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# SUSQUEHANNA TIMES

Susquehanna Times & The Mount Joy Bulletin  
 MARIETTA & MOUNT JOY, PA.

Vol. 80, No. 14, April 9, 1980

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FIFTEEN CENTS

## A history of Billmeyer

A bird sings from the branch of a tree growing out of the cellar of one of a long row of fallen-down houses. A snake slithers across the vine-covered floor of Rebecca Chapel, of which only one wall remains standing.

A gust of wind blows against a flapping piece of sheet metal and slams in like a cymbal against the steel framework of the fifty foot high stone crushing building. The bird, startled, flies away.

Then, except for the distant rumble of a train, all is quiet in Billmeyer today.

Back in the nineteen-twenties, as many as two thousand people lived or worked around Billmeyer, on the Susquehanna River between Marietta and Bainbridge.

Periodically, dynamite blasts from the limestone and dolomite quarries rocked all the buildings in the area. Banging, crashing trains shifted cars which were waiting to be filled with lime or dolomite. The huge crusher worked relentlessly, smashing rocks into workable pieces. The red-hot, 125-foot long rotary kilns turned ceaselessly, infernally. Horses glistened with sweat and, encouraged by hissing whips wielded by bare-chested men, drew carts of stone up from the quarries to be emptied into the crusher.

Men, too, were sweating and straining.

Heat and dust were everywhere.

Billmeyer was not just a huge industrial operation; it was a complete community with homes, a general store, a church, and a school—everything a person needed to sustain body and soul.

Between the train tracks and the river was a row of houses in which workers and their families lived. Blacks, Poles, Hungarians and Italians lived side by side in peace and harmony.

In summer, neatly-kept lawns and well-tended gar-



A picturesque view of one of the Billmeyer buildings.

dens stretched from the houses down to the river banks.

On workdays, the children attended the village school.

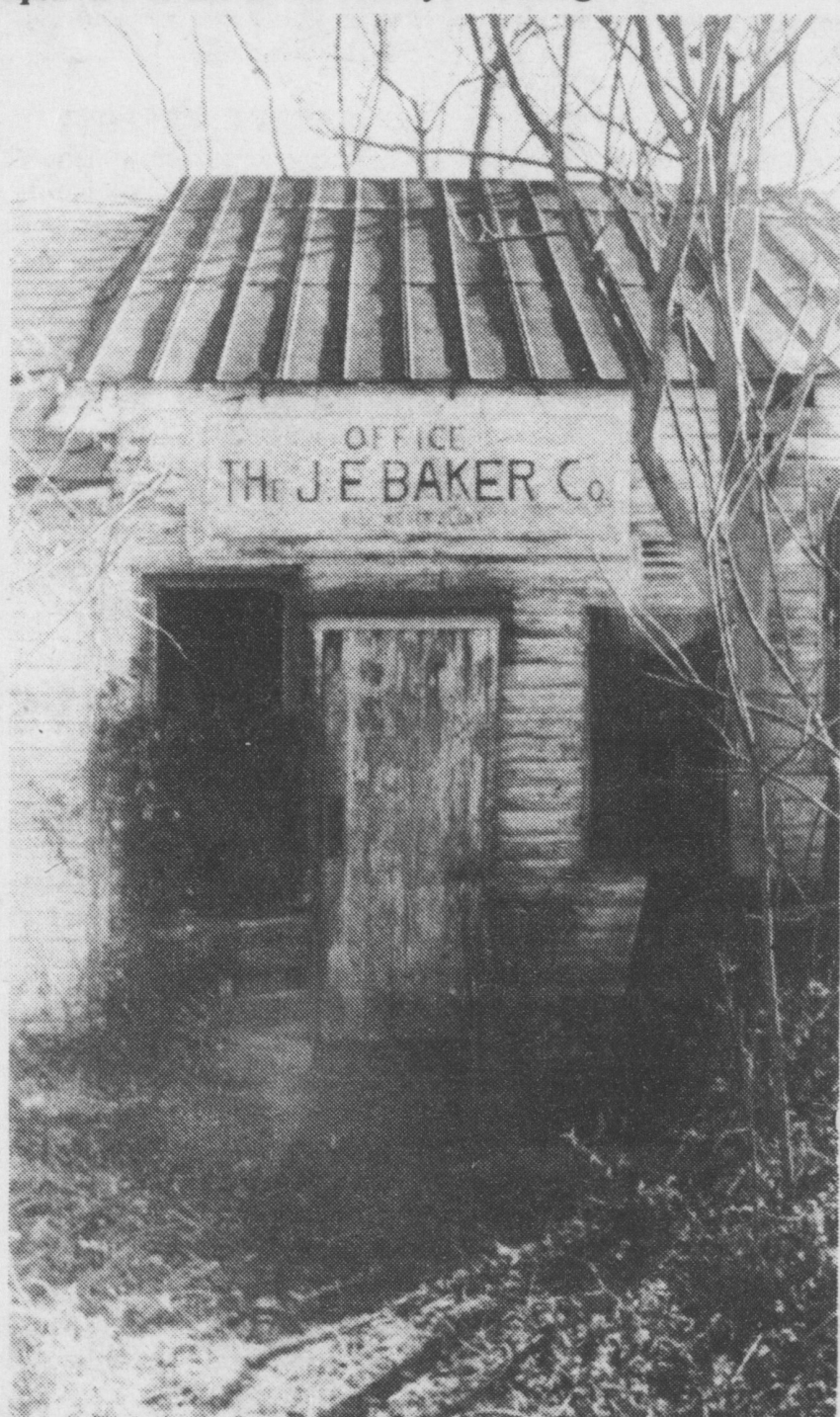
On one Sunday there would be a Catholic service in the chapel; the priest from St. Mary's in Marietta would come to say Mass. Next Sunday, a Baptist service would be held. The Rev. Louis Butcher, who worked as a red-cap porter at the Pennsylvania Railroad Station in Lancaster during the week, conducted the service.

On a summer Sunday, Rev. Butcher would lead a small flock of young converts down to the river, where he dunked them one by one in baptism.

The general store was run by Bill Mundorff. If a person needed anything, but lacked the money to buy it, he didn't have to go without it. Mundorff would simply charge the person for whatever he bought, and take the money owed out of the person's next pay-check.

Mundorff could do this because he worked for the same employer as his customers; the J.E. Baker Company.

In fact, everything in Billmeyer—the quarries, the store, the school, the



The J.E. Baker Company closed up shop in Billmeyer more than twenty years ago.

## Donegal Democrats favor Pres. Carter

John E. Matoney, a Mount Joy resident, conducted a poll of registered Democrats in the Donegal School District concerning the choices they expect to make in the upcoming primary contest between Carter and Kennedy.

There are approximately 1,500 registered Democrats in the Donegal District. Matoney contacted 74 by telephone; he selected those with the most active voting record. Each respondent was asked to place himself in one of five categories: for Carter; leaning to Carter; neutral or undecided; for Kennedy; leaning to Ken-

Those polled responded as follows:

For Carter—37  
 Leaning to Carter—3  
 Neutral/Undecided—28  
 For Kennedy—6  
 Leaning to Kennedy—0

On the basis of Matoney's poll, it seems that Jimmy will be the winner in the Donegal District. Even if all "undecided" respondents swing to Kennedy in the primary voting (statistically highly unlikely), Kennedy would still have fewer votes than Carter.

Matoney, a member of the Lancaster County Committee to Re-elect the President, conducted his poll on April 2 and 3.

## This Week's Calendar

Thursday, 4:30 to 6:30 pm, Marietta Youth Street Hockey practice to be held at the Marietta Community House. Interested persons should contact Gary Newton at 426-2514.

Marietta Youth Center activities will be held weekly through the end of April. All activities will be held at the Youth Center, East Front St., from 7 to 8:30 pm. Listed are the different groups:

Monday, Boys 9 to 12  
 Tuesday, Girls 9 to 12  
 Thursday, Guys 13 to 18  
 Saturday, Youth 13 to 18  
 Anyone interested in more information concerning the Marietta Youth Center should contact Gary Newton at 426-2514.

Thursday, April 10, a planning meeting for the annual Marietta Children's Fair will be held in the Marietta JC Center beginning at 7:30 pm.

Friday and Saturday, April 11 and 12, a rummage sale will be held at Zion United Church of Christ, Marietta.

Sunday, April 13, the Senior Choir of Trinity Lutheran Church, Mount Joy, will present an Easter Cantata at the 10:45 service.

Monday, April 14, the Marietta Auxiliary to the Columbia Hospital will meet at the home of Hazel Baker at 1:30 pm.

Monday, April 14, People United for the Arts meeting at 7:30PM. in the Donegal High School artroom. Program: Art Major classes present a "Creative Extravaganza" (exhibits, demonstrations, and surprises). The public is invited.

Tuesday, April 15, the Seiler Elementary School will present a spring music program at the Beam Junior High Auditorium beginning at 7:30 pm.

Thursday, April 17 at 7:30PM. the Marietta Restoration Associates will hold their regular monthly meeting in the Community House in Marietta. The program: "MAIN STREET, U.S.A.", a thought-provoking film from the National Preservation Trust. Public is invited.

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