

## East Falls Past-- Breck School, Dutch Hollow

*The Fallser*, June 2008, by Wendy Moody

Recently, I received an email from Robert Connolly, an 85-year-old former resident of East Falls, now residing in Cape May, offering to share his childhood memories of our community.

As I have emailed him questions, he has responded with vivid recollections of his boyhood in the 1920's and 30's. He lived on Stanton, Calumet, and Bowman.

This month the column focuses on Breck School and its environs. (Breck, located at the end of Krail Street, was the predecessor of Mifflin).

### ***What do you remember about Breck School?***

I attended through 7<sup>th</sup> grade. We walked there every day, except for very severe weather. There were two buildings – the larger one for classes 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up, the smaller for 3<sup>rd</sup> and under. We were taught English, math, spelling and history. My teachers included: Miss Everhardt (1<sup>st</sup> grade), Miss Cramp (2<sup>nd</sup>), Miss Tobin (history), Miss Edwards (math), Miss Martin (grammar), Mrs. Wertz (English), and a tall, slender very athletic gym teacher. Dr. Galter was the Principal at both Breck and Mifflin.

There was just one bathroom in the dark basement.

One half day each week the boys would walk to Whittier School (Clearfield and 27<sup>th</sup>) for woodshop training. It was in the back of the trolley barn on Allegheny, where # 60 trolley was housed. The barn - in front of the school - was below Corpus Christi Church going east. Wood shop was in the basement. After classes we had to walk back to school for dismissal. My first project was a wooden take-up reel for the clothes line.

### ***What about the grounds at Breck?***

The play area was concrete with one giant oak tree. I can remember a man from Ridge Avenue who sold penny candies and pretzels outside the iron fence near the front entrance. I believe his name was Caruso and he lived on Ridge near Crawford Street. He was there, rain or shine, except in very bad storms. The best deal was a large soft pretzel



Old Brewery at Dutch Hollow, Midvale Avenue and Wiehle Street. Built in 1857 by Henry Becker, the brewery was torn down in 1870 by Jacob Hohenadel. The ruins, consisting of two connecting tunnels known to locals as "The Cavies" were filled in and closed in the 1990s.

with plenty of yellow mustard. We walked home for lunch from Breck via Dutch Hollow to Stanton Street, and back again after lunch.

***Can you describe Dutch Hollow?***

The old brewery ran from the coalyard and Indian Queen Lane, over to the iron fence that circled the Reading train station, then down to Midvale. The other side was bordered by the houses that lined Indian Queen all the way down to Arnold Street.

The area was rugged with a large trough running down the middle ending near Arnold. It was full of trash from people dumping over the years, mostly wooded with high weeds. There were two caves – an upper and a lower one in which we played occasionally. We used it as a hideout for cowboys and Indians - bows made from large branches tied with string and cap guns. We never went near the upper cave as it was too tightly closed off, but used to slide down into the bottom cave on a large piece of cardboard. The bottom cave had a high ceiling that looked like red brick covered with something white, about 40' wide at the bottom. The bottom was wet and damp and chilly so we never stayed too long.

The front of the bottom cave was almost covered over except for a hole near the roof about 5' wide and a few feet high – our entrance....

More next month!