

Chester County

One of the three original counties formed by William Penn in November 1682. It did not become an inland county until 1789. Its name derives from Cheshire (i.e., Chester-shire), England, from which many of its early settlers came. West Chester, the county seat since 1788, was incorporated as a borough on March 28, 1799. It was named for Chester, the older county seat (now in Delaware County), which in turn derived its name from the shire town of Cheshire.

Quakers were very influential in the early period, and an older Swedish population that predated William Penn's charter was absorbed. Chester shares with Montgomery County the Valley Forge encampment and with Delaware County the Brandywine Battlefield. Iron works began before the Revolution, followed by production of paper, textiles, and bricks. Accessibility increased with the Lancaster Pike (1795), Schuylkill Navigation Canal (1825), and Columbia Railroad (1840s). In the 1890s the county became a residential location for commuting Philadelphia workers. Chester was an early producer of a valuable mushroom crop, and has long excelled in fruit growing, dairying, livestock breeding, and raising flowers. Thirty percent of the land is farmed. The Pierre du Pont Arboretum and Gardens arose in the nineteenth century. The institute that became Lincoln University was founded in 1854 to educate African Americans, and there were Underground Railroad stations at West Chester, Phoenixville, Oxford, and Kennett Square.

CHESTER COUNTY - 4th Class

One of the three original counties into which William Penn divided
Pennsylvania in 1682

Third Class City

<u>Name of City</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Prior Status</u>
Coatesville	1914 ¹ 1915 ^{2,3}	Settled before 1717. Incorporated as a borough in 1687

Boroughs

<u>Name of Borough</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Town Laid Out or Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Atglen	Dec. 20, 1875		Sadsbury Township
Avondale	1894		London Grove and New Garden Townships
Downingtown	May 12, 1859	S 1702	East Caln Township
Elverson	June 1911		West Nantmeal Township
Honey Brook	May 1, 1891 ¹ 1892 ²		Nantmeal Township
Kennett Square	1855 ¹ 1705 ²	S 1686	Kennett Township
Malvern	May 21, 1873 ¹ 1889 ²		Willistown Township
Modena	1921	S 1739	East Fallowfield Township
Oxford	Apr. 8, 1833	S 1775	Lower Oxford and East Nottingham Townships
Parkesburg	Mar. 1, 1872		Sadsbury Township
Phoenixville	Mar. 6, 1849 ^{1,3} 1790 ²	S 1732	Schuylkill Township
South Coatesville	1921		East Fallowfield Township
Spring City	1867		East Vincent Township. Called Springville until 1872
West Chester	Mar. 28, 1799	S 1760	
West Grove	June 15, 1894 ¹ 1893 ²		London Grove Township

First Class Township

<u>Name of Township</u>	<u>Became First Class Twp.</u>	<u>Incorporated as a Twp.</u>	<u>Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Caln	Nov. 4, 1952	1686		

CHESTER COUNTY - 4th Class (cont'd)

Second Class Townships

<u>Name of Township</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Birmingham	1686 ^{1,3} 1684 ²	About 1684	Incorporated before county was organized
Charlestown	1737	1715	
East Bradford	Nov. 30, 1731	About 1696	Bradford Township
East Brandywine	1844	1714	Brandywine Township
East Caln	1744	1702	Caln Township
East Coventry	1844	1717	North Coventry Township
East Fallowfield	1743	1714	Fallowfield Township
East Goshen	1817	1704	Goshen Township
East Marlborough	1729	1700	Marlborough Township
East Nantmeal	1740 ¹ 1739 ²	1718	Nantmeal Township
East Nottingham	1718	1702	Nottingham Township
East Pikeland	1838	1705	Pikeland Township
Easttown	1704		
East Vincent	1832		Vincent Township
East Whiteland	Feb. 26, 1765		Whiteland Township
Elk	1857		East Nottingham Township
Franklin	1852	1720	New London Township
Highland	1853	About 1774	West Fallowfield Township
Honey Brook	1789	1718	West Nantmeal Township
Kennett	1704 ¹ 1855 ²	1687	
London Britain	1725		
London Grove	1723	1699	
Londonderry	1734		Nottingham Township
Lower Oxford	1797		Oxford Township
New Garden	1700	1712	
New London	1744	1704	
Newlin	1724	1688	
North Coventry	1841		Coventry Township
Penn	1817		Londonderry Township
Pennsbury	1770	1700	Kennett Township
Pocopson	1849	About 1711	Pennsbury, Marlborough, Newlin and West Bradford Townships
Sadsbury	1717	About 1708	
Schuylkill	1826		Charlestown Township
South Coventry	1841		Coventry Township
Thornbury	1687		

CHESTER COUNTY - 4th Class (cont'd)

Second Class Townships (cont'd)

<u>Name of Township</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Tredyffrin	1706	About 1700	
Upper Oxford	1797 ¹ 1754 ²		Oxford Township
Upper Uwchlan	1858	1712	Uwchlan Township
Uwchlan Valley	1712	1712	
	1852		West Caln, West Brandywine, East Caln and Sadsbury Townships
Wallace	1852		West Nantmeal Township
Warwick	1842	1736	East Nantmeal Township
West Bradford	Nov. 30, 1731 ¹ 1705 ²	About 1696	Bradford Township
West Brandywine	1844		Brandywine Township
West Caln	May 29, 1744		Caln Township
West Fallowfield	1743		Fallowfield Township
West Goshen	1817		Goshen Township
West Marlborough	May 27, 1729 ¹ 1730 ²		Marlborough Township
West Nantmeal	1740	1718	Nantmeal Township
West Nottingham	1718		Nottingham Township
	1715		
West Pikeland	1838		Pikeland Township
West Sadsbury	1878		Sadsbury Township
West Vincent	1832		Vincent Township
West Whiteland	Feb. 26, 1765 ¹ 1704 ²		Whiteland Township
Westtown	1685	About 1697	
Willistown	1704	About 1697	

¹ Godcharles

² Bureau of Municipal Research and Pennsylvania Economy League, Population Growth of Chester County, (West Chester, Pa.: Bureau of Municipal Research and Pennsylvania Economy League, Inc., 1957).

³ C. W. Heathcote, (ed.), A History of Chester County, Pennsylvania (Harrisburg, Pa.: National Historical Association, 1932).