

A compilation of the 100th, 75th & 100th Anniversary Books plus stories from the diary of A.K. Seaman and the 100th Anniversary Book of Kutztown.

By Sandra Stitzer

The original inhabitants of this area were the warlike Indians known as the Minsi or Wolf tribe. They were one of the three tribes that belonged to the Lenni Lenape "Original People" nation. The other two were Unamis meaning Turtle and the Unalachtgo meaning Turkey. Evidence of Indian settlements around Fleetwood has been unearthed at numerous locations. Besides coming to this area to hunt and fish, they followed a trail along the top of the mountain from Reading to Flint Hill, which is located near Bowers. Here the Indians would obtain flint for their arrowheads. A student from Kutztown University located a bifurcated based spear point on a field trip in the area. From the material and this type of point it has been determined that man has been living in Berks County from at least 7000 B.C. It isn't until some time about 1000 A.D. that the Indians of this area began to settle in and build permanent houses.

Around the year 1630 the first white men came to explore Berks County. They were of Dutch origin and came here to trap and fish along the Schuylkill River. They did not settle here.

Later a Swede named Peter Minuet bought all the land between the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers, which included the Berks County area. In 1701 Andrew Rudman led the first Swedish settlers to what is now Douglassville. Soon they began to move into Berks County. A man named Mounce Jones built his home in the Douglassville area in 1716. The building is still standing and is thought to be the oldest structure in the county. Nearby a cemetery contains some of the oldest tombstones.

Next came the English. King Charles II of England owed Admiral Penn about \$ 80,000. Admiral Penn's son William (1644-1718), a Quaker, accepted 40,000 square miles of land in America as payment on the debt. William Markham, Penn's Cousin, was sent to America to take possession of the land. He named the new lands Sylvania meaning woods or forest. The king of England prefixed the name Penn in honor of Admiral Penn. Thus the name Pennsylvania meaning Penn's Woods was given to the area. Markham bought from the Indians an additional tract of land, which extended along the Delaware River to the Blue Mountains.

In October of 1682 William Penn arrived and made his first treaty with the Indians. He laid out several counties in that same year: Philadelphia, Chester and Bucks. Later would come Lancaster, 1729; York, 1749; Cumberland, 1750; Berks; 1752. There were two deeds made by the Indians to the Penns'. One was dated Sept 7, 1732 and the other Aug 22, 1749. Conrad Weiser was the interpreter for the Indians.

In 1682 Englishman John Strashold purchased a 500 acre tract of land in what is now Oley from William Penn.

Kemp's Hotel, now Whispering Springs, located on Rt 222 East of Kutztown is said to be the oldest hostelry in eastern Berks County. The original owner was Daniel Levan, a Huguenot, who came to the Americas in the early 1700's. He erected the hotel, which he passed on to the Kemp Family in 1788.

About 1720 the English immigrants began to arrive. They settled near Birdsboro and the Oley Valley. Most were Friends or Quakers and they quickly erected Meetinghouses. Some of these houses are still in use today.

The first German settlers arrived in 1712 and settled along the Manatawny Creek near Oley. Ten years later other Germans including Conrad Weiser settled in the vicinity of Womelsdorf. These early German settlers who came to Pennsylvania between the years of 1683 and 1776 were mostly from South Germany, the Palatinate state. During the Middle Ages the Palatinate had been among the most powerful and influential German states. The turmoil of the religious wars dealt a great blow to the prosperity of this area. Armies of friends as well as foes devastated villages. Poverty, hardships and murder followed in the wake of these strange invaders. The religious, moral and intellectual character of the people suffered such a shock. The country folk suffered terribly. Not only were horses and cattle stolen by these armies but their homes, barns and crops were burned. Often the master of the house was subjected to fiendish tortures in

order that he might reveal where gold was hidden or just plain punishment if he had no gold. When the hostile armies would approach the whole village would flee for their lives and live for weeks in caves, marshes or forests. They would then return to what was left of their homes only to flee again. With the invention of the printing press people were beginning to read of the voyage of Christopher Columbus and his discovery of a new world. Colonists were needed to found colonies. William Penn and his agent Benjamin Furley were credited with diverting the largest part of the German immigrants to American and to his own province. William Penn came to these people in 1671 and 1677 preaching a doctrine of good will to men. The news that Penn offered them a home in his province where they could live without wars and persecutions, and under laws which they could share in making brought a feeling of hope to many households. In 1683 Daniel Pastorius, as an agent for a number of German friends, bought 25,000 acres, and upon this land Germantown was soon located. This was the beginning of a mighty wave of immigrants coming to America. In 1708 - 3,000 Palatinates arrived in New York. In 1749 over 12,000 landed at the Port of Philadelphia. By 1727 the influx of these foreigners into Pennsylvania assumed such large proportions that the authorities became alarmed and the Provincial Council adopted a resolution requiring that all Masters of sailing vessels importing Germans and other foreigners should make a list of all passengers, particularly males over the age of sixteen. Women and children were often excluded from these lists. Some brought with them their most precious treasure, their German Bible, which had the life and death records of many family members. But an even greater number brought nothing whatsoever with them by which their descendents of today can bind them to their fatherland. Between the years 1728 and 1731 many came as Redemptioners. These were immigrants who had to work for 3 to 5 years to pay off their passage to the free world. It was not long after the settlers began to arrive that property in the Philadelphia area was beginning to become difficult to acquire and finally could not be obtained at all. Those who came in later years were compelled to move further and further out upon the frontiers, to the Oley Valley, to the Blue Mountains, or across the Susquehanna finding their way south to the Shenandoah Valley. They were not afraid to work. They cleared the land, built their homes and tilled the fields.

By 1740 Welsh settlers came in large numbers and established three townships- Caernarvon, Cumru, and Brecknock. Driven from France by Lois XIV, the Huguenots, skilled mechanics, also settled in the Oley Valley. Scotch-Irish settlers pushed northwest beyond the Blue Mountains.

Conrad Weiser (1696-1760) of German descent came to America in 1713 with his parents. As a young child, he spent a year with the Seneca Indian tribe in New York. In 1729 he moved to Berks County with his wife and children. He built his home East of Womelsdorf. The home is still standing in the Conrad Weiser Park. After many years the Berks County Historical Society raised enough funds to purchase the farm and has now been named the Conrad Weiser Memorial Park. Conrad Weiser is credited with not only being a translator for the Indians but he built the first store and the first hotel in Reading. The store was erected at 505 Penn Street where the Stichter Hardware building was located. This was a very important trading post for the area.

Berks County is also the ancestral home of Abraham Lincoln and the birthplace of Daniel Boone. Boone was born in Exeter Township. Three years before Boone's birth, Mordicai Lincoln, great-great grandfather of Abraham Lincoln moved to Exeter Township. Mordicai's grandson's youngest son Thomas married Nancy Hanks who also is believed to have come from Berks County. President Lincoln was their son.

Religion and Education played a very important part in the lives of our ancestors who settled in the Richmond and Maiden creek areas. After they built their homes, their first thought was to build a church and a school. The first school was established at Moselem and was used both as a school and a church. The pastors who wanted to come to this country had to pledge to be both pastors and teachers. The school was a log structure built in 1742 and was sponsored by the Lutheran denomination. The church was dedicated on January 20, 1743. Tradition places the history of the congregation even before 1730. No one knows who gathered the people here, though it might have been Rev. John Casper Stover, who visited here again and again before 1737. Some of the earliest baptisms are recorded in 1734. The Zion Moselem Church now stands where this building was located. The grant of 101 acres was given by the heirs of William Penn on August 12, 1748. This second church was dedicated in 1761. The pipe organ was dedicated in 1770 and used until 1957 when a Conn organ was purchased. The cornerstone for the present church was laid on May 13, 1894 and dedicated June 2, 1895. On September 13, 1894 the ~ congregation celebrated its 200k" Anniversary. Moselem in Indian means "Trout Stream". The first school sponsored by the Reformed Congregation was built near St. Peter's Church in Richmond Township. Records of this school date back to 1762. Both these churches and schools were built on the highest points to signify their importance to the early settlers. They were both built of logs and were two stories high to allow the teacher

and his family to live on the second floor while the first floor was used for a church and a school. Children paid a few cents a day per subject, depending how many subjects they studied. If a family was very poor, they would send only the oldest or brightest child to school and he in turn would instruct the other children still at home.

A large wooded 10,000-acre tract between Oley and Maiden Creek was surveyed and named Ruscombmanor Township for the "Manor of Ruscombe" from the district of Ruscomebe, Wales in 1739. In 1752 pioneers were attracted to the area because of the pure water. Pricetown, the only village in the township took its name from Conrad Price. Jonathan Price built the Pricetown Hotel.

Maxatawny became a township in 1742, ten years before Berks became a county. The village was originally known as Rothrockville. It was named after Dr. Jonas Rothrock, an eccentric physician, inn-keeper and Justice of the Peace.

Albany Township was formed about 1750 and was named after the district of Albany England. Kempton is the largest village in the township.

On March 11, 1752 Berks County was established. Berks is an abbreviation of Berkshire, England, where the Penn family held large estates. Reading, England was the capital of the Berkshires. The city was laid out in 1748 and established four years later. Hat making (1783) and clock making (1800) were the oldest actual industries. The iron industry was born in Reading. George Washington visited Reading in November 1793 to inspect the construction of the Union Canal. Cannon balls as well as cannons were cast in the foundries of Reading during the Civil War. When Lincoln asked for troops from Pennsylvania during the Civil War to defend the Capitol, the Ringgold Light Artillery under Captain James McKnight was the first to respond. The Ringgold Band went into the Civil War as a Regimental Band. Berks also claims to have the first Ladies Aid Society in the United States. A military hospital was set up in a building at City Park in Reading where the volunteers from the Ladies Aid Society nursed many soldiers back to health. In 1898 Carpenter Steel made shells that helped Admiral Dewey sink the Spanish fleet in Manila. In 1860 pretzel baking began in the city.

The first thoroughfare through Richmond Township was an Indian trail from the Lehigh to the Schuylkill River. Before the middle of the 18th century a primitive road called the "King's Highway" was constructed following this Indian path. In 1753, a petition signed by thirty inhabitants from Berks and Northampton counties, headed by Conrad Weiser, was presented to the Provincial Governor of Pennsylvania asking for a new road from Easton to Reading. The Easton Road or sometimes called the Great or High Road was built. The fifty mile highway became a reality. Benjamin Franklin was appointed a general by King George II of England to raise volunteers and to requisition supplies for the chain of forts stretching from Lebanon to Easton, which were established during the French and Indian War. Fort Northkill, beyond Bethel, was the nearest fort to Coxtown. In his inspection trip, Franklin traveled over the new Easton Highway. This later became known as Rt.222. Taverns sprang up along the highway. One was Kirbyville Hotel. This hotel was established in 1790. During renovations in the first floor kitchen a trap door was found in the ceiling, which provided a hiding place for slaves traveling to Canada along the Underground Railroad. In 1748, a store and hostelry stood at the corner of the Easton Road and a winding road (Rt.662) and was owned and operated by Conrad Miller who purchased the corner from the state. Thomas, Michael and Samuel Dumn owned the property after Mr. Miller. In 1847 Solomon Leibelsperger purchased the store and in 1852 built the Moselem Springs Inn on this corner. For more than seventy years the Leibelsperger named was associated with the Inn. It burnt in 1929 and Joel Leibelsperger rebuilt it. A general store was conducted along with the hotel. In 1872 Albert Weidner added a blacksmith shop and in 1894 a creamery operated by D.F. Kelchner began business on the same property. In 1846 the Post Office was also located here. During the days of Conestoga Wagons this hostelry was a stopping place for many of these teams hauling merchandise and grain between Pittsburgh and New York.

In 1773 the Rainbow Fire Co. was established in Berks County. This is the oldest organized Fire Company in the United States. In 1796 to 1913 Reading established a German newspaper called Der Adler. In 1798 the first English newspaper was printed.

Rockland Township was established in 1785 from part of Oley Township as was so named because of the many large boulder formations. Dryville, previously known as Stony Run, was established in 1852.

William Penn had sold large tracts of land, which made up early Fleetwood to the Wannans and Schlegels. On Aug. 16, 1738 and Nov. 7, 1754 Johannis Christian Sleagel was deeded 600 acres east of town. The Provincial Governor of Pennsylvania called the tract of lands the Sleagel Adventure. Richard and Thomas Penn (Sons of William) signed the first

deed. In 1797 Johannis built his stone home "The Schlegel Farm House". Today the farm is still owned and operated by members of the Schlegel Family.

The gristmill at the south end of town was built in the early 18th century. A farmer could pound his corn into coarse meal at home but he could turn wheat into flour or have a fine quality of flour without the help of a gristmill. In the early days boys often rode long distances on horseback perched on a bag of grain to a mill where the family flour or meal was ground. Later farmers brought a wagonload of bags filled with wheat or rye to the mill. Instead of money the miller took a certain amount of flour which he then resold giving him a means of support. The early mills were built of logs or stone and stood on the banks of a rushing stream that turned its huge wheel. Flour was ground between pairs of millstones varying from 4 to 6 feet in diameter. Sometimes they were made of pieces of stone that were held together with iron hoops. The grinding faces of the stones were grooved, one side of each groove being cut perpendicular to, and the other inclined toward the surface of the stone. The upper stone revolved and the lower one remained stationary. Grain was fed through a hopper with a valve to regulate the flow to a hole in the center of the upper stone. As the grist was ground it worked its way to the outer edges of the stones where it fell into a spout from which it passed by conveyors into machines called reels. In these revolving reels, cloth sieves varying in fineness separated the flour from the bran. Until the 1860's almost all the wheat grown in the United States was the soft winter type. From this a fairly fine grade of white flour could be made with millstones. But the settlers pushed ever westward and they took with them the soft winter wheat, which was not suitable to Kansas and the Northwest. Hard spring wheat was the only kind that grew there successfully. With the equipment available, it was impossible to grind this type of wheat and get clean flour unless the millstones were set to grind low for a low rate of flour extraction. Millers began to realize that from this hard spring wheat came the finest flour. The flour is much whiter with the roller mill as compared to the stone process but many say it is not equal in food value. In 1871 in a Minneapolis mill, a purifier, combining a draft of air with a mechanically shaken sifter making it possible to separate the bran particles, was introduced. Heavy iron rollers were installed and eventually the old gristmills were no longer needed.

Peter Wanner built the first gristmill in Fleetwood. He also operated a sawmill and later wadding mill both run by waterpower. Two dams supplied water for the wheel. Much of the land on the south side of town was once part of the Wanner tract granted by John and Richard Penn. The mill and the dwelling house were constructed as one. A miller was a man of importance in the community. He had to be near his business to be able to respond to the needs of his customers. Peter left the mill to his son Daniel, who passed it on to his son Samuel. Samuel built a mill between Fleetwood and Pricetown and sold the Fleetwood Mill to Philip Schaeffer. Philip bought the mill for his son William who enlarged it in 1844. Philip Schaeffer was a pioneer threshing machine manufacturer in the county. Prior to the threshing machine separating the grain from the chaff was done by hand. After a man used a flail to beat the grain, it was then tossed into the air to separate the chaff from it. The mill changed hands again when Jacob Wanner, who was dissatisfied with the amount of water on his farm, traded his farm on the Lyons road to William Schaeffer in exchange for the mill. Jacob then became unhappy with the mill and traded the mill to Colonel High and it became known as High's Mill. Daniel Koch acquired the mill in 1866 and continued in business for 16 years. Mr. Koch sold the mill to Frank Fitch. Amos and James Dumn, the next owners, eliminated the lower dam and enlarged the water wheel. The Dumn Brothers sold the mill to Joel Schaeffer who organized the firm Kaufman, Schaeffer & Co. Extensive improvements were made at this time. Electricity was substituted for steam. On August 27, 1912 a fire of unknown origin nearly destroyed the building. The mill was rebuilt and continued in business. The Schaeffer Estate sold the building to W.C. Strause on January 1, 1942. Again many improvements were made to the dam and buildings by Mr. Strause. He then leased the building to Grill and Oberholtzer, distributors and manufactures of feed. Another fire in 1959 curtailed future operations.

Around 1776, Peter Wanner also built the first hotel on the northwest corner of Main and Franklin Streets. It was a small stone structure that was noted by the strange color the stones had been painted. First they were yellow, then green and finally blue when it was torn down. There was a livery stable located to the rear of the hotel and extended down Main Street. Battalions were held at the hotel during the first week of June. Militia and other volunteer organizations joined in a parade. These gatherings were seldom bloodless. Men would look forward to these battalions and fights would ensue. Gradually these celebrations died out. Today communities celebrate Badolia Days, which stems back to this era. The hotel was changed and enlarged on several occasions. John Wanner made extensive alterations in 1812. In 1837 Benjamin Messersmith succeeded John as owner of the hotel. In 1851 Benjamin realized that the hotel business was growing so rapidly that he closed the store in the hotel and built another on the southwest corner of Main and Franklin. From 1837 to 1852 Mr. Stuart was the proprietor. In 1860 Peter Brumbach became the manager and continued there for

many years. Other proprietors have been George D. Schaeffer, Jacob Snyder, Nathaniel Fry, Lewis Fry, John Spatz and Daniel Herberm. The old blue building was torn down in 1913 and by 1914 a new three-story brick building was erected. It contained single rooms and apartments and was hosted by Howard Herbein, who followed in his fathers' footsteps. His father Daniel ran the hotel 24 years ago. Charles 1. Kutz who's father Franklin owned the building designed the hotel. In 1960 the hotel was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Max Hussar. Today the building is owned by Concern.

In 1775 George Kutz purchased all the acreage upon which Kutztown is now situated. In 1779 Kutz laid out the plans for the town that he called Cootstown.

After the battle of Brandywine in 1777, a regiment of the colonial army encamped on a farm on what is now Rt. 222 just East of Kutztown.

1800- A store, a taverns, blacksmith shop, farm implement repair shop and wheelwright shop were the oldest industries built in town. A traveler on his way to Philadelphia having spent the night at Moselem Springs Hostelry would turn his horse to the south and travel down a dirt road that passed groves of trees, fields of wheat and corn and pastures dotted with cattle and a few sheep. Cosmos Swoyer's farm is on the right just inside the borough limits. There were only 5 or 6 buildings along Franklin Street. They were built of log and stone. Next there is the Undertaking establishment of Widow Reifsnyder's son, Joseph. Peter Wentzel built the next log house. Then there was the implement shop of Jonas Weaver. Next to Weaver's shop was a corner lot, part of William Sholl's property. The Gambler House was next. The last of these homes was torn down in the 1920's. It was owned by Hiram Gambler. The Gambler House stood on William Sholl's property next to the Farmers and Drovers Hotel. The first owners were not known but the Gambler's lived in the home for many years. It was a one story structure about 15 feet high and about 15 feet wide. There was a door and a window in the front, a small window on the side and a door in the back of the building. Since it was a one-room structure, a loft provided extra space for storage or sleeping. The shingles on the roof were all hand made. Originally the roof was thatched. Later a 1 1/2-story addition made of logs was added. The Cox Family had the next log home. Adam Delp constructed a stone home. The house is still standing. The walls are 1 1/2 feet deep and the beams still have the original wooden pegs instead of nails. Benn Glase built the next log house.

1804- William Sholl built a 2-1/2-story stone building, with a front porch and two doorways, on North Franklin Street. It was called the Farmers and Drovers Hotel. Later it was called the Old Hotel. The shield on the building had two black crows painted on it. The story goes that pranksters and drunks would travel at all hours and would stop at the hotel and caw like crows to wake up the proprietor, thus the village became known as Kroppestaedel or "Crows Town". Elias Dries was the last person to hold a hotel license. Later the building was used as a shoemaker shop and a rehearsal spot for the Fleetwood Band. Two of the oldest cattle and horse dealers lived in Fleetwood. They were Henry Schlegel and Amos Rothermel. These men would drive the livestock east on foot. It would take 43 days to drive sheep east from Fairfax County, Ohio and 21 days to bring the horses over the 500-mile trek. The hotel was a place to auction off the livestock. It was finally torn down in 1932.

1806- The first store in the village of Coxtown was opened by Benjamin Parks. In a log and stone building on the northeast corner of Franklin and Vine Streets, all types of trading were carried on. Samuel Schlegel, whose name appears in a number of transactions prior to the incorporation of the borough, acquired the building, outlying stables, and a barn that protruded into Vine Street. Here he began a butchering business. Joshua Schlegel owned it next and then Mr. Bachman. In 1830, John Messersmith bought the store managing it along with another stand in the Hotel Fleetwood.

1807- Samuel Schlegel owned the butcher shop across the street from the Farmers and Drovers Hotel. He was paid a commission by the drovers to weigh each animal before going to auction.

1809- Further South on Franklin Street one of the houses was owned by the Cox family. In fact Mr. Cox had owned much of the land on which these few houses were built. It was around this time that the name of the town was changed to Coxtown. A daughter of the family named Susanna had an illegitimate child. She supposedly killed the child: she was tried, found guilty and hanged on Gallows Hill in Reading in 1809. Ballads such as "The Hanging of Susanna Cox" were written about her and the pathetic story is dramatized many times a year at the Kutztown Folk Festival.

1810- John Hoch built a whiskey distillery along the dam and across from the railroad depot. In the early sixties it went out

of business. The Church of God later used it as a meeting place for religious services. After the new Evangelical Church was built in 1866, the structure was used by the Cox Brothers as a cotton factory. It burnt down in 1873 and was never rebuilt. Rumor is that the Cox Brothers made such a superior grade of material other manufactures paid them a sizable pension for life if they would not rebuild.

1812- John Wanner made extensive changes to the Fleetwood House.

- Pike Township was carved out of Oley Township in 1812. The township was so named for the large amount of pike fish in the area streams.

1814- The town was not growing very rapidly. There were no rivers nearby for a water source. Many travelers still passed through and did not stay.

1815- Cootstown was incorporated as a borough.

1816- Mr. Stuart became the next manager of the Fleetwood House after John Wanner.

1820- As early as 1820 horse racing was very popular in this area. Race tracks were built on several farms. In the early 1870 they would race On Main street in Kutztown. The hey day for horse racing was the period from 1910 to 1925 when in August throngs of people would pack the grandstand (built in 1919) at the Kutztown Fairgrounds to watch the sulky races.

1830- John Messersmith took over the store at Franklin and Vine that was started by Benjamin Parks.

1831- John Messersmith opened another store in the Fleetwood House and kept both the stand and the tavern.

1833- The Philadelphia and Reading railroads were incorporated by the Legislature in 1833. A track was laid from Reading to Pottstown in 1837. More than 100 citizens rode back and forth on freight cars drawn by five horses. It took six hours to make the trip. The first regular steam train ran from Reading to Pottstown in 1838. First class fare was \$ 2.50 and second class \$ 2.00. The first passenger station and car shops in Reading were between Chestnut and Franklin Streets.

1835- Cootstown becomes Kutztown.

1837- Benjamin Messersmith succeeded John at the Fleetwood House and maintained it till 1851.

1840- St. Paul's Union Cemetery was established in the year 1840, in Richmond Township near Coxtown.

1841- In the spring of this year certain people of Coxtown purchased two acres of land from Benjamin Hoch at a cost of \$40.00. The parcel was located between Coxtown and Walnuttown. On April 25, 1841 the cornerstone was laid for St. Paul's Union Church for both the Lutheran and Reformed religions. The cost of the building was nearly \$ 3000.00. The organ was dedicated in the summer of 1859. The Ringgold Band from Reading played. Extra trains ran from Reading to Millerstown(Macungie) to handle the crowd. In 1887 additional land was purchased to put up sheds. In 1893 two more acres were purchased for a cemetery. The cemetery was dedicated on May 3, 1894. Many more improvements were made to the building and it was rededicated on Dec.13, 1896. On March 31, 1917 an additional 3 acres was purchased to enlarge the cemetery. The 11 0~ Anniversary Communion Service was held on June 10, 1951. Renovations were needed but were not approved and the building was declared unsafe in 1952. In the fall of 1959, St. Paul's Union Chapel was demolished.

1844- The Grand Central Taproom building was built in 1844. In 1881, it was named the Grand Central Hotel. Amos Melot and his wife are the earliest recorded tenants and proprietors of the establishment. The property was then sold to William Mayer, next to John M. Hoch, and then to George and Elizabeth Helfrich. When Mr. Helfrich died in 1923, it was used as the site of the first American Store. Later it was a salesroom for Firestone tires. In 1947, Henry Kraber bought the property after Mrs. Helfrich's death and again decided to open up a taproom. John Bucks became the sole owner in December 1950 and gave the establishment its original name- The Grand Central Taproom. Kenneth and Mildred Koller took over the property in 1976. The taproom is known for the pork barbecues and friendly atmosphere.

1846- Jonas Weaver started his business on West Franklin Street. He manufactured farm implements on a small scale in his shop. Schaeffer, Merkel & Co eventually bought him out.

1851- Benjamin Messersmith built Messersmith's Stand on the southwest corner of Main and Franklin. Other successive merchants were Daniel J. Wanner, John Shollenberger, Melot and Kline, Melot and Schaeffer, Charles A. Messersmith, Schaeffer and Reifsnnyder, Messersmith and Company.

1852- The First Post Office was established Feb. 6, 1852 under the name of Coxtown. Benjamin Messersmith was the first postmaster. It was located in the Messersmith Store at Main and Franklin Streets.

1853- The next store was erected by Daniel and Philip Schaeffer and Israel Kline. It was located at the southeast corner of Main & Richmond and was basically used as a trading post. It was later sold to Daniel Melot. Then it became known as Melot and Schaeffer when Nathan Schaeffer entered the firm. Oscar Melot bought shares and it was again known as Schaeffer and Melot. Next Nicholas Kutz and George and Alfred Schlegel joined the firm and it was known as N.S. Schaeffer & Co. N.S. Schaeffer sold his shares and then it became Boyer, Hunsinger & Kleppinger. Jacob Boyer sold his shares to Luther Buck. Mr. Hunsinger and Mr. Kleppinger passed away and it became Buck's Store. It was sold again in 1969 and was torn down in 1971. The Patriot Bank now stands where the store was located.

1854- Richmond Township accepted free public education. As a result farmers donated plots of ground in various areas for the construction of a school; thus, the one-room school houses were born.

1855- The first secret order was instituted and was known as the Order of Junior Mechanics. They met on Saturday evening at Mechanics Hall located at the N.S. Schaeffer & Co. Building at Main and Richmond Streets.

1856- Coxtown grew to 25 buildings of which all were log and stone structures. There was a log meeting house and a log school. The men were laborers and mechanics. Still the area was not favorably situated for business until after the railroad was built.

1857- June 11, 1857 Ground was broken in Temple to extend the railroad from Reading to Allentown. The last rail was laid on April 29, 1859 and the railroad was formally opened on May 19, 1859. It was chartered under the name of Reading and Lehigh Railroad. Later it was acquired by the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company and again changed to East Penn. The railway was a single-track line until 1907 when it was changed to double.

After the railroad was built, the name of the town was changed to Fleetwood. There have been two theories on how it got its name. One being that it was named for two surveyors that had worked for the railroad, Mr. Fleet and Mr. Wood. The other theory is that a man working for the railroad saw how beautiful this section of land was with its beautiful mountains and valleys, it reminded him of a place in England known as Fleetwood. Fleetwood, England was a rich and cultured area.

1858- The Union Hotel was built on Main Street by Levi Templin. It was a brick structure, which was later enlarged by George Dewees, and later Samuel Dewees. In 1873 it was largest hotel in Fleetwood with accommodations for 100 people. The hotel was known as a resort for businessmen. Everything was first class and elegant. A livery stable attached to the building with horses for sale at all times. The last proprietor was Joe Riemondi who also ran a fine restaurant. Across the alley stretched a line of sheds and stables for overnight guests. Years later the sheds along Main Street were torn down and David Hoover built a saddle shop there. In the livery stable behind the hotel, animals were kept, bred and treated for illness. At the corner of Pearl and Myrtle Alleys a red brick schoolhouse, the first belonging to the borough, was erected. Later it was occupied by Thomas Bickel's box factory and then sold to Elmer M. Hoch. Joseph Riemondi turned one of the buildings into a theater, which later became a storage place for the box factory. Many of these buildings have been removed and it is now the site of the municipal parking lot.

- The hotel itself was purchased by Goodman Associates and was torn down. It was replaced by a market house first occupied by the Acme, then Luther Buck and then by the I.G.A. Later was torn down.

- The Lester Hoch home at 19 East Main, one of the oldest homes in the borough was deeded on April 3, 1858 and built of bricks that were made in the yard above the railroad tracks. Jacob Noll originally built the structure. During the 1930's, Bell Telephone for the erection of an exchange, purchased a small parcel of ground located on School Alley (Myrtle). The old exchange is behind the Hoch property.
- The last rail for the railroad was laid on April 29, 1858.
- On August 3, 1858 Fleetwood Council No. 20 O.U.A.M. was instituted. Their place of meeting was also at Mechanics Hall, Main and Richmond Streets on the third floor of the N.S. Schaeffer & Co. store building.

1859- The last spike was driven on April 10, 1859. May 19, 1859 the railroad formally opened. A marker at the station shows that Fleetwood is 449.05 feet above sea level. Station Masters were:

H.W. Schaeffer, Jacob Schaeffer, John Bauscher, Walter Bauscher, assistant, George Schmehl and Ralph Heilman. The telegraphers were John Baer, George Schmehl, Lewis Scheiry, and Edwin Kemp. The village became a freight-handling depot for iron ore to be shipped to the furnaces. One of the early furnaces for smelting the ore to iron was located in Oley (Friedensburg). This furnace dates back to 1765. Many men found employment in the ore industry. As high as 15,000 tons of ore were mined each year. A shop opened on Franklin Street to repair the ore wagons.

- Among the early residents of the town were Michael Moyer, carpenter; Peter Hill, blacksmith; Jacob Sholl, shoemaker and innkeeper; John Messersmith, tailor; Joseph Reifsnnyder, carpenter; Jacob and John Widman, hatters; Christian Schlegel, farmer; Peter Wanner, farmer and miller; George Merkel, hatter; John Lejman, hatter; George Young, weaver; James Maxim, wheelwright; Benjamin Parks, store keeper; George Heckman, teacher.
- Aug. 3, 1859 Fleetwood Council No. 20 O.U.A.M. was instituted. Their place of meeting was Mechanics Hall on the 3rd Floor of the N.S. Schaeffer & Co. store building, Main and Richmond Streets.
- The pipe organ at St. Paul's Union Chapel was dedicated.
- The Fleetwood Railroad Station was built in 1859.
- The village of Bowers, located on a branch of the Saucony, was named after Jonas Bowers, who laid out the town on his farmland in 1859 and transformed his house, built in 1820, into a hotel. A post office was established in June, 1860.

1860- William Scholl, a general merchandiser, erected a three story brick building on the northeast corner of Franklin and Main Streets. It was a general store. Cyrus F. Reifsnnyder owned the store and Isaac Merkel became his partner. The Reifsnnyder estate sold the place to E.H. Kalbach and Clayton Mertz who were traders. Both families lived in the building, which was later acquired by Fleetwood Appliance. A number of lodges used this building until the erection of the Orioles Building on East Main Street. While Reifsnnyder was the proprietor, S.H. Rothermel and his brother leased a part of the building to operate their ore business. They hired miners to mine the ore, hired teams to bring the ore from the mines and sold and rented all types of equipment used in mining. At the north end of the lot was a large frame building, which was set on pillars. The top floor was used for storage and the bottom housed poultry.

1861- On the southwest corner of Franklin and Locust Streets, Jonas Shollenberger operated a store in a frame building where he also lived. Later it became the offices of Fleetwood Metal Body Company. A stone summerhouse served as a storage space for their records. Almost blocking Locust Street was a frame building, which before it burned down, housed some equipment, used by the borough. Samuel Dumn's Wharves were on both sides of the railroad tracks.

1862- Other stores opening were L.L. Fegely and Fenstermacher's which later became W.C. Strause & son. Fenstermacher moved to Kutztown and opened a department store.

1863- Reuben Rauenzahn operated a limestone quarry behind his barn, now a part of the Fleetwood Cemetery.

1864- Lewis, George D., Daniel and Jonathan Schaeffer started a foundry and machine works, known as Fleetwood Foundry and Machine Works located on South Franklin Streets. By 1885, the steam-operated works occupied three

acres. They manufactured all types of iron ore implements. This firm also made the Bradford Patent Ore and Flint Separator, single and double ore washers and all classes of mining and agricultural equipment, steam engines, dumping cars, ore cars and castings. Adam Haag, a member of the firm, invented the celebrated Reliance Turbine Water Wheel. In 1867 George retired and Charles Melcher took his place. Thus it became Schaeffer, Melcher & Company until 1872 when William Merkel replaced Melcher in the firm. It was William Merkel who built the famous Schaeffer Merkel Grain Separator. This company made some of the best machinery in the state. In 1899 it was sold to Mr. Rummel of Reading and later Hartman and Johnson who continued in the foundry business. In 1904 a fire burned out all the buildings except one. In 1905 the Reading Metal Body Company was organized to make automobile bodies in this one structure that was left from the fire. The Reading Firm sold their interest to an Elyria, Ohio concern in 1910. Fleetwood Metal Body leased the building in 1912 and two years later it was sold at auction to the Body Works. Philip Schaeffer built the first threshing machine.

1866- The Fleetwood Meeting House, a simple two story brick building was erected on a lot donated by Mrs. Lydia Hoch to the Evangelical Congregation in 1866 when their membership grew too large for meetings that were held in individual homes. The church was on West Franklin Street. It burned in 1888. A new church was built the following year and the old burned out structure was sold to E. M. Mill. He rebuilt it and started a planing mill. The Fleetwood Metal Body Works purchased it and extended the frame part of the building another 200 feet to the northwest corner of Franklin and Arch and along Arch Street. A fire in 1936 completely destroyed the property. One of the early ministers was Moses Dissinger. There were many stories regarding this preacher. One is that he carried a club to the pulpit to keep order. A group of boys called Bully Boys sang louder than everyone else and would occasionally get roudy. Moses built a home on the corner of Chestnut and Poplar Streets. On the South side of Poplar Street, a road led to the site of the camp meeting grounds of the Evangelical denomination. Many revival meetings were held here. Later the place was abandoned and used as a picnic ground till the new park was built.

- After the Civil War had ended people on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line began to put flowers on the graves of their family members that died in the war. It is said that some southern women visiting gravesites noticed the graves of 40 northern soldiers. They took the flowers they had and divided them among the graves. Stories of these women and their kind act reached newspapers everywhere. It was decided that May 30th of each year should be celebrated as Decoration Day because that is the day the rest of the volunteer soldiers from the Civil War were sent home. This day is set aside so all of us can remember men and women who have served and died to keep our country free.
- The Kutztown Normal School was founded.
- Moses A. Folk Carriage Works began on the corner of Washington and Franklin Streets. The business prospered for more than fifty years. He manufactured and repaired buggies, wagons, and sleighs. Many of the items were custom made for people. In the rear of the building was a storage area for these products, which were shipped all over the country. When Moses Folk died at the age of 47. His son Richard and brother Charles carried on the business. Later it became the site of William H. Seaman's garage and new car showroom.

1867- George D. Schaeffer retired from Schaeffer & Co. Charles Melcher was his successor.

- George and William Cox & William S. Young built the Cotton Wadding Factory at the Whiskey Distillery. It was enlarged in 1869. Charles Messersmith bought shares in the business. On May 5, 1873, the factory was completely destroyed by fire and was never rebuilt.
- The Fleetwood Cemetery was established in 1867.

1868- Across Hay Alley and near the northwest corner of Poplar and Richmond Streets stood the shop of Amandus Kern. In 1868 he began to manufacture mill picks. These were tools used in the iron ore business for digging, smoothing and grooving milestones. By 1885, because the mill picks had to be sharpened so often, Kern had to start another forge. Later the business was disposed of to Walter H. Noll, who built an up to date garage and show room for new cars.

- James F. Hill built the first horseless carriage powered by steam. The steam produced insufficient power for the

vehicle to go up hills. He was not allowed to operate the machine in the streets because the people were afraid of it. Not only was Mr. Hill an inventor, he learned carpentry work at Moses Folk Carriage Works. He also is well known for his wonderful paintings and has also painted murals on the walls of many churches in the area. He invented safety couplings for the railroad industry. Later on in life he also learned the art of cabinet making.

- Thomas Melon laid out the plans for the town. The plans were accepted on May 11, 1868 and the plots sold for \$5.00 per linear foot.
- On September 24, 1868 Washington Camp 103 Patriotic Sons of America was organized and instituted. In January of 1878 they went defunct. In February 24, 1880 they re-organized.

1869- The name of the town was changed to Fleetwood. March 22, 1869.

- The Knights of Pythias Willow Valley Lodge # 142 was formed. They met at Mechanics Hall on Main and Richmond Streets.
- September 20, 1869 the name of the Post Office was changed to Fleetwood. The first Postmaster was Cyrus Reifsnyder.
- Charles F. Hill started a marble and granite wholesale and retail business on Main and Walnut Streets next to his home. Later he moved to a plot close to the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad.
- Daniel Focht Carriage Works and a blacksmith shop were also doing a prosperous business at 20 North Richmond Street. This became the Kelchner Livery Stable. Mr. Kelchner rented teams to agents, rural mail carriers, and catered to the general need of the public. His large cab with seating for 12 was rented for parties at 5 cents per passenger. He also operated a two horse drawn sprinkler and charged 10 cents a week to spray the dusty streets two times a day. In the event someone did not want the luxury he would shut the water off when he went by.
- The Kutztown Railroad Station was built in 1869-1870.

1870- On the northwest corner of Richmond and Main Streets, Samuel Kerchner constructed a building, the second and third floors were used a living quarters for his large family. The first floor housed a general store under the trade name of Kelchner Brothers. His brother Jacob joined him in the business. They also managed a huckster route. Some years later George J. Schlegel and his brother Alfred carried on a hardware business. A Post Office was located there. Later, William Stein next operated a store. A few years later a Five and Ten Cent Store was in the building. Across Main Street opposite the Kelchner store was Melot, Wanner and Company, a trading post and store. A harness shop stood directly on the corner. Halfway back the lot on Richmond Street was located a marble works. Later a cigar factory and store opened where the harness factory stood and a shoe repair replaced the marble works. Charles Leitheiser operated a pool room and cigar store on the corner of Main & Richmond.

- Elanus C. Weston operated a three-story cigar factory across Depot Alley and was the first to employ women. Oliver Hoch and the Gehret Brothers operated smaller cigar factories.
- One of the earliest churches, the Fleetwood Missionary Church, formerly Independent Church of God, on North Richmond Street, was organized on September 2, 1870. Daniel Koch and his associates built the first structure. A new building was built in 1968. It was the second church in the borough.
- The Tipton-Kutztown branch of the East Penn Railroad was completed.
- George Heydt built a frame structure on a portion of land far beyond the borough limits and extending to the railroad. He drove a team of horses to and from the ore mines daily. He is also credited with starting the first dairy and milk route in the borough.