

# Society Meetings in 2013

James Brazel and John O. Senior

In 2013 the Society held eight public meetings featuring informative presentations on a variety of topics, seven of them at the Easttown Library and Information Center in Berwyn, PA. The June meeting was held at Historic Yellow Springs. The Society has no regular meetings in July, August, or December.

Program announcements for 2013 were regularly listed on the Tredyffrin Township TV Bulletin Board. And in this year, for the first time in several years, we were able to have meeting announcements published in the *Main Line Suburban Life* newspaper, which resulted in a marked increase in attendance, several times reaching the capacity of the meeting room.

A number of of the programs were video-recorded by Mr. Gene Donahue of Tredyffrin Township TV for later broadcast. A link to the program schedule for viewing these programs, as well as some from previous years, can be found on the Society's website.

The meeting schedule for 2013 by month, subject, and presenter(s):

**January: Annual Meeting, led by J. Michael Morrison, President, and John O. Senior, Vice-President.**

Official Society business was conducted (elections, etc.), and informative reports were delivered on the Society's various activities, programs, and initiatives.

**February: "Tredyffrin Easttown History Quarterly Articles and Scenes Revisited: New Images And Insights from Members' Research" by James Brazel and Roger Thorne**

The Society's recent Digital Conversion Project provided its volunteer workers with the opportunity to read closely many interesting articles on local history from earlier issues. It was particularly evident to the reviewers that, over the almost seventy year time span (1937-2005) of the reviewed issues, great improvement had occurred in the quality of image reproduction in the *History Quarterly*. This suggests that improved quality images might be added as identified supplements to the original articles.

This program featured newly discovered (some quite old) photos related to previous *Quarterly* topics such as the "Swedesford" of Swedesford Road, the varying face of the Great Valley transportation corridor, the border with Upper Merion at "County Line Road," "EitherCoe," and "Maple Station." Surviving local examples of successful use of that difficult building material the "Easttown Boulder" were shown. Jim also provided a sound movie of the last PRR steam locomotive train run through Berwyn on the Main Line.



Chester Valley RR Maple Station at County Line Rd. *Courtesy C. Herbert Fry*



Washington's Headquarters.  
*Courtesy VFNHP*

**March: "Valley Forge National Historical Park in 2013 and Beyond" by Kate Hammond**

Valley Forge National Historical Park Superintendent Kate Hammond presented an informative overview of the park, their management goals and philosophy, and upcoming projects and initiatives. She allowed time for questions and discussion, and provided some useful handouts (park brochures, trail maps, volunteer information, etc.).

**April: "Fred Wagner: Pennsylvania Impressionist Painter & Port Kennedy Native" by Cyndy Drue and Susan Brendlinger Smith**

Two sisters, Cyndy Drue and Susan Brendlinger Smith, narrated a slide show of paintings by their great grand uncle, Fred Wagner, and told his story based on the research they did for the publication of his biography in 2011. Wagner was a highly-regarded student of Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and later taught there, too. His oil paintings depict railroad stations, ports, canals, parks, bridges, and many familiar places like Logan Circle and Rittenhouse Square. His work spans the years 1880 to 1940 and serves in part as historical documentation of the Philadelphia area's industrial growth.



Cyndy (with book) and Susan.  
*Courtesy John O. Senior*

**May: “A Look into the Archives of the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society” by J. Michael Morrison**

The TEHS Archives and Special Collections was the recipient of numerous 2012 gifts relating to the history of our area. Over thirty new photographs were donated to the collection, as well as interesting items of printed matter, maps, and books. The largest gift was the collection of memorabilia saved by Mabel Davis and donated by her son, former Easttown Township Manager Gene Williams. The photograph of her 1932 senior class, on the annual trip to Washington, D.C. (see page 131, item 8), suggests a time when such events were commemorated with formal poses and one’s best clothes. The Society thanks all these donors for thinking of history.

Michael also shared some images and stories about his grandfather “Slim” Morrison and the local PECO power line, as well as a collection of historic photos from the 1917-1952 timeframe when the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts offered a summer painting program at Yellow Springs.

**June: “Field Trip to Historic Yellow Springs” led by J. Michael Morrison**

The 2013 Annual Member Excursion took us to Historic Yellow Springs. We convened in the recently renovated Washington Building on Art School Road. The event began with a presentation by John Shaw on the history of the Village from 1722 until the present day, followed by two different guided walking tours of the buildings and grounds led by docents Tom Lutz and Phil Rossomando, appropriate for different interests and abilities. We reconvened in the Washington Building for refreshments, including delicious tea sandwiches and a special seasonal cocktail, the “Lemon Spring.”



Historic Yellow Springs. *Courtesy John O. Senior*

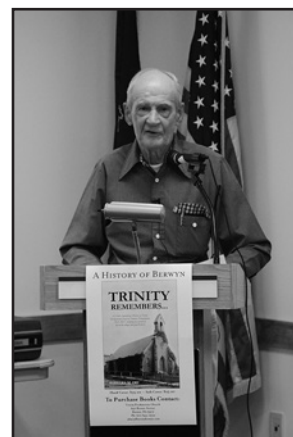
**September: “Trinity Presbyterian Church: 150 Years” by C. Herbert Fry**

Herb discussed the long and rich history of this venerable church in Berwyn, well-documented in the recently released book *Trinity Remembers...* originally written by his late wife Barbara, and completed by Herb in her memory. Herb signed copies of the book after the meeting.

**October: “Stone Houses: Traditional Homes of R. Brognard Okie” by James Garrison**

The middle region of the eastern seaboard is a particularly rich area for the study of traditional building in masonry, and one of the most interesting practitioners was Richardson Brognard Okie, Jr. His combination of high and low styles made the later revival architecture both richer and more accessible to people from inside and far beyond the original boundaries of the region.

From his early work in the Colonial Revival style, relying on applied ornament as well as creative solid geometry, he moved to an even more personal style with less ornament. For a small office, Okie produced an enormous quantity of work, hundreds of houses. There is no material more local to its source than structural building stone. It was the principal material in Okie’s architecture, and provided the most tangible links to place and history. His architecture, and the related work of his predecessors and successors is part of a continuous tradition of building relating local materials and inspiration to universal principals. The program was very well attended and Jim signed copies of his recently published book afterwards.



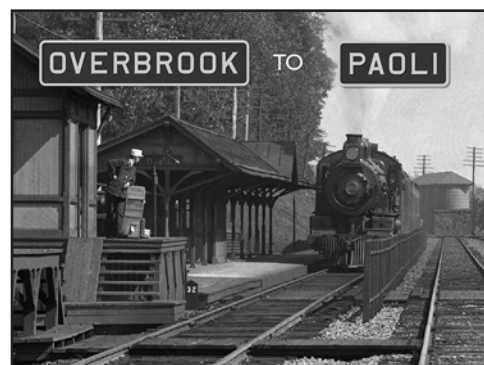
C. Herbert Fry  
*Courtesy John O. Senior*



Okie’s Hillside Farm. *Courtesy James Garrison*

**November: “The Pennsylvania Railroad Stations of the Main Line from Overbrook to Paoli” by Greg Prichard**

How did the “Main Line” get its name? Was Stauffer train station really at the 1876 Centennial Exposition? Could it be that the most historically intact Pennsylvania Railroad station of the 19th century is in Easttown Township? On November 17, local historian Greg Prichard spoke to the Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society about the historic train stations of the Main Line, encompassing all stations between Overbrook and Paoli with a special emphasis on those in Tredyffrin and Easttown. The history of each station was discussed, as well as their current conditions and future plans, and how neighborhood preservation efforts have helped them from disrepair and, in some cases, destruction.



Arriving at St. Davids station (excerpt from larger image). *Courtesy of Radnor Historical Society*