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The Challenge

PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

The Eternal Wife – Mary Todd Lincoln

*A Presentation by
 Ms. JoAnn Tufo, appearing in the character of Mrs. Lincoln*

Thursday, March 26th, 2009 – 7:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Bethlehem Pike & East Mill Road in Flourtown, PA

The year 2009 marks the 200th Birthday of the “Great Emancipator” the 16th President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln. Please join us for a fun-filled night as we experience the life of President Lincoln through the eyes of his wife and partner Mrs. Mary Todd Lincoln, portrayed by Jo Ann Tufo, actress and historian.

Born in Lexington, Kentucky in December 1818, Mary Todd was raised in a large household of 15 siblings. She had a ready wit and sparkling personality that made her quite popular but also possessed an explosive temper and a quarrelsome nature. At the age of twenty Mary Todd left the family home and moved to Springfield, Illinois, where she was introduced to Abraham Lincoln. After a two-year courtship, they were married on November 4, 1842. The Lincolns enjoyed a comfortable marriage before the pressures of public life began to threaten her fragile mind. While she often resented her husband’s absence from their home as he practiced law and campaigned for political office, Mrs. Lincoln staunchly supported him as he faced the growing crisis caused by American slavery. This concluded in Lincoln’s election as President of the United States. She faced many trials and tragedies through the war years, eventually ending in the death of her husband from an assassin’s bullet.

This program will explore the fascinating personal life and marriage of one of the most intriguing first ladies in history.

Jo Ann is a Philadelphia-based professional actress, comedienne and lecturer who has delighted audience members with her realistic portrayals of characters ranging from 18th Century icons to 21st Century Mob Princesses. She trained at one of America’s oldest and most prestigious theater schools, The Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia. Her television work has been seen on Discovery Channel, History Channel and CN8. STHS members might remember Ms. Tufo as she portrayed Deborah Franklin at our program last May.

Her live performances have been enjoyed at many venues, including the historic Walnut Street Theater, the Union League and the U.S. Constitution Center. Jo Ann also studied American History at Temple University in Philadelphia.

This promises to be an exciting and educational program that focuses on a historic and interesting national figure. The public is invited to attend, and there is no charge for admission. Reservations are not required. Light refreshments will be served.



*(above)
 Mary Todd Lincoln
 c. 1846, Library
 of Congress.*



*(right)
 Mary Todd Lincoln
 c. 1863, Library of Congress.*

For more information call 215-233-4600

President's Corner

The Springfield Township Historical Society is entering its twenty-fourth year of existence since being founded in 1985. The Society has come a long way in that time, maturing in terms of its growth in membership, the size and contents of its collection, its exposure via our Internet presence and historical publications, and the expanded offerings of its programs and services. One constant that has been a hallmark of the success of this organization from the day of its inception until the present day, is the generosity and contributions of its many friends and volunteers.

Past *President's Corner* articles have spotlighted some of these volunteers, who continue to contribute to our various committees, programs, and service offerings. But behind the scenes have also been friends who have helped house our organization throughout its twenty-four year history.

The Society's first home was literally in a home, that of Executive Director and co-founder Marie Kitto in Flourtown. Our collection resided there until 1998, when we re-located to a one-room office in Wyndmoor, provided to us rent-free by our President at that time, Richard Buck. The Society was headquartered there until 2002, when we moved again, this time to a storage facility on Benezet Street, just over the Philadelphia line outside of Wyndmoor. This rent-free space, which we called home for three years, was provided to the Society courtesy of Chestnut Hill resident Richard Snowden. In 2005 we moved into the headquarters of the Chestnut Hill Historical Society (CHHS). We co-located with them, paying a very nominal

fee for rent in return for ample space to house our collection, with additional room available for expansion. This was the first time in our history that we were able to be open to the public for historical research. In addition, we were fortunate to secure the professional services of archivist Susan Anthony, who remains with us today, as well as several volunteers who continue to help catalog our collection. Over these past three years we've seen our collection grow substantially, through numerous contributions made by people who could see that their donations were being properly archived and cared for, and available for others to access for research purposes.

As we approached the end of 2008, CHHS required the space we occupied for their own expansion plans. Once again, Richard Snowden came to the rescue for our Society, providing a rent-free location for us on Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill. See the accompanying article for more exciting details on our new home. This current facility will allow us to continue housing our collection in a secure environment, while providing adequate space for our archivist and volunteers to operate, and offer researchers the ability to access our collection.

The success of our Society over its existence has been the product of considerable generosity on the part of many volunteers and friends, including those mentioned above. I would like to use this President's Corner to thank each and every one of them!

Keeping the past in the present,

Ed Zwicker

STHS Moves into New Quarters

Many hands made light work on a Saturday morning in January as the Springfield Township Historical Society moved its archives from their home for the last several years to a new temporary location at 8428 Germantown Ave., Chestnut Hill. The Black Horse Inn on Bethlehem Pike in Flourtown will be home to the historical society in the future.

Board members and their relatives were joined by friends and high school students as they moved furniture that had been on loan to the Montgomery County Fire Academy and boxes of deeds, photos and books from its previous rented space at the Chestnut Hill Historical

Society and the Friends of the Wissahickon to a 19th century frame building three blocks south of the CHHS/FOW headquarters. Relocating to another site enables the Chestnut Hill Historical and the Friends of the Wissahickon to have more room.

The first floor space at 8428 Germantown Ave., is being provided by Bowman Properties Ltd., a Chestnut Hill firm, and the Snowden family. Richard Snowden, general manager of Bowman Properties, said that his grandmother, the late Virginia Wilmsen, had been a founding board member of the Springfield Township Historical Society.

Mrs. Wilmsen, who lived in Wyndmoor, was a leader in the successful fights against 1967 plans for a high-rise apartment building at the corner of Stenton Avenue and Paper Mill Rd., and against 1980 plans for

a shopping center on the same property, according to STHS co-founder Shirley Hanson. Six houses were eventually built on a portion of the property; another part belongs to the Natural Lands Trust, Hanson said.

According to Susan Anthony, STHS archivist for the past four years, the STHS archives includes items of media such as photographs, papers, books, maps, three-dimensional artifacts and more, dating from colonial times to the Wyndmoor Hose Company's 100th anniversary last year. Anthony said that the archives includes an extensive collection on estates in the area, such as Edward T. Stotesbury's Whitemarsh Hall



The Springfield Township Historical Society archives are temporarily housed in a 19th century clapboard building at 8428 Germantown Ave., Chestnut Hill.



STHS Launches New Friends-Based Model!

See letter insert for additional details.

From the Archives...



1920s view showing Carson Valley School children at play presumably on the banks of the Wissahickon.



Susan Anthony, STHS archivist, looks over one of the books on local history that belong to our collection.

and properties on Montgomery Avenue in Wyndmoor, as well as photocopies of deeds dating to the 1700s, material from organizations such as the League of Women Voters and the Women's Club of Flourtown, and local history books. "People need to understand that their past is Springfield Township's past," said Anthony,

as she looked at a photocopy of a photo album that was recently donated to STHS.

Anthony accepts donations of scanned photos and photocopies of albums because she understands that families would want to keep the originals. The STHS archivist said that she would like to have more genealogical information in the archives because she gets requests from genealogists doing research on families.

Working with Anthony in the archives are volunteers John Frantz, Dulie Gray and Leslie Smith who help enter information on the STHS PastPerfect cataloguing software system and organize the collection. The volunteers were on hiatus in the weeks after the move while the shelving and computer system were set up.

The building at 8428 Germantown Ave. retains some of its original appearance with a ground floor porch, boxed framed openings and gabled dormers with a paired sash from the 19th century. Records in the Chestnut Hill Historic

District inventory state that no deeds show a frame building on the property prior to 1864. The property is said to be the birthplace of John G. Johnson (1841-1917), a lawyer and scholar whose art collection is at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.



There is plenty of space at the historical society's archives for our collection of photographs, papers, books, maps, and three-dimensional artifacts. The shelves were built and filled during the weeks after the move.

STHS archive hours are by appointment.
For more information, email Susan Anthony at santhony__STHS@comcast.net or call 215-233-4600.

Be a Friend!

Springfield Township Historical Society
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PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

The Challenge

Reserve the Date

Thursday, March 26, 2009 — 7:30 p.m.

The Eternal Wife – MARY TODD LINCOLN

A Presentation by Ms. JoAnn Tufo
Appearing in the character of Mrs. Lincoln



RECENT DONATIONS

In the past few months, the STHS archives has received generous donations from organizations and individuals. The **First Presbyterian Church** in Springfield donated the records of the Women's Club of Flourtown which had met in the church from the 1950's until the 1990's and the **Old York Road Historical Society** gave us the record books of the Springfield League of Women Voters. In addition, the OYRHS also provided us with copies of the *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* and of the journal *Pennsylvania History*; these are a valuable resource for historical researchers.



The **McCall family** generously provided us with a gorgeous copy of Nicholas Scull's 1759 "Map of the Improved Part of the Province of Pennsylvania" and a framed photo of the family

from the early 20th century. In addition, they graciously allowed us to copy a valuable family scrapbook which traces the life of Elizabeth Barton, born 1900, and her siblings. Please note that we are always happy to accept donations to the archives! You do not need to donate originals; we are able to digitally copy your photos and documents.



You might have seen items from the STHS archives in local newspapers and books, too. J. Scott Laughlin's piece about Whitmarsh Hall and Lynwood Hall was illustrated with our photos and several colorful White City postcards enlivened a Chestnut Hill Local article about the amusement park. Finally, Jim Garrison used our archives to research his book *Houses of Philadelphia and the Wissahickon Valley, 1880-1930*.