

SPRING GROVE, WEAVERLAND AND BLUE BALL. SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

By M. G. WEAVER

SPRING GROVE, built on a bluff on the north bank of the Conestoga, close by one of the most beautiful springs in that region, became the home of Thomas Edwards, in the summer of 1719. He had secured the title to this farm a year earlier; and, in a few years, owned and controlled over 1300 acres of land. The western boundary of the property was the old State road leading from Blue Ball to Reading, now known as Route No. 73. The land was located on both sides of the Conestoga, and extended eastward to the present Caernarvon township line. Its northern side was hemmed in by a range of hills, known as Turkey Hill; and the southern limits were irregularly drawn on both sides of what is now the Blue Ball-Churchtown highway, No. 23.

Weaverland valley, or "Weberstahl," as originally mapped out by its first Swiss and German inhabitants, who still adhered to their Mennonite and German Reformed faiths, extended from the Thomas Edwards' possessions, or from Route No. 73, westward, and was bounded on the north by the irregular line formed by the extensive farms of prominent Presbyterian neighbors—the Kiteras and the Galts; and also by the land early owned by Evans and the Morgans, who came from the Chester valley with Thomas Edwards. They were the first white people of this section southward to Blue Ball, and westward to the extensive colonial possessions of the Diffenderfers, Hulls, Witwers and Reese Morgan.

Blue Ball, the original village, was built on a portion of 238 acres of land, patented by David Davis, June 4, 1760, (Patent Book A, Volume 19, page 620); but the larger part of the present village is along the southern limits of the Jacob Weaver tract, as outlined in 1723. It was ideally located where the Paxton road of 1737 was entered by the Lancaster-Coventry road, in 1738, and which was re-located in 1798 from Blue Ball, through the present village of Goodville, to Pool Forge. It was thus on the direct route of through travel from all points, and became a well-

known center and stopping-place for the numerous stage coaches, and for the six-horse Conestoga caravans, on the two roads and pikes, as well as for those who used private conveyances. It was a center of community activities from its beginning.

The old Chester valley, with Brandywine Manor, Bangor church and Spring Grove, with their several surroundings and supporting settlements, were already well planned in 1721. By the end of that year, the fine country, reaching from the mouth of Muddy creek, north of the Conestoga, eastward through East Earl and Caernarvon, had colonial connections with the older settlements in what is now Chester county. Claims had already been made, and warrants issued in some cases, to these hardy pioneers; and, not infrequently, to capitalists still residing in England or Wales for sections of it for themselves, their children, or for other families who were soon to emigrate to this land of unusual promise.

The English and Welsh settlers had already passed through the experimental stage of forming new colonies. They were nearly all sons and daughters of pioneers of Chester and other valleys westward from Philadelphia, where they had lived for twenty or thirty years. They came to the upper Conestoga valley for more room in which to establish large community settlements, with extensive farming and iron industries.

With them came the type of men and women equal to the great adventure:—wealthy men, trained in the skill of organizing, laying out and conducting important financial programs; farmers, who knew the value of extensive and intensive agricultural pursuits, which could be operated successfully only by large forces of men and horses during seeding and harvest seasons. There were forge-men, mechanics, builders and laborers, nearly all of whom had learned their trades and industries in their mother country. Some of them had already learned to construct a forge, a furnace, and factories, largely out of the materials found in the forests and hills of the new country.

The first permanent place of worship in eastern Lancaster county was in the vicinity of Churchtown, soon after the formation of that colony. Here Bangor church was erected in 1730, and here members of the Episcopal church of Earl township went for their devotions. In addition to the God's acre adjacent to that

ancient edifice, the Welsh inhabitants opened a burying ground, still known as the "Welsh Graveyard," on a beautiful elevation on the farm of Reese Morgan, in which repose many of the most prominent people of Welsh descent who resided in Earl township, and who died before 1800. I have been traditionally informed that these devout people held divine worship in their spacious dwellings in the vicinity of this old graveyard, and that an attempt was made by them, prior to the erection of Bangor, to have the church erected here instead of at Churchtown.

Judge Thomas Edwards, who died May 8, 1764, at the age of 91, at Spring Grove, and his wives; and General Henry Hambright, of Revolutionary fame, who died March 2, 1835, at the age of 85 years; and Robert Wallace, who died at his home at Blue Ball, in 1793, at the age of 72 years, are among the sleepers in this much-neglected spot. It is hoped that there may be a successful movement to beautify this sacred spot and restore to it the reverence and respect which a grateful people should hold for an honorable ancestry.

It has been said that Thomas Edwards had three mill-sites on his extensive possessions, which is true, but none of them was used for mill purposes during his lifetime. He guarded his water power most carefully, as is shown by a deed in which he granted to his German neighbors, Henry Martin and Christian Schneder, on May 7, 1744, a strip of land, one perch wide and forty-four perches long, beginning at a point on the south-west side of the Conestoga, with a right to build a dam across the creek, and to convey water through a ditch, to be made by them, on a strip of land from the creek to their property, and to use this water for one of the most extensive irrigating plants in the history of the county.

In this deed he restricted them from using the water or the dam for any other purposes than irrigating the land then owned by them. He reserved the right to draw water from the creek above their dam, to lead it by other ditches or races over his other lands and to discharge it into the Conestoga below their plant. Nearly ten years after the death of Judge Edwards, such intended races were dug for the operation of a sheeting mill, by James Lardner. This mill was not finished before the Revolution; but

after peace and prosperity had settled over the valley, this part of the large farm was sold to Henry Weaver, who erected the first grist mill on the original possessions of Edwards, in 1787. It is now Burkholder's mill, on Route No. 73.

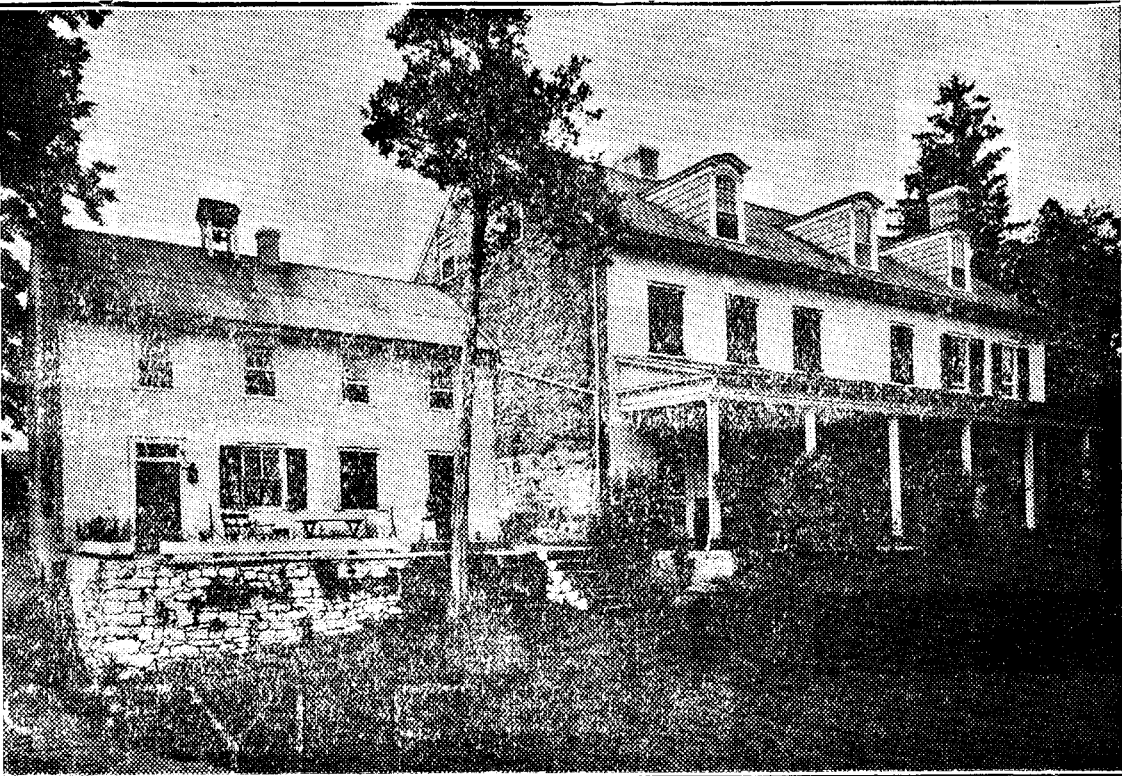
The second mill on a part of the Edwards' tract was erected in 1813, by Mathias Shirk. It was in use only a short time when it was burned, with its contents. It was rebuilt and used as the most extensive heavy wagon-making shop in eastern Lancaster county, by Gideon Weaver. The third mill on these historic grounds was built on the site of the old Spring Grove Forge, by Joseph Oberholtzer, in 1868.

Some of the original plantations forming the large possessions of Thomas Edwards, were sold or transferred to his sons, and sons-in-law, during his lifetime; many of them, however, passed into the hands of strangers while he lived. The home plantation was owned successively by John Kinsey, James Kiemer, David Morgan and John Paulding. Paulding sold it to Cyrus Jacobs, November 4, 1789.

That the place was always the center of extensive farming activities, is shown by the will and inventory of James Kiemer, who died in 1784. He mentioned eight slaves in his will, and bequeathed them to his wife and children, with the understanding that they were to have their freedom at specified times. Mr. Kiemer's remains repose in the graveyard adjoining Bangor church. His family evidently moved from the neighborhood after his death.

Cyrus Jacobs, having become proficient in the iron industry, while working with his father-in-law, James Old, at Pool Forge, made preparations for the erection of a forge at Spring Grove, as soon as he could secure title to the land. The point of swelling the waters for the dam for the grist mill site, sold to Henry Weaver a year earlier, determined the location of the forge, and the length and depth of his two tailraces. The point marked with an iron pin in a rock is still retained by the owners of the mill-sites, and has been the means of deciding several serious problems.

The dambrest was built of huge sandstones. When the last openings were closed and the waters swelled to their intended



MANSION AT SPRING GROVE FORGE. BUILT BY CYRUS JACOBS. COMPLETED IN 1800.

height, Jacobs had the largest sheet of water on the Conestoga, above Binkley's mill.

The forge was equipped with two powerful overshot water wheels, each driving a huge hammer. There was an extra high wheel outside of the building to operate the wooden blast or wind pump. A blacksmith shop, with three fires, and three anvils, was erected in front of the forge. A spacious charcoal house was built on an incline, a short distance away, with large doors along the upper side for the unloading, from the high-sided, high-wheeled wagons as they were brought from the coal pits in the forest lands, by two six-horse teams. On the sides towards the forge there were low doors, from which the helpers of the forgesmen drew the coal on a level with the fires, and brought it in iron wagons to its proper and convenient place. A large barn, or as it was called, the "carter's stable," was also maintained for the accommodation of the horses and the teams, which were steadily on the road, with a separate compartment for two driving horses and one or two riding horses. There was a room for the coachman, opening into this room. This large barn was built of stones. It is still standing, with numerous changes, and is now used as a tobacco barn and implement storage sheds.

The rear wheels of the coal wagons were six feet high; the front wheels five feet, with a narrow tread. The wagon beds for these wagons had high sides, with high top sides, or shelvings. The charcoal was burned or produced on the extensive timber lands belonging to the estate on the Welsh mountains and on Turkey Hill, or its adjoining hills and forests, which was from three to seven miles from the forge. Forces of men as woodcutters and colliers were constantly employed. Some of the men had small homes of their own near the forest lands, while others lived on the lands belonging to the estate.

The wagons used to haul the pig iron from the furnaces on Hammer creek or from the Cornwall community, or from Joanna or other furnaces of the Birdsboro region, for the purpose of delivering the products of the forge to their several markets, were heavier built, having lower wheels and wider tread, and beds with lower, heavier and stronger sides.

The carter's stable, being too small for the accommodation

of the extra horses, the farm products, and feed for the numerous livestock in the two barns on the premises, the farm barn was removed and rebuilt in the summer of 1850, with large sheds attached. The main part of this barn is still in use by John O. Huber, who cultivates about seventy acres of land adjacent.

A two-story frame farm house was built near this large stable, as were also a dozen or more stone houses, with fireplaces. Most of the houses were one and one-half stories high, some were two stories, several, with two fireplaces, were made for two families—all for the forge-men and laborers on the vast estate. Besides the large spring house for the "Big House," which is still in good repair, there was a long, wooden, shed-like building, with many small rooms, each with a door and locker, which had all the conveniences of a family spring house. This building was for the use and occupancy of the families engaged in the work of the plant.

After the comforts of the laborers and the horses were supplied, and the plant was in profitable working operation, Mr. Jacobs and his family made preparations for the erection of an elaborate dwelling-place for themselves. This was conveniently located near the other buildings. It was 40 by 60 feet, with kitchens and dining room, 20 by 35 feet, and contained 35 rooms, on three floors. A two-story stone office building was also erected on the spacious lawn, from which all orders were issued to the foremen of the forge, of the agricultural activities, of the home estate; and to those of Federal Hall, White Hall, Hampden and Ashland farms, in Caernarvon. The second floor of this building served as a chapel for religious services, for a Sunday-school room for the workmen and their families, and for the children of the community.

The building was completed about 1800,—with its half acre of terraced gardens for vegetables, choice flowers and ornamental plants in the rear, and its well-graded lawn in front, crossed by two graveled driveways, sloping and terraced to the flowing streams and to the springs. They were crossed by rustic foot-bridges, reached by delightful walks under the shade of primitive forest trees. It was only then realized how well the original settler, Thomas Edwards, had chosen the first home site; and to what

extent, along lines of financial and community development, Cyrus Jacobs had laid his plans for the place.

To this beautiful home and surroundings came many men and women of note to enjoy the hospitality of the Jacobs family. Rev. Levi Bull married Ann Jacobs. He and his young wife became the patrons of St. Mary's church at Warwick, in Chester county. Rev. Mr. Bull and Bishop Alonzo Potter often officiated at the religious services in the chapel and in open air meetings on the lawn. Another daughter, Eliza M., was married to Hon. Molton C. Rogers, a prominent attorney of Lancaster, who subsequently became one of the judges of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

At the death of Cyrus Jacobs, in 1830, his vast estate, with its surroundings and responsibilities, passed into the hands of his son, Samuel O. Jacobs, who had scarcely planned for future development, when he died, at the age of 29 years, in 1836. The entire management devolved upon his young widow, Clara Sidney Boyd Jacobs, under whose wise directions and care it enjoyed great financial, social and religious enlargement and activities.

One of the saddest experiences of Mrs. Jacobs' life on the old estate was when her son, Cyrus Jacobs, Jr., was lured by the prospects offered by the gold fields of California, in 1849. On his way westward, he was accidentally drowned by falling from his steamer into the Mississippi, while drawing water for his horse; while two of the brightest events during her stay on this estate were when her son, William B. Jacobs, returned from college to take over the management of the forges and farming interests; and when her daughter, Eliza Rogers Jacobs, was happily married, in 1857, to Rev. Henry Codman Potter, who afterwards became the celebrated Bishop Potter of New York.

It has been said that this wedding was the last great social event of the place, for with the removal of Miss Jacobs from the home the old-time social activities were sadly interrupted.

The following quotations are from the biography of Bishop Potter, pages 23-24, by George Hodges:

"To Eliza Rogers Jacobs, who was born at Spring Grove, in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, fifty miles from Philadelphia, in 1832. Henry Potter became engaged to be married. To the in-

fluence of her mother he attributed the turning of his mind in the direction of religion Mrs. Jacobs changed his entire subsequent life The social conditions at Spring Grove were of the patriarchal order. The houses of the workmen, sheltering some fifty families, were built around the forge; the great house 'of the wide-porched, stone and stucco, pine-shaded type, with pillars, broad hall, box-bordered rose gardens, and solid comfort,' overlooked a fair valley through which flowed a little river.

"Mrs. Jacobs was not only the proprietor and general manager, but, on occasion, the teacher, the doctor and the minister of the community. She instructed the children, advised their parents, dispensed medicines for their simple ailments, and in a building detached from the main house, and called the 'office,' she read the family prayers and had a Sunday school. Every Episcopal parson who passed by that way stopped to enjoy the gracious hospitality of Mrs. Jacobs."

Mrs. Potter was the last survivor of the Spring Grove Jacobs family. She died in New York, in 1901, at the age of 69.

In 1867, the hammers of the forges were stilled by the changes in the iron trade. The following year, the farm, then containing 350 acres, with the forges and water power, were sold to Peter Zimmerman and Joseph Oberholtzer. The subdivision of the large estate still continues.

The old mansion and its front lawns have recently been partly restored to their former state, and are again open to the public in the form of a summer residence by Mr. and Mrs. W. I. Cheyney, of Downingtown, who have fitted it up with numerous pieces of colonial furniture and are furnishing dinners and rooms to people who enjoy such entertainment.

It is not known what means of communication Spring Grove had with the outside world before the first post-office was established. The eastern end of the county was opened and mail was regularly carried to New Holland, as early as July 1, 1802. After that date, a post-rider from the "Bank" met all conveniently appointed mails there until the opening of a post-office at Churchtown, April 8, 1808, and another at Blue Ball or at Walacia, in 1816; after which time a private post-man made his tri-weekly, and, later, his daily trips to that place.

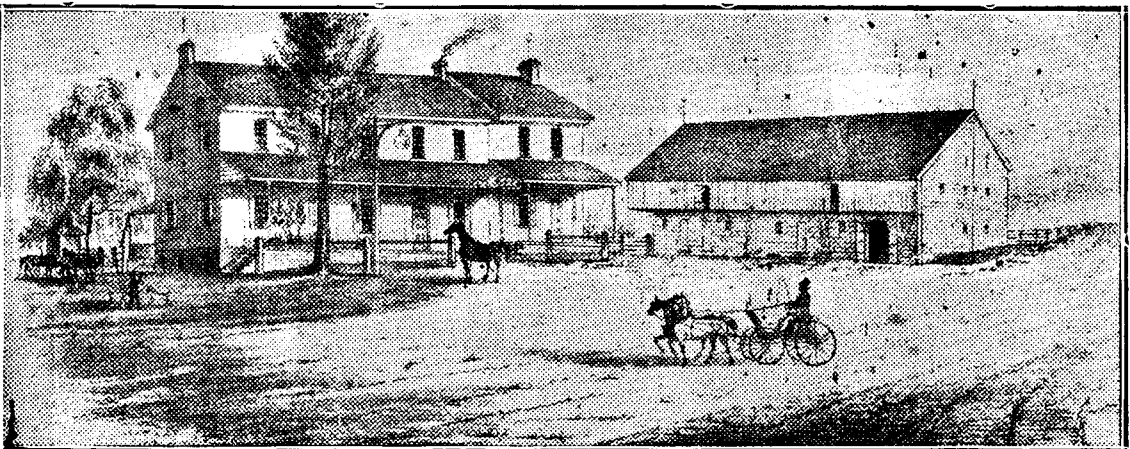
There was, however, also a post-office at Weaver's mill, on the old State road to Reading, from 1856 to 1867, with John Weaver as post-master. Although this was within a short distance of the old forge, it was on the Reading route, had no daily mail, and the forge never used it as its post-office.

There was also a post-office opened at Terre Hill, in 1850, but never having a through stage route, it was not used to any great extent by the iron works. It was, however, a great boom to the growing village.

The post-office at Spring Grove, with a semi-weekly mail route, was established, about five years after the close of the forge, a half mile from the old mansion, with John H. High, afterwards sheriff of Lancaster county, as post-master. It is still doing business under the name of "Union Grove."

There was also a Weaverland post-office, near Eli Martin's mill, for twenty-five years,—1889-1914.

About the time that Thomas Edwards came into East Earl township, as the pioneer of the Welsh colony, Hans Graff had the good fortune to discover the springs and stream, which have ever since borne his name, in West Earl township. He settled with his family on 1419 acres of land in the spring of 1718. He was followed by a number of his Swiss and German countrymen. Among these were several who, like the Welsh and English pioneers, had a desire to dwell more alone. They pushed their way of exploration, eastward, up the south side of the Conestoga, crossing a part of Reese Morgan's land, passing the Evans property, until they reached the mouth of what was first Jenkin Davis', then Shirk's, and now known as Blue Ball run. They passed a smaller stream, farther east, which had its source from three fine springs,—two of which have never been out of the ownership of some lineal descendant of the first Swiss owner, George Weber, who was one of the men who prospected for a home away from the congested colony of Hans Graff. This investigation resulted in his formal application in 1721 for a warrant of three thousand acres of land extending westward from the Edwards tract, and southward, from the Conestoga to the Welsh mountains. In the spring of 1723, Henry, George and Jacob Weber, founded the first German or Swiss homes in what is now known as Weaverland. George be-



TAVERN AT BLUE BALL, LANCASTER COUNTY, PA. FROM A LITHOGRAPH ON A MAP OF THE THREE EARLS, PUBLISHED IN 1855, BY H. F. BRIDGENS.

came the happy possessor of the tract with the three springs, which is now divided into nine farms. Five of these farms continue in the ownership of some lineal descendants. Henry and Jacob established their homes on the east bank of Blue Ball run. Henry's original grant is now divided into eight separate farms, and several smaller homes, not one of which has ever been outside the ancestral ownership. Jacob, who, with his sons, became by far the largest landowner from the start, and, apparently became the first victim among the German settlers of this valley of being "Land Poor." His original tract of five hundred acres, and many other acres added thereto by himself and by his sons, passed out of the family heritage in the second and third generations. His descendants on his native heath are comparatively few, but many communities in other states were fortunate in having these people as their first settlers, as they were successful in many walks of life.

Among others who followed these three brothers into their wilderness home, were David Martin, in 1727; Christian Schneder and Henry Martin came, in 1730. The last named Martin pitched his tent under a friendly oak north of the creek, and built his primitive home near a spring, a half mile west from the home of Thomas Edwards; and about the same distance south from the spot where the home of Thomas Kittera was shortly after established. Although these three properties have been divided and subdivided into many smaller tracts, the original lines, as drawn by the colonial surveyor, are still used. A few of them will be lost by the re-location of Route No. 73.

The Germans and Swiss knew practically nothing of the conditions peculiar to the settlement of a new country. They had been, for many years, accustomed to hardships, having eked out a scanty living from the soil in the several countries of their recent abode. They looked for large tracts of land which could readily be divided and subdivided among their friends and neighbors who were to follow. They planned to do this in such proportions as to be profitably improved and operated by the several owners, or groups of owners. They had learned the worth of irrigation in attempting to grow a profuse crop of natural grass; and their

farms were usually divided so as to give as many farmers as possible access to water for such irrigating purposes.

The irrigating plant, which was started on the land of Thomas Edwards, in 1744, to favor his German neighbors, was the only one known to have used the waters of the Conestoga for such purposes. The plant was first used to water the bottom lands on the south side of the stream, belonging to Henry Martin, over a large tract sloping northward down the stream; then it was taken in wooden troughs across the Conestoga to the farm of Christian Schneder, where it served the same purpose on the north side of the creek. By a number of dykes and other contrivances, it was spread over a large meadow, sloping southward; and, finally, if there was any water left, it was again returned to the stream at the head of the dam for the oil mill of Jacob Beyerle or Peter Shirk.

That this venture was valuable and worth while, is proven by a right given to Michael Schneder, by his father, in a deed dated May 18, 1768, to use the waters from this plant two days every week, at the extreme western end thereof, nearly a mile from the dam made on Judge Edwards' land. That the dam was valuable is also shown by a reservation for its maintenance when the head waters of the irrigating race and dam were sold in 1806.

Another irrigating plant in this township was made by using the waters of Blue Ball run, from above the Paxton road to its mouth. The first use of its upper course is noted in a deed in 1765, when Jacob Weaver took all the water from his next neighbor, John Krebill, and used it on the farms now owned by the estate of George O. Rutt and Isaac Nolt, when it was turned over to the Martin plantation, where by a long winding along an elevation it irrigated a large scope of his level farms. When he divided these farms among three of his sons in 1772, he also gave them a succession of rights to the use of the irrigating races thus constructed, specifying the number of days the water should be used by them. The first mention made in any written agreement for this section of the water rights, was in 1754. Over three-fourths of the length of the plant then maintained on the David Martin plantation is still in use, being kept up by Martin L. Zimmerman and Amos W. Sensenig, the present owners of parts of two of the

original farms; and by Joseph M. Weaver, who receives the balance of the waters, not used by his neighbors, as did the five generations of owners before him. There were many constructions of this kind, and they proved a valuable asset to the owners, but this is the only one in the county known to have been in constant use for so long a time.

The earliest grist mill and saw mill erected and operated in this section was built by Jacob Beyerle, about 1740, or a few years earlier, at the same place where Eli W. Martin's mill is still in operation. Beyerle occupied this place, with 390 acres of land, in 1738, or before. He took title to it in 1739, as per record (Book P, pages 452 to 454). He gave a mortgage on it, July 1, 1748, in which mortgage it is stated that there is a water grist mill, saw mill, and oil mill on the premises, which, together with "Mulcture Toll and Profit," are mentioned in the recitation. (Book B, page 534). Jacob Beyerle sold the tract of land, then described as two tracts, to Peter Shirk and Michael Shirk, brothers, on July 1, 1754, in which the several mills are mentioned, and, by drafts made of the descriptions of the division of those lands when the father died, it is verified that the grist and saw mills were those which came through three generations of Shirks, Rupps and Martins, from Jacob Beyerle. The oil mill, being a mile up the stream, came down the line from Beyerle, Sensenig, Martin, Horst and Gehman, to Samuel E. Sauder. This mill is sometimes mistaken as being the early one belonging to Henry Weaver, but the early Henry Weaver mill, of which Dr. F. R. Diffenderffer makes mention, was in Caernarvon township, as early as 1760.

In 1784 John and Joseph Weaver, sons of Hans Weber (Weaver), built a grist mill on Cedar run, near Goodville, bringing the water through a long head-race from a dam built on a part of their father's farm, and thereby made a head or fall of 27 feet for their mill, into which they placed an overshot head or wheel, 24 feet in diameter, being the highest wheel ever used in eastern Lancaster county.

This mill descended from the original owners, through John Weaver, (John and Joseph Weaver, 1784), (Abraham Weaver and Christian Rutt, 1812), (Jacob Frantz, Sam Eby), Henry W. Hess and Daniel Groff, David Martin and Aaron W. Martin, to the

present owner, Aaron H. Weaver, who is in no way related to the first owners. The large wheel has been kept in repair and is still used in turning the machinery of the mill.

The land whereon the Blue Ball hotel or tavern was erected, was a tract of twelve acres, which was a part of 238 acres of land which were granted by patent June 24, 1760, to David Davis, who with his wife, Jane Davis, sold the twelve acres, having "The Run" as its eastern boundary and fronting on the Paxton road, to William Douglas, of Caernarvon township, April 16, 1762. The description and outlines of which tract, with a few small changes, remained the same until 1880.

The records of the Quarter Sessions, are that Jacob Weber was granted the first license the year before, in 1761. He was followed by William Douglas. For several years there is no record of any license. In 1763, Weber bought it again, and then sold it to Robert Wallace, August 27, 1766. Wallace retained it until 1778, when he sold it to Peter Grim. In Egle's "Notes and Queries," Volume 9, page 231, it is stated that Robert Wallace had a store and tavern at Blue Ball from 1760 to 1768, at that time the tavern was rented to Samuel Bartling. He moved the store to his farm, half a mile east of the tavern, about 1768. Besides the men already mentioned, the records show that the various landlords of this ancient hostelry were, Captain John Reese, Leonard Diller, John Bear, James Wallace and George Weaver. It then passed into the possession of the Kinzers, in 1823, and to the Yundts, in 1836.

The large stone barn, with its good stabling for horses, facing the yards and lot where the wagons were parked, will be remembered by old people as having stood where the trolley waiting rooms and Mr. Everet Geist's residence are now erected.

Christopher Marshall, on his way from Philadelphia to Lancaster, entered the following in his diary on September 12, 1778:

"Reached Captain Reese's tavern at Blue Ball by dusk. Here we took up our residence for the night. On the whole, we had midling good weather, yet both we, and the horses, were tired as the roads were exceedingly hilly and stony, and I think longer and worse than the great road over the Valley hills. We drank coffee for supper and slept in our great coats, stockings, etc., for fear of

flea and bugs. We rose early on the 13th. I paid the reckoning,—thirty-eight shillings and ten pence. Set off for Lancaster.”

George Kinzer, to whom the Blue Ball tavern passed from the Weavers in 1823, and by whose family it was conducted during the period of the greatest activities of the Conestoga wagon, and stage lines over the two great pikes, was the great-grandfather of Hon. J. Roland Kinzer, of Lancaster county, who is serving in Congress.

The congressman's boyhood days were spent on a part of the old colonial plantation of Thomas Kittera, which was sold by the Hon. John W. Kittera, while he was a member of the same congressional body in 1799, to Michael Kinzer, the great-great-grandfather of Mr. Kinzer, who is still one of the owners of this part of the old homestead.

The old standstone mansion erected on another section of the original Kittera estate, where the Hon. John W. Kittera was born and reared, is now the farm house of Isaac W. Horst and family, and is only a short distance from the country home of our present congressman, and overlooks the entire upper valley of the Conestoga.

The industries at Blue Ball, before 1800, were a three-story grist mill on the premises now owned by Prof. D. W. Geist, and a saw mill in the meadow of Isaac H. Nolt, both of which were operated very successfully by the waters of Blue Ball run, which were carried to the mills by a series of dams and races built on grounds now under cultivation, or occupied by dwellings and shops. There were also a blacksmith shop, wagonmaker shop, and several shoemaker shops.

The first post-master was John Wallace, appointed November 6, 1816. He located the office at this store, a half mile east of the tavern, under the name of "Earl." The office remained at that place until January 25, 1829, when Amos S. Kinzer, landlord of the tavern, was appointed. He removed it to his place under the same name, which was changed to Blue Ball, July 11, 1833.

Blue Ball became the voting place for East Earl township, after the last division of the township, August 19, 1851.

These people, of different nationalities, lived together without trouble. In their business and municipal relations they were more

than helpful to one another. They were often the more resourceful for having lived in different surroundings before coming here. In their social and religious relations they left one another alone, yet the influences radiating from their Christian church circles and from the many firesides, had a softening effect on the hitherto exclusiveness which often had the appearance of bigotry and selfishness, but vanished when they rose above factional divisions to become a small but important unit in the framework of the American nation.

The Mennonites formed their first congregation at Weaverland, in 1730. They built their first place of worship of logs in the woods for German school purposes and for divine worship, on a corner of David Martin's land, about 1740. The first land was set apart for their use on December 4, 1766, when George Martin (the first settler's son) sold an acre of land to them or to Peter Shirk and Michael Witwer, as their minister and elder. On this ground a stone meeting house and a draw-well had been erected during the previous summer. (This is a part of the same ground on which the large brick meeting house was built in 1927, it being the largest place of worship owned by that denomination in the county).

The members of the Lutheran and Reformed churches who came with their Mennonite neighbors from Switzerland, early joined with those of their own faith in worship at New Holland; and, later, when their numbers multiplied, they erected, in 1818, a fine church, since known as "Center." It was the first church-home of those people in East Earl, and is now among the strongest congregations of these denominations in the county.

The Presbyterian church owned the first church property in East Earl township, although neither they, nor any one else, has ever made that claim for them. The original deed seems to be lost or mislaid, but in the recital in a deed of March 6, 1792, (Book L, Volume 3, page 605), it is stated that David Davis and Jane, his wife, on June 5, 1762, sold a triangular piece of ground, containing one acre and twenty-five perches of land to Robert Smith, Clark (clerk or clergyman), Charles Vance, Thomas Cochran and Thomas Kittera, as trustees for the Presbyterian congregation, lying north of the Paxton road, adjoining the tavern lot, and bor-

dering on "The Run," a distance of twenty perches. This same lot of ground was kept by them twenty-five years, then Robert Smith, John Jenkins, James Galt and James McConnell, trustees for the same people, sold it again to Jacob Weaver.

In Egle's "Notes and Queries," Volume 9, page 231, it is stated that "The Run" was the name given to the platform from which Rev. Robert Smith preached to the Scotch-Irish of that place as early as 1760, and that from this first worship springs the Cedar Grove Presbyterian church. This being the year when David Davis first acquired the land by patent, it is likely that the platform was erected before the deed was delivered to the church.

This was not, as is usually supposed, a platform or a mere preacher's stand from which the minister spoke to the people as they gathered under the trees. It is now believed that it was a substantial place of worship, erected upon their own land, purchased for that purpose by a deed of conveyance in 1762, instead of in 1775, as is usually stated.

On this same triangular lot of land, now occupied by the cattle sheds and stable of William H. Lied, and the general store of Everet S. Geist, stood an old wooden building, about 20 by 30 feet, facing the old Paxton road, near "The Run," which was used for various purposes seventy-five years ago. The building rested on heavy logs, or on heavy frame-work, which had for its foundation large logs or piles, dug or driven into the soft earth, and had the appearance of having been filled with earth and stones, and of being a building erected on stilts. It was a one-story affair, with gable ends and comb roof. Two windows and a door faced the road, and two windows were on each side. It had a wooden floor, and the sides and the ceiling were plastered.

This old building is well remembered and minutely described by T. W. Wanner, of Blue Ball, who is now past eighty-six years of age. The house stood on the grounds owned by the church fathers for twenty-five years, and was sold after they had finished their new place of worship at Cedar Grove. It is reasonable to conclude that this old building, from the manner of its construction, was either a comfortable place of worship during the twenty-five years of their ownership of the ground or that the building

and shelter over the platform was a second movement, after the platform was so substantially erected in 1760.

Of the many descendants of the early settlers who went out from their native soil and made their mark in other places, only a few of the distinct branches can be referred to here.

A son of one of the trustees who cared for the first separate church property in East Earl, was Hon. John W. Kittera, a member of the Lancaster bar, who represented Lancaster county in Congress from 1791 to 1801, and was one of the first fruits of Presbyterianism in public life from that section of the county.

Dr. William S. Wallace, of Blue Ball, and Mr. John Galt, a merchant and miller of East Earl, near Terre Hill, both early attendants at Cedar Grove church, moved to Whiteside county, Illinois, about 1840, and became prominent in the development of that new country.

Edward Davies, a member of Congress from 1835 to 1841, was a grandson of Cyrus Jacobs, of Spring Grove.

Hon. A. W. Snader, a descendant of the first settler, Christian Schneder, of East Earl, who was born and reared in East Earl township, was a member of the Legislature and a member of the Lancaster bar.

Dr. Davis B. Schneder, a missionary to Japan since 1887, now president of North Japan College, at Sendai, Japan, is also a descendant of the pioneer, Christian Schneder, and had his church home at Center Reformed church until his graduation from Franklin and Marshall College.

D. M. Sensenich and William D. Weaver, both descendants of the first Weaverland Swiss families were reared in East Earl. Graduates of Millersville State Normal school, they began their teaching careers in their native township; the former a life-long professor in the West Chester Normal school, and author of numerous text books; and the latter a member of the Lancaster bar, well known in the county, serving at one time as district attorney.

Edwin K. Martin, not reared in the valley of his ancestors, was a direct descendant from the first family of that name in the county. He was a lamented member of prominence of the Lancaster bar, a historian and author of more than ordinary note.