



# Chester Historical Society's *NEWS & VIEWS* May 2022

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Dear CHS Members and Friends, I hope your spring has been a good one. The May 2022 News & Views recounts the history of a dream, a tasty reality, a mystery wilderness cabin, and CHS' Pathways display next to the Food Truck Festival. Bruce Clark first wrote about Lake Takene 7 years ago and his latest article updates us, but he may have created more questions than answers. The tasty reality is one we have all enjoyed, Taylor's Ice Cream, but there is more to the story than sprinkles on top, so dive in. The decrepit cabin amidst grand houses and estates on Tanners Brook Road prompts many of us to muse about its history. There is more than meets the eye (and the ear), so read on. ☀

## Lake Chester aka Lake Takene Revisited

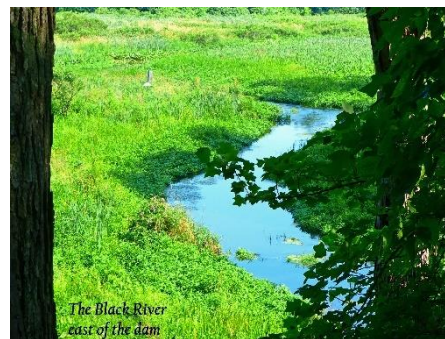
By Bruce Clark – Chester Historical Society



Remnants of the dam 7/7/2021



Real Estate Sign



Black River east of the dam 7/7/2021

Reconstructing historical events has been aptly likened to painstakingly working on a puzzle with missing pieces. When peering into the past, patience generally proves to be a most helpful virtue since the details of history seldom reveal themselves all at once or in a completely consistent manner.

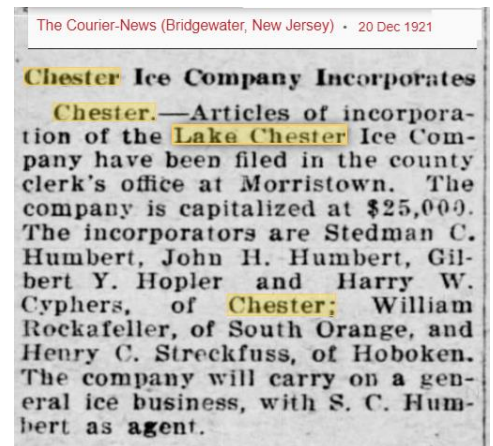


after the 'work has begun' date in the Electrical World article, one might suspect that the earlier date represented 'marketing and promotion' and wishful thinking on the part of utility.

And just as the Electrical World citation completely omitted any mention of a resort community as a motivation for the erecting the dam, so too does the following article from the end of 1921



(presumably right around the time the dam was completed based on the 10/14/1921 citation). Instead of emphasizing hydroelectricity, however, this time we see the creation of a company to harvest and sell ice from the lake in the winter months. With the continuing popularity of iceboxes for food preservation, ice cutting, and selling was a lucrative business before the availability of electric refrigerators in the 1930's.



Although the article doesn't call it out, Len Taylor's memo indicated that one of the incorporators for the ice company – Henry Steckfuss – actually owned land on Furnace Road adjacent to the proposed Lake. Two other individuals mentioned in the article were also 'high-visibility locals' – Harry Cyphers (the first mayor of Chester Borough), and Gilbert Hopler (owner of Chester's general store).

As was covered in the original CHS Lake Takene article in 2015, the overall project ended in failure and dashed any hopes for the resort community. We now know that any financial dreams of the newly formed ice company likely ended there. While this new-found information certainly enhances our understanding of the dam and the power company's motivations, what hasn't been well-understood were the physical particulars surrounding the proposed lake as well as its ultimate demise.

A re-examination of the 1974 CHS-published book by Frances Greenidge – *A Scrapbook of History Chester NJ* – offers up some fascinating details based on first-person interviews with Chester 'old-timers'. In describing the planned layout of the lake, this first passage bears a strong resemblance to the information conveyed in the 10/14/21 Courier-News article...  
*"There were great plans to dam the Black River swamp in the Furnace Road area to make a lake 500-1500 feet wide and 5 miles long called Lake Chester. This was to be a lake for generating electric power, for cutting ice, and for 'pleasure', with houses built around the shore, and docks for rowboats and motor boats."*

Although the dimensions for the Lake differ somewhat between both accounts, it would appear that the power company was planning for Lake Chester to be a significant body of water that would roughly extend from the dam off Furnace Road all the way to Pleasant Hill Road in Ironia.

Greenidge then offers a tantalizing final anecdote about the end of the dam project: “all was set to go ahead when the Central Railroad (of New Jersey) raised ‘valid objections’ and the project was abandoned.” Unfortunately, no further insights are provided as to the exact nature of those objections, but we can conjecture that the railroad leadership believed that the lake would have negatively impacted current or planned rail operations. Alas, a deeper understanding must wait for more information to surface. The search continues!

As a final note, although we don't have an exact date for the cancellation of the project, we believe that the death knell was likely sounded somewhere in the early 1920s. If that was indeed the case, it wouldn't appear that the Central New Jersey Power Company was in a great hurry to distance themselves from the failed site. We can come to this conclusion based on a brief mention in the earlier personal memo that stated that the utility still owned the site of the proposed resort as of 1947 – a good 25 years after the grand plans for the lake, hydro-electricity generation and ice harvesting fell through. ☀

**Editor's Postscript- imagine if Lake Chester was a reality.** How would Chester be different if Central New Jersey Power Company's plan for a 5-mile-long lake had succeeded? As shown in the map, Lake Chester would have extended from the dam at the Chester Furnace all the way to Ironia Road. New houses and businesses along the lakefront would have had train service as the Chester Branch of the Delaware-Lackawanna & Western Railroad (DL&W) ran just south of the Black River. Currently parts of the railbed are included in the Morris County Parks Commission's West Morris Greenway Trail.

Vacationers could arrive from Dover and points east such as New York City on the DL&W. Would Chester's center of gravity have shifted northward from Main Street? Would Lake Chester have accelerated Chester's development as a tourist destination? Certainly, a successful Lake Chester would have added to local prosperity, but the nature of Chester would have changed. And Nature would have also changed, but maybe not for the better. The shallow lake plus nutrient contamination from agriculture, municipal sewage treatment plants, household lawn fertilizers and septic systems would have promoted the growth of lake clogging vegetation and algae. By 1990, the once free flowing Black River was beset by these problems and a shallow lake could have been much worse.<sup>2</sup> ☀



<sup>2</sup> Observer Tribune Sep. 27, 1990. Local Resident Recalls Black River Flowed More Freely Years Ago


# Cream, Ice, and Fire – The History of Taylor’s Ice Cream Parlor

## By Edward Ng – Chester Historical Society

**Taylor’s**  
ROLLING GREEN  
**DAIRY**  
**FARM**

*“Look for the Cow”*

MAIN STREET  
Centennial Bldg.  
CHESTER, N. J.



MILK and DAIRY  
PRODUCTS  
FROM OUR OWN  
FARM ON  
HACKLEBARNEY  
ROAD

<b>84¢</b> GALLON	HOMOGENIZED <b>VIT. D</b> MILK	<b>45¢</b> ½ GALLON
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OPEN 9 A. M. - 8 P. M. DAILY

**Opening Specials, FEB. 5-6-7**

ICE CREAM ½ GALLON ..... Reg 90c ..... **77¢**

CREAM COTTAGE CHEESE 16 OZ., REG 29c ..... **24¢**

FRUIT DRINKS ORANGE & GRAPE ½ GAL., REG. 30c ..... **24¢**

**CLIP THIS COUPON**

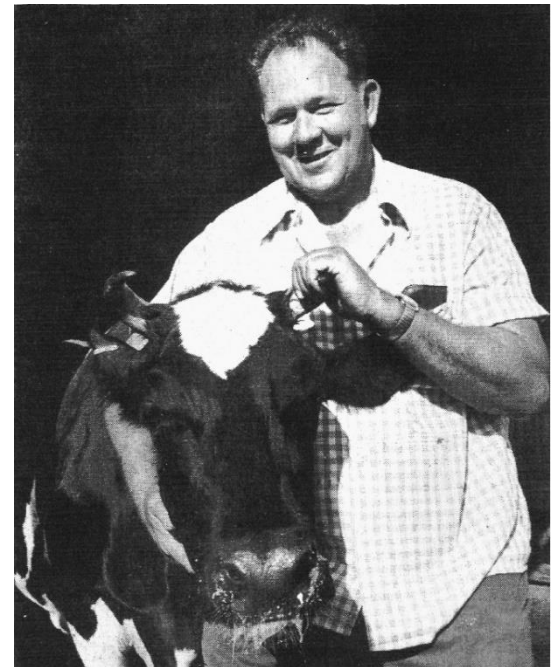
**ONE DOZEN**  
**LARGE EGGS**

WITH THIS COUPON  
FEB. 5 - 6 - 7  
CHESTER STORE ONLY

**29¢**

Taylor’s Rolling Green Dairy Store  
MAIN STREET CHESTER, N. J.

The history of Taylor's Ice Cream Parlor at 18 Main Street Chester, is about its people, but the story literally starts with cows – lots of them. Earle Gilbert Taylor Sr. (1926 – 2014) and wife Gloria Jane Taylor (1926-2017) arrived in Long Valley in 1943 from Cedar Grove, NJ where he was born and grew up<sup>3</sup>. Gil, as he was called, shown right with Nellie, would establish Taylor's Rolling Green Dairy Farm In Long Valley and eventually create a vertically integrated business, i.e., he grew the feed, raised the cows, milked the cows, processed the milk, and sold the milk to consumers directly. In order to do that he needed a store, so in 1965 he opened Taylor's Rolling Green Dairy Store at the west end of the




Observer Tribune August 7, 1975 Gil Taylor Sr. with Nellie one of 200 cows on his farm.

Centennial Building, 18 Main St., and posted the ad to the left in the Feb. 4, 1965, Observer Tribune. Three weeks later in his Feb. 25 ad, we see “Taylor's Ice Cream” for the first time, 99¢ for a half gallon.

Sales of Taylor's farm products were so successful that they would open stores in Succasunna and Long Valley. From 1975-1977, the Taylors would successfully fight the New Jersey State law that would have forced them to sell their milk at a higher price<sup>4</sup>. Geographic and economic changes were buffeting New Jersey dairies and vertical integration became unprofitable. The Taylors sold most of the 300 dairy cows but continued to process milk from other dairies<sup>5</sup> and sell products at their stores.

**Taylor’s**  
ROLLING GREEN  
**DAIRY**  
**FARM**



MILK  
**84¢ Gal.**  
**45¢ ½ Gal.**

*“Look for the Cow”*

- LARGE FRESH EGGS ..... 49c doz.
- COTTAGE CHEESE ..... 29c lb.
- TAYLOR’S ICE CREAM 99c ½ gal.

• WHIPPED BUTTER	• SOUR CREAM
• HALF & HALF	• HEAVY CREAM
• BUTTER MILK	• CHOCOLATE MILK
• FRUIT DRINKS	

MAIN STREET CHESTER, N. J.

<sup>3</sup> Observer Tribune. May 12, 1966. Golden Wedding Observed by Chester Couple.

<sup>4</sup> Observer Tribune. January 20, 1977. Taylor’s Court Ruling Prompts State Revisions

<sup>5</sup> Observer Tribune. August 28, 1980. Valley’s Largest Dairy Herd Sold.



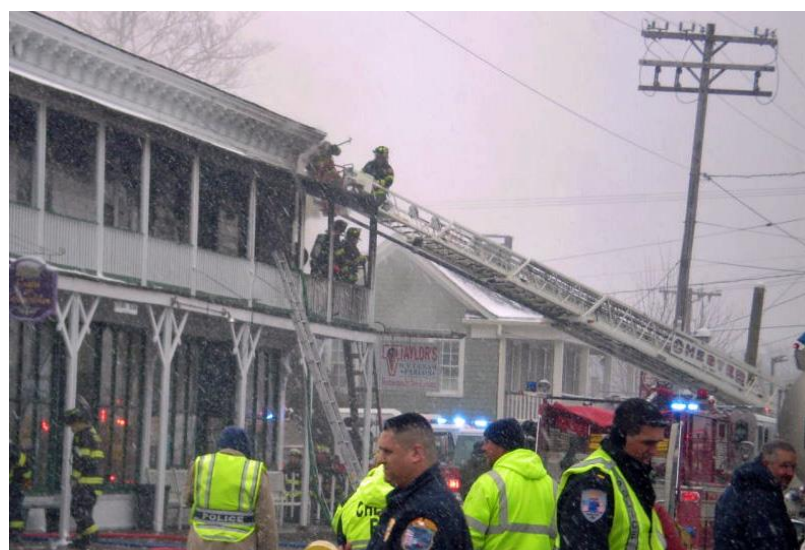
During the 1980's Gil Taylor Junior carried more of the load, literally and figuratively (see photo to the left). He became president of Taylor's Rolling Green Farm. Gil Jr not only ran the family business but was also a Washington Township Committeeman for 20 years, served as police commissioner, and as mayor.

In June 2022, I spoke with Jim Taylor, son of Gil Jr, who mentioned that the Deo family were the next owners. In a June 2022 chat with Mike Deo,

I learned that In 1982, the Taylors sold Taylor's Ice Cream Parlor to his parents, Patrick and Maryann Deo. He recalled that they were neighbors and he had worked on the Taylor Farm starting in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. After the ownership change, he started working in the Parlor. In 1986, the Deo family sold the business to Barry Markowitz and Fred Hemminger. In 1993, Taylor's Ice Cream Parlor offered 32 flavors including amaretto mocha chip and Oreo mint chip<sup>6</sup>. Thanks to Jim Taylor and Mike Deo for providing information about owner changes.

According to a June 6, 2015, Daily Record interview, Ron and Margaret Klein became the new owners of Taylor's Ice Cream Parlor in 2002. He had been in the ice cream business since 1995<sup>7</sup>. Ramping up creativity, they offered 48 flavors. Inflation had raised the price of a half-gallon of ice cream from 99¢ in 1965 to \$13 in 2010.

For over 10 years, Taylor's Ice Cream Parlor thrived, but it almost came to and end in a fiery blaze. At about 10am on March 8, 2013, a candle ignited curtains and then the apartment above the Parlor. The Chester Volunteer Fire Company arrived at the scene and put out the fire by 11:30am. One witness said, "It was a really hot fire, the volunteer firefighters were absolutely fabulous". No one was seriously hurt though two people were taken to Morristown Memorial Hospital for smoke inhalation<sup>8</sup>.



<sup>6</sup> Daily Record July 14, 1993. Gimme that ice cream – Savoring the homemade flavors of Morris.

<sup>7</sup> Daily Record March 31, 2010, Ice Cream to Fit 48 Tastes to a T.

<sup>8</sup> Observer Tribune March 15, 2013. Blaze Damages Historic Building.



A fire in an upstairs apartment damaged the building that houses Taylor's Ice Cream Parlor and other businesses in Chester on Friday. For a photo gallery and video, go to [DailyRecord.com](http://DailyRecord.com). APRIL 9, 2013 CAP/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Daily Record March 9, 2013 Fire damages iconic building.



Rebuilding - 6-4-2013 Ed Ng

The building sustained major fire and smoke damage in the second floor apartments and water damage in the two first floor stores, including Taylor's Ice Cream Parlor. The Taylor family, who still owned the building, decided to rebuild. It took more than 8 months, but the Parlor reopened on Nov. 23, 2013, with a thankful celebration. Ron Klein said "We are grateful the damage wasn't worse.... Everything is brand new. The shop was gutted from the floor up, and we're excited with the renovations."<sup>9</sup>



In October 2017, Marisa Casendino became the new owner of Taylor's Ice Cream Parlor. She was well prepared having worked at the Parlor part time for 6 years while attending school. After graduating from college, she bought the business from the Kleins. She did them one better and is now offering 49 flavors<sup>10</sup>. As you can see from the above image, the interior décor fosters an old time ice cream parlor atmosphere. ☀

<sup>9</sup> Observer Tribune November 23, 2013. Chester Ice Cream Shop Rises from the Ashes.

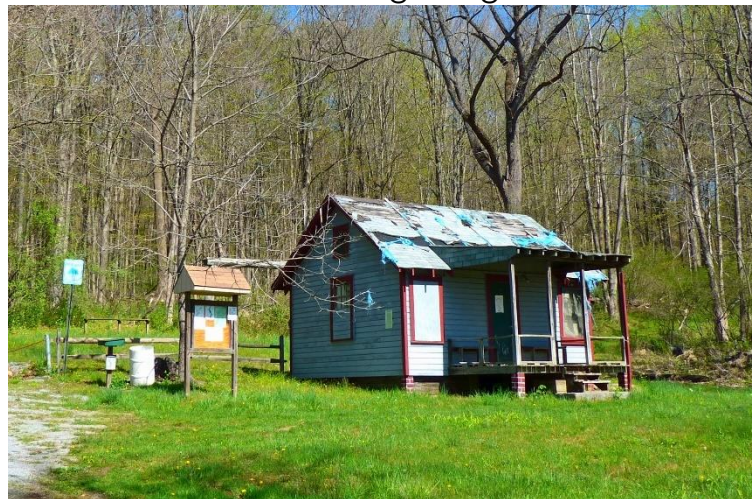
<sup>10</sup> Adapted from the graphics at <https://www.taylorsoicecreamparlor.com/ice-cream>

## The Long Range Gun Club and Beagles Too by Edward Ng – Chester Historical Society

Sometimes serendipity comes in a small box. In April 2022 a brown USPS CD mailing carton arrived and it contained an ashtray, two black and white pictures, and a brief note. The ashtray read “50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1917-1967 LONG RANGE GUN CLUB”. My first inclination was to think that the package came to the wrong Chester Historical Society. A check with some longtime residents did not turn up any recollections. Luckily the sender left a telephone number. A call to Steve Fris, who donated the items, helped convince me we were the right Chester. Steve and newspaper articles from 1938 to 1951 provided information for the history.



When Steve was growing up in Cedar Grove NJ, his godfather, Hugo J. Marchini would take him to the Long Range Gun Club property in Chester. He recalled that it was on a side road off Furnace Road. He recalled that the Gun Club once had a comfortable and well-appointed cabin, but that it was now a

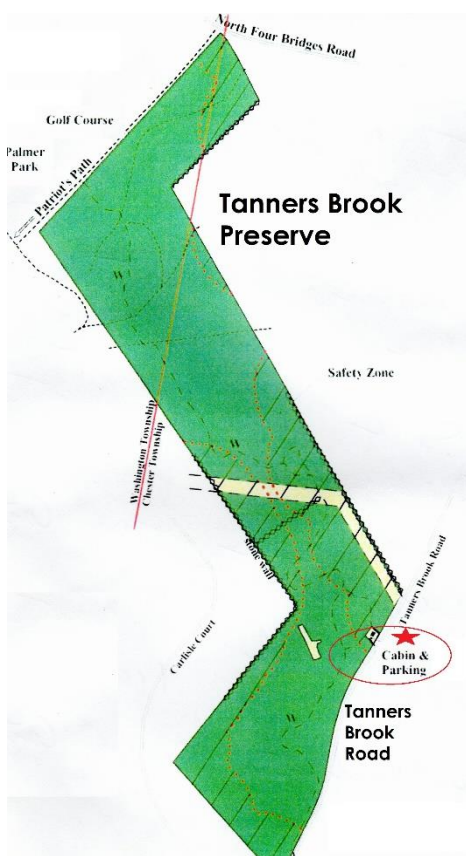


wreck. A quick check on Google satellite maps turned up the location of the cabin at 80 Tanners Brook Rd. The cabin is located in Chester Township's Tanners Brook Preserve. The map is shown left. The parking lot of the Club now serves as the parking lot with an informational kiosk for the Preserve. And yes, the building has seen better days as you can see from the image above. From the ashtray we know the club was

established in 1917, but we don't know when the original cabin was built. The December 21, 1938, Courier News reported that the cabin was destroyed by fire possibly due to arson in 1938. So, the current cabin was built after 1938.

But the Long Range Gun Club was more than about hunting. The two pictures which came with the ashtray were of Beagles and their owners. Steve said that there were Beagle trials and his godfather's Beagle Anna Bell was a keen competitor. The American Kennel Club first sanctioned Beagle Trials in 1888 and describes the process:

*In a Beagle Hound Field Trial, dogs run in packs of two or more to follow a rabbit or hare. The goal is to follow the trail of a rabbit or hare, not to harm them. Depending on which trial you*





participate in, your dog will be judged on his ability to search and explore; to pursue and keep control of a trail; his accuracy in trailing; endurance; adaptability to changes in scenting conditions; patience; determination; and more.

*If you're a Beagle lover, you have to see a Beagle Field Trial in person. But consider this a warning: You might not be able to contain your squeals of joy watching them running around a field! Everything about them is just so very cute – but make no mistake: They're oh-so-serious when competing.<sup>11</sup>*



The photo above left, shows Beagle Field Trial Champion Anna Bell with Steve's godfather Hugo and in the picture on the right, other club members with their Beagles. Hugo is in the middle. A search of newspaper articles showed that the Long Range Gun Club organized Beagle Field Trials in Chester and in Clinton annually from 1938 to 1951. I am unsure of why the news coverage lapsed after 1951.



Hunting and Beagle Field Trials were important activities, and socializing was also important. The picture above shows the Club members and families enjoying a get-together in October 1966. Most Club members had day jobs as police and firefighters in Essex County. Steve thinks the Club stopped functioning around 1973. He speculated that a generational change in leadership and a preference for locales in Pennsylvania may have been the cause. So, hike and enjoy the trails in Tanners Brook Preserve. Don't be surprised if you hear the distant baying of the Beagles still resonating in the hills. ☀

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.akc.org/sports/field-events-hounds/beagle-field-trials/>

# CHS and the Pathways of History 2022

By Edward Ng – Chester Historical Society



Visitors view Rockefeller Center history.



Plans for restoration were shown inside.



A furry history buff visited.

The Chester Historical Society was one of 27 museums and sites that participated in the 2022 *Pathways of History – Morris County, NJ*. Saturday May 30 was a gorgeous day. Over 50 folks stopped by to peruse the outside displays on the history of Rockefeller Center or come inside to look at the drawings for repairs and restoration and/or to ask questions. Folks were excited to hear efforts were underway to repair and restore the building. We shared Municipal Field with the Food Truck Festival which provided music and great aromas when the wind blew in the right direction. Pathways is an annual event so if you missed it this year, come in 2023. We may be lucky and share Municipal Field with the Food Truck Festival. ☀

## Acknowledgments and Contact Information

**CHS Trustees and Officers:** President – Edward Ng Vice President – John Pfaff  
Treasurer – Anita Rhodes Corresponding Secretary – Lois Taylor  
Recording Secretary- vacant Archives – Alison Dahl Programs – Meryl Carmel  
Membership – vacant Trustees – Ed Hanington, Elaine Hanington and Marla Jackson

If you want to get more involved with CHS and Chester's history, please let us know by sending an email [chester.historical.society@gmail.com](mailto:chester.historical.society@gmail.com) or calling (908) 844-6717. We need help with archives, programs, membership, and new Trustees.

**CHS Newsletter Editor:** - Edward Ng

We thank Steve Fris for donating the artefacts and information on the Long Range Gun Club. Historical photos and maps are usually from the CHS archives. Modern photos are by Ed Ng except as noted. I would like to thank all those who helped with proof reading, improving the clarity of the articles, and getting me to use the present tense and not the past tense.

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](mailto:chester.historical.society@gmail.com), or CHS Box 376 Chester NJ 07930. Membership information and a downloadable membership form are available at <http://historicchesternj.com/home/membership.html> .