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## 01 Miscellaneous Notes on the History of Working in Chester County

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

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

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

Data collected by: Ken McFadden, Vince Civiletti, Chris Waychunas, Nancy Hershey, Bob Troutman, Bob Gregory, Scott Harre, Dan Cleary, and Jim Jones. Last edited by John Morrison (Spring 1996)

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1880/05/15      Source: Daily Local News (May 15, 1880)

The PRR pay car came once a month to West Chester. Salaries for railway employees increased by 10% starting in 1880/04.

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1880/04/10      Source: Daily Local News (April 10, 1880)

Patrick J. Barry and Barney Finnegan started a hauling business located at 117 E. Miner Street.

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1881/09/21      Source: Daily Local News (September 21, 1881)

Patrick J. Barry and Barney Finnegan dissolved their hauling business.

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1881/04/12      Source: Daily Local News (April 12, 1881)



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1882/04/28 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
83, at the Chester County Historical Society

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

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1882/03/07 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
117at the Chester County Historical Society

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

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1882/04/28 Source: Chester County Civil Court Docket #76290,  
p. 82at the Chester County Historical Society

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

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1882/01/28 Source: Daily Local News (January 28, 1882)

Two houses from the estate of T. Chalkley Darlington sold on South Adams Street: n0329 and the house immediately to the south. The house at 329 was 12' X 18', made of brick, sat on a 17.5' x 98' lot, and sold for \$305. The other house was made of frame and sold for only \$301. A West Chester grocer, Frank P. Darlington, bought both houses. The executors of the estate were Jesse G. Darlington and William P. Sharpless. The auctioneer was William H. Sharpless.

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1882 Source: Poor House Book of Salaries 1882-1900 in Chester County Archives.

Some workers took their pay in cash. Many others took it in coal or food goods. Some also appeared to take vacation

time, some of it paid for.

Salaries and Positions for those that worked at the Poor House.

Nurse	\$1.50	per/week
Cook in Cantina	\$1.50	per/week
Work on Farm	\$18	per/month
Sewing room	\$2.50	pe/week
Teacher		
Seamstress		
Cook in Large Kitchen		
Cook in Big Kitchen		
Wash House	\$1.50	per/week \$6 per/month

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1883 Source: "Boys were sassy on switchboard" in "Daily Local News" (November 14, 1972), 100. NOTE: Centennial issue n02 of 5 by the Daily Local News

Norm Baker, manager of Bell Telephone's West Chester operation, claimed that the first telephones in West Chester were installed in 1883. The first customer was the "Morning Republican," and others included Hoopes Brothers & Thomas, Dr. John R. McClurg, S. A. Kirk, Jerome Gray, "The Daily Local," and "The Village Recorder". The first switchboard was installed over William Bell's grocery store at 10 E. Gay Street, and Nathan Rambo was the first switchboard operator. Boy operators were phased out around 1900 because they were "too sassy" to customers, often telling them to wait for a connection.

New telephone installations in the early years were so important that they were often covered in front-page news stories. By 1884, there were 50 subscribers and by 1901, there were 175. When the West Chester exchange (Owens) went to dial operation on July 15, 1956, there were 12,000 telephones. In May 1963, "Owens" became "696." As of January 1, 1972, there were 31,202 telephones in West Chester. In 1971, Bell Telephone employed 400 employees in its West Chester facility, with an annual payroll of \$3,283,567.

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1887/07/01 Source: Daily Local News

"The report of the death of five Hungarians in Puddlers' Row, although widely circulated and believed, was incorrect. There is something wrong down there though, scruvy (sp), I am told, and people are giving that section a wide berth. An employee of the Phoenixville Iron Works, whose business frequently takes him to the "Row," told me yesterday that he saw in the army and elsewhere a good deal of filth, but the Huns here beat everything in that direction. Dirt and beer,' he said, they live upon. Why after a wedding down there I saw two wagon loads of empty beer kegs hauled away.'"

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1887/06/30 Source: Daily Local News

"Five Hungarians are found lying dead in Puddlers' Row, three men, a woman, and a child, from some disease of an epidemic form. If it be true the wonder will not be great, for certainly that is a very filthy spot, and the Hungarians are very filthy people."

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1888/11/20 Source: Daily Local News (November 20, 1888)

Officer Win. Gheen provided security at the PRR station on North Matlack Street.

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1888/06/21 Source: Daily Local News (June 21, 1888)

The PRR tracks were raised in one day between the Barnard Street bridge and the North Matlack Street station by a work crew of nearly fifty men.

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

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

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1889/12/30 Source: Daily Local News (December 30, 1889)

Mrs. Lamborn and Joseph Sweney were responsible for cleaning the PRR station at North Matlack Street.

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1889/01/24 Source: Daily Local News (January 24, 1889)

James McFadden was the section boss who directed PRR track operations in West Chester.

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1889/01/16 Source: Daily Local News (January 16, 1889)

Mr. McMichael was the PRR station master at North Matlack Street.

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1889/04/08 Source: Charles Gincley Obituary, in "Daily Local News" (April 8, 1889)

Charles Gincley died. His father was the dog keeper for Professor Bolmar. Charles Gincley was an inventor who had invented a successful carpet stretching machine.

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1890/08/20 Source: Daily Local News

Michael Szaky, age 21, died at Pennsylvania Hospital at 4:30

p.m. yesterday afternoon of burns sustained in an accident at Phoenixville Iron Works. Szaky was a night-workman at the iron smelting works. At 6:30 am he was wheeling a truck with a large bar of red-hot iron on it when he stumbled and fell on the iron. The whole front part of his body was literally scorched before his comrades could rescue him. He was wrapped in cotton batting and sent on the first train to Pennsylvania Hospital, arriving at 8:00 am.

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1890/09/23 Source: Daily Local News

"I think it would pay the Phoenixville Iron Works to give good laborers \$1.50 per day instead of \$1.00 to poor laborers who must of necessity have a boss over every 3 or four of them..."

"The Hungarians have ruined nearly every branch of business in Phoenixville ."

-John O.K. Roberts (sp. Robarts)

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1890/07/07 Source: Daily Local News

Charles Matts, a boarding boss at #2 Puddlers' Row, Phoenixville, was standing at the rear of his house the other night when an Italian or Hungarian threw a stone at him inflicting a long gaping wound in the forehead and fracturing the skull. He was taken to Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. His assailant escaped.

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1890/04/24 Source: Daily Local News

There was a work stoppage at the Puddling department of Phoenixville Iron Works Tuesday, owing to the refusal of puddlers to make 100 more pounds of iron for a heat without extra pay. The company withdrew its order and work will recommence.

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1890/03/11 Source: Daily Local News

Payday brightens up business in town, as well as filled the cages of the borough lockup.

A mulatto hailing from West Chester found by Officer Brownback (and a country Constable named Moyer) at the train station was marched across Gay Street bridge to the "Rivets," where he lingered for the night.

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1890/11/26 Source: Daily Local News

Some of the best and oldest employees of Phoenixville Iron Works were discharged yesterday and many more laid off the

day before. A gentleman from that place said to a reporter:  
"New bosses make new rules. Things are getting very  
unsettled over in our town."

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1890/09/25 Source: Daily Local News (September 25, 1890)

Lamborn, Sweney and D. E. Townsend worked at the PRR  
station.

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1890/07/05 Source: Daily Local News (August 5, 1890)

Frank Patton, the telegraph operator at the PRR station on  
Market Street, was promoted to the Media station and  
replaced by William S. Valentine of Avondale.

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1890/04/22 Source: Daily Local News (April 22, 1890)

J. Kennard Jones returned as the baggage master at the PRR  
station on Market Street, replacing Charles Samples, after  
several weeks temporary assignment as the assistant operator  
in Oxford.

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1890/08/90 Source: Daily Local News

A Polander was sent to jail, charged with drawing from the  
Phoenixville Iron Works the pay of another employee whose  
name was similar to that of the prisoner's. The latter's  
pay amounted to \$3.00, while that of the other fellow's to  
\$17.00.

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1890/12/03 Source: "Huns Fleeing Home and Westward" in "Daily  
Local News" (December 3, 1890).

Almost every outgoing train is carrying away some of the  
recently discharged Hungarians. Some are going back to  
their own country to live out the winter while others are  
hieing westward.

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1890/03/03 Source: Daily Local News

Shop #6 at Phoenixville Iron Works in running day and night  
in order to finish the orders on hand. All hands are  
compelled to work all night.

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1890/01/16 Source: "Brutal Fight Between Two Iron Workers" in  
"Daily Local News" (January 16, 1890).

James Quinn and Patrick McDonald fought with each other  
while working. Quinn's face, hands, and side were literally  
chewed up, and he now lies in Girard House. McDonald

suffered badly damaged eyes. Both are employed in the blast furnace, Quinn as the first helper and McDonald as the weighmaster. Hot iron was being run into the beds and words between the two men led to blows.

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1890/03/20 Source: Daily Local News

A fire occurred on Wednesday morning at #31 Puddlers' Row, owned by Phoenixville Iron Works. The house was occupied by Hungarians, who carelessly dumped hot ashes in the cellar. Loss is not known, but houses in the "Row" are not costly buildings.

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1890s Source: Shirley Macauley, "W. Chester's squares failed as rectangles" in "Daily Local News" (November 13, 1972), 84. NOTE: Centennial issue n01 of 5 by the Daily Local News

Wilmer Hoopes owned one of the first automobiles in West Chester. "It was a Franklin, and like all of its contemporaries, spent more time in the blacksmith shop than on the road."

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1891/09/03 Source: Plaintiff's Statement: Elizabeth M. McGlone vs. The Phoenixville Iron Works at the Chester County Archives

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

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1891/12/26 Source: Statement of Appeal: Elizabeth M. McGlone vs. The Phoenixville Iron Works at the Chester County Archives

The appeal of the verdict against Phoenixville Iron Works in the above case notes that the appeal is not filed "for purposes of delay, but because he firmly believes injustice has been done". The appeal is signed by David Reeves, President of Phoenixville Iron Works .

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1891/09/03 Source: Plaintiff's Statement: Elizabeth M. McGlone vs. The Phoenixville Iron Works at the Chester County Archives

In her statement, Elizabeth M. McGlone claims that her husband John McGlone was killed through negligence on the part of the defendant on 1891/06/25. Elizabeth M. McGlone



1891/12/05 Source: Daily Local News

When running full Phoenixville Iron Works employs upwards of 3,000 men. The company owned nearly all of the town of 13,000 people, who depend on the company for support.

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1892/08/01-1893/02/21 Source: Chester County Appearance Docket #55, 240

Mary Steinberger vs. The Phoenixville Iron Works at the Chester County Archives

On 1892/08/01, Mary Steinberger filed a complaint in court against the Phoenixville Iron Works for the wrongful death of her husband, John B. Steinberger. Defendant Phoenixville Iron Works pleads "Not Guilty" 1892/08/19. A jury is impaneled 1893/02/20. On 1893/02/21 the court directs a non-suit to be entered, and judgment is entered accordingly. (Reference is then given to Judgment Docket Y2, 562. Chester County Archives does not have this item.)

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1892/11/25 Source: Daily Local News (November 25, 1892)

A train struck a horse-drawn meat wagon belonging to S. A. Conradt at the Union Street grade level crossing. Although neither Mr. Conradt nor his horse were injured, the wagon was destroyed. Charles Riley Jr. was an eyewitness.

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1892/11/25 Source: Daily Local News (November 25, 1892)

Mr. Finnegan's hours as gatekeeper at the Market Street RR crossing were extended to after the departure of the 22h27 train to Philadelphia. That meant he worked more than 16 hours each day.

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1892/12/14 Source: Daily Local News

A 10% decrease was declared by Phoenixville Iron Works in all mills and shops of the plant except the Puddling Mill, where wages will decrease from \$3.25 to \$3.00 per ton. Common laborers will hereafter receive \$.95 cents instead of \$1.02 per day. Reason given is "depression in the business".

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1892/11/14-1893/11/13 Source: Chester County Appearance Docket #55, 73

Elizabeth M. McGlone vs. The Phoenixville Iron Works at the Chester County Archives

After continuances on 1892/11/14, 1893/02/13, and 1893/05/08, the plaintiff in open court elects to suffer a non-suit on 1893/11/13, and judgment of non-suit is entered accordingly. (Reference is then given to Judgment Docket

Z2, 206. Chester County Archives does not have this item.)

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1892/08/01 Source: Plaintiff's Statement: Mary Steinberger  
vs. The Phoenixville Iron Works at the Chester  
County Archives

In her complaint, Mary Steinberger claims that her husband John B. Steinberger was injured through the negligence of the defendant on 1892/02/18. John B. Steinberger was injured when a chain connected to a hydraulic riveter broke, causing a 70 foot long, heavy iron girder (weighing about 1 ton) to fall upon John, breaking his legs, etc. John died of the effects of the accident at Pennsylvania Hospital 1893/02/19. Mary Steinberger claims that the defendant did not use due and proper care in and about its premises, and did not furnish her husband John B. Steinberger with a safe and secure piece of equipment as it was its duty to do so.

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1892/08/01 Source: Plaintiff's Statement: Mary Steinberger  
vs. The Phoenixville Iron Works at the Chester  
County Archives

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

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1892/04/02 Source: Daily Local News (April 2, 1892)

Jesse Kelley, a former "hackman," moved to East Nields Street east of Matlack Street. He planned to open a restaurant at Lenape.

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1892/03/23 Source: Daily Local News (March 23, 1892)

Mr. Gillingham was the ticket agent at the PRR station.

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1892/11/26 Source: Daily Local News (November 26, 1892)

Frank Burnett was head of the PRR station fire company.

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1892/04/22 Source: Daily Local News (April 22, 1892)

John Ryan worked for Patrick King directing the workmen who graded South Franklin Street through King's property. King expected the borough to annex the property and extend South Franklin Street in the summer 1892.

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1892/11/10 Source: Daily Local News (November 10, 1892)

Mr. Finnegan, the gatekeeper for the PRR crossing at Market Street, worked more than 12 hours each day. He began before the first train left at 06h00, and stayed until after the 18h00 train arrived from Philadelphia. That meant the crossing was unguarded for the last four hours of the day.

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1892/07/14 Source: Daily Local News (July 14, 1892)

Clement Proctor of West Chester got the contract to whitewash the PRR station.

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1893/12/08 Source: Daily Local News (December 8, 1893)

The news agent of the PRR station on Market Street was Townsend.

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1893/02/15 Source: Daily Local News

Thirty colored laborers from Harrisburg, who came here 3 weeks ago to take the places of dissatisfied Huns at Phoenixville Iron Works, quit work yesterday over a misunderstanding as to wages.

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1893/11/11 Source: Daily Local News (November 11, 1893)

People scavenged coal lumps at night using lanterns, from around the locomotive turntable located at Chestnut and North Matlack Streets. They were tempted by the regular coal pile nearby, but railway guards kept them away.

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1893/09/21 Source: Daily Local News (September 21, 1893)

The conductor on the PRR Media Branch was Miller.

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1893/01/28 Source: Daily Local News

A carload of colored men from the South arrived in Phoenixville Iron Works yesterday to take the place of striking Hungarians. The latter were working for \$ .95 cents per day.

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1893/02/15 Source: Daily Local News

"We would much rather have the colored men than the Hungarians as citizens," remarked a resident of Phoenixville Iron Works. "The Hungarians are of no benefit to anyone

other than themselves. They only patronize the two stores owned by fellow Hungarians, not spending one cent on our native merchants excepting the liquor dealers."

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1893/01/27 Source: Daily Local News

The Phoenixville Iron Works of Phoenixville has decided to employ no more Hungarian labor. Places are being filled by colored men from the South. The Hungarians have been receiving \$ .95 cents a day and struck for an advance.

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1893/02/15 Source: Daily Local News

Mrs. Steinberger, of Phoenixville, is in West Chester today to attend court. She is suing Phoenixville Iron Works for damages sustained in the loss of her husband. While at work in shop 6 about two years ago, a chain of a crane used to hoist a heavy beam broke, and Mr. Steinberger was crushed to death. His wife therefore brings this action to recover damages for his loss.

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1893 Source: Shirley Macauley, "W. Chester's squares failed as rectangles" in "Daily Local News" (November 13, 1972), 84.  
NOTE: Centennial issue n01 of 5 by the Daily Local News

The Chester County Hospital began operation in a pair of small brick buildings on the north side of Marshall Square in 1893.

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1893/05/18 Source: Daily Local News (May 18, 1893)

Terence Finnegan, the gatekeeper at the PRR crossing on Market Street, now had help from Daniel Clancy, who worked the twelve hour night shift. The article noted that Finnegan "uses no tobacco or whiskey in any form."

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1893/07/06 Source: Daily Local News (July 6, 1893)

West Chester Streets Commissioner Eachus led an inspection of the East Nields Street extension. At the time, a gang of mostly Irish laborers were clearing brush and briars from the "jungle" on the Pennsylvania Railroad property. They obtained fill dirt to raise East Nields Street to the level of the railroad from an excavation for an alley on property owned by P. J. Jefferis, which ran from Matlack to Walnut Streets between Nields and Lacy Streets.

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1893/08/25 Source: Daily Local News (August 25, 1893)

The superintendent of the PRR station on Market Street was W. A. McMichael.

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1893/01/04 Source: Daily Local News

The Hungarians employed in Phoenixville Iron Works are leaving the borough daily, but others are arriving to take the places of the dissatisfied ones. There are many--very many--who are not willing to work for \$ .93 cents per day (as a result of a 10% pay reduction that went into effect on 1892/12/15), and yet there are scores of others ready to take their place.

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1893/01/13 Source: Daily Local News

The Phoenixville Iron Works has decided to charge all tenants keeping more than 4 boarders \$2.00 per month extra to help pay for extra wear and tear of their houses. This will almost entirely apply to the Hungarian element.

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1893/02/20 Source: Court Testimony: Mary Steinberger vs. The  
Phoenixville Iron Works, 5-6, at the Chester  
County  
Archives

Upon questioning during the trial, Mr. B.F. Johnson admits to being in charge of the work gang to which John Steinberger was assigned. The gang consisted of the following six men: Michael Durnan, James McCoy, Charles Kennedy, himself (B.F. Johnson), John Steinberger, and a Hungarian whose name he does not know

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1893/02/20 Source: Court Testimony: Mary Steinberger vs. The  
Phoenixville Iron Works, p.1-4at the Chester  
County  
Archives

Upon questioning during the trial, Mary Steinberger states that her husband received wages of \$.11 cents per hour while working approximately 12 hours per day (6 A.M. to 6 P.M.) in Riveter Shop #6.

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1893/02/21-1893/04/24 Source: Chester County Appearance Docket  
#55, 240. Mary Steinberger vs. The  
Phoenixville Iron Works  
at the Chester County Archives

The following information was also given after the non-suit entry: Eo die rule to show cause why judgment of non-suit shall not be stricken off returnable 1893/03/13, filed 1893/03/06.  
Transcript  
testimony filed 1893/03/13, argued c.a.v. 1893/04/24. Rule

discharged Eo die order of Court filed.

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1893/12/20 Source: Daily Local News (December 20, 1893)

Two workers were fired at the PRR freight station, Eugene Talley and "one of the car cleaners." That left only Frank Burnett to handle all freight loading and unloading.

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1893/01/02 Source: Daily Local News

The Phoenixville Iron Works has restarted operations after the holidays. Of 700 or more Hungarians employed at Phoenixville Iron Works, about 3/4 have left their jobs. The Hungarians are first class laborers in every respect and work quite hard.

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1893/12/15 Source: Daily Local News (December 15, 1893)

The resident cleaning woman of the PRR station on Market Street was Mrs. Kate Lamborn.

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1894/08/18 Source: Daily Local News

William Develin, a worker at Phoenixville Iron Works steel plant, was helping to land a 5,000 lb. red-hot ingot when his tongs slipped. He fell back, and the ingot fell on his leg and remained there for almost 3 minutes. The limb below the knee was practically burned away, and physicians at Stratford Hospital were obliged to amputate at once.

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1894/10/15 Source: Daily Local News (October 15, 1894)

David E. Townsend was the ticket collector at the PRR station.

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1894/11/06 Source: Daily Local News (November 6, 1894)

George Guss, the stationmaster at the PRR station, left to work for an electrical firm in Philadelphia, after two years in West Chester.

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1894/11/12 Source: Daily Local News (November 12, 1894)

E. Harvey Hummell was the new baggage master at the PRR station on Market Street.

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1894/11/16 Source: Daily Local News (November 16, 1894)

Josiah Burnett was head of the freight warehouse at the PRR

station. He was assisted by Frank Burnett and Isaac Smiley.

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1894/09/04 Source: Daily Local News (September 4, 1894)

The conductor on the PRR Frazer Branch was Joseph Keech, and the baggage master of the PRR station on Market Street was Jesse Wilson.

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1894/07/11 Source: Daily Local News (July 11, 1894)

Another train operated under the control of conductor Shaw and baggage man Isaac Jones. Shaw was replaced by John Kerwin. Also, George Mendenhall was on sick leave because his foot was run over by a milk car.

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1894/01/28 Source: C.C.D. (January 28, 1894)

Thomas C. Hogue advertised his grocery store in West Chester. His prices included: three cans of corn for 25>, a can of tomatoes for 10>, flour for between \$5.00-5.60/pound, except "Snowflake" brand flour at \$3.80/pound, cornmeal at 10>/half peck (1 peck = 8 dry quarts), butter at 25-32>/pound, coffee at 25>/pound, sugar at 4>/pound, ham at 12> pound, smoked beef at 20>/pound, and lard at 11>/pound.

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1894/08/01 Source: Deeds to Poor House in Chester County Archives.

In a letter to C.H. Howell, C.B.Swisher stated that he will not run for the position of Director of the Poor due to "I am quite unwell."

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1894/11/08 Source: Daily Local News (November 8, 1894)

Mr. Rigg of Clifton briefly served as baggage master at the PRR station after George Guss, but gave up after a few weeks due to illness.

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1894/03/28 Source: Daily Local News (March 28, 1894)

Miller Snare was retired from the PRR by this time. He was in bad health (and according to the death register, died in the following month). William Munshower represented the Union News Company at the station.

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1894/05/03 Source: Daily Local News (May 3, 1894)

James Wallace, an ex-policeman and ex-employee of the Customs House in Philadelphia, replaced Miller Snare as the general assistant and messenger at the PRR station. The

station master was still W. A. McMichael, and other employees included H. A. Gillingham, Walter Keech, conductor Edward Miller and baggage master George Guss.

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1894/07/17 Source: Daily Local News (July 17, 1894)

Howard A. Gillingham was the ticket agent at the PRR station. Clark Pyle was the "night operator." This article also mentioned George Guss, Mrs. Lamborn, and the baggage master Jesse Wilson.

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1894/06/21 Source: Daily Local News (June 21, 1894)

One train operated with conductor Marsh, baggage master Frank S. Wetsel and flagman Robert Cunningham.

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1894/05/19 Source: Daily Local News (May 19, 1894)

William Gheen was a ticket agent at the PRR station.

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1894/08/20 Source: Daily Local News (August 20, 1894)

The workers at the PRR station made preparations for "the handling of trunks next Monday when the Normalites return." (Normalites were the students and faculty at the West Chester Normal School.)

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1895/09/08.ex.lab. Source: E County 1825-96, Volume II.

Edward Murry complained of a numbness of his hands and feet. He worked in a tool store. He lost all use of his hands and had to be fed like a child. Doctors found him dead and said he died of paralysis of the brain.

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1895/05/25 Source: Daily Local News (May 25, 1895)

H. Jesse Wilson was promoted to conductor on the PRR.

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1895/06/24 Source: Daily Local News (June 24, 1895)

William Gheen was the assistant to ticket agent Gillingham. McMichael was still the PRR station master, and two other employees were named Wallace and Sweney.

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1895/03/27 Source: Daily Local News (March 27, 1895)

PRR Conductor Milton Shaw. Conductor Marsh and Engineer John Richards.

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1895/03/20 Source: "Last Night Was Rather Cool for Sleeping  
Out of Doors" in "Daily Local News" (March 20,  
1895)

This article contained an anonymous conversation with a  
blue-collar laborer from Chester. He took the train to West  
Chester and slept outdoors upon arrival. He had heard that  
he might get work at a nursery.

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1896/05/20 Source: Daily Local News in Chester County  
Historical Society

W. Harmer Davis become the new Steward of the Chester County  
Home.

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1896/05/11 Source: Daily Local News in Chester County  
Historical Society

Caleb Brinton Swisher dies on 1896/05/10 after a short but  
sever illness. Was the Steward of the Chester County Poor  
House from 1886/04/00 until his death. He was born in  
Lancaster County in 1852 and lived in New Jersey. He  
married there and then moved back into Chester County. His  
first wife died about a year after he became the Steward of  
the Home. He married again on 1895/05/16 to Mary Meredith  
Strode in a Friends ceremony. He had an attack of Grip days  
before his weeding.

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1898/03/07 Source: Daily Local News (March 7, 1898)

Josiah Burnett was an invalid after 25 years working for the  
PRR.

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1899/04/05 Source: "Daily Local News" (April 5, 1899).

Names of men who worked for the PRR: Josiah Burnett (JJ:  
probably junior, since Josiah Burnett was an invalid in  
1898/03/07) was the "head man," assisted by Millard Snare,  
Michael Reagan and John Ryan.

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1900/08/23 Source: Daily Local News (August 23, 1900)

Elwood Datchell, the baggage agent at the PRR station on  
Market Street, was transferred to West Grove. He was  
replaced by Mr. Eckley, who came from West Grove.

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1900/05/17 Source: Daily Local News

An accident occurred last night at the works of the

Phoenixville Iron Works by which Roland B. Johnson, 35 years old, lost his life. Johnson, with several other men, was working on a large 60-foot girder, which had been insecurely propped up. The huge piece of steel toppled over, striking Johnson in the side, breaking several of his ribs and fatally injuring him. After being struck he ran about 20 feet, then fell like a corpse.

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1902/05/31 Source: Daily Local News (May 31, 1902)

Christian Kautz was the gatekeeper for the PRR at the Market Street crossing.

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1902/11/20 Source: Daily Local News (November 20, 1902)

Small boys congregated at the PRR station and West Chester trolley stations to earn money carrying baggage for returning teachers. At least one woman reported that her baggage was lost as a result.

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1906/06/11 Source: "Death at Sconnelltown" in "Daily Local News" (June 11, 1906)

John Carey Jr. and his son, Harry Reagan Carey, were killed last Saturday by lightning as they waited in a shelter near the railway station at Lenape. John Carey was employed at the "Griffith enterprise" (owned by Alfred Taylor and W. A. Griffith), and was active in the Republican Party, although he had recently shifted his support to the reform party and become a member of the Lincoln-Roosevelt Club.

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1907/03/16 Source: Daily Local News (March 16, 1907)

John Malin was the foreman for P. J. Jefferis' work crew that constructed eight houses on East Nields Street.

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1909/03/20 Source: Daily Local News (March 20, 1909)

Thomas C. Hogue, agent, rented a house for Elizabeth McAllister, owner, to John Raub, a foreman at the Apple Plumbing Company in West Chester.

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1917/08/17 Source: Daily Local News (August 17, 1917)

John Doran, a widower, died. He was survived by his son Lawrence, an engineer, and his daughter, Mrs. Ellen Steadman. John Doran was a retired street cleaner for West Chester borough who was in poor health. He was also a member of St. Agnes Catholic church.

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1922/03/30      Source: 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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1923/11/02      Source: Daily Local News (November 2, 1923)

The 300 block of South Adams Street, opposite the PRR freight station, was inhabited by "colored" people. Until recently, the entire block of houses was owned by General Henry R. Guss, but in recent years, many different people had purchased houses in this block.

The oldest resident of the block was Joshua Pierce, who identified himself as "the only colored Joshua Pierce in town." He was 67 years old and had worked for Colonel Guss, Lin Lewis, Al Ingram, and George F. Townsend. In 1923, he still worked for Joseph Wertz, but also had his own wood yard. Pierce was quoted as saying the only thing wrong with his block was "a lot of houses are owned by people in Philadelphia, Media and other places, who do not keep them fixed up the way they should. Our location is good and our people are good."

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1930s/early      Source: Leah Schechter, editor, I JUST WANTED TO  
MAKE A CONTRIBUTION: THE LIFE OF WALTER T. KERWIN  
(West Chester: Henderson High School AP History,  
1992), 3. CCHS#E745.K39

When he was in high school, Walter T. Kerwin (Jr) worked in local mushroom houses for \$1.52 a day. (JJ: This must have been about 1934.)

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1930s      Source: Michael Vircsik, Phoenixville resident,  
interview  
by

Daniel G. Cleary (Phoenixville, April 19, 1996).

Michael Vircsik was born at #10 Hall street (Cottage Row) in 1919. His father came to America in 1902 from Hungary(?) and was a worker at the iron mill, making about \$.10 cents per hour. His father worked a shift lasting 11-12 hours each day of the week and 1/2 day on Saturday. Michael was unsure, but estimated the monthly rent at Hall street at \$8.00. While living there in the early 1920s his family had no plumbing or running water, and burned coal for heat and fuel. He had one brother and 2 older sisters, with another brother(?) dying as an infant.

Michael described the neighborhood as having a high level of social cohesiveness, primarily due to the language barrier.

Many immigrants came to America expecting to make some money and then leave, so there was little incentive to learn English. As a result immigrants tended to associate with others from their home countries. He also noted there tended to be large families, and that alcohol consumption was prevalent.

Michael noted that women would carry soup/hot food to their husbands at the factory during lunch/break times. Children would also accompany them, providing an opportunity for families to spend time together despite the father's long work hours.

For extra money, the family would take borders into their home. Michael's mother also worked as a maid and took in extra laundry, while the entire family would contribute to piecemeal sewing projects (ex. stitching collars in women's shirts). Children would also collect coal that had fallen off of railroad cars. In general, families had to "scratch to make an existence". They were "dominated by the company," but they really didn't know any better. In Europe, they were dominated by the aristocracy. Here, it was by the company. People were accustomed to it and therefore probably never felt oppressed or taken advantage of.

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1930s Source: 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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1931 Source: "Mushrooms face 58 failures" in "Daily Local News" (November 14, 1972), 13. NOTE: Centennial issue n02 of 5 by the Daily Local News

The Mushroom Growers Cooperative Association was formed in 1931 under the leadership of William Maule. Even before that, Edward H. Jacob founded a mushroom firm in West Chester that became, after his death, part of the Grocery Store Products Company. The Borden Company had an interest in the Brandywine Mushroom Corporation of West Chester.

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1937/10/27 Source: Coatesville Record (October 27, 1937)

J. Walter Keech retired from the PRR after 46 years. He started as a clerk in West Chester on 1891/06/01, and was promoted to billing clerk, accountant, chief clerk and station agent. From 1917-1924, he served as station master at Oxford, where he presided over the worst accident of his career when a passenger train collided with a line of

standing locomotives. In 1924, he returned to West Chester, and in 1931, he was promoted to passenger and freight agent. He was the son of the late Joseph C. Keech, a Coatesville railroader and former member of the state legislature.

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1940s Source: Daily Local News advertisement

The Oriole Tea Room was located at 621 South Walnut Street and operated by Gertrude Taylor (Mrs. Warren C. Taylor).

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

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

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1945/02/17 Source: Daily Local News (February 17, 1945)

Joseph Carter supervised the grading and distribution of fill in the "Riggins Lot" just south of Goose Creek. There were plans to build a cannery there to supplement the cannery already in operation along the railway in Willistown. The fill came from rubbish collections in the neighborhoods adjoining Goose Creek.

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1946/05/22 Source: Announcement in Daily Local News 1946/05/22

Alonzo Harvey's "Saddlery Shop" opened for business at 539 South Franklin Street. It mentioned that "Al Harvey [was] formerly with M. S. Yearsley & Sons."

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1952/07/11 Source: Daily Local News (July 11, 1952)

The first diesel locomotive reached West Chester.

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1953/06/18 Source: Daily Local News (June 18, 1953)

In the obituary for Raymond O. Washburn, it was disclosed that he had been the "New England district manager" for the ESCO Cabinet Co. for 28 years (in other words, since 1925). Thus, Ann Gincley's husband worked for a large company. Other clippings showed that ESCO owned the Sharpless Separator Works in West Chester.

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1959/12/09 Source: Daily Local News (December 9, 1959)

Levi Gincley died on 1959/12/08 at the age of 71 (1888-1959). He was retired from the Brandywine Mushroom Company.

Levi Gincley died in his home at 390 E. Niels Street. He was survived by his wife Helen Harvey Gincley and the following children (presumably in order by age): Charles, Martha (wife of James S. Stanley), Dorothy, Robert, Harvey, Betty, Francis, Alonzo and Florence. Another son, Earl, was already dead (see 1956 auto accident). Levi also had a brother, Francis Ryan, a sister Mrs. Oliver Lease of York, and 21 grandchildren.

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1965/03/22      Source: Daily Local News (March 22, 1965)

A. Roy Ferrier of 437 East Niels Street died on 1965/03/22. He worked for the last five years as a carpenter at Winterthur. The obituary listed four children and eleven grandchildren, but did not give his age.

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1968 Source: Daily Local News advertisement

The Oriole Tea Room closed at 621 South Walnut Street. It was operated by Gertrude Taylor (Mrs. Warren C. Taylor).

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