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06 History of the West Chester Railroad from 1879-1882

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History of the West Chester Railroad from 1879-1882

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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1879/08/08 "The Pennsylvania Malvern Branch: The New Order of Things Begun" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 8, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

The PRR took possession of the old WCRR line from Malvern to West Chester on August 8, 1879. The first train to arrive in West Chester was pulled by locomotive No. 936 carrying engineer [Joshua] King, conductor Keech and fireman Timothy Moran to West Chester. They were accompanied by a brakeman and Mr. Black, the superintendent of the motive power of the

PRR Eastern Division. They also brought workmen and two carloads of lumber with which to construct a temporary depot on Walnut Street. Until the temporary depot was finished in about a week's time, trains used the old depot on Market Street.

The old schedule remained in effect until the following Monday.

There was a dispute between the PRR and the Borough of West Chester about the location of the temporary depot, which was solved after a meeting between officials on both sides. The PRR contingent included civil engineer T. A. Roberts, Superintendent Lockard, George W. Paxson, and Supervisor of the Eastern Division John McGraw. McGraw was appointed to supervise the new line for the PRR, and construction of the depot was encharged to boss carpenter W. K. Beard.

1879/08/14 "The Pennsylvania Branch--About the Passenger Rates" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 14, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

The PRR decided to set its passenger fares between West Chester and Philadelphia at the same rate as that on the WC&PRR, according to PRR Vice President Roberts. Roberts added that it was only because of passengers desiring to travel west from West Chester that the line was to be kept open while the improvements were underway.

1879/08/15 "Going by the New Route" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 15, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The Pennsylvania Railroad reduced the price of passage from West Chester to Philadelphia over the PRR-Frazer, and drew passenger business away from the WC&PRR.

1879/08/16 "The Result" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 16, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Mr. Preston D. Lewis of Pleasant Grove, Ton Road Station, sold land to the Pennsylvania Railroad for their new line from Frazer to West Chester.

1879/08/18 "West Chester Branch of Penna DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 18, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

The PRR announced its plans for the improvement of the WCRR

line. It planned to straighten the curve near McCall's station, straighten the track between Woodland Station and August John's schoolhouse, and relay the track with steel rails. On Sunday, fifteen carloads of railroad ties were distributed along the line.

1879/08/20 "Ties on the West Chester Railroad" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 20, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

PRR inspectors counted 33,000 ties on the WCRR and concluded that only 2,000 were so defective that they needed to be replaced.

1879/08/23 "Awarded" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 23, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Mr John Keller of Lancaster received the contract to grade and build the new railroad between Frazer and Woodland. He will have to move about 35,000 yards of soil (half fill; half cut) and complete the work in sixty days. The old rails from Woodland to Malvern will continue to carry freight and serve as a siding.

1879/08/29 "Freight Rates on the Malvern Branch" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 29, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

The PRR instituted the following rates for freight shipped from West Chester to Philadelphia on the PRR-Malvern branch line, according to Assistant General Freight Agent, Mr. Griffeths.

Class	cost	weight
First	\$0.16	cts
Second	\$0.14	cts
Third	\$0.11	cts
Fourth	\$0.08	cts
A	\$1.00	ton
B	\$0.80	ton
Coal	\$0.40	ton (to any point between Kirkland and West Chester).

1879/08/30 "At Work" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 30, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Twenty-five men were at work on the portion of the PRR-Frazer between Frazer and Woodland.

1879/09/02 "The New Brakeman" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 2, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

Hugh J. Fox was transferred from the PRR Main Line to the PRR-Malvern branch, replacing brakeman Lack.

1879/09/03 "Telegraph for the West Chester Railroad" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 3, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The Pennsylvania Railroad had plans to construct a telegraph line along the PRR-Frazer right-of-way from West Chester to Frazer. The project would require 300 poles to cover nine miles. (160 feet between poles).

1879/09/04 "Straightening Worthington's Curve" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 4, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Mr. John Grant of WC straightened the rails at "Worthington's curve" near McCall's station (later known as Fern Hill Station). The main job was excavating about 7000 cubic yards of earth using men, horses and carts. "This will give employment to a large number of men, and Mr. Grant proposes to employ those living in West Chester and vicinity--those who have homes here and are interested in the prosperity and advancement of our Borough."

1879/09/08 "Commenced Work" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 8, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

John Grant began work this morning to straighten Worthington's curve. His crew had about 35 men and the work was observed by about sixty onlookers.

1879/09/09 "A Chance for our Contractors" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 9, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Pennsylvania Railroad called for bids on different portions of the PRR-Frazer construction work, due by 9am on September 15.

1879/09/10 "Laying Steel Rails" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 10, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad,

Frazer Branch"

The Pennsylvania Railroad had already replaced a half mile of WCRR track with steel rails "at and near Woodland station" and planned to replace all other rails that were not to be altered for other reasons (such as straightening Worthington's curve).

1879/09/15 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 15, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

About eighty men, all from West Chester, were at work rebuilding the PRR-Frazer.

1879/09/15 "West Chester Railroad Meeting" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 5, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

A meeting of stockholders of the old WCRR was called to authorize a mortgage to issue company bonds worth \$75,000, and to lease the railroad to the PRR.

1879/09/15 "The First Pay Car" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 15, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

On Saturday, workers on the PRR-Malvern received their first pay from a pay train that also carried Superintendent Lockard, who inspected the work.

1879/09/24 "Contract Completed" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 24, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Today, John Grant completed the grading for the new track at Worthington's Curve near McCall's Station, in fifteen days instead of the allotted thirty days.

1879/09/30 "Postponed" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 30, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

There was a report that the Pennsylvania Railroad had changed its plans and instead of finishing the new line from Frazer to Woodland, intended to replace the rails from Malvern to Woodland with steel rails.

1879/10/10 "Stopped Work" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 10,

1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer
Branch"

Workers on the PRR-Frazer on the Wells property near
Kirkland were ordered to stop their work until damages were
assessed.

1879/10/16 "Reducing a Curve" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October
16, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer
Branch"

The Pennsylvania Railroad obtained a strip of land from
Hoopes Brothers & Thomas Nursery, west of the convent, so
they could reduce the curve from ten to four degrees.

1879/11/06 "Change of Conductors" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS
(November 6, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

Charles Romans, a conductor on the PRR Main Line, was
transferred to the PRR-Malvern and assigned to the "fast
train" that left West Chester first in the morning, made a
roundtrip between Philadelphia and Paoli during the day, and
returned to West Chester in the evening. He was replaced on
the Main Line by Conductor Sims so that Sims could get home
two or three nights a week. Conductor Romans was the
brother of a member of the Philadelphia City Council. JJ:
Note: an article dated December 2, 1879, describes the
original transfer of these two conductors, but spells their
names as Rowan and Seins.

1879/11/06 "Straightening the Curve" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS
(November 6, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer
Branch"

The workers on the PRR-Frazer moved the curve a few feet
closer to the brick kilns on the edge of town.

1879/11/07 "To Be Ready by Christmas" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS
(November 7, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer
Branch"

The PRR-Frazer branch should be finished by Christmas. The
Pennsylvania Railroad had begun to settle the damage claim
presented by Benjamin Kugler and a new one, for damage to
his woodlands, by Mr. Lockwood.

1879/11/10 "Nearly Completed" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November

10, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer
Branch"

The work of straightening Worthington's curve was nearly completed next to the Hoopes Brothers and Thomas nursery at the edge of the borough. The work consisted of leveling a knoll along the nearby carriage path that passed along the edge of the nursery, and using it to build an embankment that widened the curve.

1879/11/11 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 11, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Mr. Costigan and Mr. Baldwin were contractors on section 4 of the new portion of the PRR-Frazer. They were nearly finished in the area of the Richard White bridge on a road leading to the Lancaster Pike. Mr. Quinn was the masonry contractor on sections 3 and 4. He began work last Tuesday.

1879/11/12 "Increasing Their Force" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 12, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Contractors on the portion of the PRR-Frazer between Woodland and Frazier recently added 125 new men. They expected to complete all the grading for the new track by New Year's Day.

1879/11/12 "The Estimated Cost of Relaying the . C. Banch of the P. R. R." in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 12, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The estimated cost of materials used to relay the PRR-Frazer with 60-lb steel rails and new ties, not including any alterations to the route, was \$7,800 (The distance was 6 miles from West Chester to Frazier, there were 2400 ties/mile, etc. The complete clipping provides a detailed breakdown). The labor cost for tracklayers and ditching was \$400/mile. Stone ballast would cost an additional \$17,160. The total cost for relaying and straightening was \$55,100.

1879/11/13 "The P DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 13, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Forty horse carts and 120 men were working at the Frazer end of the line to finish the new section of the PRR-Frazer by January 1, 1880. John Grant's work at Kirkland was nearly

finished. When the rails were finished, the owners of the Pennsylvania Railroad expected to be able to operate an express train between Frazer and West Chester in nine minutes (over 6.5 miles at a speed of roughly 45mph).

1879/11/16 "Work on the Pennsylvania Railroad" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 17, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Many West Chester citizens took advantage of good weather to walk out and view the construction sites along the PRR-Frazer. The work went more quickly than anyone expected.

1879/11/24 "Notes on the W. C. Branch of the P. R. R." in (November 24, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

In addition to ballasting the entire line, the Pennsylvania Railroad constructed milk stations along the line so that farmers could ship their milk to Philadelphia, and added switches for new sidings (including one that used the old track at Worthington's curve). The work was slowed by the recent fall in temperature, but the author predicted completion and full operation by April 1, 1880.

1879/11/27 "Curve finished" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 27, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The Pennsylvania Railroad completed a siding from the PRR-Frazer to the main warehouse of the Hoopes Brothers & Thomas Nursery.

1879/12/02 "Change of Conductors" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 2, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

Mr. Harry Seins, conductor on the fast train from West Chester to Philadelphia, returned to his post, replacing conductor Charles Rowan. He expects to move his family to West Chester. Rowan was assigned to one of the train on the Main Line, and left many friends in West Chester. JJ: Note: an article dated November 6, 1879, describes the original transfer of these two conductors, but spells their names as Romans and Sims.

1879/12/04 "New Conductor" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 5, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

Conductor Isaac Hampton replaced Henry Rimms on the PRR-Malvern. Rimms was transferred to a train operating between Philadelphia and Harrisburg.

1879/12/05 "The Penn the track" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 5, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Mr. Robert Harbison was conductor on the ballast train on the PRR-Frazer. He provided the following figures for material costs of construction of 30 feet of rail: two steel rails (\$40), sixteen oak crossties (\$12), ten perch of stone ballast @87/ctw. (\$8.70), total (\$60.70). Spikes and labor are additional.

Mr. Jacob Andrews will begin to install a switch west of Kirkland this week and lay a new line from Kirkland to Woodland.

1879/12/08 "Change of Name" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 8, 1879), in CCHS clippings file "West Goshen Township, Transportation, McCall's Station."

Last Friday, the name of McCall's Station was changed to Fern Hill Station.

1879/12/26 "Nearly Completed" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 26, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

John Grant's crew worked from October 8, 1879 to the present, and will soon be finished.

1879/12/29 "New Telegraph" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 31, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

The PRR completed its telegraph line along the PRR-Malvern. As of December 30, the Walnut Street station in West Chester had its own direct telegraph connection and no longer needed to rely on the Western Union telegraph to send messages.

1879/12/29 "Local News" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 30, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

The PRR began to lay steel rails near the Convent in West Chester on the PRR-Malvern.

1879/12/30 "Will Leave Us" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 30, 1879), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

Brakeman Hugh Foy of the PRR-Malvern was reassigned to West Philadelphia as a brakeman on extra trains, following an accident which cut off one of his fingers. He had many friends in West Chester.

1879-1880 "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 the PRR acquired the West Chester Railroad, a new passenger shed was erected on the east side of the station [1879-1880]. There were more improvements after the "fire of 1888 or thereabouts" and later, a new freight station was built on East Union Street. At that time, the old station became devoted entirely to passenger and express business.

1880 James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch" in THE HIGH LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring 1988), 25.

In 1880, the WC&PRR built a new engine house, passenger station, and freight station for \$21,049.29.

1880/01/03 "Round Trip" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 3, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The PRR-Frazer began to sell full and half-fare round-trip tickets between West Chester and Philadelphia.

1880/01/20 "Par and Interest" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 20, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Stock holders who had purchased a portion of the \$60,000 stock issue by the Pennsylvania Railroad to finance the improvements to the PRR-Frazer were easily able to sell their shares for their full value plus accrued interest.

1880/01/21 "Finished" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 21, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

John Grant's work crew completed the grading of the right-of-way on the PRR-Frazer between Woodland and Kirkland. Track-laying was due to commence immediately.

1880/02/02 "Branch Railroad News" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS
(February 2, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer
Branch"

A reporter and friends walked the entire length of the track and described the work at each location: 1) Between Patton and Kirkland stations, replacement of a private bridge ("Pratt's Bridge") with a modern structure. 2) At Kirkland, 25 men at work on 3/4 mile of new track to smooth the curve, plus a new bridge and ballast, all to be finished in a few days 3) the bridge over Ship road was finished, but the western end was not yet connected 4) Ton Road bridge over the tracks near Woodland was not yet underway, but material had been brought to the site 5) the last bridge below Ton Road was finished. In summary, the new track from Woodland to Frazer was ready except for the half mile connecting the Ship Road Bridge to Woodland Station.

Mr. Joseph Shoewalter was fired by the Pennsylvania Railroad last Saturday. He had been responsible for track maintenance on the old WCRR. Track workers refused to work on Sunday (08/01/1880) in protest over the firing.

1880/02/10 "Out on the Branch Railroad" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS
(February 10, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer
Branch"

An unidentified man living near Glen Loch reported that the work crew of about thirty men on the Frazer branch of the PRR-Frazer had finished and departed.

1880/02/12 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 12, 1880)

John Grant of West Chester got the contract for excavation and paving around the new PRR station located on N. Matlack Street between Gay and Chestnut Streets.

1880/02/14 "Bridge at Woodland" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February
14, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer
Branch"

"J. A. Bricker, foreman for R. W. Gibson, contractor and builder from West Philadelphia," visited the PR-WC to inspect the site of a bridge to be built over Indian Queen Road near Woodland station.

1880/02/16 "Bridge Completed" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 16, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Pratt's Bridge on the PRR-Frazer, the last link in the new line from Frazer to Woodland, was completed one or two days ago.

1880/02/18 "Repairing Telegraph Wires" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 18, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Merrit Dixon, "the boss wireman of the P. R. R." began to repair telegraph wires that were "disarrayed" by the blasting and digging for the new PRR-Frazer.

1880/02/18 "Bad Boys" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 18, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The Pennsylvania Railroad watchman who guarded the locomotives that spent the night in West Chester reported that the town had "some of the most mischievous boys he ever saw."

1880/02/19 "Frazer Branch" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 19, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

A ballast train ran over the entire length of the new PRR-Frazer, which was complete except for the switch at Woodland which connected to the old tracks to Malvern.

1880/02/21 "The Frazer Branch R 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

After touring the PRR-Frazer, officials of the Pennsylvania Railroad (General Superintendent Chas. E. Pugh, and Wm. F. Lockard, Superintendent of the Philadelphia Division of the PRR) decided not to open the line until the beginning of March so that ballasting could be completed.

1880/02/26 "Intended for Those Interested" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 26, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad,

Frazer Branch"

The Pennsylvania Railroad prepared to pay dividends to stockholders who had contributed the \$60,000 raised to update the PRR-Frazer Thomas C. Hogue and Judge Wollerton handled the affair in West Chester.

1880/02/27 "Connection To Be Made" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 27, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

A temporary building was to be erected at Frazer for use as a station. James J. Watson, the assistant station agent at Malvern, would be transferred to head the new station at Frazer.

1880/02/28 "On to Frazer" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 28, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The Pennsylvania Railroad issued a new schedule for the PRR-Frazer that was not greatly different from the old one. Trains left the Walnut Street depot in West Chester at 6:45, 7:35, 8:45, 10:35, 2:30 and 4:25pm. Trains left Frazer at 8:00, 9:20, 12:05, 3:45, 5:17 and 6:05pm. The 7:30 train from West Chester and the 5:17 train from Frazer were direct trains that made no intervening stops and went through to Philadelphia.

1880/03/01 "Railroad Connection" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 1, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

About 200 men worked yesterday (Sunday) to complete the track, and the first train on the new PRR-Frazer ran today.

1880/03/02 "Will Stop at Malvern" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 2, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The schedule was altered so that the trains #4 and 9 which were "direct trains" between Philadelphia, Frazer and West Chester, will also stop at Malvern. The departure of the train from Philadelphia at 5:17pm was advanced to 4:30pm.

1880/03/12 "Pay Car in Town--Viewing the Improvement" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 13, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania

Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The Pennsylvania Railroad pay car was in West Chester and workers received their monthly salaries. Superintendent Lockard was also in town to inspect the new turntable and track grading.

1880/03/13 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 13, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Dr. William B. Brinton of West Chester was appointed physician for the PRR-Frazer.

1880/03/15 James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch" in THE HIGH LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring 1988), 27.

In his narrative of a train accident that occurred near Angora Station (suburban Philadelphia) on March 15, 1880, the author mentioned that the telegraph operator at Angora station was female. JJ: gender, woman, women.

1880/03/22 "New Whistling Posts" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 22, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The PRR-Frazer recently added "whistling posts" that told locomotive engineers to sound their whistles when they approached within 300 yards of a crossing. They also painted all of the milk stops brown, and they have engaged in clearing rubbish and underbrush away from the track.

1880/03/22 "Want a Bridge Under the Penna (March 22, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Residents of the northeast part of the borough expressed their desire that the Pennsylvania Railroad construct a bridge over Biddle Street near the convent. The author of the article admitted that the crossing was dangerous. An unidentified railroad official "railroad official stated yesterday that he had no doubt whatever that if the matter were brought to the notice of the company by the borough council in a friendly spirit, a satisfactory arrangement could be made by which the bridgeway might be built."

1880/03/29 "Freight Train" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 29, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The PRR-Frazer ran its first complete freight train today from West Chester at 1:00pm. Previously, the railroad carried freight in mixed trains.

1880/04/10 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 10, 1880)

The West Chester firm of Lewis and Baldwin got the contract for brickwork on the new PRR station on North Matlack Street.

1880/04/24 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 24, 1880)

Joshua King, an engineer on the old West Chester & Philadelphia Railroad, operated the first PRR train into the new West Chester station on North Matlack Street.

1880/05/15 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.

1880/05/20 "After Many Years" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 20, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Samuel "Scroggy" Dean operated locomotives over the WCRR when it was in the hands of the Pennsylvania Railroad "years ago" (JJ: 1858-1863). He was transferred to the PRR-Main Line, but yesterday, he and his friend Ed Black ran a train to West Chester over the PRR-Frazer.

1880/05/24 "Discharged" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 24, 1880),
from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation,
Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Pennsylvania Railroad track section boss Jacob Andrews fired five men after they refused to obey his orders yesterday. His section is on the PRR-Frazer near the borough of West Chester. In a piece entitled "The True Reason" which appeared the following day, Andrews claimed that he fired the men because they took 45 minutes to unload a cinder car when he was absent, and only 15 minutes when he was present.

1880/06/22 "Graduated" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 22, 1880),
from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation,
Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Conductor Keech, who has worked on the PRR-Frazer for some time, was sent to Philadelphia for a week of additional

training at the company school for conductors.

1880/06/27 "A Mammoth Engine" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 27, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The largest locomotive ever to visit West Chester arrived on the PRR-Frazer last Friday. It was No. 103 and it had 5'8" driving wheels. It stayed only briefly, but drew many onlookers.

1880/07/12 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 10, 1880)

The new West Chester station on North Matlack Street opened for business on 12 July 1880.

1880/07/20 "Arrival of Ballast" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 19, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Twenty carloads of ballast are scheduled to arrive tomorrow for use on the PRR-Frazer from Fern Hill to West Chester. After it is in place, the track will be of the same standard as the Main Line track.

1880/08/01 "Putting in a New Switch" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 1, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Workers installed an improved switch at the junction of the WC&PRR and the PRR-Frazer near the Villa Maria convent.

1880/08/10 "Railroad Fares" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 10, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Although the people of West Chester desired a fare reduction on both of the lines to Philadelphia, the prospects were poor. "One of the leading officials of the W. C. & P. R. R." told the reporter that they could not reduce fares as long as the PRR-Frazer had to operate over non-Pennsylvania Railroad tracks to reach the station at 15th and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Once the Pennsylvania Railroad extended its tracks to center city, the two railroads would have different lengths and different fares would be justified. The official also mentioned threats by the Pennsylvania Railroad against the WC&PRR, to withhold business from the affiliated P&BCRR, if the WC&PRR should

reduce its fares.

1880/09/13 "Connection Made" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 13, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

A work crew of 160 men, working under the supervision of James Kerns of Thorndale, completed the connection "with the new track of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Oakland" on Sunday that point.

1880/09/13 "Engine Repaired" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 13, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The old locomotive used to haul freight from West Chester to Philadelphia over the PRR-Frazer was refurbished in Philadelphia and returned to West Chester last Saturday. It was operated by Josh King and Timothy Moran.

1880/09/18 "Finished Grading" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 18, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The grading contractor at Frazer was named Riley. He finished with his work on the PRR-Frazer, but the company had no plans to replace the track before winter because it was so busy with other projects.

1880/11/22 "New Track" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 22, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

This morning, Jacob Andrews and a group of workers left West Chester to begin work on straightening the track on the PRR-Frazer at Frazer.

1880/12/03 "Appointed" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 3, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Miles Finegan of West Goshen was appointed night watchman on the PRR-Frazer at West Chester. He worked from 4pm to 2am.

1880/12/07 "Rapid Transit" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 8, 1880), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester"

Transportation, West Chester & Phila. RR 1880."

A carload of bran arrived from St. Louis, where it departed on December 1. It was hauled by a total of nine locomotives via the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

1880/12/08 "High Fares to Philadelphia" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 8, 1880), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, West Chester & Phila. RR 1880."

This letter, signed "W. P. H.", complains that the WC&PRR charges too much. A month-pass to Philadelphia costs \$0.48/day, or \$135 per year. This was an increase of \$55.

1880/12/16 "Local Hash" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 17, 1880), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The new portion of the PRR-Frazer track was connected to the Main Line at Frazer.

1880/early James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch" in THE HIGH LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring 1988), 33.

In early 1880, the WC&PRR acquired an anthracite-burning locomotive manufactured by Baldwin.

1880s "Town Topics" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS, in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; PA. RR 1920-1924."

Although railroads in some larger cities had created their own freight service to relieve crowding at their terminals, freight in West Chester was handled by private hauling firms and by the end-users themselves, who maintained their own wagons and trucks.

Earlier, the West Chester & Philadelphia RR operated a freight delivery service around West Chester. In those days, the freight operation occupied one side of the East Market Street station, and used a pair of horses and one large wagon to make deliveries around town.

The first driver was Jesse Ehrenzeller, who delivered molasses and dry goods around town. He also collected the freight charges, and often refused to unload goods from his wagon until the freight bill was paid.

The railroad owned a four-wheeled wide wagon and a two-wheeled wagon that was useful for delivering barrels.

The horses were stabled at the railroad station next to the spoke mill [Hoopes Brothers and Darlington].

The second freight driver was John Ryan, a former brakeman and baggage master on the railroad. He worked the wagon for many years. After the PRR took over the company, freight delivery was handled by private firms.

1881/01/18 James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch" in THE HIGH LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring 1988), 17.

A sidebar contains "A Report to the Stockholders of the West Chester & Philadelphia Railroad Company" dated January 18, 1881. It was signed by President Henry Wood, and shows that the railroad was deeply in debt and unable to pay any dividends.

1881/01/31 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 31, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

Charles Howard, assistant ticket agent and telegraph operator at the PRR station in West Chester, resigned to take a position with the West Chester & Philadelphia Railroad at the Junction Crossing.

1881/02/01 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 1, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

A young man named Fox from Philadelphia was appointed to replace Charles Howard as assistant ticket agent at the PRR station in West Chester.

1881/03/08 "Our Double PRR Line to the City" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 9, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

The PRR announced that it had purchased a controlling interest in the PW&BRR.

"As predictions are now rife, it is not out of place to predict a railroad meeting in West Chester at no very distant day--one of those social and entertaining events which serve so well to allow a few railroad enthusiasts to fire off their views in solid-shot order, and at the same time not hurt anybody in particular."

1881/03/16 "Railroad Improvements" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 16, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

The PRR is making a number of improvements to its facilities in West Chester, including the movement of the station agent's office from the south to north side of the station. The station agent is Miss A. M. Criley, who has worked for the railroad for thirteen years.

1881/05/02 "Putting Up a Fence" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 2, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

The PRR constructed a stout fence of rails and posts between its right of way and Patton Avenue between the convent and Hoopes Brothers & Thomas Nursery, to prevent wagons from straying onto the tracks.

1881/07/06 "Decorating the Grounds" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 6, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

The PRR employed a landscape gardener to place grass plots, flowers, gravel walks and shrubs in front of the PRR station in West Chester.

1881/07/19 "A Fearful Accident" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 19, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

George Torbert, a switchman at the Franklin Street crossing in West Chester, was horribly injured on Monday afternoon. He was struck by a train that passed over an incorrectly-positioned switch. He was carried unconscious to the rooming house owned by Mr. Broomall at 224 Franklin Street, where Torbert was a boarder. Freight driver John Ryan fetched Dr. Woodward, as were Drs. Hartman and Brinton, the surgeon of the PRR. Torbert sustained a concussion but was expected to live. He had already suffered an earlier accident which had cost him his arm.

1881/08/01 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 1, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

The PRR moved the operations of both West Chester lines (Frazer and Media) to the Market Street terminal. This resulted in overcrowding and congestion, leading to complaints from citizens.

1881/08/01-10/31 James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch" in THE HIGH LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring 1988), 5.

On August 1, 1881, the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad Company (PW&BRR) assumed control over the WC&PRR until October 31, 1881. On October 15, 1881, the PW&BRR was merged with the P&BCRR, ending the separate corporate existence of the WC&PRR. The P&BCRR controlled a main line that ran from the Susquehanna River to a junction with the WC&PRR at Wawa, while the PW&BRR continued to operate the line from Wawa to West Chester, which became known as the "Wawa branch."

1881/08/03 "Excursion Rates" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 3, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

The PRR announced that it would offer an all-day excursion ticket to the lower Hudson River by train and steamer for the cost of \$3.70. Passengers boarded in West Chester at 6am Thursday and rode to Media, Philadelphia (in time for the 7:35am train) to Jersey City. There, they boarded the steamer RICHARD STOCKTON for the trip to West Point and Newburg. The steamer stopped for 90 minutes at West Point and 30 minutes at Newburg.

1881/08/04 "On fire" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 4, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

The Gay Street bridge was ignited by a passing train. The fire was discovered by E. Malin, who assisted Jacob Devoe to put it out.

1881/08/04 "Removing the Decorations" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 4, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

PRR employees removed the fence and landscaping decorations from in front of the Gay Street depot, no longer in use, and took them to the Downingtown station.

1881/09/01 "A Scuffle Between Railroad Employees--Man Arrested" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 2, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

A fight broke out between switchman George Torbert and conductor Walter Keech at the Market Street station after Keech accused Torbert of setting a switch incorrectly and drunkenness. Torbert responded with fighting and threats, so Keech had him arrested.

1881/09/03 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 3, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation;

Penna. RR 1881."

Henry Clayton was appointed switchman at the Market Street station in place of George Torbert, who was fired for drunkenness.

1881/09/16 "Want the Gay Street Depot" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 16, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

West Chester residents circulated a petition asking the PRR to resume the use of the Gay Street depot because it was more convenient, it was "more sightly" than the old depot, and it gave newcomers to West Chester a better perception of the town.

1881/09/24 "Foot Crushed By A Locomotive" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 24, 1881), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, West Chester & Phila. RR 1881-1884."

John Carey, watchman at the WC&PRR engine house, had his foot crushed by locomotive no. 100, driven by engineer Harry Walters, as he ran it off of the turntable. Dr. Price, assisted by Dr. Massey, amputated what was left of his foot.

1881/09/30 "Bridge on Fire" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 1, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

A passing locomotive ignited the Gay Street Bridge. The fire was discovered by Thomas Beaumont and extinguished by Beaumont and Mr. Devoe, a nearby shopkeeper.

1881/11/12 "A Rule on change" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 12, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

The PRR had a rule that its ticket agents could only sell tickets for exact change. This was to eliminate the need to keep change on hand in the various offices and to reduce confusion and delay while selling tickets.

1881/12/15 "A Terrible Accident" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 15, 1881), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

James Bloom, fireman on engine no. 627 which operated between West Chester and Philadelphia, was injured about noon last Wednesday. He was working underneath his locomotive while it sat on a siding when several railcars

bumped it and moved it about 50 feet. Bloom suffered multiple fractures and lacerations as he was "fearfully crushed and mangled." He was taken to the home of his brother, an engineer on the PRR-Frazer, and Dr. Woodward of West Chester was summoned to treat him.

1881/12/15 "A Falling Off" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 15, 1881), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Since the PRR-Frazer raised its fare from West Chester to Fern Hill from five to seven cents, ridership has dropped off from roughly 20-30 per day to nil. They prefer to walk to West Chester than to pay the extra two cents.

1881/12/31 "80 Cents" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 31, 1881), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1881."

The PRR announced that the fare from West Chester to Philadelphia would increase to 80 cents. The fare was the same whether you got out at the Broad Street terminal, 31st and Chestnut, or 32nd and Market.

1882/01/20 "No Loafing" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 20, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

After the cleaning assistants complained, the superintendent of the PRR station in West Chester took steps to expel loiterers from the station.

1882/02/04 "Change of Base" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 4, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

N. F. Sears will assume his duties as assistant to Mr. McMichael next Friday at the West Chester station.

1882/02/06 "Increased Demand for Tickets" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 6, 1882), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, West Chester & Phila. RR 1881-1884."

An agreement was reached to allow passengers in West Chester to buy tickets to stations on the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad. The round trip between West Chester and Phoenixville was \$2.00, and it was so popular that Phoenixville's livery drivers were losing business.

1882/04/15 "Interesting to Yearly Meeting Folks" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 11, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

In a letter to Thomas C. Hogue, the PRR announced that it would begin selling ten-trip books on April 15, 1882.

1882/04/15 Editorial in PHOENIXVILLE MESSENGER (April 15, 1882), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

This editorial is addressed by a resident of Phoenixville to the Pennsylvania Railroad concerning plans to extend the PRR-Frazer branch from Frazer to Phoenixville. It condemns the PRR's request that businessmen and farmers help pay for the new line by purchasing stock, and cites the example of the Pickering Valley Railroad, which obtained its financing in the same way, and left investors with worthless stock.

It also mentioned that the construction of a through railroad to Philadelphia is not necessarily a blessing for the local community, since shoppers can easily bypass local businesses and do their shopping in Philadelphia. "It has injured our town inasmuch as it has opened up a large section of the country to Philadelphia influences and business."

The editorial writer did admit that there was an advantage to Phoenixville being served by two railroads, the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Philadelphia & Reading RR, but added that the Pennsylvania Railroad was less generous with excursion ticket fares. In the same vein, the writer added that at least the new railroad would be "a rival to the Reading, which we need, and in this connection, the Pennsylvania R. R. cannot, as it did with West Chester, destroy competition by buying up other lines."

1882/05/17 "Some complaint" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 17, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

Dairy farmers complained that the milk train left for Philadelphia so early that, in order to complete their milking on time, they had to get up at 3am. They threatened to send their milk to local creameries instead.

1882/05/20 "Finished" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 20, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

The work of remodeling the Market Street depot was complete.

1882/09/08 "Two Gates" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 8, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

The PRR planned to install crossing gates at Market Street in West Chester.

1882/10/28 "3334" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 28, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

The PRR cut its round-trip fare to Philadelphia in half for the Bi-centennial exposition and sold 3334 tickets as a result. The author also complimented the railroad for operating during this period without a single accident.

1882/11/16 "A Change" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 16, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

Frederick Hamilton was appointed gatekeeper at the Market Street crossing in West Chester, replacing Daniel Johnson, who was transferred to the yard as a switchman.

1882/11/25 "A Well Ballasted Road" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 25, 1882), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Morris Regester, the "boss trackman" for the PRR-Frazer, took pains to make his section as well-ballasted as any in the country.

1882/12/21 "About As Of Yore" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 21, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

John Carey, who lost a leg as a result of a railroad accident, was getting around again thanks to a new cork leg. It was hoped that the PRR would reimburse him for the cost of the leg.

1882/12/23-01/02 "Lower Rates" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 15, 1882), in CCHS clippings file, "West Chester Transportation; Penna. RR 1882-1884."

The PRR offered lower excursion rates during the holiday season. A round-trip to Philadelphia cost \$1.20 and a round-trip to New York cost \$4.80.