



Main Street, Dallas
Main Street, Dallas, has changed over the years as can be seen above from the 1902 photo and one taken years later when the first paved highway was run through Dallas Borough.



1879 fight over school taxes brought split of Dallas Borough, Twp.

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Writer

Newcomers to the Back Mountain may wonder why Dallas Township virtually surrounds a small area named Dallas Borough. The answer, so we have been told, is due to a disagreement between a group of residents over a lack of support in paying school taxes to maintain the new Dallas High School on Huntsville Road more than 100 years ago.

In 1878, residents of Dallas Village prepared a petition with a map, requesting the forming of a borough and presented it to a grand jury January 4, 1879. The Dallas Township supervisors, school directors and other residents opposed the petition in the courts.

Farmers and other residents drove to Wilkes-Barre in bobsleds and when necessary stayed in hotels. This continued until April, 1879, when the court approved the petition for the formation of Dallas Borough.

According to a history by Ryman, signers on the petition were listed as Fayette Allen, Joseph Atherholt, B.W. Brickel, John T. Bulford, Franklin Bulford, Charles H. Cooke, J.A. Fulkerson, John T. Fuller, C.D. Fulkerson, Thomas Garrahan, James Garrahan, J.B. Gerhardt, William J. Honeywell, C.D. Henderson, J.S. Henderson, William H. Law, James G. Laing, Leonard Machell, Thomas F. Oakley, S.B. Perrigo, Phillip Raub, Andrew Raub, C.E. Raub, L.M. Rice, Jacob Rice, William H. Rice, J.J. Ryman, Theodore Ryman, William Randall, George Randall, O.F. Roushey, S. Ramage, Barney Stroud, Ira D. Shaver, Fayette Shaver, George W. Shotwell, Lewis Starmer, Alexander Snyder, William Snyder, Christopher Snyder, C.A. Spencer, Peter Santee, J.B. Williamson, Spencer Warden, Chester White, G.W. Wilcox, Dwight Wolcott and S.H. Welsh.

The boundary for the borough

followed the outside property lines of those who signed the petition, making it resemble a jigsaw puzzle with 41 sides and a total area of only 2.259 square miles. In later years the location of some of the lines has been disputed.

The division caused a great deal of ill feeling among residents and some in the township refused to shop in borough stores. Others went so far as to not pass through the borough.

For years disparaging letters appeared in newspapers and in a few families bitter feelings were handed down to later generations. Despite some disputes over boundaries, many families and friends continued their friendships and in about 10 years township and borough residents worked together in starting and continuing the Woodlawn Cemetery, and helped build the Dallas Methodist Church on Church Street. They also worked together at the annual Dallas Fair and some worked side by side at the broom factory on Lake Street.

The township tried to force the borough to divide the township debts by suing them. This caused a lot of argument about assets and liabilities and finally the court ordered the two municipalities to divide the debt by the 1879 assessment. This resulted in the township assuming a debt of a little over \$800. The borough, much smaller and with a lower assessment, assumed a debt of approximately \$200.

Among the signers of the petition, the Machell family were early Dallas settlers and owned large farm lands on what is now Machell Avenue, Sterling Avenue and surrounding areas.

Jacob Rice built and owned the first painted house in Dallas and his father, Christian Rice built and owned a sawmill in what later became Dallas Borough on property that his son Jacob owned for years. That property was along Main Street in Dallas.

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