# StonyValley.com

## At The Mouth of Stony Creek

**By Brandy M. Watts Martin**

Stony Creek Valley was rightly named, although there has been little documentation on how the name came about. It was a desolate and forbidding valley when the first white settlers travelled to this forested region. The valley's surface was "exceedingly rough; being in some positions entirely covered with large fragments of hard conglomerate and sand stone rocks," noted Edward Miller, a civil engineer, in 1839. There existed no road through this narrow valley, which hid a mountain stream whose stony banks were shaded by evergreen trees, and waters fed by never-failing springs. Stony Valley was lush and beautiful none-the-less, its waters providing enough power to operate grist mills, iron forges and tanneries. So the settlers came to clear the stones from their farm fields and use them to build a new way of life.

### STONY CREEK MILLS

Among the first settlers was Samuel Sturgeon, who probably died around 1740, leaving his property at the mouth of Stony Creek to his only son Thomas. Thomas constructed the first grist mill there, prior to the American Revolution. He and his wife reared their large family of fifteen children at the site of Stony Creek Mills, as the area was known around 1778, when their youngest son was born.

When the Revolutionary War started, many of the first settlers of Stony Valley joined their fellow countrymen in Captain James Murray's Company of Lancaster County Militia, fulfilling their patriotic duty to a fledgling nation. Upon returning home, some would discover different circumstances that prompted them to leave Stony Valley, including Thomas Sturgeon, who relocated with his family to Juniata County in the Summer of 1793, after completing his service.

There in Juniata County, Thomas and three of his sons would reside, one of them Peter, appears to have operated a grist mill in Fermanagh Township in 1793, around the area of Cuba Mills. Thomas Sturgeon died in 1813, being buried in the Mifflintown Presbyterian Cemetery in Juniata County.

*Where Are They Now?*

*Thomas Sturgeon (left), one of the first settlers of Dauphin, and potentially the individual who named Stony Creek, is currently buried in the Westminster Presbyterian Cemetery, Mifflintown, Juniata County, with his wife, Margaret (right). Sturgeon was a veteran of the Revolution.*

**Have information about Stony Valley or one of its residents you'd like to share? Know about an individual who once worked for the Schuylkill & Susquehanna Railroad? Have some photographs lying around of people or places in Stony Valley (new or old) that you'd like to share with us and others? Contact our historian or one of our researchers:**

**Brandy M. Watts Martin**
Schuylkill & Susquehanna RR Historian
historian@stonyvalley.com

**Annette Logan**
Cold Spring Researcher
coldspringhistory@stonyvalley.com

**Seth A. Martin**
Stony Valley Daily Life Researcher
seth@stonyvalley.com

## — Inside This Issue —
## Spring 2015, Vol. 3, No. 2

# STONY VALLEY KIDS

**This season, EXPERIENCE...Nature through a child's eyes at Rattlesnake Shack!**
(Directions are on StonyValley.com's Experience page.)

## The Story of Rattlesnake Shack

In the middle of the woods in Clarks Valley, there are colorful flowers from long ago.

Alfred B. Champlain and some of his friends once lived in a cabin there along the Appalachian Trail. They called the cabin Rattlesnake Shack because of a plant they found nearby that had leaves that looked like rattlesnake skin.

He also had a friendly raccoon that stayed with him. They called her "Raccy the Raccoon." Stories about Raccy, were reported in the local newspapers.

The cabin is no longer there, but you can still see the flowers in April and May. **How many flowers can you find?**



*PINK LADY SLIPPER*

Arbutus
Bugleweed
Coral Bells
Daffodil
Flower
Japanese Rose
Pink Lady Slipper
Raccy
Rattlesnake Shack
Trillium
Violet
Wild Mustard



*THE LEAVES OF RATTLESNAKE PLANTAIN LOOK LIKE A SNAKE'S SKIN*

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B R J G W Y R E K I Y E V R E H F
U F A R B U T U S G T F I F T P K
G G P A R A T E G J W Y O H S G C
L H A I E R R H R R G H L G N T A
E E N H N S I D G U A D E F A T H
W S E T R K L H S P R C T R C R S
E A S C G H L R W G C P C D K E E
E J E Y G B I A Y H F L I Y P Q K
D D R A T S U M D L I W P I P E A
I A O R J I M Q J Y Q D F J E F N
F F S E H G U R P P S F D H T G S
L F E F H T Y P E R P L F G H Q E
E O W J F Q E Y P W P U I G K C L
W D G Y N T H K J E O P L P S F T
J I B G P T P L O F G L T Y P V T
S L L E B L A R O C P L F I O E A
K Y D C W B Y G I O P W E G Q R R
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# Upcoming Events

### Sat., March 14 @ 6:00-9:00 p.m.

"Stony Valley: Step Into History"

Comics & Paperbacks Plus
201 East Main Street, Palmyra, PA

EXPLORE...Stony Valley with our display featuring a 3-D Model that depicts hiking trails, land forms, and the top ten historic sites and top ten natural features in the valley and surrounds. Historian Brandy M. Watts Martin and Stony Valley Daily Life Researcher Seth A. Martin will be on hand to answer questions. Any *Cold Spring Hotel Site: Uncovering Its Layers of History* books by James C. and James M. Logan that are sold during this event will benefit the continued research of Stony Valley and the Schuylkill & Susquehanna Railroad.

### Wed., March 25 @ 7:30 p.m.

*Wonders of the Wilderness*

Presented by Brandy M. Watts Martin
Quittapahilla Audubon Society
Meeting held at Lebanon Valley Home,
550 East Main St., Annville, PA

Discover the natural wonders of Saint Anthony's Wilderness including Boxcar Rocks north of Stony Valley, the flowering garden of Rattlesnake Shack in Clarks Valley, and highlights from the breathtaking mountainous terrain in between. The presentation will also feature "Stony Valley: Step Into History," StonyValley.com's 3-D Model of Stony Valley and surrounds.

### Thurs., April 9 @ 7:30 p.m.

*Rausch Gap*

Presented by Brandy M. Watts Martin
Middle Creek WMA Visitors Center
Kleinfeltersville, PA

A revamp of the highly popular program, *Rausch Gap* explores the largest of the industrial communities of Stony Valley, Rausch Gap, Lebanon County, boasting approximately 1,000 residents during its heyday. A coal mining patch town turned railroad headquarters, Rausch Gap's ruins can be explored from your seat with this program.

### Sun., April 19 @ 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

"Stony Valley: Step Into History"

Earth Day At The Park
East Hanover Community Park
8848 Jonestown Road, Grantville, PA

East Hanover Township Park & Recreation Department, in partnership with Lebanon Valley College Education Department's Social Studies Methods students presents EARTH DAY IN THE PARK!
The event includes over 20 different hands-on activities, workshops and stations to help us all take better care of our community.

While there EXPLORE...Stony Valley with our display featuring a 3-D Model that depicts hiking trails, land forms, and the top ten historic sites and top ten natural features in the valley and surrounds. Historian Brandy M. Watts Martin and Stony Valley Daily Life Researcher Seth A. Martin will be on hand to answer questions.

For more information about the event and to find out who the other participants are, the flyer can be found on our Facebook page.

### Thurs., April 23 @ 7:00 p.m.

*Cold Spring Hotel Site: Uncovering Its Layers of History*

Presented by James C. & James M. Logan
Dauphin-Middle Paxton Historical Society
Church & Allegheny Sts., Dauphin, PA

Learn about the layers of history at Cold Spring in Stony Valley. Once home to a resort hotel, the site was repurposed multiple times throughout its storied history.

James C. & James M. Logan authored *Cold Spring Hotel Site: Uncovering Its Layers of History,* which is currently available for purchase on StonyValley.com's online store.

### Tues., April 28 @ 6:30 p.m.

*Walkin' The Rails*

Presented by Brandy M. Watts Martin
Annville Free Library, Annville, PA

One of the first rails-to-trails in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Stony Valley Rail-Trail runs 19.5 miles in Dauphin, Lebanon and Schuylkill Counties, winding its way through the heart of the second largest road-less wilderness tract of land in Pennsylvania. A family-friendly program, this slideshow, takes the first-time family explorer to the avid hiker in a trip down the rail-trail discovering the history and nature you can see along the way.

### Mon., October 12 @ 7:00 p.m.

*Stony Valley: A Haunting History*

Presented by Brandy M. Watts Martin
East Hanover Historical Society
of Dauphin County
8848 Jonestown Road, Grantville, PA

From ghosts to ghouls, witches to warlocks, murderers to mischief-makers, hear some of the mysterious and historical tales that call Stony Valley home.

### Tues., October 13 @ 7:00 p.m.
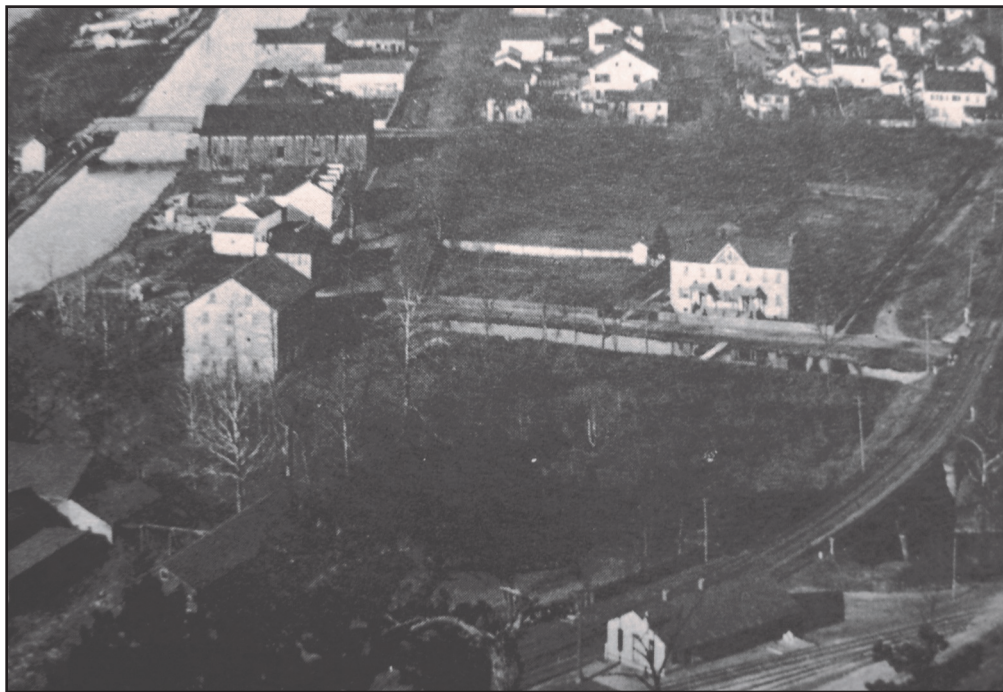
*Wonders of the Wilderness*

Presented by Brandy M. Watts Martin
Sweet Arrow Lake County Park
108 Clubhouse Road, Pine Grove, PA

Discover the natural wonders of Saint Anthony's Wilderness including Boxcar Rocks north of Stony Valley, the flowering garden of Rattlesnake Shack in Clarks Valley, and highlights from the breathtaking mountainous terrain in between.

## GREEN'S MILL

From appearances, Col. Timothy Green purchased the property at the mouth of Stony Creek next, whether it was the Sturgeon property or a neighboring property is still up for debate as the dates of both Sturgeon and Green's settlement overlap. Popular consensus says Timothy had retired as a judge in 1790, retiring to his farm at the mouth of Stony Creek.

Upon the death of Col. Timothy Green in 1812, the grist mill and surrounding farm was left to his son Innis. Innis Green likely took up residence in the house which still sits at 212 Susquehanna Ave., Dauphin, around this time. Although still residing nearby, he left operation of the grist mill to John K. Kennedy after the War of 1812, a war in which both men fought. At this time, Kennedy was in his early twenties, starting a family with Elizabeth Brown while residing near the mouth of Stony Creek. Together the couple would have ten children, but while Kennedy was still employed with the grist mill one of the Kennedy's sons, James, accidently drowned in the creek. As the story goes, Elizabeth, frightened for the safety of the remaining children, proposed to her husband that they move deeper into Stony Valley and take up farming. If the story is true and James is buried in the Dauphin Cemetery alongside his family, his grave remains unmarked.



*A bird's eye view of the town of Dauphin in 1897, depicting the Pennsylvania Canal on the left, the grist mill at the mouth of Stony Creek center-left, Innis Green's house center-right, and Dauphin's railroad station bottom-right. This one view captures the legacy of Dauphin for over a century.*

While Innis Green owned the property at the mouth of Stony Creek, he would erected a mill dam around 1823 as well, to supply water to the grist mill; although, he deprived one of his neighbors of Stony Creek's water power, and caused a lawsuit that was argued as high as the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Between Innis' death in 1839 and the purchase of the land by the Robinson family, who also owned the Dauphin Tannery, the mill's history remains sketchy. There are numerous uncertainties at this point regarding whether the mill purchased by William J. Robinson was the original Green's Mill. An 1875 Atlas of Dauphin County does show that a grist mill still sat at the mouth of Stony Creek at this time (shown left).



*1875 Atlas of Dauphin County depicting Dauphin, which includes a grist mill still present at the mouth of Stony Creek.* (Combination Atlas Map of Dauphin County, Everts & Stewart, 1875)

*Not getting them? Email historian@stonyvalley.com and ask us to be added to our e-updates!*

If you have information on Stony Valley, the S&S Railroad, families who worked for the S&S Branch, or photographs you'd like to share with us and others, please contact us!

## *Little Known Facts About Stony Valley*

Stony Mountain doesn't actually border Stony Valley. The valley is bordered by Second Mountain and Third (Sharp) Mountain.

On the Dauphin end, Stony Valley was originally called Bell's Valley after the family of Samuel Bell who lived in the area during the 1700s.

There are seven former railroad stops along the 19.5-mile long Stony Valley Railroad Grade. They are Water Tank, Rattling Run, Yellow Spring, Cold Spring, Rausch Gap, Gold Mine and Mount Eagle.

Stony Valley's peak population in the mid-1850s was approximately 2,000 individuals, most of them immigrants from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales who worked in the coal mines.