

Worcester Historical Society

2016 Membership Newsletter

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Behind the Scenes

This fall, board members Mike Kavanaugh and John Gower picked up their hammers and built a wall. Not to be outdone, artist and board member Bill Bourne gathered his paint brushes, and a mural appeared.



For several years, the stage in Farmers' Union Hall has showcased our transportation exhibit. Our sleigh and falling-top buggy were both donated years ago by Herb Schwab, and Herb also helped us find and buy the horse that pulls the

buggy. This spring, the 19th-century village of Center Point will take shape behind this display. Come visit the museum, starting the first weekend in April, to see this beautiful mural and feel like you're walking down Skippack Pike over 100 years ago!

Delicious Traditions — and Pie!

In November we were treated to a program by local historian Alan Keyser, who entertained us with stories of traditional foods of the Pennsylvania Dutch from the 1700s to the present. His talk was accompanied by many photographs of delicious dishes, which got everyone's appetite ready for the pie sale that followed.

WHS members brought home-made pies for sale —shoo fly pie, apple pie, Montgomery pie, and a traditional Pennsylvania favorite, ground cherry pie. All of the pies disappeared quickly, and many visitors commented that the talk reminded them of foods they had eaten while growing up.



Preserving Our Past To Insure Our Future

Worcester Historical Society P.O. Box 112 Worcester, PA 19490

On the web at worcesterhistorical.org

Thank You to Our 2015 Donors!

Last year the Society was fortunate to have many donations come our way, to expand our interpretation of life in Worcester's past.

Mr. and Mrs. James Marple brought us a beautiful and unique piece of furniture, a music roll cabinet, filled with almost 100 rolls for our player piano. We're all set for another sing-along program!

Nancy Lobb Markle donated many old tools used by her parents and grandparents on their Valley Forge Road homestead. Nancy reminded us that many families used to have a small fruit tree orchard that supplied enough apples or pears to make cider for the family, plus some to sell to the neighbors. Nancy also donated the handmade wooden wash stand in our newly renovated rest room.

Gary Fuess, a dedicated supporter of our Farm Museum, donated horse-drawn farm equipment and a stoneware sauerkraut crock.

In addition to the Hoosier cabinet in our kitchen exhibit, **Letty Schultz** donated a wash stand and an enamel bowl and pitcher set for the bedroom exhibit. You can almost see the ice on the water in the bowl on winter mornings! And don't miss the steel lunchbox carried by **Austin Schultz** when he worked at Olean Tile in Lansdale.

Margaret Rothenberger Schied donated several decorative tiles made by the Olean company and framed by local woodworker Alvin Rothenberger.

Guy Brunt donated Cub Scout and Boy Scout handbooks used in his family since the 1940s.

Dave Place donated a coal scuttle, tea kettle, and cooking pot to go along with his grandmother's Queen Bengal cook stove.

Join us for these events in 2016!

OPEN HOUSE AT FARMERS' UNION HALL 2011 Valley Forge Road, Saturdays 9 to noon, starting April 2.

SPRING PROGRAM Monday, May 2, "A Soldier's Life in the American Revolution," presented by Mike Jesberger, 7:30 p.m., Farmers' Union Hall. Free to members; light refreshments served.

WHS ANNUAL FLEA MARKET Saturday, **June 4**, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Worcester Township Community Hall, Fairview Village. To be a vendor, call 610-584-5620.

What Did Children Wear?

Many museums display men's and women's clothing, but a collection of children's outfits is not as common. We are fortunate to have children's clothing from the early 1900s through the 1940s, and several members have donated or loaned us their full-size dolls so that we can show you how this clothing was worn.

Don't be surprised to see a skirt on a boy doll — for instance, wearing an outfit handmade for 3-year-old Lloyd Heebner in the early 1900s by his mother, Emma Jane Anders Heebner. A century ago, boys wore dresses for their first few years. Their first short pants were a sign that babyhood had ended. Mrs. Heebner evidently was a skilled seamstress, because she also made a coordinated outfit — wool jacket, short pants, and shirt — for Lloyd's 5-year-old brother, Ernest.



Ernest's outfit is on the doll in the center of the photograph. The doll on the left is wearing a winter coat handmade by another Heebner seamstress, Ellen, whose dress shop is an exhibit in progress in our museum. The dress shop exhibit includes early pattern-making tools as well as two treadle sewing machines. A dress-maker's mannequin features a partially completed outfit in green striped silk taffeta, perfect for a spring outing.

Wish List

- Children's shoes, 19th & early 20th century
- Men's and women's shoes, 19th & early 20th century
- Slate pencils and pencil boxes
- School lunch pails or lunchboxes
- Life-size child or baby dolls, in good condition
- Ice box (for the kitchen exhibit)

Fourth Graders Learn About Farm Life

Through our partnership with Worcester Elementary School, the fourth graders visited Farmers' Union Hall last fall to learn about life in a farming community over 100 years ago. They threshed wheat on the floor of the Farm Museum, turned the handles of the corn shellers, helped make butter from fresh cream, and learned about Pennsylvania's agricultural history in our reconstructed one-room schoolhouse.

The students learned that although farm children had a lot of chores before and after school, they also enjoyed ice skating on the frozen mill ponds and making hand-churned ice cream in the summer.



Above, WHS board member Mary Jane Rees explains the many steps required to clean and prepare flax stalks before they can be spun into thread. The flax was then woven into cloth to make linen clothing and bedding. Flax was an extremely labor-intensive crop. After seeing all the steps needed to turn flax into linen, the students understood why cotton became so popular!

Thank you to Mrs. Stiles, Mrs. Macy, Mrs. Scandle, Mr. Case, and Mr. Sorgini for helping us to keep Worcester history alive for our community's youngest members.

Class of 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986...

If you have a **class reunion** coming up, why not include a visit to Farmers' Union Hall as part of your day? Let us know the date and time, and we'll be sure to have a board member available to provide a guided tour of the museum. You will be amazed at how wonderful the old place looks!

We have many class photos in our collection, from the late 1800s through the 1980s. Visitors are welcome to look through them any time.

Our Members Are VIPs!

You, our members, are the Society's most important people. Without you, we would not be able to keep our museum open to the public, or design and build the new exhibits that are such a great attraction in our museum and library.

We want you as a member, so we have some membership gifts for you:

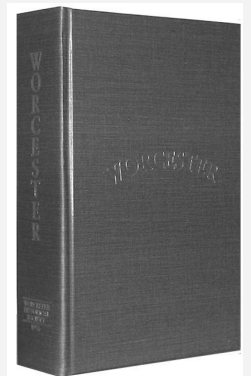
- ◇ With a **Supporting Membership** (\$35), you will receive a box of 8 vintage Worcester note cards



containing two of each of Bill Bourne's turn-of-the-century views of Center Point, Cedars, Fairview Village, and Peter Wentz Farmstead.

- ◇ With a **Sustaining Membership** (\$75), you will receive a copy of *A History of Worcester Township*, the definitive work on the inns, schools, mills, churches, and villages of Worcester from the time of William Penn to the Bicentennial.

Did you know that Worcester had seven one room school houses until 1912 ---and all of them are still in use? Find out where they are located, which ones burned and were rebuilt, and what they looked like over 100 years ago. You'll find that, and so much more, in *A History of Worcester Township*, free with your 2016 Sustaining Membership! Join today!



Everybody Loves a Vintage Kitchen!

As soon as the shellac was dry on the second floor of the museum last winter, we started renovating our exhibits, to give our visitors a better idea of what life might have been like more than 100 years ago in Worcester. The kitchen has always been the heart of a home, so we started there. Unfortunately, our exhibit was bare — no stove, no icebox, and no kitchen cupboards! What could we do?

As usual, our members came to the rescue with some wonderful donations. First to arrive was a lovely **oak Hoosier cabinet** from the home of Letty Schultz, along with many traditional kitchen implements, such as a dough knife, rotary egg beater, and glass custard cups.


Hoosier cabinets were a turn-of-the-century innovation to address the lack of storage space in farmhouse kitchens. The precursor of modern kitchen cabinets, they provided storage space along with built-in conveniences like a flour sifter, sugar jar, kneading board, and recipe holder.

Our Hoosier cabinet will be joined this spring by a **Queen Bengal enamel cook stove**, donated by David Place. The stove was used for many years in his grandmother's farmhouse kitchen on West Germantown Pike in Fairview Village. Several board members will spend the rest of the winter repairing the stove for display. This spring, visitors will be able to see how cooks made dinner and baked breads and pies in a coal-fired oven.



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Keeping Worcester's history alive

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