



### Wool Industry in East Coventry

As the Coventry Townships were rural and comprised of many farms, both dairy and crop producers, it was common for farmers to also herd sheep for their wool.

Daniel Rinehart had conducted a wool factory alongside Pigeon Creek in then Coventry Township. Upon his death in 1816, his estate administrators, John, and Nancy Rinehart, advertised its sale to the highest bidder. The property was described as having a large dwelling house, a barn, and stables, as well as a factory building on fifteen plus acres.

The property went unsold and was eventually rented to W. & E. S. Davis (first names unknown) in April 1818. The Davis's advertised that they would continue in the business and wool would be received and finished into cloth, flannel, blankets or carded into rolls or spun into yarn. They would also provide the service of dyeing the wool upon request.

In June of 1821, the woolen mill was taken over by a partnership under the name of Poley & Rinehart. At some point in time Joseph Scatchard, an Englishman purchased the property, and conducted the wool business at this Pigeon Creek establishment near what would be later known as Saylor's Mill.

Scatchard continues his wool business in East Coventry until November 1865, when his property is advertised for sale with an ad placed in the Philadelphia Inquirer. The advertisement describes the property as having "first-rate land and well cultivated" with many apple and other fruit trees. The house is described as a stone dwelling with a stone barn. Lastly, a factory building is described as forty-four feet long with a wing attached thirty-five feet long and twenty-one feet wide. Power is derived from a new water wheel propelled by the flowing waters of Pigeon Creek.

The property was purchased by William Smith, who would utilize the factory to establish a business for the production of Balmoral knitting needles. Scatchard moved to Philadelphia where he would continue in the wool industry.

Closer to Snowdenville and also along Pigeon Creek was the woolen factory of John Kaye. He partnered with his son under the banner of John Kaye & Son. Between 1850 and through 1880. he was involved with some facet of the wool industry. By 1883, due to business downturn, all assets of his enterprise were

sold at public auction. John Kaye Sr died on Feb 21, 1884, in Philadelphia and was buried in Union Meeting cemetery in East Coventry.

There were other locations that processed wool in the township. Peter Y. Custer had built a woolen mill and placed an ad in an unidentified newspaper, where he offered it for sale in January of 1848. Located in Lawrenceville near the Schuylkill Canal, the building was thirty-one feet by forty-one feet. Included in the sale were spinning jennies and looms in good running order, as well as kettles and dye equipment. The ad stated that there was a reliable source of running water just outside the door.

These buildings are long gone; however, photographer E. D. Miller, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, took the time to capture a picture of the factory as described in Scatchard's advertisement.