

DID YOU EVER HEAR OF PIGS EYE IN ROCKDALE?

Today's name derivation story is a hodge-podge. Technically it concludes the articles on county small community names. Todmorden, Briggsville and Williamson School are discussed. But it also includes the story of Pig's Eye, an old building in Rockdale, with a name history that doesn't disappoint the curiosity its odd title provokes.

One might term Todmorden the "namiest town in the county. The small village along Ridley Creek where Brookhaven borough, Rose Valley borough and Nether Providence township meet, was known by any number of other names.

The first was Crookville. This name was given for William T. Crooks, an early landowner there. Next to own property in this vicinity was Samuel Bancroft. He established two large woolen mills which he called Todmorden Mills.

Soon the section became known as Todmorden. Bancroft, however, had another name for it. He also called it The Lower Bank. This was in reference to its location relative to his other mills near Moylan, which he called the Middle Bank. Other records show that the section was also known by two other names, Ridley Falls and Sackville.

Exact information as to why and when these different names were given is sketchy. However, this tiny community was at one time or other referred to by all or several of the many names. Dr. George Smith writes concerning that he, in the mid-nineteenth century, calls Todmorden" this area constitutes one of the largest woolen manufacturing establishments in the U.S."

A Nether Providence village name formerly well-known was Briggsville. The name referred to a row of houses along what is now Willow lane in South Media. The name came from an old brick manufacturer named Briggs, who built the original homes in this vicinity.

He operated a brickyard at about the point where Vernon Street now extends. His property extended to Providence road midway between Wallingford avenue and the Media borough line.

When Briggs closed the brickyard, he used the bricks that were left including the broken ones, to build the houses along Willow lane. He called these houses Briggsville. He also ubuilt a church which ws the active local church for a long time.

At first residents nick-named the section "Rotten Row" because the bricks used in building the houses had been left-overs. Old-timers still use this name, although many others remember the location as Briggsville.

Williamson School was named logically enough for its founder Isaiah V. Williamson. He established and endowed the school on December 1, 1888. Williamson was a well-known merchant of Philadelphia.

The railroad station and postoffice which were subsequently established at the school were also given Williamson' name

Pig's Eye is slightly out of place here because it is not a community, postoffice or railroad station, but instead a building in Rockdale in northeastern Aston Township. This 2-1/2 story stone building was erected on the south bank of Chester Creek and on the east side of Pennell road.

One day, shortly after the Civil War, ouone of the front windows on the building cracked. The crack resembled a pig's eye and caused many people to comment on the odd coincidence. Ever since then, the building was called Pig's Eye.

But just as interesting as its name history is the story of how the building sheltered 12 persons during a flood of Chester Creek in 1843. Marooned, the flood victims anxiously watched the waters mount around the building. Just at the critical moment when it seemed the waters might topple the building a sycamore tree at the corner of the threatened structure fell across the stream.

This diverted the current and the building was then out of danger. It sheltered 12 victims until the water subsided.