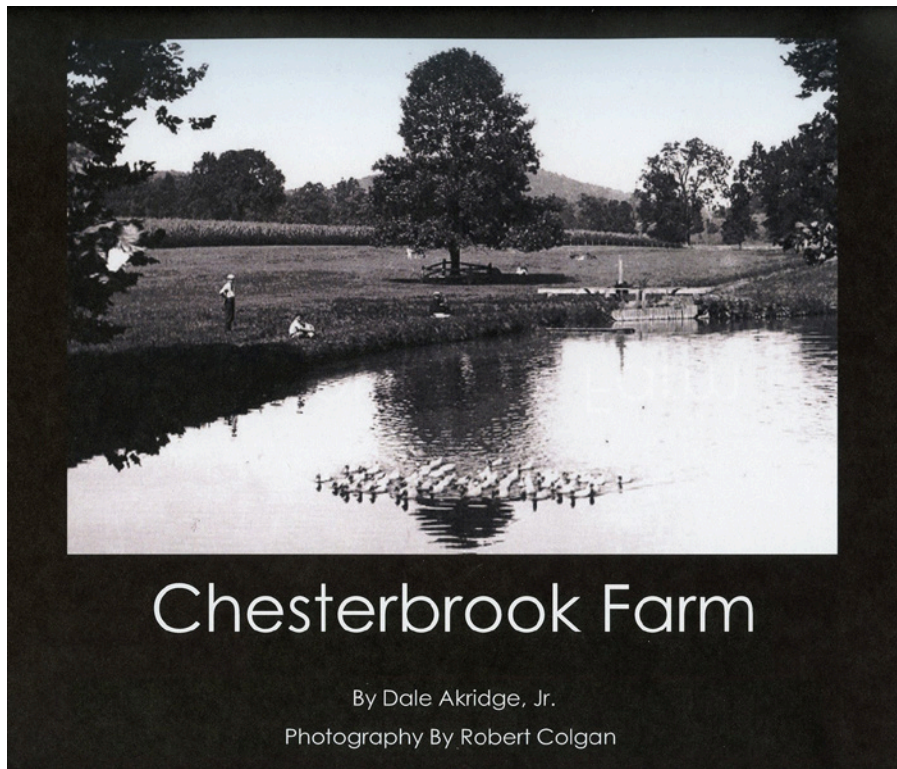


News and Comments



New Chesterbrook Farm Photographs Published

Cheryl Leibold

Dale Akridge, Jr. has published a trove of Chesterbrook Farm photographs from the 1950s and 60s. Mr. Akridge visited the farm often during his youth, roughly during the last decade of the farm's existence. His great-grandfather Richard Colgan was the farm manager from about 1885 to the early 1930s. Dale was taken to the farm by his uncle Bobby Colgan, who let him play in the fields and buildings, and observe the various daily activities. The book contains six pages of reminiscences of the visits, and reproduces over 150 photographs inherited from his grandfather Robert Colgan, who shot most of the images. As Akridge puts it: "if you have lived in this area all your life, or even just moved here, you have likely heard of Chesterbrook Farm. This book allows you to see what it looked like before the fields and pastures were transformed into the modern housing development. You can turn back the pages of time for a personal look at the farm." The images include landscape views, buildings and barns, farm operations, a steeplechase, and the people who lived on or visited the farm. The book is available either as an e-book or in hardback from: <http://progressiveclassic.wix.com/chesterbrook-farm>.



First Pennsylvania Ballet Performance in a Paoli Horse Pasture

Heidi Sproat

Society member Jim Brazel recently provided us with a copy of an article from the May/June 2010 issue of *The Penn Stater* magazine entitled "Tiny Dancer" by Maureen Gallagher Harmon ('00 Behrend). Jim's daughter had sent the article to him after noticing an interesting mention of a location in our area. Intrigued by the title and what connection, if any, it held to the Tredyffrin Easttown area, we read the article and investigated a bit further.

According to author Gallagher, the first performance of the Pennsylvania Ballet occurred in July 1963 in Paoli, Pennsylvania in a “horse pasture.” Dancers who were warming up for the “performance” did so in a nearby house in the dining room and were transported to the stage in a station wagon—not quite the grand entrance ballerinas dream about. Over the objections of the ballet’s inaugural Board of Directors who thought the troupe needed more time to hone their talents and develop a style, Barbara Weisberger, founder of the Pennsylvania Ballet, took a chance to showcase her dancers’ talents in a field in hopes of securing funding for her new ballet company. Although organizers planned for only 250 attendees, over 900 visitors crowded the natural amphitheater. Among those in attendance that evening was George Balanchine, famed Russian choreographer who served as artistic director of the infant Pennsylvania Ballet venture, various New York Times critics, and some of Philadelphia’s “elite.” Also attending was W. McNeil Lowry, Director of the Ford Foundation’s Humanities and the Arts Program. About five months later in December 1963, the Ford Foundation announced its allotment of the largest sum any foundation had ever given to any one art form at one time. The Ford Foundation awarded nine grants totaling more than \$7.76 million to strengthen professional ballet in the United States, and Pennsylvania Ballet was awarded \$295,000.

Weisberger took a leap of faith to showcase her fledgling company of dancers in a field in hopes of securing funding for her new ballet company. And where was this performance held? In a field on the Paoli estate of the then Pennsylvania Ballet board president C. Colket Wilson III. Ms. Weisberger’s intuition about the capability of her dancers paid off in untold rewards in bringing the then struggling Pennsylvania Ballet to the limelight.

For more information about this inaugural ballet performance, there are several additional articles that reference this most unusual presentation.

<http://thetimes-tribune.com/lifestyles/visionary-barbara-weisberger-to-be-honored-for-achievements-in-dance-1.1565165>

http://articles.philly.com/2013-10-15/news/43029836_1_pennsylvania-ballet-joffrey-ballet-new-york-city-ballet

http://forms.paballet.org/company_milestones.html/index.html

http://forms.paballet.org/company_milestones.html/index.html

<http://www.tehistory.org/hqda/html/v18/v18n3p083.html>

Harmon, Maureen Gallagher, “Tiny Dancer,” *The Penn Stater* magazine, May/June 2010, cover, pp. 46-49.

Thank You

The Society is an all-volunteer organization that relies on and appreciates the support of its members and friends. We are particularly grateful to members who join or renew at the Patron or Patron Plus (+) level, along with those who provide an extra contribution in addition to their annual dues, for their very important endorsement of our efforts to preserve, document, and share local history with the community. This list reflects special member contributions received as of 31 March 2015.

Patron Members

Suzanne Andrews
Rick Belber
Bo Bergqvist
Mike Bertram
James & Sharon Brazel
Jason Casterline
Lynne Dawson
Larry & Joyce DeYoung
Peggy Egertson
Steve & Raechal Finkelman
C. Herbert Fry
Dave Furman & Marianne Hooper
Pete & Judy Goodman
Bonnie & John Haughey
Adrian R. Isé & Rosemary Rodgers (+)
Glenna LaSalle Keene

William L. Keltz
Gretchen Kiernan
Peggy & Ken Kistler
Richard Kurtz
Tim & Karen Lander
Susan Lea
Steven & Charlotte Mark
J. Michael Morrison (+)
Loyd & Debbie Pakradooni (+)
Frances Pane
Ann & Al Plambeck
John O. Senior & Nancy Kimmons
Heidi & Ward Sproat
Roger & Carol Thorne
Meg Wiederseim (+)

Extra Gift Members

Robert Craig Conover
Judy & Luigi DiFillippo
Jeff & Diane Groff
Frederick & Marianne Hassold
Andrew Kese
Dennis Leeper
Angelo Meoli
William R. Spofford
Margery Stratton
Mary Jane Wallace

Organizational Patron Members

Devon Horse Show & Country Fair (+)
Easttown Township Historical
Commission (Anna Sicalides)
St. Peters Church in the Great Valley

The Society is grateful to our advertising sponsors who provide important support for production of the *History Quarterly*.

Please support our advertising sponsors