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## 09 History of the West Chester Railroad from 1907-1945

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## History of the West Chester Railroad from 1907-1945

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

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

Collected by Jim Jones, David Flogaus, Kelly Kulp-Bosler, Mike Wolford and Bob Gialanella (Spring 1995). Additional information collected by Daniel Cleary, John Morrison, Scott Harre, and Robert Troutman (Spring 1996); and by Nicole Bowman, Karin Flippin, Mary Kurtak, Kelly McVeigh, Wendy Smoker, and Brian Toombes (Spring 1997). Last edited by Jim Jones (August 9, 1997).

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1907/03/04      DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 4, 1907), in CCHS clipping  
file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-  
1909."

The PB&WRR management circulated a notice to employees concerning the procedure for rule changes. This article seems to suggest that there was labor unrest and the management was trying to head it off. It mentions that a 10% wage increase became effective on December 1, 1906, but it was not accepted by the union. Instead, it led to negotiations and finally, the following salaries:

Yard day conductors (33 cents/day); yard night conductors (34 cents); yard day brakemen (28 cents); yard night brakemen (29 cents). Passenger conductor wages rose from \$4.01 to \$4.42 with a further proposed increase of \$4.72. Passenger baggage master (2.42-2.66), passenger brakemen (\$1.92-2.11-2.30). Freight conductor (3.35-3.68-3.96), freight flagman (2.20-2.42-2.75), freight brakeman (2.09-2.30-2.64).

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1907/0302 "Narrow Escape" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 2, 1907), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Two unidentified young men were injured while trying to hop a moving passenger train at the Barnard Street bridge

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1907/04/11 "Take Notice, P.R.R." in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 11, 1907), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

This is one of many articles that complains about the lack of toilet facilities for patrons at the PRR station.

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1907/06/04 "Engine's Big Load" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 5, 1907), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Freight switching engine no.91 set a record by hauling 12 loaded cars up the grade from Union Street to Maple Street. the conductor was Frank A. Finegan, engineer W. C. Johnston, and fireman Arthur Hughes.

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1907/07/13 "Work on the Central Division of the P.B.&W.R.R. Is Pushing ahead" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 13, 1907), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Two new tracks were added between Union and Niels Street by filling in the low land along Goose Creek. The new tracks will provide room to make up freight trains. The fill work was performed by the firm of Corcoran brothers.

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1907/07/17 "Will Cars Be Run By Electricity?" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 17, 1907), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The PRR-Frazer received electric signaling equipment so that the railroad could be operated on the "block system." In West Chester, a signal was installed near the present watchman's box at Market Street station, and a signal box was installed near the Chestnut Street bridge. There was

also a tower installed on a boxcar at Morstein station, and other material was deposited at Frazer and Kirkland stations.

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1907/07/17 "Locomotive Disabled" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 17, 1907), from the CCHS clippings file:  
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

A locomotive of the PRR-Frazer became disabled near Phoenixville and was hauled to a siding in that town by a second engine until engineer Bloomer could repair it.

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1907/07/27 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 27, 1907), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Engine no.91, which shifted freight cars in the West Chester yards, was operated by engineer William Johnson and conductor John Sollenberger.

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1907/07/31 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 31, 1907), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

This article describes activity at the roundhouse near the east end of Lacey Street. The house maintained seven passenger and one freight locomotive, all of which arrived throughout the evening and left the next morning. The roundhouse was supervised by W. C. Hayes and A. J. Hamilton. They did not repair engines, but merely kept the fires going and prepared them for their morning runs.

A locomotive consumed 3000 gallons of water on its 27-mile run to Philadelphia. It also carried 12 tons of coal, which was enough to complete two round trips between West Chester and Philadelphia.

A locomotive sitting on the turntable presented a weight of 48-50 tons, yet the table was so well balanced that a single worker could turn the engine by hand.

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1907/08/22 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 22, 1907), in CCHS clippings file "West Goshen Township, Transportation, Green Hill Station."

The mistress of the Green Hill station, Mrs. Florence Wilkins, discovered that a thief had entered the first floor of the station and stolen \$60 worth on money, stamps, cigars and other materials belonging to the Union News Company. Mrs. Wilkins' assistant was H. C. Kelso. Wilkins, Kelso, and Kelso's mother were asleep upstairs during the burglary. The trackwalker, Arthur Leary, passed the station at one

o'clock (am?) but noticed nothing.

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1907/10/15 "Erecting Signal Tower" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS  
(October 15, 1907), in CCHS clipping file: "West  
Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

A new signal tower was erected just south of the Market  
Street station to control the new block signal system.

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1907/10/22 "Watchbox on Foundations" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS  
(October 22, 1907), in CCHS clipping file: "West  
Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

The watchbox used by William McConaghy at the Union Street  
crossing was placed on a new foundation.

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1907/11/27 "New Improvements" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November  
27, 1907), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester  
Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Workmen at the Market Street station dug a 16-foot water  
well to serve the new toilets, which were due to be  
reopened.

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1907/12/07 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 7, 1907), in CCHS  
clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA.  
RR 1905-1909."

The PRR ignored a letter from the West Chester borough  
council asking them to close the Adams Street grade  
crossing.

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1908/02/12 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 13, 1908), in CCHS  
clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA.  
RR 1905-1909."

The new block signaling system went into use on the PB&WRR.  
Thomas Devon runs the new signal tower by day and Clark Pyle  
works the night shift. Clarence Pyle replaced Devon as the  
daytime operator at the station.

"The new system is not welcomed by the shifting crew, as it  
takes them about twice as long to do their work on account  
of having to get a pass card nearly every time that they  
move their engine."

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1908/03/02 "Operating New Towers" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March  
3, 1908), from the CCHS clippings file:  
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer  
Branch"

The new tower at the Market Street station in West Chester on the PRR-Frazer opened for operations. It had telegraph operators, but the signals were not yet in working order, so trains still moved after the old fashion, responding to human signals, although they came from the tower instead of the station. Similar conditions existed at new towers at Kirkland and Frazer.

The operators of the West Chester tower, Frank H. Pollock and F. C. Sturn, were placed there temporarily until the new jobs could be advertised. Pollock and Sturn were normally assigned to the West Chester station; Pollock on the 5am-2pm shift, and Sturn on the 2-11pm shift.

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1908/08/24 "No More Engines in Upper Yard" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 24, 1908), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The PRR stopped storing its spare locomotives and railcars in the yard on the north side of town, and kept everything in the lower yard (below Market Street). This satisfied residents of Chestnut and North Matlack Street, who complained about the noise.

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1908/08/26 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 26, 1908), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Following a petition circulated by Charles H. Pennypacker among the residents of the north side of West Chester, the PRR agreed to stop firing up engines at the turntable located near Chestnut and Matlack Streets, and to do away with the turntable altogether.

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1908/11/10 "Returns to News Stand" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 10, 1908), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Davis E. Townsend resumed his duties at the Union News stand in the PRR station. He worked there for eight years [1882-1890] but has been absent for 18 years. He returned because the former news agent, George Wonderly, "blew out his brains last week."

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1908/12/11 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 11, 1908), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

A track crew directed by Foreman George Dougherty was involved with relaying the tracks along Evans Street, despite the frost. The turntable at the North Matlack Street yard was torn out and the hole filled with rubble,

since locomotives were turned at the roundhouse in the lower yard. The water tower was retained to service trains on the PRR-Frazer.

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1908/12/28 "Dignitaries Travel" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 28, 1908), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

This article described a number of "Dignitaries" who visited West Chester, including a famous opera singer, a physician, etc. No names were given. However, it does mention that conductor Jacob J. Polk ran the train.

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1909/03/08 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 8, 1909), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

This article has several tidbits including the addresses of three railroad employees. D. B. Colehour recently moved from North Adams Street to 406 Dean Street. Clark Pyle and Charles W. Pyle both live on Dean Street too.

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1909/04/16 COATESVILLE RECORD (April 16, 1909), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

The PRR planned to station a watchman at its railroad yard at Chestnut & Matlack Streets to prevent trespassers from crossing the tracks. It was a favorite shortcut for workmen heading to the Sharpless plant [separator works].

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1909/06/02 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 2, 1909), from the CCHS clippings file: "West Chester Transportation, PB&WRR (Central division)."

The PB&WRR was extra busy because of a strike by workers on the trolley car line that diverted many passengers to the railroad. Conductor B. S. O. Wise reported that he collected 700 tickets on his seven car train.

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1909/06/17 "Drink From the Spigot" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 17, 1909), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Passengers in the Market Street station obtain drinking water from the spigot in the corridor between the waiting room and the platform. Others borrow a tumbler from Lin Bassett, the news agent, for that purpose.

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1909/06/29 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 29, 1909), from the CCHS clippings file: "West Chester Transportation,

PB&WRR (Central division)."

The PB&WRR, responding to citizen complaints about the dangerous grade crossing at South Adams Street, agreed to rearrange the streets in that area to eliminate the grade crossing. The South Adams Street crossing was to be closed, and a new street on the north side of the tracks between Adams and Worthington, called Elmer Street, was to be constructed. They also planned to extend Worthington and Penn Streets south to Niels Street. All of the new streets were to be macadamized by the railroad at no expense to the borough of WC.

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1909/07/15        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 16, 1909), from the CCHS  
                  clippings file: "West Chester Transportation,  
                  PB&WRR (Central division)."

A train operated by engineer John Hannum collided with cars standing on the west track of the Market Street station, injuring some passengers and caused considerable damage. Among the injured were Edith Broomall (daughter of Harry), J. B. Thompson, and Harvey Fitzsimmons.

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1909/11/11        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 11, 1909), in CCHS  
                  clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA.  
                  RR 1905-1909."

Al Hamilton was a veteran of 25 years on the railroad in West Chester. He served in the Civil War and in the regular army after that before coming to the railroad.

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1909/11/12        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 12, 1909), from the CCHS  
                  clippings file: "West Chester Transportation,  
                  PB&WRR (Central division)."

Business is heavy on the PB&WRR. Recently, a single train pulled 62 freight cars to various locations along the line. This train was so long that it interfered with passenger trains at places where there was only a single track.

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1909/11/22        "New Fern hill Bridge" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS  
                  (November 22, 1909), from the CCHS clippings file:  
                  "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer  
                  Branch"

The new Fern Hill bridge over the PRR-Frazer, soon to be completed, is longer and wider than the original bridge. If necessary, there is room to lay a second line of track underneath it.

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1909/11/26        "Want Bridge Finished" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS  
                  (November 26, 1909), from the CCHS clippings file:

"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer  
Branch"

Many people asked that the railroad complete the new Fern Hill bridge before winter sets in. Otherwise, wagon teams hauling coal to West Chester have to detour past the reservoir and Achell's farm to reach the coal siding. The work to construct a modern concrete bridge has been underway for several months.

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1909/12/08 "Shortcut for Commuters" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS  
(December 8, 1909), from the CCHS clippings file:  
"West Chester Transportation, PB&WRR (Central  
division).

Commuters who wish to avoid walking several blocks around to the Market Street station climb up the embankment on the south side of Barnard Street and walk across the railroad trestle to reach the station. The article noted that such behavior resulted in arrest on the PRR-Main Line.

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1912/11/30 "Clock for Trackwalker" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS  
(November 30, 1912), from the CCHS clippings file:  
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer  
Branch"

A few months ago, the railroad installed watchman clocks along the tracks of the PRR-Frazer so that the track walkers could record their progress as they inspected the tracks.

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1914 Schedule for the Philadelphia to West Chester Line,  
Pennsylvania Railroad (January 8, 1914)

During WWI, railroad schedules were reduced. This is only the front page, so it lists no trains, but names the directors of the railroad. George W. Boyd was the General Passenger Agent, W. Heyward Myers was the General Manager and J. R. Wood was the Passenger Traffic Manager on the Phila-West Chester line.

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1916/07/22 "Monaghan" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, from the CCHS  
clipping file.

Cornelia W. T. Monaghan died at age 63 at Chester County Hospital. She was the widow of R. Jones Monaghan (married November 13, 1879; died in 1897) and the daughter of Joseph P. and Jane T. Ellicott Wilson. Her father was a leading member of the Chester County Bar Association, Burgess of West Chester 1855-1857, and President of the Philadelphia & Baltimore Central Railroad. She had two children who died as infants and two who survived: Frances E., a patient at CC Hospital with "badly sprained ankle," and Walter E., employed in Philadelphia. The family were members of the

First Presbyterian Church of West Chester.

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1917/01/20      DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 20, 1917), in CCHS  
                  clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA.  
                  RR 1915-1919."

A railroad worker "in the neighborhood of Moylan" had acquired 300-400 records and sold them cheaply to his colleagues. This article names many of them and describes their musical ability, if any. It includes other tidbits about working conditions.

Baggage master Roy Lyons, brakeman William Keeley, brakeman Andrew Haggerty, and night operator Charles Mann all owned record players.

Engineer William Buxton was a leader of the West Chester Band and a well-known musician. Other railroad workers played Jew's harp, violin and piano.

Conductor R. S. O. Wise was not a musician, but he liked music. He was 66 years old, but in excellent health, according to the physical taken by the insurance company on June 2, 1916, following his recovery from a fall that broke both of his wrists and gashed his head. He wore casts for four weeks and was off-duty for ten weeks following the accident.

Councilman Edmund H. Brown was a retired railroad engineer and the son of a violin player. He worked as an engineer a quarter century earlier, and had been retired for some years by 1917.

Firemen and engineers were not able to sing or whistle while they worked, because the coal dust dried their mouths too much. In the summer, there was relief when they wet down the coal to suppress the dust, but that was impossible in the winter because the coal would stick together and freeze. To combat the dust, the men wore mufflers about their necks, buttoned their wristbands tight, and used twine to tie their pants legs shut.

Edward M. Sooy, baggage master was a whistler, but he had recently broken his arm. It had to be rebroken and reset, and he wore a cast for two months already.

Conductors earned \$145-150 per month and engineers earned \$4.67 a day, and as much as \$5.00 a day for "through runs."

In the winter, engineers and other workmen wore gloves that had leather palms and canvas backs. Each pair cost 35 cents, and they became soiled quickly, within two days, requiring replacement or laundering.

William A. McMichael still visits the West Chester depot once a month. He worked there 25 years ago with Howell A.

Gillingham and Frank P. Patton as his assistants. Mr. Gillingham, also retired, has lived in Kentucky for several years.

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1917/01/20 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 20, 1917), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

There was a special train that carried workers from West Chester to Eddystone each morning. It started out with 160-185 men in West Chester and picked up more along the way.

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1917/01/23 "More Changes at Old Depot" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

An extension to the train station at Market Street was underway in 1917. This article describes the changes in the station during the period 1867-1917.

After through-trains began to operate in West Chester, the passenger shed was moved to the through tracks on the east side and freight was unloaded on the West side of the station, where the Adams Express company had its offices and warehouse in 1917.

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1917/01/25 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 26, 1917), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

The trolley from Philadelphia operated a freight service that was heavily used. It carried a variety of foodstuffs, agricultural chemicals, and other goods to West Chester from Philadelphia, and used a terminal on East Gay Streets. The passenger terminal was at Gay and High Streets. The West Chester Wheel Works shipped its wheels by trolley.

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1917/01/29 "Changes" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

William G. Morgan, baggage master at West Chester Market Street station, was transferred to Swarthmore as the assistant passenger agent, replacing Richard Wellers. Mr. Morgan was on temporary night duty in West Chester, replacing Charles Mann during his illness.

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1917/03/02 "Want Bath in Station" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

Railroad workers asked management to provide them with a hot

water heater and shower bath in the West Chester station.

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1917/03/20 DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

Freight conductor Thomas Hall worked on the West Chester-Frazer line for 25 years.

Freight demand was way up, especially for coal, despite the threat of industrial strikes. Industrial consumption of pea coal was so strong that consumers were forced to rely on chestnut coal for home heating. The price of coal was some \$5/ton higher than it was last year.

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1917/03/20 DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

A large derrick was at work on the tracks over the Barnard Street overpass in an attempt to add an additional track between the upper and lower rail yards.

Work was needed on the Union Street crossing, which was very dangerous. However, there was neither room to go under or over the railroad tracks.

This was an ongoing topic of contention between the railroad and the borough. Three grade crossings had already been eliminated [JJ: Magnolia, Lacey, Adams] and two bridges constructed [JJ: Miner, Chestnut].

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1917/04/03 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 3, 1917), from the CCHS clippings file: "West Chester Transportation, PB&WRR (Central division).

Workmen on the PB&WRR will move four tracks fifteen feet to the east so that trains placed on sidings at the Market Street station will no longer block the entire rail yard. At present, the siding can accommodate only five cars. To make the new arrangement work, the Barnard Street bridge was also widened to accommodate a second track. Nearly a hundred men were employed on the job.

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1917/04/05 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 5, 1917), from the CCHS clippings file: "West Chester Transportation, PB&WRR (Central division).

"A force of carpenters" extended the shed and platform at the Market Street station almost to Barnard Street in order to handle trains of six cars plus a locomotive at the platform.

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1917/04/13 "Station is Abandoned" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April

13, 1917), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

The stop at Maple Avenue, which served the convent and people from the north edge of town, was abandoned in favor of a stop at the Biddle Street grade crossing.

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1917/06/02        DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

PRR officials announced last Memorial Day, that the record for freight shipped to West Chester was broken. This was the climax to a year of increasing freight activity. Traffic was so busy and the yard so congested that the siding to "the old round house at Niels Street" had to be used to shift cars.

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1917/06/14        Leah Schechter, editor, I JUST WANTED TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION: THE LIFE OF WALTER T. KERWIN (West Chester: Henderson High School AP History, 1992). CCHS#E745.K39

p2    Walter Kerwin (Jr) was born on June 14, 1917 and grew up at 124 E. Linden Street. Walter's father was Walter T. Kerwin (Sr.), a railroad worker for the PRR. He was known as "Big Dutch" and Walter was known simply as "Dutch."

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1917/08/23        DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1915-1919."

The PRR announced that there would be no more excursion trains to Atlantic City this year. The company normally operated three or four each summer, and had already run one early in the season, but "all people realized that new conditions prevail this year and emergencies must be met."

There were a large amount of mushrooms shipped from West Chester, even in the summer.

The express agent was Charles W. Pyle and the baggage master was J. W. Walker. Thomas Winsey was an engineer.

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1917/08/27        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 27, 1917), from the CCHS clippings file: "West Chester Transportation, PB&WRR (Central division).

The work of improving the Barnard Street railroad bridge was nearing completion.

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1917/09/07        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 7, 1917), from the CCHS clippings file: "West Chester Transportation, PB&WRR (Central division).

The PB&WRR made improvements to its line at Union Street by constructing a culvert to carry Goose Creek under the tracks and onto a lot recently purchased by the borough of WC.

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1918/01/01 James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch" in THE HIGH LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring 1988), 5.

On January 1, 1918, the PB&W became part of the PRR under a 999-year lease dated December 31, 1917.

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1920s James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch" in THE HIGH LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring 1988), 25.

In "later years, a stop at Niels Street, West Chester . . . was made on a limited basis."

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1922/03/08 "Old Gates Thawed Out" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1920-1924."

The old crossing gates on Market Street were operative again after they thawed out, but they were generally unsatisfactory. They were out of service for several weeks as a result of being frozen into a single position. The PRR promised to replace them as soon as the weather improved.

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1922/03/30 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 30, 1922)

Dennis McDevitt was preparing to move from 559 South Franklin Street to a house on Marshall Street owned by William Chalfant Jr. McDevitt worked as the gatekeeper at the Pennsylvania Railroad crossing on Market Street.

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1922/04/17 "Preparing for Bridge Work" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1920-1924."

Workmen delivered steel beams to be used in raising, widening and strengthening the Gay Street bridge over the West Chester-Frazer tracks of the PRR.

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1923/02/27 "Ticket Agent Change" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1920-1924."

M. W. Kershaw of West Chester was reassigned to the West Chester Market Street station for the 2pm-late shift. He had worked in West Chester before, and he returned to replace Harvey Reynolds, who was transferred to Wilmington.

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1923/03/09        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 9, 1923), from the  
                  CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania  
                  Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The new "Green Hill Flyer" came to West Chester for the first time and was admired by many railcar was housed at Green Hill Station under the authority of Herbert Pritchard, the track foreman and the Flyer's chauffeur. (Pritchard lived at Green Hill Station.) The car is painted bright red so that other trains will see it and yield right of way. The car is capable of speeds up to fifty miles per hour, and can carry spares and workmen, so it will make it possible to respond to reports of track damage much faster. Heretofore, the track men have used a self-propelled handcar to reach track breakages, but they arrived "fagged from exertions in pumping the handles." [JJ: The article does not mention this, but I suspect that the Flyer was powered by a gasoline engine.]

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1923/03/24        DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West  
                  Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1920-1924."

The chief of West Chester police, after consulting with taxicab drivers who used the railroad station, issued new rules that required the cabs to back into the curb at an angle, instead of parking parallel to the curb. This would make it easier for the cabs to pull away without interfering with each other.

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1923/03/26        "Booth is for Smiths" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS  
                  clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA.  
                  RR 1920-1924."

The T. E. Smith & Son firm got the contract from the PRR to operate a "checking station for travelers" and had a booth constructed for that purpose at the southern end of the station.

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1923/03/30        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 31, 1923), from the CCHS  
                  clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania  
                  Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Freight traffic has been heavy of late, but today it was so heavy, despite the holiday, that engineer Captain Hall and his crew had to make two trips on the PRR-Frazer to collect all of the boxcars on sidings between Paoli and Frazer large proportion were bound for West Chester, but many were destined to continue on through West Chester along the Octoraro Branch to points between West Chester and Media.

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1923/07/18        "Work is Suspended" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS

clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA.  
RR 1920-1924."

The Market Street station of the PRR in West Chester underwent extensive repairs during the spring and summer of 1923.

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1923/10/18 DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West  
Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1920-1924."

Following an accident where a bicyclist was crushed by a train, the PRR announced its intention to close a walking path located between two tracks near the Sharpless Separator Works. The path was a popular thoroughfare for workers at Sharpless, Schramms and the nurseries, as well as for strollers in the evening and bicycle riders.

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1923/11/06 DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West  
Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1920-1924."

West Chester is served by "several motor bus lines which give service on five different routes, reaching many villages and boroughs at near and some distant points connecting with other bus lines in this and adjacent counties."

"It is not expected that these motor bus lines will eliminate the trolley and steam roads, but will serve to give transportation to many points without the long and expensive detours on railways." In particular, buses improved West Chester's connections to the north and northwest.

Twenty years ago, the American Highway Educational Bureau predicted that a network of roads would be constructed on which freight and passenger service would operate. In particular, this would allow the members of farm families` to visit towns without taking any of their horses out of the fields to make the journey.

As of the date of this article, there were 150 state highway passenger lines operating on hard-surfaced roads in Pennsylvania.

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1923/11/17 DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West  
Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1920-1924."

Workman using air compressors prepared to fit a new, improved "frog" into the tracks just north of Market Street, replacing an older one that had been damaged and repaired. the new frog was of a different design and weighed over two tons. The workers planned to cut the rails and insert the new frog between trains without interrupting operations.

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1923/11/17 "Town Topics" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS  
clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA.  
RR 1920-1924."

Horses were still used until a few years ago, but nowadays  
(1923) all freight was delivered by motor truck. Motor  
trucks and trolleys had made a serious dent in the  
railroad's freight service from Philadelphia.

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1923/11/22 DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West  
Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1920-1924."

Workers who were employed removing the brick wall between  
the train sheds at the West Chester Market Street station  
were laid off suddenly. There were lay-offs all over the  
PRR system, including section gangs on the Main Line and  
Maryland division, and mechanics at Downingtown.

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1923/12/17 "Completing the Shed work" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in  
CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation;  
PA. RR 1920-1924."

Workers finally completed remodeling the railroad shed at  
the West Chester Market Street station.

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

West Chester is served by two branches of the Pennsylvania  
Railroad and several bus and trolley lines. Its beautiful  
homes and shaded streets make West Chester "a delightful  
town."

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1928 James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch" in THE HIGH  
LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring 1988), 5.

(partial) list of stations on the Wawa Branch, and mileages  
in 1928 and 1954.

Station	1928	1954
Philadelphia Broad Street/0/n/a		
Philadelphia Suburban Street/n/a/0		
[stations omitted by JJ]		
Media	14.0	14.0
Elwyn/15.1/15.0		
Williamson School/15.9/15.8		
Glen Riddle/16.7/16.6		
Lenni	17.4	17.3
Wawa/18.1/18.0		
Glen Mills/20.3/20.2		
Locksley/21.6/21.5		
Cheyney	22.2	22.2
Westtown/23.9/23.9		

Oakbourne/25.5/25.4  
West Chester/27.5/27.4.

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1928/12/02 James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch"  
in THE HIGH LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring  
1988), 29.

The WC&PRR line was electrified as far as West Chester by  
December 2, 1928.

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1930s Leah Schechter, editor, I JUST WANTED TO MAKE A  
CONTRIBUTION: THE LIFE OF WALTER T. KERWIN (West  
Chester: Henderson High School AP History, 1992), 2.  
CCHS#E745.K39

Walter T. Kerwin (Sr.) worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad,  
and after the depression, became the tax collector for West  
Chester.

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1932/09/24 "Making Final Run on Frazer Branch Here This  
Evening" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 24, 1932),  
from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation,  
Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Conductor Frank Moore made his last run on the PRR-Frazer  
today, after over 17 years of service on this branch. He  
joined the PRR in 1893 as a baggage man and was promoted to  
freight brakeman in 1895. In 1905, he became a regular  
conductor on the Philadelphia to Harrisburg run. In 1915,  
he was transferred to the PRR-Frazer.

In 1932, Moore, aged 63, still has seven more years to go  
before he can retire. Moore was reassigned to the night  
express between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, No. 35  
westbound and No. 36 eastbound.

Moore made a brief statement: "I've looked on this old run,  
not only as a job-holder, but as I do say, `home.' I've  
known these passengers of mine--three generations of them.  
Why, when one of `my boys' and `girls,' as I call them,  
failed to show up in the morning, I became anxious until I  
got in again to see if they were all right. However, if  
doing away with this line is intended for the good of the  
service, I suppose I'll look at it from that angle too, but  
I'm certainly going to miss those familiar faces every night  
and morning. One thing that was intensely gratifying to me,  
is the fact that I was still active on this branch when it  
celebrated its 100th anniversary in the service of the  
people here.

West Chester stationmaster J. Walter Keech described Moore  
as having "one of the cleanest and best records in the  
service." According to the article, Moore was acquainted  
with General W. W. Atterbury, the president of the PRR

system.

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1932/09/24        Walter R. Farra, letter to the editor, DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 21, 1947), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

Mr. Farra was the brakeman on the last three trains to-and-from West Chester on the PRR-Frazer. He confirmed the details offered by Mrs. Alfred Johnson, widow of the engineer, and added that the trains were Nos. 5484-5486.

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1932/09/24        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 20, 1947), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

According to Mrs. Johnson, the last passenger train on the PRR-Frazer ran on September 24, 1932. It was operated by her late husband, engineer Alfred Johnson, who worked for the PRR for seventeen years. The conductor was Frank Moore of West Chester and the brakeman was Walter Farra of Paoli. Mrs. Johnson recalled riding with her husband on that last trip. He retired at the end of the day.

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1933

This writer remembered riding the PRR-Frazer from West Chester to Philadelphia in 1931-1932. After the line was closed, he/she took the Greyhound bus up Route 29 for the last two years of high school.

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1937/10/27        COATESVILLE RECORD (October 27, 1937), from the CCHS clippings file: WC Transportation, Penna. RR 1935-1937"

J. Walter Keech will retire next Sunday from the PRR after more than 46 years of service. His replacement was Harry Yohn, agent at Paoli. Keech, aged 65, began as a clerk in the WC station on June 1, 1891. He received promotions to billing clerk, accountant, chief clerk and finally station agent. From 1917-1924, he served in Oxford. In 1924, he became the passenger agent in WC, and in 1931, he was promoted to passenger and freight agent in WC. He was born in Coatesville, the son of Joseph C. Keech, who was also a railroader.

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1938/03/01        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 1, 1938), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

PRR officials stated that they had no plans to electrify the PRR-Frazer from West Chester to Frazer: "an improvement would be of value only as a detour route, in the event of a track obstruction between Frazer and Philadelphia.

Fortunately, there are four other detour routes available .  
. ."

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1939/01/25        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 1, 1939), from the CCHS  
                  clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania  
                  Railroad, Frazer Branch"

On Tuesday morning, the first passenger train in years traveled over the PRR-Frazer carrying about 700 Republicans for the inauguration in Harrisburg. It was pulled by a steam engine as far as Paoli, where it picked up five more cars of passengers and an electric engine for the run to Harrisburg. Otherwise, the Frazer branch carries only freight trains since the Pennsylvania Railroad electrified the Media branch from West Chester to Philadelphia (PRR-Frazer&P).

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1941/10/29        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 29, 1941), from the CCHS  
                  clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania  
                  Railroad"

The PRR applied to the ICC for permission to abandon three miles of the PRR-Phoenixville between Devault and Swedesford Road station near Glen Loch. There had been no passenger trains on this line for years, although the PRR still maintains freight service between Phoenixville and Devault.

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1942/04/27        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 28, 1942), from the CCHS  
                  clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania  
                  Railroad"

The 100-foot pedestrian frame bridge over the PRR-Frazer was destroyed by fire early yesterday evening. It was thought to have been caused by sparks from a passing train.

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1944/07/05        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 6, 1944), in CCHS clippings  
                  file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1940-  
                  1954."

A fire partially destroyed the PRR freight station in West Chester. It also damaged rolling stock, and a spectator, Oswald Blythe, collapsed and died from the intense heat. Harry Yohn, the PRR freight agent, reported damages of \$40,000. The fire occurred in a freight shed along the tracks near Hoffman Lumber and National Foam. The Fruit Growers of Chester County suffered the most damage. In addition, the United Dairy company lost four "mechanical cows" and the Paoli Feed and Supply company lost materials stored in space it rented from the railroad.

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1944/09/05        DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 6, 1944), from the CCHS  
                  clipping file "WC Transportation, PA.RR 1940-1954"

Fire damaged the freight station on East Union Street and drew a large crowd that regarded the fire as a spectacle. One spectator, Oswald Smythe of the Pennock Baker Apartments, died from the intense heat as three fire companies battled the blaze. The loss was estimated by Harry Yohn at \$40,000 and included the southern end of the station and several railcars. Nearby businesses also suffered damage, and the worst was at the Fruit Growers of Chester County.

A. B. McCroskey, an engineer, used his freight locomotive to pull cars out of danger.

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