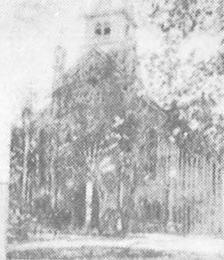




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CHURCH OF GOD

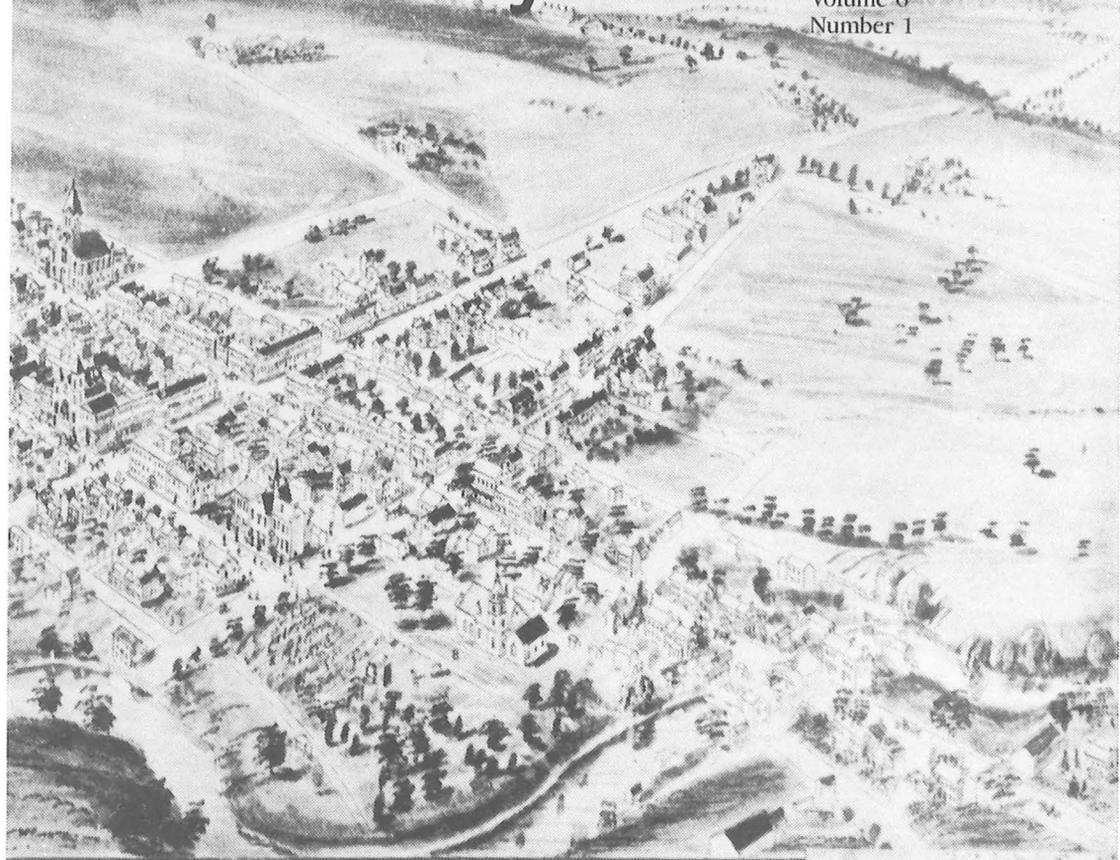


TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

# Cumberland County History



Summer 1989  
Volume 6  
Number 1



... MORRISVILLE, PA.

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### **Membership and Subscription**

*Cumberland County History* is published semi-annually. All members of the Cumberland County Historical Society receive a copy of the journal as part of regular membership. The regular membership fee is \$20.00 annually. Members receive other benefits, including a quarterly newsletter, special invitations to programs and exhibits, and the satisfaction of joining with others to preserve county history. Correspondence regarding membership should be addressed to the Executive Director, Cumberland County Historical Society, 21 North Pitt Street, P.O. Box 626, Carlisle, PA 17013.



# Cumberland County History

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COVER: Oblique aerial view of Newville from a lithograph in the collection of the Association.

## C o n t r i b u t o r S

Mildred E. Hurley, a graduate of Dickinson College, serves on the governing board of the Newville Historical Society and the Perry Historians.

Merri Lou Scribner Schaumann, an alumna of Kent State University, is a professional genealogist, author and volunteer worker at the Hamilton Library.

C. L. Siebert, a professional engineer and graduate of the Pennsylvania State University, has addressed the Society. Among his publications is *The Electric Railways of Cumberland County*.

William T. Swaim is a Presbyterian clergyman, graduate of the University of Tennessee and of Western Theological Seminary, and serious student of the earliest historical records of the Cumberland Valley.

D. W. Thompson earned his baccalaureate degree from Dickinson and a Master's Degree from Harvard. He was a past president of the Society.

Eva M. Williams is a graduate of Gettysburg College and lifelong resident of Mechanicsburg, in whose public schools she taught English until her recent retirement.

## Editor's Head Note

Ordinarily an editor can bounce copy back at an author, if changes are necessary or additions needed. In the case of the late D. W. Thompson, the process obviously cannot take place. Further, the second writer, Merri Lou Schaumann, takes responsibility for the genealogical research only, although she encouraged the editor to do what seemed necessary to prepare the article for publication.

Accordingly, the editor must take blame for the changes made in Mr. Thompson's manuscript. The bulk of these are to be found in the rather formidable footnotes and cutlines, all of which are the editor's work, Mr. Thompson having not given his source in most cases.

It would appear that the principal stimulus for Mr. Thompson's revisionist account of Molly Pitcher is to be found in the work of Jeremiah Zeamer. The latter, a Carlisle newspaper editor, was a very respected genealogist at the turn of the last century, a man whose records continue to be used at both the Society and the Pennsylvania State Library. Zeamer, believing that town boosters had twisted beyond recognition the facts of Mary Hays McKolly's role in the War of the Revolution, carried on his own revisionist campaign for many years at the beginning of the century, using the pages of his own newspaper and, where possible other publications, some of which are listed in the footnotes.

## Goodbye, Molly Pitcher

D. W. Thompson  
and Merri Lou Schaumann

### MOLLY PITCHER — THE PROBLEM

**T**he story of Molly Pitcher of Monmouth, firing her cannon at the British over the body of her husband, was (and is) a popular part of the history of the War of the Revolution, as read by Americans after 1840. After the story had been repeated in one historical account after another and depicted in several well-known prints, it became widely accepted as an accurately recounted event. The first stories called the heroine "Captain Molly"; the first print "Molly Pitcher"; and

thereafter writers called her "Captain," or sometimes "Major Molly," and "Molly Pitcher;" she was made to be one and the same woman.

In Carlisle, Pennsylvania, there lived, and died in 1832, a veteran army woman of the Revolutionary artillery, Molly Hays McKolly. During and after the war she was married to gunner William Hays, and after his death to John McCalla (as usually spelled at the time.) She was known to the townspeople as Molly McKolly. When the story of a Molly Pitcher appeared, several Carlisleers, recalling Molly and her reputation of having done something heroic while with the army, decided that Molly Pitcher was in fact their remembered Molly McKolly. In 1876, at the centennial Fourth of July, popular feeling shown in public meetings preparing for the celebration gladly agreed that her unmarked grave deserved a stone, and it was labeled "Molly Pitcher." Since the story was not doubted, investigation took the form only of inquiring among descendants, aged citizens, and old families, what could be recalled of Molly. No one then suspected that if records were sought earlier than 1840, none could be found of Molly Pitcher at Monmouth. A local patriotic lodge-fraternity, the Patriotic Order, Sons of America, found a natural and perennial object in enhancing Molly's reputation, marking her grave conspicuously with flag and cannon in 1905, and persuading the Commonwealth to erect a large monument in 1916.<sup>1</sup>

Long before this, however, the record of another woman known in the Revolution as "Captain Molly" emerged from obscurity. Margaret Corbin had performed at Fort Washington (not Monmouth) the singular feat of firing her cannon over the body of her husband, whose death she had just witnessed.<sup>2</sup> In 1926 her remains were disinterred and buried in the military cemetery at West Point under a handsome monument inscribed:

IN MEMORY OF MOLLY CORBIN — A HEROINE OF THE REVOLUTION — KNOWN AS CAPTAIN MOLLY 1751-1800, who at the Battle of Fort Washington, New York City, when her husband John Corbin was killed kept his fieldpiece in action until severely wounded and thereafter by Act of Congress received half the pay and allowance of "a soldier in the service" . . . In appreciation of her deeds for the cause of liberty and that her heroism may not be forgotten, her dust was removed to this spot and this memorial erected by the National Society of DAR in New York State, 1926.

After 1840, when the stories first appeared, American histories mistakenly treated "Captain Molly" and "Molly Pitcher" as one and the same woman. Because since 1926 tourists at West Point have been able to see the grave of Captain Molly Corbin and at Carlisle the grave of Molly Pitcher-McKolly, it is not surprising that the stories of these two women became intermingled in the popular mind, for there were striking similarities. Both women lived in an area which in 1776 was Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup> Both married gunners in Proctor's artillery and followed their husbands to the war. Both were known or reported to

have played some heroic part in the war. Both were named Molly. Although thousands of women followed the army during eight years of war, there are, naturally, only a few stories of women involved in actual battle. Two are told of Monmouth, and another of Fort Clinton, on the Hudson River, but the women in these stories are nameless and unidentifiable in any way. The two Mollies, known as persons and growing in reputation with time, invited some confusion with one another.

It may be well to remind the reader, in an investigation of this sort, that the burden of proof is always on the historian, and never on the sceptical critic. If a sceptic expresses an unorthodox disbelief in some fact that has been accepted for more than a century, he will be asked to prove that the doubted tradition is false. On the other hand, all that the doubter need do is to point to the lack of evidence. The obligation rests always on the assertor of any historical fact to supply the evidence for the fact, and no length of time can shift this burden. Long, unquestioned repetition of a story provides specious and apparently sufficient evidence of truth. Nineteenth-century historians repeated the story of Molly at Monmouth without bothering to cite sources. More careful twentieth-century historians often refer to the story and cite some striking earlier statement, or some early incident, while still failing to provide any evidence that Molly fired her cannon at Monmouth.

The story of Molly Pitcher strongly asks investigation. This paper tries to discover the truth about Molly Pitcher by looking at the records and relying upon them (although possibly mistaken), while refusing to accept as history, accounts



CARLISLE'S MARY Ludwig Hays McKolly lived in this house which stood at the Southeast corner of Bedford and North Streets.

appearing fifty or a hundred years after their events which have no discoverable basis. What might be called the "Carlisle version" of the Molly Pitcher story was put together between 1876 and 1896; it was composed literally of old wives' tales, none the less true for that reason, but open to question.<sup>4</sup>

Folklore is fascinating, and the account of how Molly Hays came to be saluted as Molly Pitcher by a whole community in 1876 may well interest the folklorist. Folklore has always aroused speculation regarding mysterious origins and transmission. In Carlisle one can see the growth of a legend.

Misleadingly, the Molly Pitcher story in any version has always been presented to the public as simple history, and history is the concern of this paper. Folklore expresses the popular imagination. History attempts to approach the truth regarding past events. Eighteenth-century records of Captain Molly are all too few and under her alternative name of "Molly Pitcher" entirely lacking. Lacking also are war-time records of Molly Hays, but records of her later life and of the time of her death are deserving of attention.

### MOLLY PITCHER

By the time of the nation's centennial in 1876 the story or tradition of Molly Pitcher was well developed and well known to the public. Briefly, the story ran that Molly had been a camp-follower of the Revolutionary Army, the wife or sweetheart of an artilleryman. At the Battle of Monmouth, as Molly was carrying water to refresh the troops on the battle-line, she saw her husband wounded or killed by enemy fire. She promptly picked up his fallen ramrod and took his place at the cannon, ramming and swabbing the gun to the admiration of the soldiers. General George Washington later commended her bravery and gave her a non-commissioned rank.

In the legend Molly was never positively identified. She was said to be Irish, because Molly was a common Irish nickname for Mary, but the name Pitcher was always attributed to her custom of carrying water. Then in 1876, suddenly, Molly was identified in Carlisle, Pennsylvania as Molly McKolly, a Revolutionary camp-follower who had lived and died in Carlisle in 1832. A few older residents of the small town remembered her in her later years, since she had died nearly forty-five years earlier, and most of them recalled that at her death it had been said that she had been known and officially recognized for some, then unspecified, service with the army, commendable as beyond the ordinary work of a camp-follower.

"Camp-follower" has probably never been quite respectable as a descriptive title. It was naturally assumed that such a rough mode of life with a company of soldiers would produce a woman little better than a prostitute. Yet many respectable army wives "followed the drum," as the phrase then ran, and tramped with the supply wagons behind the army to be near their husbands and make themselves useful. In a way, aside from battles, skirmishes and guard duty, the women worked harder than the men. They walked just as far, and their work as cooks and washer-women began when the men stopped to rest.

The nineteenth century was not an age of historical criticism. Americans were proud of the exploits of their men in the Revolution and later wars. Histories tried to be popular, and writers sought to discover new anecdotes to publish rather than to examine critically those already current. In 1876 no one doubted the story of a Molly Pitcher, which was found in popular histories, school books, historical fiction, and in colored prints available for purchase.

In Carlisle, once the assertion had been made, no one doubted the identification with Molly McKolly. She seemed to fill the bill. In 1876 her unmarked grave was located and a modest stone erected to her memory as Molly Pitcher. Her fame continued to grow for the next fifty years. One local historian, Jeremiah Zeamer, attempted to de-mythologize Molly, but his voice was not heard.<sup>5</sup>

#### GROWTH OF THE LEGEND — THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

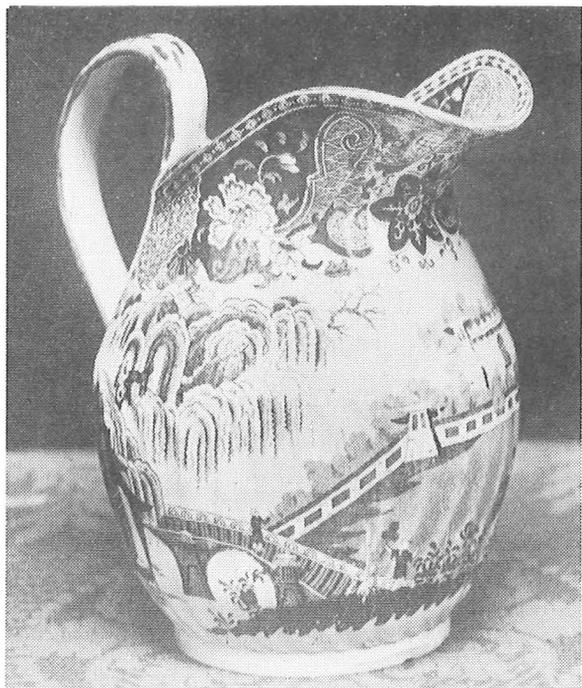
Disregarding embellishments and variations, the story to be traced is essentially that of a woman named Molly Pitcher who carried water, saw her husband or lover wounded or killed, and took his place as an artillery matross by ramming and swabbing, perhaps firing, his cannon at the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey. When one seeks a contemporary account of the battle, none is to be found. There is no record of any woman working a cannon at Monmouth, although there are stories of women there, one of which resembles the Molly Pitcher story, except that no cannon is involved.

The first printed reference to the alleged Monmouth event involving the cannon appeared in 1840, sixty-two years after the battle, when there appeared in print the diary of Albigeance Waldo, a Connecticut physician who was serving as a surgeon with the troops in 1778. A few days after Monmouth, "in camp opposite Brunswick," on 3 July 1778, he wrote:

One of the camp women I must give a little praise to. Her gallant, whom she attended in battle, being shot down, she immediately took up his gun and cartridges and like a Spartan heroine fought with astonishing bravery, discharging the piece with as much regularity as any soldier present. This, a wounded officer whom I dressed, told me he did see himself, she being in his platoon, and assured me that I might depend on its truth.<sup>6</sup>

This is not the Molly Pitcher story, but it may well be an important source of it. In both tales a woman sees her husband or lover shot down and bravely takes his place working his gun. The great difference is that the account deals with the infantry and not the artillery. [Mary's husband at Monmouth was enlisted in William Irvine's infantry regiment, but how strange it is that Irvine, in reporting to his wife and others about the battle, did not mention Mary, who supposedly was not only from his hometown but actually a servant in his own household.]

A little confusion might bridge the gap. "Gun" and "piece" were both used indiscriminately of muskets and cannon, so that a slight change in the story, as told and retold, could shift the scene to the artillery.



THIS PITCHER once belonged to Mary Ludwig Hays McKolly. The gift of a descendant to the Society, it obviously was not standard issue battlefield gear.

Another veteran of Monmouth was private Joseph Martin, who gave a quite different story. It has not the immediacy of Dr. Waldo's in that Martin first published it in his memoirs in 1830 and might have heard the story at any time. At Monmouth, he said:

A woman whose husband belonged to the artillery . . . attended with her husband at the piece the whole time. While in the act of reaching for a cartridge and having one of her feet as far before the other as she could step, a cannon shot from the enemy passed directly between her legs, without doing any other damage than carrying away all the lower part of her petticoat. Looking at it with apparent unconcern, she observed that it was lucky it didn't pass a little higher, for in that case it might have carried away something else, and continued her occupation.<sup>7</sup>

This is a good camp-fire story, and the touch of bawdery probably carried it through every mess in the army. An echo or two is heard later, but it is not a central or constant element in the Molly Pitcher story. It concerns a brave or nonchalant camp follower in the artillery at Monmouth, and because both Dr. Waldo's and Joseph Martin's women are entirely unidentifiable, both stories could be told of the same heroine, if she were put in the artillery.

Although there was no known woman cannoneer at Monmouth, there was one at the taking of Fort Mifflin on October 26, 1776. Margaret Corbin was the

wife of John Corbin, matross in Captain Francis Proctor's company of artillery. She was the daughter of Robert Cochran, born in 1751 in present Franklin County, Pennsylvania. An Indian raid in 1756 killed her father and carried off her mother. She followed the husband she married in 1772 to the war, and while carrying water during the attack on Fort Washington she saw her husband killed at his gun. She heroically took his place until she herself was disabled and permanently crippled by three grape-shot.<sup>8</sup>

After some time the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania became concerned for the proper care of Margaret Corbin and wrote to the Board of War that rations alone did not meet her need. Hence there are a half a dozen records concerning her in the *Colonial Records* series of the *Pennsylvania Archives* and in the *Journals of the Continental Congress*. On July 6, 1779, the Congress:

*Resolved*, That Margaret Corbin, who was wounded and disabled in the attack on Fort Washington, whilst she heroically filled the post of her husband who was killed by her side serving a piece of artillery, do receive, during her natural life, or the continuance of her disability, the one-half of the monthly pay drawn by a soldier in the service of these states; and that she now receive out of the public stores, one complete suit of cloaths or the value thereof in money.<sup>9</sup>

Her name appears in the roll of the Invalid Regiment of Pennsylvania, commanded by Colonel Lewis Nichola, when the regiment was discharged in April, 1783.<sup>10</sup> Her record has not been traced after that date.

Quite plainly the Margaret Corbin story may be the source of the Molly Pitcher story if, many years later, the locale was mistakenly supposed to be Monmouth instead of Fort Washington.

Another woman cannoneer (possibly the same) was recalled in the 1840's, by one old man, as having fired the last gun before the abandonment of Fort Clinton, October 6, 1777. Benjamin F. Lossing, while collecting anecdotes for a popular book met a Beverly Clinton, on the west bank of the Hudson River below West Point.<sup>11</sup> From his boyhood during the Revolution, Garrison remembered that when the men fled Fort Clinton, before the final attack of the British, a matross had dropped his match by his gun, and his wife had picked it up and fired the loaded cannon before she too ran off.

Other accounts of Fort Clinton fail to mention the incident. Obviously Garrison may have mistaken Fort Clinton for Fort Washington. That did not occur to Lossing, for his vast collection of materials missed the Margaret Corbin story entirely. Garrison also remembered a woman called Captain Molly, identified by Lossing as the famous Irish woman who worked a field-piece at Monmouth. He talked at the same time with a Mrs. Rebecca Rose of that neighborhood, who recalled a woman called "Dirty Kate," who died after the war near Buttermilk Falls. Lossing and his consultants thought that the three women, of Fort Clinton, Captain Molly, and Dirty Kate, were one and the same.

Lossing also obtained a recollection of Captain Molly from the widow of Alexander Hamilton, who lived to a great age. She recalled Captain Molly as a young Irish woman with a freckled face and piercing eyes, who would collect a hatful of alms money from the French soldiers by passing along their lines. These personal recollections of Captain Molly were not gathered in the first fifty years after the battle, but if known later, they must have been known earlier.

Contemporary records of Captain Molly as an invalid exist. Major Edward C. Boynton printed a number of letters from a Major Fleming, who had charge of her maintenance, written from West Point to the Secretary of War, in 1786 and 1787.<sup>12</sup> They ask repeatedly for more shifts for Captain Molly, who needed them badly, and speak of her as an unpleasant patient to care for. Major Fleming says nothing of Captain Molly's previous history or personal identity, but, concerned only for her care, there was no reason why he should. His evidence of Captain Molly's real existence is important because the first printed account of the Molly Pitcher story was told of Captain Molly Pitcher being the later, and finally the popular form of the name. Major Fleming reports that her name disappeared from the Commissary's rolls in 1789, which he therefore supposes to be the year of her death.

Such was the state of the Molly Pitcher legend at the close of the first fifty years after Monmouth. The various stories were known, sometimes to individuals only, such as Martin or Garrison or Mrs. Rose or Mrs. Hamilton; sometimes to a battery or platoon of soldiers. Such haphazard and scattered recollections could hardly produce a nationally-known legend. Not one of the stories regarded above had appeared in print, and so they were not a matter of public knowledge. Joseph Martin published his story of the wide-stepping woman who did not mind a cannon ball carrying off her skirt, provided it did not hit her, in 1830. It remained for the writers and print-makers of the 'forties, 'fifties and 'sixties to develop and fix the Molly Pitcher story as it came to be generally believed and accepted in 1876.

#### GROWTH OF THE LEGEND — THE SECOND FIFTY YEARS

The chief begetter of the story of the cannoneer-heroine at Monmouth appears to have been George Washington Parke Curtis (1781-1857), Martha Washington's grandson through her first marriage. His father, John P. Custis, died at Yorktown in the Revolution, about the time the son was born, and the boy was reared in the Washington household. During Washington's presidencies Custis must have spent some time at St. John's and Princeton, where he was educated; he was only eighteen when Washington died. Custis remained with his grandmother until her death in 1802 and then moved to Arlington, Virginia.

As the last survivor of the Washington family, Custis received the Marquis de Lafayette on his visit to the United States in 1824 and shortly thereafter published his *Conversations with Lafayette* in periodical form. His success with these encouraged him to write his recollections of Washington, some being printed in

the *United States Gazette* in the late 1820's. All were printed and reprinted in 1840 in the *National Intelligencer* of Washington. After Custis's death his *Recollections and Private Memories of Washington* as the title ran, were printed in book form in 1859 and again with notes by Benson J. Lossing in 1860. Two of his essays describe Captain Molly. "The Battle of Monmouth" has the most important narrative as follows:

At one of the guns of Proctor's battery, six men had been killed or wounded. It was deemed an unlucky gun and murmurs arose that it should be drawn back and abandoned. At this juncture, while Captain Molly was serving some water for the refreshment of the men, her husband received a shot in the head, and fell lifeless under the wheels of the piece. The heroine threw down the pail of water, and crying to her dead consort, "lie there my darling while I revenge ye" grasped the ramrod the lifeless hand of the poor fellow had just relinquished, sent home the charge, and called to the matrosses to prime and fire. It was done. Then entering the sponge into the smoking muzzel of the cannon, the heroine performed to admiration the duties of the most expert artilleryman, while loud shots from the soldiers rang along the line; the doomed gun was no longer deemed unlucky, and the fire of the battery became more vivid than ever. The amazonian fair one kept to her post till night closed the action, when she was introduced to General Greene, who, complimenting her upon her courage and conduct, the next morning presented her to the Commander-in-Chief. Washington received her graciously, gave her a piece of gold and assured her that her services should not be forgotten.

This remarkable and intrepid woman survived the Revolution, never for an instant laying aside the appellation she has so nobly won, and levying contributions upon both civil and military, whenever she recounted the tale of the doomed gun, and the famed Captain Molly at the Battle of Monmouth....<sup>13</sup>

Another reference to Captain Molly appears also in *Recollections* called "Headquarters":

Among the great variety of persons and characters that were to be found from time to time at and about Headquarters, was the famed Captain Molly. After her heroic achievements at the Battle of Monmouth the heroine was always received with a cordial welcome at Headquarters, where she was employed in the duties of the household. She always wore an artilleryman's coat, with the cocked hat and feather, the distinguishing costume of Proctor's artillery. One day the Chief accosted this remarkable woman while she was engaged in washing some clothes, pleasantly observing: "Well, Captain Molly, are you not most tired of this quiet way of life, and longing to be once more on the field of battle?" "Troth, your Excellency," replied the heroine, "and yet may say that; for I care not how soon I have another slap at them red coats, bad luck to them." "But what is to become of your petticoats in such an event, Captain Molly?" "Oh, long life to your excellency, and never de ye mind them at all, at all," continued this intrepid female. "Sure, and it is only in the artillery your Excellency knows that I would sarve, and divil a fear but smoke of the cannon will hide my petticoats."<sup>14</sup>

In the *Recollections* of Custis appears for the first time, sixty years after Monmouth, a detailed account of the heroic actions of a woman cannoneer, here called Captain Molly, who was carrying water, saw her husband killed, kept his gun in action, and later received the praise of Washington. With occasional variations, this is the story which has been repeated and, sometimes uneasily, accepted down to the present day as part of the history of Monmouth.

It is difficult to accept Custis's stories as simple and true history. It seems apparent that with the eye of the journalist and dramatist he sought out the surprising and striking to give point to a good story, presented in his conscious literary style. If details were lacking but desirable, Custis apparently thought it proper and part of his literary art to supply them. Neither Dr. Waldo's woman nor Margaret Corbin needed any cries of abandoning a gun or position to act; they simply took their men's places. Custis sets the stage by saying that six men had been killed at one gun, which was therefore thought to be so unlucky that it ought to be abandoned. But such an unusual blow could hardly escape contemporary notice. For so confused a battle it seems remarkable that there exists an American casualty list for more than three-fourths of the total. Of these, two men were killed and six men wounded in the artillery, which consisted (S. S. Smith's estimate) of fifteen or sixteen guns. With a possible total of ten or twelve, Custis is quite improbable in having six casualties at one gun. Nor would the Americans have abandoned it. All American cannon had been captured from the British. Under the colonial trade laws manufactures in heavy metal were forbidden (one of the discontents of the Revolution), and there was not a foundry in America capable of producing cannon. (At Carlisle, the Americans tried to cast iron, banding layers of iron rods into tubes for barrels). They abandoned a gun only when forced to do so by enemy action.

After the modern reader, guided only by his own fallible deductions, has tried to separate Custis's embellishments from the historical substance, he then begins another guessing game of trying to determine how much of the remainder is true history and how much is attributable to mistakes in the sources or changes made in the course of tradition. Where did Custis find the story of Molly at Monmouth? There are several possibilities. He might have heard the Dr. Waldo story told as though the gun were a cannon. This happened at Monmouth. Or he might have heard the Margaret Corbin story mistakenly told as at Monmouth instead of Fort Washington. The main incidents correspond exactly. It should be noted, however, that if Custis heard the Corbin story, he did not know that she had been badly wounded. Supposing that Margaret Corbin somehow became a few years later known as Captain Molly (a real person maintained as an invalid near West point) she could not later on have served as a domestic at Headquarters or anywhere else, because she had been crippled by grape-shot.

As a wealthy gentleman Custis disdained to cultivate the Best Seller market. His *Conversations with Lafayette* and his *Recollections...of Washington* were published only in periodicals (the *National Intelligencer* was widely read) while he lived. While Custis was the begetter of the popular version of the Molly-at-Mon-



THE WOMEN OF '78.  
"MOLLY PITCHER" THE HEROINE OF MONMOUTH.

PHOTOGRAPH OF AN 19th century print of a woman working a cannon at the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey. Note that the artist shows a wooden bucket that is still dripping its contents. From a copy in the Society Collection.

mouth story, it reached the American public through being repeated in Lossing's popular *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*. For four years he traveled thousands of miles to visit the battlefields and other notable sites of the Revolution, making a thousand sketches of fields, forts and buildings, and maps to show their location. His work appeared in thirty parts beginning in 1850, and they were gathered into a two-volume work in 1852.

There is no doubt that Lossing drew his account of Captain Molly at Monmouth from George Washington Parke Custis. In his travels he visited Custis at Arlington House in 1850 and soon noticed a painting of "The Field of Monmouth" done by Custis himself, showing Captain Molly at her gun as a prominent feature. Lossing obtained permission to make an outline sketch of the painting, to reproduce in his book. So it is proved that he discussed Molly with Custis and became aware of the *Recollections of Washington*, if not already familiar with them. The story of Captain Molly then appears as a long footnote to the account of the Battle of Monmouth:

It was during this part of the action that Molly, the wife of a cannonier, is said to have displayed great courage and presence of mind. We have already noticed her bravery in firing the last gun at Fort Clinton. She was a sturdy young camp-follower, only twenty-two years old, and, in devotion to her husband, she illustrated the character of her countrywomen of the Emerald Isle. In the action in question, while her husband was managing one of the field-pieces, she constantly brought him water from a spring near by. A shot from the enemy killed him at his post; and the officer in command, having no one competent to fill his place, ordered the piece to be withdrawn. Molly saw her husband fall as she came from the spring, and also heard the order. She dropped her bucket, seized the rammer, and vowed that she would fill the place of her husband at the gun and avenge his death. She performed the duty with a skill and courage which attracted the attention of all who saw her. On the following morning, covered with dirt and blood, General Greene presented her to Washington, who, admiring her bravery, conferred upon her the commission of sergeant. By his recommendation, her name was placed upon the list of half-pay officers for life. She left the army soon after the Battle of Monmouth, and as we have before observed, died near Fort Montgomery, among the Hudson Highlands. She usually went by the name of "Captain Molly." He described her as a stout, red-haired, freckled-face young Irish woman, with a handsome, piercing eye. The French officers, charmed by the story of her bravery, made her many presents. She would sometimes pass along the French lines with her cocked hat, and get it almost filled with crowns.

Small differences from Custis can be found. Lossing is content with the death of one man, Molly's husband, and not six, as cause for his piece to be "withdrawn," and elements new to the Custis version do not derive from him at all. For Molly and the last gun at Fort Clinton, one is referred to another part of Lossing's book, where, travelling in the Hudson Highlands, he meets two aged citizens who remember the Revolution.

Mr. Garrison remembered the famous Irish woman called Captain Molly, the wife of a cannonier, who worked a field-piece at the Battle of Monmouth, on the death of her husband. She generally dressed in the petticoats of her sex with an artilleryman's coat over. She was in Fort Clinton with her husband, when it was attacked. When the Americans retreated from the fort, as the enemy scaled the ramparts, her husband dropped his match and fled. Molly caught it up, touched off the piece and then scampered off. It was the last gun fired by the Americans in the fort. Mrs. Rose (just mentioned) remembers her as "Dirty Kate," living between Fort Montgomery and Buttermilk Falls, at the close of the war, where she died a horrible death from the effects of a syphilitic disease. I shall have occasion to refer to this bold camp-follower, whom Washington honored with a Lieutenant's commission for her bravery on the field of Monmouth, nearly nine months afterward, when reviewing the events of that battle."

To Lossing, the career of Captain Molly was a long-continued tale. She fired the last gun at Fort Clinton October 6, 1777, and reappeared at Monmouth to work the cannon at which her husband was killed. She then retired to a quiet life in the Hudson Highlands and finally died miserably of syphilis, known then as "Dirty Kate." Molly's action at Fort Clinton and her death at Highland Falls, unknown to Custis and other writers, in Lossing's *Pictorial Field Book* are widely separated from the account of Monmouth and never became part of the popular legend of Molly Pitcher.

The Fort Clinton incident may be suspect. Other accounts of the battle do not mention it, and it seems to rest on Garrison's memory alone. At this distance it seems probable that Garrison simply confused Fort Clinton with Fort Washington. This possibility did not occur to Lossing, because neither he nor Custis ever heard of Captain Molly being wounded and crippled at Fort Washington and incapable of action at Fort Clinton or Monmouth; they knew only the unharmed heroine of Monmouth.

Thus far all references are to "Molly Pitcher." Major Fleming at West Point, G. W. P. Custis, and his continuator Benson Lossing, never used any name but "Captain Molly." Now, for no discoverable reason, the print-makers, depicting in their own styles Molly ramming home the charge in her cannon, always called her "Molly Pitcher," and perhaps because a picture is worth a thousand words, their name finally ousted "Captain Molly."

Nathaniel Currier (not yet joined by Ives) produced the earliest known print in 1848, seventy years after Monmouth, and called her, for the first time, "Molly Pitcher, the Heroine of Monmouth." Only two possible sources of the name have thus far suggested themselves; one incredible, and the other unreasonable.

Molly Pitcher had been, in fact, a name well known to the American people for many years. Moll Dimond Pitcher, a real person, resided at Lynn, Massachusetts, in the later eighteenth century. She was famed for her occult powers as a fortune-teller and prophetess, whose special province was the sea. She was consulted by

ship-owners and sailors, who would not send out a clipper or whaler or join a crew if Moll Pitcher foresaw disaster. John Greenleaf Whittier wrote a long narrative poem on Moll Pitcher of Lynn, a publication of 1832 which Whittier came to dislike and later tried to suppress. Her story was dramatized by J. S. Jones in a melodrama entitled *Moll Pitcher, or the Fortune Teller of Lynn*, imagined to have taken place in 1790. It first appeared on stage in Boston in 1839 and many times thereafter in Boston, New York and Philadelphia. One may imagine, if one likes, that Currier thought that Molly or Captain Molly was too indefinite a name for a famous heroine, and knowing only one famous Molly in American history, captioned the print Molly Pitcher. But such a blunder or whim is scarcely credible. There is nothing in the story of Moll Pitcher of Lynn to connect her with the Revolutionary War and nothing in the picture of Molly at her cannon to suggest a fortune teller of sea voyages.

If it is indeed that the woman who was the subject of the Molly Pitcher legend never lived in Carlisle, the question arises as to who was the Molly McKolly (McCauley), who lies buried in the old graveyard in Carlisle under the monument memorializing the bravery of Molly Pitcher.

She was the widow of a Revolutionary War veteran, and she lived in Carlisle from 1783 until her death in 1832. Unfortunately, however, the facts surrounding her life before 1783 remain obscure.<sup>17</sup>

The census records place the birth of Mary, also known as Molly, somewhere between 1750 and 1755. She met and married William Hays and later followed him to the war, although the exact dates and details of the events themselves remain unknown. William and Mary had one son, John L. Hays.

As to her nationality, Wesley Miles, a Carlisle school teacher, decided she was Irish, probably because all accounts of Captain Molly or Molly Pitcher, said she was Irish. These assertions may be echos of an old memory of Margaret Corbin, who was Scotch-Irish. [Scots-Irish at the time were regularly termed "the Irish."]

Agnes Graham, daughter of Judge James H. Graham, wrote in 1876 that Molly was German, an opinion shared by Polly McCleaster, Molly's granddaughter, who said Molly was as "Dutch as sauerkraut." Polly's opinion is probably accurate, because she is likely to have had first-hand contact with Molly's speech and cooking. Her testimony is certainly persuasive in light of the fact that these were not the recollections of a young girl; Molly did not die until Polly was thirty years old. An additional piece of supportive data is the revelation that Molly's descendants belonged to the First Lutheran Church in Carlisle, which had a predominately German congregation.

Agnes Graham also wrote that Molly's maiden name was Ludwig which was most likely derived from information from Polly McCleaster. The Reverend J. A. Murray, in 1883, said the "L" in John L. Hays, Molly's son, stood for Ludwig, which may have been only a shaky deduction made from Agnes Graham's statement in

1876. John L. Hay's middle name has never actually been recorded. Deeds and war records usually contain such information, but here they do not.

Molly was never married to a Casper, John or John Casper Hays, as her monument in the cemetery states. She was married to William Hays, as all court records clearly show. These records were never seen, or else they were ignored in various accounts by the Carlisle historians who dealt with the story, namely: Wesley Miles, Agnes Graham, Dr. Conway Wing and Dr. Joseph A. Murray, John Landis, an attorney, Mrs. Sarah W. Parkinson, reference librarian at the Pennsylvania State



MARGARET COCHRAN CORBIN, a native of the Chambersburg area, replaced her fallen artilleryman husband here at an outpost of Ft. Washington, New York, in 1776. Wallace Geety marked the site of the memorial as "190th St. Subway Stn." Photograph by Geety from Society collection.

Library, and Judge Edward W. Biddle. Jeremiah Zeamer, editor of the *American Volunteer* newspaper in Carlisle, alone found the correct information and campaigned from about 1908-1915 against honoring Molly McCauley, but his efforts were unsuccessful.

Little is known about William Hays before the war. *The Pennsylvania Archives* show he enlisted as a gunner in Proctor's Artillery on May 10, 1777 from Bristol, Bucks Co., Pennsylvania, and his birthplace was listed as Ireland. Further records show that he was on furlough in Carlisle in the spring of 1779.

At the end of the war, in 1783, William Hays, his wife Mary, and their three-year-old son, John L. Hays, settled in Carlisle. William purchased Lot #257 on South Street<sup>18</sup> and took up barbering as indicated on tax lists.

During August of 1785, Pearce Rannals, who had belonged to Proctor's Artillery and was a waiter or valet to Captain Beatty, came to Carlisle and boarded with William and Mary. He ran William into debt at local stores and taverns, saying he was a brother of William's, and then left stealing William's musket, powder horn and a pair of his plaited buckles, see *Carlisle Gazette* 21 September 1785.

William and Mary seemed to have lived comfortably, as is evidenced by William's inventory filed at his death. Listed among other items are walnut tables, chairs, a painted cupboard, an armchair, six china cups and saucers, six silver tea spoons, feather beds, sheets, coverlets, looking glasses and so forth.

William Hays probably died in the summer of 1786; his inventory was dated July 24, 1786. William's debts exceeded his assets, and his wife Mary petitioned the court to sell one-half of the lot on South St. to pay William's debts.<sup>19</sup>

William was probably buried in the old cemetery in Carlisle; it was nearby, and Mary was later buried there. If there was a tombstone, it could not be found when efforts were made to find Mary's grave.

William and Mary's son, John L. Hays, was born in 1780. The account of his father shows money owed to Mrs. Minsher for schooling. John married Elizabeth Reinhart on 18 November 1802, and they reared a large family in Carlisle. John, a sergeant in the War of 1812, served six months in 1814, being discharged at Albany, New York. John died March 20, 1856 and was buried with military honors. His descendants, for the most part, stayed in Carlisle and are represented [1975] by Jacob Jesse Hays living on Spring Street in Carlisle, he is the great, great, great, great grandson of Mary and William Hays.

After the death of William Hays, Mary married John McCalla. No record of their marriage can be found, but the 1793 tax records for Carlisle show that they are married. Tax lists give Mary's name at various times as Mary, Molly and Polly.

John McCalla and Mary lived in the house on South Street. John was probably a laborer; records show that in 1789 and 1790 he was paid for hauling stones and clay for the prison in Carlisle.

The next mention of John McCalla is in the Quarter Session Docket #7 p. 182, dated August 1794, when John was brought before the court on the charge of assaulting Jane Anderson, who was a neighbor of John and Molly's.

John pleaded guilty but claimed he was innocent, and was put on probation for one year.

The 1800 census for Carlisle shows John McCalley's household consisting of John and Mary, both aged forty-five years and above, and one female under ten years old. Records never mention Mary having a daughter, so it is not known who the child was.

On October 3, 1806, Mary McCalla received two hundred acres of donation land for services rendered in the Revolutionary War by her late husband William Hays of Proctor's 4th Artillery, Continental Line. Less than one year later, Mary, John McCalla and Mary's son John sold the donation land for \$30 to James Brady of Greensburg, Westmoreland Company. Apparently to satisfy Brady of the donation land, the following statement was taken and is included in the files of the National Archives.

Cumberland County, Pa. to wit: Personally appeared before me the subscriber (John Cree) one of the associate judges of the court of Common Pleas . . . James Roney of the Borough of Carlisle, Cumberland Co., who being duly sworn . . . saith that he has known Mary Hays (now McCalla) late widow of William Hays, a gunner in Col. Proctor's Regiment of Artillerists during the Revolutionary War, and that the said Mary had but one child named John L. Hays, about 27 years ago to the said William Hays, and none other to the best of his knowledge. That the said Mary McCalla (late Mary Hays) and John L. Hays are now in full life . . . the said Mary being intermarried to John McCalla.

What became of John McCalla is not known. Sometime between 1807, when he and Mary sold the donation land and 1810 when the census was taken, he disappeared. No record of his death can be found in Carlisle.

The 1810 census for Carlisle shows Molly's household consisting of herself and five females; two of which were children under ten. Molly was described during the later part of her life as homely in appearance with a defective eye. She was not refined in manner or language, but she was ready to do a kind act for anyone. She was of average height, muscular, strong and heavy set. She wore a short gown, white or calico, a lindsy striped skirt which was very short and full, woolen stockings, heavy brogans and a broad white cap with wide, flaring ruffles.<sup>20</sup>

[Editor's notes: other fragmentary items concerning Mary of Carlisle can be found in the records. Judge Edward Biddle, in his 28 June 1916 address at the unveiling of the Molly Pitcher monument in the Carlisle graveyard told of her earning a living by "hard manual work." He found payments recorded in the "payment book" of the County Commissioners telling of \$15 for "Molly McCalley for washing and scrubbing the court house" and another five days later on 23 April 1811 for \$1.03. On August 5, 1813, there was an entry of \$22.36 to Molly McCawley and others for "cleaning and washing and whitewashing the public buildings."

Thompson's notes, without telling where he got the information, quote various people who had known Mary McCauley. One Peter Spahr said that she was "a very masculine person, alike rough in appearance and character; small and heavy with bristles in her nose, and could both drink whiskey and swear." Wesley Miles wrote in 1876 in the *Carlisle Herald* that she was "prone to indulge in passion and profanity." William Park and Polly McCleester, a granddaughter, said that she "drank grog and used language not the most polite."

Thompson quotes in his notes, but did not include in his paper, from a letter of 27 December 1910 written by Jeremiah Zeamer to Congressman M. E. Olmstead as follows: "Harriet Foulk pronounced her 'a vulgar profane, drunken old woman . . . I was afraid of her; she was so uncouth, really vulgar, very profane, was homely, yes ugly and gray.' "]

In 1814, Mary McCalla, along with her son John L. Hays and his wife Elizabeth, sold the house and part of lot #257 on South Street.<sup>21</sup> Thereafter Molly is said to have lived as a domestic in other homes. She is said to have worked in the Irvine, Miles, Miller and Foulke households.

In 1822 Molly applied for a pension from the state of Pennsylvania. The bill for her pension was introduced on 29 January 1822. On 11 February 1822 the bill was read for the first time in the Senate with the following wording, "*An Act for the relief of Molly McKolly, widow of a soldier of the Revolutionary War.*" Two days later the Senate resolved itself into a committee of the whole to discuss the bill entitled "An Act for the relief of Molly McKolly, widow of a soldier of the Revolutionary War." After some time the committee rose and reported the bill without amendment. The bill was read a third time in the Senate at which time it was passed, and the bill was then to be presented to the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives resolved itself into a committee of the whole on the bill from the Senate No. 265 entitled "An act for the relief of Molly McKolly, widow of a soldier of the Revolutionary War." After some time the Speaker resumed the chair, and the chairman reported the bill without amendment. On the second reading in the House of Representatives it was ordered that the bill be prepared for a third reading, amending the title of the bill by striking out the words, "widow of a soldier" and inserting the words "for services rendered in." The Senate concurred in the amendment by the House, and the bill was presented to Governor Joseph Hiester. Even so, there was no change in the amount of her pension. She received the same as a widow's pension which was \$40 per year — a soldier's half-pay. As of this date, no papers or proceedings have been found to show on what other basis she received the pension in her own name instead of for her husband's service as put forth in the original bill.

The *National Advocate* of New York ran an editorial on 7 March 1822 which read:



IN 1932 THE NEW YORK State Education Department erected this roadside marker to "Captain Molly," Margaret Corbin, on a highway leading into West Point. Photograph by Geety c. 1930 from Society collection.

Molly Macauly, who received a pension from the State of Pennsylvania for service rendered during the Revolutionary War, was well-known to the general officers as a brave and patriotic woman. She was called Sgt. McCauly, and was wounded at some battle, supposed to be the Brandywine, where her sex was discovered. It was a common practice for her to swing her sabre over her head, and huzza for "Mad Anthony" as she termed General Wayne. It was an unusual circumstance to find women in the ranks disguised as men, such was their order for independence. Elizabeth Canning was at a gun at Fort Washington when her husband was killed and she took his place immediately, loaded, primed and fired the cannon with which he was entrusted. She was wounded in the breast by grapeshot . . .

As can be seen from the above editorial, which was written less than one month after Mary Hays McCauley (McKolly) of Carlisle received her pension, there is no mention of Monmouth, or that she ever fired a cannon.

Molly probably spent the last years of her life living with her son and his family. The 1830 census of Carlisle shows a female aged 70-80 years old in his household.

Molly died in Carlisle on 22 January 1832. *The American Volunteer* 26 January ran the following notice:

Died on Sunday last, in this borough, at an advanced age, Mrs. Molly McCauley. She lived during the days of the American Revolution, shared its hardships, and witnessed many a scene of "Blood and carnage." To the sick and wounded she was an efficient aid, for which; and being the widow of an American hero, she received during the latter years of her life, an annuity from the government. For upwards of 40 years she resided in this borough; and was during that time, recognized as an honest, obliging, and industrious woman. She has left numerous relatives to regret her decease; who with many others of her acquaintance, have a hope that her reward in the world to which she has gone, will far exceed that which she received in this.

And, the *Carlisle Herald* 26 January 1832 ran the following obituary:

Died on Sunday last, Mrs. Mary McAuley (better known by the name of Molly McAuley) aged 90 years. The history of this woman is somewhat remarkable. Her first husband's name was Hays who was a soldier in the war of the Revolution. It appears she continued with him in the army and acted so much the part of the heroine as to attract the notice of the officers. Some estimate may be formed of the value of the service by her, when the fact is stated that she drew a pension from the government during the latter years of her life.

The local newspapers treated her kindly in obituary notices but refrained from intimating in the slightest degree that she ever fired a cannon at the Battle of Monmouth. The editors of both papers had long resided in Carlisle, had long known Molly, and presumably would have been glad to have placed that incident to her credit had she possessed any claim for such a distinction. Molly Hays McCauley may have helped to pass the ammunition, or carried water to the troops in battle, or done anything related to any other follower of the artillery. One cannot say that she did these things, simply from a lack of evidence. She did leave a reputation of unusually faithful and useful service with the soldiers, and with that one must be content. But that is a good deal, and enough to justify a statue in memory of her life, although the Molly Pitcher story and the facts engraved upon it are mistaken.<sup>22</sup>

## EPILOGUE

Several years after this paper was given, additional information came to light in the form of the obituary of John L. Hays, the son of Molly McCauley. The *American Volunteer* ran the following obituary on 27 March 1856:

Departed this life on Thursday last in this boro, Mr. John L. Hays, aged about 75 years, one of the few remaining who patriotically stepped forward in defense of our country and faithfully served 6 months tour on the Northern frontier in the War of 1812. The deceased was a sergeant in the Carlisle Infantry Co., now the oldest in the State of Pennsylvania and perhaps the union. His funeral took place on Saturday last, with military honors handsomely performed by the same Co. commanded by Capt. S. Crop, with the Brass Band, stationed at the Barrack under Col. C. May of the U. S. Army, at the head of the procession. The remains were followed to the grave by a large number of mourning relatives and a few of his associates in arms, who by their gray hairs, down cast looks and sorrowful eyes, showed plainly that it won't be long before it will be their turn.

The deceased was a son of the ever-to-be-remembered heroine, the celebrated "Molly Pitcher" whose deeds of daring are recorded in the annals of the Revolution and over whose remains a monument ought to be erected. The writer of this recollects well to have frequently seen her in the streets of Carlisle, pointed out by admiring friends thus: "There goes the woman who fired the cannon at the British when her husband was killed." . . . Signed: One Who Knows.<sup>17</sup>

[The co-author, Mrs. Schumann, believes that the *Volunteer* item of 1856 “does not have the ring of truth. Would not “her admiring friends” have known that her husband was not killed in the battle, but died in Carlisle several years after the war? And if people once pointed her out on the street as the woman who fired the cannon at the British when her husband was killed, why was this not mentioned in either of the two obituaries at the time of her death?”]



THIS SIGN CALLS THE ATTENTION of visitors at the West Point Cemetery to the grave of Margaret Corbin, described as a “Revolutionary Heroine.” Note in middleground, the marker itself standing in front of a copse of cedar trees. Photograph by Wallace Geety c. 1930 from the Society collection.

## Pennsylvania Recognizes Corbin

The Franklin County D.A.R. on 1 October 1961 sponsored recognition of Margaret Corbin. Unveiled was a Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission marker.\* Taking part in the ceremony at Rocky Spring Church, Chambersburg were the state historian, Dr. S. K. Stevens, of Camp Hill; Assemblymen Enos Horst of Franklin County, the State President of the S.A.R.; and Brigadier General D. E. Breakfield, commanding officer of the Letterkenny Ordinance Depot, who read the war record of Margaret Corbin.

Pennsylvania's marker reads:

### MARGARET COCHRAN CORBIN

Heroine of the Revolution: Born November 2, 1751, in a Pioneer Home 1. miles N.W. Accompanying Her Husband to War, She Manned A Cannon and Was Wounded at Fort Washington, N.Y., November 16, 1776, When Her Husband Was Killed. Pensioned by Congress, She Died January 16, 1800. Buried at West Point, New York.

\* From a printed program in the collection of the Society.

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> John B. Landis, "Molly Pitcher," *A Short History of Molly Pitcher, The Heroine of Monmouth* (Carlisle: Patriotic Order Sons of America, 1905.)

<sup>2</sup> Vincent Fleming O'Reilly, "Irish Margaret Corbin of Revolution," in *The Irish World and American Industrial Liberator*; 7 August 1926. Henrietta Geety Webb in 1989 has presented the Hamilton Library with a photostatic copy of a page from this rare publication. It carries the 6,550 word article by O'Reilly. Accompanying the page is the original of a letter of 14 January 1955 from Milton F. Perry, curator of history at The Military Academy, to Mrs. Webb's father, Wallace Geety, confirming the difference between Margaret Corbin, "Captain Molly," buried at West Point, New York and Mary Hays buried in Carlisle.

<sup>3</sup> The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission on 1 October 1961 erected a roadside marker recognizing Margaret Cochran Corbin's contribution at the Battle of Fort Clinton. The marker is on U.S. 11 at the intersection with Township Route 529, 1.5 miles north of Chambersburg.

<sup>4</sup> As to Carlisle's Mary Ludwig Hays manning a cannon at Monmouth, Landis offered two sources. 1. In 1895, 117 years after the Battle, Susan Heckendorn of Carlisle stated that between 1828 when she was sixteen years of age and 1832, when Mary Hays died, that she heard her say "You girls should have been with me at the battle of Monmouth and learned how to load a cannon." 2. Barbara Park, who died in 1896 at 81, knew Mary Hays in 1826 and on an occasion not specified by Landis, asserted that "she was known as 'Molly Pitcher' from her having carried water in a pitcher to soldiers at the battle of Monmouth; and from having assisted in firing the cannon, became known as 'The heroine of the battle of Monmouth.'" It is important to note that Heckendorn for certain and Park, presumably, both testified after 4 July 1876 when the Carlisle version, with attendant publicity, was made manifest by an inscription on a tombstone. Was their memory by this time "refreshed?" Thompson thought so, telling the Society when delivering this paper orally that Mary, although "garrulous," did not speak ever of working a cannon.



IN 1916 THE D.A.R. OF NEW YORK erected a monument to Margaret Corbin in the West Point Cemetery. The plaque, shown above in a photograph by Wallace Geety, celebrates twenty-four years of "Captain Molly's" Hudson River connections without mentioning her birth and initial twenty-five years on the Conococheague, then Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.

<sup>5</sup> See *American Catholic Historical Researchers*, October 1909, as quoted in O'Reilly article cited above.

<sup>6</sup> The editor has been unable to find a citation for Thompson's source, Waldo's diary. It should be noted that Thomas F. Gordon's *History of New Jersey* published in 1834 offers a lengthy account of the Battle of Monmouth but no mention of the Molly Pitcher incident. Gordon noted that in 1824 General LaFayette told him that General Washington was in such high dudgeon at General Lee during the battle that he called him to his face a "damned poltroon," the only instance that the young Marquis ever heard him swear. It might follow that this was not an occasion when, as Bernard Lossing (vide f.n.11 infra) reported, he took time to seek out Molly and award her with a lieutenant's commission.

<sup>7</sup> The editor is unable to offer a citation for Thompson's source for the Martin account.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur P. Abbott, according to O'Reilly's article *supra*, wrote the Corbin story in 1915 "when assembling a book concerning the old Palisades Interstate Park." In 1916 Colonel Herbert Satterlee also wrote an article on Corbin which was published by the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society. The facts of his account are substantially the same as the article on Corbin in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. After the D.A.R. became interested in Corbin in 1926 she was disinterred from a private burying ground in Highland Falls, N.Y. and transferred to the cemetery at West Point.

<sup>9</sup> *Journals of the Continental Congress XIV* (Washington: 1909), 805.

<sup>10</sup> John B. Linn and William H. Engle, *Pennsylvania Archives, 2nd Series II*, 277.

<sup>11</sup> Benjamin F. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution II* (New York: Harper, 1851.) 164.

<sup>12</sup> Edward C. Boynton, *History of West Point and Its Military Importance During the American Revolution* (New York: 1871).

<sup>13</sup> G. W. P. Custis, *Recollections and Private Memories of Washington, 1859*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>15</sup> Lossing, *Field Book*, 361.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>17</sup> Landis, *Molly Pitcher*; is the source for the data taken from interviews that follow below.

<sup>18</sup> Cumberland County Court House, Office of the Recorder of Deeds, 1-BB-90.

<sup>19</sup> Cumberland County Court House Orphan Court Docket #4, pp. 37-38.

<sup>20</sup> Deposition of Susan Heckendorn, *supra*, and of Harriet M. Foulke, given in 1896, as quoted in Landis, *Molly Pitcher*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>21</sup> Cumberland County Court House, Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Deed Book 1-BB, 90.

<sup>22</sup> Two Carlisle worthies are bit players in the lives of both Margaret Corbin and Mary Hays. Colonel Robert Magaw of Carlisle commanded (and was forced to surrender) the military installation, Ft. Washington, where Captain Molly manned the cannon. Anna Callender, the wife of William Irvine of Carlisle, according to Landis, while visiting friends in Trenton saw Mary Ludwig and supposedly took her to Carlisle to enter domestic service. Mary in 1778 returned to Trenton to visit her family and while there traveled to nearby Monmouth to visit her husband and became involved in the battle where she, at the least, carried water to the troops.

# Primitive Passageways To Future Newville

*William T. Swain*

Passageways evolve out of topography and out of the general location of the area with reference to destinations.

For about seventy miles the Cumberland Valley of Pennsylvania extends southwestward from the Susquehanna River across from Harrisburg to the Potomac River in Maryland. The Valley is bounded on the southeast by South Mountain and on the northwest by Blue Mountain. The eastern two-thirds of the Valley is drained eastward by the widely meandering Conodoguinet Creek, which from Roxbury Gap traverses the northern side of the Valley for a distance of about 100 miles in an air distance of forty-three miles.

Near the center of the Cumberland Valley, which contains about one thousand square miles, Big Spring Run emerges from the ground and flows northward about five miles to enter the Conodoguinet Creek. This spring of fresh water is a geological wonder. Four miles upstream from what is now the c. 1764 log Laughlin Mill at Newville, the head of Big Spring Run is the largest spring of fresh water in Pennsylvania. At a recent measurement by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission the now-reduced flow was 18,200,000 gallons per day, hence the size of what in any other state would be called a creek. The larger flow at Boiling Springs comes from a cluster of a dozen springs.

In ages past the stream became visible when approximately fourteen feet of the solid limestone roof of a cavern collapsed as a sink hole, thus blocking the underground stream and creating an invisible pool of water about fourteen feet deep. From the top of the pool the stream overflows as a spring of fresh water. The greatly weathered south wall of the sink hole is visible.

As to the source of the underground stream, the Pennsylvania Fish Commission, using dye, has traced the source to Skelly's Cave, south of Stoughstown.<sup>1</sup>

To visualize the area as it looked in the Colonial period, it is helpful to lay aside the image of a highway map, the concept of outer edges for roads and the existence and dominance of the post-1776 State road, now route 641, from the western foot of Cemetery Hill to Carlisle. Instead, it is necessary to visualize the Valley

as a densely forested wilderness interrupted only by streams, animal paths and a few Indian footpaths.

It is appropriate to use, instead of the word "road," the term passageway, which connotes a corridor with width for "passing" from one place to another. In the early days the narrow passageways resembled tunnels through the forest. Obviously the sides and ceilings of the tunnels were so ragged that the wild growth of underbrush and of tree limbs, which tend to grow downward at the ends, required frequent prunings. Prior to the establishment of an independent Pennsylvania in 1776, new routes could be created at will and at random even on privately-owned property because each patent (deed) from the Proprietaries for rural acreage contained the stipulation "plus 6% Allowance for Roads etc." To every tract a cushion of six per cent was added to the acreage that was paid for at the per acre cost as stated in the patent. For instance, if 151.2 was the acreage paid for, the surveyor's draft included 9.07 additional acres as a cushion "for Roads." Accordingly, prior to 1776 there were no legal restrictions against creating new routes across rural private property for public use, albeit with the understanding that it would be personally hazardous to flout local opinion. Each new passageway enhanced the value of the farms along and near the route.

#### WIDTHS OF PASSAGEWAYS

From common knowledge of what happened on other frontiers in Pennsylvania and from words and phrases in the road docket of Cumberland County, as of 1750 a dozen widths of early passageways can now be defined. In a slow evolutionary process a passageway could have ever-broader widths. Furthermore, at one time various sections of one passageway could have different widths.

Quotation marks on the following official designations of stages of development indicate that the terms were lifted from post-1750 local petitions to or orders of the court. The descriptive terms were, had been, and would continue to be consecutively applicable to various sections of single passageways during the decades in which whites gradually extended and improved the network of passageways in many directions through forest land, pastures, and fields. In Pennsylvania very few roads run exactly east-west or north-south.

In the 1730s the passageways did not need to be wide enough to accommodate small farm wagons, because travel was by one of two methods, walking or riding a horse. As all early passageways were created and maintained in sections by local volunteers they could be of any width. Because of the vast amounts of time and of energy involved, ordinarily the passageways were no wider than they needed to be for current purposes. Apparently for decades the widths ranged from about five feet to about thirteen feet. In sections the widths depended upon the initiative, spare time, needs and industriousness of local volunteers.

The following estimates of various widths are chiefly derived from wordings in local road petitions to the court of Cumberland County or else from resulting or-

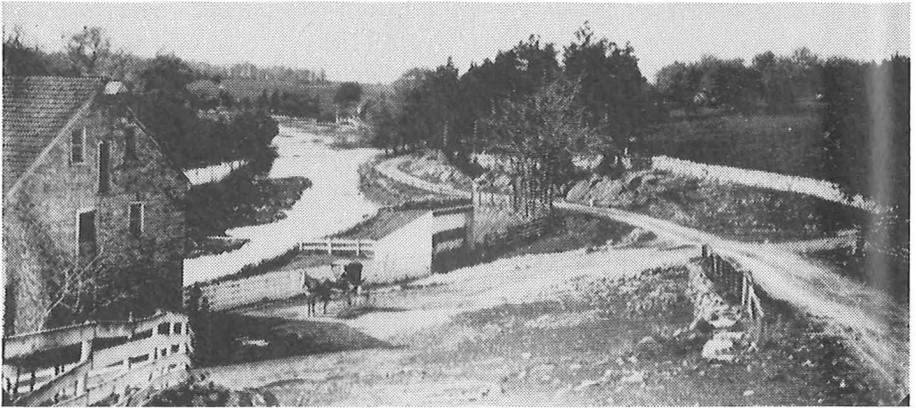
ders of that court. Fortunately, in 1909 the Cumberland County Historical Society published the verbatim entries in the road docket as compiled by John D. Hemminger of Carlisle.<sup>2</sup> As the official references to passageways frequently were descriptive words or phrases, the documented terms tend to provide reasonable bases for conjecturing on their respective widths. As each passageway was gradually evolving through various undated widths in sections enroute to fixed boundaries, these estimates of widths should be interpreted loosely.

Four types of paths can be identified. An Indian foot path apparently was at least three feet wide and six feet tall. As the whites had metal axes, their foot paths probably had a minimum width of four or five feet. In order to accommodate a rider on horseback, a "Bridle road" was probably about six feet wide and ten feet high. A "Horse path" was probably about seven feet wide in order to accommodate a string of pack animals on trail and connected in single file, each laden with a balanced saddle bag as used by white traders for transporting commodities. As late as 1755 the passageway over present-day Sterrett's Gap was only a "Horse path" even though it was the usual route from Carlisle to western Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup> Beginning at future Shippensburg and via Roxbury Gap to future Fannettburg in Path Valley the Raystown (Bedford) Path went westward to future Pittsburgh via sections of what is now U.S. Route 30, and the Allegheny Path went northwestward to what are now Hollidaysburg and Kittanning.

Four types of passageways have documentation for their respective natures and purposes. For accommodating a crude wheeled vehicle apparently as pulled or pushed by a person or as pulled by a horse, a "cart road" was six or seven feet wide. A "lane" was probably about eight feet wide as preserved for 250 years between the northeastern corner of Greencastle and the 1737 graveyard of "Canigogig" (Creek) Presbyterian meeting house with weeds beside each of two dirt tracks. In 1760 the passageway from Carlisle to present-day Sterrett's Gap needed to be widened "sufficient for wheel carriages," probably about nine feet wide. By heroic efforts, including the cutting of innumerable tree stumps down to ground level and by adequate leveling from side to side, a "lane" could be made into a "waggon road," which doubtless was at least thirteen feet wide so that small farm wagons could pass each other with safety.

Skipping a generation to the time of the Revolutionary War, eighteen-foot passageways were needed to accommodate massive, largely oak, riderless, Conestoga, freight wagons, "ships of inland commerce," for transporting tons of commodities over the Allegheny Mountains. As these were pulled by four or six horses, they obviously were too cumbersome for use by families in going west.

Four indefinite types of early passageways are loosely definable. A "by-way" was a short, secondary, somewhat secluded passageway as stated in a 1796 road docket: "by-ways, paths or roads." At the same time, and also in the Shippensburg area, a "general opening" in the forest apparently was thirty feet wide, albeit devoid of tracks beaten by wheels of vehicles. In the 1737 Minutes of the Presbyterian Presbytery of Donegal "a usual passable road" was the practical



IRWIN'S MILL here uses the power of Big Spring. It is also known as Enck's Mill. Photo from the Society Collection.

minimum for one on which the distance between a meeting house and a site proposed for a new meeting house should be measured. Obviously, this stipulation ruled out passageways that were too narrow or too rugged for use by families. In 1796 "a traveled road" was the useful substitute for the nearby blazed and court-approved outer-bounds of a legal right-of-way. Examples as modern counterparts are the dirt paths on college campuses on the routes where the side-walks should have been laid.

Five types of passageways had widths that were surveyed. As approved by the court at Lancaster in May 1744, "Great Road," now U.S. Route 11 in most areas and as surveyed for sixty miles up the center of the Valley from the Harris Ferry to about half-way between present-day Chambersburg and Greencastle, did not have the width specified in the court order, but today Market Street in Lemoyne and in Camp Hill is three perches wide, i.e., 49-1/2 feet.

As eventually approved by the court at Carlisle, the phrase, "public road," was a technical term ordinarily denoting a width of thirty-three feet, i.e., two perches or rods. The court did not take action before receiving a local petition regarding a particular passageway. In answer to such a petition the court appointed a committee of named local "viewers" to mark the lines of the outer-bounds by chipping marks (blazes) on tree trunks on both sides of the selected course, which almost always more or less tracked a passageway which had already evolved from usage. As the lengthwise measurement was irrelevant, the measuring tools were two straight wooden rods, each 16-1/2 feet long (one perch). Apparently the two rods were moved forward and placed end-to-end to show which tree-trunks should be chipped. Upon receipt of the report of the viewers, the court made official the outer-bounds, thus fixing the legal bounds for fences and for surveys. On a property the owner could keep the blazes visible for decades. Some passageways were thus given official status, but in the 1700s fewer than ten percent of the Valley passageways were thus official.

As laid out in 1751, the streets of Carlisle are sixty feet wide, including space for side-walks. The alleys are twenty feet wide, and the two main streets crossing at the public square are eighty feet wide.

Some of the above evolutionary stages in the development of passageways on the frontier are exemplified in the evolution of early routes to future Newville.

#### THE ALLEGHENY INDIAN PATH

Newville owes its location to the fact that it materialized where the Allegheny Indian Path forded Big Spring Run beside what in c. 1764 became the site of the present-day log Laughlin Mill. The regional topographical feature that pulled the Allegheny Path to the spot was Roxbury Gap in Blue Mountain.

About thirty miles west of Philadelphia the Allegheny Indian Path branched west-northwest from the Conoy Path at future Downingtown, thus laying the course of what is now U.S. Route 322 via Ephrata and Hummelstown to Paxtang. In Harrisburg it thus had pioneered Derry Street, crossing Cameron (11th Street) at what since 1976 has been concrete steps in the first block of South Cameron Street, then across the future capitol grounds to ford the Susquehanna River at what is now either Broad Street or Maclay Street, or both. From the location and bearing of Derry Street it becomes apparent that the Allegheny Path went on through the gap that was later used for the western exit of the M. Harvey Taylor Bridge. Skirting what is now the south end of a golf course, the Path met what could now be called 38th Street to skirt the bend in the Conodoguinet Creek, thence via what is now U.S. Route 11 to eventual New Kingstown, thence to the east end of modern Carlisle via what in the mid-1830's became the right-of-way of the Cumberland Valley Railroad.

At what is now the southwestern corner of East High Street and Spring Garden Street in Carlisle the direct extension of Allegheny Path was Walnut Bottom Path. From Letort Junction, which by 1736 was called "New Town" however, the Allegheny Path traversed the Virginia Path, now, in general, U.S. Route 11, seven miles to the head of present-day Mount Rock Spring Run, where from the Virginia Path it veered west toward the Allegheny Mountains via what is now Big Spring High School to ford Big Spring Run near the future log mill. At 1751 Carlisle and at 1790 Newville the former Allegheny Indian Path became the course of the main east-west street.

From future Newville the Allegheny Path went along what is now state Route 641 to Roxbury Gap, thence to present-day Mount Union, Hollidaysburg, and Kittanning. In the Cumberland Valley the route could have been called the Conodoguinet Path even though it skirted the bends in the stream.

Even without easy access via the Allegheny Path, the first settlers in the Valley would have flocked to the Conodoguinet Creek. On all frontiers and for obvious reasons early settlers have headed toward the largest stream in the region. Accordingly, a majority of the first immigrant Presbyterians settled near the Creek. As the Ulster Scots had been farming limestone land in northern counties of Ire-

land, they preferred the south bank of the stream which, in general, separates the shale land to the north from the vast limestone acreage up the length of the Valley. The early immigrants were fortunate that the Allegheny Path facilitated travel to their respective tracts along or near the magnetic Creek.

## THE FIRST SETTLERS

Between January 24, 1734, and October 30, 1736, Samuel Blunston, serving at the Harris Ferry as land agent for the Penn family, Proprietaries of the colony of Pennsylvania, issued 284 licenses for tracts in and near the Cumberland Valley.<sup>4</sup> Five of the 1734 licenses referred to the vicinity of "Great Spring." Two of them dated from March. On the 9th Blunston issued two such licenses, including

James Leper 500 [acres] for himself  
& children lying on the  
south side of Great Spring. (p. 2)

Blunston apparently was confused on the direction. The Leeper tract may have been downstream from future Newville and in the direction of the seven tracts that Blunston had already licensed along the Creek north and more especially northwest of present-day West Hill.

On the same day William McMullen received a license for "250" acres, which Blunston described as

License #16  
(N.B. this tract is since  
assigned to John White to)  
Joyn to the land of James  
Leper. (p. 2)

Blunston habitually made neighbors out of the persons who arrived together. In addition and for equally obvious reasons, the subsequent immigrants wanted to reside near existing neighborhoods of licensed tracts.

Regularly Blunston used large round numbers for the acreage in tracts, as did the Proprietaries when subsequent warrants of survey became available after the Proprietaries on October 11, 1736, purchased the Valley from non-resident Indians. Inflating the provisional acreage helped to reduce future boundary disputes. Ordinarily, the eventually surveyed and deeded acreage ranged from about fifty to eighty per cent of the previous round numbers, although a few were about equal.

Before getting a license for the tract that now includes the Laughlin Mill, Randall Chambers had requisitioned that choice tract as shown by the fact that his name appears in advance on the March 28, 1734, license to James and William Patten for "400" acres:

on South side of the C. [Conodoguinet]  
to Joyn on the Westwd with  
Randle Chamber's tract. (p. 3)

As the Allegheny Path went almost due west from future Mount Rock for 4.3 miles to cross Big Spring Run and as the Patten tract adjoined the east side of the Chambers tract, the Patten tract apparently included the present-day site of Big Spring schools. Twelve days later James Foster received a license for "200" acres on April 9, 1734:

on the South Side of Conedogwt.  
Joyning to James Patten,  
about one mile & a half Below  
the mouth of the Letorts spring. (p. 5)

As the route of Allegheny Path was apparently decisive, it is probable that the Foster tract was adjacent to the east side of the Patten tract, thus making a row of three tracts from west to east: Randall Chambers, James and William Patten, and James Foster.

In the spring of 1735 Randall Chambers was awarded the fifth license that was related to "Great Spring" Run and therefore to future Newville, March 17, 1735:

300 [acres] at the ford of the Great Spring  
where Alhegeny Road Crosses for  
convenience of a mile he having  
represented that the other  
two places are intended for  
the use of his sons. (p. 13)

Because the desirable site for a mill was the higher ground on the east bank of the stream, the Chambers tract obviously included the site of what three decades later became the present-day log mill. That Chambers did not obtain both banks is shown by the absence of words that Blunston included in the March 4, 1734, previous license to Chambers at the mouth of Falling Spring Run, now Chambersburg:

to be laid on Both sides of the  
said spring for the convenience of a Mill.

As the belated Laughlin Mill is of such solid construction, Randall Chambers doubtless had constructed a less solid mill at the site.

On the same day that Randall Chambers took out a license for himself, he also received licenses for his two sons at undesignated locations, doubtless nearby.

Nine months later Andrew Ralston received a license on January 3, 1736, for what is now Green Ridge Village of Presbyterian Homes, Inc.:

200 [acres] on the Great spring  
Joyning to the upper side  
of a tract Granted to  
Randle Chambers. (p. 21)

The juxtaposition shows that the Chambers tract went upstream for about one-half of a mile. In addition to fronting on the south side of "Great spring" Run, the Ralston tract had the advantage of a spring of fresh water about thirty feet from the stream as now vouchsafed by the old brick spring house in the front yard of

what was the Parker Presbyterian Home for fifty years. The log Ralston cabin doubtless had been on low land near the spring of fresh water. Accordingly, during the winter of 1736 a path was doubtless cleared out from the Allegheny Path to Andrew Ralston's tract, thus giving birth to the first leg of what eventually became Springfield Road from West Main Street, Newville, to the head of Big Spring Run.

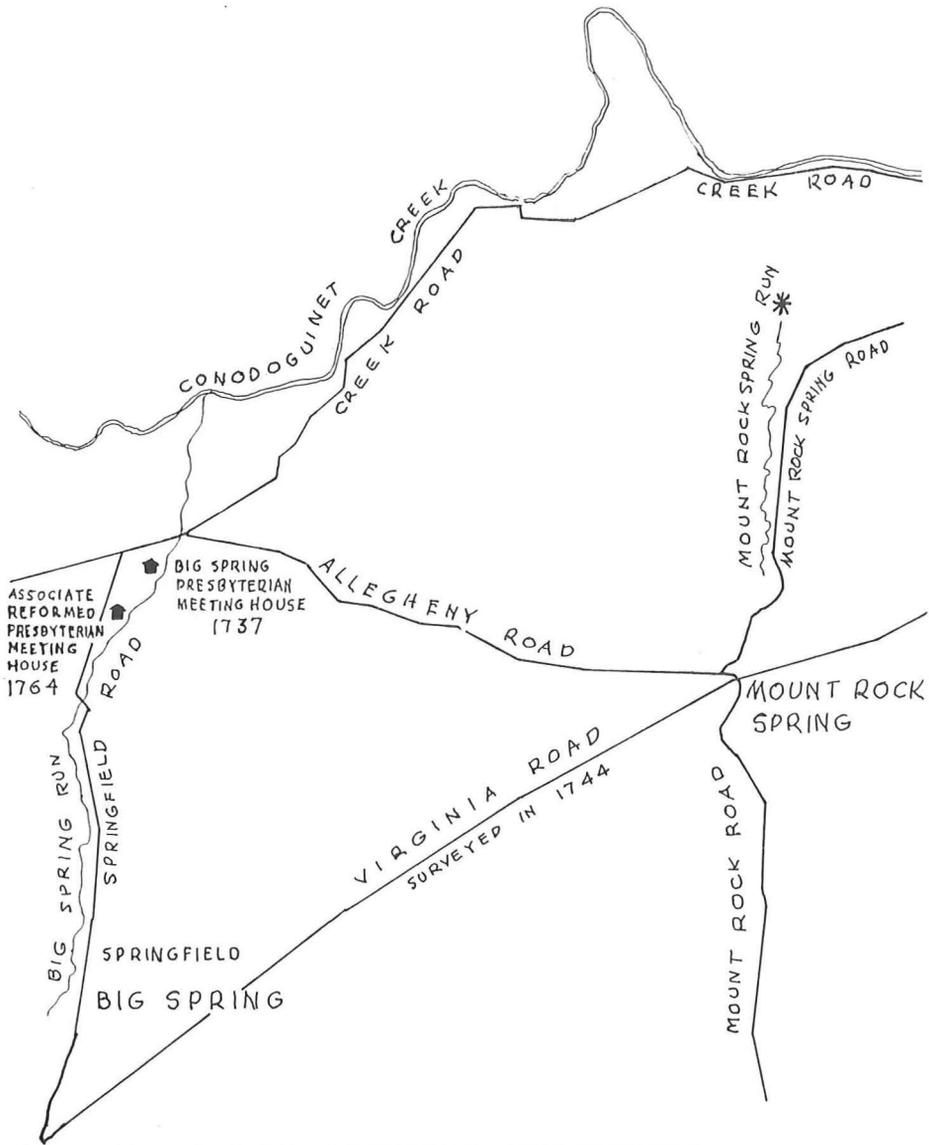
#### PRESBYTERIAN PATH-LANE

Apparently the second local branch passageway from the Allegheny Path originated late in 1736 and certainly by June, 1737, by which date Presbyterians were eager to build a log meeting house across Big Spring Run from the Randall Chambers property. The choice of the exact site was chiefly made on the basis of the spring of fresh water down over the bluff to the east and just north of the sharp bend in the stream. In the Valley the first ten meeting houses, all Presbyterian, were built either at the heads of small streams or usually at springs of fresh water beside streams. At the Big Spring site parishioners could water their horses near Allegheny Path.

As the Hopewell [Township] Presbyterian Siamese-twin societies, now Big and Middle Spring Churches, in April 1737 secured the first full-time resident stated supply, Thomas Craighead, for one society in the Valley, western Hopewell in the early spring of 1737 built the first meeting house and the first manse in the Valley on the east bank of Middle Spring Run three miles north of future Shippensburg. The warrant of survey had been secured in March in the name of Thomas Craighead.

In the summer of 1737 the western one-half of the territorial Pennsborough [Township] Presbyterian society, now the First Presbyterian Church, Carlisle, on August 31, 1737, inveigled Donegal Presbytery into forbidding eastern Hopewell, now Big Spring Church, from building a meeting house in the present-day site at Newville. At the same meeting a dispute was settled when Presbytery granted permission for western Pennsborough society to construct a meeting house at what eventually became known as Meeting House Springs two miles west of future Carlisle. Against common sense and against all precedents, Presbytery capitulated to Pennsborough's demand that the mere name of the Pennsborough society gave them territorial rights to the entire township, which extended from the Susquehanna River westward for thirty miles to and including the east bank of Big Spring Run.<sup>5</sup> The important disputed swing territory was McFarlane, as shown below.

That the gerrymandering did damage to Hopewell society at a crucial time is shown by the fact that in June 1737 the Hopewell territorial society was sufficiently mature numerically and also financially strong enough to ask Presbytery to send a minister to moderate a congregational meeting for both halves of the society in order to process a call by which to change the status of Thomas Craighead from full-time stated supply to installed minister. These first such mature developments in the Valley show that by April 1737 Middle Spring had a manse and a log meeting house and that Big Spring had an outdoor pulpit. In



PRIMITIVE PASSAGEWAYS TO FUTURE NEWVILLE  
 \* MOUNT ROCK RUN BEGINS TO RUN UNDERGROUND

June Big Spring had available the building site across Big Spring Run from the Randall Chambers tract. Thanks chiefly to the power and momentum among the Presbyterians on the four dozen licensed tracts in the five miles between the mouths of the Big Spring and Mount Rock Spring Runs, the aggressive eastern Hopewell society late in 1737 defied Presbytery and built their log meeting house near the sharp bend in Big Spring Run in order to accommodate Thomas Craighead, who for six months had been preaching on alternate Sundays indoors at Middle Spring Run and at an outdoor pulpit at Big Spring Run.

In the light of these facts and of the obvious necessity, it is logical to conjecture that by June 1737 the four dozen families along the Creek and between Big Spring Run and Mount Rock Spring Run, which by far was the largest neighborhood of farms in the Valley, had cleared out a path or lane for their own convenience enroute to hear sermons and to see other Presbyterians. Accordingly, the second new public passageway in the vicinity went southward from near the west side of the fording place up the knoll to near the bend in the stream. As passageways tend to be immortal, it is probable that the present-day dirt lane near the east end of Big Spring Presbyterian cemetery is a remnant of the 1737 lane to where sermons could be heard beside Big Spring Run.

#### CREEK LANE

As shown on the map in Swaim, *No Church in the Cumberland Valley in 1734*, 1987, by November 1734 Blunston had issued licenses for thirty-three tracts at or near the Conodoguinet Creek north and even more especially northwest of present-day West Hill and northeast of what is now Newville. By October 30, 1736, the long slender neighborhood consisted of forty-six licensed tracts in the five miles westward between the mouths of Mount Rock and Big Spring Runs. In honor of the family name that has survived most prominently in the Newville area from that settlement, this author has christened the neighborhood McFarlane. As orientation was eastward, the families obviously had first opened a passageway southward to meet Allegheny Path at the head of Mount Rock Spring Run. Doubtless the first sermon in the Valley was preached in November 1734 at McFarlane because it had twice as many licensed tracts as any other Valley settlement: thirty-three. The second largest concentration was at the mouth of Middle Spring Run: sixteen.<sup>6</sup>

Before June, 1737, the eastern Hopewell [Township] society, now Big Spring Church, had the present-day site. Accordingly, it is probable that present-day Creek Road was cleared out as a path or lane by June 1737 from McFarlane to the outdoor pulpit across Big Spring Run from the Randall Chambers tract so that the colonists could hear Thomas Craighead preach every other Sunday. Today Creek Road meets the originally surveyed and therefore direct post-1776 state road to Carlisle at the western foot of Cemetery Hill. As land owners wanted direct access all along Conodoguinet Creek, Creek Road does not traverse the south bank. For the same reason, very few miles of old passageways in this Valley are beside Creeks or Runs.

## A SECOND LOG MEETING HOUSE AT FUTURE NEWVILLE

The Scottish Presbyterians, who for two decades had made the Cumberland Valley the Presbyterian Valley between the mid-1730s and the arrival of Germans c. 1763, had immigrated from northern counties of Ireland. In contrast, in the mid-1750s Presbyterians from the Lowlands of Scotland followed Ulster Scot Presbyterians across the Atlantic Ocean and across the southern tier of Pennsylvania. Instead of being members of the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland (C.O.S.), they belonged to dissenting groups which had seceded from C.O.S., including the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenanters) and the Associate Presbyterian Church. As immigrants, these dissenters settled chiefly in Nova Scotia, Pennsylvania, and central North Carolina. In America these two denominations merged into the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, albeit leaving surviving remnants of the old denominations.

In or about 1764 Associate Reformed Presbyterians constructed a log meeting house that faced northwestward along Springfield Lane. For a quarter of a century the two log Presbyterian meeting houses were in a rural area within one-half of a mile of each other by passageways. Apparently the A.R.P. building faced what originally had been the lane to the Andrew Ralston property. Subsequently on the knoll at the back of the same property the congregation built a church that fronts southward on the comparatively new Big Spring Avenue. The small graveyard along Springfield Lane was moved to Cemetery Hill.

In 1858 the A.R.P. denomination became part of the United Presbyterian Church. Exactly one hundred years later the merger of the U.S.A. and U.P. Churches left Newville with two congregations in what is now the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Originally, the First Presbyterian Church, Shippensburg, had also been an A.R.P. congregation, as had the A.M.E. Church at 132 South West Street, Carlisle, now an old stone building with a brick front.

## CONCLUSION

The thesis of this paper had been that the locale of eventual Newville had been pre-determined by Roxbury Gap and the resultant Allegheny Indian Path. The exact site of the town had been determined by the fording place where Allegheny Indian Path had crossed Big Spring Run. Accordingly, this paper has delineated Big Spring Run as a geological wonder, Allegheny Path, the First Settlers, the Andrew Ralston Path-lane, the Presbyterian Path-lane, Creek Lane and the locations of log Presbyterian meeting houses on existing passageways, one in 1737 and the other in 1764.

Obviously, the subsequent passageways were spokes that radiated chiefly from the 1737 log Big Spring Presbyterian meeting house. That hub determined the location of Newville as laid out by the trustees of Big Spring Church in 1790 on church property. Four decades earlier a larger hub-and-spokes pattern had determined the location of the county seat, Carlisle, 1751.

Throughout the Valley the villages and towns eventually materialized where Indian Paths had forded streams: Harrisburg, where Allegheny Path had crossed the Susquehanna River; Hogestown, where that Path forded Hoge's Run; Lisburn, on the north bank of where the Conoy Path, now Lisburn Road, had forded the Yellow Breeches Creek; Carlisle, where five Indian Paths converged on Letort Spring Run; Newville, where Allegheny Path had forded Big Spring Run; Shippensburg, Chambersburg, and Greencastle where Virginia Path had forded Middle Spring, Falling Spring and Moss Spring Runs, respectively; and Mercersburg, where an east-west Indian Path had forded Johnston's Spring Run. Obviously, these facts refute the old conventional wisdom that the towns in the Valley are eleven miles apart because old Donegal Presbytery allegedly issued a rule that Presbyterian meeting houses could not be closer together than ten miles. To the contrary, in the 1730s Presbytery approved proximities of four and eight miles in a straight line, and in 1735 went on record that the governing body had no rule regarding the minimum distance between a meeting house and the site proposed for another place of worship. The eleven-mile distances that are to be found in the Cumberland Valley are attributable to the location of transverse streams.

Eventually Newville became the hub of ten passageways in the age of the horse. At the dawn of the automobile age c. 1914 the thriving town had department stores, factories, grain mills, etc. Today isolated Newville is by-passed by the nearby Pennsylvania Turnpike to the north and Interstate Route 81 to the south. Even so, the ancient past, outlined by a road network, lives in the present.

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Statement to the author from John O. Hoffman, of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission.
- <sup>2</sup> John D. Hemminger, *Old Roads of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania* (Carlisle: 1909).
- <sup>3</sup> William T. Swaim, "Newtown, Precursor of Carlisle, 1736-1751," an unpublished, 400 pp. mss in the possession of the author, scheduled for publication in late 1989.
- <sup>4</sup> The original Blunston License Book is in the possession of the former Bureau of Land Records, now part of the Bureau of Archives and History of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg. George Donehoo printed a version of the 284 licenses in his *A History of the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: 1930), I, 39-72.
- <sup>5</sup> William T. Swaim, "The Evolution of Ten Pre-1745 Presbyterian Societies in the Cumberland Valley," *Cumberland County History*, Summer 1985, II, 3-31.
- <sup>6</sup> William T. Swaim, "The Locations of the 284 Tracts Licensed by Samuel Blunston in and near the Cumberland Valley, 1734-1736," an unpublished mss in the possession of the author.

# A Photographic Essay: The Towers of Mechanicsburg

Eva M. Williams

This author's interest in the cityscape of Mechanicsburg was aroused several years ago during a bit of genealogical research. A letter written by Mollie Schafhirt in 1893 describes as "Tower Hill" the section of Mechanicsburg to which she had come as a bride. The house, on East Coover Street, still displays a tower. Nearby are five other houses with towers, all sitting on a hill at Coover and Market Streets.

Subsequent prowling of the borough revealed fifteen more tower homes of interest and dozens of others with "almost" towers. There emerged a book, *Tower Homes of Mechanicsburg*. Later appeared a companion volume, *More Homes of Mechanicsburg*, which handles the many homes without towers and speaks of the many families, more inter-related, who live or lived in those houses.

The author's favorite photograph, c. 1885, shows four tower homes at the corner of Coover and Market Streets. (see p. ). All are still standing with minor changes. Something need be said about the third house from the left, 401 South Market Street, in the foreground.

It typifies a style popular in Mechanicsburg in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The tall square tower shows the influence of the "Italian Villa" look which was favored during the late Victorian era. Here in town it is adapted in a solid, conservative Cumberland County way: wide, comfortable porches, two story bay window projections and balconies. The cornices were ornamental with carved and paired roof supports. The front doors are double and beautifully ornate and open into a vestibule formed by the first story of the tower.

The property on which the four homes were built was part of the Coover Estate. It was purchased in 1869 by "Squire" Jacob L. Heyd and his wife Catherine Coover Heyd not long before their removal to Heyd (19th) and Market Streets, Camp Hill. This particular corner was considered of prime importance to the Coovers, as they hoped for many years that Coover and Market would become the "Town Square". About ten years later this hope was abandoned, for Heyd had this Victorian home built and in 1882 sold it to Frederick K. Ployer who was a cashier at the Second National Bank. F. K. and Sarah Rebecca Ployer immediately sold off the lot at 405 South Market Street and the lots at the rear of their property; three more towers were built.



THIS 1885 photograph shows four tower houses at Coover and Market Streets, Mechanicsburg. Left to right they are: 10 East

Coover, 8 East Coover, 401 South Market and 405 South Market.



THIS 1988 photograph shows two of the tower houses at Coover and Market Streets: 401 and 405 South Market.

When Ployer died in 1920 the property was inherited by his second wife, Hanna (Bucher) Ployer. In 1921 she sold the house to Reuben and Annie M. Cockley. When Reuben died in 1924, Annie bought out the shares in the house left to her children and continued to live here with one daughter, Susie Cockley, who was a registered nurse. Susie was operating a "Laying-in" house that took confinement cases. Many Mechanicsburg residents were born here over a period of fifteen years.

Both the author and her brother first saw the light of day in Susie Cockley's "hospital." This house seemed to a child to be a sort of "baby factory." While passing this corner it always seemed that Susie Cockley would rush out in her long white apron and give mother another baby!

In 1936 the house was sold to Emily M. Landis, who ran an active jelly-making business with the help of her husband. It was during the height of this business that additions were made to the south and east sides of the house. War rationing of sugar made it difficult to continue the business. Emily Landis died in 1949. In 1957 the house was sold by the heirs to Floyd L. and Jean (Jones) Hartung. The house became the property of Jean Hartung in 1975 and is now the property of Larry H. and Jean (Hartung) Artz.

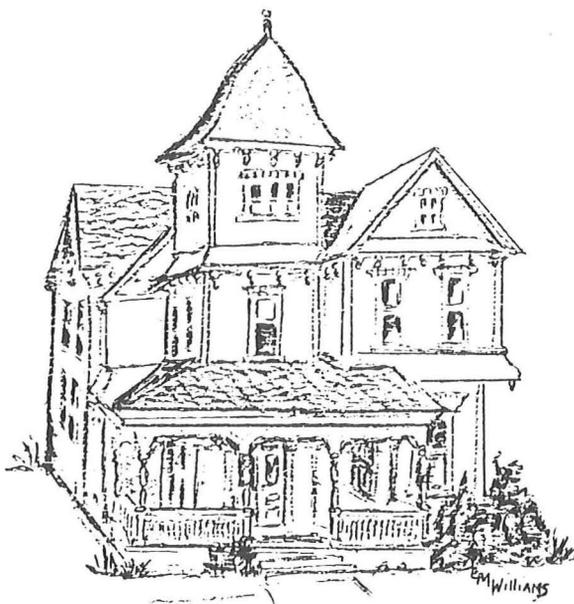
## 105 WEST KELLER STREET

Not all tower homes were built in the same style. This house in the Queen Anne style has a complicated roof line, and the square tower is topped by a bell-shaped roof. The horizontal siding is interrupted by use of fish-scale shingles between the first and second stories and on the third story gables. Interest is added by the use of porches, balconies, and angled corners on the front facade.

Originally part of the Coover Estate, this lot and the adjoining one are shown on the 1872 map as vacant and belonging to J. C. Hays, a retired merchant who came to Mechanicsburg in 1869 and owned several properties on West Main Street where he lived.

In 1885 the two Keller Street lots were purchased by William H. Dougherty, probably Mechanicsburg's foremost builder of public buildings during the last two decades of the 19th Century. He built this house as his own residence with great care and attention to detail. The interior woodwork, which has not been altered, demonstrated his skill as a craftsman. The open stairway, the doors, floors and trim are all assembled without nails — all pegged.

Dougherty began working as a carpenter at age thirteen. In 1865 he married Sarah Ann Maust of Shepherdstown, twenty years later moving from the family homestead at Chestnut Hill to Mechanicsburg better to pursue his work as a contractor. He was elected sheriff of Cumberland County in 1901. When Sarah died in 1924, William moved next door into the home he had built for his son, Dr. Milton Maust Dougherty.



105 WEST KELLER  
Street. Sketch by  
author.

The tower house at 105 West Keller Street remained in the family as a rental property until 1937 when the tenant, Edith Fegley, purchased it. She was a teacher in the Mechanicsburg schools and daughter of the Reverend Henry Neidig Fegley, who served from 1872 to 1924 as pastor of St. Marks Lutheran Church and a teacher at Irving College. In 1960 Miss Fegley was removed to a nursing home and her possessions sold at auction. Chester and Ethel Bahn purchased the house but resold it three years later to John and Leona Horan.

#### 401 EAST MAIN STREET

Not all tower homes have retained their towers. 401 East Main had its tower removed c. 1949 because of a problem with water leaks. The first and second story projection remains. An old postcard (see p. ) clearly presents this house with its tower intact. The decorative wood trim on the front porch was replaced many years ago with delicate wrought iron which preserves the Victorian look. This house has never been sold. In 1882 Solomon P. Gorgas and wife Elizabeth (Eberly) Gorgas had this house built as a gift for their daughter Anna. It remains in the family.

Solomon P. Gorgas, a well-known name in Mechanicsburg's history, was responsible for many of the early advances made in town. In 1856 he was the founder of Irving Female College, a proprietary school devoted to the education of



401 EAST MAIN Street in a contemporary photograph by the author shows the structure after the removal of the tower.

women. He was also one of the founders of the town's first banking institution, Merkle, Mumma and Company, which became the First National Bank, of which he was president at his death in 1887.

In 1883 Anna-B. Gorgas married Jake Koller who was in the wheelmaking business. They had one daughter, Mary, who married Henry Wise. To this marriage there were two children, Marjorie and Robert. When the present owner, Marjorie (Wise) Mohler, was a small child, she returned with her mother to this family home and remains here to the present.

It is interesting to note that this home has for more than 107 years been continuously the property of women. Solomon Gorgas's gift to daughter Anna had passed to Anna's daughter, Mary, and to Mary's daughter, Marjorie. From Marjorie comes much about early Mechanicsburg.



401 EAST MAIN Street appears with its tower as shown in a post card in the collection of the author.

# From Railroad to Turnpike

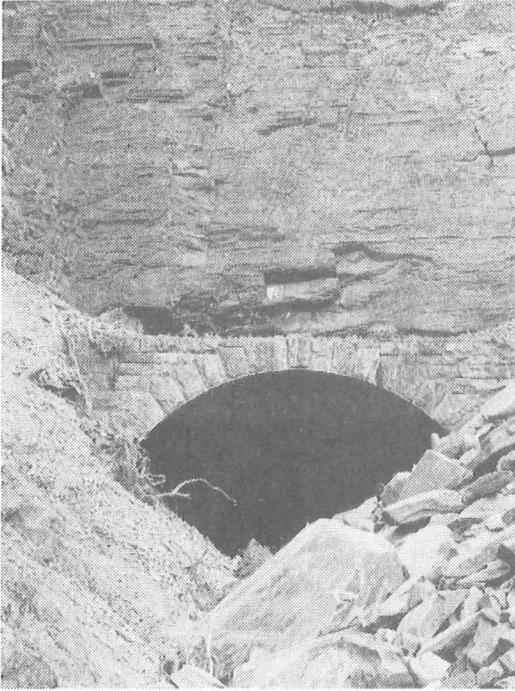
C. L. Siebert, Jr., P.E.

In October 1988 the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of construction on Pennsylvania's first super-highway. October 1990 will mark the similar anniversary of the turnpike's official opening to traffic. Probably few of those who travel the turnpike today are aware that the route was originally planned as a railroad and that after two years of construction in the 1880's, the project lay abandoned for fifty-three years before the Turnpike Commission revived it.

The story of the efforts of New York Central Railroad magnate William H. Vanderbilt to construct the South Penn Railroad to compete with the mighty Pennsylvania in its home territory has been told by William H. Shank in his *Vanderbilt's Folly* and in articles in *Railroad Magazine* and *Trains Magazine*. An even more detailed treatment is currently under preparation by Paul Westhaeffer, author of *History of the Cumberland Valley Railroad*. It is not the intent of this little report to vie with or to digest those accounts but rather to bring out some aspects of the 1883-85 project which may not be common knowledge.

What first interested the writer in the South Penn was a series of articles by David Fernsler, Associated Press correspondent, which appeared in the *Harrisburg Telegraph* in March and April 1935. Fernsler traced the route of the never-finished railroad from Harrisburg to McKeesport, spending ten days and nights in the field, locating tunnels, fragments of right-of-way, and interviewing residents who still remembered the project. His series probably had a considerable part in arousing interest in the railway route as an "all-weather highway."

At the time of Fernsler's series this author was still in college. With several friends he explored the old tunnels on several trips in 1936 and 1939. The eastern approach to Blue Mountain Tunnel was on an easier grade than the present highway and therefore lies higher on the mountain than the turnpike. The steeper gradient permissible for highway use causes the same relationship at all of the tunnel approaches. One bushwacked toward the tunnel from the east, breaking out through close-grown brush, and there, a couple hundred feet away, found the beautiful stonework of the almost complete tunnel portal. The party walked in the tunnel as far as one could still see, but subsequent explorations at several of the other tunnels found them to be mostly flooded to a depth of at least several feet by reason of earth slumped in at the portals.



EAST PORTAL of the Blue Mountain Tunnel 4 July 1939 just before Turnpike Commission contractors began work. Photograph in author's collection.

There are still eight stone piers standing on the Cumberland County side of the Susquehanna River, which were to carry the South Penn to its connection with the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad at Harrisburg. The entire set of piers, extending all the way across the river, was completed in 1885, ready for bridge steel, the remainder having been taken down in later years for the stone that was in them.

The route of the South Penn through Lemoyne and into Lower Allen Township approximated the route later used by the Philadelphia, Harrisburg & Pittsburgh (later the Reading Company and now Conrail), but the exact route up the Cumberland Valley is not known to this writer, as such relatively light grading as would have been required was not to be contracted until late in the project.

As it went west, the South Penn route clung quite close to the divide between the Susquehanna and Potomac watersheds, thus eliminating major bridges, except for the Susquehanna crossing. However, such location made for extensive earthwork, and even though long sections of such earthwork were well advanced, the cost of expanding the work to accommodate a four-lane highway would have been excessive. Consequently, the turnpike follows a route with steeper grades, out in the valley. About five miles of heavy grading west of Burnt Cabins lies along the north slope of Scrub Ridge. A number of well-constructed

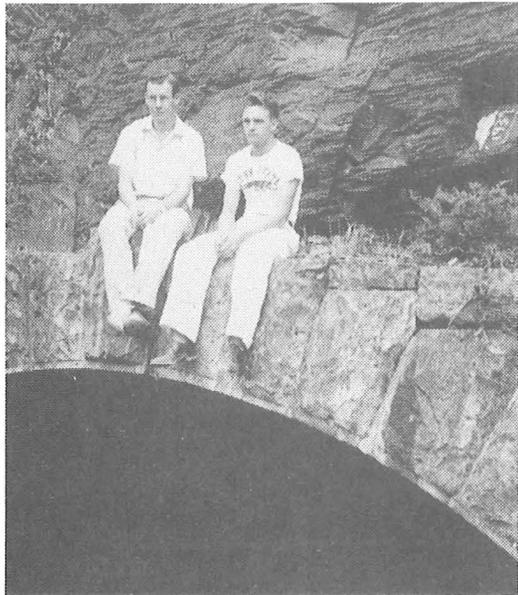
stone culverts still survive in this section, some under completed fills, some still exposed. Unfortunately, some of the deep cuts and fills have now become garbage dumps.

Farther west, miles of cut and fill are still visible north of the turnpike west of Allegheny Tunnel. As one approaches Negro Mountain on the turnpike, now traversed by open cut, the approach to old Negro Mountain Tunnel is visible at a lower level. The old grade continues, curving north around Somerset and providing a stone arch through which a branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (now CSX) passes under the high South Penn fill. All of this section was rejected by the Turnpike engineers for the reason explained above.

West of Somerset, Quemahoning Tunnel was holed through by the Pittsburgh, Westmoreland & Somerset Railroad about 1905 and actually used as a railroad tunnel until 1917. The turnpike does not use the tunnel. This "jerkwater" railroad used five miles of the excellent South Penn grade west of Somerset, then turned north and ran over twenty miles of primitive track, using geared engines, the grades were so steep. The author's father told of a trip he made on this line, in which he described the brakemen flipping safety timbers behind the train as it ascended the grade to Laurel Summit, to catch the train if it should roll backward.

The information available to Fernsler is rather vague on the South Penn route west of Laurel Hill Tunnel. A proposed Sewickley Tunnel is mentioned, to cut through Chestnut Ridge, but is not specifically located. A paper entitled "The South Pennsylvania Railroad," published in 1982 by the Pittsburgh Section, American Society of Civil Engineers, provides some details of the west end locations.

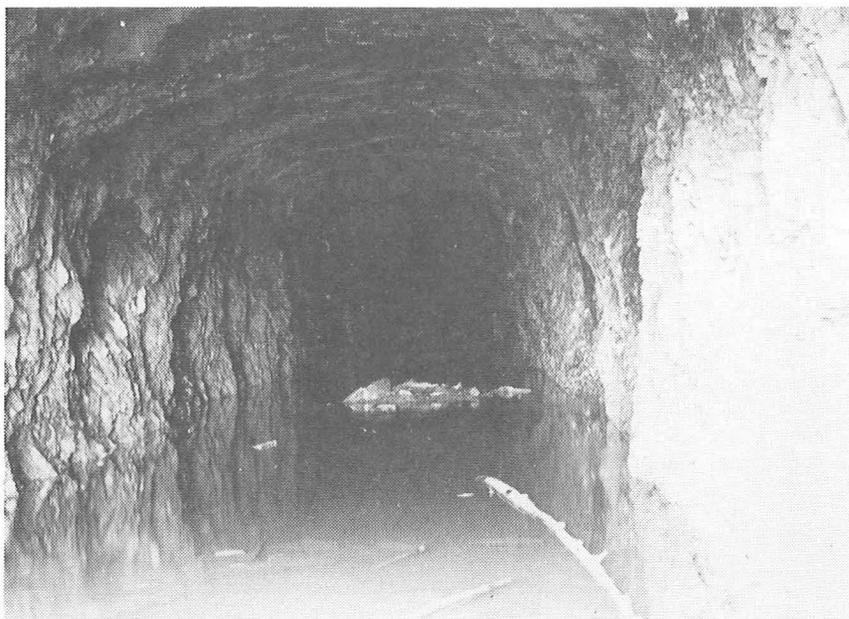
CLOSEUP OF the East Portal with Ray Snyder and the author. Note the good condition of the stonework half a century after it was laid. Photograph from author's collection.



The engineering talent employed by the South Penn was impressive indeed. A topographic survey under Oliver W. Barnes of New York covered nearly a thousand square miles, and is still considered the most complete railroad survey performed in the United States. Robert H. Sayre was appointed president and chief engineer for the construction, with William F. Shunk as his associate, both names remembered in railroad history.

As recounted in Shank's *Vanderbilt's Folly* the South Penn construction project came to a grinding halt when J. Pierpont Morgan, internationally powerful railroad investor, persuaded the presidents of the New York Central and the Pennsylvania to call a truce in their battle. The Pennsylvania was to give up its interest in the West Shore Railroad across New York state. The New York Central was to allow the Pennsylvania to acquire the South Penn, and the Pennsylvania would presumably have completed it, but disgruntled minority stockholders intervened. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania went to court to prevent transfer of the South Penn to the Pennsylvania on the grounds that the South Penn was a parallel and competing line, prohibited by a provision in Pennsylvania's constitution.

In 1894, fifty-one miles of partly graded South Penn right-of-way were transferred to the Southern Pennsylvania Railway & Mining Co., a subsidiary of the PRR-controlled Cumberland Valley Railroad. Crews did a little clearing of the three eastern tunnels, but nothing really came of this activity. Reports as late as

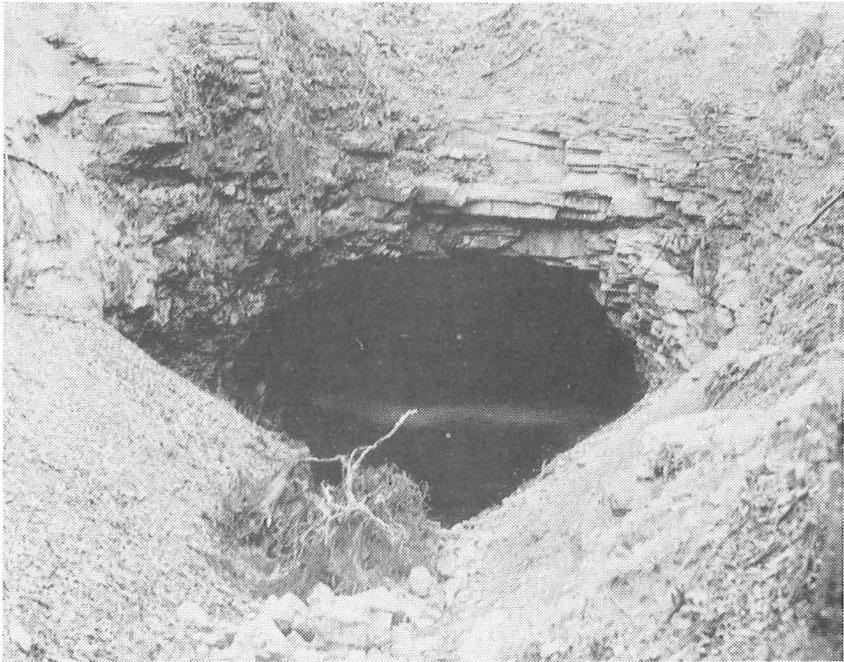


INSIDE EAST END of the Blue Mountain Tunnel of the South Penn Railroad, two miles west of the Cumberland-Franklin County boundary. Photograph taken 4 July 1939 just before Turnpike Commission contractors began conversion for highway use. Photograph from author's collection.

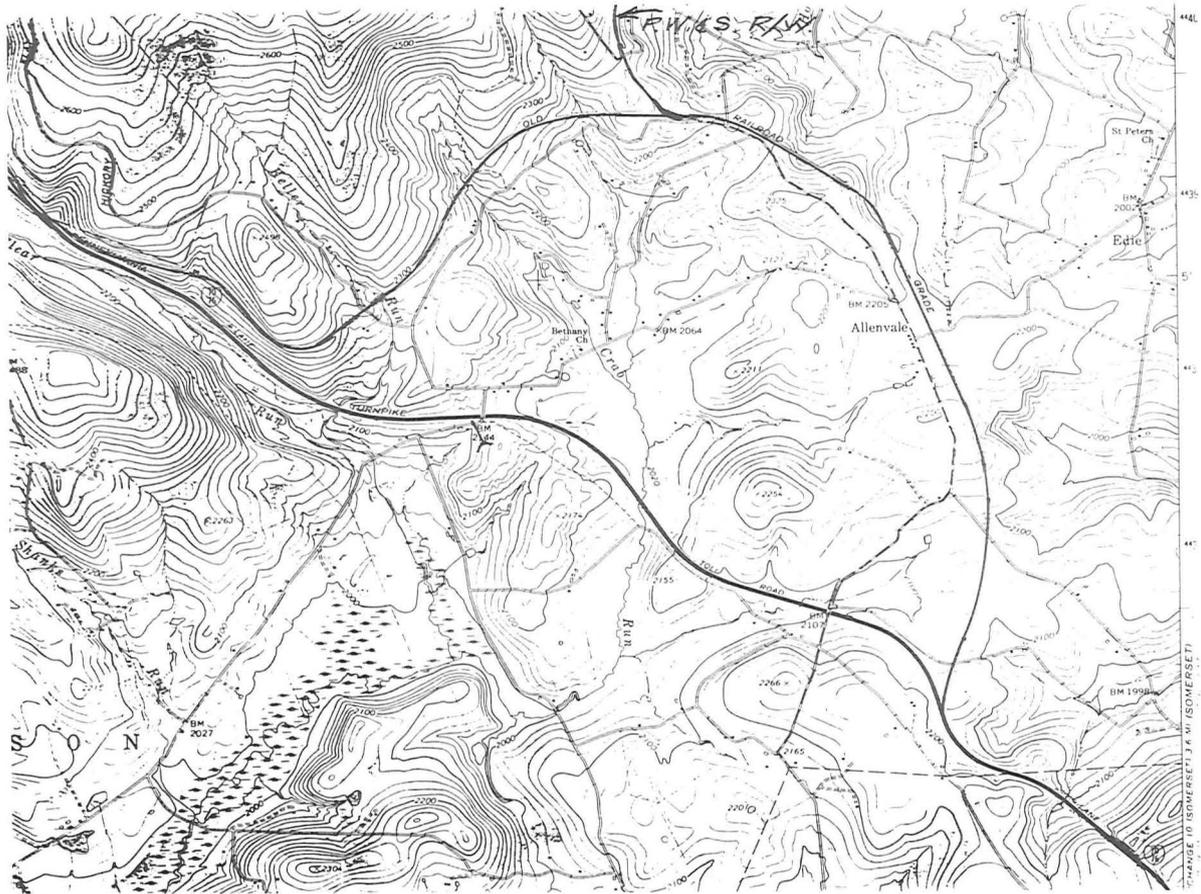
1902 proposed the use of the South Penn route as an outlet for Jay Gould's Wabash line east from Pittsburgh, but this never transpired either.

So, after lying dormant for over fifty years, the South Penn route, somewhat modified for highway use, was revived to form the nation's first truly all-weather super-highway. As the author recalls it, although the explorers looked forward to the use of the rail route as a highway, they wished it had not happened so fast as they would have liked a little more time for exploration.

By the 1960's traffic on the turnpike had increased to the extent that the seven two-lane tunnels caused severe delays. Four of the tunnels were doubled by building a second tunnel alongside the first, but three tunnels, Laurel Hill, Rays Hill and Sidelong Hill, were eliminated, being replaced by over-the-mountain by-passes. These by-passes were evidently the economically preferred solution rather than doubling the other three tunnels. However, as fog and ice affects these sections, the route is something less than the original "all-weather highway."



WEST PORTAL of the Kittatiny Tunnel of the South Penn Railroad 4 July 1939.

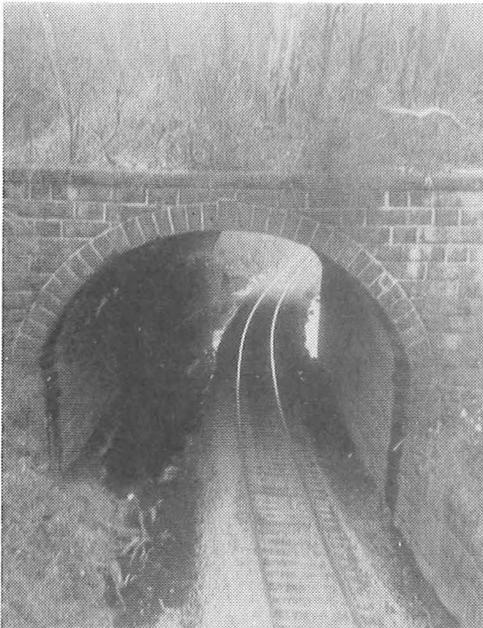


IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY the Pennsylvania Turnpike west of Middlesex follows rather closely the right-of-way surveyed (but in this section never graded or filled) for the railroad. Beyond the County the Turnpike, because its grades could be steeper and curves sharper, in some sections took shorter and more di-

rect routes. In the topographical map above, furnished by the author, the Turnpike route runs southeast-northwest, but the route surveyed for the South Penn covers the distance via an arching loop to the north.



CULVERT OF THE SOUTH Penn Railroad at Sheepskin Hollow, west of Burnt Cabins. Photograph c. 1986 from collection of Paul J. Westhaeffer.



Underpass constructed by the South Penn Railroad carrying the Somerset and Cambria Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio R.R. under the South Penn embankment. It is 2.5 miles north of Somerset. The photo shows the peculiar form of opening, adopted by Associate Engineer Shunk as being more economical of material and stronger than the usual form. 1978 Photo by E. H. Steffy in author's collection.

# What's in a Name: Newville

*Mildred E. Hurley*

Most people are unaware of the unique origin of the Borough of Newville, Cumberland County. Early towns usually grew up around springs, taverns or industries. Newville was planned by a church and laid out on church property.

Newville really began with the formation of the congregation of the Big Spring Presbyterian Church in 1737. The trustees of the church applied for land on the Big Spring and on March 2, 1744, were granted a warrant to have a tract of land known as "Reliance" surveyed and patented. The plot contained 89 acres and 105 perches. For some reason, either misunderstanding or neglect, the patent was not received until September 23, 1794.

In the meantime the trustees had built their church building and parsonage and adjacent to them had reserved space for their cemetery. At this time they realized that about ninety acres of land was too much for their needs. They devised a plan to survey this extra land into building lots which they could sell and charge a ground rent to be paid on April first of each year.

In their town plan the trustees began forming and numbering the lots along Main Street, beginning at the Big Spring and moving to the west and north. Lot number 1 was the large one along the spring, opposite Laughlin's mill. This site was bought by William Laughlin.

The method of selling these lots was not what one would expect. They were assigned a set price, usually six dollars, plus a ground rent. However, lots in more advantageous locations such as the two lots along the spring and corner lots were assigned a higher price. This also meant a larger ground or quit rent since this was based on a percentage of the value.

These lots were offered at public sale from time to time over a period of ten years or more until they were all sold. The trustees of the church set the sale dates with the first one being held on September 9, 1790.

If several buyers wanted the same lot instead of bidding a higher price as is done today those interested were subjected to a lottery.

When this town was first laid out the church decided to call it Newville which means new town, but in some of the early deeds the name is shown as Newville Town. With a simple name like this one would think there would be many places called Newville. There is a village in Lancaster County and one in Bucks County in Pennsylvania bearing this name, but surprisingly there are only two other post office towns in the whole country named Newville.

So, Newville in Cumberland County not only has an unusual beginning but also an unusual name.

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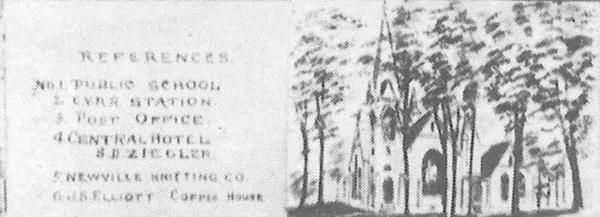
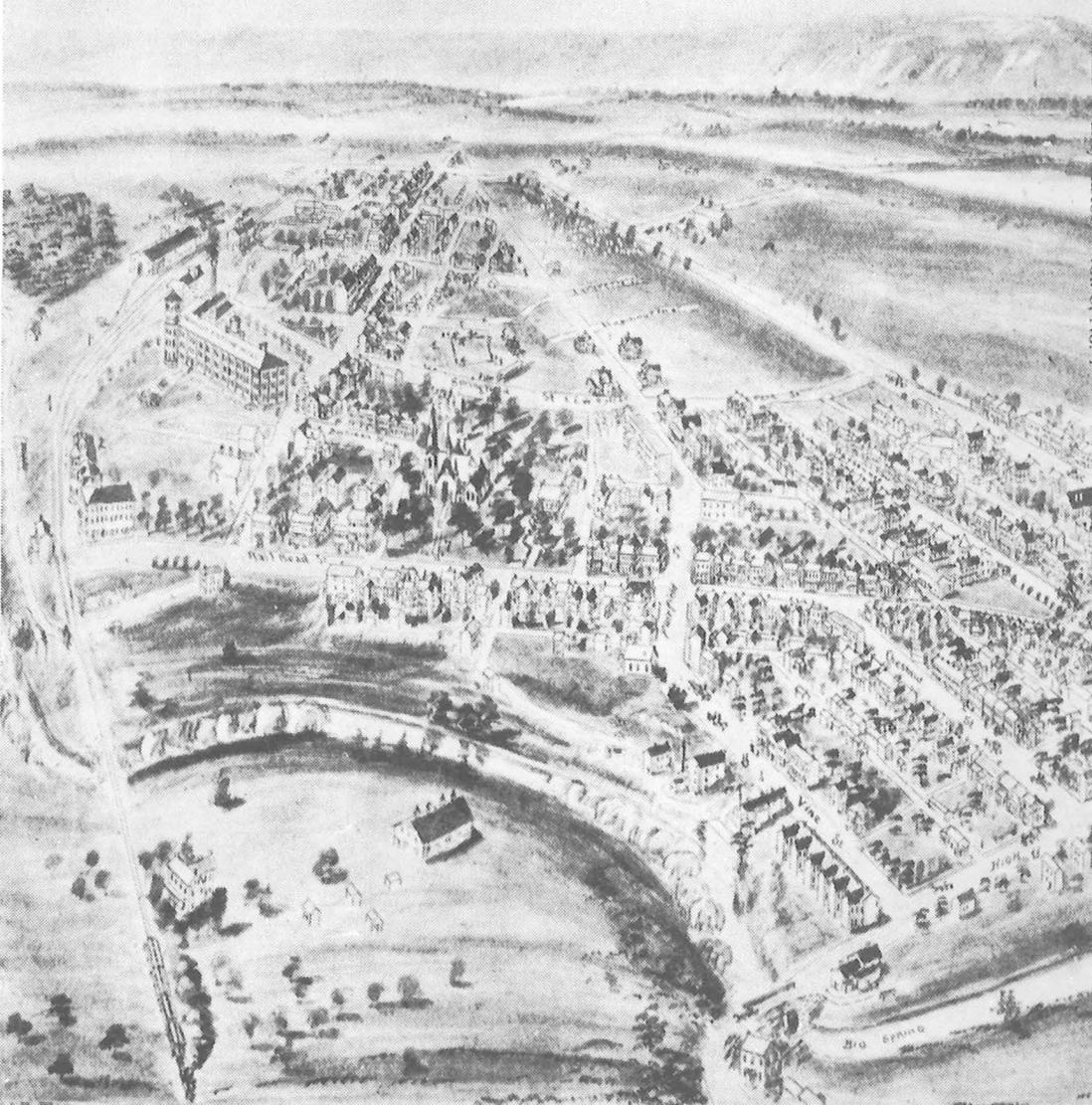
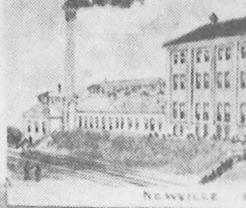
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