The Hagerstown silt loam occurs in 3 areas, aggregating several square miles, along the northern border of the large area of Hagerstown loam and adjoining the Berks shale loam on the north. The largest area is located just south of Cementon in the eastern part of the county. There is another area near Fogelsville, and another in the western part of the county just north of Breinigsville.

This soil occupies smooth-sloped ridges and hills. It has a somewhat higher elevation than the surrounding Hagerstown loam. Surface drainage is good, and the soil is not subject to destructive erosion.

The soil of the Hagerstown silt loam is a brown mellow silt loam to an average depth of about 8 inches. This is underlain by a yellow silty clay loam to silty clay which is somewhat crumbly and extends to a depth of 3 feet or more. In the lower part of the subsoil grayish and whitish partially decomposed fragments of the parent rock are present in some areas, but very few rock fragments of any kind are present in the surface soil or in the upper part of the subsoil. Frequently the subsoil has a smooth, greasy feel. The lower part of the subsoil carries a little more silt and proportionately less clay than the upper part. It ranges from yellowish-red to reddish-yellow in color. In a few small areas the parent rock, a shaly limestone, locally called “cement rock,” is near the surface, and fragments of the bluish-black shale are scattered over the surface.

The Hagerstown silt loam is easily cultivated and is devoted to general farming. It is a strong, productive soil, and good yields of all crops grown on it are secured. It has much the same agricultural value and is utilized for the same purposes as the Hagerstown loam.

Chester Stony Loam

This type is developed in small bodies scattered over the ridges and hills of the South Mountains, in the southern part of the county. (It is derived from the pre-Cambrian crystalline rocks.) It is closely associated with the Chester loam. The largest areas are found along the crests and slopes of the high ridge of the South Mountains, bordering the southern part of the limestone valley. South of the first main ridge, where the topography is less broken, the Chester loam occupies the greater area, but surrounds a number of bodies of the Chester stony loam.

The topography of this type is hilly to broken, and in many places the slopes are very steep and stony, in some cases being too steep for cultivation. Drainage is good throughout all parts of the Chester stony loam. The soil is fairly retentive of moisture.

The Chester stony loam is a brown or yellowish-brown loam or heavy loam, underlain at a depth of 5 to 8 inches by a yellow gritty clay loam or crumbly clay. In some places the soil is sandy or decidedly gritty. The subsoil occasionally has a slight reddish tinge, and in places it is reddish yellow. Fragments of the gneiss and granite parent rock, together with fragments of quartzite from associated beds, are present on the surface and in the soil body in amounts sufficiently large to give the soil a decidedly stony character. On the steeper slopes the parent bedrock is near the surface. Ordinarily the land cannot be satisfactorily cultivated until many of the stones are removed. Masses of rocks several feet in diameter are often encountered in the forested areas, and occasionally in cultivated fields.

The greater part of the type is forested with oak, birch, hickory, and poplar. However, some of it has been cleared of timber and the larger stones, so that the land can be cultivated. The same crops are grown and the same methods used as on the Chester loam. The fine earth of the type is practically similar to that of the Chester loam, and the land is nearly as high in agricultural value as that type. Yields are somewhat lower, and more difficulty is experienced in cultivation. This land could probably be utilized to better advantage for fruit, especially apples, than for the production of farm crops.