

The Chester Historical Society's



We have a variety of stories in this issue. The first involves one of the least appreciated historic sites in Chester. We may have had greater appreciation if the newspapers of the time had the headline: "Mad scientist uses dynamite to clean his furnace!" The next article features one of the loveliest houses in Chester and the proverbial "millionaire next door". Additional images from the new kiosks at the Chester Furnace Historic Site, CHS Summer Picnic, and Holiday Party are at the end of this issue. See the footer for contact information if you have questions or comments. Please let us know if your email has changed.



The Chester Furnace



Haningtons as the Cramers



New kiosk at Furnace Site



CHS "Picnic" at Willowwood

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William J. Taylor and the Chester Furnace

By Edward Ng¹ – Chester Historical Society

The May 22, 1875 issue of the Dover based newspaper, Iron Era, had several detailed articles on Chester. Rather than try to re-phrase the Iron Era article, "The New Blast Furnace", I think it best to present the reporter's own words; they are prophetic (story continued on page 2):

¹ The kind provision of information from Larry Lowenthal, Pierre Rosen –Rockaway Township Free Library, Cindy Knight -Hunterdon County Historical Society, and John Taylor is gratefully acknowledged.

The New Blast Furnace

While in Chester on Monday we made a visit to Mr. J.W. Taylor², President of the North Jersey Iron Company, for the purpose of ascertaining something definitive in regard to the new furnace at that place, brief mention of which was made in our last. Mr. Taylor, an affable obliging gentleman, was found at the Hedges Mine, greeted us kindly, and willingly furnished us with such particulars as he could at present give. The furnace, he said, will be built by the North Jersey Iron Company, (formerly the Union Iron Co.). In consultation with the citizens of the place Mr. Taylor gave then an intimation of what he would like to have them do and met with a liberal and hearty response,-- the people in a short time contributing about \$5,000, and purchasing fifty-three acres of land from Mr. John D. G. Carlyle for a site, and selling it to Mr. Taylor for a nominal sum. The land is situated on the line of the High Bridge Railroad, at the junctions of the Chester Hill Branch, and for furnace purposes is a most desirable location—the ground being level, with a good supply of water for the boilers, accessible to the railroads, and within half a mile of the Hedges mine which will furnish the ore. It is the intention of the company to have one stack completed by the 1st of January next, for the making of Besemer pig iron, for which purpose this ore is eminently calculated, being unusually low in phosphorous. This ore has been used for several years past for this metal, and has been manufactured in the Schuylkill and Susquehanna Valleys, and at the Bethlehem Iron Works. This mine is said to be the only one in the State where this ore is found in large quantities. Before using in the furnace it will be desulphurized by a roasting process, for which Mr. Taylor claims great utility and merit. The dimensions and capacity of the proposed new furnace are not yet decided upon, but under consideration. Everything in the shape of plans will be completed before ground is broken. Mr. Taylor has removed his residence from High Bridge to Chester and will personally superintend the work.

To set the Chester scene more clearly, 1875 was 8 years after Perry Skellenger discovered a large vein of iron ore while digging an ice house in the back yard of his residence at the intersection of Academy Lane and Main Street (current location of Academy store). Since 1867 a dozen iron mines have been established in Chester. Two years earlier in 1873, the



William Johnston Taylor - undated

forementioned Chester Hill Branch was set up to serve the mines (particularly the Hedges Mine) and Chester. Mr. W.J. Taylor proposed to build a furnace locally and the citizens of Chester, with a long tradition of self help, raised \$5,000 to buy the land for the furnace. However, the Chester Furnace did not go into operation until July 4, 1879 for reasons unclear. Once the Furnace starts operating it is a roaring success, producing 20-30 tons of pig iron daily. There is a report from the Iron Era dated May, 1882, that "\$18,000 per month is expended in Chester for labor in the production and manufacture of iron." The 2015 equivalent of that amount is \$441,372³ per month and the population of Chester in 1880 was only 2337⁴.

Why was the Furnace so successful? I believe W.J. Taylor deserves most of the credit. William Johnston Taylor (hereafter referred to as W.J.), was born on Jan. 5, 1836, in High

²This is an error on the part of the reporter, it should be Mr. W. J. Taylor

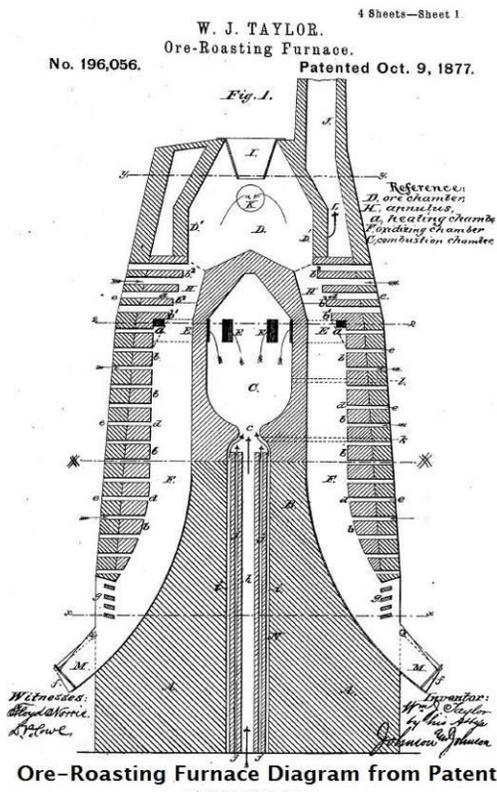
³ <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/community/teaching-aids/cpi-calculator-information/consumer-price-index-1800>

⁴ Larry Lowenthal. 1980. Chester's Iron Heyday Chester Historical Society. Page 30.

Bridge, NJ. He attended local schools and then St. Mary's College in Wilmington, Delaware.⁵ The Taylor family had been associated with the Union Iron Works which initially had only a charcoal blast furnace and forge. His great-grandfather Robert Taylor, an Irish immigrant, became works manager in 1769 and purchased control in 1803. However, the works languished until 1851 when the Central Railroad of New Jersey finally completed the track to High Bridge. W.J.'s father, Lewis H. Taylor, subsequently revived and expanded the works. With rail transportation to the east, the bar iron, wagon-axes, and car-axes made at the works, found profitable markets.

The village of High Bridge grew in response to the growth of the iron works and a Post Office was established in 1854 with W.J. as the deputy postmaster. He left for Philadelphia in 1856 to engage in the shipping business. In Feb. 1859, he married Ellen Knight, and in May, 1860 their daughter Virginia was born. Tragically in 1866, his wife Ellen died and he returned to High Bridge. He took charge of the business and expanded by adding a car-wheel foundry.

In 1868 W.J. and his father formed the Taylor Iron Works with an authorized capital of \$500,000⁶. Some of the largest stock holders were representatives of the Central Railroad of New Jersey. His father was made president and he the managing director and treasurer. Over the next several years, the company prospered by manufacturing railroad car and track fittings. The Iron Works expanded their holdings, including building a dam 26 feet high to harness energy from the South Branch of the Raritan River, equivalent to 473 horsepower. They owned 130 acres of land, a forge, a foundry, a machine shop, two miles of railway-track, locomotives and cars. By 1874, the work force reached 185 men⁷.



Ore-Roasting Furnace Diagram from Patent
research were frequently cited by other researchers in their reports.

In 1874, at the age of 38, W.J. surprisingly retired from managing the Taylor Iron Works. In 1875 he moved, with his second wife Mary, daughters Virginia, Margaret and Helen and son Knox, to Chester. They first moved into the house which is now at 40 Furnace Road (now occupied by a possibly related Taylor family). It is 1875 and we've come full circle to the Iron Era story at the beginning of this article. W.J. was a wealthy man. Why did he give up a prestigious and powerful executive position in comfortable High Bridge to come to Chester? I conjecture that W.J. was an engineering genius who loved to experiment and find practical solutions. He created and used the Chester Furnace as his laboratory and the success of the Chester Furnace speaks to the success of his engineering prowess. Further evidence of his intended career change was his election to the American Institute of Mining Engineers in 1875. He was an active and valued member of the Institute and twice elected to the governing body in 1890 and 1899. He published 7 papers in the Transactions of the Institute, plus numerous comments. His inventions and

⁵ Bi-Monthly Bulletin of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, January, 1905. Page 262.

⁶ \$8,888,800 value in 2015

⁷ History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey. Published 1881.

Two years before he quit and moved to Chester, he received the first of his 17 patents, "Improvement of the Manufacture of Iron" which suggested using composite input materials to improve furnace performance. In 1875 he received another patent, "Improvements in Calcining-Kilns" ("calcining" means "roasting"). The second patent was referenced in the Iron Era report as "Before using [the Hedges Mine ore] in the furnace it will be desulphurized by a roasting process, for which Mr. Taylor claims great utility and merit." The "roasting process" was also the subject of his 1877 patent, "Improvements in Ore-Roasting Furnaces".

For ten years after 1877, W.J. switched from writing patents to publishing results of his experiments in the Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers. He reported on the findings of his research in Chester both successful and unsuccessful. Here is the opening paragraph from his 1884 paper, "Experiments with a Straight or No-Bosh Blast Furnace"⁸. Though the experiment was a failure, he wanted to share his experiences.

It is, perhaps, more important to put on record the particulars of experiments that are decided failures than those that are successful, as those of the latter class are certain to live, while the former may be lost sight of in a short time, and repeated by others. To this end, I propose to give the particulars of a straight or no-bosh furnace just tried at the Chester (New Jersey) works, which was such a decided failure as to leave no doubt of the plan being wrong, and determining the necessity of a bosh of some kind, as of old.

Not all of W.J.'s experiments had negative results. A year after his failures with the straight blast furnace, he continued his experiments, but abandoning the no-bosh design and made small modifications to the furnace which doubled the output from 150 tons to 300 tons per week while using the same fuel consumption of less than 1.5 tons per ton of iron. He remarked "...it seems strange that a change so slight as this should make the extreme difference between a complete failure and a marked success"⁹.

These two papers are important not only in revealing his problem solving, but also in providing information about the Chester Furnace. In his published comments on the "Operation of the Warwick Furnace, Pennsylvania"¹⁰, he provided the following information about the Furnace and also illustrated his analytical and scientific mindset:

Record of the Operation of Chester Furnace, N. J. (13 feet x 60 feet), for a Blast of Twenty Weeks, from February 17th, 1881, to July 9th, 1881.

Weeks.	Pig iron made. Gross tons.	Yield of ore. Per cent.	Used per ton of iron.		Blast.			Temperature of escaping gases.	Weekly stoppages.	
			Fuel. Gross tons.	Limestone. Gross tons.	Temperature. F.	Pressure in lbs.	Cubic feet of air per lb. of coal.		Hours.	Minutes.
1	211	45	1.43	1.18	770	7.45	74.87	320	2	30
2	232	47	1.347	.946	788	8	72.03	333	3	13
3	244	51.2	1.164	.94	737	8.28	80.97	422	4	05
4	261	49.3	1.197	.94	763	8.17	76.61	412	4	10
5	242	46.2	1.28	1.11	783	7.92	74.66	361	4	49
6	237	47	1.258	1.00	746	7.35	76.81	398	5	14
7	239	46.8	1.28	.95	724	7.56	76.29	415	5	55
8	241	48.3	1.217	.89	746	7.75	79.40	412	2	46
9	246	49.3	1.15	.868	729	7.85	80.35	439	5	59
10	247	50	1.126	.867	730	7.47	82.51	416	2	30
11	242	49	1.175	.893	754	7.59	80.84	430	4	53
12	239	47.6	1.191	.824	744	7.60	82.58	424	1	23
13	239	48.2	1.184	.753	742	7.74	82.52	448	7	13
14	237	46	1.292	.79	735	7.69	78.43	449	6	28
15	228	44.6	1.305	.81	766	7.21	82.67	469	1	25
16	236	48	1.222	.745	783	7.57	84.04	444	4	13
17	236	49.5	1.188	.772	788	7.41	83.39	449	3	10
18	233	47.8	1.23	.90	794	7.44	83.16	439	3	55
19	217	47.2	1.315	.986	778	7.58	82.26	443	2	82
20	192	47.6	1.283	1.01	808	7.58	82.65	449	23	43
Avgc.	236½	47.8	1.241	.909	760.4				4	15

A twenty-weeks run of the Chester Furnace in 1881 shows good results in every respect except speed. The furnace was 13 feet in diameter at bosh and 60 feet high. It was blown by four 4-inch

⁸ The bosh is the widest part or "belly" of the furnace, measured in feet as the diameter.

⁹ The Straight or No-Bosh Blast Furnace (Supplementary Paper) in the Trans. Of the American Inst. Of Mining Engineers. Vol 14.

¹⁰ 1886 Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, Vol. 14 page 861

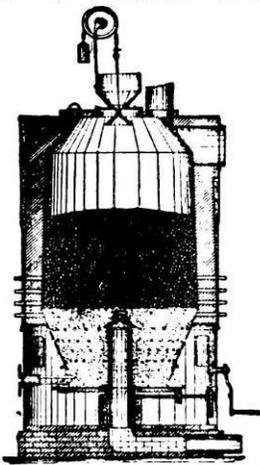
tuyeres¹¹. The average daily make, 33.82 tons No. 2 and No. 3 iron—about half of each number; the average consumption of fuel (1/10th to 1/12th coke), 1.241 tons per ton of iron; the yield of the ore, 47.80 per cent; limestone per ton of iron, 0.909 ton; average temperature of blast, 775 degrees F.; average volume of air per minute (engine measurement), 5480 cubic feet.

That W.J. was not a conventional thinker is obvious. Even more evidence comes from his paper, "The Use of High Explosives in the Blast Furnace and of Water-Spray for Cooling in Blowing Down¹²", he describes several situations at the Chester Furnace where "I found great benefit in the use of dynamite" to help clean or unclog the furnace while it was still operating. In one emergency, he and the furnace were saved by the quick thinking of his assistant and future business partner, Nelson M. Langdon.

Over half of W.J.'s patents (mostly from 1889) and two of his papers involved the production of gas for use in refining and potentially for other purposes. Though not all of them involved

THE TAYLOR REVOLVING-BOTTOM GAS PRODUCER.

Patented in the United States March 19, 1889. Nos. 399,793; 399,794; 399,795; 399,796; 399,797; 399,798; 399,799.
Also patented in all foreign countries.



The best Producer for either Bituminous or Anthracite Coal or Lignite.
Applicable to all regenerative furnaces; also for gas-firing
Lime, Brick, and Pottery Kilns, Sugar-house
Char Kilns, Boilers, etc., etc.

Producer Gas for Gas Engines.

For illustrated descriptive pamphlet and all particulars
address

TAYLOR GAS-PRODUCER COMPANY,
Brown Building, Fourth and Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, Pa.

research at the Chester Furnace, his paper "A Water-Cooled Gas-Producer" was based on work done with the ore roasting kilns at the Furnace site, primarily in 1887. These inventions were commercialized as "The

Taylor Revolving-Bottom Gas Producer", "Applicable to all regenerative furnaces; also for gas-firing Lime, Brick, and Pottery Kilns, Sugar-house, Char Kilns, Boilers, etc., etc."¹³

other invention which was commercialized was one of his earliest inventions. Partnering

THE TAYLOR-LANGDON ORE ROASTING FURNACE.

This is the only reliable Furnace or Kiln using gaseous fuel, and it is well known that a thorough roasting and desulphurization of sulphurous iron ores can not be effected with solid fuel. Furnaces now in operation by

W. J. Taylor & Co., Chester Furnace, Chester, N. J.
Phoenix Iron Company, Phoenixville, Pa.
E. & G. Brooke Iron Company, Birdsboro, Pa.
Joseph E. Thropp & Co., Edge Hill Furnace, Edge Hill, Pa.
Chester Iron Company, Hackelbarney Mines, Chester, N. J.

These Ore Roasting Furnaces, with the necessary gas producers, will be built by contract, or licenses will be granted to parties desiring to build them themselves. For full particulars address

W. J. TAYLOR, Chester, N. J.

The

with his assistant "The Taylor-Langdon Ore Roasting Furnace" found widespread success¹⁴.

We know that the both of W.J.'s inventions were already being used at the Chester Furnace from a report in the Feb. 2, 1884 Local News report from the Iron Era:

The Chester furnace of W.J. Taylor & Co., 13x60, reached an output last week of 304 tons, exceeding its usually good weekly average of 290 tons. This is probably the best work ever done in a furnace of this size with anthracite fuel. The ores used were three-quarters Chester sulphury ores which previous to going into the blast furnace were roasted in the Taylor-Langdon Ore Roasting Furnace. The iron made from these ores is very strong and tough, and is used almost entirely for special mill purposes, thus demonstrating their value when properly prepared and desulphurized. The roasting is done with gas made in separate gas producers and no coal is used in the Roasting Furnace. One and a half cwt. of pea coal or screenings from the furnace is used per ton of ore roasted. We are informed that this is the only roasted ore in the country in which gaseous fuel only is used for heating the ore.

¹¹ A tuyere in a blast furnace is a nozzle or pipe through which air is blown into the furnace below the bosh and above the hearth.

¹² Transactions of the American Mining Engineers. Vol. 13. 1885

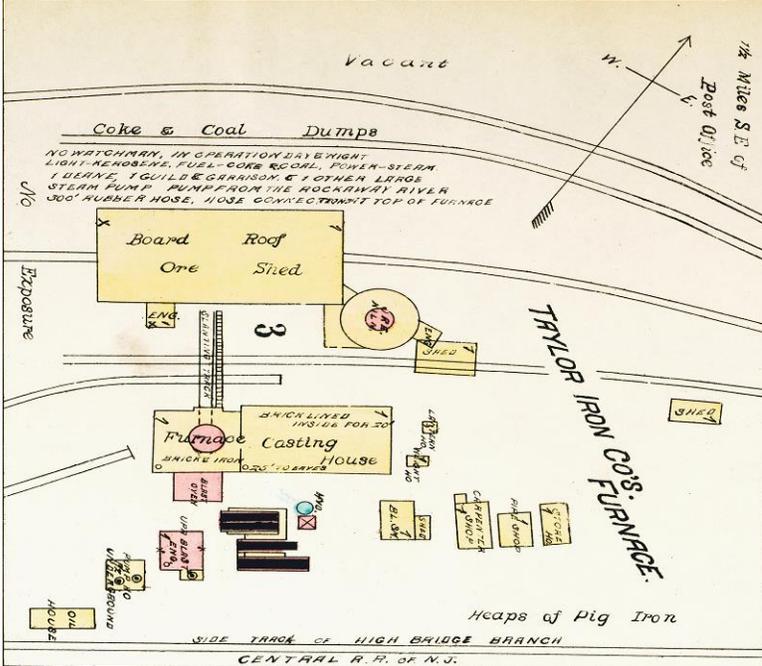
¹³ The Bulletin of the American Iron and Steel Association. Vol 24. 1890

¹⁴ The Bulletin of the American Iron and Steel Association. Vol 19. 1885

In 1886 the Sanborn Insurance Company came to Chester to map the downtown area and included in that survey is the only known official map of the Chester Furnace. We also have the only known photograph of the Chester Furnace, and although it is undated, it seems to correspond with the 1886 Sanborn map¹⁵. The writing on the Sanborn map indicates the Taylor Iron Co's. Furnace is 1.5 miles from the Post Office in town. The writing under the "Coke & Coal Dumps" provides information about the equipment, especially the engines: **NO WATCHMAN, IN OPERATION DAY AND NIGHT - LIGHT-KEROSENE FUEL, COKE & COAL, POWER STEAM -1 DEANE, 1 GUILD & GARRISON & 1 OTHER LARGE STEAM PUMP PUMP FROM THE ROCKAWAY RIVER (the Black River) 300' RUBBER HOSE, HOSE CONNECTION AT TOP OF FURNACE**



Looking at the photo, from left to right, we see a locomotive on the Central of New Jersey railroad track. There is a car, possibly loaded with slag or pig iron, to the right on the side track. The three tall, thin stacks rising behind the slag car are for the three steam pumps or engines as described in the map text. On the Sanborn map the 3 thin stacks rise out of the 3 black rectangles. To the right of the thin stacks is the wider stack of the blast furnace. Extending from the right side of the blast furnace is the slanted track of a conveyer belt that would take cars filled with desulphurized ore, anthracite coal, and limestone to charge the blast furnace. Further to the right and in the background is the large stack of the Taylor-Langdon Ore Roasting Furnace. The gas producer used to provide the "gaseous fuel" for roasting is not easily seen and may have been part of the ore roasting building.



The Chester Furnace was operating well, but external factors had been developing to put this enterprise out of business even before it opened. The discovery in 1844 of the Marquette Iron Range in Michigan¹⁶ and in 1866 of the Mesabi Iron Range in

Minnesota eventually shifted iron production from the East Coast to those mines in the Lake Superior region. Much cheaper open pit mining was used in the Mesabi Iron Range¹⁷. From 1886 to 1889 the Lake Superior iron ore shipments doubled from 3.5 million to 7 million tons. With improved rail transport to Western Pennsylvania, where bituminous coal was easily extracted, centers such as Pittsburgh became the leaders in iron and steel production. By 1889 Western Pennsylvania was producing 2,283,251 gross tons of pig iron while New Jersey

¹⁵ CHS has purchased the digitized 1886, 1896, 1901, and 1912 Sanborn Maps. Thanks to Joe Macasek for the suggestion.

¹⁶ Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marquette_Iron_Range

¹⁷ Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesabi_Range

only produced 112,226 gross tons.¹⁸ It should not have been surprising when a brief line in the Iron Era newspaper read “The Chester Furnace has ceased operation it is said on account of tariff and poor sale of iron.” In 1890, with no improvement in the iron market, W.J. put the Chester Furnace up for sale promising a bargain¹⁹. Finally, several lines appeared in the July 31, 1891 Iron Era, “The mines have all suspended operations” and “The Chester Furnace is being torn down. It will be taken to High Bridge and converted into a steel plant.”

FOR SALE.

ANTHRACITE BLAST FURNACE.

THE Chester Furnace, at Chester, Morris county, New Jersey, is now for sale. It is 18 by 60 feet, is in good repair, and can be put in blast in a month. The furnace, together with 100 acres of land, dwelling houses, etc., will be sold at a bargain. It has direct connections with the New Jersey Central and Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western railroads. For further particulars inquire of or address

W. J. TAYLOR, Brown Building, Philadelphia.

W.J. returned to High Bridge in 1891 and reorganized the Taylor Iron Works into the Taylor Iron and Steel Works. He continued his innovative ways. He had met Sir Robert A. Hadfield and in 1892 secured the license for manganese steel from him for exclusive use in the USA²⁰. This type of steel was much more durable and performed well for railway car parts and later for steel rails for railway cars. The Taylor Iron and Steel works grew and prospered.

W.J. moved to Bound Brook N.J. and continued his inventive ways, receiving two more patents both involving manganese steel. He died Feb. 17, 1903, leaving a widow and 5 children. He is buried at the Riverside Cemetery in High Bridge. The Institute of American Mining Engineers provided this biographical note:

Mr. Taylor's interest in the Institute was not confined to the professional or scientific sphere. He enjoyed keenly the opportunity for social intercourse afforded by the meetings, which he never failed to attend when he could possibly do so, and his genial companionship will be sorely missed by the survivors (rapidly growing fewer) of that band of veterans who can remember the time when "everybody knew everybody," and the gathering of members was a reunion of friends... he was an active participant in many other commercial enterprises, especially such as were connected with the introduction of new inventions, towards which his temperament always inclined him. At home, he was known as a public spirited and liberal citizen".²¹



<http://www.robertandrelatives.net/pedigree.php?personID=125&id=3&tree=1> Date Unknown

Did the man make the furnace or the furnace make the man? Given what we know about William J. Taylor, I would say more the former: he envisioned, created, and ran the Chester Furnace as a commercial enterprise for the introduction and testing of new technology, many of his own design. For a time, Chester was the right place at the right time. The mines and special iron ore, the railroads, the Black River, the workers, and the entrepreneurial, positive spirit of Chester were a good match to W.J.'s own inquisitive, but practical spirit.

Sentimentally, one might say (literally and figuratively) that the Chester Furnace continued to live on as a small part of the Taylor Iron and Steel Works and its successors, well into the 20th Century. The Chester Historical Society is working hard to insure the legacy continues. The tenor of the times is eloquently captured in Larry Lowenthal's book, Chester's Iron Heyday, published by and available from the Chester Historical Society. The preservation of the physical remains of the Chester Furnace owes much to the tireless research and field work of Len Taylor²². In the spring of 2016, the Chester Historical Society plans to formally dedicate two new informational kiosks to Len's memory at the Chester Furnace Historical Site (see article on page 10)²³ ■

¹⁸ Tariff Reform Volumes 3-4 pages 152-157.

¹⁹ Bulletin of the American Iron and Steel Association. Vol. 24. Page 32

²⁰ Taylor-Wharton Iron & Steel Company Records. <http://invention.si.edu/taylor-wharton-iron-steel-company-records-1742-1950>

²¹ January 1905. Biographical notices of 1903. Bi-Monthly Bulletin of the American Institute of Mining Engineers. Pages 262-264.

²² "Len Taylor (1936-2013) – Chester Historian" by Edward Ng; "Finding the Chester Furnace" by Len Taylor. CHS News and Views: 2014, 2015.

²³ Larry Lowenthal created note cards with stories from local newspapers of the time; Len Taylor organized them into a list "The Life and Death of the Chester Furnace" which was donated to the CHS Archives by Lois Taylor. Thanks to all. We are researching if Len Taylor is related to W.J. Taylor.



Jacob H. Cramer House - Our Home

By Elaine Hanington – Chester Historical Society

Little did Ed and I realize when in July 1976, we bought the house at 50 Hillside Road that we and our family were about to become a part of the history of this Victorian home. Early on we were encouraged by history enthusiast Carmen Smith to unearth the story of previous owners by going to the hall of records in Morristown. Our interest also triggered our neighbor across the street, attorney William Tredway, to write to us on August 10, 1976, that he also “became curious as to the age of your house.” The next logical step, it seemed to us, would be to follow Carmen’s suggestion to go to Morristown to seek more details.

We learned that Jacob H. Cramer did exist, and he bought the property on which the house stands, plus adjoining acreage, 83 acres in all, from Samuel C. Leek and paid \$5,800 for the entire parcel. The sale is recorded by deed dated June 24, 1873. Jacob Cramer had a house built and lived in it with his wife, Esther Horton Lewis Cramer, until his death in 1901. Esther had predeceased him in 1899. In his will Jacob bequeathed the house and premises to “Esther C. Moore, my deceased wife’s niece and namesake....” In addition, according to the Book of Wills, page 273, Esther was to receive “one equal half of all and singular of the household and kitchen furniture of every kind and description.” Esther Moore lived there until 1923, a total of 22 years.

Her Executor, Leon H. Moore, then sold the property to Mary M. Ammerman who lived there for 32 years, 3 months. The next owners, Herbert L. and Elizabeth S. Pickell sold after 3 years to Victor D. and Mary C. Reynolds whose ownership lasted only 2 years. The Reynolds then sold to a couple whose name will be familiar to present-day residents of Chester. Charles A. Williamson and his wife, Anna W. Williamson, lived in the old house for 8 years – 1961-1969. Charles Williamson became the principal of the grammar school on Main Street which was later named the Williamson School.

Research in the Chester Historical Society Archives recently unearthed an ad in the 1965 *Sceptre*, the yearbook of the Williamson School, which read, “Charles A. Williamson/Licensed

Real Estate Broker/Town and Country Properties/ 50 Hillside Road/Chester, N.J.” Not too many people know that Charles Williamson in addition to being a local school principal, was also a licensed real estate broker.

Morristown attorney Albert B. Jeffers, Jr. and his wife Victoria W. Jeffers were the next owners. They bought the house in November, 1969, and sold in July, 1976, to Edward Hanington and Elaine Hanington, his wife. This wonderful fact of history is recorded in Book 2370 of the Book of Deeds, pages 153-4.



Deacon Cramer and wife Esther -date unknown



Ed and Elaine Hanington dressed as Deacon Cramer and wife Esther. Sept. 20, 2014 as part of 275th Anniversary Celebration of the Congregational Church.

Ed and I and our family have lived in the Jacob H. Cramer house for 39 years as of this year, 2015. We are the eighth owners and have lived here the longest. We don't know if other families were welcomed by the ghost of a man in the pier mirror we inherited, but our sons are absolutely certain he made an appearance. We have become a part of the recorded history of the property and of the unrecorded history, too. (Editors Note: Joan Case made a video of the Hanington's re-enactment of the Cramers for the 275th Anniversary Celebration of the Congregational Church and you can view the video on Youtube, enjoy!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2jf3qEA1M>) ■



J. H. Cramer

Editors Note: Jacob H. Cramer was born in Mendham Township in 1808. He came to Chester from Ironia in 1867²⁴. He bought land for a farm along Hillside Rd. which extended all the way to the Chester Cemetery. He first built a large house at 56 Hillside Road. 1867 was also the year Perry Skellenger discovered an iron ore vein in the backyard of his house on Main St. As providence would have it, Jacob Cramer also discovered iron ore in his backyard. He sold his property including the house, except for 2 acres, to mining interests. With the profits from the sale, he was able to build the house in this article and retire from farming. According to Frances Greenidge, "He was a Deacon of the Congregational Church, a trustee, church treasurer for 36 years. He was the church's largest contributor. At his death in 1901, his estate was valued at \$50,000.²⁵" That is \$1,420,000 in 2015 dollars, so Deacon Cramer was the proverbial "millionaire next door". Ironically (sorry), the iron mine that Deacon Cramer sold on his first property was a bust. ■

²⁴ Biographical and Genealogical History of Morris County New Jersey. Vol. 2. The Lewis Publishing Co. 1899

²⁵ Frances Greenidge. Chester, New Jersey A Scrapbook of History. Chester Historical Society. 1980

Chester Furnace Historic Site – New Informational Kiosks Installed



Furnace Rd. Kiosk-Patriots' Path

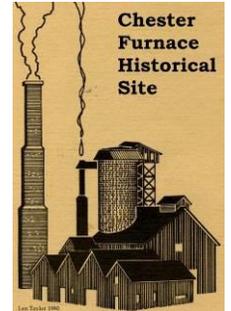


Bruce Clark, Jack Suter, Ed Ng



Information on Main Kiosk

Throughout the fall, Jack Suter worked to build and install two informational kiosks at the Chester Furnace Historic Site as his Eagle Scout Project. Patriots' Path steward, Bruce Clark, has worked tirelessly to upgrade the Path and created a new set of maps depicting the remaining evidence of the Chester Furnace. Ed Ng prepared the historic information in the kiosks. The Chester Historical Society and many other groups contributed funds and/or labor to build and install the kiosks. Thank you all very much. We are planning a dedication of the kiosks to the memory of Len Taylor in the spring of 2016. ▣



Images from the CHS Summer Picnic and the Holiday Party



The CHS Picnic was held at the Barn at Willowood Arboretum. The food was great as always! See you next September.



The Old Stone Schoolhouse on North Rd. was the sunny venue for the Holiday Party in December.



Our gracious host, Carl Pereira, welcomed us and spoke about the history of the house. Thank you Carl and CHS members for a fun time, lovely food, and great camaraderie!

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The Mr. & Mrs. Cramer and Mr. & Mrs. Hanington images kindly provided by Elaine Hanington. Historical photos and maps are from the CHS archives. All other photos by Ed Ng except as noted. If you would like to join CHS or if you have stories or pictures to share, please talk to a Board member or contact us at (908) 844-6717 or chester.historical.society@gmail.com. Membership information is available at www.historicchesternj.com.