



### UCHS Celebrates 50 Years with Anniversary Dinner

On November 10th, UCHS celebrated its Golden Anniversary with dinner and a talk at the Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College. Our guest speaker was Dr. John L. Puckett, co-author of *Becoming Penn: the Pragmatic American University, 1950–2000*, who spoke about transformational changes in West Philadelphia caused by expansions of Penn and Drexel in the second half of the 20th century. Demolitions of historic buildings and displacement of residents led to the creation of UCHS in November 1967.

The evening began with specially prepared Whiskey Sour cocktails, a classic party drink popular when UCHS was founded in the 1960's. The menu was inspired by Julia Child's *The French Chef* television show and featured items from November 1967 episodes: "Spinach Twins" (turnovers), "Napoleon's Chicken", and "Queen of Sheba Cake".

The UCHS thanks everyone for making our 50th Anniversary Dinner a memorable event, including all who attended and our guest speaker Dr. John L. Puckett. A hearty thanks goes out to the staff and students at the Restaurant School for creating such a wonderful evening.



**Top left;** John L. Puckett, **Top right;** Former UCHS President, Kathy Dowdell, **Center;** place setting and menu, **Bottom left;** Table setting, **Bottom right;** Some guests for the evening. Photos by Joseph Minardi and George Poulin.

## Valentine Tea & **2018** Awards Presentation

*Get your nominations in now*

Lovers of historic preservation, that time of the year is rapidly approaching. The UCHS will be holding its annual Valentine Awards Tea on **Sunday, February 11, 2018** from **4:00 to 6:00** at the Castle, **930 South 48th Street (48th and Springfield)**. There will be a wide array of tea, desserts, pastries, and delicious finger sandwiches. The UCHS will honor its neighbors for this year's efforts in beautifying and improving University City's historic homes and neighborhood. The event is free to all UCHS members and is an opportunity to meet with members of the University City community.

The Valentine's Tea is the event where the UCHS has the opportunity to recognize work done on properties throughout the prior year that enhances the whole community. There are three award categories: **Gifts to the Streets Awards** are given to high-quality exterior maintenance upgrades or restorations of historical features. **Outstanding Preservation Awards** are given to properties that have received full architecturally appropriate exterior renovations or restorations. **The Preservation Initiative Award** is given to a person or group of people who have acted unselfishly towards the preservation of a building or historical neighborhood resource in University City. Nominations can be emailed to [info@uchs.net](mailto:info@uchs.net) and will be accepted until **January 19, 2018**. And please feel free to nominate yourself!

Every UCHS member and their guests are invited to the Valentine Tea and Awards Presentation, Sunday, **February 11, 2018**, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the Castle, 930 S. 48th Street. The 2017 Valentine Awards Tea was an outstanding success, and next year's promises to be no less entertaining. As always, we look forward to seeing you there. Be sure to save the date!

*Selected highlights from the 2017 Valentine Tea and Awards Presentation. Top; Sara Corse and Kenwyn Smith, recipients of a Gift to the Street Award for their work on 3601-3 Hamilton Street; A four-tiered tray filled with cranberry scones; Todd Margasak and Justin McDaniel with their Preservation Initiative Awards for their successful nomination of 420-434 South 42nd Street to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Photos by Joseph Minardi.*

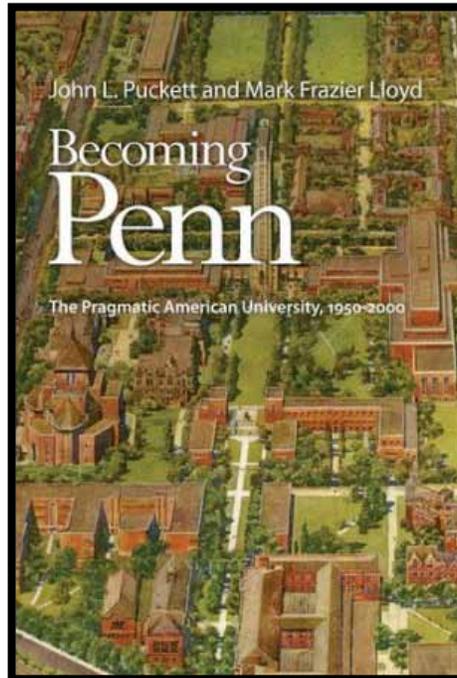


# UCHS Recommended Reading: Becoming Penn: the Pragmatic American University 1950–2000

We know that UCHS members love to read about Philadelphia's rich history, so when a good book comes along, we'll make a recommendation for addition to your library.

We recommending a book about the growth of the University of Pennsylvania campus during a fifty year expanse beginning at mid-century. The book, *Becoming Penn*, was coauthored by John L. Puckett, the guest speaker at our 50th Anniversary Dinner on November 10th. Penn archivist Mark Frazier Lloyd was the other co-author.

The second half of the twentieth century saw the University of Pennsylvania grow in size as well as in stature. On its way to becoming one of the world's most celebrated research universities, Penn exemplified the role of urban renewal in the postwar redevelopment and expansion of urban universities, and the indispensable part these institutions played in the remaking of American cities. Yet urban renewal is only one aspect of this history. Drawing from Philadelphia's extensive archives as well as the University's own historical records and publications, John L. Puckett and Mark Frazier Lloyd examine Penn's rise to eminence amid the social, moral, and economic forces that transformed major public and private institutions across the nation.



*"Becoming Penn, The Pragmatic American University, 1950-2000."* Courtesy of University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

*Becoming Penn* recounts the shared history of university politics and urban policy as the campus grappled with twentieth-century racial tensions, gender inequality, labor conflicts, and economic retrenchment. Examining key policies and initiatives of the administrations led by presidents Gaylord Harnwell, Martin Meyerson, Sheldon Hackney, and Judith Rodin, Puckett and Lloyd revisit the actors, organizations, and controversies that shaped campus life in this turbulent era. Illustrated with archival photographs of the campus and West Philadelphia neighborhood throughout the late twentieth century, *Becoming Penn* provides a sweeping portrait of one university's growth and impact within the broader social history of American higher education.

Not everything Penn has done in West Philadelphia has been without controversy. With the rapid expansion of Penn's campus came the displacement of many residents, most of whom were African-American, and the destruction of many historic buildings from the Streetcar Suburb era.

The twenty-first century also promises more huge changes to West Philadelphia. Time will tell if we can preserve our history.

## WINDOW TALK: A GLOSSARY

*Continued from previous issue.*

**Parting Bead:** A vertical guide strip on each side of a double-hung window frame which separates the sashes.

**Pediment:** A triangle-shaped crowning ornament, meant to suggest the front of a Greek or Roman temple. Often used as caps or hoods on windows in Classical Revival and Colonial Revival buildings.

**Prime Window:** As distinct from a storm window, this is the primary window in an opening, including frame and sash.

**Queen Anne Window:** A window with small glass window lights arranged in various forms and usually only on the upper sash.

**Rail:** A horizontal member in a door or window sash.

**Reveal:** That part of a jamb or vertical face of an opening for a window or doorway between the frame and the outside surface of a wall. Also, the interior space used to enclose paneled interior shutters that fold back when open.

*To be continued in next issue.*

## FROM OUR ARCHIVES

The renewal of Clark Park, which has been around since 1895, was well underway in May of 2001. Our archives note that the University City Historical Society worked closely with Peter Simone of Simone Jaffe Collins, Inc., landscape architects, in an attempt to spruce up the century-old greenspace. The UCHS had several of its members participate in the master planning process and solicited suggestions from its membership. A major bone of contention was the relocation of iconic landmarks within the park borders; the Gettysburg Stone, and the Dickens Statue.

Despite its unimpressive setting, the Gettysburg Stone, taken from the Devil's Den area of the Gettysburg Battlefield, was sited in its current location where tents were erected after the battle. The purpose of the memorial was to commemorate the service of the men and women who administered to the wounded soldiers. The reason for the siting of the Dickens Statue was less clear, but it was recommended that it too should remain in place.

## University City Then & Now: 200 block of Melville Street, north from Spruce



*Courtesy of the Penn Archives.*

These attractive row houses were built in 1906 by Clarence R. Siegel, a builder/contractor of some note in West Philadelphia. Siegel built hundreds of homes in West Philadelphia, including the Garden Court section of University City beginning in 1921. The thirty-six houses on Melville Street were built for a cost of \$5,500 each.



*Photo by Joseph Minardi.*

## PROFILES IN ARCHITECTURE

### *William K. Watson (fl. 1904-30)*

William K. Watson was active as an architect in Philadelphia during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Later, like many of his fellow architects, Watson ventured in real estate development, a lucrative vocation given the city's rapid growth during this period. Watson not only built hundreds of homes in West Philadelphia, he was also resided there.

#### **Selected Relevant Commissions:**

- 1904: Applegate, L.S., residences (54), 59th and Arch area  
Residences (112), Delancey, SS of Spruce, NS of Pine, W of 53rd
- 1905: Wilson, John R., residences (8), SS of Walton, 85' west of 51st
- 1906: Wilson, John R., residences (8), SS of Walton, 93' east of 52nd
- 1907: Residences (99), 61st and Delancey/Pine area
- 1908: Residences (15), Cedar and Conestoga area
- 1909: Emburg, James C., residences (20), ES of Conestoga, S of Cedar  
Wilson, John R., residences (33), 62nd & Dickens area  
Residences (3), corner of Yewdall and Race  
Residences (30), Hobson, 108' South of Woodland  
Residences (30), Bonnaffon, 108' South of Woodland
- 1910: Emburg, James C., residences (20), ES of Yewdall, 87' S of Cedar  
Residences (12), WS of 54th, North of Catharine
- 1911: Wilson, John R., residences (39), 57th, North of Greenway  
Residences (56), Frazier, 16' North of Greenway

## Did you know?

Acclaimed academic and author **Margaret Mead** (1901-1978) lived at **205 St. Marks Square** for a brief time as a small child. Her father, **Edward Sherwood Mead** (1874-1955), was also an academic of note, as a pioneer in finance education and a educator at the Wharton School from 1900 to 1944. Margaret's family moved around quite a bit and she resided at St. Marks Square for only a few years.

Margaret Mead was also a pioneer in the field of anthropology (M.A. and Ph.D., Columbia University) and an activist for women's rights. She died in New York City at age 76.

## Ask the Experts

### **REPAIRING A NEWEL POST**

**Q:** My newel post is loose. Can you give me ideas on how to properly repair it?

**A:** The newel connection to the bottom step is a vulnerable joint. Because of its height, the newel acts as a lever when something bumps against the top of it. This weakens the connections of the newel to the bottom step and to the floor.

If a glued-and-bored or a nailed joint loosens up, a few well-placed nails may do the trick. Take the time to understand the construction of the joint, because lots of random nails can actually weaken or split the joint. No need to worry about splitting a solid newel, but as always, drill a pilot hole or nip off the end of the nail in you're going into a thing piece of hardwood.

Without disassembly of the stair, you won't know for sure if the riser and tread were cut away to let in the housed newel. If nails won't hold, screw through the newel base into the front of the riser or the open string. Counter-bore any screws and plug the holes. Screwing into the string will always strengthen the newel connection; its disadvantage, of course, is the plugged hole left in the face of the newel.

If a newel is very loose, you might as well remove it to examine the actual connection, rather than taking pot-luck with random nails. First, disconnect the handrail. Pull the newel loose from the floor. It's probably toenailed, but if the newel was loose to begin with, removal should be easy. Take out all the old nails, and start over on the assembly. Don't use glue except on a bored connection into the rail or tread. Drive nails at angle to the grain; nailing directly into end grain gives a weak connection.

To tighten the connection of a box newel to the floor, take off the cap and see if there's a center rod. If there is, tighten the nut to pull the newel against the floor. If the rod is no longer connected to the floor, remove the newel and secure to rod to the floor. If there is no rod, install a threaded rod the height of the newel.

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

# ON THE WEST SIDE



## Worthy of Preservation

### West Philadelphia Institute Project

Thousands of people walk past an unassuming three-story building at the corner of 40th and Ludlow every week without realizing there is an attractive building with an interesting history hidden under metal cladding.

The West Philadelphia Institute, built in the centennial year of 1876, is one of Frank Furness' earliest commissions, back when he partnered with George W. Hewitt. Its first use was as an institute for young men before turning into a library by 1896. It later became a dance studio, then home to the Philadelphia Electric Company in the 1920s. It was during the PECO years that the building saw the greatest degree of alteration. In order to create office space and an appliance showroom, they hired architect John T. Windrim for the alterations. Even with the drastic changes to the building's façade, the original vision of Furness still shined through. That was until 1976 when the building was covered in unattractive siding, which remained until this day.

The building's most recent usage was as a mental health facility for adults and adolescents. This spring, the building was purchased by U3 Ventures, with the hopes of restoring the façade and redeveloping it into a multi-use facility, with an affordable ground-floor diner (with a local tenant/operator) and office space. The

\$8.7 million renovation will not only bring a landmark building back to life but will also bring a number of economic benefits to this corner of West Philadelphia, including 80 to 100 jobs in the office space, 40 hospitality jobs in the restaurant/conference space, and 85 construction jobs.

This high-visibility preservation project is supported by local politicians such as Senator Vince Hughes, Rep. Jim Roebuck & Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, and community/civic groups (University City District, Preservation Alliance of Philadelphia, University City Historic Society, People's Emergency Center

CDC, Spruce Hill Civic Association, etc). Tom Lussenhop also noted recently that the National Park Service appears inclined to expand the West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb Historic District, thus clearing the way for the project to qualify for the 20% Federal Historic Tax Credit. He and his partners at U3 Ventures have been diligently pursuing a \$3 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant from the State of Pennsylvania. Senator Vincent Hughes, Representative Jim Roebuck and Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell have been helpful. They also met with former Governor Ed Rendell who offered to be helpful with Governor Wolf's office.

On January of 2017 the building was listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

UCHS would like to thank U3 Ventures developers Omar Blaik and Tom Lussenhop for bringing the West Philadelphia Institute back to life.



*Top: 40th and Ludlow, circa 1927. Middle: The building as it appears today. Bottom: Rendering showing the building as it may appear in the future. Courtesy of U3 Ventures.*



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