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08 History of the West Chester Railroad from 1894-1906

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History of the West Chester Railroad from 1894-1906

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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1894/03/03 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 3, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

There was a penny scale at the train station, but it was out of order. The author asked if this was due to something he observed some time ago, when a group of small boys put a single penny in the scale, and then each jumped on the scale in place of the previous boy before the scale could reset. In this way, they all got weighed for a single penny.

1894/03/28 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 28, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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).

1894/03/28 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 28, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

William Munshower represented the Union News Company at the
station.

1894/05/03 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 3, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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.

1894/05/19 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 19, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

William Gheen was a ticket agent at the PRR station.

1894/06/21 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 21, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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

1894/07/11 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 11, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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.

1894/07/17 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 17, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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.

1894/08/20 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 20, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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.)

1894/09/04 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 4, 1894), from the
CCHS clippings file.

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

1894/10/15 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 15, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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

1894/11/06 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 6, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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

1894/11/08 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 8, 1894), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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.

1894/11/12 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 12, 1894), from the
CCHS clippings file.

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

1894/11/16 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 16, 1894), from the
CCHS clippings file.

Josiah Burnett was head of the freight warehouse at the PRR
station. He was assisted by Frank Burnett and Isaac Smiley.

1894/12/18 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 18, 1894), from the
CCHS clippings file.

The old Pennsylvania Railroad station at Matlack and Gay Street was no longer in service and stood empty.

1894/12/24 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 24, 1894), from the
 CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

The PRR-Phoenixville is only 11 miles long, but it is one of the most useful lines in the PRR system because it allows freight to bypass Philadelphia.

1895 no. section 36, LAWS OF PENNSYLVANIA (Busch, State Printer, 1895).

No railroad or steamboat or any other type of transportation shall accept or move a body unless there has been a burial permit issued by the Board of Health. .

1895/03/18 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 18, 1895), from the CCHS
 clippings file.

This was a complaint about "colored" boys who loafed at the train station, used bad language and littered the floor with peanut shells.

1895/03/20 "Last Night Was Rather Cool for Sleeping Out of
 Doors" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 20, 1895), from
 the CCHS clippings file.

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.

1895/03/27 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 27, 1895), from the CCHS
 clippings file.

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

1895/04/02 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 2, 1895), from the CCHS
 clippings file.

Sharp Griffith got a new job at the PRR freight station.

1895/05/25 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 25, 1895), from the CCHS
 clippings file.

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

1895/06/24 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 24, 1895), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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.

1898/03/07 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 7, 1898), from the CCHS
clippings file.

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

1898
News (February 28, 1898).

John Frederick Lewis (1860-1932/12/24), a lawyer from
Philadelphia, built a country home near Zermatt station on
the PRR-Frazer just before the turn of the century and
"supposedly named his estate after his ancestral home in
Germany," Morstein. His regular home was at 1914 Spruce
Street in Philadelphia. He served as the first chairman of
the Philadelphia sesquicentennial committee for the
Declaration of Independence, but resigned after a dispute
with city officials. He became known as an art collector,
and left an estate of more than one million dollars when he
died.

1899/01/02 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 2, 1899), from the CCHS
clippings file.

The electric trolley from WC to 63rd Street in Philadelphia
started operation, but was delayed by a snowstorm on its
inaugural run. The trolley cost 25¢ one-way, and departed
roughly once an hour. William M. Hayes was the president of
the West Chester Electric Railway. In a section that
mentions connections to other lines, this article indicates
that the WC-Lenape trolley line was already in operation,
under separate ownership.

1899/04/05 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (West Chester, April 5, 1899)
from the CCHS clippings file "West Chester
Transportation, PRR"

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.

1900/01/02 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 2, 1900), from the CCHS
clippings file.

According to an advertisement by John Wanamaker of Philadelphia, the electric trolley from WC to Philadelphia took 1h48 each way and cost 30 cents each way.

1900/01/07 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 8, 1900), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The largest locomotive ever to visit West Chester arrived on the PRR-Frazer last evening. "The engine which came in was No. 268, one of the immense new heaps of iron and steel which were recently placed on the line." The run was made very slowly so that the crew could test overhead clearances and bridge weight capacity along the line. There was only a few inches of clearance at the Gay Street bridge in West Chester.

1900/01/12 "West Chester and Philadelphia, Schedule in Effect" (Pennsylvania Railroad, November 19, 1899), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

This was the schedule that Chris Sanderson saw around the time he finished at the West Chester State Normal School. The Philadelphia terminal was Broad Street station, and there were 26 trains a day to Philadelphia, and 27 trains a day to West Chester. Fourteen of the WC-P trains and thirteen of the P-WC trains ran on the PR-Frazer tracks, while the rest ran on the "Central Division."

There are connections via Frazer and the Main Line to Lancaster, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh by express. There were also seven daily and four Sunday trains to Downingtown. The last time shows five daily trains to Phoenixville departing at 5:54am, 7:35am, 9:14am, 3:13pm, and 4:52pm. JJ: The schedule doesn't say this, but it looks like the round-trip from West Chester to Phoenixville and back took about 1:40, so a one-way trip must have been around fifty minutes. With that, we can construct the Phoenixville-West Chester schedule and see how Chris Sanderson and his mom kept in touch by mail.

1900/01/27 "Lockers for Trainmen" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 27, 1900), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

A space was filled with lockers for railroad workers at the Market Street Station in West Chester, providing them with a place to store their individual equipment.

1900/02/02 "Arrangements Made for a Reading Room at the Market Street Depot" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February

The reading room at the PRR station on Market Street in West Chester opened in the evening. "The rooms have been handsomely fitted up for the use of the men by the railroad company, and everything needful in a modern club room is to be found there, including a choice assortment of papers and magazines, with other works, which will interest the readers. The rooms are finely finished in hard wood, and the floor is neatly carpeted, while easy chairs, divans, and other pieces of furniture are placed about the room. At the opening to-morrow evening there will be a literary entertainment given by the employees for the amusement of their friends. There will be music, and after the programme has been rendered the guests who have been invited will be tendered a lunch."

1900/03/08 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 8, 1900), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

This is a lengthy editorial that praises the PRR for opening "The Employees' Reception Room" at the Market Street station in West Chester, which the author called "the beginning of an organization for the welfare of the employees of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and their families, whose interests are in West Chester, which the promoters hope will be supported by the progressive and thinking element among the men, aided, where possible, by the sympathy and concern of the traveling public."

1900/03/14 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 14, 1900), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

By accident, a west-bound freight train pulled by three locomotives sped through a site near Malvern where a track crew was at work. "The train plunged into a truck laden with railroad ties and scattered them in all directions, none of them falling beneath the wheels. Italians ran for their lives, every one escaping."

1900/03/21 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 21, 1900), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

This article describes turntables and the facilities for storing locomotives overnight on the PRR on the lower track in West Chester. It has room for four locomotives, and there are usually four parked outside, plus another four or five on the north side of town in the yard near North Matlack Street.

Care of the engines is supervised by Al Hamilton at night and Thomas Finegan in the daytime, "both old hands at the

business."

"Some of the Neighbors": The nearest roundhouses to West Chester are located at Wawa, Oxford, Lamokin, Downingtown and Paoli. The largest and most interesting roundhouse is at Powellton Avenue, which is always busy. "One after another of the locomotives come in from Wilmington, Baltimore, New York, Pottsville, West Chester and Harrisburg. They are turned, they take their places, they are carefully rubbed down, like so many sprinters, and are prepared for the track. There is no confusion, no loud talking among the men, but all is in thorough order. A mistake there might mean a loss of a minute, and minutes count in the railroad business."

"When Troubles Come": The worst problem faced in turntable operation occurs when a blizzard fills the pit with snow, preventing the table from turning. To prevent the engines from becoming trapped in the roundhouse, the railroad workers run them out onto the track in the order they will depart before the blizzard strikes.

1900/03/26 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 26, 1900), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

The PRR was trying to buy land south of the Gay Street bridge and north of the Market Street station in West Chester in order to landscape the approach to the station.

1900/03/27 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 27, 1900), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

Residents of West Chester take a shortcut to the PRR station at Market Street by climbing the embankment next to the railroad bridge at East Barnard Street. There used to be steps on the west side of the tracks, but the PRR removed them to discourage people from walking along a dangerous part of the tracks. This morning, a dozen or more passengers climbed the bank, and one of them said "It saves us about three blocks."

1900/04/04 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 4, 1900), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

PRR railroad officials, including Superintendent T. Bechdolt of Media, General Superintendent E. F. Brook of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad, Civil Engineer Alonzo Feldpauche of Philadelphia, and J. G. Ruth of Media, Superintendent of the Middle Division, arrived by special train (locomotive No. 99 and parlor car No. 2803) for a brief surprise inspection of the Market Street station

and surroundings. The author of the article reported that no one knew for sure, but there was speculation that the company wanted to enlarge the rail yard to provide more room for separate freight and passenger stations, and perhaps to straighten the curve under Gay Street. The article mentions that the property west of the railroad and south of Gay Street was owned by Charles H. Willis.

1900/04/07 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 7, 1900), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

Workers on the PRR were engaged in "sprucing up" the North Matlack Street yard where the majority of freight arrived in WC, because the circus was due to arrive soon and it was expected that many people would go to the railyard for a first look at the animals.

1900/04/20 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (West Chester, April 20, 1900)
from the CCHS clippings file "West Chester
Transportation, PRR"

A passenger train was forced to make an unscheduled stop at Union Street shortly after leaving the station, because a small boy decided to run on the tracks in a footrace against the engine. The engineer stopped to avoid running over the boy. "Just as the locomotive reached the end of the train shed the lad sprang upon the track in front of it and made a spurt down the track. The engine was close upon him, but he did not falter. It was a race with the iron machine, and he was in it to win. Such running as that boy did the engineer declares he never saw, but before he reached Union street crossing the locomotive was gaining to such an extent that it was stopped to permit the boy to escape.

1900/04/20 "Worked on the Sabbath" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April
20, 1900), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

Italian workers labored on Sunday for the PRR between Coatesville and Parkesburg. "Many of the Italian laborers worked on the Sabbath, while dozens of others enjoyed the day of rest watching their fellow workmen and in smoking their pipes about the shanties."

1900/05/16 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 17, 1900), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

Fire was discovered in one of the "emigrant cars" of train No. 3, which left Broad Street station at 11:20pm last evening. Emigrant agent Joseph O. Nathanson discovered the fire, caused when an oil lamp ignited the headlinings in the

car and set the roof on fire. He alerted conductor George A. Tullock and brakeman S. S. Douhouer, who stopped the train at Paoli. The Hungarians and the Swedes in the car got out in a state of great agitation, and it took a half hour to extinguish the fire in car No. 2706. It had a hole burnt through its roof, so it was uncoupled and left at Paoli.

1900/05/27 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 26, 1900), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

A new schedule went into effect for trains between West Chester and Philadelphia. The most important change was that trains from West Chester left earlier.

1900/06/20 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 20, 1900), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

Baggage agent Elwood Patchell and his assistant, Hayes Still, were swamped with work because all of the schools were closing at the same time and people wanted their trunks checked on the train at the same time.

1900/06/25 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 26, 1900), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

Track foreman George Dougherty and his crew worked on the tracks along the approach to the old Gay Street station from Chestnut Street rails, even though some of it was as light as 45 pounds/yard and the rest was 65 pounds/yard. In 1900, 100 pound rail was in use on the Main Line.

The article mentioned that Miller Snare was employed by the railroad in the old days, back when conductor Edward Miller was young. Miller once ran on the "lower road" (WC&PRR). The article also said that there were men in town who wanted to buy the old Gay Street station for use as a YMCA.

1900/06/27 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (June 27, 1900), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

The Paoli wreck train No. 235, had an accident at the Bradford Hills Station when it crashed into a freight train it was following. The freight train burst an air hose and came to a stop too quickly for the wreck train to avoid it. The cab boss, James Wooten, broke his shoulder and one of the workers, Alex Tollinger, sprained his ankle. The wreck train was destroyed, its two tool cars crushed and the front of the engine was smashed.

1900/07/20 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 21, 1900), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

There was a head-on collision between a passenger train and a train loaded with quarry stone near the Glen Mills station. There were a number of injured people including Mrs. Thomas S. Butler (JJ: possibly of West Chester), the passenger train conductor Walter D. [looks like] Hansell, and the freight train fireman Frank Winterbottom. The passenger train engineer was Smith Lawrence, and J. Silas Gravelle of Boston was a passenger.

1900/07/20 "Of Coatesville" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 20,
 1900), from the CCHS clippings file:
 "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

A gang of more than 100 Italian laborers was employed to widen the roadbed of the PRR near Coatesville.

1900/07/24 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 24, 1900), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

A large force of railroad workers was engaged in replacing the rails on the south side of the Market Street station in West Chester with heavier rails.

1900/07/27 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 27, 1900), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

There was a derailment of a coal train near St. Davids this evening after a wheel on one of the leading cars broke, smashing 23 more cars and scattering coal all over the four tracks. The conductor was John F. Glass of Harrisburg, and the engineer was Cheyney Steele. The front brakeman, Payne, was thrown from the train but survived. All members of the crew praised an unidentified little girl who alerted them as they passed the Wayne station that there was trouble in the front of the train.

1900/08/23 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 23, 1900)

Elwood Patchell, 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.

1900/08/30 "113 Leave for the Atlantic" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS
 (August 30, 1900), from the CCHS clippings file:

"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

113 people boarded a PRR excursion train from West Chester to Atlantic City. Two earlier trains carried as much as 200 people, some of whom remained at the shore for as much as a week. The train left West Chester at 6:45am.

1900/09/03 "Railroad Rumbblings: Bits of News Picked UP Where the Trains Are Running" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 3, 1900), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

"Miss Martha McMichael is becoming familiar with the big typewriting machine at the Market Street Station, and will make out the way bills and manifests thereon."

Conductor M. M. Shaw and crew brought a train with thirteen empty passenger cars out from Philadelphia late last night, after they were used for an excursion to Atlantic City.

Several passenger cars used in West Chester still have stoves for heat, even though all of the passenger cars west of the Delaware were equipped with steam heat a year or two ago. This was because the cars on the New Jersey side were not yet refitted, and as a result of the heavy summer shore excursion traffic, cars from both sides of the river became intermingled.

A train, known as "the educational train" left West Chester each morning at 7:35am via the PRR-Frazer line. School was back in session, so the train "was freighted with teachers" including Homer Darlington, principal at Paoli; Miss Willa M. Way and Miss Sara E. Martin in Berwyn; Mrs. Carrie W. Cummins in North Berwyn; Miss Bessie Smedley, Malvern; Miss Evaline Darlington, Wayne; Miss Emma Clark, West Whiteland; Susan C. Lodge, principal of the Girls' Collegiate Institute in Philadelphia,; and other teachers.

1900/10/31 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 31, 1900), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

The PRR took steps to stop a fraudulent practice by people who shipped their baggage to Philadelphia via the railroad and then took the cheaper trolley to Philadelphia, meeting their baggage later in the city.

1900/11/20 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 20, 1900), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

This article describes the work to extend a culvert over Saalbach's Run on the Main Line near Coatesville. It includes a detailed description of the work gang and an

offhand reference to a railroad passenger:

"The tourist from New York who looks carelessly across the landscape to the South Valley Hills, at this point less than a mile away, and carelessly tosses from the dining car window a jagged, rosy-hued lobster claw at the end of his second course, perhaps has little idea how someone has carefully planned the roadbed and many others have labored night and day that he may enjoy luxurious travel at high speed."

"There are two stone masons, a couple of bricklayers, an Italian who mixes the mortar and a mechanic who dresses the stone. Then there are, besides these, a well-fed chap in overalls who runs the engine, a stout young fellow who looks after the cable to see that it is never kinked or knotted, and a romantic looking brigand with piratical mustache and jaunty slouch hat, who carries water all day long to feed the boiler or tosses on coal for the furnace. These and the boy with the drinking water complete the gang in charge of this portion of the work." (Note: the "little upright engine" and cable were used to position limestone blocks used to build the culvert.)

1900/11/24 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 24, 1900), from the
CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

A fifteen pound can of ordinary gunpowder rests in the Market Street depot and no one has claimed it. The can arrived about two years ago, but it has no markings or shipping tag. It was kept next to a window at the rear of the building until someone figured out what to do with it.

1900/12/10 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 11, 1900), from the
CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

Fireman Samuel McComsey fell from his own freight train and was run over yesterday evening at Glen Loch. His leg and arm were severed, and he died a half hour later.

1900/12/26 "West Chester and Philadelphia, Schedule in
Effect" (Pennsylvania Railroad, November 25,
1900), from the CCHS clippings file:
"Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

There were 25 trains from West Chester to Phila and 26 trains from Phila to WC use the PRR-Media. There were twelve trains in each direction on Sunday, with five of each using the PRR-Media. There were also connections to Wilmington, Oxford, Lamokin (between Wawa & Chester), Lancaster, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh.

1901/01/01 "Late Trains New Year's Eve Via The Pennsylvania Railroad" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 31, 1900), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

In order to allow people from West Chester to view the "illumination of City Hall, Philadelphia, and the other electrical displays by which the opening of the twentieth century is to be celebrated, and the military demonstration late on New Year's Eve, the PRR will run a special train to West Chester and intermediate stations, leaving Broad Street Station, Philadelphia, at 1 o'clock a. m. on the morning of January 1, 1901."

1901/02/29 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (February 29, 1901), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

A new, unidentified engineer made a record run over the seven miles of the PRR-Frazer eight minutes, including stops at two stations on the way to WC.

1901/04/10 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 10, 1901), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

The PRR purchased large amounts of property west of Downingtown for unknown reasons, although the author speculated that it might be to block the expansion of trolley lines, since "Trolley lines do not have the right of eminent domain and could not cross the railroad's property as steam roads are able to do." JJ: See the discussion of this tactic in April 1906.

1901/04/25 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 25, 1901), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

120 Italian workers were employed by the PRR to replace the rails on the PRR-Frazer between Morstein and Greenhill stations, a distance of 2.3 miles. They arrived at the site on the first west-bound train of the day, operated by conductor Joseph Keech. The new rails will be the same weight as those used on the Main Line.

1901/05/06 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 6, 1901), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

A court ordered the PRR to build a bridge on the PRR-Frazer "between Morstein and the old Halfway House, known in years gone by as Dolly Glisson's" over a new road. John Frederick

Lewis, Esquire, had a strong interest in obtaining the bridge, while it was opposed by William E. Lockwood of Glen Loch.

1901/05/15 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (West Chester, May 15, 1901) from
 the CCHS clippings file "West Chester
 Transportation, PRR"

This article describes the activity on a train from Philadelphia to West Chester, and includes comments from the conductor about the complexity of the job and the scams pulled by passengers: "On the road between West Chester and Philadelphia, we have over a dozen different kinds [of tickets], not to mention all sorts of bluffs the dead beats give us when they are trying to ride free."

The "straight ticket" costs 73 cents. The excursion fare, "such as a transient traveler uses" cost \$1.16 (round trip). The package ticket, sold in groups of at least ten, cost 53 cents. Clerical tickets were half price, and made available to ministers, nuns, and officers of the Volunteers of America and the Salvation Army. A 46-trip booklet for students cost \$8.74. A 60-trip booklet, good for a month of working days, cost \$11.40. A 100-ticket book cost 22.80 and 180 rides for \$30.80. There was also something called a 1000-mile ticket.

1901/09/06 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 6, 1901), from the
 CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

John Frederick Lewis, Esquire and John M of West Goshen Township, arranged with the PRR to abolish the grade crossing just below Green Hill station and build a tunnel for the road under the railroad. The new bridge, an iron truss on stone abutments, eliminated a dangerous grade crossing. The crossing had long been considered dangerous, and the article mentions a "Mrs. Smith, the sister of William H. Tumbleston, Esq. of Green Hill [who] was killed here some years ago."

1901/09/09 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 10, 190), from the
 CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

A locomotive pulling a train to West Chester over the PRR-Frazer, operated by Conductor Charles Springer, was immobilized by a broken eccentric just as it left the Morstein station. There was no damage, but the train was delayed for nearly three hours, even though another locomotive stood nearby while repairs were made. The workers eventually removed the damaged part and the train proceeded to West Chester with only a single operating eccentric.

1901/09/24 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 24, 1901), from the
 CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Work was underway to replace the grade crossing near Green Hill Station with a bridge, and a siding was under construction at that station on the east side of the PRR-Frazer.

1901/10/03 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 3, 1901), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

The PRR planned to build a new water tank at its Chestnut Street yard in WC. This plan pleased local residents because it will eliminate the railroad's heavy draw on local water supplies when servicing locomotives. Residents of the south end of the borough need a railroad water tank even more, since "the draw is really greater on the southern end water mains than in the northern portion of the borough."

1901/10/11 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 12, 1901), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

A large steam engine crane, capable of lifting locomotives weighing 100 tons, was used to remove the old turntable at the Chestnut Street yard and install a new one. The work, which required more than 100 men and several supervisors, proceeded so quietly that none of the local residents awoke. (Names given included "Chas. H. Pennypacker, Esq.; Col. F. C. Hooten, Jas. D. McClellan; Edw. H. Hall, ex-postmaster Worth, and others in the vicinity")

Meanwhile, another gang of workmen was employed to lay the water main to the new railroad water tank.

1901/11/05 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 5, 1901), from the CCHS
 clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
 Railroad"

PRR officials reported that "ride stealers" were fewer this fall than at any time in the past 20 years. They attributed this to diligent effort by railroad detectives and the generally good economic situation, which meant that there was no excuse for not having a job. Justices of the Peace have also cooperated by sending offenders to jail.

Railroad detectives faced a new hazard when apprehending ride stealers--smallpox. Since the detectives had to search a suspect for weapons, they came into close enough contact to become infected.

1902/01/16 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 16, 1902)

A new plank crossing was built at the railroad crossing on Franklin Street.

1902/02/28 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (West Chester, February 28, 1902)
 from the CCHS clippings file "West Chester
 Transportation, PRR"

Negroes who loitered at the train station were a concern to West Chester's citizens. "I went to meet my sister, coming on the 8:10 train, and found the waiting room in possession of three negro boys. The outside of the station was adorned by five young negro men. These men and boys were amusing themselves by tapping on the window of the ladies' room, at a young girl. They were constantly making ugly remarks, and I found the girl pale and frightened. As in this case, it was absolutely necessary to go out alone sometimes, and it is a shame for women to be subjected to such outrages."

1902/05/26 "West Chester and Philadelphia, Schedule in
 Effect" (Pennsylvania Railroad, May 25, 1902),
 from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation,
 Pennsylvania Railroad"

There were 25 trains from West Chester to Philadelphia and 26 trains from Philadelphia to West Chester trains in each direction use the PRR-Media. There were twelve trains in each direction on Sunday, with five of each using the PRR-Media. There were also connections to Wilmington, Oxford, Lamokin, Lancaster, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh.

1902/05/31 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 31, 1902)

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

1902/06/01 "West Chester Street Railway and Lenape Branch--
 Timetable in Effect after June 1st, 1902", from
 the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Time
 Tables"

There were 34 trolleys a day between West Chester and Lenape, operating from 6:30am to 11pm at intervals of roughly half an hour to Wilmington, and two on Sundays. The Sunday trolley schedule was the same except that the last train from Lenape to West Chester left at 10:30pm instead of 11pm. C. V. Miller was the superintendent of the West Chester Street Railway.

1902/07/21 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 21, 1902)

A railroad worker, John F. Ryan, died in Philadelphia of complications following an accident which crushed his foot a few years ago and left an unhealed wound. He was survived by his wife and five children. He was "brother-in-law of Michael, James, and Kate Flanagan and Mrs. Michael Brennan."

1902/10/04 clippings file.

As of October 4, 1902, the West Chester Street Railway operated only 15 trolleys each way daily between West Chester and Lenape.

1902/11/01 James J. D. Lynch Jr., "The West Chester Branch" in THE HIGH LINE, vol. 8, no. 2 & 3 (Winter-Spring 1988), 5.

On November 1, 1902, the P&BCRR was merged with the Baltimore & Potomac Railroad Company to form the Philadelphia, Baltimore & Washington Railroad (PB&WRR).

1902/11/20 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.

1903/01/08 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 8, 1903), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

President A. J. Cassatt of the PRR announced plans to construct additional tracks on the PRR Main Line between Philadelphia and Lancaster, bringing the total to six tracks except where the Main Line crosses the wooden "high bridge" in Coatesville. A new stone bridge is under construction in Coatesville to carry additional tracks, but it will not be completed for several years.

1903/03/23 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 3, 1903), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

A car containing coal for Edward H. Hall broke loose on a siding on Evans Street, ran downhill towards the Electric Light Plant, and passed over Walnut Street without hitting anyone. However, on the other side, it struck another railcar and broke off a bumper.

1903/03/27 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (West Chester, March 27, 1903)
from the CCHS clippings file "West Chester
Transportation, PRR"

"A fire, which is supposed to have been started by people trespassing upon the property, practically wiped out of existence the old West Chester Railroad Depot fronting on Gay Street, at an early hour this morning and destroyed an adjoining stable." The old railway station at Gay Street was built in the 1850s, but empty and unused by 1903. The frame construction building was owned by Uriah Painter.

1903/03/31 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (March 31, 1903), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

The PRR announced plans to construct a low-grade freight line through Chester County beginning near Parkesburg and proceeding across the county parallel to the Delaware county line. The new line would diverge from the PRR-Main Line near Caln, cross the Brandywine south of the present bridge, head east while climbing Valley Hill, cross under the existing tracks at Whitford, and continue on the north side of the present track, passing between the Warren Tavern and Malvern.

1903/07/16 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 17, 1903), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

An accident at Whiteland station destroyed four railcars carrying granite blocks intended for the construction of the PRR's low-grade freight line across Chester County.

1903/10/05 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 5, 1903), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad, Frazer Branch"

The locomotive that normally pulled the train to West Chester on the PRR-Frazer was immobilized at the Market Street station when it backed into a line of railcars and an extension punctured the water tank on the tender.

1903/10/19 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 20, 1903), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

The PRR proposed to build a "low-grade line" parallel to the Main Line between Paoli and Thorndale as part of a larger project to construct an additional freight line from the Susquehanna River to New Jersey, bypassing Philadelphia. However, a West Whiteland land owner, Dr. Joseph Price, sued in court and won a decision that prevented the PRR from

doing so, because the new track did not satisfy the provision of the original 1846 charter that allowed the construction of branch lines to "promote the convenience of its [the county's] inhabitants." The new line would not cross any new territory, nor would it provide any new stations.

As a consequence, the railroad was prevented from condemning property to build the new road, and could only do so if it bought the property outright.

1903/10/23 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 24, 1903), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad, Frazer Branch"

A locomotive derailed between East Biddle and East Washington Streets yesterday and struck a corner of the Sharpless Separator Works, knocking a hole in the wall.

1903/12/02 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 2, 1903), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania
Railroad"

The PRR, responding to complaints by West Chester passengers, agreed not to operate any more "small trains" over either of the lines that ran to Philadelphia. Previously, trains usually consisted of a locomotive, a coach and a combination car, but in the future, all trains would have at least two coaches and a combination car.

1906 "To Keep the Cars Warm" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (incomplete date, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

The PB&WRR installed steam lines along several sidings near the old roundhouse at Niels Street to keep passenger cars warm throughout the night. That way, they were already at a comfortable temperature when they went into service in the morning.

1906 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (1906--date missing), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

Brown predicted that in the future, railroads would depend more on gasoline power coupled directly to the wheels, and not used to drive electrical generators.

1906 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (1906--date missing), from the CCHS
clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad"

The author noted how the size of railcars had grown in the last forty years. Instead of five-ton coal cars, fifty tons

was now normal, and engines had grown in weight from seven tons to 65 tons, and 106-ton locomotives were no longer uncommon. In 1866, a train weighing 300 tons was thought to be heavy, but by 1960, trains weighing 1350 tons were common.

1906/01/05 "A Portion of the Iron Work is Now in Place" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 5, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

The PRR rebuilt the Barnard Street bridge, raising it, eliminating a trestle support in the center to free up the street below, and eliminating one track across the bridge (3 tracks instead of 4. The 4th track, a siding to a coal company was placed on a separate span over the street.).

1906/01/06 Alford Kelley, "Injurious Unnecessary Railroad Whistling" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 6, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

This letter to the editor complains that railroad whistles are dangerous for the human nervous system and should be prohibited in West Chester.

1906/01/10 "May Lose Frazer Train" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 10, 1906), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Since a trolley line was completed from West Chester to Downingtown, few people used the PRR-Frazer for connections to the west. There were rumors that the PRR would cancel passenger service on the PRR-Frazer and direct all West Chester passengers towards Philadelphia on the PRR-Media. The article also mentions that the Pennsylvania Railroad might also "soon own the West Chester Street Railway."

1906/01/11 "Looking for Third Rail" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 11, 1906), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

Talk of closing the PRR-Frazer passenger service prompted several unidentified "railroad men" to propose the construction of a "third rail" electric line from Frazer to West Chester.

1906/04/01 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 2, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

A train reached the borough carrying the goods of the late Dr. Jacob Price of East Bradford township, including 14 cows which needed milking. Residents of the East Ward were invited to take the milk, and "the cars were besieged by men, women and children with all sorts of receptacles to get a portion of the milk. It was freely given away to all comers, and was thankfully received by them. . . . The spectacle was a rather unusual one in West Chester."

1906/04/10 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 10, 1906), in CCHS
clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA.
RR 1905-1909."

Holland G. Malin was recently the assistant baggage master at Market Street, but now lives in New Mexico.

1906/04/18 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 18, 1906), in CCHS
clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA.
RR 1905-1909."

Christian Kautz and Eli Rambo, gatekeepers at Market Street, added an annex to their booth with enough room to store some clothes or supplies.

1906/04/18 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 18, 1906), from the CCHS
clippings file.

West Chester Streets Commissioner John C. Heed announced that improvements would be made to E. Union Street at the PRR crossing. The PRR decided to leave an at-grade crossing, so West Chester borough opted to raise the street level and pave it. This was an improvement for the horse teams that carried freight away from the PRR freight station on E. Union Street.

The same article mentioned that the East Barnard Street "underhead" bridge was not yet finished.

1906/04/22 "Changes" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 22, 1906), in
CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation,
PA. RR 1905-1909."

Mrs. Sarah Johnson resigned as cleaning woman for the Market Street station waiting room. She may be replaced by a "white woman."

1906/04/26 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (April 26, 1906), in CCHS
clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA.
RR 1905-1909."

This article mentions several odds and ends, including the

fact that Alvin Martin of Chadd's Ford became the new assistant baggage master, replacing William Morgan when he was promoted to replace Holland G. Malin. The baggage master is D. B. Colehour.

Conductor Wellington G. Priest recalled that he worked a carpenter for 17 years before transferring to railroad operations thirty years ago.

1906/05/12 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (May 12, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Shipments of old iron from West Chester to foundries continue. Roughly one car a day full of junk iron leaves West Chester, but the supply is not depleted because junkmen bring in new material from rural areas.

1906/07/28 "Bicycles Are Buried Under Falling Wall, Happily Nobody Was Hurt" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 28, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Freight cars crashed into the south wall of the Market Street station, causing it to collapse onto bicycles owned by a number of railroad patrons including Charles Murtaugh, Charles McFarland and Harry Farra, all of whom had taken the train out-of-town.

1906/07/30 "Good Repair Work" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (July 30, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Only two bicycles were damaged in the accident on July 28. One belonged to Harry T. Ferrell of Dean Street, who worked at the Broad Street station. The other, an old bicycle of little value, belonged to Charles H. Andrews.

1906/08/14 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 14, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

The PRR operated its second excursion to Atlantic City today, and sold 250 tickets in West Chester alone. That was about one hundred more than were sold for the previous excursion.

1906/08/22 "Was Large Excursion" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (August 22, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

The last excursion of the summer to Atlantic city was a huge

success, although not as many people from West Chester went along as on earlier excursions. "The colored people, who generally go on the last excursion of the summer, were out in force. Lincoln University, Rowlandsville, Oxford, Kennett Square and Concordville furnished a big share. Ten coaches were required to convey them to and from the shore. It was decidedly the largest of the season. No accidents occurred, the crowd was orderly and a good time in general was had."

1906/09/19 "Agents Transferred" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (September 9, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Clarence G. Pyle, first assistant to D. B. Colehour of the PRR Market Street station, was transferred to Kennett and replaced by a temporary substitute, J. K. Hambleton.

1906/10/11 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 11, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

D. K. Devon of Kelton became the permanent first assistant to D. B. Colehour, agent at the West Chester Market Street station.

1906/10/15 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (October 15, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Dr. W. S. Webb, an official of the New York & Hudson Railroad, visited West Chester with a friend and two ladies during a lengthy pleasure trip. They traveled by day in an automobile, but arranged to have the parlor car "Elsmere" placed on a convenient siding each evening to provide them with food and lodging.

1906/11/06 "Thinks Auto Hack Would Pay" in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 6, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

A North Ward citizen complained that he had to take a trolley and then walk almost as far again to reach the train station. "An automobile could deliver passengers in one-third the time with much more satisfaction to patrons. I believe it would pay."

The article mentioned that J. Max Meyer Jr. of West Chester had considered starting such a service but gave it up when other matters became pressing.

1906/11/08 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (November 8, 1906), in CCHS

clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA.
RR 1905-1909."

The PRR constructed new cattle chutes near its Union Street freight station, and closed the old chute located between Gay and Market Streets. This pleased the neighbors.

1906/12/18 "Ralston R. Hoopes Gets \$4500 for Land Taken by P. B. & W. R. R." in DAILY LOCAL NEWS (December 18, 1906), in CCHS clipping file: "West Chester Transportation, PA. RR 1905-1909."

Hoopes sued the railroad for \$27,000 in damages for the loss of a strip of land along the railroad between Barnard Street and Magnolia Street. The jury awarded him only \$4500.

1906/12/31 DAILY LOCAL NEWS (January 1, 1903), from the CCHS clippings file: "Transportation, Pennsylvania Railroad, Frazer Branch"

As part of a test by the PRR, a gasoline-powered railcar reached West Chester for the first time, operated by Assistant Trainmaster H. C. Smith, a motorman and an expert engineer. The car was named "Oregita," was the size of an ordinary trolley car, and carried upholstered chairs for the officials. A small engine room was located at one end. (A handwritten note says that the cars real name was "Ogerita," not "Oregita.") It remained in town for 14 minutes while many people looked at it, then continued at 5:10pm to Downingtown and Lancaster.

People viewed the arrival of the gasoline-powered train as the "death knell of the steam boilers and engines." The article offered several ideas about possible uses for the new trains, and implied that the ultimate goal was to reduce the operating costs of passenger travel so the Pennsylvania Railroad could compete with the trolley companies.

"If one can whirl to Downingtown or Lenape in an automobile carrying a half-dozen persons over dirt roads for eight or nine cents the trip, why could not gasoline carry a carload of persons over a graded track at a corresponding expense?"
JJ: cost of transportation.
