



Congratulations to our Award Winners

Congratulations to our 2020 Award winners and to all of our members and their guests for making our annual Valentine Awards Tea at Akwaaba B&B a huge success. We couldn't do it without you! Here is a list of the winners:

Gift to the Street Awards

315 N 35th Street	Scott Ryder and Doug Ewbank, Zach Zecha, Good Dog Painting
324-32 S 45th Street	University City Housing, Inc.
804 S 48th Street	Jocelyn & Philip Scribano, Greg Berzinsky, architect and Elbert Myers, contractor
914 S 48th Street	Frank Murphy & Mary Anne Domico, Lauren Mariani, Mariani Carpentry
922 S 48th Street	Jacob Schneider & Deidre Aaron
1010 S 45th Street	Martin Bodtmann & Scott Wilds, Russell Roofing, Roofing & Titan Property Masters, Painting
3317 Baring Street	Sandra Thompson & Rebecca Baranowski, Matthew Broomfield, Painter
3502 Spring Garden Street	Eric Cohen & Anne Pomerantz
4711 Windsor Avenue	Scott & Kim Meyer
4713 Windsor Avenue	Mark McGuire & Joann Verrier
4715 Windsor Avenue	Michael Garmisa & Bridget Sullivan Garmisa, Louis Tannen, Window; Wesley Neves, Painting; Chris Nattolino, Brick Pointing
4716 Hazel Avenue	Lucy Robinson and Samuel Burns
4718 Hazel Avenue	Eric Headley
4727 Springfield Avenue	Michael Outten & Ellen Hardaway
4817 Windsor Avenue	Michele Supple

Outstanding Preservation Award

4812 Florence Avenue	Maureen Tate
327 S 46th Street	Knickerbocker Properties

Preservation Initiative Award

Corey Loftus for her nominations of West Philadelphia properties to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, including St. Francis de Sales Church, House of Our Own Bookstore, and 4525 Spruce Street

UCHS would like to thank Akwaaba Bed & Breakfast for hosting our 2020 Valentine's Tea Award Ceremony and to Doris and Denis Cochran-Fikes for their assistance in preparation and to our Board members for making our annual event such a huge success. A special thanks to Ellie and Nick Cernansky for their support and hosting our Tea for so many years.

West Philadelphia Collaborative History Lecture

The University City Historical Society would like to thank John Puckett, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Education and Douglas Ewbank, Ph.D., Emeritus Research Professor (both at University of Pennsylvania), for giving an informative and entertaining presentation regarding the West Philadelphia Collaborative History project. John, Doug, and a host of local historians have dedicated many years in bringing this extraordinary project to fruition. All residents of West Philly are forever indebted to them for this wellspring of information about their neighborhood. It is impossible to give all of the information collected here in this limited space, so we urge you to visit the project at: collaborativehistory.gse.upenn.edu

The lecture and presentation was given at the Woodlands Mansion on January 22nd and drew a large and enthusiastic crowd of over 70 people eager to learn about the history of West Philadelphia.

UCHS would also like to extend our gratitude to The Woodlands for hosting our event. It was lovely to hear such an important lecture in such an historic setting.

Look for new and interesting installments of the UCHS lecture series in the future. They are free events and open to the public.

Top photo, John Puckett; bottom photo, UCHS President George Poulin addressing the audience in attendance at the Woodlands. Joseph Minardi, photographer.



Finding Your House's Roots: A Guide to Finding Your House in Censuses

Genealogy makes history personal. But to bring history home, you need to discover who lived in your house before you. It's now easy to find your house in censuses and view the handwritten sheets online. This is a step-by-step guide that will lead you through the process.

1. You start with the Unified Census ED Finder at stevemorse.org/census/unified.html. The first thing to do is to select the census year at the top of the page. It covers the censuses of 1880 to 1940.

2. Use the drop-down menu to select the state, county and city. For Philadelphia, you can then start typing the street name and use the drop-down menu to select it.

3. You will then see a drop-down menu for selecting a cross street. For example, you might select 35th NW and Baring streets. For the 1940 census, this leads to two enumeration districts: 51-685 and 51-686. You can narrow it down by picking different streets. For example, 34th and Baring leads to 51-685. (Smaller streets often work better.)

4. Click on the enumeration district (ED) number to see the census sheets. The 1940 census offers a choice of viewers. Choosing FamilySearch leads to FamilySearch.org, a free website which requires simple registration. After logging in to Family Search, you will now see the first page for the enumeration district. You can page through to see later pages.

5. You can then look for your house. The street name is written perpendicular in the left margin and the house numbers are in the first column. (Sometimes the street name is hard to read. However, they generally walked down a block. So check the previous and following pages.) Page through till you find your house. Note that sometimes a house is missed and not enumerated. However, if you find your neighbor's house but not yours don't despair. Often the enumerator returned later to fill in houses that were initially missed. Keep paging through. You might still find it. Also, look at the neighboring houses to get a feel for the neighborhood.

- Note: there were some changes in street names. You can sort those out at <https://www.phillyhistory.org/HistoricStreets/>. I found in Powelton that there were changes in the house numbers on some numbered streets that complicate the 1880 census. Also note that houses on double lots were not always listed the same in different censuses. For example, a house at 3410-3412 might be listed as either 3410 or 3412.

- Once you find your house, you can download the census sheet using the button at the upper right. Be sure to record your findings so they will be available to future residents.

- Unfortunately, the 1860 and 1870 censuses are not as easy to use. They didn't include street addresses. In 1870, the census was so poor that it was redone six months later. That round included addresses, but only names and rounded ages. Linking that to the first round is difficult and very time consuming even if you have access to Ancestry.com.

Happy hunting!

Thanks to Doug Ewbank for putting this together. We think you'll enjoy researching your house's history!

PROFILES IN ARCHITECTURE

Alexander Wilson, Jr.

Alexander Wilson, Jr. performed a number of tasks related to the real estate business. During his brief period of activity in West Philadelphia he was listed as an architect, a builder and a contractor.

Selected Relevant Commissions:

- 1909: Residences (3), 42nd and Chester area
- 1910: Residences (55), 57th and Chester area
Residences (7), 41st and Baltimore area

Happenings in 1895

On Thanksgiving, 1895, the first automobile race in America took place, on a 53-mile track between Chicago and Milwaukee. James Franklin “Frank” Duryea (1869-1967) won the \$2,000 grand prize, achieving an average speed of 5.25 miles per hour. 1895 also saw the introduction of the pocket version of the Kodak camera. Also it was the first year motion pictures were displayed to a paying audience. The American Bowling Congress was founded in New York City in 1895, and the Gillette razor was invented.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia nearly 7,700 new houses were built, up from around 5,900 in 1894.

From *A Guide Book of Morgan Silver Dollars, 6th Edition, 2019.*



University City Then & Now: Spruce Street between 45th Street and Melville Street



Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Archives.



Photo by Joseph Minardi.

Pictured above is a set of four twin houses on Spruce Street between 45th Street and Melville Street, designed in a style that appears to be unique to University City. The eight houses were built in October of 1903 by Charles W. Budd, a prolific builder in West Philadelphia in the early part of the twentieth century. The style is described as Colonial Revival by Robert Morris Skaler, with dozens of similar examples found throughout Spruce Hill and Cedar Park. The houses were built for a cost of \$6,500 apiece.

These lovely houses were intended for the upper middle class who commuted to their office jobs downtown. They featured ample front porches, bay windows, and many bedrooms for large families and servants.

The “now” photo shows the same grouping of houses over a century later, looking east-to-west. As can be seen, the twins are in excellent condition although some of the front porches have been enclosed.

Murphy’s Law of Restoration

Restoring a Victorian house proves Murphy’s law of restoration: “Restoring a Victorian will cost twice as much and take twice as long as the estimates.” It’s a major undertaking that requires all of the creative, physical, and financial resources that most homeowners can bring to the challenge. For them, restoring a Victorian means never having to say you’re solvent.

Whether or not these houses are considered landmarks, and many are, homeowners are making landmarks out of them through their unceasing efforts to restore them and make them beautiful inside and out.

Ask the Experts

MARBLE RADIATOR SLABS

Q: Several of our rooms have hot water radiators, and the floorboards under them are severely warped and cracked. I was thinking of cutting out the boards in these areas and inserting some kind of waterproof stands. Is this ever done? If so, what kind of stand would you recommend?

A: Good results can be obtained by using a slab of marble. Just cut away the damaged section of the finished flooring and set the marble in on top of the sub-flooring, this way, you won’t even need a thick slab. It’ll look great and last forever, and then you can get around to fixing those leaky radiators.

From *The Old-House Journal*, May 1981.



Hamilton Village, A Perspective from 1854

Back when the City and County of Philadelphia were completing the act of consolidation, West Philadelphia was a blossoming suburb. An anonymous article from 1854 describes in great detail the new grouping of houses in Hamilton Village. These handsome twin homes were built on what is now 40th Street between Chester Avenue and Baltimore Avenue.

“New Buildings in West Philadelphia -

A beautiful group of buildings in Hamilton Village, occupying the square between the Baltimore Turnpike and Beckett Street, is being built by Mr. Leslie, for S.H. Harrison, after designs furnished by Samuel Sloan. The location is called Hamilton Terrace, and the high ground and natural beauties of its surroundings are greatly heightened by the varied styles of the buildings. At the corner are cottage residences in the Elizabethan and Gothic styles, replete with every convenience. Adjacent to these, with commodious grounds both in front and on the sides, are blocks, each containing two

dwelling, the fronts being covered in imitation of the Picton style, with colonnades in front in the Corinthian style, while the entrances are on the sides, with a similar colonnade. The centre building is a magnificent structure, in the Norman style, 45 by 48 feet. A tower, 40 feet in height, contains the main stairway, while the grand entrance is in the back. The plot of ground occupied by this mansion is 80 feet by 150 feet, with stable and greenhouse at the rear. This is the only portion of the whole improvement not yet finished, though it is now rapidly approaching completion. The other dwellings, six in number, are already occupied. This improvement promises to be the most beautiful square within the bounds of West Philadelphia, richly embellished as that section has been for many years past.”

To the surprise of many, three of the five twins are still standing, one being heavily altered. Sadly the Norman mansion in the middle of the block was demolished, as was the twin on the corner of 40th and Baltimore Avenue (far right side of illustration).



Hamilton Terrace as depicted in an 1854 watercolor. Courtesy of the Philadelphia History Museum at Atwater Kent.

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