

# ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



July/August, 2014

<http://www.uchs.net>

Joseph Minardi, Editor

## UCHS BOARD NOMINEES ANNOUNCED

The Nominating Committee of UCHS is pleased to announce the nominees for the term beginning in September, 2014. As per the by-laws, voting is open now. A ballot has been sent to all UCHS members along with this newsletter. To cast your vote, please complete the ballot and return it to **P.O. Box 31927, Phila., PA 19104**.

We feel that these new Board members, with their various skills and knowledge, will add strength and character to the Society and will help propel us to a very successful future.

**George Poulin** first became acquainted with Powelton Village as a Drexel architecture student. After graduating, George purchased his Hamilton Street home in 2008. He was President of the Civic Association from 2010-2012, and served as the neighborhood's Chair of the zoning committee since. He also helped organize the 2011 Powelton Village House Tour.

**Brian Spooner** has been teaching at Penn

since 1968 and lived at two locations in University City during that time, and at his current home for the last 45 years. Brian is especially interested in changes in the modern world and its increased urbanization. He also participated in the original neighborhood patrols started in the early 1970s. He is particularly interested in the changing percentage of people who stay and invest in West Philadelphia, providing social continuity amid urban diversity.

**Frank Innes** was a past president of the Friends of Clark Park, a member of the Vestry of St. Mary's Church, Hamilton Village, and has supported the Neighborhood Bike Works by fundraising for and riding in the Ride of Dreams for the past five years and assisting with the NBW summer camp.

In addition to the new members, the UCHS is welcoming Board members who are renewing their membership. The five renewing members are **Ellie Cernansky, Moe Phillips, Lee Garner, Joseph Minardi** and **Melani Lamond**.

## Nominees Sought for *U* UCHS Preservation Awards

The UCHS is looking for nominees for its annual preservation awards, which will be announced next February at the UCHS Valentine Tea, held every year at The Castle at 48th & Springfield. UCHS is looking for worthy nominees from around University City for the categories: Preservation Initiative Award, Gift to the Streets, and Outstanding Preservation Award. Homeowners are invited to nominate their own completed renovations and nominees need not be members of UCHS, although they are welcome to join. Email nominations to: [www.uchs.net](http://www.uchs.net)



## BALTIMORE AVENUE DOLLAR STROLL

Thanks to all of those happy revellers who came out on June 19th for the Annual Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll. After a rainy afternoon the clouds parted leaving a sunny evening for festivities. Thousands of strollers were out in force armed with fistfuls of dollars and a hunger for local delicacies. Participating purveyors of goodies included Gold Standard, Dahlak, Little Baby's Ice Cream, and Vientiane.

In addition to the hordes of food vendors there were local musicians performing to the amusement of the strollers. All-in-all, it was a very successful evening for the local businesses and event organizers.



Photos by Joseph Minardi





## Did you know?

South of Market Street, William Hamilton of the Woodlands made plans to subdivide his estate as early as 1808. In that year he formally proposed "Hamilton Village," a westward extension of the standard grid of the Philadelphia street system. The Hamilton Village development was triangular in shape, bounded, approximately, by the present-day streets of Market on the north, 32nd on the east, Spruce and Woodlands Avenue on the south, and 40th on the west. The streets were laid out and houses, churches, and schools began to be built. Rather than a "country" lifestyle, Hamilton Village was "suburban," that is, its residents commuted to work daily over the new Market Street bridge and returned home each evening. In that sense, Hamilton Village may be described as the first modern suburb of Philadelphia.

Hamilton named the north-south streets after members of his family, such as Mary, Margaret and William. Nothing remains of the old Hamilton Village, save for St. Mary's Church on Locust Walk.



Charles Ellet, Jr.'s Map of West Philadelphia, 1839 showing Hamiltonville.

## SPRUCE HILL MAY FAIR WRAP UP

The UCHS would like to thank everyone who visited our table at the Spruce Hill May Fair on May 10th. The rain held off until the last half hour, but before then we were able to hand out a number of unique coloring pages to the youngsters who stopped by. They didn't disappoint with their colorful renditions of historic buildings in University City. In case you missed it, the beautiful pages were uploaded to the UCHS Facebook page. The line drawings of the houses in the neighborhood were drawn by UCHS founding member Sylvia Barkan from around 1971.



Jia-Ming Gong and Auije Diller's colored-in line drawings (above), Spruce Hill May Fair. Amir's coloring of St. Francis DeSales Church by Joseph Minardi. Photo by Moira Nadal.

## University City: Then & Now - The Sedgley Apartments, 45th and Pine



Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Archives.

We reported on the renovation of the Sedgley Apartments at 45th and Pine in the July/August 2013 issue of *On The West Side*, and now we're happy to announce the restoration of this early castle-like apartment building is just about complete. The major work on the exterior involves the replacement of the bay windows on the 45th Street side, which has incurred some negative comments. The main complaints are the new bays look "cheap" and the original bluish-gray paint is now a gray color similar to the



Photo by Joseph Minardi

stonework. The new color scheme doesn't create that lovely contrast we've come to know at the old Sedgley, but it is nice to see it back in tip-top condition and ready for occupation.

The "then" photo dates from when the Sedgley first opened to the public, with a view looking north up 45th Street on the left of the photo. The architect was A. Lynn Walker, who also designed the Stonehurst and Stoneleigh Apartments in University City.

The "now" photo shows the new refurbishment.

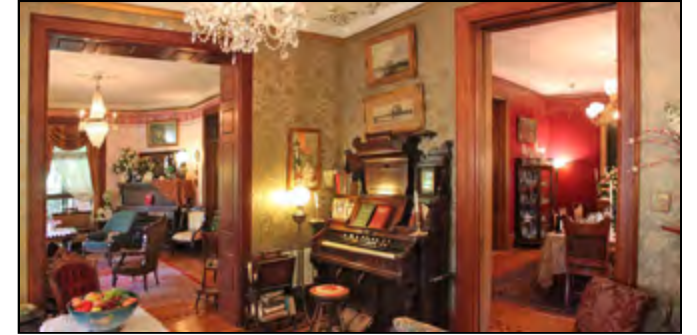
## Featured Historic House - The Gables Bed & Breakfast

Those familiar with Cedar Park have no doubt noticed the elegant Victorian mansion on the corner of 46th and Chester. In a neighborhood known for its twin houses, this stands out as a single home. And what a large single it is! Built in 1889, the Willis Hale-designed beauty has seen a number of different owners over its century-plus history.

The original owner was Dr. Daniel Egan, who taught at the nearby University of Pennsylvania. Egan died in 1900, leaving the home to his widow. When Egan's wife died in the 1930s, the house was then willed to the Catholic Church, who repurposed the expansive mansion for the next half-decade. This was a common practice for large dwellings of the Victorian era. Single families had fled to the suburbs by the middle of the twentieth century, and the only folks who could afford these houses were institutions or developers who subdivided the homes into apartments, with disastrous results.

Luckily for the old Egan homestead, it was purchased in 1991 by current UCHS president, Melani Lamond and her husband, Brian Rati-gan, who began a massive restoration project with the intent on using the home as a bed and breakfast. Next, the Gables was sold to Don Caskey and Warren Cederholm, who continued the renovations, in the process turning the Gables into one of the premier B&Bs in Philadelphia. They have received many business and hospitality awards throughout the years including "Best of Philly" in *Philadelphia Magazine* and have been featured in *Victorian Homes Magazine*.

The UCHS would like to thank Don and Warren for opening their doors to us for our annual house tour. We owe part of our success to you!



The Gable B&B, 4520 Chester Avenue. Photos by Joseph Minardi

## THANKS TO ALL FOR A VERY SUCCESSFUL HOUSE TOUR!

Here's a note to thank the twelve homeowners and ZED's Last Minute Gifts, who graciously opened up their places to so many visitors today. The houses looked great! And the write-ups provided by the homeowners for the brochure were heartwarming; it was wonderful to see how much everyone cares about their houses and our neighborhood. The weather cooperated perfectly, for a change—a big difference from last year, when it drizzled on the tour and pretty much rained us out. And the flowers were all in bloom! A perfect day for a tour!

We had a strong turnout, so it was a very successful fundraiser for UCHS. But even more important was the good will generated and the spreading of the word about taking care of old houses in University City! Thanks to all of you who made it possible.

While my husband and I walked around on the tour, we heard so many enthusiastic comments from tour visitors! And we hope that the homeowners enjoyed the tour guests' compliments and encouragement, as much as the guests enjoyed seeing the houses. It's always wonderful to see our neighborhood this way—a place where friendly homeowners welcome other old-house lovers into beautiful houses filled with special treasures. I think we are so lucky to live here.

Thanks again to the homeowners and the tour participants for all that you did today, and thanks also to Joe Minardi and the other members of the UCHS Board for their work to make the tour successful.

Melani Lamond  
President, U.C. Historical Society  
June 1, 2014



Photos by Joseph Minardi



# ON THE WEST SIDE



## FINAL DAYS OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH?

After a long period of decline, and despite efforts and concern from many local organizations, including UCHS, the owners of St. Peter's Church did not come up with on a plan to stop the deterioration of the Furness, Evans & Co. - designed church. The 114-year old church on the corner of 47th and Kingsessing Avenue has been falling to pieces for years now, with some large chunks crashing down to the sidewalk below.

The church's pastor decided that "no money changers in the temple" was more important than saving the church. A notice of demolition from L&I has been placed on the church's door and chain-link fence has been installed. Workers were seen entering the basement. A stay of demolition was recently granted, however, but only if Aaron Wunsch, a PennDesign faculty member, and other church stakeholders can prove that the title to the property is free and clear, and can be sold to the individual who has expressed the intent to buy it and prove that it is structurally sound. An independent engineer submitted a letter supporting the notion that the building is sound. This contributed to L&I's decision to grant the stay, but will have to be further documented.



The church in 2010 (top), and in 2014 (bottom). Photos by Joseph Minardi

## PROFILES IN ARCHITECTURE

*T.P. Chandler, Jr.*

Theophilus Parsons Chandler, Jr. (1848–1928) was largely responsible for the creation of the Department of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania in 1890 and served as the department's head from 1890 to 1891. Despite his great achievements and influence in the field of architecture, he is little-known today.

Chandler did a number of commissions outside of Philadelphia, mainly in the field of church design. His education in Paris, along with a collection of photographs of European monuments which he frequently referenced, was of great assistance to his ecclesiastical works. Chandler was also involved in a number of organizations outside the realm of architecture, including the Philadelphia Club, the Union League, and the Sons of the Revolution.

### Relevant Commissions:

- 1874: The Bear Pits, Philadelphia Zoo, 34th & Girard Avenue.
- 1885: Tabernacle Presbyterian Church, 3700 Chestnut Street
- 1886: George Burnham Residence, 3401 Powelton Avenue
- 1886: Hayes Mechanics Home, 2201 Belmont Avenue



Have you liked the UCHS Facebook page yet? Whatcha waiting for? Go to [www.facebook.com/ucityhistoricalsociety](http://www.facebook.com/ucityhistoricalsociety) to get all of our updates and info about future events. It's fun and free! Also be sure to check out our evolving homepage at [UCHS.net](http://UCHS.net). Now you have two new ways to connect to your favorite historical society and all the goings on in your neighborhood.



**University City Historical Society**  
PO Box 31927  
Philadelphia PA 19104-0627