

## BLAIRSVILLE.

*Historical and Descriptive.*—Blairsville, the metropolis of Indiana county and a pleasantly located town on the east bank of the Conemaugh river, in Burrell township, is destined at no distant day in the future to attain to the proportions of a city and far exceed the expectations of its founders. It was laid out in July and August, 1818, was incorporated as a borough March 25, 1825, and in 1890 contained a population of 3,113. It is 189 miles northwest from Washington City, 161 west from Harrisburg and 14 miles southwest of the county-seat. It was named for John Blair, who was president of an important turnpike company. James Baird, Sr., laid the warrant which included the larger part of the site of Blairsville and sold it to James Campbell, of Franklin county, who, in connection with Andrew Brown, of Black Lick township, laid out the town and offered the first lots for sale on November 11, 1818. Hugh Richards and James Rankin, in competition for a free lot, erected the first two houses in March, 1819, and Richards won the prize by only two hours. Jonathan Doty opened a store in 1820, and Abner Willetts, in the succeeding year, became the first tavern-keeper. The first postmaster was George Mulholland, Jr. The first market-house was built in 1829 and its successor was erected in 1857. The water-works was completed in 1873.

Blairsville is situated in the second great coal basin of Indiana county, which is named after the town.

“The Third or Blairsville basin is a simple synclinal fold extending, without structural complication of any kind, from the centre of Chestnut Ridge anticlinal on the northwest. It is the prolongation southwestward of the Third Great basin of Clearfield and Jefferson counties, where its boundary lines on the east and west are the same as those above mentioned; but continued still further southwestward across the Conemaugh into Westmoreland county, these limits of the trough are maintained only as far as Sewickley creek.

“The basin stretches diagonally nearly through the centre of Indiana county. Narrowing somewhat towards the northeast in consequence of the non-parallelism of the two enclosing anticlinals, its width is reduced from seven miles on the Conemaugh to scarcely more than four miles in the latitude of the county-seat; traced thence still further north, its width the same lines to about five miles, which is then maintained without variation from the headwaters of Two Lick and Little Mahoning to and across the Jefferson county line.

“The point where the Pittsburgh coal bed touches the county five miles from the centre of the Chestnut Ridge anticlinal, and only a mile and half from the Indiana anticlinal; and the reason why the outspread of the bed westward from the synclinal is here reduced to such narrow limits, is not because of the topography of the county, but because the southeast dips from the Indiana anticlinal correspond in sharpness to the comparative shortness of the interval over which they are felt. It is difficult to make persons unaccustomed to geological thought appreciate the force and extent of such dips, and the causes sometimes produced by them. That the Pittsburgh coal bed should *overshoot* the summit of Chestnut Ridge at the Packsaddle by nearly a thousand feet, and that the great sandrock forming the romantic cliffs at Oaks Point should *underlie* the streets of Blairsville by the same amount of interval—these and many more facts of a similar nature seem so simple as scarcely to require an explanation; but for lack of their

proper appreciation by property holders much vain and fruitless search has been expended, especially along the flank of Chestnut Ridge, for what cannot possibly be found there.

“The synclinal axis of the Third basin runs under the centre of the town of Blairsville, which, as before stated, is only a mile and a half distant on a direct line from the Indiana anticlinal.”

When the western division of the Pennsylvania canal was completed to Blairsville, in 1828, it came rapidly into public notice and became an important point for shipping. Its prosperity was slightly checked by the abandonment of the canal and the opening of the Pennsylvania railroad to Pittsburgh, but fully revived with the building of the West Pennsylvania railroad. It has retained its position as a leading town of western Pennsylvania by the thrift and energy of its citizens. It contains several handsome churches, a fine graded public school, under the charge of Prof. G. W. Innes, and a large number of industrial establishments.

The *Enterprise* describes Blairsville as follow: “Surrounded by a rich farming country, the hills underlaid with coal, to be mined by drifting. Blue stone, Lime-stone and fire clay in various places. Has adjoining it coke and coal works, and within the borough limits the West Penn Glass works; two brick works (one just outside), foundry and machine shop, two planning mills, woolen mill, two flour and feed mills, and the shops of the West Penn railroad. Has an excellent system of water works, natural gas, will soon have electric lights. The West Penn and Indiana Branch railroads pass through the town and interest three miles distant with the Pennsylvania Central.

The *Blairsville Record*, the second paper in the county, was established in 1827 by Murray & McFarland, and continued democratic under different managements until 1844, when it was succeeded by the *Citizen*, which existed for about one year. In May, 1846, Richard B. McCabe and R. B. Woodward started the *Apalachian*, which advocated “free soil” doctrines and existed until 1855. In 1858 the *Blairsville Record* was founded as a democratic paper and supported that party until 1864, when it was discontinued. About 1859 the *True American*, a republican sheet, was started, but its name was soon changed to that of the *Blairsville Journal*, which ceased to exist in 1861. on April 27, 1865, the *New Era* was started and in 1866 the name was changed to the *Blairsville Press*, which went out of existence in 1869. In 1880 the *Blairsville Enterprise* was founded, and six years later passed into the hands of its present proprietor and editor, Joseph Moorhead, who has labored earnestly and successfully in his work and issues one of the best county papers in the State.

The physicians of Blairsville for sixty years after its founding were: E. P. Emerson, Dr. Simmons, Dr. Craighead, Dr. Duffield, R. J. Marshall, Dr. Gillespie, S. P. Brown, John Gilpin, Dr. Andrews, R. M. S. Jackson, Dr. Hammell, Dr. Gemmil, Bishop I. W. Wiley, Dr. McKin, Dr. Funderberg, M. L. Miller, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Anawalt, T. M. Laney, T. J. Cantwell, F. M. McConnoughey, J. W. Hughes, S. R. Rutlege and L. S. Claggett. Among its present successful physicians are Dr. I. P. Klingensmith and Dr. J. B. Carson.

The Blairsville Ladies’ seminary was established in 1851 by Rev. George Hill, D.D., with forty pupils. Nearly 2,000 young ladies have attended this school, and its attendance grows larger every year. In 1868 the Blairsville academy was founded with normal, classical and business departments.

The first church at Blairsville was the Presbyterian, which was organized in 1822, and whose present pastor is Rev. George Hill, D.D. The other churches of the borough, with the years of their organization and the names of their present pastors, are as follows: United Presbyterian, 18--, Rev. W. H. McMaster; Baptist, 1824, Rev. D. W. Swigart; Methodist Episcopal, 1824, Rev. T. h. Woodring; S. S. Simon 7 Jude's Catholic church, 1829, Rev. Francis Brady, and A.M.E. Zion, 18--, Rev. Nelson Davis.

The W. C. T. U. holds two meetings every month.

The present secret society organizations of Blairsville are; Acacia Lodge, No. 355, Free and Accepted Masons: Blairsville Lodge, No. 436, Independent Order of Odd Fellows: Pilgrim Lodge, No. 96, American Order of United Women; Finley Patch Post, No. 137, Grand Army of the Republic; Active Lodge, No. 1601, Knights of Honor; Mechanics' Lodge, No 166, Knights of Honor; Keystone Council, No. 1, of Pennsylvania, Order of Chosen Friends; S.S. Simon and Jude's Beneficial Society, No. 351, I.C.B.U.; St. Joseph's Branch, No. 117, E.B.A.; Local Branch, No. 22, Order of the Iron Hall; Local Branch, No. 505, Sisterhood of the Iron Hall; Blairsville Lodge, No. 13, Order of Tonti; Blairsville Council, No. 831, Royal Arcanum; Blairsville Assembly, No. 8s, Royal Society of Good Fellows; Bethel Castle, No. 189, Knights of the Golden Eagle; Assembly No. 238, Knights of Labor; Blairsville Council, Nos. 206, Junior Order of United American Mechanics; Blairsville Conclave, independent Order of Heptasophs; Blairsville Lodge, No. 9, Order of Solon; West Penn Lodge, No. 392, B. of L.F.; Blairsville Lodge, No. 108, B. of L.E.; Graff Lodge, No. 39, Order of Pente; Blairsville Assembly, No. 5, American Fraternal Circle; Washington Camp, No. t35, P.O.S. of A., and Blairsville Lodge, No. 140, Sexennial League.

The burgesses of Blairsville from 1825 to 1875 have been: John Cunningham, 1825; Aaron Devinny, 1827; William G. David, 1828; R. B. McCabe, 1829; George Grier, 1830; J. N. Nesbit, 1831; John McCrea, 1832; Daniel H. Barr, 1833; Thomas Boyle, 1834; John Bruce, 1836; Wm. T. Smith, 1837; Samuel Steel, 1838; Moses Culbertson, 1839; Stewart Davis, 1841; A. R. Chapman, 1842; James C. Day, 1844; R. Bartley, 1846; R. H. Woodward, 1847; A. Alters, 1848; John Graff, 1849; Daniel H. Barr, 1850; Robert Bartley, 1851; W. T. Smith, 1852; Edward Dully, 1853; Archibald Davis, 1856; C. C. Davis, 1857; John P. Ford, 1858; Edward Dully, 1859; J. I. Chapman, 1869; John G. Long, 1871; W. G. Triage, 1872.

Blairsville's population at each census from 1830 to 1890 has been: 1830,----; 1840, 990; 1850, 1,137; 1860, 1,009; 1870, 1,054; 1880, 1,162; 1890, 3,113. In 1827 the population was reported, from an actual count, at 500.

Blairsville is noted for its important and rapidly increasing manufacturing industries.

The West Penn glass works, as they are called, lie on the southern borders of the borough, along the West Pennsylvania railroad. They are built entirely of brick. The plant consists of warehouse, packing room, leer building, blacksmith shop and factory proper. The factory is two stories high and is known among the glass trade as the best arranged and ventilated in the State. It is always cool, although a sixteen-pot furnace is going at white heat continually. The product of the factory is a car-load of bottles per day. The members of the first firm—John T. Birney and Charles E. Barr—were killed in the wreck of a portion of the works in the high winds of about a year ago. The factory building was in course of construction and it was feared the storm would blow in the

south gable. The managers were overseeing the work of strengthening the wall when it came down with a crash, burying them beneath the ruins. By a strange fate none but the managers of the company were killed. The work was taken up by other hands, however, and about 200 men and boys are now employed in the factory, and they are all residents of Blairsville or neighboring boroughs. It through the persistent efforts of R. W. Wehrle that the means were raised to procure the ground which was asked for by the company as a condition of establishing their works at Blairsville.

The Sloan heirs and the West Penn glass company are laying out a number of building lots on the ground between the works and the town, all of which are in the borough limits.

Two very important factors in the development of the neighborhood have been the Blairsville coke-works and the Blairsville brick-works. They are close together on the Indiana railroad, just on the outskirts of Blairsville. Ed. J. Graff is manager of the brick-works and Jacob Graff of the coke-works. The brick works employ twenty-five men and are operated by a forty-five horse-power engine. The clay is near at hand, and an inclined railway brings it to the presses. The capacity of the works is 20,000 bricks per day. The coke-works are turning out a large quantity of coke from twenty-six ovens. The coal is mined from adjacent hills. Another extensive brick-works is that of Isaac Wynn & Son. It is situated near the West Penn railroad in the southern section of the town. Their capacity is also about 20,000 bricks per day. They have recently put in machinery of an improved type.

The hills around the town are rich in deposits of blue stone, which recently has been developed very extensively. There is none better than the Blairsville blue stone for Belgian blocks and fine building purposes. Wilson's Feldman quarries on the Bolivar branch between Blairsville and Bolivar employ 185 men-including laborers and blockmakers. They turn out from 3,500 to 5,000 block per day and five car-loads of ballast. Stark Brothers' tone quarry lies just above that of Wilson's. They employ 100 men and have large railroad contracts to keep their hands busy continually.

The production of coal for shipment to the very best eastern market is another industry in which Blairsville is developing considerable importance. The Robert Smith coal mines are about three-fourths of a mile up the Indiana railroad. They employ about fifteen diggers and put out a large quantity of excellent coal. The J. McKinney Turner mines are adjacent, and their output is about the same. The Thomas Maher coal works, just across the hollow, employ twenty men and fill four cars daily.

Blairsville rightly lays a claim to the big Isabella furnace, although it is across the borders of Westmoreland county. The 300 employes of the company buy all their supplies in Blairsville, and are no small contributors to its commercial prosperity. The Isabella coke-works include 240 ovens, capable of producing twenty-two cars of coke per day. They are located at Cokeville.

The immense blue stone quarries of Booth & Flinn at the Intersection, although also in Westmoreland county, throw the trade of their many employes to Blairsville, and she claims them as her own. The quarries of Evan Jones, the Pittsburgh contractor, are on the other side of the Intersection, and they also turn many a dollar into the tills of the Blairsville merchants.

Turning from the development of raw materials to their application in the arts and trades, we come first to the foundry and machine shops of C. L. Tittle. They

occupy two large building on Brown street. His principal line of work is metal supplies for coke ovens and coal mines.

Blairsville has two large planning mills. That of Kennedy & Fair occupies a triangular space just back of the passenger depot and bordering upon the West Penn tracks. It is a complete mill, occupying two large buildings and employing fifty men. The planning mill of Harbison & Ferguson, Brownstown, is also an extensive establishment, and a busy one. The woolen mill of John Moorhouse is another industry giving employment to a large number of persons.

One of the oldest and most important industries of Blairsville is found in the repair shops of the West Penn railway. They give employment to 225 men. Their work is generally in repairs, but occasionally they turn out a new car. The yards surrounding the shops are a mile long, and as wide as the limits of obtainable space permit. There are six tracks leading to the round-house, and the bridge just above town is being widened so as to allow that number to cross there and thus extend the yards. An appropriation of \$35,000 has recently been made for new shops on the West Pennsylvania railroad, and Blairsville has very good prospects of getting them. We are indebted for many facts concerning Blairsville to the *Enterprise* and *Gazette*.