

# **James Steen Family**

**Cross Creek, Cross Creek Twp.,  
Washington Co., PA**

**Fort Vance Historical Society**

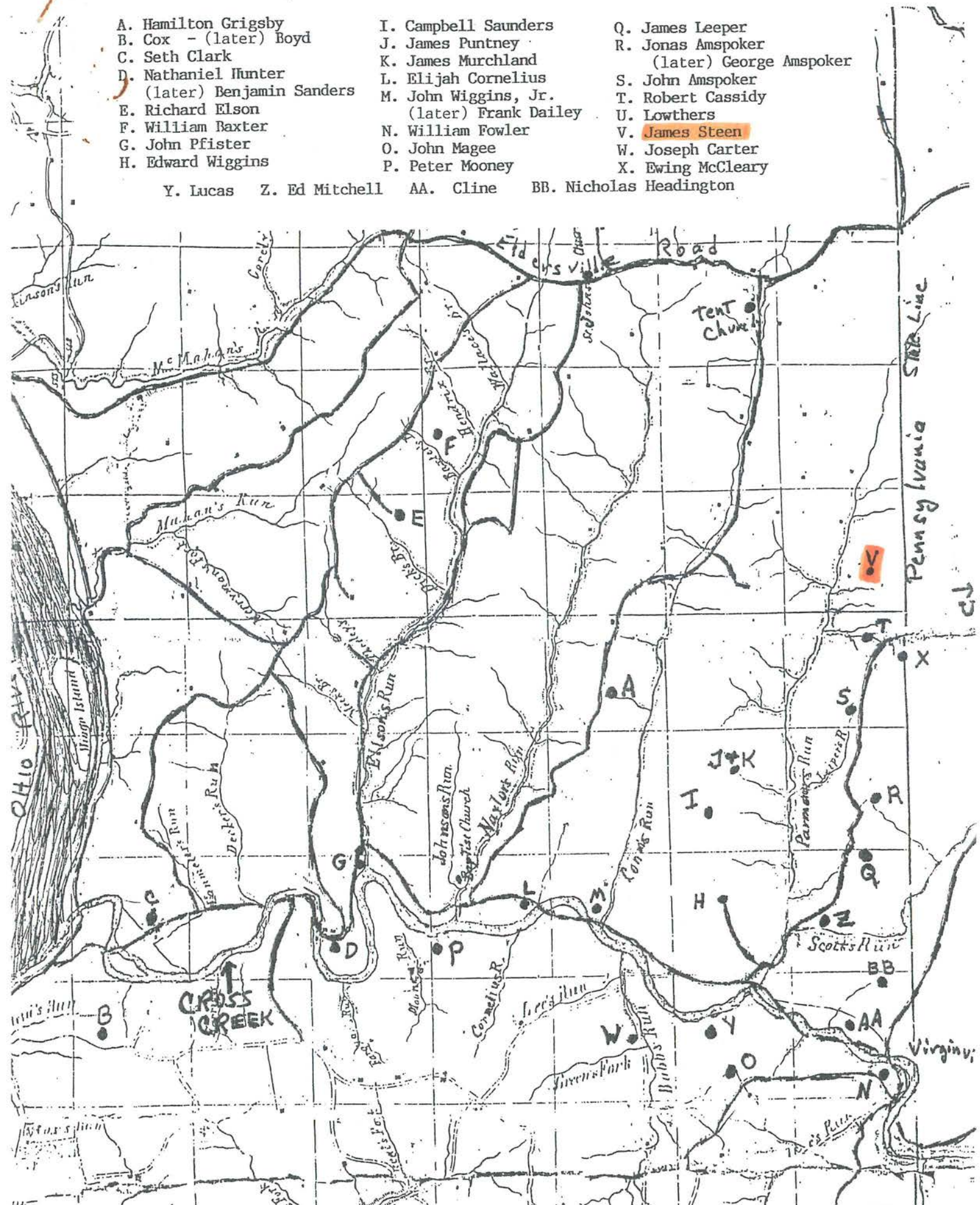
# THE EARLY FAMILIES

A. Hamilton Grigsby  
B. Cox - (later) Boyd  
C. Seth Clark  
D. Nathaniel Hunter  
(later) Benjamin Sanders  
E. Richard Elson  
F. William Baxter  
G. John Pfister  
H. Edward Wiggins

I. Campbell Saunders  
J. James Puntney  
K. James Murchland  
L. Elijah Cornelius  
M. John Wiggins, Jr.  
(later) Frank Dailey  
N. William Fowler  
O. John Magee  
P. Peter Mooney

Q. James Leeper  
R. Jonas Amspoker  
(later) George Amspoker  
S. John Amspoker  
T. Robert Cassidy  
U. Lowthers  
V. **James Steen**  
W. Joseph Carter  
X. Ewing McCleary

Y. Lucas Z. Ed Mitchell AA. Cline BB. Nicholas Headington



## STEEN

James Steen, born circa 1750 in Donegal County, Ireland, came to America in the early 1770s and located near Philadelphia. He enlisted in the Revolutionary War on 26 April 1776 and remained in the army until the end of the war, when he married Margaret Reynolds, a Scotch-Irish lass also born in Ireland. After the birth of three children, they migrated to Brooke County, Virginia, with all of their belongings on a pack horse. Margaret, carrying the infant on her lap, rode a second horse with the other two children, one on each side of her saddle, secured in a strong leather strapping. James, carrying his rifle and axe, walked the entire way.

They settled on Amspoker Ridge, where they constructed a crude house of rough stones with holes in the walls for putting their guns through to shoot at Indians should they be attacked. This served as a fort for the neighboring families in the days of the Indian raids.

The foregoing information was given by one of their descendants who copied it from the old Steen Bible.

James appears in the 1787 Virginia Tax List and also on the Brooke County list of 1800. Very shortly after 1800, they moved just across the state line to what is today ( 1998 ) Scott Hollow Road, Jefferson Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania. Here he patented 300 acres known as Pleasant Hill. He lived the remainder of his life here where the rest of their children were born, and here it was that he and Margaret died. They were the parents of five sons and five daughters. James died between June of 1831 and March of 1833, Margaret having preceded him in death by a number of years. They are buried in the Tent graveyard in unmar'ed graves near the fence. James was one of the founders of this Tent Presbyterian Seceder Church and is believed to have been on its first board of elders.

BELOW IS THE STEEN HOUSE ON AMSPOKER RIDGE WHICH REPLACED THE FIRST STONE HOUSE



Robert Steen, eldest son of the pioneer, was born near Philadelphia in 1784. He it was who came across the mountains as a small lad in his mother's saddle bags. In Brooke County, he married Sarah Ellen Murchland. He died in 1864 and is buried at the Tent Seceder Church. He and Sarah Ellen had a son whom they named William Murchland Steen. This William M. married Sarah Cunningham and to them were born eight children. David died at age one month, George at three years and nine months, and Lewis at age six. These deaths took place in 1856, 1857, and 1863, respectively. Their twin daughters, Elizabeth and Ellen, died at ages 28 and 32 respectively. These five children are all buried near their father and mother at the Tent. Their son, James, moved to Urichsville, Ohio, and lived a very long life. Their son, Robert, known in the Amspoker Ridge area as "Bob Steen", was a colorful character, seen riding about the countryside on a mule. He lived to be 97 years of age. His obituary is printed here for the edification of the readers. He is shown in the accompanying picture with a neighbor, Amelia Wright Boles, sitting on the steps of the Parkinson Boles house on Puntney Ridge.



## Oldest Brooke County Man Dies

Robert Steen, 97,  
Direct Descendant Of  
Revolutionary Soldier

FOLLANSBEE, W. Va., Jan. 26. —Robert Steen, 97, oldest resident of Brooke County, W. Va., and a direct descendant of a Revolutionary War soldier, died Saturday night, Jan. 25, 1947 at 11:57 o'clock at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Freshwater, on the Follansbee-Eldersville road.

Mr. Steen had resided with the Freshwater family for the past four years.

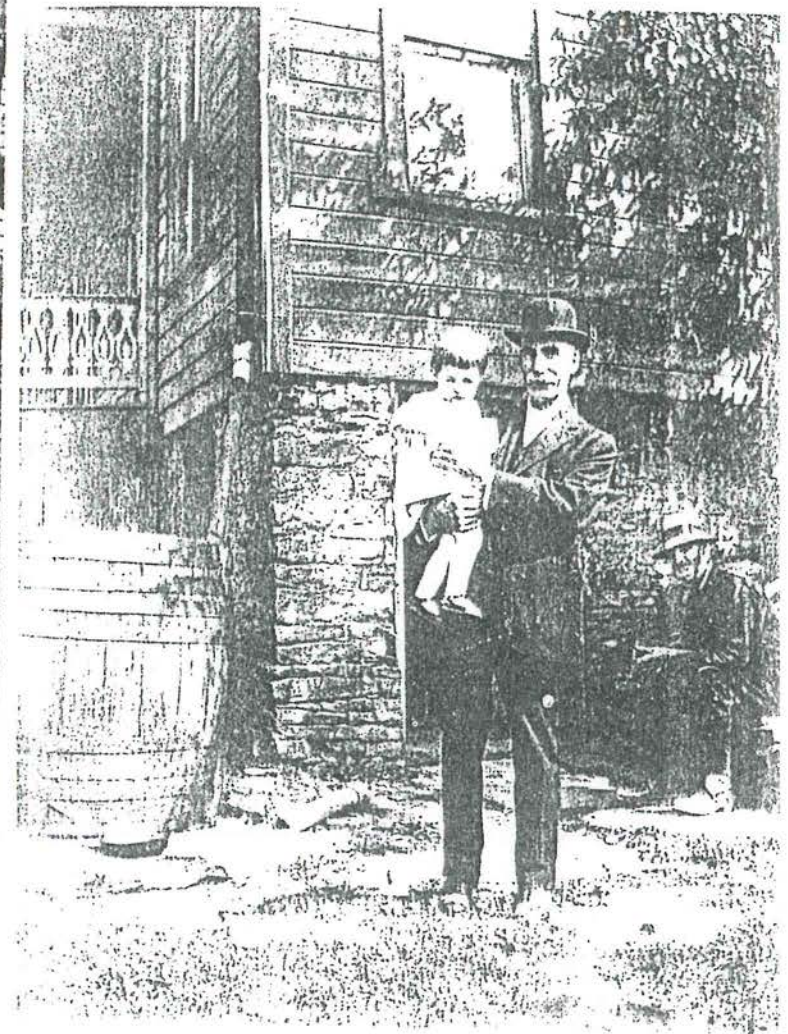
Despite his years, Mr. Steen continued very active until a few days ago.

A resident of the district his entire life, he had been active in the affairs of the district for many years. He was a progressive farmer for many years and specialized in the raising of fine sheep.

He was a member of the Tent U. P. Church. In politics he was a staunch Democrat.

A son of the late William and Sarah Cunningham Steen, he was born Jan. 22, 1850 on the farm in Brooke County purchased by his great grandfather, a Revolutionary soldier, in 1792.

He was the last survivor of a family of eight children and leaves no immediate relatives.



William M. and Sarah Steen had a daughter, Fannie, in addition to the twins who died in young womanhood. Fannie married Chalmers Miller. Her son, William . Miller, was known as "Virginia Billy" or "Billy Miller". He married Elizabeth Hall. Their daughter, Ruth, is pictured above with her Hall grandparents at the Steen farm. This Miller family was the last of the descendants of pioneer James Steen to own and occupy the Brooke County Steen land on Amspoker Ridge.



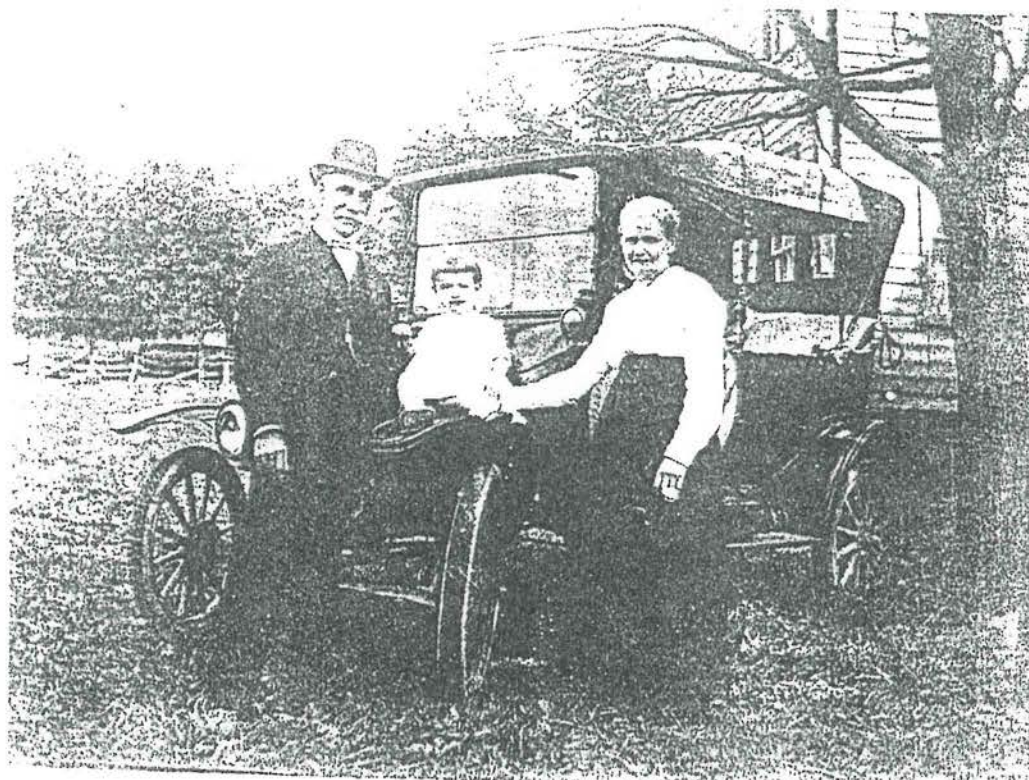
William and Elizabeth Hall Miller on the Steen Farm, Amspoker Ridge, Brooke County



GOOD NEIGHBORS: William Miller, descendant of James Steen, and David Clark, whose wife was Jennie Cassidy, working on the road between the Steen and Cassidy farms on Amspoker Ridge.



The pictures above are from an old Steen album. The writer believes they are the twin daughters, Elizabeth and Ellen, of William Murchland Steen and his wife, Sarah Cunningham Steen. The single picture is marked "Steen twin". The other simple said "Murchland-Steen". The observer may decide for himself. Below is Ruth Miller and Hall grandparents.



From this same Robert STEEN, the eldest child of the pioneer, descended Hannah Cunningham who married John McCleary, and Robert who married Jane Ann Scott. These two were children of Robert and Sarah Ellen's daughter, ELizabeth, who married George Cunningham. After the death of Jane Ann Scott Cunningham, Robert married Ellen Lowthers, a Jefferson Township girl. To Jane Ann, he had a son, Winfield Cunningham who was well known in the Eldersville area. He and his second wife, Ellen, had no children.

The second son of the pioneer Steens was Finley Steen who married Jane Worstell and moved to Marietta, Ohio, where they raised a family of twelve children. The third son, James STEEN, Jr., born in Brooke County in 1791, married Jane Kincaid. They remained on the old Brooke County farm with his older brother, Robert and his family until 1838 when they moved to Logan County, Ohio and raised their seven children there.

Of the five daughters of James and Margaret, Sarah who married James Lyons, and Esther who married William Lyons both raised large families in the Florence area of Hanover Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania. Both of these girls had been born near Philadelphia and had come across the mountains on their mother's horse. The daughter Nancy married John Lowthers and moved to Harrison County, Ohio, where four children were born. Susanna married Wilkes Bozman and moved to Morgan County, Ohio. The fifth daughter, Margaret died in young womanhood unmarried.

The two remaining sons, William and John, were born and raised on Scott Hollow Road, Jefferson Township, remaining there all of their lives on their father's Pleasant Hill patent.



PICTURED ABOVE: The STEEN home on Scott Hollow Road, Pleasant Hill Patent. This was the second house on the location, the first being log.

The ninth child of Pioneer James and Margaret Reynolds Steen was William, born on Scott Hollow Road in 1801. He married Francis Richardson, who was born in Maryland and came to the Eldersville area as a child. They were the parents of two sons and five daughters. The elder son, James Reynolds Steen died unmarried. The younger son was William Edward. He was, therefore, as the only surviving male of this line, the only one who could have carried on the name for William and Frances. But such was not to be. He married Sarah V. Miller, daughter of George Miller of Jefferson Township, but to them was born but one child, a daughter, Milleretta Steen ( Etta). Etta married Robert Stewart and was the mother of Georgia Stewart and Paul Stewart. Georgia married but had no children. Paul married Mary Brady and to them were born Robert, James, Jay, and Alma.

When William Edward Steen died in 1923, he was the last of the Steen name in the Scott Hollow Road area of Jefferson Township, and the last of his family - his sister, Susannah Steen Scott, having died in 1910. The other five of his siblings were all gone by 1872. His obituary appears below.



Etta Steen Stewart in childhood



#### WILLIAM EDWARDS STEEN.

William Edward Steen, one of Jefferson townships best known and oldest citizens and in his day one of its most progressive farmers, died at the home of his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Stewart of Eldersville, Pa., on Feb. 26, at 10 o'clock p. m., aged nearly eighty one years. Mr. Steen although rather feeble of late, was able to walk to the post office on the 13th, but the day following, Wednesday the 14th, during the severe wind which prevailed, while walking out in the barn yard at the Stewart home, he was blown over, striking the hard, frozen ground in such a manner as to receive injuries from which he was not able to recover. Mr. Steen who was the last of his family, was the son of William and Frances Richardson Steen and was born April 16, 1842 on the old Steen homestead south of Eldersville. His mother was born at Carroll Manor, near Baltimore, Md., and came from there to this section when she was a small girl. In 1886 the deceased was married to Miss Sarah V. Miller who survives him with their only child, Mrs. Etta Stewart. There are also two grand children, Mrs. Georgia Stewart of Wilkinsburg and Paul Stewart of near Eldersville. Mr. Steen's

ancestors were among the early pioneers of this section. His grandfather, James Steen, born in Ireland was a soldier of the revolution, having enlisted in 1776, in Pennsylvania rifle regiment under Col. Miles and served until the end of the war. Shortly afterward he married Miss Margaret Reynolds of Philadelphia and later they with three small children emigrated to this section, settling on a farm adjacent to the state line in Brooke county, West Virginia. This farm is still in the possession of a great grandson, Robert Steen. In 1801 James Steen came over into Jefferson township, Washington county, Pa., and bought 300 acres of Patent land which he proceeded to cultivate and improve. His grandson the late W. E. Steen, spent his life on this farm, until he retired from farm work a few years ago. His ancestors mode of traveling out here over the mountains to their new home was that of the times: The wife on horse back with one child on her lap and the other two in a wallet thrown across the saddle. In this way a child was carried on each side of the horse. The other horse was used to pack their goods, the husband walking all the way, carrying an ax and a rifle which he used to clear a way through the wilderness and to protect himself and family from the Indians. Mr. Steen was buried in the Cross Creek Village cemetery, Wednesday, Feb. 28th, funeral services having been conducted at the Stewart home by Rev. Say of Cross Creek, assisted by Rev. Brown of Eldersville.

LEFT: Very early shot of Etta Steen Stewart



Pictured on the left is Susannah Steen, daughter of William and Frances Richardson Steen, and her husband, John Franklin Scott. Franklin Scott was the son of Charles and Margaret Cassidy Scott of Jefferson Township, both from very early Washington County pioneer settlers.

Below are five of the six children of Susannah Steen Scott. Deceased at the time of the picture was her daughter, Emma.

Back Row: Fannie and Laura.  
Front Row: Wilbert, Blanche, and Elza.

They left no descendants. Susannah's children were all well known in the Eldersville area. They were staunch supporters of the Bethel Methodist Church, where, with the exception of Elza, the entire family are interred. Wilbert was a brilliant surveyor and most of the girls were teachers. All were deeply interested in local history. They were born on Scott Hollow Road, just a short distance from the birthplace of their mother.

Elza Scott, the youngest of Susannah's children was the greatest historian ever produced by Jefferson Township. He was self-educated and a professor of the Eldersville Normal School. He was an author, historian, and lecturer. He founded the Tri-State Historical Society, of which he was president.



RIGHT: Karen Happuch ( Kit)

Steen and her husband, Campbell Hunter. Karen was the fourth daughter of William and Frances Steen. She was born 24 January 1837, on her grandfather's farm on Scott Hollow Road.

She died at the birth of her son, Reynolds Hunter, who is pictured below. Her husband, Campbell Hunter was the son of Nathaniel and Catherine Smith Hunter of Hunters ( later Sanders) Mill on Cross Creek, Brooke County.



The writer has been unable to learn who raised Reynolds Hunter after his mother's death. Both of his grandmothers were also dead, and he does not appear in any of the census records examined. Tradition has it that he married and started west on his honeymoon, but neither he nor his bride was ever heard of again. It was believed that they were two of the many victims of the great Chicago Fire.

RIGHT: Elizabeth Steen Sanders, youngest child of William and Frances Richardson Steen. She was born on the Pleasant Hills tract of her grandfather, Pioneer James Steen, on 22 February, 1846. She married Byron Sanders of the Sanders Mill family on Cross Creek. Elizabeth died 22 August 1872 and is buried along with her parents and five of her siblings at Bethel. Her father William Steen, had much hardship in his life. His two eldest daughters died in 1837 in a typhoid epidemic at the ages of five and ten. His wife, Frances Richardson Steen died 27 July 1861. The following day, his eldest son, Reynolds Steen, also died. In 1868, his daughter Karen Happuch, died, and in 1872, his youngest, Elizabeth (pictured). Little wonder that a year after Elizabeth's death, William also passed away. He willed his farm to his remaining two children, William Edward and Susannah Scott.



LEFT: Maggie Hooker Sanders, second wife of Byron Sanders, and her stepdaughter, Annie Sanders Robinson. Annie was the daughter of Elizabeth Steen Sanders, pictured above.

Annie's grandfather, William Steen, willed her  $\frac{2}{3}$  of what he termed "The Pogue Farm" of 99 acres. The other  $\frac{1}{3}$  he willed to his grandson, Reynolds Hunter, son of his daughter Karen Happach. It is believed that both of his daughters, Elizabeth and Karen Happuch, died at the birth of their children.

The tenth and last child of James and Margaret Reynolds Steen was John McComb Steen. He was born in 1805 on the Pleasant Hill farm on Scott Hollow Road, Jefferson Township. He married Jane Sharp. They were the parents of four children. The eldest and only son was Lysander Steen, pictured at the right. He married Mary Dowdall and to them were born two daughters: Zoe who married James Moore, and Ida Virginia whose picture and obituary can be found on the next page. It is hoped that the reader will take the time to read Ida's obit, since it certainly gives a birdseye view of the roll of women in the workforce during her lifetime. She was a great credit to the Steen name.

Lysander tragically took his own life on the farm in 1874, just two days before his 34th birthday. His little daughters, at the time, were aged five and seven. It is believed that his depression was the result of the deaths of his parents who died within a few months of each other. After his death, his wife took the girls and moved to Washington, Pennsylvania, where she lived out her life.

The other children of John and Jane Steen were: an infant daughter who died at the age of three months; Mary Elizabeth ( pictured below on the left); and Sarah Melissa. Neither Elizabeth nor Melissa ever married. They died at Bellefontaine, Ohio, within five months of each other. After the death of their brother, Lysander, they left Pleasant Hill Farm on Scott Hollow Road. Lysander was the last male Steen from the line of John and Jane Sharp Steen. Thus it was that with the death of William's son, William Edward Steen in 1923, the Steen name disappeared from Scott Hollow and the Pleasant Hill farm of the old soldier and pioneer, James Steen.



Lysander Steen, son of John & Jane Sharp Steen



Mary Elizabeth Steen, daughter of John & Jane  
Elizabeth Steen Sanders, daughter of William  
& Frances Steen.  
( Their fathers were brothers)

With the death of William Edward Steen on Scott Hollow Road, the Steens of the Pleasant Hill Farm ended. And with the death of Bob Steen in Brooke County, the result was the same with the first settlement of Pioneer James and his little brood. The spacious beautiful house which replaced the old stone one, like the others on the hill above Cross Creek, fell prey to the coal strippers. The spot where the house once stood is barely accessible even on foot. Just at the edge of what was once a well-kept lawn, a high wall marks the beginning of the end of the world. To the writer, the Steen place was "just out the road from Grandma's". Today, the Cassidy place next door, the Amspoker place on out the ridge, and the home of the Steens, are only memories in the minds of those who remember what the world was like before the bull dozer did its thing. All is gone. The old Steen place is no more!



Miss Ida V. Steen, 143 South College street, died unexpectedly yesterday afternoon, after a full life as a business woman in the County. For 54 years she was assistant cashier of the First National Bank of McDonald, retiring in 1946.

## 2-11-54 Ida V. Steen Dies Suddenly

### Former Cashier At McDonald Bank

Miss Ida V. Steen, 143 South College street, widely known in Washington County and for more than a half a century assistant cashier of the First National Bank of McDonald, died suddenly yesterday. Her death occurred at 1:45 p. m. at Hillview Sanatorium, where she had been removed Wednesday evening. Miss Steen suffered a stroke at her home that day and, as she lived alone, neighbors made inquiries when they did not see her about.

Miss Steen was born in Jefferson Township Jan. 10, 1869, a daughter of Lysander and Mary Dowdall Steen.

For 54 and a half years Miss Steen was employed at the McDonald Bank, resigning at the close of 1946. She was one of three persons who composed the

original force of the First National Bank of McDonald when it was opened for business June 15, 1892. The other two were Edward McDonald, president, and Graham S. Campbell, cashier. Miss Steen began and continued through the years as assistant cashier.

When Miss Steen accepted the position she was the first woman in the United States to hold the post of an assistant bank cashier.

Retaining her home in Washington, she travelled to McDonald for many years by rail every day, and later roomed there during the weekdays, returning here over the weekend. Although she had to change trains at Carnegie, it is reported she never missed a train or was late for work. It was during her early tenure at the bank in the late '90s that Donald's oil strike, the biggest in Washington County, was at its height.

Miss Steen was the oldest member in point of continuous membership of the Washington County Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. Her papers for membership were approved by the National Society in January, 1898. The Washington County Chapter was organized in January, 1892, and it was the third DAR chapter formed in Pennsylvania and the 27th in the United States.

After she resigned from the bank and moved to Washington she joined the Current Events Club in 1947, and also was a member of the Washington County Historical Society.

She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Washington.

She had been a member of the McDonald Woman's Club while working there, and was well known throughout the Panhandle district.

Miss Steen was a graduate of Washington Seminary.

She also was the first woman to work in the Washington County Courthouse.

She is survived by two nephews John B. Moore, of Brooklyn, N. Y., and Francis D. Moore, of Spartansburg, S. C.

STEEN — Friends of Miss Ida V. Steen, 143 South College street, who died Dec. 10, 1954, will be received after noon Saturday at the Ritchie and Platt Funeral Home where funeral services will be held Monday, Dec. 13, at 2 p. m. in charge of Rev. Arthur E. French, Jr., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. Burial in Washington Cemetery.

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