

Landscape

Volume 33, Number 1, 2015





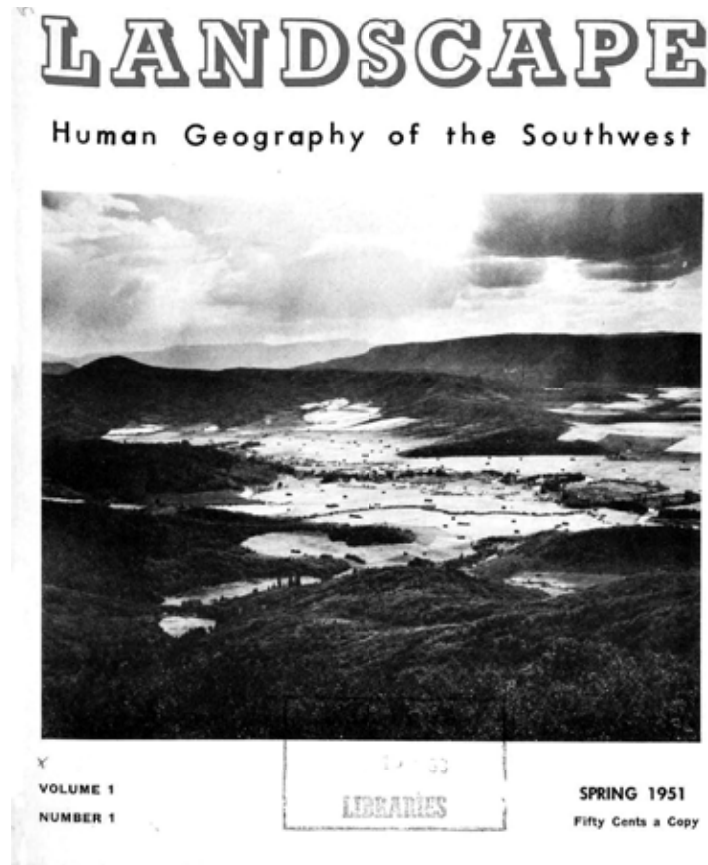
The articles in this volume were produced by the PennDesign graduate course in Cultural Landscape Studies, Spring 2015

Course Professor: Randall F. Mason

Editor: Angelina R. Jones

Editor's Note

Angelina R. Jones



This volume is both a tribute to and an extension of J.B. Jackson's *Landscape* magazine, which he edited and published from its founding in 1951 until 1968. During this seventeen-year period, Jackson used his publication to bring the art of reading landscapes to a diverse audience of academics in a variety of fields including geography, landscape architecture, planning, ecology, and history, but also wrote to appeal to the uninitiated layperson. Reading the landscape entails both experience and observation to interpret the patterns that shape the quotidian landscape. The writings published in *Landscape* touched on all aspects of the human environment and worked to define the interdisciplinary field of landscape studies.

The articles in this volume were written using the methods for reading the cultural landscape modeled in *Landscape* magazine. We chose to write about Philadelphia as a city we all knew well as residents, as temporary as that residency would be for most of us as students. We made our shared city the thematic

scaffolding for our issue of *Landscape* because our familiarity with the city could be a tool for coping with its complexity. We had all inhabited the landscapes of Philadelphia long enough to form narratives, construct boundaries, and perceive particulars that form the whole. While we share this scaffolding and the common thread of Jackson's *Landscape*, there is a great deal of variety in the topics and perspectives presented in the following pages. This variety comes both from the myriad of ways we move through the city (walking, biking, driving, etc.) and by our own individual areas of expertise as authors. The collective portrait of Philadelphia that results is multifaceted, intricate, yet necessarily incomplete. Philadelphia, as with every cultural landscape, is a living organism that is constantly evolving. What we present in the following pages is a snapshot of Philadelphia at a moment in time, just as J.B. Jackson's *Landscape* magazine was filled with snapshots of the cultural landscapes of his time.

Landscape

Volume 33, Number 1, 2015

Cover: Sanjana Muthe

Angelina R. Jones	1	Editor's Note
Randall F. Mason	4	Philadelphia is Many Landscapes
Sanjana Muthe	6	Neighborhoods of Philadelphia
Kyle Toth	8	Farewell, Amazon Woman The Long Affair of the Boyd Theater's Demolition
Madeleine Helmer	13	A Trolley Route in Fairmount Park
Andrew Cushing	15	Philadelphia's Porches
Sarah Moses	18	River That Flows Two Ways The Delaware River, Camden, and Philadelphia



RedArrowDong



Andrew Cushing

Joseph C. Mester	21	The Philadelphian Grid
Chuhan Zheng	23	Igniting Transformation The Mural Arts Program in Philadelphia
Alice Gilmore	26	The Philly Fragrance
Grace Meloy	28	What Makes the Gayborhood Gay?
Sang Bae	31	Chain-Link Fences of Walnut Hill
Andrea Haley	35	Designing to Wait
Haoyu Wang	37	How Do “High-Speed” Mural Landscapes Present the Characteristics of Philly?
Charlette Caldwell	40	The Black Bottom
Angelina R. Jones	43	Importing and Exporting the ‘Greene Country Towne’

Philadelphia is Many Landscapes

Randall F. Mason

The cultural landscape of any city is layered deep. Different moments of the place's history are exposed or erased. Different layers of the built and natural environment are logically arranged and predictable; others idiosyncratically found or barely scrutable. Cultural landscapes are marvelous tangles of the expected and the unexpected, shaped variously by design and politics and common sense and mistake. Peirce Lewis and others challenge us to read landscapes like a book, suggest they are authored and purposeful. Other observers marvel at the randomness, disturbances, and conflicts in cultural landscapes. Such are the delights of city dwelling and cultural landscape study.

The interplay of formalities and informalities – this is one of the first ways I begin to appreciate the places I live (whether for years or for a week of travel). As starting points, public spaces and memorials are two of my favored landscape types. They make and mark space in grand and subtle ways. Look, as you walk or drive or scan a map, at the public spaces and memorials of the city. As individual works of art and design they impress; recent public space renovations like Dilworth, Love and Rail Parks all the more so. Grand gestures endowed to the city by the Association of Public Art or other institutions; window box displays and weed gardens unintentionally sown in the gutters of unswept residential streets. What do these all tell us as a collection? Or as a system?

I've come to appreciate the public spaces of Philly as a stupendous combination of the made and the found. Woven together in daily walks, regular runs, and occasional bike rides, the structured public spaces present a puzzle of experiences and rarely fit together easily – the systems of parks/parkways connect more or less randomly to the relentless grid of streets.

Try to find human-scale or unscripted aspects of cataclysmically made ponderous parks like Independence Mall and Ben Franklin Parkway, our urban-renewal parks—you'll work hard to notice them. More delightful and populist are the numerous

but irregular little alleys and stoops that make up the less-celebrated public-space networks of most neighborhoods between the rivers. The alleys are great curiosities, rarely more than 6-8' wide, somewhat public and somewhat private, locked or unlocked, used as breezeways or dumps, sitting rooms or gardens. Philly's memorials display the same richness: the grandeur and loudness of the formal memorials contrast with the didactic plaques and histories-on-a-stick that quietly celebrate *genius loci* and seem like they want to sneak up and catch you by surprise.

Vernacular memorials, here as everywhere, have become part of the public realm too. Each marking a tragic story in quotidian places: a tragic accident was memorialized on Walnut Street Bridge, my walk to work, flowers and candles and wreaths doing their slow disappearing act over weeks of weathering, reminding me of the disturbing story of a young man dispatched to the street below by a careless driver.

When the formal and informal combine, wonderful and vexatious cultural landscapes like the Rocky steps can emerge. You might call them the steps up to the PMA entrance, but tourists, runners and fans of Rocky call them the Rocky steps. Before running up, look across the road to the George Washington monument (don't run across, it belongs to traffic). Take the first few steps, fast or slow, and the song starts playing in your head (Bill Conti's Rocky theme—now you're hearing it). By the time you make it up to the top, you turn and gaze – in classical landscape fashion – at the sweep of Philadelphia, City Hall straight ahead with the rest of the city as backdrop. Depending on your mood, you might raise your arms à la Rocky and cheer yourself; you might turn, swing through the magnificent courtyard of the PMA, and saunter inside to quietly contemplate Wyeths, Demuths, or European landscapes. These experiences and possibilities mark a public landscape equal parts grand and quotidian, formal and informal, made and found. The parts remain unreconciled, even awkward and contentious, and therefore inexhaustibly rich.



Neighborhoods of Philadelphia

Sanjana Muthe

There is a reason why only a few cities in the world achieve the status of being known as great cities. They are famous for historic events that they contributed in bringing about or their commercial importance to the world. There is something that each of these cities has done right, for we teach our children about these cities in school. A city however, is a civilization of people at its roots; a place where people of varied races and social statuses live together, and when such a variety of people come together, a vibrant landscape is almost always guaranteed. Experiencing such cities in person allows us to go beyond the books and peel off every layer that contributes to the landscape of the city.

Philadelphia is mostly known to people all over the world as the first capital of the United States of America, for the Liberty Bell and the Independence Hall. Living

in this city, using its streets and observing its people, their interactions with each other and their way of life brings a fresh perspective on the landscape that Philadelphia represents.

Moving to Philadelphia all the way from the other side of the world was an entirely new experience for me. The day I landed, an old friend who herself had moved here just a few days ago for a new job, drove me to her temporary home. That first drive in the city, I did not think much about the directions, I just soaked in the views. At a distance I could see the tall glass facades of buildings which I assumed was the main business district; “it’s called Center City,” she said, “we will be moving there next week.” When the car stopped, I was in a lane so narrow that there was barely room for a bike to pass by. It was one of the by lanes off a major street



Sanjana Muthe

in South Philadelphia. On both sides were really pretty exposed brick row houses, very similar in construction yet unique in their own ways; some with beautiful flower beds, the different colors of the frames of doors and windows posed a playful contrast and the bright red, blue, and white of the American flag stood out proud on one of the doors.

The next few days were spent exploring a few blocks of the neighborhood- the pizza place around the corner, the church and school down the street, the neighborhood grocery store and some Chinese shops and food joints. It came across as a mixed-race neighborhood probably having a wide range of economic classes too. There were those who drove to work every morning and those that hung around in some of the visibly shoddy streets all day; a couple of kids played out in the lane in the evenings where there was no disturbance of traffic while their mothers chatted on their front steps sharing a smoke. The nights somehow brought with them an unsafe feeling to this neighborhood. Thanks to this neighborhood though, I knew exactly what my professors meant when they mentioned “the Philadelphia row-house.”

Not very far to the North-East of here is “Center City.” A stark contrast to the row-house neighborhood, this area is defined by its tall buildings, formal skirts and dark suits. But give it a second look and it may find a definition in its vibrant culture of numerous restaurants and bars. Beyond that you may also begin to see the food carts and road side stalls selling hats, a street musician and a homeless guy sitting in a corner. The real beauty of this picture strikes you when you see a middle-aged gentleman, with otherwise a serious look on his face of contemplating a board meeting, enjoying a cheap meal at his favorite food cart, laughing away with the vendor.

Living in the corner apartment on the nineteenth floor of one of the high-rises here offers yet another perspective on the activities on the streets of Center City; much like J.B. Jackson viewing the landscape from an airplane. A landscape enthusiast could spend hours looking through the window at people hurrying in and out of offices, a group protesting peacefully for some cause at a street corner or the opposite office window that a bored employee is looking through. It feels so much like watching a movie that sometimes compels you to emotionally invest in its characters. As opposed to the row-house neighborhood, a high-rise apartment building offers very few opportunities of interaction

with neighbors; maybe only when the fire alarm goes off and you run out of the apartment only to find your neighbor calmly telling you to go back in since “it’s always a false alarm.”

To the west beyond the Schuylkill is yet another Philadelphia; one that is bursting with youth. The energy radiating from the campus of Drexel or the University of Pennsylvania is infectious. The entire neighborhood feels the excitement of a new school year, the celebration of festivals and the tension of finals week. All this activity and youthful energy is an amazing juxtaposition especially with the campus of UPenn, with its majestic old buildings. With its row houses and “twins” converted to modest apartment buildings, this neighborhood screams student life. I however have come to see it as a representation of the success of maintaining a well-balanced life, juggling studies and daily chores; of kids growing up to be responsible for themselves- the real step into adulthood. There is more to this University City neighborhood which makes for a link between West Philadelphia which is home to a number of families and the business district of Philadelphia. It stands there every day inspiring kids passing through with their parents, motivating them to walk through the campus one day as students.

Though these neighborhoods are different from each other in their communities and types of buildings, over the months their distinctions have only blurred out as I acquainted myself better with them. Philadelphia is a combination of all of them, united by the same “grid” that runs through them. They remind you that being a part of a community itself is all about having a unique character even as you blend with the crowd like the Comcast tower in Center City- a building that blends in with her neighbors but stands out from afar prompting me that I’m close to home when returning from a trip out of town.

Sanjana Murthe



Farewell, Amazon Woman

The Long Affair of the Boyd Theater's Demolition

Kyle Toth



The Irvin R. Glazer Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia

The Boyd Auditorium on Opening Day, 1928

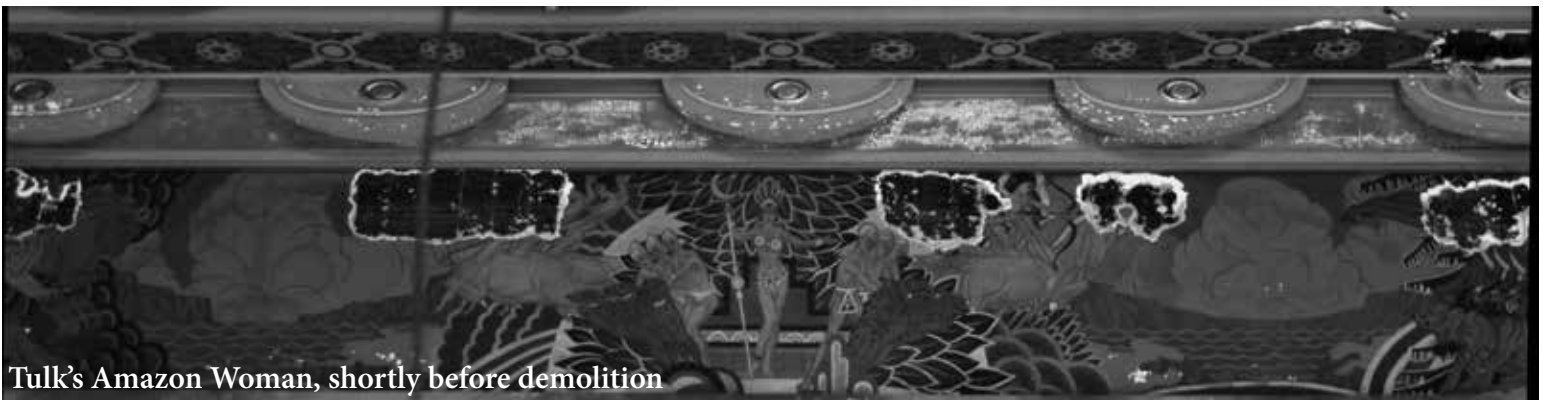
*I'm just a woman, a lonely woman
Waiting on a weary shore*

*I'm just a woman that's only human
One you should be sorry for*

“The new Boyd Theatre, fronting on Chestnut Street west of 19th, is one of the most artistic playhouses in America. Designed in modern French style, lavishly decorated, handsomely furnished and superlatively comfortable, its interior offers a delight to the eye...”

A simple search on cinematreasure.org results in 273 movie theaters listed in Philadelphia. Of these, nineteen are currently open, and fifteen are showing movies. 121 have been demolished. Of the other 133 still standing, two have current plans for restoration. Some now function in a dilapidated state as churches or warehouses or encase newly built retail and drug stores. Many others remain empty and abandoned – occupied vacant lots scattered throughout Philadelphia. Within a few weeks of this article, the Boyd Theater, the last of Philadelphia's great movie palaces, will become the 122nd theater demolished.

Built in 1928 for Alexander R. Boyd, the theater was designed by prominent Philadelphia theater architects Hoffman and Henon, who were responsible for an additional 46 theaters throughout the city. Known for lush, elaborate theaters, the architects of the Boyd employed the new “modern French” style exhibited at the 1925 Paris Exposition of Decorative Arts, bringing its relative restraint and broad proportions to the Philadelphia entertainment industry. Seating 2500, the theater surpassed most other Philadelphia “movie palaces,” a denomination that required a minimum of 1000 seats. It also brought new extremes of comfort, with the newest technology for heating and air conditioning (boasting “an ice machine that will cool air and water”), and, for the first time on the east coast, five rows of particularly spacious and luxurious seating at the back of the orchestra. Though built as a movie theater, the Boyd was prepared to host all types of theatrical performance, equipped with a pit, organ, and a dozen dressing rooms.



Tulk's Amazon Woman, shortly before demolition

Opening on Christmas Day, the Boyd was dedicated to “The Triumph of Women,” with allegorical images of women included throughout the auditorium’s decoration scheme. Attending visitors through the following decades passed through elegant lobbies and foyers of elaborate etched glass and custom made carpets, entering into the grand auditorium. With perfect sightlines from every seat, all attendees of the theater were treated to an unimpeded view of Alfred Tulk’s Amazon Woman, painted above the proscenium, from whom radiates a series of grand golden arches.

With all of the recent press considering the Boyd’s demolition, an account of its progression may seem a bit redundant. Still, for the purposes of this article, it proves useful to review. Despite its impressive list of first-runs and movie premieres, the Boyd has, for decades, been a controversial preservation topic. Originally run by Warner (then Stanley Warner, then RKO Stanley Warner), the theater was sold to the Sam Eric Corporation (Later SamEric, later Sameric) in 1971. Under Sameric (and, after 1988, United Artists), the Boyd continued to screen first-runs, and premiered such Philadelphiacentric films like Rocky III and Jonathon Demme’s 1993 Philadelphia. United Artists ran the theater until its closure in 2002.

It was a morning, long before dawn

Through its subsequent owners and development proposals, the Boyd has, since its closure, been under constant threat of demolition. Combatting this threat, the heroic (if staunch) nonprofit organization Friends of the Boyd, Inc., spearheaded by attorney Howard Haas, has actively garnered support for the theater’s restoration and preservation. The following decade of owners, proposals, and failed development plans is so convoluted and dizzying that they would do little to recite bit by bit – but more important than the individual points, the general confusion and indecision is the noteworthy aspect to mention.

Though it continued screening movies until 2002, the debate of the Boyd’s demolition began rather controversially as early as 1987, when the Philadelphia Historical Commission deemed the interiors of the theater historic landmarks. However, in 1991 the Pennsylvania Supreme Court declared that the protection of private property through such designations went against a clause in the state constitution, and was thus, for a two year period, removed from the registry of historic places until the case was reheard and the decision reversed. Though ultimately amended, this ambiguity towards the buildings preservation persisted until today’s ongoing demolition. The case was an important factor for other buildings being saved by preservation ordinances – but it ultimately did little for the theater that instigated the debate.

Without a warning I found he was gone

Though hardly pleased by the auditorium’s demolition, Friends of the Boyd takes solace in the fact that the exterior façade, currently the only portion considered a landmark by the Philadelphia Historical Commission, will be preserved and restored in future site development. In addition to this, the mirrored Deco lobby and foyer of the theater are also slated to be saved and incorporated into current owner Pearl Property’s future building project. Appealing to the PHC for demolition on the grounds of financial hardship, the previous owners were able to reject the \$4.5 million offer (the current selling value of the theater) secured by the Friends of the Boyd and proceed with demolition. Pearl now acts under the “hardship” designation granted last year to iPic.

How could he do it, why should he do it He never done it before

The demolition of the Boyd raises an interesting question about the theater’s cultural landscape – one that such an article could only begin to address. The

theater is located at the corner of 19th and Chestnut Streets, adjacent to a vacant lot and a GAP retail store (that at one point held additional Sameric theaters, already demolished). The area falls under various arbitrary considerations, like the Chestnut Street shopping district, the Rittenhouse Square district, etc., but the important point is that the Boyd is currently surrounded by successful retail spaces, restaurants, and affluent apartment buildings. However, since its closure, the Boyd has become a bit (though that is a deliberate understatement) of an eyesore. According to PlanPhilly reporter Jared Brey, residents living nearby the Boyd consider it a “blight that attracts vandals and vermin.” Brey cites a local business owner that laments “bums urinating out front,” attesting to the theater’s timely demolition and redevelopment. One rather embittered editorialist, writing for PhillyMag.com in 2014, was allured by iPiC’s previously proposed (and since discarded) eight screen theater intended for the site, with “reclining leather seats, pillows and blankets... and handcrafted cocktails.” He testifies that the state of the Boyd was nothing less than repulsive, claiming that “the floor was stickier than the floor at the late Forum porno theater, because they actually cleaned the floor at the Forum.” Now, leaving out any assumption that this statement makes about the other theaters the writer attends, it leaves a particularly distasteful impression of the space (though he may be swayed by the fact that the Boyd did show pornos for a brief period before being bought by Sam Eric). Apologies to you, Amazon Woman. Our embittered editorialist argues that the Boyd can no longer stand as anything but “home to a large colony of diseased rats” that he witnessed on his last visit to the theater before its closure, along with “one man masturbating and another man shooting up in the seats.”

*Am I blue, am I blue
Ain't these tears in these eyes telling you*

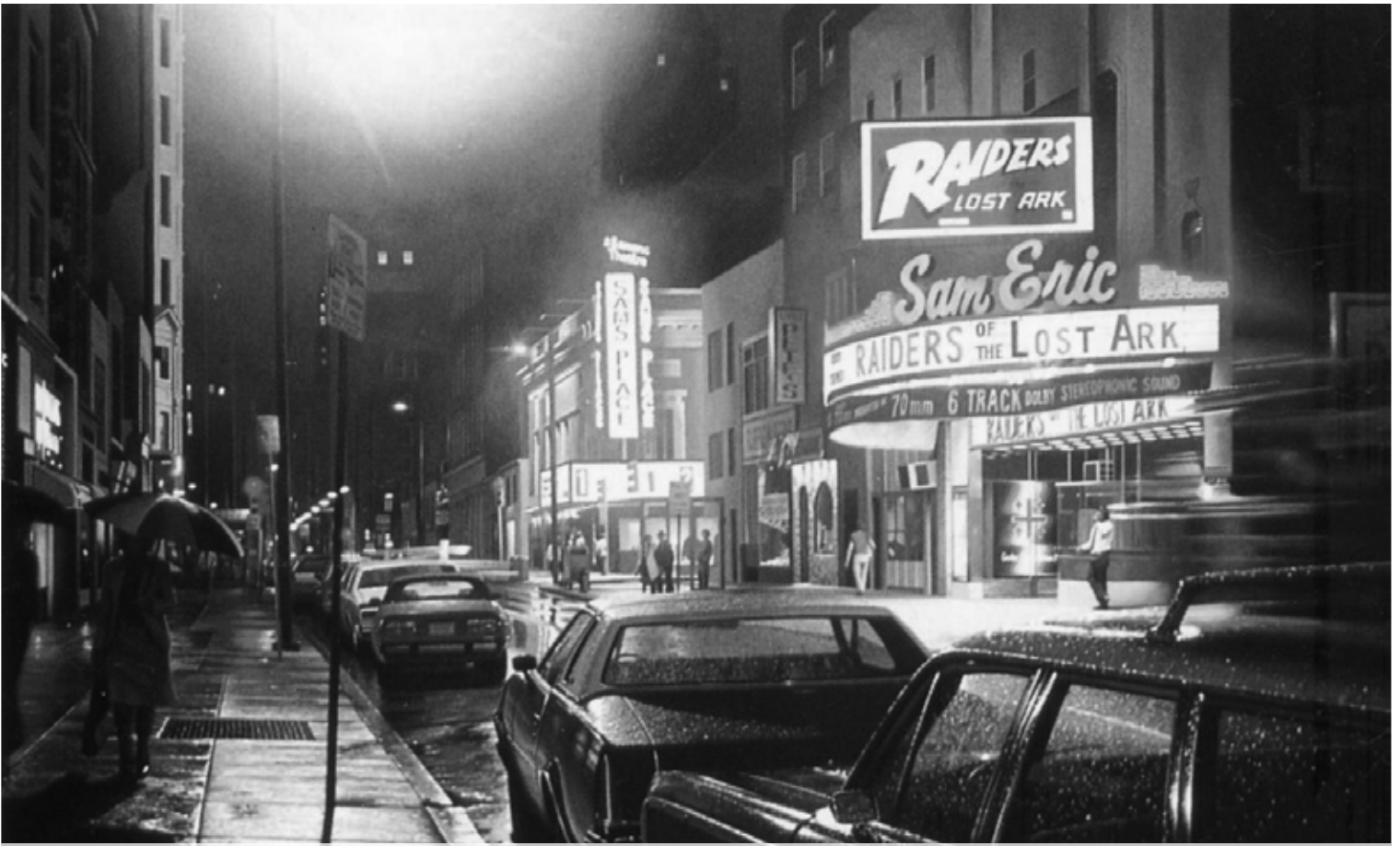
This is, of course, unacceptable. But it would require an extreme lack of both imagination and common sense to believe that this is what the Friends of the Boyd was hoping to sustain and preserve. As they explain on their website, the Friends wished to accomplish “the restoration and protection of center city Philadelphia’s last surviving movie palace, the Boyd Theatre at 1908 Chestnut Street. We will strive for programming which will include operating a film series, public tours, exhibits, and community access.” While this is somewhat vague, they elaborate by listing the more specific goals:

“The stagehouse will be expanded for live performances. The theater should be equipped with two projectors that can project in 35 & 70 MM each, surround sound, and a huge screen. As the original organ is played often in a Delaware high school, an electronic organ should be acquired. A film program should consist of classic films, Film Festival films, and Hollywood style premieres.” There’s no denying that the Friends of the Boyd were demanding in their exacting and period-centric desires for the Boyd’s refurbishment. They can’t be blamed for a zealous interest in recreation, and they do allow for one of the most important elements of its potential restoration/adaption for other uses: specifically, live performances.

In this light, it is hard to object to a beautiful multi-purpose theater in Philadelphia’s center city. Such theaters, of course, exist and thrive along Broad Street, and critics claim that the distance from the traditional row of theaters would discourage theatergoers from attending events. This is, frankly, nonsense. A similarly repurposed theater, The Trocadero at 10th and Arch, continues to host a full schedule of well-attended events. While the Troc’s concerts and comedy shows may not appeal to traditional theatergoers, the Walnut Street Theater, boasted as America’s Oldest, continues to flourish in its 206th season even further from Broad Street at 8th and Walnut.

*How can you ask me am I blue
Why, wouldn't you be too
If each plan with your man
Done fell through*

With close proximity to both the Liberty Plaza shopping district and the restaurants and bars of Rittenhouse Square, The Boyd held a particularly advantageous spot for a revitalized and re-purposed theater. The argument, at this point, is futile. It is only unfortunate that residents and business owners alike did not realize the potential of such a venue in their neighborhood and do more to restore it. The Boyd is a theater that, years (or even months) from now, the reader unenlightened to the theater and its plight will stumble across images of it and wonder, “How did we lose such a beautiful piece of Philadelphia’s history?” It is a question that we cannot answer now, and that they will most likely not be able to answer then. Should the Boyd be replaced by luxury apartments or a “4k digital cinema” with “servers at the push of a button,” the most luxurious and indulgent experience that the Boyd could have presented for today’s theatergoers has already been lost. Future residents of and visitors to Philadelphia will never know the drama and spectacle of a show at the Boyd.



View of the Sam Eric and its context

*There was a time
When I was his only one
But now I'm the sad and lonely
one...lonely*

So, where does this, as preservationists, as theatergoers, as residents and business owners, or as outside critics, leave us? Well, we will have the façade and the lobby of the Boyd. This is, to some extent, a consolation, but I cannot help but compare it to the Aldine Theater at 18th and Chestnut, that retains its original façade but is home to no more than a CVS Pharmacy. If this is the future of the Boyd, why bother? An active city is not some back lot studio of facades.

Theaters, like train stations and banks, have a very historically distinct style of architecture, and can often be picked out along a row of buildings for their classical colonnades or attenuated forms over the central marquee. It is almost embarrassing to preserve them as something completely untrue to their form. It's a dishonest and deceptive form of preservation, and I'm sure CVS would be much happier in its generic pillbox, instead of going through the trouble of refitting a building unfit for its use. The locals who will be pleased with the renovated and preserved exterior of the Boyd should really be ashamed for their lack of recognition of

its potential. If they are satisfied with the effects of the façade, they ought to imagine (though they clearly lack in these facilities) what the interior could have been, and could have done, for the community.

What of the two theaters mentioned as currently being restored? These are the Logan Theater, at 4732 N. Broad, and the Uptown Theater, at 2230 N. Broad (which readers might notice are significantly removed from center city). Both have rather promising plans of restoration and redevelopment, and enthusiasts can be hopeful for their reopening. It is very likely their distance from downtown that saved them, where "eyesores" have little chance of falling under the community's (and the property investors') radar. Let us be glad that progress is being made – that new development is taking place in existing structures suited for that purpose, and that not everyone has lost sight of the true definition of a luxurious entertainment experience.

*Was I gay, until today
Now he's gone, and we're through
Am I blue*

Lyrics taken from "Am I Blue," by Harry Askt and Grant Clark, written for Ethel Waters in On With the Show, one of the first musicals screened at the Boyd in 1929.



The Aldine Theater, now CVS

Further Reading:

Boyd Theater 1928 Opening Day Program,
friendsoftheboyd.com.

Brey, Jared. "Historical Commission Rejects Efforts to Save Boyd," PlanPhilly.com.

Fiorillo, Victor. "Is it Time to Tear Down the Boyd?"
Phillymag.com.

"Goals of the Friends of the Boyd,"
friendsoftheboyd.com

Geater, Mike, George Quirk, and Howard B. Haas,
"Boyd Theater,"
cinematreasures.org.

Kinerk, Michael D. and Dennis W. Wilhelm. Popcorn
Palaces: The Art Deco Movie Theatre Paintings of Davis
Cone (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001).

"Mission Statement of Friends of the Boyd,"
friendsoftheboyd.com.

A Trolley Route in Fairmount Park

Madeleine Helmer

Cutting a slim path between the heavy boughs of leafy trees, a trolley moves through the forest. Passengers sit and stand inside its two open cars, some hanging their heads and feet out the sides and into the sun as they are swiftly carried along. The wooden train passes under a stone bridge and by a long timber building, coming to a clearing and a simple concrete platform where men and women wait to board. After halting for new passengers, the trolley travels steadily away into the distance, following its narrow tracks and draping power line through the forest. Captured in 1946, this short soundless film clip documents the Fairmount Park trolley in its last year of operation. Now a brief video on the Internet, it offers a hazy view of the electric trolley line that wound through Philadelphia's principal park for nearly 50 years.

The Fairmount Park Transportation Company was incorporated in 1897 and operated until 1946. A line extending 8 ½ miles circled through West Fairmount Park with 16 stops, and a spur carried cars across the Schuylkill River on the Strawberry Mansion Bridge to a stop on the East Park at 33rd St. & Dauphin. Maps show how the trolley route was integrated into an intricate system of paths and features through West Fairmount Park. Its route circled the Park from the Strawberry Mansion Bridge, running alongside a bridle path and passing stone buildings and established mansions. In the wooded areas, the platforms were met by trails; one led down to a spring and then up to George's Hill. The trolley continued by the two picturesque Chamounix lakes in the north and turn back south to pass the Tennis House and its accompanying courts. As a 1915 "Descriptive Souvenir of Fairmount Park" indicates, the trolley brought many people from the city into the Park: "The grounds near Beechwood Park Trolley Station are well shaded and will accommodate about 1,000 persons. Two springs will be found in Reading thicket east of the Park trolley road. Those north of Glenside Park Trolley Station will accommodate about the same number of persons, with a spring, shelter and public comfort for women in Belmont Glen." On Saturdays during the summer, The Lemon Hill Association would "bring to Lemon Hill in trolley cars, large numbers of poor children from all sections of the city." Despite

Gerhard Salomon



this vibrancy, however, the Fairmount Park Transit Company filed for bankruptcy in 1915. The business was reorganized and it managed to continue successfully through the 1920s, but by the mid-1930s it slid back into ruin and was acquired by the city. Operating with worn equipment and at a time when people had little spending money, the trolley trundled on for about ten years until the end of World War II when it was finally decommissioned and its pieces auctioned off. Even though its trolley cars have long since been removed and the railroad ties lifted from the ground, this former transportation system can still be glimpsed in remnants on the park's forest floor.

The former trolley infrastructure is visible today in scattered remains throughout West Fairmount Park. Walking the quiet paths, one can come across traces of the once-thriving route. What was once a trolley platform is now a mound of earth with long broken slabs of concrete pushing up from the ground. Within an overgrown wood, two rows of trees appear unnaturally aligned as though to form an allée, suggesting the past presence of a nearby station or a landscaped pathway. Remains of bridge abutments and piers sidle the small ravines. The former Car Barn and Power Station are near the southern edge of the park at the bottom of Montgomery Drive, while to the north a remarkable tunnel cuts through a hillside, its masonry still revealing a masterful arrangement of fifteen brick segmental skewed arches. The bridge was once busy with a road overhead and passengers passing underneath, but today it sits quietly, sheltered within the forest's shadows.



Traveling through Fairmount Park today

Fairmount Park has always been transforming, and so have the methods for engaging with and moving through the Park. The park's many adaptations reflect Philadelphia's history of using the vast green space. When a fairground was erected for the Centennial Exposition of 1876, the Pennsylvania Railroad was extended to the site, horse car lines were connected to the local surroundings, and a narrow gauge steam railroad was established. Twenty years later, all but the horse car tracks had disappeared and an electric trolley line was laid. In 1957, the Schuylkill Expressway carved out the park's river boundary. Fairmount Park has continued to change, as an encroachment of housing developments, a new recycling plant and more sports fields have altered its surface. The electric trolley has long since disappeared, but the system's remnant structures are now a part of the park and a reminder of its persistent transformation.

Further Reading:

Bradley Maule, "The Prettiest Bridge to Nowhere", Hidden City, 8/27/2013, accessed March 2015 at <http://hiddencityphila.org/2013/08/the-prettiest-old-bridge-to-nowhere/>.

Fairmount Park Guard Pension Fund Association, *A Picturesque Scene Along Upper Wissahickon: A Descriptive Souvenir of Fairmount Park*, Philadelphia, Pa. (Philadelphia: Reichert Co., 1915).

Frederick A. Kramer, *Fairmount Park Transit: A Photographic Journey* (Flanders, NJ: Bells & Whistles, 1998).

Gerhard Salomon, "Philadelphia's Fairmount Park Trolley - 1946," Accessed March 2015 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwOLhY9TBRC>.

Jane Mork Gibson, "Fairmount Park", *Workshop of the World* (Oliver Evans Press, 1990), Accessed March 2015 at http://www.workshopoftheworld.com/fairmount_park/transport.html.

Philadelphia's Porches

Andrew Cushing

Depending on where you look in the City of Philadelphia, you may get the impression that porches are used solely for stashing bicycles, recycling bins, and furniture unfit to join the inside of the house. In fact, exploring the former streetcar suburbs of the city – especially West and North Philadelphia – and seeing the preponderance of cluttered porches makes one wonder how residents in porchless portions make do without such a popularized outdoor space. Of course the porch was, and in many neighborhoods remains, the quintessential and multifaceted architectural symbol of community. The front porch was responsible for catering to and shaping a generation of Philadelphians who, in the late nineteenth century, enjoyed newfound leisure time. Today, the porch continues to shape a changing city's population with the community ideals of its predecessors.

The addition of the front porch positively changed the greater Philadelphia landscape. It created a neighborhood feel to the industrial city, a quasi-communal space that, unlike the rest of the row home's interior spaces, offered sunlight, fresh air, and elevation from which to converse with passers-by. Historian and architect Alice Gray Read argued that in Mantua, a neighborhood in West Philadelphia, porches refocused people's attention from the singular facades to the

broader "sense of place." She continued, "Together these houses create an identity that allows neighbors to belong to their neighborhood as villagers belong to their country towns." Porches therefore fostered a sense of community between new neighbors in the city's sea of monotonous row house developments. With few greater alternatives for entertainment, the porch drew these neighbors to occupy this liminal zone where the public and private spheres converged.

The genesis of porches in Philadelphia is not of particular interest here; instead, it is the role of porches in street life and the evolution of the porch's use and meaning that is most noteworthy. In my neighborhood of Spruce Hill (where there is neither spruce nor hill), the houses have hosted many different families in its lifetime. White, immigrant working class families first inhabited the humble housing stock. The two story row houses with minimal ornamentation on the façade were affordable for those toiling in Philadelphia's many factories between the late 1800s and the mid-1900s. The development of Philadelphia's frontier at that time offered slightly more spacious lots at less cost than in the crowded sections of the old city. Wider streets and sidewalks set aside more room for both the pedestrian and homeowner; combined, these were perfect breeding grounds for front porches. Nearby mass transit whisked

Andrew Cushing



away men and women to their employment, but porches would welcome them upon their return home.

By the mid-1900s marked demographic changes in Philadelphia saw the flight of middle and working class white families and the influx of black families. As a new community of Philadelphians settled into their homes, the front porch was there to provide the same service as it had in prior generations: that of being “the physical expression of neighborliness and community.” In this era, people experimented with new materials to distinguish their porch. Original wooden columns, balusters, and spindlework yielded to wrought iron, brick, and permastone. These changes suggest an interest in home improvement, of disposable income, of persuasive neighborhood salesmen, of pride and freedom in homeownership, and to today’s preservation purists, perhaps unfortunate taste.

My particular block of 44th Street continues to reflect the demographic shifts that occurred in the mid-1900s. Many of the homeowners have lived here several decades. From their porch’s lawn chairs they wave to one another and discuss the weather. Mr. Preston reminds my roommates and me to shovel our sidewalk in the wintertime, Miss Ada calls after us to “Have a blessed day!” and Miss Betty reminds her grandchildren to clean up trash on the street. This front porch culture, or eyes on the street, is what Jane Jacobs promoted in the creation of safe neighborhoods. But neighbors whisper about changes afoot, too. From our shared front porch, Mr. Preston confides that the neighborhood’s new Muslim residents and University of Pennsylvania students (guilty) bring unwanted change to the street. On one vacant lot across the street, construction has started on a five story apartment complex. “And I tell you something,” Mr. Preston gesticulates on a morning when I am already late to class, “it won’t have a porch.”

Mr. Preston is the most ardent supporter of front porch culture in our neighborhood. He is always raking and shoveling for elderly neighbors or sitting on the concrete steps that connect his porch to the sidewalk, greeting people as they walk by. From him, I get the impression that the front porch can be used correctly and incorrectly. For instance, our porch is seldom used. We store our recycling on it. There is a table that sits out there, but none of my roommates know how it got there. I chalk it up to the fact that as students without leisure time or community investment, the front porch reverts to a state of obsolescence. Perhaps we use our

porch incorrectly. Sometimes, though, another use for the porch takes precedence. A hair salon down the street converted its front porch to an enclosed waiting room. Another row house converted its porch to a sunroom. These changes disrupt the cadence of Philadelphia’s streets. The enclosure of a porch appears oddly territorial for a streetscape designed for community interaction. Are these porches used incorrectly?

Alice Gray Read considers these porch alterations merely an additional layer of history for the neighborhoods. In Mantua, “Layer upon layer, new construction is added to old. Little is removed. Over the years, a neighborhood street becomes dense with detail. Awnings, railings, furniture, and gardens each take their place as families grow and become part of the life of the community.” Read’s interpretation differs from Kenneth Jackson’s take on the modern-day porch. “The evolution of the front porch is a microcosm of the decline of community,” Jackson observed, lamentingly. According to Jackson, porches are devolving, not evolving. Thanks to the automobile, air conditioning, and the television, entertainment left the porch obsolete.

In walks or bike rides through West Philadelphia streets, however, it is difficult to agree with Jackson’s gloomy assessment. Porch culture lives on. Winter’s close brings out the kids, who play basketball in the street, their hoop nailed to the porch columns. A man I call Mr. Radio returns to his second floor porch and blares his airwaves of Beach Boys and Motown hits to the street below. Fraying green strands of material from his porch suggest an Astro-turf oasis from the interior of his home. Blocks of porched homes host neighborhood parties, replete with music, food, and dance from a variety of ethnicities. One particular moon bounce travels between these block parties like an honored guest. These neighborhood events are not limited to streets with porches, but they are indicative of porch culture: celebrations of community life between neighbors new and old in spaces that merge the public and private.

Perhaps the best counterexample to Jackson is in Kensington, a neighborhood in North Philadelphia. As Philadelphia’s population diversifies, new interpretations are found to keep the porches useful and meaningful. In Kensington’s case, Hispanic immigrants transform their porches into *cobertizos*, or “covered porches.” At first glance, the metal bars that festoon front porches may look like security features. Rather, the sometimes exquisitely decorated metalwork is a vestige

of Moorish culture from Latin America by way of Iberia. Immigrants from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico adapted their row houses' front porches to reflect a taste of home, according to resident architect Ariel Vazquez. On the Iberian Peninsula, "These arcaded sidewalks blur the boundaries of public and private space," much like the traditional porches of Philadelphia. "The ornate ironwork enclosing many balconies and window boxes on urban buildings [in Latin America] bring to mind the caged porches in Kensington," observed Vazquez. Similar to the nebulous origins of the American porch, the proliferation of *cobertizos* are likely less about actual architectural heritage and more about adapting existing resources to re-create familiar homes in a new environment.

The porch will continue to play an important role in Philadelphia's neighborhoods as long as Philadelphians value the need for a space that blends the public and private spheres. With the city showing early signs of economic resurgence and population gains, the front porch and its accompanying culture could be endangered, however. In sections of the city facing development pressure, the row house and porch will make way for larger apartment buildings and institutions. These new developments – exactly what residents like Mr. Preston fear – promise to change the dynamics of established blocks. Good development will respect the unique qualities of Philadelphia's existing fabric and feel, but the city will continue to evolve with no such guarantee. Nevertheless, there remain generous swaths of the city where row houses stand derelict and community struggles. But when these neighborhoods are eventually revived, the porches will be ready to welcome the new residents once again.

Further Reading:

Alice Gray. "Making a House a Home in a Philadelphia Neighborhood." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* Vol. 2 (1986): 192-199.

Buozis, Michael. "The Cobertizos Of Kensington." November 5, 2014. Accessed 22 March 2015. <http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/11/the-cobertizos-of-kensington/>.

Jackson, Kenneth. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Andrew Cushing



River That Flows Two Ways

The Delaware River, Camden, and Philadelphia

Sarah Moses

Philadelphia, as its denizens know, was founded “between two Navigable Rivers, Delaware and Schuylkill,” a distinct geographic site advantageous to the formation of defensible and sustainable settlement. The Schuylkill has become less remote over the course of settlement - its crossing less emblematic of retreat to rural village than of expansion and consolidation - rather than recast as a sociocultural barrier, an obstacle to be met with disdain and conscious avoidance rather than negotiation or celebration. The latter has been the fate of the Delaware.

In 1609, English navigator Henry Hudson, in the service of the Dutch East India Company, came upon the Delaware River in search of Northwest Passage to China. The expedition inaugurated Dutch colonization of North America in the seventeenth century, with early Dutch and Swedish settlements established along the lower section of river and Delaware Bay. To both the Dutch and Swedish, the Delaware was the “South River” to contrast the Hudson River, then known as the “North River”; the North River would not be renamed for Henry Hudson until 1664, as a political tactic to rationalize its seizure by the English, who claimed that because Hudson was a subject of the English king, Hudson’s River belonged to England rather than to the Dutch. Following their expulsion of the Dutch and seizure of the New Netherland Colony in 1664, the English renamed the South River the Delaware after Sir Thomas West, 3rd Baron De La Warr, an English nobleman and the Virginia colony’s first royal governor.

The Delaware’s navigable, tidal section became a conduit for shipment and transit essential to the development the industrial cities Trenton, Camden, and Philadelphia. By the 1750s, Philadelphia had outstripped Boston as the largest city and busiest port in British America, and was second in the British Empire only to London. The river was of paramount importance to Philadelphia as a geographic and economic focus within the colonies, and to the notion of Philadelphia as an epicenter for Revolution.

Of course, European colonizers were neither first to “discover” nor to name the Delaware River. Native American dialects and mythologies made reference to the river for centuries prior to Hudson. The Eastern Algonquian Mahicantuck means “great waters in constant motion” or “river that flows two ways;” the Delaware is, in fact, a tidal estuary, where saline water from the Atlantic Ocean meets freshwater from our terrain.

The name Mahicantuck draws attention to the river as active, but mutable; interpretation of its bidirectional course has become abstract in our consciousness, as influence into and out of Philadelphia, a Philadelphia-centric model of the universe that would baffle Copernicus. Even in 1908, a sort of Philadelphia-against-the-world mentality was evident in literature about the River:

The Delaware River is a great waterway which, one hundred years ago, furnished ample means of communication between the chief commercial city in America and the sea. ... But it has not continued to furnish ample means of communication between Philadelphia and the sea. That has been one of the reasons (but only one) why commerce has been diverted to other ports.

Even as Philadelphia retains vestiges of the Delaware as an industrial catalyst in names like Port Richmond and in the remnants of refineries and docks, the fact of outside influence is minimized and the Delaware written as a polluting, contaminating force. In the previous week alone, news of “at least 400 gallons of oil” spilled unintentionally in the river and of bodies found floating along its edges as a result of unknown violence populated headlines. The Delaware is a barrier fortified in our consciousness by misfortune.

Successive efforts to increase the width and depth of the river have proven insufficient accommodation to the dimensions of merchant vessels and are obsolete at almost the moment of their authorization. Failure of the river as a thoroughfare reifies the notion of the Delaware as a barrier to circumvent, as the 1908 publication notes:

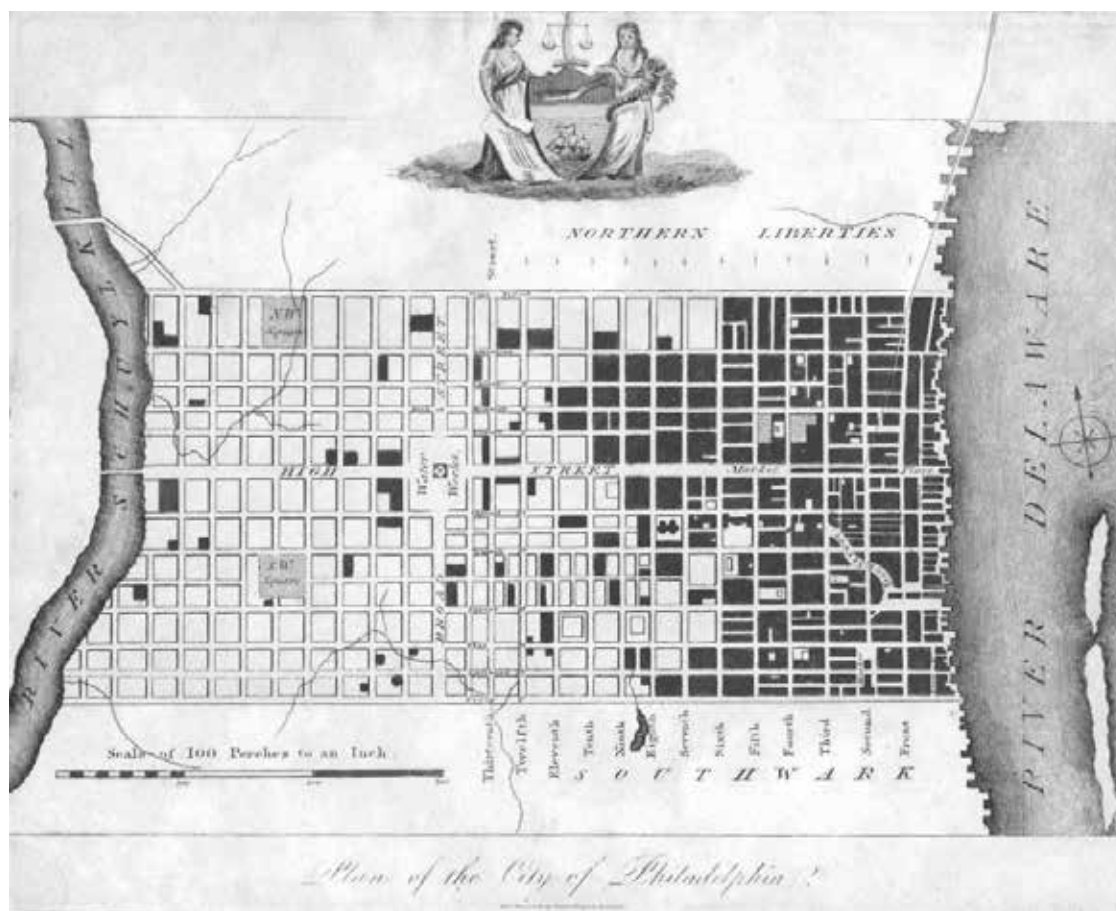
When the ships of commerce drew no more than eighteen or twenty feet of water, they could reach the docks of Philadelphia through the natural waterway almost as readily as they could reach the docks of New York, but when the draft of merchant ships was increased to twenty-five, or thirty-five feet, shoals in the Delaware prevented access to the port at low tide and resultant delays compelled the larger and more economical ships to trade at ports where fewer obstructions were encountered.

The idiosyncrasy in geolocation was brought to the attention of Democratic state representative Brian Sims, who, on a visit to the Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, California, mentioned the quirk to the social media platform's engineers. "It was something that they have clearly heard about. And, in truth, it's actually not a Facebook issue per se. It's an issue of satellites and geolocation," Sims said, "but it is something they are working to correct."

Our visceral, reflexive discomfort over conflation with Camden is in part a testament to Philadelphia civic pride, and in part a concurrent dismissal of Camden's validity, as one editorial summarizes:

Through its course, the Delaware River forms most of the boundary between Delaware and New Jersey and between Pennsylvania and New York, as well as the entire boundary between New Jersey and Pennsylvania; thus we romanticize Washington Crossing the Delaware as a symbolic, defiant act of boundary-breaking. In this Age of Facebook, the fact of the Delaware as a barrier – or rather, the lack of its acknowledgement as a barrier – has invoked the ire of many a Philadelphian as a result of a phenomenon wherein Facebook users in Philadelphia are located by satellites as "in Camden" or "Near Camden." One user notes: "I'm just kind of mind-boggled that Facebook can't tell the difference between Camden and Philadelphia. That they can't figure out which side of the river I'm on just bothers me."

Any proud Philadelphian will typically respond with the same chilliness: We certainly are not Camden. Philadelphia was once the capital of the union; we're the home of the Phillies, the Eagles, Rocky Balboa (fictional or not, he kicked Communist ass), the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Liberty Bell, the Mütter Museum, the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, and many other institutions of cultural, educational and commercial import. Camden has an aquarium and a Rutgers campus.



Camden and Philadelphia are disparate socioeconomic entities. Majority minority Camden has a white population of five percent; Philadelphia has a white population of thirty-six percent. The mean household size in Camden is three members; ever-dense Philadelphia averages twenty-five residents per household. Philadelphia has a population of 1.5 million in an area 134 mi²; Camden has a population of 77,000, down from a peak of 124,555 in 1950, and within an area 9 mi². The median household income in Philadelphia is \$11,000 higher than in Camden, though the median income on the Philadelphia banks of the Delaware is close to \$60,000, and \$25,000 along the Camden banks.

Such metrics make it seem that Philadelphia and Camden are adjacent as a result of geographic circumstance, and that the cities have little in common. Their histories, though, are twinned, if not intertwined. Because of the Delaware River, Philadelphia and Camden share an industrial and locomotive past; the Pennsylvania Railroad used both cities as termini and our industries, with bases in the river, mirrored each other for centuries. Patterns of Irish, British, German, Italian, and Polish immigration swelled the populations of both cities in similar proportions. On PATCO (Port Authority Transit Corporation) lines alone, 38,000 people move between Philadelphia and Camden daily. Acknowledgement, interest, and investment in matters across the banks of the Delaware would not be out of place.

Philadelphia and Camden, too, share further similarities than we would like to acknowledge. While Philadelphia fares better than Camden economically, a quarter of our population lives below the federal poverty line, as one author notes:



There's a lot of talk nowadays about the widening gap between rich and poor, the differences between the so-called upper and lower classes. I rarely hear talk here in Philadelphia, though, about the widening, and ever dangerous, gap between these two cities. Their respective futures are veering disturbingly far away from each other. Yet, we in Philly almost never talk about how to contribute to building a neighboring city that's as attractive as it is close; instead we jeer and bristle at the mere idea that we're anything like Camden.

"Philadelphia is your house," the author concludes, "Camden is your neighbor." Our histories are closer than that, though; we are parallel, twins, brothers, after all, and we are the City of Brotherly Love. It is time that we show our love for our brother across the banks.

Further Reading:

William Penn, "A Letter from William Penn, Proprietary Governour of Pennsylvania in America, to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders of That Province, Residing in London" 1653.

"The Hudson Estuary: A River That Flows Two Ways," New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Charles Rappleye, *Robert Morris: Financier of the American Revolution* (New York City: Simon and Schuster, 2010).

J. Hampton Moore, "The Delaware River," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 31, (January, 1908).

Dan Stamm, "At Least 400 Gallons of Oil Spill Into Delaware River Off New Jersey," NBC 10 Philadelphia, March 10, 2015.

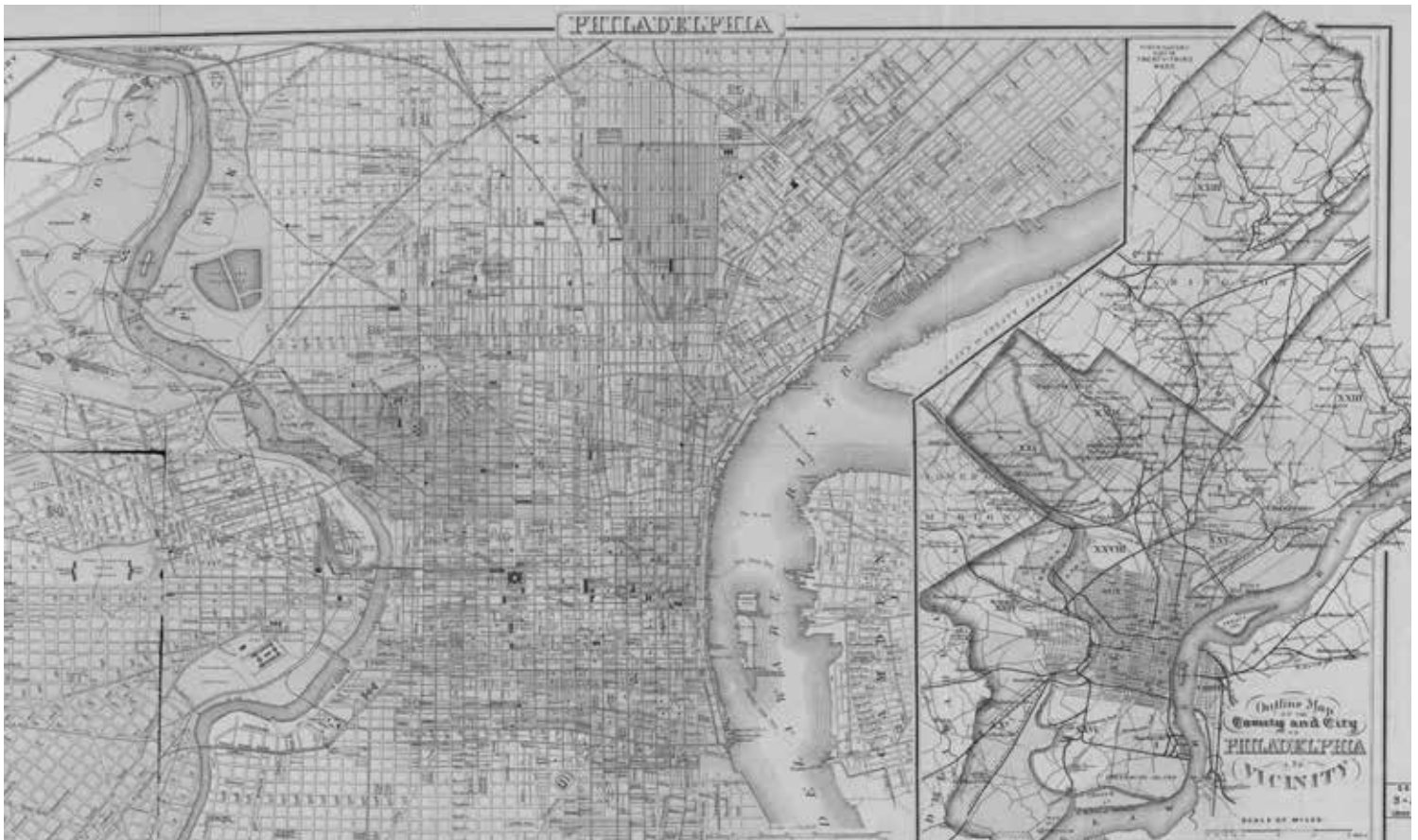
David Chang, "Body Found Floating in Delaware River Behind Philly Rec Center," NBC 10 Philadelphia, March 21, 2015.

"Philadelphians Tired of Facebook 'Placing Them 'Near Camden,'" NewsWorks, March 20, 2014.

Josh Kruger, "No, We're Not Camden -- But What is Philadelphia's Problem?" NewsWorks, March 27, 2014.

The Philadelphian Grid

Joseph C. Mester



A rhetorical question was once asked, “What makes for a hall of fame-worthy baseball player?” The typical thoughts of amazing hitting, great fielding, insightful orchestration of a game, athleticism, etc. pass through our minds in an instant. Then the answer came, “structure.” Wait, what? Structure... The idea being that without the structure of the game, its rules and boundaries, the athlete would be athletic but not great. The game’s structure provides the focus through which the player can excel. Within “fair territory,” they develop techniques to defy our understanding of ability, yet remain within the confines of the game’s instructions. Without the structure of the game, it would just be some people with a club, ball, and weird looking mittens.

The grid is the structure of Philadelphia. Within its rectilinear streets, its historic and current inhabitants have developed ideas and expressions that define and mystify our understanding of an individual’s abilities. This contribution to the Philadelphia-centric, commemorative edition of *Landscape* aims to explore the structure of Philadelphia: its grid.

The arrival of William Penn’s ideal for a “greene country towne” in the 1680s introduced a city-form as old as Roman colonialism. Penn’s colonists cleared the Philadelphian peninsula of growth, leveled its imperfections, and laid out his envisioned network of streets. As one architect put it, “Philadelphia was much like the planned estates of 17th century London, not a city so much as a residential district.” However, this cross-Atlantic suburb of London was short lived. Density transformed the residential ideal into a profitable city. With density came smaller-through streets and dead-end alleys that opened the interior of the grand blocks to housing.

The large blocks melded the urban-English house form into the Philadelphia row house. This vernacular house type enables residents to have a bit of street frontage with a long dwelling space inserted into the blocks. The alleys and smaller streets also received a much reduced row house form, known as the trinity. Philadelphia’s continued population growth led to continued

development west. Growth westward in conjunction with new domestic ideals calling for removal to the country to escape the vice of metropolitan hubs in the mid-nineteenth century established the first suburbs of Philadelphia. These communities established their own street patterns only to be bear-hugged by the Act of Consolidation in 1854. The Act mandated the grid from east to west, north to south across all of Philadelphia County. This imposed structure enabled Philadelphia to prosper at the turn-of-the-twentieth century.

Overlooked by visitors paying homage to the birthplace of the American experiment and most Philadelphians, the grid continues to provide an ever-present structure to Philadelphia. These corridors through the urban matrix are the thoroughfares that transport the provisions or the means for provision of its inhabitants. The space between the streets are filled with histories of immigrants from Ireland, German, Italy, Russia, and descendants of enslaved African peoples from southern states moving northward for work at the beginning of the twentieth century. They all came looking for an opportunity to excel within the grid of Philadelphia's success. They settled into distinct areas like Walnut Hill's 1920s apartment buildings and porch-front row houses and were later displaced from Society Hill's reconstruction of the ideal city through Urban Renewal.

A straight line is the most direct way between two points. This holds true everywhere. However, in Philadelphia the grid obscures that view unless you are going directly east/west or north/south. For example, traversing from a wedding at Christ Church in Old City to an apartment in the Fairmount neighborhood near Eastern State Penitentiary, the path will not be straight but resemble a length of teeth on a saw-blade snaking northwestward through a variety of

unique neighborhoods that compose the neck of the Philadelphian peninsula.

These everyday journeys through flourishing, declining, and "up-and-coming" neighborhoods are filled with Philadelphians trying to make the leap from the everyday to the exceptional. They are trying to defy the preconceived notions of others. Maybe this is just happy-go-lucky rhetoric? Or could the places and spaces between those lines be the birth of something new, unique, or maybe even revolutionary; only time will tell us. While we wait the grid will continue to provide structure to the landscape and provide space for its inhabitants as it has from its inception written on the stationary of its proprietor over 300 years ago. And, maybe, just maybe, the grid will produce a hall of famer or two.

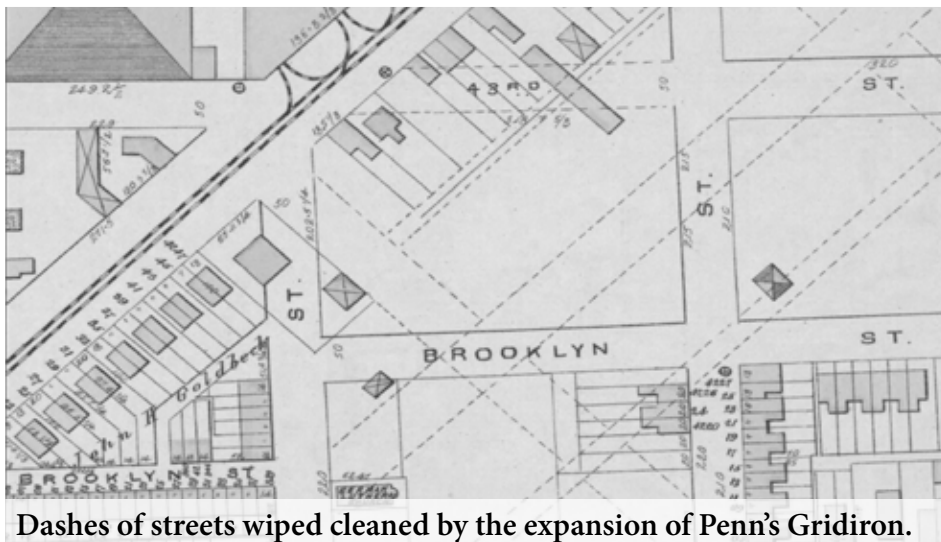
Further Reading:

Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformation, and Its Prospects* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1989).

Map of Philadelphia from Gopsill's *Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: O.W. Gray & Son, 1883).

Spiro Kostof, *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meaning Through History* (New York: Bulfinch Press, 2003).

Steven Conn, *Metropolitan Philadelphia: Living with the Presence of the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).



Dashes of streets wiped clean by the expansion of Penn's Gridiron.

Philadelphia's Atlas of the 24th & 27th Wards, 1878

Igniting Transformation

The Mural Arts Program in Philadelphia

Chuhan Zheng

If you have lived in Philadelphia long enough, you must have noticed those colorful murals. They are all over the neighborhoods; they have diverse themes and topics such as faith and spirituality, peace and war, community safety and tensions, homelessness and trauma, immigration and settlements, national and local celebrities, etc. However, they all share a common goal of transforming the city physically and socially. In the past 30 years, the program has completed over 3800 murals and public arts projects. Through public engagement, it achieves great success in enhancing community, healing public, educating arts and boosting economic potential. Modern murals on historic facades create a harmonic composition, just like this historic city is always embracing new development.

The prototype of the program launched in 1984 originally as an “anti-graffiti” effort. Graffiti’s history in Philadelphia could be traced to as early as the

1960s, which was more established even than New York’s. Disordered and massive graffiti were all over the city at the time, giving the public space a strong sense of being unsafe and unsanitary. This is a problem that is also faced by many cities in the world such as Los Angeles and Berlin. The artist, Jane Golden, was commissioned by the Mayor W. Wilson Goode to form Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network (PAGN) as an effort of transforming the blighted cityscape. She convinced a group of local graffiti artists to sign the pledge of not defacing public property and help her generate the program with city’s amnesty to prosecute past infractions of these talented artists.

The project was not as influential as expected that little changes in the city or community could be observed. By 1991, 1000 murals were completed but the program was still looking for opportunities to further engaging with the community. The turn came in 1996 when

muralarts.org



The North Philadelphia Beacon Project

the program was moved from the Department of Community Programs to the Department of Recreation and restructured to be more comprehensive. The original PAGN was renamed The Mural Arts Program with a goal shifted from “anti-graffiti” to “pro-art.” The program gained more support from city as well as public and private partnership that all the new resources gave it opportunity to reach broader community and to launch larger projects. With a solid organizational foundation, the program returned to its roots of community buildings and public engagement. In 1999, an afterschool and summer education program for youth was launched marking the beginning of its public education role. It also started to cooperate with larger criminal justice system as well as health system to help people who need to be healed and to be recovered mentally and physically. In order to work on larger scale mural projects, the program also founded a Special Projects department that specifically targeted to produce large-scale artwork and push the boundary of art. Today, The Mural Arts Program is still growing and branching its function as a leader in socially engaged art.

Reasons that contribute to the success of The Mural Arts Program are complex and multiple. However, public engagement is definitely the keyword among all the reasons. The process of mural making itself include efforts from the authors, other groups of artists, community members, public agencies, civic groups, students, prisoners, patients, shopkeepers, etc. These multi-layered components push the boundary of mural arts as a participating process that involves public life and practices. The murals tell stories about people themselves, their visions and their willingness to chance. Therefore no matter what background does people come from, they all have a common agreement upon one same goal of improving and strengthening the place they live in. This shared objective allows a continuous participation from the society, opening up a social window and communication channel for people who are from diverse backgrounds to get involve and offering efforts. This is an revolutionary shift from simply artwork collaboration to a professional, socially engaged art. Through participation, people get a chance to know and work with people from completely different fields and background and working on the same interesting and meaningful tasks collectively. This experience keeps attracting and activating people to participate and contribute to the program. As long as there are successive participants, the program could continue to grow and be long lived.



One of the obvious influences brought by The Mural Arts Program is that it has gradually changed the physical appearance of the city, beautifying public spaces and reintroducing historic buildings that might usually have been ignored by people. The murals have given buildings their “second life” by introducing new functions and meanings to them. The buildings are not only canvases as a background, but also actively involved in the story that is told by the murals. Especially in a decaying neighborhood, the bright colors and encouraging contents on the buildings which used to be awkward and messy allow people to rethink about values and potentials of this historic fabric. The beautification of the physical environment and reuse of historic fabric also helps elevate the values of the entire neighborhood, attracting more investment to development of the neighborhoods. Murals also have great positive impacts on educating and healing the participants. The Mural Arts Program is a project based learning program, which it asks all the participants for collaborations, critical thinking and problem solving skills for open-ended questions. People from all different kinds of backgrounds – age, race, and occupations – come together to be exposed to arts and creative works. It is an exceptional experience that people probably would never get from their original background. Besides, there are serious reports showing that the collaborative work on the murals are beneficial to the mental and emotional wellness. The Porch Light Initiative started by The Mural Arts Program is tested to have positive healing effects on participants’ psychological status. The collaboration work allow participants to have more communication with other people, relieving the stress through participating in the social activities and promoting positive thoughts that improve mental conditions.

To transform physical and social conditions of the city is not an easy thing. But The Mural Arts Program is gradually proving to the public that this transformation is gradually happening. As the network is growing and social participation is more actively involved, the impacts of the program are increasing exponentially. In recent years, the program is reaching further to more diverse issues such as environmental sustainability, energy, food safety, etc. By boosting the decaying buildings and neighborhoods, The Mural Arts Program allows us to see the revitalization of the city could happen just around us, and by us.

Further Reading:

Official Website of Mural Arts Program, <http://muralarts.org>, City of Philadelphia, accessed 2015.

Golden, Jane and Updike, David, Philadelphia mural arts @ 30, Temple University Press, 2014.

Golden, Jane, Philadelphia murals and the stories they tell, Temple University Press, 2002.

Lohman, Jonathan, "The walls speak": Murals and memory in urban Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 2001.

muralarts.org



The Meal, Act XXXIV in 2013 celebrating 30 anniversary of The Mural Arts Program. Over 900 participants were involved to discuss about the politics of food production and regional ecology.

The Philly Fragrance

Alice Gilmore

All cities have an abundance of smells; Philadelphia is no exception. The smells of a place are an unavoidable part of urban life. They can provide a sense of place, document cyclical change, or reinforce the transience of urban life. They also reveal and obscure the city's inner workings and the lives of its inhabitants. The way that a place smells enriches our experience of that place, and, in doing so, it affects how we construct memories about and make connections with the places we inhabit. Yet, despite how interwoven the smells of a city are to the way that we experience them, they are rarely documented. This essay will document some of the smells that are found around Philadelphia and discuss what they reveal about the city.

Some of the smells that are encountered in Philadelphia provided a unique sense of place. For example, the smell of the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers has been a part of Philadelphia since its founding; the exact smell of the rivers has certainly changed drastically over the years in response to the industries that the rivers have supported and our understanding of our impact on the environment. Nevertheless the smell of the river has been a consistent feature of the olfatoric landscape of Philadelphia since its founding. Today as you approach the rivers the smell of damp soil and deep water will greet you. Other smells have become hallmarks of Philadelphia after years of existence, for example the tangy smell of the butcher shops and fresh produce stalls that line the Italian market, or the enticing smell of greasy Cheese Steaks on the corner of Passyunk and 9th, or the stale metallic smell of train tracks and break grease that lingers on the platforms of 30th St. station. Who can forget the smorgasbord of aromas that surround Reading Terminal or the bus exhaust that fill Market Street. All of these smells have woven their way into our perceptions and recollections of Philadelphia.

Other smells follow the cycle of the seasons: the smell of hot garbage and sewer gases that hang in the thick humid air of summer. Or the pungent smell of rotting ginkgo fruit in the gutters and the aging pumpkins on doorsteps that create the sweet decaying smell of fall. Spring brings the smell of damp soil, fresh mulch and the occasional flowering tree.

Other smells occur in response to municipal cycles rather than nature's: the smell of the once weekly trash collection, or of an idling postal service truck making its daily rounds. These smells not only contribute to the experience of living in Philadelphia, but they also mark the passage of time and the weekly routine of city life.

Then there are of course the transient smells that disappear nearly as fast as they appear: the smell of someone's cigarette as they pass you on the street or a woman's perfume as she rushes past you on the train platform. All of these smells, whether permanent or fleeting, pull you out of your everyday routine, and force you to reconnect with the world around you, even if only for a moment.

Many of the smells that you encounter in a city reveal elements of the lives of the people around you. For example, a stroll through Center City on a Monday morning found the smell of a wood fire permeating Fittler Square. In southwest Center City on Catherine Street, the smell of laundry escaped from dryer vents and the smell of onions frying filled the street. The corner of 21st and Pemberton was filled with the distinctive smell of dog vomit and the evidence to prove it – providing a glimpse into the unpleasant morning of one Philly resident. Many of the smells that we encounter in the residential neighborhoods provide clues about the other inhabitants. Over time we can learn when our neighbors cook, what they make for dinner, and when they do chores or home maintenance, etc. These smells reveal unseen aspects of the lives of the other people who live in our midst.

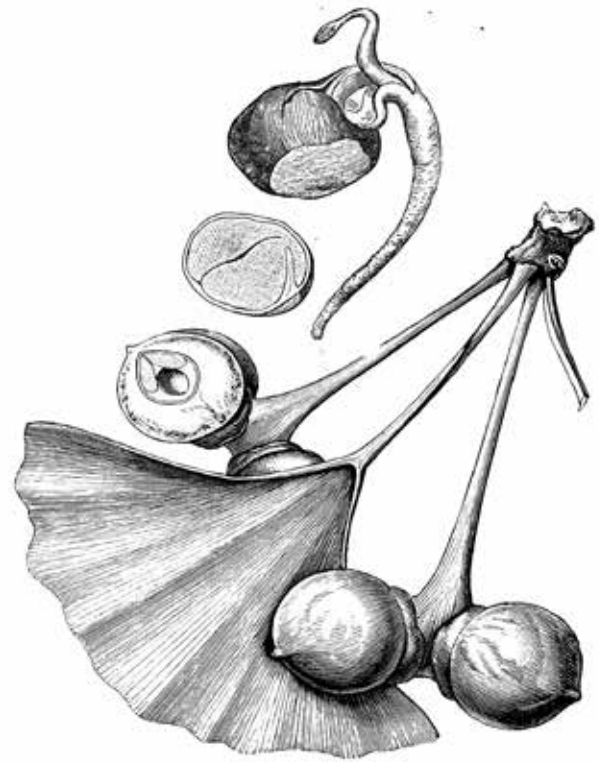
The source of some smells may not be so evident. These mysterious smells remind us that we are unaware of what is going on in many of the buildings we pass. Despite having lived in a place for many years aspects of the city will always be mysterious. For example, there was a stretch on Catherine Street between 23rd and 24th that smelled very strongly of men's cologne, but there was no apparent source. One classmate recounted that the sweet smell of cotton candy lingers at the corner at 10th and Reed, but despite having lived nearby for four years she still cannot determine its origin.

Mysterious smells, whether permanent or fleeting, spark our curiosity and force us to engage with our surroundings in unexpected ways. The way a place smells not only affects our daily interactions, but it also affects the memories that we create of that place. There are few things that will transport you back to a place in your memory more quickly and viscerally than catching a whiff of a smell you once knew. A study into the human sense of smell asserts: "It is clear that an intimate structural overlap exists between the olfactory related regions... and those devoted more generally to human emotional processing." The smells of Philadelphia go beyond the impact they have on our daily lives and weave their way into the memories that we create of the city and the narratives we tell about it.

The importance of the Philly Fragrance was made apparent to me shortly after I moved to Philadelphia. When I met up with a family friend, who has lived in Philadelphia for decades, he asked me where I was living. I responded that I lived next to Fitler Square. He laughed and retorted, "Ha, dog shit square. I used to live there when I was your age." I instantly knew what he was referring to – the ginkgo trees that line the streets surrounding the park and give off an odor in the fall that is regrettably similar to dog poop. That exchange revealed a thread between my experience in Fitler Square and his, despite the fact that our experiences were decades apart. Cities and towns that have a strong sense of place do exactly that – they tie together the experiences of those who have lived there in unexpected ways - creating an intricate narrative over time. Smells are a typically undocumented component of urban life, but obviously contribute to our lived experience and our sense of place.

Further Reading:

Jay A. Gottfried, "Smell: Central Nervous Processing" *Taste and Smell: An Update* 63 (Karger: 2006).



Fruit of the *Ginkgo biloba*

What Makes the Gayborhood Gay?

Grace Meloy

After moving to Philadelphia, I was surprised to learn that there was a neighborhood called “The Gayborhood.” I had never lived in a city that had explicitly (and officially, according to Google maps) outlined and labeled the part of the city’s cultural landscape dedicated to the LGBT community. Impressed by the city’s dedication to the LGBT community, I wondered what made the Gayborhood gay—what imprints has the LGBT community made on the cultural landscape of this Philadelphia neighborhood?

Although I knew the boundaries of the Gayborhood, as defined by various maps, the casual walker would know that he or she had entered the Gayborhood by one consistent mark in the landscape: the vast majority of the street signs within the Gayborhood have rainbow

flags beneath them. The rainbow flag is universally understood to be representative of the LGBT community, which means that, even without any knowledge of Philadelphia, someone could understand that these street signs indicate a place associated with the LGBT community. Businesses throughout the neighborhood also display rainbow flags. For example, the bar Woody’s has rainbow flags waving above its ground floor windows, and U Bar has rainbow flag banners hanging on the railings of the building’s second floor balconies.

At the corner of 13th and Locust, there is a large mural that could be understood to be supporting the LGBT community, for it illustrates men (and women) in the performing arts, a career that has often been associated with gay men. Finally, some of the business signs in



Grace Meloy

Advertising for HIV testing at the Mazzoni Center, the neighborhood’s LGBT health and well-being center.

the neighborhood convey the presence of the LGBT community. For instance, the business called The Papery advertises “fabulous invitations, cards, and stationery” and the Mazzoni Center, whose slogan reads, “Your home for LGBT Health & Well-Being” promotes HIV testing with an eye-catching sign and a large rainbow flag in the center’s front window.

Still, walking through the neighborhood I began to wonder what these symbols in the landscape really signify. What role does this neighborhood play today? Does this neighborhood continue to be an important neighborhood for the LGBT community of Philadelphia? Or is the neighborhood now more significant to the Philadelphia tourist? Relatedly, has this neighborhood become essentially a historic district significant because of the role it played for the LGBT community during the twentieth-century? And, finally, is the entire LGBT community being represented by this neighborhood?

Philadelphia has historically had a vocal LGBT community. In the mid-twentieth century, there were so many openly gay men living south of Rittenhouse Square that this portion of Philadelphia’s LGBT community became known as the “Spruce Street boys,” even by citizens outside of the LGBT community. In 1962, an article was published in the Greater Philadelphia Magazine entitled “The Furtive Fraternity,” which was the “first article the mainstream press would publish about an American city’s gay community.” In 1965, the first “Reminder Day” demonstration was held on the 4th of July, and in 1972, the first Gay Pride demonstration occurred in Philadelphia. In 1982, the Gay Rights Bill passed in Philadelphia’s City Council, despite continued police raids on gay bars and other aggressive encounters.

The neighborhood that is now called the Gayborhood started as a center for nightlife in Philadelphia resulting from its proximity to the entertainment venues on Broad Street. The gay bars and restaurants that were open in this area, particularly after the neighborhood began to decline in the 1960s due to unrealized redevelopment plans, became important places for the LGBT community, providing them with spaces to socialize safely and unselfconsciously. During the mid-twentieth century, this neighborhood became a kind of “gay ghetto,” but a ghetto that gradually began to shape its own landscape as the LGBT community gained confidence with the city after events such as Gay Pride and the passing of the Gay Rights Bill. For example,

businesses in this “gay ghetto” began to advertise themselves as being owned by members of the LGBT community, and the first Gay Business Association in Philadelphia opened in the 1970s. The neighborhood received its name in 1995 from a newspaper reporter, David Warner, when he casually remarked at the city’s Outfest celebration that it was “a beautiful day in the gayborhood!” and in 2007, the neighborhood gained official city recognition with the dedication of thirty-six rainbow flag street signs by Mayor John Street.

Today, the Gayborhood has become a place to see and experience, known for its “reservations a must” restaurants and nightlife. CBS Philly’s “Guide to Philadelphia’s Gayborhood” and the Philadelphia edition of the travel resource guide, Navigaytour, among other tourist resources, praise the “city’s rich gay culture” and highlight the Gayborhood’s bars, lounges, and restaurants. The imprints in the neighborhood’s cultural landscape make this culture visible and brand the neighborhood in a marketable way for visitors to the city, but what culture do these marks on the landscape truly represent and what culture is this neighborhood really serving?

It is questionable whether the entire LGBT community is being reflected in the landscape of the Gayborhood. From reading about the various bars and restaurants, it appears that the gay community is being emphasized heavily over the lesbian and trans communities. Additionally, are different ethnic groups within the LGBT community being portrayed, or does the landscape highlight the experiences of really only gay white men? Walking around the neighborhood, there did not seem to be many traces of diversity, and looking at the people portrayed in the Navigaytour edition of Philadelphia, the vast majority of them are white (and male).

Moreover, author Andrew Thompson points to the paradox of visibility for the community that originally needed this neighborhood. During the mid-twentieth century, invisibility, to a certain extent, was essential to the survival of the LGBT community because in places like gay bars and restaurants, members of the LGBT community could feel safe to express themselves. However, as the LGBT community is more widely accepted into mainstream culture (as evidenced by the widespread passing of marriage equality legislation) and can more safely be visible in the landscape, the need for a neighborhood of “safe places” may become

less necessary. Consequently, is this neighborhood still serving the LGBT community by whom it was created? The notion that this neighborhood is no longer catering to the needs of the neighborhood's original community and more towards LGBT tourists could be partly supported by the city of Philadelphia's conscious decision to market to the LGBT tourist community with the adoption of this city slogan in 2003: "Get your history straight and your nightlife gay."

Nonetheless, it is significant that the city of Philadelphia officially recognized the "Gayborhood." Although it seems that only part of the LGBT community is being made visible in the cultural landscape of the Gayborhood, which in itself is problematic and should be challenged, the dedication of the street signs demonstrates some level of commitment made by the city to making the LGBT community visible and to mark its experience in the city's landscape. The imprints on the cultural landscape of the Gayborhood that differentiate it from the rest of the city, if nothing else, act to remind the city's citizens and visitors that the LGBT community is a significant part of the city and its history.

Further Reading:

Bob Skiba, "Gayborhood," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2014, <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/gayborhood/>.

----- "The Roots of the Gayborhood, The Eve of a Milestone," *Hidden City Philadelphia*, 14 February 2014, <http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/02/the-roots-of-the-gayborhood-the-eve-of-a-milestone/>.

"Guide to Philadelphia's Gayborhood," CBS Philly, 5 June 2013, <http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/guide/guide-to-philadelphias-gayborhood/>.

Margalit Fox, "Barbara Gittings, 74, Prominent Gay Rights Activist Since '50s, Dies," *The New York Times*, 15 March 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/15/obituaries/15gittings.html>.

Navigaytour, Philadelphia edition, 2014, http://files.visitphilly.com/2014_PHILLY_Navigaytour-PAGE-ALL.pdf.

Nell McShane Wulfhart, "A Philadelphia Street, Transformed," *The New York Times*, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2013/07/07/travel/20130707-SURFACING.html>.



Woody's on the left and U Bar on the right.

Chain-Link Fences of Walnut Hill

Sang Bae

Sang Bae



When exploring a neighborhood, one takes mental note of elements such as building types, residential patterns, demographics, and businesses. What often goes unnoticed or undescribed, however, are some of the most fundamental aspects of any land use: fences. A fence, by definition, is a “barrier, railing, or other upright structure [...] enclosing an area of ground to mark a boundary, control access, or prevent escape.” In other words, it is the means of sectioning and claiming land, one of the most basic ways of laying human hands on a natural landscape. Throughout the years, different types of fences have implied different uses and portrayed different “images” of the bounded areas. White picket fences have become a part of the stereotypical suburban single-family home surrounded by lawns, often referred to in describing the “American Dream.” Barbed wire fences are best known for setting up perimeters to protect livestock from both wandering away and also from predators; low set, widely spaced wooden picket fences are often employed to indicate

nature trails; even highways have very distinct, low set, sheet metal fences along its roads. For the most part, a specific type of fence evokes a particular image of use. However, there is one prominent fence type that goes highly unnoticed and escapes closer consideration: the chain-link fence.

When I first moved to Philadelphia, I set off on an afternoon excursion around my new neighborhood, Walnut Hill. This small residential neighborhood bounded by 45th and 52nd streets between Market and Spruce streets was lightly strewn with mixed-use and commercial buildings and mainly consisted of residential units, both apartments and row houses. As a residential neighborhood with children, the area was also home to public schools, an athletic field, and playgrounds. The resident demographic was primarily African American. Crossing guards stood at every intersection within the proximity of schools to assist

children to safely cross the streets. As evident in my preliminary observations of my new neighborhood, I too had ignored the presence of fences. Through further, more conscious excursions, I increasingly noticed the fences in Walnut Hill—chain-link fences in particular. However, unlike the nature trail fences, white picket fences, or even highway fences, I could not establish a unifying sense of what this fence represented. It was present in different forms: painted, rusted, slatted, and even in combination with barbed wire. It bounded different types of properties: construction sites, empty lots, playgrounds, private properties, and industrial fixtures. What exactly were chain-link fences and why were they so “versatile” in use? Why did each use invoke a different “feeling” about the property which it bound?



History of Chain-Link Fences

Chain-link fences, also known as wire netting fences, originate from chicken wire. The Barnard, Bishop & Barnard of Norwich first combined the region’s agricultural and textile industries to create a machine that weaved thick wire in 1844 and by the beginning of the 20th century, the company had refined the prototype machine, patented it, and exported thousands of miles of this strong, mass-produced wire netting to Australia for the rabbit trapping trade. A US company by the name of Anchor Fence patented a similar machine in 1898 and was the first to manufacture wire netting in the country. The chain-link fence grew in popularity due to its low cost resulting from mass-manufacturing and ease of maintenance. It is relatively effective in keeping unwanted people and creatures away from certain areas; however, these fences are inappropriate for areas of high trespassing as they are easy to cut and vandalize.

Different Uses and Forms Found in Walnut Hill

Empty Lots - Many of the vacant lots in Walnut Hill are sectioned off by chain-link fences. Most of these cases, unfortunately, look very similar to the image on page 33. The chain-link is not very neatly trimmed—it has excess wire parts creating a spike-like trim at the top—and its bare metal wires in various stages of rusting. Within its bounds sit debris from demolition of the previous land occupant. In cases such as these where there are no apparent immediate caretakers to the property (lack of “Private Property” signs), the conditions of both the fence and the property are subpar: the fence is bent and warped out of shape and serve as a trap or net for windblown trash and dried organic materials such as leaves and twigs. The land itself is unkempt and badly littered.

What purpose does the chain-link fence serve here? What kind of judgments does it cause the viewer to make of the property? The warped fences beg an explanation: was it the result of vandalism? Trespassing? Or poor weather conditions? This example tempts the viewer to see the chain-link fence as an indicator of a dirty, possibly unsafe area with below-average city services (garbage disposals, street management, etc.), especially in conjunction with the exposed party wall of the row house standing adjacent to it.

Here is a similar case of an empty lot in Walnut Hill. It is located just four blocks southeast of the vacant lot discussed above. The only difference is that this lot is designated a private property. The lot is fully enclosed and sits adjacent to a larger apartment building run by a management company. One might speculate that this lot is managed by the same company. If chain-link fences were an indicator of only what was discussed above, the presence of the same fence here would cause the viewer to expect something very similar: heavily littered with trash and organic debris and remnants of demolition on unpaved, exposed dirt—except on a larger scale, as this property covers roughly half the city block. On the contrary, however, what we see is a clean, grassy lot bounded by upright chain-link fences free of dents and warping. While the fences show minor weathering and rusting as well as the untrimmed top, it looks stable. Along the top of the fence are some strands of barbed wire, making it more difficult for trespassers and vandals to access the lot. Its presence also gives the fence a more authoritative, almost menacing impression: it assists in establishing a clearer sense of boundary.

Why is it that two equally empty lots bounded by practically the same fence material invoke such a different atmosphere about themselves? Are there pockets within this 35 block neighborhood where littering and vandalism is more prevalent?

Chain-link fences are not limited to creating boundary lines and barriers for empty lots. All throughout Walnut Hill are occupied, standing structures that employ these fences for their driveways, backyards, and sometimes even in place of a porch. The above pictures are two different locations in Walnut Hill that make use of the slatted chain-linked fence. These slats weaved through the wire netting allow for the maintenance cost to remain relatively low while providing a sense of privacy or concealment. The image to the right is a slatted chain-link fence around the back yard of a residential house. With the exception of a missing slat, the space bound by the fence is completely concealed from public view. Similarly, the left image blocks from view the inside space of the fence. In this location, the fence is concealing the rather untidy dumpster area of an apartment building. I have observed similar uses of slatted chain-link fences in the area. As the addition of slats allow for more privacy in this otherwise completely visually open fence type, these fences seem to be used to separate the private realm from the public as well as

the polite activities from the impolite. Chain-link fences are not limited to creating boundary lines and barriers for empty lots. All throughout Walnut Hill are occupied, standing structures that employ these fences for their driveways, back yards, and sometimes even in place of a porch. The above pictures are two different locations in Walnut Hill that make use of the slatted chain-linked fence. These slats weaved through the wire netting allow for the maintenance cost to remain relatively low while providing a sense of privacy or concealment. The image to the right is a slatted chain-link fence around the back yard of a residential house. With the exception of a missing slat, the space bound by the fence is completely concealed from public view. Similarly, the left image blocks from view the inside space of the fence. In this location, the fence is concealing the rather untidy dumpster area of an apartment building. I have observed similar uses of slatted chain-link fences in the area. As the addition of slats allow for more privacy in this otherwise completely visually open fence type, these fences seem to be used to separate the private realm from the public as well as the polite activities from the impolite.

If privacy and concealment is the primary issue at hand, why do the owners continue to opt for chain-link fences? Is it because damaged slats are easier to replace? Wouldn't constant repairs and replacements ultimately result in costing more than sturdier, more attractive fences?

Recreational Areas - Another prominent use of chain-link fence is in the recreational areas of Walnut Hill. Here, the fences take different forms yet again: the playground fence is painted green while the athletic field fence is of aluminum. The aluminum fence stands exceptionally tall to accommodate for the baseball field and its activities that it encloses while the playground's painted fence stands at average height but sports art panels on its netting.

The aluminum fence shows no signs of rusting or dents; it shines bright as it reflects light on a sunny day. The grounds enclosed by it is kept clean and well maintained by the school that uses it. This fence's height makes it difficult for vandals to trespass while its aluminum material makes it free of rust (though not completely safe from long-term corrosion) and sturdy.

The green-painted chain-link fence of the playground, on the other hand, shows minor signs of paint



Sang Bae

chips revealing some rust underneath. However, the recreational space bounded by the fence is kept clean and safe for children and adults alike, with clean benches, chessboards, and brightly painted play structures.

There are signs of new plant growth from recent replanting as well. The green color of the fence detracts from the minor rust and corrosion activities on the metallic surface; the color makes the space seem more welcoming and safe. The small, square art pieces done by local children hang on the fence, further enhancing the welcoming image of the playground.

While these two spaces have successfully utilized the fences in a practical manner to achieve a positive and welcoming environment, one wonders: why do these sites insist on using the same fence type as those that are so often used to conceal dumpsters, section off vacant properties, etc.? Are there no better ways of accommodating for the needs of these recreational areas? Also, more positively, how do these fences differ from the previously mentioned uses? Why are these sites welcoming while others are off putting? Does color and shine have such a great impact?

Conclusion

The chain-link fence began its use as rabbit trapping tools in the early 20th century and now it is used all over neighborhoods to section off vacant lots, deny access on private properties, separate the realms of polite and impolite activities, and even to provide a safe and practical space for recreation. We must keep in mind that this is possible because beneath all this variety is the fundamental purpose of a “fence,” to mark a boundary. Its most basic function is to exert human control on the natural environment, to mark boundaries and territories and to protect it from the natural flow of movement (animals, humans, etc.).

We must also consider, however, the question: why is this used so often by so many? We have seen a range of visual impressions that a chain-link fence can leave on the viewer—from looking like a trash dump site to a nice community space. Why do these places insist on using wire netting? Is it an issue of cost? While the sum total of the original installations and future repairs may be greater than a better, more attractive fence, do people opt for this type because it is immediately cheaper? Is the fence, then, more telling of the socioeconomic status of the residents of the neighborhood more than the spaces bound by them?

Further Reading:

“Barnards,” Norwich Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust, accessed March 24, 2015, <http://www.heritagecity.org/research-centre/industrial-innovation/barnards.htm>.

“Chain Link Fencing,” Quality Fence Company, accessed March 24, 2015, <http://www.qualityfenceco.net/products/chainlinkfence.htm>.

“Fence.” Oxforddictionaries.com, Oxford English Dictionary, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2015.

“Fencing Styles,” US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, accessed March 24, 2015, http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/rwt/fencing.cfm.

“Fun Fence Facts,” Mesa Fence Co., accessed March 24, 2015, <http://www.mesafenceco.com/funfacts.php>.



Designing to Wait

Andrea Haley

Traveling is all about waiting. You wait for the train, wait for the subway, always waiting to get somewhere. Benches are a part of every platform and station, and designed for people to sit and wait. But people do so much more than sit when they wait for buses, subways, and trolleys. They lie down, they curl their legs up, and they lean against a wall. Benches act as seats, tables, shelves, and beds. Not all benches are designed the same way, and not all infrastructure that travelers use is designed for human use.

Some basic forms of benches in Philadelphia transit system include flat wooden slabs, metal surfaces with divisions between every seat, metal benches with backs, wide curving benches, and sculptural metal benches that bend and curve. Examining how people inhabit different bench designs, or make their own areas of waiting on the subway platforms and at 30th Street Station gives interesting clues about what people need and want when they are waiting for transit.

Many benches have no backs, to allow people to sit on both sides of the bench, waiting for trains to come in either direction. Divisions are often created on subway benches to prevent people from taking up too much room, or sleeping, but these divisions do not align with how people want to inhabit their space. Unless you know the person, almost no one sits adjacent to an inhabited seat on a divided bench. There is a seat left for breathing room and personal space. It's a common sight to have a filled platform, but empty seats on the benches. Because most benches are divided into an even number of four seats, this means that often only two are occupied. Flat benches, while allowing officially undesired actions, like sleeping, gives users more flexibility in how they use the benches. They can bring their foot up to tie a shoe, have more places to set their bags, more room to sit with children that they might be travelling with. Also, because there are no clearly marked seats, it is more likely to have three people on a bench. First, the two ends are inhabited, but there can still be room in the middle for someone to sit and not crowd others' personal space. Sitting behind someone follows these same rules, though the width of the bench sometimes mitigates this, as do the curves at the benches at 30th Street Station. Interrupting the

linear line gives people a sense of their own space, even though they're still sitting on the same bench.

The sculptural benches seen at 8th street station and other stations on the Market-Frankford subway line were an attempt to provide for different uses, but still controlling cleanliness and preventing sleeping, and also act as a piece of art. Each end of the bench allows for seating, but the metal begins to fold, and the middle is a shelf that people can lean against. Leaning is an important part of waiting. People who do not want to sit often lean against pillars, handrails, and basically any sturdy object that is around three feet or higher. The sculptural benches provide an official place for this. These benches are slotted, as most Philadelphia benches are, to allow for easy cleaning, and for liquids to pass through, sanitation being a part public spaces that is always a struggle. One thing they do not provide for is mass seating. There is a lot of wasted space in the transition between seat and ledge, and the rule of three people to bench still largely holds true: two on the seats at the ends, one in the middle leaning.

Because the designed areas for waiting do not provide for every use that travelers want, they appropriate unintended areas as they wait. At the 11th Street subway platform, a ramp goes along the back of the platform, to enter the concourse. This ramp causes the wall to rise, and as it does, the rising ledge of the wall is used as a bench, a table, something to lean on, and someplace to put personal items on. This wall is closer to the turnstiles than the benches, placed far down the platform, and is therefore used more frequently. Placement is also key in 30th Street Station, at the Regional Rail platforms. The platforms are open to the air outside, so in colder months many people prefer to wait inside. There are not many benches in the main interior, so people wait at the top of the stair case, sitting or leaning in the window sills, or the ledge between the escalator and stairs.

Claiming space is more than just about location though. Intent plays a huge role in choosing how to wait. Benches in 30th Street Station are long, straight, and continuous with backs, which is more welcoming to

leaning back or lying down than the subway benches. Subway benches are designed for very quick use, but train benches are for longer commutes and layovers. Sleeping, eating, large amounts of luggage are more accepted in train stations, and this is reflected in the designs.

The most inhabited benches in 30th Street Station are the ones that are advertised as ‘Charging Stations.’ A strip of electrical outlets are behind the bench, and it is always full of people recharging their devices. These benches transcend the personal space rule. People are willing to squeeze into a spot on a bench to charge their phone. When these benches are completely filled, you can see people sitting on the floor of the concourse leaning against pillars. At first, it’s an odd sight, as the other benches are very open, but then you realize that there are outlets at the base of each pillar.

People are willing to break the designed purpose of waiting areas if they need more personal space, more controlled climates, or more flexibility in how they wait. They even move to the ground in search of places to charge their devices, and newer designs reflect these different uses, with more outlets, and more flexible benches for sitting and leaning. People are creative in how they use space, and the modern digital age has encouraged non-traditional uses of space, as people wander further from designed waiting areas, and create their own. They just don’t wander much further than the length of their power cords.

Further Reading:

Benjamin Kabak, “Building a better subway bench,” 2nd Avenue Sagas, 8 March 2011, accessed 23 March 2015, <http://secondavenuesagas.com/2011/03/08/building-a-better-subway-bench>.



How Do “High-Speed” Mural Landscapes Present the Characteristics of Philly?

Haoyu Wang

<http://planphilly.com/>



The Amtrak train is passing through a passage of Psychylustro Project.

Philadelphia is claimed as the “Mural Capital of the World” which brings the city a great attention to what these thousands of murals are telling about. In addition to what the Philadelphians are familiar with the neighborhood murals painted on the blank walls which enclosing a vacant lot on both sides, another type of murals along the high-speed roads are creating a new view to see the stories of city. At the same time, these “High-Speed” mural landscapes also provide a variety of traveling experiences along the highways to the Philadelphia International Airport and the regional railroads.

Different from the performance and theme of commonly seen murals hidden inside of the community, “high-speed” murals are included in a broad and complex context. The landscape could be empty factories, any constructive envelopes or even a small piece of wasted grasslands. This environmental diversity attributes to the performances and themes of the murals behaving creatively and inclusively. In forms, the murals can creatively combine with any possible canvases to express the idea, for instance like oil-tanks, chimneys

or vertical garages. It also has a great flexibility to show the ideas in various ways, which could be languages as well as paintings and could be stationary as well as movable. In themes, high-speed murals mainly focus on the issues of urban decay and urban prospect. It usually epitomizes the characteristics of a city as a whole cultural environment which means the content of high-speed murals relate more closely to ordinary people or things, who or what is abstract as an anonymous instead of a strong emphasis to whom, for example, a specific famous person who has done some remarkable things for a certain group of people.

Some representative murals in the institutional or residential architectures along the Philadelphia highways and railroads really attract people’s attention to which build or recall their impressions of the city. Remarkably, the first to be noted here is the “Psychylustro” Project along the Amtrak rail track. The project is composed by seven abstract murals appearing in selected passages as an episodic presentation along a 5-mile railway corridor between 30th Street Station

and North Philadelphia Station. They are not images of some picturesque sceneries but a series of brilliant colors sprayed on some intact and decaying industrial buildings, and attached very straightforwardly on some rubbles, weeds or trees. The adventurous use of these attractive artificial colors by the German artist, Katharina Grosse, gives Philadelphia a unique perspective to state her positive attitude to the bright future as a historic hub. Also, as travelers, this is an unexpected and amazing experience to see the city's past greatness and possibilities of future. The part of the decaying city like the rail corridor used to be a conflicting area where the view is unwelcome to visitors. By implementing this art program along the corridor, it changes the area into a cool and attractive landscape that really drawing attentions. To this extent, it reaches the goal of project's organizer. "We really want people to see what we see", says Jane Golden, the Executive Director of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. "We see the deterioration, but we also see the beauty, we see the history, we see Philadelphia's past."

Another important case is the "Philadelphia on a Half-Tank" Project. This noticeable high-speed mural is located at Penrose Avenue and Platt Bridge in South Philly near the Philadelphia Industrial Highway where

many rounded oil-tank shaped refineries are situated. The mural is one of the first images of the city on the half side of a tank appealing to travelers' eyes when they are driving from the airport to downtown or leaving Philadelphia. The artist Paul Santoleri expresses a busy and lively Philadelphia, with a bit of exaggeration in the architecture, on an otherwise unremarkable oil tank. His idea of painting a vision of city on the half side of the tank is inspired by the Botticelli's Birth of Venus, which is "Venus on the half-shell." Although the title sounds like a stunt in order to carry the intention of Philadelphia's rebirth, its artistic approach, at least, changed view of a suburban industrial landscape, where the abandoned institutional factories no longer look exactly like old and busted version of shells, into a creative site where the decaying landscapes have great potential to renovate in different ways.

Beyond that, there are many high-speed murals performing in some creative ways. "Love Letter" Murals is a project along the elevated transit tracks nearly 20 blocks in one section of Philadelphia. They are performed as temporary media for public events, the Valentine's Day. Also the movable murals painted on the SEPTA is aiming at connecting to the different neighborhoods of Philly.



Philadelphia on a Half Tank.

In general, the projects along the highway are devoted to present the images of Philly as an enthusiastic city. In retrospect, however, what other themes of a high-speed mural should involve to describe the city in a more integrated perspective? Why people barely cannot see themes related to negative histories about racial, feminism, or pollutions? Is that just because the negative stories are not appropriate to open as an urban advocacy? But, are those portraits of smiling faces and splendid urban skylines represent all what citizens want, or just what politicians want? Actually, mural landscape as a form of public art unavoidably connects to the political intentions to some extent. Especially for those needed to paint on the institutional buildings, the reason that they are usually approved to be in practice is because they attribute to shape a shining identity in the urban context. To be honest, this type of mural is not that objective to convey the feelings of the masses but also not that subjective to express the artistic criticism of the artists. They are more like a compromised synthesis of political purpose and artistic performance.

Another aspect of argument about what other characteristics of high-speed murals should present, is the function of high-speed mural which is restricted to its sensitive and controversial location in the city. As we know, high-speed murals are not simply pieces of public arts in the downtown parks that people can see easily in their everyday lives, instead, they are really not that easy to see as part of the citizen's life. However, these types of murals are basically the first or last vernacular landscapes which would leave a deep impression to people about Philadelphia. In this situation, the high-speed murals are definitely situated in those essential locations, but on the other hands, their functions and political freedom as public arts are restricted by the

locations as well. Based on what we commonly seen, the murals are just a bunch of showy pictures without too many interactions with people. Is there any possibilities to introduce some interactive programs connecting to the high-speed murals? There is usually plenty of land or brownfields that would be activated as the sites for ecological, educational, or recreational purposes. If the site had been managed in more dynamic ways, the high-speed murals would have more opportunities to be interpreted when they involve negative or other complicated topics. Most importantly, the murals will not just be a tool of political advocacy, but they really intrigue the urban vitality in an interactive way rather than a picturesque way. Overall, high-speed murals are not just a landscape that is able to cover the vexing issues of urban decay, but they rather play as media to connect and to express the characteristic of Philadelphia as an energetic and integrated cultural hub.

Further Reading:

“Murals that turn trains into full blown art shows,”
<http://www.wired.com/2014/05/murals-that-turn-train-rides-into-full-blown-art-shows/>.

“Wild strokes and wildflowers color the Northeast Corridor through Philly”
<http://planphilly.com/eyesonthestreet/2014/05/21/wild-strokes-and-wildflowers-color-the-northeast-corridor-through-philly>.

“Philadelphia on a Half-Tank”
<http://muralarts.org/collections/projects/philadelphia-half-tank>.

SEPTA



Septa's Moving Mural.

The Black Bottom

Charlette Caldwell

Every city, small or large, has a series of communities that outline its shape, cultural makeup, and history. Many of these communities are often referred to as neighborhoods, because of their sizes and distinctive boundaries between each area to the next. A neighborhood is defined as a “district, especially one forming a community within a town, or city”. The culture and history of each neighborhood give character to the communities’ landscapes, whether it be the language spoken there, the food, or the way people interact (or do not interact) with each other on the street. Some neighborhoods are synonymous with one other thing, such as Chicago’s Back of the Yards (meatpacking district), or Oregon’s Pearl District (art galleries amongst the many warehouses).

Philadelphia is home to a few well known neighborhoods, such as Fishtown and Rittenhouse Square. Although I am not new to the east coast, being originally from the Pacific Northwest and only moving to Philadelphia recently, most of my knowledge of the city was molded by what some of my family members and friends had happened to see in their east coast travels. However, driving through the city for the first time last August and subsequently doing field research for classes out in the West Philadelphia neighborhoods, I experienced differing aspects of the city I did not expect to encounter. Philadelphia neighborhoods are much like other major city neighborhoods; there are racial and economic divides that often influence the way a particular neighborhood is treated in terms of urban planning. One neighborhood that appeals to my graduate studies is my neighborhood, in particular the area west of 40th Street toward the University of Pennsylvania. I live a few blocks away from the campus and even though now the neighborhood seems to appeal mostly to younger families and “hip” graduate students, it once had a different racial and social setting.

Known to city planners as “Area 3” or “University City”, the “Black Bottom” was a neighborhood situated easterly and westerly between 33rd and 40th streets, and on the north and south sides of Lancaster/ Powelton and University Avenue. The “Top” of West Philadelphia

referred to the affluent white neighborhoods beyond 40th street. The neighborhood was given its name for being located in the bottom half of West Philadelphia and was pre-dominantly African American. From the time William Penn imported slaves to his colony in 1685 to 1880’s, there existed a village called Greenville that was home to mostly African American families. After the First World War, when the Philadelphia population increased dramatically, the residents of Greenville began to call themselves The Black Bottom Tribe, and then locally became known as the Black Bottom.

The entirety of the neighborhood functioned as one enormous extended family with its own unwritten law and order, designed to protect the community internally and externally. Many former residents remember being extremely safe at all hours of the day; many did not need to lock doors or windows at night, one former resident recalls. Not one house was vacant in the original neighborhood, and almost every family owned their own home, although many more still rented, while also working very close to the community. Most of the people worked multiple jobs, and although Black Bottom residents were considered low-income families, the houses and landscape were well maintained; demonstrating the pride the local community instilled in their place.

With the beginning of white flight to the suburbs in the post-war era, the remaining areas around Black Bottom became more predominately African American and poorer, but were still stable and tight knit. In 1872, the University of Pennsylvania moved from Center City to West Philadelphia. In the 1950s, The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority classified Black Bottom as a “redevelopment zone”. The universities within the vicinity of the neighborhood, the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel, and the University of Sciences, experienced a surge in enrollment after the passing of the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944 or the G.I. Bill, which prompted the need to extend the campuses westward. The West Philadelphia Corporation was formed and many of the former neighborhoods on the west side of the Schuylkill, including Black Bottom, were displaced for campus expansion. Places to be renewed,



the redevelopment zones, were referred to as areas in which “physical and social ills began to grow amid the substandard housing. Crime and juvenile delinquency reared their evil heads. Hoodlum gangs roamed the Powelton-Mantua area (the self-styled ‘Bottoms’ east of Lancaster, the ‘Tops’ to the west). The efforts of the police and public agencies proved but a small deterrent.” Black Bottom resident memories were the exact opposite of this statement. According to a University of Pennsylvania professor, Walter Palmer, who was a former Black Bottom resident, the situation was much different. He stated, “If you look at any specifics in terms of crime on Penn’s campus, it’s almost nonexistent all the way up to the 1970s, when the Black Bottom no longer existed as a neighborhood. Penn’s crime statistics won’t really start taking off until after the 1970s, when it no longer has a buffer for community neighbors.”

Black Bottom residents protested against the expansion, through barricading and car fire barriers, but campus expansion was inevitable. The expansion was justified through the use of eminent domain; “the city declared portions of the area blighted, acquired them, and set about demolishing large swaths of buildings.” By the

1970s, the campus expansion project was complete, with many of the residents of Black Bottom forced out. Many of the residents did not profit from the acquisition of their homes since a majority of them were renters. By the end of the urban renewal project, about 5,000 former residents were displaced, although, because of the closeness of their community, many people from former Black Bottom neighborhood began to hold annual reunions. The annual reunions and organizations serve as a surrogate neighborhood in order to keep the community intact.

The Black Bottom Association, formed in 1976, was established through many efforts of former residents. Many of the events organized by this institution were promoted by word of mouth, which demonstrates the power of community ties and oral history. The University of Pennsylvania also partnered with the former residents to create the Black Bottom Performance Project, in an effort to reconcile the destruction the universities levied against the community. The Black Bottom Performance Project attempted to educate students about the culture and

history of the neighborhood. The university also began offering classes about the history and consequences of urban renewal. Two other organizations have formed in order to keep the community intact – The Market Street Black Bottom Association and the New Generation Black Bottom Association. Today, residents and out-of-towners can see a commemorative mural to the community titled the “Black Bottom Mural”, which sits on the southeast corner of University City High School near 36th and Filbert.

The Black Bottom story is a great example of community pride and heritage that is often present in neighborhoods around the country. Although not all neighborhoods are as closely tied together as Black Bottom, there are varying levels of shared collective memories and culture that bind one to their neighborhoods. It is important that these traditions are kept thriving; they present an opportunity for preservationists to appreciate local cultural heritage that might be overlooked in some cases.

Further Reading:

“The Black Bottom: History”. <https://theblackbottom.wordpress.com/communities/blackbottom/history/>.

“The Long and Troubling History of Penetration in West Philly”. <http://philly.curbed.com/archives/2013/07/11/the-long-and-troubling-history-of-penetration-in-west-philly.php>.

“Powelton Village: University Expansion Destroyed a Community”. <http://philadelphianneighborhoods.com/2012/12/04/powelton-village-university-expansion-destroys-a-community/>.

“DIY Mural: Harold Melvin’s Son on a Mission to Restore Black Bottom Heritage in West Philly”. <http://www.flyingkitemedia.com/devnews/haminmelvinblackbottom0925.aspx>.



Charlette Caldwell

Black Bottom Mural

Importing and Exporting the ‘Greene Country Towne’

Angelina R. Jones

As Inga Saffron has noted, William Penn’s vision of Philadelphia as a “greene country towne” can be considered the “granddaddy of all municipal brands” predating “the big apple” and “the big easy.” The five public squares are most commonly pointed to as the physical manifestation of Penn’s botanical intentions, but Penn’s nod to various plants through odonyms is another. Penn’s East/West Streets with the exception of Market, each had botanical names: Vine, Sassafras (Race), Mulberry (Arch), Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce, Pine, and Cedar (South). Penn’s siting of the city between the Schuylkill and Delaware on high land with rich soil irrigated by over 60 creeks was the most obvious design decision he made towards creating that “greene country towne.”

Thus the foundation was set for more than three centuries of Philadelphia’s influential horticulture industry. To this day, Philadelphia is home to the largest indoor flower show in the world and its horticultural society is one of the most powerful catalysts behind policies that shape its urban environment. However, walking through the city, I am struck by how much of its botanical legacy was shaped by the horticulture trade of the 18th and 19th centuries and for this reason I will speak particularly of this history.

John Bartram – whose progeny were plant hunters, propagators, and sellers for over a century - ran a horticulture business from his estate in present day West Philadelphia. Bartram’s neighbor William Hamilton was a gentleman plant collector who obsessively imported specimens from Europe and Asia. Just outside the front door of my Spruce Hill neighborhood apartment, I am greeted by trees that are connected to the botanical endeavors these two men. The London Planetree (*Platanus × acerifolia*), ubiquitous throughout North and West Philadelphia, lines 44th Street and front yards here are dotted with Flowering Dogwoods (*Cornus florida*). Hamilton first introduced the Planetree to North America after visiting England and witnessing the popularity of the tree there. Bartram included seeds of the Flowering Dogwood, native to eastern North America, in every box of plant material he shipped to Europe.

As I travel by foot around the one mile radius in which I spend much of my time in this city, many more trees that were imported or exported by these men occupy the narrow strip between the street and sidewalk: Gingkoes, Hedge and Sugar Maples, Black Walnut, Sweetgum, Sycamore, Tulip Trees, Honey Locust, and River Birch. These species are all propagated and planted as street trees. In the vacant lots, along the rail road tracks, and growing from abandoned buildings I see Paper Mulberries and Tree of Heaven, both introduced to North America by Hamilton, and Norway Maple, introduced by Bartram. These trees are now invasive and can be seen in any area of the city that isn’t actively maintained. The trees that were cultivated in Philadelphia in the late 18th century continue to be the dominant urban trees in Philadelphia today. What is more, these are the trees that became common street trees and invasives throughout the Northeast and large parts of the greater United States. In this way, the story of 18th century horticulture in Philadelphia is the story of the realization of the “greene country towne” in Philadelphia and its duplication across the country.

Further Reading:

Robert I. Alotta, *Street Names of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975).

Inga Saffron, “Green Country Town,” *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, last modified 2015, <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/green-country-town/>.

The Woodlands Tree Guide (Philadelphia: The Woodlands Cemetery Company, 2012).

Andrea Wulf, *The Brother Gardeners: Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009).



Mature London Planes Trees planted in front of the Simon Muhr Work Training School.

