

# ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



September/October 2018

<http://www.uchs.net>

Joseph Minardi, Editor

## A Welcome Message

George Poulin, President

The University City Historical Society promotes awareness of the history and architectural character of University City. This is our organization's mission statement, and the foundation that informs every action of our incredibly capable board. In my new capacity as President, I have the distinct honor of leading UCHS to ensure we live up to those goals. I've taken over from the incredible Elizabeth Stegner, who has led the University Historical Society for four action-packed years. I am incredibly thankful to Elizabeth, who I consider both a mentor and friend. In her tenure as President, UCHS has done so much to protect our neighborhood and expand the reach of our organization. I also would like to thank Joanne Kellerman, UCHS Treasurer Emeritus, who is stepping down from the board after more than two decades of steadfast service. Our organization simply wouldn't exist without Elizabeth and Joanne's dedication and service, and we are forever thankful to them both.

The University City Historical Society has never been more relevant. We were founded in 1967 (51 years ago!) in response to the tide of demolitions rampant in the era of urban renewal. While we (hopefully) no longer need to live in fear of the threat of eminent domain, a rash of demolitions has plagued our neighborhood in recent years. West Philadelphia is once again a hip and happening place, and the result is that investors and developers are foaming at the mouth to get their piece of the action. One

need look no further than the unfortunate demolition of Christ Memorial Reformed Episcopal Church at 4233 Chestnut or the intact Victorian home at 622 S 42nd Street to see that we must be proactive in protecting our neighborhood.

If this sounds daunting, don't let it be. The University City Historical Society is doing our part to both raise awareness of these threats and to protect our historic resources. In concert with the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia, Spruce Hill Civic Association, and Powelton Village Civic Association, UCHS has nominated and protected over a dozen properties throughout West Philadelphia. You can help too! On Thursday, October 25th, UCHS will be hosting a free nomination writing workshop to break down the process of nominating properties in a manageable way. We hope you'll join us for this informative event. See below for details.

In addition to this important work, UCHS will continue to host the beloved annual events we've always been known for. Keep your eye open for renovated and restored properties worthy of recognition at our annual Valentine's Tea and Awards Ceremony. We also hope to host a fabulous house tour in 2019. And, with any luck, we'll be jump starting our Oral History Project as a way to preserve and honor the legacy of those who helped shape our beloved neighborhood since our organization's founding.

We are so fortunate to live in one of the most amazing neighborhoods in the world. I hope you'll share my passion for this special place by continuing to support the good work of the University City Historical Society in the coming year.

## Nomination Workshop

Do you want to learn more about your home's history? Is there a particular property in your neighborhood that you are interested in preserving? Are you interested in saving West Philadelphia's historic structures from demolition? Nominating a property to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places doesn't require an advanced degree or preservation background. Please join us for a special UCHS member's only event on October 25th to learn more about how our neighborhood can be protected.

Our featured guests will be Philadelphia Historical Commission staff member Laura DiPasquale Zupan and Designation Committee member Jeffrey Cohen. We'll be joined by fellow UCHS members who have successfully nominated properties to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Our featured guests will break down the nomination process in an easily understood and engaging format.

We'll share our success stories, lessons learned, and examples of previous nominations. All participants will be provided with a list of resources, and dinner will be provided. We'll be hosted at the home of UCHS Board member Heather Calvert, 625 S. 48th Street (NE corner of 48th and Baltimore).

RSVP at [www.uchs.net](http://www.uchs.net). Together we can protect our neighborhood from unscrupulous developers and needless demolitions. Dinner will be provided for participants.

## UCHS Board Update

The UCHS is proud to announce that **George Poulin** is now the new President of the organization, replacing Elizabeth Stegner, who served superbly for two consecutive terms. George has been a Board member for several years and has been instrumental in our nomination writing process and several other UCHS endeavors. **Jennifer Loustau** will be stepping in as Vice-President, replacing Joseph Minardi, who also served for two terms and will stay on as Editor of the newsletter. **Heather Calvert** will stay on as our Secretary. **Elmore (Moe) Philips** will be replacing Joanne Kellerman as Treasurer. **Amy Lambert** will be taking over the duties of Registrar. **Mary Beth Murphy** will remain as our trustworthy Web Manager. We would like to give our sincerest gratitude to Elizabeth and Joanne for their many years of services to UCHS.

We are also pleased to announce the addition of new Board member, Peg Wright, a resident of the Squirrel Hill section for over 30 years. We would also like to welcome Mark Silber back to the Board. Mark was a Board member for many years prior to a hiatus. He is a resident of Spruce Hill and is a noteworthy tour guide.

# The Amazing Mr. Malie

The following bio of Tommy Malie was written, in part, by Mike McCool, who is a great-great nephew of Mr. Malie, and is currently writing a novel involving his life's story. A native of Pittsburgh, Malie spent twelve years rehabilitating at the Home of the Merciful Savior, where he learned to overcome his disability and excel in a number of fields.

Tommy Malie was born in Pittsburgh in 1894 to poor Irish immigrant parents, the name Malie being an Anglicized version of "O'Malley." At age three Tommy wandered away from his family's home and was run over by a coal train. The train severed both of his arms at the elbows. After a life-saving surgery Tommy spent nine months at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh. Despite his afflictions, Tommy's cheery disposition won over the hospital staff. Two doctors successfully raised a fund for "Little Tommy's" future totally \$1,800 (about \$50,000 in 2018 dollars). The hospital nurses, so saddened by his departure, donned black caps and aprons to mark his leaving. The young lad was then sent to the Home of the Merciful Savior at 45th and Baltimore Avenue in West Philadelphia, where he spent the next twelve years of his life and was taught to live with his disability. He learned to write by holding a pencil between the stubs of his arms and excelled in his studies. He and some friends at the Home formed a baseball team and would have



Illustration of a young Tommy Malie circa 1907. Courtesy of Mike McCool.

a game every week at Clark Park. According to an old newspaper article, which detailed one of their games at the Park, Tommy hit two home runs performed sensationally in the field. The team even played,



Home of the Merciful Savior, 45th and Baltimore, as it appeared from around the time when Tommy Malie was living there. Courtesy of the Penn Archives.

and defeated, outside teams who was not handicapped, by a final score of 12 to 5!

Tommy resided at the Home in West Philadelphia from 1897 to 1909. At age fifteen Tommy returned to Pittsburgh and was adopted by wealthy brewers. He was sent to the finest schools in the city, eventually studying music at Carnegie Tech University, now known as Carnegie Mellon. After graduating he performed as a singer around Pittsburgh and began trying to pitch songs. He eventually landed a job with Waterson, Berlin & Snyder, a leading producer of sheet music on New York's Tin Pan Alley.

He became a famous figure around New York and began performing as a song plugger for his publishers. Within a couple of years, he teamed up with Jack Little, an unusually talented pianist and became one of the first big stars of American radio.

Malie later went on to marry Dorothy Hess, an actress from Chicago. Unfortunately the author of such tunes as "Looking at the World thru Rose-colored Glasses" didn't have such a rosy ending. After accumulating \$100,000 from song writing, he managed to blow it all on cars, clothes and booze. His wife left him and he was reduced to begging for change on the streets of Chicago, where he died, destitute and forgotten at the age of 35.

## University City Then & Now: 3501 Sansom Street, Silverman Hall (Law School Building)



Courtesy of the Penn Archives.



Photo by Joseph Minardi.

The University of Pennsylvania Law School Building, known as Silverman Hall since 2000, was built between 1898 and 1902 from the firm of Cope & Stewardson (fl. 1885-1912), an architectural firm that played a large role in shaping the University's campus in West Philadelphia. The style of architecture has been described as English Baroque, a design that recalls the roots of the modern English system of jurisprudence in the seventeenth century.

# Hickman Temple Update

The Hickman Temple AME Church (50th and Baltimore Avenue) was built in 1898 and was showing its age. The façade of the church facing 50th Street was separating from the main structure and was in danger of crashing down. The gap had widened to nine inches. Cyclone fencing was placed around the church perimeter to protect passersby from potential falling debris. Things looked bleak for the venerable house of worship. This story is all too familiar in Philadelphia. An old dilapidated church and eager developers all lead to disappearing churches.

Over the last seven months, Hickman Temple embarked on an extensive effort to raise funds for the installation of an enormous steel brace on the outside of the church and roof repairs to cover the gap between the façade and the main building. The solution, while temporary, is expected to be in place for at least 10 years. The repairs totaled \$75,000, raised from the congregation, neighbors, and local businesses. Local preservationist Kathy Dowdell, who worked with Pastor Gregory P. Nelson and others in the neighborhood to save the building, estimated that upwards of \$1 million will be needed to fully pay for permanent repairs.

## PROFILES IN ARCHITECTURE

### *Charles Edward Rahn*

Charles E. Rahn (*fl.* 1892-1933) studied at the Franklin Institute Drawing School during spring term 1885 and then again in from 1887 to 1888 and from 1892 to 1893 he was enrolled at the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art. He received a number of commissions in West Philadelphia during the area's row house building boom of the early twentieth century. Rahn was the architect of choice for builders William D. Wilson and the firm of Ramsey Bros. & Forbes. These houses were generally created in styles that were popular around the dawn of the twentieth century, including elements of the Queen Anne, the stick style, the Romanesque, and Jacobean revival, and the interior plans and exterior designs are roughly similar for many of them.

#### Selected Relevant Commissions:

- 1899: Marshall, Thomas, car barn, 60th and Pine  
1900: Wilson, Robert, residences (22), WS of 52nd, south of Race  
1901: Lynch, John C., residences (24), 34th and Mantua area  
O'Neill & Knox, stores & office (6), 52nd and Haverford Ave  
Ramsey, William M., stores and residences (10), 51st & Arch  
Residence, Northwest corner of 57th and Arch Streets  
1902: Ramsey Bros. & Wilson, residences (28), 51st & Vine area  
Residences (3), North side of Arch, West of 51st  
Residences (6), 5102-5112 Race Street  
Residence, 5226 Haverford Avenue  
1904: Buildings (20), North side of Spruce, west of 54th  
Residences (14), 5400-5428 Pine Street  
1905: Burkhard, Isaac, Residence and store, 778-780 S. 32nd  
Clark, George W., residences (31), 53rd and Chester area  
Residences (44), Lindenwood, west of 52nd  
Forbes, Hugh C., res. (14), NE side of 60th, S of Kingsessing  
Wilson & Lewis, residences (8), SS of Woodland, W of 69th  
1906: Ferguson, Alex, residences (8), 52nd and Baltimore area  
Ramsey Bros. & Forbes, residences (16), 59th & Cedar area  
Wilson, William D., res. (18), ES of 50th, S of Florence  
Stores & residences (8), 50th and Florence area  
1907: Knox, John C., residences (10), NS of Pine, East of 52nd  
Ramsey Bros. & Forbes, residences (10), 59th & Walton area  
Wilson, William D., residence (5), ES of 51st, North of Walnut  
1908: Ramsey Bros. & Forbes, residences (10), 59th & Walton area  
1909: Ramsey Bros. & Forbes, res. (13), NS of Walton, W of 59th  
Residences (13), SS of Walton, West of 59th  
Residences (13), NS of Catherine, West of 59th  
Residences (3), East side of St. Bernard, 80' North of Girard  
1910: Gorman, Edward F., Stores & res. (50), 47th & Brown area  
Residences (7), ES of 66th, 112' N of Greenway  
Ramsey Bros. & Forbes, res. (18), SS of Catherine, W of 59th

## LEARN TO SPEAK ITALIANATE



### A GLOSSARY

*Continued from previous issue.*

**Loggia:** An arcaded gallery. In Italianate architecture, one that is open on one or more sides, on the outside of a house.

**Modillions:** Small horizontal brackets that run evenly along a Corinthian or Composite entablature, often above a dentil moulding and beneath the cornice. In Italianate architecture, most common on Tuscan buildings.

**Oriel:** A window that projects out from the exterior surface of a wall, but that does not extend to the ground.

**Pediment:** A triangularly shaped crowning ornament, usually over doors or windows.

**Piano Nobile:** The main, or second floor of Renaissance palaces, and Renaissance Revival buildings, usually reached by a staircase. This floor has the tallest, most ornate windows.

**Piazza:** Originally an open courtyard in the center of a house or villa. In 19th century architecture, it was often used interchangeably with "porch."

**Pilaster:** An engaged column with a flat face.

**Quoins:** Bricks or stones laid at the corners of buildings, in ashlar or rusticated fashion. Wood was also used and cut to resemble stone.

**Rinceau:** Scroll or ornament cut into stone. The scroll motifs in Italianate architecture derive from Byzantium by way of Venetian Renaissance palaces.

**Rusticated:** Stonework with chamfered edges, to give a hand hewn look. Sometimes the entire face is roughly cut. In Italianate architecture, a device used on quoins, and on the first floor or foundation.

**Segmented Arches:** Arches that do not form a complete semi-circle.

**Verandah:** An arcaded porch on the outside of a house.

**Volute:** A scroll shape, most notable on Ionic capitals.

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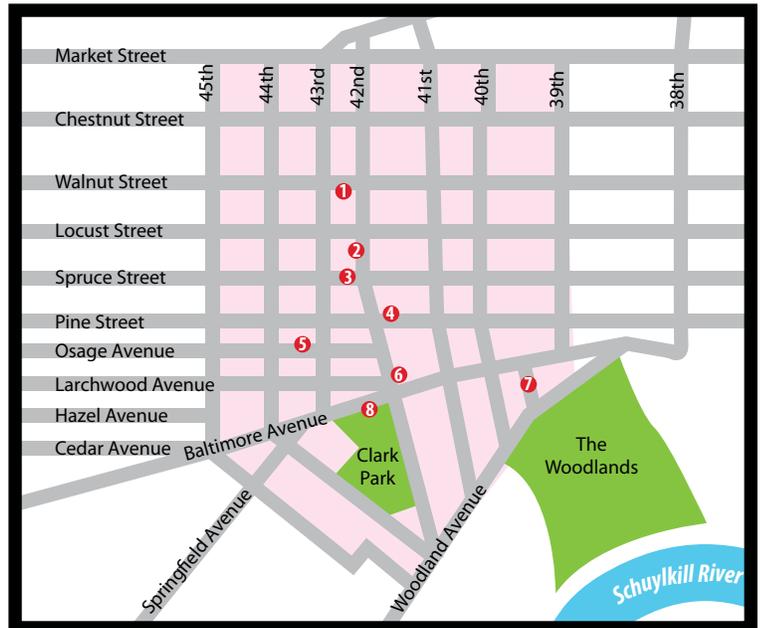
From *The Old-House Journal*, January, 1981..



## University City Historic Architecture Walks

The UCHS is proud to announce a series of walking tours in University City, highlighting the splendor and variety of architecture in the neighborhood. In this issue we will feature the first in a series of self-guided walks, Spruce Hill. For a larger version of the map please go to [uchs.net](http://uchs.net). The purpose here is to have fun and enjoy the beauty and variety of University City's marvelous "Street Car Suburb." Now, let's take a stroll through Spruce Hill.

**1. St. Marks Square** Start at point 1 at St. Marks Square and Walnut Street and head south along St. Marks Square, a row house block built in 1879 from designs by Frank Furness. **2. Civil War era twins/Grapevine motif** Turn left on Locust Street and turn right on 42nd. On the east side of 42nd are a group of circa 1865 twin houses in the Second Empire style and one Italianate on the corner of 42nd and Locust. And look closely at the iron fencing on retaining walls. You'll see our familiar grapevine arbor motif rendering in wrought iron! **3. "Spruce Street Row"** Turn right on 43rd and Spruce and gaze at the beautiful row homes known as "Spruce Street Row," built in 1889. The Hewitt Bros. were the architects for these beautiful Queen Anne style row homes. They appear to be quite original. **4. Pine Street Painted Ladies** Continue south on 42nd Street and make a left on Pine and observe the magnificent late-Victorian twins on the north side of Pine Street, built c. 1899 by developer William S. Kimball, painted in vibrant colors. The twin houses on the south side of Pine were built just a few years later but still have rich ornamentation associated with Victorian architecture. **5. Satterlee Heights** Continue to the 4300 block of Osage Avenue and glimpse at the twin houses that made up part of "Satterlee Heights," an early development in West Philadelphia, built on the site of one of the largest Civil War hospitals in the U.S. **6. 420 Historic District** Pay a visit to the newest historic district in Philadelphia, the "420 Historic District" is a collection of eight Victorian homes done in the Queen Anne style on 42nd Street between Baltimore Avenue and Osage Avenue. The tiny district was created by concerned citizens of the block fearing the denigration of their historic homes. **7. Woodland Terrace** Head east on Baltimore Avenue and go south along Woodland Terrace and stroll down the magnificent block of Italianate twins built 1861 from designs by Samuel Sloan. These twenty-two beautifully preserved houses are a reminder of the early suburbanization of West Philadelphia. **8. Clark Park and Flemish row homes** Make a right on Woodland Avenue and then turn right on 43rd Street and continue to Baltimore Avenue. Relax at Clark Park and enjoy a peaceful recess in Clark Park (built 1895). There you can see the only statue of Charles Dickens and a large stone from the Gettysburg Battlefield. And be sure to check out the attractive early twentieth-century row homes on the north side of Baltimore Avenue.



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