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# 07 Miscellaneous Notes on the History of Government in Chester County

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## Miscellaneous Notes on the History of Government in Chester County

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This file contains assorted facts from Chester County history collected by students in the HIS480 "Computer methods of historical research" class at West Chester University. Each fact consists of specific information, a reference note to its source, and a date. The "facts" are organized in chronological order.

This file has not been completely proofread, nor have the sources been verified, so use this material with caution.

Collected by Jim Jones, David Flogaus, Kelly Kulp-Bosler, Mike Wolford and Bob Gialanella (Spring 1995). Additional information collected by Jim Jones, Robert Gregory, Robert Troutman, Nancy Hershey, Christopher Waychunas, Kenneth McFadden, John Morrison, Scott Harre and Daniel Cleary (Spring 1996). Last edited by Vincent Civiletti (April 29, 1996).

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1679 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 72.

The original Chester county courthouse was located at Upland (Chester) in 1679 and was known as the "House of Defense."

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1682 Source: Norma Jacob, editor, QUAKER ROOTS: THE STORY OF WESTERN QUARTERLY MEETING OF PHILADELPHIA YEARLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Kennett Square, Pa.: Graphics Standard, Inc, 1980), 1.

The first Quaker settlement in Pennsylvania was at Upland, a Swedish settlement on the banks of the Delaware River where modern Chester is located. The town was renamed in 1682 by William Penn when he arrived.

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1683 Source: Norma Jacob, editor, QUAKER ROOTS: THE STORY OF WESTERN QUARTERLY MEETING OF PHILADELPHIA YEARLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Kennett Square, Pa.: Graphics Standard, Inc, 1980), 2.

William Penn laid out Street Road (PA926) in a straight line to connect a number of Quaker communities.

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1684 Source: Norma Jacob, editor, QUAKER ROOTS: THE STORY OF WESTERN QUARTERLY MEETING OF PHILADELPHIA YEARLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Kennett Square, Pa.: Graphics Standard, Inc, 1980), 4.

William Penn was forced to return to England in 1684 to settle the boundary dispute with Lord Baltimore, who controlled Maryland.

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1685 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 72.

A second Chester county courthouse plus a prison were built in Chester in 1685.

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1711 Source: County Government and Archives in Pennsylvania, prepared by the Pennsylvania Historical Survey, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1947. p52

The County Commissioners were created in 1711 to relieve the courts of some taxation duties and became the "chief Assessing authorities".

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1724 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 72.

A third Chester county courthouse was constructed in Chester in 1724.

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1760 Source: County Government and Archives in Pennsylvania, prepared by the Pennsylvania Historical Survey, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1947. p52

"Provision for the election of local Assessors was made as early as 1760" ( 1760,VI St. at L. sec. 3), (1835 P.L. 46 sec. 8)

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1766 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 72.

As early as 1766, there were complaints about the location

of the courthouse at the extreme eastern end of the county, which was inaccessible to residents at the western end. Public opinion divided into two groups, the "removalists" and the "non-removalists."

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1780 Source: County Government and Archives in Pennsylvania, prepared by the Pennsylvania Historical Survey, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1947. p52

The office of County Assessor was abolished in 1780.

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1780 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 72.

In 1780, the state assembly gave permission to move the courthouse. A piece of land was purchased in what was known at the time as "West Downington."

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1784/05/01 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 73.

In 1784, the Assembly authorized construction of buildings "not at a greater distance than one mile and a half from the Turk's Head tavern in the township of Goshen, and to the west or southwest of said Turk's Head Tavern." This prevented Downingtown from becoming the county seat.

Land was purchased on 1 May 1784 from Benjamin Trego of Goshen and work began immediately on a courthouse and jail.

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1785/03/30 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 73.

First the winter delayed construction of the court house in West Chester, and then the non-removalists succeeded in convincing the state assembly to halt construction on 30 March 1785. A group from Chester under the leadership of Major John Harper went to Turk's Head to destroy the unfinished buildings ("Harper's invasion). A group from Turk's Head, under the leadership of Colonel Hannum, Colonel Isaac Taylor and Mr. Marshall, gathered ammunition and provisions and surrounded the unfinished buildings to defend them. The unfinished building was fortified and the men took positions with muskets. Marshall and Taylor commanded the upper story while Underwood and Patton commanded the lower story. Hannum directed the entire operation.

p74 The non-removalists spent the night at the "General Greene" and reached Turk's Head early in the morning. They set up their cannon about 200 yards southeast of the Quaker Meeting House, but were reluctant to begin firing. After several

hours, "some pacific people" convinced both sides to withdraw without bloodshed, so the non-removalist cannon were redirected and fired in celebration of the treaty. At the next session of the state assembly, the Suspension Act was repealed and construction continued.

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1786/11/28 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 75.

In September 1786, prisoners were moved to the new jail, and on 28 November 1786, the first court session opened in West Chester.

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1789 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 75.

The people of Chester used the new courthouse in West Chester until 1789, but complained about the distance to travel and the "poor conditions of entertainment." In 1789, the state assembly authorized the creation of Delaware county from the eastern portion of Chester County, with Chester as its county seat. They defined the boundary between the two counties with a complicated formula that used the Brandywine Creek from the Delaware state line as far as Chadd's Ford, then zigzagged northeast so as not to divide anyone's property, passed to the north of Newtown, Edgemont and Radnor townships (included in Delaware County) until it met the Montgomery County line. .

p76 One bizarre consequence of using the Brandywine Creek to define the boundary was a small piece of land bounded by the Creek and the Delaware State line (between US202 and PA100). Legally, it belongs to Birmingham Township in Chester County, but it is completely cut off by Birmingham Township, Delaware County.

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1794 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 108.

Newspapers and founding dates in West Chester: "The Gazette" (1794)

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1797 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 108.

Newspapers and founding dates in West Chester: "The Literary Museum" (1797)

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1798/04/01 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF

CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA:  
Horace F. Temple, 1926), 92.

The first post office in the county was established at  
Downingtown on 1 April 1798, under postmaster Hunt Downing.

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1799 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF  
WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE  
BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ...  
(West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James,  
printer, 1857), 21.

The first fire companies in West Chester were the West  
Chester Fire Company, founded 1799

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1799 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY  
PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 31.

"West Chester.--Located in the eastern part of the county,  
it was incorporated in 1799 and was originally called  
"Turk's Head."

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1799 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF  
WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE  
BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ...  
(West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James,  
printer, 1857), 19.

On 20 March 1799, the town of West Chester was elevated to a  
borough.

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1800s Source: Frazier, E. Franklin, BLACK BOURGEOISIE: THE  
RISE OF A NEW MIDDLE CLASS (New York: The Free  
Press, 1957), 14.

Many free Negroes obtained freedom by being permitted to  
"hire their time" and work as "semi-free" laborers. With  
the money earned from this, they were able to buy their  
freedom.

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1800 Source: Heathcote, Charles William. "History of Chester  
County Pennsylvania" (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple,  
1926), 215-216.

In 1800, the present site of Coatesville was a small cluster  
of houses and shops, known as Bridge Town. Much of the land  
was owned by Moses Coates. His grandfather (also Moses  
Coates) had emigrated there in 1717. His grandfather had  
been an Irish Quaker.

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1802 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its

People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 884.

A small market was built behind the public buildings in West Chester in 1802, but it was not very successful because merchants preferred to visit their customers at home. (JJ: probably using wagons) The town built a bigger market on Market Street in 1831 and enlarged it several times in the subsequent 20-25 years.

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1804/01/01 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 92.

The West Chester post office was established on 1 January 1804.

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1805 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ... (West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James, printer, 1857), 23.

West Chester's first criminal execution, of a black woman named Hannah Miller, took place in 1805

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1809 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 108.

Newspapers and founding dates in West Chester: "Chester and Delaware Federalist" (1809)

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1812 Source: Heathcote, Charles William. "History of Chester County Pennsylvania" (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 215-216.

1812 - The Coatesville post office was created in 1812 and Moses Coates became the first postmaster.

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1814 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ... (West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James, printer, 1857), 28.

The Bank of West Chester was founded in 1814 on High Street almost directly across from the court house.

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1818 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926),



108.

Newspapers and founding dates in West Chester: "Village Record" (1818)

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1823 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ... (West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James, printer, 1857), 28.

West Chester received its first sidewalks in 1823. They were made of brick. The first MacAdam streets were laid in 1829-1830.

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1823 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 885.

In 1823, the town began to systematically lay brick sidewalks.

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1827 Source: J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY, PA, WITH GENEALOGICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES, Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881) p359

In 1827, the Legislature authorized canal commissioners to make examinations through Chester and Lancaster Counties for a railroad to connect with the Pennsylvania Canal. In 1828, these commissioners were directed to locate and put under contract a railroad through Chester County via Lancaster to Columbia.

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1829-1830 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 885.

In 1829 and 1830, Gay and Church Streets in West Chester were paved for the first time.

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1830 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ... (West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James, printer, 1857), 23.

West Chester's second criminal execution, of a black man named Edward Williams, took place in 1830.

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1830/12/11 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West

Chester, January 20, 1898), 1, in West Chester University special collections.

A public meeting was held at the Turk's Head Hotel on Dec. 11, 1830 concerning the building of West Chester's first railroad.

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1830/12/22 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West Chester, January 20, 1898), 1, in West Chester University special collections.

A second public meeting was held on Dec. 22, 1830 to discuss the possibility of building a railroad to West Chester. Joseph Wilson was appointed engineer to investigate possibilities. Judge Izaak Darlington presided at both meetings.

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1830/12/24 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West Chester, January 20, 1898), 1, in West Chester University special collections.

On December 24, 1830, a third public meeting concerning a West Chester railroad link resolved to construct a railway from WC to intersect with the Columbia Railway line, and chose Dr. William Darlington to head the local committee.

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1831 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 884.

West Chester built a bigger market on Market Street in 1831 and enlarged it several times in the subsequent 20-25 years.

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1831/01/08 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West Chester, January 20, 1898), 1, in West Chester University special collections.

On January 8, 1831, John (or Joseph) Wilson presented a satisfactory route approved by the committee. The estimated cost was \$88, 021.29 A charter was obtained on July 18 1831. It was the first rr charter granted by the state which was carried into effect.

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1831/03/28 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West Chester, January 20, 1898), 2, in West Chester University special collections.

On the 28 March, 1831, a board of directors was elected for

the West Chester Railroad. John (or Joseph) Wilson was appointed the chief engineer. By May 26, the contracts were let for grading the surface in mile-length sections.

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1832/09/18 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West Chester, January 20, 1898), 2, in West Chester University special collections.

At a board meeting on Sept. 18, 1832, it was announced by John Baily that the entire nine-mile track would be completed within sixteen months.

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1833 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ... (West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James, printer, 1857), 21.

The second fire company in West Chester, the Good Will Fire company, was founded in 1833.

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1833/10/18 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West Chester, January 20, 1898), 4, in West Chester University special collections.

The first track superintendent was J. Lacey Darlington, who was paid \$1.00 daily.

On Oct. 18, 1833, the PA Canal Commission completed a railroad line to the head of the inclined planes, located four miles from Philadelphia on the other side of the Schuylkill. Passengers were conveyed the rest of the way by stages.

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1834 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ... (West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James, printer, 1857), 23.

West Chester's third criminal execution, of a black man named Charles Bowman, took place in 1834.

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1837 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 32.

Illustration: engraved picture showing the intersection of High and Market Streets in 1837. (Courtesy of the National Bank of Chester County) JJ: It appears to show the courthouse on the left, with a clock tower and weather vane

similar to the present one. That makes me think that this picture must be of the view towards the north. However, it must be the old courthouse, since this picture is dated earlier than 1846 (see notes from p76). Note the use of stone slabs to provide a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of the dirt streets.

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1837 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West Chester, January 20, 1898), 6, in West Chester University special collections.

The Chester County Bank lost half of its capital in the general crash of 1837. As a consequence, the West Chester Railroad suffered major losses and fell heavily in debt.

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1838 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ... (West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James, printer, 1857), 21.

The third fire company in West Chester, the Fame Fire Company, was founded in 1838.

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1838 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 884.

The West Chester street plan expanded in 1838 to include land north of the Matlack property on the north side; beyond the "old Turk's Head or Patton estate" on the east side, and beyond John Rutter's land on the northwest.

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1839 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West Chester, January 20, 1898), 6, in West Chester University special collections.

No dividends were paid to West Chester Railroad stockholders during 1839. The stockholders were not happy. The West Chester Railroad did receive some breaks from the state on toll rates for use on the Columbia Road. The directors were apparently maligned by the Directors. Since its inception, the West Chester Railroad paid the state \$30, 000 in tolls.

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1842-1910 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 108.

Newspapers and founding dates in West Chester: "The Jeffersonian" (1842-1910)

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1844/01/15 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING  
IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West  
Chester, January 20, 1898), 7, in West Chester  
University special collections.

At the annual meeting of the West Chester Railroad directors  
on January 15, 1844, a new board of directors appointed  
Philip P. Sharples and Dr. Isaac Thomas as an executive  
committee. Sharples become obsessed by railroad matters.

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1844/01/31 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING  
IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West  
Chester, January 20, 1898), 7, in West Chester  
University special collections.

1/31/1844, the Executive Committee of Philip P. Sharples and  
Dr. Isaac Thomas as an executive appointed Samuel M. Penten  
as the superintendent of the West Chester Railroad.

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1844/05/25 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING  
IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West  
Chester, January 20, 1898), 7, in West Chester  
University special collections.

An agreement was reached with Canal Commission for a rate of  
\$15 a train for running from the West Chester intersection  
of the Columbia-Philadelphia Railroad to the inclined plane.  
It started operating on 5/25/1844. Two second-hand 8-  
wheeled passenger cars were bought for service. Then two  
new cars were commissioned from the W.E. Allison Company.  
The baggage on these cars was carried beneath the seat.

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1845 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF  
WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE  
BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ...  
(West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James,  
printer, 1857), 23.

West Chester's fourth criminal execution, and the first of a  
white man, named Jabez Boyd, took place in 1845.

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1845/05/26 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING  
IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West  
Chester, January 20, 1898), 7, in West Chester  
University special collections.

On May 26, 1845, the Canal Commission agreed to haul West  
Chester Railroad trains for only \$6000 annually. (JJ: that  
is 400 trains at the 1844 rate. Was it actually an  
increase? Was it due to the introduction of steam  
locomotives?) Philip Sharples reported completed contracts

for relaying for the junction from West Chester to the junction.

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1846 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 75.

The original West Chester court house was used until 1846 when the present courthouse was built.

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1847 Source: Jackson, Luther Porter, FREE NEGRO LABOR & PROPERTY HOLDING IN VIRGINIA, 1830-1860. (New York: Antheneum, 1969), 155

In 1847, Alexandria was pulled away from the District of Columbia and became part of the state of Virginia. Many land holding free Negroes after this annexation became disillusioned by the "obnoxious" laws of Virginia. For this reason, many free Negroes migrated to Washington D.C. and northern cities.

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1851 Source: Darlington, William, DIRECTORY OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER, FOR 1857: CONTAINING A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE BOROUGH FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME ... (West Chester, PA: Wood & James, Publishers, E.F. James, printer, 1857), 23.

West Chester's fifth criminal execution, and the second of a white man, named George Pharaoh, took place in 1851.

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1855s/mid Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 468.

Robert F. Hoopes was the Chester County Recorder of Deeds from 1854/11/10 to 1857/11/09.

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1857 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 885.

By 1857, almost all of the sidewalks in West Chester were bricked, and its streets were much improved.

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1857/08/01 Source: Alfred Sharpless, A HISTORY OF RAILROADING IN CHESTER COUNTY in the "Daily Local News" (West Chester, January 20, 1898), 10, in West Chester University special collections.

The Pennsylvania Company bought the rights to the state railroads and canals at auction on August 1, 1857.

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1859 Source: "Announcement: Nominee for Recorder of Deeds" in  
"Daily Local News," (West Chester:September 7, 1886)

Sharpless M. Paxson moved to West Chester in 1859 at the age  
of 12. He stayed for the rest of his life.

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1860s Source: Frazier, E. Franklin, BLACK BOURGEOISIE: THE  
RISE OF A NEW MIDDLE CLASS (New York: The Free  
Press,1957), 136

Many slaveholders set up separate residences for their black  
mistresses and some even lived with them monogamously since  
marriage between the races was illegal.. ( Could be the  
reason why Moses Hepbuirns white father is not in the  
Alexandria censuses in the early 1800s, because if he was  
monogamous he would not qualify for the census since you had  
to be the head of a household.)

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1860-1865 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and  
its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History  
Company, 1898), 345 & 347.

Chester County underground railway agents included Norris  
Maris (perhaps B53-3 in FBS) of West Vincent Township.

p347 In West Chester, George Maris (perhaps B53-11) acted as the  
local underground railway agent when he was a young man:  
"who, as a lad, drew many a map of the road from there to  
Elijah F. Pennypacker's place" (near Phoenixville).

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1861/08/23 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF  
CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA:  
Horace F. Temple, 1926), 108.

"The Jeffersonian" (1842-1910) was one of only a few  
northern papers that supported the South during the civil  
war. A mob attacked its office and partially wrecked it (no  
date given). On 23 August 1861, US Marshall William  
Millward ordered the newspaper closed, but after a protest  
and lawsuit, the newspaper was allowed to reopen on 26  
October 1861. The Postmaster General Blair barred "The  
Jeffersonian" from using the mails to distribute its issues,  
but it continued in operation until 1910.

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1862 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its  
People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company,  
1898), 290.

The population of Chester County was 77,000, and the  
population of the state of Pennsylvania was 2,900,000 in  
1862 when Lincoln instituted the military draft during the

civil war. (What this 1898 book calls the "war of the rebellion.")

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1863/03/01 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 294.

Black soldiers were drafted for the first time in the USA on 1863/03/01.

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1866  
NOTE W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and Source: ork: The Union History Company, 1898), 977.

In 1865 or 1866, George B. Thomas joined the firm and the name changed to "Hoopes Brothers & Thomas."

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1867 Source: Heathcote, Charles William. "History of Chester County Pennsylvania" (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 215-216.

1867 - Coatesville became a borough. First election of officers: William B. Morrison, Abram Gibbons, Craig Ridgeway, Richard Strode, William T. hunt, Joseph Suydam.

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1870 Source: "Announcement: Nominee for Recorder of Deeds" in "Daily Local News," (West Chester:September 7, 1886)

Sharpless M. Paxson began to work in the West Chester Recorder's office in 1870. He was a staunch Republican

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1872 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 108.

Newspapers and founding dates in West Chester: "The Daily Local News" (1872).

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1874-1888 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 967.

Josiah Hoopes served as the recording secretary of the Chester County Agricultural Society from 1874-1888 (JJ: His mother died in 1887; father died in 1888). The CCAS disappeared in 1895 when the West Chester State Normal School purchased the fairgrounds and declined to hold the annual agricultural fair.



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1876/09/28 Source: J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, HISTORY  
OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA:WITH GENEALOGICAL  
AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES (Philadelphia: Louis H  
Everts, 1881), 373.

Prior to Sharpless M. Paxson, the office of Recorder of  
Deeds was held by a man named Edwin Bateman. Bateman died  
on August 28th, 1876. Paxson was his highest ranking  
subordinate at the time, so he was appointed to fill the  
position until January of 1878. (Note that normally, this  
was an elected position.

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1882/04/04 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
79.

F.A. Tencate Esq., Cashier of the Phoenixville Iron Works,  
brings a suit to civil court against John Diamond regarding  
a rental property in Cottage Row (#?). The suit contends  
that rent is due and unpaid by the defendant John Diamond in  
the amount of \$31.50. A summons was issued 1882/04/08, with  
a judgment rendered in favor of Phoenixville Iron Works.  
John Diamond was ordered to give up peaceable possession of  
said premises and the sum of \$31.50, plus \$1.92 as cost of  
the suit.

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1882/04/11 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
81.

F.A. Tencate Esq., Cashier of the Phoenixville Iron Works,  
brings a suit to civil court against Michael Connily  
regarding a rental property in Puddler's Row (#?). The suit  
contends that rent is due and unpaid by the defendant  
Michael Connily in the amount of \$61.31. A summons was  
issued 1882/04/15 at 10 A.M. Whereabouts of the tenant are  
unknown, having moved away 1882/04/12, according to the  
Constable. A judgment was rendered in favor of Phoenixville  
Iron Works. Defendant Connily was found to be indebted to  
said corporation in the sum of \$61.31, plus \$1.97 as cost of  
the suit.

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1882/04/17 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
82.

F.A. Tencate Esq., Cashier of the Phoenixville Iron Works,  
brings a suit to civil court against John McAdams regarding  
a rental property in Puddlers" Row (#?). The suit contends  
that rent is due and unpaid by the defendant John McAdams in  
the amount of \$31.12. A summons was issued 1882/04/17,  
retrievable 1882/04/22 at 10 A.M. A judgment was entered  
that the defendant delivered up peaceable possession of said  
premises and the sum of \$31.12, plus \$1.77 as cost of the  
suit.

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1882/04/28 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
82.

F.A. Tencate Esq., Cashier of the Phoenixville Iron Works, brings a suit to civil court against Michael Keenan regarding a rental property in Puddler's Row (#?). The suit contends that rent is due and unpaid by the defendant John McAdams in the amount of \$16.72. A summons was issued 1882/04/28, retrievable 1882/05/03. A judgment was rendered in favor of Phoenixville Iron Works. Defendant Keenan was ordered to give up peaceable possession of said premises and the sum of \$16.72, plus \$1.77 as cost of the suit.

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1882/04/28 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
83.

F.A. Tencate Esq., Cashier of the Phoenixville Iron Works, brings a suit to civil court against Thomas McAnnay regarding a rental property in Puddlers" Row (#?). The suit contends that rent is due and unpaid by the defendant Thomas McAnnay in the amount of \$14.24. A summons was issued 1882/04/28, retrievable 1882/05/03. A judgment was rendered in favor of Phoenixville Iron Works. Defendant McAnnay was ordered to give up peaceable possession of said premises and the sum of \$14.24, plus \$2.02 as cost of the suit.

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1882/03/07 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
117.

James Halt, agent for the Phoenixville Iron Works, brings a suit to civil court against David Signett regarding a rental property at #22 Frame Row. A summons was issued 1882/03/07, retrievable 1882/03/12. The suit was discontinued, with no further information listed.

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1882/03/07 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
117.

James Halt, agent for the Phoenixville Iron Works, brings a suit to civil court against James Doran regarding a rental property at #5 Red Row. A summons was issued 1882/03/07, retrievable 1882/03/12. The suit was discontinued, with no further information listed.

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1887-1890 Source: "Obituary of Sharpless M. Paxson" in "Daily  
Local News," (West Chester: May 5, 1930).

In tribute form: they said of Sharpless M. Paxson, "filled with credit the office of Recorder of Deeds of Chester County" particularly his excellent penmanship. He was a "paragon of neatness and accuracy."

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1887-1890 Source: "Obituary of Sharpless M. Paxson" in "Daily  
Local News," (West Chester: May 5, 1930)

Sharpless M. Paxson was elected to a term as Recorder of  
Deeds from 1887 to 1890 following Richard H. Plank.  
Sharpless M. Paxson was always a republican who remained  
"loyal to principles of the party."

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1889/02/13 Source: Daily Local News (February 13, 1889)

Mrs. Lamborn, the woman who took care of the PRR station at  
North Matlack Street, reported to Officer Gheen that she had  
trouble with rowdy "colored" loiterers.

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1890/12/10 Source: Daily Local News (December 10, 1890)

Loitering at the PRR station was greatly reduced in recent  
weeks.

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1891/09/03-1891/12/08 Source: Elizabeth M. McGlone vs. The  
Phoenixville Iron Works in Chester  
County Appearance Docket #55, 73.

On 1891/09/03, Elizabeth M. McGlone filed a complaint in  
court against the Phoenixville Iron Works for the wrongful  
death of her husband, John McGlone. The defendant,  
Phoenixville Iron Works, pleads "Not Guilty" on 1891/09/23.  
On 1891/11/09 it is agreed that Thomas M. Baldwin, Barclay  
Lear, and John D. Mullin shall act as arbiters, hearing the  
case 1891/12/07-08.

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1891/09/03 Source: Plaintiff's Statement: Elizabeth M.  
McGlone vs. The Phoenixville Iron Works

In her statement, Elizabeth M. McGlone claims that her  
husband John McGlone was killed through negligence on the  
part of the defendant on 1891/06/25. Elizabeth M. McGlone  
has two children, Joseph and Lizzie, the latter being  
between 15 and 16 years old and has been an invalid for 6  
years by reason of a spinal affliction. This suit is  
brought on her behalf.

John McGlone died as a result of a lift accident, which the  
plaintiff claims was of "extraordinary negligent and  
dangerous construction." The lift was allowed to be run  
unoccupied as well as be operated by a boy aged under 14  
years. Because of negligence and the fact that her family  
is now deprived of their support, Elizabeth M. McGlone is  
bringing suit against Phoenixville Iron Works for damages in  
the amount of \$10,000.

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1892/03/30 Source: Daily Local News" (March 30, 1892)

John J. Pinkerton was the attorney for the PRR.

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1892/08/01 Source: Plaintiff's Statement: Mary Steinberger  
vs. The Phoenixville Iron Works

In the statement, it is noted that Mary Steinberger has two children, John B. Jr., 3 years, and Sarah, age 3 weeks. It is claimed that Mary has suffered the loss of her husband who was "constantly earning and in receipt of good wages, supporting and providing said plaintiff and her children and affording them a comfortable livelihood and maintenance." Suit is brought for damages in the amount of \$20,000.

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1892/09/02 Source: "What I Saw at the Station at West  
Chester" reprinted from the "Pottstown Ledger" of  
Wednesday, in "Daily Local News" (September 2,  
1892).

This article describes the procession of people who used the water cooler at the PRR station, including local leaders.

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1892/late Source: "Obituary of Sharpless M. Paxson" in "Daily  
Local News," (West Chester: May 5, 1930)

During the Homestead Riots near Pittsburgh, PA in the early 1890s (JJ: the strike at the Homestead Coal mines began June 20, 1892), Sharpless M. Paxson led the members of company I, 6th regiment National Guard of Pennsylvania in the coal districts of the state and remained on duty throughout insurrection.

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1892/01/20 Source: Daily Local News (January 20, 1892)

After the borough of West Chester decided to extend East Niels Street past the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks to the borough line at Bolmar Street, a jury awarded damages of \$300 to A. D. Sharples and \$105 to Pennsylvania Railroad.

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1892/10/26 Source: "Daily Local News" (October 26, 1892)

Following a lawsuit initiated by his wife, John Doran was declared to be a lunatic even though he was not present at the trial. John Doran was a street cleaner for West Chester who managed to save his money and acquire a small fortune (roughly \$4000). After his son James died of typhoid in 1889, John Doran went to Nebraska in 1891, then returned to get half of his money and left for Nebraska again, leaving the rents from his properties to support his wife. She engaged a lawyer, Robert E. Monaghan, to have her husband declared incompetent before he could take anymore of his

money away. Another lawyer, Wilmer W. MacElree, represented John Doran's interests, but several witnesses, including Doran's son Lawrence, declared that John Doran had begun to act strangely ever since his son James had died. Only Thomas Furlong, a cousin of John Doran, testified on his behalf.

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1893 Source: Pamphlet Laws: Laws of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1893.

Act No. 281: This act ordered the Clerk of Orphans Court to be responsible for the registering of births and deaths in the county. The records must be updated semi-annually. It will be the duty of parents, guardians and all others involved to supply information concerning births and deaths to the Assessors who will collect and return the information to the Clerk of Orphans Court at the same time the Assessor returns his Assessments of property to the County Commissioner along with a written oath of authenticity. The County Commissioner will supply appropriate books to the Clerk of Orphans Court in which the information will be entered.

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1893/02/28 Source: Daily Local News (February 28, 1893)

After John Doran returned from Nebraska to defend himself, he was declared to be "not insane." Doran accused his wife of plotting to take his money, and said that he had asked her to accompany him to Nebraska.

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1893/05/01 Source: Daily Local News (December 20, 1893), in Chester County Historical Society.

Starting on May 1, 1893 birth and death statistics were compiled twice a year by the Assessors, the first period covered May 1st to Oct. 30th and the second Nov. 1st to April 30th.

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1893/12/20 Source: Daily Local News, Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pa., 1893/12/20.

"In accordance with an act of the Legislature passed at its last sessions, a register will hereafter be kept of all births and deaths in Chester county. The precinct Assessors who make their rounds twice a year are required to make a return of all births and deaths and file it with the Clerk of the Courts. It is made the duty of the latter officer to prepare a book and keep a careful record of all these returns. This is the first day on which such returns are expected to be made, but they will come in at intervals as may suit the convenience of the Assessors."

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1894/03/03 Source: Daily Local News (March 3, 1894)

There was a penny scale at the train station, but it was out of order. The author asked if this was due to something he observed some time ago, when a group of small boys put a single penny in the scale, and then each jumped on in place of the previous boy before the scale could reset. In this way, they all got weighed for a single penny.

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1895/03/18 Source: Daily Local News (March 18, 1895)

This was a complaint about "colored" boys who loafed at the train station, used bad language and littered the floor with peanut shells.

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1895/12/21 Source: Daily Local News, Chester County  
Historical Society, West Chester, Pa.,  
1895/12/21.

Tax Assessors. The latter have many more duties now than formerly. Besides making a return of all taxable persons and all property subject to taxation and the number of persons liable to be called upon for military service, as formerly, they have now to make return of all births and deaths, and next spring will have to make return of all children of school age. So far as the return of births and deaths are concerned the Assessors have first to show them in the Commissioner's Office and have the number taken account of an element in making up their pay, as they are paid a certain amount for each birth and death properly returned. The sheets on which they are tabulated are then filed with the Clerk of the Courts, whose duty it is to have them all recorded in a book or books kept for that purpose."

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1896 Source: "Obituary of Sharpless M. Paxson" in "Daily Local News," (West Chester: May 5, 1930)

Sharpless M. Paxson served as the commander of the "Old Wayne Fencibles" Company I, Sixth Regiment. He showed continued interest in the unit even after he became too old to remain active. During the Spanish War, Company I went to field as a part of the US infantry. Sharpless M. Paxson organized company M of the PA reserve guard "in order that the neighborhood might have protection while the gallant young men, many of whom he had trained, were out of town".

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1897 Source: "Obituary of Sharpless M. Paxson" in "Daily Local News," (West Chester: May 5, 1930)

Sharpless M. Paxson served as the captain of the Young men's Republican club "a marching organization" till 1897.

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1898 Source: W. W. Thompson, editor, County Pennsylvania and its People (Chicago and New York: The Union History Company, 1898), 349.

"West Chester was known far and wide as being friendly to the slave ... it is largely for this reason that so many colored people have made and now make this city their home. They now constitute about one fourth of the population, have a ward of the city practically all to themselves, and have had representatives in the Council." (JJ: This was in 1898. See population statistics from p484.)

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1901/10/24 Source: Chester County Sheriff's Deed Book 14, 167.

Elisha G. Cloud sued Harry M. Burns for an unpaid debt and won. As a result, Cloud was able to purchase the property at 390-392 East Niels Street including two houses, owned by Burns, for \$1500.

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1901/12/16 Source: Daily Local News (December 17, 1901)

Fire destroyed the "small one-story frame building on Franklin street south of Linden street, occupied for years by the late Patrick King and his wife Ellen." The fire broke out at 10pm on 16 December. An alarm was sounded from Box 33 at the corner of Matlack and Lacy Streets, and although it was too late to save the house, the Fame Fire company got a chance to practice with "its chemical cart."

Mrs. King had left the previous Saturday for her former home in Dublin, Ireland, so she was not at home when the blaze broke out. "It is supposed that the fire was caused by some of the boys of the southern portion of town. Mrs. King had her own troubles with them and many of them have been previously arrested and fined by the Burgess for molesting her."

The value of the house was estimated at \$500 and the value of the furnishings at \$100.

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1905/11/23 Source: "Daily Local News" in Chester County Historical Society.

J. Preston Thomas dies of illness. Elected to the Directors of the Poor in 1887. Graduate of Haverford College. 1870 elected director of National Bank of Chester County. V.P. of bank 1895/01/11, 1901/11/01 made President of Bank. On Board of Trustees of the West Chester Normal School. Helped found Chester County Hospital, and their Board of Mangers. Member of the Downingtown Friends.

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1914/05/30 Source: "Profile Piece on Sharpless M. Paxson as

Justice of the Peace" in "West Chester Star,"  
(West Chester: May 30, 1914)

This article discussed Sharpless M. Paxson's role as a Justice of the Peace in West Chester. It described him as having heard thousands of cases, and having earned respect for his impartiality in all matters. His jurisdiction was both in the criminal and civil cases. Before becoming Justice, he was in the office of Recorder of Deeds, and served in the borough council. The article said that Sharpless M. Paxson was "still in his prime, (67) is fond of hunting, fishing and outdoor sports, and is one of our most wide awake and progressive citizens."

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1915 Source: Heathcote, Charles William. "History of Chester County Pennsylvania" (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 215-216.

In 1915, Coatesville was chartered as a city.

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1919/08/21 Source: "Notice of Sharpless Jr. acceptance into the Army" in "Daily Local News," (West Chester: August 21, 1919)

Sharpless Jr., who was living in Schnectady NY at the time, sent word to his father that he had been accepted into the "National Army from the empire state". He mentioned that his employers were not pleased with losing him, but he was willing to go. However, he was sorry that he would not be going with the Pennsylvanians.

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1926 Source: Charles William Heathcote, HISTORY OF CHESTER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA (West Chester, PA: Horace F. Temple, 1926), 31.

The present population of West Chester is 13,409, is the county seat of Chester County.

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1927/05/20 Source: Eightieth Birthday piece on Justice Paxson" in "Daily Local News," (West Chester: May 20, 1927).

Paxson's term as Justice of the Peace was to expire that year, but he wanted to continue in the role. He was quoted as saying "There is one thing that I have always conceded, and that is when a person reaches that age of eighty years, I consider they are living on borrowed capital".

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1929/03/27 Source: Daily Local News (March 27, 1929)

Twelve small boys who called themselves the "Riggstown Gang" went before West Chester Burgess George J. Brinton for stealing iron (including motorcycle parts) from a garage



behind Frank Stancato's house on Lacy Street. They were lectured and their parents were made to pay damages.

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1930/05

NOTE "Obituary of Sharpless M. Paxson" in "Daily Local News," (West ChesterSource: , 1930)

Sharpless M. Paxson was a life-long resident of West Chester who, even in later life, regarded as "one of the most energetic and aggressive of her elderly citizens."

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1930/05/05           Source: "Obituary of Sharpless M. Paxson" in "Daily Local News," (West Chester: May 5, 1930)

At his death in 1930, Sharpless M. Paxson owned extensive property, including a number of houses. At one time, he owned most of the land North of Price Street, south of Union and west of Wayne. (SEE ATTACHED MAP indicating size and location...)

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1931/09/11           Source: "Roaring Oil Blaze Perils Crown Here; Three Are Injured" in DLN (September 12, 1931), 1 & 10.

This is the account of the "Goose Creek Fire" which spread from East Niels Street to asphalt tanks owned by the Bituminous Service Company at East Union Street and the PRR crossing. The fire broke out at 6:50pm and burned for three hours.

"A match, a cigarette or a spark from a brush fire falling on the usually placid waters of Goose Creek, a small stream running the length of the eastern end of town, set off the conflagratio. The creek had an hour or so previously being (sic) transformed into a stream of oil when two 10,850 gallon tanks at the Bituminous Company service year, fell from the supports and breaking, leaked into the water."

"Frame houses on Magnolia street and a row of brick and frame houses on South Franklin street were seriously threatened by the fire. Sparks also flew across the railroad to the coal shed of J. Leon Haggerty, the P. R. R. freight station and the lumber yard of Hoffman and Baldwin.

"The buildings in greatest danger were those along the creek on South Franklin street. Wooden fences bordering the stream were set ablaze and the fire worked towards the houses with unbelievable rapidity. ... Sparks, however, set fire to the rear kitchen roofs of the homes of Lawrence Hamilton, William Montgomery and Nathan Shur." Nathan Shur (506 South Franklin Street) lost a small building at the rear of his house which housed 25-30 chickens.

NOTE: the article mentions "several airplanes [that] circled

above the crowd and took pictures of the fire before darkness settled." George J. Moses was the West Chester fire chief.

Another small sidebar mentioned Jackie McCallin of 222 Lacey Street who owned a dog named Jonah. Jonah fell into Goose Creek and got soaked with oil, so his owner had to keep him away from the fire.

There was also a quotation by William Patton, colored, of 307 South Franklin Street.

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1944/08/05      Source: Daily Local News (August 5, 1944)

Greenfield Park required many loads of fill in the swampy area around Goose Creek. A local resident, Joseph Cotter, supervised the placement of truckloads of fill. He constructed a small shack for his own use at the site, and marked it with a sign to "Keep Out" to deter local vandals.

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