

A CENTENNIAL EVENT

One of the oldest families and widest connections in Eastern Lancaster county are the Slaymakers. Their ancestors bought of and settled on the famous "London lands," along the old Strasburg and Gap roads, and they have illustrated the tenacity of the Lancaster county land-owner by many of them remaining residents and owners of real estate in that locality ever since. Before the Philadelphia turnpike—the oldest road of its kind in the country—was built, Jasper Yeates, one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, had large land ownings in common with the Slaymakers along the line of the turnpike and the Newport roads, between Intercourse and Gap, and when the toll bar this side of "Rising Sun" was thrown across the highway "Slaymaker's Tavern" became one of the famous roadside hostelries and stage taverns between Lancaster and Philadelphia. It is still a handsome structure, in admirable state of preservation as a farm house; while across a little brook and meadow stands the beautiful stone mansion which has been the private residence of the Slaymaker family for more than a century. It is one of a group of fine farm buildings in a well-improved and highly-cultivated estate, embellished with lawn, fountain and other adornments; the little stream that used to run a "tilt hammer" now being devoted to less practical, but more ornamental, uses.

This rare specimen of the best domestic architecture of the period in which it was built has been highly improved and richly decorated in the interior, but its original fine lines and admirable proportions are faithfully preserved. The house, known as "White Chimneys," was built by Amos Slaymaker, in 1807, on land obtained from his father, Henry Slaymaker, who acquired it in 1783. Amos Slaymaker was born in 1755. He was a drummer boy in the Revolutionary war, and was a member of the firm of Reeside & Slaymaker, who operated an extensive stage coach line before the time of railroads. The property descended from Amos Slaymaker to his son, Henry F.; to Henry F.'s son, Samuel C.; to his son, Samuel R., the present owner, and will doubtless some day belong to his son, Samuel C.

It was the happy thought of Samuel R. Slaymaker, the present owner of this and numerous other properties in the same neighborhood, to make it the centre of a brilliant social gathering on the evening of September 26, 1907, when his kinsfolk of the Slaymaker family, gathered from far and near, and neighbors and friends to the total number of about three hundred, were handsomely entertained from 9 to 12 p. m. The event had such special historical significance as to make a note of it worthy to be entered on the annals of this society. Conspicuous among the guests was that veteran local historian, Samuel Evans, Esq., of Columbia, with his wife and daughter. He is a grandson of the builder, and his versatile wife contributed the following:

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY CELE-
BRATION OF CENTENNIAL OF
"WHITE CHIMNEYS."

Composed and Written by Mrs. Samuel
Evans, of Columbia, Pa.

When the Bible-loving Slaymakers
came

To the sylvan land of Penn,
Did they know they had chosen the
rarest spot

That ever was known to men?

Did they know that this shire would
be queen of the State,

This State the queen of all,
On this, the Solar System's best,
Our own terrestrial ball?

'Twas not for wealth of soil or mine
A home o'er billows they sought,
No, 'twas for freedom to worship God
As conscience deemed they ought.

Unharm'd they nursed in this blest
land

The faith they held so dear,
Penn's land, where men of every creed
Might worship without fear.

When came the time that tried men's
souls,

When might oppressed the right,
Slaymakers fought in Freedom's cause
Till right was also might.

'Twas ere men had of railroads
dreamed,

No freight trains shook the earth,
Nor travel by steam in Stephenson's
Nor Fulton's brain had birth.

Coach Conestoga's six good steeds
Through woodland sped the way,
And travelers then were less than now
Impatient of delay.

'Twas Amos Slaymaker, M. C.,
Made travel elegant,
Demanding for the stage coach fine
A road like adamant.

Our kindly host's progenitor
By whom this home was reared,
Served here with gentle piety
The God whom he revered.

Not only in his songs of praise,
Or when in prayer he knelt—
Approving conscience must be his
When ere with men he dealt.

Profound respect at home, abroad,
In church and Congress Hall,
Was meted him as honor due,
And rendered him by all.

Oh! dearly prize this heritage,
'Tis more than house and lands;
High character to emulate
With pure hearts and clean hands.

Fond friends and kindred here to-day,
The host and helpmeet sweet,
Bright boy and darling baby girl,
With choicest wishes greet.

Prosperity of goodness born
And conscience free from fears
Be ever with them as to-day
Through many joyous years.

The Century past, a beacon safe,
Will be the light to guide
To coming years of blessedness
For all who here abide.

More quaint, but not less forceful,
than these lines is the epitaph on the
elder Slaymaker's tombstone in the
old Leacock Presbyterian burying
ground, which runs thus:

In Memory of
HENRY SLAYMAKER,
Who departed this life the 25
of Sept., 1788;
Aged 57.

A patriot most firm, a saint without
disguise,
Has took his unknown flight above the
Aerial skies,
O Slaymaker, the sage, the wise, the
good, thou are gone
To sit forever with the Saviour on his
throne.

Author: Hensel, W. U. (William Uhler), 1851-1915.

Other Author(s): Evans, Samuel,

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