

NOTES ON REAMSTOWN, LANCASTER COUNTY, PA.

By Pierce Leshar.

In 1724 there came to the Cocalico Valley Everhart Ream, with his family, a horse and wagon and a few household utensils. He camped for the night under a large oak tree on what is now Pierce Leshar's farm, about 75 yards in the rear of the present farm house, northwest of the public highway and about 400 yards from the Cocalico Creek.

When Everhart Ream (Rihm) a native of Leimen, near Heidelberg, Germany, came to this locality there was an Indian village opposite the present site of Reamstown. These Indians were a part of the Delaware tribe. Everhart Ream's nearest white neighbors lived at Millcreek or Millbach, twelve miles away. His nearest mill was on the Brandywine some twenty miles distant where he took his grain to be ground. He was naturalized as a subject of Great Britain, October 4, 1729.

Everhart Ream built for himself and family a log cabin, as a temporary place of abode near the spot where he located and after being satisfied with his choice of location procured several patents for large tracts of land in this locality. In 1725 he was granted a patent for 400 acres of land. June 23, 1734, he was granted a patent for 389 acres. This patent is recorded in patent book A, Vol. 8, page 96, November, 1736. In 1760 Everhart Ream deeded to his son, Tobias Ream, 54 acres of land upon which he (Tobias) laid out the plan of a town which he named Zoar (Zohar). These lots were 66 feet wide and 297 feet deep and contained 72 perches each. Sixty-five of these lots were sold upon the ground rent plan, the purchaser paying a yearly rental of \$1.33 except the corner lots which were a lower rental. This ground rent was paid annually until about the year 1880 when the owners purchased these ground rent titles from the heirs of Frederick Ream in whom these titles then vested.

This town soon sprang into prominence as the most important town located on the old King's highway connecting the cities of Lancaster and Reading. This highway was 58 feet wide and was opened in 1770. A Post Office was established here January 1, 1803, from which mail was sent and received by the inhabitants for miles around. The name of the town was at this time changed from Zoar to Rhemstown. On July 24, 1810, the name was changed to Reamstown which name it has borne ever since.

The following are the names of persons who have served at Postmasters of Reamstown:

Name	Appointed
Jacob Kling.....	January 1, 1803
Marcus Montellius.....	January 1, 1804
Charles Montellius.....	October 1, 1805
Frederick Zeigler.....	July 24, 1810
Ichabod Hamlin.....	April 16, 1832
Absalom Baker.....	December 9, 1834
John C. Reed.....	April 23, 1838
Charles Carpenter.....	June 10, 1841
John G. Shirk.....	December 14, 1842
Henry S. Shirk.....	February 6, 1844
Andrew Ream.....	July 3, 1845
Aaron D. Carpenter.....	November 13, 1849
Andrew Ream.....	June 18, 1853
Henry Rhoads.....	March 12, 1861

George Murr.....	July 29, 1867
Simon N. Klauser.....	June 15, 1869
Jacob R. Reddig.....	February 24, 1870
Andrew J. Ream.....	August 4, 1885
William B. Reddig.....	September 18, 1889
Jacob H. Mace.....	April 13, 1893
Edwin J. Root.....	July 10, 1897
Thomas J. Rhoads.....	April 10, 1899
Frank B. Witmer.....	August 29, 1907
Ivan H. Witmer.....	May 24, 1915

Reamstown was originally located in Cocalico Township which comprised the present townships of East Cocalico, West Cocalico and Ephrata. Cocalico Township was about 12 miles square and Reamstown was the seat of this township. It was at Reamstown that the voters of this township assembled to cast their ballots on election day. It was here that the strong and sturdy sons of Cocalico Township met annually for drill and instructions in military tactics on Battalion Day. This was a great attraction for the people for miles around who came here to see this great military display. Upon one of these occasions a guard line was formed around the officers' headquarters and the guards were instructed not to let any one pass the guard line unless he gave the password which by the way was "Paoli." As one of the guards was marching to and fro on his beat he was approached by a citizen when the guard shouted "Halt, you can't pass here unless you say Paoli." The citizen said "Paoli" and was admitted within the lines. On May 17, 1834, Battalion Day, it is recorded, that there was a great blizzard in this region.

It was here that the old time circuses of Van Amburg, Dan Rice, Dan Gardner and a number of others exhibited. These always drew large crowds who came from the surrounding country to see the performance, hear the clowns crack their jokes and see the elephant.

It was here that the famous Reamstown fair was held. People came from all over the Southeastern part of Pennsylvania, many bringing horses which were entered in the races. Considerable money changed hands on bets made upon the results of these trials of speed.

Gambling was another great feature of this fair. Roulette, three card-monte and thimble riggers were on hand and relieved many of their surplus cash. Dancing was another prominent feature and the writer often heard the older people relate how the lads and lassies would walk miles to Reamstown in their bare feet and when they came to the Cocalico Creek would wash, don their shoes and stockings, brush their hair and enter the town ready to tip the light fantastic toe and enter into such other sports as the fair had in store for them. These dances were conducted at each of the five hotels which the town at that time supported. In 1853 the last fair was held at Reamstown after an unbroken chain covering a period of 75 years. The race track, a straight one, used during the fair for running races only, was located on the farm now owned by Pierce Leshner. The Battalion drills and circuses were frequently held on this farm.

During the early years of Reamstown several military organizations were formed here. One was known as the Silver Grays. They had their headquarters in the building known as the Barracks which was located in the rear of the Continental House. This stood where the I. O. O. F. hall is now located. The roster of one of these military organizations shows that a number of its members were named Ream. There were three Reams in this company by the name of Andrew; one was a Captain, one an ensign and one a drummer boy. During the Revolutionary war a number of the members of these military organizations enlisted in the Continental army and did valient service for the cause of freedom and independence of the American Colonies.

The drum which Andrew Ream, the drummer boy, beat at the battle of Monmouth, N. J., is on exhibition in the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Andrew Ream and Henry Ream were Revolutionary pensioners.

After the battle of the Brandywine a number of sick and wounded soldiers were brought to Reamstown and cared for and nursed by the citizens of the community in the building known as the Barracks, which for the time was converted into a hospital. About 30 of these patriots died here and their remains were interred in one plot in the old grave yard in the rear of the Lutheran and Reformed Church.

During the Civil War and the World War Reamstown furnished its full quota of men, all of whom proved themselves true and loyal to the cause of the Union and America.

The author of this sketch enjoyed the personal acquaintance of Frederick Ream, who was the son of Tobias Ream, the founder of the town and a grandson of Everhart Ream, the first white settler of this locality. He was the nearest neighbor of the Leshers and he well remembers how in his boyhood days he sat by the side of this grand old man and eagerly listened to the many interesting things he told him; how his father played ball with the Indian boys; how they wrestled and went on hunting and fishing expeditions together; where his grandfather first located, how they lived, the privations they endured, the friendly relations that always existed between his people and the Indians, and many other matters of interest.

Twenty-five to seventy-five years ago there were large numbers of Reams living in this town who were descendants of its first settler. Only a few of this prolific family remain here now. Many have drifted to different parts of the country and today descendants of Everhart Ream can be found in nearly every State in the Union. Among those who were born in Reamstown or who are descendants of natives of this town and became prominent in the affairs of life are the following:

Vinnie Ream Hoxie, the sculptress, who carved the statue of Ex-President Abraham Lincoln, which stands in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, that of Admiral Farragut, Ex-Governor Kirkwood of Iowa, the bust of Thaddeus Stevens and a number of others. She is the granddaughter of John Frederick Ream, who was a hotel keeper at Reamstown. She was married to General Richard Hoxie of the United States army.

Norman Ream, Chicago financier, was the son of Samuel Ream, a native of Reamstown. He became very wealthy.

Henry Ream, of Reamstown, was a Colonel in the Revolutionary war.

Andrew Ream, of Reamstown, was a Captain in the Revolutionary war.

Dr. John Ream, a native of Reamstown, practiced medicine at Rohrerstown for many years.

Dr. Richard Ream, of Reamstown, practiced medicine there for a period of fifty years.

Curtis Ream and Cyrus Ream, both of Reamstown, served there as Justice of the Peace during a long term of years.

Samuel Glace, the first person to produce hydraulic cement in the Lehigh Valley, was born at Reamstown, October 12, 1805.

William R. Wilson, a prominent member of the Lancaster Bar, was a native of Reamstown.

Rev. Charles L. Grant, a prominent Lutheran minister, located at St. Paul, Minn., and Rev. Thomas W. Rhoads, a prominent Reformed minister, located at East Petersburg, Pa., are both natives of Reamstown.

Robert S. Regar, the present Third Assistant Post Master General, was born in East Cocalico Township, a few miles from Reamstown.

Miles Rock, a native of Reamstown, after his graduation in Lehigh Uni-

versity's first class, developed into one of the most noted astronomers of his day. He was officially connected with several important government expeditions to the West Indies and Central America for the determination of longitude; he was Chief of the Guatemala Boundry Commission; he went with the Transit of Venus Expedition to Chile in 1882.

The early industries of Reamstown were the manufacture of carriages, furniture, chairs, shoes, high silk hats, tailoring, tanning, wooden pumps, blacksmithing, grist mills and the distilling of liquor. Today these are all gone and we have in their stead large cigar factories, hosiery and underwear mills.

The Bushong distillery was one of the largest in the county and was built in 1835 and the mill in 1838. In this distillery they used one hundred bushels of corn daily, paying ten cents per bushel more than the regular market price. This was quite an inducement for the farmers of this section to raise corn and it created a demand for seeds and fertilizers.

There were five distilleries in East Cocalico Township.

Printing was established in Reamstown in 1822 by Peter Montellius. This was later successively conducted by Richard Ream, Rudy Hahn and J. G. Garman & Bro. The later firm moved this printing establishment to Denver, Pa., where it was finally converted into the Denver Press.

A band was organized in this town shortly after the Civil War. This band was considered one of the best musical organizations in the county when under the leadership of Samuel Schaich who later played with Sousa for 28 years.

In 1832 a public road was opened from Lebanon to Churchtown through Schaefferstown and Reamstown. Grain cradles were introduced into this neighborhood in 1820.

In 1925 Pierce Lesher erected a memorial boulder of native stone weighing about twelve tons which is unique in that it is the only stone in this section, according to historians, which honors the Indian and the soldiers of three major American wars and that on the top of which was carved a large bowl known to have been used by the Indians as a grinding bowl. The bronze tablet on this boulder reads as follows:

“This grinding bowl from East Cocalico is placed to commemorate its maker—The American Indian. And the boulder three other local figures who lived abreast of the loftier traditions of their time, light and race:

The Soldier of Independence.....1775-1783

About 30 of the wounded and sick from Brandywine Field cared for in the Reamstown Barracks are buried here.

The Soldier of Union.....1861-1865

The Soldier of World Justice.....1917-1919

Erected by Pierce Lesher, 1925.”

Prof. Herbert H. Beck, of Franklin and Marshall College and President of the Lancaster County Historical Society, presided at these dedication ceremonies which were held October 31, 1925.

The tablet was unveiled by Mrs. William Lee and Mrs. George H. Ormrod, daughters of Mr. Lesher.

The invocation was given by Chief Joseph Strongwolf of the Ojibway tribe of Indians

Addresses were made by Prof. Herbert H. Beck, Chief Strongwolf and Pierce Leshar.

Rev. W. S. Brendle, of the Reformed Church, offered prayer.

The tablet was made by James H. Matthews & Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.

To this program might well be added the poem by Mary N. Robinson, In Reamstown Cemetery:

IN REAMSTOWN CEMETERY

Low mounds, unmarked e'en by a time-worn stone,
Where wild growths riot, and tall grasses wave,
Neglected and forgotten, in each lowly grave
A soldier sleeps, his name to all unknown—
Only the sad wind o'er each tomb makes moan!
What though each died his native land to save?
What though his life for Liberty each gave?
Here, 'neath the sod, they sleep in peace, alone—
They came, obedient to their country's call,
We reap the harvest by their life-blood sown;
They died in pain, to break the tyrant's thrall,
We toast the freedom which their anguish won!
And then, unheeding, careless by them pass,
Their only monument the tall, green grass!

The religious denominations of Reamstown were principally the Lutheran, Reformed and Evangelical.

Reamstown has good schools, a well equipped fire company, telephone and trolley advantages, a bank, fine stores and restaurants and is located in a rich farming community. Its inhabitants are principally descendants of natives of Germany and France with a few from Ireland. They are good and law abiding citizens and as a rule, live well and are frugal, happy and contented.

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PIERCE LESHER.

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