

CHESTER TIMES – April 1, 1913

RAPID TRANSIT BOOMS COUNTY – Many Towns Near to Chester Reached From Sixty-Ninth Street Terminal

The fine Union Station at Sixty-Ninth Street, Philadelphia, really means a great deal more to Delaware County real estate than even its substantial lines would indicate. Few pay much attention to it, or give any thought to it at all, further than to make the change to the point at which they are aiming. Its greatest value to the community is the fact that it has made development possible to a great range of suburban country for a distance of 15 or, perhaps, 20 miles.

Take, for instance, the stretch of the old West Chester Pike. To that, it means as much or more, than to any of the attractive outlying points. It is an interesting study of what was fairly considered a few years ago “country forever”, and how it came into the market, and very much into the market.

Not so many years ago even young people can remember the end of the Market Street line at Sixty-Third Street, and how everyone who had the courage to go to West Chester that way, alighted in the road. It was bad at any season of the year, the car was seldom there, and if it was, the rush for it ended “in the survival of the fittest,” and many had to stand.

Contrast this with conditions today. The line is now run by electricity, with crowds, of course, at the rush hours, but in the main with good accommodation – only thirty minutes from Front and Market Streets, Philadelphia, and the a comfortable station to wait in and good cars to all points on a schedule that means something..

A passing view of some of the sections is all that is possible, only a few of the activities being stated as well as sales.

DREXEL HILL – At this point a very desirable tract of land is being developed by George W. Statzell. The entire property contains about 30 acres. It is the highest point in the vicinity and the Delaware River is clearly seen from any part of the property. The scheme is based on a division into one-half acre tracts and upwards.

Many attractive dwellings have already been built, and the land is selling at \$3000 to \$4000 per acre. Buyers locating at this point will be in easy distance of the proposed new golf course if plans now under consideration are carried out.

On April 6, 1907 the Garrett homestead, adjoining the Drexel Heights was sold to select Councilman Crothers. This property was sold in the year 1682 by William Penn to Joshua Ferne for £150 sterling. It passed into the possession of the family until about the year 1906 when A. Merritt Taylor purchased the 100 acres which were later sold to Mr. Crothers.

The original deeds, two of them, one apparently being a lease or option of purchase, are still in the possession of the Garrett family. The writing is a fine old-fashioned hand and at the bottom the signature of Penn stands out in bold relief.

The quaint phraseology and obsolete spelling make a perusal of the documents interesting. The option, dated April 8, 1682, states that for the sum of 8 shillings Penn bargained and sold to Ferne the estate of 500 acres. The deed of sale was drawn up three days later.

While the boundary lines of the State granted Penn by King Charles are mentioned, the exact location of the tract, deeded to Ferne is not specified.

MEDIA – This morning a new trolley line was put in operation from the Sixty-Ninth Street terminal direct to Media, connecting that attractive borough with the Market Street ferries and with the center of the city of Philadelphia. The running time from Sixty-Ninth Street to Media will be 30 minutes and the fare ten cents.

This line will open up to the highest development a virgin section running about one mile north of the Baltimore Pike. A syndicate has been formed and has been very active in acquiring property for development, the following properties having so far been purchased:

Property of Lizzie G. Worrell, 120 acres on Springfield Road
James S. Austin, 74 acres on Springfield Road
Simon Bennett, et al, 1-3 acres on State Road
Jen Jense, 3 acres on Springfield Road
Samuel G. Hart, 53 acres on Springfield Road and Powell Avenue

Directly opposite to this property is a tract of 92 acres on which an option is held. This, with additional land available, in all, 120 acres, is under consideration by a prominent Philadelphia golf association. Should it be determined upon it will be one of the finest courses near the city.

Further to the north, between Media and Newtown Square, Samuel M. Vauclain has purchased the following property:

From Nathan L. Pratt, 150 acres on Newtown Road
William Bartram estate, 160 acres on Line Road
Springfield Water Company, 100 acres on Bishop Hollow Road
Jesse L. Grim, 147 acres on Bishop Hollow Road
Dr. Samuel Trimble, 107 acres on Bishop Hollow Road

These purchases combined make a holding of 550 acres in Marple and Newtown Townships and the land was acquired at from \$200 to \$300 per acre. The property adjoins Crum Creek and also some of the finest estates near Media, large residence will be built upon the site. Mr. Vauclain is the general manager of the Baldwin Locomotive Works.

Other sales show as follows: February 3, 1909, residence and 53 acres of ground purchased by George H. Scott for \$53,000; May 23, 1910, the Clothier residence at Media was sold by S. T. Freeman & Co., comprising large stone dwelling, stable and outbuildings and 40 acres of ground for \$25,600.

NEWTOWN SQUARE – It has been definitely announced by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company that the Main Line is to be electrified as far as Paoli. The next section, it is believed, will be the central division of the Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington Railroad Company, on which are located some of the finest suburban settlements in and around Philadelphia.

Newtown Square has many attractive farm and suburban properties, and more inquiry is noted here than for some time, December 19, 1911, a Sale of 311 acres appears on the West Chester Pike, Edgar C. Howard to Thomas D. Wood, at about \$600 an acre. The fine property known as “Greenland” is held at \$800 per acre. Conditions are promising for an active market when spring opens.

LANSDOWNE – One of the noted sections in the nearby suburbs, where a market development has been made in the last year, is Lansdowne, located as it is only seven miles from Broad Street station, on the central division of the Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington Railroad.

This community affords every convenience for the seeker of suburban homes, large or small and can be reached by train in 13 minutes from Broad Street station, and by several trolleys with good running time.

The country is rolling, draining into the valleys of Cobb's Creek and Darby Creek, and is from 150 to 250 feet above tidewater. Every convenience can be had – water, gas, electricity, tidewater sewerage, schools, trust companies and general merchandise stores.

One of the many attractive portions of Lansdowne is the southerly side of the railroad along Lincoln Avenue east at Wycombe Avenue and about six minutes from the station, and a very short distance from the Country Club of Lansdowne, which contains one of the finest nine-hole golf courses in this part of the country. A very fine class of dwellings has been erected on lots 55 by 150. Houses being placed 40 feet back from the street, which is 50 feet wide, thus giving ample room for the fine lawns and shrubbery.

Properties are for sale now in Lansdowne from \$5000 to \$30,000 and higher, but conditions are the best and the outlook all that could be wished.

YEADON – This little suburb lies practically between Lansdowne and Darby, with which it is connected by the Darby and Lansdowne trolley, which, however, stops at the borough line, the Burgess and the powers in Lansdowne refusing their consent to have it go further. It connects at the station in Darby with Philadelphia, Media and Chester.

Land at this point is valuable. It sold in 1905 at \$600 per acre, as shown in the sale of 21 acres by the estate of Joel J. Bailey to George J. Hahn for \$12,139. Some portions near Yeadon are much sought for an account of available sites for factory purposes, but, of course, sells at much higher figures.

SWARTHMORE – Swarthmore is a collegiate suburb, and has grown a great deal in recent years. Many fine dwellings and handsome homes have been erected. The short run from the city makes it extremely desirable. Some trouble, however, is caused by the scarcity of coaches on the trains, especially on Sunday. Friends often with their entire families, after spending a most enjoyable day in the country, find every seat filled. Such a condition does much to disenchant the city man or woman.

The Richard G. Parker tract on Swarthmore Avenue and River Avenue is now being developed. It lies north of the station. The dwellings will contain "the last word in real estate" of their class.

WALLINGFORD – Wallingford, too, is getting into the activity. Purchases have been made by T. Elwood Allison of a tract of ten acres adjoining Wallingford station, now being developed into the finest kind of a residential section. He has also purchased Richard A. Downing's farm of 65 acres on Wallingford and Plush Mill Roads, as well as the Tyaddell farm on Baltimore Pike, containing 42 acres. The new trolley road to Media runs directly through this property.

MOYLAN – In the Rose Valley section of Moylan, Charles J. Schoen has purchased Bancroft lower bank farm, on Brook Have Road and Ridley Creek Road, 215 acres. Old "Ted Morden Hall" is located upon the property and has been remodeled into one of the show places of the vicinity. It will be remembered that this dwelling dates back to the Revolution.

Mr. Schoen's own residence is known as "Schoenhaus," on the Rose Valley Road. Adjoining it is the studio and residence of Mrs. A. B. Stephens.

Desirable property through this section is now held at \$2000 per acre. A sale was recorded June 20, 1912, at Manchester and Idlewild Avenues, of a stone residence and stable and one acre by Dr. William A. Phraener for \$15,000.

DARBY – Another center for the various systems of trolley lines is the borough of Darby, containing about 6000 residents, and being practically a part of Philadelphia, with all the conveniences of a large city.

The dwelling proposition in Darby is largely constructed upon terraces. Some of them have two and even three sets of steps. All local interests report an exceptionally good winter along the lines of realty. There is little for sale, but the usual amount is for rent, which according to present indications, will all be taken up in the next 60 days.

Several building operations are under way, one of ten dwellings near Darby station at third and Pine Streets. Four of these are nearly finished and they will sell at about \$2200. Another operation about to be begun at Seventh and Walnut Streets is to be of 12 dwellings, to sell for about \$2000 each.

On Darby Heights, just west of Darby proper, an operation of 20 dwellings, two story, porch front and terraces, has just been started by Frank Rhoads. They will be very attractive in appearance and will sell for about \$2200 each.

It has been found that dwellings of this size are very much needed and that the demand is growing.

Darby is still hoping for the elevated railroad out Woodland Avenue. Local leaders are still working for it, and they think it is bound to come.

Double tracks are about to be laid on Chester Pike from Darby to Chester. This matter, it is believed, has been definitely determined upon, and, as the work, will start soon, this will help, as does everything, even the smallest betterment in service, to real estate conditions at outlying points.

KEITH LOCKHART COLLECTION