

## **List of Articles Presented to the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.**

### **372—The Strawick Collection of Gunsmith Tools.**

This collection consists of one "Leader" a machine for rifling guns by hand and one rifle barrel cut, cleaned and rifled by Hugh M. Strawick; also a few tools used in the construction of a gun, rifle or shot gun. This set for the most part is hand made.

The leader was first constructed by Andrew Strawick who came into eastern Pennsylvania from New Jersey with the forces of the American Revolution, later pioneering west and settling in what is now Butler County. In 1790 he was married to Nancy Neil whose parents had also come west after the "war". Together they bought 400 acres of land; the first taxation of this land took place in 1803. A small village and church known as West Jefferson, Pa. now stands on a part of this land.

About 1810 Andrew Strawick turned his attention to gunsmithing rather than clearing land and teaching school and made a trip to Pittsburgh to secure the necessary equipment to start in business. The construction of the above mentioned "leader" was begun at that time and has been in continuous use until about six years ago. Andrew Strawick, Jr. moved the shop to Butler in 1838, but before that, in 1813, the gun carried by David Strawick, son of the first Andrew when he volunteered for service in the war of 1812 at the age of 20, was rifled and put in repair on this machine by his father. Many of the "smooth bore" guns of the day were made over in this shop by Andrew Strawick, Sr. After moving to Butler, the business was known as the "Modern Works for Manufacturing and Repairing Guns".

The family continued to live in Butler until 1856 when they moved to Brady's Bend in Armstrong County where the third Andrew went into business with his father. They carried with them the old "leader," business flourished and all went well until the Civil War. Two sons from the Strawick home volunteered, Hugh M. and Jacob Walter, later becoming part of the 139 volunteer infantry. Jacob Walter was killed in the battle of Fredericksburg, May 3, 1863, at the age of 21. Later Andrew III also enlisted.

After the close of the Civil War, Andrew III moved his family to Beaver Falls. Hugh M. married Elizabeth Benninger of Brady's Bend and took Andrew's place in the business with his father.

In 1872 the family returned to Butler and after the death of Andrew II in 1884, Hugh M. inherited the gunsmith machinery and business. Neil Andrew, a veteran of the Spanish American war and William, sons of Hugh M. would have inherited these same relics had they lived. Hugh M. Strawick died at his home in Butler County, July 16, 1925 at the age of 91, having retired from active business five years prior to his death.

There are two boys, Somers William and Hugh Andrew who may some time come to the Historical Society to see the carefully guarded and much loved workmanship of their fathers.

We feel that these dumb objects speak eloquently of a day gone by; of the subduing of the forest and the upbuilding of a great state.

(The Daughter)

Donated to the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania by Gertrude Strawick and Yetty Strawick Seaborn, daughters of the late Hugh M. Strawick of Butler, Penna.

**374—Old Surveying Instruments**

"Jacobs staff" used by Mr. John Findley in surveying the town site of Mercer, Penna. 1803.

"Surveyors chain" used by Mr. John Findley in laying out the town site of Mercer, Penna. The surveyor was a son of the famous William Findley, early Congressman of Penna.

Presented by Mr. John F. Findley

**375—Piece of Ash Wood**

From "*My Old Kentucky Home*" the "*Shrine*" of Stephen Collins Foster.

This piece of Ash wood is 130 years old and one and a half inches thick. It was cut from the hall-floor of "*My Old Kentucky Home*," to make room for an end of a cold air pipe, all the floors in the home are ash-wood and the same thickness and were laid down in 1793, all the window frames are 4x5 cedar and all the door frames and doors are solid walnut.

Presented to the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, by Benjamin La Bree.

**376—Token and Steel Dies.**

The token was used by the owners of the old 43rd street Bridge in payment of tolls. The steel dies were used in the stamping of these tokens.

They were found in the old toll-house when preparations were being made for the tearing down of the old bridge. This old bridge crossed the river between Forty-third street, and Bridge street, Millvale, and consisted of four covered timber spans of the Burr truss type, one of the early types of bridges built in this County and of which but few remain. Its piers and abutments were of stone masonry. It provided for a double driveway and two sidewalks, one of which had been closed for a number of years. It had been on fire several times, but fortunately, was never burned down. It was of insufficient capacity for present day traffic, and did not provide sufficient navigation clearances and had been ordered removed by the War Department. It was in an unsafe condition, badly out of alignment and nearing the end of its usefulness. Its covering had been removed to lighten its load and to offer less resistance to wind pressure. Traffic had been restricted in order that it might be kept in service until the new bridge, ("THE WASHINGTON CROSSING BRIDGE") could be opened, when it was closed and removed.

Presented by Mr. V. R. Covell, County Engineer