

## The School at Church Farm a book review

*Vision and Ability: A History of CFS: The School at Church Farm.* Mary E. Neighbor, editor. Paoli: CFS: The School at Church Farm (Box 2000, Paoli, PA 19301), 2002. 140 pages.

Originally known as the Church Farm School, Reverend Charles Wesley Shreiner started his school in April 1918 with 5 boys on the abandoned Moorhead Farm property of 125 acres in Glen Loch on Route 30. In the beginning, the farm's carriage house and cannery were used as dormitories.

Charles' father had abandoned his family, so he took many jobs to support his mother and siblings. As a millwork inspector at the Lukens Steel Mill in Coatesville he started his Boys' Brigade promoting "wholesome" outdoor activities. He graduated from the Episcopal Divinity School in Philadelphia and was Rector at the Church of the Atonement in West Philadelphia between 1910 and 1918. The school came about because Charles and his new wife were very interested in starting a boarding school with a farm component near Philadelphia for fatherless boys.

By 1938 the school had grown to 700 acres by adding the adjoining Kates, Livingston, Snowden, and Grayson properties. It extended north to Swedesford Road. By 1956 it was 1,200 acres. From the beginning, there was an ambitious building program to add cottages for the boys to live in, farm buildings, road improvements, a chapel, and a large classroom building and social center. Most of this work was done by the boys.

The farm was also developed from the beginning and most of this work was done by the boys too. The first crops were potatoes and alfalfa. In time, 200 cows, 100 hogs, and 10,000 chickens were added. The boys rotated the farm chores in the morning, getting up at 4:30AM to milk the cows, and attended classes in the afternoon. For most of its early years the school included grades kindergarten through five. The book is full of reminiscences of many CFS students and these are excellent descriptions of how the school developed, its farming methods, and the changes in its philosophy of education and work over the years.

Charles died in 1964 and his son became Headmaster. Times were changing. By now the number of small farm operations in the state had declined. Regulations enforcing child labor laws had been passed. State regulations of 1977 required that milk the students drank from the farm's cows had to be pasteurized. And so dairy operations ceased and in 1982 the dairy barns were torn down, although four silos were left standing. A full day of school was started and in 1970 CFS became an accredited college preparatory school for grades 7 through 12. By 1990 the school owned 1,600 acres and had an endowment of \$40 million. Property was later sold to underwrite the additional buildings needed to support the school's change in educational emphasis and by 2002 CFS was 141 acres.

This large picture book is an alumni effort and is full of many photographs of students, staff, and school memorabilia down through the years.

## Easttown History a book review

C. Herbert Fry. *Easttown: Old in History, Young in Spirit, 1704-2004.* Devon: Easttown Township Tricentennial Corporation (566 Beaumont Road, Devon, PA 19333), 2004. 152 pages.

This large picture book is a 300-year history of Easttown Township and its major community, Berwyn, and was written for the 300-year celebration of the township. The author, who has lived in Easttown for over 50 years, is the area's foremost historian and a long-time President of the Tredyffrin Easttown History Club. It includes many local photographs, 50 of which were featured in a one-month exhibit at the Easttown Library and Information Center in January of this year. The book is a much needed and very valuable contribution to local history because it pulls together all the information about Easttown that, until now, had been widely scattered over many different sources.

The book begins with Easttown's first official date of 1704, when court records mention the appointment of a constable and ends with a 2003 survey of continuing development of the buildings, land, and residents of the township.