

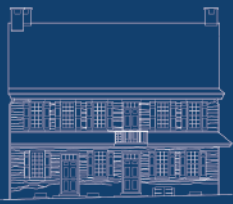


2016 ANNUAL REPORT

85
1931-2016



Powel 1765



Grumblethorpe 1744



Hill-Physick 1786



Historic Waynesborough 1724

Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks



Our Mission:

For 85 years, the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks (PhilaLandmarks) has played a significant role in both the historic preservation movement and heritage tourism in Philadelphia by restoring, furnishing, and presenting to the public its distinguished house museums—Powel House, Grumblethorpe, Physick House, and Historic Waynesborough. *The mission of Landmarks is to inspire people to engage with history by preserving these four unique sites and by providing related historical, educational, and cultural programming.* Each property presents a distinctive perspective and plays a significant role in their respective communities.

PhilaLandmarks believes that it is only through understanding and engaging in our histories (architectural, social, political, etc.) that we can make decisions about what is important to us today and what we choose to support in the future. While we enjoy providing quality house tours, we will also continue to discover new audiences and innovative ways to engage with the stories we tell.

Our Core Values:

- We believe that historic preservation illustrates the value of what endures in our society, and that this inspires people to learn about history and engage with their community.
- We are committed to maintaining our properties and their collections for the long-term, so that they will remain public resources in the future.
- We want our properties to be open and well-used by many different audiences in many different ways.
- We respect the uniqueness of each of our properties, and believe that their different programs, priorities, and places in their communities create great value for PhilaLandmarks and its visitors.
- We are thoughtful and foresighted stewards of the organization's resources and always encourage others to join us.

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Kyle Cassidy/kylecassidy.com (Hedda Gabler photo)

RA Friedman/rafriedman.com (Shadow House PR photos)

Sam Quinn/samquinnphoto.com (Cokie Roberts event and H-P Wine & Beer)

The More We See/ themorewesees.com (Powel House Wedding)

Thanks also to Pete Woodall and Eileen Reeser

Staff/Volunteer contributors: Mickey Herr, Alaina McNaughton, Linda Hawley, Diana Thompson, Kathryn Pannepacker and Pixie Biddle

Vintage Photos: PhilaLandmarks archive, Free Library and City of Philadelphia Department of Records, INHP archive

Cover Photos:

Top: Grumblethorpe 1843, C.J Wister, Jr., courtesy American Philosophical Society Library (Eastwick Collection)

Bottom: Grumblethorpe 2016, courtesy MollyPictureStudio.com

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Message from the Chair



Fiscal year 2016 kicked-off with the final Powel250 event as we welcomed Cokie Roberts in celebrating Elizabeth Willing Powel. We also ushered in our celebration of 85 years of PhilaLandmarks. These two anniversaries allowed us to look back and reconnect to our roots in significant ways. Saving the Powel House from demolition was indeed the impetus for forming our organization back in February of 1931. Not only did our founding matriarch, Frances Anne Wister, galvanize a group of Philadelphia's leading citizens, she also signed up 100 founding members, raised funding, secured a mortgage, and purchased the Powel property ALL inside four months' time! Frances—while serving as the president of PhilaLandmarks for the last 25 years of her life—would lead the charge to build awareness and preserve our city's iconic landmarks; Independence Hall, Elfreth's Alley, Second Bank, and the Philadelphia History Museum at Atwater Kent Museum to name a few.

Getting reacquainted with the work of our matriarch allows us to better understand our founding history in context with the overall preservation history of Philadelphia. Our city would be a very different place if not for the dedication of our earliest leaders and members. We invite you to visit our exhibit “Saved! Preserving Old

Philadelphia: 85 Years of The Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks” in the Community History Gallery at the Philadelphia History Museum at Atwater Kent to learn more of this important story (now through June 30, 2017).

Looking back has also reminded us of the incredible connections that exist within Philadelphia's cultural community. The stories we celebrate in our houses aren't just “ours” to share as they live throughout multiple institutions; from architecture, furniture, and paintings in museums to original manuscripts, diaries, illustrations, and photographs held in archives and historical societies. We will continue to dig deeper into these stories as we reach out and partner with our heritage partners.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles P. Keates".

Charles P. Keates, Esq.
Chairman



Jonathan Burton, Jennifer Summerfield (aka Elizabeth Willing Powel), Cokie Roberts, and Charles Keates.

Photo credit: Sam Quinn.

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Message from the Executive Director



As we have expanded our focus to include more interactive events inside our houses, we are also challenging ourselves to think about the types of stories we haven't been telling as well as to look at what learning opportunities we might be missing. We have found a new sense of freedom as we have expanded our vision to include the full-history of our houses rather than just a particular time.

In the context of our Powel250 celebrations, we started digging deeper into the history of the Powel House beyond the years of its namesakes. Our own research, along with that of the graduate students from the Temple Center for Public History, allowed us to look at the house with new eyes. Not only were we looking at who lived in the house in the 19th and 20th centuries, but those who lived next door and down the street. We discovered the voices of American immigration, a founding father of American law, industrialization, the birth of the preservation movement in Philadelphia, and the stories of many interesting women which need to be shared.

Some of these “voices” became the basis for *Shadow House*, our fully-immersive opera-theatrical production that premiered during Philly FringeArts 2016. The Powel House was alive with the voices of 250-years of history all at the same time. Imagine standing in the central hallway, hearing these voices sing their stories, all at once. The weight of so much history all in one place was never more palpable. Following each performance, attendees were invited to join the cast in the garden to discuss their experience. We were all inspired to find the crowd excited to stick around and share their thoughts. It was very inspiring.

All of our houses are ripe with stories yet-to-be discovered or told. You may have noticed that we have already turned our eye to the now renamed Hill-Physick House as we work to include Henry Hill back into our interpretation. In the coming year we will work to incorporate many of these new stories into our house tours. The Powel and Hill-Physick staff will be working jointly in guide training and tour redevelopment. The guides at Historic Waynesborough are also exploring innovative ways of telling the Wayne family history and will be getting updated guide training as well. The discovery of some new fact or story is what inspires us most. Just when you think you know it all...you learn something new. Sharing this with our visitors, both onsite and digitally, is what inspires us most.



A blue ink signature of Jonathan Burton.

Jonathan Burton
Executive Director

Our Houses

Celebrating 85 years of PhilaLandmarks...How We Became a Family.



Powel House c 1860, and 1931

February 27, 1931: Frances Anne Wister calls the first meeting of The Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks at the House of the Colonial Dames...“long were our deliberations over what might be done in Philadelphia to stop further disappearance of buildings of historic importance and architectural beauty...”

May 1931: The Powel House, along with the property next door, was purchased for \$30,000. For the next decade the organization would raise funds for restoration as well as advocate for important historic sites all over “Old Philadelphia.” The Powel House officially opens as a house museum dedicated to Colonial Revivalism on November 23, 1938.



Grumblethorpe 1843

1940: PhilaLandmarks took title of Frances Anne Wister’s family home, Grumblethorpe, in Germantown from the Grumblethorpe Association, an independent group which purchased the site from 35 heirs.

From 1956 thru 1967: Grumblethorpe underwent major restoration so that it could be opened as a museum focused on 18th-C. Germantown history.



Hill-Physick House 1961

1965: PhilaLandmarks was approached by philanthropists Walter and Lenore Annenberg about a property located blocks from the Powel House in the now revitalized “Society Hill.” Owned by Frances Anne Wister’s cousin, Elsie Wister Keith, for many years, the property was the sole-surviving freestanding Federal townhouse in the area. With support from the Annenbergs, several Physick descendents, and prominent neighbors, the property was restored to the American Neoclassical era of resident Dr. Physick and opened as a museum.



Historic Waynesborough 1890

1980: Easttown Township in Chester County purchased the farm estate of General Anthony Wayne with help from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. PhilaLandmarks becomes a partner as the administrators of a newly opened house museum, along with the Anthony Wayne Foundation and (later) the Friends of Historic Waynesborough.



Fundraising Events

Three cheers for the Powel Committee! This year marks 85 years of successful fundraising!

Members of the Powel House Ladies Committee (as it was known until recent years) have always been serious fundraisers. Starting in 1931, they arranged lectures, garden parties, bridge parties, and needlepoint exhibitions to raise money to restore the house and furnish the museum. Through the Depression years and WWII, the Bridge & Tea Committee held an annual bridge party—hosting upwards of 280 card players—raising on average \$1000 in a single afternoon. It took this committee ten years to pay off the original \$12,000 house mortgage. Members of the Needlepoint Exhibition Committee organized elaborate exhibitions between 1934 and 1939 to raise funds for the restoration fund. The second exhibition, held in the galleries of Wanamaker's Department Store, featured close to 1000 textile pieces loaned by over 300 individuals and museums, and attracted over 3000 paid attendees. After WWII and into the 1980s, the ladies arranged an annual luncheon and fashion show as their main fundraiser. Some things have changed through the years. The committee dropped the “ladies” part and have welcomed men into their ranks. The annual holiday party in December is always a sellout, but the perennial favorite event is still the annual garden party. This past year, in honor of the 250th anniversary of the Powel House, the committee had a banner year of fundraising, bringing in almost \$24,000 for general operating from their two signature events and another \$30,000 towards the Powel House endowment fund with their special Cokie Roberts event.



On November 5, 2015, the Powel House Committee welcomed guests to a cocktail reception and talk given by our honored guest, Cokie Roberts who reminded us of the contributions of the great women of the Revolution and Early National Republic, including our own Elizabeth Willing Powel. A gourmet dinner at the Powel House followed.

Each house committee continues to build upon their signature house events:

October 2015 Hill-Physick Wine & Beer Party & Spring 2016 Annual Plant Sale at the Hill-Physick House.



The Hill-Physick Preservation Committee has been "FundRaising the Roof" for several years, their hard work will become the basis for a major project in fiscal year 2016/2017. We'll have a lot to report on this front next year!

Grumblefest at Grumblethorpe

Our Fiscal year begins with our annual Octoberfest celebration at Grumblethorpe. Renamed Grumblefest in 2015, it takes place on the first Saturday of October, directly after the Revolutionary Germantown Festival. In recent years attendance has grown and it is especially popular with the battle reenactors. During the 2015/2016 fiscal year, we partnered with the 43rd Regiment of Foot, a British reenactment group, and invited them to "occupy" Grumblethorpe just as British General Agnew did before the Battle of Germantown in the Fall of 1777. So our year began and ended with Grumblefest this year. On Friday, September 30, 2016 the occupation of Grumblethorpe began...you'll have to wait for our 2016/2017 annual report to find out how we got those pesky Red Coats out of the house. Stay tuned!

Historic Waynesborough Annual Greens Sale in December 2015



Outreach

Our houses were brimming with activities and partnerships this year...live theater, author talk-backs, botanical drawing classes, floral workshops, and more. Here's a glimpse at our year!

July 4th Weekend

As part of a promotion with Visit Philly, we offered free tours of the Powel House and the Hill-Physick House. Turns out, everyone loves a free tour! The lines were long as more than 800 visitors (combined) enjoyed tours. Visitors to Hill-Physick also enjoyed free ice cream floats thanks to Dr. Physick's soda and the Franklin Fountain.

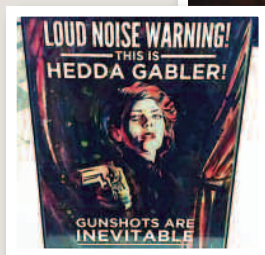


Once Upon a Nation Storytelling bench (Historic Philadelphia, Inc.) at Powel House kept the side-yard busy all summer.

We had over 6000 visitors to our bench in just 3 months!



PhilaLandmark's favorite, Jennifer Summerfield produced (and starred in) two sold out shows this year at the Hill-Physick House, *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Hedda Gabler*. Jennifer and her husband Kyle Cassidy filmed their *Hedda Gabler* production, in which the Hill-Physick House had a starring role. This amazing photo was taken by Kyle Cassidy in the basement of the Hill-Physick House during filming (with the candlelight photo-shopped in!)



Outreach



PhilaLandmarks, along with the Barra Foundation and the Fairmount Park Conservancy, co-sponsored workshops with the Museum Anarchist, Frank Vagnone. Here's our staff representing at the cocktail party hosted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania—where we brought along our special Dr. Physick cocktail!



Jim Kirschke, author of *Not Going Home Alone: A Marine's Story*, and (second) Vietnam Veterans, part of Historic Waynesborough's "People Who Shaped America" author series. November 2015.



Holly Genovese (pictured here with Grumblethorpe site manager Kathryn Pannepacker and at work) is a student at Temple University, working on her Ph.D in history, studying 20th-C African American history, the War on Drugs, and the Urban South as well as public history. We invited her to spend the summer digging around Grumblethorpe where she hoped to uncover the lesser-known and uncelebrated stories of the property. She wrote 2 posts for our PhilaLandmarks blog, *My "Nancy Drew" dream come true at Grumblethorpe and A Box Full of Hair and Other Mysteries (or why Grumblethorpe is just soooo cool)*, and mounted a small exhibit on her discoveries at the house.

Intern **Julia Bache**, an undergraduate studying history at Penn, spent time at each of our houses this past summer. She developed a survey to help us evaluate the satisfaction of our tour guests. She also did some social media posting and reminded us "this place matters" everyday! Here she is on her visit to Historic Waynesborough.



Our Grumblethorpe Youth Volunteers welcoming guests to Astronomy Night during the Philadelphia Science Festival.

Outreach

Grumblethorpe Elementary Education Program (GEEP), Grumblethorpe Youth Volunteers (GYVs), ArtStory camp, and related educational programming served almost 1400 students from September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016. Specific schools served were; DePaul Catholic, John Wister Elementary, John B. Kelly Elementary, Prince Hall Elementary, Fitler Academics Plus School, Widener Memorial School, and HMS for Children with Cerebral Palsy, thanks to the Connelly Foundation and the Widener Memorial Foundation.



Community Partnership In Action



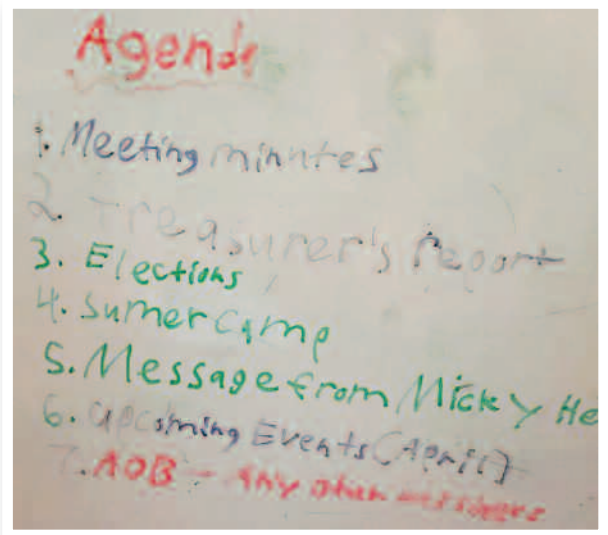
Teacher Patti DeLuca, of the Widener Memorial School, was tired of looking at the weed strewn patio outside her classroom window, so she came to Grumblethorpe's Elementary Education Program with an idea. Through the ongoing grant support of the Widener Foundation and a new partnership with Primex Garden Center, DeLuca's class now has use of wheelchair accessible garden beds, along with ergonomic trowels, soil and butterfly friendly plants.



Second Saturday at Grumblethorpe—part of Historic Germantown programming—our neighbors enjoy roaming the beautiful grounds.

Outreach

Grumblethorpe Youth Volunteers (GYVs). Thanks to the Philadelphia Cultural Fund and the Drumcliff Foundation we hired a new farmer, Michael Muehlbauer, to help the GYVs with their crops and farm stand. We also added a new partnership with Weavers Way Coop to supplement our produce with additional locally sourced products. Our annual GYV camp took a field trip to the Magic Garden and City Hall, and also worked with the students from the HMS School. The GYVs took a trip to Harper's Ferry, WV and the National Mall in DC.

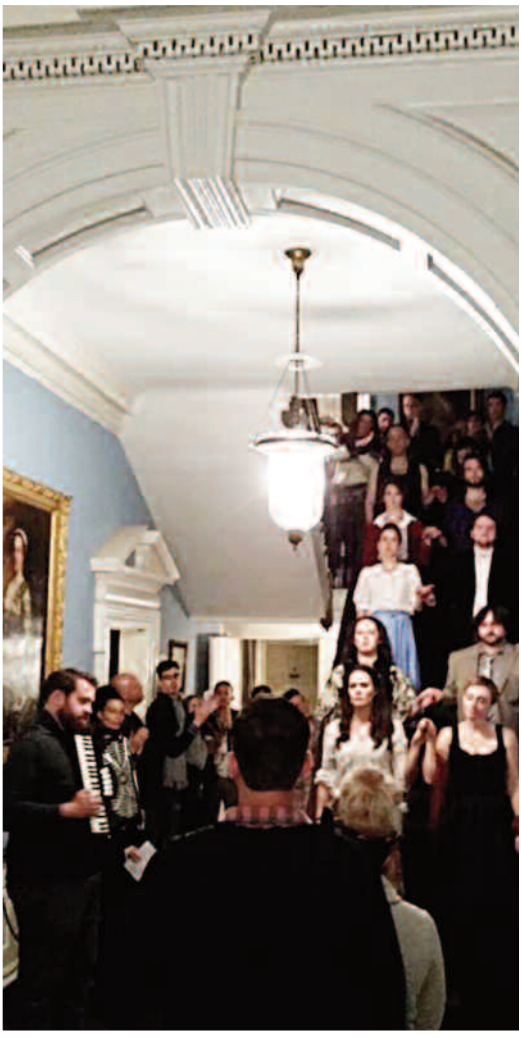


GYV planning meeting in the Grumblethorpe class room.



Farmer Michael in the meditation garden.

Outreach: Artist-in-Residence



La Ronde, October 2015.

In our quest to expand our narratives, tell stories outside the traditional museum setting, and attract new audiences to our historic houses, we did something new and bold this year. We invited theatre artist **Brenna Geffers** to serve as artist-in-residence for fiscal year 2015/2016.

Starting in the fall of 2015, Brenna invited actors and audiences into Powel House for several performances of *La Ronde*. She wanted to see how people moved through the house with multiple stories taking place simultaneously. How did the sound travel? What would happen if you let people “loose” in the house to follow actors around?



Artist-in-residence Brenna Geffers.

This initial work would lead to the creation of *Shadow House*, an original theatrical experience, based on the history of the Powel House.

Utilizing research encompassing 250 years of Powel history, Brenna, in collaboration with The Philadelphia Opera Collective (a team of 10 performers, 4 composers, and a librettist), used vocal exploration, group devising, and imagined scenarios to create a completely immersive performance of music and text. Audiences were invited to explore rooms throughout the Powel House to put the story together. Characters were followed through time and space, with a guarantee you could never enjoy the same experience twice. Yet many attendees returned to find the threads of storylines they missed the first time.



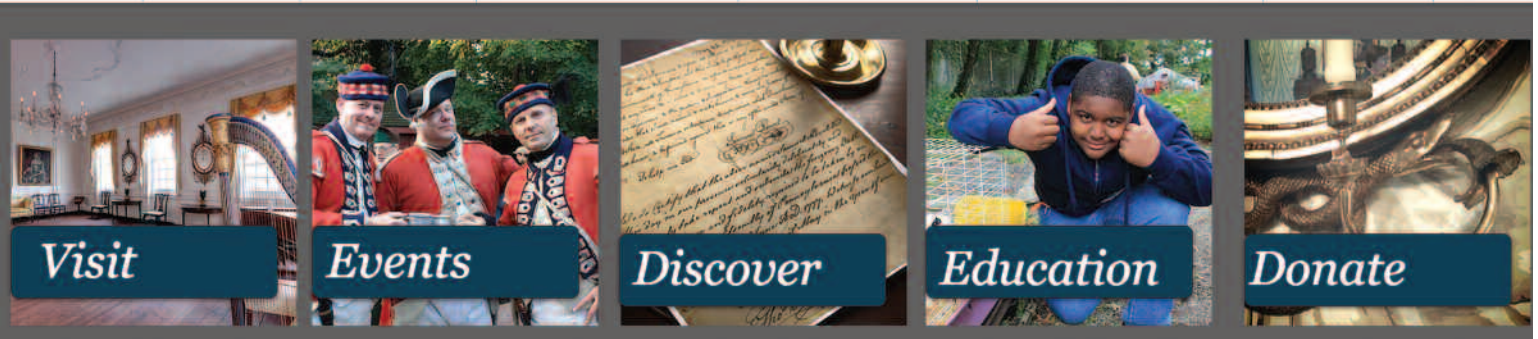
Performances of *Shadow House* ran between September 8th and September 22nd—as part of Philadelphia’s 2016 Fringe Arts Festival—with a total of 441 attendees to 10 public and 2 private performances of *Shadow House*. We enjoyed a near sellout of our performances, with nightly “wait-list” lines as word got out over social media.

Each night after the show the audience was invited to join us in the garden to have a drink, meet the cast, and enjoy further discussion. And each night the garden was full of folks asking questions about the history of the Powel House...newly engaged in what transpired on the site through the years.



Digital Outreach

HOME ABOUT HOUSES SITE RENTALS SUPPORT US ROAD SCHOLAR EVENTS More



Our digital reach continues to grow by leaps and bounds, as we easily doubled our impact this fiscal year. Our newly updated website had more than 30,000 visitors. With the addition of our new blog and continued cross-promotions through our social media posts, we expect website visitation to continue to grow. We have made a commitment to continue building our digital content. As we build “followers” on all our platforms, our reach also increases exponentially. Our Facebook “reach” (the people our posts were served to) grew from just under 85,000 in FY2015 to over 182,000 in FY2016. PhilaLandmarks admin staff maintain the main platforms, while each house site manager maintains their own Facebook page.

Social Media	
Facebook	3,586
Powel	578
Hill-Physick	203
Grumblethorpe	729
Historic Waynesborough	323
Instagram	1,113
Twitter	527
Total Followers	5,226

Our popular “Ghosts of the Mansion Tours” (Powel and Hill-Physick Houses) in partnership with *Ghost Tours of Philadelphia* continues to be a popular draw with over 600 tour-goers this year. With a visit from the *Ghost Hunters* (SyFy television series, check your local listings) at the Hill-Physick House (and that playful spirit in the basement) AND all of our houses making the “most-haunted-places-you-must-visit” lists thanks to VisitPhilly.com, Curbed Philadelphia and other online publications...we don't imagine interest in these tours dropping off anytime soon!



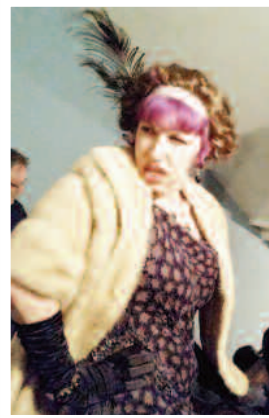
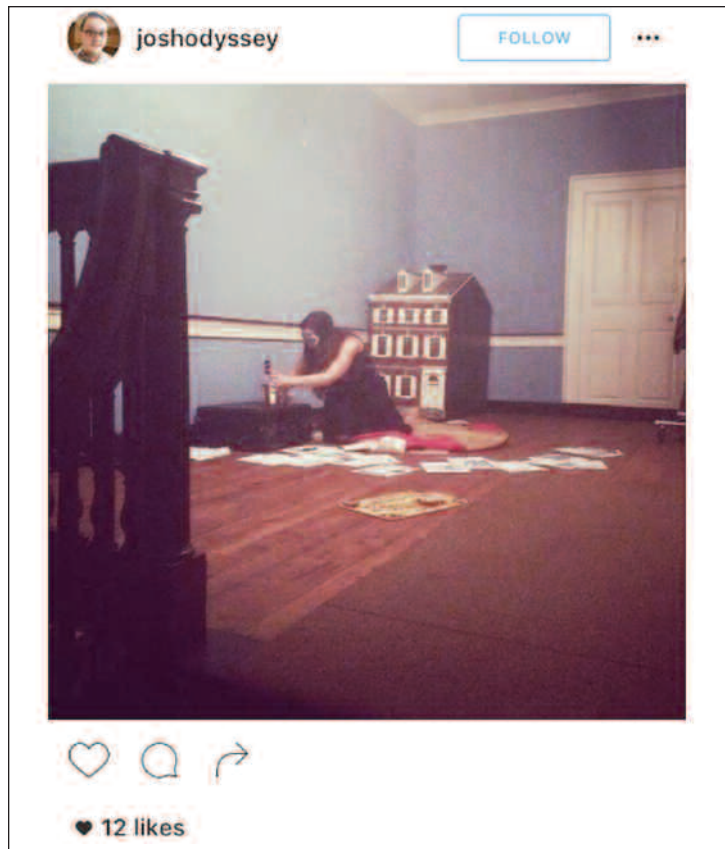
Henry Hill and his Madeira importing was featured in the May 31, 2016 issue of *Wine Spectator*.



Digital Outreach

We witnessed the power of social media during our FringeArts Shadow House production. We enjoyed great reviews and social media buzz on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, which drove ticket sales daily during the production.

A view of Shadow House in social media.



“We had the best time last night... We all agreed that we could [come] back and see it five more times because there were so many strings. It was great! And it was interesting to watch how folks engaged and stuck around after. The house felt so lively and alive. Congratulations on a great collaboration.” -**Kristi Poling, Barra Foundation program officer**

“Seeing Frances Wister portrayed in Powel House opera [is the] second most enjoyable thing I’ve ever done in a house museum” - **Seth Bruggeman, Public Historian, Temple University**

“...the secret moments you can capture through luck can be the most rewarding.” - **Joshua Millhouse/phindie, Sept 10, 2016**

“Even for the eclectic Fringe Festival, the magic of Shadow House is rare.” - **Mark Cofta/ Broad Street Review, Sept 12, 2016**

“ It will make you reflect on the mysteries of life, death, space, and time, the universal issues we all face across the centuries, and the impact our present actions will have on posterity.” - **Deb Miller/DC Metro Arts, Sept 13, 2016**



Road Scholar

PhilaLandmarks continues its 24-year partnership with Road Scholar (Elderhostel)—the largest educational non-profit travel program for mature adults. Through this program, PhilaLandmarks has become one of the largest supporters of our region’s cultural institutions. Programs such as *National Treasure of History and Heritage* and *World of Art* take advantage of Philadelphia’s stellar art museums, including our exclusive seminar program at the Barnes Foundation. We also visit historic Cape May which includes a popular birding program. Our newest program *Walking Discoveries in Philadelphia’s Neighborhoods*, has participants walking up to 6 miles a day, and engaging directly with the locals. *Topiaries & Pleasure Gardens and Botanical Gems in the Philadelphia Area* takes participants to a garden in Mt. Cuba, Delaware and Ladew Topiary Gardens in Maryland.

Praise for the *Walking Discoveries* program...“If you want to know Philly, this is the tour for you. In addition to the obvious high points...you will see the neighborhoods and out-of-way niches that make this a vibrant city. Very easy to find one’s way during free time. The locals are very polite, kind, and friendly.”

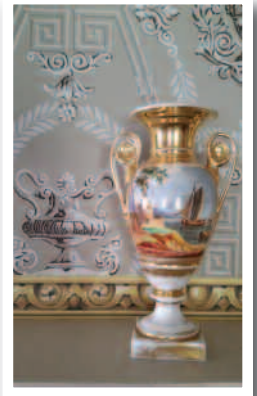
- Barbara, Class of 2016, Davis, CA

Praise for the *Cape May Birding* expedition...“This was our first Road Scholar trip, and it was a great experience! We are very much beginner bird watchers, and we learned so much...I would wholeheartedly recommend this trip to novices and experienced birders.

- Judy, Class of 2016, Edwardsville, IL



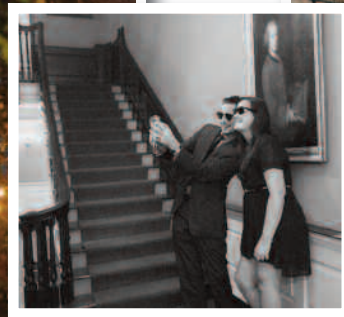
PhilaLandmarks Road Scholar brought in nearly 1000 visitors to our region in 2016, contributing \$740,000 to the local tourist economy, while also adding in \$35,400. to the PhilaLandmarks (net) earned income total.



Special Event Rentals

As rental events have become our largest earned revenue source, PhilaLandmarks works diligently to foster strategic relationships with caterers, event planners, and related vendors, who care for our properties as much as we do. The people who rent our properties aren’t looking for a cookie-cutter experience, and often request special tours for their attendees. Wedding couples are especially attached to the place they exchange their vows and they appreciate becoming part of the history of the house. In the coming year we will be launching a membership campaign geared towards our wedding couples.

Rental Events Held
Historic Waynesborough 56
Powel House 34
Hill-Physick 16
Grumblethorpe 2



**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016**

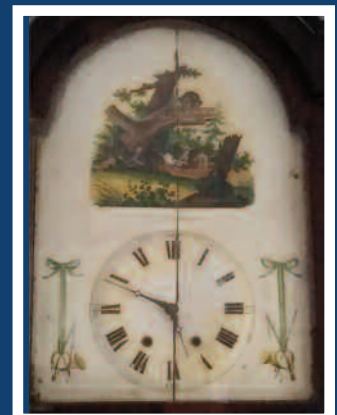
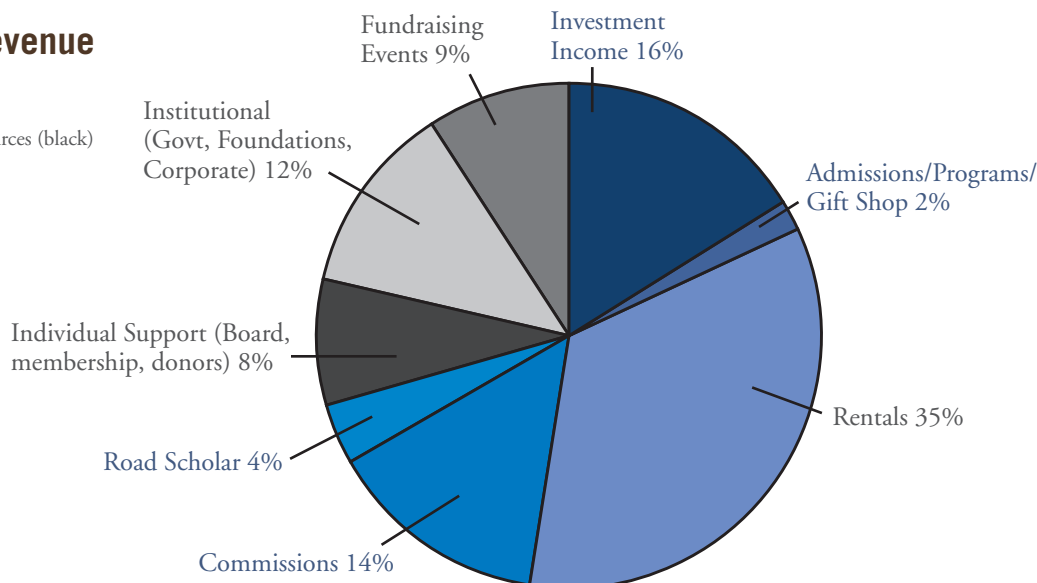
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenue And Support			
Admissions	13,789		13,789
Commissions	111,573		111,573
Contributions and Grants (gen. oper.)	86,313		86,313
Events Income (net of direct costs)	29,342	13,120	42,462
Grants and Contributions (restr.)	3,230	93,883	97,113
Interest and Dividend	36,911	24,377	61,288
Memberships	7,012		7,012
Museum Shop	1,548		1,548
Program Activities	24,897		24,897
Rental Income	273,145		273,145
Road Scholar	918,266		918,266
Unrealized Gain on Investments	28,520		28,520
Realized Gain on Investments	41,757		41,757
Net Assets Released from Restrictions			
Satisfaction of Restrictions	167,098		(167,098)
Total Revenue and Support	1,743,401	(35,718)	1,707,683
Expenses			
Program Services			
Road Scholar	882,688		82,688
Other Programs	382,252		382,252
Total Program Services	1,264,940		1,264,940
Support Services			
Administrative and General	270,393		270,393
Total Expenses	1,535,333		1,535,333
Changes in Net Assets	208,068	(35,718)	172,350
Net Assets, beginning of year	1,979,550	489,788	2,469,338
Net Assets, end of year	\$2,187,618	\$454,070	\$2,641,688



What a year 2016 was for PhilaLandmarks! We had one of our strongest financial years in recent memory. Our strong cash bottom line of \$40,000+ was due to strategic business relationships, along with increased revenue streams combined with tight monitoring of expenses. Our contributed revenue continued to hold steady after a large spike in 2014, while our earned revenue from rental events nearly doubled. The Physick House endowment saw a significant increase due to a strong market and the Powel House endowment had a generous boost from the funds raised from the Cokie Roberts event.

2016 Revenue Sources

contributed sources (black)
earned (blue)



PhilaLandmarks Donors October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016

Total Support – FY2016

The names listed here reflect total gifts, grants, contributions, memberships, restricted gifts, and fundraising events during our Fiscal Year 2016: October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016.

General Operating Grants

The Barra Foundation, \$25,000
Commonwealth of PA, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, \$18,789
The Philadelphia Foundation,
The Grumblethorpe Fund \$24,133



Education Programs Grants

Widener Memorial Foundation, \$10,010

Project and Program Grants

Historic Germantown (Save Our Site Grant) - Grumblethorpe, \$6,000
Philadelphia Cultural Fund - Grumblethorpe Farmstand, \$9,774
Drumcliff Foundation - Grumblethorpe Farmstand, \$1,000
The William Dietrich Foundation - the Physick Roof, \$215,000
For The Philadelphia Opera Collective's "Shadow House":
Charlotte Cushman Foundation
Brenna Geffers
Katherine Heaney
Mickey Herr
Jane and Steve Heumann
Roberta Kangilaski
Valerie Lutz

Gifts to Restricted Accounts

Powel Endowment Fund / POWEL 250 Events

Ms. Concha Alborg
Tim and Pam Alles
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Angelides
William and Sherrin Baky-Nessler
Roger and Dana Band
Dr. Richard Henry Bell and
Ms. Marion Janet Hanks-Bell
Beneficial Bank
Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Block
Robert P. Breathing, AIA
Judith Breslin
Robert Bryan, AIA and Julie Jensen Bryan
Robert Ciaruffoli, CPA
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Our members are the base of our support, year in and year out. This year, we streamlined membership into four categories:

Young Friend (\$25) = benefits for one individual 39 years or younger

Individual (\$50) = benefits for one individual 40 and above

Family (\$85) = benefits for 2 adults and all children 17 and under

Sustainer (\$100) = all family benefits plus 2 guest privileges for all access to our houses and events

Besides unlimited admission to our houses and priority access to our general events, we added a reciprocal membership with the Philadelphia History Museum. This includes free membership to the museum and free or reduced-rate fees for their special programming. You can now securely sign up and renew your memberships on our website.



85th Annual Meeting April 21, 2016

Held at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, with guest speaker, Nathaniel Popkin, historian & author who shared his thoughts about how Philadelphia inspires us all.



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Elizabeth Feld donated this Philadelphia neo-classical secretary/bookcase ca. 1830s to PhilaLandmarks. It is now on view at the Hill-Physick House.

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Celebrating our Founding Matriarch

Frances Anne Wister



Without Frances Anne Wister (1874-1956) there would be no Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks (PhilaLandmarks), an organization that, starting in 1931, set the standard as it spearheaded some of the earliest preservation efforts in Philadelphia. Frances is most often remembered for her love of music and especially her service to the Philadelphia Orchestra. But as the founder and earliest leader of PhilaLandmarks, we know she also had a deep and abiding love of the built environment of Philadelphia, especially as it pertained to celebrating and preserving the history of our city and our country.

Horace Wells Sellers said it best in his introduction to the *Philadelphia Survey* (1932): “While many people deplored the constant destruction and mutilation of our old buildings, little beyond an expression of regret took place until Miss Frances A. Wister, President of the Civic Club, having

become thoroughly aroused, decided to act.”

Philadelphia history is full of stories of the visionary men credited with creating modern day Philadelphia. If you walk along our streets you will find plaques and memorials honoring Charles Peterson, Edmund Bacon, and Mayor Richardson Dilworth, among others. These men are also featured in a number of biographies and books on preservation work. But what will you find of Frances Wister (on the street or in print) beyond an occasional mention of her fundraising work on behalf of the orchestra? Not much. And certainly, not a plaque or a memorial.

Through our research for our exhibit at the Philadelphia History Museum—*Saved! Preserving Old Philadelphia: 85 Years of The Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks*—we were reminded that Frances was not one to sit idly on the sidelines, rather she was in the room, twisting arms and making things happen. It was Frances who had the idea back in 1929 to develop a survey of Old Philadelphia. It wasn't just an idea, she raised the funds and moved it forward. Formally published as the *Philadelphia Survey* in 1931, this work predated Charles Peterson's 1933 proposal to the Library of Congress to document the built environment through the *Historic American Building Survey* (HABS), which became the basis for our nation's first federal preservation program.

Serving as the president of PhilaLandmarks for the last 25 years of her life, Frances would lead the charge to build awareness and preserve our city's iconic landmarks, including Independence Hall, the Second Bank, and Elfreth's Alley, among many others. Her advocacy in helping establish the Independence National Historic Park would ultimately set the stage for the redevelopment of Society Hill into one of our nation's most successful urban renewal projects. She was one of the earliest promoters of the “Society Hill” name. We would not be surprised if it was her original idea. We'll keep digging to find out!

The preservation work of Frances Wister is often overlooked. Her important contributions have been virtually erased. We hope our current research and exhibition will help ensure that Frances Anne Wister finds her rightful place among the canon of Philadelphia's leading preservationists.



Frances welcomes A. Atwater Kent (the guest speaker) to the opening ceremony of the Powel House Museum in 1938. Shortly after she would convince Kent to purchase the old Franklin Institute Building (current Philadelphia History Museum) on Seventh Street to protect it from demolition. He had purchased the Betsy Ross House the year previous, and would ultimately donate both to the City of Philadelphia.

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