**Michael Cattell**

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Introduction

**A map of a city

Description automatically generated** A common question I (and everyone else) get asked is “where are you from?” Oddly enough, it is a question I struggle to answer. This is not because I do not know where I am from, but because the name of where I am from is, in a way, vague. Since starting college, I have given 5 different answers to the question of where I am from: an hour west of Philadelphia (the most legible answer to most people), Lionville (technically where I am from), Exton (the city listed in my home’s address), Downingtown (where my high school was located), and West Chester (the county seat for Chester County). Generally, the farther from where my house is located, the more easily legible where I am from is to others.

Figure 1: Map showing town points from the Geographic Names Information System from the United States Geological Survey. The places are commons answers to "where are you from?"

Pre-Colonial Era

Colonial History

Farming County

In an 1879 article, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* described Lionville as “…inhabited by plain and wealthy Quaker farmers”.

Suburbanization and the Railroads

Developing Marchwood

Present Day: Where Even Is “Exton” or “Lionville”?

Today, suburban sprawl has resulted in places being decentralized, with Exton and Lionville being no different.