

# The History of Glenlora- the Land, the Buildings, the People

Edward Ng – Chester Historical Society – July 19, 2020

Before writing a history of anything, the author needs to define what it is. So what is Glenlora? It is more than a defunct nursing home. It is more than three buildings on 14.7 acres of land. No history would be complete without the addition of the remarkable people who made the history. I am fortunate in that endeavor, because Frances Greenidge has narrated many of the pieces in her book, *CHESTER, NEW JERSEY - A Scrapbook of History 1713-1971*<sup>1</sup>. I have organized the "scraps", updated the narrative from 1971, and added illustrative information, maps, artifacts from the Chester Historical Society archives, my own photos, interviews, and articles from newspapers that covered Chester, primarily the *Iron Era* and the *Observer-Tribune*. Not surprisingly my history is chronological and it begins with a big real estate deal.

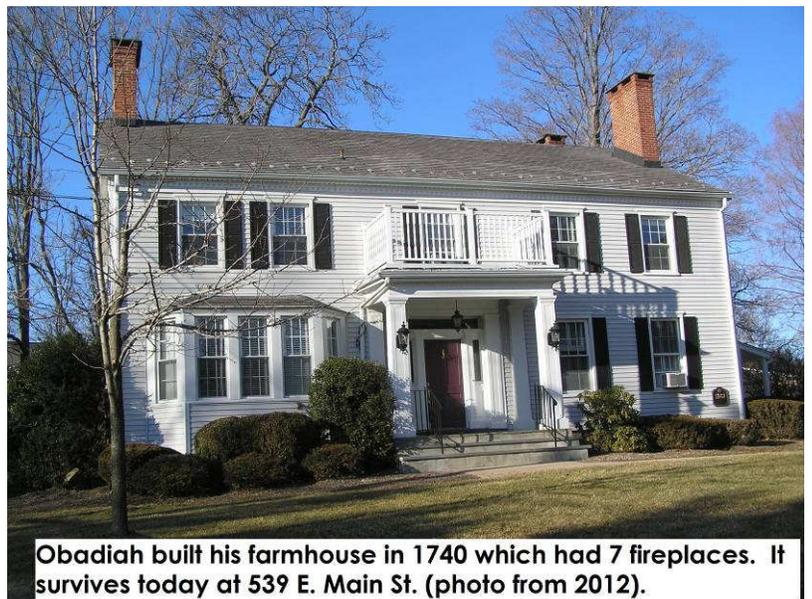


Glenlora April 2020 - E.Ng

## 1700-1800's

Abraham Bickley (1670-1726) was a prosperous Philadelphia merchant and a friend of William Penn<sup>2</sup>. Abraham was twice widowed and had fathered a dozen children, eight of whom survived after his second wife died. On July 11, 1713, in a windfall, Abraham acquired 1110 acres in Black River (later named Chester). He immediately "flipped" 1065 acres in a sale to John Shinn. Shinn was a devout Quaker who hoped to establish a new Quaker settlement in New Jersey However, after 20 years without realizing his dream of a Quaker settlement (and having logged the valuable walnut timber) Shinn decided to sell.

In 1737, Obadiah Seward (1702-1751), bought from Shinn, several hundred acres covering what is now Highlands Ridge Park (113 acres), Seward Hill Preserve (64 acres), the Chester Borough Municipal complex (22 acres), and the land encompassing Glenlora. Obadiah's most famous descendent was his great-grandson, William H. Seward (1801-1872). He was governor and senator from New York and Secretary of State in Abraham Lincoln's cabinet and creator of "Seward's Folly". His land purchase was much larger than Obadiah's: he negotiated the purchase of 425 million



Obadiah built his farmhouse in 1740 which had 7 fireplaces. It survives today at 539 E. Main St. (photo from 2012).

<sup>1</sup> Published by the Chester Historical Society 1974.

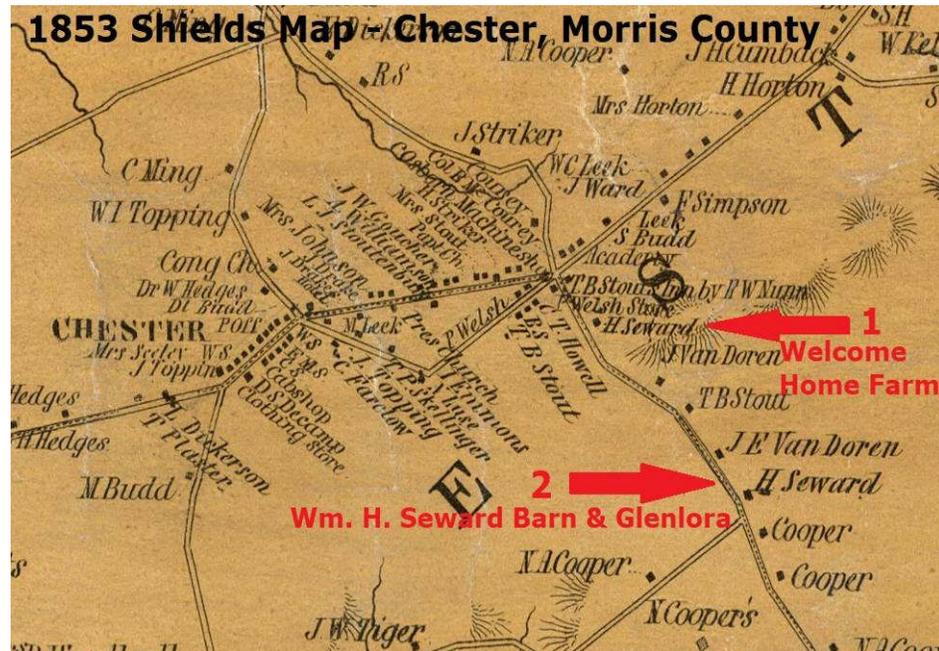
<sup>2</sup> History of the Pen-Ryn Mansion – The Pen Ryn School

[www.penryn.org/about-us/Pen%20Ryn%20History%20-%20Ciccarelli.pdf](http://www.penryn.org/about-us/Pen%20Ryn%20History%20-%20Ciccarelli.pdf)

acres of Alaska from Russia.

Reverend Stephen Overton (1772-1830) purchased the Seward farm (including the land where Glenlora now sits) after Obadiah died in 1792 from his heirs. The property became known as "Parsonage Farm". He was a man "possessed of strong intellectual powers, a clear melodious voice and thrilling elocution, and was endowed with a vigorous constitution. He traveled much preaching, more than once a day for weeks in succession".<sup>3</sup> He was installed as minister of the First Congregational Church of Chester in 1801. Rev. Overton preached and farmed for almost 30 years, but was dismissed in 1828 as the church suffered a prolonged decline in spirituality and prosperity. Reverend Overton died in 1830.

Henry Seward (1793-1871), great-grandson of Obadiah Seward, bought the family farm and land back from Reverend Overton's heir and son-in-law, Caleb Fairclo, in 1836. The Parsonage Farm was appropriately renamed "Welcome Home Farm" and Obadiah's house was its crown jewel. The 1853 Shields Map of Chester clearly shows the location of the Welcome Home Farm at "H. Seward", just southeast of the "Cross Roads", now the intersection of Main St., North Rd., and Oakdale Rd.



William Henry Seward (1840-1925), not to be confused with Secretary of State Seward of the same name, became heir to Henry when his older brother Nathan died in 1856. He was called "Billy" and was well liked and respected. He led a unique Chester lifestyle as the "lone commuter". The description (right) is from Greenidge's book (pages 86-87). However, the March 3, 1883 article from the Dover newspaper, *Iron Era*, shows he was much more than an NYC insurance man, but a modern, savvy, farmer and owner.

### William H. "Billy" Seward Chester's Lone Commuter

Frances Greenidge pages 86-87  
*Billy was an insurance broker in New York, and for years was Chester's "lone commuter," driving from his home every morning, by carriage, to the Muskrat Depot to take the train to Dover and New York, and reversing the trip every evening. A timetable seen at the Chester Inn gives the "Arrangement of Passenger Trains" that Chester's lone commuter, "Billy" Seward, must have used - the 6:15 A.M. train from Muskrat, arriving in Hoboken at 8:26 just in time to catch the 8:30 ferryboat to Barclay Street, New York; returning on the 5:26 P.M. train due in Chester at 7:10, where his carriage would be waiting.*

### A Model Farmer Iron Era 3/3/1883

Those who have had the pleasure of visiting the place of Mr. William H. Seward near Chester, express the belief that it is one of the finest homesteads to be found in all this section. A mile from his pleasant residence his farm buildings are models in their external appearance and their internal conveniences. The modern appliances for storing and handling materials are used, and the arrangements for feeding and watering his fine stock are complete. His water is brought from a spring a quarter of a mile distant and distributed throughout his buildings. As Mr. Seward goes to his business in the city every morning and returns in the evening it is a wonder to those who witness his perfect system how he finds the time to maintain and care for it all. It is an exemplification of the fact that intelligence can be used to good advantage in farming as well as in anything else.

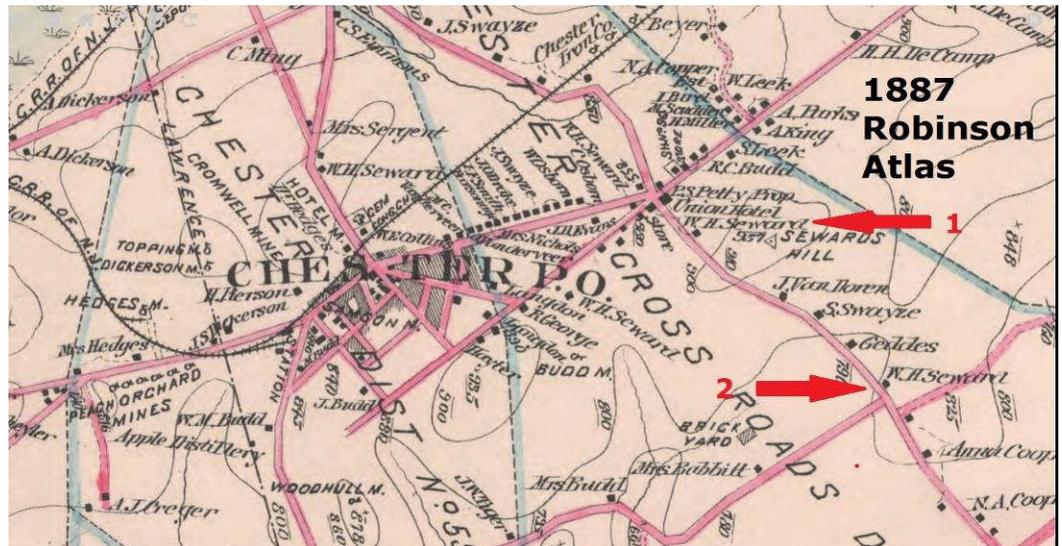
<sup>3</sup> Joan Case. *The History of the First Congregational Church – Chester, New Jersey – Celebrating Our 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1740-2015.*

In keeping with the “Model Farmer” description, in 1878, Billy erected a barn and stables on property southeast of the Obadiah House (#2 on the 1853 Shields and 1887 Robinson maps). This is the first reference we have to what is now the Glenlora barn (below right). The plaque below left is embedded just below the roof of the west side of the barn. It reads: **1878 ERECTED BY WM H. SEWARD. THOS B. KINGSLAND. ARCHT. JOS. HAMBLEY. MASON. WM AMERMAN. CARPENTER.** I think the plaque detail attests to the pride of the builders and the importance of the barn and stables. Greg Huber, a barn expert, classifies it as an “English Lake District Type Stone Barn”.<sup>4</sup> He mentions that most barns built during this period were made of wood, so using stone was unusual. He also comments that several other features “lend an air of refinement” to the barn, including curved stone arches over the windows and “S” curved metal anchoring irons (see Appendix for more details). The use of stone and added embellishments, signal that Billy wanted this barn to be noticed as special.



The *Chester Township Historic Sites Survey – 1986/87*<sup>5</sup> describes the barn as 3 stories and the perpendicular 4-bay, 2 ½ story stable both as having fieldstone foundations and fieldstone exterior walls (the 2012 picture is on the right). The 1887 Robinson Atlas shows “W.H. Seward” at the locations of the Welcome Home Farm house at #1 and the barn and stable at #2.

Emma Louise Haines Seward (1848-1910) married Billy and they had four children: Anna Haines (1874-1943), Frederic Henry (1878-1956), Lulu (1879-1888), and Frances Cooper (1884-1960). Anna married Alonzo Green (1875-1942) in 1904<sup>6</sup> and after Billy's death in 1925, the Greens inherited the Welcome Home Farm and other properties. Billy was buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery where he was a trustee<sup>7</sup>.



<sup>4</sup> Greg Huber’s analysis is from his report to the Chester Historical Society, *Architecture of the Historic Seward Barn at Glenlora Nursing Home Site- Chester, New Jersey, March 2020*. Greg Huber’s book, *The Historic Barns of Southeastern Pennsylvania*, 2017, is an invaluable resource.

<sup>5</sup> I think there is a typographical error in the *Chester Township Historical Sites Survey* which states that “By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the property was purchased by the King family at which time the main house was destroyed by fire.” I think it should be “late 18<sup>th</sup> century”. Greenidge has on page 20, only that “On March 3, 1761 the home of Constant King burned.” She does not write that Constant King owned the land, only that he had a farm.

<sup>6</sup> *Iron Era* May 13, 1904 the article “Social Events of the Past Week” provides an in depth recounting of the wedding.

## 1900's

Anna and Alonzo Green's land holdings included Seward's Hill which became a much desired locale. A big new neighbor, AT&T and their Bell Telephone Laboratories, wanted an outdoor research location to test equipment in extreme conditions. Seward's Hill, just northeast of the Obadiah Seward House, was ideal: almost a thousand feet altitude, lots of open land nearby, and not far from other AT&T offices. According to Greenidge, Alonzo and Anna did not want to sell the land to AT&T, but leased it to them. However, as the Bell Labs Chester Outdoor Lab expanded, almost all the property, except for frontage on North Road and Main Street was bought by AT&T. The image below from 1980 shows the extent of the lab. The Obadiah Seward house can be seen diagonal to Rt. 24 in the lower-left of the image. Glenlora is off the lower right corner of the map. The history of the Chester Outdoor Lab is recounted in the Chester Historical Society's newsletters including the telephone pole farm, Seward's Hill, and the dry land cable ship, Fantastic<sup>8</sup>.



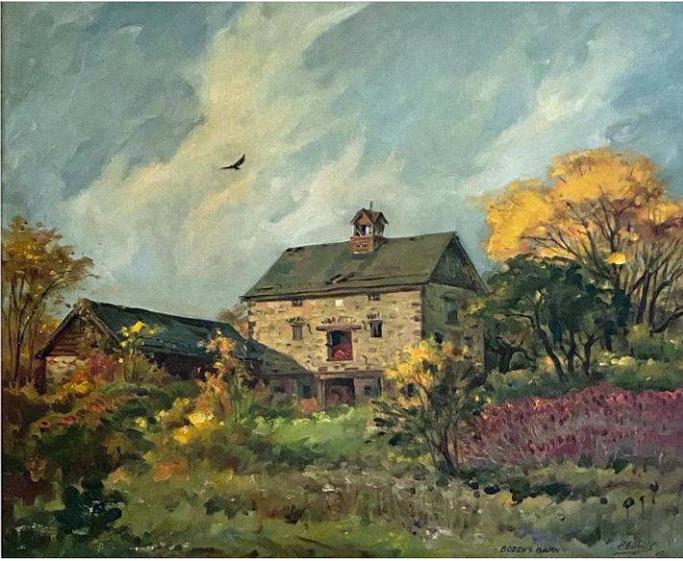
In 1947 native Canadians, Stanley J. Boden (1904-1986) and his wife Effie Irene (Glover) Boden (1903-1986) moved to Chester<sup>9</sup> to, quoting Stanley, "an old farm and we remodeled a stone barn". He and Irene were the driving forces in the transformation of the Seward barn into a house. Married in 1925, they immigrated to the US in 1928 when Stanley was hired as an analytical chemist with Merck, the drug company in Rahway, NJ<sup>10</sup>. The 1940 census lists his occupation as "Salesman" in the "Pharmaceutical Industry". He had been working for Pitman Morse as a drug salesman when he left that job and moved his wife and three children, Bruce, Bernice, and Barbara (19, 17 and 14 years old respectively), to Chester.

<sup>7</sup> *Iron Era* Nov. 14, 1902 "In Memoriam", W.H. Seward is listed as vice president of the Pleasant Hill Cemetery Association.

<sup>8</sup> <http://historicchesternj.com/newsletters.html>

<sup>9</sup> *Observer-Tribune* May 24, 1962 "New Nursing Home Set For Chester".

<sup>10</sup> *A Story of the Life of Stanley John Boden – Born March 17, 1904, Indian Head, Sask., Canada*. Stanley kept a journal. He called it his "Autobiography". There were numerous entries, but there is a big gap from 1939 to 1961 and ends in 1969. I would like to thank the Boden family and especially granddaughter Eileen Boden-McCoy and grandson Bruce Boden for making the journal available to me. The picture of Stanley and Irene is from about 1930 and was provided by Eileen. Mrs. Boden preferred the first name "Irene".



Above left: William Heslip painted the "Boden Barn in 1947. Note the datestone in the upper middle of the front wall and no chimney on the left side of the barn. Above right: Son Bruce Boden was a photographer and a flier and he took the aerial photo in the 1950's.



Above left: When the barn was converted to a house, a chimney was added to the left side of the barn. Above right: Grandson Bruce recalls that his father and aunts were very involved in the remodeling. Granddaughter Eileen Boden McCoy recalls that one special feature of the house was quite advanced for 1947. Copper pipes for heating were put into the concrete that formed the floor of the main living area.



The living area of the house, with heated floors, was very cozy, especially in front of the added fireplace. Many of the timbers from the barn were left in place. A picture of Irene reading is one of Eileen's favorite. She said "You can tell the barn home was loved".



Another massive stone fireplace was built in the basement and tree trunks were used as vertical supports (image 2019).

By 1955 Stanley changed careers and had a real estate and insurance business in Chester. He was active in the Chamber of Commerce and did insurance estimates for the Township. He was also an amateur artist. In December 1956 he painted a winter scene of the rear of the house. The painting is in the Chester Historical Society archives.

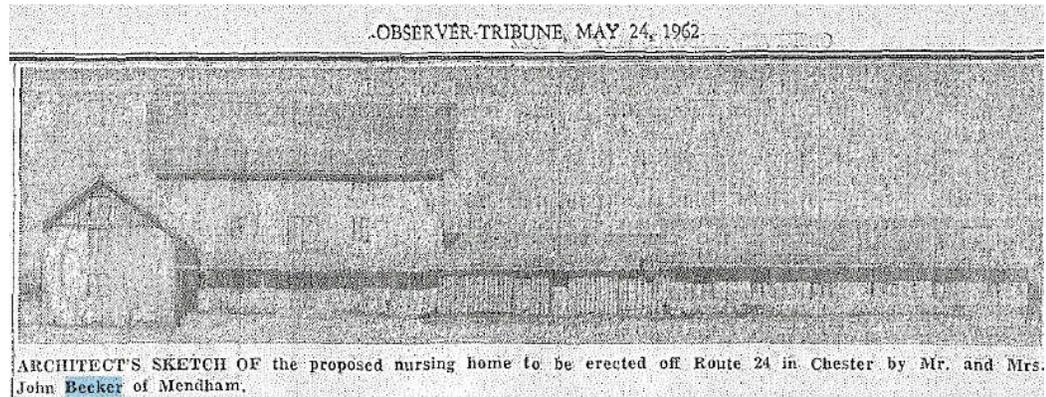


The painting is in the Chester Historical Society archives.

In 1962 Stanley and Irene sold the property to Mr. and Mrs. John L. Becker of Mendham. With the children grown and away from home often, the Bodens wanted a smaller house. Selling it helped them financially, paying some bills and creating a nest egg. That same year, Stanley bought his first Cadillac (the first of many!). They moved to the lovely college town, Madison, NJ, where both Stanley and Irene found new careers in real estate.

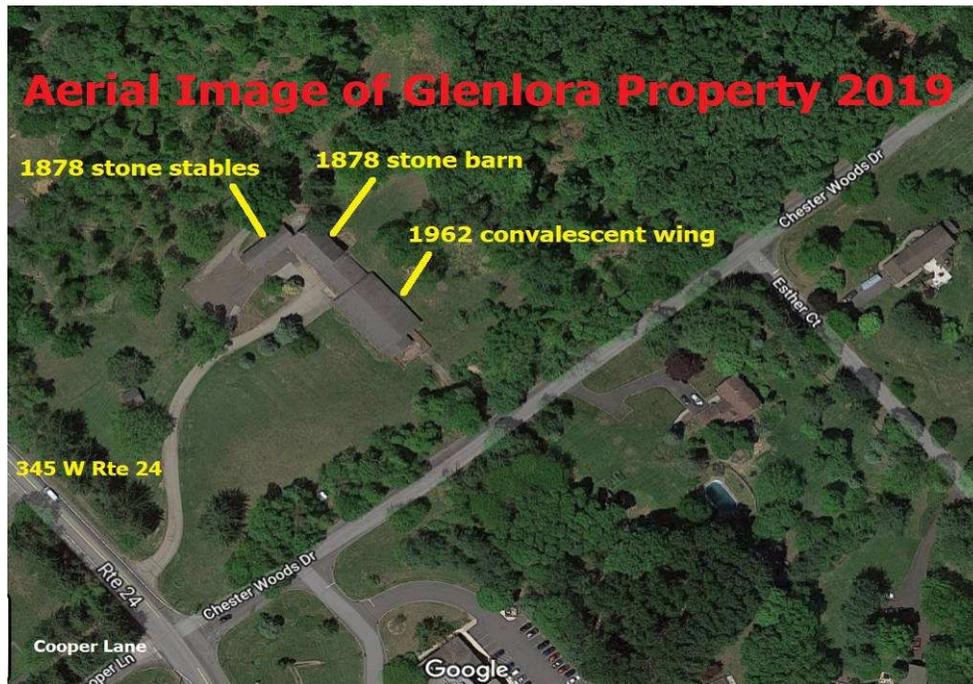
Mr. and Mrs. John L. Becker lived on Hardscrabble Rd. in Mendham. Mr. Becker was a leader with Cub Scout Pack 30<sup>11</sup> and Mrs. Becker (born 1919, maiden name Margaret Bonsall, pers. comm. Peggy Oswald) supported the Visiting Nurses Association<sup>12</sup> and was a member of the New Jersey Orchid Society and the American Orchid Society<sup>13</sup>. The new owners purchased the property with the plan to establish a nursing home<sup>14</sup>. The Beckers obtained the Chester Township variance to add a new wing to accommodate 23 convalescent adults, an apartment for a domestic couple and an apartment for a resident nurse<sup>15</sup>. The Beckers did not skimp on the additions:

“Construction of the new wing and renovation of the stone barn is expected to exceed \$125,000”<sup>16</sup> (\$1,047,000 in 2019). The Boden house/stone barn was altered to include dining facilities and housing for staff. The nursing home was named Stanfield



Nursing Home and started operating in 1963<sup>17</sup>. The architect's sketch shows the two story stone stables, three story stone barn, and the new one story wing (L to R).

<sup>11</sup> *Observer-Tribune* May 31, 1956 “Cub Pack to Hold Annual Carnival”.  
<sup>12</sup> *Observer-Tribune* April 19, 1962 “VNA Spring Rummage Sale to be Held May 12 and 13”.  
<sup>13</sup> *Observer-Tribune* May 11, 1961 “Mendham Women to Install Officers”.  
<sup>14</sup> *Observer-Tribune* May 11, 1962 “Realty Transfers”.  
<sup>15</sup> *Observer-Tribune* May 10, 1962 “Twp. Sets Salaries; Grants Two Variances”.  
<sup>16</sup> *Observer-Tribune* May 24, 1962 “New Nursing Home Set For Chester”.  
<sup>17</sup> *Observer-Tribune* November 21, 1963 “Chester Notes”



To help the reader visualize the Glenlora property, I've annotated a 2019 aerial image to show Rt. 24, Chester Woods Dr., the buildings and the area around Glenlora (345 Rte. 24).



M. KATHERINE DULIO

In 1971, Catherine "Kay" Dulio (1921-2012) took over ownership and operation of the Stanfield Nursing Home and renamed it Glenlora<sup>18</sup>. She was professionally and politically active in Chester. She was a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and was appointed to the New Jersey Board of Nursing by Governor Cahill<sup>19</sup>. Kay also served on the Chester Township Board of Health, serving as chairman for two terms.<sup>20</sup> She was elected president of the National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service.<sup>21</sup> Her political ambitions included unsuccessful runs for the New Jersey State Assembly and for Chester Township Council<sup>22</sup>. She sold Glenlora to Ann and Ray Walborn in 1982, but continued as administrator until July 1983.

Ann, a registered nurse, and her husband Ray took over ownership and administration from Kay Dulio and successfully operated Glenlora at 99% occupancy and 98 folks on the waiting list. In November 1989, to meet the demand, they made an application to the Chester Township Board of Adjustment to expand the nursing home. Under 1989 zoning ordinances Glenlora was limited to 26 beds on their 14.7 acres. However, NJ State nursing home law mandated that the minimum increase in size was 60 beds. The additional 60 beds would be housed in two new wings to be added to the facility. The old wing added by the Beckers would become a residential health facility. The stone barn would continue as offices and housing for staff. The following is an artist's rendition of the plans by architect Gary Metz<sup>23</sup>

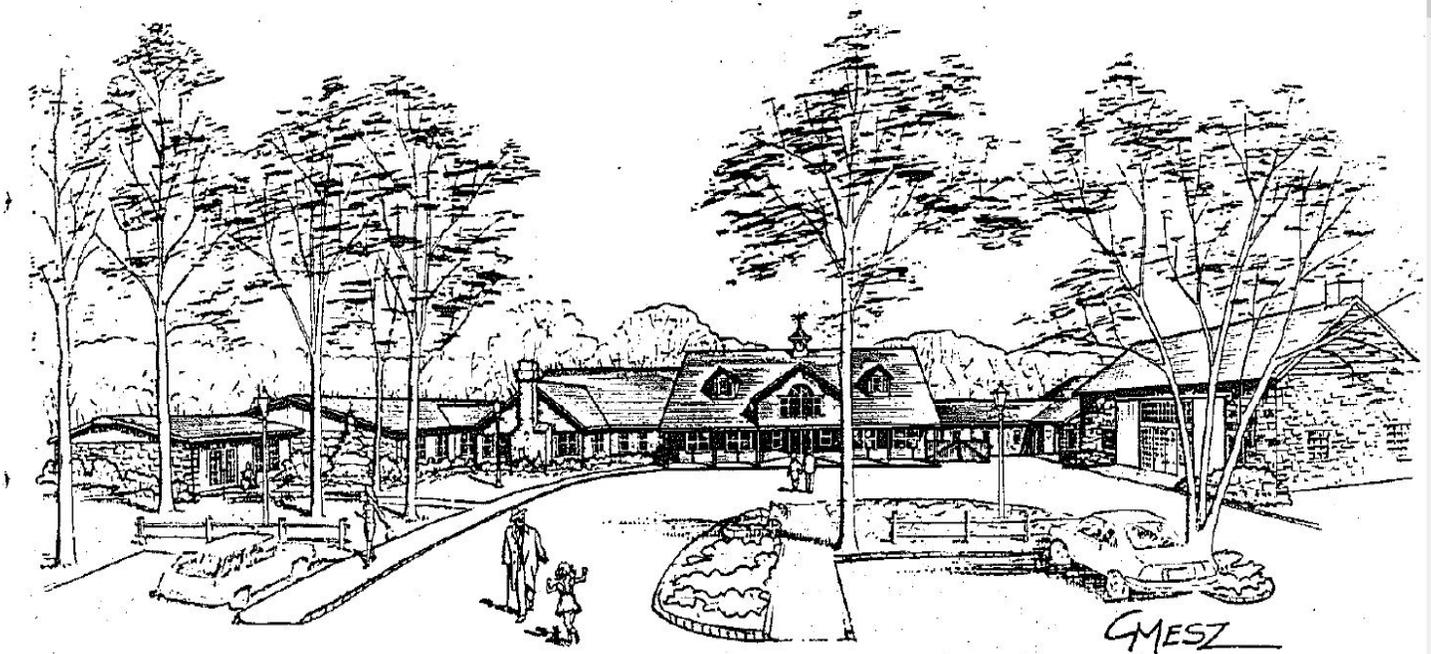
<sup>19</sup> *Observer-Tribune* April 10, 1975 "Chester Twp. 4 for 4".

<sup>20</sup> *Observer-Tribune* February 9, 1984 "Dulio Resigns Board Seat"

<sup>21</sup> *Observer-Tribune* June 1, 1979 "Glenlora Operator Named Organization's President"

<sup>22</sup> *Observer-Tribune* April 29, 1982 "Primary races loom shape up as deadline looms" source for picture of Dulio. *Observer Tribune* May 27, 1982 "Dulio Says Her Experience Would Be An Asset Here". *Daily Record* June 5, 1982 "Two Seats Up in Chester Twp."

<sup>23</sup> *Observer-Tribune* March 8, 1990 "Glenlora Hearings Continue".



(Courtesy of Gary Mesz)

### What Nursing Home May Look Like

This is an artist's rendition of what the Glenlora Nursing Home in Chester Township will look like with the proposed new building wings. The large stone building currently used as a multi-purpose room is located at the extreme right of the building. The new entry-way and common area is in the two-story section of the building. The expansion will be at right-angles to and directly behind the current facility with the front entrance facing in a northwest direction towards Willow Drive.

The first Board of Adjustment hearing took place December 18, 1989, residents from the Chester Woods and Chester Run neighborhoods voiced many concerns over the expansion. They "raised questions on groundwater pollution, the definition of psychiatric patients, staffing, traffic, dangers from infections infiltrating private wells and the financial need for expansion".<sup>24</sup> Ann Walborn, anticipating many of those objections, had stated earlier that "We hope that the people of Chester realize that we're good neighbors and want to provide a facility to fill a need. We have every intention of staying here and we share their concern about the neighborhood and the environment."<sup>25</sup> The Walborns made good on that promise, spending over \$200,000 (\$415,000 in 2019 dollars) on professionals focused on answering those concerns.<sup>26</sup>

Hearings continued for more than a year before a decision was rendered. On February 1, 1991, the Board of Adjustment denied the Walborn's expansion plans (voting 4-3).<sup>27</sup> But that is not the end of the story. On May 3, 1991, the Walborns sued in Superior Court to have the decision overturned on the grounds that the actions of the board "represent an abuse of its discretionary authority in that the action taken was in all regards arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable and otherwise wrongful".<sup>28</sup> In November, Judge Reginald Stanton (left) voided the Board's



<sup>24</sup> *Observer-Tribune* January 25, 1990 "Glenlora Hearings Kick Off".

<sup>25</sup> *Observer-Tribune* December 14, 1989 "Board to Hear Glenlora's Bid to Expand"

<sup>26</sup> *Observer-Tribune* December 13, 1990 "Walborns have spent \$200,000 and say that's about enough".

<sup>27</sup> *Observer-Tribune* February 7, 1991 "Nursing home loses bid for expansion; plans suit"

decision.<sup>29</sup> Judge Stanton said it was up to the NJ State DEP to determine whether or not the wells and septic plans were sufficient.

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However, the 60 bed expansion was never built. Since the original Glenlora application for certification for expansion, the estimated costs had doubled, mainly due to higher estimates for sewerage treatment facilities<sup>30</sup>. The Walborns had been caught in a "Catch 22". Because the state had a minimum expansion size of 60 beds, the potential environmental impact from the expansion would alarm the neighbors and the Township. Ensuing litigation exhausted funds which were intended for the expansion and thereby made the expansion impossible. Instead of physically expanding Glenlora, the Walborns started offering "Glenlora Home Outreach Services"<sup>31</sup> in 1995 which would utilize the patient's own residences as an extension of the Glenlora Nursing Home (above left).

## 2000's

Mohammed El-Hawwat (PE<sup>32</sup>), bought Glenlora Nursing Home and Glenlora Home Outreach Services from the Walborns in 2003 and sold it to Chester Township in 2005 for \$3,000,000 with the sale closing in January 2006<sup>33</sup>. The *Observer-Tribune* reported "Mayor Benjamin Spinelli said the Township Council approved a plan on Sept. 6 (2005) to allow conversion of the former Glenlora Nursing Home that would satisfy the township's state mandated affordable housing requirements."<sup>34</sup> El-Hawwat said "I was saddened that I had to sell the Glenlora property due to rising costs of operating and maintaining the high standards at the nursing home, but I'm so glad that the facility will be serving another superb purpose."<sup>35</sup> The new purpose was to serve as affordable housing and an integrated services center and treatment complex to be leased and run by United Cerebral Palsy of Morris/Somerset. However, things did not go according to plan. In 2009, Mayor William Cogger said "it's gone a lot slower than we hoped, but we are still on track." The *Observer-Tribune* reported that "Cogger said that if United Cerebral Palsy cannot complete the project, the township has sufficient funds to pay for the bonds out of the affordable housing trust fund."<sup>36</sup> The deal fell through when United Cerebral Palsy was unable to raise the required funding.<sup>37</sup>

In 2010 another non-profit, Community Hope of Parsippany, proposed to establish a resident home for about 14 mentally and physically challenged patients by adapting the Glenlora property.<sup>38</sup> However, those plans did not come to fruition. In 2010 the Planning Board

<sup>28</sup> *Observer-Tribune* June 6, 1991 "Glenlora suit charges 'abuse of authority'"

<sup>29</sup> *Observer-Tribune* November 21, 1991 "Judge voids decision on nursing home"

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> *Observer-Tribune* March 1, 1995 "Glenlora Nursing Home – Ray and Ann Walborn, Owners"

<sup>32</sup> PE "an individual, who has fulfilled education and experience requirements and passed rigorous exams that, under State licensure laws, permits them to offer engineering services directly to the public.

<https://definitions.uslegal.com/p/professional-engineer-pe/>

<sup>33</sup> *Observer-Tribune* January 12, 2006 "Township finalizes \$3M nursing home purchase"

<sup>34</sup> *Observer-Tribune* September 22, 2005 "Former nursing home to be rehabilitated"

<sup>35</sup> *Observer-Tribune* January 12, 2006 "Township finalizes \$3M nursing home purchase"

<sup>36</sup> *Observer-Tribune* January 9, 2009 "Cerebral palsy center one year behind, but mayor says still alive"

<sup>37</sup> *Observer-Tribune* March 14, 2019 "Chester Township board takes first step to determine Glenlora's future"

<sup>38</sup> *Observer-Tribune* April 16, 2010 "Agency hopeful of taking over Glenlora facility from township."

approved subdividing the property into three lots.<sup>39</sup> Finally, in 2010, Chester Township adopted the New Jersey Highlands Council Regional Master Plan which included a condition to provide 19 units of moderate and low income housing. Furthermore, the Byrne Apartments which had been considered as possible affordable housing could not be developed for affordable housing, because they were now in the preservation zone established by the Regional Master Plan.<sup>40</sup>

At a Chester Township Planning Board meeting in mid-March 2019, the history and status of the affordable housing obligations were discussed and the role that Glenlora might play in the solution.<sup>41</sup> Those discussions continued at the Planning Board meeting held on July 9, 2019.<sup>42</sup> A memorandum from Burgis Associates summarized potential affordable housing obligations in the table below which ranged from 71 to 338 affordable housing units<sup>43</sup>. These numbers are for **all Chester Township** and not specifically intended for the Glenlora property.

As shown in the accompanying table, these three (3) sets of numbers are markedly different for the Township of Chester. Most municipalities, due to various court decisions, have sought to address the need-numbers prepared by Richard Reading. Please note that while the Township ultimately decided to withdraw from its litigation with FSHC, it is nevertheless still susceptible to a builder's remedy lawsuit.

*Table 1: Potential Obligations*

Obligation	Econsult	FSHC	Reading
Rehabilitation*	29	32	32
Prior Round (1987-1999)	32	32	32
Gap Period (1999-2015)	36	123	88
Prospective Need (2015-2025)	35	215	93
<b>Combined Third Round Summary (1999-2025)</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>181</b>

\* Rehabilitation refers to a substandard housing unit which is defined as a unit with health and safety code violations that require the repair or replacement of a major system. A major system includes weatherization, a roof, plumbing, heating, electricity, sanitary plumbing, and/or a load bearing structural system.

In another memorandum, Burgis Associates prepared this map and a table summarizing the development constraints for the Glenlora property.<sup>44</sup> The map shows the three lots that make up the 14.7 acres of the property and the table lists the constraints.

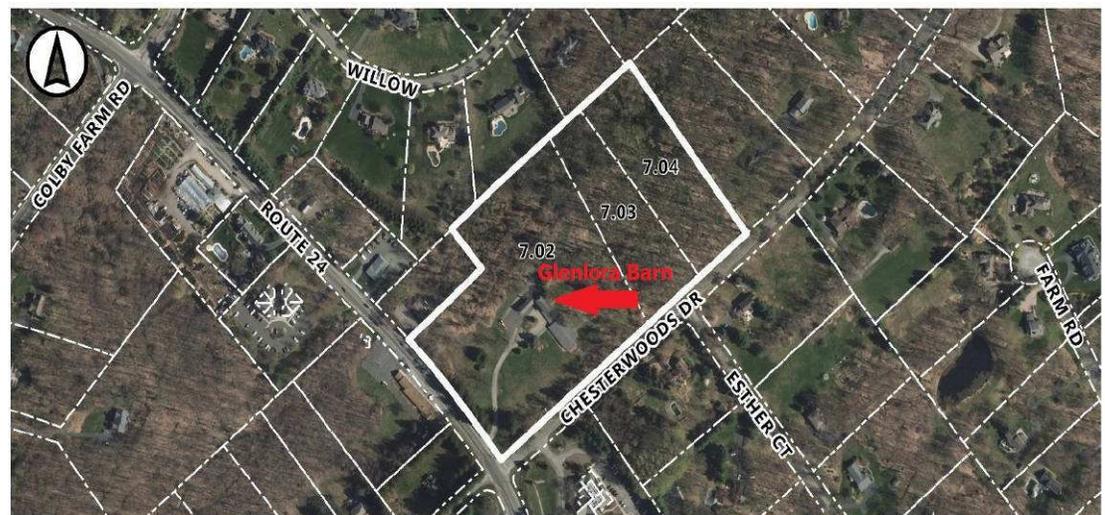


Figure 1: Aerial Map (scale: 1" = 500' Base map from Burgis Associates July 1, 2019 "Memorandum Glenlora Background"

<sup>39</sup> Burgis Associates July 1, 2019 "Memorandum Glenlora Background" to Chester Township Planning Board

<sup>40</sup> *Observer-Tribune* October 22, 2010 "First in Morris to get onboard".

<sup>41</sup> *Observer-Tribune* March 14, 2009 "Chester Township planning board takes first steps to determine fate of Glenlora".

<sup>42</sup> *Observer-Tribune* July 11, 2019 "Chester residents voice concerns at the thought of Glenlora development"

<sup>43</sup> Burgis Associates July 1, 2009 "Memorandum Affordable Housing Overview"

<sup>44</sup> Burgis Associates July 1, 2019 "Memorandum Glenlora Background" to Chester Township Planning Board

### Development Constraints

There are several environmental and regulatory constraints which may impact the development potential of the Glenlora site. Based upon preliminary conversations with the Highlands Council staff, the following three (3) constraints appear to be the most significant.

<b>Highlands Protection Zone</b>	The entirety of the site is located in the Highlands Planning Area, and the front half of the site is generally located in the Existing Community Zone. However, the rear portion of the site is located in the Protection Zone, which consists of higher resource value lands. As such, the Highlands generally limits development and the extension of sewers in these areas.
<b>Highlands Prime Groundwater Recharge Area</b>	The rear of the site is located in a Prime Groundwater Recharge Area. These areas are those with the highest recharge rates which provide forty percent (40%) of the total recharge area in a sub-watershed.
<b>Existing and Future Wastewater</b>	The site does not have access to sewer. The existing septic system, which is located in the rear portion of Lot 7.02, has a capacity of approximately 4,050 gpd. This capacity could support approximately thirteen (13) units. To expand capacity, the site would likely require a package treatment plant and inclusion into a sewer service area.

The *Observer-Tribune* reported that the Planning Board agreed that further consultation with a liaison from the New Jersey Highlands Council and meetings with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection would be required. Thirty-five residents attended the meeting, and as in the 1989-1990 Board of Adjustment meetings for the Walborn expansion variances, they were very concerned about developing the Glenlora site.

### **Preservation of Historic Buildings**

The 140+ year history of Glenlora is a classic case study in adaptive reuse. William H. Seward built the stone barn and stables in 1878. I believe, befitting the high status of the Seward family in Chester, he built a special barn in stone, not wood, with elegant curved window arches, metal S anchoring irons, and a large plaque memorializing the achievement and identifying him as the erector, and others as the architect, mason, and carpenter. In the 1940's, the Boden family adapted the buildings to a spacious house, which became a loving home. In 1962 John and Margaret Becker spent over a million dollars (in 2019 currency) to convert the house to a nursing home and added a residential care wing, eventually housing 26 beds. For the next 43 years, the Beckers, Kay Dulio, Ann and Ray Walborn, and briefly, Mohammed El-Hawwat, maintained, updated, improved, and productively used the stone barn and stables. The Glenlora Nursing Home was a comfort, asset, and source of fond memories to the Chester community and many of its residents. In future considerations for the use of the Glenlora property, preservation and adaptive reuse of the stone barn, stables, and bucolic setting is not only paramount, but eminently feasible.

### **APPENDIX – Images of Glenlora (taken on 7/26/19 except as noted)**

I want to bring the reader up to date with images from 2019-2020. However, it is difficult to convey the feeling of history and a presence that one gets while on the grounds and in the barn with images. That sense is getting rarer and is well worth preserving.





Southwest or front side of the barn  
*The stone front wall and the pent roof or roof overhang above the doors, are indicative of the English Lake District type barn. The curved window arches and metal S anchors add an "air of refinement".*



Windows, arches, datestone, and S anchoring irons.



Curved arch over the front window



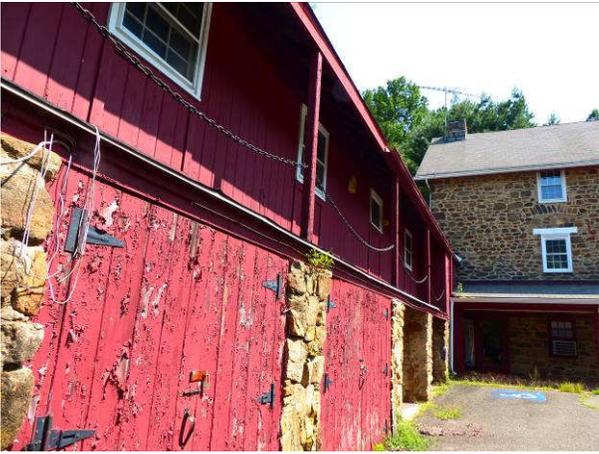
Enlarged view of S anchoring iron



Northeast or rear side and modern doors



South side of barn, note curved window arches



Southeast side of the four bay stables



Southwest view of the barn and convalescent wing



Basement fireplace, trunk supports, and beams



Window on northeast side of the barn



First floor main living room and fireplace  
The Bodens added the fireplaces.



Second floor room-could have been an office  
The interior was much altered by the Bodens.



Left: image of the attic. New roof and rafters replaced the original. The vertical support beams are original.  
 Right: Barn expert Greg Huber examines a scarf joint (in March 2020) secured by three pegs.



Southeast view of convalescent wing



Driveway from Rt. 24 and west side of buildings



Convalescent wing hallway



A typical convalescent wing resident's room