

History of Wayne Township

Wayne Township was part of the original land that King Charles II granted to William Penn as payment of a debt owed to William Penn's father. William Penn, and later his sons did not immediately open all the land for settlement. In an effort of good will, Penn purchased part of the land back from the native inhabitants.

The native Indians were primarily Tuscarora Indians, members of the Iroquois Confederacy, more commonly known as Six Nations. The Iroquois had a strong connection to nature, especially woodland animals. Their clans were named after animals. Examples include Deer Clan, Bear Clan, Beaver Clan, Wolf Clan and Turtle Clan. Iroquois were an aggressive tribe. Interesting fact is that women were the tribe leaders. They lived in what is known as long houses.

Between the years of 1754 through 1800 much expansion and settlements developed in what is now the Mifflin County Area. In July of 1782, Wayne County was officially established, when Cumberland Court divided an upper section of Derry Township.

In the early 1800's Pennsylvania developed a state canal system. The canal that was developed in Wayne Township followed the Juanita River from McVeytown to the present borough of Kistler and into what became Mount Union. This four and one-half mile canal route went around the "Great Loop" of the Juanita River. Canals were a system of moving bulk goods more efficiently than over land. Both people and goods could now travel to cities like Philadelphia.

By the spring of 1850 Railway trains competed with the canals.

Wayne Township has a rich history in agriculture, mining, mills, factories and the trades. The hard-working people of Wayne Township knew how to have fun too! Township baseball and football were a great source of recreation for the community.

As the area became more populated, schools were built to service each local. By 1889 Wayne Township had 10 schools. Several of these one room schoolhouses have been repurposed, some as residences. The Wayne Township Cross Roads Community Center is one example of a repurposed school house.

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