

Evidence of Place: Resources Documenting the Philadelphia Area's Architectural Past

AMONG THE PHILADELPHIA AREA'S greatest assets is the continuing presence of its past. These vestiges of a long succession of people and intentions accompany us daily as we walk our streets, visually rooting us in memory, reminding us of the longer view and things that have come before. They enrich our lives—but these riches are ephemeral. We inhabit landscapes of inevitable and constant change, urban, suburban, and rural. Even well-built buildings deteriorate over time. Land values and uses shift as patterns of residence and commerce evolve into new configurations. And all the while new technologies of construction succeed one another, as do new images of society. Such forces of change are resisted on occasion, usually only when someone is willing to pay a significant premium to preserve historical value, for it is not inexpensive to insulate properties from their market fate, even when the cost is primarily in the form of extended maintenance and more remunerative opportunities declined. Far more often, market forces reflecting broad-based consumer preferences command architectural change in the form of complete rebuilding every two or three generations.

As a result, there are places in the older part of Philadelphia that may have been built on and built over a half-dozen or more times over three centuries, with buildings and ensembles of different forms and types. The region presents a palimpsest of overlaid vestiges of different moments, where human motives wrought on the landscape often adjoin products of other

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conceptualizations and economic forces working their will over the passive land.

This rich heritage of building and rebuilding is a subject that attracts a wide community of interest, ranging from historians intent on envisioning the settings of the past to area residents interested in the history of their property or neighborhood. But it has also been of special interest for those involved with architectural history, for architects and planners attentive to historical roots as they design, for students and scholars investigating the work of key architects or distinctive building types, or for those probing the history of particular places that tell the stories critical to their subjects.

Libraries and archival repositories in the area offer a wealth of evidence of these places in time through documents that vary widely in form, in the motives that produced them, and in the dispersed collections where they are held. A good many of the key resources for this kind of vision into the past are preserved in manuscript or published form at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The Society's collections take a leading place in an ecology of richly interdependent area collections that record the Philadelphia area's physical history. This essay will survey some of these resources owned by the Society and other local institutions, sorting them to some degree by the motives that lay behind their creation.

At the broadest level, change in the settings we inhabit is inescapable. We are often left only with our own mental imprint of places we have outlived, as almost all vestige of old familiarities are erased from the land, and witness passes with the generations that knew these spots. We sometimes marshal prodigious efforts to anchor memory against that tide, in the form of visual surrogates. There has long been an inclination to perpetuate that remembrance beyond the death of witness, and to celebrate our proudest lost landmarks and record passing settings in images, lest their memory fade and cease. Alongside a like impulse to perpetuate some vestige of ancestors and contemporaries, this notion of preserving the memory of such places was probably one of the strongest impulses in bringing citizens together to form organizations like the Society, which became a bulwark, in a century of unprecedented, relentless transformation, against a sense of constant redefinition, dispossession, and a collective amnesia about places once familiar.

Evidence of this impulse to capture place abounds in such collections. The most complete means of capture—short of reconstruction or reuse of

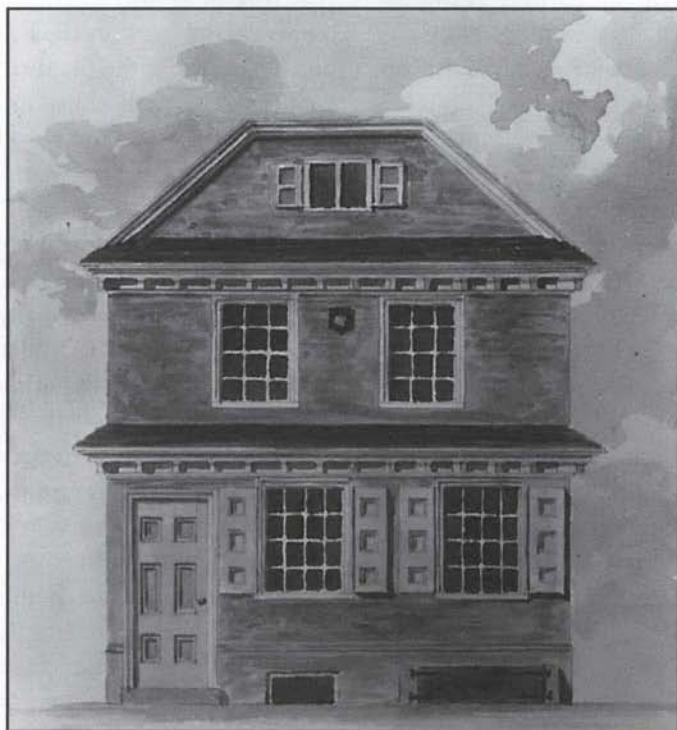


Fig. 1. David Breintnall house, c. 1700. North side of Chestnut Street, west of Third. Watercolor by William Strickland, March 4, 1818. The house was long known by the name of its most famous resident, Anthony Benezet. Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter, HSP).

pieces—usually involved architects or others who had mastered the conventions of architectural representation. These skills offered a capacity to record a building in scale drawings that so fully documented its spatial and three-dimensional form as to someday make it possible to bring the building back to life. Reconstruction rarely happened, of course, but even when an architect only drew the front in elevation, there was a sense that his

measurable, orthographic drawing was an objective, scientific record that could serve its resurrection. Commissioning such drawings was sometimes a last grasp, a totemic gesture in the face of the finality of demolition.

One of the earliest examples of this sort of record is the measured orthogonal elevation (fig. 1) that William Strickland made as the basis of an engraving of what was thought "one of the oldest, if not the first brick house erected in Philadelphia." This was the David Breintnall house in the 300 block of Chestnut Street, which Strickland drew in 1818, on the eve of its demolition. He did so at the request of Roberts Vaux, biographer of an owner subsequent to Breintnall, Anthony Benezet.¹

But there may have been another motive at work in the making of this sort of architectural record, one often encountered later. Architecture constantly feeds on itself for renewal and redefinition and, especially during the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth, architects found themselves drawn to old buildings whose language of form, though long out of date, elicited some sympathy, and even offered an implicit critique of modern work. A careful record might serve the renewed use of such forms. One wonders if some interest in the form of the Breintnall house might not also have been felt by Strickland who, in 1811, had chosen venerable old Christ Church, built in the second quarter of the previous century, as the centerpiece of a view in oils that he would exhibit at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Naturally, it was his client speaking when, in 1828, his design restored the 1750s form of the upper part of the tower of Independence Hall, to a degree reversing its radical transformation in the 1780s, but clients often choose or are swayed by architects of sympathetic inclination.

This likely pairing of motives, capture in the face of loss plus record for future application, was more clearly at work later when many architectural drawings of passing buildings were initiated by architects themselves, especially of colonial buildings. A very early example was architect Henry Augustus Sims who drew Philadelphia's oldest surviving great house, the Slate Roof House on Second Street, probably in 1867, on the eve of its destruction. Sims's interest in colonial work was, from a national standpoint,

¹ George B. Tatum, *Penn's Great Town* (Philadelphia, 1961), 154.

rather precocious; it would become a near mania in the decades to follow.²

With the full-blown Colonial Revival from the 1890s through the 1930s, there arose a degree of consonance between past and present taste that would lead many architects to record eighteenth-century buildings, whether on the brink of demolition or not. This language of forms served a self-conscious nationalism and was manifest in varied building types, from suburban houses to downtown office buildings (fig. 2). Philadelphia, the nation's largest and most cosmopolitan eighteenth-century city, was a font of such examples. One of the early attempts to record local buildings was W. D. Goforth and W. J. McAuley's *Old Colonial Architectural Details in and around Philadelphia* (1890), a volume offering fifty plates of measured drawings recording some twenty buildings. Among other early measured drawings recording eighteenth-century structures is a set by Charles L. Hillman that survives in manuscript form at the Free Library of Philadelphia. Some of those drawings found their way into the three volumes of William Rotch Ware's *The Georgian Period*, published in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Similar motives involving both the need to record and potential reapplication in modern colonial work were probably key in two efforts launched during the Great Depression. The first was the "Survey of Old Philadelphia," conducted 1930–33 under the leadership of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, which enlisted draftsmen, many of them idled by the decline in building, to produce some 407 measured drawings, mainly of colonial and early-nineteenth-century examples in the central parts of the city. These drawings, combined with a set of 125 photographs, survive in collections at the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Chapter of the A.I.A., respectively.³ This local effort served as a model for a more lasting program of collecting measured drawings, photographs, and data on such buildings nationally: the Historic American Buildings Survey, organized in 1933. By the mid-1970s

² James F. O'Gorman et al, *Drawing Toward Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics, 1732–1986* (Philadelphia, 1986), 118, 131–32. The Society also holds views of the interiors of the house drawn by William J. Clark, Jr., in 1867.

³ The six photograph albums at the Philadelphia Chapter of the A.I.A. (formerly at the American Philosophical Society Library, 1967–92) focus mainly on the areas between Eighth Street and the Delaware River, from Spring Garden to Carpenter streets. There are also some images of outlying eighteenth-century buildings in Fairmount Park and West Philadelphia. Although most of the photographs date from the early 1930s, several bear dates from 1898 to 1909.



Fig. 2. Provident Trust Company, 1927. 1624–36 Chestnut Street, view from northwest. Rankin and Kellog, architects. Photo by Philip B. Wallace. Wallace Collection, HSP.

over 600 Philadelphia buildings had been documented in the HABS collection, maintained at the Library of Congress, including many examples which were soon to come down. In its early decades this effort tended very strongly toward a focus on colonial examples.⁴

⁴ Charles E. Peterson, "HABS—In and Out of Philadelphia," in Richard Webster, ed., *Philadelphia Preserved: Catalog of the Historic American Buildings Survey*, (2d ed., Philadelphia, 1981), xxi–xlv. The HABS documentation, along with that of its counterpart, the Historic American Engineering Record

Another local effort of this sort followed quickly on the heels of these, conducted, somewhat unexpectedly, by the Department of City Transit, Photographic Division. The result was a rich set of photographs of nearly one hundred historic buildings accompanied by well-cited research in a typescript titled "Historical Buildings in Philadelphia." Joseph Jackson directed this project in the spring of 1934. Although this project too leaned toward major colonial landmarks, it was much more inclusive, showing buildings well beyond the touristic and scholarly canon. Many photographs portrayed substantially altered buildings in transformed settings rather than intact eighteenth- and nineteenth-century models for architects' emulation. This more inclusive type of survey has climaxed over the last half-century in lists, databases, and files compiled by government, at both state and local levels, in efforts to inventory and protect cultural heritage resources.⁵

Architects and builders also sketched contemporary buildings more directly for their own reference. Most often this took place in sites considered more cosmopolitan, more generative centers of modernity, or, with neoclassicism and the revivals, places of ancient authority. Such sites were usually abroad, and there was a fairly clear deference to the latest works in European capitals or the oldest in cities of antiquity, most of these visually available through illustrated publications. The works of the first generations of American professional architects, many of them in Philadelphia, began to earn a similar respect in the first decades of the nineteenth century. They became the subjects of sketches, sometimes providing posterity with its best

(HAER), is held in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. Various inventories of it have been published in print, microform, and in electronic form, but its most recent and accessible incarnation is the website, with scanned images forthcoming, mounted as part of the American Memory project of the Library of Congress (www.locweb2.loc.gov/ammem/hhhtml/hhhome.html).

⁵ Two bodies of unpublished documentation compiled by government are especially valuable for researchers. One is the Philadelphia Historical Commission's collection of research files, organized alphabetically by address, which includes photographs, deed research, insurance surveys, as well as copies of inventory sheets from the Pennsylvania Historic Sites Survey, carried out by contract mainly in the 1970s and 1980s for individual sectors of the city. The Historical Commission also holds copies of historic district nominations, often containing detailed data on individual structures within such districts.

From the Pennsylvania Historic Sites Survey, National Register nominations, and other sources, the state has compiled a large database with over 100,000 records on historical sites statewide, a disproportionate number of them documenting the early-settled southeast corner of the state. Textual data on the properties represented in the PHC files as of 1986 has also been compiled into a database, presently available for searching at the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog) under "Research Tools." Both databases are targeted for updating and integration into the Athenaeum of Philadelphia's "Philadelphia Architect and Buildings Project," just commencing.

record of such places. Two examples directed at Philadelphia buildings are early-nineteenth-century sketchbooks by New Yorkers, both at the New-York Historical Society. One, from 1822, was drawn by architect John McComb, Jr., and the other, from about 1830, was by architect/builder William Vine. These included plans, views, and details, some of them unique records of then recent buildings by Benjamin Latrobe, William Strickland, Robert Mills, and Frederick Graff.⁶

Later in the century, in the course of a vernacular revival that cast many new buildings in older, usually modest guises, there was less convergence on single models and more on types and eras. Architects, especially younger ones, took more than ever to the road, sketchbook in hand, drawing the old houses on the urban edges (fig. 3) and in the forgotten old parts of the city. The details, recorded in drawings and sometimes photographs, were often reembodied in modern work. At other times, the task of recording buildings in measured drawings by students of architecture may have been directed more toward graphic facility than toward inculcating the formal values of the subject. Student drawings of this sort date as early as the late 1820s, such as an elevation of the Second Bank of the United States drawn by John C. Trautwine in William Strickland's office four years after the building was completed to his teacher's design. More recent, and less directed to matters of style, is a collection of some 150 drawings of Philadelphia rowhouses produced by first-year architecture students at the University of Pennsylvania two decades ago.⁷

If such efforts found their focus mainly on the building in isolation, on its details and plan and often rendered orthographically, there was another tradition, less often the work of architects, that was more pictorial and textural. Since the late eighteenth century, a series of viewmakers began to record scenes that would ultimately be reflected in publications of engraved or lithographed streetscapes, most notably those of William Russell Birch and his son Thomas from the late 1790s on, Cephas G. Childs in the 1820s,

⁶ James F. O'Gorman, "A New York Architect Visits Philadelphia in 1822," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (hereafter, *PMHB*) 117 (1993), 153-76.

⁷ This Trautwine drawing, dated September 5, 1828, is in a private collection. The Penn drawings, titled "Philadelphia Rowhouses: A Comparative Study," were produced between 1977 and 1981 in the first year studios conducted by Paul Hirshorn and John Blatteau. Most of these have been scanned and posted on the web at the Places in Time site (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog), under "Measured Drawings."

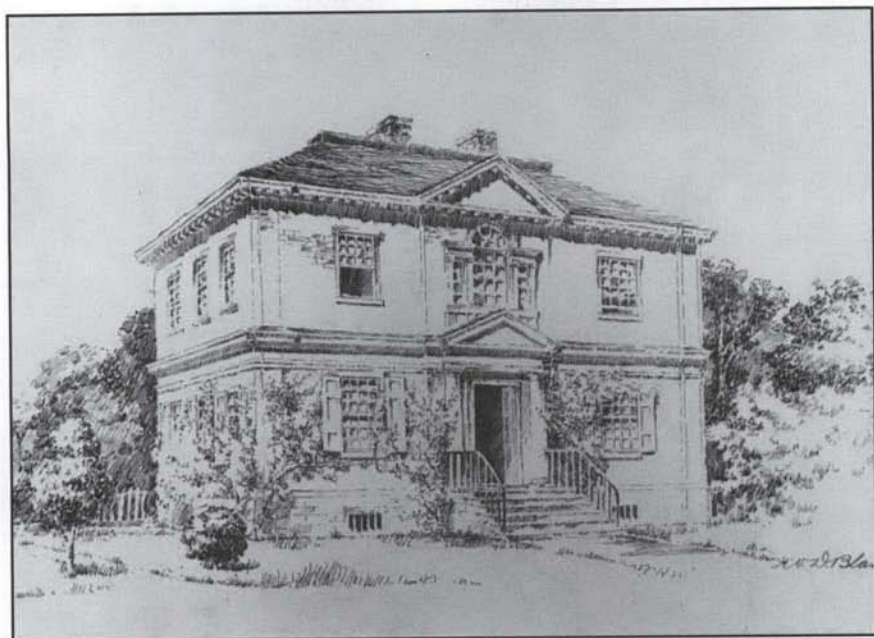


Fig. 3. "Woodford," 1757–c. 1800. Fairmount Park. Perspective drawing in ink by Walter Dabney Blair, 1899. Private collection. HSP photo.

and John Caspar Wild in the late 1830s (fig. 4).⁸ These artists tended to aim their inner lenses at a wider view, evoking setting as much as and sometimes more than individual buildings. They were especially drawn to the monumental lions that reflected the city's institutional life and often a proud

⁸ The key publications were William Birch, *The City of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania North America, as it appeared in the Year 1800* (Philadelphia, 1800); C. G. Childs, *Views in Philadelphia and its Environs* (Philadelphia, 1827–30); and J. C. Wild and J. B. Chevalier, *Views of Philadelphia, and its Vicinity* (Philadelphia, 1838). But there is a remarkably useful secondary literature on early prints in books and articles by the late Martin P. Snyder, including his *City of Independence, Views of Philadelphia before 1800* (New York, 1975) and *Mirror of America, The Developing Life of Philadelphia Seen in Engravings, 1801–1876* (Gladwyne, Pa., 1996). Key articles have been published in this journal by Snyder on the Birches (*PMHB* 73 [1949], 271–315; 81 [1957], 225–54; and 88 [1964], 164–73); and Wild (77 [1953], 32–75). On early lithographs there is Nicholas B. Wainwright, *Philadelphia in the Romantic Age of Lithography* (Philadelphia, 1958). Scanned images of the Birch, Childs, and Wild views are available online through the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog) under "Engraved and Lithographed Views," along with Wainwright's list of lithographs, presented in a searchable form.



Fig. 4. John Caspar Wild, "Manayunk, Near Philadelphia." Lithograph from Wild, *Views of Philadelphia and Its Vicinity* (Philadelphia, 1838), pl. 18.

modernity, but they were also attracted by the textural and by picturesque appeal. In this they were akin to other contemporary topographical painters, some working in oil, such as John J. Barralet, William Groombridge, John A. Woodside, John Lewis Krimmel, Thomas Doughty, Russell and Xanthus Smith, and Augustus Kollner.⁹

⁹ On paintings we turn again to Wainwright, who, toward the end of his life, had begun to compile a catalog of painted views of the city, mostly oils, that were widely distributed among public and private collections. Left incomplete at his death, his notes and glossies collected for this project, preserved at the Society, will form the foundation for any future effort of this sort. A sampling of such paintings at the Society, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Library Company is scanned and posted on the web through the Places in Time site (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog), under "Paintings, Watercolors, and Sketches." See Wainwright also on Kollner (*PMHB* 84 [1960], 325–51). On area paintings and drawings outside public collections there are several catalogs issued by the Schwarz Gallery of Philadelphia over the last two decades, most notably, Robert Wilson Torchia, *The Smiths: A Family of Philadelphia Artists*

These artists seem less frequently to have portrayed places passing into memory, although the occasion of an impending demolition or the spur of an antiquarian's interest sometimes directed viewmakers toward that role of preserving a last record, sometimes shortly before the fact. One of the largest and most vivid of such images was the oil painting of the old "Town House" amid Market Street from about 1836, now at the Second Bank of the United States, measuring about 5 x 9 feet.¹⁰ But large paintings of such memories-to-be were the exception rather than the rule; images were much more often scaled for private contemplation through publication rather than for public display.

The first artist to focus with some frequency on passing vestiges of an earlier Philadelphia was William L. Breton, who from the mid-1820s on made watercolors of several early buildings (fig. 5), often old houses that had been or were about to be replaced, such as the Carpenter mansion on Chestnut Street, the Governor Shippen house on Second Street, and the Old Town House on Market Street. These reached a wider public as woodcuts and lithographs in John Fanning Watson's *Annals of Philadelphia*, first published in 1830, in the magazine *The Casket*, and in the 1831 edition, by Thomas Porter, of James Mease's *Picture of Philadelphia*. Watson often directed Breton's brush, not only in terms of their target but even in terms of his recollection of their original state. More than three dozen watercolor views by Breton survive at the Society, and there are others at the Athenaeum, the Library Company, and other area collections.¹¹

(Philadelphia, 1999). For other graphic views of all sorts the public is admirably served by the Society's graphics card catalog, greatly expanded and unified in the 1980s to penetrate to the item level within a wide range of different collections. Collection-level and some item-level descriptions of the Society's manuscript and graphics holdings, along with a good proportion of its publications, are currently being converted from earlier database formats for integration into an on-line public access catalog (OPAC) expected to come on line in 2001. Another valuable resource on area depictions of all sorts is Christopher W. Lane and Donald H. Cresswell, *Prints of Philadelphia at the Philadelphia Print Shop, Featuring the Wohl Collection* (Philadelphia, 1990).

¹⁰ Independence National Historical Park, Museum Collection, item no. INDE 14350. The painting has been attributed to John Archibald Woodside, Jr.

¹¹ One might qualify Breton's primacy by noting line drawings in ink by Watson himself, at least some probably predating his connection with Breton. Several were redrawn from earlier graphic sources, sometimes cited in captions, but others appear to have been drawn from life or reconstructed from the testimony of others. These drawings are included along with original documents, testimony in manuscript and from newspapers (including 1820s recollections sent in to "Lang Syne") collected by Watson in volumes at the Society associated with the *Annals* (see especially manuscript Am.301). One such early document in this collection is the account of expenses, dated 1708, for the construction of the old "Town



Fig. 5. William L. Breton, "Charles Thomson residence in Lower Merion. built in 1706" ("Harriton"). Watercolor, c. 1830. HSP.

Views like these portrayed buildings on the brink more romantically posed in perspective amid neighboring buildings and activities, as a living entity integrated into its setting. Benjamin Ridgway Evans, a more prolific if perhaps less talented artist, painted a similar set of watercolors. About 300 of them are held by the Society (fig. 6) and another 151 by the Library Company.¹² Most appear to be original views that date from the 1870s and

House" at Second and Market. On Breton, see Snyder, "William L. Breton, Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia Artist," *PMHB* 85 (1961), 178–209. Most of the Society's Breton views are scanned and posted on the web through the Places in Time site (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog), under "Paintings, Watercolors, and Sketches."

¹² Tatum, *Penn's Great Town*, 149. Some 186 of the Society's watercolor views by Evans (graphics col. V64) are scanned and available on the web through the Philadelphia Historical Digital Image Library (PHDIL) website at jeffline.tju.edu/archives/phdil/. One can browse these Evans views specifically by scrolling down to select Evans's name under "creator." The Atwater Kent Museum owns a collection of photographs taken in the 1930s of sites Evans had painted two generations earlier.

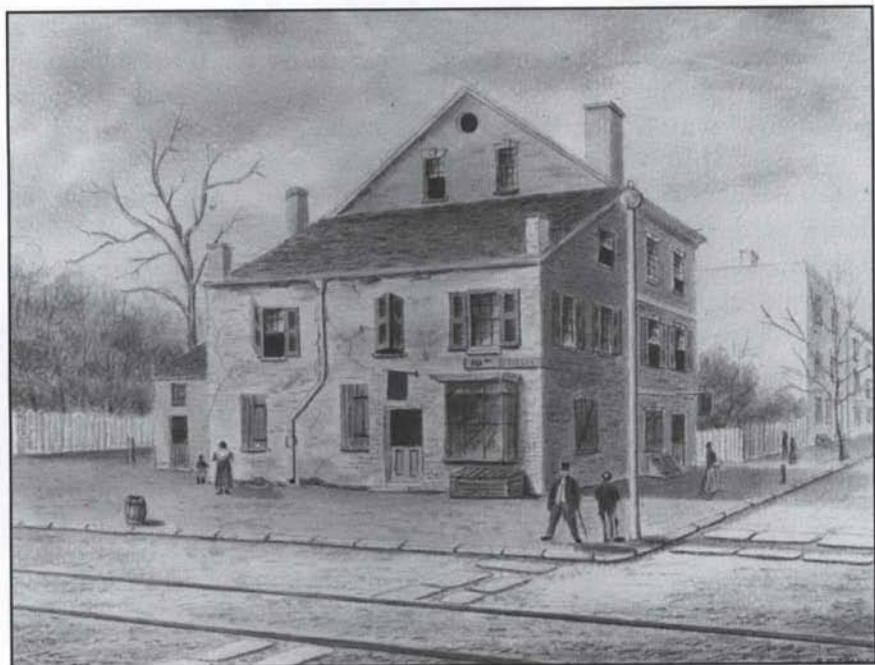


Fig. 6. Benjamin R. Evans, "S.W. Cor. 10th & Carpenter St., Moyamensing Botanic Gardens kept by Alexander Parker, 1820, torn down in 1890." Watercolor, c. 1890. HSP.

1880s, although many bear earlier dates, suggesting that they were based on earlier views by others, including drawings, prints, and even photographs.¹³ Indeed, some of Evans's views match surviving photographs rather closely. If more richly contextualized than the views by architects, these views by Breton and Evans often had a focus in buildings of significance to antiquarian interests, often a house or group of buildings likely to disappear soon. Evans's wider vision seems to have reflected the sensibility as well as the fact of photography; his work seems to capture the momentary and accidental to a greater degree than had earlier viewmakers.

¹³ Evidence of Evans's views being paired with source photographs has been indicated for #71 (cp. #292), #48 (cp. #296b), #160 (cp. #293), along with #294 and #289, photographs which bear marks of Evans tracing.

An advisor and patron to Evans was very likely jeweler and local antiquarian Ferdinand J. Dreer. Dreer certainly played such a role for many views among the even richer set drawn and painted by David J. Kennedy, now mostly at the Society. Kennedy was a railroad clerk whose avocation, between the 1830s and 1890s, was painting over a thousand watercolors of local scenes (fig. 7), recording an environment that was very rapidly changing during the decades he was observing it. He brought to this task a careful eye, a skilled pencil, and an inquiring, persistent energy. Kennedy's focus was more singular in any one sketch, and in several ways more penetrating. His watercolors were often accompanied by notes and secondary sketches about the appearance and the history of his subjects.¹⁴

There were many other like-minded but less prolific watercolorists, most of them probably occasional amateurs rather than professional artists, yet often the only ones to record a particular house or corner. For example, an E. H. Klemroth painted a watercolor perspective, now in the Castner Collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia, of the John Meany house, just before the house's replacement by the PSFS building on Washington Square in 1868. Similar views were made by other lesser-known watercolorists, such as J. Kern, a drawing teacher who in 1847 drew the William Waln house at 7th and Chestnut streets (Library Company of Philadelphia); or lamp-oil merchant Joseph S. Russell, who in 1853 drew exterior and interior views of his boarding house at Broad and Spruce streets.¹⁵ Other occasional watercolorists include architects such as William Strickland and A. J. Davis, addressing sites topographically, usually with some evident interest in the design of a building.

¹⁴ Kathleen A. Foster, "David Johnston Kennedy (1817/18–1898)," in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art* (Philadelphia, 1976), 373–74; see also "The David J. Kennedy Collection," *PMHB* 60 (1936), 67–71. A database indexing the Kennedy views (Society graphics col. V61) has been mounted on the web through the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog), under "Research Tools." It is not yet illustrated. A contemporary with similar interests and skills, but applied to the more rustic textures of old Germantown, was John Richards. His sketches, at the Germantown Historical Society, were reproduced as lithographs and in Julius F. Sachse, comp., *Quaint Old Germantown: Sixty Views of Ancient Landmarks drawn on Zinc by John Richards, 1863–1888* (Philadelphia, 1913).

¹⁵ Talbot Hamlin located and reproduced the Kern view in *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New York, 1955), pl. 17. For the Klemroth view, see Jeffrey A. Cohen and Charles E. Brownell, *The Architectural Drawings of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New Haven, 1994), fig. 82. See also Beatrice Garvan, "Mrs. Smith's Boarding-house, Broad and Spruce Streets," in *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, 339–40.



Fig. 7. David J. Kennedy, "Police Station, 15th Street below Walnut, east side. Built in 1840. Demolished July 1870." Watercolor, c. 1870. HSP.

Topographical views by professional artists in the nineteenth century were sometimes made for engraved or lithographic reproduction. These often reflected interests that were less focused on discreet buildings and less invested in issues of literal accuracy. In other cases, such as that of George Lehman, however, the image was both focused on a building and quite accurate, as in the Society's 1820s view of Lansdowne, a Penn family house in what would become Fairmount Park. A similar case is that of a view painted by artist George Essig, whose 1884 watercolor (fig. 8) shows an old cottage on a North Philadelphia site soon to be swallowed up by modern row housing.

Another kind of viewmaker captured place less for posterity than for themselves and their circle, it seems, upon their return from extended travels. Their interests could be idiosyncratic and personal, akin to a journal of their travels, if often also inclusive of key landmarks. Two early-nineteenth-century examples of this sort show some unparalleled views of area places:



Fig. 8. George E. Essig. "17th & Dauphin St." Watercolor, 1884. HSP.

sketchbooks by Joshua Rowley Watson (1816–17), and by Charles Alexandre Lesueur (1820s–30s). The architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe also made views very much in this vein, depicting many places that he visited during his peripatetic architectural career. Hundreds of these survive, but, unfortunately, most of his views of Philadelphia sites seem to have been lost.¹⁶

From the time of its emergence shortly before the mid-nineteenth century, photography began to serve some of the same intentions as such topographical watercolors, if in a medium that increasingly required fewer

¹⁶ On Watson, see Kathleen A. Foster and Kenneth Finkel, *Captain Watson's Travels in America: The Sketchbooks and Diary of Joshua Rowley Watson, 1772–1818* (Philadelphia, 1997). On Lesueur, see R. W. G. Vail, *The American Sketchbooks of Charles Alexandre Lesueur, 1816–1837* (Worcester, Mass., 1938) and Gilbert Chinard, "The American Sketchbooks of Charles Alexandre Lesueur," *American Philosophical Society, Proceedings* 93 (1949), 114–18. The American Philosophical Society Library holds a set of reproductions of many of Lesueur's originals, which are preserved at Le Havre, France. Selections from Latrobe's sketchbooks were published in Edward C. Carter II, John C. Van Horne, and Charles E. Brownell, eds., *Latrobe's View of America, 1795–1820* (New Haven, 1985).

pains to produce a more detailed image. Later topographical artists toward and after the turn of the century, figures such as Joseph Pennell, Frank H. Taylor, Theo B. White, Henry B. McIntire, and Herbert Pullinger, consequently tended to be freer with their oils, watercolors, etchings, lithographs, and drawings, emphasizing qualities of quaintness, patina, and contrast between old and new. They often edited appearances to provide images of places as they imagined them in a purer state, or dramatically probed new ways of representation by directing views toward familiar realities, toward well-known referents that would act as foils for their innovative visual transformations. If regarded as more evocative works in their day and often still captivating, such images usually are less reliable as records documenting the forms old buildings actually took.¹⁷

The number of photographs of places in the Philadelphia area must be enormous, numbering in the millions, but even the number of those more than a half-century old that are held in collections for public reference probably reaches into the hundreds of thousands, a number that promises wide coverage but still formidable issues of topical access. The richest collections of early photographs are held by the Society, the Library Company, and the Free Library. The work of the early photographers is often dispersed among collections and can involve multiple prints in different collections from a single negative. These three collections are complemented by those at the Philadelphia City Archives, at the Atwater Kent Museum, and at Temple University's Urban Archives, whose strengths are mainly in early-twentieth-century images. These six photographic collections include a wide variety of topographical photographs, including aerial views (at the Free Library and at the Library Company) and newspaper photo "morgues." The Philadelphia *Record* photo morgue from the 1920s to 1947 is held by the Society and contains some 150,000 items; the Urban Archives has photo and clipping morgues from the *Evening Bulletin*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *Daily News*, mostly from the late 1930s on, comprising a comparable

¹⁷ As in Earl Horte's "City Hall: Philadelphia," c. 1920, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. See *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, 523-24.

number of images along with nearly a half-million news clippings.¹⁸

Some of the most revealing glimpses are provided incidentally in photographs taken for some quite non-historical, utilitarian purpose. One much-used and unique example is a set of street scenes at the Society that followed the construction of subway lines and recorded the bordering buildings, particularly along (and under) Market Street and its vicinity (fig. 9).¹⁹ Similarly informative views are held by the city's Water Department. And there are dozens of smaller, locally focused photographic collections dispersed among other institutional and private repositories.²⁰

¹⁸ An example of the historical use of such photographs mostly from one newspaper collection is the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* recent publication, *Millennium Philadelphia: The Last 100 Years* (Philadelphia, 1999). Earlier there had been a centennial volume by a rival newspaper, *One Hundred Years of Philadelphia: The Evening Bulletin's Anniversary Book, 1847-1947* (Philadelphia, 1947).

¹⁹ PRT (Philadelphia Rapid Transit) Photo Albums (gift of Clarence D. Jones), 6 vols., c. 1903-08 (Society graphics col. V42). These photographs, taken while the subway was being built, document streetfronts on of Market Street between Third and Thirteenth.

²⁰ Topical access to the photographs at the Society has been greatly facilitated through the Society's recently integrated graphics card catalog, public catalog 4a, with duplicate cards filed by subject and location. Most of the older photographs at the Library Company are represented in a card catalogue in the print department, but some of the larger and more recent collections are inventoried in separate finding aids and some in searchable databases at the site. Work is advancing to scan some of these images and link them to the Library Company's OPAC. The work of William N. Jennings, a prolific photographer represented by a rich collection of topographical views at the Library Company, is described in Harry C. Silcox, *Jennings' Philadelphia: The Life of William Nicholson Jennings (1860-1946)* (Philadelphia, 1993).

The Free Library's Print and Picture Department has separate card catalogs for particular collections, most pertinently its Philadelphiana Collection, the Samuel J. Castner Collection, its collection of aerial views, and its large collection of photographs of the 1876 Centennial Exhibition (there is a typescript list of images from the 1926 Sesquicentennial).

There are as many as a half-million photographs at the Philadelphia City Archives. Some 60,000 are arranged in folders filed alphabetically by street name; the folder numbers are given in Liza Eizen, comp., *Subject Index to the Photograph Collection of the Philadelphia City Archives* (Philadelphia, 1970).

The Atwater Kent Museum's holdings include a number of B. R. Evans's views whose sites were rephotographed in the 1930s in connection with the Works Projects Administration; the Beitler Collection contains hundreds of nineteenth-century billheads and business graphics, many showing local buildings; and several other sets of images. Most of the photographs and other views at the Atwater Kent have been entered into an internal database called PHIDO that was a collaborative project with the Society.

The Urban Archives' holdings are admirably described and accessed over the web (www.library.temple.edu/urbana/urbpho.htm) and in George D. Brightbill and Colleen Byrne, eds., *PACSCL* [Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries] *Photograph Directory* (Philadelphia, 1996). This print publication also gives general collection-level descriptions of the holdings at most of the region's other photographic repositories. This guide is also on the web (www.library.temple.edu/urbana/titdir.htm).



Fig. 9. East side of Juniper Street, south of Filbert Street (23–29 North Juniper). Photo, June 27, 1905. PRT Photo Albums, vol. 6. HSP. Gift of Clarence D. Jones.

If the camera brought a capacity to grab images more casually than a draftsman or watercolorist might, the images made by photographers were usually no less subject to some visual argument in form or content—a quality that was found in some way extraordinary, or key to some narrative, whether or not it had been put into words. This was especially the case in photography's early decades, when the process of taking even mediocre images required serious effort with glass and chemicals. Still, as photography quickly became easier and more widespread, photographs began to represent an even wider community of viewmakers, and ultimately of motives for

There remains as yet no fully systematic way to search for photographs across repositories except by many-stop shopping, but this PACSCL catalog presents a major initial step forward to help bridge the gaps between institutional collections.

taking pictures. Most reflect intentions similar to those who painted or drew, and many early photographs, like some of the aforementioned drawings, were clearly motivated as records of landmark buildings about to come down. Examples include views taken of the Slate Roof House and of the Bank of Pennsylvania, immediately opposite, in the 1860s.²¹ Compared to the kind of watercolor that Strickland had made of the Breintnall house (fig. 1, above), that Sims had made of the Slate Roof House, or the measured drawing that an architect might have made of the Bank of Pennsylvania, photographs like these are akin visually to the more romantic type of image made by a topographical artist, but the result, ironically, was a more factual record that captured all sorts of minutiae in the camera's momentary glimpse. This was still not generally the day of recording the more anonymous, typical, everyday structures that dominated the cityscape, except as a byproduct of other motives.

But change in familiar settings was always a strong spur to topicality, and urban change in this period, from the mid-nineteenth century on, was nearly unhesitating and pervasive. All this visual change came at a time when photography was becoming a widespread means for recording old scenes on the verge of becoming memory, and it was the most favored means from the later part of the century onward, when fewer topographical watercolors and drawings were made. There are rich collections of photographs from this era whose main motive appears to have been to capture disappearing familiarities. One finds such images in the work of such photographers as Frederick DeBourg Richards, James E. McClees, John Moran, Henry B.

²¹ These images have been published in two books, Robert F. Looney's *Old Philadelphia in Early Photographs, 1839-1914* (New York, 1976), 26, and Kenneth Finkel's *Nineteenth-Century Photography in Philadelphia* (New York, 1980), 170-71, respectively, which together provide enticing samplings of over 400 such photographs in two collections, those of the Free Library and the Library Company, respectively.

Photographs from Temple's Urban Archives are richly sampled in two other books, Frederic M. Miller, Morris J. Vogel, and Allen F. Davis, *Still Philadelphia: A Photographic History, 1890-1940* (Philadelphia, 1983), and the same authors' *Philadelphia Stories: A Photographic History, 1920-1960* (Philadelphia, 1988), which effectively reflect more of a twentieth-century interest in the dispersed settings of social history rather than the sites of public life that were often more focal in the nineteenth century. Another publication, Philip Scranton and Walter Licht, *Work Sights: Industrial Philadelphia, 1890-1950* (Philadelphia, 1986), draws widely from most of these collections to portray images of many of the city's workplaces. They make profitable use of several others collections, most notably the Commercial Museum Collection (MG 219) at the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission. For a survey of area photographic collections relating to this subject, see their "Notes on Sources," pp. 271-73.

Odiorne, Robert Newell, and John C. Browne, many of these to be found in the Society's Penrose and Society collections and indexed by subject and location in the graphics card catalog. They were sometimes directed and supported by the patronage of antiquarians such as Charles A. Poulson, Jr., and John McAllister.²²

Photographers of this period and their early-twentieth-century successors captured the continuing transformation of Center City and its periphery, as quantum leaps in building and transportation technologies brought the high-rise city to consume its low-rise predecessor, and suburbs served by the streetcar and railroad successively swallowed the older metropolitan edges. Individual buildings were lost to transforming forces of development that were far more sweeping than fires or natural disasters. Late in the century, slum conditions themselves became topical, and the textures of lower-class life found their way—for almost the first time intentionally—into the visual record. There are many images of this sort at Temple's Urban Archives. At the Society, photographs in the Gilliams and Stratton Collection include images of many classes, from streetside commerce in the dense old urban core to the newly built residential rows of the middle-class edge (fig. 10). Others were examples of what Robert Eskind has called "spontaneous street photography," showing people on city streets or at work. These views of places and people often appeared in the Sunday newspapers from the decades before and after the turn of the century, sometimes as woodcuts. Slightly later glimpses of Philadelphia's older and newer streetscapes are provided in nearly 200 photographs by Edwin N. Kreamer (dating 1913–27), and about the same number of views by George Mark Wilson, Jr. (from about 1923), at the Library Company.²³ In the 1980s Joseph A. Labolito began to record more recent downtown streetscapes in several dozen views; these are interfiled by size and subject in the Society's Penrose Collection. A substantial number of photographs of old streetscapes and buildings are gathered for specific locations in other area

²² Finkel, *Nineteenth-Century Photography in Philadelphia*, 51–52. Early photographs from the Library Company's Richards, Newell, and Moran collections are scanned and posted on the web through the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog), under "Photographs."

²³ Robert Eskind, "Gilliams & Stratton Syndicate," in *Legacy in Light: Photographic Treasures from Philadelphia Area Public Collections*, exhibition catalog, Philadelphia Museum of Art, May–August 1990, 38. The Gilliams and Stratton Collection is Society graphics collection V74. The Kreamer Collection is V75. The Wilson Collection is numbered p.8513 at the Library Company.



Fig. 10. "Columbia Ave looking westward to Fairmount Park." Photo by Gilliams and Stratton, c. 1900. Penrose Col., HSP.

collections, such as those of the Frankford Historical Society and the Chestnut Hill Historical Society. (Many of these are described in the PACSCL Photographic directory, mentioned above.)

The heart of the city was the first to undergo this radical visual change, as commerce separated from residence and transformed the streets downtown beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Such change elicited wistful views of old farmhouses in the path of rowhouse development in West, South, and North Philadelphia as streetcars expanded the radius of the city. This process would replay itself later in suburbs reached by train and automobile, where detached single-family houses would succeed older landscapes like wildflowers. But the reshaping of the center and the edge also meant proud new landscapes, clusters of tall buildings downtown, groupings of vivid cottages, assertively imageable churches, and whole new neighborhoods self-consciously adopting a loose stylistic cosmopolitanism. Photography became a part of the celebration of the new, a keepsake of experience, and sometimes just a frozen deferral of contemplation by the nonplussed.

All of this begged the camera's attention, and there are several invaluable



Fig. 11. "Hawthorn," George D. Crowell residence. Germantown, 1884. T. Williamson, architect. Photocollotype from Wells and Hope, *Philadelphia Suburban Houses* (Philadelphia, c. 1889). Society Print Col., large, HSP. Gift of Mrs. L. M. C. Smith, 1967.

collections of views of new structures. Some, such as the sets of large-scale photocollotypes, c. 1889, at the Society (fig. 11) and the Free Library—identified by a title page as *Philadelphia Suburban Homes*, published by the firm of Wells and Hope—record mostly architect-designed new mansions on the suburban periphery. These particular plates were probably collected by owners rather than by architects; they seem instruments of affiliation for a coalescing yet dispersed community, one joined more by their similarity of social and architectural type than by their proximity. Others photographs, such as hundreds, mostly from between the world wars, of buildings and streetscapes in the D. Sargent Bell Collection (fig. 12) and the Philip B. Wallace Collection (see fig. 2, above) are more often directly



Fig. 12. Cobbs Creek Court Apartments, 6235 Chestnut Street. Built in 1926, Morris Fruchtbau, architect. Photo by D. S. Bell, c. 1930. D. S. Bell Col., HSP.

connected with architects' efforts to track progress or record and promote the results. This was more consistently the case for the Ballinger and Dillon photographic collections at the Athenaeum.²⁴

As individual photographs piled up in private and ultimately in archival collections, a great many others that focused on these new urban and suburban landscapes often found wider audiences through print publications that portrayed the new in positive ways, often in the interest of civic or commercial boosterism. This brings us somewhat afield of our topic, perhaps, but one would be remiss not to mention several of these publications, which take their place alongside those of the Birches a century earlier as some of the most evocative and wide-ranging illustrative resources of their time. One of the richest photographic publications is Moses King's *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians* (New York, 1902), with more than

²⁴ A great many of Wallace's photographs (Society graphics col. V50) reflect his principal publishing interest: colonial buildings, their ironwork and details. At this time of suburban expansion, a good proportion of Wallace's examples of new buildings were of large Colonial Revival detached houses, while Bell's (Society graphics col. V1) also included many "semi-suburban" apartment blocks. Many of these images await specific identification.

2000 photographs, roughly half of them of people and half of places, both urban and suburban. (In some ways this is the analogue of the book published a half-century earlier, R. A. Smith's *Philadelphia As It Is, in 1852* [Philadelphia, 1852], richly illustrated for its time with about 100 woodcuts, most of proudly contemporary buildings.) Other published turn-of-the-century topographical photographs are found in such volumes as George W. Englehardt, *Book of the Bourse* (Philadelphia, 1899); The North American, *Philadelphia and Popular Philadelphians* (Philadelphia, 1891); Frank H. Taylor, ed., *The City of Philadelphia as it Appears in the Year 1893* (Philadelphia, 1893; reissued in various editions); along with a number of more geographically specific publications, such as M. L. Vieira, *West Philadelphia Illustrated* (Philadelphia, 1903). And to this could be added, as a species of publication, the thousands of photographic postcards that appeared in the first decades of the twentieth century, representing not only the colonial old chestnuts of touristic interest, but also a surprising number of contemporary buildings.²⁵

Viewmakers and photographers alike often shared purposes with those who created or collected word portraits of places, some appearing in books like Joseph Jackson's *Market Street, Philadelphia: The Most Historic Highway in America, Its Merchants and Its Story* (Philadelphia, 1918), or John Frederick Lewis's *The History of an Old Philadelphia Land Title, 208 South Fourth Street* (Philadelphia, 1934). For the suburban periphery, an invaluable resource is Samuel F. Hotchkin's remarkable four-volume series surveying both the old and the new at the close of the nineteenth century: *Ancient and*

²⁵ The topographical images in "King's Views" have been scanned and posted on the web through the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog), under "Photographs." Samplings of postcards can be found in Philip Jamison III, *Philadelphia in Picture Postcards, 1900-1930* (Binghamton, N.Y., 1990) and in Robert F. Looney, ed., *Thirty-Two Picture Postcards of Old Philadelphia, Ready to Mail* (New York, 1977). There are sizable collections of postcards in institutional and private hands in the area. Some old postcards and other resources on the history of University City in West Philadelphia are presented on the University City Historical Society's website (www.libertynet.org/uchsh), including excerpts from publications and text from nominations of buildings and districts for historic certification.

Other sets of turn-of-the-century images include lantern slides, usually projected in public gatherings, and often of a retrospective character. There are several collections of these at the Society that are described in the PACSCL photograph directory (www.library.temple.edu/urbana/titdir.htm; see note 20 above). The Society's lantern slide collections are also indexed in a database posted on the web through the Places in Time site (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog), under "Photographs."

Modern Germantown, Mount Airy, and Chestnut Hill (Philadelphia, 1889); *The York Road, Old and New* (Philadelphia, 1892); *The Bristol Pike* (Philadelphia, 1893); and *Rural Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1897).²⁶

But many valuable resources of this sort never did reach publication and are now held in repositories like the Society. Such sources on local places are sometimes the work of individuals who would have proudly claimed the title of "antiquarian." The term itself implies a degree of enthusiasm and expertise, although now that expertise is often seen as more bounded than that of the academic historian. The antiquarian may also be inclined to collect diverse items solely for their connection with the past. If this somewhat archaic title seems to carry an equivocating respect, this is not to say that such collectors—of views, relics, snippets, and even stray testimony—have not been among the greatest benefactors to those with a strong interest in the history of places, especially antiquarians who compiled scrapbooks and "extra-illustrated" volumes. Others of like inclination have left only words, not pictures, in correspondence, newspaper articles, and other memoirs that nonetheless remain our best complement to otherwise fragmentary graphic knowledge of places that have passed into memory.

One early key figure of this antiquarian sort was Caspar Souder, Jr., one-time editor and proprietor of the *Evening Bulletin*, who played the leading role in the compilation of the Society's extra-illustrated "History of Chestnut Street," a four-volume scrapbook set combining all kinds of mementos, visual and textual documents of places in their old form, as well as relics like autographs associated with characters who had inhabited these blocks. "About 1852," Souder recalled eight years later, "a little knot of earnest Philadelphians, who believed there was much in the history of Chestnut Street . . . which was worth preserving," began to "hold pleasant social meetings at each others' homes," collecting material on the subject. These words come from the manuscript introduction to this extra-illustrated set. Their effort reached a wider public when the text was serialized—minus the illustrations and mementos—in seventy-eight chapters in the *Sunday Dispatch* between April 1858 and October 1859.²⁷

²⁶ Hotchkin's last volume covered parts of the western suburbs, including the Main Line. Parts of the first of these volumes were serialized in newspapers before publication as books.

²⁷ The newspaper's editor, Thompson Westcott, must have expected that the series would attract readers with a similar interest in this changing scene, and that serialization as the exclusive means of publication would draw subscriptions. Indeed, Westcott would adopt a similar strategy eight years later

Souder's extra-illustrated "Chestnut Street" volumes at the Society assemble these articles along with information drawn from memories, evidence on paper, listings from directories, advertising, and other sources. Found especially helpful here were commercial panorama plates, block-long views of shopping streets—particularly Chestnut, but also Market, Walnut, and some of the easternmost numbered streets. These had been first published in the early 1850s for advertising purposes and continued, fitfully, to 1880. The whole block would be depicted in an orthogonal elevation, but only subscribers would have the identifying signs on their buildings reproduced, along with printed block ads below on the broadsheet (or on a facing page in the bound versions).

Souder and his mates cut up these panorama sheets and pasted in the pieces in pace with the scrapbook's westward progress down the street. The transformation of Chestnut Street was most compelling in the case of blocks east of Tenth Street, which had been part both of Julio H. Rae's panoramas, bound and published in an 1851 edition (fig. 13), and also the subject of many of Dewitt C. Baxter's single sheets issued block-by-block at the end of that decade. Taken together, the pairing recorded the shop windows that had been inserted in old brick houses and, ultimately, the replacement of those houses with larger, often stone-fronted stores and banks. It is a remarkable record of a setting that was dramatically transformed over the course of a decade.²⁸

with his "History of Philadelphia, from the First Settlements on the Delaware to the Consolidation of the City and Districts in 1854," which was serialized in 876 chapters in the *Sunday Dispatch* between 1867 and 1884. The publication of J. Thomas Scharf and T. Westcott's *History of Philadelphia* in three volumes in 1884 precipitated an abrupt end to the series in mid-narrative describing events of 1829. Drafts of intended entries for the subsequent years survive in manuscript at the Society. In the decades that followed, David McNeely Stauffer compiled an extra-illustrated manuscript edition of Westcott's serialized history, also held by the Society.

²⁸ The panoramas are a fascinating topic in themselves. Baxter continued his efforts into the next two decades, publishing over thirty block-long sheets himself, sometimes returning to blockfronts he had issued previously as new subscribers and buildings arose (Society graphics col. V37). We are fortunate to have, at the Society, a large, unique manuscript volume that appears to be the master edition for the series, containing many of these blockfronts that were published but also others that never appeared in print. Here one sees the combination of ruled, inked drawings with printed cut-outs of signs and street life pasted on. Antiquarian Ferdinand Dreer acquired this bound volume in 1885, five years after Baxter's publication of commercial panoramas drew to a close. These remain among our richest continuous illustrative sources for the quick-changing nineteenth-century commercial landscape downtown—perhaps rivaled only by those photographs, now preserved in the Society's PRT/Jones collection (see n. 19 above). Baxter's and Rae's panoramas have been scanned and posted on the web through the Places in Time

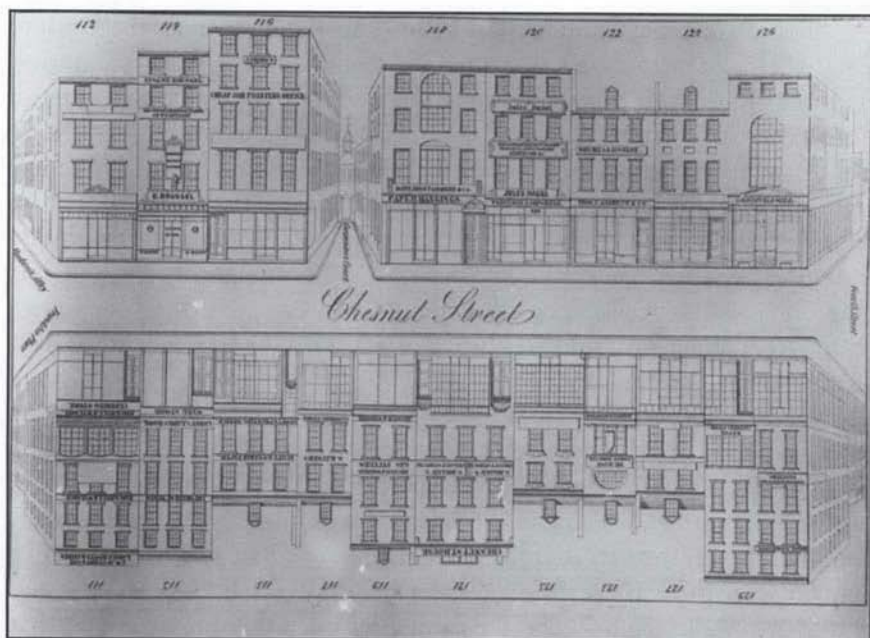


Fig. 13. Chestnut Street, east of Fourth Street. From Julio Rae, *Panorama of Chestnut Street* (Philadelphia, 1851), no. 113. HSP.

Similar efforts were, on occasion, devoted to other parts of the city, but more often this kind of topographical evidence in various forms was collected from contemporary publications, especially from newspaper notices of daily changes or occasional retrospective articles about historical sites. These were often assembled in scrapbook sets with certain topical or chronological boundaries. These scrapbooks present researchers with very rich sources drawn from materials that, in terms of effort, would be all but impossible to replicate using existing finding tools; historians of place are deeply indebted to these compilers of what in many cases is the best contemporary evidence of an area's changing built environment.

There are a number of compilations of this sort devoted to different periods and subjects, but six that focus in part on changes in the wider area's

built environment are particularly worthy of mention:

Charles A. Poulson's Scrapbooks. Titled "Illustrations of Philadelphia," ten patchily chronological volumes at the Library Company, which place a special emphasis on new buildings and suburbs, c. 1853–59. (Readers consult a complete photocopy; indexes to the series are in Poulson's own hand.)

Thompson Westcott's Scrapbooks. Titled "Buildings, Public Places, Public Things," six chronologically arranged volumes at the Society, mostly covering the years from 1875 to 1886 (We.28F). Some volumes have a manuscript index. Like Poulson's, the majority of these clippings concentrate on new buildings rising, many giving descriptions and mentioning builders' and architects' names not known to have been recorded elsewhere.

Samuel J. Castner Collection. Forty-six topical volumes at the Free Library filled with images and clippings, compiled c. 1890–1920. Readers consult a microfilm version; there is a card index initiated by Castner himself.

Henry Graham Ashmead's Scrapbooks. Titled "Ashmead's Newspaper Cuttings about Pennsylvania History," forty-seven rather heterogeneous volumes at the Society, dating c. 1885–1910 (V97). There is a partially completed filecard index. More than most others, these tend to include longer newspaper articles on old and new places, often with line drawings or, later, photographs.

Jane Campbell Collection, One hundred one topical volumes, c. 1900–20, and the **Helen C. Perkins Collection,** eighty topical volumes, 1900–12, both at the Society (graphics colls. V71 and V72, respectively). Readers may consult a modern index at the circulation desk, but the items in both collections have recently been integrated by location and building name into the Society's graphics card catalog, PC4a. These are large and wonderfully rich collections, drawn from a wide variety of early-twentieth-century illustrated publications. Volumes focus on neighborhoods, individual streets, and even portions of streets, along with occasional topical foci. They are among the Society's most heavily consulted collections and often a first stop for researchers on Philadelphia-area places.

A number of other scrapbook series are more tightly focused geographically, aimed at such subjects as the building of City Hall, Fairmount Park, the Centennial Exhibition, and Germantown.²⁹ Daily newspapers in the early twentieth century sometimes carried features looking

²⁹ A descriptive list of several pertinent scrapbook series at different institutions is posted on the web through the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog/), under "Research Tools."

retrospectively at the history of some very specific place, presenting memories, documents, or research under such titles as "One Hundred Years Ago" and "Men and Things" (in the *Evening Bulletin* from 1890s through the 1920s), "Philadelphia Yesterdays" (in the 1920s), "Seen and Heard in Many Places" by "Megargee" (in the *Philadelphia Times* from the 1890s), or, with old photographs, "Do You Know this Old Place?" (in the *Bulletin*). Unindexed and usually unsourced when encountered in the scrapbooks, these can still be among the most valuable bits of testimony on specific locations when serendipity places them at hand.

A similar impulse has continued in newer media. One of the most popular productions by WHYY, the local public broadcasting station (Philadelphia's channel 12), was a program called "Things that Aren't There Anymore" (1993; Ed Cunningham, producer), while the Society produced a compilation of old film footage as a videotape called "All Aboard for Philadelphia!" (1995), organized around the metaphor of travels long ago through various parts of the city on public transit. Another television station, WPVI (Philadelphia's channel 6), produced a similar program called "Millennium Philadelphia, The Last 100 Years: Who We Are and Where We Lived," presented in December 1999.³⁰ One can expect that more of the history of the twentieth century will be drawn from what have become its favorite media, and that historical repositories such as the Society will tackle the issues connected with making these available to researchers.

A final type of place-record is more purely verbal, in the form of descriptive accounts written primarily for or by visitors (if often with a substantial native readership targeted as well).³¹ Entire published volumes of this sort date back at least to James Mease's *Picture of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1811), and such works got richer in number, illustrative matter, and usually in retrospective content with the succeeding decades. Even earlier than Mease's account, though, descriptions appeared in portions of books and journals by other visitors, and there is doubtlessly a large trove

³⁰ Another WHYY production, less strictly historical but descriptive in a particularly potent way, is its program "Over Philadelphia" (1995; Rich Baniewicz, producer). And more recently there was "A Walk Up Broad Street" (2000; Ed Cunningham, producer); a ninety-minute program on video, with commentary on the historical buildings by Hyman Myers. Efforts have begun to identify and collect the raw materials for histories of place told through video and film, both the kinds shot for public presentation and those more on the order of home movies.

³¹ A range of such accounts is given in Philip Stevick, *Imagining Philadelphia: Travelers' Views of the City from 1800 to the Present* (Philadelphia, 1996).

of such material in manuscript letters and memoirs. The more general visitors' accounts tend to converge in a consensus on places to be seen, usually of three types: monumental buildings and civic spaces that somehow become the representational face of the city; the settings for what become prescribed recreational activities when visiting; and, somewhat less often, the more normative textures of streets or neighborhoods that come to be taken as distinctively characteristic of the place. For more finely textured portraits of place, more specifically focused and ultimately more independent of such efforts at sweeping characterization, one is thrown back on what is often still uniquely available in manuscript materials. These frequently have the added boon of recording perceptions of place that are more intimately connected with motives of use and family and the contingencies of setting, more of the immediate nexus that gave them form. Such manuscript resources of constantly rediscovered value are one of the unrivaled assets of the Society's collections.

Another kind of written record that exists mainly in manuscript (or actually typescript or printout) is the monographic report, usually the work of students or of professional historical consultants, and either can often be the most definitive body of research on a particular property. Examples of the former type are theses, dissertations, and graduate research papers, while key examples of the latter are the sometimes extensive "Historic Structures Reports" often commissioned before restoration efforts for buildings of major historical significance.³²

As measured in terms of publication, the more strictly retrospective interest in past places seems to have intensified over the decades, especially after the Centennial Exhibition held in Fairmount Park in 1876. This would seem to be the case even if one excludes the rise of travel literature and the work of more academic historians, usually less directed toward local audiences. This seems not to have been simply a matter of interest in "the olden days" reanimated by the magic of the number 1776. The Centennial caught the enthusiasm of a public already avid for settings of national singularity, historical heroism, and seeming innocence as viewed from a very different time—a scary age of industrial power and class conflict, a period of uncertain social order as old aristocratic notions of leadership and standing

³² Lists of these types of reports for properties in the area are given on the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog) under "Research Tools."

became increasingly dated. To many the past offered images of gentility, stability, and more humane scales of place and time. One of the earliest books looking back on old Philadelphia buildings, Thompson Westcott's *Historic Mansions and Buildings of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1877), focused mainly on eighteenth-century suburban houses of old Philadelphia families. Much akin was H. D. Eberlein and C. V. D. Hubbard's *Portrait of a Colonial City: Philadelphia, 1670–1838* (Philadelphia, 1939), likewise a product of this sensibility so at odds with the radical transformations of the time.

It was perhaps inevitable that such interests would turn to re-creations. This impulse went beyond the wide impact of the Colonial Revival in architecture that colored much of the new suburban landscape from the turn of the century. It was embodied in the kind of physical retrospection in celebratory settings, such as the 1926 Sesquicentennial where the east end of Market Street ("High Street" once again) was reconstructed. After the Second World War, similar impulses operated in the transformation of parts of eastern Center City into Independence National Historical Park, largely by selective demolition and colonial renovation. The same processes, if mainly through private initiatives, were felt in the recolonializing, and recolonizing, of Society Hill from the 1950s into the 1970s.

This kind of retrospection born of affection for a period, for all its strength, has not often created the kind of evidence that guides one more objectively into various moments in past place-lives.³³ Still, a more catholic kind of interest in local pasts seems to be burgeoning, as reflected in the number of active local history groups as well as local history publications. A whole rash of such publications has appeared over the last two decades, framed with remarkable local specificity—including books dedicated to lost places in a number of cities, or focused on urban neighborhoods, former suburban villages, and even individual buildings.³⁴ Much of this interest

³³ One should qualify this somewhat in the case of Independence National Historical Park. Even as it created a very rarified and genteel fiction of the eighteenth-century city amid swaths of green lawns, it also became a place of scrupulous documentation and research about the ways of building and what had been there before. The INHP Library is a rich source for photographs of this area; it gathers together many of the publications, unpublished reports, and copies of archival materials held elsewhere that have some bearing on this part of the colonial city and its postwar transformation.

³⁴ There have been several recent books of old images with a specific geographic focus, some of them part of Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series, including such titles as: *Philadelphia Naval Shipyard*, *Strawberry Mansion*, *South Philadelphia: The Jewish Community*, *Views of Lansdowne*, *Marple & Newtown Townships*, *West Chester*, *Southern Chester County Postcards*, *Eastern Montgomery County*, and

seems to come from local residents curious about or engaged with the roots of places that are familiar, born of an inclination to enjoy the memory, and often to perpetuate it by preserving and recording, researching and renarrating.

Even before publications emerged that embraced such motives, though, there was a seminal impulse to record passing settings, sometimes as an almost totemic act committed with only a faint and quite uncertain notion of what posterity would do with the result. This impulse preceded the professionalization of history, and of repositories recast as servants of such academic interests, which still may be said to look a bit suspiciously at historical accounts and evidence based in such an emotional inclination to extend memory. That impulse has nonetheless continued to create works of irreplaceable value to academic history even if the motives behind it came from less valued constructs, and of like value to residents who seek a greater sense of rootedness in the places they inhabit.

Over the last several decades the Society, like other repositories, has added an immense body of collateral documentation of place as their sense of historically valuable material widened beyond the political and familial. Business ledgers, maps, newspapers, directories, tax records, and the like were donated or actively collected, rounding out a wealth of informational resources about the history of place that is almost unparalleled, and combines with the resources of several like-minded institutions in the area to form an extremely rich collective body of evidence documenting the evolution of our built environment. Such materials sometimes straddle divergent interests, but both the academic, more analytical interest and the more directly retrospective one have the ultimate effect of helping us create a connection with our built environment that is more penetrating and enriching.

The products of retrospection are, of course, always an imperfect, incomplete rendition of place and of memory, partial in both scope and intent. The many scales, aspects, and dimensions of even a small place defy any sense of comprehensiveness in recording it. Posterity is necessarily left with selected, ultimately subjective artifacts of memory, artifacts that reflect changing conceptions of what places were once deemed worth remembering,

Yardley. Other volumes have been published independently of these, such as Frank J. Neumann, comp., *Pictorial History Book of Old Fox Chase* (2d ed., Philadelphia, 1984).

and what was worth recording about them. Such inevitable judgments necessarily reduce the multivalence of complex, three-dimensional, living, changing places. Both kinds of partiality in the retrospective motive, of selection and description, find an enormously valuable complement in documents of place produced for a broad range of other reasons that have little to do with the construction of memory. These records, usually contemporary with use and the product of regulatory or commercial transactions, cast a more dispassionate eye toward nearly all aspects of the built landscape, often giving the obscure, small, and typical structure attention nearly equal to that given the well-known, unique, monumental one. Such materials find new purpose and value to those interested in the history of place. Perhaps it is logical to briefly describe these documentary resources, often vestiges of other motives, in terms of the activities that produced them—moving from the constituent factors in the reconceptualization of a place, through building processes, and ultimately to occupation and use.

One area in which there is remarkably comprehensive record-keeping is in the ownership of land. Deed records, typically maintained at county courthouses, establish who owners were, of course, as well as the extent of the land, the value of a transaction, conditions attached to it, and sometimes a bit about bordering properties.³⁵ Deeds are usually rather generic in indicating what is built on the site. Still, this is often where the history of a

³⁵ The Society has copies on microfilm (XD PaPh: 1-226) of the grantor and grantee indexes to Philadelphia deeds, to 1890 and 1906 respectively, along with deed books before 1830. Helpful aids for this sort of research include Edwin Iwanicki's five-page pamphlet, "Tracing Title to Real Estate in Philadelphia: Sources and Procedures," published in 1973 by the Philadelphia Historical Commission, and a very helpful website by Jefferson M. Moak describing resources for architectural research held by the Philadelphia City Archives and Department of Records (www.phila.gov/phils/Docs/Inventor/deeds.htm), a part of the City's "Philadelphia Information Locator Service."

The Historical Commission's files also hold recently compiled title searches for a number of properties, mainly in the older parts of Center City. A similar type of resource is published, in a limited way, and is sometimes accompanied by a lithographed plat. In the nineteenth century, title research by lawyers—usually when subdividing or transferring large estates—was often rendered in a typeset "brief of title" tracing the chain of ownership from deeds and bringing the appropriate excerpts together conveniently in a pamphlet. The Society holds a good number of these, mostly bound together chronologically, which a geographical finding aid might make more usable. An index of some 182 such documents was compiled by Jefferson M. Moak in a typescript called "Philadelphia Land Titles: Index," dated March 17, 1977, at the Free Library. Similar documents survive for public properties, as, for example, the parcels that were to become Fairmount Park (Philadelphia City Archives, RG 149.6).

place begins, especially when observed in combination with evidence relating two or three places in time: (1) the lot to be built upon as it existed before any new work, (2) the character of the properties neighboring this lot, and (3) the place where its new functions had been accommodated previously.

How can one know what was on a site before transforming building activities were undertaken? In addition to the official record in county archives, ownership information is sometimes given by other means. It is often rendered graphically on manuscript surveys and published maps. Maps are rarely simply disinterested, neutral records; often they reflect motives and needs, often connected with the subject of ownership. Early examples include the seminal 1687 "Map of the Improved Part of the Province of Pensilvania in America" by Thomas Holme and Francis Lamb, and John Reed's 1774 "Map of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia." Similarly conceived but more focussed and urban is a plan like that from 1698 by Edward Penington detailing ownership that appeared among the "Warrants and Surveys" of the Province of Pennsylvania, 1683-1759 (Philadelphia City Archives, RG 225.3), and were part of a series that perhaps once covered more of the city.³⁶

A contextual, broad-brush glimpse is often given by single maps, especially published ones, which tend to climax in size and detail in the first half of the nineteenth century. A notable example is John Hills's circular "Map of Philadelphia and Environs," surveyed between 1801 and 1810, and published in engraved form a year or two later. More than thirty-nine inches square, this map covered the area within ten miles of the intersection of Broad and Market streets at a scale of about 2700 feet, roughly a half mile, to the inch. (In 1847, J. C. Sidney made a very similarly conceived but somewhat smaller lithographed map [about 21 inches square, or nearly a mile to the inch], titled "Map of the Circuit of Ten Miles around the City of Philadelphia. With Names of Villages, Roads, Property Owners, Taverns, &c.")

William Allen's "Plan of the City of Philadelphia and adjoining Districts," of 1830, was framed more tightly to depict an area extending from about Moore Street in South Philadelphia, to Montgomery Avenue in North Philadelphia. This covered all of the city's densely settled core at the

³⁶ *Philadelphia: Three Centuries*, no. 2; Snyder, *City of Independence*, 23, 28, 92. Other very early maps of the city are found at the Chester County Historical Society.

much larger scale of just over 500 feet to the inch. In 1849 J. C. Sidney achieved a slightly more detailed scale combined with breadth of coverage in his "Map of the City of Philadelphia, together with all the surrounding districts, including Camden, New Jersey." This showed the area at 450 feet to the inch. For the wider territory comprising all of Philadelphia County (coterminous with the city from 1854), the most comprehensive yet detailed early map, showing road and building locations, is Charles Ellet Jr.'s "Map of the County of Philadelphia . . . in accordance with the Act of Assembly passed June 30th. 1839," published in 1843. Its scale is about 2100 feet to the inch. The Society, the Free Library, and the Library Company have the largest and most accessible collections of these early maps.³⁷

One occasionally encounters early plats and other manuscript surveys focused on individual properties. Many were commissioned privately for a variety of reasons; these can be well dispersed and can prove hard to locate. Others, often for sites in the city—carefully rendered in ink and colored washes, showing precise lot dimensions and street widths—seem to be civic records related to regulating street lines at moments when such properties were about to be officially opened, paved, or built along, and there are many of these at Philadelphia City Archives.³⁸

Even when the coverage of maps is too great to show much detail about an individual property, a focus on portions of early maps, especially in comparative chronological sequence, can be remarkably useful for the more generic stories they tell—of a site's relation to the changing gradients of density, to transportation networks, and to key centers of commercial and industrial activity. Similar kinds of contextual portraiture are given by expansive but remarkably detailed city views in large-scale lithographs, such as John Bachmann's aerial views of 1850 (from the east) and 1857 (from the

³⁷ *Philadelphia: Three Centuries*, no. 177; Lane and Cresswell, *Prints of Philadelphia*, no. 157. The Society's graphics card catalogs effectively array its map holdings by subject, makers, and date.

³⁸ Survey examples include those of the "Solitude" estate, now in the Philadelphia Zoo, drawn by John Nancarrow, c. 1784, and the "Ormiston" estate, also in Fairmount Park, drawn by John Hills in 1799 (illustrated in Snyder, *City of Independence*, 132, 205). A more urban survey, executed with what one suspects was unusual graphic richness, was Charles de Krafft's plan and view of Abraham Sheridan's lots on Market Street (reproduced in Anthony N. B. Garvan et al., *The Mutual Assurance Company, Papers*, vol. 1, *The Architectural Surveys 1784-1794* [Philadelphia, 1976]).

Street openings and returns for surveying them can also be useful evidence for tracking development. For those opened by charter, see Jefferson M. Moak and Richard Tyler, "The Charter Streets of Philadelphia," typescript, Nov. 1979. Copies can be found at the Philadelphia Historical Commission and Philadelphia City Archives.

west), the latter described by Wainwright as "perhaps the most valuable lithograph of Philadelphia from an iconographic standpoint" (the original watercolor is at the Free Library). Others include J. W. Hill and B. F. Smith's 1850 view from Girard College (from the northwest) and Parsons and Atwater's 1876 view (from west south west) published by Currier and Ives, each of these nearly two feet or more in their larger dimension.³⁹

The maps mentioned above, even at the most detailed scales, would represent a 400-foot downtown-Philadelphia block in less than an inch, but shortly after midcentury one enters a new realm of representation with the publication of much more detailed, bound property atlases with densely built-up areas shown at scales of 200 or 100 or even 50 feet to the inch. These could take two to eight inches to represent a 400-foot downtown block, detailing the footprints of buildings in outlines drawn to scale, annotating them with dimensions and heights in stories, and using conventions in line weights and colors to differentiate structural materials, landscape features, and even services near the site.

This fuller scope of detail is first found in a comprehensive way with the publication of Ernest Hexamer and William Locher, *Maps of the City of Philadelphia* in seven bound folio volumes in 1857-60, which recorded the central parts of the city at the time, covering the area extending from river to river and from McKean Avenue, in South Philadelphia, to Girard Avenue, north of Center City (fig. 14).⁴⁰ Hexamer and Locher's volumes kicked off a sequence of similar publications by various surveyors and publishers over the next century, usually documenting specific sets of city wards, counties, or railroad corridors in a single volume, most updated every decade or so. The Society has a very rich collection of such atlases, in many

³⁹ Tatum, *Penn's Great Town*, no. 105; Wainwright, *Old Philadelphia*, no. 28; Lane and Cresswell, *Prints of Philadelphia*, nos. 167-68, 223.

⁴⁰ A beginning has been made, with the cooperation of the Free Library, at scanning and posting the plates of the earliest Hexamer and Locher atlases. The index sheets and selected plates are on the web through the Places in Time site (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog/), under "Real Estate Atlases."

Jefferson Moak points out what may have been a previous effort, a decade or more earlier, to map the eastern parts of the city at this kind of scale. At the Society are fourteen large sheets (Of 603 a-n) that depict in street and lot lines the areas of the pre-consolidation city along the Delaware riverfront from South to Vine Streets, and extending narrowly to the west along Market Street to about 8th Street. The address numbers are clearly those from before the general renumbering of city addresses in hundreds, according with the cross streets, that took place in 1857. Moak suggests that these may date to discussions between surveyor Robert Pearsall Smith and the Philadelphia Contributionship held about 1848-50 regarding such an undertaking.

cases dovetailing with collections at other institutions that fill in the missing editions.⁴¹

Once armed with names of owners or occupants from deeds, maps, or other sources, one can use city directories to more fully identify the players in these stories, tracing the pattern of home and business addresses and occupations over the years. The Society has a full run of such city directories for Philadelphia from the 1780s on, and for neighboring areas from somewhat later. These continue through the first third of the twentieth century, when home telephones became more ubiquitous and city directories were supplanted by telephone books; those volumes began to achieve a comparable degree of coverage about this time, if with less information about occupation, multiple addresses, and business partnerships. Some early and late city directories (1795, 1796, 1801, 1929, and 1930) offer the ability to find residents and businesses by address rather than alphabetically by name.⁴²

A related kind of information on occupants is also available from the late nineteenth century on in some social registers and other elite directories, also held by the Society in nearly full runs. Although they only treat a small segment of the population, titles such as the *West End Visiting Directory*

⁴¹ These dispersed volumes in various collections were surveyed and compiled into a typescript list in 1976 by Jefferson M. Moak titled "Atlases of Pennsylvania: A Preliminary Checklist of County, City and Subject Atlases of Pennsylvania." A similar compilation of area atlases, drawn largely from Moak's listings for local repositories but with some additions from smaller area collections, has been posted on the web through the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog/), under "Real Estate Atlases."

The Society also has a separate part of its graphics card catalog, public catalog 4d, devoted to ordering these maps and atlases by subject and date. Some of the earliest of such real estate atlases at the Society, in fact, differ from the original Hexamer and Locher sets at the Free Library and the Library of Congress in that they were continually updated with erasures and inked emendations to show changes made between the 1860s and early 1870s. Later, such atlases bore printed corrections on small pieces of paper that were pasted over the spots where new development had taken place, which sometimes produced concentrations of paste-overs offering a palpable sense of the sites undergoing rapid urban change. Volumes like these are still issued today, specifically editions by the Sanborn Map Company. These are subscribed to by city agencies, such as the Planning Commission and Department of Licenses and Inspections, and are continually updated in the same way, producing volumes spanning from as early as 1916 to the present that are worn and thick with paste-overs. Some older but similar volumes at the Society may have once served similar roles; the front covers of the earliest set here identifies the Board of Revision of Taxes as its owner. At some point, a kind of paper archaeology performed on such books could offer a stratigraphic view of urban change.

⁴² This last volume, *Polk's Philadelphia Directory* for 1930, gives such reverse listings beginning on page 1439, and even provides a symbol indicating owner occupancy.

When using early directories, a critical problem is encountered in street name and numbering changes. On the former, see Jefferson M. Moak, comp., *Philadelphia Street Name Changes* (Philadelphia, 1996).

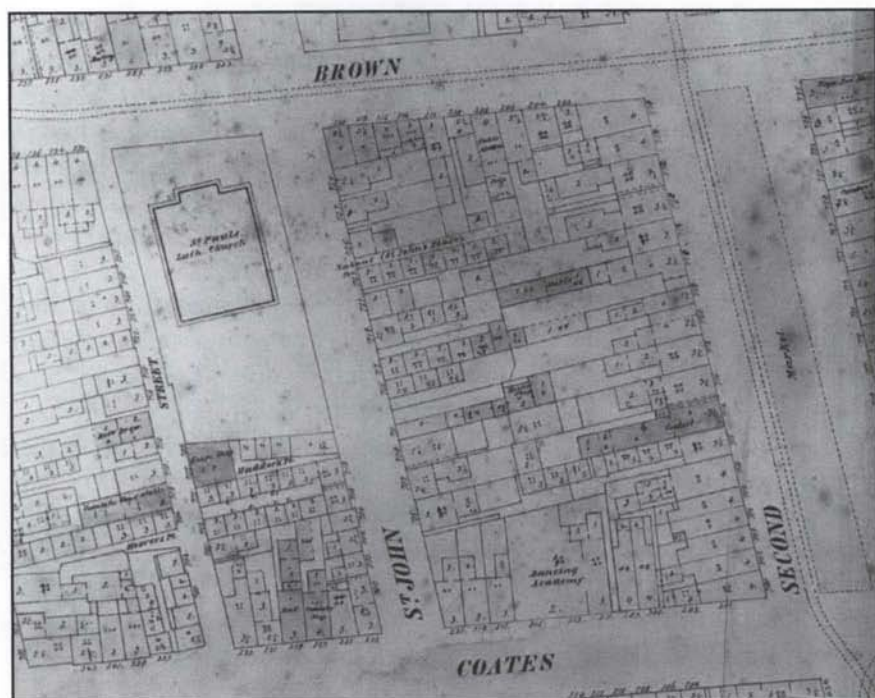


Fig. 14. Street map of Northern Liberties. From Ernest Hexamer and William Locher, *Maps of the City of Philadelphia for 11th, 12th & 16th Wards* (Philadelphia, 1859), detail of pl. 46.

(1878), the *Philadelphia Red Book, an Elite Directory* (from 1878), *Boyd's Philadelphia Blue Book* (from 1880), and the Philadelphia edition of the *Social Register* (from 1891) can help trace certain social elites, indicating familial and social affiliations (including maiden names, minors' names, clubs, colleges and class years), as well as city, suburban, and summertime addresses. Certain elite club annuals, which the Society also holds in substantial numbers, often list members and addresses and also convey a sense of generic identification through affiliation and location, helping

characterize some enclaves and settings in the city.⁴³

Some other geographically ordered listings, produced for various reasons, can also be quite helpful to the researcher. Census and tax records are often ordered by location, although specific places are not always easy to find in the former, since the goal was usually aggregations of data. Federal censuses usually provide the fullest information on households, in terms of names, family relationships, nativity, and occupations. Some special censuses were also conducted, often complementing what can be learned from the federal ones. Key examples at the Society are the early to mid-nineteenth-century censuses of African Americans conducted by the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.⁴⁴ These include such categories of information as rent paid, how freed from slavery, and schools and churches attended.

Tax records usually give more information about property than people. The earliest comprehensive federal levy, the Direct Tax of 1798, for example, remains one of our most complete documentations of the city's physical form at that time, with remarkably thorough descriptions of building volumes and materials, and distinctions drawn between owners and occupants, and between improved and vacant land.⁴⁵ Other tax records may prove similarly revealing, as may voting lists, also often geographically

⁴³ Guidance on the use of these volumes are provided in Robert E. Hoagland, "Research Tips: Using Philadelphia City Directories," *Penn in Hand* 9 (1988). The Society also holds business directories, grouping listings by products and services, and the *Philadelphia Colored Directory* for the years 1908, 1910, and 1914.

⁴⁴ ms. coll 490; microfilm XR 572: 26. The Society holds some United States census records, but a fuller set is available at the Philadelphia branch of the National Archives (www.nara.gov/regional/philacc.html).

⁴⁵ The Society has a number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Philadelphia tax lists on microfilm, along with the United States Direct Tax of 1798 and city tax lists from 1800, 1815, 1829, and 1844. Such records are also to be found at the Philadelphia City Archives and the Philadelphia branch of the National Archives, along with similar series. On the 1798 Direct Tax, see Wilbur J. McElwain, *United States Direct Tax of 1798: Tax Lists for the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—Upper Delaware, Lower Delaware, High Street, Chestnut, Walnut, and Dock Wards* (Bowie, Md., 1999). The records for Pennsylvania are on microfilm M372 at the National Archives; those for Philadelphia are on microfilm XCT PaPh-1: 1-6 at the Society.

A related type of document, apparently a one-time publication in Philadelphia's case, is a curious and rare volume held by the Society, titled *Assessed Values of Real Estate in Philadelphia, 1917*. It was produced by the Realty Publishing Company, of Boston, and gives, in geographic order, each lot's owner, occupant, size, and succinctly describes the buildings on the site and their assessed value. Although they issued such volumes for Boston properties several years earlier and later, this company unfortunately does not appear to have continued this venture in Philadelphia after this one volume.

ordered, usually by wards.⁴⁶ From sources like these one usually can sketch in some of the key elements of the history of a place, the site, the owners, and start to infer some of their intention in building.

Although there are cases where an owner plans and constructs with his or her own hands, in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Philadelphia this was probably far less common than is widely imagined. In the overwhelming majority of cases, particularly over the last two centuries, the owner would turn to people whose vocation was building or designing. The conversations between owners and agents of building processes, whether carpenters, masons, architects, or developers, are, like the progress of an intention into a building, often a matter of verbal communication lost to us, but there are documentary vestiges of these processes that can help one reconstruct them. The most direct evidence, and the most potent in allowing one to envision the effect of such interactions, is in the form of drawings by builders and architects. Although architectural drawings were very widely employed, and hundreds of thousands for Philadelphia-area buildings survive, they are relatively rare in proportion to the total number of structures built. No drawings will be found for most of them, with the least likelihood for the more modest and middling structures built a century or more ago.

Architectural drawings were usually one of four types: developmental drawings, through which a designer and client successively defined and refined a configuration of spaces and structure; presentation drawings, meant to convincingly depict the proposed result, often in color or in perspective; contract drawings, meant to assure agreement and performance between owner, designer, and builders; and working drawings, often at larger scale showing details, meant more directly to guide workmen in the act of construction. The first and last of these survive most rarely, the latter encountering the most wear and tear on the site, and the former usually jottings supplanted by more formal iterations. The second, presentation drawings, are the ones that may be highly valued for their graphic appeal and which may find their way, framed, onto a wall. Contract drawings will

⁴⁶ One particularly intriguing example is at the Library Company. Into an unrelated book of laws have been pasted what appear to be the pieces of one or more broadsheets with a partial title that can be pieced together as "a correct List of the White Male Taxable Inhabitants of the Seventh Ward . . . for 1861." There one finds names and occupations listed house by house. One suspects that there may have been other voting lists of this sort, which help characterize places through their populations.

survive most often folded up among business papers or rolled up as a client's retained set of blueprints.⁴⁷

The largest area collections of architectural drawings, however, usually descend not via the client, but among the preserved papers of an architect or builder. Holdings at the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania and at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia include many such collections, which are especially extensive for twentieth-century professional architects, such as Paul P. Cret (1876–1945) and Louis I. Kahn (1901–74), both at Penn, or Horace Trumbauer (1868–1938), at the Athenaeum and the Society.⁴⁸ These tend to comprise thousands of drawings, whereas nineteenth-century collections like those of Wilson Eyre (1858–1944), mostly at Penn, or of John Notman (1810–65) and Thomas Ustick Walter (1804–87), at the Athenaeum, tend to number in the hundreds.⁴⁹ The Society's collection is extraordinarily rich in drawings by the earliest professionals, such as Benjamin Latrobe (1764–1820), William Strickland (1788–1854), and Robert Mills (1781–1855). It is also one of the few collections nationally, and one of the most important, with a range of drawings from the eighteenth century (fig. 15); mostly predating the advent of professional architects, these are typically smaller, unprepossessing line

⁴⁷ Building owners often retain a set of contract or "as built" drawings, usually (since the late nineteenth century) photoreproductions in the form of blueprints or "blacklines." They often descend to other owners with the building upon its transfer. In the case of large, long-standing institutions like a university, a hospital, or a governmental body, this can result in sizable drawing collections. The city of Philadelphia, for example, has a good deal of documentation in the form of drawings, photographs, and other records from the construction of City Hall, city schools, and other city-owned structures. The city also holds plans of private buildings they regulate, as in the case of the Art Jury, later the Art Commission, for which City Archives holds some 4,000 drawings representing 450 projects that have come before them since 1913. Indexes and databases for internal use have been compiled as finding aids for some of these city collections.

⁴⁸ The Society has some 897 Trumbauer drawings and photoreproductions (graphics col. V36). These are listed and indexed, along with some 200 assorted drawings from the Philadelphia Contributionship (Society graphics col. V41), in a bound finding aid titled "Architectural Drawings." The Society also holds 67 rolls of drawings and other materials, dated 1914–45, of Philadelphia architect Carl F. Berger (graphics col. V46).

⁴⁹ Other large collections of note include the papers of Addison Hutton (1834–1916) in the Haverford College Library's Quaker Collection. The University of Delaware Library's Special Collections Department has similarly rich bodies of records of Philadelphia architects Collins and Autenrieth (active 1852–1904) and of Charles Edward Rahn (active 1885–1933). For more on these, see www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/guides/architect.htm.

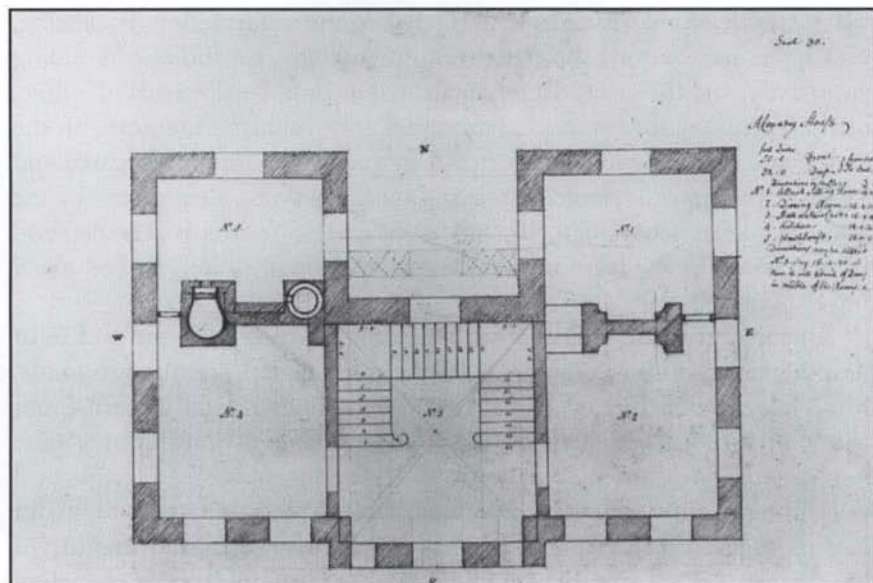


Fig. 15. "A Country House." Architectural plan, eighteenth century. Norris of Fairhill manuscripts, HSP.

drawings dispersed among the papers of individual clients.⁵⁰

For certain buildings in this region that are of recognized scholarly significance, there is a considerable literature in the form of published monographs and articles. For the great majority of buildings, however, there will have been little direct academic scrutiny, and, little or no direct documentary record of construction will have survived. But a good deal can

⁵⁰ Examples from several area collections are discussed in James C. Massey, *Two Centuries of Philadelphia Architectural Drawings*, (Philadelphia, 1964) and O'Gorman et al, *Drawing Toward Building*. Descriptions of the major collections held by the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania are given on its website (www.upenn.edu/gsa/archives/archives.html). The individual drawings at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia are described in Bruce Lavery, comp., *Catalog of Architectural Drawings, the Athenaeum of Philadelphia* (Boston, 1986) and are also accessible through its website (www.libertynet.org/Athena/), where they can be searched by choosing "add media qualifier" and then selecting medium as "visual materials." Many of the Society's architectural drawings, especially the larger format examples, are effectively indexed in the graphics card catalog, in public catalog 4a, where they are interfiled by location, building name, and designer.

still be understood. Even where such specific information is lacking, researchers have turned their attention, revealingly, to studies of building types, styles, and the most cosmopolitan architectural dialogues of the time, for the light they throw on local examples. The scholarly literature on the modest and typical buildings has grown enormously more sophisticated and extensive over recent decades, relating building types, disposition in the landscape, construction methods, and use of spaces to patterns of settlement, cultural continuities, regional adaptations, economic strategies, and social conventions.⁵¹

One may also catch traces of such building activities from the middle of the nineteenth century onward, even the most typical and modest kinds, through other documents. The city required building permits from about that point, although these are typically only available as monthly aggregate numbers until the late 1880s, and from that point survive in chronological series in city hands. These record owner, builder, location, and scope, but they are indexed by location only from the period shortly after the turn of the century. The monthly building totals of various sorts were often reported in local newspapers from the 1850s on, but individual projects were also reported there from building permits, particularly in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (on microfilm at the Society) in a weekly feature from the late 1880s on.

National architectural journals like the *American Architect and Building News* (Boston), *Building* (New York), and others in the 1870s and 1880s would also sometimes excerpt a limited number of Philadelphia building permits, along with those for other cities, and would not infrequently report on and even illustrate new buildings of architectural interest. Such publication in an illustrated architectural journal remains one of our best bodies of documentation on rising buildings. Most often, architects would send illustrations of their proudest projects, which might be reproduced with relatively little critical commentary. Other journals focussed more on the

⁵¹ A list of the articles that have appeared since 1962 in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, the key journal in the field, appears on that organization's website (www.sah.org); this includes several on Philadelphia-area buildings. A wealth of short articles on vernacular topics have appeared since 1982 in the several volumes of *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* (for a list, see www.vernaculararchitecture.org). Others on vernacular and popular American architecture have appeared in the journal *Winterthur Portfolio* and in a growing number of books with a regional focus. There is also a large but dispersed body of plans, photographs, and notes on such structures recorded by historians of vernacular and popular architecture as research and teaching tools.

emerging theoretical dialogue among architects than upon the forms of their recent work, and would include more in the way of critical analysis, articles, essays, and profiles. Discussions of Philadelphia-area buildings in national architectural journals are, fortunately for the researcher, indexed in the *Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals* (at the University of Pennsylvania's Fisher Fine Arts Library) covering the subject retrospectively through the mid-1970s, and on-line by subscription for more recent articles.⁵²

A more consistent coverage of Philadelphia-area buildings came, briefly, with some Philadelphia-based journals (fig. 16), most notably Samuel Sloan's *Architectural Review and Builder's Journal* in the late 1860s and the *Builder and Decorator* (later *Builder, Decorator and Woodworker*) from the late 1880s. About the same time Philadelphia began to be the site of roughly annual architectural exhibitions organized variously by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the T-Square Club, and the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. These exhibitions ranged from several to hundreds of items, mostly drawings. From the 1890s they were recorded, in part, in increasingly illustrated yearbooks, a series that continued until the Great Depression, and then started up again in the late 1940s.⁵³ These catalogs greatly expand on the coverage given to Philadelphia work illustrated in national journals.

Far more comprehensive coverage, however, comes through another

⁵² Published architectural drawings with Philadelphia subjects from several of these late-nineteenth-century journals have been scanned and posted on the web through the Places in Time site (brynmawr.edu/iconog), under "Illustrations in Architectural Publications." Prior to these professional journals, designs occasionally appeared in more popular periodicals for general audiences. These have been indexed in Margaret Culbertson, *American House Designs: An Index to Popular and Trade Periodicals, 1850-1915* (Westport, Conn., 1994), and also in various editions of *Poole's Index to Periodical Literature* (Boston, 1882-1908).

⁵³ A sampling from a 1914 yearbook at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia is mounted on the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog), under "Illustrations in Architectural Publications." The Athenaeum has a cardfile indexing the T-Square Club/Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects exhibition catalogs from the 1890s through 1931. The architectural drawings that had appeared prior to that in the annual exhibitions of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts were indexed in Anna Wells Rutledge, comp. and ed., *Cumulative Record of Exhibition Catalogues: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts 1807-1870* . . . (Philadelphia, 1955). A new edition of this and a successor volume by Peter H. Falk appeared more recently as *The Annual Exhibition Record of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1876-1913* (Madison, Conn., 1985).

The Society holds one of the few extensive runs of the *Journal of Progress, the Woodworkers Magazine* (later styled *American Builder and Woodworker Journal*; see Fig. 16), another illustrated Philadelphia publication from the 1880s that is at least partly architectural in focus.

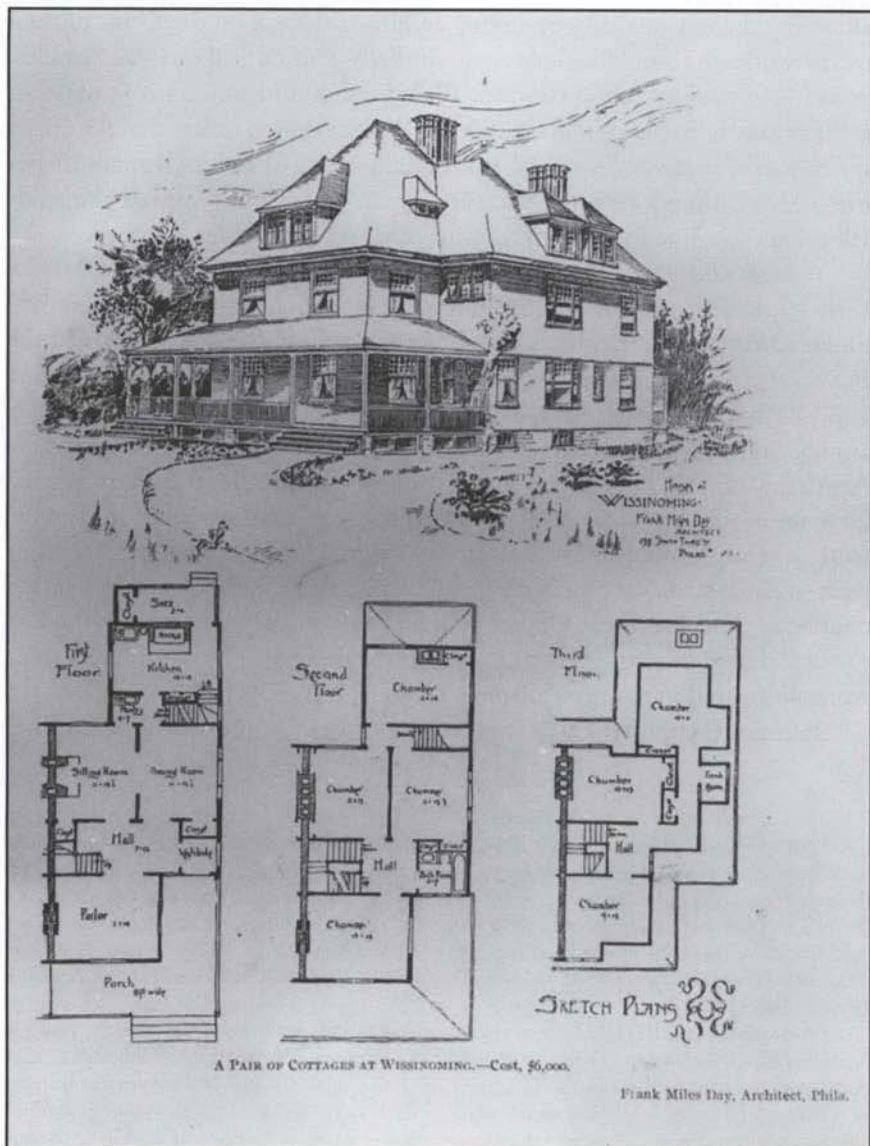


Fig. 16. "A Pair of Cottages at Wissonoming—Cost \$6,000." Frank Miles Day, architect. From *American Builder and Woodworker's Journal* 5 (June 1888).

periodical, the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*.⁵⁴ This weekly, which ran from 1886 to 1940, recorded construction projects both large and small in brief one-paragraph snippets, including the many campaigns of "alterations and additions" that constantly rivaled new buildings in number. The journal served as a means for builders and contractors to learn of impending work so that they could visit an architect or client's office to inspect drawings and proffer a bid for constructing the work. The *Builders Guide*, which had regional analogues in several other building markets, served as one of the major sources for Sandra L. Tatman and Roger W. Moss's *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, 1700–1930* (Boston, 1985), helping determine who built what and when over the period of that journal's publication. The *Biographical Dictionary* combines short biographies with building lists. Available for consultation at the Athenaeum are the research folders on each architect used to compile that volume and added to since. Scrupulously cited items in these folders allow one to trace such listings to their source and pursue them further, often in the pages of the *Builder's Guide*.

Records of building subsequent to that serial, especially from after WW II, tend to be less available in historical repositories than in other places. Although the annual yearbooks of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects resumed in 1949 and do identify several hundred projects of the postwar years, these and national journals leave a huge proportion of works of those years undocumented. Records of this period are in the course of navigating the perilous gauntlet between their relatively short-lived existence as tools of construction or regulation and the more lasting status some will achieve if accorded historical value and placed in a repository serving such ends. Collections of materials of this sort from the 1950s and 60s will often still be in the hands of the architectural firms that made the designs or the firms that constructed them (or their successor firms)—or in much smaller clusters in the hands of individual clients of these firms.

At the moment, one might have better luck locating information on buildings of this vintage through building permits at Philadelphia's Department of Licenses and Inspections, or analogous county and township departments outside the city, than in a library. Only a relative handful of

⁵⁴ At the Society on microfilm DM 4805, and also at the Athenaeum, and the Free Library.

local architects who achieved lasting national acclaim have had their drawings collected and processed in an architectural archive. But collections still in the architects' offices live in a context full of additional value. We are probably on the verge of losing verbal testimony about such buildings, as key postwar architects approach and pass retirement age, but their recollections will often provide otherwise lost insights into intentions, personalities, and circumstances beyond the laconic data on a building permit. This is especially the case in a communications environment that has left less correspondence on paper than earlier generations, and that probably tended more to the ephemeral medium of the telephone for their more interactive exchanges of ideas. Newer communications media may offer still greater challenges to scholars and archivists.

Less visual traces of building activities often remain only in unpublished sources, recording monetary and verbal exchanges of the sort in which the Society abounds with respect to earlier centuries—in the account books, ledgers, and correspondence of owners, builders, and suppliers. Such records can be harder to locate and interpret, but they are often a unique source for direct knowledge of building campaigns, especially early ones before they were likely to be recorded in published notices, and where records of expenditures may be the only surviving documentation. A building client that is a corporate entity, like a business, club, or institution, often must keep detailed records of its deliberations as well as expenditures, and when those are no longer maintained at the institution itself often they have found their way to the Society. Many early business archives have also found their way to the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware, including records of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad as well as the Pennsylvania Railroad, although Temple's Urban Archives holds most of the latter company's Philadelphia-area records.

In some cases, it will be the manuscript records of builders, suppliers, and workmen that hold key information. An example of this sort at the Society is the account book of stone contractor William A. Armstrong, dating from 1867 to 1875, which details projects, locations, dates, and payments. Similar builders' records are found in other area collections.⁵⁵ The

⁵⁵ Armstrong's accounts are in Society ms. col. 1540. These kinds of documents can range widely in type and even repository. Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library holds the records of a Philadelphia builder named William Eyre dating from the 1840s to the 1880s (ms. col. 65). Those of his contemporary, Charles A. Rubicam, are held in the Special Collections Department of the University

documentation may also relate to "measurement," a procedure used mostly before the early nineteenth century by which an independent expert in a craft would measure and assign a value to finished work performed by another craftsman, basing this on agreed-upon rates at certain levels of finish per running or superficial foot. A valued document of this kind at the Society is a plastering measurer's "Day Book, 1812 to 1818, Inclusive," a key source in documenting the close of a number of key building campaigns, since this craft was usually one of the last to do their finish work.⁵⁶ Sometimes the business of building ended less amicably and left footprints in the form of legal papers, especially those having to do with mechanics' liens and bankruptcies.⁵⁷ There may be many other record groups of these sorts yet to be ferreted out and exploited by historians.

More common than the simplest situation of a client working on an individual building with an architect or builder, however, is that where a developer buys up land and builds a number of structures speculatively, often without a professional architect, and only after the building process ends does he sell completed structures to various individuals. This was particularly the case for the tens of thousands of rowhouses that make up much of Philadelphia, as well as the detached houses, twins, and rows in speculatively developed subdivisions that make up much of the suburban periphery. Some of this story will be told in deed records, building permits, newspaper notices, the *Builder's Guide*, or occasionally in an architect's papers and other sources. Another aspect of this story may be told through records of the financing of such houses, in many cases through the small building and loan societies that abounded in nineteenth-century Philadelphia, and which were critical factors in the high degree of homeownership among middle- and working-class Philadelphians.

The fuller scenario of speculative building is sometimes best documented in the papers of developers, either acting on their own or as agents on behalf of property owners. One very rich resource of this sort from a later period is

of Delaware library (www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/guides/archtct.html).

⁵⁶ Am. b 6440.

⁵⁷ Recently scholars have profitably examined such legal records, which sometimes lay out matters in great detail. The activity of house builders proved to be quite perilous financially and is therefore occasionally richly documented among such records. Donna J. Rilling in "Building Philadelphia: Real Estate Development in the City of Homes," Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1993, along with a forthcoming book on the subject, make effective use of such materials.

the Society's Hazlett and Moss Collection, which comprises many volumes of graphic and financial records of hundreds of residential developments from between 1904 and 1938 scattered across the edges of the city and its suburbs. There is a bound finding aid and a subject index by location that help key the documents in the "Operation Books," detailing contractors, construction costs, mortgages, and financing, and in "Plan Books," bound sets of plan, section, and elevation sheets, many apparently traced from drawings by the architects who designed these.

Speculative developments could embrace rather large, upper-middle-class suburban houses as well. Some good examples from before the turn of the century are tracts developed by Wendell and Smith at Overbrook Farms, Pelham, Wayne, and St. David's. A collection of their papers from the Radnor Historical Society is on long-term loan to the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. As much as historians and critics tend to focus on the individual architect and his or her client, it becomes increasingly apparent that it is the decisions of figures like these developers that determine the bulk of the built landscape we inhabit, choosing designs, determining the size and configuration of lots, and targeting specific levels of architectural consumers.⁵⁸ Collections like this will help us gain insight into this still understudied area.

As construction drew to a close, other evidence would emerge. In the colonial period and after, street "regulators" would ascertain that property and building lines were not violated, and there are great troves of regulators' slips at Philadelphia City Archives noting their inspections. Street openings and paving also create official records, as would sudden jumps in tax assessments.

Perhaps the most revealing documents created at this stage, though, were the descriptions and plans devised for fire insurance, which date as far back as the 1750s. These get increasingly detailed and illustrated during the nineteenth century before becoming somewhat more formulaic in the twentieth. The Society has collections of surveys from the two best-known eighteenth-century companies, the Mutual Assurance Company ("The Green Tree") and the Philadelphia Contributionship, partly indexed by

⁵⁸ Especially effective use of such records was made recently by Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure in their book, *The Baltimore Rowhouse* (New York, 1999).

location in public catalog 4c. CIGNA Corporation holds the fire insurance records of one of its predecessors, the Insurance Company of North America, which are indexed in a card file at the company's archives. Two nineteenth-century companies, the Franklin Fire Insurance Company and the Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company, offer somewhat richer resources in that the majority of the 50,000 surveys in these two collections are accompanied by single-line plans (fig. 17). Roughly half of these have been entered in a database that is searchable in a number of ways.⁵⁹

The Free Library holds a related set of fire insurance records, specifically of industrial properties, in the twenty-nine folio volumes of "Hexamer General Surveys" in its Map Collection. Some 2600 surveys dated between 1866 and 1895 survive, most of these accompanied by a typeset description, plan, and often an isometric view; many of these were updated and show changes over time. These are the subject of a typescript index at the Free Library.⁶⁰

A resource still less tapped also dates from the moment shortly after completion, when buildings for rent or sale, especially new buildings speculatively built, would have their greatest attractions described and touted in advertisements, often in newspapers. Daily newspapers also often carried notices of the completion of larger buildings or rows, especially those that might be considered extraordinary in some way. A cornerstone laying or dedication of an institutional building, especially a church, was often reported in nineteenth-century newspapers. These can be unpredictable, elusive items in the newspapers themselves, but a period scrapbook attentive to such topics can be a very good friend.

Once its genesis is complete, occupation and use of buildings leave their imprints in various ways, in atlases, directories, taxes, subsequent sales, advertising, and other documentation associated with normal use rather than

⁵⁹ The database is available on-line though the Places in Time website (www.brynmawr.edu/iconog/), under "Research Tools." The Society also holds a three-volume set of bound printouts available as a finding aid. This is a sorting of the database by address, but gives only several truncated fields for each record.

⁶⁰ Joyce A. Post, comp., "A Consolidated Name Index to the Hexamer General Surveys," typescript, 1976, and Jefferson M. Moak, "Hexamer General Surveys," typescript, 4 vols., 1981-82. Moak's index includes alphabetical and geographically ordered finding tools.

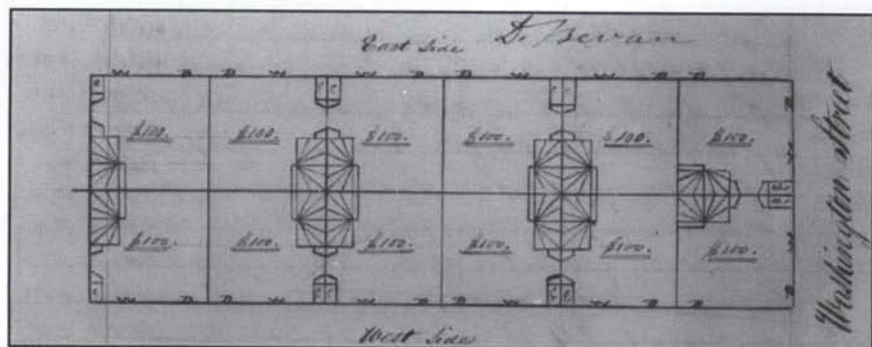


Fig. 17. Plan of twelve dwellings owned by David Bevan, Washington Avenue east of Third Street, Philadelphia. Franklin Fire Insurance Company survey no. 5633, Jan. 22, 1845, HSP.

conscious retrospection.⁶¹ For commercial properties, advertising could often include architectural illustrations, especially at a time when the distinctive facade on a major street was an enterprise's most visible "media" outlet. An early example of this sort of illustration is a store front on North Third Street, rendered in ink and wash by Hugh Bridport about 1830; it later served as the basis for an engraving. Engravings and lithographs would become popular means of planting that streetside image in the minds of consumers in the nineteenth century via business cards, letterheads, and bills, as well as in advertising per se. An epitome of this sort of image came with the commercial panorama plates of Rae and Baxter from 1851 to 1880, mentioned above.⁶²

Most buildings will be substantially transformed over a multigenerational lifetime, accommodating changing spatial needs, new

⁶¹ Everyday life sometimes leaves unpredictable and widely scattered footprints in daily newspapers. These were one of the main sources for a file-card index at the American Philosophical Society Library focused on eighteenth-century Philadelphia life that was compiled a few decades ago by historian Hannah Benner Roach. A substantial number of references will be found relevant to buildings and places, some of them otherwise unlikely to surface. More recently the CD-ROM editions of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and other area newspapers published by Accessible Archives, Inc., with their capacity for Boolean searches through the text, have made scrutiny of such sources much more approachable and powerful.

⁶² Materials of this sort appear frequently in the Souder, Campbell, and Perkins collections at the Society, and were a specific pursuit of the Beitler Collection at the Atwater Kent Museum.

service systems, and transformed settings. Ultimately, most will be demolished in response to these changes or to simple deterioration, and this too could be taken as part of its normal life. At present that does not necessarily elicit any final effort at visual documentation, especially if it is a building that has escaped the attention of academic, governmental, or local historians during its lifetime. Still, one might hope that in the future such an impending fate might invoke some review and, for those places deemed significant enough to preserve in memory if not in fact, prompt some final record.

As the preceding discussion demonstrates, the Society holds critical research materials on the history of place in the Philadelphia area, many providing documentation completely unavailable except through its collections. But clearly, even within this relatively constrained topic, the area's key documentary resources are distributed among many richly interlocked institutional collections. Researchers on such subjects will find an awareness of pertinent holdings in different collections to be a critical tool for targeting their efforts, and will most likely find it necessary to visit more than one. Expanding awareness of such collective riches has long been a primary or secondary goal of publications and of exhibitions that have drawn on many of these collections, if usually with a specific focus on a topic or medium.

Efforts to identify the collective body of such materials, at least in the realm of graphic representations, date back to P. Lee Phillips, *A Descriptive List of Maps and Views of Philadelphia in the Library of Congress, 1683-1865* (Philadelphia, 1926) and Joseph Jackson, *Prints, Documents and Maps Illustrative of Philadelphia Real Estate in the Office of Mastbaum Bros. & Fleisher* (Philadelphia, 1926). Later, Jackson wrote *Iconography of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1934), also published the following year in this journal (*PMHB* 59 [1935], 57-73), which followed on the heels of his *Encyclopedia of Philadelphia* (4 vols., Harrisburg, 1931-33), also rich in topographical information and illustrations. One can imagine these men ordering, in their mind's eye, a great assemblage of images, places, and associated facts overlaid chronologically to construct a fully illustrated and integrated matrix of such materials correlated by location, date, and medium. For research they could navigate in this mental matrix to identify items and adjacencies and follow the paths to different repositories.

Conveying this construct to others—especially with its wealth of

associated images—was another matter, one that begged for one to subdivide the topic geographically or by some other criteria. The most enterprising to take up this challenge were keepers of illustrated scrapbooks like Caspar Souder, Helen Perkins, and Jane Campbell, who brought representations together physically, arranged in series by location. But these were unpublished collections that may have been shared only in relatively small circles in their compiler's time, really as acts of recording more than disseminating. Reaching wider audiences through publication or exhibition presented some logistical constraints, and usually some substantially narrowed focus, some excerpt from that matrix.

Efforts to at least posit the larger scope have drawn from many collections representationally as a key to the holdings of each. One of the most recent cross-institutional publications, if pertaining less exclusively to the history of place, is Morris J. Vogel's *Cultural Connections: Museums and Libraries of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley* (Philadelphia, 1991). This book describes a wide range of area collections and some of their reasons for valuing the items they hold. Such a broad portrait can only sketch out and sample holdings, but increasingly one is able to find more detailed descriptions of holdings from beyond the walls of such institutions via the World Wide Web. The researcher is becoming substantially more well served by recent and impending projects on the web to connect these resources to each other and to the user through collaborative cataloging, finding aids that bridge collections, and sometimes even posted digital representations of documentary texts or images themselves.

One key initiative is that begun by the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL), working with several area repositories to unify and merge their on-line public access catalogs. When completed, this effort promises to integrate the holdings of nine area research libraries, including the Society, the Library Company, and the Athenaeum, and make them available over the web. Some have already begun to include descriptions of the visual materials. Also under the aegis of the PACSCL, Temple University's Urban Archives has forged ahead with its published and web-posted survey of the photographic collections mentioned above, drawing upon a broad range of area institutions. These collections-level descriptions serve researchers greatly in communicating the landscape of such resources. Before such tools were available, fewer scholars could have known the contents of such interlocking collections as well, especially visual collections, except by an enormous amount of footwork and

time.

Other collaborative projects have taken shape. The Society and Thomas Jefferson University have worked together to put a substantial number of their historic images—including the Evans views, mentioned above—on the web for public access through the Philadelphia Historical Digital Image Library (PHDIL) website (jeffline.tju.edu/archives/phdil/). The Athenaeum of Philadelphia (www.libertynet.org/athena), which has already created a website with a variety of resources for accessing its collections of drawings and photographs, is now preparing—with the support of the William Penn Foundation and several collaborating institutions, including the Society—to apply this model more ambitiously in “The Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project.” Just now commencing, the project will extend the coverage of Tatman and Moss’s 1985 *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects*, integrating citations, listing architectural drawings from many area collections, tapping into state and local historic resource databases, and delivering all this over the web. The Places in Time project at Bryn Mawr College, also with support from the William Penn Foundation, plans to continue to draw on a number of participating institutions to post complementary resources that are less directly associated with building processes or modern surveys of historic buildings. It will turn toward different sets of resources, including topographic views, atlases, surveys, and various other kinds of descriptive record.

Meanwhile, many institutions have begun individually to make their own holdings more accessible by means of web-posted descriptions, and sometimes even the resources themselves. The Philadelphia City Archives and Department of Records (www.phila.gov/phils/carchive.htm) is an example of a repository posting useful finding aids to its collections and samplings from them in virtual exhibitions, and one expects that this type of effort will soon be paralleled at many other institutions.

Such efforts will not supplant researchers’ use of original materials—in fact, experience so far suggests that web-posting tends to draw more visitation as researchers become more aware of the contents of particular archival collections. They will help researchers identify repositories they might not otherwise turn to, and will in many cases make the time spent in repositories more productive. Scanned and posted visual materials promise to enhance access to those dim corners of our archival inheritance, those parts largely unprobed until exposed in publications—and even then often marshaled into interpretive contexts that can touch on an image only in

passing rather than presenting that image in the context of the collection to which it belongs. Such effective publication of collections *as* collections, describing their whole scope and illustrating them representationally or in full, can serve in other ways as well. It can serve users who will discover new resources by browsing rather than searching for things already known to exist. For visual materials, often fragile or oversize, browsing usually implied unacceptable costs in terms of preservation and service, but this is much less the case with digital surrogates. And browsing offers some possibilities of discovery and often invaluable serendipities that few researchers would want to see dismissed completely in favor of access only through systematic searching.

Gathering information for this article—with some brief glimpses into the stacks at different institutions and lots of hints from those curators, archivists, and librarians who know them best—has made it clear that it is an act of hubris to try to be in any way comprehensive, in the scope of an article, or the experience of one writer, about the many resources in area collections bearing even on this one subject. For every collection where there were recollections or hints to run to ground, one would come upon still more promising mentions and hints in passing—sometimes eagerly explained to the writer, but more than he could absorb—that merited further exploration. And the archival landscape itself is changing. Websites and finding aids come and, one fears, they move. One suspects changes in arrangements and locations and tools before the ink dries (or the toner cools) on the last lines printed. It seems quite futile to try to bring this discussion to a sense of closure. The writer can claim no comprehensive knowledge of all such materials, or of the range of pertinent holdings even at the Society alone, which continues to promise as yet undiscovered resources bearing on the history of place. Like these documentary resources, knowledge of them is still rather dispersed, especially the intimate knowledge of them attained through personal experience by visiting a repository, or even better, by seeing the whole of a collection as its curator does.

This landscape of research resources, in which locations will shift and in which the collective body of intensely local knowledge far outshines anyone's general overview, is perhaps better described through media other than a journal on paper. One can imagine a collaboratively written and continually updated research tool on the web, a tool not only more current and accessible, but also richly linked to more detailed materials, to finding aids, related collections, and a fuller body of illustrations than could be

countenanced in an article.

One would first want to supplement our account by drawing from the intimate working knowledge of the archivists, librarians, and curators who know their collections best. This is a critical and often undervalued resource that can be of immense benefit in what can sometimes be a game of "battleship" through a card catalog or OPAC. One might also invite researchers to add their knowledge of pertinent documentary collections, of tools, and of strategies for using them. Such notes, tips, and insights, evolving collaboratively and focused topically, could be posted and maintained over the web. It could serve as a predictable place to find such resources, and in a form that continues to evolve and allow our collective experience in this field, which sometimes lives only in many separate heads, to become more widely and persistently available.

It is perhaps one of the ironies of our time that, just as prosperity has brought busy times for builders and architects, consuming pieces of the past with a sometimes voracious appetite, new technologies have come to hand that allow us to integrate media and disseminate representations of memory more widely, and in some ways more effectively than ever before. These mechanisms offer to penetrate what had sometimes been the cloistered boundaries of collections, diminishing the effects of distance and sometimes illuminating obscure archival corners. They promise more rewarding responses to those whose curiosity directs them even casually to places in the past, responses that enrich our connection to places in the present.

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