoolhouse and Franklinville, and of local school classes and events. We have also been transferring photos from earlier forms (slides, video tapes, etc.) to more permanent forms. SpringHouse Questers and Normandy Questers have both helped with this work.

The WVHS welcomes donations of stereograph images to expand its collection.

Update on Dinosaur Footprint

WVHS member Bob Meyers has constructed a permanent display case for the pre-dinosaur (archosaur - precursor to a crocodile) footprint that was donated last year



by Oliver Snowden. The fossil in on the surface of a 300 pound rock that came from the Huber Quarry at the southern corner of Whitehall Road and Skippack Pike intersection. With the help of scientists from the Academy of Natural Science, the footprint was identified as that of a *Chirotherium huberi*. It has been stored in the garage - and visited by numerous guests this past year.

Thanks to Bob Meyers making a safe and versatile home for our “oldest” artifact. Thanks to Jim Johnston for researching the specimen. A text plaque will accompany the display. The WVHS plan is to have the exhibit available to even more visitors - especially children.

Update on Mattison Estate Development Project

The Upper Dublin Township Comm. accepted the conditional use application for #2167 Lindenwold Residential Associates LLC for the Mattison Estate in early May.

The next stage is provisions of Land Development. The conditional use application states that new homeowners will fund historical preservation and sustainability of the property with assessments - without any details of how much and specific goals. Many of the outdoor features - including sunken gardens and mature trees - will be lost. Details can be found at <https://www.upperdublin.net/st.marys-villa-mattison-estate-development>.

Welcome Thursday Morning Visitor

Krista Lewis (center), who as a volunteer helped us begin our data base entry system and update our collection management procedures, visited on a recent Thursday morning. She now works at a county historical society in Minnesota. It was great to catch up with Krista. Thursday mornings are for working on the collection and for catching up with friends.



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