



*Ancient and historic landmarks  
in the Lebanon Valley*

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CHAPTER XXXII. A GLIMPSE OF  
ANNVILLE

Let us come down now from the hillock upon which have worshiped for one hundred and sixty years the pious German settlers of this portion of the valley that is watered by the Indian-famed, *snake-harboring* Quittapahilla, and let us get a glimpse of the little gem that adorns this magnificent vale. Like a sparkling diamond upon the bosom of a king, so the neat little aggregation of houses, and schools, and churches, and workshops, and business houses, known as Annvile, formerly as Millerstown, begets the bosom of this Quittapahilla valley. From whatever side you approach it, it charms and glitters. It has inherent beauty as a rural town, and needs no outside adornments to make it attractive. Whether viewed from the northern ridge of

hills or the southern valley of its bordering creek, whether you walk through its streets or approach it from the east or the west, it is the same "sleeping beauty"- not a Sleepy Hollow - in this season of the year a veritable bride, adorned in her virgin summer robes, and decked off to charm the lover-husband who has espoused her and made her his own. Its many peaceful looking homes, lovely in architecture, and surrounded by velvety lawns and gratefully disposed shade-trees; its towering church spires and its imposing college buildings, surmounted with classic-looking cupolas and classic-ringing bells, and surrounded by an umbrageous campus, combine to make Annvile an ideal town in picturesque beauty and in all the attractions of rural municipality. A pity it is that it is not owned by itself, but still belongs to the surrounding townships. I should think it had reached its majority, and was able to cut the maternal apron-string and start out in life independently. If it does this, and adds a few more tucks to its maiden frock, it can soon boast of being the prettiest municipal daughter of all this Lebanon valley, and such a launching out upon the municipal world would doubtless add to the list of its devout admirers.

This town was laid out by one Miller shortly after the middle of the last century, and for a number of decades was named Annvile, but afterward Millerstown for a long period, when because of its confusion in postal matters, it was again changed to the first name about a generation ago. Messrs. Abram Raiguel and Ulrich have also taken leading parts in the town's early establishment. Some of the original houses are still standing on its main and side streets. But there is no particular history connected with them, save that doubtless into them entered that

famous impostor - Dr. John Dady - that sacerdotal wolf-in-sheep's-clothing, who in the latter portion of last century, here for a while successfully practiced a smart game of gulling the simple, all too credulous German folk and extorting their hard-earned cash from them. This glib-tongued Hessian - a remnant of those contemptible English Revolutionary hirelings - however, was not sharp enough to hide, for a long period, his black and greedy heart under his ministerio-medical coat from the Argus-eyed officer of the law, who in due time discovered his deception, tore the mask from his face, and sent him to the penitentiary, where he deservedly pined out his life. For further data concerning this impostor we refer the reader to Rupp's History of Berks and Dauphin counties.

Another dark page to blot the otherwise fair history of this fair village is the monstrous deed of infanticide of "old Showers." This is of such recent date that it need not be recounted here. The buildings where this foul deed was committed, and where the murderer lived, and other scenes connected with the horrible acts here transacted, are still found in the southern portion of the town, while murderer and murdered sleep close together in one of the burial grounds of the town, awaiting their resurrection and final judgment at the "last day."

About the oldest landmark of historic account is the old Ulrich homestead to the northeast of town, almost opposite the Reading railroad depot. The place is now the home of Mrs. Commodore P. Steinmetz's family, suddenly bereft of father and husband not long ago. Here early in the last century the first Ulrich immigrant settled, the great-grandfather of Mrs. Steinmetz, and in 1751 he built a stone house, part of which is still standing. It was provided with an arched cellar, built over a never failing spring, and with air-holes, being thus furnished with the essentials for life, and proved a safe place for retreat in case of an attack by the Indians, as happened on several occasions. That these early inhabitants must have realized their constant and imminent danger to life from this source is evinced by the engraving found upon the stone that was used as the door-sill of the old fort, viz.:

"SO OFT DIE THÜR DEN ANGEL WENDT,  
O MENSCH, DEIN END BEDENK! 1751."

This stone is still found here, but when the house was remodeled it became part of a porch-pillar, while a newly-engraved head-stone preserves the old legend in more modern and legible form, together with the names of the builders, Mr. and Mrs. Steinmetz. This old house was used as a store and trading post with the Indians by the first Ulrich; and the apple orchard, just in front of the homestead, is pointed out as an Indian burial ground, for it is reported that many Indians made their home for weeks with this first white settler. One evening this pioneer and his son (the father of the late Adam Ulrich) were surprised by an attack of a murderous gang of red-men, but were fortunate enough to escape their deadly tomahawks and scalping-knives, by a hasty retreat to this sheltering refuge-cellar, whereupon the maddened savages killed all their cattle by cutting out their tongues. This happened about the year 1756 or 1757. If we mistake not, this is the place also where the Rev. Daniel Ulrich, of Tulpehocken fame, was born and reared to manhood.

Walking through the town, one is struck with the classic-looking grounds and buildings of the Lebanon Valley College of the U. B. Church, located here, under the successful management of Dr. Bierman, president; the tasty-looking homes, the fine churches, the well-built and well-painted public houses or hotels, enterprising carriage manufactories of John L. Saylor and Sons, Barnhart and Beam, T. Loser and Mr. Shenk, the long-established and reliable marble works of J. H. Black, the Daisy Shirt Factory, carried on by a stock company, of which the late

Judge Kinports was first president (present incumbent is not known to the writer), the lime-stone pulverizing works of John Bachman, and the three ancient grist-mills on the banks of the Quittapahilla. These are now in the proprietorship of Messrs. John Bachman, David Kreider and Long & Himmelberger (owned by Mr. Killinger of Lebanon), respectively, commencing on the east and following the stream in its westward course. The principal stores of town are in the proprietorship of Messrs. Kinports and Shay, Beam and Bachman, M. F. Batdorf and John Shope. The first store kept here was that of the late Mr. John Shertzer, who came to this village in its infancy from Manheim, and made quite a fortune in his time. The building used for the prosecution of his business is now used by the Annville Fire Insurance Company, and owned by C. Smith, Esq.

Walking south on White Oak street, one passes a number of buildings with an interesting local history. One of these is the fine stone residence of Mr. William Biever, ex-County Treasurer. This used to be the residence of his uncle, Mr. John D. Biever, who was one of Annville's most liberal and public-spirited men in his day. Besides the furthering of other laudable enterprises, he was in a sense the founder and father of the first Evangelical Lutheran church located on Main street. Besides donating the ground, he paid about one-half of the cost of building, presented the church with a fine two-story brick sexton's house, made provision (which his widow carried out after his death) of erecting an elegant and commodious brick parsonage next to the church, and endowed the church to the amount of \$3,000. His widow supplemented this amount by an additional legacy of \$2,100, while the same estate endowed the cemetery by another \$1,000. The present pastor of this church, Rev. W. H. Lewars, says, concerning these benefactions and this noble-hearted man: "It is but due to say, that the commendable generosity here recorded grew out of a life-long Christian character. The piety of Mr. Biever was acknowledged by all who knew him. He assumed a directing and sustaining influence in the church for half a century, and for forty-nine years was the superintendent of the Sunday-school." The house in which Mr. Biever lived was built by his father, John D. Biever, Sr., in 1814.

In the year 1804 was erected the substantial stone church edifice located on this street, on a little elevation of ground and shaded by a grove of locust trees. It was originally built as a union church (Reformed and Lutheran), and is a child of the Hill church. It has been exclusively Reformed since 1871. Its pastor, Rev. Dr. Hiester, has served it consecutively for forty-two years, and we are told there is a vigor about his preaching today that would indicate that not much of his natural force has as yet abated. The other Reformed pastors that have served this church were the same as have preached at the Hill church during this period. The Lutheran pastors have been Revs. Lochman, Ernst, Krotel, Miller, Porr, Fetzer, Weaver and Deitzler.

The school-house, as is customary, we find near the church, but since the days of the public school system it has been remodeled and used as a residence. It is at present occupied and owned by Mr. Daniel Seabold. Here such teachers as Messrs. Fisher, Bachman, Strine and others taught the now grayheaded citizens of the town and their departed companions during their juvenile years, the Psalters and their German spelling-books.

Strolling on past the old cemetery, we soon come where the cool and mill-wheel-turning Quittapahilla flows by the town. A beautiful stone triple-arched bridge here spans the stream, from which one has a picturesqueness of view in the new surrounding landscape that is quite charming. Close by is the old mill of Abram and Elizabeth Raiguel, which, according to the date-

stone in its front elevation, was built A. D. 1797. On a little hillock to the south stands the fine old Raiguel farmhouse, with all its antique appurtenances, built four years earlier, a venerable centennial relic of rural comfort, agricultural prosperity and that proverbial peace and contentment that attend husbandry. Here, if we mistake not, the wife of Rev. Dr. A. C. Wedekind, of San Diego, Cal., and Mrs. Boughter, her sister, of Lebanon, were raised to womanhood. The Cassidys and Shirks have also married into this family. This farm, with its ancient dwellings, is now the property of Mr. Josiah Kreider, living near the Horseshoe pike, while the mill property has been owned since 1840 by David Kreider and his son, present proprietor. All of this property, and many acres besides, was the original possession of Abram Raiguel, a bachelor uncle of the builder of the mill named, whose log cabin used to stand where the farmhouse now stands. He was a native of Cougmont, Switzerland, from whence, after settlement here, he called his nephew and made him his heir. Other old families are the Imbodens (one scion the Confederate General from Virginia), Kreiders, etc., all whose first ancestors are buried at the Hill church.

Were we to drift down this Indian-named creek we should soon come to where, in the days of the Revolution, stood a gun-barrel boring mill, an adjunct, we suppose, to the very prosperous gun-smith business which then flourished in and about Lebanon. Farther down we would find the grist-mill of Mr. Killinger, built long ago by a Mr. Herr, and still farther on its course the spot where, in 1812, Mr. Hentzleman and others of Lancaster county, erected, at the enormous expense of \$96,000, an extensive cotton and woolen factory, which failed in due time, according to Rupp, only because of the "ruinous policy of the nonprotection of American industry." Were we to drift on in our imaginary course, we should shortly arrive where this stream mingles with the waters of the Swatara. And here we can imagine seeing those other rude rafts, or canoes, on which were embarked the wives and children of the sixty families of temporary Schoharie settlers, who, in the spring of 1723, were passing this point, making slow progress up this stream towards its headwaters and that of the Tulpehocken, their longed-for destination.

What better place than this to close our historic pilgrimage, and here suffer the streamlet of our explorations to be engulfed by the mightier tide of our common history? Therefore, we shall bring our ancient and historic researches to an end on the banks of this valley's most conspicuous stream, of which and whose settlers the gifted Whittier has sung as early as 1836, when he addressed his "Lines" to Governor Ritner of our State, as follows:

*"And that bold-hearted yeomanry, honest and true,  
Who, haters of fraud, give to labor its due:  
Whose fathers of old sang in concert with thine,  
On the banks of Swatara, the songs of the Rhine,  
The German-born pilgrims, who first dared to brave  
The scorn of the proud in the cause of the slave."*