

# Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

Volume 13, Number 2

May 2010

## Welcome to Welkinweir!

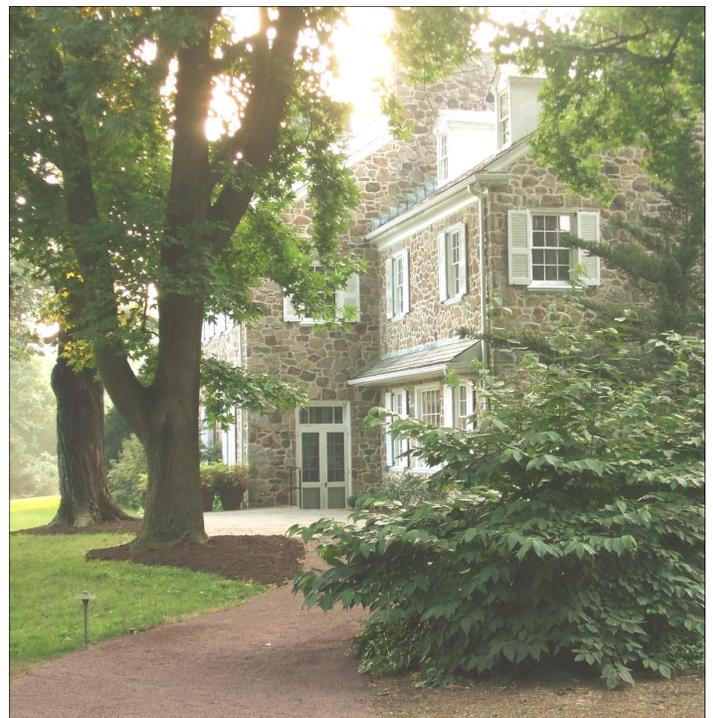
This year's Volunteer Recognition Celebration will be co-hosted by East Nantmeal Township Historical Commission and held at the historic house, Welkinweir. See page 3 for more information.

Today's Welkinweir can be traced back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century when the property was part of the Reading Furnace, one of the first revolutionary blast furnaces for iron manufacturing. In the 1820s the Morris family purchased the house and farmland, which included a tilt-hammer mill on the nearby Beaver Run, where scythes, hoes and other edged tools, as well as household pots and tools, were hammered until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1935, attracted by the peace and tranquility of the valley, Everett and Grace Rodebaugh purchased the property, which they named Welkinweir, "where sky meets water" as a weekend retreat and summer home. Conservation visionaries, the Rodebaughs founded the Green Valleys Association in 1964. They also established a conservation easement in 1976 to protect Welkinweir in perpetuity, a lifelong goal.

The original farmhouse, circa 1750, was added onto by both generations of the Morris family and in 1940, the Rodebaughs engaged Philadelphia architect Fridtjof Tobiessen to expand the

house into the stone two-and-one-half-story mansion you see today, consisting of eleven rooms, a widow's walk, and an attic that holds the Skinner pipe organ's 1,700 pipes, bellows machinery, and wind



*At Welkinweir, the house and grounds complement each other with grandeur and care.*

The Chester County Historic Preservation Network is an affiliation of local organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting, protecting, and preserving Chester County's historic resources and landscapes through education, facilitation, and public and private advocacy.

tunnels. The sound of the organ is projected downward through an ornamental wooden filigreed screen inserted in the ceiling above the entrance foyer. Welkinweir is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Nearby, a bubbling run of water cuts through a narrow defile where the hills rise sharply to heights of 500 feet. This valley once cradled the tilt hammer and the local iron industry. Through the insight of the Rodebaughs, a 55-acre

arboretum filled with rare and unusual plants and trees now radiates out from the estate house. Along two miles of trails visitors can enjoy a Pinetum, an Azalea Lane, Barn Ruins and Rock Gardens, as well as a series of ponds, wildflower meadows, and a waterfall; all connected to Hopewell Big Woods, the last large unbroken forest left in southeastern Pennsylvania.

At present, Welkinweir is a 197-acre oasis of natural beauty which includes the Estate House and ecologically diverse wetland, meadow, and woodland habitats. The property is a living laboratory for the study of ecological issues, sustainability, and land stewardship, offering inspiration and education for visitors and community members. Welkinweir is the home of Green Valleys

Association, a not-for-profit organization with a mission to protect and preserve the water resources of Northern Chester County through advocacy and education.

Green Valleys Association oversees 155 square miles of all 5 of Chester County's northern and eastern Schuylkill River watersheds. It offers summer day camps where children ages 4 to 14 are introduced to the natural world through play, exploration, wildlife studies and craft projects. Camp presenters include naturalists with live animals, story tellers, beekeepers and birders with hawks and owls. Visit on the web at: [www.greenvalleys.org/welkinweir.html](http://www.greenvalleys.org/welkinweir.html)

- Kristine Gordon-Watson,  
East Nantmeal Township  
Historical Commission Chair

The Chester County Ledger

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Direct all queries to: The Editor, CCHPN, P.O.Box 174, West Chester, PA 19381. Letters to the Editor and articles for the *Chester County Ledger* are welcome. There is no guarantee, however, that submissions will be published. No such submissions will be returned. The CCHPN does not necessarily endorse the content of advertisements herein.

Property Research Guide Now Available

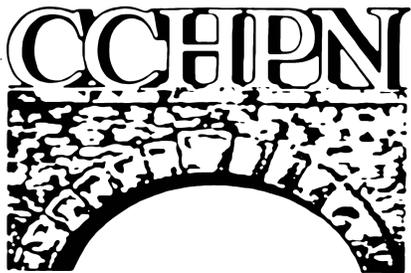
The online guide "Researching Your Chester County Home" is now available on the website of the Chester County Archives ([www.chesco.org/archives](http://www.chesco.org/archives)). Written by Archives staff with Archivist Cliff Parker as the primary author, the guide is part of a soon-to-be-completed project funded by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The guide provides an in-depth explanation of how to do property research. Topics covered include how to read a deed and how to interpret tax records. The guide addresses the problems that can occur in conducting property research, such as what to do when a deed in the chain of title is unrecorded. In addition, it contains brief descriptions of resources useful for property research that can be found in the Chester County Historical Society's Library and Photo Archives, the Chester County Archives, the Chester County Department of Parks and

Recreation, the Chester County Recorder of Deeds, and the Chester County Department of Assessment. The guide also features case studies of two Chester County houses, a twin in Phoenixville and a tenant house in Kennett Township, so the reader can see how the records are used. An abridged version of the online guide is available on the website as a PDF for easy downloading.

The grant, which was awarded to Chester County Historical Society and the Chester County Archives, also funded two workshops at Chester County Historical Society on May 1 and 22, 2010. Workshop topics include architectural history, historic preservation services, documentation of a historic house, and an overview of the new research guide. For more information, call the Archives at 610-344-6760.

- Laurie A. Rofini, Director  
Chester County Archives and  
Records Services

Printed on recycled paper.



# 2010 Volunteer Recognition Celebration

**June 23, 2010, Wednesday**  
**Welkinweir**  
**1368 Prizer Road, Pottstown, PA**  
**All are welcome!**

### *Evening's Schedule*

5:30pm Tour and presentation of  
Welkinweir and gardens  
6:45 Dinner is served  
7:30 Volunteer Recognition  
Ceremony  
8:45 Closing Comments

Fee: \$25.00 for all attendees

For more information, call CCHPN at:  
1-877-44-CCHPN (1-877-442-2476)  
Registration is by the mail-in form only.

All are invited to come out to our annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration, honoring the accomplishments of Chester County's Historical Commissions and HARBs and other volunteer preservationists! We hope every Historical Commission and HARB will be represented!

- ✓ Come and tour the historic estate house and gardens!
- ✓ Participate in the Roll Call of the Successes and Challenges of our Historical Commissions and HARBs!
- ✓ See who receives this year's Historic Preservation Awards and "Grace Under Fire" Awards, including a Special Award for an indispensable friend of Historic Preservation!
- ✓ Join your neighbors and friends in recognition of your efforts!

This event is co-hosted by East Nantmeal Township Historical Commission, and we give special thanks to Welkinweir and the Green Valleys Association.

Directions are on the next page.



## Registration Form

**RSVP by June 18, 2010**

Municipality/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Additional Attendee(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to include your membership dues with your registration, please check below:

- Individual (\$20.00)
- Municipality/Organization (\$85.00)

### **Total Payment Amount For Registration**

Number of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25.00 ea. \_\_\_\_\_

plus membership dues, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to CCHPN**

**Mail form and check to: CCHPN, PO Box 174, West Chester, PA 19381. Thanks!**



**Directions to Welkinweir:**

Follow Route 100 North past Route 401 at Ludwig's Corner, and continue 3.7 miles to Prizer Road. Turn left on Prizer Road. Welkinweir is 1 mile on the left.

## “Green Preservation” CCHPN 2010 Spring Workshop Follow-Up

As we learn to recognize historic sites that merit preservation for any or all of the multiple reasons stressed in the literature, we also need to learn about the long-term care and keeping of these structures. To begin the review of the 2010 CCHPN Spring Workshop, please look back to your February 2010 *Chester County Ledger* and read the articles that lay a foundation for the Workshop proper.

Needless to say the National Trust for Historic Preservation is a fountain of information readily available at any time, right at your fingertips, and we were lucky to have Anita Franchetti from the Trust present her information on sustainability and weatherization. The presence of the Brandywine Conservancy in our local community has played a significant role in assisting organizations to structure ordinances in a manner that will preserve and yet permit the healthy growth that will continue to support our environment. Tara Tracy, a Senior Planner from the Conservancy, spoke on this topic. In addition, Heidi Kunsch from the PA Department of Environmental Protection, talked about green building basics, the LEED ratings system, and funding opportunities for green construction and green

rehabilitations. We offer our heartfelt thanks to the presenters for their hard work.

Attendees this year represented a broad and varied sampling of the historic preservation community, coming not only from Chester County but neighboring counties. CCHPN members were well represented and, we were pleased to see, a higher percentage than usual attended from non-preservation-oriented organizations.

The interest in capitalizing on the current movement for actively incorporating environmentally enhanced avenues to support planning to bring forward natural resources and recognizing that tearing down is not efficient or economical is strong. Take time to access Chester County’s Landscapes2 for a masterful document that includes issues addressed in this Workshop. Historic structures are part of our landscape along with the woods, e.g. Big Woods and wildlife. Our focus is now to build upon the durability and inherent sustainability of older buildings to achieve further advancements over time. We can learn from the builders and architects of the past. Why is this building still standing? What keeps it cool in the summer and retains heat in the winter? How can we adapt the structure to incorporate utility systems which we now feel are essential to our life style? Learning how to save this part of history is just as important as preserving the documents that describe the life of days gone by, that were lived in these settings. We need to honor this past through rehabilitation and preservation.

The Network also thanks all attendees for their comments evaluating the workshop and for completing the Interest Survey for future education programs. We will be tailoring future educational programs to reflect these responses (See at left).

We also wish to remind you of the printed materials you received at the workshop that provided a substantial amount of more technical information than was covered in the presentations.

For the presentations, themselves, we are putting the PowerPoint files up on our website at: [www.cchpn.org/histcomm.htm](http://www.cchpn.org/histcomm.htm)

Thanks again and we hope to see you all at the Volunteer Recognition Celebration on June 23rd!

- Elaine Husted, Ph.D  
CCHPN Board

### Survey Says...

Participants at the 2010 Spring Workshop completed an Interest Survey to help the Education & Program Committee plan future programs and workshops. Indications on the survey were weighted according to ratings of High, Medium and Low.

Here’s the Top 10

10. Public Preservation Education
9. Property Research
8. Listing of Preservation Resources
7. Historic Resource Surveys
6. Architectural Salvage
5. Preservation Law
4. Preservation Planning Ordinances
3. Architectural History
2. Historic House Maintenance

And the number one topic:

1. Demolition by Neglect

## 2010 Town Tours & Village Walks

### Sixteen Years of Celebrating and Sharing Chester County's Heritage

The Chester County Board of Commissioners through the Parks and Recreation Department, the Chester County Historical Society, Westtown Township, the Chester County Historic Preservation Network, and the Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau announce the 16<sup>th</sup> annual "TOWN TOURS & VILLAGE WALKS."

From William Penn's 1682 land grant to our 20<sup>th</sup> century neighborhoods, this summer features another varied schedule of eleven FREE walking tours of our historic towns, villages, hamlets and countryside, highlighting the detailed research accumulated by our historical commissions and societies. This summer will feature historic churches, meeting houses, battlefields, and burial grounds. Themes range from the infamous Paoli Massacre to the history of important civic organizations, including fire companies and schools. Enjoy first-person presentations, a stately mansion, and movie making with a free movie!

Tours are scheduled for Thursday evenings, June 10<sup>th</sup> – August 19<sup>th</sup>, from approximately 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. The first tour starts at 5:30p.m.; the last tour at approximately 7:30 p.m. All tours include light refreshments. West Chester, Kennett and Phoenixville Boroughs will be offering dining discounts; Radley Run is offering an optional dinner. All tours are free of charge and only cancelled for severe weather by 5:00 p.m. the day of the tour.

NEW! We now have a central telephone service for information and reservations for all of the tours, provided by the Chester County Historic Preservation Network. Simply dial 1-877-44-CCHPN (1-877-442-2476) and select the menu option for the tour you want.

For an official brochure or other information, please contact Karen Marshall, Heritage Preservation Officer, Chester County Parks & Recreation, 610-344-6415, or visit the Chester County Parks and Recreation website at [www.chesco.org/ccparks](http://www.chesco.org/ccparks).

- Karen Marshall  
Chester County Heritage  
Preservation Officer

#### 2010 Schedule

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For information and reservations for each tour, call 1-877-442-2476 and select the appropriate menu option

June 10, West Chester, Northwest Quadrant, Kick-Off Tour

*Telephone Menu Selection 1*

June 17, Great Valley Presbyterian Church, Malvern

*Telephone Menu Selection 2*

June 24, Paoli Massacre & Battlefield

*Telephone Menu Selection 3*

July 1, Thorndale Village

*Telephone Menu Selection 4*

July 8, Kimberton Village's 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Quaker Burial Ground

*Telephone Menu Selection 5*

July 15, Historic Kennett Borough

*Telephone Menu Selection 6*

July 22, Goshenville

*Telephone Menu Selection 7*

July 29, Phoenixville's Historic Northside Churches

*Telephone Menu Selection 8*

August 5, Movie Making in Historic Yellow Springs

*Telephone Menu Selection 9*

August 12, Romansville Village

*Telephone Menu Selection 10*

August 19, Mather Mansion & Grounds at Radley Run

*Telephone Menu Selection 11*

## NEW This Year! Town Tours & Village Walks Kick-Off Lecture Series

Sunday, May 16, 1 -2:30 pm

### ***Chester County's Early Meeting Houses,***

presented by Seth Hinshaw, Architectural Historian

Join us at the Old Kennett Meeting House (Baltimore Pike and Kendal Drive, Kennett Square), which is celebrating its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010. This property stands as a testament to the freedom of religion we have enjoyed longer than we have had our United States!

Sunday, May 23, 1 – 2:30 pm

### ***Serpentine Buildings in Chester County,***

presented by Jane Dorchester, Architectural Historian

Join us at the Nottingham Presbyterian Church (497 W. Christine Rd., Nottingham, PA), which was

constructed of serpentine rock quarried at the in present-day Nottingham County Park. Jane will share her knowledge of the use of serpentine as a building material and the variety of structures made with it.

Sunday, June 6, 1:00- 2:30 PM

### ***Quakers, Bank Barns & Chester County,***

presented by Seth Hinshaw, Architectural Historian

Join us for a tour of the Great Barn at Springton Manor Farm (860 Springton Road, Glenmoore, PA ). Seth will discuss the manor and the Quaker influence on the County's built history.

Each talk is \$3.00 per person. Light refreshments will be provided.

## Returning World Trade Center "Trees" Welcomed Home to Coatesville in April

On April 14, 2010, World Trade Center steel arrived on a 28 tractor-trailer convoy from New York City to Coatesville, Pa.

Twenty-eight thundering trucks brought 500 tons of World Trade Center steel home to its final destination of Coatesville, PA yesterday. The trucks were carrying the steel "trees" (structural shapes that were fabricated at Lukens Steel of Coatesville in the late 1960s). The "trees" framed the first nine floors and soaring lobbies of the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center. As the horrors of 9/11 unfolded, it was the lasting images of the "trees" still standing which etched an indelible image in the minds of those who viewed them. The trees became the icons of the tragedy.

As the trucks pulled onto Route 30 in Chester County, their final leg of the trip, sidewalks were filled with visibly moved greeters. The convoy passed under two different "arches" made by two ladder trucks with an oversized flag suspended between them. This ceremony is traditionally reserved for fallen heroes.

Finally, the procession arrived at The Lukens National Historic District, the future home of The National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum. A gracious welcoming ceremony was held at 5:00pm on the porch of Terracina Mansion and hosted by The Graystone Society, whose president, Scott G. Huston (a direct descendent of Rebecca Lukens, the first female



*A "fallen hero" arch made by ladder trucks from Coatesville and Downingtown fire companies, welcomed the steel home.*

industrialist in the United States) chaired the event. The National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum considers the "trees" to be the bedrock of its artifact collection.



Chester County Historic Preservation Network

P.O. Box 174

West Chester, PA 19381

www.cchpn.org 877-442-2476

PLEASE FORWARD

Please come and  
join us for our

Spring 2010  
Volunteer Recognition  
Celebration

Welkinweir  
Pottstown, PA

June 23, 2010

## Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

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For technical help you with your preservation efforts or with  
your historic house, and for information on preservation  
events around the county, please visit:

[www.CCHPN.org](http://www.CCHPN.org)

**Matthew E. Roberson**  
**Restoration Carpentry**

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*Located in Southern Chester County,  
serving Southeastern Pennsylvania*