

THE ARK.

Old houses have a threefold interest to the members of a society organized for local historical inquiry. They have, as a rule, a certain personal, physical individuality; with the lapse of years, they acquire a coloring of stone or timbers, an expression and a setting in the landscape, which contrive to give them an aspect so familiar that we recognize them as old acquaintances, regardless of where met. Walls and gables, windows and porches, roofs and chimneys, each contribute to this individuality of expression, and, seen from near or afar, whether ragged or trim, erect or dilapidated, there are few buildings in our county a century or more old that do not excite the interest and command the attention which should attach to all venerable objects, human or inanimate.

Then, again, these ancient structures have an architectural interest, indicating by their outside plan and form and by their interior arrangements the taste and manners of generations long gone, the affluence and the deficiencies of our ancestors, and, oftentimes, proving the superiority of their simplicity over a more complex order of society and of living.

Finally, and, perhaps, of greatest actual importance, the old houses of the county hold the history of its earlier and notable people, and, in the original and succeeding ownerships, the uses and changes, the glory and decay, of these properties, are the annals of the families who settled and peopled Lancaster county, and many of whom have been widely dispersed throughout the entire country.

From all these different points of view, the old structure to which I ask your brief attention commands interest and has the charm of novelty. Situated in the northern end of the borough of Quarryville, perched on a slight hill, stands a large stone building, known for many years as "The Ark," and the hill on which it stands as "Mount Ararat." These names, it is said, were given by a noted wag of his day, named Longenecker, soon after the house was built. It was erected in 1790 by Martin Barr, and was his farm or manor house, being situated nearly in the centre of the lands he then owned. His estate consisted of several thousand acres of land, running north for almost two miles, and about that far south. The farm was almost a mile wide, from east to west. His land began at a farm now owned by John P. Rohrer, north of Camargo, and, extending south, took in the Henry Keen farm, at Spring Grove, in East Drumore. On the east, his land ran as far as the Moses Bair farm, in Eden township, and west, as far as Oak Bottom. His whole possessions comprised what are now twenty-five of the best farms in that section, besides the lands occupied by Quarryville borough and Hawkesville.

Before erecting this building, Martin Barr lived in a log house, which was torn down about fifty years ago by Henry Keen, Sr. It stood where the house of Enos Hostetter now stands, on the "Hill road," from Hawkesville to Strasburg. Near by now stands one of the largest and oldest walnut trees in this part of the State. While living at the old place, about 1775, he built what is now known as the "Bossler Mill." It is in a good state of preservation and still does some business. About one-half mile north is the old "Oil Mill," a quaint and ancient structure, where flaxseed was formerly converted into oil and meal cake.

That "The Ark" was built in 1790 is attested by a stone in the west end of the building bearing that date. It was built of "barren" stone, hauled from the ridge running about a mile north-east of that point, the limestone just at hand not having been as yet developed and not being considered as desirable for building purposes. An enormous quantity of stone was needed, as the foundation trenches were sunk very deep, the builder being determined to rest upon solid rock. The main house is 65 feet long and 55 feet wide, and from the top of the foundation walls to the "square" it is 30 feet high, with a deep basement. On the north side of the house is a back building for a kitchen, 24 feet square, also of stone, and attached to the east end is a two-story building, 50 feet square, which was the "still-house." Mr. Barr ran a distillery, and in it is one of the finest springs in the neighborhood. A fine quality of whisky was made.

The house, at the time it was built, was not only the largest in its locality, but it was one of the best and finest. Fronting on the south were two wide porches running along the entire house (the upper one was taken down a few years ago). All the woodwork was of the very best hard wood—most of it walnut. The walls are two feet thick. Not a nail was used in its inside finish, wooden pegs and pins being used instead. The hall is 12 feet wide, running entirely through the centre, and the stairway is winding and continues to the garret. It is really a curiosity and has not been improved on by any of our modern stair-builders.

On the first floor are four large, square rooms, of the same size, and in each of the two front rooms is built a very large corner cupboard of walnut; cut on the panels is "1793 B,"—evidently the house was not entirely finished until that year. It used to be said—

and it is not at all unlikely—that the entire edifice contained a greater quantity of stone than any other building in the county, except the Almshouse.

About 100 feet west of the house, an immense barn was built, the ends and lower stories being of stone. It was 125 feet long and 60 feet wide, and it was 24 feet to the square. From what old residents tell us, it was the largest structure of the kind in the county at that time; yet it did not begin to hold the crops of the great Barr farm, and the stacks of grain around it were wonderful.

The Barrs were good farmers and the land improved rapidly under their farming. They fed a large number of cattle, and had flocks of sheep. The barn was partly torn down after a division of the farms, and again a portion of it was taken down after the death of Abram Barr. Three years ago, the remaining part was destroyed by fire.

Martin Barr had four sons, Abram, Christian, Martin and Jacob; he had two daughters—the last survivor was Christiana, married to John Mowrer, who carried on lime burning at Quarryville until about 1860, when he retired, and died soon after, a very old man. His wife died soon after him, and was one of the oldest residents of her community. She was the first child born in "The Ark."

Soon after the building of "The Ark," Martin Barr built the house now occupied by W. J. Hess, in Quarryville, for his son, Abram. This was in 1791. Here he also built a large and substantial house and barn, but smaller than his own. These are of stone, well finished, and are still in a good condition. The next year he built the same style of house and barn for his son Martin. It is now occupied by Galen Eckman, and is very well preserved. In the next year he built the buildings on the farm now owned by

Samuel Keen for his son Jacob, in the same substantial manner. Age has dealt very kindly with them, as Mr. Keen has one of the best houses in Eden township.

Who Martin Barr's father was we have not been able to learn, or where he was born or died; but he died a very old man about the beginning of the century, and his body is buried in the Barr graveyard; it is one of the oldest burying grounds in the county, and is on the farm of Adam Keen, very close to Mr. Barr's old home. A sandstone was placed over his grave, but time has obliterated what was on it.

After the death of Martin Barr, his son Adam bought and removed to "The Ark," and it was he who first recognized the important fact that Quarryville marked the lower limit of the limestone in Lancaster county, and, as usual, the dividing line of the original German and Scotch-Irish settlements. The thinner lands of the "Lower End" lacked a necessary element, to be supplied by the limestone quarried and burned into lime with the then abundant chestnut timber.

Adam Barr died in 1836, and this house and adjoining lands were bought at public sale by Jacob Barr, known as "Lame Jacob." He carried on farming and lime burning until 1852, when he retired and sold to Daniel Lefever, who, until his death, several years ago, was the leading lime burner of Quarryville. The property is now owned by his son, I. Galen Lefever, who is one of the leading business men of this section.

In the Barr graveyard are interred the remains of Martin Barr's sons, all marked with good, substantial stones. That of Christian, the eldest, is quite a fine monument. He was born in 1765 and died in 1816. His wife, Susan, was born 1772 and died 1846. Her maiden name was Breneman, and her father built the mill at Camargo. They

had two sons—Michael, who has been dead for a number of years, and Jacob B., known as “Brandy Jacob,” who died only a few years ago at over four score.

Abram was born in 1770 and died 1836. He was known as “Ark Abram.” He had seven daughters and one son, Abram. The latter is still living at the age of seventy-three, near Quarryville, and is one of our most respected citizens. He is quite an active man for his age; he was the youngest of the family; all his sisters are dead, except Mrs. Henry Hoover, of New Providence, now nearly eighty years old.

Jacob Barr was born 1771 and died 1826. His wife, Elizabeth, was born 1770 and died in 1852. They had several children; of the only two still living, Jacob Barr is quite an active man, seventy-six years old, at Lappe (Limeville), Salisbury township, in this county. He was in the lime business at Quarryville for many years, and removed to his present home about thirty years ago. There he engaged in the same business, until five years ago, when he retired. His sister is Mrs. Ann Fagan, of Lancaster, who has passed her seventy-fifth milestone.

Martin Barr, the youngest of the family, was born 1773 and died 1826. Of his family we have not been able to obtain any information. After his death they left this section, going to the West.

“Lame Jacob” Barr, so called by reason of lameness from white swelling when quite young, who bought “The Ark” in 1839, was born in the vicinity of Strasburg in 1778. His father was a cousin of Martin Barr, Sr., and about 1785 he moved to the farm now occupied by Moses Bair, in Eden township, east of Quarryville. Besides farming he was largely engaged in wagoning. Jacob had charge of the teams, and made money both for his

father and himself. He was a good judge of horses and knew how to handle them. His reputation as a teamster was known from Philadelphia to Pittsburg, and his team always hauled the heaviest loads. As many hogsheads of whisky as he could possibly get on his wagon were a light load. After the death of his father, in 1810, he still continued farming and driving teams, and finally added lime-burning. About 1852 he retired from business of all kinds, and in 1874 died at the good old age of ninety-six years and six months. His last child, Mrs. Frederick Stively, died at Camargo a few weeks ago, over ninety-two years old. One of his grandchildren is Miss Annie Lyle, one of Millersville's popular teachers, and John F. Shenk, the well-known teacher of Providence, is a great-grandson.

It has been generally supposed that Martin Barr, Sr., was the first to take out limestone at Quarryville for the burning of lime; but such is not the case. It was his son, Abram, who began operations in 1820. The first man who worked for him was Peter Rinear, who was afterwards (in 1837) killed by a premature explosion in a quarry where the drug store now stands in Quarryville. He began and worked at it alone, with a small steel drill, which he held in one hand, while with the other he struck with a small hammer—rather a slow process compared with the steam drills of the present day.

The first stone burned into lime from these quarries was hauled to the farm of John Herr, near Mt. Eden Furnace, where he had built a small kiln, holding about three hundred bushels. The kiln is still there, but as a ruin. Several "burns" were made at this place, and lime was found to be a good fertilizer. Others built kilns in that section, as well as over all the lower end of the county, and the quarrying of

stone became quite a profitable and extensive business. More men were put to work. In 1825 Abram Barr laid out about twenty acres in lots of one-eighth of an acre, and these he sold to farmers to take out stone for their own use, which they did in the winter after all their other work was done. In order to be convenient to their work about twenty good-sized log cabins were built, and "Barr's Quarries" became quite a place—hence the later Quarryville.

The land laid out was mostly a large apple orchard that had been planted by Abram's father, Martin Barr, when he built "The Ark," and as other quarries were opened in this section it was eventually named "The Orchard Quarries." Of the apple trees on this tract one still remains, and it has passed its usefulness. The last of the log cabins was torn down about twenty years ago, and only one of the old houses occupied by the original quarrymen still stands.

In a very short time it was found that lime was making the lower end. It was just what that land wanted, and the opening of new quarries began; large kilns were erected, and the quarrying of stone and burning of lime grew to be a very extensive business. Daniel Lefever, John Stewart, Henry Keen and Joseph Elliott were about the first to go into the business extensively. All the burning was done with wood until 1839, when Daniel Lefever burned the first with coal, and, while some still used wood, the use of coal became general after a few years.

At the time Abram Barr began the sale of quarry lots the prices were from \$75 to \$100 each. As time went by these same lots sold as high as \$1,500.

The lime business continued to grow rapidly at Quarryville, and considerable money had been made at it until about 1860, when the use of commercial fertilizers became more general and

the business began to decline, and, in fact, became almost extinct. Stone was only quarried for business purposes, but the last few years the farmers, finding the use of something besides commercial fertilizers necessary, have begun to use lime, and the business is again gradually increasing. Millions of bushels of lime have been burned from stone taken out of the great "orchard" quarry, the excavation of which covers acres, and is almost fifty feet deep.

In 1858 alone over 600,000 bushels of lime were burned and hauled from Quarryville; fully a dozen quarries were running; over a hundred men had work in them, and every lime burner had at least one six mule team, and some as many as three, while almost every farmer kept a team which found steady hauling. Great quantities of lime were delivered into York and Chester counties and into Cecil and Harford counties, Maryland.

In the early days of Quarryville there were some famous characters among the workmen, and a history of them would be most interesting. Of the originals only one is still living, our genial old friend, "Dan" Rinear, now eighty-seven, still a fairly active man and as gay as a lark. The only one of the original teamsters surviving is George Aument. He is eighty-nine and still of good mind, but feeble in body. Both these old men say they went to work at an early age. Mr. Aument hauled the first load of stone to John Herr, who was his uncle, in 1820.

Asa, Stacey, Job, John and Peter Rinear all died long ago—all living to be over eighty except Peter.

Tom McFadden, Bill Sample, Dan Longenecker, John Suter, John Welsh, William Johnson also lived to a good old age.

Of the original business men Joseph Elliott died in Illinois twenty-five years ago; John Stewart, in York

county twenty years ago; Daniel Lefever and Henry Keen within the last twenty years—the latter being the most successful of the lime burners and leaving large estates.

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The grandchildren of "The Ark's" builder are dead and gone; the great estate has been subdivided, and its broad acres are now sold by the foot frontage; rich fortunes have been quarried from its buried limestone; where "Pete" Rinear held his drill with one hand while the other wielded the hammer, a sparkling fountain now marks the centre of a flourishing town. The cavalcade of prancing teams, "with their merry strings of bells," that once traversed these highways has passed, and the old wagoners lie under the "mossy marbles." New methods have succeeded to the old. The walls of "The Ark" stand plumb, strong, "foursquare to every wind that blows." Time has colored them, but only with deeper, richer tint, and the stains that the storm has left upon them detract nothing. Its timbers are sound and strong. Back of it a blue breast of limestone fronts towards the rising sun. Aside of it a fortlike group of lime kilns are smoking with the fires of a re-kindled industry. Could its spacious chambers speak they might tell the story of a century that has seen vast changes, social, political, scientific, mechanical and commercial. It bids fair to stand another hundred years. Long distant be the day when ruthless hands shall raze its walls, or when dull ear shall listen with distaste to the chronicle of its builder and of those who dwelt beneath its roof.

Since writing the above I find there are in addition to those named still living grandchildren of Martin Barr, Sr.: Mrs. Amanda McCalla, of Millersville, widow of the late Dr. John McCalla, of

Lancaster, and Martin Barr (brother of Jacob Barr, of Limeville), who is living retired in Lancaster. Mrs. McCalla's father was Michael and Martin's, Jacob.

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