

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WEST SHENANGO TOWNSHIP.

PETITION—ELECTION—POPULATION—PHYSICAL FEATURES—PENN POPULATION COMPANY TITLES—EARLY SETTLERS—EARLY MILLS—CHEESE FACTORY—EARLY TEACHERS—TURNERSVILLE—RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

ON the petition of citizens of South Shenango Township to the Court of Quarter Sessions to divide the township, James Espy was appointed Surveyor and Eliphalet Allen and R. S. McKay, Viewers; they reported favorably April 2, 1863, with a slight alteration of the boundaries, and the report was approved and confirmed by the court August 14, 1863. An election in and for the new township to be called West Shenango was ordered to be held in the Turnersville Schoolhouse, and John Custard and Francis Royal were appointed Inspectors and Samuel Kellogg Judge of the first election. The township contains 4,947 acres, and is the smallest in the county. Its population in 1870 was 357 and in 1880, 277. The surface is level, and the soil well adapted to the culture of fruit and grain. The Franklin division of the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railroad passes through the township in a northwest and southeast direction.

The records of the Pennsylvania Population Company which owned most of the land of West Shenango preserve the following contracts for its first settlement, the acreage being the amount of land to be granted: Tract 810, settled by an intruder; 811, Samuel Steel, December 11, 1799, 200 acres, settled under contract; 812, Moses Scott, December 11, 1798, 200 acres, settled under contract; 827, John Brooks, November 2, 1797, 401.88 acres, settled under contract; 828 and 829, Jeremiah Yoke, December 11, 1798, and December 11, 1799, 200 acres each, settled under contract; 830, John Gamble, December 11, 1798, 200 acres, deed delivered Andrew Betts, assignee of Gamble; 831, Martha Elliott, December 11, 1798, 200 acres, settled under contract; 832, John Brooks, November 7, 1797, 401.88 acres, settled under contract; 833 (a fraction in South Shenango), Andrew McArthur, September 21, 1797, 200 acres, settled under contract; same tract, James McCurdy, August 31, 1811, 200 acres, settled under contract; 834, William Kincaid, September 21, 1797, 200 acres, settled under contract; same tract, John Snodgrass, November 29, 1811, fifty acres; 835, John Brooks, September 21, 1798, 200 acres, settled under contract; same tract, Thompson McMasters, August 27, 1811, 200 acres.

Most of the above persons were residents of adjoining townships, who made the necessary settlements through tenants, and were not residents of West Shenango. Jeremiah Yoke, one of the township's earliest pioneers, was an old bachelor, and came from Fayette County. Though he owned considerable land in early times, he lost it and died in reduced circumstances. George Yoke, his brother, was also a pioneer on Tract 828, and his descendants are yet citizens of the township. Andrew Betts settled on Tract 830 about 1800. He came from Fayette County, was a hunter and a life-long resident of the place. His son John became a Methodist minister.

Other pioneers were: James French, Edward Hatton, Samuel Scott, John

White and Benjamin Snodgrass. James French was a shoemaker, and came about 1800. Edward Hatton settled on Tract 811, where he remained till death. Samuel Scott, an old bachelor and brother of Moses Scott, of South Shenango, settled on Tract 812. John White came about 1806 from Perry County, and settled on Tract 826. He was a farmer, and died in 1819, aged forty-five years. Benjamin Snodgrass was a settler through life and his descendants are still in the township.

→ **Andrew Betts** operated a grist-mill on his place as early as 1810. It was fed by a strong spring, and did the grinding in that neighborhood for a number of years. He also owned a distillery in 1810, and a little later built a saw-mill. Edward Hatton built a little corn-cracker on Hatton's Run, and kept it open for many years. There are no mills now in the township. Henry Difford and sons own a cheese factory in the southwest part. Edward Hatton was one of the earliest school teachers. Polly Moss, of Ohio, about 1820 taught a school in the southwest part, which the Hattons, Yokes, Royals and Bettises attended. Schools were rare in early times, and the children often attended schools in what is now South Shenango.

Turnersville is a little village of about twenty families situated in the southeast part of Tract 827. Its origin is due to David Turner, who entertained high hopes of speedily making it a place of importance. Adopting the suggestions of advisers on the day of the public sale of lots, which was about fifty years ago, he procured a barrel of sugar and a keg of whisky for the entertainment of the attending crowd, but though the liquor was consumed the lots were not sold, and in a year or two the too sanguine proprietor removed from the vicinity, disposing of his property to Peter Doty and Israel Kuder. Jesse Webb kept the first tavern; Charles Davis started the first store; Anthony Hollister, who owned an ashery here, James White and Peter Doty were early settlers. The village now contains one store, a hotel, one harness, one wagon and one blacksmith shop, a school and a Methodist Protestant Church.

The Methodist Protestant class was organized December 23, 1877, by Rev. C. K. Stillwagon with about thirteen members, including John Kuder and wife, Gilbert Thomas, Elizabeth Kuder, Andrew McCormick and wife, Jane A. McCormick, Cornelius and Eleanor Eastlick, George W. Eastlick and wife, and Mary White. The first meetings were held in the schoolhouse, and in 1878 the church edifice, a frame structure, 32x57, was erected at a cost of \$4,000, and was dedicated by Rev. Alexander Clark, of Pittsburgh, August 11, 1878. The successors of Rev. Stillwagon have been: Revs. E. A. Brindley, 1878; C. K. Stillwagon, 1879; J. M. Mason, 1880; J. J. Wagner, 1881-82; W. S. Fleming, 1883. This charge was at first connected with Trumbull Circuit, but since 1880 has been a station. The membership is about eighty. Both Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant classes were active at Turnersville, and in common built a schoolhouse and church where regular services of both branches were held, but in time both societies disbanded.

State Line Methodist Episcopal society was organized with fourteen members by Rev. E. Morse, the first pastor, about 1819. The society first worshiped in a schoolhouse, and in 1851 the church edifice, situated near the southwest corner of the township and county, in the western part of Tract 830, was erected at a cost of \$1,100. William Yoke, Peter Royal, Henry Royal, John Betts and Mr. Edwards and wife were early members. The congregation is now large and includes many members residing in Mercer County and in Ohio. It is a part of Jamestown Circuit.