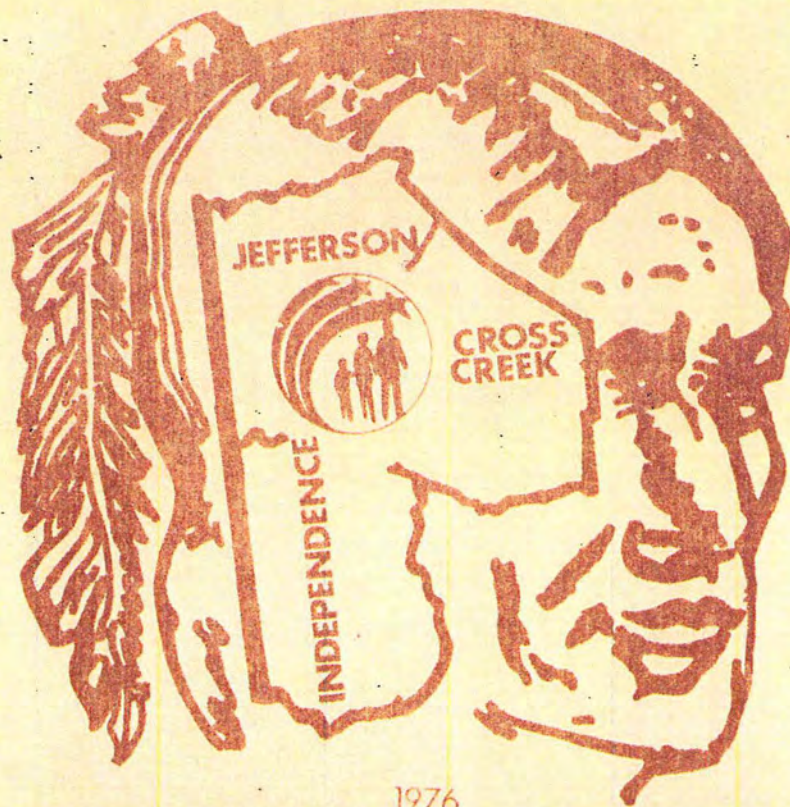


HISTORIC SKETCHES  
OF  
CROSS CREEK  
VALLEY



1976

Two Centuries of Pennsylvania's Heritage in  
Independence, Cross Creek, and Jefferson Townships

Editor: Hugh E. Parker

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SKETCHES OF THE CROSS CREEK VALLEY

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and

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Including Contributions

From Many Local Citizens and Sources

*Presented to  
Fort Vance Historical Society  
by A. D. White*

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## Introduction

These Sketches of Cross Creek Valley came into existence as part of the Bicentennial Celebration of the townships of Independence, Cross Creek and Jefferson. The committee decided that part of the preparation for celebrating the birthday of our Nation and the historical significance of our townships should be a written history of the area and of its people. The writers thought that time limitations indicated that the "history" to be written could best be gathered and presented as "sketches" of the life and history of the area. So, they decided that these writings should be titled "Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley," since the valley and the stream, Cross Creek, attracted the first settlers and influenced the history that followed. All three townships are part of the Cross Creek Valley.

It was the intention of the writers to present a true and informative picture of how our area developed from its first settlements to the present time. The reader will find that the Cross Creek Valley has an interesting and varied history. The inhabitants, old and new, came here to build their homes, raise their families, and make a better living for themselves and their children. Life was not always easy and peaceful. All those who came here struggled in turn to create a home, earn a living and become a part of the valley. The people who came here over the years came from many different places, and they brought with them a variety of cultures, faiths and languages. Together they created the communities which exist today.

It is the authors' hope that the reader enjoys these Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley, and that he finds in the pages of this Book a new, or perhaps a better understanding and appreciation of these communities. He will find that his ancestors, as well as those of his neighbors, shared the same "pioneer spirit" regardless of their time of arrival here. The newest as well as the oldest families have contributed, and continue to contribute their own special talents to the development of our Valley. The reader will find that the American "melting pot" process did happen here in that the people have all, in their own ways, become a real, living part of the Cross Creek Valley.

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## Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley

The term "Cross Creek" is a very old one, and it was applied, of course, in the very earliest history of this area to the stream, or creek which flows through almost the middle of the area. The writer of these sketches will refer to this as "Cross Creek Valley", or the area embraced in the watershed of this stream, Cross Creek, and this will include the communities of the townships of Jefferson, Cross Creek, and Independence in Washington County, Pennsylvania.

The focal point of this area is the present town of Avella which straddles the stream, Cross Creek, with part of the village in Cross Creek Township and the remaining part in Independence Township. This village was established soon after the Wabash Railroad was built through the Cross Creek Valley in the years 1901-1904.

The origin of the village's location is much earlier and involves the area's first settler, Alexander Wells, who came here in 1772, and realizing the value of the valley as a place to locate, he set about to acquire large tracts of land here. At a point in the Browntown part of Avella, Mr. Wells established a mill which was a landmark for many years. This mill was used by Mr. Wells and other nearby settlers for grinding grain into flour and meal for family use and for grinding grain for feed for their animals. There was, also, a sawmill operated in connection with the grist mill, and in early times, the mills were operated by use of water power from the Creek.

As with most pioneer mills, the Wells mill became a center for trade as other settlements were made nearby, and for many years, a store was conducted in connection with the operation of the mills. Mr. Wells operated the mills himself for about twenty years, and when he offered them for sale in 1796, they were purchased by his nephew, Richard Wells, who was also his son-in-law. When the waters in Cross Creek were high enough to permit it, flour ground at Wells Mill was shipped to the Ohio River by flatboat and would there be loaded on to a larger boat and shipped to New Orleans for sale. This practice of shipping down the Creek to the river was continued until the building of the railroad many years later.

As a means of protecting his own family and those of his neighbors from the incursions of the Indians, Mr. Wells erected a fort on his land at an early date. Located on a hill northwest of present Avella, this fort was so located that, after the clearing of the hill sides from the heavy growth of timber, the inhabitants could view up and down the Valley in all directions. In times of danger from Indian raids, nearby settlers would gather in Wells Fort for protection. Men from the community would form the fort's garrison, and if the red men were particularly troublesome, Mr. Wells, as commandant, would send to Fort Pitt or Redstone Old Fort for reinforcements.

Perhaps an explanation of the need for forts and of the frightening raids by Indians would be helpful here, as well as a description of settling a frontier community. It is difficult for a modern resident to imagine the



wilderness condition of this area in the 1770's. Joseph Doddridge, an early settler here, describes in his "Notes", first published in Wellsburg, West Virginia, in 1824, the area as it would have appeared to one coming here in very early times:

"One prominent feature of a wilderness is its solitude. Those who plunged into the bosom of this forest left behind them not only the busy hum of men, but domestic animal life generally. The solitude of the night was interrupted only by the howl of the wolf, the melancholy moan of the illboding owl, or the shriek of the frightful panther. The various tribes of singing birds were not inhabitants in this country at its first settlement. Bending his course toward the setting sun, over undulating hills, under the shade of large forest trees, and wading through the rank weeds and grass which then covered the earth, viewing from the top of a hill the winding course of the creek whose stream he wished to explore, doubtful of its source, and of his own, he ascertains the cardinal points of north and south by the thickness of the moss and bark on the north sides of the ancient trees. In an unknown region, he is the sentinel of his own safety."

Few clearings existed with the deep forest covering almost the entire area. In addition to other wildlife, there were bear, deer, raccoon, skunk, foxes both red and grey, woodchucks, squirrel, grey, black, red, and flying, muskrats, porcupines, and in the earliest times, buffalo or bison. The barbarous red men did not actually live here, but they used this region for hunting grounds, and they came here periodically for securing game from points across the Ohio River to the west. (In much earlier times, pre-historic humans did inhabit this area as has been evidenced by recent discoveries of burial places and villages).

As white men began coming into the Cross Creek Valley in the 1770's the Indians, fearing the loss of their hunting grounds, began to resist the white men's advances. This Indian resistance took the forms of raids in which any type of warfare was used. Scalping and tomahawking were two of the more famous methods of stopping the progress of the white settlers. Attacks were carried on against the women, children, and infants as well as against the male settlers. Of course, as Doddridge reveals, the Indians were savages and they were desperate in trying to save their race from extinction. They, therefore, did all they could to remove the white men and their civilization from the forest here. It was therefore natural for groups of settlers to build forts located conveniently close to their cabins in order to have shelter and to withstand these Indian attacks.

The pattern of settling this area by the earlier pioneers was similar, in one way at least, to that of later settlers - those Europeans who migrated here to work in and build this community in the early 1900's. The men would come first and settle a claim by tomahawk marks on trees, and then would return to the East to bring their families to their new home in the wilderness. They came on foot, mostly because there were no roads, but only Indian trails, and they carried their few essentials by packhorse. The "essentials" were food, a gun, an axe, some clothing, and if they were lucky, perhaps a cow. Arriving here in the Cross Creek Valley, they would have to

clear a space, build a log cabin, and plant a garden as soon as possible after arriving. An average claim or tract of land was about four hundred acres, so cabins were not close together and life was lonely as well as dangerous.

Gradually, the small log cabins gave way to larger log houses, and in time, as other farm buildings were erected, the settlements became fertile farms, stocked with sheep and cattle and other domestic animals. The villages of Cross Creek, Independence, and Eldersville were established as locations for churches, schools, and stores as well as homes. We say "gradually" for it was more than twenty years before the fear of Indian raids disappeared and life became peaceful. With this over-all background, we will proceed to develop sketches of the individual communities of the Cross Creek Valley.

Here again we pick up the story of the early Wells settlement at what we now know as Avella. Since Mr. Wells was the first white settler here, we can now appreciate his hardships, the need for a fort, and his business sense in establishing the mills here in the Cross Creek Valley.

On the same hill where the fort was located can be found what is left of the old Wells burial ground. It was just to the northeast of the stone house built by the Wells family, and in this old graveyard, Alexander Wells, his wife, Leah and several other members of this family are buried. Adjoining the graveyard is an old Indian mound, used many years ago by these early people as a place for the burial of their dead. When this mound was opened in the 1880's a skeleton eight and one-half feet long was found buried there. In 1975, the mound was again opened by archaeologists from the University of Pittsburgh and another large skeleton was found. This exploration is being continued in 1976.

As the family of Alexander Wells was prominent for many years in the Avella area, so other members of the family connection were also prominent in other parts of the tri-state area. When Mr. Wells sold his property here in 1796, he moved into the so-called "Panhandle" of Virginia (now West Virginia) and located at a town which was then called Charlestown, but which was renamed Wellsburg for the Wells family. There Mr. Wells lived until his death in 1813 when his body was brought back to his former home here for burial in the family graveyard. Another member of the family, Bazaleel Wells settled the town of Steubenville, Ohio, and still another of the family settled Wellsville, Ohio.

Two of the families who came into the Avella community and became prominent here after the Wells family had died or moved away were the Campbells and Browns. These two families eventually owned most of the land on which Avella is now located.

David Campbell was a member of another early Cross Creek Township family, and he settled at Avella owning a farm centering around the part of the town where the old bank building stands. He married a girl who was a member of another early Cross Creek Valley family, Ann Rea, whose family had lived farther up the valley. After they had occupied this farm for several years, their son, Samuel B. Campbell, took over ownership of it, and in turn, he



was succeeded by his son, Samuel S. Campbell, who owned the farm in the early 1900's when the railroad was built through the valley. This family is represented in Avella at the present time by Samuel S. Campbell, proprietor of the Avella Lumber and Supply Company.

Following the building of the railroad, Mr. Samuel S. Campbell, the elder, laid out much of his farm in building lots, realizing that this was a logical place to build a town. Mr. William J. Brown, who owned adjoining land farther down the creek, also laid out some of his farm into building lots, and on these two "plans" much of the new town was built. There are regular parallel streets in Mr. Campbell's part of town, but most of Mr. Brown's lots were laid out along the so-called Browntown Road. By arrangement with the Wabash Railroad a station was established on Mr. Campbell's farm and very near to the house in which he lived. Coal mines were quickly opened following the completion of the railroad, and this resulted in a quick influx of families from southern European countries whose men had come here to work in these mines. (See the section in these Sketches entitled: Ethnic Changes in the Cross Creek Valley).

#### The Patterson Mills Community

William Patterson came to this area of the valley in 1778 and 1779 arriving from Lancaster County with his son, Thomas, in the earlier year, then returning to Lancaster County and bringing out the rest of his family in 1779. He took up a tract of land of nearly four hundred acres, and when it was plotted and surveyed, it had such an odd shape that the patent name given was "Oddity". On this farm in 1794 Mr. Patterson built the large stone house which was the home of members of the Patterson family from that time until 1955 when Miss Mary Patterson, the last survivor of the family, found that she could no longer conduct the farm and so she sold it and moved to Washington, Pennsylvania. (Several years after the sale of this farm to Paul Margaria, the old stone house was sold to James Drain of Ligonier who tore the house down and removed the materials to Ligonier, Pennsylvania, where he rebuilt it for use as his home and as an antique shop.)

Thomas Patterson grew to manhood on this farm, and he became a famous Indian fighter. He became known as General Patterson since he was an officer of that rank in the local militia. In 1794 after the Indians had been subdued and effectively driven out of the area, General Patterson turned his attention to peaceful pursuits. He purchased some land from his father down in the valley and established the Patterson Mill which was to stand there for one hundred thirty years. This was a grist mill used in the production of flour, and the mill was located at the foot of the hill, just in front of the present homes of Fred Hofrichter and George Hines. This location enabled the General to use water for operating the mill from the two branches of North Fork which come together at this point: these branches are the ones coming down the valley through Cedar Grove, and the one which flows through the valley just south of West Point Cemetery and through the adjoining Boyce farm.



General Patterson lived near the mill, probably in a log house, but we do not know its exact location. He had a store in his house for a time, but it was later moved to the mill, and this was an important trading point as people in the neighborhood came to the mill to have their grain ground into flour or meal, and also to obtain groceries and other supplies. Goods sold here had to be brought in large wagons from Baltimore and other places in the East, where the goods originated. On many occasions, Mr. Patterson shipped boatloads of flour from his mill to New Orleans. At such times, he would build a small flatboat and load it, either at the site of the mill, or at the Wells Mill farther downstream, and on this he would float the load down Cross Creek to the Ohio River where it would be loaded on a larger boat and sent off on the longer trip to New Orleans. On at least one occasion, General Patterson accompanied the cargo of flour to the faraway city, sold the load for a good price, and then bought two horses to bring himself and the money which he had obtained back through the wilderness to his home at Patterson Mills.

Another mill, a "fulling-mill," had been built by General Patterson a half mile up the west branch of North Fork (toward present Cedar Grove) and he put his son, William Patterson, in charge of it as long as it remained in operation. The "fulling" process was used in the preparation of cloth for weaving. At one time, so-called "fuller's earth" was used in strengthening and stiffening cloth after it had been woven and the process is also defined as one of cleaning, shrinking, and strengthening cloth by moisture, heat, and pressure. In the mill at Patterson Mills, the more primitive process must have been used, and the modern process is used today in much more up-to-date mills. When this second mill was established, the village here became known as Patterson Mills, and it is still so designated today. The Patterson family operated the grist mill here for just one hundred years, the last of the name in charge being Mr. John S. Patterson, who died in 1896. The mill was operated by Chester Leech for a number of years, and after standing idle for some time, the building was torn down in 1925.

The Patterson name had dominated this community for many years, but as members of the family migrated to other parts of the country, or were deceased, people of other names came in and took their places. One prominent name for many years was that of Wiegmann, borne at first by a man of German blood: George L. Wiegmann, who soon after his arrival in America came here and took charge of the general store, conducted so long by members of the Patterson family. Mr. Wiegmann was an excellent businessman who was successful in his merchandising venture. He served as postmaster of the Patterson Mills Post Office for most of the time he lived here. He had a good sized family and many descendants. Other names which became prominent here were the Kuhns, Andrews, and Boyces, being borne by people who lived in the village or on nearby farms. The Boyce family has lived on the farm just east of this community for a full one hundred years, the present occupants of the old farm being Mr. and Mrs. John A. Boyce and their family. Further out on the "edges" of this community were the old families of Buxton, Sharp, Gillespie, Brownlee and Dunbar, and some of these names still exist in this and other parts of the Cross Creek Valley.

## Cross Creek Village Community

Two of the earliest families to settle in the area now known as Cross Creek, were the Vance and Marquis families originating in Frederick County, Virginia, near Winchester and coming to the Cross Creek area in the early 1770's. Major William Vance and his son, Colonel Joseph Vance and their families settled the area where Vance's Fort was built in 1774, two miles north of present Cross Creek Village. Major Vance settled on a tract adjoining his son's tract to the northeast and near the present town of Slovan. Although these settlements were slightly out of the area of the Cross Creek Valley, the Vances are included in this sketch because of their close identity with the history of the Cross Creek Village Community.

Members of the Marquis family, Thomas and John, settled land which lay immediately to the west and northwest of Cross Creek Village. John Marquis was noted as an Indian fighter, while his brother, Thomas, became a minister and served as pastor of the Cross Creek Presbyterian Church from 1794 to 1826. These two noted families and their descendants remained in this community for several generations, occupying much land in the vicinity of the original settlements, but at present the Vance and Marquis names are not found in this community.

Henry Graham, another early settler, came to Cross Creek Valley from Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1776, and he settled on a farm adjoining what is now Cross Creek Village. When the Cross Creek Presbyterian Church was organized in 1779, Mr. Graham donated land on which the log church was built, and the Cross Creek graveyard is on land once owned by Mr. Graham. After the church had been located there, Mr. Graham drew up a plan of lots on one side of his farm, and these were offered for sale, so that a part of the village here is located on former Graham land.

The village, called Cross Creek from the name given the church, grew very slowly at first, and it has never been a large place. However, it was important commercially with several stores, taverns or hotels, and shops for artisans who provided services for the people of the surrounding community. This importance extended well into the present century, but as good roads led to larger communities and travel and communication became easier, the commercial importance declined until today, not a single place of business exists in the community.

Another old-time family, the Lees, have been living here since 1790. Hugh Lee came to the community from Ireland in that year and settled on land, part of which is still owned and occupied by members of this family. Although the names of other early families have disappeared from the Cross Creek Village community, several prominent members of this family are Lester Lee, living in the village, and Montford Lee, and Burns Lee, living on nearby farms.



Other families coming into the Cross Creek Village community and who lived either in the village or on nearby farms include the following: Andersons, Cooks, Lyles, Scotts, Prys, Walkers, Johnstons, Snodgrass, and later the Browns, Briggs, Hindmans, Farner, Lucas, McCarty, McNelly, and Townsend families. Later yet came the Chechuck, Tkalcevic, Giacomel, Stolze, Dobroski, Casciola, Zimmerman, and Rommes families, many of whom are still residents of the community, and all take their places in the economic, religious and educational life of the area.

### The Cedar Grove Community

In earlier times, this was a distinctly rural community consisting of a number of good farms, and it had a small population until mining operations were begun here in the early 1900's. Its earliest settlement was by the Wells family who owned great amounts of land throughout the Cross Creek Valley. This family continued holding some of this land until the early years of the Twentieth Century.

After the Revolutionary War, Peter Perrine came into this community and purchased lands from the Wells family and he located upon the land now included in the village of Cedar Grove, and on the property now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Marosi. He spent his life here clearing off the forest and preparing the land for raising sheep and cattle. This endeavor was carried on by Mr. Perrine's son, Isaac, and later by his grandson, Robert Perrine. These men raised and bred fine wool sheep. Robert Perrine obtained the best stock possible for this purpose, traveling as far away as to Vermont to get animals to improve his flocks. He was able to sell some of his sheep for as much as three hundred dollars per animal, and in some cases he got as much as one thousand dollars.

In about the year 1850, Robert Perrine built a fine brick house on his farm, and this is now the home of the Marosi family. The barn which he had built was destroyed by fire a number of years ago and the other farm buildings which he had erected were torn down when the Cedar Grove mine was opened on a part of the farm. The fourth generation of the Perrine family could not carry on this farm operation, so after Robert's death in 1895, the farm was sold to John Studa, who moved on to the property. Mr. Studa was an excellent farmer who conducted a dairy, and he also was interested in the raising of fine horses. He sold a portion of his farm, that is lying on the west side of the public road to the Washington County Coal Company, and the portion on the east side of the road was bought by Mr. James Gillespie who was a dealer in livestock and who operated a butcher shop after the mine was opened here.

Since the coal was near the surface at this point, a "drift" entry was made and used for the removal of the coal at the mine. As at other mines in the area, here too, the coal company provided houses for the families of the miners who operated the mine. "Block" houses were erected, and many of these are still standing. Families, many of whom were recent immigrants, moved in



for work at the new mine. As one looks at the present population of Cedar Grove, we find that many of the families who worked at the mines are still living in the village. (For more details of some of these families, see the chapter on Ethnic Changes in the Cross Creek Valley).

With the opening of the mine here, in order to provide an outlet by rail for the mining company, a company of local men built a branch railroad from Avella up to the North Fork Valley to the Cedar Grove mine. This branch line was used until September 1912 when the Labor Day flood washed out and destroyed this railroad and it was never rebuilt. Soon after this, the Pennsylvania Railroad built a branch line in from Langeloth to Cedar Grove, and this was used until the mine here was closed. Ironically, after this line was no longer used, it too, was partially destroyed by a flood.

## The Doddridge-Manchester Community in Independence Township

John Doddridge, a man of English descent, made the first permanent settlement within the bounds of present Independence Township, when he came here from Bedford County, Virginia, in 1773. One probable reason for his locating here was that his wife, Mary Wells, was a niece of Alexander Wells, who had settled down "on the Creek." Near the center of the tract of land on which Mr. Doddridge settled, he built his home and here too, he built the block-house which was known as Doddridge's Fort. This location was on land owned until her death by Mrs. Mary Carl. To mark the site of the Fort, a road-side marker has been placed near the Carl home on Route 844. Like other early settlers, Mr. Doddridge had trouble with the Indians, and so had this fort erected for the protection of his own and his neighbors' families.

Mr. Doddridge's son, Joseph Doddridge, grew up in this area, and he became a well educated clergyman, as well as a medical doctor. His fame is still recognized in the Cross Creek Valley because of his having written "Notes on the settlement and Indian wars of the western part of Virginia and Pennsylvania." This book deals with early pioneer life in this area. Also, his name is associated with some of the early Episcopal churches in this area, notably St. John's Church in Brooke County, West Virginia.

Before John Doddridge built his fort, there was another similar fort over the hill which Samuel Teter had built on what is now known as the Manchester Farm. Since the Doddridge Fort was more defensible, the Teter Fort was abandoned but Captain Teter did command Doddridge's Fort in case it was necessary at the time of Indian attacks. One such "expected" attack is described in Doddridge's Notes beginning on page 221 in that Book. From this we quote:

"When we received advice at my father's fort on the attack on Rice's Fort (in September 1782), which was but a few miles distant, we sent word to all those families who were out on their farms to come at once to the Fort. It became nearly dark before the two "runners" had time to give the alarm to the family of a Mr. Charles Stuart who lived about three quarters of a mile from the Fort. The runners returned in great haste, saying that Stuart's house was burned down and that they had seen two fires between that and the fort, at which some Indians were encamped. There was then no doubt that an attack would be made on our fort in the morning."

"I will give the commands of Captain Teter our officer, in his own words,

"In the first place, he collected all of our men together and then related all of the battles and skirmishes which he had been in, and they were not few in number. He then reminded us,

"In case the Indians should succeed in defeating us, we need expect no mercy - that every man, woman and child will be killed on the spot. They have been defeated at one fort and now they are mad enough - - We must fight for ourselves and for one another, for our wives and children and for our brothers and sisters. A little after daybreak we shall



hear the crack of their guns."

He then made a requisition of all the powder and lead in the Fort. The ammunition was divided amongst all of the men.

"Now" says the Captain, "when you run your bullets, cut off the necks very close, and scrape them, so as to make them a little less, and get patches one hundred finer than those you commonly use, and have them well oiled, for if a rifle happens to choke in the time of battle, you will have no time to unbreach it and get a plug to drive out the bullet. Have the locks well oiled and your flints sharp, so as not to misfire".

He then said to the women: "You must fill every vessel with water. Our fort is not well stockaded, and these ugly fellows may rush into the middle of it and attempt to set it on fire and to try to burn our cabins in twenty places at once."

"Now" says he, "let every man gather in his axes, mattocks and hoes and place them inside of his door, for the Indians may make a dash at them with their tomahawks to cut them down, and an axe in that case may hit when a gun would miss fire."

Like a good commander, our Captain, not content with giving orders, went from house to house to see that everything was right.

"The ladies of our present day will suppose that our pioneer women were frightened half to death, with the near prospect of such an attack of the Indians; on the contrary, they went on with their work of carrying water and of cutting bullets and patches for the men, apparently without the least emotion of fear."

"I was at that time thirteen or fourteen years of age, but I ranked as a fort soldier. After getting my gun and all things else in order, I went up into the garret loft of my father's house and laid down about the middle of the floor, expecting to be awakened by the report of guns at day-break. I did not awaken till about the time the sun rose, when the alarm was over. The family whom we had supposed had been killed had come into the Fort about day-break. Instead of the house being burned down, it was only a large old log on fire, near the house which had been seen by our expresses. If they had seen anything like fire between that and the Fort, it might have been fox-fire. Such is the creative power of imagination when under the influence of fear."

In 1796, Isaac Manchester came through this region looking for land to buy, and since Samuel Teter wanted to sell his land, Mr. Manchester purchased what has since been known as the Manchester Farm. Due to Mrs. Manchester's desire for a home like the one which she had left in Rhode Island, her husband began to plan for the building of a brick house which was finally completed in 1815. The task of building such a home was a difficult one. All of the materials needed could be obtained from the farm itself -- trees were cut down for the parts of the house made of wood, bricks were burnt from clay of the ground, and stone was abundant for the foundations. But the workmen first had to make their own tools before they could begin work on the materials used in the house.



So, it took nearly fifteen years of pains-taking labor before the new brick house emerged on Plantation Plenty, the name which the Manchester family had given to their home farm here. The house is of full two stories, with a basement under the entire house and a large finished attic on the third floor. On the roof was built a "widow's walk," something usually found on the houses back in New England.

The present Manchester farm is a blend of the old with the new, reflecting the lives and manner of living of all the members of the family who have lived here over the years. The farm and home are now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Painter and their family. Mr. Painter is a great-great-grandson of the Pioneer, Isaac Manchester. The Painters conduct a dairy and a large, modern, farm operation.

The Doddridge-Manchester community, lying just south of the mining community of Avella, is still strictly rural. The former Doddridge Farm, and the Manchester Farm and adjoining tracts of land are real farms, with cropping and stock-raising being carried on on all of them.

#### The Mt. Hope Ridge Community

This community begins on the edge of the community which we have just described, starting at Breezy Heights and extending in a southerly direction from that point to the valley of Buffalo Creek. The "Ridge" running through this community is named from the former Mt. Hope United Presbyterian Church which once stood about three miles out on this ridge. The improved road which runs the entire length of the Ridge is sort of a "sky-line drive" with beautiful scenery in the valley of Sugar Run to the west and a less well defined valley lying to the east, as one drives south on the ridge. In these valleys and on the ridge itself lie many good farms. In earlier times these were the homesteads of the Liggett, Welch, Buchanan, Meloy and Woodburn families, and now these are the farms of the Smiths, Narigons, Kowchecks, Wilsons, Carls, Kimbles, Millers, and others, on most of which modern farming and stock-raising are carried on. The modern stock-farm of John Dryer could be included in this community, or in the Doddridge-Manchester Community, since it lies on the edge of both communities.

The Mt. Hope Presbyterian Church stood at the point where Route 231 leaves the ridge road and turns toward Claysville. The congregation here was established about 1800. Its early members had belonged to the North Buffalo Seceder Church, but they founded the Mt. Hope Church in this community to avoid traveling the great distance to the North Buffalo Church. Two men who served as pastor for long periods in this congregation were: Rev. Thomas Allison who was the first pastor and who served for thirty-three years, and the Rev. John T. Brownlee of West Middletown who served for forty-nine years. Both of these men lie buried in the old graveyard near the site of the church. Following their pastorates, other ministers served here for shorter periods of time, and the church, too, was supplied by student-pastors during its later years.

In 1946, due to a declining membership, the congregation was disbanded. A large granite marker, dedicated on October 9, 1949, marks the location of the Mt. Hope Church and on it are inscribed the names of all ministers of the church. The adjoining graveyard or cemetery is maintained in fairly good condition by a former member of the church and others who have relatives interred here.

Two other interesting institutions which were once a part of this community were the old Scott School which stood on the southern end of the ridge and the Jamison School which was located along Route 231 to the east. The Scott School still stands, partially in ruins, while the Jamison School has been converted into a modern residence.

In the tornado which crossed the ridge on June 23, 1944, much destruction was caused on the farm of Ewing Wilson, where the barn was blown down and on the farm of Hensley Keenan, where Mr. Keenan lost his life. The Wilson Farm is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. James C. Wilson, not related to the former owners. The region is still wholly rural with the owners, for the most part, living on and conducting the farms.

#### The Independence Village Community

Independence, founded one hundred seventy-two years ago, is one of the older villages in the area, being located at the so-called "forks" of Routes 844 and 50, one mile east of the Pennsylvania-West Virginia line. It was once called "Williamsburg" for William McCormick who plotted the town in 1803. When the first post office was established here in 1836, the name of the town was changed to "Independence" to avoid a duplication of names with another post office of the same name, elsewhere in Pennsylvania. The post office was closed for a brief time in 1973 when the incumbent postmaster, Mrs. Minnie Hammond, retired. However, the residents of the village were not satisfied to be without a post office, so it was re-established on a limited basis.

Like other small villages of this region, Independence at one time had considerable commercial importance. It was on the well-traveled Washington to Wellsburg "Pike" which brought some trade to merchants and hotelkeepers here, and it was also the center of a thriving rural community which required the services which could here be supplied by the stores and shops of the village.

Mr. William P. Wilson of Washington, Pennsylvania, and a native of this village, one-time school teacher and later a newspaperman, serving with the Washington Observer Publishing Company for many years compiled a series of sketches about the village, from which we quote the following:

"A century and a quarter ago, the village was a real shopping center, and a person could buy almost anything he needed in those

days and even eighty-five years ago, the same was true. The village had three first-class physicians who rode over the hills all hours of the day and night and they did not send a patient to a hospital for a small ache or pain."

"Three general stores supplied anything from a "rub of snuff" to a paper of pins. Three expert blacksmiths were artists in the working of iron. Four shoemaker shops were here where you could get homemade leather shoes and boots with the brass toe which pleased the kids as well as the older folk. The leather used came from the tanneries located right here in the village."

"Two wagon shops turned out real road wagons; there were barber shops where you could get a haircut and a shave for 25 cents; two harness makers where first-class work was done and driving harness was made; a merchant tailor where one could get first-class custom made selection of cloth; two first-class millinery stores where the ladies could have a hat made to order; a cooper shop where barrels were made, and a hattery where men's hats were turned out to order - all of these were found in this village of Independence."

"One of the best common schools to be found in the state at that time, where all grades were taught in one room and with one teacher, and with sometimes more than eighty pupils from five to twenty-one years of age enrolled, was located in Independence. There were three strong churches, two of which are still in existence here. Two carpetweaving establishments where excellent carpets and rugs were woven were found here. Several carpenters, stone masons and bricklayers took care of the building trades. There were two excellent taverns in those days. One of these taverns took care of the stock-drivers as they drove their stock on foot to Wellsburg for shipment on the river to New Orleans."

Mr. Wilson goes on to mention the Bellview Camp grounds, now a summer resort, but three-quarters of a century ago an attraction here for many people. Religious meetings held here were attended by as many as 7,000 people at one time, and these meetings did a lot to stimulate the local businesses previously mentioned. This writer tells of a fine cabinet maker who plied his trade here, and a butcher who kept a butcher shop in the village and who also toured the neighborhood with a meat wagon. Today, the village has only one single combination service station and grocery store. The coming of modern roads and faster transportation ended the commercial importance of Independence.

Surrounding the village were many fine farms belonging to such families as the Buxtons, Scotts, Vances, Liggetts, and others. And south from the village in the valleys of Shearers and Camp Runs are farms belonging in former times to the Hanna, Moore, Dodds, Scotts, Mulhollen, Lowry, Ralston, Smith, Applegate, Forney, and Patterson families with the same area being now occupied by the Georgetti, McAdoo, Adams, Hunt, Hapwood, Andrews, Lucas, and Jones families.



## The Penowa Mining Community

This community lies down the valley to the west of our focal town of Avella. When the railroad passed through the community, a station and stop called Penowa was established here. The name is said to derive from the nearness to the three states of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. The community is in Pennsylvania, and it lies near the West Virginia state line, but Ohio is actually some distance away.

Like Avella, this community lies on both sides of the stream of Cross Creek, the south side being in Independence Township, while the north side is in Jefferson. As mines were being opened in the vicinity of Avella, so early coal companies here purchased land and began operating around Penowa.

Families owning land in this community at the time the mines were opened were the Millers who had occupied their "home farm" in the valley since 1795, the Scotts, who also were early settlers, the Cunninghams, Wells, Buxtons, these all being in Jefferson Township, while on the Independence Township side were the Johnsons, Woods and Carmens.

On the Jefferson Township side of the valley here, the early mines opened were those of the Jefferson Coal Company and the Penobscot mine of Avella Coal Company. In Independence Township was the Waverley Coal Company's mine. Substantial mining camps were built by the companies on the Jefferson Township side for the families employed there, and in Independence Township, the small community known as Seldom Seen contained a few houses for homes for the miners working in the Waverly Mine. In addition to the homes in these "camps" a few families bought lots in the Barnes Plan in Jefferson Township and built their own homes. On the closing of the Penobscot Mine, all families employed there moved away and the homes in the camp were torn down. Jefferson Mine continued operating somewhat longer than the Avella or Penobscot Mine, and the camp which they built is still standing, with most of the houses being now privately owned by the people who live in them. Seldom Seen is now a ghost town since the closing of the Waverley Mine. Deep mining here ceased after World War II, but some "strip" mining was carried on on the property of the Jefferson Coal Company, but that, too, has ceased. Some of the families who came into this part of the Cross Creek Valley for work in the mines still live here. An account of some of them can be found in the Chapter on Ethnic Changes in the Cross Creek Valley.

## The Upper Cross Creek Valley Communities

In dealing with the communities of Rea, Woodrow and Wilson Mill, we are thinking of areas which are purely rural in their composition, with many active farms still being conducted in these areas as we go up Cross Creek Valley. East from Avella and about one and one-half miles from the former Donahue Mine Camp, we come to the point in the valley where the south fork of Cross Creek flows into the main stream. Leaving Route 50 at this point and driving south

through the archway under the railroad, we soon come to the point on the main stream where the breast-works for the new Cross Creek Dam are going to be built. From this point to the "head" of the dam, at least three miles to the east, the land of the former farms here has been acquired by Washington County in anticipation of using the bottom lands of these farms as the bed of the new dam or lake. Now only four or five of these former farms in this segment of the valley are still owned privately. There are the farms of Dr. John Stratiff, the Monticello Brothers farm, the Stacko farm, the Davidson farm, and the Kovalcik farm. Other farms lying east of these are still in Cross Creek Valley, but in Mt. Pleasant and Hopewell Townships and so not within the area being treated in these sketches.

Returning to Route 50 near the railroad archway and proceeding east and up the south fork of Cross Creek, we are in an area where most of the land is still in farms, privately owned and in most cases occupied by the owners. Near the site of the old Willow Valley School, the Avella Junior-Senior High School has been built. Farther up the valley are the communities of Rea Cross Roads, and at the township line, the town of Woodrow. As mines were being opened at Avella, the chief reason for their being located there was the relatively shallow depth of the coal veins at that point. Farther up the valley in these communities of which we are now speaking, the coal beds are much deeper, so no mines have been opened here.

At Rea Cross Roads, Squire William Rea settled in 1790, having then purchased a tract of land which had been settled a bit earlier by members of the Marshall family. This land has remained in the Rea family ever since the Squire located here, and it is presently owned and occupied by Maynard Rea and family, he being a great-great-grandson of the original Rea settler. The Marshalls owned much other land in this part of the valley in early times but the name has entirely disappeared from the area. Near the township line to the northeast and in the headwaters of the valley are located the Serenity Farms which have been established there for the rehabilitation of alcoholics. These farms are on land whose original settler was John Campbell. No Campbells now live in the immediate vicinity, but some of the descendants now do live in and near Avella.

At Woodrow was once located one of the old-time waterpowered mills which were once so numerous throughout the area. Some of the marks of this old mill can be seen where the mill was located and where the water was conducted in the mill-race from further up the stream. One of these old mills was located, too, in the Wilson Mills area, but it, too, has been gone for many years and traces of it are pretty well obliterated. Also, at Wilson Mill is still to be found one of the old covered bridges, which, too, were once familiar landmarks in many parts of the Cross Creek Valley. When the Cross Creek Valley is flooded here, it is likely that this covered bridge will have to be removed, since the area will be under water.

One of the Marshall farms near Woodrow was located the old Marshall Block house, like other structures of this sort, built for protection of the settlers from Indian raids. Also, just over the township line southeast from Woodrow is where the Great McGugan Gas Well was drilled in the early years of the 1880's. This was the first such well drilled in this part of Pennsylvania and was drilled in exploration for petroleum, following the "oil boom" in



Venango County, Pennsylvania, in earlier years. Instead of oil, a powerful "pocket" of gas was encountered and it was impossible to control for many months, so the immense volume of natural gas flowed from the well with a great roar; then in some way it became ignited and continued to burn for many months with a great light which covered the entire country-side after dark. Finally, it was brought under control and the gas was piped to South Side Pittsburgh where it was used in industry and for domestic uses.

In the part of this area which lies toward Cross Creek Village, the family of Robert Simpson located in the early years of the Nineteenth Century and Mr. James Simpson of this family, who was a farmer, was also a local historian who was interested in all facets of local history and who did a great deal by writing to preserve the history of this part of the Cross Creek Valley and of northwestern Washington County. James Simpson was the compiler of the first edition of the History of the Cross Creek Graveyard at Cross Creek Village.

#### The Eldersville Community

Jefferson Township lies to the west of Cross Creek Township to which it belonged until 1853, when petitions signed by residents of this part of Cross Creek Township were presented to the Washington County Court and an order was secured setting this part off as a separate township. Its western boundary is the state of West Virginia, while its boundary on the south is the stream of Cross Creek, on the north Harmon Creek, and the parent township of Cross Creek bounds it on the east side.

White men began coming into this region in the 1770's, finding a wilderness territory, and like other settlers in nearby communities, they met many difficulties in settling this region. The pioneers have faced the Indians, huge forests, and a rough terrain as well as the savage beasts of the forests.

One of the earliest white men to come to the area was Robert McCready who settled around 1777 on a tract of 322 acres, patented to him as "Goodwill" or "Robert's Fancy"; the patent being dated September 11, 1786. Descendants of Mr. McCready lived on and operated this farm until recent years when it was sold to the Penowa Coal Company. Some of the buildings which had stood on the farm for many years were removed and reconstructed at Meadowcroft Village by Albert Miller. The farm is slated to be "stripped" for coal, since the coal vein here is of shallow depth.

In spite of the rough terrain, rapid settlement occurred as families came over the mountains of Pennsylvania and Virginia, and in the course of time, the forests had been removed, the land cleared and a number of fine farms was the result.



For some years after its founding, the village established in the northern part of what is now Jefferson Township was called "Wardsville" for Thomas Ward, the original settler. Later the name was changed to "Eldersville" for Thomas Elder, the tavern keeper and evidently a man of some popularity. In the 1860's when the Pennsylvania Railroad was built down the Harmon Creek Valley, it traversed the northern edge of Jefferson Township, and a station was established at Hanlin, the name honoring an early family in the Harmon Creek Valley. This station was of value to the merchants of Eldersville, since it provided a shipping point to which goods could be sent for their stores. Also, as the dairy industry came into the area, Hanlin was a convenient shipping point for the farmers and dairymen who sent milk to the Pittsburgh market. A small village developed at Hanlin and a few homes are still to be found there. Later, as has been pointed out in the sketches of the Penowa Community, the building of the Wabash Railroad through the Cross Creek Valley resulted in a station being established at Penowa, and this served many of the people in the southern part of Jefferson Township. The mining camp, known as Jefferson still remains in this part of this township.

Eldersville, like Cross Creek Village and Independence, was established as a place to which retired people might move from the surrounding farms, as well as a location for churches, stores, shops, and also for the village school. This village had the usual array of stores and shops for serving the nearby rural communities. This commercial importance continued until the coming of good roads made it possible for the residents to get to other points for shopping and for securing the other services which they required.

With the coming of the mining industry to the township and the opening of the Superior Mine near Eldersville, this quiet country village quickly changed in character to a fair-sized coal mining camp. The mine here was opened during World War I and it continued until 1929 when the tippie at the mine was burned and it was never rebuilt. The company had built a number of houses for its miner families, some of these having been located near the mine in a camp known as "Shinntown," and a number of "block" houses were built, too, along the roads which comprise the main streets of Eldersville. The increase in population occasioned by the moving in of the miners' families created a need for more school facilities and additions were made to the village school to provide additional room. When the mine was forced to cease operations, quite a number of the families working here moved on to other mines, but some remained and their descendants are still residents of this community. More about the schools and churches will be given in a later sketch.

Jefferson Township became, primarily, a farming area, with grazing of sheep occupying the rougher parts of the cleared areas, and later the dairy industry and raising of beef cattle became of importance. As the forests were being removed, the lumber industry engaged the attention of a substantial segment of the people. In more recent years, the raising of fruit became of some importance, and apples, peaches, pears, and cherries of good quality were produced. The high ridges and steep slopes provided good air drainage and hence good conditions for the growing of fruits. Much of the fruit produced has been sold locally at the orchards of the Boles Brothers, later the Copelands, at the Robertson Orchards west of Eldersville and at

Van Nest Wiegmann's at the edge of the village.

In the area surrounding the village of Eldersville, some of the families who settled here in early times and remained on the land for some time after the first settlement, included the following:

Jacob Buxton, early resident of Cross Creek Township took up a tract of land just east of Eldersville containing 413 acres, which was known as "Buxton's Venture" and patented as "Jacob's Well". On this tract, Mr. Buxton located his daughter, Nancy, who had married Cornelius Bows (Boles), and this farm remained in the Boles family name until the deaths of McClelland T. ("Doc") Bows and his brother Cyrus, the last of the name to live here. On the farm, after his retirement from the Westinghouse plant in Pittsburgh, "Doc" Boles developed the fruit farm which he conducted until his death, at which time the Copeland Brothers came into possession of it. The Boles name continued to be a prominent one in the area and some of the name and blood still live here. Three generations of the family: Cornelius Boles, Sr. and Jr. and Robert Boles conducted a blacksmith shop in Eldersville.

A bit farther east in the township, the Walker family made extensive settlements and members of the family continued living on and operating farms there until recent times. Members of the Lee family of Cross Creek Township also settled in this area owning farms and giving their name to the one-room school in this part of Jefferson Township. In the northeastern corner of the township, the McGough family were early settlers. The Stewarts, too, came here in early times and owned large tracts of land. The James Stewart stone house stood on the farm just east of the Boles Orchard property. The family of John Stephenson settled just to the southeast of Eldersville where they lived in a log house on property now owned by David Gourley, who is restoring the log house which is still standing and in good condition. To the west of Eldersville near the state line, the Gardner family settled, and while the Gardner name no longer occurs here, yet descendants are still residents of Eldersville. Succeeding some of these earlier families in the ownership and operation of farms in this part of Jefferson Township we now find such names as Robertson, Wiegmann, Campbell, Kidd, Davis, Orenchuck, Fox, Karch, Link, and Roberts. In recent years, many of the men from families living in this part of Jefferson Township and in Eldersville are employed in industry in the Ohio Valley: At Weirton, Follansbee, and at Steubenville, Ohio.

#### The Bethel Ridge Community

This is an important rural section of Jefferson Township, which begins at a point near the Innat Farm on the road between Eldersville and Cedar Grove. There the Bethel Ridge road begins and it extends in a southerly direction to the Penowa Community in the southern part of the township. As one drives out the Bethel Ridge road, the deep valley of Scott's Run lies to the right, and the stream traversing this valley flows into Cross Creek just west of the state line tunnel in Brooke County, West Virginia. Settle-

ments in this valley were made by people of the name of Scott who were of Scotch-Irish descent, some of them being original patentees of land and others purchasing land from those who had settled here before them.

On Bethel Ridge, too, some of the Scotts located, and in addition there came the Coles, Perrines, Cassidys, Patterson, Pettibons and Cunninghams. Just off the southern end of this ridge area, George Miller, the first of his family to locate here made their first settlement in 1794, and as already noted, this land is now in the possession of a descendant, Albert Miller, the founder of Meadowcroft Village.

These families who located here were, almost without exception, farmers who conducted their own farms, raising sheep for many years, and later turning to dairying and still later to the raising of beef cattle.

One other industry which was important in the economy of the area in the Scott's Run Valley was the mill operated there for many years and at various times by the Scotts, Creswells, Weavers, Gillespies, Millers, and the Kidds, the last family operating it giving their name to the mill and to the area which persists to the present time. The mill was located near the confluence of the two branches of Scott's Run, so ample water was available at most times for the operation of the mill. Like most other old mills, this one finally converted to steam power and was so conducted during the rest of its existence. In 1883, the boiler at this mill exploded killing one of the millers and seriously injuring another, but repairs were made and work resumed. The mill was operated with more or less regularity until the flood of 1912 destroyed the mill and badly damaged the surrounding area. At one time a store was kept here and this was the site of the Bancroft Post Office. Also many years ago, a sort of fresh-air camp for underprivileged girls from Pittsburgh was conducted here at Kidd's Mill, so the place was of considerable importance to the community. The area is now almost totally inaccessible, since the roads once leading into it have been closed, and the only way to reach the "spot" is by foot. The region is wild, abounding in wild flowers and second growth timber and rarely visited by anyone except hardy souls who wish to see how the area now appears. Some of the ruins of the old mill are still visible, but all of the buildings which once stood here have either been removed or have burned down or rotted away. On the hill-side near the site of the mill was the location of the old Pine Grove Presbyterian Church, mentioned elsewhere in the sketch on Churches of the valley.

At a central point on Bethel Ridge is the site of the old Bethel churches which date back to about 1814 and which give the name to this community.

Another small rural community which might be thought of as a part of the Bethel Ridge Community is that which lies on the Coles School Ridge to the east of Bethel and which is separated from Bethel by the valley of Hollow Rock Run. Coles Ridge and the school which stood on it were named for the Cole family who were early settlers here. Other early families here included the Metcalfs, the Gillespies and in later times, the Drakes. Those



now living on the same farms are the Pleskas, Riggs, Bertovich, and Kerns, and on the farms along Bethel Ridge we find such names as the Mermons, Pastors, Burkharts, Slasors, Strhos, and Rotellinis and some of the land being owned by non-residents.

In the valley of Hollow Rock Run is a wild and interesting area once called The Shades of Death. This ominous name was given to it since, when the virgin timber was standing here on both sides of the run, the branches of the trees were so thick and heavy and so intertwined as to almost completely shut off the light of the sun; it is told that it was almost dark here even at mid-day on a very sunny day. This may have been an exaggeration, but at least there was enough truth to the description as to make the spot an unusual one. The original stand of timber has been cut off and second growth trees have taken the place of the older and larger ones, so the old name no longer applies with so much reality, but it is still used for the area nevertheless. The spot is on the township road which runs east from Bethel Church through the valley of Hollow Rock Run and to Coles Ridge to the east. In the upper end of this small valley was once located the Elymas Cunningham farm with a set of farm buildings which are no longer there, and the land has been absorbed into other farms which adjoin.

During the years when coal mining was being carried on extensively in Jefferson Township, the Bertha Coal Company had a large mine at Bertha in the northeastern corner of the township, but the mine has long been closed and the camp there is now a ghost town.

#### Churches of the Cross Creek Valley

Since the earliest settlers in this area were largely of Scotch-Irish descent, it was natural that Presbyterianism would appear early in the history of this area. We have mentioned that Vance's Fort was established in 1774, and here on September 14, 1778 was preached the first gospel sermon heard in this region. On that date the Rev. James Power preached a sermon at the gate of Vance's Fort to the persons who were assembled there for safety from Indian attacks.

Early the following year, the Rev. Joseph Smith came here from York County, Pennsylvania, and preached to groups of people in the Cross Creek and Buffalo neighborhoods. On June 21 of that year, the people from these two communities met at the farm of James Marshel, half-way between the two communities and there they made out a call for the pastoral services of the Rev. Mr. Smith. This call was accepted by Mr. Smith and the date, June 21, 1779, is considered the founding date of the Cross Creek and Buffalo churches. Mr. Smith moved to his new charge the following year, locating upon a farm near the Buffalo Church. He served these two congregations for the next thirteen years, until his death in April, 1792. These two old congregations are still in existence, and they will observe the 200th Anniversary of their founding in June, 1979. Rev. John E. Adams is present pastor of Cross Creek Church.

From the Cross Creek Church and the Cross Creek Village Community, people have migrated to many parts of the mid-west and far west, and the churches which they have established in their new home communities can really be considered off-shoots of the Cross Creek Church. Also, in other nearby communities, congregations have been established by people who were former members of the Cross Creek Church: at Mt. Prospect near Hickory in 1825; at Burgettstown in 1849. When the First Presbyterian Church, now the Hillcrest Church was established, some of the early members having been people of Burgettstown who had belonged to the Cross Creek Church. The Pine Grove Presbyterian Church, which was established in 1849 and located near the site of Kidd's Mill on Scott's Run in present Jefferson Township, was founded by George Miller and other members of the Cross Creek Church who lived near Kidd's Mill. The Pine Grove congregation was never a large one, and after the death of George Miller in 1883, the membership declined to such an extent that the church became disorganized. Other families who became members of the Pine Grove Church were the Hays, Leeper, Pettibon, Lawther, Perrine, and Shaw families. This church never had a settled pastor but was served by supplies during its entire existence.

The Lower Buffalo Presbyterian Church at Independence was the next to be established in our Valley area, and it dates from about 1790. Its first minister was the Rev. James Hughes. He served the church for twenty-four years, after which he removed to Urbanna, Ohio, where he was pastor of the Presbyterian Church. He then became principal of the school at Oxford, Ohio, which afterwards became the University of Miami at that place. The Lower Buffalo Church was first located in Brooke County, West Virginia, near the old graveyard which bears the same name, but it was relocated at the western end of Independence Village in 1850.

In 1905 after Avella had been settled, a mission bible school and preaching station was set up in the new town under the direction of the pastor and people of the Lower Buffalo Church. Services were held for a time in the Buckeye Valley School building on the Cross Creek Township side of the Creek, and later after the Highland Avenue School building had been erected, services were held there. By 1910, the people who were attending these services believed that they were ready to organize a congregation and to build a church. Their efforts along these lines were successful: Washington Presbyters approved the organization of the new congregation, and the people, after a campaign of solicitation for funds found that they had sufficient money on hand to build the new church. The organization meeting was held on May 27, 1910, in Wiegmann's Hall in Avella. The new building was dedicated in a service held in it on November 19, 1911. In January, 1912, the Rev. B. F. Heany who had been serving the Lower Buffalo Church, and who had assisted in the organization of the Avella Church was installed as pastor at Avella. He served in the pastorate there for the next two years. The Avella Presbyterian congregation is still an active one and is the oldest Protestant church in this part of the valley. For a number of years, it has been in a joint pastoral arrangement with the Lower Buffalo Church and the present minister of the two churches is the Rev. Richard Brondyke.

Since many of the early immigrants to the Jefferson Township communities were from Ireland and adherents of John and Charles Wesley, they brought with them to their new homes the teachings of the Wesleys which eventually became known as Methodism. Early members of the Scott family were of this religious persuasion, and they soon began holding services in homes in the area in which they lived. Charles Scott, a lay preacher was one of their leaders. By the year 1814, these people felt that they were sufficiently strong in numbers for the organization of a church, and the Methodist Episcopal congregation was established at Bethel. As controversy over the matter of church government crept into the area of the Bethel congregation, a breach occurred in the organization which led to the founding here of a congregation of the Methodist Protestants. Thus two separate congregations were in existence here. They tried, for a time, to use the same building for holding their separate services, but this led to further discord. So the Methodist Protestants erected a building of their own, leaving the older building for the use of the Methodist Episcopal branch, who considered themselves the rightful owners. The map of Jefferson Township in the Caldwell Atlas of 1876 shows two churches standing on this hill of Bethel. This situation continued for a number of years, but the Methodist Episcopal congregation declined in numbers and their organization was terminated and the remaining members affiliated with the M. E. Church in Independence. This left the M. P. congregation in full possession of the property at Bethel and they continued there until services were discontinued a few years ago, when the remaining members began attending services at the sister church at Eldersville. The Eldersville Church had been organized as a Methodist Protestant congregation in 1829, at about the same time as the M. P. organization at Bethel. For many years, the Eldersville and Bethel churches have been in the same pastoral charge. The Rev. Jane Myers is presently serving the Eldersville Church as pastor.

In 1844, a division over the subject of slavery occurred in the Eldersville Church, and a conservative group, greatly opposed to slavery and slave-holding, formed a separate organization known as the Wesleyan Methodist Church. They erected a building in Eldersville, still known as the "White Church", and held meetings for several years. But their numbers were small and declined after the Civil War terminated the slavery issue, so the organization finally ceased to exist.

The Methodist Church at Independence was of the M. E. faith and organization. A sister church at Franklin in Brooke County, West Virginia, had been yoked with the Independence Church in a pastoral charge for many years. The two large branches of the Methodist Church effected a merger in 1939 ending a long period of controversy over the role of bishops in church government. Another merger in 1968 with the Evangelical United Brethren produced the present United Methodist Church which includes the present congregations at Eldersville and Independence.

In the early days of this century, many immigrants who came to Avella and the surrounding mining communities were Roman Catholics. A mission was established here in 1909. Since they had no church, Mass was said once a month, first at Scouvert's Hall, then Wiegmann's Hall, and finally at



Campbell's Theatre. A real church of their own was uppermost in their minds. It was a tremendous undertaking. These people were a poor people in a new land. Their religious background, however, helped them overcome many obstacles.

Finally construction of the parish church was begun in March of 1917. The cornerstone was laid on July 8, 1917. Father Clement Pfeifer, OFM, was instrumental in getting the church started and with the fortitude and zeal of these new immigrants to our country their dream was realized.

The church was called St. Michael's. Father William Merz was appointed as the first resident pastor in 1918. There have been many pastors at St. Michaels including the now bishop of Pittsburgh, Bishop Vincent Leonard. Presently serving the parish is Father John Michaels, who has been there since June of 1971.

Some of the early names from the registry of the church are names still familiar in the area: Rector, Brozier, Rohr, Furiga, Bogo, Ugron, and Rotellini.

With the building of St. Michael's Church in our valley another part of the "old country" mixed with the "new country" and over the years this strong union has flourished. It is little wonder that in this, our bi-centennial year, we realize how much religion means to the peoples of our land.

The founders of what is now St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church were originally from the Carpathian Mountain region of Austria-Hungary. They had heard of Avella and its surrounding areas by correspondence. When they arrived here, they found the scenic countryside very similar to their homeland. Here in their new abode they found work, food, and freedom. There was no place, however, to worship God in the ritual that was a part of them and the "old ways". The year was 1916.

They would have to build their own church if they were to have a place for religious expressions. After these immigrant families realized the need for a church, their next step was to have a priest come and offer mass. Wiegmann's Hall served this purpose. When new quarters had to be located, they moved to Buckeye School which was located near the first site of St. John's Church.

Property was purchased in 1919 for a church. This building still stands on the Avella-Atlasburg road. Early names connected with and instrumental in getting the church started were: Rusinko, Haverlack, Koczur, Machuzak, Popvich, and Puhlik. Father Staurostowsky became the first resident pastor of the new church upon its completion.

With an ever increasing membership, it was decided to build a bigger church. In November of 1960 a fund raising campaign was started. Father Paul Bovankovich was pastor at this time.

May 13, 1962 witnessed the dedication of a beautiful new edifice hallowed for the worship of God.

Other churches of our valley area include the Free Methodist Church at Avella whose house of worship is located at P & W in Independence Township, and the Pentecost Lutheran congregation who took over ownership of the Browntown school building in Avella after it was no longer used for school purposes. This building was remodeled for the use of the congregation and was dedicated on August 30, 1964. The congregation has been ministered to by the pastors of Lutheran churches from surrounding areas. Mr. Andrew Sporka helped form the first Lutheran Church in this area in 1913 when eight other families moved here. These families were: John Kubachka, Sr., Andrew Suvada, Andrew Mlinarcik, John Madera, Sr., George Minda, Sr., Andrew Kovalcik, Joseph Stefka, Sr., and John Strichko. Many of the children and grandchildren of these families still reside in the area.

Churches of the Cross Creek Valley which served their time and have ceased to exist would include the Pine Grove Presbyterian Church on Scott's Run in Jefferson Township, already mentioned: the Mt. Hope United Presbyterian Church on Mt. Hope Ridge in Independence Township, already spoken of in the sketch on that community, and the Patterson Mills Associate Reformed Church, which was organized in 1865. This latter church was composed of former adherents of the old Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, which, as a separate denomination, was merged with the Seceders in 1858 to form the United Presbyterian Church of North America. However, during the stirring times of the Civil War, some of the members of the United Presbyterian Church did not agree with their church on the subject of slavery, being more in sympathy with the attitude of the south than with their brothers in the U. P. Church. As a result, the small church was organized at Patterson Mills as a protest in favor of their point of view. Preaching services were held in the local school building during the years of the war, and in 1865, the congregation was organized and a church building erected at Patterson Mills, adjoining the school property. The congregation was always small and, like all such protesting groups, when the war was over, the feelings over issues cooled and the congregation was soon disbanded.

#### Schools of the Cross Creek Valley

As the early settlers in our valley soon made plans for establishing places of public worship in the various communities, so they were not long in providing some sort of education for the younger members of their families. It is a fact that much of the earliest instruction of this nature was given in connection with the churches already listed here.

At Cross Creek Village, we are told, the first school sessions were held in the old log church building erected in 1779, when Joseph Patterson was



the teacher. Robert McCready taught at an early date in Wells Fort, and as the years went by, a number of schools were opened in various parts of the valley. One of these was on the former Welch farm near Mt. Hope Church in Independence Township, and another was located near the stream, Cross Creek, in the vicinity of present Penowa.

Generally speaking, these early schools were of the "subscription" variety, which means that they were usually sponsored by someone in a community who would furnish a building and possibly engage a teacher for the school, which would be attended by the neighborhood children whose parents "subscribed" toward meeting the expenses of the school. The teacher was often a student from one of the colleges of the state who took time off from his own education to earn some money, and then after a year or two of teaching, he would resume his own schooling. Early school buildings were usually of log construction, either built for the purpose or diverted to this use for a limited time. Few of such schools were conducted for very long periods of time, and after one would close in one location, another might spring up some distance away, depending on the need for the school.

Instructional materials were few in number and the utmost use was made of such as were available. At times, when no school was in operation in any nearby locality, no doubt many of the skills of learning were conducted in the home by the father or mother or an older brother or sister, who had already secured some education.

Secondary education was furnished in several instances in Washington County when a local minister would open a school for such advanced instruction. Such a school was conducted in the upper Cross Creek Valley in present Hopewell Township by the Rev. Joseph Smith, first pastor of the Cross Creek and Buffalo Presbyterian Churches.

Publicly supported education, as we know it today, did not begin in Pennsylvania until the passage of the first public school law in 1834. The issue of having schools supported by a taxing of the people was a hard-fought one in this state. There were few who didn't want the education, but there were many who did not want to help pay the cost. As the issue was debated in the General Assembly (Legislature) at Harrisburg, one of its strong supporters was from the Cross Creek Valley in the person of the Honorable William Patterson of Patterson Mills. He lived at the old fulling mill property and had conducted that mill in his early years.

Mr. Patterson worked hard to get the public school bill passed, and after it became law, he worked just as hard to get the local districts to adopt it. The law provided for setting up a school district in each township in the state, also a tax on real estate for the support of the schools, and it gave local townships the option of accepting or rejecting the provisions of the law, in so far as their own municipality was concerned. In the local voting on the law, Cross Creek Township, which then included Jefferson accepted the law's provisions, but Hopewell Township, which then included Independence rejected it. However, after some changes had been made in the law, all townships in Washington County and eventually, in the state voted in favor of accepting the law, and the establishment of our public school system proceeded.



The Cross Creek Valley, being so largely rural, had at first local one-room schools, located in "districts" within the townships, so that all children would be within walking distance of a school building and a reasonable walking distance was usually considered to be two miles.

For this set-up Cross Creek Township required ten buildings which were numbered and named as follows:

No. 1 Nosco Hall (1938)  
No. 2 Bunker Hill (1963)  
No. 3 Cemetery (1963)

( No. 2 and No. 3 at Cross Creek Village )

No. 4 White Oak (1913)  
No. 5 West Point (1963)

(No. 4 and No. 5 at Patterson Mills)

No. 6 Willow Valley (1944)  
No. 7 Bushy Rock (1936)  
No. 8 Beech Knob (1945)  
No. 9 Limestone Lane or  
Muddy Lane (1939)  
No. 10 Buckeye Valley (1942)

The years in parentheses following the name of the school indicate when the school was permanently closed.

These ten schools comprised the school system of Cross Creek Township from 1834 to around 1900 or a little later. The two schools at Cross Creek were combined into one and a two-room building erected in 1874 on a one acre tract of land adjoining the Cross Creek Church lot. The Cross Creek Township High School was established in 1896 to succeed the old Cross Creek Academy which had been established by the Rev. John Stockton, pastor of the Cross Creek Church in 1828. The Academy had had an erratic existence over the years, and its sessions had been held in a building erected on the church grounds in 1858. During its 35 years of existence, the Cross Creek Township High School was held in the old two-room Academy building to which in later years had been added two portable class rooms as enrollment in the high school classes increased.

Also in 1873, the West Point School at Patterson Mills had been enlarged to two rooms, and a two-story school building had been erected on the school lot there adjacent to the grounds of the Patterson Mills Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

No further significant changes were made until the influx of population in the early years of this century made an expansion of the school system necessary. The Buckeye Valley School was enlarged to two rooms and a two-story building erected. Then about 1921 a two-room building was erected in

Browntown on a lot adjoining the old Wells stone house. This was later augmented by putting up another building of one room on the same lot. These five rooms at Buckeye Valley and at Browntown constituted what was then known as the Avella School in Cross Creek Township.

At Cedar Grove children of the families who moved in there at the opening of the mine, for a year or two, walked to the old White Oak School one mile up the road toward Cross Creek Village. The White Oak School was closed at the end of 1912-13 school term, and a two-room building was erected at Cedar Grove on property donated by the coal company. After a year or two of use, this building burned down, and it was replaced by a similar building on about the same location. Later, a three-room building was built about 300 feet from the two-room building. This provided Cedar Grove with five rooms of school space within easy walking distance of all the houses in the community.

Meantime, the old two-room building at West Point (Patterson Mills) became unsafe and it was replaced by the three room building which was used until the Cross Creek Township schools were closed in 1963 when the merged Avella School District had been formed. And in the meantime, the old two-room two-story building at Cross Creek was replaced by the one-story, two-room building used until 1963 and which had been purchased by Mr. Roy Beam and remodeled by him for his home. The Cross Creek Township High School was closed in 1929, and the students from the township attended the high schools at Hickory, Burgettstown, or Avella.

As the grade schools at Cross Creek, Cedar Grove, Patterson Mills, and Avella were being put into operation and as better roads enabled the school district to transport the pupils to these grade schools from the rural areas, the one-room schools were gradually "phased out" and permanently closed. The dates following the school names in the table indicate when each school was closed due to consolidation. The last of these rural schools to be closed was the Beech Knob School in 1945, and Mrs. Hazel Cooke was the last to teach in that building.

Following the closing of these old one-room schools, since their usefulness to the school district seemed to have ceased, the properties were offered for sale. In the cases of the Beech Knob, Bushy Rock, White Oak, and Buckeye Valley schools, these buildings had been located on farms where the land for the school had been secured from the land owners by "easements" for as long as the land was used for school purposes. So at these schools, the buildings were sold and were removed from the premises, and the land then reverted back to the original owner or to the person who then owned the farm from which the school had been taken. The rental for these properties was very small, as stated in the contract when the land was taken over by the school district. In one case this was "an annual rent of one grain of wheat to be paid on demand." It is likely that in most cases the rental was never demanded. The property was leased to the school districts on such liberal terms since most farmers were glad to furnish land for a school because it was a great convenience for them to have the schoolhouse located nearby.



The schools at Willow Valley, Nosco Hall, and Muddy Lane were located on lots which had been purchased outright by the school district before the schools had been built. When these properties were disposed of, the building and the land went together so the buildings remained on the land, and they have in these three cases been remodeled by their owners into commodious residences. The old Willow Valley School is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Zatta; Mr. and Mrs. Albert Fowler live in the former Muddy Lane Schoolhouse, and Mr. and Mrs. William McCloskey live in the old Nosco Hall School.

The grade schools already mentioned at Cross Creek, Cedar Grove, Patterson Mills, and Avella served the school district of Cross Creek Township from 1945 until 1954 when this district entered the Avella District jointure with Independence Township and West Middletown Borough. The same schools remained open under the direction of the jointure until they were finally closed in 1963 when the jointure became a merged district. All pupils of Cross Creek Township now attend the schools of the Avella School District.

The schools of Jefferson Township were from 1834 to 1853 a part of the Cross Creek Township school system. In the latter year, Jefferson became a separate municipality and eventually it became a separate school district. That area, too, had a system consisting of the following one-room schools:

No. 1	Miller	(1921)
No. 2	Melvin	(1922)
No. 3	Eldersville	
No. 4	Coles	(1930)
No. 5	Gardner	(1922)
No. 6	Lee	(1928)
No. 7	Hanlin	(1929)

As can be noted from the names of these schools, all bore the name of the nearby family farm on which or from which the land was taken for the building of the schoolhouse. The schools were so geographically located as to be accessible to all children in the township, and they constituted a school system in Jefferson until the influx of population into the township caused the demand for more school space. The first school to be changed was the one-room school at Eldersville enlarged to two rooms and later to a three-room building. Then with the gradual closing of the outlying one-room schools and the coming of the miners' families, still more room was needed; so the lower floor of Centennial Hall (of the Odd Fellows Order) was used for school purposed for several years; and at the height of the miners' population at Eldersville, two additional rooms in the Shintown mining camp were leased and used for a few years.

The opening of the mine at Bertha in the northeastern corner of the township called for the erection of a five-room school building used there until the closing of the mine then abandoned, and the building was sold. The coal development in the southern end of the township caused the need for more school rooms, so the one-room Miller School was closed in 1921 and a



two-room building erected at Turney, with a second two-room building added the following year. To supplement this four-room set-up, a one-room portable building was located at the Penobscot mine camp in 1930 and was used until 1936 when it was closed and the building was sold. By 1930 all the original one-room buildings, except Eldersville, had been closed. The erection of the new brick school at Eldersville together with the use of the old frame building made possible a completely graded eight-room consolidated school. The school at Bertha Mine continued until 1936 when the school was closed and the remaining pupils transported to the Eldersville School. Enrollment at the Turney School declined with the closing of the Penobscot and Jefferson mines until in the last two years operation at Turney, only two rooms were used, and these were closed in 1944. From that time, all elementary pupils have been transported to the Eldersville School. Secondary students from the southern end of the township attended school at Avella in Independence Township, while those from the rest of the township attended the Burgettstown-Smith Township High School at Burgettstown.

When consolidation of the school districts of Washington County was first proposed, the county plan called for one school jointure for the school districts in the northwestern corner of Washington county with one large junior-senior high school to be located centrally in the area. This plan did not meet with general approval, so the result was the formation of three jointures, viz, the Burgettstown Area, the Avella Area, and Fort Cherry District. In this set-up the southern end of Jefferson Township would logically fit in with the Avella Area, while it was decided by the Jefferson Township school board to go into the Burgettstown jointure. Since there was no provision for dividing a school district under the consolidation plan, all of Jefferson Township became a part of the Burgettstown Area, and inconvenient though it is from the standpoint of transportation, the elementary pupils of southern Jefferson Township attend the Eldersville School while the secondary students attend Burgettstown High School.

Upon the closing of the one-room schools of Jefferson Township, the following disposition was made of the school buildings:

No. 1 was moved to Meadowcroft Village and reconstructed there by Albert and Delvin Miller.

No. 2 was sold to Gaylord Martin and removed from the lot.

No. 3, the old Eldersville building, has been torn down.

No. 4 this old building had been sold and torn down.

No. 5 the building has been destroyed and a modern residence had been erected on the lot.

No. 6 was sold and the building remodeled into a residence.

No. 7 had been sold to G. C. Fulton who has remodeled it and is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Fulton.

No high school or academy had ever been conducted in Jefferson Township. However, for many years from 1881 to 1915, a first class summer normal school was conducted at Eldersville for training of teachers and for the public schools; and this school was attended by students from over a wide area. Various instructors were employed in this school including Messrs. C. R. Bane, J. L. Grubbs, R. P. Stevenson, W. C. Martin, N. R. Criss, A. G. McCracken, Harry Smith, Harry G. Noah, Samuel Amspoker, and C. V. Melvin and Misses Hallie B. Criss and Mabel Reed; but perhaps the best known of all was Professor Elza Scott, who was the moving spirit in the school for a long period of time. The school was operated for the purpose of preparing prospective teachers for passing the county examinations for teaching certificates, and it was instrumental in preparing and sending into the teaching profession many teachers who served in schools in northwestern Washington County.

Until the separation of what is now Independence Township from the original Hopewell Township in 1856, the Independence Township Schools were a part of the school system of the parent township. This area then had the following one-room schools:

No. 1	Independence	(1943)
No. 2	Manchester	(1929)
No. 3	Fallen Timber	(1937)
No. 4	Boyd	(1936)
No. 5	Scott	(1935)
No. 6	Jamison	(1938)

As in Jefferson Township, so here in this school district, for four of these schools, names used were those of nearby farm owners who had furnished the property upon which the one-room schoolhouse was built. No. 1 was, of course, named for the village in which it was located, while No. 3 took its name from a natural disaster which took place many years ago when a tornado swept across the area creating a path of fallen timber, from which the name was given to the school.

These one-room schools comprised the school system for this township for many years, but like its sister townships, this one, too, had "growing pains" as a result of the influx of people following the building of the Wabash Railroad and the opening of the coal mines. The one-room Independence School was enlarged to two rooms to provide for the children of the village and the surrounding farms. For a short time pupils in the "new" town of Avella crossed the creek and attended the Buckeye Valley School in Cross Creek Township, but when this school became crowded, the Highland Avenue School was built on the Independence Township side of Cross Creek.

To provide for the increased population in the Penowa area of this township, a two-room school called Waverley was opened there. At the P & W (Meadowlands) mining camp a four-room graded school was opened, and on Avella Heights in 1922 a brick building was erected to provide space for a junior high school which was to become a full-fledged high school in later years. With this development at Avella and the building of good roads to all parts of the township, closing of the original one-room



schools proceeded; the date of closing each school is indicated in parentheses in the table on page 30.

In the movement toward consolidation in the Cross Creek Valley, it was recognized that the meeting of roads from all directions at Avella pointed to that town as a "natural" focal point for the planned consolidation. So, the name Avella was given to the jointure formed in 1953 by the school districts of Cross Creek and Independence Townships and West Middletown Borough, to be joined in 1958 by the school district of Hopewell Township. Under the final arrangements made in the merged district which evolved from the jointure, a new junior-senior high school was built along Route 50, three miles east of Avella in Cross Creek Township. The former junior-senior high school building on Avella Heights became an elementary school with the Highland Avenue and Buffalo Village schools being still used at the present time.

Thus as have most other school districts in Pennsylvania, the schools of the Cross Creek Valley have kept up with the times by modernizing their organization, and by providing graded instruction for "all the children of all the people" within this area, and this now includes kindergarten as well as grades 1 through 12. The junior-senior high school is a modern structure providing adequate classroom space, laboratories, library, and cafeteria as well as auditorium and gymnasium space. Agricultural instruction is given at the school as well as industrial arts, home economics, and commercial subjects; and in addition, a select number of students of grades 9 to 12 attend the vocational-technical school maintained at McConnell's Mills in Chartiers Township. An average of around ninety students are graduated from the senior high school each year.

The administrative staff of the Avella school system consists of Raymond Fioroni, Superintendent, Robert Loughry, high school principal, and Charles Gersna, elementary principal. All of these men hold doctorates in education.

In closing this sketch on the schools of the Cross Creek Valley, it seems only just to remark that the "unsung heroes" in our local schools have been those men and women who have over many years served faithfully and unselfishly and without monetary remuneration as the school directors operating our schools from 1834 until the present time. These people have had to consider many factors in the operation of our schools; they have had to make many decisions based on these factors; they have had to take many actions many of which were unpopular at the time. They have bought land and erected buildings; they have employed teachers and other needed workers; They have borrowed large amounts of money and have taken the necessary actions to see that this money has been repaid; they have tried to conduct our school systems in a business-like manner; and yet in many cases, the only recognition which they have received has been abject criticism or an eventual grudging admission that they probably took the proper actions.



So, to requite for this lack of appreciation, let us here and now honor the memories of these dedicated people who have gone on, and before it is too late, say a belated and hearty Thank You! to those who are still with us, and especially to those who are now "bearing the burden and heat of the day"!!

### The Granges of the Cross Creek Valley

Following the years of the Civil War in the late 1860's all types of human activity started moving forward as the nation began giving increased attention to new activities in industry, commerce, and finance. These fields had all received a great impetus during the war years, and so they began seeking new avenues of expansion as the reunited nation took on a new lease on life.

Agriculture, too, had been changed by the war as demands for increased productivity and new methods for obtaining it came into being. But the nation was not giving much attention to the field of agriculture which was being allowed for the most part to fend for itself. It was then in the year 1867 when the order, Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known as the Grange, took up the solution of the problems of the farmers of our country with a view of doing something for this important branch of the life of the United States.

The National Grange organized by the Seven Founders of the order, led by Oliver Hudson Kelly, dates from December 4, 1867, when a full set of officers were elected and constituted as The National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry.

The oldest grange in Washington County is right here in our area: The Independence Grange No. 179 was organized on March 6, 1874 by Asa Battles, and twenty-six members signed the charter. Since that time the organization has met regularly in the village of Independence. Its present meeting place is the former Independence school building, but a new building has been erected along Route 50 between Independence and Avella.

In a little over a year following its organization, this grange opened a store for its members at Independence, this being managed by Marion Liggett, a charter member. One of the purposes of the grange was to do co-operative buying and selling for its members.

On March 23, 1974, Independence Grange observed its Centennial Anniversary with a dinner and program held in the Avella Junior-Senior High School building. This meeting was largely attended by members of this and neighboring granges of Washington County and other nearby areas and by some of the officers of the Pennsylvania State Grange. State Master A. Wayne Readinger made the principal address. Mrs. Rheba Brownlee was then serving as master of this grange. At this anniversary meeting,

recognition was accorded Mrs. W. B. Gist, a member for sixty-six years and who had served the grange as secretary for the last thirty-five years. Also, fifty-five other members were recognized for twenty-five or more years of membership. The present master of Independence Grange is Rheba Brownlee.

Within five months of the organization of this "first" grange in Washington County, the second came into being at Eldersville when Jefferson Grange No. 314 was organized on August 7, 1874. This grange in 1876 erected Centennial Hall for a meeting place, and this was its "home" for several years. Then the building was sold to the Odd Fellows Lodge, and the grange meetings were held in Coles and Lees Schoolhouses and in homes of the members. For many years, now, meetings have again been held in the hall. Jefferson Grange is considered to be a strong, active organization and its meetings are well attended.

On August 7, 1974, the members of Jefferson Grange held a Centennial Anniversary meeting at Drovers' Inn on Wellsburg Pike in Brooke County, West Virginia. This was a dinner meeting and it was presided over by Marion Butler, then serving as master of the grange. W. M. Traux, a sixty-year member was recognized for his long membership and for his outstanding contributions to this grange during his many years' affiliation. Two deceased members were memorialized for long periods of service as secretary: Mrs. Annie Martin for thirty-eight years of service and Mr. Louis Wiegmann for seventeen years. Mrs. Idell Wiegmann the present secretary has served for the past twenty years. Marion Butler is the present master of Jefferson Grange.

Cross Creek Grange No. 954 is the next grange in point of age in the Cross Creek Valley. Originally organized on May 22, 1890, its first meetings were held in the Muddy Lane School, and Mr. Charles Campbell Rea served as first master with Lulu B. Reed as secretary. After a few years of activity, this grange became inactive and no meetings were held from January 9, 1897 until August 3, 1911. On this latter date, a meeting was held again in Muddy Lane School and a reorganization was effected.

Later meetings were held in rooms in buildings at Rea Station. In 1915, the grange members began discussing building their own grange hall. This resulted in the erection of the building which has been the home of this grange ever since. The first meeting in the new hall was on January 2, 1916. This hall stands on land purchased from Mr. Charles M. Rea. The older members of this grange now include Mrs. May Brownlee Miller, a charter member, belonging since 1911 and Mr. and Mrs. A. D. White who have to date sixty-four years of membership. A number of other members have fairly long periods of membership here. Mrs. Mary Louise Hunter is serving as master of this grange.

Cross Creek Village Grange No. 1751 is the most recently organized of the granges in our valley area, its charter being dated in 1917 with its first meeting having been held on December 7th of that year. Its meeting place was in the hall over the general store in Cross Creek Village, but when this building was burned in December, 1924, the grange lost all of its

equipment in the fire. The Washington County Pomona and neighboring granges assisted this grange in restoring its lost properties. Since that time the meeting place has been in the Cross Creek Presbyterian Church, but the community building in the village has been purchased by the grange and is being reconditioned for future use. The master of this grange is Edith Herstine. Cross Creek Village Grange observed its 50th anniversary on June 23, 1967. Its sole surviving charter member is H. Montford Lee now with a membership record of nearly fifty-nine years.

In the years since the organization of these granges in our valley area, many changes have occurred in agricultural methods and practices in the community, state, and nation. One hundred years ago farm work was done entirely by horsepower while today practically all farms are well mechanized and use up-to-date gasoline or diesel-powered equipment. The patterns of "cropping" on farms have changed from old rotations of crops to new methods of planting and fertilizing and the introduction of new plants and crops. Livestock raising has changed, too, from a preponderance of sheep on the farms to present practices where few, if any, sheep are kept, and beef cattle are raised or dairying is carried on.

As these changes have occurred so have the services to farm people performed by the grange changed drastically, too, with much less emphasis on co-operative buying and selling and more attention given to furnishing up-to-date legislation on the state and national levels. The grange, too, is looked upon as an important social organization for people living in rural areas not all of whom in this day and age are actual farmers. It is felt that the granges of the Cross Creek Valley have made substantial contributions to the welfare of the residents of the valley who have been affiliated with them. The members of these granges look forward confidently to their future usefulness as community organizations.

#### Meadowcroft Village

Meadowcroft Village has been developed by Albert and Delvin Miller on a scenic portion of their old farm three miles west of Avella in Washington County, Pennsylvania.

This family farm was originally settled by their great-great-grandfather, George Miller, Sr. in 1795, and the original patent was a Virginia land grant. Now composed of more than 800 acres, the farm had been harness and race horse land since the early 1800's, and the home of many trotters and pacers. The Miller brothers created Meadowcroft Village in an effort to preserve the things so common to their rural childhood but now rapidly passing from the scene.

And so began the acquisitions, restorations, relocations, and reconstructions necessary to the development of this dispersed rural community of America's past - Meadowcroft Village to date numbering more than thirty



structures many of which house permanent exhibits. Many historically significant items have been collected for exhibition. All are authentic items from the American past and many are rare.

The name, Meadowcroft, is derived from a combination of Meadowland, Delvin Miller's present horse farm and Bancroft Farm, name of the original Miller holdings. Meadowcroft Village serves not only as a living memorial to the American heritage, but also as a study in wildlife and conservation. The village is now being developed and operated as an educational and historical community by the Meadowcroft Foundation, a non-profit corporation.

Some of the buildings already standing at Meadowcroft Village are: the Miller log house, the Miller one-room school, a one hundred year old covered bridge, two general stores: The Fowler Store from nearby West Virginia and The Sugar Loaf Store from New York state, the Hindman Blacksmith Shop from Cross Creek Village, the Beall Carriage Barn from Brooke County, West Virginia, and replicas of a trapper's cabin and a frontier blockhouse, and the Patterson Log Barn originally built by William Patterson, a veteran of the Revolutionary War.

Another aspect of the Meadowcroft Village community and an important part of our local history is the archeological "dig" being conducted in a location above the iron bridge over Cross Creek as one approaches the village. Here students in archeology of the University of Pittsburgh under the supervision of James Adovasio, PH. D., are conducting an organized excavation of a rock shelter area at this point. Results to this time indicate that this may be one of the oldest camping areas of prehistoric man on the North American continent. This project, begun in 1973, is being continued this Bicentennial Year. Several other sites in the Cross Creek Valley are also being explored this year.

#### Soccer in Cross Creek Valley

In the Avella area community, not including scholastic sports, the game of soccer definitely created the greatest amount of enthusiasm and activity of all other competitive games. The early 20's when coal mining here was at its height brought about competition to the extent that here there were as many as 4 soccer teams.

These teams faded and this game was not revived until the late 30's when the Polar Star Club sponsored a team. This was discontinued, also; but in 1938-39, Morris Browarsky organized and coached a junior team, 18 maximum age. That year the group won the league title, the West Penn Championship, and the national championship. The National Title was won again in 1940, but the inability to field sufficient players resulted in the game's demise in this area.

History of National Slovak Society  
Assembly #588 of Avella, Pa.

Assembly #588 of the National Slovak Society was organized and received its charter June 21, 1907, with 18 charter members on its rolls. Listed among the family names of the original charter members were the Kubackas, Stefkas, Sporkas, Mlinarciks, Chuchiaks, Stackos, Sweders, Brinskys, Cepres, Juranek (Urnick), and Furigas. Of the original charter members only one member survives, Suzanne Stefka.

In 1913, the youth branch of the NSS was chartered. From the original 18 charter members, the Avella branch reached its zenith of membership in 1922 when its rolls, both adult and juvenile, numbered in excess of 400 members. Since then, many families and relatives have scattered throughout the country and transferred to other NSS branches and the present roster numbers 175 members.

The NSS is a non-sectarian fraternal benefit society that has its home office in Pittsburgh with branch lodges located in 27 states and Canada. The society promotes good citizenship, promotes athletic activities, aids its college student members financially, helps the orphaned, widowed, and needy as well as paying death benefits to its members. Since its inception, the society has paid out in excess of 43 million dollars to its members in benefits.

#### Slovak School

A Slovak school was held in Avella from about 1925 to the late 1930's. The school was located in the old Buckeye School that stood where the Frank Soltesz, Sr. home presently stands. Classes were held five days a week and three hours a day all summer. The first teacher was Paster Manka from the Lutheran Church. Students were taught to read, write, and speak the Slovak language.

#### The Avella Sportsmen's Association

Organized in 1945, the Avella Sportsmen's Association became affiliated with Washington County Sportsmen's Association and the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Associations.

During the first year, the Avella Sportsmen built a pheasant pen on the Joe Kowcheck farm with an initial capacity of fifty birds. The results were very successful under the guidance of Carl C. Stainbrook. The following year the club enlarged its pheasant pen to a capacity of three hundred birds. Game Protector Carl Stainbrook was promoted to Division Supervisor. Replacing him was Glenn Kitchen. Under his guidance the club received three hundred birds a year until 1950.

In 1950 the pheasant pen was moved to the Henry Georgetti farm and the pen was enlarged to a five hundred bird capacity. As a result of a transfer of game protectors, Ray Doerzbacher moved to our area. With the co-operation of Mr. Doerzbacher and the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the sportsmen and hunters enjoyed some of the best hunting in the area.

The club was very active from its inception in 1945 until 1955. During that time approximately four thousand seven hundred pheasants were released. Other activities of the club included monthly sport films open to members and their families and lectures by game commission personnel. A safety zone was maintained for ten years around the former high school building for the safety and protection of the students. Trap schools were also part of the organized activities of the club. All streams in the area were stocked with a variety of game fish. Approximately five hundred rabbits were purchased and released on lands open to public hunting. Deer feeding caravans were organized with the co-operation of the Aero Game Feeding Club of Black Monshannon Airport.

The results of the Avella Sportsmen's Association's activities culminated with a commendation of excellence from the Pennsylvania Game Commission.



## DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF EMERGENCY SERVICES IN THE AREA

### Avella Volunteer Fire Department

As was customary in most communities before the development and availability of modern means of fire-fighting, a loosely co-operative spirit existed among the men of the community. When a fire broke out, a bucket brigade was formed and through this and such other means as salvage removal of possessions, the citizens did the best they could to assist fire-endangered people. Although some forward-thinking citizens had already envisioned an organized and equipped fire department for the community, the major fire of 1924 which destroyed several downtown structures galvanized the thinking into formal planning. (This fire destroyed the area currently occupied by DiBacco's Tavern, Spataro's P. X. Market, etc., which at that time included Brozier's Garage, Karabino's Dry Cleaning Establishment, De Filippi's Barber Shop, and Konecheck's Hotel.) Our men were assisted by fire trucks from Burgettstown and Wellsburg Volunteer Fire Departments.

The newly formed Avella Fire Department was organized in 1929 and equipped with a two wheel hose cart secured by Mr. Morris Browarsky from the Oakdale V. F. D. This organization was officially chartered in 1930 and began meeting officially in various places about town.

The hose reel was housed in the garage (still existing) which was owned at that time by W. A. Barnes and is now owned by Mrs. Robert Thompson located next to the house of James Wiegmann near the base of the Avella Heights Hill Road. The hose reel was transported to fires by a strong individual sitting on the back of a private automobile such as the one owned by Mr. Albert Bogo.

Another big fire on Main Street occurred in 1932 which destroyed Ress's Market and Butcher Shop, once again, outside volunteer companies assisted our laboring men.

In 1936, the local firemen purchased their first major piece of equipment - an open cab Ford pumper. This truck was converted into a tanker in later years and has seen many years of fine service with the department. Recently a great deal of effort and work by younger firemen was put into restoring this fine antique, and it not only wins many prizes in parades but could assist at fires if necessary.

Also during the 1930's the fire department purchased an old school building on Highland Avenue from St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church for a meeting hall and equipment storage. The second floor was used for the live-in caretakers, the first floor for a meeting and community function hall, and the basement for equipment storage. (Extensive excavation of dirt was required in order to prepare the basement.)

As the firemen - backed by the community - were able to raise more funds, they began to purchase more fire-fighting equipment to better protect the area. In 1940, the Packard Roadster was purchased and converted into a squad car. (Also, in 1940, the first dress uniforms were bought.)

The next new piece of equipment was the 1948 Ford pumper, (which has since been sold to help a new fire department in Greene County get its start).

A 1956 Ford pumper was purchased new as well as a 1963 Chevrolet rescue wagon. The rescue wagon, especially, has made its mark on the community in that the fire department used it to administer timely oxygen and first aid to a number of our citizens until the formation of the Avella Area Ambulance Association. Even now, this truck serves as an unofficial back-up ambulance as well as its primary function as a rescue truck at fires, etc.

During the late 1960's the fire department purchased a used gasoline truck which, after hard work on the part of some firemen, now serves ably as a 1200 gallon tanker. This truck is especially useful in the fighting of brush fires and in supplying of water in areas where there are no nearby ponds or fire hydrants.

The department's newest piece of equipment is a 1970 Ford tilt-cab pumper with foam generator and smoke evacuation equipment.

With the prospect of increasing equipment and fire-fighting capabilities, the firemen began planning a new, modern fire station during the early 1950's. After the purchase of approximately five acres of land from Mr. Samuel Campbell across the highway from the old bank building, a new firehall was erected through much hard work and almost total involvement of the community. The new firehall was dedicated in 1958.

Although it is obvious that the primary mission of the Avella Volunteer Fire Department is fire fighting and the minimizing of fire damage, the department has evolved into a many-purposed organization. Some of the more serious of these include: rescue operations, search for missing children and adults, and pumping of basements during floods. Other community centered activities include control of parking at high school functions, an annual bazaar with parade, Halloween parade, annual banquet, hosting of primary and general elections, and teen-age dances as well as other "amusement".

The active members of this department realize that training is a never-ending process due to the fact that household and commercial chemicals and fuels lead to more treacherous and dangerous fires than before imagined. Most fires today contain the dangers of noxious fumes and "flare ups". In order to protect themselves in their duties and to minimize damage to property, new methods are learned at fire schools, and new equipment such as air packs are routinely used.



It may be well to note that at 2:30 a.m. on a cold night when the fire siren sounds, certain of your neighbors have enough compassion for their fellowman to roll out of bed and answer that alarm.

#### Avella Area Ambulance Association

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, the Avella area became part of a general trend in emergency care in that funeral homes began to cancel their ambulance services. At the same time, it was recognized that the ambulance services entailed more than the mere transportation of ill and injured to a hospital - on the scene care became recognized as critical.

In May of 1970, the local townships joined most other Washington County municipalities in contraction with the "National Ambulance Service" to provide emergency services. In October of that year, the contract failed, and the supervisors of Independence, Cross Creek, and Hopewell Townships met in order to form an ambulance commission. The first public meeting was held on November 16, 1970, and rapid progress was made from that point with citizen representatives forming the bulk of the commission.

On January 14, 1971, the first Red Cross first aid course was begun with 20 potential ambulance attendants completing the course. Since then all ambulance attendants have also been certified in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (external heart massage with artificial respiration). Also eight of the attendants have been certified as emergency medical technicians.

While the fire department rescue truck was available during the early days, in November of 1971, a used Cadillac ambulance was pressed into service until delivery of the newly purchased ambulance on March 2, 1972. The new ambulance, a van-type Chevrolet, is completely equipped for most rescue and emergency procedures and has been used in many difficult situations. Some of the more modern equipment includes tractions splints, extraction equipment, emergency lighting, internal and portable oxygen, and direct radio capabilities for both the driver and attendants to contact hospitals. In the event of an accident so serious that our extraction equipment weren't sufficient, Washington County has several rescue trucks with Hurst power devices on 24-hour alert.

During the first year of service, the association had 570 subscribers and answered 102 calls for help. In the current year, we have approximately the same number of subscribers, and it is anticipated that approximately 150 calls will be answered.

The ambulance association is incorporated under the laws of Pennsylvania and is administered by a commission of citizens.



## Ethnic Changes in the Cross Creek Valley

With the coming of the Wabash Railroad through the Cross Creek Valley in the early years of the Twentieth Century, the ethnic character of the valley began to change rapidly. After the early settlement by Alexander Wells, who was probably of English descent, and by the Doddridges and Manchesters, also English, Scotch-Irish families such as the Vances, Pattersons, Marquises, Campbells, McCreadys, Marshalls, and the Browns, Reas, Liggetts, Buxtons and Coles, Moores, McConnells, Lees, Scotts, Melvins, Walkers, Hannas, Buchanans came into the area in everincreasing numbers until the valley was pretty well populated, with almost all of the land occupied by these families, and their descendants continued to live on the land which their ancestors had settled.

In 1876, the Browns and Campbells, then well established in the present Avella area, had as neighbors such names as Clemens, Cassidy, Gillespie, Patterson, Bushfield, Brownlee, Smith, Liggett and Buxton. But by 1906, a map of the area shows land of some of these old families already in the possession of coal companies, such as the Meadowlands Coal Company, Pryor Coal Company, Pittsburgh and Southwestern Coal Company. Ess-Cee Coal Company, and farther down the valley to the west, the Waverley and Penobscot Coal Companies. This shows that interest in the opening of coal mines in the area closely followed the building of the railroad in the valley.

In the building of the railroad itself, much immigrant labor was used. The railroad bed was built by what would now seem to be very primitive methods, since actual horsepower was used in operating the plows and scoops in moving soil as "cuts" and "fills" were made and as the roadbed was being prepared. Also, this involved much hand labor in "pick and shovel" work, so there was a demand for cheap manual labor. This was supplied to the contractors by the importation of laborers from southern Europe, mostly from Italy. Agents would be sent to the "old country" to enlist these men, and they would be brought by ship to New York City, then by rail to either Burgettstown or Wellsburg, and then "walked out" to the various labor camps along the railroad right-of-way.

Wages for this work were not high and part of the pay was in board and lodging supplied at the camps by the contractors. Sanitary conditions were not of the best and sickness among the laborers was frequent. In the midst of the railroad building, an epidemic of small-pox broke out in the camps near Avella, and the mortality was high, with the victims being quickly buried near the right-of-way.

These men, we suppose, were for the most part single, or if they were married, their wives and families could not accompany them here under such conditions. After the railroad was completed, the men moved on to other construction jobs, or possibly, in some cases, returned to their native country.

But with the opening of the mines, a more stable and dependable type of labor was required, and this called for the use of "family men," who began coming into the valley in increasing numbers. It was the usual procedure for the operating coal company to provide housing for their employees, and this



Elmer Link and his wife, Rose Gallo Link, have been residents of Jefferson Township for 17 years. They have two children. The Links are of Irish, Indian, German, and Italian ancestry. Elmer's father, Russell Link, Sr., has resided in Jefferson Township since 1946. He had six children. Two still live in the area, Elmer and Hugh. The Links formerly resided in Rea, Pa. Rose came from Hanlin Station.

Mr. and Mrs. John L. Culley of Burgettstown had a son, Jack S. Culley. Jack is married to Karlene Engled Culley. They have three children, two of whom live in the area: Terri Lu and Michele. Jack is of Scotch-Irish descent. He was born in Burgettstown, Karlene in Follansbee, W. Va.

Richard Burkett and his wife, Carol, are residents of Jefferson Township. They are of German and Dutch extraction and came from Hickory. They have one daughter, Chris.

Donald Brown and his wife, Carmen, are Jefferson Township residents for 52 years. Donald is of Scotch-Irish and Carmen of Scotch-Irish-German descent. They have two sons: Dale and David.

David Brown and his wife, Barbara, live in Jefferson Township. He is of Scotch-Irish-German, and she is of Polish descent. They have one daughter.

Alvin and the late Wilda Taggart, of Buffalo Village, farmed until he retired a few years ago. They had four sons, three living in this general area: Eugene, Halden, and Duane.

John H. and Martha Gordon of Avella have two sons and two daughters. Eleanor Taggart and Alice live in this area. Eugene Taggart and Eleanor Gordon married and have lived in Cross Creek Township for the last 25 years. They have four children, three of whom live in the area. Marsha is married to Stanley Muscara. They live near Cross Creek and have one son not living in the area and daughters, Donna May and Tracy Lynn, who live at home.

Wayne C. and Mary Scott Klages moved from Taylorstown to Independence in 1958. They have four children, all living at home: Kevin, Keith, Kenneth, and Sheila. The Klages are of German-Scotch-Irish descent.

The Lee family has figured prominently not only in national history but local history as well. An ancestor, John Lee, came to Massachusetts in 1635 from England. Richard Lee also came from England to Virginia in 1841 and is said to be the first white settler in the northern neck of Virginia. Thomas Lee from Barbados came to Charleston, S. C., about 1731. Robert E. Lee, famous Confederate States army general, was descended from Richard Lee. Several different families of Lees left Ireland in 1785 in the "Faithful Steward" to come to America. The trip was uneventful until the ship hit a sand bar. During the rescue, forty-three related Lees drowned, but the rescued families proceeded westward to Lewistown and Lancaster Counties in Pennsylvania. The family of Hugh and Mary Elliott Lee



came over the mountains to the western part of Pennsylvania and settled on a tract of land in Cross Creek Township in 1791. A part of this same land is still owned by T. Burns Lee. Other members moved on westward and settled in Virginia and West Virginia. Still, others went to Illinois and Kansas. The Lees living in this vicinity are: H. Lester Lee and his wife, Florence, with six children and T. Burns Lee and his wife, Ann Lyle, with no children.

John Owen and his wife, June Yates, have been residents of Jefferson Township for 37 and 13 years, respectively. John is retired. There are two children. June is of Belgian descent.

Frank Pastor's father and mother both resided in Jefferson Township until his death when the mother moved to Pittsburgh. Frank Pastor and Debra Odrodowski Pastor have resided in Jefferson Township, he, all of his life, and she, for ten years. Frank is of Scotch-Irish, and Debra is of Polish-Yugoslavian descent. There are three children.

James Piatt and Lulu Miller Piatt came to Jefferson Township in 1954. They have three children, all living in the township.

Charles Barr and his wife, Eleanor Collins Barr, have been residents of Jefferson Township for 21 years. He is of Scotch-Irish ancestry and she of Swedish-Welsh. Eleanor's father came to this country from Wales in 1904. His name was Stanley Collins. Charles and Eleanor have four children.

Harvey Bane, Sr. and his wife, Esther, have lived in Jefferson Township since 1942. He is of German-English ancestry; she is of Welsh descent. They have ten children.

Louis Robert and his wife, Wanda Mayers Robert, live in Jefferson Township. Louis is of French ancestry. Wanda is Scotch-Irish. They have two daughters.

Ralph Strobe, Sr. lived in Cedar Grove. His son, Ralph, Jr., married Francis Bartoletti. They lived in the township from 1944 to 1971. They have two children. Ralph is of German and Francis is of Polish-Italian descent.

Dante Bartoletti was a dairy and truck farmer who owned and operated Dante's Restaurant. His wife, Anna, has lived in Jefferson Township since 1945. Their daughter, Francis Strobe, remains in the area.

Roy W. Schulte and his wife, Judy Vega, have been residents of Jefferson Township for four years. They have three daughters. Roy is of German-Irish, and Judy is of Polish and Spanish descent.

Frank Scouvar and his wife, Martha M. Vele, have resided in Jefferson Township since 1961. There are four children, two of whom live in the township. Frank is of English ancestry.

William Yates and his wife, Liza Welling, came to this vicinity around 1935. He was a carpenter by trade. They had three children. Their



daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, Earl David Miller, came about 1935, also. He was a coal miner. Earl died in 1955. They had four children. Their daughter, Ruby Jane Klovanish, still resides in the Avella area.

William Shaffer and his wife, Blanche White, came to Cross Creek Township in 1914. They settled on a farm in Rea. They had five children of whom only one, Clifford, lives in this area. Clifford married Mary Britt in 1946. They have no living children. William came from Germany.

Harry E. Tustin and his wife, Verna Pettip, came to this area in 1918. They were Scotch-Irish farmers. They had four children, but only one daughter, Hazel Rea, resides in this area.

William Rea and his wife, Jane Maison, came here in 1790. They were Scotch-Irish farmers. They had ten children. One son, William M. Rea, married Elizabeth Campbell and they continued to farm. They had ten children. One of their sons, Charles C. Rea, married Catherine Cooke. They were farmers, also. They had nine children. One of their sons, Maynard, married Hazel Tustin in 1946. Hazel and Maynard had three children, all of whom live in this vicinity: Linda Cox, Charles, and Debbie.

Louis Findling of German descent and his wife, Lucie E. Say, of English descent, came to this area in 1917. They were farmers. They had two sets of twins. One set died, but the other set lives in this general area. Millard Earl lives in Cedar Grove; Mildred Pearl McCarty lives in Cross Creek.

Wilson McCarty came to this area in 1920. His wife, Luella Crawford, came later. They were both Irish. He was a carpenter. They had three children. Randall lives in Cross Creek and married Mildred Pearl Findling in 1918. He was a farmer. They had five children, but only Dean resides in the area; namely, Cross Creek.

James Vance moved from Virginia to Pennsylvania and settled in Independence in 1839 at the age of 34. He and his wife, Susanna Walker Vance bought the farm located between Avella and Independence from David Archer. Four generations of Vances lived on the same farm. They were of Scotch descent. Three descendants are living in Washington County, but only two in the immediate area: W. Howard Thompson and Kathleen Vance Ugron in Avella. James Vance, aforementioned, was the great grandfather of the three mentioned descendants.

James Brown and his wife, Jane Shoals Brown, settled in the Avella area about 1850. They owned a farm which is now Browntown. Two sons, William and Joseph, lived their entire lives in Avella. The Browns are of Irish descent. Joseph R. Brown and Francelia M. Marquis are the grandparents of two descendants living in Washington County. One of these descendants is Kathleen Vance Ugron of Avella.

Eugene Foster and his wife, Dolores, are of Welsh descent. They have resided in Jefferson Township for the past 37 years. They had two children.

Dorice and Ruby Gaines have resided in Jefferson Township for forty-six years. They have two sons and one daughter.

Fred Walker married Della Adams in 1947. She is of Belgian-French descent, he of German. They have three children. One son, Dale, is at home.

Clarence W. Kelso and his wife, Dorothy Plance, came to this area in 1952. He was of Irish-German descent, she of Scotch-Irish-German-Dutch. Clarence is deceased. They had two sons. Dave still resides in Woodrow. He married Norma Carl in 1957. They had two children; their son is deceased and their daughter lives at home.

Robert Herstine and his wife, Edith Showalter, came here in 1961. He is of German descent, she of German-English-Indian. They had seven children. David and Alice are living at home.

George Ward and his wife, Bertha Schmidt, came to the area in 1946. He is of English descent, she of German. George was a coal miner and is presently constable of Cross Creek Township. They had twelve children, but only Tommy and Fred live in the immediate area.

James Gain and his wife, Mary Pinkerton, came to the area in 1912. James was a coal miner. They had five children. Both James and Mary are now deceased. Anna, now deceased, married Joseph Davis in 1915. He was of Welsh descent - a miner in daily life. Anna and Joseph came to Avella in 1924. They had five children, but only Mary Youk lives in this area.

Lawrence A. Withum came to Avella in 1923 and married Clara Rohr the same year. He is of German-Irish descent. Clara has played the organ in St. Michael's church since 1925. They had six children. Clarice Dohanich, Rosemary Wolfe, and Jeffrey reside in the area.

Nettie Fullum and daughter, Beulah, came to this area around 1914. She married Wylie Wheeler. He was a coal miner. They had three children. Beulah and William, Sr. live in the area.

John Smith and his wife, Luvenia William, came to this area in 1932. They had seven children. Only one daughter, Bertha Peeples, lives in the Avella area. John and Luvenia are both deceased.

Wayne Moten married Evonne Joyce Oliver in 1951. They have two children. Their, son, Wayne, lives in Avella.

Alma Alexander and her husband, Jack, came to P & W in 1930. Jack worked in Powhatan. They were the parents of seven children, but none reside in the Avella area.



John Dalton moved to Avella in 1925 and lived with his mother. In 1936, he married Audrey Perrin. They had two children. Their daughter, Laura Beatty, lives in Avella. John was a miner at the P & W mine.

Harry Hamilton and his wife, Nettie Cook, came to this area in 1941. He and Nettie had five children. None reside in the Avella area. Nettie is now deceased.

Harry Oliver and his wife, Lena Elizabeth, settled in Patterson Mills in 1912. They moved to Houston, Pennsylvania. Harry was a mule driver in the Donahoe and Cedar Grove Mines. They had seven children. None live in the immediate area. Their granddaughter is Evonne Moten.

John Peebles married Bertha Smith in 1945 and came to Avella in 1946. He was a coal miner, last working at the Ontario Mine. They had four children. John, Jr. lives in Avella.

Phillip Louis Moten was born in Virginia in 1876. He settled in this area in 1905. He married Bertha Patterson of West Middletown. Phillip had a blacksmith shop in Avella for fifty-four years. They had ten children. Edith Patterson, Warren, Wayne, and John still live in the valley.

Irwin Perry Davidson and his wife, Idabell, were both lifetime residents of Jefferson Township. They are both deceased. They had seven children. Their son, Earl, lives in the township and is married to Mary Pauline. They are all of English descent. Earl and Mary Pauline had three children, two still live in the township, Vala Jean Jackson and Homer.

C. Dwight Jeffrey and his wife, Sadie Riggs, came from Greene County to Jefferson Township. They had three children. One son, Wayne, is married to Janet Strobe. They have resided in the township since 1971 and have three children. Sadie was postmaster of Cross Creek from 1961-1972.

Grandfather Steven Cunningham lived in Jefferson Township. He had a son, Clarence, who is married to Ethel Burdin. Clarence and Ethel had one son, Willis, who is married to Margaret DeCarmo Cunningham. Willis has lived in the township all his life. Margaret came from Bethany in 1947. They have five children. The Cunninghams are of Scotch-Irish descent.

Wayne Cooke married Elizabeth Clark in 1942. They are of Scotch-Irish descent. Betty was raised by an aunt and lived in Cross Creek. They had three sons: Robert Wayne, Edwin Richard, and Dennis. Wayne has a brother living in the area, Leroy. Dr. Hindman was the grandfather of Elizabeth.

Harry Ryan and his wife, Helen Black, have resided in Jefferson Township since 1929. Harry came from New Castle, Pennsylvania, and Helen came from Frederick, Ohio.

Harry Davis and his wife, Mary, have been residents of Jefferson Township for fifteen years. He is a retired vice president of Colliers Steel.

Richard Gillespie is married to Diane Shiel. They have lived in Jefferson Township for three years. He is of Irish and she is of Albanian and Irish descent. Richard's parents are Charles and Dolores Gillespie, who have been township residents since 1946.

Ralph Jeffrey, who was born in Cross Creek, married Ina L. Ahrns, who was born in McDonald. They were of German-Scotch-Irish ancestry. They are now both deceased. They had six children. Two live in this area: C. Dwight of Cross Creek and Warren R. of Avella. Farming was the family occupation for many years.

Walter H. Riggs and Elise Harriett Polen Riggs moved to Independence Township in 1918 and to Cross Creek Township in 1932. They were of Scotch-Irish and English descent. They had five children.

Charles and Isabell Keith Pittman came to the village of Independence around the year 1900. They raised five children, their daughter being Clara Lena. James Hewett and brother Collett William Burns came to the village where James married and lived. He and his wife raised seven children, of whom one stayed in the area. Freda Burns Adams. Collett William married Clara Lena Pittman in 1914 and they raised one daughter, Gladys Tressa. She still lives in the village. Gladys Tressa married John Ryniawic, and they had four children: John M., Duane C., Madolyn G. Collins, and Charlotte E. Taylor. Their sons, John M. and Duane C., are married and live in the village of Independence.

James Price came to Avella in 1937. He married Edna Alexander the same year. He was of Scotch-Welsh origin. He worked on the railroad. They had four children. None reside in the area.

Harold Taylor and his wife, Lenora Conway Taylor, have resided in Jefferson Township since 1953. They have four children of which two live at home: Kirk and Greg. They were originally from Burgettstown.

James B. and Emma Underwood came from England. They had eight children. Their son, Joseph, and his wife had eleven children, among them David Underwood of Cross Creek. David and Joseph Underwood were among the first men to work in the P & W Mine. In the early 1920's, Joseph managed the baseball team "Penowa Athletics", made up of miners from the Penowa and Waverly Mines. David and his wife, Mildred, are lifetime residents of Cross Creek. They have three children: Diane Kintra, Doris Mallas, and Don.

Robert Williamson and his wife, Dolores McHenry, have lived in Jefferson Township for eighteen years. They have four children. Their daughter, Brenda, resides in the township. Robert came from Weirton and Dolores from Cambridge, Ohio.



Donald Lochran and his wife, Virginia Hibbs Lochran, have been residents of Jefferson Township for the past sixteen years. They are of Scotch-Irish descent. They came to Jefferson from Burgettstown. They have five children.

Rudolph Keith Fish and his wife, Mary, came to the Jefferson Township area twenty-six years ago. He is from Moundsville, West Virginia and she from Bertha. He is of Irish descent, she of German descent. They had six children. Three are living at home. Kibby Chilensky lives in Eldersville, Pa.

Robert Kidd and his wife, Kathryn Pettibone Kidd, lived in Jefferson Township. Robert was a farmer and also worked at Kidd's Mill. They had a son and a daughter. Their son, Raymond, was married to Mabel Cunningham, whose mother was Lanty Cunningham of the township. Raymond and Mabel had two sons, Robert and Bill. Raymond's sister, Eva Kidd Irwin, whom is now deceased, was a lifetime resident of Jefferson Township. Raymond's son Robert has been a resident of this township all of his life. Robert is married to Irene Brown, who has been a resident since 1939. They have four children. Irene Brown's parents were Reed and Landra Brown, both now deceased. They also resided in the township. They had three children. Reed was a railroader.

James and Martha Gillespie, lifetime residents of Jefferson Township, had seven children. James was a farmer and owned the General Store. His son, Ernest, married Elizabeth Griesby. She lived in the township for fifty-five years. They had one daughter. Elizabeth had the store in Eldersville for forty years and was postmaster for sixteen years. Ernest is now deceased.

Willard Jackson and his wife, Mildred, have been Jefferson Township residents since 1947. He is of Scotch-Irish descent, she of Scotch-English. They have one child. They were originally from Steubenville, Ohio.

William S. Jackson and his wife, Martha Bucy Jackson, have resided in Jefferson Township for twenty years. They have three children. One resides in the township, Karen Cox. Mr. Jackson's father, Charles Jackson, worked in a saw mill until his death. William's grandfather, William E. Jackson, was a farmer and a logger.

Donald Dellenbaugh and his wife, Linda Goodman, have lived in Jefferson Township for twenty-one years. They have four children. Donald is of German descent. Linda is Welsh.

Maurice Dellenbaugh and his wife, Thelma Sturgen, have one son, Maurice, Jr. Maurice, Sr. has lived in Jefferson Township all his life. His parents lived in Jefferson Township for thirty-five years.

John Diamond and his wife, Viola, have been residing in Jefferson Township for thirty-one years. They are of German-Irish descent. They had

eight children, five of whom still live in the area: Bill, Johnny, Mary, Rita, and Margaret Diamond. He is a lifetime resident of the township. Viola came from Bertha Mine.

Willis Cunningham and his wife, Margaret DeCarmo, are residents of Jefferson Township. He has been a resident all of his life and she since 1947. They are of Scotch-Irish descent. They had five children. His grandfather, Steven, owned a farm in the township. Clarence and wife, Ethal Burdin Cunningham, were farmers also. They have one son.

Herman La Posta married Ruth Pettibone. They lived in Eldersville. Ruth taught at Eldersville school for twenty-eight years. They have two daughters. Conney La Posta lives in the vicinity.

Edward D. Smith and his wife, Shirley Link, have resided in Jefferson Township for five years. There are three children. Edward is of Irish-German-Indian, she of Irish-Indian descent. Her grandfather's grandfather was a full blooded Indian. Hugh Link and Wilma Brown Link are Shirley's parents. Wilma came to Avella in 1917.

Charles and Dolores Gillespie have been residents of Jefferson Township for twelve years. Charles' father, Charles, Sr., has lived in the township all his life. Charles is of Scotch-Irish-Dutch ancestry. Dolores is of the same ancestry. They have four children.

Homer Davidson and his wife, Minnie, have been residents of Jefferson Township for 20 years as a couple. He has lived here all of his life. They have two children. He is of Irish, she of Italian descent. Minnie came from Mingo, Ohio.

Michael Bigler is married to Jacqueline Elich from Jefferson Township. Michael came from Paris, Pa. They have lived in the township for three years. They have one son.

W. Scott Walker and his wife, Margaret, came to Jefferson Township in 1779. They resided there all their lives. They had seven children. Their daughter, Manie, married Guy Anderson; and they resided in Cross Creek Township for forty years. After his death, she moved to Jefferson Township. They had six children, two of whom lived in the general area: James who lives in Eldersville and Robert, in Cross Creek. Guy was a farmer of Scotch-Irish descent.

The great grandfather of the present day Robison generation immigrated from Germany to the U. S. at an unknown date. He and his family settled in the Pittsburgh area, from whence the grandfather, William James, Sr., moved to Independence Township about 1890 or 1892. His family moved onto what was the Hattmen Farm just north of the village. Later he bought a small farm near Independence which was in turn bought by William James, Jr.,



father of the present day Robisons. W. J. (Bill) lived on this farm for 40 years before his death in 1933, raising his family of seven children. W. J. Robison's early career after marriage was spent at various jobs, one of which was carrying mail from the Independence Post Office to the area of what was later to become Avella. At that time (probably 1895-1900) the mail was delivered from Wellsburg, W. Va. to Independence, thence by horseback or buggy to the outlying districts. The Avella area was then a farming community. Some of his postal patrons were the Browns, Campbells, Sutherlands, and other farmers and businesses of what was soon to become Avella. W. J. turned to farming and freighting from Wellsburg, W. Va., and Steubenville, Ohio, by horse and wagon. Along with farming, he served as township constable for several years.

Charles F. Rohr and his wife, Clara Myers, came to Avella in 1917. They were of German and French descent. He was a miner. They had four children: Charles, Joseph, Theodore, and Clara Withum.

Ferdinand Schulte and Eunice Shaffer Schulte came to this territory before 1922. They are both of German extraction. They had five children. Their son, Charles, is the only member living in this vicinity. He and his wife, Frances Porter, married in 1941 and reside in Cross Creek. Frances is of Scotch-Irish descent. They had three children. Ruth Ann Sentipal lives in Cross Creek. Ethel Sentipal and Roy live in Jefferson Township.

Walter Porter married Ethel Marquis in 1921. Their parents had lived in this vicinity, but dates are not known. They were of Scotch-Irish descent. Both Walter and Ethel are deceased. They had one daughter, Frances, who married Charles Schulte.

John Dimit and his wife, Mary Ann Zirtue, came to the vicinity in the early 1800's. They were Scotch-Irish farmers. They had three children but two died early in life. Their son, Robert, stayed here and married Nancy Johnson in 1895. They had two children, Elsie and Hazel. Hazel married Walter McNelly in 1928. John, Mary Ann, and Walter McNelly are all deceased. Walter was a tax collector for Cross Creek Township while he lived.

Theresa Ernkosen came to this vicinity in 1911 at the age of fifteen. In 1919, she married William Houghton. He is deceased. He was a carpenter, of Irish-English descent. Theresa was of German descent. They had five children. Only one daughter, Betty Collette, lives in Cross Creek.

Maynard Collette and his wife, Elsie Hendrickson, were born here. He is of English-Irish and she of English-German descent. They had five children. Alice Taggart, Donald, and James all live in Cross Creek.

Thomas B. Brown, Sr. resided in Westmoreland County but owned large tracts of land in Smith, Jefferson, and Cross Creek Townships early in the 1900's. His three sons, William, Thomas, Jr. and E. Denny, all made their homes in Cross Creek Township in the 1920's. William died in an accident



as a young man. E. Denny married Dorothy Dallmeyer of Cross Creek and lived in Cross Creek Township with their two sons, Richard and Donald. Thomas, Jr. lived on a farm near Cross Creek Village, with his wife, Cleo, until his death in 1966. Their children are James, Charles, Barbara, Robert, and David. James and his wife, Mary Jo, now live on the family farm and have four sons, James, Jr., Thomas, Peter, and Jeffrey.

Thomas Woodburn, great, great grandfather of Ewing Wilson, was a native of Ireland. There he learned the trade of weaving. He came to America and located in Mt. Pleasant Township. He brought his bride to the log cabin home which he had built himself. The couple were frequently forced to flee to the blockhouse during Indian attacks. Fourteen children were born to this couple. Their son, Thomas, was born about 1800. He married and had eleven children, one of whom was William, Ewing's grandfather. William served in the Civil War, later married Sarah Meloy. They had three daughters, one being Jennie W. Ewing's mother. This family moved to the Mt. Hope area in 1875. They bought and continued living on the family farm until their deaths.

Hawthorn Dunkle was born in Hopewell Township in 1839. He was a farmer all his life. His last home was on Brush Run near Dunkle Bridge. He and his family were of German descent. He married Edith E. Collier from New York. Mr. Dunkle was a farmer most of his life. He and brothers, Charley and William, operated a thrashing machine in the area. Frank and Edith had six children. Their daughter, Ila E., married Cecil Meloy of Avella. They had four children. Their son, Gaylord, is married to Patricia Georgetti. They reside in the area and have one daughter. Their daughter, Marjorie Ann, married Gary Rush, and they have five children. Their daughter, Linda, is married to Warren Bedillion, Jr. of Rea, and they have one son. Marjorie and Gary's other children are Kevin, Cynthia Lynn, Tracy, and Robin. Daughter Dorothy Edith married James Raineri, Sr., and they had three sons: James, Jr., who married Cyndi Lucas, David Lynn and Jeffrey Paul. Dorothy Edith died in 1970. The Cecil Meloy family moved to Independence Township for the past twelve years. He is of German extraction from Murdocksville. Wife Delores is of German extraction. They have three children.

Edward Cashdollar and his wife, Alma, have lived in Jefferson Township for three years. He is of German-Irish-Indian descent. Alma's dad came from Ireland. Edward was born in Clarksburg. Alma is from Weirton. They have four daughters.

Howard Burd and his wife, Delores, have lived in Jefferson Township for the past twelve years. He is of German extraction from Murdocksville. Wife Delores is of German extraction who came from West Virginia. They had three children.

John Kirschmer, Sr. and wife, Mary Stemple, both natives of Austria-Hungary, came to Avella in 1905. Here they operated a meat and grocery business. They had eight children. Marie Andes and Charles are deceased.



John married Alta Winters. They reside in Avella with their six children, Edward and wife, Martha, reside in Avella, also, with their two children. Harry and Bill do not live in the area. Sue married Theodore Zatta and Josephine married Adam Wasik, now deceased. They had three children. John, Sr. and Mary are deceased.

Theodore Atillio Zatta married Sue Kirschner in 1937. He is of Italian descent, she of Austrian-Hungarian. He worked for various coal companies, the Avella Creamery, Acme Cleaning Plant, Penowa Coal Company, Paris Construction Company, Harmon Creek Coal Company, and presently works for Stravaggi Industries. They have four boys and one girl: Theodore in Washington, Edward in Avella, Richard in Ohio, Frank in Washington, and Sandra at home.

Henry Lonick came to Avella from Atlasburg in 1938. He married Rose Sfara. Henry worked in the mines and was the Independence Township Constable for twenty-four years. He is presently employed at Weirton Steel. Henry and Rose have three children. Henry, Jr. is married to Mary Jane Rickey and resides in the area. Sandra resides in Canonsburg with her husband, Armond Dellovade. Sherry and husband Richard Liconti live in Bethel Park.

In 1781 Fergus Smith and his wife, both Scotch, came to the area. He was a miller and farmer. They had five children. All are deceased including Fergus and his wife. One child, Henry, took over his father's farm. He and his wife, Betty, were married in 1797 and had nine children. When the couple and their children moved to West Virginia in 1817, their son, Henry and his wife of 1815, Betty Best, remained and ran the farm. Betty was of German descent. They had four sons and three or four daughters, all now deceased. Two of the sons, George and John, remained in the area. George married Mary Jeffrey of Scotch-Irish descent, in 1859. They continued as farmers and had eight children. They and their children are now deceased. Three of the children remained in the area: Clarence who never married, Clyde, and Ernest, who married Martha Farrer in 1896. Martha was Scotch-Irish. She and Ernest went into livestock farming. They are now deceased. Of their five children, three remained in the area: Vernen who is deceased, Evelyn Hodges in Michigan, and Guy. Guy married Bessie Craig, of Scotch-Irish descent, in 1923. They were dairy farmers and raised two sons, Howard and Lloyd. Both live in the area.

Edwin Johnston lived in Cross Creek Village all his life. He married Vinnie Leeper. Edwin worked for the state, county, and township for fifty years. They had two children. Both reside on the Johnston property: William E. and his wife, Laura, with two sons and Naomi Johnston.

Silas Monroe Clark and his wife, Nellie Linsly, came to Cedar Grove in 1910. Silas opened and operated a General Store. He also was the first postmaster of the Cedar Grove, or Studa as it was officially known, Post Office. Nellie was chief clerk for coal companies operating the Cedar Grove Mine. She later became Secretary-Treasurer of the Alex Paris Construction Company. The Clarks had two children: Edith Gay who married Harry C. Jones and Eugenia Leila, wife of R. Donald Hall.

Lee Forney died in 1905 leaving his wife, Kizzie Bell Jones, and five children. Kizzie moved to Cross Creek Township and purchased a farm from Sam Roney. Here she worked and raised her children. George Lee married Dorothy Betts. After her death, he married Mary Casteel. Between the two marriages, there were two daughters: Mary Ruth and Dora Lee. Daniel Curlis, now deceased, married Ila Cummins. They had two sons: Daniel Lee wed Janice Phillips and has three children and James A. married Delilah Miller and also has three children. Earl, now deceased, married Mzrle Zeslali. They had no children. There was also a daughter, Mary, who is now deceased.

Robert H. Scott married Alice Lyle Patterson in 1872. They lived on the farm now owned by the Hines family. Robert and Alice had two sons. Robert Elliot Scott married Jeanette Westlake in 1908. Robert E. worked at the Patterson Mills Flour Mill, P & W Coal Mine, construction work on the tipple, and on houses built on Avella Heights. He retired to a small farm in Patterson Mills. They had two daughters: Elsie Kathrine who married Michael G. Grico and Dorothy Irma who married Hugh Garin Parker. Dorothy and Hugh had two sons: R. M. Parker and Hugh Elliot Parker who married Rosemerie Rector and has two daughters. The other son of Robert H. Scott, William Oscus, married Bessie Lawton in 1900. They had one son, William Lawton Scott, who married Janet Cowden. They lived and died on the land now owned by Charles Zatta. William L. was manager of the A & P Store in Avella. He later moved to Houston, Pa.

James Fletcher Westlake was married to Mary Louche. He was a shoemaker and carpet weaver in Independence and had the post office for many years. They had one daughter, Jeanette, who married Robert E. Scott.

David O'Donnell married Annie O'Connell in 1879. They resided on a farm on Buxton Road, now owned by the Charles Zatta family. They had four sons, all deceased, including their parents. One son, Hugh, owned and operated a farm supply store in Rea and was a Justice of the Peace in the area. Another son, David Leo, married Bertha May White in 1915. He was a mail carrier out of the Rea Post Office for many years. They had five children: Hugh L. and David W. are deceased, Marium E. (Betty) resides in Cross Creek Village, Kathryn R. and husband, J. Harlan Bell, in Cross Creek Village with three children, and James E. with wife, Hazle Tuttle, also resides in Cross Creek Village.

Bernard Vogliano and his wife, Sevrina, came over from Italy in 1914. Their home, which was built in 1924, still stands.



John Parnia, another resident of Avella, came over from Italy in 1922.

Mrs. Blanche Tonini came over from Italy in 1921. Their home was built on Knox Hill in 1924. The three children are Mrs. Gloria Flannery of Hannibal, Ohio, Mrs. Velma Nodurft of Pittsburgh, Pa., and William Tonini of Hannibal, Ohio.

Mrs. Secondina Bruner came over from Italy in 1913. Of her two children, Mr. Eldo Bruner is the only one living in Avella.

Mrs. Anna Avetta came from Italy in 1921. Their home was built in 1924. She has two children, Mr. Steve Avetta living in Flint, Michigan, and Mrs. Elba Koerner.

Mr. Angelo Mucci came from Italy in 1909. Their children are: Mr. Gino Mucci, Mr. Levio Mucci, who live in the area, and Mrs. Gina McNicholas, living in Follansbee, W. Va.

## The Cross Creek Valley: A "Melting Pot"

In discussing ethnic changes in the Cross Creek Valley, we hope that we haven't given the impression that late immigrants from European countries have displaced the older families whose members occupied the area for so many years. It is true that some of the farms whose principal use had been for agriculture were taken over by the coal companies for the location of the mines and of the mining camps which had been built. This did result in some displacement, or replacement, of some farm families, but this movement was not very extensive.

In Avella, while Samuel S. Campbell and William J. Brown did sell much of their farms for building lots, yet both of these men and their families remained in Avella and continued living in the houses which had been their homes for many years. The sale of their land had enabled them to retire from farming. But in their years of retirement here at Avella, both had lived the lives of "country gentlemen," and both were active in community affairs as long as they lived. Mr. Campbell was active in the organization of the Lincoln National Bank, in which he served as a director; he also built and operated the Campbell Theater, and he was one of the early partners in the Avella Lumber and Supply Company. Mr. Brown served his home township as both a school director and a road supervisor and in other civic duties.

As previously noted in the sketch on the Cedar Grove community, a part of the Studa farm was sold to the coal company for the mine, but the part on which the mansion house was located was left as a farm of nearly sixty acres, and this is a farm home still occupied by the owners. In the Penowa area, considerable land was taken over by the coal companies, but much of it was "marginal" as far as farming was concerned, so there was no great displacement of farm owners there either.

Now, as the recent immigrant families moved into the valley, most of the members of the original families remained. In the years since, of course, there has been some attrition through death and removals, so that some of the older names are not now to be found in the area. In Cross Creek Township, the Marshall and Graham names are no longer found here, the Vances, Pattersons and the Marquises are not as numerous as they were one hundred years ago, but some of the old names and many of the "blood" can still be found.

In Independence Township, the Doddridges and Mulhollens, the Ralstons and Hannas, and the Meloys and Magees are pretty well gone, but the Smiths and Liggetts, the Scotts and Perrins, the Moores and the Craigs, the Keenans and the Manchesters are still here, either by name or by "proxy" in descendants who still help to maintain the names in the area. Inevitably, the places of some of the older families have been taken by the "newcomers," either recent or remote, and thus, gradual changes have occurred in most of our communities, with these more recent families, perhaps having different types of employment and different modes of living from the largely rural families who had lived here on the land for many years.

The farms on the hills and valleys of Jefferson Township, had, over many years, been a sort of stronghold for old family names. But here too, old names such as McCready, Murchland, Melvin, Wheeler, Metcalf and Barber have either



disappeared from the township, or are now few in number. But yet, there are found here the old names of Gillespie, Cunningham, Boles, Butler, Jackson, Kidd, Walker and Thorley, and if the old name of Pettibon is not found in Jefferson Township, it is not far away, and the Wiegmanns who are here are all of this blood and adequately represent this old family, and the Gardner family exists in the Truax family and perhaps others still living in the area. Probably the oldest families from the standpoint of continuous residence are the Walkers in the northeastern part of the township, and the Millers in the southern part.

So, as many of these older families and their members in succeeding generations have remained in the Cross Creek Valley, they have learned to know, as friends and neighbors, people whose family names are quite different from the old Anglo-Saxon names of yesteryear.

While the "growing pains" of our emerging new communities have at times been severe, yet, in retrospect, we can truly say that most of the transition has been without serious incident. As he was known to his neighbors who were already in possession of the land here, the average immigrant who came to work in the mines and to live here was a married man with a thrifty, industrious wife and a family of children. He came here from a faraway land to better his own condition and to seek improved opportunities for the members of his family. He was a law-abiding citizen who had learned to recognize authority in his native land, so he appreciated deeply this land of freedom and opportunity to which he had chosen to migrate. He was hardworking and frugal, and while he found employment at better wages than he could have gotten in the "old country" yet in many cases, he found the life of a coal miner in America to be a pretty "hard row to hoe."

For many years, the miners were at the mercy of the coal operators. While housing was furnished in the camps for him and his family, and the company store was willing to sell him groceries and supplies, yet there was the eternal (or infernal) "check-off", which left many a laboring man always in debt to his employer. As Ernie Ford expressed it, "I sold my soul to the company store"!

Following World War I, when the demand for coal was greatly diminished, the lot of the miners became increasingly difficult, as some operators tried to "lock out" the union miners and to operate their mines with non-union labor. The miners of the Cross Creek Valley resented and opposed this, and although possibly ill-advisedly, some of them took part in the Cliftonville "affair" in 1922 with the result that six or seven of their number were killed. In 1928, a number of miners' families were evicted from company houses in Avella and the Union (UMWA) provided housing for these people in "barracks" built on the Pollock Farm near Cedar Grove. Gradually, these workers found employment elsewhere, and the use of the barracks was discontinued. The closing of the Lincoln National Bank in February of 1931, created a hardship for many working people in the valley, whose hard-earned savings were thus "lost," at least until sporadic dividends restored a part of this money to the people.

But gradually, the lot of many of these people improved as John L. Lewis and the UMWA secured better working conditions and more favorable economic conditions for these people who dug the coal in our local mines. The coal business improved during the years of World War II, but following that conflict, a decline again set in, so that at the present time, not much coal is mined in the Cross Creek Valley. This "recession," of course, resulted in the loss of



many miners' families who had lived here and were compelled to move away. For those who remained, other means of livelihood had to be secured at other places, since employment opportunities in the immediate valley region are, admittedly, very limited.

As the "newcomers" to our valley sought to live with each other and with the folks already here, certain "situations" arose. Had the incoming families all been of the same nationality, their adjustment to life in America might have been much easier. But none of the mining camps were very homogenous, since people of Polish origin might be living in the same "row" with families from Italy or Austria or Yugo-Slovia. So, to communicate easily, it was necessary to know some English or "American", and at least a smattering of the other languages as well. These language difficulties reached to younger members of these families, too, since children at play must know how to communicate with their fellows just as older people do. Occasionally, a man who had had the opportunity of being able to travel into other European countries before migrating here had secured enough of the vernacular that he could serve as interpreter for his heterogenous neighbors in the mining camps. Where it was possible for a family to secure newspapers and periodicals in their native tongue, they often did so and would thus get the news of the world, but this did not help much in learning the "new" language to which they were daily exposed. But the mine "bosses" could usually communicate enough with their men to direct their work, and each working man in the mine was usually willing to help those working with him as language difficulties arose. The children of these families had an opportunity which they may not have greatly appreciated at the time in that they learned one language at home and another at school; and being thus equipped, in many cases, they acted as interpreters for their parents in dealing with the "native" Americans.

Generally speaking, relations between the new residents and the older native population were good. For the local farmer with produce and meat and dairy products to sell, the mining camp provided a ready market. If the language barrier made dealing difficult, it was gradually overcome. Occasionally, distrust of each other arose if one appeared to take advantage of the other in a "deal". But for the most part, feelings of mutual confidence prevailed. Usually, the miner would not buy anything for which he could not pay cash, and this, of course, pleased the man who had the goods to sell. When honesty and forthrightness prevailed, no difficulties arose.

As has been mentioned elsewhere, many of the families who came here for employment in the mines remained long after the mines closed down. It has been estimated that over two hundred new family names now are known in the valley which were not here seventy-five years ago. And as these families have lived and worked here and have established permanent homes, they have, of course, become a part of the communities' life. They used a different language when they came here, but now they and their families generally speak English. They may have been of a different religious back-



ground, but if so, they have provided for themselves places where they may worship in their own ways. They have provided their own social life or been accepted into the social life of the home community. They have learned skills which have enabled them to adequately provide for their families. Their children have been educated in the schools of the valley; and they, too, have found places of usefulness in life.

As the older men and women of the immigrant families have reached retirement age, most of them have continued living in Avella or Jefferson, in Eldersville or Penowa, occupying in many cases homes which they lived in for many years and possibly having purchased them from their former employers. These older men and women comprise the "senior citizens" of our communities, and they are respected and esteemed for their former and present usefulness to these communities which they call "home".

It must be admitted in referring to the younger people of our valley that many of them have had to leave their home communities. Some have found employment locally as farmers or teachers, or as workers in industry at Weirton or Follansbee, at Washington or Wellsburg, but many have been compelled to go to distant cities to find a career. Quite a number have gone to Cleveland and Detroit where employment in industry or commerce or in the auto industry has been available to them. Almost all of our young men and some of our young women have served in the armed forces either to remain as career personnel or to serve their terms of enlistment and then to enter private employment. Each year a goodly number of the high school graduates of the valley go on to college and then to careers in industry or business or one of the learned professions.

Possibly the term, "melting pot," for our valley is not entirely a proper term, but in the last seventy-five years of living together in the Cross Creek Valley, we have witnessed a blending of our peoples so that now in our communities we have feelings of friendship, cordiality, and mutual respect for each other which we think makes the valley a pleasant place in which to live, and one which we hope has a future of which we can all be proud.

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Folder on the 165th Anniversary of the Lower Buffalo Presbyterian Church  
With A Brief History of the Congregation - published by the church for  
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Rev. John T. Brownlee - read at the dedication of the Granite Memorial  
Stone erected at the site of the church on October 9, 1949.

A History of the Mt. Hope United Presbyterian Church by Harlan Keenan -  
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Brochures and Folders on Meadowcroft Village published by the Meadowcroft Foundation - Albert Miller, Executive Vice President.

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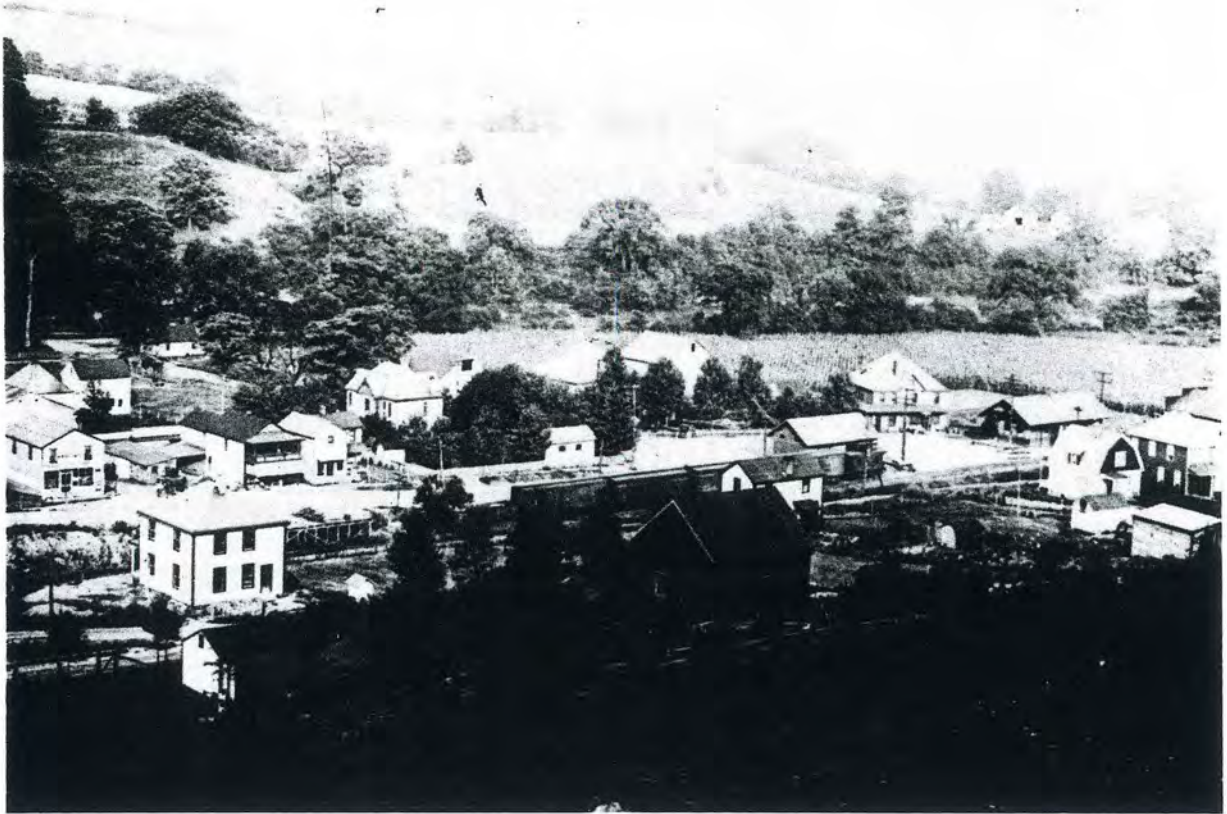
Sketches of Cross Creek Village, Independence Village, Eldersville, Avella, And Cedar Grove written by A. D. White and published in the Burgettstown Enterprise in 1967-68 in a series entitled: "Burgettstown's Neighboring Towns".

Sketches of the Wells, Vance, Patterson, Marquis, Reed, Rea, Campbell, McNary, Buxton, Boles, Lee, and Lyle Families written by A. D. White and published in the Burgettstown Enterprise in 1968 in a series entitled "First Families of the Cross Creek Country".

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I Went to Pit College - by Loren Gilfillan - this is a novel depicting conditions in the Cross Creek Valley during the depression days of the 1930's.



View of Avella about 1910.

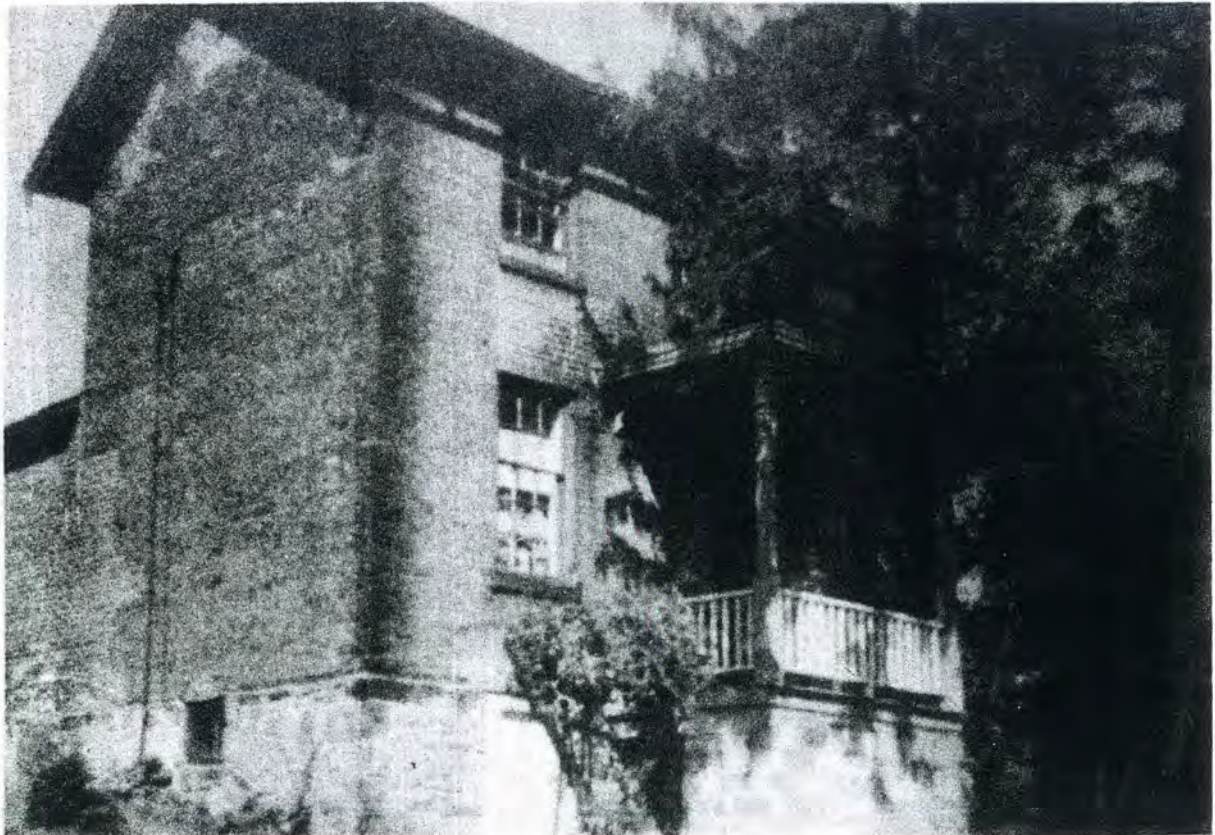


Angeline Ondrich in family car 1922





Local Avella residents in 1926, shown in front of the Service Station - presently operated by John Sweder.

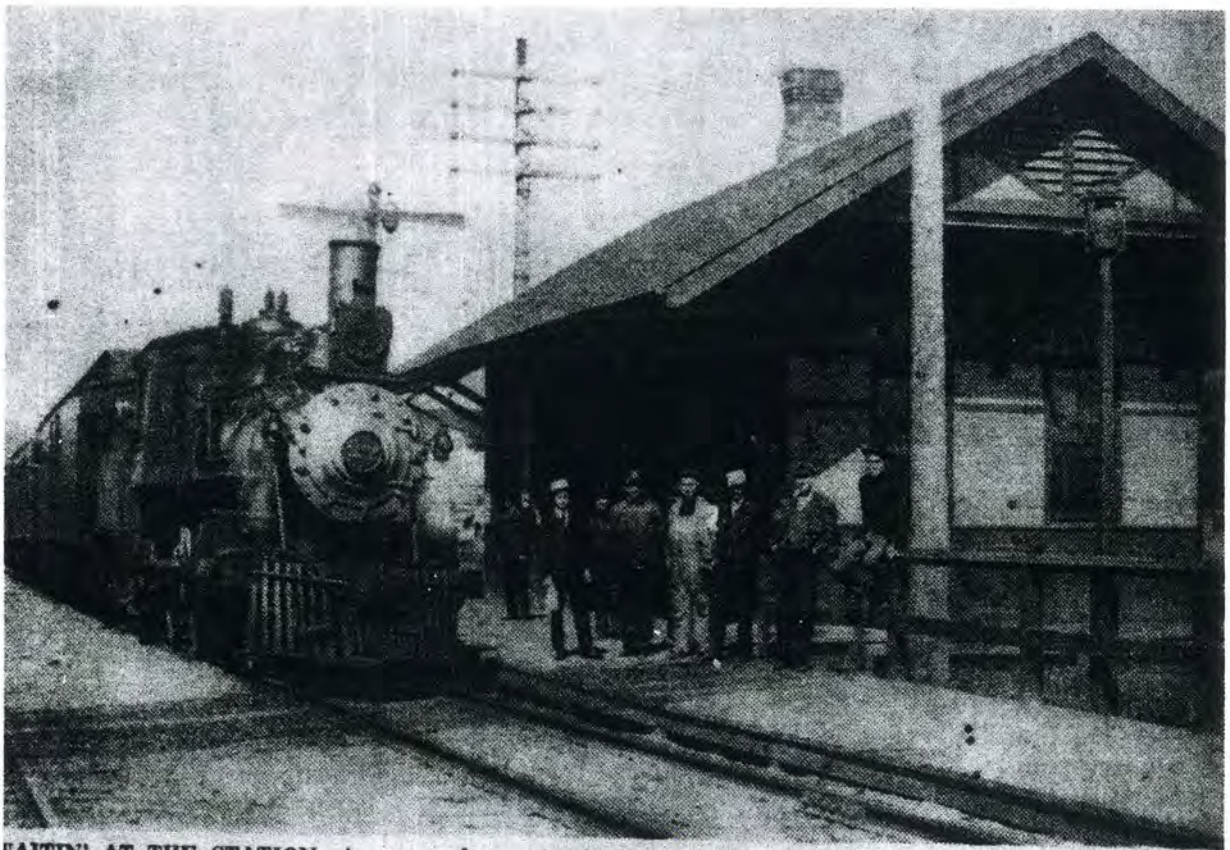


One of the oldest houses in Cross Creek Village - now the residence of Harlin and Katherine Bell.





A group of workmen pause to face the camera of Frank France of West Middletown in 1903, during construction of the Pittsburgh and West Virginia (Wabash) Railroad.



A group of men is shown, several years ago, at the old Prvor Station, about 1-1/2 miles West of ...





James Reed log house - built in 1800.  
The home of C. Brady Carter until recently.



The early Dodridge home in 1911.  
Built by John Dodridge and probably the first dwelling erected  
in Independence Township





Avella Volunteer Fire Department - 1935.  
 Steve Rohr, Steve Gianotte, Jim Weigman, Liker Kerr, Frank Endler,  
 Charles Maxmovich, Paul Bosseau, Martin Kosarik, Chris Williams,  
 Nick Pascuzzi, Joe Kosarik, Steve Haverlack, Dave Richardson,  
 Brownie, Henry Souche, Palma in background.



Officers of the Avella Sportsmens' Association.  
 Front Row: Carl Bogo - Fish Committee, Dom DeFillippis - President,  
 Alex Brandenburg - Delegate, John Cimmarolli - Delegate  
 Back Row: Audley Ciamporcero - Treasurer, Ernie Brozier - Secretary,  
 Chuck Armstrong - Game Committee, Ray Koenig - Vice President





Buckeye School 1913-1914 School Term



Nosco Hall School 1915-1916 School Term  
Photographer was the Teacher - A D White





St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church near Avella.



The Carmichael home on Buffalo Creek, Independence Township.  
The former George Smith family home.





S. OF W. J. PATTERSON, CROSS CREEK TWP. WASHINGTON CO.  
PROPRIETOR OF 445 ACRES.

W. J. Patterson home - Cross Creek Township.



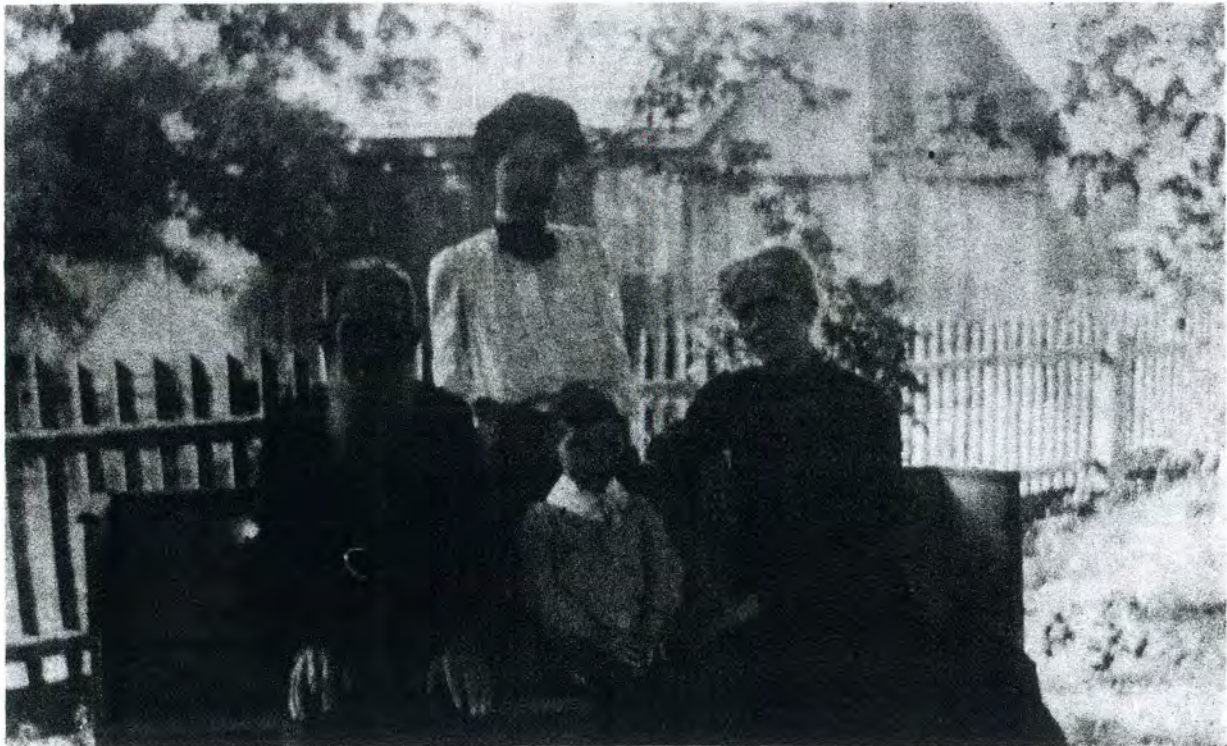
PATTERSON'S MILL, CROSS CREEK TWP. WASHINGTON CO.  
ESTABLISHED IN 1793 BY GEN. THOMAS PATTERSON W. J. PATTERSON, P.

Patterson's Mill - Cross Creek Township.





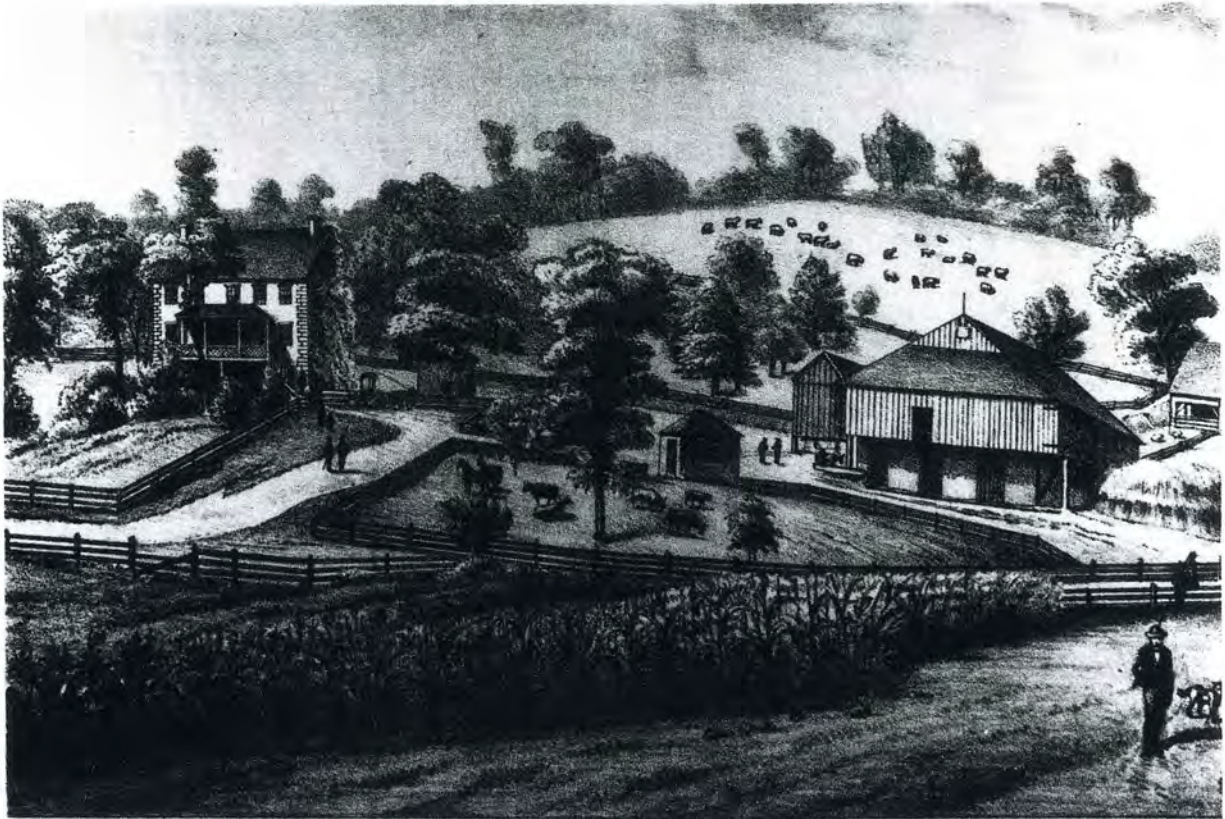
C. Bruner & Sons - about 1920.



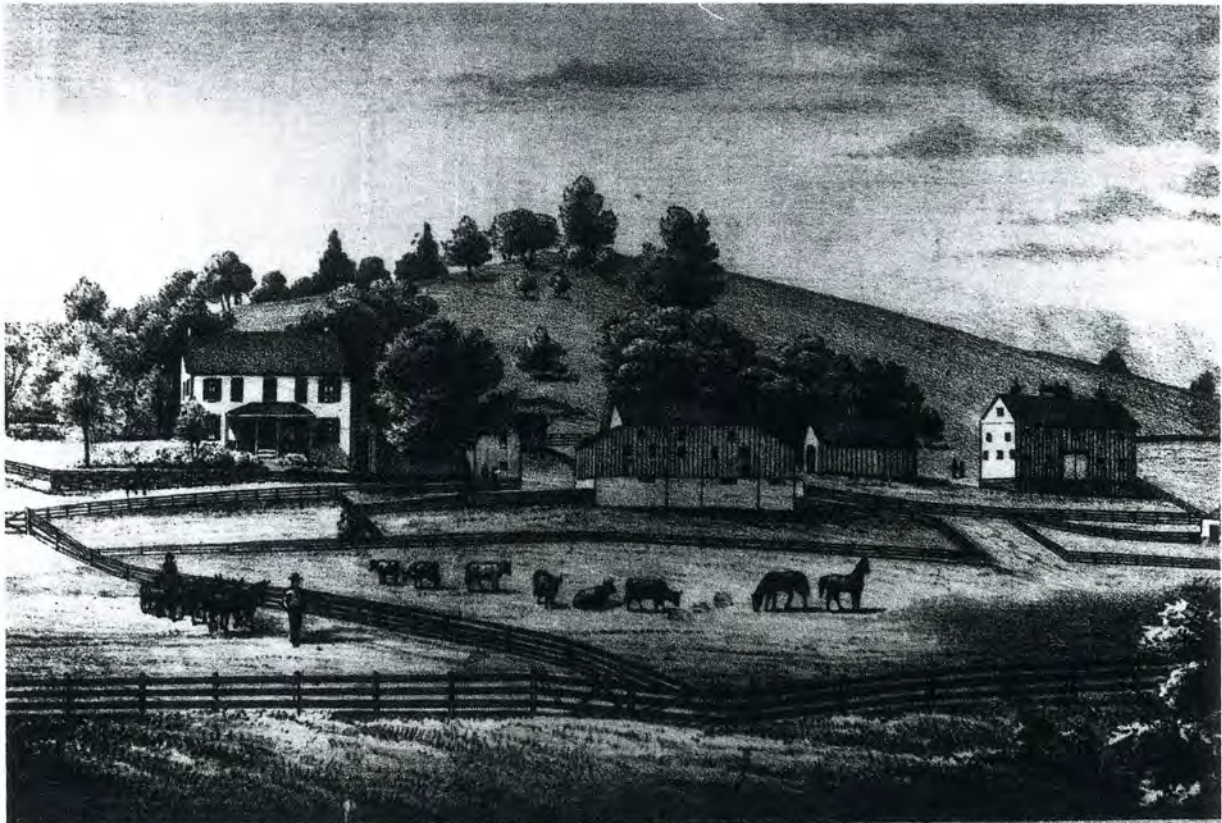
Early ancestors of the Sutherland and Irwin Family -  
Jefferson Township.







PATTERSON HOMESTEAD. R. M. PATTERSON. CROSS CREEK T<sup>p</sup>. WASHINGTON CO. PA. FARM 244 ACRES.



T. M. PATTERSON'S FARM & RESIDENCE. CROSS CREEK T<sup>p</sup>. WASHINGTON CO. PA.



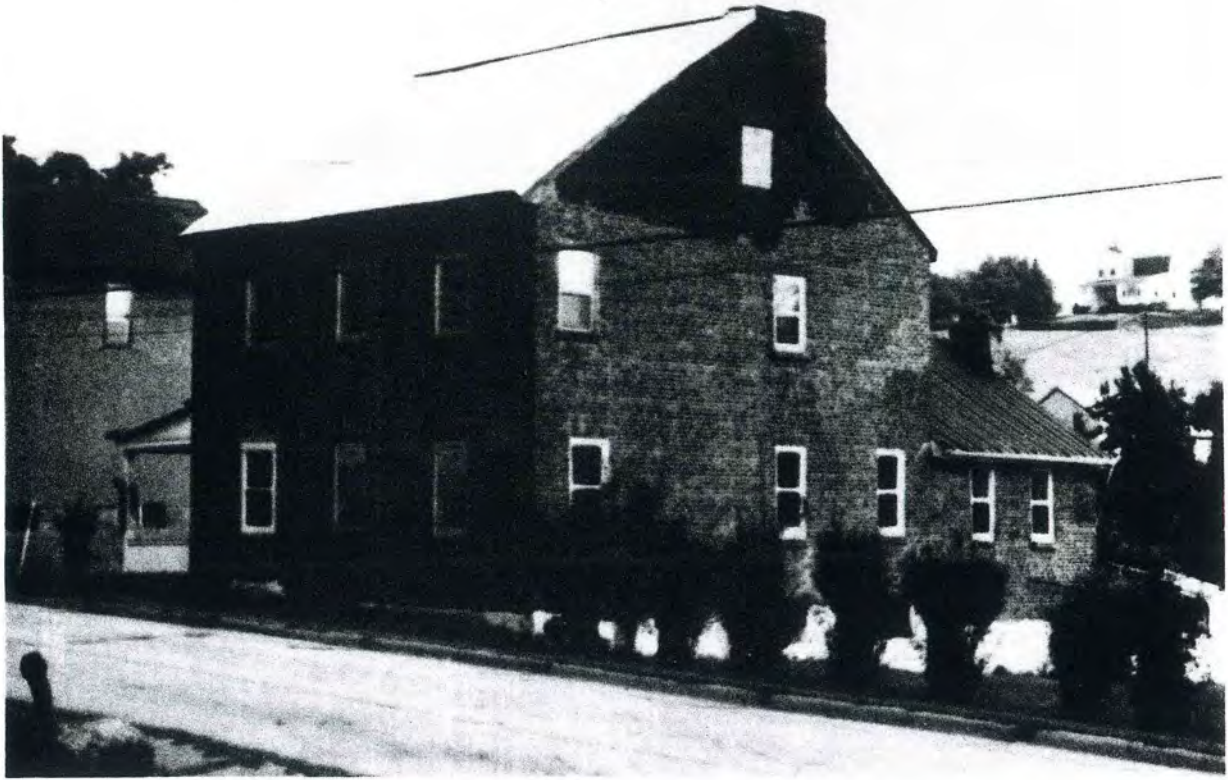


Avella Polar Star Soccer Champions 1933-1934  
 Front Row: Theodore Zatta, Andy Zubert, Ray Bortot,  
 William Debelak, Polly Valduga, George Bardwidi, Max Donelli,  
 Second Row: August Carmazi, - Coach, Tom Cepres, Babe Peneski,  
 Joe Kosarik, John Valduga, Andy Kosarik, Fred Cox, Carl Deco,  
 Missing from picture - John Nagy.



Avella National Soccer Champions 1938-1939  
 Front Row: Emedio (Blackie) Campanelli, James Beadling,  
 Edward Kirschner, Charles Kirschner, Charles Curtis,  
 Second Row: Frank Soltesz, Marino Gabrielli, Joe Griffon,  
 Joe Curtis, Red Butcher, Third Row: Raymond Donelli,  
 Elmer Elonzae, Dominick Mambu, Reefy Garcia, Max -





Brick house in Cross Creek Village - Built in 1821.  
The home of Rev. John Stockton.



Old Lee house, built by Hugh Lee - 1838





McCready Log House in Jefferson Township - Built in 1785.  
Removed to Meadowcroft Village - 1975.



Old Homestead - Jefferson Township.