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 Flourtown, PA 19031
 215-233-4600
 www.springfieldhistory.org

The Challenge

PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell

A Presentation by

Mr. Robert Sands & Mr. Alexander Bartlett

Thursday, September 20th, 2012 – 7:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Bethlehem Pike & East Mill Road in Flourtown, PA

SEPTEMBER 2012

IN THIS ISSUE:

- President's Corner
- Yeakel Cemetery Program
- STHS Holds Inaugural Summer Gala
- Annual History Scholarship Award

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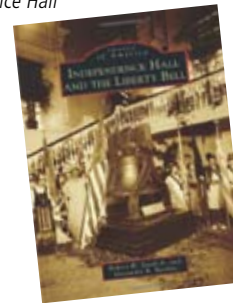
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Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, two of America's most revered symbols of freedom, date back to the British rule of the American colonies. The main structure of Independence Hall was completed in 1732, and the final casting of the Liberty Bell was completed in 1753. Visited by over two million people yearly, these historic icons have been used as backdrops for many political and social demonstrations and speeches.

Please join us as STHS welcomes co-authors Robert Sands and Alex Bartlett, who will present on their new publication "Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell" (released in early 2012 by Arcadia Publishing). Their book is filled with images from the archives of Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia Department of Records, and collections from around the country. Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell illustrates how these two historic relics generate a sense of pride and patriotism set forth by the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Their illustrated lecture will take you on a history of two of Philadelphia's most recognized and important landmarks.



1776 Engraving of Independence Hall



Robert W. Sands Jr. is a Seton Hall University graduate with a master of arts in museum professions. The author of two previous Arcadia Publishing books, Glassboro and Woodbury, he currently works as a collections consultant for the Trenton City Museum at Ellarslie Mansion.

Alexander B. Bartlett was involved with the archaeological monitoring of Independence Square during the 2004-2005 renovation. A graduate of the University of the Arts with a master of arts in museum communications,

he works as a librarian and archivist in three local institutions, as well as actively serves on the Springfield Township Historical Society Board.

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

PLEASE NOTE:

Attendees to the September program are encouraged to bring a canned food item to donate to the First Presbyterian Church's neighborhood food pantry. Please help us to support this important cause.

President's Corner

In past articles I've talked about how to look for current-day things that give us a glimpse into Springfield Township's past. Usually this comes in the form of people's stories and memories, as well as their homes and other buildings that still remain. But another interesting thing that gives hints into our past are the names of the very streets we all live on!

The network of Springfield's 249 streets is comprised of Avenues (54), a Bypass (Route 309), Circles (4), Courts (2), Drives (12), Lanes (48), Pikes (3), Roads (114), Streets (5), Terraces (2), and even Ways (4). Using the names of these highways and byways, let's paint a picture of Springfield history.

We'll start with the period of time in Springfield's history when William Penn took ownership of it. The township was comprised of beautiful flora and fauna, stretching out over its six-plus square miles of sparsely populated woods and farmland. The majority of the street names today describe this bucolic landscape of over 300 years ago. Imagine the following as far as the eye could see: Briar, Buttonwood, Dogwood, Heather, Hemlock, Ivy Hill, Linden, Mulberry, Pine, Poplar, and Red Oak just to name a few. Additional reminders of nature include Brooke, Brookside, Greenhill, Hillcrest, Hilltop, Meadow, Meadowbrook, Orchard, Spring, and Woods.

The early era of farming and industry was a defining time in Springfield's past. Some street names that were established describe these occupations and things associated with them: Bells Mill, East and West Mill, Flourtown, Oreland Mill, and Paper Mill. Even the names of present day neighborhoods, Oreland (for the iron ore mining) and Flourtown (for the flour mills) reflect the predominant occupations of their area.

In the early 1900's Springfield turned its attention to leisure time activities. Present day names of Country Club, Golf, North and South Fairway, and Tee represent the three golf courses within the township. Names such as Hunters and Pheasant elicit memories of the small game hunting that was popular as late as the 1950s in Springfield. And of course we also have a Park

to describe those areas that provide green space for recreation today.

Some of Springfield's notable families still ring out on our street signs too. These reflect the people who built the roads that their homes resided on: (William J.) Bysher (Sr.), (Albert) Comly, Fleming, (Robert) Gordon, (Frederick) Haws (or Haus), (Albert L.) Jones, McCloskey, (Enos) Rich, (Edward F.) Swade, (Morris A.) Weiss, and Yeakel. Another interesting family named street is (Henry) Auchy, owner and managing partner of the Chestnut Hill (White City) Amusement Park in Erdenheim.

Springfield's participation in the glamorous Gilded Age just prior to and after the turn of the 20th century is still remembered through the following streets: Harston (Henry Frazer Harris' "Harston Hall"), (Arthur) Lea ("Rylston" estate), (Arthur) Newbold ("Laverock Farm"), and (Edward) Stotesbury ("Whitemarsh Hall").

And finally, Springfield chose to remember famous people who either visited the township or were revered enough to be enshrined on their street signs. These included (Winston) Churchill, Clodion (sculptor of Whitemarsh Hall statuary), (James H.R.) Cromwell (son of Mrs. Eva Stotesbury and husband of Delphine Dodge and then Doris Duke), Delphine (Dodge, daughter of auto manufacturer Horace Dodge and wife of James Cromwell), (Sir Joseph) Duveen (English art and antique dealer who furnished "Whitemarsh Hall"), (General Douglas) MacArthur, (General George) Patton, (Horace) Trumbauer (architect of "Whitemarsh Hall"), and (P.A.B.) Widener (owner of "Lynnewood Hall" in nearby Elkins Park and friend of Edward Stotesbury).

Now as you travel through the township, take a look at the street signs of today and you'll get additional reminders of the past that make up Springfield's rich history!

Keeping the past in the present,

Ed Zwicker

YEAKEL CEMETERY PROGRAM

A Program in conjunction with the Chestnut Hill Historical Society

The first Thanksgiving celebrated in America was the harvest feast held by the Pilgrims of Plymouth Plantation, but the oldest continuously celebrated Thanksgiving began in Philadelphia about 100 years later with an observance by a group of German émigrés, the *Schwenkfelders*, who settled in Chestnut Hill, Springfield Township and throughout Montgomery County.



The landing of the Schwenkfelders from the Saint Andrew, by Adolph Pannash. Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center.

They, too, came to the New World to escape religious persecution and, on September 24, 1734, two days after their ship landed, they observed a day of thanksgiving which they called Gedächtnistag (Remembrance Day) that is still celebrated by their descendants.

The story of these 18th century settlers will be featured in a program to be held this fall by the Springfield Township Historical Society in partnership with the Chestnut Hill Historical Society. Consisting of two evenings of talks and a tour of the Schwenkfelders' all-but-forgotten Yeakel Cemetery in Wyndmoor, the program will illuminate the early history of European settlement in this area. The talks will take place

on two Thursday evenings, October 11 and November 8, 2012, at 7:30pm at the First Presbyterian Church in Flourtown and will be open to the public at no charge. The moderator on both evenings will be Miles Orvell, Professor of English and American Studies at Temple University and Editor in Chief of the Encyclopedia of American Studies Online, published by Johns Hopkins University Press.



Yeakel Cemetery. Photograph courtesy of Jerry Heebner.

Speakers on October 11 will be J.M. Duffin, editor of Acta Germanopolis, Records of the Corporation of Germantown, Pennsylvania, 1691-1707, and David Luz, Executive Director of the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center in Pennsburg, PA. Duffin's talk, "Lay of the Land: Revolutionary Springfield and Chestnut Hill," will provide a glimpse into the settlement pattern, community and landscape of Chestnut Hill and Springfield Township at the time of the American Revolution, using historical GIS mapping to bring out key features and place them in their modern geographical context. Luz's presentation, "Who are the Schwenkfelders?" will discuss the history and distinctive theology of the spiritual

STHS Holds Inaugural Summer Gala

Estate tour aids STHS preservation efforts in a big way

By Dorothy C. Nickelson

Guests traveled back through time down Flourtown Avenue, walking across a courtyard paved with stones imported from England, under a 500-year old limestone archway and passing through a 1,000 year-old door to enter Guildford. This magnificent Tudor manor house reminiscent of Sutton Place on the River Wey near Guildford, England was the scene of STHS' inaugural Summer Gala held on Saturday, June 9, 2012.

The more than 120 guests participated in a tour of the home that was the dream of George W. Elkins and his wife, Allethaire, in the early 1900s. After George's untimely death in 1919, Allethaire continued to build the home and a year later married Samuel Rotan. By 1925, they completed the construction of one of Wyndmoor's grandest estates.

Martha McGeary Snider, the current owner of Guildford who along with STHS hosted the event, led a lively discussion about the history of the estate and spoke of architectural elements in rooms on the main floor that date from the late Medieval to the Enlightenment periods. The library was of particular interest as it had originally been in the 15th century London residence of Lord Bolingbroke and where Alexander Pope had written his "Essay on Man." That night Springfield Middle School student Deja Smith performed there for the group accompanied on the piano by her music teacher, Joanne Dieterly, also Band Director at the school.

Outside, guests gathered around the home's splendid exterior to enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and stood on the hill overlooking a modern amphitheater to listen to the multi-generational sounds of the Sofa Kings. As the band played on, a silent auction was being held where guests were encouraged to bid on a wide array of items, among them upcoming tickets to a Madonna concert, memorabilia from Tiger Woods' first Masters tournament and a beach-house getaway.

Proceeds from the event will go toward digitalizing the thousands of documents, photos, deeds and archival materials that are part of STHS collection. "Our goal is to make sure that we have secure backup of the valuable irreplaceable items in the collection," explains Edward C. Zwicker, President of STHS. "We also



This 18th-century house once stood at the southwest corner of Germantown and Chestnut Hill Avenues.

heirs of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig, a radical figure of the Protestant Reformation in Germany. He will also share some interesting information about the Yeakel Cemetery.

The program on November 8 will feature presentations by Jefferson M. Moak, Senior Archivist with the National Archives & Records Administration, and David Contosta, Professor of History at Chestnut Hill College and co-author of *Metropolitan Paradise: The Struggle for Nature in the City: Philadelphia's Wissahickon Valley, 1620-2020*. Moak's talk, "Chestnut

Hill and Springfield Township: 18th Century Land Development and Architecture," will include the original land partitions of Chestnut Hill and Springfield Township, an introduction to the 18th century roads, and examples of 18th century architecture, both demolished and extant. Contosta's presentation, "Millers and Mystics," will explore the incongruous history of the Wissahickon Valley as both an early industrial powerhouse and as the home of a millenarian Pietist sect known as the "Hermits of the Wissahickon."

The cemetery tour will be led by Jerry Heebner, editor of *The Schwenckfeldian* magazine, a publication of the General Conference of the Schwenckfelder Church. It will be held



Guildford

plan to put more content online so people around the world will have ready access to our township's more than 300 year-old history."

The idea for the event was first proposed by Ms. McGeary Snider a few months ago. Recognized as an innovative leader in cultural endeavors and education advocacy, Ms. McGeary Snider came to STHS by way of township officials who connected her to the group. In addition to opening up her home, she helped plan the event, meeting with Zwicker and members of the board in early spring to coordinate manpower and discuss details, timeline and contacts.

A key component was recruiting volunteers and additional sponsors to donate items for the silent auction and to help cover catering and other costs. The generosity of the volunteers and sponsors allows more of the event proceeds to benefit our important preservation efforts. The event committee consisted of Ed Zwicker, Charles G. Zwicker, Barbara Coleman, Sue Duckwitz, Kathy Haight, Amanda Helwig, Christine Smith and Joy L. Zwicker. Major sponsors include Bob Brock of ChaddsFord Winery, the Sofa Kings and Gerhard's Appliances.

"We want to thank Martha Snider who made it all possible, our major sponsors and the many local retailers and businesses who helped make the event an astounding success. This was the largest fundraising event we've ever sponsored," concludes Ed. "The gala is not only an important fundraiser for STHS. It also raises awareness of STHS and our mission in the larger community."

"We look forward to continuing with these summer galas as an annual fundraising event."

twice, at 1:30pm and again at 3:30pm on Sunday, October 14, 2012 (rain date, Saturday, October 27). The tour will be free to members of STHS and CHHS (\$15 for nonmembers) but, because of the fragile nature of the cemetery, each tour will be limited to 20 people. Members of the two organizations

will be able to register for the tour starting on September 17 by phoning CHHS Business Manager Audrey Simpson at 215-247-0417, ext. 103, or sending her an email at info@chhs.org with "Cemetery tour" in the subject line; public registration will begin on September 24.

SLIDE LECTURES

Thurs., Oct. 11th & Thurs., Nov. 8th – 7:30 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church, Flourtown, PA
Free and open to the public, reservations not required

CEMETERY TOURS

1:30 p.m. & 3:30 p.m. Sun., Oct. 14, 2012 (rain date, Sat., Oct. 27)
Free to STHS/CHHS Members, \$15/Non-members
Space is limited – first come, first served
Reservations for STHS Friends/Members can be made beginning on Mon., Sept. 17th – Call Audrey Simpson at CHHS – 215-247-0417 x103



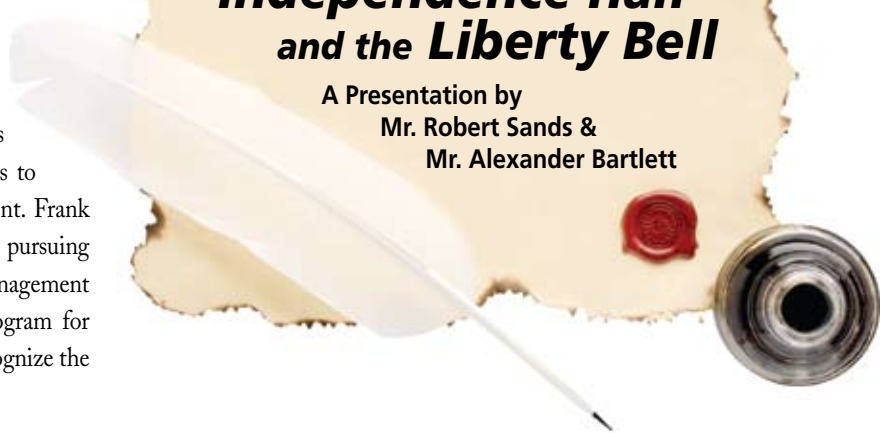
The Springfield Township Historical Society presented its ANNUAL HISTORY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD to Frank Vitale IV (left), a recent graduate of Springfield Township High School. Frank, shown here with Historical Society president Ed Zwicker, was given a certificate at the school's senior awards assembly. The award is given to a graduating senior who plans to major in history or a related field and for scholastic achievement. Frank will be attending Dickinson College in the fall where he will be pursuing majors in Political Science and International Business and Management as well as the Secondary Education Teacher Certification program for social studies. The historical society established the award to recognize the importance of education about the township's past.

*Reserve
the Date*

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