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Discovering Chestnut Hill: The Philadelphia Cricket Club

Posted on August 7, 2019 (<https://www.chestnuthilllocal.com/2019/08/07/discovering-chestnut-hill-the-philadelphia-cricket-club/>) by Contributor (<https://www.chestnuthilllocal.com/author/contributor/>)

by **Lori Salganicoff**

This week, we are diving into the Conservancy's Archives to bring you some of the proud history of the nation's oldest country club.

Chestnut Hill first became a destination for leisure activities because of its elevation, cool breezes, countryside, and the natural beauty of the Wissahickon gorge. English hosiery weavers living in Germantown during the 1840s brought cricket to America. A group of young Philadelphians formed the Philadelphia Cricket Club in 1854 and played in Camden, New Jersey, and on several fields in the Philadelphia area including one at Chestnut Hill Avenue

and Crefeld Street and along Bethlehem Pike above the Eldon Hotel.

In 1884, Henry H. Houston gave land on West Willow Grove Avenue for the Philadelphia Cricket Club, which is the nation's oldest country club still in existence. The original charter states that its object was the "practicing and playing the games of cricket and tennis and the promotion of the health of the members."

The current clubhouse building, shown here circa 1912, has stood since 1910 and was designed by architect George T. Pearson.

Today, the sweeping front lawn and open views of the Cricket Club remain much as they were at the time of its founding. You may remember in 2015, the Woodward family and the Philadelphia Cricket Club struck a deal to permanently protect the club's 37- acre golf course by placing it under easement with Natural Lands. The Conservancy was proud to have worked with the family for many years on the effort that resulted in the conservation of the property, and we continue to be grateful to the Woodwards for their consistent and strong support of active preservation and conservation efforts.

Did you know you can browse through thousands of Chestnut Hill-area historical photos from your home? Visit the Chestnut Hill Conservancy's Online Photo Collection (<http://chconservancy.org/photo-search>) for more.

Lori Salganicoff is the executive director of the Chestnut Hill Conservancy.

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