REMINISCENCES OF GEORGE B. LOGAN

Introduction by Robert D. Christie

The Reminiscences will appear in four consecutive issues of The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine during 1968. They were not written for publication but for the pleasure of Mr. Logan's children, all of whom are now dead. The material touches the lives of so many prominent Pittsburghers and has prompted so many nostalgic recollections on the part of those who knew old Allegheny that we sought and secured permission of the family to publish it. We are indebted to Mrs. William Seifert, Jr., granddaughter of Mr. Logan, for use of the manuscript.

The period with which it deals goes back to the time when Ridge Avenue was only a path, when Western Avenue was still known as "Water Lane," and the park was a pasturage.

Some of the people mentioned in this issue alone are Irwin, McKnight, Dilworth, Bidwell, Scaife, Brewer, Painter, Park, Walton, Marshall, Bagally and others.

The author was born December 21, 1845, in Wood Lawn, his father's home in Allegheny, which was known as home to three generations of Logans. Before its demolition it was known as 1007 North Lincoln Avenue. When he died February 16, 1929, after eighty-three years of a full and successful life, the city lost one of its most distinguished citizens.

John T. Logan, father of George B. Logan, married Mrs. Henrietta Bryan Kennedy, the widow of his cousin, William M. Kennedy. She was a granddaughter of Justice George Bryan of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. John T. Logan had come from Baltimore via Lancaster in 1829 and they made their home at number 108 on Penn Avenue. With his cousin, Robert P. Kennedy, he established a hardware company about 1831 under the name of Logan & Kennedy and about 1845 Mr. Logan purchased a home in Allegheny erected by the grandfather of Samuel Harden Church some ten years earlier. As business prospered, the simple rectangular building was improved by adding two wings, an extra story, and huge colonial columns both front and back which made it a notable structure over-
looking the rivers. This house, which was known as Wood Lawn, stood in a grove of oak trees which almost covered a four-acre tract. The lot extended south from Water Lane across what became Ridge Avenue to the river. Allegheny Avenue later developed along its eastern side.

The standing of John T. Logan in the community is shown by the fact that he was also identified with the Penn Cotton Mills, was treasurer of the Allegheny Valley Railroad and was interested in the Pearl Flour Mill, was director in the Monongahela Navigation Company, and was a trustee of the Western Theological Seminary. He died in 1871, four years after the formation of Logan-Gregg Hardware Company.

George B. Logan, when only sixteen years of age, entered his father's store and in 1862 enlisted in Knapp's Battery for ninety days and again re-enlisted in 1863 for ninety more days in Co. B, 193rd Regiment, under Colonel J. B. Clark. He returned to the hardware business after service and became president of the company in 1871 upon the death of his father. He held this position until 1926 when he relinquished it to his eldest son, Patton Lyon Logan, at which time he became Chairman of the Board. His other activities included more than fifty years as an elder in the North Presbyterian Church. He was President of the Board of Trustees of Presbyterian Hospital, was advisor of the Protestant Orphan Asylum and, like his father, was director of the Western Theological Seminary. He was a member of the Freedmen's Board of the Presbyterian Church and in 1906 was a candidate for mayor of Allegheny on a reform ticket.

George Bryan Logan married Frances Grant Lyon of the prominent Lyon family of Allegheny and on February 22, 1920, they celebrated their Golden Anniversary just six months before her death. They had eight children, five of whom reached maturity as follows:

from which he ultimately died at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in 1927.

The Logan-Gregg Hardware Company closed in 1962 after operating under Logan management and two other names for close to one hundred years.

George B. Logan was truly a Pittsburger.

REMINISCENCES

For my Children of boyhood days of
George B. Logan and his brothers
Edward P. Logan
John Howard Logan
Thomas D. Logan
and his sisters
Anna M. Kennedy
Mary B. Logan
Henrietta B. Logan

ALLEGHENY TOWN

In the decade 1850-1860 to which time these sketches refer, and when the boys mentioned were from five to fifteen years of age, Pittsburgh was a small city and Allegheny-town as it was called, was nothing more than a large village, — The main part of it was within the limits surrounded by the Park, Western Ave. or Water Lane as it was then called, was the road leading out to Ohio, which crossed the Ohio River by ferry at the foot of the street, and then over the hills to Steubenville, Ohio or to reach places Northwest followed the present course of Beaver and Preble Avenues. The houses along Western Ave. were few, and had grounds of from two to ten acres each. They were considered to be in the Suburbs and it was considered quite a trip "to town." The parks were then common ground, the Penn heirs having granted the ground for pasture fields, for the residents living within their limits. Cows and pigs roamed the streets at will and entered any open gate, they were even smart enough to open closed gates, learning the trick of raising the latch.

The old Town Hall was a building that looked like a stable and stood on the now open ground corner Federal and Ohio Sts. It was not over 30x60 feet, the first floor used to house a hose carriage and other city property, while the second floor was the Council Chamber. The
Market House was open on the sides to all kinds of weather. The Seminary stood on top of Seminary Hill, but was burned in 1854 and rebuilt on its present location. The Commons were a great outlet for boys, when they grew to 12 years of age and over, when baseball first appeared clubs were formed, which used different sections. The first club was of grown men and was named the “Duquesne,” then came the “Allegheny” the “Enterprise” the “Lincoln,” and others. Match games were frequent, the “Enterprise” to which I belonged generally winning. Open runs or creeks meandered through the Park or Common (now enclosed in large sewers) and balls were often lost in these gulleys.

Omnibusses ran at half hour intervals from corner 6th St. (then St. Clair St.) and Liberty St., Pittsburgh to Woods Run, Allegheny following the present course of Western Ave. to its foot, then out Beaver and Preble Ave. Braun & Reiters drug store was the waiting room at the Pittsburg end and Hartman’s Tavern at the Woods Run end of the route. The roads were unpaved and always bad in winter and spring, sometimes almost impassable. The natural cruelty of a boy is shown in the fact that we delighted to watch “stalls” in the mud holes when the drivers beat the horses unmercifully (the Humane Society was then unknown) to make them pull out.

Fred Gwinner, the wealthy contractor, was one of the “bus” drivers and we often rode on behind his “bus” when he was in a good humor, but we were always on the lookout for a long whiplash around the side. In summer it was pleasant to wait for the “bus” in the lawn on seats under the oak trees. The drivers announced their coming by blowing a tin horn, just after rising the hill in front of “Killbuck” — the McKnight Place. When the road was cut down to its present level, as shown by the walls in front of the McKnight, Black and Scaife places, a plank road was laid which was considered a great improvement.

Most of that part of the city now covered by Beech St. and North Ave. was in cabbage fields, these furnished cabbage stalks with which we battered doors on hallowe’en. From Irwin Ave. to Allegheny Ave. between Western Ave. and Ridge Ave., was one large property belonging to the Irwin family, the principal building on it was Irwin’s Rope Walk, the power house of which, was where the B. F. Jones house now stands and the “walk” extended the length of Lincoln Ave. Small frame houses along Western Ave. were occupied by the employees.

Ridge Ave. and Allegheny Ave. were only paths, then lanes im-
passible for teams. Their lower ends terminated in gravel banks and swamps. When the river overflowed this low ground filled with water, and made a good place for boys rafts and for skating. Lumber was plenty and floating about, of this we made our rafts and poled all about that part of town. The Dilworth family lived on Rebecca St. near the foot of Ridge Ave. There were several girls, who were very pretty and popular. They were as fond of rafting and skating as the boys. Dilworth Saw Mill stood about where the Lindsay & McCutcheon Mill now stands. There we got our laths to make chicken coops and dragged them up the hill to our house at the cost of aching backs and strained muscles.

The principal houses in our part of town were built on the Ridge extending Northwest from Seminary Hill. Archie Marshall lived where the house now stands, on Ridge Ave. opposite Irwin Ave., then came the Bowen place which stood about where the roofs of the Garrison houses now are, the street afterwards being cut down more than 30 feet, then came our place "Woodlawn," then Forsythes (Painters was built later) then Blacks, then owned by Charles Brewer, then "Killbuck," the McKnight place.

Wm. Bagaley built the house corner Western Ave. and Bidwell St. now owned by Wm. G. Park and afterward the Walton house which was considered a palace. Mr. Anson Bidwell owned the property from Bidwell St. to the Scaife house and back to Fayette St. He had a very fine garden on it and was fond of cultivating it. South Ave. was lined with a row of large sycamore trees from Allegheny Ave. to School Street, making a pleasant walk to town. It was the bank of the river and the residences there were among the best in the town. Smoky Island lay just in front and when the river was high a strong current ran between it and South Ave., when the water fell in winter there was good skating in this back channel.

Stockton Ave. was one of the choice residence streets, it was known as the "Second Bank" and good residences built as far up as Chestnut St. "Second Bank" meant the second rise or terrace from the river. The Penna. Canal ran just in front of it where the Railroad now runs, the Canal came down as far as Darragh St. then turned and emptied into the river.

It was famous sport to get one of the old style heavy skiffs from the river, drag it up into the Canal, row up as far as Hulton, then slide the skiff down into the river again and come home down stream.
“Woodlawn” and Environs

My father John T. Logan bought the place about the time he married (October 4th, 1843). He remodeled the house adding the columns and porches and the wing for the kitchen. There were four acres of ground bounded by what are now Western Ave, Allegheny Ave, Ridge Ave. and the Western line was along the Forsyth property. The front half was in grass with a grove of large oak trees scattered thickly over it thus giving the name — Woodlawn. The rear was devoted to a fruit, vegetable and flower garden. The rambo apple trees yielded a big crop every year (Ettie Logan Scott reminds me that we had all these apple trees named for the neighborhood doctors Dr. Dale, Dr. Gazzam), the pear trees could also be depended on for an annual crop. Cherries, currants, goose-berries, plums and grapes were abundant, also strawberries, and all kinds of vegetables. One of our gardeners, John Hughes made a specialty of egg plants and took several prizes at the County Fairs, but we could never equal our neighbors Mr. Bidwell and Mr. Brewer in the size of strawberries.

The lawn was our playground, there we played Shinny (hockey in embryo) climbed the oak trees and rode the horses around the “ring,” as we called the circular driveway from Western Ave. to the house. There seemed to be some attraction to the place for all the neighborhood boys for they always came there to play. One amusement was to stand on the front gate posts and crack our long lashed whips at the passing droves of cattle, sometimes we were favored by the drivers in being allowed to help drive the hogs to the yards on the upper part of Irwin Ave. Our stable stood at the western side of the place about where the driveway along side Mrs. Painters. It was a rickety frame building whitewashed but housed always two good carriage horses, cow, chickens and vehicles. As the oak trees died they had to be cut down and this happened at the rate of one or two each year. The wood from these trees was cut into lengths and stowed alongside the stable. We called it the woodpile and used the logs to build houses. They were eventually split into oven wood and used in the out oven or bake oven, where they made a roaring hot fire.

The flower garden was about the house and was quite extensive. It was under the special care of Sister Annie, and we boys thought it was an honor to carry her basket while she cut the flowers and made them into bouquets in the old summer house. One summer house stood about where the rear steps now are and had a swing in it which was a great attraction. The posts of the house were covered with the initials of the boys and girls who congregated there. The paths
through the garden were quite steep and formed our sled tracks, but the bump at the back fence was hard on our legs when we came to a sudden stop there.

The stable had a hayloft overhead and it was our delight to play in the hay. This angered old George Dietz, or George Teech as we called our man of all work, because the dust came through the loose floor on to his carriage and horses. He would come stealthily up the ladder armed with a strap and suddenly appear among our crowd of boys. We would promptly scatter, jumping down into the horse hay rack, out the windows or anywhere to escape the strap. Old George was a character, he was a German and talked such broken English that it was hard to understand him. Once he was sent for a jug which had been left at a neighbors, he asked for the “shug,” and when they offered him sugar, he grew quite excited saying no, no, I want the “shug.” At another time when Howard and Tom were babies, only 13 months difference in their ages, he was asked “how is the baby?”, he replied “do you mean dis years baby or last years baby.”

Another one of our men while cutting down an oak tree cut a deep gash in his foot. He immediately saddled old “Jerry” and rode at full speed to Dr. Dale to get sewed up. Our youthful imagination was full of visions of how the blood dripped from the wounded foot on that ride. Jim Nesbit was another man of all work, with the true Scotch burr on his tongue. We used to help him dig the garden or do anything where he might be to listen to his jargon.

The lawn while all in grass had daffodils, bluebells, violets, crocuses and tulips scattered through it, which we welcomed each in turn as they appeared in the spring.

Allegheny and Ridge Avenues were only lanes and when they were opened into streets, we had to give up a strip of ground for each about 30 feet wide and the length of the place.

Among our humbler neighbors was our Irish washerwoman Mrs. McGeary, who lived in a one story whitewashed cottage where Heckels drug store now stands. When a small child I got my hands and clothes covered with tar from a wagon axle, she took me into her cottage and by using a tallow candle and much elbow grease got me in shape to go home.

Frank Marks lived in a big field, where Beech and Allegheny Ave. now are. He was the best Kite maker in the neighborhood and we sometimes bought our Kites from him at a cent apiece as those we made would not fly.

Johnny Telford lived corner Western Ave. and Allegheny Ave.
(E. P. Logan says it was not Johnny Telford who is the head of the toothbrush story but a German boy who lived next door to him.) He had very white teeth and when asked how he kept them so white replied "O I get up early in the morning and get the tooth brush first before the rest get it and give them a good scrub."

Andy Graham, the butcher, lived along Western Ave. in a long low one story frame house or hovel, pigs and chickens running in and out the open door. He was a drunkard and we boys kept at a good distance when he was in his cups. It was he who when visiting at his brothers took up a boy of my age who suffered from hip disease and playfully struck him a blow on the sore hip, which it was thought rendered his recovery impossible.

The "Fence" family were workers in the ropewalk and lived on Western Ave. They had remarkable names, of which Lionel, Sophily and Hennily are samples. Another was Atkinson, the coal hauler. He had enormous wagons drawn by four or six horses and hauled the coal direct from the mines over in Saw Mill Run, crossing the river by ferry. Once or twice a year he filled up our vaults much to our entertainment.

Among our pensioners was Mrs. Phipps. She had only one leg, but was quite active, went down stairs by sitting from step to step and sliding her crutches. She came regularly one day a week and darned stockings. Her numerous family wore Woodlawn clothes as soon or before we were through with them.

Mary McGeary (1909 Mary McGeary still living at 918 Western Ave.) was the daughter of our washwoman, she was young, redheaded and trifling, but employed as a nurse. She had a habit of sitting on the high nursery fender to warm her back. One morning her clothing took fire and the family at breakfast in the room below were alarmed by her screeches. Father dashed upstairs, grasped her and put her in the bathtub and turned on the shower. I believe it was during her incumbancy that Howard and Tom burned the feather pillows inside the nursery fender to avenge some fancied wrong.

**Father, Mother — Aunt Eliza**

Father was to us boys rather austere, as was the case with most fathers of that time. He was not really severe with us but very kind, providing us with, sleds, bats, etc. I only remember one whipping and that well deserved and not a hard one. With some other boys I had been wandering along Western Ave. when the desire to break some-
thing came over us and we all stoned the lamp post breaking the glass out of it. Father sitting on the front porch heard us and when I came up asked what had been doing I 'fessed up and took my whipping. He had to work hard for us and during the panic of 1857 had hard time keeping Woodlawn, as he had to mortgage it to pay losses in business. He died April 1871 at 61 years of age.

Mother was gentle, wise and affectionate, she trained us carefully but not severely. The Catechism was learned while rolling over the floor and Bible Stories were our meat and drink. She was universally admired by all our relatives and friends. Her counsel was sought very often. She was a good cook and I have memories of pies and cakes coming through her hands while I sat by waiting to lick the spoon. Her nursing of me while I had hip disease and her care of father when paralyzed for the last five years of his life are enough to hold her in loving remembrance without saying anything else. She was spared to us until 83 years of age and died December 1897.

Aunt Eliza, was my father's sister and lived with us for a long time. She always tried to be useful, even to the last when she was so childish that mother had to fix up some imaginary sewing to keep her busy. She had a fund of odd stories which she would bring out occasionally, and she was an authority on family history of her generation. She lived to a good old age.

Characters

One of the earliest I remember was Mrs. Stafford, an old English woman, who carried two baskets filled with thread, needle, tape, etc. which she pedaled to the homes in our neighborhood and carried the gossip along. She was always welcome as she was cheery and bright, and Mother bought little supplies from her. She was especially welcome to the children in the nursery as she carried one bag filled with candy and Mother generally bought us a few cents worth. I haven't tasted any as good since.

Mrs. Peel, another English woman was a maker of crumpets, These were big cakes about the size of a breakfast plate, full of little holes. She baked them on a soapstone slab, heated over an open fire and her boy Will delivered them in time for breakfast. I well remember in what distress she was when her soapstone slab got broken and what difficulty she had in getting another.

Our neighbor Charles Brewer was a mystery to us boys. He kept peacocks, parrots, and greyhound dogs, and was very austere
and grand in his manners. I believe he was a bachelor, at all events his nieces Mary and Sophie Heam kept house for him. He left the orphan asylum its present site (Ridge Ave. Site) in his Will.

The Forsythe family were older than we, except Sister Annie who was well acquainted with them. The old folks were quite Irish and all had the family trait so much in evidence still. The young men made experiments in trying to distill oil from Coal, before the days of petroleum and the long lines of stovepipe used were very mysterious to us.

There was a blind man and his wife in the neighborhood, where Howard and Tom often carried food. One of their remarks often quoted was “what a pity we have such good appetites and so little to eat.”

The Dilworth family living on Rebecca St., had several pretty daughters admired of all the boys. Allie was my age and the prettiest. I remember sitting beside her at a party at our house when she wore a white dress and red ribbons.

The Reiters and Brauns were Germans, or rather Dutch, talked like the Menonites of Lancaster Co. Penna.

INCIDENTS, ANIMALS, HORSES, DOGS, ETC.

We always kept two carriage horses, which were also used for single driving and for riding. The first pair I remember were “Dash and Jerry,” blacks, a little under carriage size, sound and good and lasted us well. Jerry was a very fair riding horse and sister Annie used him, we boys also when we got the chance. Dash refused to be ridden, having successfully resisted all attempts to break him to the saddle.

The next pair were Jim and John good sized sorrels and lasted us until we gave up keeping horses. Jim was an excellent riding horse, as easy as a rocking chair when on a lope and quite fast. John tried to resist being ridden but we got some out of him. Once he threw Ed over his head but Ed landed on his feet with bridle in hand, got on again and finished our ride. We used to ride at full gallop around the “ring” (The circular driveway through the lawn) and as boy after boy made the round Jim would think it time to quit. Once I was jolted up on his neck while going full speed and then turned to the under side, holding with both hands around the neck and his knees bumping me at every stride. He soon stopped, however, and I rolled off and Jim ran for the stable door. The last pair of horses kept were “Bridlehawk” and “Nosey,” large bays of which the former lived to be
over thirty years of age and spent his last years with brother Tom when he was a pastor in Meadville.

John Boyd, our cousin who was a man in business had a fine black mare a very fast pacer, which he kept with us for a time. We drove and rode her, but she was so hard in the mouth that our arms ached every time we took her out.

We always kept a cow and the arrival of a calf was full of interest. We became skilled in bargaining with the butcher for the sale of the calf when it reached the mature age of 3 or 4 weeks and was ready to be made into veal.

_Dogs._ A big mastiff known as “Hyde” was only a tradition to us. He was noted for having swallowed a coral necklace of sister Annie’s when she was a little girl. We had a big black and white Newfoundland, called “Rollo.” As a pup he was very destructive carrying off shoes, door mats or anything he could get. He terrified lady visitors by rushing at them and putting his big paws on their shoulders and barking in their faces, only in fun but they did not know it. He got the distemper and the cure suggested was cutting an inch off the bone of his tail. The cutting was done on the chopping block with the axe and poor “Rollo” ran shrieking away to nurse his wound, and I believe the cure was effected.

Visiting dogs were cruelly treated. We were quite expert in getting them as they appeared through a hole under the fence, or when passing a tree behind which we hid and hit them with a stick as they passed. I shot one as he appeared at the top of the slope coming up the front path, and then had the trouble of burying him.

When cows or hogs invaded the place, as they often did and destroyed our vegetables, we raced them over the lawn, purposely forgetting to open a way of escape, until our cruelty was fully satisfied.

Forsythe’s kept a big flock of pigeons and they came over to our chicken yard and our garden for food. We set traps for them and stood behind the stable door with string in hand to pull the trigger. Then we thought we would have a good pigeon pie, but cleaning and cooking were too much for us.

Brewer’s peacocks were beautiful birds but as disagreeable as to voice as the rest of their tribe. They often flew over into the tops of our oak trees and we stoned them but failed to hit as they were above our ability to throw. The small birds fought them and made their life miserable, but they would stay as long as they pleased and leave when they got ready.
A dog kept by Forsythes and I had a fight. Their hired man bantered me to hold the dog, a good size black and tan terrier, while he stood off and called him. I tried it and the dog fought to get loose. When we got through my clothes were all torn and my hands and wrists bleeding from bites, which I still bear marks of, while the dog had only a few kicks which did him no harm.

Birds. There were a great many birds every season among our trees, especially blackbirds, of which there seemed to be sometimes thousands. They gathered there for some kind of council, which we boys called school and church, but I suppose it was getting ready to migrate. We got well acquainted with Robins, Orioles, Catbirds, Peewees and Humming Birds and had occasional visits from wild pigeons and ducks which strayed from their flock. Sometimes raccoons and oppossum invaded our chicken yard and we would catch them and chain in a tree for pets.

The long logs in our woodpile we used to build into houses. Ed was architect and I heavy laborer. One house we made two stories, the only entrance through a narrow passage near the ground and access to the second floor through a trap door. This house we used for a secret society to which the smaller boys Howard and Tom were not admitted.

Our Crowd

I will mention several of the boys in it and their characteristics, "Pete" Bagaley was one of the younger boys, but large. He lived in a big house now belonging to the Waltons. The grounds extended back to Ridge Ave. and the rear part was swampy. There we caught frogs, using a piece of red flannel for bait on a regular fish hook. There we sat on the grass with our shot guns and killed blackbirds and tried to shoot the wild ducks flying overhead, which however generally flew high enough to escape shots. Pete liked to play jokes on others, but did not like them when he was the victim. He could find all the sore spots and springs on a boys leg and back and sink his fingers in to them with great effect. Once at Woodlawn, when Howard and Tom had been his prey they turned on him and teased him until he got so angry as to hurt them severely. Then the older brother had to come to the rescue, take Pete in hand and put him down and out.

"Gem" Williams (Algernon) lived in the house corner Western and Bidwell St. (now owned by Wm. G. Park). He was fearless and active and a good climber. He outstripped the Woodlawn boys going
up our Oak Trees, climbing a trunk he could not reach around, high up and without branches. He and Ed once had a bad fist fight. He got Ed down and sat across his stomach and pummeled his face calling on him all the time to say he was whipped. This Ed would not do as he was very stubborn and finally “Gem” had to be dragged off.

Sid Madeira, lived on the outskirts of our territory, just below Fulton St. on Western Ave. He was sometimes with our crowd and sometimes not, and when not had to run down home pursued by flying stones.

Denny and Wood McKnight lived at Killbuck. They were bright active boys and up to all kinds of mischief. Denny had four fingers of one hand cut off in a hay cutter, he picked them up, ran for the doctor and had them sewed on and the hand came out all right. Wood had his front teeth knocked out playing baseball. Broken collar bones or arms were of almost yearly occurrence in that family. Once when shooting blackbirds in Bagaleys lot, Wood shot off his gun at the wrong moment and succeeded in blowing the seat out of Denny’s breeches but without injuring the boy. They were very contentious and when playing ball would stop to dispute a play for an hour while the other boys wanted to go on with the game. Wood became catcher for the famous Enterprise Ball Club of later days.

(To be continued)