

## East Falls Past – Castle Ringstetten

*The Fallser*, August, 2012 by Ellen Sheehan

Castle Ringstetten is located on Kelly Drive, above the Falls Bridge. It is the social club of the Undine Barge Club, located on Boat House Row, in Fairmount. The castle, which takes its name from the home of Prince Huldbrand, in “*The Legend of Undine*,” (also known as “*The Spirit of the Babbling Brooks*”) was erected in 1875. Designed by Frank Furness, the contractor being J.E. Bozorth, it was built at a cost of seventeen-hundred dollars.



The Castle was dedicated on May 13, 1876, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the organization of the Undine Barge Club, which was also designed by Frank Furness. The event was celebrated by a large number of members, accompanied by their friends, the entire party being taken to the Castle in the Steamer *Gazelle*. They were serenaded by a band of music, the house and grounds being beautifully illuminated with gaslights and Chinese lanterns and the rooms decorated with flags. The castle is used presently for social gatherings and monthly dinners by the members and their guest.

*The legend of Undine*, represents a water sprite, who seeks a soul through marriage to a human. The story proceeds towards the inevitable doom, because a human cannot marry a water sprite, nor a water sprite marry a human, without the conflict between earth and water destroying their happiness.

Castle Ringstetten and the Undine Barge Club buildings have been certified by the Philadelphia Historical Commission. In addition, as a part of Fairmount Park, they have been entered on the National Register of Historic Places. Incorporation in the Fairmount Park National Historic District affords the structures full protection as provided by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.