

EXPLORE THE HISTORY OF

SEVEN VALLEYS

YOUR GUIDE TO A WALK THROUGH *HISTORY*

A pleasant, bucolic name of disputed origin: some historians have denied the existence of "seven valleys" in the area, while others have taken pains to identify them in the rolling landscape. Many of the original 1700s German settlers belonged to the Seventh Day Baptists, or "Sieben Tagers." Legend has it that linguistic confusion birthed the name of 'das Siebenthal' (Seven Valleys) for their home. This name clearly suggested a place where seven valleys converged, or a valley comprised of seven smaller valleys. In 1892, town fathers incorporated the area as a borough using a literal translation of 'Siwedahl' (the PA Dutch form), or 'Seven Valley,' a name that only appears on archival items today.

Seven Valleys remained a remote farming community until the 1830s, most of its output in the form of distilled liquids. When railroad surveyors arrived in the 1820s, locals complained bitterly about the changes to come.

Before the railroad finally came in 1838, armies of immigrant laborers with pickaxes and shovels tore away the earth and farmers carried it from place to place as needed. The Northern Central literally cut Seven Valleys in half and bisected the yet-unnamed Cherry Street, hence its strange relationship with the rail trail.

For many years, the crossing on Main Street was problematic, but the installation of a subway beneath a rail bridge helped solve it. Jacob Smyser and John Ziegler established the first store in town right along the tracks near the Cherry Street crossing. Smyser would become the first stationmaster of 'Smyser's Station' and Ziegler would become the first postmaster of 'Seven Valleys' in 1841 (the U. S. Postal Service got it right from the beginning).

The arrival of the railroad triggered diverse industrial expansion, from an iron ore mine to ice cream and cigar production. The rising popularity of cigarettes and decline and fall of the railroad put a damper on Seven Valleys' expansion. But some light manufacturing, such as sewing factories, would remain for many years. And as the Borough website states, "Seven Valleys remains a haven of quiet serenity and a delightful place to live."



C. Jacob Fussell Ice Cream (Birthplace of Ice Cream Mass Production)

*North side of Main Street, east of
Codorus Creek bridge*

Despite its modest size and rural setting, Seven Valleys lays claim to a significant distinction in a nation obsessed with sweets. In 1852, Quaker entrepreneur C. Jacob Fussell began the commercial production of ice cream here, a first in the nation. Born in Little Falls, Hartford County, Maryland, Fussell began his career running a dairy delivery business in Baltimore. He sold milk and cream produced by York County farmers, demonstrating the link between York and Baltimore that would be greatly strengthened by the coming of the Northern Central Railroad. When a Baltimore-area dairyman and caterer defaulted on a loan to another Quaker, the lender contacted Fussell for help. With no interest in the caterer's production of a frozen mixture of milk, eggs, and sugar, the lender suggested Fussell continue the operation himself. Fussell realized that, as milk and cream supplies were unpredictable, producing ice cream closer to the source might reap large rewards.

In the winter of 1851-1852, Fussell decided to locate his operation in Seven Valleys. He hired Daniel Henry, a local miller, to construct an ice house and factory building on Main Street adjacent to the Codorus Creek. From the summer of



B. F. Klinedinst Ice Cream store, c1900

1852 through the fall of 1854, Fussell oversaw ice cream production in Seven Valleys, selling it for 25 cents a quart at a time when the going price was 60 cents. He made use of the railroad, which enabled him to manufacture ice cream close to the raw materials, but sell it in the distant Baltimore market. After 1854, Fussell moved his operations to Baltimore. But other entrepreneurs, including Benjamin Klinedinst and the Henry family, continued local production into the 1940s. Klinedinst operated in Fussell's old factory long enough to move from steam power to gasoline. The Henrys did their best to expand on Fussell's initial success, constructing a three-story plant on Cherry Street. In 1903, an "ice cream war" erupted when Urias Henry pelted Klinedinst with stones. Klinedinst had a reputation for drinking and Henry argued he had acted in part in self-defense, which may have led to his acquittal. Ultimately, a series of warm winters in the 1930s and a lack of capital to purchase refrigeration equipment brought ice cream production in the borough to an end.

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Nathan Gladfelter Cigar Factory and Mount Vernon Cigar Company

East of RR bridge, south of Main Street, present-day location of Four Springs Winery

Seven Valleys has long been famous, like several other spots in York County, for its cigar factories. York County's proximity to Lancaster County tobacco farms meant the raw materials were close at hand. By 1907, York County was home to 1,200 factories that manufactured 300 million cigars annually. Seven Valleys' cigar industry began with the arrival of W. F. Weihmiller, an immigrant who learned the cigar-making trade in Bremen, Germany. Weihmiller opened a small factory and taught some locals the trade.

Before long, he had emulators. Nathan Gladfelter, who ran a general store on Main Street, built a factory behind his store and would eventually employ 50 "hands." His sister, Lucy, and her husband, Henry Kuntz, would open a factory in Jesse Gladfelter's former home just down the street and would open a branch factory in Loganville; they would employ 70 hands. The cigar business combined elements of commercial capitalism with an apprenticeship system. Cigar brokers arrived by train to find suppliers for the various brands they had to sell. They carried the cigar bands with them, which would be applied to cigars once the deal was made. Lucy and Henry Kuntz made cigars exclusively on this "custom" basis and never sold cigars under their own brand name. The apprenticeship enabled young men and women to learn the trade, at no compensation, by rolling as many cigars as it took to make them proficient. When they could roll a cigar well enough to be sold as a cheaper brand, they would be paid per cigar. The filler tobacco came mostly from Lancaster, but also from Maryland and Virginia. The wrappers initially came from Virginia, but as Seven Valleys factories grew in prominence, Havana wrappers were imported as well. In the 1890s, entrepreneurs including Nathan Gladfelter, Noah Lau and David Henry (who already operated a cigar box factory), William Bubb, and two Richmond cigar brokers established the Mount Vernon Cigar Company in a large three-story factory Gladfelter built behind his own factory on Main Street.



Mount Vernon Cigar Manufacturing Company and residences, Northern Central railroad bridge, c1890

The company employed 100 hands and had high ambitions: it purchased over a dozen cigar stores from Richmond to Boston to sell its products, operating them for nearly twenty years. The cigar business continued strong in Seven Valleys into the 1920s. In 1924, the General Cigar Company, which began operations in the 1910s, employed 115 people and manufactured over six million cigars. But competition from cigarettes and other machine-made products signaled the end of local cigar manufacture. General Cigar closed down its Seven Valleys operation in 1928, downgrading their prized "White Owl" long filler cigars to a machine-made kind produced elsewhere. Some locals opened factories to produce cheap machine-mades on and off during the Depression and World War II, but the industry never recovered.

3

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

3 Church Street



Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, c1920. Built 1896.

This quaint, picturesque country church owes its existence to a religious revival that came to Seven Valleys in the winter of 1883. Rev. E. Crumbling, who had served as a supply pastor at Trinity Lutheran up the street, began holding evangelical services at the Knights of Pythias Lodge, also on Church Street. His efforts attracted nearly 100 active congregants. In addition to holding regular services at the Knights of Pythias, the congregation would form an evangelical Sunday school which, by 1895, was drawing over 100 participants. Many children attended Trinity Sunday School in the morning and St. Paul's in the afternoon. In 1896, the congregation built a church. Over time, St. Paul's would see service from twenty-one different pastors. Like other evangelical churches, in 1946 it merged with the United Brethren Church. The EUB would merge again in 1968 with the Methodists to form the United Methodist Church. St. Paul's was home to numerous outreach programs, including a Women's Missionary Society and a Mission Band. Seven Valleys came together to witness the lighting of a live Christmas Tree in 1971 and to hear an all-girls choir perform. St. Paul's planted and decorated the tree for the occasion. For years, Seven Valleys used it as a community tree. Despite its positive community role and its

central location in the borough, St. Paul's found itself unable to continue in 1975 and petitioned the Charge Conference to allow the church to close. Nonetheless, St. Paul's continued holding infrequent services for another two years with the kind assistance of the pastor and members of Glen Rock's Emmanuel United Methodist Church. The building was eventually sold and is now a private residence.



Seven Valleys during the Civil War

Heritage Trail and Cherry Street crossing, near location of Henry Bott's store

While the community played little direct role in the Underground Railroad, the tracks of the Northern Central guided many enslaved people north on their quest for freedom. The war that would end slavery came to Seven Valleys in 1863, again because of the railroad tracks through the town. On June 27, elements of the 35th Virginia Cavalry Battalion under Lt. Col. Elijah V. White entered Hanover Junction, where the Hanover Branch Railroad met the Northern Central. White sent men north and south to burn rail bridges over the Codorus. When troopers arrived in Seven Valleys, they quickly raided Henry Bott's store, taking all the clothing they could carry. Legend has it that a rebel offered Mrs. Bott a Confederate dollar in payment, arguing that it would soon be worth more than the wartime greenbacks the Union was issuing. He proclaimed the rebels were winning the war and would soon take York, cross the Susquehanna, and move on Philadelphia. The trooper's prediction was somewhat true; the 35th Virginia moved north hours later to rejoin Gen. John B. Gordon's brigade, which occupied York on June 28.

Confederate Plans to cross the Susquehanna River were foiled by Pennsylvania militiamen who burned the Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge, denying the Confederates access to Lancaster and beyond. Anyhow, Gordon's troops were soon rushed to Gettysburg, where they would lose the pivotal battle. On July 1, just days after the Rebel visit, 3,000 Union troops under Gen. David M. Gregg arrived to patrol the Hanover Junction-Seven Valleys area as part of the extreme right of the Army of the Potomac. After spending several hours on patrol, Gregg took his command west to Gettysburg to join the fight. In the aftermath of the terrible battle, locals Nathan Gladfelter and Valentine Kuntz joined other young men in providing wagons and muscle to help bury the dead.

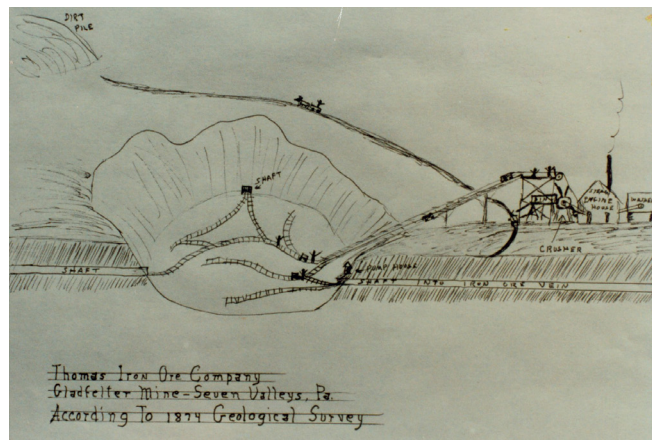


Thomas Iron Ore Company

Corner of Church and Cross streets, near former location of iron ore scales

In the 1850s, iron ore mining began on the Henry Geiselman farm at the eastern end of the borough. Known as the Thomas Iron Ore Company, the operation continued for about thirty years, ending in 1887. The company operated under the

direction of James Findley and later H. I. Gladfelter. It would change the landscape of Seven Valleys in several ways, a dam and an ore crusher were constructed on south of Church Street. The ore crusher consisted of a massive barrel lined with fins. Iron balls were added with iron ore and workers used horsepower to rotate the barrel until the ore was sufficiently crushed. A water sluice was used to separate the ore from the lighter slag. Slag and earth were dumped in huge piles around the mine. Overall, it was a simple affair: most of the digging was done with picks and a two-mule scoop carried the ore to the crusher. A narrow-gauge railroad carried the crushed ore to the main railroad siding. The company erected scales to measure the ore before it was loaded by hand, with great difficulty, into railroad cars. The company hired workers from Freiburg, Germany, to assist with this heavy work. It constructed a series of houses for their families on Church Street in the vicinity of Freystown Road, named after the immigrants' hometown.



Drawing of Thomas Iron Ore Company, c1870. (Photo, c1970.)

Although the work was hard, Thomas Iron only recorded two deaths by accident, both of them grisly. In 1869, young Irish worker Barney McClune fell into a moving ore crusher; he was buried in an unmarked grave in Mount Prospect Cemetery. In 1875, mule driver James Rowe became entangled in the traces when the mules bolted, dragging him to death. The pit mining proceeded west over time, deeper into Seven Valleys. As it continued, the company erected new washers and crushers and constructed a new narrow-gauge railroad at Cross Street to connect with the railroad. Eventually, the mining proceeded on the west side of Main Street. A financial dispute in the 1880s led the company to cease operations. In recompense for the death of James Rowe, the defunct company gave the property he lived on to his widow. Despite the financial benefits the mine brought to Seven Valleys, massive pits and piles of earth and debris lasted for generations. In the 1940s, resident Albertus Hoff found one way to fill the holes on his land: he allowed the City of York to dump "dry" garbage and junk into the holes for a period of one year. Several fires broke out and residents complained of a roach invasion, but Hoff subsequently bulldozed earth piles over the junk. Seven Valleys historian Armand Gladfelter credited Hoff for "vastly improving the appearance of the town."



Mendel Brothers/Seven Valleys Garment Company

43-47 Cherry Street

In a pattern oft-repeated across industrial America, sewing factories and other textile operations often came to cities and towns with heavy industry. In accordance with the thinking of the day, sewing factories provided employment to the wives and daughters of industrial workers already in the area. In Seven Valleys, the drive to establish a sewing factory came from within. A group of eight local investors joined to erect a building on Cherry Street.



Mendel Sewing factory employees, c1915

Upon the building's completion in 1905, the group rented it to the Mendel Brothers firm, which soon hired fifty local women. The company used a steam engine to drive its machines and the excess steam heated the building. Mendel Bros. installed a loud steam whistle blown on railroad time and accurate enough for locals to set their clocks. Following the departure of Mendel Bros., a Samuel Magill installed electric sewing machines in the 1920s. He was briefly succeeded by Louis Zupnick of New Freedom, who operated until 1932. Following Zupnick, J. H. Stern operated the factory under his name and later purchased it outright. Under Stern, the firm became a family business, and in 1946 control passed to his daughter, Margaret Diffenbaugh. In 1950, a bad fire severely damaged the plant, although it was not a total loss and insurance covered all damages. The community pitched in, once again, to make sure the sewing factory could reopen. It did so ten days later, with new equipment from the Singer company, and put seventy-five people back to work. In 1952, the company expanded with two additions. In 1965, Diffenbaugh sold J. H. Stern to Sandy Shaw, Inc., owned by Alan Lubell of New York. Like J. H. Stern, Sandy Shaw manufactured children's dresses. The factory would operate under a new name, the Seven Valleys Garment Company, until its closure in September 1998. Manager Kay Gilbert blamed foreign competition for the closure. At its height, the company employed 200 people, but just thirty-seven remained at final closure. Its workers were represented by Local 196, International Ladies Garment

Workers Union (ILGWU), and later the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). It was the last unionized garment company in York County.



Restored Jail House

Opposite 43-47 Cherry Street

A small and easily-missed brick structure, Seven Valleys' restored jail house dates to 1899, when the borough council approved construction of a lockup for occasional use. Later referred to as a "watch house," the lockup would house the community's first piece of fire equipment (later transferred to the Seven Valleys Fire Co.). The 14-by-18-foot lockup has a steel roof and is built on property that cost the borough \$22.50 to acquire. The total cost of construction, including brick, lumber, hand-made iron bars, and labor, was \$178.73 (or over \$5,500 today). There are two small cells in the building and originally the furniture consisted of iron cots, a table, eight chairs, and a stove. The borough never added bars to the windows as originally planned. It saw infrequent use for its intended purpose. At the time of its restoration for the 1976 bicentennial, older locals denied knowing anyone from Seven Valleys who ever stayed overnight. However, it is likely that the lockup saw use as a sobering tank and for detaining those accused of domestic and assault offenses. In the depths of the Great Depression, the lockup offered a one-night respite to unemployed men riding the rails in search of work (a recovered metal sign clearly announced "overnight lodging only"). The building also saw regular use for borough council meetings. After suffering from many decades of disuse, the jail received attention and care from local historian Ray Kinard who did much repair work and painted the building inside and out. In June 1976, the restored building was reopened to the public as part of bicentennial festivities that included a flag raising, a basket lunch, a fashion show, and musical events. The jail continues to serve as a landmark to many residents and is one of a few such lockups still in existence.



Restored Jailhouse, 1970



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