

THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY OF
THE UPPER KISKIMINETAS VALLEY

by

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OUTLINE

Controlling purpose: to bring together the scattered bits of historical information pertaining to the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley and to show the important part that it played in the pre-revolutionary history of western Pennsylvania.

- I. Local geography
 - A. Landforms
 - B. Resources
 1. Living resources
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- II. The aboriginal inhabitants
 - A. The Mound Builders
 1. Their remains
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 - B. The Indians
 1. How they came to be in western Pennsylvania
 2. Local tribes
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- III. The advent of white settlement
 - A. Early traders and explorers
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- VI. The frontier way of life
 - A. Shelter
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The Kiskiminetas River, along with its main tributary the Conemaugh, is the most important tributary of the Allegheny River. The sources of the Conemaugh are found near the top of the Allegheny Ridge,¹ in Cambria and Somerset Counties above Johnstown.² By the time the Conemaugh River reaches its confluence with the Loyalhanna Creek at Saltsburg, it is carrying the runoff from parts of four counties (Cambria, Somerset, Westmoreland, and Indiana). With the introduction of the Loyalhanna, having its source in the Ligonier Valley in eastern Westmoreland County, the Kiskiminetas River is formed. As one follows the valley of the Kiskiminetas River downstream from Saltsburg, one finds wide floodplains alternating from one side of the riverbank to the other, separated by bluffs that rise high above the water. This sequence occurs for about eight miles. Then a short distance below Brownstown the land on both sides of the river rises to towering bluffs that are over 400 feet high.³ It is these bluffs and the rapids below that set off the upper Kiskiminetas Valley from the lower. Within this area occurred many important historical events before the Revolutionary War was fought. The records of these events have become scattered, however, and much searching must be done to find them. The author of this paper has spent about three years searching out various sources of information and at this point feels himself capable of writing a reasonably accurate account of the pre-Revolutionary history of the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley.

LOCAL LANDFORMS

Before beginning to delineate mankind's achievements and failings in this small sphere of civilization, it is important first to become familiar with the landforms of the area. The major streams in the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley, besides the Kiskiminetas, Conemaugh, and Loyalhanna already mentioned, are Blacklegs Creek (not to be confused with Blacklick), Sulphur or Lick Run, Long Run, Flat Run, Roaring Run from the north, and Wolford Run and Beaver Run from the south.⁴

Just below the mouth of Roaring Run is the Rapids of the Kiskiminetas River, formerly called the Falls of the Kiskiminetas. A drop in the elevation of the river bed causes the water to "rush and swirl amid the rocks and bars for nearly a mile."⁵

Rattling Run flows into Roaring Run and is noted for its beautiful falls. Not far from the falls was located a huge boulder about six feet high, balanced so that it could be easily rocked back and forth, but could not be toppled by human hands.⁶ Sometime after 1916, however, it was carried off by a landslide. There is also a falls located on the hill across the Kiskiminetas River from Saltsburg.

Boiling Springs at Spring Church, formerly called Round Hole or Ten Mile Lick, receives its name from a spring that at one time spurted up several feet above the ground. It was almost a foot in diameter and was frequented by wild animals that came to drink of its clear, cold water.⁷ The spring still exists but it has been contaminated by underground gas wells, and debris in the spring has choked it off somewhat.

The landscape of the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley is mostly made up of gently rolling hills; the flattest land being located in Avonmore and eastern Bell Township. The highest point in the area is a hill with a microwave tower on it, located one and one-half miles west of Salina; elevation, 1,581 feet. About 3,500 feet from this high point is the Kiskiminetas River with a low elevation of 800 feet at the Rapids. There are also a few bluffs overlooking some of the larger streams in addition to those along the Kiskiminetas.⁸ These bluffs form many overhanging ledges. A few shallow caves are located along Beaver Run near Slickville, and along the Kiskiminetas River near Roaring Run and across from Avonmore.⁹

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Upper Kiskiminetas Valley is rich in natural resources, but before the coming of the white man it was even richer. The region was at that time heavily forested with deciduous trees, the most plentiful being the oak. Other common trees were the

chestnut, sugar maple, walnut, hickory, and poplar.¹⁰ In the few open spaces that existed then there grew wild strawberries, blueberries, serviceberries, blackberries, and raspberries. Fish (including trout, catfish, and bass) and water turtles were plentiful in the clean waters of the area's many streams. Game also was abundant and included deer, elk, bear, wild turkey, grouse, quail, partridge, wild pigeon,¹¹ beaver, raccoon, opossum, ground hog, squirrel, and rabbit.¹² Among the few harmful and predatory animals were the wolf, wildcat, panther, rattlesnake, and copperhead.

There are a few scattered deposits of iron ore, one located along Roaring Run. The coal and gas fields of Pennsylvania overlap in the region so that there is an abundance of both. Underground deposits of salt are numerous throughout the entire Kiskiminetas-Conemaugh Valley and the pioneers came across several salt springs. Sandstone, limestone, and flagstone are fairly common for use as building materials, and there are deposits of brick clay and fire clay.¹³ This, then, is what the first people in this valley found when they came to it - a land abundant in almost any resource they might need. Still, however, there was one which it did not supply, and that was flint. The closest deposits of this resource are found along Redbank Creek near Kittanning.¹⁴

THE MOUND BUILDERS

The first people to inhabit the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley seem to have been the Mound Builders, so called because of their method of burying their dead. A few of these burial mounds have been discovered locally, and all are located along good sized streams. One is found west of New Alexandria along the Loyalhanna Creek.¹⁵ When the Pennsylvania Railroad raised the level of its tracks in 1948, the new roadbed was cut through a group of burial mounds near Avonmore. The artifacts were sent to Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh.

These Mound Builders are believed by some to have had a highly civilized agricultural society that was wiped out by the American Indians. Some historians classify the Mound Builders as a separate race from the Indians, but their origin and relationship to the American Indian remains in doubt.¹⁶ Both the Mound Builders and the later Indians used overhanging ledges, known as rockshelters, as a refuge from the elements. The evidence from one such rockshelter in Washington County has shown that people were living in western Pennsylvania as early as 15,000 years ago, near the end of the last Ice Age.¹⁷

THE INDIANS

The American Indian in this part of the country was represented by the Iroquois and the Algonquian tribes. About one thousand years ago they left the Great Plains and migrated eastward to the Upper Ohio Valley. The Iroquois went north from this point and established themselves along the Great Lakes. The Delawares, or Lenni Lenape as they called themselves, crossed the Allegheny Mountains and settled in eastern Pennsylvania along the Delaware River a few hundred years before the white man.¹⁸ So it was that southwestern Pennsylvania remained unsettled by the Indians until the early eighteenth century. The only traces of civilization were their makeshift camps as they passed through on hunting trips.¹⁹

The Iroquois never did establish villages in the Kiskiminetas Valley, although small bands of them continued to pass through the area until at least 1782.²⁰ The most important part the Iroquois played in southwestern Pennsylvania history was in their role as overlords over the Delawares, whom they called "old women."

Because of increasing pressure from white settlements in eastern Pennsylvania, the Delawares received permission from the Iroquois in about 1724 to migrate from the Susquehanna River near Sunbury to what is now Ligonier²¹ and to Kittanning. Then in 1737 the notorious "Walking Purchase" was transacted and the Indians were cheated out of a huge parcel of land. Consequently,

large numbers of them moved into southwestern Pennsylvania. With this large migration came groups of Shawnees, a tribe of the Algonquian language group of which the Delawares were also a branch. The Shawnees had come to Pennsylvania from the south.²²

LOCAL INDIAN VILLIAGES

The Indian villages in southwestern Pennsylvania consisted of bark huts surrounded by a stockade to keep out wild animals. There were about a half dozen Algonquian villages in the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley, averaging about one half acre in size.²³ These were not usually continually inhabited, but were occupied for one or two seasons of the year while the tribe was hunting and fishing or farming the surrounding land. Often they were abandoned when the land was worked out, and this explains the large number of Indian villages known simply as "Old Town."²⁴

Blackleg's Town was the most well known of the local Indian towns. It was used in the 1730's and 1740's²⁵ and was situated at the mouth of Blacklegs Creek on both sides of the creek.²⁶

Keckenepaulin was a noted Delaware chief who established a town directly across the Kiskiminetas River from Blackleg's Town.²⁷ A white man named Charles Stuart was held captive at Keckenepaulin's Town in November of 1756.²⁸ The land on which this town was situated was a large flat floodplain known to local white settlers as "Old Town Bottom."²⁹ It extended downriver for about one and one half miles below the town, varying in width from 500 to 1500 feet.³⁰ At the lower end of the floodplain was an Indian campground known as "Old Town," located at the place where one of their trails crossed the river. They often would camp there while waiting for the river to become low enough to ford easily.³¹ The entire floodplain was probably used by them in growing corn. Upstream from this place at Saltsburg was another Indian campground.

This entire area where the Conemaugh and Kiskiminetas Rivers and Loyalhanna and Blacklegs Creek are in close proximity was a central point for Indian activity and later for traders in south-

western Pennsylvania.³² Also testifying to the busy state of affairs that once existed here are the accounts of yet another village, also known as "Old Town." It was located on the hilltop above the middle of "Old Town Bottom."³³ "Old Town" on the hilltop was in existence as late as 1839 because Jacob Smeltzer, who settled in that year on a farm adjoining it, encountered its inhabitants and "had part of his ears cut off by the savages."³⁴

Another local Indian settlement was Pisquetomen's Place, where Chief Pisquetomen had either a cabin or village located on Loyalhanna Creek about two miles below the present site of New Alexandria.³⁵ Toquehesp was an Indian town situated at the mouth of Flat Run, between present-day Brownstown and Edmon.³⁶ There are unsubstantiated reports of an Indian village being located at present-day Spring Church (old Boiling Springs).

HOW AND WHERE THE INDIANS TRAVELED

The Indians had two methods of travel. Their major "highways" were the rivers and large creeks. In those days a navigable waterway was just as important as a paved road is today. The Kiskiminetas River was one of their main highways, as were also the Conemaugh, Loyalhanna Creek, Beaver Run, and possibly Blacklegs Creek. These waterways were used extensively in the warm summer months because of the danger of snakes along the trails.

Their other method of travel was by trails over land, used in cooler weather or where no large streams were to be had connecting village sites. The Loyalhanning Trail went down the bank of Loyalhanna Creek from Ligonier, past Latrobe and New Alexandria, to the Kiskiminetas. A branch from it followed the southwest side of the Kiskiminetas past Keckenepaulin's Town to "Old Town" where it crossed the river, then continued northward past Boiling Springs to Kittanning.³⁷ With the destruction of Kittanning in 1756, this branch trail ceased to be used.³⁸ The part of this trail on the south side of the Kiskiminetas, however, continued to be used. It extended from Keckenepaulin's Town to Kiskiminetas Old Town,³⁹ an

Indian village in the Lower Kiskiminetas Valley where a sewage treatment plant is now located at the mouth of Pine Run in Allegheny Township.⁴⁰

When the first white traders came they used the Indian trails to move from place to place. A few years later they were widened to permit the passage of horses, and later yet of wagons. It was these wagon trails that became our roads of today.⁴¹ An example is Routes 56 and 156 going from Apollo through Spring Church to Shellocta and Indiana, originally the Frankstown Trail.⁴² This information suggests the existence of quite a few more trails that were not noted in earlier histories. Route 286 from Blackleg's Town near Saltsburg to Indiana was in all probability an old trail as were also Routes 286 and 380 from Saltsburg to Pittsburgh.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Along these old trails and the streams and especially at the village sites and rockshelters are found the remains of this proud race of people. While there are a few solitary graves and Indian cemeteries in the locality, the majority of what is found is their flint implements and pottery. Their pottery was baked and of a simple construction. Their flint implements consisted of celts or skinning stones, tomahawk blades, and the most common - dartheads, spearheads, and arrowheads. The former were made by rubbing and chipping the stone into the desired shape. The construction of the flintheads was a bit more complicated. They were produced by boring into the piece of flint with a sharp bone or animal tooth and scaling off small pieces of the rock.⁴³

There is a stone about one and one-fourth miles north of Edmon, next to a spring on the Guthrie farm. What makes it special is the figure of a man carved on it by the Indians; hence it is given the name of Indian Spring.⁴⁴

EARLY WHITE TRADERS AND EXPLORERS

The first white men to tread the soil of southwestern Pennsylvania were traders. A few were in this corner of the state before

1700,⁴⁵ but the first white man to visit the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley seems to have been James LeTort.

The son of French Huguenot immigrants,⁴⁶ James LeTort grew up in eastern Pennsylvania and began trading with the Delawares at Shamokin and Carlisle. When the Delawares moved into southwestern Pennsylvania about 1724 he followed,⁴⁷ and by 1727 had established a trading post just above the headwaters of Blacklegs Creek at the junction of Plum and Crooked Creeks near Shelocta.⁴⁸ In his travels back and forth between the many villages he almost certainly would have visited the numerous Indian settlements in the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley.

After LeTort came many more traders, and in 1734 the Indians drew up a list of desirable and undesirable traders. Out of a total of 22 listed, only seven were deemed desirable and were designated as being worthy of licenses to trade. They were Jonas Davenport, Lazarus Lowry, James LeTort, Francis Stevens, James Patterson, Edmund Cartlidge, and Peter Chartier⁴⁹ (who was half-breed Shawnee).⁵⁰ The other fifteen had been corrupting the Indians by bringing in large amounts of liquor.⁵¹

Among the early explorers of Western Pennsylvania was the famous Indian agent and interpreter, Conrad Weiser. He passed down the Kiskiminetas River on his way to Logstown on the Ohio River in August of 1748.⁵²

The Ohio Company was organized in Virginia in 1748⁵³ by Augustine Washington, George Washington's father, and George's half-brother Lawrence.⁵⁴ The purpose of the company was to settle the wild lands of the west,⁵⁵ and due to the fact that southwestern Pennsylvania was claimed by Virginia at the time,⁵⁶ Christopher Gist (later George Washington's guide) was sent out early in 1750.⁵⁷ Gist writes, "I passed down the Loyalhanna Creek to a creek called Kiskiminetas, a branch of the Ohio."⁵⁸ On this trip Gist explored the land on which Maysville and Hicksville are now built,⁵⁹ but the Ohio Company never sent any settlers to this valley. Even George Washington himself, on his journey throughout western and northern Pennsylvania in 1753-1754, ventured up the Kiskiminetas with Gist, and they supposedly slept

overnight in a settler's log cabin near present-day Saltsburg.⁶⁰

When these early traders and explorers went back to visit the eastern towns and cities, they took with them stories of the rich land that they had seen. Even though the land had not yet been purchased from the Indians and was still rightfully theirs, the whites on the eastern side of the mountains were becoming restless and their population was slowly increasing. Soon they would begin to spill over into the western lands.

STEPHEN RINEBOLT

According to local historical accounts the first settler in the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley, and for that matter in the whole of western Pennsylvania, was Stephen Rinebolt. He was born in 1710 in Amsterdam, Holland and due to his involvement in political and religious agitation was forced to leave his native country in 1732. The ship on which he traveled landed in the port of Philadelphia and he, not wanting to waste time before the onset of winter, immediately set out for the West after obtaining from the Penn family an unlimited grant of land to be located west of the Allegheny Mountains. After traveling over 300 miles on foot with only the tools and supplies that he could carry on his back, he came to the Kiskiminetas Valley where Avonmore is now located. Here he surveyed his claim of over 2,000 acres of unusually fertile land and set about building a log cabin about one-half mile west of the present town of Avonmore.⁶¹ He also planted fruit and vegetable seeds that he had brought with him from Holland.⁶²

He was a big man, being nearly seven feet tall, and at the time of his coming to America weighed about 250 pounds. He had a pleasing personality but also possessed a fiery temper.

The Indians, by which he was surrounded for many a year, as well as white settlers of his time, looked upon him with fear and trembling, as all Indians and white people without exception believed he was his protection from the treachery of the Indians, his only friends for years, who when they approached him which they were in the habit of doing, brought him meat and peace offerings. These visits and approaches were frequent and accomplished with awe and reverence.⁶³

After living in the wild and beautiful Kiskiminetas Valley for 24 years, in 1756 Rinebolt returned to Holland in the hope that conditions might be better than when he had left.⁶⁴ Evidently they were not because the next year he returned to America, bringing ten families of friends and relatives with him from Holland and promising to divide his land among them. The names of these families were Bash, Frick, Hine, Kunkle, Learn, Ringle, Rumbaugh, Taylor, Ulan, and Wolford. Although a few of these families may have accompanied Rinebolt westward to his settlement, the majority of them settled in Monroe, then Northampton County. Then in the 1780's some of their members came to the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley and acquired the portions of land promised to them. Rinebolt never married and died in 1815 at the advanced age of 105 years.

Although the events surrounding the Stephen Rinebolt story may seem incredible, the local historian and poet and likewise the recorder of the history, Linus Townsend, assures us that "nevertheless the subject matter contained are veritable and well supported by the oral demonstrations of men of recognized veracity, by men who were neighbors of Rinebolt from 1772, until the time of his demise in 1815."⁶⁵

The names of the families mentioned in the Rinebolt story are not found in many of the region's early histories because of their lack of Indian troubles, and because, being of a Germanic background, they naturally kept to themselves and failed to associate with the more politically active Scotch-Irish settlers of the area.

LAND PURCHASES

After General John Forbes' army captured Fort Duquesne from the French on November 24, 1758 and asserted British dominion west of the Allegheny Mountains,⁶⁶ settlers began to come into the region in large numbers - despite the fact that a final purchase of the land was not made from the Indians until the Fort Stanwix Purchase of 1768. There was, however, a purchase made from the Indians in 1754 that included the valley of the Kiskiminetas River, but this purchase was later returned to them by a deed of surrender in October of 1758.⁶⁷

"TOMAHAWK CLAIMS"

As a result, these early claims were known as "tomahawk claims" because the settlers had no legal right to own the land or settle on it. They only held it by a mutual consent with the Indians.⁶⁸ The only exception was the military permit, whereby a soldier or his family could legally occupy land.⁶⁹

Dr. Fennell records that in 1766 a log cabin was built on the site of "Old Town" on the southwest side of the Kiskiminetas River, below Keckenepaulin's Town. Its constructor was Robert Robinson.⁷⁰ Walkinshaw's account, however, disagrees. He states that Robert Robinson settled on the northeast side of the river about 1780.⁷¹ Dr. Fennell's account is probably the more accurate because he lived in the area and his notes are older than Walkinshaw's book. Thus Robert Robinson was probably one of the early settlers who held such a "tomahawk claim."

THE LAND OFFICE

Following the Treaty of Fort Stanwix on November 5, 1768 and the resultant land purchase, the Penn family made preparations to open the land for settlement.⁷² A land office was opened in Philadelphia on April 3, 1769, and for the first time there was some semblance of order in the granting of land titles west of the mountains. "Those having military permits and remaining on the lands were entitled to hold them, provided they made formal application for them through the land office. Hundreds of Scotch-Irish and Pennsylvania Germans flocked west to take up these lands."⁷³

THE CARNAHAN CLAIM

The first settler in what is now Bell Township to make legal application at the land office was John Carnahan.⁷⁴ He came from Cumberland County with his wife and children in 1769.⁷⁵ They travelled over the Forbes Road which had been built in 1758 as it was at that time the only wagon road over the Allegheny Mountains in Pennsylvania. John Carnahan with his two oldest sons, Adam and David, took a claim of (patented) over 1,000 acres of land between present Perrysville and Salina.⁷⁶ Like most of their fellow Scotch-Irish settlers

they took an active part in the government. The first English court held west of the mountains at old Hannastown on April 6, 1773⁷⁷ had as the foreman of the jury John Carnahan, and one of his sons, John Carnahan, Jr., served on the jury. The first sheriff of Westmoreland County was John Proctor, but in less than two years one of these John Carnahans had succeeded him as the second sheriff of the county.⁷⁸

OTHER EARLY LAND PATENTS

Another early land patent was taken out by Isaac Townsend for 600 acres of land along the north side of the Kiskiminetas River from just below Avonmore to a short distance below Edmon. He paid \$2.50 and acre. Daniel Carpenter patented land that included the present site of Tinsmill. Simon Drum patented land somewhere near Salina.⁷⁹

The point of land between the Conemaugh River and Loyalhanna Creek across the river from Saltsburg was settled sometime before 1774 by Colonel William Perry. He later moved two miles farther up the Loyalhanna and William Johnston came into possession of the land. Johnston patented the land and laid out a village which he named "Port Johnston," known today as Point Pleasant.⁸⁰

John Montgomery and Alexander Stuart obtained a grant of 2,000 acres of land. The first half of 1,000 acres was to be located along the north side of the Kiskiminetas River on both sides of Blacklegs Creek. The other half of 1,000 acres was to be located on the south side of the river below the mouth of Blacklegs Creek. When the survey was made, though, it was found that there was not enough land that was not already patented to fill the grant, so another survey was made farther down the river, extending on both sides of the river from the lower border of Isaac Townsend's survey to present Apollo.⁸¹ In 1805 William Smith bought this land at a sheriff's sale and parts of it eventually became the towns of Apollo, Brownstown, and perhaps Salina.⁸²

NAMES OF OTHER EARLY SETTLERS

Other early families in the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley not already mentioned were Yockeys, Clawsons, Ewings, Hiltys, Kuhns, McCauleys, Kennedys, Weisters or Wiesters, Sparbers, Beattys,

Gartleys, Bowmans, and Householders. Still others were McConnells, Elwoods, Bears, Grimms,⁸³ Fennells, Willards, McCrearys, Ripples, Gambles, Lauffers, Guthries, Horrells, and Ashbaughs.⁸⁴

EARLY DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES

In the early days of most of these settlements the pioneers had to be constantly on the alert for Indian attacks. This danger was somewhat minimized by the building of defensive structures such as forts, blockhouses, stockades, and blockhouse-cabins. Both forts and blockhouses were constructed of heavy logs with a second story that extended out over the top of the first, so that any Indians attempting to break in or set fire to the building could be shot from above. They were often large enough to accommodate several families in times of distress.⁸⁵ Forts were generally well stocked with food and munitions but blockhouses were only intended as a temporary place of defense. "No more provisions could be taken in them than was sufficient for immediate and pressing want. Those who fled thither expected to remain only till the storm had blown over, or until help came."⁸⁶ Another basic difference between a fort and a blockhouse is that a fort was usually surrounded by a stockade. This latter structure was made of logs set firmly in the ground on end and was about ten feet high.⁸⁷ A stockade could also exist by itself in which case it could be known as either a fort or a stockade fort.⁸⁸

But the most common defensive structure of all were those strongly barricaded cabins sometimes called stations, but which are more properly known as blockhouse-cabins. . . There were many such, and they were so frequently the places of refuge they have received the name of fort, which wrongly designates them. . . These stations would hold perhaps twenty persons when they huddled together on the fear of danger.⁸⁹

THE CARNAHAN BLOCKHOUSE ATTACK

The first defensive structure in the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley, and the only one built before the Revolutionary War, was the Carnahan Blockhouse. It was built by the settler John Carnahan and his sons in 1774 near the present village of Perrysville.⁹⁰ It must have been of

a considerably large size because Colonel Archibald Lochroy's company of 100 soldiers stopped there on July 26, 1781 on their way to Wheeling, West Virginia.⁹¹

It was at the Carnahan Blockhouse that one of the most noted Indian atrocities occurred. Although it occurred after the Revolutionary War began it shall be noted herein because it demonstrates the reality of the Indian menace to white settlement. The oldest account of this raid is to be found in Dr. T. J. Henry's 1916 history:

In August of 1777, six or seven men were reaping oats about six miles from Carnahan's. One of the men had wounded a deer and while searching for it in the woods near by, discovered Indians in warpaint. Without giving any sign of having seen them, he returned to the reapers and they all went to John McKibben's house. . . They sent messengers to Carnahan's to warn them of the presence of hostile Indians. . . The people at Carnahan's seeing nothing of the enemy sent Robert Taylor and David Carnahan to McKibben's to learn something about the alarm. On their return they had nearly reached the blockhouse when they saw several Indians stealthily approaching. Making a dash they succeeded in reaching the fort a few minutes ahead of their pursuers. Only a few men were in the fort and there were fourteen of the attacking party. John Carnahan opened the door and stepped out to get a better shot at the enemy and was himself shot and killed.⁹²

John's body was dragged inside the gate and his brother David, desirous of revenge, went to the upper story of the blockhouse and fired his musket at the Indian who gave out a terrible yell, stretched out his arms, and fell over dead. He was believed to have been a chief and they were not molested again.⁹³

THE FRONTIER WAY OF LIFE

The basic requirements for any civilization are shelter, food, and clothing. These early pioneers usually spent their first summer on the frontier in crude tents that were brought over the mountains on pack horses. They lived in these tents while they were engaged in building a log cabin and clearing the land.

Timber was plentiful, for both building and fuel. Rough unhewn log houses were soon erected, covered with a split clapboard roof, . . . held on with weight poles. . . log chimneys were lined with stone and thickly plastered with

clay. . . We suspect that many of these first cabins were soon replaced by hewn log houses, two rooms, one and one half or two story, covered with split oak shingles, nailed on. . . most of these floors were unplanned boards. . . No carpets, except a home made rug of bear skin in front of the bed.⁹⁴

The early settlers lived off the land. As previously stated, game was plentiful, so this was no problem. Many Indian foods were adopted, such as roasted bear and deer with parched corn. Then later on when the land was cleared corn, rye, wheat, buckwheat, and potatoes were easily grown. The white men soon built grist mills driven by water power to grind their grains, which were carried to and from the mills on horseback in three or four bushel bags. Another first necessity which was often built before the cabin was a small barn to shelter the farm animals and store the harvested crops.

Besides furnishing appetizing food, bear and deer also helped supply the clothing.

These skins tanned with or without removing the hair, gave a lasting material for breeches (pants) leggings, coats, and mocassins (shoes), while coonskin caps were quite popular even after cloth had supplanted these leather garments. . . Gradually they discarded their buckskin leggings, bearskin coats, and coonskin caps for linen, woolen, or linsey woolsey clothing. Cotton goods were scarce and hard to get. Flax was easily grown but sheep among these early settlers was scarce and hard to keep, owing to the prowling wolves and many hungry dogs.⁹⁵

RELIGIOUS BEGINNINGS

Besides these material needs the early settlers had need of some form of religion. Almost all of them were motivated by a firm faith in God and a sense of purpose in their lives in the taming of the frontier. Due to the fact that their population was made up almost entirely of Pennsylvania Germans, Holland Dutch, and Scotch-Irish, the first religious gatherings were of either the German or Dutch Lutheran and Reformed Churches or some form of Presbyterianism. The earliest religious meetings were often held in the open air in orchards and meadows or even in barns. Later meetings were usually held in individuals' cabins or schoolhouses, as was the case with

Yockey's schoolhouse in Bell Township where later, about 1800, a log church building was erected to house the Lutheran and Reformed congregations.⁹⁶ This was the age of the pioneer preacher who rode on horseback to and from the small groups of believers, his charges sometimes spread over an area as large as one of our present day counties. But through their faith and perseverance the roots of religion took a firm hold in the virgin soil of the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley. In the quarter century following the Revolutionary War there would be established, preceeding the St. James Lutheran and Reformed Church at Yockey's, a Presbyterian church at Poke Run in Washington Township in 1785⁹⁷ and the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in Conemaugh Township in 1791.⁹⁸

By the time the Revolutionary War had begun the white settlements in the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley were firmly established. The Indians would continue to be seen in the area until the time of the Civil War, but for the most part the Revolutionary War coincided with the end of their domination in this locality. The white settlers, however, still were faced with the challenge of developing the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley's many mineral resources, and in the years to come they would take full advantage of them. In the pre-Revolutionary period of its history the settlers of the Upper Kiskiminetas Valley played an important, if not a key part in the settlement of western Pennsylvania. This era had been one of much historical interest and the foundation of the events to follow. It had been an age of faith - faith in a Great Spirit or a God who rarely failed to give daily sustenance to His people, and faith in a man's ability to build a new life for himself and his children by the labor of his hands and the wise use of his wits.

FOOTNOTES

¹Solon J. Buck and Elizabeth Hawthorne Buck, The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1939), p. 4.

²T. J. Henry, M. D., History of Apollo, Pa. 1816-1916 (Apollo, The News-Record Pub. Co., 1916), p. 28.

³United States Geological Survey maps, Vandergrift Quadrangle (1969).

⁴Ibid.

⁵Henry, p. 28.

⁶Ibid., p. 32.

⁷Ernest G. Heissenbuttel, Pittsburgh Synod Congregational Histories (Warren, Ohio, Studio of Printcraft, Inc., 1959), p. 382.

⁸Vandergrift Quadrangle.

⁹personal letter from Julia Taylor to James Eugene Taylor, about 1925.

¹⁰Buck, p. 7.

¹¹Ibid., p. 11.

¹²Dr. Fennell, unpublished notes, Salina, Pa., about 1925.

¹³Buck, p. 15.

¹⁴Henry, p. 43.

¹⁵C. M. Bombergerger, A Short History of Westmoreland County (Jeannette, Pa., Jeannette Pub. Co., 1941), p. 34.

¹⁶Lewis Clark Walkinshaw, Annals of Southwestern Pennsylvania Vol. I (New York, Lewis Historical Pub. Co. Inc., 1939), p. 2.

¹⁷Paul Hess, "Dramatic Find, Ice Age people hunted not far from here," Valley News Dispatch, (Aug. 10, 1974), p. 7.

¹⁸Bombergerger, p. 29.

¹⁹Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 5.

²⁰Bombergerger, p. 49.

²¹Ibid., p. 30.

²²Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 6.

²³Bombergerger, p. 34.

²⁴Henry, p. 33.

²⁵Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey, Guidebook to Historic Places in Western Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1938), p. 97.

²⁶Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 16.

²⁷Ibid., p. 20.

FOOTNOTES

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- ²⁸Randolph C. Downes, Council Fires on the Upper Ohio (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1940), p. 83.
- ²⁹Taylor to Taylor.
- ³⁰United States Geological Survey maps, Avonmore Quadrangle (1964).
- ³¹Fennell, Notes.
- ³²Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey, p. 97.
- ³³George Dallas Albert, History of the County of Westmoreland, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, L. H. Everts and Co., 1882), p. 714.
- ³⁴John W. Jordan, LL. D., editor, History of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania - Geneological Memoirs Vol. III (New York, The Lewis Pub. Co., 1906), p. 250.
- ³⁵Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 24.
- ³⁶Henry, p. 32.
- ³⁷"Encounters with Indians dot Bell Twp. History," Valley News Dispatch (Apr. 25, 1975), p. 44.
- ³⁸Fennell, Notes.
- ³⁹Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 10.
- ⁴⁰"Indian Artifacts Found at Kiski Sewage Plant Site," Valley News Dispatch (Jan. 30, 1974), p. 1.
- ⁴¹Fennell, Notes.
- ⁴²Henry, p. 33.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 43.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 32.
- ⁴⁵Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 29.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 30.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 22.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 30.
- ⁴⁹Downes, p. 32.
- ⁵⁰Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 30.
- ⁵¹Downes, p. 32.
- ⁵²Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 37.
- ⁵³Ibid., p. 42.
- ⁵⁴Diana Gordish, "Washington's Father Interested in Maysville," The Country Caller (Mar. 3, 1976), p. 4.
- ⁵⁵Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 42.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., p. 40.
- ⁵⁷Gordish, The Country Caller, p. 4.

FOOTNOTES

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- ⁵⁸Fennell, Notes.
- ⁵⁹Gordish, The Country Caller, p. 4.
- ⁶⁰"Washington - Slept, Fished Near Here," The Country Caller
(Feb. 18, 1976), p. 1.
- ⁶¹Linus Townsend, unpublished notes, about 1890, p. 3.
- ⁶²Ibid., p. 5.
- ⁶³Ibid., p. 7.
- ⁶⁴Ibid., p. 6.
- ⁶⁵Ibid., p. 7.
- ⁶⁶Albert, p. 31.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., p. 37.
- ⁶⁸Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 314.
- ⁶⁹Albert, p. 37.
- ⁷⁰Fennell, Notes.
- ⁷¹Lewis Clark Walkinshaw, Annals of Southwestern Pennsylvania Vol. II
(New York, Lewis Historical Pub. Co., Inc., 1939), p. 231.
- ⁷²Albert, p. 40.
- ⁷³Walkinshaw, Vol. I, p. 352.
- ⁷⁴Albert, p. 713.
- ⁷⁵personal letter from Cora L. Davis to John Erbin Carnahan, Nov. 4,
1932.
- ⁷⁶Dorothy G. McCreary, The Carnahans of Bell Township, Westmoreland
County, Pennsylvania (Woodland Farm, Salina, Pa., 1959), p. 1.
- ⁷⁷Albert, p. 53.
- ⁷⁸Davis to Carnahan.
- ⁷⁹Fennell, Notes.
- ⁸⁰Lewis Clark Walkinshaw, Annals of Southwestern Pennsylvania Vol.
III (New York, Lewis Historical Pub. Co. Inc., 1939), p. 19.
- ⁸¹Henry, p. 19.
- ⁸²Fennell, Notes.
- ⁸³Albert, p. 713.
- ⁸⁴Fennell, Notes.
- ⁸⁵Ibid.
- ⁸⁶Albert, p. 102.
- ⁸⁷Fennell, Notes.

FOOTNOTES
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- 88 Albert, p. 102.
89 Ibid., p. 104.
90 McCreary, p. 1.
91 Fennell, Notes.
92 Henry, p. 38.
93 McCreary, p. 2.
94 Fennell, Notes.
95 Ibid.
96 Heissenbuttel, p. 359.
97 Walkinshaw, Vol. II, p. 362.
98 Walkinshaw, Vol. III, p. 23.

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