



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler  
Lower Gwynedd  
Whitpain

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P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002



## May 18 - Outing to Aldie Mansion

For our May meeting we will explore the Aldie Mansion in Doylestown. It is home to the Heritage Conservancy and its preservation is the result of cooperative effort of several groups.

Built by William and Martha Mercer, it was constructed in 1927 in the English tutor style and includes charming gardens. The Mercers entertained many well-known people at Aldie - including Groucho Marx,

Isadora Duncan, and the VonTrapp family. It is now a popular wedding venue. There is a \$10 fee per person.

We'll meet at the 1895 Schoolhouse at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 18 and carpool to Doylestown. Those who wish to have lunch in Doylestown can help the group decide where to eat!

## Market Day Saturday, May 9 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This year's Market Day - WVHS's major fund raiser - will be Saturday, May 9 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. There is an application for tables on the WVHS website or one can call Marie at 215-542-8845. A few spaces are still available.

The Society will have a bake table and a book sale. Please consider baking and/or recycling some books. Books can be left on the porch anytime; baked goods can be left off on Friday, May 8 or early on May 9.

Helpers are also needed to sort books, mark out spaces for tables, and sell baked goods and books. Please consider volunteering a couple of hours. Check with Russ at 215-643-5048.

This year a special attraction will be a plant sale. It will feature flowers grown and sold by Lakeside School students. Lakeside is a work/study school located in North Wales. Proceeds from the sale benefit the school. This is in perfect time for Mother's Day - May 10.

## Community Outreach

WVHS President Russ Bellavance presented a program about the Constitution to the Normandy Farm Questers in April. It was well received and we hope to build a relationship with Normandy Farm residents as Franklinville School is surrounded by the community.

The Bayberry Questers visited the 1895 Schoolhouse on April 15. Marie Goldkamp, Dottie MacDermott, and Peg Johnston shared the history of the 1895 Schoolhouse, Franklinville School, and the historical society. Questers also visited the upstairs museum. Several of the visitors are quilters and were very impressed with the Blue Bell Questers' quilt which was on display. They recognized the names of the designer Evelyn McAdam and artist Becky Huttinger. They were impressed with the work done by stitchers and with the care that has been taken of it. They made suggestions about storage and display of the quilt. Watch for an article about this quilt.

Ambler held its first annual Earthfest on April 18. It was organized by Ambler Borough Environmental Advisory Council (and their secret weapon Christine Raines.) WVHS shared an exhibit about the repurposing of building - a way of saving money, energy, and history. Visitors at the table were asked to make suggestions about how to repurpose the Bottom Dollar building and what used to be the Ambler Cabaret. Most expressed a desire for a grocery store, but several people also suggested a community activity/art center.

Ambler's first Farmers' Market of the year is May 2. The board is hoping to organize a table at Ambler events and a tour of Ambler's historic sites. Anyone interested in working on this effort should call Russ Bellavance.

## Annual Member Picnic Scheduled

Traditionally the last meeting of the year is a members' potluck indoor-picnic. This year it is scheduled for Monday, June 8 at the Schoolhouse at 6 p.m. Details in the next newsletter, but please put the date on your calendar and consider bringing a potential member to this social event. The appointment of new board members will be ratified at a short meeting at the picnic.





## Open Houses

Franklinville

School - our one-room schoolhouse built in 1858 will have an Open House on Sunday, May 17 from 1 to 4 p.m. Children are welcome to come and dress in period clothes, play 19th century games, and write on slate boards as children did in the early days of the school. The Franklinville School is located on Morris Road.

The 1895 Schoolhouse - Whitpain's first consolidated school - will have an Open House on May 17 as well. The first floor is set up as school classroom and the second floor houses a museum featuring Ambler, Lower Gwynedd, and Whitpain. Light refreshments will be available.

Members, of course, are welcome.



## Preserving Your Photographs

by Peg Johnston

I attended a workshop at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts recently. Entitled Preserving Your Photographs, I wanted to learn how best to deal with the photographs - as well as slides, negatives, and digital images in our collection.

After a short review of the history of photography, we were reminded that digital photography brings its own concerns and learned about them. Though some images were created earlier, the first salted paper photograph was "taken" in 1839. There were numerous print-out and developed out processes used and improved upon over the 150 years. The first digital prints were done in 1988. Most print outs of digital photos are actually printed on delicate paper and with fragile inks.

The vulnerabilities of all types of photographs are that they are easily mishandled (example: passing around through various hands), poor environment (example: storing in a box in the basement), and improper housing (example: gluing photos into an album).

When possible, cotton or nitrile gloves should be used when handling photographs. No food or drink should be in the area. A light weight card can be slipped under a photograph when lifting it.

Photographs should be stored in a location with low humidity (below 60%) and at the stable, moderate temperature. Light exposure should be minimized. Halogen, florescent, and sunlight cause the most damage. Photographs can be stored in paper envelopes, polyester pocket pages, and in boxes with acid-free paper between each photo. When buying storage materials, look for PAT certified notation on the package.

PAT means it meets an internationally developed Photographic Activities Test. When properly enclosed, photo collections can be stored in plastic bins or steel boxes.

Barbara Lemmen, the CCAHA presenter, recommended Adobe Photoshop Lightroom to manage digital photographic collection. She stressed the importance of backup storage - on an external hard-drive, thumb or flash drive, optical media, or the cloud.

Two additional ideas were to clean photos using a blower brush (Barbara said she buys and pre-washes make-up brushes for this purpose) and not using any sticky materials on photos (Post-its, corners, etc.) If needed, use a solid graphic pencil for marking backs of photographs or housings.

As part of the workshop, we toured the work areas of the CCHAH. Conservators explained work on a moisture damaged photo album from 1940s, a torn Japanese folding paper screen, and a badly deteriorated "button photo" (photo mounted on a curved piece of tin) from the early 1900s.

We will be using what I learned as we continue to accession the large photo collection from the Historical Society of Whitpain as well as work with the photos in the WVHS collection.

## Ambler's Asbestos Legacy Documented

The past two editions of the Ambler Gazette have had special features about the history of Ambler with emphasis on the Keasbey-Mattison and asbestos periods. Both editions will be added to the WVHS library. The articles complement The White Mountain theatrical production at Act II in Ambler on April 25. Several members were able to attend and reported an interesting evening. They all emphasize the on-going issue of how a community responds to an environmental crisis and how it influences generations.



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