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MAY 2011

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The Challenge

PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

THE HISTORY OF PHILADELPHIA RAILROADS

A Presentation by Mr. Joel Spivak

Thursday, May 19th, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Bethlehem Pike & East Mill Road in Flourtown, PA



Broad Street Station

Philadelphia became the railroad capital of the world in the 1830s when 12 distinct lines opened within a 100-mile radius of the city to carry people and freight. The railroad boom in the 19th century was made possible by the development of rural communities surrounding the city, the Industrial Revolution, excellent access to raw materials, and an influx of European immigrants. Philadelphia manufactured locomotives, railroad track, and other rail components and exported them around the world. The ability to move agricultural goods, manufactured products, and people commuting from home to work helped to unite the 27 boroughs, districts, and townships into one metropolis by 1854.

Please join us as STHS welcomes Mr. Joel Spivak who will present on material from his recently released book, *Philadelphia Railroads, Images of Rail*, which he has co-authored with Allen Meyers (Arcadia Publishing – 2010). Philadelphia Railroads features many unseen images and rare photographs documenting the leaders of Philadelphia's transportation world.

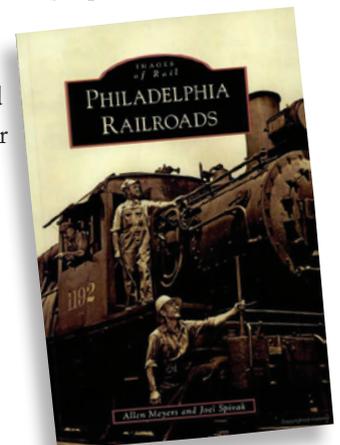
Joel Spivak is a noted rail historian and promoter who is an architectural consultant in Philadelphia. He is also the coauthor of *Philadelphia Trolleys* (Arcadia Publishing – 2003).

As the chairperson of the Philadelphia Trolley Coalition, Mr. Spivak designed and built *Monument to the Trolley*, a public installation commemorating the centennial of the first electric streetcar to operate in Philadelphia.

This promises to be an exciting and educational program on an interesting topic

of Philadelphia history. 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

President's Corner

For those of you who know me, the following statement will not come as any surprise. I am eternally and unabashedly fascinated with "Whitemarsh Hall," the palatial estate of Edward and Eva Stotesbury that once stood in Springfield Township. Typically when I research a topic for a presentation or the writing of a book, my investigation and interest has a beginning and an end. Once I complete the talk or book, I close the chapter on that topic and move onto the next one. Not so with "Whitemarsh Hall." My initial interest in the grand mansion and all things Stotesbury began with reading articles about it in the Springfield Sun and the Philadelphia Bulletin in the early 1970s as a youth. This spurred occasional visits to the mansion with family, friends, and teachers as a teenager, attending Marie Kitto's lectures as an adult, and finally culminated in co-authoring a book on this very subject several years ago with my brother. My interest in the Stotesburys and "Whitemarsh Hall" has never waned, even upon publishing the book. I am constantly looking for additional pictures, information, and opportunities to further my knowledge about the family and the people and places associated with them.

It was this desire that recently led me to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. When Edward (Ned) Stotesbury died in May of 1938, Eva was forced to put "Whitemarsh Hall" up for sale along with its contents. Unfortunately the United States was still in the throws of the Great Depression, and she was only offered pennies on the dollar for many of the antiques, paintings, and statuary. Eva stated that "I

thought I must sell the sculpture, but at the figures I am offered, I would much rather give it to the Museum in memory of Ned." The statuary which she donated included the following: *The Four Seasons* by Augustin Pajou which adorned the outside Arcade Loggia, *Love and Friendship* by Jean-Pierre-Antoine Tassart that resided in the center hall, and two large plaster groups by Claude Michel (Clodion) that were displayed in each of the interior rotundas off the ballroom.

I have seen numerous black and white pictures of these statues adorning "Whitemarsh Hall," but this was my first time seeing them in person in all their beauty, which really brought them to life. It spurred my mind to wander and imagine what it would have been like to walk through "Whitemarsh Hall" in its heyday, when these and so many other beautiful antiquities furnished the "Versailles of America," as it was then referred to. Seeing and touching this statuary today was like going back in time and being a part of those Gilded Age days.

In 1939 Eva returned to the Philadelphia Museum of Art to view her donations on display. One can only wonder what she must have felt at that moment: renewed sadness for Ned's passing just a year prior, resentment for the vultures offering such low prices for her homes treasures, or maybe even just wistfulness for the happy days gone by with Ned at "Whitemarsh Hall." I am thankful that Eva made that donation all those years ago, for it allowed me to feel something altogether different: a connection with the fairy tale of "Whitemarsh Hall" that has attracted me all these years.

Keeping the past in the present,

Ed Zwicker



*"Love and Friendship"
by Jean-Pierre-Antoine Tassart
that resided in the center hall*



*"Love and Friendship"
and Ed Z. in the
Art Museum today*



*One of the two large plaster groups
by Claude Michel (Clodion) that
were displayed in each of the
interior rotundas off the ballroom.
This one is in the West Rotunda
of Whitemarsh Hall.*



*Both of the two large
plaster groups
by Claude Michel (Clodion)
together in the
Art Museum today.*

STHS Welcomes New Board Member Alex Bartlett

When Alex Bartlett was a kid he often roamed along the SEPTA railroad line behind his house in Mount Airy, finding old railroad parts and other things people discarded such as glass bottles. A self-professed "history nerd," this interest segued into a career in archeology, where he worked as a project archeologist for John Milner Associates, Inc. in West Chester, Pennsylvania for ten years, working all around the east coast on various archeological digs.

Alex has visited practically every dump and quarry in northwest Philadelphia, Whitemarsh and Springfield townships and beyond, and can tell us much about the evidence these sites yield. His collection of intact,

found bottles, numbers in the thousands, some rare and unusual containers for medicine, and beverages. Alex is currently writing a book on bottles from the 18th through the 20th century from this area.

After his years as an archeologist, Alex went back to school and earned a Masters in Museum Communications at the University of the Arts. Since then he has become the Librarian/Archivist at Germantown Historical Society and the Assistant Archivist at Chestnut Hill Historical Society. We are fortunate to add his expertise and enthusiasm to our board, where he hopes to get involved with the Archives, particularly online applications and programming.

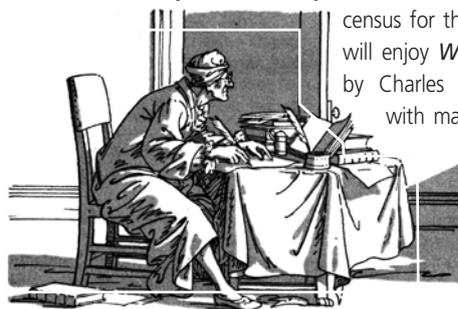
FROM THE

Archives



This photograph from our collection was taken c. 1950-51 by Springfield Police Lieutenant Jellison and shows the Springfield Police pistol range on West Wissabickon Avenue.

We are pleased to announce that the Springfield Library has generously donated their inventory of local history books to the historical society to supplement our collection. If you are interested in tracing your family history, you might like to look at *Genealogies of Pennsylvania Families*, *The Scotch Irish of Pennsylvania*, *Genealogical Data Relating to German Settlers of Pennsylvania and Adjacent Territories* or a bound copy of the 1790



census for the state. Military history buffs will enjoy *Washington at Germantown* by Charles Jenkins, published in 1905 with many primary source records or *Philadelphia in the Civil War*. More general histories include a reprint of the 1859 *History of Montgomery County within the Schuylkill Valley and the*

two-volume History of Montgomery County, published in 1884, complete with an extensive index of names, places and subjects.

We invite you to explore these volumes as well as our entire collection. For hours and policies, including long-distance research, please see our website www.springfieldhistory.org or call us at (215) 233-4600.

STHS
Hosts

Trolley Tours of Historic Springfield

Springfield Township Historical Society will launch its first annual *Trolley Tours of Historic Springfield* on Sunday, May 22. Tours are planned around the theme of Revolutionary War/Colonial Era and of Country Estates of Springfield.

The **REVOLUTIONARY WAR/ COLONIAL ERA** tour will survey locations that played a key role in the Revolutionary War and the founding of the United States. Of particular interest will be a visit to the newly-renovated Deshler-Morris House. Also known as the "Germantown White House," this building is the oldest official presidential residence in the country and hosted several cabinet meetings as well as George Washington and his family.

Participants on the **COUNTRY ESTATES OF SPRINGFIELD** will learn about some of the many mansions and summer residences built in Springfield beginning from the late 1890s through the 1930s. With the advent of the railroad, Springfield became a preferred destination for many of Philadelphia's elite to escape the heat and pollution of the

city. Many of the opulent homes built during that period survive today and this tour will provide a chance to see up close some of the architectural grandeur of a bygone era. Some of the featured residences will include the Wharton-Sinkler estate, Falconcrest, Camp Hill and Laverock Hill.

With the exception of a guided

tour inside the Deshler-Morris house on the Revolutionary War/ Colonial Tour, these will be narrated tours and will explore the history and exteriors of these sites and can be enjoyed from the comfort of the trolley, rain or shine.

The Revolutionary War/ Colonial Era tour will be narrated by Joe Becton, co-founder of the 3rd

Regiment United States Colored Troops Civil War reenactors and the First Rhode Island Regiment Revolutionary War reenactors. A former National Park Ranger and teacher, he is the director of Becton Tours and Historical Services.

The Country Estates of Springfield tour will be narrated by Ed Zwicker, president of the Springfield Township Historical Society. He is co-author of two books in Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series, "Springfield Township, Montgomery County," and "Whitemarsh Hall: The Estate of Edward T. Stotesbury."



The Country Estates of Springfield will feature Laverock Hill, designed by the firm of Cope & Stewardson and built for John Clarke Sims, Jr. in 1895 and remodeled and enlarged by Charles A. Platt after being purchased by Isaac Tatnall Starr in 1915. It was residence of Starr and his wife until their deaths, and was later home to the Starrs' daughter and son-in-law, Hope and Morris Lloyd and their family. In 2008 Hanson Properties purchased the property from Mrs. Lloyd's estate with intentions to develop the property.

Tours will depart from in front of the Historical Society office in the Black Horse Inn, 1432 Bethlehem Pike, Flourtown, and will last about 1 1/2 hours. Tickets are \$25 per person for each tour. For times of tours and ticket information, please call 215-233-4600 or visit www.springfieldhistory.org.



STHS President, Ed Zwicker (left) with David Contosta who presented our March program on Philadelphia's Wissabickon Valley.



Visit the STHS Archives at the Black Horse Inn
1432 Bethlehem Pike
Flourtown, PA

Tuesday 11am-1pm, 7pm-9pm
Thursday 10am-noon

Reserve the Date
Thurs., May 19, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.
The History of Philadelphia Railroads

A Presentation by
Mr. Joel Spivak



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