



www.wvalleyhs.org
P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002

215-646-6541

Volume 17, Issue 9
May 2016

May is a busy month!

Sat., May 7 - Market Day - 8.m. to 2 p.m. (see back page)

Mon., May 9 - Monthly meeting (see below)

Sun., May 15 - Open House (see inside)



May Program:
Presented by Jim
Tufano, lecturer on
Native American history
and culture
(at right - Lenape stone points
found at an Ambler site
and part of the collection of the
Wissahickon Valley Historical
Society.)

Monday, May 9
at the 1895 Schoolhouse
Skippack Pike and School Road, Blue Bell
7:30 p.m.



WVHS Outreach

Last month President Russ Bellavance wrote about the need for our society to do more outreach. To that end, Russ has been writing a series of articles as well as sharing several presentations with the community.

This month three showcases were re-enforced (see Jim Johnston and Bob Whittock at left) so that they could be shared in the Ambler borough building, Lower Gwynedd township

building, and the Whitpain township building. The small exhibits will be changed every couple of months. Items will come from the society's collection. If you are interested in taking on one of the show cases (i.e. changing the displays), please call 215-542-7753. We also need someone with large SUV or pick-up to transport the cases to their sites. This is a one-time job.

This week Dottie MacDermott and Peg Johnston will move the "What was School Like a Hundred Years Ago" exhibit from Lower Gwynedd Elementary to Stony Creek Elementary. In the fall, hopefully, the exhibit can be shared with St. Helena's and Gwynedd Mercy Academy.

In May, both the 1895 Schoolhouse and Franklinville School will be open on the third Sunday, May 15 from 1 to 4 p.m. Volunteers are needed at both sites where there will be tours and children's activities. Franklinville School is on Morris Road just below the entrance to Normandy Farm Estates. If you haven't been, this will be a good chance to visit the site.

Wissahickon High School senior Kannan Ramanathan has been working with John Simon and Marie Goldkamp on an Eagle Scout project at Franklinville. The project will include some major cleaning and minor repairs as well as the construction of a bench and work on the perennial flower bed.

The Society is hoping to take part in several of Ambler's community events this summer.

Featured Item from our Collection

The wooden artifact at right is one of many items that came from the Whitpain Historical Society. It was labeled "A saddle mould from Graystone, Butler Pike". It is made of wood and about 2 1/2 feet long. The curved pieces can be pushed together. A little computer research gave no results about how it was used. Then a duplicate was found at the Mercer Museum in Doylestown. Its label explained that the mould acts as a pair of clamps - the solid end being held between the knees and two pieces of leather held in the clamps. The leather pieces could then be held firmly together and the saddle maker would have two free hands to do the sewing. Nice to know that the computer doesn't have all the answers!

The Mercer Museum is a unique and very interesting place.





Report from the Roth Farm and Museum by Russ Bellavance

On Saturday, April 16 the WVHS co-sponsored an informative and entertaining program at the Abraham and Edythe Roth Living Farm Museum with our good friends from the Worcester Historical Society.

The Roth Farm was donated by Edythe Roth to the Delaware Valley University in 1993 and it is now part of Del. Val.'s Roth Center for Sustainable Agricultural. There are two historical residences and multiple outbuildings on the property. Our visit centered on the two buildings at the corner of Hancock and 202.

Right on the corner is a 3 story building known as Kulp's Tavern, which was constructed by Andres Leyman (also sometimes spelled Lehman) in 1832 as a tavern and inn. Despite its design, the building was only ever used as a residence, first by Leyman and then by the Isaac Kulp family from 1846 until the property was sold for back taxes during the Depression.

Del Val has restored the interior of Kulp's Tavern to the period of the late 19th century. Each the 3 floors has four rooms off a central stairway. There is a cooking fireplace on the first floor with a built-in baking oven and hooks for hanging cooking pots over the fire. There are fireplaces in every room on the 1st floor and in three rooms on the 2nd floor, but none on the 3rd floor. It was a good thing that heat rises!

The exterior is clad in stucco in a pebble dash design. This was also the original design of our 1895 Schoolhouse. If you are wondering what a pebble dash design is, the answer is that one throws pebbles against the wet stucco.

Behind the house is a raised entrance to an underground area that at first was thought to be a root cellar. In fact, a tributary of Stony Creek flows underground there and the cellar was used to store milk in the cool, flowing water. Kulp's Tavern is now listed on the National Registry of Historical Places.

We also toured the bank barn which is just a little north of the tavern. (There is a small commercial building between them.) The barn is filled with a variety of old farm equipment. Thankfully, our tour guides were able to identify the less obvious equipment. Of particular interest were two large pieces of equipment (a stationary thresher and a dangerous looking silage chopper) that were built by Heebner & Sons of Lansdale, (but originally from Worcester). The farm focused on hay for the Philadelphia market; all those city horses had to eat after all.

Speaking of tour guides, we were fortunate to have 4 excellent ones - including our own Gary Fuess, who graduated from Del. Val. and whose career included providing chemical products to the ag. industry. We were also guided by 3 staff members from Del. Val. Bryce Cannon, who just started as manager of the Roth Farm. Scott Smith is the general farm manager for 9 of Del Val's farms. He said they are in the process of collecting all of the archival materials regarding the farm, but that they really need some archival assistance. Finally, Dr. Craig Stutman spoke to us. He teaches history at Del. Val. - including a course on how to be a local historian. Thanks to Gary, Bryce, Scott and Craig for sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm with us.

Thanks to Becky Glover for sharing her photos.



Market Day - Sat., May 7 - 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- * flowers, vegetables, baskets for Mother's Day
- * vendors of quality items
- * books, prints, vinyl records, DVDs
- * gourmet hot dogs
- * baked goods
- * tours of museum
- * good company

This is a major fund raiser for the society. Call 215-646-6541 if you would like to help set up on Friday afternoon or help with booths/tours on Saturday.

Baked goods can be dropped off on Friday or Saturday or by arrangement - call 215-646-6541.



Looking Ahead

WHVS's annual picnic is scheduled for Monday, June 13. Pat Plumb has graciously agreed to host the event. Details in the June newsletter.



Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
799 Skippack Pike
Ambler, PA 19002