



STONE VILLAGE WITHSTANDS 150 YR. ELEMENTS!

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Our Towns bits and pieces on people and places around us by Web Coleman

Hottest news we've received from this Green Mountain underlook: Chester's Stone Village is still standing and, short of an L.A. style upheaval, probably will last another century and a half. (Native dialect, please:) "Things don't change a lot 'round here, nope."

Most of the original village—half a dozen native stone houses, a school, and a church—were built between 1838 and 1845 by the Clark brothers: Addison (aka. Alison), Orrison, and Wiley. Master masons, they came from Scotland to work on the Welland Canal stone locks in Canada and thence to the U.S. of A. They brought the "snecked ashlar" technique, still legal, of facing the locally-quarried granite buildings with rubblestone siding, also local, of fouriish-inch gneiss slabs secured with mica schist and lime mortar reinforced with moss and horsehair. (End of technical section, as reduced from the Village's application for the Nat'l Register of Historic Places.)

The first house belonged to Dr. Ptolemy Edson, variously known as the "homeliest man in Chester" and "the smallpox doctor," for treating much of the same during his 53 years of practice there. He chewed his tobacco quid in time to the jogging of the horse pulling his two wheeled gig.

Orrison Clark, seriously injured by a cannon blast one Fourth of July, con-valesced at James Johnson's and took the nursing care bill as part payment for the house. Simeon Sherman bought three gallons of rum at Marvel Johnson's store on May 4, 1845 to keep the work on his running smoothly (plus 3 ¼ more may 12th).

You could build a Stone Village house for around \$1200 in those days, which makes current owners like Lew Watters and Al Wilder wince. But the larger Universalist Church cost \$1766. It's still in use for community affairs, such as an appropriate production of "Our Town" by Chester's own theater guild, spearheaded by Innkeeper at Long Last (and former Haverford College head) Jack Coleman. Hmmm!

LEW WATTERS GRAPHICS

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