

THE
JOURNAL

OF THE

Lycoming County Historical Society

VOLUME XXXI
NUMBER ONE

SUMMER
1990

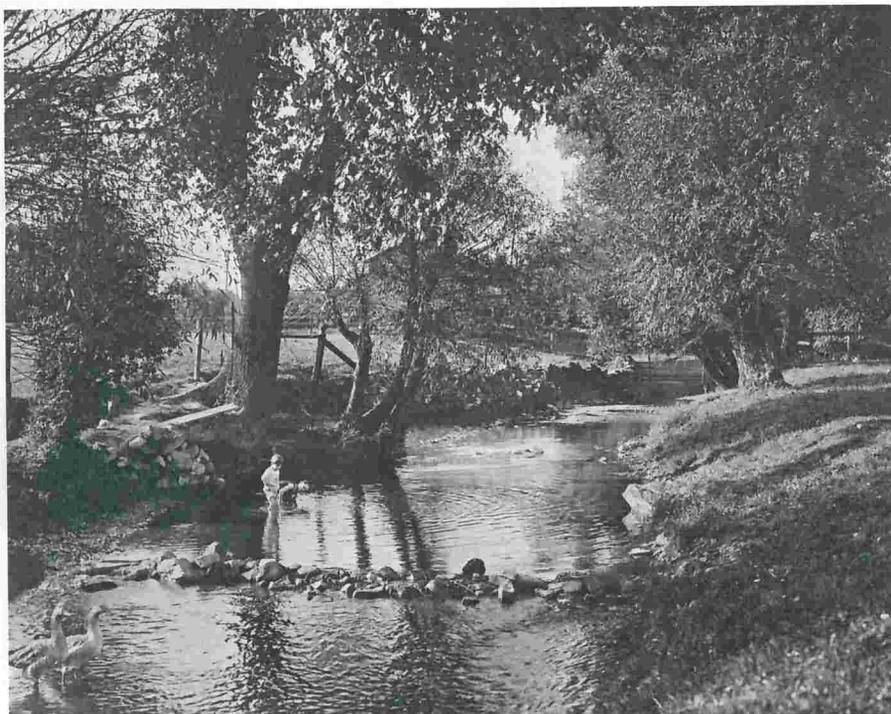


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JOURNAL
of the
LYCOMING COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Lycoming County Historical Society began its new year in April with a terrific Annual Meeting, highlighted by a presentation by member Prof. William Turnbaugh and assisted by his wife Susan. "William Penn's Treasure Chest" turned out to have a lot more in it than a few baubles for trade with the inhabitants of the "new world."

The Society began the year healthy, with a hardworking staff, an active Board of Governors, and a growing endowment. The only small cloud on the horizon is the continuing, albeit modest, operating deficit. We obviously need to encourage more persons to become supporters through membership and to market ourselves better to get a larger share of the tourist dollars.

There is one other thing that I think we can do, not so much to help the Society in particular, but to help the cause of local history and historical preservation in general. That is, we need to become aware of and more supportive of the other historical societies in our area. You might wonder what I mean by "other," and you also might well ask, "Why worry about them?"

First, there are a number of "other" historical societies nearby, many of them doing very good things, publishing interesting and valuable essays and documents and preserving very important materials which will be useful for historical interpretation well into the future. Without trying to be exhaustive we should all be at least aware of the Muncy Historical Society, the Blooming Grove Historical Society, the Jersey Shore Historical Society, and the newest of the group, the General John Burrows Historical Society of Montoursville.

Second, we all have a great deal in common. While there may be those who would see these societies as competitors, I feel we need to shelve that view for a more enlightened one. History and historical preservation are not everyone's cup of tea. There are still those around who believe that Henry Ford was right when he said "History is bunk." One thing all the members of all these varied societies have in common is the conviction that history is important in helping people discover who they are, where they have come from, and to offer some insight about where they might be going. The members of the societies need to see themselves as allies, holding common ground, seeking to persuade others to join in the noble effort.

The Lycoming County Historical Society has taken one small step in an effort to bring those interested in history in our county together. We have invited the various societies to share their particular interests at our Sunday meetings this fall. I hope they make a pitch for membership and I hope some of us join their effort, just as I hope they see the county society as their society too.

Lycoming County will soon be observing its 200th anniversary. It is time to begin to pool our interests, to think together, and to build a stronger base of support for local history in our area.

Sincerely,
John Piper, Jr.
President

EDITORIAL

Minnie is back! Yes, that's right. Minnie Viola Taylor is back. This time, however, our approach is somewhat different. In our last issue Minnie's factual history was recounted by her nephew Carl Taylor, a frequent contributor to our magazine. But, there is always a part of the story that the historian cannot give us. That's the part of another kind of writer. Nancy Baumgartner, Owen Baumgartner's grand niece, has given us that other side. I call it the, "what makes people tick side of things." In its own way it's an illustration of how historical fiction is conceived. It is also a lovely story to relax with on a warm summer evening.

The building of the canal through our region in the 1830's to the 1850's, had a tremendous impact on the region, bringing with it economic and population growth. It is responsible for helping to put Williamsport and the region on the map, for it provided a means for moving the wealth of our environment to others throughout our, then, very new country. The canal and its builders were the facilitators for a new kind of life, a modern life.

Older than the canal industry, perhaps one of the oldest out of necessity, is that of the miller's trade. The human race has been consuming ground grain from the time it was first discovered edible. Pennsylvania's beautiful water system was the natural place for the water-powered mills of old. I hope you'll enjoy the tour.

Now, I don't mean to harp about these things, but as most of you know who have been reading the *JOURNAL* for the past few years, environmental issues are very important to me. Lately, as I drive around the area I notice that more and more folks are cutting down their trees. My neighbor took out an enormous hemlock; the church just north of my house removed two choice trees; everywhere I go I see bare lawns and stumps. Our forefathers left trees or planted trees in their yards to protect their homes from the heat of summer and the cold winds of winter. I've seen folks strip the land bare up to the edges of our streams and rivers only to complain that their banks are being swept away every spring in the floods. To everything in nature there is a purpose. As Julia Gano points out in her timely article, there are dues to pay for stripping the land bare and there is a guardianship that we all must share to preserve what we have been given to use during our short life spans on this planet of several billion years. Man is a part of the food chain. Yes, he has a superior intelligence, if you want to call it that, but he is also a part of the natural world. Perhaps when all humans realize they are only a part of the natural order of things, and not above the same, we will have harmony with our environment.

Stephanie Zebrowski
Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

After receiving the latest issue of the *JOURNAL* (Summer '89) and having read the same rather thoroughly, Eleanor and I feel inclined to let you know that we are grateful to you for compiling and editing this fine production. It goes into our file of museum memorabilia worthy of keeping an account of significant events scheduled by the organization. *Good show!*

Both Eleanor and I have the highest regard for the institution and the staff; and believe you me, we have visited a few outstanding museums in our travels. We always toot the horn for Williamsport's facility and collection. I am confident that the society and the museum have grand futures to work toward and anticipate.

Your friend and Joe's,
Horace and Eleanor Lowell



The *JOURNAL*, and the manner in which you edit it, is greatly appreciated here and cheers for insisting that facts not be "displaced . . ." in that perspective, your "Debunking a Myth . . . Buffalo in Pennsylvania?" (Summer '89) I found it most interesting and informative.

. . . Placing Redstone and the "illegal settlers," according to Governors Penn and Fauquier on the border of West Virginia (minutes of Provincial Council, Vol. 9, p. 53), transplants one of the first of those settlers, William Colvin (1761), and his documented trading (1766) 20 some miles south from the proven site near the Redstone and the Monongahela River (then Fort Burd and now Brownsville).

Let's debug our "debunking . . ."

Sincerely yours,
George Colvin Deffenbaugh
Muncy, PA



It is my contention that the geographic description of the area in which the buffalo were found does not fit the description of the area around present day Uniontown. In addition, why would those residing at Fort Pitt send men to hunt on the Little Kanawa if buffalo were so plentiful in the Uniontown area? Why can't we find any evidence, physical or anthropological, for their existence in this region?

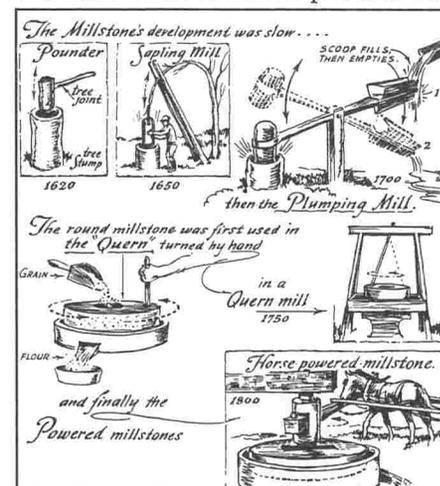
Thanks for the info about the Colvin family pioneer history.

MILLSTONES AND EARLY GRISTMILLS OF LYCOMING COUNTY

by Everett W. Rubendall

When a method of grinding grain by water power was invented, mills appeared everywhere. J. M. M. Gerner, editor and publisher of the early edition of "Now and Then" (September, 1872) wrote that, "It is said by persons conversant with the facts that Pennsylvania has more ancient mills with a history than any other State in the Union. But time, the destroying agent, and the new roller process of grinding grain, is fast doing away with the old landmarks."

In earlier days people used querns, rudely rounded and slightly hollowed stones which were moved from place to place, to grind their grain. These crude ways were laid aside when the water powered mills came along.



The first gristmill was erected by John Alwood on Muncy Creek in 1772, almost a quarter of a century before Lycoming County was formed from Northumberland County. Being a novelty in its day people came from great distances to see it. When the Indians invaded the valley the building was burned but according to Lycoming County historian John F. Meginness, the gearings were saved.

Another early mill, that of Andrew Culbertson, was located at the mouth of Mosquito Run. Pack horses, fitted with special harnesses, carried grain from White Deer Valley over the Culbertson Path, or "dug path" as it was known, to the mill.

Other settlers used the river to carry grain to this mill.

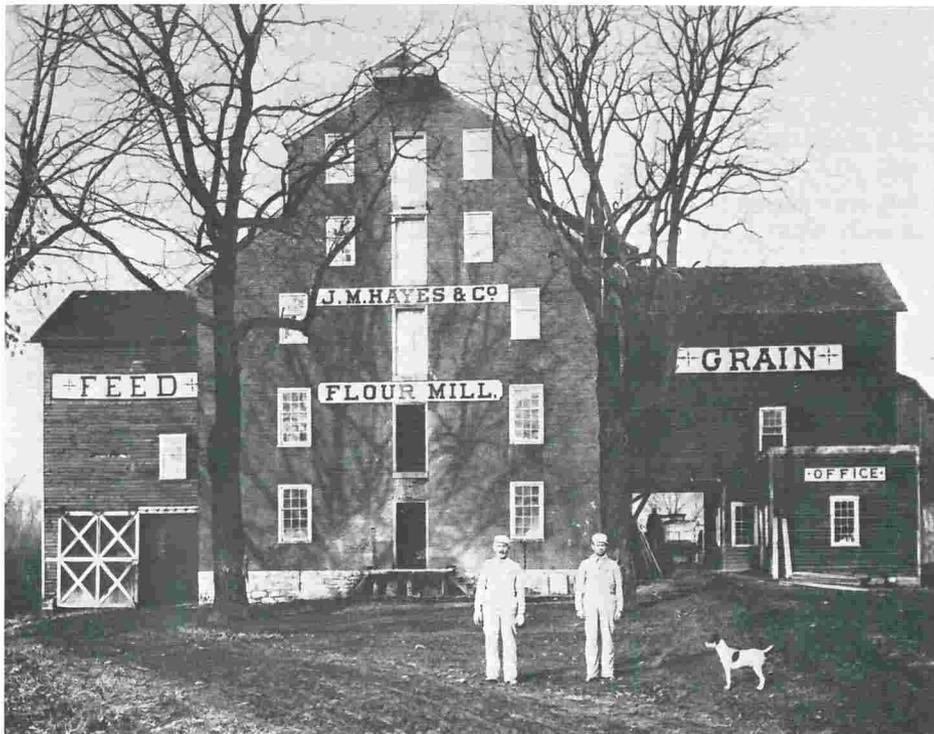
The oldest mill in the county still standing is the Wallis Mill. It was built in 1796, along Little Muncy Creek in Moreland Township, four miles east of Clarkstown. Rufus Fetter, a Hughesville historian wrote in the "Now and Then" the journal of the Muncy Historical Society (July, 1974) that, "the mill was built during the Revolutionary War days by Colonel George Smith, a member of General George Washington's staff. In early days it served as a community center, post office, store and mill." Samuel Pierson Wallis bought it around 1893; later it was owned by Joseph Wallis and presently it is owned by Eleanor Wallis.

Early gristmills were fitted into buildings several stories high. Sacks of unprocessed grains were hoisted to the top floor from an outside ridge of the roof. The grain was then poured into the hopper and millstones on the floor below. The gears and shafts were located on the lower floor. The waterwheel to power the operation was usually on the outside of the building. However, sometimes the mill would be built directly over the sluice with the undershot wheel inside the mill. The Wallis Mill was built in this fashion.

THE HAYES MILL

When William Hayes of the Cogan Station Hayes family married Margaret Follmer of Loyalsock Township on a lovely fall day in 1848, the "home bringin'" took place the following day, the party traveling from Loyalsock to the Hayes home near Perryville,

“being composed of 13 buggies filled with jolly people.” There had been some discussion as to whether the family should buy one of the new-fangled stoves for the newly weds, or whether it would be better to buy irons, pots, and kettles that could be used in fireplace cooking as most people did. A stove was purchased.



Hayes Mill, Montoursville

Isaiah Hayes, father of the groom, was a pioneer settler who had witnessed the building of the Williamsport and Elmira railroad, the first strap-iron railroad, in 1838, and the construction of the West Branch Canal. He had been engaged in the manufacture of arks for transporting grain on the canals and rivers. The marriage united a family that operated four sawmills and two gristmills along Lycoming Creek, and another, Follmers, from Loyalsock Township.

In 1884, the large Montoursville Flour Mill which began as Lloyds Flour Mill and G. Bubb & Company, built in 1825, was purchased by William Hayes in partnership with his son John M. Hayes and Clarence Wheeland. It later became the Hayes, Pidcoe and Company mill with its main office and warehouse at 335 W. Third Street, in Williamsport.

William Hayes' son, John M. later took over complete operation of the Montoursville mill and continued to operate it as “John M. Hayes & Co.,” until the end of World War I. Later the building was converted into a barracks for the Pennsylvania State Police and an apartment building on Walnut Lane. It was razed in 1974, to make way for the new I-180 bridge over Loyalsock Creek.

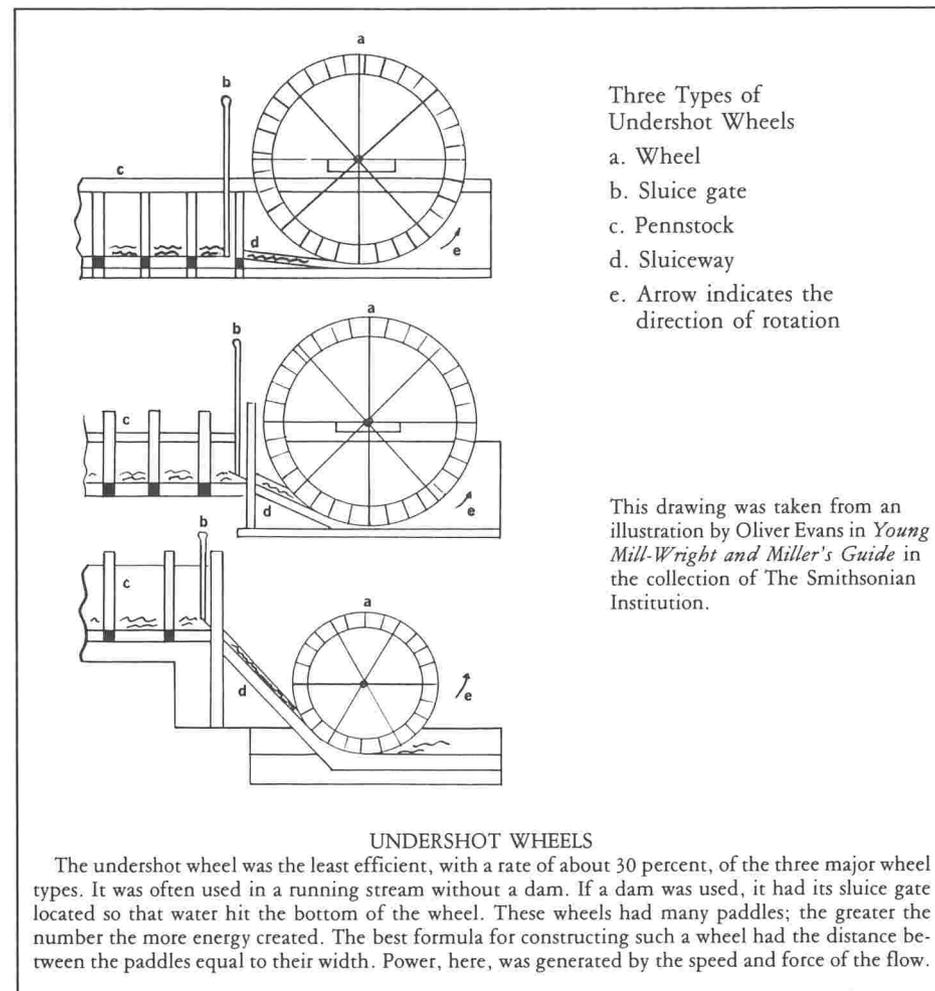
The three millstones located on the front lawn of the Museum are from this mill and were a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Cooper.

BALLS MILLS

Like many early gristmills, the one at Balls Mills, north of Williamsport, was four stories tall and stood at the intersection of Bloomingrove Road and Route 973, across the road from the Balls Mills United Methodist Church.

Recalling his boyhood memories in a recent Blooming Grove Historical Society Journal, J. Roscoe Heim said “. . . the second floor was where George Burr made bushel crates (for potatoes). His saws and all his machinery were run from water power. The third floor housed the huge stone burrs which ground the corn, oats, wheat, barley, and rye which the farmers fed to their cattle and hogs.” They called it “chop.” A cider press was added to the mill around the turn of the century. Mr. Heim recalled the fun of gigging for eels and catching frogs along the millrace, of searching for leaks caused by a pesky muskrat, of going by wagon with his father at 4 A.M. to take a load of apples to the cider press, and of joining his school cronies for an ice cold cup of that sweet cider from the family tin cup that hung on a nail on the wall of the cider press.

The millrace started at the old dam, north of Route 973 and entered a 150-foot-long flume giving the water sufficient force to turn the waterwheel.



The mill was built in 1820, for George Weisel by millwright William Ball, a mechanical genius who constructed the intricate gears and cogs of wood without nails. Young Ball married Catherine Weisel, his employer's daughter, and the young couple raised a family of ten children.

Balls Mills would soon become famous for its sawmills, fulling, and clover mills. William Ball's son Samuel invented the manual grain cradle manufactured at the Ball Grain Cradle Factory.

Writing about the community, Dr. Clarence Mutchler, former president of the Lycoming County Historical Society, said "With the influx of working families, a school became necessary. Quite naturally it took its name from the neighborhood and was called the "Factory School." The children of the men employed at the Ball factories and of neighboring farmers secured their education at this school.

In our museum gristmill the top, or runner stone, believed to have been made in France, 1650 to 1750, is from this mill as is a grain shaker made by William Wright and used by him and George Burr, and also the elevator cups that carried the ground corn to the sifter.

WARRENSVILLE MILL

Warrensville, first known as Carpenter's Mill, was laid out by John Weisel, in 1841. Samuel Carpenter cleared the land and owned a flour and feed mill, a lumber or saw-mill, and a carding machine shop.

Many years later, in the 1970's, William E. Derone and Mark T. Milnor, boyhood chums, recalled what it was like growing up in Warrensville, especially the two flour and feed mills built in the 1800's. "One leading on the road from Warrensville to Loyalsockville had a raceway extending approximately one-half mile north of the village, its source of water being Mill Creek. The second or lower mill had its raceway

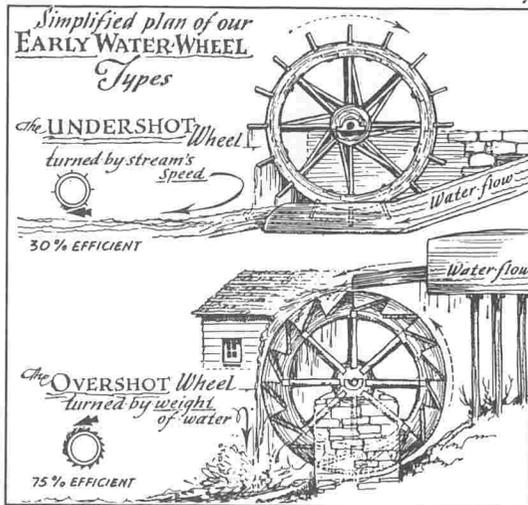
starting at a dam at the north end of the village across the same creek. The raceway of the upper mill emptied into the raceway of the lower mill, and it into Mill Creek at the lower end of the village. According to Mr. Derone, "Those were the days when sleds and sleighs were almost a must. Many of the villagers had barns and horses, buggies, carriages, and sleighs. Montoursville and Williamsport were day-long trips. The postman made one trip a day from Williamsport, six days per week, weather and roads notwithstanding."

Isaac Aderhold and his two sons, Edward and Cyrus, Jonathan Derone and his son James, and George Gehr made the miller's trade their vocation in Warrensville.

Incidentally, the millstone standing in the back of our gristmill was used by the Crawford, Derone, Aderhold, and Gehr families. It was donated to the museum by Dan Reese and Carlton Laughry of Montoursville.

MUNCY MILL

The nearby town of Muncy has known about gristmill stones since 1882, when they were first introduced by Charles Sprout. Even today some are visible as decorations or as driveway markers in the borough.



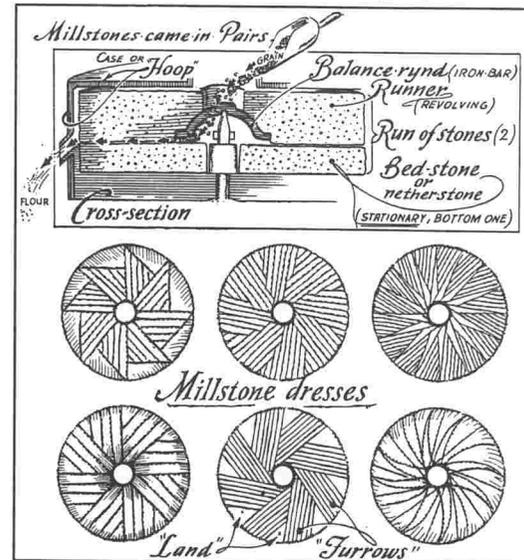
A *Muncy Luminary* article on "Making Hay With Fork Tines," dated January 10, 1971, states that around 1886, "... it was Charles Sprout's development of a 12-inch and 16-inch verticle French Burr Mill which helped revitalize the company's interests in the country's then growing, milling industry. Burr Mills were not a new idea at the time ... but most common were those of the horizontal shaft-type that were used chiefly for grinding corn, oats, and wheat for millers, farmers, and stock raisers." The Sprout Burr Mill drew enthusiastic responses from farmers because the improved method seemed tailor-made for the farmers' pocketbook.

In the early 1880's, Charles Sprout had joined his brother-in-law John Waldron in forming the firm of Waldron and Sprout. Their elders, Lewis B. and Samuel E. Sprout had experienced great success in the post Civil War days with their hay fork for unloading hay from a wagon inside the barn. In 1895 the Waldron Sprout partnership was dissolved and the new company was incorporated as Sprout Waldron & Co., Inc.

The grinding stones they used were imported from France, hence the name, French Burr Mill. One stone, called the "runner" stone, rotated against a stationary stone, called a "bedstone." Feed, or chop, entered the center of the runner stone and was finely ground between the stones as it worked its way to the outside.

At one time, the Muncy plant employed many men who spent their days cutting grooves into the millstones, some sickle-shaped, some horizontal. The edges of the furrows acted like a pair of shears, ripping off the outer shell of the grain. The area left uncut, called the "land" did the grinding. These men working with mill picks chipped away at the furrows.

A Muncy retiree, Max Womelsdorf recalls how his father, Irvin, labored with picks for many years, his wrists showing stone marks, and how his grandfather, Ambrose Dewald, supervised the department.



I recall when a millwright in the Tennessee mountains let me start his machinery; the weight of the water suddenly seemed to fill the building with its immensity. The strain of power was felt in every timber and the whole building swayed as the unseen wheel began to turn. Twelve-by-sixteen oak beams shuddered, ton-heavy wooden gears squeaked, and millstones ground so loudly that you had to shout to make your voice heard.

From: Eric Sloan's
I Remember America

THE REAL BEAST IN THE WOODS

The buffalo myth, one my husband related to me the first time he brought me here for "the grand tour," is in itself a tribute to the power of the written word and to the man who wrote down all of those folktales he so lovingly collected throughout his life.

As grand as the thought might be of a giant black beast thundering through the dark forests of Pennsylvania, the certain knowledge of a real beast of prey extinct only in nature and alive for the readers of the JOURNAL, is far more exciting. The following newspaper account may be familiar to many of you already, but to those who are unfamiliar, know this: this is an account of an actual event. (Editor's Note)

A MAN KILLED BY A PANTHER

As published in *The Eagle*, Wellsboro, PA, February 10, 1847

A correspondent of the *Jersey Shore Republican*, who signs himself "A Citizen" details the following particulars in regard to the death of Dr. Rienwald, formerly of Williamsport.

"We regret to record the death of Frederick Rienwald, a respectable German Physician, who resided in Liberty, Tioga county, Pa., and who was found dead in a small valley of the Blockhouse Fork Creek, on Sunday, the 24th ult. He had left his residence in the Blockhouse on the morning of the 22nd of December, with the intention of visiting a patient who resided on Little Pine Creek. And being on foot he preferred going down Blockhouse Fork Creek, which, though it was a much nearer route than the circuitous stream on which the public road lay; was for the distance of some ten or twelve miles an unbroken wilderness, without a road, or a solitary house in which the benighted traveler could have found a shelter from the piercing cold. Being a stranger in those parts, his friends had tried to dissuade him from going through the woods, but he thought nothing of the hazard, or paid but little regard to the kind solicitations of his friends, and being armed set off. No serious apprehensions were entertained about his safety by his friends at home, until a few days since, when, upon inquiry, it was ascertained he had never reached his destination. His brother, now became alarmed, and on Sunday, the 24th inst., a few persons turned out in search of the body, which they found as above stated about eight miles from the last house which he left before entering the woods; and four to the nearest inhabited house on his way. The woods through which he had to travel were infested by wild beasts of prey, and it is believed that a panther must have attacked him, as he was most shockingly mangled. His entire face, with the cheek bones, were torn off, the bone of the under jaw was unbroken, but stripped of all its covering. The throat and part of the right side of the neck were torn away; and all the covering was stripped off the collar bone down to the bone of the right arm, which was at the shoulder laid bare. Four or five ribs were torn out of the right side and an entrance made through his body in the direction or region of the heart. He lay on his back with his arms extended to their utmost tension, his fingers clenched and his head inclining a little over his left shoulder. His feet were stretched down and even his legs nearly straight and close, and the front part of his body from the neck down to the waist, was entirely divested of its clothing, leaving the breast exposed and bare. In short, it was one of the most dreadful and shocking pictures that could have been presented to the view. We have reason to believe he did not come to his death by freezing, as fire works were found about his person and the position in which he lay, and his things scattered and torn about him would not justify such a supposition. His gun lay six or eight feet from the body, with one barrel discharged—his hat was torn, and the papers which

he carried in it were scattered in every direction, and a small medicine chest, which he was supposed to have carried in his shot pouch, was smashed, and a pocket book torn in two, with the contents scattered about the body, and his clothes were torn and lay scattered around. But what has appeared to strengthen the belief of his having been torn and destroyed by a panther, is the fact that one was heard a short distance above the place where the deceased lay, by the two men who went to carry this sad intelligence to deceased's brother, who resides at the Blockhouse."

Youth

Jamaica, NY — I feel rather fed up with the younger generation, the so-called victims of the depression - even if I happen to be one of them. They may envy the "big shots," but they cannot realize that it takes years of steady and serious work to earn a "big shot's" job. It seems as though our young people's ambition is to start at the top and hope to goodness they never hit the bottom. Thousands of men and women enter the business and professional worlds yearly as novices. Those who cannot quite make the grade sit back on their haunches and cry, "The depression has spoiled my one big chance." The question is, was any one of those who failed capable of handling "one big chance"? I work hard. But if I don't get any farther, I hope I won't blame it on an already overworked depression. I'll blame it on myself. Perhaps my job is all that I am capable of handling. H.L.

From: "What the Readers Say"
The American Magazine, July 1936

REGIONAL INDUSTRIES and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

by Julia Gano

As acknowledged by this region's earliest settlers who depended upon the land for survival, the forests and streams of northcentral Pennsylvania are a wealth of resources. The early pioneers took advantage of the region's natural resources — fresh flowing water which provided nourishment, power, and transportation and thousands of miles of timberlands offering fuel, building materials, edible vegetation, and an excellent habitat for wildlife. In an attempt to live from the land, these Pennsylvania pioneers saw the wilderness as a thing to be tamed. And, with such an abundant supply of raw materials there was no concern for the future.

The same can be said for those that followed during the 19th century when there was an even greater population increase and industrial growth putting an even greater reliance upon the natural resources of the region. Indeed, the wealth of the forests contributed so greatly to the development of regional towns, it is hard to imagine what growth would have occurred here if not for the lumber industry. Likewise, it is also hard to imagine today's forests without trees, steep mountainsides decimated by the axe and saw, clear streams muddied by the torrential run-off of spring rains, for these too were a part of the growth of the region. The lumber and tanning industries ideally suited for the region, created employment, towns and economic growth while they laid waste to the wilderness.

While conservation and preservation are issues which concern us all today, they were concepts unknown to most Americans 100 years ago. Forest and watershed management were unheard of and industries, eager to make a profit and to supply consumer demand, simply moved on to new lands when resources were exhausted. However, a budding awareness of the environment and man's role in maintaining the gifts of nature resulted in the early 20th century creation of governmental agencies and legislation aimed at curbing the negative effects of industrial growth on the nation's forests and other natural resources.* Unfortunately, the conservation movement has always been filled with conflict and struggle. Even the earliest regulations in this country, extending back to the 17th century, were difficult to monitor. Early 20th century regulations were often altered or disregarded to satisfy the needs of industrial growth created by consumer demand and the ambitions of businessmen. Today the fate of California's primeval redwood forests depends upon the fate of an endangered owl, while the battle ensues between economic viability and environmental protection. Closer to home, the wilderness of northcentral Pennsylvania tamed 150 years ago, exploited 100 years ago, has been returned to us for careful management and protection.

The earliest consideration given the maintenance of forested lands in the United States occurred in the 1600's. Settlers of the Plymouth Colony were forbidden to sell timber without approval from colonial authorities. The British government was attempting to reserve the forests for naval supplies. Realizing the danger of fire damage to young trees and soil, laws were passed in the New England colonies forbidding forest fires. In Pennsylvania, William Penn required that for every five acres cleared by settlers, one forested acre should remain.

In the first decades of the 19th century the United States government, in an effort to expand naval operations, authorized the Secretary of the Navy to select and reserve

*See the Summer 1988 and Winter 1988 issues of the *JOURNAL* for additional history of the conservation movement in Pennsylvania.

southern tracts of oak and red cedar needed in shipbuilding operations. Experiments in transplanting and cultivating live oak were undertaken as the first efforts in forest research by the United States government. Timber thieves and settlers eventually encroached on these lands and by the end of the Civil War most of the reserved southern lands had been disposed of. These early efforts at protection and experimentation with forestlands were based on a fear of scarcity. As settlement moved westward and the bounty of the land was revealed, that fear diminished, to be replaced by a more urgent need to satisfy the demands of a growing population.

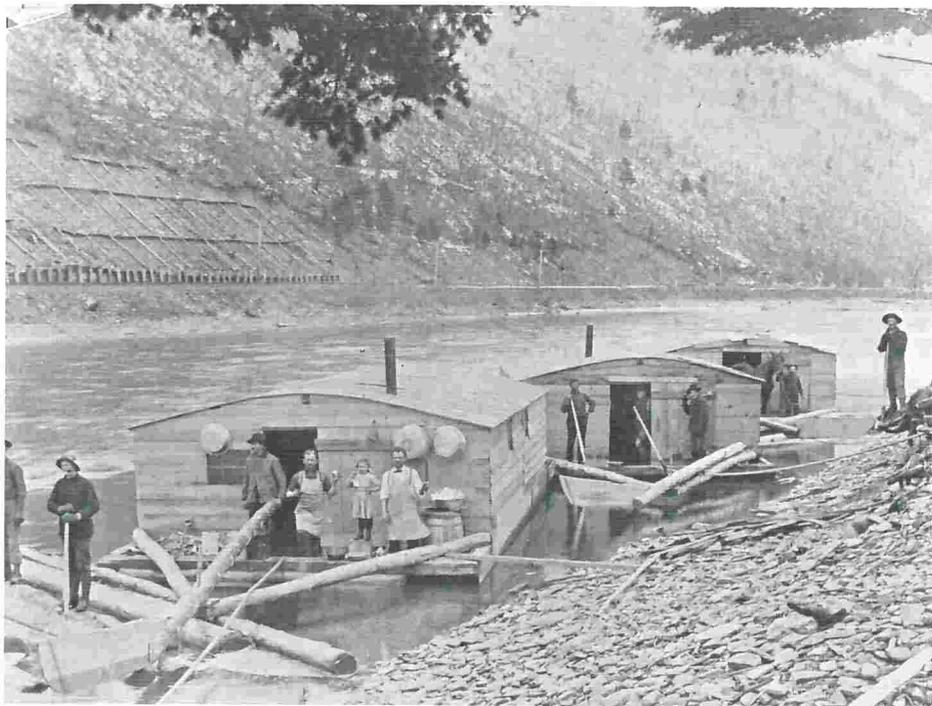


Farmers cleared the land for planting; the woods were in the way and impeded progress.

In northcentral Pennsylvania settlement progressed along with the destruction of the forests. Farmers cleared the land for planting; the woods were in the way and impeded progress. No thought was given the forest and its benefits to soil and water quality. Small sawmills along the rivers and streams provided building materials for local residents. What wood wasn't needed was burned. As in the south, the forests of the region then became an acknowledged source of lumber for naval and shipping operations. With the Civil War, the industrial onslaught began. Previously thought of as something to destroy so that progress could continue, the wilderness forests were now viewed as the raw material for a powerful new industry. The selective cutting and rafting of the great white pine gave way to logging practices where little was spared.

With the demand growing, the area around Williamsport and Lycoming County was perfect for the growing demand. Not only were there great forests, but the terrain and location of streams was such that logging operations could be expedited with the construction of logging roads, slides, and splash dams. With the completion of the

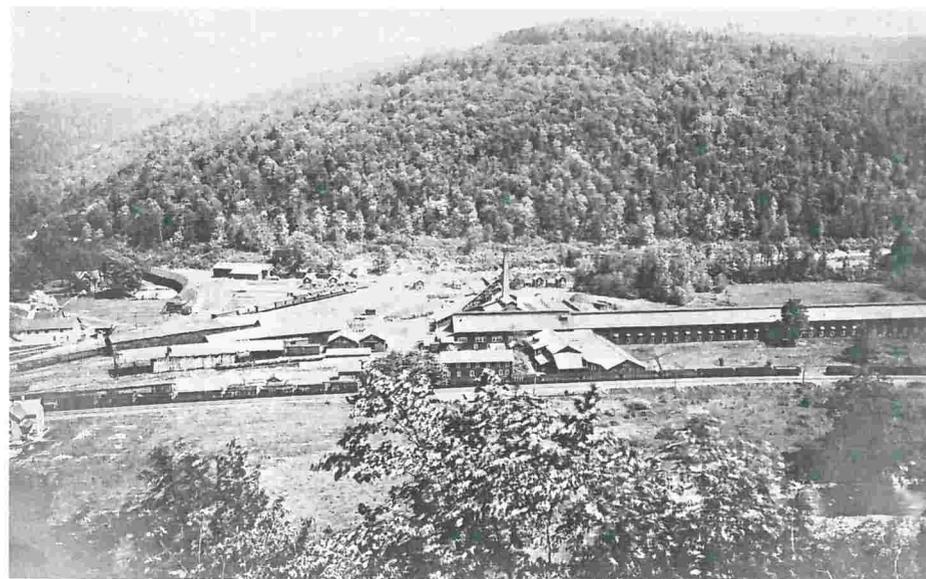
Susquehanna boom everything was in place for the efficient removal of the trees from the forest. The creeks were ideal for log drives and the holding capacity of the boom simplified sawmill operations. The industry took off.



With Pine Creek Valley stripped bare of its timber, the lumbermen built rip rap to keep the soil from sliding into the stream.

Like the timber industry, the tanning industry began on a small scale growing with the population to provide leather for harnesses, shoes, and industrial belting. The two industries worked well together. Lumberjacks took the wood needed for buildings, furniture, and tools, while the bark peelers made great use of the hemlock bark needed for its tannic acid. Using the same logging roads, and later the railroads to move their products, they depleted the supply of raw materials by the end of the 19th century. With the forests gone and the Susquehanna boom destroyed by floods, only the tanning industry remained, persisting well into the first half of the 20th century. However, they were eventually consolidated by larger corporate companies. United States Leather which had separated divisions in the region, i.e., the Union and Elk Tanning Companies, controlled vast stands of hemlock forests by the turn of the century. Originally contracting others to cut the hemlock timber after the precious bark was removed, U.S. Leather incorporated the Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company in 1903. Sawmills were purchased or constructed to process the timber and the industry prospered with the ebb and flow of demand.

Supporting the population and economic growth of large and small towns in the region while supplying the nation with necessary raw and finished materials, these two industries did not support, nor have any concern toward the well-being of the environment. Many of the industrial practices followed by these businesses were detrimental to the forests and streams. The consideration given today to the environmental impact of most industrial activity was unheard of and it can be assumed that the



The Ralston Tannery

land suffered grievously. Ironically, the businessmen who controlled the activities of these industries may have caused their own downfall and the end of lumbering in the region. Yet, was it downfall or simply time to move on? Like a "fair weather" friend, the lumber industry stuck to an area while the cutting was good and moved on as soon as the land was depleted. From an industrial center in Maine the lumber industry moved from New York in the 1850's, to Pennsylvania and the northcentral region in the 1860's, and 1870's, and then on to the Great Lakes region. The south and west were next, and now the last stands of virgin timber in the continental U.S. is being scrutinized.

The lumbermen were interested in making profits while they supplied the nation with raw materials. "That the forest resources should have been used to develop the country, no one would deny. But that such use was characterized by wasteful exploitation of the forest, usually followed by fire, is the painful record."¹ The clear-cut mountains of northcentral Pennsylvania were periodically set ablaze by wild fires in the slashings. Whatever small trees remaining after the ravages of the wood hicks were destroyed as well. The soil suffered. With the bare mountains unable to hold the spring rains erosion, soil compaction, and loss of humus through fire contributed greatly to the declining water retention capabilities of the soil. As a result, there were great floods on the streams and rivers; floods which, on more than one occasion, destroyed the boom and the sawmills, not to mention the habitat of fish and waterfowl. Aquatic life was disturbed by the clearing of streams of natural debris to facilitate the spring log drives. Residue and sediment in the water after the drives altered the oxygen content of the streams affecting fish, algae and other aquatic organisms.

The tanning industry also contributed to the decimation of the region's forests. Hemlock timber was left to rot in the woods; after bark removal there was no use for the timber. Colonel Thomas W. Lloyd in his 1929 *History of Lycoming County* wrote that "there never was a more criminal waste than that practiced by the tanneries in this regard. Twenty-five years ago one could walk through almost any section of the forests of the state and see gigantic trees, many of them nearly a hundred feet tall and from two to four feet in diameter lying on the ground slowly going into decay." Technological improvements and the development of special nails then made hemlock

valuable in the structural uses in buildings. The large leather companies of the early 1900's then began to operate sawmills.

Tanning contributed not only to the destruction of the forests, but like the lumber industry, had negative effects upon the region's water resources. The industry required great amounts of water to operate. First, hot water was used to leach the tannic acid from the hemlock bark. Next, a number of lime baths were needed to remove the hair from the animal hides. The hides were washed again and soaked in water and chicken manure to remove the lime. Finally, the hides made their way to vats full of the tannic acid liquor. What was done with the vats of lime and tannic acid solutions after their effectiveness diminished? They were drained into the forest and nearby waterways altering the pH level and color of the streams and soil. Today this sort of pollution is not tolerated. However, there was little environmental awareness 100 years ago with this sort of pollution occurring in most industries to greater and lesser degrees.

Technological advancements added to industrial capacity to lay waste to previously out of reach areas. The growth of the rail system and the development of new locomotives capable of handling heavier loads and able to move over a variety of grades, extended the lumberman's reach into the wilderness. Hemlock was found to be suitable for framing buildings while large hardwoods were used for barrel staves, mine props, and railroad ties. Scrap slabwood was used for kindling and sent in packs to the kitchen stoves of New York City. Beech trees were cut for wagon wheel hubs while the chemical wood industry grew in the early 1900's to find a use for the smallest of hardwoods for wood alcohol. There was no end to the need, and for a time, northcentral Pennsylvania filled the demand.



As the woods ran out and the lumber companies moved on, they left a range of barren mountains. Cross Forks Junction, 1908

As the woods ran out and the lumber companies moved on they left a range of barren mountains. Colonel Lloyd wrote that, "after more than 200 years of lumbering this vast wooded area has been reduced about two-thirds, leaving about 25% or about 15,000 square miles wooded to some extent." Another statistic put the remaining

virgin timber at 4,700 acres, most standing in the Allegheny National Forest. This incredible loss of wooded area also meant a loss of wildlife habitat. "The more conspicuous forms of America's original wilderness wildlife hit their low point between 1880 and 1890 . . . The white-tailed deer and the wild turkey had been eliminated nearly everywhere east of the Rockies."² The deer population of North America was approximately 500,000 in 1890. Their range in the eastern U.S. encompassed the northern Adirondacks, northern Maine, the coastal swamps from Virginia southward, and from the Gulf of Mexico to Texas. The deer inhabiting Penn's Woods today are the descendants of imported animals brought to Pennsylvania from Michigan in the early 1900's.

Streams suffered from the effects of pollution and the scouring of log drives. With aquatic life suffering the same fate as the deer, Charles Lose was prompted to write in this 1928, publication *The Vanishing Trout* of the tanning industry: "When the liquor made from the bark had lost its strength for tanning purposes it was run into the stream. With it, there went hair from the hides and sometimes the refuse of vats of lime. When the tannery was located on a tributary of a main stream, this tributary in time became a sewer and lost its identity as Pine or Laurel Run and became known as Stink Run. Slime covered the bottom and discolored the shores and the trout shunned the stream as they would shun a pestilence. If into any stream, large or small, a tannery released the contents of its lime vats or some other refuse that poisoned the water, the result was a fish tragedy."



In the beam house of the tannery from photo courtesy of Tom Taber.

Lose continues: "Ten or twelve years ago a large tannery on the headwaters of Pine Creek discharged into the stream the contents of several vats and ruined some of the finest trout fishing that the state had to offer. Large, dead trout lined the shores of the creek for miles. A similar outrage was perpetrated four or five years ago by a tannery located on a tributary of the Loyalsock."

Lose then describes the Hillsgrove tannery's efforts to purify its waste water. The spent liquor was first passed through beds of ashes which cleansed the water and adjusted the pH level and clarified the water. This water, released into the Loyalsock, caused no perceivable harm.

Had all of the tanneries followed this practice, many streams would have been spared industrial abuse. However, there was not yet a conservation movement nor an Environmental Protection Agency to ensure the proper management of the nation's natural resources. Scientific research and environmental impact studies were a thing of the future at the turn of the 19th century, when so much harm was being done to the forests. Yet we can consider the results of recent forest research and propose that similar findings would have resulted from research in the devastated Pennsylvania forests of 100 years ago.

These notations of published and unpublished research findings were compiled by Gordon Robinson, author of *The Forest and the Trees, A Guide to Excellent Forestry*. Unpublished research by Diane Myers in 1973, found that "When a large area is clear cut, the bird population changes from insect-eating to seed-eating birds. Then there are no predators to check subsequent insect outbreaks," affecting the forest's new growth. In another citation Robinson paraphrases Thomas Gilliard's 1958 publication, *Living Birds of the World*. "Many species of hawk and owl require dead, standing trees as habitat. These birds devour tremendous numbers of small seed-eating rodents. It is therefore important to leave snags in place in order to encourage these birds who will in turn control the rodent population and permit natural reforestation, a very important phenomenon."



Where forest conditions have been largely destroyed over extensive areas by unregulated cutting.

A 1961, publication by J. S. Boyce entitled, *Forest Pathology*, cites the relationship between clearcutting and disease. "Where forest conditions have been largely destroyed over extensive areas by fire or by unregulated cutting, the new stand, particularly in its juvenile stages, is likely to suffer more severely from disease than would normally be the case . . . It is evident that in cutting timber the selection method or one of its

modifications should be practiced where possible, instead of clearcutting." Another study concerning clearcutting by Jack Rothacher in 1971, found that, "experimental watersheds throughout the country show a pronounced increase in stream flow after clear-cutting." We are reminded of the disastrous floods in the region during the late 1800's.

These examples of research remind us of the recent emphasis placed on the environment and humanity's role in ensuring the well-being of the planet and ourselves. We celebrate Earth Day, adopt recycling measures, and mourn the loss of sea otters in Prince William Sound. But to the 19th century industrialist environmental considerations were unknown. The wealth of natural resources found in the United States promoted a vast array of industrial growth and northcentral Pennsylvania played a big role in that growth. We can look back and point to the environmental abuses by the industries and then appreciate the efforts made as the conservation movement began in America.

The first laws to protect forestlands were enacted in the late 1800's. In 1876 a forestry agent, Franklin Hough, was appointed to the Department of Agriculture to study possible means of preserving and renewing forests. This first governmental action was taken, as those in the colonial era, because of a concern over the threat of depletion of the much-needed resource. Other organizations became interested in forestry and scientific groups promoted the preservation and cultivation of forests.

The Forest Reserve Act of 1891 gave the President authorization to create forest reserves for the public. Six years later the Organic Act further defined the management of the national forest system with provisions for the sale of dead, diseased, and mature trees. The early 1900's saw an inventory of United States natural resources including land, water, forests, and minerals. This eventually led to conservation movements in all areas. The strength of the Forest Service and conservation movement under the leadership of Gifford Pinchot was apparent in the development of professional forestry departments in a few of the nation's colleges so that the blooming movement would have a capable leadership provided with appropriate training. Students at Penn State studied timber stand management and forest regeneration while the devastated forests of the state mended themselves.

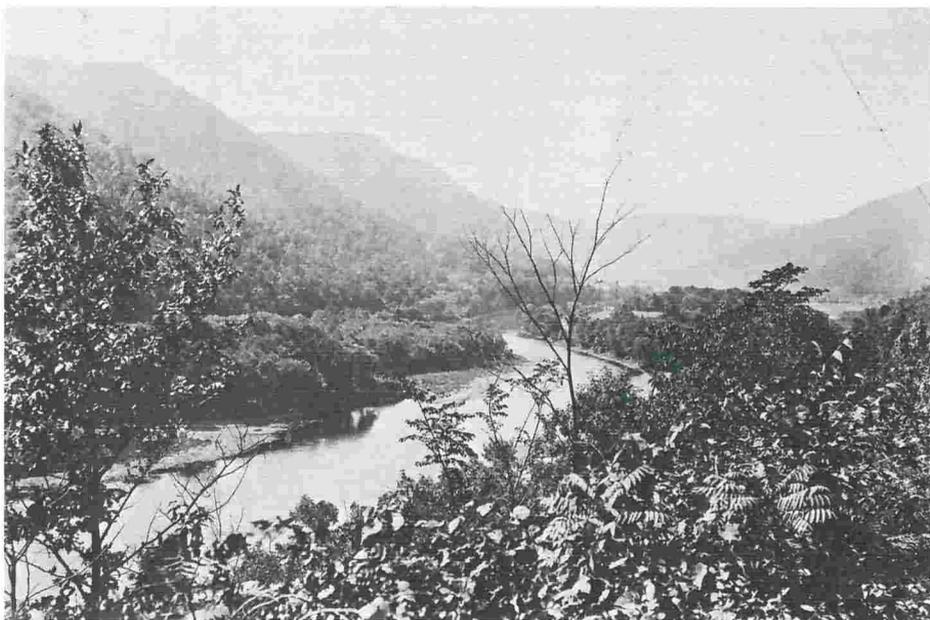
In 1911, the Weeks Law was enacted by Congress authorizing the federal government to purchase forestlands at the headwaters of navigable rivers, evidence of an understanding of the role of forests in watershed protection and maintenance. The Weeks Law also authorized the use of federal funds for state prevention and control of forests fires, setting a standard for federal and state cooperation in maintaining the public forest reserves.

Federal forestry assistance extended to private woodland area with the 1924 Clarke-McNary Act. State extension foresters were now available to demonstrate proper forestry practices. However, the bulk of federal forestry efforts were extended to state, national, and Indian lands. Attempts were made in 1933, 1941, 1947, 1949, and 1971 to pass bills which would give the Forest Service some control over the sometimes abusive cutting practices on private forestlands and to work toward the healthy management of all the nation's forest resources. All attempts at passing variations of the bill failed. The Forest Service still continues to provide educational publications and extension advice to those interested in effective land maintenance.

During World War II, demand for wood products accelerated. The National Forests were opened to the lumber industry; timber supplies on privately held lands were seriously depleted. New access roads enabled the companies to reach isolated areas, roads which would be used later as the industry returned to the national forests time and time again to continue the harvest. Following World War II the impact of the war

on the forests was assessed through surveys of the natural resources. It was found that intensified forestry practices on all lands were needed to meet projected future demand. The availability of timber was diminishing and corrective management would be needed.

The National Forests remained open to logging although many companies disliked the rigid standards imposed by the foresters. A housing boom after 1950, changed the tide. Cheaper methods of logging were found and lumbermen worked with building associations to develop ways in which more wood at reduced expense could be incorporated into home design and building. The industry was eager to attack the national forests. Under pressure from the lumber industry the federal government altered some of the national forest regulations. The allowable cut was raised from 5.6 billion board feet in 1949, to 8.6 billion in 1955. (Today the allowable cut is approximately 14 billion board feet.) Cutting cycles were shortened and the government also allowed trees of smaller diameter to be taken from the forests. The conservation movement, as advanced by federal mandates, was suffering from the strength of the lumber industry lobby.



PINE CREEK

Hopefully the lumbermen of tomorrow will support the growth of the population and the forests with the added awareness of the effects their actions have on the beauty and well-being of northcentral Pennsylvania.

The type of forestry practiced in the national forests was multiple-use management. The Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960, defined the establishment of the national forests and their administration as lands for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes. All uses were to receive equal consideration and careful management. However, the lumber industry prevailed and multiple use gave way to predominantly timber use.

As private lands were often not maintained for sustained yield and long-term benefits the lumber industry became more and more dependent upon the national forests. Segments of the public became outraged over the rampant logging of the forests,

especially in Oregon and Washington. The Sierra Club, National Audobon Society, The Wilderness Society, and other conservation organizations worked toward the passing of the 1964 Wilderness Bill which refined boundaries of primitive areas and designated those areas as untouchable wilderness. Conservation groups, disgusted with the government's policies and practices on forestlands, continued lobbying efforts and have had some successes. The lumber industry, however, continues to hold sway over many decisions which would ensure the conservation and protection of the nation's forests. Earth Firsters continue their monkey wrenching in the Pacific Northwest, spiking trees, pouring sand in the gas tanks of logging equipment, and through other means attempt to save endangered species and land in the United States. There is a general awareness of the need for conservation and environmental control as pollution, global warming, and the depletion of the ozone layer threaten man's existence.

In Pennsylvania, forestry maintenance is practiced, analyzed, and altered with new research. The forests which were once devastated have returned, although not as majestic and are now filled with hardwoods rather than pine and hemlock. Predictions are made for another lumber boom. That it would resemble the boom which decimated the forests in the 1800's is doubtful.

Forest scientists throughout the state have been conducting years of extensive research on forest regeneration, and are supported by the wood products industry. Al Sullivan, director of Penn State's School of Forest Resources, believes the forests of Pennsylvania will be perpetual with proper treatment. Today, Pennsylvania leads the nation in the volume of hardwood timber growth, harvesting only half of the amount grown each year. Much of Pennsylvania's hardwood is exported and the demand is expected to rise as European hardwood stands are depleted.

Yet an increase in demand does not mean the total destruction of Penn's Woods as has occurred in the past. Again, the natural resources of the region will fill not only the demands of a continually expanding population, but the population of the world as well. With careful management the forests will continue producing their valuable materials. The lumbermen of the past ravaged the land while supporting regional growth. The lumbermen of tomorrow will support the growth of the population and the forests with the added awareness of the effects their actions have on the beauty and well-being of northcentral Pennsylvania.

FOOTNOTES

1. Clepper, Henry, Ed. *Origins of American Conservation*. (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1966.) p. 42.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 20.



WILLIAMSPORT'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DURING THE CANAL PERIOD — 1828-1850

by Terry Rhian

The canal fever that swept through the nation brought with it people and industrial growth. As the increase in the working population grew, so grew the local economy for a period of 20 years from 1830 to 1850.



The Weaver House at Market Street and the West Branch Canal. Market Square became the crossroads of the region.

Before the completion of the canal, all communication with the outer world was carried on by means of keel-boats propelled by muscular power or by wagons across the mountains. From early settlement of the territory to construction of the West Branch Canal in 1834, virtually all of the necessities of life were produced in the home, the grist-mill, and the blacksmith shop. While men toiled in the fields and forests, the mills and shops, the women worked at home to provide the family with wearing apparel.

Though the question of building a canal had long been advocated by prominent businessmen, it was not until 1827, that it began to assume a definite shape. A survey by Judge Gettis, a civil engineer from New York, proved the area favorable to the construction of the canal. By an act of March 31, 1823, the Commonwealth appropriated \$50,000 to improve navigation on the Susquehanna River between Columbia and the mouth of the river. On March 24, 1828, the legislature authorized a board of canal commissioners to proceed "to locate and contract for making canals, locks and other works necessary thereto . . ." from Northumberland to Bald Eagle on the West Branch (Meginness, *History* p. 323). Construction of the canal began at Northumberland in 1828, and reached Williamsport in 1833, Lock Haven in 1834, and finally Bellefonte in 1835. It covered a total distance of 73 miles with 19 locks overcoming

138½ feet of vertical lockage (Shank, p. 85). The completion of the West Branch Canal was the first modern step forward in transportation in the area, and it revolutionized trade patterns in the valley.

The development of canals was a product and a part of the industrialization of America. After the close of the war in 1815, and up until 1837, there was a rising swell of prosperity in the United States. By the early part of the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution was well underway and the desire for speed which accompanied it demanded a quicker and easier means of transportation than stagecoaches or mule caravans could provide. As a result, canal fever swept the nation. Enthusiasm for canals was a result of the successful completion in 1825, of the Erie Canal in New York State. The Erie Canal, 350 miles long, connected the Hudson River to the Great Lakes and opened up new avenues of trade between east and west. Its unparalleled success gave the greatest boost to canal building inspiring numerous imitations throughout the country. The Erie, like other canals, provided a means of spreading population over a larger part of the continent, furthering economic, social, and political unity by bringing together far-flung regions of the nation. In the process, the United States was strengthened to the degree that it became competitive in world markets. Seeing the success brought on by the Erie Canal other states began borrowing enormous sums of money in order to build hundreds of canals. In a period of 135 years, Pennsylvania operated 1,243 miles of state and privately owned canals in the hopes of building new cities and enhancing commerce throughout the wilderness. The building of canals increased significantly during the 1830's, and gave impetus to business throughout the country. The canal fever that swept the nation, beginning in the 1820's and lasting until 1850, reached Williamsport during the early 1830's.

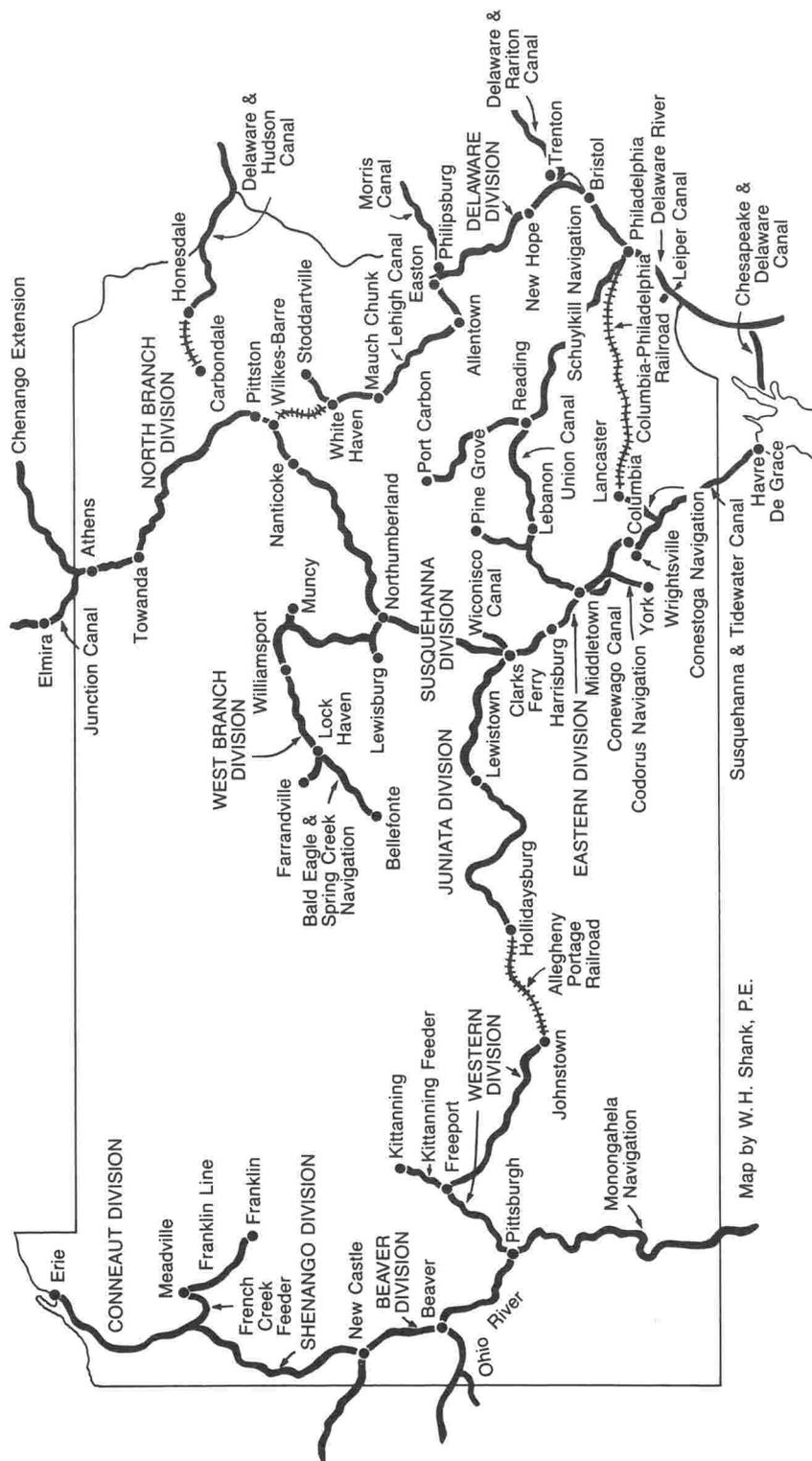
Williamsport's geographical position was an important factor considered by those looking for a place to settle down. Located in northcentral Pennsylvania, occupying the north bank of the Susquehanna River's West Branch tributary, Williamsport sat amidst a beautiful mountain countryside. To the south lay Bald Eagle Ridge, to the northeast, spurs of the Allegheny Mountains. These vast forested areas were covered with fertile soil which produced some of the most valuable timber in the country.

One of the main goals of the canal builders was to open up new avenues of trade, especially between the east and the west. Williamsport shared this common goal with the nation and hoped to use the West Branch Canal as her first real access to the eastern markets of Baltimore and Philadelphia. A look at the wagon roads used in the West Branch Valley is proof in itself that time spent shipping products by mule caravans could be cut significantly when using the cheaper and easier canal system. This further resulted in an initial cost reduction, opening up substantial trade between east and west, and allowing remote areas similar to Williamsport to make use of their interior land resources competitively in a national market. Williamsport's products were loaded onto boats at Market Street, where they were then carried via the West Branch Canal to eastern markets. With the main dock located on Market Street, Williamsport became the take-off point for goods entering and leaving the region. Market Square became the major crossroads of trade in the West Branch Valley. This route was used by Williamsport's merchants and industrialists to transport millions of dollars worth of products from farms, mines, and factories to eastern markets. In return, millions of dollars worth of manufactured and imported goods from the east moved west along the same route encouraging the establishment of new industries.

Probably the greatest influence on industrial growth in Williamsport occurred in the summer of 1831, with the arrival of John B. Hall.* A native of Geneva, New York, Hall was the pioneer founder of what was to become one of the leading industries of Williamsport. The canal was only partially built and would not be completed for several years due to a lack of funds. However, Hall believed that with the help

*See Mark Albright's article *Rags to Riches*, Winter 1989, for more information.

This map shows all the 1,243 miles of state-owned, or privately owned canals operated within the boundaries of Pennsylvania over a period of nearly 135 years. Not all of these canals were in operation concurrently. Also indicated are the state-owned or privately owned railroads which formed an integral part of the canal system. Connecting canals or navigation systems to the six surrounding states are also shown.



Map by W. H. Shank, P.E.

of the canal Williamsport had great potential to become a titan power in manufacturing and would become successful in the lumbering industry. His leading idea was to manufacture machinery for sawmills. Because he believed that the vast pine and hemlock forests of this county must be largely cut by machinery he established his iron foundry, bringing along his boilers, engines, and cupola (dome tower), the first such equipment in the West Branch Valley. Not only was the equipment a first, but the industry itself was a first in Lycoming, Tioga, Centre, and Bradford counties. Hall had one major problem, difficulty obtaining iron. Because the canal was only partially built the iron had to be hauled by wagons from Centre County. Without a ready supply of iron Hall was unable to manufacture an adequate supply of coal stoves that were being used in boroughs and towns for 50 miles around. In 1833, the problem was eliminated. The canal not only supplied iron, but further enhanced the industry when the foundry was awarded a contract from the state to furnish castings for the Columbia Railroad. In 1838, they made the castings for the first iron gang gate of saws used in the state for the "Big Water Mill." Hall's foundry made castings for the furnace at Astonville and the furnace and rolling mills of McKinney and Manly and Heylman on Lycoming Creek. Castings were also made for the blast furnace started in Williamsport by Bingham and Company in 1846-47. Hall's iron foundry was one of two important industries that led the way in the development of manufacturing and industry in Williamsport.

During the canal period Williamsport became the middle canal point between the new iron region of Bellefonte and the new coal region of Shamokin. Later it became the southern terminus of a railroad used to transport anthracite and bituminous coal. At this time however, coal was the most important resource needed to draw industries to the area. Without this coal Williamsport would not have grown as rapidly as it did. The vast forest areas surrounding Lycoming Creek made it possible to obtain all kinds of lumber and building materials whenever needed, and at reasonable cost. As a result Williamsport also became the center of the largest lumber trade east of Chicago during this period. The greatest industrial advantage was the two major transportation systems located here, the canal and later the railroad. Access to eastern markets and quick transportation attracted national attention. Without these advantages Williamsport would have remained anonymously in the wilderness.

The development of the canal led to industrial development which in turn effected the job market in the region. The first jobs offered as a result of the canal dealt with construction. Local newspapers were continuously advertising for between 1,200 and 1,500 laborers to work on the Lycoming line, West Branch and Pennsylvania Main-line Canal. Although unemployment had existed in the area around 1830, it virtually disappeared during 1832 to 1833. Most of these jobs were only temporary, though new forms of permanent employment did eventually emerge. Since all canal boats were animal-drawn, using two or three animals to tow the boats up the canal and were manned by a driver on shore and a steersman at the tiller, livery and teamsters businesses grew. It was necessary for these workers to care for and replace the horses with fresh teams. Housing and food for horses became another responsibility. In turn, saddlers were needed to supply equipment for horses. The canal created a self-perpetuating job market with one job leading to the establishment of another.

The most effective means of determining growth in employment or population is to compare the censuses of 1820, 1830, 1840, and 1850. This comparison demonstrates the increase in rate of growth. The census of 1820, shows the population to be only 671. Of these 671 people, 21% fell into the category of working men between the ages of 15 and 40. In 1830, the census shows that the population increased 70% from 671 to 1,140 residents. There were 189 men between the ages of 15 and 40, making up 17% of the total population. The decade between 1820 and 1830, showed a 33% increase in working males. This was most likely a result of more job opportunities.

The census of 1840, showed a population of 1,353, a mere 19% increase. With jobs doubling in the area of commerce and manufacturing 324 working males made up 24% of the population, an increase of 71% since 1830.

Although the population only increased by 19% between 1830 and 1840, the workforce increased greatly. The following comparison illustrates the changes that occurred between pre-canal and canal periods:

	Manufacturing	Agriculture	Commerce
1820	83	27	8
1840	216	17	28

This comparison is similar to one done by Carter Goodrich in his book entitled, *Canals and American Economic Development*. Goodrich's study showed that the rate of growth of employment in both commerce and manufacturing was higher in canal than non-canal counties. The same can be said for Williamsport. Quicker transportation provided by the canal greatly influenced the development of manufacturers in Williamsport, larger numbers of available jobs increased, and commerce also opened up as small stores sprung up throughout Williamsport. A. D. Lundy's booksellers, James Rothrock, dealer in tailoring, and S. A. Harington, dealer in confections, are the names of only several of the businesses established between 1830 and 1840. Better opportunities for employment in factories, trade, and commerce attracted a larger working force as young men between the ages of 15 and 40 flocked to Williamsport while agriculture declined since necessities could now be obtained easily from other areas of the country. The new jobs attracted more men and increased incomes.



Looking east from Pine Street Old Canal, Old Golden King Warehouse, Occidental Hotel, Market Street Canal Bridge.

The second most important establishment in Williamsport was erected in 1838, by a Philadelphia company operated by William Perry, John D. Beers, and Richard and Andrew Cochran. Known as the "Big Water Mill" the forerunner of Williamsport's later lumber fame, it was located across the canal at the foot of Mulberry Street.

The "Big Water Mill" was the first sawmill to exploit Williamsport's site amid a vast forested area. Small in size, the mill consisted of only four saws, powered by four waterwheels. The mill soon failed and was sold to James Armstrong and Abraham Updegraff. More important than their failure to establish a permanent industry was the fact they proved it profitable to run a sawmill in this area. Others soon followed, and within 25 years sawmills had become one of the primary industries of Williamsport.

The successful establishment of Hall's iron foundry and the "Big Water Mill" were made possible by improved marketing facilities created by the West Branch Canal. The availability of lumber, coal, and iron ore brought an influx of tradesmen and craftsmen to manufacture and sell their goods. Merchants and traders came because the canal had established a greater extension of trade and commerce in the area. A large diversity of industries and small businesses sprung up throughout Williamsport. By 1840, tailors, bakers, foundries, booksellers, and dealers in furniture and horses had been established. Most of these smaller businesses, which were started with sums as low as \$25, later enjoyed annual sales in excess of \$16,000. With the success and growth of small industries and businesses into larger ones, Williamsport's business future was well on its way.

As incomes increased so did the overall wealth of the city. In 1827, when plans were first being laid out for the canal, total assessed taxes on seated property was \$227.33. During this time real estate could scarcely be sold because there were no purchasers. There were, at this time, only ten brick buildings, no public improvements and no gristmills of any type. By the time the canal reached Williamsport lots previously worth \$40 to \$60 in 1827, were now being sold for anywhere between \$150 and \$200. In 1835, total assessed taxes on seated property was \$367.48. The price of land had increased with the increased population. Everyone wanted to own property near the river and the canal for the purposes of transportation. The value of this land then began to increase rapidly with most purchased by prominent manufacturers and industrialists. Jobs opened up and incomes which could be spent buying products increased, thus enhancing the overall wealth of the economy. Had Williamsport not been located on the river and along the canal route her development and economic growth would have progressed much more slowly, if at all.

It appears that the West Branch Canal did have some impact on the economic growth of Williamsport, although the slow rate of population growth between 1830 and 1850, makes it somewhat difficult to see this impact. In the 1820's, Williamsport became the regional seat of Lycoming County. By the time the canal reached Williamsport, it had lost some of its vitality as a regional seat. The building of the canal helped establish Bellefonte as the regional seat of Centre County causing an overall loss to some of Williamsport's businesses because those traveling were now staying in their own areas to conduct business. But, the canal did have a positive economic impact on Williamsport mainly in the area of industrial manufacturing and commerce. Without this development the economic growth of the area may have been inhibited until the coming of the railroad.

Canals helped develop towns and cities throughout America. But, like previous transportation systems such as stagecoaches and wagons, canals were too slow to meet the demands of growing industrialization and they outlived their usefulness. During the late 1840's and 1850's, canals were replaced by the railroads. Although Williamsport's economic growth was spurred on by the canal, the greatest bulk of economic growth would not be felt until 1850, with the development of railroads and the great lumber industry.

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The Hardy Lumberman:

I can recollect in many instances of trying times and hardships but still we had our fun. Often when we were driving we would wade ice cold water all day long and many times we would have to break ice with our pevees before we could get into the water. We often had to go in dangerous jams, especially center jams.

Well, say we could eat four good, big meals every day and never miss a bite, but I never saw a man have a bad cold when he was on the drive and wading cold water.

"Some Exciting Runs on the River"
by J. M. Work of Sheffield, PA
from: *True Tales of the Clarion River*, 1933

KEEP THEE ONLY UNTO ME

by Nancy Lundquist Baumgartner

Minnie ran her index finger beneath the high lace collar of her blouse. She could feel perspiration and wished she had worn her blue gingham instead. The air in the photographer's studio was stuffy and smelled of something that had been cooked with cornmeal.

"Just have a seat there, Senorita Taylor," the small, dark man said, indicating a high-backed mahogany settee. His hair was an arrangement of tight black curls that secured themselves to his head with drops of sweat. He had a nice smile and there was an economy of movement about him as he adjusted the tripod, checked the light in the room, and ducked beneath the hooded back of the camera to focus his subject.

"We must adjust just right, then we are ready." His English was spoken with a heavy Spanish accent, Minnie suspected he had learned just enough phrases to facilitate doing business with his American and British customers.

"Very good. Sit now, very still. Not long anymore."

Minnie straightened her shoulders, brushed a whisp of hair that had escaped from the brown mass piled on her head, and looked into the camera.

"No, no. Do not look straight," he directed, words slightly muffled from his position under the camera's hood.

"Turn to right, put chin up. Yes, yes. That is very good. Now, please we take picture. Be quite still, Senorita."

There was a loud click accompanied by a satisfied sigh from the direction of the photographer.

"Do not move. We take one more."

He jumped from behind the tripod, pulled a large, square plate from the camera and slammed another one into place. One more click and one more sigh of satisfaction and the photo session was over. Minnie had taken so much time and effort preparing for it that she felt somewhat let down when it was accomplished with such ease.

It was five minutes past eleven o'clock when she was ushered out of the studio onto Santiago's busy main thoroughfare. Too late to catch the hourly trolley back to the school, she walked two blocks north to a small, quiet cafe set back from the street in the shade of large old trees. A glass of lemonade and some tea biscuits were just the thing to restore her good humor and settle the jumpy feeling she'd had in her stomach since she awoke this morning.

While she waited for her order she thought of the things still needed for the Christmas package she was sending back home to Cogan House. She had the hand-made Indian shawl for Mama and a brightly painted pottery bowl for her brother Albert and his new bride, but what to get for Papa? Of course there would be the photo of herself, but that was intended for the family and she wanted Papa to have something just for himself. She was contemplating buying him a hand-carved pipe when the lemonade arrived in a tall, frosty mug accompanied by a small plate of biscuits. They were her favorite thing to eat when she needed comforting and she popped half of one into her mouth, closed her eyes and savored the light, flaky, butter-tinged taste.

The biscuits reminded her of the kind Owen's mother made for church socials or for any special occasion during the year. Louisa's biscuits were famous all over Cogan House Township and, although humility was one of the lady's most endearing traits, when it came to her biscuits she allowed herself to indulge in a certain amount of pride.

Minnie had been in Chile two years now, and had loved every minute of her time here, yet at odd moments sharp images of home would flood her memory with such clarity that she would catch her breath. The unexpected moments were sometimes

comforting, quite often painful, but never unwelcomed. Minnie had always believed that great joy and great sorrow were two sides of the same coin. One could not be felt without being prepared to experience the other as well. So when the memories came she accepted them as she accepted everything in her life, with a strong faith in her Lord and a gutsy kind of courage.

When Minnie arrived back at the Santiago School for Girls that afternoon, her friend Edna was waiting for her on the side veranda. A petite, flaxen-haired beauty whose energy and enthusiasm made her a favorite of both the teachers and students, Edna had picked Minnie to be her best friend. They had shared so many times of laughter and serious, deep conversation that Minnie felt they'd always known each other.

"Where have you been, kiddo?" Edna said, bounding up from the wicker chair and crossing the veranda in a few, short, skipping steps.

"I thought we'd celebrate with a tennis game this afternoon."

"I've been downtown to the photo studio, don't you remember I told you I was having my picture taken to send home for Christmas?"

Edna slipped her arm through Minnie's and laughed.

"Oh you know me. I'm such a scatterbrain about details. Anyway, hurry and change. We have time for one match before the dinner hour."

Edna accompanied Minnie to the small room the two shared on the top floor of the Spanish-style building. While Minnie changed into a blue sailor blouse and calico skirt, Edna lounged in the doorway tapping the toe of her high-buttoned shoe on the polished, wood floor. Movement was Edna's trademark. She was a whirlwind and, even when supposedly still, some part of her was in constant motion. Minnie joked that she was like a jumping bean.

"Know what today is?" Edna flashed a grin at Minnie.

"Ah, let's see? It's November 13th, right?" Minnie replied, tucking the blouse into the wide band of her skirt.

"Right. We've both been here two years today. That calls for a celebration, don't you think? So, I'll let you beat me at tennis."

Minnie stopped, looked at Edna and sighed.

"Two years today," she repeated. "Oh, how I wish I could live the time over again. I've loved it here."

"Me too. Let's go." Edna moved out of the doorway and down the hall. Minnie was not allowed the luxury of contemplating all the wonderful things she had experienced in the months since her arrival in Chile. As usual, she was rushing to keep up with her energetic friend.

In the weeks following their second anniversary in Santiago the two friends were kept busy with lessons and end of term activities. Some of their social engagements called forth overwhelming memories for Minnie and she had difficulty keeping her emotions in check.

Two of their fellow teachers at the school were getting married in Union Church on the weekend following the 13th and the whole school was abuzz with preparations for a reception for the couple. Try as she might Minnie was unable to keep her spirits up. With every mention of the preparations she recalled the times she and Owen had made plans for their own wedding. She could still hear his voice asking her to marry him.

It had been a lovely, warm, summer Sunday in 1893, when he had proposed to her. Since Sundays were always observed as a strict day of rest in both their families it gave the young couple a chance to sneak away for an afternoon picnic along Larry's Creek. It was one of those fine days when the sun, the air, and Mother Nature combined their talents to convince mere mortals that God is in His place and all's right with the world.

For Minnie, God was indeed in His place, but for Owen all was not right with the world. They spread their blanket and set out the fruit, fried chicken, and a plate of Owen's favorite oatmeal cookies. As they ate Minnie tried to figure out how she could tell him what he soon must find out.

"Owen," she said softly, "I'm going away this fall."

He stopped searching the basket for the biggest cookie and gazed over at her. The stunned look in his hazel eyes made her wish she had waited until after the picnic to bring up the subject.

"What do you mean you're goin' away?"

"I've enrolled in Williamsport's Dickinson Seminary for the fall term."

There was a short silence when neither Minnie nor Owen had the nerve to look at one another.

"Why?" he said. It was as much as he could muster.

"I have to, Owen. I feel the Lord wants me to learn more so He can use me. I don't know what for, but I know this is what I should do right now."

He got up, brushed at the seat of his trousers and walked to the huge, old weeping willow that hung its branches over the creek. He leaned against it for a moment, his tall, straight back to her. His right hand rested against the tree and Minnie focused her attention on it. His hands were one of the things she loved most about him, possibly the part of him that had brought them together. When they were kids growing up together he had formed huge snowballs and thrown them at her. At church socials he would seek her out and pull her long brown braids, which made her furious. The first time he'd come courting she had noticed how large and efficient his hands were as he tied his mother's white mare, Gyp, to the fence in front of her house. His hands had always made her feel safe and sure that he could handle anything. Now, one of them hung limp at his side, the other supported him against the tree's rough bark. She was not sure he would handle this.

"You're already smarter 'en any of us. Why can't He use you the way you are?" It was not so much a question as a plea to both Minnie and God.

She walked over and stood in front of him. He was looking out over her head to the rippling creek beyond.

"I can't question what I believe the Lord is telling me," she said. "You know me well enough to know that, don't you?"

Yes, he did know her well and one of the things he had always known was that she was not only pretty, but smart as well. He had liked the idea that she knew things he didn't. He enjoyed sitting with her, listening to her read poetry by Browning, or passages from her well-worn Bible. From the very beginning he realized she was an extraordinary person. While other girls her age giggled and acted silly, Minnie stood apart, smiling at their games with a mysterious expression that seemed to say she had more important things on her mind. Now he looked at her and saw that same expression. He knew there would be no changing her plans.



*Minnie Viola Taylor
Taken in 1908 while she was in Santiago,
Chile. She sent this photo home to Louisa
Baumgartner in December of that year.*

His arm closed around her. The sun filtering down through the willow cast bronze highlights on her dark hair. He rested his chin on top of her head.

"Well, I suppose if you have to, you have to. But, darn it, Minnie I'll miss you. How long's this gonna take?"

"Three years," she said quietly and felt his arms tighten and the muscles in his chest expand as he let out a sigh. It was difficult to keep her determination to carry through on this.

"O.K., but when you come home I want us to get married," he said emphatically.

They had never actually discussed the topic of marriage, but both of them had shared a deep, intuitive awareness that they should be together. It had come gradually, quietly, but with a power and assurance that could not be denied. His statement was the first time the need had arisen to put words to their feelings. As usual, Minnie was direct.

"Yes," she said, smiling up at him. "We'll do exactly that."

But memories or no, the present could not be pushed away. Minnie attended the wedding of Miss Sailer and Mr. Numan and managed to help with the reception afterward in the school's big dining room. She felt happy for the couple and tried hard not to let her own sadness intrude upon the festivities.

Final exams and commencement followed fast on the heels of the wedding weekend. Minnie had taught her girls well and most passed the English Bible course with high marks. At last she received a postcard from the photographer asking that she pick up her picture. Edna accompanied her downtown.

The curly-haired proprietor proudly displayed two 5 x 7 browntones he had mounted on larger pieces of grey cardboard with a leather look finish. Minnie studied them for a few minutes while Edna and the man chatted enthusiastically in Spanish.

"He thinks you look beautiful, Minnie," teased Edna. The photographer gave Minnie a wide grin and pointed to the picture.

"Beautiful Senorita, beautiful. You like?"

Minnie thought her nose looked too big and she wished she had pulled a whisp of hair down near her ear, but all in all she was satisfied.

With the photographs wrapped securely in stiff brown paper the girls left the shop.

"Let's have some lunch at that little cafe you like, Minnie," suggested Edna adjusting her straw bonnet against the hot noontime sun.

"Sounds great to me, I'm starved." Minnie agreed.

When they were seated at one of the small, round tables and had ordered, Edna grinned at Minnie.

"Think you made a real hit with the Senor at the studio?"

"Oh, Edna, you nut! He has to tell people they look nice, otherwise how do you suppose he'd make any money?"

"Well, he's right. You are beautiful."

Minnie appreciated Edna's loyalty but she'd never considered herself a beauty. She smiled and brushed aside the remark with a wave of her left hand. The small, gold band she wore on the third finger glinted in the ray of sunshine filtering through the window. Edna looked at it and felt her heart sadden a little as it always did when she remembered what the ring meant to her friend.

Quietly she asked, "Do you think you'll ever get married, Minnie?"

It seemed a casual question, but Minnie was silent a long time before she answered. It had been a question she herself had been wrestling with for months. Finally, she sighed, looked directly at Edna and said, "I don't know. I'm 32 this year and I always thought by now I'd be long married and have several children. But here I am, teaching English Bible to wealthy Chilean girls and wondering where I go from here."

"You have lots of men friends who'd like to become your beau, Minnie. What about Mr. Baker? He's been sweet on you for ever so long. Don't you like him?"

"Well, of course I like him, Edna, but I don't love him. There's a difference you know."

Just then their meal arrived and they set aside the conversation in order to enjoy the crisp vegetable salad and small sandwiches made with crusty, fresh-made bread.

With the holidays approaching the next days were taken up with last minute details. Minnie sent a box off to her family and one to Owen's parents. She included a photograph in each and hoped they wouldn't think her too vain for having had it taken as a gift for them.

On the 19th, Minnie waved goodbye to Edna at the train station and went back to the school. With the girls gone to their homes and most of the teachers already off on various holidays the building was deathly quiet. Minnie busied herself with packing and cleaning the room. She wrote notes to her parents and a few friends and disposed of papers that had accumulated on her desk during the school year. Finally, she took a small, neatly wrapped packet of letters and stuck them in the corner of her valise. Hesitating, she took them out again, pulled the top one from the packet, opened it, and read:

Cogan House

May 21, 1896

Dearest Minnie,

I am real glad your school year is almost over and this time you'll be home for good. I've missed you a powerful lot. We're into planting time and the spring lambs are comin', so I don't have much time for daydreamin'.

I will meet you at the station in Trout Run on Friday. Wish we could get married the next day. Don't want you changin' your mind you know.

See you soon.

Love you with all my heart,

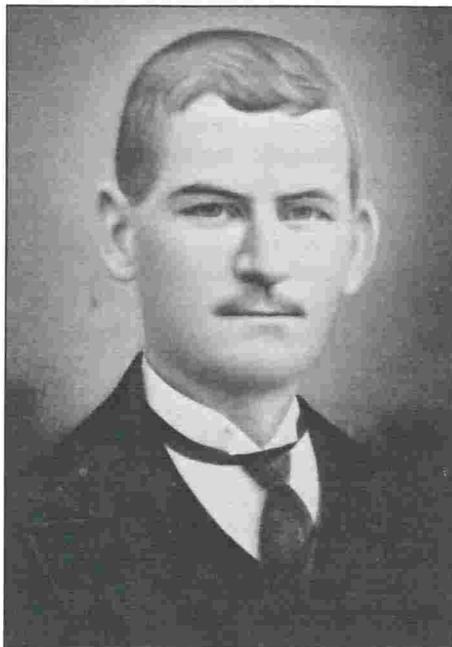
Owen

Minnie folded the well-worn page and returned it to the envelope, then put it back in the valise with the rest. How she wished she had indeed married him as soon as she had graduated from Seminary that year. But they had been good children, acutely aware of the need their parents had of them and they had pushed back their own plans time and again in favor of being responsible to their families. Owen's brother and sister had both married, leaving him the only source of help to Adam and Louisa. Her situation was no better. After graduation she taught first at Chestnut Grove and then Summit School. It fell to her to keep the Taylor household running smoothly. The asthmatic condition that had afflicted her mother for many years kept Mary Ann Taylor confined to bed many days or too weak to do anything strenuous. This left the cleaning, canning, laundry, and meal preparation for Minnie to do.

Still the young couple had their dreams and plans. When, on a Sunday, or a rare evening after the chores were completed, they could find time alone to talk of the wedding, or building a house, or even what they would call their first son. It was what kept them going through the long years between 1896 and 1900. They managed to save small amounts of money which they squirreled away in an old cigar box Minnie kept in the bottom of a round top trunk. Between Minnie's earnings from teaching and what Owen made when he could find lumbering jobs in winter, the savings grew slowly, but it was a visible sign of their intentions.

One evening in late September, 1900 as Minnie was finishing the last of the supper dishes she heard Owen's buggy coming up the lane. Wiping her hands on her apron,

she pushed back a lock of hair and went out on the porch to meet him. He waved and brought 'Gyp' to a stop by the barn. Jumping down he quickly tied the horse to a fence post, bounded across the yard, took the steps two at a time, and grabbed Minnie around the waist, swinging her off her feet and twirling around in small circles.



Owen Murray Baumgartner taken sometime just before the train accident.

"Oh-h-h," she giggled, "put me down, you'll make me dizzy."

He twirled twice more then set her down and grabbed her hand.

"Come on," he said excitedly. "Sit here on the swing. I gotta surprise for you."

He made her close her eyes. She heard him digging in the pocket of his worn jacket and with a small chuckle he said, "O.K., open them."

She blinked and focused her eyes on the tiny red velvet box he held in front of her. She would never again in her lifetime see that color without her heart jumping just as it had that beautiful early autumn evening on her front porch swing.

She looked at him, her eyes wide.

"Go ahead, open it." He pushed it in to her hand. Slowly she opened the lid. Inside, perched on a bed of white satin, was a narrow gold band. He heard the soft intake of her breath as he took the ring from its resting place, held her left hand in his and slipped it on the third finger of her right hand.

Minnie Viola Taylor, I want you to be my wife."

She looked at him, her eyes misting over.

"Oh, Owen it's so beautiful. But where did . . . , How can . . . , Where did you find the money for it?" she stammered.

He stretched his long legs out and put an arm around her shoulders.

"Sold that bull I been raisin' all summer to Squire Wood this week."

He grinned at her and kissed her cheek. She held her hand out in front and they examined the bright circle the ring made on her finger.

"Minnie, sweet, we been waitin' about long enough I figure. Squire Wood told me this afternoon they got plenty of loggin' work at the family's operation down in West Virginia this winter and they'd be pleased to have a strong hand like me on the crew. Payin' top dollar and if I go till spring I figure we'll have enough to get married this comin' summer."

"You're going away?" She gave him a distressed look.

"Now, I didn't say yes to him yet, but I thought you and me outta think about it a little. The way things are goin' there'll not be much work here this winter. I think my cousins will give Pop a hand if he needs it for a little while."

He stood up and walked to the porch railing.

"Minnie, I'm gettin' awful tired of waitin' till everything's just right. Let's make out a date and do it!"

She got up and went to stand beside him.

"I know. I'm tired of waiting too. But I hate to have you so far away."

"Well you'll be busy with those school youngens till May anyway. You won't even know I'm gone." He teased, pulling at a piece of her hair.

"Don't you believe it Mister," she teased back. "I'll know you're gone every minute. But at least I'll have this to remind me of what we have to look forward to," she touched the gold band against his cheek.

Darkness had crept into the corners of the porch and the frogs were singing a night song down at the pond near the road. He took her in his arms and kissed her on the forehead, then both cheeks and finally her mouth. A long, passionate kiss that she knew was going to have to last her awhile. It was fortunate she didn't know then just how long that 'while' would be.

They agreed he should accept the Wood's brothers' offer of employment and he left for West Virginia as the leaves were turning rich shades of gold and red. His mother was as distressed as Minnie at his going, but he assured both he would be fine, would write each week, and made arrangements with his cousins to help out his father.

He kept his promise to write, filling the letters with stories of the men he worked with and the logging conditions in the West Virginia mountains. Always in his writings to Minnie he closed with a line or two about how much he loved and missed her.

Minnie visited Louisa often, taking her a fresh loaf of bread, or a jar of jam, and telling her stories of the funny things the children did at school. One of the things Minnie had always admired about Owen's mother was her sense of humor. She laughed easily and often, but that fall and early winter Minnie sensed the older woman was troubled. Often in the middle of a conversation Minnie would notice Louisa's attention wandering. She would gaze out the window, or across the room with a strange, distant expression. Minnie knew she was terribly lonely for her youngest son.

The golden leaves of autumn gave way to snowy days. Thanksgiving and Christmas passed, as they usually do, in a rush of activity and celebration. Owen, not wanting to take precious funds from his earnings, decided to stay in West Virginia over Christmas. Instead, he sent several pictures of the logging camp and the crew of men he worked with to Minnie, asking that she share them with his parents. He included small gifts for Minnie and his family and a note telling them, "spring will be here before you know it."

As 1901, edged into being the residents of Cogan House Township returned to their normal winter routine and Minnie resumed classes at Beech Grove School. In McDowell County, West Virginia only a smattering of snow lay on the ground, but a cold wind blew through the logging camps nestled in the southern Appalachian Mountains.

On Thursday, January 10, Owen and his friend Art Morton helped load the last of the oaks they'd cut the week before onto four flatbed train cars.

"O.K." Lindy Wood, the crew foreman called to the train's engineer, "Let's take 'em down the mountain, John." Plans were to unload the logs at the mill in time for the lunch break, then start cutting on a new stand of trees further up the mountain.

"Come on, Owen. Ride up her with me," yelled Art, jumping on the first car of logs.

"Now, think I'll ride in the engine this trip, Art. Too dang cold out here in the open."

Owen pulled himself into position near the back end of the engine compartment and wrapped his long coat securely around his middle. He hoped to catch a few winks of sleep before the train made the lumber yard. Mornings came early at lumber camps and any shut-eye caught during the day was a treat. He settled his head against the cold metal and turned his coat collar up around his neck. He sure would be glad for the warmth of spring this year. The weather in West Virginia seemed so much colder than back home. He heard the engine slowly come to life as Henry Boyd, the fireman, slung shovels of coal into the boiler's furnace. The engine coaxed its monstrous

load along the narrow rails laid down on the mountain's south slope. The train gained speed rapidly and soon the steady sway and bump lulled Owen into half-sleep. Suddenly he heard Jack Hiler yell, "She's getting away!" He jumped into a sitting position his heart racing. He could see by the speed of the landscape whizzing by that the train was going much too fast. The men in the engine were fumbling frantically with the brakes, but the turn at the bottom of the gorge was coming at them rapidly. The engine hit first, grinding and screeching as it left the tracks, dragging the log laden cars behind it like a string of helpless children. Owen saw John Pennington and Henry Boyd as they jumped from the train and felt his friend Bob Sproles pulling frantically at his coat sleeve and screaming, "Jump, Owen, jump!"

In the silence that followed the train wreck the men picked themselves up from the various positions where they had been tossed like so many rag dolls. John, the engineer, knew he had a broken leg, so he lay still, the pain washing over his body in blinding waves. He called to the others and one by one they answered, some getting to their feet and staggering around trying to determine their injuries. Only Owen was still. He lay between two small saplings near the edge of the railbed. One arm was thrown out above his head, his left leg wedged beneath him at an odd angle. His hat lay some distance from him and there was blood streaming from his head near the temple. Lindy Wood hurried to him, knelt down and put an ear to Owen's chest, but he already knew he would hear nothing. Owen was dead! Spring would not come for him again.

The *Williamsport Gazette* of January 11, 1901 carried a small news bulletin on its front page.

"Special to Gazette and Bulletin.

White Pine, Pa., Jan. 10 — a telegram received here today announced the tragic death in lager, West Virginia, of Owen Baumgartner, aged 25 years, son of Adam Baumgartner of Cogan House. The deceased had been working on the lumber operations of Elmer Wood and was killed by an engine. Particulars were not given. The body will be sent to his late home for interment.

The telegram that arrived at Adam and Louisa's small frame farmhouse that January dealt a devastating blow. Their life would never quite be the same. Louisa took to her bed and could not be comforted. It was as though she had known her son would not return from the adventure he had undertaken just a few short months before.

Word of the tragedy spread rapidly throughout the community. When it reached the Taylor home, life as Minnie had thought it would be came crashing down around her. Along with deep searing loss and sadness was the overwhelming regret that they had put off being married. Then she would have had his name, perhaps even his child. Now all that remained was the gold band she wore on her finger and unbearable grief.

Despite distance and winter conditions, Owen's body was returned and buried on Sunday, January 13 in the Summit Cemetery beside the church. The crew with whom he'd lived and worked pinned a small corsage of flowers to the lapel of his coat.

A heavy pall descended on the farmhouses in Cogan House that winter, for they had lost one of their own. In a closely knit community where every person is considered part of one's extended family the loss of any member is a personal heartache. Details of the accident, Owen's short life, the welfare of his family, and Minnie's grief were the main topics of conversation among the residents during the long, dark days that followed the calamity.

Relying on her faith and family, Minnie somehow finished her year of teaching at school. By spring the sharp edge of grief was made even more intense by the knowledge that, had Owen lived, she would be making plans for her wedding.

She had visited Louisa many times that winter, coaxing the dear lady to eat, talk, read. They had formed a close bond out of their shared grief. One afternoon after classes ended in early May, Minnie was sitting on the front porch of Louisa's house with her. The lilac bush near the steps was just beginning to put forth fragrant lavender blooms.



The train crew pose atop the wrecked cars after the accident in McDowell County, West Virginia which took the life of Owen Murray Baumgartner on January 10, 1901.

"I should pick a bunch of them tomorrow and go to the cemetery," said Louisa rocking gently in the caned seat rocker beside the one Minnie occupied. "Owen always liked lilacs."

"Would you like me to go with you?" Minnie asked.

"Yes. Do you mind?"

"Not at all. I'll take some of the early daffodils from Mama's garden, too."

Louisa rocked awhile, not speaking, her gaze far off in the fields across from the house.

"Mother Baumgartner?" Minnie had adopted the title for Louisa sometime after the tragedy and it seemed to comfort both of them. "I'm thinking of going away next year."

Louisa turned to her.

"You are?" She didn't sound surprised as Minnie had imagined.

"Yes. There are so many memories here. Everywhere I look I see Owen and I am so very grieved that at times I think I cannot go on living without him." The tears started, as they always did for her and she fumbled in her dress pocket for a hankie.

Louisa was silent a long time. Then, her voice catching, she replied, "Yes, dear, I know. The pain is beyond words. Sometimes I am so angry, but I don't know who to be angry with. And sometimes I think I will surely die myself when I realize I will not see him coming home through that field there."

She reached out and covered Minnie's hand with hers.

"Where are you going?"

Well, I have written to Syracuse University and they say they can accept me when I am ready. I have the money that Owen and I saved and if I work one more year at

teaching I should have enough. Mama is feeling stronger now, so perhaps I will think about it."

"I think he would want you to do that, Minnie," Louisa finally said. Minnie thought so, too.

In the fall of 1902, Minnie enrolled at the University and four years later graduated with a Bachelor of Philosophy degree. She accepted a position to teach English Bible at Santiago College for Girls. On October 11, 1906 she sailed from New York aboard the "Alliance." Her first glimpse of the sea was both exhilarating and soothing and now, two years, thousands of miles and a whole culture away from her former life, the sea still held deep fascination and comfort for her.

She packed the last of her things determined to enjoy this time she would spend in Constitucion. Covering the 150 miles between Santiago and the seaside village by train, she and her friends arrived and moved into the quaint cottage they'd rented for a month. Long, lazy days were spent in picnics on the beach, tennis games, reading, long walks in the village, or up to the rocks above the sea to watch the beautiful sunsets.

It was January 10, 1909, and Minnie found herself alone in the cottage at last. The Brownings and Lesters had decided to spend the day in town shopping, but she had declined their invitation to go along. Instead she packed a light lunch, took a few books and her writing materials and made her way up the steep, narrow path that led to the outcropping of rocks high above the sea. She had loved this spot from the first day they had discovered it and she was anxious to spend time here alone. It seemed more than coincidental that she should find such privacy on this particular day. This was the eighth anniversary of the train accident.

She spread the blanket she'd brought and arranged the lunch, her books, and writing things around her. Then she sat, legs hugged to her chest, and gazed out at the sea for a long time. The sun cast long glimmering slivers atop the blue water. Far below the surf crashed against the rocks and several seagulls dipped and squawked over the incoming surf in search of food. She thought of home and the winter that would be blanketing the woods and fields. It had taken her awhile to adjust to living in a country where there was sun and warm breezes in the middle of "her" winter. Minnie closed her eyes and breathed in the pungent salt air.

The sun's rays were hot against her face. She opened her eyes, adjusted her hat against the glare and took up her writing tablet, pen and ink. She had been contemplating the letter she would write for many weeks. When the thought had first occurred to her, she rejected it, thinking it was not normal. The more she rejected it, the more it pursued her until finally she was convinced it was the only way to put the past and future into alignment.

Selecting a fresh sheet of paper she positioned it on top of one of her books and began to write.

January 10, 1909
Constitucion, Chile

My darling Owen,

It has been eight long, grief filled years since you were taken from me. I believe in Heaven and God and know that you must surely be there with Him. For me, that is some consolation and my faith tells me one day we may be together again.

These years have been so painful and lonely. I found myself studying, searching, constantly looking for answers. I think I must finally admit that,

although the answers are not the ones I would have chosen, they are beginning to cast some value on what has seemed a terrible senseless thing.

I believe at last I can say 'Thank God for some troubles.' I did not think I could ever reach that distance, but thank God again, it has come. I do not thank God that He called you to Him so soon, but I am thankful He has undergirded me and led me to a new awareness of the plan for my life.

Long ago when you gave me this ring, which I still wear, and asked me to be your wife, I thought I could see my life laid out before me in neat, orderly fashion. Marriage, a home with you, mother of your children, growing old together. It was all so beautiful and satisfying. But it was not to be and I have had to rest my grieving soul many times with this thought, 'Look not through the sheltering bars upon tomorrow, God will help thee bear what comes of joy or sorrow.'

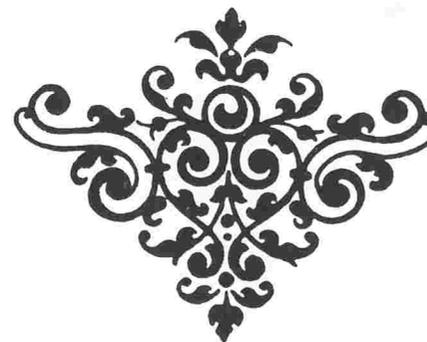
I told you, that year before I went to Dickinson, that I felt God had a plan for my life. I thought I knew then what it was. I did not! That night on my front porch when you presented me with this ring I committed my heart to you. I believe we were, in that instant, married to each other. That is why I will always wear this ring. I do not wish that part of my being to belong to anyone but you.

As for the rest of my existence I will allow God to lead, direct, and use me where he sees fit. I do not ask where these paths will go, only rest in the knowledge that it will be His will, not mine.

So beloved, here high above the sea, in the warmth of a Chilean new year I can finally say, rest in peace my darling.

Until we meet in paradise,
I remain your devoted Minnie

There were no tears this time, only a soft, gentle tug as she tucked him away in that corner of her heart she'd reserved just for him. She stood, folded the letter and tore it into small pieces. A westerly breeze pulled at her skirt as she went to the edge of the rock ledge. She lifted her hand, slowly opened her fingers and let the breeze have the tiny bits of white paper. They fluttered slowly toward the sea. A gull, thinking one a scrap of bread dipped, swirled, and catching it in his beak headed out to sea on the flaming rays of the setting sun.



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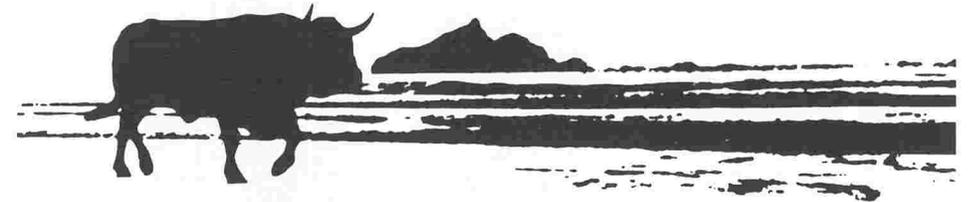
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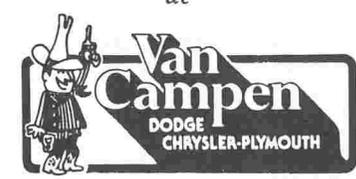


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