

The Anderson Cemetery on Valley Park Road

by Dr. John Lukacs

(Part 3 of a Series of Articles)

The township will be running a series of articles on various points of interest throughout the township in upcoming newsletters.

The Anderson family were the first permanent settlers in northern Chester County. James Anderson, born in 1690, emigrated in 1707 from the Isle of Skye, in Scotland. In 1712 he eloped with Elizabeth Jermain, who was the daughter of his employer and master (a Welsh Quaker). They went to live at what is now Anderson Place, James building a log cabin whose foundations are still recoverable there. Next year there was a reconciliation with the Quaker preacher Jermain. James then bought 340 acres in our present township. His son, Patrick Anderson, was the first child born in what is now Schuylkill Township (and what before 1828 was part of Charlestown Township). Patrick (1719-1793) served as Captain in the War of Independence (note that he was nearly 60 years old then.) He became a Major in the Army. He had three wives, survived them all. He was a member of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, 1778, 1781.

The oldest son of Patrick was Isaac Anderson. He was the most distinguished and historically significant member of the Anderson line. Born in 1760, he was First Lieutenant in the Chester County militia in the War of Independence. He was elected to the Congress of the United States in 1803 and 1805. He was a Jeffersonian Democrat. His name heads the list of Congressmen who voted for the Louisiana Purchase.

He voted in favor of significant bills, including one to free all Negroes born in the District of Columbia, and another to limit the importation of slaves. In 1816 he was a Presidential Elector at the inauguration of President Monroe. He married Mary Lane. He died in 1838.

Isaac Anderson was the man who established the Anderson Cemetery not far from the Anderson family estate. He and his wife are buried there. (There are other Andersons buried on Anderson Place, not far from the Anderson homestead house that still stands, built by him in 1804.) Anderson Place now belongs to the Sasso family and will become the Anderson Farm development. The historic buildings in the middle will remain untouched.



(Isaac Anderson also bequeathed the lot to the township where the old Pickering

School House stands, built in 1840, and in continuous service for children until about 1929; restored in 1954-55 by myself and my wife.) It is now owned by the Duckett Family.

The cemetery was established by deed of Isaac Anderson, recorded in the Deed Book of the county in 1839. It has remained in the family for 160 years now. Buried there are Isaac Anderson and his wife, Mary Lane and

also other descendants, mostly of the Anderson, Lane, Quay and Schofield families - all intermarried, some of them well before the establishment of the cemetery. Senator Quay of Pennsylvania, a famous politician during the so-called Gilded Age, insisted that his mother be buried there, and so she was. The last burials were 1955 and 1968: Lemuel Braddock Schofield and Warren Anderson Custer. There are no burial sites left. A deed allowed by first wife, Helen Elizabeth Schofield, to have a grave site reserved for her. She died in 1970; she had become a Catholic before her death, and is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery, on the north side of Phoenixville.

For awhile (I cannot tell the exact dates) Anderson also held title to a lot east of the Anderson Cemetery, the so-called "School House Lot" where a township school was to be eventually built. At some time that lot passed on to the traction company who built the trolley line running east of the cemetery; the stone building housing the end of the trolley line was provided for refreshments for a small amusement park. That was the origin of "Valley Park Road". The line stopped operation in 1924.

In the late 1940's my father-in-law, Lemuel Braddock Schofield, a prominent Philadelphia attorney, moved his permanent residence to Anderson Place, restoring some buildings and repairing the wall of the cemetery. He arranged for an annual reunion of the Anderson clan. That included Anderson, Schofield, Lane, Sutton, Pennypacker, etc. families. In 1950 the present Trusteeship for the upkeep of the cemetery was recorded, with three Trustees. Eventually the last Anderson died. The present Trustees are William Nassau and myself. A trust fund for the upkeep of the cemetery had been established. In the near future, the cemetery will become the responsibility of Schuylkill Township.