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History of Columbia County, Pennsylvania

HISTORY OF COLUMBIA COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA

Volume One

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

EDWIN M. BARTON

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LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

Sponsored by the Columbia County Historical Society

and

Commissioners of Columbia County

Prepared by Edwin M. Barton,

Historian of the Columbia County Historical Society,

1958

PREFACE

Herewith is submitted to the general public of Columbia County, in tentative form, the first six chapters of a history of this county, designed also for school use. Distribution to ninth grade students of our county high schools is also being completed at this time.

Rather than being an excursion into narrow provincialism and pettiness the history of one's locality and region touches the broader history of one's commonwealth and country in many places and in many ways.

In some occasional instances these contacts are at critical and decisive points. At others such contacts are representative manifestations of our larger history, clarifying and sharpening it by instances in the reader's own home land. In addition the heritage of the advantages and achievements of the leaders and others and, - yes, let us face them - also the heritage of tensions and scars, - make up our region. We live here. Knowing our own community the better, we can become better community builders and more loyally attached to it.

It is with these objectives in mind that this history has been attempted.

The standard sources have been combed, and diligent effort has been exerted to uncover new sources. An additional objective of this tentative publication is to uncover sources not hitherto available. Are there persons who have reliable traditions, letters, diaries, manuscripts, which would be helpful? Pictures, newspapers, clippings, catalogues, anything that will contribute to a more effective account of our cherished region, are requested. It is hoped that such sources may be made known. These are requested both for the period prior to 1870, and also for the period 1870 to the present. To be more specific: items dealing with mining, lumbering, quarrying, farming, industry, religion, education, any significant aspect or detail.

Careful efforts have been made to avoid errors, errors of omissions, of mis-statements, or of any other type. Friendly criticism is welcomed. Responses to this request will be utilized fully to improve a final edition planned in 1959 in standard printed form.

May we have your help?

Send responses to the author,
Edwin M. Barton
c/o Columbia County Historical Society
Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania

USEFUL BOOKS FOR REFERENCE AND WIDER READING

These books are all out of print. There are many copies around the county. Friends of our schools should aid in having copies given to our school libraries. They are, in some cases, somewhat more costly than currently published books. The public libraries of Berwick and Bloomsburg and of the Columbia County Historical Society have reference copies.

Battle, J. H., ed. History of Columbia and Montour Counties, Pennsylvania. Chicago: A. Warner, 1887. 4 parts. Part I, General history of Pennsylvania to 1886, 132pp. Part II, History of Columbia County in General, followed by chapters on the political subdivisions, pp. 1-318. Part III, Biographical sketches, arranged by political subdivisions, pp. 321-542. Part IV, History of Montour County, pp. 1-138; Montour biographies pp. 138-220. Table of contents, no index. The parts on local history and biography contain much that is interesting and valuable, more so for Columbia County than Montour County.

Freeze, John G. A History of Columbia County, Pennsylvania. Bloomsburg, Pa. Elwell and Bittenbender, 1883. This history does not treat all matters with equal thoroughness. On certain topics, it contains much factual information. It gives considerable attention to county and township division and very extensive attention to the topic of draft resistance in the county during the Civil War.

Historical and Biographical Annals of Columbia and Montour Counties, Pennsylvania. Chicago: J. H. Beers, 1915. 2 vols. The history of the two counties is given separately, largely drawn from the J. H. Battle work, but condensed. Some new material is also added, especially covering years 1887-1915. A biographical section is given. Tables of contents, historical index and biographical index. As in the case of the J. H. Battle reference, there is much that is useful and interesting.

Certain works centered primarily around Berwick or Bloomsburg, not only give interesting material in regard to these two communities, but much of what is included bears on the history of their regions or of the county as a whole.

Berwick:

Bevilacqua, Howard P. The Story of Berwick. Written and compiled for the Berwick Sesquicentennial Celebration. 1936.

Works Progress Administration, Manuscripts of the Writers' Project, 1936. Many manuscripts and transcripts, available no where else are in these collections and are open to teachers, and properly qualified students. Depositories of these items are in the libraries of Berwick, Bloomsburg, and the Columbia County Historical Society. An index of them has been prepared by the Columbia County Historical Society, available at these depositories.

Bloomsburg:

Duy, A. W., Jr. 1791-1951. Atlas and Directory of the Town of Bloomsburg, Columbia County, Pennsylvania. Maps with indexes. Town-Fax, Bloomsburg, Pa. Especially fine collection of pictures and maps, many of county-wide interest.

The Pennsylvania Archives and Colonial records are available at all three libraries. For certain references, where a student is given adequate guidance, to consult a report as written by a public servant to a governing body or superior, may give a sense of vividness and realism not possible from a second-hand account.

C O N T E N T S

(Consecutive page numbers at bottom of pages)

THE COLUMBIA COUNTY REGION WHEN IT WAS INDIAN COUNTRY*

Evidences of Indians

Indian Times

Dwellers in Columbia County are reminded in many ways that our beautiful region was at one time the home of people different from Europeans. The main river flowing through our county is called the Susquehanna. Both the name and the river are considered, respectively, among the most beautiful in the United States. The name is Indian. We are not sure whether it meant river where-the-water-makes-the-rocks-grind-on-the-banks, or the long and crooked river, or even the muddy river. Fishing Creek is a translation of the Indian name, Namescesepong, meaning stream-of-fish, or merely that its water smells fishy. Catawissa may have meant growing-fat-from-food or the place of pure water. Roaring Creek is probably a translation of the Indian, Popemetunk. Briar Creek was known to the Indians Kawanishoning.

Not only names but stone implements and crockery, usually fragments, have been found in our region in large numbers. These are evidences that people were living here before the coming of the Europeans. Such things are still being found. Many persons have large collections of such things, we call them artifacts.**

Such articles were found at or near sites of Indian villages. These were at places where hills with a southern exposure would give protection from the cold north winds of winter; or on high ground overlooking streams, high enough to be beyond flooding but close to the stream for fishing and canoe travel; or on level meadows where crops could be planted and cultivated with the crude wooden and stone tools. Such places have yielded many evidences of Indian life of long ago. These evidences may be human bones associated with animal bones, stone tools, spear points, arrow points, grinding stones, scrapers, boring stones, and pieces of crockery. They may be jumbled together, but are often in layers with charred embers of fires, long, long since gone out and grown cold. Some places may have a number of layers, others only a few. The oldest layers, it can be argued, were on the bottom, the least old on top. The record that one deposit may show may be carried further by another deposit at another place. Some of the oldest deposits yield bones of animals that have not existed here for many centuries, although they were plentiful at one time.

*Turn down folded part of page 9 so that you can refer to diagram as you read.

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**An especially fine collection is at the museum of the Columbia County Historical Society where school students and others may view them. If any one should find Indian relics, he should note carefully where the find took place and then report it to the Secretary of the County Society in Bloomsburg. Much that is known has been learned by giving careful study to the location of Indian finds and how they lie. The authorities at the Pennsylvania State Historical and Museum Commission will almost surely wish to know more about any important discoveries of Indian artifacts.

The stone implements in the layers that are not so deep are of definitely better workmanship. They have finer points and keener edges. The earlier, or older deposits and burials indicate that those Indians had not yet invented bows and arrows.

The Indians had been in America for many Centuries.

Just recently the scientific principle of radio activity has been discovered. Your science teacher will explain this more fully if you ask him. By this means, scientists are able to take articles containing carbon, examine them with a geiger counter, and then tell fairly accurately how old they are. Very old things that were once alive, contain some carbon. This is true of the bones of animals or human beings, and also of the charred remains of partly burned wood or roasted grain. Using this discovery, scientists are able to tell us that human beings have been in North America, and possibly in the Susquehanna valley, thousands of years, possibly eighteen thousand years.

This conclusion confirms the knowledge gained from the examination of Indian village sites and deposits in certain overhanging rock shelters.

Where did the Indians come from?

The chain of islands, the Aleutian Islands, extending from Alaska westward to a point close to Asia, suggests that primitive people made their way by stages from one island to another, until they reached the mainland of North America in modern Alaska. From here, they spread throughout North and South America. Different groups with different languages almost surely came at times centuries apart. The skin color of the Indians resembles that of the mongolians and suggests that the Indians originally came from regions close to China. There are, and have been, many different kinds of Indians. These Red Men differed from each other much as Europeans from England, Italy, Greece, and Poland, as examples, differ from each other, and from other Europeans. Different groups of Indians could not understand each other's language any more than a Frenchman can understand a Dane, unless he has studied the Danish language. More than this we know that the Indian groups have been here for an enormously long time, some groups much longer than others. Such groups naturally must have differed in languages and customs.

Why study Indians?

It is interesting to know about the people who lived here before the Europeans. Furthermore, the history of our country, and county, too, would undoubtedly have been far different if it had not been for the Indians. The whites, too, had a very great effect on the life of the Indians. With the exception of a small number, the Indians no longer live in Pennsylvania at all.

1492 In the century or so following the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, Europeans sent expeditions to the New World for exploration, for conquest, and finally for settlement.

The first explorer who has left a written account of the Indians in the valley of the Susquehanna was John Smith. There are evidences, however, that the Indians had already been receiving the white man's goods before this time. Smith wrote: "Such great and well proportioned men are seldom seen for they seemed like giants to the English, yea, and to the neighbors, yet seemed of an honest and simple disposition..." He also said that when speaking they sounded "as a voyce in the vault..." Others also recorded what fine people these Susquehannocks were.

Smith 1608

We need to learn about this "mighty people" once in our valley, their neighbor tribes, and what became of them all. We will find that they had an important influence on our early history.

The earliest white man of whom we have any knowledge to visit the North Branch valley of the Susquehanna was a Frenchman, Etienne Brulé (Broo-lay), in 1617 and 1618. Brulé, a young and powerful man, had already lived with the Indians north of Lake Erie. He had learned their language and had become skilled in woodcraft. We can piece together from several very brief account of Indians at that time, and our knowledge of the river, what Brulé must have seen and experienced.

Brulé 1617 1618

The Susquehanna Valley

He had the Susquehannock Indians as companions and guides. They travelled either in elm bark canoes or dugouts. They started from Carantouan, a strong stockaded fort of these Indians near the modern town of Athens, Pa. Paddling and floating down the river, they passed through deep gorges which were forest covered at all places except the steepest ones. Here the bare rock was visible. Below one of such precipices, Council Bluff, just before reaching Wapwallopen, the valley widens. On the north, over the tree tops they would be able to catch a glimpse of the mountain we call Lee, ending at Knob Mountain. To the south through the openings in the forested river bluffs another mountain could be seen, Nescopeck Mountain. Following the river as it cut south through what we call the Catawissa Narrows, the western end of Catawissa Mountain would have loomed impressively on their left. The stream would have then borne them past alternating bluffs and more open country, mostly forested, to the site of modern Danville. Then farther down they would reach the great forks of the Susquehanna where the West Branch, only slightly smaller than the North, would have been seen joining its flow to make a great river. The Indians called this place of joining of the two branches, Shamokin, where both modern Sunbury and Northumberland are located. From there the trip of many days took the travelers to the Cheasapeake. Following, they would then have had the return trip, this time paddling or poling against the current.

The Susquehannocks

Here and there where the banks were slightly higher than ordinary, usually near a branch stream, would have been a clearing, the site of an Indian village. Such were to be found at or near the present locations of Wapwallopen, Nescopeck, Berwick, Mifflinville, Bloomsburg,

Catawissa, and probably other places, too. Curious and watchful Indians must have paddled out to learn about the strange boatmen. They would have been assured that the travelers were friends, in fact, "brothers" of the same tribe, with Brulé as their guest.

Indian hospitality would have been offered and accepted. Not to accept would have been an affront, leading to unfriendliness and even actual attack. Shelter would have been provided for the night. It is probably true that the travelers had counted on securing such shelter along the way.

Their huts were probably oblong, made by forcing saplings in the ground, bending them to come together at the top in the center and lashed into position. These were covered with large mats of bark, lashed to the upright sapplings, sides and overhead. Smoke from their fires escaped through a hole in the roof. The Indians themselves were not very clean, and their dogs were less so. These habitations, it can be guessed, could be smelled by an approaching traveller before they could be seen.

Crowded, eyes often smarting from smoke, skin red from bites of fleas and lice, and also mosquitoes in summer, the discomforts must have been great. We can understand why, when the Indians were exposed to new diseases of the White Men, they died off in large numbers. But the Indians of this time knew no better and Brule seems to have become hardened. In fact, most of his later life was spent with the Indians.

From John Smith and others we learn further about the Susquehannocks. They were gracious and friendly to those who were friendly to them, but fierce and corageous against their enemies. They were respected and feared by all their neighbors. They once controlled the whole valley of the Susquehanna and its tributaries, extending north to its headwaters. The Susquehannocks belonged to a large group of tribes called Iroquois. The Susquehannocks were at this time one of the strongest of these tribes.

The Iroquois Confederation of Five (Six) Nations

The northern headwaters of the Susquehanna, in modern New York, were close to the tributaries of the Mohawk river. A canoe traveler could carry a canoe from one river system to the other. The Mohawk river flows from west central New York into the Hudson river at the east. Five nations of the Iroquois, united in a loose, but strong confederacy occupied this Mohawk valley. At the time our history of Pennsylvania is opening up, this confederacy was making itself the strongest Indian power in North America. It called itself the Long House. This diagram shows the members and their arrangement.

THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY OF FIVE NATIONS (After 1711, Six Nations)

West	L O N G H O U S E				East
	Senecas:	Cayungas	Onandagas	Oneidas	Mohawks
Mohawk Riv. Headwaters:	Keepers of the Western Gate	Younger Brother	Tenders of the Central Council Fire	Younger Brother	Keepers of the Eastern Gate:	Hudson river

After 1711, at the south, The Tuscaroras, on the Cradle Board

White Men and Indians carry on trade

Trade between the Indians and European started very early, in many cases, the earliest explorers found that these traders had been here before them. In 1608, for instance, John Smith stated that the Susquehannocks had hatchets, knives, pieces of iron and brass. Certainly European traders were actively trading with the Indians before the first settlements were made. This trade continued to be of great importance throughout our colonial period, and for many years after.

As soon as the Indians saw the white man's materials and goods for trade, he realized how much superior they were to his own. Steel axes, hatchets, and knives were better than those of stone. Brass and iron pots and kettles were better than fragile earthenware pots, better shaped, with better handles. Sewing with steel needles and awls was far easier than using crude flint, bone, or horn awls. Woven blankets were much desired by the Indians even though the Indians prepared soft and comfortable deer skins. Brightly colored cloth was much in demand. The white traders also brought porcelain and glass beads to take the place of the shell beads, wampum, of the Indians. The white man's fire arms were eagerly sought, also. The Indians, or at least many of them, quickly developed an uncontrollable appetite for intoxicating drinks, which they called fire water. Usually this was in the form of rum or whiskey.

The Europeans early discovered that trade could be highly profitable in securing the pelts of fur bearing animals, which would bring a high price in Europe. The goods the Indian wanted, were not nearly so expensive, some of them, such as the beads and some kinds of cloth, were cheap. The Indians on their part found that what the white traders wanted was, at first, very plentiful and cheap to them, the pelts of the fur bearing animals. Thus there actually was a basis for valuable trade, each had things of great value to the other. In many cases, however, the white traders were scoundrels, and cheated the Indians in many ways. There were also scoundrelly Indians. There were also upright traders who dealt fairly with the Indians, but they seem to have been in the minority.

Very quickly this trade reached enormous amounts. We have a few records to show this. In just one year, 1683, the Swedish traders located on the lower Delaware sent to the home land 50,000 pelts. These must have been secured from the Indians in the Delaware and Susquehanna valleys. The English at the south, the Dutch in the Hudson valley, the English in New England, and the French of New France, were also engaged in this trade. We can be sure that this trade year after year from all of these regions must have been enormous. Of course it was valuable to both the Indians and the whites. Largely on account of rivalry for the fur trade, the Dutch conquered the Swedish settlements in 1655. Then in 1664 the English conquered the Dutch and New Amsterdam became New York. This left the English and French as sole rivals. This rivalry between the English and French resulted in wars lasting, off and on, for over half a century. As you have probably learned, the English were finally victorious. This victory has a good deal to do with the history of our region. The Indians played an important part in these wars. Let us see how this came about.

The Susquehannocks Destroyed

The fur trade also brought rivalry to the Indians. How many thousands of hatchets, knives, hoes, needles and guns, and blankets, how much woven goods and firewater must have been exchanged for these thousands of fur pelts? Naturally, the Indian became dependent on the white man's goods. In order to secure them, he hunted and trapped the woodlands so closely that with the passage of years the eastern woodlands no longer were able to supply enough. The Indians farther west were brought into this trade. Now the Indians north of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence river became rivals of the Five Nations. When the Susquehannocks as rivals of the Five Nations, also sided with the St. Lawrence Indians, the Hurons, bitter and long continued warefare started between the Susquehannocks and the Five Nations. At first the Susquehannocks were victorious but the English turned against them. Their numbers were not as great as those of the Five Nations. They were seriously weakened when large numbers of them died from disease, probably small pox. Long continued attacks wore them down. Finally, their last stronghold was captured in 1675. The few survivors either fled south or were adopted into the Five Nations. The result was that there were few if any Indians living in our valley for many years after this conquest.

Pennsylvania Founded

Just seven years later, 1682, William Penn started the Quaker settlement at Philadelphia. He found the Delaware Indians* dwelling in the Delaware valley and, trying to be especially fair, he purchased land from them. It was to be revealed later that the Delawares had been held subject to the Susquehannocks. Then after the Five Nations had conquered the Susquehannocks, the Delawares were compelled to accept the Five Nations as their rulers. This fact is important in understanding Indian troubles in our region at a later time.

As we know, settlers came to Penn's Holy Experiment, the colony of Pennsylvania, in large numbers and for many years. William Penn and, after his death, his sons and heirs purchased land again and again. Although at first the Delawares were friendly, they gradually became embittered. After each purchase the Indian was required to leave and go farther west. William Penn was always very fair, but this cannot be said of his heirs in later purchases. The Indians were often made drunk in order to make an unfair bargain. Thus they were often cheated out of a fair price. By 1750 the settlers were advancing to the mountains.

Land Frauds

An especially unfair transaction was the so-called Walking Purchase in 1737. According to previous treaty, it had been agreed that the Pennsylvania authorities would be able to purchase a section of land to be determined by the distance a man could walk in a day and a half. This was to be measured from Wrightstown.

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*In their own language, the Delawares called themselves Lenni Lenape (Leñ-ni Lé-na-páy), meaning in their language, the real men.

The Indians, however, were tricked in several ways: Instead of a leisurely walk, as the Indians had anticipated, trained athletes were hires who, as the Indians said: "No eat, no smoke, no sleep, no walk, just lun! lun! lun!" Instead of measuring the distance parallel to the Delaware River, the line was marked out more westerly, so as to include a greater amount of land. The distance covered was sixty miles, more than twice the distance anticipated by the Indians. Finally, instead of drawing the far boundary due east to the Delaware river, the line was turned at right angles so as to make it go much farther north and thus include still more land than the Indians had expected.

In 1742 the Six Nations, rulers of the unsold territory in Pennsylvania demanded that Pennsylvania drive back the squatters from the unsold western lands. This the Pennsylvania authorities agreed to do. In turn, Pennsylvania asked the Six Nations to require the Delawares to leave the area of the walking purchase. This scene then took place in council in Philadelphia between the Pennsylvania authorities and Indian Chiefs. Canassetego, a Seneca chief, spokesman for the Six Nations, addressed Nutimus, Delaware chieftain in the disputed lands:

> "We conquered you, we made women of you, you know you are women and can no more sell land than women. This land you claim is gone....We therefore assign you to Wyoming of Shamokin. This Wampum is to forbid you, your children and grandchildren to the latest posterity, from ever meddling in land affairs, neither you, nor any, who descend from you are hereafter to presume to sell any land."

At the conculsion of this speech, Conassetego seized Nutimus by his hair and ejected him from the Council. The Delawares shortly after departed from their loved homelands near modern Stroudsburg for the North Branch regions. And there was bitterness in their hearts Further purchases were to follow. The Six Nations secured the purchase money. Often there was bribery. The Delawares, and other groups who had come into the Susquehanna valley were the ones compelled to move. The once friendly Delawares finally became bitter enemies of the White man.

Six Nations Control the Susquehanna Valleys

Besides compelling the Delawares to go to Shamokin or Wyoming, the Six Nations had a policy of compelling other defeated and dispossessed groups of Indians to take up lands in the Susquehanna valley, after the destruction of the Susquehannocks. This was to keep the white settlers from coming into unoccupied lands. The Tuscaroras, referred to above, who made up the Sixth Iroquois Nation, were settled at the headwaters of the Susquehanna. The Nanticokes, gave their name to modern Nanticoke, as did a Delaware group, the Munsees to Muncy. Other Delawares were settled for a time at Nescopeck and probably Wapwallopen. Conoy or Gangawese were at Catawissa. The Shawnees gave their name to Shawnee flats below Wilkes-Barre. They may have dwelt in the Columbia County region for a while. As the lands came to be successively sold, the tribes gradually moved farther west and eventually out of the State, although some of them were involved in later wars.

The Six Nations sent a representative, Shikellamy into the Susquehanna valley to control these subject groups and to deal with the White Men, traders, and others. He made his home at Shamokin. Here, at the junction of the North and West Branches of the Susquehanna River, he exercised control for the Six Nations over all the subject Indians in the valley.

The bitterness of the Delawares was shared by other subject groups. Land purchases brought enrichment in money and goods to the Six Nations, often with bribes besides, but the subject Indians always had to move west.

The last of the intercolonial wars between the French and English broke out in 1754. As you know, this is called the French and Indian War. Just previously, in 1749 a purchase was made that brought the frontier of the purchased lands through the southern part of our present Columbia County. In 1755 another purchase was made. This was west of the Susquehanna including modern Selinsgrove. In this year also occurred Braddock's defeat in the vicinity of Fort Duquesne. This was the signal for the embittered Indians to wreak their vengeance on the white settlers, the ones who were to be made to pay with their blood and suffering for the fraudulent practices of the Penn's sons and heirs. Four months after Braddock's defeat a war party of Delawares attacked whites at the mouth of Penn's Creek, near modern Selinsgrove, killed fifteen, and carried ten into captivity. This massacre was merely a small sample of what was taking place all along the frontier. In 1763 Indians attacked settlers in the Wyoming valley, near modern Wilkes-Barre. Fifteen or more were killed here, and others carried into captivity. These outrages did not touch the region of our county at this time for the reason that there were probably no settlers here then.

In 1763 the French and Indian war was brought to a successful conclusion by the complete defeat of France. The following year marked the complete and overwhelming defeat of the Indians who had participated in Pontiac's bloody uprising.

New Purchase

Then in 1768 a very important council of English and Colonial authorities with the Indian chiefs was held at Fort Stanwix, near modern Rome, New York. For us, this meeting is especially important because an extensive tract of land in Pennsylvania was purchased by the Penns from the Six Nations. This was an irregular strip of land extending from the northeastern corner of Pennsylvania to the southwestern corner of the state. It included all of Columbia County's future area, not previously purchased in 1749, and also the neighboring regions. It was called the "New Purchase".

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TO FIND OUT HOW EFFECTIVELY YOU HAVE READ

1. How do we know about the Indians of our region after the time of Columbus?
2. How long have Indians been in North America? How do we know?
3. Where did the Indians come from? How do we know?

4. How did the Indians help the Europeans? How did the Europeans help the Indians? Have you learned of these helps from other history study?
5. Explain the Indian situation in Pennsylvania when William Penn came.
6. Why did the Pennsylvania Indians change from friends to enemies?
7. Identify or connect with our history: Etienne Brule, John Smith, Shikellamy, "Long House", Walking Purchase.

INTERESTING THINGS TO DO

1. This chapter introduced you to certain Indians. List them.
2. List all the Indian place names of our region. Locate them on a map.
3. Reproduce the diagram of the "Long House". Show on a map where it was.
4. If you learn of a new site of Indian artifacts write a letter reporting it to the Columbia County Historical Society.
5. Volunteers should bring Indian artifacts to class, and explain where they were found. Perhaps the reports of students may show where there are hitherto unknown sites of Indian villages or camp grounds. Report such a find in a letter to the Secretary, Columbia County Historical Society, Bloomsburg.
6. Excursions: to an Indian site near your school, to the museum at the Columbia County Historical Society, or to an expert on Indian lore in your neighborhood.
7. Locate the 1754 line in southern Columbia County. Locate the area of the "New Purchase".
8. For the whole class: on a long sheet of paper, wrapping paper will do, make a time chart similar to that on the bottom of this page, only about four feet instead of a few inches. Now you have room for many more entries of events than could be made in the book. It would help your understanding to include events from the broader American History. Settlement of St. Augustine, Florida, might be one. Discuss additional entries and then add those that seem worthwhile. Similar time charts will be suggested for other chapters.
9. For the camera hobbyist - photographs of Indian village sites in your in your immediate region, especially any recently discovered and not noted on existing maps.
10. Possible class reports: dwellings of the Susquehannock Indians, their boats, warfare between the Susquehannocks and the Five Nations; description of the Walking Purchase; the Penn's Creek Massacre; the Wyoming Massacre of 1763. (Students utilizing the school library or a public library should have very definitely in mind their instructions as to the topic they are searching for and the steps to take in order to find it.

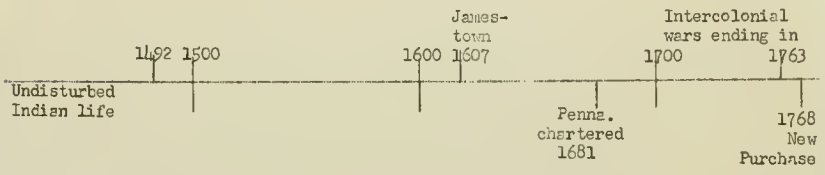
When you make a class report, you must do more than prove to the teacher that you have been diligent and thorough. The class as a whole must learn from what you present.)

Check your vocabulary:

artifacts	site	fragment
implement,	primitive	mongolian
precipice	impressive	habitations
awl	squatters	vengeance
scoundrel	fraudulent	heir
posterity	junction	wreak

Score:
16 - 18 excellent
12 - 15 good

Time Chart For Chapter I



PIONEERS, PATRIOTS, AND TORIES IN THE SUSQUEHANNA VALLEYS

Chapter II.

Conflicts and Their Causes

The New Purchase at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 marks the end of our region as Indian country, although the Indians did
1768 not all leave it immediately. The lands of the North and West Branches had been purchased and the French rivals defeated. The fur traders were to move farther west, following the Indians and seeking areas where fur animals and game had not been so nearly killed off. The area was definitely open to Pennsylvania settlers, or so it seemed at that time. But actually, terrible events were in the making. The colony of Connecticut laid claim to the northern part of Pennsylvania and endeavored to settle it with Connecticut people. Within seven years, also, the war of the Revolution was to break out. These two conflicts were intermingled and both involved our region in bitter struggles. And many Indians, reluctant to leave these lands, joined against the settlers to bring destruction and bloodshed to the people of these valleys. These struggles will now be explained.

Early Explorations in the North Branch Country

Long before 1768, information about the Susquehanna lands had been growing. Fur traders journeyed deep into Indian country.
1728 They reached the Forks of the Susquehanna at an early date. In 1728 one of these traders, James LeTort wrote from Catawissa about a fight between the Shawnees and "some back inhabts". This is the
1737 first written mention of Catawissa. In 1737 Conrad Weiser, the great Indian interpreter, came down the North Branch from a journey to the Six Nations. He reported traders in the Wyoming Valley, and also three men, Germans, from the Delaware region, who were hunting land. The following years, missionaries visited the Indians and endeavored to convert them to Christianity. This they failed to do. However, their trips increased the knowledge of the region. Soon one of these travelers was to write that the river at Catawissa was the "most beautiful he ever saw". Friendly Indian guides and the
1756 several hundred soldiers sent to garrison Fort Augusta, during the French and Indian War, were able to tell about these lands.

Conflict with Connecticut

From all these reports people learned that there were rich lands beyond the first mountains in the upper valleys of the Susquehanna. These stories were carried far and wide in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and even to Connecticut. In Connecticut, there was not much land to expand into. People were seeking other areas to settle. Its boundaries as originally granted had extended to the "South Sea", which meant the Pacific Ocean. But since that grant of 1662, other charters had granted land due west of Connecticut's settled boundaries to New York, to New Jersey, and to William Penn. By the middle of the 1700's these sections in New York and New Jersey were well advanced in settlement and were in the control of strong provincial governments. But in the upper

valleys of the Susquehanna there were no settlements at all. These Pennsylvania lands were almost as far away from Philadelphia as they were from Connecticut. The Quaker government at Philadelphia had given such weak support in the French and Indian war that the Connecticut people may very well have thought that they could take possession of this land without much difficulty from Pennsylvania, even though this meant reviving claims that had not been asserted for almost a century and also "leap-frogging", as it might be termed, over the parts of New York and New Jersey between. A land company for the settling of this region was formed. Settlers were induced to migrate to the Wyoming Valley, first in 1762.

Connecticut People Settle in Wyoming

This was in the region of modern Wilkes-Barre. The first result was to anger the Indians. In 1762 this land had not yet been bought from the Indians and the Pennsylvania government had promised the Indians that they would not be disturbed. In 1763 an embittered group of Indians, Delawares mostly, attacked the settlers, killing a number, and taking other prisoners. The remainder fled back to Connecticut.

Pontiac's War 1763

First Wyoming Massacre 1769

In 1769 the Connecticut settlers tried again. Land was cleared. Towns were laid out. Forts, houses, and barns were built, and also grist mills. The Pennsylvania authorities ordered them to leave. When not obeyed, Pennsylvania repeatedly tried to eject the Connecticut settlers by force, but without success. However, there were armed conflicts with some loss of life on the part of both the Yankees or Connecticut settlers, and the Pennamites, as the Pennsylvanians were called. After the outbreak of the Revolution in 1775, both contenders were instructed by the United States government to devote their entire efforts to winning independence. This they both did, but not without some friction and suspicion on the part of both, as we shall see later.

First Pennamite War

Trenton Decree 1781

Looking ahead of our story, we may note here that the conflict was finally decided in favor of Pennsylvania by a special court, convened at Trenton, in 1781. But further friction, and even conflict arose. These conditions grew out of land holdings which were disputed between claimants who bought from Connecticut and those based on Pennsylvania grants. After years of bitterness and more armed conflicts some of these settlers were given money damages for lands that they were required to vacate, usually the Pennsylvania holders, while the other claimants, mostly those from Connecticut, were allowed to stay in possession of the lands, if they could show a valid grant from Connecticut.

Later Pennamite Wars

Connecticut's Claim Included Part of Columbia County

This contest was centered in the Wyoming Valley and northwards as far as the New York State line. The southern line of the Connecticut claim was the forty-first parallel of latitude, which extends east and west through the mouth of Fishing Creek. Thus if Connecticut had been successful, Berwick and Bloomsburg as well as the larger part of Columbia County, the northern part, would now be part of Connecticut. Two of the towns organized by Connecticut were

Huntington and Salem. The boundary of Salem Township adjoining Columbia County in Berwick and Briar Creek Township is the old boundary of the former Connecticut Town of Salem. The name Huntington is derived from Samuel Huntington, one-time governor of Connecticut and one of her signers of the Declaration of Independence. His name is also attached to the tributary of Fishing Creek joining it at Forks, and the mountain along whose northern slope it flows.

This whole Connecticut effort at settlement brought four or five thousand settlers to the upper Susquehanna, some of whom were to help build up our county, once the violence of the conflicts had been settled. These settlers were mostly Connecticut people, but considerable numbers from New York and New Jersey, and even from Pennsylvania, had bought land from Connecticut's Susquehanna Land Company. Probably the most important result from the Yankee-Pennamite conflicts was that it made the Pennsylvania authorities bestir themselves to bring about settlement of our region more rapidly, if they were not to lose it to the Connecticut claimants. Now we can return to other conditions after the "New Purchase."

Locating the Desirable Land

The Proprietors of Pennsylvania, the sons of William Penn, had sent exploring parties into the region of the "New Purchase," even before the Treaty of Fort Stanwix. Trips were made with canoes: along the river, up Fishing Creek as far as Huntington Creek, and probably up the other considerable streams. Locations for surveys were made at the mouths of the several streams: Green Briar Creek, Catawissa Creek, probably Roaring and Nescopeck Creeks. Early in 1769 1769 parties of surveyors were on the ground. For instance, land on both sides of Nescopeck Creek at its mouth had been surveyed by February, 1769. Other surveys were extended rapidly. These early surveys followed the bank of a stream as one boundary, with the foot of the hills as the opposite boundary, the other boundaries adjusted so as to make the grant contain about 300 acres. These surveys before the Revolution extended well up the streams. For instance, those in the Fishing Creek Valley were carried beyond Knob Mountain up both the main stream and also Huntington Creek.

The Surveyors

These early surveyors usually went out in the spring and stayed all summer in the wilds. The party consisted of the head surveyor, who carried the sighting instrument, called Jacob's Staff, and two chainmen for measuring distances. One of the chainmen carried a small ax for marking boundaries on trees; the other a rifle for defence against the wild animals and also in order to shoot game for food. They might find rude bark huts or rock shelters, or they might need to construct their own shelters for warmth and as places to prepare their notes and records. We in our day cannot realize the trials and hardships of the surveyors in their work in the unmapped woodlands. There were no roads and few paths, the settlements were few and far between. They had to travel great distances through the wilderness.

Who Would Want to Take up Land in the Back Woods?

Cheap lands, new lands, even if uncleared of their dense covering of trees, attracted hundreds of Pennsylvanians, in greater numbers, probably, than those from Connecticut. The area around Philadelphia, northwestwardly to the mountains, was getting crowded and land prices higher.* The large families of those days meant that many younger sons could not be provided with an inheritance of extensive acres. Mechanics and other craftsmen in the towns in the vicinity of the Delaware valley had saved enough money to buy lands. They were used to hard work. They knew, too, that if they cleared their newly purchased lands, built a house and barn, they would increase their wealth very much. Pennsylvania was still attracting immigrants, chiefly from Great Britain and Germany. Some, having come as indentured servants, wished to strike out for the wilderness and cheap lands as soon as their terms of service were completed. Often they and others would mark out a few hundred acres of land and occupy it without paying anything for it. They were squatters. They cleared the land as best they could, a small portion at a time, built a log shelter for their family. They might later pay for it, or they might be able to sell their improvements to the rightful owner before they moved on to try the same process further into the wilds. Some settlers bought their land in the regular way from the Pennsylvania land office. Much of our frontier land in Pennsylvania was settled by former laborers and craftsmen, as well as by farmers. *(Additional: Much land farmed for a century was less productive.)

The Speculators

There were many actual settlers, however, who bought from land speculators, or land jobbers, as they were called then. These were wealthy persons who had gained riches in the prosperous city of Philadelphia, or similar places. It may have been from trade with the Indians, or by importing and exporting over seas. Certain manufacturers had been prosperous. Also business and professional men in many cases had grown rich, and had money to invest. Frontier lands that could be bought cheaply and sold at a marked advance in price seemed attractive investments when there were many actual settlers who wished to buy lands. Handsome profits might be made. The Susquehanna Land Company of Connecticut was largely organized by such speculators. We have seen how this company was important in bringing in hundreds of settlers to the Wyoming Valley.

How to Purchase Land

Pennsylvania speculators were also influential in bringing settlers to the frontier lands. The speculators actively sought out the best lands by getting information from travelers, soldiers, traders, surveyors, and also special explorers in their employ, "spotters" as they were called. Such persons had to be paid for their work. For information gathered in these various ways, the speculator would learn that there was land at the mouth of one or another of the creeks. An old indian village, conspicuous trees, or other natural features were noted. Ax marks, called blazes,

were slashed on trees to mark boundaries. The old deeds recorded in the Register and Recorder's office in the Court House at Bloomsburg, mention these early landmarks. On the basis of these landmarks persons desiring to secure land would make an application to the Land Office to have it surveyed. This office would then issue a warrant to the official surveyor to survey the land applied for. After the survey had been completed, a patent would be issued. This gave the applicant full possession of the land. An individual applicant was expected to apply for three hundred acres of land. This amount would necessarily be approximate, because the exact amount could not be specified until the survey had been made. The purchaser would be charged about five pounds per hundred acres, or fifteen pounds for the regulation amount of three hundred acres. This would be equivalent to twenty-five cents an acre.[1] Under the proprietors there was also an annual quitrent of one penny per acre.

Speculation in Land - Opportunities and Risks

Speculators, however, by various means would secure possession of thousands of acres of land. In some cases it might be for special services, as in the cases of soldiers on the frontier during the French and Indian war. In other cases, favoritism or trickery was used. As an instance of trickery: A speculator would persuade friends or relatives to make applications. Then after the patents had been issued, such lands would be sold to the speculator for the amount of money expended. Undoubtedly, the speculator furnished this expense money. Various speculators by such means secured thousands of acres which they hoped to sell at profit, some times at exorbitant profits. But the speculators also had risks. Although the land prices were low, when thousands of acres were secured, large amounts of money would be necessary, money that was borrowed in some cases. Expenses in holding it were not great for a single plot. Rents for immense holdings, the taxes, and the interest on borrowed money would become high. And when thousands of acres were owned, the quit rents would mount up. There were also the charges of surveyors, spotters, and forms of advertising to secure buyers, all of which added up to burdensome expenses. Where the land could be sold without undue delay, large fortunes were made. This was not always the case. Robert Morris and James Wilson, both revered statesmen in winning the War of Independence and securing our Constitution speculated in frontier lands, some of them in our region.[2] They became deeply involved. They could not meet their debts. They both died in financial ruin.

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[1]There were changes in the prices charged at various times.

Date	Price	Quit rents	Amount allowable
1765	5 pounds per 100 acres	2¢ per acre	300 acres customarily
	25¢ per acre		
1779		1789 Pennsylvania Cancelled ownership of the Penns with liberal compensation	
1784	30 pounds per 100 acre	abolished	1,000 acres
	$14.50 per acre		

[2]James Wilson at one time owned the land where Fort Jenkins was built. Robert Morris owned land in the Catawissa Valley.

Effects of Speculation - Good and Bad

There were cases of sharp dealing and in some cases there was outright cheating[3]. Not all speculators by any means were scoundrels or persons endeavoring to gain undue profits. Their efforts in many cases, probably a majority of cases, would class them as community builders. By learning where the good lands were, having them explored, paying the initial costs, and spreading the knowledge of them, settlers were induced to come. Some of these services were necessary and deserved compensation, to some extent, at least. Many of the early settlers bought land from such speculators, some of whom will be mentioned later. Speculation with all of its good and bad aspects seems to have been a necessary part in bringing about the settlement of frontier lands.

The First Settlers

Who were the first settlers in our region? Very probably they were squatters, although this has not been definitely proved. There is a family tradition that a William Hartman, coming direct from Germany, settled on a farm near Catawissa about 1760. Note that this date was before the area was open to settlement by Indian purchase. Tradition states further that he was a tanner by trade, and that he tanned hides for the Indians. We have no sure records to prove this. In August, 1770, a traveler reported several settlements along the river above Fishing Creek, "chiefly German". This same traveler noted many sections of land marked on trees with numbers, taken to be the numbers of "Lotts". In the available records of the next few years there are references to families near Catawissa, Nescopeck, Knob Mountain, varying distances up Fishing Creek, across the river from Fort Jenkins, in one case referred to as a compact settlement. The numbers of settlers to be inferred from such references in reports of military commanders and other statements must have been considerably larger than the recorded land holders. We do not know the names. Such people were almost surely squatters.

The Scotch-Irish

James McClure is known to have been at the mouth of Fishing Creek on Wednesday, May 10, 1769. At this place he notified a representative of Governor Penn, then traveling up the river, that he and four others were an advance group of a hundred going to join the New England men in settling and defending the Wyoming Valley. This shows that James McClure was to some degree joining with the "Paxtang Boys". These "Paxtang Boys" were not boys at all, but Scotch-Irish men from Lancaster County, near Harrisburg. They had become openly rebellious against the Pennsylvania governing class in Philadelphia because the government had not given the settlements along the frontier adequate defense against the Indians during the previous wars. These "Paxtang Boys" had murdered peaceful Conestoga Indians, in defiance of the government, on suspicion that these Indians had been guilty of certain outrages against the white settlers. Many of these Scotch-Irish were glad to join the Connecticut settlers. Under their leader, Lazarus Stewart, they took a leading part in defending the Connecticut settlements against the Pennsylvania authorities.

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[3]See page 8 for reference to Samuel Wallis

Lazarus Stewart had married a daughter of Josiah Espy residing in Lebanon county and James McClure had married another daughter. McClure had acquired an extensive tract of land near the mouth of Fishing Creek under the authority of Connecticut.

Northumberland County

On March 21, 1772, the county of Northumberland was set up with Sunbury, formerly named Shamokin, as the county seat. This county then comprised a vast extent of land north and west of the junction of the two great branches of the Susquehanna river. The increasing population of the frontier regions required a county seat closer than Reading or Easton, the previous county seats for this area. The governing authorities probably also reasoned that the attempts of the Connecticut settlers could be resisted better at a base of operations nearer to the area in dispute. McClure must have been impressed with this change for he then re-purchased his land under Pennsylvania authority in 1772. This tract first called "Beauchamp" (beautiful field) was renamed "McClure's Choice". McClure immediately built a log cabin for his wife and family. Here in 1772 was born James McClure, Jr., the first known white person to have been born in our county as established by records.[4] Pioneer life seemed to be too harsh, for McClure, Sr. died only a few years after his settlement.

The Quakers, Little Fishing Creek

The Quakers were a second most influential group in settling our region. There were three especially important leaders in the Quaker settlements.

John Eves on Little Fishing Creek

The first of these Quakers was John Eves. A Quaker, born in Ireland, he emigrated to America in 1738 and settled at Mill Creek, near Newcastle, in Delaware. He early won respect of his neighbors and was chosen for several offices in which he showed great ability. According to family traditions, he journeyed to Little Fishing Creek in 1769. Having come up the West Branch to a small settlement near the present site of Milton, no one was able to direct him to land of the McMeans, for which he was looking. Finally two Indians guided him along the trail between Great Island, on the West Branch, and Nescopeck on the North Branch, through the valley of the Chillisquaque. When he reached the high hill overlooking modern Millville, now called Fairview, Eves recognized the land that had been described to him. After examining the timber and soil, he returned to his Delaware home. The next summer he returned with his oldest son and built a log cabin. In the third summer, 1772, he brought his family. At this time he did not own the land and would therefore have been considered a squatter. We can surmise, however, that there was some understanding with the owners about his intentions to buy the land. This is borne out by the fact that in 1774, according to a deed on record in the Court House, he purchased 1200 acres. These acres took in the present site of Millville, as well as a very considerable area around it. This purchase was made from Reuben Haines, a prosperous Philadelphia brewer and manufacturer who went into land speculation.[5]

1772

[4] The site of the McClure homestead and the later fort is maintained as a park and museum by the Fort McClure Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, River Road, west of Town Park, Bloomsburg.

[5] Haines bought up thousands of acres of land. At one time he owned all of what is now the borough of Northumberland .

Haines was a Quaker. This may explain how Eves came to purchase from him. Haines had bought four tracts of about 300 acres each from four different persons, one of them being McMeans, just mentioned. The costs for the 1200 acres from these persons combined, at five pounds sterling per hundred acres, can be assumed to have been sixty pounds. Eves paid 145 pounds sterling. The difference between these amounts, making due allowances for other expenses should, give some idea of the amount of profit that a land speculator might be able to secure in these frontier lands.

The Quakers at Catawissa

A second of the important Quakers in settling our region was Moses Roberts. Land speculation had much to do with his coming. Samuel Wallis was a speculator in the lands up the West Branch, although he dealt somewhat with lands in our region also. He was one of the less honest speculators. He secured, or tried to secure, lands in the vicinity of modern Muncy. These were lands the Proprietors, the Penns, claimed for themselves. Needing some representative to investigate the situation, the Proprietors selected a young Quaker of Exeter who had attracted attention as an able man, as a speaker in Quaker Meeting, and in other ways. This man was Moses Roberts. He journeyed to the disputed lands in 1772. He reported that Wallis had no right to the lands. What is of most interest to us is that he went by the way of Catawissa. He wrote in his journal in part:

Moses Roberts

> "I went with the sheriff and others to view the land at Muncy. And when we came among the inhabitants of the New Purchase, I lamented the loose and unreligious lives and conversation of the people. Yet there was something that attracted my mind to that country..... and some time after I returned home, I felt the drawings of love in my heart to visit some friendly people about Catawesey and to have a meeting amongst them for the worship of God...."

Permission to have a weekly meeting was granted in 1775.[6]

Ellis Hughes

After Roberts had made several additional visits, he purchased land from Ellis Hughes and built his log house in 1774. But he was not the first because in his journal, quoted above, he observed people already settled there in 1772.

The Ellis Hughes, from whom Roberts bought his land, had purchased a large tract around the mouth of Catawissa Creek from Edward and Joseph Shippen, who were engaged in very extensive land speculations in other sections of Pennsylvania, as well as in our own region. Since Hughes bought land which he planned to sell to others, he was also a speculator. Hughes and Roberts persuaded other Quakers from the vicinity of Oley, Exeter, and Maiden Creek, all near Reading, to migrate to Catawissa. Most of these settlers purchased their land from Hughes. There is no record that Hughes, although a speculator, secured unreasonably high prices for the land.

Quakers at Other Places

Evan Owen

A third important Quaker can merely be introduced at this place. Evan Owen in 1771 was living in a dwelling house, almost surely of logs, on the point of land at the mouth of Fishing Creek.

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6 Permission to hold monthly meetings was not granted until 1795.

This land he had purchased from the County Commissioners. It was called McClure's Retreat. At about the same time, two other Quakers, Samuel Boone and John Doan joined Owen, taking out land in the same vicinity, Boone at the "point" and Doan on a tract up a small stream later to be called Snyder's Run. Both adjoined McClure's land. Here thus were three neighboring families with strong indication of others nearby, Germans and Scotch-Irish.

Boone stayed, giving his name to the important Fishing Creek dam, constructed later. Owen, presumably fearing floods in the swampy land, explored farther up the river and probably at this time chose the high land opposite the mouth of the Nescopeck Creek as a better site for a settlement and town. He returned to Philadelphia about 1774. The original idea of Doan, Boone, and Owen seems to have been to form a Quaker community at the mouth of Fishing Creek.

The American Revolution Occurs.

1765 Stamp Act passed by Parliament of Great Britain, quarrel with Mother Country started

April 19, 1775, the Battles of Lexington and Concord marked the opening of our Revolutionary War for Independence

July 4, 1776, our Declaration of Independence

1783 Peace was secured and our independence acknowledged.

At First, Revolution Had Little Effect on the Frontiers.

During the first years of the Revolution, speculators and immigrants to the frontier seem to have paid little attention to it.7 Families definitely named in records and other records definitely referring to individuals and families but not naming them, show that settlers continued to come during these early years of the war for Independence. By 1778 the previously untamed region of forests and streams, swamps with few meadows, hills and mountains, still supported a few scattered bands of Indians. But little settlements and individual clearings of pioneers, squatters, and legal purchasers, were to be found at a number of places. At the mouth of the Catawissa Creek there must have been a dozen families or more. Still others were to be found as far up as Beaver and Scotch valleys. Settlers were above the mouth of Fishing Creek on the river, extending, with long gaps of unoccupied land, probably up as far as modern Espy and beyond. Other settlements extended up Fishing Creek with similar interruptions as far as Knob Mountain. A fairly compact settlement seems to have been just below modern Light Street. On both sides of the river at modern Mifflinville there were settlers, with still others back in the hills, around Cabin Run. There was interest also in settlements on both sides of the river at Nescopeck falls, and quite a settlement on the river flats nearby. The John Eves family was settled up Little Fishing Creek with three or possibly more families near modern Jerseytown for neighbors. Others were farther west in the Chillisquaque valley. There are indications of families in the Roaring Creek valley at this early date.

7 Not entirely true, for a declaration of independence was issued by a group of settlers in the Pine Creek region.

War comes to the Frontier

Forces were at work which were to bring fighting and bloodshed to the whole American frontier while some special causes made the situation especially dangerous in the upper valleys of the Susquehanna.

Which side would the Indians take?

At the outbreak of the Revolution the Americans had endeavored to persuade the powerful Iroquois Confederation of the Six Nations to remain neutral. However, these Indians had been accustomed to the leadership of British agents. These agents remained loyal to the mother country and continued to have great influence with the Indians. The British authorities early planned with the help and leadership of Tories to enlist the help of the Indians in order to quell their rebellious colonies. This meant savage warfare on the frontiers, north and south. What we can learn in detail about this warfare should help us understand better what was happening elsewhere in Pennsylvania and on the Indian frontiers in the rest of the country. But our region, along with that of New York, was among those most exposed. The Iroquois, and especially the Senecas, joined the British in the fighting of 1777 in the Valley of the Mohawk River and with them suffered severe defeats at Herkimer and Fort Stanwix. Their hostility increased when the Americans allied themselves with the French, enemies of the Iroquois for a long time.

Saratoga 1777

French Alliance 1777

Wyoming

The majority of Connecticut's settlers in the Wyoming Valley were strong supporters of the Revolution. But there were Tories here who joined with Tories in New York to plan attacks on Wyoming. Shawnees, and especially Delawares, remembered how they had been tricked out of their lands and compelled to leave. For these reasons, the situation of our region was one of the most critical and dangerous on the whole frontier.

Forts Are Built

The western part of the State, and then the West Branch settlements received the first blows. These came in the forms of ambushes; attacks on isolated homesteads; murders; scalpings; burnings of buildings; and devastation of crops. The years 1775, 1776, and 1777 passed with no attacks on the North Branch.[8] But the disasters elsewhere led the authorities to strengthen the frontier with a rim of forts. Fort Augusta, built twenty years before became the headquarters for the frontier defense. Forts in our immediate region were Forty Fort and others in Wyoming; Bosley's Mills at the forks of the Chillisquaque, modern Washingtonville; Fort Rice near modern Montgomery; and Freeland fort near modern Watsontown.

Fort Jenkins

Late in 1777 or early in 1778 the home of a settler named Jenkins across, and a little down-river, from the Mifflin flats was stockaded and thus became Fort Jenkins.[9] The garrison ranged from fifty to a hundred men at various times.

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[8]A man, Harger, had been captured on Catawissa Creek in 1777, and escaped, after having been carried into New York.

[9]A marker now indicates the site.

Moses Van Campen and Fort Wheeler.

The building of our next fort introduces to us a distinguished Revolutionary fighter, Moses Van Campen. He had been brought with his parents to their settlement along Cabin Run, probably in 1773. Moses Van Campen took part in an expedition of Pennamites to expel the Connecticut settlers in 1775. The expedition was defeated, but Van Campen was not hurt. In the Revolution he first served under Washington and then had been on frontier duty on the West Branch. Promoted to a Lieutenant, early in 1778, he was ordered with his command of twenty men, to build a fort on Fishing Creek about three miles above its mouth, at the Wheeler farm. This was in order to protect a compact settlement in that vicinity. The site of this fort was some little distance below modern Light Street. This fort, as were many others, was a framework of logs, probably upright, to form a stockade. It is recorded that it was covered over with mud and was called the "mud fort". This may mean that it was chinked with mud. In May, before the fort was completed, a scout warned of an approaching band of Indians. All took refuge in the fort, but their homes and buildings were ransacked and then burned, including those of the Van Campens. The fort was hastily strengthened by surrounding it with a barrier of interwoven brush and sharpened sticks pointed outward, at about sixty feet distance. The Indians soon opened up with fire arms and such a brisk fire was carried on that the powder and bullets of the garrison was almost all used. After nightfall, two soldiers volunteered to sneak through the besiegers to Fort Jenkins, eight miles across country to secure more powder and lead. They were successful. Returning before daybreak, the lead was melted into bullets and the garrison was ready for fresh attacks. But the Indians having had enough withdrew without any traces except bloodstains.

In June there was another attack. The cows recovered from the previous attack were sheltered in a special stockade. The women were milking them at the close of day. A watchman discovered a stealthy party of Indians advancing to surprise the milkers. Van Campen quickly organized a counter attack. The Indians were the ones surprised. Van Campen shot and killed the leader. A volley from the remaining soldiers drove them off. The milkers, not knowing of the threat, were also severely frightened at the sudden noise of fire arms. In a wild scramble, milk pails rolling hither and yon, they ran at top speed to the fort.

Battle of Wyoming

These attacks, it is thought, may have been to distract attention from an attack gathering up river in New York and thus prevent the forts lower down from sending assistance. Early in 1778 friendly Indians and scouts brought disquieting news. Outrages, attacks, killings, and scalpings occurred far up the river. Six hundred or more Seneca Indians, with 400
1778 or more Tories, with British officers, were reported to be advancing on Wyoming. Many were Tories from Pennsylvania and New York. Early in July outlying points had been attacked and Forty Fort with its hundreds of refugees also faced attack.

Help was summoned from down the river: from Captain Clingaman at Fort Jenkins, from settlers in Salem and Huntington, and from an advancing company of soldiers for strengthening the forces. This was in the morning of July 3. In the afternoon it was all over before any but slight help could come. Under the rash insistence of Lazarus Stewart, the defenders made up of 300 of militia and briefly trained old men and boys marched out to meet the attackers, not realizing that they were heavily outnumbered. The Americans were quickly out-maneuvered and thrown into confusion. In the massacre that followed almost all were killed or captured. The officers died bravely leading their men. That night most of the soldiers taken prisoner were tortured and killed by the Indians. The failure of the British and Tories to prevent these outrages helped to embitter feelings for the remaining years of the war, and after.

Wyoming Massacre

The remaining forts were surrendered. The non-combatants, women, children, surviving men, what few there were, were to be protected, according to agreement. But the Indians could not be prevented from further plundering and some further killings. The survivors fled their homes in terror. Some made their way on foot overland through rugged mountains and swamps where an estimated two hundred perished. Others took the river route, some by the rough road along the river. The widow of Captain Stewart gathered her belongings and floated down river on a raft supported by two canoes. She reached the home of widow McClure, her sister. The accounts of this catastrophe at Wyoming led Mrs. McClure to entrust her family and hastily gathered belongings to a similar craft. They both then floated down the river to the shelter of Fort Augusta. A friendly Indian warned John Eves the day after the battle. He loaded what he could on a wagon and had made his way with his family to Bosley's Mills by nightfall that same day. From there he returned to his old Delaware home.

The Survivors Flee

The "Great Runaway"

The news of the battle and massacre spread far and wide through the entire frontier. The settlers were panic-stricken. They deserted their fields and houses to take refuge at Sunbury, Harrisburg, or even at points farther away. This was the "Great Runaway". We have an eyewitness account.[10]

> "I left Sunbury, and almost my whole property on Wednesday last. I never in my life saw such scenes of distress. The river and the roads leading down were covered with men, women and children, fleeing for their lives, many without any property at all, and none who had not left the greater part behind. In short, Northumberland county is broken up. Colonel Hunter alone remained using his utmost endeavors to rally some of the inhabitants, and to make a stand, however short, against the enemy. I left him with very few, probably not more than a hundred men on whom he can depend. Wyoming is totally abandoned.

[10] This was written by William McClay, a distinguished man in the history of Pennsylvania, then at Sunbury.

> Scarce a family remained between that place and Sunbury, when I came away. The panic and flight has reached to this place, (Paxtang). Many have moved even out of this township..... For God's sake, for the sake of the county, let Colonel Hunter be re-inforced at Sunbury. Send him but a single company, if you cannot do more..... The miserable example of the Wyoming people, who have come down absolutely naked among us, has operated strongly and the cry has been, 'Let us move while we may, and let us carry some of our effects along with us'..... Something ought to be done for the many miserable objects that crowd the banks of the river, especially those who fled from Wyoming. They are the people you know, I did not use to love, but now I most sincerely pity their distress...."

Another word picture, although from the West Branch, gives an idea of the panic conditions over the entire Susquehanna frontier: (History of the Juniata and Susquehanna valleys, vol. 1, p. 108).

> "I took my family safely to Sunbury, and came back in a keel-boat to secure my furniture. Just as I rounded a point above Derrstown (Lewisburg), I met a whole convoy from the forts above. Such a sight I never saw in my life. Boats, canoes, hog troughs, rafts hastily made of dry sticks, every sort of floating article had been put in requisition and were crowded with women, children and plunder.[11] Whenever any obstruction occurred at a shoal or ripple, the women would leap out into the water and put their shoulders to the boat or raft and launch it again into deep water. The men came down in single file on each side of the river, to guard the women and children. The whole convoy arrived safely at Sunbury, leaving the entire range of farms on the West Branch to ravages of the Indians."

The American Fights Back: Hartley's Expedition

Upwards of a thousand Continental line troops and militia were immediately ordered to our frontier. Wyoming was re-occupied and some of the settlers returned in August. The frontier was patrolled. Early in September a force of two hundred men under Colonel Thomas Hartley proceeded from Muncy, up Lycoming Creek, across the divide into the North Branch valley. They twice encountered Indians, killing ten or more. Four men of the expedition were killed. Queen Esther's Town and neighboring villages of the Indians were destroyed, in the region of Tioga Point, just south of the New York line. Returning a brief stop was made at Wyoming, the victims of the July Massacre were buried. Half of the force was left as a garrison. The return to Sunbury with the remnant of the force was accomplished October 5.

[11] Plunder in this case means hastily gathered belongings.

Three hundred miles of frontier country had been traveled in two weeks! This brought a measure of security to the frontier and allowed some crops to be harvested.

Indian Warfare Continues

There had been much devastation on the frontier farms but there were still crops remaining to be harvested. In spite of dangers settlers endeavored to return and salvage what they could of crops and cattle and rebuild their homes. With the widespread destruction of crops there was also grave danger of famine. Near famine conditions are recorded for families near modern Light Street and Espy.

Indian War Parties a Threat

Roving bands of Indians were a constant menace. Patrols were sent out from Fort Augusta, but the country was too wild and the area too great for the patrols to be effective. Tories acquainted with the region were often the guides. The Peter Melick family fled from their home in September of this year, taking refuge at Fort Wheeler. Their house was burned. In plundering this house before setting fire to it, a feather bed tick was tied to a pony, also stolen. The pony became frightened, escaped from his captors, and ran to the fort, thus restoring the prized tick to its rightful owners. Wyoming was again under threat that autumn. In November a roving band of seventy Indians was seen advancing toward Chillisquaque. Later in the same month a band was seen between Fort Jenkins and Wyoming.

Continuation of Frontier Warfare

In April, 1779, "two or three" families were taken prisoner near Fort Jenkins. A rescuing force was sent out and the prisoners were recovered after a sharp battle with the Indians but only with
1779 the loss of three soldiers killed and four wounded. Several houses were burned and several horses taken. Fort Freeland was attacked the next day, probably by the same band.

A few weeks later in May, across the river from Fort Jenkins but concealed from it by a heavily wooded island, a family of six lived. Two children had been sent to Catawissa for supplies. They thus escaped when a band of Indians killed and scalped all the rest of the family and burned the house.

A General Frontier Plan 1778-9

1. Helped by George Rogers Clark's victories in Ohio-Illinois Country 1778-9
2. East: Sullivan's advance up Susquehanna Valley against Seneca-Iroquois
3. Western Pennsylvania: Brodhead's expedition up Allegheny River also devastated Seneca Country

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Sullivan's Expedition

In July news of an expedition into the Indian Country must have been carried to the frontier. A little later a flotilla of 134 boats, heavily laden with provisions and military supplies was dragged and poled up the river past the settlement in our area.

A strong expedition was being gathered at Wilkes-Barre. Men and supplies also arrived over the mountains from Easton. This was the expedition ordered by General Washington and placed under General Sullivan.

Fort Freeland Destroyed

While this force was gathering, Fort Freeland was attacked. It is thought that this was in order to turn the Wilkes-Barre force away from attack up the river. After several men of the garrison had been killed, the remaining twenty-one men were captured. The women and children were allowed to go free to Sunbury. The mother of one sixteen year old boy, as yet unbearded, hastily clothed him in a woman's clothes. He thus escaped also. Shortly after the capture of the fort, a relieving force of men coming to the rescue was suprised, half of them killed and the rest added to the number of prisoners.

General Sullivan, was not to be turned aside. With an overwhelming force he advanced up the North Branch and then on into the Seneca country. He carefully avoided being ambushed. The Indians aided by Tories and British were attacked near Wellsburg, N. Y., and soundly beaten.

Battle of Newtown August 29, 1779

Then the expedition advanced to the Indian villages, in the Seneca country. These had been deserted. These villages were made up of well constructed houses and barns, fine fields and orchards, remarkably rich and productive. Buildings were burned, crops were destroyed, orchards were cut down. The destruction was complete. The survivors were compelled to flee to the British at Fort Niagara. The power of the Six Nations was destroyed, although this was not immediately evident. On the return trip there were some skirmishes and some small losses. The expedition was back in Wilkes-Barre early in October.

Iroquois Seneca Country Devastated

Limited Success

Sullivan's expedition, although highly successful, did not immediately end the pattern of Indian attacks: the stealthy attack on isolated families; killings and scalpings; burning of buildings; destruction of crops. The Indians were seeking revenge, and also bounties for the scalps that they could bring in.

Frontier Difficulties

Let us review the difficulties of frontier war. Settlers cabins were far apart. Settlers themselves were rash in going into the unprotected frontier but we must remember that in most cases such cabins were their only homes and that the pioneers had already invested hard work and savings in their location. They felt that they must work their fields or face famine. They were slow to seek protection of the forts, forts which were inadequate at the best. The troops could not patrol the widely extended frontier. Often they would arrive at a threatened location only to see the burning embers of a one-time habitation, and bury the mutilated bodies of the victims. The troops were too few. Many of them were short term militia without sufficient training. Sentinels, guards, and scouts were neglected or inadequate.

Soldiers' Pay

The pay of the soldiers, whether in the militia or regular Continental troops was poor in comparison with the earning of craftsmen making guns or other needed equipment. It was poor also in comparison with the prices which could be obtained by farmers

and others for needed supplies. This was especially true when such supplies were sold to the British armies for gold in comparison with the almost worthless Continental money.[12]

Pennsylvania's Burdens

Moreover, Pennsylvania had special difficulties greater than those of many of the other States. The capital of the country was in Pennsylvania, either at Philadelphia or, when it was occupied by the British, at one of our other cities. Both the British and the American armies were in Pennsylvania for much of the time. As the war progressed, the Americans came to have growing numbers of prisoners of war to care for. In various ways, all these circumstances placed heavy burdens on the Pennsylvania government.

Pennsylvania Factions

In Pennsylvania there was danger from the Tories, as we have seen. In some ways this fact made our War for Independence resemble a civil war. This was true in all the States. On account of this bitterness, the Quakers were open to suspicion as being Tories. They were molested by Indians less frequently, or not at all. Was this because they were not on the frontier, and therefore were indifferent to the outrages suffered by the pioneers? The Scotch-Irish, as we have seen, were bitter against the Quakers on account of these alleged reasons. None of these suggested reasons was completely true but there was undoubtedly some degree of truth in all of them. But many believed them true and this explains the difficulties in securing full cooperation among the people.[13]

The hostile feelings between the Yankees and the Pennamites had by no means ended. This made full cooperation difficult.[14] It is probably true that certain persons interested in securing land from Pennsylvania were willing to have the Connecticut settlement destroyed, even if it should by means of the cruel Indians. President Reed of the Pennsylvania government ordered that supplies going up the river for the Wyoming region should be stopped at Sunbury. He was overruled. So great did this friction become that Congress ordered that the Wyoming garrison should be made up of troops from outside of the State. When German troops were used, they seemed unwilling to leave the forts. Scouting was left to militia and volunteers.

Frontier Dangers

1780 In 1780, one of the darkest periods of the whole war, Indian attacks were renewed. As previously they came from the New York region in large parties. When they reached the tributary waters of the Susquehanna, they broke into smaller parties to attack the isolated settlements. Early this year Salmon was held prisoner, to be released a year later.

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[12]Militia soldiers were under urgent need to get back home to protect their families and get in their crops to prevent famine. Is it any wonder that it was difficult to keep the ranks of the armed forces fully enrolled?

[13]Recall Lazarus Stewart and his defiant conduct. The Quaker population seems never to have left Catawissa during the entire period of the Revolution. However, we recall that the Eves family fled. Also, the John family, up Catawissa Creek, although Quakers, had to flee on two occasions.

[14]Why did Captain Clingaman, although asked on the day of the battle,

This same party of Indians, it seems, killed a family of two or more at the foot of Knob Mountain. In March, the Whitmoyer family was murdered near modern Jerseytown. Only a son, absent at a sugar camp escaped.

Van Campen Family

1780 The men of the Van Campen family, late in March ventured to return to their burnt homesite and resume their life there. They were surprised by a raiding party of Indians on the thirtieth. Tomahawk, knife, and spear quickly snuffed out the lives of father and one son. Moses, who was with them, barely escaped the same fate. This was because the Indians were able to over-power him and take him prisoner. A younger brother, and a man named Pence were also taken prisoner. On their return trip, a sugar camp was attacked in the Huntington region, but the four men there defended themselves in their cabin, so the Indians passed on. At the headwaters of the Hunlock, they captured Abraham Pike, but let his wife and child go free. The Indians had now accumulated as prisoners, three men and two boys, a Rogers boy having been taken prisoner previous to the Van Campen attack. As they journeyed northward, Van Campen feared that they were destined for torture and death. Opportunity for conversation was offered when they were collecting firewood for their captors. At such times Van Campen persuaded his companions to try to kill their captors and escape. The attempt was made near the mouth of the Tunkhannock Creek. Using a knife inadvertantly dropped by an Indian, the prisoners in turn were able to cut each other's bonds at night when the captors were asleep. Guns and tomahawks were used to kill nine of the ten captors. A tenth engaged Van Campen in a desparate struggle in which the Indian was badly wounded, but was able to escape. A raft was built as soon as it was dawn and loaded with the three men, two boys, and much of the plunder which the Indians had gathered. Their raft gave way and they saved little else but themselves and the guns. They were able to seize another raft from a party of Indians who had left it unguarded while they were hunting. With this they made their way to Wyoming and eventually to Fort Jenkins.

Fort Jenkins Destroyed

In September, Fort Rice on the Chillisquaque was attacked by a party of 300 or more Tories and Indians. It was beaten off. A relieving force from Sunbury pursued the Indians through the Fishing Creek valleys and up Huntington creek, where the invaders divided into small parties and made their escape. One band went around Knob Mountain and then across country. They burned the Aikman house at Cabin Run and continued to Fort Jenkins. This fort had been abandoned by its garrison to go to the relief of Fort Rice. The fort and the neighboring houses and other buildings were burned.

Sugarloaf Massacre

The attackers left hurriedly. It is thought that this was because they heard of an advancing company of American soldiers in the Nescopeck valley. This American force had been sent to investigate reports of a Tory Settlement in Scotch Valley.

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to send help from Fort Jenkins, fail to try? By the time the request came, it was too late. Was it also on account of the Yankee-Pennamite friction? Was it because he felt he had too few soldiers to guard his own fort?

The forty-one soldiers, tired from a long, hot march were resting at ease at a cool spring. The Indians, advancing around Sugarloaf Mountain, completely surprised the Americans. Almost half of them were killed with a few prisoners taken. Only twenty-two escaped.

Fort McClure

Moses Van Campen reported for duty after his return from capture. He was made lieutenant of a Ranger company. One of his first assignments was to fortify Widow McClure's home with a stockade. A view up and down the river was here provided. It does not seem ever to have been attacked, but there were traditions of lurking savages with alarms and hasty flights. This fort became headquarters for supplies and expeditions.[15]

Cornwallis surrender at Yorktown Oct. 19, 1781

After 1782 the brunt of Indian attacks fell on our neighboring regions. The British assured that the savages had been recalled. Indian depredations did not end abruptly but dwindled gradually away.

Last Indian Troubles

An Indian camp was established at Catawissa about 1782. This resulted in some quarrels and threats to peace. A man was barely able to escape hostile Indians by taking refuge in the river, although he could not swim. A family was killed across the river from Catawissa, parents and three children. Three older sons escaped, having gone for flour to the mill at Sunbury.

Proclamation of Peace, April 1783

The last outrage was in 1785. A party of Indians returning to New York murdered parents and small child on Mifflin flats. This was part of a group and they had pushed ahead of a main party of immigrants.

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[15] It is interesting to note that later Moses Van Campen married Margaret, one of the McClure daughters. Van Campen's services were continued on the West Branch. He was again captured by the Indians and was in grave danger of his life when the Indians came to realize that he had been their prisoner before and was the one who had killed Indians in his attempt to escape. However, the British authorities in Canada treated him as a prisoner of war. He was finally exchanged near its close.

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TO FIND OUT HOW EFFECTIVELY YOU HAVE READ

1. What was the "New Purchase"? Why was it important to Columbia County? What other purchase involved our county's area? (Refer to Chapter I, also.)
2. How did our region come to be known and mapped?
3. Give an account of the conflicts with Connecticut over Pennsylvania territory, including causes and outcome. How was our own history affected by these conflicts?
4. Who, kinds of people, were interested in frontier lands? Why? Why did farmers, especially, wish to leave cleared and settled land for the frontier?
5. How could would-be land-owners secure possession of frontier land?

PIONEERS, PATRIOTS, AND TORIES IN THE SUSQUEHANNA VALLEYS

Chapter II.

Conflicts and Their Causes

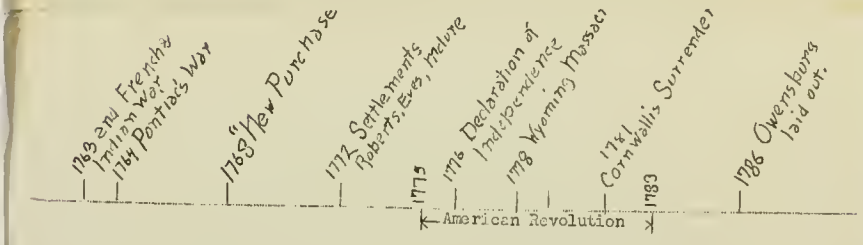
The New Purchase at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 marks the end of our region as Indian country, although the Indians did
1768 not all leave it immediately. The lands of the North and West Branches had been purchased and the French rivals defeated. The fur traders were to move farther west, following the Indians and seeking areas where fur animals and game had not been so nearly killed off. The area was definitely open to Pennsylvania settlers, or so it seemed at that time. But actually, terrible events were in the making. The colony of Connecticut laid claim to the northern part of Pennsylvania and endeavored to settle it with Connecticut people. Within seven years, also, the war of the Revolution was to break out. These two conflicts were intermingled and both involved our region in bitter struggles. And many Indians, reluctant to leave these lands, joined against the settlers to bring destruction and bloodshed to the people of these valleys. These struggles will now be explained.

Early Explorations in the North Branch Country

Long before 1768, information about the Susquehanna lands had been growing. Fur traders journeyed deep into Indian country.
1728 They reached the Forks of the Susquehanna at an early date. In 1728 one of these traders, James LeTort wrote from Catawissa about a fight between the Shawnees and "some back inhabts". This is the
1737 first written mention of Catawissa. In 1737 Conrad Weiser, the great Indian interpreter, came down the North Branch from a journey to the Six Nations. He reported traders in the Wyoming Valley, and also three men, Germans, from the Delaware region, who were hunting land. The following years, missionaries visited the Indians and endeavored to convert them to Christianity. This they failed to do. However, their trips increased the knowledge of the region. Soon one of these travelers was to write that the river at Catawissa was the "most beautiful he ever saw". Friendly Indian guides and the
1756 several hundred soldiers sent to garrison Fort Augusta, during the French and Indian War, were able to tell about these lands.

Conflict with Connecticut

From all these reports people learned that there were rich lands beyond the first mountains in the upper valleys of the Susquehanna. These stories were carried far and wide in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and even to Connecticut. In Connecticut, there was not much land to expand into. People were seeking other areas to settle. Its boundaries as originally granted had extended to the "South Sea", which meant the Pacific Ocean. But since that grant of 1662, other charters had granted land due west of Connecticut's settled boundaries to New York, to New Jersey, and to William Penn. By the middle of the 1700's these sections in New York and New Jersey were well advanced in settlement and were in the control of strong provincial governments. But in the upper



PIONEER SETTLEMENTS IN THE "NEW PURCHASE"
Chapter III

Obstructions to Settlements Removed

We recall that migration to the lands of the "New Purchase" probably never stopped completely during the entire years of the Revolution. When peace with Great Britain finally came in 1783, this migration increased to very large amounts. It resembled the surging waters of a broken dam. In this case, the dam which had obstructed the migration had been the war. The fear of Tory and Indian attacks, actually carried out in many cases in our region, held back would-be settlers. Moreover, England had tried to prevent expansion into the western lands. This, in fact, had been one of the causes of the Revolution.

When these obstructions were removed, lands occupied before the war were reoccupied. New settlements were pushed farther and farther into the unoccupied lands up and down the whole American frontier. From now on lands of the "New Purchase" in Pennsylvania rapidly filled up.

Travel Route: River Route from Harrisburg to Sunbury up the North Branch

There were certain main groups of settlers who came by certain routes of travel. It will be helpful to learn about these groups and their routes. Several groups of settlers came generally from the south-east, from the vicinity of Philadelphia, Reading, and Lancaster. As far as Harrisburg, they could journey through country well advanced in settlement with passable roads. From Harrisburg to Sunbury the Indian trails along the river had been improved to provide for growing traffic, especially during the last two wars, the French and Indian, and the Revolution. These roadways had also been improved to some extent as far as Loyalsock and Lycoming Creeks on the West Branch, and on the North Branch, past Fishing and Nescopeck Creeks, to Wyoming.

North Branch Bottom Lands occupied early from Sunbury

Before the Revolution, as we have already learned, Germans, Scotch-Irish, and Quakers had made settlements along the river. They had probably come from Sunbury and Harrisburg, either by boat or by land. These lands to which they came were a belt of flat lands a mile or so, often less, from the river bank to the line of hills. They are called bottom lands. More accurately they are flood plains, built up by the deposit of river sediments during floods from ages past. At places they were swampy, as seems to have been the case near the mouth of Fishing Creek and on up the river. Malaria was known to be prevalent in such regions. It was attributed to the damp air, Miasmas, rather than mosquitoes as we know now. Furthermore, swampy lands could not be cultivated until drained. At other places they might be very sandy and stony. For the most part these alluvial flood plains were made up of rich, deep soils. These lands were the first surveyed and usually the first to be occupied.

Such alluvial flood plains are to be found at other places along the river and up the various tributary streams: some distance below Catawissa on both sides of the river, at Light Street, above Orangeville, at Benton, Central, at Millville and Iola, at Mainville, Slabtown, at Mifflinville, and at other places also. Usually such lands were highly desired.

Travel Route: West Branch - Chillisquaque - Warrior Run Route to Little Fishing Creek

As we already know, Quakers were among the earliest of settlers. John Eves, in his various journeys and also flight from Indian danger at the time of the Great Runaway, had used the West Branch route. Coming up from Sunbury, which was probably reached overland, a fairly well-traveled route led up this branch beyond Montour Ridge. Here a broad valley opens up, watered by several streams. Eves followed up the valley of the Chillisquaque Creek to its headwaters. Here one can reach the region of Millville by crossing some low hills or Little Fishing Creek could be reached readily through Spruce run.

Valley Lands: Greenwood Valley

Once in the valley of Little Fishing Creek, another broad valley opens up. It is almost a continuation of the valley of the Chillisquaque and Warrior Run. This is the Greenwood valley. It is composed of gentle slopes, with much of the land almost level. Being higher than the flood plains, the soils are derived from the decay through long ages of the underlying rock. The soils have made fine farming lands. Quakers following John Eves, using largely his route for their journeys, were the settlers who mainly built up this valley.

Extension to the North Branch

Before taking up another section of the region, it is convenient to notice that at the east, through gaps in the hills, access could be had to Big Fishing Creek at the foot of Knob Mountain. From this point Indian trails and later travel routes led farther along either side of the mountain. North of Lee Mountain, through Shickshinny gap the North Branch was reached. From here one could then proceed to Wyoming. To the south another route led to the headwaters of the Briar Creek and to the North Branch opposite the Nescopeck Creek. These interconnecting valleys were much used by Indians and whites in travelling between the North and West Branches.

Quakers at Catawissa and Roaring Creek: North Branch Route

The second large settlement of Quakers was at Catawissa and nearby regions. We have already told about Moses Roberts and Ellis Hughes; and also the Johns near modern Mainville.
It seems that the Quakers of the Catawissa region never left during the troubled years of the Revolution. Shortly after the Revolution-1787, Hughes laid out a town in building lots and persuaded other Friends to buy and settle there. The town was first named Hughesburg, but the name was changed later to Catawissa.

Roaring Creek Valley

These Quakers journeyed up the river from Harrisburg, either by boat or by the riverside roads. Others following the same route, did not stop at Catawissa, but turned southwards over a mild elevation where a valley, somewhat similar to the Greenwood Valley opens up. It was, and is, similar in soils and in its upland fields of gently rolling or level land. But where the Greenwood valley had easy access at both the east and west end, the Roaring Creek valley was rimmed at north, east, and south, by a mountain formation in the shape of a horseshoe. At the north, it is Catawissa Mountain, which as it continues to the east bends southward to join Little Mountain which forms the southern part of the horseshoe. Although Catawissa Mountain comes to an abrupt end, the northern line of the "horseshoe" is continued by a range of steep hills. At the western and open end of the "horseshoe" access could also be obtained from the region of modern Danville, and at the southwest, at a break in Little Mountain, Bear Gap.

Quakers Come Early to Roaring Creek Valley

This Roaring Creek Valley, seemingly less accessible than many other parts of the county, was, however, one of the first to be settled. Records point to settlements there before the Revolution. Both at Catawissa and in Roaring Creek valley Quakers continued to arrive in the 1780's and 1790's. Their meeting houses, the one at Catawissa, built probably shortly after the Revolution, and the one in Roaring Creek in 1796, were probably the first religious buildings in the county, and the oldest ones still standing. Both are log structures.

Quakers Move Away from Catawissa - Roaring Creek

But the Quakers in the Catawissa and Roaring Creek regions did not stay long. Apparently prospering through the 1780's and 1790's, shortly after 1800 most of them sold their holdings, and left for Ohio or sections of Canada north of Lake Erie. As has often been the case with pioneers, these Quakers probably thought they could gain advantage by selling their improved land and taking up cheap land farther west on the developing frontier.

There are many persons in our county today who trace their ancestry from the Millville and Greenwood Quakers. Only a few families of the Catawissa and Roaring Creek settlers have left descendants in our region.

Pennsylvania Germans - Overland Route

Although some Germans seem to have been among the earliest settlers, the larger number came after the Quakers. In some cases the Quaker holdings were bought, in others, the Germans came as pioneers. The Germans, at first came across the mountainous country to Sunbury. The Indians had a well developed path, the Tulpehocken trail, which avoided some of the mountains by making use of gaps. Later, a way was developed to Bear Gap. The Germans spread through the Roaring Creek valley so that it became predominantly a region of Pennsylvania German people.

Settlements Opposite the Nescopeck Creek - Overland Route from the East

Evan Owen, after giving up his first plans of a settlement near the mouth of Fishing Creek, turned his interests to the high land opposite the Nescopeck Creek. He explored the region about 1780. He finally returned about 1783 and laid out a town which he first named Owensburg. Later it was named Berwick for Berwick-Upon-Tweed. He gave land for a Quaker meeting house. He actively worked to bring about the sale of his land. Many of the Berwick settlers came from the region of Easton along the Delaware River. These journeyed up the Lehigh River valley, continued through Beaver Meadows and on to the valley of the Nescopeck Creek. Berwick was the first of the towns of Columbia County to be laid out, although not, apparently, the first town site to be settled, for a number of others, it seems, had settlers at an earlier time.

While certain routes seem to be favored by the earlier immigrants, different groups used different routes at different times. In later years certain routes were no longer to be associated with certain groups of settlers.

Thus by 1790 or 1800, the region's settled sections had recovered from the disasters and losses of the frontier wars. Furthermore, new areas were constantly being settled and opened up. They extended farther up the valleys and into the uplands of hilltop regions. This is a process that was largely completed by 1850. However, it is true, that there are woodlots and mountain sections that have been lumbered but never been converted to farm lands. In fact, in 1958 there were two, possibly more, small plots, that have never been lumbered.

Earliest Pioneer Hardships

The later pioneers had the experience of the first ones to aid them. The first pioneers in loneliness and danger, carved out of the wild frontier their homestead and laid the first foundations of the communities which were to develop later. Let us learn about their hardships and dangers. We have no complete account of any pioneer. From various incidents and accounts we can put together what the life must have been like during the first critical year. We shall picture a comparatively young man and wife, he already an experienced farmer, she well trained in the duties of a farm wife. Both were strong and hardy, the frontier was no place for weaklings.

The Pioneers Journey to the Frontier

The pioneer whom we shall try to picture had saved enough money to secure three pack horses. They have carefully reduced their baggage to the very smallest amount possible. On one horse rode the wife carrying a small infant in her arms. A bag containing cooking utensils and table ware was attached to the saddle. The second horse carried a store of provisions and the essentials of farm implements, plough irons and other things that could not well be fashioned out of wood later. Balanced on a third, on either side, was a hamper type of crate, made of hickory withes. These hampers contained bedding, with a small child tucked safe and secure in each, with only its head showing. Two cows were led or driven along for milk. The father strode ahead carrying gun and ax. The wife could advise him if the pack train, the second and third horse, each tethered to the one in front, was advancing properly. When the trails had been widened to rough roads, carts, or even wagons, drawn by oxen, would have been used.

On the frontier, the slow but powerful ox was superior to the horse for much work. In the settled sections the advance would be rapid. Soon the region of no roads was reached. Narrow trails of the Indian and fur trader would be encountered. The pioneer's ax had to be ready to chop the trail clear of fallen trees or branches.[1] One or more mountains had to be crossed. The trail at places was steep and narrow. It was dangerous where steep drops were to be passed. There were no bridges, the streams had to be forded; swampy places might make other difficulties. Five or ten miles might be a day's journey. If conditions were favorable, possibly more might be accomplished.

Shelter at Night

At the end of the day, animals had to be tethered so that they could feed, the cows milked, and an evening meal prepared from food supplies carried. Firewood must be gathered for cooking, for warmth, and for protection against wild animals. Boughs must be gathered to make a crude bed under the stars. This was for fair weather. If it rained, a crude shelter might be found left by some previous traveler or one might be fashioned from bark and saplings. Shelter at times was available in an owner's cabin along the way. If so, the accommodations probably included sleeping on a dirt floor, so crowded with the owner's family and the guests, that there was a minimum of privacy and barely room on the floor for all to stretch out. The fatigues of the day probably brought sleep to all despite the almost universal presence of fleas and bugs.

Need for Haste

After five or ten days of such travel, the destination would be reached, barring accidents or disasters on the way. There could be no tarrying. The family must reach their new homesite as early in the spring as possible, after the end of severe weather. Before the coming of autumn, there were urgent tasks to be completed. Land must be cleared and crops planted to carry the family over the winter. After a temporary shelter had been provided for the mild weather, a house must be constructed that would shelter the family through the bitter winter that was to be expected in our region.

Some pioneer families had sons and daughters old enough to assist their parents. They may have been able to drive oxen to help in the work. Chickens and pigs may also have been brought. At the other extreme we have records of man and wife alone, advancing barefoot along the trails, carrying all their possessions on their backs!

Choosing Land: Signs of Good Soil

If our pioneer had been careful[2] he had already inspected the lie of the land and the soil. He would choose a homesite near a spring in order to have a secure source of water. There were signs of soil fertility which he would note. Black walnut trees were taken as signs of limestone soils, the most desirable.[3]

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[1]He had to be ready with gun to protect from wild animals or replenish food supply.

[2]Compare John Eves, ch. , p.

[3]We in Columbia County have only narrow bands of limestone soils, and those mostly on two rather steep ridges, one on either side of Montour Ridge. See ch. p.

White oaks were signs of deep, rich soils. Big, well grown trees generally meant deep and fertile soil. This was especially true of hardwood trees. Hardwood trees were more difficult to cut down and to fashion into useful articles. Some pioneers preferred the areas supporting the soft woods, such as the pine and hemlock, but especially the pine. The pines were straight and tall. Their logs were most easily transformed into log cabins. Their logs were most easily split to make the first boards and planks. In pine and hemlock forests there was less underbrush to get rid of in opening up plots for crops.

However, the Mifflin flats, over grown with pines, were at first considered pine barrens. Later, they were proved to be among the most fertile of lands.

It was also important to find a location that promised a plentiful supply of wild game. This was especially true for the first few years. The rich game resources of the Sugarloaf township region probably accounts for settlement there at an early date. These early settlers, about 1792, passed by unsettled richer sections in order to take up land in one of the less promising sections. They also found trees of splendid size.

The First Shelter

Having come in the spring, bark was easily pealed in order to make a crude imitation of the Indian hut for the first shelter. Saplings stuck into the ground and bent together at the top would support the bark roofing. The work might be reduced by building under an overhanging cliff or into a steep bank. The front might be left open, to be heated by the camp fire.

Planting

Quickly, a clearing must be provided so that grain and garden seeds could be planted. The quickest way was to girdle the trees by removing the bark for a considerable height clear around the trunk. The trees died, then the sun light could get to the ground beneath. Other trees were felled to provide logs for the cabin. Small roots and underbrush would be grubbed out. Seeds would have to be planted and cultivated in spaces between the dead trees and stumps. The untilled soil was so rich, that usually a good crop could be expected, in spite of the limited cultivation that was possible the first year. Much underbrush and branches would be burned. The ashes helped further to enrich the soil.

Fish and Game for Food

While crops were maturing, additional food had to be provided. Usually there was much wild game, and the streams were teeming with fish. The father, and any older boys, were under the necessity of eking out the food supplies by these sources from the wilds. The wife, besides her other housewifely duties, cultivated the garden and gathered its produce as it matured.

The Cabin

A more durable shelter had to be built. The logs would be cut into proper lengths, notched at the ends. If only the man and his wife were available, they could use only the shortest and lightest logs to provide a cabin of minimum size. This type of log cabin was learned from the Swedes who introduced it into Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The logs would be piled on each other with the notches making them stable.

The first roof was probably merely long strips of bark, held in place from a ridge pole by stones or heavier timbers. Chinks in the log sides, and possibly in the roof were filled with mud, possibly mud mixed with moss. A hole might be left in the roof for smoke, or the chimney of logs chinked with clay, with also a clay facing on the inside, would be provided for the open fire. The first door was a deer or bear skin hung in the door opening. An opening for a window might be provided. If so, it was covered with greased paper which let in some light. At best this cabin was dark. The first floor was the dirt, trampled hard. Hooks were pegs driven in the chinks of the logs. After there had been time to split logs for crude boards, some slight advance toward comfort could be made. A door, on wooden hinges could be provided. It would have a latch with the catch on the inside. To enable it to be opened from the outside, a string was provided, extending through a hole to the outside. Pull the string, the latch would be raised, and the person could enter. When visitors were not desired, the latch string was pulled inside.[4]

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Tradition has handed down many of the hardships which the pioneers in our own region experienced.

In 1772 Isaac John and wife built their log cabin along the Catawissa Creek in what is now Main Township. Its entrance was through the roof which was reached by a ladder. They apparently never built another. According to tradition they raised their large family in this cabin.

About 1780 or shortly after, Henry Long with wife and children descended the river from New York by canoe, having stopped over at Wilkes-Barre for a time awaiting the end of the Indian dangers. They occupied a deserted log cabin within the limits of modern Light Street. They planted a cleared acre of ground to potatoes but were compelled to dig out the seed for food. According to this story, they kept alive searching out wild potatoes in the swamps. These finds were roasted for welcome food.

Nearby, Levi Aikman about this time, gathered a bag of grain, his first harvest. He sent his son in a canoe to Sunbury to have it ground there at the mill. On the return trip, young Aikman consumed his last crust of bread. His journey was ended at the Webb River-landing at nightfall. Mrs. Webb would gladly have given frontier hospitality to the young man, but there was no food in their house. As a result, young Aikman dipped into his bag of ground grain to help out the Webbs, and also certain others, according to this tradition.

In 1782, Zarbeth Brittain, on a trip to examine Susquehanna lands, perished from small pox. The same misfortune happened to the son of John Bright, journeying from Northampton county in search of land here.

The Berwick region affords another frontier experience. John and Robert Brown, with their families, were pursuaded by Evan Owen to purchase land from his holdings. Coming overland to Catawissa, the Browns there transferred their belongings to canoes for the journey to the falls of the Nescopeck. Here they landed, toilsomely carried their goods to the top of the bluff when rain started in before they could make any shelter. This hardship added to the others was more than the mothers could endure; they broke down and wept.

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[4] We have the expression still, when we wish to indicate welcome, to tell our friend, the latch string hangs out for you.

Down the river at Mifflin flats Peter Yohe settled at an early date. Before his first crop matured he had to journey by canoe to Wilkes-Barre for a bushel of corn to escape starvation.

Abram Kline, about 1785 led a party from New Jersey across Broad Mountain to the mouth of the Nescopeck, thence to Fishing Creek. Finally journeying up this stream, cutting their way through the unbroken forest, they reached the foot of Knob Mountain. The party consisted of Kline, his wife, and children, some of whom were grown and accompanied with their own families. The first summer, they lived in their wagons and a tent. They subsisted on milk from the cows they had brought as well as the usual game and fish from the wilds. By the second and third summers a considerable amount of land had been cleared by their united efforts and a sizeable crop of grain was raised. This was transported to the river by pack train, where it was loaded on flat boats to be floated to a grist mill at Sunbury, thirty five miles distant from their home.

Elisha Barton, came to Hemlock about 1781. He lived with his family in their wagon until their cabin was constructed.

About 1898, near Bear Gap, some silver buttons and Spanish dollars were found. These were connected with Alexander McCauley who had disappeared in 1783 after having journeyed from Beaver Valley in search of strayed horses. McCauley was known to have had both silver buttons and to have used Spanish dollars. Was he the victim of Indians or wild beasts?

A number of traditions relate dangerous conflicts of our frontier hunters with panthers.

When the Leonard Rupert family came to the mouth of Fishing Creek about 1788, they used the route across the mountains to Catawissa. From here their goods were taken across the river in canoes. The wagons were supported each by two canoes. The pair of wheels on either side were placed in a canoe, one pair to each canoe. The rowers were under the wagon, presumably on some kind of crude seats and bracing. A landing, two miles up river was affected, just below the mouth of Fishing Creek.

As late as 1788, according to a tradition, Peter Brugler had an adventure with an Indian. Having followed a circuitous route in hunting, he came upon his own previous tracks in the snow, with those of an Indian stalking him. Thus forewarned, he was able to hide in a tree trunk and kill the Indian instead of being killed himself.

. . . . . .

Success or Failure

With such expedients and make-shift devices, our pioneers made themselves ready for the first winter. If they were not successful in getting these first tasks completed, at best they might merely have to journey back to civilization and in some way make a fresh start there or somewhere else. At worst, they were confronted with death from starvation or freezing. Probably many cases of one or the other were disguised by sickness and death brought on by such hardships. But thousands of such pioneers in our region and on other frontiers, did succeed in establishing themselves through the first critical year. Only persons of great physical vigor and high courage could undergo such hardships and dangers. A fuller account of the dangers and hardships will be given in the next chapter where we shall learn how the pioneers tamed the frontier.

TO FIND OUT HOW EFFECTIVELY YOU HAVE READ

1. What were the main routes used by pioneer settlers in migrating to the North Branch regions?
2. Describe the chief areas of settlements in the fifteen or twenty years after the Revolution.
3. What were the main groups of settlers before 1800. To what extent can they be associated with definite areas?
4. What live stock were most valuable for the pioneers? Why?
5. What were the signs the pioneers looked for in choosing a place to settle?
6. Why was haste very important after the pioneers started their journeys to the frontier?

INTERESTING THINGS TO DO

1. Using a road map, try to identify modern automobile route numbers with routes used by (a) Indians, (b) pioneer settlers. What natural features (mountains, valleys, streams) aided or obstructed the modern routes as well as historic routes?
2. Are there any additional traditions of early pioneer experiences in your family? You are requested to write a report to the Columbia County Historical Society about them. Read your report first to your class.
3. Students who live on one of the original farms might tell about it and any interesting evidences of early and long continued occupations. Requested: students report new facts to the Secretary of the Columbia County Historical Society.
4. Similarly, any students should report unlumbered areas in the county; an original log cabin still in existence, any implements of pioneers.
5. Requested by County Historical Society: Photographs and picture collections to be offered or lent to Society showing big trees in an unlumbered section.
6. Compare a modern camping trip with the pioneer journey and first lodging.
7. In Battle and Beers, investigate detailed experiences, not included in this text, that occurred in your town or township.

CHECK YOUR VOCABULARY:

alluvial
flood plains
sediments
pioneer
gap
hamper (noun)
withe
distination
to eke
chink

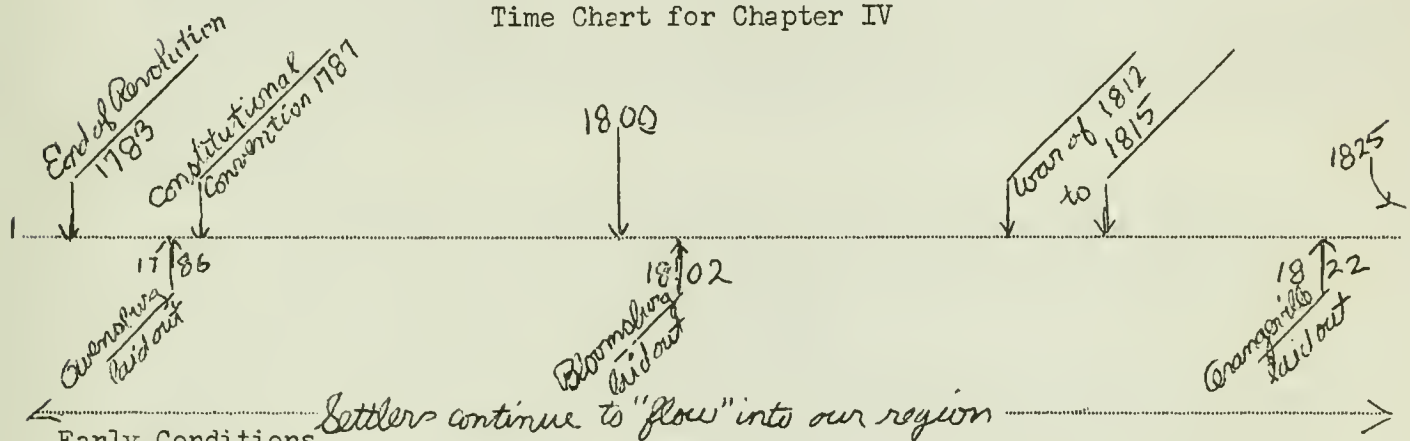
TRANSFORMING THE FRONTIER INTO CIVILIZED COMMUNITIES

Chapter IV

This chapter deals with gradual developments. They all were going on at much the same time, with no exact beginning or ending. Such developments were earlier some places, later at others, but the general conditions they reflect were common to the American frontier.

For our region these conditions were from the close of the Revolution to about 1825, or about forty or fifty years.

Time Chart for Chapter IV



Early Conditions

The pioneer life for man, woman, and child was lonely, dangerous, and hard.

Recalling Some First Steps

We have already looked at the pioneer traveling with his family and few belongings to their new wilderness home. We shall want to look further at the dangers and hardships for the many years needed to change this wilderness to a more civilized life. As neighbors came, loneliness was reduced. To secure the needed supplies and comforts, more would have to be produced - more for home consumption and more products to be sold or exchanged for the things needed. It was not enough to produce more, means to transport the products to places where they could be sold or traded, markets were necessary. These improvements will be studied in this chapter.

A garden patch and the first small field would need to be enlarged to a real farm and adequate garden. Clearing the land might be by chopping, or the trees might be girdled. After they had died they might be burned down by building a fire around the base. In this the wife might help. Actually, a woman could burn down more in a day than a man could chop down in several days. The resulting logs needed to be piled. Before neighbors had become plentiful, man and wife had to do the best they could to make these piles.

Flour was produced in the Indian fashion, by placing small amounts of grain in a basin-like hollow of a large stone or stump as a mortar and then using a cylindrical stone, a pestle, to pound and grind it. Often an

especially heavy pestle stone would be tied to a bent-over sapling to lighten the labor. When a stump was used, the clump, clump, clump of the pestle on the mortar could be heard a long distance. A course, gritty flour could be produced in this way, suitable for porridge or flat bread baked on the heated hearth.

Kettles of several sizes, were stood in the fireplace. Stews and porridge might be prepared in them. The farmer's livestock included for food, chickens, cattle, and pigs. The breeds were quite scrubby. Pigs were especially valued because they would largely support themselves from acorns and other forage from the forest. If attacked and killed by bears, a trap might be attached to the mutilated carcass with the result that the family might have bear meat instead of pork for the bear usually returned for a second meal from the carcass. From cattle milk could be secured. The ox was slow, unexcitable, and very powerful. It was preferred to the horse as a work animal on the early farm. For riding and the pack train, of course, the horse was the better. Cattle also supplied meat from time to time.

Food From the Wilds

The profusion of game is referred to in all accounts of pioneer life. At times there might be more than could be eaten, and at other times settlers might be near starvation. In Berwick, Evan Owen as Justice of the Peace, required that every bear killed should be brought before him to be divided equally among the different families.

Most of the wild game animals and birds known to the pioneers are still with us, but there are some exceptions. Panthers, which were at one time a serious threat to the farmer's live stock, have been exterminated. Seldom did they attack human beings, although there are traditions of adventures and a few tragedies, usually involving children.

Besides game, settlers learned very early from the Indians to make maple syrup and maple sugar.[1] Maple sugar sold from six to ten cents a pound. A tree might yield five pounds, a hundred-tree grove, 500 pounds. 100 barrels of sap had to be boiled down to yield this amount.

Bees were to be found in hollow trees and large stores of honey were often secured by chopping down such a tree. These two products were the main sources of sweetening and they might also be sold or bartered at the growing villages.

Nuts and berries were to be found in proper season, valued as a tasty addition to food supplies, and useful also for sale or barter.

Wild Pigeons

Wild pigeons came at certain seasons of the year, especially nesting time, in flocks so large that we of a later day can scarcely believe this to have been possible. An eye-witness from the nearby Wilkes-Barre region had this record: "The whole heavens were dark with them, the cloud on wing continuing to pass for over an hour or more and cloud succeeding cloud. There were not millions but myraids...Towns were built by them for five or six miles in length along the Meshoppen---every branch or bough of every

[1] Recall the Indian outrage at Jerseytown, 1780, when a settler escaped because he was at maple sugar grove.

tree holding a rude nest." In a Berwick newspaper item in 1840 we can read: "We have never seen such a quantity of pigeons as were flying about our place. The greater portion of our townsmen were engaged in pursuit of them, none returned without their hands full. Mr. F. Nicely succeeded in shooting 80. He fired twice into one flock and killed 37. Beat that you who can." At a later time the extermination of the passenger pigeon was completed by market hunters slaughtering them in wholesale manner and sending them to city markets by the ton. Often the masses were so thick on the branches that they could be clubbed to death. For the pioneer such plentiful and easily secured food was a welcome addition to their diet and a resource for barter in a nearby town.

Shad and Other Fish

In the earlier days, great masses of shad swam up the Susquehanna, and other north-east coast rivers also. They sought the small headwaters to spawn. From the very first the pioneers learned from the Indians to net shad. Early in the spring it has been told that watchers reported the coming of the shad in great masses like a sparkling wave crest advancing up the river. Soon nets were placed. Special fisheries were located near Catawissa, nine or more places above the mouth of Fishing Creek up to Mifflin rapids. At least two were in the vicinity of Berwick. After the Berwick bridge had been built, in 1814, the fish seemed to shun the shadow of the bridge and jammed into what seemed a solid mass of fish that could be shoveled out. Nets were placed. Numerous reports like the following are recorded: Hauls at the Boone fishery above Bloomsburg were so immense that great quantities could not be disposed of and the surplus was scattered on the fields for fertilizer. At a Luzerne county fishery, farther up the river, and therefore not so good as those in Columbia, 10,000 shad were taken in a single haul. People came to the river from all points to buy fish, bringing in exchange produce of every description--corn, meat, peach cider, whiskey, mead, and other produce. From the tenth of April to the tenth of June almost every man, woman, and child within twenty miles of the Susquehanna feasted and fattened on fresh shad, and every family salted down from one to three barrels for use during the remainder of the year. In 1800 a price of $18.00 per hundred weight was quoted. Of course prices fluctuated, but gradually became higher as the fish became scarcer. At Catawissa in the early 1800's shad were bartered for salt at the rate of six cents each. Seining was forbidden on Thursdays, in order to allow some fish to get through to spawn. There were other types of fish that were also of great value, sturgeon, and others, but not to compare with great quantities of shad. Dams in the river, and later various forms of river pollution have destroyed this valuable food fish for our river. If modern principles of conservation of resources had been applied, pigeons might still be important. The earlier shad would have remained as a resource as valuable, probably, as the salmon of the west coast rivers, adding every year to the wealth of Pennsylvania.

Although there might be plentiful food at times, in general, conditions were hard. This was true for the labor on the part of all but the very youngest. It was gruelling, at times, literally killing.

Ingenuity Fostered

The pioneers had very little--very little in the way of furnishings, tools and implements, and help. It was necessary to make the best with what they had. Mussel shells might serve as spoons. Hollowed-out gourd shells served as cups and possibly other uses. Wooden implements, whittled and fashioned around the winter fireplace, served for various utensils, especially rakes, and hay forks. Dishes were wooden. A plain board, possibly hollowed out slightly, served perhaps as a common dish. It was called a "trencher". A hearty feeder at the table is still called a good trencherman. Of course, living in a cabin made of logs and getting what food they could from forest and stream, was also getting along with what they had.

This lack of tools and implements and the scarcity of labor led the pioneer to contrive and invent. The pioneer passed down a tendency of the American to be inventive and ingenious.

Basic Needs

Certain things the pioneer had to have, but could not provide for himself: metal implements and tools, not forgetting his gun; salt[2], not only for its savor but as a preservative; gun powder and lead for bullets; suggest such needs. These and others could not be provided until two advances had been made: (1) more products which the pioneer farmer could sell or trade and (2) means by which the goods could be transported back and forth from or to distant markets. These improvements also came little by little. We will find out first about the increases in products for trade or sale. We can realize better how great this need must have been if we recall that in many cases the pioneer had used most of any money he had in the purchase of his land and in getting himself and family with their few belongings transported to the frontier.

Securing Commodities for Trade: Pot Ash

The very first work provided an article for sale or exchange. The great amounts logs burned in clearing the land resulted in large amounts of wood ashes. A container such as a barrel or a hollowed tree trunk in about the size of a barrel was secured. An opening must be provided at the bottom, if not already there, which was covered over with a plentiful matting of straw. The whole outfit was placed over a sloping trough. The container was filled with wood ashes. Water was poured over it repeatedly. The result was that an alkaline solution was leached out. This solution dripping into the trough was led to another container. This solution produced lye, useful in making soap. If the solution was evaporated, a greyish powder resulted, called pot ash. If dissolved and filtered, and then evaporated again, a better grade, called pearl ash resulted. Both of these products were in demand in the cities and in foreign trade, as well as in the home communities. From every ten acres of forest land cleared, a ton of pot ash might be secured, worth about two hundred dollars. This alone was enough to pay for clearing the land. Pot ash was an important frontier product for many years.

[2]The Lick Runs of Pine and Locust Townships suggest that there were some traces of salt at certain locations.

Grain and Whiskey

As more and more land was cleared and crops produced, there was a surplus of grain over and above what the family needed. The grain crops were usually wheat, corn, and rye. Large crops were secured from the virgin land. Rye and corn were fed to the live stock and when ground up, were used for food for the family in the form of coarse bread, cakes, or porridge. The wheat was saved to be sold.

Grain was bulky for transport for any great distance. It might sell for fifty cents a bushel and only a bushel or two could be transported by a pack horse. Wiskey sold for $1.90 to $2.50 per gallon and a bushel of grain would make three gallons. Peach brandy, apple "jack", and mead might also be made for sale.

Salt Meat

As the amounts of livestock increased, especially hogs, there would be meat that could be smoked or salted down. This surplus made a trade item. Hides from slaughtered live stock and larger game, deer and bear, and the pelts from fur bearing animals also provided trade articles.

Grist Mills and Flour

Improved means for production meant that there would be more goods for trade. Not for long did the pioneer put up with gritty flour ground or pounded from crude mortars and pestles in Indian fashion, nor with the tedious labor required in such production. Trips to Sunbury or Wilkes-Barre were long and time consuming by canoe or pack horse and the amounts that could be transported too small. Experienced and skillful millwrights soon arrived and "harnessed" the water power of our numerous streams to the heavy grinding stones, "buhr" stones, hewn from native rock found in our region. The machinery needed to be especially designed in each case to the amount of the stream's flow and the fall or "head" available at each mill site.

As early as 1774 a crude mill seems to have been constructed at Catawissa. It was often out of repair.[3] By 1800, one or more mills were constructed on each of our creeks and their more important tributaries. The lower reaches of our largest creek, Fishing Creek, were not "harnessed" until later. Being the largest, the difficulties of constructing a dam and the other mill works were greater.

In 1827 Samuel Boone,[4] built the Aqueduct Mill and the locally famous Boone's dam to provide the necessary water power. At one time or another there were an estimated forty-three mills in operation in the county.

Streams or main Tributaries	Mills known to have been constructed	Largest number operating at one time	Operating in 1958
Roaring Creek	11	8	3
Briar Creek	12	4	2
Catawissa	8	5	2
Ten Mile Run	4	3	0
Fishing Creek & Branches	35	27	12
	58	43	17

[3]Levi Aikman about 1780 had to send his son past Catawissa to Sunbury to have a bag of grain ground, Ch. III, p. 7.

[4]Samuel Boone was a Quaker, and also a nephew of Daniel Boone, the famous frontier pioneer and scout of Kentucky.

Most of the mills now operating have been changed to use some other kind of power, steam or electricity. Some still use water power in part, although the stream flow is not as dependable now. In the summer, especially the reduced flow caused the closing of many mills.

But going back to the early days to learn how the grist mills helped to "lift" the early settlers out of pioneer life: More and larger farms meant more farm products to sell. It was not many years until large amounts of flour were being sent to the southern and eastern markets.

Logs into Lumber

Water power was soon utilized to save another type of labor. The early carpenter squared logs with broad ax and adze, both heavy tools. The adze, with its hoe-like form and operated with strokes toward the worker was extremely dangerous and resulted too frequently in painful and maiming accidents. Boards were sawed out by two men using a two-man saw. One man worked above the log; the other in a pit underneath the log. It was hard work, and especially dirty for the man that had to work with the sawdust falling on him. Many grist mills were also saw mills, some were probably established in that form. James Masters may have built the first sawmill in the county on Spruce run in modern Madison Township. The date given is 1788. The following early mills were both grist mills and sawmills: John Cleaver near the mouth of Roaring Creek, 1787; Thomas Linville in modern Slabtown,[5] 1789; William Rittenhouse built a mill a mile or so up the Briar Creek, 1800. These early saw mills consisted merely of an up-and-down saw operated by a simple mechanism attached to the water wheel. There was a device to advance the log after each stroke. Several saws might be arranged in a "gang" so that two, three, or more planks could be sawed at one time.[6] With saw lumber becoming plentiful, there was now lumber that could be sold.

Lumber Floated Itself to Market, and Cargoes too

The lumber of the forest surrounding the pioneer was of great value, if it could only be gotten to the markets where it could be sold. Soon the North Branch settler adopted the plan that had been used before on the Delaware and other eastern rivers, and was to be used for many years to come on the rivers to the west. This plan was to float the lumber down the rivers and have the floating lumber carry frontier products as cargo.

Canoes

In 1771 the Provincial Assembly of Pennsylvania passed a law requiring that the Susquehanna should be considered a navigable stream. This meant that no dams or obstructions could be placed in it. The first navigation was by canoes. In 1772 Ellis Hughes at Catawissa contracted to make a dugout canoe forty feet long, three and one-half feet wide and eighteen inches deep. For this he was to receive five pounds and ten shillings, a job that was to take about forty days of work. Such a canoe could carry seventy-five, a hundred, even a hundred and fifty bushels of grain. Birch bark canoes were lighter and not much used in the southern and central parts of the state. Soon rafts and larger boats replaced the canoes, rafting being the earlier.

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[5]The slabs resulting from the operations of this mill have given one of the names used by the pretty village that developed here.

[6]Circular saws were not invented until 1805, were not in general use until much later.

Rafts

We do not know when the first rafts were floated down the North Branch, but in 1796 thirty rafts passed Wilkes-Barre. The first rafts were probably entirely of logs fastened together. The timbers were pine logs, sixty or eighty feet long, in great demand for spars and masts for sailing ships. Timbers squared by hand or by early mills were fastened together in a squared raft. On such rafts a shanty might be constructed as a shelter for the raftsmen and a considerable cargo of frontier produce carried. Often they might be hitched end to end and two side by side. Plank rafts, twelve or sixteen feet square with each course or layer of planks laid side by side and the whole raft consisted of eight or ten of such courses criss-crossed on top of each other. These also might be combined to make a longer raft in "single" file, or two-by-two. Large two-man oars were placed, one each, at front and back, for steering.

Arks

The next improvement was to construct flat boats of heavy planks. Sometimes called arks, they might be fifty or more feet long, about fifteen feet wide and would probably draw from eighteen inches to two feet when loaded. It was guided as it floated down current by two great oars, one each at front and back, each oar worked by two men. Arks seventy feet long seem to have been built in the 1820's or earlier, "at the deep hole" in Fishing Creek at the western end of Bloomsburg, from which the completed boats could be floated to the river. Costing $60.00 or more when completed, such a boat contained 6,000 board feet or more of two-inch planks. An ark might carry 1600 to 2000 bushels of wheat, $1600; 400 to 450 barrels of flour, $2000; or 100 to 120 barrels of whiskey, $3000.

Durham Boats

It was not long until the traders of the Susquehanna adopted the Durham boat, designed first for the Delaware river traffic and first constructed at Durham on that river. Sixty feet long, eight feet wide, and two feet deep, when loaded with fifteen tons of cargo, it drew only twenty inches of water. A boat for the Susquehanna was necessarily of shallow draft. Guided by oars, it floated down river. Occasionally sails were fitted, especially for up-current, for this boat was designed to come back upstream. Its main form of propulsion was polers, who set iron pointed poles in the river bottom and pushed as they walked from bow to stern. Walking ledges were built along the gunwales. Besides using sails or poles, they might be "bushwhacked", which meant that the men on the boat grabbed branches along the bank and pulled on them as they walked toward the stern. Or long towing ropes were used by men on shore hauling the boat. Again, a long rope was fastened to a tree several hundred feet up stream. Then those on board would haul in the rope either by hand or by windlass. Are we surprised to learn that rivermen needed to be strong and hardy!

Down river thirty or forty miles might be made with the current. Up river, six or eight miles might be made in a favorable day. It might be only two. However, like rafts and flat boats, Durham boats might be broken up at their down river destination for the lumber that they contained.

The River Traffic

Rapidly melting snows hastened by rain, meant rising waters in the spring. Now the rafts, or boats that had been labored over by farmers and boat builders up the little tributaries, were readied on high banks and in back eddies. Barrels of flour, grain, whiskey, pot ash, salt meat, lumber, especially in the forms of barrel staves and headings, and also shingles were loaded. Hay was sometimes shipped. The experienced "skippers" waited until the freshet has passed its crest. This meant that water was flowing back into the channel from the flooded lowlands and tended to keep the floating cargo carrier in the channel. For a week or ten days, at freshet time only, therefore, for fifty or sixty years, the watchers on the banks would see continuously large numbers of these craft floating down the river, coming in from the many creeks. Rafts predominated at first. Soon large numbers of flat boats were to be seen. Towards the middle of the century, only a broader type of Durham boat was used for cargo, although rafting on the Susquehanna as a means of transporting logs and large timbers continued for a number of years after 1850. There might be a summer freshet. A fall freshet was usually counted on. Accidents from the hazardous rapids on the river resulted in a loss of boat or raft and its cargo in about one out of every twenty ventures. Lives were lost, too. Arks seem to have been more of a hazard than other types for one out of three of these craft might be lost.

A record from 1826 indicates the extent and value of this trade:

1037 arks, value,	$1,037,000
164 keel boats, (somewhat lighter than Durham boats, provided with a keel. Also speedier than Durham boats)	164,000
1090 rafts of lumber	327,000
	$1,528,000

Columbia County Participates

There are records to show that our region joined heavily in this traffic. William McKelvey and John Barton were the largest dealers in grain at Bloomsburg and usually shipped the ark and its cargo. Both were sold at the down river destination. Wharves of dealers and wholesalers were located at Berwick. From a Danville newspaper of 1824, when Danville was in Columbia County, we learn that 100,000 bushels of wheat, 3,000 bushels of clover seed, 3,000 barrels of whiskey, 250 tons of pork, and a small amount of lumber were sent down the river by means of arks and rafts.

Land Traffic: First Roads

The rough Indian trails, improved here and there by the occasional efforts of immigrating settlers, were soon to be made over by organized work. Berwick and Catawissa took the lead. In 1787 Evan Owen secured the contract for the construction of a road from the Lehigh region to Nescopeck. This was completed in two years. Sixteen years later heavy expenditure was incurred in grading and leveling it. The Tioga Turnpike was undertaken in 1806 and was completed north across Lee and Huntington mountains through Jonestown to Towanda by 1818. The first bridge across the river in our vicinity, and one of the first on any part of the Susquehanna, was completed at Berwick in 1814.

During the same years roads were being constructed south from Catawissa: The Old Reading Road was built along the southern side of Catawissa Mountain in 1789. In 1804 and 1805 other roads connected Catawissa with Slabtown and from there across the southern mountain ridges. Another branch led to Bear Gap and thence southeast. Other improved roads, and especially those north of the river were slower in coming, for the most part. However, roads developed here too. In 1778 there was a road of some sort from Northumberland to Wilkes-Barre. Traffic was sufficient on this road to warrant the establishment of a hotel midway between Berwick and Bloomsburg. By 1801 there was a road from Buckhorn through Frosty Valley. At an early date there were roads from Berwick to Milton and from Bloomsburg to Muncy, possibly as early as 1820. The iron ore of Hemlock, discovered in 1822, was hauled to the Roaring Creek furnace for over twenty years. There must have been a road for such use. A road across the Mount Pleasant hills from Bloomsburg to the Greenwood valley had been surveyed as early as 1798. This was the only road to those portions of the county until 1856. That year the Legislature made appropriations for a road from Bloomsburg north through the valley of Little Fishing Creek. Previously the Klines at Orangeville had opened a road from Light Street. This was gradually extended by the settlers up the valley of the bigger creek, although exact dates are not known. Bloomsburg and Berwick both became junction points for stage lines. Jerseytown and Buckhorn were points of importance on the Muncy line, while Jonestown was important on the Towanda line. Such roads were passable in the summer; in the winter and spring they became almost impassible. "The wheels of the vehicle sank in the mire to the hubs. When further progress became impossible, the impatient passengers alighted unceremoniously....and assisted the team in surmounting the obstacle....Sometimes a fence rail was hastily improvised....to pry the wheels from the mud." With what effect on the clothing of the passengers, we can only guess. We can also imagine the jolting of coaches lacking any but the most primitive of springs.

With these changes, the settlers could get their products to market in ever increasing amounts. They had, therefore, the means to secure many more needed supplies by buying or exchange. The things they could buy in turn, improved household implements and farm tools, made them more productive.

Continued Flow of Settlers to Columbia County

These improved roads meant also that it was easier for new settlers to come. The region continued to build up with new settlers in the years immediately following the Revolution, 1783 to 1800, and for the thirty or forty years following in the nineteenth century.

Routes from the south converged at Bear Gap. From this point many additional settlers of German origin settled in the Roaring Creek Valley. These came largely from the vicinity of Reading and Lancaster. Other Germans from the lower valley of the Lehigh River came to the Nescopeck-Berwick terminus and spread from there into the Beaver valley. These two valleys were settled predominately by Germans. German descendants are widely distributed in the county, more so south of the river than north.

However,Dutch valley is appropriately named, undoubtedly being a corruption of "Deutsch" (Doich), meaning German, and applied because so many German (Deutsch) were settled there. Frosty Valley also received many of this industrious people. Many settlers from New Jersey came to Madison township, a fact perpetuated by the name of its principal community, Jerseytown. The Scotch Irish with their first representatives in the McClures of Bloomsburg also contributed importantly, especially in the northern section as represented by the McHenry family. English settlers also contributed, although in smaller numbers. Revolutionary soldiers came, some veterans of the patriot forces, some former members of the English forces. Some former prisoners of war captured by the patriots, both Hessian and English, settled here. For instance, Benjamin Fowler, a British soldier, captured when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, was a settler who gave his name to Fowlersville. Settlers from New York, Ohio, and Virginia also built up our county. On account of the conflict with Connecticut a considerable number of settlers were brought to the Berwick and the eastern border regions of the County in Briar Creek, Fishing Creek, Benton and Sugarloaf townships. The up-the-river route and the Chillisquaque-Spruce Run route also continued to give access to the settled regions and as means of travel for incoming settlers.

More settlers meant that the region would provide buyers for merchants and patrons who would employ all manner of craftsmen. In fact, in our region, as elsewhere certain persons bought land because they believed that they could sell it to such merchants and tradesmen. Should we call them speculators or community builders?

The Town Planners - Evan Owen

Evan Owen is an especially good example of such far-sighted men who risked considerable money and were especially energetic and industrious. After being discouraged with the swampy appearance of the land in the vicinity of the mouth of Fishing Creek, Owen chose high land near the "falls", really rapids, above the mouth of the Nescopeck Creek, at the terminus of a route from the south. In 1786 by his own efforts he laid out the main streets. He marked out the lots within the blocks thus formed. He presented building lots to the first churches. Being a trained surveyor, he did not need to hire someone else to do this work. In the following years he went to the region of the lower Lehigh and Delaware rivers and tried to sell his lots. We can be fairly sure what his sales talks were like, although we actually have no record of them. They must have gone something like this: "The North Branch country is rapidly being taken up. All kinds of artisans are needed. Any skilled industrious workman will soon have all the work he can do. Owensburg is splendidly located on high ground just at the end of the well traveled road from the Lehigh river across Broad Mountain to the valley of the Nescopeck. We have a ferry now and will have a bridge before long. Traffic up and down the river will also stop to transfer for trade at our splendid place." Can we not almost hear him saying, "There is not a better place on the whole North Branch, than right there at Nescopeck Falls." Whatever he may have said as a salesman, he was successful in inducing numbers of people to settle and lay the foundations for modern Berwick.

William Hughes

William Hughes at Catawissa laid out that town in 1787. We can be fairly sure that he spoke about the splendid water power available from the Catawissa Creek and how his town of Hughesburg had splendid advantages of a ferry in the river and access to the valleys of Roaring Creek and Catawissa Creek.

Although Bloomsburg region was among the first, if not the very first, to be settled, it built up slowly. The swampy flats along the river may have been the cause. Ludwig Oyer, it is thought, was disturbed to see that his property was not building up as fast as Berwick and Catawissa. He thought he could sell his land faster if he laid it out. He laid out Bloomsburg in 1802.

Columbia County Towns laid out:

Date	Town Planner	Name first given	Present Name
1786	Evan Owen	Owensburg	Berwick
1787	William Hughes	Hughesburg	Catawissa
1794	Christian Kunchel & William Rittenhouse	Mifflinsburg	Mifflinville
1800	George Espy	Liberty,	Espytown	Espy
1802	Ludwig Oyer	Bloomsburg[7]	Bloomsburg
1817	Philip Seidle	Williamsburg	Light Street
1822	Clement Ricketts	Orangeville	Orangeville
1835	Elijah Price	Leestown,	New Media	Numidia
1855	Survey of Streets by Alexander Rea	Centerville	Centralia

Other towns seem to have grown without any town plan, at least, at first. The owners of land merely selling off building lots from time to time.

Town Plans

Since towns were invariably planned at places of special advantage - junction points on travel routes, stoppages in river traffic, fords or ferrying places - these features almost always explain the basic street pattern that was to be followed to the present. Berwick's north and south route gives Market Street while the east and west route determined Front Street. Catawissa's main street leads back from the river until it comes to the three way "fork" where streets mark routes to Roaring Creek, Mainville, and Bloomsburg. Bloomsburg's main east and west street follows what must have once been the main river road, but well back from the river to avoid swampy land. It was the time of horses for travel. Thus many town plans provided for alleys so that easy access could be had for a horse stable placed on the rear, without an entrance necessary at the front of the lot. This is especially true of Catawissa and Bloomsburg. William Penn's plan of square blocks with streets at right angles is followed in most of our towns. His plan provided for alleys, and also a central square, as in Philadelphia.

Bloomsburg, is the only town in the county to have a central square similar to that of Philadelphia, but much smaller, of course. Berwick does not have the system of alleys. This is probably because Evan Owen provided

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[7] A map, apparently the original map, uses the name Bloomsburg. Traditions give the name Eyerstaedtel and indicate this name following 1802 was used. All deeds after 1802 use the name Bloomsburg.

a system of in-lots for residence, of 49.5' x 181', and out-lots of much larger size 247.5' x 412.5' where extensive gardening might be done, or small scale farming. It is probable that his plan was that horses would be kept there. It is interesting to note that both Bloomsburg and Catawissa have streets with the name "Ferry".

Craftsmen and Artisans

By bringing in various trades, the pioneers out on the clearings were benefited. Needed things could be made and bought in the growing neighborhood villages. The first settlers included many such skilled workers and tradesmen. Berwick is a good example because of a complete record there. At an early date, although we do not know exactly when, the following trades are listed: a tailor, a chairmaker, a tin smith, a tanner, carpenters[8], a cooper, a blacksmith, a cloth dyer, a butcher (probably a dealer in fresh meat), a weaver, a cabinet maker, a saddler, a wheel-wright, a miller, a gun smith, and a silver smith.

Catawissa, Bloomsburg, and to some degree the crossroads villages at other places must have resembled Berwick in these early days: little country settlements with shops near the humble houses, log cabins for the most part at first. The shops were mostly one-man affairs. The owner cultivated his land when he did not have jobs to keep him busy at his trade. Some of these trades have disappeared. Others have been transferred to large factories, here or elsewhere. Inns and hotels were needed established very early at the smaller villages as well as the larger towns. A record of Catawissa, also fairly typical, indicates that it had forty-five houses mostly log, but one of stone. Berwick was probably no larger, but other towns were not to achieve this size for years. Let us look more closely at certain examples of the work in these villages.

The Cooper and Cooperage

Containers were needed by the pioneer - spoons, cups, dishes, pots, kettles, caldrons, kegs, barrels, measures. A few would have been brought. As they were lost, broken, worn out, how were others provided? How were they to get additional ones needed? Wood was used for buckets, kegs, and barrels. Here is where the work of the cooper was very important on the frontier. Wooden pieces, staves, were accurately beveled and steam-bent to proper size and shape, grooved on the inside to take ends, a bottom if a bucket, both ends, headings, if to be a keg or barrel. The cooper needed to be a skillful worker in wood. His products were in the greatest demand. He could also be sure of a ready market if he shipped his headings and staves in "knocked down" form for use in the distant cities. Large numbers of barrels were needed for flour, whiskey, and grain, which soon were shipped in great quantities to the cities.

Leather A century and more ago, rubber and other plastics were unavailable. Leather, still a preferred item for certain articles such as shoes and gloves, was at that time put to many other uses also: coats, leggings, boots, belts, belting for machinery. Harness for horses and oxen required heavy leather of the finest sort.

[8]The first settlers, the Browns, were carpenters.

The Tanner and Leather

After the first season, the pioneer farmers begin to accumulate hides from game animals and from livestock butchered for meat. A solution of lye was used to loosen the hair after any of the flesh adhering had been scraped off. For the actual tanning, tannic acid was needed. This was to be secured from the ground-up bark of oak and hemlock trees, especially hemlock. A series of soakings in stronger and stronger solutions of tannic acid then followed. Fine leather resulted when the process was carried out by experienced and skilled craftsmen. All the ingredients were found on the frontier.

Harness makers and shoemakers were able early to make a living. At first they might go from farm to farm. At each stop they would use the leather of the owner. The owner might have tanned it himself, or he might have had it tanned at the early tannery in the neighborhood, paying for it by leaving a portion of his raw hides or pelts. Now the traveling craftsmen, if harness maker, repaired the harness or made a new set or sets as might be needed. If a shoemaker, he made and fitted shoes to the family feet as needed and repaired others. His pay in part would be "putting him up" for the time he was there. He might also take leather in part pay. The rest would have to come from money. This was hard to come by, but supplies were gradually increasing as the pioneers were able to sell more and more of their products.

Is it any wonder that the whole family might go barefoot much of the time in mild weather? We also learn that, by common frontier practice, maidens on their way to church, walked barefoot until they came in sight of the church, when they put their shoes on. After church, the practice was reversed. We don't learn about the swains, maybe they did the same!

Tanneries also produced leather that could be sold if shipped to the cities. Harness makers might also produce goods for sale at a distance. Shoes were sold directly from maker to user.

Certain examples reflect vividly frontier conditions.

Actual Experiences of Early Tradesmen

John Snyder completed an apprenticeship as a saddler in Allentown. After following his trade briefly in several cities, he settled in Berwick in 1808, and later became prominent in the life of Berwick. He served in the War of 1812, reaching the rank of major.

Daniel Snyder, no relative of John just noted, became dissatisfied with farm life in Northampton County after he and his older brother had taken up the family farm on the early death of their father. He took up work in a tannery in order to learn the trade. In 1810, at the age of twenty-seven, he came to Bloomsburg and bought twenty-six acres east of Catherine and North Streets, then just beyond the town limits. He paid 550 English pounds, equivalent to $2,673. A day laborer might be paid 30 to 50 cents for a day's work. A skilled worker might get 75 cents a day. These figures suggest the burden of such an investment for a young man trying to get a start in his trade. He returned to his former home for his eighteen year old bride, when rumors had it that the brook running through his newly bought property occasionally would run dry. This meant disaster for his tanning project. Squire Hutchison passing through with a load of wheat for Easton, assured Snyder that the stream was a never-failing

one. With this assurance, Snyder arranged with the Squire to haul him, his young bride, and their possessions back to Bloomsburg. According to later incidents, a young heifer must have been led also, the bride's dowery. Arriving at Nescopeck after dark, it was deemed best to make the crossing that night. When the young woman saw the swollen condition of the river the next morning, she vowed that she would never have risked the cow if she had known how dangerous it was. The heifer was forced to swin behind the ferry.

The Snyders took up residence in a log cabin at the corner of what was later East and Second Streets. But their troubles were not over. After the tannery had been erected, Snyder had only a hundred dollars left. The leather he had bought he could only sell on trust, but to secure hides for his business he was required to pay money. His industry and pluck inspired confidence and money was lent him with which he established himself as a fine business man and community leader. We shall hear more about him. His wife was a loyal and industrious helper. She made several rolls of butter each week from the milk supplied by the heifer. The butter was sold or bartered. One of the items bartered was the shovel with which Snyder dug his tan vats.

Sometime in 1816 a stranger, by the name of James Wells, "put up" for the night at a Bloomsburg hotel. He said that he was a Yankee wagon maker. On suggestion, he stayed to make a wagon for the landlord. But Wells had difficulty in borrowing tools because there was still animosity for New Englanders on account of the Connecticut troubles of fifteen or twenty years previous. William Sloan lent him tools and work bench. Seasoned wood was secured from old fences on Sloan's farm. When completed, it was the town's first one-horse vehicle, and the first to have been constructed here. It is stated further that the wagon industry of Sloan and Hendershott resulted.

Towns also early had merchants. But even before merchants, there were the peddlers. They made their appearance at an early day and were part of the farm scene for many years, even into the twentieth century. In fact, certain kinds of "merchandising" in door to door canvassing are still to be found. At first the peddler may have come by canoe, later by pack horse. At one time he may have carried his meagre stock of goods on his back. When roads developed he would have a peddler's wagon with an ever-widening stock in trade. Included were articles of necessity: woven cloth, tin or iron cooking utensils, needles, tools. Trinkets would also tempt the lonely pioneer wife. Always he carried with him a stock distributed free, the latest news and savory gossip to lighten the loneliness of the "back woods." He had to be willing to take frontier goods in trade, especially pelts, rags saved up for the paper maker, and other articles, for money was scarce. Paul Thomson, an early Berwick maker of pottery, sold his products of crocks, jugs, and other course utensils, from his flat boat along the river.

The stores[9] came very early. There was possibly one at Catawissa before the Revolution. Merchants, for example, are mentioned in Berwick shortly after 1786 and at Bloomsburg, before 1810. In 1791 John Funston in modern

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[9] Chapter II, page 14, "children had been sent to Catawissa for supplies."

Madison Township, sent his son to Reading with grain for sale. The son bought six wool hats and sold them so quickly on his return that the older Funston began to supply the neighbors with goods. This was the start of the Funston store. Around it grew up the town of Jerseytown on the Bloomsburg-Muncy road.

While the settlers were trying to produce articles for sale or trade and while they were working to improve the means of transportation, they also learned that they could exchange each other's labor, that is they could join in sharing work.

Sharing in Work

In clearing land, numerous logs resulted too large to be piled by one man, or by man and wife. As soon as there were neighbors within convenient distance, they would be told that on such and such a day there would be a log rolling. On the appointed day all families within reach of the call gathered together at the designated farm. The men chose two captains, and these men alternately chose their sides. When the teams were completed, both went to work with a will to see which team could pile up the most. There was much coarse fun spiced with the danger of handling big logs with heavy log hooks.

Meanwhile the women were having equally jolly times, preparing the food partly brought and partly supplied. Older children helped or took care of the younger ones. After a day of jolly companionship and hard work, the owner saw his fields well cleared with piles of logs that he could burn at his convenience. The Germans called such jolly work parties froehlich, meaning happiness or jollity. We have the similar word, "frolic". English speaking people noted how busy like bees everybody was. Their name often given to such neighborly work parties was "bee".

Cabins, Houses, and Barns

The next frolic or bee would probably be the raising of a house or barn. Building the second shelter, better than the first required help. The logs used were longer and heavier. On the house raising day teams would be chosen, some were to notch the logs so that a four square house could be built. Willing hands and strong made the walls rise. At the gable ends, stout wooden sticks or pins kept these logs in place. A ridge-pole supported the roof timbers on which bark was laid and weighted with stones or other timbers. Or home split shingles might be used later. Windows and doorway were cut and a door was hung with wooden hinges. No known cabins of round logs as they came from the trees are known to the writer to be in existence in our County. Usually the second shelter was a log house, rather than a cabin of crude round logs. For the house, the logs were squared with broad ax and adze, both operations requiring strong, skilled men. Such squared logs, notched one-quarter of the thickness at each end would fit together to make a solid building with a minimum of chinking necessary. There are at least three splendid examples of this better type of construction existing in our county: the Quaker Meeting Houses in Catawissa and on the hill road from Slabtown to Newlin in Locust Township. The barn on the Howard Esler property in Montour Township, a short distance north of the old Route 11, is an especially fine example of such construction.

The first log cabin probably became a live stock shelter when the better house had been built. Still another type of building required the help of a bee or a frolic. For this type, the owner, or his carpenter, had put together with careful joints well braced the heavy squared beams for each side and end of the building, laying them on the ground, next to their place-to-be in the completed building. Such a set of timbers could only be raised into place by the combined help of the neighborhood in a frolic or a bee. If the carpentry was good, these sides would fit exactly into the joints prepared previously, holes would be bored, and stout wooden pins inserted which would hold the whole heavy framework together. There are still many old houses and barns around the county that must have been constructed in this way.[10]

There were also corn-husking bees, bees or frolics for butchering, and possibly other types of work. The women often got together to share the essentially women's work: quilting, spinning and weaving, and possibly others.

By 1830 or 1840 the older sections of the county had been fairly well settled. Some settlers could look back to fifty or sixty years of development, especially in the bigger river towns, at Millville, Light Street, and the more open valleys. Neighbors were fairly close by in the country as well as in the villages. Loneliness was largely overcome. The dangers of Indians were no more. Wild animals were no serious menace, at least in the settled sections. The settler had an improved house and livestock, especially horses and oxen. Various crafts and trades were established in the nearby towns. Transportation was still hard and dangerous and undependable, but still it was greatly improved over the first days. Life was still hard for farmer, housewife and craftsman, because a great deal of work still had to be done by manual labor. But conditions were much improved.

In the more distant and out-of-the-way places, the life of the pioneer still confronted the new settler, but even for them towns and villages, and neighbors were not at such great distances. They did not have the loneliness, danger, and hardship of the first pioneer.

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[10]This skill will be referred to when we tell about early bridges.

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TO FIND OUT HOW EFFECTIVELY YOU HAVE READ

1. What three words describe pioneer life at first?
2. How did the pioneers secure food? Tell some of the ways their food differed from ours. Especially recall differences in food secured from the wilds.
3. Tell about the different kinds of shelters and how they were made.
4. What were the articles or commodities which the pioneer had to secure from others?
5. If a day laborer was paid 35¢ a day, what could be said about the prices paid for various commodities mentioned in this chapter. Or, putting it another way, how many hours or days of work were necessary to buy one or another of such items?
6. What were articles which the pioneer could secure or make; articles which they could trade or barter?

7. What were the first kinds of mills that were constructed? Can you explain why? Where were they located? Why important? At what kind of site?
8. What did these mills produce or make? How were products disposed of?
9. Consult the encyclopedia for pictures of river craft, rafts, arks, Durham boats.
10. What important roads and stage routes were established in these early years? Trace them on an outline map or road map.
11. Tell about the settlers who arrived in these years and where they settled.
12. Tell important facts about the Town planners, who they were and what were the towns they planned.
13. Using time line on page 1 as model, make a larger one showing items and details that had to be omitted on this small one, both our state and national history above the line and our local history below. This might be a committee project.
14. How did the village dwellers help the pioneer farmers? In turn, how did these farmers help the village dwellers?
15. Why were the cooper's and the tanner's trades especially important?
16. How do the experiences of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Snyder, of James Wells, of John Funston reveal pioneer conditions and experiences in our region?
17. Describe frolic or a bee (work bee) and why were such gatherings important?
18. What is the difference between a log cabin and a log house?

INTERESTING THINGS TO DO

1. The basic reference books, which your teacher knows about, probably contain additional interesting details about the particular borough, town, or township, in which you live. Read about your own district. You may find interesting points to report to the class on the topics of this chapter, and on the topics of later chapters.
2. An excursion to a grist mill, or saw mill. A visit to one with early machinery would be especially interesting.
3. Interview a miller and bring to class an account of early milling and modern milling.
4. Prepare an exhibit of early articles and utensils: of the housekeeper, farmer, perhaps craftsmen's tools. Even one or two lent to your class would prove interesting.
5. Try to bring pictures for class exhibit of life, activities, utensils of the times.
6. Write letter to County Historical Society telling about any interesting items or pictures.
7. Some such items may be seen at the Columbia County Historical Society, arrange a trip to the Society's museum.
8. We are not sure our list of towns as they were laid out is correct. letters telling us of errors or omissions are requested.
9. Letters calling our attention to any items for correction are requested.

Check your vocabulary:
ingenuity, forage, spawn, barter, mead, pollution, conservation, alkaline, solution, porridge, buhr stone, a stream's head, to bushwhack, ingredients

Chapter V

CANALS, RAILROADS, AND INDUSTRIES

Christian Brobst, a Community Leader

Christian Brobst of Catawissa was an important leader in bringing improved transportation to the North Branch of the Susquehanna. Born in Berks county, he settled at Catawissa in 1795, at the age of twenty-eight. He had accepted continental money as his share of inheritance from his father. Like all continental paper money, this became worthless.

Brobst early showed his enterprise and energy. The owner of the first grist mill seems to have been unobliging, apparently thinking that he had a monopoly. As Brobst expressed it, he became "..too sassy." He borrowed a large sum of money and built a second mill in 1801. This mill was a substantial building and equipped to produce flour, feed, and plaster.

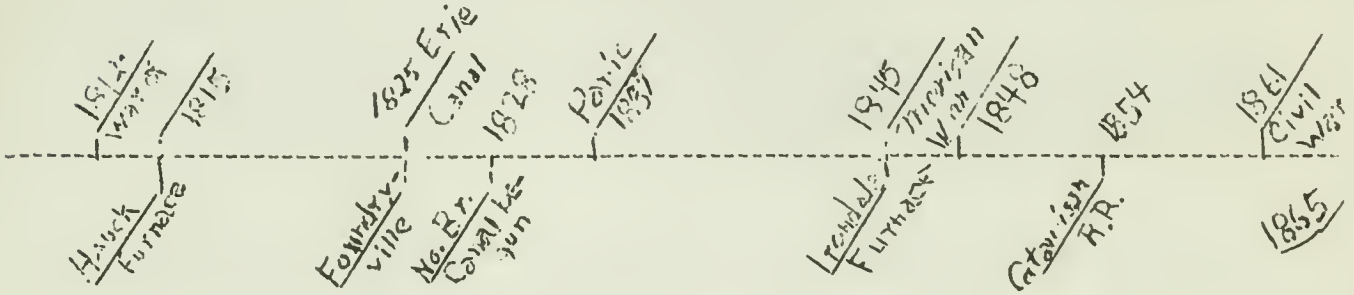
Transportation Needs

In the three or four years beginning about 1800 Catawissa sent more than 13,600 barrels of flour to Reading. More would have been sent if the roads had been better. There seems to have been some form of boat transportation on the Susquehanna at this time for communities in the region and on the West Branch, but none to the distant communities. Transportation overland by horses and wagons was slow and expensive. A ton, possibly a ton and third, might make up a wagon load. The river traffic was practically all down stream, and then only at freshet times, two or occasionally three times a year.

Why not use Steamboats on the Susquehanna?

Steamboats had been operating on the Hudson river since 1807 and on the Ohio since 1811. Several attempts were made to establish steamboat transportation on the Susquehanna, but all in vain. It was at Berwick that it was finally proved to be impracticable. A steamboat, "The Susquehanna" was built at Baltimore. After trips to Danville and Milton in 1826, Berwick was approached on a trip planned for the upper reaches of the North Branch. A number of prominent men, including Christian Brobst, were on board. A full head of steam had been built up by means of pine logs as the Berwick rapids were approached. The boat's progress was stopped by the current. It turned, striking a rock. Then the boiler exploded. It is thought that someone had held down the safety valve. Col. Joseph Paxton of Rupert, one of the passengers, has left this description: "I stood on the forward deck with a long pole in my hand, and was in the act of placing it in the water hoping to steady her, when the explosion took place. Two young men standing near were blown high in the air, and I was hurled several yards into the water. I thought a cannon had been fired, and shot my head off." Two persons were killed outright, and others burned by escaping steam. Brobst and Paxton were not seriously injured.

This disaster turned attention away from steam navigation in the river, except for local navigation on shorter stretches of quiet or slack water, as in the vicinity of Sunbury and Northumberland.



Construct a similar chart adding the many omitted items.

Will Canals Meet the Need for Better Transportation? Brobst's Plan.

The Erie canal had been but recently constructed in New York. It had proved to be a great success. As a result many canal schemes originated in Pennsylvania to overcome its many transportation difficulties. Christian Brobst came up with an original and daring scheme. This was to follow the valley of the Catawissa Creek to its headwaters, where by crossing a three mile divide the upper reaches of the Schuylkill river valley would be reached, giving access down that valley to the rich and populous south east. His full plan would have continued the route by river to Northumberland, up the West Branch and beyond that river by means of another canal to Erie. This plan, after having given much study, was given up.

The North Branch Canal

But canals were not given up. Pennsylvania, about 1828, started to build what eventually became a system of canals on all the major streams of the Commonwealth. The canal on the North Branch might have been delayed or omitted if it had not been for Brobst. The "down-state" men wished the main stem canal at the south to be constructed first. Brobst, as a member of the State legislature to which he had been elected, was influential in securing the early construction of the North Branch canal. In fact, Brobst, along with other up-state representatives, blocked action in the legislature until the branch lines also were assured.

A humerous bit of dialogue has been preserved: A down-state representative, learning that Brobst was a carpenter, asked if he had ever built a house by constructing the roof first. To which Brobst responded by asking his opponent if he had ever dug a well by digging the bottom first!

Construction of the North Branch canal was started at Berwick in 1828. It was opened along the river as far as Pittston in 1834. The whole North Branch system was not in full operation to New York until 1856. The cost was $1,598,379.35. Soon the canals were carrying a very large amount of traffic. Our North Branch canal was finally abandoned in 1901. This was at about the same time that the other parts of Pennsylvania's vast canal system were given up. The state never got back more than a mere fraction of the millions of dollars it put into its canal system.

Importance of the Canal

While the canals were at their height of patronage they carried an immense amount of traffic. For our region, they helped get our farm produce to market.

Almost immediately after the canals were begun conditions through our region became more prosperous. Work was provided for farmers and teamsters and hundreds of workmen were brought in to dig the channel and pile up the embankments, to construct the locks, and to build the bridges , to carry roads across the canal, and to build other special types of bridges, aqueducts, to carry the canal across streams.[1]

When the canal was finished, many of the workmen became workers on it, boatmen, lock-keepers, and repairmen. Besides making our farm produce more valuable by helping it to get to market more readily, the products of our early industries, tanneries, sawmills, and others, also could be marketed

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[1]One of the largest was the aqueduct which carried our canal across Fishing Creek, at Rupert.

more readily. New industries were started, especially, boat building. A number of canal boats were built at the "ark building site" at the westerly part of Bloomsburg in the early days of the canal. But Espy early became the location of a number of firms for the building of canal boats of excellent design and construction. These works continued as long as the canal system lasted.[2]

The Canal at its Height of Importance

About 1850, if we could have gone down Market Street in Bloomsburg, we would have come to the high bridge crossing the canal. If instead of crossing the bridge, we would have gone a little west we would have come to a widening of the canal with wharves and berthing docks for canal boats. This was Port Noble. Here is a boat covered with a deck, from the hold of which a mixed cargo is being taken: salt, dry goods and groceries for the various stores in town and the region. At another wharf a boat is taking on reddish rocks, iron ore, for shipment to Berwick for the Nescopeck Forge. Billets, or blocks, of pig iron from the Bloomsburg furnaces are loaded. At another location, several boats are unloading anthracite coal, some for the Bloomsburg furnaces, some for local dealers who will retail it to householders for heating and cooking. We also see quite frequently the passage of other boats in twos, one behind the other, pulled by teams of two or three mules, hitched one behind the other. If these large boats moved too fast, their wash damaged the banks of the canal, so any speed greater than four miles an hour was forbidden under penalty of a fine. Down the canal, that is with the current, many of the boats are carrying coal for the Danville iron furnaces and for markets as far away as Harrisburg or Columbia. Up current boats are apparently carrying mixed cargoes similar to those being delivered in Bloomsburg.

While we are watching, a packet boat from Wilkes-Barre comes in. This is pulled by six horses and goes much faster, about six miles an hour. It draws up at the dock. While some passengers leave, others embark. The horses are changed in order to maintain its tight schedule and reach Northumberland in about three and a half hours, so that passengers for Harrisburg and Philadelphia can make connections with the Williamsport-to-Philadelphia packet boat. We hear one passenger, who must make a lengthy stay in Philadelphia, complaining that he will need to return by stage coach because the canal will be closed for the winter before he can return.[3]

It is not difficult to realize the similar scenes of activitity taking place at the canal ports of Berwick and Danville and also at the hundreds of other places served the the great canal system, then at its height of importance.

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[2] See below for further reference to the Espy boat.

[3] Being much lighter and narrower than the big freighters, a packet boat could go faster without damage to the canal banks.

We strike up a conversation with an old man, obviously too feeble to work. He tells us that he came to Bloomsburg as part of the pick-and-shovel and wheelbarrow gang that constructed the canal in this section. When the canal was finished, he secured a job as boatman. Many are the tales that he can tell: Of the trip in which his outfit traveled with two boat loads of coal which were being towed across the Nanticoke dam, how the strong current carried them so close to the dam that the steamboat cut them loose and the boats were carried over the dam, but were saved by the skillful steering of the pilot. Another time he was on an outfit that was being towed across the Chesapeake bay, loaded with anthracite coal from Luzerne county. A storm came up. Other boats in the convoy collided with each other and some were sunk. His boat was driven aground at the shore. When the storm abated, the crew dug a channel, floated their boat, and were able eventually to enter it into Delaware river and by canal transport it across New Jersey for delivery on the Atlantic coast. Other adventures he also told: The time a gang of robbers jumped on the boat from an overhead bridge, but were beaten off by the pilot who had kept a gun handy. The pilot had heard how another boat had been held up and the crew robbed just recently at the same place. He told of the hardships of the mule boys on the cold days late in the fall when drizzle turned to sleet and one of the men had to relieve the little fellow until they could find a place to tie up for the night. Our "old-timer's" account is interrupted as an especially trim outfit comes into view. We can imagine him saying something like this: "See that outfit. That's an Espytown outfit, just about the best in the whole country. See the pointed ends, see the big chains holding the two boats together. When the steersman turns that big wheel, it turns the rear boat just as if it was a rudder. I tell you them's about the best boats anywhere, and they're made right here in Espytown."

Or again, "Oh! I remember about one outfit. It was late at night, coming into the down-river locks. The boatman missed the snubbing post with his hawser. The boat smashed into the lock walls and the gates. They were smashed and the lock tender was shook right out of bed. He thought there had been an earthquake. The canal was blocked until the gates and masonry walls could be repaired. That outfit had to pay damages and a heavy fine."

Resuming his stories, the "old-timer" goes on: "Those there packet boats is too stuck up. They are given the right of way over the freighters. Why, one time we were in a lock, and they hitched up their horses to our boats and pulled them right out and went through the lock first. The freighters bring more tolls to the canal than the packets. We would have knocked the packet crew into the canal, but all the men passengers, eight or ten, jumped out and told us we had better not or we would be the ones knocked into the canal. They looked tough, too, and we were only two and a boy. All we could do was swear, which you can believe we did."

Lots of times in the summer, boys would drop on the boat from an overhead bridge, and ride along to the next one where they would swing off. When food got monotonous, we would sometimes drop off a boat and sneak some roasting ears or apples. It was too bad if a duck or chicken wandered too close to the canal, it might find itself in the stewing pot.

It isn't as much fun now. Many of the outfits have a woman cook. It's a family affair. The boy drives the mules. When a boy is old enough, he becomes a boatman. I know of one outfit that started up in Lockhaven, went down to Duncannon, from there up the Juniata canal, across the incline railroad and finally into the Ohio. That boat ended up in New Orleans.

I've been told our canal has so much business that it can't carry it all. Just last year the tolls on our division from Wilkes-Barre to Northumberland took in over $100,000.00 and it has been increasing every year since the canal was built."

Such were the scenes and conversation that might have been experienced about 1850, every detail of which is recorded at some place or other. If we had really been living back in the 1850's, we would have had to break off our conversation and make our long way back up to town through weeds at the side of the road, dodging as best we could the clouds of dust which the lumbering dray wagons made hauling their loads to and from Port Noble. Apparently the peak of prosperity for the canals was in 1864 during the last year of the Civil War when the amount of $181,408.00 in tolls was reached for the North Branch section. "I hear they're planning a railroad down the river from Scranton to Bloomsburg," might have been old timer's remark

The canal followed the north and west bank of the river. Catawissa, Mifflinville, and other towns on the east and south bank did not have ready access. Where bridges had not already been constructed, people began to demand them in place of rope ferries. A bridge at Berwick for the highway from the Lehigh Section to Tioga had been completed in 1814. This will be referred to again. With no other bridge above Sunbury and below Wilkes-Barre, many leading men in the county and others wishing better communications with the down-state regions became active in advocating a bridge at Catawissa. Christian Brobst again was one of the leaders. This bridge was constructed and opened for traffic in 1833. A bridge at Danville, agitation for which had been started at about the same time, was completed in 1829.

Stock Companies and Toll Bridges in Place of Ferries

The state government aided in many public improvements at that time. The procedures in the construction of the Catawissa bridge afford an excellent example. The legislature appropriated ten thousand dollard to purchase bridge company stock on condition that private individuals would secure the necessary additional funds to complete the bridge. The entire cost eventually was $26,000. The subscribers held stock, that is shares. Tolls were charged and the shareholders received dividens from the income after necessary expenses had been met. The state later sold its stock and used the income to construct a wagon road along what is now called the Catawissa narrows.

Covered Bridges as Engineering Achievements

These bridges were of wood, as were most bridges constructed at that time when labor for stone bridges was scarce and wood was plentiful. Gradually the carpenters who had learned to use heavy timbers in barn construction, learned how to make longer and longer and longer bridges. Eventually, some of the longest came to be remarkable feats of engineering. Columbia county, at one time or another, had some of the more remarkable of these wooden bridges, although never a "record breaker".

1 The first bridge would be a stout set of beams between the banks of the stream. When the load became greater, or the span wider, or both, a dangerous sag would indicate the need of strengthening.

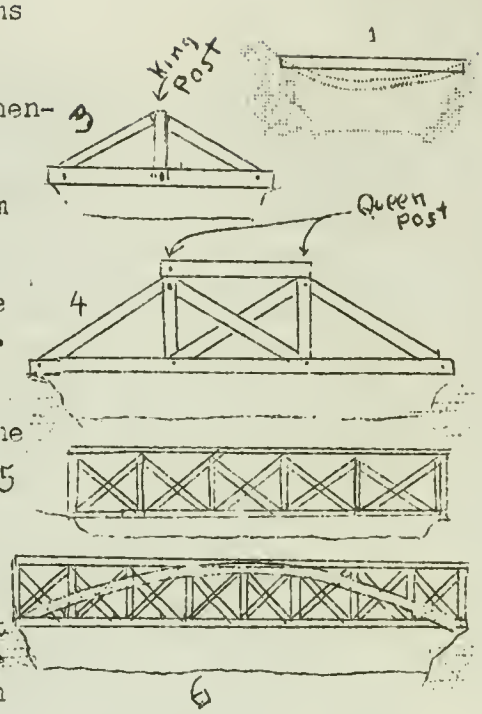
2 This might be by diagonal braces underneath, but they would obstruct the water when the stream was at flood. Not shown.

3 This was overcome by a king post and braces, or king-post truss. This would enable the bridge to span a greater distance with greater strength.

4 Still greater length was secured by a queen-post truss. This is a Queen-post truss.

5 A series of queen-post trusses might carry the bridge over a still wider span, but there were limits to the length of such a span. Theodore Burr, a famous engineer, who built many famous bridges of great length and strength, originated the Burr king-post arch truss.

6 One of his first bridges and one of the first on the Susquehanna anywhere was the noted bridge at Berwick constructed in 1814, of this Burr arch truss.



Our bridges were roofed over to protect the timbers from rotting. These bridges, testimony to the ability of our forebears, are gradually disappearing under the stress of automobile and auto-truck traffic. Pennsylvania still has a large number of them at this time, 1958, and Columbia county is among the Pennsylvania counties that still have the larger number.

Covered Bridge Memorial

The County Commissioners some years ago agreed to preserve the covered bridge at Stillwater as a memorial to these splendid structures. All vehicular traffic is blocked off, now, but it is open to pedestrians living across the creek. It is the second longest span wooden bridge ever constructed in the County, 1849. Below Bloomsburg, a bridge now gone since the late 1920's was unusual in that it had two passages, seperated by heavy structural timbers in the center. It was called the "Double-track Bridge" and was a very long single span. This bridge was built in 1840 at a cost of $2,150. The three-span reinforced concrete structure to replace it in 1923, cost more than ten times as much. The longest single span bridge in the county, and the longest span over any streams other than the river, is the bridge across the creek at Rupert, 185 feet 4 inches long. These last three bridges mentioned are or were all of the Burr arch and king-post type of bridge.

It is considered that the inventor's skill of these bridge builders led later to the construction of truss bridges using structural steel instead of wooden members. Many other types of trusses were also developed.

Railroads in Our County: The Catawissa Railroad

Despite the great benefit of canals, there were many regions that did not have ready access to them. Mines for coal and iron and quarries for stone, to be told about below, were in especial need for better transportation. The first railroad to be completed in Pennsylvania, and one of the first in America was from Mauch Chunk to Summit Hill, in 1827. Christian Brobst, five years before, was advocating a railroad, again planning it for the route up the valley of the Catawissa Creek, and then reaching the upper Schuylkill valley by means of a tunnel. He devised home-made surveying instruments by which he took levels and marked out routes in the rugged terrain along the Catawissa Creek. Later, trained surveyors were to marvel to find that the levels as Brobst had marked them out were never out of true by more than six feet. Brobst was able to interest other men both in the region and in Philadelphia. Money was raised and construction work started in 1835 and continued for several years. Then a Philadelphia bank, which had been giving financial aid, failed. Other financial difficulties at the time of the great panic of 1837 caused the work to be given up, not to be resumed until 1853 by a new company. The road was pushed through to completion and extended from Catawissa and thence to Rupert and Danville. Col. Paxton was active in securing this extension, planned originally to reach Williamsport, but never carried farther than Milton. Col. Paxton was also instrumental in having the charter for this extension in 1850 contain the provision that the road should not "diverge more than one mile from the mouth of Fishing Creek." This required the route to pass his property and continue through Dutch valley rather than to follow the river to Danville. By 1854 trains were running from the head of the Schuylkill valley to Milton on the West Branch.

Besides being the first railroad built serving our county and region, this Catawissa Railroad was noted formerly for the beauty of the scenery afforded in the wild country in the upper Catawissa valley as it carried the passengers over bridges of breath-taking height until the terminus in the Schuylkill valley was reached. It is now part of the Philadelphia and Reading railroad system.

Other Railroads

In but a few years, citizens of Wilkes-Barre joined with those from our region in raising money to finance a road from Lackawanna "Creek" to Bloomsburg. The road was constructed as far as Rupert in 1858 and extended to Northumberland in 1859.

Berwick, Bloomsburg, Danville as well as Catawissa were all benefited greatly by these improvements. As in the case of the canal, the construction workers brought prosperous conditions, and many stayed to increase the population. Rupert especially became an important junction point and freight depot with facilities of canal and two railroads. This is what Col. Paxton intended.

Although it takes us a little ahead of our story, it will be convenient to list the other railroad ventures in our county region.

1870. The Sunbury, Hazleton, and Wilkes-Barre was constructed up the river to Catawissa, thence up the creek valley through Main and Beaver Townships to the coal regions of Hazleton. The section from Catawissa to Hazleton was later abandoned.

1881. This road was extended on the south side of the river to Wilkes-Barre. Both of the last two enterprises came under the control of the Pennsylvania system. The Sunbury to Wilkes-Barre continues to be an important segment of that system.

1888. The Bloomsburg and Sullivan railroad was constructed up the valley of Fishing Creek primarily as a means of getting out the lumber of the North Mountain region. The section from Benton to Jamison City was abandoned when the lumber was exhausted. The reaminder is now controlled by the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad.

1891. The Susquehanna, Bloomsburg, and Berwick (S.B.&B.), now part of the Pennsylvania system, connects the West Branch at Watsontown with Millville, Bloomsburg, and Berwick through the valleys of Cabin Run, Big and Little Fishing Creek, Spruce Run, and Chillisquaque. A branch formerly reaching Orangeville was soon abandoned.

Importance of Railroads

At the turn of the century, 1890, 1900, 1910, what scenes of activity were to be noted at the railroad junction points! At Bloomsburg four times a day passengers patronizing the Lackawanna facilities up and down the river would change to and from those using the Bloomsburg and Sullivan from "up the creek", meaning Big Fishing Creek. At Paper Mill, now the location of the Bloomsburg Sand and Gravel, it was possible to take the S.B.&B. train for points between Berwick and Watsontown, Millville, and Washingtonville. At Rupert the Lackawanna made junction with the Reading. This Reading branch brought passengers to or took them from Danville and Milton and points between and also to Catawissa, Mainville, Ringtown and on to Pottsville. At Catawissa also, the Pennsylvania lines exchanged passengers down the river with its own branches to Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton. Up at Nescopeck, still another line of the Pennsylvania took the passengers up the Nescopeck Creek Valley to reach eventually into the Schuylkill Valley. Local and distant passengers gathering in the waiting rooms, exchanging the latest gossip, meeting some acquaintance unexpectedly, the unfamiliar passenger nervously consulting his time table in fear that he might take the wrong train -- all of these made the stations at Rupert and Catawissa as well as at Bloomsburg, scenes of colorful activity that hardly can be imagined in this day of neglect of the railroads. At the same time, over in the freight stations, there was also much heavy work as the freight cars were loaded and and unloaded or shifted from one road to another. With five railroads, Bloomsburg, it was prophesied, would become an important railroad point, and Catawissa, with its extensive railroad repair shops, would not be far behind. Car shops were started at Bloomsburg, but the largest industry of the region, the American Car and Foundry Company, dependent on railroads, developed at Berwick. Other industries were aided in almost all the towns also.

Iron

Iron was needed by the pioneer settlers. It was indispensable. Horses and oxen needed to be shod and re-shod as their shoes wore out. The implements, whether for household or for farm, especially plough shares would wear out, would get lost, would be broken. The blacksmith was one of the first craftsman to establish himself. But he had to have material to work with. Transporting heavy iron stock or implements by pack horse or horse-drawn vehicle -- the only transportation at first -- was extremely expensive and inadequate for the needs. Even after the coming of the canals and railroads, the expense was such that the early settler hoped for a source of iron near at hand.

Iron Ore and Making Iron

Our county, similar to other sections of central Pennsylvania, had generous supplies of the materials for the first establishment of the one-time important iron industry. What are these materials?

First: Earths or rocks which will yield iron in paying quantities, i.e. iron ore.

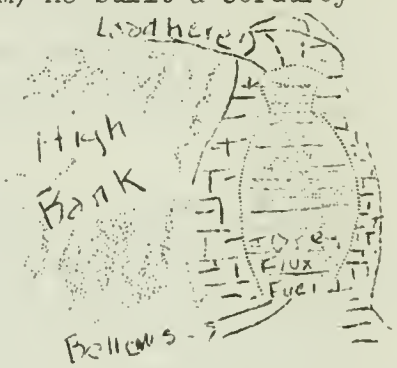
Second: Fuel to melt the ore and separate the iron from its impurities. Charcoal was needed for this purpose although it was later found that anthracite coal or coke could be used.

Third: Certain types of impurities in the ore need a substance called a flux in order that the ore may be separated from them. Lime stone provides such a flux.

The early iron industry in older parts of the State gave experience to persons who were able to provide beginnings in our region.

Charcoal Furnaces and Bogs

In 1815 John Hauck built and operated a charcoal furnace on Furnace Run near Catawissa Creek. At this site was the water power needed for the blast and an abundance of wood for charcoal. (See diagram) He built a corduroy road across the swamp in Espy and secured bog iron ore from the north side of the Espy swamp. It was hauled by horse teams and wagons over this road. The river was crossed at this place by means of rope ferry, and thence to the Mainville furnace.[4] The operation of this furnace leads to the inference that the quarrying of limestone must have been started at such early date in Scott Township, and that it was also hauled across the ferry at Espy. The completion of the Reading Road from Catawissa and the construction of Mine Gap Road led to the hauling of bog iron ore from the swamps on the summit of Locust Mountain near modern Centralia. The teamsters, it is related, habitually added water to their already damp product when close to Mainville in order to increase its weight and thus secure a higher fee.



[4]There are references to ores found near Bloomsburg, but this is inconsistent with the statement that the first discovery was in 1822 in Hemlock, see below.

Such a furnace produced pig iron, which was sent to Reading to be forged into usable products. The Mainville forge for the same purpose was constructed nearby in 1826. Although Mainville was later to have the benefit of two railroads, these early iron enterprises after lasting about sixty years, both were given up about 1880, the furnace earlier than the forge.

The construction of the Reading Road (1817) led also to the opening of Esther Furnace probably in 1822. (If opened before 1822, it would have used available bog ore.) This was a charcoal furnace and its product was exclusively pig iron. The abundance of wood for charcoal as well as Roaring Creek for power led to this location. During the Civil War days, a shipment of pig iron sent to New Jersey and thence south, was captured. This event combined with a location distant from railroad and canal both for raw materials and for markets led to its abandonment. Its ore and limestone had to be hauled from the region of Bloomsburg.

Discovery or Rock Ores

Iron ore had been discovered by a farm helper ploughing in a field near Fishing Creek in Hemlock Township in 1822. Mines were speedily opened here and at other places west on Montour Ridge. Similar rock formations in the hills north and east of Bloomsburg led to further mining ventures. Soon these hills east and west of Fishing Creek and far west beyond Hemlock Creek were pock marked with drift and pit openings. In the fifty years following, while the accessible ores were mined, millions of tons were secured. Similar discoveries in the Danville region led to the opening of a number of furnaces, the first in 1837. In the Bloomsburg region the ores were at first shipped to the furnaces already opened south of the river, and to others at a distance. Why was this the case? We can infer that wood was getting scarce in the immediate vicinity. Power was necessary for bellows to create a forced draft in a furnace, and for forging machinery. The smaller streams seem to have been "harnessed" earlier than the larger ones to provide this power.

Columbia Furnace at Foundryville

In 1825 George Mack established a small foundry on a branch of Briar Creek, a site soon named Foundryville. It was called the Columbia Furnace. It changed hands a number of times and finally failed about 1845. Incomplete records show that thousands of tons of ore were secured from mines in the neighborhood of Bloomsburg and smelted. Not only was pig iron produced for shipment to other foundry's but iron stoves and various utensils were cast. Large orders of plates were sent to the Lancaster and Columbia Railroad, then building. The rails rested on these plates.[5]

[5]It is interesting to note that a few years later, the Danville furnaces originated the improved "T" rail, so called because in cross section it resembled the letter "T". This type of rail has become standard, and our neighboring town equipped hundreds of miles of the new railroads then being built with these rails made from iron ore in the Danville region, ore of the same type and from the same rock formation as ours.

An Iron Plantation

Foundryville became a fine example of the "iron plantation" less well represented at "Morgantown" in Bloomsburg, at Buckhorn, "Wedgetown", and at Danville.[6] The establishments were called "iron plantations", because, like southern cotton or tobacco plantations they became largely self-sufficient. This Columbia Furnace had 2400 acres of land, two furnaces of different types, but both charcoal users, at least one foundry, extensive woodlands from which wood for charcoal was secured, charcoal storage house, a store, a grist mill, a blacksmith shop, and a common bake oven. Our records do not tell us if Foundryville was typical of an iron plantation in all respects. If it had been typical, some workers would have been out in the woodlands cutting timber. The larger sizes would have been marketed. Their chief objective was to secure cordwood. Other workers would have been "burning" the wood for charcoal.[7] Farm workers were cultivating and harvesting field and garden crops for food. There was heavy hauling to and from the canal, ore one way, the finished products the other. Limestone for flux also had to be brought from canal or quarry. Foundryville had its store. Teachers and a minister, possibly more than one, were secured. The owner lived in a superior house, "the mansion house".[8]

Bloomsburg Furnaces

With all its riches of iron ore, Bloomsburg finally established two furnaces. The first was at Irondale, completed in 1845. Water power was secured by damming Fishing Creek at Arbutus Park. It used charcoal. It was immensely profitable during Civil War days when the government needed great quantities of iron and steel for guns and other equipment. Its prosperity declined with the exhaustion of the iron mines beginning about 1875. It finally closed in 1890.

To produce a ton of pig iron, 400 bushels of charcoal were required. To secure this much charcoal the wood from an acre of woodland was needed. Hardwood, especially oak and hickory, was best.[9]

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[6]The rows of similar houses in Morgantown and on Mill Street, Danville continue as reminders of the one time flourishing iron industry. The piles of slag drawn off from the furnaces, called cinder tips, were at one time accumulated in huge piles near the furnaces. Only a small part of the two such cinder tips still remain at Bloomsburg. But the remaining part is still impressive as testimony to the large industry at Bloomsburg. The material has been largely used in road-making. The new Danville High School has been built on the site of its once immense cinder tip. Impressive accumulations of slag at other furnaces, Esther, Hauck, and Foundryville testify also to this former iron industry.

[7]To make charcoal, this cordwood was piled on end in the form of a cone. The sides and top were covered with earth, except a vent hole at the top, and small draft holes at the bottom, so as to provide just enough air for the wood to smoulder and char but not to burn to ash. The charcoal burner had to be both skillful and watchful. He lived in a hut nearby, and for days and weeks must watch each batch "around the clock" until the batch was complete. His job was lonely.

[8]Such an owner's house still stands and is occupied at Irondale, in Bloomsburg.

[9]The production of such great amounts of charcoal, year after year, used up timber supplies. Cutting of timber for charcoal, more than the clearing of land for farms, was responsible for the exhaustion of the nearby woodlands. Blacksmiths, and other metal workers, required charcoal, until coal or coke came to be used.

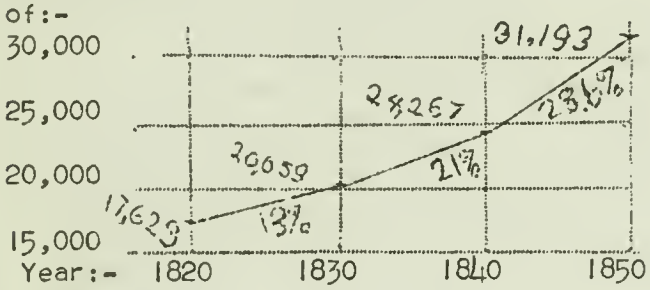
Anthracite Coal for Iron Furnaces

As wood became scarcer, efforts were early made to use anthracite coal. These efforts were finally successful. The first anthracite furnace in our region was built near the mouth of Roaring Creek, on the Montour County side in 1839. Such a furnace in Bloomsburg, named the Bloom, started production in 1854, on the canal, near Ferry Road. In the first fifteen years, including Civil War years, its product amounted to almost 18,000 tons. It was much increased later, but with the exhaustion of the readily accessible ore, it followed the Irondale Furnace into decline and stoppage about 1890.

Importance of Bloomsburg's Iron Production

We have daily recordsof the Irondale furnaces showing production of thirty tons of pig iron a day at its height of prosperity. This meant 97.5 tons of ore, sixty tons of coal, almost fifty tons of limestone had to be hauled to the furnace. The tons of finished product added to the traffic. Old timers' stories recall the continuous traffic of creaking wagons hauling ore or limestone; or others hauling the finished products. A narrow gauge railroad from Port Noble helped carry the traffic. The Bloom furnace of course added greatly to the activity in and around Bloomsburg.

POPULATION GROWTH, 1820 - 1850. (Columbia County was erected in 1813)



Production statistics
1 inch = 100,000 bushels

Oats	223,373
Wheat	214,000
Corn	208,400
Potatoes	163,480
Rye	153,248
Buckwheat	50,584

Value of Certain Products:

Machinery	$ 57,000
Finished Leather	27,000
Dairy Products	25,700
Bricks & Lime	23,600
Homemade Goods	18,000
Hats & Caps	13,000
Orchards	6,800
Paper (partial list)	4,000
Fulling & Woolens	3,600
Pottery	1,900
Poultry	3,394

TOWNS IN 1840, population and other data
Danville, over 1,250; 200 dwellings erected in 1845. 12-13 establishments for manufacture of iron
Catawissa, 800; 200 dwellings, paper mill, several tanneries
Bloomsburg, 650; 100 dwellings
Berwick, 800; 100 dwellings
"Mifflinsburg", 30 dwellings, several mills and tanneries
Jerseytown, 30 dwellings
Williamsburg (part of modern Light Street) a dozen houses
Orangeville, 40 dwellings
Espytown, 25 dwellings
(Information probably incomplete)

Production also included:
30,000 lbs. wool, 14,000 tons hay, 8 tons, flax

Livestock:

Sheep	22,184
Swine	19,474
Cattle	13,525
Mules & Horses	5,905

Miscellaneous
2 furnaces produced 13,000 tons cast iron using 2,000 tons fuel (probably charcoal)
Other Production:
121,000 gallons of whiskey
14,000 gallons of beer
Wagons and carriages $13,650
From 8 mills 710 barrels of flour
Also there were 40 grist mills, 74 saw mills

If we look behind these bare statistics we see a rich agricultural county producing bountifully. We understand its need for ever improved transport. We see also the many small craft shops then still existing, but, in addition, more substantial enterprises, forerunners of the mammoth industries to come at a later date. The wealth that these figures also show explain how better buildings were replacing the log cabins and houses of the earlier decades. Some of the older business buildings may go back to this period. Many of the substantial brick houses with their simple and beautiful lines can be traced back to the periods of business and farm prosperity of the forties and fifties of the last century.

Immigration

Immigration to the farms had been steady, as the figures above indicate. The character of the immigration continued to be much the same as that of the earlier decades; Pennsylvania German, Scotch-Irish, English. The older states, especially New Jersey, contributed important numbers. The iron industry in the vicinity of Bloomsburg and in Hemlock Township attracted experienced miners from Wales.[10]

It Was Farm Life For Most People

The farm population, as can be inferred from the above figures, was far larger than that of the little towns. The farmer had a busy life the year round, ploughing, seeding, harvesting, stowing into barns, caring for his live stock. Between times he could gain additional income from hauling ore, chopping trees for lumber or cord wood,[11] butchering, sugaring from maple groves, hunting, fishing on the large scale then possible, provided variations in kind of work, but it was mostly all hard.

The homemaker not only had the house to keep in order, the children to care for, including often the rudiments of their education, and the meals to prepare. The garden was usually her task. She also helped at butchering and sugaring. Further, she spun the flax and wool, she wove the linsey woolsey, her needle and scissors prepared the clothing in large part. (See page 12, value of goods made at home) Well might she recall the couplet:

Man works from sun to sun
Woman's work is never done.

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[10] The influence of other construction and enterprises were noted previously.

[11] Wood for a long time continued to be the chief fuel for homestead, shop, and kiln.

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TO FIND OUT HOW EFFECTIVELY YOU HAVE READ

1. What different enterprises or activities did Christian Brobst engage in or attempt?
2. Why were better forms of transportation needed?
3. What influenced leaders to advocate canals for transportation?

4. Describe canal boat traffic, kind, amount, and interesting aspects. How important was it for our region?
5. Why were our covered bridges important? Consider them from stand point of transportation, engineering, and lumber resources. Why were they covered, roof and sides?
6. Why were railroads needed after the canals had been built? Show by map, or otherwise, our network of railroads.
7. Locate the earliest furnaces and forges, then the later ones. Why were these locations used?
8. Locate the sources of iron ore. What were the kinds? (A science student may wish to read further.)
9. What were the importance and extent of our local furnaces and foundries? Note a distinctive product from Danville. Why was Danville in some respects similar to Bloomsburg?
10. What are your impressions of the county's production about 1840; amounts, variety (think of home, factory, and shop, farm, quarry and mine)? How does farm production compare with a current year?
11. Summarize or describe farm life of the 1840's and 1850's.
12. Did the Panic of 1837 have any effects in Columbia County?

INTERESTING THINGS TO DO

1. On outline map, preferably the one you used for Indian trails, mark first wagon roads or turnpikes, then the railroads and/or canals.
2. Are there other obstacles to boat traffic, natural or man-made, on the Susquehanna besides the Berwick falls?
3. The Columbia County Historical Society wishes scale models of our disappearing covered bridges. We suggest scale of 1":1'. This equals 1:48, approximately 1:50.
4. Compare conflicts over railway and canal routes with our current conflict over automobile highways.
5. Bring to your class, or lend to the Columbia County Historical Society some of the ingenious contrivances of the early blacksmiths of our region. The Society has several such interesting implements on display.
6. Excursions to one of our present Foundries: Harrington or S. & B. or the A.C.F.
7. We desire pictures for loan: canal operations, locks, Espy boat building, unpublished pictures of packet boats, canal bridges, Rupert aqueduct, the Espy boat, canal boats or arks built at the Bloomsburg "Ark building site", old railroad engines, trains, bridges, especially on Reading (old Catawissa) Railroad, a rope ferry, of iron works at the various places mentioned, an ore wagon, accounts or descriptions of the scenes and operations, newspapers or clippings, letters, diaries.

Check your vocabulary:

turnpike	rudder	terrain
divide (of drainage)	to snub	junction
lock (canal)	stock company	corduroy (road)
aqueducts	truss	plantation
packet boat	diverge	gauge
pig iron	pit	drift
smelt	kiln	

SOME MID-CENTURY CONFLICTS

Chapter VI

I. County Division: Northumberland County

When Northumberland County was established back in 1772, there was only a sprinkling of European settlers in the region of the county seat, Sunbury. There were fewer and fewer as one might have gone up the two main branches of the Susquehanna. The extent of Northumberland County at its greatest was vast, including in part or in whole, the territory of thirteen present counties. It was larger than a number of present states. The necessity to travel many miles to care for county business at the county seat, soon aroused insistent demands that new counties should be erected. Luzerne was carved out of Northumberland in 1786, and Lycoming in 1795.

New Counties Needed

The regions west from Lewisburg and Selinsgrove, and east from Danville, were soon demanding a more convenient division and a county seat closer at hand. Sunbury interests were opposed to further division, and were able to block it for a number of years. The towns in the new county or counties to be created, could not agree among themselves where the county seat or county seats were to be located. This conflict prevented further division until the groups which were later to constitute Union County, west of the West Branch, and those to be in the later Columbia County, joined forces and succeeded in establishing new counties.

Advantages to a Town Made a County Seat

In the case of Columbia County, we have already noted that Danville was very definitely forging ahead of all the towns between Sunbury and Wilkes Barre. To become a county seat of a county was a most attractive possibility for any town. The Judge and other county officers would live there or use hotel accommodations. Lawyers would take up their residence there. Owners of real estate, the town founders such as Evan Owen, Ludwig Oyer, William Hughes, George Espy, Christian Kunchel and William Rittenhouse, or their heirs and followers, could anticipate selling lots and at higher prices. In fact, Kunchel and Rittenhouse in 1794, noting that their property was midway between two county seats already established, Wilkes-Barre and Sunbury, thought it was almost a sure thing that their town, Mifflinville, would become a county seat. So the plan for their town provided the widest and handsomest street widths of any town in the region. How many of our larger towns now wish that they had streets planned on something like these generous widths. William and Daniel Montgomery[1] were among leaders in securing the creation of Union and Columbia Counties, along with Leonard Rupert and others from both sections. These persons worked for the two new counties and also to bring one of the two county seats to his own town.

Where Should the County Seat Be?

Berwick, Bloomsburg, and Danville were not so obviously the choices in 1813 as they would seem to us more than a century later. Catawissa, Mifflinville, Washington (Washingtonville), Jerseytown, also came in for attention. In 1813 the act creating the new county was passed, along with the creation of the companion county, Union, to the west. Patriotic fervor

[1] Danville is named for the latter, meaning Dan's ville.

of the war times led to the names of Union for one, and of Columbia, inspired by the then very popular song, "Hail Columbia", for the other. The boundaries of Columbia extended on the north and west to the West Branch of the Susquehanna, excluding, however, the region near the town of Northumberland (Point Township). Otherwise the area was much the same as the present combined territories of Columbia and Montour counties.

Three "discreet and disinterested persons, not resident in the counties of Northumberland, Union, or Columbia," were appointed to fix the site of the county seat of Columbia County, "as near the geographical center as the situation will admit." At the meeting called for this purpose, one of the three was absent, who, tradition states, favored Bloomsburg. The two members present gave the decision to Danville.

Why were the Boundary Lines Shifted Back and Forth?

The act which assigned substantially the territories of Turbot and Chilisquaque Townships to the new county met with great opposition from their residents, and shortly after, the townships were reassigned to Northumberland County. The effect of this was that Danville, far from the geographical center of the county when created, was now more conspicuously than ever, at one edge rather than at the center of the county. But by 1816 what are now substantially Limestone and Liberty Townships were restored to Columbia, reducing in some measure the charge that Danville was not central.

Opposition from Central and Eastern Sections

The action of the County Seat Committee aroused strong opposition in the central and eastern portions of the new county. Numerous and strongly supported petitions to allow a preference vote were brought before the legislature. These requests and petitions were looked upon with favor, but by being referred to committees or "laid on the table" for future action, which never came, the influential leaders from Danville were able to prevent referring a matter to the voters where, it is presumed, they feared that they would lose. After repeated failures for ten or fifteen years, the dissatisfaction subsided, but never died out. Berwick became a possible factor with a project of combining the eastern section of Columbia along with western parts of Luzerne, naturally in close and convenient social and trade association with her into a new county.

New Support for Bloomsburg

About 1840, the weary workers for the removal to Bloomsburg, were given new encouragement by a young Presbyterian clergyman who came to the Bloomsburg charge of these churches, the Reverend D. J. Waller, Sr. The State Senatorial district, which included Luzerne along with Columbia, was represented by William A. Ross from Luzerne. It is to be inferred that he saw that he could protect Luzerne from the loss of territory to Berwick by giving his support to the Bloomsburg cause.

Bloomsburg's Arguments

At the same time, the Bloomsburg interests were put before the public in an especially strong statement. It showed that: 1,200 taxables (taxpayers) were more conveniently served at Danville, while over 3,000 were more conveniently served at Bloomsburg. Of some of the more distant taxables, more than 1800 must travel fourteen to thirty-five miles to reach Danville, and must pass through Bloomsburg to do so. Being far from the center of business, far more of the county's business was transacted in Bloomsburg than at Danville. Whether these arguments, or the backing of influential men

like Senator Ross, was the more important, it is hard to say. But in 1845 the matter was again before the legislature, and the Danville partisans, as a last ditch argument, noted the costs of building new buildings and acquiring land for them in Bloomsburg. Bloomsburg citizens met this argument by agreeing to provide both at no cost to the tax payers. With these promises, the law was passed which provided for a preference vote, and, in case the decision was favorable to Bloomsburg, the citizens of Bloomsburg should erect "at their own proper expense" suitable buildings and secure the necessary land for them at no cost to the public.

Election and Removal of County Seat to Bloomsburg

The election was held in the fall of 1845. The result was overwhelmingly in favor of Bloomsburg, 2,913 against 1,571 for Danville, and seventeen townships for Bloomsburg against six for Danville. Bloomsburg citizens immediately proceeded to redeem their promises. Land was donated. This included the land now occupied by the county Court House, and also the present playground property of the Bloomsburg High School, which was utilized for the first county jail. It is a tradition that Daniel Snyder, one of the active workers for the removal of the county seat, had been taunted by Danville people that Bloomsburg didn't have any bricks, to which Snyder rejoined that he would make the bricks himself. The record states that the court house was built with bricks burned by Daniel Snyder. The necessary buildings were built, the records were transferred from Danville in 1847, and the first court was held in Bloomsburg in 1848.

Valentine Best Pledges Support for the new County

In 1847 delegates of the Democratic Party for Columbia County met in Bloomsburg in order to nominate a candidate for State Senator from the senatorial district. Valentine Best, a prominent leader and newspaper publisher in Danville, as a candidate for this nomination, published a statement to the effect that,... "as it is now the wish of all well disposed members of the Democratic party to lay aside local feeling and sectional jealousy...I am opposed to any alteration of the removal law (the law changing the county seat) and also to any division or dismemberment of the county." It is to be inferred from this that already certain persons were considering a division of the county, an inference supported by Danville authority. However, Best's statement was accepted as sincere. He was nominated and subsequently elected, presumably because the major portions of the county were glad to offer a peace tribute to the defeated western section.

The Petition for Division

In 1849 a petition was presented to legislature to set off the County of Montour. This petition alleged that certain townships and Danville were inconvenienced by the newly located county seat and that Bloomsburg residents had not met the full costs of the new buildings as required. At the same time, those opposed, filed a remonstrance citing that the county was already small, and denying the charge of failure to pay the proper costs. The legislature was opposed to dividing the already small county. Here the matter would probably have come to rest had not a peculiar situation developed.

"Log Rolling" in the Legislature: Montour County Erected

In 1850 the Whigs were defeated in the State elections. The House of Representatives was overwhelmingly Democratic and the Senate had sixteen Whigs to seventeen Democrats. The term of Governor Johnston, a Whig, had another year to run. This situation gave Best an opportunity, although it meant the violation of his pledge as given previously at his nomination. To enable the Whigs to control legislation, probably redistricting the State and matters of Budget, Best, a Democrat, promised his support to their measures if the Whigs would secure his election as Speaker (presiding officer) of the Senate and aid him to secure the creation of the proposed Montour County. These bargains were kept, although with great difficulty. Montour County thus came into existence in 1850. With a few further changes, the boundaries of the two counties became permanent. Best remained popular in the Danville region, but nowhere else. The bitterness created by this long contest gradually subsided. Certain adjustments of county and township boundaries were made to bring them to those established at present. Certain obvious injustices and inconveniences still remain, including in the several counties of Schuylkill, Northumberland, Montour, Columbia, and Luzerne, territories that would better have been included in a neighboring county.

IICivil War Brought Local Problems: Earlier Wars

The War of 1812 and the Mexican War, 1846-48, did not seem to have much effect on the growth and development of Columbia County. However, the Columbia Guards, recruited at Danville from the whole county before its division, rendered important and excellent service in the Mexican War.

Civil War - Columbia County Played Honorable Part

The bitter sectional controversies leading up to the Civil War did not seem to affect seriously the County's development, until the actual armed conflict broke out following the attack on Fort Sumpter in 1861. W. W. Ricketts, later to become a colonel, a former cadet of West Point, speedily raised a company of volunteers at Orangeville. The final summary of the part that Columbia County took in the war to preserve the Union shows that it was a worthy and honorable one. As the first wave of enthusiasm subsided, however, and the war dragged on through its four years of terrible loss of life, the draft quotas became harder and harder to fill in all parts of the country, as well as in our county. Columbia County had been decidedly Democratic in all the elections since its creation. Loyal supporters of the national Union, here as elsewhere, volunteered for the armed services or cheerfully accepted the draft.

Opposition Developed

As the fearful costs and loss of life mounted, hope waned. Some Democrats in the country at large, as well as in Columbia County, disapproved of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and argued that the character of the war had been changed to one to free the slaves rather than to preserve the Union. The partisan criticism by those Democrats opposed to the war, called Peace Democrats, became so extreme, that in the light of later history, a reader could not but wonder if volunteering and the draft had not been made more difficult. It was maintained by one newspaper that Lincoln could have preserved the Union in "one month" if he had given up

freedom for the Negro.[2] Such newspapers insistently urged, "..vote out the Lincoln government."

Opposition to the Draft

There was draft evasion and obstruction in other parts of the country and in other counties of Pennsylvania. In some cases this opposition was terrible and alarming[3] with rioting and loss of life, as in New York City. A considerable number of men in the northern townships and in the nearby portions of Luzerne refused to report for duty. Groups, possibly informal meetings, seem to have considered resisting, evading, or avoiding the draft. As part of conditions generally known, the draft was not always fairly or honestly administered.

Evidences of Opposition

In the spring of 1864, the enrolling officer in Mifflin Township encountered what seemed a threat of resistance, but after a conference, the enrollment was allowed to proceed. Military authorities were led by official reports to believe that there were large bands of deserters and delinquent drafted men, armed and organized for resistance. These reports were given greater weight, when in August a lieutenant with a squad of eight men was on patrol near Raven Creek after midnight. A group of unknown men was encountered and ordered to halt. Firing broke out. Accounts are conflicting as to which side fired the first shot. The lieutenant was killed. The civilians were able to make good an escape. Another incident associated with these bitter times, although th exact timing is not known: The barn of a farmer who was fully loyal to the war effort was burned and a coffin left on the house porch.

Troops to Columbia County

Such developments here and elsewhere led government leaders in Pennsylvania to feel that all draft resistance must be checked. The first of several counties in which resistance was to be over-awed was Columbia. On August 13 a detachment of United States troops arrived in Bloomsburg. Leaders in Bloomsburg assured the military commander that there was no organized resistance. J. G. Freeze,[4] a prominent Democrat, consented to inform the delinquent conscripted men that the charge of desertion would be dropped if they reported within five days. The conscripts did not report.

Arrests and Trials

The soldiers then marched to the Benton region[5] and after a few days of quiet, some hundred men were arrested at their homes. About forty-four were later marched to Bloomsburg, and finally transferred to Fort Mifflin in Philadelphia. These prisoners, some of them elderly, were treated with insufficient consideration. All suffered from long marches, poor and scanty food, and filthy and unhealthy conditions of imprisonment. They were

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[2]The student needs to compare this statement with the authenticated policy of Lincoln and the rest of the government as it developed.

[3]Consult histories of the county and of Pennsylvania, also p.7, this Ch.

[4]Freeze had been appointed aid to the Governor with the rank of colonel. He is frequently referred to with this title.

[5]A group of persons in carriages, followed from Bloomsburg, presumably to witness the outcome.

charged with conspiracy to obstruct the draft and were tried by military courts. Only seven were convicted. One paid a fine of $500.00. The remaining six were later pardoned by the President. Numbers had been discharged on account of sickness, almost surely incurred from the harsh conditions of transportation and imprisonment. One died, probably as a result of such conditions. Others were discharged, presumably for lack of evidence against them. The persons arrested, in general, were persons esteemed in their communities and looked up to as leaders. Many had endeavored by persuasion and personal subscription for bounties,[6] to help fill the draft quotas of the county. They came to be known as the Fishing Creek Martyrs.

The Milligan Case

Here is where our local history touches further that of the country as a whole. In Indiana, one, Milligan, had been arrested and convicted by military authorities of traitorous conduct. Milligan's case was appealed and came before the Supreme Court of the United States. Charles R. Buckalew, then a United States Senator, one of our county's famous leaders and a Democrat, was familiar with the whole situation here. He advised with the attorney for the prisoner in this case. This attorney has stated that Buckalew's advice was very helpful to him in winning the case. The decision in this case is part of the established law of the land. It is that where the civil courts are open and functioning and not in the immediate area of military operations, military arrests and trials of civilians are unconstitutional. This decision was rendered in 1867.

Wild Rumors and Probable Facts

Certain additional events must be recounted back in our county. Search was made for a fort with mounted cannon, which, according to wild rumors, had been constructed in the fastness of North Mountain. The soldiers, after weary searches through the difficult terrain, came to the same conclusion that we reach: There was no such fort. But this is not to say that there were no plans and no wild talk for resistance along with some plans, more or less matured, to support them. On the contrary, it should also be recalled that at a meeting in the Benton region, after the soldiers had arrived in Bloomsburg, the so-called Rantz meeting, certain persons indulged in wild talk of resistance. Wiser heads, however, advised all to return to their homes, go about their peaceful occupations, and offer no resistance. Some persons giving such counsel of prudence and non-resistance were later arrested, as noted above.

Abuses

In carrying out the search for draft evaders, the soldiers, all too frequently, were harsh and cruel. One teen-age boy, Leonard Cole, was suspended briefly by means of a rope around his neck, in order to make him confess where his father was. This the boy refused to do, even though he was suspended until he lost consciousness. His loss of vision with early death was attributed to this experience. It is also alleged, probably truly, that the soldiers raided the farms for chickens, hay, pigs, and sheep; that they cut sugar trees and robbed fences for firewood; they they even commandeered pies and cakes from kitchens.

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[6] It was legal and proper to pay for a substitute for one who was drafted or to help fill out a quota.

Soldiers at Elections

Although there was a law forbidding the presence of troops at elections, detachments of soldiers appeared at polling places in most of the townships of the northern and central parts of the county. This action seems to have been solely on the responsibility of the local commander. It was contrary to assurances and orders given by the superior officers that there would be no such interference . Democrats interpreted this action as an effort to intimidate them. The numbers, both of Republicans and Democrats, voting in this election were sharply reduced, although the Democrats carried the election locally. The possibility of guarding the Republicans against intimidation by the Democrats, must also be kept in mind although we have no direct evidence to that effect. The action was clearly illegal and a case of exceeding his authority on the part of the local commander. To give further details: The only remaining election officer in Benton, after the previous arrests, was arrested. Certain persons, a few, were arrested on the way to vote. Election returns were demanded by officers in two cases, being refused in at least one case. Even the Sheriff and Clerk of the County Commissioners were arrested and taken to Harrisburg, until they were released within a few days, after forceful protests.

Summary

By December 1, 1864, the last of the soldiers left, most being transferred to other locations where resistance was feared. The so-called Fishing Creek Confederacy never existed. That there were draft evasion and bitter opposition to government policies is undoubted. This was fomented by partisan newspapers and almost surely exaggerated by government supporters. That the government was justified in doing something is a fair conclusion to draw. The troops were sent to over-awe resistance and to "remain until ever deserter, delinquent drafted man and abettor of rebellion be arrested or run out of the county." In performing such service, soldiers and subordinate officers were guilty of unnecessary harshness, ruthlessness, and cruelties, and of grossly exceeding their authority. The whole procedure was at a cost of half a million dollars. The scars of this whole episode were long in healing.

III. Disturbances in the Coal Regions

Beaver and Conyngham Townships at the southeast and south, respectively, were discovered to contain coal measures, a continuation of the more extensive deposits of the neighboring Luzerne and Schuylkill Counties. These will be referred to later. Certain disorders which broke out in these coal regions in the years following the Civil War created serious disturbances in Conyngham Township also. These were all associated with some Irish immigrants in the coal regions. This is no more a reflection on all Irish, than the outrages associated with the draft disturbances of the County, just previously described, are a reflection on well balanced and law abiding persons, whether Democrats or Republicans.

Mollie Maguires

Among Irish immigrants before the Civil War were numbers who had become accustomed to violent resistance of the exorbitant rents charged by their English landlords in Ireland. Carrying this tradition of violence to America, an organization grew up called the Mollie Maguires, a name brought over from their home land. During the Civil War, the opposition to the draft in Cass Township, Schuylkill County, was so extreme, that the draft could not be properly enforced there without bloodshed, which the authorities did not wish to incur.

Labor Troubles and Reign of Terror

After the war, the Mollie Maguires joined in resistance on the part of laborers to low wages and dangerous working conditions. For a time such resistance centered around the "Mollies". Their procedure was to intimidate by threats followed up with murder of mine officials, and especially of mine supervisors. In the late sixties and early seventies, practically a reign of terror developed, especially in the regions of Schuylkill and Northumberland Counties adjoining our County. Murder was organized. Men of high standing and respect were slain in cold blood. Passenger trains were given special guards. Juries were intimidated, so that when persons were brought to trial they could not be convicted. The "Mollies" boasted that they so controlled the general government that even if convicted they would be released by pardon or otherwise.

Rea Murdered

On Sunday, October 8, 1868, Alexander Rea, agent for the Locust Mountain Coal and Iron Company of Centralia, was murdered near the road to Mt. Carmel. The motive was to rob the victim of pay he was thought to be carrying to the workers. This brought the violence into the territory of Columbia County. After certain arrests were made and trials held at Bloomsburg, the persons accused were acquitted. This result resembled the pattern all too common in other counties.

New Arrests and Trials

Years passed. Then a new series of arrests were made and accused persons were brought to trial in Pottsville and Mauch Chunk, the county seats, respectively of Schuylkill and Carbon Counties. This time the results were different. A quiet looking witness was called to the stand. The accused "Mollies" were dumbfounded. They recognized him as James McKenna, one of the loudest boasters and threateners of their group, who had spent considerable time endeavoring to "float" counterfeit money. If they had searched their memories carefully, they would have been able to recall that this McKenna had actually never participated in any murder, and that in some of their seemingly carefully laid plots, the intended victim seemed to have been warned or had been able to escape.

Their McKenna, on the witness, stand revealed that he was John McParlan that he had been able to become a member and actual secretary of one of the "Mollie" branches, that he had feigned lawlessness and counterfeiting, and that he had given regular reports to the Pinkerton detective forces from whom he had accepted this highly dangerous mission. His testimony, in large measure, brought about conviction and sentencing of many of the "Mollies" with prison terms and death. The condemned were confident that they would be reprieved or that judges or the Governor would liberate them. No such action took place. Armed soldiers prevented any attempt at violent liberation. In due time six were hanged at Pottsville, and four at Mauch Chunk.

New Trials at Bloomsburg

Apparently these events led one of the desparadoes, a certain Daniel Kelly, who was serving sentence of imprisonment for larceny, to fear for his life. Suspicion pointed to him as implicated in the Rea murder. He offered to turn state's evidence in return for a promise of immunity. In order to secure evidence, he was given this promise. As a result three men were arrested and tried in one of the most sensational trials ever held in Bloomsburg. Largely on the basis of Kelly's evidence,[7] the accused were found guilty and hanged by means of gallows borrowed from Carbon County for the purpose and set up on what is now the playground of the Bloomsburg High School. This took place in 1877. With the Bloomsburg trials and executions, the terrible power of the Mollie Maguires was broken forever.

[7]One of the convicted men later confessed that Kelly's testimony was substantially correct.

TO FIND OUT HOW EFFECTIVELY YOU HAVE READ

1. What was the one-time size of Northumberland County? Why were new counties needed?
2. Why was it an advantage to a town to be a county seat?
3. Recount the strivings and contests for the county seat of Columbia County.
4. Explain the erection of Montour County.
5. What reasons can be given to account for the sending of troops into our County during the Civil War? Give an account of the incidents connected with the presence of soldiers in Columbia County during 1864.
6. Who were the Mollie Maguires? Explain how events in Columbia County aided in suppressing them.

INTERESTING THINGS TO DO

1. What counties have been formed from old Northumberland, sometimes called Mother of Counties?
2. What was the approximate territory included in original Columbia County? Describe it in terms of stream valleys.
3. In what ways might boundary lines of Columbia and her neighboring counties be improved?
4. Using Battle, History of Columbia and Montour Counties - mark out on a map changes in townships along the western boarder of present and former Columbia County.
5. Discuss the possible influence of exaggerated statements and unjustified criticism of persons, goverrment officers and public policies. Should war time conditions be treated differently from peace time conditions?
6. Discuss legality of the action of soldiers sent into our county under (a) state law; (b) elections; (c) policy of U. S. Government; (d) Miligan decision.
7. Give report on Pinkerton Detective Agency.

Check your vocabulary:

county seat
partisans
conspiracy
feigned
taxables
emancipation
fastness
dumbfounded
petitions
civilians
intimidated
fervor
dismemberment
delinquent
deserter
remonstrance
Whigs
acquitted
discreet
log-rolling
presumably
exorbitant

Outline Map of C O L U M B I A C O U N T Y, Pennsylvania