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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

November 1, 1961

Members of the Lycoming Historical Society:

Just a few words to thank you for your confidence in our organization as evidenced in so many ways during these trying times. A Lycoming Historical Society without a museum is like a ship without a sail. Every effort is being made to correct that major deficiency. Now that a satisfactory site for the museum has been established and plans and designs well underway, time will soon be upon us when we must arrange to produce the wherewithal to accomplish that which is planned. This will require the earnest and sincere efforts of all members, organizations and businesses from every part of our county, because it must be borne in mind that our society is county-wide and as such, must not only serve the entire county, but be sustained by them.

Your continued firm support is appreciated.

Sincerely,
Frank W. Brunner
President

THE GREAT RUNAWAY OF 1778

By Helen H. Russell

(As given before the Lycoming Historical Society, June 15, 1960)

(Note: All events mentioned herein can be verified by Penna. Archives. First and Second Series. Proceedings of Penna's first state convention, also the first officers and committeemen named, are found in Second Series, Vol. 3. The five other resolves within the province of Penna., declaring separation from the Mother Country prior to the Pine Creek Treaty of July 4, 1776, and found in Second Series, Volumes 13, and 14.

Historians J. B. Linn and J. F. McGinnes both used this source material, but nowhere has the detail of events ever been put into their proper chronological order.)

In the early 1700's all bound for the New World were asking how to get to Pennsylvania, for Penn's colony drew the homeless and persecuted like a magnet. The Germans came as a result of William Penn's travels through Holland and Germany, distributing posters and pamphlets in their language, praising his new province and promising a new start and religious freedom. At one time Germanization of the colony was feared.

The Germans were outnumbered only by the Scotch Irish, but there were also the French Huguenots, some Swiss, Jews, Moravians, indentured servants and negroes. All who were not English subjects were made to take an oath of allegiance to the King of England before disembarking.

Of those not required to take this oath for allegiance were the Scotch Irish, of whom there were 80,000 in Pennsylvania at the time of the Revolutionary War. They were in no sense Irish, but Scots, who had been suffering under religious persecution and had been exiled to Northern Ireland. Once here, they moved to the farthest frontiers of the new colony, often on lands not yet purchased from the Indians. They were stern Presbyterians, used to rigid self-discipline, were rugged individualists who believed strongly in democratic principles. More. They were expert woodsmen. They cleared the forests, grappled with the wild beasts, and generally drove the Indians deeper into the interior of the colony.

It has also been observed that the German colonists did not relish the Scotch-

Irish as neighbors, and used all kinds of political intrigue to demonstrate this unwelcome. This ill-feeling caused the Scots to move out of Southeastern Penna toward the westward, which brought them into what was then Cumberland County, and some as far as the Juniata Valley. Since they were not as adept at getting along with the Indians as the Germans, soon skirmishes began, with the result that many of the Scots crossed over the Bald Eagle mountain range into the West Branch Valley of the Susquehanna. Some were already established there at the time of the Last Purchase of 1769.

Excepting for the Indian trails, rivers and streams were the only means of egress, so the early settlers always made their improvements along the river, at the mouths of streams, or up the creeks a short way, as far as was navigable by canoes.

As has been shown, having started their migration to the New World at the beginning of the century, at the time of the Revolution they included first, second, and in fewer cases third generation immigrants. But they still were determined to sever all ties behind them, sometimes to the extent of losing their identity. They looked only to the future—and FREEDOM!

But they were in no wise ignorant of the politics and the history of the world left behind. And there must have been some kind of excellent messenger system, for they seem to have always been well informed of what was transpiring in Penn's colony, and beyond. So we can only have a clear picture of the events leading up to the Big Runaway on the West Branch, as we also take knowledge of the general trend of events on the national scene, and how these matters affected the people on the West Branch.

1774

We should begin with the very first efforts of the colonists to weld themselves into one unit of government, when they met in 1774, in Massachusetts, and took first action authorizing each of the thirteen colonies to set up its own governmental body.

Pennsylvania was quick to respond, and held its first state convention in Philadelphia in January, 1775.

At this convention the body approved all the proceedings of the Continental Con-

gress (as it was soon called). They also went along with the idea that we must resist with force all hazards to the liberty of the citizens. (Minutes of these sessions are found in Pa. Arch., Second Series, Vol. 3, pp 625-665).

They considered necessary measures to be used in building up an economy within the colony.* For instance, no sheep under four years was to be killed or sold to the butchers, since the manufacturing of wool for coatings, blankets and rugs was of first importance. The raising of flax, hemp, and dyestuffs was encouraged; likewise the making of salt, saltpetre, nails, wire, gunpowder, glass, combs, and so on. In fact there began the first "buy-at-home" campaign as the colonists determined to neither use, or own, anything that had been made by the Mother country. All attempts at profiteering were to be punished.

"April 19, 1775, hardly a man is now alive . . . !

Every school child has thrilled at some time in his life to that poem of Longfellow's describing Paul Revere's Ride, and the next day's Battle of Lexington.

That event has nothing to do with this notice, except to make the date easy to remember. But on April 20, 1775, our representatives in the Convention, with Casper Weitzel as chairman,* urged the Committee of Safety to "alert every citizen" in their respective townships to be on hand for a public meeting to be held at the tavern and trading post of Ludwig Derr which stood on the river, at present site of Lewisburg.

On June 15 came the first urgent call for volunteers for the new Continental Army. They asked for thirteen companies, six of which were to be from Pennsylvania. One of these companies rendezvoused at Sunbury of July 1, arriving "under the Cambridge Elm" to join Washington's command in August. This was the First Rifle Regiment under Captain John Lowden and Colonel William Thompson (Complete accounts of this company in Penna. Arch., Second Series, Vol. X, pp 27-31). The arrival of Thompson's men was described in Thatcher's Military Journal thusly "they are remarkably stout, many over six feet in height, dressed in rifle shirts and

*Also in Linn's "Annals of Buffalo Valley", pp 77-85.

round hats. They are remarkable for their aim, striking a mark with great accuracy at 200 yards distance . . ." Theirs was a year's enlistment, during which time they gave a good account of themselves, according to military records. They were discharged at Long Island the June 30th next.

We must insert here that thirty of these men in Captain Lowden's company were from the upper West Branch, of "from beyond the purchase line". This is verified in Penna. Arch., Series II, Vol. 3, page 417, also in the diary of the Reverend Philip Fithian, Presbyterian clergyman who happened to be touring the West Branch about then, and met the regiment at Sunbury. (Given in part in Meginness' "History West Branch Valley" 1898, Vol. I. See page 434).

1776

This brings us to that eventful year of 1776. This was the year that the New Jersey migration was on in force, says Historian Meginness. It was the year Penna. became a sovereign state for the rule of the Penn's was now over.

The thirteen colonies were on fire for Independence. Within the borders of Pennsylvania alone there had been signed five resolves declaring in favor of separation from the Mother Country, all these before the same movement shaped to conclusion on Pine Creek, under the Tiadaghton Elm.

It was also the year the Indians first became the enemies of the people on the West Branch.

It was the year Civil Defense began in Pennsylvania. The committee appointed in each township, and called the Committee of Safety, had all those matters to attend to pertaining to civil defense in their respective areas. Among the cases handled was the supervision of all shipments, and the rationing of salt; they forbid the distilling of liquor to conserve the grain supply for food; they handled all cases of disloyalty; and they were expected to oversee the distribution of public arms (if any) into the hands of those assigned to military duty.

Field officers for a militia within the county had been named in January. Twelve captains and officers were each expected to find forty men, who would in turn furnish their own supplies and accoutrements. Six of these captains would be

stationed at Fort Augusta under Colonel Samuel Hunter, to be called the Lower Division, and six to be at Muncy as the Upper Division, under Colonel William Hepburn.

This would mean 480 men and officers. The settlers protested at once. They said it would be disastrous to let that many men go from their homes, leaving the women and children unprotected. Also, there was their poverty. The men must be kept home to raise the crops which would be a very necessary factor. Besides "there have come many bare and naked amongst us, being plundered by Yankees . ." (Likely these were New Jersey people who had been set upon by the Connecticut usurpers, called Yankees.)

Rather they offered the plan that two full companies be raised instead, and put under full time pay and training, to be ready to march whenever needed. But since to date no company had been called into service, everything was still much on a "trial and error" basis.

On July 1st two strange Indians were seen lurking around. They likely witnessed the signing of the Tiadaghton Treaty of Independence. The native Indians of this area were mostly Senecas and the Monseys, so these two strangers were under suspicion. Soon after they left the Indians began cutting down their young corn, then took their women and children and moved off.

This was characteristic procedure for Indians when mobilizing for some new action and it aroused the attention of our representatives in the Assembly, Walter Clark and John Kelly, who immediately made a desperate plea for some ammunition and arms for this frontier. But they were told (July 29th) that there was not sufficient ammunition in the county for FOUR companies, already raised. (Linn's "Annals Buffalo Valley", pg. 99)

The settlers were always a self-reliant sort, of necessity. They had often the feeling that they could handle their own Indians better than "those in command at Philadelphia", and they proposed to undertake a Treaty of their own with the Indians of their valley, namely the Senecas and the Monseys. Consequently, Captain John Brady

*Linn's "Annals of Buffalo Valley" pp 76.

and two others set out to visit their Council fires to the north, and were well received. They smoked a pipe of peace and arranged for a treaty signing day at Fort Augusta in the very near future.

Fort Augusta had been built twenty years earlier, in the French and Indian wars, but had been allowed to deteriorate. With Colonel Samuel Hunter, who was in command there, and his fifty men, they set about at once to make hasty repairs, and to make it look as formidable as possible, and every man was assigned an appointed post, in the attempt to give the place a military air.

On the appointed day the Indians came, 100 warrior braves in war costume and war paint. They had ammunition, but paradoxically also their women and children. (When on the warpath they left the women at home). All seemed to go well, though one can imagine that suspense hung heavy over the fort that day, for the Indians made an impressive caravan in their canoes. But of whatever treaty, or agreement, was reached on that day there has been nothing preserved to show for it.

One unfortunate circumstance — the fort was too poor to provide the usual presents expected and to which the Indians were accustomed. Later in the day, and after they had departed in apparent good humor, John Brady happened to think that the returning Indians might stop at Ludwick Derr's tavern and trading post at the mouth of Bull Run, at present site of Lewisburg. Mounting his horse, he rushed home as fast as he could (he lived on the river opposite Derr's), only to find his worst fears verified. The squaws were unloading the ammunition, hiding it in the bushes of the river bank. He rowed over to Derrs, to find that Derr had knocked the head off a barrel of rum, had provided tincups, and already the Indians were drinking themselves into a stupor. (Linn's "Annals Buffalo Valley" pp 97-8.)

When Brady challenged Derr as to why he would do such a thing Derr replied that the Indians complained because the fort had provided them no gifts. So he thought he would treat them and send them home in peace. Brady was so provoked that the kicked over the barrel, and a quarrel ensued, all the details of which need not be included here.

But the story of the meeting at the

fort, and at Derrs, must be included, since the events of this day in some way served as a turning point. The Indians hung around until they had sobered up, then took their wives and returned to their camps in the north. Never again were they ever considered as "residents" of the West Branch.

From that day on the settlers feared the worst, and began to make whatever preparations for their own safety as they could. They stockaded their homes whenever possible and everyone went armed.

It was not long (August 23) until the British landed 10,000 troops on Long Island and began that seige which ended in such a bitter defeat for Washington's Continental Line, and his RETREAT.

Besides, the British now had complete control of the Indians and were buying all the white scalps that the Indians could deliver. This meant extensive guerilla warfare on all exposed frontiers. From here on the whites on the West Branch literally lived by their wits—that is, by outwitting the Indians.

Whenever too many Indians were seen at one time the people were ordered into the forts. We are most concerned at this time with the one at Muncy, then nothing in the way of a fortification until Fort Antes (opposite present Jersey Shore); next Fort Horn, at the bend of the river below present McElhattan; and Fort Reed, at the site of the present city of Lock Haven.

Whenever the whispered cry of "Indians!" was heard or the three taps on the door, or whatever the appointed signal everyone in the cabin flew to his or her appointed task. The father would grab his musket from over the mantel, each son took some provisions; likewise the daughters and the mother, the salt, the mush or grain or whatever food was on hand—the most important task being to see to the child too young to know what was going on, who, being disturbed in his sleep, might cry out and betray what was going on. So, as it often happened, under cover of darkness, and without a sound, the whole population of the valley would move out of their homes. Morning would find the cabins empty and the people all inside the stockades.

Henry Antes had been captain of all military activities in his area since January

of 1776. But a year later he was promoted to Colonel. We are pretty sure, from all the records, that the people must have been living in the forts over that winter.

LIFE IN THE FORTS

We have already mentioned the relay system which was in effect in which even the children participated. Anna Jackson, only eight years old at this time, related in after years that she herself had often run to warn others, carrying the word "Indians!" She told of hiding in the thicket for fear of their knives and tomahawks, of helping to melt pewter with the women in the forts to make the bullets, of learning to shoot and said she was good at a mark, meanwhile hearing constantly of "murder being done all around us, to our neighbors and friends . . ."

She also reported that the forts were large enough for tents, for the men to exercise in and do their daily drills. Roll was called each night and morning after each mission outside the fort.

She said that once her father (John Jackson) rode out with some company, and returning along through some cleared place where there were bushes on each side he heard a man's voice call out sharply. Knowing an Indian could not hit a running target, he put his horse to speed to the fort where the roll was called and not a man was missing from the fort. Thus they knew it had been an Indian.

She also described how the men were separated into classes, and all the inhabitants had to go when called. Those who could not serve for some unavoidable reason were fined, or had to hire a substitute.

The first tragedy of consequence to strike on the upper West Branch was in the spring of 1777 at Fort Antes. The settlers were living within the fort and on a Sunday in early June a guard detail accompanied the women out to milk the cattle which were being pastured just across the river on Long Island. (Opposite present Jersey Shore). Unsuspectingly the men went into the bushes for the cow with the bell which had been decoyed there by awaiting Indians. Watchers at the fort saw four simultaneous puffs of smoke, meaning four shots from four Indian rifles, and each got his man. One of the men, James Armstrong, lived until morning. Abel Cady died in his wife's arms as soon as she reached his side.

The others were instantly killed, being Isaac Bouser (or Bonser) and Zephaniah Miller.

This incident served to draw up a company of militia which was stationed at Fort Reed for the next three months. They patrolled that frontier and no doubt enabled the settlers to take care of a necessary crop. Colonel William Kelly was in charge, with Lieutenant Van Campen, and Joab Chillo-way, the friendly Indian acting as their scout.

After that tragedy stalked the settlers. To enumerate, a few of those who fell as victims of the Indians were: The Culbertson brothers, James and John, with Isaac Delong killed, when they left Reed's Fort to do some chores at Culbertson's mill which was about 5 miles up Bald Eagle Creek, or a mile above present Flmeington. There was a Mr. Jones, either Daniel or Levi; two men unnamed, killed above Great Island, and some others likewise unnamed, killed at the mouth of Pine Creek; and two at the mouth of Bald Eagle Creek. There was also the case of the Brown and Benjamin families who lived N. E. of Williamsport and who were burned out, murdered, and some of them carried off as captives. Of course these were not all, but due to the general confusion of the period, and the overlapping in the telling, years afterward, when the historians were trying to reconstruct the picture for us, we cannot always be certain as many important details have been lost.

Besides they are too gruesome to be included here. Still we should know that these victims were often made to suffer horrors. It has been said that the Indian women were especially clever at devising new ways and means of torturing their victims. We note just one, that of Anthony Saltsman, who was killed above present Lock Haven that winter when the river was frozen over. After being tomahawked and scalped, the Indians deliberately chopped his body to pieces on the ice, in full view of his companions.

On September 11 of this year (1777) the Battle of Brandywine had begun. Two weeks later the British had entered Philadelphia without opposition. The Continental Congress had to move interior to Lancaster, then to York. The continued need for troops was very great, and though they

could hardly be spared from this frontier, many from here DID serve in this campaign. After the long seige of Germantown, Washington took his army into winter quarters at Valley Forge on December 11.

1777

We might call this the Black Winter of 1777, for the need was desperate — everywhere.

Our infant nation was in the midst of a crushing war that looked as if we could not win — that no one could stop — and to lose it was unthinkable. "Where we gonna get the money?" was the constant problem. How to maintain the war already underway? Washington's troops lacked necessary clothing, shoes, and blankets. Sickness prevailed in camp.

On the West Branch their plight was no better. Their poverty was pitiable. WORSE, they had heard from friendly Indian sources that once the British took Philadelphia then war would come to the West Branch, and they had better move off. Yet, if they DID vacate this frontier very likely the whole interior of the state would collapse. (Penna. Arch., Second Ser., Vol. III, pp 207). But one thing was certain. They could not hold out much longer as all their resources were now gone.

On November 1st, Colonel Hunter wrote from Fort Augusta that he had orders for the 3rd and 4th classes to march to join General Washington but that he could not supply them with arms and blankets as requested, since none were to be had. (Linn's "Buffalo Valley" pp 143-5)

"the first and part of the second is stationed on the frontiers of this county, and has all the good arms that could be collected in those parts, so that when those classes that is called on now march, they must go without arms . . . the people there is in a bad way as they have got no crops this fall, which is very hard on them, being generally poor, and new settlers . . ." Ten days later, on November 11, he wrote again: ". . . This day is the third and fourth classes of three battalions in this county militia marching to join the army His Excellency General Washington . . . and that . . . the militia that marches now is badly off for blankets and several goes without any but thinly clothed otherwise which shows their attachment to the American

cause"* (Linn's "Annals of Buffalo Valley", pp 143-4)

During these bleak months there were upwards of 500 people living in the three upper forts on the West Branch— at Antes Mill, the mouth of the Bald Eagle (Reed's) and at Lycoming. Hunter wrote the following March, in reporting on the general poverty of supplies that "only two rifles and 60 ordinary muskets is all the public arms we have in this county now . . ." March 28, 1778.

The point is so hard to concede now in our luscious times. Especially when we recall that Northumberland county at that time took in both the West and North branches, and extended to the westward "as far as was inhabited". Hunter added that he had tried in vain to get some good arms, that he had ordered all worth repairing to be put in order, and had even promised the gunsmiths (on his own) that they would be paid.

Meanwhile the people on the frontiers kept sending word that if no help came they would have to abandon their settlements. On May 3, 1778, Colonel Hunter wrote that he wanted to send a company for their protection but could not provision them. Ten days later, (May 14) he DID send out some men, likely to assist in the crop making, and his report on that said that it left no arms at all at the forts for those who stayed behind to guard the women and children.

From this serious plight things continued to grow worse if that is possible. Many men were being lost to the Indian sniper's bullets. All of which brings us to that fateful and climatic day of June 10, 1778. Three great tragedies occurred that day on the West Branch which brought the beginning of the end. Keeping in mind that no historian, and no military record, has ever presented these stories of the early frontier in proper chronological order, these three events went something like this:

The first was John Thomson's party. John Thomson had a mill on Mill Creek, on the Loyalsock, but had brought his family into the fort at Muncy. But he grew restless, and wished he could go back to his place to retrieve some of his stock, and possessions, etc. A friend, Peter Shuefelt, and William Wychoff, a lad of sixteen, said they would go along. Arriving at the house,

they decided to go inside at noon to prepare themselves some food, when they were ambushed by Indians, killing the two men. Wychoff, severely wounded, was taken captive. (He returned after two years).

A second party, under Captain David Berry, started out from Muncy fort to look for some horses that had either strayed or been stolen by Indians. They had not gone far when Robert Covenhoven came after them. (We are not sure why but perhaps he had heard the shots which killed Thomson). He urged the party to return to the fort, but Captain Berry refused. Covenhoven confided to his brothers, and his father, who were of the party, of his fears that they would all be killed.

When this party had gone up the Loyalsock as far as the Narrows (Probably about where the present Montoursville bridge now stands) they were attacked, likely by the same band of Indians. Some were killed, and some were carried off as captives. It is thought that if any survived they may have gone after Thomson.

We want to insert here a little noted fact. Meginness writes that William King, Robert Covenhoven and James Armstrong, likely all New Jerseyites, had attempted a stockade at the mouth of Lycoming Creek. He did not say when they did this.*

But on the day in question (June 10, 1778) William King was at this location, having left his wife and two daughters at Northumberland, with orders to stay there at all costs.

This stockade was of eight and ten feet logs, stuck in the ground slanting outward so they could not be scaled. Perhaps under existing conditions, it seemed as safe as anywhere. For, after all, where was there ANY SAFE place?

At any rate a third party of people set out this day in the attempt to make this fort by nightfall. They urged Mrs. King to come along, since if she did not, and her husband had to come for her later, the trip alone would be more dangerous. Peter Smith and wife and six of his own children were in this party, plus a guard detail of some militia men, five or six perhaps, only four of which are named in the accounts.

This party was met by young John Harris somewhere before they reached the Loyalsock, whose father had a stockade somewhere in that vicinity. He told them

firing had been heard close by and they were running into danger. At the Sock the men observed "This is the last stream we'll cross. We'll water the horses and can be at our destination by dark". Welcome news, as it was now sundown.

About that time shots rang out. One man, Snodgrass, was killed immediately. Michael Campbell was also killed.** One account says six killed and six missing. One of the boys escaped to run toward the fort for help. Meanwhile 'tis thought the young Harris boy ran for aid from Fort Muncy.

Coincidentally, on that same day Colonel Peter Hosterman and Captain Reynolds with thirteen men, had set out from the lower fort with some ammunition for Fort Antes and Great Island. Some think his party may have been intercepted, maybe by young Harris, to come to the aid of these unfortunate people. However be that, when he arrived, it was pitch dark. They found two bodies, and the overturned wagon, but had to wait until daylight to fully appraise the situation. His report is given as of June 11th, and yet sometimes the date of Michael Campbell's death is given as June 13th (Just proves the confusion and lack of proper records, and the futility of fully reconstructing the scenes with clarity in later years).

But in spite of our lack of details, one thing was plainly evident. All the raids of that day seemed to be from the same band of Indians. They were using buckshot and the best cartridge paper, known to have been supplied by the British. Also a bootrack of a Tory officer was discovered, likely one of their party.

The people were now more terrified, knowing the end was near. No one dared to venture outside the forts and Colonel Hunter reported that the people all above Muncy were threatening to abandon their settlements unless aid came; and that (June 14) all communication was now cut off with the upper forts ("Buffalo Valley" 153-4. "History of W. B. Valley" 1889, pp 516-524).

*"History of West Branch Valley" 1889. Vol. I (Meginness) pg. 493-4.

**They were buried near site of present Calvary Methodist Church, Newberry. A marker marks the place on the church lawn.

All was quiet for seven days as the people waited with bated breath. Then the men trapped in the upper fort (Horn's or Reed's) sent one of their number, Robert Fleming, Sr., to the Assembly sitting at Lancaster with a communique, signed by forty seven men who said they had been trapped for a month passed with nearly a fifth of their number now murdered; begging for aid of arms of which they had none; stating that the relief they had hoped for from Colonel Hunter had not come and that "we are persuaded that that man has done all in his power . ." (Pa. Arch., II Series, Vol. 3, pg. 217.)

This was a last resort.

Then came that massacre on the North Branch of July 3. The result was more terror. Colonel had no choice but to give the order to "Evacuate the people." For the rumor persisted that the Indians were now ready to swoop down in their planned mass attack. Immediately the round-up of the cattle was begun, one man shot at but not killed (Sam Fleming). Four were killed when the round-up of boats began. (One was the Robert Fleming, Sr., just mentioned).

When the evacuation finally got underway, the women manned the boats, while the men followed along the shore, driving the cattle and keeping watch for Indians. Witnesses said it was a tragic sight. The river, and all the creeks and roads leading to it, were filled with men, women and children. Once afloat, there was every kind of craft known, boats, canoes, rafts, even pig troughs, anything that would float — creeks and roads filled with the people running, running, RUNNING AWAY.

Anna Jackson, previously mentioned once said that "You couldn't possibly count the people, they were like a cloud—might as well try to count the raindrops in a cloud."

While waiting at Fort Augusta, Colonel Hunter wrote "Tomorrow THIS will be the frontier . . ."

When the frightened convoy arrived at

Fort Augusta he pleaded for men to stop there and make one last stand. The rest of the story you know. They agreed, and they did hold that frontier there.

There were still other skirmishes on the West Branch, such as the fall of Fort Freeland in 1779, and continued guerilla warfare through 1782, during all of which the people of the West Branch were living as refugees or what we have since come to know as 'displaced persons'. Those who had kin down the river may have returned to from whence they came.

There is little doubt but that the contribution of the settlers on the upper West Branch—by holding this far-flung line during a most critical time, and allowing the interior of the state—and the Continental Congress, to function in safety at a period when its collapse would have meant total disaster to the American cause, that this contribution can never be measured.

Of course the Indians followed, they burned the grain left behind which was ripening in the fields, and the cabins and other improvements of the settlers. John Hamilton, son of the Anna Jackson mentioned, used to say that his father often told him that because of the terrors on this West Branch only FIVE HEADS of families had remained alive. This meant a great many widows and countless fatherless children. Their poverty was pitiable, having exhausted their all in order to hold on to some kind of existence.

By means of TV we have seen the spoils of war, the awful caravans of homeless, running away. In World Wars I, and II, we have said this has never yet come to America, praise God. But it did come here once—to our own West Branch during the Revolutionary War.

But now it is mostly forgotten, as it likely should be. Yet it is good that we review it sometimes, and humble ourselves and know that nothing that we now have in this beautiful valley did we win by ourselves.

And when we say that the people on the West Branch gave their ALL, we mean that they did that literally—they gave their sons, their husbands and fathers, their homes and all their goods—their EVERY all—for the American cause and for her liberty. It is one of those great debts that will never be repaid.

HISTORY OF OSTONWAKIN FARM

By Mable E. Eck — (Continued from Summer 1961 issue)

PART V.

GOVERNOR JOHN ANDREW SHULZE

John Andrew Shulze, Governor of Pennsylvania under the Constitution of 1790, from December 16, 1823 to December 15, 1829, was born on the 19th of July, 1775, in Tulpehocken Township, Berks County. His father was a clergyman of the German Lutheran Church. The son received his early instruction in English and German from his father. He was sent to an institution in Lancaster and while there was under the care of his uncle Dr. Henry Muhlenberg. He finished his education in a college in York County, under the instruction of the Rev. Mr. Melsheimer.

For a period of six years he officiated as pastor of several congregations in Berks County, and was esteemed and loved by all who knew him. In 1802 a rheumatic infection from which he had long suffered obliged him to suspend his labors in the ministry, and two years later, finding no improvement in his condition, he was induced to seek another occupation.

He served in many capacities for the county, state, and finally was elected Governor of Pennsylvania. He was a very able Governor. He was the father of the Free School Bill. After his retirement from office in 1829, he moved to Lycoming County and now, begins the period in his history when the closing years of his life were saddened by financial and domestic trouble.

In 1831 he purchased of John Cowden a tract of land in Fairfield Township containing 500 acres and 16 perches for \$12,000. It was a part of the Andrew Montour's Reserve. The deed was acknowledged April 18, 1831, by John Cowden and Sarah his wife, before Israel Pleasants a Justice of Peace of Northumberland County, and it is recorded in Deed Book T. Page 667, in the Recorder's office at Williamsport under date of April 11, 1831.

This splendid farm bordered on the eastern boundary of the borough of Montoursville. Soon after making the purchase,

he built a handsome brick dwelling house on the farm, which was regarded as a great improvement at that day. It was a copy of an old castle in Lancaster. It is a colonial mansion with a fire place in every room. The wood-work is all hand made in colonial style with a chair-board about two feet from the floor. The fire-place has a most unusual history. The mantle is of wood; the upright part that holds the mantle is rounded, and on the top of it is a piece of wood resembling a prayerbook. In the old Castle at Lancaster County where the Mennonites were holding services one of the ladies saw that the mantle was crumbling. She thought to herself, "If I put my prayerbook there, it will hold it up." She did it and straightened the mantle. Then she told the master what she had done. He asked her to leave the book there. The next day he had a carpenter come and copy in wood the prayerbook. The following week when services were called, the master presented the book to the owner with thanks. She was delighted with the appearance of the mantle. The Mansion was called "the Governor Shulze residence" and was known by that title for half a century.

In the management of his business the Governor was unfortunate. Through endorsing and other causes he became involved and the more he struggled to get out of debt, the deeper he got in.

He was public-spirited and liberal. He gave an acre of ground and \$100 to a church. It was built in 1838 or 1839 near the eastern borough limits of Montoursville. It was called the Union Church because the Lutherans and Presbyterians had the privilege of using it. In later years it was the "White Church," because of its color. The building still stands and is now used as a residence.

As years passed away the Governor became deeper involved in debt and he was harassed with lawsuits. An inquisition was held and the property condemned and on

the 9th of September 1844, a writ of venditioni exponas was issued. On the 11th of September the Court granted the sheriff leave to amend his levy so as to divide the farm in two parts and the levy was so amended. On the 15th of October, 1844, the sheriff sold the farm in two parts. One part containing 254 acres and 101 perches and the "Governor Shulze residence" was purchased by John Ott Rockafellar for

\$9,900, and the other part containing 242 acres and 141 perches with a large two-story dwelling, bank barn and out-buildings, was purchased by George Tomb of Jersey Shore for \$7,600, making altogether the sum of \$17,500.

Broken down in health and without means, the Governor moved his family to Lancaster. He did not live long. He died in 1846.

PART IV.

THE WEST BRANCH CANAL

By Mable E. Eck

The West Branch Canal was not entirely completed at the close of the winter in 1834, west of Loyalsock Creek. But eastward it was substantially finished, and the officers in charge prepared to celebrate the event in a becoming manner on the then approaching Fourth of July.

It was therefore, ostentatiously announced at an early day that "Mr. Taggart, the enterprising proprietor of the line of packets between Northumberland and Harrisburg, had made arrangements, for a pleasure trip up the West Branch Canal on the Fourth, "and that" ladies and gentlemen from Northumberland, Lewisburg, Milton, Muncy, Montoursville and Williamsport "could celebrate the day and the deed that gave it celebrity, by a trip to the mouth of Loyalsock Creek.

Accordingly the packet boat "James Madison" left Northumberland on the day aforesaid with the canal officials as well as having on board much of the "youth and beauty" of the place and on its way up received large accessions from the towns and country along the route. At Muncy a concourse of ladies and gentlemen from Williamsport met and joined the party, among whom were William F. Packer, Rob-

ert Faries, William E. Morris and William R. Wilson, belonging to the canal brigade; and Captain Fredericks, with his Muncy Troop, also met and saluted the party by repeated firings of a four pounder which had already "done the State some service," and had been procured by Gen. Pertikin for the occasion.

On arriving at Montoursville the voyagers were met, greeted and joined by John A. Shultze, late Governor of Pennsylvania, and now a resident of Lycoming County, and his Honor, Judge Hays, of Lancaster. At the Loyalsock Creek by the Williamsport Guards, commanded by Captain Joseph Grafius, received and saluted the party, and at the outlet lock the like honor was performed by the Lycoming Cavalry, commanded by Captain John H. Cowden, who soon after escorted the procession in vehicles to Williamsport, where they were again saluted by the Lafayette Rangers commanded by Captain M. Alden, after which they partook of a "sumptuous repast" at the public house of Thomas Hall. It would be, perhaps, superogations to add that many fine after-dinner speeches were made on the occasion, or that numerous empty bottles were observed about Hall's house afterwards among the debris. Nevertheless, the captains of the "James Madison," I am told, maintained until the day of his death that the expedition was successful in all respects, and that, too without the loss of a man.

TOMLINSON FAMILY

By C. A. Tomlinson

My dear Doctor:—

Happy to have the data on your ancestors, pioneer settlers of Upper Fairfield Twp. My Maternal grandparents too, were from Wurtemberg Germany and pioneer settlers of Upper Fairfield Twp. Grandfather Guinter was married to a Steiger; one of his brothers in law resided in Kaisre Hollow. He and his brothers-in-law used to camp out for a week in the winter time on the mountain back of your estate, due North and shave shingles. At the end of the week they would bale their shingles and carry them to their homes, later on they would pack them to Montoursville and ship them by canal boat to Harrisburg Pa. and other points on the Susquehanna River. On some week end they might be able to pack a deer home and sell it on the curbstone market in Williamsport. The Guinters, first settled in Luzerne County and later moved to the Wilderness in Upper Fairfield, now the site of the Charles Davis Farm. They first built a log house, cleared a farm and raised ten children, seven girls and three boys. For many years all farm work was carried on with the aid of an ox team. My grandfather was proud that he raised a family and died out of debt. The late John L. Guinter, served two terms as prothonotary for Lycoming County and was given the largest vote ever given a candidate for any county office. His penmanship on the county records is like unto engraving. His life is portrayed in Meginnes, History of Lycoming County. He was one of the three sons of this pioneer family.

My father's people were Scotch Welsh, and came to this country and settled near Pennsdale. They were of the Quaker Faith. Stephen Tomlinson, my paternal grandfather, was the first postmaster of Loyalsockville. He was commissioned July 6th, 1854. One hundred years ago he erected the first buildings in the village of slabs from his mill, hence the name of Slabtown. He was a wheelwright and a millwright. He served as Justice of the Peace, as did my father and myself; also at a time in our lives we were general merchants. My father was boss tanner for Thomas E. Proc-

tor, for a number of years. He taught nineteen terms in the public schools; also he served four years with the 8th Penna. Cavalry, during the Civil War, having enlisted at the tender age of sixteen. He was wounded at Anteitam. He served under McDowell, McClellan, Pope McClelland, Burnside, Hooker and Meade. His name is carved on the Penna. Monument at Gettysburg, Pa. He participated in all the main battles of the Army of The Potomac

Sheriff, Dr. William J. Tomlinson, also served for a period near the close of the Civil War, and took part in the victory at Ft. Fisher. Sheriff Tomlinson, was my father's younger brother.

So your background is like mine, one to be proud of. When I think of the hardships and the noble traits of character of these rugged pioneers, I thank God for my heritage.

The Germans were wonderful mechanics and craftsmen. We had two German shoemakers in my home town at Proctor. They fashioned the finest boots for dress and sturdy boots for loggers, in addition to their shoe repair work.

I was born in the slashings at Proctor in 1881 on a Christmas Day. I worked in my father's store, drove team, worked in the woods, worked on farms, taught school for twenty six dollars per month, worked in coal mines, steel mills and did all manner of labor. Taught for a number of years, have served as Justice of the Peace, Post Master, Post Office Clerk in the Williamsport Post Office, conducted about four general stores and one clothing store. My life has been full of trials but I am thankful that I was able to send all of my children to college. In this Atomic Age, things are so much easier for our children. It is a far cry from our ancestors and their way of life, to this day of modern conveniences.

You too, have accomplished so much in life as a prominent doctor, historian and progressive farmer and citizen. You gave to your beloved county so much as a veteran also. We are proud to have yourself and family identified with Upper Fairfield Twp.

NOTES ON LITTLE FAMILY

By Susan H. Little

I just want to say how much I enjoyed the tour last week. You are a good leader.

While we stopped at the Priestley house, you asked me if I would write something about the relation of the Little family in their travels to Joseph Priestley. When I got home I read in our history, "Little Family From Monmouth County, New Jersey", written by Donald C. Little of Kansas City, whose father, Edward Little of Abilene, Kansas, had gone to Scotland to look up some information about his ancestry.

Mr. Edward was at that time a Congressman and never had the book published. After his death his son Donald, an attorney who is interested in family history and tradition, came back and visited the kin folks here. Then my daughter and I went with Donald to New Jersey, spending four days visiting old churches at Freehold, Shrewsbury, and Allentown; museums at various places; going over the places mentioned in the records from Perth Amboy along the east coast to Barnegal. We even went to old cemeteries near the old Presbyterian churches that had been established by the early Littles. At one place we found they were "improving" the church lawn and had taken up some stones.

The Miniaits said, "Can I help you"? Does Tobias Polhemus mean anything to you? "Yes, he was our great, great grandmother's brother."

The book Donald had published was principally of the Littles from about 1700 to 1812. The later ones who came to Lycoming County are written about in a copy now being prepared (the work of a committee on which John Little is a part). It is a long story of John Little Senior and then John Little Junior and then Thomas. By the way, there has always been a John and Thomas in every generation way back in Scotland. Also the Theophilus was often found, though lately that has been dropped. My husband was John; my son, Thomas; and my grandson John. Colonel John Little and his son Judge John were both appointed Judges of the court. They were devout Scots Presbyterian who believed in

religious as well as political freedom. They served as officers in the colonial wars against the French. In the old Tument church at Freehold may still be seen the church record showing John Little Truster, also the pews of the Littles, Longstreets, and Knotts. In the state house at Trenton we found the will of John Little.

Now why am I going back to all these things. Just being reminded by the talk at Northumberland about Priestley.

As early as 1799, Major Theophilus Little, son of Judge, Jr., in company with George Lewis of New York and Joseph Priestley made an examination of lands in Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. It has been said that George Lewis who was investing money in America for England capitalists, Joseph Priestley who has purchased many thousands acres in this area, and Major Theophilus Little originally intended to found a settlement around Lewis Lake, now Eagles Mere, Pennsylvania. The immense stands of timber were to be cut and floated down the Loyalsock and Muncy Creek. Factories were to be built on the lake; settlers were to be encouraged from New Jersey and New England. This settlement was to be the county seat of a new county.

Apparently, Major Little was encouraged in this investment by his brother-in-law, John Connelly, a director of the Second Bank of the United State. In 1814 Little deeded 900 acres of his purchase to Connelly for \$1478. Shrewsbury township was so named by Theophilus Little, that being the township where the Little Family came from in Monmouth County. At that time it embraced the whole of what is now Sullivan County.

On July 2, 1804, Joseph Priestley and wife Elizabeth of Northumberland deeded to Theophilus Little for a "paid consideration" of \$6750, all the tracts of land lying on the waters of Loyalsock and Muncy Creek, containing 4000 acres. These deeds are recorded in Lycoming County Court House, Williamsport. The same day, July 2, 1804, he deeded to Little's Nephew, Peter Knott of Shrewsbury, New Jersey,

1051 acres adjoining Major Little's purchase for \$1576. Also on July 2, 1804, Priestley deeded to John A. Holmes, who had married Major Little's niece, Mary Knott, 600 acres near the Little purchase. These tracts of land total 6,151 acres.

After making his purchases in 1804, Major Little returned to New Jersey where he began to dispose of his properties. His two sons, Daniel and Tobias came with their families and set up a saw mill and began to improve the land. John came down to Muncy Valley near Sonestown. Thomas stayed in Pennsylvania only a short time then went to Granville, Ohio, where his descendants still live—some in Kansas and Oklahoma. Theophilus Junior came down the Loyalsock near Hillsgrove. Major Theophilus, then 70 years old, moved from New Jersey to Eagles Mere. His wife Mary Polhemus died the same year, 1815. He died in 1825, and was buried in Eagles

Mere with all their children except Thomas. The Glass factory planned by George Lewis was never a success. How could it be, located far from markets with poor roads to haul goods.

These men were old for their time, nearing 70 years. Of course they "dreamed dreams" that never came true. If they could see Eagles Mere and Loyalsock Valley now, it would not be as they had dreamed. One writer said of Judge John, "He was the owner of several thousand acres of land, a grist mill, and saw mill, twelve or more negro slaves, considerable livestock and other personal property". He was known as the "rich Little". I've never known any other Little to have or covet that title. However, they are all comfortable and self-supporting. Not many are on farms.

All this was brought to mind when I heard the Priestley lecture. If it does not interest you, your waste basket is always handy.

HOW WE ESCAPED FROM BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

By Benjamin Hirsh

The daily press carries fascinating stories of incidents and escapes by East Berlin citizens into West Germany, but Benjamin Hirsh, a well known Williamsport retired merchant and member of the Historical Society, relates the daring adventures, when he and his family fled from behind the Iron Curtain of Lithuania more than sixty three years ago, then as now, a Russian Satellite Country. The Hirsh family owned and operated a farm for many generations on the outskirts of the small village of Pamoosha. Due to the limited farm income, Lester, the eldest son of Moisha Hirsh, found a job in a lumber camp as a foreman.

He was married and the father of four children, when he received a notice that he was to be inducted into the Russian Imperial Army. His in-laws, the Sykes family, had emigrated to America and settled in Lock Haven during the mid 1890's, and he too, desired to go to the United States, where he knew that he

would have religious freedoms and to enjoy the opportunity to earn a better standard of living for his family.

To provide a better education for his children, he had already moved his family to the nearby community of Lynkuva which had a large Synagogue and a better Hebrew School.

The Lithuanian Pogroms (Massacres)

Because there was a lack of law enforcement on the part of the local authorities in the rural areas and villages of Lithuania, and an unwillingness by the officials to provide proper protection for the Jewish communities, various groups of Lithuanian terrorists, mobsters and murderers which were known as the 'Black Hand Society', would roam through the rural communities and villages committing violence upon the inhabitants.

At certain intervals, they'd raid the Jewish settlements, loot and rob its people injuring and often killing those that dared to oppose them.

Lynkuva, a village of several hundred persons, and the home of the Hirsh Family, experienced several such horrible incidents. The community was forced to organize a vigilante society to provide protection for their families and the communities on those occasions.

Ben, only seven years of age and a student at a Hebrew School, recalls such a frightful experience when the community faced such an attack, while he and twenty other pupils were attending school. The bearded teacher, concerned about the safety of his students locked the doors and windows, barricaded the school room with every available piece of furniture. Some of the brave defenders who tried to protect the community against such onslaughts met death and serious injury during the savage raids by the invaders, many armed with clubs, farm implements and a variety of home made weapons.

Because of those incidents, the inhabitants of Lynkuva appealed to the District Governor for help, and he dispatched a regiment of the notorious Tzarist Cossacks to the community to restore order.

But this military outfit provided little peace and comfort to the inhabitants, for they helped themselves to anything and everything they desired.

Ben recalls a family experience with the dreaded soldiers, when on a Friday afternoon while his mother was preparing for the Sabbath meal, two of them passed by the house and were attracted by cooking odors.

They came right into the house, walked right up to the huge brick oven and took a roasted chicken right out of the pot, then, casually walked away while they were feasting on the fowl.

Lester became desperate. He wanted to avoid serving in the army and did not wish to expose his family to further danger of these pogroms. He wrote to the Sykes Family at Lock Haven and begged them to provide funds for passage to America. He had heard that many of his countrymen had become successful in various enterprises.

Within months, funds and tickets arrived for Lester, enabling him to start on his journey to America, a trip of many thousands of miles on horse back, on trains and aboard an ocean liner. To escape from

a satellite country for one who had failed to serve in the army, was not a simple task. Because he could not secure pass ports or visa papers, he was compelled to make difficult arrangements with members of an underground organization who specialized in smuggling emigrants out of the country through various channels and by bribing officials.

The Central Pennsylvania Area offered Lester Hirsh only one opportunity for employment and earning a living for himself and his family he left behind in Lithuania, and that was to join many of his relatives and countrymen to become a pack peddler. Lock Haven already was known as a center for such trade. There, Harris Claster, founded and operated a wholesale peddler supply house where they could secure a large variety of merchandise and on liberal credit terms.

Harris Claster, also a native of Lithuania, had brought to Lock Haven many members of his family, friends and relatives, and started them as itinerant merchants. The extent of their credit did not depend upon their financial resources as much as it did upon their strength and how much goods they were able to carry on their backs. He would assist them in planning their routes which they would cover, so they would not compete with each other for trade areas and customers. He also provided them with sturdy waterproof tarpaulins in which they would stack their stock. When the assortment was complete, the canvas cloth was drawn tight and fastened with two heavy leather straps containing loops to allow their arms to slide in. Thus they were able to brace themselves and lift the heavy pack on their back, often weighing as much as 150 pounds.

No other group of immigrants faced such difficult tasks and endured such hardships during the early years in America as did the Jewish Lithuanian pack peddlers. It meant an ordeal of back breaking effort, trudging many miles each day during all kinds of weather and over mountain terrain, hoping to find a friendly person who would inspect their goods and make a purchase. The period of the 1880's and 1890's saw few good roads in the region and fewer stores in the villages and lumber camps that studded the mountain country. The mode of transportation was by foot, on

horseback, or by horse and wagon, and in certain areas an occasional train.

When an itinerant peddler would make his usual rounds, many of the villagers and country folks would welcome him, for it provided those hinterland settlers an opportunity to select many needed items for their homes and families without making a long and difficult trip to a distant shopping town. Often several families and neighbors would gather in one house and inspect the peddler's assortment of goods. On such occasions, he would do quite well. Though the peddlers made many friends among their customers on their routes, their life was not an easy or happy one.



Young Jewish Peddler

There were spells of bad weather. They faced difficulty in finding places for meals and lodging and faced unfriendly and hostile folks who were suspicious of all foreigners and strangers.

Pack Peddler Murdered

One of the earliest peddlers in this region was Solomon Huffman, who earned his living by peddling in upper Lycoming County. He was accustomed to staying at a certain farm house where he met one William Miller.

Miller, who had a bad reputation, planned to rob and kill the Jewish peddler, luring him to a secluded wooded area on the pretext that he wanted to purchase some

of his goods, but did not wish others to know what he was buying and that he had a lot of money. Solomon Huffman came to the arranged rendezvous and when he leaned over to unpack his goods, Miller attacked him with an axe and killed him. He hid the body in the nearby woods and covered it with leaves and brush. It remained there frozen for some time.

When Miller displayed a gold pocket watch which belonged to Huffman, suspicion for the murder fell upon him and the Lycoming County Sheriff was notified.

Miller was brought to Williamsport, tried in the Lycoming County Court House where he was found guilty of the murder. Ultimately he confessed and told of plans to kill others. He was hanged in the Third St. jail yard on July 27, 1838. In a recent issue of the Historical Journal, a more detailed account of the murder is given by the Hon. Charles F. Greevy in his story on hangings in Lycoming County.

Many of America's best known business establishments were founded by early pack peddlers who migrated to the United States during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Men like Isaac M. Bernheim, founder of the Schenley Distilling Company was one of Pennsylvania's pack peddlers. Lazarus Straus, who carried his pack in the southern states, established what is known as the R. H. Macy Department Store of New York. Adam Gimbel, a peddler with his brothers founded the Gimbel Chain of department stores.

Locally, some of our best known merchants had their start as pack peddlers. They included Moses Ulman, Harry B. Pechter, Joseph Stern, Henry Heyman and many others.

Many old timers in Lycoming County and the West Branch Valley still recall of the frequent visitations by the pack peddlers a half century ago and more to the isolated farm communities and villages in central Pennsylvania and talk about the many friendships they made with these itinerant merchandise perveyors who not only dispersed various types of merchandise but brought many fascinating tales from the old country life.

Sends for Family in Lynkuva

It took Lester Hirsh more than two years at his difficult trade as a pack peddler

before he could save enough money to send for his wife Channa and his five children. But money was not the entire problem. It took much planning and negotiations with various immigration groups to arrange for the family to be brought to America. It meant dealing with several underground agents in Lithuania and Germany, and bribing officials and border guards before such passage could be completed.

Finally, the summer of 1899 saw all arrangements concluded, tickets and funds forwarded to the Hirsh Family in Lynkuva and advice where and when to contact the proper agents. After a lapse of some weeks, the family was told to prepare for the journey, pack whatever personal belongings they could carry with them and await orders to depart.

They gathered articles of clothing, family heirlooms and two bottles of Vodka, gifts to the Sykes Family and to Lester Hirsh. The two bottles of precious liquor never did reach its destination for they were stolen while the family went for a stroll on the upper deck of the boat.

The time for the long and difficult journey arrived. The children were dressed, clothes and personal belongings packed into bags and bundles. The peasant driver with horse and wagon came to take the family and baggage for the long overland journey to Shavil where, for the first time in their lives they would see and ride on a train. It was a difficult but an exciting experience for the Hirsh Family. Railroad transportation in Lithuania in 1899 had not yet been fully developed, and whatever trains there were operated first class for the wealthy, regular and third class for the peasants and immigrants. We were placed aboard a wooden car that resembles here in the states as a cattle car. It had long wooden benches on each side of the car for the passengers, the center aisle was reserved for baggage, boxes, bundles and other personal belongings.

After an all night ride on such a train with the children tired and half asleep most of the time, we arrived near the border city of Eukotrinislov, where we stopped at a suburban station and were met by the group's representative who took us off the train. He led us to an isolated section of the city to a wooden barn. We were given several loaves of dark hard bread, water and

a basket of fruit, then in season. We were told to remain indoors for several days and were not to go out, that someone would come and take us to another destination. Those two days and nights were a dreadful experience never to be forgotten. In a barn without windows or furniture, just wooden boxes and a few bundles of straw. Channa Hirsh, a small frail woman, never weighed more than ninety eight pounds, showed great courage and heroism in facing up to the ordeal, knowing that she faced the task of taking her five children to America to join their father, a journey of many thousands of miles, spanning parts of two continents and crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

On the morning of the third day in the barn, a peasant arrived with horse, wagon and a load of straw. He brought clothes for Channa to don so she would appear like his wife. The children were hidden under the bundles of straw and told to remain silent and not to move. They were almost suffocated during the hour long ride. At one point, the driver was stopped by police who questioned him about his cargo. He convinced them that he was hauling a load of straw for the horses at the military barracks.

Eventually, and with some difficulty, we reached a farm house hidden among the hills outside the city and stayed there for several days more. There we joined several other groups, who also were awaiting passage to cross the border into Germany bound for America.

This farm house was the headquarters and the meeting place for the immigrants. There, they would wait until the friendly guards and border patrols would be bribed, and we could be smuggled across the frontiers into Germany.

Each day an agent would arrive at the farm and tell us of the progress they were making and when we were to start on our journey.

After the third day at this rendezvous, we were finally told to proceed to another area, a distance of several miles of hilly terrain, crossing several streams and came to an isolated area and were told to wait there until a guard would come to inspect and count us. At some distance, we could see and hear the negotiations and bargaining for our release to be allowed to cross the border. A uniformed, officer came over, counted every person in the party

and accepted the ransom money from our guide.

Soon, we were signalled to be on the march. About a half hour later we could hear distant gun fire, not knowing whether it was meant to frighten us or other patrols were trying to intercept us. Some of the adult members of the party were very helpful and took pity on the little woman with five small children. They helped carry the baggage and the younger children during the frontier crossings. When the party entered German territory, we were met by frontier police and immigration officers, who escorted us to the immigration inspection headquarters. We were ushered into a large room and each was given a cloth bag with a certain number on it, and told to undress and put our clothes in the bag. While our clothes were taken to a steam room to be sterilized, we were taken to a hospital and health center where a staff of German doctors examined us for any possible symptoms of contagious diseases.

Those that passed their physical examination were handed their clothes and told to get dressed and to proceed to the German City of Prieson.

After our passage papers were re-examined we were escorted to the railway terminal where we took a train for the capital city of Berlin.

The German railways were much superior to those of the Lithuanian trains. They were much cleaner, more comfortable and the service much faster.

After some hours, we arrived in Berlin. We had a several hour waiting period until our next journey to the city of Bremen.

Berlin was the largest and most beautiful city we had ever seen, and it made a tremendous impression upon everyone. The station was high over the city, like an elevated train. From the huge windows we could see the big buildings, streets and congested traffic. Several agents of the tourist organization met us at the station, took us to a dining area where we had some food, including fresh buns, hot soup, tea and confections to take along on our voyage.

Our next destination was the port city of Bremen, where we had to wait two more days for arrival of the huge ocean liner that would take us across the Atlantic Ocean to

America. There, we had a good view of the city and ocean liners in the port.

Because we were traveling as immigrants, we were booked as third class or steerage passengers and were assigned to the lower decks. We were placed in triple tier wooden bunkers below the water level. We had no outside windows and poor ventilation. After a short sail over the water, we encountered heavy seas and ocean swells that kept the boat rocking and swaying. Heavy rain squalls kept us from going to the upper deck. We spent most of the fifteen day ocean voyage in our bunker with sea sickness. It was difficult sailing, for we had to endure many hardships.

On the last day of our sailing, everyone seemed nervous and excited and everyone was on deck. In the distance we could see the New York Sky Line with its millions of bright lights. In the harbor the Statue of Liberty stood graciously, the symbol of freedom for all who entered America.

Boats were blowing their whistles as to give us a hearty welcome. Ferries were chugging the waters of the East River and the whole waterway seemed to be teeming with activity.

We disembarked in ferry boats and were taken to Ellis Island, the center for immigrants to land. There we went through a complete examination for health passage papers and destination points. We were met by members of the HIAS, the Jewish Immigration Society, who were very helpful, supplied us with food and assisted us with our papers so we could be sent on to our destination. Other ferries took us to the Pennsylvania Railroad Terminal, where we boarded a train for Harrisburg.

At Harrisburg, we had to change trains again. Members of the HIAS tried to detain us for several days, as it was the Jewish High Holidays. The railroad officials refused their request because they had orders to deliver us to Lock Haven. They gave us food, including Kosher bologna, fresh baked bagles and helped us board our train that took us through Williamsport on to our new home.

It was a warm sunny Autumn afternoon in September of 1899, when our train arrived in Lock Haven. We were met at the station by several members of the Sykes Family, who took us to a house on Bald

Eagle Street which Lester had already rented for the sum of five dollars per month. He already had furnished it with some second hand furniture and a few items given him by members of the family.

Within a few days, the opening of the fall school term took place. Benjamin and David were enrolled in the first grade of the old Second Ward School Building, now known as the Penn School, which was only a short walk from their new residence.

First and second grade teachers, Miss Minnie and Miss Julia McCabe were very co-operative and helpful to the young immigrants.

In addition to the school curriculum of the first two grades, they taught us to speak the English Language, which took much patience and understanding on the part of the teachers.

America, and the years that followed were kind to the members of the Hirsh Family, for it gave them the opportunities for a better way of life, a standard of living they dreamed about and longed for while in Lithuania. From those humble beginnings, the family struggled and prospered.

Several became prominent merchants, two of the girls graduated as nurses, one became the wife of a famed doctor, another was a student at the Lock Haven Teachers College.

Two sons and grandsons of Lester Hirsh served with the armed services and saw action on the battlefields in Europe. All are grateful to their pioneer parents who had the vision and courage to migrate to a new land and to start a new life. Thus, they were spared the tragedy that befell nearly thirty relatives who had remained in Lithuania and became victims of the Nazi terror of the dreaded concentration camps.
