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A History Of Life And Times In Somerset County

Early Settlers

Very little is written of the earliest white men to enter the territory that later became Somerset County. Indians' mainly of the Delaware tribe, were here when the white people arrived, and needless to say, were not pleased at the thought of losing their hunting grounds.

One of the first white men to settle in what is now Somerset County was George Doherty. Doherty and his family settled on a small tract of land about a mile from the present town of Berlin. The land was purchased under the tanawake chain of title, and was part of the farm now owned by John Shiner.

It is said that Doherty was having dinner at the edge of his clearing one day when he heard his wife screaming and the children crying. He heard a shot and saw his eldest son fall, and then from the bushes he witnessed two Indians dragging his wife from the cabin to her tent. The Indians scolded her as she struggled and afterwards gave her a tawakaw. George Doherty saw his entire family captured as he hid in the brush.

Doherty escaped by making a huge circle around his land during the night and hiding in the brush. Returning to the cabin he then managed to drag his family into a shallow ditch during the night and cover the bodies with stones and brush.

Traveling on foot, Doherty walked over the mountains 120 miles to Carlisle, where he told his tragic story.

Transplantation
The first white surveyor was one who was probably Christopher Cline. He was sent in 1769 to the Ohio Company to explore and report on the land of the Ohio Valley.

Cline and his party traveled over the Monongahela Trail through what is now Adams Township. He crossed the Youghiogheny River at what later became known as the "Great Crossings" near the new transplanted town of Somerset.

The following year 1769, Cline again traveled through the country over the old Northern Indian Trail that was in Indian possession and later known as the "Great Crossings".

He took a very complete journal, and told of reaching the Muddy Creek on Friday evening, November 8, 1768. A heavy rain was falling and they took shelter in an old abandoned Indian house. On Sunday - continuing - they resumed their journey. The party - joined - through Kishkewilings (an Indian village) the site of which is now covered by the Quakerborough Reservoir.

In 1769 Cline built a cabin and persuaded Adam Bucklin, a surveyor, was very familiar with the area.

Another early settler was John Miller. Records from a Moravian missionary show that Miller was living in the area in 1765. The missionary, from Little, Lancaster County was passing through on March 26 of that year when a heavy snow storm hit. He found the cabin of Miller and visited while the snow stood at three and a half feet deep.

Miller, who was a pack horse driver with Colonel Bogert's force in 1768 was living near Fort Detrick on the headwaters of Broadwater. This is what is now the river.

Miller's sons guarded the heretofore wives because they had no sons in which to protect them. He is mentioned in Harmon Husband's records of the early settlers near the top of Allegheny Mountain.

Harmon Husband
Harmon Husband, a relative of Benjamin Franklin, was active in the first settlers. Husband was born and raised in the state of Maryland. He moved his family to North Carolina where he held large estates, and was a prominent man in his community. He was a Quaker preacher and a member of the North Carolina assembly.

At this time King George was imposing heavy taxes on all of the colonies. From Husband's pupil came weekly denunciations of the King, Governor and all he despote who tried to make the new world a gold mine with which to keep the coast in splendor.

Husband organized a group of "Associates". They armed themselves and in May 1775, made the long army along the Allegheny River where they suffered a terrible defeat. Husband would not defend himself.

For nine years the battle grounds and was not seen again in North Carolina and after it had been freed from British rule. Leaving his family at the mercy of neighbors and friends, Husband rode northwest, and searched for a Northern friend when he knew was a trapper in this area. To escape him, Husband by the King's men, he changed his name to "Thomas Doherty" and the settlers in Somerset County knew him by this and a later alias, "The Old Quaker".

While Husband was searching for his friend, Isaac Cline, he left the Broadwater Road at Cuckersland, and was caught in a snow storm on 4, 1771, he came back to top of Allegheny Mountain about noon and noticed a column of smoke rising from a clearing.

Towards evening he and his weary horse returned to the clearing and saw a man engaged in clearing with a team of oxen. A number of children were chopping, grubbing and burning brush. As he approached the clearing, a dog gave the alarm. The man stopped his team and gazed in surprise as he recognized a white man, a soldier of the British.

The children all ran into the cabin, excepting the eldest boy who ran to his father's side. As the farmer came closer, the man waved a sword.

The bond of friendship was stretched and eagerly grasped by Husband. Philip Waggoner spoke in German, but seeing his visitor didn't understand, switched to broken English and said, "Welcome Brother. The men continued their conversation and Waggoner said to his wife, he said, "Come along, you be hungry, you be tired."

Husband really followed and was introduced to the frightened mother and children.

The horse was unloaded and turned loose to graze in the field. Waggoner's wife began preparing food. After they had a friendly meal with the Waggoner family.

In the morning his host spoke to his wife and left with his gun. A half-hour later a shot was heard and the family and guest stepped outside to draw the door. Husband was a plain middle-aged man of middle age, balding, with a high forehead, thin lips, and a serious expression. He was a German settler, but his English was perfect.

Waggoner urged his guest to settle nearby since their closest neighbor was six or seven miles away. Husband explained that he was looking for his friend Cline, and after a day's rest he again took up his journey.

Michael Hueschle
Another of the earliest settlers with a very interesting background was Michael Hueschle. He came to this area in 1773.

Michael was the son of a German soldier and his mother was of inferior rank. Hueschle could not claim a noble until he got rid of his wife and children. He and Michael and his mother to America.

Soon after they reached this country, she received word that she had fallen into a large farm in Germany and would have to return with her child to claim it. At the time, ocean travel was very expensive and dangerous. She gave up the idea of going for a while and finally making her journey back to Germany, in 1780 or 1781. The ship on which they were traveling was boarded by pirates.

Frederick Miller
Michael's mother was killed and Michael was taken captive. He was about 12 or 13 years old at the time, and remained a captive of the pirates for about two years. While the ship was anchored in the harbor, he was rescued by a German family.

In the year 1781 he married Mary Miller who was born and raised in Berks County, Pennsylvania. Three sons were born to them, John, David and Joseph.

As a result of the war between England and the Barren O'Connor lands in Somerset County, the family moved. He was of the first to settle in Somerset County near where Pine Hill is now located.

With his wife and sons on the back of the horse he led Michael out in 1773. They crossed the mountains to reach state and finally reached Somerset county near where Pine Hill is now located.

Michael Hueschle had a large land holding and is a ancestor of the Berghel clan of Somerset County. The name Hueschle, which was the German name, has been converted into many English names.

SOMERSET COUNTY

Early residents outside of the Somerset Buggy Company.

Harmon Husband's original map of the area made between 1788 and 1795. Berlin town is marked but Brunenbrook (Somerset) was not yet established.