



PO Box 564
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www.springfieldhistory.org

The Challenge

PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

The Ladies of the Fair

An illustrated lecture by Thomas H. Keels, drawn from his new book,
Sesqui! Greed, Graft, and the Forgotten World's Fair of 1926.

Presented by Mr. Tom Keels

Thursday, October 5th, 2017 – 7:30 p.m.

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

OCTOBER 2017

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The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition of 1926 was meant to be the greatest world's fair since the 1876 Centennial.

Thanks to political corruption, greed, egotism, and the wettest summer on record, it became a crumbling, sodden, bankrupt mess, Philadelphia's "forgotten fair." The Sesqui served as a symbol for the city's monolithic Republican Organization, where one boss (Congressman William S. Vare, the "Duke of South Philadelphia") could kidnap an entire world's fair and whisk it from the newly completed Fairmount Parkway to the swamps of South Philly, his congressional district.

One of the few bright spots of this ill-fated fair was the High Street of 1776, a recreation of a Federal-era Market Street lined with 22 reconstructions of vanished historic structures, from William Penn's Slate Roof House to the Jefferson Declaration House. Created by the Women's Committee, the Street of 1776 was the Sesqui's most popular single attraction, and one of the few to turn a profit. Other popular attractions created by women included Sulgrave Manor, a replica of the ancestral English home of the Washington family, and a recreation of Mount Vernon.

The Ladies of the Fair describes how Philadelphia women – most of them from the city's oldest and most venerable families – defied the corrupt Republican Organization to create some of the fair's most memorable monuments. It also shows how these women used

their exhibits to bring the history of Philadelphia and America to vivid life.

The Springfield Township Historical Society welcomes back Mr. Tom Keels, author or co-author of six published books on Philadelphia history: *Wicked Philadelphia: Sin in the City of Brotherly Love*; *Forgotten Philadelphia: Lost Architecture of the Quaker City*; *Chestnut Hill*; *Philadelphia Graveyards and Cemeteries*; *Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square*; and *Philadelphia's Golden Age of Retail* (with Lawrence M. Arrigale).

Please join us on October 5th, as Mr. Keels talks about this fascinating and entertaining aspect of the fair detailed in his latest book *Sesqui! Greed, Graft, and the Forgotten World's Fair of 1926*, the compelling story of a world's fair that crashed and burned against the backdrop of a changing, conflicted city during the Roaring Twenties.

The public is invited to attend, and there is no charge for admission. Reservations are not required. Light refreshments will be served. For more information call 215-233-4600.



PLEASE NOTE:

Attendees to the October 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.

The Springfield Township Historical Society's Annual History in Motion

event will return on Thursday, November 2, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Ambler Theater, 103 E. Butler Pike, Ambler, with a first-person story told by reenactors of "The People of Whitemarsh Hall".

This upstairs-downstairs story will describe how Whitemarsh Hall, a 120-room Georgian mansion situated on 325 acres in Springfield Township, was built and how it was run.

Whitemarsh Hall was built and owned by Edward T. Stotesbury, a self-made man, who rose from the position of \$200 per year office boy to that of senior partner in the firm of J.P. Morgan & Company, and its Philadelphia affiliate of Drexel & Company, worth over \$100 million at his zenith. A widower for over 30 years after the death of his first wife, he then married Lucretia Roberts Cromwell, known to her friends as Eva. With this marriage his life would change dramatically from both a social and a financial perspective. Stotesbury built Whitemarsh Hall in 1921 as a tribute to Eva and her desire to gain them acceptance into the uppermost reaches of Philadelphia society.

Although it may have appeared magically on a rise over Whitemarsh Valley, the truth was that it was painstakingly created by a famous dream team consisting of architect Horace Trumbauer, landscape architect Jacques Greber, and art dealer Joseph Duveen. Once built it took a staff of over 100 to tend to the house, the grounds, and the Stotesburys themselves.

Guests at History in Motion will be welcomed by Stotesbury, portrayed by former historical society board member Andy Logan, who will set the

HISTORY IN MOTION 4 The People of Whitemarsh Hall



stage for the evening's presentation. He will be followed by Horace Trumbauer and Joseph Duveen, portrayed by Edward Zwicker III and Edward Zwicker IV who will talk about the creation of "Whitemarsh Hall." Hugh Smith, the Stotesburys' footman also portrayed by Edward Zwicker III, and Maurice Deschamps, the head gardener portrayed by Edward Zwicker IV, will then talk about the running of the home and property.

The evening will be filled with never before told stories and memories taken from actual interviews of the staff from over thirty years ago, along with some of their personal photographs and videos taken in the early 1930s.

Edward Zwicker IV, a former president of the Springfield Township Historical Society and co-author with his brother, Charles G. Zwicker, of "Images of America Whitemarsh Hall: The Estate of Edward T. Stotesbury" continues to volunteer in the historical society archives. His father, Edward C. Zwicker III, is also a volunteer in the archives.

A 30 minute complimentary wine tasting by Chaddsford Winery will take place just before the program begins. Whitemarsh Hall merchandise will be available for sale and will include tiles and notecards depicting a pen and ink drawing by Sally Yates; prints from the historical society's Deming Collection and copies of "Images of America Whitemarsh Hall the Estate of Edward T. Stotesbury,"

Tickets are \$25 each, includes entry and the complimentary wine-tasting, or VIP tickets, for \$40, includes, entry, wine-tasting and a copy of "Images of America Whitemarsh Hall: The Estate of Edward T. Stotesbury".

It was the loss of Whitemarsh Hall in 1980 and other significant historic buildings in Springfield Township that influenced the establishment of the historical society, a 501(c)(3) organization based in Flourtown. Its mission is to research and preserve the history of Springfield Township and educate the general public as to this history. Tickets may be purchased at <https://him4.eventbrite.com>. For more information, please call the historical society at 215-233-4600 or visit www.springfieldhistory.org.

Notice of Elections, October 5, 2017

Elections will be held at our Annual Meeting on October 5, 2017. The Slate, prepared by the Nominating Committee, follows.

SLATE Directors also Serving as Officers – 4 year Terms

President	T. Scott Kreilick	2018-2021
Vice President	Albert M. Comly, Jr.	2018-2021
Treasurer	W. Scott Armington	2016-2019

DIRECTORS Terms take effect on January 1, 2018

Board Members for Re-Election

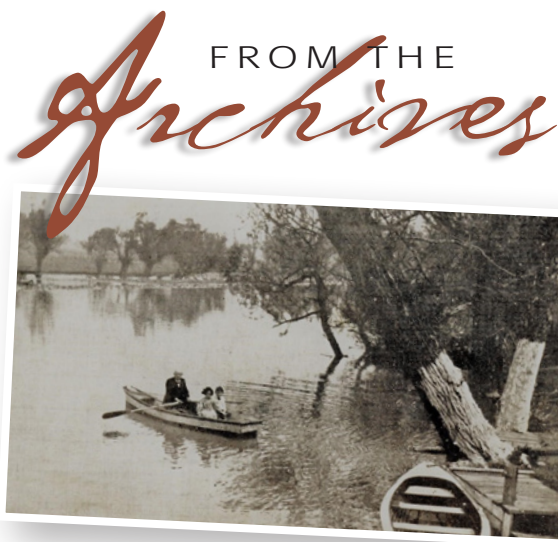
Cynthia Hamilton.....	2018-2021
Albert M. Comly, Jr.....	2018-2021
Anna Cox Toogood.....	2018-2021

Nominated Candidates for Election

Thomas H. Keels.....	2018-2021
Laura Reich.....	2018-2021
Judy Smith.....	2018-2021

Board Members Serving 4-Year Terms (elected October 22, 2015)

Robert Brock.....	2016-2019
Dolores Jordan Cannon.....	2016-2019
Dorothy J. Cutler.....	2016-2019
Katharine Haight.....	2016-2019
Amanda Helwig	2016-2019
Bud Henkels.....	2016-2019
Robert Wilmot.....	2016-2019
Catherine Worrall.....	2016-2019



Boating scene on the Wissahickon Creek at Hill's Dam in Flourtown. Circa 1901-1907.

Wyndmoor's French "Service Station"

First-time visitors to Claridge Circle at the end of Widener Road in Wyndmoor come upon something oddly out-of-place with the post-war-modern neighborhood – a tall, sculpted limestone pedestal, surrounded on four sides with low fountain basins (now filled with plantings), and capped with an allegorical sculptural group. Even those residents who have heard it called the "Juvisy Fountain" are likely unaware of its connection to French history.

One of the public works built by French King Louis XV (1710-1774) was a royal road connecting the capital (Paris) to the southern city of Lyon, and, along the way, the Château de Fontainebleau, a favorite palace that was greatly enlarged by this king.

Some natural barriers made it difficult to construct this road. Among these were the steep and slippery banks of the River Orge, in the town of Juvisy, south of Paris. In 1723, crossing the Orge was difficult in wet weather, and impossible in ice and snow. To solve this, an elevated bridge was planned letting the road cross over the river at the level of the surrounding hills. The King's engineers started excavating for the large foundations for this stacked-arch bridge, in 1724, and accidentally discovered several natural springs. This prompted the King to order that fountains be constructed, on top of the bridge – a "service station" of sorts for the travelers and their horses. These fountains, in part monuments dedicated to the King, were to be elegant – and were carved by a very-well-known sculptor of the day, Guillaume Coustou (1677-1746) who created many other works for King Louis XIV and Louis XV. As a result, the bridge, which was originally named the "Pont du Roi" (King's Bridge) became known as the "Pont des Belles Fontaines" (Bridge of the Beautiful Fountains) when completed in 1728.

Fast-forward to two hundred years later, when Jacques Gréber was searching for something to add as a centerpiece for The Plaza, a mid-point

in his landscape design between the Willow Grove Avenue main gates of Whitemarsh Hall and the mansion itself. He chose one of the two fountains from the bridge in Juvisy. Gréber's father, sculptor Henri-Léon Gréber, carved the massive limestone blocks (and two marble blocks designed as mirrors) in his Paris studio, in 1924, labeling each block with a letter and course number, and shipped them to Wyndmoor, where they were placed atop a concrete foundation that had been prepared.

While the Whitemarsh Hall Juvisy sculpture appears to be designed as a fountain (and even has internal piping to carry water to the mouths of the four figures), it apparently never operated as such as it never had a water source. The original plans would have connected it to an underground room intended to pump water to a huge fountain complex called the "Grand Bassin" – about four Olympic swimming pools in size – planned for the north side of the Plaza, but never constructed.

The two original fountains from the Pont des Belles Fontaines still exist, and can be seen today in a park near the city hall in Juvisy, where they were moved when the original bridge was widened, in 1970, to accommodate more traffic lanes as part of French National Route #7.



Photos (clockwise L-R):

The Juvisy Sculpture in Claridge Circle, 2013. Photo by author.

Engraved illustration published in a 1791 French travel guide, showing a horse and a woman partaking of the spring water from the fountain basin.

A French postcard from 1910, looking at the side of the Pont des Belles Fontaines from the level of the Orge river that it spans. The back side of the statue that Gréber copied for the Whitemarsh Hall Plaza can be seen on top of the bridge.

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<http://www.facebook.com/groups/WhitemarshHall/>

Scholarship Winner

Joseph Dolan, a member of the class of 2017 of Springfield Township High School, received the Springfield Township Historical Society Scholarship Award at the awards assembly at the school on June 13. The award is given to a graduating senior who plans to major in history, social studies or economics and was presented by social studies department head Peggy Zehner.

Dolan, a life-long resident of Flourtown, is the son of Dennis Dolan and the late Maryalyce Dolan, and the brother of Jessica Dolan. He is attending the College of Liberal Arts at Penn State, where he is majoring in political science. He first became interested in history in tenth grade when he took U.S. History 1. He studied AP history and AP government in 11th and

12th grades, and learned about issues such as checks and balances and separation of powers. He studied ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt in middle school.

"Mrs. Zehner taught me how to read well, write well and know a good source from a bad source," he said of the high school social studies department director.

Outside the classroom while in high school, he played baseball sophomore and junior years, and played lacrosse his senior year. He was vice president of his class sophomore year and was active in Youth and Government, a club at Springfield Township High School that models Pennsylvania state legislatures. He worked at Flourtown Country Club this past summer.



Joseph Dolan

Spotlight on Springfield

Oreland Swim Club Marks 60th Year

Written by Katie Worrall

ORELAND SWIM CLUB is celebrating its 60th year. The bonded club owned by members, which offers swimming, diving, and other activities was opened in 1957 at 190 Paper Mill Rd., Oreland, and started with between 175 and 200 families.

"Oreland started to sprawl after World War II," said club manager Stephen Dunscheskie. "There was a demand for a family place. They purchased the land in 1953. The pools have been upgraded but the lay-out is the same. We added a pavilion for families to use for parties. It is a covered space widely used for events."

Dunscheskie, who was born and raised in Oreland and teaches science and coaches swimming at La Salle College High School, has worked at the club for 25 years. He said that historically, people moved to Oreland as a starter place and that it is a great community. Residents often added onto their house and stayed in the neighborhood.

The first insurance for the club was with the Commonwealth Land Title Insurance Company, according to Dunscheskie. The land on which the club is located was farm land and was purchased three years prior to the club's founding. It backs up onto North Hills Country Club.

The club was built on what an April 19, 1956 article in the Sunnybrook Oreland Sun referred to as the "Kellner property."

Membership was required in the club in order to buy stock, which cost \$200. Membership was \$25 per family.

A March 8, 1956 article in that newspaper said that there was a drive for members and Oreland was divided up into nine areas for solicitation. Captains for each area were Claude Hills, Fred Schweitzer, Edward Strow, Dr. Howard Baier, Russell Johnson, J. Richard Butler, Fairways Thaddeus Jones, George Kates and Leonard Mower.

At the time of its founding, the club was led by a temporary board of directors which included Harry E. Reynolds, Walter Bergey, Winifred D. Murray, W. Griffiths Knorr, Jr., William R. Kershner, Souren Avakian, William F. Kamsler and Cornelius Zwart as well as Claude Hills, J. Richard Butler, George S. Kates and Leonard B. Mower.

Swimming was the focus of the club in its early years, Dunscheskie said, explaining that swimming and diving are the lifeblood of the club. The swim team won third place last year in the Lower Bucks Swimming League and won the league sports-



The pools have the same layout as they did when the club was opened, but they have been upgraded, the club manager said.



Children enjoy playing a game they call "gaga," similar to dodge ball.

manship award, five out of the last seven years. Between 130 and 150 children participate in the swimming and diving team.

The club offers a summer basketball league which competes against other clubs as well as volleyball and other activities. "We have weekly tournaments of wiffle ball, dodge ball, arts and crafts. We try to

make it not just for kids who come to swim but other activities. The prizes are treats at the snack bar," said Dunscheskie.

A family day and a gala took place in July. The family day, an all-day event with activities, is as American as you can get, Dunscheskie said. "It is a tradition that has been handed down."

Ghosts on My Property (Tracing Property Ownership – Part 1)

Written by Ray Smith

Have you ever wondered who lived on your land before you moved in but didn't know how to find out? The answers are available, although it may but take a little bit of digging. Montgomery County keeps detailed land records. These records date going back to 1784, when Philadelphia County was split up, and Montgomery County was created.

The quest starts with the current owner and then we follow links backwards, as far as you want to go. Every land transfer (sale, gift, combination, split, et cetera) has a record in a "Deed Book" that the county records. Each of these deeds is located by a combination of two numbers, a Deed Book number and the page number in the Deed Book. Sales records from the mid-1970's through today are online and you can look them up using your home or library computer. Earlier records may require a trip to Norristown.

Let's start with your current address to find the most recent record.

Here are the steps:

- 1 Using an internet browser (Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer...) go to "propertyrecords.montcopa.org"
- 2 Select "Search by Address"
- 3 Read the "Disclaimer" and click on "agree" at the bottom (yes, it's safe to use)
- 4 Enter the house number, street name, suffix, and Municipality and then click on the "Search" box e.g. "1432" "Bethlehem" "Pike" "Springfield" could go in these fields.
- 5 You will see a lot of information about the property. Verify that you have the correct record.
- 6 Click on "Sales" to get to a list of the most recent sales (and owners).

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Ghosts on My Property CONTINUED

Print the page that you see for your records. The “Deed Book and Page” number is our link to the past. You’ll need all of the information on the last line that contains these numbers.

Here are a few things you should know about the web site and the data.

- If you click on “Map” in the menu, the web site will display an outline of your property and show you the surrounding streets and properties. Each property will be labeled with a 12 digit parcel ID and an 8 character Tax ID. Both of these numbers start with “52” for Springfield Township. You can zoom in and out on the map using the “+” and “-” buttons and move the location on the map by left-clicking and moving your mouse.
- You can get information on any other parcel on the map by clicking on the Parcel ID –
- The measurements that you see associated with your property are based on what a developer or builder supplied prior to when the county digitized the data. The digitization was done by an outside service and shouldn’t be used to determine legal rights. Some measurements were very old and there were inconsistencies that weren’t resolved. Some measurements are from the center of a road and others are from the edge of the road. Roads and their widths changed over time. You would have to go to the actual deed and surveyor notes to determine correct measurements.

- In addition to finding a property by address, you can also search by owner, or as previously mentioned, locating a property on a map.
- Under “Residential” you may find a line “Year Built.” This answers one of the most asked questions that we receive when someone is researching their property.

In order to save time and a trip to Norristown, a good next step would be to stop by the Springfield Township Historical Society office. We have records and deed copies on some of the township properties. We also have books of maps that contains the names of the property owners at the time the maps were made. Much of Springfield Township was made up of farms, and later country estates. The maps may show you that you now live on historic farmland. This may satisfy your curiosity and you may decide not to spend time on further investigations. However if you do, in the next issue of *The Challenge* we’ll take you on a trip to the county property records office and show you how to track backwards and discover older deed records.

Being a friend of the Historical Society gives you access to our resources for your research needs. Our archivist and volunteers will welcome your questions.



This is the third in a series of reports by volunteer Ray Smith on books housed in the archives of the historical society.

Our library contains a 60+ volume transcription of historic papers chronicling the early actions of the Pennsylvania government and its people. During the 19th and early 20th century, the state ordered the collection and publication of almost every significant document written by and to the Government, from the time of William Penn, through the revolution and early 19th century. The undertaking was massive and a treasure for anyone doing research about this era. The index alone lists over one million names, an astonishing feat during the days before computers. Anyone who served in the Pennsylvania armed forces, both colonial and republic, is included in these volumes, many with details of their service, beginning and ending dates, pay, reason for separation and even physical description.

Here is a sampling of documents we found during a cursory look through the volumes as we were cataloging them:

- An indenture defining the boundaries of Pennsylvania from an agreement between Frederick Lord Baltimore and Thomas and Richard Penn who were proprietors of the disputed provinces in 1760. (King Charles I and King Charles II issued conflicting Charters for Maryland and Pennsylvania). This document was dated “4th July, 1760” (Maybe just a coincidence)
- Legal correspondence from the 1680s questioning the boundaries of the land grants to William Penn and Lord Baltimore
- The notification of the death of King George II.
*“Gen. AMHERST To Gov. HAMILTON, 1761.
New York, 1st January, 1761.
Sir:*

Yesterday arrived here Captain Prescott, one of my Aid de Camps, with Letters from Mr. Secretary Pitt, Notifying to me the most melancholy News of the Death of the Late King, on the 24th October, in the most Sudden manner. His Majesty having appeared perfectly well the day before, and even that very morning, that His present Majesty was proclaimed next

day, that the Parliament met on the 26th, and that the King was firmly Resolved Steadily to Support His Allies, and to prosecute the War with the utmost vigor.

These being His Majesty’s Resolutions, altho’ I have not as Yet received any Commands for the particular operations, which it may be found Expedient further to pursue in this Country, I think it Incumbent on me to give You the Earliest Notice of the Kings Intentions; and at the same time to acquaint You that the Services which still remain to be put into Execution, for Compleating the great object of the War in America, will require the further aid and Assistance of His Majestys good and faithfull American subjects; Wherefore, I must Desire You to be prepared for the immediate Compliance with the King’s Requisition, for such a number of men from Your Province, as shall be thought requisite by His Majesty to answer the proposed End of procuring a good and lasting Peace, which Requisition I doubt not You will receive soon.

*I am with great regard sir,
Your most obedient, Humble Servant,
JEFF. AMHERST.*

Honble Governor Hamilton.

- Numerous documents from 1775 and 1776 showing the preparations for war and divided allegiances of the Pennsylvania government and Committee of Safety. Many of the documents also deal with the concurrent bitter conflict with Connecticut for land in the Wyoming Valley, the touchy situation with Indian tribes and the still unsettled conflict with Maryland about piloting rights on the Delaware. His Majesty George III was still attempting to command loyalty from the seditious Americans, but these letters clearly show the leanings with respect to the crown by Philadelphians.
- Summaries of Governors papers during the many administrations from early colonial times leading up to Governor Wolfe (not the current one). Here is an amusing 1832 summary:
An Act supplementary to the Act entitled “An Act to alter an Act entitled an Act for the erecting the town of Easton in the County of Northampton into a Borough and for other purposes therein mentioned.”

If you are interested in learning more about these volumes, please call the archives at 215-233-4600 or send an email to archives@springfieldhistory.org for assistance.

Archives UPDATE

Archivist and Volunteer accomplishments over the last few months have included the following:

- Archivist transition – Jessica Walker completed her last day, June 21 before relocating out of the area. Stephanie Walsh began employment on June 28, 2017.
- The Bland/Crothers Collection has been processed.
- Continuation of cataloging Library Catalog
- Continuation of sorting through and organizing STHS records
- PastPerfect Online ordered and installed.

We are extremely thankful for all of our dedicated volunteers, without whom these projects would not be accomplished!

If you are interested in volunteering, please email us at
archives@springfieldhistory.org.

THE ARCHIVES ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

TUES. 7pm – 9pm • WED. 1pm – 5pm • SAT. 9am – Noon

For more information, call 215-233-4600

Reserve the Date

Thurs., Oct. 5, 2017 – 7:30 p.m.

The Ladies of the Fair

Presented by Mr. Tom Keels

***First Presbyterian Church
in Springfield***



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