

**Paul J. Stahl Jr.**  
**b. 1937**

### **Early Life**

The house that I was born in is on Welsh Road. It's now Doc Hennessey's office, Welsh and Stahl Roads. We had an apartment on the second floor. We moved from there when I was five years old to a house on Pine Road right across from the Budd plant. Then the Budd plant was Alburger's farm. During the war it was converted to the Budd plant. The house now has a wishing, about the third house in off of Red Lion. It is still there with a big addition on it. My father built the well there during WWII. One of the fears we had was bombing. Every well in the area was run by electricity. Without a well, we would have no water. So he built the well with a roof on it and stone around the outside. Then when I was in ninth grade we moved from the house on Pine Road to the farm in Southampton. Dad paid tuition, \$400 a year, for me to finish high school in Lower Moreland. I graduated in 1955. My brother and sister graduated from Lower Moreland too.

In Southampton the Pennsylvania Turnpike cut our hayfield in half. Farms were starting to break up at that time. We were across from the Johnson farm, I knew Janet Johnson Curry and her sister. They were a little ahead of my time. Anyway, I was out mowing on the farm one day and these guys came through our field with a transit. They were putting stakes in. I said, "What are you doing?" They said, "We're surveying for a turnpike." Well, I was just a farm kid. "What's a turnpike, what's a turnpike?" I asked. "Oh, it's a big highway with a lot of cars." I asked where it was going to go. "The transits lined up right now. It's on the center line of where it is going," he said. So I looked in the transit to see where it was going, and the cross was on our barn doors! It was built right over our barn and cut our property almost in half with a little three acre piece off on one side. It was like land-locked. This was in 1951-52.



[Photo: Young Paul ready for the Army]

In any event, my dad looked for something to do with the three acres. My uncle, his brother-in-law, owned a bowling alley in Roslyn, but it only had four lanes and he was looking for a bigger place. Dad was working in the building business, this was seasonal, and he was looking for something that was "depression-proof" since he had been through the Depression. All records indicated that bowling was on the rise, even with a Depression! Same way with movies. So Dad decided to build a bowling alley, and that's what he did (Pike Bowling Lanes). We operated it for 20-25 years and hired a manager. Then we got seized by a moment of sanity. The family was in the building business, and by that time we had opened a carwash across the turnpike, and I was doing part-time work there in partnership with my brother-in-law and brother, so I was doing

double duty plus trying to build houses and sell real estate and insurance at the same time. I was just too spread out. So we decided to sell the bowling alley to one of the guys who managed it. Sam Wolf, a survivor of the Holocaust. Then we had the roller rink next door. We had rented that out. Business was falling off and the manager bowed out and we had to find another use for it. That was turned into a place where they sold garden furniture. Now it is being renovated again.

After the farm, we moved to Dogwood Lane off of Heaton Road and Byberry Road. Dad built a house for us there. It's a California ranch house, a lot of glass. We had sold the farm to the Industrial Park. I poured the footings for this house the day before I went to Gettysburg College. There were about five acres there. Dad sold four of them off to a developer.

### **My Interests**

I was in tenth grade in high school when I sold my first house. I took a deposit on a house up in Stahl Road in Southampton. Dad helped me financially when I worked for the gunsmith. I didn't get paid for that. It was fun for me. When I made my own rifle, Dad bought the action bolt for it. The gunsmith lived on Murray Avenue in a house that was next to the Middle School. The gunsmith was Doug Guy, and his wife was Kitty. She was our choir director in our church the Methodist Church on Red Lion Road. Doug had a shop in his basement. He blued rifles, and he also worked on military rifles from the war. I offered to sweep up, and he asked me if I could buff on a buffing wheel. "Sure, I can buff," I said. You have to get every drop or trace of oil off before you put them in the bluing tank. It almost has to be wiped with an acid to keep it super clean. If you were touch it with your hand, you would have a fingerprint on it. So that all was part of my job. Later on I would put the lampblack on a piece of wood that was a blank for a gun stock. With that technique I would inlet the action and barrel into the stock. That was one of my jobs.

I would enjoy being with him talking about guns. He would take me up to a rifle range to do some shooting. And when we got the second farm, we had a rifle range up there and on the way to school I would take new guns that he had made to test fire. I'd bore site them. You look through the bore to see approximately where it was going to hit, then shoot it and zero in the sights, and then take them back down to the gun shop on the way to school. I had a Jeep at that time, and I would use the Jeep hood for my shooting bench. My rifle range back in the woods had bales of hay and railroad ties as a backstop. Dad had no interest in guns. He had a shotgun that he used to shoot stray dogs. In fact there was a pack of dogs that raided his sheep. Back in the 30s they had a dog hunt in town. Up at Edencroft (Glen Way Drive area) 16 wild dogs from a pack were killed, so I hear.

### **Methodist Church**

I went to the Methodist Church before I was born. Grandpop Gray, Margaret Lenhart's father, was the driving force behind organizing that church. He was head of the Women's Society, Superintendent of the Sunday school, janitor, he was everything. He was the type of man with that old time religion, like Shep Barrett and Russell Barrett. They couldn't talk without a smile on their faces, no matter what they were talking about. We used to meet in Race Relation

Sundays with their church down on Murray Avenue. My church had a Sunday school. I have pictures of the church in the early 1940s when our preacher left to be a chaplain in the army. One of the people in the picture is Mr. Warfield who was killed in the Battle of the Bulge in WWII. He's the only guy omitted from the township's new memorial plaque. It bothers me! He lived in one of my grandfather's houses up on Pine Road. He was also the best looking guy in town.



[Photo: Methodist Episcopal Church of Bethayres, 1892]

Our church moved up to Byberry Road. My dad was in the fundraising, and our company built the new church. I helped set the rafters the day before I went on active duty in the Air Force. I came back and we put a large addition on it. Our company also built the Baptist Church on the Pike, and we were the second bidder on the Korean Church. The architect underbid me when he found out what I was asking. I attended a prayer meeting there. The only English was the scripture that I read! Reverend Kim is a very good preacher and one of these guys that won't settle for "yes" as an answer. Always wants to know why.

I have a painting by Sylvia Fesmire of Red Lion School. She had a leak in her roof during a snowstorm and she had ice damage. So I climbed up on her roof and took care of it. She asked what I charge for this. I told her we don't charge for neighbors. A couple of weeks later she knocked at the door and gave the painting to my wife.

That turnpike was an interesting thing for me because some of my buddies lied about their age and worked for Jim Morrissey and operated those big earth movers. Jim would come by every night to check on their work, and he would bring his son Jimmy Jr. It was an easy access to come through our farm. You didn't have to go to a turnpike exit to get in. So I got to know Jimmy who later became President of James Morrissey Inc. We've done work for each other. He was union and more expensive. I've been friendly with Jim ever since. We used to throw the baseball around while his dad inspected the turnpike.

### **My Family**

My grandfather, Emil Stahl, died of a brain tumor in 1950. He was a butcher by trade, even though his father owned a wagon works and he worked as a wagon maker as a kid. When Dad was born, he called the company Emil P. Stahl Construction from 1909 to 1927 and after that Emil Stahl and Son. I started work about 1951. I hated working in construction, particularly down in the city. It was hot and steamy. My main job was sweeping houses and it was all plaster dust. It was not only hard to sweep, but you had to scarp the floor to get off the plaster globs. I

also cleaned copper with steel wool. In those days only a few houses had copper, never before the war, so my grandfather liked to see his face in the copper. We didn't have Johnnies on the Spot in the basement where I polished the copper, so I had to clean that up. We didn't have pumps. You used a coal or snow shovel and threw everything out the window. That's how you pumped out a basement sometimes with a foot or two of water. Or you would scoop it up and put it in a bucket and carry it out.

EMIL STAHL & SON  
BUILDERS  
PAINTING AND JOBBING CAREFULLY DONE  
HOMEST HOME SITES FOR SALE  
WELSH ROAD BETHAYRES, PA.

[Photo: Advertisement]

My great-grandfather, Daniel Stahl, was born in Germany near Stuttgart. He came over here at and settled in Mount Airy area. He had a wagon works shop down at Second Street and Rising Sun Avenue. He later took on a Chandler agency. The Chandler was a very popular car with the famous Pike's Peak engine that climbed up Pike's Peak. My mother had one and my father had one and they loved it. And he also had a Cleveland agency, but that "went south" before the Chandler Motor Company. Later my great uncle, my grandfather's youngest brother took on a Chevrolet agency which started in Philadelphia and moved to Southampton. My grandfather's butcher shop was near to Bargain Harry's down on Second Street near Market in Philadelphia.



Bargain Harry's was a cut-rate store for working class people. Seconds and reject items were bought up and sold there. Harry was a good friend of my grandfather. My grandfather wanted to put an addition on his own store. He got some prices, the guy never showed up, so he did it himself. His second construction job was a job he did for Harry.

[Photo: Paul's grandfather Emil's family]

Here's a story that goes about Bargain Harry. In 1923 my grandfather bought the farm (Welsh Road/Stahl Drive area) and he raised pigs and sold them as well. When the Depression came, it was a 100 percent farm. They weren't building anything. My grandfather set up a garbage service in Huntingdon Valley and used the garbage to feed the pigs. The bank came and said to him, "You owe too much money. We're going to foreclose on your farm." So my grandfather sold off a piece of ground, 5 acres, to help pay off the debt to a family named Anderson, Harriet and her husband. Later the bank came back and said, "You don't have any income coming in. We're going to have to foreclose for sure this time." So Grandpop confided this to Bargain Harry. He said, "I'm going to lose the farm." Harry asked, "How much do you need?" "\$10,000." That was a great sum in those days. Bargain Harry said, "I'll loan it to you." So he loaned the money

to my grandfather. Grandfather was able to get a job finishing up houses that other builders weren't able to and had gone bankrupt on. So he fixed up these houses for the bank. He got his money back and went back to Bargain Harry. He said, "Here's the money. Now what do I owe you? What's the interest? You've saved my family." Harry said, "You don't owe me anything. Friends don't charge friends." Harry was a man who worked hard all his life.

I remember the last thing I did before I went to college. Mom and I went to Bargain Harry's and she bought me a college wardrobe. I've worn a suede jacket from there up until a few years ago. At that time Harry was a very old man, a skinny little man wearing black high-top shoes. He'd been sitting in one of his bins of clothing and would greet everyone who came in the store.

My grandfather met my grandmother, Barbara Schmidt, who was an assistant at Christ's Home in Philadelphia, which later moved to Warminster. My grandfather would have leftover groceries and bread from his butcher shop. He would bring them to Christ's Home. One night the people at Christ's Home were praying because they didn't have food, and a knock came at the door. It was my grandfather with his food. That's how they met. My grandmother was part of a team that went to look at the farm in Warminster to get the Christ's Home kids out of Philadelphia. Christ's Home didn't have enough money to buy that particular farm. They didn't know how to raise the money. So they walked out to the stables to have a prayer meeting to find out what to do. I don't know exactly what happened, but after the prayer meeting, the farmer changed his mind and lowered the price, and Christ's Home was able to move out of the city.

My mother, Minnie Ziegler, always went to Tabor Lutheran Church. She and my dad were confirmed together there. They had both gone to Frankford High School. She had five brothers. She had cards from her brothers in the First World War from France that were hand sewn in silk. We have them in a picture frame that you can turn around and read the back.

### **Uncle Emil**

My father's brother, also named Emil, used to work delivering papers for the Pastores. There were four children in my father's family, Grace, Barbara who married Fred Davis, Emil and my dad, Paul. I have a brother George and a sister Crystal. Crystal wasn't born on the farm. She was born when we lived on Pine Road. My uncle Emil had Lou Gehrig's disease. We built a handicapped accessible house at the top of Valley View Drive when we broke up the farm. The previous house was built on top of the foundation of the barn. When my grandfather died, they couldn't get Emil upstairs to go to bed so my grandmother had us build her a ranch house on Valley View Drive. We had three houses in a row. One was for my grandmother, one was for my Aunt Grace, and the other for my Aunt Barbara. They were all ranch houses at Valley View and High Road.

My Uncle Emil was able to ride a horse. We normally had a horse around for him to ride. But at the end, he could no longer get on the horse. It became my job to exercise the horse, which was about three years too soon for me to really enjoy it. At the time I looked at it as a chore. Three years later I would have given my left ear lobe for a horse.



[Photo: Paul Sr. on the right, Emil, his father, on the left. The vehicle is a Hupmobile van, 1940's]

I was 8 or 9 years old and had a hard time getting the bit in the horse's mouth. The horse, Gray Knight, was an old police horse. It was a pretty good horse except that it was too comfortable being in the stable, for a kid to get on its back, and to get it to leave the stable was a chore. Until the horse and I had a meeting of the minds, he didn't move. I could kick him and hit him and everything else. He would just stand there. After a while, he would walk. But every once in a while he would get in one of those moods and stop and just stand there. Or try to turn around and go back to the stable.

We used a big MaClellun saddle which had ribs. Maybe so you could get air and not have the heat of the horse. But at my age then, the saddle was a heavy saddle, and the horse was knowledgeable. Would see you coming and would move out of the way when I tried to throw the saddle on his back. This all happened after school. Emil would come out and get on the other side of the horse. He would help me sometimes. But it was hard for Uncle Emil to walk from the barn to the house. He had a walker.

But Emil also drove. He delivered papers. I became his legs. The first speed bump we ran into was at the castle in Bryn Athyn. During the week they had put in a speed bump, hit it at about 35 or 40 MPH, and I was sitting on the tailgate folding papers. I did a big flip in the air when he hit that bump and I ended up inside the truck. Luckily it was in the dead of winter and I had bundled up pretty well. Emil was a great uncle. He went to Lower Moreland but didn't graduate from here. Went to Carson Long Military School on the other side of Harrisburg. His disease started at 12. He died at 36. He would always take me wherever he went, to Ridgway's for swimming, football games, basketball games. When he drove, he would talk to the pickup truck like a horse because he had strength to push his legs out but he couldn't pick them up. So when we got to a stop sign he would grab a pant leg and lift his leg up to put on the clutch or brake. Consequently in a paper route he knocked off a lot of dogs. In those days we had no traffic lights, so we could anticipate when to stop, whatever. If a dog ran out in front of him, it was dead meat. He delivered papers to the castle and down to True Reformer's Hall, and to the bird sanctuary over by Meadowbrook station. This was all when I was 10.

## **Farming**

When we moved to the farm in Southampton, in the summer I could do a lot of farm work. I could lift bales of hay that weighed 100 pounds. They would use a bale hook to grab the bales. Better than grabbing the wires which would cut your hands. We used a harpoon before baling. I did some of this at Blumhardt's farm, next to ours in the Pine Road area. He was also a butcher and had shop in Jenkintown. I hunted with him as a kid. I shot a pheasant where Holy Redeemer Hospital is now located. I was with Doug Guy then. You couldn't get a license until you were 12, but I shot at the farm before then. When I ran a lawn mower, a big Jacobson, the handlebars were up to my nose. It was motorized. I wasn't strong enough to make it turn but it had a clutch on each wheel, and I would release the clutch to make the turn and then snap it back. You could adjust the direction a little bit by hand, but not much. I had 3 ½ acres.

I loved Fridays because I didn't have to work down in the city. On Fridays I was in the farm. That was the day to mow the lawn. Green grass, animals, farmers, machinery, and stuff that was interesting. Baling hay. I did this on my grandfather's farm. I also used to ride the board. Old tractors had metal wheels so that when they harrowed they would drag a board behind to break up the clumps even further. Sometimes they would put a little weight on the board and sometimes that was me! I remember one time we had to go up hill, I had to get off the board because the tractor wouldn't go up the hill with my additional 70 lbs on it. The old tractors made more noise with their gears than with their motor.

## **Career Decisions**

The big decision in my life was whether I was going to go into farming. I loved the outdoors, the machinery, the animals, I loved all that. I didn't like the dust and dirt of construction, the mud. My dad offered to send me to agricultural school in Gainesville, Florida. I was smart enough to know that, although you don't go through life for money, I had an opportunity in the building business that I would never have again, and I could never afford a farm big enough to support what I wanted to do anyway. And in the building business my dad would buy a farm like my grandfather and develop that farm. That was the way things were done in those days. So we would buy a farm mainly to develop it later on. Houses could be built on it. But houses weren't always my life. When we built the church I was really interested in architecture. I enjoyed how things were put together and I did take some courses in it. But I was more of a draftsman than a design person. I could work with grades, how to fit things into hills. We made the house fit the lot, and designed the house around the lot. Today the house comes first. They make it fit any lot.

We built houses on Anne and Duell Streets. Those houses were called "Pot of Gold". They were little Cape Cods. The twin houses were graded with a farm tractor. I had a Black friend Jimmy who stood on the plow. Today OSHA would put me in jail for that. Jimmy worked for my family for 52 years. That guy never wanted to do anything but be a laborer. He did not want the responsibility. Not only was he a good friend, he was a very, very faithful employee. Early for work and would scold the guys who didn't show up. He was my boss when I was in high school. He was a handicap 3 golfer, never got married, and the spitting image of Sammy Davis Jr. He died a couple of years ago with no family, so we had the funeral service in our church and I had Reverend Barrett do the service. Reverend Barrett had worked for us. My dad fired him because

he was dancing on the roof. To this day Reverend Barrett says that the reason he went into preaching was because Paul Stahl fired him. Jimmy knew Reverend Barrett. Another Black family who worked for us was the Trotters.

Aunt Bert Worthington's family worked for the family. Bob and Allen worked for my father briefly too. She is Harris Walsh's sister. Everybody called her Aunt Bert. She had the youth program in the church. She also worked in the Bible School in the summers. The three churches would get together for that. She and Mrs. Oldroyd were very active in our church. So was Ebbie Flack's wife. Bev Flack was the best organist in town. Ebbie was an outgoing guy. He would fly an airplane during our July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations in his Piper Cub. He threw peanuts out of his plane over the football field. The July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations were three legged races, peanut scrambles, parade with fire engines, floats and Vincent Pastore in his vehicle with a one-legged chicken standing on the hood with goggles on and a dog with glasses on.

On Blumhardt's farm we used to lasso their baby pigs. Pigs squeal and carry on like mad. Little pigs are gorgeous. If you held them upright, they would almost grunt contentedly like a cat would purr. Turn them upside down and they would squeal and carry on. Mother pigs would bounce up and down to get at us. That was another time and another place!

### **Growing Up in the Valley**

When we went to school on a bus when we lived on Pine Road, we had a dash hound dog. We'd have to hold her off the road until we got on the bus. There was a tar spot on Pine Road right in front of our house there. The dog would walk over to the tar spot and lay on it until we got home because the sun would warm it. When the bus would come home at the end of the day, the driver would have to beep the horn and stop the bus until the dog would get off the tar spot. This was right at the crest of the hill. Why the dog never got hit I don't know.

For fun? We always had a trap line. For 50 cents you could buy a whole box of 22 caliber bullets. We would shoot the insulators on poles, things like that. Carl Anderson was with us some of the time. His mom would keep him on a rein. He is a very smart man. Good with attention to detail. He hunted with a senator's son, Propert. I was caught swiping a pumpkin from Propert's property. Mom made me take it back and Mrs. Propert tore into me!

My first Sunday school teacher was Grandmom Gray. Then Harvey Van Horn, then Mrs. Oldroyd, and from the time I was 8 until 58, it was a fellow by the name of Lester Lenhart. He was very good at it, but very conservative and unbending in his religion. He was in his 40s when he fell out of a tree and got the bad leg. He managed Justa Farm with 12 to 14 men under him. Had records of all the cows (Note: The records were given to the Old York Road Historical Society).

There used to be a rail fence at the end of the football field, from the tree behind Lester Lenhart's property all the way down the football field that used to be the Pastore's property. The little house next to Pastores was tiny and that house was once a part of a factory that made gunpowder. I remember Cypress Street. Old Man Snell used to come out when we were on the way home from school and talk to us. He was bent over and had a cane. We would stop there and talk to him.

Then we would go to the grade crossing and talk to the crossing guard there who would hold up the stop sign and swing a kerosene lantern when a train went through. In those days we had the Crusader which used to go through at 70 miles an hour from New York to Philadelphia. It was all stainless steel cars. The steam engine was stainless steel. We could hear it from one end of the town to the other, coming and going by its sound. Sounds then carried more. Too many other sounds interfere now.



[Photo: The Crusader]

When the grade school bell tolled, the whole town knew the kids were changing class. Mr. Stoker, who lived in the house behind the Methodist Church on Red Lion Road, would help Grandpop Gray with our church, but at school he stoked the coal furnaces and pulled the bell cord. Whether that was his name or not, I don't know. He would stand by the rope that rang the bell. Even though he was the custodian, he wore a vest with a watch bob on it. He would count the seconds. Every hour on the hour he would ring the bell.

A lot of the guys that worked in the town would carry things in a peach basket. Or if you would walk home and run across a batch of asparagus that used to grow wild along the roads in the spring, you could pick it.

We had a bus to take us, but sometimes we would walk home if we had activities after school. I kept a fishing pole under the bridge there at the creek at Red Lion and Philmont, a bamboo pole with a line and hook. There were trout in there then. The creek was much bigger. We used to swim in it before Ridgway's pond was built. Since they have put the sewers in, the Pennypack is half the size it used to be. The sewers lower the water table. I used to wade across the Pennypack down by the ball field waist deep to get fresh water mussels. We used to swim therewith a rope swing. Where the Buttonball and Pennypack meet, at the end of the ball field, we would swim and get bitten by the fish.

We swam at Mason's Mill. Tom Mason was a friend of my uncles, let us swim and hunt there. The mill was there then and taken down in the later 40's. It had two apartments in it. The mill race is still there. You see two bridges that cross the Pennypack. The one is the Pennypack. The other is the mill race that came from the mill. We used to catch a lot of turtles there. They had painted turtles of all different size. A sea of turtles. Today it is hardly above your ankles. Beavers were there. One felled one of Frank Tinari's trees. He got rid of it "in his own way." Nobody knows!

Whenever we had free time, we lived on the Pennypack. The dam was for the first electric company. The building is now a barn. They took down the original. There is a mill race going into that. They are going to take that dam out and the bridges. I'm against it. It destroys our history.

The Pennypack flooded back then. I have pictures of canoes where the gas station is at the intersection. The gate from the original tollhouse is now in the Mercer Museum. It was a tree limb. It's there now.

I remember a blacksmith down at the intersection. I used to go there with my grandfather. It was an old wood building that needed paint so bad if you opened up a bucket of paint it would suck it right out of the can, as my mother would say. It had a lot of activity. A couple of horses standing around, a bunch of metal things. They didn't have welding yet. Then it was torn down. It was behind Doering's store and post office.



[Photo: Blacksmith and wheelwright Shop, Huntingdon Pike and Welsh Road]

Steve Blumhardt and Wayne Oswald were good friends. Clyde Boyeston was one too. His dad was called into WWII right when his family was building their house. They only had the foundation down, so they covered it with tar paper and lived in it that way until he returned from the war, five or six years. It was right next to where the old generator was for electricity, on the other side of the Pike. It backed right up to the railroad tracks.

We had Daily Vacation Bible School. Mrs. Oldroyd would take us down by steam engine to Lorimer Park. We would pick up the train at Welsh Road and the Pennypack in front of Doc Bennett's farm. The train went down through the woods. It cost us a nickel apiece. We would climb on the rocks, play baseball. I played on a softball team for years, so I had people like Butch Willard, who was our pitcher. Mrs. Willard was Mrs. Oldroyd's sister. We built that little house on the corner of Barrett Avenue across from the Telephone Company for Butch's mother, who had lived up on the big house on the corner of the Pike, the double house next to the carpet place.

When we had summer Bible School we had it for two weeks and combined all three churches, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian. Each would take their turn having it at their church, one year at each. We had softball games and tugs-of-war. The kids would always look forward to a tug-of-war against the teachers. The women in their long skirts would be at one end, and the kids at the other end. We would pull the teachers all over the lot. We had softball games, and occasionally we would go swimming over at Ridgways. We would sit at the pool and wait and see who was coming, who the girls were and what have you. You couldn't see who was coming until they walked over the railroad tracks. The track was high and the path was dusty and dirty, well traveled all summer long.

There were two activities during the summer, swimming at Ridgways and playing baseball at Bethayres field, which was donated by Mr. Elkins down behind the shopping center. I don't

know what the girls did. Leibold owned the shopping center. Leibold Ford was across the street. That field is really a swamp. Another place with water problems is down at Red Lion Road. One of these days Tailfeathers (now TD Bank) is going to be gone in a flood. That water can move dumpsters. There is a dumpster buried down by Lorimer Park, carried by flood waters down there from Hatboro.

### **Interesting People and Places**

We would play baseball on fields up in Bryn Athyn, on Blumhardt's field that we made ourselves, and Burnstein's had a field on Pine Road right across Pine Road from the new houses above Philmont Station above the railroad tracks. The house sits up on Pine Road. It is still there. Three people owned that, Sidney K. Allman Jr., General Lit, and another man. One was a dog lover and the kennels are still there. Another was a horse lover and the barn and stables were taken down. The other man was a ladies' man, and there is a ballroom on the back of that house. If you go by that house now and look in the back, you can see it.

I did work for Sidney Allman, Jr. His brother owned an insurance business and the Yorktown Tavern. Sidney was around 82 years old when he remarried. He remarried a retired Rockette. Her name was Barbara or Dorothy Stahl. Her kids went to Lower Moreland. She was an attractive and nice lady. She looked after him. Sidney was the type of guy you couldn't talk to without saying "Sir". Very dignified. His coats had the black fur collars. He played golf with wooden golf clubs. He had a letter on the wall signed by Abraham Lincoln. He had a pipe collection that was terrific. Brass tags under each one. He lived in a place called the Hermitage, a little house at the very end of Edencroft Road. His father started Philmont Country Club. Mr. Lit started Lit's Department Store. The other man was another department store, Gimbel's.

I think everybody caddied at Philmont Country Club. I never did because I was too busy socking nails for my dad. I never had to worry about something to do. I worked for the Blumhardt's cutting corn. We would make horses from three stalks of corn. We would cut the corn down with a machete, then take the three stalks and bend them over and tie them together in the middle. Then you would lay the other stalks against them. They were used for feed for the cows.

I'll never forget when Vincent Pastore's father got rid of his cow. He walked it up on his pickup truck that had no sides on it. I saw him going through town, around that corner at Red Lion Road, Brown's Drug Store, with the cow standing on the back of the truck, no sides, and him with a rope slammed in the door that went around the cow's neck. The cow was weaving around the corner. I expected it to fall but it didn't.

We had our favorite cows over at Schmidts. Old Wrinklepuss was my favorite. That cow knew us. She used to come over to the fence. We used to scratch its head.

The intersection where Byberry Road comes down to meet the Pike was listed as the highest accident spot in eastern Pennsylvania. Before it was leveled off there was a big barn on top of the hill and the bank house on the northwest corner. It was a house where the first floor was a stable. The second or third floor was where the people lived. They turned the stables into garages later. Behind the house on the bank used to be Billy Wilson's house which was torn down before I was

born. When we were building a house in Justa Farm, I came across an old hand-dug well. Nice big stone wall that went down forever. This was near where Wilson's house was. This was around 1936-38. All this was part of the Elkins farm, but the Elkins farm did not extend south of Byberry Road. Later Mrs. Elkins bought the land that Spur Road and Manor Care are now on. She probably donated it to the township, or else sold it to the Walsh family, Calvin Road area.

The farmhouse with the red roof at the corner of Albidale Drive and Huntingdon Pike was formerly owned and lived in by Jesse Holt, Charlie Holt's grandfather. That house was moved down from the Manor House years ago. I have a picture of it.

Probert's farmhouse on Welsh Road, the big white house near St. Albert's Church, is still there. The township snowplows were kept in the barn. We used to sneak under the doors to play on them. The barn sat right behind the house. The springhouse is recently gone.

The house at Buck and County Line Road was used as a tenant house by George Elkins. Elkins put together all these farms, and he built some houses for his family members. One for Goodie McCormick. General McCormick married one of Elkin's daughters. Pop Reeves lived there too. Flying Heels Farm was owned by Sinkler. Pop Reeves was the one who stood in the middle of the ring and announce the horse shows. He had one of these great big long coach horns that he would toot. I stayed at his place up in Woodstock one time and I had the pleasure of polishing the living daylights out of that horn. I introduced his granddaughter to a "spit shine" one time. Grabel was the married name of the other daughter. Her farm was where Lester Lenhart worked when he fell out of a tree and broke his hip.

George Elkins used to make his own wine; he had his help go out and pick blackberries. I got the last bottle of Pop Elkin's wine. I think I probably threw it away. It was like shellac!

An old hand dug well was found in the renovation of the house on Red Lion Road (the historic Ely house). Recently, John Wahlers, the young man who leased that house, is interested in historic activity, so he cleaned it out. It's a treasure trove of glass and things thrown down there when they stopped using the well. He dug down to a point where he started to hit water. He went into four feet of water. What he did, and I worked with him on it, in his reception area, he continued the wall of the well up, but not in stone and tied the stone to the bottom of the floor boards. He's going to put a table with a glass top on it and have lights inside it. So when you come into the reception area, you can look down into the well. The stonework is beautiful! It undulates as it goes down, but it is all symmetrical on the outside. It's a round glass table just a little bigger than the well. He has his brochures and things on it, and you can look through. There is a light switch. You can look all the way down and see the water. Years ago, when a well was being hand dug, they would get most of the way down and then set off dynamite to crack the bedrock.

### **My Thoughts**

I feel disappointed that the generation now has no appreciation of the outdoors and the things we did on the farm. The fact that I had the farm there and the animals and the equipment was wonderful. When I went down to work for my grandfather building houses, it was dust, dirt, plaster dust all over the place, dirty boards with mud on them. Every time it rained on a

construction site you would be in muck and mire and up to your knees. The farm life is what I really enjoyed the most.



[Methodist Church, 1942 (originally Methodist Episcopal Church), Red Lion Road and Murray Avenue. Dedicated October 15, 1892. Electricity installed 1905. Foundation stones were donated by a Baptist. Courtesy of Paul Stahl, (Emil's grandson, age 6) who was hiding behind a tree next to the church when this photograph was taken.]