

# New Images of the Chester Valley Railroad: The Reading Railroad's Chester Valley Branch in Tredyffrin and Environs

James Brazel  
and Roger Thorne

## Introduction

This article is intended primarily as a pictorial supplement to the material presented in the Fall 2006 issue of the *Tredyffrin Easttown History Quarterly* in the article titled “Scenes Along the Chester Valley Railroad in Tredyffrin” (ref. 1). The Fall 2006 issue is available for viewing via the Society’s website.

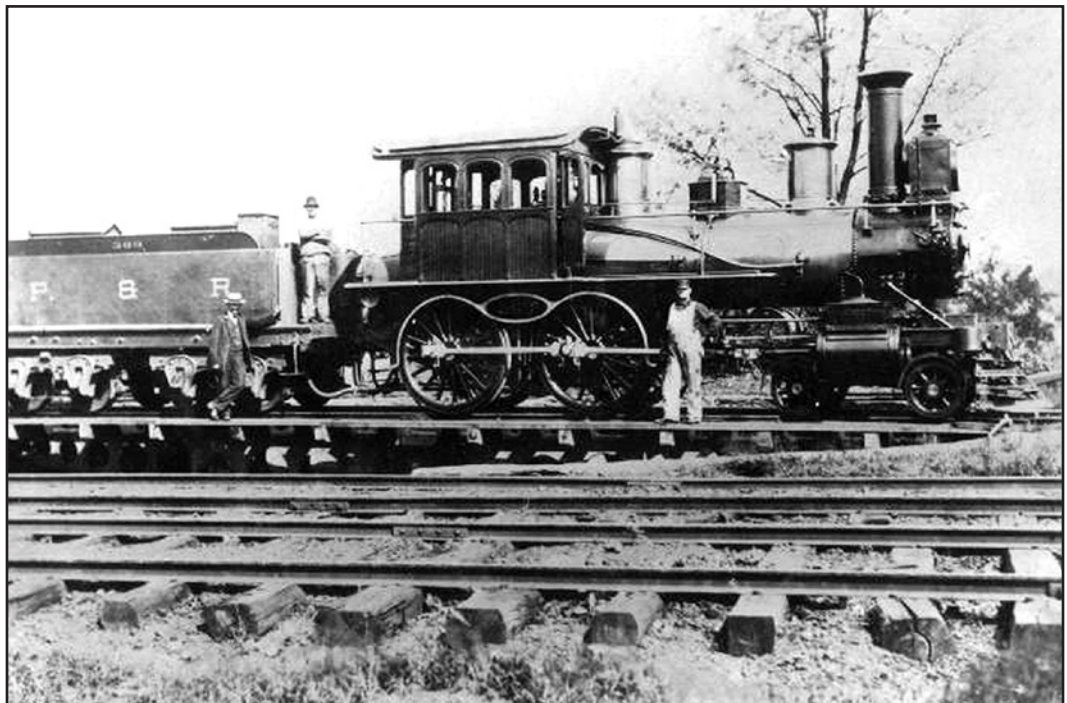
The format of this article makes use of newly acquired images (photos & maps), some historic textual information, and expanded captions. The reader should find the “obsolete” Main Line Real Estate and USGS topographic maps particularly useful for placing the scenes.

Like the previous article, it is not an end-to-end survey of the Reading Company’s Chester Valley Railroad (ChVRR), but focuses on the ChVRR in Tredyffrin and near environs. The two more expansive “slide” presentations of this material shown at Society meetings in September 2006 and April 2015 featured Downingtown-to-Bridgeport surveys of the line, with many interesting and unanticipated findings outside the boundaries of the two named townships that are the primary focus of the Society. But they were “too much of a good thing” to be included here (with a few exceptions).

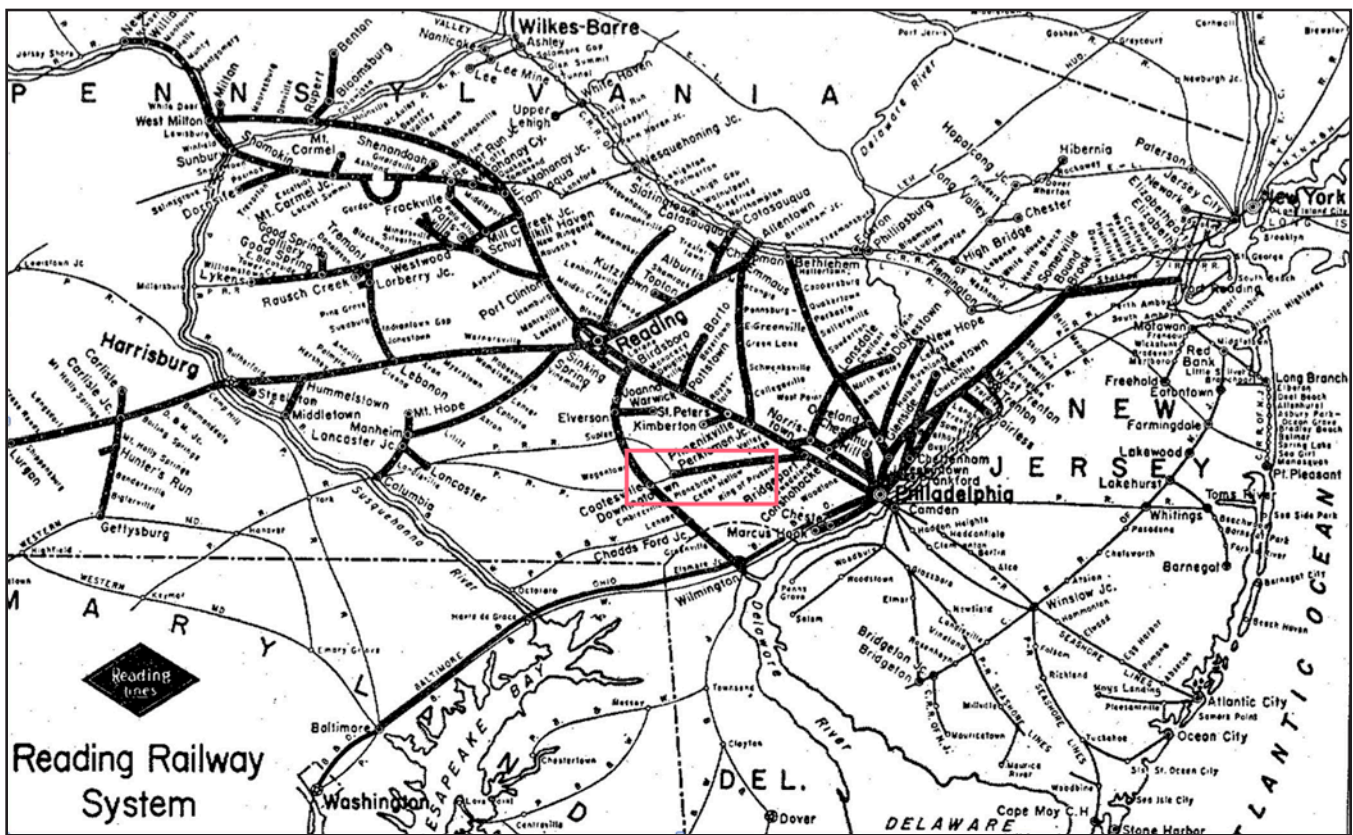
The recent development of the Chester Valley Trail has opened the right-of-way of the rail line to a gratifyingly high number of walkers, runners and bicyclists who might never have heard of this fascinating way to tour the “Valley between the Hills” or “Tredyffrin” as the first Welsh settlers named it more than three centuries ago.

In the interest of focusing specifically on the historic ChVRR, we have refrained (mostly) from the strong temptation to show “then and now” photos contrasting the new Trail’s right of way (RoW) with the historic rail line.

Philadelphia & Reading RR  
4-4-0 locomotive number  
389 and crew on turntable  
at Downingtown, PA c. late  
1800s. No. 389 was built  
in 1873 at the P&R’s old  
shops at 7th & Chestnut  
Streets in Reading PA and  
renumbered to No. 127  
in 1900. *Photo courtesy of  
Steve Mascherino & Parry  
Desmond. Locomotive  
information provided  
by Richard Bates. The  
locomotive engineer, James  
Moran, standing at right  
was Steve Mascherino’s  
great-grandfather.*







The Route Map of the Reading Railroad, 1940  
(the Chester Valley branch enclosed in red)



Downingtown, PA ("Phoenixville" U.S. Geological Survey topographic map, SW quadrant, 1906)





Reading RS3 diesel hauls "The Valley Freight" westbound at Route 30 Crossing in Exton, 1960. Dave Augsburg, photographer  
*Courtesy Reading Company Technical & Historical Society (T&HS).*



Knickerbocker Lime Works, Mill Lane (Route 401), East Whiteland Township, at upper left-center. PRR Knickerbocker Branch crosses over ChVRR at Malins, c. 1920, at lower left. The Knickerbocker Branch fill had recently been modified and track realigned. The track at lower right leads NE to Cedar Hollow Quarries. *Aero Service Corporation of Philadelphia image. Courtesy Library Company of Philadelphia.*





Site of Knickerbocker Lime Works at Mill Rd., East Whiteland Township; looking W along Route 202 from Swedesford Rd., April 1, 2015. *Photo by James Brazel.*



The PRR Knickerbocker Branch crossed over the ChVRR right-of-way at Malins.. *Photo by James Brazel.*

Looking west on ChVRR line at Malins, in 1985. The PRR Knickerbocker Branch overpass abutments and the ChVRR rails are still in place. Some of the fill behind the abutment at right has been removed. *Photo by James Brazel.*



Malins, where the PRR Knickerbocker Branch crosses the ChVRR RoW. Looking at face of PRR south abutment where a concrete cap was added in 1918 to raise the clearance above the ChVRR tracks. Note the "1918" date embossed into the right side of the concrete cap (center) *Photo by James Brazel.*





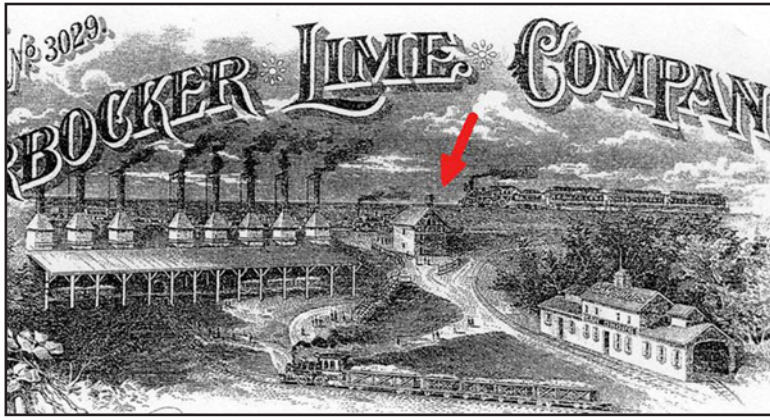


Detail of two USGS topographic maps (September, 1906 – Phoenixville, and 1895 – Norristown) “spliced” together to show the three railroad spurs servicing the Knickerbocker quarries at Malins and Cedar Hollow. Note the Knickerbocker Branch extension off the PRR Trenton Cutoff to Mill Lane and Cedar Hollow. The Frazer Branch of the PRR and the Cedar Hollow spur off the P&R Chester Valley branch both accessed the northern, lower levels of the Cedar Hollow quarry.

Knickerbocker Lime Works, east of Mill Lane, East Whiteland Township, PA. Close-up view, c. 1920. *Aero Service Corporation of Philadelphia* image. *Courtesy Library Company of Philadelphia*.







The facilities of the Knickerbocker Lime Company, in East Whiteland Township, were just a few hundred yards east of the ChVRR Mill Lane station. The scene here, from the company's letterhead, shows, with some artistic license in the plant depiction, the basic arrangement of the buildings which conform to the stone ruins visible today. The walls of the company's "office building," noted by the red arrow, are mostly intact and immediately next to the Chester Valley right-of-way. *Courtesy of Richard Bates.*

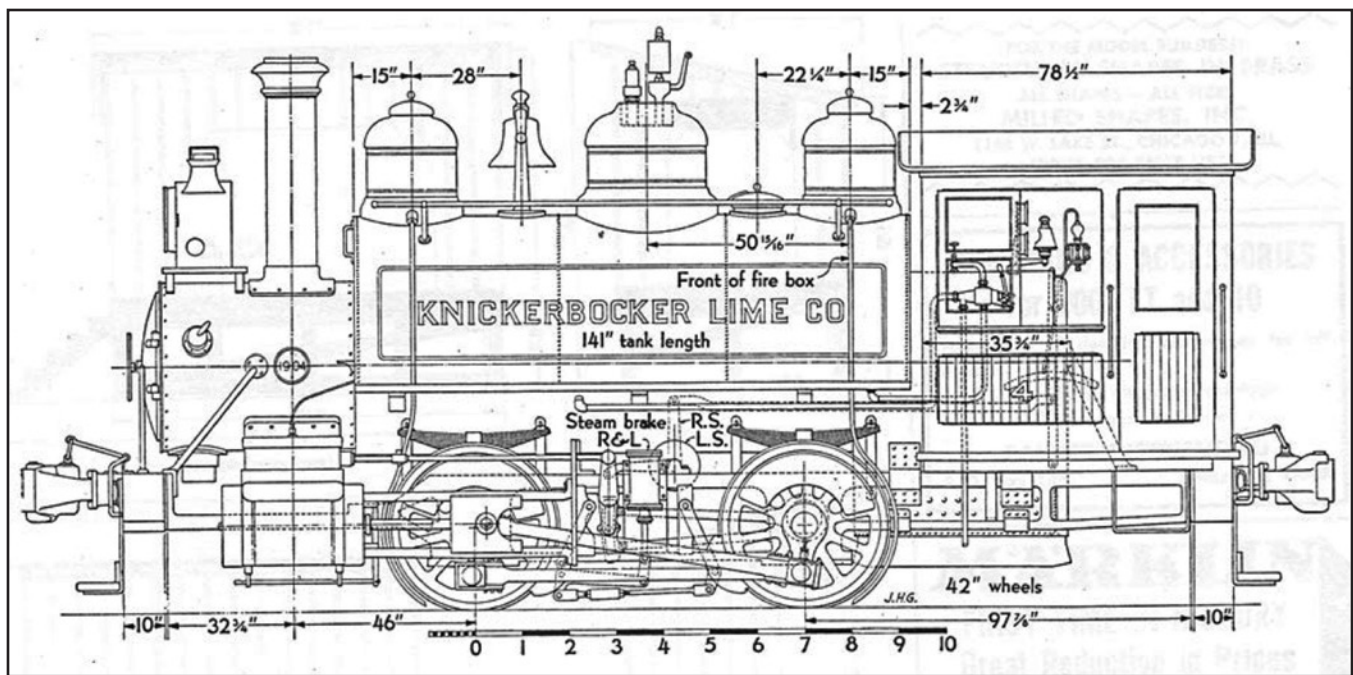
The ChVRR Mill Lane station in 1985, after discontinuance of service, but with the rails still in place. This occupied residence in East Whiteland Township is the last remaining station building of the Reading Railroad's Chester Valley Branch. *Photo by James Brazel.*



Knickerbocker Lime Works, west of Mill Lane, East Whiteland Township, PA, c. 1920. Close-up view looking NE. Note spur guiding to south. Aero Service Corporation of Philadelphia image. *Courtesy Library Company of Philadelphia.*







Line drawing of Knickerbocker Lime Company 0-4-0 T locomotive. Typical of locomotives used by the quarrying and lime-burning plants to move cars on their property, especially on sharp curves and temporary tracks. Drawing by J. H. Geissel. Shown in July 1951 in *Model Railroader Magazine*. *Courtesy Frank Watson collection.*

In this extreme close-up from a Dallin aerial image of the Great Valley, taken in 1931 looking SE, the single-track ChVRR crosses over Lees Road, which was located one mile east of Morehall Road (today's Rte. 29). Facilities consisted of a wooden flag stop shelter, and an underpass through which Lees Road connected Swedesford Road and Malvern. Note the Philadelphia Electric Company's high-tension transmission towers constructed in 1927 (upper left). *Courtesy Hagley Museum & Library, and the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society.*

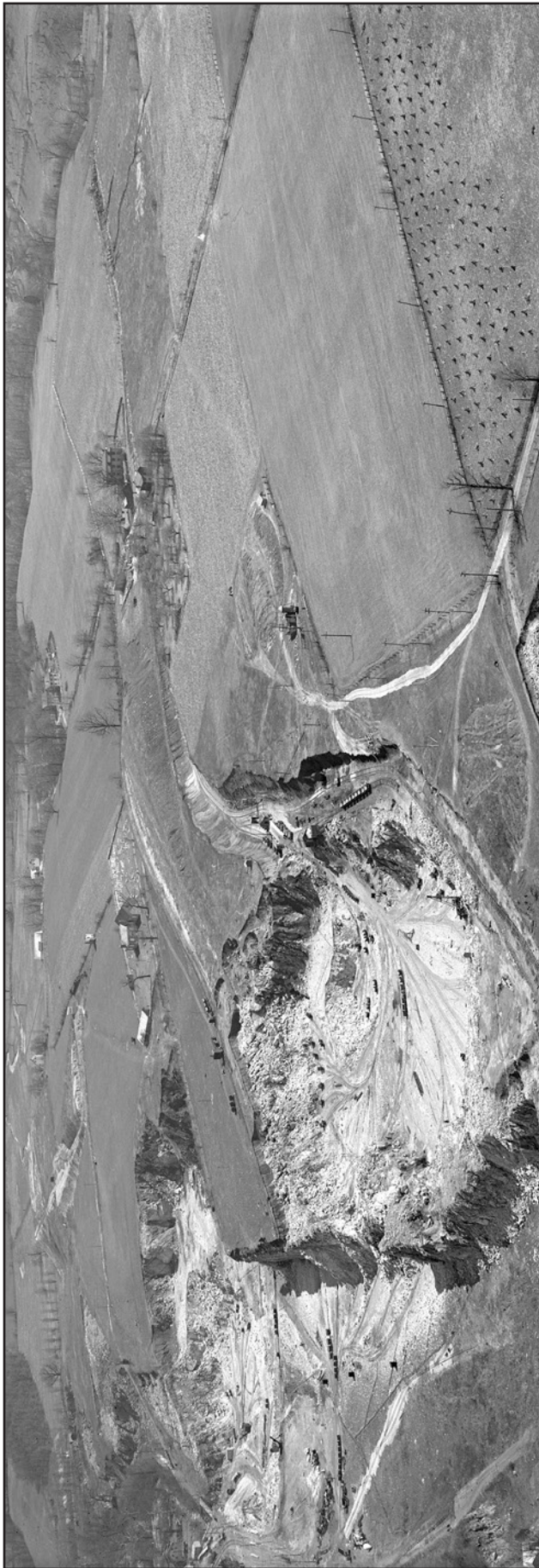


Opposite page:

ABOVE: Knickerbocker quarry at Cedar Hollow looking SE, 1926. Note: St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley (center top) and PRR Knickerbocker branch/spur passing south through a cut connecting to the Mill Rd. quarries and kilns. The limestone quarry face is being worked and the stone loaded into narrow gauge cars on the temporary arrays of panel tracks on the quarry floor. They are brought up to be dumped into standard gauge cars on the Knickerbocker branch. There are also narrow gauge tracks and cars on the surface level at left, removing overburden, which has been mounded west of St. Peter's Church property. *Aero Service Corporation of Philadelphia image. Courtesy Library Company of Philadelphia.*

BELOW: The former Knickerbocker and Warner quarries at Cedar Hollow currently being developed for mixed use. *Photographed on November 2, 2015 by Roger D. Thorne. Pilot Dave Nelson.*





ABOVE: Knickerbocker quarry at Cedar Hollow looking SE, 1926

BELOW: The former Knickerbocker & Warner quarries at Cedar Hollow currently being developed for mixed use. November 2, 2015







Tredyffrin-Upper Merion, PA section of the “Norristown” Geologic Survey topographic map, SW quadrant, 1895. The stations on the “Philadelphia and Chester Valley R.R.” are identified, as are those on the “Penn R.R.” Main Line. Note that the station indicated as “Paoli Road,” east of Cedar Hollow station, is located on today’s North Valley Road.



Looking north at bridge over Route 202 in Tredyffrin Township of former ChVRR Cedar Hollow Spur, April 29, 2009. *Photo by James Brazel.*

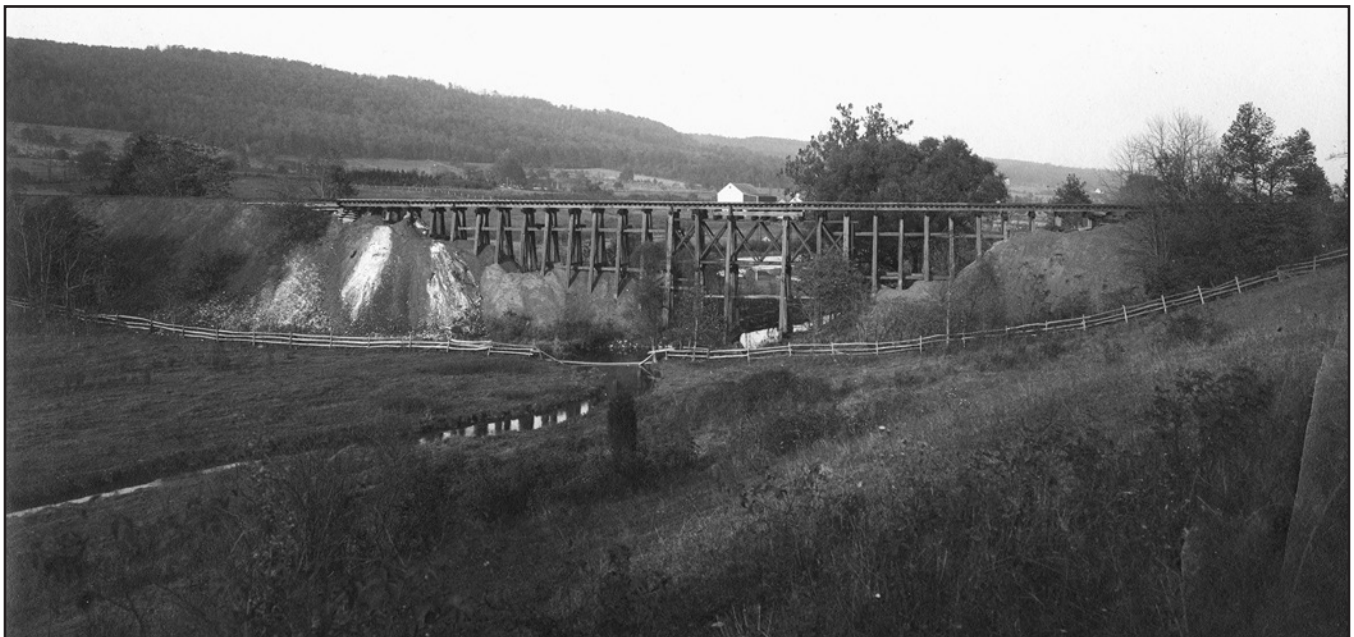


Raising the former Cedar Hollow Spur Bridge over Route 202 to provide higher road clearance, April 30, 2009. This work was done as a provision for future “Rails to Trails” use. *Photo by James Brazel.*





Looking east, Reading RS3 diesel locomotive No. 467 pushes a caboose over the (former) Swedesford Road steel girder bridge on the Warner Company spur, December 1967. The Great Valley Presbyterian Church can be seen in the distance through the overpass. Note that this bridge is no longer standing. *Photo by James Brazel.*



"Cedar Hollow Branch, Bridge No. 3, Looking EAST and down stream from WEST of bridge." Bridge on Cedar Hollow Spur over Little Valley Creek, October 23, 1914, Philadelphia & Reading Railroad Photograph. Note filling-in of pile trestle in progress. Concrete culvert for Valley Creek is already in place between wider-spaced piles. *Courtesy Pennsylvania State Archives.*

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The next station east of Cedar Hollow was called Paoli Road. William F. Issinger had a coal yard adjacent to the station, with a siding off the ChVRR right-of-way west of North Valley Road. Up to three coal hoppers could be backed in, the chutes opened on the bottom, and the coal dumped by size into the different containments below. Issinger would then transfer the coal into his three Model T trucks for delivery to homes all over the Valley and Paoli. These memories come from an interview in 2006 with Mrs. Mary Robertson Ives, and George Jr. and Richard Ford, as recorded by Roger D. Thorne. George Ford, the father of the Ford brothers, was stationmaster of the Cedar Hollow station for over three decades. *Images taken March 6, 1988 by Richard Bates.*





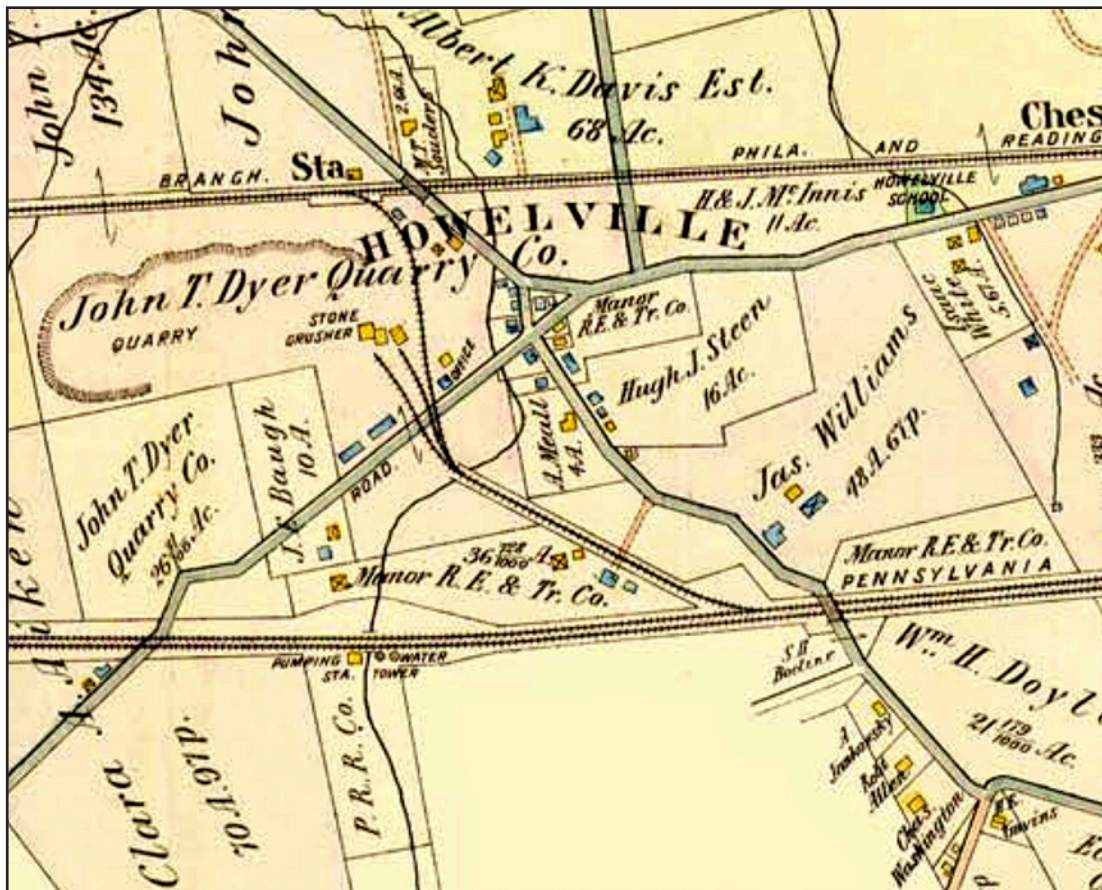


Chester Valley RR stone bridge over North Valley Road, looking north, March 6, 1988. Rails are still in place. *Photo by Richard Bates.*

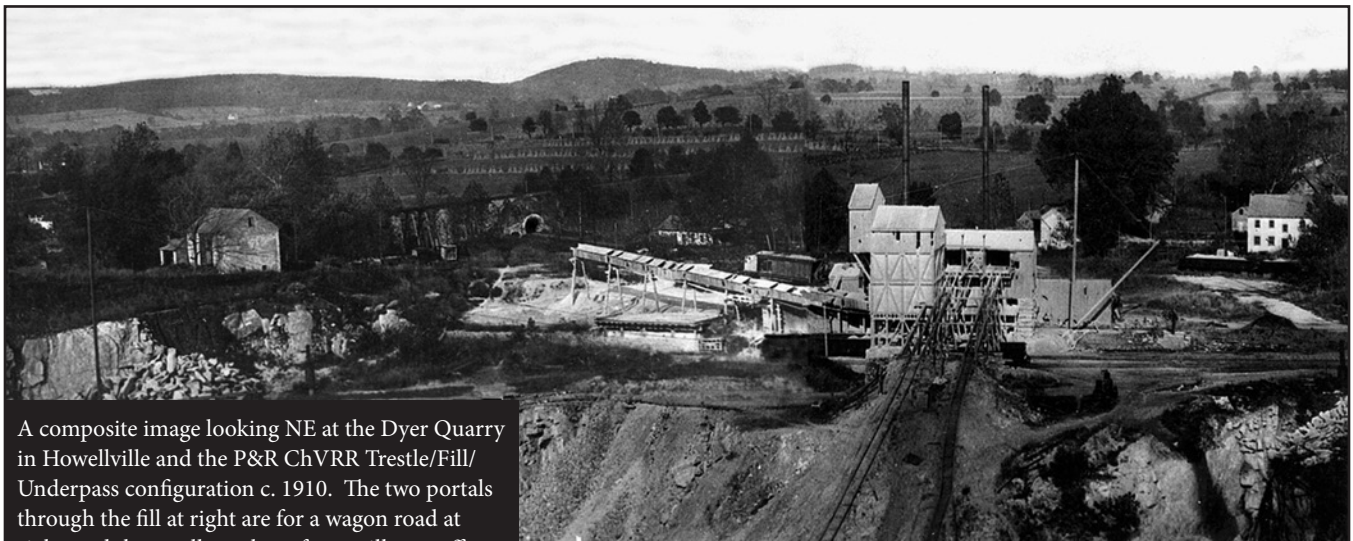
Chester Valley Trail Bridge over North Valley Road, looking north, April 1, 2015. *Photo by James Brazel.*








Map of Howellville: Dyer Quarry & Rail Complex. The "STONE CRUSHER" was serviced by both the Reading Chester Valley Branch and the Howellville spur off the PRR Trenton Cutoff. The Reading had provisions for exchange of cars with the PRR here under its "Interchange Code No. 57." The Company directed that "This code is for use of conductors in reporting movements of cars, and under no circumstance should telegraph code or symbols issued by other departments be used for this purpose" (Ref. No. 2). Note "Sta" - location of ChVRR Howellville passenger station. Also "Pumping Sta[tion]" and "Water Tower" facilities on Trenton Cutoff at Crabby Creek, bottom center. The Manor Real Estate & Trust Co. was a subsidiary of the PRR. *Mueller Real Estate Atlas*, 1913.



A composite image looking NE at the Dyer Quarry in Howellville and the P&R ChVRR Trestle/Fill/Underpass configuration c. 1910. The two portals through the fill at right are for a wagon road at right, and the smaller culvert for a mill race off Crabby Creek. Standard gauge railcars are being loaded with stone under the crusher building. Note Valley Forge and Mt. Joy in center distance. *Courtesy Suzanne Andrews.*



Form 4196 Rev. 9-28 5 M

  
**Reading Co.**  
**Atlantic City Railroad**

**STATION NUMBERS AND  
INTERCHANGE CODE**  
 FOR USE IN REPORTING  
**MOVEMENTS OF CARS**

In Effect October 1, 1922  
 Revised to September 1, 1928

A. T. OWEN  
Supt. Transportation

J. T. BOUGHER  
Car Accountant

**READING DIVISION**

**Philadelphia and Chester Valley R. R.**

Names of Stations	Numbers	Names of Stations	Numbers
Bridgeport	17	Cedar Hollow	C10
Shainline	C2	Lees	C11
Henderson	C2A	Valley Store	C11A
King of Prussia	C4	Malins	C12
Maple	C5	Mill Lane	C13
New Centreville	C6	Planebrook	C14
Garden	C7	Exton	C17
Chesterbrook	C8	Oakland	C18
Howellville	C8A	Ackworth	C20
Paoli Road	C9	Downingtown	C21

**Perkiomen Railroad**

Names of Stations	Numbers	Names of Stations	Numbers
Perkiomen Junction	P25	McLeans	P20
Oaks	P2	Red Hill	P22
Arcola	P3	Pennsburg	P23
Yerkes	P5	East Greenville	P24
Collegeville	P6	Palm	P26
Rahns	P8	Corning	P28
Gratersford	P9	Hosensack	P29
Schwenksville	P11	Zionsville	P31
Zieglersville	P12	Dillinger	P32
Spring Mount	P13	Vera Cruz	P34
Salford	P14	Emaus	P37
Hendricks	P15	Emaus Junction	P39
Kratz	P16	East Penn Junction	E
Perkiomenville	P17	East Penn Branch { Allentown { Terminal R. R. } East End Yard	A EE
Green Lane	P18		

Copies of cover of Reading Co. Booklet Form 4196 and page with "Names of Stations on Philadelphia and Chester Valley R.R.," (Ref. No. 2). Note that each station had a "Station Number." Some stations, (e.g. Cedar Hollow and New Centreville) also had a separate telegraph code. Co-author James Patrick Brazel's grandfather James Leo Brazel was a Reading freight conductor. This booklet and some of his conductor's work records were preserved by James Patrick's father, Joseph Francis Brazel. *Courtesy James Brazel.*



Howellville station on the ChVRR, Oct. 13, 1941, after discontinuance of passenger service in 1936. *Courtesy William Krug Collection.*





New (1970) Swedesford Road overpass at Howellville. *Photographed in the early 1970s by Dale Woodland.*

Looking west toward the ChVRR Bridge over Swedesford Road in Howellville, April 1967. *Courtesy Suzanne Andrews.*





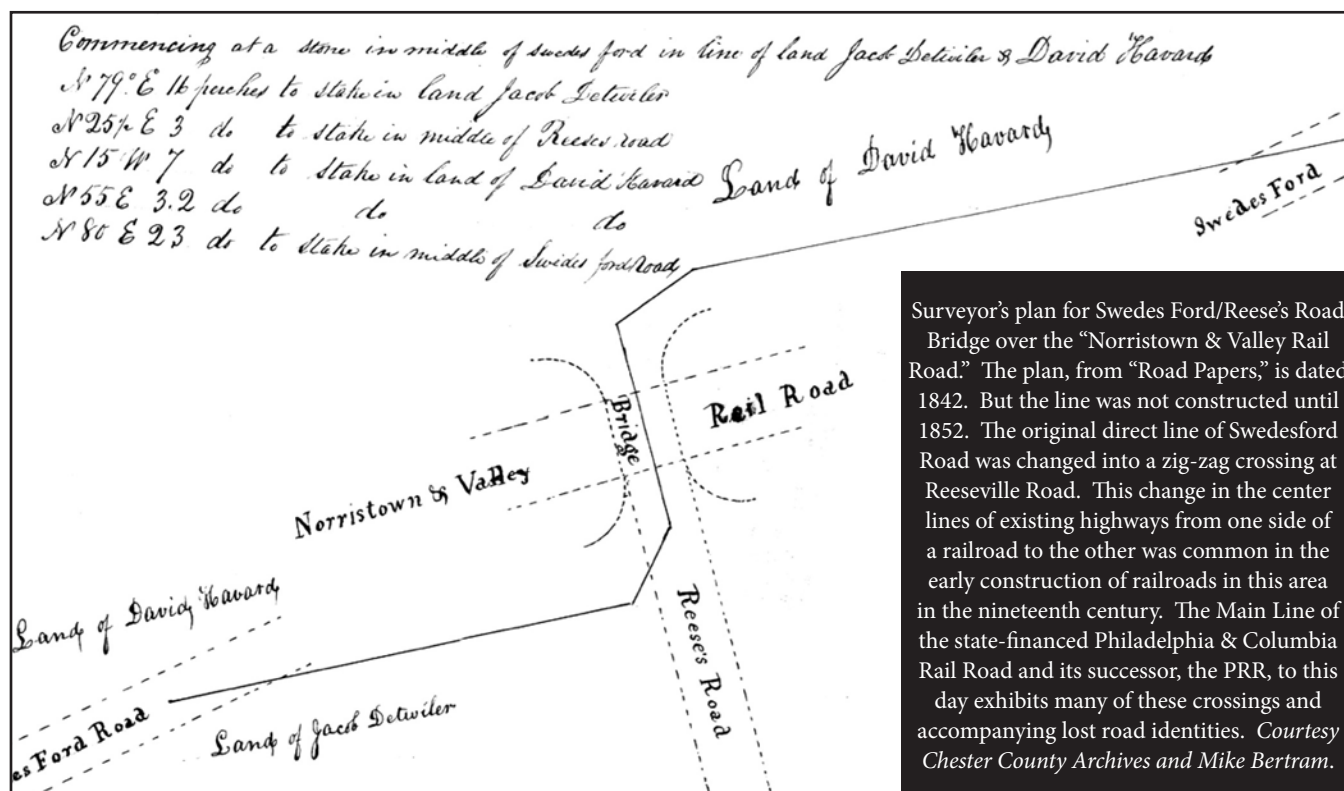


North face of ChVRR Farm Road Underpass No. 14 at Howellville. The larger portal on the left was for wagon traffic, and the smaller culvert at right for a mill race off Crabby Creek. Arrow points to the obscure P&R “1917” Diamond in the concrete facing located between the portals. *Photographed in 2011 by Roger D. Thorne.*

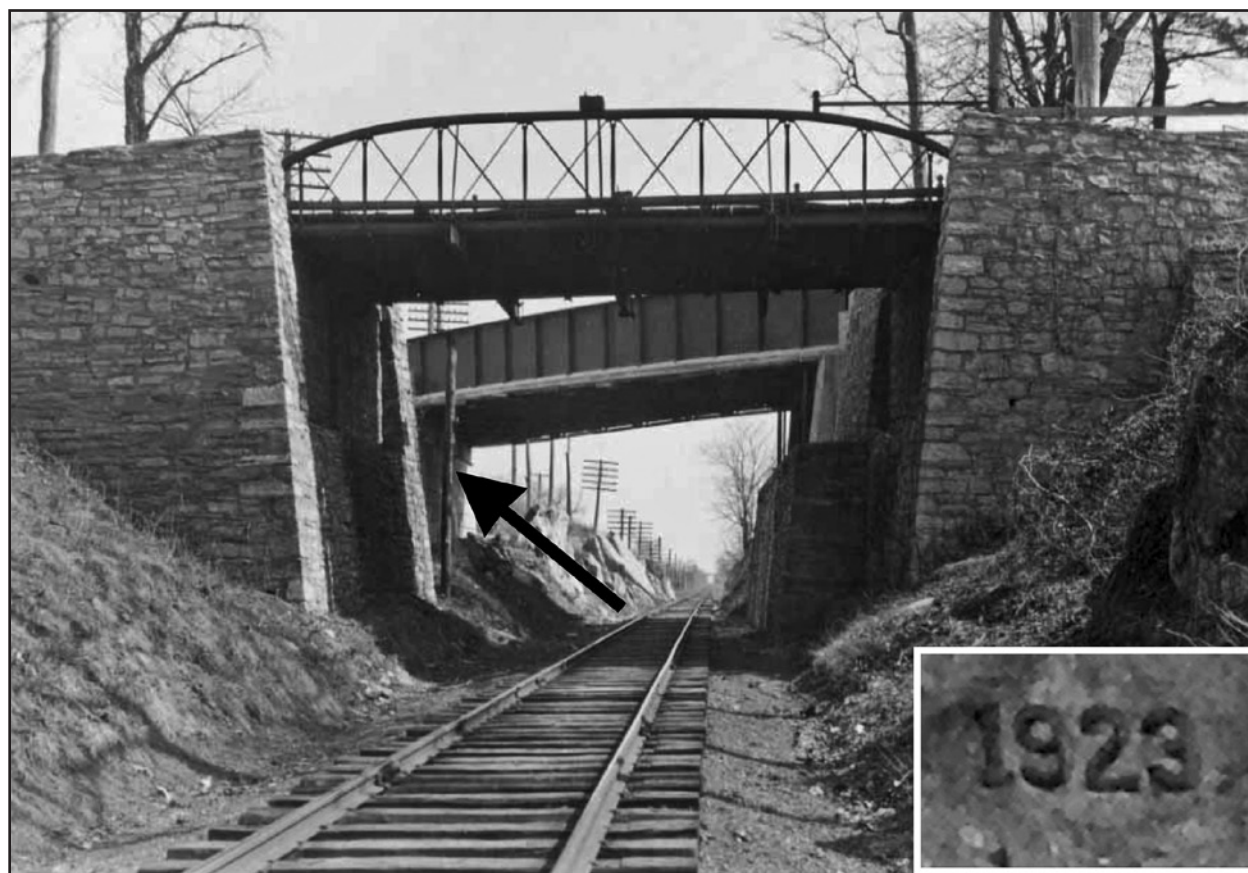
Brickwork lining the larger portal of ChVRR’s Underpass No. 14 in Howellville. *Photographed in 2011 by Roger D. Thorne.*







Reading Company photograph taken on "3-18-24" of the then-new concrete abutment steel girder overpass bridge for Swedesford Road. Original (but doubtless modified) bridge with stone masonry abutment still in place. Note skew angle orientation of new bridge versus perpendicular of original. View looking east toward Contention Lane Bridge over track in distance. Insert on bottom right is the Reading Railroad's "1923" diamond date mark embedded in the north side (see arrow) of the concrete abutment, as seen on May 25, 2015. Photo courtesy Richard Bates Collection.







Reading SW-1500 diesel switcher hauls "Chester Valley freight" west on steel girder trestle across Valley Forge Road, Tredyffrin Township, January 1971. Note the newly-constructed, original limited-access Route 202 and Miss Jeanne's Crossroads Tavern in background. *Photo by James Brazel.*

Newly-erected Chester Valley Trail steel bridge structure in place over Devon-Valley Forge Road, June 25, 2013. *Photo by James Brazel.*







ABOVE: Berwyn photographer Lucy Sampson took this image around 1910 looking north toward an earlier girder bridge carrying the Chester Valley Railroad over Devon-Valley Forge Road at New Centerville. *Courtesy Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society Archives.*  
BELOW: New Centerville Station, October 19, 1941. *Courtesy William Krug Collection.* Note that the “New Centerville” sign seen in this photo is part of the TEHS collection, and is currently on display in the local history room at the Tredyffrin Public Library in Strafford.





## Bella Toner, New Centerville Telegrapher



Photograph of Mrs. Isabella (Bella) White Toner in April 1926 at her old “paper tape telegraph instrument” taken at the New Centerville station of the Reading Railroad Chester Valley branch in Tredyffrin Township. She was telegrapher for 51 years on the Philadelphia & Reading RR at “CV” New Centerville, PA. This photo appeared in smaller size format along with others of Mrs. Toner at her residence, the New Centerville station, in a one page article in the April 1926 *Reading Railroad Magazine* (see next page) which was reproduced from the original article in *The Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger* of March 26, 1926. Photo courtesy Abram Burnett collection.

### Background information on Reading Railroad Chester Valley branch telegraph lines

Although the main line of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad had Samuel Morse’s telegraph invention installed in 1847, the Chester Valley branch was not equipped with telegraph facilities until March 1888. The telegraph line, linking stations along the 21 miles of the branch from Bridgeport to Downingtown, had taken only 22 days to build. So Mrs. Toner probably learned to be a railroad telegrapher sometime after that date, when she was in her late 30’s.

The statements in the 1926 articles about having 51 years of service and being only 70 years of age may have been a cover for her more advanced age (75) and included years of railroad service before learning to use the old “tape telegraph ticker” machine referred to in the *Reading Railroad Magazine* article.

That same paper tape telegraph instrument is now owned by Mr. Abram Burnett, who provided the high quality copy of the 1926 photograph (seen above) of Mrs. Toner operating it.

A circular issued February 17, 1919 stated that the New Centerville telegraph and train order office was open 7:40 AM to noon, and 1:00 to 4:40 PM, daily except Sunday, closed on Sundays. The code for the New Centerville telegraph was “CV.” Information on Chester Valley branch telegraph courtesy Richard Bates.



## Mrs. Isabella White Toner, Telegrapher, New Centerville Station, Chester Valley Railroad

After our original presentation on April 19, 2015 which included the following reproductions of three articles on Mrs. Bella Toner originally published in the *Reading Railroad Magazine*, and subsequent preparation of this article for publication, the better quality photograph of her shown on the previous page, and additional biographical information have become available. Much of this additional biographical information comes from U.S. Census and Pennsylvania State Death records, which are formatted in a standardized way and are heavily dependent on information provided by the interviewed respondents, as well as the skill of the Census enumerator. There are some differences among the Censuses and with the *Reading Railroad Magazine* and newspaper information in the following pages.

We are presenting this information here in detail because it further illustrates the full lives of some of the not-so-ordinary working people who have lived their lives in this area and, fortunately for this article, worked on the Chester Valley Railroad.

Isabella White Toner was born on December 6, 1850 in Bridgeport, Pennsylvania to parents Samuel and Elizabeth White (per her Pennsylvania Death record). In the 1860 U.S. Census, she was ten years old, living in Upper Merion Twp. with her father, a quarryman, her mother and her older brother George.

According to the 1870 Census, she was nineteen years old, living in Tredyffrin Twp. with her 24 year-old husband, a farmer from England, and their one month old son, Samuel. She had married Thomas D. Toner in 1869 (per 1910 Census).

Thomas Toner at some point took a job as a track repairman on the Chester Valley Branch, based at Howellville. Then on April 1, 1876, he was appointed station agent at Centerville (the station's official name until 1910)

6

READING RAILROAD MAGAZINE




Mrs. Bella B. Toner, agent, New Centerville. We also see her at the old tape instrument, one of the last two on the Reading

**Woman, 70, Served R. R. Half Century**

New Centerville Telegrapher Still Sticks to Old Ticker

SEVENTY years old and holding the distinction of being the oldest woman telegraph operator in the country, Mrs. Bella B. Toner has spent fifty-one years—or more than two-thirds of her life—as station agent for the Reading Company at New Centerville, on the Philadelphia-Chester Valley Branch.

An ancient “tape” telegraph instrument—so ancient the Reading Company boasts of only one other like it in hundreds of stations on the railroad—is used by Mrs. Toner to send and receive messages.

For fifty-one years this white-haired woman, the mother of three children, all long since grown up and with families of their own, has been employed by the railroad. As station agent she has handled all baggage, messages, tickets and the other duties that fall to the lot of a village railroad representative.

Mrs. Toner married at the age of 17, and her home and the station have always been one. The first floor is divided into two rooms—the ticket office, where the tape telegraph ticker reposes, and the waiting room.

A quaint story revolves about the venerable “ticker.” Years ago the railroad introduced a new instrument into the office, but Mrs. Toner, after a trial, declared she could not master it, so it was removed and the old machine reinstated.

With summer approaching Mrs. Toner has turned her attention to the twenty-five fat hens and a pedigree rooster which are her pride and joy. Her garden patch is also receiving its quota of care. During the winter the aged station mistress knits and crochets during her odd moments.

She is not alone in her railroad service, for the wife of one of her sons is stationmistress at King of Prussia, just below New Centerville,




Chickens are her pets. Mrs. Toner also spends her spare time at work in the garden

and another son holds a position with the Pennsylvania Lines.

—Evening Public Ledger, March 26.

Feature article from April 1926 *Reading Railroad Magazine*: Mrs. Bella B. Toner, Station Agent & Telegrapher at New Centerville Station for Fifty-One Years. “...married at the age of 17, and her home and station have always been one.” She succeeded Thomas D. Toner (husband) as station agent in 1876. “...the wife of one of her sons is station mistress at King of Prussia.” She was the last station agent at New Centerville. *Courtesy of Richard Bates & Reading Company T&HS.*



at a salary of \$17.00 per month. The previous Centerville agent, Martin F. Chattin, agent since 1865, had also worked as a trackman with his family members handling most of the station duties, so it's likely the Toner family continued this practice, with Bella handling the agency tasks while her husband did other jobs on the railroad. Reading Railroad records, courtesy Richard Bates.

Per the 1880 Census, she was 29 years old, living in Tredyffrin Twp. with her 33 year old husband, who was working on repairs on the railroad, and her children Samuel, 10, Theodore, 5 and Joseph, 2.

The 1890 Census records were destroyed by a fire, so there is no census record for her in that year.

Per the 1900 Census, she was 49 years old, living in Tredyffrin Twp., with her 54 year old husband, a railroad laborer, and their son Joseph, a farm laborer. Isabella is now listed as being employed as a station agent.

Per the 1910 Census, she is 60 years old, living on Swedes Ford Rd., Tredyffrin Twp. with her 64 year old husband, a farm hand on a dairy farm. Isabella is now listed as a Railroad ticket agent.

Per Pennsylvania Burial records, Thomas D. Toner died on February 9, 1912. He was born October 8, 1847. He had served in Co. B, 43rd Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Militia from July 6, 1863 to August 13, 1863, and is buried in the Valley Friends Meeting Cemetery, Tredyffrin Twp.

Per the 1920 census, Bella is 69 years old, a widow, living alone on "Swedes Ford Rd." (Swedesford Rd.), Tredyffrin Twp., employed as an agent in a ticket office.

According to an article in *The Norristown News-Herald* of March 31, 1926, she was "aged 70 and has completed 51 years of service with the Reading Railroad as station agent at New Centerville, near here.... and her boast is her three 'boys,' Theodore, 51; Joseph, 48; and Robert, 46."

She retired from the Reading Company on May 1, 1927 (*Reading Railroad Magazine*, July 1927).

Per the 1930 Census, she is 79 years old, living alone on "Swedes Ford Rd.," Tredyffrin Twp. and is no longer employed.

Per Pennsylvania Death records, Isabella White Toner died on May 27, 1939 in Tredyffrin Twp. She was buried May 31, 1939 in the Valley Friends Meeting Cemetery, Tredyffrin Twp.

*Chronologic biography of Isabella White Toner, courtesy Rich Bowes.*

## Bella Toner Is Retired

**M**R. BELLA TONER, agent at New Centerville, and in the Reading's service for more than fifty-one years, was retired, effective May 1.

She holds the distinction of being the oldest woman telegraph operator in the country. She became station agent at Centerville on April 3, 1876, during the Centennial year, the name of the station being changed to New Centerville in 1916. Mrs. Toner operated the ancient "tape" telegraph instrument, there being only one other instrument in use on the System.

Mrs. Toner will be able to give her garden and her chickens virtually all her attention, while in her spare time she will knit and crochet.

May 1, 1927 retirement notice from the July 1927 issue of *Reading Railroad Magazine*.

*Courtesy of Richard Bates & Reading Company T&HS.*



Mrs. Bella B. Toner

## Country's Oldest Woman Telegrapher Dies

**H**OLDING the distinction of being the oldest woman telegraph operator in the country, Mrs. Bella B. Toner, station agent at New Centerville, on the Philadelphia and Chester Valley Branch for 52 years, died on May 27. She was 83.

Mrs. Toner was one of the last telegraphers on the Reading to use the ancient "tape" instrument for sending and receiving messages. She was retired on May 1, 1927.

For 52 years this white-haired woman, the mother of three children, all long since grown up and with families of their own, had been employed by the railroad. As station agent she has handled all baggage, messages, tickets and the other duties that fall to the lot of a village railroad representative.

Mrs. Toner was married at the age of 17 and her home and the station had always been one. The first floor is divided into two rooms—the ticket office, where the tape telegraph ticket reposed, and the waiting room.

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As Summertime approached Mrs. Toner would turn her attention to her twenty-five fat hens and a pedigreed rooster which were her pride and joy. Her garden patch also received its quota of care. During the Winter months the station mistress spent her time knitting and crocheting during her odd moments.

Obituary from 1939 *Reading Railroad Magazine*. She died on May 27 at 83.

*Courtesy of Richard Bates & Reading Company T&HS.*





Real Estate Map of area around County Line Road, with "Maple Sta." (station) on the ChVRR, and "Eithercoe" (for "either county") estate directly on the county and township line. From Mueller Real Estate Atlas, 1912. The PRR Trenton Cutoff Branch, between them, was a freight line and had no *local* passenger service, but there was regular *through* passenger service on the PRR Trenton Cutoff. "From 1898 to about 1910 the PRR's east-west **Pittsburgh Limited**, **Pittsburgh Special** and later the **Iron City Express** ran between Jersey City and Pittsburgh, (using the Cutoff) avoiding Broad Street Station in downtown Philadelphia and West Philadelphia Station at 32nd Street. See Bert Pennypacker comment in Ref. 3.

View eastward toward King of Prussia from the Old Eagle School Road Bridge crossing over the I-76 access ramp from Rt. 202, September 8, 2010. Note the PECO high-tension electric transmission line towers on the right, and compare to the 1932 image on the next page. Photo by James Brazel.





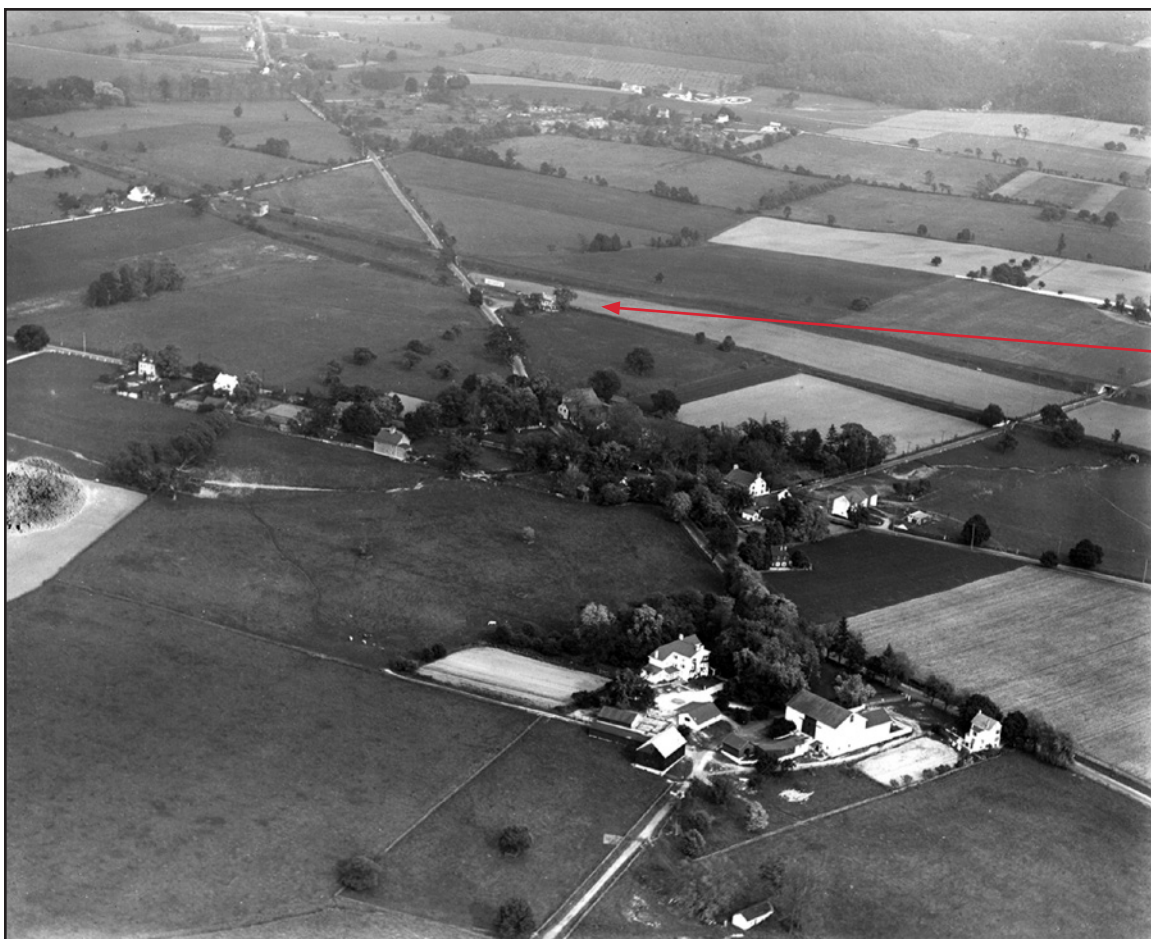


Maple Station and siding on ChVRR, looking east from County Line Rd. Note the Philadelphia Electric Company high tension wire towers erected in 1927 to the right (south) of the track. Image taken February 7, 1932 of Maple Station and Siding, *Courtesy C. Herbert Fry Collection.*

Looking west across County Line Rd. from Maple Station toward the bridge on Old Eagle School Road in the distance (center). The loading platform seen on the right was used by local farmers, and by Charles L. Thomas's "Chester Valley Nurseries." Photo dated February 7, 1932. *Courtesy C. Herbert Fry Collection.*



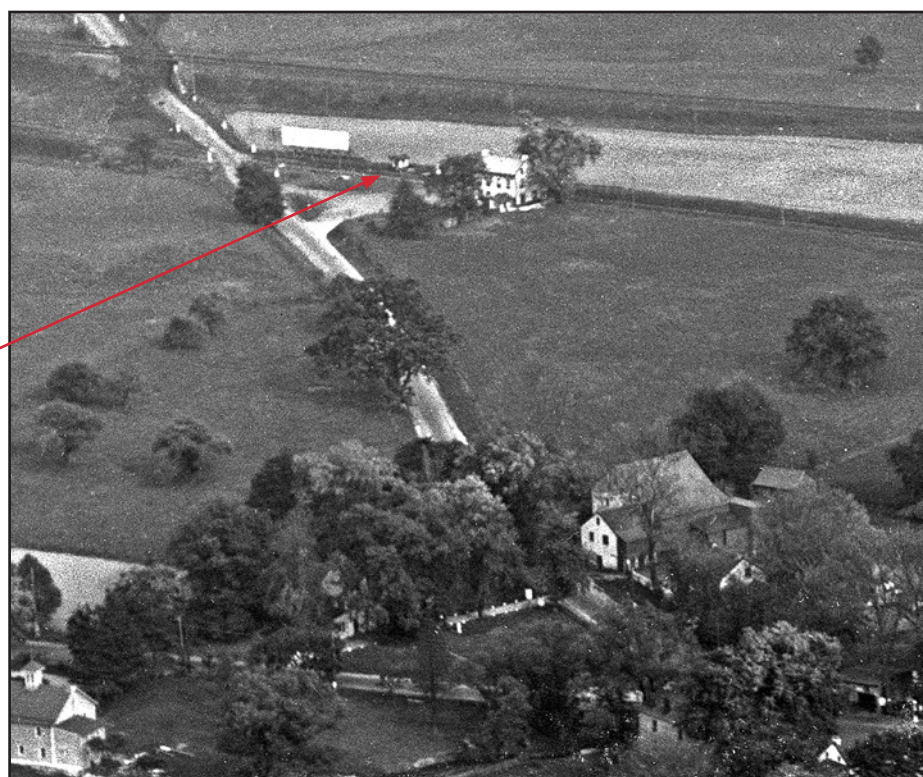




Aerial view of King of Prussia looking SE in 1925. Note two railroads: Reading ChVRR (nearest) and PRR Trenton Cutoff (beyond). Note no power wires, and hotel on ChVRR near Gulph Rd. [King of Prussia Plaza Mall now occupies lower left quadrant of this view] *Dallin Aerial Survey image, courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.*

Enlarged view of King of Prussia station on the south (far) side of the track and the railroad hotel on ChVRR, 1925.

*Dallin Aerial Survey image, courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.*





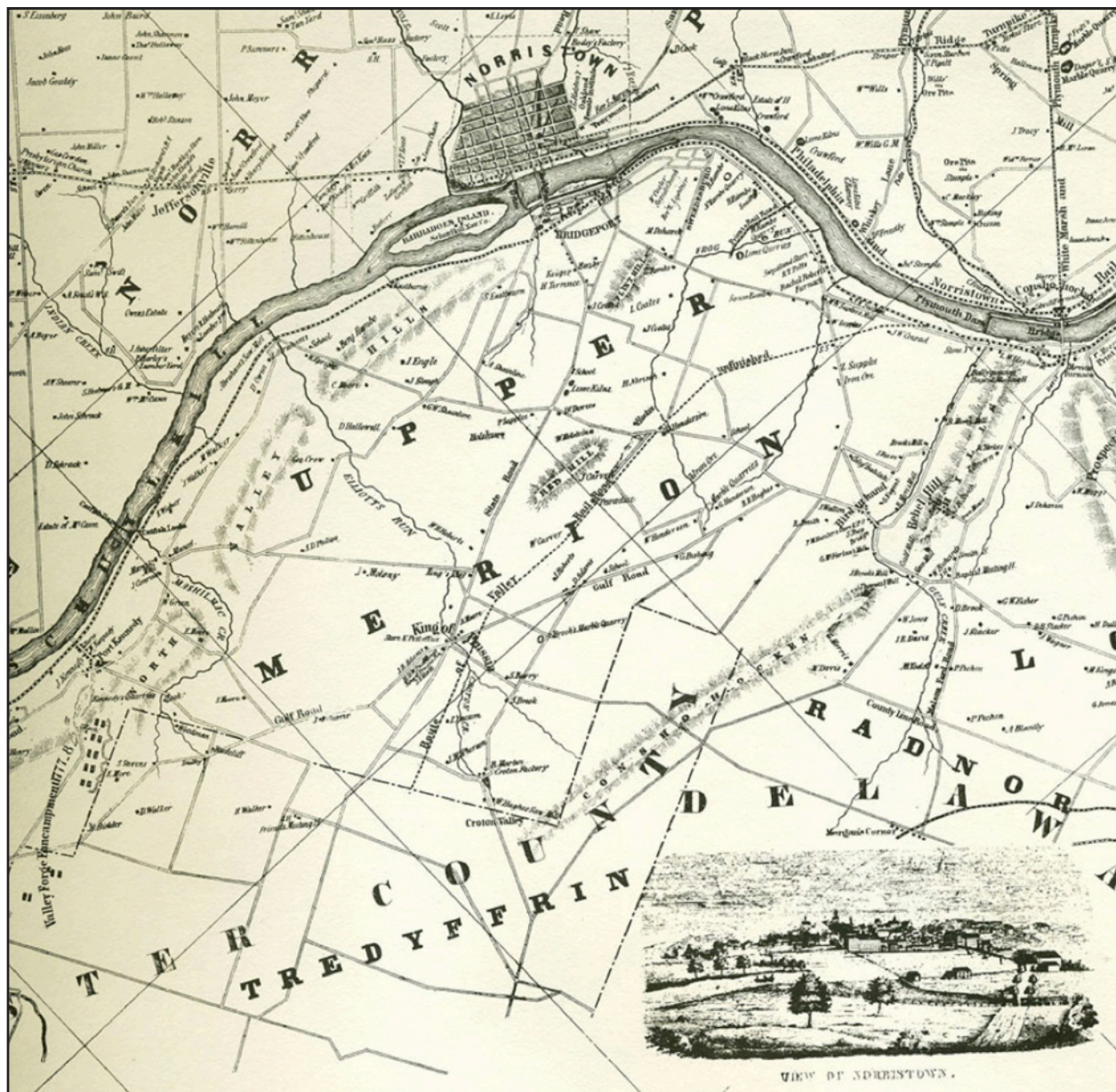


Aerial view of King of Prussia in 1928 after high tension power lines were built by Philadelphia Electric Co. Note that the hotel on ChVRR has been moved and turned, and now faces Gulph Rd. *Dallin Aerial Survey image, courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.*

Similar aerial perspective of King of Prussia on 20 October 2009 showing many remarkable changes. *Photo by Roger Thorne.*







Overview of "Route of Valley Railroad unfinished" (dotted line from Montgomery County Line). Note drawing insert: "View of Norristown" (from Bridgeport) at lower right. From "Original Surveys," Wm. W. E. Morris, C.E. 1846.

## References

1. "Scenes along The Chester Valley Railroad in Tredyffrin" *Tredyffrin Easttown History Quarterly*, Fall 2006 issue Vol. 43, No. 4. pp. 119–126
2. "Station Numbers And Interchange Code" Reading Co. & Atlantic City Railroad, Form 4196 Rev., In Effect October 1, 1922, Revised to September 1, 1928.
3. Comment, Bert Pennypacker in *Cinders* (newsletter), Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, October 2008.



**Jim Brazel** has been a member of the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society for approximately fifteen years since the organization met in a Sunday school room at Trinity Presbyterian, was a “Club” and had “Teas.” He is a graduate of Villanova University, with a B.S. degree in Physics and a M.A. in Physics from Temple University. He worked in King of Prussia and Philadelphia at General Electric Space & Re-Entry Systems, which later became Lockheed-Martin, for a combined total of forty-two years. He and wife Sharon have two daughters, Kathryn and Jeanne, who attended T-E public schools.

He has had a lifelong interest in local history, particularly railroads and canals. He wrote his thesis for a Master’s degree in Economic History at Temple University on “The Economic History of The Schuylkill Navigation Canal And Its Competition with The Philadelphia & Reading Railroad.” His thesis advisor said that he read it, but Jim says he did not really believe him.

His most favorite railroad interest since childhood has been the Chester Valley Branch of The Reading Railroad. The branch and the Reading mainline were visible from the rear windows of his parents’ home in Bridgeport, providing many interesting hours of “train-watching” for man and boy. Living in Tredyffrin (Berwyn) since 1976 has only amplified that interest because of the many opportunities for further exploration in the Chester Valley, and the generous willingness of other Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society members, friends and rail history scholars to share their work and materials.



Jim Brazel’s grandfather, James Leo Brazel (1873-1933) was a freight conductor on the Reading Railroad in the Bridgeport area. This photograph of Philadelphia & Reading Railroad 2-8-0 “camelback” locomotive No. 591, and a P&R train crew, was taken around 1899. James Leo Brazel, then a brakeman, is at right, leaning against the pilot of the locomotive. *Courtesy James Brazel.*