

HISTORY

OF

BEAVER COUNTY,

PENNSYLVANIA;

INCLUDING

ITS EARLY SETTLEMENT; ITS ERECTION INTO A SEPARATE COUNTY;
ITS SUBSEQUENT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT; SKETCHES OF
ITS BOROUGHS, VILLAGES AND TOWNSHIPS; PORTRAITS
OF SOME OF ITS PROMINENT MEN; BIOGRAPHIES
OF MANY OF ITS REPRESENTATIVE CITI-
ZENS; STATISTICS, ETC.

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to build houses upon the Beaver Commons, erected poles to match the height of the logs in this wing, and covered them with brush to protect them against the night dews. Under this temporary shelter they slept at night.

A very interesting question, and one that excites a warm discussion is: Who was the first permanent settler in Beaver county? For a long time George Baker, whose family was captured by the Indians on Raccoon creek was supposed to have been the first. Later and further investigations show that Levi Dungan was a resident of the county at an earlier date. A brief account of him and his family is in order.

Levi Dungan was born and reared on a farm about nine miles from Philadelphia. Bucks county, adjoining, is well supplied with Dungans, the original members of whom were pioneer settlers and some of them quite prominent citizens. In the spring of 1772, Levi located a tract of one thousand acres purchased from a man named Stephens, on the head waters of King's creek, in what is now Hanover township, on the edge of which tract the village of Frankfort is located. He brought with him a slave by the name of Lynn, and began at the spring which subsequently fed Stephenson's steam mill, an improvement which consisted in building a cabin, clearing some land and planting it with corn, potatoes and other vegetables. In the autumn of the same year he returned to Philadelphia to get his family. His wife was Mary Davis, a small woman of Welsh descent who had been reared in the family of the celebrated Dr. Benjamin Rush. Whether she was a relative of the doctor is not known; but she had read his medical books, and brought some of them with her to the new country.

In the year 1789, Mary Dungan journeyed on horseback to Philadelphia in company with some of her neighbors who went mainly to secure supplies of salt for the new country, their roads being mere paths through forests infested by hostile Indians. Mrs. Dungan took with her the money necessary to enter the tract of land selected and "blazed" out in 1772, and returned in safety, bringing her patents for the land dated September 1, 1789.

One of Dungan's near neighbors, for a time was Mr. Blazier. He settled on a farm about two miles south of Dungan's. Such was the beginning of a pioneer settlement in Beaver county. There were no mills, no shops, no stores, no churches, no physicians, none of the conveniences of civilized life. Mr. Dungan erected the first horse mill in the county. Captain John Braden stated subsequently that when he was a boy he had gone with his father from the mouth of Rac-

coon creek to this mill, a distance of about twenty miles, and had not seen any trace of a road.

Another neighbor at a later date was William Langfit, who was distant about six miles. On one occasion he and a neighbor by the name of Isaac Wiseman were down on King's creek to get some corn ground. On their return home they were fired upon by Indians. Wiseman was killed, Langfit was badly wounded through the body, but falling forward, he clasped his horse around the neck. The animal ran to the home of Levi Dungan where the wounded man was taken in entirely unconscious. The nearest regular surgeon was at Fort Du Quesne, twenty-five miles distant, the way to which, if any messenger had been available, was guarded by hostile Indians. Mrs. Dungan's medical knowledge was now put to a practical test. Having examined the body carefully, she discovered that it was perforated with bullets, and exhausted by the loss of blood. Tearing a silk handkerchief into strips, and improvising a probe, she drew the strips through the wounds, and by the use of lint and bandages staunches the flow of blood. Then knowledge was power.

Another difficulty was encountered. The patient in his weakness could take no nourishment. This emergency was met by allowing the wounded man to share with her infant child the nourishment afforded by her own breast. Langfit recovered, and to the day of his death accorded to his deliverer a homage closely approaching worship. He died in Hanover township, August 23, 1831, aged 95 years. Mr. Dungan lived to be 86 years old.

The second family that contests with the Dungans for the honor of being the first settlers of the county is, as has been stated, that of George Baker. He was born three miles east of Strasburg, Germany, in 1730-35, and came to America in 1750. Landing on the eastern coast, he married within the first three months a small, handsome and intelligent English girl. Her wedding dress, the finest quality of silk, a piece of which, more than 135 years old, is now in the possession of George Baker, of New Sheffield, was purchased in England. With his newly wedded wife, Mr. Baker began his western journey, and finally located in what is now Moon township, building a block-house on Raccoon creek. It is thought the settlement occurred in 1774, two years later than that of Dungan. For a number of years he and his family lived peaceably amid the dangers and difficulties surrounding them. Finally, amid the darkness of night, being restless he sprang from his bed and opened the strongly barred door of the cabin. No sooner was

Beaver, Big Beaver, Wayne, Perry, North Sewickley, North Beaver, Shenango and Slipperyrock. Several of these townships in the south tier were divided, leaving a township of the same name in each county. The townships of the county at present may be grouped into three classes: 1. Those of the South Side. 2. Those of the West Side. 3. Those of the East Side.

SOUTH SIDE.

The townships of the South Side are Hanover, Greene, Raccoon, Moon, Hopewell and Independence.

HANOVER TOWNSHIP.

This township is situated in the extreme southwest corner of the county. It is bounded as follows: North by Greene and Raccoon, east by Independence, south by Washington county and west by West Virginia. It is a rich and productive township. Its history is given in the preceding part of this chapter, and its early inhabitants are specified in the chapter on Pioneers. Its two important villages are Frankfort Springs and Harshaville. The population of Hanover township by the census of 1880 was 1,357.

FRANKFORT SPRINGS BOROUGH.

This place is situated in the southern part of Hanover township, near the Washington county line. In the days of stage coaches (1837) it was reported as a "flourishing village, twenty-six miles from Pittsburgh, twenty miles from Beaver and thirteen from Georgetown." The town stands on the edge of a tract of a thousand acres of land secured by Levi Dungan in 1772. The portion of country surrounding it was the earliest settled in the county. The names of some of the first settlers will be found in Chapter III.

At an early date Isaac Stephens entered four hundred acres of land from the government, the tract including the famous springs. He sold twelve acres of it to Edward McGinnis, who failed to utilize the rich possessions he had acquired. By his eldest daughter, Eliza J. McGinnis, the tract was finally sold to J. Moore Bigger, the present proprietor and manager of the resort. He has greatly improved the property and given it merited fame. The water from these springs has been subjected to rigid chemical analysis, and been found to contain four distinct ingredients: iron, sulphur, magnesia and alum. Near these springs were secreted, at one time, the medical books, in fact the

entire library, of Mrs. Levi Dungan, to keep them out of the hands of the Indians who were prowling about. After a year's absence the books were recovered, but in a spoiled condition. This fact produced weeping on the part of the old lady, inasmuch as the loss could not be replaced. It is to be regretted that the records of the early days of this village are not more copious. In 1837, however, the industries were thus represented:

Merchants—James Cameron, Samuel Thompson, Alexander Mossman and James Morrison . . . *Physicians*—William Banks, James Banks. — *Veers* . . . *Ministers*—Rev. W. M. McElwee, Seceder; Rev. James Sloan, D.D., Presbyterian . . . *Jus-tice of the peace*—J. Ewing . . . *Hotels*—James Dungan, Frankfort hotel; Edward McGinnis, Frankfort house . . . *Postmaster*—Andrew Knox.

Frankfort Springs has always been noted for its interest in educational matters. Its schools were its pride, and the large number of prominent persons trained and sent abroad into the world as active factors for good, attests the wisdom of the policy pursued.

The Frankfort Academy was given a legal existence by being regularly incorporated by the court on Jan. 17, 1871. The object expressed in the instrument was "the education of young men and young women in the learned and foreign languages, the useful arts, sciences and literature." In its list of incorporators were such men as John J. Carothers, Samuel Bigger, Rev. A. O. Rockwell, Rev. William M. McElwee, John Stephenson, James Morrison, John McCollough, H. B. McCreary, Thomas Nicholson, J. L. Purdy, Thomas Bigger, Henry J. Lance and S. H. Leeper. The first seven in the foregoing list constituted the first board of trustees.

The institution encountered the difficulty of access on account of its inland location. Becoming involved in financial stress, the property of the institution was sold at sheriff's sale, in 1885, to satisfy a claim of William Ewing. The structure is now used as a private residence.

Frankfort Springs is one of the oldest postoffices in the county, having been established under the name of Frankfort at the opening of the century. Below is a complete list of the postmasters, with dates of appointment, who have smiled upon the people as they came to receive their cherished messages: John McLellan, July 1, 1800; Arthur Sander-son, Jan. 1, 1801; Thomas Worrell, Oct. 1, 1803; Samuel Worrell, Oct. 1, 1807; Henry Comby, Jan. 1, 1816; James Dungan, Oct. 21, 1828; Andrew Knox, Jan. 25, 1836.

Thus far the office was known as Frankfort. On the 11th of January, 1840, it was changed to Frankfort Springs, which name it still