



LOCAL LANDMARK — Filbert's Hotel, on the corner of Main and Goodman streets in Strausstown, is shown in this photo dating from some 70 years ago. Built by Jacob Boltz in 1845, the structure served as a public house until it closed in 1969. The porches had long since been removed.

The Passing Scene

Town's Story Started With Strauss

By George M. Meiser IX
Quite recently your rural correspondent again took to the field in search of historical backgrounds and tidbits of nostalgia indigenous to some specific niche of Eagle-land. On this occasion we traveled to Western Berks to re-examine the sole population center to be found in Upper Tulpehocken Township.

Strausstown (often with one "s" in old references) lies six miles northwest of Bernville along Route 183, equidistant laterally between Shartlesville and Bethel.

In 1929 it became Berks

County's 22nd borough, situated on a tract comprising about 120 acres. At present, there are approximately 400 inhabitants dwelling in 145 units. Brian Bordner serves as mayor.

John Strauss (1779-1855), a landowner who resided on a farm near what is now Strausstown, laid out his portion of town in 1849 and sold lots for \$33 per unit. Although the place was named for him, a substantial segment of the settlement, as it evolved, came to be built on land owned by two others — Daniel Moyer and John Batteiger.

Strausstown (often spelled

ment, John Strauss moved in-

to the village and remained there until his death, leaving behind the old Strauss log house which was a landmark in the area. A distillery that he once operated was nearby. The first home along the main street was erected in 1835 by Joseph Boltz on a lot from the Batteiger tract. Another dwelling was begun some months afterward by Jacob and Joseph Klahr which, in time, became part of the Centre House, now known as Doll's Hotel. It didn't take long after "laying out" for the population of Strausstown to increase impressively.

In the last century "public

houses" played a major role in the activity of a town or rural area because they were just what the name implied — not just places to go for a beer as often thought by youngsters or the uninformed.

The public houses of the 1800s were the motels and restaurants of yesteryear. Additionally, they provided quarters for voting, dances, auctions, band practice, traveling entertainments and meetings. Think how many post offices and general stores were once housed in rural hotels.

Strausstown's first public house (1849) was erected in the eastern end of the village

by Daniel Moyer, one of the original landowners in that section. During most of its existence, this was the Farmers' and Drivers' Hotel. Calvin Luckenbill was the last hotelman. He had followed Charles Epler who also ran a stage line to Womelsdorf. In the early 1930s, Walter and Mabel Christ converted the place to a service station and store which closed in 1967. Though presently used as a multiple-family dwelling, readers should have no difficulty spotting this ancient structure on the north side of Main Street — a true landmark.

In the mid-1840s Jacob Boltz built an imposing brick hostelry on the northeast corner of Main and Goodman streets, on the opposite end of town from the Farmers' and Drivers' Hotel. Boltz was appointed the town's first postmaster and in his hotel the "Strausstown" post office was installed (1847). It's interesting to note that the spelling faux pas remained the official designation until 1864.

From the time James K. Filbert took over the town's second public house in 1879 until it closed in 1969, the name "Filbert's Hotel" was perpetuated. At the end, Katherine E. Shearer was the proprietress, having devoted 27 years to the business. Today the structure bears little resemblance to its former condition. District Justice Laura A. Keener occupies an office on the first floor; apartments are located in the remaining portions.

Strausstown's third public house, the aforementioned Doll's Hotel, continues in business in the centre of town on the north side of Main Street. Owing to its position, not surprisingly, it was dubbed "Centre House" when opened by Moses Henne in 1855.

For about four decades following the close of World War I, Elmer Miller conducted the business with great success.

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"Miller's Hotel and Restaurant" enjoyed an enviable reputation as a place that served as fine a meal as one could find. In his earlier years of operation, Miller ran dances nearly every Saturday night. In the rear, a long low dance hall still remains as an "L" of the main hotel structure which used to be known as "Miller's forest." Its rustic decor featured a profusion of trees and leaves stimulating a grove. Behind the dance hall is the Upper Berks Medical Office, located in a building of fairly recent construction initially used as a laundromat.

Bank
Four doors west of Doll's Hotel stands the Strausstown branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania, erected in 1919 to house the Strausstown National Bank, originally organized in 1913 in a room in Filbert's Hotel. It remained there until the small but architecturally interesting present structure was completed.

Across the street is the post office, situated in a vintage building beautifully maintained, characteristic of Strausstown generally. The owner of this property has seen fit to retain the old-time over-the-pavement portico, an appointment of convenience and nostalgic charm, but one that unfortunately is
(Turn to Page 61, Col. 4)



SUNDAY OUTING — Ben Laub, the Blue Mountain hermit in right foreground, poses with a group of Sunday visitors — as he often did for "a small consideration." The bark-covered mound in the back-

ground was his abode (note the smokestack), just north of Strausstown. This unusual photo was made available through the cooperation of Bernville historian Roy T. Bubbenmoyer.

THE WAY IT WAS — Anthony's Grist Mill is shown as it appeared before it was gutted by fire in 1907. The structure was then rebuilt and enlarged. Today, custom animal feed mixing is the specialty of the firm. In the inset, owner George M. Anthony sports a vintage feedbag apron. — Photos from the collection of George M. Meiser IX.



Arlene C. Shaffer

Mrs. Arlene C. Shaffer, 33, Lenhartsville, died this morning at 4:30 in the residence of her parents, Harry and Christine (Bailey) Sp, Lenhartsville, following an illness since January

born in Hamburg, she was employed as a waitress at K's Diner, Shoemakers, last working in March

Mrs. Shaffer was a member of the United Church of Christ congregation of New Bethel Union Church, Kempton R.D. 2.

Surviving in addition to her parents are a son, Chilton V., a daughter, Lannette C., at home, and her maternal grandmother, Mrs. Mimi P. Bailey, Kempton R.D. 2.

Services will be held Saturday at 11 a.m. in the Nester Memorial Home, Jacksonsville, Rev. James H. Moyer officiating. Burial will be made in New Bethel Union Cemetery, Kempton R.D. 2.

Ella M. Zellers

Mrs. Ella M. Zellers, 91, formerly of 414 Windsor St., died Tuesday night in the Lenhart Community Hospital where she was a patient since March 16.

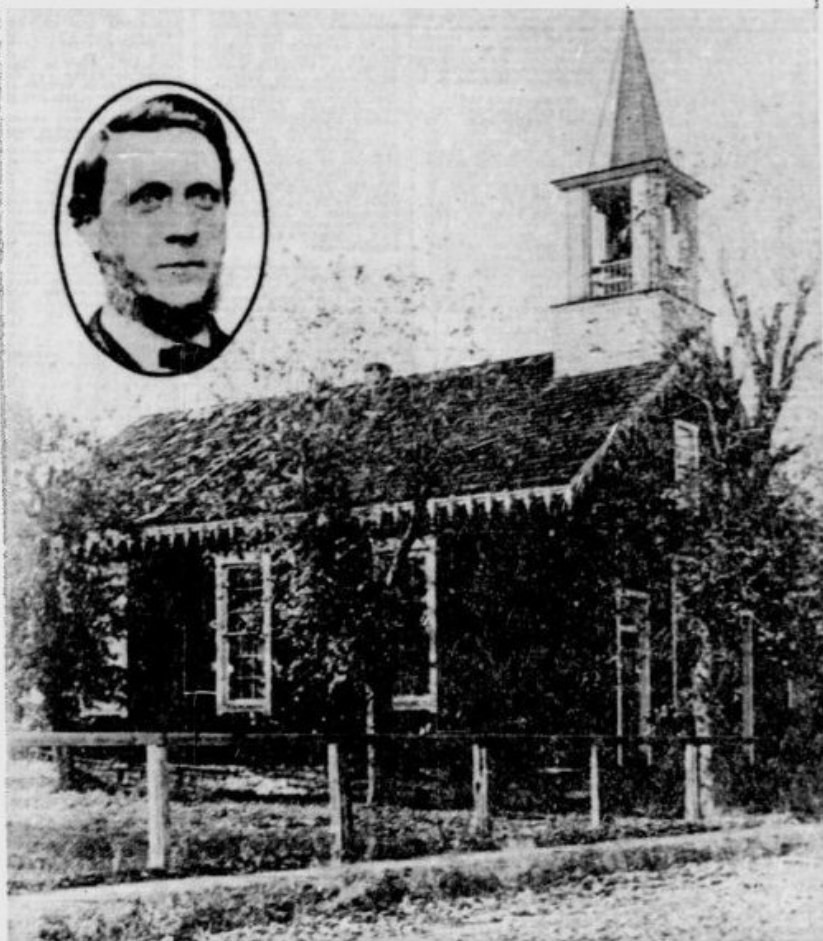
She was taken to the hospital from the Zerbe Sisters Nursing Home, Narvon R.D. where she resided since 1975.

Born in Reading, she was a daughter of the late Wellington and Mary K. (Rothenberger) Moser.

Her husband, Robert M. Zellers, died March 31, 1948. Mrs. Zellers was a member of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church.

Surviving is a nephew, Edward W. VanReed, Herby.

Services will be held today at 1 p.m. in the Theo. C. Auman Inc. funeral home, Rev. Dr. Frank E. Radtke officiating. Burial will



CONVERTED—This is St. Paul's Lutheran Church on Walnut Street as it appeared in its last days as a house of worship. Begun by "break-aways" from nearby Zion Church in 1861 through the leadership of the Rev. J. M. Deitzler (inset), its membership never exceeded 75. While services ended soon after 1900 and the place was converted to a fire company social hall, the small congregational cemetery situated to the left has been maintained... as a civic gesture.

Town Started With Strauss

(Continued From Page 18) rapidly vanishing from the scene.

Ruth Zerby is the postmaster. She succeeded her mother, Carrie Kepner, who had earlier succeeded her father (Mrs. Zerby's grandfather), Charles Heene. Truly a family affair!

On Walnut Street are the headquarters of the Strausstown Fire Company, begun in 1915. To the right of the engine house is the company's social hall which has an interesting history, dating back to the Civil War era when constructed for a house of worship.

During the period of "revivalism" that splintered numerous Lutheran congregations, the Rev. J. M. Deitzler left nearby Zion Church (Strausstown) taking about a dozen "good members" with him. John Strauss, Jonathan Reber, Michael Miller, John Beltz, and Dr. Schoener met in July of 1861 to plan construction of a modestly-sized frame chapel—St. Paul's Lutheran Church—which was completed by November.

Membership had grown to 70 by the following year. However, after the somewhat sudden departure of Rev. Mr. Deitzler in 1865, interest began to wane. By 1900 the congregation was all but defunct.

Soon thereafter the place was outfitted with a stage, across the back, to serve as a community building for all types of entertainment and socials. It is recalled that twice in the teens a director from "out of town" organized plays that featured local talent... "Hezekiah's Picnic" and "Hezekiah's Country Store." After the fire company took over the hall, many of the general social functions were held in the town's schoolhouse.

From 1869 to 1932, when the present education center was constructed near Lion's Park in the eastern part of the

borough, classes were conducted in the large, frame, two-story structure that still stands along Main Street at the "rounded turn," just below Wayne Potteligher's tombstone yard. This attractive former schoolhouse, now an apartment house painted white with red trim, occupies the site of a long-gone Evangelical church.

In spite of its considerable size, the building had originally only two rooms. The lower story held one class composed of 1st to 4th graders; the top floor was for grades 5 to 8... boys on one side and girls on the other! The second story was the one used for civic gatherings, debates, and Strausstown's two MAJOR social events of years ago: the New Year's Party and the annual 8th Grade Alumni Banquet.

"Firsts"

Some "firsts" of possible interest to trivia buffs: Dr. Charles Mc Donough was the first physician to settle in Strausstown. Frank Stump, the tax collector, had the first telephone in town—number 1-6—connected from the Rehrersburg exchange (around 1908). Main Street was outfitted with electric lamps for the first time in 1922, by way of the Blue Mountain Electric Company.

Strausstown's first industry was a tannery, started in 1825 by John Himmelberger. In time, Michael Miller rebuilt and enlarged the operation and conducted it until 1876. He used modern methods and made all grades of leather.

The tannery site was later occupied by Harry W. Anthony's hosiery mill which dated from around 1910. During World War I he produced many half-hose for army use. Anthony continued his business into the 1960s. Within recent years this property has undergone many changes. The Post Precision Castings plant now located here gives employment to approximately 100 persons.

Our last stop before bringing the Strausstown sojourn to a close is the other Anthony mill, situated just outside town along Route 183, on the way to Bernville. George Reber (Reber) erected a grist mill here as early as 1795, which was rebuilt (1849) by Joseph and Hannah Seyfert after the original was destroyed in a fire.

William B. Anthony came into possession of the premises in 1894. During his ownership a second fire occurred, in 1907. The structure was again rebuilt and, at intervals, enlarged into the complex that exists today.

Around 1930, the Anthonys curtailed production of "Snow Flake" flour, their brand of roller-made, white, pastry flour. Until 1940 water power was utilized to turn the 18-foot overshot wheel (4 1/2 feet wide) that provide the wherewithal to activate the machinery inside. The remains of this waterwheel can be seen from Mill Road behind the mill buildings.

In 1940 George M. Anthony purchased the business from his dad and, though now in his 86th year, he continues to oversee its operation. Over the decades Mr. and Mrs. Anthony (the former Ella M. Hiestler) have given generously of themselves to civic endeavors which explains, in part, why Strausstown is the fine community it is!

CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

3 P.M. MONDAY through THURSDAY

4 P.M. Monday through Friday for CORRECTIONS and CANCELLATIONS

2 P.M. FRIDAY for Saturday & Sunday

Saturday 10 A.M. FOR CORRECTIONS and CANCELLATIONS FOR SUNDAY By Phone Only

No ads taken Saturday and Sunday Eagle

Phone 373-4221 Closed evenings REPLY TO EAGLE TIMES BOX NUMBERS 221, 242, 263, 283, 244, 265, 282, 302, 320, 415

Bagpipes Electric

Copley News Service George Smith, a Glasgow bandleader, has invented the world's first all-electric set of bagpipes.

Deaths

ADDEO — On the 4th inst. ANTHONY ADDEO of 348 Hugh Blvd. Kenhorst age 69 years. Services from Theo. C. Auman Inc. 247 Penn St. Saturday 9:45 a.m. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated in Holy Rosary R.C. Church, 9:30 a.m. Interment in Gethsemane Cemetery. Friends may call Friday evening 7 to 9. (Auman)

BAUER — On the 3rd inst. CLARA R. (nee Robinson) wife of Harry S. Bauer, of 546 Reading Ave., West Reading, age 85 yrs. A Mass of Christian Burial will be sung in Sacred Heart R.C. Church, Thursday 10 a.m. Interment private. No viewing. Contributions may be made to the Heart Fund, 325 Elm St., Edg.-1962. (Kuhn)

BURDAN — On the 3rd inst. BESSIE V. (nee Rhoads) widow of William T. Burdett of 729 S. Reading Ave. Boyertown, age 68 years. Services from St. John's Lutheran Church, Boyertown, Thursday at 10:30 a.m. Interment in Fairview Cemetery. Friends may call Wednesday evening 7 to 9 in the L.W. Ott Funeral Home, Boyertown. Contributions may be made to the Memorial Fund of St. John's Lutheran Church, Boyertown. (L.W. Ott)

CALLAHAN — On the 3rd inst. JAMES L. SR. husband of Carrie D. (nee Neal) Callahan, of 30 N. 25 St., age 75 yrs. Services from Theo. C. Auman, Inc., 247 Penn St., Thursday 11 a.m. Interment in Aulenbach's Cemetery. Friends may call Wednesday evening 7 to 9. (Auman)

DeTURE — On the 3rd inst. CARL W. husband of Eva G. (nee Grim) DeTure, of Mertztown, Rte. 1, age 81 yrs. Services in the Trexler & Book Funeral Home, Tipton, on Thursday at 1 p.m. Private interment. No visitation. The family requests contributions be made to the Memorial Fund of Christ Lutheran Church, Fleetwood, R. 1, 1922. (Trexler & Book)

HESS — On the 3rd inst. CATHERINE J. (nee Landenuth) Hess, age 65 years. Services in Becker's St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Maiden Creek Twp. on Friday at 1 p.m. Interment in adjoining cemetery. No viewing. (Burke & Spacht)

HOHL — On the 2nd inst. MAMIE C. (nee Nagle) widow of Clayton R. Hohl of 609 Perry St., age 71 years. Services from J. E. Lutz Jr. Funeral Home, 2105 Parkwood Ave. Tully, at 10:30 a.m. Interment in Aulsebrook Cemetery. Friends may call Wednesday evening 7 to 9. (Lutz)

KELLER — On the 4th inst. EARL R. husband of Betty L. (nee Hottel) Keller of 612 Penn Ave. Sinking Spring, age 63 years. Services from the Francis F. Seidel II Funeral Home, Sinking Spring, on Friday at 10 a.m. Interment in Sinking Creek Cemetery, Bladensburg. Friends may call Thursday evening 7 to 9. (Francis F. Seidel II)

KINGREE — On the 4th inst. ANNIE V. (nee Weatherholtz) widow of Russell at 1:30 p.m. Interment in Sinking Spring Cemetery. Friends may call Thursday evening 7 to 9:30. (Lamb & Wilson)

LEVANDOWSKI — On the 3rd inst. EDWARD A. LEVANDOWSKI of 342 W. Windsor St., age 69 years. Funeral private at the convenience of the family, interment in Gethsemane Cemetery. Viewing Wednesday evening 7 to 9 p.m. (John P. Foomer)

LEVAN — On the 3rd inst. LILLIE M. (nee Schorker) widow of Perry L. Levan, of 234 E. Race St., Pottstown, formerly of Kutztown, Pa., age 86 yrs. Services in the William S. Fritz Funeral Home, Kutztown, on Thursday at 1:30 p.m. Interment in Hope Cemetery, Kutztown. Friends may call Friday evening 7 to 9:30. (Fritz)

MOYER — On the 2nd inst. ALBERT E. MOYER of 613 Franklin St., aged 78 years. Services from Sanders Funeral Home, 1949-51 N. 11th St., Thursday at 10 a.m. Interment in Forest Hills Memorial Park. Friends may call Wednesday evening 7 to 9. (Sanders)

OHLENGER — On the 4th inst. MAGGIE M. (nee Reiffers) widow of Harvey H. Ohlender of 1255 Dunbar Lane, Stony Creek, age 82 yrs. Services from the Daniel B. Chase Funeral Home, Clay, on Saturday at 10 a.m. Interment in Spang Church Cemetery. Friends may call Friday evening 7 to 9. (Daniel B. Chase)

POHR — On the 4th inst. WASEL E. POHR of 1821 McKinstry St., aged 82 years. Services from Sanders Funeral Home, 1949-51 N. 11th St., Friday at 10 a.m. Interment in Forest Hills Memorial Park. Friends may call Thursday evening 7 to 9. (Sanders)

ROSS — On the 2nd inst. GEORGE F. (Buddy) widower of Gloriosa (nee Hylen) Ross of R.D. 2, Reading, age 82 yrs. Services from Theo. C. Auman Inc. 247 Penn St. Wednesday at 9 a.m. Interment in Washington Memorial Park, Lansbury, Maryland. Friends may call Tuesday evening 7 to 9. (Auman)

SCZODROWSKI — On the 2nd inst. MARY (nee Schabak) widow of Louis Sczodrowski of 1022 Mulenberg St., age 78 years. Services from the Kenoski Funeral Home, 225 S. 90 St. Saturday 9:15 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial in St. Mary's R.C. Church, 9 a.m. Interment in St. Mary's R.C. Cemetery. Friends may call Friday evening 8:30 to 9. (Kenoski)

SIBALEC — On the 4th inst. JOHN A. husband of Louise H. (nee Becker) of 126 N. 70 St., Daily, age 79 years. Services from St. Joseph's Hill Lutheran Church, Boyertown, RD 4 on Saturday at 10 a.m. Interment in Hill Church Cemetery. Friends may call at the Clifford L. Losh Funeral Home, 224 W. Philadelphia Ave., Boyertown, Friday evening 7 to 9:30. (Losh)

SPETH — On the 3rd inst. CHARLES A. husband of Hannah (nee Basing) Speth of South Temple, aged 82 years. Services from the McKim Funeral Home, 404 Eastport Rd., Temple, on Thursday at 11 a.m. Interment in Charles Evans Cemetery. Friends may call Wednesday evening 7 to 9. (Harvey McKim)

SPRINGER — On the 2nd inst. GARNETTA M. (nee Red) survivor age 90 years. Services at the convenience of the family, interment in Old Fellows Cemetery, Tamaqua. No viewing. (Luskey & Spacht)

TARONEY — On the 3rd inst. NORMA K. (nee White) TARONEY, formerly of 140 Kenhorst Blvd. Services from the Cramp Funeral Home, 304 Centre Ave., Thursday at 11 a.m. Interment in Forest Hills Memorial Park. Friends may call Thursday 10 to 11. (Cramp)

ZELLERS — On the 4th inst. ELLA M. (nee Hider) widow of Robert H. Zellers formerly of 414 Windsor St., age 91 years. Services from Theo. C. Auman Inc., 247 Penn St., Friday 1 p.m. Interment in Charles Evans Cemetery. Friends may call Friday 12 noon to 2 p.m. (Auman)

In Memoriam

TRULLI — In loving memory of a dear Mother and Grandmother, Angelica Crull, who fell asleep 3 years ago today, April 5, 1975. "To know her was to love her" Loved and missed by Children and Grandchildren.

Card of Thanks

THE FAMILY OF THE LATE NEVIN W. DONAT wishes to thank relatives, friends and neighbors for the many acts of kindness and sympathy extended to them during their recent illness. Special thanks to the beautiful floral tributes and sympathy cards received.

Crash Proved Livesaving

LONDON (UPI) — An ambulance driver David Lamb was fined 15 pounds (\$30) for careless driving in a traffic accident that saved a baby's life.

Three-month-old Lisa White's parents had called an ambulance to rush her to a hospital when food got caught in her throat.

Lamb sped through a red light in his rush to get her to the hospital. An oncoming car smashed into the emergency vehicle and the impact dislodged the food from Lisa's throat. She turned pink again and started crying.

Lamb, 24, pleaded guilty Monday to careless driving charges in front of magistrates at St. Helen's in Lancashire.



RAZED — The old Zion (Blue Mountain) Church, just east of Strausstown, stood from 1819 until replaced by a new edifice in 1904. It had ornate entrances on three sides and contained a Dieffenbach organ. This was a union church building, serving both the then-Reformed and Lutheran congregations. — Photos from the collection of George M. Meiser IX.