



PO Box 564
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www.springfieldhistory.org

The Challenge

PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

Early European Settlement of Chestnut Hill & Springfield Township

A Presentation by **Jefferson M. Moak & David Contosta**; Moderated by **Miles Orvell**

NOVEMBER 2012

IN THIS ISSUE:

- President's Corner
- Bus Trip to Hudson Valley
- Letter to the Editor
- Community History Documentation Project
- Archives Update
- From the Archives

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Thursday, November 8th, 2012 – 7:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Bethlehem Pike & East Mill Road in Flourtown, PA

The Springfield Township Historical Society and the Chestnut Hill Historical Society will continue its series of programs on the *“Early European Settlement of Chestnut Hill and Springfield Township,”* with a presentation on Thursday, November 8, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Bethlehem Pike and East Mill Rd., Flourtown.

Speakers will be Jefferson M. Moak, Senior Archivist with the National Archives & Records Administration, and David Contosta, Professor of History at Chestnut Hill College and co-author of *“Metropolitan Paradise: The Struggle for Nature in the City: Philadelphia's Wissahickon Valley, 1620-2020.”* Moak's talk, *“Chestnut Hill and Springfield Township: 18th Century Land Development and Architecture,”* will include the original land partitions of Chestnut Hill and Springfield Township, an introduction to the 18th century roads, and examples of 18th century architecture, both demolished and extant. Contosta's presentation, *“Millers and Mystics,”* will explore the incongruous history of the Wissahickon Valley as both an early industrial powerhouse and as the home of a millenarian Pietist sect known as the “Hermits of the Wissahickon.”

The moderator will be Miles Orvell, Professor of English and American Studies at Temple University

and Editor in Chief of the *Encyclopedia of American Studies Online*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press.

The programs included an October 11 presentation on *“Lay of the Land: Revolutionary Springfield and Chestnut Hill,”* by J. M. Duffin, editor of *Acta Germanopolis, Records of the Corporation of Germantown, Pennsylvania, 1691-1707*, and David Luz, Executive Director of the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center in Pennsburg, PA. Luz discussed the distinctive theology of the heirs of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig, a radical figure of the Protestant Reformation in Germany. A tour of the Schwenkfelders' cemetery in Wyndmoor took place on October 14.

This promises to be an exciting and educational program on the early settlement of the Springfield area. The public is invited to attend, and there is no charge for admission. Reservations are not required. Light refreshments will be served.



(top) Jerry Heebner, Editor of *The Schwenkfeldian*, a publication of the General Conference of the Schwenkfelder Church, addresses members of the boards of directors of the Chestnut Hill and Springfield Township historical societies on a tour of the Yeakel Cemetery.



(middle) Jerry Heebner standing in front of a large stone erected on the 200th anniversary of the emigration of the followers of Caspar Schwenckfeld. The stone lists names of emigres buried in three cemeteries, including the Yeakel Cemetery.



Shirley Hanson (left), a member of the historical society's advisory board, and Dot Cutler, a board member of the historical society, study graves at the Yeakel Cemetery.

For more information call 215-233-4600

PLEASE NOTE:

Attendees to the November program are encouraged to bring a canned food item to donate to the First Presbyterian Church's neighborhood food pantry. Please help us to support this important cause.

President's Corner

My President's Corner articles over the past nine years have covered a broad range of topics. Sometimes the idea for an article came easily to me, and honestly at other times I struggled with writer's block and they came slowly. Well this one is the toughest of all for me to write. I will be stepping down from the Board at the end of this year to pursue other historical activities, so this article is my opportunity to let you know what an honor it has been to serve on the Board since 1998 and to be your President since 2004.

I take comfort in knowing that STHS is as solid an organization now as it has been in its 27 years of existence. The current Board is comprised of very talented individuals who function well as a team, with the group's STHS tenure ranging from 1985 through the current year. The organization is in a permanent home at the Black Horse Inn, it is financially sound, and its range of service offerings to its Friends and the community is as strong as ever. I'm very proud of the current Board, as well as those that came before them, who contributed to STHS' growth and maturity into the present day service organization it has become. STHS is the recognized researcher, preserver, and educator of Springfield Township's illustrious history. The society can be proud of their professionally cataloged collection that continues to grow, a modern web presence on the Internet, published books about the township's history, educational speaker programs throughout the year, a presence at community events, and conductor of special events like historic trolley and bus tours.

There are many people who supported and guided me during my time on the Board and as President, and I owe them all a tremendous debt of gratitude. Just to list their names would fill up all the pages of this edition of *The Challenge*. There are two in particular though who are no longer with us, that were earlier influencers for me, and whom I would like to recognize. Marie Kitto, one of our founders, instilled in me an appreciation and love of Springfield's history long before I joined the Board. She was a good friend and historical confidant, and the person who nominated me for the Board. John Roberts, who I served under as Vice President for 2 years prior to being elected President, helped me to understand and appreciate the responsibility and the honor it is to lead this important organization. Their guidance proved invaluable.

I have always been proud to tell people that I'm a member of the Springfield Township Historical Society and that will not change now. It has been a big part of my life these past 15 years, and I look forward to continuing to actively contribute as a Friend of STHS towards their mission of *Research, Preservation, and Education*. I ask you to continue your proud participation and support of this wonderful and important organization which keeps Springfield Township's history alive for generations to come.

Always keep the past in the present,

Ed Zwicker

DON'T MISS THE BUS!!!



Lyndhurst Estate in Tarrytown

There's still time to reserve your seat for our Fall Bus Tour to New York's Historic Hudson Valley!

Come and enjoy the late fall foliage and Halloween decorations as you visit two architectural gems: Jay Gould's Lyndhurst, in Tarrytown, and John D. Rockefeller's Kykuit, in Sleepy Hollow.

Lyndhurst is a 67-acre estate that dates back to 1838. Originally designed for New York mayor William Paulding, the home later became the summer residence of the Wall Street financier Jay Gould. Widely considered to be one of the foremost examples of Gothic architecture in the U.S., Lyndhurst has been used as the backdrop for various movies, including the *Dark Shadows* films of the 1970s, and was recently selected as one of America's most beautiful mansions by *Forbes* magazine. Our tour will include several special Halloween twists and the grounds will feature hundreds of seasonally decorated scarecrows.

A gorgeous Classical Revival mansion, Kykuit is one of the preeminent landmarks of the Hudson Valley. Built for the world's richest man, John D. Rockefeller, in 1913, this sprawling estate became the home for four generations of the family. The six story, 40-room mansion features an outstanding collection of fine furnishings, Chinese and European ceramic, and 20th century art. The surrounding 250 acres contain many gardens, terraces, fountains and sculptures, all with spectacular views of the Hudson River.



Kykuit in Sleepy Hollow

The Fall Bus Tour will take place on Saturday, October 27th, 2012. The bus will depart at 7:30am from in front of the Springfield Township Historical Society's archives in the Black Horse Inn, 1432 Bethlehem Pike, Flouertown. The bus is expected to return by 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$100 per person, and all proceeds will be used to support the Springfield Township Historical Society. To purchase tickets please visit: <http://kykuitbustour.eventbrite.com>.

Letter to the Editors

THE EDITORS OF
THE CHALLENGE
WELCOME FEEDBACK
FROM READERS

"Ed Zwicker really came up with a perfect example of 'keeping the past in the present' with his discussion of street names in the recent Challenge. It is so interesting and calls us to reflect on the street names. And to put in all the time he must have needed to compile the list and find the connections resulted in a fascinating look into so many names with historical roots. I for one will look at street names in a whole new way."

Phoebe Rosenberry

Community History Documentation Project

Thanksgiving is a time for family and friends to gather to reflect on the past and share memories. This Thanksgiving, we hope that our readers will help us with our **Community History and Documentation Project (CHDP)** by completing one of our forms to share your memories of life in Springfield Township.

The Springfield Township Historical Society's CHDP seeks to acquire personal recollections from township residents and

former residents about the people, places and events that shaped the history of our township. The information compiled will be added to our archive to benefit future generations and may be used for purposes of research, education, publication and exhibition.

We would very much appreciate you taking the time to share your recollections of life in Springfield Township and we look forward

to receiving your input to this valuable and interesting project.

Please visit the "archives" section of our website, www.springfieldhistory.org, to print a CHDP form. Completed forms should be mailed to the Springfield Township Historical Society, PO Box 564, Flourtown, PA 19031.

If you have any questions or need printed copies, please contact STHS at 215-233-4600.

Thanks to those who have contributed to this important project:

"Ice skating on gov't pond which fireman flooded with water to smooth out."

JANE MONEFELDT STROCK, KAREN MONEFELDT CATON,
LOUISE MONEFELDT BASTEDO

"One unusual feature was the 'home made' golf course in the back yard. We buried coffee cans in the ground, the boys hit golf balls into these cans almost every day. They both learned the basics of golf this way and both became good golfers."

LOIS AND HARRY DOMM

"Arlingham was a development of the mid 1920s (bounded by East Valley Green Road, Church Road and Sunnybrook Road) partly in Springfield and partly in Whitemarsh. Because of the 1929 Crash it was not fully developed in the 30s and therefore lots of open ground for playing games. Strawberries and asparagus grew wild and pheasants and rabbits abounded."

RICHARD R. NEELY, JR.

"Buckley's Variety Store was where you could go in and get a cherry coke made from syrup, not poured from a bottle. You could also get a milkshake and strings of red licorice and even order a cheesesteak from Mr. Buckley and sit at the old fashioned counter."

JOHN A. D'LAURO

"At the corner of New Street and Pleasant, there were some homes on one side, but the other corner was a large open field with no buildings of any kind. Our backyard had the proverbial vegetable garden plus an arbor for the grape vine and, a lovely Italian prune tree. Each year we made wine and brandy for our own family consumption. Since World War II struck one year after my birth...

we also were encouraged to plant a victory garden and land was made available to citizens for that purpose. Our plot was located behind the present site of the Firehouse. Each day when the men came home from working in a defense plant, the family would eat dinner and then go to the victory garden to weed, water and fertilize the crops."

ESTER BONNIE ROSA (CINTRON)

Archives UPDATE

The Springfield Township Historical Society Archives recently participated in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories project. A team from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania came to the Archives to survey the collection over two days this summer. The STHS collection will be listed, along with those of other small Pennsylvania repositories, on the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries website. The survey team has written a blog post highlighting our collection titled "Opulent Resources at Springfield Township HS" that you can read at: www.hsp.org/blogs/archival-adventures-in-small-repositories

From the Archives:



Wyndmoor Athletic Club, 1947.

This photo is held in the Springfield Township Historical Society archives.

The archives are OPEN to the public

Tuesday Evenings 7pm–9pm • Wednesdays 11am–1pm • Saturdays 9am–12noon For more information, call 215-233-4600

Reserve the Date

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