

CHESTER TIMES – December 6, 1911

WHY SYCAMORE MILLS IS A DESERTED VILLAGE – Too Far From Railroad and Modern Milling Has Caused Devastation – An Interesting Communication

In supplement to a story appearing in the Philadelphia Press and the Chester Times of the deserted, yet picturesque village of Sycamore Mills, Cyrus H. Caley, of Norristown, pens a little “follow story.” The cause of desertion was not given in the articles, according to Mr. Caley’s views. He considers that its distance from a railroad, the new roller processes in flour manufacturing, etc., are responsible for the desertion of the one-time thriving and pretty little place. Mr. Caley writes as follows to the Press:

“The Press of Sunday, November 19, 1911, gave a very interesting account of Sycamore Mills, situated among the hills of Delaware County. The writer of the article assigns no reason for the decline now existing in the end around this once prosperous country village.

There are two different reasons for the downfall of Sycamore Mills, the first and very important one being the situation then and still existing. Lying as it does, back among the hills several miles from any railroad center, the task of transporting their productions in competition with more available plants caused an expense insurmountable by the profits in return.

The second and very obvious reason is the demand for flour made by the patent roller process now used throughout the country. These old mills of our younger days were fitted up with the old burr along that ground all grain delivered at their stores.

The demand for “patent” flour became so prevalent that the old burr mills were compelled to take a retrospective seat and see their livelihood gradually slipping to more important ports.

The lumber business of Sycamore Mills was not a small or delicate one in the days when that little village was at its supremacy. The woodman’s ax was always busy in the hands of skilled men producing logs of the primeval forest for the mills down at Sycamore.

The writer, born in 1843, not many miles from the devastated village, has marked the days of prosperity and downfall. In his young manhood days he frequently aided, with his six-horse team, to relieve the Bishop Brothers in forwarding their productions to business points where they found a ready market. Not only Sycamore Mills by the devastating hand of time have crumbled to ruins, but many other similarly situated have shared the same fate.

KEITH LOCKHART COLLECTION