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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To members of the Lycoming Historical Society:

We enter the fall and winter season of 1963-64 with prospects for another fine series of programs, arranged by Dr. Max Gingrich and Richard Mix. The Williamson Road tour to Corning Glass Works is an interesting innovation to the traditional, indoor meetings to come later. We hope that the change in meeting places, made necessary by the closing of the Community Room at the library for this purpose, will make it even more convenient for our members. We assume, of course, that this will be our last year as nomads, and that another year will find us with adequate facilities of our own.

Our new architect, Frank Wagner, is preparing the working plans for the new museum in time for presentation to the public ahead of the fund drive planned for this winter. We feel that these plans once translated into reality, will give our county an attractive and efficient facility for the preservation of our historical heritage.

At this writing, however, we have been unable to procure a written agreement for the placing of the building in Way's Garden despite the conclusion reached by the Way's Garden Commission to permit this construction. All our planning to date is based on the assumption that this will be the site, and every effort is being made to procure this agreement in writing. While this may be a minor matter at this point, the society is, nevertheless, hampered by delays in preparing for the fund drive because the site must be finalized before we can assure the public of what they will get for their money.

Other than that, all systems are "Go" for the big push to procure the additional funds we must have. To this end we must all dedicate our efforts now—everything else depends on it. While we are about it, why not invite your friends to our indoor meetings and invite them to become members. A large membership is essential if we are to carry the weight and prestige necessary to convince the public of our stature as an effective organization. Our building program really begins with the society itself, so let's begin with ourselves. The challenge is great and so are the rewards.

James P. Bressler

## HISTORY OF MONTOURSVILLE

*Editor's Note — These articles on Montoursville were written for Miss Mildred Kelly while she was a teacher at the Montoursville High School.*

HISTORY OF THE TOWN  
SINCE IT WAS A DENSE FOREST

The following article is one of five papers that was read at a centennial meeting held in 1869 in the old White Church that stood on East Broad Street.

This one was prepared and read by our former townsman, James S. Lewars, and by his kindness we publish it. As the centennial was held 38 years ago, most of the people who were living here at that time have either moved away or passed to the other shore, very few of them being left. The article only covers the period from 1769 to 1869 and the articles speak of residents and buildings of which the present generation knows very little.

Today, as you have already been told, it is one hundred years since this land upon which we now reside was surveyed and given to one of the Montours by the colonial government. Where now stands our beautiful town, one hundred years ago stood dense forests. Where we now mingle with our friends and associates, or take a pleasant evening walk, one hundred years ago the fierce and inveterate foe of the white man took up his abode. What a contrast does our beautiful town present at the time when the first settler erected his rude dwelling. Wander back in imagination if you please, to the period when the red man dwelt on the banks of the Loyalsock, roamed in the forest, or hunted the deer and the elk on the sides of yonder mountain; when he built his wigwam in some shady dell beneath the wide spreading branches of the mighty oak. It was indeed a happy scene—an Indian paradise, the cherished home of the rude yet noble children of the forest. The Squaws cultivated their patches of corn and chanted songs of the spirit land—and the dusky warrior plied his birch bark canoe over the crystal waves of the beautiful Loyalsock. But mighty changes were destined to occur. Let us now endeavor to mark the gradual progress of the aborigines. The original town was situated on both sides of Loyalsock Creek, near its mouth. It was an Indian town, and bore the name, Otstuary. It was

undoubtedly large and populous, and perhaps according to the "untutored Indian's" idea of things, a large and well-constructed city. There was also a trading establishment located there which made it a town of considerable note. In after years, however, it was removed to the eastern side of the creek and was carried on by the Delaware Indians. The inhabitants were engaged chiefly in hunting and fishing but also had some knowledge of agriculture, since Conrad Weiser, the Indian interpreter and agent, says he once made a journey to Otstuary to assist the Indians in fencing in a cornfield. From this time until 1808 or for nearly 39 years, we have little or no account at all of the place.

In 1808 John Else, who is one of the oldest inhabitants still living, came here and has made it his home nearly all the time since. In 1812 Gen. Burrows bought the land from Perot and Lathropp, which most of the present town occupies together with some still under cultivation, but which was at that time a vast uninhabited woods. There was not a mark of improvement, and the woodsman's axe had but cut a channel, as it were, through the forest, about where Fuller's Lane now is, to an old log house (where their farm house now stands)—Now Nolan's—now the airport — which Gen. Burrows and family adopted as their home. We cannot conceive of the hardships and various difficulties with which they had to contend at that early day. They immediately began to clear the land and our aged citizen of that family and partaker of those hardships has said, they toiled day and night. Many, many times they worked their horses in daytime and at night drove the oxen in their stead and cleared about fifty acres each year, which is conclusive evidence that their task was an arduous one. Thus you see that this land upon which our comfortable homes have been erected and these extensive and luxuriant fields were only made so by days and years of hard work. This same year, 1812, they built a grain building, which was the first shingle-roofed building erected within the present limits of the borough. In 1814, Gen. Burrows sold some land to James More, who built the first bridge across Loyalsock. He built a log house, about where George Bubb's house now stands, (where the Misses Fuller now

live) in which he lived. About 1817 the General repurchased the land, except a few acres reserved by More along the creek, on which he erected another log house where Byron Nevins now lives (this house, which has since burned down, stood opposite the residence of J. M. Hayes) and which is still standing, which I suppose is the oldest building in the borough. As soon as sufficient land was cleared, Gen. Burrows and Thomas Lloyd, the father of our worthy citizen, Charles Lloyd began to lay out lots, selling them at \$50. There is quite a contrast, indeed, between the price then and at present. The same lots now range from two to eight hundred dollars. Among the first settlers were Thomas Wallis, a blacksmith; Chas. Bryan, who had fought in the Revolutionary War and was at this time a pensioner; Thomas Chapman, a carpenter; Dan Bailey, a mason; Dan Beer, a blacksmith; Fred Coder, a mason; Nathan Heverland, a wagonmaker, who had a house and shop near where Henry Bastian's house now stands (now the residence of Dr. Sager) Geo. Roberts, Richard Hall, Andrew Flat, Hollingsworth, and others.

The house which Thomas Wallis lived in was built by John Else and was the first house here. It stood near Paulhamus' store (where Marshall's barber shop now stands) near the east side of First National Bank).

John Rockafellow gave the land for the grave yard, and the first interment was made as early as 1811. In 1815 the eight-cornered stone school house was built, in which I doubt not some who are present have spent many happy youthful hours.

Nothing of importance transpired until 1825 when Gen. Burrows built the State mill, known at that time as Burrows' Mill until the State purchased the same. The present saw mill at that place is the third one erected on the same site. John Else put up the house in which he now lives (this is the house on the southwest corner of Broad and Montour Streets), during this year, and there were but two or three houses on the south side, and only four or five on the north side of the street at that time. Ex-Governor Shultz also built in 1825 the house occupied at present by Abe. Tule (now the Mahaffey farm house) (now Eck's).

In 1830, the firm of Burrows and Tomlinson commenced the first store, and in

1833 Mr. Burrows built the first brick house, also a store in which when finished he commenced business for himself. William Tomlinson kept the first public house in the building lately destroyed by fire (where the Lutheran Church now stands).

In 1838 the old Methodist church and this church were built, the land for the former was given by Nathaniel Burrows, and Gov. Shultz gave the ground on which this house stands. About this time or perhaps a year or two earlier Lloyd's flouring mill was built, which was burned in 1842 and under the following year was rebuilt. The mill at present is doing business under the name of G. Bubb & Co. (now J. M. Hayes & Co.). As near as I can ascertain the old borough school house was built this year. What a striking contrast between its present occupants and those of former years. Where once the human intellect was fed, now quadrupeds are stalled and fed.

The town gradually improved. A post office was established. Solomon Bruner was the first postmaster, when the town received the name Montoursville after Andrew Montour, the Indian to whom this land was given. The town before this was called "Tea Town" since the old women in the neighborhood always requested persons going to Williamsport to bring them a quarter more of tea. In 1844 there was considerable building and improvement on every hand. In 1847-48 the paper mill was erected and is still used in making paper, giving employment to quite a number of persons. We now pass on to the formation of Montoursville into a borough, which was on the 18th day of February, 1850. The borough was at this time about a quarter of a mile square, and at present about two miles square. In 1855 the Town Hall was built and since that time there had been a constant and steady improvement. Within the past four years two churches have been erected besides a school house containing four large rooms, a large tannery having steam power, a shingle mill and two saw mills. Thus you see that in little more than half a century the trees of the forest that reared their lofty heads heavenward have disappeared. Log houses were built and time and circumstances have substituted in their stead beautiful and comfortable frame and

brick dwellings. Still later the borough was formed containing at that time about 300 inhabitants. In 186 the borough lines were enlarged, with a population about four times as great as when the borough was first organized. Let us again return for a moment to the Indian town. One hundred years ago Otsuagy flourished and was at the zenith of her glory. This land was then the home of the red man. His right was exclusive and undisputed. But

### ANDREW MONTOUR

When the celebrated Moravian Count Zinzendorf, supposedly the second man to visit this place, came to Ots-Ten-Wak-in, the village which stood where Montoursville now stands, he found Madame Montour then living in the village. She had been settled there since as early as 1727. The Montours came from Canada and have an interesting ancestral history.

Madame Montour, a French half-breed and a widow, had several sons and daughters. The most famous of these children was Andrew Montour, interpreter and a great friend of the whites. He was the eldest son. His father, Car-on-do-wana, who had been an Oreida Chief, was killed in a battle with the Catawbas tribe in the spring of 1729.

Andrew Montour's cast of countenance was decidedly European, and had it not been for the broad band of paint applied by bears fat, encircling his face he would easily have been taken for one. He wore a brown broadcloth coat, a scarlet damaskin laped waistcoat, breeches, over which his shirt hung, a black cordovan neckerchief, decked with silver bangles, shoes and stockings and a hat. From his ears hung pendants of brass and other wire plaited together. He was very cordial but when spoken to in French he usually answered in English. His age probably did not exceed forty years, as accounts lead us to believe that he was in the prime of his life at that time.

Montour, being well acquainted with Indian dialects of the Susquehanna region, accompanied Zinzendorf when he left Madame Montour's village to visit the Wyoming Indians, about October 10, 1742.

In 1756 Governor Morris declared war on the Delaware Indians. During all this time Andrew Montour remained a steadfast friend of the English. His headquarters

finally the onward march of civilization hurled him from his place of nativity; hurled him from his hunting grounds; banished him from his native town, Otsuagy crumbled and sunk away into dust. There is not a trace of the former glory left. The red man's sun has set. His body has crumbled to dust with his forest home. Upon his grave the white man treads. Upon his hunting grounds the "pale face" has erected a town.

were now at Fort Augusta, the building which he strongly recommended, and he was frequently employed on Scout duty. Madame Montour, his mother, is supposed to have been with him. Her death occurred about 1753.

As a reward for his loyalty, the Penns decided to reserve a tract of land for Andrew Montour. In 1768 the proprietaries ordered a tract of land to be called "Montour's Reserve" surveyed for him. This reserve embraced a large part of the land now lying within the borough limits of Montoursville, and a tract on the west side of the creek.

As far as quantity and richness were concerned, this was a splendid grant, but there were no white settlers here, and Andrew Montour was not an agriculturist. He did not keep his land very long. After passing through several hands, Mary Norris and Peter Zachary Lloyd finally became the owners having paid one hundred ninety-three dollars and sixty cents. What Montour got is not stated, but he probably received a trifle. Land in those days was not considered valuable, and to an Indian it was worth very little.

At one time he was in the employ of Sir William Johnson, the famous English Indian agent, and he was heard of being as far as Detroit in 1761. Andrew Montour was married twice, first to a granddaughter of Al-bum-ma-pees, King of the Delawares, by whom he had a daughter and a son. The daughter, Mary Magdalen died in Montreal in 1818. The son, John, was living in 1789. By his second wife, he had a son, Nicholas. After leaving here, Montour received another grant in Juniata. He finally drifted to Montour's island in the Allegheny where he died prior to 1775. He was the noblest of the Montours and his fidelity was never questioned.

### THE CHAMPION HOUSE AND NATHANIEL BURROUS

The brick house on the northeast corner of Broad Street and Loyalsock Avenue has stood in that spot for nearly one hundred years, from the year 1833 to the present year, 1932.

Like all the other houses, the house stands flush with Broad Street facing south, while the west walls are angled to conform to the line of Loyalsock Avenue. While the exterior walls are brick in the greater part, those to the north and east of the kitchen door, are of frame construction. This was characteristic of the early builders, as were the variations in the floor and ceiling. The dining room and kitchen floors drop about two inches below those of the double front parlors, while there is a variation of probably a foot in the height of the ceilings. Between the front hallway and the "buttery" facing the wide lawn, is an open porch; between a balcony supported by great square columns, once standing in iron-footings, now on low brick pillars, the porch is adjacent to the dining room and kitchen and measures thirty feet in width, and fourteen feet in depth.

The house was originally heated by fire places, there being six, of which those in the kitchen and dining room were large affairs requiring large logs. The one in the kitchen remains intact, although boarded up, but the one in the dining room

was removed long ago. Those in the parlor are faced with smoky marble.

A fine stairway ascends to the third floor, with proper wide landings, with broad low easy treads, and rails and posts in the best style of colonial art. It was designed by Master and built by a "Stair-builder" especially employed for that part.

"Squire Nathaniel Burrous", the builder, was the son of General John Burrous, the founder, who with five stalwart brothers was at the battle of Long Island; crossed the Delaware with Washington for the battle of Trenton; for a little more than a year was personal courier for the Great Commander at Monmouth, Brandywine and Germantown; and was one of the brave patriots who wintered at Valley Forge.

Nathaniel Burrous, the youngest son, was born at Muncy, December 1, 1797. On March 13, 1824, married Sarah Jordan, and was appointed justice of the peace in the year 1825, by his father's friend, Gov. John A. Shultz.

Squire Burrous became the owner of the western part of his father's farm, which he was largely instrumental in clearing, having with the help of a boy "Cleared up fifty acres in a single year"; he was also the town's first merchant, a contractor upon the West Branch Canal. Later he was engaged in lumbering, owning a saw mill and 4000 acres of timber up the Loyalsock.

### MONTOURSVILLE'S PARADISE FOR FISHERMEN

Fisherman's Paradise, which is located in the old canal at Montoursville, is any fishermen's dream. Who wouldn't like to catch a five pound bass or a big pike. Each is tricky to catch, but this makes it all the more exciting.

In the winter everyone in Montoursville from six to sixty goes to the canal to skate. This is the story of the old canal today, but let me tell you of the canal in 1875, when my grandmother lived along the canal down by what is now the Montoursville Airport. At the time she was eight years old.

The canal followed the Susquehanna River from Baltimore to Williamsport. The canal boats hauled grain, produce, and coal.

To have a ride on a boat to Baltimore in those days was easy, but as thrilling and took longer than a ride to Europe by airplane today.

Between the canal and the river was a road, which was called a tow-path. They used mules to tow the boats and these walked on the path as they pulled the boats along.

Every few miles there would be big locks built, which held the water back. There was always a house by the locks where the lock tender lived. This was an interesting place to go for he always knew the latest news. When the boats came through the locks they usually stopped awhile and the man who attended the locks

visited with all who were on the boat.

Grandmother lived at one of the locks; and when the boats came through, her home was a busy center for folks from Montoursville who came to visit the canal travelers.

The purpose of the locks was to give more pressure to the water and raise it so the boats could float better. When they lifted the locks, the water would rise and the boats would go out.

In those days there were many tramps, for there were no homes for the poor, and they wandered from town to town. The tow-path seemed to be their traveling place and they would grab rides on the boats when they would get a chance.

They were always stopping at Grandmother's house and asking for something to eat. Often they would find them sleeping in the hay mow in the barn. She said her father would almost have to point a gun at them to get rid of the vagrants.

During the winter months, the canals would freeze over and of course the boats could not travel, but what fun they had skating up and down the canal.

To me a canal has always been a place for boats and that is about all, but last year my aunt came to our house to celebrate

her birthday on January 5th. Her birthday and my Grandmother's are on the same day only eight years apart.

I heard my Grandmother say to her, "Remember how you came down the canal on a cake of ice?" Being curious, I asked her what it was all about. This is the story my Grandmother told me.

The morning of her eighth birthday Grandmother woke up and discovered she had a baby sister. Of course she wanted to know where she came from, for it was not every morning you could wake up and find a baby sister at your house.

It so happened there had been a thaw and the ice was floating down the canal. Her father told her that when he went out that morning, he saw this baby floating down the canal on a cake of ice and he went out and brought her in. Off to school went my Grandmother telling everyone, "Just got a baby sister; she came down the canal on a cake of ice this morning."

So you see although my Grandmother is eighty-one years old, and the canal is a thing of the past, she will always remember it for more than just a place for boats to run. After all she did get her baby sister there.

## THE STATE DAM CHUTE AND RAFTING DAYS IN MONTOURSVILLE

Rafting and boating was one of Montoursville's leading industries at one time. The lumber was loaded on rafts up along the Loyalsock Creek; and in the early spring when the water was high, it was floated down the creek.

These rafts took careful handling and had to be specially built so as to withstand the voyage. They were usually constructed of stout planks, laid crosswise, one upon the other and held in place by stout wooden pins, called grubs. The bottom of the raft was about two feet thick and had a large car in front and rear for steering. Each raft carried from three to five men, depending upon the size of the raft and swiftness of the water.

The rafts would float down the creek with their load and would be snubbed to posts and trees at the mills along the creek.

The lumber was then bought by these mills and was shipped to manufacturers at Harrisburg and other southern cities.

Now we know the way in which lumber was brought into Montoursville, but we want to know, also, how it was gotten to southern markets. To do this we must go back and learn the purpose of the "State Dam".

The State Dam was the headwaters of the old canal, which was used for transporting lumber and other products to markets.

This takes us over into the old "Boating Days", as they are spoken of today. The canal was built by the state, to facilitate transportation; so we see why the dam is named the "State Dam". There were no railroads in those days, and all goods were transported over the canal. Thus we see the great need for the canal and for the

old dam; also the need of good boatmen; such as, Samuel Weaver, John Crawford, and Alec Williams.

The dam was located near the mouth of Loyalsock Creek and a great mass of water was backed up, reaching up the creek

to "Alum Rock", so they had a plentiful supply of water for the canal at all times.

We are told that it took them from two to three weeks to make a trip down the river and back. We can see what a great difference a railroad makes.

## LUMBERING

In the early stage of Monoursville, the people depended chiefly on lumbering for a living. This kind of work could be done both summer and winter, and because of the stream located close to the mountains, lumbering was proven a success. Therefore a few old people still living know something about these days, but it has almost passed away from the knowledge of the present residents of Montoursville. These old people are the ones who have helped to make it a success and are a very good source of such particular information.

Lumbering, which started when the town was very small, soon became an industry which will not be forgotten for a long time. The lumber cutting was done chiefly up around Barbours and Hillsgrove. These places, of course, contained tanneries and small sawmills. The raw lumber was usually cut in the fall and winter. In the winter the logs were skidded down off the mountains to the banks of the creek where they were ranked up so they could be sent down to the mills which were located at Montoursville. There were many men working cutting down and barking the trees because it was necessary to get a mass of logs to send down when the creek was high.

When these logs were piled up along the creek in ranks, they were so constructed that when a person would pull a certain log known as the key, the rest of the logs in that rank would fall into the creek. This was done to the many logs which were piled up along the banks, and so made it necessary for them to send men along down with the logs to prevent jams. The logs, however, could not be sent down till the ice had all floated out and the creek was high.

When these logs were sent down, small rafts with inconvenient houses built on them were also sent. These houses contained men who had to keep guard on the logs so they would not stop and jam. Being a very mean job it was easy for the workers

to fall in, and when they did it was a question of life or death. At this particular time of the year the water was very cold and the weather sometimes stormy, so colds and pneumonia were a problem.

After the logs reached Montoursville, they struck a dam which was located near the present railroad bridge. Here the logs were kept till they were ready for use by the Ripton and State Mills, once located near this place. After unloading at Montoursville, the men usually rode back to Barbours on a wagon. This was a very slow process because the roads were in bad condition. When these men reached Barbours they repeated this work over again. Occasionally, when the water was freezing, the logs would jam against the abutments of the railroad bridge, and it would be necessary to use dynamite to break the jam.

As the market for lumber was not good at this time, the men who did this hard labor received small wages. The dress of the men was practically the same in all seasons, as they wore a wool outfit both summer and winter. The reason for this heavy clothing in the summer was that it absorbed the sweat.

The chief summer work was to cut the bark off the trees and load it upon wagons ready to be taken to the railroad station at Montoursville, where it was shipped. This bark was cut into pieces so that it could be easily loaded.

The bark was loaded on the wagons tightly making the load very heavy. This weight made it necessary to get mules to pull the wagons. It was necessary for them to have two or three teams, usually two. One team would start at Barbours and the other at Montoursville, the latter having hides while the former hauled bark. The hides were taken up to the tannery at Hillsgrove. These wagons would usually meet at Little Bear Creek, and ones going up would change wagons with those com-

ing down; thus the trip was made handier and shorter.

There were at one time many saw mills running at Montoursville, but due to competition and the price of lumber they gradually began closing. Two very bad floods between 1880 and 1900 wiped out the lumber and a lot of the mills. Due

to the heavy losses the mills stopped operation. The Ripton mill was the last to operate, and closed around 1910.

The mountains from which this lumber was cut have grown full of brush and small trees known as slashing. These tend to give the mountains a less beautiful effect than their former foliage.

## THE CULBERTSON PATH

### WHERE IT CROSSED THE RIVER

A local Historical Sketch of more than ordinary interest and value to Residents of this section of Lycoming County.

### THE OLD MILL

And how people traveled to reach it. White Captives and how they were carried up Lycoming Creek more than 200 years ago.

An aboriginal trail is located along the Susquehanna River from the South country and almost parallel with it in a line just west of the bluffs that skirt its shore, until the mouth of White Deer Creek is reached, when the course bears up Spring Creek to the northwest across the valley, and over White Deer Mountain into the lower end of Mosquito Valley, thence down Mosquito Creek to its confluence with the river which was crossed a little above that point, where the trail continues up Lycoming Creek to the Northern watershed, where it branches off in different directions.

This ancient line of travel was adopted in the location of the public roads in use at the present day, to a great extent, and thus appears to be obliterated; but by taking the remnant that survives, together with the known direction of the original trail, the most casual observer becomes impressed by the evident familiarity with the geography and topography of the whole country the aboriginies must have possessed, in order to locate their paths so as to compass directness of course, sheltered spots for camping, refreshing springs of water, the habitual resort of game, and points affording extended views of the surrounding country; while they avoided the immense swamps, impenetrable thickets, laborous and difficult footing so success-

fully as to arouse a sense of admiration for these works of primeval engineering.

### WHERE IT STARTED

The portion of this great trail, so old that its names has been lost in antiquity, which affords us the subject for especial study, started in at the foot of White Deer Valley, where it can readily be identified a few rods below John Charles Smith's dwelling, on the public road leading from Williamsport to Elimsport, where it crosses in a northerly direction and leads to the summit of White Deer ridge; here it passes through a gap in a singular rocky spine that extends along the narrow mountain crest, thence down through the shallow basin known as "Heiseleys" improvement within a mile of the large spring that forms the source of Hagerman's Run; thence across the low divide upon the summit of Mosquito Valley mountain, and down into the rocky gorge to the outside of the Bald Eagle range, where the path left the stream at a point near the present brick school house in the notch, following quite closely the present Chicken street, DuBoistown, to the river. It might be added that the main trail led across the river at the lower end of Goose Island, where the ferry afterwards located by the Jaysburg settlers; thence along the edge of the great valley plateau that forms the western border of the Lycoming Creek basin, probably on the exact location of Arch Street, to the point of the hill in Newberry near Oberfell's tavern, thence skirting the foot of the bluff to the terrace beyond, now Dewey Avenue, whence it extended along the brow, winding its way into the far north.

From a point this trail in the lower end of White Deer valley a path branches off what led along the western border of Black Hole Valley through the Loyalsock

gap striking the river at the lower end or the bottom thence crossing the river at the head of Canfields Island, striking the side of the plateau forming the eastern border of the basin of Bonsel's Run (now called Miller's Run), thence up the basin of that stream through the gap by way of Blooming Valley, and down Mill Creek, where it intersected with the main path at the aboriginal settlement called Eeltown, being about five miles above the mouth of Lycoming Creek. This path is mentioned in history as the Sheshequin Path, and was familiarly called the Chicken Path by the early settlers.

### THRILLING HISTORICAL INCIDENTS

In order to strengthen the claim that this really was an ancient aboriginal highway, and was used by the pioneers of the white races long before the days of public roads, a few historical incidents will be related which have a direct bearing up in the subject: On page 195 of *Linn's Annals of Buffalo Valley*, in the narrative of Captain James Thompson, who was taken prisoner with a girl named Mary Young, by the Indians in March, 1781. In Buffalo Valley, we read that they crossed the White Deer mountains, north of the valley, and camped the second night on Lycoming Creek, \*\*\*before we got to Towanda one of the Indians shot a turkey, took out the entrails, and roasted them on a stick and gave them to us. It was delicious, as we had but a few grains of corn a day to eat. Of the girl he says: "Her hardships were fearful. Often her clothes were frozen solid after wading creeks, etc." On Page 589, Volume 6, *Pennsylvania Archives*, we read that on the 10th day of June, 1778, as a wagon with six men, two women and eight children on the way to Lycoming Creek, when within three fourths of a mile of their destination, just before sundown about twenty Indians fired upon them from ambush, killing at least six persons, a few escaped, and the rest were hurried on to Canada where they were sold or held until peace was declared, when some of them returned and their account clearly shows that the great path up Lycoming Creek was the route by which they travelled.

On page 5, Vol. 7, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Colonel Hartley, in his address to Congress, October 8, 1778, in describing

his great expedition to Tioga and North Branch says: "Our rendezvous was Fort Muncy on the West Branch, intending to penetrate by the Shesecununk path to Tioga at the junction of the Cayugs.\*\*\*on the morning of September 21, at 4 o'clock, we marched from Muncy with 12 days provisions. In our route we met with great rains and prodigious swamps. \*\*\* We made by wading or swimming Lycoming river upward of twenty times, etc.\*\*\*"

It will be observed that many of the oldest land grants were located along this old highway when the settlers began to come in, and we can easily recognize the names of those who had taken up lands and lived along the trail far down the river, who removed to this valley after the New Purchase and settled along the trail with which they were so familiar. Colonel Hartley, who owned a tract of land in Buffalo Valley, secured the whole of Mosquito Valley in which the path almost formed the line in the lower portion of the valley. When Andrew Culbertson came up the river in 1774 he settled near the path at the river, his former home had been along its course below Milton. Marcus Huling, who also owned land and had a saw mill near the path in White Deer township, settled along the line in Mosquito Valley. Many other instances might be cited but these will suffice.

### POPULARITY OF THE PATH

In order to get an idea of the popularity of the path for travel a few incidents may be given. William King, an old pioneer, had settled at Jaysburg, and before the advent of mail routes in this region, he went by this path to Northumberland Post Office. Upon his returning he would walk very fast to avoid spending the night in the wilderness. In doing so he became overheated and when he attempted to cross Mosquito Run upon a fallen tree, at a point below Cramer's Run of today, the water had splashed upon the log and frozen a crust upon which he slipped into the stream wetting himself to the hips. He hurried home and went to bed, but in the morning found that he was paralyzed in his lower extremities, from which he never recovered. He died nine years later, on October 22, 1802.

In the olden days, before the canal, stage

coaches, steam cars, boats were known in the region, the waterman would run their rafts of timber or lumber, or arks loaded with produce from the headwaters of the river to the markets below, but instead of riding back as they do today, they would "hoof" it every step of the way, sometimes covering sixty miles in a single day. They would naturally select the nearest route and this old path was a near cut across the country.

It is said that when Derrick Updegraff came up from York to settle on Long Reach in 1789, his cattle were driven over the path and it is probable that many other settlers sent their stock up in the same manner, while they brought their families in canoes or keep boats on the river.

#### ORIGIN OF THE NAME

When Andrew Culbertson built his grist mill at the mouth of Mosquito Run, he well knew that the inhabitants of White Deer Valley had no means of getting their grain ground, so he joined them in brushing out the old Indian trail, in rough places and widening it, or otherwise adapting it for the use of pack horses, so that the enterprise established the name "Culbertson Path," or the Dug Path as it is variously known. The new line varied but little from the old trail, until after it went from the old narrows north of Mosquito Valley, where it lead out by the eastern edge of the great river plateau, while the Indian trail was along the west side of the stream. The line around the point of the mountain was grubbed out and graded, a short section of which, between the school house in the notch and "Culbertson's Spring", about a quarter of a mile distant, is preserved for occasional use to the present day (1888). "Culbertson's Path" had been repaired. It was referred to in several names, to present it to our senses in its real character, and to recite its true history would require an inspiration born of the occasion of its usefulness nearly 200 years ago (1688). How can we, living in the midst of comforts and luxuries of this wonderful age (1888), work ourselves back even in imagination to the pioneer suffering and hardship when daily lives were one continuous round of such discomforts as the present generation cannot understand?

In packing grain or other substance across the mountains, it was necessary to have a harness made for the especial purpose of holding the burden securely upon the beast, and in some places the path was so steep that it would have slipped over the head, while upon the return trip the danger would have been in the opposite direction. It was always a long, tedious, tiresome, dangerous journey through the wilderness of great timber so dense as to shut out sunlight, and as night approached we can imagine with what eagerness the eye would scan every opening in the forest for a friendly light in a cabin window miles away down the mountain side. and when plodding along the tortuous path one would shrink from every thicket of laurel and undergrowth, lest they might be pounced upon by hordes of hungry wolves or stealthy wild cats who made the night hideous with howling and screaming.

When we recall the habitual use of whiskey in those days, it only requires but a short stretch of the imagination to picture the customer awaiting the grinding of the grist, and meanwhile strengthening his nerve with numerous potations of the spiritual comfort that flowed from "the worm that dieth not", until in many cases the heavily burdened beast would lead his master home, instead of the contrary, as we would like to believe.

#### ADVENTURES WITH WILD ANIMALS

The wolves were a terror in Mosquito Valley at this time and the travelers over this path in winter, or after night fall, were always in danger of their life. "Old Hunter John Huling" was once treed by wolves upon the mountain top, and was compelled to remain exposed to extreme cold until daylight, when his pursurers departed. They snapped and snarled below him all night, because he would not come down and be eaten.

Charles King was once coming up the river and was overtaken by nightfall upon the mountain, when the wolves got upon his track and ran him all the way from Pierson's cabin in Mosquito valley, where a dog ran out and parlayed them until he got away. The crust on the snow would not bear his weight so that walking was

extremely tiresome, but the wolves ran along over it easily, so that they had every advantage of him, but by dint of yelling and thrashing the brush with a club as he ran for his life, he held them off at bay until he finally escaped.

Mrs. John Dunlap had a favorite pony which she frequently rode over the path as she journeyed to and from her home in Jaysburg and the home of friends down river.

During the early days of the Lycoming Presbyterian Church in Newberry, and the Presbyterian Church in White Deer Valley, the preacher would meet his appointments in service of both churches by journeying over this path. In fact for many years before Williamsport began to be of any consequence by the building of turnpikes and state roads, this path was the popular highway between the valley west of Lycoming Creek and the country below Muncy.

The first public road in the West Branch Valley in this vicinity, of which there is record, was reported on by viewers in October, 1772, to be located between Sunbury and Lycoming Creek.

Lieutenant Colonel Henry Antes, with others, was appointed at the August session of 1775, to view, and if they saw cause to lay out a bridle road from the mouth of Bald Eagle Creek (Lock Haven) to the town of Sunbury. The path doubtless grew shut during the absence of the settlers after the "big run away" in 1778, for Philip Tome tells us that he traveled by keel boat in 1791, when he went up Pine Creek to settle, there being no roads or other method of conveyance.

#### A MAGNIFICENT SCENE

To lovers of the picturesque, and they were not lacking in those days, many of the hardships of the mountain road were softened by the enchanting view afforded from various points on both ridges. The panorama of White Deer Valley extending to the Muncy Hills, which form the distant horizon, and far away to the right the valley closing in near the site of Watsonstown, short stretches of the winding river a little nearer, then in the foreground lay the magnificent basin spread out in all its beauty, challenging the world to produce its equal. Upon looking northward from the summit of Mosquito

Valley Mountain the charming valley lay at one's feet, drawing into the narrow canyon with its rocky pinnacles and gigantic trees, through which one saw the beautiful river beyond and then the valley of Lycoming Creek, with its symmetrical hills and serpentine stream, and on the lofty spurs of the Alleghenies, all of which afforded a picture defying our efforts toward a fitting descriptive. The natural scenery has perhaps become more beautiful, though less beautiful today account of loss on some of the wilderness, the clearing away of the monstrous forests that clothed both hill and dale, and now we see those lovely shades of vegetation, peculiar to an agricultural region, interspersed with the rich foliage of the occasional groves, that go to make up the perfection of rural landscape. The old path is yet accessible, though somewhat obstructed by tree tops and scrub bushes interlocked across it, but a little determination opens up the old way and we easily follow the footsteps left by human travelers from the time memorial. It seems strange indeed, that tourists should go so far from home for invigorating exercise and soul-refreshing scenery, when a very little trouble would restore this old route of travel so rich in historical memories and intrinsic merit to charm us with its beauty and refresh us with its exhilarating pleasure.

The above article by McMinn was taken from a newspaper dated 1888. It was written by a man by the name of McMinn.

#### STYLE FORESIGHT

From the *Williamsport Saturday Evening Review* November 11, 1893.

And now for the first time in twelve years, tooth-pick shoes are again in style, as well as long coats. Pointed shoes, the last time they were worn, were fore-runners of tight trousers. It is about time the latter should again become the fashion. They are bound to come, and if such is the case, let us have them as soon as possible. They are not any more unbecoming to men than the bustle was to the women.

## THE FLOOD OF JUNE 1, 1889

Even to those who may have lived through it, the great flood which struck Williamsport June 1, 1889, is a dim memory. But its proportions were so tremendous and its damage, in human lives and property so extensive that it can never be set aside when the major events in this city are compiled.

This great inundation, spoken of as the June Flood, occurred after almost three weeks of heavy rains and cloudbursts had hit the state in May. The river started to rise Friday afternoon, May 31.

Predicting a 25 foot flood, the *Williamsport Sun and Banner* that evening was eight feet from the truth. The river crested at 33 ft. 1 inch, at 8:30 p. m. June 1st, extending from the mountain to a point on the city side halfway between Bennett and Ross Streets. The city was completely under water except Newtown and High Street.

The swollen water took with it the city bridges. The river bridges at Market and Maynard Streets and all street and foot bridges across the canal went down. The Philadelphia and Erie (later PRR) bridge at the foot of Chestnut Street and the Northern Central Bridge, a wooden covered structure just north of Newberry, also gave way to the rising water. Eleven bridges and trestles on the latter road between Williamsport and Ralston were swept away.

The southern span of the Market Street Bridge was the first to go. Before it was destroyed, however, a youngster named Gilson was swept down the river from the Maynard Street Bridge and lodged on the Market Street structure. A citizen named Harry Coder ran out on the bridge and carried the boy to safety.

The Maynard Street Bridge was the next to be taken by the waters. As the river rose the son of Michael Welker was swept from the bridge and spent the afternoon in a tree. A DuBoistown man, Lewis G. Gundrum, rescued two men from the structure when the water was almost over the floor, after several ineffectual attempts had been made by the boom steamer. When this bridge was swept away there was a man standing on it. After clambering onto a roof floating in the river, he floated to what was left of the Market Street Bridge

and was finally rescued by a man named Calvert. Seven minutes later that portion of the bridge to which he clung went down.

The Beaver Saw Mill started floating away at 3:30 p. m., passing down the river as majestically as a ship at sea. When the mill struck the bridge at Chestnut Street, which had been weighted down with cars of coal, most of the cars and two spans of the bridge went down. The Northern Central Railroad Bridge fell when struck by several houses.

The loss of human lives, especially those of children, was great. One of the saddest events following the flood was the burial services held for the John W. Youngman, Jr. family from Antes Fort. After the services were held at the David Mahaffie home in Newberry, eighteen pallbearers, four hearses, and a spring wagon were needed to convey their bodies to Wildwood Cemetery.

But miraculous escapes took place also. Seventeen-year-old Reuben Ross was swept along Lycoming Creek for over a mile and avoided death by diving under the Northern Central Bridge. The house of Charles Livingston was upset and floated down the creek with the owner and his wife inside. They managed to get into a tree from which they were later rescued. The couples ten-year-old son floated about a mile on the creek, then he too, climbed into a tree and stayed there until he was rescued nineteen hours later.

About 1000 persons spent the night on the hill back of Old Oak Park and in Brandon Park. A child was born to a refugee in an open field on top of Woodward Hill. There was no bed for the mother but the earth and no doctor to assist. The fear of fire added to the horror of the flood. But three fires started by lime were put out with slight damage.

Many persons became heroes from their rescue work that tragic day. Doc Turley and Charlie Davis rescued twenty persons from Lycoming Creek. Tom Calvert and Joe Fowler, with one boat, saved 160 persons by taking them from the second story windows of homes on Jefferson and Academy Streets. Every boat and boatman worked through the day taking marooned persons to places of safety.

The Court House and the Jail towers were filled with people. O. L. Nichols and Al Wood of the court house office rescued a drunken man from drowning in the building. One man stayed in a street car opposite the Park Hotel on West Fourth Street until the water reached his neck. Shouting loudly for help, a boat put out from the hotel and rescued him. Market clerk Morgan saved a man from drowning in a sewer on Market Street. Charles Shollenberger and Guy May rescued many families by using a raft. The Golden Gate Steamer saved many people from along the river front carrying them to the McCormick block at the corner of Fourth and William Streets.

Sunday morning a house floated down the river carrying a woman and twin babies just born to her. At South Williamsport Calvert, who later received an engraved watch for his many daring feats in rescue work, saved the mother and her babes. Another baby was saved when a Milton resident, Lloyd Warner, standing on the Philadelphia and Erie bridge, saw the child floating down the river in a crib. He quickly removed some clothing and swam out into the swollen waters and brought the child to shore.

The eyes of the town people met with great devastation when the water subsided. Dead animals, filth, and debris were strewn about the city. Nineteen horses had drowned in the Old Mansion House stables. Parts of the city were uninhabitable due to sanitary conditions, ruin aside. The fear of a typhus epidemic was great.

Along the river front where the houses were of one and two story wooden construction the damage had been the greatest. The houses on Mill Street were either washed away or twisted out of shape and moved from their foundation. East Jefferson Street was badly wrecked. Adding to the danger of cleaning up the ruins were hundreds of copperhead snakes that had been washed into the debris. Six of these were found at one spot.

Once again citizens came to each other's aid. Clinefelters and Bisery bakery used up a great stock of flour making bread. They charged five cents a loaf and those that did not have money they gave a loaf free. Although generosity like this occurred some grocers charged twenty five cents a loaf and five dollars for a sack of flour. Eriggs

Cracker bakery gave away many barrels of crackers and other provisions. Many nearby farmers loaded wagons with food and brought it to the city for free distribution. Again, the worse side of human nature came into the picture when two men went through the countryside asking for food for the hungry, and then bringing it to the city, they sold it at exorbitant prices.

All means of transportation and communication had been cut off. All telegraph and telephone lines were down. All railroad roadbed was washed away and bridges gone. At first messages had to be sent by courier.

Local officials formed relief and health committees at once. The people of Troy, Pennsylvania, loaded wagons with 5000 pounds of provisions and with twelve men in charge they left for this city. They made Canton the first night. They had to travel through Hills Grove in Sullivan County, at times crossing new plowed fields and cutting roads through the woods. Help came from as far away as Grand Forks, North Dakota, whose citizens sent a car of flour.

When stealing and looting began in the city, Mayor Foresman ordered 100 extra policemen on duty. People were advised to shoot anyone they caught stealing from their homes or property and they were assured that no jury would find them guilty, that they would be set free.

Many families were left homeless and with no possessions other than those which they wore. Tents in Brandon Park became the new homes of many. Some people took up residence in railroad box cars in the yard west of Pine Street.

In addition to personal loss, the main industry of the city was struck a blow from which it never really recovered. The saw mills along the river from Arch Street in Newberry to the city's eastern limits were either destroyed or badly damaged. Some 400 million feet of logs and sawed lumber went down the river, a loss of \$10 million. Of this the Williamsport Boom lost 1.5 million feet and the mills lost 100 million feet of logs and sawed lumber valued at \$5 Million. Our merchants lost \$1.5 million in merchandise and fixtures.

Great had been the devastation of the June Flood and citizens were faced with the almost insurmountable task of rebuilding the city. Their courage and spirit proved equal to the task.



## OUR COUNTY'S EDUCATIONAL HERITAGE

The eight-square school stood for many years in the old graveyard which was located at the eastern end of the town. The building was long looked upon as a curiosity and was one of the first schools ever built in this county dating to 1816.

At that time the settlement was growing and the farmers realized the necessity of having a school house for the education of their children. According such men as George Roberts, General Burrows, Frederick Coder, and John Farnsworth formed a compact to put up the building. The ground on which it was located is said to have been donated by William Rockafellow for a burial place and it was decided to put the schoolhouse there also.

Through this union of forces the school house was built. Frederick Coder, a mason, did the stone work and Georg Roberts attended to the wood work. The little building was an octagon or eight sided structure. On the inside it was roughly plastered making it very warm and substantial. Around the wall were rows of boards which were fastened slantingly and a long board in front made the desk. In the center of the room was an old fashioned stove and in the winter the

pupils next to it roasted while those on the outer edge froze. At the front was a door with a window on each side. The building was set in from the road and surrounded by trees and bushes.

One of the first teachers was a Mr. Raymond and his successor was G. E. Roberts. The school term was three months and the subjects taught were reading, writing, arithmetic and a little history.

This oddly shaped school was also used for holding religious meetings as there were no established churches at the time. It later became the first church in the town and both Presbyterians and Methodists used it for such until 1838 when the first church was built. At this time a new school was built and the old eight-square gradually fell into disuse. Seventeen years later during a seige of smallpox it was again opened for a hospital and three patients were treated there. After this was discarded and the woodwork was torn away and used to kindle fires in the church that stood near-by. There it stood a windowless and door-less ruin until 1886 when the crumbling walls were torn down and the stone sold for building purposes.

### THE EIGHT-SQUARE SCHOOLHOUSE

(Material obtained from interview with Dr. Lose)

The Little Brick School was one of the earliest schools, built about 1850. It was located on the west side of North Loyalsock Avenue near the home of Elias Bieber and across the street from Gilbert's. The school house was built at the rear of the lot in front of which was a fair sized play ground. The building was one story high and in order to enter one had to go up two or three steps into an entry which was about four feet wide and eight feet long then into a large room where approximately fifty pupils could be accommodated. The room was heated by a huge coal stove in the center of the room and poorly ventilated by few windows. The seats and desks were home made and very much carved with jack knives. At the front of the room was a small platform where the teacher's desk was located and a long bench in front of the desk where the pupils reported for recitation.

At this time there were no compulsory

school laws, therefore, the parents who could afford to buy their children books, paper, and pencils (as these were not supplied by the school board), sent them to school until they wanted to quit. The subjects taught were reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic. The school term usually lasted four months in the winter and hours were the same as today from nine to twelve and one to four. A man teacher was required to teach the winter school because the lady teachers were not capable of whipping the children with the long rods which they used at that time. Nevertheless, the women did teach a summer school for those who paid for special tutoring. The salary of a teacher was between twenty-five and thirty-five dollars per month which then was considered a good wage. Alice Rogers and Miss Buck were two of the summer teachers. William Lewars and Tom MURPHY were two of the winter teachers.