



PO Box 564
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The Challenge

PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

The Mining Industries of Southern Montgomery County

Presented by Ronald A. Sloto

Research Professor of Earth and Space Sciences, West Chester University

MARCH 2020

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Upcoming News & Events:



History in Motion 7 and

*Springfield's Great
Estates of the Gilded Age*

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Thursday, March 26, 2020 – 7:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church – Bethlehem Pike & East Mill Road in Flourtown, PA

When you visit the Sandy Run Park on the northwest corner of Walnut Ave. and Oreland Mill Road in Oreland and see a water-filled pit these days, you might never know that it was once a quarry. In 1898, John Schlimme purchased 64 acres of land that included a stone quarry with iron ore deposits and leased it to F. Cairo & Son, a Germantown contractor. Following Schlimme's death, it was taken over by Nicholas Cascietti who operated it as the Oreland Crushed Stone Company. It had a capacity of crushing 250,000 tons per year in 1939.

In 1954, then operated by the Stowe Trap Rock Company, it produced crushed limestone, riprap, road material and railroad ballast. It flooded during a spring snow storm that knocked out power, shut down pumps and submerged the quarry. It was purchased by the U.S. Navy in the early 1960s for underwater sonar testing and the site was known as the U.S. Navy Deep Water Facility. Springfield Township accepted ownership of the site from the United States Department of the Interior in 1999 and opened the 14 acre Sandy Run Park.

This is one of several quarries in the southern part of Montgomery County that West Chester University professor Ronald A. Sloto will discuss at the Springfield Township Historical Society program and is among the quarries he has written about in a 2019 self-published book, *The Mines and Minerals of Montgomery County*, Pennsylvania. Sloto worked for



The Oreland Quarry, now Sandy Run Park, located on Walnut Avenue (above) and in 1954 (left). Springfield Township Historical Society Collection 2008.78.1



41 years for the U.S. Geological Survey before he began teaching at West Chester University.

In his books, which also include *The Mines and Minerals of Berks County* and *The Mines and Minerals of Chester County*, Sloto said that he put together his interest in

mineralogy, history and geology in one place. While working on the books, he was able to explore some, while others are gone. According to Sloto, the quarries are being filled in and built on. Corson's Quarry in Plymouth Meeting still operates one while

another has been built on and another is being filled in to be built on. Much of Montgomery County was once covered in sand stone, crushed stone, marble and iron. Asbestos was huge, he said, noting that Ambler was the asbestos capital.

Other quarries in Springfield Township described in his book include Enfield Farm Clay Pits, the abandoned iron ore pits of the Joseph Yeakle mine at Five Points, which was later purchased by Joseph H. Dulles Allen, an artist who started Enfield Pottery & Tile Works in 1906. The Yeakle quarry, which was in operation before 1877, provided crushed stone for railroad construction. The McCloskey quarry, at the northeast corner of Wissahickon and Stenton Aves., was in operation in 1898. A supplier of crushed stone for roadwork, it was known as the R.J. McCloskey quarry in 1912.

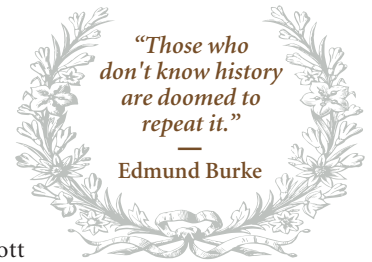
This Historical Society program is open to the public free of charge. Reservations are not required.

Light refreshments will be served. For more information, call 215-233-4600 or visit www.springfieldhistory.org.

PLEASE NOTE:

Attendees to the March 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



On December 11th, the Springfield Township Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to adopt a Preservation Ordinance overlay for the Township. The creation of a Preservation Ordinance has been a primary goal of the Springfield Township Historical Society since its inception in 1985. I'm very happy that STHS has had the opportunity to make significant contributions to this milestone in protecting the historic resources of our community. The next step is the formation of a Historic Resources Committee that will advise the Springfield Township Board of Commissioners. If you, or someone you know, has an interest in serving on the Committee, please contact Township Manager Michael Taylor.

The Whitemarsh Hall urns have returned to the Township and have been placed near the entrance to the Free Library. The urns have been covered for the winter. In the spring, the covers will come off and the urns will be conserved. Donations are still being accepted for the long-term care of the urns. Please visit our website at www.springfieldhistory.org.

Since our last newsletter, there have been several changes to the Board of Directors. Dorothy Cutler, a founding member of the Historical Society, has been named our first Emeritus Board Member.

Dorothy's many contributions over the last 35 years have helped our Society grow and thrive. Thank you, Dorothy.

Leaving the Board are Scott Armington and Mandy Helwig. Both Scott and Mandy served several terms on the Board, Scott as our Treasurer, and Mandy as our Events Chair. Thank you, Scott and Mandy, for your efforts on behalf of the Historical Society, and on behalf of the broader Springfield community.

Joining the Board is Kerry Boccella. Kerry, a resident of the Township since 2005, has a background in art and design. Kerry is involved with the Erdenheim Civic Association, Community Day, and is a member of the Township's Park and Recreation Advisory Committee. I'm looking forward to working with Kerry.

T. Scott Kreilick
President,
Springfield Township Historical Society

Archives UPDATE

Throughout the second half of 2019, Springfield Township Historical Society received nine gifts of personal papers, photographs, and ephemera. These gifts have included:

- Blueprints of Chestnut Hill Village, an unidentified house, and Proposed Reinforced Concrete bridge over Andorra Creek, Edward McCloskey building estimate, telegram and envelope addressed to Mr. JM McCloskey, and specifications sheet for pair of stone dwellings for Thomas Hudson (7 items), along with (3) digital photographs of St. Josephs Village from Michael F. Doyle.
 - Photocopy of article "Wyndmoor (PA) Hose Company #1's New Rosenbauer ACP" by Bob Vaccaro from *Fire Apparatus Magazine* Volume XXIV, August 2019 from Mary Washington.
 - Printout of online blog article "JFS: The Search For Simpson's Grave, Part 3" by Thaddeus Cooper, August 24, 2019 by Bob Wilmot.
 - Screenshots/images of ads and newspaper articles captured by Cindy Hamilton on housing plans Stotesbury and Whitemarsh Village (4 items).
 - Ephemera (Tim Wicks for Springfield Township Commissioner Ward 1 business card, and The Circuit Trails, trail map) collected by Katie Worrall at Community Day.
 - "The Wall Paper" Fall 2019 Volume XIII Number 29 (A Publication of the Cheltenham Township Historical Commission) featuring article on Laverock Hill, field collection by Archivist.
 - Railroad Blueprints for the Fort Washington Branch and other area rail lines donated by Tom Shiels (12 items).
 - Framed and matted watercolor of the Black Horse Inn, by E. Herkness. Donated by Tish Ingersoll.
 - Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County Volume XXXVIII, No. 2, 2019 from the Historical Society of Montgomery County.
- In addition to material donated for the collection, Mr. & Mrs. Howard Smith gifted an office chair for use in the Archives.
- STHS has had several inquiries from in-person visitors and online requests. The individuals sought information on historic data for various local properties, the Oreland Mines, an incident at the Department of Agriculture, and genealogical material. In addition, photograph requests were made in regards to the Reading Railroad and the Gate House on Whitemarsh Hall grounds. Frank Hartwell and Bruce Forman continue their research on the history of the tall clock which was added to the collection in 2018.
- We are extremely thankful for all of our dedicated volunteers. They provided approximately of 202 hours of service from August 1 – December 31. On-going efforts by volunteers Ray Smith, Barbara Coleman, Ed and Muriel Zwicker, Ed Zwicker IV, and Steve Lester to research, organize, and scan catalog records in the Society's collection, as well as assist researchers, have made a significant contribution to the accessibility of the STHS holdings.
- If you are interested in volunteering, researching a topic, or have items you wish to donate to the Society, please email us at archives@springfieldhistory.org.

Chief Egner's Last Parade



Chief Egner with another officer, at a corner along the parade route, May 30, 1942.

These still frames from a home movie capture moments in Wyndmoor's Memorial Day Parade, on Saturday May 30, 1942 – in the middle of World War II. They also preserve, quite by accident, the last work day of a long-serving Springfield Township Chief of Police.

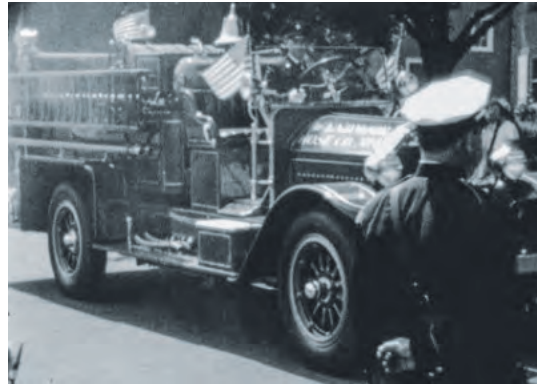
William H. Egner had started as a patrolman in the department, in 1926, and by 1932 he was elevated to Chief. Per newspaper reports, he was a genial and hard-working officer – he apparently spent some 91 hours at work each week, and had worked the parade on Saturday. Not long after returning to his Wyndmoor home, Chief Egner

died suddenly, at 5:30PM. Associates from the department said that he had seemed in good health earlier in the day. He was only 49 years old.

We have these images of the 1942 parade thanks to the family of Mr. William P. Chapman, the Superintendent of Buildings for the Metropolitan Museum, New York, who resided at Whitemarsh Hall from January 1942 through early 1944, supervising the museum personnel who were operating a secret art repository there, during the War. Mr. Chapman and his wife Agnes had moved from their home in Yonkers, NY, into the Terrace Suite which had formerly been



Section of a brass band marching down Willow Grove Avenue, May 30, 1942. Note the wrought-iron fence of the Whitemarsh Hall estate in the background.



Engine marked with Wyndmoor Hose Company No. 1, and decked out with 48-star flags, moving along the parade route, May 30, 1942.

All photos this article © 2018 by Family of William P. Chapman.

used, during the mid-1920s, by General Douglas MacArthur when visiting Whitemarsh Hall with his bride, Eva Stotesbury's daughter. Being responsible for the secret repository, and unable to leave Wyndmoor, the Chapmans encouraged their daughter to bring

her family for periodic visits, which were thankfully captured on home movies.

Thanks are due to the Chapman family for allowing us to share these images.

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Administrator, "Fans of Whitemarsh Hall" group on Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/WhitemarshHall/>



The Historical Society is on Facebook; find us at **Springfield Township Historical Society.**

**Become a Friend of
S T H S**

FOR DETAILS PLEASE VISIT:
www.springfieldhistory.org

**HISTORY
in MOTION**

SAVE THE DATE:

**Thursday,
November 5, 2020**

Details to Follow

RAIL LINES IN SPRINGFIELD

Written by Ray Smith

If you are relatively young or new to the township, you may think of local rail travel as being isolated to SEPTA's Doylestown and Chestnut Hill lines. Older residents will remember the rails crossing Bethlehem Pike in Flourtown and along Ivy Hill Road in Wyndmoor, but think of them as relegated to freight. You probably didn't know that five permanent rail lines and three trolley lines crossed through our town serving both passengers and freight.

From the mid 1800s to the mid 1900s, transportation was rail based and vital to Springfield. Numerous coal yards dotted our area and the larger ones were served by rail. Sidings were built to serve them and the various local industries. Here is a description of the lines and their stations and alternate names.

The SEPTA Doylestown line was previously called the **Reading North Penn** line and the **North Pennsylvania Railroad**. It ran to Lansdale and then split, going to Doylestown or Allentown. The three township stations were **North Hills (Edge Hill)**, **Oreland** and **Fellwick (Sandy Run, Camp Hill)**.

The **Plymouth Branch** of the Reading ran from Oreland through Flourtown and Plymouth Meeting and then joined the Reading Norristown line going to Philadelphia. The two township stations were **Whitemarsh**, near Church road in Oreland and the **Flourtown** station at Bethlehem Pike at Mill Road.

The **Fort Washington Branch** of the Pennsy's Chestnut Hill line ran along Ivy Hill (Cresheim) Road, through Laverock and along the present 309 expressway right-of-way, joining the Trenton

cutoff at Camp Hill and then to Trenton. The five township stations were **East Lane** (Ivy Hill), **Wyndmoor** (Asbestos, Nelmoor), **Sandy Hill**, **Enfield** (Roslyn Heights) near Paper Mill Road and **Sunnybrook** near Church Road.

The last two lines had short runs through the section of the Springfield panhandle ceded to Whitemarsh Township in 1876.

The **Norristown Branch** of the Philadelphia and Reading railroad ran along the Schuylkill from Philadelphia up through Conshohocken and Norristown. Its Springfield station was called **Princeton**.

The **Schuylkill Division** of the Pennsy also ran along the river from Philadelphia through Norristown. Its Springfield station was **Lafayette**.

Two trolley Lines in Springfield ran along Bethlehem Pike, terminating in Erdenheim at White City where Rittenhouse Lumber is now located. One line was an extension of the Chestnut Hill 23 trolley, running down Germantown Pike, then along Hillcrest Avenue where it continued down Bethlehem Pike. The second line ran from Erdenheim, out through Flourtown and Ambler continuing to Allentown.

A third trolley ran west along Germantown Pike from Northwestern Avenue, turning onto Sandy Hill Road in Plymouth and then to Norristown and beyond. It met another extension of the 23 trolley which also terminated at Northwestern Avenue.

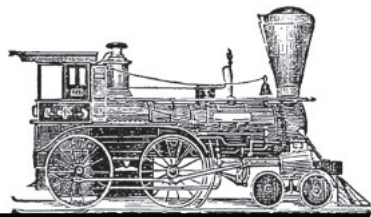
This was a bygone era but is well preserved in maps and photographs available in our archives. An 1893 map of the area railroads is available online from the Philadelphia Free Library with the following link: <http://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/zoom/16582>.



The picture "Grade crossing on Bethlehem Pike at Mill Road" was taken in 1936. Springfield Township Historical Society Collection 2013.125.1129.1.



Here is a similar view from the 70s with a single track across the pike. Springfield Township Historical Society Collection 2013.125.1129.2.



Call for Archives Volunteers

Our dedicated group of volunteers are continuing to catalogue our collection. Our volunteers provide a valuable service to the historical society and are vital to carrying out our mission. If you like history and working with computers and have an hour or two to spare each week please contact the archives at archives@springfieldhistory.org or 215-233-4600.

The Archives are **OPEN** to the Public

Wednesdays 1pm – 5pm
Saturdays 9am – 12noon

For more information, call 215-233-4600

STHS Receives Preservation Award

Springfield Township's creation of an Historic Preservation Ordinance and the restoration of a property in Wyndmoor were recognized by the Chestnut Hill Conservancy at its annual meeting.

Chestnut Hill Conservancy president Eileen Javers presented Preservation Awards to the Springfield Township representatives Baird Standish, vice president – now president – of the township Board of Commissioners, and Amanda Helwig, a former historical society board member and Springfield Township Planning Commission chairperson who headed the Historic Preservation committee that formed the ordinance.

Also in attendance were Springfield Township Historical Society representatives Scott Kreilick, historical society president, and Al Comly, who recently became the historical society treasurer after serving as its vice president. Planning the ordinance followed the demolition of several historic buildings in the township such as Whitemarsh Hall in 1980 and the Medinger House in 2017.



Eileen Javers (center), president of the Chestnut Hill Conservancy, holds the Preservation Award that was presented to Springfield Township for the formation of an Historic Preservation Ordinance. With Javers before the meeting were (from left) Amanda Helwig, a former historical society board member and Springfield Township Planning Commission chairperson who headed the Historic Preservation subcommittee that formed the ordinance; Al Comly, treasurer of the Springfield Township Historical Society; Baird Standish, president of the Springfield Township Board of Commissioners, and Scott Kreilick, president of the Springfield Township Historical Society.

The ordinance amends the township zoning code to establish an historic overlay district. Plans are for a committee to be formed that will be made up of five members with certain credentials. Kreilick, who works in preservation, and Comly, an architect, have submitted applications to be on the committee. After the committee is formed, a list of historic properties will be made. The ordinance committee will not be an architectural review board but more of a demolition delay board, according to Comly.

The property in Wyndmoor that was recognized is Foxlea, a 4 1/2 acre portion of a 31 acre estate called "Lane's End" that

was bought in the 1920s by the Rotan family. They retained architect Robert McGoodwin who designed an "English Village," a collection of Tudor-style buildings that included a 16th century cottage. The property was later renamed "Wharton Sinkler Estate" by the University of Pennsylvania, which sold the estate in 2000 in seven parcels and all of the land is protected from further development with a conservation easement.

Current owners Emilie and Peter Lapham retained Bonitatis Architects and a team of contractors to fashion a residence connecting three of the buildings. According to the Chestnut Hill Conservancy, there is a commitment to retaining and preserving the details and sense of an English village. The former stable was converted to a studio and an apartment. Other buildings and enclosing walls create "rooms," ideal for small gardens and part of the property was returned to a natural meadow with a walking trail through it to encourage wildlife.



(Top) Springtime view of renovated Foxlea

(Above) Foxlea under construction

(Photos courtesy of the Chestnut Hill Conservancy)



Coming this Spring to the Springfield Township Public Library

Our much anticipated exhibit on the
Springfield's Great Estates of the Gilded Age
will be installed at the Springfield Township
Public Library.



FROM THE *Archives*

Do
you
know
me?



This unidentified photograph of a young man posing while shoveling snow was cataloged into the archives collection in 2013. Based on the clothing the young man is wearing, perhaps this image was taken during one of the area's large snowstorms in 1915 or 1935? Springfield Township Historical Society Collection 2013.109.1

Reserve the Date

Thurs., March 26, 2020 – 7:30 p.m.

***The Mining Industries of
Southern Montgomery County***

Presented by Ronald A. Sloto

***First Presbyterian Church
in Springfield***



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