

## History of Dallas

As before stated, the earlier settlers about Dallas, after McCoy, Leonard, Worthington, Wort and probably half a dozen other families of Connecticut Yankees were nearly all Jerseymen. They brought with them many of the customs and beliefs of the Jerseymen, which gave as distinct an individuality to the Dallas settlement as the Connecticut Yankees, the Germans and Scotch-Irish have given to other settlements in Pennsylvania. In religion they were Methodists, and in politics Democrats. Methodism for many years had no rival. The first services were held at private houses and in barns. The houses of Philip Kunkle, Richard Honeywell and Christian Rice were among the places for holding prayer meetings and Sunday meetings until the old log school house was built in 1916. This became then the regular place of worship and so continued for many years until the Goss school house, the Frantz school house and others were from time to time erected. The first Methodist Church—still standing, 1886—near Dallas village (since converted into a broom factory) was erected in 1851. No other religious denomination has yet succeeded in getting sufficient followers in Dallas to erect a church, though there are now numerous representatives of other denominations.

The new Methodist Episcopal Church in Dallas borough, designed by Messrs. Kip and Podmore, architects, at Wilkes-Barre of which a cut is elsewhere given), was begun in September, 1888, and finished in the spring of 1889. The ground for this church was obtained from George W. Kirkendall, a former resident of Dallas, but then of Wilkes-Barre. The work of erecting the new church was begun with some ceremony in the presence of about fifty interested persons. Mr. G. W. Kirkendall threw out the first shovelful of dirt. The church was erected at a cost of about \$9,000. I am told that the Methodist Episcopal Church of 1851 was erected by Almond Goss at a cost of \$960, his bid being below cost, and \$40 lower than any other bid.

Politically, the Jerseymen in Dallas have not all been so steadfast in the faith of their fathers. This assertion may be questioned by some, for Dallas township has long been famous as a stronghold of Democracy. At one time it was unanimously Democratic, but as early as 1836, three men, Fayette Allen, Christian Rice and Alexander Ferguson parted company with the old line Democrats and united themselves

with the Whigs. For three or four years afterwards they stood alone in this faith. In 1840 their number was increased by eleven by the accession of John Williams, Abram Ryman, Jacob Rice, Charles Ferguson, Joseph Shaver, Henry Simons, Samuel Worden and Joseph Richards. From this eleven Whigs has grown the Republican element which has a slight majority in the borough and a threatening minority in the township.

The influence of politics was, however, quite insignificant in and about Dallas during the earlier days compared with religion. Only on rare occasions, when there was a great national agitation, did politicians visit that back country. Religion took a deeper hold, and was almost constantly kept before the people by local exhorters and revivalists. So great was the need of, and haste to make use of, the present Methodist Church edifice that it was pressed into active service as soon as it was enclosed and before any floor was put down. The congregation sat on logs. After its completion this church, like the old log school house, was put to a great variety of uses. Lectures on temperance, hygiene, travels in Holy Land, magic lantern panoramas, day school and Sunday school exhibitions, Fourth of July celebrations, funerals, revivals and "protracted meetings" were all held at the church, and they were matters of such general public concern that they usually attracted as large a assemblage of the general public as any of the other meetings or "goings on" at the church. Even a funeral was diversion in that rough and lonely county. "Uncle Oliver Lewis," as everyone called him, was at one time famous in that country for his funeral sermons. He was very sympathetic and wept copiously, as did the mourners and most of the audience, during his sermon. His discourse was usually an hour or more in length, and was devoted largely to panegyric and the narration of touching incidents in the life of the deceased, interwoven with minute and torturing details of the special sorrow that this and that member of the family would, for particular reasons, feel. The first two or three seats directly in front of the pulpit were always reserved for mourners. The open coffin was placed directly under and in front of the pulpit about midway between the preacher and the mourners. At all meetings and services in this meeting house it was the invariable rule for the men and women to occupy separate sides of the house. After the funeral the men were invited to pass

around and view the corpse, pass down the aisle on the women's side, out doors and re-enter and take seats again on their own side.

A reverse operation was then performed by the women. After all strangers had thus finished viewing the remains, the mourners were invited to take a last lingering and agonizing look. This public exhibition of mourning was often carried to ridiculous and uncontrolled extremes. Sometimes, possibly, from love of display, and again perhaps, through fear that any lack of sufficient demonstration on the part of a near relative or friend might be, as it sometimes was, the subject of unfavorable comment in the community.

Of all the occasions in that church, however, none ever approached such intensity of feeling and excitement as the "revival" or "protracted meeting" season.

These meetings usually began late in the fall, about the time or just after the farmers had finished their fall work. The first symptom usually appeared in the slightly extra fervor which the minister put in his sermons and prayers on Sunday. Then a special prayer meeting would be set for some evening during the week. Other special meetings soon followed, so that, if all things were favorable, the revival or "protracted meeting" would be at a white heat within two or three weeks. In the meantime the fact would become known far and near, and the "protracted meeting" would be the leading event of the neighborhood. If the sleighing became good, parties would be formed miles away to go sleigh riding with this protracted meeting as their objective visiting point, often from idle curiosity or for want of something more instructive and entertaining to do. Others went equally far, through storm and mud, in wagons or on foot, from a higher sense of personal responsibility and duty. With many it was a most grave and serious business. The house was usually packed to repletion. Professional ambulatory revivalists, often from remoter parts of the state or county, would stop there on their religious crusades through the land, to attend and help at these meetings. Many of these were especially gifted in the kind of praying and speaking that was usually most successful at such times. It is not overdrawn to say that many times on a still night the noise of those meetings was heard a mile away from the church. On one occasion I saw a leading exhorter at one of those meetings enter the pulpit, take off his coat, hurl into a cor-

ner and standing in his shirt sleeves begin a wild and excited harangue. After possibly half an hour of most violent imprecations and raving he came down from the pulpit, jumped up on top of the rail which extended down the center of the room and divided the seats on the two sides of the house, and from there finished and exhausted himself, begging and pleading with sinners to come forward and be converted, and invoking "hell fire" and all the torments supposed to accompany this kind of caloric, upon those who dared to smile or exhibit a sentiment or action not in accord with his.

The principal argument at those meetings was something to excite fear through most terrible picturings of hell, and the length of an eternal damnation and death. Scores would be converted, and many would backslide before the probationary period had ended. Some were annually reconverted, and as often returned again to their natural state. Many remained true to the new life and became useful and prominent members of the church and community. It cannot be successfully denied that many are reached and reformed at those meetings whose consciences never could have been touched by any milder form of preaching. They had to be gathered in a whirlwind or not at all.

A famous revivalist and assistant at those meetings was Elisha Harris, personally well known to many now living in Luzerne county, and also extensively known in larger fields, through what Dr. Peck and others have written of him. His home was near the Dallas Methodist Church and he was a frequent visitor there, and a most zealous worker at those "protracted meetings." His familiar and tremendous shout, "Amen! Glory be to God," was heard always at such times clear and distinct above all other noises. Its effect was often most

startling and ludicrous. It was his expression of approval of anything that was said by any one either in prayer or in speaking. It was a short thundering punctuation mark which he could not refrain from putting in whenever he listened to a prayer or sermon. On one occasion, at Lehman Center Church, he came in late at an experience meeting, when some probationers were giving their "experiences," etc., since conversion. As he entered the church he observed some one standing up apparently to speak. Not wishing to disturb any one he quietly seated himself unobserved in a seat behind everybody in the room near the door. The person speaking talked so low and indistinct only a faint sound of the voice could be heard by Elisha. As the speaker sat down Elisha heard apparent mutterings of approval from the good brethren who sat nearer and felt sure that something good must have been said. The old shouting instinct at once irresistibly came over him, and in that silent moment "Amen, at a venture," came thundering up from his powerful throat. The shock to many was quite severe. He had so managed that not half a dozen in the house knew of his presence. He enjoyed such surprises and rather took pride in the distinction they gave him.

John Linskill, a brawny Yorkshire Englishman by birth, a man of good sense and sterling honesty, of whom more is said elsewhere, was also heard often with good and telling effect at those meetings.

### Famous "Black Shirts"

The black shirt was originally worn by the Italian shock troops during the World war. Later it became part of the uniform of the legionnaires of D'Annunzio at Fiume. The Fascist adopted it as a symbol of the new patriotism. The Fascist organization was founded by Mussolini in March, 1919, at Milan.

### -Vernon-

Quite a number of parents and friends attended the Christmas entertainment and Christmas tree exercises given by the pupils of the Vernon school on Friday afternoon.

Our school is progressing nicely with Miss Bessie Ross as the teacher.

Mr. and Mrs. George Rogers entertained about forty relatives and friends to a venison dinner on Thursday evening.

Mr. William Weaver spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. John Montross of Jenks.

Miss Ethel Race spent Thursday and Friday visiting friends and relatives of Noxen.

Mrs. Mary Frempter, Lawrence Frempter and family spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Leon Dalley of Plattsburg.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry DeRemer of New Jersey spent the week-end with the latter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Corey Newman.

Mr. and Mrs. William Conden of Kunkle visited Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Eggleston on Sunday afternoon.

Mrs. Ralph Weaver visited Mr. and Mrs. George Rogers and family on Sunday afternoon.

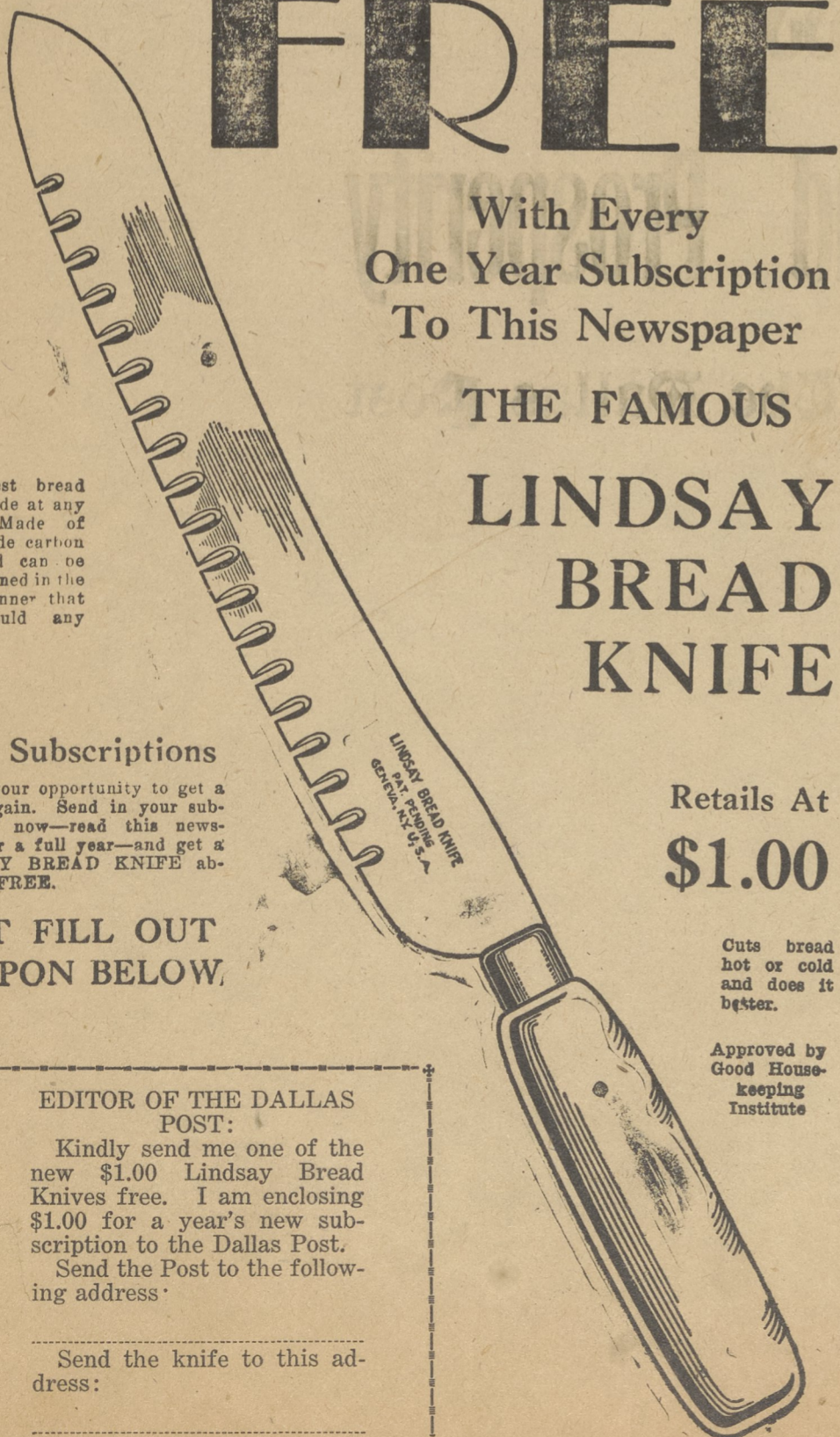
Miss Florence Frempter is spending the week with her aunt, Mrs. Marjorie Searfoss of Plattsburg.

### Worker Not Understood

He who would do some great thing in this short life must apply himself to work with such a concentration of his forces as, to idle spectators, who live only to amuse themselves, look like insanity.—Parkman

### Beckoning Light

Two lights are seen on the horizon—one the fast fading marsh light of power; and the other the slowly rising sun of human brotherhood.—P. Altgeld



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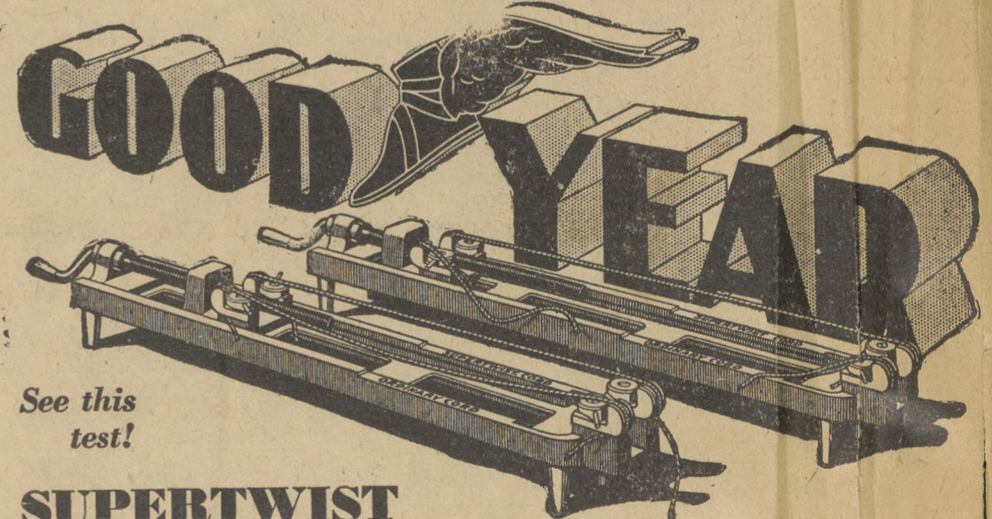
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