

The Old Strongstown Cemetery

The old Strongstown cemetery is pictured above, and plans are now being made for perpetual care of the burial ground. Its history goes back to 1803, the year Indiana Co. was formed, for it was then that James Strong, Jr., of Windsor Township, York county, purchased this tract. In 1807, James and Catherine Howard Strong moved their little family to the new home a few rods from this spot. In a few years they were followed by James and Barbara Emenheiser Hill, also of York county, who bought the adjoining tract.

Lumbering in the surrounding pine forests increased activity in the quiet community, and the two friends saw an advantage to be gained by laying out a town and selling lots. Strongstown was laid out for James Strong and James Hill by James Evans in 1823.

Two stories are told of the manner in which the town was named. One story is that the two men drew straws, and the one selecting the shorter one received the honor. The other story is that a date was set for the dead-line on housebuilding and the person having the most cabins erected by that date would be the winner. However, James Strong received the honor.

This became a shopping center for lumbermen and early settlers for miles around, and sometimes things got quite lively over the week-end. A tradition in the Strong family credits Mrs. Strong and Mrs. Hill with having discussed the name of the town long after a decision had been reached. Grandmother Hill still thought it would have been nice if the village had been named Hilltown. "Hilltown," sniffed Grandmother Strong, "Hilltown." "Well, I think it's a good thing they did call it Strongstown. Hilltown! Why, they might just as well have called it H——town and been done with it!"

Soon these devout Lutherans found the need for a church, and services were held in the homes of James Strong, Jacob Sawyer and George Bowers, and sometimes in the school house. In 1832, a log church, 20-30 was erected on this ground for the "use of all Christian denominations." James Strong sold the ground to Ac trustees, Jacob Strong and George Mardis, Sr. for the sum often dollars. Jacob Bennet was the stone mason and John Fink was the carpenter.

It is said the first man to be buried in the litde cemetery was Thomas Hull who had been killed by falling from a wagon. Soon it became the final resting place of many *others* including the founder of the town.

The little church is gone, but the graves ofths early settlers remain. Their remote descendants have scattered from New Jersey to California, and even to the "islands of the sea" for one family reports from Porto Rico. Since members of the James Strong Society of Pennsylvania believe they have more relatives buried there than any other family they have started a movement for perpetual care. All credit for its fine appearance today goes to Ralph Rummell local resident, who has cared for the cemetery the past 3 years without making charge.

The society will sponsor a pie social in Penn Run Grange Hall Friday evening, November 10th. This is to be a community affair and the public is invited. Envelopes will

be sold containing the name of the owner of the pie. There will be a guess cake, a cake walk, door prize, and a free coffee for all who buy pies.

Details concerning plans for a trust fund may be obtained by contacting Mrs. Charles L. Strong, Penn Run; Mrs. Grace Rankin, Strongstown, or Mrs. Frances Strong Helman, 732 Locust Street, Indiana.