

Monroe Township Named For President Monroe

This township, named for President Monroe, included Beaumont and Noxen after the township was divided from Northmoreland in 1832.

This happy hunting grounds for the Indians was in the beginning a portion of Westmoreland County, Connecticut. Later under the Penn Treaties it was a portion of Luzerne County from which it separated in 1840 to become part of Wyoming County. *2

The first election for township officers was held at North Moreland.

The first election in the township itself was held at George Cairl's house (now home of Samuel Davis). The records were lost.

Nathan Parrish and Peter Lutz were elected as the first justices in 1840. (The Nelson Harding home in Noxen is that of Peter Lutz.)

Munsell's "History of Luzerne, Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties" states the first settler in these parts was a J. Lewis who came here in 1804. *1

Lewis was followed by Ward Frazer, then Lewis Warwick, and Jared Slaughter, a noted hunter, fisherman, and expert rifleman who settled in the vicinity of the Children's Home at Stull above Noxen.

These early settlers came here to obtain land grants and settled on the mountain tops. The land had to be surveyed.

Josiah Newberry was the state surveyor who obtained many tracts of land here in 1813 as payment for his services. He also did some surveying for Colonel Matthias Hollenback of Wilkes-Barre, a prominent figure in the early development of the country between Wilkes-Barre and Elmira.

On the original site of land settled by this Josiah Newberry, who at first claimed much of the land now called "Beaumont", is one of his descendants, Mr. William C. Newberry, born April 9, 1870. Mr. Newberry gave the following data when he was interviewed: "I am the fifth generation to live on this land which has been in the hands of the Newberrys since Josiah Newberry claimed it as his. This is one of his original 424 acres which now is divided into this farm, the Charles Clark farm, the Glen Clark place, and John Rifenbery's farm."

"My father, Oliver C. Newberry, enlisted in the Civil War with the Army of the Potomac, got malaria and was in the hospital which was the patent office in Washington. He was sent home, then drafted by the Army, and was present at Lee's surrender. I have my father's gun in the house right now."

"I remember my father saying that Josiah Newberry was born in Connecticut in 1782, married Mary Chandler, had eleven children, and died at the age of 73."

"I believe the Jackson and Frear settlers bought their lands from Josiah Newberry who owned the greater part of Beaumont."

"Oliver Wilson was a son-in-law to Josiah Newberry and I can recall the Wilsons owning the land now belonging to the Douns farm, the Union Church, the school grounds, John Lewis, Clarence Hilberts."

"There was a Wilson grist mill built on the site of the first Newberry sawmill near the present bridge at the foot of the Cemetery Hill. There used to be an oar factory there too."

"Then Scott and Norton Newberry, descendants of Josiah, lived on the farm where Charles Hilbert used to live and Arthur Smith is now. Norton was born here in Beaumont in 1839. He entered the Union Army September 10, 1861, in the 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteers and was with them fourteen months when he reenlisted in Co. A, 4th U. S. Light Artillery, was present at thirteen engagements, lost an arm at Gettysburg, and was discharged May 2, 1864. In 1861 he married Armina H. Montross, daughter of Elijah Montross."

"There was a Frank Newberry too, who was born in Beaumont April 9, 1848. He was with the 104th N. Y. Infantry and he too

saw Lee surrender. He married Eliza Bennett, daughter of Josiah Bennett. They had three children, Alberta, born November 22, 1870; Josephine, born January 15, 1872; and Kate, October 5, 1876. In 1878 Frank built a steam saw mill over in Buckwheat Hollow on the present Mary Kibbler farm which used to be the McKnight tract.

"Another Newberry, Chauncey, was in the Civil War too. Some of his regalia is on display at the Gettysburg Museum."

"I've heard it said that more men from Monroe Township served in the Civil War than there were voters and that public offices could not be filled."

Matthew Phoenix was an early settler who arrived in Monroe Township in 1815, bought out Peter Farrer, and became 'owner of 409 acres in a wilderness of no roads but bridle paths."

Matthew Phoenix was born at Kingston, Delaware County, N. Y., in 1769. He married Mary May whose father, Thomas May, operated a saw mill on the present Elmer Dymond property.

Nine children were born to Matthew and Mary Phoenix. Mr. Phoenix lived to be 107 years old.

Lloyd Phoenix of Noxen is a living descendant.

The original Phoenix homestead is now occupied by William Munkatchy and the farms of Oscar Patton, Elwood Patton, and Elmer Race are part of the Phoenix tract which now is the present boundary between Noxen and Monroe Townships.

Following Matthew Phoenix to the Bowman's Creek area in 1816 came Josiah Newberry's brother-in-law, Philemon Clark from Plainville.

Clark purchased a tract of land from Lazarus Finney and 200 acres from Jesse Good whose land joined Newberry's. In 1953 that complete purchase reaches from the north rear of the present Lewis Orcutt farm to the southern boundary of the present Charles W. Smith's farm. Just imagine! The original purchase price was \$1,500. Some of the present land sites on that purchase include homes of Stanley Kozak, C. J. Dress, whose home was John Clark's, (one of Philemon's sixteen children), William Arch Austin whose house was built by a daughter of Clark's married to a Freeman, William Martin, Charles Hilbert, Willard Wetzel, and a direct descendant, George Clark.

Mr. Lewis Orcutt owns the original warranty deed written in long hand and signed by Lazarus Finney, Philemon Clark, Aaron Brown, and Orial C. Orcutt.

At the deaths of Philemon Clark and his wife, Elizabeth, his remaining children divided his estate (which had to be settled in Orphan's Court) and the present land owned by Lewis and George Orcutt was bid in by Aaron Brown who immediately sold it to Orial C. Orcutt. Orial Curtis Orcutt was born April 22, 1802, at Poughkeepsie, N. Y. When he first came to Beaumont in 1824, he cleared then farmed the forest land of the recently deceased Mrs. Myrtle Martin.

O. C. Orcutt married Nancy Clarke (born in 1806, died in 1878) daughter of Philemon Clarke.

Before O. C. Orcutt there was an Ebenezer Parrish, who was born in 1760, in Massachusetts where he later enlisted July 15, 1776, in the Continental Army. This Mr. Parrish came here in 1822.

Peter Montross came in 1824 and bought 100 acres of the Swetland and Benjamin Newberry tracts. He and his wife taught the first Sunday School. As a local preacher of the Protestant Methodist Church he preached gratuitously over forty years. He was married first to Levina Newberry (who died in 1827) died in 1873. Mrs. Clara Smith and then to Olive Jackson, who now owns the Peter Montross place.

Nathan Parrish, born in 1796, came to Monroe Township in 1828 and settled a mile east of the village on land purchased from Josiah Newberry—just below the present John Rifenbery farm.

Michael Hafner, born in 1808, settled in Monroe Township in 1840 in Stonestown which today we call Stull, above Noxen near the Children's Home.

Rufus J. Frear built the Frear homestead in 1840 and cleared land over which the present route 309 runs. The house and land is now owned by James Sickler.

In an interview with Mrs. Calla Frear Parrish, Beaumont's oldest living resident now (born May 28, 1862) the following Frear data was garnered:

"John Frear built the first frame house on Leonard's Creek at the foot of Cemetery Hill. This house, though in ruins now, is still there. Daniel Meeker, Sr., bought it from the Nettie Davis estate."

"The Frears left France in the early sixties 'thirties when the French Hugenots were undergoing persecution. They settled in West Stockbridge, Mass., then New York State and finally landed here."

"My father, Rufus Frear, was a justice of the peace here for two terms and a deputy marshal. He enlisted in Company F, 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteers. He fought in battles at Antietam, Fredericksburg,

and Gettysburg, then was captured at Ream's Station February 6, 1864, confined to Libby Prison, and died of malnutrition at Salisbury, N. C., December 16, 1864.

"William Frear was another 1840 settler. He was born in Eaton in 1827, married to Elizabeth Parrish of Monroe in 1854. They had six children, Edwin D., born in 1855, David in 1857, Emma in 1859, Carrie in 1861, Lois, 1862, and Charles, 1873. Uncle Will was a school director for ten years, assessor for eleven years, and a poor-master."

"Henry J. Frear, my brother, was born here in 1847 and in 1866 he married his cousin, Mandana K. Frear of Frear Hill, North Eaton, by whom he had Gertrude and Alpha who are dead, and Florence whom you see right there very much alive in that chair this very minute."

"My mother was Mary Louisa Jackson whose people settled here on land bought from Joseph Newberry. Uncle William H. Jackson was born here in 1835. In 1866 he built a grist mill on the site of the first grist mill built by Josiah Newberry. The mill had a run of two stones and was quite capable of doing all the work brought to it."

"The stones of this mill are now part of the landscape at Niccolo Cortilio's summer home."

"William Jackson married Sarah A. Clarke, daughter of Sydney Clarke and had four children, of whom three lived: Charles born February 17, 1871, Jennie May, April 1, 1873, and Stanley A., August 3, 1879. Mr. Jackson entered the Union Army in 1862 in the 171st Pa. Volunteers and returned in 1863. Today none of the Jacksons live in the homestead recently purchased by Fuller Dymond who wishes to sell it."

The Crispells came to Monroe Township about the same time the Frears did.

The Crispells too were French Hugenots. They came to America in 1660 and settled in Ulster County, N. Y.

Thomas Crispell, the fourth generation of the original French immigrants, settled on land of the present Edgar Engleman Fruit Farm at Noxen.

This Thomas Crispell was born in Ulster County, N. Y., September 10, 1795, and died in Wyoming County, Pa., December 22, 1861. He married Sara Weckes, born April 20, 1795, died September 12, 1823.

It was Thomas's son, William Henry Crispell, who settled in Buckwheat Hollow in 1844 on the present Frank Blossom farm which Crispell purchased from Elisha Diamond. In 1854 William H. Crispell added more land to his by purchasing some from Matthew Phoenix.

William Henry Crispell was born December 20, 1816, in Ulster County, N. Y., and died here July 22, 1902. He married Sarah Wright by whom he had these children: Severn, Gertrude, Mary and Ziba and Priscilla Honeywell by whom he had Zachariah, John, William, Corry and Hattie.

Severn Crispell, who was born in Monroe Township April 9, 1848, died November 26, 1926, married Eunice Harris (born July 14, 1844, died February 12, 1894). Their children were Chester, James, Sarah, Frederick, Elmer, George Ira Albert, and Grace.

Elmer Crispell now lives in Monroe Township on land purchased from O. C. Orcutt from the original Philemon Clarke Estate.

George Crispell, Alfred E. Crispell, and John M. Crispell also live in this township in the vicinity of the original settlers at Buckwheat Hollow.

Crispells have served their country from the time of the Revolution and now the Korean conflict. The book entitled "The Crispell Family" lists nine generations of the Crispells from 1660-1950, truly a family treasure.

Another early settler was Thomas Baringer born at Olive, Pa., in 1827. He came here in 1848 to dwell on the land now owned by Dr. Eugene Farley. Mr. Baringer married a Hannah Traver of Olive, Pa., in 1846. He enlisted in the 143rd Pa. Volunteers in 1862 and was with the regiment at the Wilderness and all of its other battles. He was mustered out in 1865. The Baringers had a daughter, Olive, who married George I. Miller. This Miller fellow was born in 1846 at New Milford, Pa., came here in 1867,

then for his first wife married Rosy O. Wall, John Wall's daughter. Mr. Miller had four wives with Olive Baringer as number four. Miller served in the 152nd Pa. regiment until it was mustered out. After Olive was married she sold the Baringer farm and kept a grocery and candy store during the early 1900's in the house now owned by William Meeker. She now lives in Binghamton, N. Y.

There was quite a flood in Bowman's Creek in 1850 when horses, barns and mills were carried away.

The Travers came with the Baringers for Baringer married a Traver and a Traver married a Baringer, settling on land in Buckwheat Hollow.

There was a Mark D. Newman who was born in Dallas in 1830 and came here in 1853. The Nultons

bought his farm in 1890. Newman was post master, school director, inspector of elections, proprietor of the mail stage between Kingston and Monroe and the postmaster in 1877 and 1878. He was married in 1857 to Carrie F. Earl of Tunkhannock. Their children were: Henry W., born May 27, 1857; Miles R., April 24, 1854, and Hiram H., May 2, 1871. Mark Newman's grandfather left home one morning to seek work and never returned. No traces of him were ever found.

One of these Newman's, Morton, was a blacksmith who practiced his trade here in the early 1900's in the house occupied by William Derhammer and owned by Warpa Hadsall.

Another newcomer about this time was R. Harper Evans who was born at Deposit, Delaware County, N. Y. He had married Miss H. N. Belden, daughter of Silas T. Belden, M. D., of Dover Plains, N. Y. They had one son, Henry C. Evans, born February, 1853. Part of Monroe Township now bears the name of "Evans Falls" at which spot R. Harper Evans first bought 1,300 acres of land comprising part of the Wilson, Daniel Jackson, Matthew Bridge and Hoyt tracts plus an old saw mill and one house. He built a new mill on the site of the old one, then his new one burned in December, 1877, but by May he had replaced it adding machinery for making lath, shingles, etc. From 20 to 50 men and boys were employed to peel from 1,000 to 1,500 tons of bark per year on the additional 2,000 acres purchased. This bark was taken to a Tunkhannock tannery. The James Ogden Estate of Tunkhannock owns the site of Evans' mill on Bowman's Creek on Route 309 near the present entrance to Root Hollow. The foundation of the old house is there on the same site and at the rear of Evans Falls, a very good local swimming hole.

The Hilbert family too were among those who developed farm land after clearing the timber. Simon Hilbert, who was born in Germany, came from Germany to Wilkes-Barre with his wife and foster son, Daniel Morgan. From Wilkes-Barre they settled and cleared the land of the William Herdman farm now partly owned by Cragg Herdman, Arthur Parks, and ?

After the sale to the Herdmans, the Hilberts owned the present Edward Freeman farm, part of the Nesbitt Estate, and in 1889 the Samuel Cook farm which Harry Hilbert still owns.

Scott Morgan, the son of Daniel Morgan, was born in Monroe Township in 1847. In 1873 he married Nelly Brown of Monroe. Their children were Mertie born in 1877, John B. (born in 1879) who became Superintendent of Wyoming County Schools, Alice, Florence (Mrs. Harry Wall), and Harry.

David M. Silkworth, M. D., came to Monroe Township in 1862. It was he who named the local settlement Beaumont—French for "beautiful mountains."

Dr. Silkworth always told Mrs. Calla Parrish, "You were my first baby."

Dr. Silkworth was born October 3, 1820, at Stafford, Conn. He received his early education at the "common school" and at Monson Academy, Mass. He studied medicine under Dr. A. W. Lenwood at Lee, Mass., and was admitted to practice in 1850. After enjoying an extensive practice in several states, he opened an office here in the house now occupied by Emil Balewski. He served with the 53rd Pa. Volunteers in the Civil War doing good service on the hospital staff until he resumed his practice here in 1865 and kept a drug store, on land now used by Daniel Meeker, Sr., for Meeker's Garage. Dr. Silkworth married Nancy J. Stanton (born June 17, 1838) of Clinton, Wayne County. Mrs. Silkworth was a sister to Mrs. Solomon McConnell.

Edward Dimmick came to Monroe in 1864 from Mansfield, Conn., where he was born in 1803. He married Laura Round of Jackson, Pa., Mary Meredith in 1865, and then Abigail Stevens Parrish, widow of Ebenezer Parrish. Ebenezer's father was a Revolutionary soldier and pensioner.

Edward Dimmick's son, Byron, finally sold the original settlement to John Staley.

Byron Dimmick was born in 1833. He married Ermina O. Turrell of Connecticut by whom he had four children: Frederick born June 27, 1854, Lelia U. February 14, 1856, Shelby T., October 1, 1861, and Cora D., October 4, 1866.

Byron Dimmick owned a mill on mill which was sold to William Frear, then to Nesbitt Estate.

Levi Moshier or Mosier came from Lexington, N. Y., in 1865 to settle on land now occupied by Palmer Updyke's farm, Beaumont Inn and the former Caleb and Mosier farms. Levi Mosier operated the only "up and down" saw-mill in this locality on the stream coming from Lake Catalpa near the former Austin homestead now the Searfoss farm.

In 1869 H. P. Colvin came from Benton, Pa., where he was born. He married Miss B. Swingle, daughter of Ephraim Swingle of Monroe,

To them were born Eliza December 7, 1870 and Charles A., September 23, 1874. In 1878 Colvin built a saw mill on the land now owned by Heber Belles. There was also a kiln on the same property for making bricks which were marketed in Wyoming.

Colvin settled in Monroe a year after Noxen Township was formed or broke off with Monroe in 1868.

In 1884 Henry G. Dietz cleared the land which now bears the name of Dietz Hollow.

Lutes' Corners was formerly called Crosby Corners until William Crosby sold his land to Wilbur Lutes in 1898.

EARLY DEEDS

(Contributed by Heber Belles, Sr.)
The first white man to blaze a trail to this vicinity was Marcus Blair who left the Buffalo, N. Y. area as a soldier of the French and Indian War to travel to Easton with a companion, a mule, and a dog.

He became separated from his companion and his mule was devoured by wild animals.

With his dog and his compass as his guides he continued on, crossing Bowman's Creek near Stull. Near the outlet of Harveys Lake he fell, breaking his leg. He then built a lean-to for protection in a cave where he wintered. He was the original discoverer of Harveys Lake.

When he recovered from his leg accident he staked out the area surrounding the Outlet as a future claim and a water power site.

Blair journeyed in the spring until he came to the Susquehanna River (near the present Nanticoke) and noted by the smoke there were several Indian villages at the present Wilkes-Barre and Plymouth. The year was 1757.

The first Connecticut settlers made their first roads on the mountain tops.

One road went from Eastwood Mountain through Rattle Snake Springs to a point near Sugar Hollow. Another road was cut from the Eastwood Mountain toward the present Ricketts.

Many of these early mountain top settlers whose clearings can still be seen left with their possessions for the prairie lands when they opened up.

General Sullivan in his expedition against the Six Nations sent a detachment over the Root Hollow Road. The trail they blazed was called the Old State Road.

The next road started from the present Centermoreland and over the hills to Beaumont, crossing the Frear property, continuing down Leonard's Creek to Evans Falls on Bowman's Creek to make a junction with the Root Hollow Trail.

Near Evans Falls there was a road from the present land of Voyle Traver to the mountain top towards

Noxen. The original settlers here were Knox and Chandler. In the mountain pasture fields back of Lewis Orcutt's the cellar walls and apple trees of these log cabin residents still stand.

The first road toward Wilkes-Barre was the Fell Road which was followed by the State Road.

When checking old deeds recorded under the name of "CLARKE" at Wyoming County Court House here are the records:

- 1852—Philemon Clark to Amos Poole.
- 1852—Philemon Clark to Elijah Montross.
- 1860—Philemon Clark Heirs, Geo. D. Clark, John Clark to O. C. Orcutt.
- 1860—Aaron Clark to Hugh Patton.
- 1865—Sarah and John Clark to Charles Crispell.
- 1885—George Traver from George

and Alice Clark.
1914—Sarah and John Clark to L. B. Hilbert.

1916—Sarah and John Clark to Charles Hess.
These are early "NEWBERRY" deed records:

- 1847—Johiah Newberry to Milton Newberry.
- 1864—Chauncey Newberry to John Shotwell.
- 1886—Norton L. Newberry to Park.
- Norton L. Newberry to McConnell.
- 1891—Frank Newberry to George T. Miller.
- 1903—Fanny Newberry to A. W. Cook.
- 1909—Margaret Newberry to Elizabeth Scovelle.
- "CRISPELL" early deeds:
- 1844—Wm. H. Crispell from Elihu Dimond.
- 1852—Thomas Crispell from Elias Hoyt.
- 1854—Wm. H. Crispell from Mat-

(Continued on Page 10—A)

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