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From the Editor

Our local creeks were a critical component of the economy from colonial times well into the nineteenth century. With numerous mills dotting their banks, their water power was routinely harnessed to grind grain, saw lumber, and drive other small industrial operations in the days before steam or electricity. It is somewhat surprising, then, that those same streams have made a partial recovery towards the pre-colonial days when their waters flowed unimpeded by dams. While still being abused by storm water runoff, Valley Creek, Crum Creek, Darby, Ridley, and others are increasingly viewed as natural resources to be restored and preserved, not exploited. In this issue, Dick Kurtz looks at the Crum Creek valley, where far-sighted landowners have managed to limit residential and commercial development and have preserved many colonial-era structures. Grubb's Mill, shown in our cover photo, is one such remnant of the early days. We are fortunate to have residents who understand the value of preserving these pieces of our past.

In contrast, the University of Pennsylvania had a different vision for preserving a large portion of the Valley Creek watershed when it considered building a suburban campus in what is now Chesterbrook. In a story reprinted from the Penn alumni magazine, horse pastures would have been replaced by playing fields, and historic homes would have housed university offices. Even so, it is likely that a significant percentage of the Cressbrook and Chesterbrook Farms would not have changed significantly for many years. Although the area is now heavily developed, some open space was set aside by the developers, and the Wilson Farm tract was eventually converted to parkland. Ironically, Penn has recently established a presence of sorts in Chesterbrook, with the construction of Penn Medicine Valley Forge. According to their website, students of the Perelman School of Medicine will receive some of their training at this new facility, fulfilling the decades-old vision of educating some Penn students here in the suburbs.

Contributing author Mike Bertram returns again in this issue to tell us of a work in progress not far from Chesterbrook and Valley Creek. It's hard to imagine that a little over thirty years ago a major manufacturing plant was located in Valley Forge Park. The resulting asbestos waste that continues to contaminate the site of that operation is slowly being cleaned up, with hopes that future generations will see no evidence of the industrial activity that disrupted the tranquility of this national landmark.

Our final article celebrates the 150th anniversary of the founding of Berwyn's Trinity Presbyterian Church. In what was then known as Reeseville, a small but determined group of local residents formed the initial congregation, and went on to build the thriving church that is still a vital part of the Berwyn community. As part of their anniversary celebration, long-time parishioner Herb Fry has compiled a history of the church which should be published shortly. As a past president of the Historical Society and frequent contributor to the *Quarterly*, Herb is certain to do justice to Trinity's history, and we look forward to seeing the results of his endeavors.

Trinity recently hosted a public hearing to envision what the Berwyn of the future might look like. The results of that community gathering are posted on the Easttown Township website at:
easttown.org/flyers/pdf/berwyn_study_group_meeting_results.pdf
Perhaps a future issue of the *Quarterly* will look back and tell us how much of that vision has come to pass.

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Cover Descriptions

Front Cover: Grubb's Mill, on the bank of Crum Creek in Willistown Township, built by Quaker
carpenter Nathaniel Grubb. *Dave Reid.*

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TREDYFFRIN EASTTOWN HISTORY QUARTERLY

~ 75th Anniversary ~



Crum Creek Valley

The University of Pennsylvania's Chesterbrook Campus

Trinity Presbyterian Church 150th Anniversary

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Back Cover: Two photographs of Trinity Presbyterian Church from the archives of the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society.

Top: An undated photo from the Dorothy Reed collection. In the background is the steeple of the Berwyn Methodist Episcopal Church, a prominent feature that is absent in the bottom image. In the January 1939 Quarterly, an article on the Methodist church by Ruth Moore says “The bell tower was deemed unsafe and removed in September 1925.”

Bottom: An aerial view of Berwyn, taken by Aero Services of Philadelphia in 1926. This is one of the only images known to show the old Trinity Presbyterian graveyard. The graves were removed to Great Valley Presbyterian Church in October 1951 to make room for expansion of the parish hall.

