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of the  
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1974-1975

### MEMBERSHIP MEETING PROGRAM LYCOMING COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

- September 19, 1974 (6:30 p.m.)  
 PHOTOGRAPHY AND HISTORY: "THE LAST RAFT." Exhibit of Early Photographic Equipment. Richard Long, Coordinator of Audio-Visual Services, WACC. Turkey Dinner, Eldred Township Fire Hall, Warrensville.
- October 17, 1974 (8:00 p.m.)  
 "THE GLORIOUS DAYS OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA CAMP MEETINGS." Rev. Earl E. Kerstetter, Curator, Berkheimer Memorial Library, Lycoming College.
- NOVEMBER 21, 1974 (8:00 p.m.)  
 "MUSEUM INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES." Howard Walker, Lycoming College (railroad collection), and art majors.
- DECEMBER 19, 1974 (8:00 p.m.)  
 INTERNATIONAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM: "CHRISTMAS ABROAD." Guests: International Students studying in Lycoming County — with some speaking of Christmas at home.
- JANUARY 16, 1975 (8:00 p.m.)  
 "NEWS MEDIA AND LOCAL HISTORY." Everett W. Rubendall, W R A K
- FEBRUARY 20, 1975 (8:00 p.m.)  
 EXHIBITION AND DEMONSTRATION OF CRAFT WORK, ESPECIALLY TEXTILES. Mrs. Joseph G. Winton and craft workers.
- MARCH 20, 1975 (8:00 p.m.)  
 "STONE HOUSES." Richard W. S. Jones, Mifflinburg, Pa.
- APRIL 17, 1975  
 BICENTENNIAL PROGRAM: "EVE OF LEXINGTON."  
 7:30 p.m. — Annual Business Meeting of Society, Physics Lecture Hall (C-309), Academic Center, Lycoming College.  
 8:00 p.m. — Lecture by Guest Speaker (free lecture, open to public). Basement Lecture Hall (D-001), Academic Center, Lycoming College. (Sponsored by the Lycoming County Historical Society in cooperation with The Greater Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, Lycoming College, and The Greater Williamsport Community Arts Council.)

## GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Members:

As you may know, I came into this position from the 2nd Vice President's spot last Spring due to the illness of the President and the 1st Vice President. I am happy to report that both gentlemen are now back on the active list as Board Members. They, along with the rest of your Board of Governors and Museum Director, are working hard to improve the quality and effectiveness of your organization. We take this opportunity to give special credit to our Museum Director, Andrew K. Grugan, and his assistants and volunteers for building up the Museum with its many youth-oriented programs.

At present your Board of Governors are working primarily on improving the plus side of our budget. Due mostly to inflationary costs of fuel oil, electric utilities, and insurance, plus the increasingly poor return from special money-raising events, our next year's budget shows a deficit of \$6,000.

The following four methods are being worked on to improve our financial position:

1. Working out a fair method of funding from 6 of the 8 County School Districts, all of which are served by our extensive youth programs.
2. Securing Industrial Memberships on a mutually beneficial basis through the help of the West Branch Manufacturers Association.
3. Getting our three representatives in Harrisburg to secure legislation to raise the legal limit of county funding of qualified County Historical Societies throughout the State of Pennsylvania.
4. Building up the number of dues-paying members.  
 You can help us in this last effort by encouraging your friends and neighbors to become interested in the Historical Society and to help support it with their memberships. On all new memberships, dues will cover the twelve-month period from date of application.

Looking forward to seeing you at our next membership meeting, I am,

Sincerely yours,

D. M. Carson, President

We all regret the untimely death of Mr. L. Rodman Wurster. Both he and his father were active in the Historical Society. "Rod" was involved in editing the JOURNAL during the period from 1955 to 1968.

## WILLIAMSPORT'S MUSICAL HERITAGE

### Dickinson Seminary Offers Musical Training Three Decades before City's Public Schools

Many years prior to the introduction of music into the public schools of Williamsport, music was given much emphasis at Dickinson Seminary, forerunner of Lycoming College. It was natural that those persons desiring musical training would grasp the opportunity to study there. Faculty members through the years have influenced and contributed to the musical life of the community.

One of the earliest teachers on record was Gustavus Voelkner who came to the city in 1871 and remained 20 years as an instrumental and vocal teacher. His work with the German choruses of the city has been described in the chapter on choral organizations.

\*\*\*

Records from 1884 to 1903 list the following teachers in addition to Mr. Voelkner: Nellie M. Lake, Allie M. Bates, Mary Lillian Quinn, Ellen Sophia Ransom, Instructors in instrumental music; Kate E. Purvis and Anna Netta Gibson, vocal instructors; Agnes Louise Miles, Mary Wartham Seeley, piano instructors; Arestus E. Baker, violin teacher; and Charles S. Shields, instructor in guitar, banjo, and mandolin.

\*\*\*

During those years faculty recitals and artists courses were given for the benefit of all interested local residents.

In 1904 Mary Trimble Stuart, a local resident, became head of the music department at Dickinson Seminary. Miss Stuart, who later became Mrs. Frank Otto, remained in the music department where she taught piano for about 10 years.

\*\*\*

Another musician of prominence who came to the Seminary in 1904 was Dr. Will George Butler. Dr. Butler remained there until 1914. During that time he taught stringed instruments and music history. Dr.

Butler achieved recognition throughout Pennsylvania for his efforts to preserve folk music. A collection of his manuscripts is on permanent display in Harrisburg.

\*\*\*

In 1933 he was called "the greatest living Pennsylvania composer." He conducted the first All-State High School Symphony Orchestra of 200 musicians before the Pennsylvania Education Ass'n. in Harrisburg, in 1935.

Other teachers of the early 1900's included Cornelia Rose Edren, Jennette Cowles Vorce, Miriam Landon Chandler, Blanche LeFevre Parlette, and Regina Feigley, piano; Mabel Gohl, piano and harmony; Emma Blanche Marot, Lulu Babb, and Florence Vincent, voice; Gunnar Eckman, violin; Roscoe Huff, organ.

In the 1920's Esther Megahan, later Mrs. James Mensch, came to the school as a piano instructor. At the same time Marguerite Welles Stiles was added to the music faculty to teach violin and theory.

With the establishment of the Junior college in 1929, a two-year course in music was offered which paralleled the first two years of a music conservatory. Thus many local students took the opportunity of getting a start on their music education at considerable financial saving.

In February of 1957 the Williamsport Music Club was organized as an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Federation of Music Clubs. Founder of the club was Mrs. J. Frank Budd who felt that there was a need for musical women of the city to band together. The organizational meeting was held at the Young Women's Christian Association.

\*\*\*\*

The object of the club has been to acquire broader knowledge of music and

music literature, and to promote a greater love and appreciation of music in Williamsport.

The senior club sponsors two other groups for young people, the Juvenile Music Club for children from six to thirteen and the Junior Music Club for those from 13 to 18.

Each year since their formation the combined senior and junior clubs have heralded the Christmas season with a traditional candlelight service. The offering received at this service is contributed to various charities of the city.

A group of local organists met February 3, 1946, to form a local chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Programs are planned to serve the interest of church musicians with the purpose of raising the standards of church music.

\*\*\*

Each year a Junior Choir Festival is held in which junior choirs from all over the city sing anthems which each choir has prepared individually.

A chapter of the National Guild of Piano Teachers was established in Williamsport in 1944. The purpose of the group was to uphold standards of piano teaching and to sponsor the local auditions for piano students annually.

In addition to the larger orchestral organizations, a number of smaller ensembles have appeared through the years. A program in First Baptist Church in 1891 featured the Mozart String Quartet.

During the years between 1927 and 1929 E. Hart Bugbee and Osborne L. Housel organized a string ensemble of 40 players. Under the name Bugbee-Housel String Ensemble the group was composed of violin students and others who played in the Williamsport and Milton Symphony Orchestras, which Mr. Bugbee directed.

In the early 1920's the Brahms Trio made its initial appearance. Having been organized in answer to the request of various women's clubs for programs, the group is in existence today.

With the opening in 1930 of Williamsport's first radio station, WRAC, a new string group was created known as the Singing Violins. Twelve years later a trio known as the Singing Strings was organized.

First mention of choirs, their leaders, and their salaries is found in some trustees' notes of 1857 of the Second Presbyterian Church.

\*\*\*

Here one discovers that D. S. Andrus, organist, was allowed a salary of \$200 a year with the stipulation that he pay out of that the amount assessed upon his pew.

A. K. Mabie, leader of the choir, was given a salary of \$100 a year and was also assessed for a pew. C. L. Herrick was given \$75 a year as a member of the choir, and suitable compensation was to be made to three other choir members.

Motive power for the organs of the early days was not by electric current and motor but by manpower. Therefore, the sum of \$25 was paid to the person whose duty it was to pump the organ.

Church choirs composed of several members of one family were quite the order of the day in the latter 19th century.

Col. and Mrs. S. S. Starkweather and Mrs. Starkweather's brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Linn Herrick, made up the choir at Second Presbyterian Church for a number of years.

### WILLIAMSPORT CLAIMED ONE OF NATION'S OLDEST MUSIC PUBLISHING HOUSES FOR 30 YEARS

More than 100 years ago a business was established in England which was later transferred to Williamsport, and subsequently became one of the city's oldest enterprises.

It was the Henry Distin Manufacturing Co., later known as the Keefer Manufacturing Co. The company came to this country in 1875 and to Williamsport in 1888 under the ownership of Luther R. Keefer,



then a state senator and grandfather of the present owner — Brua C. Keefer, Jr. Mr. Keefer's father, Brua C. Keefer, Sr., owned and managed the business until his death in 1927.

\*\*\*

The industry attracted considerable attention for its manufacture of the highest grade brass and silver plated musical instruments. Instruments were made for many prominent musicians, including John Hazel, local cornetist; Ted Weems, orchestra leader; Ernest Williams, famed trumpeter with the Philadelphia Orchestra; and Gardell Simons, foremost trombonist with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

\*\*\*

In 1940 the corporation disbanded its manufacturing facilities to concentrate on retailing and instruction.

A number of music publishing companies have been in business in Williamsport through the years. An early company was the Fisk, Krimm and Co., which existed about 1886. Another was the Hazel-Gerry Music Co., which opened offices in 1915. John Hazel and David Gerry formed the company. They made a specialty of publishing variations for band and orchestra of all popular numbers. Their first publication was "The Old Gray Mare."

One of the nation's largest music publishing houses flourished in Williamsport during the first 30 years of the present century. It was the F. W. Vandersloot Music Publishing Co.

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It was from the kitchen of his home at 29 Washington Boulevard that Mr. Vandersloot began his business shortly before 1900. He later had a publishing branch in New York City and one in Toronto, Canada, under the name of Whale Royce and Co.

The popular "Repasz Band March" by Charles Sweeley was first published by the Vandersloot firm.

Mr. Vandersloot and his wife were both musicians as were other members of the

family, including Mr. Vandersloot's brother, Caird, whom he took into the firm in 1905.

A son, Carl, who now resides at 425 Louisa Street, was a pianist and composer, and a daughter, Ruth (now Mrs. Arthur T. Eaker, Muncy) composed the music and words for many songs. Another daughter, Esther, now deceased, wrote ukelele accompaniments to the selections which were published.

In 1930 the firm moved to Philadelphia where it was taken over by Mills Music, Inc.

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One of the oldest businesses in Williamsport is the D. S. Andrus Music Store which was formed by D. S. Andrus in 1860 to sell musical instruments.

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The original location of the business was on Pine Street adjoining the Eliot Block. Later the firm moved to Market Square in the building formerly occupied by the C. C. Mussina Jewelry Store. There Mr. Andrus had William R. Vanderbilt as his partner for a time. His interest was purchased in 1874 by William and James J. Gibson.

After a fire destroyed the storeroom and stock, the business was moved to the old three-story First National Bank building where it occupied half of the structure for 40 years.

After Mr. Andrus' death in 1883, Charles E. Brownell became affiliated with the store as a salesman. He was soon admitted to partnership with the Gibsons. On July 1, 1916, Mr. Brownell purchased the partnership interests of the Gibsons and continued as sole owner until the business was incorporated in 1927.

Mr. Brownell served as president until his death in 1928 with his sons-in-law Tracy L. Nicely and Laurence P. Maynard as vice president and secretary-treasurer, respectively.

\*\*\*

Present officers are Tracy L. Nicely, president; Laurence P. Maynard, secretary-treasurer; and Laurence P. Maynard, Jr., a grandson of Mr. Brownell, vice president.

\*\*\*

Another early music business — Bloom's Music Store — was established in 1843 as a retail store. In 1909 a wholesale business was added.

Newspapers of the 1880's contain advertisements of Mingle's Music House. At the same time the Central Music House at 301 West Fourth Street advertised several makes of pianos, organs, and sewing machines. J. M. Hall was the manager.

\*\*\*

Stopper, Fisk and Co.'s music house flourished in this period at 45 East Third Street. In 1894 Fisk, Krimm and Co. professed to be sole agent for the Lehr piano case organs which were advertised as being

"the first ever brought to this city."

\*\*\*

Other stores were the Shade and Breining Music Store on the northeast corner of Third and Hepburn Streets and Logue Brothers Store which specialized in pianos.

In the early 1900's other music stores appeared. Harry Kaseman maintained the Central Music Store at Laurel and Fourth Streets about 1915. Another store of that era was the Ferguson Piano Co.

In 1923 Byron L. Gleckner and Ernest E. Landon opened the Landon and Gleckner Music and Furniture Store at 327 Market Street. Pianos, radios, instruments, and music were sold over a period of 26 years.

*(Editor's Note: These are the tenth and eleventh installments of a series of twelve describing the history of music in Williamsport as compiled by Mrs. Glen Russell, in 1951, of the Lycoming College music faculty.)*

## THE FIRST SCHOOL IN WILLIAMSPORT

By J. F. Wolfinger

1800. About this time the first schoolhouse in Williamsport was built. It was a rude log structure and stood on the southeast corner of the present Court House Square. James Watson was the first teacher in this common English schoolhouse, and Apollos Woodward, one of the late Associate Judges of Lycoming County, also taught school there for some time in his youthful days, but whether he was the immediate successor of Watson is unknown. Among the taxable heads of families in Williamsport in 1806 we find the names of Bess, Boone, Buyers, Calvert, Collins, Cummings, Doan, Dumm, Eldridge, Emmons, Green, Haller, Hays, Hepburn, Heylman, Houston, Hunter, Hyman, Freeman,

Levergood, McClure, McElrath, McEwen, Moore, Murphy, Murray, Ross, Shaffer, Sloan, Tallman, Throp, Titus, Turk, Updegraff, Vanderbelt, Waters, Watson, Wilkinson, Winters, Woodward, and Young. And the following new taxable residents appeared on the list in 1807: Bailey, Biss, Brindle, Harris, McConnell, Lenover, Piddock, Scates, Steiner, and Strawbridge. And it was the sons and daughters of these families who were the scholars in this first schoolhouse of Williamsport.

*(Taken from The Historical Journal, Williamsport, October, 1887, John F. Meginness, Editor and Publisher.)*

## THE STORY OF PETER HERDIC

Peter Herdic — December 14, 1824 - March 2, 1888

A plain slab of marble that would not attract more than passing notice from a casual visitor occupies an inconspicuous position in a plot in Wildwood Cemetery. The simple inscription on the stone reads:

PETER HERDIC

December 14, 1824

March 2, 1888

This ordinary slab marks the last resting place of a man who in his day did more for the advancement of Williamsport than any other single individual before or after his time.

Has Williamsport really forgotten its greatest man? Peter Herdic's name was on everyone's tongue when this energetic man of affairs flourished here. He was into everything. When Williamsport awoke each morning, the inhabitants would wonder "What Herdic would do next", for Peter Herdic must have dreamed his enterprises while others slept. He was too busy during the day with the work he had in hand to think of anything new.

Herdic gave to Williamsport its first real start on the road to prosperity. He literally pushed the town forward; he made things hum, injecting new life into the place and its people. While he lasted, he was the moving spirit in everything that forecast the future good for Williamsport and the welfare of its citizens for he believed in Williamsport. And yet the only way his memory was honored and perpetuated by the city was in the naming of a street after him. Trinity Place was known as Herdic Street before his business failure and before his name was eliminated from everything he possessed except his personality. At the present time Herdic Street, one block in length, lies between Park Avenue and High Street, just west of Campbell Street.

## BIOGRAPHY

Peter Herdic was the son of Henry and Elizabeth Pletts Herdic, both of Dutch de-

scent. His father died in the summer of 1826 when Peter was but eighteen months of age, the youngest of seven children, six sons and one daughter. Peter was born December 14, 1824, at Fort Plains, New York. In 1826 the mother with her large family moved to Ithaca, New York, where Peter attended school for a short time only. In 1830 his mother married a second time, removing to a farm about five miles distant from Ithaca.

When thirteen years old, his step-father died, and this second bereavement in his young life seemed to necessitate a radical change in family affairs, for soon thereafter his mother sold her interest in the farm and moved to the headwaters of Pipe Creek, New York, where she bought fifty acres of wild land for two hundred dollars, making a payment of fifty dollars. A log house was erected and efforts at once made to clear enough land upon which to erect a new, comfortable house. Here young Peter put in many a hard day's work in clearing and cultivating crops and in other ways aiding to support the family.

When he was twenty years old, he hired out to one Ransome Light, the agent of William Ranson, owner of a sawmill at the head of the creek. He worked faithfully for six weeks and made a demand for his wages, which were finally paid after a threat of suit was made. He continued to add to his capital by hard work.

In 1846, when less than twenty-three years of age, he came to Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, with William Andress, to Cogan House Township. They there bought a shingle mill and cleared about seven hundred and forty dollars each during the first year. At the end of three years Mr. Herdic had laid up two thousand five hundred dollars; he then bought a farm of one hundred and fifty four acres on Lycoming Creek, erected a modest house, and on Christmas Day, 1849, married Amanda Taylor. In 1850 he erected a steam sawmill in company with Henry Hughes, whose

interest he soon after purchased, and later sold to James Wood. He realized from his lumber operations and the sale of his mill upwards of ten thousand dollars.

In 1853 he settled in Williamsport, then but a town of less than seventeen hundred people, and from the hour he landed there till the day of his death his busy brain and restless body worked and toiled for his own advancement and for others about him. What he accomplished and how, through toil, is well known to those who have survived him. During the following decade he purchased hundreds of acres of land and built mills and other useful factories, giving the sprightly town an impetus that sent it upward with a boom that was the wonder of outsiders and the pride of every home citizen.

His first wife died December 6, 1856, leaving Peter with a young daughter; and on January 12, 1860, he married Encie E., daughter of Judge J. W. Maynard, to whom were born two sons, Peter and Henry.

He induced the Philadelphia and Erie Railway Company to move their passenger station to a plot of ground he gave them nearly a mile west of the old one. He built several fine houses on Fourth Street and, close to the station, the Herdic Hotel. Blocks of buildings sprang up as if by magic, street railways, paving jobs, manufactories, gas companies, water-works, banks, and stores soon followed in the triumphant march. Everywhere he was the busy, mysterious, the energetic, the wonderful Peter Herdic. He was instrumental in obtaining a city charter. In the autumn of 1869 he was elected mayor of Williamsport, and he pushed many of his speculative operations with great vigor and sagacity. He acquired over fifty-four thousand acres in Lycoming, Potter and Cameron Counties, of which twenty-one thousand are supposed to have contained valuable coal deposits. He built at his own expense the Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church, and donated it to the Society.

Everything went well until the panic of 1878, when he threw his every energy into his business, but fate had marked his course, and he finally passed through bankruptcy

in that year. But he revived, and in a few years was extensively engaged in many paying enterprises, and during his last year was engaged in erecting water-works systems at Selinsgrove; Huntingdon; Cairo, Illinois; Orlando, Florida; and other sections. He was a very generous-hearted, benevolent man, and naturally greatly mourned by this part of the state. He died as the result of an accident on February 2, 1888, when he slipped on the ice, fell down an embankment, and received a concussion of the head, from which he died within a month. Upon his funeral day most of the business places closed, and great sorrow prevailed.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND  
PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

"Mr. Herdic (in 1877) is a ruddy-faced, stout-built man, 53 years old. He wears no sign of beard, has massive features, a clear gray eye, and evidently never had a day's sickness in all his life. Put Thomas J. Barr's head on Harry Genet's shoulders, reduce Genet's height six inches, widen Barr's nose a little, and throw a blue talma cloak over the combination, and you have a fair idea of Peter Herdic. He is very quick-motioned and can give Tweed ten words out of a hundred and beat him talking. We saw him slip through doors like a ferret, beckoning his retainers here and there, and pouring words into their ears like corn in a hopper." (This was said by a reporter from the *New York Sun* after an unsuccessful attempt to interview Mr. Herdic.)

\*\*\*

When Peter was only about four years of age, a single circumstance showed that there was already budding into life the germ of a determined will power, which became such a prominent element in both his physical and mental endowment.

To help their mother, Peter's brothers did little "chores" for their neighbors, for which they would receive a shilling or two in return. Among these was the carrying of stove wood from the street up one and two flights of stairs. Little "Pete" would accompany his brothers and silently gaze upon their manly achievements.

On one of these occasions he approached his brother George, and in his childish way begged permission to help them. Being refused, he repeated his request to be allowed to carry up just *one* stick.

"Now, Pete," said the industrious brother, "you must not bother us. Don't you see that we have no time to fool with you?"

Still came the pleading voice, "Oh George, jes' left me heft one stick. See if I can't put it up!"

Thus importuned, the brothers consented, while, with a mischievous twinkle of the eye, they both stood aside to watch the first defeat of the youthful Hercules.

Selecting a stick for him, which we may imagine was not the smallest in the pile, it was laid in Pete's arms, and now commenced the desperate effort to "put it up" stairs.

The tugging process was comparatively easy so long as he was plodding on level ground. Having gained the first step, what could a four-year old youngster do but stop and acknowledge his defeat?

Not so with Pete. He was not made of that kind of stuff! His next process was to lay the stick down, and then, in baby fashion, creep up on the first step, where he had deposited the stick. This done, it was not so hard a task to "heft" it up to the second one. Then there was another "creep," to step number two, followed by one more "heft" and one more "creep;" and as each additional step was gained, he would look down upon his admiring viewers with something like a look of triumph, while an occasional sigh or moan could be heard, showing how great was the conflict between physical endurance and a strong mental determination to succeed.

Finally, the last step was gained; and seizing his stick, while his brow was all aglow with the flush of victory, he shouted out to his brother George, "Didn't I tell you I could put it up?"

\*\*\*

When but ten years of age, young Peter could cut his cord of wood a day and, in addition, would frequently walk to Ithaca

in order to dispose of quails, rabbits, etc., that had been caught in his snares during the hours of the preceding night. On his return he would pass the house of his brother George, often at a late hour. During the still hours of the night his brother would hear Peter's familiar whistling, first in the distance, and then gradually nearer. Sympathy for his young brother would often prompt George to invite the tired boy to stop and rest, or to stay with him through the night.

"Can't do it, George. Got some work to do yet tonight," and his hurried steps would soon carry the familiar whistle away in the distance.

That Peter Herdic was an exceptionally hard worker all the rest of his life, no one will dispute.

#### EDUCATION

When about six years of age, Peter occasionally accompanied his brothers to the Lancasterian schoolhouse in Ithaca. His first lessons in writing were made in sand, the teacher forming a letter, while the youthful scribe, with his forefinger or a stick, would seek to imitate it. If not successful at first, it was an easy matter to smooth the sand over and try again. This original system may have had some influence with him in the formation of his very peculiar chirography.

\*\*\*

Like many, many other people, Peter learned by doing. When he hired out to Ransome Light, Mr. Light wished to know how much his new hand expected for his services, to which question Peter made this characteristic reply: "No matter about that, I'll go to work, and when you see what I can earn, we then can fix that up."

Peter commenced work on a Thursday — and this was his first experience on a sawmill. By Saturday night, Peter had gained one additional day by working two extra half-days. This mill was on a small stream where the water power was available only a short time during the spring season, and the plant in consequence was run both day

and night — Peter's day being composed of the afternoon and one-half of the night. By this arrangement it will be understood how he had been enabled to gain this additional day in three.

Bright and early on the following Monday morning, Peter was at his post in the sawmill, but for some unexplained reason all the other hands were absent. His four days' experience in the mill, however, had been sufficient to give him a general idea of the way the logs were worked up into boards; so Peter, without waiting for the appearance of the other members of the crew, went to work alone. He started the machinery, the sawdust began to fly, and Peter was having a fine time all to himself. Then at 10 o'clock Mr. Light appeared on the scene. There stood the young "sawyer" at his post, feeling, no doubt, much enthusiasm and independence, and very well satisfied with himself and his work.

Mr. Light, taking a cursory glance around, and evidently laboring under the impression that the green hand had wrecked the machinery, or some part of it, rushed up to Peter with the exclamation, "My God! boy, what are you doing?"

Without dismay, Peter pointed to his work with conscious pride, while the boss, having observed with his practiced eye that there had been no damage done, commended his new hand for his laudable ambition. As a reward for his faithfulness to duty, Mr. Light immediately promoted Peter to the "head of the gate," fixing his wages at the munificent sum of seventy-five cents per day and board, which at that time was the highest price paid to the best men employed on the mill.

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As time went on Mr. Herdic, like all prosperous men, appeared to become ambitious of social standing. While at Cogan House, he was uncouth and ungainly, and could hardly write his name. As he became wealthy and influential, he seemed to recognize these disadvantages, and made a strong effort to amend them. He put himself under the instructions of a professor of dancing, and acquired a few of the graces of life.

The professor polished him, and he was soon able to be presented in any society.

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#### PERSONALITY TRAITS

From a small boy, Peter displayed great pluck and unusual energy.

In Ithaca, a Mr. Davis was a neighbor of the Herdic family. He took a fancy to young Peter, and in a familiar and fatherly manner would tell him how, by first earning and then saving his money, he had acquired a large amount of property. When quite young, it had been his principle "never to spend his wages." As fast as he could acquire a little money, he would immediately put it out at interest, and he would earn his spending money by trading or by jobs outside his regular work. Mr. Davis urged Peter to always keep his promises and never depart from the principle of strict integrity in business. These familiar talks made a deep impression upon Peter's mind, and no doubt laid the foundation for the frugality and acquisitiveness which became such ruling passions with him in later life.

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In earlier life, Peter's ambition was to be the owner of a fifty-acre farm of wild land, which would cost, say, four dollars per acre, and by patient industry and labor he would clear the land and erect thereon a modest log house. When this had been achieved, and all debts cancelled, then he proposed taking to himself a wife and settling down in life as a staid old farmer. But his successes in his dealing had enlarged his ambition and expanded his desires. After he had accumulated some three hundred dollars in cash, he concluded that it would be much better to purchase a farm already improved, and thus save the wear and tear upon his health and consequent exhaustion of physical strength. And these ideas became more settled and confirmed as he gradually added to his little capital.

While still at Cogan House, our young rustic was rapidly expanding into a bold and successful operator. Already his aspirations carried him far beyond the confines of his rural abode and were rapidly devel-



oping an intuitive power to scan the future and confidently anticipate both victory and success when others would predict ruin and defeat.

Many have characterized some of his boldest enterprises as rash and venturesome speculations, but to his mind the successes that followed these ventures were the legitimate and natural results of a carefully-studied plan and purpose. It was, therefore, simply impossible to limit the operations of such a mind to the confines of a fifty-acre lot. Consequently, his quiet farm life, once so attractive and so alluring, were no longer venerated. To him the future presented vast and untold possibilities, and it was only necessary to put into practical operation what had been previously fixed upon and determined in order to realize some of those airy visions of wealth and influence which, doubtless, had so often flitted through his mind.

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While he made thousands and tens of thousands by honest enterprise, he also gave back his thousands to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to elevate the standard of morality and religion in his gifts to benevolent and religious institutions, and to adorn the city with noble edifices and public and private improvements.

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Peter Herdic was a man of simple tastes, fond of his home and family, although the demands of his many interests often required him to be away from home. He neither smoked nor drank nor gambled, so that in his dealings with other men he had the advantage of entire soberness; and there seems to be no end to the examples of his generosity.

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The members of the First Baptist Church had always looked forward to the time when they could worship in a church of their own. Though all the members were comparatively poor, nevertheless in May, 1855, a committee was appointed to purchase a lot. After several unsuccessful attempts to find a suitable plot of ground,

the church agreed in March of 1857 to accept a previously made offer of Mr. Herdic, donating to the church the lot they now occupy, providing they would agree to build thereon a "first-rate" house of worship.

By referring to Deed Book O O, (Vol. 38), page 758, it will be seen that he conveyed the lot in consideration of \$10 to "The Trustees of the First Baptist Church of Williamsport." In the deed was inserted a clause stating that the lot would revert to the heirs of Mr. Herdic, should it cease to be used for church purposes.

During the 1860's this small white wooden church with its lofty spire stood alone on the outskirts of the town, the only approach being a dirt road. From its steeple, a beautifully toned bell, the gift of Peter Herdic and L. A. Farnsworth, rang out to the inhabitants of the scattered farm houses. However, the bell was destined to be short-lived. Along with all the other bells of the city, it was rung on April 9, 1865, to celebrate Lee's defeat at Appomattox. A continuous and vigorous ringing destroyed its tone beyond repair, and it was later removed.

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A successful movement for a church organization of Trinity Parish was made at a meeting held at the Herdic House on December 28, 1865, at which were present Messrs. Peter Herdic, John A. Wilson, W. Dwight, A. L. Tyler, George Hoppes, and Henry F. Snyder, with Mr. Herdic as Chairman. Messrs. Tyler, Herdic, and Wilson were appointed to perfect plans and obtain estimate for the cost of a chapel, and to report on a proper site. In due time the chapel on Vine Street was finished, and the first service was held there on Trinity Sunday, 1866.

Anticipating growth, the vestry of Trinity Church began at once to plan a substantial stone building. Mr. Herdic, who had generously donated the ground on which the chapel was erected, now offered to deed to the vestry a fine plot of ground at the corner of Fourth and Herdic Streets. (Herdic Street is now called Trinity Place.) This offer was put into legal shape

and formally accepted July 14, 1871. Preparations for building had been pushed so vigorously that the cornerstone was laid on Saturday, July 15, 1871.

In August, 1872, Mr. Herdic retired from the building committee, and offered to build the church for twenty-five thousand dollars. The offer was accepted; and the building committee, which had consisted of Messrs. J. W. Maynard, P. Herdic, J. A. Wilson, H. F. Snyder, and Charles Hebard, was now made to include Messrs. J. W. Maynard, H. F. Snyder, J. H. Gulick, and G. B. Moore.

As already stated, Mr. Herdic had offered to build the church according to plans for \$25,000. But from the summer of 1871 to the spring of 1875, no requisition had been made upon subscribers for the whole or part of their subscriptions for the building of the church. It now began to be rumored that Mr. Herdic intended to complete the building at his own cost, and present it, as he had already presented the ground, to Trinity Parish. Nothing definite was known, however, beyond the fact that the superintending architect had received direction to push the work with all possible speed, and to complete the spire, a thing which Mr. Herdic had not contracted to do. At the suggestion of the rector, gable windows were placed in the roof, which, besides being useful for ventilation, added to the picturesqueness of the exterior, and filled with stained glass, to the beauty of the interior. Other suggestions looking to the enrichment of the edifice were readily adopted by Mr. Herdic.

On February 22, 1876, this magnificent edifice was consecrated. After the opening exercises, Hon. John W. Maynard, in behalf of Peter Herdic and wife, read and presented to the church a deed for the lot and the edifice erected thereon, the latter having been constructed entirely at Mr. Herdic's expense. A money consideration was expressed in the deed as the value of the lot; and "in further consideration thereof, this lot is to be and remain a permanent site for the Protestant Episcopal Church; and the pews in the same are to remain forever free." The organ and

tower clock were also the donation of Mr. Herdic.

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The crowning glory of Bishop O'Hara's administration, of the diocese of which the Church of the Annunciation was a part, was the building of the grand edifice on the corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets. Peter Herdic had given the site to the congregation.

Mr. Herdic also gave lots for the Congregational Church and the First Evangelical Lutheran Church, and contributed generously toward building the Jewish Synagogue.

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Prior to 1865 the railroads entering Williamsport maintained a joint depot at the intersection of Pine Street and the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad, which was on Third Street. The proximity of this building to the street crossing at Pine Street created an obstruction during the arrival and departure of trains. Since a borough ordinance made it obligatory upon the companies to keep this passageway clear, and any violation thereof subjected the railroads' employees to arrest, the employees consequently were repeatedly arrested and fined. Exorbitant prices were asked at the time for the adjoining land, a portion of which became necessary to extend the sidings and erect additional buildings. These annoyances became so insufferable that a change in the location of the passenger depot was necessary. Its removal to the south side of the river, and the repair shops to Sunbury, was both possible and probable.

Mr. Herdic recognized these facts and believed that such moves would be detrimental to the growth and prosperity of the borough. He submitted a proposition to the officers of the several railroads which was subsequently accepted on June 13, 1864:

"On condition that the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad Company or her lessee will locate, build, and maintain their joint passenger depot station for Williamsport, with the other connecting railroads at that place, on



the 'Grove Lot,' now the property of Peter Herdic, I will procure and convey, or cause to be conveyed, by unincumbered title to the designate, a strip of land not exceeding eighty feet in width, on the north side of and adjoining the Philadelphia and Erie right of way between the Elmira and Williamsport Railroad, as at present located, and Walnut Street, in the borough of Williamsport; and also convey, as aforesaid, a strip of land south of and adjoining the Philadelphia and Erie right of way between Center and Walnut Streets, now held by A. Updegraff in trust; also, such ground west of Walnut Street as may be deemed necessary by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company for said joint passenger station and sidings therefor, according to a plan for the same exhibited by J. D. Potts, Superintendent of the said Philadelphia and Erie Railroad Company, or General Manager."

The strip of ground south of and adjoining the Pennsylvania and Erie's right of way between Center and Walnut Streets, which he had agreed to convey to the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad, was a part of a twenty-six acre tract purchased in 1855. This tract had been divided into blocks, or squares, which were purchased by a number of persons. When this division was made, Mr. Herdic knew that at some future time the railroads would require more space for additional tracks, etc., and, therefore, reserved the strip of ground above referred to (about three acres) for that purpose. This ground was subsequently conveyed to A. Updegraff in trust for the joint interest of all those who had purchased one or more of the blocks.

This fact was, of course, known to him at the time he executed his agreement with the railroad companies; and, in the absence of any stipulated price having been agreed upon with the parties interested in the piece of ground, he also knew that an unjust advantage might be taken of the fact and he obliged to pay very much more than its actual value. Still, he carried out his agreement in good faith, though he was compelled to pay four thousand dollars in

cash in order to acquire title to these three acres. Few men, indeed, would have voluntarily assumed such mighty responsibilities as were connected with the execution of this agreement. The ground and other valuable considerations conveyed by it were worth to the companies between fifty and sixty thousand dollars! This valuable donation was made in the interest of the people of Williamsport who, with their posterity for all time to come, would participate in the advantages secured to them by Mr. Herdic's generosity.

Mr. Herdic also gave to the city "free of cost" all the ground covered by the streets and avenues subsequently opened through the large tract of land he acquired west of Hepburn Street.

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One day Mr. Herdic was conversing with several gentlemen on the street. A little girl came along, begging. Herdic reached in his pocket and gave her a silver half-dollar. One of the gentlemen remonstrated, "Herdic, you ought not to do that. That girl's father is a professional beggar. He sends his children out on the street to beg, and practically lives on what they gather in." "I know that," Mr. Herdic replied, "but if that child goes home without any money, she will probably get a whipping. I gave her the half-dollar to save her the whipping."

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Peter Herdic gave a house and lot free to each of three widows who were in reduced circumstances, and there were countless other benefactions of which the public knew nothing.

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When Peter Herdic conceived the idea of building the Herdic House, he instructed Eber Culver (the architect who did all of his work) to bring in plans. When they were submitted, Mr. Herdic looked them over, and they appealed to him greatly. He then said to Mr. Culver, "Now give us an estimate of the cost." As Culver started to leave the room, however, he called to him, "Never mind that estimate of cost — it might scare us off. We'll build the hotel anyway."

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It has been said that his faith in his own ability seemed unbounded; that his perceptive faculties were good, but that he lacked system and order; that he went along without records, and kept the run of all his extensive transactions in his head; that he seemed to be possessed of little conscience, and apparently had no sense of moral obligation. Instead of husbanding his capital, Herdic was stimulated to wild speculation. This, more than anything else, accounted for his downfall. He never would use money to pay a debt if any attractive field of speculation presented itself. He lent his aid to every scheme calculated to increase business and bring capital to the city. If he traded largely on the credit of others, he lent his own credit without stint or limit. Indeed, it is doubtful whether he ever refused a request to endorse a note or sign a bond. He put his name on the back of a note without looking at the face of it, but it is said that he never failed to make money in some way out of the transaction.

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After going through bankruptcy, Mr. Herdic declined to be interviewed. He said to a would-be reporter that in his present situation he thought it would be injudicious for him to say anything to the public. He conversed affably and pleasantly for thirty minutes with the man, but said he talked to the reporter "as a gentleman, and not as a newspaper man." And that if any information was desired concerning him, it must be picked up in Williamsport for he would furnish nothing at present.

His friends said that "Herdic feels for the poor mechanics and laborers whose mortgages will be foreclosed through his failure; and if he lives, he will see that none of them lose a dollar. Herdic wastes no sympathy on his wealthy creditors. If they let him alone, they may get something; but, if they press him to the wall, they will not get a cent."

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Illustrative of Herdic's stoicism and good humor in the face of his impending finan-

cial ruin is the following tale of his encounter upon The Great Road (now West Fourth Street) with a zealous, and no doubt anxious, creditor, who for several days had been tracking him down without success:

One fine morning as the "impatient" creditor was traveling afoot on "The Great Road," he espied his quarry approaching in a handsome open carriage drawn by a team of spanking bays at the trot with Peter at the reins. Seizing the opportunity which thus far had eluded him, the excited creditor stationed himself in the middle of the public highway and cried: "Hey, Pete! Hold up!" Whereupon Mr. Herdic obligingly brought his carriage to an abrupt stop, and the following colloquy ensued:

Herdic (inquiringly): "Yes?"

Creditor: "Remember that sixty-day note you gave me?"

Herdic: "Yes?"

Creditor: "Well, it was due three days ago!"

Herdic (with poker face): "Is *that* so? (Pause as though cogitating.)

It sure beats hell how time flies, don't it? Giddyap! Giddyap!"

(Courtesy of Mr. Seth M. Lynn.)

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Peter Herdic was a stickler for service, and he was willing to pay for it. He not only was a prodigious worker himself, but he wanted everyone about him to be in the thick of his business. He was also quick to recognize ability, and he believed in paying those who worked for him what they were worth to him. He thoroughly appreciated every little bit of service rendered.

Hermon Hinckley, an expert accountant and bookkeeper, was one of Peter's employees and for years one of his "right hand men." Twice in one week Mr. Hinckley had his salary raised by Peter Herdic, which is a rare happening in the business world.

One evening in that particular week Herdic and Hinckley were at work in the office rather late. The hands on the office clock were creeping along close to midnight, and still employer and employee



were pouring over column after column of figures.

Suddenly Peter Herdic looked up from his work, and in his blunt way inquired: "Hinckley, what salary are you getting now?"

Mr. Hinckley gave Peter the information sought.

"Raise it five hundred," remarked Herdic in his off-hand manner, and as if this salary-raising business was an everyday occurrence.

Three nights afterward Herdic and Hinckley were again hard at work in the office at a late hour, when once more came the question from Peter, suddenly and without warning: "Hinckley, how much salary am I paying you now?"

Peter was given the desired information by the obliging Hermon.

"Raise it five hundred," came the swift reply of Peter, and the accountant was almost knocked off his feet.

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There are many stories concerning Peter Herdic's wakefulness — whether in a business deal or on pleasure bent. He seemed to know everybody's game, and it was his delight to turn the tables on an opponent. The following story has to do with this subtle element in Peter's make-up.

One day in August, 1875, when Minnequa was booming and Herdic's hotel at his once famous mineral springs was doing a flourishing business, there arrived at the resort Squire "Bill" McMullen, well known in his day as a particularly wily Philadelphia politician. With him came John Tobin, P. J. Fitzgerald, and several other gentlemen who also lived in the Quaker City.

It wasn't long after they had registered and been assigned to rooms that "Bill" McMullen had assembled his "gang," and everything was arranged for a quiet little game of "draw." Poker was suggested to Herdic, who happened to be at the resort, and Peter was lured into the fold.

Play started, but before the cards were dealt one of the Quaker City tricksters had surreptitiously run a "cold deck" in on the supposedly unsuspecting Peter. This move was said to have been made as a joke.

The game went on, and when everybody was ready to drop out Herdic's indebtedness to the crowd from Philadelphia was an even \$1,200.

Peter said in a whisper, while a disturbed look overspread his countenance: "Boys, I can't take the money out of the till in the hotel office, but I'll give you a check on the Lumberman's National Bank of Williamsport, if you don't mind. Now, keep this quiet. I don't want the judge (his father-in-law) to know of it."

They were agreeable, swore to keep mum, and took the check. Tobin was made custodian of Herdic's \$1,200 order to pay; and, without so much as a glance at the paper, slipped it into his inside pocket.

On their way back to Philadelphia, the party stopped over in Williamsport for dinner at the Herdic House. Tobin remembered the check and thought it an opportune time to have it cashed at the Lumberman's Bank. At the Pennsylvania Railroad station, opposite the Herdic House, Tobin inquired of the stationmaster, Jacob Hyman, the whereabouts of the bank. Jacob pointed across Herdic Street.

Stepping inside the door, Tobin pulled out the check; and handing it over the counter to Sammy Jones, the cashier, asked if it was any good.

Mr. Jones, giving the check a cursory glance, replied: "Ye-es; but you just go around the corner into Fourth Street, and walk up to the next street (Maynard), then go down to the end of that street and you'll find the bank."

Tobin, appearing somewhat puzzled, remarked: "But a sign over your door says this is the Lumberman's Bank."

"Well, it is," replied Sammy, "but this check is on the 'River Bank!'"

Peter had turned the tables on the Philadelphia crowd, and had gotten even for

the "cold deck" joke. You couldn't catch him napping; Peter was a smart man.

## LAND PURCHASES

Peter Herdic's first purchase of land was the 154 acres he bought in 1849 on Lycoming Creek in Cogan House. His next purchase was made in the spring of 1850 when he bought a tract of pine timber from Mr. Hayes.

His first purchase of real estate in the borough of Williamsport was made from James H. Perkins in February, 1854, and comprised Mr. Perkins' one-fourth interest in the Hepburn Islands — containing some 10 acres of land. Then followed in rapid succession these many purchases:

May, 1854 — 10 acres between the canal and the river, the site of the Beaver Mills and B. H. Taylor's sawmill property.

November, 1855 — with James Gilbert, 8 acres between 3rd and 4th Streets, Mr. Gilbert retaining his interest but a short time before selling out to Mr. Herdic.

April, 1859 — 70 acres from Campbell St. to a short distance above Maynard St., and from 4th St. to the river.

Also in 1859 — with Henry White, 44 acres contiguous to the above land, extending as far west as Park St., and from 4th St. to the river. Soon Mr. White sold his interest in this land to Mr. Herdic.

July, 1860 — 10 acres, from Elmira St. to Locust St., between 3rd and 4th Sts.

December, 1860 — 23 acres between 3rd and 4th Sts.

April, 1863 — 5 acres, the "Grove Lot" at the northwest corner of 4th and Campbell Sts. He also bought 13 acres adjoining to the east to Walnut St., from 4th St. to the railroad.

June, 1864 — 188 acres.

December, 1864 — with Mr. L. A. Arns-worth, the Maynard farm of 108 acres, which was west of Hepburn St. and be-

tween 4th St. and the river. Mr. Arns-worth's interest was afterwards conveyed by his executors to Mr. Herdic.

April, 1865 — 56 acres north of the railroad, extending from Center St. to Campbell St.

July, 1865 — 19 acres, which was later known as "Herdic Park."

March, 1866 — 5 acres on the southwest corner of 4th and Maynard Sts. This purchase also contained the "Faries Mansion" which was later known as the "White Castle," and the land became Ways Garden.

Fall, 1873 — 200 acres on the east bank of Lycoming Creek.

And so, it appears, Peter Herdic came to own practically all of the land from Hepburn Street west to Lycoming Creek, between 4th Street and the river, and even land north of 4th Street.

In addition to the above purchases of real estate, he also acquired title to over 54,000 acres of land in the Counties of Lycoming, Potter, Tioga, and Cameron, of which 21,000 acres in Cogan and Pine Townships, Lycoming County, contained valuable coal deposits. In 1869 he purchased 604 acres surrounding Minnequa Springs in Bradford County.

Like Williamsport, property on the south side continued to sleep quietly until that master genius of progress, Peter Herdic, began to purchase most of the land now covered by South Williamsport. He paid prices that seemed utterly ridiculous to those who knew nothing of his ulterior purposes. The two bridges of the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad across the Susquehanna River, one about five miles west of the city and the other at the lower end, had gone adrift during great freshets, and all movement on the railroad was stopped. Herdic interested the officers of the Pennsylvania Railroad (the lessee of the Philadelphia and Erie) in the purchase of land on the south side of the river. They built a track along the south bank in order to prevent further interruption in travel in case the bridges should again be carried



away. The land became more valuable for mill sites than land in Williamsport, and it brought extraordinary prices. He originated the South Williamsport Land Company and had a post office established there, which was named "Burlingame." A town of nearly a thousand inhabitants sprang into existence like magic. When land sales began to fall off, the public was startled by the announcement that Herdic intended to build a bridge about a mile above the old toll bridge (at Market Street). He threw one across the river at an expense of \$40,000, and offered life passes to parties purchasing lots in South Williamsport. He made enough money through the sale of his lots to reimburse him twice over.

The index to transfers of properties in the Register and Recorder's office here covers, so far as it relates to Herdic real estate, over fifteen pages. With forty-two properties to a page, it can be figured that approximately six hundred and thirty separate pieces of real estate once owned by Peter Herdic changed hands during his lifetime here and afterward. It should be remembered that Herdic began selling properties in 1853, soon after he arrived in Williamsport and commenced the purchase of farmland, and long years before his failure.

#### BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES PURCHASED OR INVOLVED IN

According to the various histories of Lycoming County, Peter Herdic purchased, or was involved in, a good many businesses and industries:

Spring, 1846 — With William Andress he purchased a shingle business in Cogan House Township.

Spring, 1850 — In company with Henry Hughes he erected on his tract of pine timber a steam sawmill.

1854 — Peter Herdic purchased from Major James H. Perkins his half-interest in the Big Water Mill, and then with Messrs. Bronson and Taylor built a gristmill and sawmill.

1854 — Built a dam on the Susquehanna River. It extended diagonally across

the river, ending at the head of Hepburn Island.

1857 — With Mahlon Fisher and John G. Reading he purchased the Susquehanna River Boom from Major James H. Perkins and his associates. Before Herdic got control of the boom, the boomage was 50¢ a thousand feet. Soon thereafter, he manipulated the legislature to raise the fee to \$1.25 per thousand feet. As the quantity of lumber passing through the boom was 200,000,000 feet in some years, profits were enormous. But the tolls were not the only source of profit. Unmarked logs were appropriated by the boom company. Their value was estimated at from \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year. Great quantities of flood and drift wood were caught by the boom and utilized by the industrious Peter, who turned them into charcoal.

October, 1859 — Peter Herdic, Geo. Lentz, John and Henry White formed a co-partnership known as Herdic, Lentz, & Whites. They built extensive sawmills near the river above Center St. On January 14, 1862, they contracted with the Susquehanna Boom Co. to rebuild a crib lost the previous fall, to replace and extend the sheer boom, and to have the boom in good condition to catch and secure the logs on the first floods of the following spring. In 1867 Herdic withdrew from the firm.

April 15, 1863 — The Williamsport Passenger Railway was organized under a special charter issued to Peter Herdic. He was one of the incorporators and on July 30, 1864, was elected a director. It first opened with two horse-cars in September, 1865, for the State Fair held here then. The track had a branch at Herdic Street to reach the Philadelphia and Erie R. R. depot.

1865 — The Lycoming Gas and Water Co. was incorporated with Peter Herdic as president, the purpose of which was to distribute water mains and plugs through the various mills and

lumber yards west of Campbell St. The water came from a stream in Mosquito Valley and through a pipe under the Susquehanna River. In 1876 water was supplied to 600 families, 15 saw and planing mills, several machine shops, hotels, the railroad standpipes, and nearly 50 fire plugs. In due time it was consolidated with the Williamsport Water Co. under one management. The Gas Works were built by contract in 1865. Gas was furnished through 1500 feet of main to the Herdic House at its opening, and to four other buildings in October of that year, the occasion being the holding of the State Fair on the grounds between Campbell and Park Streets and Third and Filbert Streets. The gas house burned down on the second day of its existence, but was immediately rebuilt.

February, 1865 — The Lumberman's National Bank was organized with Peter Herdic as president. It was first located on Pine St. In 1867 it moved to a small two-story brick structure on Herdic Street between the Herdic Block and Trinity Church. The little bank building on Herdic Street was torn down to give way to Trinity House, and the bank was moved to the Opera House Block.

1867 — Peter Herdic was president and principal owner of the Herdic Park Association.

June 26, 1867 — Peter Herdic and Mahlon Fisher were appointed a committee to superintend the erection of a new dam across the river.

1868 — The "Dutch Gap Canal," built in 1868, was Williamsport's first big sewer, and was designed to carry off storm water. Constructed of brick, Herdic had the contract for the excavating, and John I. Berry for the brick work. The "Dutch Gap" extended from the Pennsylvania Railroad down Campbell Street to Third, east on Third to Hepburn, and then south to the river. It was 5400 feet long. It caved in at numerous points along its

length in after years, and the city authorities were always having trouble with it. Outside of its sanitary qualities, the sewer served as an admirable drain for Peter's lands.

May 4, 1868 — A contract was made with Peter Herdic to fill with stone all the cribs along the entire line of the boom.

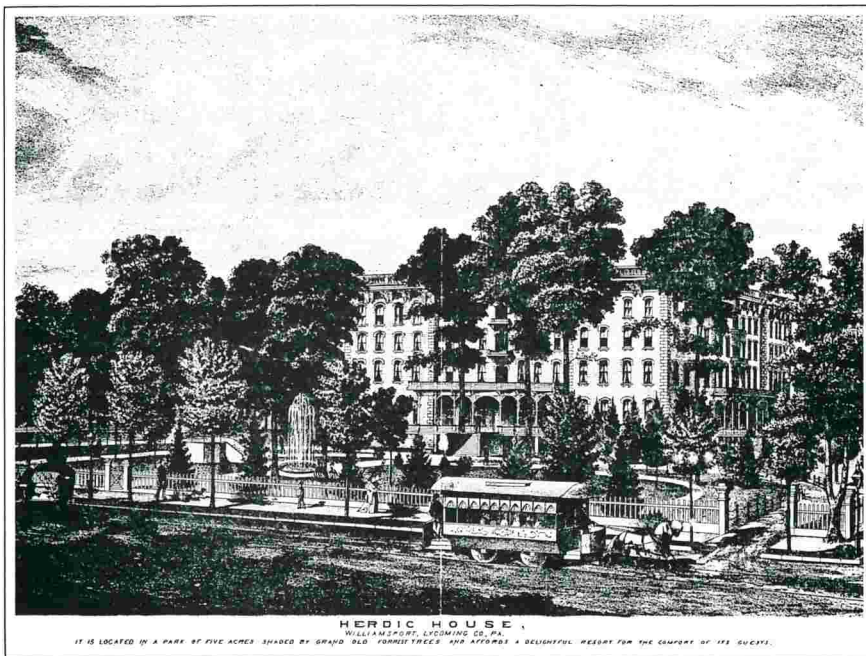
April 9, 1869 — Mr. Levi L. Tate, Editor and Proprietor of the *Lycoming Standard*, wrote to Judge Gamble: "The *Gazette* office was this morning under the sheriff's hammer, but was postponed until next Monday. Mr. Herdic, it is believed, will get it all, and it will be ultra Radical . . ."

November 22, 1869 — *The Lycoming Gazette* was consolidated with the *West Branch Bulletin* under the title *Gazette & Bulletin*, which was published by the Gazette and Bulletin Publishing Ass'n, with a capital stock of \$50,000. Peter Herdic, then in the zenith of his career, was the capitalist and held a controlling interest. E. W. Capron, who was editor of the *Bulletin*, became editor of the *Gazette and Bulletin*, with John F. Meginness as city editor. Up to this time, for 68 years, the *Gazette* had been a democratic paper, but after consolidation with the *Bulletin* it became Republican in politics. In 1873 Herdic became sole owner. In April, 1874, he engaged C. E. Fritcher as publisher. Fritcher acquired controlling interest of the paper after the autumn of 1882 (probably because of Herdic's bankruptcy).

1869 — Peter Herdic was head of the firm of Herdic and Company, which sold dry goods in the Opera House Block. His partner in this business was Robert M. Foresman.

1872 — Peter Herdic purchased a majority of the stock of the Williamsport Gas Co. In January, 1873, the two gas companies were consolidated. Peter Herdic was elected to the Board of Managers of the new company and made president thereof.





May 14, 1875 — Peter Herdic was elected president of the Susquehanna Boom Co., having been previously elected to the Board of Managers in 1868.

July 15, 1875 — Gov. John F. Hartranft granted permission for the incorporation of the Maynard Street Bridge Co. with Peter Herdic as one of the incorporators.

1877 — *The National Standard*, a Greenback organ, was started by Peter Herdic. It was published about two years.

April 22, 1880 — Peter Herdic was granted a new patent to reduce friction and strain in vehicles jolting over inequalities of ground and to facilitate easy running and abrupt turning.

#### BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED

In Herdic's offer to give the railroads land for a new depot on the "Grove Lot," he also agreed "to build on the said Grove Lot, and adjoining or near the said passenger depot, and connected with it in such manner as the said Pennsylvania Railroad engineers and myself may agree to be best,

a first-class hotel, with a dining room of such plan and location to accommodate the traveling public as the railroad company, engineers, and myself may determine. The eating arrangements thereof always to be kept in a manner to accommodate the railroad travel, to the satisfaction of the General Manager of the railroad company."

The Herdic House was completed and opened to the public in the autumn of 1865. It stood in an enclosure of five acres which was filled with native oaks, evergreens, vines, and flowers. Smooth walks led throughout the inviting retreat, and a fountain mingled its soft lullaby with the songs of the birds. A deer park fronted the hotel and railroad and contained never less than three or four deer.

The hotel was a square brick building, reached by an open archway, with outside dimensions of 156 feet each way. The durability of the white pine used in the buildings was attested by the fact that in 1940, when the two top floors were cut off to form the Park Home, the heavy beams, scantling, girders, and 2 x 4's were apparently as good and sound as the day they had been put in. The halls and lobby

were laid with marble tiles that came from one of the quarries in Mosquito Valley. The rooms were sumptuously furnished. The hotel had accommodations for 700 guests.

As originally laid out, the hotel had two large dining rooms on the west side separated by a partition that could be at least partially removed. The kitchen was on the railroad side of the building, and in the basement was a restaurant chiefly patronized by passengers on trains that stopped at the station. It is said that, in his contract with the railroads, Herdic had arranged not only that there would be no other main station in Williamsport, but that the trains arriving near mealtime would stop twenty minutes for meals.

When trains stopped at the Herdic Hotel Station, the first noise heard by the passengers was the loud beating of a large gong and a foghorn voice announcing that meals were ready for serving at the hotel dining room.

Not long after the hotel was built, it became quite a summer resort, and large numbers of people came from Philadelphia, Washington, New York, and Baltimore to spend part or all of the summer in the spacious buildings and grounds. The rates were moderate, the highest not exceeding \$3 per day.

Mr. Herdic had built a gas manufacturing plant across Campbell Street at the corner of Edwin to light the hotel, among other things. Everything had been tried out, and it was expected that the hotel would be opened in a blaze of glory from gas lights. During the day of the opening night, the gas plant took fire and burned to the ground. Herdic had his entire staff scurrying around the town buying oil lamps, candles, and everything that would make light, and the hotel opened as planned.

It is not generally known that planked shad was first served to the public at the Herdic House. Mr. Herdic had visited the logging camps and was attracted by the succulent flavor of the shad served to the woodsmen. Shad were plentiful in the West Branch river at that time, as well as in

such tributaries as Pine and Loyalsock Creeks. Probably to save dishwashing, and possibly because there were not dishes enough to go around, the cooks at one of the camps invented the idea of cooking the shad on a slab of wood from the logs on which they were working. Considerable experimenting developed the fact that apple and hickory wood gave a greater delicacy of flavor than any other kind of wood. Mr. Herdic adopted the idea for the Herdic House and began to serve "planked" shad. Among the guests of the hotel at that time was Jay Cooke. He had a cottage and camp near Salladasburg. On his frequent trips to this camp, he would stop over at the Herdic House. When "planked" shad was served to him, he was so favorably impressed that he introduced the practice at Philadelphia, and from there it spread all over the world.

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"In the northern part of the city, lying on the north side of High Street, and bounded on the east by Locust Street and on the west by First Avenue, lies a beautiful tract of about 150 acres of level land, known as Herdic Park. It was handsomely laid out by the Herdic Park Association in 1867. It contains a half-mile race track and suitable buildings of every description that are unequaled for the purposes for which they were designed.

"In connection with this park are very complete hatching houses and trout ponds, where at all times may be seen half a million of the "speckled beauties," of all ages and stages of growth and development. The trout ponds are connected with three miles of creek on the other side of the river, and are models of successful fish culture and management." (This is an 1876 description.)

On July 25, 1872, the troops on duty in the city in the "Sawdust War" went into camp at Herdic Park.

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Peter Herdic built the three-story brick row in the rear of Trinity Church on Herdic Street (now Trinity Place). It was designed for offices and apartments. A number of lumbermen had their offices in the



sides by the brick walls, there was to have been one of the largest and finest playhouses in the whole state. The theatre entrance would have been on 4th Street, with the stage door facing Edwin Street, and with a railroad spur leading to the rear of the playhouse to facilitate the loading and unloading of scenery and baggage of traveling theatrical troupes. In what was to have been the lobby, or foyer, there now is housed (1925) the Citizens State Bank. The remainder of the first floor was to be occupied by stores, and the upper floors by offices and apartments. There would have been two or three galleries in the theatre. The open space for the theatre in the center and rear of the building has never been put to use. The structure at the time of its erection was known as the Opera House Block.

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In the fall of 1874 there were many idle men in Williamsport with families to provide for. As winter approached, and most had only scanty means of support, how they were to live became a serious question. The preceding season had been a memorable one in the history of Williamsport's lumbering industry as the Eastern markets were flooded with vast quantities of lumber from the West while millions of feet piled up here awaiting tardy orders from purchasers. Many area lumber manufacturers doubted the practicability of putting in a new stock of logs during the winter, and many mills had shut down earlier in the season than usual for want of piling ground for their lumber. Thus it was that so many idle men were seen on the streets.

Many times each day Mr. Herdic was sought after by these men and importuned for work. Here was a need for action, and it afforded him an opportunity to introduce a new scheme. With that quickness of perception and celerity of execution so remarkably prominent in him, he at once perfected his plans, and soon scores of busy hands were put to work.

Between the fall of 1874 and 1876 there were completed: 32 small two-story frame tenements, comfortably arranged; 8 two-

building. The structure at the time of its erection was known as the Herdic Block. The name has since been changed to Trinity Row.

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To prevent the expansion of the town in any other direction than westward, Peter Herdic got a friend to purchase on the quiet a good-sized lot from his competitors, who were working a land development project east of Hepburn Street and north of the railroad. On this lot, after it had been transferred to him by his friend, Peter erected a quite lengthy row of frame tenements, which he is said to have rented to all classes of tenants—good, bad, and indifferent, but mostly bad — at \$5 a month each. Then the astute Peter got another friend to buy for him a large lot beyond the town limits in the northeastern section that was undergoing development. On this lot Peter is alleged to have erected a large and roomy frame dwelling which he also is said to have filled with a number of "undesireables" imported from another town. The wily Peter evidently figured that these invasions into the camp of the enemy would end the sale of lots in the territories of the opposition. The plot must have worked for the town moved westward faster than it did in any other direction.

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Peter Herdic further wondered what he might do to expand the town and attract more people westward. He finally thought of a big office, apartment, and store building for the corner opposite the Herdic House. Soon he had Eber Culver at work on plans for the immense and imposing brick structure at the northeast corner of West 4th and Campbell Streets. In this large building Peter Herdic also planned to install a theatre, but his failure in business prevented the consummation of that feature of the structure and it afterwards was abandoned. The building was not quite completed when he met financial reverses, and the work was finished by the Weightman interests who bought it. The building was erected in "U" shape, with the open space gaping wide on Edwin Street. In this vacant spot, that is surrounded on three

## CHRISTMAS DINNER, HERDIC HOUSE

Friday, December 25, 1874

SOUP		Chicken, a la Reine	
Green Turtle			
FISH			
Boiled Salmon, Oyster Sauce			
Baked Halibut, Champagne Sauce			
BOILED			
Turkey, Oyster Sauce		Chicken, Celery Sauce	
Leg of Mutton, Caper Sauce		Ham	
Beef Tongue		Corned Beef and Cabbage	
COLD DISHES			
Corned Beef		Boned Turkey, with Jelly	
Roast Beef		Lobster Salad	
Chicken Salad		Mutton	
ENTREES			
Sweet Breads, larded, garnished with Green Peas			
Filet de Bouef, Pique, au Champignons			
Oyster Pate, a la Francaise			
Timbale of Macaroni, a la Richilieu			
Chicken, Fricassee, with Mushrooms			
Spanish Puffs, Lemon flavor			
ROAST			
Beef		Turkey, Cranberry Sauce	
Lamb		Domestic Duck	
Ham, Champagne Sauce		Pork, Apple Sauce	
GAME			
		Saddle of Venison, with Current Jelly	
		Broiled Quail on Toast, a la Maitre de Hotel	
		Pheasants, larded, a la Cashmere	
Canvas-Back Duck		Rabbit	
VEGETABLES			
Mashed Potatoes		Sewed Tomatoes	
Baked Potatoes		Squash	
Boiled Onions		Cabbage	
Spinach		Boiled Rice	
New Beets		Lima Beans	
Baked Sweet Potatoes		Asparagus	
Vegetable Oysters		Green Corn	
		Baked Parsnips	
RELISHES			
French Mustard		Horse Radish	
Mixed Pickles		Olives	
Cole Slaw		Chow-Chow	
Tomato Catsup		Pickled Onions	
Cucumber Pickles		Walnut Catsup	
		Worcestershire Sauce	
PASTRY AND DESSERT			
Charlotte Russe, a la Vanilla		English Plum Pudding, Brandy Sauce	
Cream Pie		Omelette Soufflee	
Mince Pie		Apple Meringue Pie	
Cocoanut Steeples		Fruit Cake	
Champagne Jelly		Orange Kisses	
Mushrooms		Calf's Foot Jelly	
Oranges		Vanilla Ice Cream	
Grapes		English Walnuts	
Pecans		Raisins	
		Bananas	
		Almonds	
		Coffee	
		Cheese	

story frame tenements, with an attic, a one-story back building, and hydrant water; 22 large two-story brick dwellings with Mansard roof, furnished with all modern improvements; 4 other brick dwellings, without the Mansard roof, with all modern improvements; and 2 fine single brick residences, with Mansard roof and all the modern improvements.

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The Encie Block of apartments on West 3rd Street, at the foot of Elmira Street, was built by Peter Herdic and named after his second wife. Eber Culver was again the architect.

#### ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF WILLIAMSPORT

It was in the year 1869 that Peter Herdic started and subsequently developed a summer and health resort. Minnequa in its day became one of the famous haunts of the country for health seekers and those on pleasure bent. Now only the site is left along the Pennsylvania Railroad, about a mile north of Canton.

Minnequa was in a beautiful and picturesque location, at a healthful elevation above sea level. The commodious hotel was surrounded on three sides by the primeval forest, through which in various directions walks had been built for the guests who came to wander and mingle with the health-giving ozone of the woods. The Northern Central Railroad tracks were in front of the hotel, and all passenger trains stopped there. A never-failing spring, from the depths of which there gushed hourly gallons of supposedly healing waters, was located in the woods to the right of the hotel. Over this spring Peter Herdic had erected an artistically designed building, and the place had all the ear-marks of a regulation resort of the period in which it thrived for several seasons. James W. Maynard, Peter's brother-in-law, told how Herdic came to select this spot as a suitable location for a resort.

Peter was in the neighborhood looking after some business interests. (James Reynolds had a carriage shop at Alba in which

the Herdic coach was built.) He was suffering at the time from a ring-worm on his face. The farmers around Canton told Herdic to "go up to that mud hole," meaning the spring, and put his face in the healing waters, and he would cure his ring-worm. Peter took the advice, and the ring-worm disappeared. In his quick-acting manner, he thought if the water from the spring cured his ring-worm, it would help others and perhaps give relief to humanity suffering from various other ailments; and he immediately had visions of a great health resort hotel rivalling Saratoga Springs and other popular spas of the day. The water that poured from the spring was not impregnated with sulphur, although it tasted and smelled like it.

Within a few days Peter had purchased the large tract of 604 acres of timberland surrounding the spring, and had begun the erection of a frame building to accommodate guests who might wish to stay overnight. This building was merely a hemlock structure containing three rooms and with few accommodations, but it was a start toward what eventually developed into a noted summer and health resort.

Herdic's enterprise soon became noised about the country and well-advertised so that it was not long before people began flocking to the place in such numbers that Peter found it necessary to erect a regular hotel on the premises. The Minnequa House was a long, rambling structure of frame construction, painted white, and capable of housing 600 guests, together with the personal servants many brought with them. In 1877, Herdic had an eight-inch water main laid from Canton to Minnequa.

The fame of Minnequa spread as a resort for invalids and near-invalids, and the guests began to multiply. Many people high up in politics and other walks in life became regular visitors.

One of the first and most important of Peter's promotional works was to interest the famous actors E. L. Davenport, Frank Mayo, and the Rankin's in the healing and youth-giving properties of the famous spring. A drill team and band, known as the Herdic Grays, was organized. The

members were splendidly equipped with gray uniforms and band instruments, and played many concerts for the hotel visitors. To carry on the tradition that Minnequa Springs had been famous for its healing qualities among the Indians, Mr. Herdic imported three families of Penobscot Indians who lived nearby in shacks and wigwams, making baskets, bows and arrows, canes, and other novelties to sell to the visitors. The same Indian families came for many years and were a great attraction to the hotel guests.

In addition to the driving trips planned for Minnequa's sojourners, there were many other social and intellectual entertainments. Mr. and Mrs. Davenport gave Shakespeare and other readings in the hotel parlors, and once they gave an open air production of a Shakespearean play with a full cast of actors. The hotel had a first-class four-piece orchestra, and "Dress Hops" were a frequent diversion. The billiard rooms and bowling alleys were much in use, and there were other frequent attractions. One of these was on August 15, 1876, when a balloon was sent up which landed in Williamsport at 8:37 p.m., making the distance in two hours and seven minutes.

On July 4, 1876, there was a grand celebration at Minnequa beginning with the arrival of the morning train from the south at 9:30 a.m. On the engine pilot a long plush-covered seat had been built, and on this and in the engine cab were Gov. Harranft; Thomas A. Scott, President of the Pennsylvania R. R.; A. K. McClure, editor of the Philadelphia Record; and other prominent men. This was a publicity stunt arranged by Peter Herdic, the men probably riding thus only from Canton to Minnequa. Music was furnished by the Herdic Grays Military Band, with dancing and grand fireworks in the evening.

Each year Mr. Herdic tried to outdo his previous effort in a Fourth of July celebration, and that of 1877 far outshone the one of 1876. This time he had the Hon. A. K. McClure, Gen. McCandless, Gen. Collis, Col. McMichael, the Hon. Stanley Woodward, and others as speakers, and the famous Repaz Band of Williamsport fur-

nished the music. Dinner was served from 1 to 5 p.m. to more than 1,000 diners, and there was considerable criticism of the balance of the 6,000 persons present for not patronizing the hotel dining room instead of bringing basket lunches.

The height of the season at Minnequa was from August 1 to September 15, but there was always a goodly number of guests from July on.

One night, after several successful years, the Minnequa House caught fire from some unknown cause and burned to the ground. The season for that year had closed and the hotel was empty. A year or so later a new hotel, a brick structure, was erected on the other side of the railroad tracks, but it never became popular nor paid dividends on the investment. This brick hotel was not as attractive as the old frame structure, and the fame of Minnequa was gone. The brick hotel, after several unprofitable seasons, also was destroyed one night by fire, and was never rebuilt.

The story of Minnequa's rise and fall wouldn't be complete without an account of the boat race that Peter Herdic had on Lake Nephawin with Col. "Bill" Mann as an opponent.

One season when Col. Mann was spending some time at Minnequa, and a number of guests were sitting and conversing in the cool of the evening about the blazing, sputtering logs in the roomy fireplace in the big parlor of the hotel, the conversation turned to Lake Nephawin and its possibilities as a boat-racing ground.

Peter Herdic and Col. Mann were among those seated around the fireplace.

"Tell you what let's do," said Peter to the colonel. "Let's us two have a boat race for a purse on this lake. We'll try it out, Bill, as a race ground. Is it a go?"

Col. Mann hesitated for an answer to Herdic's proposition, but finally agreed to match his boat-racing prowess against the doubtful athletic ability of the sport-loving Peter.

A day and hour were set for the race, and the racers picked out their boats. When



the time came for the contest, the shore of Lake Nephawin was crowded with summer guests from Minnequa and all the country around as the race had been well advertised.

Peter Herdic won that boat race — won it with hands down — and "Bill" Mann was never in it from the beginning. Peter and his boat just walked away from the colonel and his craft.

Col. Mann was dumbfounded. He hadn't believed that he could possibly lose, for he had indulged in considerable secret practice on the lake when the wily Peter was engaged in other business.

While the shrewd Peter hadn't practiced rowing in advance, secret or otherwise, his mind hadn't been idle. He finally hit upon a trick worth two of "Bill" Mann's secret practice game, and which the colonel discovered when after the contest he pulled his boat out of the water and turned it bottom side up. Then he knew why he had lost.

At four o'clock in the morning on the day of the race, Peter Herdic jumped out of his comfortable bed in the Minnequa House, hustled into his clothes, slipped quietly out of the hostelry, and drove up to the lake. Arriving at the scene of the race, Peter got "Bill" Mann's boat out of the water, nailed a heavy stick of timber to the bottom of the craft, and then slid it back into the lake.

That's why Col. "Bill" Mann lost the famous boat race on Lake Nephawin to Peter Herdic, and he never heard the last of it. Peter never had a boat race before that eventful day on Lake Nephawin, and he made up his mind that he wouldn't lose the first one if he could prevent it. He never entered another boat race either. He was content to let well enough alone and rest on his laurels.

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At the time of his business failure, Peter Herdic was engaged in an effort to construct a railroad twenty-six miles long — to be a link in a new line from Pittsburgh to Binghamton. A connection was to be

made with the Albany and Susquehanna which would join Pittsburgh to Boston through the Hoosac Tunnel. It is said that this would be 135 miles shorter than any existing route. Herdic was interested in this road because the projected line would tap 25,000 acres of bituminous coal land owned by him, and would render it immensely valuable.

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In the January 5, 1881, issue of the *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, a short notice stated that "Mr. Peter Herdic is acting as manager of the Bingham House, Philadelphia."

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In 1886, with his nephew, James P. Herdic, Peter Herdic began erecting waterworks in different parts of the country. Their first project was in Cairo, Ill. The City Directory of Cairo, Ill., for 1887-1888, lists James P. Herdic as "Superintendent, Secretary and Treasurer, Cairo Water Co." Other waterworks were built in Huntingdon, Canton, and Selinsgrove, Pa.; and in Orlando, Fla.

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### POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Peter Herdic was instrumental in having an act passed in 1866 incorporating Williamsport as a city. The act was presented to the governor on March 22, 1865. In accordance with the state constitution, it became a law without his signature on January 15, 1866; and the old borough, which had existed for sixty years, passed away. The act defining the first boundaries of the city reads:

"By extending the northern boundary line of the former borough of Williamsport in a straight line west to Lycoming Creek; thence down said creek in a southerly direction, the several courses and distances, to the West Branch of the Susquehanna River; thence easterly along the northern bank of the river to the southwestern corner of the boundary of the former borough of Williamsport."

After defining the duties of the officers of the new corporation, the act divided the city into four wards, and an election for mayor was provided to be held on the third Wednesday of May, 1866.

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The first mayor under the city charter was Maj. J. M. Wood who served from May 17, 1866, to May 15, 1867. His successor was William F. Logan (May 15, 1867, to October, 1869). Mr. Logan was re-elected, and his second term lasted nearly seventeen months as the Assembly passed an act requiring all city elections to be held on the second Tuesday of October, and providing that officers whose terms expire shall hold over.

The fourth election on the second Tuesday of October, 1869, was a very exciting one. Peter Herdic and H. C. Parsons were the candidates. Herdic spent money lavishly and was elected by a majority of 816 votes. It was generally believed at the time that his triumph cost him \$20,000. In the heat of the campaign saloon keepers often found ten and twenty dollar bills among their bottles on the bar. How they got there no one seemed to know, but that they were put there for a purpose was apparent. Herdic's administration was a lively one, and many curious things were done.

For one thing, he "soaped" the common council into giving him a contract to pave the street leading to the depot (West 4th Street) with Nicholson pavement at a cost of \$600,000. He fulfilled the contract to the letter and undoubtedly realized a large profit besides enhancing the value of his land in the upper part of the city. The people were as pleased with the pavement as a child with a new toy until they awoke to the unpleasant reality that it was worn out and the debt wasn't. They then made a desperate effort to repudiate the debt, but the Supreme Court upheld the legality of the contract and ruled the debt must be paid.

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In the winter of 1866, a few citizens of Newberry submitted a petition to the grand jury to have a borough organized,

the limits to be from Lycoming Creek west to the lands of D. W. Foresman and from the river north to the Williamsport public road (West 4th St.) Several farmers on the "Long Reach" opposed this movement with another petition signed by a number of residents in the surrounding area. The grand jury reported against the borough applicants. In the meantime, another petition was prepared concerning the borough of Newberry with different boundary lines. Much feeling among the parties was engendered and it was difficult to agree on any lines. Before the grand jury met to consider this second petition, Peter Herdic and Thomas Updegraff had a petition prepared and presented to the city council praying that the "adjacent" territory west of Lycoming Creek be annexed to the city. Common council voted in favor of the appeal, but the select branch opposed it; and that stopped the proceedings.

But Peter Herdic soon conceived another plan. To succeed in his new scheme, Herdic secured the old petition, tore off the names of the signers, and had a new petition written praying to have the territory west of the creek annexed to the city. He attached the names torn off the old petition to this new one and forwarded it to Mr. S. C. Wingard, who was the State Assemblyman from Williamsport. As the signers were well known, Mr. Wingard had the annexation bill promptly passed in the state legislature. There being no objection, as the citizens were not aware of what had been done, Governor Geary approved the bill on March 21, 1867.

Anyone acquainted with the territory can see, by following the boundary lines in Herdic's petition, how adroitly the work of annexation was accomplished without mentioning the name of the populous district west of Lycoming Creek. Needless to say, many of the Newburyites, and especially the farmers living along the river above town, were indignant when they found themselves living in an incorporated city without their consent, and many denounced the method employed by Herdic to annex them.

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In the winter of 1867-68, Peter Herdic



and his friends conceived the idea of having Lycoming County made a separate judicial district (the 29th), as it fulfilled the population requirements of the state constitution. A bill was introduced in the Pennsylvania legislature, promptly passed, and approved by Governor John W. Geary. This act authorized the Governor to appoint a suitable person as President Judge to hold office until the first Monday of December, 1868. It further provided that, in the meantime, a judge should be elected on the second Tuesday of October to serve for ten years. Immediately in February of 1868, Governor Geary appointed Benjamin S. Bentley, Sr., to the newly created judgeship, and he served until December 1, 1868.

In the 1868 fall election, the Republicans nominated Bentley for the full ten-year term. The Democrats offered James Gamble of Jersey Shore, who was exceedingly popular and well known throughout the county, and Gamble won.

Peter Herdic again took the stage as he was greatly displeased over the election of Judge Gamble. When the legislature met in 1869, he caused to be introduced a "ripper bill" to repeal the former act creating the 29th Judicial District. This bill appended Lycoming County to the Fourth District consisting of Tioga, Potter, McKean, Elk, and Clearfield Counties. This act was passed by a submissive legislature, so great was Herdic's state-wide political influence. Suddenly Judge Gamble found himself legislated out of office, a thing which he and his friends naturally did not like. They took prompt steps to challenge this act before the Supreme Court. The Court quite rightly decided that the act of March 16, 1869, (the "ripper bill"), was "unconstitutional and void and of no effect;" and Judge Gamble retained his seat.

On April 8, 1869, William F. Packer wrote the following to the Hon. James Gamble of Jersey Shore:

"My dear sir:

"Before leaving here you were kind enough to ask for a 'brief' of my views relative to the unconstitutionality of Her-

dic's judiciary bill . . .

"As I have insisted from the first, I consider your case a perfectly plain one, and one which cannot be decided against you, unless there should exist some overshadowing 'military necessity.' That has heretofore been considered a sufficient excuse, for all manner of wrong, both in courts and camps . . ."

On April 9, 1869, Levi L. Tate, Proprietor of *The Lycoming Standard*, wrote this in a letter to the Hon. James Gamble:

"By the way, the prospects for the redemption of our (judicial) district brighten daily. Att'y General Brewster, I am told, has said that Mr. Herdic's *Quo.* was only worth the paper on which it was written."

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The "Sawdust War" was a strike by the workmen in the lumber mills for a ten-hour day instead of twelve, with no question of wages being involved. The principal advocates for the change were not lumbermen but labor agitators from outside of Williamsport. The move for the ten-hour day began in June, 1872, and was characterized by frequent public meetings at which speakers urged the men to strike. This finally culminated in a large number of men walking out on July 1, 1872, and adopting as their slogan, "ten-hour day or no sawdust." Many mills were compelled to shut down on account of a depleted force until July 10, when an attempt was made to start up the mills with non-striking employees.

Parades and marches were held every day, the strikers going to the several mills and endeavoring to induce the workers still on the job to quit. Meetings were held every night. Thomas H. Greevy, secretary of the local union and secretary of the state labor organization, was a prominent figure and always addressed these meetings.

After the strike had been in progress a few weeks, some men were induced to go back to work; but others, who were not willing to return, interfered. A number of breaches of the peace took place precipitating the "Sawdust War."

Marches to the mills by strikers resulted in assaults on loyal workmen, and several attacks were made on mill owners. These assaults finally became so frequent and serious that the mayor and the sheriff asked the governor to send militia to Williamsport. The troops arrived on July 23, and the city was placed under martial law.

Thomas Greevy and five others were arrested on July 23 for inciting to riot. At a hearing on July 25 they were held on \$10,000 bail for the September term of court. Bail was promptly furnished. An hour later Greevy was rearrested, and \$15,000 additional bail demanded. As other charges were pending, the men were taken to jail to await trial. More strikers were arrested on the same charge, but on July 31 they were all released on bail.

The defendants were tried on September 7 before Judge Gamble. Twenty were found guilty; sentenced to jail for 30 to 90 days; and fined one dollar and costs. Thomas Greevy and three others, because they were outsiders and not connected with the lumber industry in any way, were sentenced on September 14 to one year in the penitentiary and costs of prosecution.

On September 16, Peter Herdic went to Harrisburg and induced the governor to pardon them all.

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Sometime after Herdic got control of the boom the lumbermen began to complain about the high charges of the Susquehanna Boom Company. A Democratic legislature had been elected, and the lumbermen flocked to Harrisburg for relief. But Herdic was there before them. It is said that he fought like a "political Malay." Corruption tainted the air. Although Herdic was quoted as saying that the average price for a Pennsylvania legislator was \$15, he is said to have offered \$200 to members dodging the vote and \$400 to those voting in his favor. As the critical moment approached for the vote to lower the boom charges, somebody turned off the gas in the state house, and left the legislators in darkness. Every effort was made to mislead honest members. Bogus dispatches were sent announcing death

or sickness in their families, and traps innumerable were laid for them. All was in vain. A bill was passed reducing the boomage to \$1 per 1,000 feet. Herdic found himself in hot water. His operations had been conducted so openly that the legislators ordered an investigation. He fled to Jersey to avoid a summons, and did not return to Williamsport until the legislature had adjourned. Gov. Hartranft sympathized with him to such an extent that he refused to sign the bill, and it became a law without his signature. Herdic declared that if the bill became a law, he would tear out the boom, and let the logs go to Halifax; but the boom remained.

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At the height of Minnequa's prosperity, Herdic applied to the Pennsylvania legislature for a charter to create a new county out of portions of Bradford and Tioga Counties. He intended, if successful with the lawmakers at Harrisburg, to call his new county Minnequa, and to make his resort the county seat. This enterprise, however, met with so much opposition that the project failed of realization and was abandoned.

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Through the thousands who felt themselves under obligation to him, Herdic wielded considerable political power, and he did not scruple to use this power for the advancement of his purposes. His influence was felt in the election of city and county officials, judges, members of the legislature, state officers, congressmen, and United States senators. Though a professed Republican, he manipulated both parties as his interests dictated.

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The Story of Peter Herdic will be concluded in our next issue.

#### CORRECTION

In the list of LIFE MEMBERS on page 7 of Volume X, No. 1, the name of Mrs. John Lindemuth was omitted. Mr. and Mrs. Willard A. Schell have become LIFE MEMBERS since our last issue was published.



## WINDOW GLASS

(From STORIES OF THE WEST BRANCH VALLEY by Katherine W. Benner)

A man's wealth was once judged by the number of window panes in his house. During pioneer days this luxury was taxed, and window glass was found only in the homes of the prosperous. The usual frontier cabin was equipped with oiled paper instead, and the nineteenth century was well advanced before the cost of window glass became low enough to be used by all.

The first mention of this precious commodity having been brought to the valley was in 1772 when Bishop John Ettwein led a band of converted Indians and Moravians from Friedenshutzen on the North Branch to the valley of the Ohio. When these pilgrims decided to abandon their mission, they took down the bell from the turret, removed the sash from the windows, and nailed up the dismantled church.

The entire migration numbered 211 souls, some of whom traveled on foot with their cattle, while the others went by canoes on the river. The two parties met at a point along the West Branch about five miles above the mouth of Muncy Creek. They encamped and rested several days, then proceeded to the Great Island at a spot near the present Lock Haven. They stopped to reorganize for their journey and were dissuaded from going further by water on account of the shallowness of the stream, whereupon they sold their canoes and sundry utensils as well as the "four windows of our church, one box of glass, etc." The purchasers, who were lucky enough to buy so rare an article at a spot as remote as the Great Island in 1772, are not recorded.

The house of Samuel Wallis at Muncy Farms was doubtless equipped with window glass, for an appraisal of his personal property made in 1798 mentions "72 panes of window-glass at 8 d., 500 panes of bull's eye do at 2 d." An original paper extant giving a "rough plan of the site of Mr. Saml. Wallis' mill at Muncy", dated November, 1785, gives specifications which call for "two glass windows in the second stories and attic."

Another pioneer home having glass windows was that of Samuel Harris built near

the mouth of Loyalsock Creek. The story and a half cabin had two windows with two sash each, besides a sash in the door, containing perhaps thirty panes of glass altogether.

During the year 1867, Samuel and Benjamin Harris, grandsons of the old pioneer, erected a two-story brick house which stands near the Williamsport-Montoursville road, and is now the home of the Misses Moyer. Twelve panes of bull's eye glass from the old cabin were placed in the front attic window. Later, the remaining panes of this old glass were taken out and preserved as relics and modern glass set in its place. The glass, which was quite a curiosity, was loaned to various exhibitions until it became lost to the original owners. The only specimen in existence today is in possession of John Stokes, a grandson of Tony Stokes, who accompanied the Harris family from Maryland as a slave, and having been given his freedom settled on the island known as Stokes Island, the first colored man to settle in the valley.

This glass is genuine bull's eye, pale green in color, and though not exactly square is almost seven by seven inches. It varies in thickness from three-sixteenths of an inch at the edge to three-quarters of an inch at the bull's eye, which is rarely in the middle.

It was this type of glass that George Lewis, the Englishman, tried to manufacture at Eagles Mere. The factory was erected in 1798 on high ground at the end of the lake farthest from the sand. It flourished until 1833 or '34. Both window glass and hollow ware were manufactured, but the output was never large and the market was too remote for large profits. Most of the products were transported to Philadelphia by wagon. Visitors at Lewis' Lake, as the place was called thirty or more years ago, remember the remains of the factory's stone wall and chimney as well as the fragments of multi-colored glass scattered about. Wyno cottage, the property of Edgar Munson at

Eagles Mere, was built on the site of this early industry.

In his autobiography, written in 1803, Tunison Coryell tells of a scheme of the early housewives to count the panes of glass

in each house. According to the old pioneer, the housewives would remove the glass about the time the assessor was due and substitute paper until after the returns were made in order to escape the tax, which was very unpopular.

## THE PASSENGER PIGEON

By Charles H. Eldon

In my boyhood days I lived in Bendersville, twelve miles north of Gettysburg. Near our village was timber land locally known as the "big hill" which was a favorite nesting place of the Passenger Pigeon. The coming of the pigeons in the spring time was heralded with delight by hunters. I have been on the mountains with my father and have seen the birds in multitudinous number, the pigeons so completely covering the trees that to my boyish eyes they appeared as massive leaves. In memory I can see them fluttering and lighting on the swaying branches, and here and there could be distinctly heard the breaking of the limbs from the weight of the birds. The fluttering of the wings and the cooing of the birds sounded one almost continuous roar.

I remember seeing a flock of pigeons in stream formation fully twice the width of a street, and as far as the eye could see in both directions. Becoming tired looking as the pigeons were passing directly over me, I lay upon the ground for a long time and watched this seemingly endless stream, but finally the end came abruptly and I watched them way in the distance until lost to view. Turning and looking in the opposite direction I saw the grandest sight I ever witnessed in the flight of birds — a flock of pigeons — in cloud formation — and of seemingly countless number swept along in majestic flight. They were clearly outlined against a gray sky, and as the birds were passing directly over me flying low I could distinctly hear the surf-like swish of their wings.

In 1868 I came to this city and have always been greatly interested in the Passen-

ger Pigeon, and have during the successive years endeavored to learn all I could concerning their life habits and final disappearance.

The mountains north of this city for many miles were favorite nesting places for the Wild Pigeon — where they were trapped in great numbers, most of which were sold on our curbstone market — they being (sold) frequently by the wagon load. A family living on the headwater of Rock Run, which empties into Lycoming Creek, made a barrel of soap fat from squabs. From the nesting grounds at Kane, Pennsylvania, from ten to twelve tons of pigeons were sent daily to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York markets. Men in lumber camps and families living on the mountains, whose principal diet during the winter months was pickled, salted, and smoked meats, regarded the coming of the Wild Pigeon as a God-send for then they would obtain a supply of fresh meat.

I cannot help but feel from information that I have gained at sundry times that the disappearance of the Passenger Pigeon was not caused by man, guns, and nets.

Mr. James V. Bennett, of this city, was a pigeoneer. He told me that when the pigeons left this part of the county, he followed them into the Indian Territory, and when he reached the nesting ground which was fully fifteen miles wide and forty miles long, he said he never saw the pigeons so numerous. The trees — hickory trees, fully fifty feet high — were so bent over by the weight of the birds that the tops could be reached with the hand. He further said they had plenty of provisions

but no meat. He (got his) gun and shot into a tree top, and picked up forty-two pigeons. When Mr. Bennett quit netting pigeons, they were still abundant. Two years after they were practically all gone. The hand of man could not have destroyed them in so short a space of time.

Mr. Isaac Henninger was also a pigeon-eer. He informed me he remembers distinctly of reading in the Philadelphia and New York papers accounts of vessels crossing the ocean, plowing through millions of dead pigeons.

Mr. Haraar of Roaring Branch said a friend was coming to America on a slow sailing vessel, and for days he saw dead pigeons floating on the water.

The birds were possibly in search of new feeding grounds as our mountains were being stripped of food-bearing trees — or they were driven out over the ocean by a storm, or got into a dense fog, lost their direction of flight, and aimlessly circled about until the weaker birds became exhausted and settled upon the water; and the balance of the flock, thinking land had been found, they lighted upon those that already lighted and hence were drowned.

Mr. Bennet told me he remembers reading accounts in the New York papers that the birds got into a fog — lost their direction of flight — flew out over the ocean and lighted upon vessels in such numbers that the passengers fearing for their own safety clubbed the birds off the vessels. The account further stated that the pigeons were washed up onto the shore from one to two feet deep in places.

I have a letter from Mr. Stephen, Manager of the Cincinnati Zoological Garden, in which he says the last Wild Pigeon died at 2 p.m., Saturday, August 29th, 1914.

#### THE TIES OF NATURE LOVERS

There is a bond of union between all true nature lovers that is hard to define or understand.

To the true lover of the woods and fields nature has a richer blending of her wondrous colors as she strikes the myriad notes

that thrill all who have a sense of harmony. To them there is a low sweet melody that others never hear. It is strangely sad yet they love to hear its sweet vibrations. It pervades their whole being with a sweet gentle melancholy. To them the breaking of a twig or the rustle of a leaf is music. The sighing of the breezes, and the whispering of the pines, the merry music of the rippling waters have been mouthed by the multitude until they are meaningless phrases. Those who utter them understand them not, but they who understand may treasure the full essence within the heart though they cannot encompass with words. Standing in a primitive wood, awed by the Holy Witness, there is a feeling more religious than pervades a gigantic cathedral. Thrilled by organs, deep diaphanous or echoing, with prayers voiced in song, their invocations frame not themselves in words. They are too deep for even themselves to understand. They bend not the knee in supplication, yet in one entrancing moment of Holy joy and peaceful calm, a happiness that seraphs might envy steals into their enraptured being and they truly see God in the storms and hear Him in the wind. Only they whose hearts have been touched by nature's God — only they who have been fed on this heavenly manna of air, sunshine, field, and wood can feel what they cannot utter. Truly their mind to them is Kingdom; and those heart throbs, upon which sits gloomy melancholy, are in sad estate, yet supremely happy, binding the hearts with these emotions are cords to the mind — tangible — yet to the senses invisible mystic that makes us one, and all, united.

Charles H. Eldon

#### NOTICE

If anyone has any information pertaining to the West Branch Canal (pictures, documents, diaries, letters, artifacts, or memorabilia) that Mr. Richard Mix may borrow and Xerox, he would appreciate your contacting him as he will be publishing a pamphlet on it in the near future. Mr. Mix's address and telephone number are 338 Lincoln Ave., Williamsport, Pa., 323-9511.

#### A. RICHTER, M.D., HEALTH OFFICER

Writes to Mayor James L. Foreman

Williamsport, Pa., December 4, 1888

Department of *The Board of Health*

To the Honorable James L. Foresman,  
Mayor

Dear Sir:

In compliance with the demand made on the health department of our city, we confidently and thankfully can state, that Williamsport is in a good sanitary condition when speaking summarily or in general terms, while more could have been accomplished if all citizens understood intelligently their duty towards themselves, their families, their neighbors and the public. Unfortunately, however, a large portion of the inhabitants have not been leavened with the new dispensation of order and neatness. The benign principle of hygiene is only recognized by few, as the true bulwark for life's security.

To make the sanitary department more effective in our city, a crematory is required for the destruction of garbage and carcasses, and to have the streets and alleys

more promptly cleaned and kept in order, the superintending officer should be provided with a man having a horse and cart, for the immediate removal of nuisances from neglected places, especially in those localities where the poorer classes are crowded together, though some few of our wealthier members are also tainted with the same malady of neglect. And for the improvement of our weekly curbstone markets, to have controlling power granted to the Health Officer to enforce personal and general cleanliness in butchers, hucksters, fish and fruit dealers and others, and to have power to prosecute or send from market any individual offering unwholesome meat, vegetables or fruit for sale.

Should the above remarks meet with your approval, then your honor please bring our wants to the knowledge of the honorable select and common council.

Yours with Respect,

A. Richter, M.D.

Health Officer.

#### THE PRICE OF MEAT

Jersey Shore, December 4, 1817

Dear Sir,

You recollect I was speaking to you some time since about purchasing my winter beef and pork. I shall want two hogs that will weigh about two hundred each which will make 400 of pork, and half a beef that will weigh about 250#.

I have been inquiring the probable price of beef and pork this season. The price is not yet properly ascertained. Some say 8 cents, some 7, and others 6 for pork, and about from 5 to 6 cents per pound for beef. I should not be willing to allow more

than 6 dollars & 50 cents per cwt. for pork, & 5 dolls. & 50 cents for beef. If this will suit, you may bring it on as soon as possible. If not, I will give you the market price when you deliver it or as much as others are giving at that time at this place. Perhaps you may be at the Jersey Shore in a few days. If so, I should like to see you on the subject. I wish the beef and pork to be well-fatted.

M. M. Bennett

Yours,

Matthew M. Reynolds

**THE SECOND ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE**

of the

**ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB**

Will be held at the Museum

NOVEMBER 15, 16, and 17, 1974

(Regular Museum Hours)

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**THE PENNSYLVANIA GUILD OF CRAFTSMEN**

presents their

**1974 CHRISTMAS CRAFT SHOW AND SALE**

at the

**Historical Society Museum**

NOVEMBER 21, 22 and 23 — 12:00 Noon to 9:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 24 — 12:00 Noon to 6:00 p.m.

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**OUR MUSEUM GIFT SHOP FEATURES**

Roesen Note Paper

Rock Jewelry by Maggi

Stationery by Current, Inc.

"Reflections of a Country Boy"

by Dr. L. M. Hoffman

1974 Reprint of "History of Lycoming County"

by J. F. Meginness

Local and State Historical Literature