

Life Long Learning Classes at Freedom Village

We are proud to present the **Winter/Spring 2026/2027** series of Life Long Learning classes brought to Freedom Village by instructors at various Life Long Learning Programs.

There will be 1 - 5 week class per session, on Mondays from 1:30-2:30 in the Learning Center. **There is a $25 charge for the 5-week classes.**

There will also be lectures on the second Friday of the month in the auditorium/Chesapeake Room. **The lectures are free.**

1. " **America – The Land of Immigrants Part 1**
   Instructor – Bob Collins
   Mondays from 1:30-2:30
   January 4,11,18,25, Feb. 1
   Cost: $25

The United States is often called The Land of Immigrants. Unless you are an American Indian, you are the descendant of someone who came to this country from somewhere else seeking a better life. This course will examine five different groups of immigrants who migrated to America at various times, starting with the Colonial period. It will focus on who they were, where they came from, why they came here, where they settled, what they did, and will identify some outstanding reasons from each group. The first five groups are the British and Northwestern Europeans, the Scots-Irish, the Irish Catholics, the Germans, and the African Americans. This is a repeat for those who missed it last fall.

Bob holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in Civil Engineering from Villanova University. He worked for 49 years as a Civil Engineer for several local engineering firms. In retirement, he has taken his love of history and music and created and taught life long learning classes on various topics.



2. "LOSING CANDIDATES IN OUR PRESIDENTIAL RACES"

INSTRUCTOR: DAVID HUDIAK
MONDAYS FROM <u>1:30-2:45*</u> NOTE TIME CHANGE
FEBRUARY 8, 25, 22, MARCH 1
COST: $25

"While most of us know of the winners of our Presidential elections, few of us know the stories of the losers of these contests. Some became famous, some faded into obscurity, but all of them have interesting stories. This course will tell the stories of the losing major party candidates in each Presidential election, from the early days of our nation through 2024."

David Hudiak, Esq. has been a licensed attorney for more than 35 years and is a member of the Bars of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the U.S. District Courts for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and the District of New Jersey. He has extensive teaching experience, having taught numerous paralegal classes as well as seminars in law school admission test preparation. He has been listed in both Who's Who in American Law and Who's Who in American Education

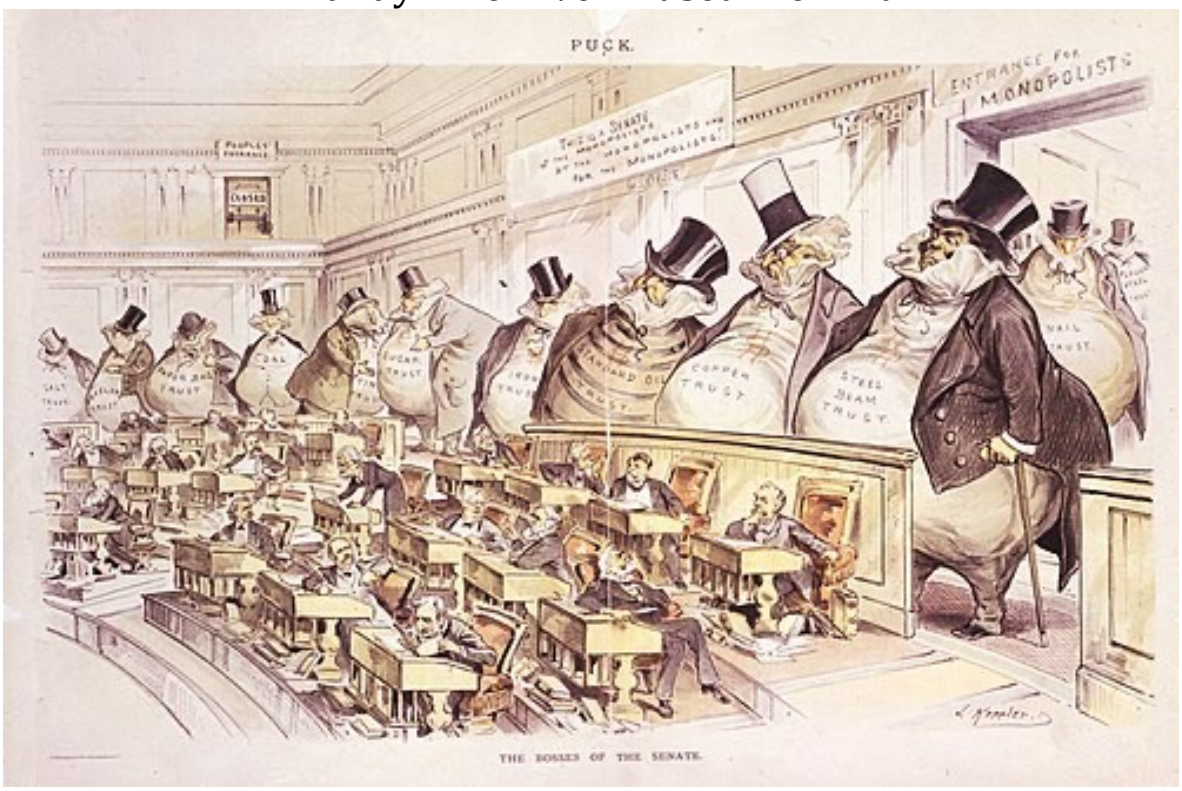


3. "The Gilded Age Turns Progressive (1876-1912)"

Instructor: John Meicht
Mondays from 1:30-2:30
March 8,15, 22, 29, April 5
COST: $25

In United States history, the Gilded Age is the period from about the late 1879s to the late 1890s, which occurred between the Reconstruction era and the Progressive Era. It was named by 1920s historians after Mark Twain's 1873 novel The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today. It was a time of optimism and hope; a time of delight with inventions; a time of worry about corruption; a time of poverty and wealth; a time of child labor; a time of segregation; a time of political change; it was a time of expansion; it was a time of contradictions; it was an age of extremes!

John is a retired social studies teacher, having taught for 32 years in the Downingtown School District. In the last nine years, he has been active with the Academy for Learning and Retirement at Widener University; lecturing at various retirement communities and cruise ships and also a docent for the Brandywine River Museum of Art.



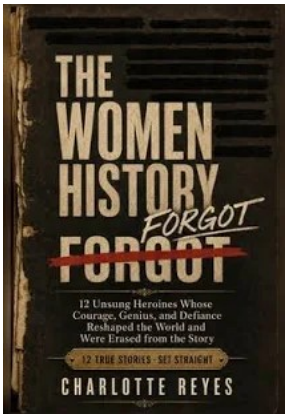
4. "Unsung Heroines: Women who Changed History"

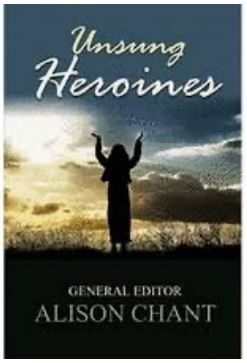
Instructors: Roberta Matz and Roberta McManus
Mondays 1:30-2:30
April 12, 19, 26, May 3,10
Cost: $25

In 1776, Abigail Adams urged her husband to "remember the ladies" as the new nation took shape. Yet the achievements of many women have remained overlooked or forgotten. This course will bring their stories to light, highlighting women from different eras and fields who broke barriers, achieved important firsts, and helped shape history. Join us in celebrating their courage, persistence, and lasting contributions—and in making sure these remarkable women are remembered.

Roberta Matz was a classroom teacher for 30 years, teaching French and Hebrew languages and Judaic studies in public and private schools. Additionally, Roberta worked for the Jewish Federations of Greater Philadelphia and Delaware, where she worked on Jewish Life and learning, community development and outreach.

Roberta McManus had a 39-year career teaching science in the Oxford Area School District, and co-authored two books on teaching strategies. She continues to be involved with schools as a volunteer and board member with the Oxford Educational Foundation.





Afternoon Lecture Series will continue –Fridays – at 2 p.m. in the Greg Walsh Auditorium/Chesapeake Room
No charge or sign up needed

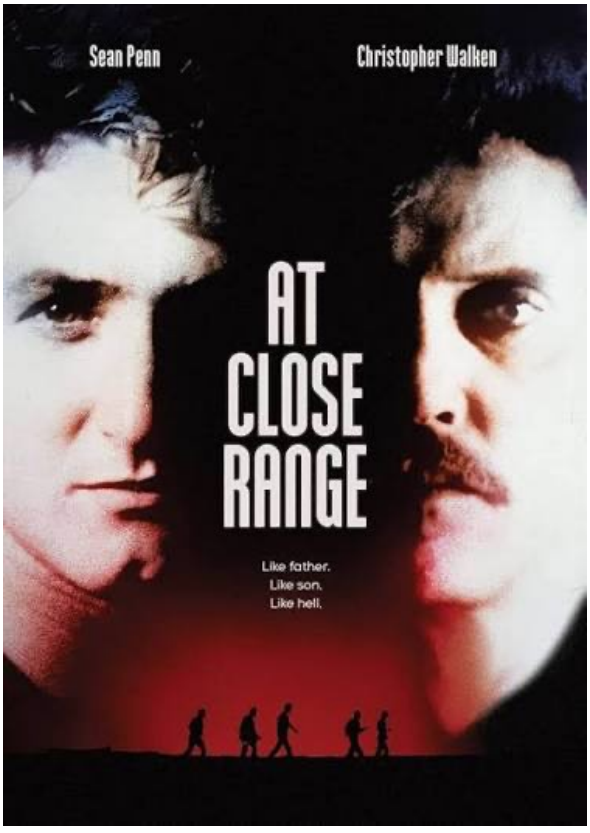
1. **Friday, January 8- 2 p.m. Chesapeake Room**

   "Chester County's Number One Criminal Gang: Tractors, Paintings and Murder!"

   Bruce E. Mowday

Members of Chester County's notorious crime gang stole tractors, construction equipment and almost anything not nailed down. Gang members stole millions of dollars of paintings from the Andrew Wyeth. And, the Johnston Gang murdered. There was even a Hollywood movie on the gang, *At Close Range*.

Bruce E. Mowday is an award-winning author and newspaper reporter. He has authored more than 25 books on history, sports, business and true crime. He will talk about the gang and his personal experiences covering the murder trials for the *Daily Local News*.



2. **Friday, February 12, 2 p.m**. Chesapeake Room

"Ida Jones – American Folk Painter"
Thea Horstink Searles

Ida Jones, native of Chester County, was a folk artist who began painting at age 72 and completed over 300 works of art in less than 14 years. Ida's art is primitive, akin to Grandma Moses. She has been called the Grandma Moses of Chester County. Her grandson, Milton Jones Searles, spent his retirement years researching her story. His wife, Thea, has completed the journey and she will tell us about this remarkable woman

Thea Horstink Searles, is from Gelderland, the Netherlands. She met her future husband, Milton Jones Searles, from Ercildoun, PA by chance in the train station in Basel, Switzerland in 1971. Unbeknownst to them, Rand and Ginny Moll happened to be passing through in Basel that same day and were stuck in a traffic jam! Milton and Rand were best friends and colleagues. They were both language teachers in the Coatesville Area High School. Thea [Taya] and Milt were married in the Netherlands in 1973, after which Thea moved to the States. Sadly, Milton passed away in 2022. Since then, Thea has continued Milt's "work" to get his Grandmother Ida Ella Ruth Jones and her primitive/folk art more well-known in Chester County and beyond.



3. **Friday, March,12, 2 p.m.–**

"A Woman's Place is in the Kitchen" – Auditorium
Roberta Matz

Women have spent years of their lives in the kitchen – over an open fireplace, in an outbuilding, washing dishes in the stream, preserving food with salt and managing a household in very trying circumstances. Then, clever women began to step up and create labor saving devises and strategies for the home kitchen. Come learn about these women innovators who truly made a kitchen the women's place.

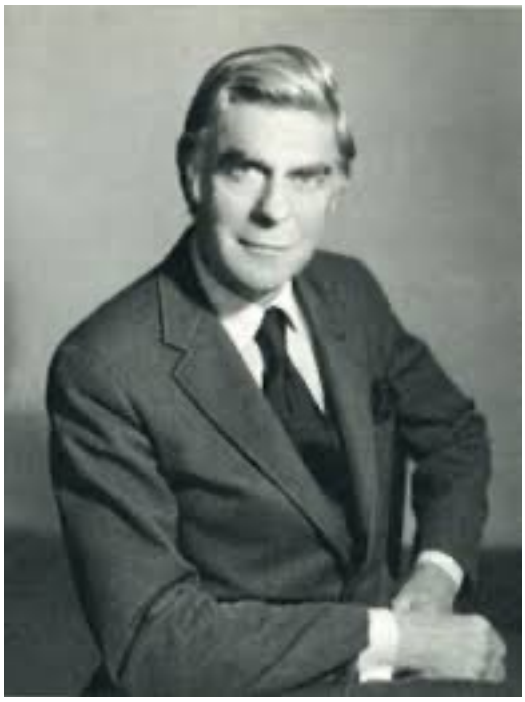
Roberta Matz was a classroom teacher for 30 years, teaching French and Hebrew languages and Judaic studies in public and private schools. Roberta also worked for the Jewish Federations of Greater Philadelphia and Delaware, where she focused on Jewish Life and learning, community development and outreach. She loves preparing and teaching lifelong learning classes on many topics.





4. Friday, April 9, 2 p.m. Auditorium

"Harry Grier: Monuments Man"
Roberta McManus



Did you know that Chester County had a Monuments Man in Europe in the 40s retrieving art stolen by the Nazis? Born in 1914, Harry D. M. Grier never forgot his hometown of Oxford in southwest Chester County. But his hometown and county seem to have forgotten him. Let's explore the interesting life of this man who went from Oxford, PA to becoming well-known in his chosen field. His army service took him from Normandy to Berlin. Decorated by several governments he did important work on retrieving art in post-war Germany. He later become the Director of the prestigious Frick Collection in New York City. Join us to bring this decorated and talented man back to life, both personally and professionally.

Roberta McManus had a 39-year career teaching science in the Oxford Area School District, and co-authored two books on teaching strategies. She continues to be involved with schools as a volunteer and board member with the Oxford Educational Foundation. She is fascinated by local history and the many important people who came from Southern Chester County.

5. Friday May 7, 2 p.m. Auditorium

"Rodgers and Hammerstein"

Rodgers and Hammerstein, with their first Broadway musical, Oklahoma!, began a new genre of the musical play, representing the unique fusion of Richard Rodgers' musical comedy and Oscar Hammerstein's operetta. A milestone in the development of the American musical, it also marked the beginning of the most successful partnership in Broadway musical history. They went on to unprecedented success, composing 9 musicals for the stage, one for a movie, and one for television; and they won a multitude of awards and honors. In this class, we will explore the genius of Rodgers and Hammerstein and the sound of their music.

Patti Garver Patty is certified in clinical counseling, life coaching and music/sound healing**.** She has been an instructor for Life Long leaning programs, Neumann University and the Community College of Philadelphia. She is a member of the resident chorus of the Philly Pops, the Media Chamber Chorale and the Healing Presence of Singers. She firmly believes in the healing power of music for body, mind and spirit.

