

HIGHTSTOWN



EAST WINDSOR

NEW JERSEY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

MARCH - APRIL 2003

William Hight Re-Visited

by Richard S. Hutchinson

In the September-October 1997 issue, the lead article on the front page dealt with the family profile of William Hight, of Clermont County, Ohio, as was written in the *History of Clermont and Brown Counties, Ohio*. This county and region saw many New Jersey families migrate there when the Northwest Territory opened up and the Trout family, from Monmouth County and counties to the South in New Jersey, was one of those families.

In the above mentioned article, the publication states, "The birth of Squire William Hight occurred in Brown county, on the Clermont line,

September 13, 1834, and his parents were Allison and Nancy (Trout) Hight." It further states that "Nancy (Trout) Hight was born in Clermont county in 1789, a daughter of Morris Trout, a pioneer of Clermont, coming probably from Pennsylvania. Nancy (Trout) Hight passed from this life in 1837, leaving children as follows: Martha, John, Isaiah and Peter, William, and James..."

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to do some New Jersey research on the Trout family for Richard A. Moore, now of Solana Beach, CA. While Mr. Moore and others have done the bulk of the Trout research, we were trying to locate more New Jersey information on his ancestor, Morris Trout, as his children. So, when Mr. Moore read this Ohio item in our newsletter, he thought he had found some answers to his Morris Trout questions. However, after doing further research generated by our newsletter revelation, Mr. Moore is now convinced that the *History of*

Clermont and Brown Counties, Ohio, is incorrect by stating that William Hight's mother, Nancy Trout, was a daughter of his Morris Trout. It is Mr. Moore's contention that William Hights's mother was Nancy Trout but that she was **not** the daughter of Morris Trout, Sr., but the daughter of Morris' older brother, John Trout. The confusion lies in the fact that both Morris, Sr. and his older brother, John, had girls named Nancy. [In this period of time, Nancy and Ann were also used as nicknames for each other.] There is basically very little information that can be found for Morris, Sr's children. We know that he had a son, also named Morris, but Morris, Jr. can be eliminated from this problem by other research.

Here are the known facts from research to lead Mr. Moore to the above conclusion. We know that both Morris Trout, Sr. and brother John Trout went to this same area in Ohio but at different times. John being the oldest headed to the West before Morris

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Life Membership Changes

At the January 6, 2003 Business Meeting, the officers took up the issue of making changes to the Life Membership category in order to address certain issues. The decision was regularly moved, seconded and approved that effective January 1, 2003, there will be two Life Membership categories, Life (Individual) at \$200 and Life (Married) at \$275, which will replace the current single Life Membership category AND that "all current Life Memberships will be grand-fathered." ■



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

3 7:30 p.m., Business Meeting, Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center

No program information available this month

APRIL

7 7:30 p.m., Business Meeting, Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center

No program information available this month

William Hight

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Trout, Sr. and was therefore somewhat more of a "pioneer" to the area than Morris. Two of Morris's children, daughters Nancy and Mary, were found in the records of the Old Trinity Church of Gloucester County, New Jersey, showing that Nancy was baptized in April 1798 and Mary was baptized in October 1800. So, we know that Morris Trout, Sr's daughter, Nancy, was at least born as of this date in New Jersey. Now, remember that the county history article stated that William Hight's mother was "Nancy (Trout) Hight who was born in Clermont county in 1789, a daughter of Morris Trout..." We also know by research in the land records of both New Jersey and Ohio that Morris Trout, Sr. (born September 1771) did not move to Clermont Co, Ohio before July 1816, the date of his sale of land in Gloucester County, New Jersey and his subsequent purchase of land in Clermont County, Ohio, in August 1816 from his older brother, John Trout (born February 1769) who went to Kentucky and was later in Ohio around 1799-1800. Either one of the two could have migrated west to Pennsylvania from New Jersey, as many did, before going on to Kentucky and Ohio.

So, now we have a problem! The county history book says that William Hight's mother, was Nancy Trout, daughter of Morris Trout, and was born in Ohio in 1789 but we can show by New Jersey records that Nancy Trout, the daughter of Morris Trout, Sr. was born in New Jersey, as of April 1798, before her father went to Ohio in 1816. Now, you will note that **MAYBE** the history book transposed the date 1789 when it should have been 1798. If that was the case, then we really would have a problem. [This could be the case because most of the time the information in these "county history" books was gathered from the family of the person high-

lighted rather than from true record research.]

Therefore, Mr. Moore decided to test the above possibility of switched dates by "asking" William Hight himself, being William was alive as of 1882 and living in Sterling Township, Brown County, Ohio, according to the county history book article. To do this, Mr. Moore searched the 1880 Federal Census of the above township and county, and found William Hight and his household. **The significance of using this census is that the head of the household was asked in what state where were you, your father and your mother were born!** Surely, William Hight himself would know where his mother and father were born and whether it was Ohio or New Jersey! **William Hight gave the census taker Ohio as his birthplace, New Jersey as his father's birthplace, and Ohio as his mother's birthplace.** So, William Hight himself, or at least the person in the family speaking to the census taker, knew that his mother Nancy (Trout) Hight was born in Ohio which shows that **Nancy Trout, daughter of Morris Trout, Sr., baptized in New Jersey 26 April 1798 did not marry William Hight.**

Therefore, Mr. Moore concludes that the Nancy (Trout) Hight, wife of William Hight, was the daughter of John Trout, the brother of Morris Trout, Sr. However, by eliminating the above Nancy (Trout) Hight as his Nancy Trout, Mr. Moore finds himself now back to "square one" in his search for the children, as adults, of his ancestor Morris Trout, Sr. ■



HIGHTSTOWN EAST WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hightstown, New Jersey
founded 1971

609-371-9580

**To educate, while preserving for
future generations, our people
and our community's history.**

Editor, Richard S. Hutchinson

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**Genealogical queries pertaining to the
Hightstown-East Windsor Township area are ac-
cepted, but will be printed as space allows.**

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The Cedarville School House

by Richard S. Hutchinson

In the mid-1990s, I was told that the original Cedarville School House, where Clara Barton once taught and then referred to as the Cedar Swamp School, still existed and was the building housing the office at Village Nurseries on York Road in East Windsor Township. This I doubted because I had always been led to believe that this school house had been destroyed a long, long time ago. Therefore, I decided to do some research in order to see what I could find.

As we all know, Clara Barton did teach at the little one-room school house that once stood on Cedarville Road, for a short period of time in her early years, long before her Civil War fame. But, the question is, does it exist or is it which school house are we talking about. In John Orr's book, "Reflections from the Shrine," he quotes Mr. Joseph Ely, who in 1877 wrote: "My father told me that he attended the Cedar Swamp School when a boy. It was, of course, in the old house not far from the present site of the Cedarville schoolhouse..."

Mr. Orr continues "Joseph J. Ely's father, Joseph Ely, was

born in 1782, which means the school had to be in existence before 1800." Therefore, from Mr. Ely, we learn that there was an earlier school house near the site of the then present-day (1877) Cedarville School House. Mr. Orr also believes that the original school house stood "on the east side of the Cedarville road, and located between two small streams nearly opposite the present-day lane leading into the Bogatz farm..." If one looks at the 1875 Everts & Stewart Atlas of Mercer County, the later Cedarville school house (referred to by Mr. Ely in 1877)

is shown on the East side, at the South end of Cedarville Road, between two small creeks that merge and feed into what was then known as Schenck's Pond, and is today the pond at the Meadow Lakes facility on Etra Road. The school house was further located by the Atlas as being across from property then owned by J. R. Norton and perhaps about 200 yards from the Perrineville Road to the South.

In 1884, in the September 25th issue of the *Hightstown Gazette*, it re-

ported: "Cedarville School House Burned - About half-past four four (sic) o'clock on Sunday morning, Mr. George Pullen observed a bright light from his bed-room window, and quickly arising and arousing his neighbors, went to the school house to find it a heap of burning ruins. The supposition as to the origin of the fire is as follows: About half-past eight o'clock the evening previous a tramp visited one of the stores in Milford and obtained matches, which fact from his appearance, elicited remarks of suspicion. About half-past twelve o'clock the same tramp was seen by Mr. Ely Hutchinson, going in the direction of the school house. Between one and two o'clock the cellars of Mrs. Elizabeth and George Roszel were forcibly entered and relieved of bread, pudding and other eatables. About half-past three o'clock, Mr. Franklin, of Milford, saw fire light in the direction of the school house, which was first discovered as mentioned by Mr. Pullen. The Sunday School which meets in the school room, loses a new organ, lately purchased, and a library of new books, with other Sunday

School material, amounting in all to about one hundred dollars ---not insured. The building was insured for three hundred dollars in the Pennington Co." So, from this we know that the school that Mr. Ely was referring to in 1877 school was destroyed by fire.

Later, in the October 30th issue of the above paper, it was reported: "The voters in the Cedarville school district have voted to rebuild the school house. In the meantime the school is held in the house of Mr. D. Davison." And, in the November 20th issue, we find the following letter to the

Editor: "Mr. Editor - With your permission I would like to say a word through your columns concerning the needs and the possibilities, as I view them of the Cedarville district. About fifty years ago when the house that has lately burned was erected, the necessities for a school house were very great. Before I was ten years old I, with my older brothers, went to the old brick schoolhouse, which stood near where Mr. Benjamin Gordon's house stands, on the H. & P. turnpike. The nearest house southerly was and is the

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Photo of Clara Barton, ca. 1850 - 1851, believed taken at Clinton, New York. Website-Clara Barton National Historic site.

School House

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eight-square, in Upper Freehold. At the north the Wyckoff Mill school. Hightstown school was near Mr. Job's place, and the Allen's not far from its present location. So you will readily see the village of Milford was ... accommodated at that time. They joined with the surrounding country and erected on the roadside in a beautiful clean forest belonging to Col. S.C. Johnes, the school house which was burned a short time since. Now to be brief, let us see what are our present needs. Milford has a school house only moderately strong. The old eight-square is still there strong and prosperous. Fairplay is not so well supported. Allen's district has a good house, and the trustees say plenty of room, and Hightstown, which has become a school centre, has the Academy with its efficient corps of teachers, with Peddie Institute and the Home Seminary, so that as soon as a boy or girl gets in their teens, and often before, they are sent from all of the above named districts to one of these select schools. Cedarville being directly under the eaves of these schools suffers particularly from this cause, which must necessarily keep our school very weak, and entail upon the taxpayers of the district a burthen that will eventually drive away all capital and leave us in a beggarly condition....I think the County Superintendent is also neglecting his duty in not counseling the district to desist in rebuilding, knowing as he does, the great difficulties we have to encounter in keeping the school open. It will probably never be a united district, and if disbanded could all be accommodated in the Allen's, Milford, Fairplay, and per two families might desire to

unite with the Eight-square, already being in Monmouth county. I hope the inhabitants, as well as the taxpayers, will look deliberately upon this picture before it is too late and retrace the rash step taken. Respectfully, J.R. Norton." From Mr. Norton's letter, we learn that the school house referred to by Mr. Ely in 1877, and destroyed by fire in 1884, was built circa 1830.

Apparently, the school district decided to rebuild the Cedarville school house because on the 4th of December 1884, it was reported: "We learn that an injunction has been served upon the erection of the Cedarville public school building." But, on the 22nd of January 1885, it was further reported: "The new school house in the Cedarville district is about completed and will soon be occupied by the School. The building is much larger than the one recently destroyed by fire, high ceiling, rolling windows for top ventilation, in fact the convenience, comfort and health of the children have been duly considered in every particular. The house is alike creditable to the building committee and the district. The School will be under the management of Miss Horsefull, of Bordentown, who has thus far proved herself to be an efficient governess and instructor."

So, what have we learned? As of this time, we know that an earlier school house, which I'll call (#1), was built before 1800, stood near the site of the Cedarville School House in 1877 (#2), according to Mr. Ely, and that it (#2) was built circa 1830, through Mr. Norton's letter, and presumably replaced the earlier

school house (#1). Now, in 1885, a new Cedarville School House (#3) was built to replace the burned (#2). In my opinion, school house (#2) is the candidate for being the school house where Clara Barton taught.

Clara Barton began her teaching career at the age of 17 and taught at many locations before coming to the Hightstown area. According to the Clara Barton National Historic Site, run by the U.S. Park Service, in Glen Echo, Maryland, Clara Barton was born 25 December 1821, at North Oxford, Massachusetts. From 1850-1851, Clara Barton was in Clinton, New York, continuing her teaching education. On July 18, 1851, her mother died and in October she came to "Hightstown" to visit a school friend, Mary Norton, and resumed teaching school. From 1852-1854, she established a free public school in Bordentown. So, Clara Barton was here but a short period of time, at age 29, in 1851, which would make the Cedarville school house (#2) as the prime candidate.

Now, it was reported in the *Hightstown Gazette*, of 30 June 1910, that: "Rev. William H. Pullen, son of Higbee Pullen, when a boy attended for a time the Cedar Swamp school, of which Miss Clara Barton was principal over fifty years ago... Pity the one story, antiquated building couldn't have been preserved until, like the 'one-horse shay,' it fell into pieces of its own accord." His statement places Clara Barton again during this time period, at the Cedarville School (#2), referred to as the Cedar Swamp School, and

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implies by his statement that it didn't disappear from the scene through its own deterioration, and we know that it was destroyed by fire in 1884. Therefore, if any of the three Cedarville School houses **does exist** as the office at Village Nurseries, it is most probable the Cedarville School (#3).

We now turn our attention to Village Nurseries and its connection to the Black family in order to see what we can find. The earliest ancestor of the Black family was Joseph Black and his wife, Martha, who came to this country from England in 1837, as an itinerant Methodist preacher. They finally settled in the Prospect Plains area where they were involved in farming and had at least ten children - Ann, Mary, Jane, John, Charles H., Joseph H., Martha, Ellen, William E., and Elias. The family was also involved in farming, fruit farming and the propagation of fruit trees. We will look at a few of their children. Remember the Higbee Pullen above? Well, he married Ellen D. Black in September of 1872. And, Charles H. Black, son of Joseph and Martha Black above, married Mary Pullen, who died in December 1908, at the Black homestead on York Road near Hightstown. Another child, Joseph H. Black married Jennie Dillon, and she died in March 1907, "at their home, The Village Nurseries" and was survived by her husband and two children - Walter C. Black and Miss Nina Black. Yes, this is the Walter C. Black, of local fame and for whom the "Walter C. Black School" on Stockton Street is named.

Walter C. Black was born 14 February 1867 and died at the age of 95 in August 1962, at his home on York Road. Four years before his death, he had retired as operator of the Village Nurseries. In 1961, he gave up his job with East Windsor Township as their Tax Collector, a position he held for 59 years. He was best known for his membership and work on the East Windsor Township Board of Education; a seat he held for 56 years and from which he retired in 1952. Altogether, he had 133 years of public service during his career.

Mr. Black operated the Village Nursery for his income. In an interview in 1961, he stated: "I was in the nursery business from the time I was nine until I was ninety." He said that he learned the business from an uncle, and has passed on the management of the Village Nursery to one of his grandsons. Mr. Black and his wife, Sarah, had three children: Nettie Mason Black, who married C. Stanley Stults; Alma Black, who married Harry C. Locke; and Estelle Rae Black, who married Ferris Charles Waite, at "The Orchards," on the York Road, near Hightstown, in July 1914.

After his early schooling, he attended Peddie and Rider Business College. He played football while at Peddie and after graduation he pitched for years for a local Hightstown baseball team. At the age of 37, he pitched a perfect game and at the age of 45, he pitched his last game. He took up golf at the age of 60 and three years later won a local tournament. He was also a member of Peddie School's Board of

Trustees for 31 years, as well as its treasurer. He walked a mile every day and if the snow is deep, he walked on his porch that surrounds the house, doing a mile in thirty five laps. Just under six feet tall, he weighed a solid 190 pounds, but in 1961 he had lost 40 pounds due to recent illnesses. He stated that if he wasn't handicapped by his near blindness, he would still be willing "to tackle a delinquent taxpayer or a golf ball." He stated that he had no special health or success formulas but added, "I could always find new and better ways to do things."

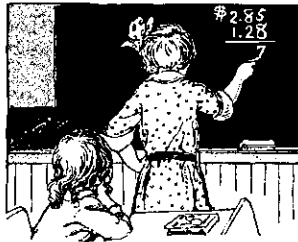
Still no clues as to whether the office at Village Nurseries is the Cedarville School House (#3). However, on August 6th, 1914, the *Hightstown Gazette*, printed a notice by the East Windsor Board of Education and it was this notice that supplied the answer: "On Monday, the Board of Education held a meeting and decided to sell at auction on August 17th, the four unused country school house properties - Etra, Cedarville, Hickory Corner and Locust Corner." Then the auction was postponed until September. The following article was found in issue of September 6th - "The three country school houses were sold at public sale, Monday Evening, at the Mercer Street school building. About a dozen men were present besides the members of the Board of education, and except in one instance, the bidding was not very lively. John S. Mount acted as auctioneer, and Dr. G. H. Franklin, clerk of the sale. The properties included the houses and the township's title to the land on which they are now situated. **The**

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Cedarville school was first offered. It was started at a low figure, and with only two bidding, was finally sold to Charles Black for \$70. The Locust Corner school brought a bid for \$20. The sale was withheld, and the Hickory Corner was put up. This also bought a bid of \$20, and was withheld. The Etra School was then offered. A number of small bids were received. It was sold to Dr. C.M. Franklin for \$30. He represented some of the residents of the vicinity who wanted the property purchased for school and Sunday school purposes. Hickory Corner was again offered, and was sold to William J. Scott, the original bidder, for \$20. The Locust Corner property, which had previously a bid of \$20 from Mr. Scott, was put up again. The bid was gradually raised in small amounts.



Several times the amount was raised 25 cents and 10 cents. Finally, W. J. Scott and Dr. C.M. Franklin were the only bidders, and the property was sold to the latter for \$67.

So, there it is. The Cedarville School House (#3) was sold for \$70 at public auction to Charles H. Black, of Village Nurseries, who was the brother of Joseph H. Black, and the uncle of Walter C. Black. Since the property title went with the building, it might be interesting to do a title search for that piece of property to see if we can tell when it was moved. Therefore, it does appear that the office of Village Nurseries was the Cedarville School House (#3) but not the school house wherein Clara Barton taught. ■

Joseph Black

A very well known businesses in East Windsor Township in the 1800s was the nursery of Isaac Pullen in the York Road area. A son of his, Alexander Pullen, moved from the area but took what he had learned with him and established another well known nursery business in Milford, Delaware.

In January 1910, the following item was written about Joseph Black of East Windsor Township:

“Joseph Black, the new County Collector, is a native born American of English parents, and was 5th of 11 children. He was given is father’s name, to which was added his mother’s maiden name. The father was a Methodist Protestant preacher, who died young from a severe burn. Joseph lived in the Prospect Plains area as a boy and for several years worked for Isaac Pullen on the nursery. The year he was married, he bought a little farm near Cedarville School, on which he lived for four years, at which time he left to work on a fruit farm in Northhampton County, Virginia, where he stayed for 7 years. He then came north and entered into a partnership with his brother, Charles, which lasted for 12 years, at which time he and his son bought out the brother’s share and today the nurseries of Joseph H. Black and Son & Co. are known in all parts of the country.” ■

Canon Found in Cedarville

The following was reported in the *Hightstown Gazette*, dated 18 November 1897:

“A canon, which was supposed to have been in the war of 1812, was unearthed in Cedarville by a farmer who was plowing up a corn field. It was hauled out, and a salute was given with it to the Stars and Stripes that had been nailed on the weather vane of the barn, while cheers from a hundred throats were given for the victory achieved...” ■

Abraham Lincoln Defends Former Hightstonian

Saturday, June 1, 1867 -
Mercer County Courts - The case of Abijah Anderson vs Jesse Anderson, was concluded by the jury rendering a verdict of ... [cash] ... for the plaintiff.

Action was brought in this case for the recovery of \$420[?] paid by Abijah Anderson for the defense of Jesse Anderson’s son, Theodore, from the charge of murder, who was tried at Springfield, Illinois, in 1856. The plaintiff, then living in Illinois, pleads having received a letter from defendant, who at the time lived at Hightstown, asking him to do all in his power for his son, in accordance with which he paid the specified amount. The defendant denied having written any such letter. The counsel for the defense of Theodore were Abraham Lincoln, Hogan and Rosette. A receipt for fees in Mr. Lincoln’s own hand-writing was exhibited to the Court. ■

Abraham Lincoln

After Lincoln became President, probably like any President, he was besieged by those wanting appointed positions or those seeking an office. One day, Lincoln sat down a rather unpromising man seeking such a position and told him a story that he had once been told.

Lincoln said: "Once upon a time there was a King who was fond of hunting, and always before start-

ing would send for his magician for a report on the weather. One day when the magician promised fine weather, they started off. Soon they met a peasant driving a donkey. The peasant asked, 'My great King, turn back, a storm is brewing.' The King replied, 'No, my magician says the weather will be fine.' Said the peasant: 'When my donkey turns his ears forward it is going to storm.' But, the King went on, and was caught in a terrific storm. When the King

returned he removed the magician from office and secured a donkey.' Lincoln paused and then added: 'And since that time all the jackasses in the country have been seeking office.' ■



CDV image of Elizabeth E. Cox, taken ca. 1865, by photographer R. R. Priest of Hightstown, N.J.

Hightstown's 1895 Bird's-Eye Map Available

The Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society is having the 1895 Bird's-Eye Map of Hightstown copied and will offer same for sale. The map shows all of the businesses and residences of the town of Hightstown, and the area then surrounding the town, with the entire map surrounded with numerous vignettes of the town businesses, churches and other buildings. At the bottom of the map, the names of the businessmen and other personalities are listed. Thanks goes to Skip Cox, Fran Cook and "Cappy" Stults for helping make this possible. The map measures 20" x 16" and is suitable for framing. The price is \$20 made payable to H-EW Historical Society. Send your remittance to HEW Map, 164 N. Main Street, Hightstown, New Jersey, 08520. ■

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Membership Committee
Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society
164 North Main Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520

21 November 1867 - Washington, D.C. - Senator Wade on Mrs. Lincoln - It seems that Senator Wade, of Ohio, was on a committee of the two Houses appointed to investigate the pecuniary condition in which President Lincoln's family was left, and report a bill, if necessary, for their relief. In conversation last week, Mr. Wade emphatically contradicted the statement of Mrs. Lincoln that Mr. Lincoln had left little or no property behind him. "We looked into the matter," says Senator Wade, "very carefully. The Illinois men wanted us to give her one hundred thousand dollars, and we agreed to do so, if it appeared that she really needed it. We sent for the administrator of the estate, and he testified that Mr. Lincoln left seventy-five thousand dollars in Government bonds, or something like that, besides some little productive property in Springfield, Illinois — in all about one hundred thousand

Nothing Has Changed

dollars. We thought, then, that twenty-five thousand dollars would be enough — the same that was paid to the widow of General Harrison. Mrs. Lincoln was very well off, and didn't need, even, what she got. She took a hundred boxes of something or other — I don't know what --- away with her,

and the Commissioner of Public Buildings swore that there were fifteen other boxes that she wanted to carry off, and he had to interfere to prevent her. At any rate she cleaned out the White House. I didn't know but what she was going to run a big hotel with all she carried off." ■

Cranbury In The Philadelphia Papers

In February 1915, the following item was found in the *Philadelphia Telegraph*:

One afternoon a traveling salesman from a big city happened to make a stop in the little town of Cranbury, N.J. and after completing his business call, he started to return to the railroad station, which is quite a distance from the town proper.

"Talk about towns," he breathlessly remarked to a native, as he even-

tually reached the platform, "this dump is certainly the limit." "That's what they all say," indifferently responded the native, with a casual glance at the businessman. "I've lost no end of good time beating it over the bloomin' road! What do you do suppose made them put the station so far from the town?," impatiently continued the businessman. "Derned if I know," carelessly answered the native, F. Brennan, "unless they wanted to have it near the railroad." ■

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