

# Jackson Township

Cambria County, Pennsylvania



## Chapter 18

Annals of Jackson Township

**Mrs. Betty Burkhart**  
**Nanty Glo Journal**  
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### Communities And Their First Settlers (Continued)

Jack Rager District

In the year 1792 Michael Rager, ancestor of many of the Rager families now residing in Jackson township, settled on land near the line of the Cambria and Summerhill townships, on the first public road that crossed the mountain. He came here with Prince Gallitzin and was successful as the proprietor of a tavern. Many of his patrons were the teamsters that traveled the highway, hauling freight between Hollidaysburg and Pittsburgh. When the location of the road was changed, Mr. Rager moved to "Rager Mountain" which was described as "a most unfriendly piece of ground," a dense forest at that time and in its wildest state. By dint of great hardship, Mr. Rager was able to make a home for himself and family which turned out to be a large one. He married three times and was the father of twenty children, many of whose descendants are still living in this community, which was named for his son, Jackson Rager, who lived where Hiram Rager now has his home. Michael Dan Rager, a great-grandson of the first Rager, died within the past year in the community where he had lived his entire life. Jackson Rager had a shook shop at his home, and also a sugar camp.

The first Michael Rager died in 1841 and was buried with military honors, having been a faithful soldier in the Revolutionary War. He is buried in the old Lambaugh cemetery which is located near the Jack Rager school. No burial stone marks the grave of the last resting place of this soldier and pioneer.

Mr. Rager was a great hunter and stories were often told of his success. One of the tales handed down was that, knowing where a she wolf had her lair; Mr. Rager would go there each spring, get her offspring and sell the pelts for the bounty which was ten dollars each. In this way he paid his yearly taxes. This earliest settler was granted a pension of \$40 annually.

In the "Ebensburg Sky" of November 8, 1832, we read an account of the burning of Mr. Rager's house: "On Thursday last the house of Michael Rager of Jackson township, in the county, was consumed by fire, with all his furniture. The family were absent and it is not known whether the fire was communicated from the chimney or from the woods which was on fire in the vicinity. Mr. Rager was an old soldier and one of the first settlers of the county. This is the second time he has lost his all by fire. His case calls for the sympathy and the aid of his fellow citizens, which we have no doubt he will receive." In the 70's the Meegan brothers were plowing on their farm and found old coins at the place where the Rager home once stood.

The Clinefelter community is an old one and is one of the best farming communities in the township, although, as has been stated, fifty years ago, the population of this section was larger than it is today. Many of the old farms that the first settlers cleared from the forests are today the property of the Johnstown Water company and are fast returning to their native condition. Among the old farms now owned by the water company are those known as the Griffith, Keis, Grouse, Keefer, Michael, Augustus Ling, Ad Varner, Abraham Varner, Pringle, and Abe Fresh farms; also part of the Hunt and John Link farms. In the olden days logging was done by the farmers in the winter. One of the first farms cleared, if not the very first, was the Peter Rager farm later owned by Frank Fitz (now of Millwood) and Sharkey. Other first settlers were families by the name of Walk and Layton. It was about the time of the Civil War that the settling in the community became general.

Abraham Fresh settled here in 1868 and he and his wife, who was Mary Koon from Richland township, became the parents of five children. The Fresh family built a little log cabin, later building a larger house. Jacob Clinefelter, after whom the community was named, as had been stated, was a shoemaker in addition to being a farmer. He bought his farm from George Snyder. Jacob Clinefelter donated the ground for the Mr. Olive church and the Clinefelter school. The Clinefelter school was called the Snyder school until 1866.

Solomon Hildebrand and his wife, Hannah, were among the early settlers. She was a midwife and as at that time there were no doctors in this section, she was often called in to cure the sick as well as perform her other duties. Herbs and teas were then used instead of the medicines we use today.

Charles Link came here from Germany and took out naturalization papers in 1848. He was twice married, his first wife coming with him from Germany and later dying here. He settled on the farm, now known as the Stefanick place. Iverda Link, a teacher in the township schools is a great-granddaughter of this settler.

There was a settlement of Varners in this community at one time. The first Vamer's were George and Christina who settled on the farm where Blair Leidy now lives. They were the parents of John, Sam, Abe, William, Henry, Adam, George, Susan, Margaret and Christina, most of whom settled near the old home and reared large families. Several of their descendants are yet residents of this township but most of them are living elsewhere.

Other names noted among the earliest settlers are Timothy Hunt (grandfather of Mrs. Eli Wissinger, who lives on the farm he owned.) Timothy and two brothers came from England but he was the only one settling here.

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