

Dauphin County History

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Dauphin County is one of the oldest and most influential counties in the development of our nation. Located in south central Pennsylvania, this 557.7-square-mile area is approximately 100 miles west of Philadelphia and 200 miles east of Pittsburgh. Today, the days of the Harris Ferry, Indian trails, canals, and Conestoga wagon and stagecoach routes have yielded to a vast network of highways and air routes.

John Harris, a native of Yorkshire, England, arrived in Philadelphia as one of the first emigrants to accompany William Penn. In approximately 1719, Harris moved with his wife Esther from Chester County to Lancaster County. They then eventually built a log cabin on the banks of the Susquehanna, near the present juncture of Paxton and Front streets.

In about 1727, John Harris, Jr. was born. Harris, Jr. became the founder of Harrisburg and the leader in the movement to establish Dauphin County. Other settlers soon followed in the footsteps of John Harris, Sr., and on December 17, 1733, the proprietaries of Pennsylvania granted to him by patent, 300 acres of land, within which was included the present site of the Dauphin County Court House. He developed a large trade with the Indians in fur and skins and established numerous trading posts. He also began farming on a small scale and introduced the first plow to the vicinity. Harris, Sr. established the first ferry across the Susquehanna, which in time became so popular that that place was no longer called by its Indian name of Peixtan, but Harris' Ferry.

John Harris, Sr. died in 1748, and was buried, at his request, beneath the shade of a mulberry tree in River Park below Harrisburg Hospital. He had once been tied to this tree by hostile Indians who were prepared to burn him, but fortuitously, his Indian friends rescued him in the nick of time. John Harris, Jr. operated the ferry established by his father, over which were taken many boatloads of supplies for the Continental army west of the Susquehanna River.

In the beginning of Provincial government in Pennsylvania, what is now Dauphin County was part of Chester. An act of Assembly of 1729 included a major portion of it in the new county of Lancaster. John Harris, Jr. argued against the inconvenience of having to travel to Lancaster for the conduct of legal business and court sessions, so he presented an appeal to the General Assembly in 1782 to carve out a separate county around Harris' Ferry.

Although a stormy debate ensued over whether the county seat should be in Middletown or Harris Ferry, Harris ultimately won out, and by an act of the General

Assembly of March 4, 1785, Dauphin County was established, providing that its seat of government and justice should be "near Harris's Ferry."

John Harris gave two lots on Market Streets and two on Walnut Streets for the use of the county, and with amazing foresight, gave the southern part of Capitol Park for the use of the Commonwealth should the seat of state government be chosen for this centrally located area. In 1785, Harris's son-in-law, William Maclay, laid out the town proposed by Harris.

The county was named "Dauphin," in honor of the eldest son of the King of France, who had come to the aid of the American colonies during the American Revolution.

In 1791, the city was named "Harrisburg," after a brief stint as "Louisbourg" in honor of the French King Louis.

The first court house was a humble log cabin on South Front Street, owned by John Harris. The first real courthouse was an unpretentious two-story red brick building by the side of the old Lancaster Road. Its construction was financed largely from the proceeds of the operation of the nearby Harris Ferry. Today's imposing Georgian-style marble courthouse stands by the side of the same road.

The first courthouse became the temporary Capitol of Pennsylvania in the fall of 1812, when state government was moved from Lancaster to Harrisburg, under the Act of February 21, 1810.

In January 1822, the first State House was completed on Capitol Hill, and the courthouse used as the Capitol was returned to the county for its courts and business.

In 1860, a second brick courthouse was built on the same site and enlarged in 1894. Today's courthouse, made of stately white Georgia marble, at the corner of Front and Market streets, was erected between 1941-1943, and dedicated on December 21, 1943.

Over the years, the county has furnished leaders in religion, patriotism, education, the arts, science, professions, industry and agriculture.



The Township has extensive water frontage along the Swatara and Conewago Creeks and the Susquehanna River. There are several islands included in the Township. Chief among them are Shelly's Island, Elliot's Island (now called **Three Mile Island**, the site of the famous nuclear power plant) and Hill Island.

Port Royal, now known as Royalton, was the first and largest village in the Township. It was one of the main stops for the Union Canal.

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UNION CANAL OF PENNSYLVANIA



Proposed by William Penn in 1690 to tap the agricultural wealth of the Commonwealth and give access to a second settlement on the Susquehanna River. The Canal was the first ever surveyed in the United States. This was done in 1762 and 1770.

First chartered as the Schuylkill and Susquehanna Canal Co., work was begun in 1792 under the director of William Weston, an English engineer. Several miles of the Canal were dug and 5 locks were built between Myerstown and Lebanon before financial difficulties caused the work to cease. It was this area that President George Washington visited in 1793.

Reorganized in 1811 as the Union Canal Company of Pennsylvania, work began in 1821 and the Canal was completed for the opening in 1828. A branch canal was finished in 1832 reaching from the Water Works north to Pine Grove to tap the coal fields and supply much needed water for the summit level. The Canal required an elaborate pumping system to keep the summit level from going dry. The cost was in excess of six million dollars.

The 102 locks of the Canal were built too small (8-1/2' x 75') and could not accommodate the larger boats from the Pennsylvania Canal and the Schuylkill Canal. Enlargement took place in the 1850's, increasing lock size to 17' x 90'.

Dug through the ridge dividing the waters of the Quittapahilla Creek and Clark's Run, the tunnel was originally 729 feet long. Drilling was done by hand and blasting with gunpowder through Argillaceous Slate rock with veins of hard flinty

limestone 80 feet below the summit of the ridge. Progress of the work was 5 yards lineal per week.

Work began May 1825 and was completed in June 1827, at a total cost of \$30,404.29. The tunnel's length was reduced to 600 feet during the canal enlargement in 1858 at a cost of \$8,280.

The first boat to pass through the tunnel was the Alpha of Tulpehocken on June 12, 1827. Boats were poled through the tunnel against the ceiling while mules were led over the top of the ridge.

In April 1950, the Lebanon County Historical Society purchased the Union Canal Tunnel. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 1, 1974.

Designated a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 1970, this tunnel is the oldest existing transportation tunnel in the United States. At the time of its construction, it was considered a work almost unknown in this country.

On April 19, 1994, the tunnel was designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior.

For more information about the Union Canal visit www.lebanonhistory.org

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PENNSYLVANIA ON THE EVE OF COLONIZATION

Indians: The First Inhabitants

When first discovered by Europeans, Pennsylvania, like the rest of the continent, was inhabited by groups of American Indians, people of Mongoloid ancestry unaware of European culture. The life of the Indians reflected Stone Age backgrounds, especially in material arts and crafts. Tools, weapons and household equipment were made from stone, wood, and bark. Transportation was on foot or by canoe. Houses were made of bark, clothing from the skins of animals. The rudiments of a more complex civilization were at hand in the arts of weaving, pottery, and agriculture, although hunting and food gathering prevailed. Some Indians formed confederacies such as the League of the Five Nations, which was made up of certain New York-Pennsylvania groups of Iroquoian speech. The other large linguistic group in Pennsylvania was the Algonkian, represented by the Delawares, Shawnees, and other tribes.

The Delawares, calling themselves Leni-Lenape or "real men," originally occupied the basin of the Delaware River and were the most important of several tribes that spoke an Algonkian language. Under the pressure of white settlement, they began to drift westward to the Wyoming Valley, to the Allegheny and, finally, to eastern Ohio. Many of them took the French side in the French and Indian War, joined in Pontiac's War, and fought on the British side in the Revolutionary War. Afterward, some fled to Ontario and the rest wandered west. Their descendants now live on reservations in Oklahoma and Ontario. The Munsees were a division of the Delawares, who lived on the upper Delaware River, above the Lehigh River.

The Susquehannocks were a powerful Iroquoian-speaking tribe who lived along the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania and Maryland. An energetic people living in Algonkian-speaking tribes' territory, they engaged in many wars. In the end, they fell victim to new diseases brought by European settlers, and to attacks by Marylanders and by the Iroquois, which

destroyed them as a nation by 1675. A few descendants were among the Conestoga Indians who were massacred in 1763 in Lancaster County.

The Shawnees were an important Algonkian-speaking tribe who came to Pennsylvania from the west in the 1690s, some groups settling on the lower Susquehanna and others with the Munsees near Easton. In the course of time they moved to the Wyoming Valley and the Ohio Valley, where they joined other Shawnees who had gone there directly. They were allies of the French in the French and Indian War and of the British in the Revolution, being almost constantly at war with settlers for forty years preceding the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. After Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers (1794), they settled near the Delawares in Indiana, and their descendants now live in Oklahoma.

The Iroquois Confederacy of Iroquoian-speaking tribes, at first known as the Five Nations, included the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. After about 1723 when the Tuscaroras from the South were admitted to the confederacy, it was called the Six Nations. The five original tribes, when first known to Europeans, held much of New York State from Lake Champlain to the Genesee River. From this central position they gradually extended their power. As middlemen in the fur trade with the western Indians, as intermediaries skilled in dealing with the whites, and as the largest single group of Indians in northeastern America, they gained influence over Indian tribes from Illinois and Lake Michigan to the eastern seaboard. During the colonial wars their alliance or their neutrality was eagerly sought by both the French and the British. The Senecas, the westernmost tribe, established villages on the upper Allegheny in the 1730s. Small groups of Iroquois also scattered westward into Ohio and became known as Mingo. During the Revolution, most of the Six Nations took the British side, but the Oneidas and many Tuscaroras were pro-American. Gen. John Sullivan's expedition up the Susquehanna River and Gen. Daniel Brodhead's expedition up the

Allegheny River laid waste to their villages and cornfields in 1779 and disrupted their society. Many who had fought for the British moved to Canada after the Revolution, but the rest worked out peaceful relations with the United States under the leadership of such chiefs as Cornplanter. The General Assembly recognized this noted chief by granting him a tract of land on the upper Allegheny in 1791.

Other Tribes, which cannot be identified with certainty, occupied western Pennsylvania before the Europeans arrived, but were eliminated by wars and diseases in the 17th century, long before the Delawares, Shawnees and Senecas began to move there. The Eries, a great Iroquoian-speaking tribe, lived along the south shore of Lake Erie, but were wiped out by the Iroquois about 1654. The Mahicans, an Algonkian-speaking tribe related to the Mohegans of Connecticut, lived in the upper Hudson Valley of New York but were driven out by pressure from the Iroquois and from the white settlers, some joining the Delawares in the Wyoming Valley about 1730 and some settling at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Two Algonkian-speaking tribes, the Conoys and the Nanticokes, moved northward from Maryland early in the 18th century, settling in southern New York, and eventually moved west with the Delawares, with whom they merged. The Saponis, Siouan-speaking tribes from Virginia and North Carolina, moved northward to seek Iroquois protection and were eventually absorbed into the Cayugas. In the latter part of the 18th century there were temporary villages of Wyandots, Chippewas, Missisaugas, and Ottawas in western Pennsylvania.

European Background and Early Settlements

The rise of nation-states in Europe coincided with the age of discovery and brought a desire for territorial gains beyond the seas, first by Spain and Portugal and later by England, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Wars in southern Germany caused many Germans to migrate eventually to Pennsylvania. The struggle in England between the Crown and Parliament also had a pronounced effect on migration to America. The Reformation led

to religious ferment and division, and minorities of various faiths sought refuge in America. Such an impulse brought Quakers, Puritans, and Catholics from England, German Pietists from the Rhineland, Scotch Calvinists via Ireland, and Huguenots from France. Also, great economic changes took place in Europe in the 17th century. The old manorial system was breaking down, creating a large class of landless men ready to seek new homes. An increase in commerce and trade led to an accumulation of capital available for colonial ventures. The Swedish and Dutch colonies were financed in this way, and William Penn's colony was also a business enterprise.

Exploration

The English based their claims in North America on the discoveries of the Cabots (1497), while the French pointed to the voyage of Verrazano in 1524. The Spanish claim was founded on Columbus' discovery of the West Indies, but there is evidence that Spanish ships sailed up the coast of North America as early as 1520. It is uncertain, however, that any of these explorers touched land that became Pennsylvania. Captain John Smith journeyed from Virginia up the Susquehanna River in 1608, visiting the Susquehannock Indians. In 1609 Henry Hudson, an Englishman in the Dutch service, sailed the ***Half Moon*** into Delaware Bay, thus giving the Dutch a claim to the area. In 1610 Captain Samuel Argall of Virginia visited the bay and named it for Lord de la Warr, governor of Virginia. After Hudson's time, the Dutch navigators Cornelis Hendricksenm (1616) and Cornelis Jacobsen (1623) explored the Delaware region more thoroughly, and trading posts were established in 1623 and in later years, though not on Pennsylvania soil until 1647.

The Colony of New Sweden, 1638-1655

The Swedes were the first to make permanent settlement, beginning with the expedition of 1637-1638, which occupied the site of Wilmington, Delaware. In 1643 Governor Johan Printz of New Sweden established his capital at Tinicum Island within the present limits of Pennsylvania, where there is now a state park bearing his name.

Dutch Dominion on the Delaware, 1655-1664, and the Duke of York's Rule, 1664-1681

Trouble broke out between the Swedes and the Dutch, who had trading posts in the region. In 1655 Governor Peter Stuyvesant of New Netherlands seized New Sweden and made it part of the Dutch colony. In 1664 the English seized the Dutch possessions in the name of the Duke of York, the king's brother. Except when it was recaptured by the Dutch in 1673-1674, the Delaware region remained under his jurisdiction until 1681. English laws and civil government were introduced by The Duke of Yorke's Laws in 1676.

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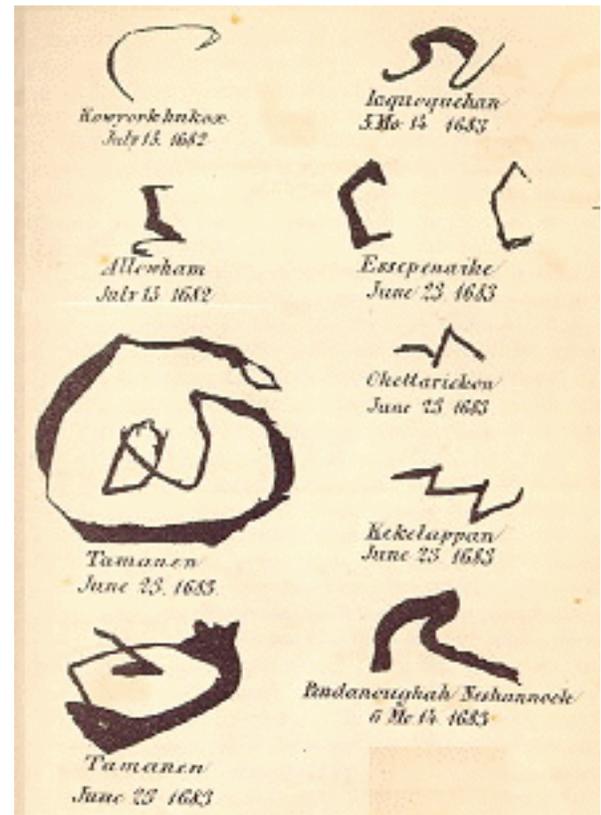
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Harrisburg: Pennsylvania's Capital City



As American communities go, Harrisburg, the capital of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is an old community.

The Indians, using the Susquehanna River and the natural trails along it, settled the area long before the white man came. As early as 1690 William Penn, to advertise his Province, offered a settlement "upon the river of Susquehannagh." White traders came soon afterwards.

Just before 1700 John Harris, born in Yorkshire, England, probably about 1673, and a brewer by occupation, landed in Philadelphia. In 1705 he secured a license to obtain land, and sometime between then and 1718 he arrived in the wilderness of what was to become Harrisburg. He prospered as a trader, farmer, and ferryboat operator, and he was highly respected by both white settlers and Indians. In 1720 he married Esther Say, a native of Yorkshire, in Philadelphia.

Harris died in December of 1748, and together with his Negro slave Hercules and a Harris daughter is buried in River Park in front of the John Harris Mansion, Front and Washington streets, build by his son in 1766.

The second John Harris, one of four Harris children, was born in October, 1726, and is known as the founder of Harrisburg. He planned the city with his son-in-law, William Maclay, a member from Pennsylvania of the first United States Senate, and laid out the lots on April 14, 1785. Harris married twice and had a least five children. He died July 29, 1791, and is buried in Paxton Church Cemetery in suburban Paxtang.

For a short time Harrisburg was known as "Louisburg" after King Louis XVI of France, but the second John Harris insisted it be named in memory of his father. The second Harris helped to organize Dauphin County, which was created from part of Lancaster County on March 4, 1785, and named for the French dauphin, the king's eldest son, who died in 1789. Harrisburg from the beginning was the county seat and was incorporated as a borough, with fewer than 500 people, on April 13, 1791. It received it charter as a city on March 19, 1810, when it had a population of about 13,000.

The second Harris by deed conveyed "4 acres and 13 perches to be held in trust until the Legislature see fit to use it" as the site for the capitol. The legislature moved from Philadelphia to Lancaster in 1799, and then in February of 1810 selected Harrisburg to be the capital.

The General Assembly moved to Harrisburg in October, 1812, four months after American declared war against Great Britain. Simon Snyder, of Selinsgrove, was governor and the State had a budget of \$336,189.15. Temporary quarters were used, and in 1819 Governor William Findlay, of Cumberland County, laid the cornerstone of the first Capitol. This two-story brick building lasted until February 12, 1897, when it was gutted by a noontime blaze.

The new Capitol was expected to cost between \$5 and \$10 million, but by the time it opened in 1906 it had cost \$12.5



million, about a third of which went for graft. Five persons, including the architect and the chief contractor, received prison sentences in the famous 1908 Capitol graft trial held in the Commonwealth Court in Harrisburg; however \$4 million of graft, including the \$850 spent for a \$150 flagpole atop the building, was never recovered.

The present Capitol was dedicated October 4, 1906, by President Theodore Roosevelt, who said it was a handsome structure. Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker, under whose administration it was built, contended it was a masterpiece, but Owen Wister, the novelist from Philadelphia, at the time wrote: "The Capitol is not a good work. Outside it looks as much like all other capitols as any banana looks like the rest of the bunch. Inside it is a monstrous botch of bad arrangement, bad lighting, bad ventilation, and the most bloated bad tastes."

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