

GOLDEN JUBILEE EDITION
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1948

Fifty Years Growth and Progress of the Town Newspaper

"I wish no other Herald. I must read this paper." — King Richard III.

Great oaks from little acorns grow, and all that sort of axiom. Fifty years of continuous existence involves a story of drudgery, toil, tribulation and close attention to business, interspersed with some very pleasant happenings and occurrences.

The close of the first half century of publication of The Rockdale Herald is an epic that perhaps has no equal in all journalistic history. The writer, who is — and has been — the publisher through all these years entered the newspaper business in a small way at the tender age of seven years. At that time it was our job to go down to Rockdale station every afternoon and get the Chester newspapers, the Times and the old Evening News, and distribute them through the neighborhood. We stayed in that distribution, including the six Philadelphia newspapers, for more than twenty years, thus acquiring an attachment for the distribution of news.

When we were a teen-age boy, it was the custom with the clothing stores, when parents bought a boy a suit of clothes, to give them a premium with the suit, a baseball glove, a penknife, a camera or some other present. On one occasion, when our parents bought us a suit, we were given a tiny printing press, with a very small assortment of type. With this miniature outfit we printed small name cards for our friends, and made a little small change. We saved the change and bought some more type and equipment, including a larger hand press, and started in printing tickets, envelopes and programs.

Thus the beginning of the printing business which has been in operation for more than fifty years. In October, 1898, still yearning for more printing, business was dull, and, as an experiment, a small weekly newspaper was begun as an experiment. Not expecting it to endure long, this little sheet, 9 x 12 inches, continued to appear each week. It entailed prodigious drudgery, and nearly every night we worked under the kerosene lamps until the midnight hour.

In those days hand-set type was necessary, and after hand-set type is handset, it has to be unset and distributed afterward, making double work. This small sheet was printed a page at a time on an 8 x 12 press, the type



HOME OF THE ROCKDALE HERALD

distributed and another page set up and printed, requiring the entire week. This slow process continued for six months, when, in April, 1899, we made an arrangement with the building association and got sufficient funds to put in the cellar a cylinder press. This press had a handle on it, and the papers were ground out by hand power. We would feed the blank sheets in with one hand and turn the crank with the other. It was thus necessary for our right hand to know all about what our left hand dideth.

The hand power business became a back-breaking job, and there was an arrangement whereby a shaft was run through the wall, and a circular sweep constructed just outside the cellar — or press room — door. This merry-go-round was propelled by a horse, which was a great relief to the man power. Some time later we obtained an antiquated steam boiler and engine, and the press was propelled by steam power, the only trouble being that the engine would go too fast and we had to stop the press frequently.

In 1915 the electric power came into this neighborhood, and a motor was installed, which has been the most satisfactory power we have ever had. One defective thing about the cellar press room, there was water several inches deep after every rain, and many's the time we have had to bale out some of water on press day, and at time we have been obliged to roll up our pants to the knees and operate the press under water.

In August, 1923, this old press in the cellar became very much worn, and a larger press was brought up from Salem, N. J. The old press printed only two pages at a time, and the new one prints four pages, and larger ones at that. This is the press we are using today.

The Rockdale Herald has been operating under many handicaps, one of them being that there is no use for a newspaper in this town. In the first place we haven't any town. It is a country village. And, that being the case, in all country places everybody knows everybody else, and all about everybody else's business. Consequence is that everybody knows all the news before it comes out in the paper. And it is a very difficult matter to tell Rockdale people something they don't know.

Having lived among our neighbors and being in close touch with them through several generations, we are thoroughly familiar with their source of ancestry, their background, their shortcomings, their talents, propensities and idiosyncracies, we conceitedly believe we know who can take it, and the thin-skinned ones who cannot. Thus it is very seldom anything gets into the paper that would offend anyone. We have thus played reasonably safe, and know of very few instances wherein people's feelings have been hurt during the past fifty years.

We have made many mistakes, to be sure. To err is human, but to forgive is divine. Here in Rockdale the people are like one big family, and it has been a real rhapsody of ecstatic delight to have mingled with this neighborhood family for fifty years.

Thus was brought about the epic which led to a career. An arduous career, to be sure, but when one becomes inoculated with the virus of printer's ink, there is no escape. It becomes an incurable disease.

Many times there were difficulties which seemed to indicate that we could not go on. But many years ago, confronted with such dire circumstances, we adopted a motto — One word — "Stick." And this motto has been prominently displayed at our masthead all through the years.

We have gone through many hazards. Fire, ill health, flood, depression and even threats of libel. But the local journal has survived them all, and have managed to hand out the paper regularly every week for the first half century.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

By an Old Timer

Say! the good old Rockdale Herald
Has been published fifty years!
Just heard it over on the Knob,
Couldn't quite believe my ears.

But it must be true I reckon,
For the fellow gave it straight,
Says he knew when it was started
Back in eighteen-ninety-eight.

You remember, don't you, Martha,
That first copy that Dad had?
Why, Bill Griffith in the nineties
Couldn't been but just a lad.

But he surely put it over,
For on every Friday night,
We kids fairly fought to read it,
Soon as mother lit the light.

So she read us all the headings
And the gossip of the town,
And then later in the evening
She and Dad would settle down.

And would read it more completely,
Patent ads and all the rest,
But Dad always — he insisted —
Like the politics the best.

Well of course when we were married
Just the first thing I must do,
Was to get the Rockdale Herald
Sure, we had to have it too.

Homes were not complete without it,
Often heard the people say:
"Why, I saw it in the Herald"
(Yes, they say it still to-day).

And now, you and I are old folks,
Hard to realize but true,
And I get to reminiscing
Just as old folks always do.

I keep thinking of Glen Riddle
As it was so long ago,
You too remember, Martha
Back, say fifty years ago.

It was such a pretty village,
Mills and houses side by side,
Here a store and there a dwelling
With a green lawn stretching wide.

And a picket fence around it,
And perhaps a tree or two,
I know folks won't believe it,
But we oldesters know it's true.

There were sidewalks on the Mount
road
Hitching posts by every store,
I can close my eyes and see it
Back two score years or more.

Country roads were dark and lone-
some,
There was no electric light.
We hung lanterns on our wagons
When we drove to town at night.

Schools were good and so were
churches,
Though quite different in that day.
One thing, no school buses,
Had to walk then, all the way.

There were sheds behind the churches
In those Horse and Buggy days,
And those sheds sure came in handy,
Church times and in other ways.

They were used by everybody,
Always on winter night,
When the mercury was falling
And the wind began to bite.

And we young folks wrapped in
blankets
To some dance or party sped,
One and all we tied our horses
'Neath the most convenient shed.

We had more time for religion,
Least, it seemed so in that day,
For we had a mid-week service
Where folks really went to pray.

Recollect the old camp meetings
Up in Chester Heights wood?
Often think about those meetings,
"Spouse they did a lot of good.

Sometimes I feel quite homesick
For the Church as it was then,
When a man was not thought crazy
If he chanced to say "Amen."

So, though customs change, and fash-
ions,
Hair cuts, length of skirts and such;
Man's own self, his inner being,
Hasn't seemed to alter much.

Well, well, Martha, how I've wan-
dered,
Looking back all through the years,
Meant to talk about the Herald,
And to give three rousing cheers.

For a sheet as clean and wholesome
One that never missed a date
One that's never missed an issue
Since that first in '98.

So here's a happy birthday
To a banner still unfurled;
Congrats to Billy Griffith
And his good old Rockdale Herald.



WILLIAM E. GRIFFITH

Founder and Publisher of The Rock-
dale Herald.

HISTORY OF ROCKDALE

Rockdale is one of the prettiest towns on earth, and the derivation of its name needs no explanation when one views the numerous green-crested, rugged hills, its sloping, picturesque dales and myriads of rocks. It abounds in rocks and dales. Another explanation is that when this community became an important textile center in the 1820's, many of the operatives for the textile industry came from Rochdale, England, an important cloth manufacturing center.

The Britishers traditionally have a habit of taking away their "h's" from where they belong and placing them where they do not belong. Consequently, over there they spell it Rochdale, and here we spell it Rockdale.

But be that as it may, all who have ever lived in this unique and pretty town have never forgotten it, and the mere mention of the name everywhere awakens tender memories. The happiest people in the world are those who are busiest, and, as Rockdale has always been an unusually busy place, we take a pardonable pride in the assertion that nowhere can be found a more fraternal, neighborly, industrious, hospitable or intelligent people than the typical Rockdalers. They love our rocks and rills, our woods and templed hills, and our heart with rapture thrills at the name of Rockdale.

Soon after the landing of William Penn in 1682, the site of the present village of Rockdale was surveyed to one John Nield, but there was nothing doing, industrially, until the year 1717, when William Pennell is assessed with a grist and saw mill in a building which until recently was a part of the Glen Riddle Mills. Previous to this, however, there was an iron works on the site of the present Penn Tapestry Mills, now vacant, but we have no record of its being operated until 1717.

The very beginning of industrial Rockdale was probably these iron, or rolling mills. At the time when they were started, this place was admirably situated for such purposes, because of its natural water power and abundant timber for use as fuel. This timber was burned into charcoal, some charcoal pits being yet visible. The pig iron and ore were hauled by team on deposits in the adjoining counties, also from Chester and Marcus Hook, having been brought there in boats, and in Rockdale's earliest days, when there were no railroads, the teaming business was a very profitable one.

Back in 1906 we had a conversation with Samuel Dutton, Media business man, then 89 years old, who told us that he had seen the fires burning in the old iron forge, and at that time he was the only living person who had seen that sight in Rockdale.

Samuel Dutton's father, Thomas Dutton, was a most remarkable man, having lived to the age of 100 years, and died in 1869, some months after celebrating, with his many descendants and friends, his 100th birthday. Thomas Dutton was a tanner and for many years conducted a tannery on the original Dutton tract, owned through five generations of the Dutton family. This tract was afterward acquired by Joseph Burnley, and lies between Rockdale and Village Green, and is now a part of the Convent property. It is near the present American Legion Home. Thomas Dutton, the tanner, remembered seeing the British soldiers encamped in this neighborhood during the Revolutionary war.

On the second day following the Battle of Brandywine, Lord Cornwallis' army marched from Chadds Ford to a site now included in Mt. Hope cemetery. Arriving here at five o'clock in the afternoon, they established headquarters, the camp extending from Mt. Hope to the lower end of Village Green, where, in an old brick house, still standing, Lord Cornwallis established his temporary residence. The very building in which Cornwallis dwelt is now the new Episcopal Church building at Green Ridge.

From here troops were dispatched all over the neighborhood to secure supplies for the British army, seizing for that purpose all the flour in the nearby grist mills.

Another important industry which formed the nucleus of Rockdale's thriving industrial growth was the manufacture of paper. Previous to the year 1800, paper was being made in what are now the known as the Yorkshire mills, the Lenni mills and the West Branch mills, and these factory buildings were erected originally for that purpose. But along in the early 1820's, when our English forefathers began to invade this country, the introduction of textile manufacturing became very profitable, and all of our iron and nail mills, grist and saw mills and paper mills were transformed into cloth-weaving establishments, and new textile industries were built alongside our abundant streams.

In the early part of the nineteenth century we find the entire territory which is now known as Rockdale and Vicinity, including Rockdale proper, Glen Riddle, Lenni, Crozerville and Aston Mills, owned by three families. The Sharplesses owned all the lower part, extending from Mt. Alverno to a point near the site of the present Crozerville Methodist Church. The middle part, extending from this point westwardly to Aston Mills, was the property of the Mattsons, paper makers who built the West Branch mills and afterward disposed of their estate to John P. Crozer, and the upper part was held by the Lungrens, who built the Lenni mills for manufacture of paper also.

The textile industry has always been the most profitable one here, and its success has been the means of bringing many people here who have bought lands and built houses, thus diversifying all three of these large tracts into numerous small, comfortable residential sites.

The industries have all experienced many trying vicissitudes, to be sure, within the past century, yet notwithstanding the disastrous freshets, the ruinous fires, the troublesome strikes and the inevitable expensive, poverty producing slumps and depressions, they have, like our persevering people, arisen from the many setbacks, and now stand out as a bulwark of indomitable and progressive spirit of the rural business world.

During the Civil War Rockdale's noble sons were among the first to answer President Lincoln's call for troops, and Rockdale enjoys the proud honor of sending more men to the front, in proportion to its size, than any other town in Pennsylvania. In World War I it sent 150 service men to the fighting lines, and in World War II it provided 533.

Our town will continue to go forward as in the days of yore, for good people are determined to live here. Rockdale is more than ordinarily healthful, the mortality rate being far below the average. The town is convenient of access, with two bus lines providing good passenger service, and we are handy to all large cities and the river front. It is full of beautiful building sites, its schools are excellent, and its moral standard is high above the average, as Court records will prove.

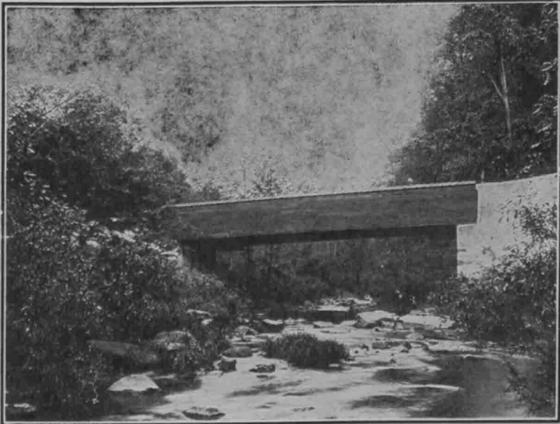


THE MOUNT

For many years Rockdale's nerve center. To the right is the old Rockdale band room, burned down in 1904. In the building in the left foreground was instituted Rockdale Lodge, No. 50, Loyal Patriots of America, Feb. 28, 1854. The organization is still in existence.



KNOB SOCIAL CLUB



THE OLD RED BRIDGE

So called because the wooden structure was painted a bright red. It spanned the west branch of Chester Creek near where the Soldiers' Monument now stands. It was replaced by a handsome modern stone and concrete span in 1932.



CHESTER CREEK RAILROAD

At the base of Riddle's Hill



HERBERT R. GRIFFITH
Veteran of World War II, foreman and superintendent of the Herald's mechanical department.

Best Wishes
of
LOUIS ESSAF

Lenni, Pa.

CONGRATULATIONS
ON
50th ANNIVERSARY

THE
THOMAS W. PRICE CO.

14-16 SOUTH FIFTH STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

*We Appreciate
the Patronage of
Our Advertisers*

Best Wishes of

WILLIAM J. WOLF

Wolf Building
Chester, Pennsylvania

next pay-day...

**Open a Special
Check-Plan
(NO MINIMUM BALANCE)
Account**

ADVANTAGES:
No charge for deposits
... No monthly service
charge ... The only
cost: \$2.00 for a book of
20 checks.

**CHESTER-CAMBRIDGE
BANK AND TRUST COMPANY**

Member Federal Reserve System
Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

**POPULAR WRITERS HAVE
PLEASED HERALD READERS**

In the fifty years of its career, The Rockdale Herald has had some valuable correspondents and auxiliary editors. Along about 1900 Ambrose S. Ottey, an oldtime Rockdale boy and a blacksmith who had moved from Rockdale to Claymont, Del., wrote articles every week on the oldtime doings in Rockdale.

Otway E. Hutchings, a retired pharmacist, also with a deep-seated love for Rockdale, where he lived for many years, used to write letters every week on historical, political and scientific matters, under the pseudonym of "Overbrook."

Frank L. Gold for thirty years wrote every week the happenings around Wawa, under the heading, Wawa Whispers. Frank passed on to his reward December 18, 1942.

Dr. Charles B. Shortlidge delighted the Herald readers every week with his news letter from Lima, and also wrote on scientific subjects under the nom-de-plume of "Old Man River." Dr. Shortlidge has also passed on, to the regret of his many Herald readers.



CHARLES T. BONNER

Postmaster at Glen Riddle. Everybody's friend, he's an ever present help in time of trouble. On January 25, 1941, the main works of the Herald print shop, Herbert R. Griffith, the publisher's son, was called into the army, and remained in the service until August, 1945, 4½ years.

When the boy was called, Charlie also called. He stated that, while he is not a printer, he would like to help out in the emergency, and he ran errands, folded papers and performed many other chores which enabled the editor to carry on all alone. We owe Charlie an everlasting debt of gratitude.

Congratulations to "Squire" William E. Griffith, Editor and Proprietor, on the 50th Anniversary of The Rockdale Herald.

Dear "Squire" Griffith:

Your 50 successful years as founder, editor and proprietor of The Rockdale Herald stand as a triumph of American freedom and individual initiative.

From amateur beginnings as a boy with a toy printing press, you established a weekly newspaper that commands the respect of the community, and of everyone who has an opportunity to read The Rockdale Herald.

The Chester Times takes sincere gratification from your acknowledgment that it had a small part in creating your early interest in the newspaper business, when, as a seven-year-old lad, you were a newsboy for this daily.

But the Times takes friendly issue with your statement that "there is no use for a newspaper" in your town, because it isn't a town, but a country village "where everybody knows everybody else, and all about everybody else's business."

Wherever people gather together in community living there is an opportunity—and need—for a journalist who will chronicle their daily and weekly comings and goings. You have done that job superbly over 50 interesting years.

Your success belies your self-effacing statement that there is "no use for a newspaper" in your community.

The Chester Times congratulates you on the Golden Anniversary of your Rockdale Herald, and wishes you many more years of service as the chronicler of happenings in your section of the Chester Creek Valley.

Congratulations for 50 Years of Service to the Community
From a New Organization

BOULEVARD FLORIST, Inc.

MacDADE BLVD., MILMONT PARK, PA.

Ruth Shisler - Ann Worrell - Howard Faddis, Jr.
Flowerphones: Chester 3-5447 - Ridley Park 0166

CONGRATULATIONS

To the Rockdale Herald and Wm. E. Griffith on their
GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

May the Herald and its brilliant editor enjoy many
more years of success and community service.

RICHARDS & SCHRADER
CHESTER HEIGHTS CONCORDVILLE

45
YEARS
IN
BUSINESS



35
YEARS
IN
CHESTER

Congratulations to the Rockdale Herald on its 50th
Anniversary, as we appreciate the efforts necessary
to give satisfaction to the public over so many years.
CARL A. DOUBET

Phone Chester 3-6119

All Hours

MESSMER FLORIST

Wallace H. Wilson, Proprietor

716 WELSH ST., CHESTER, PA.
Member Florists Telegraph Delivery

Congratulations

to our

Local Paper

from

ALDON RUG MILLS

Lenni, Pa.

Felicitations

and

Greetings

from

SUNROC REFRIGERATION CO.

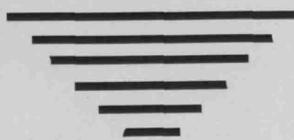
Manufacturers of

Electric Water Coolers

Glen Riddle, Pa.

Which kind of a Saver are You?

**Minus-Saver
Zero-Saver
Plus-Saver**



Open a Savings Account and find out
how easy it is to build a Bank Balance.

1 Percent Interest Paid.

**THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK
OF MEDIA**

Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

May We Exchange Congratulations?

.

*Victoria Plush Mill is also 50 years old,
reaching its*

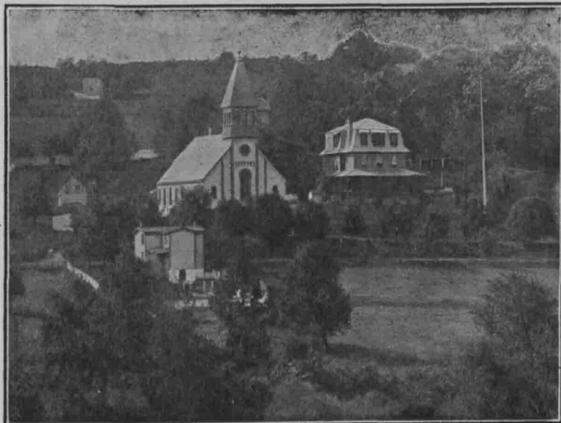
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR!

.

VICTORIA PLUSH MILL

. . .

Swarthmore and Lenni, Pa.



ST. FRANCIS DE SALES' CHURCH AND RECTORY



ROCKDALE'S MAIN STREET
Fifty years ago.



LENNI RAILROAD STATION

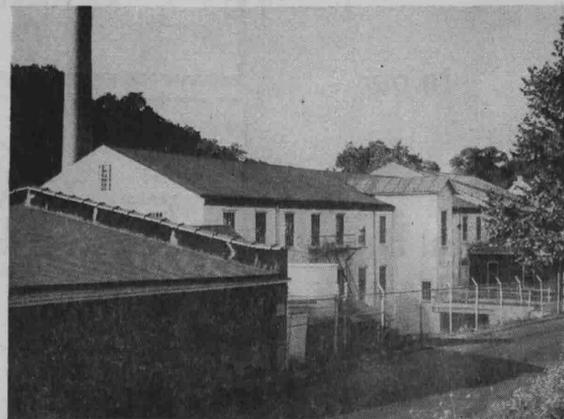


LENNI MILLS

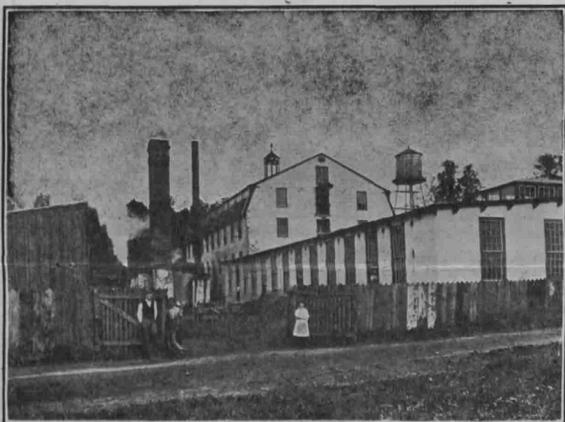
At the right is the plant of the Lane-Hall Textile mending Company. The building in the center is that of the Aldon Rug Company, and the building to the left is the Jefferis Dye Works.



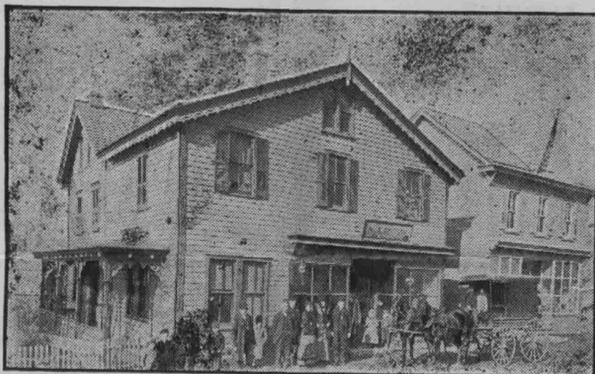
BROWN'S STORE AND HOMESTEAD
Erected, 1831. Torn down, 1930. Oldest building in Rockdale



VICTORIA PLUSH MILLS
West Branch



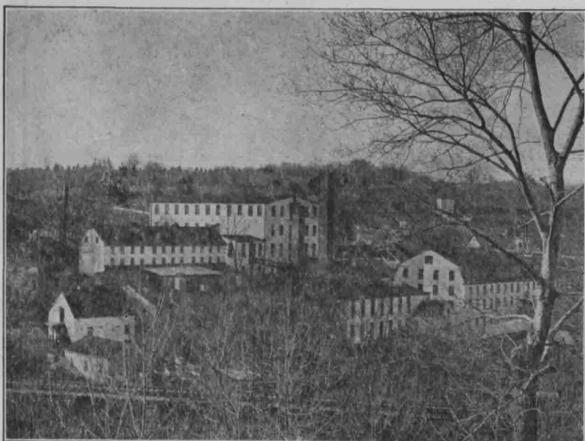
YORKSHIRE WORSTED MILLS



YORKSHIRE APARTMENTS
Formerly Wolf's store, and, before that, Griffith's



FIRST FACTORY BUILDING IN GLEN RIDDLE
Erected 1733. Torn down, 1920



GLEN RIDDLE MILLS
Before the big fire in 1896



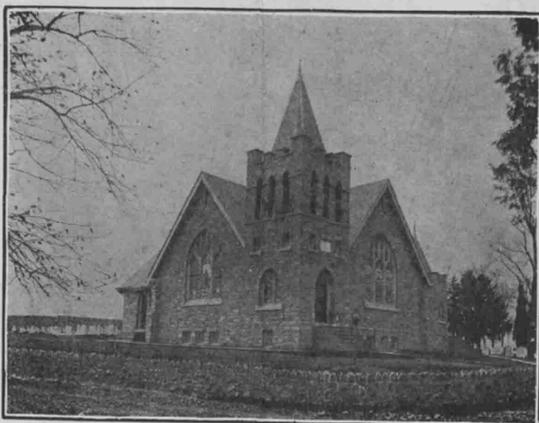
EAST ENTRANCE TO THE KNOB
Crozerville Hill



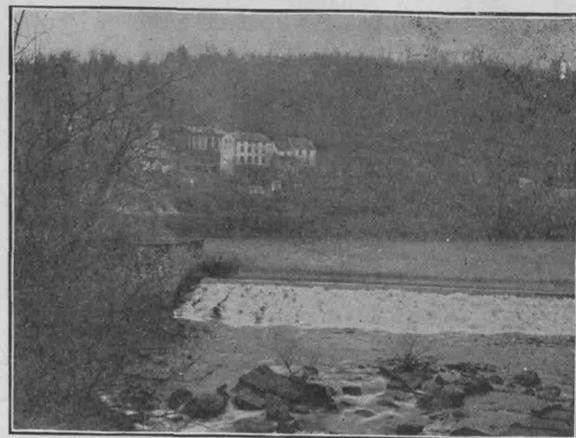
OLD ROCKDALE SCHOOL HOUSE
Mount road, Rockdale, where the publisher of the Herald got all of his education. Erected 1859. Replaced by the present school, 1917.



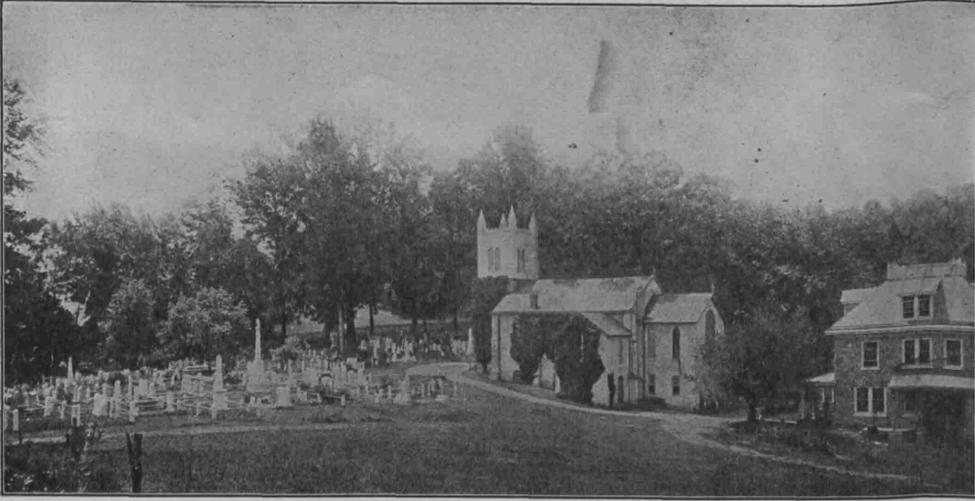
ROCKDALE BASEBALL TEAM
1912



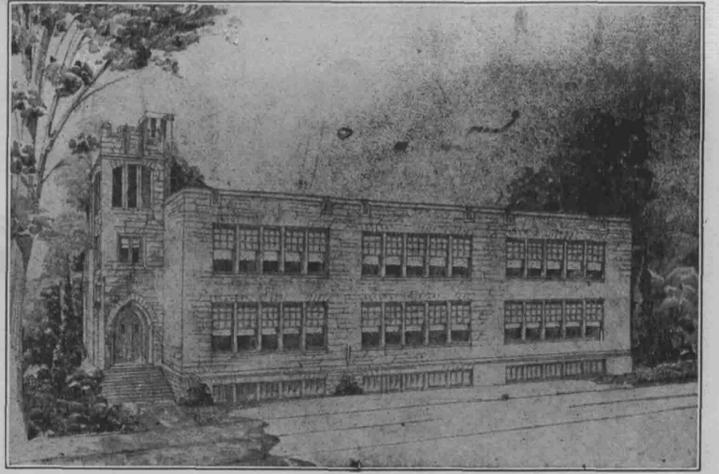
MT. HOPE METHODIST CHURCH



ROCKDALE DAM
Built by Samuel Riddle in 1857, to provide increased water power to drive the machinery.



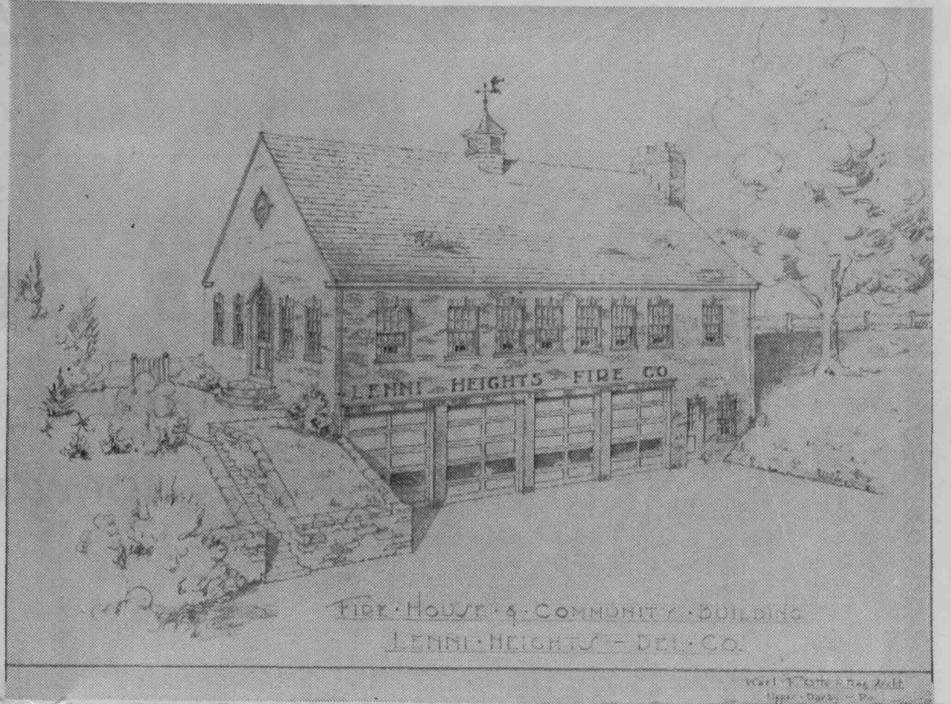
CALVARY CHURCH, CEMETERY AND RECTORY



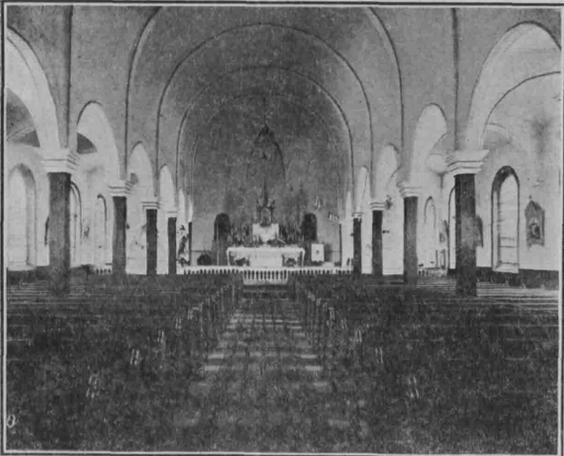
ST. FRANCIS DE SALES PAROCHIAL SCHOOL
Erected 1926



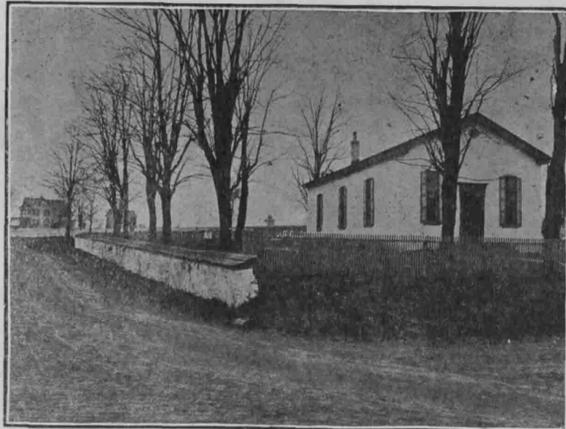
SEVEN STARS HOTEL AT VILLAGE GREEN
Erected 1736



LENNI HEIGHTS FIRE HOUSE



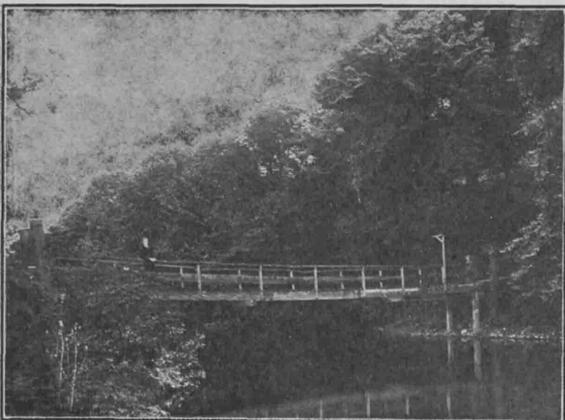
INTERIOR OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES' CHURCH



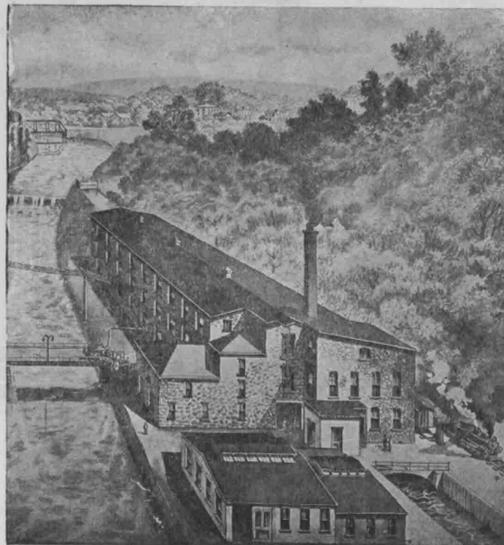
OLD MT. HOPE CHURCH
Erected 1807. Torn down to make way for the new church, 1898.



CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF ANGELS—1873
Replaced by a modern structure in 1900



VICTORIA FOOT BRIDGE
Leading from Lenni to new road.



PENN TAPESTRY MILLS
Now operated by Charles Ahrens & Son — Mill Work



SUNROC REFRIGERATION COMPANY
Glen Riddle

Congratulations and Best Wishes

to a

Wonderful Brother

HORACE S. GRIFFITH'S SONS

Funeral Directors

NORWOOD, PA.

Congratulations

On Your

Golden Anniversary

YORKSHIRE WORSTED MILLS

Congratulations
on the 50th Anniversary of
The Rockdale Herald

Village Green Trailer Co.

GET IT AT
WITTEN'S
ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING

LENNI, PA.

THE NEW ADDITION IS
BIRD'S EYE FROZEN FOODS

Selling
CHEVROLET
CARS and TRUCKS

To Satisfied Patrons
for Twenty Years

WILLIAM S. MELLEN
Authorized Chevrolet Dealer

LIMA GARAGE
Lima, Pa.

Congratulations

To

THE ROCKDALE HERALD

From one half-century-old Business to

another

We have been satisfying the wants of Men

in Furnishings for the past

Fifty-five Years

H. M. McCoy

525 Market Street

Chester, Pa.

LANE-HALL
TEXTILE
CORP.

Commission Burling
Mending
Invisible Mending

Plant No. 1

Chester Heights Road
Lenni Mills, Pennsylvania
Tel. Chester Heights 160

WILLIAN J. HALLINAN, Pres.

HENRY P. HALLINAN, Treas.

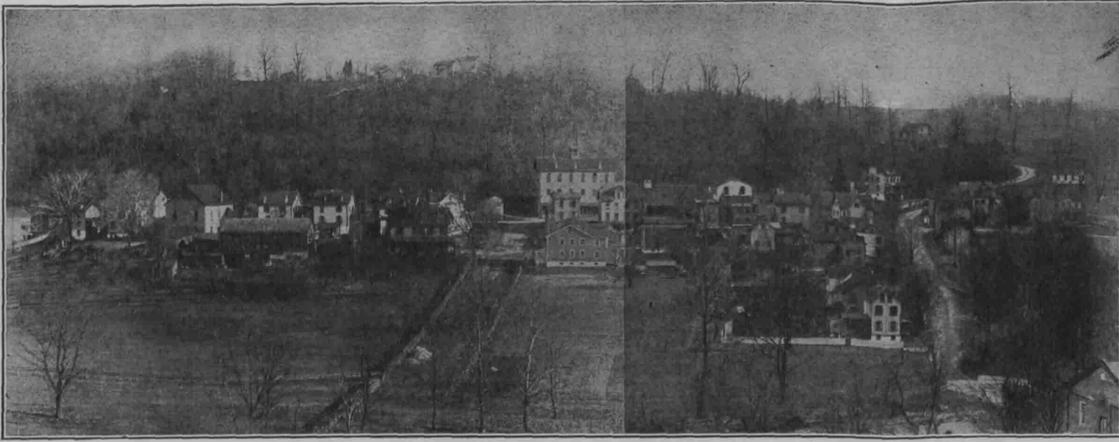
Compliments
of

JEFFRIES

DYE

WORKS

LENNI, PA.



A BIT OF ROCKDALE'S SKY LINE
Viewed from the railroad



THE PIG'S EYE

In this building ten people were marooned during the great flood of 1843. It is along the water's edge, and the lives of these imprisoned Rockdalers were saved by a big tree falling across the torrent, turning the water away from the house. The tree fell just a few minutes after a prayer meeting for the safety of the prisoners was held on the high bluff just above the railroad. The building is still standing, but unoccupied and in a state of decay.



ROCKDALE HALL

For seventy-three years the social, civic and fraternal center of the community. Completed in 1873, the building was erected through shares of stock, and operated by the Rockdale Hall Association, Incorporated. On the first floor was the Literary Room, headquarters of the People's Literary Association, a store and restaurant, and dwelling quarters for the janitor.

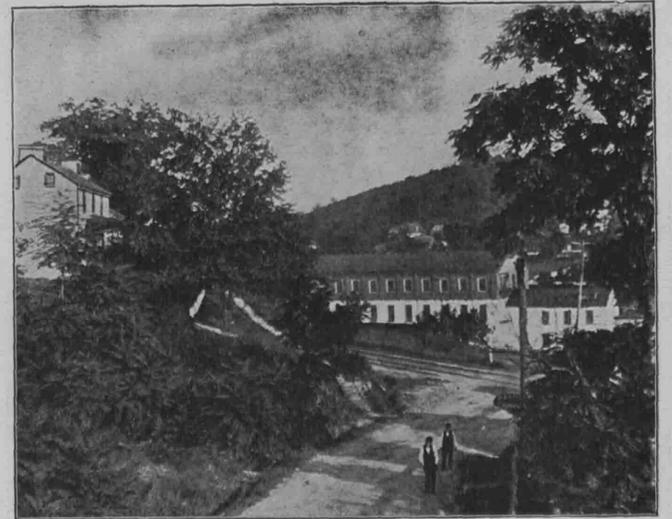
The second floor consisted of an auditorium, where were held concerts, festivals, dances, medicine shows and minstrel shows. There were two lodge rooms on the third floor. The old building is packed full of fond memories for the older people.

In 1923 the building was purchased by Calvary Church, and used as a parish hall and public center. Twenty years later, in 1946, it was sold to the Stillwell storage firm, who still use it as a warehouse.



ROCKDALE AMBULANCE BUILDING

Built, 1911. Destroyed by fire in 1943

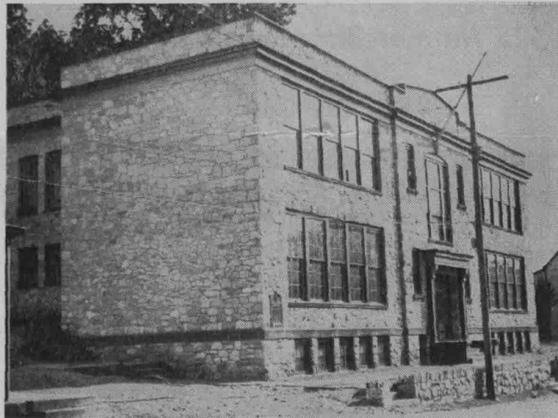


PARKMOUNT MILLS

Erected 1829

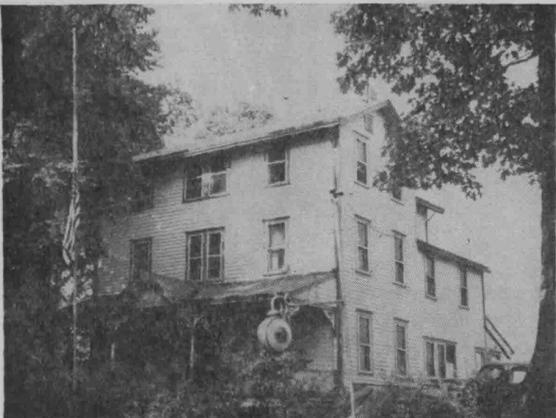


CROZERVILLE METHODIST CHURCH

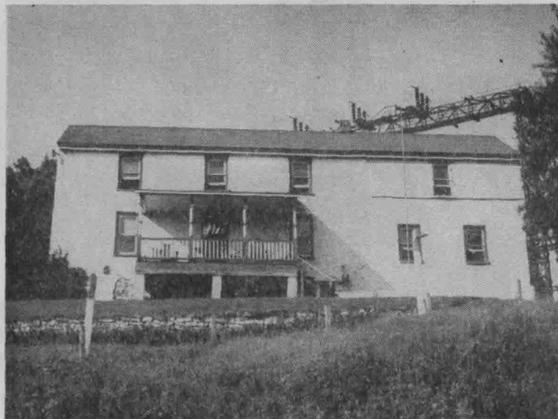


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