

CHESTER TIMES – January 15, 1913

MODEL TOWN PROGRESSING – Departure Buy Viscose Company Seems to Solve Housing Problems – Many To Be Ready In May

The model village that is being built by the American Viscose Company at Marcus Hook to house the families of their workmen has already progressed far enough to prove that this company and their architects have solved the housing problem insofar as working men's houses are concerned. Sixty-six houses will be ready for occupancy by the middle of May and 194 are to be finished by December.

The site was carefully chosen from the viewpoint of convenience to the operatives and the architects have spent the greater part of a year investigating the construction of workmen's houses, not only in the United States, but also in Europe. Mr. Perot, a member of the firm of architects have gone abroad last Fall with that end in view. As a result the 215 houses now in course of construction will form one of the best villages in America for the housing of workmen.

Instead of following the stereotyped two story rows of brick houses, which are so common in this locality, the problem has been considered not from a commercial standpoint, but from a standpoint of what best suits the people employed by the company. As the houses are not going to be sold to the occupants, the entire estate being under the control of the company, the consideration of the aesthetic in planning the village entered as much into the problem as the disposition of the rooms in the houses, so that instead of having a village with rectangular plots and rows of houses, streets diverging from a central plaza, with beautiful vistas, is the outcome. Several types of houses have been designed, with a view to accommodating the working people whose wages vary. The houses constituting the semi-circular plaza, of course will be more expensive from the standpoint of construction and artistic appearance. Those in the streets diverging from the semicircle will be less expensive, but the architectural treatment of the facade of the houses on each street will be different. In general there will be two classes of houses. As is common in England, the principle has been adopted here, also that no house shall have less than three bedrooms on the second floor, together with the living room, stair, hall, dining room and kitchen on the first floor. This permits the occupants of the house, where there is a small family of having separate rooms for sleeping. A modern bathroom will be provided in each house and there will also be provided a front porch. The customary outside wooden shed is omitted and the houses are being treated with the same care as the fronts, the customary side yards also omitted, the houses being made purposely broad, so that in the houses adjoining each other, the lighting of the rooms will be from the front and back and not from the sides, except in the case of the corner houses. The material used in construction will be of the best. All the walls will be of brick, the roofs will be of slate, and the porch floors of cement. All the houses will have cellars, and the heating will be by individual hot air furnace systems. There will be no fences between the rear yards, instead iron rails, 3 ft. high, will be provided. The fronts of the houses will be terraced above the street and rows of trees will be planted on each side of the streets. Hedges will form the division between the front gardens. Sewers, of the most approved type, will be provided for the entire property. The houses will be provided with water and gas. The streets will be macadamized, with cement curbs and gutters, and cement walks will be provided on the sidewalks, with grass plots on each side. The large semi-circular plaza will be treated in a formal way, as an open lawn hedged about with bushes.

KEITH LOCKHART COLLECTION