



Afterword

The profits of Col. Ricketts and the Trexler and Turrell company from timbering on the Ricketts lands cannot be determined since the business records have not survived. It appears that the Colonel received \$30,000 annually from the Trexler company for timbering rights, at least through 1896. If this arrangement continued, the Colonel may have earned \$720,000 during the 24 years lumbering occurred from 1890 to 1913, not too removed from the proceeds promised to Col. Ricketts if the “English deal” had succeeded. There is also evidence in the Ricketts’ estate records that he held a 25 percent interest in the Trexler and Turrell Lumber Company, which would have realized additional income to him from the Ricketts lumbering operations. Unfortunately, Col. Ricketts lost significant capital in a failing effort to develop hydro-electric power at two lakes he owned in Ricketts Glen. Lake Rose, south of Lake Jean, was built on the west branch of Kitchen’s Creek as a log splash pond by a squatter named Jesse Dodson, who cut cherry trees to make bedsteads (c. 1830-1860). These were hauled to Pottsville and Reading for sale. The lake’s early name was Dodson’s Dam. In 1905, Ricketts reinforced the Lake Rose dam. The name “Rose” was a Ricketts family name in Scotland. The family can be traced to Kilvarock Castle, in Nairn, Scotland.

Ricketts also built a concrete dam on the east or Sickler branch of Kitchen Creek to create Lake Leigh, another Ricketts family name which was carried by the Colonel’s second daughter. The concrete dam was on

the site of an earlier log dam built by a squatter named Sickler, who also cut cherry for bedsteads (c. 1838-1860). But the Lake Rose and Lake Leigh dams were poorly constructed and could not be used for hydro-electric purposes. Fifty years later, Lake Leigh and Lake Rose were condemned by the state and are now drained.

Dodson also built Timber Dam on Kitchen Creek below a small lake called Mud Pond. Colonel Ricketts reinforced the dam in 1905 and named it Lake Jean after his first daughter. In 1949, the Department of Forests and Waters replaced the log dam at Lake Jean with a larger earth-filled dam with dikes at the east and west ends. The enlarged lake also enclosed former Mud Pond to create a 245-acre Lake Jean.

While Ricketts, Lopez, and Jamison City were in operation, a consolidation of lumbering operations in the state occurred with the creation of the Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company (1903-1941). The Central Pennsylvania company was an outgrowth of the United States Leather Company, which was formed in 1893 to consolidate the tanning industry. In our region it owned the Union, Elk, and Penn Tanning Companies. In 1903, the tanning companies formed the Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company to purchase timberlands and mills. It eventually controlled sixteen mills in seven northcentral Pennsylvania counties, including Jamison City in Columbia County and the Masten and Laquin mills in Bradford County. For a time after the town of Ricketts closed, the Central



Pennsylvania company leased from Col. Ricketts a portion of a former Trexler and Turrell logging track outside the town of Ricketts, apparently to reach an isolated section of timberland, which was presumably milled at Laquin in Bradford County.

In March and December 1924, the Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company sold 12,500 acres in Davidson Township, Sullivan County, to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for state game lands. These lands were purchased by Central Pennsylvania Lumber from the Union Tannery Company in 1903 and the Elk Lumbering Company in 1921, and they were formerly the North Mountain Lumber Company tracts purchased in 1889 for the Jamison City lumbering operation. They were the Jamison syndicate lands which were to have been combined with Col. Ricketts' 45,000 acres in the "English Deal" in 1888-1889. They became a main source for State Game Lands No. 13 west of Ricketts Glen.

The Ricketts Estate

Col. Robert Bruce Ricketts and Elizabeth Reynolds Ricketts were survived by three children. Jean Holberton Ricketts (1873-1929) never married. A second daughter, Frances Leigh Ricketts (1881-1970), married Judge William S. McLean, Jr., (1877-1938) in 1921. The Colonel's son, William Reynolds Ricketts (1869-1956), was generally associated with the Ricketts holdings after his father's death. An 1892 graduate of Yale University, William R. Ricketts was engaged with his father in the management of the Ricketts enterprises. He was the volunteer curator of mineralogy of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, a world-class stamp collector, and an avid mystery book fan and collector. He married

Stella Shoemaker from Forty Fort, Pennsylvania, and they had a son Robert Bruce Ricketts, II (1907-1927), who died of typhoid fever while attending Los Alamos Ranch School in Santa Fe, New Mexico. After the death of Stella Shoemaker Ricketts in 1909 at age 32, William R. Ricketts married Margaret Beach (1881-1950) from Ballston Spa, New York.

Four of these family members, Jean H. Ricketts, R. Bruce Ricketts II, Margaret B. Ricketts, and William R. Ricketts are buried in the family cemetery at Lake Ganoga. John Green, the Colonel's servant, is also buried there.

On August 1, 1941, Governor Arthur L. James, a native of Plymouth, signed legislation authorizing the state to acquire the Ricketts lands in Luzerne and Sullivan Counties for \$150,000 for state park and game lands. In December 1942, the Ricketts heirs sold the 1,261-acre tract which encompasses the Kitchen Creek glens and waterfalls to the state for \$82,000. The glens are the heart of Ricketts Glen State Park in Fairmont Township in Luzerne County. In December 1945 and September 1950, the Ricketts heirs sold another 16,000 acres in the two counties to the state for \$68,000.

Ricketts Glen State Park is comprised of about 10,000 acres formerly owned by the Ricketts family, and 3,050 acres purchased from other persons. The balance of the Ricketts lands were incorporated into the surrounding game lands.

In October 1957, the 3,140-acre tract which comprises the Lake Ganoga lands, including the Stone House, were sold for \$109,000 to trustees who formed the Lake Ganoga Association in September 1959 to regulate and preserve the recreation and residential facilities at Lake



Ganoga. The Department of Forests and Waters had bid on the tract but the state offer was inadequate to purchase the lands.

The Stull Lands

When the Albert Lewis and Arthur L. Stull partnership was dissolved in 1912, Lewis had retained ownership of 15,000 acres in Wyoming and Luzerne counties. In January 1927, the Lewis heirs transferred these lands, plus additional lands in Dallas and Lake Townships, to the brothers Arthur L. Stull and Albert A. Stull. With this sale, the Lewis estate divested itself of all lands Albert Lewis formerly held on the west side of the Susquehanna River.

Between 1930 and 1934, the Stulls transferred 5,840 acres of Wyoming County lands to the Pennsylvania Game Commission. In 1938, an 82-acre site for a children's camp at Noxen was transferred by Albert A. Stull to a Wilkes-Barre charity. The lots were sold to private interests between 1979 and 1985- In June 1942, the Arthur L. Stull Company and the Stull heirs sold 2,283 acres in

Ross and Fairmont Townships to T.N. Wood. These lands surrounded, but did not include, the ice plants at the two splash dams. Wood sold this property in December 1947 to the State Game Commission. These lands, except for the former children's camp, form the core of State Game Lands No. 57 adjacent to Ricketts Glen State Park.

In July 1943, the Stulls contracted with Ralph S. Smith and Gordon Smith, partners in the Crawford Smith Lumber Company, to timber 6,700 acres in Fairmont, Ross, and Lake Townships in Luzerne County. In November 1963, the Stull heirs sold these tracts to the Crawford Smith

Company. These tracts represented substantially all of the remaining Stull land interests. Since 1963, Crawford Smith acreage has been sold to private interests or are still reserved by the Crawford Smith estate.

In May 1953, five years after the last ice-cutting season in Mountain Springs, R.A. Davis and John W. White, who acquired Mountain Springs from the Stulls in 1945, sold the 368-acre site which contained Splash Dams No. 1 and 2, to F.T. Butler, an agent for Donald P. Morgan and Emil C. Wagner, who in turn sold the tract in July 1959 to the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. Splash Dam No. 1 was condemned and drained in 1957. Splash Dam No. 2 was rebuilt as a concrete dam and enlarged in 1957. Renamed Mount Springs Lake by the Fish Commission, it was regularly stocked with trout, but acid rain conditions have ruined the lake and stocking has been discontinued. In July 1953, the Lehigh Valley Railroad sold the Bowman's Creek railroad bed through the game lands to the state, and the Fish Commission now maintains it from Noxen to Ricketts.

The Lewis Estate

Albert Lewis was survived by his widow Lily C. Lewis (1868-1950), a daughter Lily (Wiffie) Lewis Seneff (1896-1971), and a son Hugh (Dick) Romaine Lewis (1895-1948). Another son, George Lewis, died in infancy. A third son, Albert (Bert) Lewis, Jr. (1893-1916), held promise as his father's business heir but tragically died at age 23 from a head injury after falling from a railroad hand car which overturned after striking an object on the track.



The Bear Creek Ice Company property was transferred in November 1931 by Lily C. Lewis to Burt A. Bryant, who incorporated another Bear Creek Ice Company with D.S. Lauderbaugh and John T. Williams as partners. But the new company only lasted one year before the property reverted by sale to Lewis's daughter, Lily Lewis (Kilner), in December 1932. For another year, the Bear

Creek ice operations were leased to Lauderbaugh, then for the last four years to R.A. Davis, before closing in 1938.

The 30,000 acres of Lewis lands in Bear Creek and surrounding townships were partitioned among the Lewis heirs in litigation which began in

1930 and concluded in late 1942. The lands were divided among the three heirs, and since that time they have been privately developed.

The Bear Creek dam and lake which once served the Lewis ice industry, and the second Lewis country mansion adjacent to the Bear Creek dam on Route 315, always catch the eye of the traveler. In the surrounding woods, there are other reminders of the Lewis era: the family cemetery, Grace Chapel, the village workers' church, and the lovely trails and woods which still surround the old company village.