

CHESTER TIMES – November 13, 1886 – ROCKY ROCKDALE – History of the Place and a Sketch of Its Leading Houses

Situated across Chester Creek on the Aston side from Glen Riddle, is the dale, or the Mount, as it is generally known, and a very appropriate name it is. It is located on the side of a great hill about half way up, and bears the appearance of a mountain village.

The hill on the side of which the village nestles, was formerly called "Mount Miser," on account of the total desolation which pervaded the place 50 years ago.

Rockdale was settled about half a century ago by the late William Brown, who built the large store and dwelling about half way up the Mount Road, and in which to this day, the business of the father is carried on by his son, Wm. D. and daughter, Alice H. Drews.

A forge, however, had been in successful operation about a quarter of a mile below Rockdale in 1809, when it was turned into a nail mill, where nails were made by the old fashioned hand method until changed into a grist and feed mill, which in turn gave way in 1845 to a cotton mill under the ownership of Bernard McCready, who subsequently sold it to Steen & Riddle, who in turn sold it to Alexander Balfour, now a prominent paper maker of Philadelphia, who sold it to Amr. Samuel Riddle, one of the gentlemen of whom he purchased it.

The property was burned down in 1873 and was rebuilt and turned into dwelling houses. Thus after almost a century of varying success this place of industry was given to the tidy housewife in place of the turning spindle or the clanging forge.

During the war of the Rebellion almost every able-bodied man in the village buckled on his armor and went to the front, and it is to be questioned if there is a locality in all the Northern States, which in proportion to the number of inhabitants, sent so many valiant soldiers to the country's aid in the time of peril.

Calvary Episcopal Church, situated in the midst of a miniature city of the dead of the village had half a century, is with the church yard, a spot to which many a tender recollection is attached by the good people of the vicinity, and if those somber, pebble-dashed, ivy-covered walls could but speak, what a tale of sorrow, gladness and all the passions of the human heart could they tell. The body of the founder of the church, Mr. Richard S. Smith, truly a noble man, rests among the graves in the yard, but the influence which his noble character cast around him while living has lived after him, and Antony's maxim that "The good that men do is oft interred with their bones" does not hold good in the instance of the life of this noble man. Mr. Smith lived long enough to see two generations come and go, and there sleep around him fathers and grandfathers of whom he could remember as boys.