

Samuel Berger – Businessman and Entrepreneur

In 2002, P. Galen Lenhert, grandson of Samuel Berger, returned to this area from Nashville, Tennessee for a visit and brought with him several items that he found in a trunk that had belonged to his grandfather. Sue Cummings and Glynn Marsh spent an evening with Galen, his wife and other family members at their camp retreat known as Berger's Glen along the Stillwater River, NE of West Milton. Family photos and stories were shared. Galen has donated the Berger and Dohner genealogies from which the following information was gleaned:

Samuel Berger was born October 24, 1869 in Centerville, Ohio to John S. Berger and his wife Mary Magdalene Hiller, both of Wertemberg, Germany. He was the eldest and only son and had three sisters. On May 15, 1898, he married Barbara Ann Dohner, born September 6, 1872, daughter of John H. Dohner and Mary Ronk Moist. Samuel and Barbra (family spelling) had two girls, Mary Dohner Berger, born February 2, 1902 and Ruth Dohner Berger, born September 17, 1903 (Yorkshire, Darke Co., Ohio). The girls married in a double wedding ceremony in Englewood, Ohio on June 8, 1928. Ruth married Benjamin Musser Hess, born October 11, 1900 in Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania. Mary, who was Galen's mother, took Paul Gish Lenhert as her husband. He was born in Dickinson Co., KS on March 19, 1903 and became a physician. Samuel and Mary Dohner Berger both are buried in Fairview Cemetery in Englewood. They died on August 22, 1951 and October 8, 1966, respectively.

Sam started the Berger Lumber Co. in 1912 by agreement with Theo. F. Sinks, H. G. Cress, J. F. Eidenmiller, R. H. Welbaum and Levi Wenger who deeded property on National Road to Berger with the understanding that he would establish and operate a general lumber yard on the site (RTHS has a copy of this deed). The business flourished and Sam owned the lumber yard until his death at which time it passed to his daughter Ruth and her husband Benjamin Hess who had operated it for several years. In addition to the lumber yard, Sam owned several other properties in Englewood including a brick bungalow across the street from the yard, the Pure Oil Station at the corner of Routes 40 and 48 and land south of the corner on which Zimmerman's market was later built (inherited by Mary and her husband Paul Lenhert). Sam also owned some 37 acres along the Stillwater River in Union Township, Miami County, northeast of West Milton where he built several cottages and a dining hall. He operated the retreat and rented cabins by the year. He also invited church groups to use the facility for weekly outings. No liquor, firearms or dogs were permitted on the grounds – fishing by cottagers only! Other activities included hiking, croquet, and tennis.

Within a few months (October 2002), a new Ace Hardware Store will open in Englewood on the land once occupied by the lumber yard. Time marches on.