

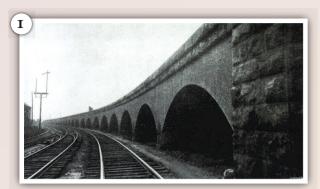


Friends of **The Furness Railroad District**

First Arrival Artist: Robert Nickle 2007

July 9, 1907The Pennsylvania Railroad's " Baltimore Accommodation " arrives at the newly completed Wilmington Railroad StationMarch 19, 2011The historic exhibit " Wilmington 's Railroad Heritage " is introduced in the Amtrak Station

A Celebration of Two Historic Dates



Construction on the viaduct, the largest part of the "Improvements" began in 1902. The street-level tracks were raised 15 to 20 feet on this massive four-mile granite block arcade, allowing the railroad to run high-speed passenger and freight tains through the city with no danger to pedestrians or street traffic.



Pennsylvania Railroad Office Building (1905), and the Wilmington Train Station (1907), comprise a unique campus of railroad architecture by renowned Philadelphia architect Frank Furness (1839-1912). Frequently commissioned by the nation's leading railroads, Furness left his creative mark at stations large and small throughout the Northeast, though few survive. Over his half-century career, which was interrupted by service in the Civil War, Furness developed a distinctively American style in which architectural elements were manipulated in proportion and scale in order to dramatize a building's function and character. Oversized arches, muscular moldings, and bold projecting elements distinguish his works, which were further enlivened by his idiosyncratic ornament that combined organic and geometric motifs. His Wilmington commissions included the former Security Trust and Safe Deposit Co. (1885) at the corner of Sixth and Market Streets, and the B&O Delaware Avenue Passenger Station (1886), demolished in 1960

Delaware Public Archives - 2007 NC-175



In 1900 the Pennsylvania Railroad began the "Wilmington Improvements" the new Station (#2), adjacent Office Building (#3) and the Viaduct. Furness' signature style featured colorful, textured surfaces created by the skillful combination of architectural styles and a daring combination of materials finished in different fashions.



In 1886 B&O RR hired Furness to design a line of over 30 new stations, shelters and other auxiliary structures from Baltimore to Philadelphia. Furness understood that commercial buildings were in direct competition with one another and he made his as aggressively eye-catching as possible.



The Furness Railroad District includes (#2) The Pennsylvania Railroad Wilmington Station (1907-08), (#3) The Pennsylvania Railroad Office Building (1905), (#1) The Wilmington Rail Viaduct (1902-1908), and (#5) The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Water Street Station (1886). Numbers 2, 3 and 5 are the only example of contiguous buildings designed by the Philadelphia architect Frank Furness still standing. In the course of his 45-year practice, Furness (1839-1912) designed more than 600 structures, including banks, office buildings, libraries, mansions, hotels, churches, and railroad stations. Of the 180 stations and other buildings designed by Furness for the Reading, the B&O and the PRR, 90% have been lost to changing tastes and diminishing railroad profits after WWII.



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www.FriendsOfFurness.org