



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BENSALEM TWP

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NEWSLETTER FOR JAN. AND FEB. 2024

Wishing everyone a very Happy and Healthy New Year with not as much rain for our events!!!

NOV.

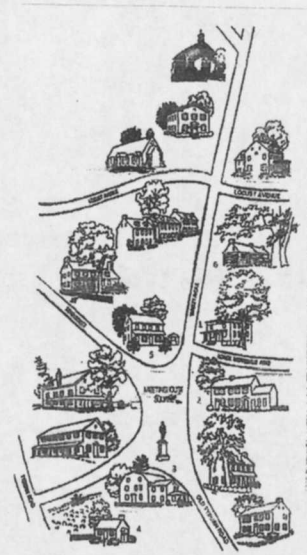
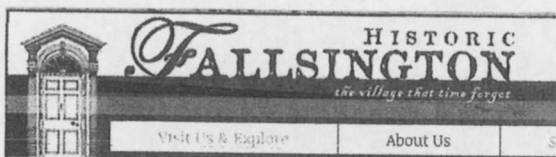
Our meeting featured Kim Praria from Historic Fallsington Inc. (our neighbor to the north).

This small pie shaped Quaker Village has over 100 houses of all shapes, sizes, and ages along with 4 Quaker Meeting buildings. Many of them have been altered thru the years and 5 are now owned by Historic Fallsington.

One of the most famous buildings is the Moon Williamson House. This small log house is one of the oldest log houses still standing on its original foundation. In the 1870's it was "Victorianized" by Miss Mary Williamson who would then bring the members of the Girl's Friendly Society of Philadelphia to spend the summers in the country.

The Village of Fallsington was listed as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

Thank you, Kim, for sharing this local history with us.



DEC.

Did you ever wonder why George Washington picked Valley Forge as his campground for the winter of 1777?

Ken Gavin explained in detail all the thinking behind that decision. It made us all realize that Valley Forge was the only logical decision Washington could have made with the British controlling all the waterways.

Washington was an amazing general and we were lucky to have him on our side at the beginning our of country.

We have been taping the meetings in case you want to see all the details involved in the Valley Forge decision. Thanks, Ken, for sharing your knowledge with us.

SPECIAL MEMBERS TOUR OF GROWDEN 11/18

The day was sunny and very windy for this event from 10-12. Kathy Leighton guided the 27 people on the outside buildings tour and Sally Sondesky gave the family interior information to groups of 10-15 people at a time.

The furniture and dishes in the building are from the Logan Estate (Now Neshaminy State Park) and given to us by the PA. State Museum The only original furniture is the bench in the center hallway. A few other pieces of furniture were in the second room where we had set up displays and items for sale. We served warm cider, water and cookies to the guests.

The hours passed quickly and everyone seemed to enjoy the history lesson about this famous house.

Many THANKS to Mayor DiGirolamo and his staff for all their efforts to preserve this 1685 house for Bensalem Township,

THANKS to all the Historical Society members who helped make the day a success. We raised \$67 from sales and donations of \$12.

IN MEMORY OF

JENNIE T. ARMENT

Extending our deepest sympathy to Hank Arment and family upon the death of his wife on Oct. 31, 2023. They have been members since 2002.

LILLIAN M. JULIFF

Extending our deepest sympathy to the family of Lillian Juliff upon her death on Sept. 29, 2023. Lillian joined in 2004 and had been living at Allegria for the past few years.

NEW MEMBERS

Robert K. Harris
Robert & Georgann Herritt

Arthur Jones

Sarah Growden
Paul & Joyce Altimore

FORMER BENSALEMITE HONORED

Edward Bailey VanSant Jr. who had been a resident and graduate of Bensalem High School died in 2014 while living in Hulmeville. His family had a farm along Hulmeville Road for many years as he was growing up.

After he retired in the early 60's he started to do part time work for Hulmeville Borough and eventually became the zoning officer.

On Nov. 19th the Borough honored him by planting an Elm tree in his name. A few of our members might remember Ed.

ADDITIONS

MaryAnn Goodrich donated BHS yearbooks 1948, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1954, 3 alumni books, and copies of our book 1 & 2.

Charlene Dornisch donated several lights for along our walkway.

Cathy Buchatsky donated a very old beaded wedding gown.

DUES ARE DUE

As January begins it is time to pay your dues (if not already done). If you are not sure you can call the office 215-639-6575 or Sally 215-946-1744 to check. If your dues are not paid by the end of March we will understand that you are not interested in staying as a member.

Single Membership \$15.00 Family (same house) \$20.00 Business \$75.00

A Visit to the Vandegrift Cemetery, Michael Stein

Loren Vandegrift is a long-time friend, and this past summer he made the trip from his home in California to visit us at our home in New Jersey. Loren is the grandson of the late Bill Vandegrift, and the nephew of Detective Glenn Vandegrift of the Bensalem Police Department.



I happened to mention Bensalem's Vandegrift Cemetery, and was surprised that he had never seen it. So it was my privilege to take him for a visit so he could see it for himself. We spent some time there, and Loren was amazed at how many of his ancestors were buried there. During our visit, we spoke to a neighbor who suggested that we visit a little-known cemetery on Vandegrift Lane in the Township. We located Vandegrift Lane, and briefly explored the abandoned Allen Cemetery which was in use from 1681-1863. I believe that it may be the second oldest cemetery in Pennsylvania.

When Sally Sondesky found out that Loren was in town, she very generously offered to open the Historical Society Headquarters for him to take a look. Imagine his surprise when he found out that our Historical Society had a copy of his family tree which traces every generation of the Vandegrifts back to the year 1509. I made a high resolution copy of the family tree and presented it to him as a gift.

We had fun that day exploring some of Bensalem's heritage,
and it points out the importance of
preserving our local history for future generations to study and enjoy.



CALENDAR

Jan. 7 th	"Hit The Pike" Memories of a Road	2:00 pm
Jan. 20 th	Board	11:00 am
Feb. 4 th	"Clothing & Textiles in Early America" Kim Praria	2:00 pm
Feb. 17 th	Board	11:00 am

Thought for the New Year: History is not there for you to like or dislike. It is there for you to learn from. And if it offends you, even better, because you are less likely to repeat it. History is not yours to change or destroy.

The Board