

# A First in America

It is often only with the hindsight of many years of history that we can recognize a movement that made a sea-change in the life of a nation. Two hundred years ago, on September 15, 1817, a unique event occurred in the small village of Upper Middletown, Fayette County, western Pennsylvania. It was a unique event in that it represented the first operation, in America, of the iron puddling process.

This event was historically significant because it was a major step forward in transforming brittle pig iron, produced in early blast furnaces, into malleable materials, wrought iron. The introduction of the puddling process in America, together with an innovative way to roll a variety of bar shapes, can be attributed to the persistence of a Welsh entrepreneur, Thomas C. Lewis and the local Western Pennsylvania iron maker, Issac Meason.

The Fayette County Historical Society and The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission on Sunday, September 10, 2017 at 3:00 along route 51 had the dedication of the official state historical marker commemorating The First Puddling Furnance in the United States.