



THE  
JOURNAL  
OF THE  
LYCOMING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME IV  
NUMBER ONE

SUMMER  
1967

the JOURNAL of the  
LYCOMING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PUBLISHED BIANNUALLY IN WILLIAMSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA

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In Memory of  
Lloyd E. Wurster, M. D.

The untimely death of Lloyd E. Wurster, M.D. will leave a blank space in the lives of all who knew him. During the busy years of his professional work he made a host of friends, not only in his beloved medical profession, but amongst the population at large.

He always seemed to have the energy and find the time to aid in carrying on the work of the civic and cultural activities of the local community. We will especially miss his influence and guidance in our own Lycoming Historical Society.

We can only say, "well done," to a busy and useful life.

Berton E. Beck, D.D.S.

## A LETTER OF YESTERYEAR

*Editor's Note — The name of the contributor of this article has been lost due to circumstances beyond our control. Will she please communicate with the society for credit and manuscript.*

*The old letter that is printed here was written by Mary M. Taylor to her sister Catharine A. Taylor on August 1, 1840. It is printed here, with no changes.*

August the 1th Liberty Tioga

(A post script but not so indicated.)

Dear sister I embrace the present opportunity to inform you that we are all middling well and hope that these few lines may find you well too we was glad to hear from you but I would be much pleased to have A short conversation with you and if it was not more than two ours our grain and garden is middling good we finished cutting the ry to day we commenced making hay A week ago last tuesday and we finished last thursday we had very good luck we got it all home without much rain the spring weat is not ripe yet but it looks good we have potatoes beens cowcubmers and peas and fare prospects of cabbaig our plums and currens are not ripe yet and there will not be many when the are ripe but if i get an oppertunity i will send you A few i did not go to church last sunday but i will go to morrow if it does not rain i was glad last week when sunday came for we was very buisy at our hay and julian was taken sick on monday and was not able to help me any till saturday she pealed potatoes for dinner we had good many hands all week we was not asleep last monday knight when you wrote that letter i can tell you we was wide awake for jesse and myself and two of our haymakers was down to Mister Sechrists it was 11o'clock before we started home i ges it was 1 before we got to bed so i think i was as wide awake as you was i cannot come to see you yet for some time but if nothing turnsup i will come after harvest but for mother and julian i not think that the can come for i think mother is not as harty as she was in the winter you have heard about the accident that happened but perhaps you have not that Mises Webster is dead and was buried last Saturday she left a family of six children one only an infant babe i received your letter yesterday i was still in hopes you would be my company to church to morrow now i will close my letter for this time but our bets Love to all  
Catherine Taylor much from your sister  
Mary M. Taylor

this evening when me and julian went before the dore i seen some thing i sed to julian there is somethin the dore stood opened and we both run in the house she sed you calf then i took tne candle and went to the dore and seen it was only A bunch of smart weed

now i will go to bed

This letter takes us back one hundred twenty-five years to an era that is all but forgotten. For over a century it lay hidden in the dark recess of a partition between two rooms in a farm house in Jackson Township, where the unchanging atmosphere preserved the colors of the yellow paper and black ink. The letter would still be in its resting place had not a carpenter removed the partition, bringing the missive to the light of day.

At that time they did not have envelopes, but the paper was folded and sealed with wax, leaving a blank space on which to write the address. As this was before pre-paid postage stamps were devised, the post master drew a small square on the upper right corner of the "envelope," and marked the amount of postage the addressee should pay on receipt of the letter.

The contents of the letter are only those any young woman might write to an absent sister who has been away for a number of years, but is still interested in, and glad to learn what her loved ones at home are doing.

There seems to be an unwritten law that all letters should be dated, as to the month, day and year, but here the year was not given. Noting the letter was written on Saturday evening, August first, and that the mother was not as "harty" as she had been the preceding winter, we checked the Taylor genealogy and found the mother had died March 3, 1842. With access to a perpetual calendar, we found that August the first came on Saturday, 1840, establishing the year when the letter was written.

We might wish the writer had been a little more specific regarding the accident in which "Mises" Webster died, but we can be sure it was not caused by an automobile; but horses and even oxen have been known to "run away," causing fatal accidents.

Mary had received her sister's letter only the day before, and here she was writing her reply the very next day. How often all of us are not so prompt in answering our friends letters.

Though the two girls were not fifteen miles apart, we note that Catharine's letter was written on the preceding Monday, and not received until Friday. But then this was long before the days of Rural Free delivery, and Mary had to travel three or four miles to Liberty for the mail.

Let us turn back the calendar to 1840, and read "between the lines," by consulting the Taylor genealogy. We find that Jonas Taylor and his wife Mary Eschbach, were born in Muncy in 1781 and 1784. At that time Muncy could have been most any place between Northumberland at the confluence of the two Branches of the Susquehanna River and Loyalsock Creek.

It has been found that the Eschbach and Taylor families lived in Paradise Valley, five or six miles east of Milton. Here in the home of Jonas and Mary three of their four children were born. Jesse, in 1816, Mary M. the writer of our letter in 1818 and Catharine A. in 1820. In 1826 the Taylor family moved to a small farm near Nauvoo, Tioga County where later that year the third daughter, Jullianne was born.

Five years later in 1831, Catharine at the age of eleven went to live in the home of Jacob and Catharine Beck in Jackson Township. At that time this was called, "taking a child to raise".

The young persons were to remain in their new home until age eighteen, receiving their clothes and board in payment for the work they were able to do. In some cases where children were orphans and wards of the courts, they were "bound" to a family to be reared until age eighteen. In Catharines case, the parents gave their consent for her to live in the home of Squire Beck.

Catharine was welcomed in the Beck family, sharing the love and joys, also the hard work. With the family she worshipped in the Friedens Lutheran Church, and with the Beck children attended the subscription school, the parents of the community had established in 1820. The parents erected the log school building, and paid the teacher. Each family was to furnish the text books for their children. This was fifteen years before the State set up its public education system in 1835.

Other than being called subscription schools, they were known as "blab schools," for the teacher taught the alphabet to the young "scholars" by reciting aloud and in unison a-b, ab, a-d, ad, i-b, ib, and so on through the alphabet. Until the late eighteen hundreds, all young persons attending school were called scholars, which according to Webster is correct. But the modern usage of the word scholar indicates one of "great learning," or a person of advanced education. Students or pupils is now the accepted term to indicate persons attending elementary and high school.

Though many of the people living in the Block House Settlement were of German origin and spoke only German at home, the instruction in the school was in English. Frequently children came to school who knew no English and had to learn the language from the teacher.

As Catharine had had several years of "schooling" she was in the advanced classes, and told in later years that her reading book was the New Testament.

At the age of eighteen in 1838, Catharine left the Beck home and was employed by two different families in Blossburg for a period of seven years. In 1845, she was married to George Beck, a nephew of Jacob and Catharine Beck. Now her foster parents were her uncle Jacob and aunt Catharine, with her foster brothers and sisters her cousins, with a close tie of relationship between the two families during their entire life time. Forty years after this marriage in 1845, George and Catharine Beck became my grandparents.

In 1846 the young couple bought one hundred acres of virgin forested land, and a few years later they built their farm home.

We can imagine they lived in the house before it was completely finished, and Catharine having kept the letter from her sister, it became lost in the unfinished partition. There like Rip van Winkle, it slept, not for twenty years, but for six times twenty.

In 1965, Fred Marshall and Sons purchased the former farm home of George and Catharine Beck, and Mr. Marshall's brother Melvin was employed to remodel the house. Finding the letter the Marshall brothers read it with interest. Knowing the relationship between the Taylor and Beck families, they sent the letter to Leon Taylor of Cogan House Township, and a short time later it was passed on to me. Taken to Hoyers of Williamsport it was photographed and the original was laminated for its preservation.

With the consent of all concerned, this memento of a bygone age has been given to the Lycoming Historical Society, to be

placed with other old letters and documents.

In the post script to the letter - though it is not so indicated - we note a sense of humor in the younger Jullianne, who called her sister a "calf" when the bright glow of the candle revealed the cause for their fright.

Our appreciation of this old letter is increased by the beautifully executed Spencerian penmanship, that could only have been produced at that time by a carefully carved quill from a wing feather of "Old Mother Goose." The ornate shading of the down and backward strokes, the straight lines on the unruled paper and the neatness of the whole composition amply compensate for the lack of punctuation and the few misspelled words.

Who of us using a modern ball point pen can produce a more legible letter?

## ROBERT COVENHOVEN 1876 A Biographical Sketch

About four miles east of Jersey Shore, a little south of the road to Williamsport, resided, a few years since, the venerable subject of this sketch, at the advanced age of eighty-eight. Mr. Covenhoven was born of Low Dutch parents in Monmouth Co., New Jersey. He was much employed during his youth as a hunter and axeman to the surveyors of land in the valleys tributary to the North and West Branches of the Susquehanna.

The familiarity thus acquired with all the paths of that vast wilderness rendered his services eminently useful as a scout and guide to the military parties of the Revolution, which commenced about the time of his arriving at manhood.

It is unnecessary to say that the graduate of such a school was fearless and intrepid, that he was skillful in the wiles of Indian warfare, and that he possessed an iron constitution.

With these qualifications, at the call of his country, in 1776, he joined the cam-

paigns under General Washington. He was in the battles of Trenton and Princeton. His younger brother had also enlisted, but his father took his place, and the general, with his characteristic kindness, permitted the boy to return to protect his mother.

In the spring of 1776, Robert returned to his home on the West Branch, where his services were more needed by the defenseless frontier than on the sea-coast.

Mr. Covenhoven was one of those men who were always put forward when danger and hard work were to be encountered, but forgotten when honors and emoluments were to be distributed. Nevertheless, he cheerfully sought the post of duty, and never shrank from danger, although it might be a humble post. Few men have passed through more hairbreadth escapes, few have encountered more personal perils in daily encounters with savages, than Mr. Covenhoven.

In the Autumn of 1777, Job Gilloway, a friendly Indian had given intimation that a powerful descent of marauding Indians

might be expected before long on the headwaters of the Susquehanna. Near the close of the season the Indians killed a settler by the name of Saltzburn, on the Sinnemahoning, and Dan Jones at the mouth of the Tenagascocotac.

In the spring of 1778, Colonel Hepburn, afterwards Judge Hepburn, was stationed with a small force at Fort Muncy, at the mouth of Wallis Run, near which several murders had been committed. The Indians had killed Brown's and Benjamin's families, and had taken Cook and his wife prisoners on the Loyalsock Creek.

Colonel Hunter, of Fort Augusta, alarmed by these murders, sent orders to Fort Muncy that all settlers in that vicinity should evacuate and take refuge at Sunbury. Colonel Hepburn was ordered to pass on the order to Antis's and Horn's Forts above. None would volunteer to carry this message except Covenhoven and a young Yankee millwright, an apprentice to Andrew Culbertson.

Purposely avoiding all roads, they took their route along the top of Bald Eagle Ridge until they reached Antis Gap, where they descended towards the fort at the head of Nippenose Bottom. At the bottom of the hill, near the fort, they were startled by the report of a rifle, which had been fired by an Indian at a girl. The girl had just stooped to milk a cow. The harmless bullet passed through her clothes, between limbs and the ground. Milking cows in those days was dangerous work. The Indians had just killed in the woods Abel Cady and Zephanich Miller, and mortally wounded young Armstrong, who died that night. The messengers delivered their orders that all should evacuate within a week, and they were also to send word up to Horn's Fort.

On his way up Covenhoven had stayed all night with Andrew Armstrong, who then lived at the head of the long reach. Covenhoven warned him to quit, but he did not like to abandon his crops, and gave no heed to the warning. The Indians came upon him suddenly, and took him prisoner, with his eldest child, and Nancy Bunday, his wife concealed herself under the bed, and escaped.

Covenhoven hastened down to his own family and, having taken them safely to

Sunbury, returned in a keel-boat to secure his household furniture.

He was eminently useful in obtaining intelligence at Fort Freeland the day before his capture. He was the guide to Colonel Hartley's expedition up the North Branch after the battle of Wyoming, and he was in several bloody skirmishes with Indians on Loyalsock and Pine Creeks.

On one occasion (after the return of Colonel Hepburn to Fort Muncy), a detachment was started out, under the command of Captain Berry, to recover some horses stolen by the Indians, reported to be up on Loyalsock.

Covenhoven, for some reason, was sent out to advise Berry to return, but the latter would not acknowledge the colonel's authority, and persisted in going forward.

Several of Covenhoven's brothers, and his Uncle Wyekoff, were in Berry's detachment, and a friendly Indian by the name of Captain Skerpahins. As so many of his family were in this expedition, Robert Covenhoven determined to go along as a guide, but he could not persuade Berry to keep to the woods, and before long they found themselves ambushed. A bloody struggle commenced, in which a brother of Mr. Covenhoven was killed, another brother was taken prisoner, with several of his cousins and his Uncle Wyekoff.

The latter had been previously bald, but, strange enough, after the hardships of imprisonment, he returned with a fine head of hair.

Robert Covenhoven, after hard fighting, was chased some distance along the bank of the creek, dodging up and down the bank alternately, that his pursuers might get no shot at him. He escaped and returned to the fort. Brave as he was, the old man often spoke of the fluttering of his heart during this chase.

The skirmish occurred in Loyalsock, just above Scott's, one mile above the bridge. The old man told a queer story about his "surroundings", in company with Robert King, a party of Indians and refugees, who were working a loaded boat up the North Branch, from the depredations of Wyoming. The party in the boat out-numbered them, but the price was too tempting to be

resisted. King, remaining in the bushes, kept up a prodigious hullabaloo, whooping and shouting to his imaginary comrades to come on. Covenhoven rushed out with his gun in hand and ordered the fellows in the boat to surrender, which they did, and permitted themselves to be secured. King made his appearance, and the two, forcing the prisoners by threats to assist them, arrived with their prize at Wyoming, where, said Mr. Covenhoven, the officers and soldiers of the Continental army cheated the poor provincials out of their share of the plunder.

In 1796-97, a Mr. Williamson of New York, agent for Sir Wm. Paultney, opened a rough wagon road from the mouth of Larrys Creek to Painted Post, in New York, and Mr. Covenhoven next appears upon the scene as superintendent of the

work. After the cessation of hostilities, and the settlement of the people into the quietude of their domestic affairs, our hero dropped from public view.

His efforts in behalf of his neighbors were herculean, when the emergencies demanded courage and skill; but as soon as the necessity for him had passed he modestly retired into oblivion, and never sought, at the hands of those he had so faithfully served, any recognition of his services.

In the year 1832, he applied through the Hon. Mr. Gamble then a young attorney at Jersey Shore, and received a government pension for his services in the border war.

Robert Covenhoven died, October, 1846, at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. Pfouts, near Northumberland, aged 90 years, 10 months, and 22 days. He was buried at the grave-yard at Northumberland.

## THE LARRYS CREEK PLANK ROAD

BY MILTON W. LANDIS

A remarkable and unusual type of road, the Larrys Creek Plank Road, was built sometime in the years preceding the Civil War. It started at a little hamlet on the banks of the Susquehanna River called Larrys Creek and extended up creek through Larrysville, Salladasburg, Mifflin Township, to Brookside and White Pine in Cogan House Township, and to English Center, Pine Township, on Little Pine Creek, where a very large tannery was in operation.

A large tannery was located in Salladasburg besides other business firms. In fact, all along Larrys Creek from Salladasburg to the village of Larrys Creek at the mouth of the creek were to be found tanneries, sawmills, flour mills and firms making shoes, boots, and other leathersgoods besides a number of grocery stores. All this business along the creek created a large volume of traffic on the old, winding dirt road with its deep mud and snow for half the year and deep sand the other half.

The village of Larrys Creek in Piatt Township served as a port on the West Branch Canal and as a depot on the Jersey Shore Pine Creek and Buffalo Railroad. A post office was established at Larrys Creek

in 1858. Larrys Creek became an important shipping center and remained so for many years.

The old dirt road was inadequate for the traffic it had to carry. Complaints about the road were loud and long. Business men wanted an all-year road but no one seemed to know how to build such a road.

Road building was still in a primitive state of development. The pick and shovel were about the only available tools. A hand-dump scraper was just coming into use. Hauled by a team of horses, the handles of the scraper were held by a workman who tilted the scraper high enough so that the leading edge bit into the earth and filled the scraper with a small load of earth. The scraper was then leveled and hauled on its bottom to the spot in the road where a fill was to be made. Dirt was hauled on wagons to fill ruts and holes in the road. Road-making machinery was unknown.

All the hauling on roads was done with teams of horses or oxen moving at a slow pace. At times, when roads were all but impassable, only part of a load could be moved over them. Often, two teams were hitched to a wagon or sled. Transportation on roads

was a costly item in those days.

What was needed was a man of vision, a man with imagination, a man of practical experience and such a man appeared in the person of James Williamson who settled along Larrys Creek and became a successful business man.

### JAMES WILLIAMSON

Providence usually provides the right man at the right time when a leader is needed to do His bidding. Mr. James Williamson had the insight and experience necessary to solve the problem and it was to him that the people and businessmen turned when he first expounded the theory of building a plank road.

Mr. James Williamson was born June 17, 1812 in Buffalo Valley, Union County, Pennsylvania. He came to Lycoming County in 1824. Mr. Williamson was born in President Madison's Administration and in the first year of the Second War with Great Britain. We do not know where Mr. Williamson first located in Lycoming County but history records that in 1850 he located on a farm along Larrys Creek. He built and operated three sawmills on the creek, established a store in Salladasburg and another at English Center. We believe Mr. Williamson might have traveled through some of the northern tier counties, especially Tioga County, before settling in Lycoming County. If this be true, he had an opportunity to observe and study the construction of the plank roads which were built in Tioga County during the 1800's. History does not record this fact and is just a supposition on our part. However, it is just as reasonable to assume that the Tioga roadbuilders may have found favor in Mr. Williamson's ideas and therefore modeled their plank roads after the Larrys Creek Plank Road.

### THE LARRYS CREEK PLANK ROAD COMPANY

On May 8, 1850, The Larrys Creek Plank Road Company was incorporated. Officers and Directors were elected, stock certificates were ordered printed and were sold to investors, and a survey was made of the new road. James Williamson was awarded the contract to build half of the road. As near as we can ascertain, the stock certificates

were sold at Twenty-five Dollars per share. We have been able to get track of a few of the officials and stockholders in the Company. From The History of Lycoming County, by John F. Meginness (1892) we copy the following:

James Williamson. (page 1049) He built one half of the Larrys Creek Plank Road and was one of the stockholders of the improvement. (He was a director and at times served as president of the Company.) Gideon Breneman. (page 1051) He was born Nov. 1837. He served as secretary of the Plank Road Company for a number of years. Col. Jacob Sallada. (page 719) He was born in Lycoming County Feb. 26, 1817. He was engaged in farming, business and served in the Army. He was one of the projectors and builders of the Plank Road. He was a director of that road for a number of years. Robert Wood. (page 1228) He was born Dec. 3, 1832 in Yorkshire, England. He came to America with his parents, James and Mary (Caldwell) Wood in 1842 in Wilmington, Delaware. In 1849 the Woods came to Cogan House Township and purchased 400 acres of forest land. They engaged in lumbering and built several sawmills. Robert Wood was elected Justice of the Peace in 1864. In 1881 he was elected County Register and Recorder. Mr. Wood was one of the original stockholders of the Plank Road and also a director for some years.

Cogan House Township. (from an old Minute Book) Auditor's Minute Book, on page 9, reference to the Larrys Creek Plank Road; "Certificate of Plank Road Stock No. 106, in name of Supervisors of Cogan House Township, and dated November 2, 1878; 20 shares at \$25 per share .... \$500.00 signed, Abraham Myer, Town Clerk."

Another item on same page reads; "To amount dividend on Stock, 20 Shares..... \$40.00

Mary W. Grafius. (Newspaper clipping from The Grit - late 1850's) "A sixteen share stock certificate of the old Larrys Creek Plank Road Company, worth \$25 a share at the time of issue, is held by Kenneth McBride, of Endicott, N.Y., who once lived in Hillsgrove, Lycoming County, Pa. The certificate made out to Mary W. Grafius, a relative of Mr. McBride three

generations removed, is of parchment-like paper in an excellent state of preservation and still bears the internal revenue stamp. The date of the stock issue, according to the certificate, is Nov. 20, 1868. At the time James Williamson was president of the Larrys Creek Plank Road Company."

There were many stockholders in the Plank Road Company but most of them are forgotten. The company's record books probably lie forgotten in some old attic along Larrys Creek. The legal aspects of the Larrys Creek Plank Road Company are probably recorded in some old record-book somewhere in the Courthouse at Williamsport, Pa.

#### A PLANK ROAD IS BUILT

Enthusiasm ran high over the building of this novel type of road. Investors bought shares in the newly incorporated company, James Williamson who had been awarded the contract to build the plank road set to work organizing his road-building crew in the summer of 1850 and by the end of 1851 part of the new road had been built from Larrys Creek depot, on the river, to Salladasburg and possibly some distance beyond the town.

It might be well to pause here in this narrative and explain how the author can describe, at this late date, how the plank road was built. In the 1950's when this author became interested in the plank road, there were still quite a few older people living who had traveled over the old plank road in their youth and who remembered much of the detail of the appearance and structure of the road. There are a few people still living who well remember the plank road and eagerly recall with vividness their experiences of traveling over the road in their youth, and with a bit of longing and wistfulness they relate stories of the old road.

The contractor, James Williamson, took full advantage of the times and conditions existing in his day. There was a plentiful supply of woodsmen looking for jobs. Wages were low. The forests were full of hemlock logs going to waste. In fact, all conditions were ideal in 1850 for the construction of this plank road. Lumbering was going on at an accelerating pace. Fine

building materials were being cut and shipped by canal and railroad to distant markets. The demand of tanneries for more hemlock bark increased. There was a demand for everything but hemlock logs. Consequently, hemlock logs by the hundreds of thousands were left lying in the forest to decay away.

James Williamson was therefore able to buy up thousands of fine hemlock logs for a "song". He set crews to work sawing the logs to proper length. Other crews hauled the logs to the local sawmills where the hemlock was sawed into planks eight feet long and four inches thick and varied widths. Stringers were sawed from long logs.

This plank road was built very much on the order of a railroad. The ground was graded. Ties were first laid down partly imbedded in the ground. On rough terrain, large blocks of wood or stones were first anchored in the ground and ties placed on them for firm footing. When a section of ties had been placed on the ground, another crew began spiking stringers to the ties. These stringers were placed about six feet apart on the ties, so that, to the beholder, it looked exceedingly like a wooden railroad. To complete the road, eight foot planks four inches thick were spiked to the stringers. Now, it readily can be seen that an eight foot plank road is wide enough for only one vehicle at a time. Traffic moved in both directions over the road so provision was made for turn-offs or sidings. Where the plank road had been built nearly level with the ground, it was relatively easy to construct turn-offs. Over rough terrain it was necessary to build a turn-off much in the fashion of the main road itself.

Toll-houses were erected at each important intersection along the plank road and a movable barricade called a toll-gate hung across the road thus effectively barring access to the road. A toll-gate keeper was hired to tend each toll-gate. It was his duty to collect a toll or fee from the traveling customer in exchange for the use of the plank road. After the keeper had collected the toll, he raised the toll-gate and the traveler continued on his journey. The amount of toll charged varied. A man walking on the plank road might pay several pennies toll. A man on a horse would pay a bit more. The rates increased, all according to

the number of horses hitched to the vehicle and the weight of the load they hauled. The writer does not have a schedule of tolls charged for using the Larrys Creek Plank Road but hopes that some reader of this article will be reminded of an old keepsake like a schedule of tolls, a picture of the plank road or a newspaper clipping and will pass it along to be included in this story.

For many years this plank road venture prospered and stockholders received profitable dividends on their investments. The plank road was extended up-stream to Brookside and then to White Pine and from there down Licks Run to English Center.

It is said that a branch of the plank road was built beginning at the upper end of Salladasburg and following the main branch of Larrys Creek through Anthony Township but we do not know how many miles it extended in this direction.

The Larrys Creek Plank Road Company enjoyed a fairly lucrative business for many years. A steady stream of bark and hides were hauled over the plank road to the tanneries and they in turn hauled leather back over the road to Larrys Creek R.R. station and the canal port. Lumber went in the same fashion. New goods came from far away markets over the plank road to replenish the shelves of the stores and shops located along the road. Businessmen from Wellsboro and nearby communities in Tioga County traveled over a portion of the Old State Road to Little Pine Creek where they entered the plank road and continued to Larrys Creek station or the West Branch Canal. During the years of the Civil War, the government purchasing agencies must have made heavy demands on the tanneries and sawmills for leather, leathergoods and shoes and lumber products, in particular, those located along the plank road.

#### THE JUNE FLOOD

A vivid word picture of the June Flood is given in the History of Lycoming County by John F. McGinness, 1892: "The memorable flood of June 1, 1889, has passed into history as the highest and most destructive to life and property ever known to white men in the West Branch valley. Rain

fell incessantly for nearly forty-eight hours, with the wind from the southwest. It seemed that the windows of heaven had been opened and the water descended in a solid sheet. The river rose rapidly and at Williamsport attained the unprecedented height of thirty-three feet one inch, or nearly six feet higher than in 1865." Mr. McGinness then goes on to describe the damage suffered in Williamsport. He noted that all the county bridges over the principal streams, as well as the river bridges, were swept away, entailing a loss of over \$500,000. There is at least one exception to that statement. The covered bridge below White Pine Church, on Larrys Creek, known at present as the Larrys Creek Covered Bridge, withstood the full fury of the June Flood and was the sole remaining bridge left standing in that township of Cogan House.

Old-timers told about the miles and miles of plank road that was washed away by the June Flood. The damage was so extensive that whole sections of the road were never repaired or replaced. In the years to follow the upper portion of the plank road was abandoned and township road supervisors took over the duties of maintaining the road. Whenever a section of the remaining plank road wore out, the supervisors removed it and graded a dirt road in its place.

By the year 1900 all that remained of the plank road was a section from Salladasburg to Larrys Creek station on the river. On Friday, April 27, 1900 the following article appeared in the Williamsport newspapers; - Harvey W. Whitehead, attorney, will present a petition to the court Saturday, signed by 46 taxpayers, asking for the opening for free use of the toll plank road between Larrys Creek station and Salladasburg.

The June Flood destroyed long sections of the West Branch Canal and damaged much of the railroad roadbed. The railroad was restored to service but the canal was abandoned.

After some legal jockeying the court declared the plank road a free road. Thus, an era come to a close. The Larrys Creek Plank Road Company closed its books after a half century of service to the public.

### ANECDOTES OF THE OLD PLANK ROAD

During the era of the plank road, it was the custom for a young fellow to take his girl for a ride on the plank road. On a pleasant Sunday afternoon, with a horse hitched to a cart or a team of driving horses, all decked out in flynets, tassels and other harness ornaments hitched to a buggy, the young couple entered the plank road at the nearest toll gate and set off for a distant village for an afternoon outing.

Many good people of the times believed that it was to "break the Sabbath" to go joy riding on Sunday. They stayed at home to rest. On pleasant afternoons they sat on the front porch visiting or reading and watching the rigs go by. Some of the young fellows in their flashing carts and buggies would whip up their horses when passing a dwelling. The rolling wheels and pounding hoofs of their steeds raised quite a racket causing the older generation to raise their arms to high heaven and complain aloud about what this younger generation was coming to - just as they do now.

### BLOCKHOUSE HORSES

An old fellow, Mr. M. Pautot, who lived near the plank road on his farm a short distance above Brookside, claimed he could always tell when a team from Blockhouse was coming down the road even when the team was not yet in sight. When asked how he could recognize a Blockhouse team, he replied, "A Blockhouse team always trots on the plank road. The teams around here always keep to a walk on the planks."

### BEAUTY'S RUN

CARLTON E. FINK, SR.

Before the Revolutionary War Alexander Irvin located on the big sandy stream then known as the Lycoming River. Many years later this land was owned and occupied by J. R. Hayes, Esq., who was known far and near for his ugliness. His neighbors, in a spirit of derision, nicknamed him Captain

Beauty. So generally did he become known by this name, that it was given to the stream that ran through part of his land and empties into the Lycoming, which yet perpetuates the cognomen of the homliest man ever to inhabit Lycoming County.

### THE BAND CONCERT

The Cogan House Band was organized about 1886. It was taught and conducted by Mr. Calvin Harmon, the teacher of Cogan School. At one time there were twenty-two members in the band. This band gained local fame and as a consequence they were often invited to distant communities to play a concert. One autumn the band was invited to play at a big celebration at Salladasburg.

On the appointed day, the members gathered together and climbed aboard the wagon which was to transport them to Salladasburg. Curt Sweely, a member of the band, had two good teams of horses that worked well together and often Curt took the band on any distant concerts. He would whip up the horses and away they would go, mostly at a gallop. Curt was a "hot-rod" of his day.

Arriving at White Pine, they entered the plank road, passed the toll-gate and headed for Salladasburg. Curt whipped up the horses and away they sped down the plank road. The thunder of the horses hooves on the planks and the rumble of wagon wheels raised such a commotion as to alarm the residents along the road clear from White Pine to Brookside. Curt was in his glory.

Some distance below Brookside, still going at a fast clip, misfortune overtook the speeding vehicle; a wheel flew off, the wagon pitched over, men and instruments spilled all over the roadside. Some of the bandmen were injured. Every instrument was dented, bent or broken and the Bass Drum had a big hole in it. That is as far as the band got that day. They patched up the wagon and made their way back home again far less jovial than before.

### PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE VISITED WILLIAMSPORT AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

BY LOUISE NICHOLSON

#### INTRODUCTION

A president has a life like an open book with very little privacy. As Hoover said in his book *Fishing For Fun*, "Presidents have only two moments of personal seclusion. One is prayer: the other is fishing - and they cannot pray all the time." Williamsport has been important in different aspects of many of the president's lives. For some it has given them a chance to get the votes they wanted and for others it has given them the rest and relaxation they needed. In any case it is interesting to learn of the presidents who have visited in or around the Williamsport area.

Many people think Williamsport is back in the bush or off the beaten path, but after reading about the presidents that have been here, I think Williamsport has attractions of which we aren't aware.

The convenient location of Williamsport was the reason Benjamin Harrison passed through Williamsport Saturday, May 28, 1892.<sup>1</sup> He was on his way to Rochester to give an address for the dedication of a monument in honor of the soldiers who died for the Union in the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> Accompanying Harrison were Sec. Noble, Sec. Halford, Gen. and Mrs. Scholfield, and Congressmen Leafland, Bount, Outwaite, Locwood, Hooker, Handerson, Raines, and E. B. Taylor.<sup>3</sup> Harrison's schedule was as follows: departure from Washington (by train) 7:00 A.M., arrival at Harrisburg 10:45, Williamsport 1:06, Elmira 3:00, and Rochester at 7:00 P.M.<sup>4</sup>

The train bearing William McKinley's body passed through Williamsport, the half-way mark on Pennsylvania Railroad's Buffalo to Washington run. The funeral train traveled through here on September 16, 1901, after McKinley's assassination in Buffalo.<sup>5</sup> In the funeral party were, Mrs. McKinley, President Roosevelt, the cabinet, except for Secretaries Hay and Gage, and prominent officials of the Army and the Navy.<sup>6</sup> The funeral train stayed at Williamsport only five minutes, long enough to

put water in the engine.<sup>7</sup> Although the train was here only a short time Mayor Williams and city officials made arrangements to honor the late president.<sup>8</sup> Businesses were closed, the public meeting was cancelled, a proclamation was issued, and the Post Office, Court House, banks, and schools were draped in black.<sup>9</sup> While the train was at the station on West Fourth Street the chimes at Trinity Church played *Nearer My God to Thee*.<sup>10</sup> Plans were made for the schools to go as groups to the nearest railroad tracks to see the funeral train pass.<sup>11</sup> My grandmother, a pupil at Curtin School, then at the triangle of Market and Packer Streets, remembers students putting pennies on the tracks to be run over by McKinley's train. As usual there were many security measures taken, such as having a pilot train precede the funeral train and not permitting any trains on the track thirty minutes before the pilot train.<sup>12</sup> Both trains were also given the right of way over all other trains.<sup>13</sup> McKinley's train was scheduled to arrive here at 2:30, an hour and 20 minutes after it left Renovo, arrive at Harrisburg 2 hours and 10 minutes later and finally arrive at 8:38 in Washington.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to being in Williamsport with McKinley's funeral train, Theodore Roosevelt was here October 26, 1914.<sup>15</sup> He was helping Pinchot, who was running for senator on the Washington Progressive Party ticket.<sup>16</sup> With Roosevelt and Pinchot were State Chairman Detrich, William Draper Lewis, Fred E. Lewis, Percy F. Smith, candidate for Secretary of Internal Affairs, Harry Watson, candidate for Lieutenant Governor, and Judge Charles N. Brumun, and Lex N. Mitchell both candidates for Congressmen-at-large.<sup>17</sup> A group of people from here left to meet Roosevelt and his party at Sunbury and escort them to Williamsport.<sup>18</sup> W. Clyde Harer, then Chairman of the Lycoming County Progressive Party and now County Commissioner was one who welcomed the ex-president.<sup>19</sup> On their arrival at Williamsport they were honored by a parade headed by the Repasz Band.<sup>20</sup> Roosevelt and Pinchot spoke at the

Lycoming Opera House, now the State Theater, the Court House, and were scheduled to speak at the Park Hotel, now the Park Home, but Roosevelt was exhausted and didn't speak at the last stop.<sup>21</sup> It was not necessary to have a ticket to sit in the balcony and gallery of the Opera House but it was necessary for the other seats there.<sup>22</sup> Three hundred of the 580 seats at the Opera House were for people from Williamsport and the remainder were for other people in this district. Eleven hundred seats were reserved at the Court House for people who wanted to hear Roosevelt.<sup>23</sup> It was said, "Col. Roosevelt is the last bet of the Progressive Party, their trump card and one with which the party hopes to take the trick which is necessary to prove the winning one."<sup>24</sup>

The Progressive Party felt that under the Republicans a few people got everything and under the Democrats no one got anything, but under the Washington Progressive Party everyone would prosper alike and they felt Roosevelt was the one who could make it possible.<sup>25</sup>

Roosevelt's train left New York at 7:53, and arrived at Easton at 9:35. The train left Sunbury at 5:37, Lewisburg at 5:57, Milton at 6:20 and arrived at the Pine Street Station at 7:20.<sup>26</sup>

Also here because his train came through was William Taft.<sup>27</sup> He was on his way back from Jackson, Michigan where he spoke at the celebration of the birth of the Republican Party on June 4, 1854.<sup>28</sup> He was here only a few minutes on June 4, 1910, but Mayor Wolfe and the crowd persuaded Taft to say a few words.<sup>29</sup> With Taft were Senator Burrows of Michigan, Assistant Sec. of the Treasury Hills, The Rev. John Wesley of Brooklyn Tabernacle and Captain Archibald Butt, Taft's aid.<sup>30</sup> Taft arrived at Harrisburg at 5:10, he left for Washington at 5:35 and arrived there at 8:44.<sup>31</sup>

Herbert Hoover was attracted by the good fishing around Williamsport. He was here twice May 16, 1928<sup>32</sup> and May 31, 1930.<sup>33</sup> Hoover was Secretary of Commerce and candidate for Republican nomination for president on his first trip fishing in this area.<sup>34</sup> Hoover and Lawrence Richey,

his secretary traveled leisurely to enjoy the Susquehanna Trail.<sup>35</sup> They left Washington at 10:30 A.M. and arrived at 6:00 P.M. Saturday at the Park Hotel where they stayed that night.<sup>36</sup> Hoover and his Companions left Sunday at 9:00 A.M. and two hours later arrived at Ogontz, where Hoover was the guest of Jay Cook of Philadelphia.<sup>37</sup> Cook's estate was three miles from Salladasburg,<sup>38</sup> at the first fork of Larry's Creek in Cummings Township, Lycoming County.<sup>39</sup> Hoover was glad for the rest and was assured peace because the nearest phone was three miles away.<sup>40</sup>

On his second trip on May 31, 1930, Hoover was president.<sup>41</sup> He came on his way from Gettysburg where he gave a Memorial Day speech.<sup>42</sup> He was welcomed by crowds at Washington Boulevard, West Fourth Street, Campbell Street, Park Avenue, the Park Hotel, and Newberry.<sup>43</sup> Governor John S. Hurley and Hoover's private doctor, Dr. Boone, were with him.<sup>44</sup> After traveling four hours from Gettysburg, Hoover stayed in Williamsport only long enough to pick up J. Cook at the Park Hotel.<sup>45</sup> At 7:30 P.M. they arrived at Ogontz, the same place they had been two years earlier.<sup>46</sup> The security measures included a nine car cavalcade, 36 secret servicemen, a 20 man escort of State Police and State Police at every crossroads.<sup>47</sup> When we pass the undergrade at the turn off to Salladasburg my mother often tells of the time her family was stopped by the police to let Hoover's car go by.

Sunday, June 1, 1930, on his way home, Hoover paid a surprise visit to the Episcopal Church in Liverpool.<sup>48</sup> The church which can accommodate 200, but usually only had 50 present, was soon overflowing.<sup>49</sup> The minister, The Rev. Mr. Jarrett conducted the service as usual except for an added prayer for the president.<sup>50</sup>

Harry S. Truman was here twice campaigning. In 1948, he was running for president and in 1952, he was electioneering for Stevenson, a candidate for president. According to members of my family Truman made a whistle stop from the observation car, talking as the train kept moving. Four years later Truman and his daughter Margaret had a mixed welcome when they

visited Williamsport, the bands were cheering for him but there were also placards for Eisenhower. Truman was not running for president himself because his wife preferred that he didn't.

Lyndon B. Johnson was in Williamsport October 18, 1960, campaigning for vice president.<sup>51</sup> Unlike his predecessors he came by plane, a four engine American turbo-jet.<sup>52</sup> Welcoming him were Governor David Lawrence, Mayor Thomas Levering, Dean R. Fisher, Candidate for Congress from the seventeenth district, Assemblyman Howard M. Burns, and Morris Good both party candidates for General Assembly.<sup>53</sup> Between the airport and the front of the Court House there were an estimated 3,500 people who saw Johnson, about the same number that saw Lodge the Saturday before.<sup>54</sup> The Montoursville schools permitted the students to have a recess in order to see and hear Johnson.<sup>55</sup> The band of the Montoursville High School was on hand for the music.<sup>56</sup> Also the St. Boniface School was permitted to go out to see Johnson.<sup>57</sup> For ten minutes Johnson signed autographs for the three hundred pupils and talked to the nuns.<sup>58</sup> Continuing on his trip he went to Montgomery, Muncy, Lewisburg, Sunbury, Shamokin, Pottsville, and Allentown.<sup>59</sup>

There were presidents who were in towns

1. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 28, 1892, p. 1
2. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 30, 1892, p. 1
3. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 28, 1892, p. 1
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, September 16, 1901, p. 6
6. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, September 16, 1901, p. 6
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, September 16, 1901, p. 6
15. *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin*, October 26, 1914, p. 2
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin*, October 27, 1914, p. 1
20. *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin*, October 26, 1914, p. 2
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin*, October 26, 1914, p. 2
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin*, October 27, 1914, p. 1

near Williamsport. Franklin D. Roosevelt was in Wilkes-Barre for the dedication of the dikes.<sup>60</sup> Crowds were lined on either side of the streets of Kingston and Wilkes-Barre to see him as he rode by in his open touring car covered by secret police.<sup>61</sup> Eisenhower was at Penn State several times while his brother was President of Pennsylvania State University.<sup>62</sup> Ike was there for May Day one year and was there another time when Milton's wife died.<sup>63</sup> Kennedy was campaigning in this area twice, once in Scranton<sup>64</sup> and once in Harrisburg.<sup>65</sup>

Several candidates for high offices have come to Williamsport to electioneer. Blaine, known for the slogan: Rum, Roman, and Rebellion was here January 1886.<sup>66</sup> I remember the different times Nixon, Lodge, and Rockefeller were here campaigning. Nixon was here when he was electioneering for vice president. He was near the Rialto Theater where Little League Boulevard is now. Lodge was at the Court House and Rockefeller spoke from the church across from the Bethune Douglas Center.

Williamsport isn't far off the beaten path. Its' location in route to some of the larger cities brought several presidents here and its' opportunities for fishing brought one for a return visit. The fact that many candidates came here to campaign shows they felt Williamsport is important.

25. *Ibid.*
26. *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin*, October 26, 1914, p. 2
27. *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin*, June 4, 1910, p. 5
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin*, June 4, 1910, p. 5
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 14, 1928, p. 1
33. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 31, 1930, p. 1
34. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 14, 1928, p. 1
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 14, 1928, p. 1
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 15, 1928, p. 16
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 31, 1930, p. 1
42. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, May 31, 1930, p. 5
43. *Ibid.*, p. 1
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, p. 5
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*, p. 1
48. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, June 2, 1930, p. 1
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, June 2, 1930, p. 1
51. *Williamsport Sun Gazette*, October 18, 1960, p. 1
52. *Ibid.*



53. *Ibid.*  
 54. *Ibid.*  
 55. *Ibid.*  
 56. *Ibid.*  
 57. *Williamsport Sun Gazette*, October 18, 1960,  
 p. 1  
 58. *Ibid.*  
 59. *Ibid.* p. 4
60. Miss Olwen Rosser  
 61. Mrs. W. T. Nicholson  
 62. *Ibid.*  
 63. *Ibid.*  
 64. *Ibid.*  
 65. *Williamsport Sun Gazette*, September 16, 1960,  
 p. 1  
 66. Mr. Paul Gilmore

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*WILLIAMSPORT SUN GAZETTE*, September 16, 1960; October 18, 1960

Mr. W. Clyde Harer  
 Mrs. B. C. Jones  
 Miss Olwen Rosser

Mr. Paul Gilmore  
 Mrs. W. A. Nicholson  
 Mrs. W. T. Nicholson

## THE HISTORY OF MONTOURSVILLE

BY ELIZABETH CHAMPION KING

presented at the July 1966 meeting  
 of the  
 Montoursville Garden Club

## TEATOWN TOPICS

Topics, according to the Dictionary, are things to be discussed or written about. I am sure that most of you are aware of the fact that for a number of years, when we had a local newspaper, I had a weekly column called "Teatown Topics". Why Teatown? In the early days of our town, so the story goes, teamsters driving through were asked by the housewives to bring them a "Quarter of Tea" or a "Pound of Coffee" upon their return. Those living in the eastern end favored coffee and those in the western section asked for tea. The dividing line was a small run, now covered over, located in the vicinity of the Sylvania Plant, known as Coffeetown Run.

As a Teatown, I chose that name. The name is not too common now, but as a child and young adult, we invariably spoke of Montoursville as Teatown, and one bit of local history notes that General Burrows considered the name as suitable for his town. Incidentally, Marie Bair, looking for a name for his first show dog chose "Teatown Belle".

The history of Montoursville has been too long neglected - and the time has come when there are very few old timers left who

can recall the early days of the Borough.

The very early knowledge of the area is quite vague. It is believed that Etienne Brule was the first white man to visit this section. He was entrepreneur (Organizer) and guide to Champlain, the French Governor of Canada, and in 1615 he made a visit to the Andastes, urging them to help a French expedition against the Iroquois.

The Andastes were believed to hold this part of the country, particularly for hunting and fishing, but very little is known of them. War was waged throughout this section by the various Indian tribes for at least a century.

In 1737 Conrad Weiser made his first journey through the valley, journeying from his Tulpehocken home to the Headquarters of the Six Nations at Onondaga, New York. The month was March, the ground was snow covered, the rivers and streams were swollen. He was accompanied from Shamokin by Shikillemy, afterward Vice-King of the Six Nations at Shamokin two other Indians and a German. Weiser was one of the few white men who served as an interpreter and intermediary who was trusted almost implicitly by both the Indians and the whites.

He kept a diary and notes that they visited the Indian Village of Ostuagy, situated near the site of Montoursville, and so named from a rock on the opposite side of the river. Meginnis in his History says that this conspicuous landmark was destroyed by the construction of the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad.

Here it must be noted that John H. Meginnis is the foremost authority on the History of Lycoming County, and while his accuracy has been doubted at times - one must turn to him for information.

Weiser states that "before we came in sight of the village we reached the large creek (Loyalsock) which looked more dreadful than the one yesterday." All of which leads the reader to believe that the Indian Village was situated on the west side of the creek and near the river.

General John Burrows, the Founder of Montoursville, was a native of New Jersey. As a young boy he served as a mail rider between New York and Philadelphia. He served with General Washington through the trying winter at Valley Forge.

He came to Muncy (then Pennsborough) with a wife and five children, no friends and no money, in 1794. The family moved in with some of his wife's relatives for a short time, and by dint of hard labor he managed to purchase some land which he later sold to George Lewis of Eagles Mere, and with this money he bought 516 acres and 17 perches of land from Peletiah Perit and Joshua Lathrop. The price was \$9,500.00 and the year 1812. The land he purchased was along the Susquehanna River, on the Great Road leading from Muncy to Williamsport, and was a portion of the grant given to Andrew Montour by William Penn, for his services as a guide and interpreter.

So Montoursville was born - a piece of land cleared here, another there. This was land where the Indians had roamed, hunted and lived.

General Burrows and the title "General" stemmed from the fact that he was a lieutenant general in the Pennsylvania National Guard for many years - wrote the story of his early life and travels, but said

very little about the town and its beginnings. Where did he live? Was it in a log cabin on the main street between Loyalsock Avenue and the first alley to the West, or did he live, again in a log cabin, on the site of the airport? Wherever he resided, he was an influential man and undoubtedly a well-to-do man. He was involved in farming, real estate, built the first grist mill, was a politician. In his early days in Pennsborough he was a distiller, an occupation that seemed to be in high regard in those early days.

General Burrows, at his death, left the greater part of his land to his son, Nathaniel. He was an ambitious son, following in his father's footsteps. He was a farmer, a contractor with the canal, which could mean many things - he furnished food, he furnished men and materials, he did hauling. He was the father of six, a contributor to all local projects, a good citizen and a churchman. As a lumberman he, at one time, owned 4,000 acres of timber at Sandy Bottom on the Loyalsock. This area (in 1966) is being eyed as a recreational area. It will always remain in my mind as the section where one could see an eagle or two soaring high above the valley, and a nest high up on the mountain side.

Nathaniel was a merchant, opening the first general store in the town. Where? Vaguely I recall being told by "Auntie" Paulhamus, his daughter, that it was on the south side of the main street, in the vicinity of the present State Liquor Store. He built the first brick house in the town, my home, and the family possessed the first set of china dishes, the first piano and the first bathtub.

As I find inevitable, I must wander in my narrative. As a child, my family moved from Jordan Street to Loyalsock Avenue, across from my present home, and as a youngster I was mail carrier, errand girl and apparently general nuisance to the Stetler family who then owned the Burrows home. So my acquaintance with the house goes back many years. There was an outside cellar entrance on the porch, and a story that there had been a store next door to the house at one time, and the outside cellar entrance was to provide easy access to the barrels of vinegar, etc. stored in the cellar.

When Mary Burrows married William Paulhamus, Nathaniel built her a house next to the brick mansion, and there she resided until she was past 90, and I must regretfully note that the many stories she told me were not appreciated and recorded.

The town was laid out in 1812, and in 1814 James Moore built the first bridge across the Loyalsock. The Great Road to Williamsport had been authorized in 1772. Meginnis says in 1898 - "the draft of the survey which is still in existence shows that the road was mostly laid on the Indian Path which ran through Montoursville, and over which trolley cars now dash! I wonder what he would think of present day speed.

John Else is reputed to be the first settler. He was a builder of note and history has it that he built the first house at the age of 18 for Thomas Wallis who opened a blacksmith shop. In 1816 the first school house was built - an eight sided building. The ground on Broad Street - now a school park, is said to have been donated for a burial place and a school house, by William Rockafellow. This was also the first Church. From 1833 to 1838 the Presbyterians and Methodists used it. It was abandoned as a school when, in 1838, the free school law was accepted. The building was used as a hospital during a smallpox epidemic, and Helen Harding Shearer tells me that her grandfather, James Harding, carried smallpox scars on his face throughout his life, having cared for patients and contracted the disease, in this same building. Finally, in 1886, the crumbling walls were torn down and the stone used in other building projects.

In 1838, J. Andrew Sheets donated a parcel of land to the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches. In this year on the lot at the eastern end of the town was built a building for all denominations to use. As such it was called the Union Church. Later it was painted white and was called the White Church.

The building was rectangular in shape, approximately thirty-six feet wide and forty-five feet in length, and of medium height. The gable roof extended over the front part several feet and rested on four tall massive columns, eighteen or twenty inches in diameter which reached to the ground.

This formed a neat little porch and gave the building a touch of the southern colonial style of architecture. From the portico there was a double entrance, each door facing an aisle which extended to the back part of the interior. The middle block of seats was divided by a low partition, which ran parallel with the aisles. In each side of this partition, about half way back from the front part, was a boxed pew, almost square, which was entered from the aisle through a swinging door. One of these was known as the Family Pew of ex-Governor Shulze. The pulpit was located in the front part of the room, midway between the doors, and was elevated 5 or 6 feet from the floor. Entrance to it was gained by means of two ascending stairways, one on each side. Beneath it was a small closet where books were kept, and to the front of it was a small enclosure in which stood a plain table used as an altar. A high ceiling arched in circular form from both sides of the building eliminated the need of a customary sounding board.

The officers occupied the seats to the left of the pulpit; and men and boys sat on the western side of the middle partition, while the women and girls worshipped on the eastern side. It had an estimated seating capacity of two hundred. The singing was done without an instrument. The only light was the light of day, which entered the building through six large, heavy shuttered windows, three on each side.

The old "White Church" was the center of community life, and many interesting scenes and memories might be related. Among them, mention might be made of the singing schools held within its doors, of the jolly country festivals held under the trees on the lawn, of sad burials, as soldier after soldier was brought home during the Civil War and laid to rest in the adjoining cemetery, and then, saddest of all, perhaps, of the first Memorial Day ever held in Montoursville. It was held on a Sunday, some days after the close of the War while the misery and sorrow was still fresh in the minds of the people. Many loved ones had been given to the nation, that it still might be the Union and a great crowd gathered to give honor to their memories.

The Address was delivered in the Church, which was much too small to hold the peo-

ple who crowded around the windows and on the porch to hear. This service, doubtless, was more solemn and impressive than any since that day. Such were some of the scenes and events, aside from the regular and stately worship, which transpired on this spot made sacred by hallowed associations and joyous fellowships in the days of long ago.

On March 31, 1875 the building was sold by the trustees to John A. Bennett, J. C. Bryan and Harrison Moyer, for \$450.00. The interior was altered and it lost its churchly appearance. The Grangers used it for a meeting place. The first high school was organized here in 1880 by Professor John Mason Duncan. Later it was sold again and converted into a dwelling, still standing and bearing the number - 717 Broad St.

Montoursville was incorporated under a special act of the Legislature in 1850 as a Borough, but the first officers were not elected until 1853. William Dewars was the first burgess.

Let me quote from Anthony's Standard Business Directory Guide and Reference Book of Williamsport, Montoursville, Milton, Muncy, Jersey Shore, Hughesville, Montgomery, Pennsylvania, 1893-1894.

"The Village has a population estimated at fifteen hundred and on every hand the marks of progress can be seen.

The industries of the village consist of three flouring mills, the largest Hayes, Pidcoke and Company has a reputation of turning out one of the finest brands "The Banner" sold on the market. The mills are spacious and have a capacity of 75 barrels a day. A. H. Heilman and Company operate an extensive furniture manufactory, employing a large number of hands. The Emery Lumber Company operates large saw mills, and they manufacture 15,000,000 feet of hemlock annually. There are two other saw mills the Fisher, 12,000,000, Canfield Mill, turning out large quantities of lumber. The Montoursville Pantaloon Manufacturing Co. employ a large force of help in the manufacture of pants, sending their goods to every part of the United States - Goodstein and Novensky, proprietors.

The firm of L. I. Meyer and Co. annually turn out a large amount of work in their overall manufactory. S. S. Jarrett, Chief Burgess of the Village, is a large manufacturer of horse collars, which find a ready market for their superiority of workmanship. The pork packing establishment of John Peters does an extensive business in butchering and the curing of meats, supplying a large part of the trade in Williamsport and the vicinity.

Montoursville had four churches, six schools, a weekly paper, four hotels, connected with the outer world by the Reading Railroad, with the contemplated road of the Wilkes-Barre and Western Railroad. The village is soon to enjoy the electric car service from Williamsport. (The Fox Hotel was the first, later called the Central Hotel. Others were the Montour House, Ebner House, Gellinger House and the Seaside Hotel).

The original area of the Borough, as purchased by General Burrows, extended from the Loyalsock two miles along the Great Road to Muncy. How the boundaries were established is - to me - a question. The Charter of the Borough states that the Borough of Montoursville be bounded and limited as follows: "Beginning at a post at the corner of the land of Charles Lloyd and the free school lot". Later, in 1862, the limits were extended - beginning at a buttonwood on the eastern bank of the Loyalsock Creek. The description goes on to a stone near the public road - south to a post near a road - south to a stone - south to the Susquehanna River at low water.

The reading of the Borough Charter and ordinances is most entertaining.

Who settled in this area and where did they come from? The Lloyds, the Rawles, the Harris Families, came from Philadelphia - many came from New Jersey, and as could be expected when one family settled at a certain place other relatives and friends joined them, particularly if land was cheap.

The names of many of those early residents are but a memory, but they are of interest - John Rockafellow, Aaron Patchin, Bernard Buser, George Gucker, Jesse Haines, Henry Bastian, the Tomlinsons, Burrows, Coders, Epley, Hollingsworth, Wallis, Hepburn.

Ex-Governor John Andrew Shulze was probably our most distinguished resident. (I wonder why more of our streets were not named for early settlers - Wouldn't Hollingsworth Drive have more local interest than Fairview Drive? Hollingsworths were living on the spot now occupied by the William Monroe house when Mary Hollingsworth wrote her diary in 1814-15. If I am not mistaken the house was built by the Lloyds.

John Andrew Shulze was the Sixth Governor of Pennsylvania, retiring from office in 1829, coming to this area. In 1831 he purchased from John Cowden "a splendid trace of land lying in Fairfield Township, containing a fraction over 500 acres (535) for \$12,000. Interestingly, you may recall, John Burrows had bought 516 acres and 16 perches for \$9,500.

Quoting from John of Lancaster in 1898 - "Having become the owner of this splendid farm with its rich undulating acres, sweeping off the river, the Governor, naturally, became a man of consequence in the community. Soon after making the purchase he built a large and handsome brick house on the farm. On account of its size and stately appearance it attracted much attention. There was nothing to equal it in the neighborhood. Residents back in the hills looked upon it with awe on account of its magnificent appearance and it received the name of the Governor Shulze residence, which it bears to this day. It stands near the trotting course, but has been greatly beautified since the day of its builder. But the purchase of this farm and the erection of such a fine residence marked the beginning of his financial ruin and downfall and in 1844 the land was sold at sheriff sale. The area with the house was purchased by John Ott Rockafellow for \$9,900, and the balance by General George Tomb of Jersey Shore. We today, know the Governor's home as that of the Eck family and our airport was formed in part from the Tomb farm. Incidentally, there has always been some question as to whether the Burrows home or the Shulze home was th first brick house. The Burrows home was the first brick house in the Borough, while the Shulze home, at that time, was in Fairfield Township.

Montoursville's transportation problems present an interesting story. The first known trail through the area was that from Muncy - a continuation of the path from Northumberland which continued up the river on the line of the present (1966) highway to Ostonwakin where it crossed the Loyalsock.

The Court of Quarter Sessions on May 26, 1772, authorized, the laying out of a road from Fort Augusta to Lycoming Creek.

The Susquehanna River, which, undoubtedly, had been the main route of travel from the New York State line to Sunbury on the North Branch, West as far as navigable on our West Branch and South to the Chesapeake Bay, was declared a public highway by the Act of March 21, 1783.

From 1809 until about 1838 there was a stage coach from Northumberland to Williamsport. Starting with a weekly trip it advanced to three trips per week. The stone house at the eastern edge of town, now occupied by the Robert Raymonds, is reported to have been a stage depot.

James Moore built the first bridge over the Loyalsock. What type of bridge it was I do not know, but at one time there were two bridges - a covered one and the other an open span.

In 1827 the Great Road was continued North to Williamsport and Jersey Shore.

The canal reached Williamsport in 1833 and was abandoned following the Flood of 1889. The story of the building of the canal - its trials and tribulations, together with the stories of the local people who worked the canal is another interesting tale.

The building of a railroad, known as the Sunbury and Erie between Sunbury and Williamsport in 1855 also was a contributing factor to the decline of the canal. In 1861 the railroad was leased to the Pennsylvania Railroad and the name changed to the Philadelphia and Erie.

In 1871 the Catawissa railroad was extended to Williamsport from Milton via Montoursville, giving local residents transportation in two directions. In 1872 the railroad was leased to the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company, later to be known as "The Reading". Patrons could

leave the local station in the morning, journeying to Williamsport and return in the late afternoon - the 5.09, as I recall. Then there was an evening train into the city at 5:30, returning at 11:30. This train was a favorite with the young men who had girl friends in the city. This late train carried a sleeping car for Philadelphia, and earlier in the day, around 4 the Cannonball went through, en route for Philadelphia, stopping only on signal.

Mail was accelerated by the arrival of the trains. Passenger service was discontinued some years ago, but freight is still carried. I recall that in my childhood we hung over the fence at the rear of Grandmother Bird's farm, on the Old Montoursville Road, and watched the "dagos" who were building a double track to replace the single. Living quarters in box cars, cabooses and shanties lined the right of way, together with builders equipment.

On March 27, 1897, the Montoursville Trolley Company offered the County Commissioners \$1,500 for a right of way over a proposed new bridge. The offer was refused.

On April 3, 1897, newspaper reports show that William C. Ebner president of the Montoursville Borough Council, conferred with the County Commissioners and local people interested in a trolley company on the proposed construction of a new bridge over the Loyalsock.

On June 4, 1897, the Commissioners and the trolley operators were nearing agreement on the proposed bridge. June 8 the trolley officials agreed to pay \$3,000 for additional iron work on the new bridge. On June 29, 1897 the Montoursville Passenger Railway Company, to operate by single or double track over the state road from Williamsport through Loyalsock Township, was chartered by the State.

By July 16 the trolley line had progressed several squares and the ties were in position. On July 23 it was announced that the Williamsport Company would join the Montoursville Company at the City Line.

On September 27 it was announced that the lines were completed and ready for the installation of the cars, three of which arrived on October 13 - reported to be of the

latest design. The new bridge was to be opened to traffic about December 1, 1897.

In March, 1898, it was announced that the trolley line would be extended to the proposed park up the Loyalsock.

The trolley company had summer and winter cars - the latter had seats extending the length of the car on either side, with a vestibule front and rear. They were heated - underneath the seats, and ones' legs encased in heavy underwear and woolen stockings, got awfully warm. The late comers hung on to straps. There was a motorman and a conductor. The cars received their power through a pole that ran along an overhead electric wire and at the end of the line the pole was disconnected and turned in the opposite direction.

One of the delights of the pranksters was to pull the pole away from the wire. The pole could also slip off while rounding a corner, particularly in bad weather. The cars, in the winter, travelled from the intersection of Montour Street and Loyalsock Avenue one trip and from below Arch Street, where there was a car barn, up Broad Street, across the bridge on a track attached to the side of the bridge and overhanging the creek. Across the creek there was a rather sharp turn and a climp up Sand Hill. Snow and ice caused a great deal of trouble and sand was standard equipment.

Between the top of Sand Hill and the City line there were three switches, permitting the running of more than one car in each direction. Summer cars were open with the seats running crosswise, with the backs flippable. There were canvas curtains that could be pulled down in stormy weather. The favorite seat was that in the front directly back of the motorman - a wonderful way to cool off on a hot day - and the fare to Williamsport was seven cents.

Starr Island Park, later known as Indian Park, was a popular place - in those days it had everything!! I had my first roller coaster ride there. It had a roller skating rink, shooting gallery, merry go round, a dance hall, baseball field, and swimming. Every church, every organization, even the town, had annual picnics. Sometimes you ate your own food, other times the tables

were loaded with the contents of everyone's baskets, and what food!

Here, too, I saw my first illustrated songs, the forerunner of the movies - an evening to be remembered, color slides with tenor accompaniment.

As we grew older, we graduated to the dances, always waiting for the day when we could stay until the last trolley.

One of the stories that belongs to the trolley era, is of the young man en route to call on his girl friend - the trolley was crowded - he had imbibed a bit too freely, was standing on the step, hanging on to the seat handle, and as the trolley was crossing the creek bridge he lost his hold and landed in the creek - never losing his derby hat.

Floods took their toll - the automobile came to be the means of going places and Indian Park became a memory. The trolley company went out of existence when a bus company took over the franchise in 1925.

As I think back over the years I wonder how we managed - the trolley tracks ran through the center of the street and there was dust to navigate in the summer, snow in the winter, and mud in between. Boots as winter wear are a recent innovation. Rubbers we had, but what good were rubbers when one had to cope with inches of mud.

The main street was paved, on both sides of the track, in 1918, so the mud and dust problem was eliminated, although the middle section remained a problem for some time. Frank Dalburgh asked me one day if I remembered Doc Born's Salve - something that Council had put between the tracks, resulting in a slick black substance when it rained.

Transportation in Montoursville has run the gamut - those missionaries and early travellers journeyed on foot or on horseback - the Indians had their canoes, then came the canal boats, followed by the steam locomotive - the trolley car, the electric automobile, the gasoline automobile, buses, airplanes of various kinds, diesel engines - maybe there is a cycle and we will be walking again - who knows?

Montoursville has had a number of newspapers over the years - none has survived

and principally, I would believe, because of the existence of daily and Sunday newspapers in the area. My own involvement in a local newspaper revealed those who would have no part of it because it was a small time operation - news of the kind he or she was interested in was stale by the time the paper was printed, and those who loved it and helped in every way - by subscribing - by news items and even by sending copies to family and friends away from home. I am sure all editors and publishers have had the same problems.

The Pastoral Visitor, edited by B. R. Smith, in 1869, is recorded as the first local paper. In 1891 The Echo was published by M. Doyle Marks and Frederick S. Kelley. Back in 1898 there was the Globe - J. S. Murphy, editor; - then the Republic, with H. G. Phillips, the Montoursville News was published by E. J. Waltman in the 1930's - the Montoursville Monitor flourished from 1955 to 1961, followed by the Montoursville Merchandiser in 1962. There may have been others.

From the early papers one gets a picture of the social life of the day, guests for dinner, descriptions of weddings, including the wedding gifts, illness, births and deaths, all in great detail.

Montoursville's history isn't world shaking - in fact - as I have said before, its early beginnings are full of blank spaces, but has progressed through the years. We may not have had many outstanding personages, not many millionaires, but we have a good heritage of hard working, God-fearing people who have brought us to our present, pleasant existence. Montoursville will never set the world on fire, but as a place in which to live, to work, to raise a family, to retire to, what more can one ask than mountains, fresh air, good roads, good schools, churches for all, good neighbors.

To close, may I again quote from John of Lancaster, written in 1889: "Philosophers tell us that history is a review of the past, of what has been suffered and achieved by our ancestors, that we can fairly count upon what may be anticipated from future action. It is truly said that the years have voices for those that will hear, and the simple annals of commonplace habita-

tions, deeds and events need but the gentle touch of fond imagination to develop heroic possibilities in him who will study and analyze them."

#### CHURCHES OF MONTOURSVILLE

Methodist Episcopal - Broad St., Rev. A. E. Taylor, Pastor.

Episcopal - Church of Our Savior - Loyalsock Ave. No rector.

Lutheran Church - Broad St., Rev. J. R. Sample, Pastor.

Montoursville Presbyterian Church - Cherry, corner Washington, Rev. J. Ludlow Kendall, Pastor.

#### INDEPENDENT ORDERS

Eureka Lodge No. 335 F. & A.M. - Regular communications the Friday evening before each full moon, over store of John Horlacher.

Fairfield Lodge No. 236, I.O.O.F. - meets every Saturday evening of each week in the L. I. Meyer and Co. building, Broad St.

Bald Eagle Encampment, No. 289, I.O.O.F. Meets first and third Friday evenings of each month in Meyer building.

Washington Camp No. 299, P.O.S. of A. meets every Tuesday evening in Meyer building.

Jr. O.U.A.M. Abraham Lincoln Council, No. 513 - meets every Thursday evening over store of J. B. Weaver, Broad Street.

Montoursville Lodge No. 270, I.O.G.T. meets every Monday evening in Lodge rooms in Montour Hotel Block, Broad St.

#### BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Weaver and Callahan - Agricultural implements, wagons, carriages, coal; O. P. Nicely, Broad St., Architect. Electrical appliances; L. M. Weaver - Bakery, Broad St.; M. B. Harman - Barber, Broad St.; W. H. Righter - Barber, Broad St.; Barratt and Reed - Blacksmiths, Broad St.; C. F. Hanner - Blacksmiths, Cherry St.; George Shirm - Blacksmith, Broad St.; L. I. Meyer and Co. - Books and stationery, boots and shoes, gents' furnishings, grocery, pants manufacturing, Broad St.; James Dawson - boots and shoes; Bartley Lose - Boot and shoe maker - Broad St.; G. H. Woolever - Boot and shoe maker

- corner Broad and Loyalsock; Samuel Bowler - boots and shoe maker - Broad St.; I. D. Buck - boots and shoe maker - Broad St.; J. Smutzinger, boots and shoe maker, Jordan Ave.; P. A. Konkle, building, moving and raising, Jordan Ave.; George Martenas, Carpet weaving - Mulberry St.; G. W. Coffman - Arch St., Carpenter, contractor, building; Jacob Coffman - Builder - Corner Cherry and Montour St.; H. Else - Builder; J. C. Else - Broad and Montour; Hoffa and Swinehart - builder - Mulberry St.; George Horlacher - Loyalsock Ave., carpenter; H. H. Kennedy, boards Temperance House; William Grafius, Loyalsock Ave., Confectionery, tobacco and cigars; H. B. Konkle, Broad St., confectionery, tobacco and cigars; Mrs. Cline Quigley, Broad St., confectionery and ice cream; J. B. Weaver, Broad St., confectionery; Susan Konkle, dressmaking, Jordan Ave.; Thomas Griffith, druggist, Broad St.; G. S. Saeger, druggist, Broad St.; James Harding, early vegetables, florist - Washington Ave.; Fisher and Fisher, fire insurance, insurance - Cherry St.; Hayes, Pidcoe and Co. Flour, feed, grain, flour mill - Broad St.; Heilman and Co. - furniture manufacturing - Foot of Washington St.; John Jones - grape culturist - monumental works, Broad St.; Thomas Bubb - grocery, Broad St.; R. E. Dietrick - grocery, Broad St.; S. Mendenhall and Son, hardware, paint, oil, grease, glass, plumbing; S. S. Jarrett, harness, horse, clothing - Broad St.; James Dawson, hats and caps, Broad St.; George W. Weaver, horses, Broad St.; Central Hotel, William Lucas, Broad St.; Montour House, H. S. Weaver, corner Broad and Loyalsock; Temperance House, Mrs. C. Gelling, proprietor; The Ebner House, W. C. Ebner, Creek Road; L. M. Weaver, ice cream - Broad St.; J. R. Heiney, insurance, real estate - Broad St.; H. B. Konkle, jeweler, Broad St.; David Lichtenthaler, Justice of the Peace, Cherry St.; R. H. Hunt - lath and pickets - Jordan Ave.; G. T. Cressel - lumber, Jordan Ave.; J. R. Fisher and Bros. - lumber, wholesale wood - Cherry St.; Weaver and Bennett - lumber, Broad St.; L. W. Cole - sausage manufacturer - Loyalsock Ave.; John M. Day - mason contractor - Cherry St.; George Hall - 40 foot; J. S. Murphy - Broad St.; J. F. Konkle - meat market - Broad St.; John Peters - meat market - Broad St.; S. T. Buck - merchant tailor - Broad St.; C. M. and A. P. Rogers,

millinery - Broad St.; Mary A Tomer - F. Betts - plasterer - Jordan Ave.; Jefferson Broad St., millinery; Montoursville Echo - Hartman - job printing - sign writer; G. J. S. Murphy, Editor; W. J. Scott - painter, Cherry St.; Montoursville Pantaloon Manufacturing Company - Cherry St.; R. H. Born - Physician - Broad St.; W. B. Konkle, Broad St.; G. C. Saeger, Broad St.; Wool- ever Bros. - Planing mill - near depot; H. Mulberry.

## BLOOMING GROVE

*This is the first of a series of selections to be reprinted from "Blooming Grove" the historical work of Joseph H. McMinn printed at Williamsport in 1901.*

*It was donated for use in the "Journal" by Mrs. Carrie Flick, R. D. 2 Montoursville, Pennsylvania.*

*Tell me a tale of the timber lands,  
And the old time pioneers;  
Somepin a poor man understands  
With his feelings as well as ears;  
Tell of the old log house—about—  
The loft—the puncheon floor—  
The old fireplace with crane swung out  
And the latch-string through the door.*  
J. Whitcomb Riley

## INTRODUCTION

From the very dawn of history Southern Germany has been inhabited by a people possessing strong powers of endurance, strong determination and patient, plodding perseverance.

The people of what we now call Wurttemberg were known to the Romans as the SUEVI, from which came the names Suabia, Swabia, and Swopes.

The armies of Rome found that it required a policy of extermination to conquer these people, and this same method has been resorted to by numerous despots of Europe since the downfall of Rome, and their successors, the Alemanni, who have destroyed by massacre, pillage, disease and famine many thousands of the inhabitants in order to maintain their standard of authority; until Wurtemberg has finally come to be a part of the Great German Empire.

In the development of christian civilization the doctrines of the reformers came into conflict with the demands of military service, and made outcasts or victims of bigoted rage, of multitudes of the most in-

telligent and most useful of the inhabitants of Germany. It is estimated that thirty millions of the best people of Europe have emigrated to foreign lands within the last century, mostly to escape the tyranny of military despotism.

The original trend of the emigration to Pennsylvania is probably due to the proselyting tour of William Penn in 1677, when he visited the Pietists, German Baptists, Mennonites, Quakers and other religious sects whom he invited to come to America where his refuge for conscience sake became founded in 1682.

The topography and climate of Southern Germany resembles in a marked degree the conditions in Central Pennsylvania, so that there has been a natural drifting toward this part of our country. It is said that fully three-fourths of the German population of Lycoming County is from the Kingdom of Wurtemberg.

It is not the purpose of the following pages to analyze the various shades of religious belief that were advocated by the numerous leaders or teachers in Germany during the time of the great Napoleon; nor

is it intended to trace the wandering of the devout people, of whatever name, who fled from persecution to become scattered abroad to leaven the whole earth. It is rather meant to offer a simple, unbiased narrative of the experience of one small party of emigrants who settled together in the wilderness of Central Pennsylvania in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Harrassed and tormented until the land of their ancestors became intolerable, they fled to a strange country, where they hoped to "live apart from the world and its wickedness, and worship God with joy and fervor, unmolested."

The apparently easy task of compiling the record of this emigration has required years of inquiry and investigation in order to get into the current of events and try to reconcile statements of public record with the testimony of individuals who lived on the ground, which was frequently at variance, owing to the traditions being misleading, and through imperfect local records.

While the original colonists were educated men, much beyond the average of their time, yet the lack of opportunities and the intense labor imposed upon them, deprived their children of the schooling they should have had, and it was not until their children's children or the third generation came on, that the public school system and home comforts permitted the cause of education to become uniform and general.

The result of this imperfect work is offered as a centennial souvenir for the descendants of the original settlers; to remind them of the mighty power for good their ancestors have unconsciously exerted toward establishing that fundamental element in our national government which accords the privilege to all its citizens of worshipping God and obeying His will, according to their individual understanding of it.

## THE MENNONITES, PIETISTS, ETC.

The Mennonites, as a sect were organized by Simon Menno, of Friesland, Holland, in 1536.

In 1682 the Frankfort Company sent Rev. F. Daniel Pastorius with twenty German and Dutch Mennonist families to America.

They bought a tract of eight thousand acres of land of William Penn and settled Germantown in 1683. Although so poor that they lived in caves and huts, yet after five years they, first of all, protested against negro slavery in America. The twelve branches of the Mennonites in the United States now number 41,541 members.

The Pietists as a body, of whom Philip Jacob Spener was leader, settled in Germantown and on the Wissahickon in 1694. They were noted for their extreme pity and mysticism.

Christopher Sower one of their number, afterward a Tunker, was a wonderfully versatile man, and among other things he established a publishing house that has continued until this day. In 1743 he published the first German (or any other kind of) Bible in America. He either invented or generally introduced the ten plate stove, the greatest domestic invention of that time.

## THE TUNKERS OR GERMAN BAPTISTS OR BRETHREN

The German Baptists first became a distinct body of believers in the year 1708, near Schwarzenau, Germany. The origin of this sect forms an impressive incident in religious history. During the turmoil in Germany among the adherents of the various reformers a few families who had fled from persecution to live under the tolerance of the ruler of the place above mentioned (which was called even by some of themselves, "the village of huts") met in each other's houses to study the Bible together, and decide for themselves the requirements of a pure christian life. They agreed in the essential tenets of the Baptist denomination and assumed the name of *Brethren*, from Matthew XXIII:8, "For one is your Master even Christ; and all ye are brethren."

The eight persons who formed the first congregation: were George Grebi, from Hesse-Cassel; Lucas Vetter, also from Hesse; Alexander Mack, from Schrisheim; Anna Margaretha Mack, his wife; Andrew Bony, of Basle, Switzerland, Joanna Noethingen, his wife; John Kipping, of Bareit, Wurtemberg; Joanna Kipping, his wife. They held sacred, as their successors to this

day have done, the non-resisting principle of the Apostolic Church. They refused to go to war. Neither did they swear the civil or any other oath before a magistrate or in a court of justice. They were noted for modesty of apparel, plainness of speech, and distinguished hospitality. In connection with feet washing, or when surrounding the communion table, they extended the hand of fellowship and saluted one another with the holy kiss. In conferring the rite of baptism they dipped the candidate kneeling, face downward, three times, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost".

In the long list of dissenters from the established church, among the latest sects to arise were the Tunkers, who occupied a place of moderation among the various beliefs. After long and careful preparation by self-examination and prayer, one morning in 1708 the eight persons named went together in solitude to the stream called the Eder and were baptized by the triune immersion, and thus began the German Baptist Brethren church as a separate and distinct organization.

Alexander Mack was born in Schriesheim un der Bergstrasse, in 1679, and died in Pennsylvania, February 19, 1735. In 1700 he was married to Anna Margaretha Klinggen. He was a wealthy man, owning mills and vineyards, but he became converted to the Separatist, then the Pietist doctrines, and contributed all his possessions to the community. Later on, with those at Schwarzenau, he declared that baptism should be "in flowing water with complete submersion." He became their pastor and guide, and in 1726 fled with the others to West Friesland, where they remained nine years. Mack then organized his colony for emigration to America. There were 59 families and 126 souls in this company. After a tempestuous voyage of 71 days, they landed in Philadelphia, September 15, 1729.

Creyfelt, Westphalia, Germany, was then famous as a silk and velvet centre, established by Mennonite weavers who had fled from their homes and met here as a refuge from religious persecution. Peter Becker was born in Dillsheim in 1689, and joined the Tunker church at Creyfelt, Germany in 1714. Upon the disagreement with Elder

Libe, Becker gathered together twenty pious families and sailed for America in 1719. They dispersed into the surrounding country and wilderness. Becker had been elected their elder and leader. In 1722 there was a revival spirit aroused, and in the following year on Christmas day six persons were baptized in the Wissahickon Creek, which was the first immersion in the church in America. In the evening at the house of John Gomerry they (23 in all) assembled and washed one another's feet, then ate the Lord's supper, passed the kiss of charity with the right hand of fellowship, partook of the holy communion, sang a hymn and went out. The congregation of Germantown was thus organized, and the good work has gone forward until the denomination flourished in all parts of our land, and now number 73,601 members.

The Tunkers have been confused with the Pietists, the Mennonites, the Ephrata community of Seventh Day Baptists, the Amish, the Wissahickon Hermits of Kelpius, the Separatists, the New Born, and all sects of Anabaptist societies and sects. In name, too, they have been strangely and variously designated. The word Tunker in German, Baptist in Greek, and Dipper in English, have the same significations. The sect has been variously designated as Dompelaers, from the forward action or "ducking"; Anabaptists, because they do not believe in infant baptism; Taufers, Tunkers, Tunkards, Dunkers, Dunkards, Dippers, and Witgenstein or Schwarbenau Baptists, among themselves *Brethren*, officially as the *German Baptist Brethren Church*.

Although given in derision they have accepted the name of Taufers (taeuffer, Plungers) to distinguish them from other sects of similiar belief and practices among whom they have lived in America. It is claimed that the name Dunker or Tunker (from Tunken to sop) originated among unsympathetic countrymen in Lancaster county about the year 1719.

#### EPHRATA

In the Community of Brethren in the Pequa Valley a dissension arose on the question of the observance of the seventh day for the Sabbath, when Conrad Beisel in September, 1733, purchased 250 acres of

land in the dense wilderness, eleven miles from the city of Lancaster, on Cocalico Creek, where he took the dissenters. They called the settlement das laager (the camp) until 1738, when it was named Ephrata, and a regular conventual fellowship adopted. They dressed like the Copuchin Monks. Many preferred a solitary life, but about 300 men and women lived (separately) in buildings prepared for them. They ate vegetables, touched no animal food, slept on benches with a block of wood for a pillow, and in other ways punished the body for sins they could not avoid while living in this unnatural condition. They were very gloomy and very religious, attracting much ridicule and levity when at times they appeared upon the streets of Germantown or Philadelphia. But with all their Asceticism they were the most advanced thinkers in the country. They printed forty religious books, tracts, etc., and the continental money. Their schools attracted pupils from Philadelphia and Baltimore. They started the first Sunday School in America. Peter Miller, the second friar of the monastery, translated the Declaration of Independence into seven languages.

#### THE BLOOMING GROVE COLONY

Harmony, Economy, etc.

The authorities in Wurtemberg continued to be imperious and cruel to the non-conformists and imprisoned John and Gottlieb Heim in 1803 for refusing to bear arms in the levies being made for Napoleon; but after a year, the prisons being overcrowded, released them upon promising to leave the country. They at once joined a large company who through religious scruples or dread of military service, were preparing to go to America. They left Moehringen on the 9th of June, 1804, spending the first night in Vaingen on the Enz. On the 10th they passed through Bruchsal to Langen Bruecken, on the 11th they reached Saxheim, the 12th Aller Heilige, and on the 13th Frankfurt on the Main. They remained here until the 16th when they took ship for Muinden (for 1,275 florins). They set sail at 7 a.m., spending the night at Elsfield, and continued on until noon on the 20th, when they arrived at Arnheim, Holland. After numerous delays and tedious windings

through the canals they finally boarded the ship Lulu on the evening of July 3d. Sailing on the morning of the 12th day of July, 1804, landing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on the 18th of September of the same year. The story of the journey and voyage is briefly told by George Kiess, Sr., one of the party, whose diary conveys an impressive sense of the deep religious fervor which pervaded these people. It will be noticed in the record that the company of men, women and children were on the way for one hundred and one days, sixty-eight of which were spent huddled together upon an overcrowded emigrant ship at sea. It can be safely inferred that they paid their passage, including subsistence, for they complained that "the food was poor, the water bad, and the beer sour." In spite of this unsanitary situation and the terrorizing experiences, there were but two deaths, small children, and one child was born.

It is related that during the tedious days of the voyage religious discussion occupied much of the time, often becoming very animated and intensely earnest. The different ideas of the most effective method of serving God eventually settled upon two distinct lines. One of these led to the declaration of celibacy, as being the correct doctrine. Those who favored adopting it, when it should become practicable, selected George Raap, assisted by his son, John, as leaders. These men took their followers to Butler county, Pa., where they established a town which they called *Harmony*. Later on they were joined by many other German emigrants. Soon disagreeing among themselves, the leaders took their adherents to Posey county, Indiana, in 1814, where they remained until 1825. Becoming dissatisfied with the place, they returned to Pennsylvania and established *Economy*, in Beaver county about 18 miles below Pittsburgh, on a 300 acre farm of bottom land, 90 feet above the Ohio river. The first written contract as a community was signed in 1805, and about two years later the doctrine of celibacy was promulgated. The theory of perpetuating the life of this colony was based on emigration, but their inability to control the religious or even moral convictions of the newcomers worked their ruin.

George Raap died in 1847, when Jacob Henrici became his successor. In 1890 John

S. Duss and his wife, Susie, took charge of affairs, and still continue, though Duss is very old.

The community of Economy prospered until their estimated wealth became twenty millions. When the original leaders died the organization became corrupt and is now rapidly disintegrating.

In the colony at Economy were relatives of settlers in Blooming Grove, and one of them, Samuel Hendricks, came occasionally, when an old man, to visit among his friends, and, as though uneasy as to the disposal of his estate after his death, wanted his kindred to visit him in order to establish a claim. None would go, until after he had passed away, when on two occasions about 1890, Samuel Goetz and Conrad Solomon went to the community authorities to claim their inheritance. After being royally entertained for a week, they were presented with a bottle of wine, tickets for their return and politely conducted to the train for Williamsport. The courtesy of their hosts was so overwhelming that no opportunity was ever offered for so much as alluding to the object of their visit. Other people from Blooming Grove have been in Economy and were entertained with lavish hospitality, when they made themselves known to the authorities.

The remaining members of the ship's company spent the winter at Germantown. During this time their pastor, Rev. Doctor Conrad F. Holler, who had come over the previous year, now joined with Wendel Harmon in organizing a colony to settle in the interior part of the state. It is probable that Doctor Holler, Wendel Harmon, John and Gottlieb Heim and perhaps some others who were unmarried, accompanied the land agent to locate their purchase, later in the fall after their arrival in America. There is a tradition to this effect and also that the young men remained all winter and were almost starved. They girdled some heavy timbers to help along the clearing, but found in the following spring that the deadened trees were hardened and became much more difficult to cut than when green. In their little cabin there was one window hole, which they stuffed full of buckwheat straw

(obtained from some distant neighbor) to keep the cold out at night. In the morning they found their window gone, and upon looking out saw some deer were walking away after having eaten their straw.

Doctor Holler during his winter in Germantown had become a Dunker, and although his company were reformed Lutherans (but nicknamed Pietists) they were easily persuaded to accept this form of faith and practice which was an easy transition, so that they came to Lycoming county known as Dunkers.

#### ORIGINAL COLONISTS

The colony of 1804 comprised the following named persons: John and Gottlieb Heim, Leonard Ulmer and family, Leonard Staiger and family, John George Waltz and family, John George Kiess and family, David Young and family, Wendel Harmon and family, Michael Gross and family, Michael Biehl and family, Ferd. Frederick Scheel and family, Michael Burghardt and family. In 1806 came Christopher Kiess, George Kiess and Michael Waltz with their families. From this time emigration was prohibited for ten years, after which John Heim returned to Germany and brought out the families of Christian Heim, Jacob Heim, Frederick Schafer, John Wagner, Jacob Guinther, Jacob Streile, Abraham Schiedt, Jacob Kurtz, John Kurtz, Ulrich Stabler, Abraham Wolf, and Michael Stroble. Other families came also from time to time. Some became converts with the Dunkers, but many only settled near by and intermarried.

Previous to this time the traffic in human souls by the "Newlanders" as depicted by Gottlieb Mittelberger (an organ builder from Wurtemberg) known to us as the "Redemptioners," had been broken up. Thousands of children too young, or parents too old for use as servants had perished from starvation and exposure after being turned adrift at Philadelphia. But the emigration agents, or as they would now be called, "promoters" or "steerers" worked up parties of colonists in the interest of ship owners, and Wurtemberg continued to be one of the most fruitful fields until as late as 1835.