

In 1952 Raymond Losch left the boiler company which continued operation under new managers until it was finally sold to the present company.

Now called Summit Trailer Sales is owned by Mr. Charles Pishock, they manufacture demolition trailers, trailer and truck bodies.

JOHN O'HARA

Shortly after the turn of the century Dr. Patrick O'Hara of Pottsville became the owner of the present Tregear farm in Panther Valley, Wayne Township. Dr. O'Hara maintained a herd of Jersey cattle and engaged in general farm operations. The farm was also operated by tenant farmers from time to time.

Dr. and Mrs. O'Hara had a large family but it was their eldest son, John, who later became a noted author. In the early part of his career he was a journalist writing for newspapers and magazines but he is far better known for his novels and short stories which can be found in bookstores and news stands anywhere in the United States.

As a young boy, John often spent weekends on the family farm and was well known to the residents of the area. Certainly those who were acquainted with him during his boyhood days could not have realized the fame that young John O'Hara would eventually achieve as one of the most noted authors of his time.

MORE PEOPLE...

PLACES...

THINGS...

POWDER MILL EXPLOSION

St. John's Union Cemetery, Friedensburg, is the site of an unusual memorial stone. Inscribed on the stone are the names of three men whose remains are buried in a common grave. The men were killed in an explosion of a powder mill near Cressona (½ mile north of Beckville). The names inscribed on the stone are:

Wm. Schropp
Born Jan. 21, 1842
Died Sept. 26, 1889
47 Yrs. 8 Mon. 5 Days

John Henry (Son of
M. and Susanna Reed)
Born March 20, 1869
Died Sept. 26, 1889
20 Yrs. 6 Mon. 6 Days

Samuel Sotzin
Born Aug. 16, 1859
Died Sept. 26, 1889
30 Yrs. 1 Mon. 10 Days

An account of the tragedy was reported in the September 26, 1889 issue of the DAILY REPUBLICAN, Pottsville and relates the following facts —

On Thursday morning, September 26, shortly after eleven o'clock three explosions occurred at the Laflin and Rand powder mill at Beckville in the Mine Hill Valley, a short distance above Cressona. Three men were literally blown to pieces and several men were injured. The shocks were felt by many people and were perceptible in the REPUBLICAN building.

The persons killed were:

Samuel Sotzin (reported as Feltzin in the newspaper), aged 30, a resident of Beckville who leaves a young widow and one child. He was an employee.

William Schropp, a young married man, a brother of Worthington Schropp, of Pottsville. He was an employee.

Henry Reed, a young single man residing at Cressona. He was employed by Edward Beck, of Cressona, as a driver, and was passing with a mule and cart at the time of the explosion. With them, he was blown to pieces. Reed came to Cressona from Pinegrove Township.

Injured were George Kipp, Joseph Kantner, Albert Zessman, and another man who were all employees. Kipp was the most seriously injured.



ST. JOHN'S CEMETERY

Three men were killed at the powder mill at Beckville.

The packing house, the engine house, corning mill and glazing mill were demolished. It was said that huge boulders were blown from the ground and large trees were felled as if cut down by knives. Windows of homes in the area were shaken out and shreds of clothing were found at intervals in the trees and on the ground.

Of the three bodies blown to pieces only part of an arm and face, supposed to be Schropp's, were found. The mule was blown into a shapeless mass and only a few wheel tines found of the wagon.

On September 28, the REPUBLICAN reported that funeral services would be held the following day, Sunday, for the victims of this tragedy. The remains were to be taken from Beckville to Friedensburg for burial. The funeral procession was to leave Beckville at 12:30 P.M. A religious service was scheduled and a large attendance was expected.

It was also reported that all expenses would be borne by the Laflin and Rand Company. The expenses, including settlements to the three families, was expected to total twenty thousand dollars.

THE DANIEL KAY REED FAMILY

Lyman Reed
1852 - 1916

Daniel Kay Reed
1828 - 1883

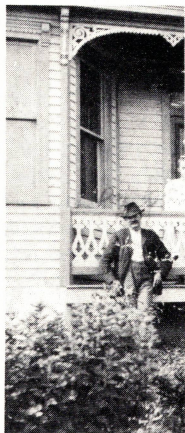
Sherman Reed
1865 - 1925

Daniel K. Reed was a resident of Wayne Township prior to the Civil War. He was a veteran of that war and is buried on the cemetery in Friedensburg. Mr. Reed's home was on the second farm west of Friedensburg. The original house on this property has since been removed.

Daniel K. Reed was the father of Lyman, Sherman, and Gordon Reed.

Sherman and Lyman became auctioneers as young men and worked together in this profession for many years. The "Reed Brothers" auctioneers were well known to many people in the lower Schuylkill County area where they conducted many public sales.

Sherman Reed later lived on a farm which adjoined the southern boundary of the borough of Cressona. At the time of his death, he was living on the Fair Grounds in Cressona where he was in charge of the ground and buildings.



LYMAN REED
Auctioneer - Friedensburg



DANIEL K. REED



SHERMAN REED

Lyman Reed lived on the farm now owned by Harold Reed. The original house and barn have been removed. The house presently occupied by the Fleischut family was built to replace the original farm house.

Gordon Reed and his wife Elizabeth Riland Reed purchased a property on the north side of the Stone Mountain Road adjoining the property now owned by the Friedensburg Fish and Game Association. They purchased this property in May 1887. Former owners of the property were Catherine and Alfred Deibert who sold it to Stephen Palsgrove. Mr. Palsgrove died before the transaction was finalized and the property was then sold to Michael Fritz in June of 1870. The next owner was Paul Snyder who purchased it in April 1876 and then sold it to the Gordon Reeds in 1887.

The property has belonged to the Reed family for 89 years. In April 1974, the Reed Estate sold it to the present owner, Elsie Reed Krammes.

In former years the place was known as "Frog Hollow" because of the many large green frogs that lived along the Swatara Creek. Over the years the barn and out-buildings have been removed and only the original house remains today. It has a beautiful setting surrounded by large hemlock, maple, and oak trees and is hidden from the view of passersby on the Stone Mountain Road. This is one of the few original homes remaining in the area.

The Reed family moved from the farm house in 1895 and took up residence on the grounds of the then Schuylkill County Almshouse where Mr. Reed as the manager and Mrs. Reed as the matron. Following their term of service at the Almshouse the Reed family moved to Schuylkill Haven but kept "Frog Hollow" to enjoy whenever possible.

RYLAND'S FAMOUS EATING PLACE

On a small farm on Panther Valley, now a part of the Hidden Valley Golf Course, the Charles Ryland family was engaged in the interesting enterprise of catering meals to private parties and groups, who came from far and near to enjoy the famous chicken and waffle dinners served at Ryland's farm.

School and church groups, boy's clubs, athletic squads, business groups, and family groups were among those who visited the farm for food and entertainment. This enterprise continued well into the automobile era following World War I.

Entertainment at the farm included year round activities such as hayrides, sleighing parties, buggy rides, rides in caravans of cars and in the earlier years, rides aboard the tally ho. The tally was probably the most interesting means of conveyance. It was a handsome carriage of glistening red with high seats and was drawn by horses. Carriages with fringe around the top were also used on occasions. These were drawn by two horses, and had two or 3 seats. Later, automobiles were used.

The horses were stabled, after a drink from the watering trough in the corner of the barnyard. Spring water ran constantly from a pipe, into the trough. After a refreshing drink, the horses were rested, ready for the return trip.

Upon arriving at Ryland's farm the guests would assembly in the parlor and sing songs before the old-time organ while awaiting the summons to the tasty meal. In addition to the chicken and waffles, the guests were served mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, all kinds of vegetables, fruits, several kinds of pies and special layer cakes. The hossler was privileged to enjoy his chicken & waffle dinner after the guests had finished eating.

The guests had access to a shrubbery studded lawn, or "yard", and a porch which extended about half-way around the large house, which was painted white with green trim. There was a narrow boardwalk leading to a large springhouse at a slope in the yard. A gutter with running spring water, kept the springhouse cool, and Stoneware crocks holding perishable foods were placed into the water, covered, and weighted down.

Mrs. Riland, Sara did most of the cooking and baking, Mr. Riland, was the sole waiter, except for larger parties when several of his granddaughters and young girls from the neighborhood were asked to assist him. He looked very distinguished wearing a beard, and his hair was white, he wore his white apron and coat, and a folded towel over one arm. Their very last party consisted of forty-five gentlemen. Records show that as many as 422 persons were served in a single month. In the year 1905, the total number of guests at the farm was 1,955. The guest book also showed that there were patrons from New England in the East to California in the West.

All the buildings have been removed, and the farm is now part of the Hidden Valley Golf Course. Charles C. Ryland attended public school until he was 18 years old. He enlisted in the 16th Pennsylvania Cavalry and served under General Sherman during the Civil War. He died on Sept. 21, 1926 at the age of 81.



SCHUYLKILL HAVEN WATER DAM

Situated at the foot of the Second Mountain in Panther Valley, Wayne Township, there is a reservoir which supplies water for the boroughs of Schuylkill Haven and Cressona. The reservoir's location is in the Panther Gap, which was also known as the Honsberger Gap in former years.

The reservoir was originally owned by a Philadelphia Company who sold it to the Pottsville Gas and Water Company. The Schuylkill Haven Gas and Water Company purchased it from the Pottsville Company who in turn sold it to the Schuylkill Haven Borough in June 1919. The Schuylkill Haven borough has maintained the reservoir continually since that time. There is a large water main which extends from the reservoir to Cressona and Schuylkill Haven.

The breast of the reservoir is constructed of stone and cement and is very wide at the base. In 1909 and 1910 the height of the breast was raised which doubled the holding capacity. In 1911 a catch basin was built in Hummel's Gap and a 12" water line was laid from this catch basin to the reservoir, a distance of approximately one and one half miles. Water flowed through this pipe line by gravity but this line is no longer of much benefit to the water system because of deterioration of the pipe.

In the early 1920's a catch basin was built approximately 1000 feet below the Panther Valley Reservoir to catch its leakage and the water main was connected to this basin. In the early years of this century pumping stations were used during seasons of drought to supply water. Large stationary pumps run by steam were operated 24 hours a day, pumping water from artesian wells into the reservoir. About 1920 two additional artesian wells were drilled to provide an additional water supply, one of these wells was over 600 feet deep. These wells are no longer being used and the pumps and boilers have been removed.

The borough of Scuykill Haven has maintained the water supply and the entire water shed in a very complimentary condition for the past 56 years.

"THE STONE HOUSE"

(Located in "Long Run" the home of Mrs. Gordon Reed)

In the year 1811 on August the 21st there was conveyed to one Michael Wommer a patent of land encompassing ninety seven acres in the township of Wayne in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The record of the transaction is enrolled in the Patent Book H-6 Page 250 in the Schuylkill County Court House at Pottsville, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania.

He erected thereon a large dug-out cellar on top of which he built a two and a half story house of field stone encompassing therein ten windows on the second floor and nine on the first floor each having nine panes of glass in the upper sash and six panes in the lower sash. These are considered treasures by antique lovers. The attic floor had four windows of six panes each.

A barn and other buildings necessary for rural living were raised including a spring-house which appears to have been known through the Long Run Valley as "The spring of good water that never runs dry."

On the premises there still remains a hand dug well and pump which gushes clear cold water that tests show to be of a very fine quality. Fertile land and an abundance of good water made it an ideal spot for man and beast.

From August 21, 1811, to August 1957, the find old stone house has changed hands nine times but has changed names only six times.

The sequence of ownership reads as follows: The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

to Michael Wommer—land patents	1811
to Joseph Wommer	1866
to Mary (wife of Joseph Wommer)	
to Joseph Nelms	1876
to William G. Nelms	No Date
to Benjamin G. Nelms and all his heirs	1926
to Edward and George Kramer	1927
to Ida and Ora (daughter) Barger	1932
to William Long	1937
to Gordon and Dorothy Reed	1957

Many interesting little stories come to light if one takes the time to "phone visit" with people who were born, reared, and still live in the surrounding townships. Mr. Edward Kramer, who with his deceased brother George, once owned the "Stone House" and the surrounding lands, is such a person. He has the advantage of having been born just before the turn of the century and hearing the history of the area discussed by his elders. He also has his own personal knowledge of the twentieth century.

Mrs. Ida Barger and her daughter Miss Ora Barger, now living in California, have many happy memories of the "Stone House" they once called home.

During their sojourn there, the interior walls which originally had been plaster over stone were furred and newly surfaced.

As happens in homesteads which are over a century and a half old, each new owner leaves some mark of his or her residence there, and this home is no exception.

At some point in its long history someone had added a large room to the rear of the house, part of which the Bargers utilized for a kitchen and pantry and from this room a second stairway led to the second floor and some small rooms.

The next owners, Mr. and Mrs. William Long, had the back addition removed and the workmen found an odd assortment of things in the walls including coffee grinders and cooking utensils! In its place they built a modern kitchen and a powder room on the first floor, and a second bathroom and closets on the second floor, with provisions to add a small green house to the rear at ground level and a fourth bedroom on the second floor. This remained a "dream in blue-print" only. During their occupancy they had small buildings removed and a fruit stand which had occupied the southeast corner was moved to a northwest location. Also during the Long's residence, a large double garage of field stone was added to the east side of the original building at ground level.

The present owners were satisfied to leave things as they were, and merely turn the attic into comfortable sleeping quarters to accommodate visiting grandsons and granddaughter.

One is certain that if the old house could talk many surprising things would be heard, some joyful, some tragic, and quite likely some hilarious jokes and pranks would come to light!

One persistent tale that has come from at least three sources to the present owner is the story of the fire. It seems that at one time it was decided to smoke hams, bacon, etc. in the attic and a stove pipe was run up from a lower level stove and the pipe was disconnected to open into the attic. Apparently no one thought to screen the pipe and sparks did the rest. Details of the extent of damage are lost in the foggy past, but apparently the original stone portion was not damaged and the heavy wide boards of the attic floor were not burned but the evidence of dripping fat is there, now covered over with modern flooring.

Another such story deals with an elderly brother and sister who lived in the house and through some disagreement ceased speaking to each other. The tale is that they went to their graves without reconciliation.

It is a sad fact that happy events are often lost in the past and the unpleasant keep surfacing, but never the less "The Stone House" has an aura of happiness in spite of lost records to that effect.

STOYER'S HOTEL

In 1902, Mr. and Mrs. Joel Stoyer became the proprietors of the hotel at the intersection of routes 443 and 183 and continued its operation for forty years. They succeeded Mrs. Stoyer's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Reber, who had operated the hotel for many years before that time.

The Stoyer's served many groups who held banquets at the hotel and also served meals daily to salesmen and travellers who were passing through the area. It was common for farmers and hucksters who were bringing produce from Berks County to Pottsville and surrounding communities to spend a night at Stoyer's Hotel. These travellers would reach the hotel on the first day of their journey, spend the night there and leave early the following morning to go to Pottsville with their produce. While at the hotel their horses would be cared for in the barn by hostlers. William Fidler was the hostler there for many years.

There was also a large platform scale which was used by farmers and cattle dealers to weigh hay, straw, and cattle.

Cattle and horse sales were held on the hotel grounds several times each year. The sales were conducted by William P. Heffner, a cattle dealer in the area.

The hotel was the site of many fairs and festivals. The Black Horse Band and later the Bressler Band were organizations that held fund raising festivals there.

A familiar sight to passing motorists was a large sign bearing the month and the day in brightly painted letters. This sign was changed daily by Mr. Joel Stoyer who rose early each morning to carry out this chore.

When Mr. and Mrs. Stoyer retired the thirty-two acre farm became the property of their son, Earl Stoyer, an automobile dealer. He laid out the property into building lots and eventually the development known as Stoyer Hills became a growing segment of Wayne Township.

The platform scale and all the frame buildings of the original farm were dismantled when Route 83 became 183 and was relocated in this area.

STONE MOUNTAIN MANOR

In the year 1924, Jacob and Maud Boltz purchased approximately 300 acres of land situated at the foot of Stone Mountain, 1 mile west of Route 183 junction at Summit Station. This land consisted of 4 farms which were primarily used for raising cattle and sheep.

In 1930, being aggressive people, they began to establish a summer resort known as Stone Mountain Manor. This became a well known recreation area throughout the county. It was so named after the railroad station, "Stone Mount" on the Susquehanna & Schuylkill Railroad", better known as the "S & S" which then was located back of the park at the foot of the mountain and ran parallel with Route 895. This venture was very successful and later they expanded the resort grounds and remodeled the swimming pools.

Stone Mountain Manor consisted of a large picnic area with pavillions, childrens playground, a building for refreshments, grille, dance hall, a beautiful lake for boating and a wooded area for hiking. The people from this area were grateful for a lovely park for picnics and social events. With no other parks around people came from far and near to enjoy gathering in this beautiful park. Churches, Sunday Schools and various organizations held picnics and reunions in the pavilions and picnic grounds. Youngsters enjoyed the swings, sliding boards, swimming and also hikes thru the cool wooded grounds. Many well known top name bands and orchestras were the added attraction for Saturday nights and Holidays.

Those who were inclined enjoyed rides on the Lake in row boats and canoes. Cottages too were available to rent for week end and summer vacations and provided a cool refreshing retreat under the trees near the Lake, away from the heat and hustle of the towns and one's daily work routine.

In 1958 the Manor was thriving and improvements were made on the pool and grounds to accommodate the crowds which gathered to enjoy the resort.

In 1960 a son, Benjamin took over the management of the Park until his death December 23, 1975.

Today the resort is owned and operated by Yogi Amrit Desai who owns and operates the Kripaul Yoga Ashram Retreat which has replaced the Stone Mountain Manor Resort.



MUSIC

BROWN'S BAND

The community of Brownsdale would not have been complete without a local band, known as the Brown's Band. They held weekly rehearsals at the Washington Band Hall, which was located on the corner at the foot of the hill, north of Brown's church. Its annual "Band Fairs" were then quite an attraction. This organization was known for rendering the concerts at the Brown's Sunday School picnics and also for neighboring churches. They often provided free concerts for functions sponsored by charitable organizations. These events usually brought a feeling of closeness in the community.

INDEPENDENT CORONET BAND OF BLACK HORSE



1st Row, (left to right): George Kremer, John Bessa, William Kerschner, Edward Deitz, Joseph Roeder, William Kramer, Theodore Fessler, Oscar Bressler, Henry Bressler (leader).

2nd Row: Harry Wildermuth, Allen Marbarger, Grover Reber, Robert Roeder, Franklin Reber, Anderson Dubbs, Joseph Reber, Clark Scholl, Elmer Roeder.

3rd Row: Theodore Achey, Harry Brown, William Clauser, Edward Berhisel, Levi Kremer, Samuel Heffner, Edward Degler, Charles Kremer, George Webber.



Left-right kneeling—Philip Hummel, James Freeman, Milton Patchett.

Second Row—Henry Fehr, Robert Kerschner, Gordon Brown, Goerge Brown, Harry Schrope, Irvin Leffler, William Krause, Sherman Schaeffer, Thomas Manbeck, Robert Moyer, Samuel Heffner-Director.

Third Row—Samuel Brown, Gordon Fehr, Levi V. Brown, Charles Freeman, Oscar Ney, Herman Krammes, Dorie Fehr, William Nunemacher, Sherman Schaeffer.