Souvenir Programme

Opening and Dedication

OF THE

Perry Highway

IN

Ross Township

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER THIRTEENTH

NINETEEN HUNDRED THIRTY

AT TWO O'CLOCK

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—AND—

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Parade to move at 3 P. M. sharp.

Route of Parade—Southward on the Babcock Blvd to Evergreen Road to East Street, to Perrysville Avenue out to the Perry Highway and thence along the New Highway

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A FEW BRIEF HISTORICAL FACTS OF OUR OWN ROSS TOWNSHIP COMPILED BY ATTORNEY JOHN E. WINNER

Ross Township was formed in the year 1809 out of what was then known as Pine Township, one of the original townships of Allegheny County. When formed, Ross Township included all of the territory now embraced in the North Side, Pittsburgh, the Boroughs of Bellevue, West View, Millvale and Etna and the Townships of Reserve

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and Shaler. The name "Ross" was given to the township out of respect to Senator Ross, a large landowner and leading citizen in the County of Allegheny.

The first settlement in the township was made in what is now the village of Perrysville, by Casper Reel, about the year 1790 or 1792. The second settler in the township was Barnabus Hilands, who settled on lands a part of which is now included in the Wellington Heights Plan of Lots in the borough of West View. Mr. Hilands disappeared during the year 1795 or '96 while on a journey from the village of Perrysville to the city of Pittsburgh; it is supposed he was captured by a roving band of Indians. One of his sons subsequently became County Commissioner, and another, Robert Hilands, was County Surveyor. All that part of the present City of Pittsburgh known

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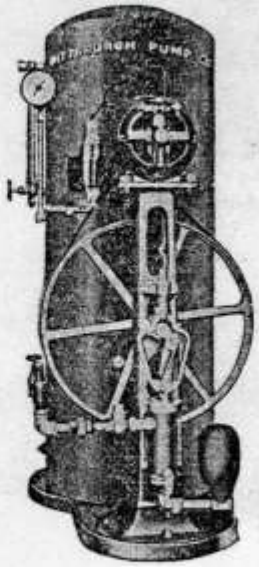
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as the "Hiland Park District." was surveyed by Robert Hilands. The Hilands family founded the Hiland Presbyterian Church at Perrysville.

Baltzer Good established a hotel or tavern about the year 1797 on the site of what was the old Keown Hotel. John Mason was the first justice of the peace. The first postmaster in what is now Ross Township was Conrad Reel, who obtained his appointment somewhere about 1840.

The Venango Trail crossed the township from north to south. This trail led from the northern part of the state to Fort Duquesne and Fort Pitt. When the county became more thickly settled the Venango Trail was known as the Franklin Road. Many

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celebrities traveled over this road. LaFayette, during his visit in the early '20's traveled the road on his way to Butler. About the year 1845 or 1850 travel became so heavy that a private corporation, known as the Allegheny-Perrysville Plank Road Company, was formed. The highway was planked and known as the "Perrysville Plank Road." The corporation maintained the highway until the year 1904, at which time the County of Allegheny purchased its franchise. The road from that time until the present has been maintained by the county and by the state and is known as the "Perry Highway." The equipment and munitions used by Perry in the year 1813, in his celebrated victory on Lake Erie, were transported by wagons from Pittsburgh over the

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old Franklin Road, now Perry Highway, to Lake Erie. The road was used very extensively by drovers until the completion of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, formerly Pittsburgh & Western Railroad.

Many of the original settlers of the township were soldiers of the Revolution who obtained title to the lands by reason of the certificates given to them for their services in the Revolution. Others purchased the public lands at sale to redeem the certificates of the soldiers caused by the depreciated currency of the Revolution.

Some of the descendants of these original settlers are now living within the limits of the present township, among whom are the Reels, Ivorys, Criders, Browns, Quails, Goods and Sterretts.

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