



Northeast Philadelphia History Network  
sponsored by  
*Friends of Northeast Philadelphia History*  
**Meeting Notice**

**\*Zoom Only\***

**7:00 PM, Wednesday, January 7, 2026**

**Topic: *Sesqui! Greed, Graft, and the Forgotten World's Fair of 1926***

**Speaker: Tom Keels, Author**



**The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition of 1926**, held in South Philadelphia, was meant to be the greatest world's fair since the 1876 Centennial. Thanks to political corruption, greed, egotism, and the wettest summer on record, it became a crumbling, sodden, bankrupt mess, Philadelphia's "forgotten fair." The Sesqui served as a symbol for the city's monolithic Republican Organization, where one boss (Congressman William S. Vare, the "Duke of South Philadelphia") could kidnap an entire world's fair and transfer it from the newly completed Fairmount Parkway to the swamps of South Philly, his congressional district. After that, one mistake followed another, until the poorly attended world's fair became known as "The Flop Heard 'Round the World." *The Sesqui Sinks* also explores how the Sesqui became an unwitting battleground for many of the social struggles convulsing America in the 1920s: racism, anti-Semitism, women's rights, the Ku Klux Klan, eugenics, and Prohibition.

**Thomas H. Keels** is an author, lecturer, and commentator specializing in Philadelphia history, cemeteries, and architecture. Besides *Sesqui!*, he is the author or co-author of six published books, including *Wicked Philadelphia: Sin in the City of Brotherly Love*; *Forgotten Philadelphia: Lost Architecture of the Quaker City*; and *Philadelphia Graveyards and Cemeteries*

***Zoom Link***

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88392957115?pwd=uNjouaJpKGbaAF8kvhbKPLkNZq1lWZ.1>

Meeting ID: 883 9295 7115  
Passcode: 844807