# on the HOUSE

The Newsletter of
Hopkinson House • Fall 2021

## What's Inside

**Lynn Miller,** www.lynn-miller.net

As autumn advances, Hopkinson House is preparing to undergo the largest and most expensive transformation in its history: replacement of the entire building's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system. Our council president **Theresa Kowalski** explains how the work schedule has been somewhat revised as the result of the accidental flooding late in the summer of a number of apartments on the northeast corner. She also outlines the provisions that have been made to accommodate residents during periods when they need to be out of their apartments while construction is taking place within their residences. Read her column, too, for ideas on leisure-time activities not far outside the city.

Now that Taylor Management Company is in charge of Hopkinson House, our new manager, **Michele Roque**, introduces herself in this issue. She also presents the other two members of her management team: **Melissa Port** and **Stephanie McCool**. Stephanie of course is a familiar presence in the front office, though she has new duties, as Michele explains. All three are ready and eager to assist residents in the months ahead.

Our regular contributor, **Martha Cornog**, takes us on a fascinating tour through an earlier time in our city, when the bustle of street traffic was dominated by the sound of horse shoes clip-clopping over cobblestone. Her tales of "Ghosts with Hooves" includes reminders of an era that live on near us today.

My own article explains the campaign now underway to raise funds for a memorial to the great Philadelphia contralto, Marian Anderson. Long-time resident Jim McClelland was instrumental in initiating this project. The task force now has approval for a statue of the singer to be installed in front of the Academy of Music.

**Joseph Quinn** explores the Egyptian Revival architectural movement, which became very prominent in structures erected in Philadelphia during much of the 19th century. He considers in particular a landmark building—or what's left of it—that's little more than a stone's throw from Hopkinson House.

Guest contributors (and Hopkinson House residents) **Michael Hairston** and **Dan Rothermel** examine the career of another musical genius—and, like Marian Anderson, an African American—William Grant Still. Active in the first half of the 20th century, Still made ends meet as a young man by playing in theater orchestras and writing arrangements for shows. Then in the 1930s, his *Symphony No. 1* drew acclaim and his work began to be widely performed. Yet by the 1950s, Still's star had faded. Read how his compositions have begun to enjoy a revival recently.

In her Chef's Corner, **Jane Hickman** gives us two delicious recipes that feature the fruit of late summer, apples and pears. You're sure to find them mouth-watering.

Thanks to Robin Siddall of Parallel Design, Inc., for the design of this issue. ■

**Occasional Photo by Simon Roberts**

Fall colors in Washington Square.

on the HOUSE

**Newsletter Committee**
Nelly Childress, editor emerita
Lynn Miller, editor and Committee Chair
Concha Alborg
Martha Cornog
Jane Hickman
Theresa Kowalski
Joseph Quinn

**Council Liaison**
Theresa Kowalski

**Graphic Design**
Parallel-Design.com

**Advertising**
Stephanie McCool
stephaniehhoa@outlook.com

**Photography**
Martha Cornog
Jane Hickman
Lynn Miller
Joseph Quinn

**Issue Contributors**
Martha Cornog
Michael Hairston and Dan Rothermel
Jane Hickman
Lynn Miller
Joseph Quinn

**Hopkinson House Council**
604hopkinson@gmail.com

**Website**
Find past issues of *on the House* at www.thehopkinsonhouse.com

# Message from Council

**Theresa Kowalski**

On Monday, September 20, the HHOA had an owners meeting at which HVAC financial issues and individual unit assessments were presented. Bruce Noel, Chief Financial Officer, and Nick Haralambopolous, Director of Accounting from the HHOA's new management group, Taylor Management, presented individual unit assessments and explained the different options that owners had to pay for them. Unit owners will be given an opportunity to pay the entire assessment amount without interest upfront. **Those who choose the lump sum option can drop their checks in the office beginning now, but before May 15, 2022.** They can also choose to pay the assessment monthly on a schedule for up to fifteen years as part of the loan that the HHOA negotiated with its lender. Additionally, those who choose to take the monthly option will be given the opportunity to pay off the remaining principal on their loans once every two years.

Finally, the HVAC project is moving from the drawing table through the pre-construction and procurement phases, and actual construction is starting. One of the first pieces of the construction project to be undertaken was the asbestos abatement of the mezzanine and mechanical rooms. This is necessary because part of the project includes the replacement of valves at the bottom and top of each of the risers which happen to be located in either the mezzanine or the mechanical room. Associated Specialty Contracting, a certified asbestos remediation company, is contracted to do this work for the entire project. They have already removed the insulation, and air testing was completed daily as work progressed. All of this remediation was completed, including re-insulation of those pipes, by early September.

Any of you who park in the garage will have noticed that Goldner, the general construction contractor, has started to take over the garage locations for a large lay-down area and a large construction dumpster. Many of us have noticed that they've also taken over the freight elevator, thus pressing into service one of the four passenger elevators as a temporary freight elevator for occupants who are moving in or out. To make more efficient use of the elevators, Goldner has been attempting to rent units on strategic floors of the building in order to use them as staging areas, thus being able to move construction materials into them at off hours.

Construction within the actual units themselves will begin on October 18th with the small efficiencies facing west. Construction was originally scheduled to move clockwise from there to the north and around the building. However, due to the recent leak affecting riser #9 which covers units ending in 01, that riser will become the 2nd location worked on after riser #1.

Owners in the 01 and 02 units have already begun to meet with Corona Partners, the resident coordinators, who will help them map out what may need to be moved from around the work areas, and/or which betterments and improvements in their units may need to be deconstructed to reach the risers. Corona partners will be able to judge your need for additional help and have prepared a list of appropriate movers, electricians, carpenters, stone/granite masons and the like for referrals.

Corona and management are working to furnish the upper and lower solarium with lounge seating, tables

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## Important Dates

Some noteworthy dates coming up:

**Weeks 9/28 through 10/11**
The building will be drained; thus A/C and heat will not be available during this period. This was purposely scheduled during a shoulder season in order to give the contractors time to install new valves, top and bottom, on all 18 of the risers so that they can be controlled as work begins on the total replacement of each.

**Week of 10/4**
HHOA town hall to address concerns about readying for construction.

**Week of 10/11**
Corona will hold a social gathering for all those whose units will be worked on in the first two periods.

# Message from Management

**Michele Roque**

I have met some of you since my arrival onsite just a few weeks ago. I would like to thank those of you who have provided a warm welcome, words of support, helpful suggestions and perspectives on life at Hopkinson House. I look forward to meeting more of you when possible.

I have much experience working in both the residential and commercial property management industries in Philadelphia, including several high-rise condominiums in Center City. I have had the pleasure of working with boards of directors, unit owners, and staff at several high-rise condominiums in Center City and I am pleased to be at Hopkinson House as your General Manager.

A new Assistant Manager recently started. Her name is **Melissa Port.** She comes from a management position at another high-rise condominium here in Center City where she honed her skill set that includes resident relations, front desk staff supervising/ training, and project management. She is excited to be part of the new manage-ment staff and has already taken the lead in working with the Landscaping Committee. She hopes to perhaps take some tips from the committee back home to her own garden. She is excited to be a part of the new management office and working as a team on upcoming projects and meeting and helping residents.

Melissa Port, Assistant Manager; Stephanie McCool, Executive Assistant, Property Management Coordinator; Michele Roque, General Manager

**Stephanie McCool** is stepping into a new role as Executive Assistant/Property Management Coordinator. She is pleased to be staying with Hopkinson House Owners' Association along with the new Taylor Management Company! Stephanie looks forward to working with the new managers Michele and Melissa. She believes this new trio will be a great asset to the building.

Stephanie is excited to tackle the upcoming HVAC project, as well as to improve building strategies, enhance security, and address any other issues that may come. She is happy to be a familiar face in the management office as this community holds a special place in her heart.

Each of us is looking forward to working together in a very collaborative effort of the daily operations and management of the building. We will be working closely with all staff in the hope to bring more cohesive and productive daily efforts. ■

## Message from Council,

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and chairs, a television and a center for coffee, tea and cold drinks for those who may be out of their units for construction and need a place to "hang out." Those who work from home or need a few quiet hours with a computer are still invited to consider the workspace short term rentals from the realtor office on the main lobby level.

By the time the next newsletter comes out, we will have finished (I hope!) the first riser on the west side and everyone whose unit is included will be talking about what a snap it was!

Time flies now, so have a nice fall, enjoy the leaves and the cooler weather, and take a day trip somewhere close and get outside. You can jump on a train to Swarthmore right at Jefferson Station and spend a day walking through the 425 acre Scott Arboretum there, often named one of the most beautiful in the country, and it's free. Or take the Septa regional rail to Wilmington, and grab a cab or Lyft for a quick 6-mile trip to Winterthur. One of the most impressive Dupont Estates, the 175-room mansion now houses the most significant collection of American decorative arts in the world. But you could also spend the entire day outside in its 60-acre world-class naturalistic garden set within 1,000 acres of rolling hills, streams, meadows, and forests. There is a café for lunch, or you may picnic outside. These are only two ideas of many I had during the summer, but it always seemed too hot. Now, however, owners and tenants are contending with a lot: the HVAC project and its intrusion, the broken pipe and resulting flooding a few weeks ago, no A/C during one of the hottest weeks of the summer, knowing their individual assessments, long lines at the elevators and more. So now is a perfect time to get yourself outside somewhere quiet, peaceful, and beautiful, and for now, not in Philadelphia! Sometimes, the most productive thing you can do is to step outside and do nothing—enjoy nature. ■

# Ghosts with Hooves

**Martha Cornog**

Just across the street from our Hopkinson House front door, a horse drinks from a trough. Sweat pours from its coat as the coachman, shifting his whip to the other hand, marks the delay. No, the horse isn't there today, but the watering trough is—a reminder that four-legged workers once powered Philadelphia life and industry.

Our trough first materialized in 1869 on the north side of Washington Square, and boasted a showy eagle on top. *(Figure 1)* It was the first of some 100 horse-friendly drinking fountains once dotting our city, funded by newly established animal humane societies. Temperance groups pitched in and funded basins usable by thirsty people as well as animals, conjecturing that a public water supply could keep tipplers out of taprooms.

In 1916, the city decided to widen Walnut Street for electric trolleys, and relocated the Washington Square trough to its current home—minus the eagle. Perhaps the move damaged the bird. *(Figure 2)* Only a dozen such troughs remain in Philly now, including one outside Pennsylvania Hospital's wall at 9th and Clinton Streets, and another set in the median of Bainbridge at 3rd Street. Did the multi-species fountains keep people sober? The temperance folks could hope! Certainly, Philly's sweltering summers could kill working animals, and horse deaths did go down after the troughs became common.

Another centuries-old reminder marks where people could park their horses: hitching posts. Two remain on the 200 block of Delancey Street and another on the 400 block of Spruce. Cast iron hitching posts could be fashioned in various styles, including the horse's head design of two of these, and have become pricey collectors' items. Aficionados speculate ruefully that many iron hitching posts probably disappeared into the government's scrap metal drives during two world wars.

More common in Society Hill are "carriage stones": curb-side marble blocks partially sunk in the sidewalk to ease stepping up into a horse-drawn conveyance. Most of the houses that still have hitching posts or carriage stones also display plaques indicating certification as a historic building. Yet I saw one stone sitting unburied and askew on the sidewalk, perhaps moved aside to make way for a tree pit that was under construction. Has it been our neighborhood's glorious greenery that has driven out hitching posts and carriage stones?

Carriages, as well as horses, needed parking, and many Philly carriage houses—even stables—have survived to accommodate new uses. As an educational installation, the President's House exhibit north of Independence Hall shows that George Washington's residence here once had both "coach house" and stable on the property, located just beyond the slave quarters. President Washington, who lived and worked in the original building from 1790 to 1797, owned fourteen horses and four carriages at the time. The carriage house and stable no longer exist as such, but the exhibit brings them to life again to teach our country's history.

Another nearby carriage house survives at 8th and Delancey Streets as part of Pennsylvania Hospital, now used for clinical and administrative rather than transport activities. A few blocks north on 8th Street, the 1787-built Morris House Hotel pampers visitors in its own carriage house, which offers a luxury "wedding suite" on the third floor. Earlier Morris family patriarchs, both named Anthony, probably would have approved, being brewmeisters as well as early mayors of Philadelphia.

Up Broad Street near Fairmount, a stable where horses once ate and slept now feeds hungry humans—and houses them, too. Clementine's Stable Café occupies the ground floor of what was once the

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**Figure 1** Washington Square watering trough, 1869. The Library Company of Philadelphia.

**Figure 2** Washington Square watering trough today. WHYY.

## Ghosts with Hooves

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Edwin Hart Stables, while upper floors of the enlarged building have been turned into loft apartments. *(Figure 3)* Numerous other old Philly carriage houses also harbor city residents.

But what was it like, back when horses ruled the streets? Might we wistfully imagine a more natural, leisurely, quieter city?

At the height of horse-powered Philadelphia around 1900, some fifty thousand horses toiled amongst two-legged citizens, *four hundred horses per square mile of city*. In colonial times, it was mostly the wealthy using horses in town—the less monied walked, and transported goods by handcart or oxcart. But the Industrial Revolution, with its emerging technologies and expanding commerce, required the much faster horses in supporting roles. When horse-drawn stagecoaches gave way in the 1800s to railroads, train service depended upon horses to carry goods to and from depots. Better quality roads increased intra-city wagon and stagecoach traffic, so more horses were needed here, too.

Horses likewise speeded people and goods throughout the city. Way before SEPTA, horse-drawn streetcars operated with over five thousand horses quartered in multi-story stables akin to parking garages. Nineteenth and early twentieth century municipal fire, street, sanitation, and police departments all relied on horses for speed and muscle. Multi-horse-drawn wagons driven by teamsters moved freight around town.

But horsepower came with a cost: the beasts deposited tons of manure and gallons of urine on the streets every day. Manure dust stuck to shoes and drifted in windows. What's more, the average life expectancy for a working horse was only around three years. *(Figure 4)* The result: several thousand died in harness year after year, carcasses rotting for days on the cobblestones. All that waste attracted flies and diseases—and smelled awful. In addition, poor hygiene and working conditions made the horses vulnerable to an equine influenza dubbed the "Great Epizootic," which infected thousands of Philadelphia horses in 1872 and brought Philadelphia to a standstill.

As for sound, the clatter of iron horseshoes on cobblestone or pavement created quite a din. It was so bad that some Philly streets were repaved with wooden blocks to keep the noise down. Customers hollering for cabs, teamsters and coachmen yelling at each other, and animals neighing would have added to the racket.

All told, Philadelphia was a bustling, stinking, and noisy city. Indeed, when Henry Ford's Model T appeared in the early 1900s, the car was touted as an odorless, quieter, cleaner, and all-around more aesthetic alternative to horsepower! Nobody foresaw the loud and exhaust-fumed gridlock of modern rush-hour hell and its effects upon climate change. One thing both horses and cars have shared, however, has been an antipathy to bicycles—those upstart, human-powered contraptions hogging Philly streets since the 1890s.

In any event, electric streetcars replaced horse-drawn public transport as the new century progressed, and automobile use increased. Fire companies retired their horses in favor of sleek, motorized contraptions. By the 1930s, the inner-city horse population had dropped by 50 percent. By the 1950s, only a small number of horses still delivered milk and other goods from wagons, and toiled at the city dumps.

Today, steeds still grace our streets, but only for special purposes. Modern Philly police officers ride astride when the saddle's vantage point allows a broader view of crowds at functions like parades, protests, and sporting events. Further, the charisma of a mounted rider can make officers

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**Figure 3** Clementine's Stable Café. The Philadelphia Inquirer.

**Figure 4** A dead horse in Boston, c. 1897. Boston Public Library.

**Ghosts with Hooves**
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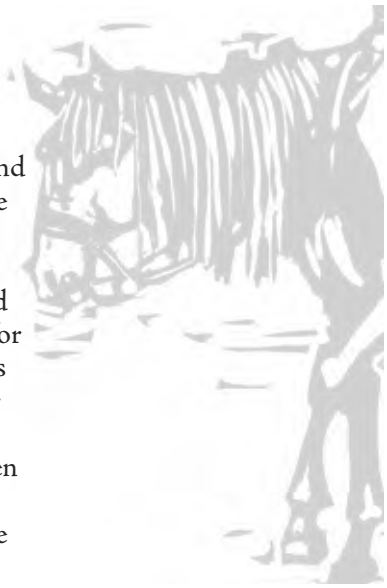
more approachable, strengthening community relationships. Additionally, hooves can handle off-road travel better than tires, giving the Philadelphia Police Mounted Patrol Unit an advantage beyond plain old cop cars.

In Philadelphia's Historic District where Hopkinson House stands, horse-drawn carriage tours have been taking visitors "around the nation's most historic square mile" since 1976, the year when the Bicentennial revitalized the city's cachet for tourists and residents alike. The carriages go through Society Hill and sometimes around Washington Square, the drivers pointing out historical facts and foibles. These horses differ from inner-city horses of the past, however, in wearing "containment devices" functioning as diapers, so that manure can be collected and disposed of properly between trips.

Meanwhile, some Philly citizens just want to mount up like our countryfolk of yore. For them, Fairmount Park has the steeds and the saddles. The Chamounix Equestrian Center's Work to Ride program and the Bill Pickett Riding Academy both focus on teaching disadvantaged urban youth about horsemanship. So does the Fletcher Street Urban Riding Club, an inspiration for the film *Concrete Cowboy*. The Pegasus Therapeutic Riding Academy welcomes learners with disabilities and offers specialized sessions for children with autism spectrum disorders. More broadly, Chamounix, Northwestern Stables, and Monastery Stables all provide riding and horsemanship lessons across age groups.

Remember that horse-bicycle antipathy? Such encounters now happen on trails instead of turnpikes. How does a horse perceive a biker? How can one rider pass the other without spooking the animal? Courtesy Stable offers The Horse Bike Experience, a course for equestrians and cyclists about safe trail etiquette when trails are shared by both.

Philadelphia's water troughs, hitching posts, and carriage houses all conjure up ghosts of horses past, animals that kept us in touch with each other and supplied the city's needs for transport. But now horses keep us in touch with our past, and with a bracing athleticism shared between species. Certainly, horses aren't going away any time soon—either in our city or in our imagination. ■



"Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad and rivers of waters in the streets" reads the inscription on this fountain, the city's oldest at Washington Square.

## Residents Corner

Residents wishing to make comments or observations on the current issue may send them to: "The Editor," lynnm3@comcast.net. Those who do not have a computer can place their comment in an envelope addressed to "Editor, on the House" and give the envelope to the employee at the Resident Services Desk.

Your comments will be published in the next issue of the newsletter.

Anonymous comments will not be accepted.

The editor reserves the right to reject opinions/comments, etc., if they are deemed inappropriate or can involve the association in legal troubles.

# The Philadelphia Campaign for a Memorial to Marion Anderson

**Lynn Miller**

Early in her remarkable career, Philadelphia's own Marion Anderson (1897-1993) was described by conductor Arturo Toscanini as having a voice that occurs only once in a hundred years. Late last August, a midday ceremony in front of the Broad Street entrance to the Academy of Music launched a public campaign to erect a statue at that site in honor of the renowned contralto and civil rights figure. One of the greatest singers of the 20th century, Anderson was born and reared in South Philadelphia. From an early age, she sang in her local church choir. By the time she was eighteen, her supporters recognized her remarkable talents and sponsored a benefit concert at Musical Fund Hall, where she sang to raise money for her musical education.

Starting at age thirty, Anderson began to garner immense acclaim in her recital tours throughout Europe, which continued over the next decade. Yet, once back in America, she had to lead the way as an African American in opening America's cultural institutions to performances by people of color. She did so most memorably at a vast, open air recital at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Easter Sunday, 1939. That came after Anderson, because of her race, was refused permission to sing in Constitution Hall, owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution. First lady

1940 photo of Anderson by Carl Van Vechten

Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the D.A.R. in protest and arranged for the Lincoln Memorial event. 75,000 people attended and millions more heard it broadcast on the radio. Finally recognized as the national treasure she had become, Anderson sang at the inaugurations of Presidents Eisenhower, then Kennedy. Meanwhile, in 1955 she broke yet another color barrier as the first African American to perform at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

The effort to erect her statue on the steps of the Academy of Music was largely initiated by Jim McClelland, a long-time resident of Hopkinson House, now retired, whose career was in fund-raising and the management of several arts organizations in Philadelphia. Last November, he read a plea by Peter Dobrin, music critic of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, to create a public statue of the singer for the city. Jim immediately took up the challenge, helping to organize a task force of the region's cultural, academic, civic and governmental leaders to determine how best to commemorate Miss Anderson's legacy in her hometown.

In short order, the task force received permission from the Philadelphia Orchestra, which owns the Academy of Music, where the singer performed often, to place the statue at the north end of the Academy's steps. A memorial fund was set up through the efforts of the Philadelphia Foundation, and fund-raising efforts are now well underway. More than $300,000 had been raised from a number of private funders by the time of the August launch. According to Jim, "we anticipate the total fundraising need to approach $1.4 million for the statue and ancillary needs, including signage and the potential cultural heritage trail through South Philadelphia. We encourage anyone who is interested in preserving the legacy of Marian Anderson to contribute to our fund-raising efforts." Go to www.philafound.org, click on "Donate" and specify that your gift is to the "Marian Anderson Memorial Fund."

The task force is now moving into the planning and design phase, working with the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Moore College of Art and Design, the Barnes Foundation, the University of the Arts, and others to source design ideas and potential artists for creation of the statue. The group expects to announce artists and a design choice by the time of Miss Anderson's 125th birthday, February 17, 2022.

Among those appearing at the August ceremony in Broad Street was Jillian Pirtle, CEO of the Marian

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**The Philadelphia Campaign for a Memorial to Marion Anderson**
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Denyce Graves, Honorary Chair of the task force raising funds for a Marian Anderson memorial outside the Academy of Music. The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Eleanor Roosevelt with Marian Anderson, Richmond, Virginia, July 2, 1939. The Associated Press.

Anderson Historical Society and Museum, which is based in the small row house Anderson owned and lived in from 1924 to 1943. The house is located at 762 S. Martin Street (which lies between 19th and 20th Streets south of Fitzwater) and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. For hours, go to www.marionanderson historicalsociety.weebly.com. In his remarks at the same event, Mayor Jim Kenney said, "for too long we have inadequately celebrated the rich cultural legacy of black Philadelphians. Today, we honor a voice that stood for more than just musical perfection, but a voice that stood for civil rights, human rights, freedom, and democracy." Once the fund-raising effort is successful, an image of Marion Anderson in the heart of the Avenue of the Arts will recognize her place in the pantheon of Philadelphia—and the nation's—finest citizens. ■

# Egyptian Temples in Our Midst

**Joseph Quinn**

When the Penn Mutual Insurance Company established its headquarters at Sixth and Walnut in 1916, it planted its flag in a neighborhood long associated with that industry, on a street known as "insurance row." It first occupied a structure built in 1838. The company eventually added two more buildings moving eastward, occupying most of the block by 1975. When it decamped for the suburbs in the 1980s, it left behind the free-standing white marble façade of its original building with features reminiscent of an Egyptian temple, making it one of the more curious instances of architectural preservation in Center City. *(Figure 1)*

It's the starting point for a story about a 19th century design aesthetic—known as Egyptian Revival—its influence on Philadelphia buildings and monuments, and the ongoing tension between commercial development and historic preservation.

The historical event that kicked off the first Egyptian Revival was Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. As the result of that campaign, the Egyptian aesthetic was soon translated into clothing, jewelry, furniture, and the design of monuments and public buildings.

Incorporated in 1825, the Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company (PFIC) hired John Haviland to design its 1838 headquarters, which stood out among its neighbors. Instead of the brick and wood construction common at the time, Haviland chose for the façade white marble, a material that must have suggested indestructibility to the company's policyholders. Also unusual were the ground floor columns topped with palmetto leaf capitals and the trapezoidal second-floor windows capped with winged sun disks, indicating that Haviland was aware of the trend using Egyptian features in American architecture. *(Figures 2,3)*

In 1902, Theophilus P. Chandler, Jr. doubled and duplicated Haviland's design, making it almost impossible to tell the twins apart. Perhaps Chandler felt qualified to take on the expansion because of his visit to Egypt in 1894 where he studied its architecture. He added a substantial "cavetto cornice," a parapet curving outward, at the top where he reproduced and enlarged the winged sun symbol and inscribed the name of the company. *(Figure 4)*

The winged disk, honoring the Egyptian sun god Ra, became ubiquitous in Egyptian Revival contexts; it signified the triumph of good over evil and the promise of enlightenment and protection for the living.

Obelisks and pyramids have long been visual shorthand for Egyptian culture, adding a sense of ceremony and grandeur to public spaces; the Washington Monument comes immedi-

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Photos by Joseph Quinn

**Figure 1** The façade of the PFIC today at Sixth and Walnut Streets.

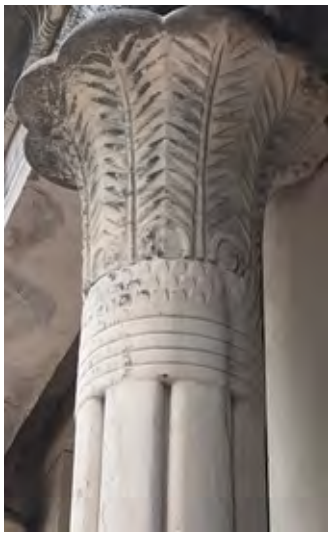

**Figure 2** Detail of column with palmetto capital.

**Figure 3** Original marble façade of the PFIC designed by John Haviland (1838). Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

## Egyptian Temples in Our Midst

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**Figure 4** Detail of cavetto cornice with winged sun disk added to the top of the façade in 1902 by T. P. Chandler.

**Figure 5** T. U. Walters Moyamensing Prison (1835) with Egyptian style Debtor's Wing on the right. Athenaeum of Philadelphia.


**Figure 6** Second Mikveh Israel Synagogue by William Strickland with prominent Egyptian Revival features (1825). Mikveh Israel History.

ately to mind. The most common Egyptian iconographic features imported into vernacular architecture were present in the PFIC façade: cavetto cornice, sun disk, trapezoid-shaped walls and windows, and bulbous columns with palmetto leaf or lotus bud capitals.

These features were gradually idealized in Western architectural practice to suggest qualities that appealed to many institutions and businesses —stability, dependability, durability. After all, Egyptian civilization lasted for almost thirty centuries.

Few American architects would have had the opportunity to visit Egypt, like Chandler, but they would have been familiar with its iconography through prints and reproductions available in such books as *Incidents of Travel in Egypt*, published in 1837 by New Jersey-born archaeologist John Lloyd Stevens. As a result, some of Philadelphia's most productive and prestigious architects were inspired to step out of their Greek Revival comfort zone and explore the possibilities of a new design realm.

Perhaps it was the Egyptian preoccupation with death and the underworld that influenced the proliferation of Pharaonic imagery in funerary monuments and prisons. Stroll through any non-denominational cemetery and you're sure to find obelisks, pyramids, and faux-Egyptian temples, presumably ensuring a long and dignified afterlife for the departed. In 1836, William Strickland and Thomas U. Walter submitted designs for the gates of Laurel Hill Cemetery that included several of the most conventional features of the Egyptian Revival aesthetic.

As for prisons, look no further than Walter's 1835 design for Moyamensing, long a South Philadelphia landmark. Next to the prison's main Gothic building Walter attached a separate unit known as the Debtor's Wing that could have been imported right from the banks of the Nile. *(Figure 5)*

Anyone studying Egyptian Revival architecture might be surprised to discover its influence on two 19th century Jewish synagogues in Philadelphia.

The second Mikveh Israel Synagogue inaugurated at Third and Cherry Streets in 1825 has been called "the first American synagogue built in [that] style." *(Figure 6)* It was the work of William Strickland, in a departure from the severe Greek Revival style he used for the Second Bank of the United States (1816). In 1848, ten years after his Moyamensing Debtor's wing, Walter (a Strickland student) included striking Egyptian motifs in his design for the Beth Israel Crown Street Synagogue. *(Figure 7)*

Egyptian imagery for a synagogue? Diana Muir Applebaum speculates that it was a "positive statement

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**Egyptian Temples in Our Midst**
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**Figure 7** Beth Israel Crown Street Synagogue by T. U. Walter (1849). International Survey of Jewish Monuments.

**Figure 8** The 21-story glass and concrete tower placed behind the PFIC façade today, designed in 1975.

of the Eastern origin and ancient nature of Jewishness." She also observes that members of the Mikveh Israel congregation were active Freemasons, as were both Strickland and Walter, and that "Masonic enthusiasm for Egyptian motifs" was likely a factor in the design of both synagogues. (To experience that enthusiasm firsthand, visit the dazzling Egyptian room in the Masonic Temple at One North Broad.)

Stimulated by Howard Carter's discovery of King Tut's tomb in 1922, the twentieth century brought the delicious kitsch of mummy movies and theater palaces adopting Egyptian regalia. The suburban Bala theater was the Egyptian Theater when it opened in 1926 (Hoffman-Henon architects, terra cotta work by O. W. Ketcham). It has survived, minus its original signage, as the centerpiece of a block-long array of almost cartoonish Egyptian Revival designs.

Back in our neighborhood, in 1975, the Philadelphia firm Mitchell/Giurgola Associates designed a 21-story glass and concrete tower, the final piece of the Penn Mutual campus on Walnut Street, displacing the Haviland/Chandler PFIC building. Their gesture to historic preservation was to salvage, restore, and reinstall the marble façade as a purely decorative object in front of the tower; a controversial tactic known as "façadism." *(Figure 8)*

In 1976, Paul Goldberger, then architecture critic of the *New York Times*, called the tower "one of the most rewarding pieces of commercial architecture in a long time," and hailed the inclusion of the Haviland/Chandler façade as a "brilliant design decision." More recently, architectural historian Kevin McMahon has called it "historic preservation at its most superficial and arbitrary."

In his examination of "The Ethics of Façadism," Robert Bargery defines the strategy as "retaining the facade of a (usually historic) building that is deemed to have some architectural or other cultural value and building afresh behind it." This becomes problematic, he believes, when it results in "the loss of purpose" of the original remnant, drawing attention to its "essential redundancy."

Brilliant, superficial, redundant. Critical assessments aside, how does our façade fare today? In truth, it looks a bit puzzling and forlorn, striving to maintain its singular dignity on a block of towering structures in a medley of architectural styles.

Does it still have preservation-worthy aesthetic value despite its "loss of purpose," and lacking any functional connection to its parent structure? Or is it a relic, more suitable for a museum, like the Egyptian façade of the Moyamensing Debtor's Wing, now in the Smithsonian, or the winged sun disk from that façade, which happens to be in the collection of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia?

Given its unique visual interest and past historic associations, does it hold its own, aesthetically if not functionally, in a neighborhood devoted to "relics" from a more recent very different era—colonial America?

Opinions may differ, but there is no denying the power of the Haviland/Chandler façade to surprise and delight—sitting serene and mirage-like, amid our urban noise and clutter, evoking a far more distant and fabled civilization. ■

## Concert in Washington Square Presented by The Athenaeum and Independence National Historical Park

On a balmy Sunday afternoon in late September, several hundred concert-goers sat or sprawled on the grass in Washington Square to enjoy a free concert sponsored by the Athenaeum of Philadelphia and Independence National Historical Park. Photos Courtesy of The Athenaeum of Philadelphia

# William Grant Still: An American Composer

**Michael Hairston and Dan Rothermel**

*If I have a wish to express, it would be that my music may serve a purpose larger than mere music. If it will help in some way to bring about better interracial understanding in America and in other countries, then I feel that the work is justified.* —William Grant Still

William Grant Still sincerely believed in the power of music to combat prejudice and discrimination and to promote racial understanding. He believed that by combining idioms of American folk and European art music, he could further the cause of equality for African Americans. This composer was a descendant of William Still (1821-1902), the African American abolitionist and civil rights activist, who was born two hundred years ago this October. Both worked diligently to fulfill their dreams of an integrated American society.

Three decades after the Emancipation Proclamation, William Grant Still Jr. was born in Mississippi on May 11, 1895. His father died shortly thereafter. Still and his widowed mother moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, where she met and married Charles B. Shepperson, who nurtured and encouraged young Still's love of spirituals, opera, and orchestral music. Still began formal music training on violin at age 15 and then taught himself to play clarinet, saxophone, oboe, double bass, cello, and viola. At age 16, he began composing music. He was valedictorian of his high school class and at his mother's urging, enrolled in the pre-med program at Wilberforce University in Ohio, an historically black university. Most of his time there was spent composing music and performing with the university band. It soon became evident that music, not medicine, was his primary focus. He left Wilberforce without a diploma but with a determination to make music his future.

He enrolled in the Oberlin Conservatory of Music to study composition with George Andrews and later in Boston with the American composer George Whitefield Chadwick, who taught him principles of harmony, and in New York with French composer Edgard Varese, who was a pioneer in electronic and *avant-garde* music.

Opportunities for black composers and musicians were limited in 1916, so Still moved his family to Memphis where he worked with W. C. Handy, the Father of the Blues, as an arranger and band member. Still eventually made his way to Harlem and then to Broadway where he wrote arrangements and played in the pit for *Shuffle Along*, the groundbreaking all-black Broadway musical by Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake. Still's fame as a skillful arranger and talented musician rose steadily as the years progressed.

In his "spare" time, Still continued writing "serious" music. After experimenting with more "modern",

William Grant Still. Detroit Public Library.

dissonant works, he realized that he wanted to write music that spoke to the African American experience. His mentors gave him a solid foundation for writing music in the European idiom, but they also encouraged him to discover his unique voice, his American voice.

His breakthrough came in 1931 when the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Howard Hanson, played his *Symphony No. 1 "Afro-American."* This was the first time a complete symphony by an African American was performed by a major orchestra. It was an immediate success and became Still's most consistently played work, with hundreds of performances by orchestras around the world. Leopold Stokowski conducted it on tour with the Philadelphia Orchestra. The Rochester Philharmonic recorded it in 1939. Well into the 1950s, Still's *Symphony No. 1* was one of the most frequently performed American symphonies. The *Afro-American Symphony* is regarded as a daring and creative integration of African American and European musical idioms. Still's intention was to demonstrate the idea that blues, jazz, and spirituals are unequivocally equal to European music. This aesthetic synthesis is considered a unique and valuable contribution to American culture.

As Still's popularity skyrocketed, he continued to break barriers. With the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in 1934, Still was the first African American to conduct a major American orchestra in a performance of his own works. His opera *Troubled Island* with a libretto by Langston Hughes was the first opera by an African American to be performed by a major opera company. Its production by the New York City Opera in March of 1949 was the first of many important world premieres by the then young company. For his singular accomplishments, Still became known as the "dean of African American Composers."

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**William Grant Still: An American Composer**
continued from page 17

Still remained a man of faith. His greatest desire was for his music to foster racial harmony. With the universal acclaim and acceptance of the *Afro-American Symphony*, Still felt his music could indeed make a difference and bring people together. While he was concentrating on uplifting the race through serious music, life for African Americans outside of the concert hall was another reality; Jim Crow laws, mob violence and intractable racism continued to prevail. Still was no stranger to discrimination in all aspects of his personal and professional life. He used music as an outlet to express his anguish about the precarious state of freedom for African Americans. In his *Darker America* (1924), Still invoked black cultural traditions that give voice to "sorrows", but also to "triumph through fervent prayers." He continued believing in redemption and unity.

Not all of his fellow American composers acknowledged or appreciated his achievements when Still was at his peak. Aaron Copland, the dean of *American* Composers, had nothing but disdain for Still's music. He wrote, "…One can't help wishing that [Still's] musical content was more distinguished."

Many years later in retaliation, Still, a relentless and outspoken anti-communist, publicly "named" Copland as a communist. Still's list also included the composers Leonard Bernstein, David Diamond, and Marc Blitzstein. He believed that Copland and these composers had formed a "cabal" with the intention of "provoking a politically motivated music conspiracy in favor of dissonant, modern music." How they were going to accomplish that is not clear.

As a result of his accusations, Still's position within the relatively liberal musical community became problematic. Many of his colleagues and friends, including Paul Robeson and Langston Hughes, fell away. Because of his politics, his race and/or his consistently negative reviews, Still's reputation took a nose dive in the 1950s. From being one of the most performed American composers, he watched his music eclipsed by more "modern" works.

In spite of the lack of performances, he kept writing and the awards kept coming to him. He was given nine honorary degrees; however, each year the number of his commissions declined. To augment his income, he arranged music for films, but refused to work on movies that dealt in racist stereotypes. Late in life, his financial situation became dire and his hope for racial equality faltered.

William Grant Still, Jr. died in Los Angeles on December 3, 1978 at the age of 83, leaving behind a musical legacy of almost 200 works, including nine operas, five symphonies, four ballets, thirty choral works, as well as art songs, chamber music, and works for solo instruments.

Through the efforts of his granddaughter, Judith Anne Still, classical music audiences are rediscovering his music. She preserved his scores, published them through her company, *William Grant Still Music*, and marketed them to a new generation of conductors and performing musicians. According to her, William Grant Still's work is "now performed or broadcast on the radio more than 40,000 times a year." Still's music is now regularly heard on WRTI, Philadelphia's classical and jazz station. With this renewed interest, books and articles that share his inspiring story continue to be written. ■

You are invited to join

## Washington Square Citizens League

Washington Square Citizens League is a nonprofit organization with more than 140 members, most of whom live in Hopkinson House.

Membership Fee: $10 per year.

If you are not a member and would like to join, contact Susan Tomita at (215) 925-8464, or susan.tomita@gmail.com, or find a link to the membership form at https://thehopkinsonhouse.com/activities/

# For Sale by Allan Domb Real Estate

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# Apples and Pears!

Chefs' Corner

**Jane Hickman**

Although apples and pears are available year-round, fresh, local varieties are abundant in the Mid-Atlantic region in the fall. Eating both apples and pears is a good way to keep fruit in your diet when other fresh fruit is unavailable. To keep apples crisp, I store them in the refrigerator, but I leave pears out to ripen. The recipes below are simple to make, taking little time and no special or expensive ingredients. ■

*Note: If you have a favorite recipe, we would love to test it and put it in this column. Send your recipes or requests to jhickman@upenn.edu. Thank you!*

## Pork with Chunky Applesauce

*Serves 4. 258 calories per serving. Based on recipe by Ann Pittman.*

### Ingredients

- ¾ teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 pound pork tenderloin, trimmed and cut crosswise into 12 pieces
- 2 tablespoons canola or other vegetable oil, divided
- 1 Gala apple, cored and chopped
- 1 Granny smith apple, cored and chopped
- ¾ cup water
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Fresh parsley leaves (optional)

### Directions

1. Combine ½ teaspoon salt, garlic powder, paprika, and pepper. Sprinkle evenly over both sides of pork.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon oil to pan and swirl to coat. Add pork to pan; cook two minutes on each side or until desired degree of doneness. Remove from pan and cover with foil to keep warm.
3. Add remaining tablespoon oil to pan (do not wipe pan clean) and swirl to coat. Add apples and ¾ cup of water; cover and cook for six minutes or until apples are tender.
4. Uncover and stir in ¼ teaspoon salt, sugar, and cinnamon; cook two minutes or until apple is soft and most of the liquid evaporates to become syrupy, stirring occasionally. Serve pork with apple mixture; top with parsley if using.

## Baked Pears

*Serves 8. 110 calories per serving.*

### Ingredients

- 4 medium pears, peeled, halved, and cored
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ½ cup finely crushed gingersnaps
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Place the pear halves, cut side up, in a 12" x 7½" x 2" baking dish. Drizzle the orange juice over the pears.
3. In a small bowl, combine the gingersnaps, walnuts, and butter. Sprinkle over the pears.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the fruit is tender.

*For an excellent dessert, add a scoop of vanilla ice cream.*

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