Backward Glances

Local Family Histories
Series 1-3

Courtesy of Fort Vance Historical Society

Series 1

Backward Glances

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Preface

The late A.D.White was, beyond doubt, the greatest Keeper-of-the-Records of Southwestern Pennsylvania history during a lifetime which lacked four months of spanning a century. During that lifetime, he had a dream which was two-fold. First, it was his earnest desire that his extensive collection of personal writings, clippings, and other genealogical and historical gleanings should, at some point in time, be made available to the public. Second, recognizing the inevitability that his own efforts at recording facts concerning people, places, and events of the area were coming to an end, it was his hope that others would take up the torch in this behalf. These dreams he voiced frequently and with great conviction.

After his death in 1994, the establishment of the A.D.White Research Society, Ltd., and the present endeavors to secure a permanent Center for this Society, are efforts to bring to fulfillment this first dream. This series of "Backward Glances", a compilation of writings on local history, is a beginning attempt to fulfill the second.

As may be noticed from the Table of Contents, these writings fall into one of four arbitrary categories.

The "Second Wave Pioneers" category contains the stories of families whose immigrant ancestor came, for the most part, to this country between 1890 and 1925. Many worked in the mines, on the railroads, or on farms. Their greatest handicap was the language barrier. Their children were often discriminated against and ridiculed because they were not fluent in English. Many of these children were befriended by A.D.White himself, who was principal in many of the local schools at that time. He encouraged them to be all that they could be. As time went by, it was almost an obsession with him that someone should put the stories of their hardships and tragedies into written form. This category of "Second Wave Pioneers" is the attempt of the A.D. Society to do exactly that. These stories were written either by a descendant of a pioneer or by someone to whom the story had been told.

The pioneers who made the perilous journey across the ocean are gone. Even the entire generation of their children are, in many instances, no longer living. Thus, the tales of their experiences will soon be beyond retrieving. If you, one of our readers, descend from such a family, we plead with you either to write the story of your family and submit it to us to be published in the near future, or tell it to someone who will do the writing for you. Such stories should be similar in content and scope with those published in this volume and should include appropriate accompanying pictures.

Articles in the "Memories of Yesteryear" category are exactly that. Many of them have been written by persons who no longer live in the area targeted, but whose memories of the same are fondly cherished. Readers are encouraged to make personal contributions to this category for future publication. Potential contributors need not be concerned that spelling, grammar, or sentence construction may not be perfect. All articles will be carefully edited for such errors, while keeping the original style and structure intact.

Persons wishing to contribute to either of these categories should contact Kathryn Slasor at 724-947-3983 or mail contributions to her at 742 Cedar Grove Road, Burgettstown, PA 15021.

Because of the extensive research necessary to produce stories for the "Old Homesteads and Pioneers" category, no one has yet come forth to assist in these writings. Thus the reader will find the majority in this section are authored by either June Campbell Grossman-Welch or Kathryn Campbell Slasor, who have done extensive research and writing in this category over at least a dozen years.

"Personalities from the Past" is included to provide a change of pace from the more rigorous style encountered in the "Homesteads" section. This format has been used extensively over the past several years to catch the attention of a group of young people known as the "Seekers". Maintaining their continued interest in local history is an important goal of the A.D.White Society. These "Personalities" are also authored primarily by the two above named writers.

The Society wishes to thank its many contributors for the work and time spent in providing these stories. It also wishes to remind readers that two persons viewing the same experience may be affected by it in two entirely different ways. Thus, in reading these accounts, you may recall some of these events in ways other than those expressed in these articles. However, this is the way it was as the authors remembered it.

Profits from the sale of "Backward Glances" will be used to continue similar publications in the near future.

Second Wave Pioneers

The Antonio Donati Family

by

William L. Donati

Antonio Donati and Madelina Pandolfi were born within a few weeks of each other in the early part of 1879 in the village of Vimogno, province of Como, Northern Italy, about 25 miles from the Swiss border.

Vimogno, along with the neighboring towns of Prima Luna and Introbio, are nestled in a valley between two mountains in the Italian Alps. The valley is called Val Sasso which means "valley of stones". Stones are plentiful, the homes, the streets, the fences, even the roofs of the older homes being made of stone. Roofs are still shingled in flat fieldstone. These villages scattered throughout Northern Italy are beautiful, peaceful and unpolluted with crisp, clear mountain air and crystal mountain spring water running through. If you were to walk up the main road through these villages, you would look straight up on either side to see the tops of the snow-covered peaks. The meadows start a little lower down below the tree line, and that is where Antonio, as a young boy, would take the family cattle up each morning to graze. He would stay there all day attending the cattle with a lunch consisting of a handful of cornmeal mush known as polenta and a few slices of cheese.

You might ask yourself "Why would anyone want to leave this beautiful setting, this quaint village, and bring his wife and children to a strange land called America where they knew no one and could not speak the language?" For the answer to that question, go back to that lunch of a handful of polenta and cheese that Antonio took with him each day as he tended the cattle on the mountains. They were tired of existing on polenta and cheese seven days a week. The villages were not prospering due to their isolated location and poor transportation in and out of these areas. They were closed off from the world and it kept them poor.

Word had come to them that the coal mines of Pennsylvania offered the chance for better jobs with higher pay and it looked much better to them. It was a chance to improve their conditions. In fact, most of them believed that they would have starved if they had not moved to the United States.

Antonio's parents had four children, he being the eldest. Three of the boys came to America. Only one, Bernardo, stayed in the homeland. Bernardo's daughter, Rena, kept in contact with those who emigrated. Antonio's wife, Madelina, had been educated in Italy enough to be able to read and write Italian. This enabled the families to keep in touch.

Rena told of the poverty during the two World Wars when the enemy soldiers would take all their food. They existed only on what they could hide buried in the earth. She was so malnourished when she was pregnant with her first child during WW II, that he was born with very poor eyesight and is almost completely blind. On Madelina's side they were poor also. Her father, Protszio Pandolphi, was raised in the Pandolphi Orphanage for which he was named. Madelina started working in a silk factory at the age of eight to help her family make ends meet. Her job was feeding mulberry leaves to the silkworms. She would work half a day and go to school half a day.

As a young man, Antonio worked in the silver mines in the mountain. The Northern Italian men were for the most part short, stocky, muscular, hard-working and were perfectly suited for such enterprises as mining in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. When word came to them that workers were needed, and promised better pay and a better life, Antonio decided to go. He joined his friend, Mr. Rupani, and they left their families to try their lot in America. The two young men set sail in 1903, and eventually ended their journey in Erie Mine. They saved enough money to send for their wives and children in 1905.

The Donatis had two children by 1905. The eldest's given name was Battista Donati, later changed to John. The second child was Matt. John later told the story of getting off the train in Burgettstown and seeing his father for the first time in two years. He walked hand and hand with his mother and father as they carried little Matt, who was only two years old, up the track toward their home in Erie Mine. It was a very dark night and a strange place. John was only four years old and was frightened. There were no street lights to show the way and the night was pitch black. They were walking in the area where Sutherland Lumber Company is now located. Suddenly the sky ahead of them turned a bright red. It was the end of the mine shift and they had dumped the fire from the steam boiler at the mine, causing the sky to glow red.

In 1906 and 1907 came two more children, Katrina (Catherine) and Guglielmo (William). Shortly after William was born, Madelina received word from Italy that her father was very ill and needed someone to care for him. Thus came another big decision - to go back to Italy or to stay in the United States. Antonio decided to go back to Italy with his wife and four small children to take care of his father-in-law. While they were in Italy, the fifth child, August, was born. After the grandfather's death in 1910, the family returned to the United States, never to return to Italy again.

The trip back, requiring almost two weeks, was aboard a small boat on a very rough and stormy sea. Madelina had still not recovered completely from the recent birth of the latest child. She became so violently seasick on the voyage that she could neither eat nor nurse the baby. August would have died, had it not been for a kind woman, with whom they were not previously acquainted, whose baby had recently died. The woman offered to nurse August, which saved his life.

While on the return trip to America, the captain approached Madelina, telling her that he adored her little Guglielmo who, at the age of three, was playing happily about the ship's quarters. The captain told her that he and his wife could not have children. He said that he was very rich and would be willing to pay anything if she would let him have her little boy. The Donatis were practically penniless and it was very uncertain what future awaited them in America since Antonio had no guarantee of a job. But without a moment's hesitation, Madelina gave him an emphatic answer. "I no can give up my baby!" And that was the end of that.

After coming back to America the second time and going back to work in the mine, Antonio realized that he had the makings of a good farm family, having several sons to his credit. He decided to rent a farm and try his luck. By 1920, they were living on the Archer farm which is the first farm on the right on Lee Road in Jefferson Township. After the landlord raised the rent a few times, Antonio decided to buy his

own place. When the Thomas Lee farm next door went up for sale in 1923, he bought it. He, with the help of his children, ran a very successful dairy farm there. They cleared the land and made pit posts, and in 1925 he bought the farm below it for his eldest son, John, and family. It was there that this author, his brother John, and sisters June and Dorothy were born and spent their childhood.

The Lee farm which Antonio purchased in 1923 became the Donati Homestead. There they lived with their ten children who, from that house, each eventually married. Although they lived through the Great Depression, they always had three cooked meals a day, decent clothing, and plenty of food. Madelina and Antonio made it a rule never to argue in front of the children, thus they grew up to be happy, well adjusted people. The parents loved each other and loved each child. They were a very close family. When the children had differences between them, they never told their parents. But later, when they grew up, they said that they had simply settled it with their fists. When they were small, Antonio took them on his knee at night and told them bedtime stories in Italian.

In the back part of the house, around the huge old table, they looked at each other each day and into the faces of their children. As the children married and left home, they gave them their blessing and drew closer to each other, living to share over 60 years of wedded life together.

The author remembers growing up in the forties and fifties as days filled with hard work and good times. After the close of World War II, uncles and friends returned from the service to marry and establish homes of their own. On weekends, all gathered together in the old farmhouse – the ten children, their spouses and their children- eating homemade salami and cheese. For the adults there was an ample supply of good Italian homemade wine.

The Fall gathering for the annual hog butchering was a festive day when aunts, uncles and cousins joined together to help with the project. Antonio would put a large cast iron kettle on a tripod over a wooden fire and boil the water used to scald the pig. The young boys would each try to get a pig's tail to roast in the oven. They considered the crunchy treat a delicacy. They watched as the men ground the meat with a hand powered grinder – the smell of the herbal seasoning remaining with them through life. No one could ever quite duplicate the taste. They remembered in later years that it was achieved by Antonio's mixing in a handful of this and that until the taste was just right for sausage and salami. When completed, he put them in casings and hung them in the root cellar to dry. Later in the winter, they would all gather around the farmhouse table, sometimes 25 or more, eating and enjoying the fruits of their labor. Here the children listened to the family stories, handed down by word of mouth over the ages, from one generation to the next. The aging couple were always of a welcoming nature, and could always find room at the table for a few extras. They were the good old days.

Antonio and Madelina Pandolfi Donati center front row with their 10 children - 1959

He Climbed the Ladder of Success

The Joseph DePetro Story

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

When Joseph DePetro came to this country from Italy as a young boy, he was unable to speak the language, and had no money and no friends. He began with nothing, so there was no way to go but up.

The man who accompanied him from Genoa, Italy, suffered a nervous breakdown within a week after reaching their destination of Newark, Ohio. Since this companion did not recover from his ailment, Joe found himself totally alone. He sat at the railroad station in Newark and cried.

From seemingly out of nowhere, a man with a long beard appeared and tried to comfort him. But since Joe could not understand the English language, he cried even more. Moved by the plight of this heartbroken boy, the bearded man found someone who could speak and understand Italian. Although Joe knew very little about this new land to which he had come, he did remember that his father back in Italy was acquainted with a family in Mingo Junction, Ohio. Upon hearing this, his kindly benefactor accompanied Joe to Mingo Junction, gave him five dollars and a note, and sent him on his way.

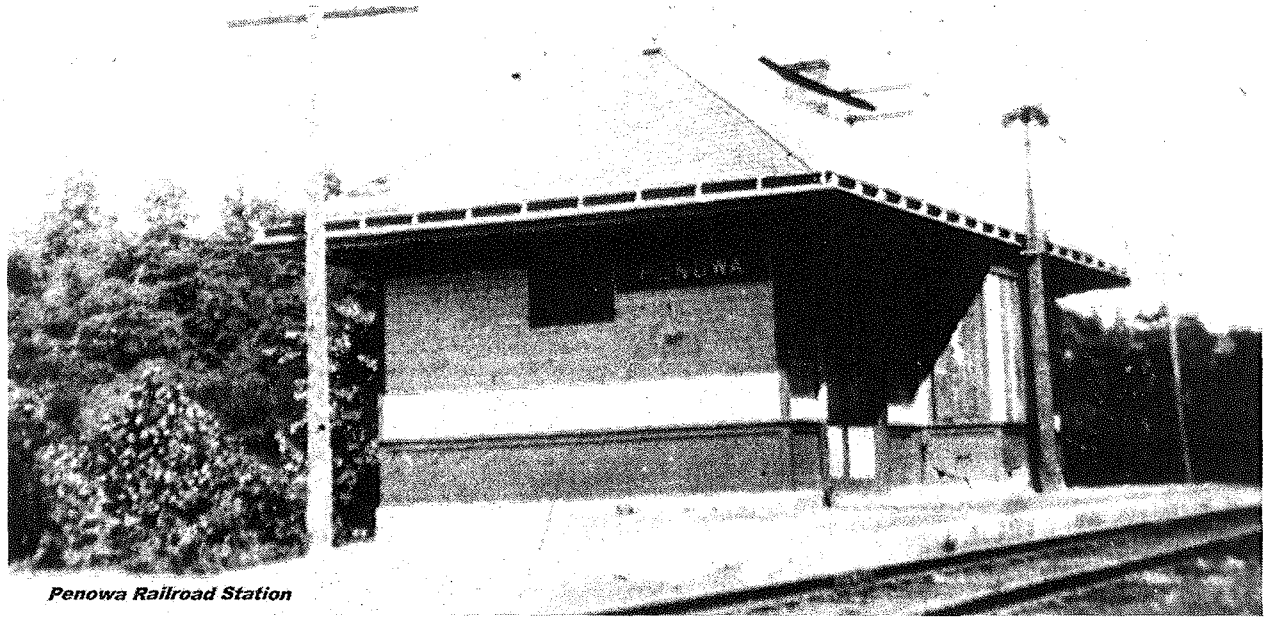
Joe found this family, and was delighted to discover that it included some boys nearly his own age. These boys taught him to speak English. He also found a job working with mine mules. In addition, the boss told him that he could use him as a trapper, to open and close the ventilation doors to allow the mules and the motors to go through. Life was looking up.

He stayed in Ohio working in the mines for about a year. During this time, he still kept in his possession the note which his bearded friend had placed in his hand that fateful day about twelve months before. After Joe learned to speak and read English, he always kept in the back of his mind the contents of that note. It had stated that if he were to go to a place called Penowa, Pennsylvania, there, not too far from the railroad station, he would find a family named Cunningham who would give him work on their farm.

The work in the mine at Mingo was hard. Joe was required to stoop down and bale water out with a bucket, then pour it into a box on wheels. "It was dirty sulphur water," Joe recalled years later. "We had to wear boots." His pay was fifty cents a day. One day, he decided to see what fate would bring him if he followed the advice of his unnamed friend who had authored the puzzling note. He said goodbye to Ohio and set out for that unknown destination.

The journey by train from Mingo to Penowa cost Joe eleven cents. David Barnes, the storekeeper from Barnes' Bottom, happened to be waiting at the Penowa Station with his wagon and team when Joe dismounted from the train. Once again, this plucky young man from Italy felt completely alone. But David Barnes looked like a kindly person, so Joe approached him and told his story. He handed him the note telling him to seek out the Cunningham family. David read the note with interest and directed Joe up the hill to Penobscot, the mining camp where men from the

surrounding neighborhood were employed. He began the long trek to the mining camp and then walked still farther, as David had directed.

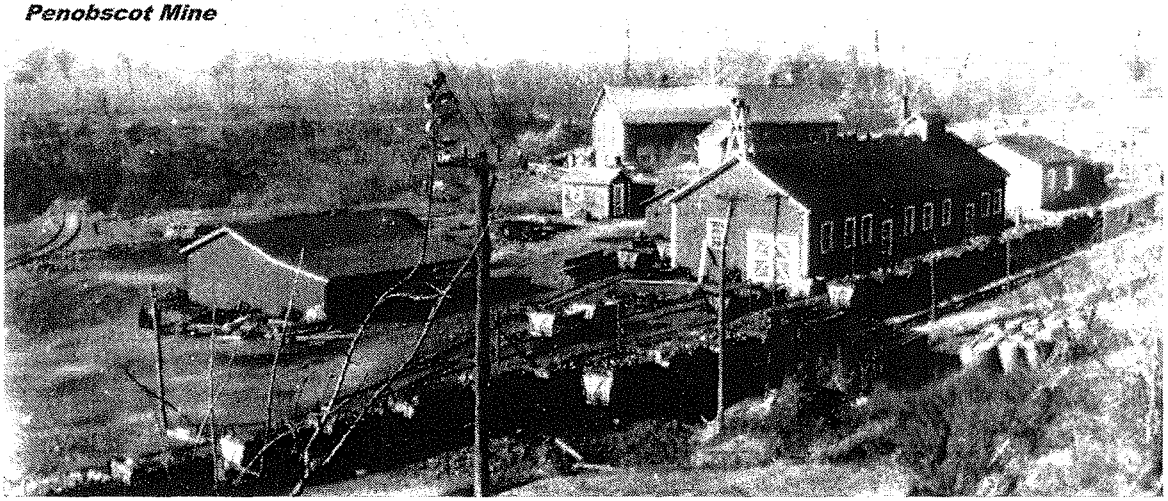


Penowa Railroad Station

As he had been assured, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Winfield Cunningham was a welcome sight. The parents and their children, Robert, George and Margaret, welcomed him with open arms. This farm became his home for the next five years. His only pay throughout those years was his room, board and one new pair of overalls. But he became part of a family after a year of loneliness and despair in Ohio. It was an answer to prayer.

While Joe lived with the Cunninghams, and helped with the farm work, he also worked in the Penobscot Mine. He was now in his late teens and made friends easily not only with the other miners, but with everyone in the neighborhood.

Penobscot Mine



One of his closest friends was Albert Miller, with whom he shared many of his dreams. Although Albert was much younger, theirs was a binding friendship.

Their youthful memories served as reminiscences in their old age.

Joe was twenty-three years old in 1917 when Uncle Sam called him into the army. He served two years as an interpreter. He could now not only speak his own Italian language and English, but also was fluent in French, Polish and other languages. The fact that he could speak many languages and interpret them, kept him from the front lines. "I did not have to do any fighting," he recalled in later years. "Of the 250 soldiers in my company, only eighty came home. They were in the front lines and those 170 were all killed."

After the war was over, in 1919, Joe asked his commander if he might be permitted to visit his folks in Italy. He was given three weeks. He had not seen his mother since he had left home ten years before, and was therefore a stranger to her. However, a grand reunion took place, and during his visit, he met the village school teacher with whom he immediately fell in love.

At the end of the three weeks, Joe returned to the United States. It would be three years before he would see Veturia Salvatori again. The two kept a steady correspondence, Joe assuring his love that he would send for her when the time came.

But Mama Salvatori was one step ahead. "He knows where you are," she told her daughter. "If he wants you, he can come to get you."

Thus on June 7, 1922, Joe left for New York on the first leg of his journey to his betrothed in the little country village in Italy.

On October 11, they went to get their marriage license. "That was the first time I got to kiss her," Joe beamed, in recalling the story many years later. "I could not have picked a better wife if I had roamed the whole world."

Thus it was that Joe and his bride made their way from their native Italy to the little mining town of Penowa where many more years of hard work in the coal mines awaited him.

When Joe had lived with the Cunninghams prior to the war, he had become closely acquainted with the Tranquill family. Even though Mrs. Tranquill already had nine children living in her little house, in addition to five boarders, she was determined that Joe would have a place to bring his bride. She had their room ready when they arrived.

With so many people living in one house, the newlyweds found little in the way of privacy. Joe continued to look for a house they could call their own, and was tempted to quit his job in the Penobscot mine and move to another location. But Superintendent McBride considered Joe a valuable employee, and built him a little house he could call his own.

The couple's first daughter, Llora, was born in the Tranquill house at Penowa. Joe's new house was located in Jefferson, and was the happy home of Joe and Veturia for seven years. It was here that two more daughters and a son were born, always with Mrs. Tranquill at the bedside.

Joe worked in the coal mines for a total of twenty-nine years. At age 55 he found that the mines were no longer able to supply him with work. It was then that his life took a turn that would shower him and his family with good fortune, happiness and prosperity. The neighboring village of Independence became home and with this move, dreams which Joe hardly dared put into words began to come true. An old farm and a new life began to materialize. It was a combination that had been worth the poverty and heartache that had come his way during those lean years of his youth.

Gone were the nostalgic days of the buzzing sawmills at Pine Flats and the escapades with George and Lanty Cunningham at Hollow Rock. Behind were the horse trades with the Gypsies at the County Fair, the smell of Jim Grimm's skunk hides at the Shades of Death and the old road that led to the "Far Cunningham" Place, as Albert Miller so aptly dubbed it. His youth was over. But so were the bad times.

Nearly the last half of Joe's life was spent in plenty, instead of poverty. He restored the old Jerome Plummer house and moved in with his family. Five children had by this time blessed their home. He invested in expensive cattle and horses. He bought the neighboring Hanna farm and began improving it. This was the Flower Garden Tract, coveted so intensely by the early pioneers.

By 1979, Joe was named Pennsylvania's Conservation Farmer of the Year. During his retirement years, his backyard garden and fruit trees provided him with much joy. He never forgot the kindness of the Cunningham and the Tranquill families, to whom he gave the credit for carrying him through those lean and sadly emotional years.

The farm in Independence had much potential, and Joe proceeded to develop it. Through the succeeding years he added to his fortune through herds of Aberdeen Angus cattle, registered horses and other farm stock. Shadow Lawn Farm became an Eden, providing the Village of Independence with a panoramic background of breathtaking beauty. His barnyard was neater than most lawns.

His crops followed the gentle twist of the earth. Fields of tall corn graced his acreage. In the late years of his retirement he relaxed under the huge shade trees in his back yard, or proudly showed off his weedless rows of vegetables to anyone who chanced to pass by and reminisce about the past ninety years.

The loss of his beloved Veturia in 1977 was a blow that he had difficulty overcoming. He took daily walks to her grave just outside of town as long as he was able.

On February 22, 1985, Joe went to join her on some other shore. His life span of 91 years told its own story – a long life of love and hard work, of thrift and honesty, and just plain goodness to his fellowmen, as he slowly but surely climbed the ladder of success.

The only one left now in the big brick Jerome Plummer house on Main Street in Independence Village is Joe and Veturia's son, Joseph. The life and laughter which once echoed through the old hallway and up the stately stairs have gone. Llora, Thelma, and Janet - the DePetro daughters, each took their leave for new lives of their own. Robbie, the only one of the five DePetro children born in the house, left a sad void in the family when he was taken prematurely from them by the unexpected Angel of Death a few years ago. Robbie was a partner with his brother, Joe, in the farming operation. Life became very different after his passing.

Yet today, the machinery still clatters across the rolling hills of Shadow Lawn Farm, and the tall corn grows even taller. But these days it is a younger Joe DePetro at the helm, following in his father's footsteps of climbing the ladder of success. It is a climb that his father also laboriously performed a generation and many tears ago.

As must be expected, this Joe's life is a lonely one. After the many setbacks that Fate has handed him, he yet picks up the pieces and goes on with life. After all, he is the son of the Joe DePetro who had so many strikes against him a century ago, but survived in a wonderful way. Today's Joe will do the same.

Joseph & Veturia Salvatori DePetro

The Story of Alex E. Paris

by

Carrie Wood Paris

He was born Emanuele Alessandro Paris on September 15, 1892, in Calavino, Italy, a small village in the southern Tyrolean Alps in the Province of Trent. This area was a part of Austria until taken over by Italy in the early 1900s. It has since been known as Northern Italy, the largest city in the area being Trento.

Calavino, Italy

Alex was born to Vigilio and Maria Constandina Paris. Their family consisted of five children, three sons and two daughters, of which Alex was the youngest child.

Vigilio and Maria Constandina Paris parents of Alex Paris

The story is told of Angelina, one of Alex's sisters, who had fallen in love with a young man to whom she became engaged. But fate had other plans. He was tragically killed and his heartbroken fiance later joined a convent and became a nun. In due course of time, she went to South America where she served as a Mother Superior until her death.

Alex's family had some cows, and as a little boy, his job was to take the cows to the mountain meadow in the morning to pasture, and bring them home in the evening. This he did from early spring until the frost killed the grass in the autumn, everyday, except Sunday. That was church day and the cows stayed home. His mother gave him a lunch of cold polenta and a piece of cheese and he drank water from the mountain spring.

When Alex was eleven years old, his father gave him an ox and a cart. He then began to gather wood that had fallen from the trees in the mountains. The government had forbidden anyone to cut a living tree. When he had gathered enough wood to fill his cart, he would hitch up his ox and again take some hard polenta and cheese to begin a trip to Riva-del-Garda, a city at the southern tip of Lake Garda. This was a long trip on a very narrow mountain trail.

When his son and wife visited his family in Italy in 1983, they were taken to see the actual mountain trail (path) that he used. One of his nephews still has in his possession the ox yoke he had as a child.

He delivered his wood to Riva-del-Garda and traded it for "farina" (cornmeal). They were able to grow wheat in the mountain where his family lived, but they could not grow corn. Since polenta was one of their staple foods, the people in his village needed cornmeal. He sold it to them, making these trips in the summer until the snows came and the trail became impassible. The round trip took one week! He was just eleven years old when he began to do this. He must have had a mind for hard work and business even at that young age.

Alex went to school on skis, as did all of the children in his village. The lessons were taught in both German and Italian, half-day in each language.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many people emigrated from his area to North America and also to South America to find work and a more prosperous way of life.

His oldest brother Louis (Luigi) had come to America during that time and found work in the coal mines in the Carnegie area. He saved what little money he could until he had enough to buy a one way boat ticket for his younger brother, Tullio, to come to join him. He sent the ticket to his parents in Italy, but one week before the ticket arrived, Tullio was drafted into the Austrian army so could not come to America.

The parents told Alex that he would have to go in his brother's place. He did not want to come, but they told him that he must, because the money had been spent for the ticket and it could not be wasted. Thus it was that in the year of 1909, sixteen year old Alex set off for America. He was terribly seasick for the entire trip and got quite "skinny" by the time of his arrival. He came through Ellis Island and after going through customs, boarded a train for Carnegie, Pennsylvania, where his brother met

him. He could not speak or understand a word of English; German and Italian he spoke fluently, but no English.

Upon his arrival, he stayed with his brother at a boarding house in Carnegie, and got a job in the mine where his brother worked.

Eventually, he and his brother came to work in one of the mines in Avella, which was a booming coal town in those days.

Alex had been saving what money he could, intending to go home to Italy when he had saved enough for his boat ticket.

New roads were being built in the area at that time and he asked to work the night shift in the mine. He then took a job driving truck to haul reddog during the day. He had a room at a boarding house in Avella and was able to get enough sleep between his day job and his night job to keep going.

Time went by, and finally he had enough money for his ticket. But at that point, he changed his mind about going home. Instead of a boat ticket, he spent the money on a small, used dump truck and continued to haul reddog, now using his own truck.

In the year of 1928 he founded the Alex E. Paris Contracting Co. Inc. When he named the Company, he turned his name around and shortened his middle name to Alex. In later years, he stated his reasoning for this action was based on the fact that people just got confused with the name "Emanuele".

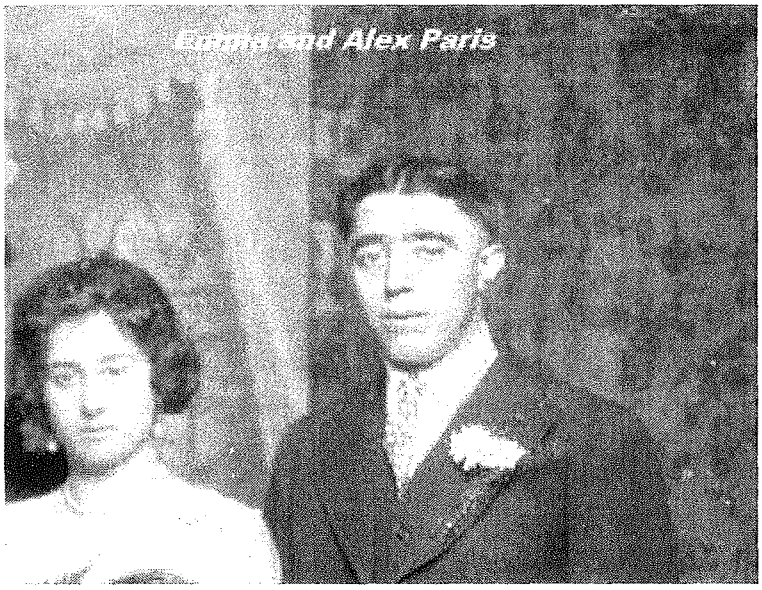
In 1929 he got his citizenship papers and in December of that same year, he married Emma Bertimini who was the daughter of Frank and Maria Bertimini of Cedar Grove.

Everything was going well, and he and Emma bought the home of the former mine Superintendent on what is now Cross Creek Road in Studa. Alex had gotten more trucks and hired men to drive them, and was still hauling reddog.

Unfortunately for the young couple, Alex did his banking at the Lincoln National Bank in Avella, which went "under" in the 30s as did many banks. They lost all personal and company funds, except the $33.28 of Emma's grocery money and about $20.00 which Alex had in his wallet.

From his very first business enterprise, Alex had valued his employees as his greatest asset. His faith in them and his treatment of them was about to pay off. Aware that $53.28 was the sole capital of the company, his loyal employees continued to work, without pay, on the faith that things would get better. And they did. W.P.A. projects brought enough work to keep the company going. And in due time, the enterprise which Alex had founded in the twenties, became one of the area's most successful businesses with an outstanding reputation for fair dealing and employee satisfaction.

On September 14, 1933, Emma gave birth to their only child, a son whom they named Emanuel Alexander after his father. Alex was 41 years old the next day, September 15. Emma passed away on November 8, 1947, at the age of 42 years, when this son, Emanuel, was just fourteen years of age.




Alex and Emma Bertimini Paris
with son Emanuel Alexander Paris

While excavating "reddog" for the W.P.A. road building program, coal was uncovered on the Penowa-Avella road area. This was upsetting, because reddog was the material needed.

Coal was more abundant than "reddog" and Alex soon found himself fully involved in a coal stripping operation. This continued through World War II. Steel mills and the plants that manufactured items for the defense of the country used coal as their source of energy.

By 1951, however, the coal market was at a low ebb. Alex began to sell his machinery and changed the company to the used equipment sales market. This continued until his son completed college and his military service. Emanuel had always worked for his father in the summers and school vacations, and now he joined his father in running the firm in 1958. The company re-entered the construction field.

In October of 1958, Emanuel married Carrie L. Wood of Washington, Pennsylvania. They became the parents of three sons.

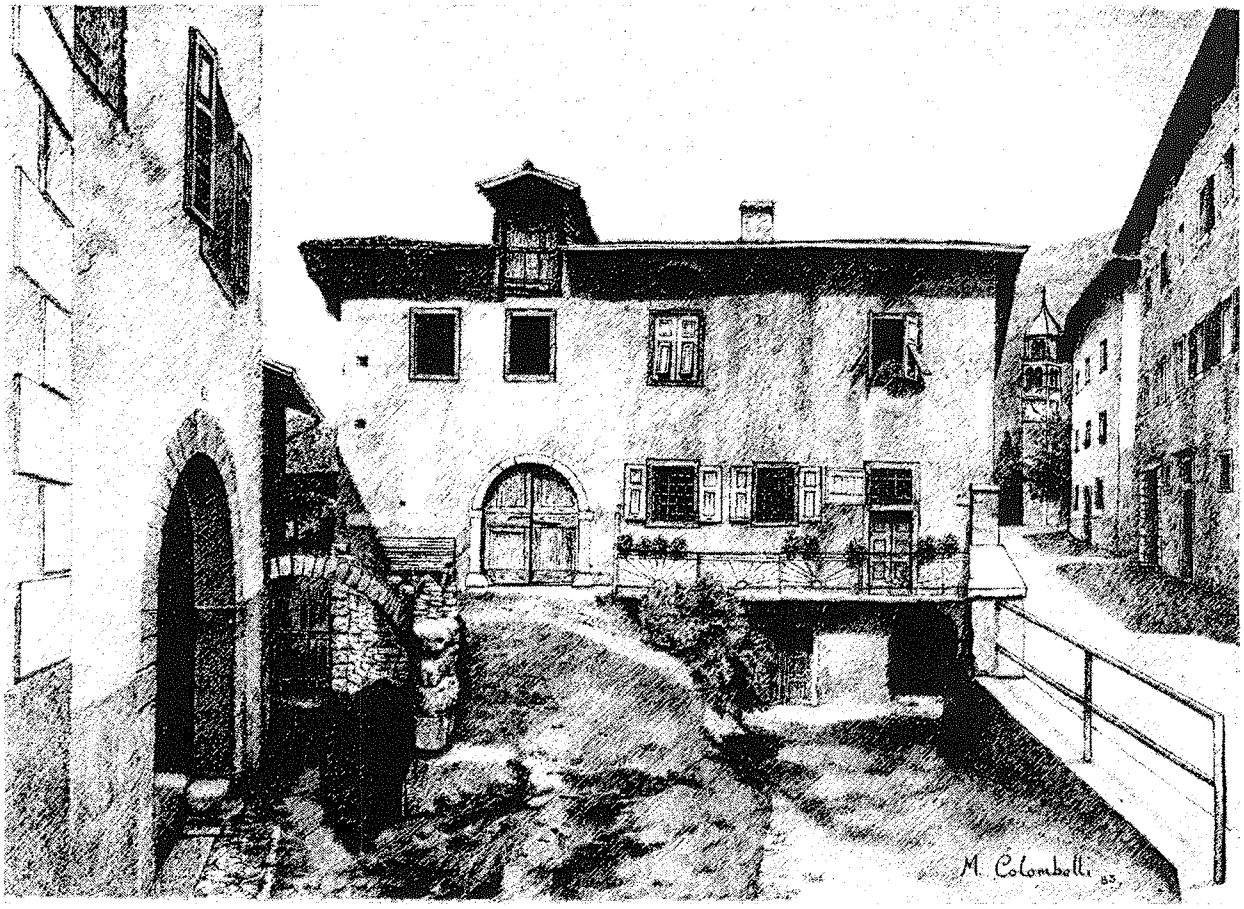
Emanuel wanted to do more than buy and sell used equipment, so he decided to try infrastructure, water and sewerage. The company has been successful in that endeavor since this transition.

As he grew older, Alex continued to work, going to the office every day until the last couple weeks of his life. He was proud of having three grandsons and lived to see this third generation come to work in the summer and on Saturdays. Members of this third generation are Emanuel III, Eric A. and Timothy Paris. Alex was so happy to have three grandsons to carry on the business he had founded under such difficult circumstances so many years ago. Alex passed away on October 22, 1975 at the age of 83 years.

Emanuel continued to run the business and always believed the company was fortunate to have the type of employees that permitted it to have continuous growth over the years. But on November 21, 1989, at the age of 56 years, Emanuel was also called from his earthly realm. Therefore, the third generation had to take over the

management of the company much sooner than was ever anticipated. Emanuel (Alex) III, the eldest, was just 30 years old at this change of command. But like their father and grandfather before them, they have been able to keep the company flourishing, and have done well.

Unfortunately, Emanuel never got to see any of his five grandsons. Had he lived to enjoy the proverbial three score years and ten, he most certainly would have instilled in them the gratitude they should feel for the legacy which is theirs. It is a legacy created from an early life of hardship and homesickness on the part of an immigrant boy who turned setbacks into successes. Surely these five great-grandsons of Alex E. Paris will continue to carry the torch.



The house on the extreme right in the picture above was the birthplace of Alex E. Paris. It is located in the village of Calavino, Italy. When the family of Alex visited Italy in 1983, they were able to enter this house and see the very room in which he had been born in 1892. The house was built in the 1400s and is today under the auspices of an Italian Historical Society, but is still in the Paris family.

The Joseph Cecchini Family

story by Elio Cecchini
as told to June Grossman –Welch
(Genealogical and Family Data courtesy of Lee Cecchini)

Three Cecchini brothers - John, Ecola, and Joseph – came to America from Caseteno, Italy, nearly a century ago. For a time, they stayed together wherever they could find work to support themselves.

The youngest of these brothers, Joseph Cecchini, had been born in Italy, 10 March 1892. His children are uncertain exactly where he met his future wife after emigrating from his homeland, but they do know that on the 2nd of December in 1915, Joseph married Oretta Flori. Oretta was a pretty seventeen year old Italian girl who had come with her family to this country at the age of eight, arriving on the vessel, "Princess Irene" on 15 May 1906.

After marriage, Joseph and Oretta settled for a time in the Ellsworth area, later near Belle Vernon, and still later near Presto. Eventually, Joseph heard from his friends that there were mining jobs in the Avella area of Washington County, so he moved his little family to Cedar Grove. Joseph's eldest son, Elio, reports that his earliest memories are of living in the mining camp at Cedar Grove during the time of the Cliftonville riot of 1922.

Those were frightening days for the miners and their families. Union organizers and those opposed to unionization attempted to coerce every miner into marching to Cliftonville for the showdown. Angry mobsters knocked on every door in the little mining camps, asking for the man of the house to report immediately for action. Elio recalls his mother's fright when the knock came on their door. He remembers that his father, Joseph, like many others, had been gone a couple of days, hiding in the woods to escape the coercion. Tulio, then the baby of the family, was very, very ill at the time, and Elio relates that he and his siblings took turns rocking little Tulio's cradle to keep him from crying out when the union organizers stormed the mining camps.

The number of miners who lost their lives in that infamous affair will never be known. Many were never given decent burials. They died on the hillsides and in the woods. Some were buried at Patterson's Mill Cemetery on Cross Creek Road, but many lie in unmarked graves on the banks of Cross Creek in Brooke County, WV. They were young immigrants, alone in the world, with no one to care that they were gone. Their bodies were covered over where they fell, with no attempt made to identify them.

Eventually life settled down after the riot and Joseph got work at various times in the P & W Mine, and in the Duquesne Mine in Avella. He moved his family there after the smoke from the riot had dissipated.

During these years of moving from one mining area to another in order to find work, the Cecchinis were busy with their ever-growing family. Alica and Elio were born during their stay in the Ellsworth area. William (Nick) was born when they lived at Pricedale, near Belle Vernon, on 29 May 1918. While in the Presto area, Clarence was born at Federal, followed by Joseph, Jr. (Tulio) on 30 October 1921, at Burdine.

After the Cliftonville Riot, when Joseph moved his wife and children to the P&W camp of Avella, Lee (Punt) and Mary Margaret were next in line. Their last move was to the Browntown area where Delores rounded out the family as child #8. Delores was born 20 February 1931.

In 1929, tragedy struck the Cecchini family. Little Mary Margaret (Dolly) aged three, became violently ill. There apparently was no doctor in the Avella area, but Oretta was determined to save the life of her little girl. Accompanied by a friend who knew a doctor in Burgettstown, Oretta picked up her dying child and walked the railroad tracks from Avella to Burgettstown, carrying Dolly in her arms. Twice she made this impossible journey, but each time the answer was the same. The doctor could not diagnose the illness. Some time after the death of the child, he told the Cecchinis that he later discovered that she had died of diptheria. They buried her on the hill above Patterson's Mills, but the hole in their hearts left by her passing, they carried to their graves.

On the 10th of October in 1932, when Delores, the baby, was 20 months old, tragedy struck again. Joseph, barely aged 40, was killed in the Duquesne Mine in a freak accident which his companions believed was caused by negligence of one of the workers who had consumed too much alcohol. Oretta was left to raise her remaining seven children alone. The mining company gave her the exorbitant sum of $3 per child per month for support. But the older children were not the children of Joseph Cecchini for nothing. They picked up the ball where their father had dropped it and went on with life.

The two eldest, Alica (Alice) and Elio, quit school and went to work. Alice was given a job at the Duquesne Company Store after their father was killed. Later, she worked for long hours and small pay at the Economy Store at the bridge in Avella, and Elio, as soon as his age permitted, in the very mines that had claimed the life of his father. Nick, Clarence and Tulio got jobs at the Creamery at the east end of town which necessitated getting up before daylight, working until time to go to school, and then hurrying off to classes. When they became a little older, Nick and Clarence quit school to help support the family. But Tulio continued the almost impossible task of working early mornings and hustling to get to class on time, an endeavor which paid off later with a high school diploma. Because of the extreme difficulty of working and attending school simultaneously, Tulio, and the two younger siblings, namely, Lee and Delores, were the only Cecchini children to be graduated from Avella High. This right to an education was thus denied the four eldest of Joseph's children because of a tragedy over which they had no control.

Elio remembers delivering cream in the early mornings for the Creamery to supplement their meager income. For this pre-dawn excursion, he received a quarter. But five quarters bought 25 pounds of flour, and with the flour, Mom would make bread to feed the little ones still too small to help in the endeavor.

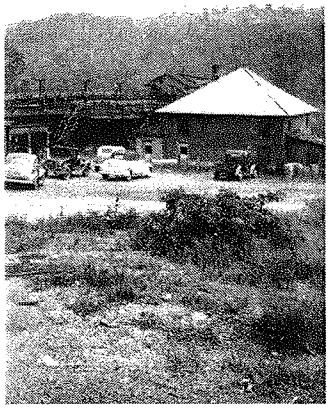
They were hard times. There were probably moments when they each must have wondered if their father's dream of a good life in the New World was merely a nightmare. Yet eventually they grew to adulthood and felt that at long last, they were leaving the bad times behind. Then it was that another crisis loomed on the horizon. In 1942, across the entire nation spread the terror of World War II. When

the call to defend the country was sounded, the five sons of Joseph Cecchini answered. Elio, Nick (William), Clarence, Tulio(Joseph), and Punto(Lee) went to serve the adopted country of their father. And back home in the little mining town of Avella, their mother waited and prayed.

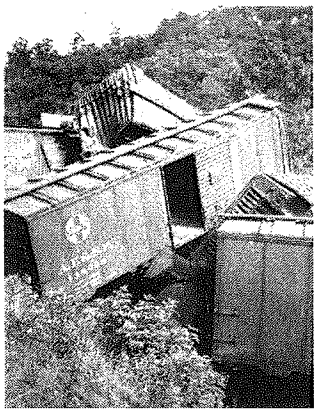
What seemed like forever, finally ended. Oretta forgot the days of hardship and sadness and thanked God for returning all five of her sons, safe and sound. And as life would have it, they returned to make new lives for themselves, marrying and raising their own little broods of grandchildren for Oretta to pamper.

Alica, the eldest daughter, had married Milan Sporka. To them was born a son, Ronald. Alica managed the Fashion Hosiery Shop in Washington many years prior to her death.

Elio married the prettiest girl in the little village of Pryor, Mary Suvada, who gave him three children - Oretta, Daniel, and Marc. After a time with Alex Paris Construction Company, Elio worked nearly thirty years at Pittsburgh-Wheeling Steel where he was leader of the track gang in Repair & Maintenance. In his spare time, he became an excellent self-taught photographer, accumulating nearly a hundred one-of-a-kind photos of the mining operations and railroad enterprises of the Avella area. (He has graciously permitted the A.D.Society to copy them for the public to enjoy.)



Pictured are two early photos by Elio Cecchini.
On the left is the mine office at Duquesne. The rail line leading to the tipple is behind it.
On the right is a shot of a train wreck near Avella sometime in the 1940s. No one was killed in the accident, which was the result of a head-on collision by two trains on the same track.



Nick (William) married Anne Lucas and owned and operated the Avella Bakery near the Economy Store in Avella where he turned out tasty pastries for many, many years. Nick is now deceased. He and Anne were the parents of William, Sandra, and Nicholas.

Clarence married Mildred Milnarcik, and they became the parents of Clarence Joel, Les, and Alan. Clarence spent most of his working years as a dozer operator for Pittsburgh-Wheeling Steel.

Tulio (Joseph) married Tresalla Scariot and had sons Joseph and Gary. Tulio, now deceased, was a successful painter at St. Joseph's Lead for nearly his entire working lifetime.

Punt (Lee) married Edith Campanelli. They are the proud parents of two sons - Lee and David, and of twin daughters – Laurie and Peggy. Lee served many years with the Pennsylvania State Police as a state trooper. He has been a civic minded citizen

of the Avella area all of his life and was very instrumental in the acquisition and management of the Avella Community Center.

The youngest daughter, pretty little Delores in the accompanying picture, married Alex Malinky and is the mother of Gregg, Keith, and Renea.

Oretta Flori Cecchini, mother of eight, passed from this earth 18 December 1967, having spent 35 years alone after the untimely death of her husband. Oretta and Joseph are, like their little Mary Margaret, buried on the hill above Pattersons Mills.

Joseph Cecchini's life was very short, but actually quite typical of America's later pioneers of this last century. They came to a strange land to seek a better life. They could not speak the language and met with prejudice and ridicule because of it. Their children were discriminated against and taunted by the their peers and often by their teachers. Many who were artisans in their homeland were forced to give up their skilled craftsmanship and perform ugly, menial, dangerous tasks for a mere pittance in order to survive. Joseph Cecchini, like many of his contemporaries, met with these very conditions. But his children, his grandchildren, and his great-grandchildren are, today, the living evidence of the power of the human spirit. They are well-adjusted, highly respected, contributing members of the communities in which they live. Avella is richer for the life of Joseph Cecchini.

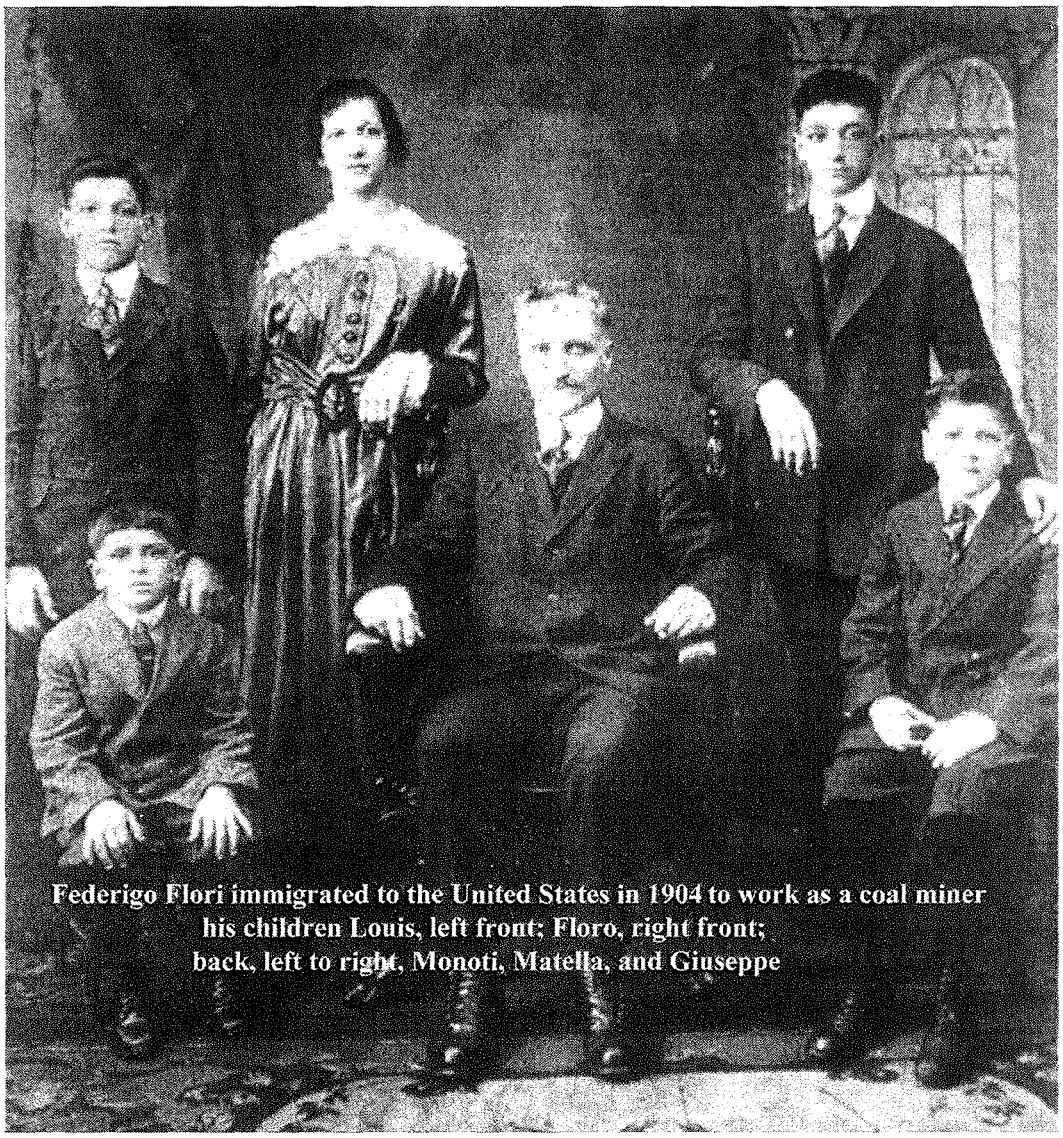
The Dellovade-Flori Family

by

June Grossman Welch

Ann Flori Dellovade was born in Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania, not far from Charleroi. Her father, Federigo Flori, was a Tuscan bricklayer from Pistoria, Italy, who emigrated to the United States in 1904 in search of a better life. He eventually settled in Belle Vernon where he worked as a coal miner, sending back to Italy for his wife, Irene Vanni Flori, and their four children.

Irene was always a resourceful person and had been blessed with a beautiful singing voice. On the way to New York, she entertained first class passengers on the ship to pay for food for herself and her four little ones. Arriving at last in the New World, she joined her husband at Belle Vernon where five more children were born to them. Ann Flori was the youngest of these nine children.



Federigo Flori immigrated to the United States in 1904 to work as a coal miner
his children Louis, left front; Floro, right front;
back, left to right, Monoti, Matella, and Giuseppe

Life was not easy, but the whole family did whatever needed to be done to survive in their adopted country. Even when the boys were very young, they worked beside their father in the mines. They were so small that their lunch pails made sparks as they dragged them across the rocks in the road.

When Ann grew to young womanhood, she fell in love with Michael Armand Dellovade and married him. He had been born in Patterson, New Jersey, a son of Danile and Domenica Perna DiLoretto. His parents had left the Abruzzo region of Italy as a young married couple in 1910, eventually ending up in Avella, Pennsylvania, where his father became a coal miner. Armand, as a first grader in Avella, spoke little English. As a result, the teacher misunderstood his verbal rendition of the name, DiLoretto, and interpreted it as Dellovade. His parents wanted so much to become real Americans that they accepted the new name unquestioningly. So Dellovade it became.

To Armand's parents, four more children were born in Avella, namely, Thomas, Edith, Helen, and Edward. As the children of a coal miner, they played among slag heaps and coal dumps. One tragic day, Helen, aged 13, who was picking berries along a country road, was accidentally killed by an automobile. The loss of this child was a sadness which stayed with the Dellovade family forever.

Armand and Ann became the parents of six beautiful sons: Robert, Armand, Frederick, Dennis, Peter, and Kenneth. They were a close family, warm and loving. The years passed, and on holidays they had wonderful gatherings at their home which included not only their sons, their wives and children, but also their brothers, sisters, and their families. They were wonderful times, everyone crowding around happily. Every Christmas was a gala event. Ann enjoyed decorating their home and cooking huge dinners for all the family. They also loved Columbus Day affairs at the Italian Club on the hill, where they celebrated their wonderful Old World heritage.

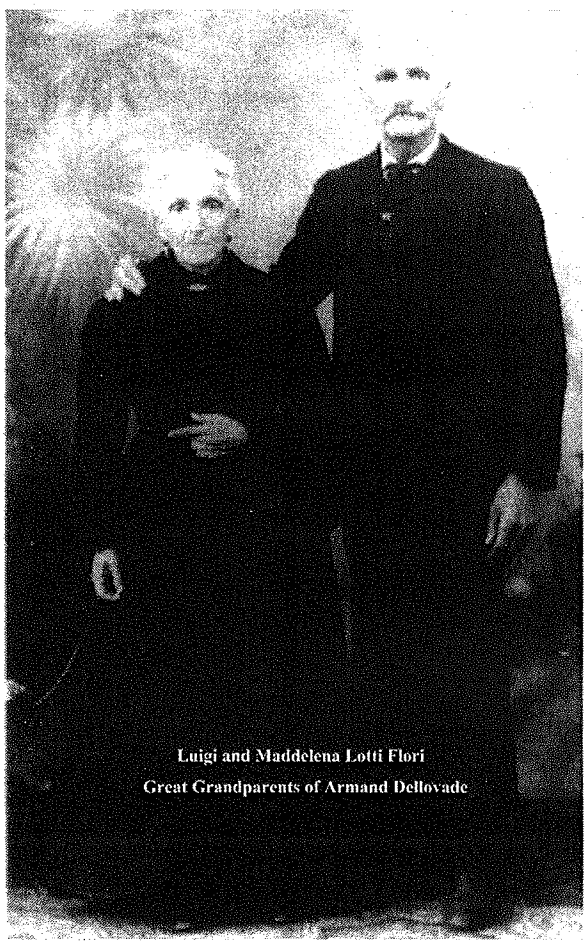
But not all of life was a holiday. The oldest sister, Oretta, who had married Joseph Cecchini, lived nearby in Avella in what was known as the Duquesne mining area. Oretta had a wonderful family: Alica, Elio, William(Nick), Clarence, Joseph(Tulio), Lee, Mary Margaret, and Delores. Their lives together were tragically interrupted when Oretta's husband, Joseph, was killed in the mine in 1932. Oretta was left with this large brood of children to raise. But the spirit of Oretta's mother, who sang to feed her children on the long ocean voyage to America so many years before, must have lived on in Oretta. Through sacrifice and hard work, she succeeded in raising them to adulthood where they became prosperous, respected citizens.

Of Ann and Armand's children, their son, Armand, with the help of his brothers, founded a now thriving construction business of which they may be justly proud. Their efforts are a real credit to the Avella area.

Ann Flori and her husband, Armand Dellovade, had been married in a civil ceremony, but all her life long she dreamed of the church wedding she never had. On our 50th anniversary, those dreams came true. Armand and Ann renewed their vows in St. Michael's Catholic Church in Avella, surrounded by their six sons and thirteen grandchildren with whom God had blessed them. Life was complete.

In 1988, Ann Flori Dellovade took leave of her earthly life and moved to that land where the sun never sets. In 1997, Armand followed her.

Today, in the earth year of 2001, the little village of Avella has shed its coal mining façade of dirt and hard times so prevalent in the past, and become a clean, pleasant little town on the banks of old Cross Creek. If you should ever pass through its quiet streets on a soft day in spring, you might find it interesting to journey a little farther away to the very old settlement of Patterson's Mill. Here it was that an old gristmill once stood, built by one of the sons of William Patterson who had carved a living out of the wilderness back in 1778. On the hill above the millrace, a school and church were the center of life for the surrounding area. Today, all are gone. But nearby the site of the old church is a well-kept graveyard containing the earthly remains of many of these early peoples. And on the edge of that ancient plot are newer graves where the mortal parts of a later wave of humanity lie peacefully interred. There, among the other children of immigrant parents, who left their homeland behind never to return again, you will find the spot where the bodies of Ann and Armand were laid to rest. There, their children and grandchildren still come to bid them a tearful goodbye. But they are not there. They have passed to a better world. Yet, it is fitting for their children to look into the past and appreciate the sacrifices their forebears made to make their lives what they are today. We should remember that Avella's story is not unique. It is the story of America.



Luigi and Maddelena Lotti Flori
Great Grandparents of Armand Dellovade

Memories of Yesteryear

A PORTRAIT OF MY BROTHER JOHN

by

Frank D. Furiga

He was born at Van Voorhis on March 27, 1912, in the coal fields of Western Pennsylvania. He was the first born of the marriage of a widowed Slovak immigrant, Andrew Furiga, with three previous children, and his Ukrainian wife, Anna. His destiny was to be trapped for most of his working life in the coal fields, but his nature was that of a fervent idealist trying to better his lot.

The family moved through various coal mining towns and arrived in Avella at the Pryor mine in 1913. Here two more boys and two girls were born. After World War I, they moved to the Cross Creek Mine near Penowa in what was called "The Old Block". In 1922, a home was purchased in Pine Flats and the family moved there. At Pine Flats, the births of another boy and girl completed the list of John's siblings.

Johnny attended several schools in the Avella area, including Highland Avenue School. He was a good student and an avid reader. His friends knew him as Johnny, but at home he was always called John.

At the age of sixteen, he left school to work in the mines as a slate picker in a coal tipple, where his inquisitive mind saw the sad lot of the coal miner.

In early 1930, there was seething unrest in the coal mines of Avella. The miners wanted better conditions. The owners wanted them to sign lower wage contracts. Picketing became the order of the day. Mine owners imported scabs who worked for low wages. Violence broke out. State Police and Iron Men security police hired by the mine owners came forth. Avella was in turmoil. The Communist Party seized the opportunity to come in and lend assistance and sustenance to the miners. John became a militant activist. Some articles he wrote for the Daily Worker did not endear him to the mine owners.

At this time a young lady journalist, Miss Lauren Gilfillan, came from New York to write about the conditions. John was captivated by this charming lady. He had her to his house for several weeks and worked with her on her writings. From him, came the title of the book that was published, "I WENT TO PIT COLLEGE". When her fact finding was over, she left Avella and his contact with her ended. The United Mine Workers Union became a reality and the miners were lifted from the doldrums.

John continued to work in the mines until the late thirties when he and the next oldest brother got jobs in a steel mill in West Virginia. The relationship with Laurie had inspired him to write. He submitted a number of stories to publishers, Hollywood studios, etc., but without success. He invented a new type of automobile seat that made a profit only for the patent attorneys. He also took a fingerprinting course in attempts to better himself, but to no avail.

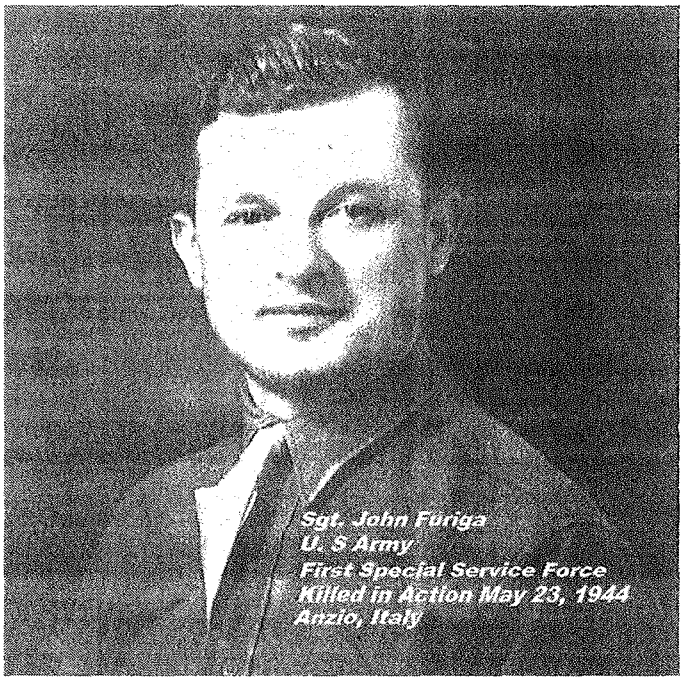
The political unrest in Europe was now filling the newspaper headlines. Hitler was taking over neighboring countries, and John became involved with this through his constant reading. His younger brother, Steve, enlisted in the Infantry and then went on to the 82nd Air Borne. John was interested in this new type of warfare.

In the fall of 1942, he was drafted and went the usual route for Pennsylvania inductees to Fort Meade, Maryland. He spent some time there taking various tests. At one point he tried for Officers Candidate School. He wound up at Camp McCoy,

Wisconsin, and found, to his chagrin, that the government wanted him to work in the coal mines since he had the experience. He became quite incensed over this sad turn of affairs, so he volunteered for a new group called the First Special Service Force. It was a special Army group composed of Canadian and American soldiers who were trained in parachuting, skiing, mountain warfare and amphibious landings. He went first to Fort Benning, Georgia, where he got his parachutist wings. He was quite thrilled over this. Next it was to Helena, Montana, to Fort William Henry Harrison for skiing and mountain fighting. The next move was to Fort Ethan Allen in Burlington, Vermont, for further training in amphibious landings and other warfare.

In July of 1943, he had his first chance at combat. The First Special Service Force was part of a group that invaded Kiska in the Aleutian Islands chain. Their stay there was brief and the whole Force returned to Fort Ethan Allen in Vermont. They were soon off again, this time to Italy. John participated in some very heavy fighting as part of the Fifth Army at Cassino and the Liri Valley. In 1944, his group invaded the Anzio Beach area. Here they were continually bombarded by artillery and German Luftwaffe bombers. On May 23rd, the breakthrough for Rome began. John was killed that day in Anzio. He was part of a bazooka team and we never did really find out for sure how he died. He was buried at Anzio-Nettuno in Italy. In 1948 his body was brought to this country and buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

I was stationed at Ardmore, Oklahoma, when I received the telegram of Johnny's death. In a week I left for the Eighth Air Force in England. This tragic news devastated the whole family and shocked the little town of Avella back home. Although I was to fly many dangerous missions, which resulted ultimately in finding myself as a POW, nothing compared to the loss of my brother. In the face of great danger, I many times felt the spirit of Johnny there beside me. More than half a century has come and gone since the 23rd of May in 1944. But time does not change some things. We who remain, still remember.



The Miller School Story

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

Along an isolated country lane, in a rustic pastoral setting, about half way between the Miller Mansion and the Pine Grove Gristmill, sat a small, sturdy wood schoolhouse.

Even though in 1834 it had been built astraddle the farm boundary of George Miller and William Pettibone, it was named Miller School.

Many years before, in 1811, the first school in the Miller District was built on Kline property in Barnes Bottom near the area that later developed into the hamlet of Penowa. Records indicate that teachers in this primitive log structure were John Neager, Richard Freeborn and Andrew McCullough. This school and one that developed later on McCrea Hill, on property of George Cunningham, were the earliest known schools in Cross Creek Township. Considered as "subscription" schools, they were financed by parents of the area who "subscribed" to them by providing wages for a teacher.

Upon passage of the Public School Law by the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1834, regular school districts were organized and permanent buildings were erected. At that time, the present township of Jefferson was a part of Cross Creek, and thereby a part of its school district. This changed on June 16, 1853, when Jefferson Township was carved out of the larger Cross Creek Township to become its own entity. Miller School, which had been School No. 11 in Cross Creek, became School No. 1 in Jefferson.

In 1869, the Miller building was deeded to the school district by both Miller and Pettibone. When the school closed in 1921, the building was purchased from the school district by T.A. Miller and immediately moved a few feet to rest entirely on Miller land. It was then used for farm purposes.

The first teacher in the newly created Miller district in 1853 was Miss Margaret Jane Moore, a quaint little lady who eventually spent over fifty years in the profession. A woman who could and did throughout her life make her own maple syrup, cut fence posts for her garden, grub the pesky bushes from her yard, and dig her own coal, Margaret Jane taught a 3-month term that year for $15 a month. Records state that beginning August 8, 1853, Margaret Jane had a roster of 33 boys and 31 girls in her class that term.

Not many records are in existence on the early history of Miller School. The years have come and gone and the names of teachers and pupils of those early days are gone too, from memory.

In his "History of Miller School," the late A.D. White wrote, "Over the years, we can be sure that the children from the nearby farms - the Millers and the Pettibones, the Sutherlands and the Cunninghams, the Wells' and the Klines, the Buxtons and the Gillespies, and at least some of the Scotts, their heirs and successors, ad infinitum, were among the pupils of this school."

The school served as a social center for the community as well as a classroom, and in the old building were held many a spelling bee, old-time singings and box socials.

A number of pupils who had reached the status of being in the upper grades, went on for a teaching certificate and returned later to her role on the other side of the desk. Sometimes when a newly trained teacher returned, having come from a large family, she would find a younger sibling occupying a seat where she herself once sat a few years earlier.

One example of this occurred in the Sutherland family. Myrtle, the oldest of this family, returned as Miss Sutherland, to find Esther, the youngest of the brood, as her pupil. One day she called on the little girl to ask her a question.

"Esther," she addressed her pupil.

Much to the amusement of the other children, she answered, "Whaddya want, Myrtle?"

Esther Sutherland Gordon lives today (2001) in her home in Rochester, Pennsylvania. She recalls vividly her days at Miller School. The pot belly stove in the center of the room, the slates for figuring, the dunce stool in the corner, the water bucket and dipper from which everyone drank, the bench for reciting lessons, all are clear in her mind as if it were yesterday instead of ninety years ago.

The late Florence Buxton Ertle, known to her family as Aunt Po, often recalled incidents from her school days at Millers. For instance, there was the Christmas in 1911 when the entertainment for which the pupils had worked so hard, was cancelled. Every pupil in the school was absent with the 9-day measles!

When the doors closed at Miller School that Spring of 1921, the consensus of opinion was that never again would any of these simple country school chums be together. Gone were the days of waving of arms and skipping of feet as they sprinted along the country lane that led to their homes in the Bethel - Penobscot farmlands. From this tiny woodland school, they would now be scattered to the four corners. After 87 years of readin', 'ritin' and 'rithmetic, playing marbles and chasing Fox-and-Geese, three generations of future leaders of America bade a fond and nostalgic farewell to Miller School. Only memories, precious, priceless memories, would remain.

But short-sighted folks of little vision for the future could not foresee the possibilities within reach when a little exertion is employed. Brothers Albert and Delvin Miller, fifth generation descendants from the pioneer settlers, had a vision. They would take down Miller School board by board, move it from the isolated niche in its pastoral setting, insulate it, wire it for electricity, paint and renovate it, and re-build it in a more accessible spot.

The project was begun in 1964. With the removal of the last board, the brothers placed a small fieldstone to mark the spot where once stood this revered country school. From this humble beginning had emerged a great harvest of men and women whose talents would extend into a wide world, and who would carry with them tools forged at Miller School.

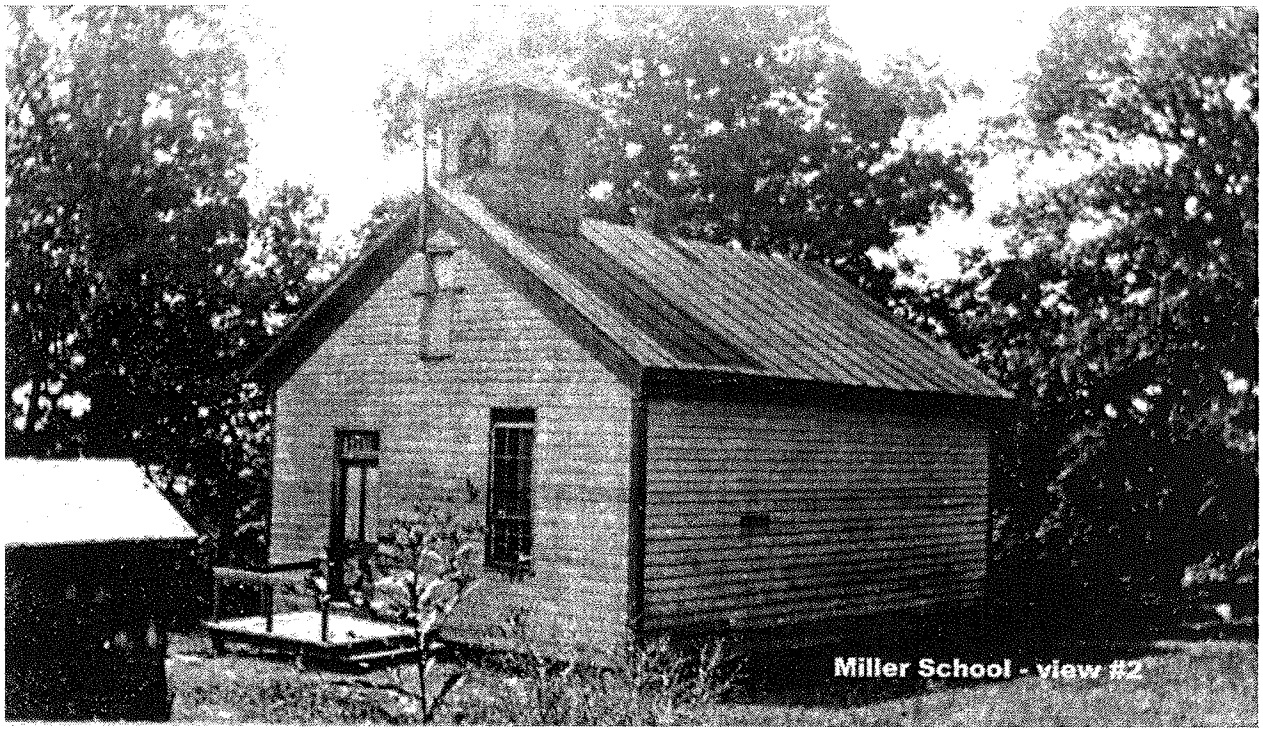
The building became the nucleus around which the preservation of history was the central focus. Meadowcroft Village was born.

In the summer of 1966, forty-five years after school mates had said good-bye, a joyful reunion was planned. About sixty pupils and teachers reminisced together of happy childhood days.

Another twenty-two years passed and the Miller brothers hosted what would be the last reunion ever. It was on October 8, 1988 that approximately fifteen remaining school mates gathered together in the old school. Only two teachers remained at that time. They were Hazel Sutherland Pettibon and Grace Barnhouse Glover, the latter having taught the final year of classes, the 1920-21 term. Both have since passed away, but not until each had reached her late nineties.

Another of these beloved teachers was William P. Wilson, who taught at Miller School from 1899 to 1901. At the calling of the roll for this special school day, he remarked, "Before we have another reunion at Miller's, many will have answered to the Roll Call up yonder." William Patterson Wilson was among them.

The saga of Miller School will be forever a benediction for past, present and future generations. Early education in this humble one-room institution of learning was unsurpassed, due chiefly to the high quality of educators who walked through its doors. Only Eternity can reveal the results of such dedication as was shown in the little wood building that stood for 87 years by the side of a rambling country lane that ran from Miller's Mansion to old Kidd's Mill.



Miller School - view #2

One-Room School Days in Independence

By
David Davis

The one-room schoolhouse is, for the most part, extinct, gone. It survives in such specialized places as the Amish communities where it is tenaciously maintained. But essentially it has disappeared from the educational landscape, being judged by the experts as a pedagogical anachronism, a pitifully inadequate place to get a proper education.

But that little schoolhouse has, nevertheless, a lively survival in the memory of many such as I. And I remember well that one which sat down at the end of the town in Independence.

Our little schoolhouse (it was white, not red) had the typical tower and bell, and in the dirt-floor basement, the big coal furnace, coal pile, and play area for those bad weather days. The building was two-roomed but only one was used for school in that time of the late 30's and early 40's. The other room was used by the Grange and also for voting.

Independence Grade School

There were six grades in five rows and desk sizes accordingly, the smaller ones being on the west side of the room (about a mile from West Virginia) next to the blackboards, the sixth grade ones near the windows on the east. The teacher's desk was, naturally, at the front (south side). Above the blackboards behind her looking down on all of us were the portraits of the presidents, Washington and Lincoln, serious and solemn. Our country's flag hung between them. About those blackboards - I can still hear the slide of the chalk across the slate and the peck of the punctuation as teachers stood there writing out their sentences vigorously or students doing the same with much strain and labor. And I think I can still hear the sound of heads banging on those slates when some older boy got sassy with one of the teachers.

During my time there were three teachers, Miss Emma Lowry (near retirement), Mr. John Caldwell, and Miss Alice Smith. Miss Lowry gave me the only paddling I ever had in school--for hitting my sister, Judy. Only two strokes but I raised such a howl that she must have thought she was killing me so she quit. It didn't hurt but the mortification was terrible. The teachers of that time were not averse to using the paddle; neither they nor anyone else had any qualms about corporal punishment, not having had an overdose of psychology. Miss Lowry and Mr. Caldwell used the paddle judiciously. Miss Smith, a young first-job farm girl who couldn't take any lip from students, lost control a couple of times, and became a monster. The mother of one of her victims let her know in no uncertain terms that she wasn't to do that again. She didn't. I think Miss Smith was with us for only a year.

Two other things I remember about Miss Smith besides the fact that she could be mean, was that she was pretty and that she read Tom Sawyer to us over several weeks during the last 15 minutes of school. How we hung on every word about Tom and Becky Thatcher, Aunt Polly, Huck Finn and others. I thought how wonderful it would have been to have lived at that time and in that town along the Mississippi. Little did I realize how close we were in that tiny village to Tom Sawyer's times and circumstances. To be sure, we had no great river but two state roads converged in our town and like a river, a lot of life goes by on a road too.

We went to school in our bare feet until cold weather required the shoes that had been saved wear and tear by our going unshod. The school room floor was oiled regularly to keep the dust down, I suppose, maybe even for septic purposes. Whatever the purpose, it blackened our feet so that when we went home we had to scoot our feet in the grass or wash them before going into the house so as not to stain the carpet, which was rare, but the linoleum, so common. Besides the shoe saving barefoot custom, some of us as in Tom Sawyer's day, wore wellworn patched clothes as did many adults in those late years of the Great Depression.

Some of our desks were big enough to seat two but none of us boys shared such a desk with any Becky Thatchers, although we did have plenty of pretty girls. A.nd we certainly did have a couple of genuine Huckleberry Finns, if not at least one girl Huck Finn. I'm sure we also had a Tom Sawyer or two, boys full of energy and imagination who got into mischief that upset teachers and parents and other adults, but they did nothing vicious. Although the desks had ink wells which the teacher

filled from a big bottle with a special spout (I can still smell that ink--it did not stink) but no boy seated behind a girl ever put her plaits in the ink well, even if he may have pulled them occasionally.

Being of an incurably romantic nature myself, I always had a crush on Betty, or Naomi, or Romaine, or Norma Jean, or Lorraine, or. . . . well, anyway, I spent many a dreamy hour looking their way, sometimes having to turn discreetly, furtively half way around, leaning chin on hand, to behold momentarily the current charmer. But I was longest in love with Betty Westlake. All of these "crushes" , dismissed by adults as puppy love, may have distracted from our lessons but it sure made school a lot more interesting.

Sometimes we were allowed to sit together, two boys or two girls, in one of the double desks to study spelling. But before long we got to talking and laughing and Mr. Caldwell would look at us, his big eyes batting faster than a blinking owl and the lips of his small mouth tightening in anger, and we would sober up real fast. In fact any time a boy was talking or otherwise goofing, causing any disruption and didn't get the message in that look, Mr. Caldwell was not averse to jerking him out of his seat and marching him to stand in front of the room facing the blackboard. Am I also implying that Mr. Caldwell was a lot more lenient with the girls? Yes. But of course they were better behaved.

How pleasant it was when the holidays came and we got a break from studies. First, Halloween, then Thanksgiving, Christmas, and on Valentine's Day, waiting, atremble for that special one when the love tokens were distributed from that big box, decorated, and with the slot where everyone had deposited his friendly or sweet greetings, often handmade, special. And how disappointing if the right message didn't come from the right person. It was fun to decorate the windows, hang appropriate emblems from the chandeliers (too fancy a word for these plain fixtures), light globes actually. Then to string season-appropriate, colored art paper chains from wall to light to wall. It made me feel ever so daring to stand on a big ladder in this tall- ceilinged room to string these chains. We had our Halloween party and parade through town of course and during Christmas we'd have Dicken's "Christmas Carol" or some other story relative to the season. At Easter, the folklore part was mostly emphasized, although there was no fear of mentioning the religious meaning. In those days, May Day was still celebrated. We didn't do anything about it in our school but I remember that we were bussed to Avella High for their program--the May Queen and Court, the Maypole Dance, the Jesters, the strains of "In An English Country Garden". It had all the atmosphere of the Renaissance and the days of Shakespeare when lasses and lads in Spring went a-Maying and gathered rosebuds. Of course I wasn't aware of such literary and historical associations at the time. Finally, came the school-end picnic also in early May. Sometimes the day came chilly and overcast; sometimes warm and sunny. In any case we would head down the "red-dog road" and have our little picnic along the "crick," which was not a wild rushing stream. But there were deep places where you couldn't see the bottom and it looked murky and a little scary. I recall the time when my sister was standing on the edge of an undercut bank and it gave way. She could just barely touch bottom and I can still see her dress floating in a perfect circle around her waist and

she laughing instead of being hysterical. She enjoyed all the attention and I'm sure there were lots of tales about it afterwards. And yes, girls actually wore dresses to school, even to the year-end picnic.

There was no such thing as gym class but we had play time before school, during recess and lunch time. In the Fall we played softball or soccer. Soccer for us was very simplified--here are the boundaries, here the two goal lines; kick the ball across one or the other. Some kids had cleats on the front of their shoes and when they missed the ball and kicked your shins you were missing some skin. But there was no penalty. Sometimes the ball was soccer ball size, but never a real soccer ball; sometimes basketball size; sometimes just a big cheap rubber ball. And a level playing field? Forget it. Incidentally, the balls were not supplied by the school. The teacher bought them and the kids chipped in pennies, nickels, and dimes to help pay for them.

In winter on bad weather days we had recess and lunch time activities in the basement. The boys usually played marbles or did something to show off for the girls. Once while swinging on a crosspiece between the floor beams, my hands slipped on the upswing and I fell flat on my back where I lay making an awful moaning noise and gasping for air. The girls were not impressed, and I gave up basement acrobatics. What the girls did for entertainment I'm not sure, besides being amused by the antics of the boys. I was too busy gawking at them to notice what games they played. However, despite that disclaimer, I do recall one of their entertainments. . . Jacks! They played Jacks. How, on a dirt floor? That I don't really recall. But I do remember the tinkle and the tumble of the jacks being scattered, the bouncing of the little rubber ball as the girls dropped it and deftly picked up the jacks before the second bounce.

There were also certain distractions beyond the walls and windows of the school that provided amusement. In the late Fall we got to watch hog butchering. Not on a field trip or even with the teacher's permission. The butchering took place across the road in Robison's front yard. We had to look out the east window and look back a bit to see the proceedings---three large poles erected teepee style, the hog hoisted up hind feet first, a big fire under a huge copper tub of boiling water, the hog doused in it, dehaired, disembowelled and dismembered, the men working hard and fast. I don't remember the teacher badgering us to work on our lessons but it would have been next to impossible to read our geography and learn the products of Massachusetts with such a fascinating ritual going on right across the road. Then there was sheep watching. Many a daydreaming afternoon I gazed at them grazing on the hillside to the east on the school side of the road, wooly in the Fall and shorn to the skin in the late Spring. There were many other distractions which attracted us also; a team of horses pulling a loaded wagon, a tractor pulling a hay rake, a coal truck going down the reddog road, highway workers setting up the snow fences, even someone merely walking down the reddog road. A lot of people did a lot of walking to a lot of places in those days. Many people had neither car nor pick-up truck.

Sometimes the snow was so deep and the weather so cold that the farm kids couldn't make it to school but no buses picked them up and brought them there and I

don't remember any "snow days" cancelling school. There may have been one time when school had to be cancelled because Mr. Caldwell, who lived miles away in Hickory, couldn't make it. There was a time also when super cold days made for a special time for those of us who were able to make it to school. The furnace couldn't cope with such weather so the teacher had us gather at the big heating vent near the floor on the west wall. We had our lessons and lunch there sitting on chairs brought from the unused room. Even if the furnace couldn't heat the whole room, the hot air billowed out around us and we felt cozy in our coats and hats. And lunch was like a picnic even if there were no potato chips or fritos or corn curls or cans of pop and certainly no ice cream. A few of the kids had fancy lunch pails with fancy sandwiches, even cake, but there were a lot of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and graham crackers, all wrapped in newspapers and bound by rubber bands (actually it was "gumbands" as I recall) . All in all it was fun having school like this instead of sitting in five straight lines at our desks.

The school had one paid employee besides the teacher, the older boy who fired the furnace, put up and took down the flag, swept the floor after school, and made sure there was toilet paper in the girls' and the boys' outhouses. The pay was a few dollars a month . I don't know who took care of the grass nor do I remember seeing it mowed. Some farmer may have come and cut it in the Fall with his mowing machine.

Our other conveniences besides the outside toilets were a cloak room for our coats, hats, boots, and lunchpacks or pails, and a two gallon water crock in the entry-way which had to be filled with a bucket of water handpumped from Mrs. Sally Buxton's well next door. The crock had a little push-button spigot that you pushed to fill the little cone-shaped cups was our drinking fountain. How slow it seemed when we were terribly thirsty standing in line after hard play in the hot weather. It was the boy janitor's job also to fill that crock, and to ring the bell before and after school and after lunchtime. But sometimes other kids were given that ringing privilege, pulling down on the big hemp rope knotted at the end. We liked to feel the big bell lift us up so we pulled down hard, sometimes turning it over. Then a couple of us boys had to climb up inside the tower and turn it right, holding the clapper so it wouldn't bong and pain our eardrums at that close range. Some other chores also were privileged assignments like cleaning the erasers, washing the blackboards, and passing out the pencils and tablets which we got, one of each, at the beginning of the month. (The paper was not white bond.) Before sharpening our pencils we wrote the lead down to the wood and used the whole thing right down to the nub. Frugality was an everyday lesson in life in those times.

There was one time of great sadness in our school. Next door, Ada, a girl in her teens, Mrs. Buxton's grandaughter, was bedfast dying of cancer. On Halloween we all went over to visit her in our mostly original but makeshift costumes--witches, ghosts, bums etc. --- and as we stood around her bed she looked up at us with eyes so longing for life, and I, in fourth grade, in ghost costume fell in love with this beautiful girl who lay dying. And to this day when I go back to the cemetery outside of Independence, I visit her grave and sometimes put a flower upon it. When she died, all the kids and all the town went to her funeral at the Methodist

Church. One thing about a small town, no death, especially of a young person, is an incidental thing, quickly forgotten; and Ada's death lingered among us for a long time.

There was a time also when a great pall of alarm and worry was cast over the town and the school. My eleven year old sister, Judy Davis, was hit by a car speeding along that main highway, and injured terribly--a fractured skull and many broken bones. She was in a coma in Washington Hospital for nearly two weeks. But she was a tough girl and the prayers of the town saved her. Some weeks later she was back home, a leg and arm in casts, and with many scars, hobbling on crutches_-- how I don't know, but she did.

I think I could name most of the students who were in school in my day and even remember where some sat. Some big kids sat in desks too small in the lower grades. There were no automatic promotions in those tougher times. But most of the kids were bright and learned a lot in our six-grade one room school, getting a preview of what was to come as we made our way through the grades listening to the lessons of those above us. Such a school, once huffed and puffed about by educational gurus, has been given credence by being somewhat replicated in the modern "open classroom" school.

In any case, these things I have written were something of the school days, but by no means the whole story, of those of us who went to a particular little white school house in the waning years of the Great Depression and the beginninq of the Big War. They seem more like Tom Sawyer's days with every passing year. And I and others with whom I have talked, are glad that we had the privilege, the advantage, the good times, the great memories in getting our beginning education in that one room school now gone, down at the end of the town in Independence, Pa., USA. In that light, I close this piece and proudly sign myself—

David Davis, B.A., M.A., Th. M., Ph.D.,
Student of a One Room School.

Old Buxton House near Independence School

My Memories of Plum Run Road

by

Edith Muskovich Creps

Away back in time when I could name the make of every car on the road, I also knew the name of every person who passed our house in his daily travels. At that time, Plum Run Road was part of the main highway from Pittsburgh to Wheeling, so a lot of people came our way.

I was just a tiny kid when the "new" road came through Langeloth going toward Eldersville. It was just a wee bit over the hill from us, passing beyond our house maybe 500 feet away. But my sister and I always remembered that time since we carried drinking water to the men who worked on the new road. We were their "water girls".

My father, William Muskovich, left Lithuania at about the age of sixteen. That country belonged to Russia, and he was about to be drafted into the service for World War I. He left his native land and went first to Poland, from which he emigrated to the United States. He made this choice because he had a half-brother, Michael West, who had gone to America and encouraged my father to follow him. While in Lithuania, he had gone to school and learned the machinist trade. This resulted in his becoming a blacksmith after his immigration. He arrived in Baltimore and made a straight line for Pittsburgh where he knew Michael would be waiting for him.

His first job, however, was not in Pittsburgh, but in the little town of Langeloth where he worked digging ditches and sewers as he helped to build the new houses that were under construction at the time. His residence was at Cherry Valley and it was there on July 3, 1915, that he married my mother, Stella Jusevich, in the Cherry Valley Catholic Church. Dad was 22 years old and Mom was 20.

The young couple soon moved from Cherry Valley to Donora where he worked for the Donora Zinc Company. Here their first child, Edward Muskovich, was born on June 21, 1916. They soon moved again, this time to the north side of Pittsburgh where a daughter, Brancia, was born on February 10, 1918. My mother became ill, perhaps with the flu which was so prevalent at the time. My father then returned to the Burgettstown area where he settled in Francis Mine. Here, on November 6, 1921, I, Edith Muskovich, was born. My father was a miner at the time at Francis Mine. Soon after my birth, he bought two acres of ground on Plum Run Road. He lived there until his death on January 27, 1988 at the age of 94 years and 8 months.

After the permanent settlement on Plum Run Road, two more sons were born to my parents, namely, Felix in 1925 and Henry in 1927. (My older brother, Edward, died in 1991.) At this writing, the other four children are still alive. Our mother passed away in 1964 at about the age of 70.

My father worked in Bertha Mine until it closed, then again in Francis Mine until its closing, and finally at Cecil Mine until he retired at 65 years. He also worked on "off days" (Saturdays and Sundays) at Penowa, Penobscot, Langeloth, Atlasburg, Bulger, and Shintown mines.

During all of these years when our father was a coal miner, there were many strikes between the unions and the newly formed company of Jones and Laughlin. Mr. Jones had three daughters for whom he named three of his mines: Bertha, Francis, and Jean. I remember the Iron Police and the scuffles when the miners struck for higher pay and better working conditions. Sometimes the fights were violent. The companies did not worry much about the working men then. There was no minimum wage or 8 hour day. It was – work until you drop. You got paid only for the boxcar of coal you loaded, not for the slate and dirt you had to remove to get the coal. There were long working hours with carbide lamps for light and many times in a kneeling position to get the coal out. I remember the mules they used to pull the cars of coal. Many miners were injured or killed trying to make a living.

My sister and older brother, Edward, started to school at Bertha, but soon changed to the Lee School on Eldersville Road. I went to first grade in the I.O.O.F. Hall in Eldersville where the playground was full of weeds and jaggers which we got in our hair. The teacher, Eliza Murchland, would try to remove the jaggers as gently as she could. Of course we got the usual childhood diseases of measles, mumps, whooping cough, and sometimes lice in our hair. After first grade, we went to the old three room building on Maiden Alley until the new brick school was built on what is now Cedar Grove Road.

Out home on Plum Run Road, we had the first telephone for miles around on our wall and were the first to get electricity in our house. We brought it from Langeloth. The three families of us who signed for electric had to pay one dollar a month for seven years to pay for its installation. That was a lot of money in those days. We had the first flush toilet in the area. It was outside behind the house. It operated from the rain water running off the roof and was channeled into a septic system behind the toilet.

Our first car was an Overland with celluloid side windows. I remember Dad learning to drive. He did not know how to use the brakes, so drifted it back into the barn. No test was required to drive, and a new car could be bought for five or six hundred dollars. Most roads were mud and it was not unusual to get stuck in the ditches much of the time.

I remember one time when we had the Overland and were going to Avella to see my cousin. We were chugging along, as those cars did not go very fast, when we hit a ditch on the bumpy dirt road and got a flat tire. The car door flew open and I flew out. Dad ran over me, but I was not badly injured for those old cars were not very heavy.

During all of our growing up years, not only did our dad work in the mines, but he also was a blacksmith. He would shoe the mules for the mining company and work every spare minute in the little blacksmith shop across the road from our house. We kids had to help in the shop sometime by holding the metal on the anvil or turning the blower to heat the metal. I just hated that task, but everyone was expected to do his part.

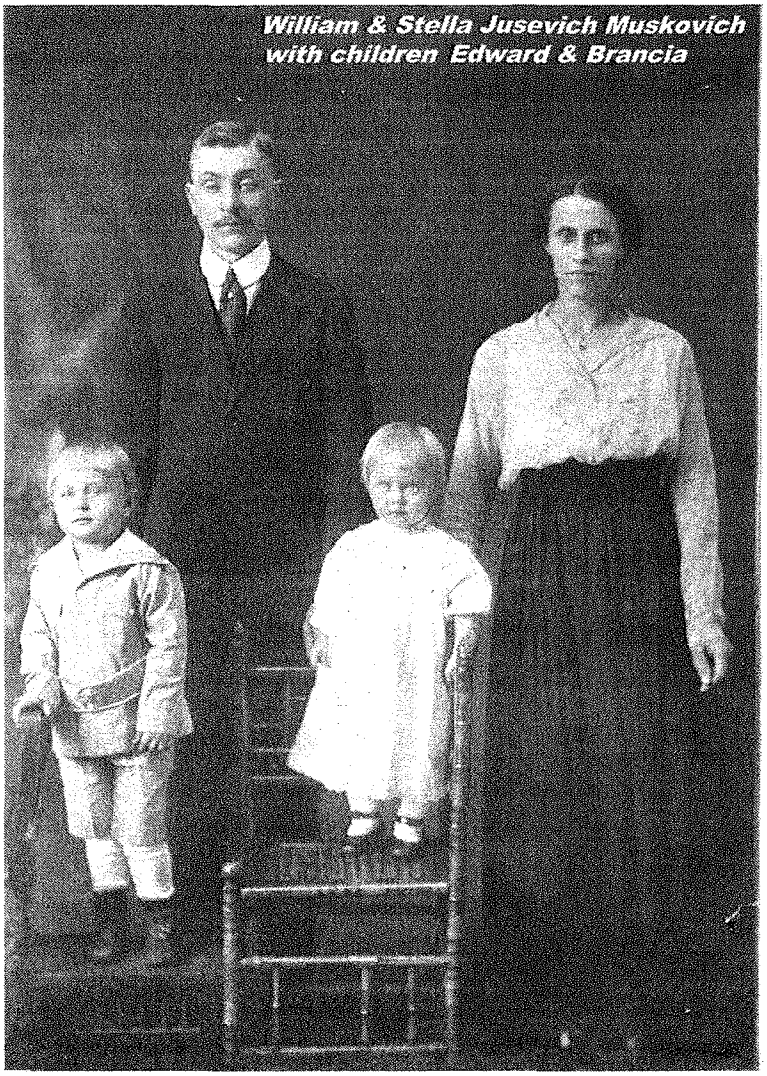
The Depression came along and my dad's skill as a blacksmith was a great blessing. He always had some work and we always had plenty to eat. We were never on relief. Some farmers had to mortgage their farms. How well I remember

the beggars who used to come past our house, looking for work of any kind. They were hungry, and we always fed them as they passed through. It was heart-sickening to see how poor they were. Many were desperate.

When my dad worked at blacksmithing at home, we had to help, and so we got to know all the farmers around the locality. Many times they paid with produce or bargaining. Some paid with cash and some with checks that bounced. This included two of Burgettstown's biggest businessmen. My father told us never to accept anything but cash. Many banks went under about that time.

Among those for whom my dad worked, was "Grandpap" Miller of Avella who had race horses that raced at the Burgettstown Fair. Dad would shoe the horses and Mr. Miller would let me ride them many times when I was a small child. It was a good life.

My Dad had a long life, filled with hard work, long hours, and short pay. But he was able to keep us together as a family and we knew that he loved us. As I look back on my life as the child of an immigrant from Lithuania, I can honestly say that they were good years. I owe an awful lot to my wonderful parents.



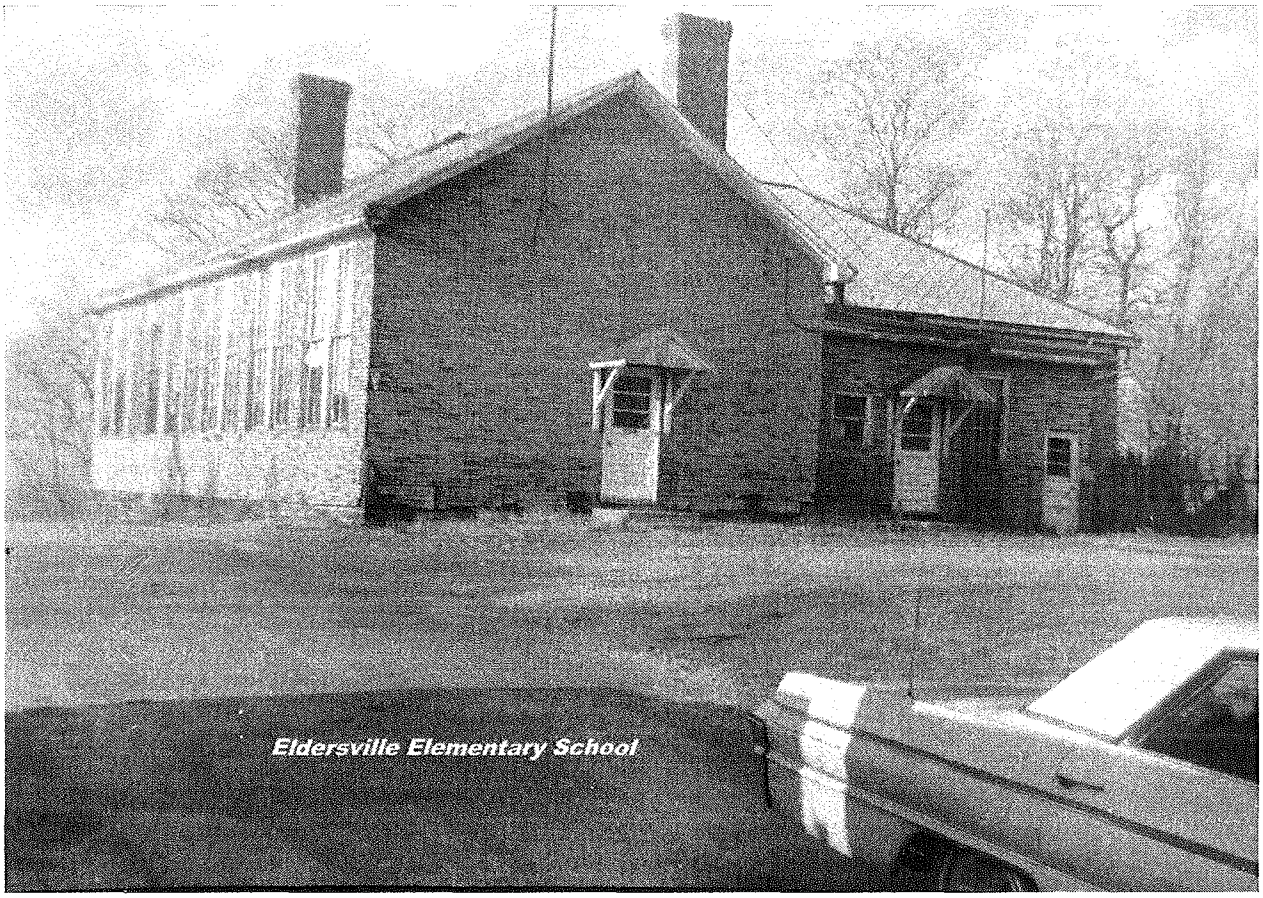
William & Stella Jusevich Muskovich with children Edward & Brancia

Marion and Dorothy

by

June Campbell Grossman - Welch

The place was the old three room grade school on the north end of Maiden Alley in Eldersville, Pennsylvania. The ancient building, part of which had once housed the Eldersville Normal School between 1880 and 1915, was not new to me. I had survived first and second grades there under the tutelage of Mary Sanders whose ancestry could be traced to Jacob Buxton and William Murchland. Buxton was reputed to have been the seventh white man ever to set foot in Jefferson Township away back in the 1780s. And Murchland had come from County Down, Ireland, on the ship "Brothers" in 1790. Mary was young and pretty and a born teacher, and I loved her to the point of total admiration. But first and second grade do not last forever. I was growing up now and would be in the third grade. After two years with Miss Sanders, how could I possibly sit under the watchful eye of someone else? It was going to be a fearful first day of school.



Eldersville Elementary School

Thus it was on that September morning in 1937, I found myself in the third seat of the second row from the windows, in that room which had always been "off limits" to us little guys. It was, of course, the domain of the "upper classmen" – grades three

and four. But the day was not over before every fear in my childish heart had disappeared. I had found a friend. Life could go on after all.

Her name was Dorothy Grimm. And like Mary Sanders, she was young and pretty and a born teacher. How lucky can you get? Thus it was that by the time I completed third and fourth grades under her master guidance, I knew I would someday follow in her footsteps. I, too, would teach school. It took Mary and Dorothy only four combined years to show me that. But in those four years, they gave me not only the vision of the path I was to follow, but the tools with which to make that vision a reality. When I left Dorothy Grimm's fourth grade class to go to the "Big School" – the new brick, four-room building on the other side of town – I left my childhood behind. But thanks to her, I was ready to go.

I remember many things about Dorothy and those two years under her care. But one thing stands out foremost in my mind. She taught us to sing. It was the time of the Great Depression and there was not much about which to sing. Yet every morning she led us in singing the old songs she thought we all should know, such as the Stephen Foster classics, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee", and the usual Christmas Carols of the holiday season. But clearest of all, I remember that there was a new song making the Hit Parade for people lucky enough to have a radio to hear it. It was called "Easter Parade". The words were very hard for third and fourth graders, but as she taught us the tune, she also patiently explained the meaning of every passage. In particular, I recall her explanation of "sonnet" – to rhyme with Easter bonnet" – and "You'll find that you're in the Rotogravure". And once we understood, with her beautiful soprano voice leading the way, we were off and running with the new tune. Over sixty years later, whenever I hear that song, I hear her singing it.

Dorothy used her beautiful voice all of her life to keep the community singing. She could be counted on as lead soprano in a mixed quartette at Grange, as director of a children's choir whenever one was needed, and of course, to be in her place at choir practice on Wednesday evening and again on Sunday morning at church for the entire length of her busy life. When she died, the music of the little village of Eldersville died with her.

The years passed, and the "Old" school building was eventually abandoned. With that action, the primary grades were moved to the new brick structure where they joined grades five through eight. And with that move, came that year's fourth grade class, and Dorothy Grimm.

By the time I was in seventh grade, another person came into my life as teacher and friend. I was sure he had been teaching seventh grade since the beginning of time and would no doubt continue to do so long after the end of the world. This was not because he was old. Quite to the contrary, he was fairly young, energetic and very personable. In spite of his youth, however, he was so stable and self-assured – perhaps 'timeless" is the word – that we thought of him as having been always there. And we were older now, and inclined to try our wings.

It only took one incident to show us that Marion Butler was in charge. He would laugh with us, and tell us all about the Civil War and how to diagram a complex sentence, but if anyone had ideas about disrupting what was taking place in that classroom, Mr. Butler became a totally different person. I am sure that many

students must have challenged his authority over his forty odd years of teaching, but it is my guess that when he laid down the last card in the game, it was always trump.

When the Great War came, Marion kept a running account of every boy from Jefferson Township who either enlisted or was drafted. He sympathized with those in his classroom who were siblings of these young men, gleaning from them exact information about when their brother left for the service, and what later became of him. As time went on, Marion himself joined them in the line of duty. Upon his return after the war, he became very devoted to researching and keeping records of all persons from the township who had ever served in any war. These records have provided the Jefferson Township Historical Society with one of the most accurate accounts of veterans from its local area in existence today.

Marion Butler, unlike Dorothy Grimm, was a product of the local area. He descended from Jonathan Tucker who crossed the Allegheny Mountains in 1775 and founded the old stone Tucker Methodist Church on Steubenville Pike in Hanover Township.

Marion's father, Frank Butler, was one of my favorite people when I was three years of age. Each Sunday, my mother sat in the same pew with Frank Butler in the old church on the hilltop at Bethel. When the sermon got long, he would look my way and give me a silent signal to scoot across the pew in his direction. When I got close enough, he would quietly pick me up and place me on his knee. Then reaching into the inside left pocket of his Sunday-go-to-Meetin' suit jacket, he would draw forth two pink wintergreen lozenges. One for him and one for me. In perfect contentment, I would lean my head against his chest as we waited out that infinity of time until the man up front said, "Let us pray". In that interminable interlude, we permitted those incomparable delicacies to melt in our mouths as our minds wandered leisurely to any topic except the one under consideration by the rest of the congregation. When the last "Amen" was pronounced, I would scoot back to my mother until next Sunday when that weekly ritual was re-enacted. In later years, I wondered if, to Frank Butler who was the father of three sons, I may have represented the little girl he never had.

During the last four years of my elementary education at the brick school in Eldersville, a drama was quietly unfolding in the wings. As has been stated, this building now housed grades one through eight. Included on the teaching staff was Dorothy Grimm, previously assigned to the old three room structure. Unlike Mary Sanders and Marion Butler, Dorothy was not from an old established Jefferson Township family. She was a newcomer. But she was young, and she was pretty, and she fell head over heels in love with Marion Butler.

As students, we "picked up" on this budding romance and like watching today's soap operas, we watched each day for any new developments. Where Dorothy was concerned, there was no hiding it. She was completely aglow. It was a light which lasted their fifty years of wedded life.

From the beginning of the courtship, until their wedding day, was a period of nine years. But nobody worried about it. The whole world knew that some day they would get married. And they did.


Marion Butler

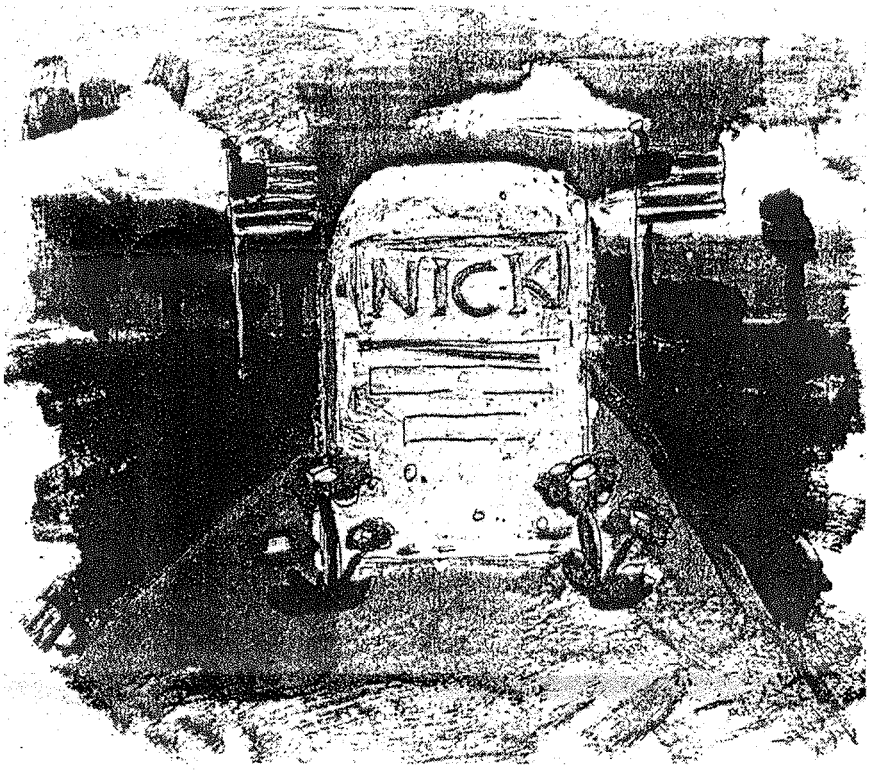

Dorothy Grimm Butler

Volumes could be written about those fifty years of wedded life enjoyed by Marion and Dorothy. Together, they kept the Grange going. And the church. And the firehall. And the missionary circles. And the IOOF lodge. They were known as the "put-out-the-lights" people, being the last to leave every event – always checking to be sure the windows were all closed and everything in place. When anything "happened", they would appear – in their quiet way – doing whatever needed to be done. You could always count on them. If a family member from some distant point died, and you had to drive miles and miles to the funeral – and you KNEW that nobody from around home would show up, when you got there, they were there ahead of you.

Time passed, and they were finally recognized by the community to which they devoted their lives. Individually and collectively, they were given honors and plaques bearing testimony to the selfless lives they lived. There are not enough words in the language to tell the true story of their lives of service.

Marion and Dorothy were the living epitome of the term "soul mates". They were totally inseparable and completely in sync with each other. When the last trumpet sounded for Marion, it was the end of the world for Dorothy. The next four years, she walked as one not here. And when the call came for her, all who knew them rejoiced that for her, the black night of grief was finally over. Her dear ones laid her body to rest beside that of her beloved husband near East Palestine, Ohio. It was the land from which Dorothy had come as a young woman seeking her first teaching assignment those many years before.

Somewhere in some unseen realm, they are surely together again – just Marion and Dorothy. It could not be otherwise.



A memorial to Nick Negra

On V-E Day, Grief Lingers

by
Sonya Jason

Time does not completely erase the pain from the loss of a family member in war. In today's psychological jargon, it may best be described as "unfinished business." The soldier departs and takes with him the vital essence of a young man in his prime. And then one day there is a telegram saying that he is dead on some distant battle ground with a name you can hardly pronounce.

The first reaction is that surely it is not he. It must be some stranger whose death does not matter very much to you. And then begins the unconscious waiting, the jumping at each sound of footsteps on the stairs or ring of the phone. It just might be that he is calling or returning at last.

So it was with our family when my brother Nick was killed in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Every news report attested that the war was winding down at last. The long years of service from enlistment to training to overseas duty would end soon. We began to gear to peace our own frenetic wartime household, with every one of our 10 members involved in some aspect of war duty. We felt an optimism we had not dared entertain before. But it was the lull before the emotional storm that came with a deadly telegram. It arrived that black day in December 1944, and for us the war ended, as it does for any family whose son, husband, father or brother is a casualty. Now it just as easily may be a daughter, sister, wife or even mother. At that point, the war is over, regardless of the official date the peace agreement is signed.

Months later, May 8 dawned, with glaring headlines declaring WAR IN EUROPE OVER. I went downtown that afternoon to report to my most ordinary job on what to me was still a rather ordinary day. But in tbe city, it had become another world overnight.

The familiar lethargy brought by the four-year war had vanished. Increasing crowds surged back and forth, people hysterically embracing strangers and friends, shouting, singing or weeping. The unleashed emotions struck me as a tidal wave because, for months, my own had been hardened under the weight of grief. Every man in uniform was enthusiastically hugged and kissed, and hands were fervently shaken as though he had single-handedly brought about this victory.

I wandered slowly along an avenue where just one year earlier, Nick and his date and my love and I had strolled through the heart of an enchanted city after an evening of dining and dancing. Were these teeming streets the same ones? But that night with the two young males I loved most walking beside me, I had felt invincible to anything other than the most wonderful possibilities.

But that had been an idyllic dream, and it had ended. Waking every morning meant renewed searing pain and the sounds of my mother's stifled weeping, and the sight of the tear-swollen eyes of my sisters and brothers and father.

A revulsion at the frenzy flooded over me. I felt isolated and alone in my anger that this day of victory had come too late for us. And then I saw him. The young soldier was still in uniform, although surely he was officially discharged. Appearing no older than my own teens, he leaned against a large building in the late afternoon shadows.

A crutch was propped under one arm, and a pinned-up pant leg revealed where his leg had been. His gaze denoted disbelief at the near madness of the throngs, and a cynical smile hovered about his lips. His eyes caught mine for a moment before we both turned away. But in that instant, a message of shared understanding passed between us before we retreated into ourselves.

It was not possible for me to work that day, so I turned to climb the steps of a stopping streetcar to return home. Its wildly clanging bell was pealing, not only to warn passers-by who lingered on the tracks or ran across them in front of the car, but also to celebrate the good news. The journey was slow through unheeding mobs and jammed intersections that would not clear easily.

It was dusk when I reached home, but the reveling could be heard all around. Cars with honking horns speeded by, and drivers yelled joyous greetings out windows to other drivers and bystanders. But my own heart knew no jubilation. There was only a deep, jagged bitterness at our loss.

The face of the young soldier came back to my mind. For him the victory also had come too late. I was entering a house darkened with grief. He, too, was entering a darkened future, no matter how strong his ability to overcome his battle experience and loss.

Lingering in the twilight, I whispered a prayer for him and fervently wished him well.

I hope it was answered.

THE DAY WE HUNTED NUTS

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

"Let's go hunt some nuts", Pappy blurted out in an unguarded moment, one afternoon in autumn. I had known George since 1942, married him in 1944 and henceforth and forever followed the plow, catering to his every agricultural whim. A determined farmer he was, whose moniker became "Pappy" with the arrival some years later of a series of grandchildren.

Now if Pappy had said, "Let's go out and get some of that corn husked", or "Why don't we dig the rest of the potatoes today?", I would not have given his suggestion a second thought. We would have husked corn or dug potatoes. Even if he had said, "Why don't we start filling silo?", a big job such as that would not have caused me too much alarm.

But to "go hunt some nuts" ? Incredible! Take precious time from a rugged farm-duty schedule to hunt nuts? Leave some undug potatoes in the ground? Let the corn stand in the shock? Disregard the remainder of the apple crop hanging in the trees in the orchard?

Fall always brought enough chores to fill all the days of the week. Winter would soon set in with its fury and that would be time enough to rest from the daily outdoor burdens. Or so Pappy always thought.

But this was an exceptionally enchanting fall day, that year back in the fifties. Gentle breezes stirred the leaves of the two Queen Anne cherry trees in the front yard. The grass had been cut for the last time that season. The end of the tomato crop lay on a wide board in the sun to finish ripening.

But come to think of it, hunting nuts did not sound like a bad idea. I had noticed some black walnut trees bordering the wheat field as Pappy and I made the rounds with the tractor and binder during harvest season.

While I was recovering from the shock of my husband's plans for the afternoon, a short pudgy figure appeared around the corner of the barn. Aunt Kathryn puffed her way to a seat under the cherry tree and sat down.

"We're going to hunt nuts!", the words struck her ears with as much force as they had mine a few minutes earlier. Her mouth flew open and remained there. Not since we were kids, a generation apart, had either of us performed such a pleasant, unnecessary undertaking as hunting nuts.

Aunt Kathryn was not only my Dad's sister, but our nearest across-the-valley-and-up-the-next-hill neighbor. A frequent visitor, she was always ready with a helping hand canning meat, snapping beans, picking peaches. She was always there. But never did we do "nothing" but hunt nuts!

We walked out the lane in the gentle breeze, the three of us, heading for nowhere in particular. Aunt Kathryn's face beamed with joy, as each step put more of the farm behind us. We crossed the country road and strolled into the pasture field. On we went, chatting among ourselves, of the warm sunshine, the gentle fall breeze, the splendor of the multi-colored leaves, the calming peace of Nature's outdoors. Sometimes we were quiet, with the silence broken only by an occasional snapping of a twig under our feet.

We entered a small wooded area sheltered by tall maple trees. This had at one time been a sugar camp. Some farmer before us had taken time to tap the trees and boil down his own maple syrup. Aunt Kathryn and Pappy and I agreed that, come next Spring, we would do just that – make our own maple syrup. Yet each of us knew full well we would never carry out that dream. There was still corn to be husked. There were potatoes to dig. And a silo would need to be filled. But for now, these rugged tasks did not exist. We would live only in the beauty of this carefree afternoon.

As shadows grew longer, our thoughts turned to reversing direction and heading home. We had not found any nuts, nor were we really looking for any. As we strolled toward home, I could detect a bit of sadness on Aunt Kathryn's face. The joy of this golden autumn day was ending. She would walk down the hill, across the valley, and up the next hill and into the same distressful atmosphere that marked her entire married life. Her general unhappiness was no secret. Friends, family, and neighbors all knew of her loneliness and depression. And all knew that no one but she could make a change in her life.

Her soft-spoken words, no matter what the situation, and her inability to harbor an evil thought or speak an angry word, brought about her life of meek submission. Sad years followed sad years. Already thirty of them had crept their way into eternity. Those of us who were to see her through to the end, were to know that 49 years of her 84-year life span were next to unbearable.

However, when brief opportunity presented itself to be happy, Aunt Kathryn grasped it and held on. For her, those moments were few and far between, unless someone, somewhere, helped her to search for them.

For many years, she proclaimed this nut-hunting afternoon "one of the happiest days of my life". The fact that no nuts were found, was of little consequence. For a few moments out of Eternity, we had quietly skimmed over the demanding tasks of everyday living and followed a whim. A half century later, when anyone mentions the name of Aunt Kathryn, I do not recall the countless days we peeled peaches together, or canned vegetables, or dug potatoes. Only one thing comes to my mind – the day we hunted nuts.

NOTE: Pictured on the following page is Kathryn Campbell Scott – "Aunt Kathryn" in the accompanying story. The house in the background was the old Oliver Scott Homestead, later occupied by Oliver's brother, Cassidy Scott. Oliver and Cassidy were two of the ten sons of Charles Scott, Sr. and his wife, Margaret Cassidy Scott. The house in the picture stood on the farm of Charles and Margaret, and later, on the part of that farm which became the property of Charles Scott, Jr., who was a brother of Oliver and Cassidy. It was Harold Scott, the only son of this Charles, Jr.,

who married Kathryn Campbell, pictured above. The house sat off Miller Road, not far from Bethel Church. "Aunt Kathryn" spent her 49 year marriage on this farm.

Two Scott brothers, Cassidy and William, served the entire length of the Civil War in Company K, 140th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, from August of 1862 until the end of the war, seeing fierce fighting in such major battles as Fredericksburg, Spottsylvania, Gettysburg, Cold Harbor, and Appomattox.

Old Homesteads and Pioneers

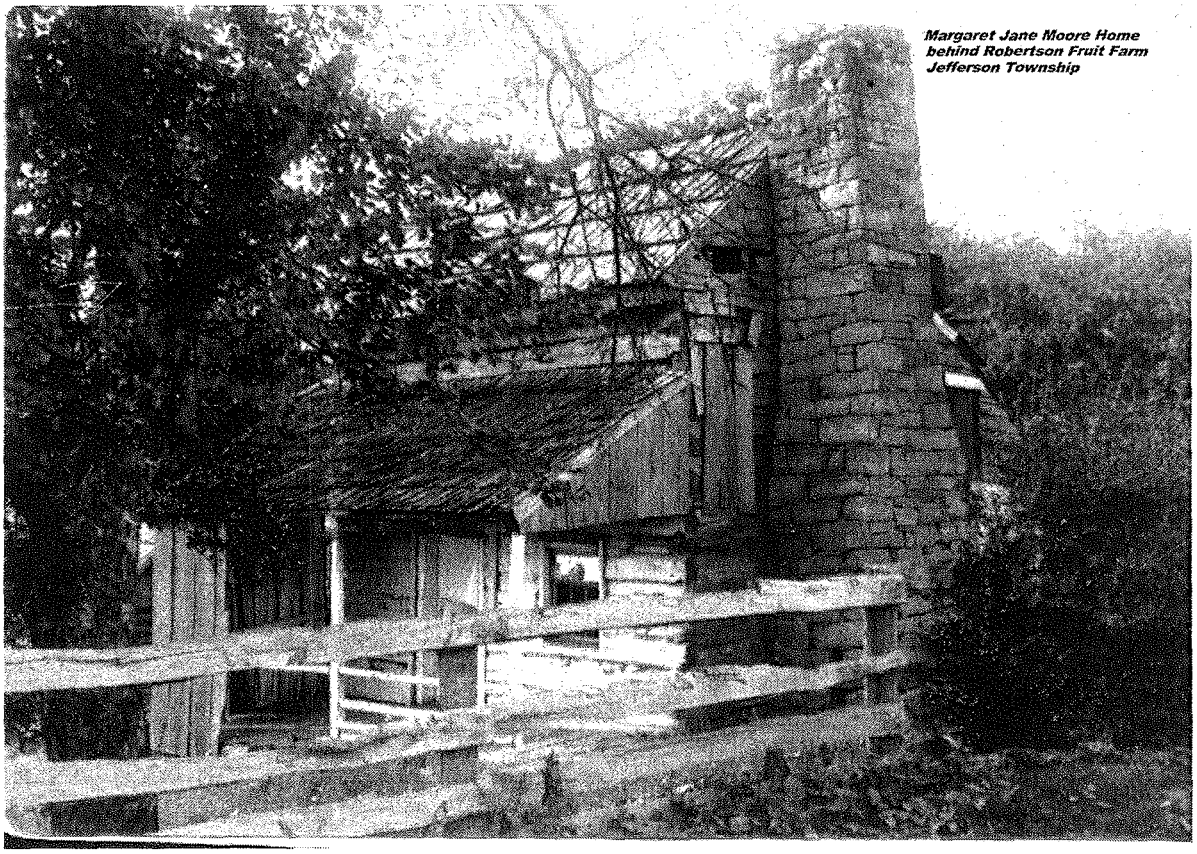
The Thomas McCarroll Homestead

by

June Grossman-Welch

Thomas McCarroll was born in County Down, Ireland, in 1745. He came to Philadelphia in 1768 and from there to York County, Pennsylvania, where he married Eleanor Rusk. While living in York County, he served in the Revolutionary War. In 1793 he came to Washington County and settled near what is now Eldersville. There on the 20th of March 1812, he patented 88 acres which he named "Hickory Grove". His land lay in what was to become Jefferson Township adjoining lands of Abraham Barber, Thomas Ward, James Clark, and James Watson. Thomas died on his home farm in 1835 at the age of ninety years and was buried at the "Tent" Seceder Church in Brooke County, Virginia, where he had served for many years as an elder.

Thomas and Eleanor were the parents of three daughters and two sons. Mary married Robert Cresswell and Margaret remained single. Jane married James Moore but died at the birth of her daughter, Margaret Jane. Her husband did not survive her by long, so the McCarrolls took this little grandchild and raised her. Margaret Jane was a teacher in the local schools for many years and an active member of the Tent Church. She never married. Her little house is pictured below and was located behind the property of the Robertson Fruit Farm. It was said that Margaret Jane was completely self sufficient in her quaint little house, even to cutting her own fence posts and setting them.



Margaret Jane Moore Home behind Robertson Fruit Farm Jefferson Township

The eldest son of the McCarrolls was Samuel who settled in Hanover Township and reared a family of four sons and a daughter. Among Samuel's sons were Alexander McCarroll, a Presbyterian minister, and J.F. McCarroll, M.D., who was a physician in the Eldersville area for a number of years. The youngest son, Thomas Rusk McCarroll, who had been born on the farm in 1795, remained on the home place. He was twice married and the father of four daughters and three sons. His youngest daughter, Caroline, married Henry Cooper, a prominent merchant in the Eldersville area.

From the death of Thomas Rusk McCarroll in 1877 until at least 1911, the maps of Jefferson Township show the property as belonging to the McCarroll heirs, but other families lived in the old frame house at one time or another, making their lives a part of its history. During the stay of Thomas Pettibon and family, it became the center of dancing and laughter on Saturday nights when Tom took the old fiddle out of the case and sent the strains of The Wabash Cannonball wafting on the breeze across the hills of Jefferson Township, calling his neighbors to a good old fashioned hoe-down. His brother-in-law, Louis Wiegmann was the figure caller and along with Louis came his wife, Anna, and children. Over ninety years ago at this writing, the birth of Helen Wiegmann (later, Helen Martin) did not deter her mother from attending the weekly dance. In later years, Merle Irwin told Helen that she was the first newborn baby he had ever seen - and it was on one such occasion in the old McCarroll farmhouse.

In later years the farm was owned by William Sutherland who sold to John Wargo in 1916. Six of the Wargo children were born in the McCarroll house and it was here that the family lived when Mrs. Wargo died in 1924 at the age of 42. She left ten children between the ages of 16 and 4, the eldest son John, being in the navy at the time. Mary, the sixteen year old, assumed the role of mother, caring for and loving the little ones as if they were her own. Mary married George Ihnat when she was 22 years of age and her father built her a little house on the farm so she would be nearby to keep a watchful eye on his little brood. John Wargo was a caring, hard-working father who gave up a coal mining job at the death of his wife in order to be at home with his children. He became a dairy farmer and kept his family together until they reached adulthood.

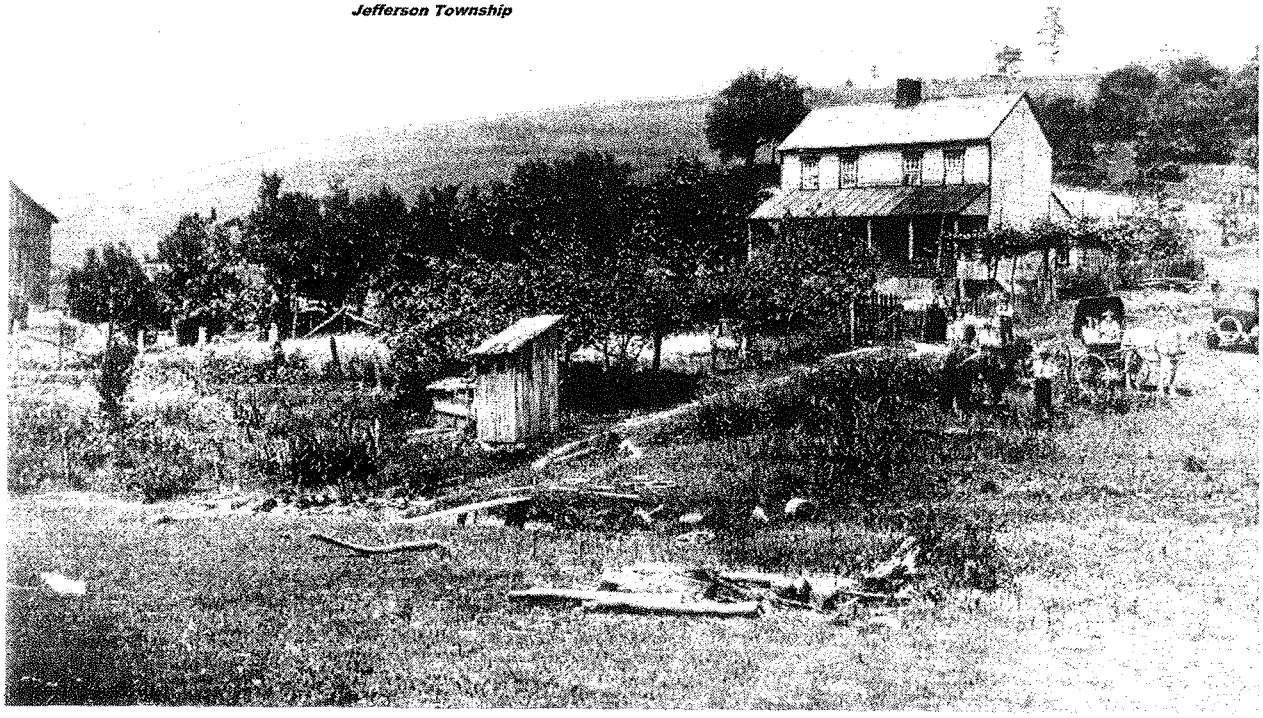
The old farmhouse was built with a very large kitchen and living room on the first floor and three smaller rooms which served as a pantry , a bedroom, and a summer kitchen. Helen Wargo Dreyer, who was born in the house and grew up there, reports that the kitchen was put together with mud. The upstairs was just an unfinished attic when her parents bought it, but her father plastered the walls and made it livable for bedroom space. She said Park Boles, whose property adjoined theirs, told them the house was very, very old. The last of the Wargo family to own the property was Mary's son, George Ihnat. The Wargos were keepers of the homestead for the past 85 years.

Although the old house must have seen days of love and laughter, it also held its share of heartache. When John Wargo came to America, he left his wife and son, John, and daughter, Sophia, in Europe until he could establish himself. They lived

with neighbors whom the Wargos trusted. These neighbors were very wealthy and had no children of their own. When John accumulated enough money to send for his family, he wrote to Europe telling them he was ready for them. But his wife could not read or write and so the neighbors got the letter. They told her that her husband said for her to come to America and bring John, but to leave Sophia there. Although she was heartbroken and could not understand why he had made this decision, she trusted her husband, assuming that at a later date, they would send for little Sophia. When she arrived in America, John was grief-stricken at the treachery heaped upon him by ones whom he had trusted. Over the years, he many times wrote to his daughter and sent money for her to come. But she never did. The Wargos never saw little Sophia again.

Thus it is that this old frame house, hidden behind a growth of beautiful trees in the summer time, sat quietly at rest, nestled in the little valley where Thomas McCarroll first settled 208 years ago. Having stood empty for a number of these last years, it deteriorated beyond repair and was recently demolished shortly before the death of its last Wargo owner, George Ihnat, Jr. It was considered to be one of Jefferson Township's oldest dwellings, and during its tenure, saw its share of life.

Thomas McCarroll Homestead
Intersection Bethel Ridge & Cedar Grove Rd.
Jefferson Township



Plummer's Mill

by

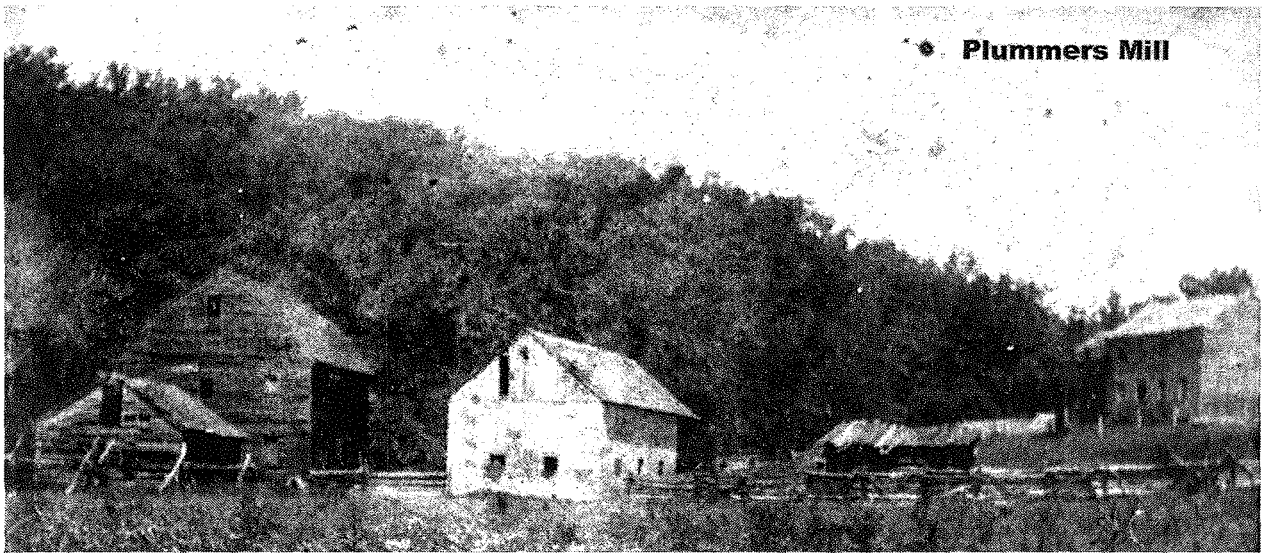
June Grossman-Welch

The northern boundary of Independence Township, Washington County, is formed by the stream known as Cross Creek. A couple of miles east of the West Virginia State Line, this creek makes a distinct upside-down "U" turn in its rambling toward the far-off Ohio River. The little parcel of land, within this "U", juts northward against the southern boundary of Jefferson Township and was at one time part of a 400 acre tract of prize farmland. Within this little promontory once stood the legendary Plummer's Mill.

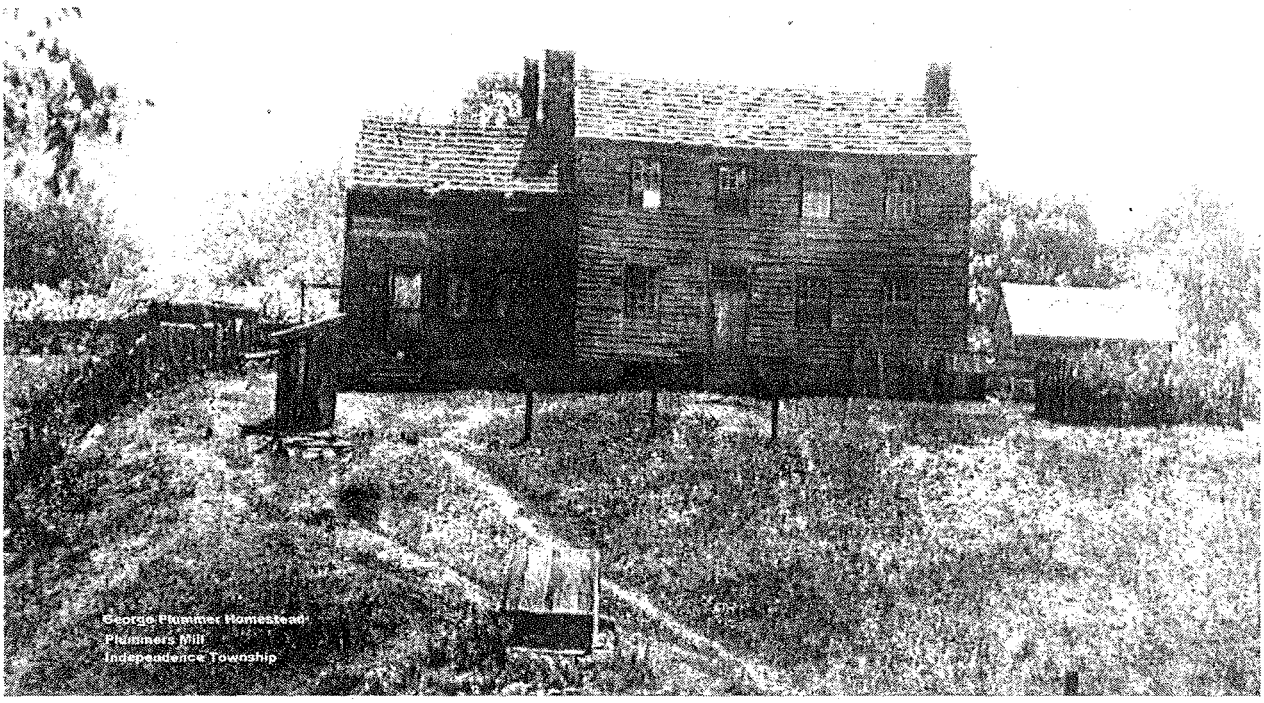
George Gilbert Plummer was born in Maryland, 22 November 1785. His father, Jerome Plummer, Jr., died circa 1796 when George was about ten years of age. After this death, Jerome Plummer, Sr. migrated to Brooke County, Virginia, bringing with him this young grandson, George. The grandfather died circa 1806. About this time, George, now about twenty years of age, wandered one day east of the state line into Pennsylvania, where he happened upon the grist mills, distillery, and fort of Richard Wells in what is now the Avella area of Washington County. Richard's wife was Helen, daughter of Alexander Wells who had been the first settler in that area and who had built and operated those mills and the fort since the early 1770s. Between 1795 and 1799, Alexander either sold or gave away three very large plots of his property to this daughter and son-in-law. Richard then built the huge stone house which stood until well into the twentieth century on a knoll in what is now the Browntown area of Avella. This eye-catcher of a mansion may have been already constructed by 1806 when Plummer made his appearance in the area.

It is known that prior to George Plummer's arrival, the Wells Clan had established a general store in the mill area. The young man must have made a good impression on Richard Wells for he hired him to operate the store. At one point in time he sent young Plummer down Cross Creek to New Orleans with a boat full of flour. It is reported that once having sold the flour, he took the payment in gold and silver coins and walked from New Orleans home, carrying the same. (This was common in those days as there was no way to return back up the waterways.) The length of time required for the trip was so great that prior to his arrival back home, he was given up for dead.

But George Plummer was far from dead. He was industrious and intelligent and had an eye for business. About 1810, he married Leah Wells, Richard's daughter, who was but fifteen or sixteen years of age at the time. Apparently Richard was pleased with the match, for he bought the remains of a mill owned by George Sparks which stood just down the creek from his own establishments and gave the property to his daughter, Leah, and her husband, George Plummer. Plummer immediately rebuilt the mill and the dam and set up a thriving business of his own. It was probably George Plummer who built the entire complex of buildings which at one time stood proudly on this little U-shaped piece of land which became known for all time forth as Plummer's Mill.



In addition to the mill itself, there were several outbuildings, including a large 2-3 story barn and a spring house. But its crowning glory was the magnificent two-story, four bay mansion house on the high plateau far above the mill level. In this 50 foot long homestead, George and Leah were to live out the rest of their lives.



The picture above of the George Plummer Homestead is the courtesy of Frank Furiga

This writer has been unable to establish exactly how many children resulted from this union of a young lady from the wealthy Wells family and an orphan immigrant from Maryland. Early census records would lead one to believe that an educated guess would be 3-5 daughters and 3-5 sons.

Near Richard Wells' old stone house are the remains of what is believed to be the first white burial ground in the area. Most of the markers disappeared years ago, but

at one time a small broken headstone told its heartbreaking tale of a George Wells Plummer, son of Leah and George, who died the fifth of April in 1829, aged 11 years, 6 months, and 17 days. This would indicate this child was born in 1817. Census records show 2 sons and 2 daughters living with George and Leah in 1820, all under the age of 10. Their son, Jerome Plummer, was born about 1819 or 1820. If this information is accurate, this George Wells Plummer who lies buried in his grandfather's old graveyard was the eldest son of George and Leah.

The son, Jerome, grew to manhood and married, but was childless. He became a very wealthy man, eventually owning the coveted Flower Garden Tract of Independence Township. Sometime after 1850, he built the beautiful brick mansion in Independence Village still known today as the Jerome Plummer House. It is now (2001) owned and occupied by Joseph DePetro.

A younger son of the Plummers, Gilbert M. Lafayette Plummer, who was born in 1834, married Mary J. Moore of the Moore and Boyd pioneer families of Independence Township. In 1862, at the age of 28, he and two of their small children, Nancy Leah aged 4 and James Moore aged 3, died of one of the dread diseases of the day. (Their oldest child, George, age six, died ten years later.) On December 21 of that year, Mary, the wife and mother, gave birth to their last child. This grandson of George Plummer was not three years of age when his grief-stricken grandfather died. But had he lived to see this child reach maturity, he would have been justly proud. William F. Plummer eventually received his doctor's degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and for years was pastor of the 4th Presbyterian Church of Washington. He was an active member of the Masonic Order and a highly read scholar and logical thinker, as well as a clear, convincing speaker. William's mother, Mary J. Moore Plummer, survived the deaths of her husband and three children and lived until 1919. Her stoicism and fortitude may perhaps have been handed down from her grandfather, Thomas Boyd, who was captured by the Indians at the age of four and kept prisoner a number of years before his parents were able to achieve his release.

This writer has no definite information on other children of George and Leah Plummer. It is believed that the Civil War Veteran, William Plummer, born in 1842, may possibly have been a son, but if so, his mother was 47 years of age at the time of his birth. Research has turned up no information on the daughters of the Plummers, although it is known that there were definitely some girls.

On April 1, 1845, Leah Wells Plummer died at Plummer's Mill at the age of 50. She was buried about a mile up Cross Creek at the Wells burial ground, indicating that she lived and died within a mile of her birthplace.

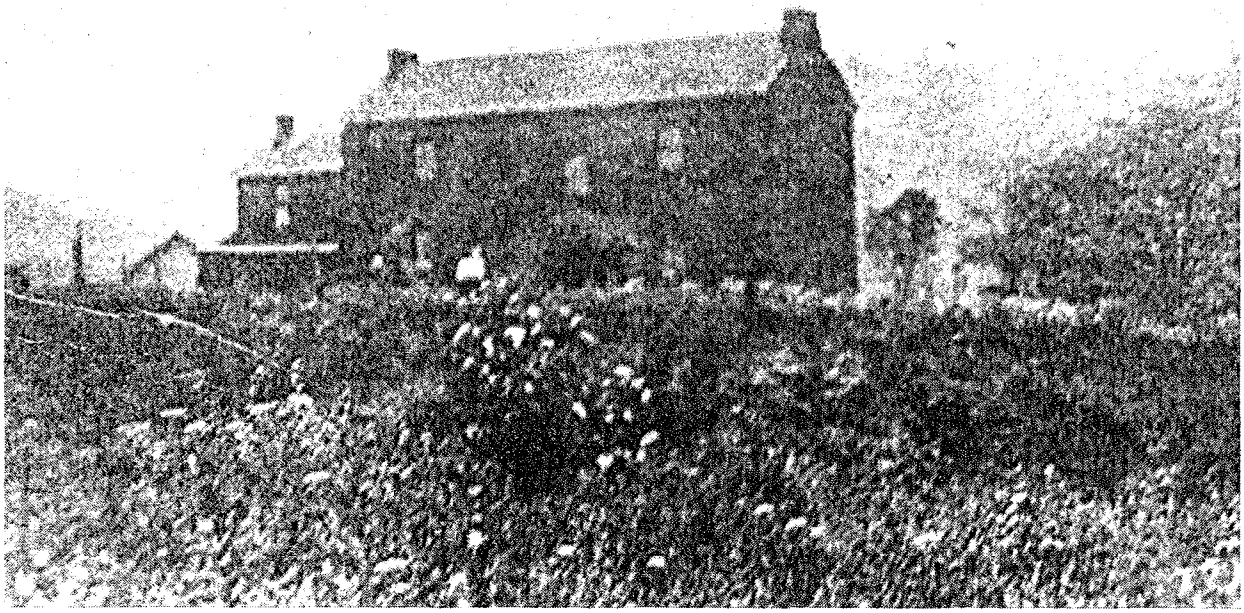
By 1850, her husband, George Plummer, had remarried, this time to Sarah Perrin, widow of John McCormick. Sarah became the new mistress of the mansion house at Plummer's Mill where George's son, Gilbert, was also in residence.

During his lifetime, George Plummer accumulated a sizable fortune in lands and wealth. He was highly esteemed in the area and was an avid supporter of public schools after their inception in the 1830s. A number of times he donated land for school purposes and served many years as a Justice of the Peace, performing marriages and other legal functions for area residents. It was at Plummer's Mill that

he conducted the wedding of Patrick Gass, last survivor of the famous Lewis and Clark expedition. Records show that he was a member of the Washington County Agricultural Society in 1822, and was on a committee to lay out districts for school purposes in Hopewell Township in 1835. He was prominent in most civic functions of his day.

In his eightieth year, having buried the wife of his youth, at least two of his children and a few of his grandchildren, he went to join them on the other side. At his beloved Plummer's Mill on the third of October, George Plummer died. He was buried in the old Wells graveyard beside his Leah and little son, George Wells Plummer. A lot of water had gone over the dam by his funeral day in 1865 since, as a lad of twenty, he first laid eyes on the mills of Richard Wells.

Richard Wells Stone House



After the death of Plummer, a man named James Craighead appears to have bought the mill and farm. But in the flood of 1870, the dam went out and records show that it was never replaced. Plummer's Mill never operated again. Craighead did not stay long at the mill site, but other families came and went as the years went by. About 1900, Alexander Martin and his bride, Bertha Gillespie Martin, set up housekeeping in the old Plummer homestead. It was there that two little daughters were born to them, Milda Martin Davidson, and Roxanna Martin Wiegmann. (Val Jean Davidson Jackson and Homer Davidson of the Eldersville area today are children of Milda, while Vernon (Bub) Wiegmann is Roxanna's son.) Gaylord Martin also of Eldersville is today (2001) 96 years of age and was the son of Alexander and Bertha. But Gaylord was not born at Plummer's Mill, for the Martins, like others before them, came and went.

The two little girls in the picture on the left were born in the old George Plummer Homestead as is stated above. On the left is Roxanna Martin Wiegmann, and on the right is Milda Martin Davidson. Their mother, Bertha Gillespie Martin, is upper right in the white blouse. Their grandmother, Martha Johnston Gillespie is upper left. The lady seated in the center is their great-grandmother, Elizabeth Johnston. The picture was taken shortly before the death of Mrs. Johnston, who was over ninety years of age at the time. It seems fitting that these little girls would be born in such an historic house as that of George Plummer, inasmuch as they descend from very early pioneers of the area. Mrs. Johnston's grandmother, whose maiden name was Wayne, was a sister of "Mad" Anthony Wayne. This picture appeared in a very old newspaper clipping circa 1904. This copy is the courtesy of Vernon Wiegmann, great-great grandson of Mrs. Johnston.

No one consulted by this writer has been able to describe the inside of the Plummer mansion house. Perhaps it was abandoned for living purposes before persons living today were born. Kathryn Brinsky Sporka, who lives nearby and is ninety years of age, remembers the old house in her girlhood days when she went berry picking at the old mill site. But it was vacant and she considered it scary.

From available maps, it appears that when the railroad went through the Avella area circa 1903, the then existing road to Plummer's Mill became a part of the railroad bed, cutting off any easy access to this secluded spot.

Today it is the proud property of James Starinsky who appreciates its long and interesting history. In making his farming rounds, Jim walks the ancient path past the still intact foundation of the old barn, down to the mill site where the remaining stones lie exactly as they settled when the mill fell into ruin. He leaves undisturbed the moss-covered cut stones of the homestead foundation, clearly perceptible through the green grass on the high plateau.

Even today, a century or so later, one might stand alone above the location of the house and look into the waters of Cross Creek far below the steep cliff which protects the area from the outside world. It might then be possible to turn back in the direction of the foundation and almost see the ghost walls which once formed the Plummer mansion house. And whispering through the tall pines, perhaps may still be heard the sounds of childish laughter of long ago when the Plummer children ran at play. The name Plummer is gone. But in this beautiful sylvan paradise, it just may be that upon occasion, George Plummer walks once again over the land where he spent the last sixty years of his earth life. Maybe he watches with approval as Jim Starinsky drives a new post in the line fence that separates Plummer's Mill from civilization. Maybe he smiles at the obvious fact that a man much like himself now owns and loves this place that once was home to him – this place called Plummers Mill. Just maybe.

The Edward McFadden Story

by

June Grossman-Welch

Shortly before the turn of the century, a prominent young farmer named Edward McFadden married an energetic young neighbor girl by the name of Annie Ralston. Annie was the daughter of Joseph Ralston whose farm lay on the extreme western boundary of Independence Township a few miles south of the old Bellevue Campground.

The Ralstons had been apart of Independence Township for a number of generations before Annie arrived on the scene, but such was not the case with young Edward McFadden. Edward's mother was Ellen Dinsmore, a native of County Donegal, Ireland. She came with her parents to America, along with at least one sister, Mary, about 1848. Just where she met John McFadden is not known to this writer, but they fell in love and married about 1850. John soon bought a farm which lay mostly over the state line in Brooke County and moved there with his new bride. He joined farms with Joseph Ralston. Undoubtedly it was this proximity of homesteads which led to the eventual marriage of Edward and Annie.

Edward was the youngest of the six children of John and Ellen McFadden, having been preceded by two brothers, Charles and William John, and by three sisters: Nancy, Mary, and Margaret. It is reported that the eldest brother, Charles, took up a farm near the home place, while William John moved into the Bethany, WV, area. The three girls married and made homes of their own with their respective husbands. It would appear that Edward, the youngest, stayed on the home farm. His father died about 1890, when Edward was in his early twenties, after which, he and his mother continued to live at the old homestead.

Pictured is the old McFadden log house. Standing on the left is Edward, with his mother seated beside him.

When the mother, Ellen McFadden, died in December of 1912, her obituary stated that at that time, she had been living with her daughter, Nancy Councilman, for about

a decade. It is highly probably that when Edward married a neighbor girl, his mother decided to leave them to their own devices in her home, and moved with her eldest daughter. This Nancy must have had a very generous spirit, since records show that she not only cared for her aging mother, but also for her mother's sister, Mary Dinsmore Morris. Mary had six children of her own, all of whom died before Mary reached the place in life where she could not care for herself. This niece, Nancy, took her, also, into her home and cared for both of these aged women until their deaths in 1912 – a period of at least 10 years.

After Edward McFadden's marriage to Annie Ralston, life for the newlyweds was no doubt full of the usual highs and lows of any young married couple. At least two events which befell them must, however, have filled their lives with more joy than sadness, namely, the births of little Estelle in 1900, and George in 1902. Of Estelle, it was said that she was considered to be one of the brightest children in that section of the county, being able, at the age of ten, to bake bread without assistance and to do nearly any kind of housework without her mother's help, but in May of 1910, the days of happiness in which the McFaddens had been living, came to a screeching halt. On May the twenty-sixth, Estelle complained of being sick. Her mother thought it was one of the usual childhood illnesses with which every child must contend. But by afternoon, it was obvious to her parents that something was definitely wrong. Dr. W.L.Simpson was summoned and worked with little Estelle all night, yet the coming of dawn only intensified his worst fears – that Estelle was very seriously ill. He ordered the distraught parents to tell Dr. Harden of Wellsburg to come immediately. Dr. Harden hastened to the scene, but despite all efforts, at 2:30 in the afternoon of May 27, little Estelle died of the dreaded "cerebro spinal meningitis". Her parents were crazed with grief. Her grandfather, Joseph Ralston, was summoned from Washington where he was performing jury duty. Services were held on Sunday afternoon with interment in the Independence Cemetery. To the McFaddens, it was very clear that life was never to be the same again.

The funeral service for little Estelle McFadden was attended by a record crowd of friends and neighbors seeking to impart their heartfelt sympathy to the distraught parents. No doubt when Annie McFadden returned home from that heartbreaking event, she must have felt that nothing could ever happen again that could possibly equal the grief and pain of her daughter's death. But sometimes fate has a way of proving us wrong.

Some persons in attendance at the funeral were from the Bethany area where a rash of cases of scarlet fever had suddenly erupted. Not long after the McFaddens buried this love of their lives, little George became violently ill. The diagnosis was scarlet fever. The father, Edward, still nearly out of his mind at the loss of his daughter, stayed at the side of his son, day and night, frantic with the thought that this child also, might be taken from them. But little George McFadden's immune system must have kicked into high gear. The prognosis that he would recover, proved accurate.

By June 16, however, Edward himself developed the fever symptoms. The trauma of the last two weeks had reduced his ability to give it a good fight. He suffered a heart attack from which the doctors feared for his life, and from which he lay at

death's door for three days. At 8:30 on Thursday morning, Edward McFadden, barely past the age of 40, went to join his beloved Estelle.

In Edward's obituary, it is written that his wife, Annie, was almost prostrate with grief – probably the understatement of the year. Her sorrow was so great that her family feared that she might become so weakened that she, also, would succumb to scarlet fever. What no one considered was the fact that Annie was a strong woman. She came from pioneer Ralston stock and she knew exactly what she had to do. She was left with a farm of over 170 acres and barns full of sheep for which she must care. Certainly above and beyond these mundane, yet, necessary tasks awaiting her, was the one which had to be foremost in her mind. She had an eight year old son who had just lost his only sibling and his father. Young George McFadden needed his mother. And as those who knew her best believed, she was going to be there for him.

Estelle McFadden

Annie Ralston McFadden

Time went by, and little by little, Annie McFadden took over all the tasks of operating the farm. She ploughed, she harvested, she tended the ewes when their lambs were born, and she was mother and father to her son. She threw all of her energy into the thousand and one jobs that Edward would have performed, had he lived. To those, however, who knew her best, she was putting up a brave front which actually covered a very broken heart.

Her descendants today have forgotten just how long it was before some of her Ralston family decided that Annie needed help with the farm. The Ralstons had been close friends for years with a Bethany family named Lauck. Surely there must be some of that family who could help. Eventually it was the concensus of opinion that Alfred Lauck would be most able to go, and certainly the most desirable. He was a hard worker, bright, and of a pleasing disposition, and had uncommonly good sense. He had never been interested on a personal basis with any young women, so had no personal ties. After consultation with both Alfred and Annie, the Ralston family

achieved their aim. Alfred would go to the McFadden farm as a hired hand and would room and board in the old McFadden homestead with Annie and little George.

No one is quite certain how long a time elapsed with this situation in existence. They DO know that Annie continued to work in the fields and in the barns, helping her new laborer in the same manner that she had conducted these affairs herself since the death of Edward. But the days stretched into weeks and the weeks into months, and finally Annie and Alfred realized that their working relationship had developed into friendship, which had now become much more than that. They both knew that they loved each other, but there was one slight problem. Alfred was very hesitant about the idea of marriage. He had always stood in awe of girls, and had certainly never attempted a personal relationship. Annie discussed this situation with him a number of times, but each time the idea of marriage came up, Alfred hedged at the thought. Perhaps Annie would forget about marriage and they could just go on as they had been, without tying the knot. Apparently he did not know the REAL Annie Ralston McFadden. Here was a young woman who had lived through two major tragedies at the loss of two of the people dearest to her in life. Yet she had picked up the pieces of her broken dreams, and started again. She was certainly not going to give up now.

The story told to this writer by her grandson, the second Edward McFadden, goes something like this. One day when the two of them were hard at work in the corncrib, shelling corn, and sharing the easy communion that had developed between them, Annie again brought up the subject of marriage. Once again, Alfred assured her that his reluctance had nothing to do with his feelings for her, but simply that he could not bring himself to marry. Without another word, Annie arose from the little stool where she was seated, lay down the basket of unfinished corn ears, walked quietly out the door, and LOCKED it behind her. As she started for the house, she called back to him over her shoulder, " When you decide to marry me, just let me know, and I'll let you out." And the rest is history.

Annie and Alfred shared a reasonably long married life until her death at the age of 92. At that time, Alfred took her to the Independence Cemetery and buried her beside her beloved daughter, Estelle, and first husband, Edward McFadden. He survived her by but two years and was laid to rest at Brooke Cemetery in Wellsburg beside others of the Lauck family.

In researching the McFadden family for clues which would substantiate the meager information found in old obituaries and graveyard records, this writer was fortunate indeed to have come across Annie's grandson – also an Edward McFadden. He is the son of Annie's little George McFadden who survived the scarlet fever epidemic of 1910. It was from this grandson that the intriguing story of the corncrib episode was gleaned. Deepest gratitude from this writer is hereby extended. The encounter was one of great satisfaction, this Edward being a compulsive teller of stories with an unsurpassed sense of humor and a warm, disarming, personal charm. It makes this writer wonder if perhaps it was this same McFadden charm which, more than a century ago, enticed pretty Annie Ralston to marry the FIRST Edward McFadden who was born and raised just across the line fence of her father's farm.

Personalities from the Past

Agnes Burns

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

My name was Agnes Burns. I was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania, on New Year's Day in 1839. I lived until 1941 to the age of 102.

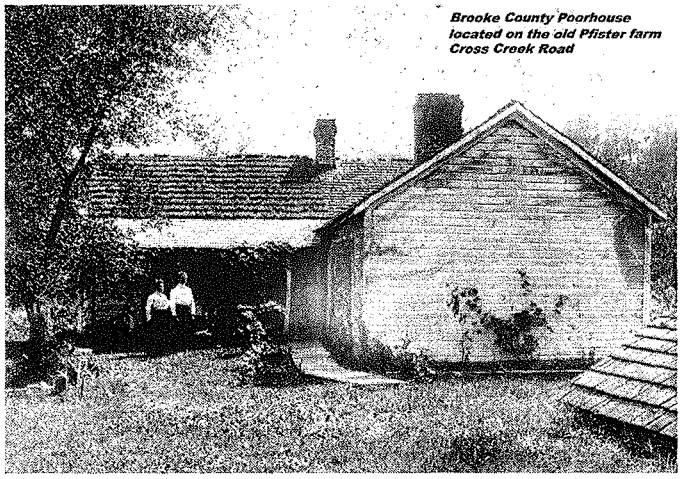
I had no relatives for much of my lifetime and was very alone in the world. I worked many years as a cook in the Poor House at Brooke County and also at the infirmary in Ohio County. When I grew too old to work any longer, I simply stayed in the Poor House, making it my home.

The Brooke County Poorhouse stood on the banks of Cross Creek behind the John Pfister Homestead. John's daughter, Fannie Pfister, worked there as a cook also. In the mid 1940s, the Pfister homestead caught fire one cold winter night and burned to the ground. Fannie's bachelor brother and maiden sister escaped unharmed, but Fannie, who also got out of the flaming inferno, remembered something inside the house which she just could not give up. She ran back in and was overcome by smoke. Her body was later found in the old back stairway to the second story.

When I grew very old, I could remember many things about the past. I had lived in Steubenville, Ohio, when it was just an outpost. I lived in Florida at one point in time and was caught in a tornado. I was somewhat injured in that terrible storm and lost one thumb.

My chief enjoyment in later years came from smoking my pipe. This attracted a lot of attention among the other inmates of the Poor House. I was always a very popular person while I was there, and had many friends. For my one hundredth birthday, the people of Brooke County gave me a post card shower at which I received several hundred cards.

When I died in 1941, large crowds attended funeral services for me. Judson Gardner, well-known mortician of Brooke County, gave me a decent burial and placed my body in his own personal burial plot at the Eldersville Cemetery in Jefferson Township. He even had a stone erected to mark the spot where I lay. No one passing by my grave would suspect that I lived and died penniless. Sometimes the grave covers a multitude of secrets.



Brooke County Poorhouse located on the old Pfister farm Cross Creek Road

Mary McClain

by

June Grossman-Welch

My name was Mary McClain. I was born the seventeenth of February in 1832 on the old Craig Farm in Hopewell Township near West Middletown. My mother, Polly McConnell, daughter of George and Pheobe McConnell, had been married to a man named John Christy by whom she had a son and daughter. Her husband died in 1824 at the age of 33 and was buried in the McConnell family plot in Grove Cemetery.

As a young widow with two small children, my mother was no doubt pleased to find herself the object of the attentions of a young stranger in the community by the name of George McClain. He had recently emigrated from County Donegal, Ireland, and seemed reluctant to discuss his past life there. Since he was somewhat of a mystery, he was often the subject of discussion over the back fences of the little village. One of his newly acquired friends discouraged him from courting my mother, believing that a ready-made family would be a detriment to his success in the New World. Yet, despite the advice, he married my mother, but unlike the endings in the proverbial fairy tales, they did not live happily ever after.

My older brother, James McClain, was born in May of 1828. I followed in 1832, and my brother, William, in December of 1836. At the birth of William, my mother died. I was but four years of age and remembered very little of our lives up to that point.

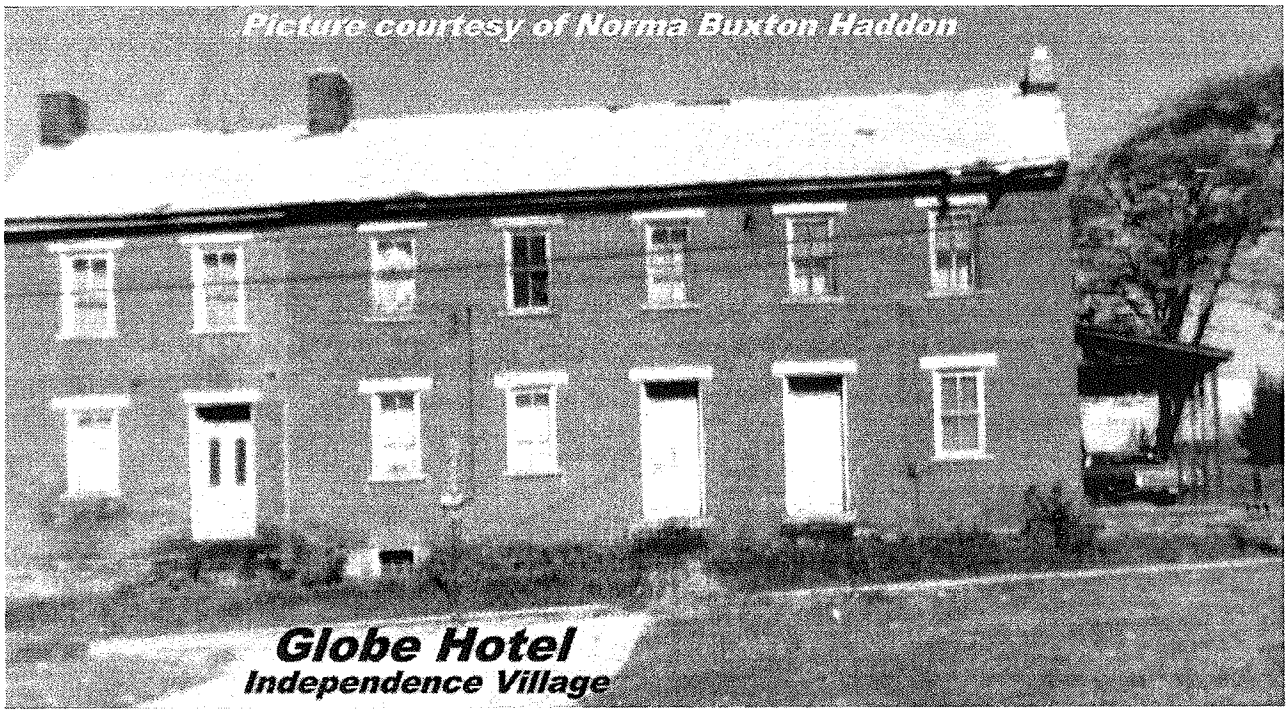
For some reason unknown to us children, our father was gone from home for long periods of time, during which, my mother took us to our McConnell grandparents' home where she worked at odd jobs to try to support us. At the time of my mother's death, my father was back home with us, but immediately after the funeral, my mother's siblings came to our house to make some important decisions about us. Apparently they knew that our father was not going to make a home for us. Uncle Hugh Hamilton, who was married to my mother's sister, Anne, told the family that he was going to take me and raise me with his own little daughters. This, he did. My life with them was happy, and I was given the same material possessions as his own children and was always treated as one of the family. I was especially close to my cousin, Elizabeth. As the years went by, we became more like sisters than cousins, and shared the secrets of girls growing up in the same household.

Uncle John Patterson, who was married to my mother's sister, Elizabeth, took my older brother, James. James must have been happy with them for they made certain he was taught a trade and when he married and had children, he named his second son, John Patterson McClain.

My baby brother, William, was but an infant when my mother was buried, and what to do about him seemed to be a matter of great concern to those gathered about. One of those present, stated that he thought they really did not need to worry because the child was so frail he would probably not live long. But before any decision could be made, Mrs. Elizabeth Liggett, walked into our home, went to the cradle, picked up my sleeping baby brother in her arms, and announced to those present that she was taking the baby. My mother's sisters and their husbands were dumbfounded. Mrs. Liggett was very highly esteemed in the neighborhood, as was her husband, Lemuel. The Liggett family had been prominent in the area since

pioneer days, and were a prosperous people, respected by the entire community. But they were not family. I am sure as those in the little gathering searched each other's faces for an answer, it must have been in the backs of their minds that no one else had come forward to take this sickly infant, and perhaps this was at least a temporary solution. But Elizabeth Liggett saw nothing "temporary" in it at all. Here was the baby she had wanted all of her life, but whom the fates had denied. She scooped him up and walked confidently out the door.

A man named James Thompson who was also present at this occasion, finally gained his composure and stated that he felt for the family to be legally safe, the husband of Elizabeth should sign a paper to guarantee that he would never sue for the keep of this child. This he willingly did. The Liggetts took William from that day forth, changing his name to Liggett and making him their very own. They gave him everything that money could buy and all the love they would have bestowed upon him, had he been their natural child. As the years went by, they purchased the well-known Globe Hotel in Independence Village and passed it on to William who made a good living from it. He became a Justice of the Peace for at least a quarter of a century, and was well respected in the community. He married and raised a family, and supported his widowed mother for many years after Lemuel's death. The frail infant who was given up "temporarily" because no one believed he would live, grew up in a very permanent family as a beloved only child and survived to the grand old age of nearly 84.



After going to live with my aunt and uncle, life settled down for me to a pleasant routine. As we grew up, Elizabeth and her little sister, Fannie, married and began new lives of their own. Elizabeth married Jerome Plummer whose mother was from

the wealthy Wells family of the area. Fannie married David Buchanan and had four beautiful children. But Jerome and Elizabeth were childless. I remained at home with the Hamiltons. When I was about twenty years old, Uncle Hugh died. Ten years later, Aunt Annie followed. But I was not left alone. At the death of my aunt, Elizabeth and Jerome came immediately to get me, assuring me that I was to be a member of their family for as long as I might live. Thus it was, for the last 49 years of my life, I lived with them in the beautiful brick Plummer mansion on the main street in Independence Village, sharing their abundance and wanting for nothing.

After my death, my obituary stated that our parents both died when I was four years of age, leaving the three of us as orphans. For all practical purposes, this was true. We WERE orphans. My mother died that December in 1836. But my father did not. What he DID do, was desert us.

Even as a small child, I was aware that something was wrong. Things were not as they should be. My father would be gone for long periods of time, yet no one seemed to know much about his absences. There was always somewhat of a mystery about him. Even by the time of my death, I knew only bits and pieces of the true story.

From old letters kept by James Thompson, I learned that before I was born, my father told my mother that he had received a letter from Ireland. His mother had died and as her eldest heir, he was to receive a huge settlement from her estate. He told my mother that he had made arrangements with another man to return to Ireland to settle up the matter. He was gone for more than a year. When he returned, his story was that there were some entanglements with the estate and it would be another 18 months before he would receive his share. Many years after my mother's death, we learned the truth. He never returned to Ireland at all. He had gone to New York where he taught school to support himself. Unfortunately for him, a man from our local area was there at the time and recognized him. The reason for such deceit became obvious in due time.

A young man fresh out of Ireland appeared in our community one day in search of a George McClain. He said he was the son of this George McClain who had deserted him and his mother and that George had come to America to escape the consequences. When my father's web of deception closed in on him, he refused to admit that he was a bigamist, but eventually conceded that he perhaps had an illegitimate child back in Ireland. For years, this young man followed our father in his constant changes of scenery. But each time, my father was able to elude him. As late as 1859, this John McClain was still searching. At one point in time, my father had let it be known that he had gone to Lancaster to accept a teaching job. But after a very detailed and comprehensive search, John was able to establish the sad fact that my father had never, ever lived there. The last definitive report we had of this whole affair was that John conceded that he was never going to find him alive. We never heard anything of him again. The time and place of his death were as much a mystery to us as was his life. At the time of my mother's death, he signed over to us children any share of her inheritance from her father which might have come to him, as her husband. Perhaps he feared that an investigation into their marriage might turn up information about his former marriage. He made no attempt

to keep us together as a family, but seemed content that we were being "farmed out" to my mother's relatives.

When I died at 8:30 a.m. on the fourth of April in 1911 at the age of 79, I knew that the three of us children had been very lucky human beings. We had been loved and cared for all of our lives by people who wanted us. Each one of us would have been a credit to our biological father, George McClain. The decision he made to desert us, was HIS loss.

It was on the old Craig Homestead that Mary McClain and her brothers were born. The house pictured above is still standing in 2001. The date of its construction is not known, but the McClain children were born either in this house or in its predecessor on this old Craig farm.

Series 2

Backward Glances

Published by
AD White Research Society, LTD
Avella, PA

Courtesy of Fort Vance Historical Society

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Preface

The late A.D.White was, beyond doubt, the greatest Keeper-of-the-Records of Southwestern Pennsylvania history during a lifetime which lacked four months of spanning a century. During that lifetime, he had a dream which was two-fold. First, it was his earnest desire that his extensive collection of personal writings, clippings, and other genealogical and historical gleanings should, at some point in time, be made available to the public. Second, recognizing the inevitability that his own efforts at recording facts concerning people, places, and events of the area were coming to an end, it was his hope that others would take up the torch in this behalf. These dreams he voiced frequently and with great conviction.

After his death in 1994, the establishment of the A.D.White Research Society, Ltd., and the present endeavors to secure a permanent Center for this Society, are efforts to bring to fulfillment this first dream. This series of "Backward Glances", a compilation of writings on local history, is a beginning attempt to fulfill the second.

As may be noticed from the Table of Contents, these writings fall into one of four arbitrary categories.

The "Second Wave Pioneers" category contains the stories of families whose immigrant ancestor came, for the most part, to this country between 1890 and 1925. Many worked in the mines, on the railroads, or on farms. Their greatest handicap was the language barrier. Their children were often discriminated against and ridiculed because they were not fluent in English. Many of these children were befriended by A.D.White himself, who was principal in many of the local schools at that time. He encouraged them to be all that they could be. As time went by, it was almost an obsession with him that someone should put the stories of their hardships and tragedies into written form. This category of "Second Wave Pioneers" is the attempt of the A.D. Society to do exactly that. These stories were written either by a descendant of a pioneer or by someone to whom the story had been told.

The pioneers who made the perilous journey across the ocean are gone. Even the entire generation of their children are, in many instances, no longer living. Thus, the tales of their experiences will soon be beyond retrieving. If you, one of our readers, descend from such a family, we plead with you either to write the story of your family and submit it to us to be published in the near future, or tell it to someone who will do the writing for you. Such stories should be similar in content and scope with those published in this volume and should include appropriate accompanying pictures.

Articles in the "Memories of Yesteryear" category are exactly that. Many of them have been written by persons who no longer live in the area targeted, but whose memories of the same are fondly cherished. Readers are encouraged to make personal contributions to this category for future publication. Potential contributors need not be concerned that spelling, grammar, or sentence construction may not be perfect. All articles will be carefully edited for such errors, while keeping the original style and structure intact.

Persons wishing to contribute to either of these categories should contact Kathryn Slasor at 724-947-3983 or mail contributions to her at 742 Cedar Grove Road, Burgettstown, PA 15021.

Because of the extensive research necessary to produce stories for the "Old Homesteads and Pioneers" category, no one has yet come forth to assist in these writings. Thus the reader will find the majority in this section are authored by either June Campbell Grossman-Welch or Kathryn Campbell Slasor, who have done extensive research and writing in this category over at least a dozen years.

"Personalities from the Past" is included to provide a change of pace from the more rigorous style encountered in the "Homesteads" section. This format has been used extensively over the past several years to catch the attention of a group of young people known as the "Seekers". Maintaining their continued interest in local history is an important goal of the A.D.White Society. These "Personalities" are also authored primarily by the two above named writers.

The Society wishes to thank its many contributors for the work and time spent in providing these stories. It also wishes to remind readers that two persons viewing the same experience may be affected by it in two entirely different ways. Thus, in reading these accounts, you may recall some of these events in ways other than those expressed in these articles. However, this is the way it was as the authors remembered it.

Profits from the sale of "Backward Glances" will be used to continue similar publications in the near future.

Second Wave Pioneers

The Frank Chilensky Family

by
Paul Chilensky, Sr.
as told to
June Campbell Grossman-Welch

My paternal grandfather, Jan (John) Celinsky, was a high ranking officer in the Checko-Slovakian Army. When the Germans took over the area, the Check Army retreated to Budapest, Hungary. There my grandfather married Maria Rodena Lenardova. While they lived in Hungary, my father, Frank Chilensky, was born. The year was 1891 and the exact time was September the 5th. In 1895, he was followed by a brother, Andrew, and still later by two sisters, Susan and Erma.

Grandfather John Chilensky

Andrew Chilensky (Uncle Andy)

We are not exactly sure just when my grandfather decided to try his luck in America, but we do know that he felt he should see what the new country would be like before moving his family. We believe that he came to the Braddock area of Pittsburgh where he worked for some time in the mines there. In 1902, when my father was but eleven years old and little Andrew was just seven, my grandfather sent passage money for them to come to America.

Their journey was not a pleasant one since many people on board the ship felt they must be stowaways since no adult was with them. Eventually, however, the long, scary journey was over and they arrived at Ellis Island where their father awaited with open arms. But the joy of being reunited with their father was quickly dispelled. A message came from Europe that their mother, Maria, had died, leaving their two little sisters in

the care of relatives. Over the years, my grandfather coaxed and coaxed for Susan and Erma to come to America. But they were afraid to make the journey and chose to remain in their native land. My grandfather, my father, and my Uncle Andy never saw Susan or Erma again.

My father, Frank, spoke often and lovingly of his mother. I think he never quite recovered from her death. Over the years, the boys kept in touch with their sisters, sending them gifts and many of the necessities of life. Life was difficult in Hungary at that time after the Communist take-over, and many times the packages that were sent were opened by the government and the contents confiscated. One time, Uncle Andy and his wife sent one of the girls a wedding gown which was the biggest thrill of her life.

Years later, when Uncle Andy died, I was hoping to gain some information for the family history I was compiling. I knew he had received many letters from his sisters over the years that would surely shed some light on the missing elements in our family story. But as fate would have it, by the time I arrived to ask about the letters, one of his descendants had been there first. The decision had been made that they were just "a bunch of old letters from the old country". They had all been destroyed. Needless to say, I have been heartsick over the situation ever since. All we have left are our memories of things our father told us.

On March 3, 1903, our grandfather, who had applied in a district court in Pittsburgh for his citizenship papers, had his request approved. But it was not until 25 September 1906, that he finally received the document.

At some point in time, my grandfather decided to move to Washington County. On the southern end of Bethel Ridge Road in Jefferson Township, he purchased the Creighton Pettibon homestead. Since Creighton did not die until 1915, we are not certain exactly when this move was made. We do know, however, that in 1918, Grandfather decided that he needed a mate. My Uncle Andy had left home and married Sarah Sutherland, and my father, Frank, was planning to marry my mother. So Grandfather married Elizabeth Ivanko and to them were born four sons: John, Joseph, Michael, and George. The little boys attended the one room school known as Millers Schoolhouse but which actually stood on the edge of my grandfather's farm.

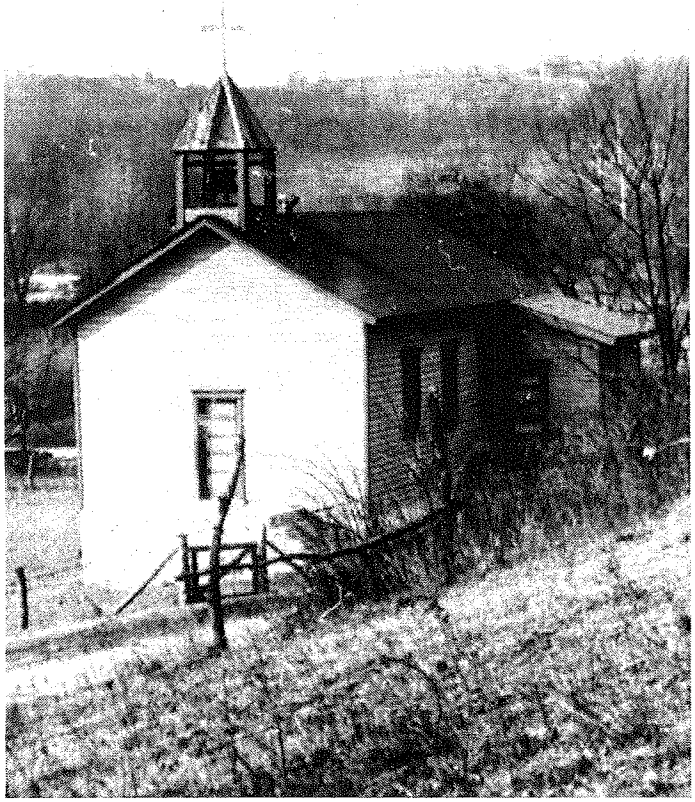
Of my grandfather's background, we know very little. We know that his parents were Ondrej and Susany Celinsky, but we know nothing of any illnesses or physical problems they may have had. We know that in addition to farming, Grandfather worked in the Penowa and Penobscot mines. We have wondered if the years spent in the damp, dark coal mines may have been the undoing of my grandfather, or if he had inherited respiratory problems. We will never know. What we do know is that he had been born on October 24, 1871, in a far off land. And he died at the age of 51 on his farm in the old Pettibon log house on Bethel Ridge Road on Christmas Eve in 1922 of pulmonary tuberculosis. He left his wife, Elizabeth, and four small boys behind. He was buried at St. Michael's Cemetery at Pattersons Mills near Avella.

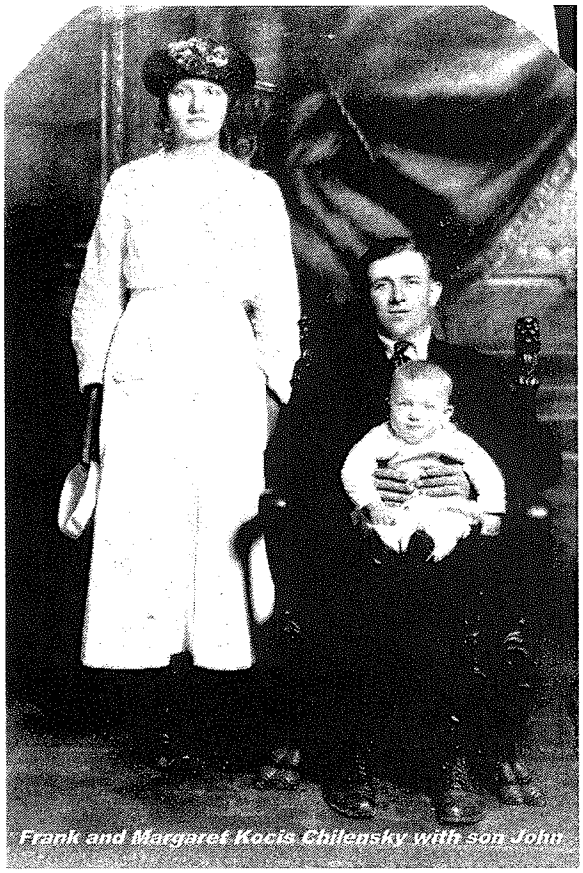
After my grandfather's death, life was very hard for Elizabeth. When he grew big enough, little Joseph kept the fire burning in the pot-bellied stove at Miller's School for the exorbitant wage of 50 cents a week. Elizabeth's neighbors, John Cassidy, Mike Stillson, Martin Reagan, and the Rigo family kept in touch to see that she and the little

fellows were fine. Eventually Elizabeth married Joseph Ter, who helped her operate the farm. They sold farm products to local townspeople to make a living. Finally Elizabeth sold the farm to a coal company and they in turn sold it to the Strho family, by which name it is still known.

As has been said, my father and his brother, Andy, were much older than Elizabeth's children and soon ventured out on their own. On the 9th of January in 1919, my father, Frank Chilensky, married my mother, Margaret Kocis, at the little St. Hermanguilde Catholic Church at Penowa. My mother's parents, who also came from Hungary, had settled in Cleveland, Ohio, where my mother had been born. At the time of their marriage, my father was working at the Penowa mines, so of course this is where they went to housekeeping.

St Hermenguilde Church





Frank and Margaret Kocis Chilensky with son John

It was in Penowa that my two eldest brothers were born: John, on 24 November 1919 and Frank,Jr. on 13 June 1921. Frank later married Mildred Kramer. They were the parents of: Frank, Nicholas, David, Debbie, Joyce, Mark, Judy, Theresa, and Kathy. He died 30 December 1986.

After Frank Jr.'s birth, my father got work in Louise Mine just across the state line in Brooke County, West Virginia. Here my sister, Mary, was born on 3 March 1923 and I followed on 11 September 1925. Mary married Edward Greer. They had no children. She died 19 September 1981. I married Mary Greer. We had three children: John, Diana, and Paul Jr. . I later married Della Reed.

It was in 1926, when I was but a toddler, that the family moved back to Jefferson Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania. There, they settled on the beautiful Gould Moore Farm, high on the hill above Kidds Mill. The rest of my siblings were born in the big farmhouse, making a total of ten children. This Moore Farm was "home" to the Chilensky family since six of us were born there and we remained there until many of us were grown.

My siblings who were born on the Moore farm were:

David, born 17 July 1927; married but had no issue.

Edward, born 13 June 1929; married Alice Spencer; had four sons: Edward, Robert, Steve, and Raymond; died 1 May 1971.

Martha, born 27 July 1933; married William Hlusko; had children – Margie and William.

The Twins: August and Agnes, born 22 August 1935. August unmarried.

Agnes married Charles Morris and had two sons: Charles and Gregory.

Grace, born 20 November 1938; married Merle Bender; had four children: Denise, Mary Jo, Lisa, and Thomas.

By 1939, coal strippers were invading the area and the Moore Farm was one of their targets, so my father moved us to an adjoining farm known as the Jackson Farm. But by the early 1940s, the same fate befell this old homestead. So as a family, we made one last move – back across the state line to Amspoker Ridge and one of the oldest homesteads in Brooke County – the James Steen Farm.

We were, as can be seen, a very large family. But we were also a very close family. Our parents loved us and we loved them and each other. I remember how my sisters always seemed to be in conversation with my father. There was a wonderful closeness between them. But nothing lasts forever.

In 1944, the War to end all wars, broke out. And the four eldest sons of Frank and Margaret Chilensky answered the call. John, the eldest, enlisted in the Army 16 December 1941. Frank became a sergeant in the Marines, serving in the South Pacific. I was a S1/c in the Navy on the LST659 with the Amphibious Forces. And David became a sergeant in the US Air Force. (He later served in Vietnam where he was wounded in action. The two younger boys eventually were military men also. Edward received the Bronze Star in Korea and August participated in the occupation of Germany.)

John received his Basic Training at Camp Lee, Virginia. After further schooling, he eventually was graduated from quartermaster motor transport school at Hoabird, MD. And on 17 June in 1942, he was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant at Officers Training School in Fort Benning, Georgia. He was assigned to 3rd Division, 7th Infantry, Company A and went overseas in March of 1944.

In the meantime, I had been assigned to serve as signalman on the LST659. My mother, in writing to all of us, tried to keep us informed as to the whereabouts of our siblings. It was through her efforts that John knew the number of my ship.

John had survived the devastation of the Battle of Anzio and the equally treacherous journey to Rome. By mid-August, momentum was swinging toward the Allies. They had broken through German lines in Northern France and had moved into open country. The invasion of Southern France would allow them to race up the Rhone River Valley and push eastward to the German border near the Rhine River. John was then reassigned

to the Invasion of Southern France and placed aboard an LST that would take him to the shores of France.

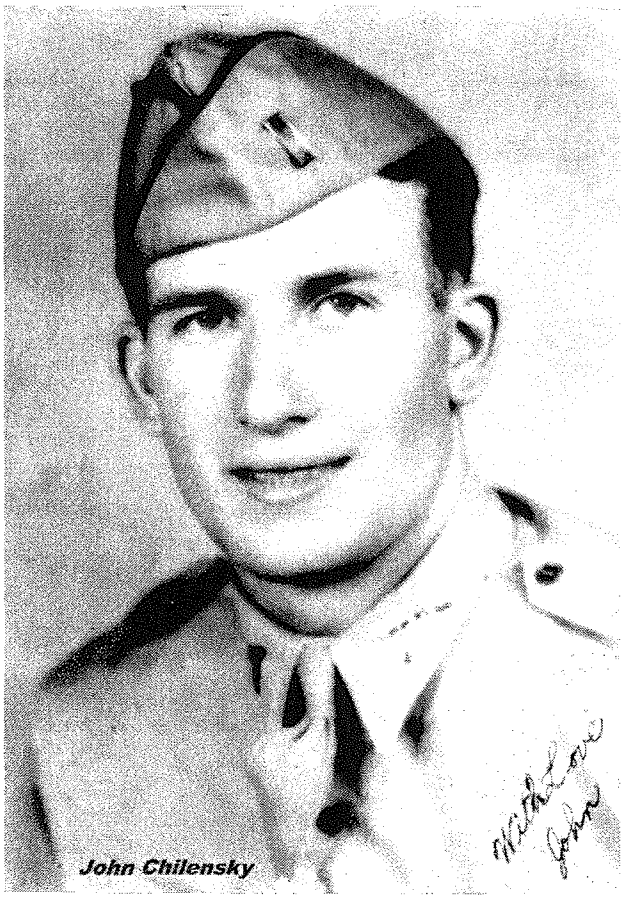
Paul Chilensky's ship
LST - US659

While my ship was anchored in the bay, John saw the number on its side, and knew from our mother's letter, that I was on that ship. John came aboard and informed the officer of the day to send word to me that someone wanted to see me at the gangway. I remember of telling the messenger, "Who, in this God-forsaken world, would want to see me at the gangway?" One of our crew spoke up and said, "Didn't you say you had a brother somewhere in this vicinity?" I immediately went topside to the gangway. There stood my brother, John, in battle fatigues, alive and in the flesh! We went to the stern of the ship and talked about two hours, before his time was up to be back to his own assignment. He was in good spirits, but had serious doubts that we would win the War. When it was time to say goodbye, I watched until he was out of sight. It was the last time I saw my big brother. The invasion of Southern France began on August 15th. John was killed in the line of duty by an SS sniper on the 16th.

My sister, Martha, who was eleven years old at the time, said that when the messengers came to the door of the old Steen house on Amspoker Ridge with a telegram, she was not fully aware of the implications of war. But with four brothers fighting overseas, she knew it was bad news. She often related that our mother was so nervous that she could not sign her name for the telegram. Life was never the same again.

Through the long years following John's death, we each had our own way of coping with our grief. I am certain that the deaths of my parents were hastened by that tragic event.

One would think that after half a century, we could have let him go. But somehow, there was no end to this thing that seemed to hang over our heads forever. So it was that forty-nine years later, my sisters Martha and Agnes, and Martha's son, William, and I went to France to find John's grave. As Martha so aptly described it to a local reporter a year later, " It tore our hearts out". The beauty of his burial place is, I am sure, unsurpassed. In our minds, we now have a picture of his final resting place. But nothing makes up for the useless ending of a life at the age of 24.



Above, left, is the Army photo of John Chilensky. On the right is his grave marker at Rhone American Cemetery, Draruignan, France. The inscription reads: John Chilensky, 2 Lt., 7 Inf. 3 Div., Pennsylvania, August 16, 1944.

Through the years, our family tried to locate someone who knew John when he was overseas fighting. Finally, on a whim, I put an ad in an Army organization newspaper asking if any of the members knew John. It was in July of 1994 when we got a phone call. My wife answered the phone. A man said his name was Andrew Macke and he lived in Ottawa, Ohio, but was now just downtown Steubenville. He had known John and wanted directions to our home. It was a meeting to remember. The following year, my sister, Agnes, and I went to a reunion of this group of veterans where Andrew introduced us to a number of men who had known our brother. But it wasn't until July of 2001 that Andrew was able to bring himself to tell us that he was with John when he died. For the first time, we were able to begin to get a handle on things. Here was someone who was with him at the end.

In these seven years since we have known Andy Macke, he has become part of the Chilensky family. We have learned to love him – for himself – not just because he was the last to see John. It has been a healing and rewarding experience. We have had other deaths in the family since John left us, but none were quite so deep and cutting as that first break in the circle. But thanks to the generous spirit of this wonderful new friend, we are, at long last, beginning to heal.

The Repole Family

by

June Grossman Welch

(The story, itself, plus the family genealogy, is from Jennie Repole Ramsey)

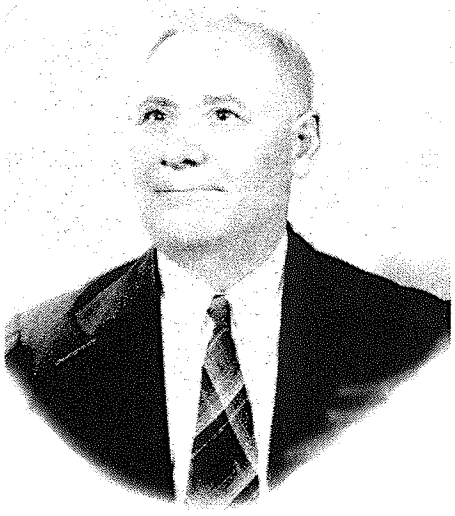
Benny Repole was born on a tobacco plantation in 1883 in the town of Benevento, in the Province of Naples, Italy. Five years later, in 1888, near the Isle of Capri on the Bay of Naples, Rose Cuomo first saw the light of day. At that time, the families of these two children could not know that they were destined to spend nearly half a century of their lives together.

Shortly after 1900, Benny decided to try his luck in the New World. He set sail from Naples and arrived at Ellis Island in New York. Eventually he made his way to the little village of Burgettstown in Smith Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania, where he was able to get work on the railroad.

When Benny felt he was able to support a wife and family, he sent back to Italy for Rose, with whom he had long ago fallen deeply in love. Rose was not more than eighteen years old and her parents felt she was too young to travel that far alone. Thus it was that her brother, Tom, who later became a realtor in America, and her sister, Mary, who was a seamstress, determined that their little sister, Rose, was going to have her chance for a better life in a new land. They set sail from Naples with their little charge, and arrived, as planned, in New York.

They knew that Rose's fiance was living in Burgettstown and that he worked on the railroad. With that little piece of information, they were able to put through a long distance call to the little passenger station which stood at that time on Main Street Extension. A man named Bob Stottlemyer answered the phone. He sent quickly for Benny who told his beloved where to wait for him in New York. He took the next train back east. When he brought her back with him to Burgettstown, he then took her to St. Anthony's Catholic Church across the river in Steubenville, Ohio, where they became husband and wife.

Rose Cuomo Repole



Ben Repole

Nine children were to be born to this union between 1908 and 1924. But this awesome task of giving birth to this large family and providing for all of their needs did not stop Rose Repole from helping her husband to provide for their children financially.

Rose was apparently born with an eye to business. They lived at 26 Main Street Extension in Burgettstown, not far from the railroad, and Rose saw in this convenient location an opportunity of a lifetime. The work crew of the railroad company camped in the railroad yards behind the freight station. The railroad company provided for their physical needs, including their meals. Rose immediately set up a small grocery store in her home which she stocked with staples needed by these work crews, so the company bought all of the food supplies for their men from the Repole Store. This thriving enterprise was only the beginning of the Repole name as a business family of the area.

In 1915, Benny Repole hired a man named James Woodrow to design a building for him that was to house a general store.

At the chosen location of 72 Main Street, Jim and Joe Martin followed these plans to construction. They called it simply the Repole Building. What they did not guess was that it would house various forms of business enterprises for Benny and Rose and for their children for 77 years, until Jennie Repole Ramsey, being the last surviving member of this large family, in 1993, was forced to throw in the towel.

As Rose spent her "spare time" running the general store in the new building, her eldest son, Gus, in 1944, started a furniture store next door to the general store. As

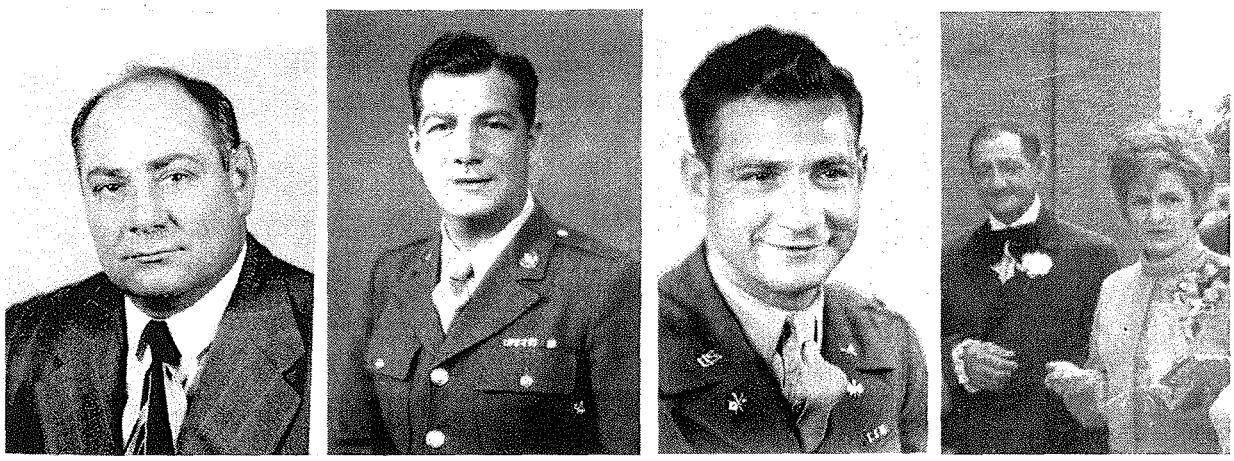
time went by, Mary, who served the area many years as a telephone operator, took over the family business and converted it to a clothing shop. At the time of its closure in 1993, it provided the ladies of the area with the latest fashions from New York at a reasonable price, right in their own back yards. It was a far cry from the days when the Repoles delivered groceries for people with a horse and wagon and climbed ladders along the walls to reach items on the top shelves. The smiles they always wore on their faces belied their vivid remembrances of the dark days of the Great Depression when they got paid in chickens and eggs and sold $18 high button shoes for 88 cents.

The first two children of Benny and Rose, namely, August and Mary, did not marry, but remained closely tied to the family circle. Gus was employed by Weirton Steel and served in World War II, along with two of his brothers, while Mary took over the family store at the death of her mother. Clair, the third child, was a boxer, being the Golden Glove Champion of 1938. He also served in the armed forces during the war. He had one son who died as a child. Elizabeth, child #4, married Nicholas Iannetti. The Iannettis had three sons: Nick and Carl, who followed their father in the operation of the well-known Iannetti Garden Center on Steubenville Pike, and Joseph who became a school superintendent.

In 1915 when Benny decided to have the Repole Store building constructed, a fifth child, Samuel, was born. But little Sam did not live to see his fifth birthday. In 1920 he succumbed to a bout with pneumonia which took his life. The world for Benny and Rose was never quite the same again.

In 1917, Bernard was born. Bernie was a first lieutenant in the Signal Corp during the war and posthumously was awarded the rank of Captain. He died tragically at the age of 29, almost before life began. It was said that his was the biggest military funeral ever known in Burgettstown up to that time. Bernie never married.

James, the seventh child, worked for Weirton Steel and served his country during the war. He married Mary Klilach and together they had three sons: James, Thomas, and Timothy. These are the only grandchildren of Benny and Rose to carry the Repole name.



The four Repole sons

Gus *Clair* *Bernie* *Jim & Mary Kay*

Jennie was the eighth child of the Repoles. She married Donald James Ramsey by whom she had two sons: Bernard and Gerald. At the age of eighty, Jennie may still be

seen just about any time at all behind the counter of "EZ Pickins", a popular drive in eatery at Florence since 1956.

Josephine was the ninth and final child of Benny and Rose, being born on the 4th of February in 1924. She married James A. Gilliland. They had no children.

A careful scrutiny of this family tree will show that Jim, Jennie, and Libby were the only three of this family of nine to produce offspring who lived to adulthood. All of this generation were boys. Of these eight grandsons, Jennie's sons, Bernie and Gerry Ramsey, seem to have the Repole yen for being in the public domain in business. This is evidenced by their constant presence at the EZ Pickins establishment. Two of Libby's sons, Nick and Carl Iannetti, have the same natural business acumen of their grandmother, Rose Repole. They have developed a nursery business which is probably the best known and trusted company of its kind in the Tri-State area, having followed in their father's footsteps for most of their adult lives.

The four Repole daughters

Mary Jennie Libby Josephine

If you were to ask any old timer in Burgettstown what they know about the Repole family, they would be sure to mention their love of the town and their faith in the people of the area. This faith was strongly evidenced by the fact that they remained in business on Main Street for 77 years. And this did not count the years before the "new" store building of 1915, when Rose operated the little grocery down on Main Street Extension. Probably one of the most difficult things that Jennie Repole Ramsey ever had to do was to close the doors of that Repole store building for the last time. But with the death of her last sibling, Jim, on June 22 in 1992, she had little choice in the matter. The feeling of the entire Repole family for their town and their business was summed up very well by Mary when she was interviewed in 1975 for the celebration of their 60th year of uninterrupted business on Main Street. She said it very succinctly and very well with these twelve little words:
"Papa said, 'There will always be a Burgettstown.' And we believed him."

THE KRANAK FAMILY

by
John A. Kranak
as told to
Kathryn Campbell Slasor

My father, Frank Joseph Kranak was born in Bratislava, Moravia, near the Austrian border, on October 22, 1889. He was the fifth son of a farming class family, considered at that time to be very productive and well off.

The family members lived happily together, all working on the farm. When he was four years of age, his father was taken by death. His mother was left with six young children, but took things in stride, the family sharing the load.

As time went by, his mother realized that more land was needed to raise crops to feed the family. A suitable farm was found in Yugoslavia, so the family moved. My father was now eleven years old. He decided he would rather become a blacksmith than work on the farm. To fulfill this ambition, it was necessary for him to become an apprentice for four years. He was not permitted to return home during this four- year period, but was expected to remain the entire time at the place of his apprenticeship.

My father found that this was, indeed, hard work. His sleeping quarters were in the haymow of the barn, and his meals consisted of food left over from the master's table. Sometimes he would become so hungry that he would sneak all the way back home at night. There, his mother would give him food to eat with enough left to take with him. He would then run back to his place of apprenticeship to be on the job by daybreak. No one ever knew that he was gone.

After four years, he received his diploma and was a full fledged blacksmith with a book of recommendations. In the meantime, he had learned to speak many languages that would help him in supporting the family back home. By the age of twenty-three, he had seven years of employment behind him.

Due to various sets of circumstances, my father decided to book passage to America. On December 4, 1913, he landed at Ellis Island. Strangers became friends, as kind people helped him find employment. He secured work soon with a coal mining company as a blacksmith and a boiler maker for Champion Coal. He then rented a house in Noblestown, met Mary Stiburek, married her and began a family.

I am John A. Kranak, the fifth son of Frank and Mary Stiburek Kranak. Except for my sister, Mary, I was the youngest of the family. My parents experienced heartache and tragedy when the first children were small. One twin, Joseph, died in the influenza epidemic, while two-year-old Jerry a few short years later pulled a pan of scalding water from the stove, causing his death. My mother's parents also passed away during this time. But Mother and Dad had each other, and they held fast to those of us who were spared. The other twin, Michael, and Frank,Jr. completed the family.

In those early days, my father moved the family a number of times and by 1923, had settled on a farm not far off the Hanlin Road where they operated a boarding house. There were times that my mother had twenty-six boarders as well as her own children around her table. My father was glad that he had also studied the trade of butchering. When I was small, we moved again, this time into the old stone house at Hanlin Station,

near the arch. It was here that I became my father's "shadow," following him in all of his work. When I was six, I carried bricks to help build a cistern that would contain the water we piped from the top of the hill. I also learned to mix cement and sand on a mortar board. At this young age, turning the blower in the blacksmith shop was also my job.

I attended the one-room school at Hanlin Station, then went to high school in Burgettstown where I excelled not only in books but also in sports. I was graduated in 1941.

Since I had learned welding and burning from my father, I wanted to continue my schooling. By the time I was twenty-three years old, I had attended and graduated from five trade schools. These included Conley Trade School, diesel and advanced diesel classes in Illinois and Virginia, and others.

By November 5, 1943, I thought it was time to join the Navy. My experience on the YMS 468 enabled me to work with all the technical and mechanical equipment, fitting me for the highly dangerous job of mine sweeping for enemy mines and subs.

While docked at Honolulu, I became the barber for 32 men. After the clippers I had bought were paid for, there was no charge for a haircut. And never any complaints!

Mine sweeping was a constant challenge, as were typhoons and storms. One day in 1945, a severe typhoon struck our ship. The anchors were out and I was on the

engines full throttle. Many ships were lost and others severely damaged. The damage suffered by our ship required seventeen days to repair.

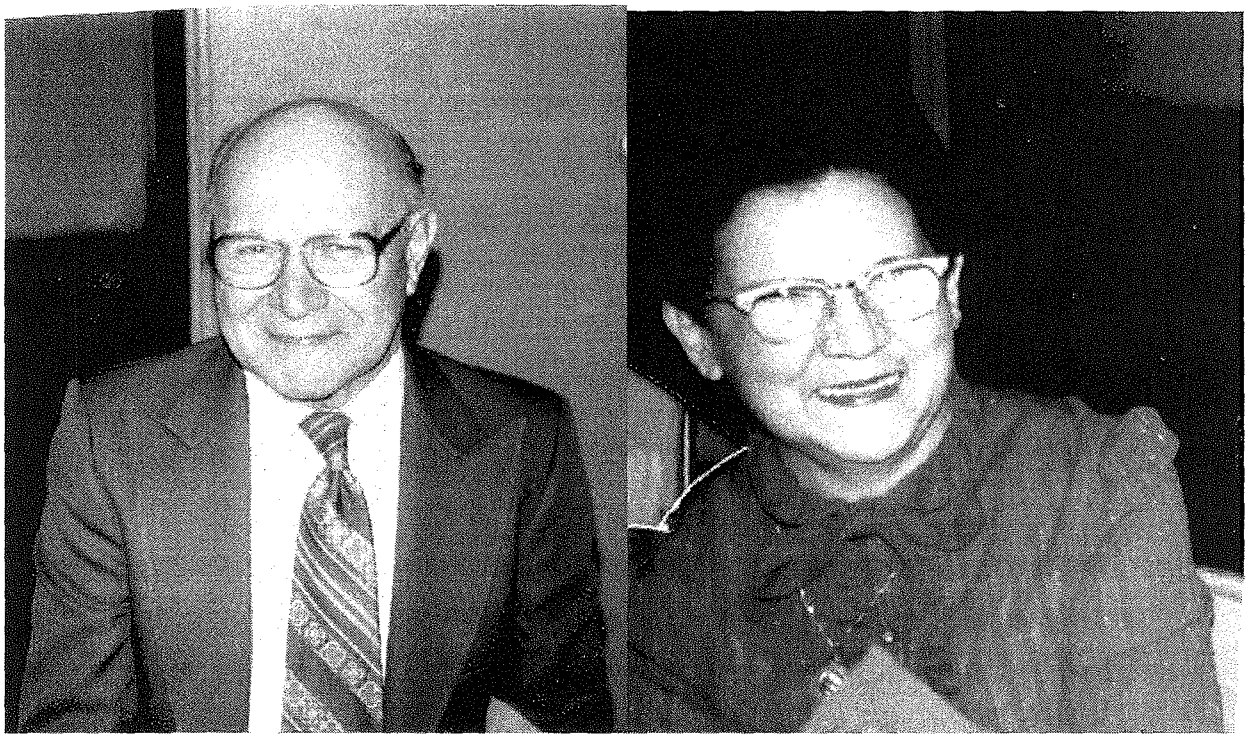
There is one memory which has stayed with me throughout all of my life. We were sweeping in Japanese waters. I recall that it was Friday, August 13, my sister's birthday. Suddenly the Captain barked out his orders. "Man your battle stations!" I uttered a prayer, "Oh, God, if it ends, let it end now!"

At this moment I made a decision, one I would honor for the remainder of my life. As we steamed toward Japan, I made a vow that if we were spared, I would forever do my best to help the human race, to make the world a better place for other people.

As we rushed to obey orders, the news came. "The Bomb" had been dropped. The Great War was over. But, even as we were breathing prayers of thanks, we realized that much work was yet to be done. The channel had to be swept clear, and the mines that remained, exploded. Then it would be time to go home.

Even though I had an opportunity to stay longer and break in another crew, I felt I had paid my dues. I could not wait to see my family and my beautiful wife-to-be.

Amelia Salvati and I were married in Christ the King Church in Ambridge on April 28, 1946, only a month after I arrived in the States and received my discharge.



We lived first in Murdocksville, then Langeloth, then built a home at the corner of Devils Den Road and Route 22 in Paris. The house was not quite finished when we moved in. But our family was beginning to arrive and we needed to be settled. John, Jr. was born January 9, 1948, and in April of 1949, little Jim made his debut. Due to

traffic dangers at this location, we built another house farther from the busyness of Steubenville Pike. We still reside in it. It was here that our third son, Joe, was born.

During my working years, I built several houses in the Paris area. My friend, Austin Long, once said, "If Kranak started a house last week, you can move into it next week!" At one point in time, I built a seventeen unit motel in Hankey Farms, completing it in less than four months.

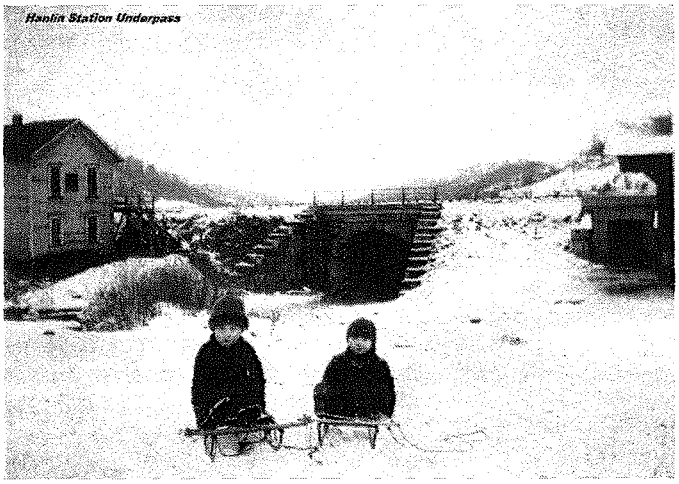
During the time I was building houses, I was also working for Harmon Creek Coal. I was "burning the candle at both ends" and came down with pernicious anemia. I had also been injured many times, usually not my own fault. But I had vowed that never would there be a lawsuit. I was fulfilling the promise I had made that day back in 1945, when I told God that I would do my best to help other people.

One accomplishment of which I am most proud came in 1959. Amelia had developed glaucoma in both eyes. I then knew I must do something to help the blind. I had invented a number of things in several fields, so inventing was not new to me. The machine I came up with was for stone facing. Amelia and others tried it, including one man who was totally blind. It was a success. KRANTEX is registered in the U.S. Patent Office and has provided employment for several sightless people.

I have fought many enemies in my life, such as the Japanese, some of my employers, and a typhoon. But when a tornado once tried to come in my front door, I again had to let God know that I was on His side. As the wind rushed toward our house and deposited a tree on our roof and crashed another into the sun porch, but left the house standing and the family intact, I knew Someone was looking out for us. When the statue of the Blessed Mother flew out of the bird bath without toppling it, I knew I was being divinely protected as I had been from many pitfalls through the years.

"I have been a carpenter, a cement finisher, an auto mechanic, an inventor, a stone mason, a welder, a machinist, and a baseball player," I tell my friends. "But marrying Amelia is the best deal I ever made."

(John recalls with fondness the good life he has had. He gives thanks constantly for an ever-present protection. He and Amelia have been married nearly fifty-seven years, and their happiness is supreme. He is also ever mindful that it was his beloved father, Frank, the immigrant from the humble farmlands of Yugoslavia, also no doubt divinely directed, who unknowingly made much of it possible.)



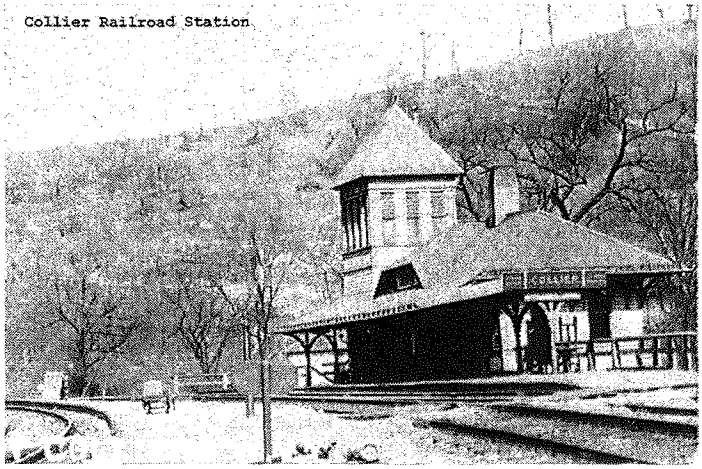
Memories of Yesteryear

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF COLLIER

by

Howard Gelini

During the first part of this 20th Century, this country was involved in a great movement westward. The railroads became very important since they were the only means of transporting heavy equipment and building materials, along with personnel, to western cities. Since the Pennsylvania Railroad's main line to St. Louis ran right through Collier, and since Collier could also supply coal and water right up to the railroad's right-of-way, it is easy to see why Collier became an important railroad and coal mining center. People came from all over to get jobs from these industries.



I was born October 19, 1911 to Angelo and Bianca Gelini. My father was given the name, "Charley Crovey" by the bookkeeper who no doubt could not spell Angelo Gelini. Besides, in those years, it made no difference, and so we were the Crovey family. My father had just been promoted from laborer on the Pennsy to section foreman and moved from Pittsburgh to Collier to take over No.18 section gang, a track repair group. My parents purchased a small home in down town Collier to be near the railroad, and that is where I was born.

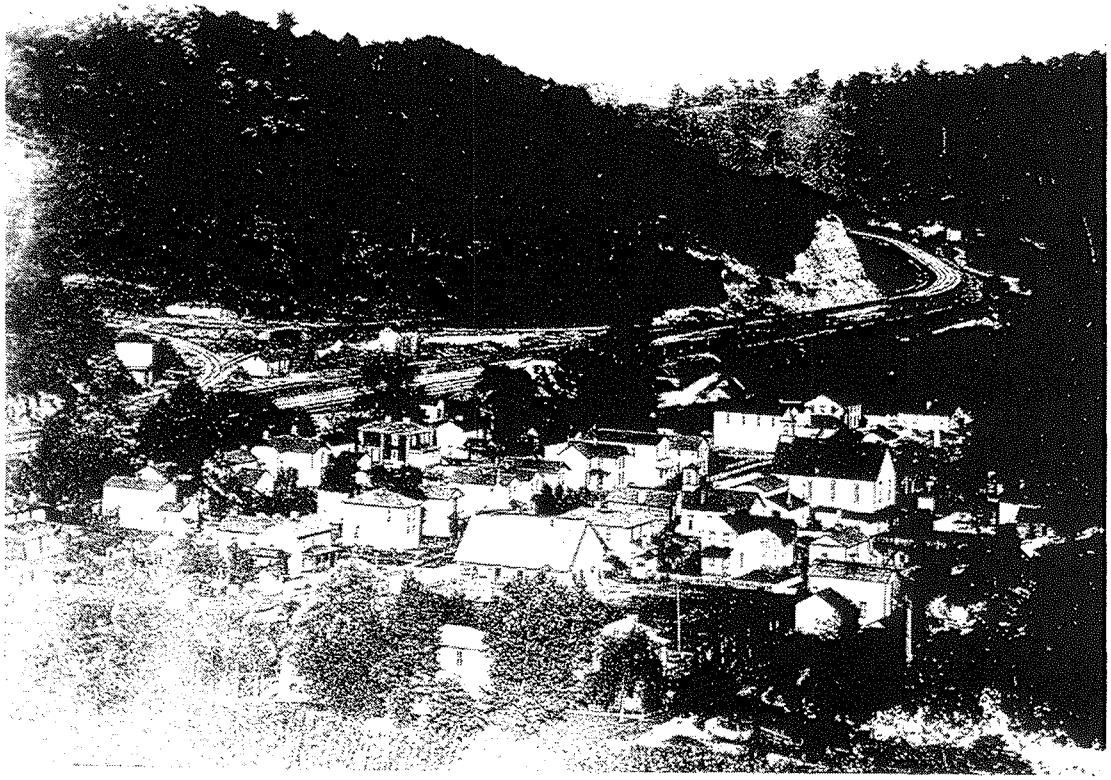
Everything seemed to be going well, but on September 1,1912, misfortune struck. A devastating flood caused from a cloudburst hit the area.

Because our house was close to Harmon Creek, it was hit hard and completely destroyed. We lost everything and were lucky to save our lives. Some good neighbors and railroad workers helped us get out, and took us to higher ground - just in time, too, as the crushing waters pushed the house away like it was a toy.

The people of Collier were wonderful. They helped us in every way with clothing and food. There were no homes available after the flood, so we had to rent a house in Steubenville temporarily while a new home was being built in the area just west of the railroad station. We moved back to Collier the following spring. The house was built high against the hillside above any possible flood waters, just a short distance from Mr. William Brown's house. The town, too, was rebuilt, and the railroad tracks replaced. And so Collier continued to prosper, thanks to the railroad and the coal mine.

I recall that the period just before and during World War I, the railroads became busier than ever, hauling personnel and military equipment. So it was important that the tracks had to be maintained and kept in top condition. Since labor was very scarce, due to the war, it became necessary during the summer working months to import transient workers. Several summers, blacks were brought in from the south, or Mexicans from Mexico.

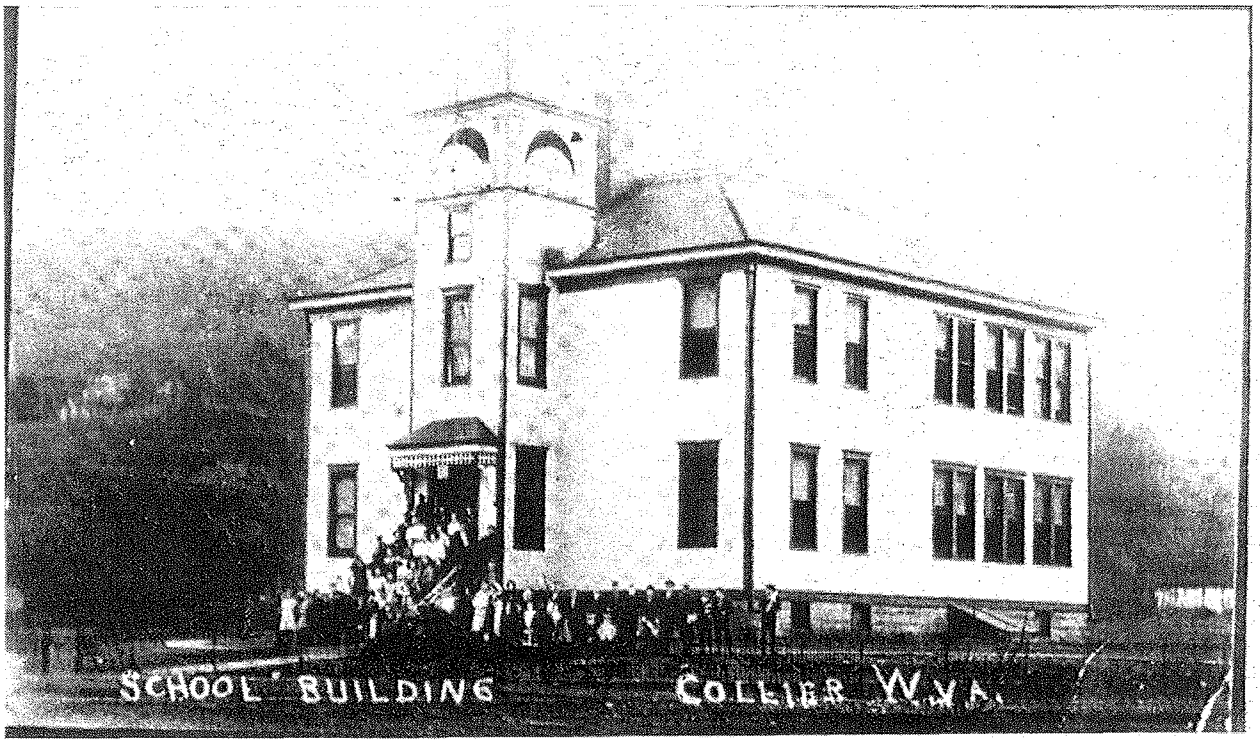
These people were housed in railroad boxcars that were altered for living purposes. The cars were switched off onto a siding in the large open field where the Browns lived, and where we lived. Now, these people were not abused. They were well-treated, paid regular wages, and their living quarters were comfortable and clean. They had their own cook and dining car. They were mostly young men away from home, and lonesome.



Railroad turnaround at Collier

On weekends, and on some evenings, they would gather and sing to the music of a mouth organ or fiddle. They were a happy and hard-working group that kept traffic moving on the railroads. In later years, after the war was over, these people were no longer needed, because local youths were available. And during the summers, many high school boys were employed - I being one. The railroads were a very important part of this country's history, and I hated to see them practically abandoned.

During my years in Collier, I attended the Collier Grade School, as did my three brothers and two sisters. I started in the old wooden school house with the bell tower in front. The principal was Mr. Elza Scott, a very strict but fair administrator. He also taught the 8th grade, and was a very good teacher.



During my 7th and 8th grade years, it was decided to form a boys' basketball team. One of the teachers, Miss Marge Mahley, was chosen as coach. Miss Mahley, as we called her, was a very good coach, coaching boys' teams long before Women's Lib. We played teams from Weirton, Follansbee, Wellsburg, Burgettstown, and others. During my 8th grade year, we won every game. The boys playing on that team were, Malcolm Snyder, Lee Hunter, Herbert Minnis, Howard Freshwater, Howard Crovey (Gelini), and Charles Mechling. I have very good memories of those years and have sort of kept in touch with all of them, even Miss Mahley, who became Mrs. Alex McConnell. She still lives on Marland Heights.

My Collier years were very good years. We were a close-knit family, and have remained that way. Our parents were wonderful, hard-working and loving Christians - the very best!

Memories of Life at Jefferson and Days at Turney School

by

Dolly Herceg Whitco

I started to school in 1939 at Turney. At that time, there were two buildings with two rooms in each building and two grades in each room. There was a huge round coal furnace in each room and a big cloak room with pegs on the walls for hanging coats. The big seventh and eighth grade boys carried in the coal and fixed the fires. There were always hot coals since the fires were always banked at night. I do not know what was done on weekends to keep the fire going, but I never remember coming into a cold classroom. Each cloak room contained a bench, a wash basin, soap, and a bucket of water.

Turney School Buildings - C. 1937 - L. Grades 1 - 4 & R. Grades 5 - 8
L. Tom Fodor - R. Steve Chubusky & seated Bill Fodor

The boys and girls toilets were across the road from the school and stood about 50 feet apart. There was an L-shaped front where you came in from the side, and a solid wooden wall across the front.

The teachers whom I remember were: Alvina Tranquil – grades 1 and 2 – later, 1 through 4; Mrs. Rhine, grades 7 and 8; Miss Pettibon, grades 5 and 6. After one of the buildings was torn down, Mrs. G. Lynn Pugh taught grades 5 through 8. She was followed by Neva Bertamini. The substitute teacher, when Miss Tranquill was sick, was Elsie Martin from Avella Heights. And of course, A.D.White was the principal.

The children from Jefferson, Penowa, Penobscot, and Bethel Ridge Road south of the church, all came to Turney School. When one building was torn down, about 1939, the Bethel Ridge kids were sent to Eldersville School and I lost my best friend, Delores Strauss who was one of those transferred.

Our family lived in Jefferson and my siblings and I walked to school across a beautiful rolling green hill. After the steam shovel tore it up, we had to take a path through the woods and down a steep hill. There were two paths, one of which led to Rotunda's Grocery Store, and the other to Murzy's Store and Bar. From there, we turned right and climbed the hill up a red-dog road to Turney, a total distance of about 4 miles.

Jefferson Bottom

At the bottom of the path near Murzy's Store and Bar, if you followed the road to the left about a mile and a half, you would have seen the little Roman Catholic Church - set back in a few hundred feet from the blacktop road. It was called St. Hermenguilde Church. I had forgotten the name of the church since it was so many years ago that it stood there in its quiet splendor. I am deeply appreciative that someone remembered and supplied the picture for us on the next page. All that remains of it today is that accompanying picture and our memories.

There were two houses past the church – Yurosko and Panjuscsek. One of the Panjuscsek boys, Michael, later became well known in the Washington area as "Polka Mike".

St Hermenguilde Church

My dad, Michael Herceg, worked at the Jefferson Tipple. It was located just a few hundred feet from the present entrance to Meadowcroft Village. Edward Martin, husband of the previously mentioned substitute teacher at Turney, was accountant and paymaster for the mine. The superintendent and mine boss was Claude Ferguson. He lived in a nice house just off the blacktop at the foot of the hill that led up to the Camp. "The Camp" was our term for the little village of mining houses.

There were three pumps and one spring which served as the water supply for the on whole camp. On Sunday evenings, all of the men carried water, two buckets at a time, to fill their tubs and boilers so their wives could wash clothes Monday morning. Each family also had one or two rain barrels at the corner of the house to catch rain water from the roof for washing and baths. Everyone took a bath on Saturday night, but the rest of the week we sponged off, always washing face, hands and feet in a

basin. Everyone was trained to use as little water as possible since it was always at a premium. The trip from our house to the nearest pump was a quarter of a mile.

Our family took our baths in a round galvanized wash tub which was set beside the kitchen stove for warmth. The whole family except Mother went into Mother and Daddy's bedroom, which also served as a sitting room because it had a rocker. After we got electricity, it also had a radio. Thus we had some privacy for our bath.

Everyone had an outside toilet, and once a year the "honey-dippers" came and cleaned them out.

Among other things, I will name a few isolated facts which come to mind about those days at Jefferson Camp.

I remember the steam locomotive which we called "the Shifter". It came down the siding to the tipple in the evenings to drop off empty railroad cars and hook up to full cars. It was a great treat for us kids to be allowed to go down to sit on the hillside and watch the Shifter.

I remember a little white-haired man named Mr. Sleigh who came once a week to sell ice cream. He dipped it out for anyone lucky enough to be able to buy. I remember my dad bringing me ice cream when I got my tonsils out. All the kids, when they were 5 or 6 years old, got their tonsils out at the little clinic outside Avella on the road to Donahue.

Groceries were delivered twice a week from Emma Thompson's Grocery Store. (One of the first delivery boys was Chris Williams who later became a well-known horseman and auctioneer in Hickory.) Between grocery deliveries, Mother would send me to Rotunda's Store for a pound of bologna or a loaf of bread. Sometimes she would let me buy a penny's worth of fudge. It was about 3 inches square and over an inch thick. When I brought it home, Mother would cut it into four pieces – one piece each for Dad, Vivian, herself, and me. We each had a nice sized piece of fudge.

We got our milk from Gazell's farm on the road to Avella just before the turn-off to Pine Flats. We got two gallon jugs, three times a week. Vivian and I and sometimes our neighbor, Stephanna Koltick, went for the milk, a distance of about three miles each way.

I loved living in Jefferson. I could name every person who lived there when I did and I have fond memories of most of them. I loved the place and the people, our house, and my teachers. I loved everything about it.

In 1991, the Jefferson Township Historical Society had a little party for A.D.White. My sister and I attended. When he saw us, he called us by name, as if we were still school children, fifty-four years before, in the days of Turney School. He said he remembered our dad, the house we lived in, and our whole family. It was his 97th birthday. What a wonderful man! When I grew up, I realized that his presence as school superintendent, was one of the determining factors in making my life at Jefferson Camp and Turney School the cherished memory that it is today.

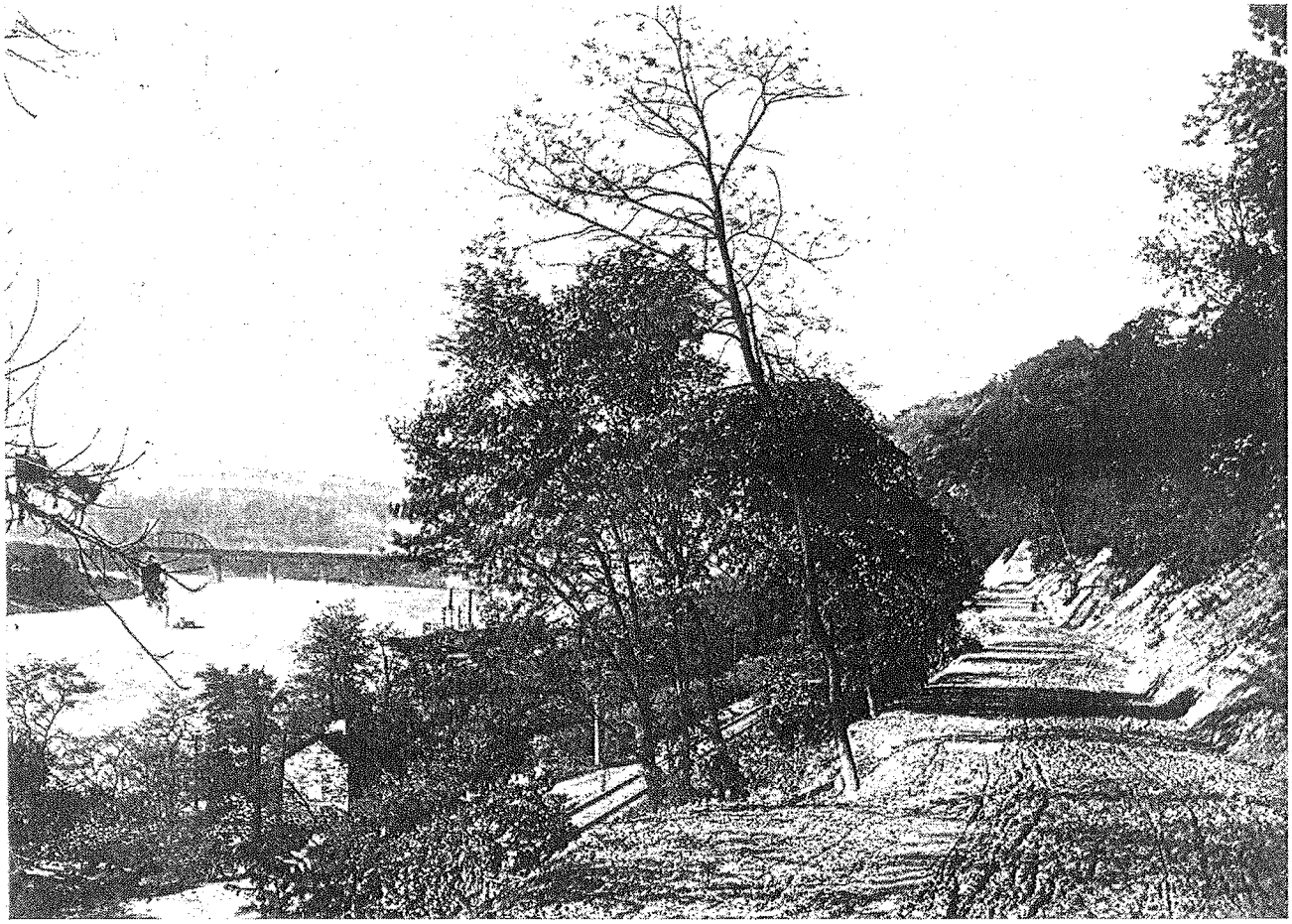
The Intolerable Cliffs & The Elusive Set of Steps

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

Traveling north from Follansbee, West Virginia, in Brooke County, as one passes the end of Market Street Bridge, it would be impossible not to note the jagged, vertical terrain on the right. Far above this nearly vertical mountain of rock, and completely out of sight of the highway, lies the beautiful plateau of countryside known as Morton Hill.

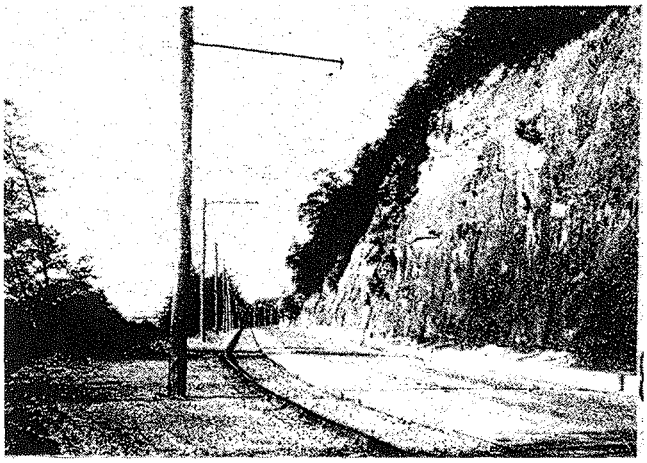
At one point in time, the Dohrman Sinclair family of Steubenville, Ohio, bought the section of Richard Wells' property west of the old Sappington patent and deeded it to the state of West Virginia for the purpose of building a road. This road is now a part of Route 2. It lies between the imposing rock structure and the Ohio River.



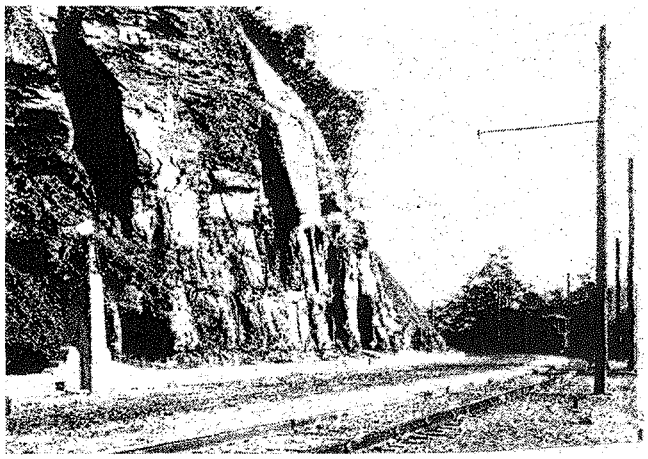
Route 2 looking north, before the construction of the Market Street Bridge in 1905

The first surveyors, faced with the task of mapping the area for Sappington, had apparently sized up these nearly insurmountable ledges of rock, and labeled them, perhaps facetiously, as "The Intolerable Cliffs". The original surveys bear testimony to the repeated use of this catching phrase in describing the problems faced by those

early surveyors. The road crews at this same site, in the year 2002, in spite of heavy equipment and bulldozers, might still give them that same title.



"The Intolerable Cliffs" looking north



"The Intolerable Cliffs" looking south

In writing the history of this area in 1997, the writer interviewed a number of old timers for their recollections of unusual events or landmarks of the area. The late Lawrence Roush talked many times about "the steps that went up the hillside". Most of today's residents are bewildered when such an "impossible" bit of history is mentioned. But according to those who lived on top of the hill, these steps were very real indeed. They had climbed them, from a spot along Route 2, somewhere near the end of the Market Street Bridge, they assured the writer. And they knew EXACTLY where they were!

"They came up about 200 feet north of the bridge," said several who were certain about their location.

"They were just a little south of the bridge," said others.

Two said, " They came down the hill right to the middle of the end of the bridge."

Another said, "They were right at the corner."

But not one picture has ever materialized of that elusive set of steps!

The descriptions given of their construction vary about as much as their location.

"They were zig-zag," most people agreed.

"They went up to a landing, turned the other way, up a few more, and zig-zagged again, all the way up the giant rocky hill."

"The landings were covered, had a roof over them," some recalled. Others remembered that they were out in the open, because, "you could look straight down!".

"They hugged the hillside," some explained.

"They were straight up and down," one said.

"They were very dangerous," another shuddered.

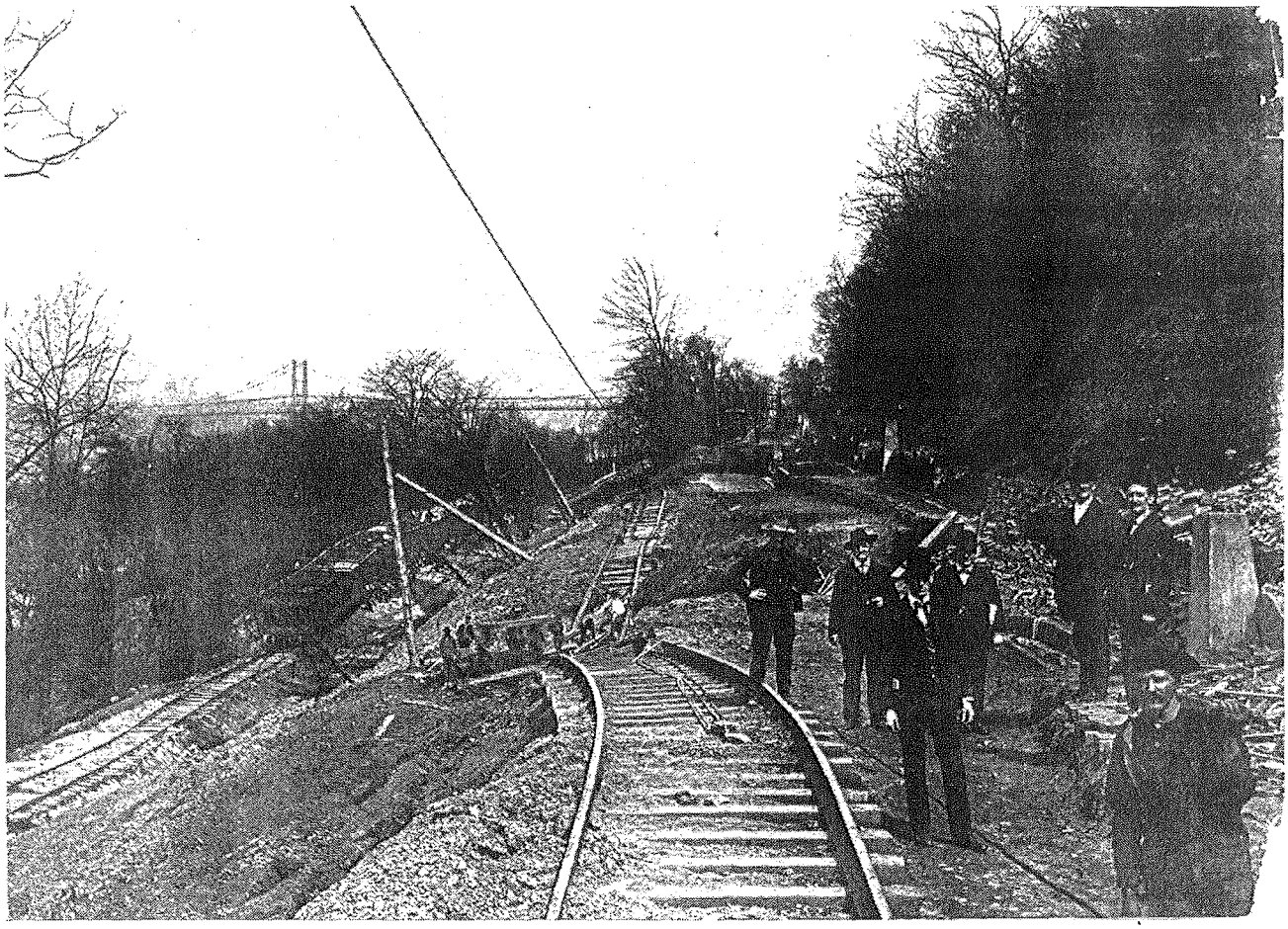
"They were not really very dangerous," other brave souls recalled.

"I walked them at least two hundred times," said one.

"I have seen them, but never walked them," others reported.

"You could see them from Steubenville," was one description.

Homer Roush said that people came across the bridge from Steubenville, carrying their picnic baskets, went up the steps and had picnics in a park at the top. From there, they could look over at the great view. Homer also recalled that he was told that in ancient times, a giant rock slide had occurred, sending a huge boulder down the hill and into the water at the edge of the river. Many people of today recall seeing this rock that for many years was visible under the end of the bridge. But since the locks and dams have been constructed, and raised the water level ten feet, many attractions along the river's edge are no longer visible.



The Hazards of the Intolerable Cliffs

Destruction created by a landslide south of the Market Street Bridge in an unknown year. A streetcar is seen in the picture. The "turning around place" was the end of the bridge.

The steps have been gone these many years. Some recall that the wood was deteriorating in the middle 1930s.

Just how many steps comprised this inconceivable feat over the "Intolerable Cliffs"? Tom Evans held to the figure that someone once gave him.

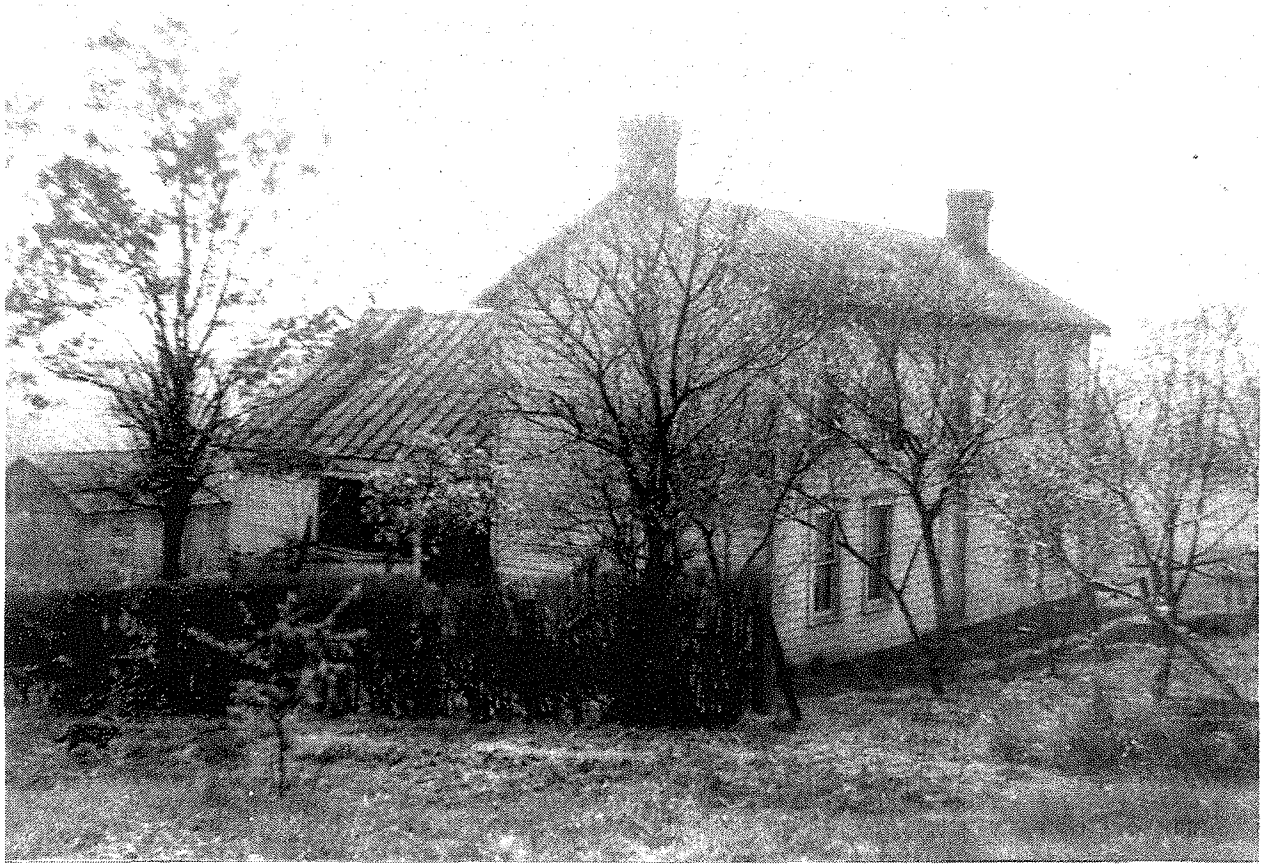
"I have walked part of them," he said, "but I never counted them. I was told there were 487 steps." And since Tom was 95 years young when he reported these statistics back in 1997, this writer has decided to take his word for it.

My Memories of the Muranye Farm

by

Annabelle Horvath Reese

My mother, Anna Muranye Horvath, was 14 years old when my grandparents, Matt and Anna Tonyi Muranye, bought the Johnnie Carter Farm on Puntney Ridge off Tent Church Road, Brooke County, West Virginia. My mother was born September 10, 1910, so this was the latter part of 1924 or before September, 1925. The property was purchased from Lillie Bell Carter Grigsby, who was a sister of John Carter. Mr. Carter was struck by lightning and killed two weeks before he was to be married.



The Johnnie Carter Farm, Puntney Ridge, Brooke County, WV

This farm of 95 acres was a real West Virginia farm with lots of hills. As young children we were all over these hills, playing or bringing in the cows. A creek flowed through one of the valleys, so we children decided to make a swimming hole. We constructed a dam across the creek to make the water deeper. There was my Aunt Katy, two of my brothers and me. We worked hard all day long, piling up big rocks. Then we realized there were snakes in the water with us! Lots of them! We could not get out of that water fast enough! Occasionally we would go back and look longingly from a distance, at our swimming hole.

The Muranye family consisted of my grandfather, Matt Muranye; my grandmother, Anna Tonyi Muranye; my mother, Anna; an aunt, Hazel; and an uncle, Matt, Jr. The youngest, Catherine (Katy), was born in the farmhouse in November, 1929. I also, was born in the house the following February.

Matt, Sr. and Anna Tonyi Muranye with son, Matt,Jr.

Anna Muranye Horvath
In 1927 at age 17

My mother and my Aunt Hazel walked the long distance to school at Scott's Run. The school was the first building to the left upon leaving the road from the farm. By the time Katy started to school, the buses were coming into the area. She attended Colliers Grade School and was graduated from Follansbee High School.

During World War II, there were no young men around since all of them were in the armed forces. This included my Uncle Matt. This presented the problem of help for the farm work. Although my father was employed full time in a local factory, our family moved to the farm with my grandparents in order to help. Our family consisted of Andrew and Anna Muranye Horvath, my three brothers: Robert, Thomas Edward, and Bernard, and myself.

While we lived there, we attended Colliers Grade School. But it was World War II days and almost everything was rationed. Ours was the last bus stop on the run. And since gas was in short supply, they kept moving our stop up the road. I don't know how far we had to walk, but it was quite a distance. To this day, I walk fast because of those long walks to the school bus stop. I recall winter days when the snow was piled so high along the sides of the road that we could not see over it.

Andrew Horvath and son, Bernard

Thomas Edward and Annabelle Horvath, Katy Muranye and Robert Horvath

Anna & Hazel Muranye

Anna Tonyi Muranye

My grandfather sold eggs, butter, blackberries and strawberries to regular customers in Follansbee. At times we children would go with him. Although my grandfather did not sell fruit, he had a large orchard which contained a variety of apple trees, cherry (yellow, black and red sour), plum, peach and pear trees. There were also grape arbors. There was a steep hill off the orchard that was great for sled riding.

The farmhouse had four bedrooms, a dining room, a formal parlor, a huge family room complete with a big pot belly stove, a kitchen and a pantry. The family room was the heartbeat of the house. In the center was a very large sturdy dining room table. We spent many evenings around that table doing our homework by the light of a kerosene lamp. Kind of makes me feel I have something in common with Abe Lincoln! I can still see my grandmother sitting at that table every evening, reading her Bible.

On one side of the house was a large "L" shaped porch. My grandparents and mother would rise early in the morning to milk the cows. At one time Katy and I had the bedroom overlooking the porch. I would awaken to the sun shining and hear my grandparents and my mother working on the porch. They would be separating the milk. I would run down and watch, with amazement, as they poured the milk into the separator and it would come out in two streams - one cream and the other skim milk. That would still amaze me to this day.

There was no central heat in the house. On cold winter nights we would make a mad dash upstairs and jump under a big thick feather tick. Very comfy and warm. There were a lot of out-buildings on the farm – barn, silo, grainery, corn crib, a two-story outbuilding, smoke house, pig sty, a long chicken coop, and a springhouse. There was no electricity. Everything that had to be kept cold was put in containers in the water in the springhouse. The water was very cold and very good. I still find myself talking about the good cold water from that spring. My grandparents lived on that farm until 1948 when it was sold to a coal company.

They were wonderful days – those childhood years on the Muranye Farm. I know the house has been gone these many years and I have been told that no trace remains of any of the outbuildings, the orchards, or the great array of flowers that grew in profusion everywhere. But it lives forever in my memory – this wonderful old house on Puntney Ridge where I was born.

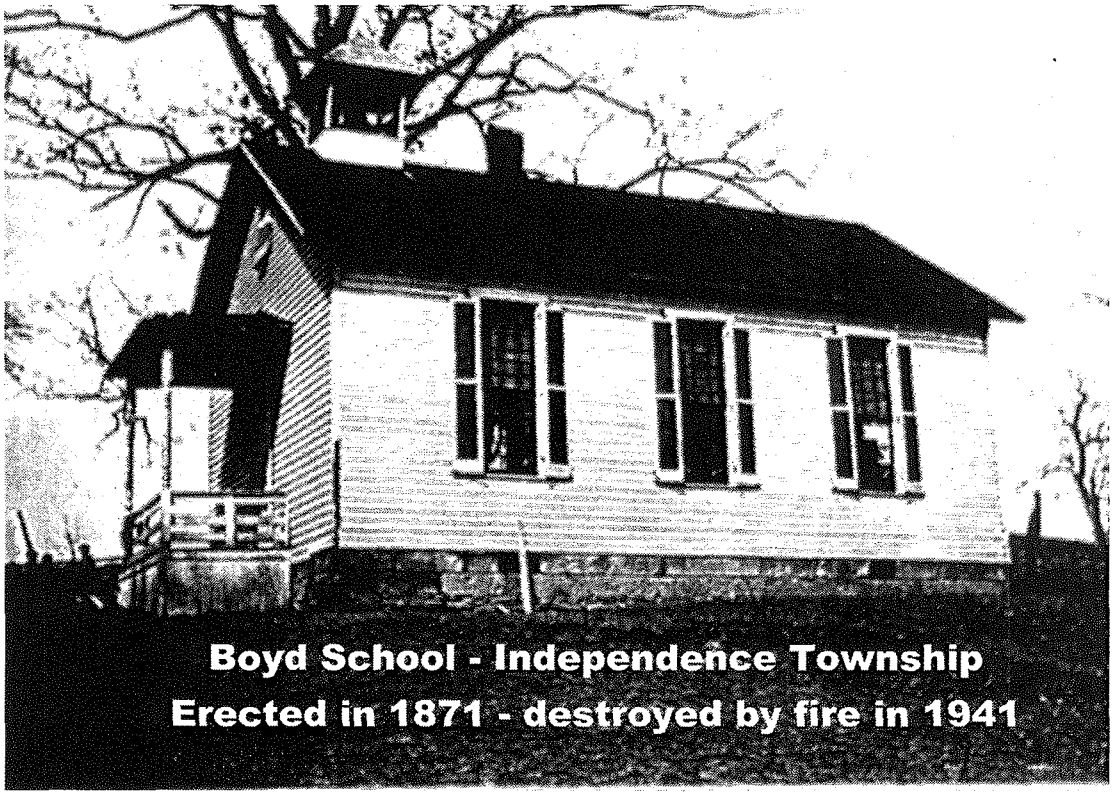
Note: by Kathryn Campbell Slasor

My sister and I were brought up with the details of the "Carter Farm" firmly etched in our minds. Our mother, the late Fannie Clark Campbell, had lived there for five of her youthful years. "We moved there in 1913, " she would say, "when I was twelve years old. It was absolutely beautiful," she exclaimed over the years. "There were fruit trees of all kinds and flowers of every sort." On and on she would reminisce, until we actually thought we had lived there ourselves and had roamed the hills and orchards along with her. It was not until the 1990s that we met the former Annabelle Horvath, who had married our second cousin, Wendell Reese. Annabelle continually sang the praises of the "Muranye Farm" that her grandparents had bought on Puntney Ridge in 1924 or 1925. "It was just beautiful!" she exclaimed, "Fruit trees and flowers every where! " Owners of the farm as she remembered it were Matt and Anna Muranye, Annabelle's grandparents. It is still known today by the neighbors on Puntney Ridge as, "The Muranye Farm." What a thrill it was when my sister and I discovered that the "Muranye Farm" and the "Carter Farm" were one and the same farm! Neither Mom nor Annabelle would recognize it today. Time has taken its toll.

Boyd School

By
Gertrude Adams Buck

Boyd School was a little one-room school building on Brashear Run Road about two miles south of Independence, Pennsylvania. It was located on a small tract of land that was formerly owned by William Patterson.



The students entered the building by a small front porch. There were hooks on the wall just inside the front door for the students' coats. The girls hung their coats on the right side of the door and the boys on the left side.

In the very center of the room was a big coal stove that we all referred to as a "pot bellied " stove. It was the teacher's chore to be at school early and get the stove burning before the children arrived. The coal for the stove was stored in another building that was about thirty feet from the schoolhouse. The teacher also had to bring the buckets of coal in from the coalhouse unless some of the older boys would volunteer to bring it in.

To the right of the big stove were two rows of desks facing the front of the room. These were small desks for students in the first four grades. There were two more rows of desks on the left side of the stove that were used for the fifth to the eighth grade students. The teacher's desk was on a platform in the front of the room and on the wall just behind her desk was the blackboard. In front of the platform was a bench that would seat about five or six students. This is where each grade would be called to recite their lessons.

On the wall over top of the blackboards were two framed pictures of George Washington and Abe Lincoln. During recess the older boys would make little mud balls and bring them to class to see if they could hit the pictures without the teacher catching them. Somehow the teacher could never catch the guilty party.

Many of the younger students learned a great deal from hearing the older students reciting their lessons. This is one advantage of a one-room school.

Recess was a great time when all the students went about to play. If we had a small ball, we sometimes would play a game we called "Annie Over". We had people on the upper and lower side of the coalhouse roll the ball over the roof and hope the other side didn't catch it.

During recess, if you needed to go to the rest room, you had to follow the path down a little hill to one of the two six by six buildings. We did not have nice soft toilet tissue but we could always read the "Sears" catalogue.

We had a well for our water supply. We pumped the water into a bucket with a real old fashioned pump. We carried the bucket in and put it on a bench near the coat racks. A ladle was put into the bucket from which all the students drank. There was a pan for water that you could wash your hands.

All of the children were happy and loved to get to school early to talk and play with their friends. The children were all farm children. The older ones had to help with farm chores before they walked a couple miles over hills to school.

There were several one-room schools in our neighborhood. They would all ring the school bell at eight thirty and at nine o'clock. When we heard the eight thirty bell, we knew we had to walk a little faster but if we heard the nine o'clock bell, we knew we were late for school. We could hear two other school bells beside Boyd School. We heard Jamison School and Scott School bells.

I went all eight years of grade school to Boyd and was in the last to go to Boyd School. To keep a school open you had to have at least ten students. When our class finished eighth grade there were only six students left. We were all bused to Avella Schools. This was a great change for country children. Boyd School closed in the spring of 1936. There were three families going to school then. The families were four McAdoo boys, four Adams girls, and two Craig children.

My sister Olive and I started to Boyd School in the fall of 1928 and attended all eight grades. We walked from home across Indian Camp Road, the Moore Farm, and the Patterson Farm to the School on Brashear Run Road. We had to cross a creek on the Moore farm. When there was a hard rain, the creek would rise and wash away the board on which we crossed. Dad would harness up our old gray horse and ride each one of us across the creek every morning and evening until the creek was back in its banks.

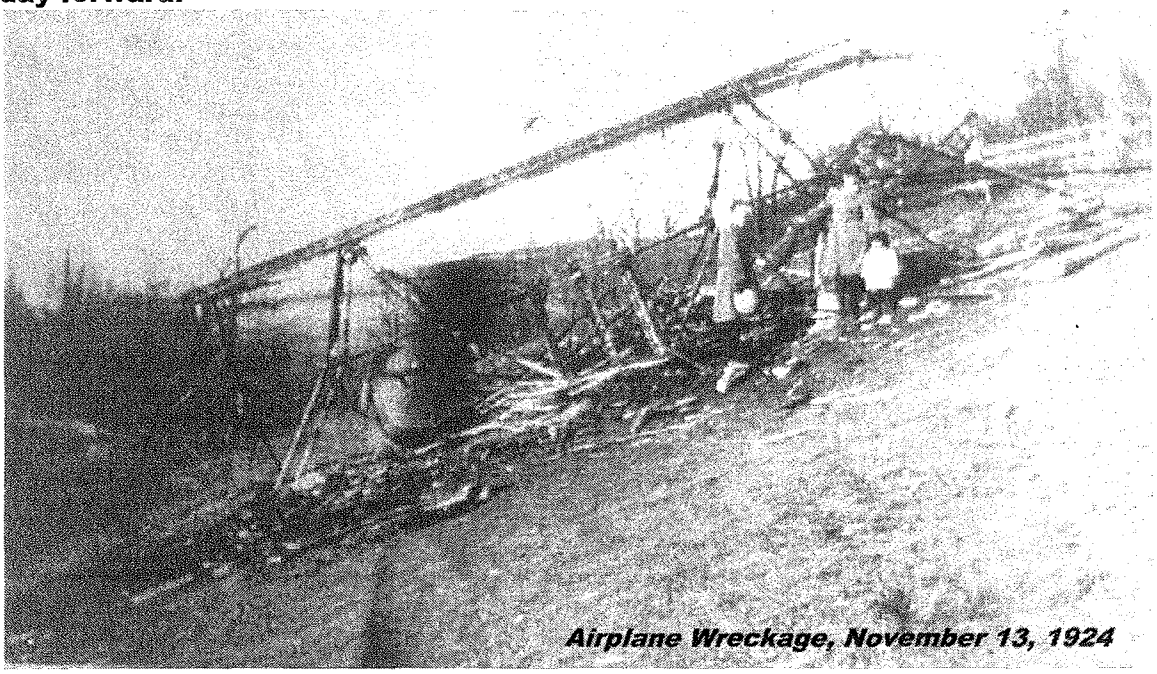
In 1928, our first teacher was Mary Brautigam. She only taught one semester before she married Charles Robison. At that time, it was a law that married women could not teach. You can imagine how well liked Charles Robison was by the students at Boyd School!

I know that it would not be feasible for us to go back to one-room schools, but I am so pleased and thankful that I had the opportunity to go to Boyd School.

Memories of Kidds Mill, Scotts Run and the Penobscot Area

By
Frank J. Pollack

Memories of Kidds Mill, Scott Run and the Penobscot area are gentle on my mind. My first experience in aviation happened when I was still in my mother's arms. There was a military airplane in trouble looking for a place to land and it crashed near our home. The airplane was a DH-4 Liberty bomber that had seen service in WW I. According to my parents there was no loss of life. I was too young to understand what had happened. Little did I know that my life would be centered around airplanes from that day forward.



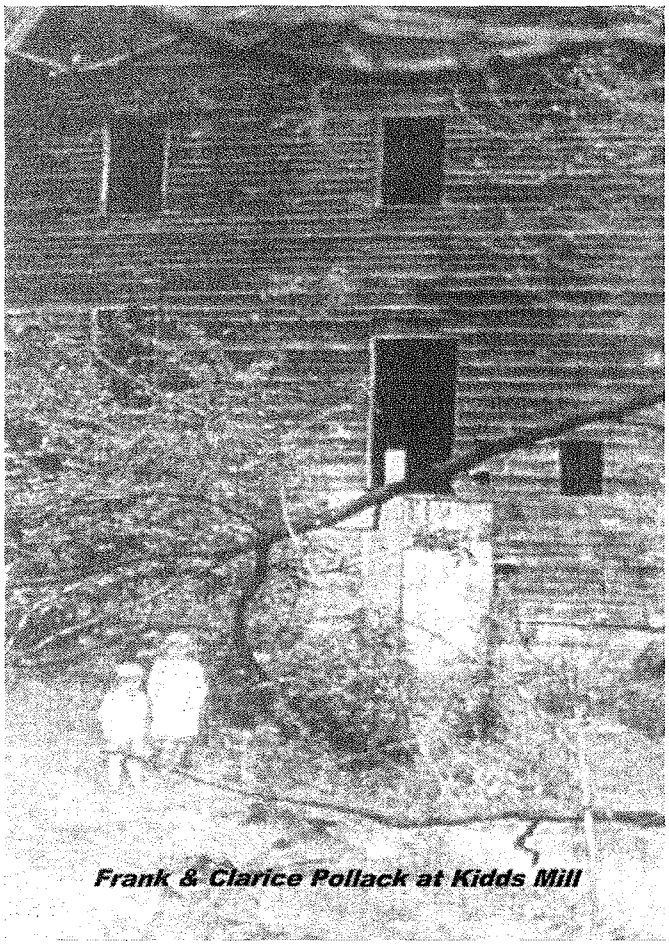
Airplane Wreckage, November 13, 1924

Turney School where I attended was named after W .R. Turney. Turney was the superintendent of the Penobscot mine. The school served two mining camps along with the surrounding area. One of the games we played as I recall was anti-anti over. Two groups of kids would gather on each side of the schoolhouse. One player had a sponge ball. The group would split up and part of the team would go around one end of the school while the rest of the team would go around the other end. The opposing team never knew which group had the sponge ball. The idea was to hit someone on the opposing team with the ball. Once they were hit, they had to join your team. It was good clean kids' fun.

Mr. A. D. White was one of my teachers at Turney School. Along with the responsibility of being the school principal of Jefferson Township, he visited other schools in the township occasionally. When he was away, we had a substitute teacher. This was an opportunity for those inclined to misbehave. Needless to say when Mr. White came back, there was a day of reckoning for the "offenders."

Long before my time, Kidds Mill was a very popular place for vacationing. There was a post office, a store and some cottages. Agnes Murchland operated the facility. A

water-powered mill for grinding grain was probably the main attraction. The name Kidd belonged to one of the families who operated the mill. It is still known by this name today. Some of the remains at the site are still visible. Another place of interest in the area is known as Hiscus Leap. According to the area folklore, a man by that name jumped off the cliff to escape the Indians.



Frank & Clarice Pollack at Kidds Mill

In my early teens I trapped Scotts Run for mink during Christmas vacation. The quality of the fur of a wild mink is far superior to ranch raised mink. One of my best skins brought seventeen dollars. That was big money for a kid back in the early nineteen thirties.

I still enjoy going back to my roots. The mining camps no longer exist. Very few people live in the area. Our Creator takes over and reclaims the land. Looking back down my trail, who could have asked for a better childhood?

Thank You LORD !

Kidds Mill - abandoned but still standing July 4, 1925

THE CEDAR GROVE RAILROAD

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

"It was the crookedest railroad that was ever built," claimed the late A.D. White, local historian for most of his 99 years.

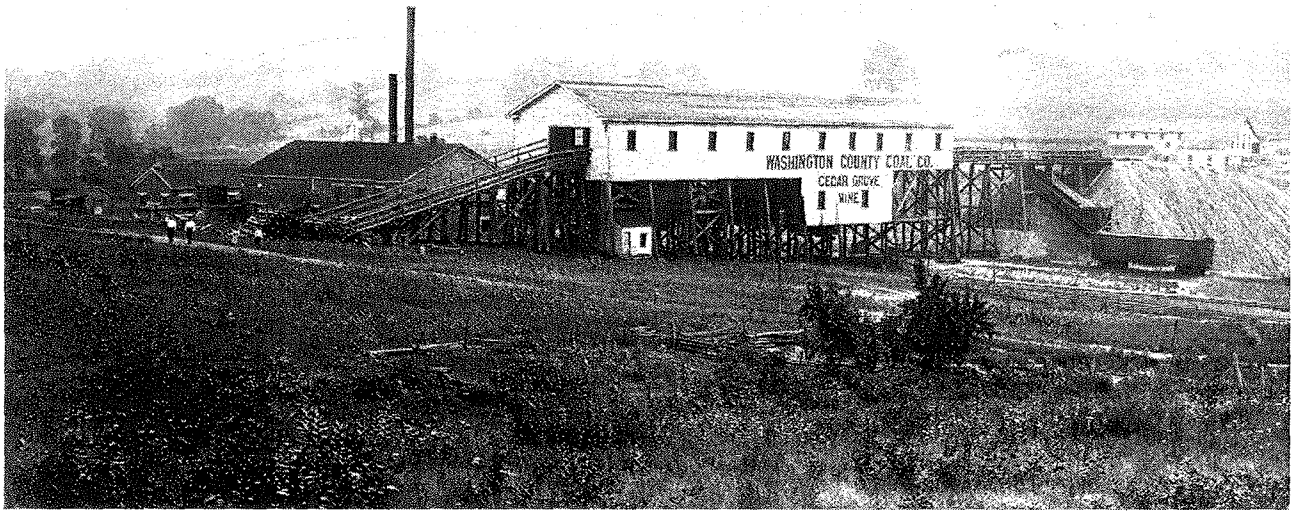
"It followed the creek. Where there was a little bend in the creek, they made a little bend in the railroad".

The creek was the North Fork of Cross Creek. It flows down the Cedar Grove Valley and empties into the main stream in Avella. The valley is narrow and deep in places, making it necessary to construct expensive bridges in order to cross the creek the eight times that were deemed necessary.

When the mine opened at Cedar Grove, it was considered a "drift" mine, sloping toward the west. The coal lay both in Cross Creek and Jefferson Townships. In order to get the coal to market, a railroad line was built, financed largely by local capitalists. It was called the Pittsburgh and Cross Creek Railroad, but was known locally as the Cedar Grove line.

It was 1904 when the local farmers decided to sell their coal. Craig Lee, one of the most prominent farmers in Cross Creek Village area, was one of the first to take the step. Others followed. The mines and the little railroad boomed with business. A monstrous tipple was built, measuring about 75 feet long and 40 to 50 feet high. Cedar Grove grew rapidly, with houses being built to a total of at least 125, as well as a Company Store, a Post Office and a school.

Cedar Grove Mine



On September 1, 1912, disaster struck, not only the mines and the little railroad but everyone who lived in the low lying areas of several streams, such as Cross Creek, Harmon Creek and others. It became known as the Great Flood of 1912. Bridges were washed out, including those that had been constructed to carry the railroad from Cedar Grove to Avella only eight years before. This ended the Wabash Railroad connections with Cedar Grove.

The railroad was never rebuilt, causing the Cedar Grove mine to suspend operations. About two years later, the Pennsylvania Railroad extended its line from Langeloth to Cedar Grove, providing transportation from the opposite direction. Production of coal at the mine was resumed, and Cedar Grove again had access to the outside world by way of "The Hooterbug".

The Hooterbug hauled not only coal, but milk, a baby calf, or any goods that needed transported. Stations were placed along the line, and soon a passenger train was running to Burgettstown and back twice a day. Cross Creek area farms were split by the tracks, and people happily boarded the train from just about anywhere. Helen Wiegmann Martin boarded from the Pettit farm with her sister, Viva Wiegmann Newman, for a day of shopping in Burgettstown. The late Matt Donati was extremely proud that one of the stations had been located on his farm. Marberry Station was one of his favorite memories in later years. He and his siblings walked the tracks to school at Langeloth.

Sherlock Station was located near the Revay farm, while the station near the Pollack place was known as Graymont. Many residents felt happy and privileged as they rode leisurely through the farmland of the Donati, Pettit, McCreary, Rankin and other families.

Gaylord Martin, born in 1905, holds memories of having ridden the earlier train that ran between Avella and Cedar Grove. He, as a little boy before 1912, would visit his Aunt Nancy Gillespie out on the Jefferson Township farm. The two of them would either walk or ride horseback to Cedar Grove and board the train to Avella, which was only a budding town in these very early days. The name, "Hooterbug", had always fascinated him, even into his later days. Those who remember have described it as "a small engine with four or five cars".

What a treat it must have been during those years after 1914 when a busy housewife from Cedar Grove could leave her chores for an afternoon. She could cast aside her big white apron, fix the combs in her hair, and walk leisurely to the schoolhouse to catch the train. As the Hooterbug chugged merrily on its way to Burgettstown, her mind must have been filled with those yards of calico she would buy at Bloom's or Brody's Department Store for a new dress.

Cedar Grove Mining Houses

I Remember Margy

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

After March of 1989, she was missed from her tiny place of business along the road just outside Avella. For the past 49 years she had waited on customers who dropped by for gasoline, kerosene, bread, milk or lunch cakes. But in the spring of that year, the little station by the wayside was vacant, the gas pumps gone and the large underground tanks removed. Only memories - nearly fifty years of them remained.

Her name was Angeline Margaria, but everyone knew her as Margy. She was born Angeline Yanos in 1907, in a little place called Glen Campbell, near Indiana, Pa. She considered the Pittsburgh area as home for many years.

Margy retired from business as of Good Friday, in March of 1989. She had begun her roadside enterprise in the tiny block building in October, 1939. She could tell many stories of her life with the gas pumps, including 17 times that she was either robbed at gunpoint, or burglarized at night by persons unknown.

She could tell of the war years when gas was not only hard to get, but available only by ration stamps. She remembered the long lines of cars waiting for service, driven by motorists who were frantic to buy gas at any cost. She recalled the many service boys who stopped at her place of business for candy and potato chips, pop and ice cream, or just to chat. This was understandable for those who knew what an interesting and well-versed little lady she was.

The sale of local newspapers sometimes kept her going. But that was before the days when papers were home delivered by carrier. This was only one of many changes of the times that practically forced this spunky lady out of the public eye, into retirement.

Everyone knows the hardships of the "little businesspeople". They have a difficult time competing against modern super markets, automation, self-serve gas stations, and many other so-called improvements of modern life. But Margy was not bitter. She was in her 50th year of business, and had survived many hard times, including the depression, a flood, the shortages of the war years, and, of course the robberies.

She told many tales of the robberies in detail.

"Don't take ALL the money!" she would plead with the thugs. "Leave me five dollars or some change."

But of course the robbers did not listen. They scooped up everything.

One went so far as to force her into the tiny back room while he attempted to open the cash register. On failing, he asked her, "How do you open this thing?"

"I'm back here, " she answered bravely. "I can't open it from back here!" With his gun, he waved her out to the cash register. "Put that gun away!" she demanded. "You'll hurt yourself!"

Surprisingly, he lowered the gun, but only as he scooped the contents from the drawer.

Another time, two small children were with her in the station. Needless to say, they were frantic. But Margy kept her calm attitude as she gathered them close to her, while chastising the robber. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself, frightening

these little children? Take the money and get out of here!"

The unusual thing about this story is that any time the robbers were apprehended, and brought to justice, Margy would refuse to prosecute. "They are just kids," she would say. "Maybe they will learn something from this."

Some of them, after a number of years, returned to repay her.

"I'm the one who robbed you," one would say. "I brought back the five bucks." After Margy was out of the public eye, she spent her time outdoors and in the garden. She missed the long years of waiting in the station to welcome the Coen Oil folks who serviced her for nearly 50 years. But she could still be seen there occasionally when the garden produce was ready for sale. It was not the money that proved to be the real attraction, but simply how much she loved people!

Margy's retirement days are now over. She has gone to a place where robbers do not frighten little old ladies who are trying to earn an honest dollar. But she is still remembered by the old timers of the Avella area for the little place of business she provided for so many years which was such an accommodation to the community. Her children are Angeline Gagich, of Rea, and Paul Margaria, of Avella. A son, Peter Michael Dutka, is deceased.

Old Homesteads and Pioneers

The Richard Hanna Family

by

June Campbell Grossman-Welch

Richard Hanna was born in County Donegal, Ireland, in 1790. With his parents, he moved to County Caven where he learned the weaver's trade. At the age of 28, in 1818, he left Dublin to seek a new life in America.

His journey was beset with one tragedy after another. When only a few weeks from shore, the ship sprang a leak, and the crew steered for Cork, where, for some unknown reason, they were not permitted to land. Passengers were transferred to another ship bound for Halifax. After twenty-one terrible weeks, they anchored – far from young Richard's intended destination. It was his plan to cross the mountains into Washington County to which a relative had already migrated.

In attempting to make enough money to complete his journey, he was forced to work long hours gathering stones for a paltry sum, a task unbefitting one who had learned an honorable trade. But inasmuch as there were no openings in the weaving business, he was willing to do anything to reach his intended destination.

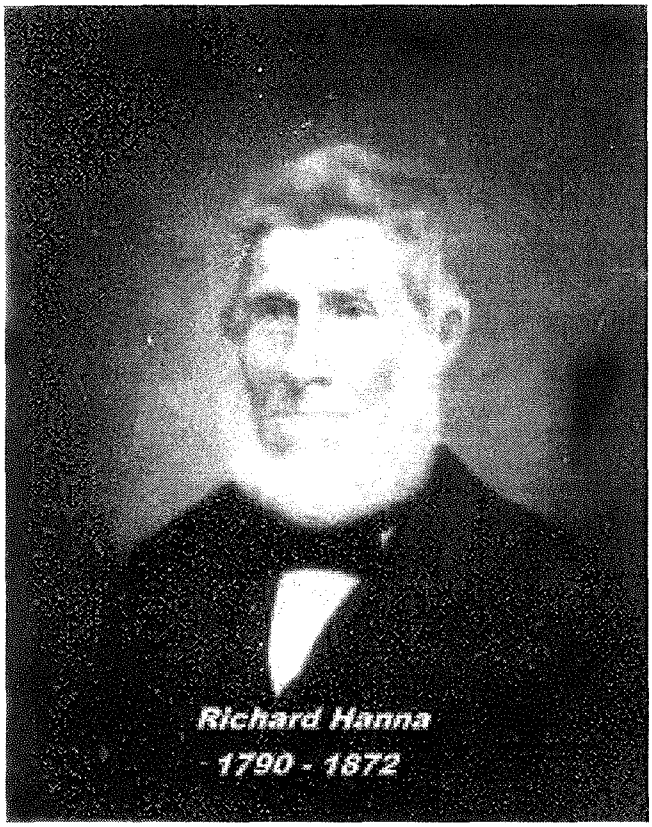
Before leaving on this last leg of his journey, he invested his small savings in some goods that he hoped to sell along the way. This attempt was but partially successful, and only through sheer determination was he able to stretch his meager funds for the journey. He was bound for a place called Independence which at that time was comprised of but two houses, one of which was the home of his relative.

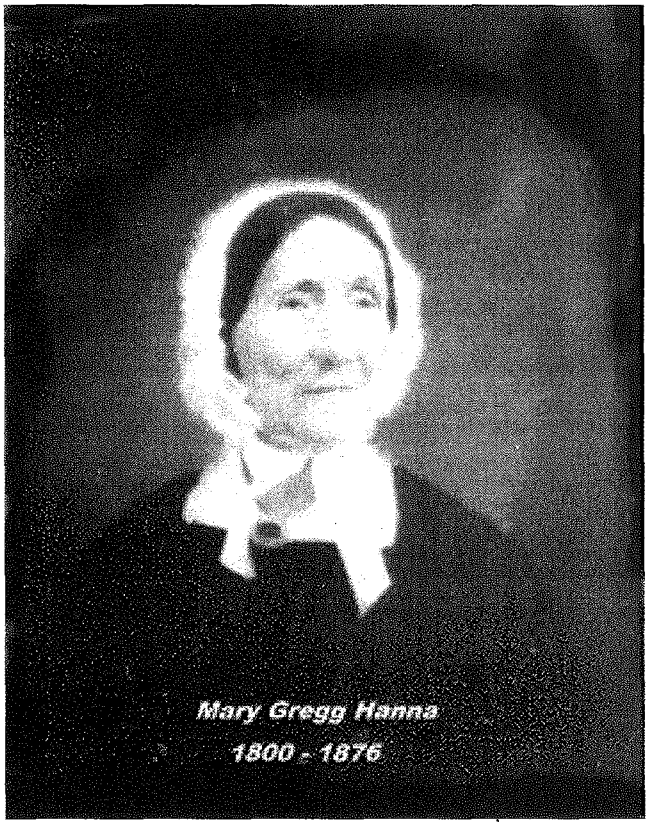
When he got as far as the village of West Middletown, the soles of his shoes fell off. He continued barefooted to the home of his relative, arriving with but one cent to his name. Here he worked as a farm hand for $4 a month in the summer and as a weaver in the winter months.

After twelve years of struggling and saving, he joined a party of local young men like himself who were bound for Ashland County, Ohio. Upon on arrival, he purchased 160 acres of land and spent the next four years at hard labor in clearing it.

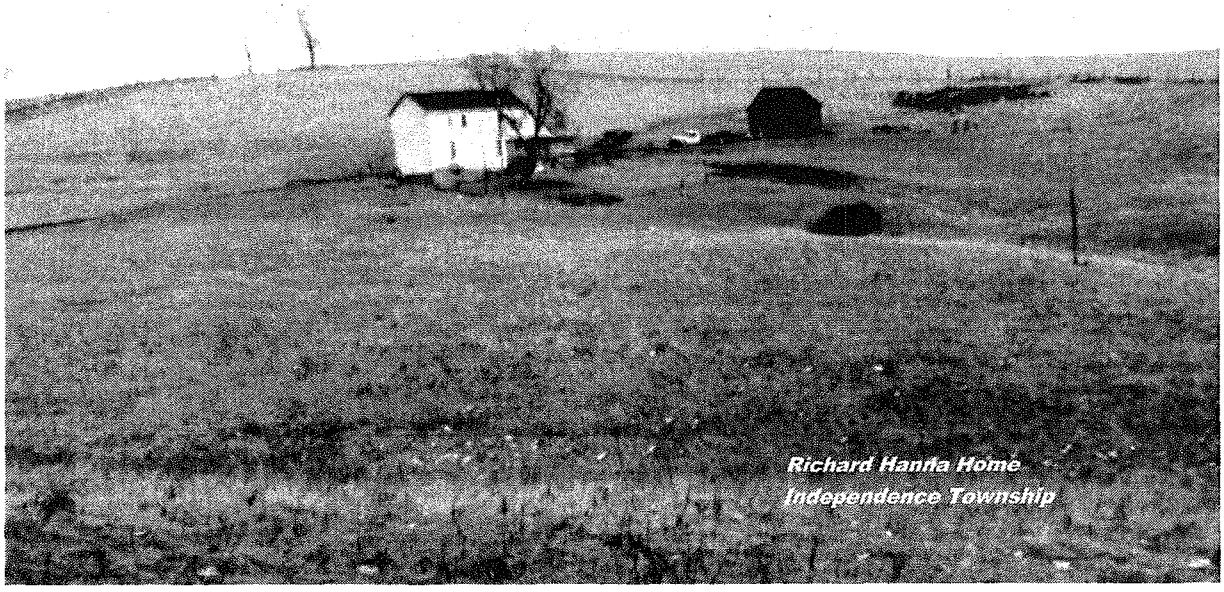
But all was not lost. While trying to make a home for himself, he became acquainted with the family of James Gregg. James had been born in County Donegal, Ireland, in 1770 and in 1798 had married his cousin, Elizabeth Gregg. They became the parents of ten children.

Because of the unrest in Ireland, the Greggs set sail in the spring of 1829 for America with all of their children except Charles, who had died in infancy. After arriving at Philadelphia, they made the long and tedious journey overland to Savannah, Ohio. As time went by, they took up nearly 500 acres of land and built a house. As fate would have it, eventually one of their neighbors was Richard Hanna. Richard fell in love with the eldest daughter of James Gregg whose name was Mary. On the 5th of May in 1834, he made her his wife.



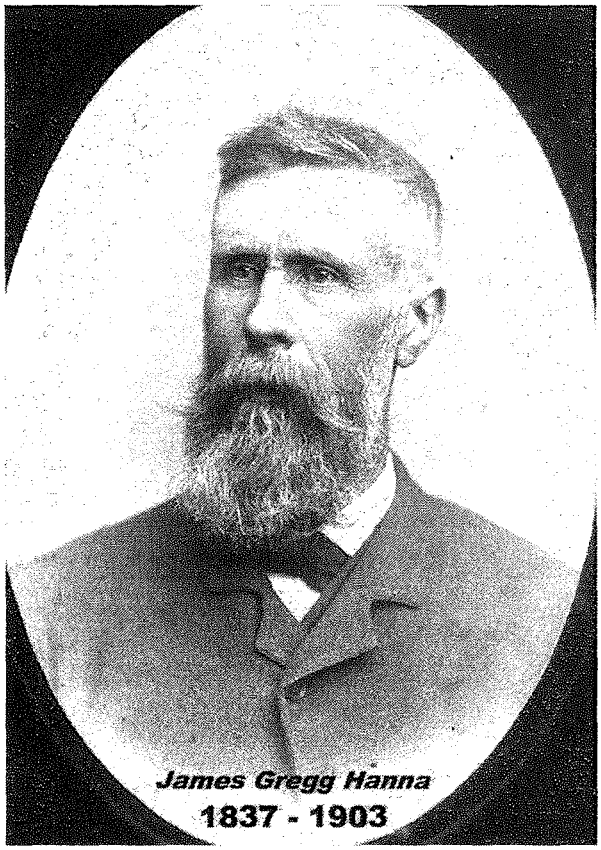


Although Richard had sacrificed much to clear his land, Ohio was somehow never quite home to him. He talked it over with his wife and together they decided to return to Washington County where Richard had first settled sixteen years before. A mile south of Independence Village, the young couple bought a farm that became their permanent home. Nearly 170 years later, it still is known as the Richard Hanna homestead.



Richard Hanna was nearly 45 years of age at the time of his marriage and his chosen partner nearly 35. But the fates smiled upon them and blessed this union with two children: a daughter, Elizabeth M. Hanna, who was born 1 May 1835, and a son, James Gregg Hanna, born 5 June 1837.

Elizabeth Hanna Stewart
b. 1-5-1835--------d. 30-11-1910



James Gregg Hanna
1837 - 1903

In 1861, Elizabeth became the bride of John J. Stewart, prominent young man of Cross Creek Township. Mr. Stewart was descended from one of the township's oldest families. Upon his marriage, he took his young wife to the home farm near Walker's Rocks. Here they lived out their lives together, a span of nearly half a century.

In the space of the first twelve years of their wedded life, Elizabeth gave birth to their seven children, all of whom lived to adulthood. She had been educated in the Independence Township schools and had been graduated from old Pleasant Hill Seminary. It was said of her in her obituary of 1910, that she was always a rugged woman who had enjoyed the best of health during her entire lifetime of 75 years. At the time of her death, she experienced an illness of but five hours before passing away.

Elizabeth's husband, John J. Stewart, lived his entire life on the farm on which he had been born. He was a man of quiet habits who was always content with the activities of maintaining his land. He preceded Elizabeth in death by two years at the age of 81. Both were active members of the Grove Presbyterian Church at West Middletown and were laid to rest in the cemetery there.

John J. Stewart, husband of Elizabeth Hanna Stewart and father of the following children

The children of the Stewarts were:

1) **Mary Elizabeth, born in 1862 and died at the age of 80 in 1942. She was married to John Lyle.**
2) **Elmer James Stewart, born in 1864, married, and moved at an early age to Hebron, Nebraska, where he lived out his life. He and Maggie had a daughter and a son.**
3) **Richard Austin Stewart, b. 18 November 1865, married Ella Doak. They had three children: J. Leslie, Helen who married DeWitt Edmonds, and Austin. In 1915, their son, Leslie, met with a mysterious death under a railway bridge in Westview, Allegheny County. When his body was found, his gold watch and money were missing. Foul play was suspected since there had been a number of recent holdups in that section. His father, R. Austin Stewart, was a prominent M.D. around Washington and had served in World War I where he was the first physician from the area to land in France. He served throughout the war and left the military with the rank of lieutenant colonel. His son's death left him so grief stricken that it was believed that this loss may have resulted in his own sudden premature death ten years later at the age of 59.**
4) **Ella Rebecca Stewart, born May, 1867, married Staunton Cunningham.**
5) **John Moore Stewart, born 14 October 1868, married Edna Lawton. Died 8 March 1950.**
6) **Margaret Georgia Stewart, born, 1871, married Charles Brownlee.**
7) **Hannah Louetta Stewart, born 17 March 1873, married Robert Parker Wilson.**

On the old Stewart farm in Cross Creek Township, stands a beautiful old brick home which, unfortunately, was permitted to remain empty until it became past salvaging. The stories told this writer concerning its history are somewhat vague as to exactly which of the Stewarts built this house. It has been said that the wash house was built and occupied first while the big house was under construction. It is believed to have been completed and occupied in 1880. The Stewarts are reputed to have sold the deep coal rights to acquire money for the house. Everything but the tin for the roof came

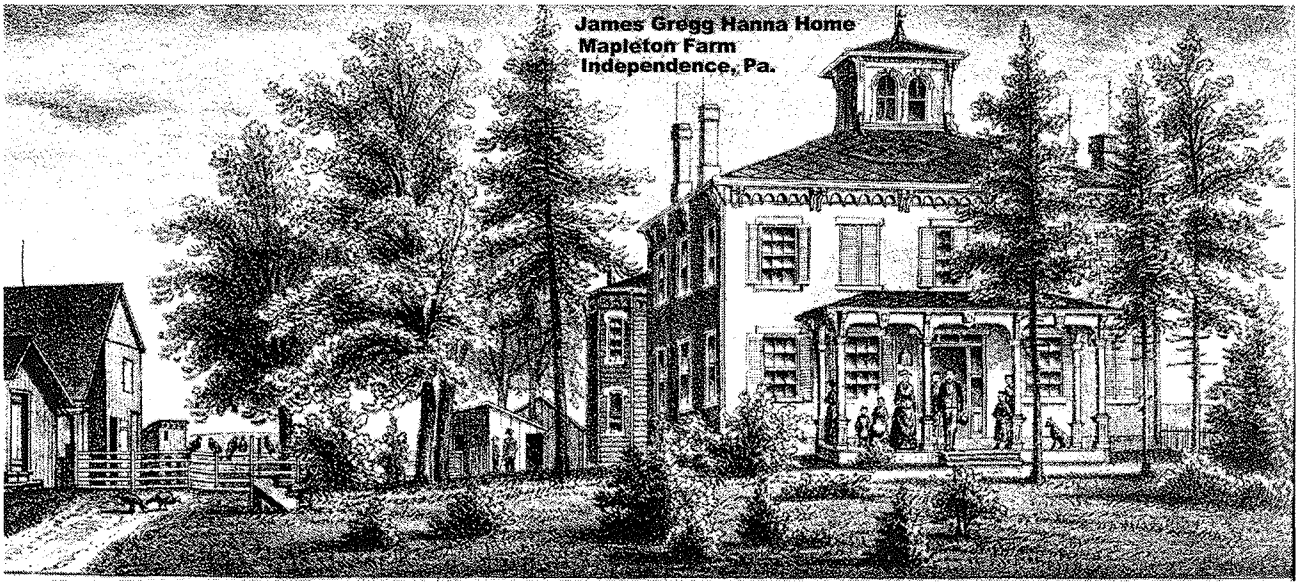
from the farm. All of the walls are two bricks in thickness. There are five rooms in the basement and ten rooms, two stairways and two huge halls in the main part of the house. After the death of the Stewarts, it is believed that the daughter, Ella Cunningham, continued to live there. Peter Monticello, Sr. bought the property in 1917 and moved into it in the spring of 1918 with his wife and five children. Five more youngsters were born in the house. Today (2002) it appears to be beyond repair, but not even the destruction by the elements over time has been able to erase the innate beauty of the place.

J. Stewart Homestead, Old Ridge Road, Cross Creek Township

James Gregg Hanna, the only son of Richard and Mary Gregg Hanna, was not so fortunate with producing and rearing his family as was his sister, Elizabeth Stewart. On 26 February 1861, he took as his bride Mary A. McCreary. Exactly one year later, to the day, a son was born to them. This child died the same day he was born. Three years later on 27 June 1865, a daughter, Mary A. McCreary Hanna, was born. To their delight, she was a healthy baby. But just 22 days after her birth, her mother, Mary McCreary Hanna, died at the age of 29 years 5 months and 25 days. It must have been the end of the world for James Hanna.

It is believed that during this short four-year marriage, James purchased, from his wife's family, a home that was later to become known as Mapleton Farm. During the

ensuing years, he added a second story, a unique cupola, a bath, and other features which transformed it into the showplace of Independence Village. It sat on the top of a beautiful knoll, surrounded by lush farmland, looking down upon miles and miles of well-kept fields and forests. When Caldwell published his famous Centennial Atlas of Washington County in 1876, one of his artists created a sketch of the mansion for inclusion in the Atlas. A copy of it appears below.



Little Mary A. Hanna who was born shortly before her mother's death, grew up in the Hanna mansion and married John S. Liggett. But fate did not smile on Mary. Not long after their marriage, John died, and a short time later, Mary followed him into the great beyond, on 28 April 1891 at the age of 25 years, 10 months, and 1 day.

In the meantime, about three years after the death of his first wife, James married again – this time to Jane A. Scott, on 12 March 1868. Seven children blessed this union. But hard times were not yet over for James Hanna. Two of these children died as infants – Albert W. Hanna, born 24 May 1871, died 15 July, aged 1 month and 21 days, while an infant daughter born 8 January 1875, died 10 January, aged 2 days. On 31 October 1872, another son, Robert Scott Hanna had been born, sandwiched in between the two above named infants. No one living today remembers having heard exactly what happened to this precious son. But family records show that on 1 October 1876, little Robert died at the age of 3 years, 11 months and 1 day.

This must have been a very dark time for James, who had just buried his mother, Mary Gregg Hanna, about 26 days before little Robert died.

During these very trying years for James and Jane Scott Hanna, there was one bright spot in the otherwise blackness of death which seemed to surround them. Just about a year after their marriage, their first child, Nettie Bell Hanna had been born on 15 April 1869. Nettie Bell was a happy healthy baby from the beginning and grew to adulthood where she married Joseph H. Anderson and became the mother of a son, James K. Anderson and a daughter, Margaret Gertrude. But Nettie also had her share of problems. Her daughter died near the age of 30. Her son died at the age of 59 and

Nettie Bell, herself, having now lost both of her children, followed him to the grave not many months later, at the age of 82. Her son, James K. Anderson, left a daughter, Gretchen, who married Robert Osgood. It is not known if Gretchen had issue or if she were the end of the Nettie Bell Hanna line.

After the death of little Robert Hanna, the last three children of James and Jane were girls. Jo G. Hanna was born 20 September 1877. She lived until 11 August 1948. Jo Hanna never married. Long after the death of her parents, she continued to live in Independence Village where she was an active member of Lower Buffalo Church and of the West Middletown Garden Club. She was well liked and highly esteemed in the area.

The sixth child of James and Jane was Bird Virginia Hanna, born 14 January 1879. On 28 May in 1902, she played the leading role of "bride" in the Hanna mansion in Independence when she married Dr. John Boyd McMurray. Two years later on 20 June 1904, she gave birth to a son, Boyd Hanna McMurray. Birdie never recovered from the birth. On the first of December that same year, she died at the age of 25 years 10 months and 17 days. Her son grew to manhood and married Catherine Holt. But at the age of 29 he died in Missouri. He had no issue.

The seventh and last child of James and Jane was Maybelle Hanna, born 10 April 1881 in the Hanna mansion. Six days later, her mother, Jane Scott Hanna died at the age of 36 years. Maybelle grew to adulthood and married William P. Wilson, well known historian of the Independence area for nearly a century. Their children were: William Hanna Wilson and Jean Wilson. Jean married a man named Robinson. She had a son, Richard T. Robinson. It is not known if he had children. Her son, William Hanna Wilson, had two sons, John and Thomas, who produced at least four grandchildren for her.

Less than two years after the death of his second wife, Jane Scott Hanna, James married for the third time. His choice this time around was Mellissa J. Welch, whom he married 3 January 1883. On October 31 of the same year, she gave birth to a daughter, Jane Lillian Hanna. Jane never married. At one point in time, she moved to Kansas, but the call of home was stronger than the allure of the west. The remainder of her life she spent in Independence living with her half-sister, Jo Hanna. She was an active member of Lower Buffalo Church where she served as organist a number of years. She died at home 21 January 1942.

On 29 September 1885, Richard and Mellissa welcomed the birth of a son, Richard Welch Hanna. Just a week later, Mellissa died. On October 16th, this son also died. He was the eleventh child of James Gregg Hanna and his fourth and final son. As will be seen, James was to father a dozen children which included these four sons. None of the sons survived past the age of four years.

Just after Christmas in 1887 on December 28, James Hanna made one final attempt at marriage. His choice was Margaret L. Denny, daughter of Walter and Mary Welch Denny. Margaret was just 27 days shy of her 40th birthday, but she came from strong pioneer stock. Her mother had produced 13 children in her lifetime and had lived to the ripe old age of 90. Nearly five years after her marriage, Margaret gave James Hanna his twelfth child. They named her Mary Gwendolyn Hanna. Margaret must have inherited the strength and stamina of her maternal line. She lived until 22 September 1942, when she died in her 95th year.

Margaret L. Denny Hanna

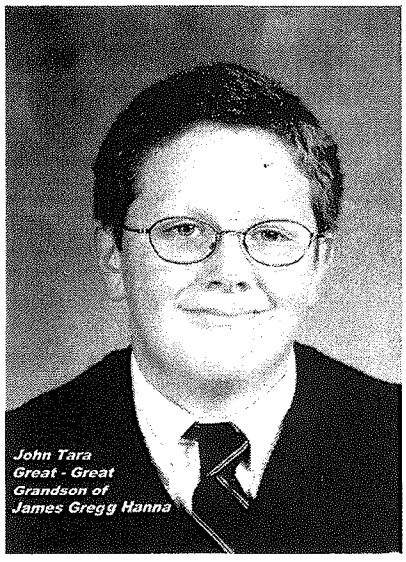
Mary Gwendolyn Hanna Gist

Mary Gwendolyn Hanna grew to adulthood in the Hanna mansion and on 3 October 1917, married Wilbur Gist. To them were born two children: Mary Virginia Gist and Robert Richard Gist. But the fates were against young Robert. At the age of 16, he was taken from them, succumbing to a streptococal infection which proved fatal. It was a blow from which the family never completely recovered.

Mary Virginia married W. Walter Renberg, Jr. a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University in engineering. Mary Virginia was graduated with a B.S. degree from Penn State University. They were the parents of a daughter, Mary Beth Renberg, who married Christopher John Tara. Both Mary Beth and Christopher were graduated from the University of Virginia Law School. The Taras had two children: Christian Elizabeth Tara and John Nathaniel Tara,II.

Walter & Mary Virginia Renberg

Christian Tara
Great - Great
Granddaughter of
James Gregg Hanna



John Tara
Great - Great
Grandson of
James Gregg Hanna

James Hanna's last child, Mary Gwendolyn Hanna Gist, was but eleven years old when he died 16 July 1903. His last wife, Margaret Denny Hanna, survived him by nearly forty years. He was buried in Franklin Cemetery beside his wives and children.

James's father, Richard Hanna, the pioneer, had little formal education, but he was a remarkably clear-sighted business man. Although he began life against extreme odds and worked in the face of abject poverty, at his death in 1872, he left an estate valued at $40,000. In that day and age, it was a fortune. Richard and Mary Gregg Hanna are also buried in the Franklin Cemetery just west of Independence in Brooke County, WV.

After the death of Margaret Denny Hanna, her daughter, Mary Gwendolyn, and family continued to live in the Hanna mansion. But five years later on 7 February 1947, fire broke out which destroyed this showplace of Independence. Gallant efforts by neighbors, firemen, and others could not save it. Today, all that remains of the homestead are the foundation stones and a few pieces of building material salvaged by its present owner, Joseph DePetro. This loss in terms of historical value cannot be estimated. It was the end of an age.

At the time of the death of James, it was an established fact that only his unmarried daughters still bore the Hanna surname in the area. The deaths of his four sons must have been a terrible disappointment. His sister, Elizabeth Hanna Stewart, had three sons and several grandsons, but none, of course, with the Hanna surname. For James, the chances of having a long line of descendants even from his daughters, seemed to decrease with each passing decade. A careful scrutiny of the preceding genealogical data will reveal the following bleak picture.

One daughter died in infancy. The eldest, Mary A. McCreary Hanna, married, but had no children. Two daughters, Jo and Jane, never married. Birdie Virginia died at the birth of her son who, himself, died childless. There is a possibility that Nettie Bell's granddaughter, Gretchen Anderson Osgood, may have had offspring, but if so, the other living descendants are unaware of it. This leaves only Maybelle, the daughter of his second wife, Jane Scott Hanna, and Mary Gwendolyn Hanna, his twelfth child and daughter of Margaret Denny Hanna who produced known descendants for James G. Hanna. Maybelle's children gave her three grandsons and at least four great-grandchildren. Mary Gwedolyn's son died at 16, but her daughter produced a granddaughter for her in the person of Mary Virginia Gist Renberg. Fortunately for the Hanna blood line, Mary Virginia can also boast of a daughter and two grandchildren: Christian and John Tara whose pictures appear on the preceding page. In these smiling faces rests much of the hope of the continuation of the Hanna line. What a glorious inheritance is theirs! And this writer, who has been supplied with untold pictures, clippings, data, and such by their grandmother, Mary Virginia, feels very confident that she has long ago instilled in these children a gratitude and appreciation for this prestigious heritage which is theirs.

The Samuel Stewart Campbell Homestead

by

June Campbell Grossman- Welch

Part of the little village of Avella lies on the south side of Cross Creek, paying allegiance to Independence Township as its political base. It is not an old town, having been laid out about 1903 by a man named Samuel Stewart Campbell.

Samuel's father, Samuel B. Campbell, was born in Ohio, 14 May 1811, the son of David and Ann Rea Campbell. David had been born in Cross Creek Township in 1783, the son of one of the township's first pioneer couples, John and Mary Hammond Campbell. These pioneers had come to the area from York County and settled on the farm known today as Serenity Farms. When David married Ann Rea in 1808, he left the Cross Creek area, moving to Harrison County, Ohio, where he served as Associate County Judge for a number of years and was a merchant of sorts. Samuel Stewart Campbell's father, Samuel B. Campbell, was the second of the eleven children born to David and Ann while they lived in Ohio. This family returned to the Cross Creek area about the year 1828. Upon reaching adulthood, Samuel B. married Jane McGugin. He is listed in the 1850 census as a resident of Independence Township. His father, David, was a ruling elder in the Lower Buffalo Presbyterian Church from 1848 until his death in 1858, which may imply that it was about this time that the family came to what is now the Avella area.

The grandparents of Samuel Stewart Campbell were a very devoted couple during the 50 years of their married lives and were not long separated at death, Ann dying 28 September 1858 and David following her on 15 November the same year. Their children had these powerful words carved on their mother's tombstone: "She made home happy".

Before the town of Avella was laid out shortly after 1900, the land on which it is located was comprised of two farms, the Campbell farm being the part on which much of the Avella Lumber and Supply Co. and the Lincoln National Bank would be built. The other farm was owned by W.J. Brown and was to become known as Browntown. The farmhouse of the Campbells stood above where the railroad tracks were later laid. When the railroad went through in 1902-1904, the house was moved farther up the hill with the use of logs, skids, and horsepower. The late Joe Kelly, who was an employee of the Campbell family for 40 years, was privy to this information. Samuel B. Campbell died in 1890, at which time his son, Samuel Stewart Campbell inherited the farm. It was this later Samuel who built, on what was then bottomland, the beautiful mansion house known for nearly a century as the Campbell Homestead and later owned and occupied by James and Rose Geresti.

The late A.D.White, who personally knew Samuel Stewart Campbell during their lifetimes, had the following to say about him:

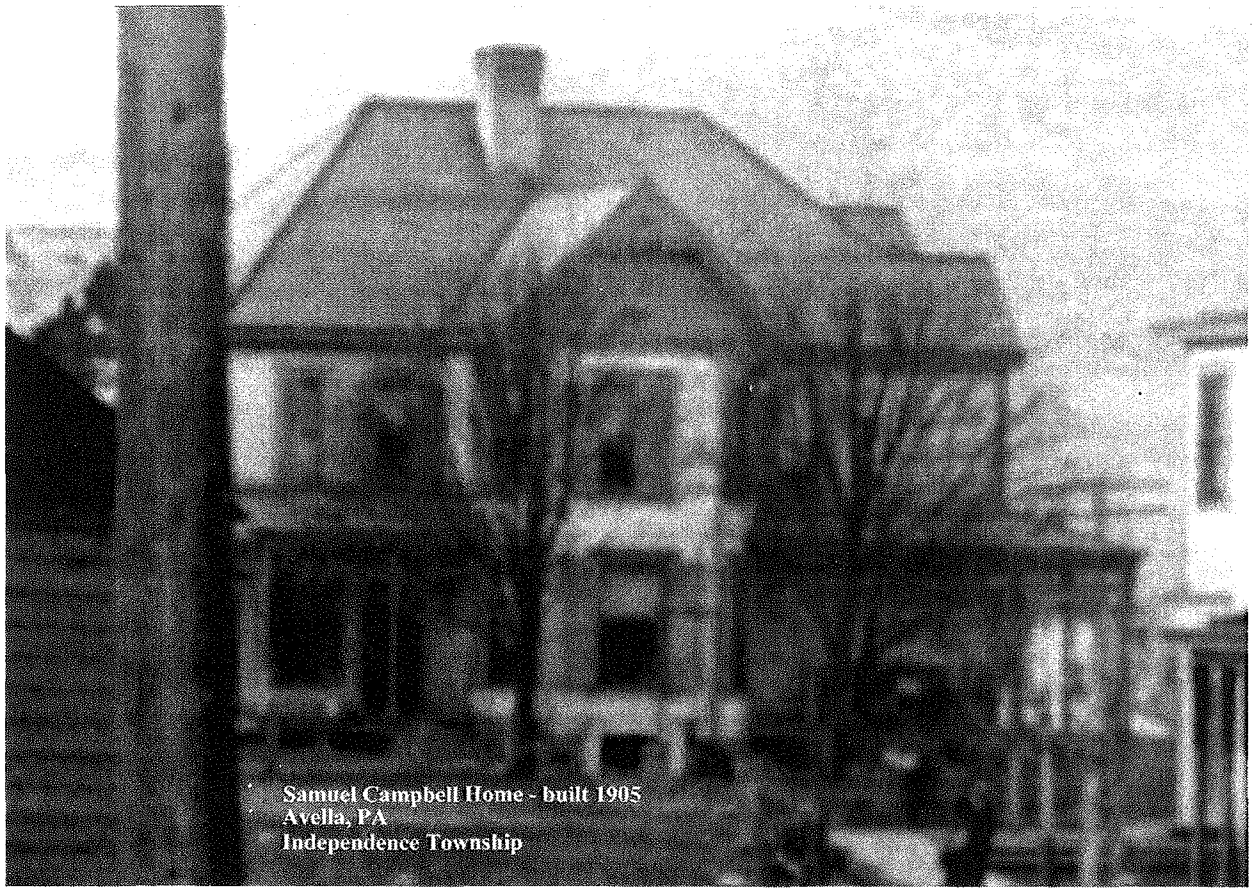
" I remember Mr. Campbell (Samuel S.) very well. He was a large man, well built, and of commanding appearance. After selling his farm out in lots, he had a competence in life and was a sort of country gentleman, although always plain and affable, and never pretentious. He had a good singing voice and belonged to a male quartet which sang at many community gatherings in his day. He helped organize the Lincoln National Bank

and served as its president. He was part owner of Avella Lumber and Supply Company, which he passed later to his son, J.E. Campbell, then his grandson, Samuel Scott Campbell, who died in 1975. He established the Campbell Theatre in Avella and helped organize the Presbyterian Church. To Mr. Campbell's interest, foresight, and industry, we may attribute the planning of this end of the town of Avella."

During his lifetime, Samuel had his share of tragedies. His first wife, Jennie M. Scott, died in 1882 at the age of thirty, leaving him with their son, Ernie, aged 3 and daughter, Alma, about a year old. Ten years later, he married Anne Rankin, but seven years into this marriage, Anne was tragically killed by lightning during a thunderstorm. Samuel was away on business at the time and upon his return, chanced to run into Mr. Wiegmann, the town undertaker, who was on his way to pick up the body of Sam's wife. The following year, his aged mother died. Samuel lived until the age of 83, dying in 1932.

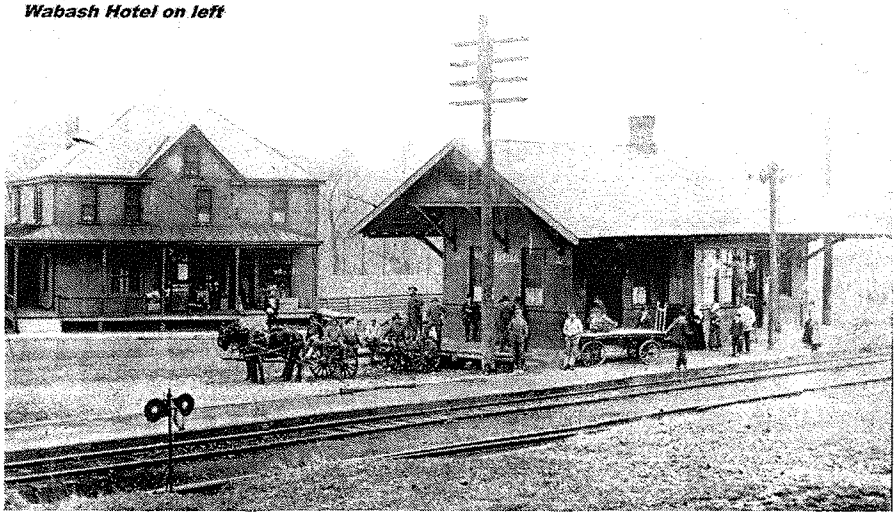
Sam's son, Ernie, fell heir to the Campbell mansion and property at the time of Sam's death. Ernie had married Awilda Cooper of Eldersville, a descendant of several pioneer families of the area including that of John H. Murchland, James Patterson, and Erasmus Cooper. Ernie and Awilda had but one child, Samuel Scott Campbell. After two childless marriages, this last Sam Campbell died in 1975, removing the Campbell name from the Avella area forever.

It has been a century and a half since the last Sam Campbell's ancestors bought the land that was to become Avella. Today, in 2001, the Avella Lumber and Supply Company is only a memory. The Lincoln National Bank Building stands desolately empty on its corner of Wabash and Campbell. But just across the street, the Campbell mansion, with its carriage house intact, rests gloriously on its immaculately landscaped lawn. Avella is fortunate indeed. James and Rose Milvet Geresti have preserved a little corner of history. May it stand forever.



An early side view of the Samuel S. Campbell homestead appears above. On the bottom of the preceding page, is the wedding picture of Mr. Campbell's only daughter, Alma, and her husband, Robert Liggett, in 1906. The wedding took place in this house shortly after its construction. This Alma Campbell is the grown-up version of the little girl aged about one year whose mother, Jennie Scott Campbell, died in 1882 at the age of 30.

Avella Railroad Station
Wabash Hotel on left



The William Pettibon Homestead

by

June Campbell Grossman-Welch

NOTE: The extensive research required on the families later occupying this homestead as well as innumerable interviews with Thelma Pettibon Potts who provided much of the information on the Pettibon family was performed by Kathryn Campbell Slasor. The story concerning these later families and the material on "the little foundation" is also authored by Kathryn.

In the Cross Creek Township Census of 1840, there is recorded a William "Pettebone" living near Charles Scott, three Magee families, Frederick Kline, a Sutherland, and a Metcalf. To the well-versed local historian, these names are powerful indicators that this part of Cross Creek Township was the locale soon to become Jefferson. This is, in fact, a fairly complete roster of the farms bordering the southern end of Bethel Ridge Road from the Bethel Methodist Church to the top of Virginville Hill. The place where this William Pettebone lived, at the taking of that 1840 census, was to become known for more than a century and a half as the Pettibon Homestead.

Little is known about this couple and their six sons and one daughter numbered with them at that point in time. In the 1880 census, their children indicate that William was born in Maryland, but their mother, Catherine Ward Pettibon, was a native of Pennsylvania. A brief family history, probably written in the late 1970s, gives the birth of the eldest child, Elihu, as 22 October 1830. The writer of that history listed birth dates of thirteen children beginning with the aforementioned Elihu. These births included two sets of twins, namely, Christopher and Benjamin, born in 1838, with Eleanor and Rebecca arriving in 1851.

For the most part, their offspring were born at intervals of two or two-and-a-half years. The one major exception was that of the thirteenth child, Albert, who arrived on the first day in December of 1858, a period of seven years and seven months after the birth of the twelfth child, Rebecca. According to the given birthdate of the mother, which agrees with census records and her tombstone inscription, she was past fifty years of age at Albert's birth.

Just how many of these children were born in the old Pettibon log house is not known. The young couple does not appear in the 1830 census record of this area, so were apparently elsewhere at the time the census was taken. If they settled there before October of 1830, when their eldest child was born, then all of their children were born on this homestead. In later census records examined, all of the children recorded list their birthplace as Pennsylvania. Census records for 1800 through 1830 for all bordering townships and for the state of Virginia have been consulted for other Pettibon listings but only two were found. The Pettibon name occurs in Hanover Township in 1810 where a young man named Benjamin Pettebone is listed with his family. (It is interesting to note that William and Catherine named one of their twin sons Benjamin.) The other Pettibon listing is that of an Elizabeth Pettibon, age 15, living with a Joseph Corbin family in Cross Creek Township in 1850. In 1860, at age 24, she is listed in Hopewell Township with a McClay family. She then disappears from the records.

Inasmuch as extensive research has turned up nothing further on the early days of this family, we must assume that William, having been born in Maryland in 1795

(according to his tombstone), made his way westward, where he met and married Catherine Ward, daughter of James Ward of Hanover Township. This marriage is believed to have occurred 4 April 1828.

NOTE: Reference in this text has been made to the Pettibon Family History circa 1970. This document has presented one puzzling fact. The compiler lists the couple as having eight sons before any daughters are produced. The first girl listed in this history is Martha, born in 1845. Yet five years before Martha's birth, the 1840 census lists, in addition to the six sons (which agrees with the family history), a daughter between the ages of 5 and 10. Why is she not listed in the family history? Could she be the Elizabeth discussed in a previous paragraph? If so, why is she not living at home in 1850 when she was 15 years of age? Or was she simply working for this Corbin family? If the female child listed in 1840 is not Elizabeth, who was she and what became of her? In the 1850 census, a girl named Mary Babel, age 15, is listed as a resident in the Pettibon home. Could she be this eldest daughter who has married a man named Babel? Perhaps she is back home helping her mother with her younger siblings. Since family members are buried in the graveyard at Bethel Church, why is this child not among them if she died after the 1840 census? Any reader who can resolve this situation is asked to contact the A.D.White Center at the address listed on the cover page so that an accurate account of this old pioneer family may be recorded.

The land on which William Pettibon settled was patented before 1800 under such names as Levinns and Metcalf. Most historians believe that none of these people built on the land or lived there. In all probability, William, himself, built the log house in which he was to spend the rest of his life. It contained four rooms, two upstairs and two down. It had a total of six windows, one in each end of the house and one in each of the four rooms. The closed stairway led off the kitchen, which was on the observer's left side when viewed from the front. Occupants of the upstairs were forced to trespass through one bedroom to get to the other – a feat not too conducive to privacy. A grate fireplace occupied the end opposite the stairwell on the lower floor. Eventually, both grate and kitchen stove provided heat. In later years, a façade of lap siding, painted white, hid the log structure. But passersby in the early days remember "just black logs".

Of the day-to-day life of William Pettibon, little is known. However, a few scant pieces of information found among the writings of the late A.D.White provide the reader with an insight into the character of the man. The following "story" illustrates a little of this "character".

It is not known what the religious background of William was prior to his coming to Cross Creek Township. His earthly remains and that of his children who lived out their lives in this area are interred at the Bethel Graveyard just a mile or so from the Pettibon log house. Bethel Church, which joins the graveyard, was of the Methodist faith. But in 1849, a number of persons in the area surrounding the Pettibon homestead banded together to form the Pine Grove Presbyterian Church. A building was constructed just down over the hill from William's house not far from Creswell's Mill – later known as Kidds Mill.

The congregation was in existence from 1849 until approximately 1886. It was always a small group and inasmuch as this was a period of great unrest due to the imminent Civil War, it fell prey to the turmoil of the age and disintegrated in less than a forty year span. During its existence, however, William played a role which has been recorded by the late A.D.White.

As given in the original records of this church, William Pettibon was the first person received into membership of the Pine Grove Church upon examination by the session at their first meeting on 8 December 1849. He had already been elected to the office of trustee on 17 October in the same year.

It is not the purpose of this discussion to iterate the circumstances of William's importance in this church. But a letter composed by him to the session of the church on 8 February 1863 demonstrates conclusively that William Pettibon was a very literate man, very articulate in expression, and very sincere and well versed in his knowledge and belief in the scriptures. His descendants would do well to read this old document that they might better grasp the level of accomplishment and intelligence of their ancestor.

Of the thirteen children of William and Catherine Pettibon, little information has surfaced about nine of them. In 1978, Eloise Pettibon Morris, a descendant of the eldest son, Elihu, contacted historian, A.D.White, for information on her great grandfather. The only facts she, herself, knew at the time were that in 1857, Elihu had married Hulda Matthews, after which they moved to DeWitt County, Illinois, then in 1876, went further west to Deerfield, Missouri, where they later died. Nothing further concerning Elihu is known by this writer.

The second son, James, fourth son, John, and twin sons numbered 5 and 6, Benjamin and Christopher, may have later followed their elder brother, since they do not appear in any local census records after leaving the family nest.

Four daughters were born after the eight sons and little is known of them. Martha, the eldest, was still home in 1870 but was gone by 1880. One of the twins, Eleanor, died in 1874 at age 22. Her sister, Nancy, died the next year at age 27. Rebecca, the other twin, was still home with her mother in 1880, but nothing further is known of her.

The eighth son, David, married Cornelia Leopold. To them were born five daughters and one son. Four of their daughters lived very long lives. The three eldest, namely, Mary, Laura, and Sarah, remained single, while Effie, the fourth daughter, married John Buchanan. Jane Ann, the youngest, married Harry Bebout. Their only son, Lewis Pettibon, married Anna Wiegman. They were the parents of two sons and a daughter. David and family appear to have lived most of their lives in the Oakdale area.

The youngest son, Albert, married Catherine Stroud, daughter of James and Jane Stroud of Independence Township. They were the parents of eight children, living most of their lives on St. Johns Road in Brooke County, WV. They lived to celebrate 61 years of wedded life.

Only two of the thirteen Pettibon children remained close to home after marriage. These were: son #3, William, Jr. and son #7, Thomas. Census records, however, testify to the fact that all thirteen of these children were never in any hurry to leave the nest. They were, to all appearances, happy at home, even though "home" was a four room log house which afforded little or no privacy and not much room for stretching. Some census listings show ten or eleven adults, counting the parents, living there at one time, even though many were of an age when they might well have been off on their own. Theirs may have been a closely knit unit where the keyword was love. All of the children grew to adulthood – a rarity in those days, and nothing is known of any tragic events as they were growing up.

The third son, William,Jr., never was far from home. He married Nancy Metcalf, daughter of John Metcalf, a neighbor of the Pettibons. William and Nancy had seven children, three of whom died in infancy, and are buried at Bethel. Those who survived, for the most part, continued to live in the Jefferson Township area which their descendants to the fifth generation still call "home". John Van Nest Cole Pettibon, the eldest, married Almira Price, while Katherine wed Robert Kidd. The remaining two children – Thomas and Anna – married Minnie and Louis Wiegmann, thus making their children double cousins. The only known descendants from this third generation still living today are Sarah Pettibon Cassidy, daughter of Thomas and Minnie Wiegmann

Pettibon, and Helen Wiegmann Martin, daughter of Louis and Anna Pettibon Wiegmann. Both "girls" are, in 2002, well into their nineties in age.

It was the seventh son, Thomas, who remained on the old Pettibon homestead, and with whom this treatise is most concerned. Thomas had been born in 1841 and was sandwiched in as the middle child, with six siblings coming before him and six after. He did not marry until about 1878 at the age of 37. His chosen bride was Sarah Stroud, a sister of the Catherine Stroud his baby brother, Albert, would marry five years later. Shortly before his marriage, the family had experienced three deaths in the family circle: his sister, Eleanor, in 1874, his sister, Nancy, in 1875, and his father, William, in 1876. His mother must have been nearly out of her mind with grief over this triple loss. Perhaps this is the reason that William brought his bride home to the log house to start housekeeping rather than to strike out on his own. (It is not known to this writer whether Catherine willed the farm to Thomas or not, but those "in the know" still living today maintain that there was always bad blood between Thomas and Albert. This may have been over the issue of which son inherited the home place.) The fact that his sister, Rebecca, and young brother, Albert, where still at home may not have created the ideal situation, but the young couple must have attempted to adjust to it. What they could not know was that their troubles were only beginning.

On 29 March 1879, a son, James Creighton Pettibon, was born to Thomas and Sarah in the old log house which had now seen much of birth and death. The joy of having this first child was, however, to be quickly dispelled. Nearly thirteen months later on 22 April 1880, Sarah gave birth to a baby daughter, Sally Alberta. Sarah died at the birth of this child and two months later on June 27th, "Baby Sally", as she had affectionately been labeled, went to join her mother in the great beyond. Apparently Thomas was beside himself with grief. When the census taker arrived in that year of 1880, Sarah and Baby Sally were gone, and no mention is made of little Creighton, aged one. Perhaps one of Thomas's sisters had taken the toddler until Thomas could cope with this double tragedy.

A little over two years after Sarah's death, Thomas's mother, Catherine Ward Pettibon, also passed away. This was in November of 1882. Two months later, the youngest of the Pettibon children, Albert, married and moved out. Apparently Albert did not receive what he may have felt was his just share of things or he did not wish to have further altercations with his brother, Thomas. For whatever reason, Albert left the nest at his mother's death and struck out on his own. Except for Thomas and little Creighton, this left but one other person living in the old log house which had seen so much of life the past half century. This other person was Thomas's youngest sister, Rebecca, who was still unmarried, at least until 1880. It is not known just when she moved out or exactly what became of her. But no further mention was made of her in tales handed down by the family.

It must have been a lonely life for little Creighton and his father. It is known that he attended the local schools – probably the one room Millers School just down the road – as well as Eldersville Normal School and Wellsburg High. Creighton was a nice looking young man and highly esteemed in the neighborhood. At some point in time, the inevitable happened. He became acquainted with a pretty young lady who lived just

down over the steep hillside below the Pettibon homestead at the spacious boarding house of Kidds Mill.

Creighton and Edna Murchland Pettibon

Her name was Edna Murchland and the boarding house was efficiently operated by her mother, Agnes Kidd Murchland. Edna could probably empathize with Creighton's trauma of having lost a parent while yet a child, for when she was very small, her father, James M. Murchland, departed for parts unknown, leaving her mother with a set of twins and little Edna and no bread winner in the household. It was through the operation of the Kidds Mill Boarding House that Agnes was able to provide for her children. But whatever the attraction may have been, Creighton seems to have been properly smitten with the pretty face in the valley. Just out of sight from the old log house, he constructed a new farm house into which he moved his bride in 1906. This "honeymoon house" is still standing in 2002.

Creighton Pettibon Homestead

The new farmhouse had a sitting room, a living room, one bedroom and a small kitchen downstairs. The upstairs contained two very large bedrooms. Down over a steep hill from the house and the grape arbor were the farm buildings. A barn, a corn crib, a wagon shed, and the springhouse were on this level area at the foot of the hill. Water from the spring was carried up the hill to supply the family's needs. Flat fieldstones formed a path of steps.

Four years after the marriage of Creighton and Edna, a daughter, Thelma, was born. In her 92nd year, she still recalls vividly her one most precious memory of her father.

She remembers Charlie, the rough old farm horse whose erratic movements frightened her mother. When her father returned from a hard day's work in the fields, she and her mother would watch from the window for him and the faithful horse to arrive at the old gate at the foot of the hill below the house. Her mother was always fearful that Charlie would turn too mean and frisky for the little four-year-old to ride. But Creighton knew otherwise. At a given signal from her mother, she would run with abandon down the old flagstone path to meet her father who waited with open arms at the gate. Creighton would speak gently to Charlie as he placed the tiny girl on his back. Charlie would walk softly and slowly from the gate to the barn sensing his precious load. "Walk carefully, " her father would tell Charlie as he gave the horse a gentle pat. "Remember, you have the baby." Thelma would not trade that memory for anything this world could offer.

There is little else that she remembers of this young father whom she adored, for fate had other plans in store.

In the latter part of 1914, when little Thelma was four years of age, her father, Creighton, became seriously ill. By 2 February 1915, he was taken to Gill Hospital in

Steubenville, Ohio, where Pittsburgh's best specialists failed to curb his all-consuming illness. On February tenth, he asked to be taken to his father's home in Wellsburg, where he died the next evening at 7:00 p.m. of lymphatic leukemia.

Thomas, Creighton's father, had remained a widower for 29 years after the death of his young wife, Sarah, in 1880. He had raised his small son there on the old Pettibon homestead where he, himself, had been born and raised. It was not until 1909, after Creighton had married and moved into the new home he had built on the farm, that Thomas had remarried – this time at the age of 68 – to a prominent, dearly loved, lady from the Wellsburg area, Anna Lazear. Anna was an educator in the public schools for forty years, an ardent worker in the Christian Church, and active in social circles of the area. She and Thomas lived out their lives in Wellsburg, he having left the old Pettibon homestead at the time of their marriage.

After Creighton's untimely death, Edna and little Thelma left the new house to spend her growing-up years moving haphazardly from relative to relative, searching, perhaps, for "home". But the farm of Creighton's ancestors on the road back in Jefferson Township had been home. And after his death, this young wife and child could not remain there alone. Thus it was that a place to really call "home", was to forever elude young Edna Pettibon. From her husband's passing in 1915 until her own death 65 years later in her 95th year, nothing ever came close to the life they had shared together back on the old Pettibon homestead on Bethel Ridge Road.

The old log house is gone. Those living today who are at all aware of its existence, know it only as "the little foundation." Anyone traveling the southern end of Bethel Ridge Road passes within fifteen feet of its front wall without sensing so much as a vibration. Although a man, his wife, and 13 children once called this location "home", voices that echoed then are now still. As is the house itself, gone also is its spirit.

Only partial walls of flat fieldstones that at one time formed the well-laid foundation are yet visible. Briars, brambles and persistent grasses work to choke out even these, but the intricate pattern of stones squaring off what was possibly the fruit cellar, still remains.

It is not known positively, but it is highly probable, that the first family here was that of William Pettibon. It is known, however, that the log house became "home" to a few others after the Pettibons left it. A group of bachelors who worked the Wabash Railroad lived there and claimed the house was "haunted."

In the mid 1930's, Mrs. Fay Clouston, having lost her husband in the coal mine, moved into the log house with her son, Raymond Boso. Raymond recalls many details about life in the log house when he lived there with his mother and his sisters.

When they arrived in the area, the only other buildings were the chicken house and an outhouse. Their only livestock were a flock of chickens and a pet pig.

Drinking water was obtained from a small stream below the house. After digging a small hole, the water came in so it could be dipped with the bucket. But after one bucket, the water was muddy. Water for washing clothes was caught in barrels on rainy days.

"We were poor, but we didn't know it, so we were happy," Raymond says today.

Personalities from the Past

JAMES W. GILLESPIE

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

My name was James W. Gillespie. I was born on the Winfield Cunningham farm about a mile south of Bethel Church on August 26, 1847. I was a descendant of early pioneers, my parents being Nathaniel and Catherine Johnston Gillespie.

In 1864 when I was only 17 years old, I answered the call of my country. I enlisted in the Army, and until the close of the Civil War, I was with Company L, Second Regiment, Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery.

In March, 1870, I married Caroline Giles, who died at the birth of our little Carrie. Nine years later I married Hannah Martha Corbin. We had six children, among them Ernest A. Gillespie, who served as Postmaster at Eldersville for a number of years.

I was always interested in the huckstering business, and raised a variety of vegetables for sale. I peddled them along the country roads with my wagon, usually drawn by a team of mules. One day I got caught in a flood in the valley of the Shades of Death. My wagon and team were washed away, and I barely escaped with my life.

In 1883 I moved to Eldersville with plans for opening a store. But there was no building available for such an endeavor, so I bought the old parsonage and moved it to my property. It took my mules and me three days to roll the big building on logs up one hill and down the next, to the location where it still stands. The store flourished in the Gillespie name for nearly a century.

My life of nearly 73 years was marked by many outstanding episodes, but I considered the fact that my children became happy, self-sufficient people, to be my greatest accomplishment. In later years, I developed asthma and other complications and the end came on August 5, 1920.

WILLIAM WESLEY KNIGHT

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

My name was William Wesley Knight. I was born May 28, 1818 on the Thompson farm in Hopewell Township. We lived in a two-story log house where my father, Zachariah Knight, made hats.

When I was seven years old, we moved to Eldersville. After getting what education I could in those early days, I began to teach. I also learned the trade of carpenter. I built many of the landmarks of Jefferson Township including the house where I lived. Clyde and Pearl Melvin and the Socha family were later owners.

I taught at the Gardner School on Eldersville Road. One of my contemporaries was Margaret Jane Moore, who taught for fifty years in a number of different one-room schools of the area. Margaret Jane and I were quite elderly when we were invited to be guests of honor at the reunion of Eldersville School pupils in 1909. This was in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the Public School Law of 1834.

I served as Postmaster for nine years at Eldersville. I enjoyed walking, and often walked to the railroad station at Hanlin, even when I was very old.

In 1910, I suffered a fall from which I never recovered, but when one has lived for ninety-two years, it is time to move on. I was buried in the cemetery at Eldersville, having lived in the town for 85 years. Nothing lasts forever.

W. W. Knight Homestead
Cedar Grove Road
Eldersville, PA

standing in front are
Clyde & Pearl Melvin

ROBERT C. OSBURN

My name was Robert C. Osburn. I was born March 25, 1841 in Robinson Township. My grandfather, James Osburn, came from Ireland. The pioneers of the family lived in Westmoreland County and in Johnstown. Some of their descendants drowned in the great Johnstown Flood of 1889.

I received a good common school education. I then taught five terms of school, later taking a course at Duff's Mercantile College in Pittsburgh. After I graduated in 1864, I opened a general store in Eldersville. Some people laughed at my store. They said I sold everything from needles to horse harness.

I was married three times, my first two wives, Mary Robertson and Hannah Knight, both having died when very young. My last wife was Hattie McConnell.

My store prospered well. I had Cyrus McConnell erect a large beautiful store building for me in 1871. It had living quarters in the back. In that area is where my wife, Hattie, made fancy new hats and sold them in the store.

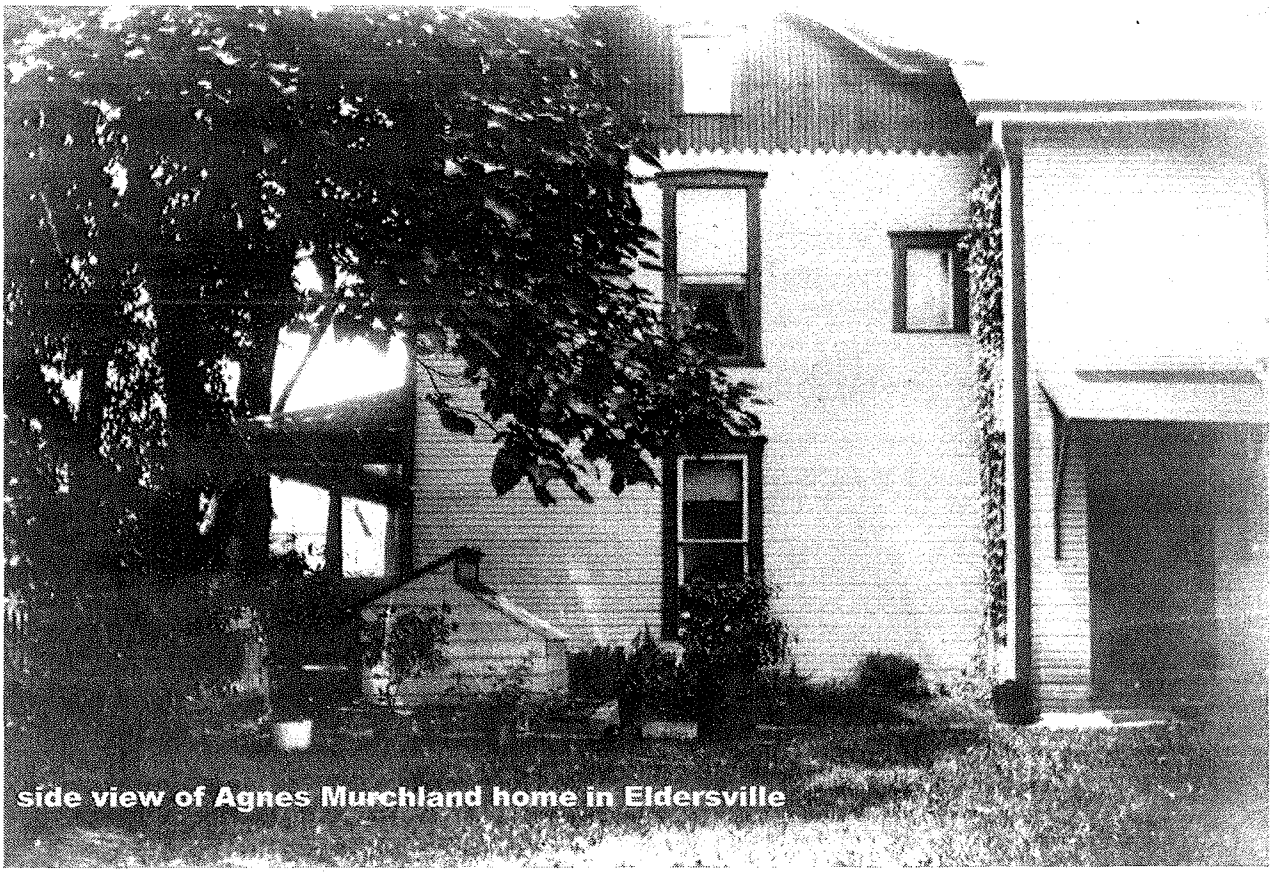
This building was located on the main street of Eldersville, next door to the beautiful home of Agnes Murchland. The Murchlands were nice people and we got along very well. We shared a big dug well together. Even though the well was dug by the Osburns, it was located on the Murchland property in the side yard surrounded by a white picket fence.

One day the top was left off the well and the cat fell in. Mrs. Murchland was horrified and screamed frantically that the well would have to be bailed dry and cleaned. After some excitement, someone had an idea. The old oaken bucket was exchanged for a basket, placed on the windlass, and lowered into the well. The cat jumped into the basket and was pulled to the surface without further ado. That pussy cat became Eldersville's celebrity for some time to come.

My store continued to prosper. I sold a complete line of dry goods, groceries and hardware. In the beginning, I had to haul all my goods from Steubenville with horses and wagon, but as times changed, so did I.

I engaged in other enterprises as well. A neighbor, Oliver Scott, and I started a brick-making plant on Maiden Alley between the church and the school. But this business did not succeed and was later abandoned.

I was told that I had a very energetic spirit. But I attribute much of my success to the neighborhood in which I lived. Eldersville was a place where one could lead a happy life, surrounded by people who cared for each other. I loved the town and the people. Thus, I became a success story where I had had such a humble beginning only a few years before.



side view of Agnes Murchland home in Eldersville

Series 3

Backward Glances

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Preface

This series of "Backward Glances", a compilation of writings on local history, is a beginning attempt to record facts concerning people, places, and events of the area, and to make this material available to the public. As may be noticed from the Table of Contents, these writings fall into one of four arbitrary categories.

The "Second Wave Pioneers" category contains the stories of families whose immigrant ancestor came, for the most part, to this country between 1890 and 1925. Many worked in the mines, on the railroads, or on farms. Their greatest handicap was the language barrier. Their children were often discriminated against and ridiculed because they were not fluent in English. Many of these children were befriended by A.D.White who was principal in many of the local schools at that time. He encouraged them to be all that they could be. As time went by, it was almost an obsession with him that someone should put the stories of their hardships and tragedies into written form. This category of "Second Wave Pioneers" is an attempt to do exactly that. These stories were written either by a descendant of a pioneer or by someone to whom the story had been told.

The pioneers who made the perilous journey across the ocean are gone. Even the entire generation of their children are, in many instances, no longer living. Thus, the tales of their experiences will soon be beyond retrieving. If you, one of our readers, descend from such a family, we plead with you either to write the story of your family and submit it to us to be published in the near future, or to tell it to someone who will do the writing for you. Such stories should be similar in content and scope with those published in this volume and should include appropriate accompanying pictures.

Articles in the "Memories of Yesteryear" category are exactly that. Many of them have been written by persons who no longer live in the area targeted, but whose memories of the same are fondly cherished. Readers are encouraged to make personal contributions to this category for future publication. Potential contributors need not be concerned that spelling, grammar, or sentence construction may not be perfect. All articles will be carefully edited for such errors, while keeping the original style and structure intact.

Persons wishing to contribute to either of these categories should contact Kathryn Slasor at 724-947-3983 or mail contributions to her at 742 Cedar Grove Road, Burgettstown, PA 15021.

Because of the extensive research necessary to produce stories for the "Old Homesteads and Pioneers" category, no one has yet come forth to assist in these writings. Thus the reader will find the majority in this section are authored by either June Campbell Grossman-Welch or Kathryn Campbell Slasor, who have done extensive research and writing in this category over at least a dozen years.

"Personalities from the Past" is included to provide a change of pace from the more rigorous style encountered in the "Homesteads" section. This format has been used extensively over the past several years to catch the attention of a group of young people known as the "Seekers". These "Personalities" are also authored primarily by the two above named writers.

The compilers wish to thank the many contributors for the work and time spent in providing these stories. They also wish to remind readers that two persons viewing the same experience may be affected by it in two entirely different ways. Thus, in reading these accounts, you may recall some of these events in ways other than those expressed in these articles. However, this is the way it was as the authors remembered it.

Profits from the sale of "Backward Glances" will be used to continue similar publications in the near future.

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Second Wave Pioneers

THE FOTOVICH FAMILY

by

June Campbell Grossman-Welch

(Research, pictures, and genealogical information in this material was provided by Joyce Bertovich Takah, whose husband is a grand-son of the Fotovich pioneers. Joyce has displayed a life-long interest in local and family history and credits the living members of the first Fotovich generation for their input as well as children of deceased first generation members. The material on Helen Fotovich Pall is the result of a long research in Hungary by Helen's great-grand-daughter, Erzsebet Koos. Much of the personal accounts of the lives of the pioneers is from the memories of their living sons, Joseph and George Fotovich. This author is deeply indebted to all of these persons and in particular to Joyce Takah who performed a beautiful labor of love in compiling and financing a comprehensive family history for Fotovich descendants and who willingly shared it with us.)

John Fotovich was born in Kallosemjen, Hungary, 10 August 1874. In approximately 1896, he married Julia Vas, born 24 April 1881.

John & Julia Vas Fotovich

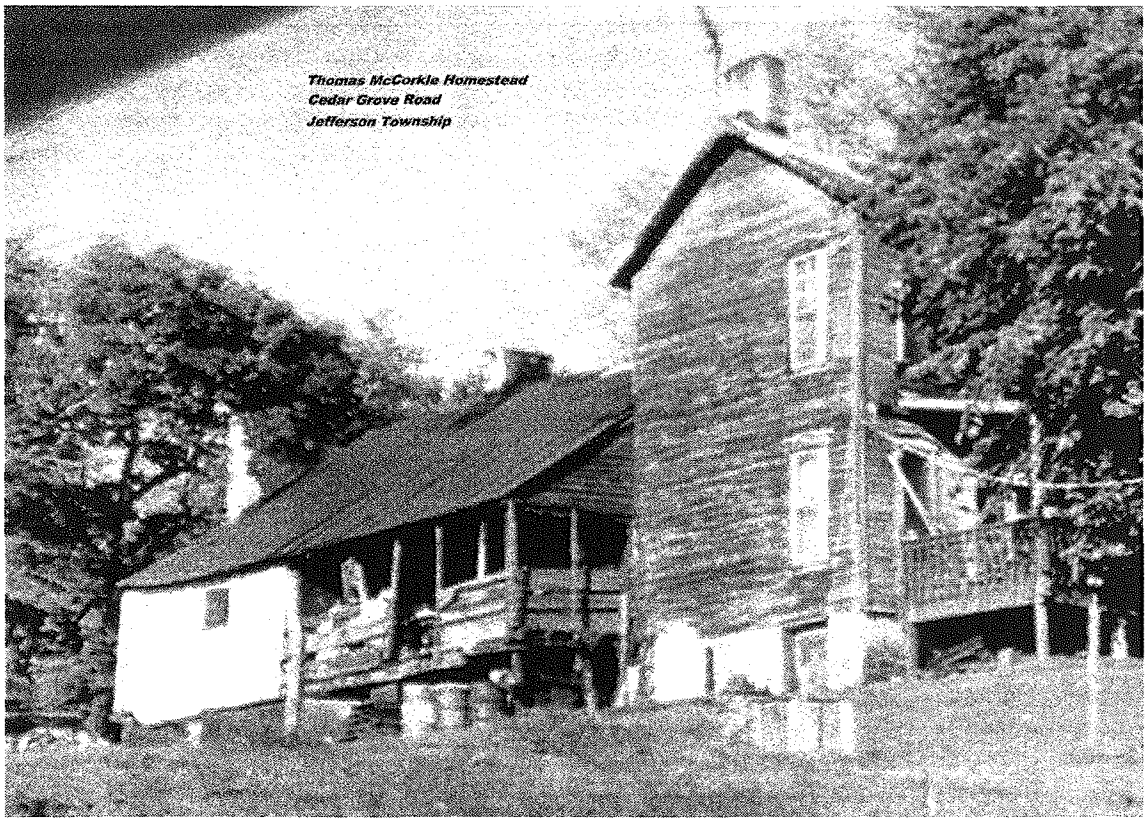
After the birth of three children, the couple, accompanied by their eldest child, Julia, emigrated to the United States in 1902. One frightening thought was a well-known fact in those days. Many children who were still in infancy when their parents crossed the ocean, died on board ship, unable to survive the crowded, unsanitary conditions prevalent at the time. Thus is was that Julia's mother, aware of this fact, insisted that she leave the two younger children with her in Hungary until they would be older and their parents firmly established in their new life.

For this reason, their second child, Frank, and third child, Ilona (Helen), remained in Hungary with their grandparents. At the age of 15, Frank came to America to be with his parents. But Helen, who was little more than an infant when her parents left Hungary, spent her entire life in her birth land. When the eldest child, Julia, who had come to the new world with her parents, grew to adulthood and married, she returned to Europe to see her younger sister, Helen, intending to bring her to America when she, herself, returned. But Helen refused the generous offer. Her grandparents who raised her were the only "parents" she ever knew, so perhaps she could not bring herself to break away and start life over in a strange place. For whatever reason, when John and Julia left baby Helen in the arms of her grandmother as they sailed for the New World, they never saw her again.

Standing: Frank. Front Row: Mary, John, Joe, Julia & Ann Fotovich

John and Julie Fotovich became the parents of nineteen children during their sixty plus years of wedded life. These nineteen births included five sets of twins. Three sets died shortly after birth. {Their names, birth order and places of birth and burial were not made available to this researcher.} Seven years after arriving in the United States, the Fotovichs were blessed with the births of twin daughters, Mary and Ann, both of whom survived to adulthood. Two years later, little Joe's birth made a total of six living children. For a period of over six years following Joe, no more children who were born survived. The accompanying picture on the preceding page was taken during this six year span. Helen, of course was still living in Hungary, and apparently Julia, the first-born, had already struck out on her own. But when Joe was past six years of age, another set of twins arrived, one of whom survived. Dorothy, apparently the stronger of the two, was to live until the year 2002, but her twin brother died shortly after birth. This set of twins was followed by three more children who lived beyond infancy: Betty, George, and Beatrice, making the Fotovichs a total of ten children who survived the rigors of birth and grew to adulthood. The births of the nineteen offspring of the Fotovichs spanned a period of 26 years.

During the early years after their emigration, John worked in various coal mines and farmed on the side to keep his family going. The surviving twins were born in Sturgeon in 1909, while two years later, Joe was born near Brownsville. The children recall that they lived in different mining camps and towns in the Brownsville and Avella areas as time went by. But "home" was the old Thomas McCorkle farm in Jefferson Township, bordering Cross Creek Township and the Cedar Grove area. John rented this farm for a twenty year period and it was here that their little ones grew up.



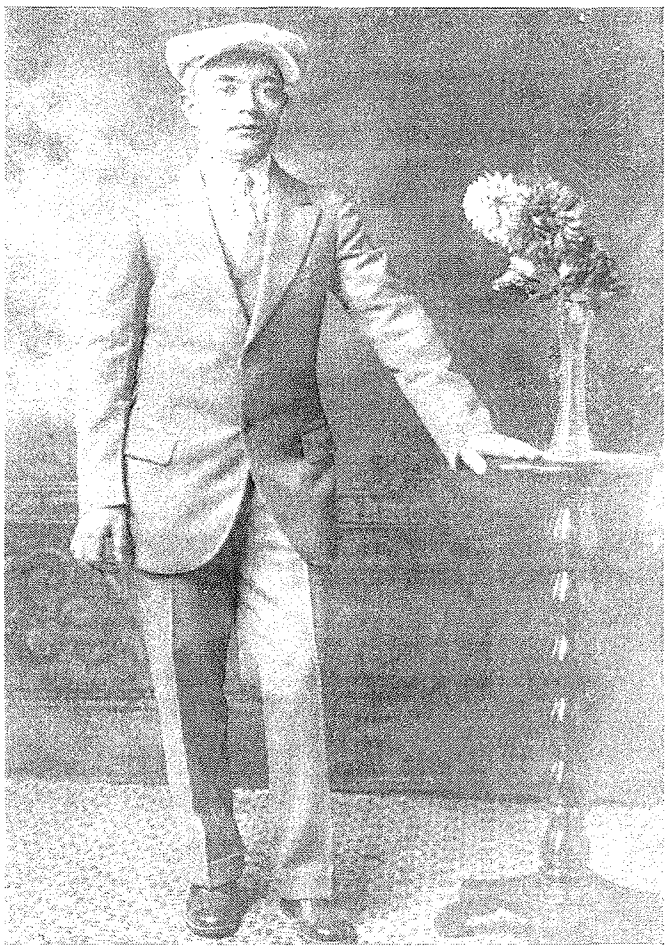
John raised cows, pigs, and chickens and always had lots of hay and many kinds of crops in the ground. A big garden was the family mainstay. As a sideline, he grew grapes for making his own wine and raised tobacco for his faithful pipe. For fun and entertainment, he loved to play the button box and the organ.

Julia was the typical wife of a European immigrant. The children recall that she always wore a babuska and an apron, the latter serving as a basket for carrying "things". On Sundays, she cooked a huge dinner for all. As time went by, her beautiful wavy hair turned white, but her gentle ways and loving care were ever present.

The grandchildren still recall kissing their grandparents at every visit. A precious memory they now hold dear is how Granddad's mustache tickled when they kissed him.

To supplement their income, John and Julia took the one horse spring wagon for the long ride through Cedar Grove to Avella to sell milk products, eggs, and vegetables. Their youngest son, George, reports that his very earliest recollection from his childhood is that of being sandwiched in between his parents on the wagon and feeling the love that always surrounded them. He remembers them as hard working, humble people to whom God gave long lives. They were loving parents and devoted to each other. They died in 1959, just five months apart, John on the 21st of June at the age of 85, and Julia on the 19th of November at age 78. They are buried in the cemetery at Cross Creek Village.

Julia Fotovich



Frank Fotovich

The eldest child of these pioneers was Julia Fotovich, pictured on the preceding page. She was born 8 May 1898 in Hungary and came with her parents to America in 1902. She married first Albert Banyas by whom she had one son, James. Later, Julia married Joseph George Furry, by whom she had four children: Albert John Furry, John Michael Furry, Irene Julia Furry Camsky and Margaret Mae Furry. Julia died 5 December 1951. One of her sisters has reported that while Julia was visiting family in Hungary with her four year old daughter, the child died. This researcher is not aware of the name of this child.

The second child of John and Julia was Frank Fotovich who was born in Hungary 7 November 1899 and remained there under the care of his grandparents. At the age of fifteen, he came to join his parents. When he reached manhood, he married Margaret by whom he had four sons: Frank, Jr., John, Joseph, and Louis. Frank died the 21st of December in 1963.

The third child was Ilona (Helen). Helen was an infant when her parents left Hungary for the New World. She was the only child never to come to America. Helen married Mihaly Paul. Their ten children were born between 1923 and 1946. These children were: Mihaly, Janos, Frenc, Gyorgy, Jozsef, Maria, Ilona, Veronika, Julianna, and Margit.

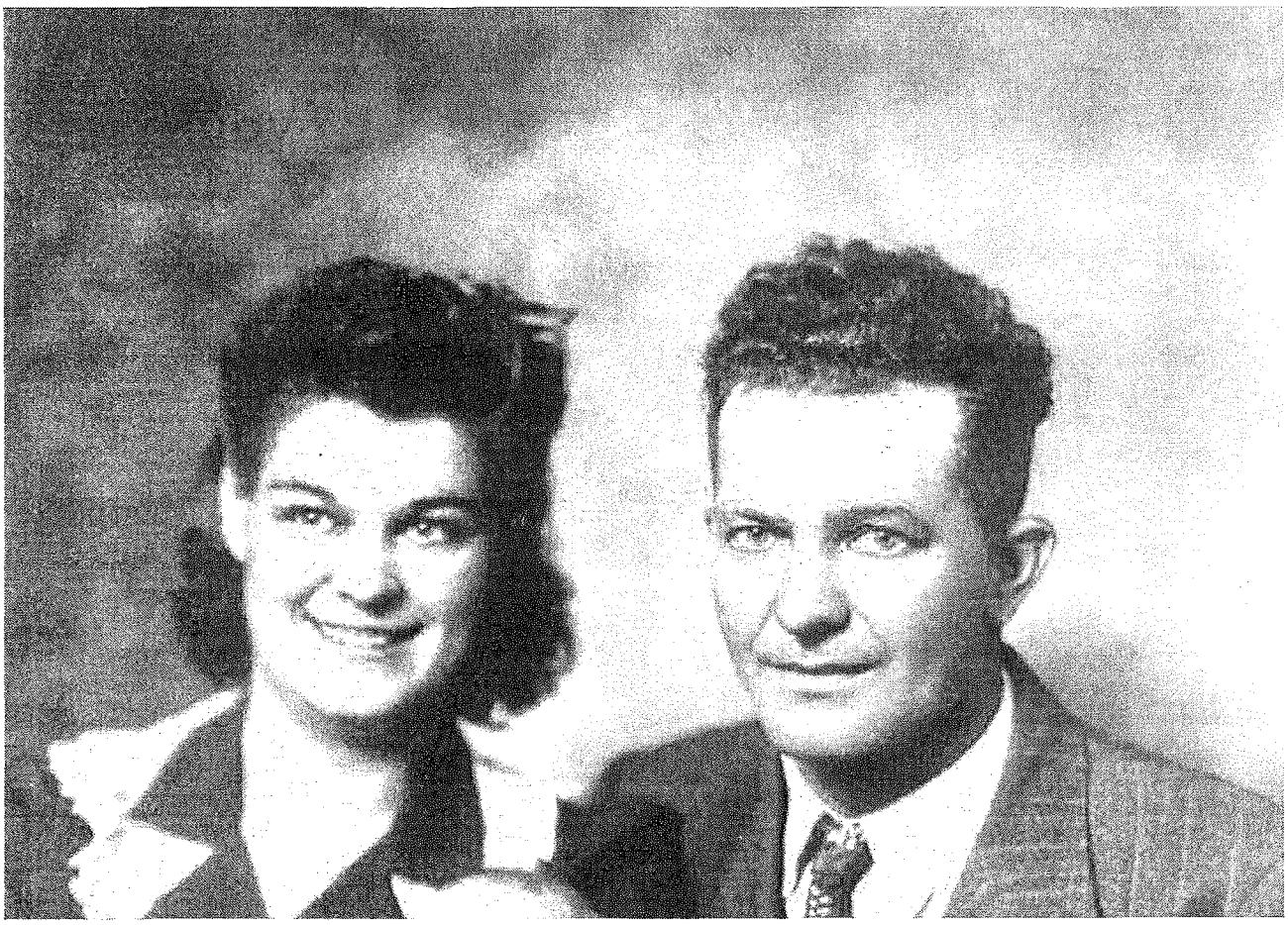
Helen and Mihaly Pall

The fourth and fifth living children were twin girls: Mary and Ann. They were born in Sturgeon, Pennsylvania 29 May 1909. Mary married William Takah and had two children: June Takah Barnes and William Takah, Jr.. Mary died 30 August 1986. Ann married Floyd Riddile and had seven children: Mary Jane Riddile Gardner, Betty Pearl Riddile Hopper, Floyd Leroy Riddile, Jr., Shirley Ann Riddile May, John Raymond Riddile,

Richard Mitchel Riddile, and Francis Joseph Riddile. Ann died 24 October 1972. These twin girls are pictured with some of their siblings and their parents on a previous page.

June, Mary, Bill,Jr., Bill Takah, Sr.

The sixth child was Joseph Fotovich who was born 24 January 1911. He married Ruby Mae Morrison. Their children were: Dan Joseph Fotovich, Rebecca Faye Fotovich Johnson, Nancy Gail Fotovich Kester, and Steven John Fotovich.



Joseph and Ruby Fotovich

Although Joe was born near Brownsville, he grew up on the old McCorkle farm in Jefferson Township. He attended the one-room Cole Schoolhouse where, he recalls, there were as many as 60 students in the one room with only one teacher. When he was 16, his father bought a 1924 Chevy Touring car. Joe then became the designated driver, and went to Burgettstown for the license and driver's test. He passed!

Joe lived a fascinating life. At various points he was a diamond core driller in New York City, and a worker in the copper mines of Vermont. He tells the interesting tale of how he got into the drilling business. In 1940, a neighbor, Russell Strope, who worked for Pennsylvania Drilling Company, asked him to give him a hand on the job. Joe relates: " 'I'll give you a hand for one day,' I told him. I stayed for 42 years."

It was while on the job at a copper mine that Joe noticed a brother and sister walking together to school. What he also noticed was that the young lady was very, very attractive. He and his buddy soon decided that since her father was a welder, they would go to his home when something broke at the mine that needed welded. One can only assume that a number of things soon needed "fixed". Needless to say, on a cold Saturday in November of 1943, just six weeks after making her acquaintance, he married beautiful Ruby Morrison, who was to remain his lifelong sweetheart every one of the remaining days of his life, up to and including the present time of 2002.

The seventh child was Barbara Dorothy Fotovich, born 24 April 1917. She was a surviving twin. Dorothy married Michael Babish. They were the parents of Patricia Jean Babish Bauduin and Michael John Babish. Dorothy's husband, Mike, was killed in an auto accident in 1964 when their son was but five years of age. Later in life, another great tragedy befell Dorothy when her daughter, Patty, died with cancer at the age of 39, leaving four children behind. Dorothy was very instrumental in the rearing of these children during their mother's long illness and after her untimely death. (It is to Dorothy's cooperation in providing family information for this story that Joyce Takah credits much of the detail provided in this history.) Dorothy died 21 March 2002, at the age of 85.

Dorothy and Mike Babish

Betty Fotovich Rexroad

The eighth child was Elizabeth Margaret Fotovich who was affectionately known as "Betty". Betty was born 19 March 1919. She married first Benjamin Franklin Lux by whom she had two children: Benjamin George Lux and Priscilla Ann Lux. Betty later married Elmer Rexford who adopted her two children by her first marriage. Therefore, the above named children now bear the names of: Benjamin George Rexford and Priscilla Ann Rexford Minich. Betty was a foster mother to many children, among whom was Leslie whom she eventually adopted. This child died in 1971. Betty spent her life in service to others, making over 100 baby quilts for newborns at a missionary station in Haiti, plus at least 50 for persons confined to a rest home. Her life of love for others ended on 13 May 1993.

The ninth child and youngest son was George Fotovich, pictured above, who was born 27 July 1923. He has written beautiful memories of his life on the farm with his parents and of his long and useful life in general. He married Margaret Ann Lewis. (See wedding picture above.) They are the parents of Timothy Allan Fotovich and Susan Kay

Fotovich Miller. Among the fascinating experiences of this unusual individual are his years spent in the mission field in Haiti where he helped to provide a church, a school, and a medical clinic, in addition to feeding over 150 children per day, every day of the year.

The tenth and youngest child of John and Julia was Beatrice, born 21 April 1926. Bea married Steve Bradford and together they built a beautiful home that adjoins the farm property of the Fotovichs where she was born and raised. Bea is an active energetic member of the community who loves to sew, decorate cakes, collect post cards and feed the birds in her backyard. She and Steve have visited the native land of her parents where they visited with her sister, Helen, who never came to America.

Bea recalls her mother saying that she always had from two to four bachelors who roomed and boarded with them. It was customary that a miner and his family live in a company house and walk to work. But you could not rent a company house unless you kept boarders, too. Another memory she cherishes of life at home on the farm was the pig and corn roast held every year with all the family and friends in attendance.

When consulted for genealogical data on Fotovich ancestors, Bea informed this writer that her father's father was Frank Fotovich. She had no further information on her paternal line. Her mother's ancestry, however, was available to her. Julia Wash (Vas) Fotovich's father was George Wash. His parents were Aleck and Julia Yajtik Wash. Julia Wash Fotovich's mother was Julia Csirjak Wash. Her parents were John and Julia Demeten Csirjak. The family should be indebted to Bea for preserving this important family genealogy.

Pictured on the preceding page is Beatrice Fotovich on the occasion of the wedding of her brother, George. (George and his bride were pictured previously.) To the right of the picture of Beatrice is a snapshot of one of the gala family pig and corn roasts which she remembers with such nostalgia. Bea can be seen in the picture, facing the camera. She is standing near her dad, John Fotovich.

Pictured above are Constance Marie and Allison Dawn Currence, twin great-granddaughters of Ann Fotovich Riddle, who was, herself, one of the only surviving set of twins of the Fotovich pioneers. As has been stated, those pioneers were the parents of five sets of twins, only one complete set of which, survived to adulthood. Thus it can be seen that the "twin phenomenon" for the family continued down the succeeding generations.

The Fotovich family discussed in this historical account was a respected, hard-working core of children of immigrants who, despite hard times and sometimes very little in the way of material possessions, managed to live happy productive lives. They were a great credit to their parents, John and Julia, and to the Jefferson Township community in which they grew up. Like their parents, they were exceptionally hard working individuals who carried with them an optimistic view of life. (The old Thomas McCorkle homestead in which they grew up is still standing in the year 2002. The late historian, A.D.White, once told this author that he believed it to be the oldest frame dwelling in Jefferson Township.) The descendants of the Fotovich pioneers can, indeed, hold their heads high with pride over the wonderful heritage of love and appreciation for life bequeathed them by their mother and father, John and Julia Vos Fotovich.

THE JOHN ORENCHUK FAMILY

by

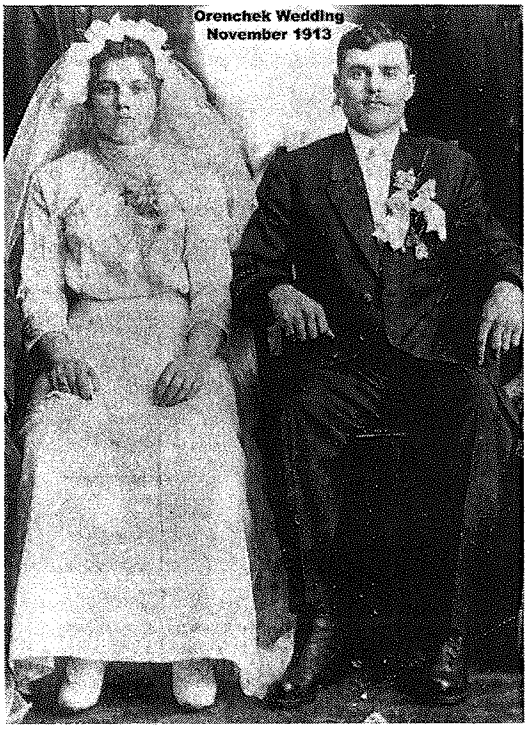
June Campbell Grossman – Welch as related by Harry Orenchuk

(Information on the William McConnell farm was provided by John Orenchuk while pictures & data of the Dussere family are the kind offerings of Jeannie Robert Baltich.)

John Orenchuk was born 28 June 1889 of Ukrainian parents. Nothing is known of his parentage except that he had a stepfather under whose name he traveled when he came to America in 1910 at the age of 21. The Orenchuk name was originally spelled Ohrynchyk. John's children are not certain if he traveled alone or perhaps came with a friend. What is known, is that he eventually made his way to Pittsburgh where he worked for some time.

One of John's co-workers was a fellow Ukrainian named Kasurak who had emigrated from Bremerhaven, Germany. At some point in time, Kasurak sponsored his sister, Mary, to also come to the New World. Mary had been born 22 February 1893. Nothing is known of her parentage except that her father had died and the mother had remarried – this time to a man who was a heavy drinker. Apparently to escape the unpleasant home life, Mary went to Germany where she got a job for a paltry sum hoeing potatoes. It was 1911 that her brother sent for her to come to America. Mary sewed her belongings into her clothing to protect them from theft – common among immigrants.

Upon arriving in Pittsburgh, Mary got a job in the Heinz factory. Her brother soon introduced her to his friend, John Orenchuk, and they became friends. When John proposed marriage, Mary was uncertain, being perhaps influenced by her mother's bad choice in marrying a drinker. But her brother assured her, " He is a good man. He is the one for you."



Eventually, Mary decided to take his advice. In 1913 they were married on a Pittsburgh stagecoach and began a new life together.

John and Mary soon decided to try a better way to get ahead financially. John had heard that miners were in demand and that the pay was better than his current job. They packed their few belongings and went to Moundsville, West Virginia, where he had no trouble getting work. But Moundsville was also known as the site of a large penitentiary, and the new immigrants were a little scared of their surroundings. A prison outbreak clinched their decision to move back to Pennsylvania. They came to the Avella area where John worked in the mines at Cedar Grove, Avella, and lastly at Atlasburg.

But mining was not what John Orenchuk had in mind when he made the decision to come to America. As more children were born to them, he decided that farming was a better way of life. For a number of years he rented the Mae Lawton farm in Cross Creek Township. Here the last of their eight children, Harry and Daniel were born. Their family now consisted of seven sons and one daughter, so it appeared that John would have plenty of help running a farm. By 1930 when the Great Depression made its first impact on the nation, John moved to Smith Township with his family to what was known as the Brown farm. In 1939, when Harry was 14 years old, the family went to the old Archer Farm on Donati Road in Jefferson Township. Times were very hard, but the Orenchuks had been hard-working, thrifty people with but one goal in mind – to have a farm of their own. In 1942, that dream came true.

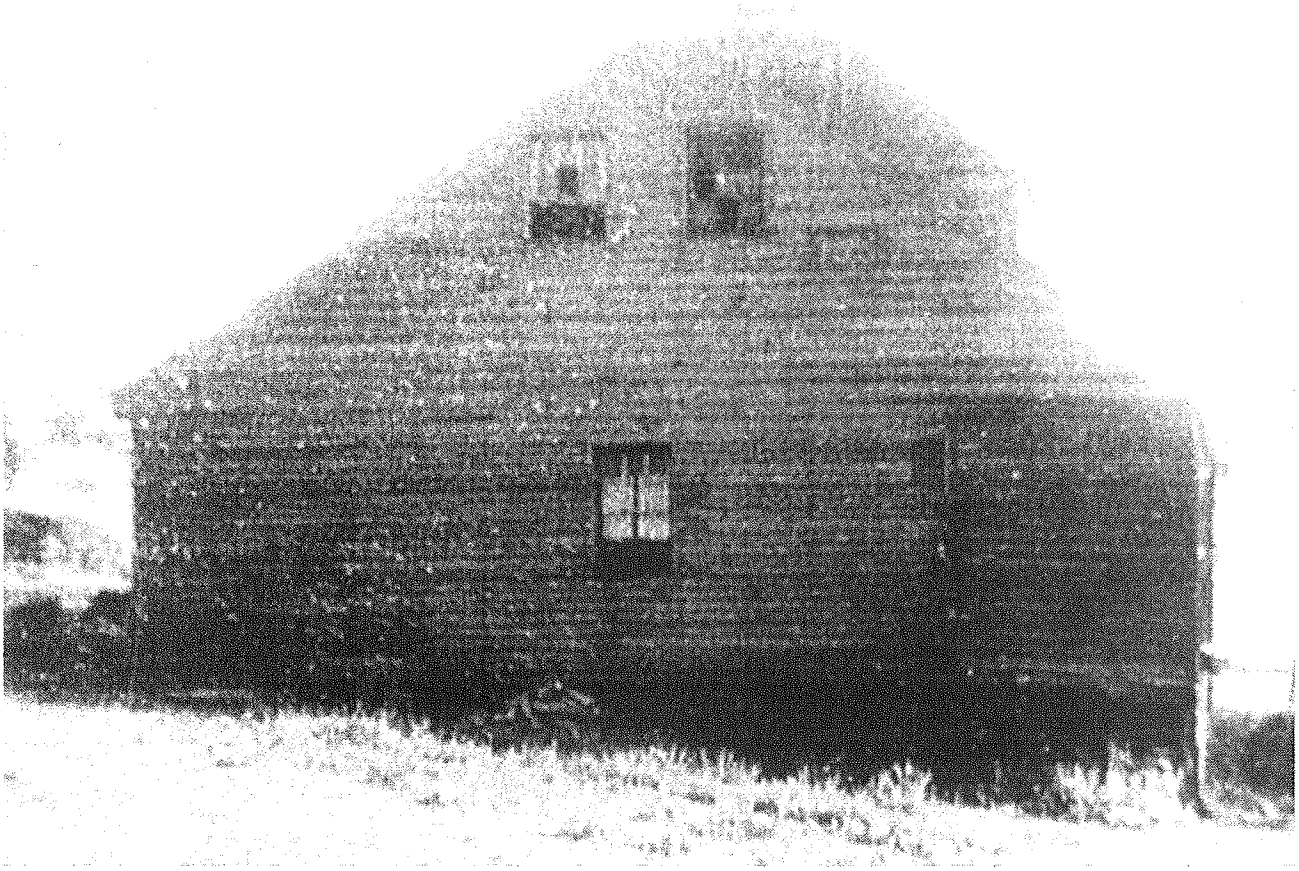
On Scott Hollow Road in Jefferson Township, the Adrien Dussere property beckened. Dussere was a French Huguenot immigrant who worked in the coal mines of McDonald.

Adrien & Rosine Dussere

Just how he came to buy this property near Eldersville is not known. But in 1896 he purchased from the William Steen heirs one-half of the original James Steen farm. This

half consisted of 144 acres. (Local residents of today will recall part of this as the Louis Robert farm.) The Dussere family, which consisted of two sons and two daughters in addition to Adrien and his wife, Rosine Roqueplot Dussere, moved into the old Steen house and made it home.

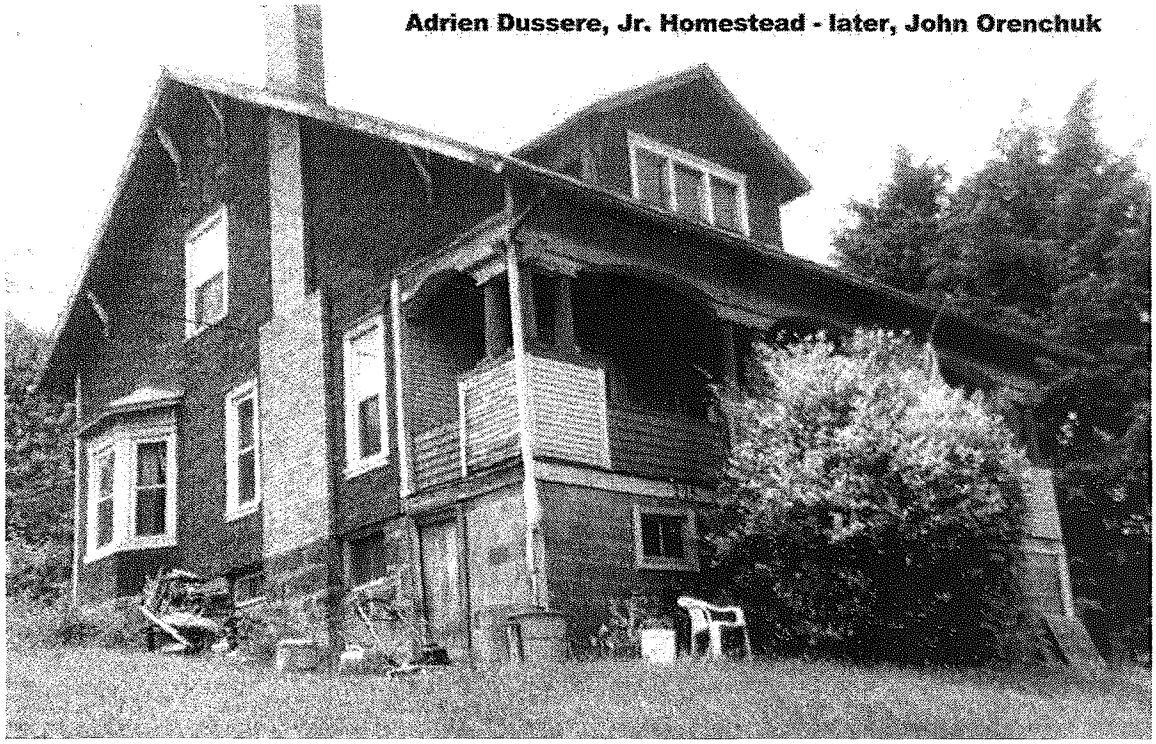
Log end of old Steen house



The eldest daughter, Louise, often told her grandchildren of the wonderful times they had, growing up in this old, old house. Having spent many years in the McDonald area, her father had many friends whom he had left behind when he moved to Scott Hollow. But Adrien found a way to get around that obstacle. He invited them to come for weekends. This they did, by the dozen. Louise remembered with pleasure the great times they had and how no one ever complained about the lack of comfortable accommodations. The problem was solved quite simply. The women occupied all of the beds and couches and floor space in the old house. And the men slept in the barn!

Adrien Dussere died intestate 29 July 1914 and his wife, Rosine, followed the next year on the fifth of June. Although he lived out the last 18 years of his life in the old Steen homestead, he never forgot his French heritage. It is still evident today that he passed that heritage on to his children. In 1923, his son, Adrien, Jr., had a new house constructed on the property based on a French Provincial design of his liking. It was to this house that John Orenchuk moved his wife and family in 1944.

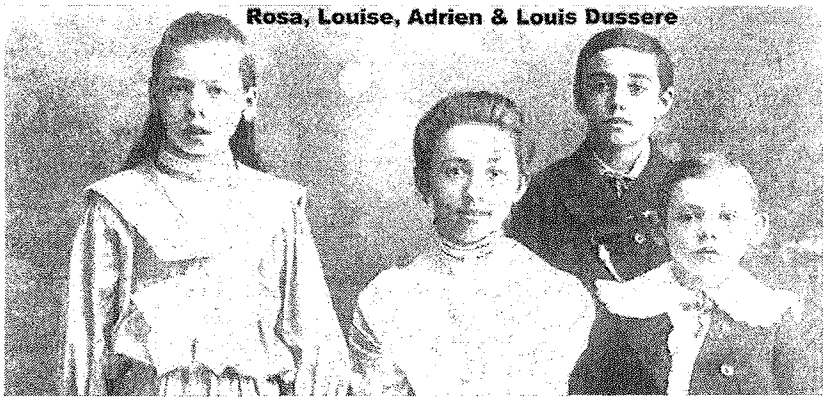
Adrien Dussere, Jr. Homestead - later, John Orenchuk



By this time, Adrien Jr. had moved to parts unknown because of family difficulties and the property was in need of repair. Because of the war effort, lumber was quite scarce. To secure the lumber needed to refurbish the barn and other out buildings, John purchased the old William McConnell farm nearby and tore down both the smoke house and the old house, which was part log and part frame to use the materials on his own farm buildings. This property later belonged to John Orenchuk, Jr. and his wife, Jennie. John, Jr. relates that the old log house was built on solid rock. The barn, which was built of chestnut that had been sawed at Kidds Mill, was built in 1869, replacing the original log barn of the McConnells. The springhouse was stone and frame while the chicken coop was log with one door and one window.

By the time the Orenchuks bought the Dussere property, it had once again been cut in half. After the death of Adrien Dussere, Sr., his purchase of 144 acres was divided in two parts. The part containing the new house went to Dussere's two sons, Louis and Adrien,Jr., while the "homeplace" where the Steens had lived, went to the two Dussere daughters.

Rosa, Louise, Adrien & Louis Dussere



Thus it was that the half which John Orenchuk purchased from Adrien, Jr. consisted of about 72 acres.

In the meantime, while Adrien Dussere, Sr. worked in McDonald, he became well acquainted with a co-worker named Emile Robert. Both men were of French descent and it was inevitable that they would become friends. On a visit to Dussere's farm on Scott Hollow Road, Emile became enamored of Adrian's eldest daughter, Louise, and eventually married her. She and her sister were both well known and dearly loved school teachers of Jefferson Township. When his father-in-law died, Emile bought out the share of his wife's sister, Rosa. Thus the Robert family ended up living out their lives on the old Steen farm, while the Orenchuks lived happily next door, having purchased the share bequeathed to Adrien's two sons.

In due time, Emile Robert and his wife, Louise Dussere Robert, became the parents of two sons, Emile, Jr. and Louis. It was Louis and his wife, Wanda, who spent their lives on that farm. Emile Robert, while an elderly man, later removed the old log portion of the ancient Steen house with his team of horses. Louis and Wanda then replaced it with a new kitchen.

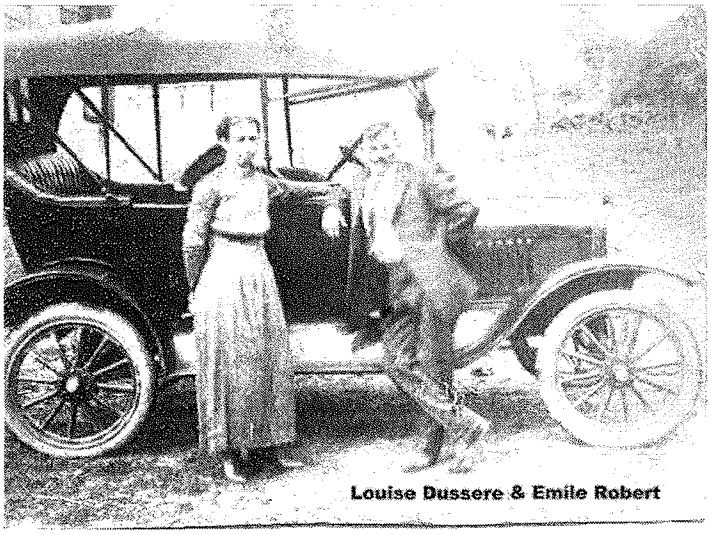
The Steen Homestead - remodeled

This Robert family with their two daughters, Jeannie and Martha, were the closest and dearest loved of the neighbors of John and Mary Orenchuk. And to this day, the remaining sons of the Orenchuk family speak with loving reverence of their wonderful memories of Adrien Dussere, Jr. and the Louis Robert family.

For the remainder of his life after selling to the Orenchuks, Adrien still frequented the area of his old farm and stopped to chat for hours with the Orenchuk family, reliving the old days that were no more. One of the younger of the Orenchuk boys, Harry, graciously wrote his memories of Scott Hollow Road for this author to use as background material. He relates that since there was no television to entertain them, the visits of Adrien Dussere and their next door neighbor, Emile Robert, were greatly anticipated and lovingly cherished by his entire family. Harry also reported that Emile was very small in stature, but very tall on tales.

Harry's favorite story from the lips of Emile Robert was of the days when he courted Louise Dussere. The story follows.

The original road down Scott Hollow did not take the path it occupies today. Instead, it followed the stream, crossing and re-crossing it at least ten times on its way toward Kidds Mill. During the beginning of his courtship, Emile would board the train in McDonald, getting off at Hanlin Station where he either walked to Scott Hollow Road or Louise's father, Adrien Dussere, Sr., met him with the horse and buggy. On this particular occasion, Emile dressed up in his best courting clothes and took off in his newly purchased Model A Ford, hoping to make a good impression on the object of his affections. What he did not allow for was the damage to the old dirt road created by a recent series of hard downpours. While traversing the creek on one of the many such crossings made by the old road, Emile was deeply chagrined when the high water drowned out his engine. There was nothing to do except get out into the muddy mess in his new dress shoes and fancy clothes to pull out the crank and start the car. When he arrived at his destination and surveyed his personal situation, he knew that all hope of showing off his new car and of displaying an image of the well dressed man he was trying to create, had gone down that little country creek with the waters of the flood. But as fate would have it, Louise Dussere was more interested in Emile, the ordinary man with whom she had fallen in love, than in Emile, the fancy dresser. She later married him and they shared together the rest of their lives on the Dussere farm of her father, just out of sight of that wretched crook in the road through the creek that had destroyed his brand new shoes. It was Emile's favorite story and became dearer to the Orenchuks with each re-telling.



Louise Dussere & Emile Robert

John and his youngest sons, Harry and Daniel, carried on a lively business of dairy farming until 1986 when they sold out on a Government Buy Order. Back in 1950, both boys were drafted into the Korean War and their father, John, had to learn to drive the tractor – a task he had gratefully assigned to his sons.

Shortly after the purchase of the Dussere farm by the Orenchuks, the family became quite close to another neighbor, Elza Scott. Elza was, beyond doubt, the greatest historian Jefferson Township ever produced. It was his very nature to talk history where the ordinary person would have spouted small talk. In the Orenchuk boys, Elza found fertile soil for his lectures. He frequently stopped at the Orenchuk house on his way to visit his Uncle Oliver Scott in Eldersville. Oliver was ill at the time and the Orenchuks gladly gave Elza their food stamps to share with his ailing uncle. In return, Elza filled the boys with stories of the old Indian trail which he believed came through that area and pointed out where the old log houses had once stood and the log school houses which preceded even the first one-room schools mandated by the school law of 1834. Harry, Dan, and their brother, John, thus became excellent sources of information on the local history of the Scott Hollow Road territory. (Danny is now deceased, but the other two still remain the most reliable contacts for local historians today in researching the area. In addition to remembering the stories told by Elza Scott, the Orenchuk boys have supplied the author with much material on the Steen family. This was probably gleaned from a combination of information supplied to them over their lives by both the Scott and Dussere families.)

As has been stated, John and Mary Orenchuk became the parents of seven sons and one daughter.

standing: Harry, Pete, John, Dan, Mike, Russell, Steve; seated: Catherine

They were as follows:

Steve, born 2 August 1914, married Theresa Egyhazi and had children: Steve, John, David, Patty, Jennie, and Mary Margaret;

Russell, born 2 March 1916, married Julia Litvak and had children: Russell and Dorothy;

Catherine, born November, 1917, married Sylvester Kansius and had children: Marie, Sophie, John, Joseph and Jane;

Michael, born October, 1919, married Mary Abramwicz and had children: James, Robert, Rita, John, and Patrick;

John, Jr., born 1 July 1921, married Jennie Macugoski and had a daughter: Linda;

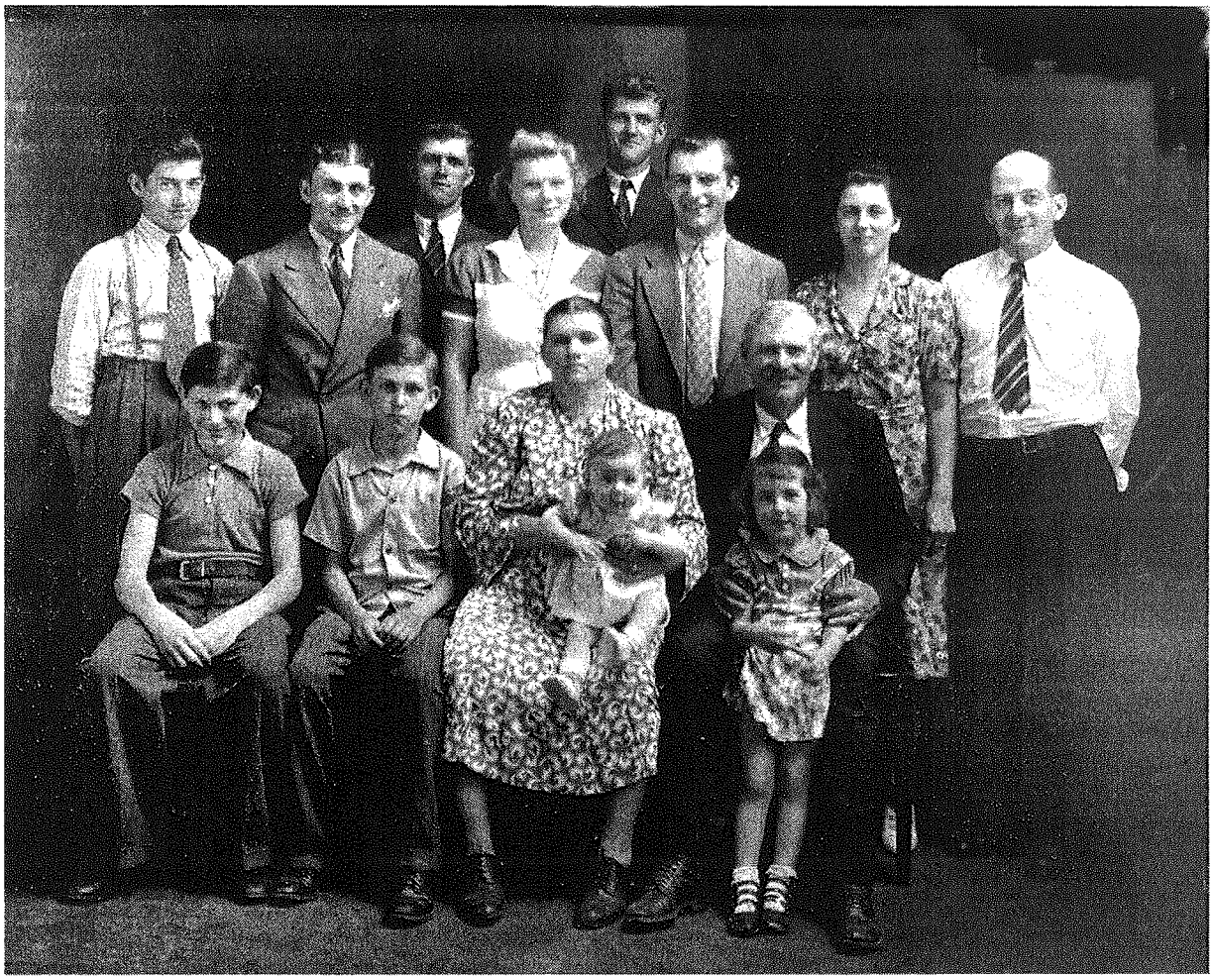
Peter, born 2 July 1923, unmarried;

Harry, born 26 June 1925, unmarried;

Daniel, born 21 September 1928, married Mary Macugoski and had daughters: Mary Ann and Rose Marie.

At this writing in 2002, all are deceased except Catherine, John, and Harry.

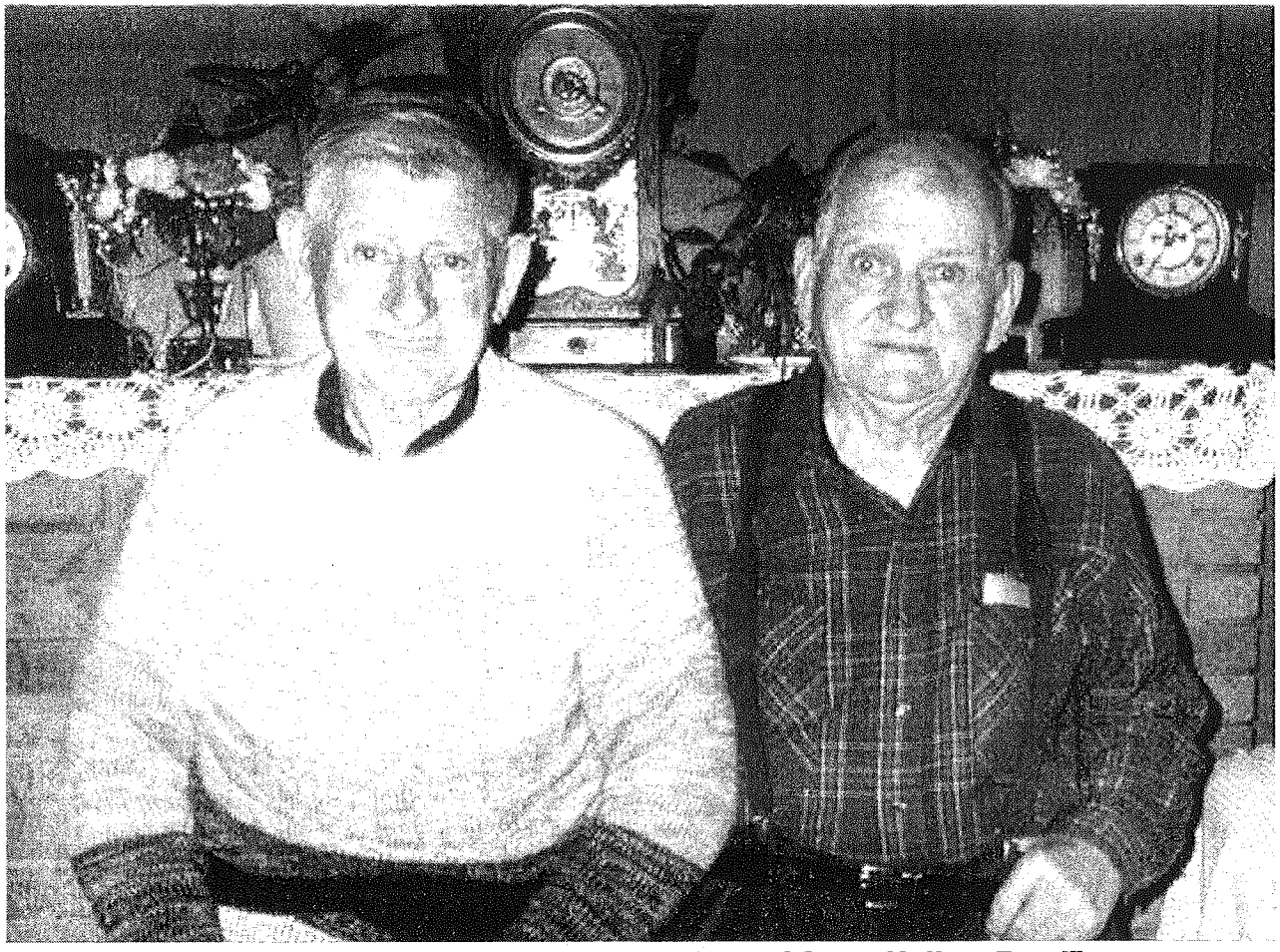
The mother of this family, Mary Kasurak Orenchuk, died 10 May 1957. The father, John Orenchuk, died nearly eight years later on 24 March 1965. They are buried in Chapel Hills Cemetery in Weirton, West Virginia. Each of them died on the old Dussere farm they loved so much.



One of Adrien Dussere's great-grandchildren, Jeannie Robert Baltich, speaks with great fondness of the Orenchuk family who were the next-door neighbors of her family during all of her growing-up years on the old Steen farm in Jefferson Township. She reminisces about them as if they were blood relatives and the sincerity of her tone assures the listener that her feelings are real. In closing his writings on his memories of Scott Hollow Road, Harry Orenchuk echoed beautifully these same sentiments concerning his feeling for the Dussere and Robert families. He wrote:

" I stopped on my way from Claysville the other day and visited Bethel Cemetery because my old friends and neighbors are buried there. It was scorching hot, but Bethel seemed like a cool place to be. Jean Louise Baltich and her sister, Martha, are the only ones left from the Louis and Wanda Robert family..... Louis and his wife Wanda are buried there, as are his parents..... Emile Robert was a good farmer and a good dairyman. He used to visit us regularly and we enjoyed his visits so much."

In the world of today with its rampant violence and greed, it is hoped that the readers of this story of a hard-working, honest, immigrant family who loved their neighbors as themselves will take renewed hope. The older generations are gone, but the values they held fast live on in their children. Jeannie Robert Baltich and Harry Orenchuk are living proof of that fact.



Harry and John Orenchuk, "Historians of Scott Hollow Road"

THE JOSEPH MACUGOSKI FAMILY

by

June Campbell Grossman-Welch

(Pictures and genealogical data were provided by Joyce Bertovich Takah, a granddaughter of the Macugoski pioneers through their eldest daughter, Stella.)

Joseph Macugoski (Macugowski) was born 8 February 1896 in Winary, Poland, the son of John (Jan) and Katherine (Katarzyna) Kopec Macugoski. Joseph's parents produced five sons whose birth order is not known.

His father, John, whose parents were Joseph and Josephine Rasinski Macugowski, had been born in 1870. It is not known if he had brothers, but his sisters were Josephine, Mary, and Caroline. He died at the age of 76 in 1946.

Joseph's mother, Katherine Kopec Macugoski, was the daughter of Baltazar and Eva Blasiak Kopec. She was born in 1876 and died in 1961 at the age of 85.

Seated in the picture above are Joseph Macugoski's father and mother, John and Katarzyna Kopec Macugoski. Standing, back right is Katarzyna's mother, Eva Blasiak Kopec. The four boys are believed to be Joseph's brothers: Zygmunt, Stanislau, John, and Frankisick – (order not known).

His father, John, had a small farm of perhaps 5 acres on which he raised crops and maintained an orchard, selling both produce and fruit to provide for his family. In addition to being a farmer, John was also a fisherman, working the Vislua and Nedra Rivers both day and night with three of his sons for fish to sell in town. John was able to both read and write and when his son, Joseph, decided at the age of 16 in 1912 to try his hand in the New World, his mother sold the only family cow to provide boat fare. This had to be a very great sacrifice in a world where money was practically nonexistent and a man's wealth was measured by the crops he planted and the animals he owned.

Young Joseph had attended school for 4 or 5 years prior to immigrating to America. It is not known if he came alone or was perhaps accompanied by a friend or relative, but his children believe that after arriving in New York, he went to Cleveland and Chicago where he later met Antonina Mysior, marrying her in 1917. Their children do not know exactly the time or place of this marriage, but they recall their mother's beautiful wedding gown. Antonina had been born 29 November 1892 in Szczytniki, Poland, the daughter of Kazimierz and Frencisilie Mysior. (Her mother's maiden name is not known to this researcher.)

Meantime, back in Poland, Joseph's four brothers were living out their lives. (Joseph may have been the eldest of the five, having been no doubt named for his grandfather, also a Joseph Macugowski.) These brothers, the given names of their wives and children are given here as reference for Macugoski descendants who may one day wish to make contact with their relatives in Poland.

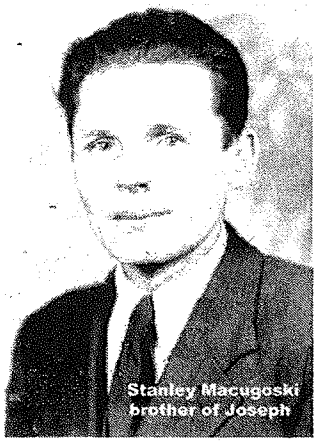
Zygmunt married Marie and had four children: Suzanna Wodek, Leliah (Alfreda) Chrabaszcz, Emilian (who had twin sons) and Minka who never married and is believed to have been deaf.

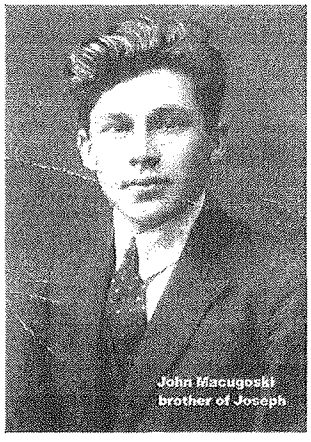
Stanislaw (Stanley) married Anna and had four children: Jerzy, Wieslawa, Bogdan, and Eugeniur.

John married Maria and died childless at age 45 of bronchial asthma.

Frankisick (Frank)married Helena Matusik and had three children: Maria Roman, Teresa, and Rysard (Richard).


Leliah Macugoski
eldest dau. of Zygmunt


Stanley Macugoski
brother of Joseph


John Macugoski
brother of Joseph


Frank Macugoski
brother of Joseph

NOTE: No picture of Joseph's brother, Zygmunt, was available.

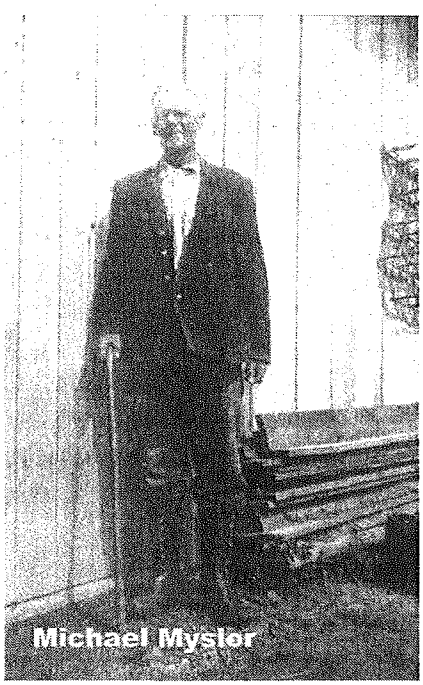
Of the siblings of Antonina Mysior Macugoski, the following information is given to assist family members in future genealogical research of her family.

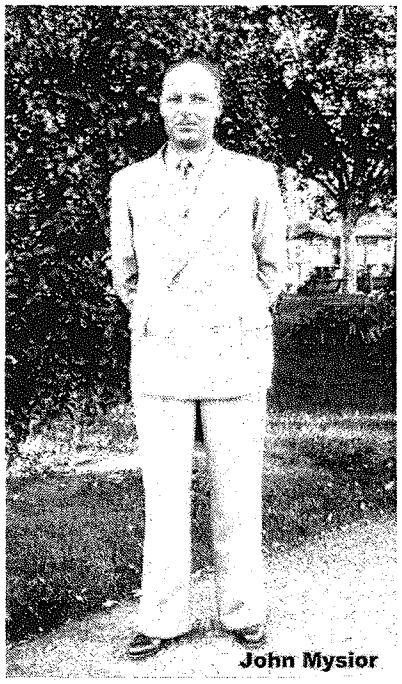
Michael Mysior married a woman whose name is not known. They were the parents of three children: 1) Antonina Mysior Grabowska who had two children to her first marriage, namely Stanislau and Edward Pietrzyk; 2) Kasimierz Mysior who married Mary and had two children, namely, a) Sophia Mysior who married a man named Walter and had a son, Martin and b)Stanislau Mysior whose wife was Bronco and daughters were Anna and Donna; and 3) Mary who married Andrew Bogcho and had six children: Alfreda, Andrew, Stanley, Anna, John, and Edward - all with surname of Bogcho.

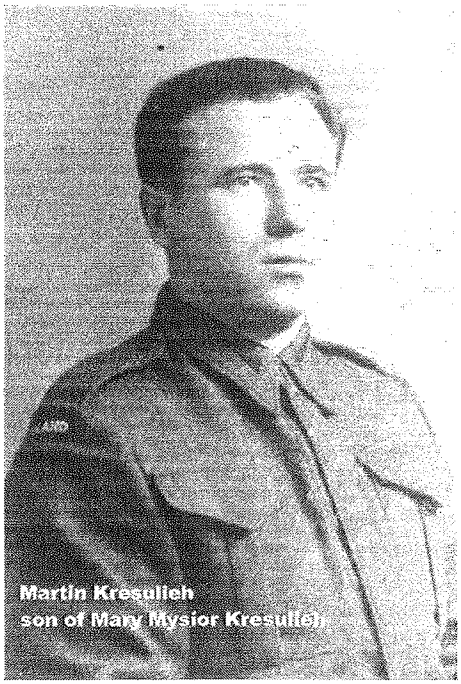
John Mysior was twice married. He spent his life in Argentina. It is known that he had at least a daughter, Donota Mysior.

Mary Mysior Kresulieh (sp.) and had children: 1) Marcina Kresulieh; 2) Mary Kresulieh who married Vassouck Gruhalla and had children a) Anna who married John Felosick and had a son, Adam b) John, c) Ted, and possibly d) Stephanie and e) Martin- all with surname of Gruhalla; and 3) Stephanie Kresulieh.

Anna Mysior Zaworski who married Petro Zaworski and had children: 1) Stanislau Zoworski who died at age 24, 2) JosephineZaworski Gozzella, and 3) Mary Zaworski Voktiez.







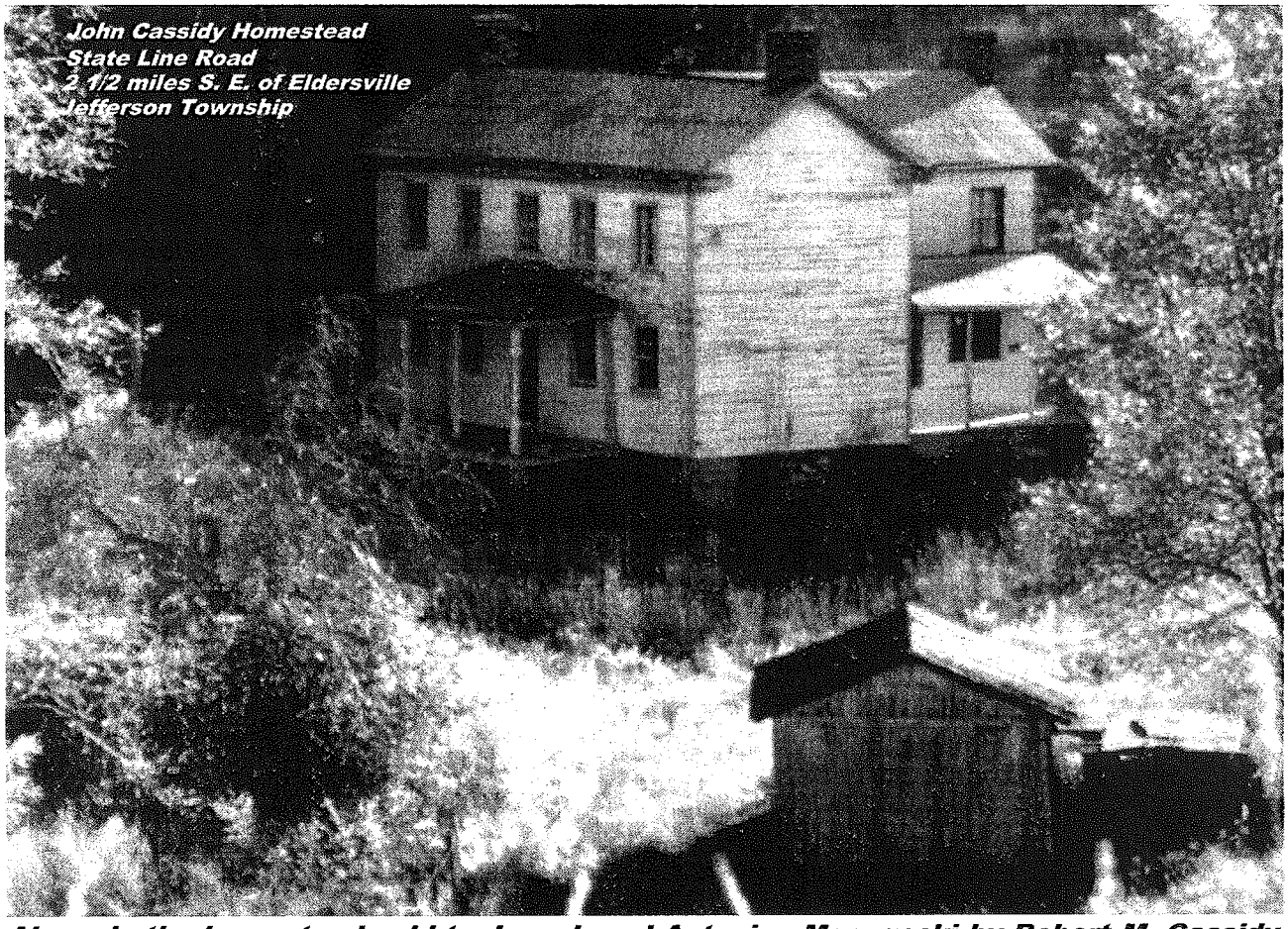
Michael and John Mysior, pictured above are brothers of Antonina Mysior Macugoski. No picture of her sister, Mary, was available. But Mary's son – possibly named Martin – is pictured on the right. On the following page is Antonina's youngest sister, Anna Mysior Zaworski, and her three children: Stanislau, Josephine, and Mary.

As has been stated, nothing is known of the mother of Antonina Mysior Macugoski and her siblings except her given name. Since information on only two sisters and two brothers has come down the family grapevine, it is altogether possible that Antonina's mother died young and the children were left in a motherless situation. One thing that is definitely known about her early life is that she was working in Denmark, watching geese and doing housework, when World War I broke out in 1914. For some reason, she was told she had the choice either to go to America or back to Poland, but could not remain where she was. Some of her family believe that her father had made an arranged marriage for her with a man who was apparently not to her liking, so she had fled her native land to escape this fate. At any rate, she and one of her first cousins with whom she had always been close, came to the New World together. At some point in time, she either lived in or passed through Cleveland and Chicago where she met and fell in love with Joseph Macugoski.

After their marriage, the young couple eventually arrived in Cherry Valley, Washington County, Pennsylvania, because there was work available in the mines there. It was here that their first child, Stella, was born on 27 March 1918. They moved a number of times from one mining village to another, living in Shintown, Dusquesne, and eventually Jefferson mining camps.

By 1927, they were the parents of four children: Stella, Joseph, Steve, and Edward. By 1928, they had saved $2000 toward buying a home of their own. Times were hard and a miner's pay was barely enough to eke out a meager living. But Antonina had taken in boarders – men who worked in the mine and needed a place to live – for a few

dollars a month. She carefully put each dollar in the Avella National Bank for safekeeping. They sold produce from their garden, and engaged in every conceivable way to save money. One day a friend of Joseph Macugoski, Joe DePetro, who also was a miner, told him confidentially to have Antonina take out all of her money from the bank. He had been privy to a conversation from a reliable source that the bank was no longer solvent. The Macugoskis gave the idea intense consideration . Finally Joseph went to see Robert M. Cassidy, who owned a farm of 85 acres on Irish Ridge in Jefferson Township, not far from Bethel Church. He knew that Robert Cassidy wanted $6000 for the farm and he had only two thousand. But Robert M. was ready to give up farming and his old family homestead and retire to the village of Eldersville. Besides, he had faith in this young immigrant miner and they agreed together that Joseph would pay the $2000 as a down payment and the rest at a given amount each year until the balance was paid. The young couple knew it would be a terrible struggle to come up with the yearly payment. But they were determined to do so. Thus it was that Antonina went to Avella and drew out every dollar of her savings and they gave it to Robert Cassidy. Then they moved to the old Cassidy homestead which was now their very own home and set about to devise a method for raising the yearly payments.



Above is the homestead sold to Joseph and Antonina Macugoski by Robert M. Cassidy, a grandson of pioneer John Cassidy who first settled here. For the past 75 years, it has been the Joseph Macugoski Homestead.

The following year, in 1929, the Stock Market Crash closed the Avella National Bank forever. Ten percent was the most any investor ever retrieved of his life savings. From that day on, the Macugoskis believed that Joe DePetro had been sent by God to save them from destruction. They considered him forever to be their guardian angel.

In the coming years, Joseph struggled to farm along with coal mining. Antonina made butter and cottage cheese and Joseph peddled it to the mining camps. He now had to walk 5 or 6 miles from his home on Irish Ridge to the Jefferson coal mine, work long hours under pitiful conditions, and then walk back home. He later worked in the Collier mine on Tent Church Road, once again walking to and from the job.

By 1938, Joseph left the mines forever. During those past ten years, he also tried to get the farm going. He struggled to buy a couple of cows, a team of horses, chickens, and pigs and of course, to raise a huge garden. With great perseverance, they met their obligations and the old Cassidy homestead became their very own. Joseph Macugoski was no longer, Joseph, the miner. He was now, Joseph Macugoski, the farmer. Life was looking up.

In January of 1928, another son, John, had been born to Joseph and Antonina. But baby John did not live to reach adulthood. He died in his mother's arms of what perhaps today might have been diagnosed as a congenital heart condition, and was buried at Pattersons Mill Cemetery. In December of '28, Jennie was born, making two births for Antonina in one calendar year. Jennie was followed a couple of years later by Clara and then Mary. A last child whose birth nearly took his mother's life, died at Washington Hospital in the midst of a terrible snowstorm. The doctors told Joseph that had he not gotten her to the hospital before the storm, she most certainly would have died.

As can be seen, to Joseph and Antonina Macugoski were born a total of nine children, seven of whom reached adulthood. (At this writing in July of 2002, four of those seven are now deceased.)

These nine children, their mates and offspring are as follows:

1. Stella Macugoski, born 27 March 1918, married Steve Bertovich and had children: Joyce Bertovich who married William Takah, Joseph Bertovich who married Sharon Petrelle, and Donna Bertovich who married Milton Bruce Hines.
2. Joseph Macugoski, born 16 March 1920, married Mary Dyluski and had children: Mary Jo Macugoski who married Rich Helba, Joanne Macugoski who married Curt Stanley, Anita Macugoski who married Ted Maslowski, and John Macugoski who married Andrea Carrasco.
3. Steve Macugoski, born 10 August 1923, married Jennie Shore and had children: Steve Macugoski, Bernadine Macugoski, Allan Macugoski who married Kerrie Cox, and Mark Macugoski.
4. Edward Macugoski, born 7 November 1925, married Eleanor Elonzae and had children: Terry Macugoski who married James Alonso, and Valarie Macugoski who married Robert Kozack.
5. John Macugoski, born January of 1928, died in early 1928 on the farm and was buried at Pattersons Mills Cemetery.
6. Jennie (Genieve) Macugoski, born 13 December 1928, married John Orenchuk and had children: Linda Orenchuk, who is now deceased.

7. **Clara Macugoski, born 16 September 1930, married Charles Ivanak and had children: Charlene Ivanak who married Jerry Ford, Charles Ivanak who married Gwendolyn Smitsky, Craig Ivanak who married Sherry Dalfol, and Gerald Ivanak who married Marsha Riggle.**
8. **Mary Macugoski, born 8 June 1933, married Daniel Orenchuk and had children: Mary Ann who married Jeffrey Milnarcik, and Rose Marie Orenchuk.**
9. **Infant, born and died during a winter sometime after 1933.**

Although the generation of these children is fast passing on to a better world, the tenacity, faith, and work ethic of their pioneer parents lives on. The grandchildren of Joseph and Antonina, for the most part, continue the traditions established for them by their forebears. Clara Macugoski Ivanak's, daughter, Charlene Ivanak Ford, has made the farmhouse on Irish Ridge, for which her grandparents struggled so fiercely, a place of beauty. May the Macugoski bloodline continue to hold dear this earthly treasure.

Macugoski extended family

Pictured above: Antonina and Joseph Macugoski – center front. From left to right: Steve and Stella Macugoski Bertovich, Joseph and Mary Dyluski Macugoski, Charles and Clara Macugoski Ivanak, John and Jennie Macugoski Orenchuk, Steve and Jennie Shore Macugoski, Edward and Eleanor Elonzae Macugoski, Daniel and Mary Macugoski Orenchuk.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: When my siblings and I attended eight years of grade school with these Macugoski children, life was much too difficult to have time to visit the neighbors. But we all knew each other, and we cared about each other. Our father, Harry Campbell, and Joseph Macugoski did not become fast friends until the later years of their lives, when Joe would stop for a couple of hours nearly every Sunday afternoon and they would enjoy talking about their old mining days and the affairs of the world. On the 11th of July in 1976, at the age of 80, Joseph went to his eternal reward, his beloved Antonina having died the 1st of December in 1968. Our father lived a year and four days after the passing of his old friend. It was the end of an age. But the bond of friendship continues to the present time in the next generation. The recent passing of Joseph's daughters, Jennie and Stella, have left a void in our lives that will not be filled. This writer would like to be certain that the readers of this brief account of this family are aware of what a caring, hard-working, honest family they were, and that it is with deepest affection that this story is written.

Joseph and Antonina Macugoski with children Stella and Joe, Jr.

Memories of Yesteryear

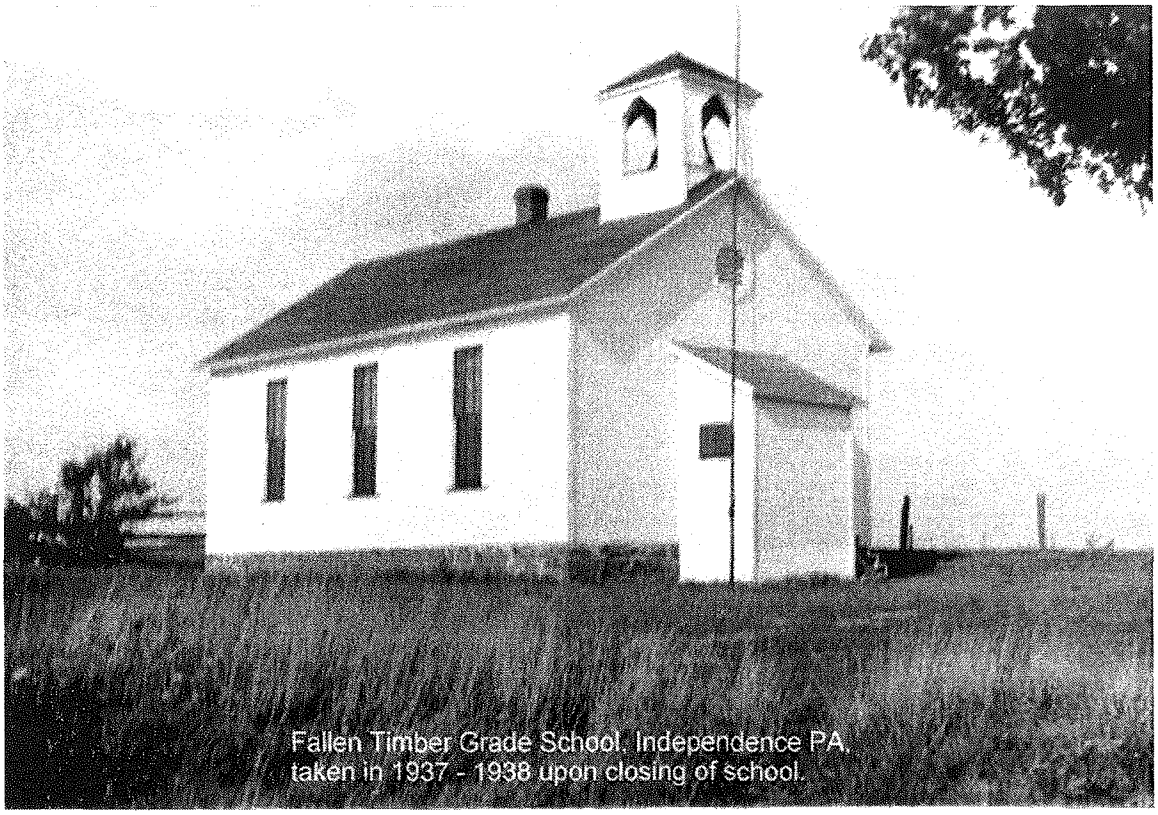
MY MEMORIES OF FALLEN TIMBER GRADE SCHOOL

by
Frank Furiga

I was the youngest child in a family of six children. There were three boys and two girls older than I. Both of my parents were Central Europe immigrants. Since they arrived in this country without much formal education, they had to accept whatever work was available.

Mother was a Carpatho-Rusyn coming from the old Austria-Hungary and Dad was a Slovak coming from the same country. Due to his lack of much formal education, he took a job that did not require much work experience. He became a coal miner. Mother had come to this country as a child care-giver to my father's three children by his wife who had just died. Mother stayed with her brother during this time and eventually married her employer - my father.

My parents started a whirlwind of moves as Dad had to take employment wherever there were jobs available. Consequently, they moved from Van Voorhis to Hazelkirk to Pryor to Seldom Seen and finally to Pine Flats. Here they made a purchase of five acres of land which was most beneficial when raising a family. The property had ample room for gardens and keeping livestock, plus a house. Having settled down permanently, there was now a need to educate their children. Fallen Timber School supplied that need.



Fallen Timber Grade School, Independence PA,
taken in 1937 - 1938 upon closing of school.

Eventually in the Avella district, progress was made to provide higher education. This came via the Highland Avenue School and finally Avella High School.

Due to economic necessity, Johnny, the oldest boy quit school early and went to work. The next two boys, Michael and Stephen, plus sisters, Helen and Mary, went to the high school but did not graduate as was the custom.

Since I was the youngest, Stephen and Helen would often bring things from school for me. Once I was treated to a visit at the school with Stephen. Sister Helen also took me as a guest. I created quite a stir when a slow flying airplane at low altitude approached the school. I jumped up, shouting, "Charlie Lindberg! Charlie Lindberg!" I ran out the door with all of the pupils following. In less than a minute, everybody was outside. No doubt the pilot wondered what was going on below. As a result, I never was asked to be a guest again.

In the interim, I looked forward to the day when I could attend that school. In 1931, that dream came true. I became a pupil at Fallen Timber .

My first teacher was Virginia Cox. She came from Washington, Pennsylvania. This was in the early thirties and a presidential election was under way. The teacher had quite a few Hoover stickers on her car. There were about 32-35 pupils and all came from working families. This meant that at home, Roosevelt was the popular choice. I recall that when FDR won the election, we got a day off from school.

Virginia Cox was our teacher for two years. At times she could be a strict disciplinarian and some of us got paddled.

Class Picture of Fallen Timber School
Spring, 1932
Virginia Cox – last on upper right. Frank Furiga – front row, 3rd from left, seated.

At this time, which was in the heart of the Great Depression, some governmental agency decided that school children should have warm meals. As a result, every day, five days a week, a truck delivered a large milk can filled with thick soups, stews, etc. It was always nice and hot. There was also very fresh sliced white bread. It was really a very beneficial thing.

Our next teacher was Mildred Painter. By then I was in third grade. She was a very good teacher and very friendly. There was a parlor reed pump organ in the school at the time which she had loaned to Virginia Cox. Mildred could play it quite well. Unfortunately, she became ill and was replaced by a substitute teacher, Lily McNeely. It was some time before Mildred Painter could teach again.

IN MEMORY
OF
SCHOOL DAYS

As the dew to the bud,
As the flower to the bee,
As the fragrance to the rose,
Are school memories to me.

FALLEN TIMBER SCHOOL

Independence Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania

1933–1934

MILDRED M. PAINTER, Teacher

PUPILS

SIXTH GRADE

Jean Kotnik — John Kolesar
Charles Narquini — Jack Kotnik

FIFTH GRADE

Helen Smith — Lillian Bogatay
Mary Rockey — Rosie Narquini
Timmie Yensull — Tony Giedraetis
Helen Mc Laughlin

FOURTH GRADE

Wilma Guzell — Malvine Rockey
Agnes Kolesar — Ray Mc Laughlin
Joseph Madera — Joseph Pankovich
Mike Kotnik

THIRD GRADE

Dorothy Lucas — Frank Furiga
Lena Narquini — Rosemary Mc Laughlin

SECOND GRADE

Helen Kolesar — Jay Lucas
David Rockey

FIRST GRADE

Genio Narquini — Clarence Mc Laughlin

B. F. Skillen, Supervising Principal

Our next teacher was a very charming young lady by the name of Sarah Tranquil. She lived very close by in Penowa. Her father and brothers worked in the coal mines so she had a good understanding of what we went through. During the school year, she became ill and was off a month or so. Her doctor would stop by during school hours to see how she was doing healthwise. But in reality, he was falling deeply in love with her. Perhaps a year or so later, they got married. She continued teaching, but at some other school.

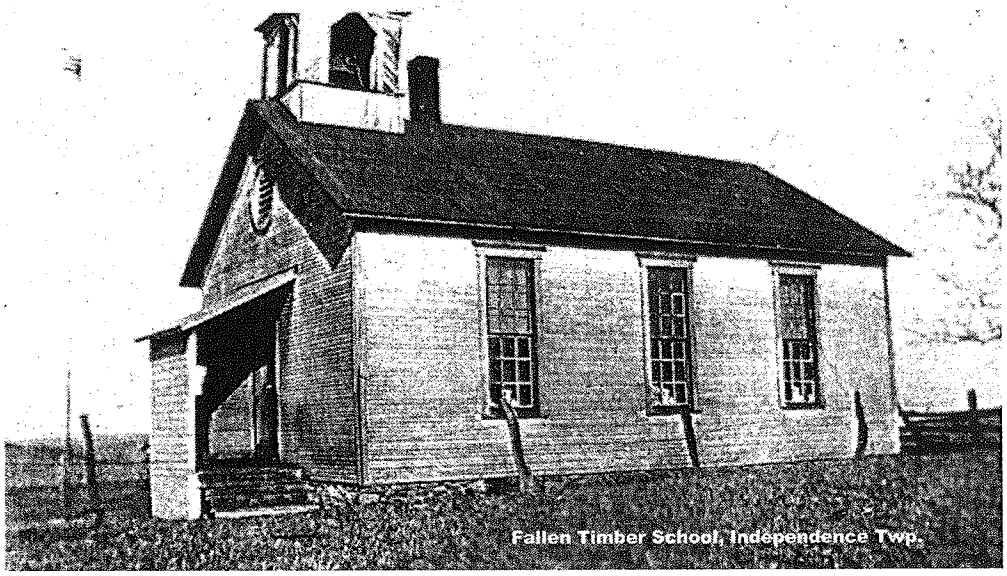
In the sixth grade, we had a teacher from Brownsville, Pennsylvania. Her name was Schaeffer. She was easy to get along with and was liked much by the pupils. At this time also, we got another school principal. He replaced a very business-like and not so friendly Mr. Benjamin Franklin Skillen. The principals worked out of the Avella High School offices and every once in a while would travel out to see how things were going in the elementary schools in the Avella School District. Our new principal was Thomas Alford Smith. He lived next to the Avella High School on Avella Heights.

At the close of the 1937-38 school year, Fallen Timber School went the way of many such one-room buildings in the county. Consolidation was the fad, and one after another, the little schoolhouses, with a belfry pointing to the sky, were abandoned.

The original Fallen Timber School had burned on October 11, 1894, due to a defective flue. It was quickly rebuilt by Samuel McFadden for $451, exclusive of painting and new pupil seats.

Of my days at Fallen Timber, I have mostly happy memories. But the winters were bad and we saw much snow. Or it rained, and because of the distance from Pine Flats, we often arrived at school pretty wet. Yes, umbrellas were available but sometimes the winds turned them inside out. I remember that there were separate outside toilets for the boys and girls and on very cold days, we usually went out in groups at recesses. Heat was supplied by a potbellied stove surrounded by heat shields. Fuel was soft coal. And I remember that the water cooler was in the back of the room.

Like my fellow classmates, I went on to the upper grades through the school system at Avella. But in March of my senior year at Avella High, I enlisted in the Army Air Force since the War to end all wars was in full sway. Little did I dream where life would lead me. Today, in 2002, I have celebrated my 77th birthday- a long jump from my childhood. But I will carry with me to the end, my memories of my early school days and life at Fallen Timber School.



Fallen Timber School, Independence Twp.

THE SUTHERLAND CONNECTION

by OPAL LANTZ
as told to
Kathryn Campbell Slasor

John Walker Sutherland, born on a farm in Cross Creek Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania, on August 22, 1828, was my great grandfather. This former Buxton property was located between what is today (2002) Meadowcroft Village and the prominent stock farm established by George Miller, Sr. in 1795. By 1922, a portion of this area became the site of Turney School in Jefferson Township.

John Walker Sutherland married Eleanor Virtue, who was born November 18, 1836 in or near Burgettstown.

John Walker & Eleanor Virtue Sutherland

The couple became the parents of seven children, as follows: Emma, who married David Barnes; Mary Margaretta who married Stephen Cunningham; Effa who became the wife of Robert Cassidy; little Jimmie V. who lived less than one year from his birth on October 24, 1861 to September 7, 1862; George L. who married Dian Foster; Ella, who married Albert Scott; and John V., who married Cora Osborne.

Eleanor Virtue Sutherland died December 2, 1868, at age 32, leaving six young motherless children. My great grandfather, John Walker Sutherland, then took for his second wife, Cynthia Hanlin Daugherty, who was born in 1849. Her first husband, John Daugherty, had passed away, leaving her with one daughter, Janet, who in time married

Don Hendershot. Cynthia and great grandfather became parents of six more children, making a total of twelve who lived to pose for a family picture taken in 1896.

The second family of John Walker Sutherland were: Anna, who married Robert Irwin; Charles, who married Bess Whitson; William Wallace, who married Louella Wiegmann; Edna, who became the wife of Dr. C.R. Megahan; Cynthia Faye, who married Ward Secrist, and Holland Dean, whose wife was Esther Jackman.

My grandparents, George L. and Dian Foster Sutherland, who reported that they had met at a party and it was love at first sight, became the parents of eight children, three girls and five boys. And, like their parents before them, they also suffered the loss of children. John Walker, his grandfather's namesake, died when only a few months old, and Leland passed away at age eighteen of appendicitis.

My mother, Myrtle, the oldest, married Oscar W. Lantz, on October 22, 1913. He died when I was four years old, leaving my mother with my brother, Paul, and me. After my mother came Glen, who married Mary Hartswick; Hazel, who married Arthur W. Pettibon; George Roy, who married Celia Bowers; Esther, who married Florus W. Gordon, and Charles Orville, whose wife was Helen Vollmer.

By 2002, all of this generation have passed away except Aunt Esther Gordon, who was born in 1906 on the Pogue-Sutherland-Burkhart farm near Bethel Church in Jefferson Township. My great grandfather's Aunt Christiana Sutherland had married John Pogue, this family having been early settlers in the township. The Pogue family graveyard is located on this farm. My grandfather, George Sutherland, built the cement wall around the graves when he and Grandma Dian lived there. The wall has been crumbling these many years, as he no doubt built it over a century ago. Penn State University had laid out a large orchard for Grandpa across the lane from the little graveyard as you came down the hill from the road to the house. All traces of the orchard are gone, but the graveyard remains.

I remember this farm with much pleasure, especially in the 1920s and early 1930s. I remember riding the Wabash train - and walking to the farm for the weekend. My brother, Paul, and I spent many wonderful summers there with our grandparents.

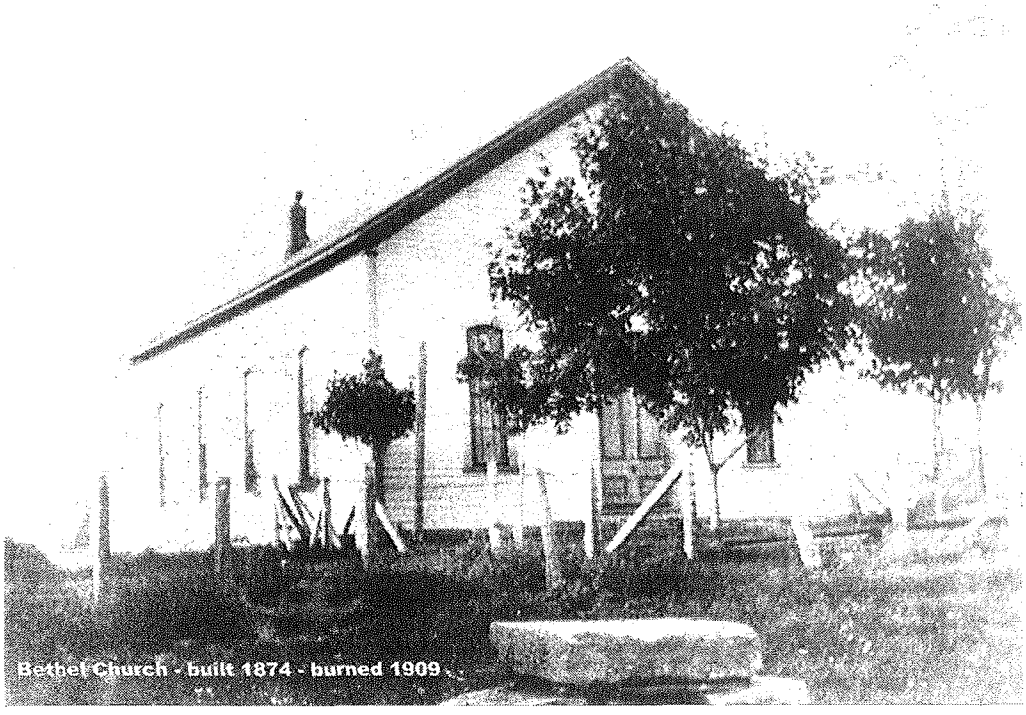
George & Dian Sutherland

One of the things which occupied my time on the farm was reading and writing Roman numerals. I remember writing them into the thousands. I had a tablet which I always left at the farm for this purpose.

In addition to the seven-room farmhouse, there was a wash house, a hen house, and a large barn and silo. The kitchen was very large, with a coal stove, a large kitchen table, a rocker with no arms, and, what as a child, seemed to me to be a HUGE space. When I got older, I remember hoeing corn and pulling hay shocks with the horse. The sweat bees bit me on hot summer days. Other things I recall are carrying things from the springhouse, filling the oil lamps, and doing other chores around the house.

In June of 1930, Grandma and Grandpa (George and Dian) and my mother, Myrtle, went on a trip to California and all over the West with Uncle Glen and Aunt Mary. Aunt Esther, my brother, Paul, and I, with the hired help, ran the farm while they were gone. It was a great summer!

Grandpa was a good man. Each evening he gathered us around and read to us from the Bible and we all knelt for prayer. When Bethel Church burned in December, 1909, it was my grandfather, George Sutherland, who rode horseback throughout the neighborhood for funds to rebuild. Due mainly to his efforts, the new church was built and dedicated by the following December, free of debt. Bethel was the home church of the Sutherlands. They always attended, arriving on foot or on horseback.

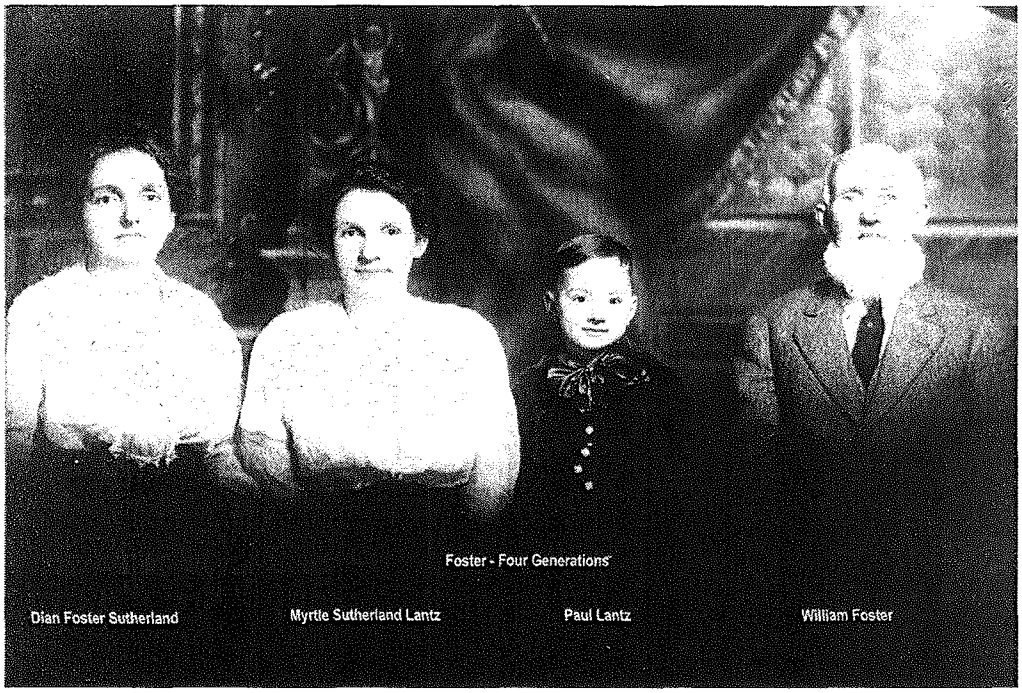

Bethel Church - built 1874 - burned 1909

Shortly after the turn of the century, while the Wabash Railroad was being built, smallpox broke out among the workers. Most of those who helped to build the railroad were immigrants with no families in this country. Illness and death touched a wide segment of the population in Penobscot, as well as these immigrant workers. Grandpa continued his delivery of milk from the farm to the suffering families, despite the deadly

epidemic. "They need milk," was his only comment when told he was going beyond the call of duty. He ignored the dangers to himself and continued to make his rounds with the milk wagon.

Grandpa farmed and had sheep and cattle. He shipped milk on the train from the Penowa station, and delivered fruit to Penobscot. And as children, we remember that he could always find a job for everyone.

Grandma was quiet, a hard worker, and a wonderful cook. She was a Foster from Smithfield, Ohio, where her father was a shoemaker.



Grandma always had a large garden. She milked the cows and Grandpa did the farming. Grandma always told us about their wedding day. She said that when they were married on February 22, 1888, his father gave him one hundred dollars. He spent sixty dollars for furniture and bought a new suit and started a new life. She also said that that day in February was so hot that when she was in the carriage on her way to be married, she was sunburned and her nose peeled.

After their marriage, Grandpa did share-cropping, but only for a year. He said if he were going to work that hard, he would do it for himself, and not for somebody else.

My mother, Myrtle, their first child, was born near Avella on January 9, 1889. Her parents moved several times during her young years. She went to Miller School and stayed in eighth grade for several years. There was no high school in the area and she preferred being in school. She attended Eldersville Normal School for several summers, also for the same reason – she liked to be in school.

My mother then taught at Miller, Gardner, Lee, Cole and Melvin. (These were five of the original one room schools of Jefferson Township that were set up after the Public School Law of 1834 was passed many years before.)

To teach at Melvin, she traveled by horse and sleigh in the winter time. She said that Grandma heated bricks and put them in the sleigh to keep her warm. She often stayed all week with a family near the school, possibly the Melvins.

Mother was a hard worker with a great love for and interest in people. After she married my father, he operated the Lantz Dairy in Follansbee. After his death in 1922, she worked for the Brooke County Board of Education. She lived to be 98.

Myrtle & Oscar Lantz

Some time after 1930, Grandma and Grandpa sold the original farm to Joe Burkhart, and moved to the old farm across the deep hollow. This farm had seven gates. Anyone who ever lived there called it, "Seven Gates to Bugville." No one ever knew why. To get mail to the second farm, we had to walk across the deep hollow to the original farm. One of the reasons that Grandpa bought the farm across the deep hollow was that it had timber on it. He bought it so that Bill Sutherland could have lumber for his sawmill. Grandpa thought that he owed Bill because when Grandpa had diphtheria, Bill came out and took him to the doctor. He always thought that Bill had saved his life.

The old farm house on my grandparents' first farm burned to the ground one day after Joe and Emma Burkhart had lived there many years. I have searched, but in vain, for a picture of that rambling old building which housed so many memories for me. I would love to show it to my brother's children as a part of their heritage. As of today, it remains still elusive. But no fire or tornado or any other physical disaster can destroy the wonderful pictures which remain forever etched firmly in my mind - pictures of those carefree, precious days of my childhood with Grandma and Grandpa on that old Sutherland farm just off Miller Road in Jefferson Township.

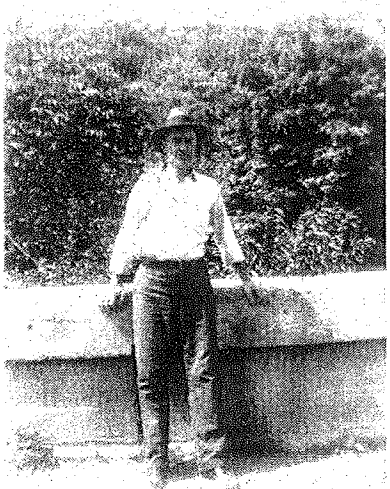
MEMORIES OF MY GRANDFATHER'S FARM

by
Louella Ward Sebastian
as told to Kathryn Campbell Siasor

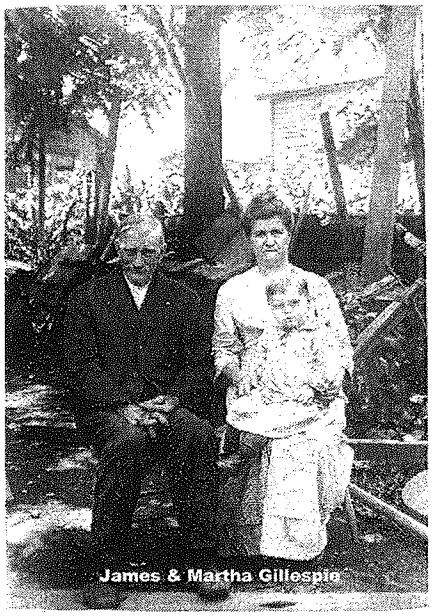
My grandfather's home may have lacked modern conveniences, but looking back to summer vacations spent there, I would not change a thing. Through the eyes of a little girl, I can see it still. It is hard to describe the joy I felt at that old farm in Jefferson Township near the Brooke County line.

The Gillespie homestead provided more than a summer vacation for me and my brother, Charles. It was part of my family's long history in the Tent Church-Eldersville area, my great grandfather having been James W. Gillespie, son of Nathaniel and Catherine Johnston Gillespie. Nathaniel was one of the first settlers in the region.

Although I was born after all of these pioneering ancestors had passed away, it is my grandfather, Charles J. Gillespie, son of James W., I remember with such fondness.



Charles J. Gillespie



(A short biography of James W. may be found in Series 2 of Backward Glances.)

Charles J. Gillespie married Harriett Barnes. They were the parents of three boys, Cliff, Calvin (nicknamed Jim), and Melburn, and one girl, Esther Gillespie, who became my mother. Ours was a closely knit family, the three boys living within five miles from each other most of their lives. My mother, however, married and moved to Pittsburgh.

This arrangement worked to our advantage. We most appreciated the visits to the farm where we, and some of our cousins, created memories we will never forget.

As a young girl, my mother got a job in Pittsburgh. A relative took her to Washington to catch the trolley to her job in the city. It was only natural that she would meet a young man in the area where she spent most of her time. That romance led to the marriage of my mother, Esther Gillespie, and my father, Thomas Ward. When my brother, Charles, and I came along, we were included in the family's adventures to the farm of my grandfather, Charles Gillespie.

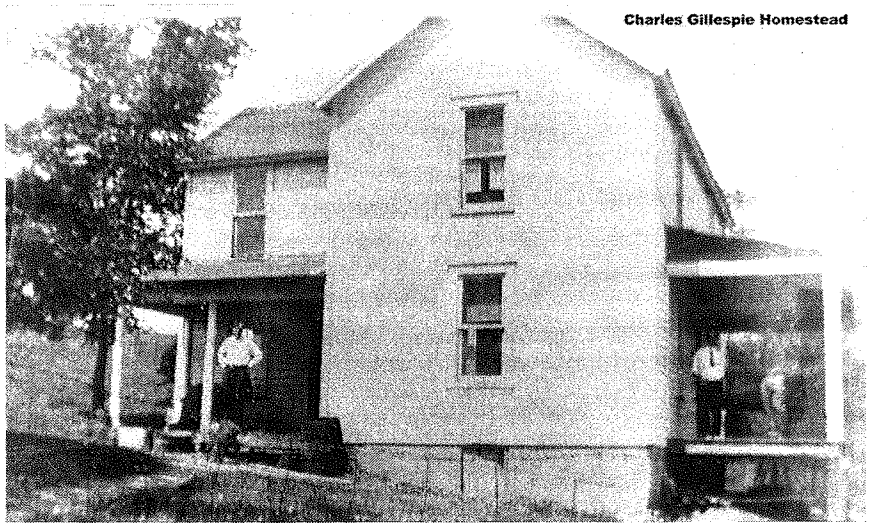
My grandfather was proud of his farm, which bordered the West Virginia state line. In fact, in the early days when the state boundary was surveyed, one of the stone government markers had been placed on the farm to indicate the West Virginia-Pennsylvania border. These stones were deeply set, leaving only a foot or two above the ground level. As kids, we would climb on it, mount one of the farm horses from it, and in general, include it in our play.

I am not sure where my grandparents lived in the early days, but it was probably on the Winfield Cunningham place near Bethel Church, where great grandfather, James W., had been born. He had opened a store in Eldersville in the 1880s, after moving the building with mules to the spot where he wanted it.

Many interesting stories have been handed down about my great grandfather and his store. In it he had a grate fire where the men of the town would gather in the evenings. They sat on sacks of sugar and potatoes and spun yarns, enjoying each other's tales by the light of the oil lamp and the fire. He kept a large casing of baloney hanging from the ceiling. When a customer came into the store for baloney, he cut off a piece and let the rest hang. He sold everything in the store from needles and thread to bags of beans. He had always been a huckster, raising and peddling vegetables throughout a wide neighborhood. He was followed in this trade by his son, my grandfather. James W. Gillespie died in 1920.

My grandmother died in 1919, long before I was born. Her youngest son, Melburn, was only six years old. The only memory he carried through life of his mother was of having been lifted up to view her in her casket.

The year my grandfather, Charles J., moved to the farm is not available nor is it known why he needed a house, because the outbuildings seem to already have been there. As I remember, they all looked like such old buildings. But it was during the 1920s that he dismantled the old boarding house at Kidd's Mill and moved it to the farm atop Steen Hill. There it joined the wagon shed, the granary, the outhouse, the spring house, the chicken coop and the big barn. The boarding house had already reveled in a history of its own, and made a good addition to the farm. A couple of smaller houses had been built at some point in time in the vicinity of the long lane that led into the farmstead. Former owners possibly could have lived in one or more of them.



Charles Gillespie Homestead

Having consulted the late A.D. White, local historian for most of his ninety-nine years, it seems that the farm was the home of Arthur Montgomery Campbell before the Gillespie family arrived in the area, and was where Mr. Campbell raised his family. "Gum" Campbell, as he was known, was highly respected and reputed to be an excellent carpenter. He had built many houses and barns during his lifetime.

My Uncle Cliff was the local mail carrier for forty years. He retired at the close of 1966. When he took us kids on his route occasionally, it was a real treat. "One at a time," he would say. He told us about the early days of carrying mail sometimes on horseback, or with horses or mules and a buggy. He said his cargo sometimes consisted of milk, oil, or anything the farmers along his route would be out of. We traveled with him on the back roads around Hanlin Station, and places we had never been before. Uncle Clifford Gillespie died in 1970.

Another of my mother's brothers was Calvin, known to everyone as Jim. He had employment in a number of places, including the Revenue Department in Washington, D.C. from which he retired. At one time he had worked at a sawmill where he lost an eye in an accident. Uncle Jim passed away in 1971.

Since Melburn was the youngest of the three boys, his children were naturally younger than the rest of us cousins. So they missed out on the fun we had at the farm. Uncle Melborn was an avid Granger who was blessed with a beautiful singing voice, and he used that voice all of his life in both the Grange and the church at Eldersville.

It was early in our lives that the Great Depression hit. But we were never without plenty of food, including those of us who lived in Pittsburgh. We always had milk, eggs, chicken, and vegetables fresh from the farm. Cold packed meat was also a specialty. I can still see all the women of the family working and preparing food, especially for threshing day. This was when neighbors gathered to help each other with that dusty job, and the women hurried to have a huge meal ready for them. We kids would be running to the spring house down over the slope for a piece of fruit or to stick our fingers in the jello. When Mom found out about such carryings-on, we were in trouble!

It seems I can still smell the hay that we hauled from the fields in Uncle Cliff's wagon to the hayloft in the big barn.

Some of us were too young to remember the fire that destroyed our grandfather's first barn. It was one day during harvest time. The men had come in from the fields for their noonday meal. Grandfather had unhitched the team and put them inside the barn to rest, when a summer storm came up with a heavy shower of rain. After the rain stopped and the sky was clearing, neighbors a few miles away were startled at their dinner table by a deafening clap of thunder.

My Aunt Ruth was in her kitchen clearing the meal when she saw a reflection of fire in a mirror. Even though the thunder did not seem extremely loud to the family, and the storm gave the appearance of having passed over, this sneak attack from the final bolt of lightning had done its work. The barn was on fire. Two years' worth of hay and grain were lost, and the faithful team of horses died in their stalls. The barn in which we kids played was apparently built shortly thereafter, and life resumed at the farm. But neighbors did not soon forget "the day that Charlie Gillespie's barn was struck."

The lane that led into the farm from the country road was an extremely long one, bordered with elderberry bushes. As with most farms, fields were fenced in. Thus to reach the house, the opening and closing of two or three gates was necessary. The path from the house to the outhouse was also lined with fruit trees. In season, we could reach up and pick a peach to eat coming and going from this necessary trip.

My cousin, Delores, recalls that riding the horse bareback in haying season was a sweaty job. Before turning the horse loose, she would ride to the watering trough. As the horse leaned down to drink, she could visualize herself plunging down his sweaty neck into the water. But as she held to the reins, that terrible fear never materialized.

We played in such places as in the old surrey with the fringe on top, in cherry trees where Uncle Melburn left me up on a limb once, and in and around the chicken coop that was not off limits to lice. We sometimes explored the old coal mine of my grandfather, and walked with the dog where the copperheads were.

We had no electricity nor gas, but we had the stars on dark nights which we enjoyed immensely as we lay under them out in the yard. We had kittens and baby ducks with which to play, and sometimes nests of baby mice that Uncle Melburn found somewhere.

When it was time to go back home to the city, my mother would frisk us so that no stowaway mouse or kitten would find its way to Pittsburgh concealed in our clothing.

"These little pink things have to stay here," she would say, as she extricated a baby mouse from my pocket.

We would gather the eggs and help Aunt Ruth churn the butter. We enjoyed meat that Grandad slaughtered and smoked, and the home-grown vegetables. In fact, we loved every phase of farm life and after many, many years are yet so grateful to our wonderful family for making us children an important part of it.

My grandfather, Charles J. Gillespie, died September 15, 1960 at age 77. He had left the farm a few years before, and new owners, the Guy Leavett family, began their lives where ours left off. The next great change was the advent of the greedy shovels of the coal strippers, whose huge jaws scooped up the fields and farmlands.

Of course we kids were grown and gone by then, and nothing remained of the old place but memories. We cousins who shared a wonderful life during that interim of what was actually only a few years, are grateful for having been given such a wonderful childhood. What memories we can pass on to our children and grandchildren!

RED-DOG ROAD CHRISTMAS

A Great Depression Christmas Remembrance

by

David Davis

It was December, 1939, near the end of the Great Depression, but no one knew it in our town. Its end had not been foretold and if it had, no one would have believed it. Our family certainly did not know it. Our gas station (filling station as Dad always called it) had gone under at the end of August. We sold lots of gas but not enough people paid for it. Dad stopped giving credit too late. Some of our creditors would say, "I gotta have some gas to get to work, Marion." And Dad, being a great believer in work, would give in. But those who pled for more credit did not pay when they got paid. So the unpaid piper had to quit piping and pumping. Most of the folks were four-square and either paid in cash or settled accounts when they had the money, but there were not enough of them.

Soon Sunoco (We called them "Blue Sunoco" because their gas was blue, their oil tanks, their pumps, air compressors, trucks, and other equipment.) came and took all their stuff and we were without an income, not that we had much coming in before. The garage where we had done minor mechanical work and State inspections turned up its toes too. Not enough work to keep it open. Most men did their own car repair anyway. Shadetree mechanics abounded in our small town and in the country. State inspections had cost a quarter and by the time the mechanic was paid ten cents and the necessary equipment was paid for, there was not enough left to pay for the utilities. But we did have a bunch of tools which could have been sold for a few dollars except for the fact that one night thieves broke in and stole them, kindly souls saving us the trouble of getting up a sale. They surmised we would be despondent over giving up to strangers those much handled old friends. So they put them out of our sight as sometimes the clothes of loved ones who have died are given away to relieve us of sorrow in seeing them.

It had become a grim winter - very cold and a severe shortage of money, food, and other basic necessities. And Dad would kill before he would go on welfare. So even the common Christmas luxuries were out of consideration that year. Even in better times, anything beyond the basics was considered frivolous and not likely to be on even the bottom of the list. My sister, nine years old, might get stockings, those heavy tan ones held up with garters (homemade out of elastic) and I, eight, might get some socks, and both of us, handkerchiefs for our perpetually cold-ridden noses. But at least we wanted to find our gifts under a Christmas tree which now was far out of the picture. We knew there was no money for such an extravagance.

Our house, a made-over garage, was three-roomed: kitchen, bedroom above it, and a lean-to type room added on to one side—our living room. Those days before Christmas this room looked so barren to us-- a couch, a fold-up canvas cot that I slept on, a lamp, small radio, a big coal stove, no chairs, and a cold linoleum floor. It did not begin to breathe the aromas of Christmas like my sister and I wanted it to do. The red and green art paper chains made in school which we had strung up high in the middle length of the room and from corner to corner were pretty with the silver icicles draped

over them, but what we needed was that Christmas tree smell. Not all the artful decorations in the world would take the place of a tree with its piney odors and elegance. How could we get one? Where? As the days passed we were more and more in a frenzy about it. We HAD to have one. Our family was broke, getting on by the skin of our teeth as they say. Still, we had to have a Christmas tree.

Every time we heard "0 Christmas Tree" sung or played on our little static-ridden radio, we got lumps in our throats but our little jaws were set to a single purpose. We thought and thought and thought about it. We could not earn a tree. No one in town was selling them. You had to go seventeen miles to Washington, Pennsylvania, to buy one and our old Chevy coupe was sitting crippled in the garage waiting for repairs not affordable at that time or long after.

Our minds roved over town and country trying to locate a tree. There were some nice trees in people's yards but they certainly were not available. And in the countryside -- well, those days had seen many years of Depression and whatever trees had been in the woods, however once abundant, were long gone like the rabbits, the squirrels, ground hogs, possums, coons (never called racoons in that neck of the woods) and deer. All this edible game was as rare as wild turkeys and scarce as the buffalo which once had wallows in that country. Hunters' prey was nearly extinct; the country had been raked over by every kind of hunting weapon from traps to high-powered rifles. The woods for miles around had been scoured for everything by a hungry and thin people. Still, there must be a tree out there somewhere which had been overlooked. So we thought some more.

In all seasons we kids roamed the square miles of countryside seeking adventure, more in warmer times than in winter, naturally. Trudging through the fields we flushed out quail, knew the ground sparrows' nests, got burrs and stickles in our clothes and sometimes picked the violets and buttercups for our Mother. We walked the cricks ("creek" sounded funny to us when we heard it said by city folk who never lived "out in the sticks") and fished them with stick, string, hook and worm. The cricks were also our swimming holes after we dammed them up with sod and rock until the water was neck high. It seems like there was always a menacing bull in our swimming hole field looking at us with his fiery eye, and we either stayed in the water up to our necks or scrambled up some nearby willow tree until he found some cow or yonder tufts of grass more interesting than we. We wandered far along the red-dog roads which were made from the rough reddish rocky stuff that had smoldered for years beneath the thousands of tons of mountainous coal mine slag heaps. As we walked these colorful roads they took us far out into the country of covered bridges, remote farms, and deep woods. With all our explorations, we knew the territory and what it contained.

So it was that Sister and I remembered a grove of evergreens way down the red-dog road. We had seen it in summer on one of our expeditions into that remote territory south of town and we had stored that information somewhere in the back of our brain pans and the strain of our hard pondering now brought it forth with a beckoning call. We got bundled up; I got my hatchet; and we crunched through the snow to the east of town and down that road which would take us past old Don Dunkel's sheep farm, the Robisons, the Burns place made of whatever rock and wood materials that Mr. Burns could find, on and on to that distant bower of evergreens.

Robison Homestead
Indian Camp Road
Independence Twp.

We huffed and puffed along blowing visible breath, our cheeks getting more and more rosy. Finally we spotted that beautiful green grove which previously we had seen only from afar as we and our friends walked the crick bank skipping flat pebbles over the placid waters of one of the deeper parts of the stream. When we got closer to our treasure trove of trees, it was apparent that they looked fuller from a distance and better as a bunch than individually. They all had a bad side from growing up so close together, not to mention here and there generous gaps in the branching. There were trees of many sizes and shapes. We wanted a tall one but the taller the skimpier. Eventually we selected one that would do and I began hacking away with my hatchet which, after many whacks, I realized I should have sharpened.

Everyone, especially kids, assumed that whatever was in the woods was public property; but those trees weren't quite in the woods and I was worried that some farmer might come skuddling up to our tree-napping and order us to be gone. Apparently however, the cold and the heavy snow aided our little scheme of "relocating" one spindly tree from among so many. In any case, I eventually got the trunk hacked through and put our little rope on one of the lower branches and Sis and I started dragging it through the snow toward home. On the way back, very tired, we took a short cut through Wilbur Gist's field, hoping the bull was in the barn.

When we arrived with our precious prize, Mom and Dad did not say anything but we hastened to tell them that we got it in the woods. They could see how enraptured we were so they asked no questions, perhaps figuring as we did, that neither the woods nor anyone else would miss it. Sister and I got some little boards of various lengths and widths and fashioned a stand for it, not too substantial but good enough to keep it standing if we put it snug against the corner of the room. We could not come up with a

way to have it stand in water but as it was a fresh cut tree it would keep its needles long enough to serve its purpose.

We pulled it into the living room and stood it up. Now for the decorations, all old, from the more prosperous days of the 1920's before sister and I were born; also before the bankers stole Dad's money --- he had had quite a stash from the acres of coal he had sold to the mining company. The strings of lights, as with so many in those days, were the kind that if one went out the rest went along with the idea. Out of several strings in the big ornament box we got enough lights, many of which had lost some of their paint, to fill a couple of strings.

The thing about this tree, and likely the reason it was still where we found it, was that it was a hemlock. Sis and I thought when we first got close to it that it seemed awful flimsy but it had the right color, the right smell, and it had the tell-tale needles of a Christmas tree. Trying to decorate it was another matter as the thin and delicate branches drooped even with the weight of the almost weightless shiny colored balls and icicles. And as for the lights, we were able to put them on the tips of the branches holding them up by tying thread to them and binding the thread to the heavier part of the branches above. For all its faults, it was our own special tree and like Charlie Brown's runty pine, our tree needed us.

At last it was all adorned with all the glory of ornamentation we could provide. And even when the lights went out and we had to unscrew a dozen bulbs and screw in one we knew was good until we found the bad one, we did not mind, as we looked with faces radiant at the restoration of the colorful brightness. Our tree nearly touched the ceiling. It was magnificent - a thing of beauty. And in the corner of our living room, its bad side to the back and its other flaws obscured by decoration, it created something more than holiday magic. Something of mystery and solemn secrecy especially at night when room lights were out. Something to draw your attention and hold it and make you think of things that such a tree symbolized, the "good tidings of great joy" that we had heard about in church. Sister and I especially, used to sit near it for hours and look at it in reverent awe as it was for us a special gift of Christmas, from what or from whom we could not name.

Our tree brought our spirits into the company of Mary and Joseph and Jesus and angels and shepherds and wise men and treasures brought as gifts to the newborn King. And speaking of gifts, some folk from the Lower Buffalo Presbyterian Church where we first heard that greatest of stories, came and sang carols outside our door and when we opened the door they presented to us gifts for each of us and bags of food for all the family.

Everything that had seemed to bode our having our worst Christmas came to be the best in our remembrance. For we knew, perhaps felt, more than knew, that something sublime had come into our lives and every time to this day that we hear "O Tannenbaum--O Christmas Tree", we feel a kind of delight and a pervading warmth. And I still find that decorating the tree, with carols playing in the background, is one of the most delightful and enchanting parts of the days of Christmas. And I want, this day, to thank that farmer who gave, knowingly or not, to my sister and me, to our broken-down Depression-ridden family, that Tree of Trees which, in that barren year, brought us even unto Bethlehem.

DOUBLE COUSINS - DOUBLE MEMORIES

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

How close can cousins become? Jefferson Township is proud of two of them, whose families have intermarried making them double cousins of each other. And as fate would have it, each of them has out-lived all of her siblings.

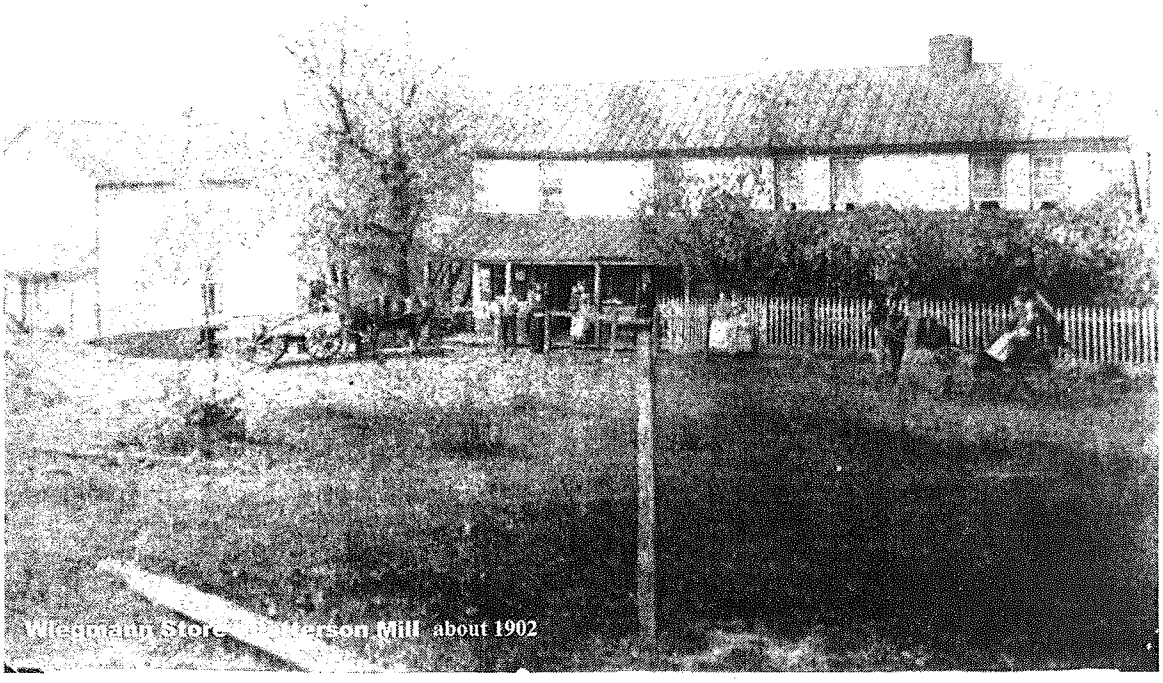
Helen Wiegmann Martin, of Eldersville, is past the age of 94, while her double cousin, Sara Pettibon Cassidy, has seen her 96th birthday. Both are in excellent health and are active in their communities.

Helen has spent her life almost within sight of her birthplace. Although Sara left the area many years ago, Jefferson Township is still "home". She returns for reunions and special occasions and mixes with her old friends and relatives as if she had never been away. Sara and Helen are in touch by phone at least once a month.

Sara was born on November 2, 1905, on the Thomas McCarrell farm, later Wargo, about two miles south of Eldersville. Her parents were Thomas and Wilhelmina Wiegmann Pettibon.

Helen was born on March 24, 1908, on Cole's Road on the old Metcalf farm, a mile or so from Sara's birthplace. Her parents were Louis and Anna Pettibon Wiegmann.

The Wiegmanns and the Pettibons were two of the early pioneer families of Jefferson Township. George Lewis Wiegmann emigrated from Hanover, Germany, in 1850. His wife passed away on the boat, so he spent ten years in New York City, rather than moving westward as were his probable intentions. After his sojourn in New York, he then came as far west as Pittsburgh, returning later to Prussia where he married his wife's sister. He brought her back with him to America and settled in the Patterson's Mills area of Cross Creek Township where he opened a Post Office and a dry goods store. Meanwhile, this couple produced a family of ten boys.



Wiegmann Store - Patterson Mill about 1902

William "Pettybone", born in 1795, made his way from Maryland into the southern tip of the township in the early 1800s. He married Catherine Ward in 1828. Their children numbered thirteen, and were probably all born and raised in the family's two-story, four-room log house on the south end of Bethel Ridge Road. As far as is known, this couple became the ancestors of the entire Pettibon clan.

The marriages which produced the "double cousin" condition mentioned previously were as follows. Sara's mother's brother, Louis Wiegmann, married her father's sister, Anna Pettibon. And Helen's mother's brother, Tom Pettibon, married her father's sister, Wilhelmina Weigmann. The children of both of these couples thus became double cousins. Due partly to this relationship, and partly to living many years on neighboring farms, they were always very close in spirit to each other. The ten children of the combined families attended the one room schools at Eldersville and Cole's. Regardless of which building they attended, the only transportation was on foot. With little complaint, they trudged the two to three miles to and from school, sometimes in mud nearly knee-deep and sometimes through snow as high as the fence rows.

Attending Sunday School was done in the same manner. It was either to the Methodist Church in the village of Eldersville, or to the old house of worship high on the ridge out in Bethel country.

The Pettibon family, of which Sara was one, consisted of five children: two boys and three girls, while the Wiegmanns also raised five youngsters: three boys and two girls, which included Helen. Tragedy had struck Louis and Anna Wiegmann in 1916, with the death of their sixth and last child, Leroy, after only a two-day siege of spinal meningitis.

Being farm children, shuffling hayshocks and milking cows was a way of life for the girls as well as the boys. They could handle horses, as well as their brothers could, hitching them to the surrey for a ride occasionally to church, or harnessing them to the road wagon to peddle eggs or to haul milk to the train at Hanlin Station for shipment to Pittsburgh.

Education was "hard to come by," remembers Sara. She and her two sisters, Ina and Ruth, had set their eyes on careers of teaching, but Cross Creek High School was over the hills and through the fields. When it closed, they had to find a way to Burgettstown for a high school education. Walking to Cedar Grove and riding the "coal train" to Burgettstown was their eventual solution.

In the meantime, their brothers, the Pettibon boys, established commercial dairies in the Monaca, Rochester, and Aliquippa areas. They followed dairy businesses all of their lives, passing them on to their children as time went by.

The three Pettibon girls conquered the hardships of getting to school and went on to become teachers. Sara said that after graduating from Burgettstown High School in 1923, she attended summer school, then began teaching. This career ended after six years. In 1929 she married Harlan Cassidy, the handsome son of a neighboring farm family. In those days, a girl had to choose between a teaching career and a husband, since married women were not permitted to teach. Most girls chose a husband.

Sara's double cousin, Helen Wiegmann, had already made her choice three years earlier in 1926. She also left the daily routine of milking the cows on the home farm, and, like Sara, married another of the handsome young farmers of the area named Gaylord Martin. Unlike Sara, Helen was not whisked away to a glamorous life in the

city. Helen's husband moved her to his own farm not far away, where she again took up the tasks of milking and hauling hayshocks. But this time they were HIS cows and HIS hayshocks! This life must have agreed with them, however, for last year, in 2001, they celebrated 75 years of married life!

The memories of both Helen and Sara are replete with stories of their early lives in Jefferson Township. But the one most outstanding memory of both cousins bears repeating here.

When Helen and Sara were about ten and thirteen years of age, tragedy struck a neighboring family, the Elliott Stewarts. Elliott and his wife lived on what is today (2002) Strope Road. They had a daughter, Vera, who married Earl Bell and lived on the Englert farm on what is now known as Wiegmann Road. As time passed, Vera gave birth to twin girls. They lived only a short time, then both babies died.

The funeral was held at the isolated farm home down in the hollow, as was the custom in those days. The babies were attired in dainty little white dresses and placed in small separate caskets. Helen was chosen as one of the pallbearers, along with three of her young friends, Wilma Dimit, Ruth Meneely and Sara's youngest sister, Ruth Pettibon. More than four decades have passed since that sad occasion, but neither Sara nor Helen has ever forgotten that early experience with death in their closely-knit neighborhood.

THINGS I REMEMBER

by

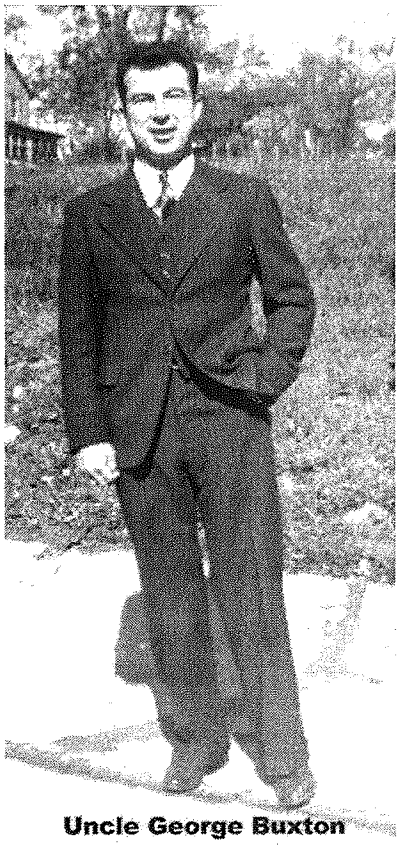
Norma Buxton Hadden

EDITOR's NOTE: Norma Buxton Hadden, the author of the following article, is a lineal descendant of Jacob and Hannah Young Buxton who were among the earliest pioneers of the Cross Creek Country. During the long months of her husband's final illness, Norma sat into the nights by his bedside to be at his beck and call. To put in the time, she began to write page after page of things she remembered from her early childhood and young adult life in the village of Independence and surrounding areas. Eventually she wrote a complete accounting of all the houses in the village and who lived where. (That section of her history is available from Norma at 724-587-3005 for a very nominal fee.) When her writings were brought to the attention of those of us who were producing these "Backward Glances" series, we realized that her humor and honest portrayal of the persons whose lives crossed her path might be of interest to the readers of these histories. No attempt has been made to edit them, lest it spoil the complete abandon with which she wrote. We hope you enjoy them.

My dad's sister, Aunt Po, told me many interesting things when I was a child.

Norma Buxton - age 16

Aunt Po Buxton



Uncle George Buxton

She said that when they lived at Penowa, one afternoon in summer they had a total eclipse of the sun. It got as dark as night and all of Grandma's chickens went to bed.

After a while, the sun came out again and so did the chickens. They started to eat, just like they did every morning. Aunt Po told Grandma that she bet they thought it was a really short night.

Rev. Carl Whipple came here to preach in 1930 from Meadowlands. One night he was going home from prayer meeting and saw a man beating his wife. He went in and separated them. The wife immediately picked up a skillet and hit him over the head, knocking him down the steps and over the bank onto the railroad. He said it was a good thing no train was coming and from now on, men could beat their wives all they wanted. He would never interfere again.

Jack Sebeck owned Breezy Heights for many years. When he lived at Penobscot, he was the manager of the company store. It was in the early twenties and he wanted my dad to paper some rooms in his house for him. But he needed help and Glenn and Jim were not about to get out of their warm beds at 5 o'clock in the morning and walk four miles, paste paper all day, get home at 10 p.m. and then do it all over again the next day. Jack told Dad to bring me along. So he did. One day Jack told us that his wife, Josephine, had gone away and he decided to have a can of corn for dinner. He set it on the stove to get hot, but neglected to open it. It exploded. Jack said he never found one grain of the corn.

Aunt Po said that when they lived in Penowa, the well water was so soft, they didn't have to break it to wash clothes.

Elisha Craft came through town every week day with his great big threshing machine. Uncle George took his picture. When he showed it to him, Elisha asked how much he would charge him for it. When Uncle George said "five cents", Elisha said he couldn't afford it, so Uncle George just gave it to him.

The Mulhollans came to the Lower Buffalo Church in a surrey with the fringe on top. Aunt Po said it was the only one she ever saw.

Mrs. Shroder was Lulu Adams before she was married. Aunt Po said Lulu wouldn't admit she was an Adams relative.

In 1933 – 34, Frank and Aunt Po cleaned the school three times a week to work out their Relief money. They also did sewing at P & W School building.

Aunt Po said her sister, my Aunt Mary, had thirty dolls at one time. David Prewett won two dolls at the Burgettstown Fair and gave Aunt Mary one of them. That was in 1924. In 1925 it was the last time Aunt Po went to the Fair.

Aunt Po and Eula Richey used to play music for Mrs. Wales who was ill. Aunt Po said it made her real happy.

The KKK was at our church when my mother joined it. They sat up front and scared Mom nearly to death. I heard later that Darwin Buxton was one of them.

Bill Miller came to town with his wagon pulled by two oxen. He lived down below the Robison farm.

When Aunt Po was little, she would go to the back of the church and sit on Pep Plummer's lap and go to sleep.

The Hanna mansion used to have church festivals in their yard where they strung lanterns in the trees for light.

Our family lived in the Gist house during 1922 when the Cliftonville Riot took place, and the sheriff was killed. Grandma was hanging clothes on the line when the men came home running and yelling. She was very scared.

When the Buxtons lived in the Spencer house, it caught on fire and Grandma told Dad and Aunt Po to take the baby and run. They had a bucket brigade that put out the fire without a lot of damage, but Grandpa was so scared he was afraid to live there anymore. So they moved back to the store building where they had lived once before.

When the Lincoln Bank in Avella closed during the Depression, it was reported that the man who was in charge had stolen money and run away. People only got back 10% of their savings. Aunt Po said Frank lost a lot, but she had just taken most of hers out and bought a new car.

Grandpap used to cook frog legs and they jumped around in the skillet. He also helped people butcher hogs in exchange for the hog's head. He would come down the road carrying it.

The kids used to make their own marbles out of clay and Grandma would bake them so they could paint them.

Aunt Po said a call at the doctor's office was 50 cents and that included the medicine. It was also 50 cents to have a tooth pulled. A teacher earned $40 a month, less room and board.

Dick Shepherd told my Grandma she should put out a sign "Children's Home".

When they lived in Penowa, Uncle Glenn took them to church in his 4-door Model T Ford which was a touring car he had bought from Darwin.

Aunt Po said they used to wait for Isaac Joseph, the peddler, junk man, and rag man to come by their house. She said it was unbelievable how much stuff he had.

My Uncle George Buxton was kind of accident prone. He was a very strong man. One time he came from Minnie Hammond's where he was working on some lines in her basement. He had raised up and hit his head on a beam. He had a big piece sticking out and he wanted me to pull it out. I wanted to take him to the doctor but he wouldn't go. He said I could do it. The blood was coming out all around but the kids got me some peroxide and towels and a pillow case to make bandages. He said, "I won't yell." And he didn't. I pulled it out, cleaned it and bandaged it. He even refused a ride home. When I was done, he said, "Good job," and walked down home.

Many times my phone would ring and he would say, "Norm, I need you," and hang up. One time he stepped on a rake and split his eye open. Another time he was drilling something and set it on continuous drilling and then dropped it. It went through his foot. I doctored him up and wanted him to go to the doctor but he insisted on driving himself home.

Sometimes he would call and say, "Listen to this." And he would play a tape of something he had written. Then he would hang up and call back later to see how I liked it. He never said goodbye on the phone. He would just hang up.

Uncle George's house seemed to be haunted by McGuire, the Indian Fighter, who was caught by the Indians and tied to a tree down Coal Hollow. (They planned to pick him up on the way back, but he got loose.) Sometimes strange things happened in Uncle George's house, and suddenly McGuire would be standing there. One night McGuire woke up Uncle George and wanted to borrow his horse. Uncle George told him to take

it. Many times the horse would be found in the morning just standing across the road. No one ever knew how he got there.

Uncle George, Dad, and Albert Miller used to hunt for arrowheads. Albert and Uncle George checked out the mound at Meadowcroft and the one down Coal Hollow. I used to take Uncle George to Claysville and West Alexander, and leave him off in the morning and pick him up in late afternoon. He found many arrowheads. He said one day down Coal Hollow Road he heard something in the woods. It was a bear, so he came right back home. His son, Bill, has all his arrowheads which he had mounted on wood. I had him one time come to my Cub Scout meeting to show them and talk about them.

When Mom and Dad were going to have a baby, Uncle George was real happy about it. (The baby was Wayne.) Uncle George made him a baby bed. He may have gotten his talent from his great grandpap, Samuel Byers, who was a great cabinet maker. When Grandma and Grandpap lived in the brick house, they had tables, chests, and things that Samuel Byers had made.

Grandpap & Grandma Buxton

I used to sit at the kitchen table in the brick house. Grandma had a big dining room table there. Her Christmas presents were homemade candy for many people at the church. She would fill the table many times, having to have it cleaned off for supper. It took her many days – melting chocolate and dipping candies in it. She made many kinds.

On this same table I had watched her clean wild game and chickens. I was excited when I got to top the lids on some bottles of ketchup. I think I still have one of the tools they used earlier from Grandma's.

Grandma used to wash clothes for people and iron them. Mrs. Perrin and Painters were some. Mom used to help her. They spent many days in the kitchen and in the summer, on the back porch – the old boiler on the coal cook stove boiling the white clothes and the big long stick they took them out with. Our kitchen was across the porch from Grandma's. After a while, I remember Mom and Grandma cooking a lot of meals in Grandma's kitchen. The holiday meals had always been there.

Grandma always beat up Ivory Flakes and water to a stiff peak and put this on our Christmas tree for snow. Out tree sat in the corner of our living room by the window, but Grandma's sat right in the middle of their living room.

I used to sleep in Grandma's room in her bed and she heated a brick by the fireplace in winter, wrapped it, and put it by my feet. I was very fortunate to have the grand parents I did.

Grandpa Buxton used to fix shoes on our back porch just for the family. There was a big long bench there where I sat and watched him. When we were all little, he would scrape apples with a butter knife and feed us as we sat on his lap in the living room in his big chair. I somehow remember it and remember seeing Lois and Wayne, too. I remember helping him fill Christmas treat boxes for the church and working and playing in the garden with him. I remember watching him get so feeble and Dad having to go across the hall where he slept, awaking and calling for Dad – forgetting the present time and going back to when Dad was a boy and he was younger. Dad would pretend it was really back then. This would control him and he would go back to sleep. I was little and it was hard for me to understand. The good memories and the bad are there - being involved in their lives and in their deaths. Being the bearer of bad news even when I was very young.

Farm scene at Robison farm

On bridge by Grandma Robison's

Grandpap Robison

Grandma Robison

My Grandfather Robison died before I was born, as the result of a car accident. I didn't know him. Grandma Robison was also a loving grandma who lived very differently from Grandma Buxton, from what I can remember.

Both grandmas worked very hard. Grandma Robison had a phone because she was out in the country. Grandma Buxton lived in Independence Village and she had none. Grandma Robison had no electricity but Grandma Buxton did. Grandma Robison had a spring she had to carry water from and a springhouse she stored food in. Grandma Buxton had a well and an ice box- and later, a refrigerator. Grandma Robison had a cow, but Grandma Buxton had to buy milk and butter amd beef. Grandma Robison had a washboard and later a gas run washer. Grandma Buxton had an electric one. Grandma Buxton had a radio. Grandma Robison did too, but it was battery operated of some kind so we couldn't use it often. Grandma Buxton had neighbors close by, but Grandma Robison didn't.

The wonderful times I had with them are so numerous I couldn't possibly tell them all. There are many more things I know about them, and many more I wish I knew. I probably knew more of each of their lives than they knew of each other's.

PENOBSCOT, GONE FOREVER

by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

A tract of over four hundred acres was patented in 1794 under the name, "Penobscot," by Samuel Marshall. It included Kidd's Mill, Scott's Run, the old Magee place, the Winfield Cunningham farm and the William Pettybone homestead. It also bordered Jonas Amspoker and Massum Metcalf.

The word, Penobscot, is from the native American Algonkian Indian language. It means, "Rocky River". The Algonquins were natives of the present state of Maine- a county, a river and a bay in that state still carrying the Penobscot name. Of rivers, the Jefferson Township Penobscot has none. But with rocks, it is saturated, the very hillsides seeming to sprout them. And after a century, the name Penobscot remains.

Few people today recall having lived in the coal mining camp of Penobscot, its rows of wooden houses nestled on a sloping hillside in southern Jefferson Township overlooking the Cross Creek Valley.

The coal mining business at Penobscot came into existence around the year 1906. Thirty years later it was gone. The Wabash Railroad was built through the valley shortly after the turn of the Twentieth Century, contributing to the change of lifestyle.

Those who were a part of the influx of people in 1906 and shortly after are no longer living. Only a few are alive today who even saw the demise of Penobscot in 1936.

The camp's most plentiful resource was its children. Large families were typical, and people helped each other. Sometimes the older ones were required to assist in ushering the newest siblings into the world.

Water was carried in buckets from springs and rain barrels for washing clothes. The Saturday night bath was routine, each child taking a turn in the big tub in the middle of the kitchen floor, while others waited in an adjoining room.

Few of the children of Penobscot are still alive today. Mary Volpe Tulle and Margaret Burkhart are among them. Their memories of the area are precious.


Mary Volpe Tulle


Margaret Burkhart

Mary Volpe was born in Penobscot in 1913 and left at age 19 after she married Premo Tulle. They later had three daughters, Juanita, Rita and Marie. Mary yet today at age 88 has vivid memories of life in the camp. Among her recollections are the row and the house where her parents and their eight children lived.

She recalls one new family that arrived in their wagon with only a suitcase. They had no belongings. Mary and others went to their house to help get it ready for them. They had no stove, no washer, or cooking utensils. Neighbors helped them get started by making benches. And since all the women baked bread at least twice a week, household skills were shared – hanging clothes, canning food and patching trousers.

Another vivid memory of Mary's is of a Russian wedding. The bride, Katie, had come from Czechoslovakia. The music, dancing and feasting lasted three days.

A French family lived in one of the rows. The women and girls had long black hair which they cut and sold, money being very scarce.

The late David Underwood, who contributed to this story until his death at age 90 in August, 2001, began working in the Penobscot Mine at age 16 in 1927. He remembered that Penotscot had a five- foot vein of coal, with room to walk and stand, without crawling on their bellies, as was the case where only a three-foot vein existed.

"Penobscot was one of the best," he said. "It had a good roof."

Mr. Underwood said that some of the Penobscot houses were bolted together, with George Frye as head carpenter. He also recalled Dr. Stunkard, the faithful mine doctor who was always on call whether for a mine accident or a new baby in camp.

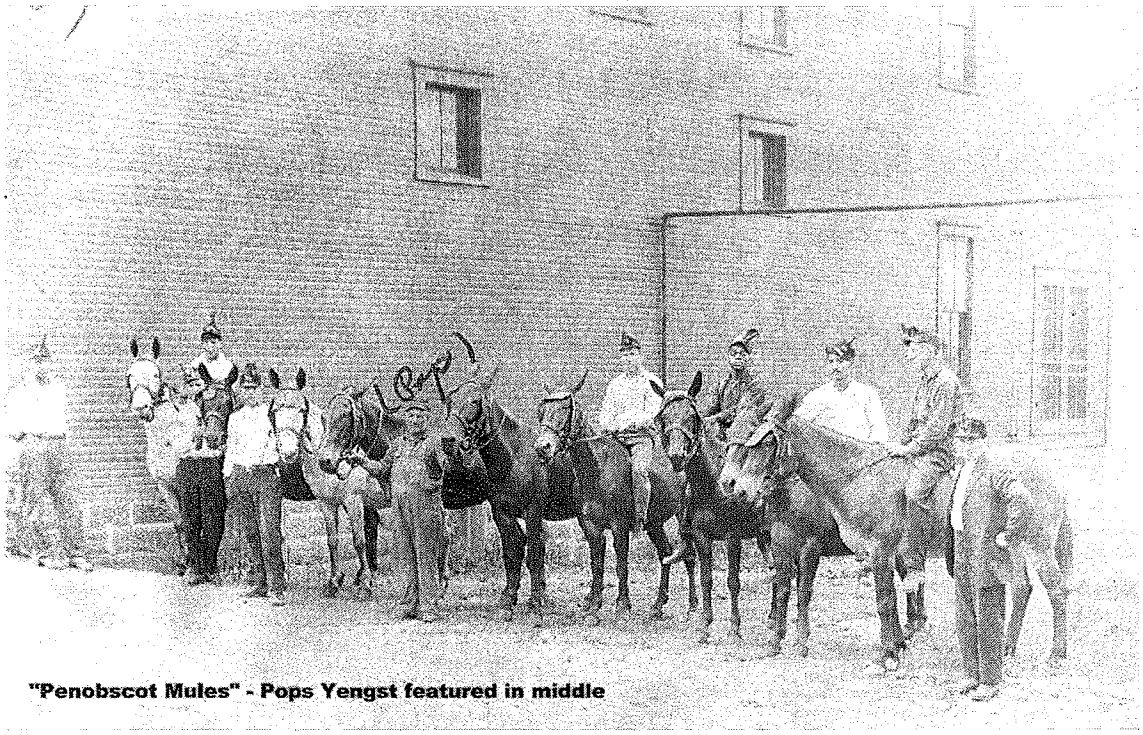
Another survivor of the coal mining days of Penobscot is Margaret Burkhart who has spent most of her 88 years in Jefferson Township. She was born in the neighboring mining camp of Louise, West Virginia, in 1914. Her mother, Stella Blanche Smith, died in 1917, at the age of 23. Stella Smith, daughter of a minister, had married William Burkhart a few years before, and had given him six children. One little boy, Kenneth, had died. The other three boys, Herbert, Charles and Willard, plus Margaret and her sister, Goldie, were yet very young children when their mother died.

"I never saw my mother," Margaret says. "My dad never told us anything about her. When any of us would ask, he would change the subject. The only thing he ever said was, 'You had a good mother.'"

Margaret related that her dad kept the three boys with him and let her mother's mother raise her and Goldie, until they were seven and eight years old..

At that time, he pulled his motherless family together in his Penobscot home where he was a strict disciplinarian. Attending church every Sunday was a must, even though he, himself, made no effort to go. They walked several miles-to Bethel or Scott's Run.

"But we enjoyed it," Margaret recalls today. "We walked with all the other young people of the neighborhood." He also sent them walking out over the hills to Turney School to finish their formal education, high school being out of the question. "You don't need high school to cook and wash dishes," he had declared to his daughters.



"Penobscot Mules" - Pops Yengst featured in middle

"My dad was stable boss, taking care of the mine mules that the miners used in the coal mine," wrote Margaret. "My three uncles, Joe, Frank and Andy Burkhart also

worked at the mine and walked a long distance every day to get to work. Times were hard and they didn't make much money."

"In the year 1934, my father, Goldie, and I came to the farm near Bethel Church. The coal mine went under at Penobscot, so my father cleaned up rubbish and cut timber and trees, since the land to which we moved was all woods. He had to use horses for all of his work."

"My father worked very hard for a living. He raised beef cattle and chickens and peddled eggs, made garden and canned vegetables to keep us going."

"After his many years at Penobscot Mine, and more than thirty years of hard work on the farm, my father took sick. He became bedfast, and I took care of him until he died in 1967."

At this writing, 2002, Margaret alone remains. Her entire family is gone.

A true story of Penobscot written by Andrew Bailey, now deceased, reveals another aspect of this little mining camp.

" When Mama and five of us children arrived at Penowa, Papa was waiting for us at the station. He had another man with him, Mr. Yengst.

"Mama wanted to know where the town was, and Mr. Yenks said it was about a mile up the hill. I later visited the mule barn with Mr. Yengst. He had a daughter named Edith. As the days passed, we spent a lot of time together.

"I went to the mule barn regularly. I loved that place. Mr. Yengst was in charge of the barn and the mule-drawn equipment. His daughter, Edith, was my age.


Edith Pearl Flohr

We had the most modern array of playground equipment imaginable - wagons to sit on, pretending you were driving a mule team, brakes that worked, and the tongue like a teeter-totter. Edith and I enjoyed our elaborate toys. We stayed away from the unpredictable mules."

Andrew told later about the War days, when the Kaiser was in command. "Kaiser Bill went up the hill to take a peek at France - Kaiser Bill came down the hill with bullets in his pants", was only one of the refrains they sang.

"In school" he wrote, "we knitted six-inch squares for the soldiers. These pieces were then sewn together to make sweaters. There must have been some lumpy looking Yankees if they used the squares some of us kids made."

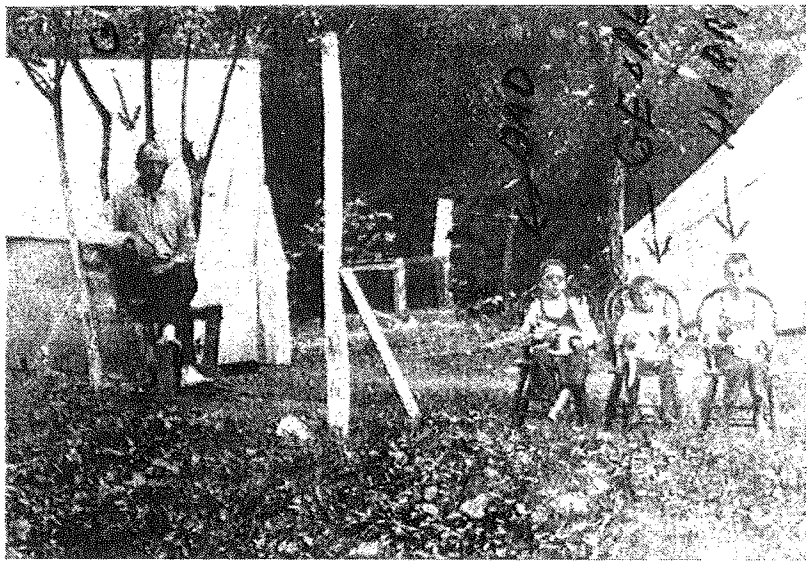
Andrew also remembered the flu epidemic during World War I. "Some families got it worse than others. A kid I played with told me one day that his mother was dead. He wanted to come to live with me. I asked my mother and she said he could. He stayed a couple of days until I caught the flu. Then his sister took him home. Some kids lost their fathers and some lost both parents. The doctor came from Avella by horse and buggy. He carried all his medicines with him. A lot of the town died."

Andrew closed this chapter of his life by saying, "Very reluctantly and sadly we moved from this coal mine camp. Leaving Penobscot also meant leaving my playmate, Edith. Never again would we romp in the mule barn and use the wagon tongue as a teeter totter. Those days, like Penobscot, were gone forever."

What became of Edith? Where did her life lead? From her son, Charles Paul Cunningham, we found the answers.

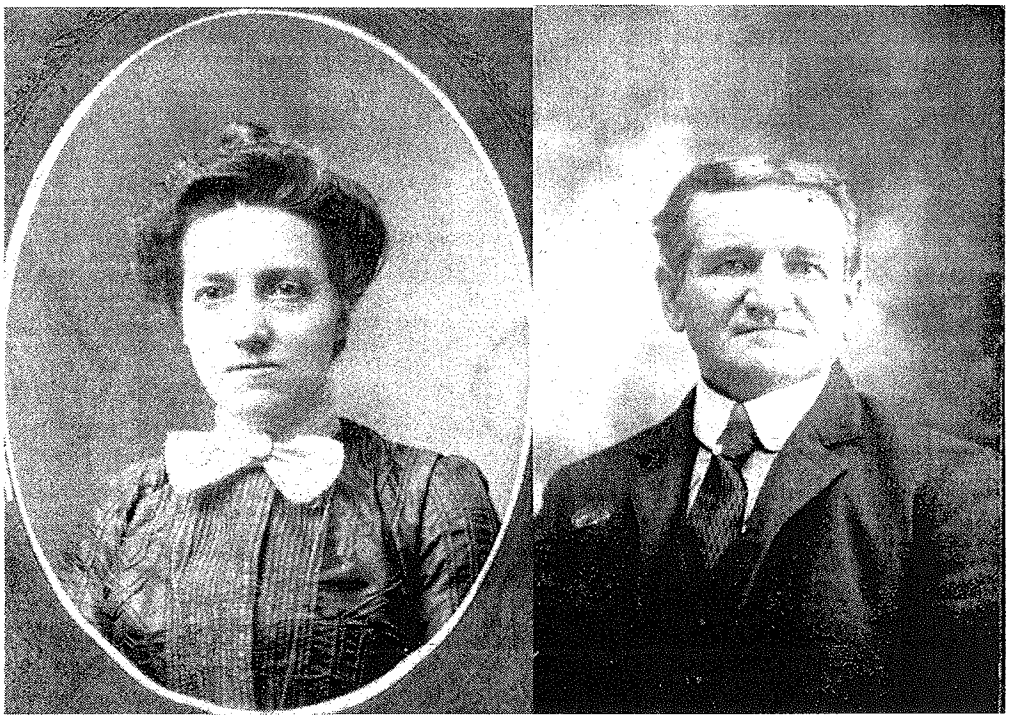
Today, "Charlie" is 73 years old, retired from the furniture business and operates a thrift store for the Christian Layman Corps, in Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

His mother was Edith Pearl Flohr, who grew up around the mule barn in old Penobscot so many years ago. She was born April 17, 1906, in Wellsburg, West Virginia, a daughter of Samuel and Carrie Shearer Flohr.



Pictured above on the left is Edith's mother, Carrie Shearer Flohr. On the right is Edith's father, Samuel Flohr and her three brothers- Charles, George, and Harry.

Carrie had died at Edith's birth. Samuel worked at Wellsburg Glass and Mfg. until it burned in 1907. The infant, Edith, was then "given away" by her father, to the Yengsts of Penobscot.



Mom and Pop Yengst of Penobscot

Her older sister, Margaret, was placed in a convent orphanage. Although Sam Flohr was forced to give up his two little girls, he kept his three boys with him, living months at a time in nothing but a tent for shelter. He finally found work again in a glass factory in Grafton. He died in 1914 at the age of 47.

The connection between Edith's birth parents, Samuel and Carrie Flohr, and "Mom and Pop" Yengst, who raised her, is not known. Edith knew nothing of her background until one day after their father's funeral, three young men arrived in Penobscot and said, "We are your brothers." Edith, however, remained with Mom and Pop Yengst until they died. Mom Yengst died when Edith was 13 and Pops two years later. Again she was orphaned, and was taken to Bridgeville to live with another foster family.

Edith later married Charles Cunningham, who had previously been married to Nellie Wilhelm. To him she had a child who died as an infant and a second child, Charles Cunningham, Jr. In 1933 she and her husband divorced.

(It is interesting to note that Charles' first wife, Nellie, had a daughter, Joyce, making Charlie and Joyce half-brother and sister. This Joyce is currently the wife of KTH McFarland of Avella. She and her half-brother, Charlie, have remained close throughout their lives.)

Nellie and Edith spent most of their lives raising and caring for foster children. Each knew the heartaches that many children must endure due to death and broken families. Nellie, at some time, had a hand in raising thirty-five little ones who needed someone. Edith, who never knew her own mother, became Mom to forty-six foster children throughout the years.

Edith's son, Charlie, is extremely proud of the Heart of Gold award that was presented to his mother by the Governor of Michigan. He keeps it among his "most treasured things."

Edith died on Labor Day in 1976 at the age of seventy, closing a dramatic chapter in the life of the little mining camp of Penobscot.

Mr. Yengst and helpers
Pops Blacksmith Shop - Penobscot

Old Homesteads and Pioneers

THE JOHN CASSIDY HOMESTEAD

by

June Campbell Grossman - Welch

In Jefferson Township on State Line Road, about two and a half miles southeast of its intersection with Eldersville Road, is the old John Cassidy homestead. Patented 9 January 1788 under the name "Levels" by Archibald Elson, it contained at that time 394 acres.

John Cassidy was born in County Donegal, Ireland, in 1783. After coming to America, he landed at Philadelphia where he worked in a powder mill a few years. He then walked to Westmoreland County, eventually marrying Jane Osburn. Together, they came to what is known today as Jefferson Township, Washington Co.

John and Jane were the parents of four sons and five daughters. One son died in infancy and their little Robert Cassidy at the age of eleven. James married Maria Cosgrove and moved to Ohio for a time, returning later to Jefferson Township. The eldest son, William, remained on the home place until his death in 1887 at which time the property became that of his only living son, Robert McCready Cassidy. The property remained in the Cassidy name from the advent of the pioneer, John Cassidy, until this grandson, Robert, sold the 105 remaining acres on 28 March 1928.

John Cassidy lived to the age of 85, dying in 1868. He is well documented in history as a founder and staunch supporter of the Bethel Methodist Church. His remains lie buried in the graveyard there, along with eight generations of the Cassidy line. A Catherine Cassidy, among those buried there, is believed to be the mother of John. She died in 1825 at the age of 81. Her tombstone today is still very well preserved.

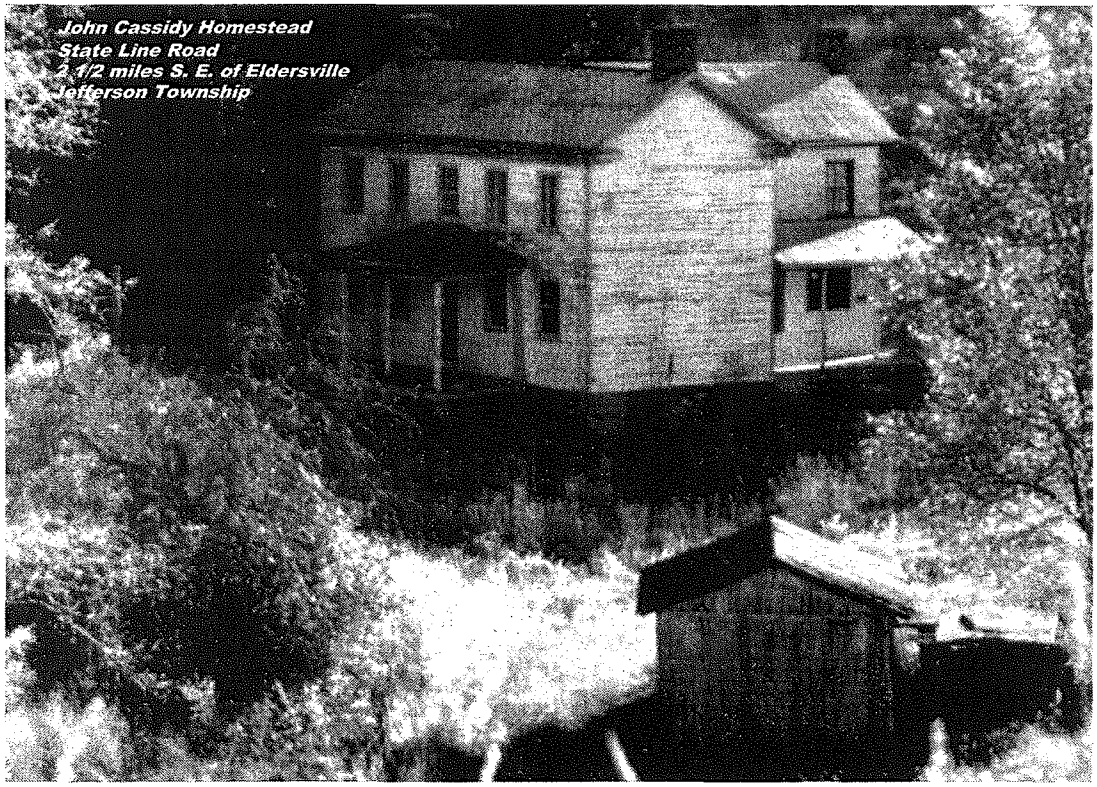
In 1928, the new owners of this Irish Ridge homestead were Joseph and Antonio Mysior Macugoski. Joseph was a coal miner in the Cherry Valley, Shintown, and Jefferson mines for thirty years. The last four of his seven children were born on the Cassidy homestead.

The two story frame house still known today as the Cassidy homestead, may have been built by its pioneer owner, John Cassidy. It is, however, more likely that it was built by his eldest son, William. It was preceded by a log home which stood in the garden nearby. When the Macugoski family moved there in 1928, remains of that log structure could still be seen.

In the 1840 census of the area, the entire Cassidy family was still living in one dwelling – no doubt, the original log cabin. By that time, the eldest daughter was married and gone and the infant son born in 1837 was dead. But the four remaining daughters and three sons were still under one roof with the parents.

By 1850, a decided change in the family is evident. The eldest daughter, Margaret, had married Charles Scott and moved with him to the south side of Bethel Ridge. They became the parents of ten sons and two daughters. Ann had married Robert M. Smith about 1844. Shortly after 1850 they moved with their two sons to Drakesville, Iowa, where Ann died in 1914 at the age of 91. Mary was apparently married and gone before 1850 as she is not at home at census time. She is reputed to have married a Charles Scott, but does not again appear in any of the local census records. William, the eldest son, married a neighbor girl, Mary Smith, in 1848, and remained at home. The following

year, a baby girl was born and died. Early in 1850, another daughter, Mary Jane, was born. In the census of that year, William, his wife and baby daughter were living next to his mother and father (the pioneers.) His brother James, and two unmarried younger sisters were still part of his parents' household. This may well indicate that William was building the new frame house either before or immediately after his marriage in 1848 and its construction was far enough along for him to occupy at least a part of it by 1850. If this supposition is correct, in this year of 2002, the house is at least a century and a half old.



The first floor consisted of a kitchen, living room, dining room, and large pantry off the kitchen with a smaller room behind the pantry. There were three large upstairs bedrooms, a front porch, and a back porch. The basement was constructed of hand cut stone. Two fireplaces upstairs and two downstairs completed the layout of the frame house. When the Macugoskis bought the house, they said it was in excellent condition and had been well maintained. Today's owners include Charlene Ivanac Ford, a grand-daughter of the first Macugoski owners.

The 1860s produced a number of changes for the John Cassidy family. In 1856, the second son, James, had married Maria Cosgrove. In 1863, he moved to Carroll County, Ohio, where he remained for five years. This writer has been unable to determine what prompted this move. In 1868, he returned to the area and lived in Independence Township for the next four years, then returned to Jefferson Township and lived until 1891 on what is known today as the Starinsky farm.

In this decade of the 60s, the two youngest daughters of John and Jane married and left the nest. Catherine married Francis Magee and became the mother of at least four

children. Her younger sister, Martha, married John D. Gillespie about 1865. They had at least two children, but disappear from local census records by 1870. In 1867, Jane Osburn Cassidy died at the age of 70. The following year, John, the old pioneer, followed her to the grave. In all probability, the use of the old log cabin as a place of abode ended with John's death. The "new" house continued to be occupied by the eldest son, William, and, as has been stated, by William's son, Robert McCready Cassidy, until 1928, when it became the home of Joseph and Antonio Macugoski.

A very little research will lead one to the obvious conclusion that John and Jane Cassidy had their share of problems in this life on the early frontier. As has been noted, one son died as an infant and one at the age of eleven, and the two remaining sons, William and James, were not exempt from their share of sorrows also.

James, the second son, and his wife, Maria, had one daughter and three sons. The daughter, Vista, died unmarried at age 28. The youngest child, Oliver James Cassidy, died at age 25 of typhoid fever. He and his brother, William James Cassidy, were born during the years their parents lived in Carroll County, Ohio. The remaining son, Robert Curtin Cassidy, produced children to carry on the Cassidy name. Robert had one child to his first wife and five to his second. He was well known in the Burgettstown area as a prominent insurance businessman and lived into his 94th year.

Robert Curtin Cassidy

William, the eldest son of the pioneers, spent his entire life on the John Cassidy homestead of his parents. He is believed to have been born in the log cabin there circa 1819, and died in the "new house" he probably built, on the 9th of January in 1902. As

has been stated, William's first child died at birth. The second, Mary Jane, died at age 18. The third, Margaret, married James Wright and had three children. (Her third child, Nancy Wright Robeson, was tragically killed with her husband in an accident, leaving their five children as orphans.) His fourth and fifth children were twins, but the son did not survive. The daughter, Nancy, married Robert Boyd McCready but was childless. William's youngest child, Robert M., was the only son to reach manhood. (It was to this son, Robert M., that the old homestead descended.)

Robert McCready Cassidy

Robert M. married Effie Sutherland from a prominent Jefferson Township family and had four children. One daughter died at age 16. The other, Pearl, married, but had no children. His two sons, however, Fred and Harlan Cassidy, produced children to carry the Cassidy name. If one were to examine the latest genealogy of the children of Fred and Harlan, it would become quite apparent that the Cassidy name is safe and sound after at least four or more generations beyond the last Cassidy to occupy the homestead. Yet one cannot help but be a little sad to think that at least one of John Cassidy's great-grandsons did not see fit to keep the old home place in the Cassidy name. It is a beautiful, well kept farm, there on Irish Ridge, and speaks of a quiet peace and serenity. But a closer look at the changes made in the past few years by the descendants of Joseph Macugoski soon erase any sadness. It is obvious that they feel its beauty and have a deep, deep appreciation of the heritage that is now theirs. May they keep it in their bloodline forever!

THE MARQUIS HOMESTEAD

by

June Grossman Welch

Located on the east side of the Eldersville-Langloth Road just north of the site of the old one room Lee Schoolhouse stands a large brick house known for the past eighty years as the Maggs home. Formerly this was the John Marquis homestead. Patented originally on 12 March 1788 to Hugh Newell under the title of "Mutilation", the property was willed by Hugh to his son George on 25 March 1796. On 26 June 1832, George Newell sold part of the original tract, including the brick house, to John Marquis, Jr. It passed from generation to generation in the Marquis name until 7 February 1918 when L.V.Marquis sold it to William Maggs. It has remained in the Maggs family until 2002.

The large brick house, at this writing in 2002, contains ten rooms. The original house comprised only the rectangular front section and is believed to have had only two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. The partition between the two downstairs rooms was removed many years ago, revealing the present enormous living room with its two fireplaces, one on each end. Near the newer L-shaped section of the house are the remains of a stone walk which, according to one of the Maggs heirs, was reputed to have once led to an outside summer kitchen. The bricks in 2002 are in need of

repointing, but the structure appears sound and firm, displaying a lovely ancient beauty.

The first immigrants of this Marquis family were William and Margaret Marquis, French Hugenots who emigrated to Ireland and later, to America in 1720, settling near Winchester, Virginia. According to family legend, they left several children in Ireland, some of whom later followed them to the New World. After their arrival in Virginia, two more children were born to them, namely, Thomas and Mary. Thomas married Mary Colville and by her he had seven children.

When these children were very young, Thomas was killed by a falling tree. Shortly thereafter, his wife also died, leaving the seven children as orphans.

In the meantime, Thomas's sister, Mary, had married a man named John Wilson, who was a pious schoolteacher. Mary died at the birth of their first child and her husband mourned her death bitterly. However, when her brother and his wife both died, leaving seven orphans, Mr. Wilson put aside his personal grief and took these children of his brother-in-law and raised them as his own, educating them well and loving them dearly. (At the death of his wife, Mary Marquis Wilson, over her grave he erected the first stone marker for an immigrant in the Shenandoah Valley.) When these children whom he raised reached adulthood, some of them migrated to various parts of the new frontier, three of them coming to the Cross Creek area of Washington County, Pennsylvania.

One of these three who came to the Cross Creek region was Thomas Marquis. While still in Virginia, he had married Jane Park. He and his wife were converted at the famous gathering held at Vance's Fort in September of 1778 where Rev. James Power preached the first sermon ever heard in the Cross Creek Country. As a result of this conversion, he became a Presbyterian minister and served many years at the Cross Creek Church. He was a brilliant preacher and was blessed with a magnificent speaking and singing voice which earned for him the nickname, "Silver-Tongued Marquis", a handle which stayed with him until his death.

A second child of the Marquis family who came to the area was a daughter. She married William Park who was killed by the Indians in 1782. He is believed to have been a brother of Jane Park who had married Thomas Marquis. William was buried by his neighbors on the old Samuel Leeper farm in Jefferson Township where several others who had been murdered by the Indians were also buried. No trace of this graveyard has been found.

The third child to settle in this region was John Marquis. Here he met and married Sarah Griffith. In 1786, he patented a tract of 421 acres on the north fork of Cross Creek, a mile from the present village of Cedar Grove. This later was later subdivided, part becoming the Harry McCreary farm, part being known later as the Francis Stewart farm and the reminder that of the late Mae Lawton. When John Marquis settled this land in 1774, he named it "Marqueseta". It was here that their nine children were raised.

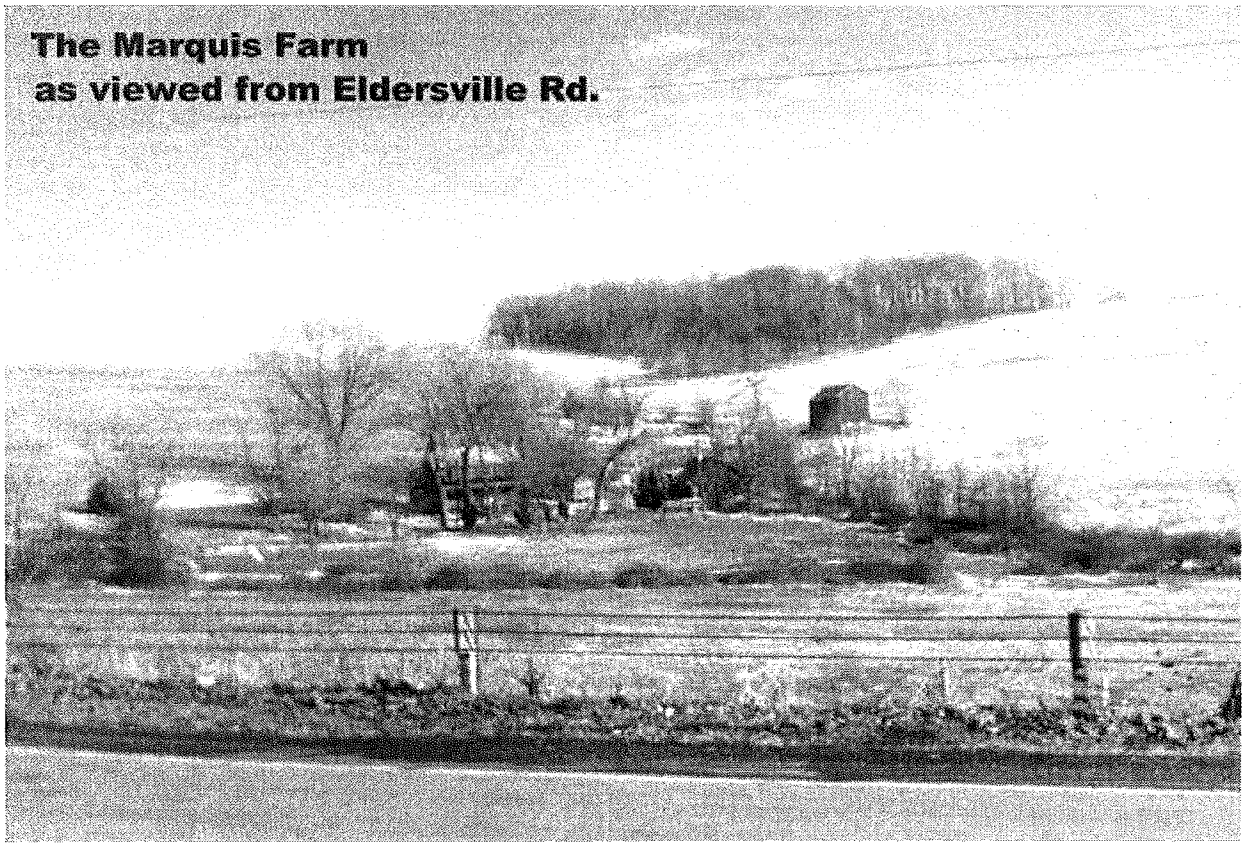
John Marquis was known during his lifetime as being extremely fleet of foot. At one time he outran a band of invading Indians, having run all of the way from Cedar Grove to Vance's Fort near Langeloth. He participated in many military campaigns and expeditions between 1776 and 1783 during the Indian Wars. He took part in the well-known Indian pursuit when the wife and child of William Reynolds were murdered in the

Cross Creek area. Because of his swifness, it is said that he overtook the marauding band across the river from Mingo Junction, Ohio, but they escaped in a waiting canoe. He was a ruling elder in the Cross Creek Presbyterian Church and is buried in the graveyard there, having died in 1822 in his 72nd year. His life consisted of many adventures and dangers, complicated by the distressing fact that he was unable to see, having gone blind many years before his death.

One of John Marquis's children was John, Jr. who grew to young manhood under the direction of this loving, caring man. His death was a great blow to this son who was his namesake. This lad must have inherited some of the Marquis love of freedom for he enlisted at the beginning of the War of 1812 and served until its close.

On November 16, 1816, he married Elizabeth Taggart of another pioneer family. She was his lifelong sweetheart and the mother of their seven children. On June 26, 1832, John Marquis, Jr. bought from George Newell part of his father's original patent on the Eldersville-Langeloth Road. It stood just north of the one room Lee Schoolhouse and contained the beautiful brick house which had been built by George Newell. Here he and Elizabeth raised their family, passing the property down in the Marquis name for several generations. In 1918, it was sold to William Maggs and at the present time, is still known as the Maggs property.

On January 16, 1844, John, Jr. died at the age of 60, and was buried beside his parents in the old Cross Creek Graveyard. His beloved wife, Elizabeth, remained his widow for 37 years. Their children were happy, prosperous citizens – a credit to the Marquis name.



THE BROWN FAMILY OF BROWNTOWN

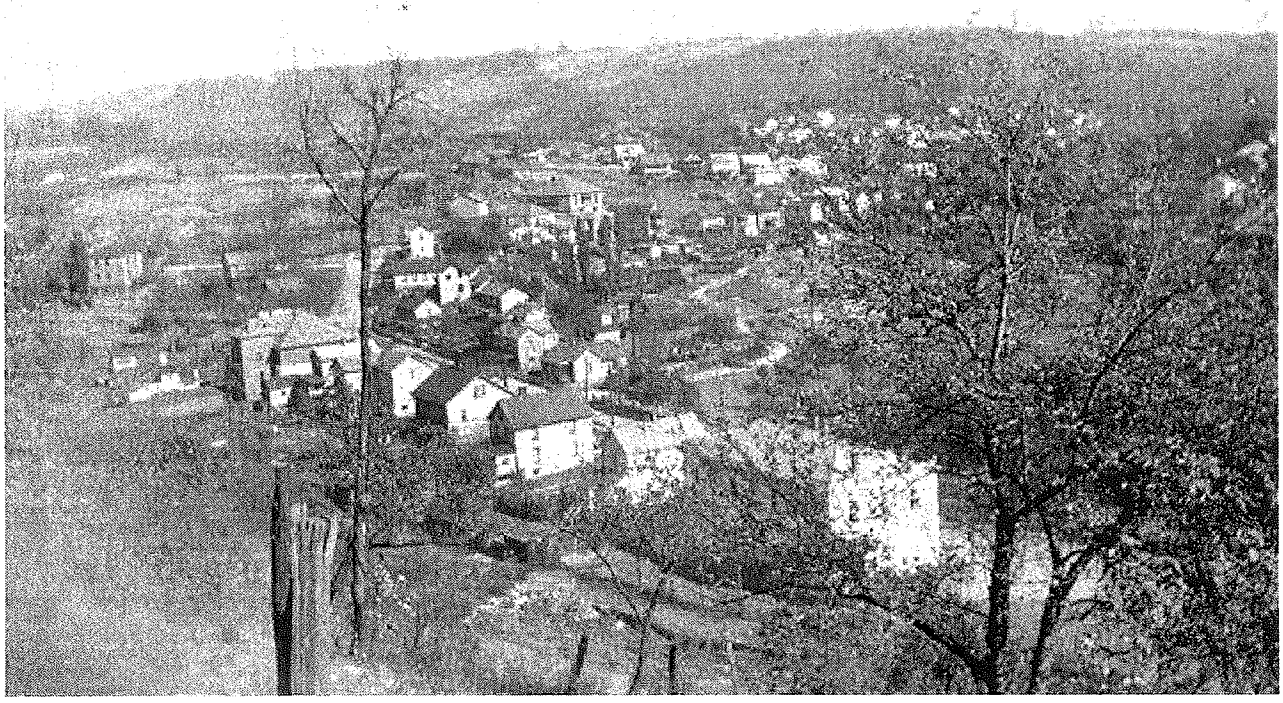
by

June Campbell Grossman-Welch

In Washington County, Pennsylvania, circa 1900, when plans were laid for building the Wabash Railroad through the area now known as Avella, the land was entirely agricultural. Two farms comprised the territory where the village now stands. The farmer-owners of these farms capitalized on the happenings of the day and laid out their bottom land along Cross Creek into building lots. One of these enterprising men was Samuel Stewart Campbell and the other was William James Brown.

Campbell's lots, in the east, eventually became downtown Avella. In the west, the land of W.J.Brown, where Alexander Well's old mill once stood, was labeled Browntown. Here it was that from about 1810 until its demolition in the 1940s, the big stone house built by Alexander's son-in-law, Richard Wells, dominated the scene. It is with this Browntown area and the family of W.J. Brown that this writing is basically concerned.

Browntown - 1941



William Brown, (W.J.), had been born in Cross Creek Township 23 March 1840, on the John Rea Farm near what was known as Walker's Rocks. (This unusual phenomenon of rock structure was named for John N. Walker on whose land it sits.) He attended the old one-room school house at Bushy Run which was a short distance from his home. William was the second child of James and Jane Shoals Brown, Irish immigrants who had been married in Philadelphia circa 1835 and had migrated to Cross Creek

Township, Washington County in 1837. In addition to his elder brother, John, he was succeeded by four other siblings.

Sometime prior to 1850, the family moved across the creek from Cross Creek Township to Independence Township. On the "old" road, no longer open, between today's Browntown area and Avella Heights, they bought 126 acres which became the Brown Homestead and remained in the family through three and perhaps four generations of Brown descendants. It was in the old log house on this farm that the last of the children of James and Jane Brown was born. Long after James's death at the age of 64 on the third of January in 1872, Jane continued to occupy the old homestead, sharing it at times with the family of her youngest son. She survived her husband by twenty-five years, dying 29 May 1897, at the age of 88. They are buried at West Middletown Graveyard with four of their sons and several grandchildren.

Although this writing is chiefly concerned with William James Brown, the second child in the family, the scanty information available to the writer on his siblings follows.

William's brother, John, the eldest child, had been born 9 April 1838, in Cross Creek Township before the family purchased the Brown Homestead in Independence Township. He grew to manhood and married a woman known only to this writer as Mary H. From census and other records consulted, the couple were apparently childless. The census of 1870 shows them living beside his parents and also beside his brother, William. He died at age 45 on 19 January 1884, and was buried beside his father. His widow lived until 1905, spending at least part of her remaining life with a brother of her husband.

The third child in the Brown family was the only daughter, Sarah Jane, born in 1842. She married a neighbor boy, Lewis Irwin, and moved just across the line into Jefferson Township where they spent their lives.

The Lewis Irwin Family:
Seated: Lewis & Sarah Brown Irwin
Center Front: Bert Irwin
Standing left to right:
Jessie Irwin
Robert Irwin
Anna Irwin
Ida Irwin
John Irwin

Sarah was the mother of six children: James, born in 1865 and died at the age of 34; Ida, born circa 1868; Annie, born in 1870, unmarried and lived into her 95th year; Robert, born in 1872 who married Anna Sutherland, and had two children – Jean and Merle Irwin; Jessie, born in 1879, unmarried, and lived past the age of 90; and Bert, born in 1882, who married Anna Dimit and had a son, Kenneth, and a daughter, Alta, who married a man named France.

The fourth child, David, was born 10 March 1844, and died 4 December 1889, at the age of 45. He is buried at West Middletown with his parents and other siblings. He lived for a time in Brooke County where he served as sheriff. He was single in 1880 according to Brooke County census records. In all probability he never married as no wife or children are buried beside him.

The fifth child, Thomas, was born circa 1847. Little is known of him. A Washington County historical article written some time after 1889, states that Thomas at that time was living in Colorado Springs. He was not living by 1933 when his youngest brother died. No further information has surfaced about Thomas.

The youngest child, Joseph Ray, was born on the old homestead 4 January 1851. He married Francelia Marquis on 16 May 1878, and lived in the Avella area his entire life. He helped establish the Avella Lumber and Supply Company and conducted a hardware store in Avella for a long period of time. He served as postmaster for a decade and conducted a country coal mine from which he mined coal for many years. He was one of the most prominent citizens of the area and highly respected. He was also an excellent musician. He and his wife were the parents of five children: Jessie, born in October of 1879, married Doc Vance and lived in the Avella area all of her life until her death at age 88; David Clyde, born September of 1881, married Nettie Cooper and had one son, Lorin, who died without issue; Blanche, born October of 1883, married Doc Vance and had two children – Robert and Kathleen; Joseph Ray, Jr., born April of 1891, married Emma Miller, and had a daughter, Dorothy; Sarah Mae, born May, 1893, married H.H.McGinnis and had a child.

The children of Joseph Brown were highly respected persons and a credit to the Brown name. But Joseph and Francelia had many heartaches in the course of their lives together. In 1915, their daughter, Blanche Brown Vance, died from a severe stomach condition at the age of 32, leaving her husband and two children to carry on without her. One month later, the Brown's youngest son, Joseph Ray, Jr., died at the age of 25 from pneumonia following surgery. He had been married but five months. This double tragedy in the space of 30 days was nearly their total undoing and was a sorrow from which they never really recovered. The eldest son, David Clyde, was a successful bank president in McDonald most of his life, but he, also, had his share of troubles. On a youthful impulse at the age of 16, he had married a woman 8 years his senior. His life of 65 years in this marital state was one of turmoil and incompatibility. To compound their problems, their only son, Lorin, died of cancer in 1949.

Of the five children of Joseph Brown, one was childless, namely, Jessie. However, after the death of her sister, Blanche, Jessie married her sister's widower and reared his children. The other four children produced five grandchildren for Joseph. But neither of his grandsons, Robert Vance nor Lorin Brown, had issue. The granddaughter, Kathleen Vance, had a son who later produced heirs, and the daughter, Sarah, had a

child whose whereabouts are unknown to this writer. As has been stated, Joseph's son, Joseph Ray, Jr., had a daughter, Dorothy, born after his untimely death at the age of 25, he and his wife, Emma Miller Brown, having been married but five months when he died. (Emma reared her daughter alone, but always remained very close to the Brown family. She and her parents, David and Clara Miller, are buried in West Middletown Cemetery very near to the graves of the Brown family. Dorothy was considered to be a beauty in her youth and is remembered as May Queen at Avella High School during her senior year.) Although these granddaughters of Joseph and their offspring are of the Brown bloodline, the surname of Brown from Joseph's descent is gone.

The theme of this writing will now focus on the second child of James and Jane Brown, namely, William James (W.J.), for whom Browntown was named.

As a lad of sixteen, William learned the carpenter trade at which he worked for thirty years. It is written of him that he was an expert workman. As he approached fifty, however, he became afflicted with rheumatism. He was, no doubt, unaware that this rheumatic onset was a blessing in disguise. To cope with his problem, he decided to change his occupation for something requiring more outdoor work. Since he had been thrifty during his carpentry years, he had accumulated enough money to purchase a farm of forty acres, located not far from the old homestead of his parents. This property at that time included the old Wells flour mill, a landmark of incomparable historical value. Its builder, Alexander Wells, was the first white man ever to settle in what became Cross Creek Township. Unfortunately for posterity, the mill was razed in 1898.

When coal was discovered underlying the purchase of William Brown, the Wabash Railroad extended its line to tap the region. It was then that W, J., along with his nearest neighbor, Samuel Campbell, laid off his farm in lots which sold for excellent prices. Practically overnight, W.J. Brown became, financially, what was termed in those days – a wealthy man. It was thus, in his honor, the area was given the name of Browntown, a title still in use nearly a century later.

As time went by, William became a leader in public affairs, a school director, a road supervisor, and a highly respected member of the Avella community. It had been his streak of bad luck which came in the form his rheumatic affliction that was eventually the making of him, for through that event, he made the choice to buy the property on which Browntown stands today. William lived into his 92nd year and is buried at West Middletown.

On the 31st of January in 1867, William had married Margaretta Phillips. To them were born eight children, three sons and five daughters.

The eldest child was Etta Jane Brown, born 5 December 1867. She married James Walker by whom she had at least one son. Later in life she married a man with surname Methias. In 1931 at the time of her father's death, she was living in New Castle.

On 24 July 1870, William's wife gave birth to twin daughters whom they named Margaret and Margaretta. Margaret died that same year and was buried in the West Middletown burial grounds. It is believed that her burial was the first of the fifteen graves which today comprise the Brown plot in that cemetery.

The other twin, Margaretta, grew to womanhood and married J.R.Crawford. In 1931 she was living in Crafton with a surname of Wood. It is not known what offspring, if any, Margaretta had. But her father's obituary credits him with seven grandchildren, four of which can be credited to the last five of Margaretta's siblings. Therefore, she and her elder sister, Jane Etta, apparently had three children between them.

The fourth child of William and Margaretta Brown was their first son, David Charles, born 14 August 1873. He married Mollie Roney and spent most of his life in Hubbard, Ohio. He was the father of three daughters. David died of heart problems in the prime of life.

The fifth child and second son was John C. Brown, born 27 October 1876. He married Mary Latimer of Brooke County. They had one daughter whom they named Margaretta. She married a Marsh from the Morton Hill area and had a son, Jack Marsh, who died unmarried. John Brown, like his older brother, David, left no sons to perpetuate the Brown name. As years went by, John became the last surviving member of the entire family, dying in 1973 in his 97th year. He is buried at St. John's Episcopal Cemetery on Eldersville Road.

The last three children of William Brown grew to adulthood and married, but remained childless all of their lives.

On 11 October 1879, Anna Mary was born. She was a pretty girl, with a quiet, reserved temperament. She married a young man who was considered one of the most promising business men in the area. The son of a prominent doctor, he worked his was up in the business world and at an early age achieved a coveted position with the Lincoln National Bank at Avella. Life looked rosy for the young couple. But fate had other plans. In 1929, the unforgettable "Crash" of the stock market sent out shocks which reverberated across the nation, sending even the little isolated village of Avella into total turmoil. From the perspective of the passing of much time since then, most persons passing opinions about the tragedy exonerated the chief executive, L.M. Irwin, of any real misdoing in the affair. But the bank never reopened and the citizens of the area lost their entire life savings in one moment of time. For many, it was the end of their world. For some, it was too late to start over. Others struggled to stay alive but never really recovered financially. Some who could not face the reality of their loss simply took their own lives and ended it all. The bank was not solvent and could not withstand the effects of the speculation engaged in by those in charge. Mr. Irwin was disgraced for life and served time in prison for his part in "misdirecting" funds. For Anna and her beloved husband, it was the end of the rose covered pathway they thought they had foreseen for themselves. But those who knew Annie long after her husband's death, tell the consistent story that she always maintained that it was not his fault. She returned to the old home of her parents in Browntown to live out her life, always stopping anyone who would listen to her tell "the other side of the story". Annie died a heartbroken woman in her 93rd year.

On 18 January 1882, William's last son, George Leonard Brown, was born in the William Brown home in Browntown. He married Jane Pence, a highly respected teacher in the Avella School District and an active participant in the work of the church and missionary society. But in her fifties, Jane became very ill and died while still in middle life. They had lived in the homestead where George had been born and it was there

that he continued to live after the death of his wife. Those who remember him today report that he was a quiet man who minded his own business, but seemed friendly enough when you met him on the street. He was the first person in town to have a radio when radios were the newest thing out, and he would bring it out on the front porch and turn it up loud enough for the curious neighbors to share the enjoyment of his latest treasure. But George Brown had no children and was a loner sort of person most of his life. The long years after Jane's death must have been lonely ones for him, and at the age of 75, he tragically took his own life in a moment of great despondency. He was buried beside his wife in the family plot at West Middletown. George was the youngest son of William Brown and the last chance for a male heir to carry the Brown name into the future. But such was not to be.

According to senior residents of Avella today, the Brown children whom they remember were always very "proper", fulfilling the expectations of their parents and doing exactly what the children of W. J. Brown would be expected to do. But after the 24th of July in 1884, when the Brown's youngest child, Mary Alice, was born, it became evident that she was definitely not cut from the same mold as her seven older siblings.

Alice grew to young womanhood and dated the young men of the area and continued to remain single- waiting perhaps for the "right" man to come along. This pattern continued until she was around the 40-year mark when an interesting event took place.

The town physician at the time was Dr. Harry Stunkard who not only served the town, but the mines as well. His obituary at his death had this to say of him:

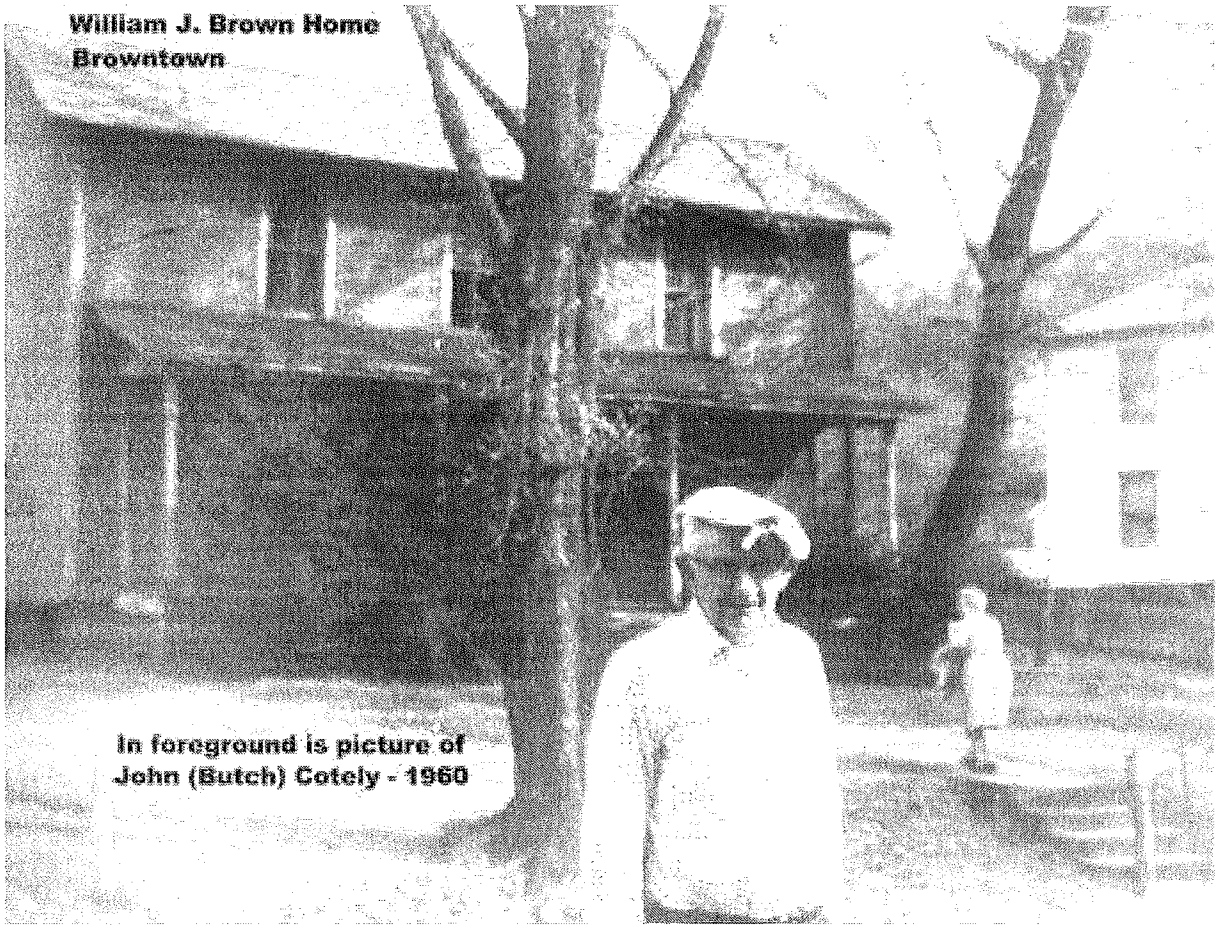
" Dr. Stunkard was one of the old type country physicians, as no night was too stormy, no mud too deep, or no distance too far for him to answer a call whether the patient was rich or poor. He was considered the friend of the poor man and his books will show thousands of uncollected bills."

He had come to Avella in 1905 when mining and the railroad began to boom. In 1918 or 1919, his wife died of the infamous "1918 Flu", leaving him with a young son. He had been married at least once prior to this marriage and was the father of three older children. Some time after the death of this last wife, he married Alice Brown. He was about sixteen years her senior, but nevertheless, considered to be a good catch. But in December of 1931, he died unexpectedly of peritonitis following an appendectomy. This must have been a great shock to Alice, having buried her father that same year in September. She did not marry again.

Alice's life style was not the "Sunday-go-to-meetin' " routine of her older sisters. Quite to the contrary, Alice was what one might label a "party girl". Her favorite "hang-out" was the German Beer Garden down on Buffalo Creek where it was reputed that she maintained a cabin for entertaining guests. There were those who believed that these shenanigans took place even when Doc Stunkard was alive – a fact which appeared not to disturb him in the least, Doc being inclined to be a little "partyish" himself. Alice died in 1969 at the age of 85. She is buried with the other Browns at West Middletown.

For a number of years, the three youngest Brown children: Anna Brown Irwin, George Leonard Brown, and Alice Brown Stunkard had lived at various times in the old William Brown homestead where they had spent most of their early lives. George, of course, had never left home, but upon his marriage had moved his wife into the family home. With the deaths of these three, all of them being childless, there was no one left to

keep the old home going. Their brother, John, was still alive in Brooke County, but was 96 years of age at the death of the last of these three youngest siblings. His daughter, Margaretta Brown Marsh, is reputed to have come to the old house, sold its contents, and eventually the house itself. It was razed a few years ago to make room for a beautiful new home which now graces the site of the original homestead.



The outbuildings and the barn where George Brown took his own life in 1957, have all disappeared. Well kept houses line the quiet street which was one time the barnyard, orchard and fields of W.J. Brown. No one living today who was consulted in this research can state for certain exactly where the old log house of William's parents, namely, James and Jane Brown, once stood on the old road. But the name Brown is far from gone.

Residents of the area point with pride at the sign on the sharp bend of the road from Avella to Meadowcroft Village. It stands just within what was once the shadow of the Richard Wells stone mansion house. And a few feet below it in a vacant lot, is the grinding stone from Alexander Wells' old mill which boasts over 200 years of existence since he first cut it to shape and placed it there. The Brown family, it is true, is gone from Avella. But the story of their lives should remain forever a part of the history of the area. The memory of them should be prompted by the sign at the end of the road which says it all in one word – BROWNTOWN.

Personalities from the Past

TRAGEDY AT THE WELL

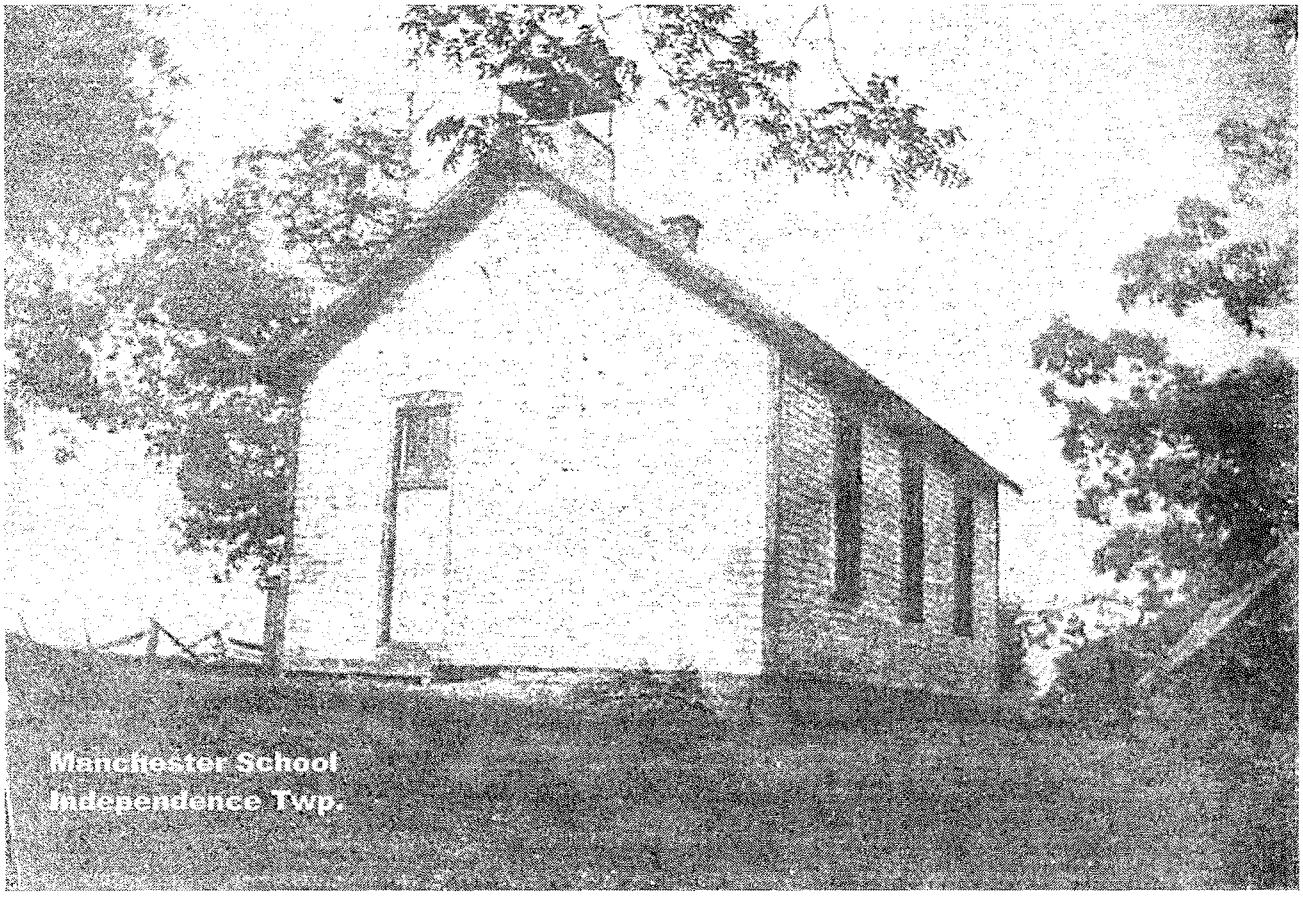
by

Kathryn Campbell Slasor

My name was George Keenan. My life ended at age 42 in the bottom of a well. Mine is indeed a tragic story.

My first wife, the mother of my only son, Harlan, was Margaret Garrett. At her death I buried her in the old cemetery on Mt. Hope Ridge. I later married Roselin Simpson who was a daughter of Cross Creek Township's greatest historian, James Simpson.

The Manchester one room schoolhouse, pictured below, stood at what is today the intersection of Routes 231 and 844 in Independence Township. One day when my son, Harlan, was fifteen years old, I decided to pump out the abandoned well that had been sunk many years before near this old schoolhouse. Wylie Crowe had planned to help me. Other neighbors, including David Patterson, who worked on the nearby William Craig farm, was also there.



Manchester School
Independence Twp.

After Harlan and I pumped the water from the 33-foot deep well, I lowered a ladder. When the ladder touched the bottom, the top was still five feet from the surface of the ground.

I let myself down with a rope to where I could get on the ladder. I then went down to the bottom to clean out the debris, but I knew something was wrong. I could not

breathe properly. I tried to hurry back up the ladder, but when I got to within five feet of the top, I fell backwards into the open hole, and died.

Harlan and the others gathered there became confused and did not know what to do. Knowing the danger to themselves, they seemed to make no effort to help me. Finally someone ran to the home of James Murdock a half mile away.

Mr. Murdock immediately went down the ladder, although he was aware that he risked his own life in doing so. He tied a rope around me and brought my body to the top.

In the meantime, someone had gone for Dr. Bemis. When he arrived and examined my body, he said I did not die from the fall, but had suffocated from the gas in the well. Those standing nearby became vividly aware that Mr. Murdock, by descending into the well, had not thought of himself, but only of helping me, his neighbor.

I was very foolish not to test for gas before I went down into the hole. A lantern was later let down and it went out ten feet from the surface. Also a candle was lowered with the same result.

My wife frantically waited at the top of the well until my body was brought out. She was overcome with grief. It was also a sad day for my eight brothers and sisters.

This all took place in the year 1908. Thus it was that I was laid to rest in the old cemetery at West Middletown, before my 43rd birthday.

WILLIAM MELVIN

by

June Campbell Grossman - Welch

My name was William Melvin. I was born June the ninth in 1805, the son of Samuel and Tamar Miller Melvin. My father, Samuel, was born in Ireland in 1772 and brought by his parents, William and Margaret Melvin, to America that same year. With them was also my father's older brother, William. They settled in Cecil County, Maryland, and when my father grew to manhood, it was there that he married my mother in 1795.

In 1803, my father brought my mother, my two older brothers and two sisters, to Washington County, Pennsylvania, to the area known today as Jefferson Township. He settled on what was then the Abraham Barber farm on Bethel Ridge. This farm today is the Jiggs Mermon property.

Being a cooper by trade, my father built a log cabin cooper shop and carried on the business of making barrels. Years later, one of my father's grandsons reported that he visited this area in 1909 and entered an old log barn not far from Bethel Church and in sight of the Abraham Barber farm. Here he was shown a barrel which my father had built when he worked there. The hoops were made of hickory poles and it had a capacity of perhaps 125 gallons.

When he worked at the cooper trade, he at one time filled an order for a very large barrel. When it was completed, he discovered that it was too large to pass through the door of the shop, so he quietly removed the clapboard roof, and took it out there.

Within two years of my parents' arrival in Washington County, I was born – there on Bethel Ridge in the old log cabin on the Barber farm. My birth was followed by two more brothers and two more sisters, making my parents a total of nine children of which I was the middle child.

My youngest sister, Lydia, was born in 1816. When she was but five years of age, my mother and my oldest brother, John, aged 22, died the same day. My father placed them in the same casket and buried them in the same grave in the old cemetery at Bethel Church, where we were all members. Three years later, in 1824, my youngest brother, Samuel Jr., died at the age of 12. The death of my mother and of his eldest and youngest sons in the space of 3 years was too much for my father. He grieved terribly for them and in March of 1826, at the age of 54, he followed them to the grave.

The year after my father's death, when I was 22 years of age, I married Abagail Jones. Abbie and I became the parents of 7 children. Our oldest daughter, Ann, married David Thorley and had five children. Among her descendants were Roy and Merle Thorley, well-known citizens of Eldersville all of their lives. Our oldest son, John, married Susan Boles. But tragedy befell them when their only son, Frances, was killed on the railroad in 1902. Four of our other children married into the Hamilton, Hanlin, Stephenson, and Cooper families. My namesake, our baby boy, William Jr., married Priscilla Cosgrove. Their three children were the last by the Melvin name to live in Jefferson Township. Clyde married his next-door neighbor, Pearl Cassidy; Margaretta married another neighbor, Lorin McCready; and Gayle, who lived to the age of 96, remained single. These grandchildren of mine were born on what people today know as the old Melvin farm on Irish Ridge. They were born in the second of two log houses

which stood, until a few years ago, on the State Line Road about a mile from Bethel Church. The third Melvin house still stands on that farm and is owned by Ted and Anita Macugoski Maslowski.

Samuel Melvin Log Home
Irish Ridge
Jefferson Township

William Melvin Log Home
Irish Ridge
Jefferson Township

All three of these grandchildren of mine – Clyde, Gayle, and Gretta – were possessed of beautiful singing voices which they used in praise of their maker in the old Bethel Methodist Church on the hill. John Cassidy, our next door neighbor, was one of the founders of that church. We held many a Methodist meeting in our old log house during those early days and in fact, it was at a revival in my home that a neighbor boy, John Scott, was converted. He later became one of tbe outstanding Methodist ministers of his time and the author of a well-known book entitled Recollections of Fifty Years in the Ministry. In that book, he gives an account of his conversion at my home.

After my marriage, I purchased the Melvin property on Irish Ridge. Times were very hard during those days in the mid 1800s and so I farmed by day, and like my father, made flour barrels at night by the light of an old lantern. The slavery issue and prohibition were the topics of the day, and all of us Melvins and Thorleys were staunch anti-slavery believers. We were among those who built the Weslyan Methodist Church in Eldersville in opposition to slavery. It was later known as "The White Church".

It was on July 3, 1850, that my Abbie died at the age of 41. I later took as my second wife, a delightful lady from the West Middletown area whose name was Susannah McKeever. My family dearly loved her, as did the entire community.

Just before Christmas in 1888, when the slavery question, which had dominated so much of my life, had been settled for all time, I passed to the great beyond. All of my children were still alive except my baby, Lydia, who had married Robert Cooper and had died seven years before my death. We had buried her at Bethel, and there my beloved children – three sons and three daughters - placed me beside their mother who had preceded me in death by so many years.

You who remain today may pass by the old Melvin graves there on the windy hilltop at Bethel Church. My father and mother lie nearby my final resting place. Later, two of my other children were buried here also.

At this point in time, the Melvin name is only remembered by the old timers in Eldersville. But in the land that is fairer than day, we laugh, and love, and sing together as we once did in that short span of time we spent together on earth. But here, my friends, there are no tears or sorrow or parting. For behold, all things are made new.

Melvin House #3
Irish Ridge
Jeffersoon Township

Pictured on the left is William Melvin, Jr. and his wife, Priscilla Cosgrove Melvin. When William bought the old Melvin homestead from his siblings after the death of his father, he neglected to consider the chidren of his deceased sister, Lydia. She had married Robert Cooper and moved west for a period of time. Family records, however, state that she became ill and returned to the Melvin home where she died. She was buried at Bethel with her extended family. Court records show that eventually her children brought their Uncle William to task for their mother's share of the property. Fortunately, he was prepared to pay the required sum to them and obtained a clear deed.

William's three children were the last Melvins to live in the Jefferson Township area. Although two of them married, neither had offspring, so the Melvin line from William and Priscilla died with the passing of their youngest son, Gayle, in 1976 at the age of 97.