

CHESTER TIMES – April 12, 1916 – SOMERSAULTS IN REAL ESTATE – Genuine acrobatic Stunts in the Local Market Stimulated By Recent Important Deals and Investments

While they are walking around evidently cool and collected, the real estate men in this city are well aware of the fact as expressed by one of that fraternity, that Chester “has gone crazy on real estate.” This remark when passed verbally, and after consideration by one man who is largely interested in transactions which are now pending and which during the past few weeks have been completed, was not made in a slighting manner. The remark was passed by him evidently with a full understanding of its meaning, as well as the conditions which now exist in this city.

The demand for houses, places of business, and even so-called shacks, has advanced to such an extent that six months ago if the present prices being offered had even been asked it would have been looked upon as preposterous and beyond the bounds of reason. And it is not expected there will be any abatement in the demand figures offered, and inducements which will be put forward in an effort to size up to the situation and keep in the front line as the present movement of progress steadily goes to the fore. With the prospects outlined as they are in such an unmistakable manner, it is now fully realized that this city must have more housing facilities, not only for dwelling purposes, but also for stores.

TOO MUCH CONGESTION – “It is now recognized,” said a well-known business man yesterday, “that in the first place the business district of Chester is too contracted; it is too much congested and restricted in scope, and more space is needed and it is needed immediately. Just at present it is impossible for a merchant to come to this city and rent a store at any point where it will be possible to make a profit. This must be relieved. The business district must expand, for not only is the business here now, which demands this expansion, but there is more coming, and will be here before Chester will be in readiness to meet the influx of residents and handle the money which will be deposited here in the form of wages.”

This man speaking was not one of those who are hasty in conclusions. He is a man who has made his success in Chester’s business world by staple, conservative ideas combined with modern methods of hustle and being equal to the occasion. But he did not confine himself to the business section of the city in his remarks. He also touched on the necessity of housing the people who are coming to work in the industries in and around Chester, as well as those who have already come and are making their homes here in an impromptu manner.

General opinion is that the situation is a serious one, and it is pointed out that the time has arrived to act. Over at the Remington plant, where there are now three or four thousand men at work, there has been a fear that in a couple of years the present contracts will have expired and the place close down. This was evidently started from the original statement that when the Remington Company completed their work the buildings would revert to the Baldwin Locomotive Works. In this respect it has been stated on good authority as coming from some of the highest of the skilled labor at the plant that it has been but a few days since the men were given to understand that it would be much better for them to bring the members of their families to this vicinity in order for them to have as many of the comforts of home as possible. The assurance was given that the contracts now in hand were sufficient to keep the establishment operating for five or six years and in the meantime there are other contracts that will be gone after and secured.

It is this home life which employers desire their employees to have on the ground that a man living at home with the members of his own family is able to do more and better work than

a man who is boarding out with strangers and without the beneficial advantages of home comforts.

NEW FAMILIES ARRIVING – There are now in this city about 45,600 people, and as near as can be estimated there is on an average of about twelve new families moving here each week, and this estimate will increase as the days go by. These people must be housed and the logical place for housing them is right in Chester. At present on the contrary, men employed at the Eddystone plants are living in Philadelphia, Darby, Marcus Hook, and even the borough of West Chester employs such a number that it is paying the Pennsylvania railroad to run a special train morning and evening to carry those who desire to make the trip.

Chester has about \$3,000,000 lying in the banks in the form of saving funds and it is this money which it is the argument of the hustling real estate dealer, should be used in the purchase of homes or the erection of new dwellings. It is feared that it will be but a short time before there commences a bidding for dwellings similar to that which has been in operation for store properties; then the trouble will commence. It is looked upon as being only a matter of time before this will be started and then the cry will arise. In real estate circles it is looked upon as a period when the boom in the staid old city has arrived, and that within a few years the population of this city will have arisen to at least 100,000 and all property values will practically have doubled. It will be the month to month renter who is going to suffer during the early stages of this reconstruction and in that time there will be settling down of values, and Chester will blossom forth in all its glory and be one of the largest and most progressive of the modern cities along the Atlantic seaboard. Prices have now almost doubled in value before they go higher those who are able to get hold of the necessary cash are getting it invested where it will do the most good.

As an instance of the jumps taken in realty values it may be cited that it has been but a couple of weeks since there was a large deal under way and there was objection to \$15,000 the price asked, \$14,000 being offered. Negotiations slowed up; another sale was made nearby and the man who had held back for the \$14,000 awoke, but the \$15,000 had raised his price to \$22,000.

IN THE COUNTY – The biggest thing in the county just at this time is the John McGlathey plan for 150 houses on the tract of thirty-two acres in Upper Darby Township, near Sixty-Ninth Street Terminal. This tract fronts on West Chester Pike, Garrett Road, Powell Avenue and Marshall Road, and the first work to be done upon it is the opening of a hundred foot wide street, with flower beds and grass plots in the center. Plans are ready for fifty houses upon which work will be started as soon as possible, and within a month work will have been begun weather permitting, upon a hundred and fifty houses. It is understood that these 150 form but a small percentage of the number upon the tract.

The winter season has acted as a check upon most building operations and developments in Delaware County, but out in Springfield the work is going along just the same. A half dozen or more houses are being erected at this time, all of which will cost \$5000 or more. All are of the colonial style of architecture, and are in keeping with other houses on this big tract. The Springfield Real Estate Company, which is developing the ground has decided that no electric light or other poles shall be placed on the principal streets, and at this time electric light line pole are being erected on alleys in the rear of houses erected.

James B. Flounders a Media contractor has been awarded a contract this week for a stone and shingle house and garage for William B. Sheppard at Cynwyd. When completed, the house

will cost about \$37,000. Thomas B. Lippincott is the architect. Mr. Sheppard is a member of a Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, dry good firm.

Harry Marlor of Norwood is receiving bids for a stone and shingle house at Wallingford, plans for which were prepared by Bunting and Shrigley. It is estimated that it will cost about \$10,000. The contract will be let shortly. Ferman Furness, son of the later Walter Rogers Furness, is to build an addition to an old stone house on a property along Ridley Creek which he purchased some months ago. The property is covered with timber, and the young man spent much of the last year clearing away underbrush. He will dispose of a fine residence in Upper Providence which came into his possession at the death of his father.

Walters, Burks and Melon, Philadelphia contractors, have been awarded the contract to install a steam heating apparatus in the boiler house and woodworking shop at the Baldwin Locomotive Works. The price is not given.

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS – The following transfers of real estate were yesterday recorded with Recorder of Deeds McClenachan:

Collingdale – Leonard E. Elverson of Collingdale to David Baird, house and lot on Rhodes Avenue, \$950

Upper Darby – Sarah P. Sellers and Annabella Sellers of Upper Darby to Joseph M. Hiltner of Philadelphia, lot at Bywood \$1

Chester – Horace B. Davis of Chester to Maurice M. Glick of Camden, N. J., lot at Sixth and Lincoln Streets, \$1,000

Chester – Richard Babe of Chester to W. Gibson Bird of Chester, house and lot on Fourth Street, west of Market Street, \$900

Aldan – Edward E. Barry of Aldan to Mary A. Schlesinger of Philadelphia, lot at Providence and Lincoln avenues, \$650