

OUR REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Few places in the county have a more beautiful scenery than that found along the Blue Mountain, Stone Mountain and the Second Mountain.

The view from the top of the Blue Mountain is magnificent and the various shades of color among the trees and foliage in autumn cannot be surpassed anywhere.

The terrain between the Blue Mountain, so called because of its hazy bluish appearance, and the Second Mountain is a succession of low rolling hills and fertile valleys, almost parallel with each other throughout the extent of the township. A well defined range of several miles known as the "Summer Hill" and the Stone Mountain are the only elevations of importance.

Elevation range from a low of 570 feet to a high of 1660 feet above mean sea level.

The streams in the eastern half of the township include Panther Run, Long Run, Red Creek, Plum Creek and Bear Creek. These streams flow into the Schuylkill River, a part of the Delaware River Basin. Water resources in the area drained by these streams are under the auspices of the Delaware River Basin Commission. The streams in the western half of the township are Middle Swatara Creek and Little Swatara Creek. These streams flow into Swatara Creek and are part of the Susquehanna River Basin. The water resources in the areas drained by these streams will eventually be under the auspices of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission which is currently being formed.

Historically, Wayne Township has been an agricultural area, and although it will continue to be so for years to come, there are trends in some sections toward a more suburban character with some sections having pockets of concentrated residential development. With only a few small scattered manufacturing operation in the township, concentrated industrial development is absent.

OUR FORBEARS

Penn's Holy Experiment was an invitation to those who fled Europe to escape the laws which destroyed liberty of conscience. Among our forbearers were people who valued "free" education as highly as they valued the right to worship.

The first great influx of Germans came to America between 1700 and 1750, many of them settled in Pennsylvania for the liberal policies of William Penn attracted them to the land.

Most of them came from the Palatinate, arriving in Philadelphia, they traveled northward. In addition to the German settlers there were a few Irish and Welsh families. They all came with the common object of bettering their condition in life, and securing homes in a land where they could enjoy "the right to Worship God" as their conscience dictated. Some of them were poor, even coming as indentured servants, others were well-to-do farmers. Finding the price of land North of the Blue Mountain very reasonable, they were tempted to venture into new sections of the interior.

As the incoming tide of settlers increased, it became necessary to push farther on, making clearings, and building crude houses for their families often close to springs, streams, or along Indian trails.

It is quite possible that they were confronted with the Indian population that still inhabited certain areas in Schuylkill County. Evidence that our region was a favorite Indian hunting place is that many arrow heads are found in certain areas.

Finding this new land an excellent Agricultural territory, our German speaking forbearers were mainly engaged in farming, producing only their own necessities, often "bartering" to produce for themselves.

It can be seen quite readily that the life of the early settlers was hard but they became one of a community which resulted in organizing the township and as the population increased gave root to our church and school.

OUR NATIONAL ORIGIN

As we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the United States of America, we are reminded of the many people of former years who gave of their wisdom to make our nation great. The founding of our nation was a happening born of man's reliance upon spiritual guidance. The first settlers who came to America brought their Bibles with them and relied upon Almighty God for guidance. Evidence of this is found in the fact that they built places of worship. These earliest settlers built a foundation for those who were to become the founding fathers of the following century.

Never in history were there gathered together so many outstanding minds as there were in the year 1776. The declaration signed in that year by these men stands as an outstanding legacy to us all and as a lasting tribute to the 56 men who signed it. These 56 patriots who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the cause of liberty will be honored in every community across our land this year of 1976.

From the youngest, Edward Rutledge of South Carolina, to the oldest, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, all were champions of liberty who earned their honored places in our country's history as signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Our nation became the strongest and the most advanced nation in the world because of the strength and wisdom of men such as Monroe, Jefferson, Washington, and Franklin who are only a few of the many men of great caliber who laid its foundations.

Washington and Jefferson were rich men. Monroe could not have been called a poor man but Franklin the 15th child of a poor candle maker had nothing.

Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston. Because of the meager circumstances that existed in his home he moved to Philadelphia where it is said that he spent his last three cents for a loaf of bread. Having been raised in a stern New England Calvinist philosophy and believing in the help of God, he did not see his situation as being hopeless. He went out and borrowed some books and began to read. In time he became the most learned man in the colony of Pennsylvania.

It was Franklin who invented many things connected with electricity. He had to invent words to describe what he was doing, as armature, battery, and condenser. He became the leading publisher in Pennsylvania. The invention of the bifocal lens is credited to him. He established the first fire department in Philadelphia, became affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania by becoming president of the board of trustees. He was the only man to sign all these important documents: the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the Treaty of Alliance in 1778 and the Constitution of the United States of America in 1787. He was instrumental in securing aid from France for the Colonies during the Revolutionary War. He helped to establish the U.S. postal system and to make the present map of the United States.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that we salute the memory of Benjamin Franklin and all those other great leaders who have given us so rich a heritage. In 1976 as we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of our nation we are amazed at the wisdom of our founders.

As we celebrate the 200 years of our great national achievements we wonder what the role of Wayne Township has been during these years and what heritage we can leave to those who must follow us.

It is true that we had no part in the momentous happenings in Philadelphia in 1776 nor have we contributed anything to the invention of the automobile, the airplane, or even the atomic bomb, but our community like thousands of small communities all over America, has made a contribution to civilization that will be beneficial to future generations.

Wayne Township provides a clean and healthy environment where all children have equal opportunities for growth and education in wholesome and rewarding community living. We have lived close to the ideals and principles that our founding fathers sought for their new nation. During the past quarter century our population has increased considerably as many families from other areas have chosen this as a desirable place to live. We have welcomed them and have been proud to share our heritage with them.

It is our hope that with the guidance of our Creator and the inspiration of the heritage which we proudly claim that Wayne Township will long remain a leader among the communities of our nation for years to come.

ANCIENT INHABITANTS THE INDIANS

The Indians in this section in the early days were a remnant of the Shawanese, Naticoke and Delaware tribes. Three of the original six nations with whom William Penn made the treaty. The others being the Susquehannas, Hurons and Eries. There existed a continuous chain of Indian villages from the Delaware to the upper waters of the Susquehanna. One of the chain of war paths extended to Sunbury, where stood Fort Augusta, named in honor of the daughter of George the Second. Schuylkill county was not on the chain of war paths, but the savage marauders raided the locality as history shows.

Shamokin an Indian village stood on the present site of Sunbury, from which Shamokin afterward took its name.

The Indians that remained in this vicinity after the Indian War were not of one powerful tribe but included some Mochicans in addition to those indicated above. The Moravians farther southeast made strenuous efforts to Christianize the red man. Rev. David Zeisburger converted Shekilling, the chief of the Delawares. The war of extermination waged against them so reduced their number that those that scattered beyond the pale of their tribal restrictions were considered harmless, but falsely as the settlers discovered to their undoing.

Nothing very definite can be ascertained as to Indian occupation of Wayne Township previous to the beginning of white settlement. On the farm of Michael Fritz various implements and weapons of Indian make have been discovered pointing to the probability that at an early period there was an Indian fort there. At some distance from this place, but on the same farm, it is believed a permanent Indian dwelling once stood. Four or five hundred yards Northwest from the "Old mill property", in a field now under cultivation, are several graves supposed to be those of a family who were massacred by the Indians.

In 1775, near what is now Friedensburg, a neighbor from Panther Valley went over to Henry Hartman's house and found him lying on his face in the doorway. He had been scalped by the Indians. Two men were found scalped on the State road to Sunbury and they were buried by the settlers who turned out to hunt the red fiends.

In December of 1756, Michael Ney was killed near Summit Station. He and his brother were ambushed by two Indians while gathering firewood. One Indian was being badly beaten by Michael when the other Indian came to his rescue and killed Ney. Michael's brother pretended he was dead, later crept away and warned his family.

Many of the settlers fled into Berks County in the wake of the raids, but erection of Fort Henry gave them some protection and they moved back. Pursuing forces had difficulty finding the Indians after the raids. One of their hiding places was the "Red Hole", a deep gap between Klingerstown and Fort Henry, four miles east of Pine Grove.

After the forts were built, the raids halted for a time. Abandonment of the forts after 1758 was followed by more Indian raids in 1763. On September 8 of that year, the Indians murdered four children of Nicholas Miller in the Long Run Valley. They returned the same day to John Fincher's mill in Schuylkill Haven and killed him, his wife, and two sons and captured his daughter.