

# Our Stretch Of The Valley

The Story of a Rural Community







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# *Preface*

*This book is dedicated to all my wonderful neighbors  
~ some of whom I have known for over fifty years  
~ and some of whom I have just met while writing this book.*

The following residents of our stretch of the valley have contributed information to this book:







### *The Beginning*

In terms of age, I'm not the oldest person residing in our community. But in terms of the number of years having resided in this little rural village, I'm the oldest. I've lived here, one mile west of the town of East Freedom and three miles east of the community called Smith Corner, for sixty-eight years. And those sixty-eight years have been my entire life. Well, maybe not technically my entire life. About forty-five minutes before 2:00am on the morning of 12 December 1954, my dad got my mother into the car to head into Altoona so that she could give birth to her third child at the Mercy Hospital. Carol was the first, on the 25th of July 1946, and Leon was the second on the 7th of June 1953. I would be the third. I like to joke about being the third and last of their children by saying that they did it until they got it right.

My father, Bernard, pulled off the road in the village of East Freedom and he and mother, Dollie, sat in the parking lot of the Freedom Township Elementary School for about ten or fifteen minutes. They were waiting for mother's oldest sister, Ellie Helsel, to get there. Aunt Ellie attended mother for each of her two previous children, and mother intended to wait for her as long as it would take. Thank goodness Ellie's son, Carl, got her to the school parking lot in time for dad to get mother in to the hospital. Mom's water broke as they were going up in the elevator and at two o'clock I made my appearance.

In the 1950s, women who had given birth at the Mercy Hospital were compelled to remain in the hospital for about a week. Mother later told of how she was in a ward with six other new mothers. And she often told of how she spent most of her time crying over the fact that she had given birth to another boy, and not the second girl that she wanted. And besides that, every other woman in that ward had given birth to boys, so they were all crying. My Aunt Ellie told mother that she would gladly take me and raise me as her own child if that is what mother wanted. But I guess

after thinking about it a little, my mother decided that I was worth raising herself.

So except for one week, I lived my entire life in the community where I still reside. At sixty-eight years, I most definitely qualify as the oldest ~ or rather the person who has been the resident in this community for the longest period of time.



Larry Smith, the author, and his furbaby, Maggie. 2019

I have compiled this 'history' from person to person discussions and deed information. I have tried to be considerate of my neighbors' privacy, and sincerely hope that I have not included any information that might have offended or insulted anyone. I apologize to anyone who has been offended.

**Note:** My personal reminiscences will appear in blocks with double line borders like this:



### *Ancestral Heritage*

The earliest settlers in this entire frontier region were Jacob and Rosanna Schmitt and their family of three children.

In 1774, Henrich Schmitt died in Lebanon Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. According to his will, Henrich's two youngest



sons, Peter and Jacob (the youngest) could keep the property on which they had built houses if, and only if, they paid their six siblings the equivalent of two or three thousand dollars. Unable to come up with such an amount of money, both brothers left their homes in Lancaster County and moved westward.

Peter Schmitt made his new home near the town of Bedford. Jacob Schmitt, on the other hand, traveled west through the valley now known as the South Dry Run Valley. Only certain major Indian paths had unique names and the Schmitt

brothers probably made their way westward on one of those: the Raystown Path. When they reached the town of Bedford, Peter stopped there while Jacob continued on to the west and north by way of the Frankstown Path. He then left that major path before it passed through the Kittanning Gap and

headed south on the Warrior Path. It was called 'Warrior Path', but then there were two or three other paths, all named 'Warrior Path'. When he came to the mouth of the South Dry Run, where it emptied into the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River, Jacob made his way up that valley to where the headwaters of South Dry Run began in five or six springs. And that was at the foot of the Blue Knob of the Allegheny Mountain Range.

Two DNA tests that I took suggested that I have Asian / Amerindian DNA. That means that I have Amerindian ancestors in my family tree. And I believe that that Asian / Amerindian blood comes from the wife of Jacob Schmitt. Research in eastern Pennsylvania revealed that of seventy-some individuals by the name of Jacob Schmitt,

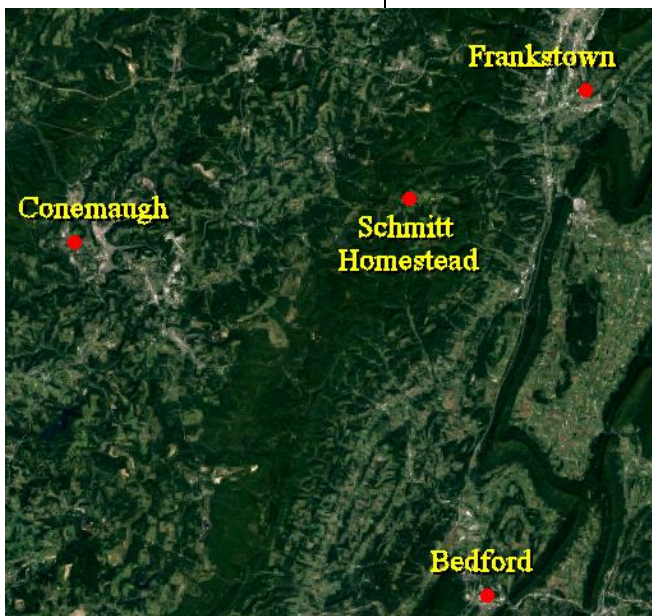
all of them could be associated with known wives, with the exception of my ancestor, Jacob Schmitt. And even the name of Rosana did not show up in any historical records of any of the eastern counties of Pennsylvania. So it is not only possible, but very probable that Jacob Schmitt met an Amerindian woman named Rosana after his arrival in this wilderness region in 1774. Throughout the 1770's and 1780's there were numerous Amerindian incursions into the Bedford County region (of which Blair County was part of), but at no time did the Amerindians harm the

Jacob and Rosana Schmitt family. That suggests that Rosana, herself very well could have been Amerindian.

Jacob and Rosana Schmitt established their homestead and gave birth to three children: Jacob Jr., Jacob Peter and Agnes Elizabeth. They made a living in the wilderness with no close neighbors for ten years. Their closest neighbors in the period from 1774 to 1785 were residents of Frankstown, about fifteen

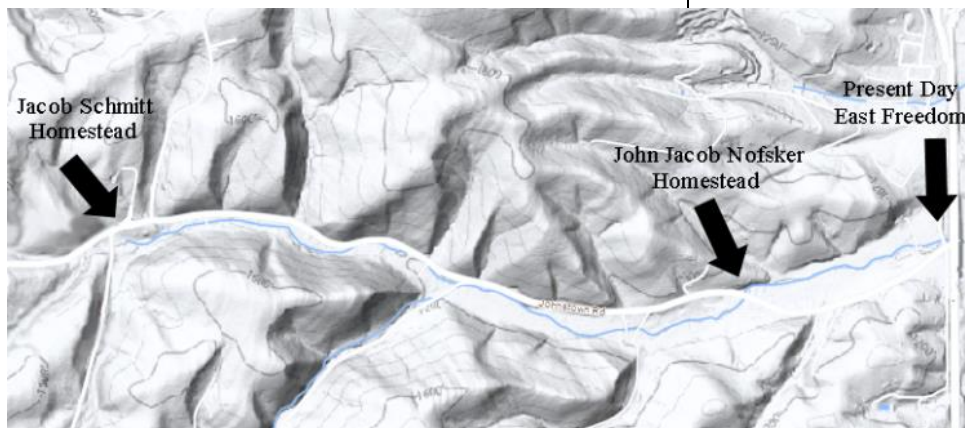
miles to the east, residents of Bedford, about thirty-five miles to the south and residents of Conemaugh (that is, present-day Johnstown), about thirty miles to the west. Knowing that an average day's journey was fifteen miles, it can be realized that even to travel to Frankstown and back would take two days.

The Schmitt family was self-sufficient, and the need to travel to Frankstown, Conemaugh or Bedford could be avoided for long periods of time. Jacob Jr., had a small blacksmith shop where he could fabricate most things the family needed. Jacob Peter was a cooper, and could make barrels and other wooden containers. Jacob Sr., and his sons grew and harvested flax and tended sheep for wool which Rosana and Agnes Elizabeth spun into



yarn. The family also had their own cider press and produced cider from an orchard of apple and pear trees.

Jacob Schmitt Sr., served as a private in the Bedford County Militia during the American Revolutionary War. After the War he made a living as a farmer. He died and was buried on the hillside to the west of his log house in 1797. The three children of Jacob and Rosana Schmitt married into the Helsel and Mock families and



bore large families. And it should be noted that Agnes Elizabeth married John Mock and they moved westward to the frontier that is the present-day states of Indiana and Illinois. They carried the religious denomination of the Dunkards (Brethren) to that region.

Although the Schmitt family settled about two miles west of the community in which I have lived for the past sixty-eight years, in 1954 when I was born, many of the families in this little community were descended from Jacob and Rosana Schmitt.

### ***The Schmitt Family's Earliest Neighbors***

In regard to the immediate region encompassed by this little community, there was one family that came to reside here prior to the arrival of John Jacob and Margaret Nofsker. Shortly after the American Revolutionary War ended in 1783, there was a great movement of veterans of that war throughout the Eastern Seaboard and into the frontier of the Allegheny

Mountain range. Included in that general movement of veterans of the War was Friedrich Wilhelm Singer. Singer was a Hessian soldier who had been brought from Germany to the American Colonies to fight for the British as a paid mercenary. He served as a rifleman in the HJA4 Company of the Hesse-Hanau Fusilier Regiment. Friedrich was born in 1762 at Obristfeld, Bavaria. He married Mary Magdalena Ridenour. Traveling westward through the valley of the South Dry

Run, Friedrich and Mary Magdalena were enticed by a smaller valley that cut off to the south. Friedrich constructed a log cabin at the far south end of the valley. It is identified by the letter (G) and the arrow pointing toward the site of the Singer cabin. When Friedrich died on 7 March 1851, he was

buried in the Newry Lutheran Cemetery, about three miles from his homestead. His wife, Mary Magdalena was born in 1781 and when she died on 20 December 1868, she also was buried in the Newry Lutheran Cemetery.

Twenty years after the Schmitt family homesteaded in the valley drained by the South Dry Run, the Dodsons arrived. Thomas, Michael and John Dodson were originally residents of Maryland. They moved northward to this part of then-Bedford County in the early 1790's. Thomas and Michael are believed to have been brothers. The first year that any of them appeared on a tax assessment return for this region was 1794. Michael Dodson Sr., took up residence at the south end of what is now known as Butler Hollow. The log cabin that still stands on their homestead property has the date '1739' on its gable end. Perhaps whoever painted that date was dyslexic and simply jumbled the numerals for the date '1793' into '1739'. The family was not extremely rich and could not have maintained homes in both Maryland and Pennsylvania for nearly sixty years.

And in the same way, it would have been virtually impossible for the Dodsons to have resided in this region for fifty-seven years without anyone (such as the tax collector) noticing that they were living here. Someone surely would have seen smoke rising from their cabin in at least one of the winters over all those years.

Following Michael, John Dodson Sr. arrived in this region in the year 1796. Thomas appeared on the tax assessment return for Greenfield Township in 1799.

Both, Thomas and Michael Dodson served in the American Revolutionary War. Michael enlisted in the Taneytown Militia in Carroll County, Maryland. He later served in the Fourth Regiment of the Maryland Line. Thomas served in the Fifth Regiment of the Pennsylvania Line. It was after the War that the brothers came to Bedford County. When they died, they, and their kin, John, and their families were buried in the Dodson Cemetery on the summit of Rattlesnake Ridge.

Henry Hoelzel and his wife, Eve (Stiffler) and their family of four children came to establish their farmstead just to the west of the Schmitt farm. After their arrival here, the Hoelzel (variously Helsel) family increased by six children. Various members of the Helsel family intermarried with the Schmitt family.

The valley adjacent to the South Dry Run valley to the south, named Paw Paw Hollow, was settled in 1797 by the family of Johannes George Mack and his wife Eva Amelia. George was another veteran of the American Revolutionary War. The John Mock who married Jacob and Rosanna Schmitt's daughter Agnes Elizabeth, was a son of George and Eva Mack.

Also, in the year 1797, the family of Jacob and Anna Catarina (Meyer) Stifler moved in to homestead to the south of the Schmitt farmstead. A number of the Stiffler family intermarried with the Schmitt and Helsel families to populate the community that would bear the name Smith Corner.

Another family moved into the vicinity of this little community in the first half of the Nineteenth Century, after the settlement made by the Nofskers. That family consisted of Abel and Mary Davis and their four children. Around 1840 they constructed a house opposite to the north entrance of the small valley settled by Friedrich and Mary Magdalena Singer. It is identified by the letter (F) on the map. Abel operated a grist mill in the field beside his house. The mill was not situated directly on the South Dry Run. Instead, water was diverted from about a quarter mile west by means of a long ditch. Abel died in 1853 and apparently the grist mill had been torn down between that time and 1890 when Adam and Agnes Hazenstab moved into the Davis house.

Mary Davis died on 5 August 1852. Abel Davis died on 22 October 1853. Their one son, David P., had died at the age of eleven on 26 January 1849 and was buried a short distance north of the house, alongside the South Dry Run. When Mary and Abel followed their son in death, they too were buried alongside the creek. The family of Raymond Hazenstab have continued to maintain the tombstones over the years.

### *The Naftzger Presence*

[*Note:* In this section, some of the public documents by which the majority of the region encompassed by our community was dispersed will be transcribed.]

Heinrich Naftzger was born in 1764 and was about seven years old when his maternal grandparents, Heinrich and Anna Meier brought him to the North American continent from their home in Bubendorf, Canton Basel, Switzerland. Heinrich's parents, Martin and Elizabeth Nafzger, did not make the journey to America.

Besides making a living as a shoemaker (as had his ancestors for four or five generations before him) Heinrich served for a brief time in the American Revolutionary War in the Lancaster County Militia. He married twice, first to



Margaret Sense, by whom were born seven children, five of whom died in infancy. Heinrich's second marriage was to Margareth Beschtlar, by whom thirteen children were born. After the War, the Heinrich Naftzger family moved from the Lancaster County region to the present-day Centre County region. It was from there that three of the Naftzger children (brothers: John Jacob, Samuel and Jonathan) moved southwestward in the late-1820's to homestead three miles east of the Jacob and Rosana Schmitt farmstead. John Jacob married Margaret Ruggles and they built a log house near a wooden bridge that crosses over the South Dry Run. The site is identified by the letter (B) on the map. Jonathan married Elizabeth Mauk and they built a house to the south of John Jacob's house in the valley adjacent to the south of the one drained by the South Dry Run. The site is identified by the letter (EE) and arrow on the map. Samuel married Eve Schuck and they homesteaded on the other side of the hill near Jonathan and Elizabeth.

It is believed that the property that John Jacob Nofsker acquired had previously been owned by the ironmaster Peter Shoenberger. He obtained the lands for the trees above ground (to be made into charcoal) and any iron ore below ground. This region would have been on the boundary of the jurisdictions of Bedford and Huntingdon Counties in the 1820's, but no deed between John Jacob Nofsker and Peter Shoenberger can be found in either the Huntingdon or Bedford County Court Houses. It appears that since John Jacob Nofsker did not acquire his property by engaging in a publicly documented transaction with Shoenberger, he either squatted on the land or entered into a purely

verbal contract with Shoenberger. Although it is not documented as such, it is possible that Jacob Nofsker 'purchased' a tract of land from Peter Shoenberger by cutting the trees and giving them



**John Jacob Nofsker**

to Shoenberger in payment for the land. Such a transaction would have benefitted both parties. Shoenberger would have got the trees he needed to make charcoal for his furnaces and the Nofsker men would have got their farmlands cleared of the trees, which they would have had to do anyways.

John Jacob Nofsker moved from present-day Centre County to present-day Blair County in the year 1826. Jacob settled on a tract of land about a mile west of the Johnstown ~ Bedford

Crossroads (so named because of the intersection of a road connecting McKee's Gap and the Newry to Johnstown Road and the Hollidaysburg to Bedford Turnpike). In the 1827 Tax Assessment return for Frankstown Township, Huntingdon County, Jacob Nofsker was included in the 'Single Freeman' category. Jacob no doubt met and married Margaret Ruggles in 1827 after the tax assessment was recorded. A year later their eldest son, and my ancestor, John Wilks was born. In my house, I proudly display a step-back cupboard that they brought with them in addition to an iron toy horse and buggy that they gave to John Wilks upon his birth.

In the 1842 Septennial Enumeration for Greenfield Township, Bedford County, Pennsylvania, *Jacob Nophsker* was recorded as a farmer. He apparently was a farmer most of his adult life; only the additional occupation of shoemaker appears in the tax assessment records other than farmer, and that was only in the 1827 assessment. He also, perhaps like most of the farmers who homesteaded throughout the valleys of the Allegheny Mountain range, would have engaged in some huckstering to gain profit from his labor in the fields.

Margaret (Ruggles) Nofsker died on the 25th of April, 1856 at the age of forty-nine. Jacob succeeded her by 25 years, passing away on 02 January, 1881. During his later years he resided with his daughter Margaret Jane and her husband Joseph Ruggles in his original homestead house. Both, Jacob and Margaret, upon their deaths, were buried in the Newry Lutheran Church Cemetery.

When John Jacob Nofsker died in 1881, he died intestate (*i.e.* without a will) and therefore the County of Blair, State of Pennsylvania became the administrator of his estate. Normally, in an intestate situation, the county court system would attempt to divide the property evenly among the surviving next of kin. If that proved impossible, the court might decide to place the whole property, or sections of it, for sale to the highest bidder among the next of kin. Jacob Nofsker's

property, which amounted to roughly four hundred acres when he died, was divided into four tracts.

Upon the petition of Jacob Emanuel Nofsker and Mary M. (Nofsker) Diehl on 24 January, 1881 intestate proceedings were commenced on the estate of John Jacob Nofsker, who was referred to in all the subsequent legal documents simply as *Jacob Noffscher*.

In order to give an equal share of the estate to each of the heirs of Jacob Nofsker, an inquisition was held to determine how the Nofsker property could be divided and sold, and the following report was filed in the Prothonotary's Office between 11 April and 04 May, 1881.

No. 122 1881 - Return of an Inquisition held on the Estate of Jacob Noffscher, late of the Township of Freedom, Blair County, Deceased, as follows:

Blair County, S.S:

An Inquisition indented and taken in Freedom Township and County aforesaid this 11th day of April AD 1881, before G.T. Bell, Esq High Sheriff of the County aforesaid, by their oaths and affirmation of Jurors whose names and seals are hereunto annexed, good and lawful men of my bailiwick, who say upon their oaths and affirmations, that having been taken by the said G.T. Bell, High Sheriff as aforesaid, in his proper person to the premises in the writ of this Inquisition annexed described and the parties in the said Writ named having been severally warned and as many as choose being present, That the property described in the said Writ can be parted and divided without prejudice or spoiling the whole thereof and therefore that they have valued and divided the same as follows, to wit:

Tract No. 2 - Blue Knob divided into two parts, and numbered one (1) and "Two" (2):

No.1 - Northern part containing 100 acres more or less, Mansion, per acre - \$17.00

No.2 - Of same tracts southern part, containing 100 a. more or less per acres - \$13.25

Tract No. One - Mansion Tract - divided



into 2 parts, and valued as follows:

No.1 - Northern part occupied by Joseph Ruggles, & leased by him, containing 100 acres, more or less, per acre - \$10.16

No.2 - Southern part occupied by J.E. Noffske, being the part of said tract leased by J.E. Noffske, 100 acres more or less, per acre - \$18.33

In Testimony Whereof as well I the Sheriff and the Jurors aforesaid, to this Inquisition have fixed our hands and seals this day and year above named.

G.T. Bell, Shff

J.G. Lingenfelter      John Sell

G.W. Benton              Henderson Gorsuch

John H. Hileman      Jacob D. Burket

Rec'd of J.P.S. for J.D.B. & Lingenfelter

Whereupon 25 April 1881 this considered by the Court, and it is ordered and decreed that the Partition as within made be firm and stable forever and that the costs by paid by the parties concerned - Also compensation or fee to W.J. Woodcock, Counsel to Admn, relative to said Inquest amount 100.00 dollars -

Now 4 May 1881 On motion of W.J. Woodcock Esq Rule granted on the Heirs of said Jacob Noffske, Deceased to appear and accept or refuse Real Estate of Decedent at appraised valuation.

Orphans Court Docket G, Page 193, Number 122  
Blair County Court House, Hollidaysburg, PA

In the foregoing document, the 'J.E. Nofske' referred to Jacob Emanuel Nofske. Jacob Emanuel was a son of John Jacob.

The Blair County Court notified Jacob's heirs that they would have to place bids on the various tracts identified in the Inquisition. Of course two of Jacob's heirs were more interested in this procedure than the rest. Jacob Emanuel and Margaret Jane were both residing on the homestead property: Jacob Emanuel and his wife Elizabeth (Dodson) Nofske resided in a house to the south side of South Dry Run (the site of which

is identified on the map by the letter 'E'). (It was eventually owned by the Gates family and later by the Weavers); and Margaret Jane and her husband Joseph Ruggles resided in the homestead house, which was called the 'Mansion' in the legal documents. The 'Mansion' house was located on the site identified by the letter 'A'. It eventually deteriorated and was replaced by the house of Bernard and Dollie Smith. Jacob Emanuel and Margaret Jane would have wanted to continue living in the homes they had known for however many years rather than to have to move out and find somewhere else. Only one other sibling, Sarah Ann and her husband John B. Hoover, decided to bid against the two heirs who were residing on the property.

On 25 July, 1881 the Blair County Court issued a decree on the bids submitted for Jacob Nofske's properties. That decree stated:

No. 290 1881 - In the Matter of the Partition and Valuation of the Real Estate of Jacob Noffske, Deceased late of Freedom Township, Blair County, Penna, to wit:

Now 25th July 1881, Due proof of service of Rule to appear in Court and accept of refuse to take the Real Estate of said Deceased, at the valuation thereof, or show cause why the same should not be sold upon the within named heirs of Jacob Noffske Decd residing within Blair County, having been made, and by advertisement &c, according to law as to the within named Nonresident heirs, and none of said heirs having appeared to accept at the appraised valuation any of said 4 tracts of Land - See Inquisition No. 122-1881 Orphans Court, but Margaret Ruggles having put in a sealed bid of \$20.25 per acre on tract on which she lives, being 90 acres & 120 perches, being \$1.00 above appraisement, and Sarah A. Hoover, having bid \$20.50 per acre (12781 perches) for tract on which J.E. Noffske now resides 02" above appraisement, and J. Emanuel Noffske, having bid \$22.00 per acre, on same tract - Now July 25 1881 Purpart No.1 of Mansion

Tract decreed to Mrs. Margaret J. Ruggles and her heirs to enter with Recognizance with good sureties to pay to the other heirs their legal and equitable shares of said consideration, less costs of Inquisition, being the highest and best bidder & her aggregate bid amounting to 1837.60/100 Dollars; Purport 2 Mansion Tract awarded to J. Emanuel Noffske and his heirs, to enter with recognizance with good sureties to pay the other heirs their respective shares, as above, less costs of Inquisition, being the highest and best bidder his aggregate bid amounting to 2605.00 Dollars, and as to Purports Nos 1 or 2 of Blue Knob Tract, a Rule is hereby granted on the Heirs to show cause why the same should not be sold according to law - the shares of the other Heirs in the purchase money or valuation for the lands decreed to Mrs. Ruggles and J.E. Noffske payable in one and ten years.

Orphans Court Docket G, Page 256, Number 290  
Blair County Court House, Hollidaysburg, PA

On 26 July 1881, Jacob Emanuel Nofske, along with W. W. Nofske and John Sell, went to the Orphans Court and signed a Recognizance stating that they would put up a bond of \$5,610 toward the tract upon which Jacob Emanuel had been awarded the bid.

On the following day, 27 July 1881, John Wilks Nofske, the eldest son of John Jacob Nofske, who was at the time of his father's death residing in Neilltown, in Forest County, Pennsylvania, came to the Court House in Blair County. John Wilks had moved up to Forest County possibly by accompanying an army buddy of his who was related to the Shirley and Gilson families. John Wilks Nofske is believed to have served in the Mexican-American War that lasted between 1846 and 1848. It was possibly through the introduction of an army buddy that John met and married his first wife, Catherine D. (Shirley) in 1848. While residing in Forest County, John Wilks and Catherine gave birth to nine children. Catherine died on 30 November, 1880, only a

month or so before John Jacob's death. Named by the Blair County Orphans Court as the Administrator of John Jacob Nofske's estate, John Wilks was required to give an account of the value of the estate. An audit report was filed by John Wilks Nofske and showed that the money in his father's estate amounted to \$13,605.11. The amounts which would be paid by Margaret Jane and Jacob Emanuel to the estate would amount to \$4,642.69. John Wilks added a note for \$1,225 which he claimed he owed to his father (which the Court lowered to \$1,000 by changing the 6% interest John Wilks had charged himself to 3%). Five \$1,000 U.S. Savings Bonds were found to be in addition to the original accounting of the estate and were added to the total. All in all, the estate was valued at \$25,221.80 by the Orphans Court.

It should be noted that John Wilks met and married Margaret Smith while he was in this region taking care of his father's estate. His youngest child by Catherine D. Shirley was Sarah Grant Nofske, and she was sixteen years old when John came southward to handle his father's estate. John and Margaret married on 20 March 1883 and Margaret gave birth to their only child, Henry Martin Cleveland on 7 January 1887. 'Cleve', as he was known to his family, married Bertha Mae Shoop and one of their daughters was Dollie Edith Nofske, the mother of this study's author.

Money from John Jacob Nofske's estate was disbursed to each of his eight heirs (which included his seven children: John Wilks, George James, Jacob Emanuel, William Alexander, Mary Magdalena Diehl, Margaret Jane Ruggles, Sarah Ann Hoover and his deceased son, Henry Martin's daughter (Dimerus Benner).

The total disbursements amounted to \$23,609.29 or \$2,951.16-1/8 to each of the heirs. The Audit Report was filed in the Blair County Court House in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania and recorded in Orphans Court Docket, Volume G, Page 341.

On 28 July, 1881 Margaret Jane Ruggles filed a Recognizance amounting to \$3,675.38 for the tract of land she had been awarded in the Inquisition.

According to certain records maintained in the Blair County Court House (such as Deed Book, Volume 376, Page 587) Margaret Jane Ruggles either sold or gave a portion of her tract of land to her sister, Sarah Ann Hoover. Sarah Ann Nofsker had married John B. Hoover, but in all the legal documents, she, like Margaret Jane, is the individual who is named as owner of the property. No record exists in the Blair County Court House, in any department, to verify a transaction between Margaret Jane and Sarah Ann. But each successive deed states something in regard to the lot of Mrs. Sarah Ann Hoover being within the boundaries of the Mansion Tract that Margaret Jane was awarded in the estate settlement of John Jacob Nofsker.

About eight years after she was awarded the property on which John Jacob Nofsker's 'Mansion' house stood, and on which she and her husband had lived for a number of years, Margaret Jane Ruggles passed away. Now at the time she died, the Ruggles family was residing in Newry. They moved some time in 1883. The name of Joseph Ruggles appeared in the Freedom Township tax assessment for the last time in that year, and also appeared for the first time in the tax assessment for Newry Borough in 1883. They retained possession of the property along South Dry Run although they didn't personally reside there, and that may be how Margaret's sister, Sarah Ann came to reside there prior to her own death in 1901. Margaret, like her father, died intestate, and so her estate was handled by the Blair County Orphans Court when she passed away.

The inquisition valued the property at \$1,920.00 on 11 March, 1889 and recorded such in a report filed in Orphans Court Docket K, Page 60, No. 127.

Although Joseph Ruggles, her husband, was still alive, Margaret's brother, George James Nofsker was appointed the Trustee of her estate and he placed the property on sale. The following report was filed in the Orphans Court.

***The Adam and Agnes Hazenstab Family Joins  
the Community***

No. 941/2 -1890 The Petition and Report of George J. Nofsker, Trustee, to sell the Real Estate of Mrs. Margaret J. Ruggles, late of Freedom Township, Blair County, Penna., deceased, was presented to the Court, setting forth: That pursuant to an order of this Honorable Court dated, the ---- day of ---- AD and continuances and enlargements of the same, empowering him to sell and dispose of the same at private sale, as is shown by a certificate of said order, continuances and enlargements of cause under the seal of said Court hereto attached, he did, on the 12th day of February AD 1890 offer and sell at private sale, the Mansion Farm of Decedent in Freedom Township, Blair County, Penna, near East Freedom, on Johnstown Road, containing 96 acres, more or less, adjoining land of Emanuel Noffsker, Sarah A. Hoover and others, to Adam Hazenstab, for the sum of One Thousand Six Hundred Dollars - that being the highest and best sum bidden for the same, and said Adam Hazenstab being the highest and best bidder; Said premises having first been duly offered at public sale: Which said sale he prays the Court to ratify and confirm. Terms 1/3 of price bidden on confirmation of sale, and balance in one and ten years, to be secured by bond or Mortgage of purchaser, with interest, with the right to accept a larger amount of said price, or all of it if tendered by the purchaser.

Whereupon, Now February 17 1890 within return to order of sale heard, and it appearing that the same was conducted in due form of law, the said sale is hereby ratified and confirmed and the premises so sold are decreed and adjudged to said

Adam Hazenstab, his heirs and assigns, firm and stable forever; Terms 1/3 on confirmation of sale, and balance in one and ten years, with interest, to be secured by Judgement Bond or Mortgage with right to accept a larger amount of said purchase money if tendered by the tenant.

Above paper entered October 4 1890 and filed - Chas Geesey Clerk  
Orphans Court Docket K, Page 309, No. 94-1/2  
Blair County Court House, Hollidaysburg, Pa

And that is how the Hazenstab families came to reside in the South Dry Run Valley on the east end of the community which is the subject of this study.

Adam H. Hazenstab was born at Ore Hill, on the boundary line between present-day Blair County and Bedford County on 20 August 1848. The surname, *Hazenstab*, often appeared as *Hazelstrop* in early records and maps. Adam was the son of immigrants, John Francis Andrew Hazenstab and Maria Anna Stenger (variously, Stanger). John and Maria were both born in the Bayern region of Germany. Adam Hazenstab married Agnes Yingling at Newry in 1885. The couple gave birth to nine children. During his lifetime, although Adam made a living as a farmer, he became active in the business of the township. He served as an auditor for Freedom Township and in 1910 was elected as township clerk.

On 01 April, 1890 the following deed was filed in the Blair County Court House.

This Indenture Made the First day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and Ninety Between George J. Noffske, Trustee to sell the real estate of Margaret J. Ruggles, late of Freedom Township, Blair County, Pennsylvania, deceased, of the first part, and Adam Hazenstab, of the same place of the second part.

Witnesseth, That the said part of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of One

thousand six hundred (1600.0) Dollars, lawful money of the United States of America, unto him in hand well and truly paid by the party of the second part, at or before the sealing and delivery of these presents, the receipts whereof is hereby acknowledged has granted, bargained, sold, aliened, enfeoffed, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents does grant, bargain, sell, alien, enfeoff, release, convey and confirm unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns forever.

All that certain tract situated in the township of Freedom, County of Blair, and State of Pennsylvania, bounded and described as follows: - Beginning at a post, on line of Shoenberger's heirs; thence North 590 degrees East 16 perches to a post, thence North fifty six 56 degrees east 64 perches to a white oak, thence South 71 degrees East, 60 perches to a white oak, thence South 7 degrees East 81 perches to a point in middle of Dry run, thence South 80 degrees west 15 perches to a point in said stream at Sarah Hoover line, thence along said stream to a point in said stream in middle of road from Freedom to Johnstown, thence along said road 17 perches more or less to a point at intersection of said road and private road, thence along said private road 27 1/2 perches to a point in said road, thence along same 24 perches to a point in the middle of said stream, thence along said stream to a point in opposite side said stream, thence 41 1/4 perches to a post, at line of land of Feathers, thence North 30 degrees East 60 perches to a post, thence North 30 1/2 degrees West 24 perches to a locust, thence north 13 degrees west 26 perches to a post, containing 90 acres, more or less, excepting and reserving from this conveyance a lot of ground within said lines on the Johnstown road, adjoining Dry run, as now fenced or occupied by Mrs. Sarah A. Hoover, sold by said Marg't J. Ruggles, in her lifetime to said Sarah A. Hoover, said tract of land by which sundry conveyances became vested in Jacob Noffske, who dying intestate seized of the same, the tract herein described was after due

proceeding had in the Orphans Court of Blair County, duly taken by said Margt. J. Ruggles, at appraisement.

-And the said Margaret J. Ruggles, dying intestate, seized of said herein described tract of land, proceedings in partition were in due form of law had thereon, and the Court duly appointed the said George J. Noffske, trustee to sell said tract of land, and the said trustee, having first offered said tract of land at public sale & being unable to so dispose of the same, said Court authorized him to dispose of same at private sale, and on return being made that he had sold said premises to said Adam Hazenstab for the sum of one thousand six hundred dollars, the Court did on the 17th day of February A.D. 1890, ratify and confirm said sale, hence this deed.

Together with all and singular the buildings improvements, ways, waters, water-courses, rights, liberties, privileges, hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and the reversions and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof; and all the estate, right, title, interest, property, claim and demand whatsoever of the said party of the first part, in law, equity, or otherwise howsoever, of, in and to the same and every part thereof: To have and to Hold the said described tract of land hereditaments and premises hereby granted or mentioned and intended so to be, with the appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, to and for the proper use and behoof of the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns forever.

And George J. Noffske, Trustee as aforesaid the said party of the first part, for himself his heirs, executors and administrators, do by these presents covenant, grant and agree to and with the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, that he the said party of the first part, his heirs, all and singular the hereditaments and premises herein above described and granted, or mentioned and intended so to be, with the appurtenances, unto the said party of the second

part, his heirs and assigns, against the said party of the first part and his heirs and against all and every person of persons whomsoever, lawfully claiming or to claim the same or any part thereof by from or under him SHALL AND WILL WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND.

In Witness Whereof, The said party of the first part has to these presents set his hand and seal. Dated the day and year first above written. Signed, Sealed and Delivered in Presence of C.G. Lowry, W.J. Woodcock.

Deed Book, Volume 78, Page 470

Blair County Court House, Hollidaysburg, PA

The following should be noted in regard to the property being resided upon by Margaret Jane (Nofske) Ruggles' sister, Sarah Ann. Sarah Ann Hoover died in September of 1901 and the lot she had received from her sister Margaret Jane was conveyed to Adam Hazenstab in February of the next year. The reference in Deed Book 376 is found in the settlement of Adam Hazenstab's estate by his children, and is part of the deed titled 'Deed From J. Regis Hazenstab, et al., To John J. Yingling, et ux'. On the second page of that deed we find the following:

The Hoover lot included in above description became vested in said Adam Hazenstab by Deed of Commissioners of Blair County, dated February 4, 1902 to be recorded herewith.--

The Blair County Register and Recorders Office should hold such a deed in their files, but a very thorough search was unproductive. The supposed deed from the Commissioners was not found in the Prothonotary's Office either, so it might be assumed that the Commissioners failed to have it recorded at the time.

After they acquired the Nofske property, Adam and Agnes Hazenstab moved into the house built by Abel Davis. They allowed Sarah Ann Hoover to reside in the log house built by John Jacob and Margaret Nofske. Sarah's husband,



John B. Hoover, died in 1895, so she was alone for six years. Sarah Ann died in 1901. The old log Nofsker house would have stood vacant after that. In the early 1920's when Bernard Smith as a child traveled past it to go up to Smith Corner where his home was, it would indeed have appeared to be an old haunted house.

Adam Hazenstab held the property until his death in 1916. He died on 04 August 1916 and left a Will which bequeathed his estate to his wife Agnes, so long as she remained a widow. Were she to remarry, the estate would pass on to their children. Agnes never did remarry, in fact she died before Adam on 27 March 1916 and so upon his death, the property became vested in the children. Now one son of Adam and Agnes, Raymond Hazenstab, had died prior to his mother's death and the Hollidaysburg Trust Company was appointed as guardian of his two minor children, Donald and Marie. The Hollidaysburg Trust Company, on behalf of the two children of Raymond, initiated an Orphans Court proceeding to have the property disposed of. Following is the petition filed by the Hollidaysburg Trust Company in 1928.

No. 718-1926 In Re Estate of ADAM HAZENSTAB, deceased. The petition of the Hollidaysburg Trust Company of Hollidaysburg respectfully represents: -

That your petitioner was duly appointed guardian of Donald Hazenstab and Marie Hazenstab, sole minor children of Raymond Hazenstab, a deceased son of Adam Hazenstab, the mother of said wards, to wit:- Genevieve Hazenstab, widow of said Raymond Hazenstab, is still living.

That said Adam Hazenstab left a Will and Testament, duly probated and registered in the office of the Register of Wills of Blair County in Will Book ---- Page --- under which a life estate vested in his widow, during her widowhood, in his personal property and mansion farm, situate in Freedom Township, Blair County.

That said Agnes Hazenstab did not remarry, but died on or about March 17, 1926, whereupon the real estate of said testator vested in the seven living children, and the two children of a deceased son, Raymond Hazenstab, to wit: Donald Hazenstab and Marie Hazenstab, wards of your petitioner, subject to the rights of their mother.

That the parties interested in said real estate are as follows:

Regis Hazenstab, a son 1/8

Elizabeth Hazenstab, a daughter 1/8

Marie Muri, wife of George Muri, a daughter 1/8

Bernard Hazenstab, a son 1/8

Vincent Hazenstab, a son 1/8

Arthur Hazenstab, a son 1/8

Genevieve Hazenstab, a daughter 1/8

Genevieve Hazenstab, widow of Raymond Hazenstab 1/24

The wards of your petitioner,

Donald Hazenstab, a grandson 1/24

Marie Hazenstab, a granddaughter 1/24

That the parties in interest have agreed to sell said mansion farm of the testator, at private sale, to John J. Yingling and Mary Yingling, for the sum of Three thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty (3760) Dollars for the whole thereof, clear of all encumbrances, as shown by deed therefor, duly executed by them, and to the Court shown. Your petitioner being willing to unite thereon, under the approval of your Honorable Court.

That the said real estate is assessed for the year 1928, in the sum of \$-as appears from the assessment and certificate of the Board of Revision of Taxes hereto annexed. Affidavits as to the value of said real estate by two competent persons are also hereto attached.

That the rental value of said premises is merely nominal, about equal to taxes and maintenance.

That your petitioner believes \$3760.00 is a fair price for said premises being, in its judgement, a better price than could possibly be

gotten by a public sale, and that this sale, in its judgement, will be to the interest and advantage of its wards. That the property is not under proper cultivation and in need of repairs, yielding virtually no net income.

That the said sale may be made without prejudice to any trust, charity or purpose for which it is held, and without the violation of any laws which may confer an immunity, or exemption from sale or alienation.

Your petitioner, therefore, prays your Honorable Court, under the provisions of the Revised Price Act of 1917, to authorize it, as guardian of said wards, to join with the other parties in interest in the sale of the real estate aforesaid, at the price fixed in said deed of the other parties in interest.

Now, October 29th, 1928, the Court being of the opinion that the proposed sale will be to the interest and advantage of the minors, and without prejudice to any trust, charity or purpose for which such real estate is held, and without the violation of any law which may confer an immunity or exemption, and that \$3760.00 is a better price for the premises than can be obtained at a public sale.

Therefore, the Hollidaysburg Trust Company, guardian of the said Donald Hazenstab and Marie Hazenstab, minors, is authorized, on receipt of the share of the minors in the purchase money, less costs and expenses of sale, being in amount about \$3700.00 in its entirety to join with the other parties in interest in the private sale and conveyance to the said John J. Yingling and Mary Yingling, his with the right in said guardian to execute separate deed for its wards' interests wife, their heirs and assigns for the real estate described in deed of the other parties in interest, (duly executed by them) under date of June 2, 1927.

The title so transferred to the purchasers to be indefeasible by any person or persons, ascertained or unascertained, or any class of persons having a present or expectant interest in the premises, and unprejudiced by any error in the proceedings of the Court. Security to be given by

the guardian in double the sum due its wards, above expenses and cost.

BY THE COURT Marion D. Patterson, P.J.

Orphans Court Docket, Volume 47, Page 337, No. 718

Blair County Court house, Hollidaysburg, PA

The actual deed that was filed in the Register and Records Office for the transaction between the heirs of Adam Hazenstab and John J. Yingling did not note the amount of \$3,760 as the purchase price. The text of that deed will follow.

*John and Mary Yingling*

THIS INDENTURE, Made the 2nd day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven. BETWEEN J.R. HAZENSTAB and ANNIE HAZENSTAB, his wife, GENEVIEVE HAZENSTAB, widow, HOLLIDAYSBURG TRUST COMPANY Guardian for DONALD and MARIE HAZENSTAB, minor children of RAYMOND HAZENSTAB, deceased, of Freedom Township, JANE ELIZABETH HAZENSTAB, single, MARIE MURI and GEORGE MURI, her husband, A.I. HAZENSTAB, single, and IRENE HAZENSTAB single, of Altoona B.A. HAZENSTAB, single and V.A. HAZENSTAB and MARY HAZENSTAB, his wife, of Freedom, Beaver County, all of Pennsylvania, and all heirs and heirs at-law of ADAM HAZENSTAB, late of Freedom Township -AND- JOHN J. YINGLING and MARY C YINGLING, husband and wife, tenants by entireties, of Freedom Township, Blair County, Pennsylvania, parties of the second part.--

WITNESSETH: That the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of One Dollars, lawful money of the United States of America, unto parties of the first part well and truly paid by the said parties of the second part, at or before the sealing and delivering of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have granted, bargained, sold,

aliened, enfeoffed, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell, enfeoff, release, convey and confirm into the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns forever.--

ALL THAT CERTAIN tract of land situate in the Township of Freedom, County of Blair, and State of Pennsylvania, bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at a post, on line of Shoenberger's heirs, now Austin Feathers; thence north fifty-nine (59) degrees east sixteen (16) perches to a post; thence north fifty six (56) degrees east, sixty-four (64) perches to a white oak; thence south seventy-one (71) degrees east, sixty (60) perches to a white oak; thence south seven (7) degrees east, eighty-one (81) perches to a point in middle of Dry Run; thence south, eighty (80) degrees, west fifteen (15) perches to a point in said stream at Sarah Hoover line; thence along said stream to a point in said stream in middle of road from East Freedom to Johnstown; thence along said road seventeen (17) perches, more or less to a point at intersection of said road and private road; thence along said private road, twenty-seven and one half (27 1/2) perches to a point in said road; thence along same twenty-four (24) perches to a point in the middle of said Stream; thence along said Stream to a point on opposite side said Stream; thence forty-one and one-fourth (41 1/4) perches to a post at line of land of Feathers heirs; thence north thirty (30) degrees, east, sixty (60) perches to a post; thence north thirty and one-half (30 1/2) degrees; vest twenty-four (24) perches to a locust; thence north thirteen (13) degrees west twenty-six (26) perches to a post; containing ninety (90) acres, more or less, including within said boundary lines lot of Mrs. Sara A. Hoover.

Being the same premises title to which became vested in Adam Hazenstab by deed of George J. Noffsger, Trustee of the Estate of Margaret J. Ruggles, Deceased, dated April 1, 1890 and recorded in the Recorder's Office in and for Blair County in Deed Book, Volume 78, Page

470. Reference being had thereto will more fully and at large appear. The Hoover lot included in above description became vested in Adam Hazenstab by Deed of Commissioners of Blair County, dated February 4, 1902 to be recorded herewith.

The said Adam Hazenstab died on or about the 4th day of August 1916, having first left a Last Will and Testament wherein he devised all of his real estate and personal property to his wife, Agnes, so long as she remained his widow and then to his children, Regis, Elizabeth Bernard, Vincent, Raymond, Arthur, Marie and Irene. The said Agnes Hazenstab never remarried and died on or about the 27th day of March, 1926, thus vesting the above described premises in the children above named, who with their husbands and wives have joined in this conveyance, with the exception of Raymond, who died on or about the        day -- --- of ----- leaving to survive him his widow, Genevieve and two minor children Donald Hazenstab and Marie Hazenstab. The said widow and the Hollidaysburg Trust Company, Guardian for said minor children, Donald Hazenstab and Marie Hazenstab have joined in this conveyance.

The Hollidaysburg Trust Company, guardian of Donald Hazenstab and Marie Hazenstab, minor children of Raymond Hazenstab, deceased, having joined herein in pursuance of a decree of the Orphans' Court of Blair County authorizing it so to do.

The said described premises has thereon erected a two story frame dwelling, large frame barn and other outbuildings.

TOGETHER with all and singular the buildings, improvements, ways, waters, watercourses, rights, liberties, privileges, hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and the reversions and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof, and all the estate, right, title, interest, property, claim and demand whatsoever of the said parties of the first part, in law, equity or otherwise howsoever of, in and to the same and

every part thereof.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said described premises, hereditaments and premises hereby granted or mentioned, and intended so to be, with the appurtenances, unto the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns, to and for the proper use and behoof of the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns forever.

AND the said parties of the first part, for themselves and their heirs, executors and administrators, do, by these presents, covenant, grant and agree to and with the said part of the second part, their heirs and assigns, that they, the said parties of the first part their heirs, all and singular the hereditaments and premises herein above described and granted, or mentioned and intended so to be, with the appurtenances, unto the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns, against the said parties of the first part and their heirs, and against all and every other person or persons whomsoever, lawfully claiming of to claim the same of any part thereof, shall and will WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND.

The Hollidaysburg Trust Company, a Pennsylvania Corporation, doth hereby constitute and appoint J. Calvin May to be its attorney for it, and in its name and as and for its corporate act and deed to acknowledge this Indenture before any persons having authority by the laws of Pennsylvania to take such acknowledgement to the intent that the same may be duly recorded.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said parties of the first part have to these presents set their hands and seals. Dated the day and year first above written. Signed in the presence of: W.S. Detrick.

Deed Book, Volume 376, Page 586

Blair County Court House, Hollidaysburg, PA

John Jacob Yingling was married twice. His first marriage, in 1893, was to Martha C. Dodson. Martha died just two years later, and then, in 1907, John married Mary Catherine Gonsman. John and Mary purchased a portion of

the Adam Hazenstab property in 1927 and held the property for about fifteen years.

The Yinglings did not purchase the entire property, only the western half. The family of Adam and Agnes Hazenstab retained ownership of the house originally built by gristmill owner Abel Davis along with a large tract of land on which many of Adam's descendants still reside today.

In 1941, after the death of Mary, John Yingling conveyed the property, by deed, to Earl S. Hite who resided in Blair Township at the time.

This Indenture, Made the 19th day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and forty-one. Between JOHN J. YINGLING, WIDOWER, of the Township of Freedom, County of Blair and State of Pennsylvania, party of the first part, AND EARL S. HITE, of Blair Township, said County and State, party of the second part,

Witnesseth: That the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of One Dollar and a credit of \$2500.00 on account of a mortgage given by John J. Yingling et ux upon after described premises, and recorded in Blair County in Mortgage Book Vol. 295 page 53. Said mortgage given to C.S. Hite and Lana Hite. Dollar lawful money of the United States of America, unto him well and truly paid by the said party of the second part, at or before the sealing and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hath granted, bargained, sold, aliened, enfeoffed, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents doth grant, bargain, sell, alien, enfeoff, release, convey and confirm unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, forever.

All that certain tract of land situate in the Township of Freedom, County of Blair and State of Pennsylvania, bounded and described as follows, to wit: Beginning at a post on line of Shoenberger's heirs, now Austin Feathers, thence North 56 degrees East 16 perches to a post; thence North 56 degrees East 64 perches to a white oak;

thence South 71 degrees East 60 perches to a white oak; thence South 7 degrees East, 81 perches to a point in the middle of Dry Run; thence South 80 degrees West 15 perches to a point in said stream at Sarah Hoover line; thence along said stream to a point in said stream in middle of road leading from East Freedom to Johnstown; thence along said road 17 perches more or less to a point at intersection of said road and private road; thence along said private road, 27 1/2 perches to a point in said road; thence along same 24 perches to a point in the middle of said stream; thence along said stream to a point on the opposite side of said stream; thence 41 1/4 perches to a post at line of land of Feathers heirs; thence North 30 degrees East 60 perches to a post; thence North 30 1/2 degrees West 24 perches to a locust; thence North 13 degrees West 26 perches to a post; containing 90 acres more or less including within said boundary lines lot of Mrs. Sarah A. Hoover. Having thereon erected a two story frame dwelling house, large frame barn and other buildings.

Being the same premises title to which vested in John J. Yingling and Mary C. Yingling his wife as tenants by the entireties by Deed of J. R. Hazenstab et al., dated June 2, 1927 and recorded in Blair County in Deed Book Vol. 376 page 586. And the said Mary C. Yingling have departed this life the 17th day of May 1940, title vested solely in the said John J. Yingling, surviving tenant by the entireties.

Deed Book, Volume 468, Page 301

Blair County Court House, Hollidaysburg, PA

### *The Second Phase of the Community*

The 'second phase' of the growth of the community came between the early 1920's and the 1940's.

In just less than a year from the time he acquired it, Earl S. Hite, in turn, sold the entire ninety acre property to Elmer J. Miller for the price of one dollar. That suggested that Mr. Hite

wanted to avoid having to pay tax on the transaction, so he accepted from Mr. Miller some large amount, but it was recorded as only being one dollar.

This Indenture, Made the 9th day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and forty-two. Between EARL S. HITE, SINGLE, of the Township of Blair, County of Blair and State of Pennsylvania, party of the first part, AND ELMER J. MILLER and MINNIE E. MILLER his wife, of the City of Altoona, said County and State, as Tenants by the Entireties parties of the second part,

Witnesseth: That the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of One Dollar lawful money of the United States of America, unto him well and truly paid by the said party of the second part, at or before the sealing and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hath granted, bargained, sold, aliened, enfeoffed, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents doth grant, bargain, sell, alien, enfeoff, release, convey and confirm unto the said party of the second part, their heirs and assigns, forever.

All that certain tract of land situate in the Township of Freedom, County of Blair and State of Pennsylvania, bounded and described as follows, to wit: Beginning at a post on line of Shoenberger's heirs, now Austin Feathers, thence North 56 degrees East 16 perches to a post; thence North 56 degrees East 64 perches to a white oak; thence South 71 degrees East 60 perches to a white oak; thence South 7 degrees East, 81 perches to a point in the middle of Dry Run; thence South 80 degrees West 15 perches to a point in said stream at Sarah Hoover line; thence along said stream to a point in said stream in middle of road leading from East Freedom to Johnstown; thence along said road 17 perches more or less to a point at intersection of said road and private road; thence along said private road, 27 1/2 perches to a point in said road; thence



along same 24 perches to a point in the middle of said stream: thence along said stream to a point on the opposite side of said stream; thence 41 1/4 perches to a post at line of land of Feathers heirs; thence North 30 degrees East 60 perches to a post; thence North 30 1/2 degrees West 24 perches to a locust; thence North 13 degrees West 26 perches to a post; containing 90 acres more or less including within said boundary lines lot of Mrs. Sara A. Hoover. Having thereon erected a two story frame dwelling house, large frame barn and other buildings.

Being the same premises title to which vested in Earl S. Hite by Deed of John J. Yingling, widower, dated the 19th day of October 1941 and recorded in Blair County in Deed Book Vol. ----- page ----- on the 8th day of August 1942.  
Deed Book, Volume 468, Page 579  
Blair County Court House, Hollidaysburg, PA

Elmer J. and Minnie E. (Weiser) Miller, of Altoona, built a new house along the south side of the road at the top of the hill just west of the site of John Jacob and Margaret Nofsker's homestead. Their house is identified by the letter 'K' in the map. They resided there until Minnie's death in 1957 and Elmer's in 1959.

When Bernard R. and Dollie E. (Nofsker) Smith got married on 18 June 1944 they, at first, resided with Bernard's parents, Eldon B. and Jennie F. (Bowser) Smith on a tract of land which Eldon purchased from his brother, Brady Smith, and which can also be traced back to being part of the land John Jacob Nofsker possessed when he died. Bernard and Dollie wanted to purchase a part of the land that had just previously been acquired by Elmer J. Miller. He was agreeable to them purchasing a lot containing 1.97 acres, and, in order to avoid the hassles of paying taxes on the purchase, he privately accepted their payment of approximately \$500, and had the deed worded that the sale price was \$1. The text of that deed follows.

This Indenture MADE THE thirteenth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and forty-seven;

BETWEEN ELMER J. MILLER and MINNIE MILLER, his wife, both of the Township of Freedom, in the County of Blair and State of Pennsylvania, parties of the first part; AND BERNARD R. SMITH and DOLLIE E. SMITH, husband and wife, as Tenants by the Entireties, of the Township, County and State aforesaid, parties of the second part.

Witnesseth: That the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of ONE (1) Dollars lawful money of the United States of America, unto them well and truly paid by the said parties of the second part, at or before the sealing and delivering of these presents the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have granted, bargained, sold, aliened, enfeoffed, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell, alien, enfeoff, release, convey and confirm unto the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns, forever.

ALL THAT CERTAIN messuage, piece or parcel of land located in the Township of Freedom, in the County of Blair and State of Pennsylvania, the same being more particularly bounded and described as follows, to wit:  
BEGINNING at a nail in a tree root along the Southern bank of creek at the intersection of lands of J.R. Hazenstab, B.M. Smith and E.J. Miller, thence along lands of B.M. Smith South eighty-nine and one half (89 1/2) degrees West along creek bank, two hundred and forty-seven and five-tenths (247.5) feet to a stake; thence South twenty-four and one-half (24 1/2) degrees West, one hundred and seventy-seven and two-tenths (177.2) feet to a stake on the North side of a macadem road, which is State Highway Number 164, from East Freedom to Johnstown; thence across creek and along the northern side of said road, North sixty-five (65) degrees, fifty (50) minutes, West, two hundred and ninety-five and two-tenths (295.2) feet to a stake; thence up steep bank and

along lands of E.J. Miller, North ten (10) minutes, West, fifty-eight (58) feet to a stake; thence along top of slope North seventy-six (76) degrees, ten (10) minutes, East, along lands of E.J. Miller, five hundred and eighty-eight and three-tenths (588.3) feet to a stake at the boundary of the lands of J.R. Hazenstab; thence along lands of J.R. Hazenstab down slope and across creek, South six (6) degrees East, one hundred and sixty-five and four-tenths (165.4) feet to the nail in tree root, the place of BEGINNING; CONTAINING one and ninety-seven one hundredths (1.97) acres; the same being according to survey and plan made May, 1947, by E.F. Hoover, Surveyor.

TOGETHER with all and singular the buildings, improvements, ways, waters, water-courses, rights, liberties, privileges, hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and the reversions and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof, and all the estate, right, title, interest, property, claim and demand whatsoever of the said parties of the first part, in law, equity or otherwise howsoever of, in and to the same and every part thereof.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said message, piece or parcel of land, hereditaments and premises hereby granted or mentioned, and intended so to be, with the appurtenances, unto the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns, to and for the proper use and behoof of the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns forever.

RESERVING, nevertheless, herefrom and hereout, unto the said grantors, their heirs and assigns, an easement across the northeast end of said piece or parcel of land, at the location shown upon said survey and plan made by E.F. Hoover, Surveyor, and marked "Trail or Lane", for the purpose of ingress, egress and regress from State Highway Route #164 to and from other lands of said grantors adjoining the within described and conveyed lands on the North.

AND they, Elmer J. Miller and Minnie Miller, his

wife, the said parties of the first part, for themselves and their heirs, executors and administrators, do, by these presents, covenant, grant and agree to and with the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns, that they, the said parties of the first part their heirs, all and singular the hereditaments and premises hereinabove described and granted, or mentioned and intended so to be, with the appurtenances, unto the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns, against the said parties of the first part and their heirs, and against all and every other person or persons whomsoever, lawfully claiming or to claim the same of any part thereof, shall and will WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said parties of the first part have to these presents set their hands and seals. Dated the day and year first above written. Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of R.D. Lorenze.

Deed Book, Volume 565, Page 291

Blair County Court House, Hollidaysburg, PA

Bernard and Dollie Smith constructed a wood frame two-story dwelling on the site of the original homestead of John Jacob Nofsker, which had fallen into ruin in the early 1900's. Because of the fact that Dollie's home was the log structure that stands on the eastern slope of Blue Knob in the vicinity of Smith Corner, it was always assumed that that was also the site of John Jacob Nofsker's homestead. But as the various deeds have proven, this tract along South Dry Run was the actual 'Mansion Tract' of Jacob and Margaret Nofsker and that the log Nofsker homestead at Smith Corner would have been constructed by John Wilks Nofsker after he moved from Forest County upon his father's death.

It is interesting that the descendants of John Jacob Nofsker would unknowingly come to reside on the portion of his property that had actually been occupied by his homestead. In place of the original log 'mansion' house that Jacob Nofsker built, Bernard and Dollie Smith built their

wood frame house in the Cape Cod style. And Bernard and Dollie did not have a contractor build their house for them. Bernard's father, Eldon B. Smith, and his one uncle, Brady M. Smith, built a number of houses in this area, and so it was natural that they would build the house for Bernard and Dollie. Although it was not an actual kit house from the Sears Roebuck Company, the structure that was built by Eldon B. Smith and Brady M. Smith was based on plans they purchased from the Sears Roebuck Company. Bernard once stated that the plans cost about \$15, which, in 1947 was the equivalent of about \$100

today. At that time, Bernard's occupation was that of a 'logger' or 'woodsman'. He would lease the rights to cut trees in a stretch of woods, and then after cutting down a certain number of the trees, he cut them into set lengths which were sold to companies such as the D. M. Bare

paper mills at Roaring Spring and Tyrone. Dollie worked right alongside of Bernard as much as she could, and in fact the couple would take their children along when they worked (the kids occupying themselves by exploring through the woods and collecting leaves, berries and other things). Bernard and his father, Eldon (whose 'primary' occupation was moonshining whiskey) owned and operated a sawmill, at which they sawed planks out of the trees that Bernard cut down. Eldon's brother, Brady also worked at the sawmill with Bernard. The sawmill stood near the property that Jacob Emanuel Nofsker resided on,

to the south / east side of the South Dry Run creek.

A ledger that Bernard Smith kept on his activities with the sawmill in the 1940's contained entries such as:

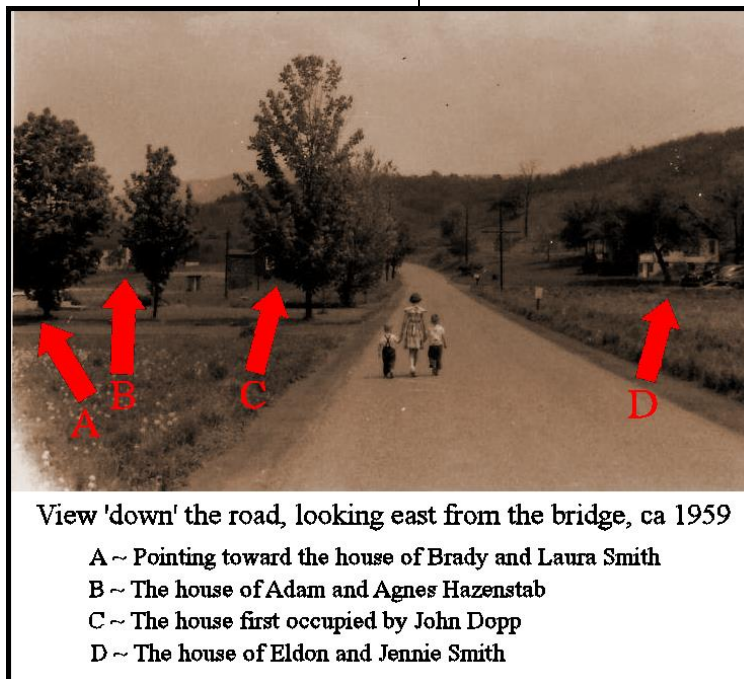
- \* 28 April 1944 – E. J. Miller – 60 locust posts 7'
- \* Slab wood – 1943 – Lecky Nofsker – 3
- \* 26 August 1943 – Portage – 36 4x6x5 Ties

Bernard also performed simple hauling jobs for neighbors and others. An entry in his ledger for 16 March 1944 noted that he hauled a 'rabbit pen' for E. J. Miller. On 26 April 1944 Bernard hauled a cow to Newry for Watson Feathers.

The work at the sawmill was a bit sporadic, especially in the fall. An entry in Bernard's ledger for the 1st of September 1946 noted that they did no work at the sawmill because they were boiling applebutter. The on the 12th Bernard and Brady worked only four hours at the sawmill because in the afternoon they made cider. The sawmill was silent on

the 3rd and 4th of December 1946 due to two pig butcherings. One was Brady's and one was Essie's. Essington Bowser was Bernard's mother, Jennie's brother.

The Bernard and Dollie Smith house is identified by the letter (B) on the map. The house was built in 1947 by Bernard, his father, Eldon Smith and his uncle, Brady Smith. An entry in Bernard's ledger stated that on 27 August 1947 (and then on the 28th and 29th) Bernard 'worked on foundation'. By the 6th of October they were working on the 'sheeting' of the house. On the 13th they 'put roof on house'. They put in the window frames on Saturday the 1st of November,



and despite the next day being Sunday, they laid the brick for the flue. On 12 November they put siding on the house. Bernard, Eldon and Brady continued to work on the house for the next eight days. And Bernard noted on the 15th that Irvin (Brady's brother) helped that day. On the 19th and 20th they laid floors in the house.

Not much work got done at the sawmill as December progressed. On the 3rd, Bernard helped with butchering for the Nofskers, then on the 9th he helped with butchering for Essie Bowser. On the 10th he helped with butchering for Con Helsel (one of Dollie's brother-in-laws). On the 12th and the 13th he hunted deer. And then on the 15th he butchered 'for ourselves'. On the 17th he helped with butchering for Art Nofsker (one of Dollie's brothers). Bernard took the 25th off to celebrate Christmas, and then on the following day he took off work to attend the burial of John Raugh, the pastor of the Smith Corner Mennonite Church.

The house that came to stand on the property originally occupied by the Nofsker homestead, as noted above, was constructed in the Cape Cod style, painted white and trimmed in blue (and in later years, black). Two large windows, known as 'picture' windows, and composed of twenty-some small panes, were placed on either side of the front door in the south wall, providing a tremendous amount of sunlight into the two largest rooms of the house. A small porch made of cinder blocks and cement (replaced in the late 1990's by a hexagon shaped step entry), led to the centrally located front door. The front door opened up at the foot of a staircase that was open toward the large room at the west side of the house that was used as the living room. It was a little unusual for a 'country' house because at that time, staircases in country houses were normally enclosed on both sides with solid walls. The open side of this staircase was given a custom-made balustrade. Reuben Smith, a relative of the Smiths, who did carpentry work, made the left-hand vollute, turned balusters and railing for the balustrade. He also constructed cupboards and

counters for the kitchen (which were replaced by Dollie and their youngest child, Larry in the 1990s). Bernard picked out choice planks of five types of oak that he cut in the woods in this region (white, pin, red, live and chestnut) and had them planed and cut into tongue and groove boards at the Modern Cabinet planing mill in Altoona. The oak boards were used to panel the large room at the east side of the house; it became the dining room. In fact all of the woodwork throughout the house came from wood from trees cut down in the forest by Bernard and Dollie. The wood moldings, consisting of oak and cherry, were also shaped at the planing mill. Hardwood (oak) flooring was installed on both floors, and in fact, the roofing material was oak. (When the roof shingles were replaced in the 1990's, the roofing contractor had a major job trying to remove the previous shingles because the nails could not easily be pulled from the oak roofing.) Onto the east end of the house, the Smiths attached a large porch; over the years, and even to the present day, the large side porch would prove to be the favorite gathering spot for the family throughout the spring, summer and fall seasons.

To the east side of the house, the Smiths built a two-story garage. The garage was almost the same size as the house and was constructed with two car bays. The second floor was built and furnished to accommodate an apartment for Dollie's mother, Bertha Mae Nofsker (the widow of Henry Martin Cleveland Nofsker, who was a son of John Wilks Nofsker, and a grandson of John Jacob Nofsker). The garage apartment was heated by 'coal-oil', what the 'old people' used to call kerosene.

Bertha Nofsker refused Bernard's offer to install plumbing and a bathroom in her apartment. Instead she would walk, rain or shine, summer or winter down the steps of her apartment and then down through the yard toward the outhouse that adjoined the pigpen that stood alongside the creek.

Bertha, despite falling off the hay wagon
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when she was young, and hurting her hip in the fall, would not only walk to and from the outhouse. She would, once or twice a month, walk the three miles west to the Smith Corner Church at Smith Corner. She sometimes took me and my brother along on her walk. We didn't walk directly as in a mad dash to get there and back again. The 1960's was a time that moved forward at a much slower pace than today. Bertha, with her grandsons in tow, would stop at every other house to visit a little. It made the trip longer, but it definitely made the trip more enjoyable. While on those walks, Grammy (as everyone in the community knew her) taught me and my brother about herbs and edible plants that we found alongside the road.

Grammy Nofsker was well known in the entire region between East Freedom and Smith Corner ~ not just in our stretch of the valley. Everybody, even those who were not related to the Nofskers or Smith in any way, knew who Grammy Nofsker was. She was instrumental in the Smith Corner Mennonite Church (recently renamed *Smith Corner Church*).

When Bertha Nofsker died, she left a will in which she requested that her pall-bearers be "ladies from the church." She also asked that the funeral sermon be centered around John, Chapter Fourteen, verses one to three: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

My father, Bernard, often told me a story of when he was young and living with his maternal grandparents. Aaron and Linnie Bowser, my dad's maternal grandparents, lived in the house that was originally the home of the Jacob Emanuel Nofsker family for a couple years. Aaron was an itinerant sharecropper. He would take his wife and daughter, Jennie and live with a farm family for a couple days, weeks, months or even

years. During that time Aaron would repair or build fences for the farmer and Linnie would help the farmwife with cleaning, sewing and other needs around the house. Aaron and Linnie and Jennie were living with the family that lived in the Jacob Emanuel Nofsker farm in June of 1919 when Jennie gave birth to Bernard. One story my dad told was that when he was five or six and he would go up to Smith Corner to see relatives living there, he would have to cross over the wooden bridge near the log house of John Jacob and Margaret Nofsker. The building, according to my dad, who was born in 1919, was decrepit and falling into ruin. He did not know at the time that the people who had built it and lived there were Nofsker ancestors of the woman he would eventually marry. To his young mind, the log house was haunted because he never saw any living person around it. He said that as soon as he crossed the bridge he would start running, not stopping until he was at the top of the hill to the west of the house. Only then did he feel safe from the witches that he was convinced lived in the log house. Bernard didn't know that in later years he would build his own house on the property just in front of the foundation of the old Nofsker log structure.

### *A Community of Relatives and Friends*

Prior to my birth in December 1954, the little community consisted of families related by either the Smith blood or the Hazenstab blood. The Smiths were located in the west half and the Hazenstabs were located in the east half of our stretch of the valley. There weren't many houses in the community, and the ones that were here consisted of two-floors and fell into the architectural style of *vernacular*, meaning their style tended to be whatever the builder could do.

In 1954 there weren't many more houses than the Elmer and Minnie Miller house on the top of the hill, the 'new' Bernard and Dollie Smith house at the foot of the hill, the Brady and Laura Smith house, the Eldon and Jennie Smith house, the Francis and Arma Gates house and the Regis Hazenstab house. At that time, you could see



across the valley and everyone's house was visible to everyone else. After he moved into the community, Edwin Gates planted evergreen trees around his property, effectively cutting off the view from one side of the valley to the other.

The families living in this stretch of the valley would interact during pig butchering and apple butter making. The fact that most of the families here were descended from Jacob and Rosana Schmitt, a community event like pig butchering would seem like a family reunion.



But the Hazenstabs also joined in with the Smiths in other ways. A couple of the Hazenstab boys helped Bernard and his dad, Eldon Smith in their saw mill. The Smiths thought of the Hazenstabs as kinfolk, and hopefully the Hazenstabs felt the same toward the Smiths.

Into the 1950s, almost all of the residents of the community were related to one or the other of the two families. Beginning in the mid-1960's a new wave of residents came into the community and became loved neighbors.

### ***Histories of the Individual Properties***

In this section I will present brief histories of the individual properties that comprise our stretch of the valley at the present time. Each sketch will note who built the house and its successive owners. Rather than start from the earliest to the most recent in time, the study of the properties will be presented with the westernmost to the easternmost in space.

### ***Aurandt***

On 22 June 1957, Elmer J. Miller sold a tract of land to Leroy M. Smith, the son of Brady and Laura. As an unmarried man, Leroy sold a portion of the tract to Floyd Lawrence and Mary Mildred (Bowser) Aurandt on 14 August 1959. They built their ranch style house in 1971. Previously they resided in Juniata Township. Floyd died on 14 July 2019, but Mary is still living there with their son Glenn. The Aurandt house is identified by the letter **(BB)** on the map.

### ***Johnson to Holsinger***

To the east of Aurandts, identified on the map by the letter **(AA)**, is the house that John Johnson constructed circa 1976. John married Janet M. Baird and they built this house on property owned by Janet's parents, John F. and Leah G. Baird. The parents sold the property to John and Janet on 24 November 1975. Additional acreage was sold to John and Janet on 18 March 1981 and 28 October 1987. Unfortunately John and Janet's marriage was destined for divorce. On 3 April 1990 a deed 'in contemplation of divorce' was filed from John and Janet Johnson to John Johnson by himself. Then on 10 March 1993 a deed was made out between John Johnson and Janet M. Eldred to John Johnson. In the following year, on 10 February 1994, John R. Johnson sold the property to Gerald E. McCormick Jr., and Michele J. McCormick. And most recently, Gerald and Michele McCormick sold the property on 30 April 2002 to Shawn M. Holsinger. The property is currently occupied by Shawn and Kelly Holsinger.

I remember John Johnson, who I knew as 'Johnny', because we graduated together from Central High School in 1972. Johnny and I were both kind of skinny ~ I never went above 125 pounds the whole time I was in school ~ but I remember that he was always my rival in gym. While most of the other kids could do only three

or four chin-ups, Johnny and I vied for twenty to thirty. While most of the other guys could not climb the two inch rope suspended from the ceiling, Johnny and I were both able to do it somewhat easily. And while most of the other guys could do only less than five push-ups, Johnny and I pushed our way into the thirties or more. It was always a friendly rivalry.

### ***Miller to Baird***

Elmer J. and Minnie Miller bought the property and moved into the house located on the south side of State Route 164, at the summit of the small hill west of the John Jacob and Margaret Nofsker property. It is identified by the letter (**K**) on the map. The Millers purchased the property encompassing 9.247 acres from Earl S. Hite on 9 September 1942. They resided there for eighteen years.

I remember when Grammy Nofsker would take me along with her on her walk to Smith Corner and our first stop was at the Millers' house. Mrs. Miller was very prim and proper (which is code for kind of stuffy and stand-offish). Being a young kid, I yearned to see inside the Miller house, but Grammy was afraid that I and my brother might do something bad to the Miller house. So when we arrived at the Miller house, Grammy would tell me and my brother, Leon to stay at the road and she would go to the door. When Mrs. Miller opened the door, Grammy would not even go in. She would stand outside and talk briefly to Mrs. Miller as she stood in the doorway, blocking my view. That made me want to see into the house even that much more. As Howard Carter told Lord Carnarvon when he first opened Tutankhamun's tomb, and Carnarvon asked if he saw anything, I am sure that if I could have seen into the Miller house, I would have seen "Yes, wonderful things".

Another thing that I remember about Mrs. Miller, although it came to me by way of stories my mother told, concerned the U.S. Air Force and her minks. When the United States government built the radar station on Blue Knob during the

Second World War, many of the officers and pilots stayed with families in the region. My parents hosted one such pilot. And that pilot came to know that the Millers raised minks for their pelts. Also, whether accurate or not, the mother minks would kill any babies it had if threatened ~ like having a plane fly down close overhead. My mother told of how that pilot would fly down low over this valley just to aggravate Mrs. Miller. Soon after such a flight, Mrs. Miller would come down to tell mother to tell that pilot what she would do if he 'buzzed' her minks again.

The property was bought by Robert L. and Sylvia Jane (Smith) Korona on 21 May 1960. (Mr. Korona was employed as the shop / industrial arts teacher at Central High School for many years.) The Koronas lived there only six years. Mr. Korona sold the property to John F. and Leah G. (Paulvir) Baird on 15 September 1966. Mr. Baird died on 17 November 1991 at the relatively young age of fifty-six. Leah is still residing in the house.

### ***Roberts To Currie***

The entire hill behind, or to the north of the Nofsker homestead became vested in Margaret Jane Ruggles upon the death of her mother, Margaret Nofsker. It was then sold successively to Adam and Agnes Hazenstab, then to John J. and Mary C. Yingling, then to Earl S. Hite and then to Elmer J. and Minnie M. Miller. On 27 May 1960, E. J. Miller, by his executor, Robert E. Miller, sold the property to Herman J. and Bertha M. Beyer.

I only had one experience with Herman J. Beyer in my life. My father was a woodsman for many years. He cut timber for many landowners in Bedford and Blair County. He also cut timber on the hill behind the old Nofsker homestead for E. J. Miller. In order to get his equipment up over that hill from the state road, he had to 'cut' a road. When my parents purchased a tract of land from Elmer Miller on which they built our house, my dad cut the access 'lumber' road behind their new house. After Mr. Beyer purchased the property

covering the hill behind the Smith's new house he asked my dad to give him access rights to the lumber road. Mr. Beyer told my dad that he intended to lay out a housing development over the hilltop and needed an access road to Route 164. That would have meant that there would be traffic all hours of the day and night. So my dad refused to allow the use of the lumber road as the primary access to the proposed housing development. Then in 1987, when I decided to build my own house, I contacted Mr. Beyer to purchase just an acre or two (of his 90-some acres) adjacent to my parents' property. Out of spite he refused to sell me any land.

The Beyers sold the property to Stephen and Tracy Lynn Roberts on 26 June 2001. The Roberts gave the name of 'Hawthorn Hill' to the previously unnamed hill. Most recently, Scott and Jamie Currie purchased the property on 8 November 2018. The house is identified by the letter **(DD)** on the map.

I have fond memories of the hill behind our house in the 1960's. The property covering the entire hill (at the time unnamed) was owned by Herman J. Beyer for the years that I was growing up and into my teens. When I was young, I spent a lot of my time on that hill. Especially in the summertime, I would spend my days hiking up over the hill. There had been a fire that destroyed all of the trees and vegetation over the summit of the hill when I was in fifth or sixth grade (*i.e.* 1965 or 1966). Only one small scraggly locust tree was left standing part way to the top, and I would sit by that tree watching out over the valley and the South Dry Run. On the north and west sides of the small hill, the land was posted against hunters by the Chimney Rocks Beagle Club. I never wanted to get in trouble trespassing on that posted property, so my hiking ended when I reached that boundary. I would sometimes cross over the small spring-fed stream that flowed north to south and emptied into the South Dry Run. To the north of the hill behind my home (*i.e.* which was eventually named Hawthorn Hill) rose a slightly higher hill which formed the south boundary of

the Cream Hollow. That next hill to the north was partly owned by members of the Hazenstab family. Once while I, as a child of about fourteen or fifteen, was simply hiking up to the summit of the second hill, one of the Hazenstab landowners shot at me with a rifle. I learned very fast not to hike up over that hill.

### ***Barnes To Daugherty To Smith***

Merle V. and Ruth (Butler) Barnes lived behind Lydia Lang's store. Their property is identified by the letter **(CC)** on the map. Merle and Ruth Barnes acquired a tract of land from Elmer J. Miller on 15 September 1942. Then, on 25 August 1958 they acquired another tract from Mr. Miller. On 15 November 1976, Lydia Lang sold a portion of her property to Merle and Ruth to the west of her store. Then, on 2 September 1977, Robert Miller, acting as executor for E. J. Miller, sold a tract of land to Merle and Ruth between Lydia's property and the tract that she had sold to them the year before. The Barnes property is currently owned by Michael Smith and his wife, Audra.

### ***Lydia Lang's Store To Smith***

When she established and operated her little grocery store in the 60's and 70's, Lydia Lang's store became the only store between East Freedom and Blue Knob.

Lydia Lang purchased a lot from the estate of Elmer J. and Minnie M Miller through their executor, Robert E. Miller on 27 May 1960. Elmer had died on 21 November 1959, and Minerva E. "Minnie" preceded him on 5 January 1957.

Lydia Lang's small country grocery store was located right alongside the State Route 164's north edge. It is identified by the letter **(L)** on the map. Lydia's store was only about ten feet wide and fourteen feet long. Attached to her store, on its east end, was Lydia's residence. She had only a small living and sleeping space, but being single all her life, she did not need a lot of space.

Lydia stocked a little bit of everything that you would need: bread and rolls, milk, butter and ice cream, cereals and a few vegetables and fruit. Outside of the store was a small chilled cooler, or soda vending machine, in which bottles of pop were suspended in chilled water. Pop bottles were designed with a collar around the lip and the cooler was constructed with parallel bars of metal with spaces between them. The metal bars were spaced just enough apart to allow the lips of the bottles to rest on the parallel bars. In order to get any particular bottle of pop out of the cooler you had to move other bottles around so get your chosen bottle to the exit point. In the 1950's through the 80's Lydia was able to keep the pop cooler outside of her store without it being stolen or damaged ~ that is until Irvin Smith backed his car into the cooler. I remember going into Lydia Lang's store and to the left of the door stood a large freezer. In it, Lydia kept the tubs of ice cream and popsicles. I usually went for the orange flavored 'Dreamsicle', but when Lydia started carrying the Cap'n Crunch bars, the strawberry flavored ones became my favorite. Lydia had a large, three feet square, piece of plywood set up to hold boxes of candy. The candy counter was set up in front of one of the two windows in the store. The windows were along the south wall and so the sun did not shine too hot against those windows. Lydia also sold small toys that were in little bags and stuck on a stand beside the cash register. Despite the fact that the toys cost little more than 29 or 39 cents, they were too expensive for my family. So I would spend my time looking over the toys while mom or dad shopped for groceries. I would get excited about once every two months when mother would say "Okay pick out what toy you want."

Lydia died on 27 August 1977, and her property went to Merle and Ruth Barnes. Lydia's store was closed and that space and the adjacent residence were renovated into a single residence. Merle died on 24 August 2000. Between the time that Lydia died to when Merle died, Merle and Ruth rented the renovated 'house' to Harry "Clyde" and Shirley Butler. Upon the death of

Merle, Ruth divested herself of the property. On 20 February 2001, Ruth sold the tract including the renovated store to Christopher P. Wineland. He was single at the time, but he got married shortly after he bought the property. Perhaps the new couple discovered that the renovated building was just not large enough for a family. On 15 November 2004, Christopher P. and Amanda L. Wineland sold the property to Kathie F. Daugherty. On 9 November 2006, Kathie sold a portion of her newly acquired property to a nephew, John T. Acker. The deed noted that it included the "Miller Store building". Then, on 29 June 2016, Kathie sold a portion of the property to her son, Michael A. Sollenberger.

John T. Acker sold his portion of the property to Michael A. Smith & Audra K. (Hite) on 14 August 2018. On 12 August 2022, Michael A. Sollenberger sold his portion of the property to Michael and Audra Smith. At the time that this book was being written (May and June 2023), the building was vacant.

### ***Baird***

John F. Baird, Jr, a son of John and Leah Baird, and his wife Jane built their own house in 1988 behind his parents' house, or rather to the south of the Elmer and Minnie Miller house. It is identified on the map by the letter (T). They are still residing there.

### ***Clapper To Keaton***

Linda Baird, a daughter of John and Leah Baird, married Steve Clapper and they built a house to the east of John Jr's house in the 1980's. It is identified by the letter (S) on the map. After they moved out, the property was sold on 30 September 1985 by John and Leah Baird to Dan C. and Pamela L. Riley. The Rileys lived there thirty-some years. On 28 August 2017, Dan and Pam Riley sold the property to Dustin T. Pollard.

In September 2022, the property was bought by Justin and Ashley Keaton, making them the most recent family to move in to this little community.

### ***Dodson***

Donald Eugene and Barbara Dodson purchased a lot from Robert L. and Sylvia J. Korona on 28 June 1966 and built their house directly opposite to the Bernard and Dollie Smith house in 1966. Their property is identified on the map by the letter (Q). Don worked at F. L. Smithe, a company that made the machines that made envelopes. And for a number of years Barb worked at the Agway egg-candling business just across the road and creek from where they built their house. Over the years, the Bernard and Dollie Smith family and the Donald and Barbara Dodson family became very close. They would go on trips and hold parties and picnics together.

I remember when Don and Barb moved in. They had two children: a son, Jeffrey Allen (who was called JD), and a daughter, Sherri. Whenever we would come out of our house, if Sherri, then only five or six, would call over to us: “Why dontcha come ober?” JD was born in 1961 at Baltimore, and Sherri was born three years later after the Dodsons moved back to this region. She was about two years old when they moved to this house in our community.

### ***Musselman***

Ivan Abraham and Lorraine Ruth Feathers purchased a lot from Robert L. and Sylvia J. Korona to the east of the Millers / Korona house but they did not build on it. The Feathers sold that property to Terry Lee and Phyllis Denice Albright on 3 September 1965. Terry and Phyllis Albright then sold it to Donald Perry and Donna Jean Musselman on 27 June 1969. In 1969, Donald P. and Donna Jean Musselman moved a mobile home in on the lot to the west of the Dodson house. Don and Jean Musselman would eventually

construct a wood frame addition to their home, identified by the letter (R) on the map.

### ***Smith To Kane***

The Bernard and Dollie Smith house was built on the site of the original John Jacob and Margaret Nofsker homestead. It has been described elsewhere. Bernard died in 2001 and Dollie died in 2011. After her death, the property was sold to Erik and Amanda Kane. Amanda was the daughter of Bernard and Dollie’s eldest son, Leon Robert Smith and Linda Kay (Snyder). The Kanes have three sons: Trevor, Gavin and Liam.

### ***Smith***

Larry D. Smith, acquired a portion of the property from his father and mother, Bernard R. and Dollie E. Smith in 1988. They retained the lot containing their house, of course, and, as it will be remembered, had been the site of John Jacob and Margaret Nofsker’s homestead. The portion Larry received was the easternmost portion over which the creek flowed. When he built his own house on the tract, it was laid out in a strict east-west, north-south line, with the southeast corner being situated within five feet of the creek bank. Bernard R. Smith, helped Larry and the two of them were partly assisted by ‘Bus’ Colbert of Martinsburg in constructing the house. Apart from the cement work, the electrical wiring and the plumbing and heating, Larry and his father constructed the house over a two-year period. The walls and floor of the house were constructed of tongue and groove pine boards. Larry insisted that the exposed rafters be 2 x 12’s on 24” centers to give the illusion that the house was an old barn that was turned into a house. The corner booth from the Five Gables Restaurant in Cessna was purchased by Larry and he incorporated it into his house as his ‘dining room’ table. The house is identified by the letter (A) on the map. It was completed during 1988.

Larry Smith was the first person in his family to go to college, attending the Indiana University of Pennsylvania between 1972 and 1977, and graduating with a BS Degree in Art Education. He then spent twenty-eight years working at the Appleton Papers paper mill in Roaring Spring. For twenty of those years he served as the storeroom supervisor and for four years as the watermark designer for the specialized papers produced at the Spring Mill. In January of 2006, Larry lost his job through corporate downsizing. Although disheartening at the time, it was a blessing in disguise. His older brother, Leon was diagnosed as having cancer of the liver and being off work allowed Larry to spend more time with his brother before he died in June.

In 1997, Larry Smith (with contributions by five other historians) published a 926-page book titled *150th Anniversary History of Blair County, Pennsylvania*. Then in 1999 he published a 658-page book detailing the history of the Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset Counties during the American Revolutionary War, titled *Mother Bedford and the American Revolutionary War*. In the year 2020, for Bedford County's 250th Anniversary, Larry (with contributions by eleven other historians) published a 1,090-page book titled *Bedford County Pennsylvania ~ Two and One-Half Centuries in the Making*. Larry was also named in charge of the Bedford County Sestercentennial in 2021. Since then, Larry Smith has been involved in the identification and restoration of the powder magazine for the original Fort Bedford, a half-timber structure located at 111 South Juliana Street in Bedford Borough. He was instrumental in establishing the Friends of the Fortified Bedford House non-profit foundation to support the restoration and maintenance of the building that has been identified as possibly the only extant structure associated with the French and Indian War.

### ***Trautman To Long***

Roger W. and Carol J. (Smith) Trautman moved a mobile home in to the triangular field formed by the main road, Route 164 on the north side, the Gates Lane on the south side and the South Dry Run to the west. Carol is a daughter of Bernard and Dollie Smith. They originally had their mobile home near Duncansville. They purchased this tract near Carol's parents' home from Robert Lee and Judith K. Smith on 22 May 1968. Their daughter, Kimberly was born at this location in December of the same year. Eventually, the Trautmans had a prefabricated house installed behind the mobile home and removed it. And later on, a large room containing numerous skylights in its ceiling was built onto the house to serve as a solarium to accommodate Roger's interest in horticulture. The Trautman property is identified by the letter (U) on the map.

Roger Trautman made a living working at the SKF ball-bearing manufacturing plant in Altoona. From 1986 until 2002 Roger served as the Freedom Township Tax Collector with an office in his house's solarium. When the couple moved to Florida in 2002, Roger asked that Diane Hazenstab continue in the position of tax collector.

During the 1990's Roger and Carol moved to Florida. Their property was purchased by Mary E. Detwiler and Angela Young on 18 July 2003. Also living at this location was Angela's husband, Benjamin. On 17 May 2008, Adam and Jessi Long purchased the property.

### ***Ruggles To Fletcher***

Robert E. Miller, for the estate of Elmer J. and Minnie M. Miller, sold the entire triangular tract between the main road, Gates Lane and the South Dry Run to William D. and Shirley Mock on 14 January 1960. The Mocks did not build on the property and four years later, on 16 May 1964 they sold the tract to Robert Lee Smith, Mervin



Harry and Shirley J. Smith. Mervin H. and Shirley J. Smith then sold the east half to Gary E. and Barbara Ruggles on 20 July 1967. Their property is identified on the map by the letter (V). Gary and Barbara Ruggles sold their property to Edwin A. and Marjorie M. Gates on 18 July 1972 and they moved into a house along Singer Lane.

Edwin A. Gates and his wife, Marjorie (Dolaway) resided in the house built for Gary and Barbara Ruggles almost to Ed's death in 2005. Ed planted evergreen trees along the ditch that ran alongside the north side of Gates' Lane. He stated that he planted all of the trees so that they would form a solid wall to prevent the Smiths and Samels families from being able to see his house. A year or two before he died at the age of 96, Ed moved into a relative's home in Hollidaysburg. Marjorie had died on 3 February 1988. The property was then purchased by Brent Fletcher (previously of Bedford County) on 10 November 2005 and he and his wife Ashley currently own the property.

### *Smith To Emeigh & Knisely*

On the north side of State Route 164, recently named 'Johnstown Road', Brady McKinlay and Laura Mae (Bowser) Smith built their house in the 1930's. It is noted by the letter (C) on the map. Brady was not a professional carpenter, but he and his brother, Eldon Brooks Smith, performed enough carpentry work to produce their own houses along with a couple others in the vicinity. Brady and Eldon purchased the wood when the East Freedom railroad station was torn down and built their two houses using plans obtained from the Sears Roebuck Company for their 'Craftsman' style structures. The plans from Sears Roebuck cost the two Smith brothers about \$35. Eldon and Brady would eventually build three other houses in the vicinity. Laura died in March 1967 and Brady followed her in May. Everybody in the community said that Brady died of a broken heart over the death of Laura. The

property was inherited by their son, Leroy Merrill Smith. At the time, Leroy and his wife Betty Jane (Holland) were residing at Brooks Mills.

I have very fond memories of going to visit Laura and Brady. Well the visit was more with Laura because Brady was seldom around when we visited. Laura seemed to be forever baking. And when she baked pies, if she had a little dough left over she would give it to me with the cinnamon bottle. I would sprinkle the dough with cinnamon, and then I'd roll the cinnamon covered dough into my own version of cinnamon rolls. Laura would add my 'rolls' to the tray holding her own pies and bake them. When my beloved Grammy Nofsker was mortally wounded in a car crash, and the family was at the hospital, mother had given the school instructions that the bus driver was to let me and my brother off at Laura's house. It was Laura who was the first to comfort my brother and me.

The west end of Brady Smith's property bordered on property of Bernard Smith, over which the South Dry Run flowed. Brady and Eldon wanted to share a barn, so they built it half on each side of the boundary line at the west end of the Brady Smith property. The barn stood into the 1960s.

My brother Leon and I liked to play in that barn in which Eldon and Brady kept a cow or two. There was a resident black snake who could be often seen in the barn. Our grandfather, Eldon always told us to pause at the door and look all around through the barn before stepping inside. When we would see the resident black snake, which could have been upwards of six feet long, we then knew where not to go to bother it. And if the snake was seen on one of the structural beams, we would simply stay away from being directly under it. Pap (our nickname for Eldon) would also tell us to wait before reaching into the feed bin. If we saw the grain moving, we should not dip our cups into it. Whether it was the same snake over the years I can't tell, but there was a large black snake in residence in the barn for at least six or

seven years as I was growing up.

In the 1960's, during just about every autumn, all of the Smith relatives who lived in the community would hold a picnic in a clearing beside the barn. Those relatives included Eldon and his second wife, Wilma; Eldon's son, Bernard and Dollie and their three children: Carol, Leon and Larry; Brady and Laura and their two children: Leroy and Donna; Irvin and Elma and Beverly, Elma's niece whom she raised after the death of Thelma, Elma's twin sister. The picnic usually centered around boiled corn on the cob and maybe freshly made kielbasa. After the picnic some of us would walk up the hill to Lydia's store to get 'Eskimo pies', which in today's 'woke' world are named "Klondike bars". Regardless of their name, the ice cream covered in hard chocolate was a delicious treat after the picnic. While the children played tag and other games in the field, the older folk would sit around and tell stories about their younger days. I enjoyed sitting with them, soaking up as much knowledge of the family as my little brain could hold. My brother, Leon, would often ask me "How do you know all that stuff?" He never seemed to understand the value of listening to our elders.

Following Brady and Laura's deaths in 1967, Leroy and Betty sold the property to Eugene Hazenstab and John Hazenstab (as joint tenants). The transaction involving 3.843 acres and a two-story frame house was recorded in the deed dated 17 May 1968. A slender strip of land that Bernard R. Smith had sold to Laura Mae Smith on 16 February 1944, and which bordered on the Smith property along the east side of South Dry Run, had previously been sold by Leroy and Betty to Eugene and John Hazenstab on 16 April 1968.

Eugene Hazenstab was a general contractor. He built quite a number of houses throughout the Blair and Bedford Counties region. Although the houses that he built tended to be standard 'Ranch' style houses, you could usually tell one that was built by Gene Hazenstab by its distinctive roof shape. He constructed a standard

'hip' roof, but the ridge beam on the gable end would project, or extend, out farther than the base.

While living in the house built for Brady and Laura Smith, Gene Hazenstab made a few architectural changes. An addition was built onto the east side and the kitchen was enlarged.

The Hazenstab Development was created on lands acquired by Eugene Hazenstab in the vicinity of Newry, heading toward Puzzletown.

In regard to Brady and Laura Smith's house, Eugene and Barbara Hazenstab sold the property to James R. and Nancy Lee (Cramer) Poplin on 25 May 1984. The Poplin family previously resided in Altoona. Jim enlarged the garage and established a truck repair business. At one point he employed four or five men at the business. He also fenced in a field to the west of the house and used it as a run for the Arabian horses he raised. A tax sale on 20 July 2015 decreed the property to Brett A. Shoenfelt. But then, on 14 July 2021, as a result of a Sheriff Sale, the property became owned by Donald Knisely Jr., and Mark Emeigh. Intending to rent the house, it took them a couple weeks to rid the house of the smell of cat urine and feces. Nancy Poplin had raised many cats in their house and the stench pervaded the house.

The house is currently rented by Michael and Heather Lunger.

### ***Agway To Emeigh & Knisely***

While residing here, Eugene Hazenstab had sold a portion of the property at its west end, and bordering on lands owned by Bernard and Dollie Smith, to the Agway Company who built a cinder block structure. It is identified by the letter (M) on the map. Agway was formed in July 1964 by a merger of the Grand League Federation of New York, Eastern States Farmers' Exchange and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. The new merged business provided agricultural service and supplies. One of those services was the egg candling business. An egg-candling operation was

set up in the new building. For anyone who does not know what an 'egg-candling operation' is, it is where chicken eggs are illuminated from behind to make sure that they are not fertilized with chicks growing in them. Everyone in our community knew the business as the 'egg-plant'. When that business closed, the property and building were bought by 'Barney' Barnhart of the Blair Press business in Roaring Spring. He expanded the building to the east and also constructed an attached pole barn to the west. The additional structures provided storage space for the rolls of paper that were used in the printing of the weekly newspaper. Tractors and trailers were constantly coming and going. The Blair Press evolved into the News Printing Company of Roaring Spring, PA., Inc., (NPC) and operations were moved from Roaring Spring and this storage space to a new facility north of Claysburg.

The official NPC website gives a history of the business and in that history Barney Barnhart was described with the note: "Barney gains a reputation as a 'rambunctious and controversial' editor". That was indeed a kind way of describing one of the most ruthless and mean-spirited men to walk the face of the earth. I had heard stories of Barnhart sitting a piece of equipment on a neighbor's property and then claiming that the piece of property was his by right of eminent domain. I had my own personal experience with Mr. Barnhart. After my parents had sold me the east two-thirds of their property, over which the South Dry Run lay, Barnhart came up and did not ask, but rather told me that he was going to buy a portion of my land to the center of the creek. I told him that I had no intention of selling him any land, but he assured me that he would eventually get the land he wanted. I wasn't scared of his threat, but a couple days later my dad called me at work to tell me that a couple of Barnhart's employees had come onto my land, poured gasoline on the trunks of three or four maple trees and set fire to them. The fire company was called and the fires were put out, but I still refused to sell the land to Barnhart. It was after that incident that Barnhart

had the large pole barn constructed, possibly to block my view down the valley.

After NPC moved all of its operations to Claysburg, the building became used for a variety of purposes. For a couple years there was an MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) group using the building to train young children the art of self-defense. Mark Emeigh, owner of Mark's Computers in the Leighty's Market at Newry, and Donald E. Knisely, Jr purchased the property on 3 September 2009 and established a computer and electronic salvaging business.

### *Dopp To Dodson*

Eugene Hazenstab, who was more commonly known as 'Gene' Hazenstab, and his wife Barbara sold a small tract of land on the inside of the curve of State Route 164 to Jeffrey W. and Patricia E. (Diehl) Bowers on 27 June 1972. The house that already stood on the property had been one of the houses built by Eldon and Brady Smith. It was similar to Eldon's and Brady's Sears Roebuck 'Craftsman' style houses, but scaled down a little to make it more of what was called a 'bungalow' house. It is identified on the map by the letter (H). The house was originally occupied by John Dopp and his daughter, Althea. During the years that Jeffrey and Patricia Bowers owned the property, she committed suicide. Before the phrase was commonly known, the neighbors commented that she probably suffered from postpartum depression. It was reported that on 8 January 1979 she went down into the basement and shot herself while her young children were upstairs. On 16 December 1980 Gene Hazenstab sold an additional small piece of land to Jeffrey W. Bowers, who was noted as 'unmarried' on the deed. Jeffrey apparently did not want to continue to reside in the home where his wife had died, so on 31 March 1981 he sold the property to Charles

Dean and Sandra L. Dodson. Sandy resides there to the present and is helped by her son, Jason.

### *Nofsker To Gates*

Gates Lane cuts off of State Route 164 (Johnstown Road) to form the left arm of a 'Y' intersection. It extends from that 'Y' intersection westward toward the South Dry Run. The road was named for the Francis and Arma Gates family. It should be noted that the ditch that runs alongside of Gates Lane for its entire length served as the raceway for the grist mill operated by Abel Davis.

At the westernmost end of Gates Lane stood the two-story log house built by Jacob Emanuel Nofsker, a son of John Jacob and Margaret Nofsker, and his wife Elizabeth (Dodson). It would be the home of the descendants of Jacob Emanuel and Elizabeth for many years. The site where it stood is identified by the letter (E) on the map. And because the house was constructed as a duplex style house, two families could be residing in it at any time. Jacob Lecky Nofsker was one of Jacob Emanuel's sons and it was Jacob Lecky who inherited the lands on the south side of the valley when his father died on 7 April 1911. On 1 August 1927, Jacob Lecky Nofsker sold a large tract of those lands to Brady M. Smith. Brady, in turn sold twenty-eight acres of land to Francis Edgar and Arma U. (Towle) Gates on 2 April 1943. The tract that Brady sold to Francis amounted to a little over twenty-eight acres.

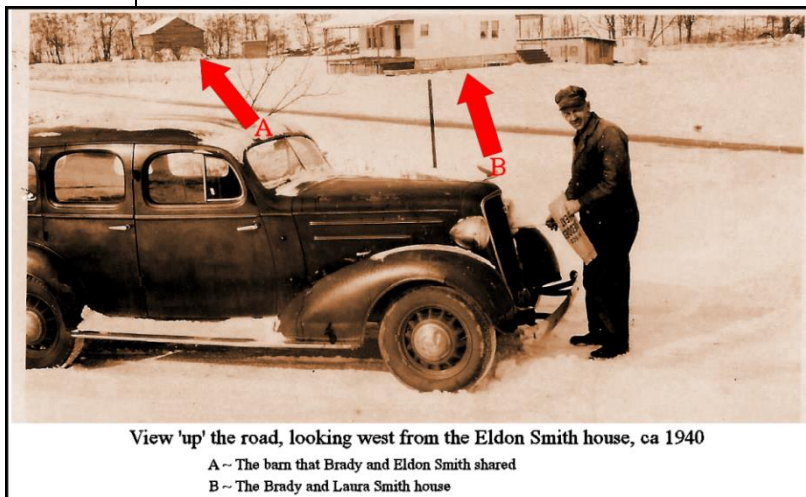
Eldon B. Smith sold a tract of 5.46 acres to Francis and Arma Gates on 5 June 1954. This was part of the tract that Brady sold to Eldon on 10 October 1932.

Two years later, on 13 August 1956, Francis E. and Arma U. Gates sold a portion of their property (that they acquired from Brady Smith on 29 January 1947) to Donald Paul and Ruth Carmen Weaver.

On 29 April 1957, Eldon Smith sold a portion of the tract that he had acquired from Brady Smith on 10 October 1932 to Francis and Arma Gates.

Francis and Arma Gates, on 6 March 1959, sold a tract to Donald Paul and Ruth Weaver out of the property Brady Smith had sold to the Gates family on 29 January 1947. Ruth was a daughter of Francis and Arma, and at the time, she and Donald were living at Pleasant Mills in Snyder County.

During the 1970's Donald and Ruth



Weaver had a house constructed to the east of the house then owned by Ruth's parents. It is identified by the letter (P) on the map. Donald and Ruth raised a family of six children: Carol, Linda, Keith, Paul, and the twins Dawn and Dianna in their new home. At the same time, with Francis and Arma in poor health, the Weaver family moved into the old house with Ruth's parents. Francis died in 1980 and Arma in 1982. Donald and Ruth Weaver continued to make their home in the old house. Donald died in 1994 and Ruth died in 2021. The house would eventually be torn down in 2021 following the death of Ruth Weaver. Before it was razed, the old house would have been the oldest standing structure in this stretch of the valley.

Over the years, after the deaths of Francis and Arma, and as the children of Donald and Ruth

grew up and married and moved out, the old house became occupied solely by Ruth.

### ***Wombacher***

One of the Weaver twins, Dianna married Lance Walters and moved up on Blue Knob. The other twin, Dawn, married Barry Wombacher and they built a house on the summit of the hill to the south of the Gates and Weaver houses. They moved into their new home on 23 November 1994. It is identified by the letter (Z) on the map.

### ***Weaver To Butler***

The newer 'Weaver' house was rented out. One of those renters, or perhaps the only one, was a divorced mother, Judy Boyston, raising two children: Joanne and Charles. [Some neighbors thought they remembered her having five children, but the only ones anyone ever saw were Joanne and Charles.] Ms. Boyston made a living 'entertaining' gentlemen visitors and when she had a gentleman visitor at the house, she locked the children out of the house. The two children spent their time running around the community begging food and other stuff from the neighbors. They also played a lot in the South Dry Run that flows past the Weaver house. At least two times the kids nearly drowned in the fast flowing stream. Joann and Charles would climb trees in the yard of Roger and Carol Trautman, and fearing they might fall and hurt themselves on the property, Roger had to keep chasing them away. The mother was in Altoona one winter, possibly plying her trade, and on an especially cold evening, she was very drunk and fell asleep in her parked car. Her frozen body was discovered a day or two later. About a week after that Charles was discovered killing one of the neighbor's cats and when questioned why he did such a thing, he responded that he and Joanne were hungry. A couple neighbors went to

the house to see what was up. They found that the children had pulled some of the wood moldings off the kitchen cupboards and were making a fire in the center of the kitchen floor apparently on which to roast the stolen cat. When the authorities were notified, it was then that the death of their mother was discovered and the kids were taken into the care of Blair County youth services. That was the last that anyone in the community heard of the mother and Joanne and Charles.

The 'Weaver' house and property was sold on 2 May 1975 by Francis E. and Arma U. Gates to Russell L. and Shirley A. Butler. This was part of the property that Brady M. Smith sold to Francis and Arma Gates on 29 January 1947.

### ***Smith To Lear***

The house that is identified by the letter (J) on the map was one of the houses built by Eldon and Brady Smith in the 1940's. On 5 December 1947 Eldon B. and Jennie F. Smith sold the tract of 0.33 acres to Irvin R. and Elma (Smeltzer) Smith. Irvin and Elma moved into this house on the 1st of December 1947. On 18 February 1958 an additional tract of 0.044 acres was sold by Eldon to Irvin. Irvin was another brother to Eldon and Brady. As noted elsewhere, Irvin and Elma took in and raised Beverly Smeltzer when her mother, Thelma (Elma's twin) had died. Beverly's father, Irvin Sherwood Smeltzer was still living at the time of his wife's death, but he was just not capable of raising his daughter by himself. Irvin made a living working at the brick plant in Altoona. Irvin Smith died on 3 February 1986. Elma died on 28 August 1992. Following Elma's death, the house stood vacant for a couple years. Then Kathy Snyder purchased the property. Kathy's father, Harold Snyder, did carpentry work and so before Kathy moved in, her father made some changes and repairs to the structure. Kathy resided there until 2020. In October 2020 Rick and Terri Lear purchased the property. Until Justin and Ashley Keaton moved into the community, the

Lear family had been the most recent new residents in this community.

### *Samels To Green*

The house identified by the letter (I) on the map was built in the 1940's by Brady and Eldon Smith. Construction on it was started on 27 August 1947 and was completed by 10 December 1948. The property consisting of 0.296 acres was sold by Eldon B. Smith to Ethel A. Walter on 28 April 1956. On 23 January 1958 Ethel Walter sold the property to Leo Oscar and Margaret Marie (Walter) Samels. Leo and Margaret, or Peggy as she was better known, raised their two daughters, Shirley and Beverly there without indoor plumbing for many years. Both daughters married and moved out before their parents' deaths. Leo died in 1979 and Peg died in 1999. Later Cory Green purchased the property and lived there with his son until the 2010's. The house is currently standing empty.

Sound carries in a small valley, and this valley of the South Dry Run was no different. On a calm summer evening, as our family sat on the porch cooling off from the hot day, we could clearly hear people on the opposite side of the valley talking. Irvin was a drunk and would wander over to the Samels house to spend the evening 'talking' to Leo. On some evenings we could vaguely hear Leo and Irvin talking and every now and then we would hear Leo yawn. It was an exaggerated yawn intended to suggest to Irvin that he should go home.

### *Smith*

The next house to the east of the Samels house was built for Eldon Smith who wanted a more modern house than the one that he and his brother Brady built from the Sears Roebuck 'Craftsman' house plans. Eldon's first wife, Jennie

Florence Bowser, died in 1954. He married his second wife, Wilma A. Black in 1957. Wilma died in June 1965 and Eldon then married his third wife, Luella Burket, in November 1965. He and his third wife Luella moved into the new home. It is identified on the map by the letter (O).

On 23 October 1973 Eldon, realizing that he didn't have long to live, sold the new house and the 0.243 acre property to his son, Bernard R. Smith. Eldon died on 22 December 1973, and Bernard and Dollie allowed Luella to live in the house for a short period. Eventually they asked her to move out of this property and into her daughter's home along Ski Gap Road in Greenfield Township.

For a number of years, Bernard and Dollie rented the new house that Eldon had built for his third wife, Luella. Three renters: two families and one single man, were enough for Bernard and Dollie. The demands placed on the landlord were too much for them, so after the third renter's lease was finished, the house was left vacant until their eldest son, Leon Robert Smith got married. Leon married Linda Kay Snyder in July 1978. On 9 April 1981 Bernard R. and Dollie E. Smith sold the property of 0.243 acres to Leon R. and Linda K. Smith. (They had started to purchase it by means of Articles of Agreement signed on 16 July 1979.) Planning to have a family, and seeing that they would need additional space, Linda's father, Harold Snyder built a two-story addition onto the single-floor house.

Leon and Linda raised one child, a daughter, Amanda. Amanda would eventually marry and her uncle Larry made it possible that they could purchase the house built for her grandparents Bernard and Dollie Smith.

### *Smith To Snyder*

The house identified on the map by the letter (D) stands to the south side of State Route 164 right where Gates Lane cuts off the main road. It was one of the first ones in this little



community to be built by Eldon and Brady Smith, but the exact construction date is long forgotten by anyone now living. The house was built for Eldon and Jennie originally. The Eldon Smith family had previously resided along what is now Harker Road in Butler Hollow. That is where dad grew up, despite being born in the Jacob Emanuel Nofsker house. Bernard and Dollie Smith got married in June 1944, and they moved in with Eldon and Jennie in this house, so it must have been built prior to 1944.

Eldon B. Smith made a living operating a saw mill (noted elsewhere) with his son, Bernard R. Smith. He also moonshined.

My dad would not tell me how 'Pap' made a living until I was in my late teens. He didn't think that a young kid should know that ~ and possibly tell friends. In any case, dad recounted to me how Pap would order large quantities of sugar. Since it was during Prohibition, he had to hide the fact that the sugar would be used in making alcohol. In order to do that, he would also order bottles of 'cordial'. The cordial was the name given to fruit extracts often used in making non-alcoholic drinks. Pap had his moonshining still up near Smith Corner on the eastern slope of Blue Knob.

As a sideline to the moonshine, Pap made wine. He grew raspberries all along the hillside behind, or to the south, of his house. He would put hundreds of the raspberries in cloth bags and hang them on a beam. The weight of the berries forced them all to be pressed and the juice would be captured in a pot beneath the hanging bag. That juice would be removed for making a sherry type drink and then he would squeeze the remaining berries into other pots, which would then be used to make plain wine.

When pap died he had five or six gallon jugs of wine 'working' but not ready to cap. If the wine was in danger of going sour before finishing fermenting, pap would add honey to it. It created a sort of mead.

Pap also made dandelion wine and I inherited a recipe that he wrote out for making the dandelion wine. To make three gallons of wine,

you would collect six quarts of dandelion flower tops. Any of the leaves or stems would give the wine a bitter taste, so only the flower tops would be used. The flowers would be placed in a large five-gallon pot and set on a stove to be heated to boiling. Three gallons of water would be added to the pot. Four or five oranges and one or two lemons would be cut into quarters and the juice squeezed into the pot. The spent peels would also be added to the mix. A variety of spices including cinnamon and cloves would be added and the whole brought to a boil. After boiling the entire mixture for about fifteen minutes, the liquid would be strained into another five-gallon pot. The second pot would contain five pounds of sugar. After all the boiled liquid would be strained onto the sugar, yeast would be added and the pot covered. It would be left to ferment for about a month before being bottled. The resulting wine did not taste anything like the dandelion flowers smelled. It had a fruit and nutty flavor something like a port wine.

All of the hillside to the south of Gates Lane was acquired by Eldon B. Smith via two transactions. The first was between John and Mary Yingling to Eldon and Jennie Smith on 2 June 1932. That tract was a portion of the tract of 127 acres originally sold by Jacob Lecky Nofsker to Brady Smith on 1 August 1927. The second transaction was between Brady and Laura Smith to Eldon and Jennie Smith on 30 October 1932. The two transactions equaled a total of 5.067 acres.

Bernard and Dollie Smith were not in favor of Bernard's dad, Eldon getting married for a third time. They felt that he was too old and sickly to take on another marriage. As a result, on 2 October 1965, a month before his third marriage, Eldon Smith sold the entire tract that he had acquired in 1932 (with the exception of the lot of 0.243 acres that he retained and upon which he had built his new home) to Leroy Smith, his nephew. The sale was done just to spite Bernard for having tried to dissuade him from marrying a third time.

Leroy and Betty Smith sold a tract of 1.237 acres or the western third of the Eldon Smith tract to Donna Kay Fry of Schwenksville, PA on 18 September 1967. Donna was Leroy's sister who married Walter Donald Fry, the son of the pastor of the Smith Corner Mennonite Church. On 27 December 1974, Donna Kay and Walter Donald Fry sold the property back to Leroy. Perhaps she had at one time thought about moving back to this region, but after seven years changed her mind.

When Leroy Smith married Betty Jane Holland in June 1963, they initially took up residence at Brooksmills, Pennsylvania. Then after Eldon Smith sold the property to them in 1965, Leroy and Betty moved from Brooksmills to this little community. Leroy and Betty resided in the house at the east end of Gates Lane for about twenty-five years. It was here that they raised their son, Troy and their daughter Jennie. They made some renovations to the house to add more living space. But eventually being unsatisfied with this property, they purchased a farm near Gallitzin in Cambria County, where they spent the rest of their lives together. (Following Leroy's death, Betty moved to the Hollidaysburg area.) On 25 November 1991, Leroy and Betty Smith sold their property and the original Eldon B. Smith house to Bill and Heidi Snyder. Heidi is a cousin of Linda, Leon Smith's wife.

Bill and Heidi also purchased the tract of land on the hillside to the south of their and the other lots bordering on Gates Lane. The tract of 1.237 acres that Leroy Smith had sold to his sister, Donna Fry, in 1967 and which she in turn sold back to him in 1974, was sold on 28 May 1997 by Leroy and Betty Smith to their daughter Jennie Lee Corl. That tract was also purchased by Bill and Heidi Snyder.

### *Nofsker To Krise*

Beyond the curve in the road are a couple 'relatively new' houses. Arthur and Violet Nofsker's hip-roofed ranch style home was built

in the 1970's. It is identified by the letter (N) on the map. Arthur, more commonly known simply as 'Art' was a descendant of John Jacob Nofsker and a son of Bertha Mae Nofsker. Art and Violet had a home up at Smith Corner near the John Wilks Nofsker property. When Bertha died, her will gave Art the bulk of her property. Art eventually sold the Nofsker property to Jeffrey Bowers. That gave him and Violet the money to build a new house and this house on the north side of Route 164 at the curve was the result. Art and Violet Nofsker, on 2 August 1965 purchased a lot of 0.544 acres from Annie C. Hazenstab (wife of J. Regis Hazenstab who had died on 22 September 1960). Annie had acquired a tract of 61.08 acres on 1 May 1961 from two of her sons and their wives: Raymond A. and Mary Ellen Hazenstab along with Robert V. and Thelma Hazenstab.

Art died in 1982 and Violet continued to live in the house until her death in 1994. When Violet died, having no children, her estate went to a niece and nephew of hers. Violet's executors, Walter P. and James R. Fagans, sold the property to Gerald W. and Anna R. Fagans. On 19 September 2008, the property was sold by Anna R. and C. Eugene Smith to Rudy and Sandra Krise.

### *Singel To Foor*

On 29 April 1918, Mary Hazenstab sold a tract of land on the south side of State Route 164 to J. Regis Hazenstab. Thirty years later, on 13 February 1948, J. Regis and Annie C. Hazenstab sold a portion of that tract to George H. and Olene A. Singel. George and Olene built the modern style home on the south side of the road opposite to the Davis / Hazenstab house. It is identified on the map by the letter (FF). It occupies the southwest corner of the 'T' intersection of Singer Lane and State Route 164, (*i.e.* the Johnstown Road). After George died in 1976, Robert Hazenstab (Olene's brother) bought the property from Olene, who needed to go into Garver Manor

Nursing home. He thought that she might be able to return, and he intended to hold onto the property for her, but as time went on, that did not appear feasible. So in 2005, Bob Hazenstab sold the property to Steven and Tracie Foor. Steve and a partner owned and ran an excavating business for a couple years.

George and Olene sold a portion of their property on 11 April 1960 to Thomas P. and Violet Musselman. On 19 February 1964, George and Olene also sold a small piece of land to their neighbor William John and Fay Beatrice Kunsman with the stipulation that the “land cannot be used as a junk yard.”

### ***Spielvogle To Simington***

Annie C. Hazenstab sold a tract of 1.708 acres to her sons: John J. Hazenstab and Eugene M. Hazenstab on 11 January 1966. John and Gene were intending to start a business called Hazenstab’s Cabinet Shop. At the same time, Annie was selling a tract of 0.602 acres to Silas A. and Ruth N. (Hazenstab) Musselman. The Musselman tract was located to the west and adjacent to the property of George and Olene Singel. And the Hazenstab Cabinet Shop tract was to the west and adjacent to the Musselman tract. The Musselman tract shared a boundary with lands of Brady M. Smith.

The Hazenstab Cabinet Shop never materialized. On 11 November 1968 a deed was made out between Eugene M. and Barbara L. Hazenstab, he being the ‘sole surviving co-partner of Hazenstab’s Cabinet Shop’ to William R. and Carol G. Musselman. Gene Hazenstab and his sons built the house sitting on the hillside opposite to Art and Violet’s house [identified by the letter (Y) on the map] for the Musselman family. On 11 August 1970, William R. and Carol G. Musselman sold the property they had just bought two years before to William Kenneth and Cherry Sunshine Spielvogle.

While the Spielvogles occupied the house, in the early 1970’s, they experienced a minor fire that was confined to the basement. On 27 November 1993, the Spielvogle property was purchased by David A. and Melissa Cherry. David and Melissa were in the process of divorcing and so, on 1 March 2002, a deed was made out from David A. and Melissa A. Cherry to solely Melissa A. Cherry. Melissa married Brian T. McKee and on 10 November 2004, the tract of 1.708 acres was sold by Brian T. and Melissa A. McKee to Curtis E. and Cheryl A. Simington. Curtis worked as a supervisor for Conrail. Cheryl died in 2016 and Curtis died on 17 December 2022. The property was purchased on 28 June 2023 by Cory and Brandy Moyer.

### ***Musselman To Ruggles***

Occupying the tract on the hillside to the south side of the road between the Singel property and the Spielvogle property is a house built by Silas A. and Ruth N. Musselman. The tract of 0.602 acres was purchased by Gary E. and Barbara L. Ruggles on 17 January 2006. The house is identified by the letter (X) on the map.

### ***Hazenstab***

To the east of the Art and Violet Nofsker house, Mike and Diane Hazenstab had a new house built on 12 October 1985. This house is identified on the map by the letter (W). Annie C. Hazenstab died on 24 October 1966. On 6 April 1967, Thomas Hazenstab, in the capacity of executor of the estate of Annie C. Hazenstab, sold a tract of 53.37 acres to Raymond A. and Mary Ellen Hazenstab. Of that large tract, Raymond A. and Mary Ellen Hazenstab sold a tract of 0.473 acres to their son Michael R. and Diane M. (Thomas) Hazenstab on 23 September 1985.

### ***Davis To Hazenstab***

The house built by Abel Davis, and later purchased and occupied by Adam and Agnes Hazenstab is recognizable by being the oldest building in the immediate cluster of new ranch-style houses. The 2-story house at one time had a steeper roof, but in the 1980's the roof was replaced with one having a lower pitch. The house, identified by the letter (F) on the map is currently occupied by Mary Ellen Hazenstab and her son, Kevin. Mary Ellen was the wife of Raymond Hazenstab. The house stands opposite to the north end of Singer Lane.

*Note:* Because of the fact that Boyd Shaw lives back along Singer Lane and because Boyd's daughter, Kelley sings for local events, the claim

has been made that 'Singer Lane' was named in her honor. The fact of the matter is that Singer lane was named in honor of Friedrich Wilhelm and Mary Magdalena Singer who homesteaded at the far south end of the lane after the American Revolutionary War. Friedrich served in the British Army as a Hessian mercenary soldier.

### ***The Bicentennial of Our Stretch of the Valley***

John Jacob and Margaret Nofsker homesteaded in this valley in the year 1826. That means that in the year 2026, the community that would develop into approximately twenty-six houses will celebrate its bicentennial or 200th Anniversary.

## *What Our Stretch of the Valley Looks Like Today*

The title of this section of pictures is not *exactly* correct. The meaning of the word ‘today’ is the part that is not entirely accurate. Anyone who is familiar with our stretch of the valley knows that the thirty-five mile-per-hour speed limit seems to be more of a suggestion than an absolute restriction to most people traveling on the road. With many drivers flying up or down the road at sixty or seventy mph, just being on the berm to take photos is taking one’s life in one’s hands.

I have utilized the [google.com/maps](https://www.google.com/maps) internet website to obtain my photos. And what that means is that the word ‘today’ refers to images taken in July 2019 ~ the most recent date that the google mappers passed this way. Some things have stayed the same while some things have changed. Hopefully your property is displayed properly.

It should also be noted that the google equipment did not travel back Gates Lane, so the couple houses along it are represented in this collection of images by photos taken by Larry D. Smith.



This is a view looking west. The house on the left was the Singel’s house. The one on the right was Adam and Agnes Hazenstab’s house, which was originally built by Abel Davis. The road cutting off to the left is Singer Lane, at the far south end of which Friedrich Wilhelm and Mary Magdalena Singer homesteaded after the American Revolutionary War (in which Friedrich served as a Hessian mercenary).





This is a view looking east, back toward the direction of East Freedom. The house on the left is the Adam and Agnes Hazenstab house and the one on the right is the Singel.s house. Abel Davis' grist mill would have stood a little farther to the left of where the shed buildings on the far left currently stand.

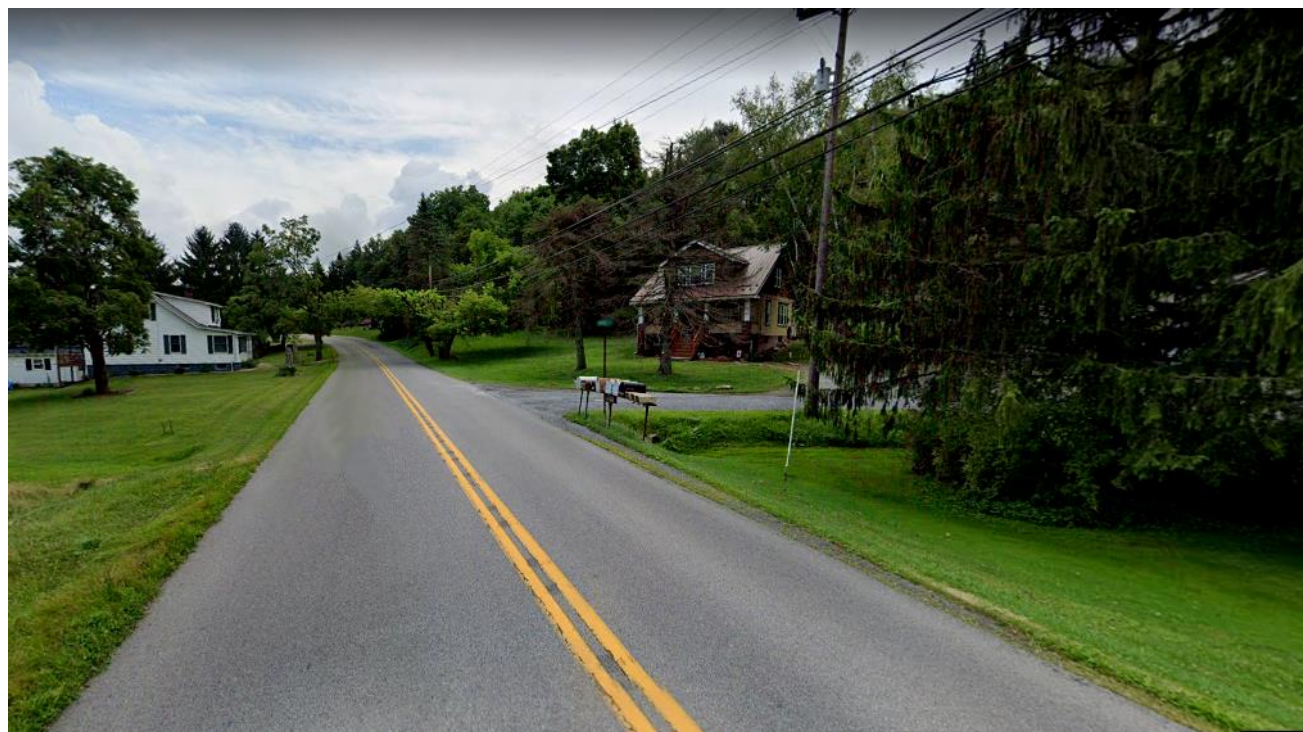


The house on the left is currently owned by Gary and Barbara Ruggles. The one on the right is the home of Mike and Diane Hazenstab. In the distance, on the left of center, is the Spielvogel / Simington house.





Continuing westward, the Spielvogle / Simington house is on the left. The house on the right was originally built by Arthur and Violet Nofsker.

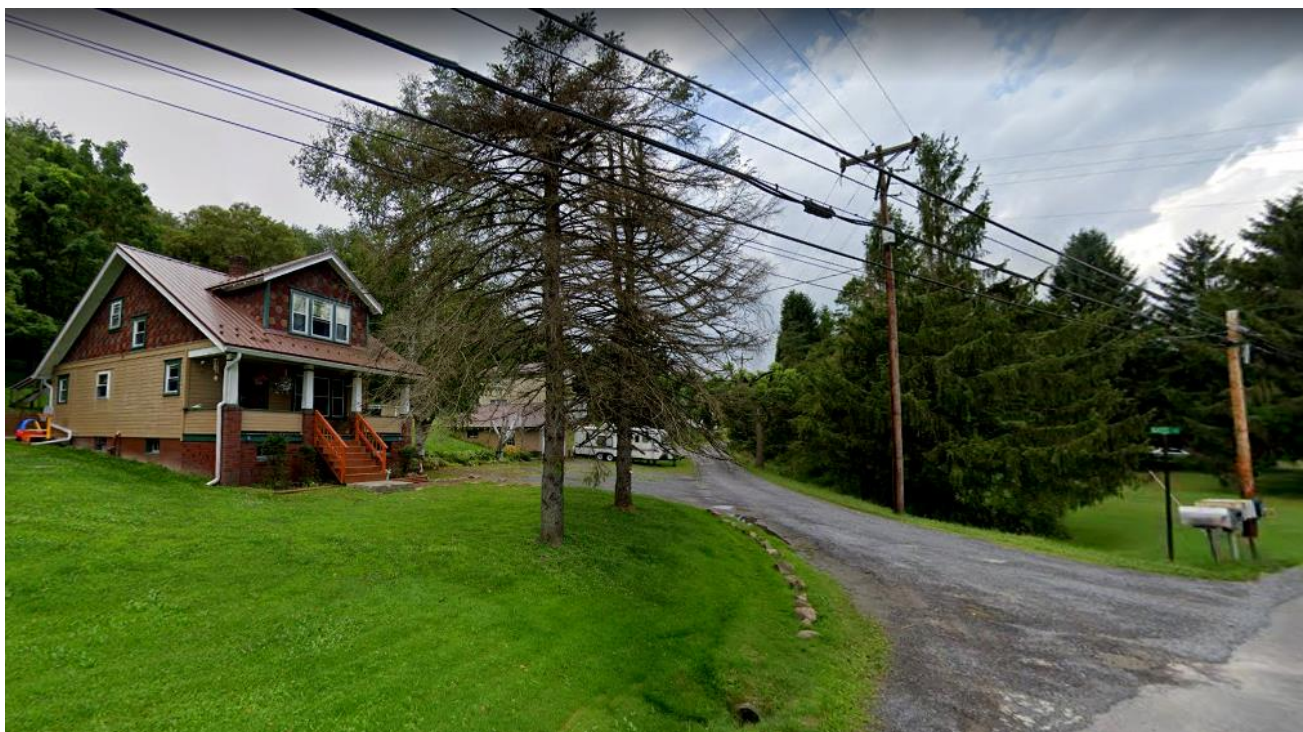


After coming around the curve, and looking backwards toward the east, the house on the left was one of the houses built by Brady and Eldon Smith. The house on the right of center was Eldon and Jennie Smith's house and one of the first built by Brady and Eldon in the community.





The house on the left was Eldon and Jennie Smith's house. The two trees in front were cut down after this image was taken. The house in the center was the new one built by Eldon Smith in 1965.



This view of the Eldon and Jennie Smith house shows it a little clearer, revealing the 'insulbrick', a fibreboard sheathing used for partial siding, which was a very modern building material in the 1940s.





These two houses were constructed by Eldon and Brady Smith. The one on the right of center was owned by Irvin and Elma Smith and the one on the left was owned by Leo and Peg Samels.



Looking backward toward the east end of Gates Lane, the house on the right is the Leo and Peg Samels house. The one in the center was Eldon Smith's 'new' house and the house to the left of center was Eldon's original house. Note the pine and spruce trees planted by Edwin Gates around the perimeter of his property. The trees completely blocked off these families' view of the main road.





The house built by Donald and Ruth Weaver is on the right. The house owned by Irvin and Elma Smith is in the center. The property owned by Roger and Carol Trautman and currently the residence of the Adam Long family is off the left edge.



The house of Barry and Dawn Wombacher can be seen at the summit of the hill in the left side of this photo. The building to the right is a workshop built by Russell Butler after he bought the Weaver house.





After the Poplins resided in the Brady and Laura Smith house, built by Eldon and Brady in the 1940s, the house stood vacant for nearly a year. Mark Emeigh and Donald Knisely, Jr., purchased the property, cut down all the trees and converted it into a rental property.



This is the current view of the Brady and Laura Smith house, photographed by Larry Smith in 2023. A portion of the warehouse pole building constructed by News Printing Company is seen to the left of center. Also the house built by Stephen and Tracy Lynn Roberts can be seen up on the hill to the left.





Along the south side of the road stands the house that Gary and Barbara Ruggles initially built and currently occupied by the Fletchers. In the center of the image stands the house originally owned by Roger and Carol Trautman and currently occupied by the Longs. Both houses date from the 1960's.



The Bernard and Dollie Smith house can be seen at the far left side. The large white structure to the center and right is the Agway / Blair Press / Mark's Computers building. The original part built to house the Agway egg candling business is the part right behind the white box truck.





This is the house that I and my father, Bernard R. Smith, built in 1987-88. It is about eight feet drop in elevation from the road, and because it is enclosed by large trees, it does not show up properly on gps equipment. People using their smart phones to come to my house invariably are directed to the property to the east on the other side of the South Dry Run.







The house to the left was built by Eldon and Bernard Smith for the Bernard and Dollie Smith family in 1949. The John Jacob and Margaret Nofsker log homestead built in 1826 would have stood immediately behind this structure. This view is looking east with the Brady and Laura Smith house in the distance.



The house on the left is the Donald and Barbara Dodson house, in which Barbara still resides. The house in the center of the image is the Donald and Jean Musselman house. The view is again looking west. Blue Knob appears faintly in the center distance.





From the summit of the hill, looking south across the fields to the house built by Steve and Linda Clapper in the center and the house built by John and Jane Baird to the right.



The Elmer and Minnie Miller house stands on the right. Leah Baird still resides there. The building previously used by Lydia Lang as her store is on the right. And appearing to sit on the Lang store building's roof is the house of Merle and Ruth Barnes.





At the west end of our stretch of the valley stands the Floyd and Mary Aurandt house on the right. The house built by John and Janet Johnson is on the left. This view is looking south.



This is an aerial view of our stretch of the valley showing the Aurandt house in the lower left corner, the Currie house in the upper left corner, the Wombacher house in the lower right corner and the Hazenstab house in the upper right corner.