



Volume 53 Number 4

June 2017

\$10

TREDYFFRIN EASTTOWN HISTORY QUARTERLY



Convergence: A Near-Catastrophe over the Main Line Airport, June 25, 1939

2015 Gifts to the TEHS Archives and Special Collections

Katharine Wentworth Ruschenberger
and the Justice Bell



The *History Quarterly* is published by the

**Tredyffrin Easttown
Historical Society**
720 First Avenue
Berwyn, PA 19312

A 501(c)(3) organization

Board of Directors

Officers

John O. Senior, *President*
Roger Thorne, *VP & Chair*
Bill Keltz, *Secretary*
Tim Lander, *Treasurer*

Bonnie Haughey
Gretchen Kiernan
Cheryl Leibold
Michael Morrison
Bart Van Valkenburgh

Editor

John O. Senior

Associate Editors

Heidi Sproat
Larry & Joyce DeYoung

Distribution

Cheryl Leibold
Gretchen Kiernan
Bill Keltz

Subscription

A subscription to the *History Quarterly* is included with each membership in the Society. One copy per membership is mailed to the member household address.

Annual Membership Dues

Patron: \$125
Family: \$40
Student: \$24

Please visit our website for membership applications, details on upcoming programs, and other valuable information.

www.tehistory.org

ISSN: 1938-5676

From the Editors

Once again, we are pleased to present Society Archivist Cheryl Leibold's annual report on additions to the collection that have been recently received, in this case during the year 2015. She presented this information at the Society's May 2016 public meeting, and the written version has been patiently anticipating its proper place in the *Quarterly*.

Another piece that has been waiting in the queue is Roger Thorne's remarkable story about an aviation disaster that was narrowly and very fortunately avoided in the skies over the Main Line Airport in 1939. His thorough research and story-telling skills add another fascinating chapter to the growing story surrounding that historic location.

As we prepare for our Annual Members Excursion in early July to Washington Memorial Chapel in Valley Forge National Historical Park, we are pleased to present Susanna Gold's story about Katharine Ruschenberger and the Justice Bell. This material was originally published in a booklet in April 2016, by the Parish History and Archives Committee of St. David's (Radnor) Church, and we appreciate being able to

republish it here in the *Quarterly*. It seems particularly appropriate for this issue since the Justice Bell resides in the Bell Tower at the Chapel, and we will be visiting it in July. Several recent photos of the Chapel and the Justice Bell are included on both sides of the back cover.

Lastly, we were saddened by the passing of several of our older former members, and include a brief remembrance of them in this issue.



History or Mystery?

The Case of the Missing Videotape

In July 1996, Herb Fry published a *History Quarterly* article about the June 1952 celebration of Berwyn's 75th Anniversary. Herb described a videotape (which was itself produced from the original movie film) that recorded the Sunday parade down Lancaster Avenue. It would be nice to think that the videotape has survived in the TEHS archives. Alas, it has not yet made it there, and the mystery of its whereabouts remains unsolved. We have received one possible lead, but so far it has not resulted in us obtaining the tape. Does anyone have a copy of the video, or know where it might be obtained? The Society would be eager to transfer it to a digital medium, and also provide a copy to the owner or donor. Please contact us with any information that might help us locate this historic movie. Email: archives@tehistory.org

Trash or Treasure?

It is not uncommon for us to hear from or about people who are in possession of some items that they may be uncertain how to value, but for which they would like to find a new home.

If you (or people you know) have photographs, drawings, maps, letters, documents, books, or other items of possible (or definite) historic interest that might be donated to the Society, please visit the Archives page of our website (<http://www.tehistory.org/archives.html>) and review our Collecting Policy, or contact us directly for more information. Email: archives@tehistory.org

Tredyffrin Easttown History Quarterly

Volume 53, Number 4

June 2017

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 4 Convergence: A Near-Catastrophe over the Main Line Airport,
June 25, 1939
Roger D. Thorne
- 16 2015 Gifts to the TEHS Archives and Special Collections
Cheryl Leibold
- 25 Katharine Wentworth Ruschenberger
(1853-1943)
Compiled by Susanna Gold

DEPARTMENTS

- 34 **In Memoriam:**
George and Jean Harlow
Len Gottliebse
- 35 **Notes and Comments**
- 36 **Support Recognition**

Cover Descriptions

Front Cover: Boeing 314 *California Clipper* (NC18602) in flight over San Francisco Bay, with the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz Island visible below. This was the sister ship of the *Dixie Clipper* involved in the near-miss “convergence” over the Main Line Airport. *Photograph courtesy of Silodrome.*
INSIDE: Washington Memorial Chapel Sign. © 2017 courtesy of John O. Senior

Back Cover: UPPER: The Washington Memorial Chapel and Bell Tower.
LOWER LEFT: Interior view of the chapel. LOWER RIGHT: Detail of the decorative stonework on the Bell Tower.
INSIDE: Justice Bell and Bell Tower images, June 2017. © 2017 courtesy of John O. Senior

Copyright © 2017 Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society. All Rights Reserved. Authors retain copyright for their contributions. This publication or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher. Please contact the Society for permission to use any content in this publication. The Society does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information in these articles. The Society retains the right to republish submitted material.



The Justice Bell, with the yoke removed, June 2017.
Courtesy of John O. Senior

JUSTICE BELL YOKE REPLACEMENT PROJECT



Cast in 1915, this Liberty Bell Replica toured cities and towns in Pennsylvania in support of Women's Suffrage.

After 100 years, cracks have developed in the bell's yoke, causing the bell to sag.

Thanks to grants from the Pennsylvania State Society DAR and the National Society DAR, the yoke will be replaced.



In addition, all support hardware will be sand-blasted and painted, the display carriage will be refinished, and new interpretive signage will tell the story of this American treasure.

Informative sign, located near the bell, describing the yoke replacement project. *Photo courtesy of John O. Senior*



The Justice Bell may be found in the entryway at the base of the Bell Tower, at Washington Memorial Chapel. *June 2017 photos courtesy of John O. Senior*



Scenes at Washington Memorial Chapel, Valley Forge, 2017.