

Claysburg, PA History

Black History Month – Claysburg, PA

--by Rich Allison

While this article is about Black History Month in Claysburg, PA, we think that it is important to give you a little background on the Claysburg community. Racism is unacceptable anywhere and anytime. It is unfortunate that it has occurred since the beginning of time. The blacks were subjected to something more severe than racism. Slavery made it even worse. As I have looked back at Claysburg's history through the years, I know that America was never ideal for blacks, or others including our native Americans as well as many others anywhere. In Claysburg I never saw any signs restricting people, but I am sure people were aware of unwritten rules. Life was never perfect in Claysburg in regards to race. However, I believe that Claysburg, PA was a much better place for the ethnic groups that came in the 1910-20's than many other towns and cities at the time. For those reading this who are under 60 years old, you probably had no clue about this history.

And when I think about today how we mistreat each other due to political beliefs with name calling and judgements, and think back through the years, how all Germans were treated after World War I and II, all Japanese after World War II, all Muslims after 911, and even our white European ancestors who came to America in the 1600 and 1700's to avoid religious persecution, we have come a long way. I could go on and on to make a point. However, we all have a long way to go. But enough on what is wrong with our treatment of others. We need to continue to strive to overcome those imperfections in all of us.

In the early years, the town of Claysburg and Greenfield Township was basically a farming community. The majority of the people living in Greenfield Township were of German or Swiss descent with a few English, Scotch and Irish, and most of them were farmers and all were white. In 1910 the total population was only 370. However, the building of a railroad and two silica brick plants - one at Sproul and the other in Claysburg from 1910 to 1913 created a need for workers. By 1920 the population was 815 or more than doubled in just 10 years. By 1940 the population had increased to 1,871 or more than five times the size in just 30 years. There were no African Americans in the township prior to 1910.

1914 Township records showed 45 blacks living here. In the 1920s, Claysburg tax rolls counted more than 150 black residents, most of them from the South who found work in the town's silica brick plants. 1925 showed 112 and estimates for the late 1920's showed approximately 200 living here. The 2010 census counted just seven African-American residents. Claysburg at one point had the second largest population of blacks in Blair County after Altoona.

Now for some background history on the Claysburg area:

NATIVE AMERICANS

The very first people to live in the area around Claysburg-Sproul were Native Americans. Archaeologists discovered artifacts that dated to the Paleoindian period or as far back as about 10,500 years ago. This discovery was made at the Walter Business Park and the area near the former Harbison/General Refractories property at Sproul prior to the construction of the road re-configuration there several years ago when the Sheetz Corporation properties were constructed.

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Artifacts included a spear point and many other artifacts. The Paleoindian period was about 10,000 years ago or during the end of the ice age. Radiocarbon dating indicated that the site was occupied repeatedly from approximately 10,500 years ago to around 3,000 years ago. This is a very rare find for Pennsylvania, and there are very few other sites of this age in Pennsylvania

The Indian Path which basically Route 220 followed from Bedford to Claysburg and beyond was called Warrior's Path. We believe that it actually came along Rt 220 from Bedford to Osterburg then through Imler to the Sproul area following the streams of the area such as Beaver Run and then the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River.

The Frankstown Path split near Frankstown and one branch went west over the Alleghenies to Kittaning, PA. The other headed north towards Claysburg and was sometimes referred to as the Indian Valley Path. At some place the Indian Valley Path and the Warrior's Path merged.

A few white settlers arrived in the Claysburg-Sproul, PA area somewhere between 1770 and 1790. Records were poorly kept, and there are varying opinions as to the date. Tax records in what was then Woodbury Township and part of Bedford County in the 1790's do show that Valentine Lingenfelter and his sons, Jacob and George resided near present day Sproul. Also, John Ives and Thomas Nicholas were other early settlers. In 1846 Blair County was carved out of Bedford and Huntington Counties and Greenfield Township, the current township where Claysburg and Sproul are located was formed.

Other settlers came to outlying areas such as Upper and Lower Claar in 1800 and were the Claars, Walters and Musselmans.

The town of Claysburg had its first settlers in 1803 and 1804 when John Ulrich Zeth settled in the actual town of Claysburg. John Zeth's house at corner of Bedford and Church Street was believed to have been built in 1811 and was formerly part of Mauk's Service Station. It is the oldest house in Claysburg, PA standing in Claysburg. John Zeth was a Hessian soldier and considered an outsider due to fighting for the British. Hessian soldiers were German's recruited to serve in the military for the British during the Revolutionary War. However, after the war and the loss to the colonies, many of the Hessian soldiers defected and stayed in America. John Zeth came from the Taneytown, MD area as did many of the local German settlers. Many of these early settlers were from south of Gettysburg, Pa and Taneytown, Md area. These two towns are only about 12 miles apart. Others followed shortly from the Lancaster, PA area.

Even with the introduction of Sarah Furnace, the great ironmaking operation at present day Sproul by Dr. Peter Shoenberger in 1832, there was no major influx of new people. In checking the 1840, 1880 and 1910 census, Greenfield Township, the home of Claysburg, PA did not list any African-Americans in the US census.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FOR ESCAPING SLAVES

The first recording of Black Americans in the Claysburg, PA area was information on the Underground Railroad. Claysburg was one of the stations on one route to help slaves escape to the north from the south.

The Ling Hotel was built in 1838. The Inn was located across the road from the old Klevan's Store on Bedford Street. Part of the concrete pad and retaining wall are still visible. Supposedly Orator Henry Clay

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stayed there. There has always been speculation that this was used as part of the Underground Railway to help slaves escape. However, no actual proof exists on this.

Much has been written about the Underground Railroad and the moving of African American slaves in an attempt to get them to freedom. Many of the routes from the south actually went up the eastern seaboard and went near Philadelphia.

However, there were routes that went through central Pennsylvania with many of them being moved through Bedford County to Pleasantville and then on to Johnstown and further north with many eventually ending up in Canada.

While very little was ever written down and documented about the Underground Railroad, there has been much folklore passed down through the years. Keeping any type of records would have been dangerous to the families involved in moving slaves as well as their properties.

Rumors have always swirled around Claysburg that it was also a stopping place on the Underground Railroad and that the Conrad Ling Inn that was built in 1838 was supposedly that place. However, no documentation is available. It does make sense that it could have been a stopping place since the Claysburg area is mid-way between Bedford and Altoona.



Ling Hotel
Claysburg, PA
Built 1838

In the book *Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania - Second Edition* by William J. Switala on page #37, there is one paragraph that does list Claysburg, PA as a station on the route as follows:

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD - FISHERTOWN-HOLLIDAYSBURG- CLEARFIELD ROUTE

The second route from Fishertown to Clearfield followed the western slopes of the Dunning Mountain Ridge, running along Warrior's Path, as does U.S. Route 220. An entry in the diary of James Blackburn dated May 14, 1837, mentions runaways leaving Fishertown and going northeast to the town of St. Clairsville and says that another Quaker settlement there provided aid and transportation for those fleeing northward to Clearfield. **From there they made their way eleven miles northward to the hamlet of Claysburg,** proceeded

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five miles to East Freedom, and continued northward another six miles to Hollidaysburg and Altoona in Blair County. Siebert says William Nesbet was the major agent in Blair County. There were two escape routes leading from Altoona to Clearfield. Much has been written about Nesbet who resided in the Altoona and Hollidaysburg area.

Again there has been no conclusive proof to date of which buildings or how these slaves were moved through the Claysburg, area, but it does indicate that a route did go through through Claysburg.

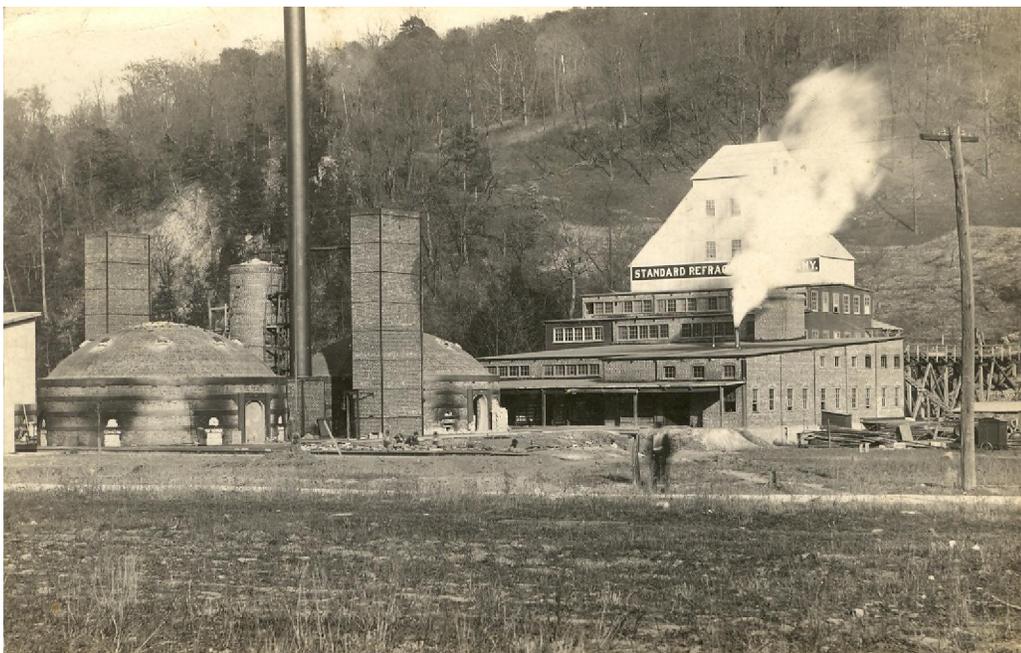
GROWTH OF CLAYSBURG, PA

The idea for a railroad began as early as 1872. The first group went bankrupt. Then by 1910 the Pennsylvania Railroad was built through Claysburg and Sproul. This was from the old steam locomotive days. There were three (3) railroad stations within the Greenfield and Kimmel Townships, and the town grew.

The construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1910 and General Refractories in Sproul in 1910 and Standard Refractories, Claysburg in 1913 created a melting pot in the early 1920's of a varied group of people.

In 1910 the first silica brick plant in the area was built at Sarah Furnace. This plant was owned by General Refractories Company. After the opening of the brick plant, a new post office was opened and the town was renamed Sproul in honor of Governor Sproul.

Two miles up the road in Claysburg, Thomas N. Kurtz decided to build a silica brick plant in 1913. The company was called Standard Refractories Company. The town of Claysburg boomed and employees were recruited from everywhere.



Standard
Refractories Co.
Claysburg, PA
Built 1913

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INFLUX OF WORKERS

After 1910 there was an influx of workers that included European immigrants from Italy, Croatia, Slovakia and Poland to name a few of the larger groups. Names like the Gazzara, Gazzara/Rosey, Johnnie, and Dugi families from Italy and the Blazeovich family from Albania settled in Claysburg. An influx of Croatian families which at the time was part of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire with names such as Adlish, Antich, Clinich, Berrich, Pozgar, Buzinec and Bozich. Many came from the Ganister, Pa area near Williamsburg to Claysburg.

The first African Americans to arrive were the Gastons, Winters, Williams and Barnes families. As more workers were needed for the brickplants, other relatives were recruited from the states of Mississippi, Arkansas and North and South Carolina. Others followed like the Kimbrough, Bonds, Holloman, Dupree, Witherspoon, Lee, Fitzgerald, Bonds and many other families.

The first black workers traveled to Claysburg from the Jim Crow South in the second decade of the 20th century, as the construction of a silica brickyard transformed a farming area into a growing factory town. Working for Standard Refractories and later General Refractories, they turned quarried ganister stone into high-temperature silica bricks for the steel and glass industry.

In Claysburg, the waves of Southern workers lived in company built homes of small wooden houses, built in mass to hold the town's surging population. Others lived in small, ethnically divided neighborhoods that sprang up around the brickyards similar to others livings in other cities or rural towns with their Little Italy, Croatians and other ethnic areas.

The blacks generally lived in one of two areas. The first was Shanty Row on the right on the north end of town across from the Little League Field where the railroad spur goes back into the McCabe Complex. These homes were not exclusive to the African American community. There were some white families who also lived in Shanty Row. There were approximately 15 homes along this stretch of railroad track. Many of them were double homes. These homes were torn down in the 1960's.

The other area was called Little Africa and was located off Hileman Hollow Road and also fronted current Dunnings Highway or Route 220. There were approximately 17 homes, a store and a small church in that area at one time.

The town boomed. Company houses were built for most of the employees. I am sure that the white workers had slightly better living conditions than blacks and the other European immigrants just like bosses had slightly larger houses than the workers.

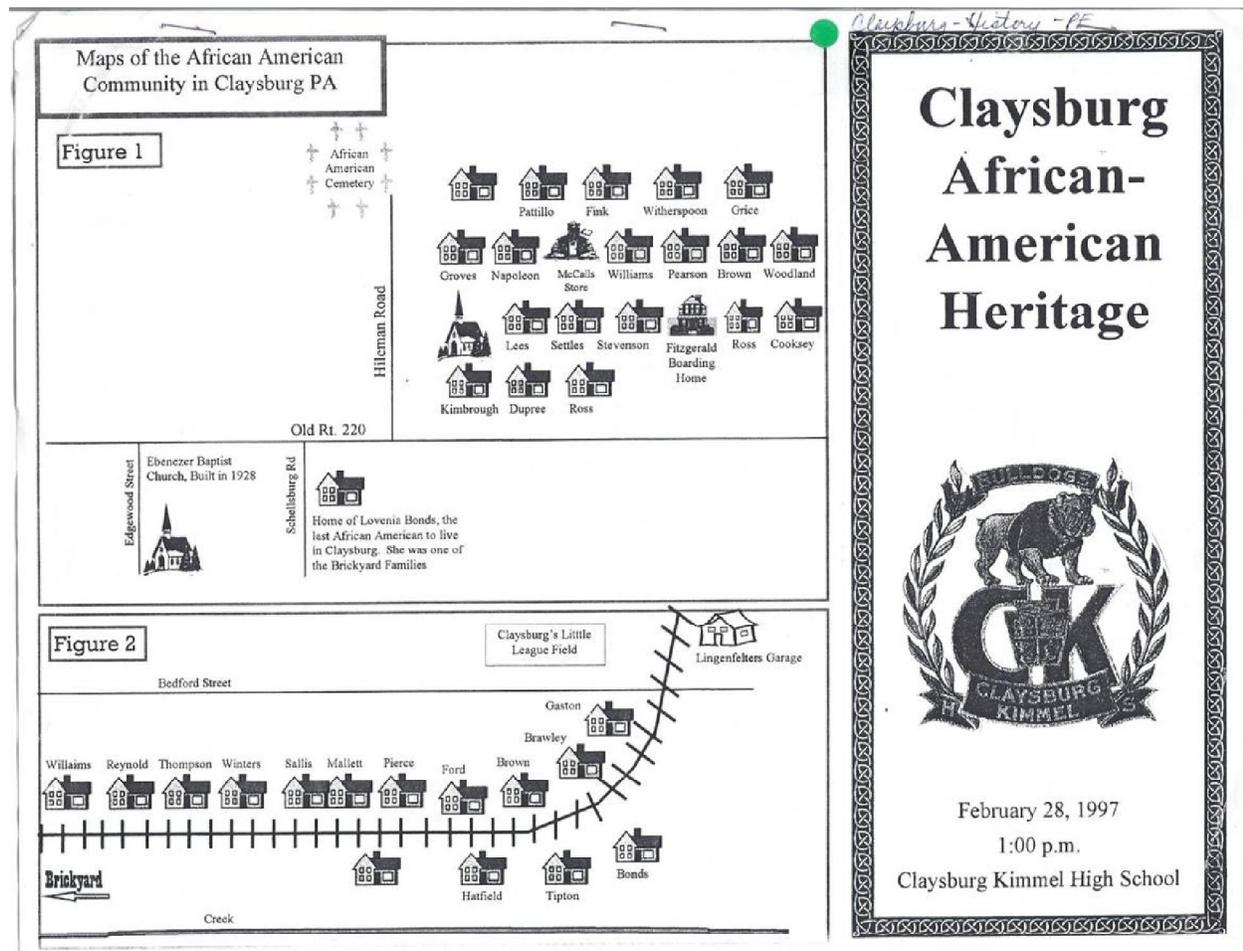
In the 1920s, families in Claysburg shopped at their own markets and prayed at their own churches but sent their children to an integrated high school. The booming town of Claysburg needed new schools to hold all the new student arrivals in town. In 1918 a new yellow brick building was constructed on the site of the current high school as the first high school and a graduating class in 1920. It included all ethnic groups, black, white, eastern European, etc.

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Claysburg African American Heritage Presentation

Feb. 28, 1997

Claysburg-Kimmel High School



View from Coney Island in Claysburg, PA looking at Shanty Row where many blacks lived across Frankstown Branch of Juniata River. Irvin Dively and son, Dick Dively on horse. circa 1941

The majority of the people living in these areas were blacks, there were also some whites living there. Shanty Row and Little Africa were known for bootlegging operations. Both were run by white ladies. A white lady lived in Shanty Row and ran a bootlegging operation. She put two sons through college doing this. They moved from Claysburg many, many years ago and no longer live in the area. Both sons are successful businessmen and have their own businesses today.

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Program Agenda

Opening Remarks by

Claysburg Kimmel High School Principal

Mr. Robert Cunningham

Introduction to President of N.A.A.C.P.

Mr. Donald Witherspoon

Introduction of Panel Members

George Bailey, Computer Sales & Service

Virginia Day, Certified Occupancy Specialist

for Improved Dwelling, Altoona Inc.

Police Officer Jerry McCaulley,

Communications Specialist, Alt. Police Dept.

Bill Sweet

Local Claysburg Citizen

Robert Imler

Local Claysburg Citizen

Diane L. Hudson,

Legal Redress N.A.A.C.P.

Movie

Question and Answer Session

Media Interviews

Note: Display contributors are Dorothy William's, Jean Markley, Don Witherspoon Family and the James Pearson Family

All area History was compiled by Bill Sweet

N.A.A.C.P. would like to recognize Suzanne Ghant for her design work on this program.

Claysburg African - American History



Boyd Mallot was born on August 15, 1922 in Claysburg PA. He was the son of Ira Mallot and Etta Belle Ross. He attended Claysburg High school and was a member of the High School Band. In 1940

Boyd wrote the words to the Claysburg High School Alma Mater, which is the same one used today. Fred Lowe is credited for writing the music to the Alma Mater. Boyd graduated from Claysburg High School in 1942. He married Dorothy Kimbrough in Bronx NY on May 17, 1944.

Boyd and Dorothy had four children. Dr. Ronald Mallot is a Physics Professor at a University in Connecticut. Jason Mallot is a Computer Technician in Scottsdale Arizona. Keith Mallot is a Commercial Artist in Spring Valley California, and Eva Mallot is a Computer Programmer that also resides in California.

Boyd was an Army Veteran of World War II, and he was employed by Signa Electronics in New York.

On May 22, 1985 Boyd passed away in Bronx NY and was buried in Pine Lawn National Cemetery, Long Island NY.



Grover C. Winters Jr. had a popular Dance Band that toured all over the US in the 1930's.



Reverend Hollyfield was one of the ministers who preached at the Ebenezer Baptist Church. He is the father of Evander Hollyfield, today's 3rd time, World Champion Boxer



Donald Witherspoon, a 1960 graduate of Claysburg High was a Vietnam Veteran and today is an avid golfer and the President of the Blair County Chapter of the N.A.A.C.P.

Dan Napoleon played Baseball for the New York Mets



Jeffrey Grove is a Minister



Brother and Sister, John and Patti (Witherspoon) Curry were King and Queen of Football in 1965



Clifford Lee is a School teacher in Houston Texas

Ralph Pearson is a UPS Deliver in New Jersey

Hugh Bonds and Lovenia Bonds ran a Barber Shop and a Beauty Salon where the Claysburg Volunteer Fire Hall is today. Lovenia was the last one of the African American "Brickyard Families" to live in Claysburg. Lovenia passed away in 1984.



Patti Witherspoon was the only African American Boarder at Claysburg High.



According to Greenfield Township Tax Assessment Records in 1814 there were 46 African Americans living in the Township. By 1825 there were 112. There were an estimated 200 African Americans living in Claysburg by the late 1820's and



John Gaston's family was the first to move to Claysburg. They were followed by Grover Winters Sr.'s family then the Ernest William's family and the Barne family. They went on to recruit other African American families from Mississippi, Arkansas, and North and South Carolina to work in the Claysburg Brick Plant.

Browley's ran a Cleaners on the same area the Claysburg Fire Hall is located today.

I have not seen any large sense of segregation in Claysburg like other towns such as separate schools, restaurants, drinking fountains, etc., but I am sure that some of it did happen. There was a dance hall in Claysburg that was open to blacks on Friday nights and to whites on Saturday nights in the late 1920's.

And there was a Klan in the area and in most towns in the early years, more so to limit the influx of not just blacks but also the eastern Europeans. From all records, I have never read about bodily harm done to anyone but more for scare tactics. Regardless, it was wrong and probably was done by all of our white ancestors who first settled in America.

In the early years, more African Americans were recruited from the south. Charley Madara who was plant superintendent at one point actually was going south to recruit more blacks, and a cross was burned across the street on Bedford Street near Arden Street. This did not phase Madara, the next morning he left as planned to go south.

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Eventually, the company went out and recruited more people. Company managers traveled the South, stopping to recruit from the towns where others had lived. Black workers were taken by the trainload to Claysburg, Mt. Union, PA and other brick towns from Little Rock, Ark., during World War I, according to a study by the Department of the Interior. Many would remain for decades.

It was the first Great Migration, a cultural wave that, by 1930, brought more than a million black Southerners to industrial cities and towns in the North. Seeking refuge from limited job opportunities and southern racism, many worked alongside recent European immigrants and whites in factories across Pennsylvania.

While the German families who had come to the area in the 1800's already had their own churches such as the Lutheran, German Reformed and Church of the Brethren, there was a need to fill the spiritual needs of the new residents.

The Croatian families settled along Edgewood Street near the Community Park. The Italians settled north of town near the Fairview section of town. They built a Catholic church in the area.

Next to the Claysburg Community Park and now a parking lot was the Ebenezer Baptist Church for African Americans. Land was purchased for \$300. It was built in the mid-1920's and remained open until approximately 1960-61. As with all church groups, families remained close to their fellow members with church activities since traveling was limited in the early part of the 1900's.

A black cemetery called Fairview Cemetery was located off of Hileman Road with marked graves dating back into the 1920's. The land was donated by General Refractories at the time.



Congregation
meeting at Ebenezer
Baptist Church in
Claysburg, PA - circa
1935

Claysburg, PA History

A 1924 photograph shows a young, black Fred Gaston – listed in contemporary articles as the descendant of early migrant John Gaston – sitting among white classmates with familiar names like Knisely, Lingenfelter and Hileman. The town’s black neighborhoods even sported their own baseball team: The “Claysburg Colored Giants” – distinct from a Claysburg team apparently limited to white players – took on local clubs, black and white, throughout the 1920s in a Blair-to-Bedford twilight league. By the late 1930’s they all played on one team regardless of race.

Claysburg Class - 1924 - Room 3



Tony Johnnie, Roy Imler, Roy Hileman, Fred Gaston, Max Weyandt, Frank Miller, Thomas Hoenstine, Carlton Leslie, Glenn Berkheimer, Clair Gordon, Stanley Walter, James Yingling, Standford Gordon, Fred Carn, Joe Angle, Russel Pope, Chester Brown, Carrie Dodson, Earnest Murphy, Clara Mae Pope, Pauline Walter, Leslie Berkheimer, Pearl Bailey, Anna Greene, Lovenia Kimbrough, Garrett Wertz, Jesse Walter, Gladys Walter, Chlora Walter, Henrietta Mauk, Glen Ritchey, Jesse Eicher, Grace Knisely, Myrtle Nale, Esther Miller, Louise Sleek, Almeda Bowser, Luella Feathers, Eliza Fries, Velma Burket, Mary Johnston, Rosil Lisa, Etrelyn Cooper, Eleanor Walter, Virginia Beegle, Gladys Lingenfelter, Alestia Clapper, Evelyn Weiland.

“Gaston chucked for Claysburg and starred on the peak and with the bat,” a 1922 Altoona Mirror story announced after a win over Bedford’s black club. He was among several local baseball stars to emerge from the town. Gaston’s family came to Claysburg from Kosiasko, MS.

Employment boomed in the 1920’s. But the community couldn’t grow forever, and signs of trouble emerged even in its early years. The Great Depression devastated demand for Claysburg’s silica bricks, and many of the Southern workers returned home, jobless.

Some would return during the boom of World War II, however, as the American war industry’s insatiable need for steel and supplies drew thousands more to the North.

It was then that the brick plant’s hundreds of workers, black and white together, organized their first labor union. They joined the United Construction Workers in 1944, then the United Mine Workers and finally the United Steel Workers decades later. It was strictly one union. The African-Americans were part of the same bargaining unit as the others.”

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1924 Claysburg Elementary Class



Row 1- 1?, 2?, 3?, 4?, 5?, 6?, 7?, 8?, 9 - Barton Hoover, 10 - Tony Berrich.

Row 2- 1?, 2?, 3?, 4?, 5?, 6?, 7 - Dick Greene, 8?, 9?, 10?, 11?, 12?, 13?

Row 3- 1 - Walter Diehl, 2 - ? Quint; 3 - Mary Gazzara, 4?, 5?, 6?, 7?, 8?, 9 - Fred Musselman, 10?, 11? 12 - Althea Winter, 13?, 14 - Nettie Mallette.

Row 4- 1?, 2 - Kathryn Dively, 3?, 4?, 5?, 6?, 7.

Row 5- 1?, 2?, 3?, 4?, 5?, 6?, 7 - Mary Flaugh, 8?.

A union couldn't stop the industry's technological shift, though, and by the 1950s, hiring had stalled. Hundreds were laid off amid a steel strike, news reports said, and many of the Little Rock and other black southerners left the area. Some opted for transfers to another General Refractories silica plant in Morrisville, PA and lived across the Delaware River in Trenton, New Jersey. Others moved to neighboring towns such as Altoona while others returned to their southern roots.

By the late 1960's, only a few black people remained. Little Africa and Shanty Row were the black neighborhoods, and as people left the area, the company tore down the houses and now there are empty lots on Dunnings Highway and Bedford Street where they stood. Most of Claysburg's black population came and went in a matter of 50 years.

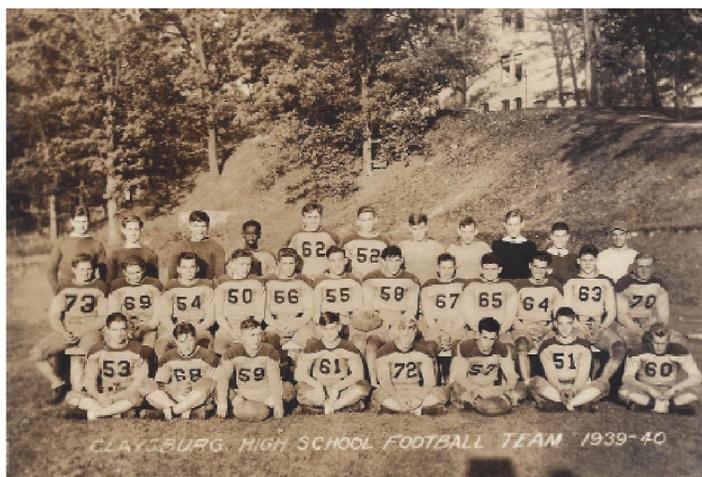
As for paying rent and water bills at General Refractories, a lot of people never paid their bills. But I fondly remember Mrs. Lilly Fitzgerald from the late 1970's who was the last African American living in a General Refractories house in the Little Africa section of Claysburg. In her older years, she would walk about a mile to the General Refractories - Claysburg Plant Office to pay her rent and water bill and never missed paying her \$15 rent or \$.75 cent per month water bill. She was one of the few black or white people who continued to keep her rent and water bills current.

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Claysburg Schools grew so quickly in the 1920's, they could not keep up with construction. They used portable classrooms called "chicken coops" in the 1920's



EARLY SCHOOL "CHICKEN COOP'S"
CONSTRUCTED IN LATE 1920'S



Claysburg High School Football Team
1939-40



Claysburg High School Football Team 1938



Claysburg's 1962
Only undefeated
football team
in school history

: Donald Knisely - manager; Russell Knisely, Robert Zeigler, Dennis Cowher, David Cox, Tommy Briggie, Vaughn Stephen Fickes, Phillip Lingenfelter - manager. ROW 2: Francis Musselman - manager; Wayne Henderson, Charles Berger, Larry Dodson, Randy Hengst, Vince Dodson, Donald Sell, Tom Lewis, Jerry Witherspoon, Jesse Emleigh, Musselman - manager. ROW 3: Ted Delozier - Head Coach; Jack Mauk - manager; David Lamborn, Barry Corle, Diehl, Ralph Pearson, Lynn Crist, Dick Dellinger, Wayne Ebersole, Terry Lori, Dick Hoenstine - Assistant Coach. : Kenneth Musselman, Wayne McCarty, John Witherspoon, Lloyd Harr, Jerry Gardner, Ronald Bowser, David man.

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Boyd Mallett, Claysburg Class of 1941 and a member of the African American Community in Claysburg Wrote Words for Claysburg-Kimmel's School Song - CK Alma Mater

CK Alma Mater

Claysburg-Kimmel is proud to have its own school song. The words for the "Alma Mater" were written by Boyd Mallett, Claysburg Class of 1941, and a member of the African-American Community in Claysburg. The music was written by Mr. Fred C. Lowe, music teacher at Greenfield Township.

The "Alma Mater" was written in 1940, and a few minor changes have been made since that time. Claysburg-Kimmel also has standard colors and a mascot. Blue and Gold were adopted as the standard colors, and the Bulldog was adopted as the mascot.

Hail! Oh Hail! Our Alma Mater
Let us cheer our Gold and Blue.
We your Sons and we your Daughters
Sing forever praise of you.
Ever faithful, true and loyal
In your battles do our part,
And then your glory never failing
Lives forever in our hearts.
Hail! Oh Hail! Our Alma Mater,
Hail to dear old C. K. High.



CK ALMA MATER



Hail oh hail our al - ma - ter Let us cheer our gold and blue,
We your sons and we your dau - gh - ters sing for e - ver praise of you.
Ev - er faith - ful true and loy - al In your bat - tles do our pa - rt
Then your glo - ry ne - ver fail - ing lives for ev - er in our he - arts
Hail oh hail our Al - ma Ma - ter Hail to dear old C K High

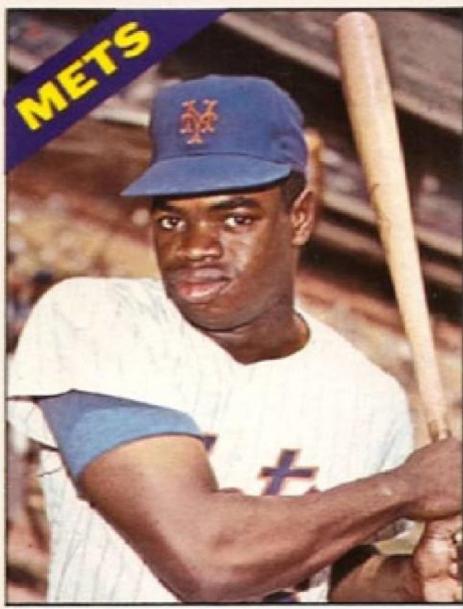
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1940 Blair County Baseball Champion Team
Claysburg



1st Row: Samuel D. Harshberger, Charles Madera, John J. Ebersole, Kenneth Burket, Fred Gaston, Samuel Hoenstine, mer Lingenfelter, Paul Lingenfelter, Benjamin Hengst, Harold Hoenstine, Harry Diehl, Regis Walter, Ray Tipton, Stephen Angle, Raymond Shoemaker, Luther Miller, Gaston, Blazeovich, Shoemaker



Daniel Napoleon

Positions: Pinch Hitter, Leftfielder and Third Baseman

Bats: Right, **Throws:** Right

Height: 5' 11", **Weight:** 190 lb.

Born: [January 11, 1942](#) in Claysburg, [PA](#)

High School: [Trenton Central HS \(Trenton, NJ\)](#)

School: [Rider University \(Lawrenceville, NJ\)](#)

Signed by the [New York Mets](#) as an amateur free agent in 1964. ([All Transactions](#))

Debut: [April 14, 1965](#)

Team: Mets 1965-1966

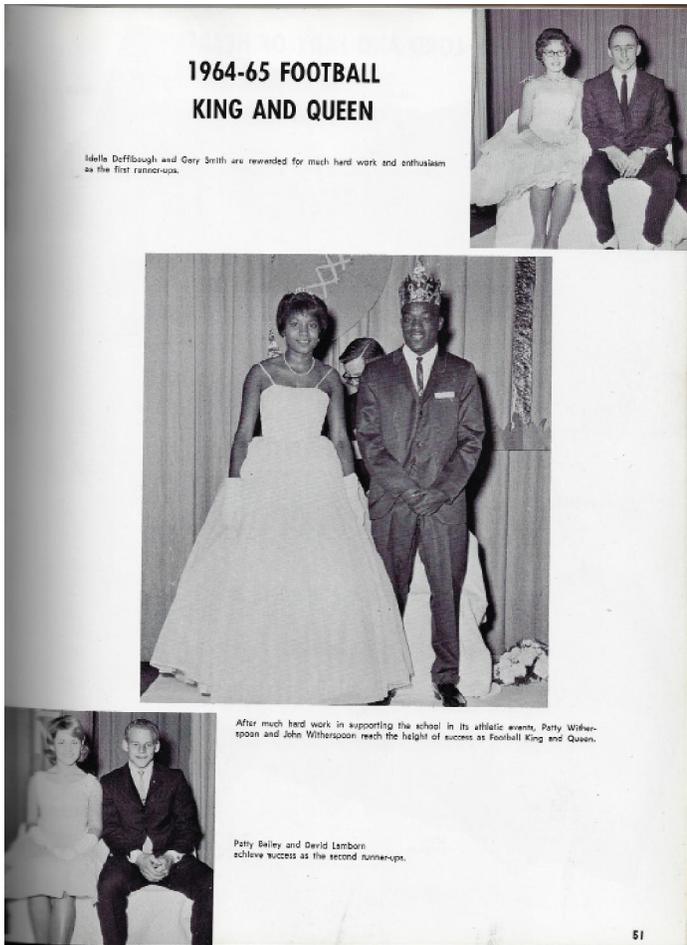
Final Game: [October 2, 1966](#)

Died: [April 26, 2003](#) in Trenton, [NJ](#) (Aged 61)

Buried: [Greenwood Cemetery, Trenton, NJ](#)

Dan Napoleon played for the New York Mets. Dan was born in Claysburg, but his family moved to Trenton, NJ when General Refractories opened a brickplant across the river in Morrisville, PA. Dan graduated from Trenton High School.

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John and Patty Witherspoon were selected by their Claysburg-Kimmel Classmates for the 1964-65 Claysburg-Kimmel Football King and Queen

In the 1980's Berthine Fitzgerald was asked to be Claysburg's Homecoming Parade Marshall for all her contributions to the community through the years.



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Oliver Fink and Lovenia Bonds Holloman were the last surviving black members of the brickyard community. Lovenia, a lovely lady with a heart of gold died in 1984.

As a school district, I believe that all students were generally treated the same. One of my best friends in 3rd grade was a black kid named Larry. I was pleasantly surprised when I found a picture from 1924 of Claysburg students of different ethnic backgrounds black, white and eastern European in the same class. While I remember hearing of segregated schools other places continuing into the 1960's, it was not that way in Claysburg. Also, starting in the mid 1930's there was participation in all sports in Claysburg regardless of race.

John and Patty Witherspoon were crowned King and Queen of Football in the 1964-65. They were graduates of Claysburg-Kimmel in 1965. They were both very active in all athletics. They were the first brother and sister King and Queen, and they were selected by their classmates for this role.

Claysburg was a great place to grow up with a very safe, rural setting where regardless of ethnic background, everyone really was welcomed and got along. I really never heard the words segregation as a kid growing up and didn't really understand what they meant until I became an adult and traveled outside the area. Claysburg, PA is a great town!



Claysburg students waiting for the bus at Rosey Gazzara's Store - circa 1950