

THE HISTORY OF WANA, WEST VIRGINIA

by

Mae Stiles

Preface

Many years have passed since I first began the research for this writing of the History of Wana. Therefore, some of the material is a little dated...some of the people mentioned have since passed away, among them being Blanche Woodruff, Fred Wiley, Jess Stiles, and some others have moved away from Wana. These people helped with the composition of this history, as did many others, including Henry Cross, Emma Berry, W. A. Sanders, J. S. Robinson, Elizabeth Wiley (deceased), and Adaline Stiles (deceased). There are others I cannot recall. All the information was helpful, and I wish to thank them for their assistance.

Much of the history came from my own memory, from the stories I heard as a child and adult in all the years I have lived in this community. I believe that the story of our small town should not completely disappear in the future, and so I have attempted to gather its story together in one writing. It is dedicated to the people of the past, and to the generations yet to come, who see in these old green hills some of the beauty and glory placed there by the Hand of God, and who believe that all men are brothers sharing the common bond of the search for peace.

Mae Stiles
July 24, 1963

The History of Wana, W. Va., Monongalia Co.
Second Dist., Battelle Dist-Sub. Dist.#1.

Wana is situated in Dunkard Valley along the creek bearing the same name. It has five streets: Morris, Main, and Plum run east to west; Water and Greene run north to south, parallel to West Virginia Route 7. Wana is nestled in the foothills of the Alleghenies, which fact accounts for its beautiful scenery and picturesque setting. The soil is very fertile and rich in minerals, as shown by the quantity and quality of trees and other plant life. An abundance of coal, oil, and natural gas have been discovered in this area. Phillip Dodderidge was one of the early settlers of Wana. He bought a land patent consisting of a thousand acres near the year of 1745 at closest determination. He settled on what is known as the Will Wiley farm, now owned and occupied by John L. Harker and family. Mr. Dodderidge was soon discouraged by Indian raids and abandoned his project about the year of 1785. He sold this tract of land to Steven Styles.

It is evidenced by many Indian graves and Indian "rings" found in this vicinity that Wana was an Indian hunting and camping ground. The Indian rings were circles worn by young Indian braves and old warriors on the warpath as they practiced their war dances to the weird beat of the tom-tom and the rattle of the castanet. Battelle District was probably named in honor of Reverend Gordon Battelle, born at Newport, Ohio. In 1842 he became the head of Ausbery Academy, founded in Parkersburg, W. Va. His work took him all over the western part of the state. In 1863 he was the presiding Elder of a District of the Methodist Church.

About this time, a legend was told concerning a young man by the

name of Biggerstaff, who came to this valley and settled on the Styles range on the east side of the creek, on what is now the Clovis farm just opposite the side of the little cemetery on what is now Gay Wilson's farm. He became interested in, and married, the daughter of William Styles.

They were highly pleased with their wilderness home and called it "Dunkirk" in honor of his hometown in France. The little rippling stream of clear water beside the camp, they called Dunkirk Creek; however, when the first child, a son, was a few months old, they were attacked by a band of Indians and driven from their home. They escaped and took refuge in a small cave across the creek from their camp at the foot of a little plateau, which cave was barely more than a ledge of rocks. Their hiding place was soon discovered by the wily redskins. The family was dragged from their cave and the father and mother were cruelly murdered. The Indians took the child to their camp and reared him as one of their own. When he grew up he married an Indian princess. The writer remembers hearing Mrs. Minerva Hennen relating this story and bragging about her Indian blood as a result of this union. She was a descendant of that marriage and spent all her life in this community. Time and pronunciation altered the name of this valley from Dunkirk to Dunkard. Although this is the legend of how this creek and valley acquired the name "Dunkard", the story is based on facts.

There is another possibility, history informs us, of a place on Cheat River called Dunkard Bottom, so named because the early settlers were of the Dunkard Faith. As some of the early settlers in this valley were also of that faith, the name could have been derived from them. This is not authentic.

The first house in what is the geographically-formed village of Wana

was that of James Morris. It stood where Edward Wiley now lives. The old water well, which was hand-dug and -walled is still the source of water for the family that occupies this land. James Morris, son of Amos Morris, was married to Sara Hinegardener, September 21, 1834. Miss Hinegardener was the daughter of Samuel and Fanny "Showalter" Hinegardener, who came here from Rockingham County, Virginia, about the year of 1831. The trip was made in a covered wagon. Besides the family, all the household goods were moved in this manner, and cattle and extra horses were driven. They lived in a log cabin in the southern end of the round bottom, which is now known as the Arthur Harker farm. Mr. Morris owned a tract of land joining with the David Harker farm on the north and on the east, by Dunkard Creek on the west, and by Jack Santee's on the south. He brought his bride to the cabin mentioned previously.

This place is now known as the home of Edward Wiley. Mr. Morris set up a sawmill on the creek bank near where the country road crossed the creek. He also built a pottery with a large outdoor kiln fired with wood, all wheels being run by a foot pedal. He built an addition to the sawmill and installed burrs for grinding feed meal and burr flour. This was the first industry in the community. About this time a log school house was built on the southern part of the James Eakin farm joining the Jack Santee farm.

In the year of 1867 the county road was surveyed and built in this section, as was the old covered bridge. Sand and rocks for the abutments were taken from the Efaw Knob. Zeph Martin from New Brownsville, W. Va., directed this work. Others working on this structure were Jothan Shull, William Talkington, and Albert Talkington. The men boarded with Mrs. Talkington, mother of the two boys. Bridge and road work was discontinued

around 1930, after the completion of State Route 7.

Mr. Morris came here from Apple Pie Ridge in Whitely Township, Pa. His was the first house directly in the village of what is now Wana. Here Mr. and Mrs. Morris reared a family of ten boys and girls. A few of their descendants are still living in this community. Jess Stiles, Blanche Woodruff, and Fred Wiley are grandchildren of James Morris and they are also the grandchildren of Lizzie Morris Wiley. When the oldest son, Samuel, was married they built a small log cabin down near the creek, where Fred Wiley now lives. Mr. Morris erected a new pottery building on this plot of ground and moved the equipment from the old pottery to this site. Many of the residents now living in the Wana Community remember this pottery in operation. Clay used in the product was plentiful on the farm. After the death of Mr. James Morris, his widow, Sarah H. Morris, sold a tract of ground bordering on Dunkard Creek to S. H. Shriver and Jack Santee, farmers living near here. Mrs. Morris had her log cabin torn down and moved to the eastern part of her farm, where it still stands on the farm now owned by Addison Thorne.

About the year of 1876, the Messrs. Shriver and Santee planned to build a large grist mill. They contracted the job to Levi Long of Marshall County near Cameron, W. Va. Mr. Long brought with him from that part of the country his millwright, a Civil War Veteran by the name of John R. Robinson. Other laborers were hired locally, as were Madison Ullon, a carpenter, and others for bringing materials from nearby woods, since all building materials were sawed and prepared at the site of this structure. All the heavy timbers were moved by ox sleds. The location of this building was about one hundred feet north of the old wooden bridge. An eleven-foot dam was built across Dunkard Creek. A forbay of heavy hewn

logs was next built, in which was placed a huge wooden water wheel. The water thus harnessed turned this giant wheel, which in turn ran all of the machinery in the mill. As many men were employed for this building, a place had to be provided for them to lodge. Mr. Jimmy Wells and his son Basil came here from Metz, W. Va., and built and operated a boarding house on what is now the property of Minerva Simpson. The construction of the mill building covered a period of about two years before it was finished in detail. In the meantime, Mr. Robinson had moved his family to the farm of Jack Santee, which was later owned by Saul Russell and is known as the Saul Russell place, located on Russell Run. He resided there only a few months and then moved nearer his work, which was on the farm of Mr. Santee on the opposite side of Dunkard Creek from Mr. Santee's home, now the home of Arthur Harker and family. At the completion of the mill, a boardinghouse was no longer necessary, so Mr. Basil Wells used the building for a store and dwelling. The store was in the center with apartments on either side, occupied by the Wells families. This was the community's first store, and was started in 1878. Prior to this time the nearest store was in West Warren, now Wadestown, or Jack Cumberledge at Shamrock, now Brave, Pa. During this time Mr. Azem Miner built a house on what is now known as the Mrs. Bell place, owned and occupied by Thomas Simpson. He also built and operated a blacksmith shop between the mill and bridge abutments. Mr. Sam Morris sold his home where the Wiley house now stands to Jack Madigan, and the pottery was discontinued. The village now consisted of four families, who occupied three houses, and of course, the blacksmith shop, grist mill, sawmill, and store. It was at this point that the village acquired its first name, "Dog Town". According to the grape vine, this name was the result of Basil Wells owning so many hounds,

he being interested in fox hunting.

About this time the first school, which was a log cabin, was discontinued and another log school was built about one-half mile north of the village on the Eakin farm bordering the Ben Stiles farm, now Gay Wilson's place. Mr. Robinson, the millwright, moved from this community to Yeager's Mill, which is now the Thomas Place, west of Bula. He remained in this locality until he completed the mill which is known today as the Thomas Mill, located on the Saul Thomas farm. He then moved back to this community, into the log house which he purchased from Jack Madigan in 1880. In the meantime, real estate had changed hands. Mr. Wells had sold his property and store merchandise to Mr. Ben Lee, and moved back to Metz. Mr. Lee then sold the merchandise stock to Rev. John Wesley Woodruff, who came with his family from Jollytown, Pa. His family occupied one apartment, and the Lee family the other. Mr. Lee operated the grist mill and sawmill and Mr. Woodruff took over the store. However, this arrangement lasted only a few months. Fire destroyed the store building and most of the household possessions of both families living in the building. The homeless families were taken in and cared for by the two other families until other arrangements could be made. The Woodruffs stayed with the Robinson family in the little log cabin, and the Lee family with Mr. and Mrs. Azem Miner. Later Mr. Woodruff's family went to Glen Easton where he went into the store business with his brother. Now the little village was again without a store, but Mr. Robinson came to the rescue and built a small store building facing the abutment of the wooden bridge, which is now torn down and is marked only by the said abutment.

In the autumn of 1880, James A. Garfield was elected President of the United States and March 4, 1881 he was inaugurated. Shortly after-

wards, Mr. J. R. Robinson sought, and received, permission to establish a post office in this community. Mr. Robinson was commissioned Post Master and asked to select a name for the new post office. He submitted the name of Wise, in honor of Congressman Wise who aided him in getting his commission. The name was accepted and the first post office was established early in the year 1881. J. R. Robinson P.M. Commissioned, signed by President Garfield, whose national services were so soon to be cut down by the bullet of an assassin, for less than four months later, on July 2, 1881, Charles Guiteau shot and wounded President Garfield, who died in September of the same year.

The county now built a frame schoolhouse on the Eakin farm near where the cemetery now stands. It was the usual type of one-room school that existed throughout the county at that time. It was, of course, painted red, and has always been referred to as the "little red school house" which was destined to make history for the Wana Community. It was here that the first Sunday School and Church services were held and were so well attended that the crowds could not be accommodated. It was obvious that other arrangements had to be made. In the meantime, Rev. Woodruff, not being satisfied in Glen Easton, returned to this community and purchased the ground on which his ill-fated store once stood. He built the house that Minerva Simpson and her family now occupy. He brought his family to their new home and immediately started to build a new store building short distance from their residence. Early in the year of 1883 he was again in business in the little village of Wise, W. Va. He gave his full support to the Sunday School and Church services in the little red school house. Other ministers came from different parts of the country and helped out. A Baptist minister from near Pine Bank, Pa., by

the name of Rev. Clark, occasionally held services. He was the great-grandfather of Wilbur Rush. Rev. Tommy Holbert from Flat Run also helped. Finally a young man, Benson Cross, son of Francis Cross who lived on the Kirkhart Run, took up the ministry, was ordained in this school house, and became the regular pastor. A few of the elder citizens remember starting their Christian lives in a service in this little school house. All converts were taken to the creek nearby and immersed sometime during the series of services. Since this was always in the winter, the ice very often had to be chopped and cleared in an area large enough to serve for baptizing. People's clothing would freeze so quickly that it made walking home very difficult. Other families instrumental in carrying on the church work in this building were Josiah Corss's, Isaac Cross's, James Eakin's, the different Stiles families, and the Jacob Wiley family, who moved into this community around the year 1879 from near Waynesburg, Pa. Among the first teachers to hold school in this building were George DeGarmo of West Warren (now Wadestown), John Russell from Russell Run, Georgia Fletcher from Blacksville, and Stephen Harker from Wise Community. School was county-controlled and the school term lasted four months. D. B. Waters was our first County Superintendent of free schools, followed by Stephen B. Mason. The school playground was on top of the hill in the same field as the building. Here the games of baseball, prison base, black man, tag, crack the whip, and many more athletic games were enjoyed every day, providing plenty of exercise. One teacher taught all grades and subjects. Ages ranged from 22 down to and including five-year-olds. The number of students varied anywhere from fifty to seventy-five, as this village served a large area and had truly become a community center. The parents were determined that their boys and girls should have "book

larnin" (as they called it), even though a number of them could neither read nor write, not having had the opportunity to attend school. The children certainly did absorb education during the brief time they spent in school, for the three R's were taught to the tune of a hickory stick! This was not always as severe as it sounds, for many stories of human interest are related; some entertaining, some sad, but through them all runs a thread of gold that proves beyond a doubt that the early settlers of this community were educationally and religiously inclined. Of their own free will they attended religious services and of their own free will they sent their children to school. Compulsory school law was not in existence at that time.

Reverend Woodruff no sooner got settled in his store than he decided to also go into the real estate business. He bought a tract of land from the Morris's and a portion from the David Harker farm and developed them into lots and streets which formed the geographical plan of the village of Wise. Among those buying property in this new project and settling here were Joseph Harker and family, who built and operated the first hotel. Joseph Harker also operated a shoe repair and harness shop. Jaspar Morris and family, Benson Nicholas, and Milt Shriver, a young physician just out of medical school, decided to settle here. Shriver bought the home that Floyd Hebb now owns. By some strange coincidence, William Tennant, a funeral director, located on the adjoining lot and erected his funeral home on the property now owned and occupied by Mrs. Bessie Weekley and family. Other families to settle around here at this time were that of William Pouge, those of William Staggers, Link Thomas, and William Talkington.

With such an increase in population something really had to be done about a church building. The lack of space in the little red school house

made it impossible to take care of the crowds. It looked like a gigantic undertaking for a struggling new community, consisting mostly of farmers. While they were making a comfortable living, there wasn't much money, but the problem had to be met and a solution worked out. So they attacked it in true pioneer style. A meeting was scheduled in the school house and all citizens interested were asked to be present. Needless to say, the response was encouraging. It was unanimously decided that a church must be built and without further delay. The question was, How? It was thoroughly discussed from every angle. Committees were appointed and put into action at once. Everyone volunteered their full cooperation and donated time, services, labor, and materials. This service was contagious. When the news spread throughout the community, cooperation was one hundred percent. Each family contributed generously and wholeheartedly and the work went forward steadily with not a slacker or a quitter in the bunch and with no thought of turning back. There were discouragements aplenty, for the obstacles met and overcome by this little band would fill a large history book. They worked under great difficulties, with inadequate tools and with no machinery except a sawmill, with plenty of determination and courage, just as free, red-blooded Americans have always fought for their ideals. They were fighting for the future of their families, their boys and girls and of all the boys and girls who would come after, that future generations might have an opportunity to develop character-character that would accept no defeat, that would go forward to greater achievement, that lays the foundation for a people able to take their places in the world by being good citizens. There is no substitute that will create a friendly atmosphere and a feeling of brotherly love like a people united, with a goal in sight well worth

striving toward. The hopes of our forefathers in their wilderness homes were that each generation would take up where the other left off and carry the torch for them to new heights and to a better way of life for all humanity. Have we failed them?

Mrs. Sarah H. Morris donated the ground for the church building. It was located by the county road, which is now State Route 7, joining the property which is now owned and occupied by Mrs. Ruth Strosnider and family. Others donating materials were Isaac Cross, Josiah Cross, James Eakin, Levi Stiles, David Harker; many others donated lumber. They had timber on their farms and could get it to the sawmill. T. E. Robinson, better known as Tom, a youth of twenty years, had been the mail carrier from West Warren to Wise, making tee trip on foot two days each week (Monday and Thursday). There were only two mail deliveries a week then. When he had earned enough money from this employment, he bought a pair of calves and trained them for oxen. When they were grown and fully trained, he traded them to Peter Gump for a sawmill. It was installed on his father's property, where Floyd Howard now lives. This is where all the logs were sawed into lumber to be used in the building of the church. Tom donated his labor. Rufus Bell was the carpenter, for which he received top wages of one dollar a day. After the lumber was sawed it was taken to the planing mill at Blacksville and finished, and allowed to season for a time. Eventually the building got under way and went along very well, considering that all the window frames and door frames were made by hand at the job. When the building was finished, all inside furnishings were handmade by donated labor. Mr. Woodruff, Mr. Robinson, Madison Ullon, and Newt Robinson all did their bit and all were considered very good carpenters, which would at that time cover all wood work, cabinet-making

and wood crafting. The benches were all made of yellow *poplar*, which was plentiful in the locality at that time. The church was well built from the stone foundation to the roof. It was a neat little structure ceiled throughout with dressed and matched ceiling. The overhead ceiling was painted in pastel blue and a deep tan was used on the sidewalls. It was a very pleasing combination of tints. The pews, mourner's bench, and Bible stand were a medium brown. There was a long porch in front with a railing around it and steps at either end, two doors in the front of the building. The pulpit was placed between these doors, so of course, the pews all faced the door. (I guess this was so no one had to turn around to see who was coming in.) This arrangement was not very satisfactory and in a short time the pulpit was moved to the other end of the room and so remained for the life of the building. The floor was of dressed lumber but was left with no paint, oil, or any other finishing, and there was no carpeting anywhere. A dressed board fence enclosed the lot with many iron rings fastened on the top board for hitching horses. An up-on block was placed beside the ladies' gate, for the feminine part of the congregation entered the left gate, the left door, and sat on the left side of the house, while the males kept to the other side. The ladies rode sidesaddle and wore riding skirts which reached to the ground as they sat on the horse's back. For night services the building was lighted with little kerosine lamps in tin brackets hung on nails in the wall. This was quite an improvement, since most everyone used homemade tallow candles for lighting. A large burnside stove stood on either side of the room for heating, and coal was used as fuel. This completed the church furnishings; there was no organ or piano. Even at that early date they had music, for the villagers had plenty of musical talent. They also had

several learned leaders in the art of music. Among those efficient in this field were Isaac Cross, Lee Wise, and Ashley Pettit. There were many good voices and they loved to sing so it was no task to have a choir with all parts represented. There is a noteworthy incident connected with the roofing of the church that I believe should be told. The roof was of wooden shingles shaved out by hand; this was done on the farm of Levi Stiles (now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Ed McClure), as Mr. Stiles donated the trees for them. Men gathered there with cross-cut saws and felled the trees, and sawed them into blocks the right length for shingles. These were split and placed on a shaving horse and shaved down to the right thickness and smoothness by a draw knife, one end very thin. Then the shingles were ready and the carpenter was ready for them. It seems there was no transportation available and the shingles had to be gotten there that day, so the men secured a light wagon, loaded the shingles into it and six of them pulled it to the building site, a distance of more than a mile. They made several trips. The cheerful manner in which they performed this most humble of tasks made the distance seem shorter, for as they trudged along they laughed, chatted, and whistled, and when they arrived at the scene of action they were met by such approval it gave them a feeling of achievement. They had bridged another gap. The population of the community was made up of Methodist, Baptist, and a few of Dunkard Faith. It was agreeably decided that this church would be known as a Baptist church. This decision was arrived at for convenience, for Wise was then in a territory reached only by the Baptist Association and this church was under the jurisdiction of the Baptist church. The Methodist Association at that time had not reached this district. As a result it was dedicated as Dunkard Valley Baptist Church.

Reverend Benson Cross, who was ordained in the little red school, was the first minister. Tom Robinson was the first Sunday School Superintendent. Thus Wana's first church was built and put in use in the year of 1888.

In the meantime, Mr. Woodruff sold his store and the hosue he was living in to a Mr. Morris Lantz, who immediately took possession, moved here with his family, and became the village merchant. The population had increased and the school was very crowded. A Mr. Elmer Bowers from Mt. Morris moved into the house that stood where the Goerge Whitehill house now stands. He put in another store building in a structure on the Joseph Harker property, but only operated this for about a year, when he closed out and moved away. Mr. Lantz continued in business until 1891. In November Mr. J. W. Sanders from Swartz, Pa., bought the store and property and moved his family in. Mr. Sanders, a progressive type of person, put in a full line of general merchandise. Soon he had the most outstanding store in the surrounding country.

Then came another election year, 1894, and Wise now claimed enough citizens to be granted a voting precinct. My, what a day for our community! Elections then were for men only and they waited and looked forward to them for the whole four years. (Just as a child waits for Christmas.) Those who never experienced an old-fashioned election day in a country community have certainly missed part of their education. It was entirely a man's day and not one of them would have missed an hour ot it. The farmers flocked into town as soon as the polls were opened and stayed until they were closed. Hopes, ideals, and fond dreams of peace and prosperity were expressed and discussed from every angle, and as strange as it may seem to the present generation, these country folks had some very sound ideas. Each candidate was picked to pieces and his life history was bared from

the cradle until that present time. And as the day wore on, the mountain dew flowed freely and disputes and arguments became more enthusiastic and were often settled by blows. No one could accuse these folks of lacking interest in the affairs of their nation. When the sun set and the polls closed, those who lived so many miles away mounted their horses and faced towards home; after a good night's rest all hard feelings were gone and only the pleasant memories remained. Those fortunate enough to live near the village would rush home, eat a hasty supper and then run back to the polls. They would wait patiently until the tabulations were completed before tearing themselves away, which usually was in the wee small hours. The period of waiting for election news ended on Thursday, the first mail after election on Tuesday. Then the Morgantown Post was eagerly read from cover to cover and all they could hope for at that early date would be the county news. It would be at least another week before they would get the full account of the nationwide election. Grover Cleveland was elected as President, and this change of administration of course meant a change in post master. J. W. Sanders, being a democrat, became the next post master and after the inauguration March 4, 1895 he moved the Post Office into his store. 1895 was an eventful year for Wise Community. The little red school house became crowded and other arrangements had to be made. The county built two school houses, one on the James Hagan farm which is now known as the Arthur Harker place. This school was always known as the Hagan school. The other school was built on the J. W. Wiley farm now the farm of Jaspar Bean. It was called the Wiley school. The little red school was discontinued and the students of Wise attended the Hagan School.

The next years were hard ones for the little community, for this

was the notorious Panic of 1894. As there was no work for the men and the highest wages were fifty cents per day, more than ever the families of the community had to raise and make everything they used. More spinning wheels and looms were put into use, and the sugar camps were opened. The old ash hoppers were put up with a barrel filled with wood ashes, and water was poured on them and drained through and became potash-lye, which was used to make soap. People planted more crops, determined to win this fight for survival. The flax they grew and the wool from their sheep were spun and woven by hand to furnish clothing for all members of the family. They were fortunate in having their own fuel, which was plentiful and convenient. Wood was mostly used, although a few small coal mines, or banks, were opened; mixed with wood, this made a very good fuel. The coal was plentiful, but hard to get at. Despite the hard work that it took to keep the households running, there was still time for recreation.

These were the days of pack peddlers. At irregular intervals an interesting figure could be seen moving slowly down the short hill. It looked like an immense pack with legs but at the first glimpse everyone knew what was in store and excitement ran high. Eagerly we waited until this "store on feet" reached the village. Every door was opened to him. Oh, the thrill we felt when he would deposit this pack in the middle of the room and release the heavy straps that held it so firmly. It was amazing what would come out of it, all the bright colors of dress materials one could think of, silks, velvets, gingham and calicoes, ribbons wide and narrow, men's and women's shoes, black cotton hose, hairpins, side combs, jewelry, penknives, and many more things. We got a kick out of his broken English, for then as now this community had no foreign element and these men were Assyrians, Greeks, or Italians. All their conversations were

listened to very attentively but we understood very little of what they said.

One day, sometime in June 1896, diaster visited Wise. The floodgates of the Heavens were opened and a cloudburst swept down the valley, and the swollen streams pouring into Dunkard Creek caused the walls of the mill dam to be torn from the moorings and washed away in the current. This was indeed a setback. No more would the old mill wheel turn to set in motion the burrs that would make the grain into flour and meal for the nourishment of the many families in the valley. The mill at this time was owned and operated by Jonathan Shuff, who with his family lived in a small house at the corner of the country road and Main Street. Many were the plans discussed for the reconstruction of the dam, but as times were so hard it seemed impossible to raise funds enough for this enterprise. As a result the mill stood idle until the latter part of 1899, when J. R. Robinson bought it and installed a steam engine and boiler, also bolting chests and new burrs. Quite a lot of remodeling had to be done before it was in running order but after a few months it was a thriving business again and very welcome to all those in the Wise Community.

In the year 1895 the folks of this community who were of Methodist Faith decided we needed a Methodist Church. So they bought the property where the church now stands from Link Thomas's widow and remodeled the dwelling that stood on it for a temporary church. It was on the Wadestown Charge and the parsonage was located at Wadestown. Reverend E. M. Marple was the first pastor. Among those responsible for instituting this church were J. W. Sanders, Will Wiley, Wesley Wiley, and J. W. Woodruff. Services were held here until sometime in 1897 when construction was started on a new church building on this property, and in 1898 the church now serving

the community was finished and dedicated. Rev. G. W. Bent was pastor on the charge at that time. The old Meetin' House in which were conducted such wonderful shouting revivals (for the Methodist brethren who met there were the shouting type) was torn down and gave way to the new.

In the year of 1900, Dec. 15, about thirty minutes after Sunday School was dismissed at the Baptist Church, fire was discovered in the building. It had gotten such a start that there were no hopes of saving it, but the furniture was dragged out and stored at the members' homes; the church was never rebuilt.

1898 was another Presidential election year and William McKinley, a republican, was elected President. The post office again had to be changed and J. R. Robinson was once more chosen for the post. Mr. Robinson added a room to his dwelling on Morris Street and moved the post office there. This is now the home of Mae Stiles. Sometime prior to this the government established a mail route from Wadestown to Brave via Wise and following Dunkard Creek, and we were receiving mail twice daily. The carrier at this time was Bill Roberts of Brave (Shamrock), who made the trip on foot and never wore shoes except in the coldest part of the winter.

At this time Wise was an attractive little vallage with high moral standards and brotherly love. People were intelligenet, simple country folks, The children were healthy and happy and mingled like one big family.

Each year in early spring a strange pair would be seen working their way slowly down the county road: An Italian man with a long black mustache leading a large brown bear, keeping at the edge of the road to stay out of the mud, which was very deep at that time of year. The poor

old bear would keep slipping off the path and splashing into the mud puddles, until his long hair was very much caked with mud, but nevertheless they reached the front door of the village store. Most of the population was there to greet them and after a short breathing spell the show would begin. Of course, the bear was trained and he would perform the tricks he had been taught. The owner played the mouth organ and the bear would dance; then they would dance together, and the bear would count by tapping his foot once for each finger held up by his master. There were many other tricks along this line and then the last one: The master would hold his face close to the bear's and say "Kiss-a-me, John", and the old bear would stick his long, rough tongue between the bars of his muzzle and lick his master in the face three times, and the show was over. Someone would pass the hat and a collection was taken up for the performers. Then they would travel on. Where they came from and where they went no one seemed to know or even gave it a thought, but it was an accepted fact that we would be seeing them again the next year.

In the year 1899 the South Penn Oil Co. located and drilled a wildcat well on the farm of Rufus Bell. Excitement ran high and well it might, for it was the beginning of a new era for these isolated districts. The project was successful and a very good oil well came in. Prosperity had come to our community and Wise became a boom town overnight. Other companies came in, and derricks dotted the hills and valleys. People poured in from everywhere and some of these old hill farms that a family could scarcely make a living on became priceless. Battelle became a very wealthy district. This enterprise furnished work for everyone with good pay, and although the work was done in a crude, old-fashioned way, every situation was conquered. Oil derricks were built with raw, heavy

timbers from the woods, and all the heavy machinery was moved with teams and wagons.

Business picked up and Mr. Sanders' store expanded so rapidly he found it necessary to have a larger building. One was built with no trouble and he soon opened his new store for business. It was a modern store at that time, a large, two-story building with large show windows in front. It was connected with the old store building, which was used for a ware room. The upper story was entirely given over to Fraternal Orders and a public hall. Now we could have gas for fuel and lighting, and the homes were plumbed in quick time. Oh, what luxury, no more smelly kerosene lamps to clean and fill each day and no more carrying in wood and coal and carrying out the gritty ashes. This is not all that was changed by the progress, for constant contact with people from the outside would soon begin to change the atmosphere in the country town. New inventions for convenience in everyday living brought in by the newcomers were adopted by the natives and gave us all a feeling that there was a whole new world out there waiting to be explored.

And what progress did to the roads: There were no hard roads anywhere, just a sticky, soft, miry clay, and the hard narrow wheels of steel cut very deep. The loads were heavy and needed more than two horses to move them along. Very often there were as many as twelve horses pulling one wagonload. It did not take very long for at least a part of the road to be rendered completely impassable. There were stretches where the creek bed had to be used instead of the road. Now the old road around the mill hill could no longer be used, as there was no way of getting over into the town from the down creek road. As that was now the mail route, the county was compelled to put in a bridge. The contract was given to a Mr. Charles Messenger, who pitched two tents where the home of Mrs. Elizabeth Rose now stands. These were occupied by Mr. Messenger and his family and

the construction crew. Within a few months this engineering feat was accomplished and gave us the little iron bridge at the northern end of the town which greatly aided transportation.

Next came our first telephone. Newt Robinson spent several years in Fairmont as a carpenter, also completing a course in the construction of telephones. He became a telephone technician, and returned to this locale and began building and trying to install them. He put up a test phone at the home of his father, where he was living. When it was conceded a success, Mr. Sanders had one installed in his store. Eventually, phones spread over the community. Many were the interesting experiences related by Mr. Robinson of trying to convince people that words spoken into this little box could be heard over a distance of miles. Many times he was accused of being a practical joker and of trying to make donkeys of the people.

The stores in this area were served by salesmen coming from Wheeling who were called "drummers". They came to Burton, W. Va., by train and by livery rig from there on. With roads in the condition they were then, it was impossible to make the trip in the dead of winter. Stores had to stock enough to take care of that period. These visits were quite a happening, for everyone expected something new to be introduced with each visit, and they were seldom disappointed. One time the drummer brought a graphophone, and as he always spent the night here, he demonstrated it. The store was crowded that evening and a fee of five cents was charged each person for two minutes listening, as the graphophone was equipped with earphones. It was wonderful then, but the graphophone was improved and the earphones became a thing of the past. Soon nearly every home owned one. The next amusement that came to Wise about this time were the

Vaudeville tent shows. They showed different magical tricks, sleight of hand, illustrated song pictured by magic lantern, drama, and ventrilloquism. Most everyone saw Uncle Tom's Cabin in this miniature theater and it was thoroughly enjoyed. Of course they had the Indian Medicine shows too. Wise was a regular beehive of activity now and the next three or four years saw quite an increase in population and business establishments. George Whitehill built a new blacksmith shop and dwelling on Main Street. J. I. Eakin built a hotel where Clyde Wiley and family now live. Mark Stiles and John F. Coen built a store and dwelling which Charles Anderson and family now own. Mr. Robinson had long since been a Notary Public. I believe he was commissioned about the year of 1881.

For character-building, Fraternalism was becoming very popular. I.O.O.F. was first organized, followed by Jr. O.U.A.M. Then the M.W. of A., also a ladies' secret order, and the Daughters of America Auxiliary, were introduced. The Jrs. ladies' secret order used the same hall on the second floor of Mr. Sanders' store. These did much to further the feeling of the brotherhood of man.

During the winter there were plenty of school entertainments. The Literary Society met once each week and all pupils belonged and were required to take part whenever called upon. The programs consisted of a song, American Devotionals, recitations, selected readings, debates, and queries, all supposed to be educational. Two or three times during the school term, which had been extended to five months, the school gave an exhibition, what we now call "home talent". Music with stringed instruments, a hillbilly band, also singing, dialogues and tableaux were presented. Each Friday evening was spent in spelling bees, not alone for the pupils but for anyone who wanted to take part in them. There was always

(23)

a large audience. There was a social at Christmas time, when the teacher always treated the pupils with bags of candy. On the last day of school, the main feature was a community dinner. None of the patrons ever missed it if it were at all possible. Planks were placed on top of the desks to form tables, one on either side of the aisle, making two huge tables which were crowded with the most choice food the country contained. After this the rest of the day was spent in playing games, of which baseball was the top game.

About 1904 the Methodist Conference made some changes in circuits and Wise was taken from the Wadestown charge and the Wise charge was formed. The four churches on this charge were Wise, W. Va., Brave, Pine Bank, and Phillip, Pa. Reverend S. B. Hart from Trenton, N. J., was the first minister after this change was made. Of course there was no parsonage but as Rev. Hart was a single man he stayed at the hotel for a short time. Not many months after, he returned to New Jersey and was married. When he came back with his bride they resided in the George Laughlin house, now occupied by Gunner Gump and wife. Reverend Hart remained pastor on this charge for five years. In the meantime, the church had purchased a lot joining the church property from Henry Brewer and a parsonage was under construction.

When Rev. Hart was replaced, Rev. William Gilmore was the first minister assigned to this charge after the parsonage was completed, but he did not occupy it as he was an unmarried man. He resigned this post in a few months and the vacancy was filled by a retired country minister by the name of Daniel Parrish. He and his family were the first to live in the new parsonage. School activities plus church activities didn't leave much idle time. The Church program was something like this:

Sunday: Sunday School, first service, Class Meeting immediately after, 7 p.m. Eqworth League, 8 p.m. preaching; Tuesday: 7 p.m. choir practice; Wednesday: 7 p.m. midweek prayer meeting. All special days, Christmas, New Year's Eve, Easter and Children's Day were observed with an elaborate program. Taking into consideration the period of preparation for these, it shows there was a place for everyone.

The revival services in winter often continued for five or six weeks, and the crowds were immense. When there were no church services, here, the citizens of this community attended services in nearby communities. All the farmers were equipped with teams and sleds and there always seemed to be plenty of snow. It was no trouble to get enough folks to fill the sleds. It was really combining duty and pleasure. This way communities became acquainted and were friendlier because they kept in touch with one another.

Sunday afternoons in winter were usually spent in ice skating. As many as 100 young people would congregate wherever the ice was best. Sometimes it would be at the Mill Seat or Sheep Shoot, Alligator Hole, Swimming Hole, or Rocky Ford. Add a little social life, such as surprise parties, and you will have a fairly accurate picture of what life was like in Wise when winter closed down and shut people away from the rest of the world. It mattered not what the occasion was that brought them together, friendly atmosphere always permeated the whole valley. The continual associations of young and old, the deep concern of neighbor for neighbor, contrasted with today's attitudes would certainly indicate that this was indeed the Golden Age. So let not the present age pity the old timers for having no modern conveniences. They had what was far more important; an understanding of how to live with each other. There

were no feelings of superiority, though some had more of the world's goods than others. Some had more education and some had more advantages than others, but all met and mingled on one common ground.

During the year 1904 the post master, Mr. Robinson, became ill and could no longer serve in this capacity. His son, Joseph Robinson, was appointed and his commission was signed by Theodore Roosevelt, President at that time. Shortly after this the Post Office Dept. directed the changing of the name of this post office, because a post office of the same name in Virginia caused a confusion of mail and as it was the larger, this one had to change. A short name was to be chosen, one that did not already exist in the state. After many trials and much correspondence, the name Wana was selected. It was taken from the popular song, "Arrah-Wanna." As you can see, the first part of the name was dropped and one N of the last part. This name was at once accepted and so the name chosen was Wana, W. Va.

J. S. Robinson remained post master until the year 1914. Then Charles E. Hennen became post master. He owned and operated a general store in the Whitehill building, so the post office was moved to that site. He did not stay here long, so again the post master was changed and George M. Whitehill became our fourth post master. From then on they changed in quick succession: J. Ray Wiley, Mrs. Sara Wiley, Mrs. Mildren Sharp, and Mrs. Nellie Wiley, present post mistress.

During this period the present school was built, as was the high school at Wadestown, The educational system was also changed. The districts of Clay and Battelle combined and a new school building was built for a junior high and high school at Blacksville, W. Va.

With the ending of the oil and gas boom all the newcomers vanished,

and many of the native farmers disposed of their farms and moved away. Destructive fires and the deaths of many of our businessmen were responsible for the change in our community.

The highest peak in this section is Efaw Knob. It is noted for rock formation which resembles Cooper's Rock, only on a much smaller scale. Another high peak is located on the Hagan Knob farm. A number of Indian graves are on the Eakin farm. Although the land has been plowed and pastured year after year, the paths made by the first Americans in their war dances are still visible. (The writer remembers when the children of the village made this farm their playground. They would deck themselves with beads made by stringing rose berries, and gather feathers from domesticated fowls, which included turkeys, chickens, and a few peacocks raised on the farm. They would dance, trying to imitate the Indians, with an old tin pan for a tom-tom, and a long-handled gourd with gravels in it for a castanet).

The Mason and Dixon line, which divides West Virginia, a Southern state, from Pennsylvania, a Northern state, centers directly in our community. Each year a number of school children visit what is known as the "Center Post" and report on it.

The Wana Charge was discontinued and this church went on the Brave Charge, so our parsonage was sold (it later burned down) and one established in Brave, Pa. A few years later, we were again changed to the Blacksville Charge. So this brings us up to the present time in the history of the Wana Community.

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