

Cannon Hill and the Hessian Ditch

With Personal Reminiscences of the Furnace Hills

By HERBERT H. BECK

Cannon Hill, in northern Elizabeth Township,¹ is one of the hills in the red sandstone range which extends along the border line between Lancaster and Lebanon counties. All of this country, between 1729 and 1813, was Lancaster County. In Lancaster County these hills, from the days of the ironmasters there, are called the Furnace Hills. At the county seat of Lebanon County they are called the South Mountain. Viewed from Brickerville, Cannon Hill, immediately to the north, appears as a round top in the landscape profile of the range.

The profile of the Furnace Hills as it appears to the north from the Horsehoe Pike² of yesterday, the Sproul Highway of today (Route 322), is recog-

¹ Despite the fact that early records show that this township was named "for a furnace that derived its name in honour of Queen Elizabeth," it was quite evidently named for Elizabeth Huber, daughter of John Jacob Huber and wife of Henry William Stiegel, for whom Elizabeth Furnace was named. Neither Huber nor Stiegel was of English descent; furthermore, the virgin queen had been dead for a hundred and fifty years. It was customary among the early ironmasters to name their furnaces for daughters or wives; witness Joanna, Mary Ann, Sally Ann and many others.

Elizabeth Furnace was the industrial feature of the township the year it was erected from Warwick (1757). According to Ellis and Evans, Stiegel named the township for his wife. See the Names of the Townships, by Joseph H. Dubbs, Vol. I, No. 3, Lancaster County Historical Society. F. A. Godcharles, in his Pennsylvania History, says the township was named for Queen Elizabeth.

² The Horseshoe Pike, which was laid out from Downingtown to Cornwall and beyond in 1737, according to Phares E. Will, blacksmith and horse-shoer, late of Penryn, Penn Township, got its name in this way: "Conestoga wagons, in long journeys, went in companies (2 to 10) which carried a job blacksmith. When a horse cast a shoe, he was reshod from toolbox supply without stopping to find a lost shoe. Other teamsters, finding a shoe, knowing that it would be sought by the loser at that place, hung lost shoes to the fence,

nized by State Archivist, Dr. Henry W. Shoemaker, as one of the most picturesque skylines in Pennsylvania. Knowing the State as few others do, and being familiar with many parts of Europe, he likes to call the profile of the Furnace Hills the Tuscany of America.

The Furnace Hills might well be called the Red Hills, for the prevailing color of their sandstone base and their soil is red. Much of this color extends down into the red fields of farmlands to the north and south. Geologically the Furnace Hills are the youngest part of Lancaster County by many millions of years. The southern parts of the county, against the Mason and Dixon line and the converging streams of the Susquehanna and the Octoraro, are again, by many millions of years, older than the central limestone belt that runs across the middle townships. The red sandstone of northern Lancaster County was laid down in a land-locked sea which extended nearly parallel with coast, from Nova Scotia to Georgia, during the Triassic period. The Furnace Hills are to geologists part of the Newark formation, a name given for that region in New Jersey where this part of the Triassic was first studied. The red sandstones of the Furnace Hills are variously studded with wave-washed beach pebbles, showing their seacoast ancestry.

To the west of Cannon Hill, and separated from it on the profile of the Furnace Hills by the gap of the Broadwater Run, is the Forge Hill, whose name again reflects the lore of iron. This long hill descends on its west end into the Hammer Creek Gap. Beyond this, again to the west, is the longest of these hills, called, from days of first settlement, on account of the abundant growth of white oaks on and about it even today, the White Oak Hill; in the usual language of the region, the Weisaichle Barrich. Beyond this in the profile is the Deichle Barrich (ravine mountain) in Lebanon County. This is also called Spring Hill. Finally to the west in the main profile is the high point of Governor Dick, named for a negro slave who was called that.³

The Hammer Creek was named for three tilt hammers which its water power operated to convert cast iron into malleable iron; i. e., from iron that could be used for casting stove-plates into metal fit for nails or horseshoes.

which often carried many horseshoes to the mile. Whence the name Horse-shoe Pike."

Phares E. Will, as the writer remembers him, had a wide and apparently accurate knowledge of the technical lore of northern Lancaster County. His blacksmith shop at Penryn was on the historic Newport road.

³ Henry C. Grittinger, First Manufacture of Iron at Cornwall, Lebanon County Historical Society, Vol. II. Mr. Grittinger says: "The Grubbs had slaves, used as house servants, furnace men, laborers, wood choppers and colliers. To a number were given the classical names of Caesar, Scipio, Pompey, Cato, Phoebe, Diana, etc. One of the colliers was called Governor Dick, and tradition has it that he lived in a cabin at the foot of the high hill east of Mount Gretna, and the hill was referred to as Governor Dick's Hill, by which name it was known for a long time, but it is now simplified to Governor Dick."

These hammers were in forges started between 1742⁴ and 1760 by Peter Grubb and James Old. They were the Upper Hopewell, or Jeffries,⁵ immediately between Forge and White Oak Hills; the Lower Hopewell, about half a mile down the Hammer Creek; and the Speedwell Forge, another half mile below. These were all later acquired by Robert Coleman.⁶ The dam breasts at the sites of these three forges are still, in 1940, sufficiently intact to be parts of the landscape. A few of the small sandstone houses, where the iron workers lived, are also left.

These forge hammers, each weighing about five hundred pounds, must have made the Furnace Hills resound and echo as they dropped on their heated iron. The writer's father, Abraham R. Beck, who was born in 1833, could hear as a boy the heavy thump of the Speedwell hammer at his home in Lititz, four and a half miles to the south by direct line. The carrying quality of this sound can be sensed when it is remembered that the Upper Hammer Creek Valley with its forges was separated from the valley of the Lititz Creek by an intervening ridge of hills between the towns of Lexington and Brunnerville. The cast iron pigs, which fed these forges during their first years, were hauled to them mostly from the Grubb blast furnace at the Cornwall iron mines about five miles north of the Upper Hopewell. Later this raw iron was also brought to the forges from Elizabeth Furnace, three miles to the east of the Hammer Creek, after 1785 from Mount Hope Furnace six miles to the west, and after 1791 from the Colebrook Furnace.

The heavy voice of the Speedwell forge hammer intoned northern Lancaster County for about a century. It had been started by James Old and D. Caldwell in 1760.⁷ The forge was discontinued about 1865.⁸ The tilt hammer of the Speedwell Forge is now treasured in the home of the Lancaster County Historical Society. Could it but take tongue to tell of its life and times!

The James Old mansion, at the Speedwell Forge, with its surrounding farmlands, woods and meadows, to which had been added a superbly built

⁴ H. C. Grittinger, *Leb. Co. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. I, says that Peter Grubb took up 171 acres on the Hammer Creek, April 4, 1737. He says that Grubb may have built one of the two Hopewell Forges shortly after 1737, and used it as a bloomery or Catalan forge, bringing the ore from Cornwall. H. C. G. had a technical knowledge of his subject, being manager of the Cornwall Mines when he wrote the article.

⁵ Phares E. Will.

⁶ Robert Coleman acquired the Speedwell Forge in 1785. Horace L. Haldeman, "James Old," Vol. XI, p. 263, *Lanc. Co. Hist. Soc.* See also later notes on subject.

⁷ *Pennsylvania Iron Manufacture in the Eighteenth Century.* Arthur C. Bining.

⁸ *Early Manufacture and Uses of Iron.* *Leb. Co. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. II, No. 1, by Henry C. Grittinger. Probably earlier. H. C. Grittinger's son, Paul, can find no records of sales from Speedwell Forge later than 1854.

barn, side stables and a half mile race track, later became the center of the Speedwell Stockfarms. Here for many years standard bred horses were raised by Edward C. and William C. Freeman, who had come into the Coleman Family.⁹ As a boy, in the early eighteen eighties, the writer can remember seeing Middletown, son of Rysdyk's Hambletonian, in the stallion stalls,¹⁰ Middletown, named for a town in Orange County, New York, was buried in an honored place in the center of the race-track oval,¹¹ which was on a plateau east of the great barn.

The breeding of standard bred horses was discontinued at Speedwell in 1896 when the last sale was held. The stables had been built by Robert W. Coleman in 1862. (Speedwell Records, Paul Grittinger.)

About a quarter of a mile to the southeast of the Upper Hopewell Forge and about two hundred yards south of the Horseshoe Pike the writer was directed by W. I. Matthews, whose family has lived in the immediate region for well over a century, to the graveyard used by the Grubbs and Colemans for their slaves. Though overrun by vegetation the unmarked headstones and footstones at the graves of several dozen slaves could be found.

The stone house a hundred yards east of this graveyard must have been one of the first in the region. Over the door is a panel on which is inscribed: "Balthaser and Barbara Svesen 1747." Under this house is an arched cellar with narrow barred portholes, which would indicate that it was built as a refuge and with plans for defense against marauding Indians, as tradition says it was.

Following the profile of the Furnace Hills to the east, Cannon Hill is separated from the hills beyond by the Saegeloch, through which flows the creek bearing that name, which means Saw Gap or Saw Valley. Of late years this original name of the early settlers has degenerated in its spelling into Seglock and Seclock.

To the east of the Saegeloch there are still lingering some of the significant, picturesque Pennsylvania German names, a few of which, in the Furnace Hills, have already been insured for posterity by the writer.¹² There

⁹ Robert Coleman married Anne, daughter of James Old, in 1773.

¹⁰ Rysdyk's Hambletonian, one of America's most famous horses, whose blood-line runs into ninety per cent of the trotters and pacers of today, is buried under a fifteen foot monument of pink granite at Chester, Orange Co., New York. The epitaph is "Rysdyk's Hambletonian Progenitor of the American Light Harness Horse." Hambletonian was foaled in 1849 and died in 1876.

¹¹ Henry White, a former employee at the Speedwell Farms. A ravine immediately south of the race-track plateau, where the common carcasses were thrown, is known as the Luderloch (Carrion Valley).

¹² Historical Sketch of Rural Field Sports in Lancaster County by Herbert H. Beck, Vol. XXVII, No. 9.

is the Saegeloch Kop (knob) rising in the profile near the creek of that name. Back of this knob, running west against the creek, is the Hittedeich (Hütte Deich or hut ravine). This name comes down from the days of the charcoal burners who had a few huts in the ravine. George Stolcr, now 76, who has lived his life against the northern base of Cannon Hill and who furnished many of the local names for this record, is the son of a charcoal burner. George's father was one of the last of the many who had worked at this important side line of the iron industry in the Furnace Hills from about 1740 to about 1895. The Cornwall Furnace used charcoal until it went out of blast in 1883. (Cornwall Records, Edward M. Patton). After the decline of the local furnaces some charcoal was still made for blacksmiths and tin-smiths.

Recently published accounts of Pennsylvania Iron Manufacture in the Eighteenth Century¹³ point out the enormous amount of charcoal which was used in a stack of the period like Elizabeth Furnace. Henry Drinker, writing in 1786, estimated an average furnace of his time would consume eight hundred bushels of charcoal every twenty-four hours. When these furnaces were in blast they ran continuously, drawing the pig every six hours or four times a long day. When it is remembered that eight hundred bushels of charcoal require twenty cords of wood, and that an acre of land is necessary to produce twenty-five cords of wood of twenty-five year growth, it will be understood what an enormous range of the wooded Furnace Hills was kept busy to keep its furnaces going. Even though Elizabeth Furnace may have been out of blast for about four months a year, a stack of its size would use up about two hundred and fifty acres of woodland a year.

Even though in Stiegel's day the chestnut, then prevalent, now gone, rapidly grew up from the stumps in coppice growth, one thousand acres of woodland would mean little to a busy furnace like the Elizabeth. And it must also be recalled that there was Peter Grubb's Cornwall Furnace, started in 1742, just north of the Furnace Hills; the Mount Hope Furnace (1785), Peter Grubb, Junior and Company, in Rapho Township, seven miles west of Elizabeth; and the Colebrook Furnace (1791), Robert Coleman's, two miles west of Mt. Gretna. With this heavy timber demand for the local furnaces it is evident that most of the second growth of the primeval forest of the Furnace Hills must have been cut down prior to 1800. What meaning the name Hitte Deich carries with it! And when it is remembered that all the cord wood had to be hauled to the charcoal pits; the charcoal, the iron ore and the limestone to the furnaces; and the cast iron from furnace to forge, thence to the market; what work there must have been for horse, teamster and blacksmith!

Collectively, for about a century, these four furnaces would cast a lurid glow against the night sky as their mouths were opened to receive the charges. This was visible to the greater part of Lancaster County. Germane to this,

¹³ Arthur C. Bining.

in sight range and history, the writer could see the former famous landmark of southern Lancaster County, the Nickel Mine stack on Mine Ridge in Bart Township, twenty-three miles in direct line from where he stood on Cannon Hill. Truly the Furnace Hills were the Red Hills of Lancaster County under the North Star.

Between the Saegeloch Kop and the Swartz-aichle Barrich (Black Oak Hill) to the east is the Bearathal, Bear Valley, obviously named for the black bears that formerly frequented it. This valley, still wooded with fourth or fifth growth, runs into the farmlands on the south. The Black Oak Hill runs against the Middle Creek Gap to the east.

In its rich heritage of picturesque, euphonious Indian names a beautiful one was lost when this stream was given the prosaic name of Middle Creek. According to early records the original Indian name was Legawi, meaning between two others.¹⁴ It flows between the Hammer Creek and the Cocalico. Beauty of expression gone, never to return.

The Geierthal (Vulture Valley, named for the Turkey Buzzard), already mentioned in the reference above noted, runs against the Swartz-aichle Barrich into the Legawi ravine.

Supplementing the same reference there should be recorded the Welsh Hinkel Deich (Wild Turkey Ravine) north of Forge Hill; and the Kahlekop immediately east of the Legawi Gap. This name means bare or bald head. The patch of cleared or barren land in the woodland on this hill is still in sight as the profile of the Furnace Hills is viewed from Brickerville.

A ravine running into the winter side of Cannon Hill from the Fox road is known, even today, as Nigger Hollow. This is doubtless reminiscent of slaves who lived there. There is a slave graveyard in Nigger Hollow.¹⁵ Nor is the term winter side used inadvisedly. Along the Furnace Hills, which range east and west, there are generally recognized among woodchoppers, foxhunters and nearby farmers a summer side and a winter side. The southern sides, against which the winter sun shines, are always called the summer sides. The northern slopes of the hills, where the snow lingers, are the winter sides.

CANNON HILL

Cannon Hill was named for the salute gun which Henry William Stiegel kept near its top. He placed a cannon there to welcome him as, in his coach-and-four, with outriders and hounds, he approached his mansion at its south-

¹⁴ Mumbert's History of Lancaster County.

¹⁵ Jacob Douple.

western base.¹⁶ It is called, even today by a few of the older foxhunters and woodchoppers of the region, by its common name of a century ago, which was the Stick Barrich. Stück, in high German, is a cannon or piece of artillery; Berg (whence Barrich) is a mountain or hill. This act of pompous greeting to Stiegel, the cannon salute, seems also, from authentic records, to have been carried on from his tower at Schaefferstown, and from the roof of his mansion at Manheim.¹⁷ It was a part of that baronial pomp, akin to a fanfare salute from a band on his housetop at Manheim, which Stiegel craved and created for self-aggrandisement and personal thrill during the rising times of his meteoric career. With little doubt one of his greatest thrills must have been this heavy boom in his honor from a mountain top. How, with its heavy gunshot echoing through the Furnace Hills into what are today two counties, could that promontory be known by any other name than Stick Barrich or Cannon Hill? Whether or not Stiegel was of noble birth, how could such display of baronial pomp and glory be carried into the eyes and ears of his small world without, quite automatically, winning him the generally accepted title of Baron?

The cannon which perpetuated its fame by naming a hill was probably cast at Elizabeth Furnace or possibly at nearby Cornwall. It stood on a tower which was built in 1768.¹⁸ Tradition says that in proper season a watcher was stationed on the tower to give notice of the Baron's arrival with cannon fire.¹⁹ Hunter says that this tower was similar to the one on Tower Hill in Schaefferstown, which was seventy-five feet high, with a fifty by fifty base, and on top of which a cannon was also placed. Dr. J. H. Sieling of Manheim, from whom Hunter got much of his data²⁰ mentions a tower of that size on the Thurm Berg at Schaefferstown, but he does not record the dimensions of the one on Cannon Hill.

Jacob Douple (born 1880) remembers having seen the stone foundation of the tower on Cannon Hill. He was taken to it by his father (born 1836) who had been an employee at Elizabeth Furnace. He remembers the foundation, made of hewn sandstone, to have been about twenty by twenty feet square. The foundation was doubtless removed by builders who made use of the hewn stones, for it is gone today.

The tower stood on a level tract edging the southwest of the top of Cannon Hill. Jacob Douple was there with the writer. The position of the gun tower is traditionally marked along the highway below (Brickerville to Schaefferstown, now Route 501) by an ancient twin beech tree with its two

¹⁶ Dr. J. H. Sieling, Baron Henry W. Stiegel, Vol. I, p. 44.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Stiegel Glass, by Frederick William Hunter.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Dr. J. H. Sieling, Baron Henry W. Stiegel, Vol. I, p. 44.

trunks joined like Siamese twins about ten feet above the ground. This tree stands a few feet to the west of the highway and is about a hundred yards south of the Fox road, which turns to the east of the main road and goes around the winter side of Cannon Hill. From the topographic map of the region, made by the United States Geological Survey, a line from the beech tree to the highest place from its position would strike the southern end of a narrow plateau with its long axis running north and south.

This piece of tableland, about eighty yards square, where the gun tower stood, is about eight hundred feet above sea level. Elevated on this by a tower with a twenty foot square base, a watcher could command for many miles the several roads approaching. From this position the cannon, with its load of black gunpowder, could make its voice carry over a great range of country in all directions. Doubtless it could be heard at Stiegel's Tower Hill in Schaefferstown and at his Manheim Mansion seven miles away. Hundreds of farmers plowing their fields would know that the great Baron had returned to Elizabeth Furnace when the cannon roared from the Stick Barrich.

Did Stiegel inherit these baronial rights or did he create them? Frederick William Hunter, whose close and careful research tends to make his work, "Stiegel Glass," authoritative, says that exhaustive search in Germany failed to uncover any facts that might in any way place Stiegel among the nobility. From records found on the fly-leaf of an old devotional book, Stiegel seems definitely to have been born at Cologne in 1729. (See works of Hunter and G. L. Heiges.) Hunter also has found no evidence that Stiegel landed in America in 1750 with much money. Hunter is fairly well convinced that Stiegel was buried at Charming Forge, but the evidence is circumstantial.

Even at that, whether or not Stiegel actually inherited these baronial rights or merely created them is still, today, under debate.²¹ However, the

²¹ Light that might suggest that Stiegel really inherited baronial rights, as well as baronial pomp, come from Mrs. William A. Sadtler of Selinsgrove, Pa. To this much debated question she adds: "Searching old records in Germany the name Stiegel is not found on the nobility list of Henry William's region but Stengel is. Records show that a young Stengel left Manheim for America shortly before the date of Stiegel's landing here and that a younger line of Stengels belong in Baden, their ancestral home "Stengelhof," being near Manheim. (Research of J. H. Dubbs and J. H. Sieling.) The fact that in the various trips Stiegel made abroad he made no effort to visit his earlier home lead one to believe he had quarreled with his family, which probably accounted for his changing his name. Of good family undoubtedly he was, educated and gifted. Then, too, the style in which he lived in America indicated that he was 'to the manor born'."

Mrs. Bessie Van Tassell Nagel, (Brookline, Mass.) a Stiegel descendant, adds to this, "Stiegel came here with 20,000 pounds. Had he been penniless it would be difficult to understand how he could marry the daughter of the wealthy iron-master Huber just two years (1752) after he landed in America."

Dr. J. H. Dubbs is reported to have investigated Stiegel's claim to honor but was unable to find a record of it at Manheim, in Germany. He found,

very mystery of his ancestry, like the uncertainty of his place of burial, only intensifies the glamor of the picturesque and colorful figure of Stiegel. His fame is well established by his artistic glassware, by the firm traditions of the baronial pomp of his career, and by the churchyard, which he gave to the Manheim Lutherans for one red rose. Let it be for Cannon Hill to perpetuate the fame of the baronial pomp of Henry William Stiegel's meteoric career.

ELIZABETH FURNACE

Elizabeth Furnace, at the southwest base of Cannon Hill, stood to the immediate south of the charcoal house. The latter was recently restored by its late owner, Miss Fannie Coleman. John Jacob Huber erected this blast furnace about 1750.²² Huber's original house, standing north of the charcoal house and also thoroughly restored, was built, according to Miss Coleman, about 1746. It is directly east of the mansion on the east side of the road which divides the various buildings on the property today.

Coming to America in 1750, Stiegel married Huber's daughter, Elizabeth, in 1752.²³ Acquiring the furnace in 1756, Stiegel and his business partners erected a new one on the site of the original Huber stack in 1757.²⁴

About the same time that Stiegel rebuilt the furnace he built the eastern or small part of the Elizabeth mansion as it stands today, about twenty-five tenant houses and a store. Robert Coleman, who took over the property in 1776, built the larger part of the mansion to the west, which gave the whole

however, that about the time of Stiegel's departure a young Baron, who answered Stiegel's description, had left Manheim for America.

J. H. Sieling (Vol. I) also mentions this and checked up on it with two clergymen at Manheim, Germany.

Dr. Henry W. Shoemaker, State Archivist, gets his data on the noble birth of Stiegel from the diary and records of Michael Quigley, who worked for Stiegel at his Manheim glassworks. Quigley, who was an ancestor of Dr. Shoemaker, claimed that Henry W. Stiegel was a real baron of German antecedents, descendant of industrialists who went from Courland to Russia in the reign of Catharine the Great. There were domestic clouds of some kind, Quigley says, and the boy was sent to Germany to be apprenticed to a glassmaker after he had shown indifference to a military career in Czarist armies. The "domestic clouds" would seem to fit with Mrs. Sadtler's ideas.

²² Pennsylvania Iron Manufacture in the Eighteenth Century. Arthur C. Bining.

²³ Stiegel Glass, by Frederick William Hunter.

²⁴ The writer's father, told him that in the 1840's, visiting with his father, John Beck, at the Elizabeth mansion, his boyish mind was entranced as the ceiling above his bed, in a southeast room, would be brightly illuminated by this furnace as it opened its mouth to be charged. Coleman records show that Elizabeth Furnace was in almost continuous operation until 1856, when it was abandoned and dismantled. It had been in blast for about 106 years.

building the architectural dignity which is so impressive today.²⁵ This, with the other structural units of the property, the picturesque stables with their flattened arched doors, the houses of the workmen, of which a few are still left, all built of local sandstone, several thousand acres of wooded mountain land including Cannon Hill and several farms have been in the Coleman family ever since Robert Coleman took possession in 1776.

Robert Coleman was one of the ironmasters of his period whose business led to great and lasting wealth. When he took over Elizabeth Furnace in 1776 it was on a seven-year lease. Within that period "he became owner in fee simple of the whole or the greater part of the estate."²⁶ He soon acquired a large interest in the Cornwall mines, the Cornwall Furnace, the Mount Hope Furnace and the Forges on the Hammer Creek.²⁷ In 1791 he built the Colebrook Furnace.²⁸ When he died on March 8, 1825, he owned most of these ironworks besides Elizabeth Furnace.²⁹ He was one of the leading and most successful ironmasters of the latter part of the eighteenth century and beginning of the next. His wealth has come down to his descendants of today.

What a lasting, historical contrast there is between the business lives of Henry William Stiegel and Robert Coleman! One living in splendor and pomp, always on credit,³⁰ only to fall like a rocket. The other to rise from a humble clerk at Quittapahilla Forge³¹ to become a business baron, in true and lasting sense, of vast estates.

The baronial, social superiority which Stiegel reflected upon the ordinary folk of his region, though based on less display of pomp than his, belonged to the other ironmasters of his day as well. Nor did this apparent individual brilliance of those who lived in great mansions, surrounded by vast estates of woodland with furnaces, forges and farms, snuff out with Stiegel's fall. As a boy in the 1880's, driven with his fellow boys of the Beck Family School by a Lititz liveryman to the Furnace Hills, the writer went there for chestnuts, which were usually plentiful, and incidentally to be thrilled by the colorful beauty of these hills as they rose against a clear blue October sky. On such trips to see, drawn by a pair of beautiful horses, a Colman or a Grubb, was to his humble self, to see someone akin to royalty. To him and to his equally humble neighbors in northern Lancaster County they were the Lords

²⁵ Miss Fannie Coleman. G. Dawson Coleman says it was built between 1776 and 1790, probably nearer the latter date.

²⁶ Robert Coleman, History of Elizabeth Estate (MSS).

²⁷ Lancaster County Deed Book. A. C. Bining.

²⁸ Early Manufacture and Uses of Iron. H. C. G.

²⁹ Lancaster County Wills. Robert Coleman will, dated March 8, 1822, proved September 3, 1825. A. C. Bining.

³⁰ Stiegel Glass.

³¹ At Lebanon on the creek of that name. Erected by Gerrard Etter about 1750. A. C. Bining.

of the Barony of the glorious Furnace Hills. The late Miss Fannie Coleman was a real ruler of her little empire. And when of recent years the writer's acquaintance with Miss Daisy Grubb grew into close friendship, he found that her baronial heritage was sustained not only by her mansion at Mount Hope and five thousand acres of Furnace Hill woodland about it, but that in a refined sense she was to the manor born, for she always showed that rarest of all human combinations, gentility of manner and gentility of heart. Was it not with similar gentility that Mrs. Margaret Coleman Freeman Buckingham recently presented to the State the historic Cornwall Furnace with a \$35,000 endowment? Nor was Mrs. Buckingham less beneficent when she placed, for public use and enjoyment, a picturesque sandstone water-trough along the highway at the base of White Oak Hill.

STIEGEL'S GLASS HOUSE

Stiegel's first glass house (works), which was erected about 1763, was at Elizabeth Furnace, at the base of Cannon Hill. Hunter, in 1913, found bottle and window glass in an old slag pile several hundred yards southeast of the mansion and east of Furnace Run; and also found plentiful scatterings of both kinds of glass in a field opposite the mansion. That both of these kinds of glass, bottle and window, then most in demand, were made at Elizabeth Furnace as late as October 7, 1765, is shown in its old account books. (Pennsylvania Historical Society.) In this record there is also an entry of September 18, 1763, showing that on that day glass-blowing was begun there with Christian Nasel, Martin Greiner and Benjamin Misky as blowers. This glass house at Elizabeth Furnace was a Stiegel enterprise preliminary to the erection of his great glass house at Manheim, which made him famous today. The fires were started at the Manheim glass house October 29, 1765.³²

THE HESSIAN DITCH

For a period of about twenty-seven years, in which Elizabeth Furnace had been run by Huber, Stiegel and Coleman, the water which furnished power to drive the bellows for the cold-air blast had evidently at times, as during dry seasons, been insufficient. The stream which had been dammed above the furnace to drive the blast engine is known as the Breite Wasser (Broadwater) or Furnace run. It flows between Cannon Hill and Forge Hill to join the Saegeloch Creek a mile and a half below the furnace. The Broadwater is a comparatively small stream, much lighter in its flow than the Hammer, Saegeloch and Middle creeks. The ironmaster's problems of low water in Furnace Run were solved by bringing an extra supply of water around the summer side of Cannon Hill from the Saegeloch Creek, which is nearly twice the size of the Broadwater. This was done through a sluice which is always

³² Stiegel Glass.

called by the old local residents the Hessian Ditch. It was dug by an extra force of employees, some of which Robert Coleman got from Edward Hand, later Washington's adjutant general. The Coleman's still have the papers of agreement between Edward Hand and Robert Coleman by which these Hessian prisoners of war came into the latter's service. (Probably from the barracks at Lancaster.) According to Miss Fannie Coleman, these Hessians were lodged in the long story and a half building adjoining the office to the north of the Stiegel built part of the mansion.

The Hessian ditch is today nearly as it was when it was picked and shovelled out by the misguided mercenaries from Hesse-Darmstadt. It runs around the southern base of Cannon Hill, a distance, according to the geological survey, of about a mile and a third. It is about six feet wide by as many deep. The sluice or canal was fed by water impounded in the Saegeloch Creek, well to the north in the gap of that name, along the eastern base of Cannon Hill. Small remnants of the dam-breast can still be seen on both sides of that creek immediately above the head of the Hessian Ditch. The line of the ditch can be seen for several hundred yards from the road through the gap which follows the creek on its east side.

After viewing this line of the Hessian Ditch many times, noting that from the varying levels of the Saegeloch road it sometimes appears, by illusion, to be going uphill, and after walking its entire length around the southern base of Cannon Hill to the site of the dam-breast on Furnace Run, the writer is impressed with the fact that the Hessian Ditch required in its making notably efficient surveying and engineering. The hand work on it in manpower hours must have been enormous.

It is unfortunate that the nearly intact relic of this extraordinary engineering feat of revolutionary days should be so nearly obscured by forest growth that only a small part of it, and that only when pointed out from the Saegeloch road, is visible to travelers. Nor is that road today, because of its bad condition, much travelled. But to one who walks a bank of the old sluice around Cannon Hill and throws his imagination into the past, with its sweating, German-speaking youths, somewhat happily throwing their shoulders into the work rather than be on a bloody battlefield, ever thinking of their homes from which they were herded, never to see them again, the Hessian Ditch stands out as one of the historical features of Lancaster County.

During the Revolution, when the furnaces of southeastern Pennsylvania were busy casting cannon, shot and ironwares for the Continental armies, the workmen in these ironworks were not permitted to leave their employment, or to march with the militia without the permission of the Council of Safety.³³ So great was the scarcity of labor at the furnaces of this region that the iron-

³³ Pennsylvania Statutes at Large.

masters of Chester, Lancaster and Berks counties were permitted to use prisoners of war at their works.³⁴ Coleman took advantage of this for his Elizabeth Furnace as also did the Grubbs at the Cornwall Furnace.³⁵ Among other iron works to employ Hessians were the Durham in Bucks, the Mary Ann in York and Charming Forge in Berks counties.³⁶ That other landowners besides the ironmasters made use of Hessian labor is proved by early records of central Lancaster County. Peter Swarr, who took up about one thousand acres in East Hempfield Township along the Harrisburg Pike, employed Hessians. They dug a mill-race along what was then Swarr's Run, a tributary of the Little Conestoga, to Swarr's Mill. (Ellis and Evans.)

The first lot of prisoners of war came to Elizabeth Furnace in August, 1777. These must have been from the companies of Hessians, about a thousand men, that were captured in the Christmas night surprise party at Trenton in 1776. The Pig Iron Book of the Elizabeth Furnace manuscripts records that on August 14, 1777, twenty-two Hessian prisoners were employed for which the Continental Congress received thirty-two to forty-five shillings a month for each of them, the amount being paid in iron. The Colemans still have a bill from Robert Coleman to Robert Morris, Treasurer, of the United States, rendered in 1779, for cannons and various ammunition furnished to the Continental Army; and there is a credit for thirty prisoners, who were given over to work at Elizabeth Furnace. (G. Dawson Coleman.)

The total number of Hessians employed at Elizabeth Furnace was seventy. An entry in the manuscripts there of November, 1782 is: By cash, being the value of 42 German prisoners of war, at £30 each, £1260. Again in June 1783: By cash, being the value of 28 German prisoners of war at £30 each, £840. In a foot-note to these credits Robert Coleman certifies "on honour, that the above 70 prisoners were all ever secured by him, one of whom, being returned is to be deducted when he produces the proper voucher."³⁷

After the war a number of these Hessians settled in Lancaster County and their scattered descendants are still here. Like redemptioners, many of whom were also employed at the furnaces, they had to work their way to freedom by service.

Typical of these was Justus Krow who settled on a farm located between Ephrata and Akron. He Anglicized his name to Gray. The name is carried to the present time by the fifth generation in Justus H., young son of Justus S. Gray of Broad Street, Lancaster. The original indenture papers of Krow, now in the Lancaster County Historical Society,³⁸ are in printed form with spaces to be filled in. This shows that this form of indenture was in regular

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Records at the Cornwall Furnace.

³⁶ Pennsylvania Iron Manufacture in the Eighteenth Century.

³⁷ Swank's History of Iron Making in Pennsylvania.

³⁸ Presented by Henry Reemsnyder, a descendant of Justus Krow.

and common use. The words written into the blank spaces are shown in italics in the indenture which is:

This Indenture, made the *Seventh* day of *September* in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, between *Em. Carpenter* of the state of *Pennsylvania* of the first part and *Justus Krow*, late of the Regiment of *Kniphausen*, a native of *Hesse*, late Prisoner of War to the United States of AMERICA, of the Second Part, for and in consideration of the sum of Eighty Dollars, paid for his Liberation by the said Party of the first part, to the Use of Said States and for the further Consideration of the Condition hereafter mentioned, doth covenant, promise and agree to and with him the Said Party of the first part, well and faithfully to serve him for and during the Term of *Three Years* next ensuing the Date of these Presents, on the expressed condition that the Party of the Second Part, shall enjoy all and singular the Rights, Privileges, Benefits and Advantages, which by the Laws of the Said State of *Pennsylvania* are provided for such servants, under the Title of Freedom Dues, or any other Title whatever, and also the further Benefit following at the expiration of said term, to wit:

In witness whereof, the Parties to these Presents, have hereunto interchangeably set their Hands and Seals, the Day and Year first above written. (Signed)

Justus Krow

(Wax Seal)

Sealed and Delivered
in the Presence of
Moses Hazen
W. White

One relic, germane to our subject, of the life and times of these mercenaries in northern Lancaster County, where many of them settled, comes from the Muddy Creek, which incidently was originally Modebach, named for a stream in the Palatinate.³⁹ Jacob Fry, now well over eighty, who lives along the Muddy Creek where Ephrata, East Cocalico, Brecknock and Earl Townships join, relates this from the memoirs of his family: There was an old Hessian officer living near Fry's Mill, who on Saturday nights rode to the nearby Rote Kuh (Red Cow) Tavern, where he was likely to imbibe too freely. On one occasion, when it was noted that he was so full that he would have to be lifted into the saddle, some of the young blades of the boisterous tavern company plotted a prank on the Hessian. His road home, which of course his faithful horse knew by heart, was past Fry's Mill. Here were some bushes from which it would be a great lark to dash out with a ghost act that would topple the Dutchman from his saddle. The act was sprung with curious reactions; for when his mount reared at the charge of the apparitions, the gallant

³⁹ Early records of Herbert H. Beck's family, several ancestors of which were Moravian pastors in Lancaster County in the eighteenth century.

officer not only held his seat, but before he galloped away, with a burst of ferdomsei profanity that made the dark night blue, he told those good-for-nothings, in language which decency cannot repeat, just what would happen to them if they heard the cannon shoot once on the battlefield.

THE HORSESHOE TRAIL

Today one of the features of the historic Furnace Hills is the Horseshoe Trail which follows their profile. This trail for riders and hikers was planned, laid out and marked by Henry N. Woolman of Ardmore, in 1934. For many of its miles through wooded hills it follows old roads of woodchoppers and charcoal burners. It is marked along its path of one hundred and eighteen miles from Dr. Woolman's Cressbrook Farm on the Valley Forge Camp Ground to the Manada Gap on the Kittatinny range by yellow horseshoes and spots and directing arrows, painted yellow on trees and rocks. It passes through the Hopewell National Park in Chester County, past the historic Plow Tavern in Berks and into Lancaster County through Adamstown. It comes into the Furnace Hills east of the Kahlekop and crosses the Middle Creek immediately south of what was originally called the Beaver Swamp, now the Big Swamp. Crossing Black Oak Hill, it comes to the Saegeloch Creek about a hundred yards above the dam-breast of the Hessian Ditch. It mounts to the top of Cannon Hill where it passes one of the geological features of Lancaster County. This is the balanced rock. It is shaped like a turtle head on a neck about eight feet high. This is a phenomenal freak of erosion which cut out the Triassic red sandstone around a stem which carries a massive part of the upper stratum. On Cannon Hill, as along most of its route through the Furnace Hills, the Horseshoe Trail passes the pits or hearths of the early charcoal burners. These pits, sometimes even retaining their circular rims, are still plainly to be seen. A horse, pawing in them, upturns fragments of charcoal.

Now the trail descends to the Fox road, where it crosses highway 501 to climb Forge Hill. Well along on Forge Hill it passes Eagle Rock, the Awdler Kop of the foxhunters, from which there is a glorious view of Lancaster County to the south. It fords the Hammer Creek at what is now the Lebanon Pumping Station to ascend to the long ridge of White Oak Hill, thence through Cornwall Forests to skirt the historic and still active Cornwall iron mines. These mines were opened by Peter Grubb soon after 1730. While the Cornwall Furnace of today was not built until 1742, Mr. Grittinger found ruins of an older furnace, probably a Catalan forge, which evidence shows was worked there as early as 1735 or a few years later. The Cornwall mines have furnished munition material for all the wars America has ever known.

Now the trail goes through the forest lands of the late Miss Daisy Grubb. It comes to the top of Governor Dick nearby Mt. Gretna, passing near the observation tower erected by Clarence Schock. The trail now continues on to cross M. S. Hershey's eight thousand acres of open farmland, thence finally

across the Harrisburg-New York highway to the Manada Gap, which is the first gap in the Kittatinnies or Blue Mountains east of the Susquehanna by about twelve miles. At the Manada Gap the Horseshoe Trail joins the Appalachian Trail which runs from Maine to Georgia.

In June, 1938, the writer and Mahlon N. Haines, of York, rode the Horseshoe Trail. With side trails to the hostels, where we spent the nights, it was a ride of about one hundred thirty-five miles. The best of these hostels was at the historic home of the Gable Sisters, in Heidelberg Township, north of Cannon Hill. The horses were trucked to Valley Forge where we started, and again loaded into the truck at Manada Gap, where we finished five days later. Embellished along its route by impressive scenic beauty, colored at many points by historical lore, this ride of the Horseshoe Trail was one of the happy and memorable events of the writer's life.

During the summer of 1939 Mr. Haines and the writer made history in the Shenandoah National Park, Virginia. According to the forest rangers there we were the first horsemen to ride the entire length of the Appalachian Trail, from Front Royal to Swift Run Gap, as it passes through the National Park, a distance of about seventy miles. The features of this ride were the native beauty of the surroundings and its adventure, for we often rode on three-foot ledges, 3500 feet above the sea, unfenced and with precipitous drops of several hundred feet. There was nothing like this in the easy riding paths of the Horseshoe Trail.

THE CHANGING FAUNA OF THE FURNACE HILLS

The changing fauna of the Furnace Hills should be noted in historical records.

The black bear must have been fairly common there when John Jacob Huber erected Elizabeth Furnace in 1750. Even as late as 1766 a black bear passed through the village of Lititz, then in fairly well opened country, one October night.⁴⁰ Deer, too, must have been in this forest range in good numbers. The Christian Eby house, on the Hammer Creek six miles below its gap in the Furnace Hills, has under its eaves the antlers of a deer that was shot on the Eby farm when the house was being built in 1754. This fine animal is recorded in the lore of the Furnace Hills, as is the bear with a valley named for it, by the Hirsch Thal (Deer Valley), which runs into the hills northwest of the upper waters of the Hammer Creek. While the bob-cat, not lately recorded there, was undoubtedly common when the gun tower was built on Cannon Hill (1768), the timber wolf, always a menace to the sheep on the farms of the first settlers in the region,⁴¹ was probably rare at that time.

⁴⁰ Diary of Pastor Bernhard Grube, Lititz Moravian Archives.

⁴¹ Rupp's and F. R. Diffenderffer's Records.

The elk and the bison, neither ever plentiful here, probably had gone; though there is something significant in the name Buffalo Springs at the headwaters of the Hammer Creek. It is probable that early settlers saw the bison there as local traditions say they did. There is a Buffalo Township in Perry County. Early records show that the woodland bison had easterly migrations from the Ohio watershed as far as the Delaware River.⁴²

The beaver was probably gone in 1768, even though the name Beaver Swamp remains at the headwaters of the Legawi Creek, for this animal, because of the enormous demand for its pelts, was among the first of the mammals to be exterminated from Lancaster County. Due to restocking in Pennsylvania, today there is again a beaver dam in Eden Township. After about two centuries, during which there were none here, the beaver has been brought back to its original range.

There is no local record of the cougar or panther, though the Furnace Hills are within its original range.⁴³ Early settlers must have seen it there. The raccoon and o'possum, of course, were there, though in far greater numbers than they are today.

For a number of years the bear, the deer, the wild turkey, the ruffed grouse and great numbers of gray, black and fox squirrels provided game and food to be had for the asking with the flintlock rifles and shotguns. The wild turkey has a ravine, the Welsh Hinkel Deich, named for it, north of the Hammer Creek Valley. Even the writer can remember when ruffed grouse were plentiful in the Kettle and the Hitte Deich. The heath hen, which must have been in the open Pine Barrens of southern Lancaster County, was probably never in the forested Furnace Hills.⁴⁴ The heath hen is extinct today. Squirrels were so abundant in this part of Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century that they were considered a menace to crops. In 1749, and probably some years later, there was actually a bounty on them.⁴⁵ Christopher Marshall, in his diary of September, 1777, records the enormous numbers of squirrels he saw near New Holland on his way to Lancaster from Philadelphia. The black squirrel was a dark phase of the gray. The stump ear gray squirrels were a variety of the fox squirrel.⁴⁶

⁴² Mammals of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. S. N. Rhoads.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Historical Sketch of Rural Field Sports in Lancaster County.

⁴⁵ Historical Sketch of the Three Earls, 1876. F. R. Diffenderffer.

⁴⁶ The writer remembers as a boy hearing old squirrel hunters speak of shooting stump ears. There are several typical specimens in the Franklin and Marshall Museum. These were originally in the collection of the Linnaean Society of Lancaster County, which was organized in 1862. Earl H. Poole, Director of the Reading Museum, has recently identified this squirrel, which had been called stump ear gray squirrel, as a phase of the fox squirrel.

The bob-white and the cottontail rabbit were doubtless more plentiful about the open farmlands than in the hills. Occasionally, as in spring migrations and more often during the fall, wild pigeons were enormously abundant and doubtless were of great use to the Grubbs and the Colemans as food for their slaves, redemptioners and Hessian employees. Even as late as March, 1846, the passenger pigeons flew in such numbers that the flying flock covered the sky from zenith to horizon for four hours.⁴⁷

The best woodcock swamps in Lancaster and Lebanon counties are against the Furnace Hills. The Big or Beaver Swamp, around the headwaters of the Legawi Creek, covered originally several square miles of wooded swampland. The Long Meadow, somewhat smaller, but equally good as woodcock ground, is about a half mile north of Hull's (formerly Koch's) tavern and eight miles west of the Big Swamp along the Furnace Hills. With the abundance of larger game, woodcock were scarcely hunted in Siegel's day, but these two swamps must have been teeming with them at that time. Woodcock shooting in the Big Swamp in 1900, the writer met an old gunner who recalled days in the eighteen seventies and eighties when the shooting parties would foregather at twilight to compare bags totaling several hundred woodcock.

The writer was lured onto the hilltops and into the hidden vales of the Furnace Hills by the infectious music of the foxhounds. Often, on winter mornings, he was riding into the Kettle, along the summer side of White Oak Hill, at sunrise. This meant that he and his fellows, usually Hiram Holtzhouse and Elam Althouse, had opened the kennel gate for the excited and noisy hounds in Lititz, six miles away, soon after five o'clock in the morning. And how six or eight couples of black and tans, blueticks and three colors could make that Kettle ring and roar when they jumped their fox! And the excitement of dashing up the mountain trail to the ridge of White Oak Hill to catch the continued chorus of the sopranos, altos, tenors and basses of the wild pack as they followed the redskin's line into the Welsh Hinkel De'ch or on toward the distant Felsa Barrich. Could it be otherwise than that foxhunting in the Furnace Hills was a family tradition of the early Grubbs?⁴⁸

As the writer knew foxhunting in northern Lancaster County, between 1895 and about 1920, the gray fox was not there. Wh never our hounds broke away we could be sure they were on the line of a red fox. Nor did the foxhunters, whom we often met and joined packs with, Theodore Keener, George Stoler, Jacob Double, Levi and Jake Nessinger and others, who lived near or on the Furnace Hills, know the gray fox in that region during those

⁴⁷ Abraham R. Beck, who as a twelve year old boy, saw this flight over Lititz. More than 1,000,000,000 pigeons passed over Lancaster County that day.

⁴⁸ See Legend of the Hounds, by George H. Boker.

years and long before. And yet it is authentically recorded that the Indians of William Penn's time did not know the red fox in this region.⁴⁹

It is also recorded that English settlers, who always love to ride to hounds when they can, were dissatisfied with the low sporting ethics of the gray fox. To get a fox which would not keep their hounds pottering around in a briar patch or would not climb a tree, as the gray fox will, English-bred country gentlemen imported red foxes from the British Isles into Virginia and into Long Island.⁵⁰ Did the Grubbs do the same thing in the Furnace Hills? They probably did.

The red fox that is here today is thought by zoologists to be a cross between the imported English fox and the red phase of that American fox which exists mostly to the north of this region, in two color phases—red and black.⁵¹

Today in the Furnace Hills the black bear is gone, probably never to return. After a lapse of a century or more when there were no deer there, due to the great increase of deer in many of the central, northern and western counties of Pennsylvania, that animal is again straggling back into the Furnace Hills.⁵² The wild turkey is gone, like the black bear, doubtless never to return. The passenger pigeon is gone, certainly never to return, for the species is extinct. There have been no stump ear gray squirrels authentically reported for at least fifty years. The ruffed grouse is still here, to make his drum roll sound through the Kettle, though in such greatly reduced numbers that its status in Lancaster and Lebanon counties is always in doubt. Woodcock, scattered and rare, still probe the black mud in the Big Swamp and the Long Meadow. But the gray fox, which for fifty years, probably much longer, had disappeared from the Furnace Hills, has returned. To take a pack of hounds into the Kettle, into the Hitte Deich, into the Hirsch Thal today is to take them there with the unpleasant feeling that if a fox is started there is a two to one chance that it will be an unethical gray.

The gray fox originally owned the Furnace Hills.⁵³ Its disappearance for a long term of years is more difficult to explain than its return. But anyway, with the reappearance of the gray fox in the Furnace Hills, those happy hunting grounds of the writer have lost some of that sporting flavor, that compelling charm, which was fully theirs in earlier years, when the hounds could start nothing but that Prince of hound-run game, the red fox.

⁴⁹ Mammals of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The Pennsylvania Game Commission estimated that there were 2,000,000 deer in the state in 1938.

⁵³ Mammals of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.