



# FWCCSP RECORD

December 2022

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## History of the Schaen Cider Mill

Located along the western bank of the White Clay Creek near North College Avenue lies the remains of the Schaen Cider Mill, a once prominent feature in Newark. The Cider Mill has a rich history, with records of its land ownership dating back to 1702. It is believed to have been built in 1917, and there have been 3 different owners from 1917-1972. In 1903, James A. Morrison and his wife Sarah Morrison purchased the property. Mr. Morrison died shortly after the acquisition of this land, and the property was passed to his wife Sarah. When Sarah passed away in 1936, her son James E. Morrison oversaw the property and the Mill. The land was sold once again in 1940 for \$5500 to a family of German immigrants, William and Mary Russell. The Russell family hired George Schaen, a local who worked at the National Vulcanized Fiber plant in Newark on Paper Mill Road. Schaen ran the Mill, and the profits were split 50/50 between Schaen and Russell. William Russell died in 1956 and Mary Russell oversaw the property until 1960 when she sold it to George and Nora Schaen for \$10.

### Apples & Delaware

The Schaen Cider Mill was operated as a seasonal business, running from late August to December. Records from 1760- 1830 show that nearly every farm in New Castle County had an apple orchard. From 1920-1929, Delaware was listed as the most concentrated apple growing area in the United States. Apples were exported to over half of the 48 states, Canada, and Europe. The



Cider Mill began as a place for farmers to bring their apples; locals who happened to stroll by could also purchase cider on site. Farmers were required to make an appointment with George's wife, Nora, since George's work at the Mill was scheduled around his shifts at NVF.

## How Cider Was Made

Apples were dumped into a chute outside of the building and then carried up to the ceiling by a chain-driven conveyor belt, where they were dumped into a grinding box equipped with rotary blades to reduce the apples to a pulp. The pulp was then dropped onto rubber trays covered in burlap cloth and the trays were stacked and moved into the press. The press could hold 8 layers of trays, or 24 bushels of apples, and exerted a pressure force of 2500 pounds. The juice then flowed down into a wooden box, through a trough where it was filtered with cheese cloths. From here, the cider traveled through a hose where it was deposited into jugs ready for distribution. George Schaen could complete this process from start to finish in just under an hour. The leftover mash was dumped onto the riverbank, creating the perfect environment for worms to grow. Local children used to hunt for fishing worms along this creek bank.

The conveyor, grinder, and press were all powered by a 1929 Ford Model A engine. The Mill ran with its original equipment for the entirety of its lifetime. Electricity was added in the late fifties.

## The Unique Schaen Cider

The Schaen family prided themselves on the fact that nothing was ever added to their cider. "I never knew my father permitting anyone -- either he or anyone else -- putting preservatives in the cider. I know that he wouldn't permit it" says George's son, Charles Schaen. The Schaen Cider was unique from other local ciders, according to son William Schaen, "Milburn's, their cider is cloudy, and I can't understand that because my father's cider was always so clear. It wasn't cloudy at all. It looks like it's muddy. When you see their cider, you'll see sediment in the bottom... [George Schaen] filtered everything."

Below: Apples moving through the conveyor belt.



Below: The press reduces pulp to cider.



The big squeeze comes and the apple pulp is reduced to cider. This is doubtful if anyone really knows how old it is or where it was made, around 2500 pounds.

## Present Day

On May 23, 1972, the Schaen Cider Mill suffered irreparable damage from a fire with an unknown cause. Fire inspectors later investigated the fire as a possible arson. George Schaen was ill and bedridden at the time of the fire and died 2 weeks later. His family never told him about the fire. In 1981, Nora Schaen sold 11,957 square feet of land to the State of Delaware and it was added to White Clay Creek State Park. Today, the Mill is commemorated with a wayside and you can still see remnants of the foundation where it once stood by the creek.

*Sources include: Schaen Cider Mill Historical Reports, DE State Parks Cultural Resources Unit Interview of Charles Eugene Schaen, William Schaen, and Lorraine Fretz, DE State Parks Cultural Resources Unit*



## Upcoming volunteer opportunities

### **Saturday December 3, 1pm-3pm: Autumn olive blitz!**

Invasive plant species removal. Park and meet at Nine Foot Road parking lot. For more information contact Ann at [Ann.Burruss@Delaware.gov](mailto:Ann.Burruss@Delaware.gov) or 302-722-5656. Please sign up by selecting the calendar event at the following link: <https://destateparks.com/Volunteer/Calendars>

### **Friday December 2, 1pm-3pm: Set-up for Wreath-making program.**

Park at Judge Morris Estate parking lot and meet at Judge Morris Estate House.

### **Sunday December 4, 9:30am-12:00 noon -OR- 12:30pm-3:00pm: Assist with Wreath-making program.**

Park at Judge Morris Estate parking lot and meet at Judge Morris Estate House. Please contact Claire for more information or to sign up at [Claire.Mickletz@Delaware.gov](mailto:Claire.Mickletz@Delaware.gov) or 302-242-5156

## Join us!



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The Friends have a governing body, the Executive Committee, with the President and six other members. We are in need of someone to handle **Publicity and Social Media**. This means helping, for example, with this newsletter, with Facebook, and connecting with people and organizations that use and support the Park. If you think this is of interest please send a note to [whiteclaycreekfriends@gmail.com](mailto:whiteclaycreekfriends@gmail.com).

## Quiz



What is this and where is this found in the park?

- 1) horse trough inside Judge Morris barn foundation
- 2) cow trough at the Niven farm
- 3) goat trough at Chambers House
- 4) pig trough at Wells Barn

Of course there is a prize for the correct answer.....send to:  
[whiteclaycreekfriends@gmail.com](mailto:whiteclaycreekfriends@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Park Activities

### Wreath Making Workshop

**Sunday, December 4, 2022 at 10:00 AM**

Join us for a cup of coffee in the cozy Judge Morris Estate during our wreath making workshop. Bring clippers and gloves. \$30 per person, includes greens, base and accents for one holiday wreath.

### **Wreath Making Workshop**

**Sunday, December 4, 2022 at 1:00 PM**

Join us for a cup of coffee in the cozy Judge Morris Estate during our wreath making workshop. Bring clippers and gloves. \$30 per person, includes greens, base and accents for one holiday wreath.

### **Full Moon Friday**

**Friday, December 9, 2022 at 6:30 PM**

Join our park naturalist for an evening hike near the full moon. We'll start the hike as the sun sets and then enjoy the moonrise as we return. Online registration ends 24 hours prior to the program. After that, please call 302-368-6900. Meeting location provided upon registration. \$6 per person.

### **Naturalist Led Hike**

**Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 10:00 AM**

Ready to find a new favorite trail? Join the park naturalist on this series to explore trails and discover nature in White Clay Creek State Park. Dress for the weather, bring bottled water and come ready for adventure! Call 302-368-6900 for registration and hike location information. Free

### **Harmony/Winter Solstice Hike**

**Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 4:00 PM**

Join us for silent hike just before sunset, as we listen to the sounds of nature with our heightened senses. This is designated as a meditation hike to enjoy the forest and fields in quiet contemplation. Pre-registration is required, call 302-368-6900 for meeting location. Free

### **Naturalist Led Hike**

**Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 10:00 AM**

Ready to find a new favorite trail? Join the park naturalist on this series to explore trails and discover nature in White Clay Creek State Park. Dress for the weather, bring bottled water and come ready for adventure! Call 302-368-6900 for registration and hike location information. Free

## **Deer Hunting Season Is In Session**

### **Archery Deer Hunting Seasons**

**September 10, 2022 – January 31, 2023**

### **General Firearm Deer Hunting Seasons**

**November 11 - November 29, 2022**

**December 10 – December 17, 2022 – Special Antlerless Season**

**January 14 - January 21, 2023**

**Check out this website for the full 2022-2023 Hunting Season rules: <https://destateparks.com/Adventures/Hunting>**

## Support the White Clay Creek State Park by Renewing your Membership!

The more members we have, the more our voice is heard when we seek to preserve and enhance our Park. Please go to our [website](#) and click on the purple button.

