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The Flow of History along Ridley Creek

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The Flow of History along Ridley Creek

By Walt Cressler

Last updated: 13 December 2019

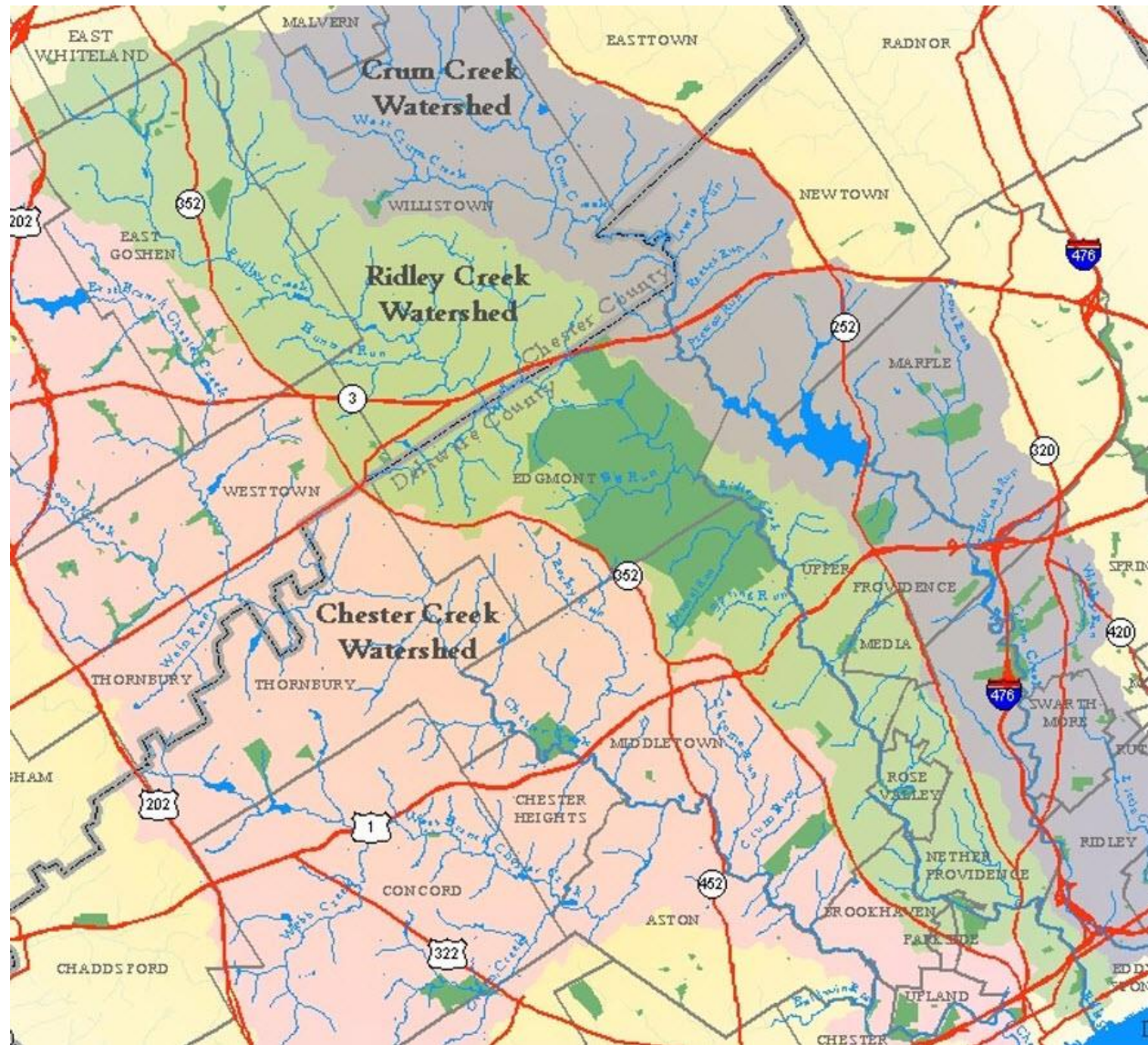


Ridley Creek along Fisherman's Trail, Ridley Creek State Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Overview

Ridley Creek flows southeast for 24 miles from the South Valley Hills of southern Chester County through Delaware County, Pennsylvania, where it enters the Delaware River between the City of Chester and the Borough of Eddystone. Ridley Creek and its tributaries flow within a narrow 38 square mile watershed that includes parts of eleven townships, five boroughs, and one city. The Borough of Rose Valley is the only municipality entirely within the Ridley Creek watershed. The topographic boundaries of the Ridley Creek watershed roughly correspond to two early colonial roads that were built on the high ground of the divides between neighboring watersheds. Along its western margin is the Edgmont Great Road, also known more currently as Middletown Road and PA Route 352. Along the eastern margin is Providence Great Road, now just known as Providence Road. Its lower portions correspond to PA Route 252. The correspondence of the roads with the watershed boundaries holds true throughout most of area, but breaks down a bit at both the headwaters and at the mouth of Ridley Creek where it flows into the Delaware River.



Detail of map by Ben Aller, created on behalf of the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association, 2004

Ben Aller's watershed map shows the main roads mentioned above. In addition, the headwaters portion of the Ridley Creek watershed to the west of PA Route 352 in East Goshen Township is bounded by Boot Road. On the eastern margin of the watershed, Providence Road continues along the watershed boundary well into Willistown Township, where it meets Sugartown Road. Sugartown Road then roughly corresponds to the watershed boundary until just west of Malvern Borough.

The Ridley Creek watershed is the catchment area for all the precipitation which falls within its topographic boundaries and drains into the Delaware River through Ridley Creek and its tributaries. Watersheds can be studied as ecosystems within which water, energy, and nutrients flow. Plants capture energy from sunlight and convert water and carbon dioxide from the air into the sugar molecules which make up their structures. They draw further nutrients up through the soil, which consists of decaying organisms and crumbling rock. Animals eat plants and nutrients are further pumped up the food chain as animals are eaten by other animals. When

they die, they return to the soil. Gravity forces the downhill flow of nutrients and takes them out of the watershed ecosystem to the sea. More nutrients are added by the further decay of bedrock beneath the soil. At least, this is the picture of the Ridley Creek watershed ecosystem without humans in the equation. The natural operation of the eastern deciduous forest which is native to the Ridley Creek watershed has changed drastically in the last few centuries. The Lenape burned the forest to open up areas for hunting and small-scale agriculture. When the Europeans arrived, they cleared land for farming and altered the flow of the streams to tap its energy for their watermills. With scientific farming and the industrial revolution, more and more energy and nutrient inputs came from further and further outside of what the watershed ecosystem produced itself. Now, in the early part of the twenty-first century, the connections that the Ridley Creek watershed has beyond its boundaries are truly global.

The story that follows highlights many of the natural and cultural features of the Ridley Creek watershed, from its sources to where the creek finally meets the waters of the Delaware River. Some of the treatments are shallow, and some of them go deep. This is an ongoing project to promote the engagement of people with the landscape within which they live.

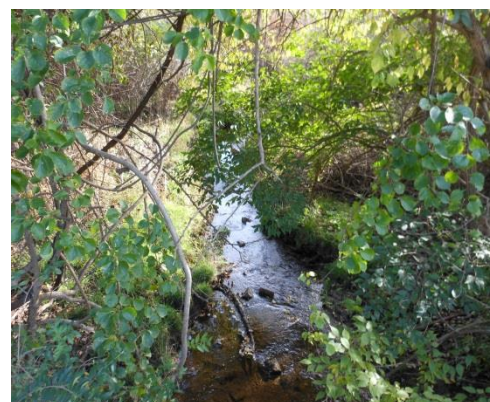
Ridley Creek was named by John Simcock for Ridley, Cheshire, England, which was his original home. He was one of the English Quakers that arrived with William Penn. Many of them came from Cheshire, which inspired the name for Chester County, one of the original three counties of Pennsylvania along with Philadelphia and Bucks. Delaware County, through which the middle and lower portions of Ridley Creek flows, was formed out of Chester County in 1789. The Dutch settlers prior to the English referred to Ridley Creek as Oele Stillin's Kill.

Headwaters at Line Road

The main branch of Ridley Creek originates at the confluence of the East Branch Ridley Creek and the Northeast Branch Ridley Creek at Line Road on the borderline of East Goshen and Willistown Townships.

East Branch Ridley Creek

The East Branch Ridley Creek originates on the flank of the South Valley Hills in East Goshen Township.



East Branch Ridley Creek at Forest Lane, East Goshen Township

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Malvern Institute

The source of East Branch Ridley Creek is a pond across Brookmont Drive from the Malvern Institute. The Malvern Institute is an addiction treatment center that had been founded in 1948 by Dr. C. Nelson Davis and Dr. C. Dudley Saul. They had opened the first private alcoholism treatment clinic in the country in Philadelphia in 1946. Two years later they moved to the Ridley Creek watershed. Dr. C. Dudley Saul had been one of the first medical professionals to support Alcoholics Anonymous, when an AA group first got started in Philadelphia in 1940.

From the pond near the Malvern Institute, the East Branch Ridley Creek flows south for a little less than three quarters of a mile to where it converges with the Northeast Branch Ridley Creek at the outflow of a pond at Line Road and Pond View Lane. This confluence forms the main branch of Ridley Creek which then flows south through East Goshen Township.

Northeast Branch Ridley Creek



Northeast Branch Ridley Creek at Forest Lane, Willistown Township Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Northeast Branch Ridley Creek originates on the flank of the South Valley Hills in Willistown Township, just west of the Borough of Malvern. It flows through a series of ponds and through the Willow Pond neighborhood before entering yet another pond at Pond View Lane and Line Road at the border with East Goshen Township. Just below this pond on the East Goshen side of the line, the Northeast Branch Ridley Creek converges with the East Branch Ridley Creek. At their confluence, the main branch of the Ridley Creek begins.

These small tributaries have their sources in suburban neighborhoods on the flank of the South Valley Hills in these two respective townships. The tributaries converge at the outflow of a

private pond located at Pond View Lane just off of Line Road, which marks the boundary between the two townships.

Ridley Creek flows south along the East Goshen side of the line, and passes through the Indian Hill, Saddlebrook Farm, and Waterford neighborhoods.



Ridley Creek at Warrior Road, Indian Hill subdivision, East Goshen Township
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Applebrook Golf Course

After it flows under Paoli Pike, Ridley Creek enters the Applebrook Golf Course, which was built on land formerly owned by the pharmaceutical firm Smith Kline Beecham. The Applebrook Golf Course is irrigated with wastewater from homes in the nearby Hershey's Mill gated community.

Traders Run

Traders Run is a small tributary of Ridley Creek that originates in the northwest corner of Willistown Township. It is named for the Free Society of Traders, a commercial organization founded by William Penn that owned the land along this stream until the group disbanded in the 1720s. Purchasers of land would be made to cooperate with Penn's monopoly that took the form of the Free Society of Traders. As a result, land sales in Pennsylvania were only moderate at first. The Assembly did not grant the Free Society of Traders a charter at its first meeting in 1682, because the monopoly conflicted with the individualistic goals of the early settlers. In the early years of the colony, contention between the Assembly and the proprietor and his council resulted in more power for the Assembly, which was elected from Philadelphia and the other counties. However, the proprietor continued to have power over the disposition of land through

his surveyor general and the Land Office. Nonetheless, the actual choice of sites for settlement was largely in the control of the people. This was because of strength of the Assembly, which prior to 1756 still represented Quaker interests, in contrast to William Penn's heirs who became Anglicans and whose interests became largely self-serving. The Assembly was able to put a check on proprietary control and left decision making about land to local elected officials and religious and economic leaders. Other factors included the lack of organization on the part of the proprietors, confusion in the Land Office, and land speculation by public officials, particularly between 1700 and 1732. When William Penn's son Thomas Penn moved to Pennsylvania and took over as proprietor in 1732 he took tighter control. However, it was the people, particularly those with capital, who still controlled disposition of land.



Traders Run at Line Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The source of Trader's Run is in a wooded corridor to the northwest of the loop formed by Fox Ridge Drive. It flows in a southwesterly direction roughly paralleling Paoli Pike and then passes to the south under the pike with Christ Memorial Lutheran Church to the west and the Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation Hospital to the east. After a short traverse through the Toll Brother's Applebrook Meadows development, it flows under Line Road and enters the Applebrook Golf Course in East Goshen Township. Here it merges with Ridley Creek.

A short distance downstream within the Applebrook Golf Course, two more tributaries enter from the east, also having originated in Willistown Township from within the Natural Land Trust's Willisbrook Preserve. The more southerly of the two tributaries has been named Serpentine Run for the rare serpentine barrens plant community that is maintained in the preserve.

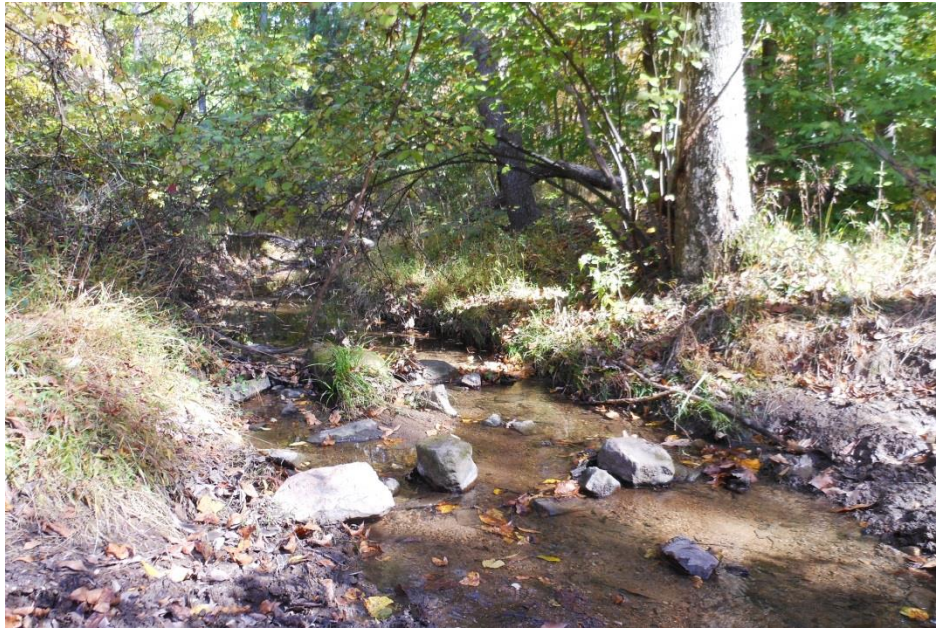
Serpentine Run

Serpentine Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek that originates within the Natural Land Trust's Willisbrook Preserve in Willistown Township. From the Willistown Preserve, it flows into the Serpentine Preserve, which the township maintains as a buffer to protect the stream and further protect the rare ecological community in this portion of the watershed.



Map: Willistown Township & Natural Lands Trust

Another unnamed tributary of Ridley Creek originates within the Willisbrook Preserve just to the north of Serpentine Run, and flows parallel to it along a narrow corridor of the preserve.



Serpentine Run within Willisbrook Preserve

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Willisbrook Preserve



Entrance to Willisbrook Preserve from Line Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Willisbrook Preserve includes a mix of woods and meadows, and 20 acres of the serpentine barrens plant community, which includes rare and endangered plants especially adapted to tolerate the toxic soils that develop over serpentinite rock. Within the barrens the

dominant trees are pitch pine and post oak. The serpentine barrens within this preserve are known as the Sugartown Serpentine Barrens. They were designated a Wild Plant Sanctuary by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in 2010.

The forested part of the Willisbrook Preserve consists of oak-hickory woodland, mixed with tulip poplars and American beech. Smaller trees include red maple and American hornbeam. Spicebush is in the understory, and New York fern forms patches on the forest floor.



Serpentine barren with post oak and pitch pine, Willisbrook Preserve



Serpentine aster, Willisbrook Preserve
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Burn treatment to encourage growth of serpentine barren ecosystem, Willisbrook Preserve



Prairie grassland, Willisbrook Preserve

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Woodland within the Willisbrook Preserve

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Wetland with narrow-leaved cattails, Willisbrook Preserve

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Willisbrook Preserve was donated to the Natural Lands Trust in 1963 by Jane Gordon Foxe Fletcher. She came from a family who is best known for breeding champion Hackney and American Saddlebred horses. The preserve was expanded through additional acquisitions in 1968 and 2004. It now consists of 126 acres.

Greater Chester Valley Soccer Association



The fields of the Greater Chester Valley Soccer Association
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

For about three-eighths of a mile, as Serpentine Run flows through the Serpentine Preserve, it runs roughly parallel to the southern edge of the soccer fields of the Greater Chester Valley Soccer Association. The unnamed tributary flows roughly parallel to the northern edge of the soccer fields along the narrow shrubby corridor of the Willistown Preserve.

The Greater Chester Valley Soccer Association has been in existence since 1977. It provides Recreation League soccer for boys and girls from age 3 to grade 12, summer Adult League soccer, and Travel League teams. Travel soccer is more competitive and involves try-outs and long-term commitment. The Boys Travel teams participate in the DELCO (Delaware County) soccer league, and the Girls Travel teams participate in the PAGS (Philadelphia Area Girls Soccer) league.



Fields of the Greater Chester Valley Soccer Association in action – view from Serpentine Preserve
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

Serpentine Preserve

The Serpentine Preserve consists of 49.1 acres of meadows and woodlands, part of which was purchased by Willistown Township and its state and county funding partners to provide a protective buffer for the serpentine barrens within the Willisbrook Preserve. The 27-acre meadow through which Serpentine Run flows is under a long-term lease to the Greater Chester Valley Soccer Association. A trail around the meadow permits public access. That part of the property is held under a conservation easement by Willistown Conservation Trust. The Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association acquired grants to plant a riparian buffer along Serpentine Run here in 2017.



Serpentine Run within Serpentine Preserve
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*) along Serpentine Run, Serpentine Preserve
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Green frog, Serpentine Preserve

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

Both Serpentine Run and the unnamed tributary come to the western end of the soccer fields and the surrounding preserves at Line Road. To the north can be seen the Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation Center facing Paoli Pike and the Applebrook Meadows subdivision by Toll Brothers.



View of Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation Center from Willisbrook Preserve
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



The construction of Applebrook Meadows subdivision
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Serpentine Run flows under Line Road and into the Applebrook Golf Course, where it joins Ridley Creek.



Serpentine Run at Line Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Applebrook Park and East Goshen Township Park

Ridley Creek then bends towards the west and enters Applebrook Park, a township park which adjoins the golf course. The park includes paved walking and jogging trails.



Ridley Creek within Applebrook Park and Applebrook Golf Course in the background
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Entrance to East Goshen Township Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

To the west on the other side of Paoli Pike is another portion of the township park system called East Goshen Township Park. It includes tennis courts, playgrounds, and baseball fields and is the source of a small unnamed tributary that flows under Paoli Pike into Applebrook Park and then into Ridley Creek.

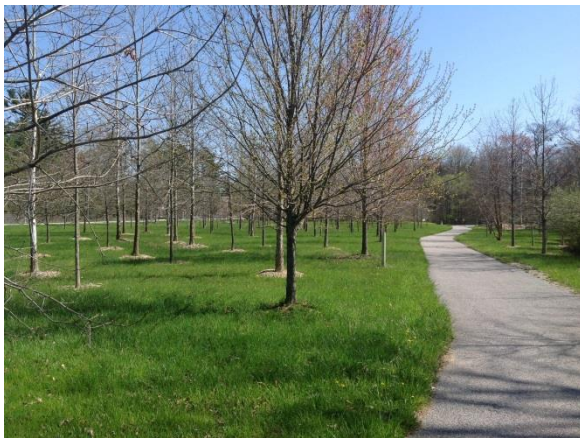


Indiscriminate use of Ridley Creek sign on small unnamed tributary at Paoli Pike
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

At the northern end of Applebrook Park is a forest restoration project undertaken by the East Goshen Conservancy Board with participation by West Chester University. Trees and shrubs native to Pennsylvania were planted in a portion of the park which has been dubbed Clymer's Woods.



Clymer's Woods in the fall of 2012
Photo: Walt Cressler



Clymer's Woods in the spring of 2018
Photos: Gerry Hertel

Applebrook Park includes a large, wet meadow. Red oak is a common tree. Along the creek can be seen abundant black willow and alder. Towards the southern end of Applebrook Park, Ridley Creek flows past a cattail marsh.



A white-tailed deer was observed jumping over this portion of Ridley Creek,
But the photographer was too slow to capture it
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Winding paved path in Applebrook Park skirting straight rows of plane trees
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry is within the park. It is housed within a serpentine stone farmhouse that was built by the Garrett family who owned the surrounding farm from 1715, when Samuel Garrett acquired it, until 1900.



Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The land had originally been acquired from William Penn by the original settler of Goshen Township, Robert Williams. His 1702 homestead is on East Boot Road near the southern end of the park. In 1913 the farm was purchased by Samuel Horner. It is believed that the name Applebrook Farm originated with him.

After Ridley Creek flows under East Boot Road, it forms the eastern boundary of another portion of the extensive East Goshen Township Park system. At the southeastern corner of the park it is joined by the western branch of Ridley Creek.



Ridley Creek at Boot Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Historic Goshenville Village

The East Goshen Township Park embraced by these two branches of Ridley Creek includes the Historic Goshenville Village with its preserved eighteenth century blacksmith and wheelwright shops and the Hickman plank house. The crossroads village itself dates from around 1704. The blacksmith shop was built around 1740 at this location, and the wheelwright shop was added sometime in the 1750s. A second floor was added to the blacksmith shop in the early 1800s. The Milltown/Hickman plank house was originally built around 1808 on West Chester Pike, but was disassembled, stored for a while, and then reassembled in the Historic Goshenville Village for public display in 1999. It is listed on the American Historic Building Survey. It is called a plank house because it is constructed of sawn planks separated by dowels which are dovetailed at the four corners and mortised at two center posts. The Hickman plank house is a “hall and parlor” style house with a kitchen (hall) and living room (parlor) on the first floor and two bedrooms upstairs. Like many of the “Penn Plan” houses, there are also two angled fireplaces in the center of the front wall.



Goshenville Village blacksmith shop (on right) and wheelwright shop (left)



Other views of the blacksmith shop and wheelwright shop
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Hickman plank house, Historic Goshenville Village Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Within the park there is also a wetlands trail on a raised boardwalk called the East Goshen Township Wetland Walk.



Views of the East Goshen Wetland Walk



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



View of Historic Goshenville Village from the wetlands meadow

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

“West Branch Ridley Creek”

This western branch system of Ridley Creek is not distinguished by a separate official name. The signs on the roads that cross over it refer to the stream simply as “Ridley Creek.” The headwaters of the western branch of Ridley Creek flow from the southern flank of the South Valley Hills in East Whiteland Township just south of the village of Frazer.

Immaculata University and the Villa Maria Academy

One of the sources of the west branch of Ridley Creek is on the conjoined campuses of Immaculata University and the Villa Maria Academy.

Another source originates from a little bit further west near the border with the southeastern corner of West Whiteland Township and northeastern corner of West Goshen Township, and another just to the east of Villa Maria Academy. This network of small source tributaries is beaded with ponds, and converges just to the south in East Goshen Township where the stream flows along Hershey Mill Road.

Immaculata University is a Catholic school of about 2,500 undergraduates. It is considered the “birthplace of modern college women’s basketball.” This recognition came about through the accomplishments of the school’s national championship teams of 1972, 1973, and 1974. Coach Cathy Rush led the “Mighty Macs” team from 1970 until 1977 and took them to the Final Four six times. She ended with a record of 149-15. She was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2008, and the school’s basketball program was inducted in 2014. The three-time championship team was the subject of a 2011 Sony Pictures film, *The Mighty Macs*.



One of the sources of West Branch Ridley Creek on the campus of Immaculata University
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Battle of the Clouds

One of the two skirmishes that comprised the Battle of the Clouds during the Revolutionary War occurred on the farm of Thomas Rees which was located north of Greenhill Road near North Chester Road (PA Route 352). The action occurred on September 16th, 1777, in the aftermath of the defeat of the Continental Army five days earlier at the Battle of the Brandywine. George Washington and his 11,000 surviving Continental troops assembled in the vicinity of the White Horse Tavern a bit farther north in East Whiteland Township. The British army and their Hessian mercenaries planned to intercept Washington's troops and deal a final fatal blow. Cornwallis marched to the Goshen Monthly Meeting House at the intersection of Paoli and Chester Roads, while Knyphausen and Howe proceeded to the Turk's Head Tavern in the center of what is now West Chester. General Howe then split his forces. General Matthews took his British soldiers to the Indian King Tavern, while Knyphausen took his Hessian troops to meet up with Cornwallis's forces which were now at the George Hoopes farm north of the Goshenville School. After the generals met at the Goshen Friends Meeting House for further strategizing, Howe ordered the Hessians to proceed to the Boot Tavern at the intersection of Boot Road and Phoenixville Pike, right at the headwaters of the East Branch Chester Creek. George Washington was brought word of the British movements, and positioned his army on the ridge of the South Valley Hills south of King Road. George Washington's scouts engaged the pickets of the army of General Cornwallis in the southernmost part of what is now the Hersheys Mill Village. In addition to the skirmish between the British light infantry and the Pennsylvania militia on the farm of Thomas Rees, another skirmish occurred on the Meredith farm near the Boot Tavern between the Hessians and more militia. The so-called Battle of the Clouds was inconclusive. The weather was so bad and the visibility poor, that after the initial exchange of musket fire, the Pennsylvanians retired from the field.

Hersheys Mill Village and Golf Club

Another small tributary joins from the east just before Ridley Creek flows under Greenhill Road and enters Hersheys Mill Village and Golf Club. This is the site of the original Hershey's Mill.



Glimpse of Hershey's Mill
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Hershey's Mill dam from Greenhill Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Carriage house associated with Hershey's Mill along Greenhill Road Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Hershey's Mill was one of four 18th century grist mill communities in Goshen Township. The others were Milltown, Rocky Hill, and Dutton Mill. The Hershey's Mill dam had been part of life in the township since at least 1748. The 14-foot high dam was a popular landmark in more recent decades when it served purely recreational purposes. Its waterfall was a back-drop to many wedding photos and other milestones in peoples' lives. It once provided beloved waterfront property to surrounding residents. In 2007, the water behind the dam was drained after it failed to meet state inspections. A local resident named Neil DeRiemer formed the Friends of Hershey's Mill Dam to raise money to repair it. They only raised \$1,500 of the \$400,000 needed by the deadline of the end of 2015. A new federal permit was drafted to push the deadline to the end of 2019 to either repair the dam or to remove it.

The Hershey Mill itself was built as a gristmill by Benjamin Rees between 1798 and 1799 and was converted into a residence by 1981.

A small tributary joins Ridley Creek after it flows through the west side of the golf course, where it is ponded in a couple places as water traps. At the western edge close to Boot Road are the remains of the Hershey Mill Serpentine Barren. The golf course has covered a small serpentine barren at its eastern end where PA Route 352 makes a sharp bend through a road cut.

After the golf club, the stream passes through the wooded corridor of the Wentworth Open Space before flowing beneath Paoli Pike between the Goshen Village Shopping Center and the East Goshen Township Building.



West Branch Ridley Creek coming out from under Paoli Pike
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



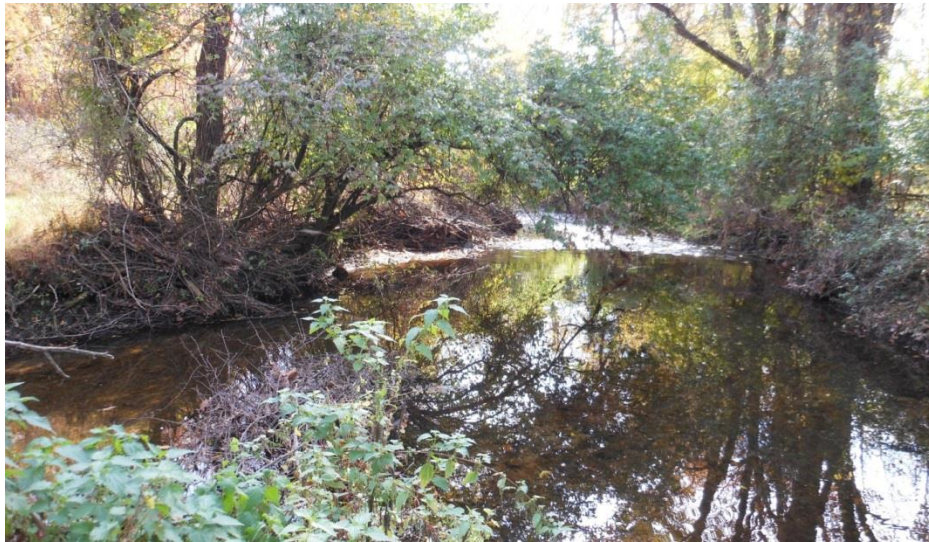
West Branch Ridley Creek flowing past the TD Bank branch

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

From there West Branch Ridley Creek flows behind the East Goshen Elementary School, under PA Route 352. On the southeast corner of PA Route 352 (Chester Road) and Paoli Pike is located the Goshen Friends Meeting House. It was established in 1702. Two years later in 1704, Goshen Township was created. The township wasn't split into East and West Goshen Townships until 1817. The West Branch Ridley Creek then flows along the edge of the southern portion of the East Goshen Township Park that includes the Historic Goshenville Village and the East Goshen Township Wetlands Walk before it joins the main stem of Ridley Creek.



West Branch Ridley Creek at edge of East Goshen Township Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Confluence of the West Branch and the main branch of Ridley Creek
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Ridley Creek then flows in a southeasterly direction through a wooded corridor amidst the Bow Tree residential development. This Bow Tree Open Area also includes a boardwalk through a wetland. Ridley Creek flows past the East Goshen Township Municipal Authority Sewage Treatment Plant on its northeast bank and then through open fields at the former site of Sinkler Lake on the former Grace Estate. Reportedly, Sinkler Lake drained when a mattress that was plugging the dam finally broke loose.

Ashbridge Preserve



Entrance to Ashbridge Preserve from Strasburg Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Ridley Creek flows through the Ashbridge Preserve where Sinkler Lake was once located. The site of Sinkler Lake became a productive 5-acre wetland. The 59-acre preserve is maintained by the Willistown Conservation Trust. The trust is promoting the growth of an early successional shrubby ecosystem here in order to encourage birds that thrive in this fertile habitat. There is a meadow of asters and goldenrod, abundant black willow along the creek, a dense hawthorn thicket, and red maple woods.



Meadow at Ashbridge Preserve

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The preserve surrounds a three-quarter mile long meandering stretch of Ridley Creek. Smaller tributaries enter the creek within the preserve with associated wetlands, flood plains, and vernal pools. Nearly 300 plant species have been surveyed within the Ashbridge Preserve, some of which are rare species.

Ashbridge Preserve was created in 2003. The 176-acre Ashbridge Farm was in danger of being made into a 200-unit housing development. A multi-partner conservation project protected the land. While 55 acres were set aside for the preserve, 120 acres were divided into several large parcels acquired by conservation buyers who placed conservation easements on the properties. The project partners included Ashbridge Farm Associates, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Chester County, and East Goshen Township. Four additional acres were added to the preserve in 2010 with the donation of the adjacent Gordon-Barshinger Woods by Linda Gordon, in honor of her late husband Donald Barshinger.



Ridley Creek shaded by black willow in the Ashbridge Preserve



Meadowland in the gas pipeline right-of-way, Ashbridge Preserve
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Step bridge across the Ridley, Ashbridge Preserve

New stream crossings were finished in 2013 for ease of access to different parts of the preserve under the planning and oversight of the Willistown Conservation Trust's Director of Stewardship, Bill Hartman.



Hawthorn thicket, Ashbridge Preserve

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Sun and shadow on Ridley Creek, Ashbridge Preserve

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Shugart Run

Shugart Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek that originates in Willistown Township from a small pond along the north side of a bend in Boot Road, a few hundred feet west of the Sugartown Historic District. Shugart Run is named for Eli Shugart, who became the local tavern keeper in 1804. The village of Sugartown was named for him also, as its original name was Shugarttown.

Shugart Run then flows through the Thorncroft Equestrian Center which is located on both sides of Line Road, which divides Willistown and East Goshen Townships.



Shugart Run at Line Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the East Goshen Side, Shugart Run is joined by Benoni Run at the northwestern corner of the Thorncroft Equestrian Center fields. It then bends south, flows under Towne Drive, and enters Ridley Creek at the Sinkler Lake wetland within the Ashbridge Preserve.



Shugart Run in the Ashbridge Preserve

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Benoni Run

Benoni Run is a tributary of Shugart Run, which in turn flows into Ridley Creek within the Ashbridge Preserve in East Goshen Township. Benoni Run originates in Willistown Township in a copse of trees within the pastures of Aliquippa Stables. It flows under Boot Road just west of its intersection with Line Road and then flows under Line Road where it enters East Goshen Township.



Benoni Run near Boot Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Benoni Run then meets Shugart Run at the northeast corner of the pastorage for the Thorncroft Equestrian Center. Benoni Run is named for Benoni Griffith, who purchased 100 acres along this stream when he became a freeman in 1716. He later built a house in 1732.

Shugart Run merges with Ridley Creek within the Ashbridge Preserve.

At the southern entrance to the preserve, Ridley Creek then passes under historic Strasburg Road just west of its intersection with Dutton Mill Road.

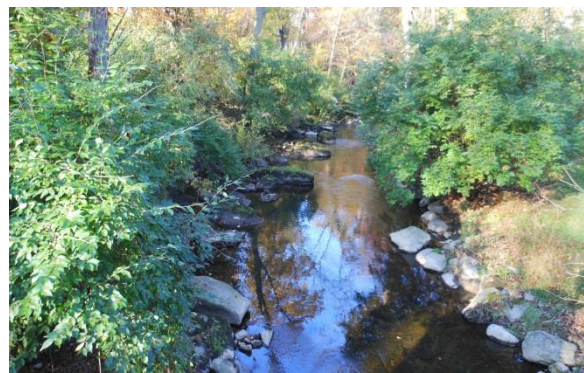


Ridley Creek flowing under Strasburg Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Ridley Creek then flows under Dutton Mill Road and enters Willistown Township.



The bridge over Ridley Creek at Dutton Mill Road



Views of Ridley Creek west and east of Dutton Mill Road

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Willistown Township

Ashbridge Run

At the boundary between East Goshen Township and Willistown Township, Ridley Creek is joined by Ashbridge Run, a small tributary flowing out of the northeast. . It originates just south of the village of Sugartown and flows towards the south-southwest through a wooded corridor in a portion of Willistown Township that otherwise consists of estates and horse pastures. It flows under Green Lane and Goshen Road before joining Ridley Creek at the East Goshen Township boundary close to Dutton Mill Road.



Ashbridge Run on north side of Goshen Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Ashbridge family owned land for many generations in this vicinity. George Ashbridge built the family home in 1720. Along Ridley Creek near its confluence with this stream, the family operated a grist mill that provided flour to the Continental Army at Valley Forge.

As Ridley Creek flows toward the southeast, it is slowed by a series of dams, which may be a legacy of the Ashbridge family milling operations.

Extensive woodlands surround a chain of ponds that have been silting up over the years. The woodland is itself surrounded by estates and horse pastures.

Garrett Mill Run



View of Garrett Mill Run from Garrett Mill Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

As Ridley Creek meanders through this landscape, Garrett Mill Run enters it from the direction of Garrett Mill Road in the northeast. Its source is on an expansive estate just north of Goshen Road. It flows south under the road and then bends toward the southwest and flows under Garrett Mill Road. In early 2019, a friend of the Willistown Conservation Trust donated to the trust 33 acres of land to the east of the road through which Garrett Run flows. It was originally part of the 450-acre Delchester Farm.

A short distance west of Garrett Mill Road, Garrett Mill Run joins Ridley Creek. The Garrett Mill was nearby.



Garrett Mill Farm on Garrett Mill Road next to Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Garrett Mill

William Garrett and Samuel Levis each purchased 500 acres in Willistown Township from Bristol land speculator John Lobe before leaving England in 1684. Once in Pennsylvania, they chose to settle on two opposite banks of Darby Creek in Upper Darby and Springfield Townships where they bought additional property. By 1713, William Garrett had added 100 acres to his original tract in Willistown Township, bringing his property there to the northwest boundary of the Okehocking tract. His descendants settled on these lands. One of the Garrett women married an Ashbridge, “whose forebear had a grist mill in Willistown.”

A quarter mile downstream from Ridley Creek’s confluence with Garrett Mill Run, Hunters Run flows into Ridley Creek from the west.

Hunters Run

Hunters Run has its source in the Ashbridge Farms subdivision of East Goshen Township. It flows towards the east amidst other residential developments in East Goshen Township until it enters the more open spaces of Willistown Township and the grounds of Arrowhead Day Camp.



Arrowhead Day Camp during the off-season

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

At the eastern end of the camp along Dutton Mill Road, Hunters Run is joined from the south by a smaller tributary called George Smedley Run.



Confluence of Hunters Run (top) and George Smedley Run (bottom) at Dutton Mill Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

George Smedley Run

George Smedley Run originates in the extreme eastern edge of Westtown Township in the Green Lane Village housing development. After its waters flow for a mere 600 feet, they are detained by a pond behind the offices of Worington Common along PA Route 3, the West Chester Pike. As the stream continues to flow north it enters Willistown Township and passes under West Chester Pike.



Foot bridge over George Smedley Run at the Hunters Run Condominiums

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the other side of the pike, George Smedley Run's left bank is occupied by the Hunters Run condominiums and along its right bank is the remaining portion of Dutton Mill Marsh. This marsh is located between West Chester Pike and Dutton Mill Road and has been remarkable for its lack of invasive species. George Smedley Run joins Hunters Run at Dutton Mill Road near the entrance to Arrowhead Day Camp.



George Smedley Run along Dutton Mill Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

George Smedley Run is named for none other than George Smedley, who lived from 1656 until 1723 and owned much of the land along the stream. Between the Hunters Run condominiums and the stream is a stone foundation. According to a sign erected by the developer Pulte Homes, it is the oldest barn foundation in Pennsylvania. George and Sarah Smedley had bought the farmstead in 1705. The barn and the farmhouse, which had been built according to the "Penn Plan", were erected in 1697 by John (1652-1704) and Frances (1656-1721) Bowater of Worcestershire, who had arrived in 1684 as the first settlers of Willistown Township.



Foundation of George Smedley's barn, the oldest in Pennsylvania (1697)

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Another view of the ruins of the George & Sarah Smedley farmstead

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Hunters Run then flows east under Dutton Mill Road and joins Ridley Creek in a wooded corridor amidst the estates and horse pastures of Willistown Township. Hunters Run is not to be confused with Hunter Run, which is a tributary of Crum Creek.

Ridley Creek flows towards the southeast and passes under Garrett Mill Road and then flows roughly parallel along the east side of the road.

Turtle Rock Run

Turtle Rock Run enters from the northeast where it flows through private property. Turtle Rock Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek within Willistown Township. It enters Ridley Creek near Garrett Mill Road, having originated in the northeast from a source located on private property. A rock outcrop overlooking the stream resembles a turtle and is believed to have been significant to the local Lenape. This land was once part of the Okehocking Land Grant as was an adjacent portion maintained by the Willistown Conservation Trust as the Okehocking Preserve.

Garrett Mill Park



Garrett Mill Park amenities

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the west side of Garrett Mill Road are the ball fields of Garrett Mill Park.

Hillside Run

Just north of this park, Hillside Run flows under Garrett Mill Road from the west, where it originates in the Deerfield Knoll subdivision at Dutton Mill Road.



Hillside Run at Garrett Mill Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Hillside Run flowing into Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The stream was named for a farm located along it that was dubbed “Hillside Acres” in 1950 by owner Harry F. Taylor, who found it to be “hillier than he imagined”.

Ridley Creek makes two sharp bends as it flows through the woods and fields of the Okehocking Preserve. It flows towards the southeast along Garrett Mill Road, then to the northeast, and then to the southeast again.



Ridley Creek along Garrett Mill Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Okehocking Preserve



Okehocking Preserve Signage
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Okehocking Preserve is a 155-acre Willistown Township park that was acquired through the Willistown Township Open Space Program and grants from other organizations. It comprises a portion of the 500-acre Okehocking land grant established in the early 18th century.

The Okehocking land grant was the last place the Okehocking band of the Lenape lived in their native watersheds before they moved west. Originally, they foraged for a living along the Ridley and Crum Creek valleys. For nine months of the year their activities focused on fishing for eight different fish species that migrated along the Delaware River and its tributary streams. The cultivation of corn was a minor activity. Their summer encampment was along the river.

The Okehocking were one of thirteen bands of the Lenape tribe that lived along the west side of the Delaware from Leipsic Creek to Tohickon Creek. The related tribe of the Lenopi lived across the river in New Jersey. Each band occupied the valley of a Delaware River tributary and its surrounding hills, as well as a section of the Delaware River front around the mouth of their home tributary. The Okehocking band consisted of a small extended family, perhaps consisting of not more than 25 to 30 individuals. Okehocking means “the place surrounded,” in the sense of being bounded by the meander bends of a stream.

The Lenape began selling their lands to William Penn in the decade of the 1680s following his arrival to found the colony of Pennsylvania. By 1700, the Okehocking avoided the lower parts of the Ridley and Crum watersheds where the colonists had their earliest settlements. The Lenape resettled on a 1,920-acre parcel that had been originally allotted to Griffith Jones in 1686, but who never asserted his claim. This was in a section of the 40,000-acre Welsh Tract which had been set aside for Welsh members of the Society of Friends. By 1690, the original

Welsh settlers had left and the land reverted to the Proprietor. Since there were no farms and houses, this area remained attractive to the Okehocking. Before long, though, the land around them began to get sold as the Quakers moved further inland.

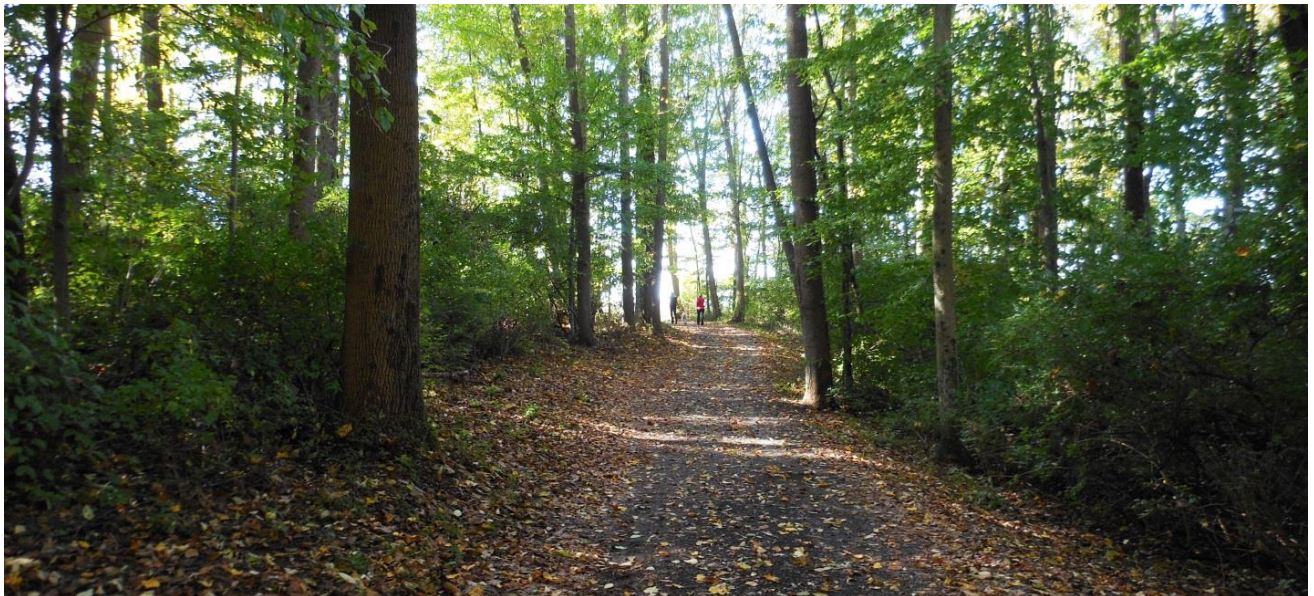
After years of encroachment by settlers, the Okehocking band finally requested a more secure living site, but in the European manner. In 1702, the Okehocking petitioned the Provincial Council so that they “might be confirmed in some particular place under certain metes and bounds, that they might no more (be) driven like Dogs...” Nathaniel Newlin, Caleb Pusey, and Nicholas Pyle were authorized as commissioners to select a parcel and supervise the transfer of the population. Provincial officials Edward Shippen, Griffith Owen, Thomas Storey, and James Logan, acting for the Proprietary, issued a warrant of survey to Isaac Taylor, the Chester County surveyor. The Okehocking were granted a 500-acre reserve in Willistown Township in the name of Pokais, Sepopawney, Muttagooppa, and their families. There were 15 to 20 members of the band. A large rock with the appearance of a turtle’s head emerging from the ground may have convinced them of the auspiciousness of this site, as the turtle is of spiritual significance to the Lenape. Otherwise, before long they were once again at a disadvantage. At first, they were on the frontier of settled land and had adequate hunting grounds. They even added to their income by collecting bounties on wolves. They were increasingly confined to their territory as settlement continued, though. Furthermore, it was hilly land that had little of the fertile floodplain favored by the Lenape and the Europeans alike. The colonists increasingly took advantage of the Okehocking. In 1710 a road, now called Delchester Road, was made directly through their tract rather than along a customary route between parcels where it wouldn’t encroach disproportionately on one landowner’s property. The period between 1700 and 1720 was a major interval of roadbuilding for the Quaker colony. The roads were quickly followed by the stone houses, barns, and other structures of European settlement. The Okehocking soon were surrounded by neighbors. In 1713, warrants were granted to William Garrett and his son Thomas Garrett on land adjacent to the Okehocking.

For a generation, the Okehocking farmed, fished, hunted, and made items on their tract in Willistown Township such as baskets, bowls, and brooms for trade. Near the Okehocking Preserve, at the northeast corner of West Chester Pike and Delchester Road is supposedly a quartz outcrop that shows evidence of years of arrowhead manufacture that had occurred there. Meanwhile, other Lenape bands began leaving the Delaware valley as early as 1694. They headed west to the Susquehanna valley, joining the Lenopi of New Jersey and other tribes and beginning to develop a growing political unity as the Delaware Nation. The Okehocking finally reached their tolerable limit of encroachment by surrounding farmers. They left their last stronghold in the Ridley Creek valley by 1735. The Brandywine Band of the Lenape probably left their home watershed around the same time and both likely joined other groups in Shamokin along the Susquehanna before being pushed further west. The land of the Okehocking Preserve returned to the Proprietorship. The land was granted to only to the Okehocking and their descendants as long as they lived there. They weren’t allowed to sell it or give it away.



View across the open meadows of the Okehocking Preserve

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Woodland path in the Okehocking Preserve

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Okehocking Preserve is dedicated to passive recreation activities and the enjoyment of nature. A portion of it provides space for innovative forms of waste water treatment for the surrounding township.



Spray irrigation field for municipal wastewater, Okehocking Preserve
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Wastewater treatment lagoons, Okehocking Preserve
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Delchester Run

Just downstream from the second bend, Ridley Creek is joined by Delchester Run. Delchester Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek that flows entirely within the Okehocking Preserve of Willistown Township. It originates in the northeastern corner of the preserve and flows southwest through fields and woods and into Ridley Creek just upstream from the Garrett Farm House.



Views of Delchester Run within the Okehocking Preserve

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The stream is named for the historic 450-acre Delchester Farm located nearby, close to the boundary between Delaware and Chester Counties. It had been managed as a dairy farm by the Ashton family for three generations. In 1986 the farm was sold off in various parcels during a community effort to acquire and preserve the land.



Delchester Run flowing below foundation of Garrett barn and Willistown Township utility shed
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Delchester Run flowing into Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Ridley Creek then flows past the 1802 Garrett farmhouse which serves as the headquarters for the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association, and then passes under PA Route 3, the West Chester Pike. South of the pike, Ridley Creek flows through a wooded corridor between housing developments at the southern edge of Willistown Township before passing into Edgmont Township in Delaware County.

Garrett Farm House



Aaron Garrett Farm House overlooking Ridley Creek
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

The Garrett Farm House overlooks Ridley Creek and West Chester Road at the southern edge of the Okehocking Preserve. It was built in 1802 for Aaron Garrett and his wife Jane (Hoopes) Garrett. It has the characteristic floor plan of a Penn plan house, one-room wide and two-rooms deep. A two-and-a-half story addition was built on the north side, probably sometime before 1850. The father of Aaron Garrett, whose name was also Aaron Garrett, conveyed the house, a barn and the surrounding land to his son by deed of gift in 1803. The father also opened a tan yard and a bark mill along Ridley Creek on the north side of the West Chester and Philadelphia Road (now called West Chester Pike) in 1802. This tannery was operated by the younger Aaron Garrett until he died in 1816. He bequeathed the land and the tannery to his three sons. The tannery was leased by Joseph Jackson from 1818 until 1822. David Garrett, the oldest son of Aaron Garrett the younger, operated the business from 1826 until 1838. He then advertised it for lease again. A newspaper ad that he took out in the Village Record described the tannery as follows:

TANNERY for Rent. The subscriber will rent on reasonable terms his tan yard situated at the 16 mile stone, on the West Chester and Philada. Road. It is well calculated for doing business; all the vats and handlers are trunked into a cistern, in which stands a pump which goes by water; the bark mill all goes by water; the handlers are all in the house. The buildings are sufficiently large for doing all the work belonging to the business. Possession will be given by the 1st of the 10th month next. The neighborhood is good, and affords a sufficient quantity of bark and hides. DAVID GARRETT. Willistown, 9th mo. 4, 1838.

The water of Ridley Creek downstream of the tannery probably wasn't very clean when the business was in operation. David Garrett ended up selling his property to his uncle Robert Garrett in 1841. Robert appears to have promptly closed down the tannery's operations.

Robert Garrett was a prosperous farmer. In 1850, his 45-acre farm produced wheat, Indian corn, oats, Irish potatoes, and hay. He produced wool from his half-dozen sheep and butter from his three milk cows. He had a horse and two working oxen, as well as four other cattle, and two pigs. He also bought and sold real estate, including the Willistown Inn on the West Chester and Philadelphia Road and the Duckett Paper Mill on Ridley Creek. He also owned twenty shares of stock in the West Chester & Philadelphia Direct Railroad.



Another view of the Aaron Garrett Farm House

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

The dam on Ridley Creek that was associated with the Garrett family operations was removed around the year 2009 under the supervision of Willistown Township Parks & Recreation director Mary (Hundt) McLoughlin.

In 2017, the Garrett Farm House became the headquarters and offices of the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association. It had been previously occupied by the Okehocking Nature Center, funded by the Chester County Community Foundation.



Double doorway to the stairs, Aaron Garrett Farmhouse
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



The Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association

Watershed advocacy groups play a vital role in promoting the health and well-being of streams. The human and natural community of the Chester, Ridley, and Crum Creek watersheds is fortunate in having a very dynamic group working on its behalf. The Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association was incorporated as an all-volunteer non-profit water advocacy organization on October 26th, 1970. In the decades since, its history has been one of dedicated people building on the accomplishments of the dedicated people who came before them. The year 1970 was a time of social ferment. The civil rights and anti-war movements had been ongoing. Awareness of threats to the environment reached a new level and also stirred action. In April of that year was the observation of the first Earth Day. In the watersheds of central Delaware County, Pennsylvania, there was one particular issue of immediate environmental concern. Planners of the Cross-County Expressway linking the Pennsylvania Turnpike and Interstate -95 had finally decided on one of the several possible routes, all of which had been designated on the planning maps by different colors. They settled on the Blue Route, which was proposed to run right along the lower Crum Creek stream corridor. Concerned citizens, particularly from the Crum Creek community of Swarthmore, decided to get organized. These early advocates included the pediatrician David Wood, the landscape architect Jonathan Sutton, and the lawyer Don Auten. In order to enhance their standing as a group of concerned citizens, they decided to incorporate as a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Don Auten's associate Allen Hunt, at the law firm Duane Morris (formerly Duane, Morris, Heckscher & Roberts), wrote up the articles of incorporation. David Wood, who had been president of the Rocky Run Watershed Association in the Chester Creek valley, became the first president of the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association (1970-1976), and the previous organization was assimilated. Money to support their early advocacy came from Dolfinger-MacMahon Foundation. They hired an expert to give testimony at hearings and they submitted comments to influence the process. After much hard work, they succeeded in getting a few changes made to the highway's construction, such as improved drainage systems. Meanwhile, momentum went forward on building the Blue Route. David Wood was succeeded by two other organization presidents, Hank Bishop (1976-1982) and Jim Sands (1982-1983) during a time when membership in the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association consisted of around ten members who were highly-focused on this one issue. With the assumption of Carl DuPoldt to the presidency (1983-2000), the scope of the organization expanded as he took it to the end of the century. Membership increased as the variety of projects and initiatives expanded. This was the era of the earliest stream clean-ups (which began in 1997), riparian plantings, and water monitoring projects. Under Carl's leadership, the first systematic studies of the creeks were undertaken by Claus Victorius and others, in order to put all these efforts into a scientific framework. An additional study was done on the critical Media Wetlands just above the water supply uptake on Ridley Creek. These

studies were performed with limited resources, but they laid important groundwork for the more comprehensive Creek Conservation Plans that came later. These plans were funded by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources through the Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Program, and were created with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, as well as the Natural Lands Trust. As the plans were approved, each of the creeks were then included in the Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Registry. This listing provides the basis for PA DCNR to provide matching grants for watershed projects to municipalities that adopt the plans by resolution. A municipality or a group that it sponsors is then eligible for up to \$50,000 a year to implement recommendations from the plans. The Ridley Creek Conservation Plan was the first of the plans to be released for one of the three creeks, in 1997. The Chester Creek Conservation Plan followed in 2001 and the Crum Creek Conservation Plan in 2005.

A challenge in the form of additional residential development to vulnerable areas came in the late 1980s when the Public Utility Commission didn't think it was necessary for the water company to hold land in order to protect the watersheds. They felt as though waste-water treatment plant technology had improved to the extent that natural buffers were no longer needed. Philadelphia Suburban Water Company began to divest itself of land above the drinking water outtakes, especially around Springton Reservoir and the Media Wetlands. By the 1990s the pendulum had swung the other way. The folly of destroying the ecosystem services provided by riparian buffers was recognized by many, and the open space movement caught on. The Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association partnered with Upper Providence for Open Space and the Middletown Township Conservancy to protect these vital stretches of the creeks. The Pennsylvania Environmental Council was also beginning to provide Greenway funds and later the state began to make available Growing Greener grants to assist with watershed protection projects. In order to provide further protections through more restrictive permitting requirements, High Quality Stream Status was obtained for the Upper Crum and Upper Ridley Creeks, and for the Rocky Run tributary of Chester Creek. To promote the protection and appreciation of the Chester Creek stream corridor, the organization also worked with Mike Fusco and his group that were trying to make the Chester Branch Rail Trail a reality.

Membership in the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association had grown in the 1990s, but fluctuated so that there were about 80 members by the year 2000. Most of the dues-paying members were otherwise inactive. The board of the organization was carrying out most of the projects at that point. Judy Auten, a long-time board member and married to lawyer Don Auten, became president of the organization at the turn of the millennium (2000-2007). Under her leadership, the board of the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association began to do some serious thinking about the future of the organization. An indication of their seriousness was the hiring of a professional consultant named Shelli Bischoff from the firm Conservation Impact based in Denver, Colorado to help with a strategic planning process. The process involved getting frank feedback from local partners such as Natural Lands Trust, Ridley Creek State Park, and Philadelphia Suburban Water Company (now Aqua PA). The biggest result of the strategic planning sessions was the momentous decision to change from an all-volunteer organization to hiring a paid executive director and support staff. Anne Murphy, the first executive director, began work at the beginning of 2003. During the next ten years, she focused her ample energies on expanding the organization's partnership network and increasing the amount of grant revenue. The membership base grew, as did members' involvement with an increasing number of riparian plantings and other stormwater mitigation projects, as well as an expanded stream clean-up. The annual stream clean-up was already the organization's signature event. Anne worked with the

board clean-up coordinator Rich Erickson to increase the number of clean-up sites into more municipalities. Chris Townend later followed Rich Erickson in that role. In 2004, new stormwater rules for the MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) permits under the Clean Water Act also gave municipalities incentive to sponsor stream clean-ups as part of the Public Outreach requirement. Membership events were scheduled, such as picnics, workshops, and lectures. The annual meeting was made into an annual dinner, to include a keynote speaker and the presentation of awards to recognize people and organizations that made exemplary contributions to the well-being of the watersheds.

Meanwhile, Ridley Creek State Park finally provided a home for the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association by donating offices in its park headquarters at the Hunting Hill mansion. Other important milestones during this time period were the destruction of dams along the Chester and Ridley Creeks with the cooperation of Delco Anglers and Trout Unlimited, and assisting in the acquisition of Mineral Hill and other parcels in the Media Wetlands by Middletown Township. The succeeding board president who worked closely with Anne Murphy to continue building on these achievements was Gary Snyder (2007-2013). He focused on broadening the skill set of the board by seeking out and nominating members with diverse talents. He also hired a succession of interns to help with various initiatives.

In 2013, the aptly named Tom Brooks became president of the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association. He led the board in another iteration of the strategic planning process. The re-evaluation of the organization's priorities was timely, as Anne Murphy had decided to resign to spend more time with her family. A successful transition to a new executive director was made with the hiring of Brian Byrnes that year. Brian promptly began carrying the organization's mission forward. He focuses on the chief threat to the health of the creeks, that of excessive stormwater runoff due to the high prevalence of impervious surfaces in the built environment of the watersheds. He and the board plan an even more systematic educational outreach program, and are looking for ways to involve more citizens in projects to address the issue and become more effective stewards of the watersheds. He persuaded board member Ross Schmucki, an experienced attorney, to review and rewrite the organization's policies in order to clarify and strengthen its mission. He emphasized the use of data to evaluate results in order to improve efforts.

The executive directorship of Brian Byrnes lasted nearly three years. He resigned in 2016 to take a better paying job with benefits to support his young and growing family. His departure precipitated a leadership crisis for the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association. President Tom Brooks and Secretary Ross Schmucki also left. The remaining board members asked new board member Tracy Bouvette to stand for election as board president when it became known that he had experience creating and leading several environmental non-profit organizations. Under Tracy's leadership, the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association focused on its core strengths and programs, the streams clean-up and the tree plantings. Corporate sponsorships and greater financial participation by the board were sought as part of a Leadership Campaign to be better able to retain an executive director. The organization arranged a lease with Willistown Township to occupy the Garrett Farmhouse at Okehocking, where it finally had a home of its own starting in 2017. The farmhouse in Okehocking provided offices for the additional staff who were hired that year. Among them was new program director Meghan Lockman. Her dedication to the mission and her energy and competence in getting things accomplished resulted in her being offered the job of executive director the following year. Tracy Bouvette stepped down as president after spending nearly three years working hard to put the Chester-Ridley-Crum

Watersheds Association on good financial and managerial footing. Ted Leisenring became president of the organization at the end of 2018.

Throughout its history, the many dedicated people involved with the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association have increasingly built on its achievements as it plays a more and more vital role in its community, protecting the drinking water supply and the local sense of connection to nature. The wherewithal is in place to face future threats to the watersheds, such as climate change. All of this can be achieved with a sense of purpose, but not without a sense of fun. Working with your friends of the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association provides both.



Ridley Creek beneath West Chester Pike

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Edgmont Township

Edgmont Township was originally called Gilead by William Penn. Its present name was inspired by an early settler named Joseph Baker who came from the Royal Manor of Edgmond in the county of Shropshire.

Right at the county and township boundary, Ridley Creek is met by School House Run which flows into it from the southwest.

School House Run

School House Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek that seems to originate near the boundary between Willistown and Edgmont Townships and flows generally towards the east to meet Ridley Creek right at the boundary line between the two townships. In 1784, a Quaker school house was built along this stream. It is fed by a network of tributaries that drain the northwest portion of Edgmont Township.



Two views of the stream at Stackhouse Mill and Valley Roads
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The precise location of the named stream is confusing due to conflicting information in the Geographic Names Information System of the U.S. Geological Survey. The stated coordinates for the source of the stream appear to be at PA Route 926, Street Road, just east of its intersection with Smedley Drive. It flows towards the southeast and meets another stream near the intersection of Valley Road and Stackhouse Mill Road. The other stream originates near PA Route 926 just east of its intersection with PA Route 352, Middletown Road. It is fed by two tributaries that flow in from farm fields to the south. To the east of Valley Road, School House Run is joined by another tributary that flows into it from the south that originates near Brickhouse Farm, now a housing development. As it heads east, School House Run flows under Pony Trail Drive and soon enters Ridley Creek at the border between Willistown Township in Chester County and Edgmont Township in Delaware County. On the Edgmont Township Zoning Map and other sources, the stream that appears to be called School House Run by the USGS is called Stackhouse Mill Run, but the USGS lists no such stream with that official name. The coordinates for the mouth of School House Run given by the USGS is not precise, but it is closer to a very small tributary that enters Ridley Creek from the south just beyond the confluence with Little Pony Trail Creek. On the Edgmont Township Zoning Map, that tiny tributary is the stream that is marked as School House Run.

Wynnorr Farm

Close to the source of the USGS version of School House Run at the intersection of PA Routes 352 and 926 is the Wynnorr Farm. This is the location of the Sunny Harvest Farms CSA. It's a cooperative venture involving Amish farms from Lancaster County in which members sign up for shares of fresh produce.

Arasapha Farm

At the headwaters of a tributary that enters School House Run from the south is located one of the last operating farms in Delaware County, Arasapha Farm. The operation has been in the hands of the Bates family since 1952, whose matriarch named it after the nineteenth and early twentieth century textile mills her great grandfather Abraham Blakeley owned in Chester. Its approximately 80 acres are visible from Middletown Road, PA Route 352. A large part of their income has come from holiday attractions such as the Bate's Motel Haunted Attraction, the

Haunted Hayride and other hayrides for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. More recently they have begun operating Escape Rooms in various locations.



Arasapha Farm

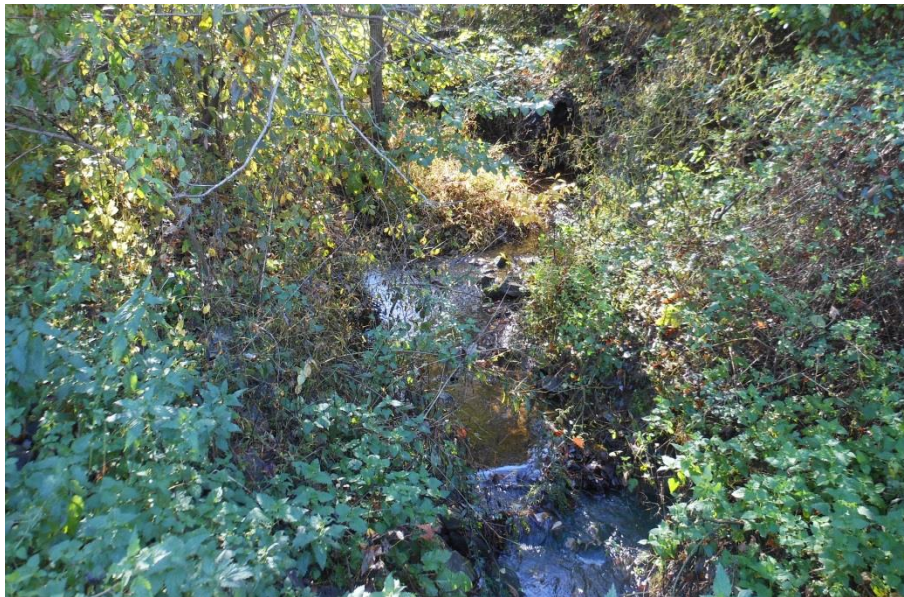
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

Little Pony Trail Creek

A little over 300 feet further downstream, Little Pony Trail Creek flows into Ridley Creek from the south. Its source is a pond on the property of Open Connections, a campus along Delchester Road that offers programs for homeschoolers.

Open Connections

The founders of Open Connections, Susan Shilcock and Peter Bergson, combined the progressive educational principles of experiential learning and the development of the whole individual with Synectics, a corporate training movement that emphasizes collaboration and flexible thinking. After starting out as a preschool in Bryn Mawr in 1978, their programs expanded and then moved to the 28-acre Open Connections Village in Edgmont Township in the year 2000. With the assistance of the Willistown Conservation Trust, conservation easements on the property and four adjacent residential parcels comprise 50 acres of protected open space.



Little Pony Trail Run at Stackhouse Mill Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

From the pond at Open Connections, Little Pony Trail Creek flows roughly northward where it flows under Stackhouse Mill Road and then parallel to Pony Trail Drive before it enters Ridley Creek.

Ridley Creek then meanders eastward back and forth along the boundary between Willistown Township, Chester County and Edgmont Township, Delaware County. While doing so, it flows under Delchester Road, named for the two counties.



View of Ridley Creek from the Delchester Bridge



Plaque on the 1926 Delchester Bridge

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

U.S. Army Reserve Center

Once the creek flows under Delchester Road, it skirts the northern end of a U.S. Army Reserve Center that serves as a regional equipment maintenance facility. Its specific mission is referred to as Area Maintenance Support Activity # 31, and it is one of 26 such AMSAs in the 13 state area of responsibility of the 99th Regional Support Command of the U.S. Army Reserves, which has its headquarters in New Jersey at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. From 1955 until 1968 this facility was a Nike missile site. Before the age of intercontinental ballistic missiles, it was one of twelve sites encircling Philadelphia to protect the city from nuclear attack by Soviet bombers. The missile magazines have been covered over with the asphalt of the current motor pool parking lot.

As Ridley Creek continues along the township border at the northern end of the U.S. Army Reserve Center, it is entered by Okehocking Run flowing down from Willistown Township to the north.

Okehocking Run

Okehocking Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek within Willistown Township. It is named for the Okehocking Land Grant of 1701.

Radnor Hunt Club

The source of Okehocking Run arises in a forested section of the township north of Goshen Road and west of South Warren Avenue within crying distance of the Radnor Hunt Club.

The club moved to this location from Bryn Mawr in 1924, just west of the intersection between Goshen and Providence Roads. It is on property that once was home to members of the DuPont, Widener, Strawbridge, and Rockefeller families. The first Radnor races pitting Thoroughbred horses against each other took place at the Cassatt family's Chesterbrook Farm in 1930, but a few years later were held here at the Radnor Hunt Club. Breeders from the area pitted their horses against those coming from Long Island, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas. Steeplechase racing was inspired by fox hunts and have been a popular feature in addition to racing on straight courses. Across Goshen Road was the Happy Hill Farm estate belonging to Widener family members Ella Anne and Cortright Wetherill. They bred what was considered one of the greatest 20th century Thoroughbred sires, Raise a Native. A few miles down Providence Road is Brushwood Stables, where Belmont Stakes-winner Crème Fraiche was bred by Betty Moran. The riding scenes of Alfred Hitchcock's 1964 film *Marnie* were made on or near the fields of the Radnor Hunt Club. In the early 21st century, the proceeds of the races were used to support the Brandywine Conservancy in preserving the surrounding acreage as open land.

Willistown Friends Meeting

Okehocking Run flows towards the southeast and passes under Goshen Road just west of the Willistown Friends Meeting.

Rushton Woods Preserve and Rushton Farm



Entrance to Rushton Woods Preserve on Delchester Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Just south of Goshen Road, the creek makes a bend through the Rushton Woods Preserve and Rushton Farm. Willistown Conservation Trust is the steward of this parcel and conducts wildlife studies and conservation and habitat restoration activities here, and maintains the adjoining Rushton Farm as a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm.



Rushton Farm

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Rushton Conservation Center opened in the fall of 2018. It is a 2,800-square foot education building for conducting conservation programs throughout the year. It also provides indoor research space for those conducting field work in the Rushton Woods Preserve and other Willistown Conservation Trust sites. Research partners include faculty and students from Drexel University, Villanova University, and the University of Pennsylvania. Rushton Woods has a bird banding site used by scientists such as Jason Weckstein, associate curator of ornithology at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. In 2018, a memorandum of understanding was signed that designated the Trust's entire focal area as a field study site for the Academy.

The Willistown Conservation Trust received grant funding to participate in the Motus telemetry tracking system for collecting migratory bird data. Along with the Northeast Motus Collaboration, they installed the first array of receiving stations across Pennsylvania in 2018. The publicly available centralized database is managed by Bird Studies Canada. Willistown Conservation Trust has partnered with the Westtown School to use this bird data network for a conservation science curriculum.

The Rushton Conservation Center also includes a teaching kitchen for culinary classes that showcase the bountiful harvest of the Rushton Farm.



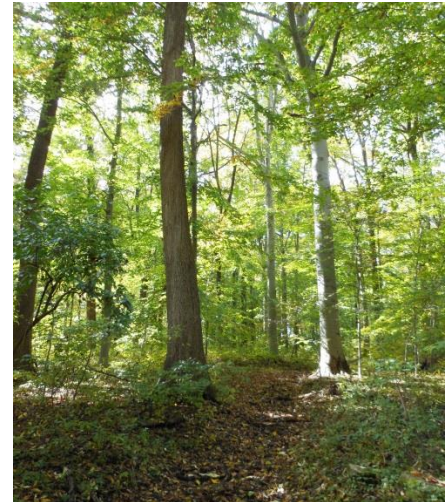
Rushton Woodland Preserve's trail through the meadow towards the woodland
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

There are a variety of habitats represented in the Rushton Woods Preserve, including a meadow and a woodland dominated by American beech and tulip poplar with spicebush and American hornbeam in the understory.

The Rushton Woods Preserve has become a favored site for biological fieldwork. For example, University of Pennsylvania graduate student Jay Geipel studied the habitat and prey relationships of the Northern saw-whet owl there. His field research also revealed a healthy ecosystem with populations of small predatory mammals such as long-tailed weasel and mink.



Two views of the Rushton Woodlands



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Okehocking Run within the Rushton Woodland Preserve Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Okehocking Run flows out of the eastern edge of the preserve through private property where it is dammed to form a pond. The pond outflow continues towards the southeast and is joined by the small tributary of Hibberd Run just on the west side of Plumsock Road.

Hibberd Run

The source of Hibberd Run is just south of Goshen Road between Willistown Friends Meeting to the west and the village of White Horse to the east. It flows south through a narrow, wooded corridor among the large open fields of the 17-acre Stonehedge Farm, and enters Okehocking Run just after passing under Plumsock Road.

In early 2019, the acreage was purchased by a non-profit conservation firm called Delchester Group, Inc., a sister organization of the Willistown Conservation Trust in order to save it from a planned subdivision and development. The intention was to keep the equestrian trail through the property permanent for foxhunters and other riders. The fieldstone jump at the southeast corner of Plumsock and Goshen Roads marking the equestrian entrance to the property is the signature landmark of the Stonehedge Farm.



Two views of Hibberd Run from Plumsock Road

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Hibberd Run is named for an early settler in Willistown Township, Jolen Hibberd, who lived from 1699 to 1766.

Yarnell Run

A mere eighth of a mile downstream from Hibberd Run is the confluence of Okehocking Run with an even smaller tributary, Yarnell Run. Yarnell Run originates in a field east of Plumsock Road, flows towards the west and shortly after it passes under the road it enters Okehocking Run.



Two views of Yarnell Run from Plumsock Road



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Yarnell Run is named for an early settler in Willistown Township, Francis Yarnell, who lived from 1699 to 1766.

From there, Okehocking Run flows in a more southerly direction through a wooded corridor which merges with extensive woods adjacent to the Plumsock subdivision. The stream is dammed within these woods where an old mill pond is silting up. Okehocking Run flows from there under PA Route 3, West Chester Pike.



View towards Okehocking Run from the north side of West Chester Pike
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Just south of there at the Edgmont Township border, Okehocking Run enters Ridley Creek just north of the U.S. Army Reserve Center.

From its confluence with Okehocking Run, Ridley Creek turns southeast and flows between the U.S. Army Reserve Center and the WillowMay Farm, a 36-acre family run equestrian facility. Just downstream from the farm, Plumsock Run enters Ridley Creek.

Plumsock Run

Plumsock Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek that originates from a large pond to the east of the Plumsock residential subdivision in Willistown Township. It is named for that community of detached single-family homes, which was built around 1994.

Nathan Evans and the Underground Railroad

At one time, Marlborough Road (which now only extends from the east side of Providence Road) traversed the headwaters of Plumsock Run and connected Providence Road with West Chester Pike. Starting in 1821, the property on the north side of this portion of Marlborough Road was owned by Nathan Evans, who actively participated as an agent of the Underground Railroad. His property was an important link in the network of escape routes for slaves fleeing towards freedom in the north. Fugitives were directed to the Evans property by Dr. Bartholomew Fussell in Kennett Square, who had received them from his colleague Dr. Thomas Garrett below the Mason-Dixon Line in Wilmington, Delaware. Dr. Garrett worked in close association with Harriet Tubman. From Willistown, the alternative lines on the Underground Railroad ran north to and Phoenixville and east to the Philadelphia offices of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, where most of them were taken. In 1837, Nathan Evans called upon James Lewis of Marple Township to make his house another station on the Underground Railroad, since the long nighttime journeys were taking a toll on Evans on account of his age. The vocal abolitionist and temperance stances of Nathan Evans and his activities disturbed his conservative neighbors. He was disowned by the Willistown Friends Meeting.

Nathan Evans lived with his wife Zilah (Maule) Evans and their five children. The oldest was David Evans, who kept a detailed diary for many years of his life. He reported a total of around 150 slaves that his father helped on their way out of bondage. In January of 1850, David Evans brought Frederick Douglass to the house to lecture. They had met the previous month when Evans had attended an event to benefit the *North Star* newspaper, edited by Douglass. Nathans Evans died in 1852. David Evans sold the majority of the family farm in 1856, having tired of the farm life. That year he purchased the old John Yarnall House (ca. 1765) on 23 acres at the east end of the former Evans property and closer to Providence Road. Ten years later he moved to 30 acres he purchased at the northern end of Willistown Township at the intersection with the Pennsylvania Railroad and became a lumber and coal merchant. This property became the center of the Borough of Malvern, incorporated in 1889. David Evans is considered the town's founder.

Plumsock Run flows towards the southwest and passes under PA Route 3, the West Chester Pike.

Edgmont Country Club

South of the West Chester Pike Plumsock Run flows through a couple links of the Edgmont Country Club's golf course before entering Ridley Creek at the northeast corner of the course.

In March 2016, the country club and golf course were purchased by the New Jersey real estate development firm of Ridgewood Real Estate Partners. They proposed to build 150 to 160 units consisting of a variety of housing types.



Views of Plumsock Run in the Edgmont Country Club
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Edgmont Country Clubhouse

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Ridley Creek valley just beyond the golf course of the Edgmont Country Club
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Downstream from its confluence with Plumsock Run, Ridley Creek is met by an unnamed tributary which flows into it from the south where it originates at the White Horse Village retirement community.

Ridley Creek then bends towards the east and forms the southern boundary of the Edgmont Golf Club.

Ridley Creek State Park

On the other bank of Ridley Creek is Ridley Creek State Park. At 2,606 acres the park includes the largest continuous woodland in the watershed. The park has numerous natural and cultural features of interest.

Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation



Ridley Creek as it flows past Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation, Ridley Creek State Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

At the north end of the park the creek flows past Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation. A vivid simulation of eighteenth century farm life can be experienced there. The farm belonged to

the Pratt family from 1720 until 1820 and is now maintained as a living history museum by the Bishop's Mill Historical Institute.



Farmhouse at the Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Unnamed tributary of Ridley Creek flowing from spring house, Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Gardens, pastures, and outbuildings at the Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2013



Swine taking their ease, Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

Fisherman's Trail



Riffles and pools on Ridley Creek along the Fisherman's Trail
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Fisherman's Trail runs alongside Ridley Creek downstream from the 18th century living history farmstead of the Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation. American hornbeam, or musclewood, is a common tree seen along the Fisherman's Trail. There are also some spectacular outcrops of Baltimore Gneiss to be seen along the trail.

The most common sports fish in Ridley Creek are redbreast sunfish, rock bass, and smallmouth bass. Brown trout are also stocked. Other native fish as revealed by Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission surveys in the park include bluegill, green sunfish, pumpkinseed, yellow bullhead, brown bullhead, longnose dace, blacknose dace, cutlips minnow, common shiner, satinfin shiner, spottail shiner, spotfin shiner, swallowtail shiner, golden shiner, redbfin pickerel, white sucker, northern hogsucker, creek chubsucker, tessellated darter, margined madtom, fallfish, banded killifish, largemouth bass, and creek chub.



Musclewood and other trees along Fisherman's Trail
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Sinewy forms of musclewood and Baltimore Gneiss, Fisherman's Trail, Ridley Creek State Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Tagalong Run

Tagalong Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek that is named for the Tagalong Girl Scout cookie. It flows entirely within Ridley Creek State Park, a facility frequented by Girl Scouts. It originates in the park's woods just west of Providence Road and flows towards the southwest and passes under Sandy Flash Road. It crosses the Fisherman's Trail before entering Ridley Creek just north of the trailhead on Gradyville Road.

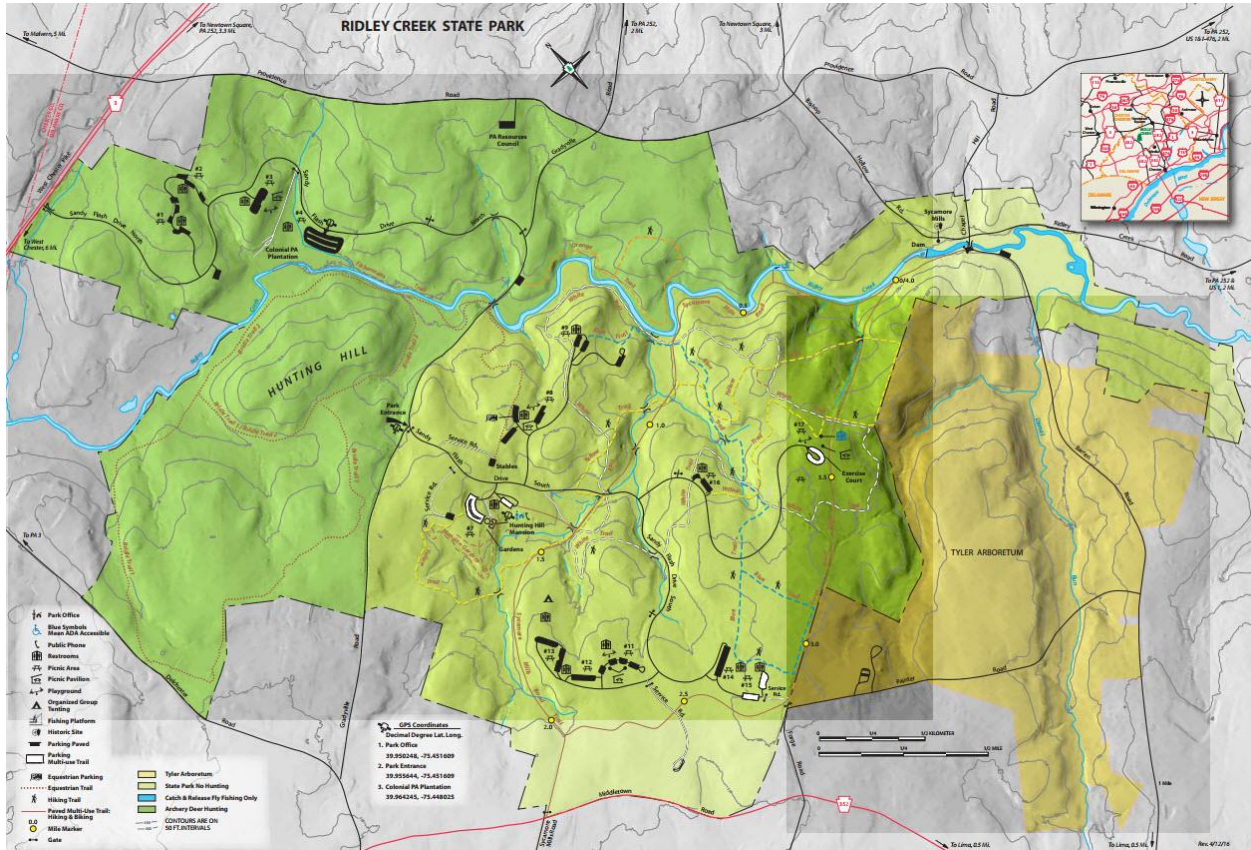


Tagalong Run as it crosses the Fisherman's Trail
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the west side of Ridley Creek opposite from the Fisherman's Trail and north of Gradyville Road is the park's Equestrian Area.

After Ridley Creek flows under Gradyville Road, it continues to meander through the dense canopy of the park woodlands. A portion of the White Trail follows the course of the west

bank of the creek through a particularly undisturbed portion of the forest where the damage from white-tailed deer browse has been minimal. The White Trail and the Blue Trail converge for a distance until they reach the Sycamore Mills Road Trail (which is part of the paved Multi-Use Trail). Just before reaching the Sycamore Mills Road Trail, Big Run flows into Ridley Creek from the west side and goes under the White and Blue Trails at a picturesque spot.



Ridley Creek State Park map (zoom for details)

Image: PA DCNR

Big Run

Big Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek that flows entirely within Ridley Creek State Park. Its source is on the west side of the park where two portions of the paved Multi-Use Trail join together, the Sycamore Mills Road Trail and the Forge Road Trail.

Yellow Trail

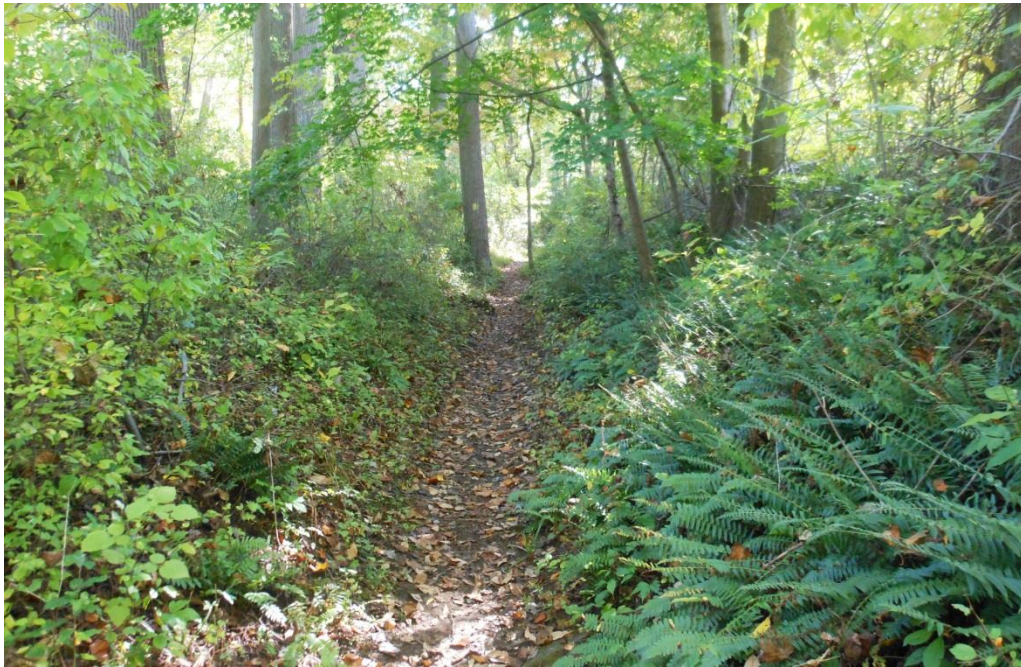
A little less than a half-mile from its source, Big Run is crossed by the park's Yellow Trail. The Yellow Trail begins at Picnic Area #7, just behind park headquarters, and loops down to Big Run and follows the valley formed by Big Run for most of the rest of the stream's length.



The Yellow Trail crosses Big Run



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



The Yellow Trail in the vicinity of Big Run

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

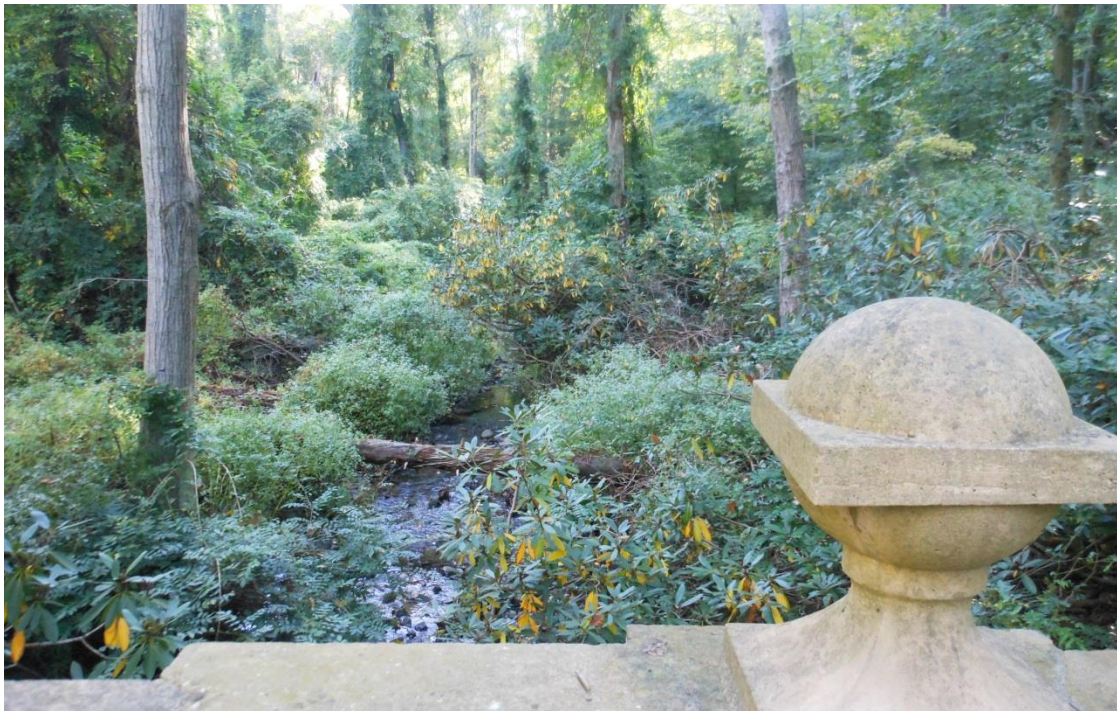
The Yellow Trail traverses the park roughly diagonally from the northwest to southeast. As it approaches the eastern end of the park and leaves the vicinity of Big Run, it crosses the Sycamore Mills Road portion of the Multi-Use Trail and loops around the southeast corner of the park, crossing the Forge Road portion of the Multi-Use Trail twice. Its other end is at Picnic Area #17, which is a prime spot for certain events with a large pavilion and an exercise court.

Hunting Hill Mansion

As Big Run continues to flow out of the southwest, it goes past Hunting Hill Mansion, which serves as Ridley Creek State Park headquarters. From there Big Run flows in a more westerly direction.



Elegant bridge over Big Run on approach to Hunting Hill Mansion
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



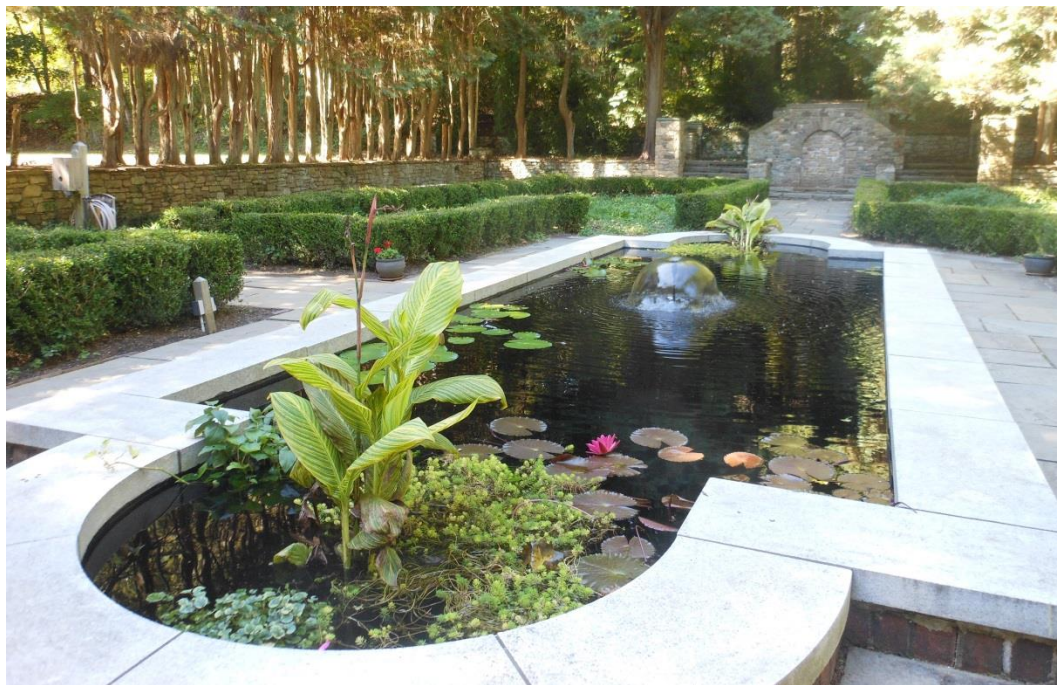
Big Run from Hunting Hill Mansion bridge

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Hunting Hill Mansion, Ridley Creek State Park Offices

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Formal gardens of Hunting Hill Mansion

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Hunting Hill Mansion was once the home of Sarah and Walter Jeffords, who had accumulated numerous parcels in the Ridley Creek watershed to foster their interest in horses. Sarah Jeffords was the niece of Samuel Riddle, the owner of the famous thoroughbreds Man-o-War and War Admiral. The Hunting Hill Mansion was his gift to her. In 1972 the land and the mansion were donated to the state for the creation of the park.



Greenhouse ruins, Hunting Hill Mansion



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Parking lot of Ridley Creek State Park office surrounded by beautiful trees

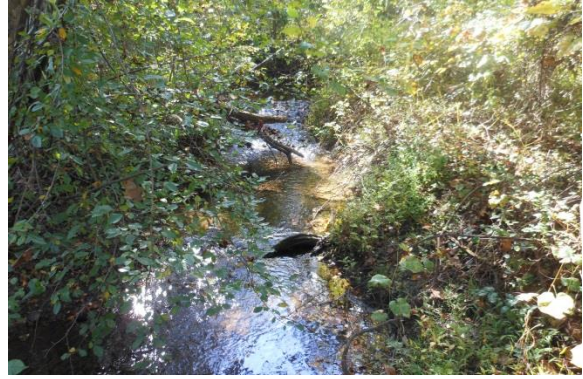
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Past the park office, Big Run flows under South Sandy Flash Drive, which is the paved road in the park that provides access to the various picnic areas. At this location, the Yellow and White Trails, the Sycamore Mills Road portion of the paved Multi-Use Trail, and South Sandy Flash Drive all converge.

Big Run continues to flow towards the east where it is crossed by the Yellow Trail one more time.



The Yellow Trail crosses Big Run again



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Big Run then tumbles into Ridley Creek near where the combined White and Blue Trails cross over it.



Big Run crossed by the White Trail, with the Multi-Use Trail visible beyond
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Big Run where it joins Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Just below its confluence with Big Run, Ridley Creek flows parallel to the Multi-Use Trail along Sycamore Mills Road, a paved biking, hiking, and jogging path. At a point marked by a sharp meander bend to the southwest where the Multi-Use Trail is at the top of a steep cutbank, Ridley Creek begins to form a boundary between Edgmont Township and Upper Providence Township to its east.

Hidden Valley Farm

Ridley Creek State Park includes facilities that carry on the tradition of a love for horses that had been so much a part of this acreage before it became a park. On the other side of Sandy Flash Drive South from park headquarters are the stables of Hidden Valley Farm. Riding lessons and horse boarding are provided here. Pony rides for children's parties are available. The 4.7 mile horseback riding trail begins at Picnic Area #8 next to the stables and goes north across Gradyville Road where it makes a figure-eight in the northwest portion of the park.



Entrance to the paddock, Hidden Valley Farm

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Another view of Hidden Valley Farm stables; Pony Ride viewing bench in foreground

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Hidden Valley Farm pastures



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

White Trail

The White Trail forms an irregular loop around the southeastern portion of the park. Going clockwise from Picnic Area #9 it follows Ridley Creek down to where it is joined by Big Run and then crosses the Multi-Use Trail for the first of four times. The two trails are two overlapping loops. The White Trail goes through a variety of habitats, including some of the more mature forest within the park.



View of Ridley Creek from near the White Trail

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Tulip poplar and American beech in winter, along the White Trail
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015



Baltimore Gneiss outcrop along the White Trail

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Blue Trail

The Blue Trail runs diagonally from the northeast to the southwest through Ridley Creek State Park. It starts at Picnic Area #9, joins the White Trail briefly where they both parallel Ridley Creek past the confluence with Big Run. The Blue Trail diverges from the White Trail after they cross the Multi-Use Trail, but meet again at the top of a hill where the two converge with the Red Trail. The Blue Trail forms a small loop at the southwest corner of the park in the vicinity of side-by-side Picnic Areas #14 and #15. One edge of the Blue Trail loop coincides with a portion of the Multi-Use Trail at the border with Tyler Arboretum. From there, the ruins

of the Round Top Farmstead are visible several yards into the woods. It originally belonged to the Minshalls, ancestors to the Painters and the Tylers, owners of the land that became Tyler Arboretum.



Along the Blue Trail, Ridley Creek State Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Red Trail

The Red Trail is a short trail that takes a winding route from Picnic Area #16 to Picnic #17.



Along the Red Trail, Ridley Creek State Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Trail heads for the Red and Yellow Trails near convenient restrooms, Picnic Area #17
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



A steep and rocky portion of the Yellow Trail in the southeast corner of Ridley Creek State Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2102

Multi-Use Trail

The Multi-Use Trail is a paved five-mile loop through Ridley Creek State Park for the use of walkers, bikers, and joggers. Cross-country skiing takes place in the winter time. The loop is comprised of a portion of Sycamore Mills and Forge Roads which extend outside the park as roads open to regular car traffic. Parking for the Multi-Use Trail is accessible at several picnic areas along Sandy Flash Road South within the park. Another popular spot to enter the Multi-Use Trail is at the park entrance at Barren and Chapel Hill Roads at the Sycamore Mills Historic Area.



Park entrance from bridge over Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Going counter-clockwise along the Multi-Use Trail, visitors pass through the Sycamore Mills Historic Area and along a scenic portion of Ridley Creek. A handicap accessible fishing area is available. The Multi-Use Trail passes through deep woods that include the State Champion black oak. The trail passes the Hunting Hill Mansion and park offices. As it approaches the west side of the park, there are more open brushy areas and meadows. The trail skirts several picnic areas and then briefly runs along the border with Tyler Arboretum where it is joined by the Blue Trail with views of the Round Top Farmstead. The Multi-Use Trail descends steeply down to where it started along Ridley Creek during its last portion for those going in this direction.



Approach towards Multi-Use Trail loop and Sycamore Mills dam

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



A nice flat rock for getting close to Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Wheelchair access to Ridley Creek



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

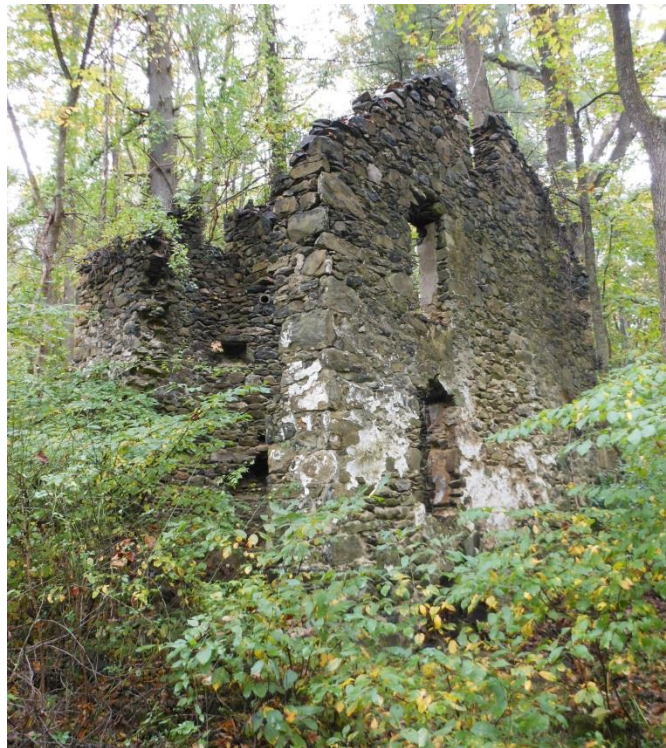


Tree root wrestling along the Multi-Use Trail, Ridley Creek State Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



A meander bend and point bar on Ridley Creek, as the Multi-Use Trail traverses above the cut-bank
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



One of several ruins along the Multi-Use Trail
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



The Multi-Use Trail crosses over Big Run, one of many points of intersecting paths and streams
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



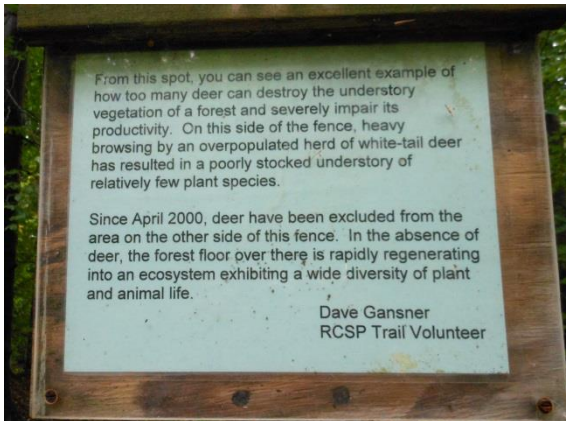
Multi-Use Trail tunnel beneath Sandy Flash Road South
The White Trail, the Yellow Trail, and Big Run also converge here
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Pennsylvania State Champion Black Oak, Ridley Creek State Park
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Open section of Multi-Use Trail on west side of park, looking towards Middletown Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Deer exclusion fence, demonstrating damage to forest of deer browse outside of fence
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Three major stressors on the forest ecosystem in Ridley Creek State Park and elsewhere in the northeast are over-browsing by white-tailed deer, invasive plants, and invasive earthworms. Surprisingly, none of the earthworms north of Maryland are native to the area. Ten thousand years after the retreat of the glaciers, they hadn't had time to recolonize on their own. The earthworms that inhabit the soil in the northeast United States were brought there from Europe and Asia by people who wanted a source of fishing bait, or brought accidentally in the soil around the roots of imported plants. The five-inch European earthworms are being replaced by nine-inch Asian earthworms of the species *Amyntas hilgendorfi* and *A. agrestis*. These Asian earthworms have voracious appetites and can entirely consume the leaf litter and humus layer on the forest floor. They compact the soil which then can't hold water, resulting in runoff and an increased sediment and nutrient load going to the creeks. There is also a loss of invertebrate diversity in the soil. The salamander populations crash because their young can't find food. Plant seedlings also can't take hold, except for a few exceptions such as blue cohosh.

Over-browsing by deer also has a cascading effect on the forest ecosystem. By destroying the herb and shrub layers, not only is the plant diversity reduced, but this missing forest structure and food source eliminates the bird species that depend on them for nesting sites and forage.

Often the forest floor is bare of vegetation, or only consists of ferns and other species unappetizing to deer. Many of those unappetizing species are invasive non-native species, which then outcompete any native plants species that remain.

One of the reasons for the deer overpopulation is the long-ago elimination of top predators in the local ecosystem such as gray wolves and cougars. Black bears on not predators of white-tailed deer, but they have been making a comeback in Pennsylvania. According to the Pennsylvania Game Commission, there numbers increased in the state from 4,000 in the 1970s to 18,000 in the 2010s. A 210-pound male black bear made its way into Ridley Creek State Park in 2016. Authorities decided to trap it and release it into state game lands in Dauphin County.



Ruins of Round Top Farmstead and a warning
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Round Top farmstead was built by Jacob Minshall in 1710. His father, Thomas Minshall, purchased land in both Nether Providence and Middletown Townships from William Penn. Thomas gave his son Jacob the Middletown parcel in 1707.

Sycamore Mills



Sycamore Mills dam, Ridley Creek State Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Downstream, and still within the park, is the Sycamore Mills Historic Area. This was the site of important early grist and saw mills dating from the early 18th century when it was known as Providence Mills, later to be known at various times as Bishop Mills and Sycamore Mills. In 1717, John Edge, Jacob Edge, and Henry Miller formed a partnership to build a “water corn mill.” The following year the mill was completed and called Providence Mill. This grist mill is known to have ground flour that was sent to the West Indies in the eighteenth century when Pennsylvania was the breadbasket of the British Empire and part of the triangular trade. It also ground grain for cattle feed. The grain was poured into a hopper. The head gate on the mill race was pulled up to allow water to flow over the wheel. A lot of screeching, cracking, and thumping was heard as the grinding commenced. In the lower story of the mill, the meal came out of the grinding burrs into a large chest. The burrs could be adjusted to produce the desired consistency of the meal depending on whether it was for flour or for cattle feed. The miller and his customer would sit by the fire and wait. As payment, the miller would extract a toll of one-tenth of a bushel for every bushel ground for a customer.

Around thirty years later in about the year 1747 a saw mill was built at the site. The line of ownership of the land and the mills is complicated for the next several decades. The grist mill was leased to a number of people who ground their own grain. The saw mill was used intermittently. In 1785, Thomas Bishop acquired absolute ownership of the mills and operated them himself until 1802. Francis Bishop began operating the grist mill that year, but Thomas took over again in 1807. Thomas took responsibility for the saw mill in 1811, the same year Amor Bishop took over the grist mill.

Also during the period from 1810 to 1811, the Bishops, along with a partner named Malin, built a rolling and slitting mill at the south end of the saw mill. It was the site of an old

plaster mill that had been in operation for the previous fifty years. The rolling and slitting mill made boiler plates and sheet iron for slitting into strips for other uses. Two-foot long bars of iron were carted out from Philadelphia for rolling and slitting. This mill was not a water mill, but rather was steam-powered. The fuel for the boilers was bituminous coal from western Virginia until the War of 1812 cut off that supply. The cargo ships carrying the coal from there was too easy to capture by the British. Charcoal was considered too expensive an option. But, in 1812, Pennsylvania anthracite coal was introduced. The Pottsville Board of Trade in its first report describes how Colonel George Shoemaker loaded nine wagons of anthracite coal from what became known as the Centreville Mines to the Philadelphia area and tried to sell them. He was accused of being an imposter for trying to impose stone on potential customers and calling it coal, and yet he persisted. Bishop and his partner Malin tried it at the rolling and slitting mill and found that it worked very well, despite their skeptical employees and a near disaster. The furnace worker couldn't get the hard anthracite coal to ignite at first, and he thought their boss was surely fooled. He went to bed, but woke up in the middle of the night feeling restless. He then went over to the mill to discover that the furnace door was red hot and the surrounding woodwork was about to burst into flame. He was able to control the fire and stave off disaster. The enormous potential of anthracite coal as a fuel was proven. The success of anthracite at Bishop Mills was noticed. The Philadelphia papers reported "and from that period we may date the triumph of reason, aided by perseverance, over prejudice." After that, Enos Helm was sent to Mauch Chunk on a regular basis with a five-horse team to bring back anthracite to the mills at the rate of two dollars a ton. Amor Bishop took over the rolling and slitting mill in 1826, but it was no longer occupied by 1829.

An operation that was associated with the rolling and slitting mill and used its product as raw material was Register's Nail Factory, which was located across the creek. David Register was a Tory who returned to Pennsylvania following after the Amnesty Act. From 1812 to 1813 he built a frame structure where he produced wrought iron nails by hand.

This mill center also contributed to the intellectual development of Delaware County. In 1812, the mill office was built. On its second floor was located the Union Library, the second library (after the one in Darby) to be created in the county. The year 1812 was a great time of growth at Bishops Mills. They also added a blacksmith and wheelwright shop that year.



Sycamore Mills office and Union Library
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

During the Great Flood of 1843, the saw mill and the dam were swept away, but it they were replaced soon afterwards. The flood also caused the loss of two tenement houses and the bridge, but the bridge abutments were left intact. The nail factory also met its end during that event. The flood of 1843 was by far the most damaging, but the dam had been destroyed during floods three times previously, in 1793, 1822, and 1839.

During the 1840s, black oak trees from the surrounding area were sawn into boards at the saw mill. The bark from the trees was sent to nearby tan yards, such as the one on William Bartram's farm along Crum Creek.

In 1862 the mills were sold to Joseph D. Velotte and went out of the hands of the Bishop family. The Union Library was dissolved. Its book collection went partly to the Delaware County Institute of Science and partly to the private library of Minshall Painter. The mills were then sold to William L. Lewis in 1868, who deeded them to his son William F. Lewis in the following year. The mills burned in 1901 and were not replaced.

The mills themselves are all gone, but the dam remains, and the miller's house, the office and library, and a few small millworkers' houses are now used as private residences within the park.



The miller's house, Sycamore Mills village
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Former mill tenant house on Bishop Hollow Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Ruins of millworker's tenant house along Multi-Use Trail
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The ruin of a millworker's tenant house along the Multi-Use Trail is all that remains of the house reputedly built by Peter Yarnall between 1785 and 1810. It was in continuous use until it burned in 1974.



18th century Sycamore Mills village houses with current residents
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Downstream from the dam and the mill seat is a bridge which now carries Barren Road over Ridley Creek. The original bridge about a hundred feet downstream from this location was built in 1763. Funds were raised to build the bridge by subscription. County money was used to repair the bridge in 1799, after the court was successfully petitioned. The bridge was destroyed by the flood in 1843, which swept away the abutments but left behind the framework. The bridge was rebuilt. It was a covered bridge called the “Long Bridge.” It was finally replaced by the current concrete bridge in 1927.



“Peace Wall” at the corner of Bishop Hollow and Chapel Hill Roads
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

From just inside the entrance to the Multi-Use Trail in Ridley Creek State Park at Sycamore Mills, Ridley Creek starts its lengthy boundary between Middletown Township and Upper Providence Township. The creek flows under the bridge at the park entrance over which passes Barren Road. Barren Road derives its name from the Pink Hill Serpentine Barren, which lies within the property of Tyler Arboretum farther south on Barren Road in Middletown Township. On the Upper Providence side of the bridge, Barren Road converges with Chapel Hill Road, Bishop Hollow Road, and Ridley Creek Road. Chapel Hill Road is continuous with Barren Road on the other side of the bridge and heads northeast toward Blue Chapel Hill on Providence Road. Bishop Hollow Road heads in a northerly direction out of the valley and Ridley Creek Road heads southeast along the downstream course of Ridley Creek.

Dismal Run

Ridley Creek continues to flow south through a portion of Ridley Creek State Park for a short distance. It is joined from the west by Dismal Run which flows out of neighboring Tyler Arboretum. The name of Dismal Run belies its disposition as an attractive stream flowing for most of its length beneath the canopy of the forested portion of the arboretum. It is one of the least degraded streams in the area, its condition probably close to what it was prior to the disturbances that have affected many of the local waterways from deforestation, agriculture, and subsequent suburban development. Studies funded by the William Penn Foundation done in the second decade of the 21st century by Stan Kemp from the University of Baltimore and his colleagues at Villanova University revealed a diverse fauna in Dismal Run. There were several species of stonefly and caddisfly that are sensitive to disturbance. Brown trout that were clearly born in Dismal Run due to their size, coloration, and fins indicated that the water temperature remained below a critical point, another sign of a health stream. American eels of large size also inhabit Dismal Run, where they stay for five to seven years before returning to their spawning grounds in the Sargasso Sea near Bermuda. The tiny eel larvae then make their way back to streams like Dismal Run to grow and start the cycle all over again.

The life cycle of the American eel is intimately linked to that of the last remaining freshwater mussel species to inhabit Ridley Creek, the eastern elliptio. Larvae of the mussel attach themselves to an eel's gills and get transported farther upstream. They drop off upon maturity and take resident in the streambed. As populations of mussels filter enormous quantities of sediment for nutrients they clean the water making it healthier for other organisms to flourish. Each individual mussel can filter 20 gallons of water a day. They can live for up to 80 years. In 2011 and 2014, mussels from the Delaware River were transferred to Ridley Creek in order to increase the population there. The project was overseen by Dr. Danielle Kreeger of the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary. In 2017, a Mussel Hatchery was opened at the Fairmount Water Works in Philadelphia, as the beginning stage towards enlarging the scale of mussel introductions to the local waterways. The hatchery is a partnership among the water works, the Philadelphia Water Department, and the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. They began with another mussel species, the alewife floater, which is dependent upon the migratory alewife fish for its dispersal in the same way the eastern elliptio depends on American eels.

Another fish species that was observed in Dismal Run was the cutlips minnow, a large species unusual in such a small stream. The cutlips minnow has a specialized jaw for dislodging

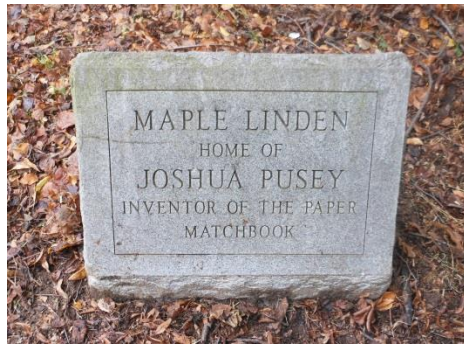
prey from rocks. It's also known as the "eyepicker" for its habit of removing the eyes of other fish if confined with them in a bait bucket.

Dismal Run originates in Middletown Township just north of the intersection between PA Rt. 352, Middletown Road, and PA Rt. 452, Pennell Road. Near its source it flows parallel to an access drive shared by a Kingdom Hall of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the offices of the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association. The stream flows northeast and passes behind the Lima Estates retirement community.

Lima Estates

Lima Estates is a retirement community that hosts the monthly lectures of the Middletown Township Historical Society. The name was originally the Open Door Estates. It was built on the Pusey-Fetters property.

Joshua Pusey House



Maple Linden marker

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the grounds of Lima Estates was “Maple Linden” the former home of Joshua Pusey. He was the inventor of the paper match book cover. The house was originally built in 1835 by Abraham Pennell, Jr. and was passed down through the Pusey family. Joshua Pusey took possession in 1888 and named it Maple Linden. The following year he invented the paper match book cover. He was a patent attorney who commuted by trolley from Lima to Media, and then to Philadelphia by train. He liked to smoke cigars, but he thought his silver match case was too bulky to carry around. He received a patent for the paper match book cover in 1892 and sold it to the Diamond Match Co. in 1895. The only thing they changed was to move the strike surface from the inside to the outside cover. Seven years later, they had their first big order by a single business. Pabst Brewing Co. ordered 10 million match books. Joshua Pusey was a descendent of William Penn’s business partner, Caleb Pusey. He was born in Auburn, now Yorklyn, Delaware in 1842. After his schooling and travels in Europe, he returned to the U.S. to become a farmer until 1860 when he joined the Union cause and lost his Quaker meeting membership. He was wounded in the jaw and throat during the Battle of Fredericksburg. He wore a beard the rest of his life to cover the scars. He subsequently became a patent attorney and inventor best known for the matchbook, but he also invented a coin-operated device attached to opera glasses, a toboggan, a letter box, and a crayon holder. He died in 1906 at the age of 64.



Joshua Pusey historical marker on Middletown Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Fetters were the last private owner of the Pennell-Pusey house and property. Lima Estates used the house as offices at first. At some point they received a zoning variance from Middletown Township to raise their buildings to three stories if they agreed to maintain Maple Linden. They have not been held accountable for its maintenance and the house became increasingly dilapidated. It was demolished before the end of the second decade of the 21st century.



Maple Linden engulfed in vegetation



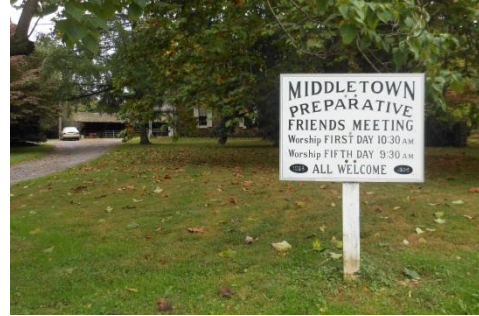
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Middletown Friends Meeting

Just north on Middletown Road, PA Rt. 352, are two Quaker meeting houses. The Middletown Friends Meeting was originally established in 1686 shortly after the first Quakers arrived. In 1770, a stone structure replaced the original wood building. In 1783, the schoolhouse was built.



The first Middletown Friends Meeting



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

When Elias Hicks of Bucks County began preaching in 1827, the controversy he created caused a serious split among Middletown Quakers as it did in many Friends Meetings. The Hicksites continued to gather at the Meeting House, but beginning in 1828 the local Orthodox Quakers met at the home of James Emlen. This lasted until Joseph Pennell donated some land to the south of what is now Cumberland Cemetery in 1835 and a new Meeting House was built.



The 1835 Middletown Friends Meeting



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



It looks like a Quaker schoolhouse!

In between the two Meetings was the burying ground. On its plain grave markers can be seen the names of many original Quaker families to the area, such as Sharpless, Pennell, Smedley, Darlington, Yarnall, Emlen, Minshall, Yearsley, and Broomall.

Cumberland Cemetery



Cumberland Cemetery caretaker's house and entrance along Middletown Road
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Cumberland Cemetery was established in 1860 by Thomas Pratt, expanding on the original Quaker burial ground. The cemetery is the final resting place of many additional local persons of note, including those associated with Tyler Arboretum. John Tyler's grave is here, as well as the mausoleums of the brothers Jacob and Minshall Painter. They wanted to be buried next to their mother, but the grand style of their markers was not in the plain Quaker style, so they were relegated to the edge of the graveyard. But then, they were outdone by John J. Tyler in terms of sheer size of mausoleum.



Memorials of Minshall and Jacob Painter
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Additional views of Jacob Painter's tomb, showing botanical theme
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Joshua Pusey's modest grave and John J. Tyler's crypt, Cumberland Cemetery
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Rosemont Fault

Dismal Run follows path of least erosional resistance along the trace of the Rosemont Fault. Serpentinite rock is exposed at the surface as a result of erosion that followed geological action along this fault beginning approximately 430 million years ago.



Dismal Run upstream from Pink Hill

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Pink Hill

The presence of serpentinite bedrock has given rise to the development of the Pink Hill Serpentine Barren, a unique plant community that has developed on the toxic serpentinite-derived soil. It is part of Tyler Arboretum on the west side of Painter Road.



Pink Hill in April
Moss phlox in foreground, blackjack oak in background
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2019

The serpentine barrens ecosystem is a rare and diverse community that includes at least a dozen endangered and threatened species of plants and animals. One such species was confirmed at Pink Hill in the early 1990s by Dr. Al Wheeler, Jr. It was a rare mirid bug (*Polymerus tinctipes*) that specializes in feeding on the moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*) that gives Pink Hill its characteristic color in April. There are at least 47 rare butterfly and moth species that inhabit serpentine barrens in Pennsylvania. Many of them specialize as feeders and pollinators of the unique serpentine barrens vegetation. The serpentine barrens ecosystem looks like a prairie grassland of the Midwest, and has many of the same grass species. Serpentine adapted trees include a variety of scrubby oaks, including blackjack and post oaks. Some of the herbaceous

plants that have adapted to withstand the toxic levels of chromium and nickel and the high ratio of magnesium to calcium in the serpentine-derived soil are the barrens chickweed, serpentine aster, Philadelphia lily, arrow-leaved violets, lyre-leaved bittercress, and pussytoes.



Close-up of moss phlox, barrens chickweed, and arrow-leaved violet at Pink Hill
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2019

The serpentine barrens ecosystem requires periodic fires to maintain it. Soil build-up around the edge the barren derived from the leaf litter dropping from the surrounding forest allows the forest to encroach upon and close up the serpentine barren. Pink Hill is 3 remaining acres of what had once been 14 acres of open grassland in recorded times. Under the guidance of Dr. Roger Latham, conservation biologist, and Bill Lucas, engineer, Tyler Arboretum secured funding to clear 8 acres of woods to expand and reestablish the barrens. In addition to tree removal, this involves prescribed burning, invasive species control, partial soil organic matter removal, deer management, baseline surveys, and species reintroduction. Delaware County once had the second largest number of serpentine barrens of any county in the eastern United States. Of those ten original barrens in the county, only Pink Hill remains.



Views of Pink Hill in the fall when the pink phlox is not blooming
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Serpentinite boulder at top of Pink Hill & serpentinite gravel on trail at bottom of Pink Hill
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Dismal Run from the Pink Hill Trail
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

South Farm

Near Dismal Run below Pink Hill is a stone ruin. This was the barn that was part of “South Farm,” comprising a portion of the Tyler agricultural enterprise.



Ruin of the South Farm barn

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

American Chestnut Tree Restoration Program

On the west side of Painter Road, Tyler Arboretum maintains an orchard for American chestnut trees. The arboretum participates in a national breeding program to develop a blight resistant strain of American chestnut.

In 1904, the fungus *Cryphonectria parasitica* was accidentally introduced from Asia and almost wiped out the American chestnut, *Castanea dentata*, by the end of the 1940s. The fungus is spread by wind-blown spores. It kills the above-ground portion of the tree but spares the roots. Stump sprouts never reach maturity before they die back again, effectively removing this once ecologically and commercially important tree species from the canopy. Tyler Arboretum has been part of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the North Central Region of The American Chestnut Foundation since 1997. The American Chestnut Foundation is dedicated to saving the species through its research and breeding programs. The chestnut trees at Tyler Arboretum serve as a reservoir of the genome characteristic of Pennsylvania. Backcrossing experiments take place at other locations. William Powell and Charles Maynard have led the research team working on the restoration project at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, New York. After working for many years attempting to create a resistant strain of chestnut trees by backcrossing, they began using transgenics to create a resistant strain by transferring a single

gene from wheat into the genetic code of the American chestnut. This gene codes for an enzyme that breaks down oxalic acid, which is the lethal toxin produced by the chestnut blight fungus. Regulatory approvals are required to grow and plant the 10,000 blight resistant trees that are planned as part of the restoration to its native range in the eastern United States.

Meanwhile, a second pathogen has begun to spread from the south. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* causes root rot, and will have to be dealt with in order for the restoration of the American chestnut to be successful.



American chestnut orchard, Tyler Arboretum
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Goldenrod and aster meadow in the fall, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Invasive plant demonstration garden?, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Painters Mills

Dismal Run flows under Painter Road and continues to flow through Tyler Arboretum and past the former site of Painters Mills. The mills were reportedly located 300 yards east of Painter Road, and were also known as Painter's Clover and Saw Mills. But, in the earliest record, from 1826, they were already known as the "Old Mills." In 1831, Benjamin Robinson and John Heacock took over the mills from Thomas Chalfont. Hugh Jones used a portion of the mill complex to manufacture chair backs for a time. In 1860 all operations ceased after the place went up in flames.

Tyler Arboretum



Lachford Hall and the Painter Library, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Tyler Arboretum in the spring



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2014

Tyler Arboretum traces its origins to 1825 when the brothers Jacob and Minshall Painter began to plant specimen trees around the family estate of Lachford Hall in the midst of 500 acres they had inherited and 150 additional acres they had purchased. It was a portion of the land originally purchased in 1681 from William Penn by their ancestor Thomas Minshall. Neither brother had any children, so the property passed to their sister Ann who had married John Tyler. Their son John J. Tyler took over the running of the property which had operated as a farm through the entire eight generations of the family's occupation. When John J. Tyler's wife Laura died in 1944 without children, the long family ownership of the property ended when she bequeathed it to a Board of Trustees to operate as the John J. Tyler Arboretum.

Thomas Minshall I of Lathford, Cheshire had originally purchased 625 acres from William Penn in 1681 in both Nether Providence and Middletown Townships. He and his wife Margaret Hickock arrived in Pennsylvania from England in August 1682. They had two sons, Isaac and Jacob.

Their son Jacob Minshall I (1685-1734) was born in Nether Providence. In 1707, Jacob married Sarah Owen, and was given the 500 acres in Middletown Township by his father that same year. Also in 1707, Jacob's older brother Isaac married Sarah's sister Rebecca and inherited the family's 380 acres in Nether Providence. Jacob's wife Sarah was the daughter of a physician in Philadelphia who also sat on the Provincial Council. Jacob was motivated to build her a fine manor house. "Round Top," built in 1710, was the first house on the property. That was also where Thomas I and his wife Margaret lived out their remaining days. The ruins of Round Top can be viewed from the Multi-Use Trail within Ridley Creek State Park. It was inhabited until the late 1940s.



Round Top Farmstead
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Thomas Minshall II (1708-1783) was a son of Jacob and Sarah. He was born before "Round Top" was even finished. When his father died when he was 26, he inherited 150 acres in the western part of the tract. Eighty of these acres were part of the original land grant. Jacob had also purchased 70 acres from John Cheyney, and in 1734 purchased another 50 acres from Peter Trego which became the South Farm. Meanwhile, a younger brother of Thomas inherited "Round Top." In 1738, Thomas Minshall II married Agnes Salkeld, the daughter of a Quaker "preacher" from Chester. They lived in a small stone cottage known as the White Cottage at first, and began the construction of what became Lachford Hall. Thomas II was a skilled carpenter, wheelwright, and blacksmith. He had help with the construction from his younger brother Moses and his brother-in-law and first cousin Griffith Minshall. They started with the western end, and in the 1760s added the eastern end. That year they also began construction on the Valley Cottage.

Their home was located on the extensive property to be near the Edgmont Great Road (PA Route 352), which connected them to the shipping port of Chester. Thomas and Agnes had ten children.

Jacob Minshall II (1738-1817), eldest son of Thomas II and Agnes, was probably born in the White Cottage. Later, he built the first stone barn on the Home Farm, bred horses and started a large orchard. His unusual varieties of fruit trees might have inspired the horticultural interests of his grandsons Minshall and Jacob Painter. He and his wife Ann Heacock, who he married the year after the Declaration of Independence was signed, moved into the western end of Lachford Hall. They were married when he was 39 and she was 35 years old. They added the east side and doubled the size of the house. His parents Thomas and Agnes moved into that half for the remainder of their days. Jacob had tenants on the other farms, and was considered a fair landlord. As a well-respected member of the community, he was appointed guardian to many orphans and was frequently called to help settle estates.



Two views of Lachford Hall, Tyler Arboretum



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Jacob and Ann's daughter and only child Hannah Minshall (1782-1838) married Enos Painter in 1800. Enos Painter was the son of James and Jane Carter Painter of the Brandywine Creek valley. He was the one who actually named Lachford Hall after his wife's family's ancestral village. They added a small kitchen onto the house the year they were married. Enos Painter owned property in Philadelphia, and energetically augmented the Delaware County holdings of the family into which he married. He purchased parts of the original land grant from other branches of the Minshall family, including Round Top and the Middle Farm. He built a saw mill on Dismal Run in 1814. It included a millrace and an impounded pond, as well as a house for the millwright and his family. He made improvements to the tenant farms. When Jacob II "Father Minshall" died in 1817, Hannah and Enos moved from the house they had built that was located to the northwest of Lachford Hall into the western portion of Lachford Hall itself. Hannah's mother moved into the eastern portion. Enos built the large stone barn on the Home Farm in 1833 as the local economy switched from grain to cattle production.



Two views of the Barn, Tyler Arboretum



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Enos Painter and Hannah Minshall Painter had seven children, Minshall (b. 1801); James (b. 1802); Sarah (b. 1804); Hannah (b. 1806); Sidney (b. 1810); Jacob (b. 1814); and Ann (b. 1818).

Among those seven children, their oldest son Minshall (1801-1873), their youngest son Jacob (1814-1876), and their youngest daughter Ann (1818 – 1914) were the most important to the history of Tyler Arboretum. Minshall was largely self-educated, having completed his formal education in 1817 at Samuel Gummer’s boarding school in Burlington, New Jersey. Jacob graduated from the Westtown School and went on to attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York. Minshall was a young man of 24 years old when he started planting specimen trees around the family estate, and Jacob was quite young at age 11. They called their garden “Eden.” Their plantings include over 1000 specimen trees, of which a small fraction survive. Their main sources were through exchanges with other botanists. These included John Evans of Radnor, Robert Carr and Ann Bartram Carr of Bartram’s Gardens, the second Humphrey Marshall of Marshallton, the Hoopes brothers and William Darlington of West Chester, Victor du Pont and Pierce’s Garden (now Longwood Gardens), former Kew gardener Thomas Meehan of Germantown, and Darwin’s friend Joseph Hooker of Kew Gardens, London, to whom they sent many American specimens. They also expanded on their grandfather’s orchard, first purchasing an oxheart cherry and nine apple trees from Gideon Malin in 1830. They had inherited 500 acres from their father and purchased another 150 acres over the course of their lives. They also added a number of springhouses and smokehouses on the various farms. In 1858, they added a root cellar to the Home Farm. In 1849 a greenhouse was built onto Lachford Hall where they kept an orange tree. In 1863 the brothers built the Painter Library to house their many books, a printing press, and scientific instruments. Minshall made careful weather observations, and forwarded his reports to the Smithsonian Institution. The brothers invented a circular file system for organizing the notes on their comprehensive range of interests which they called “The Cycle of Knowledge.” It was a large drawer with radiating partitions and pie-wedge shaped spaces for containing the notes on every branch of human knowledge. With their printing press, they produced copies of a book about their organizational system, as well as pamphlets on other topics of interest. Such topics included the “sexdecimal system of notation” favoring 16 instead of 10 as a more flexible basis for mathematical manipulations, a new system of scientific nomenclature, and etymology.

Minshall Painter was a founder of the Delaware County Institute of Science and one of the first public school directors for Middletown Township. In the years leading up to its founding in 1850, Minshall was instrumental in determining the location and name of Delaware County’s new seat of government, the Borough of Media.



Giant sequoia and cedar of Lebanon, two of the original Painter trees, Tyler Arboretum
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

After Minshall died in 1873, Jacob sought a change of scenery that winter in Florida. He was so entranced with the semitropical vegetation there that he prepared to return for another winter, but suffered a stroke the evening before his departure. He died a year later in 1876. The brothers are buried in Cumberland Cemetery in Middletown Township. Their elaborate tombs bear imagery of plants and poems written by Jacob, who was a life-long poet. Their graves are adjacent to that of their mother's, but separated by a fence that divides the Cumberland Cemetery from the Middletown Friends Meeting burial ground. The Painter brothers were no longer members of Middletown Friends Meeting at that point. The brothers were prevented by Quaker custom from placing a headstone on their mother Hannah's grave when she died in 1838 at the age of 34. It is believed that this was one factor leading to the brothers' withdrawal from the Meeting in 1842. This was also around the time that Friends Meetings split as a result of the doctrinal dispute about the teachings of Elias Hicks. The Painters favored the more liberal Hicksites. They left the Orthodox meeting and withdrew their sister Ann from the Friends school associated with it, where they had gone for their early education.

Neither of the Painter brothers ever married. Their youngest sister Ann Painter (1818-1914) married William Tyler in 1847. She inherited the property from her brothers, but she and her husband lived in Philadelphia. The couple used Lachford Hall as a summer home.



Painter Library, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

After the death of the last brother in 1876, and when Ann and John's son John J. Tyler (1851-1930) became an adult, he ran the farm for his widowed mother. In 1877 Lachford Hall was renovated with Victorian-era additions. John J. Tyler married his cousin Laura Hoopes in 1881. She was the great-granddaughter of Hannah and Enos through their daughter Sarah Painter Barnard. Laura was the last of the family to survive. She and John had no children. John died in 1930. He had written a will to create an arboretum on 68 acres of the land and then died within 30 days of the bequest. In 1934, Laura deeded the property to the trustees designated to create the arboretum, which happened upon her death ten years later in 1944.

Charles G. Whittaker was the first superintendent of the arboretum. He and his staff spent six years cleaning and refurbishing the buildings and grounds in time for an open house in June 1950 to coincide with the Borough of Media's centennial celebration. Minshall Painter was celebrated as the Sponsor of Media, having been instrumental in determining the location of Delaware County's new seat of government and coming up with the town's name.

The first executive director of Tyler Arboretum was John Caspar Wister (1887-1982). Twenty-seven years before he became executive director of the arboretum, he was in the Ordnance Department of the American Expeditionary Services serving in France during World War I. Even during the hostilities and for some months afterwards, Wister took every opportunity to learn about horticultural practices in France and even visited the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew outside London before coming home. These experiences informed the rest of his long career, especially at Tyler Arboretum. He was executive director from 1946 until 1968. He laid out the general plan of the arboretum that expanded beyond the original Painter brothers' trees, to include the walking trails, the Pinetum, and the collections of cherries, lilacs, magnolias, rhododendrons and crabapple trees. John Caspar Wister was a descendent of the prominent Philadelphia family that included the 18th century physician Caspar Wister after whom the genus *Wisteria* was named.

By the last decade of the twentieth century, Tyler Arboretum was still relatively unknown, underfunded, and in need of new leadership. Eric Colbert was hired in 1991 as the new executive director, having shown a great deal of horticultural leadership in the beautification of the city of Newark, Delaware. Over the next 23 years until his death from pancreatic cancer in 2014, he developed strategic plans, increased fundraising, created new positions, increased

public programming, and improved infrastructure which included a deer enclosure fence, interpretive signage, and a visitor center. Many more visitors came to the arboretum as a result of its new family orientation and educational outreach.



Fragrant Garden, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Butterfly House, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



One of the treehouses and the Crooked House, Tyler Arboretum

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2014 (left) and 2012 (right)

After passing underneath Painter Road, the remaining course of Dismal Run largely passes beneath a dense canopy of forest as it flows through Tyler Arboretum and Ridley Creek State Park. Running along the north side of Dismal Run is Tyler Arboretum's Dismal Run Trail. The trees here are younger than in other wooded portions of the arboretum, and consist mainly of tulip poplar with a tangled undergrowth of spicebush, along with abundant multiflora rose along the trail. In John Tyler's day he called this area "The Meadow," which explains why the trees are younger.



Dismal Run from the Dismal Run Trail
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Within the arboretum woods, it is joined by a tributary known on arboretum maps as Rocky Run. Near their confluence is a landmark known as Indian Rock.

Indian Rock



Indian Rock

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Indian Rock is a large disc-shaped boulder that bears perpendicular grooves in a cross shape, or perhaps defining the four cardinal directions. There is a figure shaped like the letter A incised into the west corner. The rock is approximately four feet in diameter and nine inches at its greatest thickness. It has been assumed that the work done on this rock predates the arrival of Europeans to the area.

Early in the nineteenth century, three native people reportedly lived in a cave along Dismal Run. They were known by the names Andrew, Isaac, and Nancy. When Andrew died, the others joined relatives in New Jersey. Andrew is buried in the Friend's cemetery in Middletown Township.

“Rocky Run”

Rocky Run is the unofficial name of a tributary of Dismal Run that flows entirely within Tyler Arboretum and has been designated with that name on arboretum maps. This stream is not to be confused with the Rocky Run that flows into Chester Creek and originates nearby just across the Ridley and Chester Creek watershed divide on the west side of PA Rt. 352, Middletown Road.

The source of this Rocky Run is west of Painter Road. It flows towards the east through the shallow valley overlooked by Tyler Arboretum's main landmark buildings such as the Barn, the Painter Library, and Lachford Hall.



Skunk cabbage wetland along Rocky Run, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2014

The Springhouse supplies additional water to Rocky Run through a small tributary that flows from it.



Two views of the Springhouse, Tyler Arboretum



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



A good spot to get married, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Rocky Run is impounded to form the Pond, which is inhabited by numerous eastern painted turtles and green frogs.



The Pond, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Pond is next to the deer enclosure fence that surrounds the carefully maintained horticultural portion of Tyler Arboretum. At the gate next to the pond is the head of the Rocky Run Trail that runs parallel to the stream outside of the fence. It passes through a mature woods consisting of American beech, tulip poplar, red maple, and a few oaks. Spicebush, flowering dogwood, and American beech saplings comprise the understory. In places, New York fern covers the ground.



Two stretches of the Rocky Run Trail, Tyler Arboretum

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The trail passes through a large three-sided open meadow before entering the deep woods again. This was the site of the “Middle Farm” during the time that the Tyler family had an active agricultural operation.



Former site of Middle Farm, Tyler Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Two stretches of Rocky Run, one with small rocks and the other with large rocks

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The confluence of Rocky Run and Dismal Run is at Indian Rock just before Barren Road.



Where Rocky Run flows into Dismal Run

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

From here, Dismal Run flows under Barren Road eastward through the small southernmost portion of Ridley Creek State Park downstream from Sycamore Mills where it joins Ridley Creek at the boundary between Middletown Township and Upper Providence Township. North of this location, the Delco Anglers maintain a small fish nursery.

Delco Anglers Fish Nursery



Delco Anglers Cooperative Trout Nursery sign
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

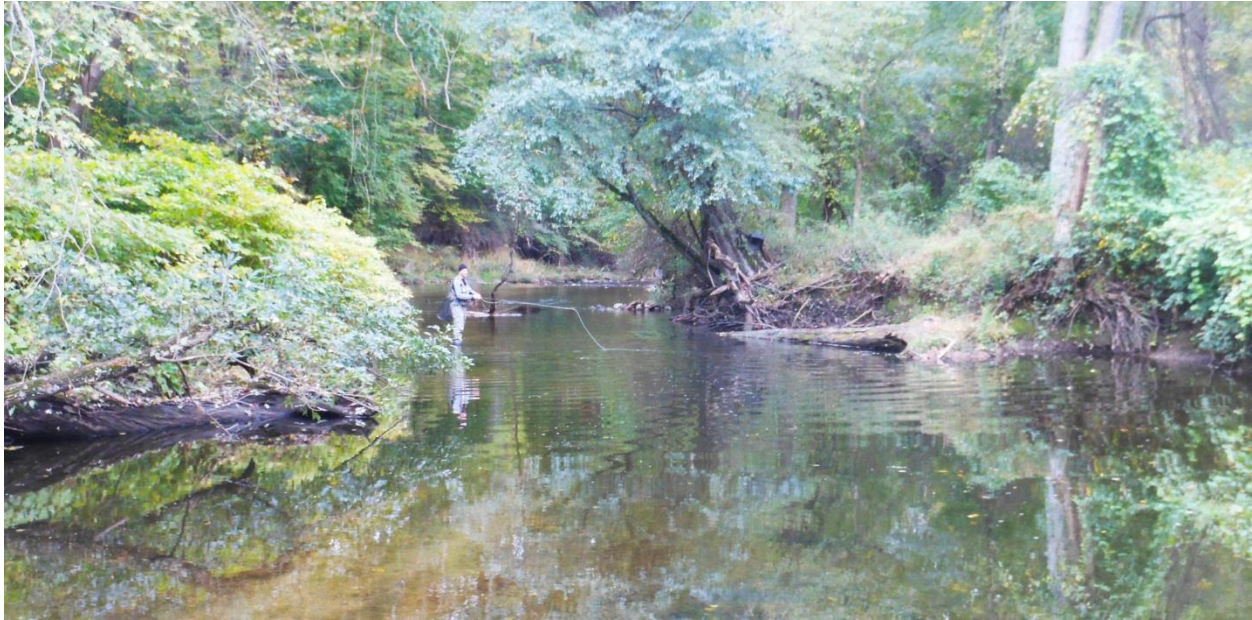
The Delco Anglers Club maintains a small fish nursery to supplement the trout stocking program that is run by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. During a visit to the nursery in 2012, Delco Angler member Steve Kosciak showed me two tanks containing brook trout and another tank containing both golden and brown trout. They get the fingerlings from the Commonwealth through a cooperative program. At the time, the Delco Anglers stocked Ridley Creek at the south end of the fly-fishing area at Sycamore Mills, at the Gradyville Road bridge, and at the Rose Tree Road bridge. They also stocked on both branches of Chester Creek and somewhere on Darby Creek.



Delco Anglers Trout Nursery tanks



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



In pursuit of the trout, Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Along Ridley Creek just above the fish nursery are trees that represent an early riparian planting project of the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association.



Ridley Creek shoreline badly in need of trees (left) and riparian tree restoration (right)

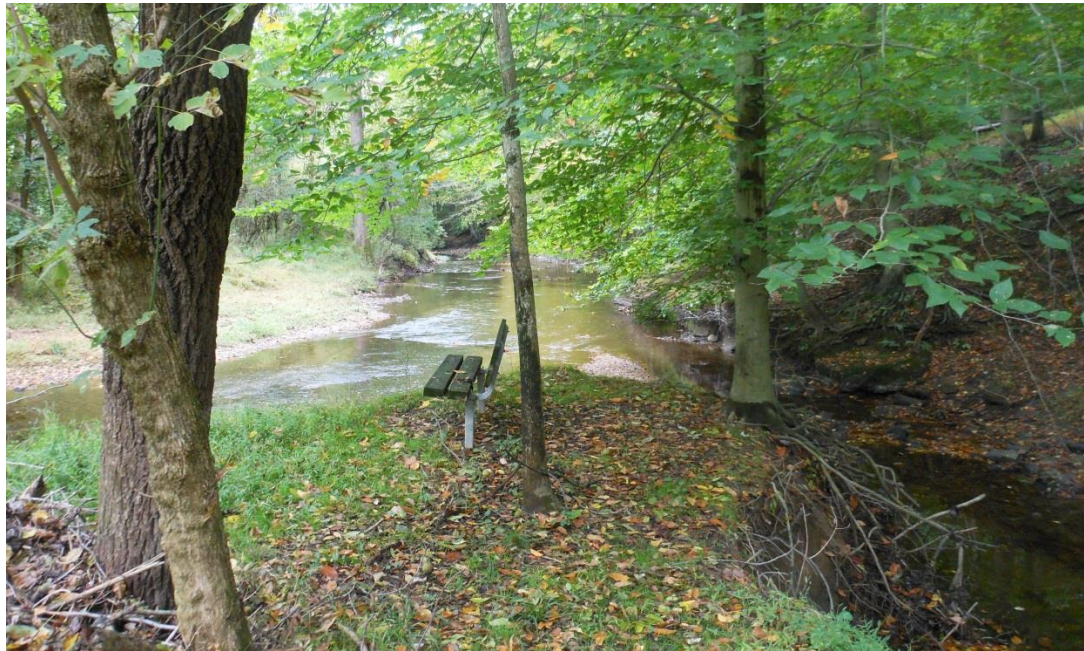
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Below the fish nursery is a large riparian grove of silver maples, as well as American sycamores, both typical streamside trees. Beneath their shade is a bench at the scenic confluence of Dismal Run with Ridley Creek.



Silver maple riparian woodland along Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Confluence of Dismal Run (from right) with Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Ridley Creek Road

After leaving the southern end of the state park, Ridley Creek flows through the grounds of some grand residential properties that sit on large lots. Some of the homes date from colonial times and some are much more contemporary. Many of them have lawns that reach right down to the banks of the creek. While paralleling North Ridley Creek Road, Ridley Creek passes under a perpendicular extension of that road also called North Ridley Creek Road. As the creek flows south, housing density increases but the houses are no less grand.

Spring Run

South of Barren Road Ridley Creek is joined by Spring Run from the west.

Penncrest High School



Penncrest High School

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

Spring Run originates at the woods and playing fields near Penncrest High School. Penncrest High School is the public high school for the Rose Tree Media School District, which encompasses Middletown, Edgmont, and Upper Providence Townships, and the Borough of Media. Spring Run flows through land originally cultivated by the Smedley family since colonial times. Penncrest was the name of one of the later Smedley family farms owned by William Smedley.



Penncrest High School and surrounding portion of former Smedley Tract
Restoration project of Pink Hill Serpentine Barren in upper left
Photo: Josie Cressler, 2019

Originally, George Smedley purchased 295 acres from William Penn in 1684. The tract extended south from Dismal Run over to the east of Ridley Creek and south towards what is now Baltimore Pike.



Spring Run at Deer Run Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Old springhouse on Painter Road in Spring Run drainage

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Close-up of springhouse showing 1794 date stone

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

Heilbron Subdivision

Spring Run flows parallel to Painter Road into the Heilbron subdivision on its way to Ridley Creek just north of Rose Tree Road. At this point, Ridley Creek forms the border between Middletown Township and Upper Providence Township.

In the late 1980s, 75 1-acre lots in the Spring Run valley were subdivided and developed by B & B Development Co. on the former estate of Tillie T. Heilbron. She lived in the Heilbron House, a 17-room gray stone mansion at 559 West Rose Tree Road that had the dubious reputation of being haunted. She was the last inhabitant before the mansion was destroyed by arson in 1987, but subsequently restored by B & B Development Co. The tract was originally part of the 2,000-acre land grant from William Penn to George Smedley. An 82-acre portion of this grant came into the possession of William Edwards, whose family held the land for over 200 years until 1877 when it was sold to Louis Jack, dentist and dairyman. This parcel became the Heilbron estate after a subsequent change of ownership. The mansion was built in 1837 by Joseph Edwards, who named it "Chromedale." It was the subject of a novel that purported to be non-fiction that claimed a rape, murder, and suicide took place at the house in 1864. Supposedly the 14-year old daughter of the mansion owner was raped and murdered by a farmhand, and her despondent mother threw herself out of an upper story window after finding the strangled daughter's body in Spring Run. The murderer was supposedly hanged by his fellow farmhands. The book was *Night Stalks the Mansion* by Constance Westbie and Harold Cameron, published in 1977. They claimed to have experienced the ghosts of the girl and her mother while renting the mansion. They also cashed in on the popularity of such stories of the time as *The Amityville Horror*. The notoriety of the mansion attracted curiosity seekers, vandals, looters, and arsonists.



Spring Run at North Heilbron Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Joseph Edwards House

William Edwards received a land grant from William Penn at around the same time as William Smedley, and just to the south. The Edwards property was bound by what eventually became Rose Tree Road to the north and Baltimore Pike to the south. On the eastern boundary was Ridley Creek, and the western boundary was a north-south line beyond Middletown Road and apparently through what became a Sears Auto Store not far off of it. A stone farmhouse was built in 1684 on the east side of Middletown Road between the current Rose Tree Road and Baltimore Pike.

In a subsequent generation, Joseph Edwards built a house on what is now Rose Tree Road. It's on the north side of the road just two houses west of Painter Road. The house was completed in 1778. Its construction was interrupted in September 1777 by the distant sounds coming from the Battle of Brandywine.



Two views of the Joseph Edwards farmhouse



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2013

Pennsylvania had once been the breadbasket of the British Empire. Following the War of Independence and the War of 1812, wheat and other exports to the British colonies in the Caribbean declined. Not only was Pennsylvania no longer part of the colonial triangular trade system, but extensive wheat cultivation had exhausted the soil and crops suffered from the predations of the Hessian fly. Infestation by the Hessian fly started out in New York and New Jersey during the Revolutionary War. Meanwhile, farmers had reached the limits of the “old fields” technique of abandoning exhausted land as it became unproductive and then clearing new land to cultivate.

As wheat farming became unprofitable, the farmers of Delaware and Chester Counties turned to supplying an increasing amount of foodstuffs to the growing city of Philadelphia. The city became the principal market for dairy and poultry products. Transport was along roads by cart or pack horse. This transition is exemplified by the story of the Edwards family of Middletown Township. To take advantage of the growing Philadelphia market, they successfully petitioned the court in 1812 for the building of a public road through their land. The new road spanned Ridley Creek and its entire watershed, terminating at the oldest roads in the county, Edgmont (Middletown) Road at the western edge of the Ridley Creek watershed and Providence Road at its eastern edge. On the eastern end the road led up to the Rose Tree Tavern, and so it became known as Rose Tree Road. In preparation for taking this road to market, eggs, butter, poultry, and veal and provisions for the road were loaded into baskets, tubs, and “wallets”. Wallets were linen sacks that were laid across the backs of the pack horses and fastened to the

saddles. The market men from various local farms would rendezvous at midnight for the long walk to the Philadelphia morning market. A tin horn announced the approach of a group, and then they would all gather at Peter Worrall's Anvil Tavern at the northwest corner of Providence Road and Baltimore Pike. They would then proceed along Baltimore Pike to Philadelphia, where the caravan would either take the floating bridge across the Schuylkill or take Grey's Ferry. Horses were taken in and provisioned at Strawberry Alley and cargoes were unloaded beneath the eaves of the Market House. Housewives would then emerge at dawn to make their purchases for the day.

Just south of the confluence of Spring Run and Ridley Creek is another unnamed tributary that flows in from the east. It follows the slope along Rose Tree Road out of Upper Providence Township and enters Ridley Creek just below the Rose Tree Road bridge over Ridley Creek. The covered bridge at this crossing was called the Red Bridge. The covered bridge was replaced around 1900. Above the bridge was Smedley Meadow, which was once a popular camping site alongside Ridley Creek with swimming in a deep portion of the stream.

Media Wetlands

After passing under Rose Tree Road and U.S. Route 1, the Media By-Pass, Ridley Creek enters another area of undeveloped woodland, consisting of several parcels including Mineral Hill County Park, Louis W. Scott Memorial Park, mostly in Upper Providence Township, and Middletown Township's Memorial Park, formerly Gleave Baker Park.

Louis W. Scott Memorial Park



Entrance to Louis W. Scott Memorial Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Louis W. Scott Memorial Park is a 63 acre township park that straddles Ridley Creek. Most of its acreage is on the eastern side of the creek in Upper Providence Township, but

there is a small portion in Middletown Township adjacent to that municipality's Memorial Park. The southern portion consisting of 26 acres became a park in the 1990s. It contains a grove of trees known as The Pines.



Trail through The Pines
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

In 2004 the Lavin Tract was acquired by the township to add an additional 37 acres or so to the north of the park. The Louis W. Scott Memorial Park can be entered from Ridley Creek Road. The woods in the park consist of silver maple, tulip poplar, black walnut, and ash. Multiflora rose is abundant, as are many other invasive plants. The creek is lined with black willow and American sycamore. Box elder is another common streamside tree found in the park.



Ridley Creek from Scott Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



A big patch of mile-a-minute weed, Scott Park

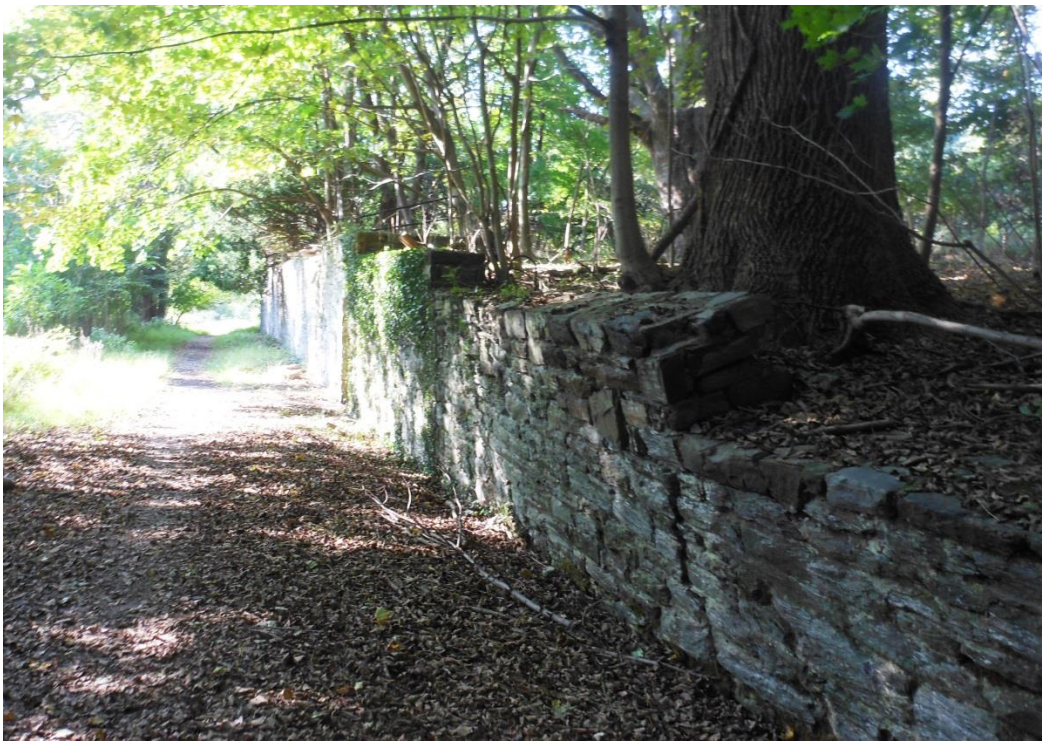
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the Lavin Tract portion of the park are the remains of Brookwood, a pioneering nursing home facility. The original facility was housed in the Randall and Elizabeth Malin house, the first Quaker purchasers of this tract in 1686. Their descendent Edgar Smedley sold the house to Dr. Elizabeth Winter in 1916 to be used as a sanitarium. In 1947, the house was sold to Charles Lavin, a West Philadelphia realtor and pioneer in the nursing home industry. He was a World War I vet, and became concerned about conditions of the elderly living in boarding houses where they had been often relegated. He purchased the house and the surrounding 37

acres, which required a lot of repair and upkeep. His son Robert helped, as well as his wife Sarah. The residents also took responsibility for the house and grounds, and for a while maintained farm animals there. A fire destroyed the main building in 1965, but the nursing home continued to operate until the 1980s.



Brookwood ruins in the Lavin Tract, Scott Park
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Crumbling wall in the Lavin Tract, Scott Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Robinette's Grist Mill

Allen Robinette purchased a tract of land from William Penn that lay south of that of Randall and Elizabeth Malin and north of Peter Taylor's. He too, built a grist mill in 1681. It lasted until 1765.

Memorial Park



Memorial Park sign

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Memorial Park is a Middletown Township Park along the west side of Ridley Creek opposite the Louis W. Scott Memorial Park in Upper Providence Township. It can be entered from Baltimore Pike. Its former name is the Gleave Baker Park.

At the entrance to the park is an observation platform looking over the wetlands which comprise the former impoundment behind the Palmer's Mill dam. The creek is still wide at this point. It was once a favorite ice-skating spot for the artist Charles Fussell, who lived in Media for thirty-eight years of his life and painted landscapes, including those of the Ridley Creek valley. He frequently skated here with his friend and mentor, Thomas Eakins.



Fall views of and from the observation deck, Memorial Park

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



View towards the Baltimore Pike bridge over Ridley Creek
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Millennium Trail, dedicated along with the park in 1999 on the eve of the new millennium, winds through Memorial Park providing access to a variety of additional habitats.



Entrance to the Millennium Trail
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



A bend in Ridley Creek viewed from the Millennium Trail, Memorial Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

PECO Substation

Next to Memorial Park is a major piece of infrastructure that is part of the local electrical grid. A large PECO substation borders the edge of the park and is hard to miss.



Power line pylon in the middle of Memorial Park parking lot
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Mineral Hill

Mineral Hill is the name of a locality in the Ridley Creek watershed between Middletown Township's Memorial Park and the U.S. Route 1 Media Bypass. The 46.2-acre parcel, which is now administered as a Delaware County park, was sold to Middletown Township by Elwyn Institute for \$650,000, in a transaction facilitated by the Natural Lands Trust and the Middletown Township Land Conservancy in 2010. Leadership at Elwyn Institute during this delicate negotiation was provided by its president, Dr. Sandra S. Cornelius. Mineral Hill is adjacent to township parks that protect nearly a combined total of 100 acres of open space that serve as important public recreational amenities, hotspots of biological and landscape diversity, and as a watershed buffer. Formerly, the area known as Mineral Hill comprised an extensive area on the west bank of the Ridley Creek watershed out to near the former Granite Run Mall and down to the Williamson School.

Mineral Hill has been of commercial and scientific interest since the nineteenth century. There are twenty-four different minerals recorded from Mineral Hill. They can be found by exploring the beds and banks of two unnamed tributaries of Ridley Creek that drain into the creek from the west side. A large pegmatite dike of slow-cooling magma intruded within a wedge of serpentinite created the chemically complex conditions to form a large variety of minerals.



Serpentinite outcrop (left) and pegmatite boulder (right), Mineral Hill
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Jonathan Crump's old serpentinite quarry is between the two small tributaries of Ridley Creek. Crump had purchased the land from a man named John Smith in 1878. Jonathan Crump was known for his invention of an innovative type of stone saw.



Crump's Quarry

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Bridge to Crump's Quarry over unnamed tributary of Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

After Crump's death, the land was sold to the Elwyn Institute. Their facility for housing and training the mentally-challenged is located just to the south across Baltimore Pike. They used the Mineral Hill property as a Boy Scout camp for their troop of mentally-challenged youth. They hiked to Mineral Hill from their residences through a tunnel beneath Baltimore Pike.



Abandoned Boy Scout camp, Mineral Hill

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Octagonal crystals of chromite can be panned from the runs. Delaware County and a locality in Maryland were the centers of chromite production prior to 1900, until major deposits were discovered in Turkey.



Demonstration of chromite panning by Roger Mitchell
(President and curator of minerals of the Delaware County Institute of Science)
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Mineral Hill is famous for its deposits of amazonite, which is a green microcline feldspar.



Amazonite, Mineral Hill

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Boulders of enstatite can be found in the woods, and actinolite in the streams. Also, a mineral known as sunstone can be found, which is an oligoclase feldspar with layers of hematite that act as a lens to identify the location of the sun on cloudy days.



Enstatite boulders in woods and a close-up



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Actinolite from Mineral Hill

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



“Honeycomb Rock”, weathered serpentinite



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Perthite from Mineral Hill

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Graphic granite from Mineral Hill

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



"Sunstone" oligoclase feldspar from Mineral Hill

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Chlorite at Mineral Hill; and mixed with hematite on banks of unnamed Ridley Creek tributary
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Conjoined American beech trunks, Mineral Hill
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Black Horse



Weather vane from the Black Horse Inn at the Delaware County Institute of Science, Media
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

Towards the west of Mineral Hill at the edge of the Ridley Creek watershed where U.S. Route 1 meets PA Route 352 is the historic crossroads of Black Horse, encompassed by the open space within the Balderston Tract. In 1737, William Noblit built the Black Horse Inn at this location and received a license to operate it as a tavern in 1739. During the 18th century it was the location of an important cattle market. It was also an important gathering place for those doing other kinds of business and for unusual entertainments. In the 1790s, James Pennell would show off his trained tiger at the Black Horse Inn, until the day that it fatally mauled him. In the 1840s, the leaders of Delaware County had a series of meetings during which they decided the location of the new county seat, which would be Media. In 1908, the inn was purchased by an attorney from Swarthmore named Alan Cunningham, who was also editor of the Philadelphia Public Ledger at the time. He sold it to a man named John Dwyer in 1913, who added a classical revival porch to the building three years later. It operated as the Black Horse Farm & Restaurant until it closed in 1935. It served as a substation of the state highway patrol for a few years and then was torn down in 1939 to make room for the new cloverleaf on PA Route 352, which was the first cloverleaf in the state of Pennsylvania.

Woodlands at Ridley Creek

To the east of the parks of the Media Wetlands and to the north of Glen Providence Park, is a subdivision developed by Toll Brothers that is named after what is no longer there. It is called the Woodlands at Ridley Creek.



The entrance from Kirk Lane, and the remnant woodland in the Woodlands at Ridley Creek
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2018



Stormwater basin in the Woodlands at Ridley Creek
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

Broomalls Run



Broomalls Run in Glen Providence Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Broomalls Run is a tributary of Ridley Creek that has incised a valley along the northwest boundary of the Borough of Media. During millions of years of erosion, its waters have cut through the underlying mica schist bedrock of the Wissahickon Formation. The Borough of Media was laid out as Delaware County's new seat of government in 1850, perched on a mile-wide prominence of this crystalline rock with valleys incised on all three sides of the town's roughly triangular outline.

Bryn Mawr Formation

Capping the Wissahickon Formation on the eastern and southern sides of town is a layer of consolidated sand and gravel assigned by geologists to the Bryn Mawr Formation. The name was given to the rock formation by the influential Bryn Mawr College geologist Florence Bascom in 1909. The headwaters of Broomalls Run originate in this sedimentary deposit near the aptly named Upper Providence neighborhood of Sandy Bank. This is the location of the Sandy Bank Burial Ground, where some of the earliest Quaker settlers in the area are buried. These early Quakers include the Taylor family. Peter and William Taylor were each granted a plot of land by William Penn in 1683 that extended from Providence Road in the east to Ridley Creek on the west. Their land encompassed the lower portion of the Broomalls Run sub-watershed and most of the present town of Media. Broomalls Run is responsible for the absence of the Bryn Mawr Formation on the west side of town, having long since washed its sand and gravel down to the beaches of New Jersey and Delaware by way of Ridley Creek and the Delaware River. This has been the fate of most of the Bryn Mawr Formation, which once blanketed the area. Only

scattered patches of it remain on high ridges between watershed drainages. According to his understanding in the 1880s, local naturalist T. Chalkley Palmer attributed these deposits to the beaches of a “tertiary ocean [that once] washed over Media’s hill,” during a time of high sea level before the onset of Ice Age glaciation. That’s a romantic but somewhat disquieting image for those living in Media during the early 21st century’s time of melting glaciers and return to rising sea levels. Current interpretations attribute the sand and gravel to river deposits from the beginning of a period of erosion and deposition in the region that began in the Late Miocene age, sometime before 12 million years ago, and which continues to this day. T. Chalkley Palmer was correct in his rough idea for the age of the deposits. The Miocene is an Epoch that was formerly included in the Tertiary Period. Geologists have now abandoned the term “Tertiary Period” and divide it into the Paleogene and Neogene Periods. During the first 50 million years of the Cenozoic Era spanning the Paleogene Period and the beginning of the Miocene Epoch in the Neogene, temperature and rainfall increased in eastern North America and a rainforest ecosystem evolved. The dense vegetation prevented erosion, but the bedrock minerals on which the rainforest soil developed got highly weathered, leaving a high proportion of resistant quartz. When the climate changed, becoming cooler and less humid starting in the Middle to Late Miocene, the vegetation transitioned to a type that was less resistant to erosion. The highly weathered quartz sand and pebbles in the subsoil was then vulnerable to being washed towards the ocean, some of which got deposited as the Bryn Mawr Formation on its way there, possibly by an ancient version of the Schuylkill River. The timing of the onset of this erosional event corresponds with the beginning of massive marine sediment deposits that are observed offshore. So, in our day we have accumulated more evidence to aid in our interpretation of the origins of these deposits than T. Chalkley Palmer had to support his interpretation. Nevertheless, our story is just as subject to revision as his “tertiary ocean” in the face of further evidence since the exact age and origin of the Bryn Mawr Formation is not known.

The Regional Geologic Fabric

T. Chalkley Palmer was clearly astute in his observations, though. He noticed another pattern in the fabric of the local landscape and understood the basics of its significance. He observed that the northwest to southeast orientation of Broomalls Run, which he called Scroggie Run, was repeated in many geological features in the region. This pattern appears in the orientation of many streams, particularly tributaries of the main creeks. Indeed, the Elwyn valley on the west side of Ridley Creek continues along the same northwest to southeast direction directly opposite the Scroggie valley. He also mentions that the thick veins of feldspar and quartz ranging from a few inches to six feet thick that are found in places like the Avondale quarry along Crum Creek have a similar northwest to southeast orientation. This is also the orientation of the “trap dykes” of Radnor and Springfield, which represent linear intrusions of magma in the Earth’s crust. T. Chalkley Palmer attributes all of these phenomena to action by a common force, but at different depths in the Earth’s crust. He correctly attributes this force to the same one that pushed up the mountains that once towered above the region. His notion of how the mountains were formed was informed by an obsolete theory that was replaced by plate tectonics, though. He subscribed to the geosynclinal model, in which he envisioned the massive accumulation of coastal sediment being offset by a “weakness in the Allegheny crust.” This supposedly produced a colossal see-saw effect that caused a catastrophic folding and overturning of rock that was flung up to create mountains. This was the prevailing idea behind mountain building events until

the acceptance of continental drift in the late 1960s and its underlying mechanism of plate tectonics. We now know that eastern North America was subject to at least three major collisions of the Earth's crust during the assembly of the supercontinent Pangea during the Paleozoic Era. The orientation of the collisions was mainly perpendicular to the northwest to southeast pattern of geological phenomena mentioned by T. Chalkley Palmer. These phenomena resulted from stress fractures caused by the collisions. The Wissahickon Schist is the metamorphosed sediment that was shed off of the chain of volcanic islands that participated in the first of these collisions, beginning about 430 million years ago. These sediments were subsequently recrystallized to form mica-rich schist by the enormous heat and pressure of being buried beneath the mountains that have long since eroded away.

T. Chalkley Palmer

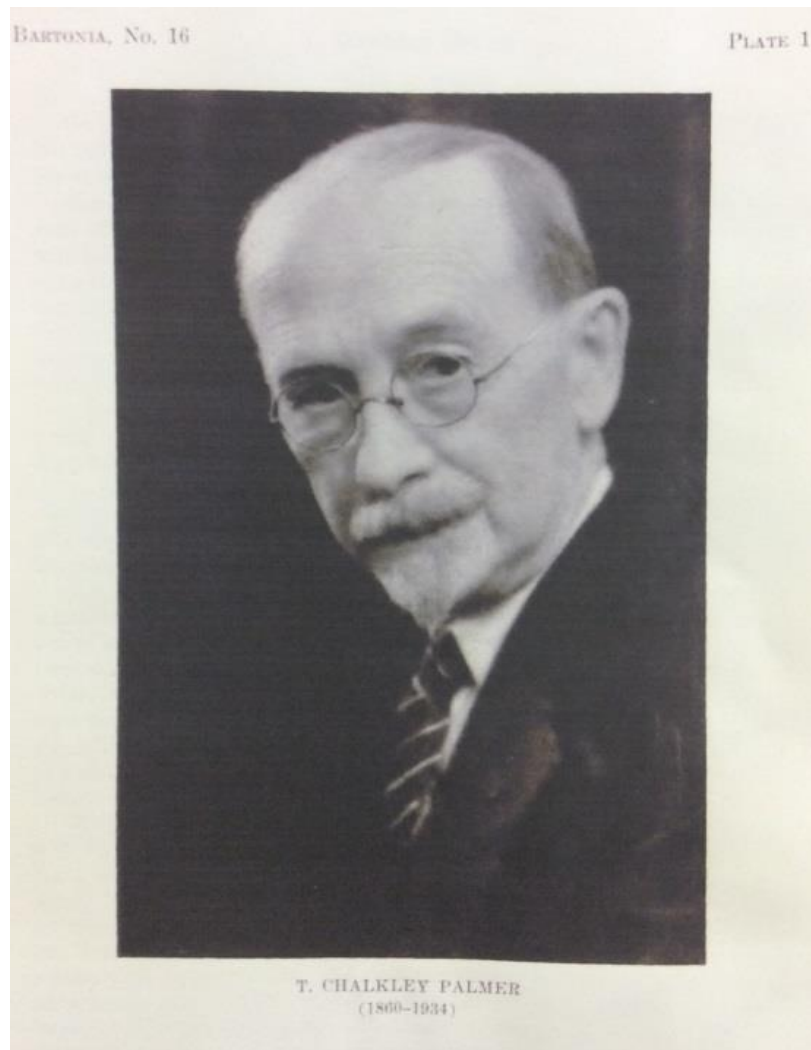


Photo: Delaware County Institute of Science



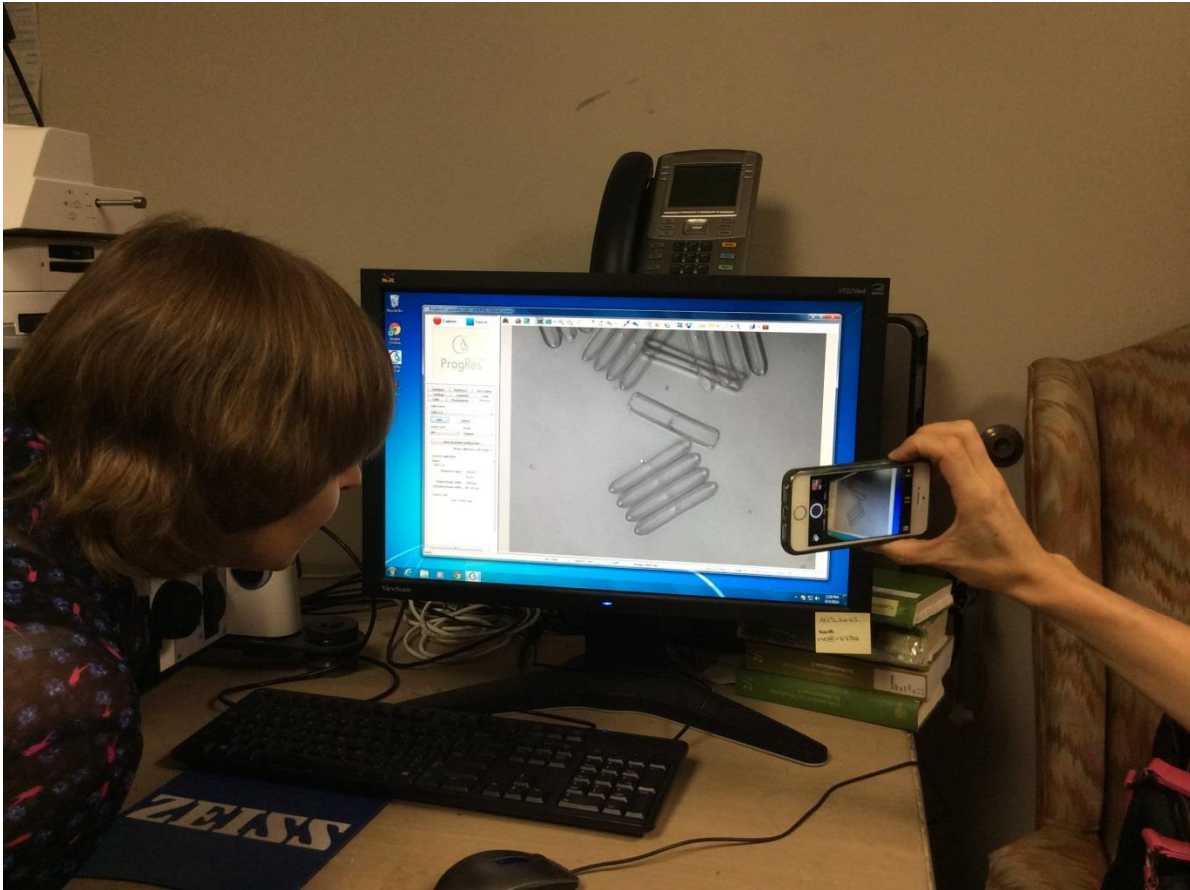
T. Chalkley Palmer's birthplace
Photo: Delaware County Institute of Science

Just yesterday, comparatively speaking, T. Chalkley Palmer was a boy in the 1860s and 1870s, exploring this ancient eroded trench in the Earth which he called Scroggie valley. "Scroggie" is a term redolent of its usage in Scotland and Northern England and means "abounding in stunted bushes or underwood" according to the Oxford English Dictionary. It is apparently related to the word "scraggly," but has a much more nostalgic ring to it. The name was introduced by Congressman John M. Broomall, who built a house near the mouth of the stream in 1867 and called it "Scrogie." T. Chalkley Palmer was the oldest surviving child of Lewis and Mary (Wildman) Palmer. They owned the saw and grist mills along Ridley Creek that were eventually sold in 1872 to the Borough of Media for its second water works. The facility continues to be used in the 21st century as Aqua Pennsylvania's Ridley Creek drinking water outtake. The lower end of the Scroggie valley opened upon his parents' property on Ridley Creek, inviting the young T. Chalkley Palmer to explore its mysteries. He maintained his lively interest in nature to the end of his life.

After graduating from the Westtown School and Haverford College, T. Chalkley Palmer had a professional career as a chemist with the Sharpless Dye Works, while at the same time becoming an amateur expert on diatoms and quillworts. He was president of both the Delaware County Institute of Science in Media from 1894 until his death in 1934, and of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia from 1926 to 1928.

During the course of his work on diatoms, T. Chalkley Palmer published eight papers on his research in the Proceedings of the Delaware County Institute of Science between 1905 and 1911. He also published in the Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, including his description of a new diatom species in 1910, *Naviculus socialis*. The species name *socialis* was chosen for its habit of clumping in groups of four. The genus name has since been changed to *Pinnularia*. The type locality was indicated as "Palmer's Swamp," which was

probably the wetland above his father's mill dam on Ridley Creek. Specimens of the species at the Academy of Natural Sciences were also collected at a place called "Dutton's Ravine" in Middletown Township.



Pinnularia (Naviculus) socialis Palmer, at the Academy of Natural Sciences Diatom Herbarium
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2014



Stephanie Gabouriault, Friends of Glen Providence Park President in the Diatom Herbarium of the Academy of Natural Sciences with Diatom Herbarium Assistant Curator Dr. Marina Potapova and Collections Manager Jennifer Beals
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2014

T. Chalkley Palmer's early memories of Scroggie included a character named Frank Gunn whose house chimney would trail smoke over the valley. Frank Gunn also blew a lot of verbal smoke in the form of tall tales that he told the children concerning the local flora and fauna. He told them that the weeping willow on his property took on its drooping form because it grew from a twig he planted upside-down with its point in the ground. He had obtained the twig from a majestic, but ordinary willow that grew along Ridley Creek near the bridge at Baltimore Pike. Frank Gunn also warned the children about the deadly habits of the local "lizards." Based on their description as bright red creatures with black spots, these were actually red salamanders (*Pseudotriton ruber*). Mr. Gunn warned of their poisonous saliva. If they were provoked and made really angry and succeeded in spitting on a person, that person's skin would turn red with black patches, which preceded an agonizing death. He also enjoyed scaring the children with preposterous stories about the size, speed, and aggression of the local snakes.

T. Chalkley Palmer and his companions did find the black rat snakes to be intimidating, but they were able to easily catch a northern water snake and make it captive. They named it Joe. Joe staged an apparent hunger strike, and after "a council was held" the children agreed to let him go. As a curious and observant child, T. Chalkley learned the difference between frog eggs with their large gelatinous masses and the long gelatinous ropes of toad eggs. He watched a female snapping turtle labor up from the stream to deposit its eggs in the sandy soil at the foot of Scroggie valley's northwestern hill. He was a budding scientist who learned to trust the evidence of his own observations while at the same time allowing himself to be amused by the stories of a local character.



One of the fierce reptiles from the wilds of Scroggie Valley
Northern Brown Snake, Glen Providence Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

John M. Broomall



Photo: Matthew Brady

Broomalls Run is named for a man with a more forthright reputation than Frank Gunn, who owned most of the land encompassing Scroggie valley during T. Chalkley Palmer's youthful explorations. John M. Broomall was already a lawyer of significant renown when he moved from Chester to Media in 1860, the year of T. Chalkley Palmer's birth. He speculated on a lot of land in Media, but settled on property that had long been owned by Isaac Cochran, who during his long life of 87 years was the landlord of a series of landmark establishments in Delaware County, including the Blue Ball Tavern in Springfield Township and the Anvil Tavern and Rose Tree Tavern in Upper Providence Township. Meanwhile, as he practiced law during his prior two decades in Chester before moving to Media, John M. Broomall also served as a representative in the state assembly for a couple years and served off and on as director of The Bank of Delaware County. He was one of the leading figures behind the development of Chester from a sleepy fishing village and former county seat to a hub of industrial activity. During his first year of residence in Media he went out to Chicago as a Lincoln delegate in the Republican National Convention. When General Robert E. Lee and his forces entered Maryland in 1862, John M. Broomall joined an emergency regiment as company captain when Governor Andrew Curtin called out the militia to protect Pennsylvania. After Lee was defeated at Gettysburg in 1863, these auxiliary troops were discharged, but meanwhile, in the midst of his military service, John M. Broomall was elected U.S. Representative for the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He was

re-elected twice and was an outspoken Republican legislator during the remaining years of the Civil War and the early period of Reconstruction, from 1863 to 1869. He gave an impassioned speech on the House floor in support of the Civil Rights Bill of 1866. It was designed to protect the civil rights of African Americans, and was the first to define U.S. citizenship. It anticipated the language of the Fourteenth Amendment providing equal protection before the law. It passed when Congress overrode President Andrew Johnson's veto.

John M. Broomall did not run again after his third term and went back to practicing law in Media. Six years after moving into the farmhouse he dubbed "Scrogie," he built a large Victorian estate overlooking the other side of the Scroggie valley in 1873, which continues as a dominant landmark on Media's West Street into the 21st century. He was a delegate to Pennsylvania's state constitutional convention in 1874, where he proposed a women's suffrage amendment. He boldly and eloquently defended it in the face the strong opposition and ridicule before it was finally voted down after the second reading. The year 1874 was also when Governor John Hartranft appointed Broomall as the first President Judge of the newly created judicial district comprising Delaware County. He only served as judge from March 1874 until January 1875. He was defeated for re-election by Thomas J. Clayton after a bitter campaign. John M. Broomall was accused by his rival of profiting from the construction of a bridge built on Front Street in Chester over Chester Creek at public expense. This bridge joined one of John M. Broomall's many real estate and infrastructure investments, the Chester & Delaware River Railroad, with a spur of the Reading Railroad. When the bridge was completed, the Reading bought the smaller railroad. Clayton and his supporters used the seeming impropriety of the "Front Street Bridge Affair" as a way of wresting control of the party from Broomall and the old-line Republicans who had held sway in Delaware County since the origin of the party in 1856.

Another wedge that his opponents used successfully to defeat him emerged from the fact that the reformer Broomall was a temperance advocate. He did not approve any liquor licenses in the county during his term as judge. Liquor merchants and hotel owners led by William McClure of Chester supported Thomas J. Clayton, who subsequently rewarded them by approving over a hundred liquor licenses during his twenty five years in office. The liquor interests and their patrons formed a steadily growing foundation of support for the Clayton faction of the Republican Party within the county. This "Liquor License Ring" was the root of the powerful Republican machine that held power in Delaware County politics under the bosses William McClure and his son John J. McClure from 1875 until 1965.

After his defeat, John M. Broomall once again returned to law practice in Media. He was also a man of science, and served as the president of the Delaware County Institute of Science from the death of its first president George Smith, in 1882, until his own death in 1894. It was upon the death of John M. Broomall that T. Chalkley Palmer took the helm of the Institute. During her address to the Institute in remembrance of John M. Broomall, Graceanna Lewis said that in the process of "understanding his own rights keenly, and demanding freedom for himself, he made the same plea for others without distinction of sex, or color, or clime, or religious belief."



John M. Broomall estate, Media, PA

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2016



Waterworks in backyard of "Frog's Frolic," the former John M. Broomall estate

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2016

Two branches of Broomalls Run converge on the west side of North Orange Street at the bottom of the valley at the northwest edge of town. Historically, the main branch was fed by a network of headwater streams that drained the area around the northeast of Media once occupied by the Rowland family farm. Most of these small waterways are now in pipes beneath buildings and roads. Nowadays, the main branch of Broomalls Run emerges in the valley between 8th Street and Ridge Avenue in the vicinity of Olive Street. It curves towards the southwest and meets the smaller branch that has its source in a small duck pond on the corner of Kirk Lane and North Orange Street in Upper Providence Township. Broomalls Run continues flowing towards the southwest after the two branches meet at North Orange Street. At this bridge is one of the many localities along the stream where T. Chalkley Palmer as an adult collected diatoms for study at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and the Delaware County Institute of Science. This was also the location of Media's first water works until the new one opened in 1872. It was operated by a hydraulic ram that used the power of the flowing water itself to pump it to a higher elevation for storage. Water was piped from the ram-operated plant down to Third Street, across town, and up to the northeast corner where a reservoir was located. The reservoir was on a parcel of land between Monroe Street and Providence Road where Media's water towers are now located, just across Providence Road from the Sandy Bank Burial Ground.

Hickory Hill Condominiums

Downstream from the bridge at North Orange Street, Broomalls Run forms a scenic water feature for the residents of the Hickory Hill Condominiums situated along Lemon Street. Their construction dates from 1968.

Broomalls Lake



Broomalls Lake Country Club

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

After Broomalls Run flows out from amidst the condominiums, it bends around the swimming pool facilities of the Broomall's Lake Country Club and into Broomall's Lake. This was all once the property of John M. Broomall. In 1883 or 1884, he had the stream dammed to create the lake as a source of ice that was sold to supplement his income. A large ice house was built on the south side of the dam where ice was stored in pits between layers of hay. In the spring and summer it was hoisted from the pits, cut to size, and distributed out of ice wagons to customers in the area. Plants harvested from the lake may also have been sold. The lake has a drain which has never been used. When the dam was built, a 42-inch diameter pipe was installed on the lake bottom below the sluice gate. The valve was accessible from the embankment but was broken around fifteen years later. A raft was built over the sluice gate. There is an upper drain with a 10-inch diameter pipe located two-and-a-half feet below the spillway. Removal of a wooden cover allows for the lake water to drop by that much in about a day and a half. This has been used as a precaution at times when the lake level has reached precarious levels. In the mid-1880s, Broomall also had a two-story boathouse built on the west shore of the lake in the same location as the current clubhouse that was constructed after the boathouse was destroyed by fire in 1967.

Following John M. Broomall's death in 1894, the lake was leased to the Delaware County Fish Protection and Anglers Association by his heirs and other subsequent owners. Popular turn-of-the-century pastimes at the lake included fishing, swimming, ice-skating, and especially boating. Rowing on the lake on a Sunday afternoon was a favorite courtship ritual. Broomall's Run was navigable all the way up to Orange Street at that time. In those early days, before siltation had a chance to run its course, the lake was up to 21 feet deep at the dam's crest and up to 30 feet deep in front of the boathouse where a dive tower was later installed. Swimmers remarked on the cold spots where springs fed the lake.

In 1896, Broomall's heirs sold the property to the Longstreth family of Sharon Hill. In 1915 a proposal was made by a group of citizens under the leadership of J. Lord Rigby to purchase the lake and then sell it to the Borough of Media at no profit at a time in the future when the municipality was financially capable of purchasing it to create a public recreational facility. The council ultimately decided not to enter into such an understanding so as not to bind a future council into an agreement which it did not make. The property was then sold to the Palmers of Media in 1917. In 1919, nearly twelve acres were purchased by Walter Corkran, Frank Hadley, and their partners who established the Media Swimming and Rowing Club. The club purchased more acreage in subsequent decades. That first August they hosted the Middle Atlantic Athletic Association's swimming and diving championships on the lake. Perhaps the biggest event reported in the club's history were the swimming and diving demonstrations associated with the nation's Sesquicentennial Exposition in 1926. The swimming pool originally planned for that purpose in Philadelphia had collapsed, so the exposition's organizers arranged to have the demonstrations take place at the Media Swimming and Rowing Club. That was when a 30-foot high wooden diving tower was erected next to the boathouse. Johnny Weissmuller, Duke Kahanamoku, and Ethel Lackie all participated in the swimming demonstrations. They all were Olympic gold medalists, having competed most recently at that level in Paris in 1924. Of course, Weissmuller went on to become famous as Tarzan in the movies, and Duke Kahanamoku was responsible for popularizing the sport of surfing. The burning of the boathouse in 1967 led to some major changes. At that time, it was decided to abandon the lake for swimming due to increased pollution and siltation. Property upstream of the lake was sold to a developer for the

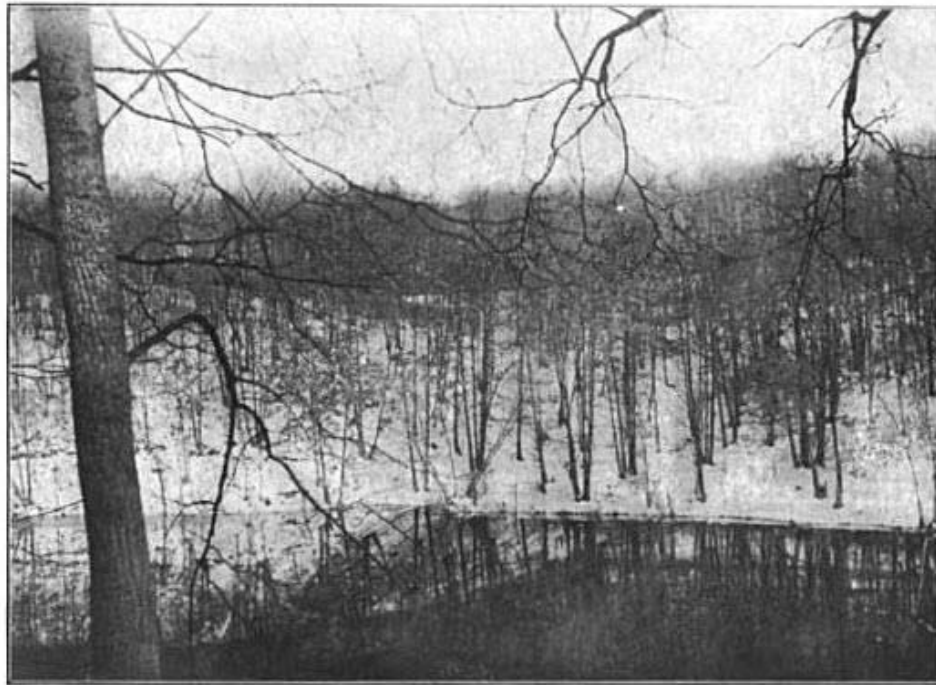
construction of the Hickory Hill Condominiums. The club constructed a new complex just north of the lake consisting of an Olympic-sized swimming pool, wading pools, a pool house, and tennis courts. The new facilities opened in 1968 and the organization was renamed the Broomall's Lake Country Club. A one-story bathhouse that had been hastily built after the boathouse was destroyed was soon replaced by a spacious two-story clubhouse with a massive field-stone fireplace in the main room. Its mantle is a rough-hewn timber that came from the original Media Firehouse. In 1977, the dock was rebuilt and enlarged. In addition to the club's tradition of sports events, many weddings, parties, meetings, and other community events have taken place in and around the clubhouse over the years.



Johnny Weismuller
Duke Kahanamoku (on right)
1926 Sesquicentennial Exposition, Media Swimming and Rowing Club
Photo: Broomall's Lake, 1884-1984

Five years after the damming of what was then called Scroggie Run, T. Chalkley Palmer lamented the condition that he saw the Scroggie valley “as it is” in an essay written in 1889. A road had been extended from the town of Media along the embankment that formed the lake and across the valley, cutting into the opposite hill. On the other side of the hill had been erected barbed wire fences. Scroggie was becoming “lamentably civilized” according to T. Chalkley Palmer, who dreaded the extension of the town that would follow, with its brick houses, outhouses, and chicken coops. It was the extension of Media’s Third Street into Upper Providence Township that caused him this distress. He was even somewhat contemptuous of the five-acre pond that developed upstream from the embankment, scoffing at it having been dignified with the name of “The Lake.” Thirty years before the establishment of the swim club, he described the plant life around the lake. It was surrounded by an interrupted ring of “black alder.” The other common shrub he observed was “spicewood,” which is today more commonly called spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). He admired its clusters of small yellow flowers in the spring and the red berries which followed in the summer. He remarked upon the abundant *Promethea* moth cocoons clustered on the shrubs in the fall. Sometimes he counted up to twenty-five to a bush, which would be an extraordinary sight today. The margin of the pond was further vegetated with abundant “iron-weed, jewel-weed, bonesets, sedges, reeds, and rushes.” He observed the presence of *Phaseolus perennis*, growing on the hillside near the lake. This is the

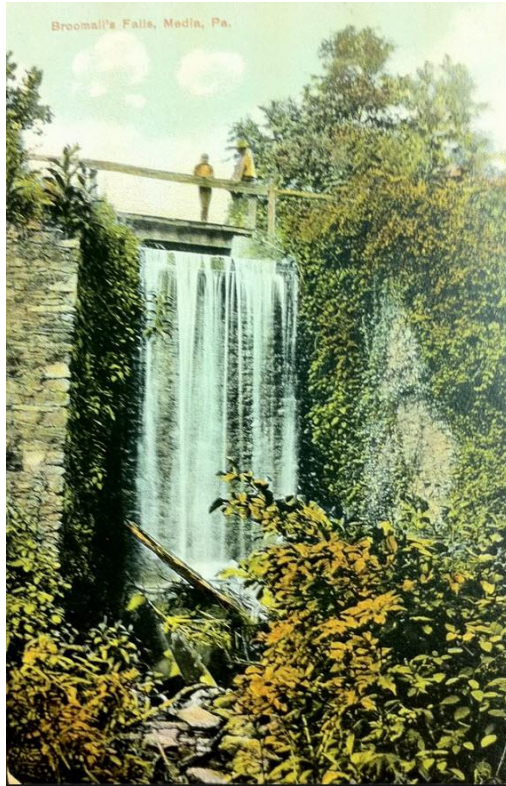
native wild bean, now referred to as *Phaseolus polystachios*. To forestall any lack of respect for the wild bean, he reflected upon its close kinship with the useful garden bean. In doing so, he referred to the “doctrine of descent with modification.” Charles Darwin, who had coined this phrase, had only died seven years before Palmer wrote those words. Palmer described finding a pogonia, of the kind that Chester County botanist, physician, and leading citizen William Darlington described as having “whiskers of a catfish.” This is a description of the large-whorled pogonia, *Isotria verticillata*. With the impending spread of the town, T. Chalkley Palmer had a fear that “it is not in Scroggie for long.” But, seeing that the Trailing Arbutus (*Epigaea repens*) was still thriving, he was consoled that “Scroggie’s charms have not all departed.”



Location of the Media Grackle Roost.

Media Grackle Roost, 1905, woods east of Broomall’s Lake (former “Camp Meeting Woods”)
Photo: Delaware Valley Ornithological Club

During the late nineteenth century, the woods along the eastern edge of Broomall’s Lake was also the site of an enormous grackle roost in the fall. Local ornithologists reported tens of thousands of birds whose “sound at a distance of a quarter of a mile closely resembled the steady discharge of steam from a gigantic locomotive.” These congregations began after the stand of mature chestnuts in the “Camp Meeting Woods” had been cut over for lumber and the stump sprouts that replaced them reached a certain age. They were a regular annual feature for a couple decades until around 1905. That was the year that the Pennsylvania Legislature removed the grackle from protection and classified it as a game bird. The shots began to ring out in Scroggie Valley and the Media Grackle Roost passed into history. Flocks of common grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*) still pass through Media in the fall, but don’t roost there in such large numbers, but enough come through to overwhelm the backyard bird feeders.



Broomall's Falls, Media, PA
1909 postcard
Photo: Media Historic Archives

Broomalls Dam



Broomalls Dam and Broomalls Run, Glen Providence Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2011



Broomalls Dam (condemned), Third Street, Media
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

It's impossible to know how T. Chalkley Palmer would feel about the condition of Scroggie valley if he could see it in the first decades of the 21st century. He might be consoled by the fact that it remains largely wooded and continues to sustain a diversity of flora and fauna. Upstream from Third Street, the members and guests of Broomall's Lake Country Club still enjoy a natural setting surrounded by mature trees. Downstream from Third Street, twenty-five acres of Scroggie valley have been preserved since 1935 by the county as Glen Providence Park. It would be interesting to know what T. Chalkley Palmer would make of the fate of the road that caused him such dismay in 1889.

In 1996, Third Street was closed for safety reasons where it passes over the Broomalls Lake Dam. As early as 1979, the earth and rock-filled dam built nearly a century earlier, with its original mortared masonry box-culvert spillway, was deemed "seriously inadequate" by the Army Corps of Engineers. The repair of the dam has been held up for over three-and-a-half decades because of a dispute about who should have it rebuilt. As money became available for its reconstruction, the dispute then continued over the exact manner in which to go about it, or even whether to rebuild the dam at all. While the dam underneath Third Street is divided between the country club and the county park, the Borough of Media is responsible for caring for the road that traverses it. The dispute has been among these three parties. Despite the assurances that no conflict of interest was involved, efforts to resolve the issue in the early 1980s got bogged down partly due to the complex relationships that key individuals had with the entities in the dispute. An engineering study to analyze the damage was performed by the county's full-time assistant director of public works, who was also the borough's engineer on a fee basis. The president of the county's Parks and Recreation Commission was the former president of the Broomalls Lake Country Club. Apparently the situation was deemed a local problem, and the estimated \$300,000 needed to repair the dam was not forthcoming from the state or federal government.

The closure of Third Street over the dam in 1996 opened a new chapter in the saga. By that point, a reconstruction cost of \$3.2 million was projected. However, money to pay for eighty percent of that cost was available from the state of Pennsylvania by the year 2000. It was still

difficult to sort out responsibility for the project, and discussions stalled until 2011. In that year, a stipulation agreement was signed by all three parties. It did not designate an owner of the dam, but all agreed that the borough would complete the dam construction and continue to care for the road, and the county and the country club would pay for future dam maintenance. The county committed \$75,000 more to the project, and the borough received an additional \$650,000 through State Senator Dominic Pileggi to cover the remaining costs. In the year following the election that fall, a newly constituted borough council held public hearings and conducted a survey to get citizen input on a preferred design for the dam. Some, such as the board of the country club, the school district, and first responders, advocated for restoring full access provided by a two-way road over the dam such as there had been prior to its closing. Some, such as a group of residents newly formed as the Friends of Glen Providence Park, advocated for a pedestrian walkway, removal of the dam, naturalization of the stream, and a continuation of the tranquility conferred by the lack of traffic.

In 2012, the borough council voted on a compromise. They approved a smaller dam with a one-lane road and a walkway for pedestrians and cyclists. The goal was to minimize the area over which the new dam would impinge upon the park, restore vehicular traffic, and at the same time retain a calming effect on the traffic by restricting it to one direction. The country club and the county disagreed with the compromise, though, and took the case back to court. They argued that the “established roadway” clause in the stipulation agreement meant that a replacement of the original two-way road was required. In June 2014, Common Pleas Court Judge James Proud ruled that the one-way road plan violated the 2011 agreement. A lack of further appeal from the borough cleared the way for the construction of a dam with a two-way road. Since the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has a large backlog of infrastructure projects, construction was expected to begin in 2017. That didn’t happen, but the PA Department of Environmental Protection took action that year to reduce the hazard of the dam, which had continued to crumble on both its upstream and downstream faces. After removing all the turtles, the dam was breached, and the water level above the dam was brought down to the absolute minimum. Instead of a lake, Broomalls Run now meandered across the accumulated sediment of the lake bottom. The replacement dam and roadway could still be a couple years in the future. Meanwhile, a temporary footbridge is being advocated by neighbors on both sides of the breach.



Signage at the Third Street breach

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Broomalls Dam breach



Two views of the former Broomalls Lake



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2017



The former dam in 2018

Photo: Walt Cressler

Glen Providence Park



At the east entrance near State Street



At the west entrance near Kirk Lane



Broomalls Dam, bridge over run



Playing in Broomalls Run, pond in background

Photos: taken by G.J. Ulshafer in 1939, courtesy of his grandson William Van Leer

Downstream of the dam, Glen Providence Park was created in 1935 from a donation of land made by George T. Butler and Eleanor Reed Butler. In 1905, they had purchased the John M. Broomall estate and the portion of Scroggie valley that it overlooks to the west. The Butlers were already well-known in the community as the co-founders of the Springhaven Golf Club. The Springhaven Club was originally located at Five Points in Media at Jackson Street and Providence Road and named for the Rowland family dairy farm that was leased for the creation of a nine-hole golf course in 1896. The Springhaven Farm was located amongst the headwaters of Broomalls Run at a time when these source streams weren't yet buried in pipes. Springhaven was evidently named for a source of Broomalls Run. The old springhouse served as the club's first locker room. Eleanor Reed's enthusiasm for the game of golf had been inspired by a trip to France that summer. On her return she campaigned for the establishment of a course, and hit the first shot off the first tee with a foursome that included herself, Henry P. Dixon, Dr. Casper T. Miller, and a young man named George T. Butler. According to the official history of the Springhaven Club, Eleanor let George win that day. They were engaged to be married months later. George became the president and Eleanor became the secretary of the Springhaven Club, the first golf club in Delaware County. Golf was not new to the county, however. The Idlewild Hotel had been established on the southern edge of Media in 1871 and it had a golf course on its

grounds. In 1904, a year before they moved into the Broomall estate, the Springhaven Country Club moved to its present location in Nether Providence Township. During the social gala that opened the club at its new location, among the elite in attendance was the “young swain” John J. McClure in the days before he took over the county’s Republican Party from his father. Ida Dixon, the wife of Henry P. Dixon, was the architect of the new eighteen-hole course. She was the first female golf architect in the United States. Incidentally, Ida and Pennsylvania Railroad director Henry P. Dixon owned the estate that later became the Community Arts Center in Wallingford.



Eleanor Reed Butler and George T. Butler with daughter Mary
Photo: courtesy of Mary’s son Cliff Butler Lewis

When George T. and Eleanor Reed Butler donated the majority of their property as an Arboretum and Bird Sanctuary to be known as Glen Providence Park, it became the first of Delaware County’s public parks. It was created under the auspices of the Delaware County Park and Recreation Board’s first president, Samuel L. Smedley. The Media Swimming and Rowing Club donated a small parcel of land near the dam to serve as a public entrance to the northern end of the park. In 1968 they donated another adjoining small parcel to the county to provide additional parking, at a location where the Broomall’s icehouse had been and the Yarnall family presided over a refreshment stand during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Eleanor Butler was the one who suggested the name of Glen Providence Park, for its picturesque glen in the midst of Upper Providence Township. The park comprises the valley of Broomalls Run from the dam to a point about three-quarters of a mile downstream. The northeast and southwest entrances are located atop steep rounded hills with slopes that plunge 200 feet into the valley. In the nineteenth century, T. Chalkley Palmer observed oaks and chestnuts on the southeastern slope. The chestnuts were wiped out during the early twentieth century blight, but a grand white oak and other large trees remain from T. Chalkley Palmer’s day. He also mentions “broad-leaved laurel, hepatica, and trailing arbutus” growing in the understory of these trees. The density and maturity of the woodland on the slopes was greater in his day, as indicated by the deep woods bird species he observed. Ovenbirds were apparently common, a ground nesting species that requires dense undergrowth. He mentions the “chewink” or rufous-sided towhee nesting in the roots of the

laurel. Some mountain laurel thickets persist in the park, but the undergrowth has been over-browsed by white-tailed deer. There are stands of great rhododendron in some places of the understory. The canopy is dominated these days by tulip poplar, American beech, and some oaks. T. Chalkley Palmer heard the “wood-robin” or wood thrush singing from the trees and a “brown thrush,” by which he probably meant a brown thrasher, singing from the heights of a chestnut tree at the top of the hill. In the early twenty-first century these birds are still occasionally observed in Glen Providence Park. A couple of American chestnut stump sprouts can be seen in the woods, which die back from the chestnut blight once they reach maturity. On the west slope and hilltop was a meadow, which had been part of Isaac Cochran’s farm and remained a meadow until sometime in the 1940s when it was planted with the white pines and Norway spruce that now dominate that hill. In his essay, Palmer also discloses that he had a secret place where he found *Cypripedium*, which he refers to as “purple lady’s slipper.”



Entrance plaza to Glen Providence Park, State Street, Media
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

It was the Great Depression at the time of the park’s creation, and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal was well underway by 1935. Many of the initial improvements to the park were paid for by the Works Progress Administration as well as by the county. These improvements included a stone structure that still serves as entranceway and observation deck, and formerly as “comfort station” on the southeast side at the State Street entrance. The structure is built from the local Wissahickon Schist. A stone gate was built at the northwest Kirk Lane entrance, and wooden signage was placed at both locations. A concert stage was constructed halfway down on the right side of the southeastern hill, and a guardhouse was built on the opposite side of the hill slope from the stage. A picnic pavilion was constructed at the bottom of the glen, and footbridges were placed at a couple locations over Broomalls Run. The footbridges were improved in 1939 through another New Deal agency, the National Youth Administration.

The pond that forms the centerpiece of the park was created in 1936 by the Isaak Walton League as a rearing pond for fish. The ten breeding pairs of largemouth bass that these angling enthusiasts first introduced created quite a stir when a hapless young wader was attacked by a

parent fish defending its nest. Largemouth and smallmouth bass are actually large aggressive sunfish that were first brought east from their native Ohio River watershed by rail in the nineteenth century in order to liven up the local sports fishing. In his writings of 1889, T. Chalkley Palmer criticized their introduction into Ridley Creek by the Fish Commission as the “story of the Australian rabbits over again,” in which prolific European rabbits outcompeted native Australian marsupials. Palmer anticipated that the bass would doom the native “redfins, minnows, sunfish, and roach” even if the smaller fish fled “up the rills.” They would just be washed back into the “funnel mouths” of the bass during periodic floods. This perennial struggle of big fish versus little fish takes place underneath the waters, where only an occasional ripple breaks the tranquil surface. This is often the only hint that passing humans may have of the high stakes drama unfolding below, as they enjoy the park’s picturesque water features.



Two views of the pond, Glen Providence Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

The pond is a spring breeding ground for American toads and wood frogs. Green frogs are abundant and their distinctive gulping twangs can be heard during the warmer months. They are frequently startled from the pond's banks. Large snapping turtles have been known to be in residence here, as well as eastern painted turtles, red-bellied turtles, and the non-native red-eared sliders. Northern water snakes slither along the edge and sometimes out into open water. Dusky salamanders live under the rocks of Broomalls Run above the pond. The pond itself has been silting up over the years. There are frequent algal blooms and non-native aquatic plant species such as the parrotfeather water hyacinth have invaded.

In the early days of the park there was a drinking water spring at the base of Broomall's Dam near the spillway. Water was also piped for 500 feet from that location to feed a waterfall on the west side of the pond. In 1949, the Providence Garden Club dedicated the waterfall to Eleanor Reed Butler and installed a plaque. Some decades later the pipe got clogged and the waterfall dried up.

During the park's first heyday, from when it opened in 1935 until around 1970, the county employed a full-time park guard. The guard served as security officer, events facilitator, and nature guide. James Stokes, Jr. was the longest serving of the park guards, serving from 1935 until around 1960. The guard house that served as his base of operations stood until it was torn down in the 1990s. One of the guard's jobs was to set up the chairs for the concerts that took place on the stage.

Concerts were a regular Tuesday evening feature during the summer months from the first concert that took place on 29 June 1937 until the middle of the 1970s, with a wartime hiatus during the first half of the 1940s. The first concert was provided by the Delaware County WPA Orchestra and provided a classical program. Musical tastes tended to lean towards the classical before the war, but shifted to big band numbers and John Philip Sousa in the years after. Popular groups that came to the stage in Glen Providence Park year after year included the Upper Darby Orchestra and the Chester City Band, which was originally called the Sun Ship Band. Regular concerts in Glen Providence Park came to an end after Rose Tree Park was opened in 1975 and its new amphitheater was dedicated. Delaware County has held its annual outdoor concert series at this larger venue ever since.



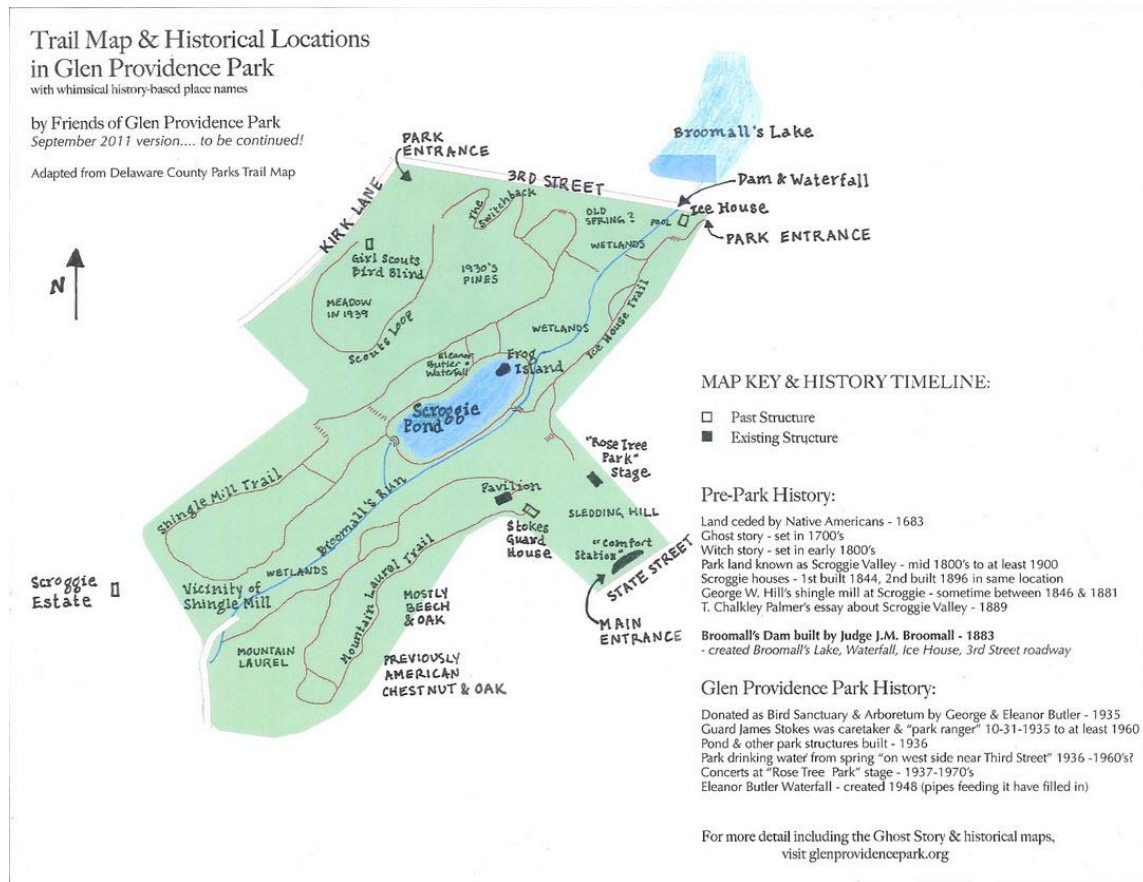
The grand white oak near the concert stage, Glen Providence Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

Other activities in Glen Providence Park over the years have included ice skating on the pond, which was once lit by electric lights. Sledding is the wintertime sport still popular on the southeastern hill. Media's annual Easter Egg Hunt has taken place in the park since 1954. That was also the year that Media began holding its July 4th fireworks display in the park. These were ended in 1986 due to problems controlling the increasing crowds in such a small space and the associated increasing costs of liability insurance. During Halloween in the 1980s the park was host to a "Haunted Woods" attraction.

Following the 1980s, Glen Providence Park went into somewhat of a decline. Many of the traditional activities had been curtailed by then and the infrastructure was beginning to decay. Erosion had caused Broomalls Run to cut a deep gully through the bottom of the valley as it passed near the pond. Then, during a critical stage of the Broomalls Dam controversy, a renewed interest in the park inspired a group of local residents to get organized. Volunteers led by Parks Edge Lane resident Stephanie Gaboriault formed the Friends of Glen Providence Park in 2011. Their stated mission is to enhance the natural and historic resources of Delaware County's oldest park. They perform this mission through public policy advocacy, maintenance and improvement projects, researching and documenting the park's human and natural history, and conducting nature appreciation and educational activities in the park. They have sponsored the planting of trees to halt erosion. They have even begun to bring back a regular concert program to the stage. They have been active participants in Delaware County Planning Department's plans to improve Glen Providence Park. The park is one of six in the county that has been given priority for incorporation in the Open Space, Recreation, and Greenway Plan. It's a three-year effort begun in 2013 and partially funded by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Improvements made to the park in 2014 include tree planting above eroding stream banks, reinforcement of the banks with stone, and regrading of the slope and fencing at the base of the hill leading from the east entrance to the bottom of the valley.



The grand white oak after the Nor'easter of March 2nd, 2018
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2018



Map: Friends of Glen Providence Park

Towards the southwest edge of what is now Glen Providence Park was once a shingle mill along Broomalls Run. It was owned by John Hill, the owner of one of the five original farms that became the Borough of Media. The mill burned in 1851. It must have been repaired because it was in operation six years later when John Hill was sued by a downstream landowner, John R. Lewis, over water rights. John R. Lewis claimed that he was entitled to half the water from the run for which he paid an annual fee of an ear of corn. He also claimed that for a year the water was blocked by gates and diverted to run the shingle mill, denying him his portion. John Hill claimed that the mill and sluice gates were operated by a tenant during the time in question and were out of his control. The claim that Lewis made to one half of the water was based on an unrecorded 999-year lease from Thomas Pennell. According to evidence provided by witness Isaac Cochran, the plaintiff John L. Lewis was long accustomed to only using one sixth of the flow of the stream to water his meadow. That is what Judge Haines decided he was entitled to have, since the terms of an unrecorded lease could not be passed on to subsequent owners. The jury deliberated over this long line of evidence and finally decided to award the plaintiff five dollars in damages.



Broomalls Run near Ridley Creek Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Scroggie

It was in 1866 that Congressman John M. Broomall purchased five acres of land at the west end of Media, close to the mouth of the stream that would one day be named for him. The property had belonged to William Hanley and was situated along Ridley Creek Road between Kirk Lane and Baltimore Pike. The following year Broomall had a farmhouse built to join the pre-existing buildings. According to the local newspaper, he named the house “Scrogy,” just one of the variant spellings of “Scrogie” and “Scroggie” that were recorded through the years. It was by this name that the stream and the valley would be known to T. Chalkley Palmer, who was seven years old that year and living in the mill owner’s house at the future Media Water Works along Ridley Creek just a few hundred feet downstream from the valley’s enticing entrance. His explorations were no doubt already well under way. And, thanks to continuing foresight of many people through the years, Scroggie Valley and Broomalls Run remain enticing areas for exploration.

Broomalls Run enters Ridley Creek beneath Baltimore Pike.



Broomalls Run enters Ridley Creek underneath the bridge here
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Baltimore Pike

A covered bridge carried Baltimore Pike over Ridley Creek until the year 1915.

Media Water Works

Just below Baltimore Pike, Ridley Creek enters the former Media Water Works. It is now a major drinking water uptake and treatment plant for Aqua Pennsylvania, which has owned the facility since the 1980s.



The dam at the Media Water Works
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Entrance to the Media Water Works
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Media Water Works from Ridley Creek with Media-Elwyn Commuter Rail trestle in background
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

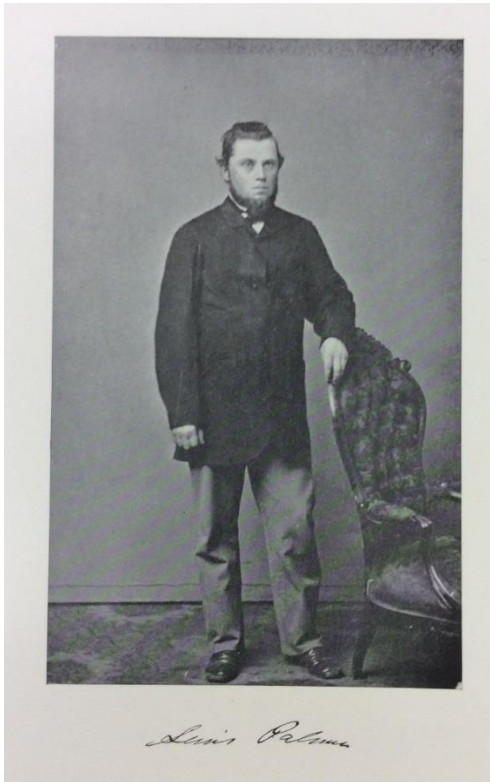
Joseph Jarvis operated a grist mill here on Ridley Creek by 1701. In 1705, Jarvis and Joseph Yeates conveyed the mill and 63 acres of land to John and Richard Crosby. The mill and land were sold to Job Harvey in 1715. A fulling mill was added in 1729, and then both it and the grist mill were sold to Josiah Harvey. The rapid change of ownership continued. In 1731 the mills were bought by William Pennell and Frederick Engle, but four years later Pennell was the sole owner. He sold the mills to his son Thomas Pennell in 1740.

In 1775 the mills were bought by Isaac Levis, who also erected a saw mill. Sometime between 1790 and 1794 he added a paper mill. Apparently he also built the brick portion of the small house at the site. There are initials cast into the bricks that appear to be of early Levis family members. Isaac Levis was a son of Samuel Levis 3rd, the first paper maker in the family. Isaac married Phebe Pancoast. After the death of Isaac in 1798, Seth Levis ran the mills. In 1807, he sold half-interest in the mills to his brother-in-law Edwin Lewis. They had a watermark of "L&L". It was a two-vat operation that manufactured 24 reams of imperial and 30 reams of royal printing paper each week. Supposedly some of the lumber from the saw mill was used to build St. Mary's Catholic Church in Philadelphia. Edwin Lewis was the sole operator by 1825. Paper making by Levis and Lewis ended following the devastation of the great flood of August 5th, 1843 when the paper mill was swept away. The grist mill was nearly destroyed. A marker in the old stone building shows how high the water rose. In 1845, a tilt mill was added.

According to a local legend, Seth Levis got the better of two sisters who lived in a stone house up the road on the slopes of Media Hill. They had the reputation of being witches who used magic bridles to turn men into horses in order to ride them all night. Seth Levis had been forewarned. Supposedly, when he was visited by one of them, he grabbed the bridle and turned

the tables, and rode the witch all night. Apparently this recurred over the course of a couple nights, but the witch could never get the better of the canny Seth Levis. After that, word got out that one of the sisters had fallen ill, and the fiendish night rides stopped altogether.

An heir of Edward Lewis sold the mills to Lewis Palmer in 1861. Lewis Palmer (1830-1881) was the oldest child of Thomas Chalkley and Ann Palmer. He was a naturalist who was particularly knowledgeable about plants and minerals and accumulated valuable collections of both. He taught at the Westtown School for five years. He learned the milling trade from his father at Palmer's Mills on Crum Creek and subsequently bought the saw and grist mills in Media on Ridley Creek.



Lewis Palmer

Image: Delaware County Institute of Science

After ten years Lewis Palmer sold his water and power privileges to the Borough of Media to establish the Media Water Works in 1871, but began a successful retail ice business out of the mill pond behind the dam. This business was continued by his widow Mary (Wildman) Palmer after his death in 1881. At the time of his death he had been serving on the Media Borough Council. Lewis and Mary Palmer's oldest surviving child was named Thomas Chalkley Palmer after his grandfather and spent his formative childhood exploring nearby Scroggie Valley from his home on Ridley Creek.

Among the collections of the Delaware County Institute of Science are several arrowheads and spear points mostly found by Lewis Palmer around the Media Dam between 1858 and the 1880s. The largest one was found by his son T. Chalkley Palmer. They range in age from Late Archaic to Late Woodland.



Projectile points found around Media Dam
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2014, courtesy of DCIS

In 1984, the Media borough council voted to tie in the Media Waterworks with the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company, which was the predecessor of Aqua Pennsylvania. Water lines were built north of Upper Providence Township into Edgmont Township, and a water main was built to the west to connect Media Waterworks with Middletown Township. Not long afterwards, Philadelphia Suburban Water Company purchased the Media Waterworks and took over its complete operation.

Media Municipal Sewage Disposal Plant

Just downstream from the Media Water Works and across Ridley Creek Road is the Media Municipal Sewage Disposal Plant. It is owned and operated by Aqua Pennsylvania and serves some residents of the Borough of Media and Upper Providence Township. Its origins go back to 1923 when the residents of Media voted to create a sewer system. Further expansion took place in 1970. This may have been when sewer lines from Upper Providence Township were connected. In 1979, the Upper Providence Township Sewer Authority was formed as residents of

Letitia Lane petitioned to be added. Prior to that, the sewer system in the township was under the control of the township commissioners. A year after another stage of construction was completed in 1986, Upper Providence negotiated a contract with Media, the owner of the plant, guaranteeing that they would fill 32% of its capacity.

Media-Elwyn Commuter Rail Line

Far above it is the trestle of the SEPTA Media-Elwyn commuter rail line. The original wooden trestle of the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad was completed here in 1854.



Ridley Creek from the Media Bridge

Image: West Chester Railroad Guidebook, 1867

An illustration from a West Chester Railroad Guidebook published in 1867 shows a view to the north from the railroad bridge up the Ridley Creek valley. Directly below are Lewis Palmer's saw and grist mills. A pile of lumber is stacked loosely in the yard and the tail race can be seen with the saw mill positioned above it. The house where T. Chalkley Palmer was born is partly obscured by a tree on the left. The covered bridge that carried Baltimore Pike over Ridley Creek is in the middle distance. Directly on the other side, the wide expanse of Ridley Creek impounded by the Palmer's Mill dam reflects the sky. In the distance on the right is Scroggie Valley and on the left is Mineral Hill.

Elwyn Institute

Elwyn Institute and its extensive grounds are just to the west of Ridley Creek south of Baltimore Pike. Elwyn Institute is the nation's oldest and largest human services organization. Their programs in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and California serve over 12,000 people with a wide range of intellectual, physical, behavioral, and developmental disabilities.



Elwyn Institute

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Elwyn Institute traces its origin to 1852, when Dr. Alfred E. Elwyn opened a school in Germantown for 26 children with special needs. The following year, his school was incorporated as the Pennsylvania Training School for Feeble-Minded Children. When the reformer Dorothea Dix encouraged the Pennsylvania legislature to fund a larger school in 1857, a 60-acre farm in Delaware County was purchased for that purpose for \$10,000. In 1859, the main building was built. It originally held the classrooms and the residences for both students and teachers, but now is the corporate headquarters and administrative offices of an organization with many satellite locations.

Dr. Sandra Cornelius was Elwyn president from 1991 until 2017. Of the many changes that occurred during her nearly three decades with the institution were the selling of the Mineral Hill tract and the addition of Greener Partners, a CSA (community-supported agriculture) farm on campus. After being run by Greener Partners for six years, Elwyn Institute took over the operation of the 8-acre farm in 2015, when Greener Partners consolidate its operations at its Collegetown farm location. Staff at Elwyn continued the farm to provide a variety of programs for its 360 students and to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to the adults in its thirty residential homes located on and off campus.

In 2019, Elwyn Institute made plans to move up to 200 administrative staff members from its headquarters in Delaware County, to Camden, New Jersey. The organization had worked out an arrangement with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority to receive

\$3.9 million in tax credits each year for ten years for agreeing to make a capital investment in the struggling city. Camden was to be the Elwyn Institute's location for its human resources, innovation and technology, fundraising, and other services. The organization will remain incorporated as a Pennsylvania non-profit based in Middletown Township. The shift, however, was part of moving from an on-campus residential model to a reduced size main campus. The number of adults living there was down to 200, in contrast to a population of 2,000 residents in the 1990s. With this in mind, Elwyn Institute planned to sell off parcels of its 500-acre property, and get it down to 70 acres to more efficiently deliver its services. How those parcels are used will have consequences for the Ridley Creek watershed.

An unnamed tributary of Ridley Creek flows through the grounds of the Elwyn Institute. It ought to be called "Elwyn Run."

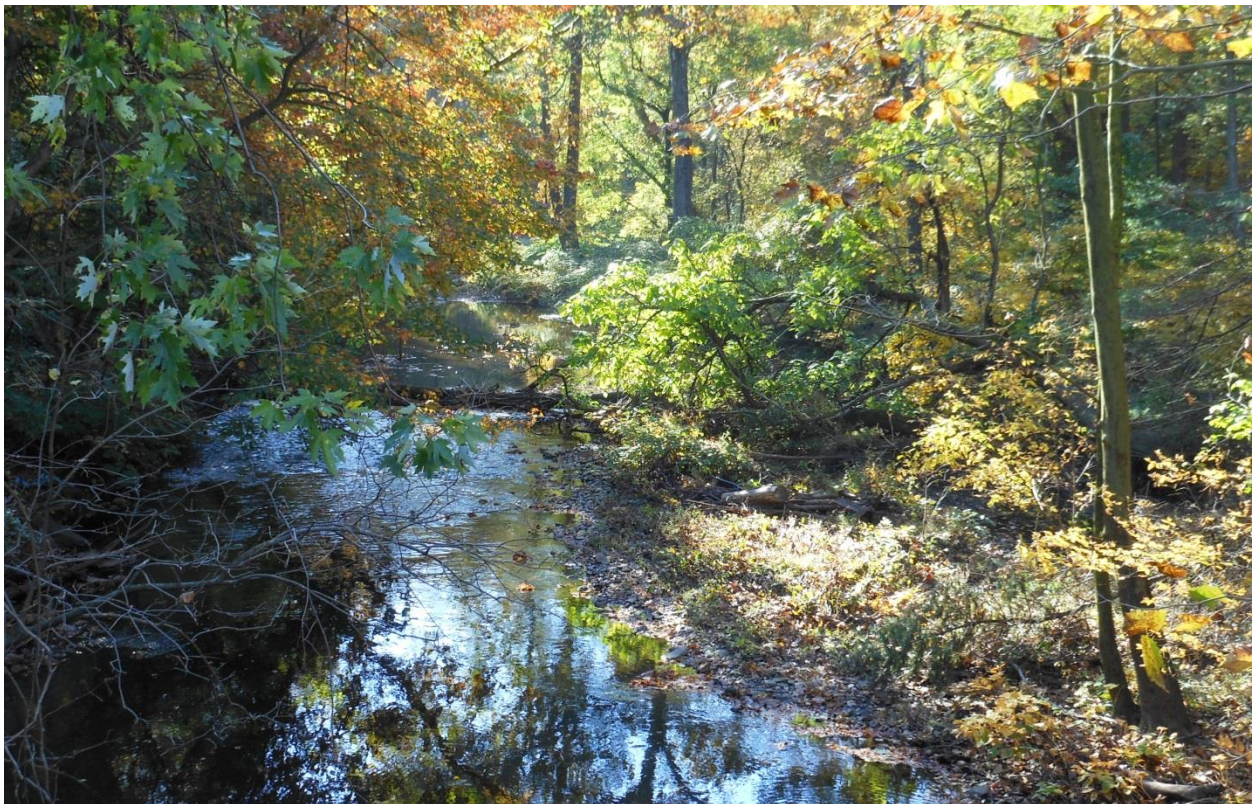
The original name for the part of Middletown Township where the Elwyn Institute is now located was Greenwood. A train station called Elwyn was built along the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad to serve the institute in 1880, and that is the name that persists. Prior to the opening of the station, the open area next to it was known as the Greenwood Camp Meeting Grounds, used by black Methodists.

Blue Bridge

Ridley Creek passes under Media Station Road after flowing past some small contracting businesses built directly in the floodplain. The covered bridge over Ridley Creek that once existed at this spot was called the Blue Bridge. The plaque on the existing concrete bridge still refers to it as the Blue Bridge.



Blue Bridge plaque Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Ridley Creek from the Blue Bridge

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the west side of Ridley Creek, Media Station Road ends at Indian Lane. Continuing towards the southeast to close to the edge of the Ridley Creek watershed, Indian Lane ends at Church Road which runs between Indian Lane Elementary School and the Middletown Presbyterian Church.

Indian Lane Elementary School



Middletown Township History Murals, Indian Lane Elementary School
Photo: Barry Halkin, 2013

Indian Lane Elementary School is one of the public elementary schools in the Rose Tree Media School District.

Near the front entrance of the school are mosaic panels that highlight aspects of Middletown Township history, including the mills along Ridley and Chester Creeks, Linvilla Orchards, the Samuel D. Riddle Thoroughbred horse farm, the Lenape, Wawa Dairies, Tyler Arboretum, and the Middletown Presbyterian Church. Claire Brill was the mosaic artist-in-residence who worked with cooperating teacher David Woods and students to create the murals in 2011.

Middletown Presbyterian Church

Dating back to 1729, the Middletown Presbyterian Church is the oldest Presbyterian congregation in Delaware County. The stone church was built in 1766. After a fire in 1879, the

interior of the church was rebuilt in a Victorian style in accord with contemporary tastes. In 1923 a new sanctuary was added. The structure comprising the 1766 church became the wing for the Sunday school. In 1966, the tower and the administrative wing were built.

The oldest graves in the burial ground date back to 1731. The Thoroughbred horse breeder Samuel D. Riddle and his wife Elizabeth are buried there. Apparently he had obtained some ivy from Napoleon's tomb and had it transplanted to around his plot. His industrialist father, the elder Samuel Riddle, had been a member of the church. He donated the wall that was built around the burial ground, but when he was denied the number of plots he wanted to buy there, he left the church. He transferred his allegiance to the Glen Riddle Presbyterian Church which he had built in 1879. The son reconciled with Middletown Presbyterian Church and came back into its fold.

The architect and Civil War veteran Frank Furness designed the Charles L. Leiper monument which stands in the Middletown Presbyterian Cemetery. Leiper was his former commanding officer during the war.

Borough of Media

On the east side of Ridley Creek across from Middletown Township is where the Borough of Media is located on a highland between the Ridley Creek and Crum Creek valleys. The portion of Upper Providence Township that became Media was chosen as the new county seat because of its central location in the county and its relative flat and prominent perch between the two stream valleys. After a contentious struggle among advocates for various sites, the act of the Pennsylvania legislature in 1848 determining the new county seat stipulated that the new public buildings be no further than a half mile from the county almshouse and the "State road leading from Philadelphia to Baltimore." The location that became Media was by design the only one that met those criteria. Its central location was emphasized in its name, chosen by leading citizen Minshall Painter to make that very point.

The bedrock foundation beneath Media consists of Wissahickon Schist. Most of Media lies within the Ridley Creek watershed. Providence Road, along its eastern edge, follows very closely the divide between the Ridley Creek drainage area and the Crum Creek drainage area. Broomalls Run drains most of the runoff from the northern and eastern portions of Media into Ridley Creek. Gayley Run drains most of the southern portion of Media into Ridley Creek. Together, the two streams carved the western and southern slopes of the table land on which Media is perched.

The Borough of Media received its charter in 1850, and was established within the following year as the new seat of government for Delaware County. The selection of the new county seat was the result of a drawn-out and contentious process. All of Delaware County was originally part of Chester County since its establishment in 1682 as one of the original three counties of Pennsylvania. Its county seat was Chester, an original foothold of European settlement along the Delaware River dating back to earlier in the 17th century. As settlement spread inland, the need for a seat of government more central to the growing population increased. A new county seat was established at the crossroads marked by the Turks Head tavern in 1786 and was named West Chester. The animosity that was generated between the "Chesterites" and the "Removalists" was such that only three years elapsed before Delaware County was established in 1789 and Chester regained its status as a county seat, but now for Delaware County. It was another half century before the inconvenience of the growing population further inland from Chester generated rumblings once again for a new county seat which came to a head between the years 1845 and 1848, with the act of legislation that created Media.

The inhabitants of the 300 acres comprising the Borough of Media when it was first established consisted of a few farming families and the residents of the almshouse and county poor farm. By the year 1860, the human population reached 900 as brick houses and business establishments were beginning to spread east, west, and south from the court house and the court house square. But, in that year there were also counted 24 milch cows, 12 other kinds of cattle, 19 horses, 20 sheep, and 32 swine living in Media, and farmers harvested 256 bushels of wheat, 50 bushels of rye, 860 bushels of Indian corn, 170 bushels of oats, and 578 bushels of Irish potatoes from within the borough, which was still largely a rural place.

Sandy Bank Burial Ground

The northern and eastern portions of the hill upon which Media sits is capped by the sand and gravel of the Bryn Mawr Formation, which does not exceed a depth of 20 feet. These are river deposits that were most likely deposited in the Late Miocene, perhaps around 12 million years ago or so. The sandy deposits of this formation only exist as remnants on the tops of hills at an elevation of 180 feet or higher. In the northeast portion of Media and neighboring Upper Providence, its existence is reflected in the name Sandy Bank that has been applied to an early Quaker burial ground for the area's earliest English inhabitants, a school, and a street.

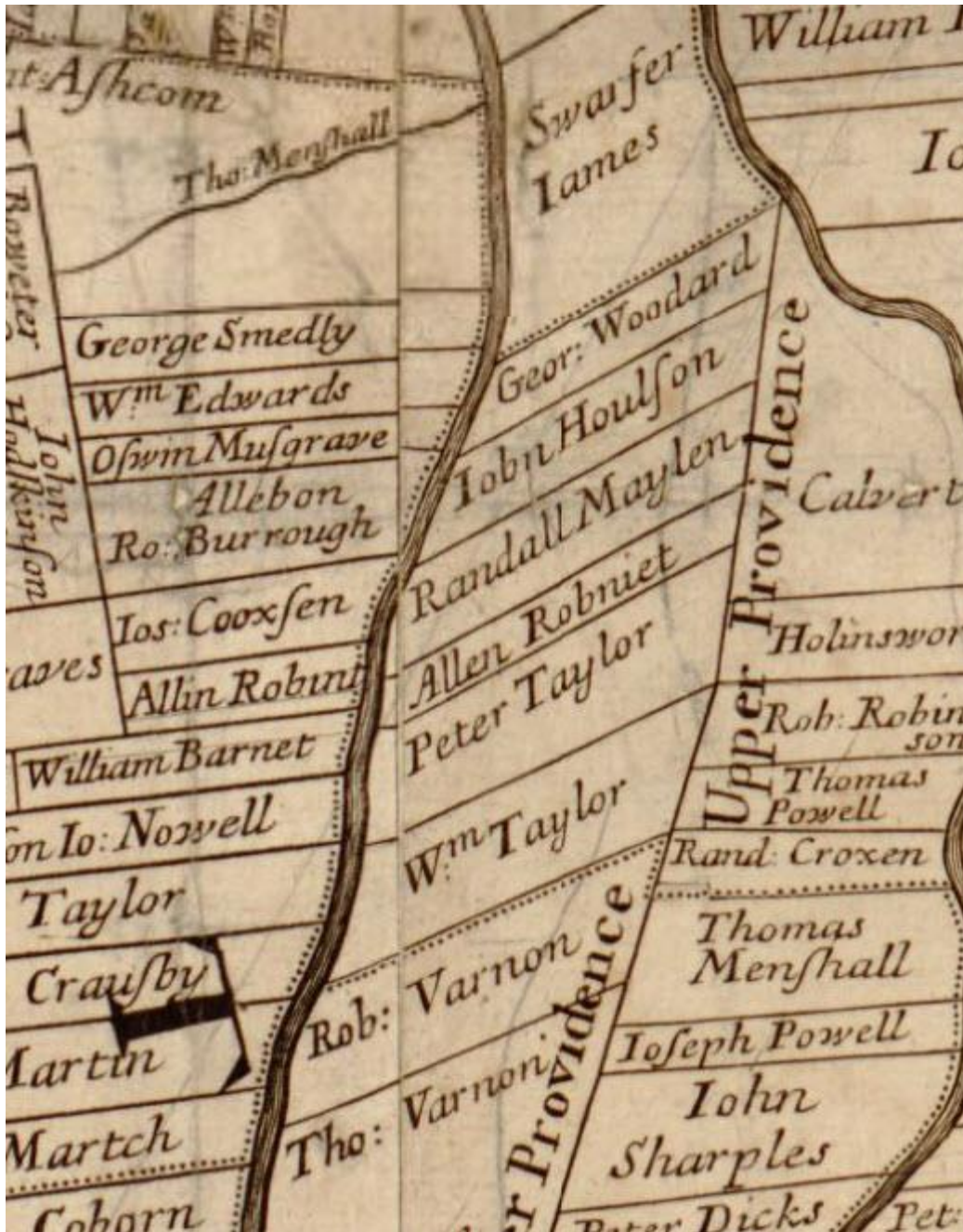


Old grave markers in the Sandy Bank Burial Ground



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

According to the historical marker installed by Media Borough Council in 1977, the Sandy Bank Burial Ground was on the original land grant that William Penn made to William Taylor in 1682. The account continues to say that the plot was donated in 1690 as “a burying place” by Thomas Powell to the Friends Meeting that met at that time at Thomas Minshall’s house. How the plot transferred from William Taylor to Thomas Powell is unclear. On the 1687 map that William Penn’s surveyor Thomas Holme made, the Thomas Powell tract is on the east side of the Providence Great Road opposite that of William Taylor. That is where the Sandy Bank Burial Ground is now and whether there was some exchange of adjoining property during the building of the road in 1683 is unclear. Perhaps it was originally on the west side of the road.



Detail from the Thomas Holme map of 1687

The oldest graves in the Sandy Bank Burial Ground are marked by rough field stones, the oldest ones being dated from 1704. Members of the Taylor family are buried here. William Taylor and Peter Taylor had adjoining parcels between Great Providence Road and Ridley Creek in the part of Upper Providence Township that later became the Borough of Media. Peter Taylor married Sarah Houlston, the daughter of John Houlston, a neighboring settler. They then moved to East Caln Township where he had a further 500 acres he had purchased from William Penn. Peter Taylor was the lineal ancestor of Zachary Taylor, the Mexican War general who was briefly the president of the United States in 1849. Members of the Malin, Robinson, Powell,

Moore, and Worrall families were also buried here. As the burial ground fell into neglect, members of the family disinterred bodies over the years and buried them elsewhere.

The Sandy Bank Burial Ground was where the first Quaker inhabitants of the surrounding farms were buried. It was the first place where the local Quaker meeting house was proposed to be built, but the committee appointed to make the selection decided to accept Thomas Minshall's offer to donate an acre of his land a little bit further south on the Providence Great Road. Meetings for worship were already being held in his house, so in the early days it was called Thomas Minshall's Meeting. In addition to his 300 acres which extended from the Providence Great Road to Crum Creek, Thomas Minshall had also purchased 310 acres in Middletown Township, and received 10 acres of Liberty Land outside Philadelphia from William Penn as a bonus. His residence was a few hundred feet southeast of the meeting house, on what in the late nineteenth century became the orchard of William L. Green and then in the twentieth century the Bowling Green subdivision.

Providence Friends Meeting House

The Providence Friends Meeting House was built in 1699, and had its first monthly meeting in the ninth month of 1700. The original structure was built of logs. The meeting house was rebuilt of stone in 1814. The school house to the left and slightly behind the meeting house dates from 1809. It was annexed to the meeting house in 1931. The earliest burials were held at the Sandy Bank Burial Ground, but the burial ground directly behind the Providence Friends Meeting House was used more frequently over the subsequent years. There is a hidden room under the floor of the Meeting House, where tradition holds that it was used to hide freedom seekers during the time of the Underground Railroad.



Two views of Providence Friends Meeting, oldest portion is on the left
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2014



Providence Friends Burial Ground and the grave of Isaac Haldeman
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The village of Providence developed in its modest way around the Providence Friends Meeting House. The oldest buildings to survive in what is now Media were once part of this crossroads village. The oldest residential dwelling, dating to about 1750, is the Thomas Minshall House, named for the grandson of the original Thomas Minshall. It's on the west side of Providence Road, opposite his ancestor's property. The Minshall House also served as a store at one time. It was among a cluster of buildings that included a blacksmith shop, a wheelwright shop, and tailor's establishment, as well as a barn and other buildings. Later the Providence post office was in one of the nearby buildings. According to early sources, while on his way to the Battle of Brandywine, General Lafayette purchased a saddle in the store downstairs at the Minshall House, made for him by a local saddle maker.

Local independent scholar Sam Lemon's great-great grandparents Cornelius and Martha Jane Ridley lived in the Minshall House briefly after fleeing slavery in Southampton County, Virginia during the Civil War. They were sponsored by Providence Monthly Meeting members Isaac and Elizabeth Smedley Yarnall, as well as Graceanna Lewis. Once their journey crossed the Mason-Dixon Line, they followed the Baltimore Turnpike through Oxford, Kennett Square, and the Darlington valley, to Media. They followed a route of the Underground Railroad operated by Harriet Tubman, William Still, and Thomas Garrett. They purchased a permanent home at 308 North Olive Street, now the site of a school district building, and helped established the Campbell A.M.E. Church across the street. Cornelius became a delivery wagon driver for Hawley & Snowden's Hardware Store on State Street. He died in 1922 and Martha Jane died in 1919. Cornelius and Martha Jane's son William Ridley became the first African-American attorney in Delaware County in 1891. He was born in the Minshall House.

After being in the Minshall family for a couple generations, the house went through the hands of many owners. George and Marion Lewis purchased it in 1937. Finally, Marion Lewis deeded the house to the Borough of Media in 1975 in the memory of her late husband during the 125th anniversary of the town. In the face of the possibility that the house would be torn down, the students and teachers of Media Elementary School rallied in support. The house was renovated, and became the responsibility of the Media Historical Society for the education and enjoyment of Media's citizens and visitors to the town.



Thomas Minshall House
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Just north of the Minshall House along Providence Road is the former home and general store of Isaac Haldeman (1797-1878). He was the chief merchant and citizen of the village of Providence when it was incorporated into the new Borough of Media in 1850. He operated the general store out of his home from 1839 until 1856. With the establishment of the Borough of Media, he was elected to Media Borough Council and served as its president until 1868. Meanwhile, he built Media's first department store in 1855 just before closing his general store, and he established Media's first bank in 1864. Both establishments were in the new business district along State Street, where commerce had shifted away from the village of Providence.



Isaac Haldeman's former home and general store
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The northwest corner of Providence Road and Baltimore Pike was the location of Peter Worrall's tavern. In the 18th century it had been the Anvil Tavern, a "public house" and stagecoach stop built by John Wells. Later it became known as the Providence Inn. Peter Worrall operated the Providence post office out of the establishment starting in 1843. In 1850, the name of Media was adopted during a public meeting that took place in the building. It was also where the first borough election and council meeting took place in the same year. The Providence Inn was later used as a boarding house, and served as the Media Hospital for a time. It was demolished in 1954. A motel called the Media Inn was built on the site shortly afterwards. The Media Inn and the Exxon station next to it were eventually demolished also. After a long period of idleness, with the exception of a Starbucks and a jewelry purchasing outlet on the corner, the location saw the emergence of a Super Wawa Market which opened in 2017.



Providence Inn historic plaque next to Starbucks at east entrance to Media
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Wawa Market at Providence Road & Baltimore Avenue, Media
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

At the west end of Media along Baltimore Pike was located the farmhouse of Sarah Briggs at the time that the borough was incorporated. She had sold her 48-acre tract to the county commissioner in 1849 for the creation of the new county seat. The restored Briggs farmhouse and surrounding land was sold by its owner Paul Schlenker to be part of a townhome development called the West End Walk. The site was developed starting in 2017 by Jason Duckworth of the Arcadia Land Company.



Briggs Farmhouse, newly restored

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Briggs Farmhouse as part of West End Walk

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Detail of the 1848 Ash map showing the village of Providence
Image: Delaware County Institute of Science

The 1848 map of Delaware County prepared by Joshua Ash shows the village of Providence, including Isaac Haldeman's store, the Providence Meeting House, and Peter Worrall's "Providence Tavern." To the west is indicated the Briggs farmhouse. Also prominently marked are the Delaware County Poor House and the surrounding poor farm property, which formed the nucleus of the new county seat. Other neighboring farms were purchased, including those of Dr. Joseph Rowland, John Hill, and John and Elizabeth Way. The poor house and farm were transferred to Middletown Township and lots in the new county seat of Media surrounding the court house and jail proceeded to be sold.



Photo montage of Media's original farm houses created by Stephen H. Appleton for
1900 Sesqui-Centennial Souvenir
Image: Media Historic Archives

Delaware County Court House



Delaware County Courthouse, Media, PA

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

By 1851, the courthouse, jail, and a home for the sheriff were built. The first court session took place by August of that year. The county government had grown so large by 1870, that two wings were added to the sides of the courthouse. The building was enlarged again in 1913, and once more starting in 1930, with a dedication in 1932. The exterior marble work on the new portions is of Georgia Marble, and was chosen to blend seamlessly with the marble of the older portions. The Georgia Marble Company is located in Tate, a town in Pickens County, Georgia where the entire economy is focused on marble quarrying. It is also the source of the marble for the statue of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial, the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art, the National Air and Space Museum, and the National McKinley Birthplace Memorial in Niles, Ohio.

Inspired by the colonial style of the main court room of the old building, the four new court rooms of the 1932 additions were created to represent different 18th century periods. In chronological order, court room No. 5 was in the early Georgian style of the 1740s with ivory woodwork, pale green walls, orange brown curtains, and green leather upholstery. Court room No 2 was in the Chippendale style of the 1760s with cream and light brown walls, jade green curtains, and walnut furniture. The Orphan's Court was done in the Revolutionary style of the 1770s. Court room No. 4 was in the Wedgewood and Hepplewhite style of the 1780s, and court room No. 3 was in the Adams (or Federal style in the U.S.) of the 1790s, a time when more color was introduced. The Law Library was designed in the Pompeii or Roman style, with vaulted ceilings, terra cotta walls, and Pompeian green and black furniture and rugs. The color consultant was Esther Stevens Fraser of Cambridge, Massachusetts, a specialist in period

decorations. She worked with the architect Clarence W. Brazer and the general contractor, the Arey-Hauser Company of Philadelphia. Period furniture was provided by the J.B. Van Sciver Company.

Between the entablature and the pediment of the court house's classical portico is an additional pilastered frieze with the following motto engraved: Boni Viri Omnes Aequetatem Itsam Amant – "Good Honest People Love Justice Itself."



Veterans Square, Media, PA

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Court House & Jail.

The first Media Court House and Jail from an 1855 map
Media Historic Archives



Media Court House in 1900
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives



Media Jail (AKA Delaware County Prison) on 2nd and Orange Streets, ca. 1900
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives

On the east side of the Media Courthouse is the Soldier's and Sailor's Monument that was erected at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1903, the Secretary of the Navy loaned the Delaware County Commissioners two condemned 37 mm Hotchkiss revolving cannons from the Navy Yard in Norfolk, Virginia. Well over a hundred years later, they are still in Media in front of the monument. The Hotchkiss revolving cannons were widely used by warships of that era as anti-torpedo protection. Torpedo boats at the time were small and usually only carried one torpedo, but could be lethal. The loan "for ornamental purposes only," came right after the end of the Spanish-American War.



Soldier's & Sailor's Monument, Media, PA
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

One of the guns came from an American ship, and the other came from a Spanish ship. The larger Spanish ships had eight of these guns. They were often taken as war trophies by the U.S. Navy.

To the rear of the monument are two 816 pound cannons that were cast in 1866.



37 mm Hotchkiss Revolving Cannons in front of the Soldiers & Sailors Monument
American Gun, serial no. 503, made in 1880
“Wgt 206 Kgs”

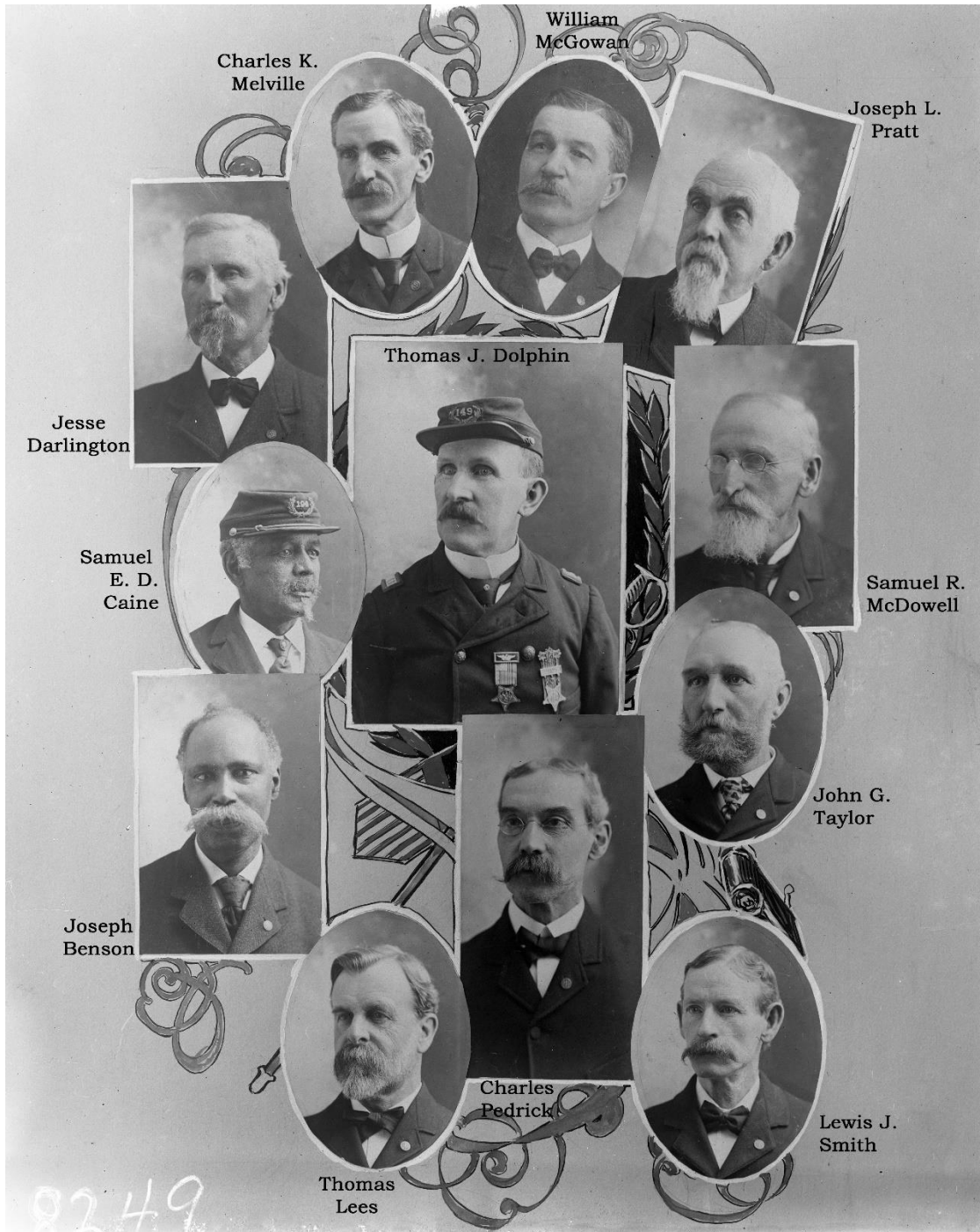


Spanish Gun, serial no. 3181, made in 1891
“PESO 206 KG”



Sailor & Soldiers Monument, ca. 1903
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives

Both the Soldiers & Sailors Monument planning committee and the unveiling committee consisted of veterans of prior conflicts, all bearing some form of distinctive facial hair.



Soldiers & Sailors Monument Unveiling Committee
Photo montage: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives



Media Borough Hall, ca. 1900

Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives

The old Media Town Hall stood on the northeast corner of Jackson and State Streets for many years. It also housed the fire station and the public library. The public library was eventually replaced by a Carnegie library that was built nearby. Both structures were demolished in 1969 at a time when an emphasis was being placed on Media as a center of retail. The negative reaction to the destruction of Media's rich architectural legacy led to the passing of a historic preservation ordinance.

The Borough Hall had moved to a building across the street on the northwest corner of Jackson and State Streets. It had been built as the post office in 1918. A new fire house was built one block north on the east side of Jackson Street in 1969.



Spasso's Italian Grill – the former Media Post Office and then Borough Hall
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018



View of Jackson Street with 1969 Fire Station in distance beyond site of early Town Hall
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018



Media Borough offices and police station

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

The Media Borough offices and police station moved to 301 North Jackson Street in the 1990s. The municipal complex occupies the entire block between Jackson and Monroe Streets and Third and Fourth Streets. This block was owned by William H. Miller, who built many of the structures on the block in the 1880s, including the stone mansion that houses the borough offices. A large modern structure was added to it to include the police station, borough council chambers, meeting rooms, and a community center.

William H. Miller was the president of the First National Bank of Media during the time it was doing so well it built a spectacular new French Chateau-style building on State Street at the turn of the 20th century. He also was on the board of directors of the American Pipe and Construction Company, which owned, controlled, and operated many waterworks in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and beyond, including the Springfield Water Company, which went on to become Aqua America.

Starting in 1950, the William H. Miller residence became a Workmen's Circle Home, designed to house one hundred elderly Jewish residents in the familiar atmosphere of Jewish culture. The Workmen's Circle (or Der Arbeter Ring in Yiddish) was a Jewish fraternal organization founded in New York City in 1892. It provided insurance benefits and community activities to immigrants from the Russian Pale of Settlement. Following World War II and the Holocaust, it expanded its activities and adapted its programs, to include opening a branch in Media. To accommodate the new residents, additions and alterations were made in 1959 by the architect Louis Magaziner, who designed the Media Theatre earlier in his career back in the 1920s. By 1985, the organization still had three old-age homes, in Elizabeth, New Jersey, the Bronx, and the one in Media. As the population finally dwindled down to nothing, the property was available to the Borough of Media for their new government complex.

By the 1870s, the Borough of Media became a popular summer resort destination for residents of the rapidly industrializing City of Philadelphia. The town was easily accessible from the city by means of the State Road as well as the Central Division of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. Media's appeal lay in the clean, country air and its quiet rural surroundings, which were balanced out by its accessibility to the amenities of nineteenth century civilization. Also, a certain population was attracted to the further wholesome atmosphere made possible by the provision in its 1850 charter prohibiting the sale of intoxicating beverages. After spending one or more summers in town, many people decided to become permanent residents.

At first, accommodations for summer visitors were available at the Charter House Hotel on the court house square, at the Chestnut Grove House near the train station, and at Peter Worrall's Providence Inn on the east end of town where State Road crossed Providence Road. State Road originally made a diagonal through town to what is now Jackson Street. The portion of State Road through the business district of town became State Street. The main thoroughfare through town became Washington Street. Later, State Road from Philadelphia to Media and beyond became known as Baltimore Pike, and Washington Street in Media became Baltimore Avenue. Meanwhile, private educational establishments unoccupied during the summer also served as resort accommodations. These included the Brooke Hall Female Seminary at the west end of town, and the Shortlidge Media Academy for Young Men and Boys at the east end of town. And in 1871, the owners of the Charter House Hotel opened the grandest resort hotel that Media ever had on offer, the Idlewild Hotel to the south of town.



Charter House Hotel, 1889

Photo: Stephen H. Appleton; Media Historic Archives

The Charter House Hotel was established as a temperance hotel by John Eves in 1851. William Eves started a temperance organization by the name of the Charter House Association in the same spirit.



M & T Bank and Plymouth Apartments
Former Media Title & Trust Building attached to the former Charter House Hotel
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

In 1922, the Charter House Hotel sold its front lawn to the Media Title & Trust Company, which went bankrupt following the stock market crash later that decade. The business had originated as the Media & 69th Street Title & Trust Company in 1890.

In 1939, the hotel was turned into apartments.



Chestnut Grove Hotel, 1889
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton - Media Historic Archives

Brooke Hall Seminary

The Brooke Hall Seminary was established in Media, Pennsylvania for the cultural refinement of girls and young women. Such an establishment was commonly known as a “finishing school”. It opened in the fall of 1856 and was named in honor of H. Jones Brooke, who had it built. It flourished under principal and owner Miss M.L. Eastman during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The school was conveniently located at the western end of town near the Media station of the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad.

Young women from Pennsylvania and “all parts of the Union” attended Brooke Hall. It was one of the first female boarding schools in the country. Someone writing under the name Inkee Penn reported in an 1867 issue of the *Friend’s Intelligencer* that the “Brook Hall Seminary for young ladies is a commodious and handsome building, beautifully embowered in shade, but we regret to say that it is conducted on the principle that it is inexpedient and dangerous to educate boys and girls together.” In 1892 both the Brooke Hall Seminary and its counterpart across town, the Shortlidge Academy for young men were seized by the sheriff. All the personal property of the principal Swithin C. Shortlidge was scheduled to be sold after around \$10,000 in judgments were entered against him.

Among the notable graduates of the Brooke Hall Seminar was Ida Saxton (1847-1907) of Canton, Ohio, who married William McKinley and became First Lady of the United States from 1897 until his assassination in 1901. She left the school in 1869 to go on a grand tour in Europe with her sister Mary. In 1898 Mrs. McKinley hosted an elaborate luncheon at the White House for the former faculty and students of her old school, who came down from Philadelphia aboard a special train for the occasion. Among the guests was Miss Galt, honored for having been at one time the teacher of the “first lady of the land”.

A Brooke Hall graduate with her own formidable personal achievements was Mira Lloyd Dock (1853-1945) of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She followed up her education at the Brooke Hall Seminary with coursework at the University of Michigan and became a scientifically trained botanist, suffragist, and Progressive Era reformer. She was the first woman to be appointed to the Pennsylvania state government, serving for twelve years as one of the founding members of the Pennsylvania Forest Commission from 1901 to 1912. She was a friend and associate of two other Pennsylvanians who were also pioneers of scientific forestry in the United States, Joseph Rothrock of West Chester and Gifford Pinchot. She was instrumental in the founding of the Pennsylvania State Forest Academy in Mont Alto, which later became the Mont Alto branch campus of Penn State University. Her efforts on behalf of Pennsylvania’s forests had their urban counterpart in her activities with the City Beautiful movement, particularly in the state capitol of Harrisburg. She was a prolific lecturer, and worked with women’s clubs to promote the creation of parks, playgrounds, city gardens, paved streets, and sewer and water filtration systems. Mira Lloyd Dock remembered her years in Media at the Brooke Hall Seminary with great fondness and took time to attend alumni dinners when she could. She had arrived as a 14-year-old in 1868 and reported in a letter to an aunt her excitement about her participation in riding parties, tableaux, and taffee-pulling frolics.



Brooke Hall in 1900

Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives



Brooke Hall apartments, Jefferson Street

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

Brooke Hall was torn down, and the neighborhood was subsequently built up in the 1950s with brick townhomes and apartments. On Jefferson Street, one block to the east from where the Brooke Hall Academy once stood, is an apartment building known as Brooke Hall.



Delaware County Institute of Science
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Inside the Delaware County Institute of Science
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Zen Nails & Spa and Phoenix Building
Former Beatty Black Building and Snowden Department Store
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

One of the early Media businesses was at the northeast corner of State Street and Veteran's Square in the Beatty Black Building, built between 1849 and 1851. The first floor had retail. Offices and a small manufacturing space were on the second floor, and the third floor consisted of meeting rooms.

Just to the east of the Beatty Black Building was the Snowden Department Store. It was later expanded - a datestone from 1896 reads "Halle & Snowden." The building burned in a 1976 fire, which contributed to the decline of Media's business district along with the opening of two nearby shopping malls at around the same time. The façade was restored, but not including the fourth floor. The structure that arose after the fire was dubbed the Phoenix Building.

At the other end of the same block on the north side of State Street is the former Haldeman Store, on the northwest corner with Olive Street. It was built between 1854 and 1855 and was the first real general store in Media. It also was the site of Media's first post office. In the 1920s, it became the Media Drug Store. In the 1970s, it was the Sunrag Drug Store and had a soda fountain. For the U.S. Bicentennial, a Colonial Revival façade was added that went heavy on the mortar between the bricks, creating a contrast with the rest of the building.



10,000 Villages gift shop – formerly the Haldeman General Store
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

The first Acme Market came to Media in the 1920s on the northwest corner of State and Plum Streets. It was built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. At the time, it had red clay roof tiles and open balconies. Between the dormers can still be seen the retablos along the roof line.



Five Media businesses in the original Acme Market
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

In the 1970s, Plum Street was converted into a pedestrian mall for two blocks north and one block south of State Street. Perhaps it was an effort to revive a struggling downtown as shoppers were diverted to the two nearby shopping malls.



Plum Street Mall, north side of State Street Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

At 106 West State Street, near the southwest corner with Olive Street, was located the Burdsall & Adams Cigar Company. Having opened in 1879, it was the leading employer in Media by the turn of the 20th century, with 50 employees. They brought in tobacco from Lancaster County. Their most popular product was the Blandero cigar.



Burdsall & Adams Cigar Company, ca. 1900
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives



Fellini Café Trattoria – former Burdsall & Adams Cigar Company
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

On the southwest corner of State and Monroe Streets was the site of Carey & Brother Plumbing contractors. George W. Carey also served as the superintendent of the Media Water Works.



Nooddi the Noodle Bar – former building for Carey & Brother Plumbing
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

On the northwest corner of State and Monroe Streets is mansard roofed building with highly ornamented dormers. The building housed the East End Grocer in its early days, and the Roger Russell Photoshop for most of the latter part of the 20th century.



Vision Care of Media and China Nails Studio in former Roger Russel Photoshop
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018



PNC Bank, former First National Bank of Media
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

The First National Bank of Media was originally in the Haldeman Building on the southeast corner of State Street and South Avenue, starting in 1864. Isaac Haldeman was the first bank president, as well as the first president of Media Borough council. A French Chateau-style building designed by Albert W. Dilk to house the bank was built on the same corner in 1899.



First National Bank – the original Haldeman Building, ca. 1895
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives

Across from the Charter House Hotel on Veteran's Square was built the Charter National Bank in 1887. It is located on the southeast corner of Veteran's Square and Jasper Street. It is an Italianate building made from long, thin Pompeiian-style brick.



Charter National Bank, ca. 1895
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives

Early in the 1850s, a shingle mill on the western outskirts of Media burned down. This led the town leaders to pass an ordinance prohibiting the construction of wood-frame buildings. Most of the homes and businesses were built of brick or stone after that.



Brooke residential block of 1850s townhouses, State Street, Media
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Media's oldest schoolhouse, now a residence, Lemon Street
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Media Presbyterian Church

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

The congregation of the Media Presbyterian Church first met in the Beatty Building on State Street. John C. Beatty was one of the church's founders. Their building on Baltimore Avenue in between the two sections of Church Street was built in 1855. The architect was John McArthur, who also designed the 10th Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and went on to be most famous for Philadelphia City Hall, the tallest masonry building in the world. His signature feature was tall steeples, but the one on the Media Presbyterian Church was replaced by a safer golden dome.

In its early days, Media was the home of three newspapers. One of the largest weekly newspapers of its time in eastern Pennsylvania was the Media Ledger. It started publication in 1891 out of its adapted Gothic Revival building on the southwest corner of State and Jackson Streets and ran until 1913. Its founder was John B. Robinson (1846-1933), a Republican navy veteran and lawyer who was elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 1884 and 1886, the Pennsylvania Senate in 1889, and served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1891 to 1897.

The Media Ledger Building was the Media Hardware Store from the early 1900s until 2003, when it subsequently became Quincy's Gift Shop until 2018.



Quincy's Gift Shop – the former Media Ledger Building
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

The other two Media newspapers were the Delaware County American, which was a Republican newspaper at 212 West State Street, and the Delaware County Record, a Democratic newspaper at 122 West Front Street.

Thomas V. Cooper was the publisher of the Delaware County American. Stephen H. Appleton was one of its editors, and a prolific photographer whose visual record of Media and its vicinity from 1888-1909 has proved invaluable.



Seven Stones gift shop at 212 West State Street – former offices of the Delaware County American
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018



Delaware County American, ca. 1888
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives



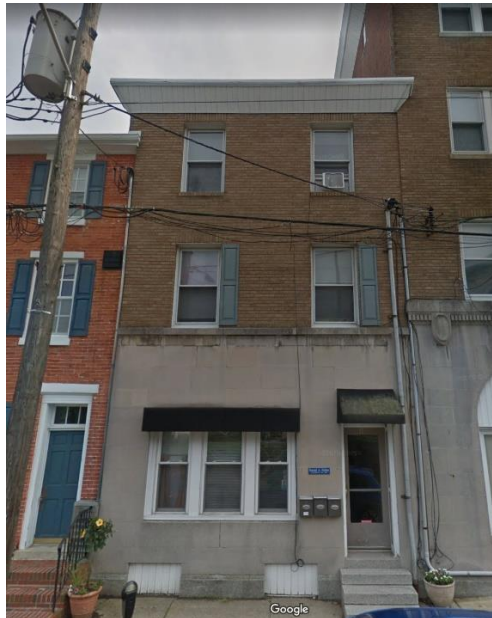
J.W. Cooper setting type at the Delaware County American, ca. 1888
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives



Brownie McCoy delivering the Delaware County American in 1888
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives



Delaware County Record, ca. 1888
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton –
Media Historic Archives



122 West Front Street –
Former site of Delaware County Record
Photo: Google Street View
Image captured June 2018

Media Theatre



Media Theatre and the SEPTA 101 trolley on State Street
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

The Media Theatre opened in 1927 as the first movie theatre in Media that showed talking pictures. The first “talkie” released, “The Jazz Singer” starring Al Jolson, was the first movie to be shown there. Its owner Sam Bembow hedged his bets however. Just in case his investment in the young movie industry didn’t work out, he had his theatre built with a stage, orchestra pit, and changing rooms so that he could convert it to live performances. This proved to be fortuitous in the early 1990s when the Media Theatre was in fact changed to a live performance venue. The building was designed by the firm of Magaziner, Eberhard, and Harris. Louis Magaziner was the main architect for the project, a curious combination of Colonial Revival and Art Deco.

Media Fellowship House

In January of 1937, the chair of admissions at the Media Friends School, Dorothy Biddle James (1900-1985) enrolled the school’s first African-American student. Up until this time, racial segregation prevailed in the local public and private schools. This step forward in the cause of social justice caused consternation among many parents. The Media Friends School lost a third of its enrollment in the following year and nearly had to close. The school administration persisted with their pioneering efforts and served as a model for further school integration in the area.

Dorothy Biddle James further made her mark in 1944 when she witnessed two African-American women, Marie Whitaker and Edna Best, being refused service at a new restaurant in Media. She followed them out and suggested they have lunch together at a more receptive establishment. There, they discussed the formation of what became the Media Fellowship House

for the promotion of civil rights. It was established at 302 South Jackson Street as a center for community activities.



Media Fellowship House

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

Media FBI Field Office Burglary

On March 8, 1971, the Media field office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation was broken into by a group calling itself the Citizens' Committee to Investigate the FBI. They picked the night of the heavyweight boxing championship fight between Joe Frazier and Mohammed Ali in Madison Square Garden, when they knew a lot of people, including the FBI agents, would be distracted. They stole files that revealed the existence an unconstitutional domestic surveillance program that went by the name of COINTELPRO. The documents were published in the Washington Post the following year through the efforts of reporter Betsy Medsger. This program of domestic surveillance and intimidation led by J. Edgar Hoover was the subject of a senate hearing led by Senator Frank Church in 1973, and was subsequently shut down. The identity of the eight burglars were unknown to anyone but themselves until 2014, when four of them were interviewed for the film "1971" and a book entitled *The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI* by Betty Medsger. Four of the six "burglars" revealed themselves as William C. Davidon, a Haverford College physics professor; John and Bonnie Raines, the parents of three children whose father was a Temple University religion professor; and Keith Forsyth, at the time a cab driver and anti-war activist who served as the locksmith for the operation. Another young participant, Bob Williamson, subsequently agreed to be identified.



County Court Apartments
Site of former regional FBI office involved in 1971 burglary
(Second floor, left side)
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

The Borough of Media began a period of decline which started after two new shopping malls were built along Baltimore Pike in 1974. In that one year, the Granite Run Mall opened two miles to the west of Media in Middletown Township and the Springfield Mall opened two miles to the east in Springfield Township. These glittering new shopping localities drew commerce away from Media's old-fashioned business district along State Street. For the next decade or so, Media's downtown would clear out after the courthouse and surrounding businesses closed at 5:00 p.m. A crime wave crept into the dark and quiet nights that resulted. Burglars routinely entered law offices along Front Street by climbing up to second floor windows and making their way back downstairs where they would rifle the offices for valuables. Mayor Frank Daly was just one of the victims. He had a stenography machine stolen from his law office. He had been elected in 1981 along with four other new Democrats who joined Borough Council. They were determined to confront this issue. As liaison to public safety, council member Bob McMahon worked with Police Chief Jerry Olmstead, the mayor, and the rest of council to enact measures to eliminate crime. Chief Olmstead had experience as an attorney, and was able to find just cause for searching the motel rooms of suspected perpetrators. This led to the capture and arrest of the main criminals. There were also block by block security meetings, the formation of a citizen's auxiliary police force, the registration of emergency phone numbers for businesses and offices, a minimum-security ordinance that applied to landlords, and the hiring of more police officers.

In addition to directly confronting the crime problem, the effort to bring life back to the downtown was underway at the same time. Mayor Frank Daly envisioned a lively shopping district similar to the one in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia. A key element to this plan was the campaign to save the aging Media Elementary School. A neighborhood school that children could walk to from their homes was considered essential for attracting families to live in town. At the time, the Rose-Tree Media School District had calculated that it would have been less expensive to build a new elementary school in Upper Providence Township next to the Springton Lake Middle School than to renovate Media Elementary School. Attempts were made to save the school in 1984, 1987, and then successfully in 1992. By then Bob McMahon was mayor, having taken over the position when Frank Daly resigned in order to run against Curt

Weldon for his U.S. Congress seat. Mayor McMahon and the borough treasurer Bob Goggia led the final round to save the school. Treasurer Bob Goggia was able to show that the figures that the school district had calculated for renovations were too high. This cleared the way for the Media Elementary School to be refurbished in 1994.

During the debate over the elementary school, a performing arts group was in negotiations to rent or buy the potentially vacant building. They wanted to start live performances and establish a theatre school. The owner of Media Real Estate, Walter Strine, Sr. donated \$1 million to refurbish the Media Theatre for that purpose instead. He had done something similar in his hometown of Milton, PA. He saved his hometown high school through a generous donation from the Strine Foundation, having it converted into a performing arts center and retirement community known as the Rockwell Center. It houses an extensive collection of Norman Rockwell prints. The Media Theatre, which had declined since its movie showing days, was renovated the same year as the Media Elementary School, and both institutions were saved.

A major period of economic development then took place in Media beginning in the mid-1990s through 2005. Iron Hill Brewery was the first of the destination restaurants that was recruited to come to Media. Another key piece was bringing a Trader Joe's grocery store to town. Special arrangements had to be made with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to convert the Media Armory into Trader Joe's, which involved putting the Pennsylvania Veteran's Museum downstairs below the store. When the number of restaurants reached a critical mass in 2008, Media had its first series of "Dining Under the Stars" events, during which a large part of State Street and the surrounding business district is closed off to vehicle traffic during Wednesday evenings in the warmer months. During the first season, this outdoor dining event was considered a failure, but persistence was rewarded. By the tenth season, the restaurants were bringing in more income on Wednesday nights than either Fridays or Saturdays. There were also a lot more restaurants by then. In 2018, Media had 50 restaurants, in addition to 30 shops and 45 other businesses, all within three-quarters of a square mile.



Trader Joe's Market and Pennsylvania Veteran's Museum in the old Media Armory
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

The Media Armory was built in 1908 by the architectural firm Price & McLanahan. It is an uncharacteristic fortress-like design by Will Price, the founder of the Rose Valley Arts & Crafts community. It was built during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, a time when the U.S. armed forces consisted mainly of local militias. Later it housed the local National Guard unit up until the 1980s. The drill shed then became a basketball court. In the early 21st century, Mayor Bob McMahan worked out an arrangement with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to transfer the Media Armory to the borough to rent to a retail establishment, as long as space was provided for the Pennsylvania Veterans Museum. Bob Linn of Linn Architects designed the modifications for the structure's new uses.



Church Street scene during the Armory construction, 1908
Photo: Stephen H. Appleton – Media Historic Archives

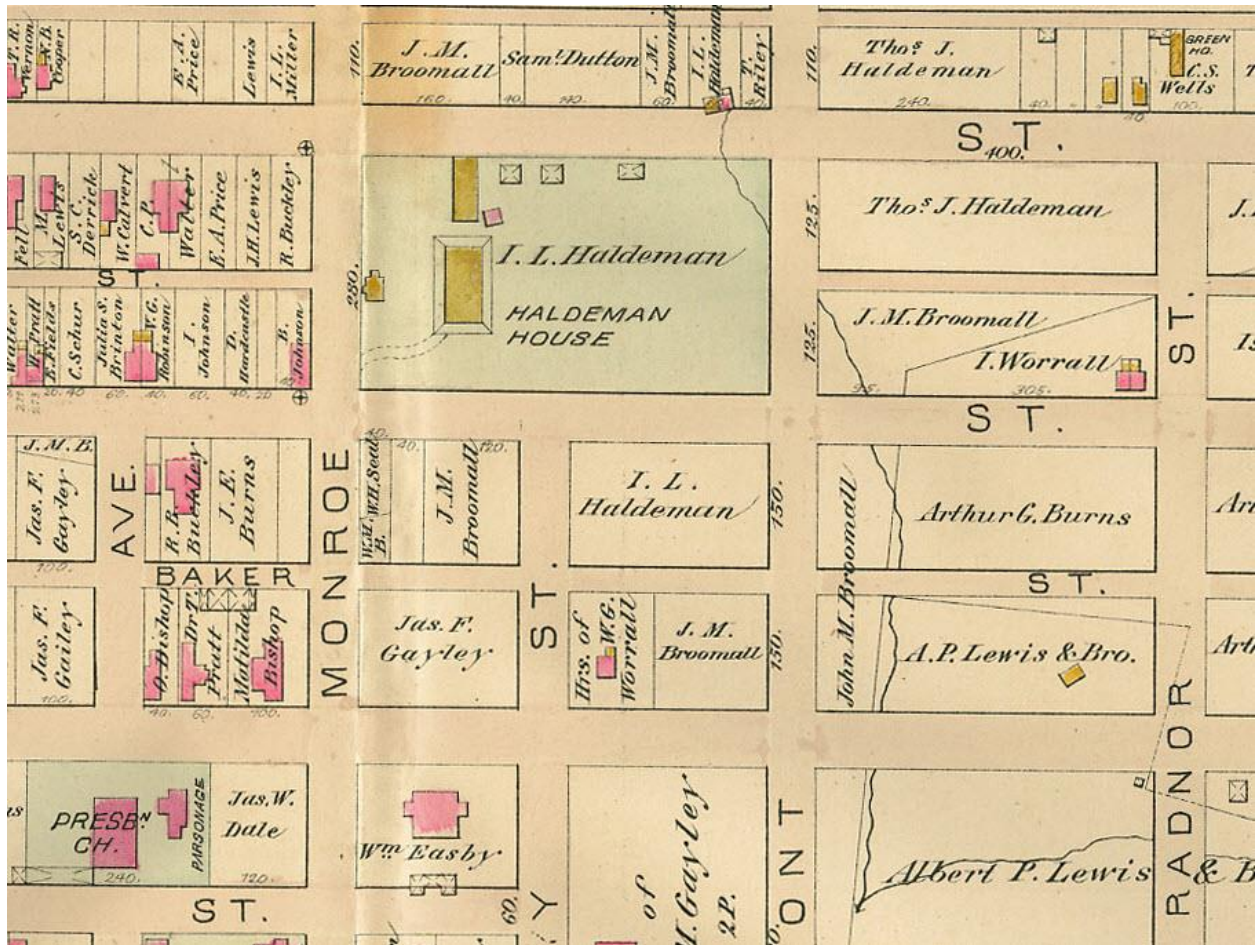
Gayley Run

Media Elementary School



Media Elementary School with storm drain at source of Gayley Run
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Early maps show Gayley Run beginning at a springhouse at the northeast corner of what is now Front and Edgmont Streets. There is a storm drain there now, which gets significantly backed up during heavy rainfall. Media Elementary School occupies the block between Front and State Streets and between Edgmont and Monroe Streets. It was originally built as the Media High School in 1914.



Detail of 1882 Hopkins map showing source of Gayley Run at a springhouse owned by I.L. Haldeman

Delaware County Poor Farm

Between 1807 and 1857, this was the site of the Delaware County Poor Farm. The two-story almshouse was near State and Monroe Streets. In the basement were four cells lined with sheet iron for violent indigents. Others were chained and hobbled to keep them from leaving the premises. The establishment was officially known as the “house of employment” but there was no remedial treatment. The poor shared the house with the insane, mentally impaired, chronically ill and handicapped, as well as orphans, widows, and deserted wives. The poor farm extended from State to Sixth Street. The burial ground for the Poor Farm was along Monroe Street between what is now Second Street and Fourth Street. When the county donated the Poor Farm, and bought four other private farms to create the new county seat of Media in 1850, the Poor Farm was moved to Middletown Township onto the 210-acre Abraham Pennell farm known as Fair Acres and eventually became the county’s Fair Acres Geriatric Center.

Shortlidge Academy

After the Poor Farm moved, the residence building in Media became the Continental Boarding House for Farm Workers. It was torn down to build the Haldeman House. The property was bought by Swithin C. Shortlidge in 1875 and converted into a 55-room boarding school

called the Media Academy for Young Men and Boys. After a few years of success, he expanded his operations, and purchased the Gayley Institute building farther at the south end of town and renamed it the Shortlidge Annex. Ashmead in 1884 refers to Haldeman and Gayley establishments being under one management as educational institutions except in summer when they were used as resort hotels. The 1882 map shows the property between Monroe and Edgmont Streets and Front and State Streets as belonging to I.L. Haldeman. The largest structure is still called the Haldeman House on this map. This must be the same as the Shortlidge Academy, who may have been a tenant at that time because he seems to have still been involved in the operation of the school. The Shortlidge Academy acquired the Brooke Hall School for Girls and operated it for one year in 1890. The Academy soon afterward faced financial troubles with the Panic of 1893 and then closed. In 1914, the new Media High School was built on the site.

The 1875 Everts & Stewart atlas shows Gayley Run following a path across what was then undeveloped lots, but is now Front Street to the corner of the Media Elementary School parking lot, across what is now Edgmont Street to Barrall Field, from there across State Street and under what is now the Media Medical Imaging building, across Baker Street and under the Laundercenter, and across Baltimore Avenue to underneath the Wendy's Restaurant. That space was occupied by Isaac Worrall's brickyard in 1875. It appears to have been a wet area with a network of small streams some of which flowed from the direction of the Sunoco gas station. This brick yard was between Edgmont and Radnor Streets, where the Wendy's Restaurant and the Sunoco Gas Station are in the early 21st century.



Detail of the 1875 Everts & Stewart map showing portions of Gayley Run in Media now underground



Storm drain access to Gayley Run at corner of Barrall Field;
Media Medical Imaging Center on other side of State Street
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The 1875 Everts & Stewart map also shows Gayley Run crossing where Edgmont Street is now and under the playground of the former Nativity B.V.M. Parish School and along the east side of Gayley Street and under Jefferson Street to where it currently exits a culvert and sees daylight. There was no Edgmont Street at that time, but the way the current streets slope down towards Edgmont Street, the old valley is still clearly visible.

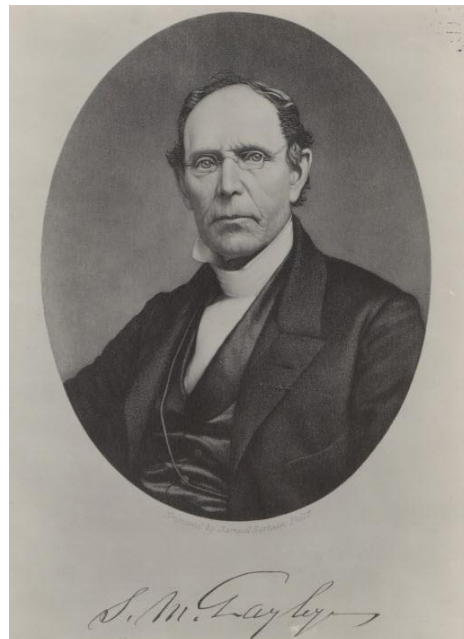


The former Gayley Run valley;
Looking north up Edgmont Street from Baltimore Avenue
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Samuel M. Gayley's Media Classical Institute



The former Gayley Classical Institute and
Convent of the Sisters of St. Francis
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Samuel M. Gayley
Image: Hagley Digital Archives

The name Gayley in Media originates with the Reverend Samuel M. Gayley, an influential figure associated with the beginning of the town in the 1850s. He owned property in the vicinity of the new Media Presbyterian Church along Gayley Street, for which he appears to be one of the founding members. During the early days of the founding of Media in the 1850s, two major educational institutions were begun. Samuel M. Gayley's Media Classical Institute was established on Gayley Street between Washington Street (now Baltimore Avenue) and Jefferson Street to give boys a classical education. Meanwhile, the Brooke Hall Academy for Girls was established at Washington and Lemon Streets. The Rev. Samuel M. Gayley appears to have moved from Wilmington where he had a similar school, but decided to tie his fortunes to the new town of Media. An 1856 article in the Delaware County American announced the 48th session of the Classical Institute commencing on November 4th, with the Rev. S.M. Gayley and his son T. Gardner Gayley, A.M. as principals. Samuel Gayley and the first pastor of the newly established Media Presbyterian Church, James W. Dale, owned a lot of property in the south of town around the vicinity of the church. From 1856 to 1860, Rev. Gayley officiated at the weddings of two sons and two daughters in the church, Dr. James F. Gayley, T. Gardner Gayley, Lizzie Y. Gayley, and Maggie C. Gayley. Clearly, the Gayley family was thriving in the new town.

In 1856 an article in the Delaware County Republican announced the formation of a Media Female Institute with a Miss Gayley as principal. It was to occupy a room of the Media Presbyterian Church. Many leading citizens were involved and were planning to send their daughters there. John C. Beatty was president. James W. Dale, the first pastor of the Media Presbyterian Church, was secretary. Among the Board of Visitors were Thomas Leiper, John F. Van Leer, John C. Beatty, and Joseph H. Hinkson. But, Miss Gayley's career was short. An announcement in the Delaware County American in December of 1857 informed the public of her resignation "due to health". Miss S.F. Campbell was to be her successor.

Samuel M. Gayley died in 1862 at age 61. In 1866 the Delaware County Republican announced a real estate sale of his property. The notice was placed by John M. Broomall. The lands listed were bounded by State Road, the lands of David Milne, and by the road leading to Bancroft Mill. In 1867 the Delaware County American posted a notice that his son Dr. Gayley of Philadelphia was selling lots between Monroe and Gayley Streets, on the north side of Washington Street. This is the current site of the Media Post Office.

Also in 1867, the Gayley property, "Melrose Glen", was being fitted as a Sanitarium for Inebriates, under the supervision of Dr. Joseph Parrish. He was the president of the Citizens Association of Pennsylvania. He had the services of Jno. A. Anderson as statistician, late of the U.S. Sanitary Commission. The Sanitarium is indicated on the 1875 map.

That was the year that Swithin C. Shortlidge established his Media Academy for Young Men and Boys. After a few years of success he expanded his operations, and purchased the Gayley Institute building. It was called the Shortlidge Annex. In 1881, after the fire at Swarthmore College, students lodged for a year at the Shortlidge Annex and the Chestnut Grove House near the train station. It was a little more than a decade later, Shortlidge lost control of the school due to financial troubles during the Panic of 1893.

The 1902 Baist atlas shows that the former Gayley property was owned by J.B. Robinson at that time. The 1909 Mueller atlas shows the lot as subdivided and "The Gayley" is on property owned by Elizabeth W. Robinson. To either side on that block her property is bordered by properties of John B. Robinson. The relationship of the Robinsons is yet to be determined.

At some point, the property was acquired by the local Catholic parish. The former Gayley Institute building became the convent for the Sisters of St. Francis.



Another view of the former Gayley Classical Institute
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Nativity B.V.M. Parish Church



Nativity B.V.M. Parish Church and entrance to its sanctuary, Media, PA
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Nativity B.V.M. Parish Church was built between 1881 and 1882. It's a Gothic Revival church designed by Edward Durang. The stone Rectory was built in 1903.

The first Catholic church in Media was the "Brick Church." It was built in 1862 by the Reverend Thomas Kyle as a mission station of the Ivy Mills Parish. Father Henry Wright became the first resident pastor in 1868. When the new Gothic Revival church was built, the Brick Church became a school and parish hall.



The Brick Church Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Nativity B.V.M. Parish School

The Nativity B.V.M. Parish School moved to Gayley Terrace in 1953 from the southeast corner of Baltimore Avenue and Monroe Street where it had been since 1912. It closed in 2012 when it merged with the St. John Chrysostom Parish School on Providence Road in Wallingford to become the Mother of Providence Regional Catholic School.

The vacancy provided an opportunity for the Rose Media School District to conduct classes for its Media Elementary School students while the roof repairs were being made to their building during the 2012-2013 school year.



Nativity B.V.M. School, Jefferson Street entrance and grotto with Jesus
Photos: Walt Cressler, Spring 2012



Nativity B.V.M. School along Gayley Street



Photos: Walt Cressler, Spring 2012



Nativity B.V.M. School, with convent (former Gayley Institute) beyond playground
Photo: Walt Cressler, Spring 2012



Former Nativity B.V.M. School as temporary home of Media Elementary School
Photos: Walt Cressler, Fall 2012

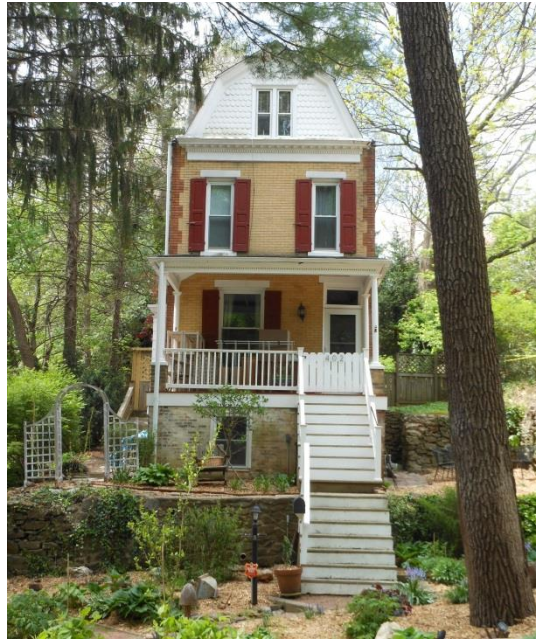
Gayley Run emerges from a culvert beneath Jefferson Street at the southern edge of Media, right on the eastern side of Gayley Street where it is screened by a thick stand of bamboo.

George Hay House

A thick screen of bamboo provides a secluded setting for the Frank Lloyd Wright inspired house at 200 East Jefferson Street built by architect George A. Hay in 1954. The house is Media's version of Fallingwater, built overlooking Gayley Run. George Hay based his architectural practice at an office on 1 West Second Street, and was a resident of Media for over 80 years. In keeping with his emphasis on using local materials, the wood paneling of the entrance way was made from material salvaged from a Kennett Square mushroom house.

After passing alongside the George Hay House, Gayley Run turns in a westerly direction and flows beneath Gayley Street.

Charles Fussell House



Charles Fussell House

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Along Gayley Street just across from where Gayley Run first emerges from underground is the Charles Fussell House. Charles Fussell (1840-1909) was an artist, farmer, western pioneer and Civil War veteran. He was friends with his mentor Thomas Eakins, who frequently visited this house. Charles Fussell primarily painted landscapes, including those of the Ridley Creek valley. He lived in this house during the last nine years of his life with his aunt Grace Anna Lewis who was also an artist as well as a botanist.

Gayley Park Apartments



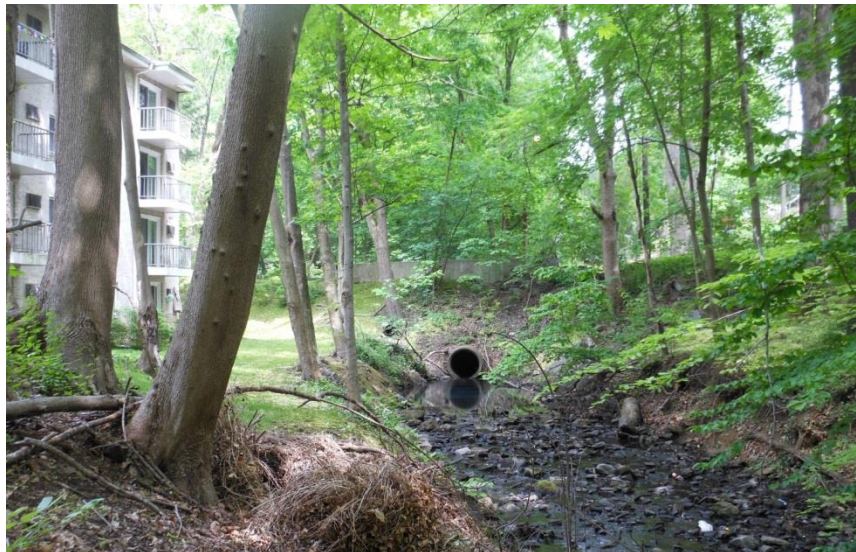
Entrance to the Gayley Park Apartments

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Overlooking the north bank of Gayley Run as the stream flows west from under Gayley Street are the two towers and parking lot of the Gayley Park Apartments owned and operated by Westover Properties.



The edge of the table of Wissahickon Schist upon which Media was built
Gayley Park Apartments parking lot
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Gayley Run emerging from beneath Gayley Street between
Gayley Park Apartments and the Muriel Jaisohn Nature Preserve
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

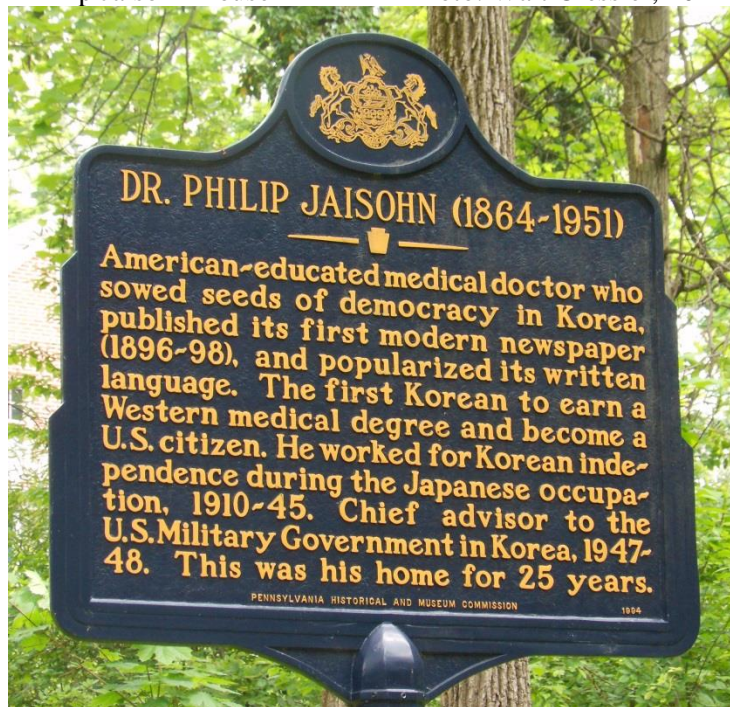
Philip Jaisohn House

The great Korean patriot and physician Philip Jaisohn purchased the house at 100 East Lincoln Street in Media in 1925 and lived there until his death in 1951. It is maintained as a memorial and museum, and houses the offices and Korean community center of the Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation.



Philip Jaisohn House

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Dr. Philip Jaisohn historical marker

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

He was born as Seo Jai-Pil in Korea in the year 1864. The Korean peninsula, or Chosen, was occupied by the Manchus of the Chinese Qing dynasty. Seo Jai-Pil joined the fight for independence and equality as the youngest member of the Kapsin Coup in 1884, led by Kim Ok-

Kyun. When the new revolutionary government was toppled, and his parents and brothers were sentenced to death, and his wife committed suicide and their one-year-old son starved, Seo Jai-Pil fled for his life to San Francisco in 1885. He worked at a furniture store and made friends, including a rich businessman named John W. Hollenbeck who supported him in getting a high school education where he learned English. He followed Hollenbeck to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania to pursue this education. By then, he went by the anglicized name Philip Jaisohn, which is a reverse of his Korean name. He attended Lafayette College and worked at the Smithsonian Institution for a while. In 1890, he became a U.S. citizen. After passing the civil service exams, he was appointed to work in the Surgeon General's library in Washington, D.C. translating Chinese medical books into English. He was inspired to pursue a medical degree and took night classes at George Washington University. He earned his medical degree in 1892.

In 1894 he married Muriel Armstrong, a Chicago socialite. Her father founded the railway mail delivery system and her uncle was U.S. President James Buchanan. They had two daughters, Stephenie and Muriel.

He continued to be involved in the Korean independence movement, returning to that country. In 1895, he was an advisor to the Privy Council. His focus was on education, rather than politics. He published a Korean language newspaper, *The Independent*. It was the first Korean newspaper printed in Korean Hangul and not Chinese characters. He organized the Independence Club to hold meetings to discuss political issues. He taught world history every Thursday at a college-level school. One of students was future South Korean president Dr. Syngman Rhee. In 1898, he was forced to flee Korea again due to the territorial ambitions of the Russians and Japanese on the peninsula. He stayed in the Pacific by working on a hospital ship during the Spanish-American War. He then moved to Philadelphia and worked at the Wistar Institute until 1905. He then started an office supply business, Philip Jaisohn & Co., which had branches in Philadelphia and Wilkes-Barre.

Japan occupied Korea in 1910. Philip Jaisohn continued to promote Korea's independence using Washington, D.C. as a base where he held a pathology position. In 1919, he called together the First Korean Congress in Philadelphia to discuss how to bring back freedom to the Korean people. The meeting included a march to Independence Hall. He also organized the League of Friends of Korea to focus support for Korean independence. He kept people informed of developments by publishing *The Korea Review*. He put enormous amounts of money into these efforts, and lost his printing business and his house in Philadelphia in 1924.

In 1925, he purchased the house on East Lincoln Street in Media and enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine where he updated his medical education. He opened a general practice on South Avenue in Media in 1938 as well as served the local school districts. During World War II he was an examining physician for the local draft board. After the war, he was an advisor in the finally independent Korea to the commander of the U.S. occupation forces. He then resumed a medical practice on State Street in Media. He turned down requests to run for president of Korea during their first democratic elections in 1948. He decided to remain a U.S. citizen. He died during the second year of the Korean War in 1951. The first Korean-American was broken hearted to see his country of origin broken apart.

Muriel Jaisohn Memorial Park and Nature Sanctuary

The Muriel Jaisohn Memorial Park and Nature Sanctuary is a narrow wooded strip between Gayley Run and East Lincoln Street that runs along the top of the south bank of the stream. It was dedicated in honor of the daughter of Dr. Philip Jaisohn in 1988. She was a well-known local artist who painted the glories of nature, and had donated the land in 1985 “to be preserved forever and ever as a wildlife sanctuary.”



Muriel Jaisohn Memorial Park & Nature Sanctuary entrance
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Two more views of Muriel Jaisohn Memorial Park



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Gayley Run then passes under West Lincoln Street, which approaches from the west and parallels the northern edge of Upper Providence Township’s boundary with the Borough of Media. The stream continues in a southeasterly direction parallel with Park Avenue, a continuation of the East Lincoln Street right-of-way.



Gayley Run emerges from under Park Avenue and East Lincoln Street into Houtman Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

G.D. Houtman Park



Houtman Park sign

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the other bank is G.D. Houtman Park. G.D. Houtman was the engineer for Upper Providence Township beginning in 1950. The park is within Upper Providence Township, but is owned by the Borough of Media. Enhanced passive recreational were installed in 2015. These improvements included a rebuilt bridge, ramps, and a wheelchair accessible paved path around the perimeter of the park. The park contains a sewage pumping station for the Media Municipal Sewage Disposal Plant.



Houtman Park after cleanup but before improvements

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Newly enhanced G.D. Houtman Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015



More views of Houtman Park improvements



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2015



Springtime in Houtman Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018



Sewage pump house, G.D. Houtman Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the 1909 Mueller map, this property between Lincoln Street, Park Avenue, and the railroad is owned by Hunter Brooke and is called “Braecroft”.

A small tributary joins Gayley Run at the Lincoln Street end of the park. This stream emerges from a culvert under Lincoln Street from where it originates on the other side at Philip Green Park.



Outfall of small tributary that flows from one park to the other
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Philip Green Park



Philip Green Park



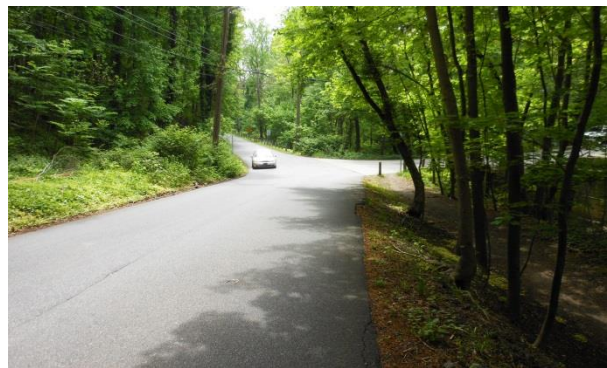
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Philip Green Park is essentially a wooded ravine between South Olive and South Jackson Streets. It was dedicated in 1976.

Media, Middletown, Aston, & Chester Electric Railway

From 1905 until sometime in the 1930s, the trolley route of the Media, Middletown, Aston, & Chester Electric Railway passed along Park Avenue and up West Lincoln Street to where it turned at South Olive Street to its terminus at Sixth and Olive. It was an extension of the Chester-Brookhaven line, which continued south to Bortondale Road and then south along Middletown Road to Market Square in Chester. In 1906 the line was leased to the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company and abandoned in the 1930s.

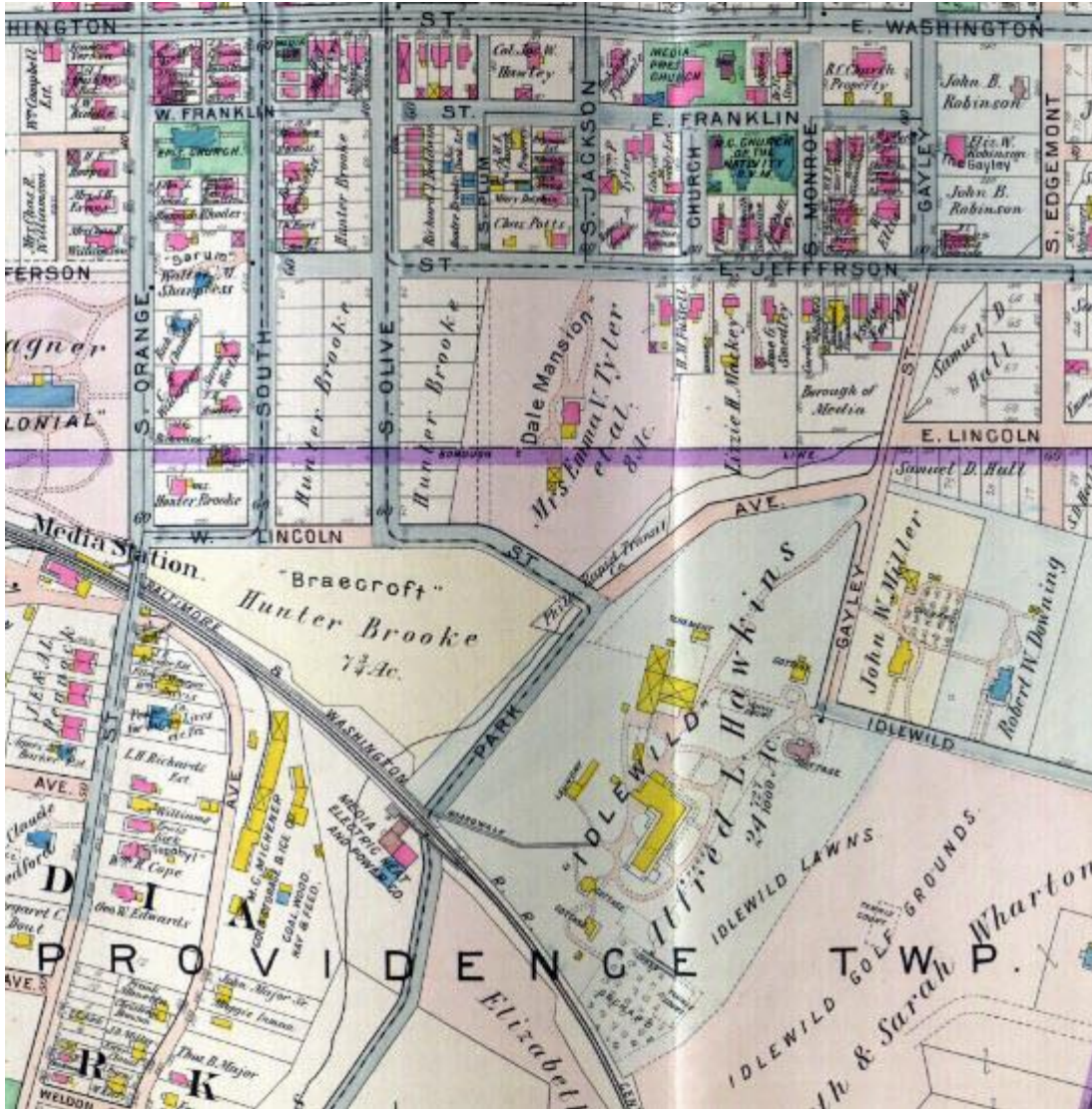
In addition to this north-south line, Media had an electric railway line connecting it east-west to Philadelphia along the Delaware County & Philadelphia Electric Railway. It made connections in Angora with the Union Traction Company's lines to the foot of Chestnut Street.



Park Avenue under the SEPTA bridge (left) and at its intersection with West Lincoln Street (right)

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

At the southern end of G.D. Houtman Park, Gayley Run flows through a high railroad embankment. On the top of the embankment are the tracks of SEPTA's Media-Elwyn commuter line.



Detail of the 1909 Mueller map of the south part of Media showing landmarks along Gayley Run

Idlewild Hotel

Up on the eastern bank of Gayley Run is the site of the Idlewild Hotel, now the site of the Idlewild Circle subdivision. The Hawkins family built this large resort hotel in 1871. While D. Reece Hawkins continued as the proprietor of the Charter House Hotel in the center of Media near the courthouse, his sons John H. and Alfred L. Hawkins became proprietors of the new summer resort hotel. The grounds had tennis courts and a golf course. The hotel itself boasted a hydraulic elevator, a bowling alley, a billiard room, and shuffleboard tables. A wooden boardwalk extended from the hotel's west lawn across Park Avenue and Gayley Run, and parallel to the Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington Rail Road, Central Division to the Media Train Station. The hotel and grounds were between Park Avenue and Gayley Street and south of Idlewild Avenue east to Manchester Avenue. In the early twentieth century, the chestnut blight killed 400 trees on the hotel grounds. The hotel closed in 1926 and was demolished by the early 1930s.

The biggest resort hotel was the Idlewild Hotel, which was situated between East Lincoln Street and Park Avenue on its northeast side, and Gayley Street and Manchester Avenue to the west and the railroad along the southern edge of its grounds. A wooden boardwalk from the hotel crossed Park Avenue and over the stream and paralleled the railroad all the way to the Media train station.



Steps reputedly to the Idlewild Hotel, Idlewild Circle
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

Idlewild Cottage

The last remaining structure that was on the hotel grounds is a house designed by Frank Furness, also called Idlewild. He had it built in 1888 and spent his summers there until his death in 1912. Furness covered the costs to build the cottage. As it was on their hotel grounds, the Hawkins family owned the land and occupied the cottage during the winter. Since it had a small kitchen, Furness dined in the hotel when he occupied it in the summer. Its design is a prototype for the Furness Library on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania but at a much smaller scale. They both have a semicircular apse and a square block at the other end with the entrance in the joint in between. The owner of the house in the early 21st century, Michelle Jamney, succeeded in getting it listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.



Idlewild Cottage

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

Pennsylvania Institute of Technology

Sharing the hilltop with the Idlewild Circle subdivision is the Pennsylvania Institute of Technology. After the Idlewild Hotel closed in 1926, a group of Belgian nuns built the Notre Dame High School for Girls on part of the property in 1927. In 1935, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia approached the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur to run it. It closed in 1981. In 1982, the Pennsylvania Institute of Technology moved into the gothic buildings of the former girl's school. The institute specializes in granting two-year degrees in various fields such as engineering, allied health, and criminal justice. It was originally located in Upper Darby where it was founded in 1953.

Fulmer's Garage

On the other side of the railroad embankment is a small cluster of buildings currently belonging to Fulmer's Garage. This was the site of the first electric company to generate power for Media and Wallingford, the Media Electric Light, Heat, and Power Company. Some of the original buildings are still there. This company supplied the first street lights and wired the first homes for electricity in Media and Wallingford. It began in 1889 as the M.R. Muckle, Jr. & Co.

A contract was awarded by Media to light the town and most stores and dwellings in Media and Wallingford were lit by 1900. The company lost money because people were charged a yearly fee for the number of lights they had, but the power to supply the electricity cost more than what the fees brought in. The stock was guaranteed by Robert Downing, the Comptroller for the Pennsylvania Railroad, a member of Philadelphia City Council, and a resident of Idlewild Lane. Operations were moved to the vicinity of the Media Water Works. By 1909 a New York firm bought four local electric companies, presumably including this one, and formed the Delaware County Electric Company. This company was eventually absorbed into the Philadelphia Electric Company.



Fulmer's Garage

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The electric company buildings were sold to the Kelsall family in 1922 to use for the Media Machine Works. They made industrial rotary saws, and presses for the vinyl music record industry.

Victoria Square Townhouses

The sides of the valley through which the stream flows are high and steep here. Perched above Fulmer's Garage are the Victoria Square townhouses along South Avenue. They were built on the site of the Turney Fuel Company. Around the turn of the millennium, the fuel tanks were removed and townhouses were built at the site. Turney was the last of a long history of fuel and other supply services at this location, beginning with the Media Coal and Ice Company. M.C. Michener Cold Storage & Ice Company purchased the site in 1895 from the S.S. White Dental Company. They harvested ice from behind Palmer's Dam above the Media Water Works and also produced fifteen tons of ice per day with an ice making machine. For winter business, he purchased the Matthew Elliot & Company coal operation. In 1920, feed grinding and the sale of hay, grain, straw, fertilizer, building material, were added. Not long afterwards, tanks for the storage and sale of fuel oil were added to the business, too.

South Avenue

The newer structures of Victoria Square are a departure from the distinctive older frame houses of South Avenue. Two phases of development occurred in the late nineteenth century along this street. The Cummins Addition was undertaken north of Weldon Street and the Town of Surrey was laid out south of Weldon. Altogether this area was known as Media Park. On October 2, 1872 James R. Cummins submitted a plan to develop South Avenue and the east side of South Orange Street north of Weldon Street. The Town of Surrey was established in the 1890s on South Avenue south of Weldon Street.



Houses on South Avenue, south of Weldon Street

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

In contrast to the western slopes up to South Avenue, the eastern slopes of the valley rise less abruptly towards Rose Hill, where there are much larger and relatively newer dwellings.

Thompson Park



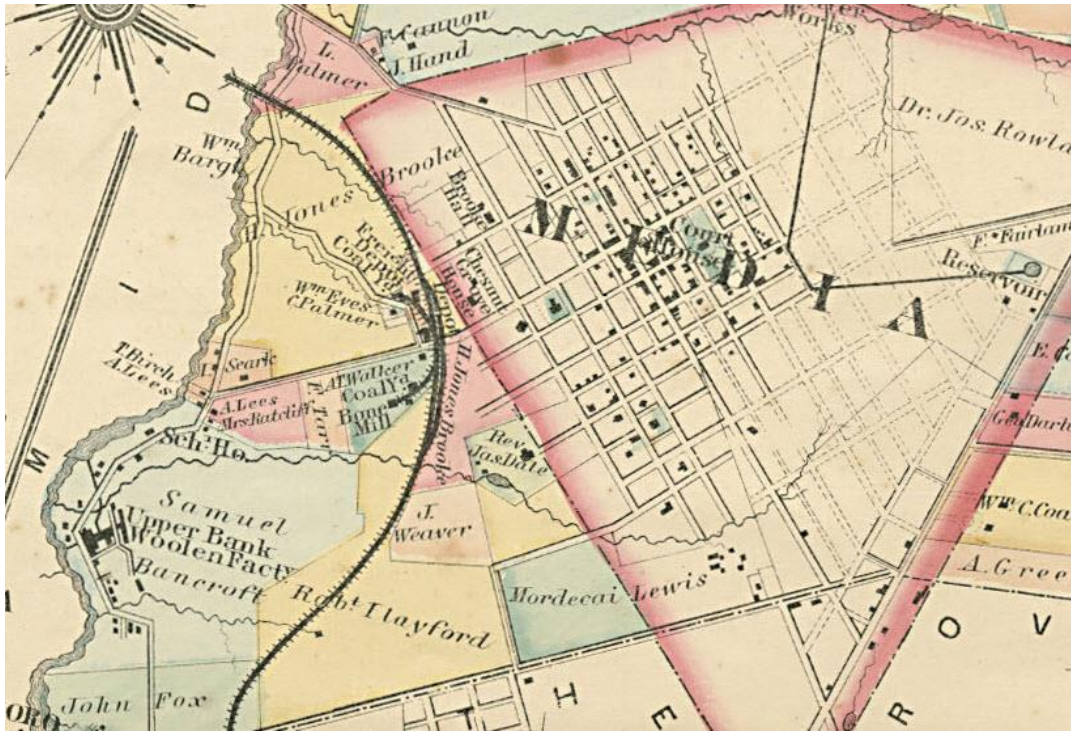
Two scenes from Thompson Park: Gayley Run and “The Meadow”
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The terrain flattens out on the approach to Ridley Creek as Park Avenue converges with Ridley Creek Road. Gayley Run still closely parallels Park Avenue as it passes through the level plain of Thompson Park, known by local residents as “The Meadow”.



Gayley Run between Park Avenue and Ridley Creek Road (left);
Gayley Run beneath bridge to Upper Bank (right)
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

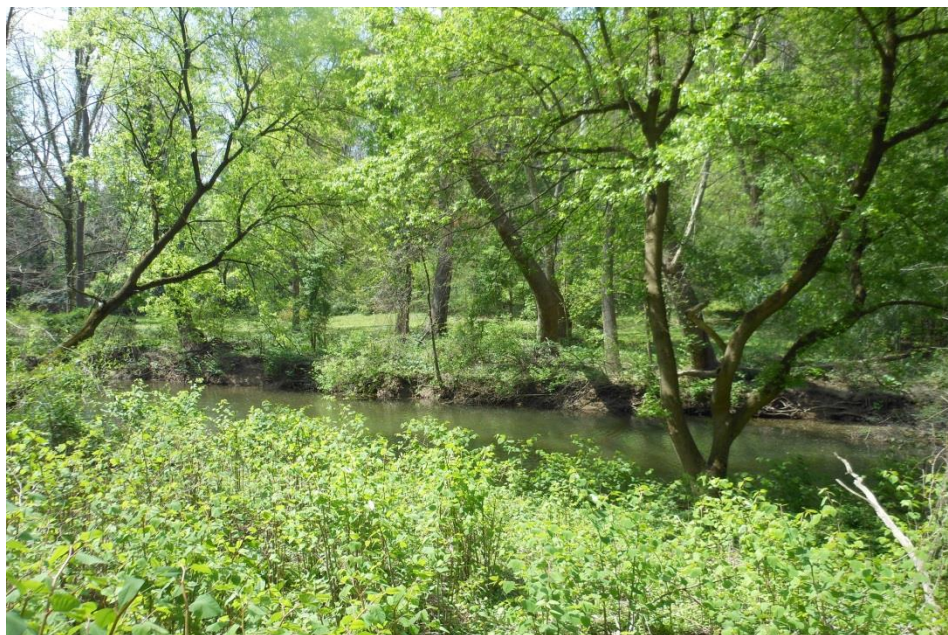
After flowing under Ridley Creek Road, Gayley Run enters Ridley Creek within the former Upper Bank Nursery, the former site of the Upper Bank Woolen Factory.



Detail of 1870 Hopkins atlas showing Gayley Run's course through Media and Upper Providence

Upper Bank

Below Media Station Road, Ridley Creek flows through a wooded area along the former Upper Bank Nursery, which had once been the site of Samuel Bancroft's Upper Bank Woolen Factory.



View across Ridley Creek to Upper Bank

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

James Wilcox had originally built a paper mill at this site in 1766. It was operated by his son Mark Wilcox from 1766 until 1785. The main house on the grounds preceded the mill, and was built by James and Mark Wilcox in 1764. The mill and house went passed through the hands of several owners over the years. John Lundgren took ownership in 1785 and William Levis in 1795. It was operated as a cotton mill by Wagstaff and Englehorn when they bought it in 1818. By 1823, Hugh Wagstaff had sole ownership, but John Ronaldson was in control two years later in 1825. The mill was in John Bancroft's hands in 1829, and then William Crook had ownership in 1842.

During the "Great Freshet" of August 5th, 1843, the woolen factory was destroyed. Mill worker and tenant George Hargreaves and four of his sons died in the flood as most of their house was swept away. His wife Jane Hargreaves and an infant survived as she clung desperately to the remaining corner of the house with one arm and the baby with the other.

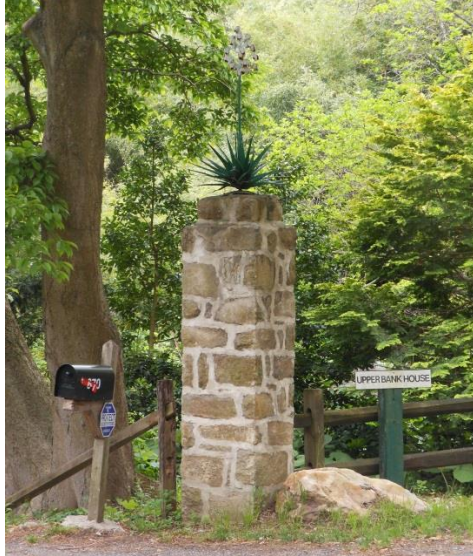
Finally, Samuel Bancroft opened his large woolen mill operation and called it Upper Bank in 1857. It also was known as Manchester Mills. Samuel Bancroft and other members of the Bancroft family owned several mills on the Ridley and Brandywine Creeks. Samuel Bancroft provided free blankets that were made at this mill to the Pennsylvania militia during the Civil War. It burned in 1872, and the charred hulk sat on the banks of Ridley Creek for many years afterwards.

In 1915 the house and property was purchased by Fairman Furness. He bequeathed the 55-acre nursery he had created and three dozen neighboring rental properties on South Avenue to his nephew Wirt L. Thompson, Jr. in 1971. Wirt and his wife Sais (Sara Wood) Thompson operated the Upper Bank Nursery along Ridley Creek for many decades until she died in 2007 and he died in 2010 at the age of 99. Wirt Thompson was born in Wallingford and graduated from Yale in 1934. He was an intercollegiate pole-vaulting champion in 1932, the national champion in 1934, and narrowly missed qualifying for the 1936 Olympics. His record vault was 14 and a half inches. These were the days before the poles were still made of bamboo and not fiber glass. That may explain Wirt Thompson's fascination with bamboo. His nursery grew 17 varieties, and may be the source of the many invasive bamboo patches in the Ridley Creek valley.

After college, Wirt Thompson worked in the marketing office of Procter & Gamble in Omaha, Nebraska. In World War II he was in the South Pacific as an armaments commander on a merchant marine supply ship. Following the war, he returned to marketing between 1946 and 1956 and worked for a variety of companies, including American Viscose Corporation in Marcus Hook.

Wirt Thompson was an inventive person. While living Connecticut during the 1950s he invented a seamless brassiere. He and Sara steamed the bras in a pressure cooker to mold the nylon into shape. His sponsoring firm lost its enthusiasm for the product so he sold the patent for a modest sum. He then invented a typewriter ribbon called Beautyrite, which could hold the ink longer than other ribbons. He sold the rights to the Remington Rand Corporation in the 1960s. During this period his income was sporadic, but the seven-member family was supported by Sara's inheritance as a member of the Wood family that founded Wawa Dairies.

He became a teacher in the early 1960s. He taught mathematics at the Episcopal Academy from 1963 to 1965 and at Germantown Academy from 1965 until 1970. The family moved to the old stone house at Upper Bank Nursery in 1973.



Entrance to Upper Bank with detail of forged iron yucca on gate posts created by Greg Leavitt
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Gayley Run flows into Ridley Creek past some of Wirt Thompson's bamboo
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Just below Upper Bank, South Ridley Creek Road turns east and out of the bottomland, but the main road crosses Ridley Creek and continues to run parallel to it on the west side. The road that continues to follow the creek is called Knowlton Road.

Anna Howard Shaw

Along South Ridley Creek Road just north of the bridge over Ridley Creek is a historic marker installed in 2014 that commemorates the suffragist Anna Howard Shaw (1847-1919). She succeeded her friend Susan B. Anthony as the head of the National Woman Suffrage Association and served in that capacity from 1905 until 1915. She was replaced by Carrie Chapman Catt, whose strategies were more successful and led to women's ability to vote throughout the United States in 1920.

Anna Howard Shaw moved to Moylan in the Ridley Creek valley in 1908, where she lived a block from the train station. After she broke her ankle and couldn't walk to the train station to commute to her many engagements, friends and supporters bought her a yellow roadster. After she refused to list her property for tax assessment purposes because she claimed she was still a resident of New York, her car was confiscated and put in Pierson's Garage in Media. Her friends bought the car back when it was auctioned and returned it to her.

A bridge carries Knowlton Road over the creek just south of the split with South Ridley Creek Road and then Knowlton Road follows the west bank of Ridley Creek for a scenic mile-and-a-half.



Ridley Creek under the Knowlton Road bridge

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Bortondale

Bortondale Road turns off of Knowlton Road towards the southwest and up the steep side of the Ridley Creek valley. Along Bortondale Road is the Bortondale subdivision. It was the first housing development in Middletown Township. It was built by William R. and Martha Borton between 1905 and 1916. It was originally called Wells Crest. Bortondale Road was a trolley right-of-way that went through the farm of Samuel Well. The new homes came with water rights supplied by a gravity-fed spring just to the north.

At the corner of Bortondale Road and Old Middletown Road is the Nelling House. According to Anna Broomall, this was the last place north of the Mason-Dixon line where slaves were held.

Middle Bank

The former site of the Middle Bank Mills, also known as Hillsborough Mills, is located near the bridge where Manchester Road crosses the creek and meets Knowlton Road. Middle Bank Mills were also once owned by Samuel Bancroft. At first, it looks as though these mills have left no apparent trace, but there is a partial stone wall on the east and west banks of Ridley Creek at this location that may have been part of the mill dam or bridge abutments.



Structures on the sides of Ridley Creek at Middle Bank
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

In 1800, John Evans built the first mill at this location. It came into the possession of the First National Bank of Delaware County, located in Chester. James Ronaldson bought the mill in 1819, and erected a cotton mill on the site that produced 700 yards of cotton yarn per week during its peak. The operation was run by Patrick Mulvaney, and included three carding engines, 662 throttle spindles, and 408 mule spindles. There was a mansion house for the operator, and nine worker's houses in the associated mill village. The operation was purchased in 1845 by Hugh Groves, who upgraded the technology to consist of four double cotton cards, two speeders, a drawing frame, two mules, and thirty-six power looms. At some point during this period, the mill was owned by Samuel Bancroft, but was then bought by John Fox in 1866. The mill burned down in 1870, and the property was bought back by Bancroft. In the 1920s there was a quarry with a stone cutting operation at this location.



Quarry at Middle Bank

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

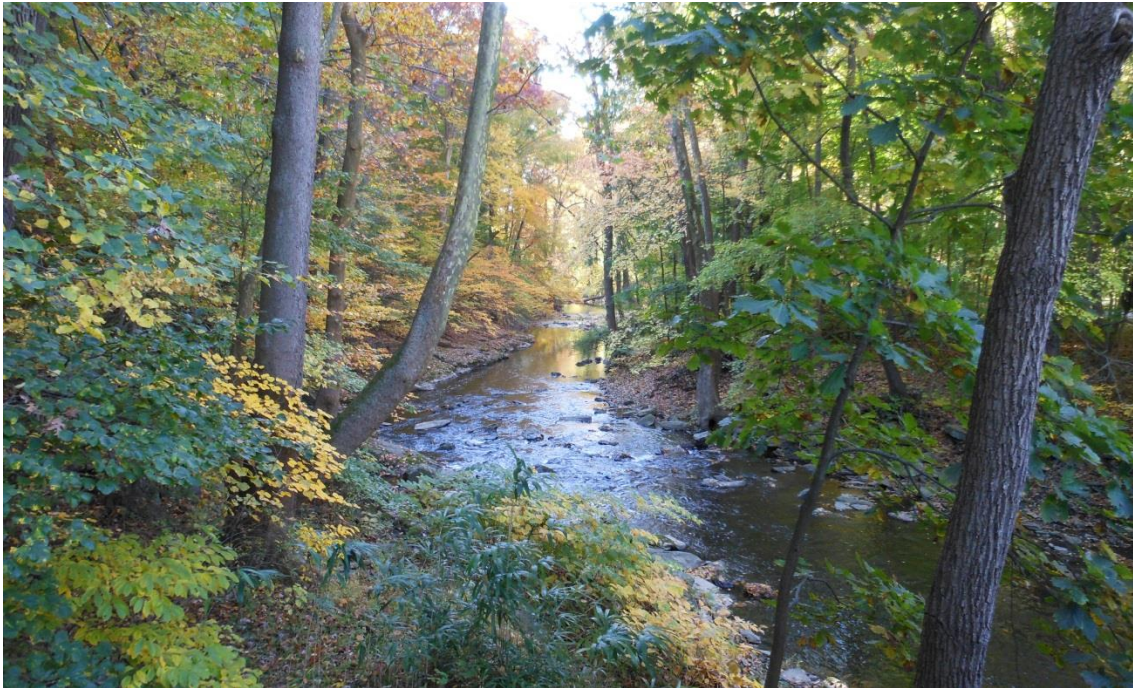


Remains of industrial operations, Middle Bank



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Just downstream of Manchester Road, as Ridley Creek forms a boundary between Middletown Township on the west and the Borough of Rose Valley on the east, the sides of the ravine steepen through which the creek flows.



Ridley Creek from Knowlton Road, near Manchester Road crossing
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Halloween ghouls at old farmstead near Manchester Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Delaware County Sportsman's Association

Here on the west side of the creek and across Knowlton Road is a large wooded area owned by the Delaware County Sportsman's Association. Sometimes the valley rings incongruously with the simultaneous shouts of playing children and the loud reports of target practice at the shooting range.

The School in Rose Valley

Up the east bank is the campus of a progressive private school known as The School in Rose Valley which was founded in 1929 by the first generation of children to grow up in the community of Rose Valley. Grace Rotzel was hired as the first head of the school. The founders were inspired by the whole-child educational approach of John Dewey. In this spirit, the creek and its woodland corridor are part of the extended classroom of the school.



The woods along Ridley Creek below the School in Rose Valley
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

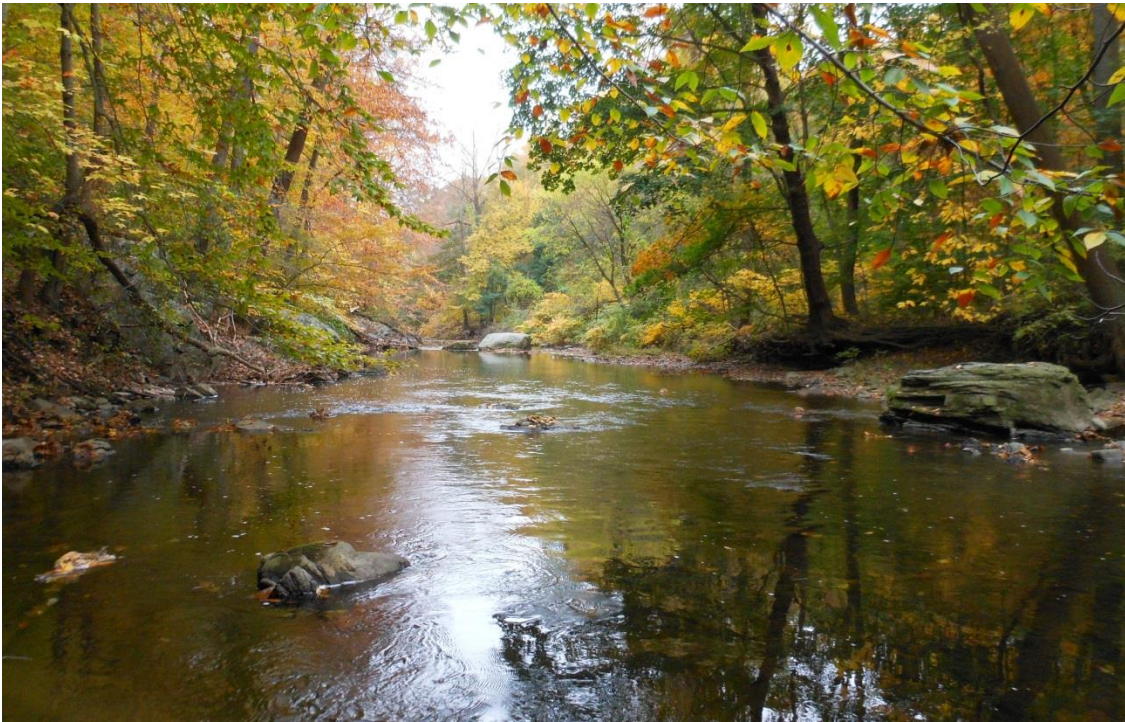


The School in Rose Valley, Main Building

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Bronze cast of horse sculpture by Wharton Esherick, The School in Rose Valley
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Scenes along Ridley Creek with
Rose Valley on east bank and Middletown Township on the west bank
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Borough of Rose Valley

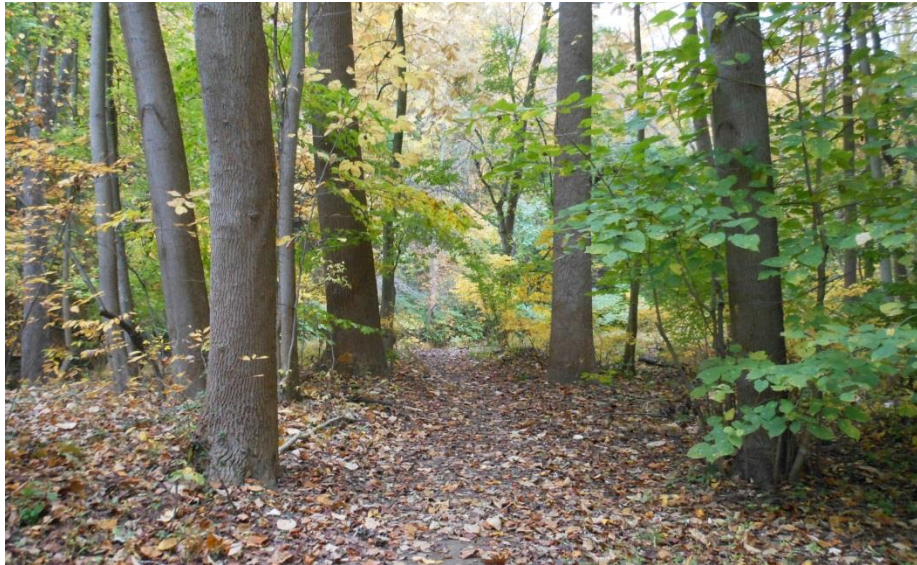
As Ridley Creek makes a sharp eastward meander at Long Point, it flows entirely within Rose Valley Borough, which had its origin as an Arts-and-Crafts Community in the early twentieth century.

Maurice and Adele Saul Wildlife Sanctuary and Nature Preserve



Andy Saul on a nature walk in the wildlife sanctuary donated by his parents
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2013

Twelve acres of the wooded east bank of Ridley Creek downstream of the school consists of the Maurice and Adele Saul Wildlife Sanctuary and Nature Preserve. Over the years, a number of habitat restoration initiatives have taken place within the preserve. These have included invasive plant removal, stream bank restoration, and white-tailed deer bow hunts.



Trail through the Saul Wildlife Sanctuary

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



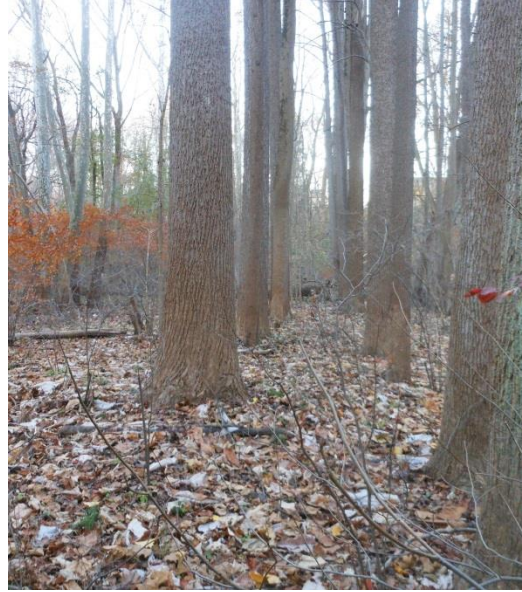
The "Wolf Tree"

Trunk measurement by Junior DCIS Club, led by Curator of Botany, Dr. Katherine Hornberger, Delaware County Institute of Science (in green coat)

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2013



Umbrella magnolias in rows



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012 & 2013



American beech with a handle, Saul Wildlife Sanctuary

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

A lot of American sycamore and silver maple grow along the creek within the preserve. Red maple is abundant on the floodplain, which consists of a very thick layer of legacy sediment from the time when the dam impounded a large amount of water to power the mill. Tulip poplar is an abundant, including a particularly large specimen known as the “Wolf Tree”. During the first decades of its life, it grew unencumbered by surrounding trees and has a lot of large side branches unusual for a tulip poplar. A grove of umbrella magnolias are distinguished by their very large leaves that turn bright yellow in the fall. They were planted in rows during the time

the Sauls operated a plant nursery in what became the preserve. There are also oaks and hickories. The understory consists of spicebush and arrowwood and scattered witch hazel, and there is mountain laurel growing on the slopes.



Exposed roots of American sycamore along Ridley Creek, Saul Wildlife Sanctuary
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Fall leaves, Saul Wildlife Sanctuary
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Remains of the old dam and mill race can be seen in the preserve.



Remains of the dam

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Remains of the millrace and millrace wall



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Erosion of the legacy sediments that were deposited in the mill pond
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Stream bank restoration project

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The Old Mill



The Old Mill, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The creek flows past the historic Old Mill which is owned by the Rose Valley Folk and rented out for events and to the Rose Valley Borough government for its offices.

A snuff mill owned by Nicholas Stimmel was first built here in 1789. His son Philip had a tobacco store in Philadelphia. Ownership of the mill passed to him in 1794. In 1814 it was sold to William Smith, and then in 1818 it was sold to John White who was the first to use the name Rose Valley Mills. Until 1821 he ground bark as a fever medicine, but the growing use of quinine put him out of business. Park Shee rented the mill from 1826 until 1850 and operated it as a paper mill. For a decade or so, the mill was abandoned. Antrim Osborne established a woolen mill here in 1861. He added more buildings and repaired the dam and the mill race. The mill burned and operations finally ceased in 1885.

Rose Valley Arts and Crafts Community

The next phase in the history of Rose Valley came with the founding of the Arts and Crafts community in 1901, inspired by the utopian writings of William Morris, specifically his 1890 work *News from Nowhere*. Architect Will Price and friends were dismayed by the dehumanizing effects of industrialization, and in the days of increasingly mechanized production they wanted to revive handmade arts and crafts in close relationship with nature. Will Price and his friends formed the Rose Valley Association, and bought at a sheriff's sale the 80 acre property around the remains of Antrim Osborne's old woolen mill. They converted the mill to workshops for producing hand-made furniture and ceramics. The handicraft shops were not commercially viable and only lasted from 1901-1907, but the community's legacy lives on.

The first of the Rose Valley Shops built furniture modeled on the notion that William Morris had of “banded workshops,” in which a small group of craftsmen communed with nature and their woodcraft. John Maene of Belgium was hired to head the furniture shop. Craftsmen from Norway were brought in to work in the shop, since skilled local furniture makers were hard to find. Most of the furniture was made from white oak and put together with traditional mortise-and-tenon and double-dovetail joints. The furniture was highly carved in several styles, including Gothic, Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Colonial Revival. The furniture shop closed for good in 1906. Only a few hundred pieces were made, all unique, and less than a hundred probably survive.



Guest House, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

The Guest House at 74 Rose Valley Road was originally a tenement house for Antrim Osborne’s millworkers at the Rose Valley Mills. The building dates from the 1860s, but was renovated in 1901 by Will Price to house his family, friends, and followers when they first established the Rose Valley Arts & Crafts community. The original six worker’s apartments became houses for three families. By 1902, the frequent change-over of residents was being managed by Nathan and Anna Price Kite. The small tributary of Vernon Run that flows past the Guest House bears the informal name of “Dishwater Run.”

Across Rose Valley Road from the Guest House are other former millworker’s houses that had been renovated and are also private residences.



Former millworker's houses along Rose Valley Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The architectural firm of Price & McLanahan renovated the 18th and 19th century farmhouses in the valley for members of the community and their families, as well as designed new bungalows for like-minded patrons. William Price designed large water cistern towers and placed them on the hills above the valley to supply running water.

On Price's Lane, off Rose Valley Road, are many houses built or remodeled by Will Price. Among them is "Camaredeil" which was the home of Will and Emma Price and family after it was remodeled in 1902 and they moved out of their temporary quarters at the Guest House. It was originally a stone house from 1876. The name of the house was coined after Will Price died in 1916. It's an acronym of the names of the four children: Caroline, Margaret, Edson, and Eileen. For thirteen years Will Price used this house as his interior design laboratory, and made many changes inside, particularly to the woodwork. He tried to make most of the actual changes during the summer, but never seemed to finish the projects before the rest of the family returned from their vacation.



Camaredeil, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

The “House of the Democrat” at 29 Prices Lane was built in 1906 from designs that Will Price widely published prior to the house’s construction. It was one of his most influential structures. It embodies the goals of the Arts & Crafts movement as an example of modest, egalitarian domestic architecture that draws upon the American vernacular style. It was built by Henry Hetzel, a young Rose Valley craftsman who made furniture, woodwork, and wrought iron.



House of the Democrat , Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

Herbert Walton was a craftsman who was part of the Rose Valley community in the early days. He worked iron, and made stained glass, woodwork, and furniture. On Price's Lane is "The Forge" which he built as an iron-working shop.



The Forge, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

The "Hillside House" is to the left of "The Forge" on Price's Lane. It is believed to have been designed by Herbert and Will Walton in the nineteen-teens.



The Hillside House, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

Will Price added a couple of rooms to a pre-existing water tower that is now at 32 Price's Lane. He lived there during the summer when the rest of his family was on vacation in Maine. Herbert and Frank Walton expanded the "Tower House" in 1914 in order to live in it upon their marriage. The tower itself was converted to rooms when the cistern became defunct after water was piped into Rose Valley around 1913 or 1914. After the death of Will Price, the downsizing Emma Price traded with the Waltons in order to move into the Tower House. Sometime later, Will's son Billy Price added further units to accommodate the expanding family.



Tower House, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

To the right of "The Forge" on Price's Lane is "Rose Cottage." It was designed and built by Will Price and Herbert Walton. Upon its completion, Will Walton and his new bride moved in. Will Walton worked under the tutelage of Will Price as a draughtsman in his architectural firm. Over the many years they worked together, Will Walton built numerous homes and contributed greatly to the life of Rose Valley.



Rose Cottage, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

Next to the Rose Cottage is a house that was the home of “Auntie Bess” Warrington, which was designed by Will Price and built in 1908. It was a central location for the activities of the Price and Walton families.



Auntie Bess, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

To the right of Auntie Bess, and on the corner of Price’s Lane and Rose Valley Road, is a house called “Rose Hedge.” It was originally an early 19th century farmhouse, but was remodeled in an Italianate style during 1906-07 by Walter Ferris Price, the brother of Will Price, who was also an architect. Walter Price and cousin Will Walton later formed the architectural firm Price & Walton.



Rose Hedge, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

After the Rose Valley Association failed to make a financial success out of its craft shops, the Rose Valley Improvement Company was formed from assets that were salvaged by Charles Schoen and McLanahan in 1910. The purpose of the company was to build five model homes that would serve to recuperate the economic fortunes of Will Price and his associates. The homes were designed by Will Price and built from 1911 to 1912. They used modern building materials such as hollow-fired ceramic block walls in addition to the iconic Rose Valley red roof tiles and stucco fashioned from Ridley Creek sand. They also incorporate Moravian tiles designed by Henry Chapman Mercer of Doylestown in both their exteriors and interiors. The Rose Valley Improvement Company houses are along Porter Lane and West Possum Hollow Road on the hill overlooking Artsman's Hall.



Rose Valley Improvement Company Houses #2 and #1, 4 & 2 Porter Lane

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015



Rose Valley Improvement Company House #3, 213 West Possum Hollow Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015



The back of the house next door, 217 West Possum Hollow Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

In the same neighborhood along West Possum Hollow Road as the Rose Valley Improvement Company Houses, is a large stone house known as “Glen Castle.” It was built by the architect Howell Lewis Shay in 1923 as his dream home.



Glen Castle

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

On the west side of Rose Valley Road opposite the entrance to Prices Lane is “Thunderbird Lodge.” The building was originally 1790s stone bank barn. Will Price converted the barn into studios in 1904 for the husband-and-wife artists Charles H. Stephens and Alice Barber Stephens after talking to them about their idea for an ideal working and living space. Thunderbird Lodge was featured widely in early 20th century design publications such as *Arts & Decoration*, *Town & Country*, and Gustav Stickley’s publication *The Craftsman*.

Alice Barber Stephens studied art with Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where she won the Mary Smith Prize in 1890. Her illustrations appeared in magazines such as *Scribner’s Monthly*, *Harper’s Weekly*, and *The Ladies Home Journal*. She also illustrated many books, including the 1903 edition of *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. She was one of the co-founders of The Plastic Club of Philadelphia, started in 1897 with fellow artist and educator Emily Sartain. It is the oldest continuously operating women’s art club. She was teaching at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women and working as an illustrator at the time it was founded.

Charles H. Stephens taught at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and specialized in painting scenes of the American West. He assembled a large collection of Native American art, particularly of the Blackfeet Nation in Montana. His collection was later given to the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Thunderbird Lodge is named for the legendary thunderbird of Native American lore. Stylized thunderbirds are evident in the tile work and masonry throughout the house.

Their son Daniel Owen Stephens moved with his parents to Rose Valley when he was a young boy. He was also an artist, and used a telescope on the tower observatory of Thunderbird Lodge to sketch the night sky. Even after attending classes at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, he focused his work on painting night skies, creating accurate and detailed renderings for private clients and institutions. He died at age 44 during an expedition to Peru with the American Museum of Natural History. He left behind his wife Lucie and their children in the house he designed next to Thunderbird Lodge along School Lane. In addition to astronomical work, he wrote and illustrated books, such as one on Quakers in France which was inspired by his work the Friends Service Committee during World War I.



Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015



More views of Thunderbird Lodge



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2015

Later, Thunderbird Lodge became the home of Allen Seymour and Mildred Scott Olmsted. They were leading activists who worked with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Friends Service Committee, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, as well as other organizations. Mildred Scott Olmsted was the head of the WILPF for over forty years. Thunderbird Lodge was a meeting place where the couple hosted Jane Addams, James Farmer, George Washington Carver, Bayard Rustin, and Martin Luther King, Jr.



Mildred Scott Olmsted Historical Marker on Rose Valley Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

After many years of planning and preparation, on October 28, 2017 Thunderbird Lodge was dedicated as the Rose Valley Museum. The Olmsted family trust gifted the building to the Rose Valley Centennial Foundation in 2015, which then partnered with the Rose Valley Museum and Historical Society to establish the museum within Thunderbird Lodge. In 2019, the museum received \$99,788 from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Keystone Historical Preservation Grant program to replace portions of the roof, exterior masonry, and stucco. The foundation was seeking a total of \$1 million for a thorough restoration of the structure.



Rose Valley Museum ribbon-cutting on October 28, 2017

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

Participants in the ribbon-cutting ceremony included several descendants of founding members of the Rose Valley community. On the right side of the entrance stood Loring Starr, a great granddaughter of Charles and Alice Barber Stephens. She grew up nearby on School Lane, but came down from her current home in New England. She was accompanied by her son, who stood with her. On the left side of the entrance representing the Price family was Museum President Morris Potter, grandniece of William Price, and her daughter Felicia. Standing with Morris Potter was Borough Manager Paula Healy, descendant of Rose Valley Furniture Shops

foreman John Maene. She was in the company of her niece, who was holding her infant son, a great great great grandson of John Maene.



Interior of the Rose Valley Museum at Thunderbird Lodge

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

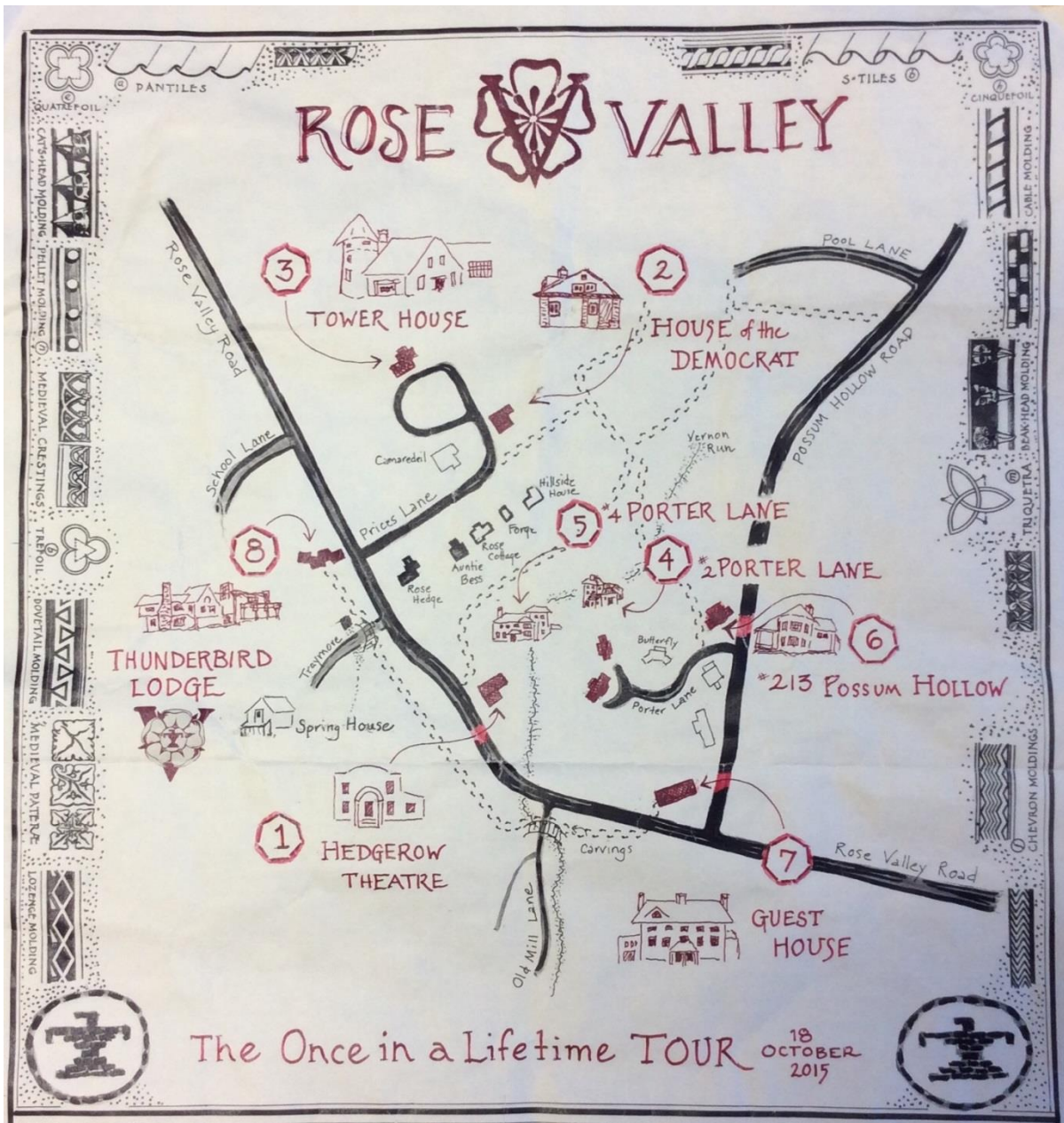
In the foreground of the photo of the Rose Valley Museum interior are (from left to right), Mary Jane Penzo, PhD candidate researching Rose Valley furniture; Morris Potter, Rose Valley Museum & Historical Society President; Trinity “Happy Dancing Feather” Norwood of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation of New Jersey, who blessed the museum at its opening; and Ryan Berley, Rose Valley Museum Curator.



Rose Valley Pottery

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

On display in the Rose Valley Museum are many items that were created in the Rose Valley Shops. Included among them is a display of Rose Valley pottery designed by an Englishman named William Percival Jervis. He was an author of several books on ceramics, who arrived at Rose Valley to great acclaim and took out a year's lease in the newly renovated Guild Hill starting in 1904. His studio is now the Green Room of Hedgerow Theatre. His pottery and glazes reflect the forms and colors of the lush vegetation of Rose Valley, but he did not put down roots in the community. After his lease was up he moved to Ohio, and Rose Valley Pottery ended its run.



Map of Rose Valley: The Once in a Lifetime Tour, 18 October 2015
 The Rose Valley Museum & Historical Association

Vernon Run

Vernon Run enters Ridley Creek near the Old Mill and close to the entrance to the Maurice & Adele Saul Nature Preserve. Vernon Run is named for the three Vernon brothers who received land grants from William Penn along this stretch of Ridley Creek in 1681. They arrived to claim their grants in 1682. Their land consisted of three adjacent parcels on the east side of Ridley Creek. From north to south, the parcels were allotted to Robert, Randal, and Thomas. A portion of the Providence Great Road was laid out along the eastern edge of their properties in 1684. The Borough of Rose Valley is within portions of all three of the Vernon land grants.

Two of the original houses built by the Vernon brothers still exist, but in modified form. Robert Vernon's house is on Old Mill Lane. Randal Vernon's house is on Rabbit Run. The site of the Thomas Vernon house is on the grounds of the Scott mansion in the Todmorden neighborhood of Rose Valley.



Randal Vernon House, Rabbit Run, Rose Valley
Home of Delaware County Court of Common Pleas Judge James Proud
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

By the time of the War of Independence, the Vernon family descendants were divided in their loyalties. Thomas Vernon's grandson Nathaniel was a Tory, and Nathaniel's brother Frederick was in the Continental army. Young Nathaniel, Jr. was also with the British in occupied Philadelphia. One night, while Frederick was on a visit to the family homestead, Nathaniel and his troops surrounded the house in order to take his brother prisoner and try to get him to join the Loyalist cause. As Nathaniel reached the top of the stairs, Frederick confronted him with a pistol and said he would only be captured as a dead man. At that, Nathaniel and his troops withdrew.



Olivia Vernon Mayes at Vernon Run
A Midwesterner on her first visit to her ancestral homeland in PA
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

South Media

Vernon Run has its source to the north in the South Media neighborhood of Nether Providence Township. It is first visible within Sapovitz Park.



Vernon Run emerges at Sapovitz Park



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Vernon Run flows under Wallingford Avenue and runs roughly parallel to it and then behind the tiny commercial center of Wallingford.



Vernon Run along Wallingford Avenue at intersection with Highland Avenue
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

It then flows under the SEPTA Media-Elwyn Commuter Rail tracks and along Possum Hollow Road until it enters the Borough of Rose Valley at Pool Lane.

Vernon Run flows past the Rose Valley Pool where it is joined by Minquas Run.

Minquas Run

Minquas Run traces its source to the South Media neighborhood of Nether Providence Township. It flows south through Moylan and passes under the SEPTA Media-Elwyn Commuter Rail tracks. Minquas Run then flows under Woodward Road.



Minquas Run flowing out from under Woodward Road, Wallingford
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



“Anne Hathaway House,” on Woodward Road near Minquas Run Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

There are actually two branches of Minquas Run. South of Woodward Road they flow parallel to each other to either side of an old trolley bed that is used as a walking trail.



Two branches of Minquas Run to either side of trail

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Trail on old trolley bed from the Rose Valley Pool to Woodward Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

The two branches of Minquas Run merge and then the combined flow enters Vernon Run near the Rose Valley Pool. The pool was built into the depression formed by the site of the mill pond that provided power to the Hutton Mill, which is now the Hedgerow Theatre. While a mill pond, the community enjoyed boating and skating on it. It became a swimming pool in 1925, replacing the Lotus Pond swimming hole.



Minquas Run at the Rose Valley Pool

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Minquas Run merges with Vernon Run at the 1926 footbridge

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Minquas Run is named for the Minquas Path, which was a fur-trading route that ran through the vicinity in the 17th century. “Minquas” was the pejorative name that the local Lenape people gave to the Susquehannocks, who were conducting the fur trade with the Swedes, Dutch, and English through Lenape territory.

Minquas Path

The major economic activity of the Dutch and the Swedes was trading various goods for beaver pelts with the Susquehannocks. By the middle of the 1600s, most of the beaver were gone from the lower Delaware River valley. Beaver pelts were brought along the Minquas Path from deeper in the interior along the Susquehanna River valley. The path started near the confluence of the Susquehanna River and Conestoga Creek and traveled across the Pequea Creek valley to the forks of the Brandywine. It went through Paoli, entered the Chester and Ridley Creek valleys through Middletown along the Edgmont Great Road at Forge Road. It proceeded to Bortondale Road on Old Middletown Road and went southwest to cross Fox Road and along south side of Long Point to Rose Valley and then across the Crum Creek valley and the rest of Delaware County to the Schuylkill at Fort Manayunk.



Minquas Path markers, Rose Valley Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

After its confluence with Minquas Run near the Rose Valley Pool, Vernon Run tumbles down the breached dam that once impounded the mill pond.



Vernon Run below the dam, Rose Valley

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Below the dam, Vernon Run flows through a wetland that was restored by the Borough of Rose Valley's Environmental Advisory Council and the Rose Valley Swim Club.



Vernon Run wetland restoration

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Old hydraulic infrastructure along Vernon Run



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Newer hydraulic infrastructure pertaining to sewer right-of-way along Vernon Run

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Hedgerow Theatre

Vernon Run then flows behind the former Hutton grist mill. Since 1923, the converted mill has been the home of the Hedgerow Theatre.

Thomas Hutton built his grist mill in 1840 to grind grain for the local farmers to produce feed for livestock and flour and meal for household use. He dammed Vernon Run to power his mill. The mill race is still visible, and the former mill pond is now occupied by the Rose Valley Pool. In 1847 the mill was converted into a turning mill and sandpaper factory and later it became a bobbin mill. Antrim Osborne bought it in 1879. He used it as a storehouse and a workshop where shipping cases were made for the woolens produced at the Rose Valley Mills just downstream at what is now The Old Mill.

The Hutton grist mill was converted into the “Artsman’s Hall” in 1901 at the founding of the Rose Valley Arts & Crafts community. It was a community center where art exhibitions, plays, and community meetings took place. On the second floor, the English potter William P. Jervis set up his studio in what became the Hedgerow Theatre green room. His ceramics bore the Rose Valley Shops mark from 1904 to 1905.



Hedgerow Theatre from Rose Valley Road

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Hedgerow Theatre from the back revealing its origins as a mill

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Jasper Deeter arrived in 1923 from New York City to establish the Hedgerow Theatre, the oldest independent repertory theatre in the country. The sculptor Wharton Esherick from Paoli had two daughters who took acting lessons here in exchange for furniture that he carved.



Wharton Esherick staircase
Hedgerow Theatre
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2015

Vernon Run flows under Rose Valley Road and then flows parallel to it for a short distance.

Vernon Run then passes under a stone bridge that carries Old Mill Lane across the stream. On each side of the bridge is a carved head of a Shakespeare character. They were carved by John Maene, who was a sculptor and the manager of the Rose Valley Shops. The heads make reference to the theatrical propensities of the early Rose Valley Arts & Crafts community.



Entrance to Old Mill Lane from Rose Valley Road
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Two sides of the Old Mill Lane bridge over Vernon Run

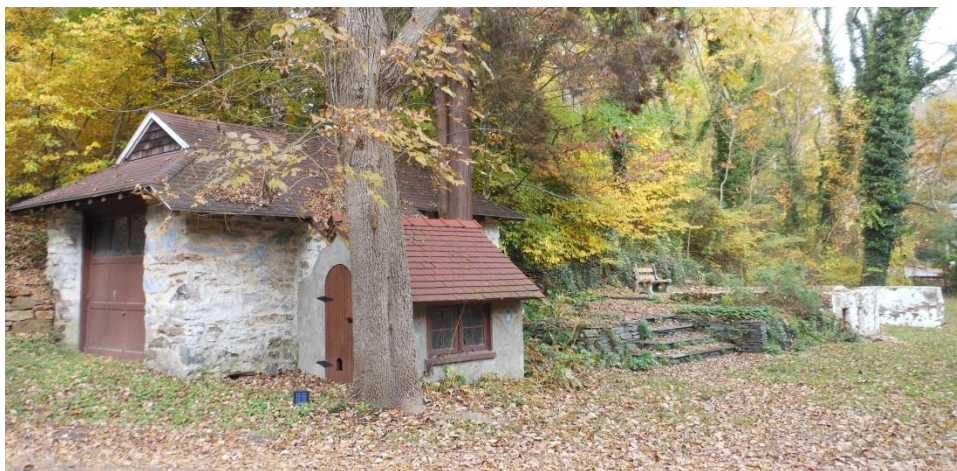
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Shakespearean faces on the Old Mill Lane bridge

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the other side of the bridge is a spring house that probably dates from the 1910s or 1920s. It has all the hallmarks of a Will Price structure, with a tiled roof, stuccoed walls, and formerly blue-green trim. Supposedly it provided cold storage for the residents of Thunderbird Lodge up the hill. There was also a house right next door to the spring house. Its foundation is still visible.



Spring house along Old Mill Lane near Vernon Run

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Vernon Run flows roughly parallel to Old Mill Lane towards Ridley Creek.



Vernon Run along Old Mill Lane

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Bishop White House

Along Old Mill Lane is the so-called Bishop White House. It was originally the house built by Robert Vernon dating from 1691. During the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, Bishop William White of Philadelphia sent his family here to escape the disease. Not only was William White the first Episcopal bishop of Pennsylvania, he had been chaplain of the Continental army during the Revolution and was chaplain of the Continental Congress until 1801. He ministered to the sick during the yellow fever epidemic and periodically rode his horse out to the Ridley Creek valley to check on the well-being of his family. He did so without getting off his horse. He waved to his family from the road in order to maintain their safe quarantine.



Robert Vernon/Bishop White House
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Portrait of William White by Charles Willson Peale, 1788
Gallery of the Second Bank of the United States, Philadelphia
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2016

Vernon Run passes by The Old Mill and enters Ridley Creek just downstream from the Maurice and Adele Saul Wildlife Sanctuary and Nature Preserve.



Vernon Run entering Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

E. Wallace Chadwick Long Point Wildlife Sanctuary



Long Point Wildlife Sanctuary

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Across Ridley Creek from the Saul Wildlife Sanctuary, is the E. Wallace Chadwick Long Point Wildlife Sanctuary. E. Wallace Chadwick had been a congressman, a judge, and a Rose Valley councilman. He donated thirteen acres to his community in 1972. The Long Point Wildlife Sanctuary consists of dry oak woods along the spine of a resistant Wissahickon Schist rock outcrop that has caused Ridley Creek to bend sharply here, hence the name Long Point. In addition to red and white oaks, there are also chestnut oaks here. There are also large specimens of American beech and tulip poplar. Mountain laurel and flowering dogwood comprise part of the understory.



Schist outcrop in the Long Point Wildlife Sanctuary

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Ridley Creek from the Long Point Wildlife Sanctuary
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Rose Valley Sewage Treatment Plant

On the west bank of Ridley Creek at the downstream end of Long Point is the Rose Valley Sewage Treatment Plant. Ridley Creek then briefly forms the boundary between Middletown Township and the Borough of Rose Valley once again. Between the creek and the neighborhood surrounding High Meadow Lane on the Middletown Township side is a stretch of riparian forest set aside as the High Meadows Open Space.

Sackville Mills - Todmorden - Lower Bank

As Ridley Creek leaves the Borough of Rose Valley, it forms the boundary between Brookhaven Borough and Nether Providence Township at the former site of Sackville Mills. In 1831, the Bancroft family established John Bancroft & Son woolen mill on this site, where there had been a snuff mill in the 1790s. John Bancroft called his operation the Lower Bank Mill.



Ridley Creek at Sackville

Sackville subdivision on left bank, legacy sediments from the mill era on right

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2014

The land here was originally part of Randal and Thomas Vernon's grant from William Penn. The core of the property was confiscated at the time of the Revolution because their descendent who lived on it was a Tory. It was a strategic spot known as Spy Hill, because at 240 feet above sea level it is high for the area. It was sold to Alexander Willcox as farmland in 1777. In 1787, Willcox leased the property to a Philadelphia tobacconist named Jacob Benninghove, or Benninghof. Despite not owning the land, Benninghove built a large house which later became known as Todmorden Hall. Benninghove also leased land belonging to Caleb Harrison which included the right to build a dam across Ridley Creek on the property's southwest corner. That is where he built the snuff mill.



Stone and wood remains of 18th century dam, Sackville



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2014

In 1831, Samuel Bancroft bought the land, the house, and the mill. He renamed the house Todmorden. That's a fox-hunting term, which means something like "The Death of the Fox" or "The End of the Hunt."

The Bancroft family was a major industrial presence on the lower Brandywine Creek as well as along Ridley Creek. In 1822, the devout Quaker John Bancroft (1771-1852) and his sons John (1802-1882) and Samuel (1804-1891) arrived in Wilmington from England and started a woolen mill along the Brandywine. Two years later a third son, Joseph (1803-1874), joined them after finishing his apprenticeship with an uncle in England. In 1831, the family established John Bancroft & Son woolen mill on the site of the 1790s snuff mill on Ridley Creek, which they called the Lower Bank Mill. In addition to the Lower Bank Mill, Samuel Bancroft owned mills farther up Ridley Creek that he called Middle Bank and Upper Bank. During the economic downturn following the Panic of 1837, the Bancrofts were forced to sell the mill house in 1842 during a sheriff's sale. When more prosperous times returned, Samuel Bancroft bought it back in 1854, by which time it had been renamed Todmorden Mills. By the 1870s it was one of the largest woolen mills in the United States. He owned it until 1889. Samuel Bancroft was a staunch abolitionist. Reportedly, Todmorden Hall has a network of underground tunnels and chambers that he built as part of the Underground Railroad.



19th century mill structures built into natural rock outcrop on the west side of Ridley Creek, Sackville

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2014



Young woodland and brush growing in mill pond silt, Sackville
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2014



Skating on the mill pond prior to 1970s dam washout
Photo: Diane Bastian, by way of Matt Kass

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the mill workers were predominantly immigrants from England, Scotland, and Ireland. Since it began producing textiles in the 1830s, it was a semi-autonomous mill community located in an isolated rural setting. In addition to the mills themselves, it had its own worker housing, store, church, and school. Home and work life

were intimately intertwined. The mill village centered around a three-story high brick mill building on the east side of the creek and a one-story mill building on the west side. The community was hierarchically arranged, with the unskilled workers living in row houses near the creek and around the mill and its associated machine shop and sheds at the center of the village. The skilled workers and foreman lived in single-family dwellings farther up the hillside. The overseer lived near the top of the hill, and the paternalistic mill owner lived at the very top where he had a view of the whole village.

Starting in 1900 and until World War I, increasing numbers of young Polish and Ukrainian immigrants arrived to work in the mills to start at the lower-level unskilled jobs. They found out about the jobs through their tight social and family networks. Some came directly from Europe through the port of Philadelphia to Columbia, which is what the mill village was called then. Some arrived at other nearby Polish and Ukrainian immigrant enclaves in Clifton Heights and Chester and were referred to this mill village along Ridley Creek, which readily welcomed newcomers and reminded them of their rural origins. Poland and Ukraine had only in the previous generation or so freed its serfs and granted them land. Young people from those countries were sent as wage earners to the new factories in Europe and ultimately to America to earn money to secure their family's land holdings. Some of them stayed in the countries to where they had emigrated and started families. At first, the Polish and Ukrainian workers lived in the older row houses along the west side of Ridley Creek. The British workers occupied newer row houses on the east side of the creek. The children from the two groups would have fights on the bridge. Following World War I, the mill village became an entirely an Eastern European community. From 1914 until 1940, Polish was the major language spoken. The British workers, who had been in the country longer and held skilled and supervisory positions, had left for better paying jobs during the wartime industrial expansion.

Between 1900 and 1925, the mills were at their peak and employed 300 people, many of them consisting of entire families whose work and social life centered around the rhythm of the mill shifts. The mill pond was a leisure time swimming hole and its shores were a good place for picnics. Children were not discouraged from playing in the mills. Employment was unsteady due to slack periods and lack of social mobility. Often the entire family need to work in the mills in order to get by. The children who played in the mills were soon working in them.

From 1900 until the 1950s, the mill was involved in all the operations for producing heavy woolen cloth, from carding to finishing. About one third of the workers were men and two thirds women. The operations were largely segregated by sex. Men did the carding and finishing and fixed the weaving machines. Women did the actual weaving, as well as the doffing and spinning that was done prior to weaving. Both men and women did the drawing.

In 1920, the mills were purchased by Herman Rudolph Sack, and that was when their name was changed to Sackville Mills. In the same year, Todmorden Hall and 131 of the surrounding acres were bought by Arthur Hoyt Scott, the inventor of the paper towel. He and his wife Edith restored the eighteenth century features of the house. They were devoted horticulturalists and had extensive plantings on their property. Arthur H. Scott was one of the founders of the American Peony Society and active in the American Iris Society. He produced many of his own hybrid varieties. Scott Arboretum at Swarthmore College is named after him, due to a generous bequest by his wife Edith after he died.

Sackville Mills continued to be a small mill village where work and home life were intimately intertwined until January 1934. At that time worker housing was permanently closed due to an anthrax outbreak. The infection was carried in from the wool used to weave rough

lining material produced at Sackville. The mills staid open, but the workers had to live elsewhere. Work and home life became distinct realms like they already were most other places by then, and Sackville lost its community atmosphere. The American born children of the immigrant generation were reaching adulthood by then anyway, and so it lost its identity as an independent immigrant community. This workplace transition had been taking place throughout the Philadelphia area. Following this transition, the mills' workers unionized in the 1940s.



Bridge over Ridley Creek between two Sackville Mill worker communities
Modern structure (left) and abutment of older structure (right)
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2014



Ridley Creek under the Sackville bridge Photo: Walt Cressler, 2014

By the early 1980s the workforce only consisted of twelve people in the finishing and shipping departments. Labor costs are what caused the mill's operations to leave Ridley Creek altogether for North Carolina. All mill operations ceased by the late date of 1992 and the site was sold and subdivided for a housing development called Sackville.



Sackville Subdivision

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2014

The 18th century dam at Sackville had long been breached, and then buried by the sediment of the nineteenth century dam. It was only revealed by erosional downcutting through the silt buildup once the nineteenth century dam was washed away in a flood during the 1970s. It was not until the early twenty-first century that migratory fish could swim unimpeded this far up Ridley Creek, when the two remaining downstream dams were removed. The dam at Irving Mill was removed in 2004 and the one at Taylor Arboretum was removed in 2005. Evidence of the return of migratory fish was revealed following a storm in 2014 when Matt Kass found a gizzard shad washed up along Ridley Creek near his house on the west bank at Sackville.



Gizzard shad at Sackville
Photo: Matt Kass, 2014

On the Brookhaven side of Ridley Creek at Sackville is the Summit Swim Club and Scott Park, which consists mainly of baseball diamonds. These recreational facilities are associated with the Cambridge Square subdivision of the Borough of Brookhaven.

The Cambridge Square subdivision is adjacent to the Cambridge Estates subdivision, which lies to its southwest. During the 19th century, Cambridge Estates was the site of one of the many stock farms that industrialist John P. Crozer consolidated in the area. He bred racehorses and prize bulls on these farms, and had them driven down the Edgmont Great Road (PA Route 352) to the stockyards in Chester when they were ready for sale.

Before passing under Brookhaven Road, Ridley Creek flows past the Ohev Shalom Cemetery and then upon emerging from under Brookhaven Road it flows parallel to Waterville Road.

Borough of Brookhaven

Brookhaven Road was laid out in 1816 in order to join Hinkson's Corners on the Providence Great Road (Providence Road, PA Route 252) with the mills on Ridley Creek and to further join with the Edgmont Great Road, thus traversing the entire Ridley Creek watershed. The Edgmont Great Road (PA Route 352, generally known as Middletown Road) is known as Edgmont Avenue through the Borough of Brookhaven. Brookhaven Road continues across the Borough of Brookhaven to the site of the Bridgewater Mills on Chester Creek. The crossroads formed by Brookhaven Road and Edgmont Avenue was once known as Sneath's Corners, and also Beatty's Corners. The earliest known use of the name Brookhaven appears to have been in 1872 from letterhead used by the Beatty Brothers General Store which was at the crossroads. The Borough of Brookhaven was incorporated in 1945.

Hinkson's Corners

Hinkson's Corners is at the crossroads of Brookhaven Road with the Providence Great Road (Providence Road, PA Route 252) at the eastern edge of the Ridley Creek watershed. In December of 1847, Hinkson's Corners was the site of a meeting of local mill workers who signed a resolution denouncing long work hours as "injurious to children" and of depriving women of "the opportunity of acquiring the necessary knowledge of domestic duties." Their resolution and similar agitation elsewhere in the state led to the Pennsylvania state legislature passing a law the following year that limited the work day to ten hours in factories that manufactured goods made from cotton, wool, flax, paper, or glass.



Two views of Ridley Creek from Brookhaven Road bridge;
Upstream (left) and downstream towards Waterville Road (right)
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Franklin Iron Works

Along Ridley Creek near Waterville Road in Nether Providence Township was the site of the Franklin Iron Works. It was first listed in the tax rolls in 1795 and by the time of the 1826 county mill report was rolling 200 to 300 tons of iron each year. Later the Beatty family took over the works for their Edge Tool Factory, which then moved to Crum Creek in 1848. Perhaps after that time, the operation on Ridley Creek became known as Johnson's Edge Tool Factory.

On the opposite southwestern bank are the Texas Eastern Pipeline Tract and the Decon Buildings Open Space.

Hinksons Run

Ridley Creek flows past the northern tip of the tiny Borough of Parkside and the Parkside Woodlot not far from Parkside Elementary School. The small tributary of Hinksons Run originates near the school and flows out of the southwest along Park Valley Lane and enters Ridley Creek at the upstream end of Chester Park.

Borough of Parkside

The Borough of Parkside was created from a portion of Chester Township in 1919 through a decree signed by Judge Isaac Johnson. It offered municipal services not available in the township and promised a more suburban lifestyle in contrast to the urban living of Chester. Two farms were subdivided in the 1920s to create Parkside. The Lukens farm was developed by the Norfolk Development Company and the Kelly farm was developed by the Parkside Real Estate and Improvement Company. The property belonging to A.N. Peoples became Parkside Elementary School, which is now part of the Penn-Delco School District.

After touching upon Parkside Borough and the confluence with Hinksons Run, Ridley Creek forms the boundary between Nether Providence Township and the City of Chester. On the Chester side is Chester Park and on the Nether Providence side is Taylor Arboretum.

Chester Park



Entrance to Chester Park trail

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Chester Park includes a paved trail along Ridley Creek beneath a gallery of large oak trees. The park continues up a steep slope from the creek, at the top of which are playing fields, a playground, and a utility barn and shed. The Texas Eastern Pipeline passes under Ridley Creek and through the park.



Chester Park facilities

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Bridge across Ridley Creek, Chester Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Ridley Creek in Chester Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Gneiss outcrop in Ridley Creek, Chester Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Trail in Chester Park along Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Taylor Arboretum



Taylor Arboretum entrance, offices, and maintenance truck
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

The 30-acre Taylor Arboretum is enclosed within a meander bend of Ridley Creek, which turns back sharply on itself three times in this jigsaw puzzle-like border area between Chester and Nether Providence. The arboretum was established in 1931 by a Chester lawyer named Joshua C. Taylor (1873-1946) in memory of his wife Ann Rulon Gray after she died of cancer. She was a descendent of the Sharpless family. In 1914, he had purchased the property along the creek that was used by the Sharpless family for industrial purposes for generations. The ruins of their 1828 estate are still visible, consisting of a post, wall, and steps. The house was occupied by Joshua C. Taylor's sister, followed by her son, until it burned in the 1980s. After that, the ruins and the plot within which they were situated became part of the arboretum. The dam that provided power to the Sharpless mills was removed in 2005 as part of a project spearheaded by the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association under the leadership of executive director Anne Murphy.



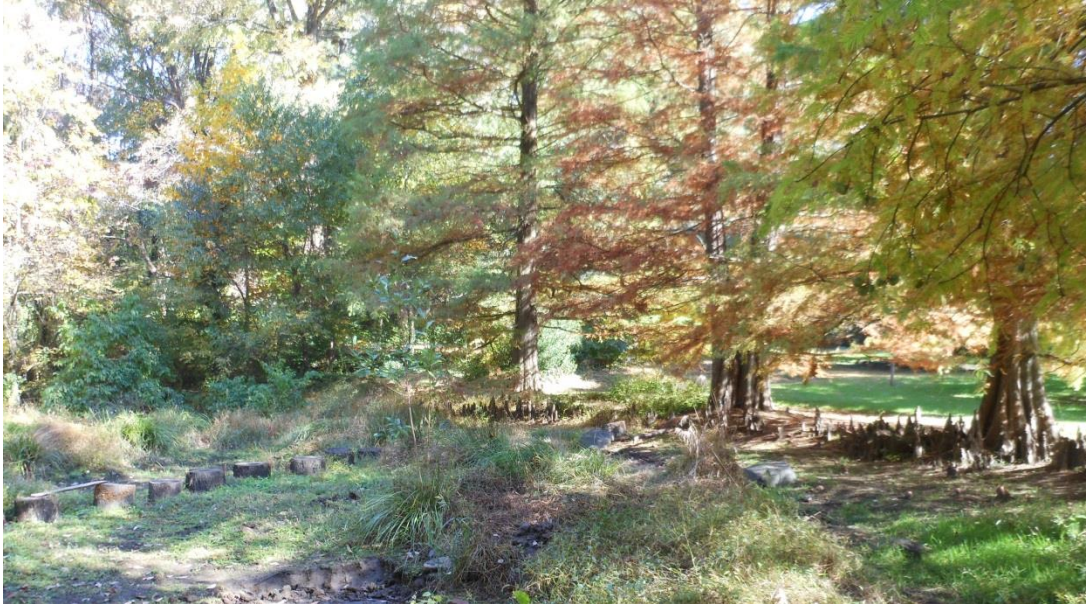
Remains of Sharpless estate, Taylor Arboretum



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

Taylor Arboretum has three state champions within its borders. It has the largest examples within Pennsylvania of giant dogwood, Korea juniper, and lacebark elm. Within the

arboretum, the floodplain alongside Ridley Creek is planted with an assortment of trees, including willow, water oak, and southern white oak. There are extensive plantings of dogwoods, magnolias, and hollies. Bald cypress grows near a vernal pond. There is a grove of western red cedar, and planting experiments of coast redwoods was begun in the early 2010s. A cooperative partnership with the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. involved the plantings of some southeastern U.S. plants.



Bald cypress trees in Taylor Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Experimental coast redwood plantings, Taylor Arboretum

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Taylor Arboretum had been held in trust by the Taylor Foundation since the 1946 death of Joshua C. Taylor. It was open to the public in 1951 under the management of the Academy of

Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Most of the plantings occurred between 1950 and 1960 under the supervision of the Academy's curator of experimental botany and horticulture William Holmes "Red" Camp. The Natural Lands Trust supervised the arboretum in the beginning of the 21st century. Tom Kirk began his job as resident manager in 2001. Under the leadership of Widener environmental science professor Steve Madigosky, responsibility for Taylor Arboretum was acquired by Widener University when they took over the trust from BNY Mellon in 2016. The arboretum is a valuable educational resource used by the university in the areas of biodiversity and sustainability. For example, biology professor Bruce Grant and his students have studied the moth diversity at Taylor Arboretum as sensitive indicators of climate change.

Next to Taylor Arboretum are the practice fields of the Philadelphia Union professional soccer team.

Waterville Mills

At the downstream end of Taylor Arboretum, Ridley Creek bends sharply from flowing towards the southeast to flowing towards the northwest. In the midst of this bend, a high bridge carries the Chestnut Parkway over the creek.



Bridge over Ridley Creek, Chestnut Parkway

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

This is also the site of several former mills, many of which were held by the Sharpless family who were descended from the earliest English inhabitant of Nether Providence Township, John Sharpless. The Sharpless family operated mills here from 1740 until 1882. The mills were referred to as the Waterville Mills, and at one time or another consisted of grist and saw mills, the Sharpless Cotton Factory and the Sharpless Dye Works. The dye works moved to Chester in 1878.

Wolley Stille

Nearby, at 802 Harvey Road, is the location of the original home of John Sharpless, named Wolley Stille. John Sharpless arrived in 1682 aboard the *Friendship*, and claimed his grant of 1000 acres from William Penn. He arrived with his wife Jane and the six of seven children who survived the voyage. The Sharpless family turned out to be a prolific one through the generations, but they started in Pennsylvania here. At first they built a cabin with a large rock outcrop serving as the back of the fireplace. The Sharpless Rock is still there, with the initials J.S. and 1682 carved into it. In 1683, he began building a larger house, but died in 1685 before he could complete it. His son Joseph finished it in 1700. John Sharpless had help in building his house from a Swedish immigrant that he had befriended, Olaf Stille, who had arrived aboard the *Kalmar Nickel* in 1641 during the time of the New Sweden colony. He had a plantation further downstream on Ridley Creek in what is now the Borough of Eddystone. He also died around the year 1685.

Betty Run

After flowing beneath the viaduct carrying the Chestnut Parkway, Ridley Creek bends toward the southeast again, and is soon joined by Betty Run from the north. Betty Run is a typographical error perpetuated by the U.S. Geological Survey on contemporary maps. Old maps indicate that the stream is named Beatty Run, after the local industrial family.

Strath Haven High School

Betty Run originates behind Strath Haven High School. It is the public high school within the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District.



The Betty Run valley (to the right) behind Strath Haven High School
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

As Betty Run makes its way in a southeasterly direction, for much of its course it has the appearance of a suburban drainage ditch. South of Strath Haven High School it wends its way through residential neighborhoods of Nether Providence Township. It passes under Rose Valley Road and flows roughly parallel to Providence Road, which lies to the east of the stream.



Betty Run at Rose Valley Road and Cedar Lane (left) and at Meadow Lane (right)
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

St. John Chrysostom Church

Betty Run flows south past the rear of the St. John Chrysostom Church on Providence Road.



Betty Run at Morris Lane behind St. John Chrysostom Church
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Grace Bible Church

Betty Run flows further south past the rear of the Grace Bible Church on Providence Road.

Holy Trinity Church

Betty Run continues to flow south behind the Holy Trinity Church on Providence Road.

A small unnamed tributary of Betty Run enters from the northwest where it has a source north of Nether Providence Elementary School. It passes through the Garden City neighborhood not far from the ballfields of Hepford Park before entering Betty Run.

Houston Park

Betty Run flows through Houston Park before entering Ridley Creek. Houston Park is part of the former estate of Howard H. Houston, who was mayor of Chester between 1902 and 1906. He had also been director of the Chester and Media Electric Railway. An abandoned stone gateway with a 1921 date is visible along Providence Road, and an ornate stone bridge crosses Betty Run on the former approach to the estate. The ruins of a springhouse are next to the bridge. The estate is still a private residence. The wooded portion includes some large American beech and oak trees. Spicebush, rhododendron, and witch hazel grow in the understory. A great deal of the ground cover consists of English ivy and pachysandra.



Former gateway to the Houston estate along Providence Road
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Ridley Creek flows under a fine stone bridge, Houston Park
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Stone structures in Houston Park

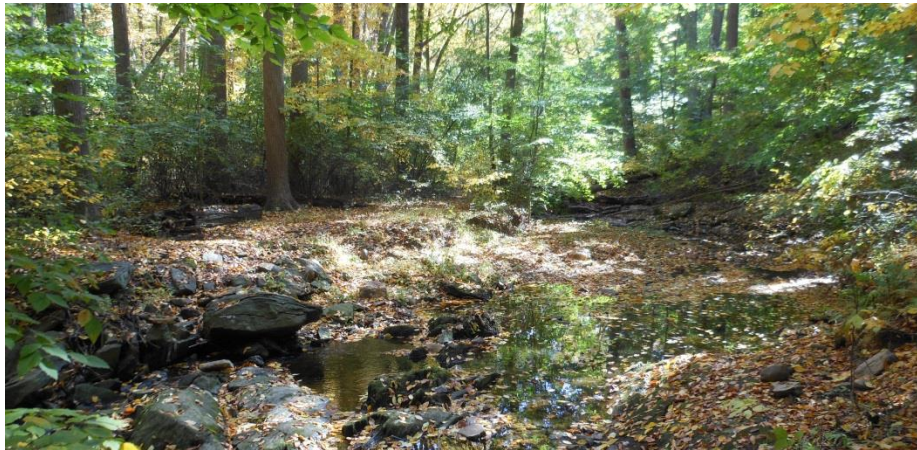


Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Circular wall around a beech tree, Houston Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Bucolic aspect of Betty Run, Houston Park

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Part of Houston Park includes the Robert Urban Recreational Fields, the soccer and baseball fields of the Nether Providence Athletic Association dedicated in 2003. Bob Urban was involved in youth sports in Nether Providence for more than 35 years, including 28 years (1970-1998) as NPAA Soccer President. Through his efforts Nether Providence Township became nationally known as a soccer powerhouse with its many Olympic Development Program players and state high school championship teams.

The Nether Providence Athletic Association began in 1960 after a failed attempt to obtain an official Little League franchise for Nether Providence Township from the national organization in Williamsport, PA. The NPAA program officially began in May of 1961 when 12 baseball teams were fielded, for boys between the ages of 8 to 12. During the first season's opening day on the newly created Summit School ball field on Plush Mill Road, "American Bandstand" host and Wallingford resident Dick Clark was the emcee for the event. The baseball

program expanded over the years. In 1965, Bill Spock founded the NPAA soccer program. Two years later, Bob Urban joined the program and in the next 35 years developed it into one of the most successful in the country. NPAA also has programs for basketball and wrestling.



Robert Urban Recreational Fields

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Turner Cotton Lap Factory

The eastern edge of the park is along Providence Road, which is designated PA Route 320 at this point. This is also where William and Richard Turner operated a cotton lap factory along Ridley Creek here.

Governor Printz Bridge



Providence Road goes over Ridley Creek at Governor Printz Bridge
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Providence Road is carried over Ridley Creek by a high bridge. It is called the Governor Printz Bridge in honor of the governor of the 17th century colony of New Sweden. A plaque on the bridge reads:

*Governor Printz Bridge
A Memorial*

To the Swedish colonists who made the first settlement of this Commonwealth, at Upland, now Chester, A.D. 1641. The first main public highway of this colony, connecting the several Swedish settlements and their seat of government under Lieut. Col. John Printz, at Tennekonk – now Tinicum, Delaware County – crossed the Ridley Creek at a ford just east of this bridge.



Ridley Creek to the east viewed from Governor Printz Bridge
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Springhaven Country Club

To the north on Providence Road is the Springhaven Country Club. Most of the Springhaven Country Club lies within the Ridley Creek watershed even though its northeast edge overlooks the Crum Creek valley. It lies between the drainages of Betty Run and an unnamed tributary of Ridley Creek that flows through the Sproul Estates.



Club house of the Springhaven Country Club

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2016



View of the course from the clubhouse windows during an impending storm, Springhaven Country Club
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2019



Golf cart fleet, Springhaven Country Club

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2016

On its last bend towards the northeast after passing under Providence Road, Ridley Creek flows through some open space set aside by the Irvington Civic Association.

Sproul Estates



View of George Leiper's "Lapidea" with William Cameron Sproul's ballroom addition on the right
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

South of Bullens Lane, a small tributary enters Ridley Creek from the north where it originates in the Sproul Estates subdivision. The unnamed tributary has its source on the grounds of the original estate first established by George Leiper that he had named "Lapidea," and then was subsequently owned by William Cameron Sproul. Sproul purchased the land while a state senator and moved into the refurbished Lapidea Mansion in 1909 from his previous home in Chester. Sproul made additions to the Georgian-style manor that had been built by George Leiper nearly a century earlier in 1818. Sproul added a ballroom on the east side and a multi-story library in the back.



Portrait of George Gray Leiper by S.B. Waugh, ca. 1861
Image: Thomas W. Leiper, Stamford, CT

George Leiper (1786-1868) was a son of Thomas Leiper, the Crum Creek snuff mill and quarry owner and associate of the nation's founders. George took over his father's enterprises shortly after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1803. During the War of 1812 he was a first lieutenant in the Delaware County Fencibles and was part of the forces gathered at Camp DuPont and later at Camp Gaines in Marcus Hook to defend the Delaware River approach to Philadelphia when it was threatened by the British army and navy in the fall of 1814. During 1818, the year he moved into Lapidea, he also defrayed the cost of construction for the Leiper Presbyterian Church in Ridley Township. The church was an outgrowth of the Sunday school he established at his home in 1811, the first in Delaware County. He was a director of the Delaware County National Bank intermittently starting in 1814. He also dedicated part of his life to public service. While a member of the state legislature from 1822 to 1823, he advocated for an appropriation to support the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in Philadelphia. He was subsequently elected the institution's director, and re-elected to its board every year until his death. In 1824, he was one of those appointed to represent Delaware County at the reception in honor of the return of the Marquis de Lafayette. He served in the Twenty-First Congress as a Jacksonian Democrat elected in 1828, but the president couldn't convince him to run for re-election after his first term. He decided instead to focus on his personal affairs. At that time, George Leiper was finally fulfilling his father Thomas's dream of building a canal from the Leiper quarries to the Delaware River. During the canal boom of the 1820s, there was only one canal constructed within any of the Chester, Ridley, or Crum watersheds. It was built by George Leiper between 1824 and 1828 to haul stone from the Leiper quarries and other goods down the otherwise unnavigable Crum Creek valley. His father Thomas Leiper, had unsuccessfully requested permission from the Pennsylvania General Assembly to build a canal as early as 1791. The request was denied because of the objections of other mill owners. With his successful completion of the canal, George Leiper expected to be occupied with a great increase in output from the quarries. However, the canal failed to even pay for itself. His public career continued in 1843 when Governor David Rittenhouse Porter appointed him Associate Judge of the Courts of Delaware County. He was re-appointed by Governor Francis Shunk, but chose to retire from public life in 1851 when the new state constitution made judgeships elective offices. He died at Lapidea in 1868.



Detail of the 1848 Ash map (north to the right)

In the 1848 Ash map, George G. Leiper's 1818 structure is shown between the N and the P of the words Nether Providence. The unnamed tributary that flows from behind his Lapidea manor to the sharp bend in Ridley Creek is clearly shown. It appears also that the mill community along Crum Creek in Ridley Township is referred to as "Lapidea." On the Barnes

map of 1868 they are called Leiper Mills. Note also that the Ridley Creek tributary that is called Betty Run on modern maps is called by its original correct name Beatty's Run on this map.



William Cameron Sproul as State Senator

Image: One Hundred Years: The Delaware County National Bank, Chester, PA, 1814-1914

William Cameron Sproul (1870-1928) was a Pennsylvania state senator from 1897 until 1919, when he became governor of Pennsylvania and served in that capacity from 1919 until 1923. He was born in Lancaster County. After his childhood years there and in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, his family moved to Chester where he graduated from Chester High School in 1887. He then continued his education at Swarthmore College, graduating in 1891. Right after college, he entered the world of publishing. He owned half-interest and was president of the *Chester Daily Times* and the *Morning Republican*. He held many interests and occupied key positions in numerous other enterprises in mining, manufacturing, banking, iron, railroads, and farming. For example, he was the president of the Chester Shipping Company, the Ohio Valley Electric Railway Company, the Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Railroad Company, and the General Refractories Company. In addition, he was a director of the First National Bank of Chester, the Delaware County National Bank, the Delaware County Trust and Title Insurance Company, the Commercial Trust Company of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia, Baltimore & Washington Railroad Company, and the American Railways Company. In 1898 he married Emeline Roach, daughter of Chester shipbuilder John Roach. Also that year, he became the vice-president of the Delaware River Iron Shipbuilding and Engine Works, otherwise known as "Roach's Shipyard." He resigned that position a year later to organize the Seaboard Steel Casing Company. As a trustee of Swarthmore College, in 1906 he personally funded the purchase of astronomical equipment by the institution, including a photographic telescope, and a 24-inch

research telescope housed in the new Sproul Observatory named for him. He also became president of the Union League in Philadelphia.

His work in journalism led to a career in politics. He served in the Pennsylvania state senate from 1897 to 1919. He sponsored the Sproul Highway Act of 1911 and became known as “the father of good roads” in Pennsylvania. This was legislation that created the state highway system, which was built and maintained by the state. As a result, many previously dirt roads, especially around towns and cities such as in southeastern Pennsylvania, became paved in the next decade. Suburban development followed.

In April of his first year as governor, William Cameron Sproul declared two Arbor Days. Thousands of trees were planted to commemorate the war dead of World War I, and to replenish the state’s forests after an intense several decades of industrial logging. Sproul State Forest in the north-central part of the state is named after him. His actions as governor also brought relief to disabled war veterans, expanded public education, and saw the creation of the Department of Public Welfare. He also oversaw the peaceful resolution of the steel strike of 1919 and the coal strike of 1922. He was the chair of the Delaware River Bridge Joint Commission which planned the construction of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge between Philadelphia and Camden, New Jersey, and was completed in 1926. William Cameron Sproul was offered the nomination to be Warren G. Harding’s running mate in 1920, which he turned down. If he had accepted the nomination for vice president, he would have become president rather than Calvin Coolidge following Harding’s death in office.



Rear of Lapidea Mansion, showing remnants of the Sproul additions.

Glimpse of ballroom wing on left, multistory library at rear reduced to foundation level by subsequent owners Ruth & Lewis Smith for tax reduction purposes; (Bentley the dog at lower left)

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

After Sproul died as a millionaire without a will in 1928, his property and the adjacent parcel belonging to Callender I. Leiper were purchased by a developer and the new subdivision of Lapidea Hills was formed in 1929. Callender I. Leiper was a grandson of Thomas Leiper through George's brother Samuel. He operated the quarries after his father Samuel died. Among the features of the new subdivision that were promoted was close proximity to the Springhaven Country Club and three-story stone Colonial-style homes with terraced porches, two-car garages, and maid's quarters with a bath. As more roads were built after World War II, the subdivision expanded and adopted the name Sproul Estates in the 1950s. The detached single family homes of this expanded subdivision were built mainly between 1951 and 1963 and have a median lot size of one-third of an acre. Apparently the last people to retain ownership of all of the original Sproul buildings and much of the property were Lewis and Ruth Smith.



Homes built for the 1950s Sproul Estates subdivision along Brent Drive

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

In addition to Lapidea, there are at least four other surviving buildings in the Sproul Estates from the days of William Cameron Sproul. The oldest even pre-dates the Leiper family. It is the Lapidea Cottage, which has a date stone from 1737. This Georgian-style stone house may have been part of the property of Hugh Lloyd, who owned the grist and saw mills that were sold to Thomas Leiper in 1808. It became a tenant house to the neighboring Leiper mansion "Lapidea" after that was built in 1818. The cottage was intensively remodeled during the same 1890 – 1900 period as the turn of the twentieth century establishment of the Sproul estate, which included the major additions to the 1818 Leiper mansion and the construction of a springhouse/laundry and a stable/garage. Among other features, the cottage received a "T" addition in the back, Elizabethan window treatments with casements and diaper mullions, shed dormers, terra cotta chimney pots, and a pedimental front porch.



Lapidea Cottage

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

The building which served as the springhouse and laundry was built by architect Clarence Wilson Brazer for William Cameron Sproul and was designed to match the Georgian-style architecture of the cottage. Its neo-Georgian-style departs from the characteristic symmetry of the original Georgian building, though. The springhouse had a system for separating the dirty water from the clean water and was connected to the elaborate headwater network of the unnamed tributary of Ridley Creek. In the vicinity of the springhouse, the stream is reinforced with stone drawn from nearby sources.



Signature of Wm. C. Sproul on a plank from the springhouse/laundry

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

Laura Hebler is the early twenty-first century resident of Lapidea Cottage. She uses the upper floor of the springhouse/laundry as her ceramic studio. While puttering around there, she found a piece of paneling that has what appears to be the signature of William Cameron Sproul. The handwriting matches his signature on surviving official documents.



Springhouse/Laundry next to Lapidea Cottage

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Interior views of the Lapidea Springhouse/Laundry



Photos: Walt Cressler, 2017



Reinforced stream next to Sproul springhouse/laundry, an unnamed tributary of Ridley Creek
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

The springhouse/laundry drains by a pipe to the unnamed tributary which is reinforced in this section by slabs of the local schist. The sides of the stream have stone stacked to form vertical walls. The bed of the stream has slabs placed on end so the edges form a corduroy-like effect. It is unclear whether this engineering effort was more for the aesthetics or for practical purposes, but in any case the natural ecosystem has been dramatically altered.

William Cameron Sproul's stable and garage that he also had built around 1909 has since been converted into a fine residence located on Austin Court. The impressive stable and garage is said to have originally been designed by the architect Will Price, the founder of the Rose Valley Arts and Crafts community located farther up the Ridley Creek valley. The stable/garage has a clock tower, which is an unusual feature for such a structure. The clockworks in its tower were sold by the Smiths to a buyer in Germany.

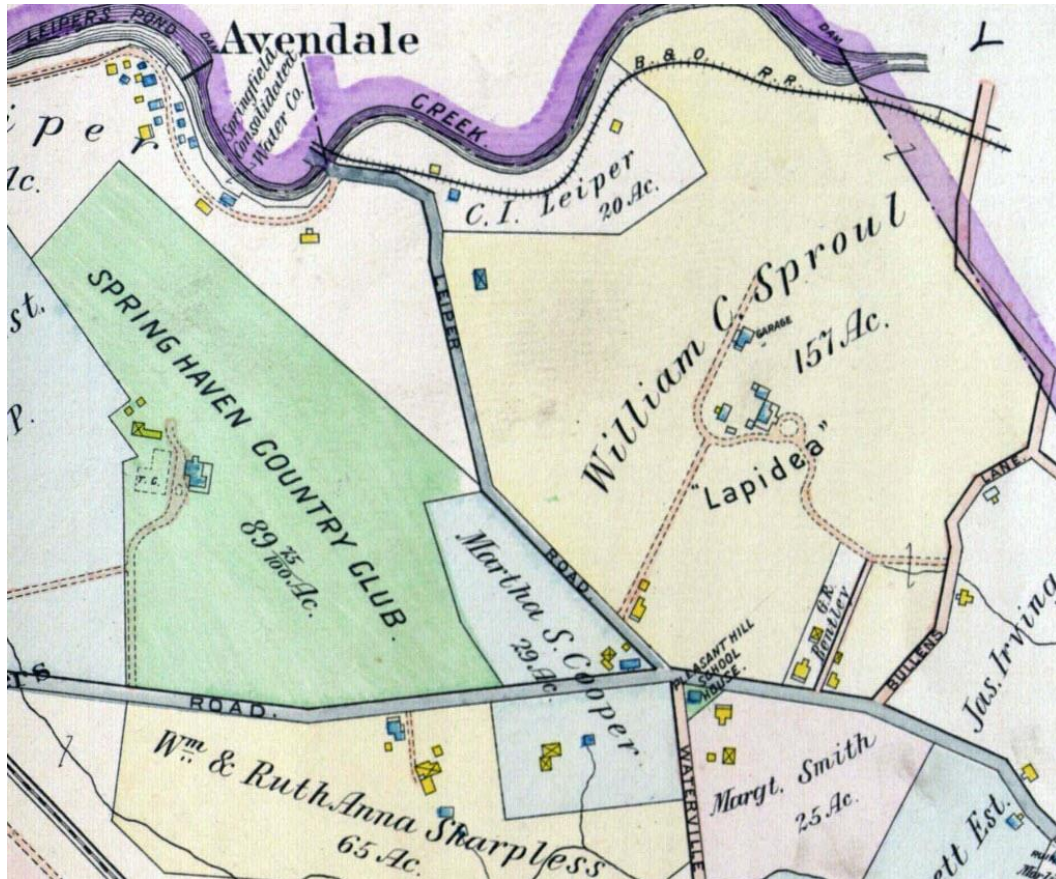


Two views of the Sproul stable/garage

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012 (top) and 2017 (bottom)



One of the four horse stalls in the Sproul stable garage
 Shirley and Ed Mitrovich converted this one into their dining room
 Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Detail of 1909 Mueller map showing W.C. Sproul estate and adjacent properties

The 1909 Mueller map shows all the still existing stone buildings from William Cameron Sproul's estate indicated in blue. This includes the Lapeia Mansion, the cottage, the springhouse/laundry, and the garage. In addition, it appears there were a couple of frame gatehouse structures indicated in yellow at the entrance to the drive off of what is now Chester Road but is labelled Leiper Road on the map. The driveway to the estate is now called Sproul Lane. The frame structures were in the same location as the current Congregation Ohev Shalom synagogue.



Sproul estate bridge on Sproul Lane, spanning the unnamed tributary
The rear of the Congregation Ohev Shalom synagogue is behind the distant screening hedge
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

William and Emeline Sproul had one child, Dorothy Wallace Sproul. Her parents built a house for Dorothy and her husband Laurence Price Sharples on the grounds of the Lapeia estate. The house is one of the larger residences in the Sproul Estates subdivision and is visible from Brent Drive.



The former Dorothy Sproul house
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017



Aerial view of the Sproul estate, ca. 1930s
Image: courtesy of Laura Hebler

An aerial photograph of the Sproul estate hangs on the wall of Lapidea Cottage. It appears to date from either the late 1920s or early 1930s, since there is no sign of any subdivision of the property. The Lapidea mansion, the cottage, and the springhouse are obscured by a cluster of trees in the center of the photograph. Just in front of them is visible the line of the reinforced stream, with a row of tall, thin trees planted along it. The entrance drive, now and possibly then called Sproul Lane, enters from the bottom right corner. Daughter Dorothy's house is clearly visible in the mid-distance, left of center. It backs onto a large open field.

As the reinforced stream flows south, at some point the stonework on its bed and margins ends. The stream continues to flow parallel to Brent Drive. Both Brent Drive and Austin Court are reportedly named for sons of Ruth and Lewis Smith, the last substantial landowners before the major subdivision of the property. Brent Drive runs along the same route as Sproul's access road to Bullens Lane, and may even date to a cart path used by George Leiper. A beautiful stone bridge spans the stream in its lower portion. It appears to date from the same period as the other structures built for William Cameron Sproul.



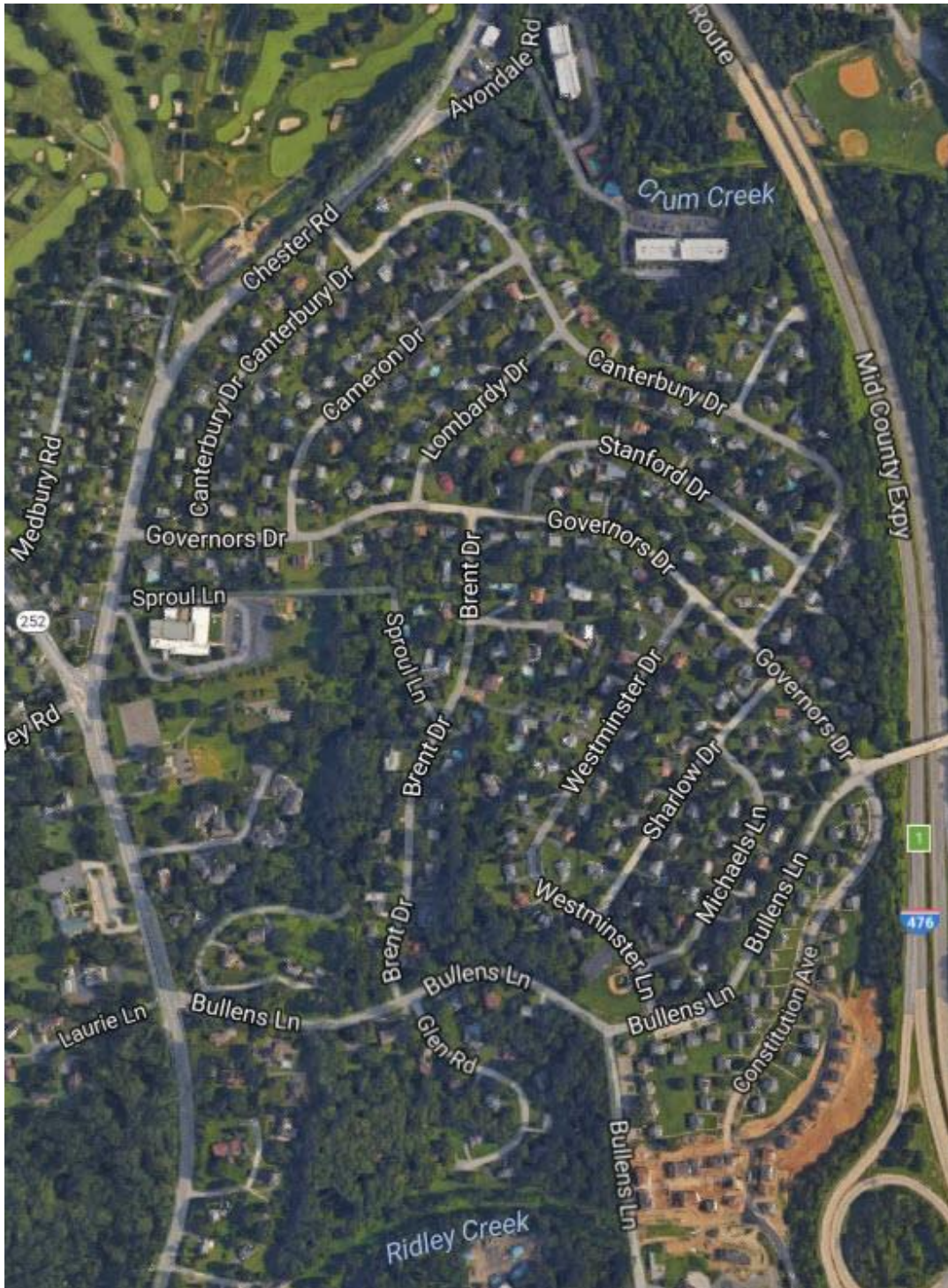
“Bridge to Nowhere” near Brent Drive, Sproul Estates

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2017

From the bridge, the unnamed tributary continues for a few hundred more feet until it passes under Bullens Lane. It continues through a heavily wooded residential section at the southern end of Nether Providence Township until it meets up with Ridley Creek.

Leiper Railway

Thomas Leiper’s animal-drawn rail tramway designed by engineer John Thomson was the first commercial railroad in the United States. It began operating in 1809. It carried Leiper quarry stone and other goods down the Crum Creek valley and across to a navigable portion of Ridley Creek where it was loaded onto barges for shipment to Philadelphia. A historical marker for the “Leiper Railroad” was posted along Bullens Lane in the valley of the unnamed tributary that flows out of the Sproul Estates.



Sproul Estates subdivision

Image: Google, 2017

In the satellite view of the Sproul Estates subdivision, the unnamed tributary of Ridley Creek is visible as a wooded corridor starting at Sproul Lane and running parallel along the west side of Brent Drive. The large white and gray roofed structure at the west end of Sproul Lane is the Congregation Ohev Shalom synagogue.

Irvington Mills

Once Ridley Creek definitively bends toward the south where it forms the border between the City of Chester and Ridley Township, it flows past the site of the old mill community of Crosbyville and then the site of the Irvington Mills on the Chester side at the end of 25th Street. This mill complex at the head of tide on Ridley Creek once produced cotton and woolen goods. In the early 21st century, the remaining mill building is rented for a plumbing business and art and music studios.



Two views of Irvington Mill

Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012

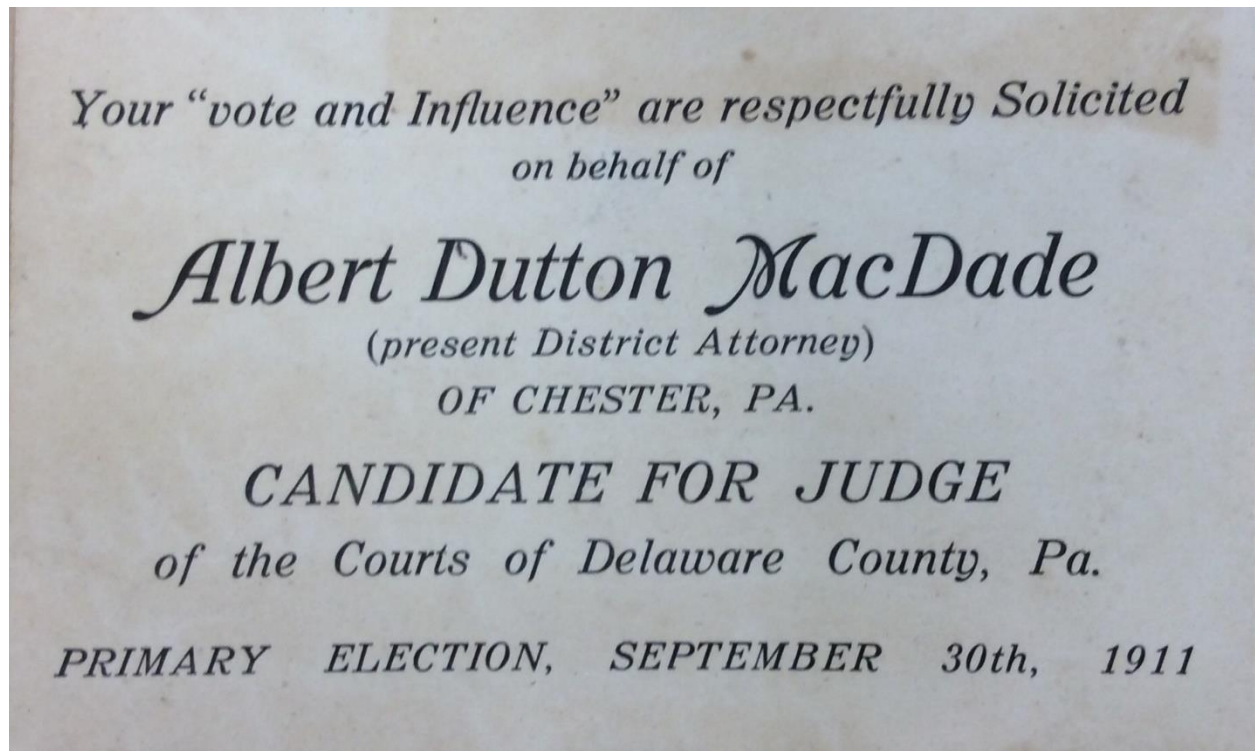
The dam associated with the Irvington Mills was removed in 2004 as part of a project spearheaded by the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association under the leadership of Anne Murphy.

Just downstream from Irvington Mills, Ridley Creek flows beneath McDade Boulevard. From here downstream, Ridley Creek experiences the tidal influence and an influx of fish species that typically inhabit the Delaware River and avoid the upper reaches of the stream. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has done surveys that revealed channel catfish ranging in size from 15 to 22.5 inches. Other unique species in the tidal reach include striped bass, white perch, silvery minnows, and mummichogs.

MacDade Boulevard

MacDade Boulevard was named after Albert D. MacDade and dedicated in 1931. MacDade was a Chester lawyer whose career included stints as Delaware County district attorney, state senator, and judge on the Court of Common Pleas. As senator, he channeled many state funds to road building projects in Delaware County.

West of Ridley Creek, MacDade Boulevard becomes 22nd Street in the City of Chester.



From the MacDade scrapbooks, Media Historic Archives Commission
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

John McClure

Four blocks west of Ridley Creek, and a block and half south of 22nd Street along Providence Avenue, is the former Chester home of John McClure (1886-1965).



Former John McClure home at 2000 Providence Avenue
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2018

John McClure led the Delaware County Republican Party from 1907 until his death in 1965. His father William McClure preceded him as head of the county party organization starting in 1875. John McClure took over at the age of 21 when his father died, dropping out of Swarthmore College to do so. The McClure father and son created the most long-lived and entrenched political machine in United States history.

John McClure was a building contractor and insurance man with many connections. By 1920, he had formed the “War Board,” which was a secret committee of thirteen to fifteen specially selected local supervisors who made all the political decisions for the county. They chose who was going to run for all the county and local offices, and which businesses were going to get public contracts. They controlled appointments to all the public jobs as well as those with Pew family operations at Sun Oil and the Sun Shipyards. They guaranteed votes through such patronage, as well as other schemes. The state and national GOP relied on the War Board to guarantee at least a 50,000-vote majority from Delaware County for their candidates.

In 1928, John McClure chose himself as the candidate for state senate from Delaware County. He was re-elected in 1932. During this time of Prohibition, McClure enriched himself with a bootlegging operation that gained notoriety as the “Rum Ring.” A federal grand jury indicted him. He was subsequently convicted of the charges but escaped a sentence because Prohibition was repealed in the meantime. During this process, the PA state senate voted to keep him in office in 1935, but he lost re-election in 1936 despite the support of local industrialists

such as the Pews who had petitioned him to run. After that, he decided not to run for elected office again, but to remain the power behind the scenes.

John McClure was once again indicted in 1941 along with four Chester councilmen. This time it was for profiting from the sale of the Chester Water Company to a private syndicate. The defendants were acquitted, but they were told to return the money.

The Delaware County Republican War Board remained under the control of John McClure until his death in 1965. He was so respected by the national party for his effectiveness in bringing out the vote, that Richard M. Nixon's 1960 presidential campaign included a motorcade down Providence Road through the heart of Delaware County. Following McClure's death, the War Board continued until 1975 under Frank Snear of Media. The Delaware County Republican Party continued to be an entrenched machine, but without the McClure magnetism, the decision-making became less centralized.

Widener University



Old Main Hall, Widener University

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013

Downstream from the MacDade Boulevard bridge, the campus of Widener University lies on the west bank of the creek on the Chester City side. The creek flows alongside the university's Quick Stadium and the Bernard Lee Schwartz Physical Education Center.

Widener University is a private university that for most of its existence was known as the Pennsylvania Military College. Founded as a preparatory school in Wilmington, Delaware in 1821, it moved to its current location along Ridley Creek in 1862 as the Pennsylvania Military Academy. It became the Pennsylvania Military College in 1892. It adopted the name of Widener in 1972 after expanding its curriculum.

The iconic structure at the heart of campus is Old Main, which first opened its doors in 1868, only three years after the end of the Civil War. The building accommodated the 150 cadets and officers of the Pennsylvania Military Academy under the direction of Colonel Theodore Hyatt. He was the first of three generations in the family to preside over the institution. His grandson, Colonel Frank Hyatt, was born in Old Main. He went on to head the institution for 22 years until his retirement in 1952.

Classes for the cadets were on the top floor. They lived on the second and third floors. On the first floor was the assembly room, the spaces for officers, quartermaster's office, and reception area for visitors. The ground floor included the mess hall and the bathing facilities. On Friday nights, the wooden floors were rolled back, revealing the bathtubs below. Each cadet got five minutes for a soak in the tub and then it was drained and refilled for the next cadet. When they all got their weekly cleaning, the floor was put back in place.

In February of 1882, a chemistry lab caught fire on the top floor. The cadets were having drills outdoors. The horse-drawn firetruck was delayed by getting stuck in the mud, and then

once it arrived the hose was too short. Cadets formed a bucket brigade, but to no avail. The building was destroyed, but rebuilt in a matter of months. Meanwhile, the school operated out of the Ridley Park Hotel. When the building was rebuilt, the chemistry lab was constructed separately from the main structure. The metal walkway that connected the two, and the steel fire doors placed at that time on the first floor are still visible.

At the end of the second decade of the 21st century, Old Main contains administrative offices, the headquarters for campus safety, and a boardroom. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.



Wolfgram Memorial Library, Widener University

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2013



Bridge over Ridley Creek nest to Bernard Lee Schartz Physical Education Center
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Ridley Creek as it flows past Widener University

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

A few blocks to the west of the creek and just to the north of the Widener campus are Washington Park and Stetser Elementary School. On the Ridley Township side of Ridley Creek, between the creek and Bullens Lane, is the Woodlyn Shopping Center, the baseball field of Derwood Park, and the Widener University soccer field.

Conrail Freight Line



Ridley Creek where it flows under the Conrail Freight Line
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Below Widener University, Ridley Creek flows under the bridges of the Conrail Freight Line, Interstate 95, and U.S. Highway 13, which follow each other in quick succession. The rail line was originally laid down by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1886 after they lost their bidding war with the Pennsylvania Railroad to acquire the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. Its Philadelphia terminal was at 24th and Chestnut Streets.



Ridley Creek under the Conrail and I-95 bridges
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Interstate 95

Interstate 95 is the main east coast portion of the Interstate Highway System and connects Maine to Florida.



Ridley Creek under Interstate 95

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

U.S. Route 13

After Ridley Creek passes under U.S. Highway 13, Chester Pike, the creek forms the boundary between the City of Chester and Eddystone Borough. Chester Pike was originally established in 1696 as the King's Highway. The previously existing road was extended from Philadelphia to Wilmington along the southern portions of Penn's grant. It became part of the continuous colonial postal road from Boston, Massachusetts to Charleston, South Carolina, serving as a vital link for information and commerce in colonial America. Additional surveying was done in 1706 during the reign of Queen Anne. It was called the Queen's Highway at that time. The subsequent monarchs that ruled the English colonies were all kings named George, so during their reigns the road went back to being called the King's Highway. In September 1777, George Washington and his troops marched to and from the Battle of Brandywine along the King's Highway. When they finally won the Revolutionary War, the road became known as the Southern Post Road.

From 1851 until 1921 it was a plank road that charged tolls as a maintenance fee. It was one of the last roads in the area to do so. Residents celebrated when the tolls were abolished during a ceremony presided over by Governor William C. Sproul. The road was then paved in 1926, and the trolley tracks that had run parallel to the road were moved so that they ran down its center.



Ridley Creek flowing towards the Chester Pike bridge

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

On the west bank of Ridley Creek below Chester Pike is Sun Village Park in Chester.

Borough of Eddystone

Ridley Creek then flows under the 9th Street Bridge. A couple blocks to the east are Eddystone Elementary School and the ball fields of Eddystone Borough Park.



The 9th Street Bridge towards Eddystone, and a view of Ridley Creek from there
Photos: Walt Cressler, 2012



Two views of Eddystone just a few blocks from Ridley Creek in tribute to "Topper" Corcoran -
"Mr. Eddystone"

Former site of Topper's Bar at 11th St. & Saville Ave. and near his birthplace at Chester Pike & Leiper St.
Photos: Google Street View, 2012 (left) and Larry Culkin, 2017 (right)

On the west bank of Chester Creek along 9th Street in the City of Chester is located County Wide Transportation Services and other buildings and paved lots. But, on the west bank below 8th Street is a large wetland that was once a canal at the mouth of the former Mundy's Run. The canal was an access point for industry and trade in Chester's North Ward during the 19th century.

John M. Broomall's future father-in-law, John Larkin, Jr., purchased an 83-acre farm in 1850 and developed what became the North Ward of Chester. The North Ward lay between Chester and Ridley Creeks north of the railroad and 6th Street. The 1870 Hopkins map shows the northern extent of the city ending around 16th Street near the Pennsylvania Military Academy, which is now Widener University. John Larkin, Jr. was the first mayor of the City of Chester after it was incorporated as a city in 1866. He continued to profit from his real estate investments in the North Ward, selling his last lot in 1881.

One of the most successful purchasers of Larkin's investments was Abraham Blakeley, a Lancashire weaver who emigrated to the United States in 1828 at the age of 22. At first he was a weaver in Germantown and Pottsville, but first arrived in the Chester Creek valley as John P. Crozer's weaving foreman at the West Branch Mill in 1833. His first wife was an Irish woman he married in 1836 who died within a year, leaving him a son. In 1838 he married Maria Miles, a protégé of Sophia du Pont. He went into partnership with Phineas Lownes at the Knowlton Mills in 1846, leasing a factory from John P. Crozer. In 1853, he sold his interest at Knowlton, and moved to a three-story brick mill in the North Ward of Chester built for him by John Larkin, Jr. Four years later he bought out Larkin's interest and continued to prosper. Before long, the Arasapha Mills of Abraham Blakeley and Sons comprised a dozen buildings in which 200 workers ran 8500 spindles and 270 looms powered by Corliss engines. They manufactured work cloth, tickings, denim and striped cloth. The main Arasapha Mills complex was on the northeast corner of Tenth and Walnut Streets, at the headwaters of what was then called Mundy's Run. The stream ran to a canal along Canal Street that opened upon a navigable portion Ridley Creek next to Algodon Mills. The canal is now largely filled in and occupies a wooded portion of Ridley Creek's west bank between Hinkson Street, East 8th Street, and Amtrak's Northeast Corridor rail line.

To live in a home suited to a man of his stature in the community, Abraham Blakeley bought Bishop Alonzo Potter's mansion. He served for many years on Chester City Council and was leader of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He died in 1886. Abraham Blakeley was the great grandfather of Mrs. Bates, who named her farm along Middletown Road in Middletown Township after his mills. Arasapha Farm is one of the last working farms in Delaware County, which also operates as a seasonal attraction such as the Haunted Hayride and Bates Motel around Halloween.

About a quarter mile downstream from the 9th Street Bridge, Ridley Creek flows under three more bridges in rapid succession. Two sets of railroad bridges run parallel to each side of the bridge for PA Route 291, the Industrial Highway.

Amtrak's Northeast Corridor

The upstream railroad bridge carries Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and SEPTA's commuter rail lines. This rail line was originally built in 1872 as the Darby Improvement project of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad.



Amtrak Northeast Corridor train crossing Ridley Creek

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Industrial Highway



Entering Chester on the Industrial Highway

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

CSX Freight Line

The downstream railroad bridge carries the CSX freight line. This rail line was originally built in 1837 by the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, which originated at Broad Street and Washington Avenue in Philadelphia.



View of Ridley Creek as it flows under a footbridge and the CSX Freight Line
Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

As Ridley Creek flows out from under the bridges towards the Delaware River, it passes Harrah's Casino and Racetrack on the southwest side in Chester and Penn Terminals on the east side in Eddystone.

Harrah's Casino and Racetrack

Harrah's Casino and Racetrack opened in 2006 and 2007, respectively. Their presence was touted as a stimulant to economic recovery for the City of Chester.

Sun Shipyards

The casino and racetrack are built on the former site of the Sun Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company. The shipyards were founded in 1916 by the Sun Oil Company to build tankers to transport oil from their Sun Oil refineries in Marcus Hook. All of these enterprises were owned by the Pew family. Joseph N. Pew, Sr. (1848-1912) was the founder of the Pew family business empire. He was born near Titusville, PA where the petroleum industry was also born a decade after his birth. He became the president of the People's Natural Gas Company in Pittsburgh. He made Bradford, PA the first town to use natural gas. When the Spindletop oil field was discovered in Texas in 1901, Pew bought 82 acres in Marcus Hook to build a refinery. The age of oil as a fuel had begun. Pew developed the first long distance pipeline to transfer oil and

perfected the catalytic cracking process to produce high-octane gasoline. In 1919, the company founded Sunoco to get into the gasoline retail business. Along the way, he was also one of the founders of Grove City College in western Pennsylvania. His son John Howard Pew (1882-1971) was president of Sun Oil for 35 years and was on the board for 65 years. He was dedicated to free enterprise and was friendly with the John Birch Society. His brother Joseph Newton Pew, Jr. (1886-1963) also supported pro-business causes. He was not a big fan of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Democratic Governor of Pennsylvania who supported the New Deal, George Howard Earle III. He gave \$250,000 to Republican Arthur James who ran against Earle in 1938 and defeated him.

Their cousin John G. Pew, Jr. (1870-1954) was the first president of Sun Shipbuilding and held the position for 31 years.

Many immigrants from Italy and Poland and many African-Americans from the south came to Chester and neighboring industrial towns to find jobs during the production booms of World Wars I and II. The attack on Pearl Harbor prompted what one expert has called the most intense period of industrial expansion in world history. The Sun Shipyards and other companies along the Delaware River were at the heart of it. The top government priority was shipbuilding. In Chester, employment in industry tripled between 1939 and 1943. Sun Ship launched 247 cargo ships and tankers between 1942 and 1945. The workforce peaked at 35,633.

Sun Shipbuilding employed many African Americans. In 1942, they established shipyard No. 4 as a segregated all-black shipyard. Many were recruited to work there by the former secretary to Booker T. Washington, Emmett Scott. One of the workers at the shipyard, George Raymond, became the leader of the Chester chapter of the NAACP in 1942. Demobilization at the end of World War II was the beginning of the end of major industry in Chester and led to the city's economic decline in the second half of the twentieth century.



Sun Shipbuilding Historical Marker

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012



Harrah's Casino

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Penn Terminals

At Penn Terminals on the Eddystone side of the mouth of Ridley Creek, Banacol S.A. transports 260,000 tons of bananas a year. That is just a small fraction of the total number of bananas that come into nearby Wilmington, South Philadelphia, and Gloucester Terminals, New Jersey. The Delaware River estuary receives more tropical fruit than any other port system in the world. The area's global food network was expanded in the 1980s when Delaware River ports became major importers of grapes and other winter fruit from southern hemisphere countries such as Chile.



Penn Terminals

Photo: Walt Cressler, 2012

Eddystone Industrial Park

Penn Terminals are at the eastern end of the Eddystone Industrial Park, which was created after the Belmont Iron Works closed in 1971. They had begun leasing the site in 1914, and had purchased it in 1917 from the Simpson family.

This was the location of the Eddystone Print Works, which gave its name to the Borough of Eddystone. William Simpson was a textile printer who came to the United States from Manchester in 1818. At first, he established a plant in Philadelphia which he named after its location, "The Falls of the Schuylkill." The city condemned his property in order to create Fairmount Park to protect the Philadelphia's water supply from industrial pollution. William Simpson then bought riverfront property in what was then Ridley Township. He bought land from the shipbuilder John Roach, and eventually owned virtually all of what is now the Borough of Eddystone. The new rail lines, such as the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, made the site even more attractive. William Simpson sent his son Thomas to Europe to tour the state-of-the-art textile plants, where he got ideas about bleaching, dying, and printing. He also recruited workers there. On his way home, his ship passed the Eddystone Lighthouse on the south coast of England, which impressed him deeply. He decided to borrow the name for his new

enterprise. In 1874 he established the Eddystone Print Works. In 1888, the Borough of Eddystone was incorporated. Textiles from the print works won a Bronze Medal at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. From 1900 until 1925, a William Simpson from the third generation controlled the print works. He then sold the property to Joseph Bancroft.

New Sweden

Olofe Stille was the first settler from Europe to live in what is now the Borough of Eddystone. He arrived in 1641 during the third Swedish expedition to the colony of New Sweden. He was made one of the four commissioners to administer justice within the colony in 1658, but by that point it was under control of the Dutch. He was involved with making treaties with the Lenape. They called him Tecoherassi, or Man with Black Beard. He died in 1666, two years after the English took control. Olofe Stille may have been the father of Olaf Stille who befriended the English Quaker John Sharpless and helped him build his house farther upstream.

A Swedish or Finnish woman from what is now Eddystone was involved in the only witchcraft trial to take place in Pennsylvania. Beginning in 1670, Neals and Margaret Mattson lived on a 100-acre land patent between Ridley and Crum Creeks. In 1683 or 1684, Margaret was put on trial for witchcraft having been accused of bewitching cows, which she claimed through an interpreter was all based on hearsay evidence. Supposedly, William Penn asked her directly, "Art thou a witch? Hast thou ridden through the air on a broomstick?" Perhaps without understanding the question, she said, "Yes." At that, Penn pointed out that riding a broomstick was not illegal. The jury went out and came back with a verdict of being guilty of having been accused of being a witch, but not guilty of that for which she was indicted. Her husband and son-in-law each pledged 50 pounds to guarantee Margaret's good behavior for the next six months.

Okehocking Band of the Lenape

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, and for a generation or two afterwards, the Okehocking band of the Lenape lived along the Delaware River between Ridley and Crum Creek where for about nine months of the year where they subsisted on migrating anadromous fish such as American eels, alewives, sea lampreys, American shad, striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon, blueback herring, short-nosed sturgeon, and Atlantic menhaden. During the rest of the year they hunted and foraged farther inland as family groups within the Ridley and Crum Creek valleys.

The Lenape adopted this way of life along the Delaware River in their tribal territory from Tohiccon Creek south to the Leipsig River in Delaware where these fish runs prevailed. Each band had a fishing station during the warm weather months at the mouth of a Delaware River tributary. Their culture likely evolved into this form during the beginning of the Late Woodland Period, which coincided with the Medieval Warming of around 900 to 1100 C.E. That climate event perhaps changed the behavior of fish populations in response to changing water temperatures. The maintenance of fish stations along the river appears to have corresponded with a matrilineal culture. During the fishing season, families and individuals travelled up and down the Delaware River to maintain connections - exchanging information, arranging marriages, and visiting relatives.

The Lenape began selling their lands to William Penn after his arrival in their territory in 1681. There had already been a movement of the Lenape population out of their original homelands as many became involved in the fur trade with the Swedes and Dutch earlier in the

century and based themselves in the Susquehanna valley. The Okehocking represent a group that remained tied to their traditional culture until the early 1700s. At the beginning of that century they petitioned the provincial government and received a 500-acre grant of land in Willistown Township. They stayed there until around 1735 before they left for the Susquehanna valley, joining their compatriots farther away from European settlement.

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