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HISTORICAL NOTES.

The Settlement of Providence Township

—AND—

Remeniscences of Early Scranton,

—BY—

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THE early history of the Lackawanna Valley is involved in the obscurity of time and it is hard to exhume from a hundred or more years of oblivious record—yet enough is known to convince us that the Indians held undisputed sway long after Penn became the owner of its soil by purchase. The first explorers were from New England, and to the state of Rhode Island we must credit the first enterprise, that, after years, became the van of a colony that crossed the valley—seeking the beech and maple lands still further north and west in the towns of Abington, Benton and Factoryville, where their descendants enjoy the fruits of their enterprise and industry.

In 1754 these lands, or this section of Pennsylvania, was purchased of the Indians, known as the Six Nations, who continued their domain up the waters of the Susquehanna to the interior of the State of New York. As late as 1820, tribes or large parties from the Oneidas made yearly excursions down the Chenango to its junction with the Susquehanna, and usually spent three or four months with their traps and bows in quest of peltry, returning to their northern homes for the winter.

We have no means of knowing how long the Indians had occupied the valley of the

Lackawanna, but we have positive knowledge that a small tribe called the Capouse inhabited this particular locality, and the wide meadows of the Tripp farms and up and down the stream for a few miles were the field of their hunting and fishing; and even at this late day evident marks still exist of their ancient homes. The desecration of their graves for trophies has been the favorite pastime of one of our historians, and the fruits of his labors are to day on exhibition on their grounds, and even the vandal hand of enterprise has not disturbed an ancient apple tree that has been a land mark since the first white settler came to the valley, and still bears fruit.

The Chief Capouse was not a man of war, as we are informed. He fought all other tribes who trespassed on his rights, and successfully resisted all efforts to dispossess him of any portion of his domain, but he never encroached on others, and he lived and died with his tribe, and was buried in a mound near Park Place, where bones, copper kettles, arrow-heads and beads were found in 1795. The pacific character of the old Chief Capouse, he did not transmit to the younger portion of his tribe. After his death they were impatient to avenge the wrongs he had patiently endured, and they resisted

the encroachments of the Moravians, who were located at Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Easton and who, under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf, were encroaching on them, and the Indian settlements along the Susquehanna below, in the interest of their religious zeal and a desire to civilize this ardent race, and perhaps with some selfish desire to possess the broad fields of the Wyoming.

Even after the great treaty of peace was held at Easton between the English and Confederate Indian Nations in 1766, the Messers on the Lackawanna, under the leadership of their new chief, Backstosa, were troublesome and hostile to the English. In the first Indian massacre of the settlers at Mill Creek in the summer of 1768, the warriors of this tribe were charged with participating in the bloody and cruel deed.

The last warriors of this tribe disappeared from this region known as Capouse in 1771. The tribe returning to their northern haunts with the Oneidas along the Chenango and the Onondagas who resided along the Susquehanna, where the flourishing village of Windsor now stands, and afterwards, with pale-faced allies enlisted in their cause, came down and visited their wrath on the inhabitants of Wyoming in 1776, in a war that caused the world to shudder at their atrocities, and in their retreat swarmed up the Lackawanna for the last time, brandishing their blood-stained weapons of war, leaving their victims dead and dying—their homes desolated by fire and slaughter, and their coveted lands reduced to a barren and desolate waste.

We now commence our history of the township of Providence. The Indians having reached their vengeance on the successful inhabitants of Wyoming have retired to their allies of the north, known as the Six Nations, or a union of six powerful tribes who inhabited mostly the northern and central portion of the State of New York. We find the first settlers of the Capouse, or what is now Providence, to be Isaac Trapp, Andrew Hickman, John DeWitt, Gideon Baldwin and Christopher Avery. Others might have been with them at the time they

came, but no one has been able to find any positive evidence of them, as neither ashes of their homes nor any marks of civilization existed prior to 1771, when they risked their lives in this howling wilderness. The unkind treatment the New England settlers at Capouse had received from the Pennamits at Wyoming from the date of their arrival in 1771 to 1782 furnished arguments against the colonization of this section of Capouse, or what is now Providence, and then designated by the Westmoreland settlers as Wyoming. Other causes might have checked emigration. Like all new countries, it was not perfect.

The settlers above named returned to their former homes for a season. Fever had stricken them, and not until the Trenton decree in 1772, that extinguished the title of the Connecticut settlers, when peace began to reign, did they dare return to their old homes. Even when the County of Luzerne was inaugurated in 1786, and the laws of Pennsylvania promised protection to settlers, they did not dare venture a home in their wilds; but soon the Tripps returned, and with them the Abbot, Athertons, Bagleys, Dolphs, Lutzs, Fullers, and many other old families that have left their posterity to inherit their farms came back. The march of improvement and the spirit of speculation have induced many to leave, and but few are left that once owned without knowledge, the vast fields of black rock, which, since then, have made hundreds rich, and have built a populous and business country from a prayerful, quiet, secluded home.

The honor of a historian was never thrust upon me before, and a reluctance to dis appoint those who gave me the honored position induced me to assume the new role, and so far as I can interest the reader in giving the history of Providence Township, I will do so, so far as my acquaintance with its history goes, which now is nearly forty years previous to that. The history of the Wyoming and all its tragic scenes are so eloquently depicted by Miner, and now recently by Pierce in his annals of Luzerne County, and still more recently by the venerable Rev. Dr. Peck and

Dr. Hollister, who each had means for accumulating history that do not now exist, by interviewing the old settlers that now have gone to their long rest, and by documents that I have neither time nor inclination to seek. Should anyone desire more of previous history than I am able to give, I will refer them to each for the particulars.

The territory of which I write is located on a small share of the great county, and only contained originally six miles square. I must even in that encroach on the domain of others that perhaps may make the same complaint of me, yet history is what is wanted, and I will as briefly as possible contribute what I know of Providence for nearly forty years.

Providence, as a Township, lies on both sides of the Lackawanna creek—the stream passes about through the centre of the territory. The land along the creek in many places was loose, and, as the latter receded, was rolling, and presented a variety of sub-lands and meadows that were desirable for agriculture, until it approached the mountains that skirt it on the east and west. The Moose range is on the east, and on the west is the Lackawanna, which has never been inviting for tillage, and comprised at least one-third of the territory which I have in charge.

The majority of the land-holders were men of generous impulses, liberal and hospitable, and each owned his own farm, and by the sweat of his brow maintained himself and family by agriculture. Yet a few varied their pursuits especially in winter by a devotion to the charms of lumbering. Some more romantic spent the time in hunting—for deer was plenty on the mountain sides—and others more of a practical turn used up their time in "shingle weaving," as they called their work, while still others enjoyed the congregation that could always be found at the hotels, that sought the solace of old age, and dealt with the politics of the country, in which they had a very great influence—or thought so. The inhabitants generally respected the Sabbath day, except in haying and harvesting times, when I think they did the most work—or rather

the best farming of the town. They disturbed no worshipping congregation, for there was none to worship. At intervals of a month some devoted Methodist would venture a sermon in some old school house in the neighborhood, but seldom would venture to disturb the monotony of the country by advancing the idea of a God that ruled over all, for 'twas looked upon as an innovation on vested rights. However, a few were devoted Christians and did what they could to inculcate a spirit of benevolence and charity to all; but such were looked upon as suspicious persons and watched closely. Father Hunt, I recollect, in the winter of 1840, gave notice that he would deliver a lecture on "Temperance" at the school house opposite Providence,—then better known as Razorville. The night came, and the old gent was on the ground and had an audience of about twenty, each of whom fortified himself with a bottle of "Old Hang's Whiskey" and whenever in the lecture he made a good point—for there were many such—each took his bottle and drank, and when the lecture closed they were all lecturing on the same subject.

There was but one physician in the town of Providence in 1840. He was a clever, kind-hearted old gentleman at about sixty, who had the free run of the township, and was looked upon as a member of every family, although he had one of his own. He rarely gave any medicine except rhubarb and soda, and when called in haste his patrons made the request that he would go on foot. He rarely rode a horse, and never drove, and rarely went faster than a slow walk; yet he performed all the duties of doctor and nurse for the whole country around.

Hotels did better. There were four: two at Hyde Park and two at Razorville. The proprietors had a good business, lived well and charged sixpence a drink, six for lodging, twelve and one-half for a dinner, and everything else in proportion.

The mail facilities consisted of a line of two-horse wagons that carried the mails three times a week from Carbondale to Wilkes-Barre. This line was succeeded in a short

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time by two horse covered coaches, and that after a year or two by a four-horse coach, and which about 1844, was run daily, and was well patronized.

There was one store at Providence. It was kept by an old Scotchman who kept open during the winter; but in the spring he packed his whole stock, strapped it on his back and travelled and peddled until winter came again. There were two other stores at Hyde Park of more complete assortment. In one, the room was some fifteen by twenty feet, and there, in connection with the post-office, you would find a general assortment of dry goods, crockery, hardware, drugs, medicines and liquors. In the evening this was a hailing place for the neighborhood, and the habitués were often delighted with music of the sweet violin to a late season. There were but few inhabitants that did not see each other daily in Hyde Park, and residents there were always antagonistic to Razorville—so much so that the annual elections were divided, one year at Providence, the next at Hyde Park. Though both were important villages neither contained more than a dozen dwellings, but in each there were always political leaders who stood very high.

It was seldom that a New York paper was met with, and the papers at Wilkes-Barre gave the news of the world once a week. There were but few men of liberal education in the country, and those were emigrants from the east, and as a general thing, were stray school masters, seeking a market for knowledge, that was not merchantable from whence they came; but they were well received, and, captivated by the wiles of Venus, became fixtures, and gave tone to the intelligence of the valley. They were denominated as "smart critters" by the original masters of the soil.

The legal profession did not suffer, for there was one attorney on whom all relied. In our modern parlance, he was a "Carpet Bagger" from the state of New York, who early captured one of the fair daughters that had inherited what would be now called a large possession. He was a man of much brilliancy of talent,

tolerably well read, full of wit; sarcastic when, excited a great mimic, and was always on the lucky side of all his cases. His opponents were from Wilkes-Barre and Carbondale. The rough and tumble of Justices' courts in this region was his delight, and on such occasions the whole neighborhood was present. In these days when there was seldom any exciting theme, a lawsuit gave great relief, and was enjoyed hugely; and as they, by a kind of tradition, came on Saturday, they often lasted till next morning, but nothing was considered wrong about a little lapping over so the case closed before daylight. Of this brilliant man and his history much might be said. After many years' absence he returned to this city and died in poverty. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* "*Requiem in mortis.*"

Shortly after the advent of this limb of the law, a young doctor made his appearance in Razorville. His modesty commended him to the pity of a few, and being rather an obstinate kind of genius, he decided to tarry for a season. He was well prepared to do business, for he brought two old horses with him, but the strenuous opposition of the old occupant of the situation and of his friends almost discouraged the young chap; through some accident, however, he had a fall; pity and sympathy came to his aid, and he had others till, after a long time, he made a living, and has hung around ever since. Whether he has achieved any reputation as a physician, or has cured more than he has killed, is a problem never to be told—dead men tell no tales. A live doctor was considerable of a fellow in those early days, and as public lectures were then being delivered in some of the large cities, he was imported to deliver a lecture, in the winter of '41. He got up his lecture, and delivered it with great *clat* at Razorville, Hyde Park, Slocum Hollow, and Blakely, at that time the first ever delivered in this country. It was a brilliant effort, gave great satisfaction, increased his practice, and no doubt will immortalize his name.

Dunmore was forty years ago known by the classic name of Bucktown, and was made

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up of four corners, one a tavern, another a store, another the tavern barn, and the fourth an open field. In the vicinity were three or four houses constructed of logs. The hotel was kept by Mr. Asa Coursen, now of Providence. The bar-room contained the old fashioned bunk, that with him answered also for a tailor's bench, on which he sat making a pair of homespun cloth pants. The bar was of the usual four feet square in the corner, and was surrounded with a fence of slats to the ceiling. It contained the usual beverage of the country, which was thrust through a hole in the fence on a small board large enough to hold a bottle and a glass, in which the customer was invited to help himself. If water was also wanted a tin dipper in a pail in the corner answered the purpose, and he paid his sixpence and went his way. Bucktown in those days was a rallying point for the neighboring farmers, hunters, and lumbermen of the region about, and had always in the early days a hard name. When the operations of the Pennsylvania Coal Company commenced a change came over the place, and an influx of a better class of inhabitants has, in the establishment of churches and schools, worked a vast change in the morality and business of the place.

The road from Bucktown to Slocum Hollow was through woods, excepting a small farm owned by a Mr. Carey. The road had never been worked, and was only opened with one track. The next house was that of Col. Hitchcock, who owned quite a tract of land, running from the river nearly to the top of the mountain, and on which the most beautiful of Scranton residences now stand. He was a good citizen, and had for many years resided there and fast cleared it from a wilderness. Then came the Slocum property since purchased by the Iron Company. There were the remnants of an old saw mill where now the five large furnaces stand, below them an old distillery and grist mill, both worn out and disbanded, and the red house that for years was an important hotel in the country. This was all there was of what is now Scranton. There was a covered bridge

where now the iron bridge stands, and no other up the stream short of Providence. A road seldom traveled led to Providence, on the bank of the pond for some distance, and then through a thick forest of stalwart pines where now the Dickson manufactory stands. The writer upon one occasion chased a fine buck on horseback for a long distance on this road, until he made for the river, where now the bridge of the Street Railway Company crosses, and made safe passage to the mountain.

To return to a description of Scranton in 1840. It was mostly covered with second growth of pines and oaks, especially the ridge now occupied by the elegant residences of Mr. J. C. Platt and Mrs. J. H. Scranton, as well as further east to the Archbald estate and the residence built for and by Mr. S. T. Scranton. From there to the river was all covered over with second growth forest. A fence of stumps drawn from the field enclosed all of the space now lying below Lackawanna avenue, and between Washington avenue and the river, and was used and cultivated for farming purposes by Burton Mott, a very good man, who owned the grist mill, and becoming embarrassed sold the same to Mr. H. S. Pierce, who, after holding it for a short season, parted with it at a large profit of \$4,000. That has, of course, since enhanced in value immensely, and the south side of Lackawanna avenue and all the large manufactories on that side now occupy the same land. This is one of hundreds of instances in the history of this valley where man's foresight was not as good as his hindsight in those days.

Having briefly given a history of Providence as it was found in 1840, I will proceed, in my own way, to follow up the various events of any importance from then to the present, dealing with those which soon changed the monotony of a quiet, moral town, not unlike many that surrounded it to a busy, hurly-burly business mart.

The winter of 1844 commenced a very exciting controversy about an innovation of the Valley by the Erie Railroad or some other

improvement which was actively opposed by some, and especially by my friend and companion, Charles H. Silkman and his cohorts, who in those days were all powerful. At his instance meetings were held in Hyde Park, Providence and Blakely. These meetings were attended very faithfully and, as a matter of course, Silkman was always victorious when it came to a vote on any resolution concerning the project for the Delaware and Hudson, or any other improvement coming here. In face of the projected branch of the North Branch Canal that was to be carried up the Lackawanna by a system of dams and slack-water navigation. It was to open every man's coal and carry it to market without cost, and bring to every man a fortune at public expense without even the trouble of mining.

After several months the excitement all died away, and for the time I was the only advocate of the Railroad. It was about this time that a vigorous old gentleman, Mr. Nathan Smith, a relative of the family of Wurts, appeared in Providence, and before any one was aware of his intention, had purchased quite a number of farms above Dunmore. Before he had concluded his purchases, and while in Blakely, he was taken ill, and died. His remains now lie in the quiet repose for the dead near the Baptist Church in that town. For a year after his decease but little was heard of his objects in purchasing these lands, but when other payments were due they were all met by the Wurts interest, and it was found afterward that he acted only as their agent. For a time nothing occurred to interest the inhabitants what was in store for them, when rumors came that Mr. Archbold and a party of engineers were running lines over the mountains from Dunmore to the Lackawanna. The work occupied nearly a year. It was thought as a matter of course that he being an officer and manager of the interests of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, that it was their project, but after a time it came out that a new company had been formed under a charter called the "Washington Canal

Company" that was subsequently changed to the Pennsylvania Coal Company, and it was a kind of mutual company. He first arranged with the Delaware and Hudson Company to afford tonnage through their Canal leading from Honesdale to the Hudson River at Roundout and a bargain was made, and each company thought they understood themselves, and some years after the completion of the Pennsylvania Coal Company's road to Hawley, a town on the banks of the Lackawanna, thirty-five miles from Dunmore, named after Gideon Hawley, its President, the agreement was carried out.

The Pennsylvania Coal Company had, as a corporation, purchased of the Wurts's the lands obtained by Smith as a nucleus and another tract where now an important part of the city is located, and called "No. 6"—where the machine shops of the Company are located now, and where, at the time of the purchase, they expected to supply their road with all the coal it could carry. Mr. Archbold, and his chief assistant in all these projects, Mr. Clarkson, opened the mines in that vicinity, and at the same time commenced a shaft some half mile north of the Depuy farm. After going down about one hundred and fifty feet they abandoned it as reaching no coal, as they had struck a fault in the strata. This was a great disappointment to the Company. At that time one hundred and fifty feet for a shaft was a great thing, and discouraging in the extreme, for they were the only ones in the country that knew all about coal, and not finding it as they expected, abandoned it partially, and sought other sources for a supply. The few openings about No. 6, under any circumstances, could not yield for any length of time, what their facilities would transport.

Then of course these gentlemen were casting about for more coal lands, and for days might be seen up and down the Lackawanna with their little hammers in hand pecking all the rocks on the west side of the Lackawanna for a coal seam, but none could be found. The writer met these gentlemen one early morn in the ravine near the Mount

Pleasant Colliery in Hyde Park, where a seam of coal was cut through by the rivulet, and ventured to ask the object of their search. They answered with all the gravity their natures and habits of truth would allow: "We are searching to find where this coal belongs. It is out of place. Some convulsion or upheaval has disturbed its natural position. It belongs to the other side of the Valley."

"But, sir, don't you suppose all those lands are coal bearing lands?"

"Oh, no, not by any means! We have been here often seeking to find where it belongs. It is very curious. In fact, we do not suppose that this seam extends over two or three acres at most. There is no coal this side of the valley that belongs here."

The entire failure of finding any other coal in Providence, except at No. 6, and the failure at the one hundred and fifty feet shaft at Dunmore was a damper on the Pennsylvania Coal Company. The road had been built and was ready. What next was to be done.

About this time Mr. William R. Griffith, of Philadelphia, came to these parts and offered the Company lands below Pittston, at Port Griffith, that he had purchased for some purpose, and he had these lands and offered to join the company and become a stockholder. It required only about thirty miles more of road to bring this coal to Dunmore, and this was built, and the stability of the Company was maintained, and the extension has ever since contributed to its success. At the close of this brief outline of the history of the Pennsylvania Company from the beginning to its consummation and final success, it is proper to refer to its faithful and efficient manager, Mr. John B. Smith, of whom too much cannot be said for his faithfulness to his employees, his honesty of purpose, and the confidence reposed in him by his thousand of employees. These things speak more for him as a man than all the eulogiums I can load him down with.

During all this time I have said nothing of the early history of Scranton and finally of the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company

which has done more to develop the growth and prosperity of Providence Township than all other events in its early history. Influenced by Wm. Henry, a few gentlemen in New Jersey combined their capital and purchased the property known as Slocum Hollow for the sum of \$8000, in August, 1849, and at once commenced the improvements they contemplated for manufacturing iron. To a man of prudence it would have been a visionary scheme, and would have proved so, but the indomitable will of Colonel George W. Scranton, who assumed charge after a time and prevented it from being a stupendous failure. He had faith, and, backed by a commanding presence, his earnestness and honor was never doubted, and to this we are indebted to day for what we have. Had he have been of a sickly sentimental turn, no confidence could have controlled the capital. The iron ore proved a failure; the lime which Mr. Henry thought existed on the banks of Roaring Brook also was worthless, and it cost thousands of dollars to demonstrate that we had nothing that was required to make iron except anthracite coal. "We brought the mountain to Mahomet to worship." We had coal, and a long, tedious series of disasters were gone through with, before any success attended their efforts. Ores were brought from other quarters hundreds of miles, and are now, as well as lime stone. The manufacture of iron was, at the outset, an experiment, and theirs was at least one of the first in this county that made a success. Their merchant bar was not saleable, and the nails made from it would not drive, so brittle were they, and everything went wrong until 1848, when the company obtained a contract for furnishing rails for the extension of the Erie Railroad from Port Jervis to Binghamton. This was the first dawn of daylight the corporation had had from the beginning, and to this they struggled manfully against all odds. But the capital advanced by them had set the wheels in motion, and all was activity and life, and but a few months elapsed before every road was covered with teams drawn from the country

around transporting the iron. Some to the Bend, some to Honesdale and some to Narrowsburg. This set the ball in motion, and by the time this contract was finished, a road was projected to Great Bend, 50 miles. This was finished in 1854, and when that was done another connecting this direct with New York. From these, others sprung, and a general railroad furor pervaded the land, and our iron works were making fortunes for the stock holders.

Meanwhile the growth and prosperity of Scranton kept pace with the iron and railroad interests of the country, and, from a mere dilapidated, worn-out old mill property, in 1840, has become the third city in the State, containing a population to day of at least eighty thousand inhabitants, with Dunmore taking off a large corner, a separate borough.

Other railroads were projected up and down the Valley; in 1854 the Lackawanna and Bloomsburg was built connecting Scranton with Northumberland, eighty miles, where it connects with the North Penn. In 1865 the New Jersey Central ran a branch from Wilkes-Barre to Scranton, connecting with the Delaware and Hudson to Carbondale; from thence to the Erie road at Susquehanna, and from thence with a branch to Nineveh, New York, to join the Albany and Susquehanna, thus making Scranton a great central point of railroad connections to all points of the compass.

What I have said of the history of Providence alias Razorville, Dunmore alias Bucktown, or Hyde Park, all are but portions of the city, and if any inquiring mind desiring more minute history than I have given, I commend him to Dr. Hollister for a faithful review and trustworthy compilation.

To write from memory the early history of Scranton from its commencement in August 1840 to this time would be a serious task; but a hasty outline might interest if not instruct the present generation.

Scranton was first owned by the Slocums, and the portion purchased by Mr. Henry was owned by a syndicate of residents of the township that purchased it of the Slocum

estate, on the death of the elder Slocum. On the South, the line running with a stump fence through Lackawanna avenue from thence to the Flats, and included the old grist mill and old house that belonged to Barton Mott, who was a farmer, and raised most of the grain for the country round. On the North of the Slocum property was the farm of Ebenezer Hitchcock, whose wife was the sister of the elder Slocum. Mr. Hitchcock, too, farmed for a livelihood. He was a man of intelligence, a millwright by trade, and emigrated from New Hampshire, when a young man. To travel these few hundred miles on horseback to a new country in those days required more enterprise than at these days of steam and railroads is requisite to go to California, and it required as much time to accomplish the journey.

This property was encumbered with a mortgage, the terms of which gave the owner the option of paying one amount, and taking the whole of the farm or of taking but half of it on non-payment of the obligation. He accepted the latter, and the Scranton company took their part. After some time and much delay, Hitchcock sold his half to a Mr. Beckett, of Philadelphia, through the agency of the late George Sanderson, and this portion now contains a large share of the most prominent residences in the city. North of this was another property belonging to Mr. Charles H. Silkman, being a portion of a large tract extending west, crossing the river, and adjoining the Holden-Tripp property, one of the original tracts settled in the last century. These four tracts comprise nearly all of Scranton proper.

The subsequent purchases of land by the Scrantons that have been a source of so much profit in sales of lots, were made at more recent dates. As the prosperity of the company became established, they sought other lands, and, in fact, it was several years before they began to develop the coal of the valley. Then by purchase and leases of coal lands that had formerly been condemned by experts, especially about Hyde Park, they secured large tracts from which they have been

mining yearly since 1854, millions of tons.

The prosperity of Scranton was recognized. Other land men saw the value of lot sales, with a reserve of the coal, and many additions were made to Hyde Park and Providence, and new residence portions, such as Green Ridge, Park Place and the Remington purchase in the vicinity of the Scranton Steel Mill were laid out.

My conclusion to locate in this valley was brought about by a singular accident, and as was the case with many was the work of an instant, and perhaps it might be interesting to note it here. I left New York, where I had opened an office and practiced for nearly two years. I concluded to spend a few weeks in Honesdale, where I had practiced from 1831 to 1834, from thence I went west, and afterward returned to New York. I had passed through the great panic of 1837 when every bank in the country failed, and was among the victims of the disaster; but had survived it. When I concluded to spend a few of the summer months among my old friends and patrons, I provided myself with a horse and carriage and started through the country, crossing the Hudson River at Haverstraw, and made my way to Honesdale. In the vicinity of Middletown, I remember, I overtook a long political procession of devotees of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too." They had twenty yokes of oxen hitched to a log cabin on wheels, at each end of which there was a barrel of hard cider, and the latch string was hanging out with a tin cup tied to it.

The long procession interrupted my progress somewhat, but I reached Cuddebackville that evening and staid that night. The next day I reached Honesdale, the end of my contemplated journey.

I arrived there and sought my old friends. Soon it was noised abroad that I had returned to resume my profession, and after a few days I began to have calls, and being rather weary of doing nothing consented to answer them, and, before I knew it fairly, was in full practice. A call at Carbondale in consultation with two physicians, on a patient that I diag-

nosed, correctly too, to be typhos fever, and recommended a change from calomel treatment to quinine, which, out of courtesy, they allowed me to do for the night. When the morning came, though they acknowledged the symptoms had changed for the better, yet they would not assume the responsibility which I reluctantly did, and made my prescription for the day. They agreed to follow my orders, while I rode to Hyde Park to see my old friend Silkman, and return in the evening. I mounted my sulky and rode down the valley, over the turnpike, across the mountain, the only road then—for the road around by Olyphant was made a few years after. On the mountain summit I looked for the first time upon the beautiful valley of the Lackawanna. I stopped my horse for a few moments and surveyed its loveliness. It was then that the thought came over me "here is the beautiful valley filled with coal, near to New York where eventually the fuel must go," and, in less time than I have been writing it, I made up my mind to make it my future home for good or ill.

When I met my friend I told him my ideas and he introduced me to several of the then leading citizens who seemed pleased with the plan. I engaged lodgings for myself and horse, and in three weeks from that day arrived in Providence alias Razorville, on the 8th day of October, 1840, the day of the election of Harrison, and have hung around in the vicinity ever since. In a few days I began to have calls, and as the following winter was one of great severity—with deep snows and plenty of calls that led me to a very extensive and very exacting practice, I was worked to my heart's content at once.

After a few days I concluded I would go and see what there was of the town, and I mounted my sulky and crossed over and took the road that was scarcely recognizable as such, to Slocum Hollow. In so doing I passed through what is now Green Ridge, and came to the woods through which I secured my way by innumerable lumber roads, until I arrived at the then scene of the Company's operations, of which I will speak further on.

From there I started for Bucktown, or Dunmore, as now called. I found so many roads leading from the woods on the left, that I missed the right one and came to the point that occupied the ground now partly occupied by the court house and square, where I turned around, retraced my way, and followed a path that was through woods all the way to Bucktown, excepting at Esq. Hitchcock's farm, and through a small clearing belonging to an old gentleman who lived near the store of Johnson & Co. When I arrived at Dunmore alias Bucktown, I found about five houses around the corners. One was a hotel, which stood where O'Boyle's store now stands. This, of course, I visited. The landlord, Asa Coursen, now living in Providence, was a tailor and the only one in the country. He was seated on a bunk in the bar room, that also answered for a tailor shop. I asked him if he kept a tavern, and he answered me in the affirmative. I saw a corner fenced off with slats running to the ceiling, and a small hole to put a glass and bottle through. There was also a tin dipper in a pail to assuage the thirst of customers. I as scraped; paid my sixpence, and started on my way to Razorville through the woods.

The very early history of Scranton has not yet been attempted by any one, so far as I am impressed. Though much has been written on the subject, yet the early history is still somewhat left in the dark for the reason the writers were not here at the time; nor was I, indeed, until some four months after the purchase by Mr. Henry, who was depending on a friend, a Mr. Armstrong, of Newburg, N. Y. The latter was here, and looked over the property, and went to his home intending to furnish the money, but was taken sick and died shortly after. The anxiety of Mr. Henry led him to other friends, and he enlisted his son-in-law, Mr. Seldon T. Scranton, and his brother, George W. Scranton, of Belvidere, Mr. Sanford Grant, of the same place, and lastly Mr. Philip Mattes, of Easton, the trusted agent of the old United States branch bank, at Easton. These four raised the amount necessary to make the agreed pay-

ment, and a bond and mortgage was given for the balance of purchase money.

My arrival in Razorville—alias Providence was Oct. 8, 1840; but I had made a day's visit a month earlier when I heard of the purchase of this property—which contained elements in abundance of the three necessary articles for its undoubted success; to-wit: Iron Ore, Lime and Coal. It certainly was a splendid venture—and the large experience and undoubted knowledge and good judgment of Mr. Henry would have made all happy in an undoubted and rapid fortune, had it panned out precisely as he had predicted—but the proof of the fact was a great disappointment to all. The lime was the large body of rocks, the railroad tunnel perforates a half mile from the furnace, where yet may be seen the track of the road he built on the south side of Roaring Brook, this side of the tunnel, that proved to be any thing but lime. The iron ore was better. It lay in boulders in the five feet of fire clay that overlies the coal seam along the bank of the brook on the north side. That proved the only element they had, that was finally of any value.

After my arrival in town I started out on an exploring expedition. I first ventured as I had been advised to Slocum Hollow by way of Hyde Park, and crossed the Lackawanna at the only bridge below, now known as Dodgetown. The Providence bridge was near at hand, but the road was little traveled and much of it in the woods where no road existed, except such as was used in drawing logs to the old mill where the furnace now stands. I reached the place all right in my sulkey and with the bob-tailed pacer, that did much to hasten my acquaintance through the country, from the rapidity of his motion, which set everybody to wondering how a horse could go so fast and not run. It led everybody to inquire about the owner; and here I will advise all young doctors that go among strangers to eke out a living, by practicing medicine especially, to get a fast nag, and pass everybody on the road. They are sure to find out who and what the owner is, for everybody has a fancy

for the horse if not the owner. This horse is a digression; to return to my subject: The first man I met at Slocum Hollow was W. W. Manness who was then building a house on the ground now occupied by the large engine house north of the five furnaces. The first furnace occupying the site of the present northern furnace was to be run by the water power already there, and which had been utilized for an old sawmill for many years. The building Mr. Manness was constructing was used, after its completion as a dwelling house, an office for the company, and afterward for a time as a store. After the store was supplanted by one of brick, it answered for many years for a hotel and was first kept by Mr. Snyder, and afterward Mr. Kressler for many years, or until the Wyoming House was built in 1852.

The first furnace was commenced by Mr. Simon Ward who did the first days work under the new firm in September 1840, and he it said to the credit of both of these faithful artisans, that they both have been recipients of the fruits of their industry from that day to this; though Mr. Ward is now among the four scores.

At this time little was said about this iron company or its operations. Mr. Henry made occasional visits, and, the following spring, moved his family here and occupied a house at Fellows' Corner. The main business was done under superintendence of Messrs. Ward and Manness. Occasionally Col. Scranton would drive up over the Drinker Turnpike from his home at Belvidere, and bring with him "the sinews of war," and was always a welcome visitor. The company had built a few boarding houses for their men and a few tenant houses for those having families. There was but little said through the country about the new venture, and its success was generally doubted; so much, in fact, that company's credit was badly impaired, especially with the capitalists. This was peculiarly true of those at Wilkes-Barre, who were always depreciating the success of this enterprise, as they had some experience in

that line among themselves. But they did not know the men. However, as the thing progressed, every one connected with it became more anxious. They had exhausted more capital than they expected, and some were disheartened; but they braced up and kept moving along until they finally commenced the manufacture of iron.

The furnace was filled in 1841 and fired up. It was charged with the material they had collected on their own premises, and the heat was kept up for some time, and finally tapped for the hoped-for result. After days and nights of intense anxiety, the thing turned out a dead failure; they saw the danger of a chill, knew the results should it ensue, and, as an experiment to avoid it, purchased all the sulphur and brimstone in the country and put in the furnace with plenty of coal. But all to no effect. The tapping for iron was fruitless, the furnace chilled, filled with stove coal and iron enough to cement the whole thing in a solid mass, that it took weeks to remove. Not dismayed, they worked day and night clearing the furnace for another trial, not yet doubting they had the true material, and, at great cost and labor, obtained a new furnaceman. The making of iron with anthracite coal was yet an experiment, and they secured the services of Mr. John Davis, of Danville, who was finally successful.

And now another season of hard work for weeks was before them to again dig out the conglomeration mass of welded stone, coal and iron, with large sledges and hardened steel. Upon this occasion, Col. George W. Scranton came to the front, who, in those days, was a man for the occasion. He would swing the heaviest hammers with more blows than any of his athletic companions, and here it was that he injured his heart in a way that led, no doubt, to his early demise. Col. Scranton was "every inch a man," over six feet, broad shouldered, stout as a giant, as amiable and modest as a child, and on all occasions, a gentleman.

At this failure it was demonstrated that the trouble was in the lime. Though it would

indicated lime chemically and there was some reaction with acids, yet for the purpose of iron making it was worthless. What was to be the next move? They went to Lime Ridge, in Columbia County, and purchased a section of Lime Ridge, and arranged to have it brought up in boats to Pittston, and from there brought in wagons to the furnace; a work which kept all the spare teams in the country, as well as all of the company teams busy for all time after, until the Bloomsburg railroad was built.

The iron, thus far, had been obtained in boulders, buried in the fire clay, as before mentioned, and was drilled and blasted, or broken in some way, before use. At the same time bog ore was found in small quantities at Green Ridge, on the Albion farm. This had some good quality for mixing with other ores. About this time iron ore was also discovered about four miles south, on the mountain, and a railroad of very easy construction was improvised that answered for transporting logs and ore, for some time. This last ore was of a richer kind, but made iron that was of an inferior quality for almost any use. It averaged about thirty per cent. iron.

Many families lived at the mines for two or three years, but I have now got before my story, and must return to the third trial of making iron. Two loaded furnaces having collapsed, the whole concern was brought into a condition of extremes. It was financial death to the whole party, should they make the third failure, and the way to avoid such a result was a matter of constant study.

The third trial was commenced with a view of conquering. First, to demonstrate that iron could be made with anthracite coal; second, that it could be done with ores they had at hand. At the new beds, found some three miles on the mountain, ore was more plentiful and could be produced at less cost even after hauling it to the furnace. The lime was brought from Columbia County; the coal was at hand, and mined on the grounds contiguous to them, on both sides of Roaring Brook. After all was ready, and the furnace was loaded, an old tradition of

the iron districts in Wales, from which he had come, occurred to Mr. Davis. It was that in order to have good luck with a new furnace, a lady must apply the match. It was resolved to give this gallant legend a test. Mr. Sanford Grant had recently arrived with his wife, and accordingly she was asked to do the honors. She was waited upon from her house by all the gentlemen of the place, who formed a procession, escorted her to the furnace where she kindled the flame of Scranton's prosperity, that finally proved a success. After a proper time the molten metal poured forth in goodly quantity, and made all happy. The problem was solved, all their wishes gratified, and Slocum Hollow from that day has been progressing upward.

The great question of iron making being solved, another problem claimed the company's attention. What should they do with the product. In this country there was no demand or market for it. The long haul to Carbondale, and then the high freight would not pay a profit in any eastern market, and the southern market had enough of their own and it would be sending coals to New Castle. The finances of the company were exhausted, their credit was impaired and under this press, a change was made in affairs. Mr. Henry, who had been the head of the concern from the start, resigned to Col. Geo. W. Scranton. The first thing the latter had to do was to provide funds; he had exhausted his own and the rest of the partners. He took the animal by the horns, and through his efforts with men of capital, the means was procured, first \$10,000 from his cousin, Jos. H. Scranton, then of Augusta, Georgia, and afterward from another cousin, Erasmus Scranton, of New Haven, who put in the same amount. After these, Messrs. Moory, Hartman, Phelps, Dodge, Buckley, and later John I. Blair and Moses Taylor, and together these resurrected the whole from poverty, to independence, and placed the venture on a stable and firm foundation.

At that early day, with a large stock of pig iron that they could not sell, they concluded

to manufacture it into nails. The company had become stronger in capital, and in 1843-4 constructed a rolling mill and nail factory above the furnaces, at a heavy expense. Mr. Grant, one of the original partners, weakened and sold out to Mr. Joseph H. Scranton for the amount he had invested, losing four years of hard work in conducting the store that was started with the undertaking, and thought himself happy once more. After a year or more Mr. J. C. Platt, who was connected by marriage to Mrs. Scranton, closed his store at Fair Haven, Conn., and came here about 1846. He was the merchant of the company for many years, and filled other responsible positions under the company until within a few years of the present time.

The manufacture of nails and merchant iron, after a time seemed a success. Thousands of tons were made, and nails in abundance were transported on wagons to Carbondale and Pittston, destined for New York and other markets. In fact they glutted both market extremes, until the tide turned, and the nails, in many cases, were returned in large quantities and had no sale at home. The quality of the iron was not suitable. It was "red short," 'twas said, so hard and brittle that at least every third nail would break in driving unless a thoroughly instructed expert had a hand at the hammer. Thus, after a long time, everything seemed to turn against the company; but they had a general at the head who was never beaten and could not be discouraged, and one who had the "sinews of war" at his command as well. But 'twas hard times; the country had not recovered from the great financial troubles of 1837-8, when all the banks suspended, Specie was at a premium. The Safety Fund Bubble of New York, had burst, and shin plasters were the order of the day for small change. What was next to be done to save the ship? A happy thought came to the mind of William E. Dodge, who was a large stockholder in the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company, which had been chartered then, as well as in the Erie Railroad that had reached

the Delaware River. Through him the Erie Railroad Company advanced \$100,000 to the Iron Company to change the nail mills to a rolling mill, and furnish rails for the extension of that road from Port Jervis to Binghamton.

During all of the time of which I have been writing, this side of the river was deprived of post office facilities, and the residents had to depend entirely on Hyde Park and Providence. We made an early effort to obtain one here, but this side was always intensely Whig as well as a temperance community, and had but little sympathy from the Democratic power that largely predominated in old Luzerne. However, after a time, permission was given to Mr. John W. Moore, who had opened the first tailor shop in the Hollow—or Harrison, as it was then called in honor of that President's recent election—to take the mail matter from Hyde Park to his store, and there distribute it to the persons to whom it was addressed. Soon he tired of the thankless office, and induced Mr. Amsden to assume the "Postmastership." He, too, soon desired a release from the position, as there were no facilities for conducting it properly. About this time I erected a dwelling and drug store on the street that was destroyed by the construction of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad. It was about where the Star Bakery now stands. I was appointed Postmaster by S. R. Hobie, May 6, 1853, and commissioned by Franklin Pierce, Feb. 4, 1857, and continued under the administration of President Buchanan. The office was in charge of E. C. Fuller, as my deputy for all these years, or until L. S. Fuller, his brother, was appointed my successor. This office was, in reality, the first post office in Scranton, and it was under my administration that mails were first brought here without being extracted at Hyde Park, and carried by Mr. Moore in a leathern satchel.

On the grounds near the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company reservoir there stood a dilapidated building, one story high, with one door and six windows. It was about

fourteen by sixteen feet square, and was used on all occasions for church purposes, public meetings and for schools. Here, Hon. W.W. Ketcham, afterwards a judge in Luzerne County, taught school in the winter of 1834. While he so occupied it, to while away the tedium of the long winter evenings, a debating society was organized by Charles Seranton, Martin L. Newman, Ketcham and a few other luminaries that shone brightly at that time. Here great questions of State and Nation were settled, and here I was requested to repeat a lecture I had delivered at the Presbyterian Church in Blakely, in Hyde Park, and elsewhere, and had placed me very high—No. 1, in fact—among the lecturers in this part of the United States, at this time. But as time wore along and others moved here, some of whom felt religiously inclined, there was need for a better building. The Methodists are always pioneers, and they were on hand, and so we all chipped in and put up a larger place, that answered when built, as had been before agreed, for all denominations. Methodist services were arranged by the Presiding Elder for every two weeks, and the other denominations filled in the rest of the time. This did very well for a year or two, but then the Presbyterians began to gain the ascendancy, and soon along came a missionary or two and sought a share of the spoils. The old church had a revival and added to its numbers so far, that a little jealousy was engendered. About 1845 or 1846 the Old Fellows' Hall, which cost about \$700, was projected and built by a stock company. It was erected on a hill, which has since disappeared, on the site now occupied by the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company's store, and was about twenty by sixty feet and one story high, the upper floor being occupied by the lodge of Old Fellows that had been organized, while the lower story was appropriated to the use of the Presbyterians. It was here that Rev. Mr. Parks first officiated, and after him Rev. Mr. Mitchell, Hinkok and others, until Rev. Dr. Logan, who still holds the fort, was inaugurated. In the meantime, however, the splendid edi-

fice now occupied was built about 1852. The Old Fellows' Hall was used as a school, and was rented upon all occasions for anything that came to the place—for phrenological, homeopathic, or other lectures or entertainments that came to the community. All had to pay, and in fact paid, fair dividends. None of the stock was ever sold in Wall street, and at the same time much of it was owned there.

The adherents of the Romish Church were first supplied with missionaries from Susquehanna County, and when they were numerous enough to warrant the erection of a place for worship, they cast about for an eligible location, and finally selected a site on the east side of Roaring Brook, back of the company's steam saw mill, with ground for a cemetery contiguous. Here they worshiped and buried their dead, until about ten years after the Borough of Seranton was surveyed and plotted into blocks and lots, when the church was changed to the southeast corner of Spruce street and Franklin avenue, and a burial place was secured on the west side of the river, back of Hyde Park. The church edifice was constructed under the supervision of the late, lamented, Rev. Father Whitty, and the old church was taken away, as were the dead whose remains were deposited near it. At the time the first church was erected, Seranton was an uncultivated place covered with a thick growth of weeds, some large and some small, and the whole, with a little exception, north of Lackawanna avenue was swamp, pond or woods. The second church was occupied until the new and elegant Cathedral of St. Peters was erected, in 1865. This now stands as a monument to the memory of Father Whitty, and is now presided over by Rt. Rev. Bishop O'Hara, whose congregations in this city and the surrounding townships have a membership of over thirty-five thousand.

I have meant in my reveries of Slocum Hollow, Harrison, Seranton, and finally Seranton, to fill a place in history of which had not been written—to bring up its story from the time of its birth until the child had become quite a man. The first few years

were a severe ordeal, and but few can have any idea of the trials and tribulations the first purchasers had to endure. Their all was invested in the land and developments necessary to bring about their anticipations, and the failure of ores and lime threw them into the most straitened circumstances that but few could survive, disheartening as everything turned out. To surmount all these difficulties was the work of master minds, and the Serantons, both Seldon T. and George W. were the men for the occasion—Col. Geo. W. for procuring the sieves of war, and Seldon T. for disposing of them to the greatest advantage.

An incident, perhaps, that might be omitted with propriety—yet one having an important share in the venture—I will relate only to show the exigency of the times and of the occasion. It was in March 1843, just before the celebration of St. Patrick, that Col. Seranton came to my house in Providence early one morning and informed me that they had no money for their men. They had made all preparations for a grand parade, the first ever celebrated in this valley. He asked me if I had any friends that had money. I said, "Yes."

"Can you influence them to make us a loan?"

"Well, that's the question."

"I must have some; I have just returned from Belvidere and could not get a dollar, and never felt more disheartened in my life."

Well, Colonel, I said, "If you will go with me to Carbondale, I will do all I can for you."

I harnessed up, and off we started for Carbondale. Arriving there in due time, I found my friend Knapp, and gave him an introduction, and, after a pleasant evening,—and no man was ever given better powers of persuasion than Col. Seranton had—we obtained a thousand dollars. That was good luck so far

as it went, but was not enough. He wanted another thousand. Then I proposed to continue our journey the next day to Honesdale, where we renewed the attack, and succeeded in obtaining seven hundred more. Then started for home a couple of as happy men as ever crossed the Moosic, and St. Patrick was never more adored than upon that occasion. And I felt proud also that I had friends who would lend money to a stranger on my introduction when I could not have borrowed a dollar of either without good security. But Col. Seranton had a way that gave everybody confidence in all he said, and what was more, he always filled his contracts sooner or later. Some think the honor of the location of Seranton belonged to Mr. Henry. So far as that goes there is no question about his making the purchase, and inducing the capital that was invested. At the same time he was most egregiously imposed upon, or was himself mistaken in the geological formation of this country. He had, as he supposed, all the elements on the property for making iron, when the thing, as demonstrated by a series of experimental trials, turned out a dead failure. The ore was lean and the lime was not here, there was nothing, in fact, but coal to rely upon. When all failed he was in bad order with his friends whom he had induced to embark in the business and, of course, they lost confidence, and he was superseded by Col. Seranton. As for Mr. Henry, the world never produced a more high-minded, honest gentleman, but he was deceived, as I have been, and hundreds of others in this valley, even in coal that is in abundance.

Having exhausted my recollections of events, prior to Mr. Platt's history, which, in fact, dates from 1846, I will close this series. I will, however, occasionally submit to you for approval concise histories of various valuable additions, to the comfort and happiness of this thriving city.

R. D. THOMPSON.



