

Logan Mills boasts of its covered bridge

By DAVID KAGAN dbkagan@sungazette.com
POSTED: June 7, 2009

LOGAN MILLS - It is believed that the first white settlement in Clinton County's Sugar Valley was made by John Christopher Culby in about 1784. A Hessian soldier who had deserted from the British to join the Americans, Culby (whose name had been Miller or Muller) made his way after the war to live in what was then a Pennsylvania wilderness area along Fishing Creek, where the small village of Logan Mills eventually arose.

Joining Culby not long after was Samuel Jones, another Revolutionary War soldier. He settled along the mountain just south of Logan Mills, a location popular with early settlers because of its good mountain water.

Other early pioneers included the Groningers, John Philips, Henry Spangler, John Strawcutter and Philip Schreckengast. The latter became known as the greatest hunter in Sugar Valley, reportedly killing 400 deer, 93 wolves and 74 bears during his lifetime.

Arriving from Brush Valley (just south over the mountain) several years later were Philip Glantz, Michael Bressler, Frederick Womeldorf, Daniel Moyer, Jacob Spangler, Isaac Frantz, John Stover, Philip Hahn, Daniel Raudaback, John Lamey, Barnet Rockey, Col. Anthony Kleckner and Peter Emig. Emig ran a sawmill at Logan Mills, Moyer a store, and Kleckner built a grist mill around 1840 right on the north bank of Fishing Creek.

Kleckner's mill house stands today. After his days, it continued operating throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, finally under Samuel Ilgen into the 1960s. Then Ilgen sold what was described as a "flourishing business." It ended as the "D & G Practical Feeds for Practical Feeders" (the sign remaining on its front wall today), the structure now deserted.

In the village's 19th-century heyday, in addition to Kleckner's gristmill, there was a post office, a school, a church, at least two water-powered sawmills, a store, a blacksmith's shop and a cider press.

On July 1, 1840, the second post office in all of Sugar Valley (the first was at Logansville, later to be renamed Loganton) was established at Logan Mills. George Rearick was the first postmaster, with Frank L. Emig the last when it closed on April 29, 1939, due to the establishment of Rural Free Delivery Route 2 out of Loganton.

The one-room subscription school of Logan Mills was built in 1820 on a section of William Bartges's farmland. It only was open in the winter (for just a few months), with instruction in both English and German, and classes in grammar, arithmetic, spelling and writing. Teachers then received little pay, only about \$12 to \$15 a month. The school closed in 1926.

St. Paul's Evangelical United Brethren Church (also known as Miller's Church because a man named Miller "sold 80 perches of land for the church site for \$5" on the Winter Road just east of Logan Mills Road) is the second oldest church in Sugar Valley. Records show a log house of worship was first constructed there about 1825. It was replaced in 1879 by a structure that still exists, although its adjacent horse and wagon shed (standing in the 1960s) has been razed. A cemetery lies to the immediate west of the church.

Reputedly, eight future ministers and six ministers' wives came from the congregations through the years. N. L. Bartges (whose ancestors first came to Sugar Valley in the 1830s), wrote in 1962, "Here I attended an old time revival meeting and was converted under the preaching of Rev. C. N. Wolfe. It seems that kind of revival meeting has disappeared. Perhaps the influence of those meetings is one reason why so many preachers have come out of Sugar Valley."

Of historical facts about the early church, Bartges wrote, "There was no organ. All singing was done by 'air.' It was mostly in German. The preacher would read a line or two. Then the foresinger would tune up and they would sing those lines and so on through the entire song. They had no song books."

Of the replacement church built in 1879, Bartges noted, "There was a large brass chandelier in the middle. Kerosene lamps were used. In 1904 the church was remodeled for \$240."

Of its popularity in the valley, Bartges wrote, "At one time people from Bull Run, Booneville, Greenburr, Sweet Grove and Tylersville attended this church. About 1850, there were 150 pupils enrolled in the Sunday School. It had quite an extensive library. The records show the books were widely read."

Regular services finally ended in May 1964. Only special services are held there today.



The covered bridge in Logan Mills over Fishing Creek originally was built in 1874. It was refurbished in 2003.

Logan Mills (also Loganton and Logan Township) was named after Mingo Indian Chief and noted orator James Logan (1725?-1780), a son of Chief Shikellamy (of the Sunbury region). Logan's Indian name had been Tah-gah-jute, but in a Christian baptism he was renamed in honor of James Logan, then Secretary of the Province of Pennsylvania. Chief Logan had been a frequent presence in Sugar Valley in the 1700s, often traversing a path over the mountains between McElhattan Spring and Sulphur Spring (the future site of Loganton).

Across Fishing Creek at Logan Mills is Clinton County's only remaining covered bridge. Maintained by the state since the 1930s, the red-painted, wooden span is just west of the old gristmill. The bridge, constructed in 1874 and refurbished in 2003, is 63 feet long. It uses a Queen Post Truss.

Aside from the bridge and the abandoned mill, only a few houses now constitute the 21st-century "village" of Logan Mills. There is no sign on Logan Mills Road, from the north or the south, indicating the beginning of any village boundary line. But the waters of Fishing Creek and the western winds of Sugar Valley still pass through as they have done for centuries.

SOURCES: (1) articles by Sugar Valley residents included in the "125th Anniversary of Loganton and Sugar Valley" booklet of 1965; (2) the Sugar Valley High School 10th grade class's 1976 booklet, under the direction of Mark J. Temons, "Country Pride I: Sugar Valley"; and D. S. Maynard's 1875 book, "Historical View of Clinton County, Pennsylvania."

[Subscribe to Williamsport Sun-Gazette](#)