

FULTON COUNTY



LICKING CREEK



AYR TOWNSHIP



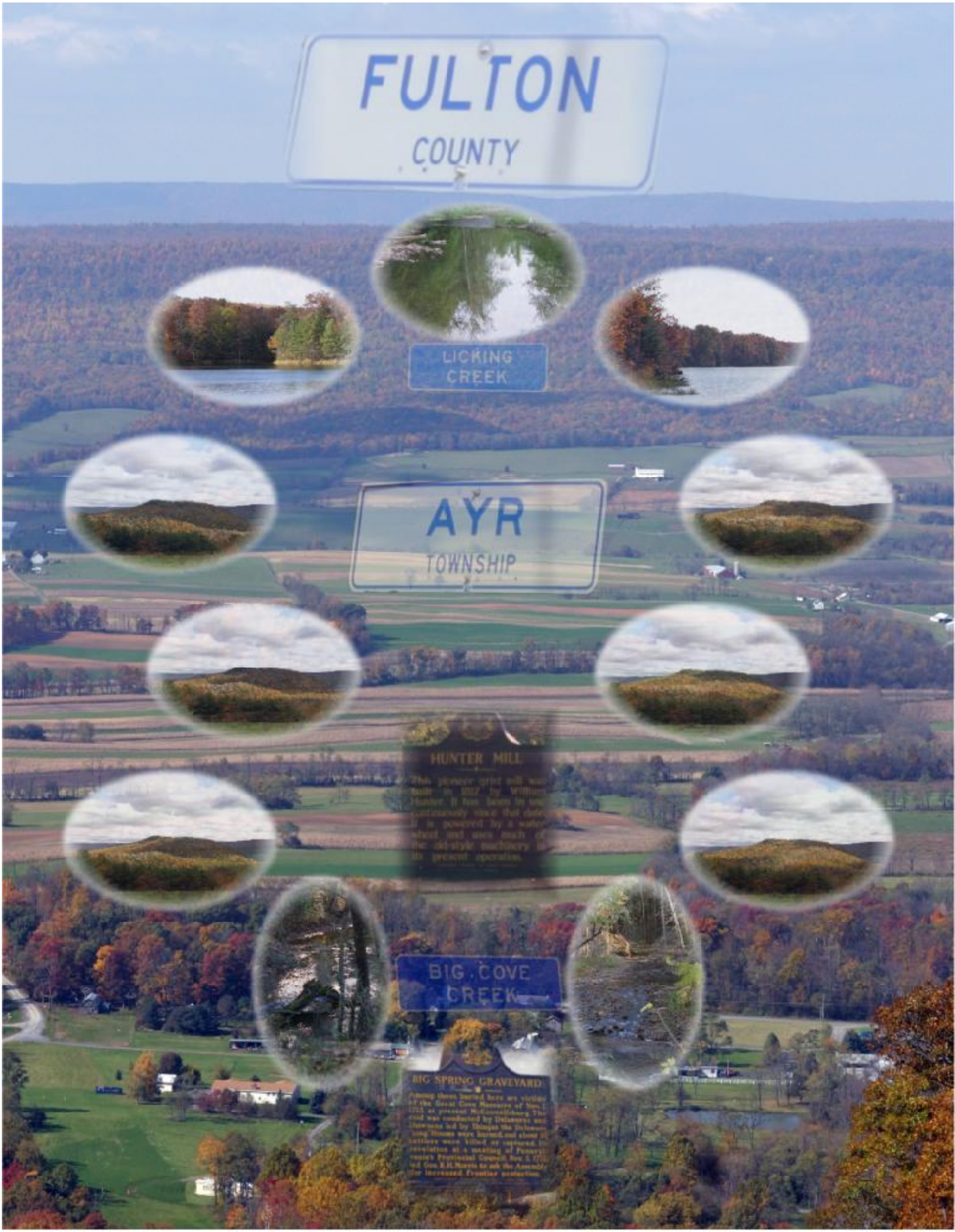
HUNTER MILL
This power plant mill was built in 1827 by William Hunter. It has been in use continuously since that date. It is powered by a water wheel and uses much of the old-style machinery in its present operation.



BIG COVE CREEK



BIG SPRING GRAVEYARD
Among those buried here are victims of the Great Cove Massacre of Nov. 1, 1781 at present Millersburg. The road was conducted by Delaware and soldiers led by King the Delaware and British were killed and about 100 soldiers were killed or captured in retaliation at a meeting of Pennsylvania's Provincial Council Nov. 2, 1781 and Gov. Mifflin to ask the Assembly for increased Frontier protection.



FULTON COUNTY

Licking Creek
at Gem Bridge Road
& Great Cove Road

Meadow Ground Lake

Meadow Ground Lake

LICKING
CREEK

Lowrey's Knob
Looking East from
Fox Crest Road
Sequence 1

Lowrey's Knob
Looking East from
Fox Crest Road
Sequence 4

AYR
TOWNSHIP

Lowrey's Knob
Looking East from
Fox Crest Road
Sequence 2

Lowrey's Knob
Looking East from
Fox Crest Road
Sequence 5

Lowrey's Knob
Looking East from
Fox Crest Road
Sequence 3

Hunter Mill
Historical Marker
Pennsylvania Historical
and
Museum Commission

Lowrey's Knob
Looking East from
Fox Crest Road
Sequence 6

Big Cove Creek
near
Ravensburg Road

Big Cove Creek
near
Ravensburg Road

BIG COVE
CREEK

View from the Tuscarora Summit
from Route 16 Looking West
over the Valley
Formed by the Tuscarora
and
Meadow Ground Mountains

Big Spring Graveyard
Historical Marker
Pennsylvania Historical
and
Museum Commission

Cover Photography
and Artwork
by
Michael J. McMeans
All rights reserved
2006

So, what brings a Chicago Metro city boy to Fulton County, Pennsylvania?

A brief journal of delightful observations, thoughts and memories
collected during a recent visit to Fulton County, Pennsylvania.

Part of a series of sketches based on the theme
“That No One Should Be Forgotten.”

by

Michael J. McMeins, Sr.

Roselle, Illinois
November 2006

**Dedicated to the memory of our ancestors,
who braved the most hostile elements
at the edge of the western wilderness
in eighteenth century Pennsylvania.
Who came to settle in the serene valleys
that was to become known as Great Cove.**

**And to all of the generations of citizens
of Fulton County, Pennsylvania
up to and including the present,
who have acted responsibly
in their roles as caretakers
of the land, preserving the
beauty for all generations
to see.**

**And finally,
to the memory of
Anne Willson-McMeins-Jamison,
whose own writing has served to inspire
and encourage numerous individuals throughout
the course of their lives.**

**“ . . . ; that her numerous offspring and others
might be excited to acknowledge God in all their ways,
patiently submit to His chastening rod, and fully put their
trust in Him, through the Lord Jesus Christ, even in the most
gloomy and afflicting dispensations of His Providence.”**

*An excerpt from “An Interesting Narrative” by Anne Jamison.
Dictated to Joseph Patterson by Anne Jamison
and published in the Pittsburgh Gazette
July 23, 1824*

So, what brings a Chicago Metro city boy to Fulton County, Pennsylvania?

My wife asked that very question as did all of my friends and associates. When I introduced myself to the Fulton County Historical Society on October 20, 2006, I stated that my ancestors were amongst the first pioneers to settle the area that became known as Great Cove. My ancestors are the McMeins and Willson families of Air Township. They resided just south of Webster Mills from about 1749 until 1771 at which time they removed to the area known as the Forks of the Yough, located in present day Allegheny County. It took the McMeins family four generations and about one-hundred years to reach Illinois from Fulton County. It then took another five generations some one-hundred-fifty years for one of the McMeins to return to Fulton County for a visit.

Some facts that pertain to the lives of these pioneers are as follows:

John McMeins was one of eighteen Great Cove settlers signatory to the famous petition sent to Governor Hamilton on September 27, 1750. The introductory segment of the petition follows:

“We are exceedingly sorry, as well we may, that any part of that letter sent from the Great Cove to the magistrate of this county should have given your Honor any umbrage to suspect we should desire to get rid of being under the government of this Province, and forcibly to maintain the possession of these lands on which we at present live; in opposition to your authority.”¹

John McMeins was appointed the first constable in newly formed Ayr Township on October 23, 1754.²

John McMeins owned and operated one of the first, if not the first, grist mills in Ayr Township, predating those recorded in history by several years.³

The McMeins homestead and grist mill is thought to have been located on a narrow strip of property located where Spring Run Creek and Big Cove Creek join and southward to a line defined by the gap between Dickey's Mountain and Lowrey's Knob.⁴

The Willson homestead is thought to be the property located on the valley floor, directly east and south of the foot of Lowrey's Knob.⁵

James Willson was ordained a Covenanter elder by Reverend John Cuthbertson in April 1753. James was a member of the Licking Creek or Cove Society. (Sometimes called Timber Ridge Society)⁶

The McMeins and Willson families were amongst the half that survived the Indian massacre of November 1755.

There were two unions consummated between the McMeins and Willson families, Andrew McMeins and Anne Willson⁷, Aaron Willson and Madjie McMeins.⁸

I have much more to write regarding the lives of these folks and hope to do so in the near term. However, I will be inclined to include a warning with these writings to the effect that they are read while reclining. Experience reveals that when I recite this family history to my wife she immediately becomes drowsy and falls asleep. Imagine that.

I did not come to Fulton County to dig up old bones or look for living relatives. My trip in October 2006 was actually my second trip to the region. I visited the area in May 2006 to perform historical research. During my May visit I visualized the explosion of color that would occur when autumn arrived and I wanted to sample this in person. In simple terms, I came to nurture my senses. A man can find a certain peace while reminiscing in the area of his ancestor's domain. Walking the fields, viewing the beautiful landscapes dressed in her colorful autumn cloak while to the east the Tuscarora performs brilliantly to the tune of the sun peaking through the clouds. The natural beauty of rural Fulton County was found to be in great contrast to the urban sights found in my home county of Du Page in Illinois.

My residence is located in Roselle Illinois which is situated in the north-central portion of Du Page County. Du Page County is located in northeastern Illinois adjoining Cook County on the east boundary.

Du Page County rests on generally flat land averaging 700 to 775 feet above the sea with a total area of about 334 square miles. There are no mountains or valleys in Du Page County. About one and one-half miles southwest of my home is the location of Mallard Lake Forest Preserve. Within the bounds of this preserve is a hill whose summit reaches 185 feet above the prevailing grade. This hill has been very cleverly disguised with soil and planted grass to conceal its use as a landfill. There is also a big ol' drainage ditch down the street from my home, but I do not think it qualifies by definition as a valley. There are a couple of rivers in the county, namely the Du Page river and Salt creek. Our residential use water supply is pumped in from Lake Michigan. The water board says the water is safe but coffee tastes much better when brewed with distilled water.

The 2000 federal census data places the population of Du Page County at 904,161 people of which 23,115 persons reside within the city limits of Roselle. The census bureau records Du Page County as the 37th wealthiest county in the United States. I believe that the census folks either made some kind of mistake or my neighbors are concealing their wealth. It's also possible that some of the folks may have been tellin' stretchers on their census forms.

My wife and I are engaged in the steel construction business from which we receive a modest income, well below the county average. I drive to work which is about three miles from my home. The commute takes anywhere from nine minutes to forty-nine minutes, dependent on weather and traffic patterns.

The panoramic view from my home reveals a scenic glimpse of my neighbor's homes, his neighbor's home, so on and so forth. I remember one time there was a clear day and I could see the skyline of Chicago, some twenty-four miles to the east. The buildings that outline this magnificent sight boast elevations of 1000 to 1451 feet above the street. Some of the finest examples of architectural design in the world are found amongst the steel and concrete monuments that define Chicago's skyline. And while looking in that easterly direction, you are guaranteed to see one of the many airplanes in their final approach or taking off from O'Hara Airport. It's okay if you miss one because within one-half minute you have opportunity to see and hear another.

Du Page County has thousands of miles of paved roads. We have two lane, three lane, four lane and six lane roads. These roads lead to church, work, school, stores and any other place a person wishes to go. These roads are easily distinguished by the orange road construction cones. I believe that Illinois maintains the nation's largest inventory of road construction cones.

Medinah Country Club is across the street from Roselle and was host to the 1999 and 2006 PGA Championship. I like the Bears pretty good but I have a real soft spot for the Steelers. As for baseball, there's only one team that needs mention, that being the Chicago White Sox.

Fulton County, Pennsylvania is six-hundred-twenty-three miles and ten feet from my front door in Roselle, Illinois. My visit of October 19-21, 2006 was initiated as a result of an invitation extended by Mr. Glenn Cordell of the Fulton County Historical Society. Mr. Cordell stated that Fulton Fall Folk Festival was to occur on the noted weekend. This annual festival was said to be coordinated to the time of the autumn turning of the trees. Mr. Cordell stated that this would be the best time to view the autumn foliage of Fulton County.

My wife is always reluctant to let me take these trips alone. Generally when we travel, Kathy acts as the navigator. She also orchestrates restroom stops every hour on the hour. This usually adds about nine hours to our nine-hour trip. Kathy also questioned my ability to find my way around, alone. She cites the time that I got lost in the shopping mall parking lot as her basis of concern. I assured her that I had the most sophisticated GPS (Global Positioning System) equipment available. The GPS technology provided her the assurance needed to grant me leave.

However, she insisted that I drive the speed limit. I made the trip in eight and one-half hours. Let's see, doin' a little math, I come up with about 73.3 miles per hour. And that's certainly well within the speed limit. She also made me promise to take frequent bathroom breaks, eating breaks, rest breaks and break breaks. I can't remember ever *breaking* a promise to my wife before my trip to Fulton County.

Fulton County is located in south central Pennsylvania. The county is about 100 square miles larger than Du Page county measuring in at 438 square miles. Fulton County requires the extra area for all of the mountains that rise within its domain. The east and west boundaries of Fulton County are natural in that the county lines are located at the top of Ray's Mountain on the west and the Tuscarora Mountain on the east. The south county line is an invisible line set by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon in the 1767 to keep the Marylanders out of Pennsylvania.

The earth science scholars use terms such as, "Ridge and Valley Physiographic Province, synclines and Mississippian Pocono Formation," to describe the land of Fulton County. Who talks like that? What I saw were mountains. There are mountains everywhere. Nestled between all of these mountains are valleys by which the term "picturesque" may be properly defined.

I was able to locate two of the better known water courses in the county, Big Cove or just Cove Creek and Licking Creek. The former known in early land documents as the east branch of Licking Creek.⁹ The local folks were very quick to correct my pronunciation of Licking Creek. It is known locally as Lickin' Creek, giving emphasis to the "Lick" portion. I smiled during this correction as I should have known how to say it right as I had heard the term thousands of times in the days of my youth. "Michael! Clean up your room or I'll give you a lickin'!" Licking Creek is aptly named because attempts to navigate it will simply kick your butt. Licking Creek begins in the northeast portion of the county and makes its exit to Franklin County, twenty-three miles southwest by crow. Now if you're a fish that same trip will take you forty-four miles. And you will be one dizzy fish by the time that you reach the county line. The definition of "meander" would be easily understood if a drawing of Licking Creek was used to illustrate the meaning.

Fulton County has hundreds of miles of paved roads. Most of these roads are two-lane but there are some four-lane roads, namely US Route 30 or the Lincoln Highway. I suppose that US Route 30 was named the Lincoln Highway because navigation of this route westward will lead the traveler directly into the heart of the Land of Lincoln. There are also some curious spurs on the roads coming down from the mountains for trucks to escape. We don't have these escape spurs in Illinois but I wish we did. I laughed at the possible road sign, "Nowhere - This Exit." I then thought how much fun it would be to sit back and observe the many drivers that would actually take the exit.

I drove most of the roads in Fulton County from McConnellsburg and to the south. Some of the roads would be difficult to find had it not been for my GPS and mapping software. And some of the roads were notably different from those indicated on the GPS maps. One instance of this is Ravensburg Road just south of Webster Mills. I turned ~~down~~ up this road heading northerly and found that someone had built a garage right in the middle of the road. I made this attempt twice on two different days just to make certain that I wasn't making a mistake. My interest in this area was in Big Cove Creek which follows the winding road. All of my research indicates that the old McMeins grist mill was located near this vicinity. I was able to pull over and take some photographs of the creek near the point where Roaring Run Creek empties into Big Cove Creek. Big Cove Creek is a narrow creek and appears to be the home of hundreds of beavers. Every twenty feet or so I saw what looked to be a beaver dam. The creek steps down from its higher course and filters through the mountain rock. I thought of collecting some of the crystal clear water for the purpose of brewing coffee later, but decided to honor the "NO TRESPASSING" signs. It is entirely possible that Fulton County may be largest consumer of "No Trespassing," No Hunting" and "No Fishing" signs in the United States. There's a gazillion of them posted on every tree and fence post in the county.

I arrived in Fulton County late Thursday afternoon exiting the turnpike at Breezewood. I was beside an eighteen wheeler whose driver was yelling every sort of truck driver profanity at me. The condensed and sanitized version was to alert me to get off the road because my tire was flat. I hadn't noticed anything unusual in the way my van was handling but thought I should probably check this out. I pulled over at a gas station and found the truck driver's observation to be correct. I checked my tires when I left home and they were in pretty good shape. It seems that all of that mountain driving through Pennsylvania wore the thread right off my tires. I filled the tire with air and pumped a bottle of that liquid tire repair hoping to seal the tire for the day.

I had a couple of hours of daylight and decided to take advantage of the time with a trip to Meadow Grounds where I could browse around. The drive from Breezewood to Fulton County is a winding and rising roller coaster ride over the mountains. I had been called an "air head" a few times in my life. The drive over this irregular terrain supported the use of this nickname as my ears were cracking and popping. I thought I must be suffering from Ridge and Valley Physiographic syndrome. All said, the drive is very scenic, offering the best view of the mountain ranges in the area. I couldn't conceive as to how the people navigated these roads in the winter with ice and snow coverings.

I turned off Route 30 onto Back Run Road and wound my way up the area where the lake is located. I had been intrigued with this place for many years. Topographical and satellite maps of this area reveal the very unique land formations that create the plateau that contains Meadow Ground Lake. My ability to explore was cut short due to darkness. The water became covered with little sparkles from the sun passing through trees. And then it was gone. It went from dusk to pitch black within a few minutes. I'm not generally fearful of the dark but then I realized that I had probably never actually been in the dark. Where I live there is always light, streetlights, house lights, moon light or car light. There was no light here, nothing, complete and total black darkness. I confess I never would have found my way out of there had it not been for my GPS and mapping software. I didn't see any light until I reached the intersection of Route 30. From that point I could little specks of light dotting the sides of the mountains in the area. I was happy to make my way back to the hotel and call it a day.

My first order of business on Friday morning was to get new tires on my van. Giving thought to my deflated wage bracket, tire purchases are considered to be a "Big Ticket" purchase. In order to make a purchase of this magnitude, a person has to be comfortable with the shop performing the work. So, here I am six-hundred and some miles away from home trying to get comfortable about spending a bunch of money. There were two choices that I was comfortable with, a General Motors dealer or the local Sears Auto Center. The closest Sears Auto was over in Chambersburg and that meant scaling mountains on a gimpy tire.

I decided on the GM dealer and proceeded to Thomas Chevrolet in McConnellsburg. I arrived at their shop at 7:45 a.m., some fifteen minutes before they were scheduled to open. The doors were open so I entered the office where I was promptly greeted by a lady. I told her of my dilemma and she directed me to the parts counter. I explained my needs to the parts manager. Buying tires always comes with options. I don't much like options either. I stated that I would like new tires of the types that were currently on the van. The manager looked up the information and stated he could have a set in by next Tuesday. I said with some concern, "No. I don't think you understand. I have to be at work in Chicago Metro on Monday." I then asked, "Is there anything comparable that will fit on my van?" To that the manager started typing a bunch of stuff into his computer. It seemed like hours before he finished at which point he said that he had a set of Michelins® that would fit, but they would be an upgrade and come at a higher price. Of Course! I thought, waiting for the price hammer to drop on me. It turned out that the better tires cost an additional twenty dollars apiece. I asked the manager how long it would take for the work to be complete and he yelled out, "Is Mike here today?" One of the ladies said he would be in at eight to which the manager reported, "He'll be done in about an hour." I said, "Thank you."

I sat outside on a little bench in front of the office, indulging in some hot coffee and a chapter of I. D. Rupp's history book about Cumberland County. I took frequent breaks from reading to observe the surroundings and wished the fog and drizzle to go away.

Michelin® is the registered trademark of The Michelin Group, a worldwide tire manufacturing company.

I wondered what establishment stood on this property back in the pioneer days. I was certain that it must have been a combination enterprise, wagon wheel-blacksmith type business.

I was curious as to the age of the flat stone fence that was erected on the property adjacent to the dealer's shop. It looked to be very old. About that time a lady strolled by and conversed about the weather. I asked about the fog and she told me that this was a good day as it pertained to fog. I wondered what a bad day would be like. After all was said and thought about, my van pulled up in front of me at precisely nine o'clock. The tires were a handsome fit and a fine sight for my sorry eyes.

The anxiety of my new tire purchase subsided as I climbed into my van. I was extremely satisfied with the great service and good pricing offered by Thomas Chevrolet. I recognized that business transacted between a local enterprise and a traveler can be good or bad. I was fortunate to have received the best of good. I also thought that the folks in McConnellsburg have had more than two hundred years experience catering to the needs of travelers so what better place to put your trust. My thanks to the proprietor and personnel at Thomas Chevrolet for their efforts in getting me roadworthy again.

(The day that I wrote the preceding paragraph I arrived at home and looked through the daily mail. I opened one unfamiliar envelope and was surprised to find a rebate check from Michelin® in the amount \$50.00. It seems the folks at Thomas took care of the rebate for me too. Again, my sincere thanks.)

Okay, it's Friday morning, I got new tires, a full tank of gas and 438 square miles of ridge and valley something or another to explore. The fog was dissipating and the drizzle was starting to fizzle. I decided to go up into the hills in the Timber Ridge area and sight see the valley east of Scrub Ridge. I took Great Cove Road (US Route 522) south and turned onto Gem Lane, which is narrow and gravel paved. The road starts at about elevation 700 and rises to about elevation 1000 near a place called Big Hollow and eventually winds around to Timber Ridge Road. Gem Road sorta dead ends at Hill Road where you are given the obvious choices of left or right. I took the left fork and as the road wound around I was greeted by a creek passing right across the road. I couldn't see the depth of the creek and didn't want to chance getting stuck out in this wilderness so I carefully turned my Venture van around. I then took the right fork and wound around to the northeast and found that the same creek had washed over that fork of the road. I had pretty much resolved that I wouldn't be going up to Timber Ridge on this road. I was curious about the creek that denied my passage so I stopped in the middle of the one-lane road and pulled up my topography map on the computer. It turns out that the culprit was Lickin' Creek meandering its way across Hill Road.

About that moment I glanced up at my rear view mirror and saw what looked to be the parting of the Red Seas about fifty yards behind me. There was seen two walls of water formed by this medium size John Deere front-end loader as it plowed through the creek. I saw a farmer driving and a passenger standing on the sideboard and they were coming in my direction at a fairly rapid pace. I put the van in gear and progressed forward at the rate of ten miles per hour or so. The tractor pulled up right behind me and raised its bucket to my rear window height. I perceived there to be a potential problem when I noticed that the front bucket of this tractor had been removed and some kind of poker installed in its place. Now picture this for a moment, a large mechanical rhinoceros coming at you with his horn at window height. The poker was a 1 1/2" square solid steel bar protruding out some five feet from the front of the tractor. And this bar was sharpened to a point. I knew that John Deere tractors were manufactured in Moline, Illinois, right in the heart of the Mississippi valley. I wondered if that tractor chasing me had one of those "Mississippian Pocono Formations" stuck on the front of it. Aside from scarin' folks like me, I suppose that this device could also be used for loading bales of hay and such like things.

I kept my pace and at some point I guessed that the farmer must have wanted to pass me. I found a small clearing just ahead and proceeded to pull aside so as to grant him access around me. About the time that I stopped, the tractor pulled up alongside me and parked. There was the best part of two inches to spare between my door and the tractor. I rolled down my window and extended proper greetings whereby the driver asked, "What ya doin' here?" I said, "I'm just driving around trying to get a lay of the land." The driver restated the question, "So, what ya doin' here?" I responded, "I was just driving around and was going up to Timber Ridge Road and found the road to be washed out by Lickin' Creek." And I said Lickin' correctly as if trying to gain favor.

The farmer had a particular, almost familiar tone in his request. I rummaged through my list of tones: muscle tone, music tone, ring tone, high tone, low tone and baritone, but none of these worked. Then it dawned on me, it was the *insistent* tone, it was as if he wanted his new tires today, NOT next Tuesday!

The farmer made his final inquiry, "So, whatcha doin' here!?" Throughout this interrogation I was looking at this poker sticking out the front of his tractor. I was certain that any fear that I had was well concealed. I remember smiling as I thought that it would probably not be good for me to ask the farmer if his tractor was male or female. My life was flashing before me as my thoughts turned to my wife. I knew I could explain driving too fast and not taking bathroom breaks but I couldn't conceive as to how I would explain all of the 1 ½" square perforations that were about to embellish my van.

I smiled again and thought I might attempt a different approach. I explained that my ancestors were the earliest settlers in these parts some two-hundred-fifty-seven years ago and I was just trying to see the land as they saw it. There must have some magic words in that answer because midway through the sentence those fella's commenced with two of the biggest Pennsylvania smiles that I had ever seen. They both just lit up and grinned ear to ear and proceeded to some friendly conversation. They explained that they were the owners of the land up in that area and they thought me to be one of those Marylanders cleverly disguised with Illinois license plates. They went on to say that the metro Marylanders were buying up large tracts of property in Fulton County for use as summer homes as well as primary residences. I perceived from the conversations that the Fulton County residents preferred to remain rural.

I explained more things about my ancestral family, the names and occupations to which they offered up some great information about where to go for the best views of the valleys and such. We talked for about a half hour and concluded, seemingly as friends. I reached out my window and shook hands with both men and wished them the best as they did me likewise.

I was happy to depart this area without the benefit of having been skewed or perforated. I drove away thinking that things really haven't changed all that much in two-hundred-fifty-seven years. If I had been wandering around this area in 1750, I am certain that I would have been accosted by two fellas bearing slightly different weapons of impalement, namely muskets and pitchforks.

Southern border disputes and intrusion by Marylanders had been an annoyance to Pennsylvanians since the time Lancaster County was erected in 1729. Historic records suggest that the Great Cove residents of 1750 not only lived with the fear of expulsion by the Provincial government and annihilation by the Indians, they also feared annexation by Maryland. In July of 1750 these "illegal residents" sent a letter anonymously to the Justices of Cumberland County stating that some of the Great Cove residents were being urged to apply for land warrants in Maryland of which they would certainly receive. The letter asked the provincial government to decide the destiny of Great Cove before such time that the residents would have to choose between the two governments in order to preserve their rights.¹⁰ This letter may have had an undesirable effect because the residents offered their apologies and explanations in their next petition of September 1750, part of which follows:

"... It is, and always has been our strong inclination to enjoy the privileges of the Government of Pennsylvania, above these of any other of his Majesty's colonies in America. We never did directly or indirectly apply to Maryland for a right to said Land, and should anything in said letter seem to insinuate as if we had a mind to do so, or should any of our inconsiderate or even guilty expressions be reported to you, we hope you will not interpret these things to our ruin; but in mercy forgive them; for your Honor may know, what extremes, people of weak policy, when they see their all in danger, may be guilty of."¹¹

The parleys and petitions that occurred between the Great Cove settlers and the provincial government from May of 1750 through September 1750 became the impetus for the land purchase from the Indians in 1754. The pioneers defined their own character as "people of weak policy" and the government defined them as squatters. I contend that they were just stubborn, refusing to yield to any authority that asked them to leave their gardens and dwellings in this enchanting valley. Had it not been for their stubborn disposition, Great Cove would this day be called Fulton County, Maryland. And that just doesn't sound good.

It was just past noon and I wanted to get some research done before the library closed. The Fulton County Historical Society has a research center, the George Ritzert room, located within the county library in McConnellsburg. The research room houses numerous reference volumes including the entire Pennsylvania Archives collection. The society is also a repository for family and local histories. When I arrived there, I was greeted by three ladies in the room. I didn't get their names but one was *visiting* from Maryland, one lived near Burnt Cabins and the other lived in Harrisonville on the east side of Meadow Ground.

I spoke to the lady from Meadow Ground and retold the Gem Lane drama that had occurred earlier in the day. She said in a matter of fact way, "You know, Fulton County has the highest per capita number of guns in Pennsylvania, about fourteen per person?" "And Fulton County has the highest incident of accidental shootings in the state." I didn't quite know how to respond other than to say "Wow. I didn't know that." At the same time I thought, "Given the choice of being shot or skewed, I'd probably prefer being shot so I'm okay with these statistics."

The lady went on to state that the best view of the valley was from her front porch up on the Meadow Grounds. I told her that I was up in that area the previous evening and I agreed that the sight was stunning so long as you were there before the sun went down. I left the conversation with I should try to get up there again tomorrow.

I spent a couple of hours browsing the records contained in the research room. I was able to glean two pieces of information that will aid in subsequent writings of the family history. For those folks not involved in family research, two pieces of information about ancestors of the 1700's is the same thing as pullin' an onion out of the garden to find gold nuggets stuck to the roots. Information for that time period is very scarce. I extend my compliments to the volunteers of the Fulton County Historical Society for their dedicated work to uncovering and preserving the history of Fulton County.

After lunch I made my way south on Great Cove Road to a point just south of Big Cove Tannery Road and noticed the sun glittering through the clouds in the area of Dickey's Mountain. The Lord knows I asked for a clear day but, He in his Providence, thought better to provide me with a partly cloudy day. The sun spilled down through the holes in the clouds to render a most spectacular show of light dancing on the mountainside.

I decided to turn on Foxcrest Drive and found a place to pull over. This particular spot allowed a most picturesque view of Lowrey's Knob, Dickey's Mountain and the gap created between them. I could see some clearings in the clouds to the west and I thought that I would wait as these clouds were moving from west to east.

I was sitting in my van listening to Beethoven's sixth symphony, Pastoral.* I must interject that while I am a God fearing man, I wasn't really aware of His presence on this particular day. I sat there in awe as Beethoven's first movement played in perfect time to the splattering of sunray on the mountainside. As the tempo raised, the clouds yielded to a broad path of sun dancing melodically across the valley. About the time that the second movement, "By the Brook" started, the cloud cover began to dissipate and the sun waved her wand towards Lowrey's Knob. The sight was as if the knob was being dressed in a brilliant petticoat rendering the softest shades of yellow and orange. Then as the cloud passed away from the sun's gaze a most spectacular autumn dress was revealed. The colors transformed to an iridescent array of heavenly spray. At that moment Lowrey's Knob was adorned in her finest autumn gown spilling a glitter of golden colors in every direction. Her crown glowed high above the valley as if to reveal her pride at bearing a heathy son. In the background the great Tuscarora applauded in sparkling consent as though angels were fluttering their way across the hillside adding golden hues to each surface touched.

I was standing with my camera fixed on a fencepost taking time sequenced pictures of this brilliance. The warm sun was upon me yet goose bumps rose upwards to my collar. I wasn't cold, but rather found myself dealing with emotions incited by the realization that my ancestors most certainly saw this dazzling production every year of their settlement.

* *Sixth Symphony, Pastorale, by Ludwig Van Beethoven, 1808, as conducted by Herbert von Karajan with the Berliner Philharmoniker Orchestra, 1982*

I found comfort, thinking that no matter how difficult their lives were, they were able to find solace in the incredible sights of this place. And what a mushy sight I must have been, standing there all goose bumpy. I would go so far to confess that a tear may have fallen were it not for the longstanding rule forbidding men from the shedding of tears.

I returned to my van to the commencement of Beethoven's fifth movement, appropriately named, "Cheerful and Thankful Feelings After the Storm." While listening I viewed the masterful panorama thinking how very romantic this place was. I then remembered that five days from this day would mark the two-hundred-forty-fourth anniversary of the day that Andrew McMeins and Anne Willson traveled to York to be married by Reverend John Cuthbertson. I am certain that Andrew would have chosen this spot to perform his proposing ritual to Anne. And there was probably some kissin' and huggin' type of stuff that took place here.

Andrew and Anne returned from York to build their home and gardens on fifty acres of land near the John McMeins homestead.¹² During the next eight years, five of their nine children were born in this valley including my 4th great-grandfather, James McMeins.¹³ I paid my respects to this place with good memories of my ancestors and offered my thanks to God for revealing His splendor to me. I was content to have fallen under the afternoon shadow of Scrub Ridge in the place near my ancestor's settlements. Historians have defined these Scotch-Irish folks as being pioneer adventurers and as taking the best of the land. I now had firsthand knowledge of the latter of these attributes.

As the music concluded, I thought of the tranquil elements that may have inspired Beethoven to have composed such a beautiful suite. I proposed that he must have been sitting on this very spot and gazing at the magnificent scenery while writing this music. Or more probable, that my 5th great-grandmother, Anne Willson McMeins, wrote to Beethoven informing him of the exquisite natural beauty of this place. In any event Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, "Pastoral," is well suited to be nominated as the theme music for the Great Cove in Fulton County.

I still had much exploring to complete so I decided to head back north on Great Cove Road to Big Spring Cemetery. I had already plotted the location on my mapping program. The cemetery is located on Big Spring Drive about halfway between Webster's Mill and McConnellsburg. Big Spring Cemetery had great historic value as well as sentimental value. These hallowed grounds are thought to contain the remains of the settlers who were massacred by Indians on November 1, 1755. My direct ancestors were probably not buried on these grounds but it is very likely that the second child of Andrew and Anne was buried here. Their five-week-old male child died in the year 1765 or 1766. I was certain that the McMeins and Willson families visited this cemetery often. I felt that it would be proper to stop and pay my respects to my ancestors' neighbors.

I drove to the area where the historical marker was located and as confirmed by my GPS map. I could not see the road or the cemetery from Great Cove Road. There were two fellas standing out by the house near the marker, but I didn't want to enter their driveway and perhaps trespass. I knew from a good source that these residents had no less than twenty-eight guns between them or worst yet, a John Deere with a poker hiding in the shed.

Needless to say, I passed the road and followed north to a place where I could turn around. Now I did this several times, back and forth, back and forth. If there was anyone watching me, I was certain that they must have thought me to be crazy. I finally approached the area for the fifth time and I enlarged my map to the highest resolution. I slowed my van to a crawl and waited for the map to show the road. I was going about five miles an hour when the street popped up on the screen and I turned right blindly. What I had thought to be a residential driveway turned out to be Big Spring Lane. I was very careful going down this road because it was single lane and gravel. Further, I was descending a steep grade. About one block into the road I saw the bottom of the grade with an out building conveniently located right square in the middle of the end of the road. The road was still a little slick from the morning drizzle so I decided to pull aside and walk the grade down to the cemetery.

I reached the fence enclosing the small grounds and proceeded to walk about the marked areas. The historical records indicated that there were no marked stones for those murdered in the 1755 hostilities. There were numerous markers from the 1840's through the 1890's. I did see several flat stones without markings on them. I wondered if baby McMeins may have been placed here and if so, where?

Short of wandering around and wondering, there is not much to be said about this old cemetery. I would be remiss to not extend my compliments to the caretakers of these grounds. The grounds were very well maintained with no brush or overgrowth. The good maintenance of the burial grounds of our ancestors is a positive reflection on the community to the extent that they honor the memories of their departed loved ones.

On Friday evening I had plans to attend the fall meeting of the Fulton County Historical Society. Just two weeks' prior I had sent my application for membership into the society. I struggled with the choice of annual or lifetime membership in the society. I opted for lifetime membership because I felt that it would probably take my lifetime to learn all of the history that has taken place in Fulton County.

I arrived at the old Fulton County theater just before 7:00 p.m. and commenced with introductions to some of the society officers. I was made to feel at home and at ease with my new friends. When the meeting started there were the usual offerings of fiscal matters, awards, announcements and such. At one point the president of the society, Richard Miller, introduced me to the members and asked me to share a brief of information about my family. I stood at the podium before an assembly of fifty thousand people seated in the hundred or so chairs in the theater. I am embarrassed to share that I am not a very good public speaker and was quite satisfied to quickly complete this chore and be seated again.

After all of the society business was concluded, the evening settled into one of entertainment and relaxation, as it was experienced sixty some years before. A society member, Larry Springer provided the entertainment in the form of old movies featuring Laurel and Hardy, Gene Autry and Donald Duck. I admit that as I watched those old films I was shuttled back to those almost forgotten days of my youth. Days that I remembered as being so simple and pure and oh, so very uncluttered.

We were a poor and wealthy family. Poor being defined as a six-ounce box of barley, half loaf of bread and a jar of Miracle Whip[®] to sustain the three children and two adults of the family. Our wealth could be found in our facilities to withstand and overcome all of the obstacles of being poor.

I remembered how difficult and adventurous the employment of a young boy was to earn a few pennies collecting soda bottles. And then, earnings in hand, standing in front of that candy counter for what seemed like hours, making certain that I got the most economy for my nickle.

Then I was reminded of that early Sunday morning of long past that I struck gold. While scavenging about town and finding that case of empty beer bottles. I would be able to redeem the bottles for 48 cents as soon as the store opened. (And that was a fortune in kid money.) I was so overcome with excitement as I tied my loot onto the basket on my bicycle. I just had to share the news of my fortune so I rode over to Tom's apartment, Tom being the proprietor of the Walgreens[®] store in town at that time. It was evident that Tom was home as his car was parked in the driveway. The minute that it took Tom to answer the door seemed like hours. When the door opened, I greeted Tom with the news. Tom did not share my enthusiasm as he sternly told me that he would see me at the store later. It seems that Tom was entertaining a young lady that morning. At age eight I didn't have a clue as to the inconvenience that I had caused Tom. Some years later I suffered the embarrassment of the events that occurred on that Sunday when I learned of the things that occur between a man and a woman. I still feel awkward when I remember this intrusion of many years past.

And then in September of that same year I remembered my introduction to the beautiful Mrs. Schaeffer, who was to become the first love of my life. Only for my heart to become broken upon learning that my third grade teacher was already married to Mr. Schaeffer.

*Walgreens[®] is the registered trademark for chain pharmacy stores owned by The Walgreen Company.
Miracle Whip[®] is the registered trademark of Kraft Foods, a global food and beverage company.*

As children we lacked in store-bought mechanisms of amusement. This deficiency presented us with opportunity to nurture great creative skills at this early age. I recall the time that my friends and I found these big ol' boxes at the back of the furniture store. We dragged those boxes to a nearby hill where we proceeded to tear the bottoms out. We climbed into the boxes pretending them to be Army tanks, rolling and bumping down the hill, spilling boy talk and laughter all over the hillside. We quit only after sound victory was achieved and that as was evidenced by the sight of those boxes ripped to shreds. After which we would walk away boasting of our triumphs, pointing out the scars of battle; bruises, cuts and a dirt covering from head to toe.

I chuckled to my self with the thought, "I remember all of these things but I cannot remember ever taking a bath when I was young. Can this be good?"

The following year on October 25th, the school declared a holiday to honor the arrival of Senator John F. Kennedy. Senator Kennedy was going to speak at the city park that day. Us kids were extremely happy about getting the day off until mom decided she didn't want us to go out for fear of us getting trampled by all of the folks visiting. I got out though and sat right up front under the podium. I didn't understand much of what he was saying but the people must have liked his words because they were doing a lot of clapping and cheering. Three years later we were all saddened when this man was shot to death. School closed that day too and I remember that I didn't even want to go out and play.

I sat there that evening immersed in these good old thoughts only to wake to reality and to the conclusion of how really good life is and has been.

Bob Hope of radio and television fame would close his shows with a catchy tune of which I offer the opening line and title to the Fulton County Historical Society, "Thanks for the memory."[©]

Saturday morning greeted me with a blanket of fog covering the mountains and valleys alike. As I made the descend from Sideling Hill, I learned the literal meaning of "fog on the brain." To say I had my head in the clouds would probably be accurate as I could not define the difference between the fog and the clouds that morning. I made the best use of the five feet I could see in front of me and crawled into the valley. I drove around McConnellsburg for a half hour or so and waited for the fog to burn off. I had intentions of taking the Lincoln Highway up to the Tuscarora summit and then return via Route 16. I believed this to be the area where the old bridle trails existed.

The drive east on US Route 30 from McConnellsburg is really a southerly jaunt as the road is cut into the side of the Tuscarora thus providing the greatest efficiency in the ascend. The trip to the Tuscarora Summit covers about three and one-half miles and 1200 feet of rise. When I reached the summit, I pulled aside to find a spectacular view. I walked around for about a half hour and took some very nice photographs of the valley. I imagined this to be the very spot that my ancestors stood for the first time, viewing the serene offerings of this valley that they were destined to settle.

The Tuscarora summit offers the best view of McConnellsburg. The most prominent site was the JLG manufacturing plant located on the south outskirts of McConnellsburg. There were literally hundreds of aerial lifts extended into air. JLG Industries, Inc. recognized the potential of fall hazards to construction and maintenance workers. The company responded with the design and manufacture of aerial lifts and boom lifts. These lifts raise tradesmen to high work areas while limiting their exposure to falls. I was very familiar with JLG's product line because of my involvement in the steel construction industry. The use of these lifts in our daily operation assists in safe and efficient prosecution of steel erection. We are thankful that all of the workers on our job sites are able to go home to their families at the end of the day.

It is interesting to note that as I sat there with my head in the clouds, I became aware of the balance of trade between Fulton County and Illinois. I was certain that the roads were rutted between Fulton County and Illinois from the commerce exchanged in shipping these JLG lifts to Illinois. And to reciprocate, Illinois was delivering those John Deere tractors with pokers on them to Fulton County.

"Thanks For The Memory."[©] From the film "The Big Broadcast of 1938," Words and Music by Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger.

I drove around in Franklin County for about an hour, visiting Buchanan's birthplace and Fort Loudoun. Fort Loudoun was established in 1756 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly as a defense post to protect the early settlers from Indian massacres such as had occurred in Great Cove on November 1, 1755. It is probable that the early Great Cove families found refuge at this fort during Indian aggressions.

I navigated my way up to the place where State Route 16 reached the Tuscarora summit. I pulled aside and again viewed the beautiful valley in central Ayr Township. The weather cooperated very nicely as the wind had picked up and vacated the valley of haze and cloud cover. I was starting to feel some hunger and decided a picnic would couple very nicely with the scenery. My wife had made some delicious apple-caramel muffins to sustain me on this trip. I was quite happy to just sit in this high place, starin' about, eatin' muffins and washin' 'em down with coffee. I found comfort in viewing the very sights that my ancestors had seen two-hundred-fifty some years ago. As I looked over this valley I thought, "this place doesn't look as though it has changed much over the years." The lack of change speaks well of the people that have lived in Fulton County over the years and up to the present. It appears that the residents have taken extremely good care of the land. The whole valley viewed from this summit can be seen as a mosaic of carefully fitted pieces of farmland, pastures, meadows, hills and streams. There is minimal intervention of unsightly man-made structures. The buildings that do exist appear to be aged but very well maintained. I wished that I were an artist so I could properly record the imagery before me. I sat there atop that mountain knowing that it was time to leave, hoping that my senses could etch this embroidery of landscape into my memory such that I could recall the picture over and over again.

What goes up must go down and that I did driving Route 16 down the mountainside and back into McConnellsburg. I approached the city about 11:00 a.m. and was greeted by a traffic jam. It seems that there was a tractor parade in progress to celebrate Fulton Fall Festival Days. There were about ten cars with Pennsylvania license plates in front of me. They extended to the point where a policeman was sloooooowly redirecting traffic around the parade route. I felt very much at home with this congestion. Some of the drivers in front of me were not as accustomed with the wait in traffic and it seems they were venting their frustration to the policeman. I could hear some of the conversation from ten cars away. I learned that frustrated commuters talk about the same in Fulton County as they do in Illinois. The words are pretty much the same, spoken with the same lilt but with a faint hint of an accent. I heard one drive exclaim, "So how the @#&* do I get to 522 now?"

The traffic may have stalled but my mind was running rampant down memory lane. I recalled those times when I used to drive my children to school. One day my ten-year-old daughter, Michelle, heard the radio announcer reporting the traffic jams of that morning. She naively asked, "Dad, what is a traffic jam?" I answered her, "Well, you've heard of grape jam and strawberry jam haven't you?" She smiled and said yes. I continued, "I know you've heard about toe jam, right?" To which she shrilled, "Oh, you're so gross, dad!" Then I explained "A traffic jam is just like spreading grape or strawberry jam on a slice of bread with some spilling over the side. A traffic jam is where cars and trucks are spread all over the roads, spilling over to the side of the road." Well, I started laughing and after a thirty second, deer in the headlight glare, Michelle and my son Jonathan burst into laughter saying "You're just so weird, dad."

My children have earned a place in heaven as a result of the persecution that they were subjected to while enduring my sense of humor. It is written: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Matthew 5:1

The humor I was so enjoying must have been painted all over my face because when I passed the policeman he blurted out "What are you laughing at!?" I simply said, "I'm just havin' a great time," He just shook his head and directed me to the detour route.

I went over to the library to take in some more research. The research room was empty so I was quick to browse through most of the information located there. I settled into the Ayr Township book of Land Warrants and Surveys. This resource contains more than one hundred pages of information. I estimated that the records would take about a month to read and longer to abstract the vast information contained in that volume. I took some notes and decided that it would best to contact the Fulton County Historical Society to the possibility of reprinting the records for me. I would prefer to stay in Fulton County for a month but my duty at home and work would preclude me from staying.

I left the research room with knowledge revealing the large gap that exists between those things that I know and everything there is to know about Fulton County.

I left the library and proceeded out of town west on US 30 with intentions of visiting the Meadow Grounds again. I decided to take the old logging road up to Meadow Grounds Road and wind around to the lake. The afternoon sun was brilliant against the wall of forestry that encompassed the lake. I was on the east side of the lake looking westward. The lake is interesting in that it is nestled between two converging points in Meadow Ground Mountain and Scrub Ridge. I have not researched the origin of the lake but it appears that the lake is the result of a large earthen dam at the south end that has captured the waters of Roaring Run Creek. Whatever the cause, the waters contained in this lake are crystal clear. I walked out onto a fishing overlook and I could see the bottom of the lake as far as ten feet away. I walked around to the south side of the lake and across the dam where I could see the drainage that allowed Roaring Run Creek to continue its southward escape. I had seen pictures of a waterfall that exists somewhere on these grounds but I was not dressed appropriately for hiking about. I heard some gunshots in the distance and realized that I would probably make a fine target as I was dressed in all black clothing including black casual shoes.

Further, I was not familiar with the wildlife in the preserve and had no weapons for defense. Well, it's not really a weapon, but I do carry one of those Craftsman® multi-tools with the little knife and pliers in it. I was humored at the thought of facing a mountain lion or a black bear armed with this little inky-dinky plier and knife set. Or better yet, using the tiny pliers to pluck buckshot out of my hind side. I resolved that my welfare would be best served by vacating the area rather than staying to become the inadvertent target of hunters, mountain lions, bears or snakes. Aside from these thoughts of potential calamity, I vowed that I should revisit this area again, dressed in proper outdoor attire and armed with adequate weaponry. I left this preserve with a fine collection of memories of the peaceful and undisturbed natural beauty that existed there.

The afternoon was upon me and I still had some places that I wished to explore. I headed north on Big Cove Road with intentions of visiting Fort Littleton and Burnt Cabins.

I arrived at Fort Littleton at about 3:30 p.m.. The old fort is long gone but a historic plaque stands at the bottom of the hill where the fort once stood. Fort Lyttleton was erected by 1756 as a defense outpost to defend against the atrocities such as had occurred in Great Cove on November 1, 1755.

I was fortunate to have visited the area during the 250th anniversary of the founding of the fort. Across the street from the fort site were exhibitions portraying eighteenth century pioneer life. There were quite a few visitors on the exhibition grounds. I noticed that one of the cars in the lot had license plates from Alaska. I wondered how many miles it was from their front door to this place.

There were tents full of folks dressed in eighteenth century clothing. They were illustrating the tasks of daily life in colonial times. People were milling about and enjoying the festivities. I found my fascination in the period clothing.

Men's clothing has not changed all that much in the last three hundred years or so. Pants, shirt, shoes, belt and hat about sums it up, ho hum. Women, on the other hand, have changed their style dramatically over the years. I am not an expert on design trends but when I see a woman today, I can closely estimate how much effort it's going to take to get her up and over the threshold. From the things that I saw there of period clothing, that lass could have weighed in at ninety-eight pounds or three-hundred-ninety-eight, with the difference not revealed in those big puffy dresses. Think of the disappointment. You fall in love with this beautiful plushy woman only to get to the honeymoon suite to find that you married a toothpick. The doorways on those cabins had to be six foot wide and generously greased with lard to allow unfettered passage of these women. And speaking on cabins, history has precisely recorded the reason behind the naming of Burnt Cabins. Had written history failed us, I think we could safely write here that grandma just got too close to that dadburn fireplace. And she was five feet away when she caught fire!

Craftsman® is the registered trademark of Sears Holding Company

There was a windsock, similar to those seen at airports, set up at the edge of the parking lot. I wondered about this, "There was no place for airplanes to land here." Then I noticed what looked to be huge kites being assembled beside the parking lot. These kites measured about twenty feet across and had some type of frame attached with little wheels. Folks would drag these big ol' kites up the large hill east of the parking lot. When they reached the top of the hill, they strapped these kites onto their back. Then they would roll down the hill, gliding up some ten feet and crash at the bottom of the hill. I had never seen this type of activity before. I thought that the windsock would have to be something other than limp for these kites to fly. I watched this for some time and decided I would not be engaging in this sport anytime soon.

I had an open plan as to how long I was going to stay in Fulton County so long as I was home in time to go to work on Monday. There are certain problems with visiting northern Fulton County in the late afternoon of the third day of your trip. The turnpike is so close. By 3:30 p.m. I was starting to feel pains that I self diagnosed as homesickness. I really didn't want to leave the area because I had so much left to explore. My mind was already playing with the calculations of departure-arrival times and speculating the sights that could be seen during the trip back. I sat there in the parking lot arguing with myself the merit of staying another day versus leaving. Going home to the embrace of my wife and the sounds of our grand babies scored high points in this argument.

My oldest daughter, Danielle, died two years earlier and Kathy and I have been blessed with the raising of Danielle's two young babies. Andrew is three years old and suffers from severe disabilities. Olivia is two years and suffers only the need of grandma and grandpa's constant love and attention. Olivia is the bounciest bubble of little girl joy ever to scamper on our family room floor. The scampering part weighed heavy on my mind.

Then I had thoughts of the beauty contained in this place named Fulton County. I thought, even if I stayed one more day I would still not see all of the hidden riches of this place. I succumbed to the fact that it would require many trips over the course of my life to see all of the sights of this place. I then questioned if a lifetime would be enough to learn more of the history, history that flooded this valley to the point spilling over the mountains to every point of the continent.

I left Fulton County that afternoon.

I left with my sack filled to overflow with the greatest of memories.

I left with a better understanding of the history and geography of the area.

I left, having engaged in the local economy with positive mutual outcomes.

I left after meeting and interacting with some of the fine citizens of this place, recognizing them to be a warm and proud group of neighbors.

I left acknowledging the hardships that our ancestors endured while settling in the Great Cove.

I left vowing to never forget their contributions.

I left wishing that I had kept all of those soda bottles that I collected in my youth, knowing that they would have fetched enough in the antique market to buy a couple of acres in this beloved place.

I left the area reminded of the bible passage found in Ecclesiastes 3:1;

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:"

The meaning of the verse became known to me as:

"To Fulton County, the autumn season is a most beautiful sight, blessing every person fortunate to be there during the occurrence."

So, my wife asked, “Why are you going to Pennsylvania?”

My friends asked, “Why are you going to Pennsylvania?”

The farmer asked, “Whatcha doin' here?”

There are found no words to express with accuracy my reasons for coming to Fulton County. I can only say that I arrived safely back in my hometown with every aspect of my being filled to overflowing with everything of what I came to Fulton County hoping to find.

So, to those weary eyes that have labored greatly to this point, I extend thanks for your indulgence with the reading. If you smiled once, recalled one fond memory or even thought, “I didn't know that,” then these words become worthwhile. If you live two-hundred years from the time this story was written, then my passion for sharing family history will have been fulfilled.

I ask that you accept these writings as a gift offered in a spirit of thanksgiving and of remembrance to our ancestors who settled old Aire Township and to the good folks who currently have the good fortune of residing in Fulton County, Pennsylvania.

Your ancestral neighbor,

Michael J. McMeins

Son of Garold

Son of Roy

Son of William,

Son of John,

Son of Alexander,

Son of James,

Son of Andrew,

Son of John

Son of Scotland

Sources

- ¹ *“Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government,” published by the state. Volume V, 1851, pages 468, 469. Book held in authors' library.*
- ² *“History of That Part of the Susquehanna and Juniata Valleys, Embraced in the Counties of Mifflin, Juniata, Perry, Union and Snyder, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” by Everts, Peck & Richards, 1886 (Reprint, Windmill Publications, Inc. 1996), page 727. Book held in authors' library.*
- ³ *“Tax Lists - Cumberland County, Pennsylvania 1768, 1769, 1770”, by Merri Lou Scribner Schaumann, 1972, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, page 11. Book held by Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.*
- ⁴ *“History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties Pennsylvania with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Pioneers and Prominent Men,” Waterman, Watkins & Co., 1884, pages 71, 202, 636. Book held in authors' library.*
Ayr Township survey dated January 7, 1771, Wm. Smith, Saml Findlay & Wm. Marshall, filed under John McMeen Warrant. Copy held by Fulton County Historical Society, McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania.
- ⁵ *“History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties Pennsylvania with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Pioneers and Prominent Men,” Waterman, Watkins & Co., 1884, page 636. Book held in authors' library.*
Map of Fulton Co. Pennsylvania, published by A. Pomeroy & Co., 1873. Copy held in authors' library.
- ⁶ *Register of Marriages and Baptisms performed by Rev. John Cuthbertson, 1751-1791, by S. Helen Fields, page 126. Book held in authors' library.*
- ⁷ *ibid., page 240*
- ⁸ *The Willson Family Tree, by Mrs. Ralph Wilson, Morning Sun, Iowa, Published by Louisa Publishing Co. 1956, page 30. Book held at Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana.*
- ⁹ *“History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties Pennsylvania with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Pioneers and Prominent Men,” Waterman, Watkins & Co., 1884, page 636. Book held in authors' library.*
- ¹⁰ *“Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government,” published by the state. Volume V, 1851, pages 452, 453. Book held in authors' library.*
- ¹¹ *“Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government,” published by the state. Volume V, 1851, pages 468, 469. Book held in authors' library.*
- ¹² *“Tax Lists - Cumberland County, Pennsylvania 1750, 1751, 1752, 1753(8), 1762, 1763, 1764, 1765, 1766, 1767”, by Merri Lou Scribner Schaumann, 1988, Dover, Pennsylvania, page 26. Book held by Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.*
- ¹³ *Bible inscription, Andrew and Anne McMeins bible. The children of Andrew and Anne are named as follows: Mary born January 15, 1764; Infant, died at five weeks old; Jon born ??? 25, 176?; James born January 29, 1767; Jane born January 18, 1769; John born March 24, 1771; Isaac born June 15, 1773; Robert born April 1, 1776 and Ann born June 15, 1779. Copies of Bible pages held in authors' genealogical library.*

The “McMeins” surname has been recorded in history variously as MacMean(s), McMean(s), McMeins, McMien(s), McMMain(s), etc. The Bible of Anne and Andrew use the spelling “McMeins” and “McMeans” simultaneously. The handwritten Bible record is reputed to be in Anne Willson McMeins hand.

Transcription of the McMeans Bible record was performed by Mr. Ralph Edwin Cozad with copies of same held by The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The reader may obtain copies of all source material by submitting written request to the author.

The Legal Stuff

This story has been written based on true accounts as experienced and remembered by the author. There has been no attempt on the part of the writer to misrepresent any of the events that have been recorded within the writing. The writer encourages any corrections or clarifications that may render a more clear understanding of the events to the extent that they differ to that which is contained within the story.

There has been no deliberate attempt to malign nor demean any individual or group as it pertains to race, gender, religion, age, disability, national origin, class, occupation, business or any other affiliation.

The writer reserves all rights to the original written, photographic and art material contained within this document.

Trademarks, copyrights, business names and protected terms are so noted and remain the property of the respective owners.

Permission has not been granted to the author for use of or the publication of the names of officers and/or members of The Fulton County Historical Society, Inc. In the event of re-publication of this article, the publishing agent bears the sole responsibility of protecting the privacy and confidentiality of any named individuals within the article.

Permission is hereby granted for use or edited use by Historical, Genealogical and other like entities to the extent that the material is not used to profit any individual or business enterprise.

Special permission has been extended to The Fulton County News for their use in part or whole, profitable or otherwise, to the extent that the article is used as a service to The Fulton County News subscribers in Fulton County.

Permission for use other than described above must be granted in writing by the author. Profitable use may be granted to the extent that proceeds are donated to The Fulton County Historical Society, Inc., for their use in the preservation and exhibition of the history of Fulton County, Pennsylvania.

About the Author

A disclosure offered to answer any potential questions such as, "Who in the heck is this guy?"

- Name: Michael James McMeins
- Birth: July 24, 1951, Highland Park, Illinois
- Residence: 510 Waterbury Lane
Roselle, Illinois 60172
630-529-6455
- Occupation: MTM Metal Fabrication, Inc., Vice President, May 1992 through present
701 East Irving Park Road
Suite 307
Roselle, Illinois 60172
630-924-4957
- Sears Hardware, Tool Department Manager, November 1996 through present
310 South Barrington Road
Schaumburg, Illinois 60193
847-923-5990
- Marriage: Susan M. Behnke, February 7, 1970 through November 1975
Kelline Watkins, April 15, 1978 through August 1992
Kathleen A. Schlack-Conklin, January 2, 1993 for life
- Children: Michael J. McMeins, Jr., age 36, Building and Carpentry
Danielle R. McMeins, Born October 5, 1972, Died October 3, 2004
Michelle R. McMeins-Mutchler, age 26, Roosevelt University, Sears HR Consultant
Jonathan P. McMeins, age 22, Retail Survey Specialist
- Step-children: Shane M. Conklin, age 24, University of Illinois, Structural Engineer
Brett R. Conklin, age 22, United States Navy, Nuclear Mechanic, USS Toledo
Jenna L. Conklin, age 19, College of Du Page
- Education: None, self educated
- Military: None, Draft Lottery of July 1, 1970, #360
- Affiliations: Fox Valley (IL) Sons of the American Revolution (National Application Pending)
Illinois Genealogical Society
McDonough County (IL) Genealogical Society
Great River (IL) Genealogical Society
Versailles (IL) Genealogical Society (Lifetime Membership)
St. Louis (MO) Genealogical Society
Jefferson County (MO) Genealogical Society
Woodford County (KY) Genealogical Society
Fulton County (PA) Historical Society (Lifetime Membership)
- Motivations: History, Genealogy, Woodworking, Master Craftsman Metalworking, Music-Piano,
Music-Guitar, Antique Tools
- Achievements: Former co-proprietor of Neuman Metal Craft, (1984-1990), a N.O.M.M.A award winning
ornamental metal fabricator. Co-Founder of MTM Metal Fabrication, Inc., \$3m annual
sale steel construction firm. Casual writer of family history with contributions to Jefferson
County (MO) Genealogical Society and Quincy (IL) Herald-Whig publications.
- Police Record: None, Never (Maybe speeding tickets)