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EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.

HISTORY OF ELK COUNTY.

By a Northwestern Pennsylvanian.

EARLY SETTLEMENT OF RIDGWAY AND VICINITY—CONTINUED.

Enos Gillis was pushing his improvements rapidly on, his saw mill was in operation, and his tannery about completed, he removed his family to Ridgway in 1827. The same year Levi Alyworth came in and took an interest with his brother in building a saw mill, it was a failure producing considerable merriment at the time, thought a somewhat serious affair to the owners. It is worthy of a mention. Alyworth and James L. Gillis had purchased the land of Mr. Ridgway, from the river at a point near the west end of the present bridge, thence west to below Hughes & Dickinson's mill and including all below this line to the river; about eighty-five acres, known as the "mill lot." At the lower end of the lot is an island, which any one having been at Dickinson's mill will recollect. Back of this island and yet below the present mill, Mr. Alyworth decided to set his saw mill, with the expectation that with a slight dam across the stream at the head of the island, he would turn the water through and have sufficient head for all purposes. The mill was about completed, the bulkhead at the entrance was finished and considerable progress on the dam, when it was suggested that a level being taken it would appear a mistake and that he could not get a sufficient head. Upon examination, this was found to be the case. To obtain sufficient head and fall, a dam would be required so high as would overflow the whole eighty acres, besides, no such dam could possibly stand the first ice-freshet. The tools were dropped and every laborer discharged immediately. It subsequently had to be removed to make room for the present improvements. A similar anecdote is told of Thomas Jefferson. In sight from his office window on his plantation was a mound or pinnacle. It struck him that a wind power could be erected on this summit that would carry a saw mill. A contract was made with a mechanic for its erection. It was completed and after a settlement with the contractor, he said to Mr. Jefferson, "that he thought the power fully sufficient," but says he, "I have often wondered how you would get the logs to the mill." Mr. Jefferson was instantly struck with its impracticability, and replied; "I never thought of that." Of course it was only a wind-mill. This mistake of Mr. Alyworth was a theme of much annoyance, besides the loss of money; "old" Jacob Shafer frequently gave him some hard hits about it. Mr. Shafer was an early settler on "Little Toby," near the south line of Ridgway township; which then comprised a large territory, consisting of the present township of Ridgway, Snyder, Spring Creek, Highland, and Jones townships. The elections were held in Ridgway, and although there were less than ten voters they were spirited; particularly for the office of supervisor. Mr. Alyworth was running for that office and opposed by Shafer, who declared "he would not vote for any man who would erect a saw-mill that he could get neither wind or water to it." Mr. Shafer was a legitimate son of Pennsylvania German stock, he was a sound Democrat. Such was the firmness of his character that slander often imputed it to obstinacy. As his residence was half way, from Ridgway to Brookville, he kept an "entertainment" and was well known throughout the whole country; he imbibed a prejudice against the Ridgwayites at an early period. One of the causes was this; In the settlement of Ridgway, spirituous liquors were "tabooed" teetotally, except as a medicine. There was no temperance society, no pledges, but it was the spontaneous desire of the whole people to keep it out of the place. Mr. Shafer, either from a desire to add to his profits or from the importunities of his guests, kept a bottle of "twitch-eye" or "rot-gut" in his cupboard, which from its scarcity, more probably than from its quality was eagerly sought after, frequently tempt-

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ing those, whose appetites from long abstinence had well nigh been cured of its former effects. The dispensation of this "tabooed" article by Mr. Shafer, and without any license from the Commonwealth had its deleterious effect upon the settlement at Ridgway, though eighteen miles distant, and in fact became an annoyance. Mr. Alyworth being on the grand jury deemed the case a proper one for a presentment, and the court as properly fined Mr. Shafer five dollars and costs, with the admonition, "go, and sin no more." Mr. Shafer never forgave this prosecution. Subsequent action on the part of Mr. Shafer showed that he must evidently have studied the laws of nations with regard to "Reprisals," carrying it into effect so long as his "entertainment" was absolutely necessary to the returning lumbermen of Ridgway or when any of its citizens were his guests. The price of meals suddenly rose fifty per cent, and the astonished raftsmen upon their remonstrance, was quietly told, "that the Ridgwayites had got him fined for selling liquor and he must make it up;" now there was logic in this. Mr. Shafer regarding Ridgwayites as a sort of hostile nation, having despoiled him of his property by fine, believed it his duty (as well as interest) to make these reprisals. Did General Jackson do less when he threatened France for her delay in making good her despoliation on American citizens? It is unnecessary to add that Mr. Shafer was a good Jackson man. One other anecdote of Mr. Shafer will exhibit the peculiar logic of his mind. It was after Mr. Viall had established his well known tavern at Brandy Camp, (of which, special notice will be made hereafter) the writer, with a friend, were on their way to Ridgway from Pittsburgh, travelling on horseback, night overtaking them, they "turned in at Shafer's." None but children were at home, so they hitched their horses in the old open log barn, appropriating for them the only article of food to be found, parts or two sheaves of oats. Mr. Shafer having returned in the evening, met his guests at an early hour next morning starting to Viall's for breakfast. To the call for the bill he apologized for its amount, stating "that having no conveniences for keeping travellers he had to charge high, that Mr. Viall, having a good barn and plenty of oats, good house and beds, could afford to keep cheaper than he," his argument was conclusive, and never was a good hotel bill paid with greater cheerfulness. But to return to Mr. Alyworth. This mistake of his with regard to his mill, led to a survey by himself and James L. Gillis of the race, which now courses through the west part of the village of Ridgway. A competent engineer was employed, and although a perfect maze of forest, swamps and under brush, so correctly was it staked out, its several cuttings marked, that when the whole was completed, mill erected, and the water applied to the wheels there was not an inch variation of head and fall from the draught made by the engineer. It is safer to abide the result of calculation and instrumental guide, in cases of like character. The failure of the "Alyworth mill" gave Levi Alyworth a distaste for forest life and he determined to quit, the country which did. During the time he remained, Mr. Ridgway came in, looking after his affairs. He was accompanied by his son John, who had just emerged from college life with no experience in business details, nor of a woodman's occupations. Mr. Ridgway, always an admirer of robust, stalwart forms, could not but notice the slender and delicate figure of Levi Alyworth and contrasting it with what he deemed so necessary for clearing land, asked (a number of who were together) what Levi was going to do, "Oh! he will get along, he is deputy post master," (the avails of this office have been before mentioned) "John" very naively asked how much the "office was worth?" The elder Ridgway was evidently vexed at John's simplicity, uttering a sarcastic "pish!" "the devil, not a cent." From the laugh that followed, John in turn was embarrassed, without fully understanding the entire

meaning, he saw however, that it was necessary to become acquainted with the value of property, so he questioned J. L. Gillis as to the real value of effects which he sold at the college, he wished to know whether he had got *quid pro quo*? He had a bed, "first-rate bed and bedding, towels, washstand and basin, and all the appurtenances for a student's room" well how much did you sell them for? "a dozen watermelons to treat my friends with;" you made a good sale for the purchaser but don't you report it to the old man," John kept whist, no doubt. Those who have dealt with "John" in after years when all these lands came into his possession, will not underrate his advancement in the science of political economy, nor his judgment in all matters relating to business affairs, and here we must relate another story showing the nerve of the Backwoods. After "John" had gone to Paris, where he now resides enjoying his fortune, his land affairs continued under the agency of Mr. John Colegrove, who had always regarded "John" as a sort of *protège*. No man was more scrupulously exact than Mr. Colegrove, and "John's" interest was peculiar care. "Communications" were necessarily frequent and usually dated from his "Hotel," Paris. Mr. Colegrove had often puzzled himself as to why "John" should stay so long at Paris. His "communications" still continued, dated as before mentioned, the idea that "John" had retired from the active business that his father had led was not to be thought of. To the many inquiries, as to when Mr. Ridgway might again be at Ridgway, Mr. Colegrove would reply; His "communications" from Mr. Ridgway did not specify; he supposed that as he was keeping a "Hotel" its cares would render it difficult for him to leave! How much more exalted, does human nature appear when viewed from this (unsophisticated as we may say) stand point; the diamond is not the less valuable because of its outer rugged covering! would there were more such good and true men as Jonathan Colegrove. But we have been "off the track" of our "history" in digressions, and we will now return to about 1827, after Enos Gillis had arrived with his family: The construction of the "pike," was next to personal affairs, the engrossing object of the settlers, and its value was never over estimated. James L. Gillis was untiring, and it was necessary: Every winter must he appear at Harrisburg, pressing for aid, the land owners seeking at his importunities, declaring at every subscription, "it should be the last," "don't you call again" was repeated at every application. To these bursts of impatience he would argumentatively reply, you have already paid something, which must be irretrievably lost unless you add more to its completion, otherwise the work must stop." Thus these land owners must be *impromptu* to their own interests. It was like a beggary for some charitable object, those taking the lead "get more kicks than coppers." As subscriptions were often made, conditional that the same should be expended upon, and through the subscriber's lands, detached parts were made, by adding the state appropriation per mile.

Many were unable to do so, and the road thus left had the appearance of a public highway under the care of supervisors, who generally worked the road on such portions over which they, themselves, would likely travel. That portion of the turnpike from Milesburg to Snow Shoe was the third section. We have already stated that Mr. Karhaus had made the road from the Susquehanna to Snow Shoe. This section extended to the coal beds and was greatly traveled, and the tolls were fully sufficient to keep it in repair. The next section was from Bennett's Branch, (Caledonia), to Ridgway, soon afterwards it was extended up to Montmorency, thence north to the creek. That portion from Ridgway to the creek or west fork of the Clarion, was mainly, with Mr. Ridgway, subscription and the State appropriation. Thus was left two sections in the line of road which, from the fact that funds and labor had become exhausted, was really appalling. Gillis, however contrived to obtain other subscriptions from Mr. Ridgway, and Benjamin and A. M. Jones, proprietors of the lands, sufficient to make the road from "11 Mile Spring" to the west branch towards Montmorency. Then came a "sticking point" for two or three years where we leave it for a period.

Benjamin and A. M. Jones were then the owners of a large body of land lying principally in what is now Jones town. In their advertisement for their sale they say, "They had no desire to transmit these lands to their grand children," and offering them for one dollar and twenty five cents an acre.— They secured the services of Wm. P. Wilcox, of Nunda, N. Y., as the agent to reside upon and sell these lands. In the winter of 1832-3, Mr. Wilcox commenced hauling in provisions, mill-irons, &c., preparatory to a commencement the next spring. The same winter, L. Wilmarth, Arthur Hughes, and George Dickinson came into Ridgway. As a lumbering site was their object, they at once selected and built upon the location which has been so long known upon the Clarion below as the "Hughes & Dickinson Mill." So familiar was the name along the Clarion to its mouth, that many of the people living on the stream spoke of Clark Wilmarth, then a lad, and who frequently went down with the raft, as *Hughes & Dickinson's son*, and actually considered him as such for several years. As the "Wilcox settlement" and the construction of the race and mill by H. & D. were simultaneous, and may be regarded as an Era in the History of Ridgway. Their origin and progress will make a subject of comment hereafter.

But it is not so easy to answer written queries. The weather fails then as a refuge. It will not do to reply to a letter demanding an explicit reply to political questions that they are "great" and "important" and "vital," and that, in short, "it will likely rain." Hence it is we suspect that the General, whose pen although mightier than his sword is desperately weak, impressed with the sorry fate of his epistolary efforts on protection and railroad communication, dreads any further attempts of that kind with the fear which scorched infants are proverbially alleged to entertain of conflagrations. We have more than once tried to lure him from his silence and to encourage him in again attempting a written exposition of his views, by furnishing him a draft of certain model political letters, which it was only necessary that he should copy and sign to satisfy the public and establish his claims to their support. Although our efforts have been vain hitherto, and our benevolent assistance has been slighted, we are not to be discouraged, and have, accordingly, prepared another letter for the signature of the reticent warrior, on the subject of reconstruction, which we commend to his attention. It is not copy-righted, and he need have no fear that we will basely attempt to reclaim it when he has made it his own, as was done by the Governor of Massachusetts when Geary borrowed his inaugural, and recited it to the people of Kansas. "Here we are":

DEAR SIR: I have read with great attention the reports respectively of the majority and minority of the Committee on Reconstruction, and have been much struck with the perspicuity and patriotism by which they are distinguished. I have also carefully studied the constitutional amendments which have recently passed Congress, and which are about to be submitted to the legislatures of the respective States. I am opposed to unnecessary innovations and needless alterations in the great charter but have no doubt that the provisions now proposed to be added to it, if ratified by three-fourths of the States, will be accepted as valid, at least by that portion of our citizens who are favorable to them. The government owes much to its stability to the Constitution, and the broader the base the steeper the apex. Having thus frankly declared my sentiments upon the great issue of the day, I remain yours &c.

This document only needs the potent initials "J. W. G." at the bottom of it to give it currency (in the Republican journals at least), as one of the clearest and profoundest political papers of the day. We charge nothing for this hint, or this help.—*Phil's Age*.

WHAT WOMEN CAN DO.
Among the strangers in Philadelphia at this moment are two ladies from Martinsburg, W. V. Yesterday they were purchasing a seed drill, a mowing machine, and other agricultural implements, whose cost in the aggregate was about \$800. Their home was very close to the theatre of the late war.— Between the two contending armies their houses and their barns were burned, their horses and cattle driven off, their only brother conscripted into the Rebel army, and themselves left utterly destitute and homeless. Any one who, seeing a young lady such as we saw yesterday, had been told that she had personally plowed and planted many acres of land, would have laughed to scorn the party so informing him.

Such, however is literally the case.— We learned the facts from a gentleman residing in the vicinity. The smoking ruins of the farm upon which these young people resided had scarcely cooled when the neighbors clubbed together, built them a log house, and extemporized a sort of a barn. Horses were loaned to them, and the girls with their own hands plowed the ground and seeded it with corn. The crop grew apace, and with their own hands they harvested it. They sold it to good advantage. They had owned forty-seven negro slaves. Some of these went into the Union army, others deserted the locality. The girls were left alone to battle with the vicissitudes of war.

Our informant, whose respectability is beyond all question, says that these girls produced by their work in the field more decided and productive results than were accomplished by the en-

tire gang of slaves. They toiled for three years and now have a comfortable house and most substantial barn upon their property, while improvement have been made upon it to such an extent that makes it of considerable more value than before the torch of conflicting armies reduced its buildings to ashes.— One of the young ladies has since married; but the others still do duty as their own "overseers," and they themselves purchased yesterday, and directed the shipment of the agricultural implements to which we have above referred.

The wonder to the dealer was that a lady, delicately gloved, and attired as though she had never overstepped the bounds of the boudoir, should descend experimentally and intelligently upon the respective merits of the different reaping machines, and upon the comparative values of the different machines for threshing out the cereals.

These young ladies were educated in this city, and are well known to many of our best people.—*Phil. Gazette, 9th inst.*

PENNSYLVANIA AND THE SOUTH.

Shall we have Union or disunion? That is the question upon which the people of Pennsylvania, and of all the Northern States, must decide by their votes in the coming elections. The modified plan of the Senate caucus proposes to delay the restoration of the Union no less than the more objectionable proposition of the Committee of Fifteen. To subserve the purposes of Republican politicians the Union is to be kept divided. To enable them to carry out this infamous purpose they rely upon their ability to keep alive in the North a feeling of hatred toward the South.— If they cannot succeed in that the people will decide against them and their schemes by an overwhelming majority. Will the people of Pennsylvania still be led blindfolded by passion?

The war is over. All the purposes proposed to be accomplished have been successfully achieved. If the Union is not restored it is the fault of the Radicals in Congress. Slavery, whether the cause of the rebellion or not, has been wiped out. The news, even as published in the Radical newspapers, shows that the people of the entire South accept the results of the war, and are willing to bear true allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. The slaves are well treated and are only doing and faring badly where injudicious agents of the Freedmen's Bureau and Northern speculators interfere between them and the whites. There is no animosity on the part of the negroes towards their former owners. Even in Memphis riots it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Radicals themselves that citizens and returned Confederate soldiers had no hand in the disturbances. The whites of the South are principally concerned about repairing the ravages of the war. They are building, planting, and doing their best in every way to better their material condition.

What is the proper course for the people of Pennsylvania to pursue under such circumstances. Do not our duty and our interests alike demand that we should lay aside passion and prejudice and aid these people with whom we so lately waged war. Their section is part of our common country—they are important part of a people with whom we have common interests and a common destiny. We would not permit them to separate from us. Now that they are ready to coalesce with us, shall we act as if all our professed love for the Union was a sham and a lie?

Pennsylvania is closely allied with the South. Joining Maryland and Virginia along her entire extended Southern border, she is geographically united to that section. Heretofore the intercourse between our people and their Southern neighbors has been most friendly. They have married and intermarried, until everywhere a thousand ties of kindred and of blood have knit them together in bonds of the closest and most kindly relationship. In material interests we are no less closely related. Our rivers all run toward the South, and our channels of trade tend in that direction. We are in all respects nearer akin to the South, more closely allied to that section in

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

GEARY.

It is a long time since Geary has written a letter. Perhaps his bold and perilous avowal that railroads are "useful for the carriage of coal, iron, lumber, merchandise, flour, bacon, and other commodities," made in an epistle to the merchants of Pittsburgh, and which we noticed at the time of its publication, has exhausted his courage, and he fears to excite and exasperate the public mind by any more startling declarations of the same nature. He has not taken up the pen since, though public questions of the mightiest importance have been pressed upon his attention. His conversation is said to be altogether meteorological, consisting of profound allusions to the temperature of the atmosphere, the direction of the wind, the appearance of the sky, and the probabilities of rain. When these interesting topics, as sometimes happens, begin to wax tedious, and one of his auditors ventures to inquire what he thinks about the political situation, and how he likes negro suffrage, and what is his word on reconstruction, the mouth of the great man suddenly closes; he assumes an oracular frown, and replies: "These are great questions, sir, great questions—questions of great importance—vital questions, sir; how very warm it is—wonderful weather for the season, isn't it?" and the sage shoots off again into meteorology, and pours out his weather-wisdom with a suddenness and volubility which quite palsies the faculties of his questioner.