

1951
1879
Imperial 72 yrs old.
IMPERIAL or Montour City.

The study of Imperial necessitates the consideration of two townships, Findlay and North Fayette. Both townships are located in Allegheny County, about 16 miles west of Pittsburgh, and 24 miles east of Chester W/Va. Findlay township is south of Moon and west of North Fayette, adjoining Beaver County on the west and Washington County on the south. The portion west of Washington County received the name of Findlay in 1820, in honor of Governor Wm. Findlay, an able and honorable man

who was the head of this state from 1817-1820; U.S. Senator from 1821-1827; Treasurer of the mint from 1827-1841; contains the greater part of Imperial in its territory. North Fayette township derived its name from General ~~de~~ Fayette and became a township in 1790. The township is crossed diagonally from NE to SW by the Pittsburgh & Steubenville Turnpike, and the Montour Railroad traverses the region about its Northern boundary.

The Montour Creek defines the line of demarcation between the townships in Imperial and thus marks the school districts.

The most prominent natural features of Imperial are its hills and valleys. To the inhabitants, the hills are regarded as only something to climb, but to the outsider natural beauty prevails.

1 The first two houses were built on the Archibald Marshall farm, which comprises the central part of the town to-day.

Shelley - I would like to see your paper later on - as I am to have one in Feb. at Garden Club - I know you will keep this carefully & return to me before winter - your father has helped me so much that I hope this helps you

The village of Imperial was laid out by the Imperial Coal Co. about 1879. Prior to that date the site was the farm of R. R. Wilson consisting of 115 acres. The Montour Railroad was ^{Incorporated 1878} built in 1879 by the Imperial Coal Co. ^{2nd} The first passenger train run was an excursion trip to the Pittsburgh Exposition in the fall 1879.

^{1st} Coal shipments were made in July 1879. Wm. McCaery of Pittsburgh was the President of the Imperial Coal Co. ^{B. M. Jenkins - Treas. F. H. Schallenberg - Supt} and Chauncey Andrews of Youngstown, Ohio. and Wallace Andrews of Willoughby, Ohio, were members of the company. The railroad

was 11 1/2 miles long when first built. The terminal points were Montour Junction on the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad and Imperial, (formerly known as Montour City.) The railroad was built for coal transportation from the mines of the Imperial Coal Co.

but also afforded passenger facilities. The railroad has proven to be an important factor in the development of the Montour Valley.

At an early date a grist mill (grain mill) stood on Montour's run, a mile below Imperial and was conducted by Wm. Guy, as early as 1820. ^{known as Guy's mill} (Horse power was used here in times of drought and subsequently a steam engine was added.) Forbes mill on Potatoe Garden Run and Straus's mill on the same stream were in operation long ago, but have since gone to decay. The Coal Co. operated coke works on the line of the Montour Railroad near Montour Junction and coal from Imperial mines were shipped there.

After the railroad was built, mines were opened, the roadsides were built up and extended to the hills. ^{about 1 mi from Ohio river} ^{on farm formerly owned by Wm. Guy where 120 coke runs}

3
Original P.O. established April 1880

By 1889 there were about 30 houses which were virtually owned by the Coal Co. The new people who came in to work in the mines were foreigners from various parts of the country. These people who were Catholic walked to Noblestown (8 miles away) to worship. ^{but} ~~With the raising of subscriptions~~ a Catholic Church was built in 1907 which remains there to-day. On the otherhand, the Valley Presbyterian Church was organized in 1840. This church supplied the religious instruction to the remainder of the Valley, except a small band of Methodists who met in the Odd Fellow's Hall. The old church was replaced by a new building in 1911. ^{The Building Committee were} ~~Building Committee~~ Andrew Stewart - Lewis C. Hays - Wm. Wilson.

The old Valley School first located on the site where the bank now stands was the only seat of learning for a year after the town was built or populated. A select school for the summer term was first held in the Valley Presbyterian Church conducted by the pastor Rev. C.M. Spargrove ^{and 1881} assisted by Rev. Stewart of the Murraysville Academy of Washington County. It was later held in the Odd Fellows Hall erected in 1880. A new public school building was erected in North Fayette Township in 1882 and was followed by the erection of a building in Findlay Township. Both buildings contained one room, and a second room was shortly added to the Findlay Township building. In 1917, the new school provided for public school and three years of high school. Students completed their high school course in Coraopolis. Several years later the senior year was added here. With the growth of population more school space became necessary. The school was then divided into Elementary, Junior, and Senior high school and a large

building was built in 1922. The people of the community were vitally interested in the school progress and cooperated well with the school directors. Then the North Fayette Township realized that their school system was inadequate for their students. There was much controversy over the location of the new school, but was finally built $\frac{1}{2}$ mile S E of the Findlay school in 1924 and had classes only through the sophomore year.)

An old resident of 83 years of age who was a teacher in the first school of Imperial, stated that students and teachers rode to school and church on horseback. They lived on farms several miles away and transportation was most convenient in this way. ^{1903 or 1904} *from here*

B - According to the 1930 census Imperial has a population of approximately 2,000. The community doesn't appear to be of that size, but the population is rather scattered. The influx of the negroes in 1927 ^{did} has not tended to increase the population to a marked degree, because they ^{came} come and go. There are about 150 negroes at ^{present} present. *over time*

Out The negroes are looked down upon by the other inhabitants of the community. The cause may be attributed to the irritation at the time of the 1927 coal strike, and also the general attitude which people have towards all negroes. "Oh, he is only a nigger," is the expression often heard from residents of the community. But the negro can never get a square deal in a small mining town where such hostility exists. The most hostile group is the foreign group

About the time of the 1927 census there were 150 negroes of which 300 are foreign born and about 600 are of foreign or mixed parentage. The most common languages spoken among the foreign group

are Slavish and Grannish. These people comprise the Catholic element with the addition of about 100 people of native parentage. The majority of Protestants are of Scotch-Irish and German decent.

Cut Imperial is an ^{un}incorporated town whose government is divided into two townships. The officers are the same for both townships, but each has its own governing bodies. The bodies are Road Supervisors, School Director, Justice of Peace, Constable, Auditors, Tax Collector, Assessor, Registrar, and Health Officer. They are elected by the people with the exception of the Assessor and Health Officer who are appointed by the County Commissioners and State, respectively. Women do not have much authority in politics, although ^{she} ~~the~~ Tax Collector for Findlay ^{was} ~~is~~ a woman. ^{Miss Edna Marshall} The community politics have always been run by the men who feel themselves more superior to the women. However, the attitude of the men is gradually changing to give recognition to the women. In the past the School Directors of Findlay were elderly ^{men} who lived on farms with little knowledge of modern school life. For the last two elections the Directors chosen have been younger men ^{who have} ~~with~~ modern ideas and are influential men in the community. At present the Board consists of a doctor, a real estate man, Superintendent of the Natural Gas Co., and two successful farmers. These men have children attending the school, and apparently understand children and wish to help them and the community, in large.

The business men of the town are interested in promoting community welfare and usually back projects of the town.

The town is on the Lincoln Highway which makes it easily accessible to East Liverpool, Ohio and Pittsburgh. (Since Imperial is an ~~un~~incorporated town the side streets are unpaved but are kept in fairly good condition by the townships.) The fact that the highway connects Imperial with larger towns means that the people go out of the community to satisfy many of their wants. Not only the roads, but the great number of people who own autos, and the good transportation service are important factors in taking the people out of the town.

Food and necessary clothing are purchased in the town by the people. When it comes to buying a coat, a "Party dress" or an expensive household item, the many stores of the city must be inspected first. There is a psychological factor present which usually exists in every small town. In Pittsburgh, they feel that the latest styles are displayed and material values are higher. Many will not admit that the same values can be bought in their own community. The fact that an article is ^{found} bought in a large store, makes it more valuable to the purchaser. However, the farmers who live in the outlying rural districts buy most of their things in Imperial. They market their products and then buy food and clothing for the money received. Along with the farmers, the foreign group trades almost entirely in the community.

The latter people can't afford to pay for transportation to the city and few own cars.

The major industry of Imperial is mining. But with the instability of the industry, many are partially unemployed. However, the mines around the community have been working more steady than most mines near Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh Coal Co. owns the Dickson mine which employs approximately 360 men, working 70% of the time. About 30% of these men are negroes. According to the Superintendent of the mines, the white men are more efficient for which he gave no reason. The colored people came from Ohio and West Virginia in 1927. They came from the cotton fields of their own accord in search of livelihood. The negroes live in the lower end of the town known as the "Field". The remainder of the workers who live in the company houses are closer to the center of town. ^{One} Section called "Big Bug Row" houses the official men who work for the Pittsburgh Coal Co. Their houses are painted white, not red, and have beautiful lawns surrounding them.

Two miles from Imperial is the Coal Co's Champion No. 1 Preparation Plant which washes coal. The Superintendent states that the plant was built in 1927-1928 and has been in steady operation since September 1928. It is the largest bituminous coal treatment plant from the standpoint of input tonnage in the United States. Since its installation it has treated over 6,500,000 tons of coal. (The input to the plant is 800 tons of raw coal per operating hour, the number of hours operating, governing the tonnage per day. At the present this is averaging around 7500 tons per day, but in "normal conditions" it will run between 11,000 and 13,000 ton per day).

This plant employs 150 men, of which 10% come from Imperial, including all men who work about the plant with the exception of the Montour Railroad Co's yard crews. The plant is working 6 days a week, single shift, but using two shifts of men giving each man an extra day a week. In other words each individual gets at least 4 days a week. Some preference is given to men with dependents. All of the officials and salaried men have high school or higher education. Of the men who work by the hour approximately 15% have high school education. The men have locker rooms and shower bath privileges. All working places are well lighted, kept clean, and repainted annually. Employees are protected through the company by group insurance and full-participating compensation for injuries. The officials live in company owned houses at the plant and about 20% of the other men live in company houses at Tyre, Montour #9, and McDonald.

The Peoples Natural Gas Co at Imperial employs 25 men who reside in the community. The majority are working 5 days a week and a few are working 6 days. The work consists of producing, transporting, and distributing natural gas. The Gas Co. has about 50 gas wells that Imperial takes care of. The Pumping Station here is pumping gas from quite a large scope of territory, in addition to the gas that is produced at and near Imperial. The Imperial Office is the central branch for Lawrence, Beaver, Allegheny, and Washington Counties. The total number of men employed in the district at present is 125. There are several independent coal companies near by who employ approximately 100 men.

The income levels of the people of the community are comprised

of low and middle classes. The majority of bread winners are miners , and others consist of carpenters, laborers, oil field workers, official men, business men, and several professional men. Girls can earn a living in Imperial only by clerking in a store or teaching school. The few who have acquired some wealth are elderly retired people who have made little attempts towards improvements for the community.

The Imperial State Bank was opened for business on July 20th, 1920. Prior to that a representative from the Coraopolis Bank made regular trips to the town and collected the money to be deposited there. The bank has been quite successful, and the people of the community patronize it. Another important institution of the town is the Post-Office which was established in 1880. (Before that, the mail was carried from the Shirland Post Office on the Steubenville Pike. *where it is now*) The retail stores are located along the main street. There are 24 establishments including 3 groceries, 3 general merchandise stores, 1 moving picture theatre, 5 garages, 1 hardware store, 3 barber shops, 2 meat markets, 1 pressing establishment, 1 restaurant, 2 confectionary stores, 1 dairy, and 1 drug store. Several establishments have become "speak-easies" in addition to their usual trade and are protected by the officers. The Federal Supply Co is owned by the Pittsburgh Coal Co. and about 13% of the company's payroll goes back into the store. Credit is given to all workers whether they can pay or not. The Imperial Cooperative Association was first organized in 1917. Twenty-five thousand dollars was the capital needed to start the Cooperative. Money was borrowed and shares were sold not exceeding 10 shares to each stock-holder.

In 1927 many stockholders left Imperial who owed money to the store, but the Association was able to pay for these losses. There are more customers who do not own stock than who do. The manager of the store is the treasurer of the association, and he feels that the store has been successful thus far. The stock, building, and fixtures are now worth \$50,000.

It is through the Chamber of Commerce that the business men cooperate with each other. During the summer months all stores close for one half day during the week. This time gives them additional leisure hours. On the otherhand, many of the business men feel that the extra rest period is not advantageous to them. This may be probably due to the fact that they must go out of the town for the desired recreation. The Volunteer Fire Department., which includes 23 men and a fire chief, was organized by the Chamber of Commerce. The men are prompt, willing, and able to administer to fires. The firemen have organized and give an annual "Street Fair" to which the community responds with open hearts. The fair usually lasts for one week which affords much excitement in the quiet town. The money is used for the truck expenses and erection of the new fire house. The men have been giving their services in the construction of the building which shows good cooperation spirit. Then too, the firemen sponsor a picnic each year for the entire community.

The fairs and picnics which the firemen hold provide recreation for the people at the time and also something to gossip about during the year. The only commercialized recreation are the movies, open twice a week, and the pool-room, open every night.

The latter affords a place for the younger boys to loaf. There has always been a stigma connected with the pool room, which makes it an undesirable place for young people. The absence of a community house makes it difficult for the young adolescents to have wholesome recreation. Many young men drink, but little crime is found in the community. In the same building is a dance hall whose patronizers depend on the sponsors of the particular dance.

The news of the town which is all personal is printed in the McDonald Record. The foreign groups get their papers from Pittsburgh and New York.

The schools may be said to be the center of recreation. Findlay has a Glee Club, Band, and Orchestra, and athletic association. The school is vitally interested in sports and draws many spectators from the community to the various games. There is keen competition between Findlay and near by towns. The Glee Club, Band, and Orchestra were honored to contribute to the Rural Section of the Pennsylvania State Education Association Convention in Pittsburgh, December 1931. Clubs were started in the Junior and Senior High Schools but failed because of inefficient leaders. However, the students participate in the weekly assembly programs. There are about 700 students from grades 1 through 12. Students who live out of town are brought to school by buses.

13 The North Fayette school just completes the Sophomore year, whereupon the Junior student ^{event} chooses to come to Findlay or ~~Go to~~ Oaldale to graduate.

The township ^{Paul} pays \$9.00 tuition monthly for each Junior, but he ^{has to} must pay his own transportation. Therefore, Findlay receives most of the "Pike" students, as they ^{are} ~~are~~ called. The enrollment of the North Fayette School is approximately 500 and gets pupils from 6 miles around since it is the nearest school. The activities are practically the same in both schools except for the organized music clubs. The annual School Fair held by each school is an interesting affair during the year. The people of the community participate in that they exhibit garden projects, poultry, canned food, and sewing. The affair brings people together and stimulates interest in the school. The students and teachers work diligently to make the "fair" a success. The money goes to the Athletic Association. Both schools have a Parent-Teachers Association which hopes to bring the school and home closer together. At present Findlay is interested in beginning Adult Classes at night. The teachers will give voluntary service.

Next to the schools, the churches play an important part in the lives of the inhabitants. The one Catholic Church has a membership of 550 people who come from 4 miles around. The sermon is first given in Polish and then in English. The audience must sit through both sermons, but they do not complain. The Activities of the church includes Polish and Slavish Orders, Knights of Columbus, and the Lyceum Club which holds dances and bake sales to raise money for the church. There is a decided need for a larger building, but lack of funds prevents its erection. - have it now

The Valley Presbyterian Church whose membership is 532 with only 12 living out of town, is active in the community. The Boy Scouts were organized through the church and meetings are held there. Other organizations within the church to promote religious study and social life are "Pioneers" social group of young men, Sunday Schools, and Junior and Senior Young Peoples Societies. The members do respond rather well for recreation of this kind. However, more organized recreation would interest the people of all ages. Both churches cooperate with the schools when holding social affairs. It is only in the church ^{or} school that functions can be held which require much space. Then too, these two institutions have been the only means through which any welfare work has been done. Through the Parent-Teachers Association at North Fayette, a committee of 8 were appointed to plan a campaign for food, clothing, and funds. An effort is made to investigate and furnish necessities that can be given. No money is given out to families. This type of work has not been extensive but has met the needs of a few families. In a community such as Imperial, there is much cooperation among the neighbors when there is a question of relief. There is a neighborly feeling and each one does what he can for the next one.

The only public health work that is done is through the schools. Physical examinations are given and the individual must then look out for himself.

The health officer is strict with quarantine laws, but is not a competent person to give personal hygiene advice. Imperial does not have a public water system and many undesirable conditions exist-
no sewerage disposal. However, many individuals have installed water systems into their homes.

There is little hope of Imperial ever becoming industrialized but it can increase the scope of its mining. There are two recognized problems in the community of Imperial. First, that of unsanitary conditions and secondly, that of the lack of recreation. If the community became incorporated, water systems would be installed in all homes and sanitary conditions would improve. An organized means of garbage disposal would bring good results. An Attempt was once made to join this territory with nearby boroughs. The people voted against the plan stating that taxes would then be too high. But if they were to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of their annexation, the former would outbalance the latter. However, many residents do feel that in the near future the town will become incorporated. Such a step will mean much to the lives of all who live in the community.

Then the problem of recreation can be met through the school and Chamber of Commerce. Leaders of both organizations are interested in the development of boys, girls, young men and women. Good leadership for organization is necessary at the beginning. A progressive step would be the creation of a community building to which all nationalities would attend.