

Hessdale Makes County Map; in 1912 It Received Post Office Rating

LANCASTER FARMING here presents another in a series of articles "From Years Ago," written by Charles E. Slentz, Quarryville. These items of interest



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are bits of history, local in nature, universal in interest.

Four years after the inception of the Slumbering Groundhog Lodge in Quarryville, the fraternal order which helped to put that borough on the map in a bigger way than ever, Hessdale, in Strasburg township, "made" the map. The occasion? The establishing of a "new post office at Martinsville . . . to be known as Hessdale."

The press of Feb. 2, 1912, records that the office "opened for the accommodation of its patrons February 1." It further records that "an effort was made to have the name of the village given to the post office, but the department would not grant it. . . . The Martinsdale office was discontinued when the rural delivery service was established, it will be located in the store of A. W. Hess." This set-up possibly gave near-by farmers, and neighbors a more logical excuse to hobnob at the village with greater frequency; they'd have to go to the store, and get the mail.

Mail Three Times a Week

As long as its the business of getting the mail, it may have been passed down to some farmer folk up in the several Bart townships that their great-grandparents got mail in from Lancaster only three times a week — 100 years ago. The post office tied up with this service came into being in 1856. Following is The Manheim Sentinel's word on it, as of Feb. 1, that year: "A new Post Office was established at 'Weaver's Mill' in East Earl Township and John Weaver Esq. appointed postmaster. It received mail from Lancaster three times a week."

Still mail conscious, this bit is relayed through courtesy of The New Holland Clarion, from an early issue of 1881: "The Postmaster of New Holland, George W. Smith, held that office since his appointment by President Taylor in 1849. . . . with the exception of the four years of Buchanan's administration when Peter Ream was Postmaster."

School Days, Years Ago

The year James Madison was re-elected president of the United States, West Donegal town-

ship built its first schoolhouse. The suitable site for it, chosen by leading land-owners of what is presently Rheems, was a tract where the Christian Graaf (Groff, or Grove) and John Albert farms joined. The plot (one-quarter acre) cost \$20 — \$10 being paid to each Graaf and wife, and Albert and wife. The building, erected in 1813, served nearly a half century. In 1859 it was completely destroyed by fire of unknown origin.

Other early public schools in the Rheems area were Pleasant Hill, and Cherry Hill; both schools were tremendously rich in the color and atmosphere inherently a part of institutions of learning prior to, and during the first years of the free school system in our State. Still another early school in this part of the county was a church school. According to old German-written records, the Blosser (Dutch Reformed Church was erected about 1740, and served as church and school. The location of this structure was along the Maytown highway, immediately southeast of the Union School (Brandtstown). The writings refer to one, Templeman, "a pious German tailor. . . . who acted as both schoolmaster and cared for the spiritual needs of the community (Blossers) during the early 1740's and 1750's."

Elizabethtown Role Large

(Apologies to H. E. Reem, who contributed "History of Rheems School Began in the Year of 1813," as per Elizabethtown Chronicle dated Feb. 2, 1956. Read, or re-read if you will, this interesting and informative Reem article for a fascinating story on that section's oldest schools, its educational problems and stirring progress made in salvaging them.) — This, because currently, particularly, the good people of Elizabethtown borough, and of Upper Mount Joy, West Donegal and Conoy townships are very, very school-minded. So, for that matter, are the good people of Quarryville borough and those residing in the surrounding and outlying townships. So, too, for that matter, are all good people, everywhere — and the farmer, always the farmer, is in the vanguard of every better school movement.

The farmer has been and ever is in the forefront, too, when road or highway betterment is at stake. According to county newspapers, time was when he had a certain gripe — perhaps a justified one — where such betterment was concerned. Along with other misinformed people, there were those on farms in our county who felt road improvement was being designed only, and we quote the press, "for a special and select class, the motorist." Quoting farther, there seemed to be "little interest in the movement as long as only wealthy men in the big cities were the owners of motor cars." (This was possibly a minority reaction influencing rural communities in the late 1890's and very early 1900's.)

Farmer — Motorist — 1911

The kick-back on the part of the farmer was a reluctance to "improve the roads for the benefit of the city 'nabobs' who chased by at railroad speed and scared his horses, killed his chickens which strayed on the public highway and, to his mind, ruined

Groundhogs Accept Three



Three Baby Groundhogs shown bibbed for initiation into the organization for the denizen of the underground were photographed underground (in the Quarryville St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church basement) with the picture developed by Most Exalted Prophet Carl Reynolds Jr., E. F. D. On the grade roll are, left to right, Harry K. Gerlach, Michael DeBerdine and Herbert B. Valentine. Shepherding the youngsters, in the underground background are, left to right: William A. Frutchey, STC, communications engineer; Jackie LeFever, GKE, watchman by day; William U. Hensel, III, secretary and bondless treasurer; between Mr. DeBerdine and Mr. Valentine, J. Earl Newswanger, DSNF, patriarch of degrees; Victor Alvin Keen, MCEAE, ambassadorial patriarch and — finally — on the right, Albert H. Fritz, board of hibernating governors. — (Lancaster Farming Staff Photo.)

what good roads there were throughout the State." This feeling had changed somewhat by at least 1911, or thereabouts, for "now the farmer is a motorist," we read — "and 'thousands of pleasure vehicles driven by motor power are owned throughout the State by farmers.' Farmer ownership was not too great in the county's most southerly township, however, for a spring, 1912, issue of The Quarryville Sun announced that "Fulton township will shortly be able to boast 16 automobiles" and, in compliment, added, "that isn't bad for one township."

Having hit the roads, always broad ways or avenues for endless comment and discussion, it might not be amiss to do a little speeding — speeding a-la 1908, that is. To get to the point, Wakefield's reporter gave this racy brief covering activities at its neighborhood track, about St. Valentine's Day that year: "Spirited racing was witnessed by a number of people on Saturday afternoon on Farmer's race track. The racing was done in sleighs and a number of fast horses were sped around the track. Mabel Wilkes, driven by Scott Housekeeper, won first prize. James Boyd's horse and Monroe Farmer's kept side by side.

A. K. Bradley was there with his speed as was also Edwin Housekeeper, B. F. Riley and a number of other noted horsemen." Currently, The Quarryville Sun informed concerning more speedy diversion for old and young alike — form farmer folk and others — in telling: "Some of the owners of speed here and thereabouts (Oak Shade vicinity) have converted Howard Overly's two adjoining fields into a race

track. On Monday and Tuesday nights all lovers of fast driving who had anything fast to drive and would venture out into the chilly night, were found at this path of sport. 'Twas of fun the participants say, to sleigh, hear the bells jingle and race all at the same time. William Walton won first money on Monday, while Harry McCardell won second."

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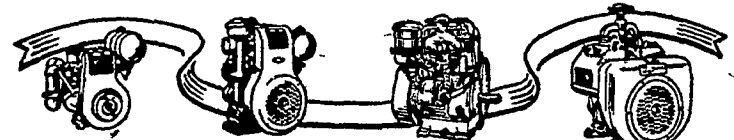
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