



## **HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BENSALEM TWP**

**3211 Knights Road**

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### **JAN. AND FEB. NEWSLETTER 2020**

**The next time you drive on Route #13(Bristol Pike or the Kings Highway whatever you call it!), try to imagine what it would have been like riding in a stagecoach on this dirt road in the 1700's!**

**On Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> at our meeting, Charlie Moody shared his research about the early roads and the stagecoaches that traveled on them.**

**In 1686 the dirt road ended in Morrisville at the ferry. By 1813 a more modern road had been constructed by the Frankford Bristol Turnpike Co. The cost of this modern roadway was \$209,300 back then.**

**In 1753, Benjamin Franklin had stones/markers placed along the roadway as a way to determine the cost of mailing letters and to determine where a business was located (example..Maud Postoffice was near marker #13). In 1764 more markers were added by an Insurance Co. and finally the second full set of markers was placed in 1803 by the Frankford and Bristol Turnpike Co. and had to show the mileage to center city Philadelphia.**

**Toll houses were placed every 5 miles to pay for the road maintenance. The houses would open at 4/5am and close at 8pm. There was never any charge for a funeral passing on the road or going to Church on Sunday.**

**Stagecoaches or Stage Wagons would take 3 days to travel from Philadelphia to New York. The first stage line was opened in 1756 from Philadelphia to New York. The coaches that carried mail also had an**

armed guard. Carrying the mail ended in 1836 when the railroads started transporting the mail. Thanks to Charlie for sharing his research with our group.

Ross Mitchell from the Glen Foerd Mansion was our speaker on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>. He shared his enthusiasm for the mansion, its' history and the many types of events that can be held there.

The former McCallister Mansion was purchased by Robert and Caroline Foerderer in 1895. The name of the mansion was changed from Glen Carrey to Glen Foerd. Robert was the developer of the process of making goat skins into "Vici Kid" by tanning the skins a certain way. He built a factory that processed 9 million skins a year which made him a millionaire. The Mansion was redone by 1905 but Robert had died before that. His wife and children (Florence and Persicus ) lived there. Florence married and was the last Foerderer to live there. She died in 1971 and the property was sold to the Lutheran Church. Then it was purchased by the city of Philadelphia and it became part of the park system.

Now it is supported mainly by its use as a wedding venue. They are holding a "Mock Wedding Fund Raiser" next October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

**Sharon Lindley**

**Jeff Fournier**

#### **ADDITIONS TO OUR COLLECTIONS**

**Jim Davis** donated pieces from the Johnson - Williamson Cemetery Gate that he found while cleaning the tombstones.

**Ralph Douglass** donated the notes and documents from the Bensalem Administration Code Committee to change the Township status.

**Kathy Leighton** purchased items from the Warner Candy Shop auction including pictures, house blueprints, a ceramic Red Lion Sign and other items.

**Sally Sondesky** donated a copy of the book "Stripped and Script" about Grace Growdon and other wives of traitors during the Rev. War.

**Lee Freeman** donated a ceramic plate of "Bensalem Twp. High School".

## IN MEMORY OF

On November 6, 2019 the Society lost one of the original members with the death of Fran Stuhltrager Jarvis. Fran's mother was the head Cornwells telephone operator before it was converted to the dial system. Fran lived in the house with the telephone office and also became an operator. Fran was a volunteer for many of the local organizations and will be missed by everyone.

## CORNWELLS EDDINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

This newly formed group is working together to keep their neighborhood safe and beautiful. Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm and are held at the Cornwells United Methodist Church, 2284 Bristol Pike. For additional info contact Eileen Keefe at ([ekeefe50@gmail.com](mailto:ekeefe50@gmail.com)).

## EVENTS

On Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> we hosted the meeting of the Bensalem Business Association. Kathy Leighton presented a stroll up Bristol Pike that was enjoyed by everyone. Since then Kathy had has an opportunity to show those slides and also those about the mansions along the Delaware to the residents of Ashland Manor.

## INTRODUCING OUR NEW SECRETARIES

After asking for volunteers for the Recording and Corresponding secretary positions we had 2 women volunteer. Our new Recording Secretary is Renee Kitchenman and the Corresponding Secretary is Ginny Neuman. Thanks Ladies and welcome to the Board.

## "Stones and Stories"

You may have seen in recent newsletters some references to Jim Davis and his gravestone and cemetery restoration business "Tidy Tombstones". Over a good part of the past year he has been working on the Williamson-Johnson Burial Ground located in the Glen Ashton Section of Bensalem. During that time he has been cleaning, resetting,

and repairing the gravestones located there. But more importantly he and we at the Historical Society have been piecing together the stories of those who lie beneath the stones. Jim says, "Whenever I work on a stone the physical remains of the person beneath the stone are not much more than several feet away from me, but the stories of "who" they were can many times be more than 100 years away". Think about how many stories of significant historical value exist right here in our own backyard. Bensalem is extremely rich in history. Do you know a story that you'd like to share? If so take a few moments and write down the story, let us know where the person is buried in Bensalem, then drop the information off at the Historical Society office or email it to us. As Henry Louis Gates says, "Once we find these people they are never lost again". If you have any questions about cleaning or repairing a historic or family gravestone, give Jim a call at 215-378-8943 or email him at TidyTombstonesPA@gmail.com

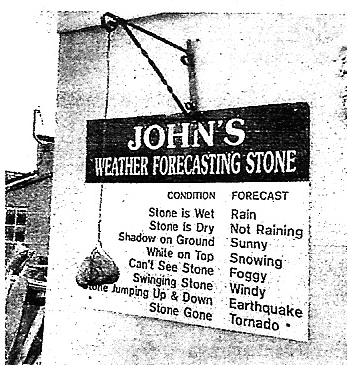
**DUES ARE DUE FOR 2020**

**\$15 single      \$20 Family      \$75 Business**

**CALENDAR FOR JAN. AND FEB.**

**REMEMBER... MEETINGS ARE ON THE FIRST SUNDAY AT 2PM**

<b>Jan. 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>"History of Concord Park"</b> By Joyce Hadley, Lauren Swann & Karen Milles	<b>2:00 pm</b>
<b>Jan. 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Board Meeting</b>	<b>7:00pm</b>
<b>Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>"Stones and Stories"</b> By Jim Davis	<b>2:00pm</b>
<b>Feb. 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Board Meeting</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>



*The Board*