

**Historical Facts**  
about the village of  
**Independence, PA**

Compiled by  
W.P. Wilson

*Courtesy of Fort Vance Historical Society*

SOME HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT  
THE VILLAGE OF INDEPENDENCE

Plotted and laid out early in 1803  
and among the oldest unincorporated towns in  
Washington County

A thriving shopping center  
one hundred twenty-five years or more ago

The younger generation, wishing to have some facts for future reference,  
asked the writer, who was born in the village October 18, 1878, to com-  
pile a sketch for future generations.

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The village of Independence is one of the oldest unincorporated towns in Washington County and at this writing (March 15, 1965) is 162 years old, having been plotted and laid out in 1803.

The younger generation now residing in the village know but little of the early history and have asked the writer of this article to give them some facts that may be preserved. Some of these facts come from the knowledge of the writer as he roamed over the hills in that section in his bare feet, and we hope they will be accurate enough to give a general idea of what the village was in years gone by.

Originally Independence Township was a part of Hopewell Township and remained as such for almost 75 years after the forming of Hopewell Township in 1781. The new township of Independence was established by the February term of court 1856.

When the village of Independence was plotted or laid out by William McCormick in 1803, the lots were 60 by 110 feet and contained one-fourth of an acre. Shopping centers are springing up in all sections of the country just outside the city limits of cities and large towns. Ample free parking is found in these new business centers. However, these shopping centers are not new, as a hundred years ago or less every village in the county was a shopping center where most everything could be purchased, and the parking was not a problem in those days when the country man came into town in the old slat wagon and tied old Dobbin to the hitching rack in front of the business place on Main Street. It also provided the old "Upping Block" for the convenience of the lady who came to town horseback, riding on the old side saddle with the old carpet bag hung over the horn of the saddle. They did not have to watch the parking meter while they

visited with their neighbors around the old pot bellied stove and secured the neighborhood news and rubbed their snuff and "chawed" the old J. T. Plug tobacco, which came in strips or plugs about eight or ten inches long, and the store keeper cut off the sized plug the customer wanted. The J. T. was a tin tab buried in the tobacco.

Among the first and early settlers in the Independence area was John Doddridge who came from Bedford County in 1773. He took up 137 acres located about two and one-half miles east of Independence, and the farm is now owned by Mrs. George Carl. A marker shows the location of the Doddridge Fort. This land was surveyed to him April 6, 1786. Samuel Teeters, a relative of Doddridge, took up a tract of land of 380 acres and surveyed to him May 1, 1780. This land is now owned by the Manchester heirs. The Teeters fort was built on this tract a short distance east of Doddridge Fort. These are the earliest established recorded residents of the Independence area.

The original name of the village was "The Forks," given it by the junction of two roads. The old name still sticks, and Independence is often referred to as "The Forks." When the village was plotted, it was named Williamsburg and retained this name until it was changed to Independence in 1836 when the first post office was established. No records show why it was named Williamsburg, but it is presumed that William McCormick who laid out the village attached "burg" to his first name and called it Williamsburg. No records are found to show how the village got the name of Independence. In 1836 a post office was established in the village, but it could not be called Williamsburg, as a post office in Blair County had that name, and the name of Independence was given to the village and post office. The office, one of the oldest in the county, is still in operation serving the village and the community. Mrs. Vance Hammond is now postmaster. The first postmaster of the village was Richard Carter. Lot No. 20 was sold to

John Cuthbertson and Robert Harvey on January 17, 1825, and they sold to Richard Carter. He, in partnership with his cousin, James Bell, built on the lot and opened a store, among the first in the village near what is now the old hotel, operated for years by Mr. and Mrs. William G. Liggett, and known as the Globe Hotel. The first store in the village was opened by William Gilchrist near the Harvey Tavern, which was in the "Flower Garden tract." Gilchrist moved to Ohio in 1816. The land lying south of the village was known as "Pembroke," and Shannon Hall tracts.

John Bell, a brother of James, also erected a store in the village. The lots were laid out mostly from the Pembroke tract. In 1812 William Gregory opened a blacksmith shop on the Main Road in the village near the Tannery on the hill. He lived in an old log house built by Dennis Dorsey. It was later weather boarded straight up and down and stood off the road leading to what is now the Methodist Church and the Aveilla road. For years Katie Baker and her son, Lewis, who was a shoemaker, lived in this house. She lived to be 102 years of age. No trace of the old log house exists. Early in the history of the village, William Waters, a hatter, came from over the mountains and opened a hattery in a field on the Jerome Plummer farm on the road known in early days as "Plummer lane."

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 85 years ago.

The village had three first-class physicians who rode the hills all hours of the night and did not send you to a hospital with 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 working in iron. Four shoemaker shops where you could get homemade leather shoes and leather boots with the brass toe tip which pleased all the kids as well as the "olders." The leather came from the tanneries located in the village.

Two wagon maker shops turned out real road wagons; a barber shop, where you could get a shave and hair cut for 25 cents; two harness makers where first-class work and driving harness was made; a merchant tailor where you could get a first-class, custom-made suit to your measure and 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; a hattery where men's hats were turned out to their order--all were to be found in the village.

One of the best common schools to be found in the state at that time where all grades were taught in one room with more than 80 pupils from five years to 21 enrolled, was located in Independence. There were three strong churches, two of which are still in existence and carrying on in a much changed neighborhood in the past century.

Two carpet weaving establishments where excellent rag carpets and rugs were woven were found here.

Several carpenters, stone masons, and bricklayers took care of building trades. There were two excellent taverns in their day. One old tavern cared for stock drovers as they took their stock on foot to Wellsburg for river shipment to New Orleans. A good hotel (that cared for the travelling (horse and buggy) public, most of which were "drummers" who sold merchandise to stores, etc. where you could get a fine chicken dinner with all the trimmings for 25 and 35¢.

The Belle-View Camp Meeting grounds containing 17 acres was part of a tract warranted to Benjamin Wells in 1874 (and leased to Methodist Episcopal people for camp meetings) from Thomas Buchanan. The ground was later purchased, and religious services were held three weeks out of each year. More than three-quarters of a century ago this camp meeting was the big attraction, and on Sundays the grounds were filled with people who came in every mode of transportation of that day. It is now more of a summer resort, but I think they are required to hold some religious services to hold the charter. This was a big time

for the old brick hotel "The Globe House" in the village as hundreds of camp meeting attenders flocked here for a fine dinner when chickens could be purchased for 35 cents a pair.

A cabinet maker turned out some of the finest furniture of the day. The writer has in his possession a bureau made by this cabinet maker for his parents. It is over 100 years old and made of solid cherry with birds eye veneering.

A butcher shop was operated in the village where good home dressed beef could be bought for 10 cents per pound. In addition to the shop, a "butcher wagon" toured the neighborhood and sold from the wagon.

The Independence Grange No. 179 is the oldest in Washington County and eighth oldest in the state. It received its charter March 6, 1874, and had 26 charter members, all of whom are dead. James G. Hanna was the first secretary. The grange operated a store in the village just at the turn of the highway to Bethany. They did cooperative buying and selling for the members. The store was opened May 1, 1875. All traces of the building in which it operated are gone. The grange is still operating and is one of the strong grange organizations of the county. James G. Hanna, the first secretary, at his death was followed by a daughter, Miss Jo G. Hanna. At her death, Mrs. Mary Gist, another daughter, took over and is the present secretary.

A good country coal bank was operated within a short distance where excellent coal could be had for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cents per bushel with same price for hauling. A load of slack was thrown in for good measure. Mike Kelly, for years operated this mine down what is known as Coal Hollow. John and George Westlake operated the mine more than a half century ago. The digger had to be the mule, and when the big cart holding about a ton, the "digger" got into his harness and hauled the cart to the dumping platform. These old "coal bunks" as they were known then could not even be located by the present generation down what was known as Coal Hollow.

The area around the village of Independence never had gas for fuel, and in early days burned the old tallow candle and oil lamps for light. Some 60 years ago there was some drilling for oil and gas, but dry holes were the result. A well was drilled south of the Camp Meeting grounds; one on the William McConnell farm, now owned by Grover Cari; one on the James Boies farm southwest of the McConnell farm; another on what was known as the Smith and White farm on the road leading to Fallen Timber school house, off Route 50 to Avelia. Here a small showing of gas was secured and was used as fuel for a short time, but the salt water soon drowned it out. No drilling has been done in recent years. A well on the Welch farm, Mt. Hope Ridge, was dry.

Long before the days of improved roads, George Lampre of Carnegie operated a huckster route through the section gathering up eggs, butter, and other farm products and furnishing his customers with some groceries in trade. He made regularly scheduled trips in his large covered wagon. These long ago hucksters purchased the turkeys raised by the farmers' wives, and during the holiday season they were corralled at one point, usually the William McConnell farm. One wing was clipped in order that the bird could not fly, and upwards to 400 and 600 were driven a-foot to Carnegie about 25 or 30 miles away. The huckster wagon, a big covered vehicle, followed and picked up the leg-weary birds. Try to drive them to market on the highway today! These hucksters often got stuck in the mudholes in the village and had to be pulled out. At that time what is now Route 31 was known as the main road from Washington to Wellsburg. Route 50 was not known then, and this highway was known as the "Backroad" leading to Cross Creek village and Burgettstown. It led down Brown's Hill to what is now the Browntown section of Avelia. At that time there was no Avelia, and the farm house of Samuel S. Campbell set alone with its old "Dug Well" and the old windlass to draw the water up in the "Old Oaken Bucket." The country post office was located on this road with Dick Tigner as postmaster. He was blind, but with the assistance of his wife, conducted the office.



The roads through the village of Independence were unimproved and were they muddy in winter time and dusty in summer, especially during Camp Meeting time. The highway from the Pennsylvania-West Virginia state line was semi-improved to Wellsburg, and a familiar sight in those days was men sitting astride a big pile of limestone, knapping the stones with small pieces to be spread upon the road--a slow process, but they were out of the mud.

The village got out of the mud about 1925 when the first concrete highway was constructed from the P. & W. mines at Avelia through Independence by the way of now Route 80 or the "back road" through the village. The main highway through the village had not been built. This road was built by the township with county aid. The county built the highway from the P. & W. mines to connect with Route 31 which had been improved from Washington to Manchester School House.

This gave an improved highway to the county seat via Avelia. On September 22, 1929 the last concrete was poured from Manchester School House through the village to the Pennsylvania-West Virginia state line. The stretch from the school house to the Independence Cemetery was thrown open to travel, but the stretch from the Cemetery through the village to the state line was not open to travel until October 13, 1929.

The village was among the first to organize a local telephone company, and Ben Painter was active and finally had connections with the county seat. It is now connected through Avelia with the dial system.

The old kerosene lamps for light gave way to electricity as the "juice" was turned into the lines about August 15, 1938. The village has now street lights and power for everything.

In order that the younger generation might know where the stores and other places of business were located, a little journey through the village from end to end giving the location and who occupied and conducted the stores, shoe shops, blacksmith shops, etc. a century ago, and what has become of all of them, may

be of interest. As far as possible, the names of the various homes years ago and who occupies them when the article was written will show that many changes have taken place in the old village. Many changes of residents have been made since this article was started, and many new names and faces will be recorded in the list. Strange as it may seem, scarcely a building is standing and occupied today that made the village of about 100 persons a thriving center a century or more ago. The post office, two churches, a small store with a service station attached, are about all that is left of this business center of a hundred years and less. Starting at the road in the western part of the village with what is now the W. B. Gist farm. A century or more ago, this land belonged to the Benjamin Wells plantation, one of the first settlers in this section. One of the early tanneries was located on this farm as well as the first church of the Lower Buffalo congregation. On this farm was a small graveyard and an old frame house where Fatty Leech resided. I presume the old house and graveyard are gone. This farm for years belonged to David Buchanan. Next in line is the Lower Buffalo Church. As stated above, the first church of logs was located on this farm near the West Virginia-Pennsylvania state line. This church was established about 1788 and nearby is the old Buffalo burying ground, surrounded by a huge stone fence, many of the stones three and four feet long and 18 to 20 inches square. A cyclone which swept over that area in 1944 destroyed part of the fence, tossing many of the heavy stones several feet. Miss Margaretta Parkinson left a trust fund to take care of the cemetery. The fence has been repaired, and the monuments and gravestones have been re-erected, and the old burying ground of 180 years is again in first-class condition. This trust fund keeps it mowed and cleaned up each year. The date 1789 is carved on the stone steps leading into the burying ground. Among the last burials here was Nancy Beard of the village. Lewis Baker of Mt. Hope Ridge, killed in an accident in Washington in 1914, was buried here. William Baker, a brother, buried here a short time after his brother, is believed to be the last burial.

century or more ago. The post office, two churches, a small store with a service station attached, are about all that is left of this business center of a hundred years and less.

The second Presbyterian church was erected on the ridge 1-1/2 miles south of the village and near the old burying grounds in 1822. In 1850 the ground was purchased in the village and a frame church was erected. This building was destroyed by fire January 1, 1917. The corner stone of the present pressed brick building was laid September 1, 1917 and was dedicated the Sunday following Christmas Day, 1918. The building was built at a cost of \$11,000 and dedicated almost free of debt. The seats, carpets, and other furnishings were salvaged from the fire. Across the highway is a cottage house which was occupied by Robert Backer and son, Thomas. They operated a shoe making shop on the property. The shop is gone. The house is now owned and occupied by Jessie Hall and family.

Adjoining the church property was the Ephriam Johnston tavern, a long "I" shaped building located at the junction of the Bethany-Wellsburg highway. The bar was in the front room next the Wellsburg road. James Johnston operated a barber shop here for years where you could get a shave and hair cut for two bits (25¢). A century or more ago stock dealers drove their cattle on foot through here to Wellsburg to ship by boat to New Orleans and other Southern points. The old Tavern was the stopping place, and many wild tales from this old landmark are told. A Masonic Lodge was established in Independence March 7, 1871. While no records show the meeting place, it is believed the lodge had rooms upstairs in this old building. There was a brick walk along the North end of the building leading to an entrance to the second floor. The Lodge was moved to Patterson's Mills June 2, 1886. A town pump stood on this property at the road junction and was a favorite watering place for the drovers. The old tavern has been torn down and the pump gone. The Presbyterian Church now owns the property.

Across the highway was what was known as the Grange Store. It has also

disappeared. The Independence Grange No. 179, the oldest in Washington County and eighth oldest in the state, put this store in operation May 1, 1875 and was a cooperative association in buying and selling for its members. The Grange was chartered March 6, 1874 with James G. Hanna the first secretary. The store operated for a number of years with Madison Liggett as manager. A feather renovating outfit operated in this building for some time. William Tarr, one of the old-time stone masons, lived here for several years. The building is gone.

At the curve of the road where the two highways meet was the wagon maker shop operated by Henry Beard. He built and repaired all kinds of vehicles. This old shop has long disappeared. On the same lot and adjoining the wagon maker shop was the home of Johnathan Beard, a custom tailor where you could have a good suit of clothes cut and made to your order at a reasonable cost. Mrs. Beard, who was among the last persons to be buried in the old Buffalo graveyard, could raise the hair of the neighborhood youngsters with her ghost stories. This house is now occupied by a family by the name of Baxter and is owned by a Mr. Dale. Adjoining this property was the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Wilson, where the writer of this article was born over 86 years ago. The Wilsons occupied this property for more than a half century. This was an old-time constructed building with huge stone walls separating the four cellars and the weatherboarding lined with brick. The home was in excellent repair when sold by the Wilsons in 1918, but today it is falling down piece by piece for lack of repair and attention. Mr. Wilson conducted a harness making shop in this home for more than 70 years. He also served as postmaster, and the office was in the harness shop. The house is now unoccupied, but it is owned by Mrs. Fees of Dunns Station, R. D.

Adjoining is a four-roomed home built and joined to the Wilson home. This home was occupied by Abbie McCammon, a maiden lady, for many years. She was a relative of Mr. Samuel George, a big banker in Wellsburg in those days. They created quite a sensation when they came to see Abbie, driving up with their

phaeton with gold fringes, a big black horse with fancy harness, and a colored driver. The property is now unoccupied and is owned by Annabel Buxton Castle of Detroit.

Adjoining this was the Liggett store room where David Liggett and son, Charles, had a general store. The post office was also located in this store room. Richard Shepherd also conducted a store here and occupied living quarters above the store. This building was frame. It is owned by Annabel Buxton Castle. Joining this store was the large brick residence of David Liggett. George W. Buxton later lived here when a fire destroyed the home in 1919. The vacant store room adjoining the vacant lot has also disappeared.

Adjoining this property and across a driveway into the Liggett property was the home of Maggie Moore, a maiden lady and her mother. A sister, Mary Jane Smith Plummer, also resided here after the mother's death. In the east end of this residence Dr. J. P. Johnston had his office until he moved to Wellsburg. Miss Jennie McElroy for years conducted a millinery store here. The building has now been torn down and the lot is owned by Henry Georgette, Jr., who now owns the adjoining property.

Across the highway from the Moore home was the large brick building, the home of David Scott, who conducted a general store for years. During its existence, Thomas Long, John Nolan, W. H. S. McAdoo, S. L. Byers were co-partners at different times. George W. Burton operated the store; later Thomas and Howard Adamson had the store also. Over the storeroom, Samuel Byers, a well-known cabinet maker had his residence. The entrance was from an outside stairway off the Aveila road. The brick building housing the residence of David Scott and the store has also been torn down. In its place is a small store room with the residence of James Roadman, who also operates a gasoline station with the store.

Adjoining the Scott residence is the old brick "Globe Hotel" operated for many years. It was the first brick building in the village. The James McCreery family operated the hotel a century ago. Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Liggett ran the

hotel for years and later were followed by Jehlie Garman and family. This was a busy place during the Camp Meeting season, and a good chicken dinner was served for 25 cents and your horse fed for two bits.

Young chickens then could be bought for 35 cents per pair. Tobacco (the old J. T. Plug) cigars, etc. were sold in the office. This first brick home in the village was built by Thomas Potts. Connected with the old building was a large brick oven where the finest of homemade bread and cakes were baked. John A. Boles and family occupied this building in later years previous to moving to Washington after they had sold their farm. The large livery stable kept in connection with the hotel and later used as a garage finally burned down. The old hotel building now is used as an apartment house owned by N. J. Myers. It is also occupied by Fred White and family and Mr. and Mrs. James Kline. Crossing the highway again and adjoining the Maggie Moore property is a home owned by Henry Georgette, Jr. This home was originally a frame stable on the Wylie Rickey property and was moved up front to Main Street and made into a residence for Elizabeth McCarty. Mr. Georgette has faced the house with brick and otherwise improved it.

Adjoining this property was an old straggly brick structure occupied for many years by Wylie Rickey who conducted a blacksmith shop, and he was an artist in the work of his profession. He operated the shop from 1880 until 1905 when he gave up blacksmithing and opened a general store in what was the blacksmith shop. Mr. Rickey's death occurred in March, 1915, and the store was closed. The old brick structure has disappeared. Adjoining the old blacksmith shop was the home of Mr. Rickey. Nearly a century ago Thomas Long lived here. He was associated with the Scott store. Cree Westlake and family, a teamster, lived here. A daughter, Fay, was burned to death here when a can of kerosene exploded as she was starting a fire in the outside kitchen. The home was formerly owned by Emile Lerby and occupied by Cecil Hunt and family, and Gene Grimm and family.

It is now owned and occupied by Kenneth Hadden.

Adjoining this property was the home of Dr. Robert J. Hartman, one of the old-time physicians of the village. He had his office in the residence. He came from France and settled here in 1859. He also owned a farm down "Coal Hollow" and bordering on the upper end of the village. Dr. W. A. Kidd also occupied this home as did Dr. W. R. Simpson. The home is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Vance Hammond, who have the post office in the home. The farm is now owned by the Sutherlands.

Adjoining was the home of James K. McConahey, a Justice of the Peace in 1858. Clarence Meneely and family own the home now. Mr. and Mrs. Meneely now reside in Wellsburg and the home is not occupied. On an end room David F. Richey, for many years one of the old-time shoemakers of the village, had his shop. He also had the post office in his shop. In this room three-fourths of a century or more ago, the election was held. A board with a slot cut in the center was placed under the window and the ballots put through from the outside. Ballots were not printed as they are today by the county. Over the shoe shop with an outside stairway was the office of William C. Liggett for many years a Justice of the Peace and who operated the old hotel.

Adjoining this property was the brick home of Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Plummer. They also had a farm at the east end of the village. Mr. Plummer was opposed to the liquor traffic and left his wealth to establish "The Plummer Temperance Fund" to oppose the liquor traffic in the county and to promote temperance. A large granite mausoleum in the Independence Cemetery marks his resting place with Mrs. Plummer and Mary McClain who lived in the Plummer home for years. This home is now owned by Joseph DePetro and family. At the corner of the sidewalk is one of the old-fashioned dug wells with the huge pump stock of octagon shape and made from a big log with a hole bored in the center. The well is now covered over by cement but no doubt the old pump stock is still there and well preserved

over the century of use. Stock drovers and teamsters stopped here for water. Mr. DePetro and sons who purchased the Hanna farm which joins it with lane leading into the farm have improved the farm until it is one of the show places of the neighborhood. With the assistance of a building contractor, the sons have planned and erected one of the finest barns in the county. The Mansion House on the Hanna property was destroyed by fire. The DePetros plan to erect a new home. They specialize in black Angus cattle and dairying. On the farm they have two lakes covering two acres each.

Across the highway from the old Plummer property is the home of the late Chester Painter and family and the former home of J. K. P. Boles and family. Mr. Boles was one of the early blacksmiths and wagon makers of the village and was an expert at his trade. Ninety years ago this property belonged to Mike Miller and family. Some of the descendants still reside in the West Middletown section. A Mr. Patton had a small store in this home years ago. Mr. Boles had a large two-story shop on the property, with the blacksmith shop on the first floor and wagon maker shop on the second floor. A few years ago the old building collapsed, and no trace of the old landmark is left. Before the coming of the telephone, Mr. Boles had a communication with the home over a wire with a tin can on each end of the wire. The home is now owned by the DePetros and has been modernized with bath, etc. In the rear of this property and located on the road leading from Route 31 to Route 50 was the old Westlake home, built of logs with huge fire place and outside chimney. This house for years was occupied by Mr. and George Westlake and John Westlake. The Westlakes were old-time fox hunters and had several fine fox hounds. By the baying of the hounds they could tell what hound was in the lead. The Westlake brothers also operated the old country coal bank. The old log house has been modernized and occupied by William and Viola Westlake Spencer, a daughter of George Westlake. The big old-fashioned stone chimney still stands in excellent condition.



Coming back to Route 31 on the corner and across from the old Boles property, is the home of Eugene Painter. Years ago this was the Thomas Boyd family home. It had huge stone steps leading to the sidewalk. William Perrin lived here after the Boyds, and it was later owned and occupied by a son, John E. Perrin.

Adjoining this was the property of James Westlake and family. Miss Jennie Fouche lived with the Westlakes. Mr. Westlake was one of the old shoe makers of the village, and he and his son, J. Fletcher, had a shop in the building. They made all kinds of shoes and high top leather boots with brass tips on the toes which pleased the kids. In addition to the shoe shop, they had a carpet weaving machine where fancy rag carpets and rugs were turned out. J. Fletcher also had the post office in the shop. The portion of the building used as a shop and carpet weaving have been removed. Miss Jo G. Hanna who was secretary of Independence Grange for many years, resided here. Following her death the property was sold to Earl Lunger, Principal of the Independence-Avelia Area Joint School District, who occupies the home.

Adjoining this is the home of Mrs. Nina Andrews and son, Lyndon Andrews and family. Years ago Cooney Moran and wife lived here, and I think Mrs. Moran had a millinery shop. Later Mr. and Mrs. James Crouch lived here, and Mrs. Crouch had a millinery store. She also erected a large store room on the property, and besides millinery sold ladies' wear. The youngsters of the village called it "Gusky's Store" after a large Pittsburgh store. This building, erected by Mrs. Crouch, has also disappeared. Mrs. Nina Andrews had the post office here for years.

Next to this property was the home of George Webster, a most respected colored minister, and one of the old-time shoe makers of the village. This is the only negro family that ever lived in the village. Their children attended the village school, and their two sons were physicians in Texas. The home was next to the old school building, and Mrs. Webster, who was an excellent cook,

always had cookies on hand ready for the school kids, and they were daily visitors. Mr. Webster had his shop in a small building on the Main Street corner of the lot. It has long disappeared. Nathan Andrew, an uncle of Lyndon, lived here for years. The Seacrist family lived here when Enos Seacrist conducted the Grange Blacksmith shop across the highway. This property is now owned by Mac and Stanley Fainter and is unoccupied.

Across the alley was the old one-room school building erected in 1872, where one of the best schools in the county held forth. John Nolan was one of the early teachers 80 years ago and had over 80 pupils of all ages from five and six years to 21 and over. In 1892 another room was built on top of the old building. It was rather shaly and termed by one of the directors who opposed its building as "Hell on stilts." A high school was established here and was the second rural high school in the county (Cross Creek village had the first). The writer helped to plant two small maple trees from the Hanna farm. They grew to huge trees and were destroyed when the old building was destroyed by fire.

A high stone wall was in front of the grounds and next to the sidewalk. A sited ride down the school lot and a jump over the stone wall was a thrill and into the fence of Isabell Callendine, who lived across the road in a cottage house. A complaint and the fence was repaired, and the kids were told not to do it again.

After the two-store school building had been condemned as unsafe for school purposes in 1909, a new building was erected in the eastern part of the village. When the schools consolidated and the area schools established, the building was sold to the township supervisors. It is now used for their meetings and public gatherings and the Grange. After the building was condemned for school purposes, it was sold to J. Fletcher Westlake, who later sold it to Samuel Farrar. He sold it to William Shepard, who owned it when it was destroyed by fire May 29, 1942.

A small cottage on the lot owned by Mrs. Mary Pyle was also destroyed by fire which started in the Pyle home at 3:30 A. M. The cottage has been rebuilt and was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Reed of Hickory and was unoccupied. Samuel Farrar occupied the old school building when it was burned. The school lot is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. George Pollock.

Adjoining the old school property and next to the Methodist Church is the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Pollock. This house was formerly the W. F. Kline home on the hill. It was moved to its present location and for some time Elizabeth McCarty lived here. The moving of this house a long distance was some feat. It was placed on skids and moved by a winch and could be moved only when it was raining or the ground watered. It was moved only a short distance at a time.

Adjoining this property is the Methodist Church, one of the oldest Methodist congregations in the county. Collections of money for its building were started January 13, 1846 or 119 years ago this past January. The old building was rectangular in shape with the pulpit in the end next to the school house. A solid block of seats was in the center with a dividing strip. A single block of seats was built on each side of the center block with an aisle between them. The old pot belly stove occupied a spot near the middle of the outside row of seats on each side of the room. In those days it was the custom for the women to occupy one side of the auditorium and the men the other side. I can still hear the sound of the old church bell as it rang every Sunday morning and evening and for Wednesday evening prayer meeting. The congregation was first organized in 1846 and the first house of worship built in 1848 at a cost of \$800. The present building was erected in 1896 at a cost of \$2500. Many improvements have been made in recent years. The steps leading into the church are of one piece composed of hundreds of pieces of various kinds of stone and molded together. They were made by W. F. Kline, a member of the church and a noted stone mason

in his day. They were dedicated January 23, 1940. A marble slab is built into the steps with the following inscription: "To the lady workers of the Methodist Church."

On the road leading from Route 31 to Route 50 and next to the Methodist Church is the house erected several years ago by Richard Shepart, later occupied by Mr. Yates and now owned and occupied by Wendell Westlake and family.

Across the road stood the old home of Samuel Crawford and family. The old house has been removed, and a new home erected some years ago by Earl and Lizzie Miller. It is now owned and occupied by Mr. Miller's widow, Mrs. Lizzie Yates Miller.

Adjoining the Crawford home more than a century ago was an old log house, later weather boarded straight up and down and one of the oldest in the village. Upwards to 110 years ago the house was occupied by Katie Baker and her son who was a shoemaker. The Bakers later moved to Cross Creek village where Mrs. Baker died in 1914 at the age of 102 years. The man who operated the hattery lived here a century or more ago. No trace of the old landmark is left.

Years ago when the village was laid out, a road led from Route 31 past the old Ferguson home and joined what is now Route 50. Across from what was the old Baker home is the John Virgin home. Years ago, James Wilson, the harness maker, lived here. It joins up with old tanneries that were operated years ago by the Carters and Adams family. It is now owned and occupied by Myrtle Virgin.

Across from the Methodist Church is a vacant piece of land of several acres. On this land and on the road now closed is a large old frame house which was the home of "Granny" Vance (Great-grandmother of Robert Vance). Mrs. Matilda Ferguson and daughter, Martha, lived here for many years. They operated a carpet weaving machine and turned out fancy woven rag carpets and rugs. The old home has been vacant for some time, and it, with the acreage adjoining it, belongs to Darwin Buxton.

Adjoining this property and facing on Route 31 was the home of William Richey, a harness maker. Next to this property is the home of John and Nora Buxton Smith, who occupy it. A small shack across the highway, but now gone, was occupied by Samuel Farrar and a Mr. Stocks. Near where this shack stood is a new home of Violet Robison and her sister, Mrs. Bertha Dunkle, who own and occupy it. It was near this home that the old hattery of a century or more ago stood. The road at this point was known as Plummer's Lane, as it bordered the Jerome Plummer farm.

Dropping back on Route 31 to the lane leading to the Hanna-DePetro property, across the lane from Joe DePetro or the old Jerome Plummer home was the home of Dr. R. A. Stewart, who practiced here in 1921 and for many years. He was in World War One and later located in Washington and was connected with the X-Ray department of the Washington Hospital. He erected this home when he began his practice here. Lillie Meneely Fry lived here for some time. It is now occupied and owned by Wayne Klagar and family.

Adjoining this property was a small frame building which was the central office of the local telephone company when the village had its first telephone service. Grace Liggett now of Scio, Ohio, operated the exchange for a long time. A dial system is now in operation through the Avelia exchange. The little telephone building was moved across the highway and became a part of the Nina Andrews home. It was used as the post office for many years when Mrs. Andrews was the postmistress of the village. This was among the first local telephone companies in the county. It became defunct and for awhile the village was without telephone service. After electricity was brought to the village in 1938, the Bell Telephone Company built lines through here and connected with the Avelia office.

Adjoining the telephone office was the Grange Blacksmith shop with Enos Seacrist as the "smithy." The old shop has also disappeared, and the ground

is owned by the Painter brothers. Several garages are on this property as well as the old stable of J. K. P. Boles now made into a garage. Next to these buildings years ago stood an old frame house weather boarded straight up and down. The writer never remembers of the house being occupied. It has also disappeared.

Adjoining is the property of Ralph Pittman and family. Upwards to 80 years ago this was a two-roomed house, and occupied by a maiden lady, Isabella Calendine and surrounded by a board fence which was often broken down by sledriders from the old school across the road. Mr. Pittman has enlarged the house and made it modern.

Adjoining this property was the home of Mrs. McGrerey who owned the front farm purchased by James G. Hanna, now owned by the DePetros. Dr. R. A. Stewart occupied this previous to erecting his new home. George Brierley and family also lived here. Mrs. Brierley was a daughter of Patrick Cass, a noted pioneer character in the early history of the western country. The house is now owned by Harley Pittman and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lowe.

The adjoining house years ago was owned by the Stevenson family and later was the home of Charles and Clara Smith Liggett. Mr. Liggett was one of the early merchants of the village. Mr. and Mrs. John Buxton of Jefferson Township owned and lived here. It is now owned by Annabel Buxton Castle of Detroit and is occupied by the Smock family.

Adjoining this property was the home of David F. Richey, one of the old shoemakers and post master of the village. He erected this home and occupied it for many years. It is now owned and occupied by Donald Dunkle and family.

Next to this property was the home of the late John and Sally Brierley Buxton. Mrs. Buxton was a granddaughter of Patrick Cass, the pioneer. Darwin Buxton now owns and occupies the home.

Adjoining this property and bordering on the Plummer Lane is a school building erected by the Independence School District. With the coming of the central area school system, the school was closed and the building sold to the township supervisors. The Grange and other community affairs are held here.

Starting with the Pennsylvania-West Virginia state line is the old brick residence of the late Dr. Joseph Parkinson, one of the early physicians of the neighborhood, who spent most of his life in the saddle attending his patients day and night. He had his office in his home. He started his practice in Pittsburgh, but three years later came to Independence April 1, 1835 and spent the rest of his life here. He propounded his own medicines. On the Parkinson farm is an old private burying ground with only a few graves in it. This is now included in the adjoining golf course. Buried in this old graveyard are Francis McGuire and his wife. The date on the tombstone is 1815. There is no record of the McGuire family known by the writer. There is a legend, however, about the McGuire family. There were two boys and three girls. The legend records that one of the boys was bitten by a mad wolf, and in his suffering, he begged to be put out of his suffering; and he was smothered with a blanket. He is supposed to be buried in this old grave yard with other members of the McGuire family. This legend comes from some of the older descendants of the McGuires now residing in Ohio. The farm was purchased by the Myers family and now part of the farm is owned by a large golf course company which was started on the Waugh farm adjoining. Dr. Parkinson's means were limited while in medical school, but at his death he left an estate of nearly a million dollars. Today the village and the community is without a physician. Adjoining the Parkinson home was the home of Joseph Dimit and wife, now owned by Mike Lukachko and family and greatly improved. The farm borders on the village.

At the junction of the old Coal Hollow road and Route 31 is the home of Mary Buxton and next is the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Buxton and adjoining this is the home of George Buxton and family. These homes are on the former

property of W. C. Liggett of the Globe Hotel, and the field extended from the Samuel Moore property to the Coal Hollow road.

Adjoining the Moore property was an orchard that produced some good apples for the kids of the neighborhood. Adjoining the orchard is a small home erected by William Sheppard, now owned and occupied by Frank and Florence Buxton Ertle. Across the highway from the Buxton properties is the parsonage of the Lower Buffalo Presbyterian Church. Bordering on the old orchard was the home of Samuel Moore and family, later owned by Nannie Moore Griffith and her daughter, Mrs. Pease. This property had some acreage and had a stone quarry where some fine sandstone was secured for building purposes. The home has been improved and is owned by Henry Georgette, Jr., and unoccupied. The old home of the Moores was moved to another location on the lot and in later years was occupied by the Rev. Henry Blayne and family. Mr. Blayne was pastor of the Presbyterian Church. The old house has been torn down. The new home of the Moores was the largest and finest in the village 75 years ago. It is reported that a Pittsburgh church organization is looking over this tract for a summer camp for boys. At the entrance to the Moore property and at the junction of Routes 31 and 50 stands a monument or Honor Roll for those residents of Independence Township who served in World Wars One and Two.

Adjoining the Moore property and on Route 50 "or the back road" as it was known years ago is the home of Emma Robison. This home is now occupied by Donald Selia and family. Upwards to a century ago this home was owned and occupied by Jane and Nancy Irwin, aunts of the late Judge Robert W. Irwin of Washington. In part of this house Samuel Byers, Sr. conducted a cabinet making shop and some excellent furniture was made. This is one of the oldest homes in the village.

Next to this property is the home of Bud Meneely. Years ago the Fosters lived here. Mr. Foster conducted a butcher shop and also peddled meat from a wagon. Later Billy Cunningham lived here and also had a butcher shop that stood



on the corner of the lot facing the highway. It has long disappeared. Cunningham also drove a meat wagon over the area where you could get a good steak or roast for 10 cents or less per pound. He was known as Beefy Cunningham. Richard Stocks and wife, a Civil War veteran, and later Mrs. Spencer lived here.

Across the highway from the old butcher shop was a house known as the Methodist Church parsonage but seldom occupied by the pastor. Mrs. Beck White was one of the early occupants as was Charles Liggett and family, Rev. Henry Blayne and family, Henry Westlake, a teamster, and Samuel Rea. It is now owned and occupied by George Davis.

Adjoining this property was the Bates home years ago and later owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Crawford and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Malone. Recently it was owned by George Raiston but now owned and occupied by the Hennesy and Davidson families.

Across the highway stood the old Campbellite or Disciples of Christ Church. It was of brick structure. The church was organized in 1865 with Mrs. Rebecca Perrine Hartman, wife of Dr. Robert W. Hartman, as one of the promoters. Services were held in the school house until 1867 when the brick building was erected on a lot adjoining the Hartman farm. The congregation never had a regular pastor but the pulpit was served by supplies from Bethany College. Regular services ceased in 1876 but services were continued occasionally. The old building was used as a village theater and summer school was held there. The building was destroyed by a heavy windstorm, and the lot was sold for taxes and purchased by W. H. S. McAdoo, now the property of Mrs. Mansell Brautigam. No trace of the old landmark and early house of worship is left. Across the highway and joining the Crawford-Malone property is a large lot and was owned by J. Fletcher Westlake; on this property was the home of Mrs. James Cunick and son. This was the former home of J. Fletcher Westlake, one of the old shoemakers of the village. E. F. Westlake, for 45 years a teacher in the Washington County schools, resided

here during his boyhood days. The Gunions no longer live here. It is now owned and occupied by J. A. Penrod and family.

Across the highway from the Westlake-Gunion property was the home of W. H. S. McAdoo, one of the early school teachers of the county. Upwards to a century ago this property was occupied by Unity Lanum and Margaret Johnston, two maiden ladies. The mother of Mr. McAdoo died when he was nine months old, and the father when he was 15 months of age. These two women took him into their home and raised him. After Mr. and Mrs. McAdoo's death, the home went to Mrs. Mansell Brautigam, and the Brautigams own and occupy the property.

Adjoining the Brautigam property is the new home owned and occupied by John Ryniawec and family. This home is on the old Samuel Ferrin farm.

Across the highway is the home of Guy and Ruth Adams Westlake. For years this was the home of John C. Adams, a well-known painter of the village. The old tanneries were on part of the Adams property. A century ago this property was owned by the Carters, early pioneers of the village. One of the early stores of the village was in this house. Richard Carter, who settled here in 1830, operated the tanneries where first-class leather was produced. He was the first post master of the village in 1836 and the office still serves the residents of this section. Joseph Adams, father of John C., secured the property from the Carters. The Carters had the first store of the village. There are no traces of the tan yards.

Beyond the old tan yards was the home of Mary Jane Smith Plummer. This place contained several acres and was later the home of J. Vance Dodds and family. In recent years this place was owned and occupied by the Wright family. Howard Wright still lives there. While there are no records to show, it is said an old red brick school building stood just inside the property and off the highway. Some records show that the school authorities traded this for other property for school purposes.

Adjoining this property was the home of William F. Kline, a well-known stone mason. Previous to this Frank Marshall owned the home. Mr. Kline moved the old house to another location on the lot, and a new residence was erected. Joseph Adams and family lived in the old house for some time. Later this house was moved down to the Main Street of the village next to the M. E. Church. Mr. and Mrs. George Pollock now own it. The new home of the Klines was burned on April 6, 1938. The property was sold to Matthew and Mildred Painter Morrow who erected a modern home on it and occupy it. James Kline still owns some of the ground.

The Samuel Perrin farm adjoins this property as well as bordering on other sections of the village. William Perrin, a son, was a well-known attorney in the State of Washington. Mr. Perrin died in February and was buried February 28, 1889 in the Independence Cemetery. This was the first interment in this cemetery and a road had to be cut among the tree tops to reach the grave. This land was in forest and cleared for the cemetery. Clyde Perrin, a grandson and family lived here. The residence is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Robison. Mrs. Robison is a great granddaughter of Samuel Perrin. Several new homes have been erected on this farm and the road leading to Avelia. On the old tan yard property, Joseph Fry and family occupy a new brick home they recently erected.

Another interesting adjunct to the old village 75 or more years ago was the old swimming hole down Coal Hollow near the entrance to the Hartman farm. The water poured over a large limestone slab and a dam was built to collect the water. There was a vacant place under the rocks which made a good hiding place when any females came by. That was before the day of bathing suits. The patch of willows adjoining the pool furnished material for the kids to make their own whistles. This old "hole" was bordering on upwards to 50 acres of the finest oak and poplar timber just cut out a few years ago. This timber was on what was known as "The Knob" farm and owned by the Bealls who owned upwards to 2,000 acres in this section and West Virginia just over the line. Despite being in

copperhead snake territory, this timber made an excellent place for the youth to roam in their bare feet and study nature and learn why bark on trees was thicker on one side, gather berries, ginseng, a valuable root, and study the habits of the denizens of the forest. More was learned here than from books. When a rock was hurled through a hornet's nest, the fellow who threw the rock soon learned to dart behind a tree as soon as the rock left his hand, as Mr. Hornet followed the line the stone made, and the hurler of the rock was hit on the forehead by the hornet. They came with such force that the youngster would be knocked to the ground.

A coal bank was opened on this tract but was never a success as the drainage was in the wrong direction for a slope mine.

On this tract and near the old swimming pool was another large pour-over where Joseph Dimit washed his sheep. In those days washed wool brought a few cents more on the pound. Washing sheep today is a lost art.

Not far from the old swimming hole was a large beech tree which leaned far out over a deep ravine. The old tree had the initials of nearly every boy and girl in the neighborhood carved in its bark. Whoever could carve his initials in the highest point of the old tree was always a "dare." The tree, over 75 feet high, leaned over a deep ravine. The girls of the gang would climb to the most top branch. A reputed Indian mound was close to this old tree and many an hour was spent by the youngsters looking for Indian lore. Only a few dart heads were found.

Kids today are not unlike those of years ago. While roaming in this big forest we would explore the old coal banks nearby. Fortunately we were never trapped by a fall of slate. The life of the boy 75 to 100 years ago was full of thrills, and things learned not in books meant much to the lives of these youths as they grew older. Their time was occupied in learning about nature and not in vandalism.

305 Oak Street  
San Marino, California  
91108  
February 5, 1967

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However, I believe you missed a little bet on Patrick Cass. He was a pioneer all right--a pioneer on three frontiers. Born June 12, 1771, at Falling Springs, Pennsylvania, the family moved in 1775 to near old Fort Frederick, Maryland, and there young Cass spent his early boyhood within sound of the guns of the Revolution. In 1780 the older Cass moved to a new frontier--the land beyond the Allegheny Mountains. They followed the Braddock Road across the mountains and stopped at Beasontown, now Uniontown. This was a beautiful country and there was plenty of land, but the elder Cass had itchy feet and western fever, a bad combination, and the next spring he again headed west, stopping at Catfish Camp. He leased some ground nearby, and spent the next eight years farming and trying to make a living. Then his feet got itchy again, and he headed west. I was unable after a long search to find the location of the land that Cass leased near Washington. At any rate, he never owned it.

After leaving western Pennsylvania, the elder Cass stopped at Charlestown, now Wellsburg, West Virginia, and there his wanderings came to an end.

The boys of the old frontier of western Pennsylvania, and western Virginia learned early in life to take care of themselves. Before 1790 young Patrick Cass had made several trips across the mountains to Hagerstown, Maryland, and Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, and he had traveled the wilderness trails of what is now western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio.

In 1792 he joined Captain Caton's Company of Rangers of the Frontier, an organization of bold woodsmen who guarded the settlers from raiding bands of Indians from the Ohio country, and while stationed at Yellow Creek Fort, West Virginia, and Bennett's Fort, three miles above Wheeling, where he met two of the greatest Indian fighters of all time--Lewis Wetzel, the lone scout of the old Virginia Panhandle, and Captain Sam Brady, leader of the Fort Pitt Rangers. He is one of the few persons who have left us a description of the renowned Lewis Wetzel, meager though it is: about five feet ten, dark complexion, almost like an Indian, very long straight black hair, and piercing black eyes, and very powerful.

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2

Cass learned the carpenter trade at Mercersburg, where he worked some two years as an apprentice. At this period of his life, young Cass became acquainted with a youth named James Buchanan, who became President of the United States sixty years later. This young carpenter who had seen so much of the world appealed to the youthful imagination of the future President, and they became close friends.

When war with France seemed certain in 1799 the prospect of a good fight appealed to the young Pennsylvania Irishman, and he enlisted in the Tenth United States Infantry, in a division commanded by General Alexander Hamilton; but the war clouds passed and he was mustered out in 1800. However, army life appealed to the young Irishman and the ink on his discharge was hardly dry when he re-enlisted under Major Cass for five years with the rank of sergeant; and this enlistment led to his greatest adventure.

Cass and Sergeant John Ordway were in Captain Russell Bissell's Company of the First Infantry, stationed at Fort Kaskaskia, Illinois, in the fall of 1803 when Captain Meriwether Lewis stopped at the Fort in search of volunteers for the proposed expedition into the unknown land beyond the Mississippi, known to history as the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Both Cass and Ordway volunteered, but they were such valuable soldiers that Captain Bissell refused to release them. However, Captain Lewis with the authority vested in him by President Jefferson to take any army men he wished wherever he found them, over-ruled Bissell and both Cass and Ordway left with Captain Lewis.

When Sergeant John C. Floyd died of what is believed to have been appendicitis, near the present Sioux City, Iowa, on August 20, 1804, Cass was elected Sergeant in his place. It is interesting to note here that this was the only death that occurred among the 31 white men, one Indian woman, and her infant son whom she carried on her back.

On May 14, 1804, the expedition left its winter camp at the mouth of Wood River near St. Louis, and near the last of October it reached the Mandan Indian villages near present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. There the two captains, Lewis and Clark, decided to spend the winter, and it was here that Captain Lewis's choice of Patrick Cass as a carpenter was of great value, for his knowledge in the construction of log cabins and palisades.

It was at the Mandan villages that a French Canadian, Toussaint Charbonneau, was engaged as interpreter, and he took along his 17-year old wife, Sacagawea, of the Snake Indian tribe. It is interesting to note that when the expedition left Fort Mandan on April 7, 1805, there were 33 in the party.

This little Indian girl carried her baby, Baptiste, on her back, Indian fashion clear across the Rocky Mountains to the shores of the Pacific and back to the Mandan villages. Much credit has been given to her for her part, and some historians have claimed that she guided the expedition. She was of great value to them, especially when Indian tribes were met, in obtaining horses, and guides; but the services of George Drouillard, the son of a French Canadian father and a Shawnee mother, mentioned in the records as George Drewyer, have been overshadowed by historians in favor of Sacagawea. I do not wish to take away any credit due Sacagawea, but in my opinion the expedition might have been a failure but for George Drouillard. Born on the frontier at Detroit he was an expert woodsman and frontiersman as well as the best hunter with the expedition. He knew the universal Indian sign language, and he knew how to deal with Indians as no other person in the expedition did.

It is also interesting to note here that a member of the expedition was Captain Clark's negro slave, York. He was the blackest of negroes, and a great curiosity to the various Indian tribes. And another member was Scammon, Captain Lewis's big Newfoundland dog, who also proved his worth before they returned to civilization.

On April 7, 1805, part of the soldiers and French engages were sent back to St. Louis. At this separation the Corps of Discovery, as the expedition was designated, disappeared in the western wilderness and no word came back from it. It was reported as lost, and no one ever expected to see the members again. Then on September 23, 1806, it suddenly appeared in St. Louis, to receive the most royal welcome any expedition ever received.

The Lewis and Clark was one of THE great exploring expeditions of all time. It passed through a wilderness that had never been trod by white man before. They passed through the lands of the Teton Sioux and the Blackfoot, the two most hostile tribes in all North America. It went far beyond the bounds of the Louisiana Purchase, and gave to the United States a valid claim to what is now the states of Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

The return of the Lewis and Clark Expedition was not the end of Patrick Gass' adventurous life. When he returned to Wellsburg in 1807 he found that the Wellsburg he had once known was not to his liking. The frontier had moved farther west, and so he returned to the Illinois country where he again enlisted in the army.

In the spring of 1814 his regiment was ordered to the Niagara frontier. He arrived too late to take part in the battle of Chippewa; but he lost an eye at Lundy's Lane when he was in the charge of the 300 led by Colonel James Miller that captured the British battery. Later he was at bloody Fort Erie.

After his discharge in June, 1815, at Sackett's Harbor, he returned to Wellsburg; but he was still restless and lonesome for the frontier. He drifted to Mansfield, Ohio, where he spent several years working for settlers.

After his father's death in 1827 he returned to Wellsburg. After working at odd jobs he met Maria Hamilton, and in spite of the great difference in their ages (he was 60 and she was 20) they were married March 1, 1831 at Plummer's Mills by Squire Plummer. He purchased a tract of hillside land on Pierce's Run, six miles from Wellsburg, where he erected a two-story log house and settled down to the life of a farmer and raising a large family.

His young wife died of measles on February 15, 1849, leaving him at the age of 76 with six children to raise. The youngest, later Mrs. George Brierly, was just a baby at the time. He remained in the cabin on Pierce's Run for eight or nine years, and then went to live with a married daughter, Mrs. James Smith, at Waugh's Mills, three miles away.

Well, as usual, I guess I have run away with myself on this story, but Lewis and Clark has always been very close to me. I have been over most of the Lewis and Clark Trail across Montana in company with my cousin, Glen C. Hallam, of Billings, Montana, a native of Washington, and son of the late J. R. Hallam, a former prominent photographer.

Patrick Cass, the last white survivor of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, died April 2, 1870, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Smith; he was aged 99 years.

In 1922 I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Rachel Cass Brierly, wife of George Brierly, both of whom I think you knew very well. Mrs. Brierly told me many events of her father's life. She had a razor box, carved out of cottonwood by Sacagweas and given to Cass, and she also had a big old-fashioned hatchet that was almost an ax, that her father had carried and used on the expedition. I visited her many times and secured many facts of her father's life. She described the log house on Pierce's Run, and told me just how to reach it, just a short distance across the state line in West Virginia. I found it and took a number of different photographs. It was torn down early in March, 1936 and the logs were sawed into lumber. I doubt if many persons there knew of its interesting history.

Mrs. Brierley died in the Washington Hospital, May 31, 1926, aged 79 years. She was buried at Independence where she had lived for more than half a century.

Her sister, Mrs. Annie J. Smith, at whose home Cass died at Waugh's Mills, died in Los Angeles, February 2, 1926. She left a number of descendants living in California.

Cass and his wife are buried in the Brooke County Cemetery at Wellsburg. Joseph Bowman, the caretaker of this cemetery when I visited it to hunt the graves of Cass and his wife, was a step-son of Sara Cass Bowman, another daughter of Patrick. She died in 1921. Mr. Bowman had a small photograph that had been taken of Cass when he was about 90, and he kindly loaned it to me to copy. My Cousin, J. R. Hallam, made an enlargement from the negative, which his son, Jack, colored. It is now one of my most valued possessions, for there is no other like it.

Well, Bill, I know that you are tired of all this so I'll quit. When I start to write something the old urge comes over me, and I just keep on and on. That is the reason that this is so long, so I'll call it a day and quit. I'll see you when I get back some time in May. Until then, so long and Thirty.

/s/ Earle R. Forrest



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San Marino, California  
91108  
February 5, 1967

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Gass learned the carpenter trade at Mercersburg, where he worked some two years as an apprentice. At this period of his life, young Gass became acquainted with a youth named James Buchanan, who became President of the United States sixty years later. This young carpenter who had seen so much of the world appealed to the youthful imagination of the future President, and they became close friends.

When war with France seemed certain in 1799 the prospect of a good fight appealed to the young Pennsylvania Irishman, and he enlisted in the Tenth United States Infantry, in a division commanded by General Alexander Hamilton; but the war clouds passed and he was mustered out in 1800. However, army life appealed to the young Irishman and the ink on his discharge was hardly dry when he re-enlisted under Major Cass for five years with the rank of sergeant; and this enlistment led to his greatest adventure.

Gass and Sergeant John Ordway were in Captain Russell Bissell's Company of the First Infantry, stationed at Fort Kaskaskia, Illinois, in the fall of 1803 when Captain Meriwether Lewis stopped at the Fort in search of volunteers for the proposed expedition into the unknown land beyond the Mississippi, known to history as the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Both Gass and Ordway volunteered, but they were such valuable soldiers that Captain Bissell refused to release them. However, Captain Lewis with the authority vested in him by President Jefferson to take any army men he wished wherever he found them, over-ruled Bissell and both Gass and Ordway left with Captain Lewis.

When Sergeant John C. Floyd died of what is believed to have been appendicitis, near the present Sioux City, Iowa, on August 20, 1804, Gass was elected Sergeant in his place. It is interesting to note here that this was the only death that occurred among the 31 white men, one Indian woman, and her infant son whom she carried on her back.

On May 14, 1804, the expedition left its winter camp at the mouth of Wood River near St. Louis, and near the last of October it reached the Mandan Indian villages near present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. There the two captains, Lewis and Clark, decided to spend the winter, and it was here that Captain Lewis's choice of Patrick Gass as a carpenter was of great value, for his knowledge in the construction of log cabins and palisades.

It was at the Mandan villages that a French Canadian, Toussaint Charbonneau, was engaged as interpreter, and he took along his 17-year old wife, Sacagawea, of the Snake Indian tribe. It is interesting to note that when the expedition left Fort Mandan on April 7, 1805, there were 33 in the party.

This little Indian girl carried her baby, Baptiste, on her back, Indian fashion clear across the Rocky Mountains to the shores of the Pacific and back to the Mandan villages. Much credit has been given to her for her part, and some historians have claimed that she guided the expedition. She was of great value to them, especially when Indian tribes were met, in obtaining horses, and guides; but the services of George Drouillard, the son of a French Canadian father and a Shawnee mother, mentioned in the records as George Dreyer, have been overshadowed by historians in favor of Sacagawea. I do not wish to take away any credit due Sacagawea, but in my opinion the expedition might have been a failure but for George Drouillard. Born on the frontier at Detroit he was an expert woodsman and frontiersman as well as the best hunter with the expedition. He knew the universal Indian sign language, and he knew how to deal with Indians as no other person in the expedition did.

It is also interesting to note here that a member of the expedition was Captain Clark's negro slave, York. He was the blackest of negroes, and a great curiosity to the various Indian tribes. And another member was Seaman, Captain Lewis's big Newfoundland dog, who also proved his worth before they returned to civilization.

On April 7, 1805, part of the soldiers and French engages were sent back to St. Louis. At this separation the Corps of Discovery, as the expedition was designated, disappeared in the western wilderness and no word came back from it. It was reported as lost, and no one ever expected to see the members again. Then on September 23, 1806, it suddenly appeared in St. Louis, to receive the most royal welcome any expedition ever received.

The Lewis and Clark was one of THE great exploring expeditions of all time. It passed through a wilderness that had never been trod by white man before. They passed through the lands of the Teton Sioux and the Blackfeet, the two most hostile tribes in all North America. It went far beyond the bounds of the Louisiana Purchase, and gave to the United States a valid claim to what is now the states of Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

The return of the Lewis and Clark Expedition was not the end of Patrick Cass' adventurous life. When he returned to Wellsburg in 1807 he found that the Wellsburg he had once known was not to his liking. The frontier had moved farther west, and so he returned to the Illinois country where he again enlisted in the army.

In the spring of 1814 his regiment was ordered to the Niagara frontier. He arrived too late to take part in the battle of Chippewa; but he lost an eye at Lundy's Lane when he was in the charge of the 300 led by Colonel James Miller that captured the British battery. Later he was at bloody Fort Erie.

After his discharge in June, 1815, at Sackett's Harbor, he returned to Wellsburg; but he was still restless and lonesome for the frontier. He drifted to Mansfield, Ohio, where he spent several years working for settlers.

After his father's death in 1827 he returned to Wellsburg. After working at odd jobs he met Maria Hamilton, and in spite of the great difference in their ages (he was 60 and she was 20) they were married March 1, 1831 at Plummer's Mills by Squire Plummer. He purchased a tract of hillside land on Pierce's Run, six miles from Wellsburg, where he erected a two-story log house and settled down to the life of a farmer and raising a large family.

His young wife died of measles on February 15, 1849, leaving him at the age of 76 with six children to raise. The youngest, later Mrs. George Brierly, was just a baby at the time. He remained in the cabin on Pierce's Run for eight or nine years, and then went to live with a married daughter, Mrs. James Smith, at Waugh's Mills, three miles away.

Well, as usual; I guess I have run away with myself on this story, but Lewis and Clark has always been very close to me. I have been over most of the Lewis and Clark Trail across Montana in company with my cousin Glen C. Hallam, of Billings, Montana, a native of Washington, and son of the late J. R. Hallam, a former prominent photographer.

Patrick Gass, the last white survivors of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, died April 2, 1870, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Smith; he was aged 99 years.

In 1922 I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Rachel Gass Brierly, wife of George Brierly, both of whom I think you know very well. Mrs. Brierly told me many events of her father's life. She had a razor box, carved out of cottonwood by Sacagawea and given to Gass, and she also had a big old-fashioned hatchet that was almost an ax, that her father had carried and used on the expedition. I visited her many times and secured many facts of her father's life. She described the log house on Pierce's Run, and told me just how to reach it, just a short distance across the state line in West Virginia. I found it and took a number of different photographs. It was torn down early in March, 1936 and the logs were sawed into lumber. I doubt if many persons there knew of its interesting history.

Mrs. Brierley died in the Washington Hospital, May 31, 1926, aged 79 years. She was buried at Independence where she had lived for more than half a century.

Her sister, Mrs. Annie J. Smith, at whose home Gass died at Waugh's Mills, died in Los Angeles, February 2, 1926. She left a number of descendants living in California.

Gass and his wife are buried in the Brooke County Cemetery at Wellsburg. Joseph Bowman, the caretaker of this cemetery when I visited it to hunt the graves of Gass and his wife, was a step-son of Sara Gass Bowman, another daughter of Patrick. She died in 1921. Mr. Bowman had a small photograph that had been taken of Gass when he was about 90, and he kindly loaned it to me to copy. My Cousin, J. R. Hallam, made an enlargement from the negative, which his son, Jack, colored. It is now one of my most valued possessions, for there is no other like it.

Well, Bill, I know that you are tired of all this so I'll quit. When I start to write something the old urge comes over me, and I just keep on and on. That is the reason that this is so long, so I'll call it a day and quit. I'll see you when I get back some time in May. Until then, so long and thirty.

/s/ Earle R. Forrest

