

SHENANGO



“LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL”

1-8386
1-8387



DRAWN BY T.M. FOWLER MORRISVILLE PA.

COPYRIGHTED BY T.M. FOWLER

SHARON,
MERCER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA
1901.

INTRODUCTION

The success and enthusiastic reception of Shenango I have underlined for those of us involved in its preparation some important truths, truths that should be self-evident but that sometimes need to be re-affirmed: that there are great learning atmospheres outside the classroom; that real people can be (and usually are) better "textbooks" than real textbooks; that (and this perhaps is less self-evident than the others) people who seem not to have much in common can discover through dialogue that their common humanity cultivates mutual respect. If learning is discovery, then there is no more important kind of discovery than that.

It is easy for the young to see the older as moving in a different world. It is as easy for the old to look with puzzlement and suspicion on the world of the young. When the college student takes his tape recorder and his camera to the home of a senior citizen, who sometimes has to struggle with the student's language, different cultures and eras confront each other. Usually both are enriched. In the strange story that he hears, the student often discovers the human struggle and recognizes it as his own. The story teller, often amazed and pleased that anyone should find his story interesting and important enough to record, may rediscover in the student his own youth. A mutual respect develops.

The encounter of the young and old is not the only discovery that the Shenango Project affords. Sometimes the encounter is between the young and the still younger. As high school students become involved — and it is our hope that more and more will become involved — we see invaluable educational opportunities developing. Still other kinds of encounter occur. High school and college faculty become involved with each other. The potential here for growth on both sides is inestimable as ideas are exchanged and problems are worked out together. As the Project continues we hope that it will become more and more identified as a community rather than just a college project, with area high schools participating and adding their potential to future issues of Shenango. Still further, on both the college and high school levels, teachers from different disciplines — history, English, sociology, anthropology — will continue to find in Shenango a common cause and reason for increased respect.

Lastly, we have witnessed, and trust to continue to witness, in the community's reaction to Shenango the kind of mutual respect that should be present between a college and the people it serves. The people of the Shenango Valley are what Shenango is about. They have shown through their support their appreciation of the college's interest in them; the college students and faculty have had reaffirmed for us, through the cooperation of the community, the truth that discovering people is discovering self.

Here in this Bicentennial year we have the occasion to remind ourselves of the self-evident truths that speak of the dignity of all persons, those older and those younger, those different from us in culture, profession, and way of life. If Shenango in its preparation and in these pages in some way serves as such a reminder, we are more than pleased.

— Carmen Leone —

DEDICATION

Orvis Anderson, life-long resident of Mercer County, is well-known and highly respected for his contributions and dedication to his community.

Professionally, Orvis Anderson has taught at all levels in the public schools. At his retirement in the Spring of 1971, Mr. Anderson completed forty-six years of service to his profession and to the many students who were touched by his generous, unique influence.



Mr. Anderson has also taught Sunday School for fifty years, serves as a counselor for the Boy Scout Merit Badge program, and still enjoys hunting and gardening.

In addition to these activities, Orvis Anderson has spent almost a lifetime pursuing a very special interest — the history of Mercer County. In October, 1946, he became a charter member of the Mercer County Historical Society for which he has served as director, president, and finally, curator, a position which has made him the mainstay and inspiration of the Society.

Those who have worked with Orvis Anderson love him — love him for the genuine dedication which characterizes him and all he does; for his willingness to help others; for his capacity to give unselfishly and unstintingly of himself.

One of his fellow teachers comments: "One word describes Orvis Anderson — dedication."

Another friend, a fellow member of the Mercer County Historical Society, has this to say about him: "There is no one who has given as much of himself to the Society as Orvis Anderson. He does a lot of work — quietly."

In 1961, Orvis Anderson was honored as the recipient of the Valley Forge Freedom Foundation Award.

Because we, too, at Edinboro Shenango Valley Center, wish to celebrate the dedication of his service and the generosity of his spirit, we dedicate this issue of Shenango to Orvis Anderson, teacher, local historian, curator, friend.

— Caroline Daverio —

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FACULTY

Mr. Eugene Antley
Miss Caroline Daverio
Dr. Carmen Leone

Mr. Edward Lindway
Mr. James D. Siar

OFFICE STAFF

Mrs. Robert Myers
Mrs. Hugh Phythyon

LIBRARY STAFF

Mrs. Carl Valerius

STUDENTS

FALL '75

Borkowski, Ann
Burlingame, Karin
Cannon, Lynette
Cole, George
Dale, Mark
Early, Donna
Foster, Dana
Henning, Laura
Martin, Gail
Massey, Dorothy
Rock, Michael
Wilds, Thomas

SUMMER '75

Antley, Corinne
Bock, Steve
Foltz, Carol
Frye, Mark
George, Mike
Grandy, John
Koscinski, Stella
Lauro, Gerald
Lazor, Paula
Vamosi, Dan
Williams, Penny

SPRING '76

Benigas, John
Blank, Brian
Campagna, Anna
Conti, Lisa
Dale, Timothy
Dye, Rita
Emerick, Roy
Moder, Scott
Morgenstern, Rodney
Paoletta, Larry
Raver, Star
Wilds, Robert

VISITING LECTURERS

Rev. Raphael Biernacki
Mr. Frank Egercic
Mrs. Vincenzina Grasso
Mrs. John Gruitza
Mr. Peter Joyce
Dr. James Knightlinger

Rev. Jerome Kucan
Mr. Ted Lazorishak
Mr. Carlton Lehman
Rev. Michael Polanichka
Mrs. Nellion Ponder
Mrs. Pamela Wood

PATRONS

Beneficial Society of German Homes
Mr. Carl Bordy
Mrs. Susan Cornman
Professor Hugh Earnhart
Mrs. Edmund Finucane
Mr. Harold Gwin
Ms. Elizabeth Haller
Dr. William Herrmann
Hicks Office Products Center
Mr. Richard W. Hopkins

Ideas, Inc., Washington, D.C.
Leali Bros. Meats
Mrs. Alfred Longietti
Mercer County Bicentennial Commission
Mercer County Federation of Clubs
Mr. Louis J. Morocco
Pic Electric
Sharon Stationery & Supply, Inc.
Sharon Steel Corporation
Shenango Valley Council of Governments

We extend a special note of appreciation to Barbara Antley for her aid in fiscal matters.

S H E N A N G O

<i>Introduction</i>		1
<i>Dedication</i>		2
<i>Acknowledgments</i>		3
<i>Contents</i>		4
<i>A Home Away From Home</i>	Al Krochka Roy Emerich	5
<i>"A Way Of Life"</i>	Robert Wilds	8
<i>Middlesex — A Mecca For Many</i>	Dorothy L. Massey	13
<i>"Full Steam Ahead"</i>	Tom O'Brien	16
<i>"I Felt I Accomplished What God Was Wanting Of Me"</i>	Susan Cornman and Carl Bordy	21
<i>The Bock Story</i>	Steve Bock	27
<i>It's Tommy Tucker Time</i>	Mark Frye and Pearl Ann Longietti	38
<i>Life Was Filled With Guns and War</i>	Pearl Ann Longietti and Carol Foltz	43
<i>Cooking Business? I'll Tell You What Happened!</i>	Mike George and Susan Cornman	48
<i>Statue of Liberty</i>		54

C O N T E N T S

A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Roy Emerich
Al Krochka

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the twentieth century saw all previous records for immigration from Europe to the United States broken during the first decade. Unlike the majority of the immigrants of the nineteenth century, the new immigration was made up of poorer people, as a whole less well educated, most of whom remained either in the port cities or went to factory towns where a relative or friend was awaiting them. Conditions of their life often made them hostile to American institutions. This hostility, in turn, was reciprocated by Americans over whom the tide of immigration swept. At best, most of these immigrants were looked upon as strange in language, dress and customs, hardly acceptable for assimilation into the existing social structure. Consequently, ethnic organizations known as Clubs, Unions, Alliances and Societies were established. Within these organizations the immigrant and his family enjoyed social, cultural, recreational, financial, and educational benefits not always available to them in the general society. By 1915 immigrants made up more than half of the work force in the industries located in the Shenango Valley. More than two dozen ethnic societies flourished by the early nineteen twenties. One of the very prominent ones was "The German Home" located in Farrell, Pennsylvania. Chartered in 1916, it has existed at its present location ever since that date.



German Home in Farrell

When making inquiries about the German Home we were invariably told, "Ask Jacob Schmidt. He can tell you all about it." Who was this Jacob Schmidt who was the considered authority on the subject of the German Home? A telephone call arranged an appointment for an interview and, after several min-

utes of conversation, it became clear why inquiries were directed to him. For, as a house does not become a home until people abide within, so a home does not thrive or prosper unless people like Jacob Schmidt have a hand in shaping its destiny. The German Home has been synonymous with Jacob Schmidt, and vice versa. Immigrants came to America for various reasons: freedom, fame, fortune, or for just a better way of life. After hearing Jacob Schmidt's story it became evident that, for him, a better way of life was the opportunity to help his fellow man.

Jacob Schmidt, born in Hungary, January 15, 1899 arrived in America in 1912 with his father. When World War I began, his mother and brother came to the United States to join them. He became a citizen in 1923, served the city of Farrell as Street Commissioner until it became a third class city, was a foreman under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and is now a retired foreman of the Sharon Steel Corporation.

Schmidt explained to us how the German Home came to be established: "Well, first of all, it is a sick and death benefit organization. The full name is "The Beneficial Society of the German Home". Like the Polish, Italian and other clubs, when people joined, they took out "A", "B", or "C" membership. "A" is a sick and death benefit, "B" is not eligible for sick benefits but he got death benefits, and a "C" member is only a social member. He doesn't have any sick or death benefits. Naturally, we had our club rooms and served beer and whiskey in big glasses. We served sandwiches and big dinners too."

To have "A" standing, Schmidt explained, a



Mr. Schmidt at Home

member had to join before age 45. After that age they could only be "B" members, entitling them to death benefits only.

Since most of them knew only their native language, the Home was a place where they were accepted, could discuss problems and topical events, and enjoy recreational as well as cultural pursuits.

Schmidt continued his explanation: "Well, they built the present German Home in 1916. The charter members paid for it by taking out shares. There were 10, 25, 50, and 100 dollar shares. It was like a loan to the club to pay for the building. And when the home was built, they had quite a bit of activity like dances and songfests, plays and things like that. When I first became president of the home in 1921, we sponsored a basketball team. They put a hoop in the hall upstairs and the young fellows had a place to play, especially those who didn't go to high school had a chance to play. For many years the clubs in Farrell and Sharon played each other and played in tournaments all around. We also had a lot of picnics and sometimes as many as 1500 people came to a picnic out on a farm. Like the other clubs we had baseball teams for the boys and men. At the club all the class members could come eat, drink, play cards and dance, or just talk with friends. Now that people have insurance and sick benefits where they work, most of the members are "C" members."

Schmidt then informed us of his personal background: "I went to public school in Hungary until I was almost fourteen. After coming to this country I sort of educated myself. Then when the first World War broke out, I had to register as an enemy alien like people from the other countries who were at war

with the United States and we couldn't become citizens for five years after the War and proved we had good reputations and didn't get into trouble. I became a citizen soon as the five years were over. Even during World War II I was interviewed by a man from the government who asked me about some of the men he had listed in a book. He said my name was in the book too but that I was a citizen in good standing. Our son volunteered in the Second World War and was a pilot of a B-24 bomber. He made 51 bombing trips over France and Germany."

At this point, we asked the difference between the German Maennerchor Home in Sharon and the German Home in Farrell. He pointed out that the Maennerchor is strictly a social organization: "In 1870 a bunch of German people got together and organized this club and called it, "Apollo-Maennerchor of Sharon, Pennsylvania". The purpose of the club was to perpetuate German songs and customs in the United States. Now the main purpose is the songs. I belong to that, too. They belong to the North American Singing Society and travel to different places to sing. Even today they have twenty six members who belong to the singing group and have a director. Next Friday we are going to the Kennedy Christian Senior Citizens Home and sing for the people there. We go to different places to sing for people like Youngstown and New Castle. We also have a yearly Family Day and invite people from all over so we can sing German songs. In the evening we have a dance and dance German dances and American dances. It lasts all day long."



Picnic Group Mid-Thirties

We asked Schmidt how long he had been associated with the German Home before he became president in 1921: "Well, I joined in 1917 when I was 18 years old. I was president all together for 23 years and was on the board of directors for 42 years. And currently I am an auditor of the home. Right here is a picture of the charter members. The only

one besides me living is Peter Rommelfanger but he is 86 years old and his wife is in the hospital. So I don't think you would want to bother him now. Two of the women charter members are still living who are in that picture. There is Mrs. Rose Nettinger and Mrs. Frank Bayer, Sr. But they are up in their nineties, too."



Mr. Schmidt's Son in World War II

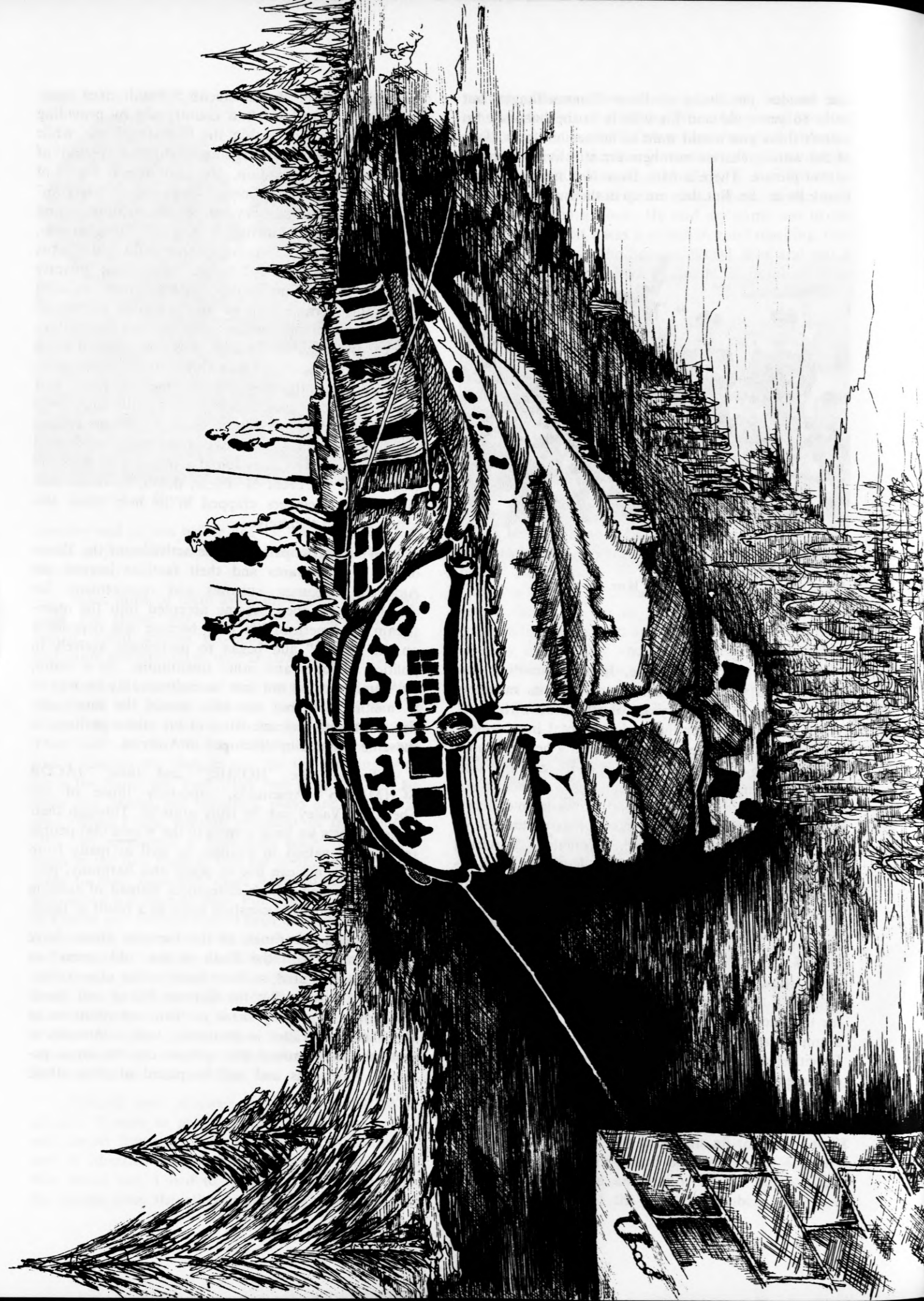
Though 77 years of age, Jacob Schmidt is just as interested in the German Home and its members as he was through his 60 years of affiliation with them. What he brushes over lightly is his total involvement with the welfare of people who needed a helping hand. When people were unemployed or ill he saw to it that their death and sick benefit premiums were kept paid. He used to canvas the town and browbeat merchants and tradesmen to provide trucks so that all the people could attend picnics and other functions requiring transportation. During World War I, when the immigrant Germans were under suspicion, harassed, ridiculed and otherwise maligned, he worked hard to provide a social life, recreation, sports and educational opportunities for his fellow countrymen over a tough few years. Within the home, instead of conspiring with fellow Germans, (as many people suspicioned) he was instrumental in providing citizenship classes for the aliens. They learned about the American government, language, and customs so they could qualify for citizenship. Following World War II many German displaced persons came to the United States. They became homeless after the partition of Germany and

the occupation of Russia. Jacob Schmidt once again was able to help his fellow countrymen by providing a temporary refuge within the German Home, while the refugees were undergoing a difficult period of adjustment and transition. He also helped many of them to secure employment. Why was a "German" Home felt to be necessary for people anxious to find a better life in "America"? Why, for that matter, the other two dozen various ethnic clubs which exist in the Shenango Valley? Fleeing oppression, poverty and lack of freedom in their mother countries most immigrants became isolated and ridiculed by the established community in the valley because they talked, dressed and behaved "funny". Residents looked upon them with suspicion, or as a threat to their own security. Consequently they formed their "Clubs" and "Homes" where people could meet with their own kind, wear old country dress, speak the mother tongue and follow familiar customs without being persecuted or laughed at. Too, they found a measure of financial security: in the event of illness, death, or other misfortune, all members chipped in to help those less fortunate than themselves.

While participating in the activities of the Home or Club, immigrants and their families learned the American language, customs and requirements for citizenship. As they became accepted into the mainstream of American life they became less dependent on the "Home" and began to participate actively in politics, athletics and other institutions. As a result, the immigrant did not lose his individuality by way of a "melting pot" but was able to add the best qualities, traits and characteristics of his ethnic heritage to those he adopted or developed in America.

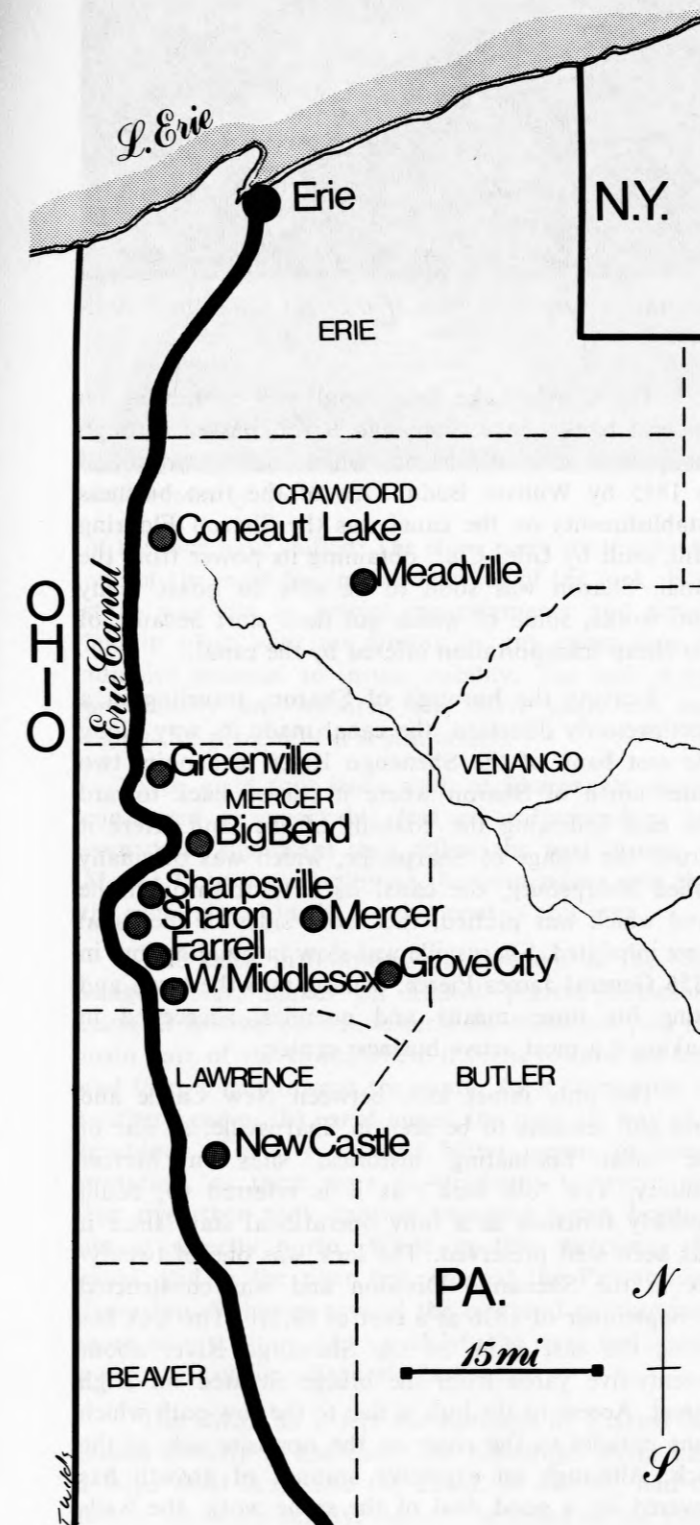
To all the "HOMES" and their "JACOB SCHMIDTS" Americans, especially those of the Shenango Valley can be truly grateful. Through their tireless efforts we have proven to the World that people from every nation in Europe, as well as many from other continents can live in peace and harmony, profiting from each other's differences instead of existing in an atmosphere of constant strife as a result of them.

Though the ranks of the German Home have been thinned with the death of the "old timers" as Mr. Schmidt stated, so have those of the other ethnic homes and clubs. But the German Home and Jacob Schmidt can proudly share in their contributions to the Shenango Valley in particular, and to America in general. They proved that people can be loyal, patriotic Americans and still be proud of their ethnic origins.



"A WAY OF LIFE"

by Robert Wilds



The Pittsburgh Erie Canal (1844-1871), in passing through Mercer County was not only a base for a cheap means of transportation, but it played an even more influential role in the development of the county's resources. In Mercer County the iron and steel industry had its beginning after the coming of the canal. Perhaps the canal played an even more important role in the development of coal. Prior to the completion of the Beaver-Lake Erie Canal, the means of transportation were so imperfect that the coal mined had to beg for a market. The construction of the canal gave new business the needed stimulus by providing the much needed outlet. At first small profits were made, but as the canal grew satisfactory results to both capital and labor took place.

Although there is some question as to which ethnic group had the most to do with the construction of the canal, it is presumed a great deal of the actual digging was undertaken by the Irish, English, Scotch, Welsh, and German. Most of the construction during the 1830's was done in segments by many private contractors who did their own hiring.

It was because of the lack of water transportation that Mercer County was inactive in settlement and commercial development. Since Mercer County was situated midway between the Great Lakes to the north and the natural highway to the west, the valley of the Ohio River, these two great water routes established the directions in which the settlement and migration of Mercer County took place. Because of the canal, settlers departed from the main courses of travel and pushed their way up in lateral lines through western Pennsylvania eventually occupying it. One can, therefore, see the important role the canal played. Not only did it have an influential hand in the development of industry and commercial interest here in Mercer County but its most notable effect was in the rearrangement and re-distribution of population. Along the route of the canal new life grew in old settlements, such as Sharon and Greenville, while others rapidly grew into prosperous villages because of the ever growing commerce that daily passed by their doors.

Settlements, such as Sharon, Clarksville, Shenango and Greenville were benefited by the canal, and the result to the entire Shenango Valley was such that it became the seat of a host of industries which

were later reinforced by the building of railroads along the same river valleys.

The Shenango Division, which comprised three fourths of the main line between Pittsburgh and Erie, was not completed until after the Beaver division and the Pennsylvania and Ohio cross-cut canal had been in operation for many years. In Pittsburgh and the Beaver Valley, commercial interest was directed toward that line by which Ohio trade could best be obtained. Since this portion of the canal ran along the Shenango River it was referred to as the Shenangó Division. This division extended to the outlet of Conneaut Lake; however, only three fourths of it was provided for at this time.

Starting from the Western Reserve Harbor, outside of New Castle, the canal was dug and completed through the town of Pulaski, situated in the northwest corner of Lawrence County, by the fall of 1836.

The canal entered Mercer County in the southwest portion known as Shenango Township. The first lock built in the county, was just about one and one-half miles north of the Lawrence County line, and lay about two and one-half miles to the south of West Middlesex. The village of West Middlesex supplied a large amount of fresh produce for use on the canal, and coal was its chief export until the construction of the first furnace in 1845. The canal was, no doubt, instrumental in the establishment of the village.



A Portion of the old Canal beside the Railroad that superseded it.

Continuing in a northwesterly direction the canal left the Shenango Township and entered Hickory Township. The first village of any size on the canal in this township was that of Wheatland. Wheatland was non-existent during the construction, but after the canal had passed through this area, it became quite a

sizable village. The borough of Wheatland is now diminished to almost nothing in comparison to what it used to be.



Another Overgrown Part of the Old Canal in Wheatland.

The Beaver-Lake Erie Canal, still continuing on the east bank of the Shenango River, passed through the present city of Sharon, which was incorporated in 1815 by William Budd. One of the first business establishments on the canal was the Sharon Flouring Mill, built by Giles Clar, obtaining its power from the canal. Sharon was soon to be able to boast many iron works, some of which got their start because of the cheap transportation offered by the canal.

Leaving the borough of Sharon, traveling in a northwesterly direction, the canal made its way along the east bank of the Shenango River to a point two miles north of Sharon where it curved back toward the east following the contour of the land. Here it struck the village of Sharpsville, which was originally called Sharpsburg; the canal itself went through the land which was plotted, thus both sides of the canal were inhabited. Sharpsville was slow in building, but in 1856 General James Pierce, coming into the town and using his time, means and energies, succeeded in making it a most active business center.

The only intact lock between New Castle and Erie still remains to be seen in Sharpsville, as one of the most fascinating historical sites in Mercer County. The "old lock", as it is referred to, could possibly function in a fully operational state since it has been well preserved. The lock was one of twenty-six in the Shenango Division and was constructed in September of 1836 at a cost of \$9,210. The lock lies along the east bank of the Shenango River about seventy-five yards from the bridge situated on High Street. Access to the lock is due to the tow-path which runs parallel to the river on the opposite side of the lock. Although an excessive amount of growth has covered up a good deal of the stone work, the walls



A Remnant of the Past.

of the lock have shifted. The stone work itself is by far one of the more fascinating features of the lock. Each stone was cut to precise measurements and simply laid in place with no mortar or any other type of adhesive material to insure stability. The lock is approximately one hundred and forty years old and eighty-five percent of it is still intact.

The eight foot stone walls at Sharpsville can be considered a remarkable feat of craftsmanship, but even more significant they reflect the past history of Mercer County exemplifying the tremendous role that the canal played in the development of this area.

The canal in following the east side of the Shenango River, makes an almost perfect horseshoe curve; it follows a northwesterly direction just past the main part of the town, where it turns toward the east and then comes toward the south. As it started on its southern curve, the canal joined the river by way of a head-lock. The river offered better means of transportation, as there were no gradients to overcome. The river then took another sweeping curve, heading almost directly north. While in this direction, the canal, still in the river bed, entered the Pymatuning Township. Swinging toward the east and coming into more hilly territory, the canal left the river bed about a mile west of the village of Clarksville.

The canal, as it left the borough of Clarksville, flowed directly to the east. The Shenango River had a large bend in it and the canal, of course, had to follow the water supply. About five miles to the east,



Part of the "Old Lock" in Sharpsville.



Well Preserved After 140 Years.

the canal and river then turned back toward the north for a mile or so and then toward the northwest. At the bend of the river, there was one of the most industrial towns of the canal in Mercer County. The village of Big Bend, located in the township of Jefferson, was the site of one of the pioneer iron works of Mercer County. Nearly all the merchants for the county seat passed along the canal to this point, and there reloaded on to wagons to be carried by wagon road to Mercer.

The canal re-entered the river bed a mile or so to the north of Big Bend and continued its way toward Erie. In this northward direction, the canal left Jefferson Township and entered that of Delaware. As the river made another jog toward the northwest, the canal again became slackwater, leaving the bed of the river on the east side, as usual. The first hamlet to be reached in this township was that of Delaware Grove. The canal didn't cut through the village, but was to the west above it. From the point that the canal came out of the river bed, Delaware Grove is directly east. With the abandonment of the canal and the establishment of a railroad some distance away, the busi-



The Ebb and Flow of History.

ness drawn out of Delaware Grove, and it is now only a reminiscence of its former prosperity. Flowing in a northwesterly direction, the canal re-entered Pymatuning Township in the extreme northeast corner. It then turned to the north into Hempfield Township.

There was only one good-sized village at the time of the construction of the canal through Hempfield Township, the town of Greenville. The canal followed the east bank of the Shenango River to the junction of the Little Shenango. It was at this point that the canal had its second terminus, for construction on the canal ended at this point in 1838. With the completion of part of the Shenango division, the canal commissioners placed the remaining 18.5 miles, that is, to Conneaut Lake under contract in the same year.

The canal as it approached the village was on the east side of the Big Shenango River; and after passing through the town, coming to the north part, it crossed the Little Shenango Creek, and followed it on its way north, thus leaving the Shenango River after following it and using its water supply for the distance of 91.75 miles. It was thought best to follow the Little Shenango Creek to the mouth of the Crooked Creek, a distance of 3.75 miles.

After leaving the Shenango River, the canal followed the Little Shenango to a point just northeast of Greenville and then entered the creek bed. It then swung to the north, following the bed of the river to the north of the Crooked Creek, located in Sugar Grove Township.

For over twenty years the canal was the chief means of transportation here in the Mercer County. During most of that time it was useful for passenger traffic as well as freight, but its great service consisted in its use for transporting coal, iron ore, and merchandise in and out of the county. As can be seen from the half ruined sections of the canal which still exists,



Cattle Now Graze on the Ancient Canal Bed With the Towpath Seen on the Left.

the channel was not a large one, with the average boat carrying only sixty-five tons. But the presence of this navigable stream, through which boats passed up and down for the greater part of the year, gave such a boost to the activities of Mercer County as nothing had since the start of any settlement.

The principle highway through the county had been the overland road from New Castle on the south, through Mercer, and north to Meadville. The early caravans of commerce passed along this route, and by their passing many taverns and shops were established. Had nothing occurred to change the way things were, it is quite possible that this central road would still have continued to this day to be the great axis of commerce and intercourse for the Mercer County.

Slow and primitive though the canal boat was, as compared with modern progress, it was far better as a means of transportation for commodities than the ox team and laboring wagon and far more comfortable for passengers than the stagecoach, and except when the roads were especially good, was quite as rapid a conveyance as the stage.

Canal days came to a close soon after the construction of the railroad. Efforts were made to improve the waterway and at the same time continue construction on the railroad. An enlargement was proposed but never undertaken. In 1871 the aqueduct that conveyed the waters of the canal over Elk Creek was destroyed by accident, and the railroad refusing to repair the damage left the canal abandoned. In Sharon a railroad runs along the old embankment of the canal. In some places where it ran alongside the river all traces have been washed away, and only here and there are to be seen unmistakable evidences of the old route which once played such an important part in the affairs of Mercer County.

MIDDLESEX A MECCA FOR MANY

by Dorothy L. Massey

"Where there is no vision, the people perish"

Proverbs 29:18a

No Chronicle of American black people would be complete without substantial emphasis on their religious activities. The story of the vision, founding, purchase and development of the Church of God Campgrounds in West Middlesex, Pennsylvania, and one of the religious men who was a pioneer of this development, may be designated as one chapter of such a history.

Mr. Daniel Sowers Phillips of Wansack Road, R.D. 1, West Middlesex, Pennsylvania, one of these pioneers, was born in Elizabeth, Pennsylvania in



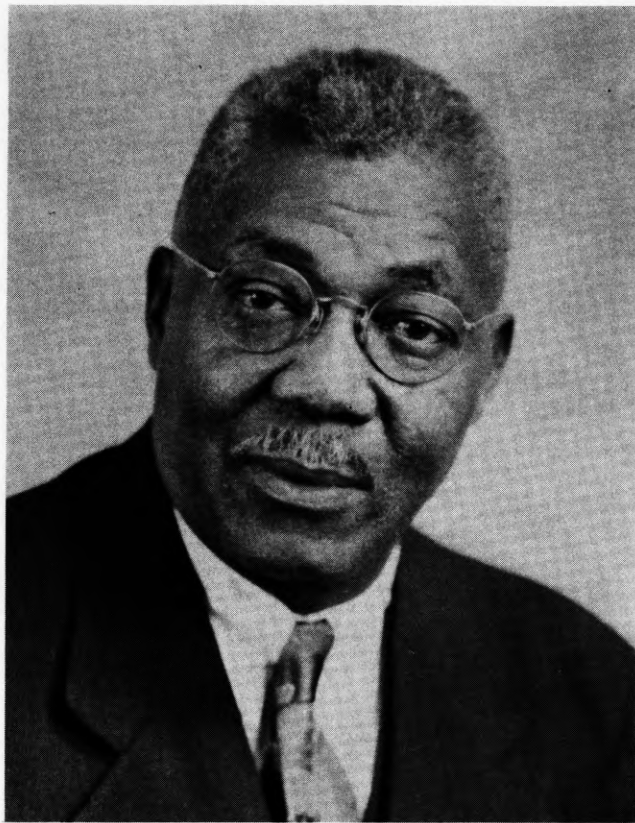
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Sowers Phillips

1891. He came to the Shenango Valley in 1909, and began working in the tin mill for one dollar and seventy-five (1.75) a day, residing in the North Flats area in Sharon. Mr. Phillips remembers the great flood of 1913, when he had to vacate his home on Franklin and Vine in Sharon because of the high waters. Although Mr. Phillips could have retired nearly twenty years ago, he is still employed at Mott Robertson Ice Cream Company on Dock Street in Sharon. Of his job he says, "The work is not hard, and Mr. Robertson is a fine man to work for. I've been with him for twenty-nine (29) years."

In 1914 my wife and I were married and have resided in the Valley all of our married lives, raising a family of five boys and two girls. Our older daughter is head nurse at Cumberland Hospital in Brooklyn, New York; our younger is director of Gifted Children Center in Chicago. One of our sons is a personnel man in the Army Ordnance; one, a manager of Federal Tube Plastics in Chicago; one, an employee of the Chamber of Commerce in Rockville, Illinois; and one, a doctor, chief of staff of Kaiser Foundation in Parma, Ohio. Our one son who lives here is principal at Farrell Middle School.



Russell Phillips



Brother James Christman (Founder of Church and Grandfather of Student Writer).

In 1915, wife and I were converted from a life of sin to righteousness and today we are doing our best to please our heavenly Father. Through the instruction we received from a very, very dear lady, Sister Wimbush, (the founder of the Church of God at Cedar Avenue, Sharon, then known as 'The Brothers and Sisters of Love') we learned that there is only one church, the Church of God. You become a member when you repent of your sins, believe on Jesus Christ, and live right."

"We believe that our living for God is one of the Reasons for our good health and our living over four-score years. Another reason is that we have been very conservative in our manner of eating. Wife is very health-conscious. She is careful in her choice of meats and vegetables. We do not use white sugar and white flour products and use very little candy, sweets and starchy foods. We have eaten in this way for over thirty (30) years."

Of his contributions to the local church at Cedar Avenue, Mr. Phillips says, "I organized the church choir and directed it for more than thirty (30) years. Two members, my brother David from Mercer, and Mrs. Amye Young of Sharon, from the old choir are still singing in the choir. For several years I was youth president and trustee and am presently a deacon.

Mr. Phillips reveals how the Campgrounds were envisioned and purchased. "Around 1914 Brother Elisha Wimbush related, to the church on Cedar Avenue, a vision he had several years earlier. One day while hunting Brother Christman came across a farm that looked like the one Brother Wimbush had described to the Church. He took Brother Wimbush out to see it and they came back very enthused for they were sure this was it. His vision was of crowds of happy people worshiping God on a hill where beautiful buildings were among the trees."

In 1916, this small group of churchmen, together with a group from the Church of God in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, closed the deal for the purchase of the one hundred seventeen (117) acres of land located in Shenango Township. The purchase was financed by members pledging sixty (60) dollars per member. This from people earning less than two dollars a day!

Mr. Phillips says he thinks his children's success in life is due to their adapting themselves and their obedience to his way of life when they were at home. He has never known them to use profanity, drink, smoke or conduct themselves in an unseemly way. "Refraining from these things", he says, "adds to life in many ways."



Home of Daniel Phillips, largely built by Mr. Phillips

In August 1917, the first camp meeting was held and every year wife and I have attended. In 1918 the first tabernacle was built and an electrical system which we used until power was made available from the P and O Company."

The talents of the pioneer members were utilized in the building of the campgrounds. The volunteer work Mr. Phillips did there may have given him the confidence to tackle the building of his own house.



Youth Counselors at Summer Camp 1974

In 1940 I began building my present home on Wansack Road, West Middlesex. I bought a little brick schoolhouse of North Buhl Farm Drive, tore it down, and had it hauled out here. My sons and I dug the cellar and laid most of the block. A friend from the mill helped me do the framing from materials salvaged from the schoolhouse and laid the brick. The sheeting, floors, roof, windows, plumbing, wiring, sewer and septic tank I also did with little help. It's not a fancy house, but we live here and like it."



Church Leaders at Convention Time

From the humble beginnings in 1917 the campgrounds have been vastly improved. A new tabernacle valued at over two hundred thousand (200,000) dollars was dedicated in 1974. There are large dormitories, modern kitchen and diningroom facilities, an administration building and many private cottages. The attendance, estimated at over twenty thousand (20,000) has grown so much that the lodging facilities are not adequate. Area hotels, motels and lodges are filled to capacity each year at camp meeting time (eight days in mid-August) with pilgrims to Middlesex. Area restaurants and businesses benefit also.

More important, however, than these physical properties, are the spiritual benefits derived from the meetings. Christian education for all age groups, inspirational singing and preaching, motivation and training for ministers, missionaries and church leaders are but a few. Youth camp sessions have offered worship, Christian education and camping experience to an average of one hundred fifty (150) youngsters each year since 1949. Mr. Phillip's son, Russell C. Phillips, has been Youth Camp Director for seventeen (17) years.



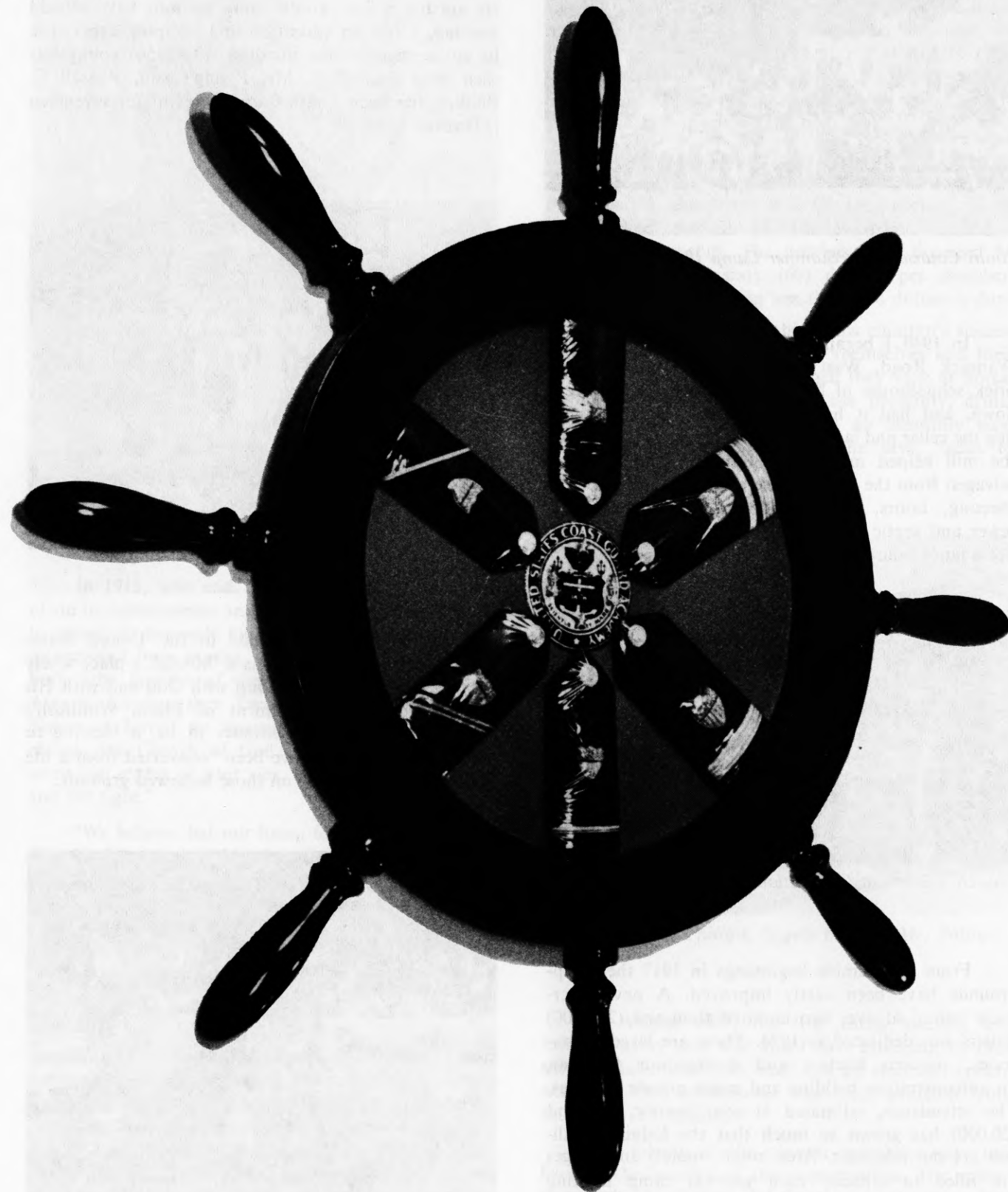
Recreation at Campgrounds

People from every state in the United States think of the Campgrounds as a 'Mecca', a place where they meet and have fellowship with God and with His people. Truly, the fulfillment of Elisha Wimbush's vision has been, and continues to be, a blessing to thousands, for many have been "converted from a life of sin to righteousness" on those hallowed grounds.



Pilgrims at Camp Meeting 1974

SHIP AHOY...



Ship Wheel



Student Writer Admires Spanish Galleon

"FULL STEAM AHEAD"

by Tom O'Brien

Shipbuilding, a hobby not uncommon to children and adults is more than a hobby to Mr. George Bandzak. It's a love affair, a love affair fostered in George's youth during the days of the Great Depression.

George grew up in Farrell, Pennsylvania, on Emerson Avenue, in a mixed neighborhood of Slovaks, Italians, Polish and a few Blacks. It was a difficult period for everyone, and George still has vivid memories of this trying period. "It was Depression and everybody just made the best of what they could," said George, "Everybody was in the same shoes." He remembers how the neighbors from the various ethnic elements in the community would congregate to make handmade carpets or work together in little

shops in the cellar with what few tools they possessed.

George's parents, who were of Slovakian background died while he was quite young, forcing him to quit school in the eleventh grade. Fortunately he secured a job in a shoe shine parlor and survived on seven dollars a week.

At the age of eighteen, George realized a life-long dream. As a youth his great ambition was to join the Navy. "I figured if I joined the Navy it would be a home for me, three meals a day. I wouldn't have to worry about anything, and it would be better than living on seven dollars a week. So I enlisted in the Navy."

From the Great Lakes training center he was transferred to San Francisco where he began a tour of duty on the battleship U.S.S. **Pennsylvania**. This was the beginning of World War II, and the **Pennsylvania** saw plenty of action in the Pacific. Three days before the peace treaty was signed, the **Pennsylvania** was torpedoed by the Japanese at Okinawa. At the conclusion of the war the **Pennsylvania** survived two atom bomb tests but was finally scuttled by aerial torpedoes from our own planes.

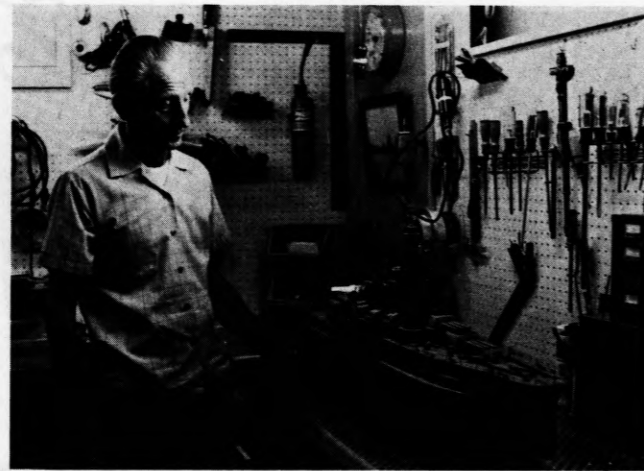
Upon his discharge from the Navy, George returned to Farrell, and then moved to Wheatland, Pennsylvania, where he and his wife reared their son, Donald, who is now a lieutenant in the United States Coast Guard.

As a young boy, George became interested in shipbuilding. His love of shipbuilding stayed with him and then he conceived the idea of reproducing his "home away from home," the U.S.S. **Pennsylvania**. "I always loved the ship, thought she was a great ship. She fought in World War I, World War II; and Captain King — he was captain on it always said that if he lived long enough to fight another war, he would like to have the same crews. It was a bloodthirsty crew."

Initial attempts to reproduce the ship, however, were stymied by George's fruitless attempts to secure blueprints from the Navy. "To get the blueprints was a little tough. I had to write to different harbors and they referred me to somebody else. Finally, I got to Puget Sound, Washington naval yard, and they finally found a set of blueprints where I left the ship." After the ship was sunk, it was removed from the restricted list, and finally George received the prints following an eighteen month attempt to secure them.



Closeup of 4-1/2 ft. Model



Model of U.S.S. **Pennsylvania**

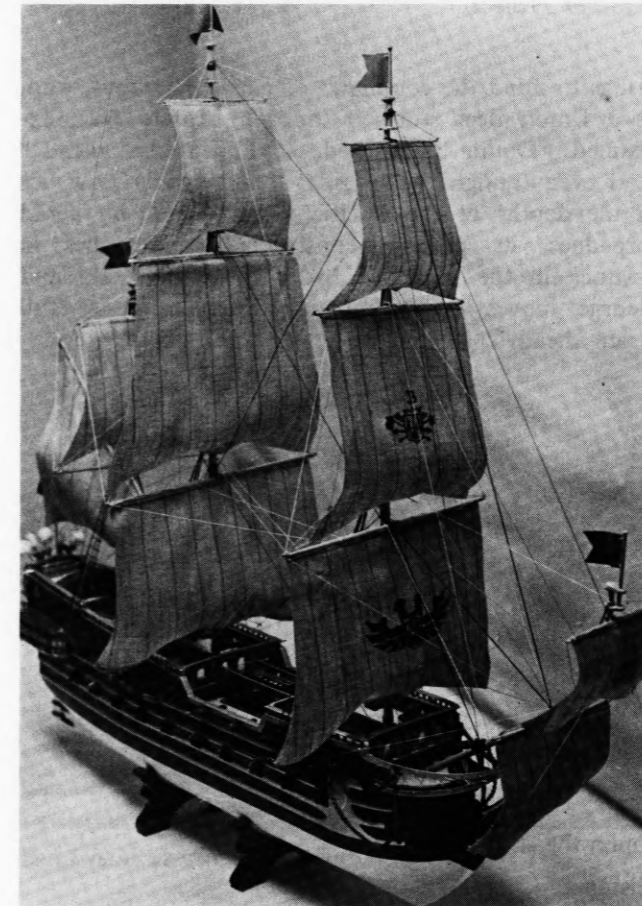
During the next two years and eight months, in his leisure hours away from his job at the Sharon Steel, George patiently reconstructed a model of the ship from scratch. The end result was a four-and-a-half foot reproduction of his beloved battleship, the U.S.S. **Pennsylvania**. The ship is marked by precision workmanship, some things so minute, one would almost need a microscope to see them. Every part is hand carved from white pine and balsa wood. One would wonder how such intricately designed features such as these could be made so precisely by hand. As George explained, "You need a lot of tools and micrometers, inside and outside calipers, exacto blades, knives, thread, tacks and glue." Another important ingredient in reproducing a ship is patience. As he mentioned, "It is very tedious work and you have to have a lot of patience. Using tweezers is not most convenient to work with. It's not like a pipe wrench, and to spend time there with tweezers, you must have a lot of patience." Besides making these ornate little pieces for his ship, he also spent many hours block planing and sanding.

George estimated the cost of making the ship, discounting many tedious hours of labor, about twelve dollars. Asked to put a dollar value on the ship, George responded, "That would be pretty hard to say; to some people it would mean nothing, but to someone who cherishes it as I do, it would mean a lot more. It would be hard to put a dollar value on it." It is obvious that George is one to let his work speak for itself, because research on the part of this writer found that such a reproduction would sell on the commercial market for as much as three to four hundred dollars.

The reproduction of the **Pennsylvania** is by far the most fascinating of George's collection, but not the only one. He has reproduced, in the same manner, beginning from scratch, a model of the **Constitution** and the United States Coast Guard cutter, the **Eagle**.

He has also made other models which he has given away to friends and relatives.

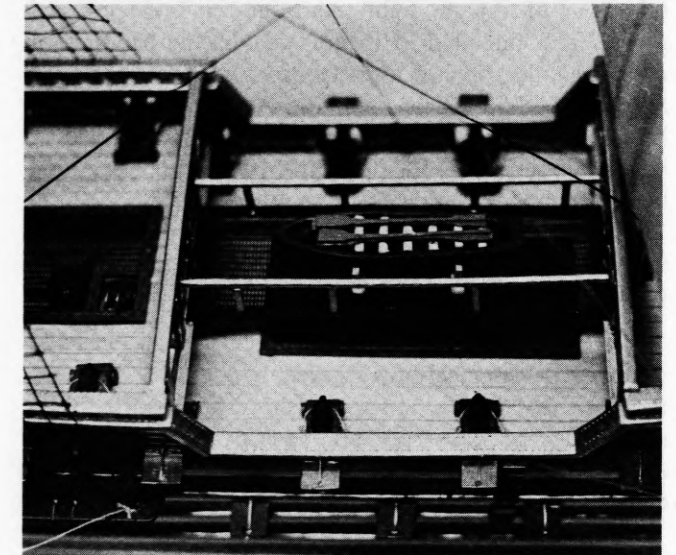
George is not only a skilled craftsman, but is quite familiar with the history and background of his reproductions. "I do a lot of reading; it's interesting." Along with learning the history of his ships, he also searches for many ideas for his models. He keeps abreast of new ideas in shipbuilding by reading books from the Naval Institute in Annapolis, Maryland, to which he subscribes. He also subscribes to **Model Shipbuilding**. Naval shipyards provide new ideas and keep his enthusiasm running high.



Completed Galleon

Even though he keeps abreast of new ideas, he is most fascinated with an era of history dominated by the pirates. "The pirate days were real fascinating because of the way they sailed the ships and handled them. There will never be seamen, even today, as good as the pirates." Currently, he is working on a pirate galleon which is partially assembled and will be almost four feet in length when finished. George said, "It's made after the regular old time galleons.

It's got sixty guns on its main deck, just about everything the old timers had on it. They even had chicken coops on it to store their chickens, so that they'd have something to eat. And it's fancy, I mean they believed in fanciness, a lot of gold and figurines. Anything they found that was worth looking at, they put it on. It wasn't like the modern sailing ships."



Guns on Main Deck

George has often been offered jobs to go into model making for different companies, to build and design, but as he says, "I just never went into it. I've been in the valley and just want to stay here and build my own models. It's tedious work, takes a lot of patience and is more of an art."



Steve at Work on Galleon

Recently, George and his wife had a chance to visit their son in Baltimore and had an opportunity to board two new cutters, **The Winona** and **The Midget**. A future project in George's mind is to reproduce **The Midget**.

George's leisure time has not been confined to shipbuilding, however. Hanging on the wall of his souvenir room is a helmsman wheel, decorated with each new shoulder bar his son has received in the Coast Guard. Also, there is a Conestoga wagon in the form of a night light, made at the great cost of forty cents. Included in future plans is the production of a dirigible. He has already produced one, modeled after the U.S.S. Macon, made in Akron, Ohio. Of this he says, "I engineered it myself, cut it out, stripped it, covered it up with Japanese silkspan, and everything and even had a nozzle on it to fill it up with helium. It was four and half feet long, with a twelve inch diameter in the center and it weighed exactly seven ounces."

Certainly George, a very talented man, has the mind of an engineer, the skilled hands of a surgeon, the patience of Job, and a boyish enthusiasm to build ships. George has truly enjoyed a love affair with ships, which he has transformed into an art. Looking at the classic reproduction of the U.S.S. **Pennsylvania**



Another Project

brings to mind the command of David Farragut, who, as a Union fleet stormed through Mobile Bay, exclaimed, "Damn the torpedoes! Full steam ahead!" And even though the original Pennsylvania now lies in the depths of the Pacific Ocean, sunk by aerial torpedoes, its precision-constructed replica lies in drydock in the home of Mr. George Bandzak, and George moves on with new construction — "full steam ahead."

CHANGELESS TIME

As I stood upon a sandy beach
And looked far out to sea —
The noisy whitecaps rolling in
This message told to me.

Enjoy all this while yet you can
As thousands have before,
Because long after you have gone
These waves will beat upon the shore.

The lighthouse in the distance,
With white and shiny dome,
Ever faithful day and night —
Guides weary travelers home.

The graceful seagulls high above,
Unmindful of the ocean's roar,
Like noisy sentinels on guard,
Fly to and fro across the shore.

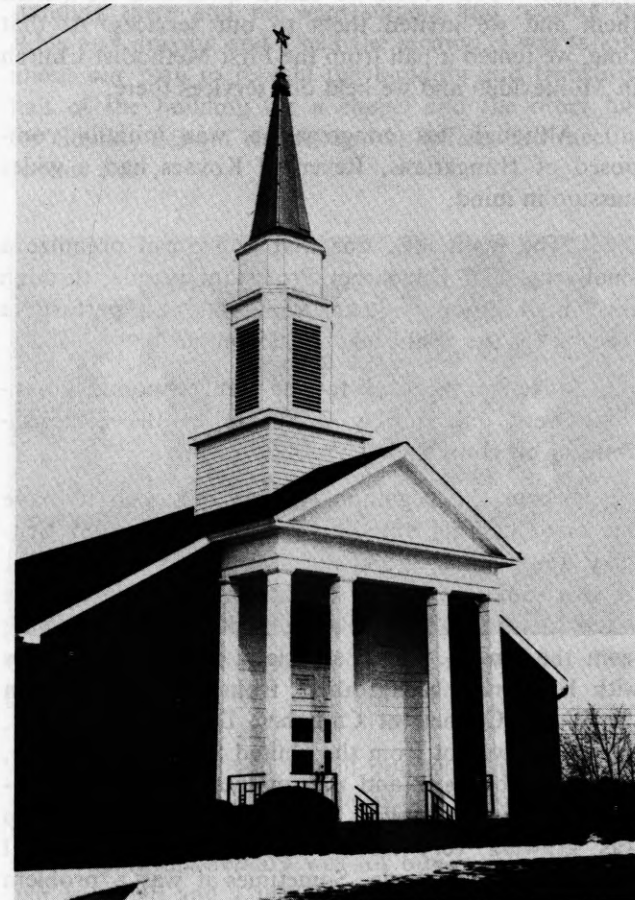
All this beauty has been here
From the very dawn of time.
So truly GOD — not men like me —
Leave footprints on the sands of time.

— John J. Flynn '75

**"I FELT I ACCOMPLISHED WHAT
GOD WAS WANTING OF ME" †**

Reverend Paul Kovacs

by Susan Cornman
Carl Bordy



Bethlehem Presbyterian Church of Sharon, Pa.

Reverend Paul Kovacs, currently pastor the the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Sharon, Pennsylvania, arrived in the Shenango Valley in 1972 in the course of a ministerial career that has spanned twenty years and three continents. Reverend Kovacs, a highly educated and articulate man, has studied, lived or worked in seven countries; he has earned degrees in theology, studied medicine and psychology, and speaks or has studied nine languages. He has decided opinions on the United States and the quality of life he has seen here as compared to the other nations to which his vocation has called him.



Rev. Kovacs' father, Paul Kovacs

Reverend Kovacs was born in Nadudvar, Hungary, on February 14, 1930. Although twelve others in his family were ministers, Reverend Kovacs entered the field only because of the difficulty he and others experienced in being accepted in Hungarian universities.

"When I entered into the seminary, I had no vocation as you call vocation, really. I entered it because, in 1948, when I graduated from high school, the Communist Party was very strong and the only governing party in the land. So they even decided who

would go to college. So every university had its lists of whom to permit to enter.

It was all big for the communists so they pushed only the children of the proletarian families to the universities. It was difficult for this reason to enter the university. So my father told me to go to the seminary.

Reverend Kovacs spent the first two years in Theology studying several languages and subjects which were to him "not very interesting." But he completed his exams and "learned how to play billiards very well also."

"When I really got interested, that was in the end of the second year and in the third year. Then I felt that I had the vocation and then I decided that I would become a minister."

"I finished with my theological studies in 1953. Then for one year, I was an assistant minister in Budapest. I received my Master's Degree from Theology in February, 1955."

Reverend Kovacs decided to leave Hungary in 1956 during the revolution because "there was no future for us there". After leaving Hungary, he went first to Austria where he worked at a refugee camp, "visiting people and holding services." During that time, he received a scholarship from the Reformed University in Amsterdam, Holland.

Reverend Kovacs and his family spent the next four and a half years in Holland where he studied to become a missionary. While there, he studied medicine and mission history and mission science.

Then, in 1960, Reverend Kovacs was offered his first mission.

"I received a letter from the Secretary of the Federation of the World Reformed and Presbyterian Churches asking me if I would be interested to go to Uruguay to organize a church. I answered him that I might be interested but I would like to know more about this. So he sent me an airplane ticket and one morning I went to Switzerland and we talked over this Uruguayan situation. The same day I decided to go to Uruguay. After three months, we left Amsterdam to Uruguay."

Reverend Kovacs received something of a shock when he and his family arrived in Montevideo, Uruguay. He had been told by the Secretary of the Federation of the World Reformed and Presbyterian Churches that there were four or five hundred people who would like to form the first Reformed and Presbyterian Church in the history of Uruguay.

"So in 1960, I believe it was on April 28, when we arrived in Montevideo, there were waiting seven people at the harbor. And when we arrived they told me that inviting you, it was a lie because we don't

know for sure if there is four or five hundred people here, but we are here and we will work with you and we are happy to receive you."

In spite of the rude awakening the Kovacs received when they arrived in Montevideo, they remained there for ten years, during which time the last three of the five Kovacs children were born. Many problems would arise during their stay in Uruguay.

"The first important thing for us as we arrived in Uruguay was how to get members in our church. So the first thing we did, we got to the telephone book and we tried to find out the Hungarians through the telephone book. Then we called them and we visited them and we invited them to our services. At that time, we rented a hall from the First Methodist Church in Montevideo and we held our services there."

Although his congregation was initially composed of Hungarians, Reverend Kovacs had a wider mission in mind.

"The main idea was that as we can organize a small group of Hungarian Protestant people, through this small group we can reach out and perform a mission for the Spanish-speaking people."

Reverend Kovacs found that economic conditions were not entirely favorable to the establishment of his church.

"From the beginning, it was our wish to have our own building but the financial situation in Uruguay was a disaster and our money was not enough. In that time there was a terrible inflation. So we asked for money and help from outside of Uruguay; from the United States, especially from the churches with Hungarian backgrounds, from Europe and from the World Council of Churches. During these years, the money we got from the United States and Europe, we put in the bank and that maintained its value because it was in dollars. But even the membership was growing very slowly because of the financial situation of the people. Sometimes it was a problem to come to church because of the bus rates and tickets and people were not accustomed to go to church like here in America. So we had to bring the religion to these people and not the people to the church. We organized, in several areas, Bible Study groups in family houses and they, in the family, invited neighbors and relatives together. As they became stronger in their faith and in Christian knowledge, then they came to our meetings and our services."

But Reverend Kovacs persevered. Combining faith and hard-nosed practicality, he finally succeeded in acquiring a permanent home for his church.

"After about six years, we had the amount that we were able to look around to find some building or property for our need. So we saw around one

hundred fifty to one hundred eighty different kinds of buildings and properties, but our money was not enough, not even for a garage. One day we found a big building, a ruined big building which was a meeting house for the White Party in Uruguay. And, as they lost that year the election, they sold their house. Our money was enough for the down payment and in two years' period, we had to pay the whole amount."

"That was a very hard time. The building was totally ruined and I never will forget the first worship service. The people came together in high plaster on the ground; it reached almost our knees. We were standing there and we were singing and reading the Bible and praying and I had the sermon. I was talking about our plan to rebuild the building and transform half of the building for a chapel and the other half for Sunday School rooms, and an office, and meeting rooms, etc.



Church Building bought in 1966 (Montevideo, Uruguay)

So this man said that if you will ever finish this plan you talk about with this people here, then there is a God in Heaven and so he left. You can imagine how encouraging this remark was for our people. They began to alugh and I felt they believed what this man said. In the first moment I became very angry, but then I realized that maybe this man was right; that maybe I would never finish my plan with these people. I don't know why I said, 'Now from this day forward, I won't deliver to you a sermon for a year. And our worship service, Sunday by Sunday, will be here in our church - a short Bible reading and a short prayer — and everybody should roll up his sleeves and work and that will be our worship service every Sunday. And I won't ever put on my robe until this building will be finished and we will do it a year from now.'

Even though Reverend Kovacs himself had doubts about the congregation's ability to fulfill the pledge he had made for them, the work was completed in one year.

"It was a very hard year. Every day I looked up people and I pointed to people that now I know you are not working tomorrow or you are retired and I will pick you up on this day at this time and with my car I went after people. I put in my car four or six people every day and I took them to rebuild this building."

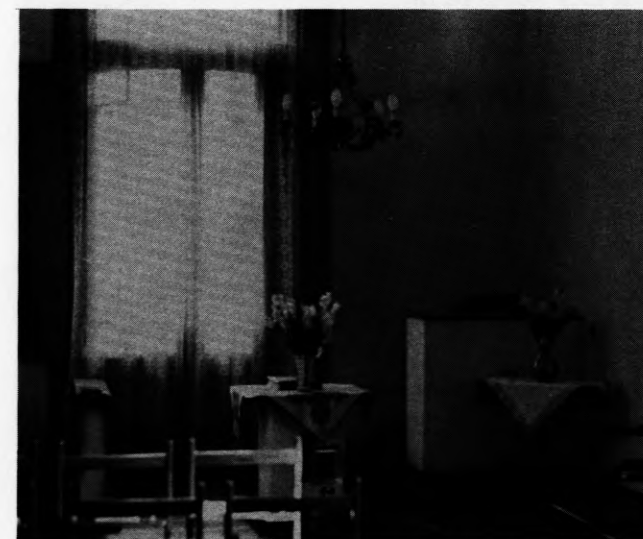
It was ruined completely. There was no electricity, the water pipes were robbed and taken away and first we had to install the electricity line and the water, then the plaster on the walls. And we had to take out walls and we had to fix the roof because the water came in and we have to put in three bathrooms . . . et cetera."

"This poor man who was working on the roof got a heart attack and after two or three days, he died. Then his wife cursed me because she told me that I killed her husband. Naturally, I was the one who had to hold the funeral service for him. And in the service I told that, yes he died and he was very faithful to his church and we have to have the example he showed us and this would be a beautiful death for all of us if we would die in duty."

"Well, in short, after a year we finished rebuilding our church building. This was in 1968 — December 8th."

Many things American churches take for granted were luxuries to the Uruguayan Congregation.

"Our church was very primitively built. For example, the pulpit was made from the wall we took out from the building. We couldn't even dream of an organ. I wrote to the Budapest Seminary and asked a friend to tape several hymns. A choir was singing the Psalms and other hymns they taped for us and we used this tape for our worship services."



Church after being rebuilt in Montevideo, Uruguay.

"There the materials are very expensive. I sometimes had to smuggle materials which we couldn't buy in Uruguay across the borders of Brazil and Argentina. It was, for example, impossible to get velvet in Uruguay and we needed it to cover the Lord's Table. So I went to Brazil and I bought it and under my jacket — I looked like I weighed two hundred pounds — I snuck it into Uruguay."

"We also had to paint the inside of the whole building. I went to Argentina and explained about our struggles at a Sunday service and twenty-five gallons of paint was donated to us. In order to bring it back to Uruguay, I had to bribe the custom's official and he was happy about it."

In spite of difficulties, the church did grow steadily.

"In the beginning, it was very difficult to get people together but during this seven or eight years we worked there, we had two hundred and thirty-five membership — families — so that was, if we include the children, a good size of a church. We felt it would be time, after six years, that we should have our first bilingual services. So then we began our Spanish services also."

"Once we even tried to have an Evangelism Service. At that time we were very good friends with the Mennonites' Seminary there. And they promised me to come, the students from the Mennonite Seminary, with a choir and with guitars to help with this event. So we visited one hundred fifty families in a week. Now, how many people do you think came to that Sunday service? Two! And we three pastors and a choir with guitars and everything were waiting to begin this big, well-planned and well-organized evangelism service. And two people came after a whole week of visitation and inviting and we left in their houses Christian literature and everybody promised that they would be there."

"But their promises, you have to know these people because if they say that tomorrow morning I will be there, you can be sure that they won't be there. They just say it to be nice because they are very nice but they never do the thing they promise."

Reverend Kovacs' missionary work was not confined to Uruguay alone.

"I was charged also to visit the Protestant and Reformed people in Paraguay. So at least twice a year, I went and visited them in Asuncion, Paraguay. Oh, that was a beautiful city and there were about thirty-five families whom I visited in that time and I spent every time a week there, having services and Lord's Supper and social events with them. They were very nice and very thankful for every visit."

"I visited Argentina too, together with the pastor

*charitable institution for the aged and orphans.

of Buenos Aires who asked me to help in his mission. Now, in northern Argentina, there is a territory — its name is Chaco. Now Chaco is a province with the territory of half of Pennsylvania, and in that territory lived a thousand Hungarian families. There were only two towns in this big area and a thousand families living in farms scattered in the whole area. So if I visited a family, it took me a day to visit one family and when it was the rainy season, the mud was so high that it was impossible to go with cars. So we had to go with horses and wagons. There they lived in very primitive circumstances. They had food planted; their main harvest was cotton. About forty or fifty years ago when they began this work, they lived in a cave they made in the ground. The children were born there also. Little by little they had enough money to buy the materials to build a little house or something. They received their ground for nothing from the state. They just had to buy the wire to fence it and how long wire you could buy was how much land you could have."

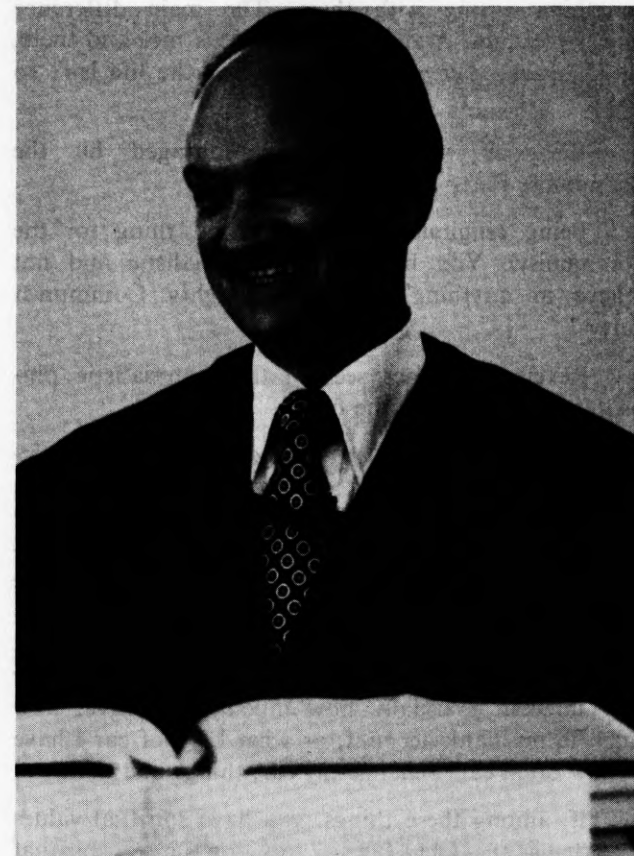
Reverend Kovacs left Uruguay because he felt his work there was done.

"I felt, after ten years of work, that I accomplished what God and the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches was wanting of me. I strongly felt that there had to come another minister who would take over."

Reverend Kovacs' church had been supported for seven years through missionary funds from the United States. This was instrumental in his decision to come to America.

"In 1970, November 30, we arrived at Kennedy Airport and the President of the Calvin Synod of the United Church of Christ was waiting for us. He told me that in that time there was only one vacancy and that was in the Johnstown, Windber and Vintondale area in Pennsylvania. In Vintondale, only Hungarian services; in Windber, I had to deliver every other Sunday, a sermon there in Hungarian and English; and in Johnstown, every Sunday."

"So the same day we went to Ligonier, Pennsylvania first. There is a *Bethlen Home there for Hungarians and we stayed there for a month. During that month, the first week — from Johnstown — the pulpit committee came and told me that they needed a bilingual minister who can talk Hungarian and English. Now I never spoke English before that time in my whole life but I told him — why not, I will have your English sermon for next Sunday. So in this first week when we arrived in the United States, I was studying day and night an English sermon, half of which I didn't understand myself. But I delivered the sermon. After the sermon, they had a meeting and I was waiting outside. They came and told me that you know you were better than the other man who



Rev. Paul Kovacs

was serving here for five years. Then I became a minister there for three little churches."

Reverend Kovacs remained in Johnstown for a year and a half and then assumed his present position as minister of the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Sharon.

"Naturally to come over to the Presbyterian Church, you have to have the requirements — filling out the forms and sending them to the United Presbyterian Church to the main office and I had to appear before the Ministerial Relationship Committee of the Presbytery. Then, because I came from the United Church of Christ, they had to revalidate my diploma."

"The Bethlehem Presbyterian Church was originally a Hungarian church. They were organized in 1904. In 1950, when they sold their building in Farrell, they came to Sharon and built this beautiful building here."

"In the old times when the Hungarian people came to the New World, as I assume that the other ethnic groups felt the same way, they got together because they needed each other. They couldn't talk the language first of all, and they had their social and congregational life together — that was all in Hungarian — and they had suppers and dinners with the typical Hungarian foods."

During the time when the Hungarian Presbyterian Church was in Farrell, they kept their heritages more effectively and strongly than they do it right now. In that time they celebrated their Hungarian holidays and they had a dance group and grape dances, Hungarian plays with Hungarian costumes. They were taught to talk, read and write in Hungarian. I think that that school was very effective because the second and third generation in our church today, after fifty years, are still talking about the Hungarian school where they learned how to talk and write Hungarian. Even their catechism was in Hungarian at that time."

After seventy years, the Hungarian heritage, although still noticeable, has waned.

"In the church life, we don't have any Hungarian tradition, except one Hungarian song we have every Sunday morning in the worship service, that's all. We have around sixteen or eighteen people who comes once a month, every second Sunday, to a separate Hungarian service for those people who speak Hungarian."

"About twice a year we have the traditional chicken paprikas dinner. We butchered a pig lately, about a year ago, and made kolbasz and hurka (liver pudding). And right this year before Christmas, we made and sold Hungarian kolbsz (sausage)."

His church no longer observes activities which require wearing the Hungarian national costume.

"Not here in our church; although in the Holy Trinity Catholic Church, they have sometimes Hungarian programs with costumes and children will come forward in Hungarian costumes. The last time I saw them was when Cardinal Mindszenty was here in the Shenango Valley." Likewise, few Hungarian holidays are celebrated.



Rev. Kovacs (at mike) greeting Cardinal Mindszenty (seated) when he visited Shenango Valley.

"Naturally we have our historical holidays. But the only one we celebrate here in the United States is on October 23, when the revolution was in 1956 in Hungary."

"March 15, that was the greatest holiday for the country. That was for Kossuth. In 1848, he was a great freedom fighter in Hungary. Also, August 20, in honor of St. Stephen, the first Christian King of Hungary."

"The Christian holidays are the same as here, except at Christmas we had two days' celebration: The First Christmas Day and The Second Christmas Day. Both are celebrated in church with services. In America, they celebrate Christmas Eve with a Candlelight Service and we didn't have that in Hungary."

"Now in this time, the national holidays in Hungary are different than they were before World War II because it was then everything free. The whole country was free and now the holidays are obligatory for the people, especially the Communist holidays when the Russians took over. They have to celebrate every year that day and everybody has to go out in the street and celebrate because if you won't be there, then you might lose your job or more."

Reverend Kovacs feels there are differences in the quality of personal life in America as opposed to Communist Hungary.

"First of all, there is no freedom and that means even for the family there is no freedom because the individual life is controlled by the Communist Political Party. So the life is under pressure; not only the individual life, but the family life. There are several requirements that the State expects of the family: they have to attend several courses, for example, on how to become a faithful member of the Communist Party or such crazy things. And they have to attend these meetings and through these meetings and through the control of the Communist Party, the family life is controlled also. So the life style is such that they have to close the doors and the windows to live their own private family lives, because they are afraid that the Communist Party would find



Rev. Paul Kovacs and his mother, Mrs. Judith Nagy, from Budapest Hungary.

something wrong with them. The main difference here is freedom. And freedom in life is nice and there, (in Hungary) there isn't freedom and the life isn't so nice."

Religious practices are discouraged by the Communist Party in Hungary.

Being religious, it's not a good thing for the Communists. You have to be materialistic and not believe in anything, just the almighty Communist Party."

Reverend Kovacs sees in the materialistic philosophy a warning for the future.

"Some people in the United States are practicing religion because of custom, because of what would people say if I don't belong to a church or something like that; and such people are materialistic to a point. And maybe even the other people whose lives are involved with other comfortable luxuries — cars, refrigerators, houses — they work for it and they spend their money for such things and their only interest is usually how much do I have, how much in my bank account, or what kind of car I have or how often can I change my car, things like that."

If, among these things, you have spiritual values too, that's all right, but if you don't have spiritual values, only material values, that is wrong then. I think that right now in this country that is the great sign for everybody that they have to change their attitude, their life style, their philosophy on how to live in the United States and what are the values that will maintain this country."

Reverend Kovacs feels that retention of tradition and heritage is vitally important to American life.

"I think personally that I would try to practice in my family, as long as I lived, to maintain all the heritage I have and I brought over to this New World, because as long as we have our heritage, which is rich in a thousand years' background, our lives are more valuable, more rich, more bountiful and if we mix our lives with our new values from our new country, that will contribute more effectively to our life in America."

THE BOCK STORY

by

Steve Bock

INTRODUCTION

If you can, try and imagine yourself at the age of twenty-six with a wife and child. Your country has just lost the war and you've lost your home and everything that you've saved for twenty-six years. You have to start from scratch again, so what do you do now? Where do you go?



The Old Country

Other than the United States there isn't another country in the world that you would consider as "the land of opportunity". Throughout the years immigrants have been attracted to America more than any other country because it is still the land that offers a better life.

In this story I'll be telling you what life was like for my parents in the old country and how they came to the decision to come to America. What they found once they got here and how they feel about it now.

John and Helen Bock were both born in a small town in Yugoslavia and came to America in November, 1951. John described their life in Krndia:

"We had about 1,500 people in our town. The town consisted mostly of farm workers. No one in town was rich in the money sense, but the more land you had the better off you were. The poorer people in town who didn't have any land would go and work for the people who had a lot of land. We had tailors, shoemakers and wagon-makers who would make the wagons that we would use everyday. We had blacksmiths who shod the horses. The barbers didn't have



Sweethearts

barber shops. They would get up early in the morning and pack their briefcases and go to their customer's houses. They would go from house to house and give you a shave or a haircut and so on. Also, they wouldn't get a dime for this. They would get paid once a year and that was about a hundred kilograms of wheat. A hundred kilograms is about 250 pounds. That was their fee.

We didn't have any electricity or radio, TV or even newspapers in this town. The only way that we would get any news at all was by this man that the town hired. He would go down the street with his drum and beat it until the people would come out. Once the people came out, he would stop beating the drum and announce the news. If there wasn't any news, he just wouldn't come around."

John then talked about the educational system in Yugoslavia.

"I started just like the kids started here. There was no kindergarten. When I started, I was six and a half years old and I went through four grades. In first and second grade, they let us speak German, but in the third grade they started teaching us a Yugoslavian language which was either Serbian or Croatian. It was very strict. Whipping was a daily routine:

Helen also went to school for four years: "Yes, I went to school for four years, too. But I didn't have to learn Croatian. Just German. When I went to school, learning Croatian wasn't important anymore. I graduated when I was eleven years old and I had to go and work in the fields and help with the chores at home also."

Farming was the main source of income in this Yugoslavian town. John quit school to work on his father's farm:

"My dad needed me to help him work the fields. We were just poor farm people and we couldn't afford to hire anyone. If you had your own kids, you never hired any-

one because eventually they would take over the place and you had to learn to run it yourself. You had to raise corn, wheat and oats for the animals, and potatoes. You could sell what you had left over. Like eggs, you wouldn't get up in the morning and eat an egg a day. You would use the eggs in cooking, such as noodles and strudel and stuff like that. The balance you would sell. We had these ladies that we called eggwomen. They would walk with their baskets down the street and call: "The eggwoman is here." Then we would go out and sell them. Eggs were sold by the piece, one or two, not by the dozen.

The other products . . . this you would pack upon your wagon, hitch your horses and take it to town. It took about eight hours to get to this town. Once you got there, you would sell the goods. Then, while you were in town, you would buy cloth or fabric in order to make the clothing you wore. You never bought ready-made pants or shirts. The women always made them."

John recalled that the men and women in Krndia had their own work to do:

"In our area, women were treated like slaves. The livestock we raised consisted of horses, cows, pigs, chickens, geese, ducks and sheep. The horses, cows and the sheep were the responsibility of the men. The women took care of the pigs, geese, ducks and chickens. They had to feed and clean them. The women would have to go out to the fields with the men and work there all day. When they got back they would have to cook dinner, take care of the animals I mentioned, and clean house. The women had to do a lot more than the men. The man was the boss of the house and they both had their duties and that's the way it was. That was tradition. You could not, as a boy, go out and feed the chickens, geese, or ducks because if another boy saw you he would go and tell everyone that you were a sissy. You did your job and the women did their job and there was no changing."

Helen added: "And you never saw a man in the kitchen cooking or anything. That was strictly woman's work."

My parents did all the farming. We just had a small farm and didn't need anyone else. They would get up at four in the morning and go out to the fields, and they wouldn't come back till late at night when it was dark. When I got out of school, I started going out to the fields. I would do little things before I got out of school, but once I graduated I had to go out every day with my parents. I didn't have to do the heavy work but I had to help with the little things."

Their way of life was soon to change. In 1941, Hitler invaded Yugoslavia. John described the change:

"People were happy and content in our town because we just didn't know a better life. Even though we were poor, we felt that we were rich. Then came the war and a lot of sad things happened to the town. It all started when Hitler took over Yugoslavia back in April, 1941. The following year, in 1942, he called on all the German people throughout Yugoslavia to serve in the German army. Everyone that was from the age of eighteen to forty had to serve in the army and there was no getting out of it. Since Hitler took over Yugoslavia in 1941, many of the people who were still loyal to the king started an underground movement. We called them the Bandits. Tito, who is the leader of Yugoslavia today, was also the leader of the Bandits. In time, the Bandits grew stronger and stronger and eventually became stronger than the Germans in Yugoslavia. They burnt down our town in 1943 and from then on, our people just scattered and went every which way. In 1944, when the Russian front was in Rumania and coming closer, we had to move out. Ninety-nine per cent of our people moved out. Many went to Germany and many went to Austria. If you stayed, it meant being ruled by Communism. My family packed up the wagon and went to Austria."

Helen remembered: "Yes, but you forgot something. During the war, we had a ring around our town and at nights we all had to stay together inside the ring to sleep. We weren't even allowed to sleep in our houses because every night, practically, we would be attacked. Our soldiers would chase everybody in the ring every night and sometimes there would be almost fifty people sleeping in one house. Sometimes when the Bandits would attack, they would bore holes through one house to another so that no one would see them until they came real close to the bunkers."

John continued: "There were hardships and, like I said before, if you were eighteen to forty you had to join the army. My dad was forty, so he had to go and when he did, I became the boss at home. I had to fill his shoes. That was in 1942. I was only sixteen and a half and it was hard on me because I had to stay in one of those bunkers. We had to stand guard in these bunkers. There were four or five of us in each bunker and we had to stand guard for two hours. I would stand guard from twelve 'til two and then I would have to get up at four. That was just too much for a young person. All the boys my age had to do this. I wasn't the only one. Those left in the town were just the people over forty and under eighteen. Everyone else was gone."

During this time, the Bandits were attacking the town of Krndia. John said:

"The underground movement, Tito's Bandits, were attacking us. They were attacking and terrorizing any German town in Yugoslavia. They were all mixed; women and men, Servians mostly, Croatians, even Germans. They were any nationality. Germans fighting against Germans. Everyone who didn't know what they were going to do went with them. In the daytime, we went and worked our fields just like any other normal day. We would see them walking on the streets. We knew who they were, but they wouldn't do anything in the daytime. Tito's

Bandits fought only in Yugoslavia. They terrorized the people"

Helen said: "Just in the evening they would come and attack the town. They would steal the peoples' clothes and, of course, kill. We were watching while they killed my second neighbor one night. They beat him to death because he had a gun and they wanted it. He told them that he didn't have one, but they knew that he did so they killed him right there. They burned his house down and everything."

When John turned eighteen, he was called to serve in the German Army:

"I got called in 1944 and I wasn't too happy about going because everyone knew that Germany was going to lose the war. But there was nothing I could do, so I put on the uniform and gun and went. At first we fought in Yugoslavia when we had to go fight Tito's Bandits".

Helen said: "When he turned eighteen, he was called into the Germany army and he had to fight in Yugoslavia again. Afterwards, he had to go to Hungary on the Russian front. Most of the people in Yugoslavia had to leave because the front was coming closer. So, it was either be killed or move out. We took just what we could carry, everything else had to be left behind. Because of the Russian front they were even calling boys that were only seventeen years old. After we left the town, it was all torn and burnt down. There were just a few houses left."

John was wounded twice during the time he fought in the German army:

"I was in the northeast part of Yugoslavia fighting the Bandits. It was close to Hungary's border. I was wounded then and I had to go to a hospital in Germany. I was there for about three or four weeks and in the meantime I had found out that the people in my town had left. When I recovered I was given two weeks leave. I asked this officer



Army Duty

what should I do with my vacation and where would I go. He asked me if I had any folks and I told him that I didn't know where they were. He then gave me three days extension on my leave and told me to go to Munich, Germany, and Vienna and Graz in Austria. He gave me addresses to go where they had the names of families and where they went to. So first I went to Munich and didn't find anything there. Then I went to Vienna and I found out where they went. They had gone to an area close to Graz in Austria. It took me two days to find them

there. By this time, my vacation had run out and on New Year's Day, 1945, I had to go back.

I got back to my base and they told me that my unit was gone. I thought that they would send me back to Yugoslavia where my unit was, but instead they put me on the Russian front. The fighting was a lot different on the front. Instead of facing just one hundred or two hundred men, you had the whole front and you never knew how many there were. We had trenches all along the front. The outfit I was in was a mortar outfit. We had eight centimeter mortars. In the beginning, there wasn't too much action, but then in April the Russians put on the offensive and that's when it really started going. We just kept on backing up and I was wounded for the second time. It happened in April, just a month before the war was over. I was only there for four months before I was wounded. From January to April. So when I got wounded I was transferred to Austria. I was shot in the shoulder and it came very close to my lung and it came out through my shoulder blade. I thought that I was going to lose my arm, but thank God, it came out all right."

World War II ended in May of 1945 and John spent the next thirteen months in a P.O.W. camp:

"On May 8th, the war was over and I was still in the hospital. I was released in June. In order to go home, we had to have discharge papers and we had to go to a P.O.W. camp. The reason for having the discharge papers was that if you didn't, you wouldn't be able to get a job. So we had to go to a P.O.W. camp and they held me there for thirteen months. Just because I was in the German army I suppose, I don't know for sure. We were constantly starving. It got so bad that most of the young guys like me — I was only nineteen — had to use two sticks to walk with. I couldn't walk without them. The older men were a little stronger and didn't need them. In time, the food and

we got better. We finally saw some beans in our soup and after a while, we were allowed to receive visitors.

I never expected anyone to visit me, but one day the guard came and told us that there was a woman out at the fence and if anyone knows John Bock. Whenever a visitor would come, it would spread life a flash fire. They would spread the word around camp and in no time at all, that guy is located. So I heard there was a woman looking for me and I went to the mess hall because we were not allowed to go to the fence and talk to anyone. I looked out through the window and I recognized her, so I called; "Mother", and she asked, "Is that you?" and I answered yes, that it was me. At that time I didn't know if my father and my brother were home from the army and safe, so my first question was if they were all right and luckily they were. She said that everyone was worried about me and I told her not to. The conversation was short and she had a knapsack with some dried meat and bread in it. She was allowed to give it through the gate and then the food was inspected and finally I got it. Everyone was happy that day because we all got a mouthful to eat. Finally, after thirteen months, I got my discharge. I went home and I was one of the happiest guys in Austria.

How my mother knew where I was, well, that was a story. The camp I was in was in Hallein, Austria, and we went to work by train everyday in Salzburg, Austria. We were in boxcars and we would pass two camps who had people who had lost their homes. We could tell, by the way that the people dressed, where they came from. I noticed some people who dressed exactly like the people from my town or that area. The train would go too fast to recognize anyone. Someone got the idea to put their names down on a piece of paper and say I'm so and so and I'm looking for my family. Or if they knew where their family was, they would write and tell someone to send them a line. I don't know why, but we were not allowed

to write letters. How I got this matchbox, I don't know, but I wrote a note and put it inside the matchbox along with a stone. When we went by the camp I threw it out. I still don't know who sent it to my parents but they got the note. That's how my mother found out where I was. It took her about three days and nights to get to the P.O.W. camp. She had a lot of walking to do and she also had to go through a Russian zone. At this time you weren't allowed to just go anywhere when you felt like it. It was very strict. She walked a lot. She went a ways by train, but to prevent the Russians from getting her once she got in their zone, she had to walk over many hills to get to me".



Early Picture of Writer's Parents

After John was released from the P.O.W. camp, he got a job working on a farm for a priest:

"In the meantime, I had plans to get married, which I did in 1947, nearly a year after I was discharged. Then I started to work in the coal mines. We were in Koeflach, Austria. It was close to Graz. We got married on November 11, 1947 and we both started working in the mines."

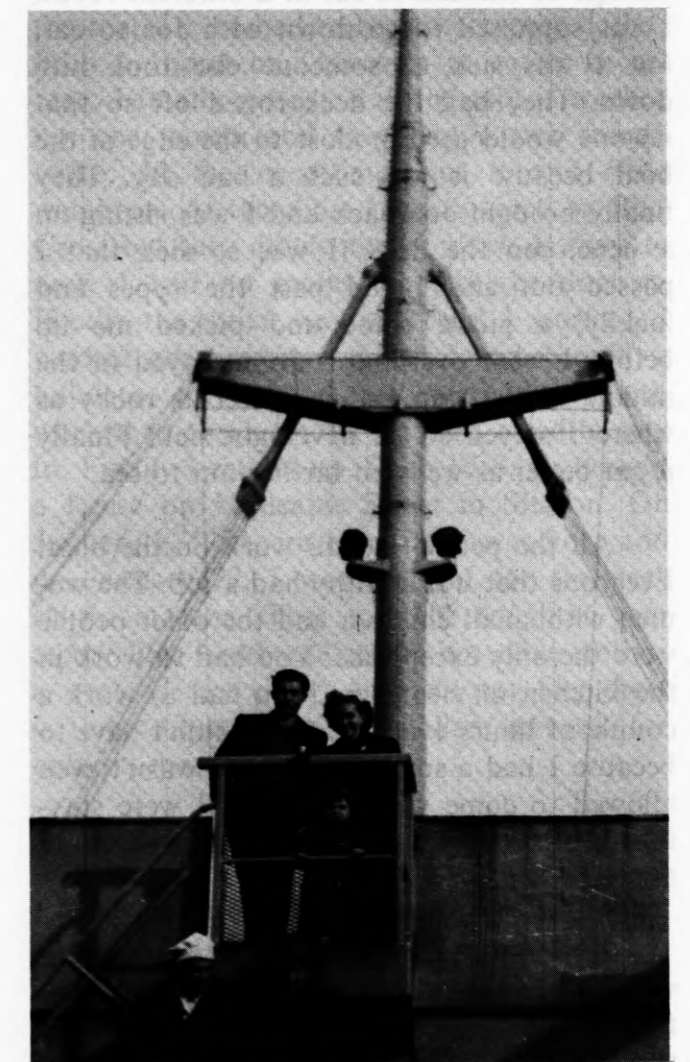
Helen said: "I was only sixteen years old when I started to work in the coal mines. They wouldn't hire anyone under the age of eighteen, but my father was killed in the war and since we had no one to support us, they let me work there. I worked there till our first child was born. The women worked on top of the mines, not down in it. We had to do a little farming and separate the bad coal and do different odd jobs."

It was at this time that John and Helen first talked about coming to America. John recalled:

"I worked in the coal mine for four years until it finally ran out of coal. When this happened I had to go work labor and I didn't like that at all. The job I had was an easy one and a good one. When I went to labor, I decided that I had to do something about it. People were talking about making applications to go to the United States. I thought about it and I decided that it would be better than working midnight all my life. So one day I went home and told Helen that we were going. She was surprised, but I told her that I just couldn't stand working midnight turn anymore. We all talked it over and we decided to do it. So I went to town and picked up some application forms. We didn't get to go until November 1951 and we applied in January. During this time they would check up on you to see if you were a trouble maker or something or if you had anything to do with the Nazi party. If you had any faults you would not be accepted. You also had to be in perfect health. There were many people ahead of us that were applying for Australia and France, but you had to be another nationality other than German. So a lot of people changed a few letters in their names to

make it sound like another nationality. I wouldn't do this. So the only thing I could do was to make the application only to the United States."

Helen said: "First we had to go to Salzburg for a whole week. They showed us all kinds of films about America and they tried to teach us a little bit about the language. After that we went to the doctors and then to the American counsel. They sent us back home again and said that they will call us if we passed. They called us and we had to go to Salzburg again for a week. From there we went to Bremehaven, Germany. We were there for a week till we finally got on the ship. John, me, Joe and Grandma. The four of us."



On The Way to America

John added: "We got on the ship in the evening and I told your mother to turn around and take a good look at this part of the country because you may never see it again. And to this day we still haven't gone back to see it."

Now let me tell you about coming from Bremenhaven and over. It sure wasn't a joy-ride. The boat was going up and down and all the people were getting sick, especially Helen."

Helen said: "It wasn't a liner, it was just an old army ship. We all had to stay in different parts of the boat. There weren't any beds on the ship so we had to sleep in hangers. One day we went up to eat and the ocean was real bad. Mothers with children under the age of ten had to eat in a different room. I was supposed to go down with Joe to eat, but I was sick so someone else took him down. They had the deck roped off so that no one would get too close to the edge of the boat because it was such a bad day. They finally brought Joe back and I was sitting on a bench on the deck. I was so sick that I passed out and I slid past the ropes and luckily, a guard came and picked me up before I went overboard. John stayed in the middle of the ship and it wasn't as rocky as where I stayed so he never got sick. Finally it got better as we went farther out to sea."

All the people had to work on the boat. Everyone that was healthy had a job. The women with small children and the older people were the only exceptions. You had to work in the kitchen or clean up. John had to work a couple of hours everyday but I didn't have to because I had a small child. John wasn't even allowed to come where Joe and I were staying. We had to go up deck so that he could take Joe."

John said: "There wasn't one day that we saw the sun throughout the trip. It was foggy the whole time. I was expecting to see the nice blue sea and lots of ships and things. But all we saw was our own ship and the

waves. Then one night we could see the lights from New York City and we were all happy that we finally made it. When daylight broke, we could see the Statue of Liberty and all the big buildings and skyscrapers. That was on November 11th, our anniversary. But they wouldn't let us land that day because of the holiday. We didn't go on shore until the 12th."

Helen said: "When we came, all we had were just a couple suitcases and one big trunk. Just our clothes. And we had no money at all. After they unloaded us, they took us to a hotel in New York City and we stayed there until they contacted us. We had to have a sponsor in order to come to the United States. So we stayed in the hotel while they contacted our sponsor. They made arrangements for us to go from New York to Tennessee by train, where our sponsor was. Then they gave us twenty dollars. That's all the money we had. They put a badge on us because we didn't know English or the value of money over here. So they took us to the railroad station in New York and told us where we would be stopping. At every station, they had people from an army there."

John said: "You might call it like the Salvation Army, but it wasn't them. We came through the N.C.W.C. The National Catholic Welfare Conference and these people were at the railroad stations and once they spotted our badges, they would approach us and show us where to go to catch the next train. We didn't have any plans when we got here. I came over as a coal miner but I couldn't get that kind of a job. So we went to Tennessee and I worked on a farm. It was rough for a while because I couldn't speak the language and I was only making three dollars a day. There were four of us and three dollars a day just wasn't enough."

Helen remembered: "Our sponsor's name was Mr. Scott, but we hardly knew him. They have people in America who need workers, so when you apply they assign you a sponsor. When you get to New York they

just send you where people are needed. So this man had a farm and he needed someone, so that's where they sent us. We were on the farm for five months. They tried to do the best for us but it was hard to understand each other. There was a neighbor who would come over in the evenings and help us to learn English. He knew a little German. The people there were very nice to us."

John then described how they lived when they first went to Tennessee:

"Well, it wasn't easy to talk with the farmer when I didn't know English. I had to go over in the morning and feed the horses and cows and he would tell me things. I had a pair of overalls in which I would keep a notebook and pencil at all times. Some of the words which I couldn't understand I would ask him to write it down. Before this, I would write it down the way I heard it. Then I would compare them. In the evenings I would get out my German-English dictionary and study the way I heard it and the way he wrote it. I was determined to learn the English language so I studied about two hours a night. In time, we could understand each other well enough."

We only lived in the farmhouse for the first two weeks. Then we moved into a little shack. They used it to store grain. So we cleaned it out and we moved in. We had a little stove to heat the house. This little house was up on stilts and believe it or not, we had skunks living underneath us. But that was the best we could do."

Helen said: "When we first moved in, the wind would just blow right through the house. There was nothing on it. If we would have had the money at this time, we would have gone back to the old country. We were very disappointed. We couldn't speak the language. We had nothing to go on. But since we didn't have the money, we knew we couldn't go back."

Helen explained why they decided to come to the Shenango Valley:

"John had a friend here in Farrell and he wrote us a letter and he told us that he was working in Sharon Steel and how much money he was making. He told us how good it was and asked if we wanted to come up. Then Grandma got a job in Pittsburgh with a priest. John took her from Tennessee up to Pittsburgh. So we decided to go up to Sharon and we stayed with a friend of John's for a week. We couldn't get a job right away so we stayed with him until we got our own place. The place was real expensive and we had to borrow money for it and for food. That's the only way we made it until John got a job."

John said: "When we came up here there were strikes going on. This was in '52. They would work a couple days, then they would strike a couple. So they weren't hiring. I just hung on and borrowed more money for the rent. I even had to borrow seventy dollars from a friend in Tennessee in order to get here. I finally got a job in the mill. I worked for one month and they had a two month strike. In the meantime, our second child was born. At that time I was covered by Blue Cross but they didn't pay as much as they do now. I had no money to pay the doctors. Finally the strike was over and I worked. I worked overtime any chance I had. Sundays, holidays, off days. I just worked, worked, worked to pay back the people I owed money to. Finally I caught up. So in 1953, we bought a house on Malleable Street in Sharon. On January 5, 1954, our third child was born and on January 22, I was laid off for the next eleven months. That was the toughest year in my life. I only collected thirty-five dollars a week. There wasn't any sub pay like there is today. Just thirty-five dollars a week for only six months."

During the summer, I had a little money so I decided to paint the house. This is where I got lucky. Soon afterwards, a lady from Cleveland, Ohio, who owned a house in the neighborhood came over one day and asked Helen who painted the house. The lady liked it so much that she asked me to paint her house the same way. It was a fancy job be-

cause I had all the time in the world. So I did the job and the lady paid me more than I asked for because I did a few extra things for her.

My unemployment ran out in August and I could have gone on relief but since I owed money on the house, I would have to pay it back. So I decided to go to New York City to do some painting. I worked for two months there and I didn't like the city so I came back. Soon afterwards, the mill started operating again and I got called back. And I haven't been laid off since."

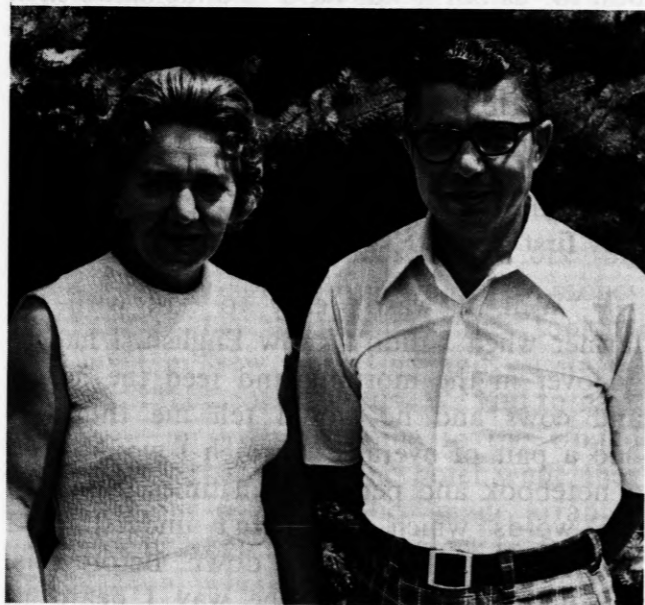
Helen also went to work to help out: "I would get up at five in the morning and I would go and clean up a beer joint. At seven, I had to be done with it. Then I would go home and take care of our three boys and at nine I would go out and do housework till five in the afternoon. I'd come home and cook dinner and clean our house then. We got a little money that way."

John said: "In 1954 we didn't eat junk because we didn't have any money. We would go to the butcher's and buy bones with a little meat on them. Helen would cook the best old country chicken and beef soups that you could imagine. That makes the best soup. We didn't starve, but we couldn't afford steak. Steak was out of the question."

John and Helen both agree that there have been many changes in their life style since they came to America. Helen said:

"My cooking has changed a lot since we came to America. Especially because of our boys. They wouldn't eat a lot of the stuff that I would cook from the old country. At home, we wouldn't eat as much meat as they do over here. Just maybe on Sundays we would have meat and during the week we would eat all homemade stuff. There was nothing that you could buy at the store like over here. You had to make your own noodles and everything. Over here you get a little bit lazier and you go to the store because it's there. So your

cooking habits change quite a lot. There are still many things that I cook the same as I did over there".



Mr. and Mrs. Bock

John said: "For about the first five years that we were here, the parents would put a lot of pressure on their kids to marry someone they approved of. Then after a while, they slacked off. Religion played a major part in marriages in the old country. Sometimes the parents would start out when the kids were only ten years old. If the parents liked a certain girl, usually because she was an only child and she would inherit everything, they would give him hints or ask him who he would marry when he got older. Of course, he wouldn't have any idea so the parents would say, 'Why don't you marry so and so? She'll get all the land.' If he liked someone else they would try to talk him out of it. Some people would grow up listening to this all the time and end up marrying someone that their parents picked for them. There were no divorces in our town, but there was trouble in some marriages."

Helen added: "Sure there was trouble when the parents put a marriage together. But they weren't allowed to separate. When you got married over there, you always lived

with his parents. Sometimes the parents would still tell them what to do even when they were thirty years old. It was rough on the young couples over there. Over here you move out right away, but over there your parents had control over you in some cases till you were forty.

When we first came over we thought it was all wrong. We thought our way was right. We didn't think it was right that people would get married and just take off right away. So it was hard for us to adjust to everything, but in time, you learn to accept it just like everyone else."

John said: "That was the custom. The old people ruled. If you were walking down the sidewalk back home and an old man walked by, if you didn't greet him, he was allowed to smack you. That's the way it was. The younger people had to respect the older people."

John also talked about the different styles of clothing that were worn in the old country:

"The way we dressed, while working or on Sundays, had a lot in common with the Dutch people over here. No one went anywhere without a hat. A hat was a must, until in the thirties when we started picking up German customs. The women wore dresses all the way down to the floor."

Helen said: "You wouldn't be seen on the street with what we had to wear. No way. There were no low cut dresses. Everything was covered up. No sleeveless blouses and we all had babushkas. We never had nylons like over here. We had to make our own wool socks."

John continued: "Our town was mixed with a lot of different people. So we all blended in to make our own style. Then in the late thirties, the Germans wore their hair short so we started to. The shorter the hair, the more German you were. No mustaches or beards, either. In the wintertime, we had wooden shoes which we called klumpen. Like the Dutch people, we had a metal band around them and straw on the inside. You could go through snow all day and stay dry on the inside. Those shoes were a must in the winter. I wish I had a pair now."

Helen said: "I wouldn't want to go back now for anything in the world. I'm used to this kind of life and I'm sure that I wouldn't want to go back and start a fire everyday and everything. We're spoiled now. We're used to everything over here now. This is my home more than the old country was because I've been here longer."

John added: "There is one thing that I have on my mind that I'd like to say, and that is 'God bless America!'"



IT'S TOMMY TUCKER TIME

by Mark Frye
Pearl Ann Longietti

When today's generation of teenagers recall the music of its younger years, names such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones will be mentioned as leaders of popular rock music. When the parents of this generation recall the music of their younger years, names such as Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, and Count Basie will be remembered as leaders of the big band era. One local resident who was part of big band music at its inception is Mr. Karlton "Bus" Brown. As a member of the Tommy Tucker Band, he was known as one of the finest lead trumpet players among the nationally known dance bands of that era.

Mr. Brown began his musical endeavors at the early age of seven when he began to take trumpet lessons. He was encouraged in this pastime by his mother and father. Both were accomplished musicians, playing the piano and violin respectively. At age eight, he entered the Croton School in New Castle where he played the coronet in the then famous Croton Band. It was one of the first bands featuring only grade school youngsters in the entire country. Playing in an organization such as this was very encouraging for a beginning musician and was also good experience. Continually improving his capabilities, at age twelve, Mr. Brown began to play in dance bands in the New Castle area. There were many dance halls in the area and Mr. Brown feels, "I fell into an era when there was a need for this type of entertainment." Accordingly, he was one of the youngest musicians to be playing this type of music. He continued in more serious music by playing in both the high school band and orchestra. At age eighteen came graduation from high school and time for a major decision about his future. Mr. Brown decided to go on the road and play the dance hall circuit as a member of some of the most popular dance bands of the day. Music was the only life he knew and because it had been so lucrative for him in high school — "I was making as much when I was in high school as most people supporting a family were making" — going on the road was not a difficult decision to make. He says he has never regretted his decision. So in 1928 he began playing in theaters and hotel dining rooms across the country.

Playing with these bands meant that a great deal of traveling had to be done. It amounted to a long series of one-nighters and was a very tiring life. When

asked to describe a typical tour, Mr. Brown chose to describe what was known in the music business as the "M.C.A. (Music Corporation of America) course in geography". He continued, "A band would play an engagement for one night which would end around eleven o'clock. They would then pack their instruments and personal belongings into one or two cars, depending on the size of the band. Then it was an all night drive to the next concert." Mr. Brown explained more emphatically saying, "They booked such impossible jumps, if you weren't young and healthy there was no way you could stay alive . . . for instance, they'd book you on a tour where you might have a three or four hundred mile jump and the next night a five or six hundred mile jump, and then the next night maybe you'd come back past the place you were two nights ago, a thousand miles back, and maybe they'd give you one extra day to be able to make that jump . . . and it was a real tough thing to do." This hectic traveling life, however, was no excuse for missing a playing date. In fifteen years on the road, not one day of playing time was lost."

There were no excuses, Mr. Brown says, for not playing because he was often the lead trumpet and his absence would greatly affect the quality of the performance. Mr. Brown also pointed out that nobody else from the band ever missed a date, so he could not be the exception to take leisure.

The disadvantage of this moving about was the inability to maintain lasting relationships with other band members and also, as Mr. Brown stated, "You never seemed to stay in a place long enough to get acquainted with living conditions so as to live with the greatest advantages financially. So you had to like your work to be able to stay in and keep plugging away and find places that were enjoyable to work."

Mr. Brown was quick to point out that the lethargic look of many of the musicians of that era led to their being accused of being drug addicts and alcoholics. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact remains that they were so physically and mentally tired that they often had a difficult time just staying awake. Through fifteen years in the business, Mr. Brown says that he associated with no musicians who were under the influence of any type of artificial stimulants.



Bus Brown at Home

This type of traveling schedule led to another surprising revelation by Mr. Brown. Since all of the well-known, popular bands were continually playing on the road, they did not have much opportunity to hear each other play. So many of the big name bands had no idea what their contemporaries sounded like. If two bands were playing in the same city, they would often juggle the starting time of the shows so they could leave immediately after their performance to see the end of the performance of their competition. Sometimes this was a delightful experience. When they liked what they heard, they were the first to compliment the entertainers, and a mutual respect grew between the two groups of musicians. Sometimes, however, the ability of the performers was not what was expected and therefore, the show was a major disappointment. As often is the case today, it might not be that the most well-known band is the most talented, but only that it has been well advertised and well promoted by a sharp business manager. This is not to say that the musicians of the big band era were total strangers to each other. Mr. Brown recalls many instances of events such as softball games between bands which served as acquainting sessions, as well as much needed recreation.

As Mr. Brown stayed on the road, he related, "I kept going and going, building myself up in better bands until I attained a seat with the Tommy Tucker Band, a very popular band of the era. Of course, the traveling never did stop; but as radio came in, that was the way of becoming popular. Many of the bands would play in a particular place because it had good air time. This was a great advantage to a band because they would become more popular."

If a band was not seen and heard in a live performance during this era, they often achieved their popularity through radio rebroadcasts on the various national networks. The radio was the key to popularity in the big band era and as previously mentioned, it could be the band with the best air time, not necessarily the best band, that became the most popular. The show was picked up from the site of the performance and they played nationwide through the base station in New York. As the band became more popular, it received better air time. It was then requested for more frequent road appearances, and hopefully, recording sessions. When appearing as part of the Tommy Tucker Band, Mr. Brown recalls recording in the studio for Columbia Records at least once a month and even as much as once every two weeks. This was, of course, a very profitable financial arrangement and was the goal of the bands of that era as it is of bands and musicians of today.

References have been made to the big band era and it is necessary to qualify this term and explain some of the musical changes that took place at its beginning. The basis of the big band era, according to Mr. Brown, was the Dixieland jazz of New Orleans, which was refined in such cities as Chicago and Kansas City. Instruments were added, other changes in style were made, and the New Orleans jazz sound became the big band sound.

One of the first changes in musical style that was made involved the rhythm itself. New Orleans jazz was definitely two beat rhythm which is considered the basis of authentic jazz. This was changed to a four beat rhythm — which gave it more of a lift and less of a honky tonk sound."

The next important development was the addition and expulsion of some of the instruments. A typical Dixieland band would have had a banjo, bass, drums, and a piano, one of the most prevalent instruments being the banjo. The banjo was replaced by the guitar, which "—is more of a blending instrument and which in turn made a more musical sound." As this refinement continued, the trumpet, trombone, saxophone, and clarinet were added. The trend toward blending of instruments continued and became more popular. Eventually this pattern evolved into the big band which might include three trumpets, two trombones, and four or five saxes. This was the way



To our pal Kibby Joe Owen Pete Holmer Bruce Stanley
 Bus Brown Tommy Tucker Al Loria
 Howard Millman Amy Arnell Kerwin Somerville
 Allan Kaler L.B. Hall Paul Davis
 Al Knapp Gene Steinbach Billy Rand



The Tommy Tucker Band (Mr. Brown — Third from right, next to last row).

in which Dixieland jazz moved northward and was refined and altered to a more melodious style of dance music. Mr. Brown was careful to point out that New Orleans jazz has not been replaced or phased out. He stated that if one was to venture to that city even today, the bands could still be heard playing the music that is so much a part of its heritage.

While playing on the Atlantic coast, Tommy Tucker's band received a request for an engagement in California. An easterner by birth, Mr. Brown hesitated to move west but was convinced by his band leader to travel once again. The engagement was at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, one of the finest hotels in the world. So the Browns took their eldest son out of school and moved to the Pacific coast. This engagement proved to be the last for Karlton "Bus" Brown. "Pearl Harbor had been bombed and there was a scare of possible Japanese submarines plopping some shells up on the west coast." Because of this scare and because he didn't want to keep changing schools for his son, Mr. Brown decided it was time for him to leave the music world. "I decided to give up the whole deal and I had to start someplace and since I was originally from New Castle I decided to go back. Looking back it seems ridiculous. I had never done anything but play. I had never worked another job in my life. I didn't even know how you went about getting a job, but I knew I had to start looking for another type of work because of the conditions of the country and because my son was of school age."

So after fifteen years on the road with various bands, Mr. Brown decided that it was time to return home to New Castle and settle down to a more stable life style. With this decision he faced his new problem — that of trying to find some type of permanent employment outside of the music business.

Arriving in New Castle, Brown organized his own small group and played around town for a couple of years. "I was very happy with the acceptance of the type of music I was used to playing. I carried this on for awhile and then I got busy at other things and in fact, I was trying to wean myself away from the music business into something more stable." At this point, he became part of another innovation, the Westinghouse data processing staff. He remained in that capacity until his recent retirement.

In retrospect, Brown stated, "I was very fortunate to be able to get from one interesting type of work into another interesting type of work. I suppose the music end was the most interesting. There are so many things that can happen. It's such an education jumping all over the country all the time. Nobody can supply an education like that from books or anything. I enjoyed every minute of it, but it's nice to look back on. It was a pretty romantic, adventurous time and I wouldn't give up the memories of it for anything." Looking ahead, Mr. Brown says, "I think there will be a big recovery of what is termed big band music. It will be a revision of the cream of the big bands. The good usually comes back."

Being on the ground floor of an important American entertainment innovation, the big band era of jazz, and also an important American technological innovation, data processing and later computer processing, Mr. Brown has led a self-educating, entertaining, and fulfilling life. He readily admits, however, "—retirement is probably the best job I ever had in my life."



Life Was Filled With Guns And War...

Pearl Ann Longietti

Carol Foltz

Life in Italy during World War II meant poverty, hunger, and war. It was a difficult time for all of the inhabitants, but especially difficult for those whose husbands or fathers were in another land seeking stable incomes and moderate lifestyles. This is an account of life under these conditions during a time of guns and war.

Mrs. Sebastian (Vincenzina Spadafora) Grasso, of Sharon, was born in Rogliano, Calabria, in the toe of Italy. All communication with her father in Monessen, Pennsylvania, ceased when the war broke out. Mr. Frank Spadafora had gone to America to get a job and eventually bring his family to America.

Mrs. Grasso recalls, "He followed in his father's footsteps. His father had been to America years ago and he had heard about America, so he decided he was going to save his money. He went to work when he was eleven so he could save his money. When he was sixteen, he had enough money to pay for his trip. (In America) he worked in the steel mills. He went back to Italy in 1929 and married my mother. That was the time that the depression started and so he knew for sure that he couldn't bring a bride to the United States without work. So he left her with his mother. My mother stayed 18 years with her mother-in-law. My father made many trips back and forth because he couldn't find work. He was undecided whether to stay in the United States or Italy. In 1935, things were picking up and he got work and was saving money so he could pay for our trip. Then World War II broke out."

"We were playing on the road and the neighbors had a radio on, the only one in town. I knew there must be some important news on because all the people were gathered about the radio listening. It was Mussolini. He was announcing that Italy had declared war against United States and Great Britain. We children didn't realize what serious news that was. We could see some people cry, an old lady who wiped her eyes. It didn't dawn on us how really serious it was. But these people were so bogged down with burdens. Everything imaginable was on their shoulders and thinking about a war was unbearable. The population in our town consisted of old men, young children, and sickly people. The youth had left either for war or to go to other countries. So we had to gather together and support each other. If we had

something to share with the neighbors, we did. There was no shortage of luxuries, we just didn't have them. We struggled from day to day just to have a piece of bread on the table. Things were shut off and Father couldn't come back to Italy and we couldn't come to America. He couldn't even write us. We didn't know the two countries were against each other, were enemies. My grandfather died in 1942 and my father knew nothing about it."

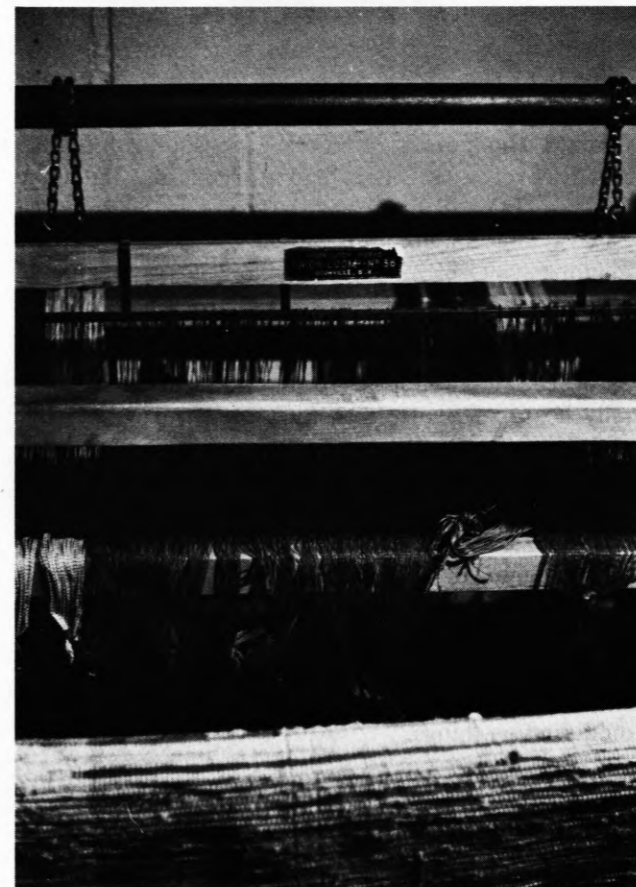
Mrs. Spadafora (Mrs. Grasso's mother) recalls, "I saw my husband in 1935 and not again until 1947 when he got papers to come back to Italy."

Being the head of the household, Mrs. Maria Spadafora was responsible for providing for her three children and mother-in-law, whom she was living with while her husband was away. Mrs. Grasso says, "As World War II started, I was a small child and I had a twin sister and a brother. He was a little older than I. My mother was trying to raise three children plus we had her parents and her in-laws. She had to shoulder all the responsibility herself. She could see children dying in the neighborhood from starvation and she made up her mind that she would never let that happen to us."

Mrs. Spadafora knew the trade of weaving cloth, so she bought a loom. She would plant linen on her small farm. When it came time for harvesting the linen, the entire family would go into the fields, cut the linen plants and tie them in large bundles. They next laid the bundles in a stream for twenty-four days so that the inside fibers would become moist and soft. Then the ladies would run the bundles of soft linen through a machine that would smash the plant. This caused the harder outside part of the plant to fall away from the softer inside. Next, the ladies would gather the soft inside fibers and tease them with a special wooden comb, making the mass softer yet. They also boiled the fiber five or six times. This helped make the fiber whiter and softer. After this was accomplished, they would twist the soft fibers together to form a thread. They would then wind this thread onto a spool. Each spool held almost five hundred yards of thread. After the spools were filled, they would put the thread on a spinning wheel and spin it into a large bundle. When this was completed, Mrs. Spadafora was ready to prepare the loom.



Spooling the Thread for Spinning.



Mrs. Spadafora's Present Loom.

Mrs. Spadafora would first set the width of the loom. Next she would thread the loom. Threading the loom was a day's work. She was now prepared to start weaving the cloth. In a day's time, she could weave ten to fifteen yards of wool or five or six yards of silk or linen. More wool could be woven in a day's time because it is thicker and easier to work with. The silk was difficult to work with because the thread was fine and could easily break. If this occurred and it was not mended immediately, there would be a flaw in the cloth. The linen took a longer time to make than the wool because of the intricate designs that were often woven into the cloth.



Bolt of Linen Cloth Spun in Intricate Pattern.

Mrs. Spadafora soon became well noted for her weaving ability. She wove basic patterns that almost every weaver knew, along with many of her own designs. Her ability to create new designs won her the patronage of many people who could afford to pay a higher price for a novel pattern. Her competition would soon learn patterns that were similar to hers and she would have to create a new design. Her ability to be the first to create a new design won her the recognition of being one of the best weavers and this fame helped her to support her family better.

Even though Mrs. Spadafora worked long hours and was truly dedicated to her work, her family was still not well taken care of. At one point, Mrs. Spadafora paid an extremely high price for a light bulb so that she could weave well into the night. Her house was equipped with electricity, but she felt lucky to have an opportunity to buy the bulb since they were so scarce. After she bought the bulb, she began working day and night trying to weave more cloth. "I can remember," says her daughter, "her sitting by the loom. I don't know how she ever came out alive."

She was just skin and bones, working day and night. She worked so hard so that we could have bread on our table, but many nights we went to bed hungry."

Soon many of the neighbors would go to her house at night and work on their projects. This constant weaving depleted Mrs. Spadafora's energy and her mother-in-law became upset with her obsession to provide for the family. A few weeks later, however, the bulb blew up and things were restored to their original state.

Mrs. Grasso remembers clearly, "My mother would be too busy at the loom to go to the bread line, so we children would wait in line for a loaf of bread. Many times, by the time our turn would come, the bread was finished. And how many times I went to the line and got a loaf of bread which had to last us two or three days and I'd be so hungry that by the time I got home, half a loaf would be missing. I was like a little mouse. I would dig a little hole in the bread and eat the middle. I knew that I was doing wrong, but when you're hungry you just try to have something in your own stomach. My mother never despaired in front of us, but at night we could hear her complain about Mussolini to my grandmother."

Other times the children would go through the streets like scavengers, searching for anything they might be able to use. On trips like this, they would sometimes bring home olives, figs, or chestnuts. On one occasion, Mrs. Grasso excitedly brought home a shiny tin can. She knew her mother would be pleased with the treasure she had found. From the tin can, Mrs. Spadafora had the blacksmith make a coffeepot to be used whenever they were able to get coffee.

"We had an outside oven that we baked in. My mother had these huge wooden trunks she would store food in. She would say, '—this is for the months of October, November, and December, and this will be for January and February.' She had them marked so that by the time spring came we would be sure to have something to eat. She would nail them down so no one could open them".

Bread was the main food supply for the family. Occasionally, they would have cheese or figs to eat along with the bread. "When we had an egg, my grandmother would eat the yolk and my sister and I would split the egg white. To us that was Heaven. If my mother had something cooking, she would say, "Close the windows and don't go outside and eat," because there were hundreds of kids gathered. They could smell the food cooking and they would gather by our house. However, my mother always ended up sharing what we had."

Along with poverty and hunger, there was a lack of sanitary facilities. The people of Rogliano had to go to the outskirts of town to get water. Because of the

war, there were almost no soaps, shampoos, or toothpastes to be had. As a result of the lack of cleansing products and unsanitary conditions, disease was prevalent. It was practically impossible to be immune from the existing conditions.

Because of this lack of good sanitary conditions, a typhoid plague soon broke out. The animals were the first to be affected. If an animal showed early signs of the disease, someone would kill it and use the meat. The disease soon spread and many of the people were contracting it. "There were so many people dying. You heard the church bells constantly. That was the only way we had to announce the deaths. Finally one of the doctors told the priest, 'Please stop ringing those church bells because they're so depressing on the rest of the people that are living.'"

The poverty of the land put a strain on life, but the reminders of war made life close to unbearable. The inhabitants became accustomed to rising early in the morning to the sounds of blaring sirens. "The thing I used to hate the most about the war was the sirens blaring in my ears." These sirens warned them of a possible attack and they immediately took refuge. They returned home only after they were reassured that the fighting had passed.

On one flight to the north, Mrs. Spadafora and her family took refuge in a friend's home in the hills. One night they saw lights in the sky. They soon discovered the lights were bonfires made to proclaim that peace had finally come. With a new ray of hope, they slept that night dreaming of the return trip home. They awakened the next morning to the sounds of war. They discovered that Italy had surrendered, but their homeland was still being ravished by war because the Germans had ammunition stored in Rogliano, their hometown.

As the Germans were pushed back, Mrs. Spadafora was hoping to contact an American soldier who might be able to tell her about her husband. "We finally heard of one soldier who was from Monesson, Pennsylvania, where my father was living. So we went to talk with him. He spoke very little Italian, but he made himself understood. He had known my father and said that he was doing all right. And you could imagine, my mother hadn't heard from him in years and that was the best news that she could ever hear. Not long after that, my father contacted us through the Red Cross. He was glad to hear that we were well and as soon as communications opened he would send us things."

Not long afterward, Mrs. Spadafora began receiving things from her husband. Once the neighbors found about the aid, they would ask Mrs. Spadafora for some food supplies. Mrs. Spadafora would give whatever she had to those who asked her. She held little

back for herself. She believed that she was to worry about today and God would provide for tomorrow. So whenever she received a package from her husband she held no reservations about rationing it out to those in need.

"I'll never forget the thing that he sent that I treasured most — tennis shoes. My sister and I were so thrilled. We were so tired of wearing wooden cloggers. They were so clumsy looking. When we got those tennis shoes we saved them just for church. All our girlfriends envied us. When we left for America, one girlfriend of mine said, 'When you go to America, please send me some tennis shoes.'"

One day, Mrs. Spadafora received word that she was to go to Naples to board a ship that was sailing for New York. Although she wanted to join her husband, she wrote and indefinitely postponed the journey because she was weaving some silk for someone important and she knew she could not finish the order by the time she was to be in Naples. Her husband found out she postponed the trip and wrote to Naples and explained the situation. She received another



Mrs. Spadafora and Granddaughter

notice giving her a later date to be in Naples. She met this deadline and boarded the boat to meet her husband a few short weeks later.

"We left Italy on April 1, 1947. It was Palm Sunday. We spent Easter on the boat. It was real stormy day. When we finally arrived in New York, my father was there to meet us."

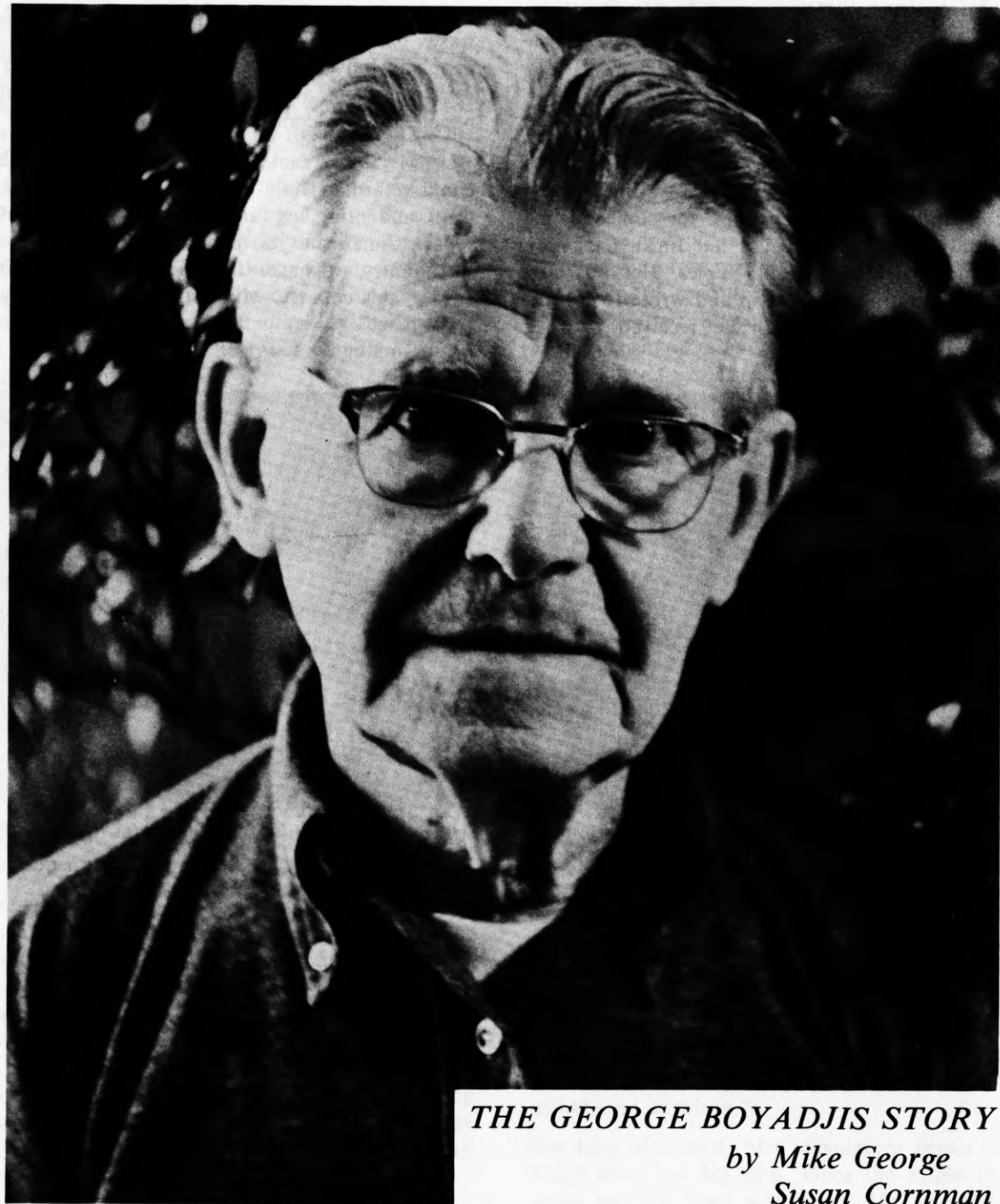
"My mother was so happy to come to America. She could be rid of all the poverty. And what she couldn't get over was how people would waste food like on picnics. The people would drop food in the waste baskets. We used to get so disgusted. If the people in Italy could have just had this food the people were throwing away, they'd be happy. There were people dying to come here."

"My father came to America to find a job so he could return to Italy and marry his childhood sweetheart and bring his family here," states Mrs. Grasso. "Many Americans just do not realize what a wonderful country we have. There's nothing like being citizens of this country. My mother and I are very proud to be here."



Mr. and Mrs. Frank Spadafora, Mrs. Grasso's Parents.

COOKING BUSINESS? I'll Tell You What Happened!



THE GEORGE BOYADJIS STORY
by Mike George
Susan Cornman

George Boyadjis, now eighty-three, is well remembered around the Shenango Valley as the former owner of the Blue Moon Cafe which for many years was the restaurant highly frequented by Sharon businessmen. George opened the Blue Moon Cafe in 1936 and finally sold it in 1961. How George became a restaurant owner is quite a story.

George was born on Inbros, a Greek island in the Mediterranean right across from the Dardanelles. When George first left Inbros, he went to Cairo, Egypt.

"Egypt, it's international. You speak different languages and no one insults you. I had to work in a shoe store. I spoke English, French and Egyptian. In this country, it's different. Not so much now, but in years back. They used to call you a Greek or a Polack."

In March or April of 1909, George came to Sharon to get a job with an uncle who worked at the gunworks here. George tried his hand at several different jobs before he began his career in the restaurant business.

"Cooking business? I'll tell you what happened. This is a funny thing. There was a barber shop on the bridge here, John Wellman's Seven Chair Barber Shop. I was shining shoes there. I was only about seventeen or eighteen years old. There was a fellow. He had a place on Shenango Street, a saloon, Tom Davis Saloon. And he had a boy about the same age as me, Harry, and we ran around together. So there was another fellow there too. He told me that he was going to open a restaurant. And the place is down on Dock Street in Sharon. On the corner of State and Dock. Well, there was an empty space there and on the corner there was a fruit store. Big, big fruit store, had all kinds of fruit there, candy and stuff like that."

So, with the help of his friend, Fred Lockman, George opened his first restaurant, the Sharon Dairy lunch. George will be the first to tell that he wasn't quite ready for the cooking business when he opened the Dairy.

This inexperience led George into a few blunders in his debut. The one he most remembers is the first time he made a chocolate pie.

"I decided to make chocolate pie. I made chocolate pies. I got the crust and I made the pie. I didn't put no sugar in the chocolate pies. So one of my friends I used to run around with says, 'George, what the hell's the matter with your chocolate pie?' I says, 'What?' He says, 'You didn't put no sugar in it.' I says, 'You supposed to put sugar in the pie?' We had a lot of fun. But, today a little bit, next day a little bit and you learn to cook. You learn how to manage."

"I had a nice business there at the Sharon Dairy Lunch. I had a desk with a cover (roll top desk). I had that desk filled with dollar bills and fives and tens. We had so much business we didn't even know what we was making."

George's career in the Sharon Dairy Lunch was short-lived. After a few years in the restaurant business, World War I broke out. George enlisted in the army and left the busines to his brother. George quickly realized that the time he spent in the army would not put a halt to his career as a cook, but would serve to further it. When George went to Pittsburgh to enlist, he was asked what his occupation was before he enlisted. "I said I was a businessman and I ran a restaurant." George was then shipped to Augusta, Georgia, where he found himself in charge of the kitchen. While there, he was told to attend the cook's training school.

"I took the roll on my back and off I went. I walked in there. Someone asked me, 'What's your outfit?' and I says, '107 Field Artillery, Battery B.' He says, 'You own a restaurant,' and I says, 'Yes.' Then he says, how many kinds of potatoes can you make? I looked at him kind of funny and says, I can make any kind of potato you like. I can call them any name that I want — mashed potatoes, fried potatoes, boiled potatoes, baked potatoes, cream potatoes and home-fried potatoes. Any kind! He says, how long do you think (it takes) you to prepare potatoes and I says twenty minutes. He said, you know more about cooking than I do. He gave me my certificate and out I went. I went back the same day. I was supposed to be in class with a teacher. The captain looked at me and said, what are you doing here? I says, I passed the examination."

After George left Augusta, Georgia, he was sent to France. There again, George was in charge of the kitchen. After leaving France, George went to Belgium where he received a certificate from his officers for his cooking abilities.

"This certificate I got in Belgium from the officers. It's from all the officers in Battery B at Regimental Headquarters. That's where the certificate comes from. It's from the Colonel and all the rest. On a Tuesday night, they had a big dance for the ambulance girls. They didn't have no way to treat them, but they had lots of coffee. So they ask if I could make some doughnuts and I made them. So they gave me this certificate just before we were discharged."

After George was discharged from the service, he worked as a cook in his brother's restaurant.

"My brother had a restaurant on West State Street, the Erie Restaurant. So I went into the Erie Restaurant with my brother. My brother and I and my uncle were partners. And that's when all my friends,

Judge McKay would come in from the courthouse every Tuesday. I would serve him and four other guys the special of the day. I served the special of the day for sixty cents and everybody was happy. I'm telling you, that beef stew! You couldn't get it no place for that amount of money."

"Our menu included: Monday — Stuffed Pork Chops. Tuesday — Beef Stew. Wednesday — Spare Ribs and Sauerkraut. Thursday — Baked Short Ribs. Friday — Blue Pike. Saturday — Roast Turkey and Baked Ham. On Sunday, I wasn't open much. I was open for about four or five years, then I got tired and didn't open up on Sundays."

Frances said: "It was a small place. The food was plain but it was good. No fancy names for anything and it was good. Everything was used, nothing was wasted."

George said, "I took the extra meat from the pork and made sausage. I used the bones to make soup. I give them exactly what they ought to eat. You know how a sirloin steak is. There is an extra cut of waste on the end. Nobody's going to eat that, so I don't give it to them. I cut it off. I cut that up and make hamburgers."

George and Frances sold the Blue Moon Cafe in 1961. George said, "Well, I had that place for twenty-four years. I'll tell you. I'm eighty-three years old now and I was in my seventies then. So the doctors, (my friends) they used to tell me all the time, what you want to do? You want to die on top of that stove? Get rid of the place and go out and enjoy yourself. Go out and get a set of clubs and go to golf every morning and have a lot of fun. The doctors got together and bought me the clubs. These doctors were in the same building as the Blue Moon. This was the Dollar Title and Trust Building. Once it was called the Harmony Building. That was the best building they had in town."

"Hey Frances, when did we sell the restaurant?"

Frances answered, "In 1961. We had it opened twenty-four years and closed it fourteen years ago."

George said, "It was a nice, clean place. Closed nights at eight o'clock. After eight o'clock, no go. I opened at six in the morning and I work all day. Sometimes I didn't know what was coming or going. I have people stop me on the street and ask me if I'm ever going to open another place and I say no. You ask people downtown. They'll tell you."

Evening Enchantment

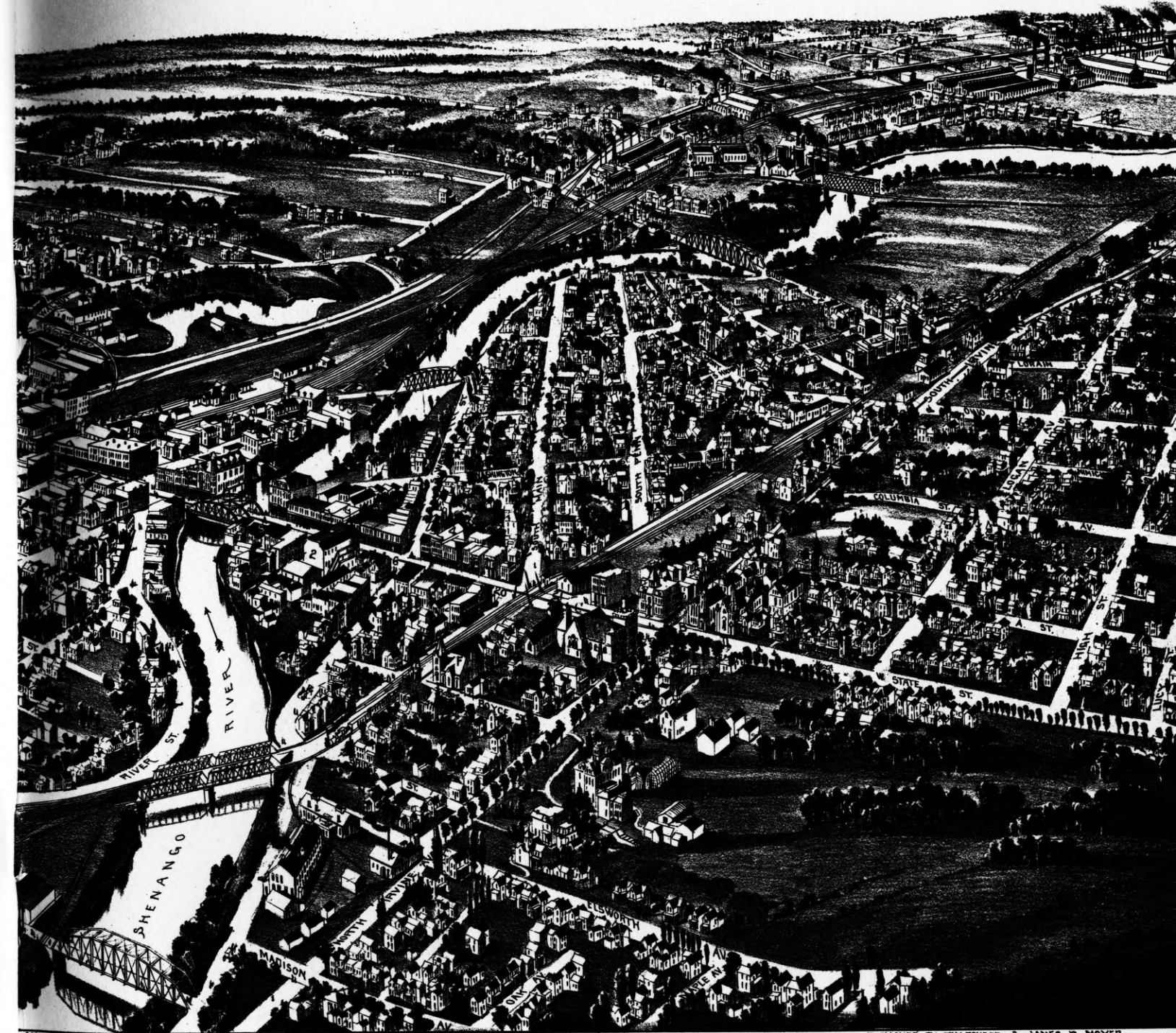
The magnificent beauty of the autumn sky
After the sun has ceased to shed its light
And the shimmering stars along the milky way
Arrayed in splendor on this lovely night.

The lonely vigil of a silent moon
Inspiring lovers of every land and clime
To pledge this love of theirs will long endure
Unaware that dreams will fade with time.

But man's mind can see way out beyond the stars
To visions only known within the soul
And so the struggle to achieve the next horizon
The constant gift of challenge the elusive goal.

The magnificent beauty of the winter sky
Or indeed the spring or summer if you will
Does it really matter what the season is
The restless yearning heart will not be still.

— John J. Flynn



- 1. PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
- 2. OPERA HOUSE.
- 3. CABLE HOUSE. HUNT, BERT & FITZGERALD, PROP.
- 4. CARVER. — P. F. DAVIS.
- 5. WHITE. — GEORGE SMITH.
- 6. THE EXCHANGE HOTEL. J. W. MORGAN.
- 7. BARKIN. — ARCHIE BARKIN.
- 8. BROADWAY. — T. J. BUCKLEY.
- 9. UNION BREWING CO.
- 10. STEWART IRON CO. LIMITED.
- 11. THE NATIONAL MALLEABLE CASTING CO.
- 12. SHARON BOILER WORKS.
- 13. THE SHARON STEEL CO.
- 14. NATIONAL STEEL CO.
- 15. PLANING MILL. WALLIS & CARLEY, PROP'S.
- 16. — — — — — A. WISHART & SONS. — — — — —
- 17. — — — — — TAYLOR BROS. — — — — —
- 18. — — — — —
- 19. SHARON MILLING CO.
- 20. ERIE R.R. STATION.
- 21. L.S. & M.S. R.R. — — — — —
- 22. E. & P. R.R. — — — — —

- CHURCHES. —
- A. ST. JOSEPH'S GERMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.
- B. SACRED HEART. — — — — —
- C. ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL. — — — — —
- D. FIRST BAPTIST. — — — — —
- E. — — — — — METHODIST EPISCOPAL. — — — — —
- F. — — — — — PRESBYTERIAN. — — — — —
- G. REFORMED. — — — — —
- H. CONGREGATIONAL. — — — — —
- I. DISCIPLES. — — — — —
- J. ST. PAUL. LUTHERAN. — — — — —
- K. UNITED PRESBYTERIAN. — — — — —
- L. FREE METHODIST. — — — — —
- M. A. M. E. ZION. — — — — —

PUBLISHED BY T.M. FOWLER & JAMES B. MOYER.

John J. Flynn
380 Cedar Avenue
Sharon, Pa. 16146

STATUE OF LIBERTY

Oh beautiful Statue of Liberty,
Serenely standing in New York Bay,
The hope of millions who seek to find you.
A thrill to thousands who arrive each day.

With out-stretched arms you offer strangers
The torch of freedom for all to see.
This is no dream they see before them
But our famous landmark — Miss Liberty.

There are those among us who squander freedom
As though it were gained by some magic wand —
Forgetting the struggle of our founding fathers
Who gambled all, just to free this land.

Magnificent statue standing straight and tall,
Undisturbed by storms from land or sea,
Unselfish symbol of liberty and justice
Embracing all who hunger to be free.