

Historical Data

McKEAN COUNTY



1804-1970



Prepared By

McKean County Schools

Every pupil should know something of the historic background of his own community. The materials found herein have been prepared with the hope that they will assist teachers in presenting the basic facts concerning the early history of the county. No attempt has been made to treat any one of the topics in an exhaustive manner. Teachers who desire additional data may find them in county and state libraries. An effort has been made to present materials and facts which are generally accepted as authentic.

Acknowledgment is hereby made of the helps derived from these sources:

History of McKean, Elk, Cameron and Potter Counties.

Marie King's "History of Ceres."

McKnight's "Pioneer History of Northwestern Pennsylvania."

J. E. Henretta's "Kane, and the Upper Allegheny."

R. B. Stone's "McKean, the Governor's County."

Pennsylvania Commission's "Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania."

McKEAN COUNTY HISTORICAL DATA

1. McKean County is in Pennsylvania—what is the historic background of our State?

On March 4, 1681, Charles II, King of England, signed a charter granting to William Penn a "tract of land in America, lying North of Maryland and west of the Delaware River, extending as far west as plantable." The charter also fixed the western boundary of the grant as five degrees west of the Delaware River.

2. How long before Penn made settlements in his lands in America?

In June of 1681, Penn sent his cousin, William Markham, with three shiploads of settlers to Pennsylvania. William Penn, himself, followed in August of 1682 with one hundred other persons who settled in Philadelphia in November of that year.

3. How did Pennsylvania get its name?

Penn was the son of William Penn, an admiral in the British Navy, who had lent his government a sum equivalent to \$80,000 in our money. King Charles, being unable to pay this loan, finally granted William Penn, the son, a large tract of land in the New World to satisfy the debt, with the understanding that it should be named in honor of Penn's father. The son had wanted to call his acquired lands "New Wales" but this name did not please the King. Penn then suggested "Sylvania" to which the King agreed with the stipulation above noted.

4. What are some interesting facts concerning the founder and proprietor of Pennsylvania?

The Penn family was a very aristocratic and wealthy English family. They sent their son to Oxford where William met adherents of the New Quaker faith. Young Penn soon grew to like the Quakers very much and put on their dress and lived and talked as they did. This was very much against his father's wishes and those of his former friends, including the court of King Charles. William was thrown into prison on account of his religion, but was released when his father interceded for him. After the death of Admiral Penn, William allied himself still more with the Quakers, who were persecuted vigorously by the rulers of England. Perhaps this is the reason why William Penn suggested to the King that he would gladly take land in America rather than the sum of money which the King owed the Penn estate.

Since the King had much more land than he had money, he willingly agreed to the request. Soon after that, there was a change of kings and Penn no longer had powerful friends at court. He was tried for treason and acquitted. He was always persecuted on account of his religion, and at one time was cast into prison for debt. Notwithstanding his rich holdings in the New World, his way was not easy either here or in England. Penn died at his home in England in July of 1718 at the age of 74 years. The closing years of his life were tragic. In 1711 he testified that the Pennsylvania venture had cost him \$250,000 more than he had received from it. For nine months the impoverished old man was cast into prison for debt. He tried to sell his holding in America for 12,000 pounds, a sum less than the amount owed to his father in 1681, but was not successful.

5. Who succeeded to the estate left by William Penn?

The proprietaryship of Pennsylvania descended to Penn's three sons, John, Richard, and Thomas. The latter, upon the death of Richard and John, became sole proprietor. On the 27th of November, 1779, the Legislature of Pennsylvania took over practically all the properties belonging to the Penns and granted them as compensation the sum of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds sterling. This ended, after ninety-eight years, the rule of the Penns in America.

6. Why did more kinds of people come to Pennsylvania in its early years than to any other colony?

Penn spoke of his colony as a "Holy Experiment." He drew up a frame of government which gave freedom of worship, protection from unfair trial, right to accumulate property, provision for education of children, and a general protection of the peace and safety of the public. He wanted everyone, including the Indians, to be treated fairly and honestly. So it was natural that persecuted people in many parts of Europe turned to Pennsylvania as a haven of refuge.

7. What was William Penn's attitude toward the Indians?

When William Penn was ready to sail for his new lands in 1682, it is said that he sought an audience with the King, who said in jest to him, "It will not be long until I hear that you have gone into the savages' war-kettle - - - what is to prevent it?"

"Their own inner light," said Penn. "Moreover, as I intend to equitably buy their lands, I shall not be harmed."

"Buy their lands?" replied the King in surprise. "Why is not the land mine? Have I not granted it to you?"

"No, your Majesty, you have no right to their lands—they are the original occupants of the soil." (Acting on the principal just stated, the conquest of Pennsylvania was different from that of any other part of the Americas.)

His relations with the Indians were always friendly. Although he accepted Pennsylvania instead of money owed him by the King, he assumed that the Indians had a prior right to the lands and that he should satisfy these rights before he could sell or lease lands to white settlers. Penn, therefore, adopted the policy of buying from the Indians lands which were already his under the terms of his charter. Numerous conferences and treaties were arranged by Penn and his agents for the purpose of securing deeds from the Indian chiefs, who acted as agents for their tribes. While the money value paid for these lands by Penn was usually far less than the actual value, the Indians were satisfied and that was the real purpose of the transaction. For seventy years this peaceful policy of William Penn was carried out in the dealing of the Province with the Indians. Benjamin West's famous painting of Penn's treaty with the Indians at Shackamaxon depicts better than words the friendly relations existing at that time.

8. When and how did this peaceful policy of dealing with the Indians change for the worse?

In 1737 the Province took from the Delaware Indians living near Easton on the Delaware River their most prized lands by means of the unfair "Walking Purchase." According to the terms of this sale the white people were to get as much land as could be covered by a man who walked for two days. When the walk was made, the most active white man, a celebrated and seasoned runner, was obtained, who running at top speed from daylight until dark, and then resuming the same pace the following morning, doubled the lands claimed by the white men over that contemplated by the Indians. This purchase, certainly unwise if not unjust, was the opening transaction which finally led to open hostilities along the border. Delawares, Shawnees, and western Indians fell away from English influence and became, as time passed, the friends of the French along the west-

ern lakes and rivers. During the French and Indian War they devastated the frontiers of Western Pennsylvania. Later the Iroquois, or Six Nations, living in Central New York and claiming lands in Northern Pennsylvania, espoused the cause of the British during the Revolution and once again the frontiers of Northern and Western Pennsylvania were laid waste by Indian warfare. In fact, there was little peace and security along the frontier from 1756 until Wayne's victory over the Western tribes in 1794. It is indicative of these perilous years that in 1764 Indians attacked a schoolhouse in Franklin County, killing the teacher and eleven pupils. However, that it may be understood that acts of savagery were not all on one side, let us note that in 1756 Governor Morris issued a proclamation offering bounties for Indian scalps. These bounties differed according to sex and age—more being paid for males above ten years of age. The top price was one hundred and fifty Spanish dollars.

9. What famous white woman captive probably journeyed from Ohio across the country now included in Warren and McKean Counties and finally made her home on the lower waters of the Genesee River?

Since 1824 twenty-eight editions of the life of Mary Jemison, "The White Woman of the Genesee," have been written for an appreciative public. When she was a child of thirteen, her home was raided at Marsh Creek near Gettysburg. Her parents were killed and she was taken captive to Pittsburgh where she was adopted by two young Indian women who had lost a brother in the wars against the whites. The Indian family then moved down the Ohio to the mouth of the Scioto River where Mary made her home for four years, finally marrying a Shawnee warrior. However, since influential members of the family were of the Seneca tribe living on the Genesee River (now New York State), she and three of her adopted brothers set out by way of Sandusky on Lake Erie to Venango, Warren, and Salamanca to go to the Seneca tribal headquarters. Most of the journey of six hundred miles was made on foot, with Mary carrying an infant of seven months on her back. She was nearly drowned while trying to cross the flooded river flats at Conewango (Warren), but finally arrived safely at the Genesee flats where she was warmly welcomed by her adopted sisters who had preceded her. Later, upon the death of her husband, who had remained for a season in the Ohio country, and upon recommendation of Chief Cornplanter, she married Hiokattoo, the

fiercest of the war chiefs of the Senecas. Visitors to Letchworth Park, Livingston County, New York, will observe the fine monument erected to the memory of Mary Jemison, one of the most famous of the long list of white captives who remained with their captors until the end of their lives. Her husband, Hiokatoo, died at the age of one hundred and three, some years prior to the death of Mary Jemison. At the close of the Revolution Mary Jemison had been offered her freedom by her Indian brothers. Her son, Thomas, by her Shawnee husband, advised her to return to the settlements, but since the Seneca chiefs refused to let Thomas go, she decided to stay with her family of seven children and thirty-nine grandchildren. She died at the age of ninety years.

10. What pioneer missionary labored in this region?

It is likely that as early as 1765 a Rev. David Zeisberger, who had established a mission for Indians at Wyalusing in Bradford County, passed over the portages between the Sinnemahoning and the Allegheny on his way to the Muncy Indians, who were then living near Tionesta in what is now Forest County. This missionary with two Christian Indian guides traversed the forest solitudes and finally reached his destination on the 16th of October, 1767, at least thirty years before the first settlement in McKean County. So embittered were these Indians, who had been driven from their rich lands near Williamsport, that Zeisberger writes thus of his seven days' stay among them, "Every day I was in danger of being murdered. I have never found such heathenism in any other parts of the Indian country. Here Satan has his stronghold. Here he sits on his throne. Here he is worshiped by true savages, and carries on his work in the hearts of the children of darkness." The missionary returned to Wyalusing and in 1768 led two hundred and fifty of his converts, whose lands had been sold from under their feet by the Six Nations, to Big Beaver (now in Lawrence County) by way of the Susquehanna, Big Island (Lock Haven), and Kittanning. This journey, with all its exposure and hardships, took weeks. Often the advance was only four miles a day.

11. What famous Indian chief lived and died within the limits of the territory now included in McKean and Warren Counties?

On the Allegheny River flat a few miles above Kinzua village there stands a stone memorial erected in honor of "Cornplanter," once head

chief of the Senecas. He was a half-breed whose father's name was O'Bail, a trader in the Mohawk Indian country. Cornplanter was born in 1732 on the Genesee River. When twenty-three years of age he was allied with the French against General Braddock. During the Revolution he was a chief of high rank among the Six Nations and doubtless led his warriors against the forces of the Colonies. He was on the war-path against the whites during Sullivan's campaign in 1779. The next year he led the Senecas against the Mohawk Valley settlements where he is said to have taken his father prisoner. He offered to take his father to the Seneca country and care for him in his old age, or to return him safely to Albany. When peace came at the close of the Revolutionary War, Cornplanter threw all his influence on the side of the United States and was instrumental in making the Indian treaties of Fort Stanwix and Fort Harmar, which ceded all of northwestern Pennsylvania to the whites. In return, Cornplanter was granted a reservation along the Allegheny River where he died at the age of one hundred and three. In 1789, together with other Six Nation chiefs, he signed the treaty ceding Indian rights to Presque Isle (Erie County) which were later vested in Pennsylvania. In 1791 he gave assistance to the settlers at Meadville against hostile Indians. In 1794 when Western Indians were ravaging the frontier of Ohio, he prevented attacks on western Pennsylvania settlements. It is said that he journeyed to Franklin during the War of 1812 with two hundred of his braves, offering his assistance against the British. Cornplanter lived on his reservation on the Allegheny River for thirty-four years after McKean County was organized.

In the summer of 1816 Rev. Timothy Alden, founder of Allegheny College at Meadville, set out on a brief missionary tour among the Indians residing on the waters of the upper Allegheny. Among others he visited Cornplanter, whom he describes as follows: "He has been the greatest warrior the Senecas ever had; yet he has always been remarkable for his humane treatment of the women and children of his enemies who at any time have fallen into his hands. He is a man of strong mind and masterly eloquence. At the treaty of Fort Stanwix he greatly distinguished himself by his talents and address insomuch that by general suffrage he has held the first place of power among the chiefs of his nation."

12. Was the warfare between the whites and Indians ever carried into the McKean County region?

White settlers did not move to the area now comprising McKean County until border warfare with the Indians had moved westward into Ohio. However, in 1779 Washington sent two expeditions against the Six Nations in reprisal for the massacre of settlers living at Forty Fort in the Wyoming Valley. Here a force of seven hundred Senecas and four hundred British provincials met and defeated in the previous year the armed forces of the settlers, who had sent most of their able-bodied men into Washington's army. The conflict was soon over. Major Butler, the British officer, reported two hundred and twenty-seven scalps taken. It was a complete victory for the Indians and British, who marched into the fort, robbed the inmates of whatever valuables they possessed and then passed on to plunder and devastate the whole valley. Settlers below Forty Fort had, in the meantime, abandoned their homes and fled in panic toward the Delaware River. The "Wyoming Massacre" was kept alive for many years in song and tradition among Pennsylvanians, symbolizing as it did the events of the dreadful years of Indian border warfare.

Washington now planned to break the power of the Six Nations so thoroughly as to prevent future raids against the whites along the northern borders of the State. An expedition of five thousand men under the leadership of General Sullivan was sent from Easton on the Delaware by way of Sunbury and Tioga Point (Athens) against the Indians located in southern and central New York State. He defeated the warriors of the Six Nations at a place near the present city of Elmira. His troops then passed on to destroy all the property, including growing crops, orchards, and villages of the tribes that had destroyed Forty Fort the year before.

At the same time that General Sullivan struck from the southeast, Colonel Daniel Broadhead was directed to conduct an expedition from Pittsburgh northward along the Allegheny River against the Seneca and Muncy nations living at Kinzua, Salamanca, and adjacent places. The Broadhead force left Pittsburgh on August 11 and returned on September 14, 1779. It went through Venango, Warren, and probably through Salamanca and Olean. There are those who think it also passed through Smethport and Kane and thence down the Tionesta and Allegheny to Pittsburgh on its return march. In any event, Colonel Broadhead and his men completely destroyed Indian homes and stores in a dozen or more Indian villages on the upper Allegheny. He par-

ticularly mentioned the destruction of five hundred acres of corn, as fine as any he had ever seen, and plunder amounting to \$30,000. He reported to Washington that he expected the Senecas and Muncies, in their great distress, to sue for peace.

13. When did the Indians surrender their title to lands now included in McKean County?

In 1784 commissioners from Pennsylvania and chiefs representing the Six Nations met at Fort Stanwix (now Rome) in the Mohawk Valley. The Indians ceded all lands in northwestern Pennsylvania, except the Erie triangle, to the state government for the sum of \$5,000. The same commissioners were sent later in the year to Fort McIntosh on the Ohio River to make a treaty with the Western Indians who also claimed rights to Pennsylvania lands. The commissioners paid \$2,000, which extinguished forever Indian claims to lands in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania acquired by these treaties "lands that now include all of ten, and parts of eight other, counties in the northwestern area of the state."

Those who are interested in tracing the area included in this "Last Purchase" may do so on a map of Pennsylvania. It began where the Ohio River leaves Pennsylvania and went north to the 42nd parallel of latitude, thence eastward along that parallel to the point where the east branch of the Susquehanna River enters Pennsylvania. The purchase went down this river to a point near Wyalusing, thence west to the head waters of Pine Creek and then down that creek to Jersey Shore, then up the Susquehanna to a point near Kittanning, then west to Kittanning, and from there along the Allegheny and Ohio to the place of beginning. At the time of the purchase this area was largely an uninhabited and untraversed wilderness. It was not until thirteen years after this purchase that the first settler came to what is now McKean County. During the year 1786, the "Last Purchase" was divided into ten districts and surveyors were appointed to make preliminary surveys in order that the State might sell lands to settlers. However, owing to Indian troubles in 1791-1794, little could be done in surveying these western lands. The Indians had spent the \$7,000 and were ready to condemn the action of Cornplanter and other chiefs who had made the treaty of Fort Stanwix. It was not until Wayne's decisive defeat of Indian power in Central Ohio in 1794 that northwestern Pennsylvania was really opened to settlement.

14. What did the State do with land acquired by the purchase of 1784?

The State found its inhabited area increased by nearly one-third at a cost of only \$7,000. The first desire of the people of the State, through their Assembly, was to sell lands to the value of this expenditure and, of more importance, to induce families to go to this great wilderness region to live.

Less than three months after the purchase, a system of land sales was inaugurated, through land offices, that was intended to secure fair and equal distributions of lands. Priority of all applications received during the first ten days of the sales were to be determined by a lottery under the supervision of the Secretary of the Land Office. Surveyors were appointed for the ten districts, into which the area of the Last Purchase was divided. It is interesting to note that during the early years of the sales, May 1785 to 1792, the sales were not numerous and were chiefly to religious and educational institutions. Among these were Dickinson College, the Episcopal, Pittsburgh, Reading, and Washington Academies as well as the Lutheran congregation of Philadelphia. It now became apparent that the price of the lands was too high. The Legislature therefore reduced the original cost from eighty cents an acre to fifty-three cents, and then finally in 1792 to thirteen cents an acre. This low price and the alluring prospect of a large increase in their value, resulted in an astonishing increase in sales—chiefly to large purchasers. Seven shrewd merchants as far away as Amsterdam, Holland, must have considered lands in Pennsylvania a good investment for their company, known as the Holland Land Company, bought nearly 2,000,000 acres. Ruter Jan Schimmel, one of the names of the merchants, is outstanding for its Dutch atmosphere. An abstract of title would show that these seven citizens of Netherlands owned, during the years 1816 to 1829, lands where the city of Kane is now located. Nearer at home another individual, William Bingham of Philadelphia, reputed to be Pennsylvania's wealthiest and most prominent citizen, socially and politically, sought to turn an honest penny in speculating in lands in the Last Purchase. He bought one million, one hundred and twenty-five thousand acres which he sold, probably at a profit, to John Keating, also of Philadelphia. In 1884 the Keating Estate sold its holdings in McKean County to Byron D. Hamlin, Henry Hamlin, and John Forrest of Smethport who paid \$400,000 for 297,428 acres. It is interesting to note that the

McKean County Historical Society has among its most prized possessions an original deed from Robert Morris and his wife of Philadelphia to lands in McKean County and other counties, and also a deed executed in 1796 from William Bingham to Omer Talon for lands in this county.

15. What is meant by "Donation Lands" as it applied to portions of the Last Purchase?

In December of 1783 the Pennsylvania Assembly passed a law by which certain quantities of lands were to be donated to soldiers of the Pennsylvania Line serving in the War of the Revolution. These lands were also exempt during the life time of the owner from taxation. The amount of land to be received depended upon the rank and pay of the man. Lands were to be assigned to claimants by lottery and ranged in area from two hundred acres for a private to two thousand acres for a major general. No donation lands were asked for or surveyed in the area now included in this county.

16. What foreign nation once claimed ownership of lands now lying in McKean and adjacent territories?

There are many residents of McKean County who annually visit Jamestown, Lake Chautauqua, and Celoron. The park is named after a French explorer who in 1749 did his best to obtain control of all western Pennsylvania for the King of France.

The English had formed the Ohio Company to make this region secure for themselves. In turn France, through the Governor General of Canada, sent a soldier named Celeron with a command from Montreal by way of Lake Ontario and Niagara to the southern shoreline of Lake Erie to a point nearest to Chautauqua. By way of this lake and the Conewango Creek, the French made their way to the point where the town of Warren now stands. Here a lead plate bearing inscriptions claiming the lands for France was buried. This procedure was repeated at Fort Venango (Franklin), Fort DuQuesne (Pittsburgh), and on down the Ohio. Finally the expedition found its way back to Montreal and made a favorable report to the Governor who sent a considerable force of French and Indians in 1753 to occupy these regions. Because the Conewango was shallow for the canoes and batteaux of the expedition, that route was abandoned for Presque Isle, Waterford and Venango, where the French forts were built. A few months later Washington was sent by Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia to warn the French

off lands claimed by the English in the Ohio Valley. From this time on until the close of the French and Indian War, both the French and English made determined efforts to take and hold all lands in the Ohio and Allegheny River valleys. At first fortune favored the French, but finally the whole region came under the control of the British.

17. What boundary disputes had Pennsylvania with neighboring colonies?

While the boundaries of Penn's lands in America had been fixed by charter, the terms of that charter unfortunately conflicted with other charters granted to neighboring colonies. As a result the location of boundary lines for many years vexed colonial officials, and, in one instance at least, led to bloodshed. Pennsylvania had disputes with both Maryland and Virginia about the southern border. There were also disagreements with New York over the boundary line. Massachusetts claimed the lands in the "Erie Triangle."

However, the dispute between Connecticut and Pennsylvania over the lands in the northern part of the colony was far more serious. Connecticut's charter, made long before that of Charles to Penn, assigned to that colony lands between certain latitudes from sea to sea unless already possessed by other colonies. New York and New Jersey were already settled when Connecticut's charter was granted in 1662, but by leaping over these areas, that province claimed that her charter gave her the right to all unoccupied lands extending to the westward of the Delaware River. About the year 1750, enterprising settlers from Connecticut began to come to northern Pennsylvania, settling chiefly in the Wyoming Valley in what is now Luzerne County. The heirs of William Penn were unable to employ enough magistrates and sheriffs to force the Connecticut people from their lands in Pennsylvania. The dispute was finally settled by the Pennsylvania Legislature's granting Pennsylvania titles to the lands which settlers had previously held under Connecticut grants. The most lasting effect of the attempt to extend the boundaries of New England into Pennsylvania was the extension of New England culture into all the northern section of the State.

There are maps showing the outlines and names of six Connecticut townships to be organized in what is now McKean County. One of these occupying the present site of Bradford was named Lorana. Where we now have "Lafayette," the Connecticut officials had located "Trumbull," named after the Governor of that colony. The

first settlers of Canoe Place came with Judge Samuel Stanton who years before had left Connecticut for Wayne County in northeastern Pennsylvania, and then finally moved to McKean County. He and those who came with him preserved the New England traditions, even including the village "common," or public square.

18. When was McKean County organized? After whom was it named?

McKean was set aside from Lycoming in 1804 and named after Governor Thomas McKean whose energy contributed much toward the settlement of the northwestern part of the State. During his governorship, extending from 1799 to 1808, seventeen of our sixty-seven counties were organized. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a member of the Congress for eleven years. He was also Chief Justice of Pennsylvania for a time. He was one of the most active and public-spirited of our Revolutionary patriots.

19. Who first settled in McKean County?

In the year 1797 Francis King, a surveyor who had recently moved from London to Philadelphia, was employed by John Keating of that city to explore lands in the northern part of the State then owned by William Bingham of Philadelphia. At the time Francis King lived with his family at Asylum, in Bradford County, Pennsylvania. From this point on the Susquehanna River, Francis King struggled through the wilderness lying between his home and lands he was supposed to survey with only a boy of fourteen and a pack horse to carry provisions. Lost in the forests after six weeks of wandering and almost completely out of food, he was taken violently ill at the home of a poor settler somewhere near where the Sinnemahoning joins the Susquehanna. Sending the boy back home with a letter to his wife, Mr. King remained for another six weeks before he was able to return to his home at Asylum. In the spring of 1798, Mr. King and his family, consisting of his wife and seven children, together with workmen, again started for his new home on the lands which had been purchased by John Keating upon his recommendation. The little party came through what is now Lock Haven, Driftwood, Emporium, Port Allegany, and finally to the mouth of the Oswayo, which they ascended six miles to a site near the present village of Ceres. The nearest settlement of three families was at Andover, New York. Fifty-six miles away there were two families located at Big Meadows in Tioga County. The King family ar-

rived in Ceres late in June and immediately began to sow corn and make other plantings of garden and farm crops. A saw mill was built the first summer and a grist mill the second season. Mr. King's work as a surveyor naturally took him away much of the time. It is related that once when the head of the family was away, Mrs. King, accompanied by two Indians, made the trip to Pittsburgh, bought provisions and took them home by canoe. Late in 1801 the family of seven children was left motherless in the wilderness while the father was in Philadelphia getting supplies and settling with the Land Company. He was detained by high water and the dangers of winter travel until sometime in March. Had it not been for meat brought in by the Indians, the children would have fared very poorly. This family was of the middle English class and had never been used to hardship and work before their arrival in America in 1795. The Kings and many others of the Ceres settlement were members of the Society of Friends. It is related that Mary, daughter of Francis King, was engaged to be married to Joel Swayne, a missionary to the Indians. With other members of the family, she made the journey from Ceres to Muncy, below Williamsport, by horseback in order that the ceremony might be consummated in a Friends' meeting. Her sister, Martha, had been married the year before at the same place and in the same way.

20. What hardships did the pioneers have to face?

One of the early settlers has left the following description of the first years of his life with his family on the edge of the frontier: "It was very lonesome for several years. People would move in, and stay a short time, and move away again.

I started with my two yoke of oxen, to go to Jersey Shore, to mill, to procure flour. I crossed Pine Creek eighty times going to, and eighty times coming from mill, was gone eighteen days, broke two axletrees to my wagon, upset twice, and one wheel came off in crossing the creek. . . .

"The few seeds that I was able to plant the first year, yielded but little produce. We however raised some half-grown potatoes, some turnips, and soft corn, with which we made out to live, without suffering, till the next spring, at planting time, when I planted all the seeds that I had left; and when I had finished planting, we had nothing to eat but leeks, cow-cabbage, and milk. We lived on leeks and cow-cabbage, as long as they kept green—about six weeks . . . during the three winter months it snowed seventy days. I sold one

yoke of my oxen in the fall, the other yoke I wintered on browse; but in the spring one ox died, and the other I sold to procure feed for my family, and was now destitute of a team, and had nothing but my own hands to depend upon to clear my lands and raise provisions. We wore out all our shoes the first year. We had no way to get more—no money, nothing to sell, and but little to eat — and were in dreadful distress for want of the necessities of life. I was obliged to work and travel in the woods barefooted. After a while our clothes were worn out. Our family increased, and the children were nearly naked. I had a broken slate that I brought from Jersey Shore. I sold that . . . and bought two fawn skins, of which my wife made a petticoat for Mary; and Mary wore the petticoat until she outgrew it; then Rhoda took it until she outgrew it; then Susan had it until she outgrew it; then it fell to Abigail, and she wore it out."

Frontier life in this country lasted from 1607 until the 1890's. Experiences like the one given above were common. It was a life that tried men's souls, but out of it came the independence, courage, and active sense of justice which have helped so much to make America great.

21. What part did John Keating have in the settlement and organization of McKean County?

While John Keating never lived in the county, yet it is likely that he made frequent trips to his lands in this section. It is recorded that he was present when Smethport was surveyed in 1807. In any event, it should be clearly understood that John Keating had much to do with the first settlements and the future course of events in McKean County. The settlement at Ceres was made and maintained, for a time at least, through funds furnished by the Keating Land Company. Later he donated lands and cash for schools and other public enterprises in the county.

John Keating was truly a "Soldier of Fortune." He was born near Limerick, Ireland. When he was five years of age his father moved to France in order to escape religious persecution. Five of the sons entered the French army. John attained the rank of captain in the Irish Brigade and received the Cross of St. Louis for meritorious service. Upon the execution of the King during the French Revolution, John, who was stationed in San Domingo, resigned from French service and came to this country, bearing letters to Washington and others. He was immediately sought after by foreign capitalists who wished to make

investments in the New World. Locating in Philadelphia, he formed the John Keating and Company, which became the owners of 297,000 acres of lands bought from the William Bingham Estate. The entire management of this estate fell upon him. He entered upon it with the same zeal that had characterized his activities as a soldier. He endured labor, privation, and peril in supervising and founding his settlements in several Pennsylvania counties. Each settlement had to be made self-supporting and at the same time made to return some revenue to the Company. He was far-sighted and generous, and enjoyed the confidence of the many settlers to whom he had granted and sold lands. His visits to the lands owned by the Company continued for nearly fifty years. He died in Philadelphia at the advanced age of 95 years, beloved not only by his friends and neighbors, among them the chief men of the day in business; but also by those in the more remote sections of the Commonwealth who had known him as their benefactor.

22. Was McKean County originally the same shape and size that it is today?

The number, shape, and size of Pennsylvania counties make a very interesting study. In the beginning, Penn carved but three counties out of his woodland domain. These were Philadelphia and Bucks on the Delaware, and Chester, which included all the other lands in the Province. As occasion arose, other counties were formed from Chester. These were as follows up to the time of the organization of McKean County:

Lancaster from Chester	1729
Cumberland from Lancaster	1750
Bedford from Cumberland	1771
Northumberland from Bedford	1772
Lycoming from Northumberland	1796
McKean from Lycoming	1804

Three changes have been made in the boundary lines of McKean County since 1804.

1860: Parts of Clinton, Elk, and McKean were taken to make Cameron County.

1843: Parts of Jefferson, Clearfield, and McKean were organized into Elk County.

1864: Lands along the Allegheny River adjacent to Warren County were made a part of that county as the inhabitants of that area found it much more convenient to attend court in Warren than in McKean County.

The creation of new counties was largely a matter of growth in population of certain areas, convenience, and sometimes of local pride and

politics. As settlers moved into the western wilderness from the original Chester County, it is but natural that eventually more counties would be created to take care of local administrative needs. This was especially true in the days when travel was restricted to rivers and roads that were at times nearly impassable. For instance, a map of 1840 shows two roads leading from Emporium to Smethport. However, residents of Shippen Township could not possibly make a visit to the county seat under two or possibly three days. With the growth of Emporium and areas adjacent in Shippen Township, the demand for more convenient county administrative facilities could be met only by the creation of a new county. Thanks to Pennsylvania's good roads, county seats that were once a day or even several days apart in travel are now separated by hours, or even minutes. It may be that in the interest of public economy there will be a regrouping of counties for certain administrative activities.

23. How many townships in McKean County in 1804?

There were but two townships. Ceres, which comprised all the northern two-thirds of the county, everything north of the southern boundary of what is now Lafayette and Keating Townships; and Sergeant, which included all the remaining portion of what is now McKean County, together with what was taken to form Cameron and part of Elk in 1843. Altogether there have been twenty-two changes in township names and lines since 1804. The names and dates of formation of the fifteen townships of the county are as follows:

1. Ceres	Original	8. Norwich	1835
2. Sergeant	Original	9. Lafayette	1842
3. Keating	1824	10. Eldred	1843
4. Bradford	1828	11. Hamlin	1844
5. Liberty	1828	12. Otto	1853
6. Corydon	1829	13. Wetmore	1856
7. Hamilton	1834	14. Annin	1857
	15. Foster		1880

Townships-Towns-Villages

The date and circumstances under which the first settlement was made in the County have been given. Prior to 1810 very few families came to the Keating lands. However, Francis King and his associates were busy surveying tens of thousands of acres upon which white men had never set foot. Often these surveyors were away in the wilderness for weeks at a time. When the first straggling families did venture into the County,

they came through the efforts of the Keating agency located at Ceres. Schools, land sales, tax levies, and receipts were all handled from this center. In 1824 the first division of Ceres Township was made. It was divided into two equal parts, the southernmost one being given the name "Keating" in honor of the head of the Land Company that controlled a large portion of McKean County.

24. When and where were the townships settled?

The answer to question 23 gives the dates when the townships were organized and named. Quite often it is a difficult matter to assign the exact date of settlement. When it comes to the settlement of boroughs, it is a still more complicated affair as in every instance each borough was in the beginning a part of some township. For instance, Smethport, up to 1824, was a village in Ceres Township. After 1824, and until 1853 when the county seat was incorporated as a borough, Smethport was a part of Keating Township. It must be kept in mind that first settlements were made more than one hundred years ago and that accurate records were not always kept of events that would now make interesting reading. The history of McKean, Elk, Cameron, and Potter Counties prepared in 1890 gives dates for the settlements of townships in McKean County. Interesting data taken from other volumes have been added to the information derived from the source mentioned.

Annin: Men who were digging a mill-race near the Allegheny River in 1836 uncovered a large turtle which gave rise to the name "Turtle Point." R. B. Stone in his book entitled "**McKean, the Governor's County**," mentions the fact that county records show that Governor McKean bought a tract of three hundred acres known as the "Plantation of Mount Equity" in what is now Annin Township. This tract of land, as revealed in the deed books of the county, proved to be a "round top" mountain which lies between Sartwell and Turtle Point to the east of the highway. In a county celebration in 1904 commemorating the 100th year of the organization of the county, a boulder from this tract of land was hauled to Bradford and set up in the public square.

About the year 1840 a number of Irish families from New York State settled in the Newell Creek region of this township. Farms were cleared and homes were built. Another chief concern of these newcomers was adequate church facilities. John Keating donated a tract of fifty acres for

the use of the Catholic congregations of the county. A cemetery was consecrated in 1842 and was followed in 1848 by a church, which served the areas included in Bradford, Eldred, Port Allegany, and Smethport for many years. In 1869 the Sartwell church was replaced by a larger edifice to meet the needs of a greatly increased congregation. Among the Catholic churches of the county, the Sartwell church has a unique place, for from it have come a number of other churches of that faith.

Bradford: Honorable H. B. Stone's "**McKean, the Governor's County**" states that in 1796 the Connecticut-Susquehanna Company granted to three settlers, upon proof of nominal settlement, a township named Lorana. Nearby townships planned by this company were "Conde," part of present day Foster; "Tuerrene," where now are Otto and Eldred; and "Newtown," which coincides with the present confines of Ceres. However, the rights of Connecticut to lands in northern Pennsylvania had been extinguished by the Trenton Decree of 1782. This did not prevent individual citizens from the New England colonies from coming to Penn's woods to make their fortunes. In fact, the Northern Tier counties were settled to a large extent by families from that section.

On the 19th of June in 1827 John F. Melvin and fourteen others including Pikes and Foster petitioned the court to divide Ceres Township into east and west portions and asked that the western part be called Bradford Township. Here we note the New England influence, as this was the name of the town in New Hampshire from whence the Melvins and others came. When the borough was incorporated in 1873, it took the name of the Bradford Township.

In 1838 the United States Land Company, formed largely by citizens of the town of Bosca-wen in New Hampshire, bought 150,000 acres of land in McKean County. The trustees of the company sent Col. L. C. Little to manage its affairs. The little group of houses located somewhere near the present site of the Emery Hotel was then called Littletown. In 1851 that part of the holdings of the Land Company located on the waters of the Tunungant was sold to Daniel Kingsbury of Boston. In those days lumbering was probably the chief industry. In an Old Home Week and Centennial Anniversary celebrated in August, 1925, Hon. F. H. Newell, a descendant of Daniel Kingsbury said that "the reason why Main Street does not extend westward is that

'Uncle Daniel' would not permit it to be laid out across his mill pond."

In 1861, 1865, and 1871, attempts were made to discover oil in Bradford Township. By the end of 1875 there were reported to be seventeen producing wells in the Bradford area. However, the next five years saw a remarkable development of this most important industry. The township became and still remains one of the chief oil producing townships of the county. Toad Hollow, Song Bird, West Branch, and Custer City became centers of the producing areas. The last-named village was named by Civil War veterans in honor of General George Custer.

Ceres: These data already contain many items concerning the early settlement of Ceres. Once occupying two-thirds of the county, Ceres has been reduced to approximately forty square miles located in the extreme northwestern corner of the county. In like manner the political and industrial activities of the township have been more or less limited by the passage of time. Not only was Ceres the "hub" of the county in its earliest days, but a little later it was the center of the pine and hemlock lumber activities of the Oswayo Valley. Discovery of petroleum in McKean County also brought its share of improvement to Ceres. In 1881 the Bradford, Eldred, and Cuba Railroad was constructed, passing through Ceres on its way from the oil fields to Cuba. Having a population of less than one thousand, the county had fifty-two men serving in the Northern Armies during the Civil War. One of the first companies of the celebrated "Bucktails" to answer the call of General Kane was the one from this district, which marched through Port Allegany and Emporium to Driftwood where it joined other companies. From there they were rafted down the Sinnemahoning and the Susquehanna to Lock Haven and then went by rail to Harrisburg. For many years the Methodist parsonage in Ceres Village was the Gretna Green of the county. The state line runs through the sitting room of the parsonage, making it very convenient for the pastor of the church to perform wedding ceremonies for citizens of either state.

Corydon: It will be noted that the Allegheny River, as it makes a sweep to the southward after leaving the Olean escarpment, borders Corydon Township in both McKean and Warren Counties. It is but natural that some of the early settlers drifting down the river would be attracted to the river flats and endeavor to make homes thereon. We read that as early as 1808 Philip Tome settled along the river. He was one of the greatest

hunters who resided in the county. A volume "Thirty Years a Hunter" recounts many of his adventures. McKnight in his "Pioneer History of Northwestern Pennsylvania" tells of the taking of a live elk on the Kettle Creek by Isaac Lyman, Philip Tome and others. The elk was gotten onto a raft on the Allegheny River, floated to Olean Point, and from there taken through New York State to Albany where it was placed on exhibition. For years Tome was accustomed to hunt elk and other big game on the "Big Level," the Mt. Jewett-St. Marys mountain top. In J. E. Henretta's "Kane and the Upper Allegheny," reference is quoted as saying, "In August of 1820 I left Kinzua Flats with white companions and two Indians for the Four Corners (somewhere between Kane and Mt. Jewett) to hunt elk. We proceeded to the Kittanning Black House which was fitted up for use." The party must have remained for some time as it finally encountered snow three feet deep. Finally the party returned to Kinzua with the meat of fifteen deer and some elk. This reference is also of value as it indicates that in 1820 there was an Olean-Kittanning road which had been in use for some years.

Eldred: The first settlements in Eldred Township were made in 1808-10 by families which still number many descendants among the citizens of the district. These were Loops, Hookers, Stulls, and Wrights. Lumbering seems to have been the chief occupation for many years. Records show that between 1860 and 1879 seven of the mills were burned, some with as much as three million board feet of lumber in the yards. One of the largest mills destroyed was located at Larabee, the J. J. Newman Concern. The other was the Bullis Brothers Mill at State Line, near the present overhead crossing of the P. S. & N. R. R. Larabee, situated at the junction of the Pennsylvania R. R. and the Clermont branch of the same railroad, was at one time a place of considerable importance, as we read that in 1885 a fire destroyed a large mill, two hotels and other property. Records show that at least three sawmills have burned at this place. In August, 1879, Haymaker, in the northern section of the Township, had a population of hundreds. A fire in 1879, during the boom days of oil drilling activities, destroyed three hotels, oil rigs, and other property. For many years the chief village of the township was known as Allegheny Bridge in commemoration of the construction of one of the first bridges across the river. In 1878 individuals and companies started drilling operations in Eldred Township. These activities have been and still are very suc-

cessful in the western areas, particularly in the Haymaker, Indian Creek, Barnham, and State Line regions.

Foster: This district was the last to be organized in the county. It was set aside from Bradford Township in 1880 and of course up to that time its history paralleled that of Bradford Township. The name "Foster" was given to the new township thereby honoring Leonard S. Foster, the oldest continuous resident of the Tuna Valley.

As one reads a history of the Bradford area the names Littleton, Tarport, Kendall Creek, and Bradford appear in a manner that is somewhat confusing. As before stated, the name Littleton was given the little settlement located near the western end of Main Street when the United States Land Company organized its holdings in the Tuna Valley. The history of McKean, Elk, Cameron, and Potter states that Tarport adjoins Bradford City on the north and that Tarport was great when Bradford was a hamlet and that for years the trade of northwestern McKean County was centered there. In 1876 the Tarport community was organized as a borough and named Kendall Creek. It is apparent that in the early days there were two distinct communities a mile or more apart. Time and a rapidly growing community merged everything into what is now Bradford City, which, of course, includes parts of what at one time were either Bradford or Foster Townships.

It is interesting to note in R. B. Stone's "McKean, the Governor's County" a map and an account of the first fifty-nine oil wells drilled in the Bradford area. The first eight of these were drilled near Limestone, just north of the state line. The next twenty wells were drilled in the Foster Brook region just north of the present city limits. It was not until the sixteenth well came in at seventy barrels on December 6, 1874, on the Buchanan farm that the productivity of the Bradford field was assured.

During the early days of the oil boom the ground and the air were saturated with natural gas and petroleum, a situation which often led to frequent and disastrous fires. In 1880 the newly settled village of Rew was destroyed by fire which originated on one of the nearby leases. More than fifty private homes, stores, and boarding houses were destroyed in less than two hours' time, to say nothing of the loss of smaller buildings and lease properties. In the same year a fire at Foster Brook destroyed one hundred and one drilling rigs. In October of the next year, Rew

had another and less disastrous fire, which consumed a barber shop, a meat market, a bowling alley, a blacksmith shop, two hotels, a furniture store, a drug store, a saloon, and a wagon shop, with private dwellings. This list is given to show the change in occupations in the smaller towns of the county during the last three-quarters of a century. In the early days every little community must have a variety of stores and shops to meet local needs. Now these same conveniences are supplied only in larger centers made accessible through better transportation facilities.

Hamilton: Sometime about 1810-12 George Morrison of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River made his way along the same course pursued by Philip Tome of Corydon and settled at or near Morrison in Hamilton Township.

In the beginning practically all the lands included in the southwestern portions of the county were purchased by the Holland Land Company from the Commonwealth. Later, a large part of this township came under the control of L. D. Wetmore of Warren, who had extensive mills at Wetmore, located on the Pennsylvania Railroad between Kane and Ludlow. In 1869 J. G. Curtis built the Ludlow Tannery and began the manufacture of high grade leather for upholstering purposes. In 1901 the Curtis interests were sold to James A. Connelly, who has for many years been one of the chief business and political figures of the county. The Ludlow Tannery is one of two tanneries still left of the many that once made tanning one of the chief industries in McKean County. In 1885 an eight-inch gas line was opened from Ludlow to Jamestown, New York, which conveyed gas from McKean County's gas field to that city. This project was constructed by the Pennsylvania Gas Company, which still has large holdings in Hamilton and other townships in northern Pennsylvania counties.

Hamlin: A map of McKean County in 1850 shows two roads crossing what is now Hamlin Township at places named Kingston and Stanton. One of these roads led from Williamsville, on the edge of Elk County, to Smethport. The other was the Ellicottville road from Emporium by way of Rich Valley and Tarport into New York State. Records show that Samuel Stanton, who settled Canoe Place, had purchased seventeen hundred acres in Hamlin Township and that the stream later named Marvin Creek was called Stanton Creek. A history of that portion of Hamlin known as Hazelhurst dates back to 1838 when William Field of Howard, New York, settled in the upper Marvin Creek Valley. Mr. Field later moved his

family to Howard Hill, now known as Mt. Jewett. B. F. Hazeltine in 1890 selected a site for a mill which is now known as Hazelhurst in honor of the man who created this pleasant little community. At one time the town had a chemical factory and a number of large glass factories. The first settlers in the western portions of Hamlin came with Colonel Thomas Kane in 1860. They were mostly Scandinavian nationality and rapidly cleared very attractive farms along the Kane-Mt. Jewett highway. A later member of the Kane family, E. K. Kane of Kushequa, was known for many years for his many business enterprises which included very extensive land holdings, lumbering, gas and oil activities, and the manufacturing of brick. He also constructed his own railroad to carry his products to nearby trunk lines.

Keating: This township was the first to be created after the organization of the county in 1804. Ceres was divided into two equal parts, the southernmost one being named after John Keating. As before noted, Francis King and others, probably including John Keating, surveyed Smethport in 1807. In 1809 Benjamin Cooper, then interested in building a town at Instanter in Sergeant Township, petitioned Congress to make a port of entry at the forks of the Nunundah where he had purchased twenty acres of land near the bridge in what is now East Smethport. It seems the plan was to build a port at this site and then carry the goods to Instanter by pack horses or wagon trains. It is recorded that Jonathan Colegrove came to Keating Township with his wife and family by canoe from Olean Point in 1815. He was an agent for the Ridgway lands from 1817 to 1852. In 1810 James Otto and family had already settled near what is now Farmers Valley.

In 1855-57 a "coal-oil" factory was established near Smethport on Potato Creek. McKean County had developed a thriving business in this commodity when Colonel Drake discovered a much better product in his well at Titusville. It was no longer profitable to extract oil from coal, although such a course may be necessary if our petroleum resources are finally exhausted. It is interesting to note that Germany kept her vast war machine moving on gasoline extracted largely from coal.

The western portion of Keating Township was greatly affected by the oil boom of the eighties. Oil towns grew up over night at Coleville, Aiken, Davis, Ormsby, and Cyclone. Bordell,

known in 1879 as the "Banner Frontier Town," had a newspaper; and an important oil country railroad bore the imposing name of "Bradford, Bordell, and Kinzua." Coryville and Farmers Valley are situated in the Nunundah (Potato) Creek Valley in agricultural and oil refining centers. For years, "Backas," on the B & O Railroad, was a junction point with E. K. Kane's railroad running from Mt. Jewett to Kushequa to Smethport, thus affording the citizens of the county seat access to Bradford, Kane, and other points. Since then, Kane's railroads have been abandoned and not a vestige remains of "Bakas." It has gone the way of other so-called "ghost" towns. As before noted, East Smethport had an early historical importance. It has remained, during the years, a site important in road and railroad transportation, as well as in the manufacture of wood products.

Lafayette: Recent developments in this township somewhat overshadow more ancient events. Reference is made to the Music Mountain oil developments of 1942 which raised the oil production of Lafayette until it stands the highest per capita in the county. In the spring of 1944, the Federal Government completed a splendid new airport at Mt. Alton, which has runways more than a mile in extent. This project places McKean County in an advantageous position as far as post-war aviation is concerned.

Early settlements were made at Mt. Alton and Lafayette. The last named was situated where the East and West and Kittanning roads crossed and must have been a place of importance in the early development of the county. The early history of Mt. Alton was chiefly concerned with the production of lumber and coal. In July of 1863, the Lafayette Coal Company was formed. Other companies were organized and mines were opened at Buttsville, Alton and Bon Vein. The town also had wood alcohol and lumber products, at one time. Marshburg, now a road junction, was at one time a typical country lumber town with post office, school, stores, railroad, and hotel. It, too, has gone the way of many other temporary, once prosperous, communities. Westline on Kinzua Creek in the southwestern corner of the township has one of the largest wood chemical factories in Pennsylvania.

Liberty: Old records indicate that permanent settlement in this district was made in 1815 by Stantons, Lillibridges, Burts, Fosters, and Sartwells. It seems the first dwellings were erected on the knoll between the Public Square and the bridge that crosses the river at the south end of

the village. However, it was not until 1822 that the so-called Red House Bridge was constructed over the Allegheny. Records show that Samuel Stanton of Canoe Place, Joel Bishop of Instanter, and Isaac Lyman of Roulette were appointed the first commissioners for the Potter-McKean area in 1815. They held the first meeting in the house of Benjamin Burt at Burtsville, John King, son of Francis King, who had died the previous year, was appointed as treasurer with an office at Kingsville. It is interesting to note that both streams of water arising at Keating Summit, one flowing south to meet the Sinnemahoning at Emporium, the other flowing north to join the Allegheny River at Port Allegany, were named "Portage" by the early settlers. Pioneers, and before them the Indians, when passing from the Susquehanna to the Allegheny and Ohio, found it necessary to leave the water near the head waters of each and carry, or "portage," their goods and canoes over the summits dividing these river systems. Those who passed on to the westward upon coming to the Allegheny named the junction point of Portage Creek with the Allegheny "Canoe Place" for this was the place where once again they could pursue their journey in the easier way. The first industry of real consequence in this as well as other McKean County townships was lumbering. Early mill owners were Daniel Stanton, Solomon Sartwell, Benjamin Burt, and Daniel Clark. Somewhat later in the century, owners of larger mills were A. M. Benton, F. E. Rowley, A. N. Lillibridge, E. B. Dolley, and F. H. Arnold.

Norwich: This township was settled by pioneers from Connecticut, who after a brief sojourn in New York, came on to Pennsylvania. Among the first settlers were Jonathan Colegrove and Nathaniel Gallup, who came to Norwich in the year 1815. In court records of January 1816, we find the names of David Comes and Jonathan Colegrove appointed as viewers for much needed bridges over Potato Creek on a road leading from Smethport to Instanter. In the next year we find the name of Nathaniel Gallup as a viewer for a road from Arnold Hunter's house on the East and West Road and connecting with the Instanter Road.

Crosby, the chief manufacturing town of Norwich Township, was once known as Spearsburg and then Newerf. It is the site of the Crosby Chemical Company, which at the present time is one of the largest producers of products made from chemical wood, in the county. Wood for the

factory is obtained from the lands of the Heinemann Estate which, under the direction of the late N. W. Heinemann, grew until it embraced a great portion of the valuable gas and timber lands of the township.

In 1811-12 lumbering was begun on the 26,000-acre tract of virgin timber belonging to the Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company with headquarters in Williamsport. For ten years the upper Potato Creek Valley was a beehive of various phases of the lumber industry. A great saw mill was the center of activity at Norwich. The town had moving pictures, a hotel, stores, and dwellings for a thousand or more inhabitants. *Betula*, meaning "beech," was the site of another equally as large town which used beech timber for staves, while a short distance down the valley there was the Keystone Chemical Factory that used the remaining hardwoods in the manufacture of wood alcohol and by-products. Nothing remains of Keystone except the huge brick smoke stack. Norwich has vanished with the exception of a few scattered houses along the highway that leads to Emporium.

Most of Norwich Township is in the Potato Creek Valley. However, the extreme southeastern portion of the district lies in the Parker Run Valley, a tributary of the Portage Creek that finally reaches the Sinnemahoning at Emporium. The great Elk Lick of Indian and very early pioneer days was located about four miles from Gardeau on Parker Run. In the days of long ago countless deer and elk were accustomed to satisfy their cravings for salt here. A little later white men established one of the few salt factories in northwestern Pennsylvania. A road from Coudersport called the "Salt Works" road led to Gardeau and the Salt Works. In 1844, here also came George and N. H. Parker who were attracted largely by the fine hunting to be had at and near Gardeau so bought tracts of land. George Parker was doubtless one of the country's greatest hunters. After the novelty of hunting in the Gardeau area had passed, he hunted the Lake Superior, California, and Adirondack regions. His comment upon first coming to the Elk Lick in 1838 was, "No place on the American continent would award the hunter's pursuit as well as this." An account in the "Fifty Years Ago" column of the Port Allegany Reporter-Argus reminded the readers that four fishermen from Wellsville, New York, took from the Parker Run one hundred and twenty-five pounds of brook trout. It seems that Norwich in the pioneer days must have been a sportsman's paradise.

Otto: At this writing the chief towns in Otto Township are Rixford and Duke Center. However, it seems that the first settlement in the district was made at Prentiss Vale about 1842 by Arthur Prentiss and Herman Strong, who came to the township to market the pine timber that was found at the heads of the valleys. Other settlers who came to the district were Benjamin Bunker in 1852 and John Duke about the time of the Civil War.

Rixford and Duke Center were among the boom towns of the early Bradford oil field, and still remain centers of rich oil producing areas. Records show that a gas explosion in 1880 destroyed seventy-five dwellings and also burned 70,000 barrels of oil and forty drilling rigs at Rixford. Less destructive oil-country fires occurred in the same and succeeding years. In 1880 Duke Center had a population of 2,068. It was chartered as a borough on September 23, 1778 with burgess, council, and other regular borough officials. However, the dwindling population that followed the hectic days of the oil boom made it advisable to drop the borough organization. The Duke Center "Herald" was published in 1879. It was succeeded by the "Auger" and it, too, finally suspended publication. In the same year the borough had a bank which did business until the nineties. Many of McKean County's well-known physicians and attorneys first hung out a shingle at one or the other of Otto's oil country villages. Acre for acre this township has probably produced as much oil as any other district in the county. A writer in 1890 makes the statement that nearly fifty men of the township volunteered for service in the Civil War and that nearly twenty of that number lost their lives in the struggle.

Sergeant: As before noted, this township was one of the two original ones into which the county was first divided. We should, therefore, anticipate a very rich historical background. The first settlement was known as Instanter, which was settled about 1809 on Cooper lands. It appears in the first surveyor's notes as Cooper's Farm. The names of those early associated with Instanter are David Comes, who later moved to Norwich; Seth Marvin, after whom Marvin Creek was named; and Arnold Hunter, who later built the first cabin in "Smethport." During the early years of the county one of its foremost citizens was Joel Bishop of Instanter whose name appears on practically all the court records from September, 1815, to the same month in 1818 as a reviewer

of petitions for bridges and roads in McKean County.

In the early "twenties" P. E. Scull came to Instanter as an agent for Jacob Ridgway. He cleared the Bunker Hill farm of some hundreds of acres. Among the legends of the county is the Bunker Hill fire that burned the slashing so thoroughly that it never reseeded itself to forest trees. It still remains a barren waste covered with wild grasses and bracken.

McKnight's "History of Northwestern Pennsylvania" contains this reference to one of the most noteworthy of the county's early settlements. "Teutonia is the name of a German settlement situated on Stanton Creek fifteen miles southwest of Smethport, near the old town of Instanter in Sergeant Township. It was started in March of 1843 on the plan and by the enterprise of Henry Ginal, a German now residing in Philadelphia, and the agent of a community which is known as the Society of Industry. It contains at present about four hundred and fifty people. There is a school house and about seventy log houses besides a saw mill, tannery, and a large store furnished with all articles needed for food and clothing. The society has forty thousand acres rich in coal, iron ore, limestone, and brick clay. The society is founded on the principle of communal ownership of property and is sustained by the cooperation of its members, who put everything raised into the common storehouse and draw out according to their needs." This communistic project went the way of all others of its kind. Instanter, Ginalsburg, and Teutonia gave way to the village which has survived during the years and is known as Clermont. It, too, has seen better days. At one time two hundred and forty families lived on the "Patch" just across the road from the village school house. Now the "Patch" where once lived the families of coal miners is a cow pasture with here and there signs of cellar excavations as the only remains of a place that must have once hummed with activities peculiar to that type of village. At one time the center of both coal mining and lumbering, it was an enterprising village on the Pennsylvania Railroad line between Larabee and Johnsonburg. But now coal, lumber, and railroad are things of the past and with them went much of Clermont's business activities.

On August 5, 1944, E. Kent Kane, Jr., conveyed 2,200 acres of land in Sergeant Township to the Board of Fish Commissioners, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as a public recreational

area. This forest park is to be named "The Elisha Kent Kane Forest Recreational Park" after the father of the donor, a grandson of Thomas L. Kane who settled the Kane area. The State is to construct within a ten-year period a dam on Five Mile Creek of sufficient size to make a lake of at least two hundred acres.

Wetmore: This township occupies the southwestern corner of McKean County. It is situated on the western edge of the Big Level and has in many places an elevation of better than two thousand feet above the sea level. The Tionesta, Kinzua, and Clarion Rivers have tributaries arising in this district.

Tradition makes the Big Level a favorite hunting place for both the Red Man and the pioneer whites. In addition to the larger famed animals there were also the flocks of wild pigeons which raised their young in the beechwoods of the higher levels. During the sixties, the Senecas were accustomed to come to the Kane area and spend weeks in trapping this much sought-after game bird. There is also tradition that the Kittanning Indian Trail running from Onondage, the capital of the Six Nations, in Central New York to Kittanning, an Indian town on the Allegheny, passed through this township and that there was a much-used camping site within what is now Kane Borough.

It was not until a relatively late date in the development of the County (1860) that settlers under the leadership of Gen. Thomas L. Kane came to Wetmore Township. In 1883 the Ridgway Lumber Company was formed, which took the timber from 2,500 acres. In 1886 Wetmore was the center of deep well drilling, which brought rich dividends in petroleum production at Jo Jo and other localities in the district.

Wetmore Township was organized in 1856 from the western area of Sergeant Township. Prior to that date it was necessary for voters from Kane and other portions of Wetmore Township to go to Clermont to vote, which was, of course, a great inconvenience. Jo Jo, Kanesholm, Sergeant, and East Kane have been known as thriving centers of industry, as well as homes of those who found employment in Kane Borough.

25. What are the historic backgrounds of the city and villages of the County?

Bradford City: Bradford City is the metropolis of the Bradford oil fields. Were it not for the production of something like 33,000 barrels of oil per day, McKean County would not rank among the seven richest counties per capita in the

State, and were it not for McKean County's oil there would have been no city of Bradford. In 1874 the population of Bradford Township, including the village, was three hundred and fifty. The oil production for the preceding six years was roughly estimated at twenty-one barrels per day. In that same year on December 6th, Bradford's real oil boom started with the discovery of a seventy-barrel well. In 1880 the population of Bradford Township had increased to 2,699 and that of the city to 9,197. The daily run of oil in that year stood at 55,173 barrels. The feverish activities of the early oil days are shown by a statement which reads as follows: "In 1880 eight large brick buildings, including the Riddell House, and five hundred frame buildings were erected; the swamp was reclaimed and a number of new streets laid out." Col. A. K. McClure of the Philadelphia Times in his visit to Bradford in May of 1883 said, "The houses as a rule are pitched together like a winter camp, with here and there a solid brick edifice to mock the makeshift structures around it. Oil is just now on the boom. Everybody talks oil, and the visitor must talk oil or endure the unconcealed pity of all around him."

In 1873 the village was incorporated as a borough. The first city election was held in February, 1879. There are few cities with a population approximating 18,000 that have an area more restricted than Bradford. During the years, city councils have had difficulties arising from this situation. Narrow streets, old frame houses dating back to the oil days, houses crowded too closely together have also added to the difficulties faced by a very efficient fire department. In 1879 the city took over the privately-owned Water-Works Company and has since purchased many warrants of woodlands in Foster and Bradford Townships lying to the northwest of the municipality. Very recently the city also acquired the Mt. Alton airport which was started by city and county funds and then finished by the Federal Government. A hangar, administration building, lighting and other equipment will be erected and regular service installed by the United Air Lines. It is said that fifty-two industries, four hundred ninety-seven communities, and approximately three hundred seventy-nine thousand will be benefited if this airport is made completely ready for use.

The initiative that led to "wildcatting" for oil has also been felt in the civic, professional, and industrial life of the city. Many great fortunes have been made in the Bradford area. Much of that wealth has been channeled into activities

looking toward civic betterment and general welfare. The Bradford Hospital, Children's Home, McKean County Society for Crippled Children, the McKean County Tuberculosis Society, the Carnegie Public Library are some of the recipients of noteworthy gifts by civic-minded citizens. These data have space to mention only two of the many eminent citizens who have helped to give Bradford its place in the economic and cultural life of the county and state.

Hon. Lewis Emery, Jr., was born in Chautauqua County, New York, in 1839. His family removed to Hillsdale, Michigan, where he attended college. He taught school and then moved to southern Illinois, where he engaged in general merchandising. In August 1865 he started for the oil fields of Pennsylvania. He made his first stop at Pit Hole in Venango County and then went on to Titusville where he achieved a small fortune that was lost in the panic of 1873. Without a cent of money, he leased and purchased 14,000 acres of land in McKean County and drilled his first well at "Toad Hollow" (South Bradford) on July 28, 1875. It came in at forty barrels and not only proved of great financial value to him but at the same time opened one of the greatest oil territories the world has ever seen. Men had confidence in a man who had failed a number of times and yet came back stronger with each defeat. He served his county in the General Assembly from 1878 to 1884. When measured by his political and business success, his private benefactions, and the daring, initiative, and independence of his thinking, Senator Emery is typical of the men who explored and expanded the Bradford oil field.

Rufus Barrett Stone was for years one of the leading members of the McKean County Bar. He was born in 1847 in Groton, Mass. He was of old New England stock which settled his native town in 1655. He entered Williams College and later tried to enlist in the Navy during the Civil War. In 1869 he entered the United States Internal Revenue Service and was assigned to the Third District in Mississippi where Mr. Stone had exciting experiences during the hectic days of the Reconstruction period. He was repeatedly shot at, hanged in effigy, and made the recipient of death notices. Upon his marriage he decided to seek a more peaceful and safer environment in the North. He came to Bradford prior to 1880 and immediately took an active part in all phases of the civic, business, and cultural life of the community. The time soon came when he was either director or trustee for more Bradford enterprises

than any other of her citizens. At the same time he rapidly advanced to a leading position among the attorneys of the county. In 1879 Mr. Stone founded the "Evening Star." He drafted the charter of the Board of Trade and was its first vice president. He was member and treasurer of the Hotel Company that built the St. James Hotel, long known as Bradford's leading hotel. He was corporator of the Bradford, Bordell, and Kinzua Railroad, and a director of the Warren State Hospital at its organization in 1880. Mr. Stone organized the McKean County Historical Society. With N. M. Orr and J. M. McLure he founded the Pompelon Club in 1884 whose objectives were purely cultural. Mr. Stone was also the author of a history of the county entitled "McKean, the Governor's County" and a biography of Arthur George Olmstead.

Two of Bradford's best known industries at the present time are the Kendall Refining Company, one of the leading independent petroleum producing and refining companies in the Eastern Oil Field, and the Dresser Manufacturing Company which has developed from a business having a net worth in 1929 of \$2,400,000 to one that now has a net worth of \$16,400,000. This plant has been working on very essential war products and expects to reconvert its activities to civilian needs at the close of hostilities.

Eldred Borough: Eldred Borough is a "new name for an oil settlement." In November of 1879, a petition was sent to the Postmaster General asking that the name "Allegheny Bridge" be abolished and that Eldred be substituted therefor. In February of the next year, the petition was granted and a name that for fifty years had been well known along the Allegheny River was discarded. On December of 1880 the village was incorporated as Eldred Borough.

The Bank of Eldred was opened in February, 1879. It was robbed in 1884 of \$2,500 cash. In the fall of 1907 the bank failed and for some years the village did its banking elsewhere. The First National Bank was incorporated in 1909. It soon had a fine business at home and among the nearby oil regions. In 1941 five robbers robbed the bank of \$5,000 in cash, overlooking a much larger sum stored in the vaults. The robbers were soon captured along with much of their ill-gotten gains.

The areas of Otto and Eldred Townships, which are adjacent to the borough, are among the rich oil-bearing districts of the county. Naturally the village has prospered from oil activities. During the boom days of the oil excitement,

Eldred was connected with the oil fields by the Kendall and Eldred Railroad which was opened on July 10, 1877. The Wellsville and Eldred line was started in May of 1881. On May 28th of the next year the Eldred and Rew Railroad was commenced. Two of these mushroom lines left the borough side by side, crossed the flats and the river a few rods apart and wended their way to the Otto and Foster oil fields up to Knapp's Creek Valley. These railroads were abandoned after a few years of precarious financial existence. In the first decade of the century, the borough had two excellent glassworks, but these, too, went the way of other glass plants of the county. Cheaper fuel elsewhere proved too much of an attraction. In 1887 one of Eldred's oldest, and for the time its best, industry was organized in the Carriage Leather Manufactory owned by James N. Duffy. This industry was located on the Stull farm at the northern limits of the borough on the Olean road. Unfortunately for Eldred the owner made a fortune in his tanning business, retired, and from that time on the plant was indifferently successful and finally was dismantled.

Kane Borough: Kane Borough was incorporated October 6, 1886. It had been settled the year before the opening of the Civil War by General Thomas L. Kane, who came to the locality as an agent of the McKean and Elk Land Improvement Company. Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, General Kane at once recruited companies of men from the Northern Tier counties known as the Pennsylvania Bucktails, one of the most famous regiments of the Civil War. Companies from Cameron, Elk, and McKean Counties met at Driftwood on the Sinnemahoning within twelve days of Lincoln's call for volunteers and floated on rafts down the Susquehanna almost as far as Lock Haven, and from thence to Harrisburg where they were enrolled in the Federal Armies for the duration of the war. After the close of the war, General Kane returned to Kane, resumed the construction of his dwelling house and the building of the town which has since been named in his honor. General Kane and those of the family who succeeded him have doubtless been the best known of all those who have shaped the history of McKean County.

In 1864 the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad was constructed through Kane, which added much to the transportation facilities of the village. Oil developments in the Kane area in 1879 and later in 1886 needed facilities of this kind to expedite the work.

In the early days, lumbering was a chief industry. Then, as above noted, the production of petroleum took the center of the stage. During the first decade of the 20th century, Kane became the glass-producing center of the country. Cheap gas from the nearby gas fields contributed largely to this end. Chief among these plants was the American Plate Glass Company incorporated with a capital of \$800,000. Some years later the falling off of gas production and the discovery of great gas wells in West Virginia brought about the removal of the glass plants that had for many years been one of the borough's chief industries.

Probably the largest industry in Kane at the present time is the Holgate Brothers Company which is mentioned in the history of McKean, Elk, and Potter Counties in 1890 as a brush handle factory of some extent. Since that time the plant has been reorganized under the leadership of J. E. Henretta and has become one of the best known manufacturers of educational toys in the country. Prior to World War II, the company enjoyed a large trade with European centers as well as extensive trade in the Americas.

Any worthwhile account of Kane should mention the great number of fine parks that adorn the community, many being the gifts of the Kane family. It is also worthy of note that the high elevation and efforts of the citizens of Kane to keep the borough free from weeds leads many people afflicted with hayfever to come to this mountain-top community during August and September of each year.

One of the outstanding features of the Kane community is the provision for a splendid park system, which makes it possible for future generations to enjoy beautiful woodland settings within the borough limits. These are Evergreen Park—nineteen acres; Southover Park—thirty-five acres, and Glenwood Park with forty-five acres.

A history of Kane would not be complete without at least a casual reference to President U. S. Grant's acceptance to spend a brief vacation at the home of his friend and comrade in arms, General Thomas L. Kane. Needless to say, the coming of the President was a great event to Kane and the entire county. The President attended church in an old log schoolhouse, a reception was given at the Kane Mansion, and to climax the visit a fishing party was arranged to go to a stream somewhere near the McKean-Elk County line. The rest of the story seems in keeping with the best of fishermen's "yarns." It seems that the horse upon which the President was mounted attempted to roll in the water while crossing a fairly

large stream, with disastrous results to the Chief Executive; and then when the party had started to fish just over the Elk County line, a constable appeared and placed all members of the party under arrest for fishing out of season. General Kane paid all the fines, \$125, before Squire Parsons in Wilcox. So much for democracy and the majesty of the law in the Reconstruction Period.

Mt. Jewett Borough: This borough, originally a part of Hamlin Township, was first known as Howard Hill. The village was apparently named after a family that came to Marvin Creek in Hamlin Township and then later moved to the hill top region of the same district. Mt. Jewett has the distinction of having the highest elevation of any railroad town in the State. The greatest elevation is given as 2,268 feet. It is one of the few towns in the county that is served by two railroads, the Baltimore and Ohio running between Pittsburgh and Buffalo and Rochester, and a branch of the Erie extending from Salamanca southward into Pennsylvania's soft coal regions. In the earlier days, Mt. Jewett was a junction point for those traveling from the eastern to the western parts of the county. The B. B. & K. and later the Kane lines afforded travelers from Smethport, Bradford and Kane railroad facilities that were more or less appreciated accordingly as the trains ran on scheduled time. Travelers from Kane to Smethport had to make close connections at Mt. Jewett and Backus over three different roads in order to make the evening trip. The Kinzua Bridge built by the Erie Railroad over the Kinzua Valley just north of Mt. Jewett, for many years was regarded as one of the country's chief engineering accomplishments. The bridge is three hundred and one feet high and more than two thousand feet long. It consists of stone piers which support the twenty towering iron columns upon which the railroad track is placed. A watchman climbs over and inspects three of the columns each day. This bridge has attracted thousands of visitors. At one time Mt. Jewett had glass plants that added to the county's leadership in that industry. In common with those of other places in the county, they have been abandoned. The chief industries of the borough at the present time are the production of oil in the nearby areas and the Mt. Jewett Tanning Company, one of the greatest producers of shoe leather in the country. Mt. Jewett was incorporated as a borough on June 8, 1893.

Lewis Run Borough: On March 4, 1911, a portion of Lafayette Township was set aside as the borough of Lewis Run. This village of approximately eight hundred was so situated in the

valley of the east branch of the Tuna as to be practically cut off from the hilltop of Lafayette. This consideration, together with other civic problems incident to a community of that size, led to the petition for incorporation as a separate district. The village has a fine deposit of brick-clay which has led to the construction of the Hanley Brick Company, the town's chief industry. A great proportion of the inhabitants of Lewis Run are of Italian descent. They are among the county's most industrious and patriotic citizens.

Port Allegany Borough: This borough was a part of Liberty Township until it was granted a charter in 1882. The notes on the early history of Liberty Township apply with equal force to Port Allegany Borough as all the early business activities of the township were located in what is now the borough. It is at present the business center of all the eastern area of McKean, and much of the western portion of Potter County.

Doubtless the earliest industry of the community was lumbering. At first the timber was cut into logs, joined into rafts, and floated down the river to markets at Pittsburgh. When the railroads came, sawmills were built along the Allegheny River and its smaller tributaries, which manufactured the timber into lumber and shipped it to towns and cities by means of the railroads. The chief saw and grist mill of the area was owned by the Arnold and Dolley Company. It was situated at the east end of the bridge across the Allegheny River where Route 6 crosses that stream. The Root and Keating Tannery located where the Pitt Corning Glass Plant is now situated was at one time the largest tannery in the country. These two industries formed the backbone of Port Allegany's industrial life for a half century. Later the Tabor Extract Company, which extracted the tannic element from hemlock bark, was organized. Still later the first of Port Allegany's three successive glass factories was established. Of these the only one remaining is the Pierce Glass Company on the site of the first glass plant to be erected in the borough. One of the oldest landmarks in McKean County is the Butler Hotel, which stands across the street from the southeastern corner of the Public Square. It has been owned at one time or another by a long line of the best known of the town's business men.

Port Allegany was first known as Canoe Place. It has also, at various times, been called Keating, after John Keating; Kingsville after Francis King; then Liberty; and finally in 1840 was given the name it still bears. The spelling of "Allegany"

is still a puzzle to many who insist upon spelling it the same as the river upon which it is situated.

Port Allegany has had its share of fires and floods. High water of 1889 did much damage to streets, homes, and the Arnold and Dolley Mill property. In 1899 a disastrous fire in October destroyed practically all the block in which the First National Bank is now located. July 18, 1942 was the great flood which inundated portions of Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties. Port Allegany was particularly hard hit. Many lives were lost and hundreds of thousands of dollars in property was swept away. The new cement bridge across the Allegheny River was destroyed after a day's use by the public.

Smethport Borough: In August of 1807, Francis King came with some helpers from Ceres to survey a site which has since been named Smethport, the county seat. A camp was built near the forks of Potato Creek and surveying of streets and lots went on from August 28th until September 19th. Doubtless, the choice of the site was determined largely by the Act of Assembly creating the county, which specified that the county seat must be placed not more than seven miles from the geographical center of the county.

The survey meant little in the immediate settlement of the county seat. In 1811 Arnold Hunter built a cabin on the site, which was abandoned three years later. In 1810 James Otto settled two and one-half miles from Smethport on the Farmers Valley Road. In 1820 Smethport contained a few log houses and a carding mill. In 1822 the county commissioners were empowered by an Act of Assembly to clear a thirty-acre tract of brush and timber on the present site of Smethport. In March of 1827 Solomon Sartwell was given an order to build a Court House at the cost of \$3,000. In 1850 that building was replaced by one costing \$16,000. In 1881 the oil boom of McKean County made it necessary to provide more adequate buildings with vaults and some fire security for public records. On September 12, 1881, McKean County's third court house was dedicated with Hon. B. D. Hamlin as orator of the day. He reminded his audience that the new building cost \$80,000, and that it was evidence of the progress made in the county between the years 1827 and 1881. On the anniversary of Lincoln's Birthday in 1940 this structure was destroyed by fire. In its place a splendid and modern court house has been erected. It was dedicated on June 14, 1942. The fourth of McKean County's Courthouses cost when finished

and furnished, about \$363,881. This structure, which was paid for at the time of its dedication, stands out as one of the finest public buildings in the Commonwealth. It is worthy of note that the square where all of McKean County's Court-houses have been placed was donated by John Keating and conveyed by deed, dated June 3, 1908. It is likely that he visited the county at the time of the survey of the county seat. The first court was held in Smethport on the fourth Monday in September 1826 with Judge Herrick of Bradford County presiding. It is recorded that the journey took four days by horseback, one way.

Any statement concerning the early development of Smethport and McKean County would be incomplete without reference to the coming to the county seat of Orlo J. Hamlin, who came to the county in 1826 to practice law in the newly opened country of northwestern Pennsylvania. In 1832 he represented the district in the General Assembly, and urged an appropriation for an improvement of the East and West road. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1836-38. He was a successful lawyer and business man and withal a man of scholarly instincts, as is shown by his mastery of French, German, and Sciences during his later twenty-four years when partial physical disability prevented active participation in legal and business affairs. He died in Smethport at the age of seventy-seven. He was the father of the late Henry Hamlin, founder of the Hamlin Bank and Trust Company, one of McKean County's oldest and best known banking institutions. Orlo J. Hamlin, a grandson and resident of Smethport, carries on the traditions of the family in banking acumen and generous benevolences for worthy causes.

26. What were the chief industries of the county in 1840?

"In 1840 McKean County had two thousand nine hundred and seventy-five people, who lived in nine townships, to wit, Keating, Ceres, Bradford, Corydon, Sergeant, Liberty, Norwich, Shippen (now a part of Cameron County), and Hamilton. The amount of coal mined that year was one thousand bushels; number of miners employed, two. Salt manufactured, one thousand bushels; number of men employed, two. Number of retail stores, ten; amount of capital invested, \$28,100. Total value of lumber, \$88,700. Sale of furs and pelts, \$963. Number of tanneries, two; number of men employed, four. Number of grist mills, nine; number of saw mills, thirty-three. Maple

sugar manufactured, sixty-nine thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds."

—McKnight's History.

That this portion of the State well deserved the nick-name, "The Wild-Cat Region" is proved by this author's statement that Jefferson, which included what is now Elk; McKean, with a portion of what is now Cameron; and Potter had a total of \$2,847 receipts for furs and pelts.

Six other counties of the northwestern area of the state were listed as having fifty distilleries. It seems that the Scotch Irish pioneers of the western part of the state found it more profitable to turn their corn into liquor than it was to transport the corn over the mountains to markets in the eastern part of the Commonwealth. Hence their opposition to internal revenue levied by Washington's administration.

Pioneers in Potter, Tioga, McKean, and Jefferson Counties, on the other hand, utilized the hard maples which grew in great numbers in these counties to produce annually 481,080 pounds of maple sugar. Doubtless cane and beet sugar as we now know this product must have been very scarce in the forties. Doubtless many pioneer families derived a relatively good income from the production of this toothsome delicacy.

27. To what circumstance did McKean owe its high rating as a salt producing county?

In a description of Norwich Township mention is made of the Great Elk Lick which was located at Gardeau in the Portage Valley a few miles north of Emporium. One traveler of the early days states that an area of three acres had literally been cleared of grass and brush by the stamping deer and elk that came to the spring and swampy area to lick the ground for the salt it contained. Since salt was scarce in all the northwestern regions of the state, settlers of this and adjoining areas managed to obtain this necessary article by boiling the water from salt springs. Very early roads were built in Potter and McKean Counties to what was afterwards known as the Parker Salt Works. In 1779 salt sold in Pittsburgh at \$3.50 per bushel. It was one of the absolute necessities, and one that could not be made or found near the average pioneer home. The wilderness could furnish a living of sorts if there were salt to season the foods and preserve meats and hides. In a history of Warren County, it is related that while General William Irvine was engaged in surveying lands for the State, a party of Monsey Indians came to his cabin near Warren for salt which in those days was as precious as

silver. His old negro servant took out his measure of salt to give them a little, but they wanted the whole and vowed they would have it by fair means or foul. General Irvine drove them away. A few days afterwards, several of Cornplanter's men came to the cabin to visit and hunt. Months after, Cornplanter told the general that the Monseys had threatened his life, and that he had sent some of the Senecas down the river to watch their movements. It is altogether probable that no other of McKean County's long list of valuable products was more acceptable to the men and women of pioneer days than the salt obtained by early settlers from the salt springs on Parker Run.

28. If Francis King could have made his journeys to his new home by airplane rather than by canoe and horseback, how would McKean County have appeared?

It is likely that few of the counties of Pennsylvania better deserved the name Penn's Woods than McKean. From the air practically the whole area, except here and there a portion of a stream, would have appeared carpeted by the beautiful greens of the hardwood, hemlock and pine forests. Valleys, mountain sides, and ridges were alike clothed with forests so dense that even at noon time the direct rays of the sun were unable to penetrate to the ground beneath. However, pioneers of those early days were denied a bird-like passage over McKean County. They must make their toilsome way by foot, horseback, or by canoe. Whichever course was taken, the voyagers waged endless war against the forest which encompassed them. On land there were the overhanging branches, and fallen branches and tree trunks to vex the careless one. By water there were half submerged branches and snags that threatened the unwary boatman as he "poled" his laborious way up shallow streams. And always at the junction of streams there was low swampy ground which abounded with "ponkis," Indian term for gnats. The dangers and difficulties of forest travel in those early days are vividly portrayed by excerpts taken from the journal of Rev. John Ettewein, one of the missionaries that helped to lead Christian Indians from Wylusing in Bradford County by way of the West Branch of the Susquehanna through Clearfield, Kittanning, and the Allegheny to the Big Beaver, in Lawrence County.

"Friday, July 17, 1772; Advanced only four miles. Had a stony and narrow place for a camp.

"Saturday, July 18th. Moved on without Roth and his division, who on account of rain had re-

mained in camp. Today Shebosh lost a colt from the bite of a rattlesnake. Here we left the main stream and went up a creek which we crossed five times and then by a path that went precipitately up the mountain for four or five miles to the summit, until we came to a spring that flowed westward toward the Ohio.

"Sunday, July 19th. As yesterday, but two families kept with me because of the rain. We had a quiet Sunday, but enough to dry our effects. In the evening all joined me but we could hold no service as the ponkis were so excessively annoying that the cattle pressed toward and into camp, to escape their persecutors in the smoke of the fires. This vermin is a plague to man and beast, both by day and night. In the swamp through which we are passing their name is legion. Hence the Indians call it 'Ponksutenink.' "

This missionary of long ago seems to have hit upon the origin of the name which still stands as one of the most difficult in the long list of Pennsylvania's Indian terms.

29. What were the first highways used by the pioneers and early settlers of the county?

In his "McKean, The Governor's County," Hon. R. B. Stone has a chapter on Navigable Highways in which he states that during the first seventy-five years of the county's history, the lumber era, when the forests were being converted into lumber, all the principal streams navigable by rafts or loose logs were declared by legislative action public highways. In 1928 Tuna Creek was so declared. Prior to that date, the Oswayo and the Allegheny streams were considered highways for public use. Such legislative action was not taken so much to advance the welfare of settlers, as to provide the means for the transportation of timber down the streams to cities located on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. At a later date these water courses provided a way of floating logs to the many saw mills located on all the navigable water-ways of the county. During the first half of the history of the county, the free and uninterrupted use of the larger streams was very essential to the carrying on of the county's first great industry.

It is also apparent that in the early years traders, missionaries, and pioneers came to the new lands along the main waterways. Thus the West Branch of the Susquehanna and its tributary, the Sinnemahoning, enabled Francis King and those who came after him to reach McKean County from the east and south. Once across

the divide at Keating Summit, travelers could pursue their way westward by means of the Allegheny and the Ohio Rivers.

In this connection it is easy to understand how the word "port" was made a part of the names of many pioneer settlements, even in this very mountainous region. Smethport, at the junction of Marvin with Potato Creek, was the head of navigation on that stream, and the "port of entry" for the more thriving hill-top town of Instanter. Coudersport, similarly situated on the Allegheny, was also dignified by the term "port." Canoe Place gave way to Port Allegany, that point on the Allegheny where traffic from the Susquehanna again took to canoes after the portage over the highland separating these two river systems.

The earliest water craft was dugouts and bark canoes adopted from Indian life. These were supplanted by bateaux which were flat bottom, keelless boats made of planks, tapering at each end. In this region they were usually propelled by oars or long iron-tipped poles. In some instances they were dragged up current by long tow ropes. Any of the methods named was, of course, work of the most arduous nature, especially since McKean County is situated on the upper waters of the Susquehanna and Allegheny Rivers. Going with the current, boats were usually empty. Return voyages from the trading centers found the craft loaded and that much harder to handle in the currents and shallows. Tradition has it that early settlers of Canoe Place "poled" provisions up river from Olean Point. Marie King in her history of Ceres tells of the canoe trip made to Pittsburgh by the wife of Francis King, with Indian guides, for provisions for that frontier settlement. It is related in the history of Venango County that supplies for Perry's fleet in the War of 1812 were brought from Pittsburgh to Franklin, and then by means of bateaux up French Creek as far as possible, and then overland to Erie. Potato Creek derives its name from a boat load of potatoes once lost in its flood water.

30. Why did the early settlers turn their attention to road building?

Passable roads were not only necessary that immigrants might get to their new homes, but they were also necessary for the transportation of those few but indispensable provisions that could not be supplied from forest resources. And then again, there was the matter of communication with the outside world. Letters and newspapers were few and far between. Some semblance of mail service must be maintained. It was not until

1817, twenty years after Francis King's first trip to the county, that a postoffice was established at Ceres. From 1820 to 1824 mail for the settlement was carried on horseback, a distance of one hundred nine miles from Jersey Shore to Olean once in two weeks. In 1832 a two-horse stage ran once a week over the route. Miss Marie King in her history of Ceres writes that postal privileges were very limited. Williamsport was the nearest and most convenient post office. Letters from England were sent to someone in Philadelphia, and then forwarded to Williamsport, directed to Cerestown, and were then brought on from Williamsport by an accredited person coming through. If no one happened to be journeying northward through the wilderness, a messenger was sent once a month on foot with a pack horse, with letters and messages to the land office at Ceres, a distance of one hundred fifteen miles.

In 1825 records show that a contract was let to carry mail from Bellefonte by way of Karthus, Bennett's Creek, Brockway, and Scull's to Smethport. In 1827 Ridgway and Sergeant were added to the postoffices served by this route. In June 1830 the contract was given to Gideon Irons of Smethport at eight hundred and forty-five dollars per annum for the delivery of the mail once a week.

Judicial business for the McKean County area prior to September 25, 1926, was transacted in Bellefonte or Williamsport. Land records were kept and sessions of court were held there. Hence it was vitally important that means of communication be maintained regularly as possible.

Barter was taken in exchange for postage. In the thirties, the postage on a letter carried up to four hundred miles was twenty-five cents. The postmaster, who was usually a merchant too, took produce for postage the same as for goods. Twenty-five cents postage was worth two bushels of oats or potatoes, four pounds of butter, or five dozen eggs.

31. What were the main highways first constructed in McKean and neighboring counties?

The first and most important of the early roads was the East and West road surveyed pursuant to an act of Assembly of 1807. The State Legislature felt a need to connect the northern counties with an East and West road running from the Moosic Mountain near the Delaware River to the city of Erie. Surveyed on the date given it is probable that the road for some years was a mere

trail with very few of the streams bridged. This road entered McKean County at Burtville, followed the Allegheny River to Canoe Place, and then passed directly west by way of Skinner Creek, the ridge route, and down Riley Hollow to East Smethport, and thence westward through Lafayette, and down the Kinzua Valley to the village of Kinzua in Warren County. County records show the first bridge across the Allegheny River in this county to have been built in 1822 at the "Red House" crossing at Canoe Place. It is evident that travelers on the East and West Road prior to that date were obliged to ford this stream of water. In 1816, the State Legislature appropriated a mere \$3,000 to be distributed among the northern counties for the improvement of this road. Roosevelt Highway (United States 6) follows the old East and West Road for a greater part of its way across the county, the exception being the distance between Port Allegany and Smethport and the present approach to Kinzua village from this county. If the proposed Federal Conservation Project is built at Kinzua, it will be necessary to establish a different routing for the Roosevelt Highway. Perhaps the older route down the valley from Lafayette to Morrison will again be used.

Two other trans-county roads of very early days should be mentioned although both have long since been discontinued.

The first was the Ellicottville Road which was constructed by Joseph Ellicott, agent for the Holland Land Company mentioned elsewhere in these data. This road was opened about 1806 from Dunnstown, opposite Lock Haven on the Susquehanna, up that river to the Sinnemahoning branch, and then to Emporium, the Big Elk Lick (Gardeau) and then over the highlands crossing Marvin Creek about seven miles from Smethport, and again over highlands and down the Tuna Valley and on to Ellicottville, New York. This road made the lands of the Holland Company accessible, and for many years was the only wagon road on the Sinnemahoning. This road was of little use in the later development of the County.

The northern part of what is now Elk County was originally a part of McKean County. In 1820, James Gillis came from Ontario, New York, to a farm near the present site of Ridgway to act as the agent for Jacob Ridgway, at that time regarded as the richest man in the Commonwealth since Stephen Girard. The first concern of Gillis was some means of communication with the outside

world. Under his influence and that of his patron in Philadelphia, the Kittanning-Olean Road was surveyed and opened to traffic in 1826. This road was one hundred and ten miles long and created a great excitement at the time it was surveyed and opened for use. It really amounted to little as the tides of migration moved east and west and not north and south.

Road building in pioneer days was a tremendous problem. Labor was scarce and distances were great. Road building machinery consisted of rude ploughs and inadequate scrapers drawn by ox teams. Much of the work was done by hand with axes and grub-hoes. Routes must be surveyed through unknown regions, foot-paths widened, streams forded at suitable points, or bridged. Swamps must be filled in, or by-passed by circuitous routes. In many places roads had to be corduroyed for long distances to make them passable during the rainy season. Nor did it follow that a pioneer road once opened remained suitable for traffic. It is a matter of record in 1810 that a road opened several years previously between Emporium and Canoe Place was so grown up with underbrush that it was impassable. It was reopened in 1814.

A road unique in county annals is the "Plank Road" constructed during the days of the oil excitement by Dr. W. L. Chrisman of Eldred and known as the Eldred-Duke Center-Rixford Plank Road. In the race of rival contractors to develop new territory, heavy oil field equipment was moved over all sorts of roads and in all kinds of weather. Oil country tradition tells of horses drowning in some of the deepest mud holes along river flats. To expedite travel between the towns named, Dr. Chrisman constructed a substantial plank road with tolls at each end and at convenient places along the seven miles of the right of way. It is said that the road was never a financial success. Plank roads were constructed for shorter distances in other places in the county. These roads were constructed when the hillsides of McKean were still covered by wonderful forests of hemlock. Planks and timbers suitable for road construction were readily available at a very low cost.

From the earliest days of the pioneers until the present time the people of McKean County have been very much interested in road building. A modern highway map shows this county has more miles of improved road per capita than any other county in the state. In fact the actual mileage of this area compares very favorably with

urban centers with many times our population. The wealth of the townships, the needs of the oil fields, combined with a progressive program of State highway construction and maintenance have given the county a splendid system of improved roads.

32. What railway played an important role in the development of McKean County and Northwestern Pennsylvania?

For nearly seventy years after the first settlement of the county, there was no way of bringing provisions and supplies of various kinds into the McKean area except by horse team and wagon roads. This region was so sparsely settled and its manufactured products so few that for a long time the building of a railroad was not practical. However, in 1837 the Assembly passed an act permitting the incorporation of a railroad to run from Sunbury at the junction of the North and West Branches of the Susquehanna up the West Branch of that river and on to Erie. Commissioners were appointed in each county in this part of the State to sponsor the movement. McKean's representatives were Solomon and Asa Sartwell, Hiram Payne, John King, Jonathan Colegrove, and Orlo J. Hamlin. In 1840 Edward Miller, chief engineer, made a report of a route two hundred and eighty-six miles in length. As originally contemplated, the railroad would have gone up the West Branch to Clearfield, and from that point to Franklin, and then on to Erie. A little later the plans were revised to include Driftwood, DuBois, Brockway, and Warren. Fortunately for McKean County, the influence of General T. L. Kane and the Philadelphia owners of extensive holdings of lands in McKean and Elk Counties led to a final revision of the route as it now stands. Someone of that day said of this road through the northern wilds, "To build a railroad through a dense forest of worthless hemlock, ferocious beasts, gnats, and winter-green berries requires a large purse and great courage." Nevertheless, the effort was continued with work starting at both ends of the line. In 1859, a train was run from Erie to Warren. In May 1864, a train was run from Sunbury to St. Marys. Western Elk and McKean being midway between the terminal points of the line were the last places to be served by the new railroad. Furthermore, it is quite likely that Civil War activities delayed the building of the last few miles of this project. In any event, on May 23, 1864, the Sheffield to Kane portion of the line was completed, and on October 19 of that year, the

entire railroad was opened. It was twenty-seven years from the time of incorporation until the last link in McKean County was finished. When the road was first contemplated, there was not a cabin on the proposed line from Emporium to Ridgway, and but one from Ridgway to Sheffield. It was truly a pioneer road.

The influence this railroad had on all phases of life in this area is shown by this incident. It is related that raftsmen of the Eldred-Port Allegany localities after running their rafts to Pittsburgh in the spring would come back by rail to Kane and then walk from that point to their homes in the eastern sections of the county. Kane to Port Allegany was one day's walk.

33. What other railroads were constructed at a later date?

Other railroads followed in rapid succession. In January, 1866, the Buffalo and Pittsburgh and the Buffalo and Bradford railroads were opened. On November 19, 1883, the Rochester and Pittsburgh railroad afforded still another route from Bradford to Buffalo. In October, 1867, work was started on the Buffalo, New York and Philadelphia Railroad which was completed from Buffalo through Olean, Eldred, Port Allegany to Emporium in December of 1872. This road did much in the developing of industry in the eastern part of the county. The Pennsylvania Railroad at the present time maintains service between New York, Philadelphia, Washington and the Buffalo and Toronto areas over this line now, of course, greatly improved.

After the building of the main line railroads, numerous feeder roads were built in McKean County, at first to expedite the manufacture of lumber, and later to develop the Bradford oil fields. It is impossible to travel along any fairly long creek in the county without coming upon the long-since abandoned grade of a logging railroad. If the valley was of considerable extent, perhaps an old mill site may be discovered, now grown over with underbrush. One of the best known of these lumber railroads was that operated by the Kane interests of Kushequa in the Kinzua Valley. This short but very important line connected Kushequa with the B.R.&P. at Mt. Jewett and Backus, and then at one time came on to Smethport and to the Pennsylvania line at Larabee. The last extensive lumbering activities of the county were carried on at Norwich on the headwaters of Potato Creek. All the lumber from this tract of 26,000 acres was transported from

the mills by rail over the divide to the Pennsylvania at Keating Summit.

A very interesting and extensive history of "oil boom" railroading in McKean County might well be written. Railroading "boomed," too. Why build just one railroad if there was room to lay another track, and why conform to any set standards of grade or equipment? Stock was sold for all sorts of railroads everywhere, some of which was almost valueless from the day it was issued. One authority says, "If variety is a recommendation to railroad system, McKean County is singularly well endowed." Here have been constructed roads ranging from a single rail to a double track of six feet gauge, and from a prairie level to a grade of 264 feet per mile.

Undoubtedly, in referring to the one-track railroad, the author had in mind the celebrated "Peg-Leg" line that was one of the curiosities of the early oil field. The McKean County Historical Society has the smokestack of the peculiar up-right boiler that furnished motive power for this line that extended from Bradford through Tarport-Foster Brook-Babcock-Harrisburg Run to Derrick City. The boiler blew up in January of 1879 killing practically all members of the crew and assistant superintendent of the road, six in all, and seriously injuring three others. The cars ran astride of an elevated track on a single rail which was nailed to a single wooden stringer which rested on the top of wooden posts. Ten double trips were made a day along the line mentioned above, and an accident occurred nearly every day. Not long after the serious accident of January, the road was sold at a sheriff's sale.

In 1880 the Bradford, Bordell and Kinzua railroad was incorporated. This road, which for years connected Bradford with Smethport, was opened for traffic in June of the same year as far as Kinzua Junction, and was extended to Smethport in December. It played a very considerable part in the opening of the oil territory between Smethport and Bradford.

In 1881 the Bradford Railroad, fourteen miles in extent, was built from the city by way of Custer City to a point near Marshburg where it joined with the Kinzua Railroad, likewise fourteen miles in length. These opened the oil and lumber resources in the area west of Bradford.

In writing of the early development of the oil industry in Eldred, reference was made to the Kendall and Eldred and the Wellsville and Eldred Railroads which together served some of the rich oil-bearing areas between Eldred and Bradford City.

The Mt. Jewett, Kinzua & Riterville Railroad was chartered in 1889 by E. K. Kane as president. This road at first was eight miles in length. As time passed, this line was extended to Backus, and then on to Smethport, and was known as the Kushequa line. It served as a connecting link between the Pittsburgh & Western Railroad that ran from Butler to Kane to Mt. Jewett, and the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh, and at one time the Pennsylvania line at East Smethport. For years it was the chief means of getting into or out of Smethport.

34. Of what importance was lumbering in the early development of the county?

During the first seventy-five years after the organization of the county, lumbering was the chief industry. In the beginning pioneers who desired to make homes in the wilderness thought the forest giants that grew in such profusion were more or less of a nuisance. The clearing of a forest farm was a difficult matter. Trees had to be chopped down, cut into suitable lengths, drawn to the log-pile and stacked, and then when dry, burned. It is a part of the early tradition of the county that the humus was so burned out of the soil during the great Bunker Hill logging fires that the soil was not and has not been fertile since that time. Ploughing and cultivating around the stumps required patience. Farmers must either wait a long time until the stumps were so decayed that they could be easily removed or dug out soon after cutting by means of the grub-hoe, stump-lever and a team of oxen or horses. It should also be noted that practically all the pioneer buildings were constructed either of logs squared to fit or of logs rolled into place with intervening cracks chinked by rails, moss, straw and mud. For many years the construction of rude cabins and barns was the only practical use the settler made of the forests.

As soon as cities began to develop "down the river" there was an urgent demand for lumber in the form of boards and planks and squared timbers that in those days took the place of iron and steel in modern construction. As late as 1881 when the Court House was built, the contractor used great beams, some of them eighteen inches square and forty feet or more in length as sills, plates, and rafters.

Since there were no improved roads and trucks, and since the railroads had not yet penetrated to the wilderness of the upper Allegheny, the only way the forest products could be moved to market was down the streams to the cities. This

period of our lumber industry is known as the era of pine and of rafting which lasted through the late thirties to about 1875.

One author writing about this topic says, "In the spring and fall such large quantities of these great pine trees were cut and put afloat on the river in rafts that the perils of navigation were great as the rafts were compelled to run both day and night to get to market before a summer drought or a winter freeze tied them up for the rest of the season. Small rafts were made at Coudersport and the Canoe Place. These were doubled by tying together at Larabee and then again at Warren."

Another writer at Franklin gave an account of a still different use of these rafts. He stated, "It was not an unusual thing to see an Olean raft on the river with a team of horses, a cow, a girl cooking, and a mother spinning flax. These were emigrants going to Ohio or Indiana State."

Some of the large rafts that left Warren for Louisville and New Orleans were sixty to seventy feet wide and from two hundred and fifty to three hundred feet long. These rafts, like floating islands, formed at once the vehicle and the temporary residence of several families on the way down the river. Each raft had its little shanties and its busy population; some lifting the long heavy oars, some cooking at the great fire, some eating bacon from a broad clean shingle, some lounging in the sun, and some practicing their coarse wit upon the gazers from the shores, and making the wild hills echo with their shouts.

The second period of the lumber industry might be called the saw-mill and hemlock era. The coming of the railroads made it possible to saw logs locally and then ship the lumber to market by branch and main line railroads. In time those critics who once had said, "Hemlock is worthless," found that the products of the hemlock forests were even more valuable than the pine had been. There was much more of it and the demand for forest products had also greatly increased. There was also the increasing demand for the bark of the hemlock which for years was the chief tanning element in use in the tanneries of this country.

In the year 1840, statistics show that there were ninety-four tanneries and seven hundred fifteen saw mills in the eight counties included wholly in the Last Purchase. The least number of these were at that time in McKean and Potter Counties. It is evident that the products of the great forests of these more remote regions had not yet begun to move to the markets that were being supplied from sources nearer at hand. How-

ever, in the year 1888 one reads in the Four County History that Potter yielded 150,000 cords of bark and McKean 225,000, with millions of feet of lumber. It is recorded that one hemlock tree furnished thirty rings of bark, showing the tree to have been peeled for one hundred fifty feet. Many of the first mills were primitive affairs costing little more than \$300. They were run by water power and could, with the aid of three or four men, cut 4,000 board feet in twenty-four hours. As time passed, there was the same improvement in saw mill efficiency as there was in all other types of machinery. Records show that Liberty Township had its first steam-operated, circular saw mill in 1853. The first mill in that township had been built in 1824 by Daniel Stanton who sold five years later to Gideon Irons, who in turn transferred his mill in 1832 to Solomon Sartwell. This saw mill was on or near the site of Port Allegany's greatest mill, which in 1869 came into the partnership of Arnold and Dolley. Prior to this time, A. M. Benton had come to McKean County in 1846 and purchased 3,000 acres of pine lands. For twenty-six years this lumberman continued this phase of the lumber industry, sometimes employing as many as one hundred men in cutting, rafting, and in the mills. In the early seventies, he moved his mill to the Eldred region where he engaged in the marketing of hemlock products. As one reads an account of the activities of the communities of the county as given in the Four County History, published in 1890, it is rather astonishing that few places outside of the Port Allegany and Liberty regions record items having to do with the lumber industry, and yet, as has been pointed out, it was for the first three-quarters of a century the only industry of any consequence when measured by money returns.

Typical of the lumber activities in the county in the eighties, it was reported in the Four County History that there were six saw mills in and near Mt. Jewett. If one should explore the banks of the Allegheny River from Burtville on the Potter County line to Bullis Mills near the New York State boundary, a distance of approximately twenty-two miles, it is very likely that the remains of as many saw mills would be discovered.

The last great lumbering operation in the county took place during the twelve years which succeeded 1911. The Goodyear Lumber Company took the timber from a 26,000-acre tract situated in Norwich Township. A great saw mill was constructed at Norwich village, a stove factory

at Betula, and a little later a large chemical wood plant at Keystone. At one time these villages had a combined population of better than three thousand people with stores, hotels, movies, professional services, and other activities of a well organized community. These thriving towns have long since vanished. A one-teacher school now serves where once there were high school and elementary school facilities employing eleven teachers.

35. What is the leading industry in the county?

Since 1887 the leading industry in the county has been the production of petroleum and its manufacture into refined products. While there had been some satisfactory wells drilled prior to 1876, it was not until that year when operators from the Venango field turned their attention to the Tuna Valley that the true development of the Bradford field began. During this year, 376 wells were drilled. In 1877 nine hundred wells were put down and the oil boom in the Bradford field was on. Production increased until the peak was reached in 1881 with 23,000,000 barrels of oil brought to the refineries. In 1887 the production had dropped to nineteen million barrels. The following year had a production a little less than eight million barrels, which was probably somewhat above the average of the field until "flooding" greatly increased the output.

36. What is the daily production of petroleum in McKean County?

According to returns to the County Commissioners for the year 1944, the daily production in townships and boroughs was as follows:

District	Barrels per Day
Annin Township	5.57
Bradford City	602.66
Bradford Township	7,443.43
Ceres Township	62.43
Corydon Township	51.24
Eldred Township	1,457.00
Foster Township	10,250.79
Hamilton Township	5.12
Hamlin Township	474.81
Kane Borough	3.30
Keating Township	6,452.93
Lafayette Township	4,633.76
Lewis Run Borough	14.81
Mt. Jewett Borough	190.53
Norwich Township	.05

Otto Township	5,412.08
Sergeant Township	60.40
Wetmore Township	436.36
Total daily production	37,557.26

The yearly production probably averages about twelve million barrels.

According to the above table there is only one of the fifteen townships that does not produce some oil. It is also interesting to note that the production of the several districts varies from time to time as the drilling operations increase or decrease. The latest big development in the county was the Music Mountain strike in Lafayette Township, which, from August 1937 until the end of 1942, produced 3,750,000 barrels of oil from 670 acres which lay in an area which ranged from eight hundred to two thousand feet in width. It is very evident that the "wildcatters" of the eighties did not hit upon this rich find.

37. The Bradford oil field is a part of what larger oil deposit?

The Bradford oil field, which stands out as one of the most productive in the development of the petroleum industry, is part of an oil field which has its northern terminus in Southern New York and extends southwestward across Pennsylvania into West Virginia. The oil from this region has qualities which make it the chief source for the best lubricating oil yet discovered. It should be understood that the Bradford field was not opened until ten years after the Titusville-Oil Creek petroleum deposits had been discovered and fully exploited. This was between the years 1859 and 1866. Prospectors then worked southward from the Oil Creek region, probably thinking that the higher plateau region of the upper Allegheny was barren of oil sands. The few wells that were at first drilled here were abandoned before the oil bearing sands were reached. However, beginning in 1874, paying wells were discovered in the Bradford area and soon an oil field was opened that in extent, uniform richness of sands, and excellence of products, has equalled, if not surpassed, any of the succeeding petroleum discoveries. Like every other oil discovery, Bradford had its "boom" years, but no field has had the long time production, now approaching the sixty-year mark, which has characterized the Bradford region. Other tremendous fields have come and have gone, but the Bradford area is still producing better than ten million barrels of oil per year. While the Pennsylvania field pro-

duces only 1.3 per cent of the national total, it should not be forgotten that from Pennsylvania's crude oil there comes about forty per cent of the nation's highest grade lubricating oil. Our greatest contribution to the war effort has been that special lubricant that "keeps them flying" in all kinds of weather and under the most adverse conditions. Of equal importance in the development of a world petroleum industry was the discovery and organization of all phases of early oil field activities that have made this industry one of the greatest and most important in the world. Methods of drilling, refining, and transportation were worked out in the Pennsylvania fields. Later drillers and operators from Pennsylvania went wherever oil strikes led them; Oklahoma, California, Texas, Russia, Burma, and the East Indies. We live in a Machine Age to which McKean County has contributed its share of the oil that has kept the wheels turning. We have also contributed our share of the "know how" that has helped to develop the oil fields that have been discovered since 1880.

38. What is the historical background of the discovery and rise of the petroleum industry in this region?

As early as 1627 a French missionary reported a "fontaine de bitume" near Cuba, New York. It seems that a well known path of the Seneca Indians led from this region southward to another area where similar and more extensive springs were located along a stream now called Oil Creek, which flows into the Allegheny River at Oil City. There is evidence that the Indians or a preceding race had gathered oil from the springs by means of pits walled by logs.

In 1775 a map was made in London which had written across the region indicated above the word "petroleum." In 1791 a map of Pennsylvania was prepared which named the stream "Oyl Creek." Thus, when the nineteenth century opened it was known in this country, England, and France, that Northwestern Pennsylvania had a substance called "rock oil" that seeped from springs and that it burned freely, and had, as then thought, great medicinal value taken internally, or used as an ointment for external injuries. Early settlers also mixed it with flour and used it to lubricate the wheels of their ox-carts. Early historians have also stated that the Seneca warrior mixed his war paint with the product of the oil springs which gave a permanency not otherwise obtained. The French commandant at Fort Duquesne wrote to Montcalm at Quebec that while

descending the Allegheny a chief of the Senecas invited his party to witness religious rites at Venango. A part of the ceremonial consisted of firing the surface of a stream covered with a black scum that burst into flames when lighted by a torch.

The early New England settlers of the upper Oil Creek Valley were soon made keenly aware of the commercial value of the curious product which sold for as much as one dollar a gallon. Buyers came from Pittsburgh on foot and by horseback and took away all they could carry. It was natural that there should be a desire to increase the production, and it also easily followed that those outside the petroleum region who first became interested should be New England business men. Ebenezer Brewer of Titusville had a son in Vermont who was a physician. The doctor who made frequent visits to Titusville had a sample of the "Seneca Oil" analyzed by Dartmouth College. The report was very favorable. It was just a problem of getting more of the product which up to that time had been gathered by soaking woolen clothes in the oil pits and then wringing them out, or in some instances by a slow skimming process. It was even thought by some that there might be reservoirs of oil which fed the springs, and that these might be tapped.

Finally in May, 1858, the Seneca Oil Company was organized in New Haven. Its charter gave the right to dig, bore, or mine for petroleum on the lands of Brewer and Watson near Titusville, Pennsylvania. The company sent an ex-railroad conductor, a jack-of-all-trades, E. L. Drake to develop the project. In order that dignity might be added to the enterprise, mail was addressed to Drake at Titusville, as "Colonel." Drake started to dig his well and then decided to bore or drill. Fortunately, for fifty years prior to this time, folks had been drilling wells for salt-water in the Pittsburgh and West Virginia areas. Drake secured the services of W. A. Smith, a blacksmith, who had experience in making the drilling tools, and also using them, in drilling salt wells. Smith agreed to work for \$2.50 per day with the services of his fifteen-year-old boy "thrown in." We owe as much to the ingenuity of Smith as we do to the persistence of Drake in the initial venture that ushered in the Age of Oil. It was not easy by any means. Like every other venture, most of the "wise ones" stood back and scoffed. Between the time when Dr. Brewer had Seneca Oil analyzed in 1853 and the drilling of the Drake well in 1859, there were many delays and disappointments. Ebenezer Brewer, the fa-

ther, wrote to his son who was trying to organize a company to drill for oil, "Now mark well what I tell you; you are associated with a set of sharpers, and if they have not already ruined you, they will do so if you are foolish enough to let them do it." The Titusville people dubbed the company, "The Fancy Stock Company" and laughed at the idea of drilling a well and pumping oil from solid rock. Dr. Benjamin Silliman of Yale, one of the foremost chemists of the country, was employed to confirm the findings of the Dartmouth analysis. His laboratory blew up and the promoters were obliged to furnish special apparatus before the report could be obtained. Finally this was ready and contained the following significant statement which really marked the turning point in the establishment of the oil industry. "The Titusville oil, unlike that from any other place, does not become hard and resinous from continued exposure to air. It gives a most perfect flame for illuminating purposes when used with an Argand burner. The company has in its possession a new material from which it may manufacture very valuable products." After this report it was not so difficult to sell stock in the Seneca Oil Company. Drake finally had his "rig," thirty feet high, twelve feet square at the base, and three feet square at the top, lifted into place by a crowd of good natured but skeptical on-lookers who were glad to help raise "Drake's Yoke" if it would help with the "wild and wooley" enterprise. Then there followed cave-ins and other mishaps with the weeks lengthening into months. Smith and his sons kept working while Drake persuaded the New Haven promoters to send enough money to keep the job going. Local friends at Titusville endorsed his personal note for \$500 just before oil was struck. At first the work was started by digging and cribbing. Finally an iron pipe was driven through the dirt to the bed rock thirty-two feet below the surface, and real drilling began with steam power about the middle of August. When driller Smith came to the well on Sunday afternoon, August 28, he found that oil had filled the hole nearly to the derrick floor. Soon the news was spread to the entire countryside that the "Yankee had struck oil." The excitement that followed was equal, according to eye-witnesses, to anything that had taken place ten years before in the California gold rush. Men came from everywhere trying to lease land and drill for oil. Some even tried to "kick down a well" by using a spring pole from which drilling tools were suspended over the hole. Two men would pull the pole down, permitting the drill to hit the rock. The spring of

the pole would then lift the drill, and the laborious process would be repeated until patience was exhausted or the oil-bearing sand reached. It is fortunate that the reservoirs of oil in Titusville and Oil Creek regions were found at a shallow depth. The tools in use in the early days would never have reached the deeper sands in McKean County. In 1868, the method of drilling wells through casing was first used on the Benninghoff Run in Venango County. Previous to this time all wells had been drilled "wet," with a six-hundred-foot hole taking anywhere from three to six months. The new method shortened the time by two-thirds and has been called the greatest invention ever applied to the art of drilling.

In the year 1859, the production of oil hardly reached two thousand barrels which sold at seventy-five cents to one dollar a gallon. In 1860 there were seventy-four producing wells with a total production of two hundred thousand barrels that sold at twenty-two cents per gallon in December of that year. During the year 1861, the Venango field reached a new high level with the drilling of wells whose initial production was as much as three thousand barrels daily. Since many of these wells also had tremendous gas pressure, it is not surprising that many accidents occurred. When the first of these great wells was struck, there was an instantaneous explosion which ignited the oil covering an acre or more of ground. Two other wells, oil vats, and a barn were consumed, as well as the oil which spouted from the new well. Eight men at or near the well fled for their lives. All were either killed or seriously burned. During the year 1861, the average daily production reached five thousand barrels. The price dropped from ten dollars per barrel in January to fifty cents in May and ten cents per barrel at the end of the year. In the meantime speculation ran riot. Fortunes were often made and lost in a week, at times over night. One well located on a barren hillside tract of thirty-six acres that originally sold for two hundred dollars produced 1,500,000 barrels of oil that netted the owners over five million dollars. The tremendous production of oil, the fluctuation in price, the uncertainties of drilling, all combined to produce an orgy of speculation seldom if ever equalled in any other place in the world.

Drake and others in the early sixties found themselves with oceans of oil on hand and no great demand for it. The odor, the impurities found in the natural product, and even the color, all tended to make disposition of crude oil a difficult matter. However, refineries sprang up at

Titusville and Corry, costing anywhere from four to one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars, that began to manufacture an illuminating oil that soon drove the coal oil products from the markets. Because the transportation of oil was easy down Oil Creek and the Allegheny, it naturally followed that Pittsburgh soon became the refining center. In the spring of 1863, the city had sixty refineries, representing a capital of one million dollars. They employed six hundred men and had a total weekly capacity of twenty-six thousand barrels.

American merchants began to seek foreign markets. United States consuls at London, Antwerp, Leghorn, St. Petersburg, and Frankfort sought to introduce it into European countries. Representatives of local gas companies, coal oil manufacturers, and insurance companies opposed its importation. However, its use became so widespread that in 1862, the London Times prophesied that the value of the trade in petroleum in time might exceed that of American cotton. That prediction has been more than realized. There is hardly a navigable river or a roadway or a trail in the world that does not have along its courses abandoned tins which once contained kerosene. In fact, few of these tins are abandoned, as the natives in the remotest jungles find a ready use in their simple economy for tin cans of the great oil refining companies.

Perhaps the most spectacular development of the oil industry was the transporting of crude oil from the wells to refineries by means of horse drawn wagons. This method of carrying oil was succeeded by railroad tank cars and eventually by pipe lines. In the beginning, petroleum was placed in barrels at the well and then when the waters of Oil Creek were high enough, flat boats loaded with oil were floated down stream to Oil City and Pittsburgh. When waters were low, ponds were built along the creek and by careful management these were released at the right time and flat boats loaded with oil carried down stream. In the meantime, prior to 1862, six thousand horse teams were employed in the oil fields to transport barrels of oil to market. A report of that day said, "No such transportation service had ever been seen in the United States except in the Army." It was not an uncommon sight to see a solid line of teams a mile or more in length on the roads leading into railroad centers. The customary load was five or six barrels per wagon. In 1862 teamsters received \$2.50 to \$3.00 per barrel for delivery of oil from the fields to Meadville. Roads were most miserable, and during the rainy season the mud impreg-

nated with waste oil was especially hard on both man and beast. Hundreds of horses died from over-exertion, smothered in the mud, or from natural causes. In 1865-66 transportation of oil was revolutionized by development of the pipe line, railroads, and tank cars. In 1861, a four-inch wooden pipe was laid in a trench along Oil Creek; letting the oil run by gravity to Oil City. Other attempts were made through iron lines. Finally an operator named Van Syckel laid a two-inch line for a distance of five miles, and on October 9 by means of steam pumps forced eighty-one barrels of oil through the line in an hour, doing the day's work of three hundred teams working ten hours. Naturally the teamsters were greatly vexed. His line was broken but finally armed guards were placed along the line. The teamsters now reduced the price of teaming, but the pipe line was far more efficient and like any other forward-looking step in industrial expansion, the old way gave way to the new.

The discovery and development of the Titusville and Oil Creek oil fields have been rather fully presented as a background of what took place ten years later in the Bradford field. Many of the basic problems of drilling, transportation, and refining had already been solved prior to 1877. Bradford's contribution to the rapidly developing oil industry was a refinement of method in all phases of the industry. Of these, the more important was that of shooting the well, a process which placed a torpedo on the sand and by exploding it greatly increased the flow of oil. Pumping techniques were also greatly improved, not only in equipment, but also in the power used. At first there were the long lines of steam pipe covered by wooden boxes, but even so it was a difficult matter in zero weather to convey live steam a great distance from the boilers to the pumping wells. Steam was succeeded by power applied through long lines of rods extending from the power house to the wells, and often on larger leases by compressed air conveyed through lines from compressor to wells, and still again to keep pace with the modern age, by electricity. The Bradford field was opened in 1875 and really got under way in 1877, and reached its peak production in 1883. By 1890, it was generally believed that the field was exhausted. Many people left for other fields. It is now known that only a small portion of the oil was taken from the sand by the original gas pressure. Since that time operators have been trying to obtain the eighty or more per cent of the oil left in the ground after the "boom" days were passed. One expedient

that has worked well in the Bradford field has been "flooding" which consists of putting water under pressure in certain wells in a given area. The water moving through the sand from these "water wells" drives the oil before it to near-by producing wells. When conditions are right it is surprising how much oil can be taken from territory otherwise exhausted, by this process. However, much of the oil originally in the sand is by-passed by the water. It remains in the sand and is unrecoverable until such time as science makes it available. How and when, are questions that only the future can solve.

39. How does the county rank in the manufacture of glass?

At the turn of the century McKean County ranked first in the United States in the manufacture of this important product. In 1905 there were thirteen window glass factories with a combined capacity of ninety million square feet of glass. One-fourth of the glass made in the entire country was at that time manufactured in the county. An abundance of very cheap gas, together with a great supply of rock high in silica content, lead to this local development of the glass industry. After a few years the supply of gas was depleted, while a better and more convenient supply of silica sand was discovered elsewhere. These factors resulted in the transfer of the industry to other sections of the country. Another factor that entered into the local decadence of this industry was the transfer from hand-blown manufacture to that by machines. The glass industry probably began with the Egyptians at least four thousand years ago. Throughout the centuries this product had been produced by a highly specialized hand-blown process. Members of the craft ridiculed the idea that a machine could be made to produce high grade glass. But here again the machine triumphed and members of an ancient and very exclusive craft were obliged to adjust themselves to a new order of things.

At the present time there are only four glass factories in the county. These are the Pierce Glass Bottle plant and the Pittsburgh-Corning Corporation of Port Allegany, and the Corning factory of Bradford. The last named industry is a subsidiary of the Corning, N. Y. plant that manufactured the two hundred inch lens for the celebrated Palo Mar Observatory located between Los Angeles and San Diego. Each of the above named plants produces a highly specialized product, as does the Sergeant Wire Glass Corporation of Wetmore Township.

40. What other flourishing industry of former years has also suffered a serious decline?

Seventy-five years ago the mining of soft coal was an industry of considerable importance in this county. As early as 1815 coal was discovered near Instanter. A few years later other and larger deposits were found. In 1845 coal was delivered from Clermont to Smethport at 12½c per bushel, and also hauled by teams to many towns in neighboring New York State. In 1874 large mines were opened at Clermont and in 1875 the first train load of coal was shipped from that town to Buffalo over the McKean and Buffalo line which had been constructed from Larabee to Clermont for the better transportation of that product. It is related that at one time there were two hundred fifty houses for miners on the "Strip", just across the road from the present Clermont school house. Mt. Alton was another county town that enjoyed a flourishing trade in coal. The Erie railroad from Salamanca through Bradford to Johnsonburg ran across the Kinzua valley by means of the celebrated Kinzua Bridge which at one time was one of the greatest in the world. Excursions were at one time run from Pittsburgh, Rochester and Buffalo to accommodate summer excursionists who desired to view this great structure which is 301 feet high and more than a half mile in length.

An interesting by-product of coal mining in the early days was the "coal oil" extracted from coal by means of pressure and distillation. However, the discovery of petroleum soon put an end to this rapidly expanding industry. Likewise the production of coal itself came to an end when thicker and more productive veins of coal were opened in counties to the south of McKean. Philadelphia interests still own large tracts of land in the county and it may be that once again when coal deposits are exhausted elsewhere that coal will once again be mined extensively in the county.

41. How does McKean County rank in Agriculture?

McKean County is not well situated for many phases of agriculture. The growing seasons are short, not averaging much more than ninety days. Corn and other crops requiring a longer season do not do well. Much of the land near the heads of the valleys is so called "marginal lands" as far as farming is concerned. In these areas much of the land that was formerly cultivated has been allowed to revert to pasture, and quite often to areas that are growing up to second growth brush

and timber. However, the county is well-adapted to the dairy industry and many successful farmers are turning their attention to this important phase of agriculture.

In 1916 representative citizens of boroughs and townships organized the McKean County Farm Bureau, which later became known as the Agricultural Extension Association, which is affiliated with the Pennsylvania State College. This Association brings to the farmers the latest thought and research along agricultural lines. Often experts from State College visit the county and help solve the problems of the individual farmer. The work of the Association is under the guidance of a County Agent who represents the college in the county. More recently a Home Economics Representative has been added to the Association staff. Under the influence of Extension Association agricultural interests have made rapid advances in gardening, poultry raising, forestry, soil erosion control and in dairying. The ratio of farm income in the county to that derived from oil and manufacturing has been as one to thirty which shows that McKean is not a distinctively farming community. However, as time passes agricultural interests will undoubtedly grow in importance.

42. Is there a National Forest in the County?

Parts of four northwestern Pennsylvania counties are included in what is known as the Allegheny National Forest. Areas in Elk, Forest, McKean, and Warren totalling 726,000 acres will finally be acquired. To date the forest includes nearly 463,000 acres. Headquarters of two Ranger Districts included in the forest are at Warren and Marienville. The Allegheny Forest is one of seven national forests in the Eastern Region. The purpose of these forests may be stated as follows: To conserve timber, water, grazing, recreational, wildlife and other resources of national forests for the use of the people. National forests contribute to industrial enterprises through their yearly cut of over a billion board feet of timber; they protect watersheds and help to ensure pure and abundant water supplies to hundreds of towns and cities; furnish pasturage for about thirteen million head of livestock; and afford playgrounds for millions of recreation seekers.

The Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters has cooperated with the National Forest in constructing ten lookout towers in the forest area for the detection of forest fires. During the past ten years only six-tenths of one percent of the area has been burned over, or less than one-

half acre annually for each 1,000 acres protected. Every fire, except a few due to lightning, could have been prevented if care had been taken by those responsible for its cause. The management also has a well-developed plan for reforestation by planting seedlings in carefully selected areas. Provision is made at the Kane Experimental Forest to study the growth, management, and protection of the various types of forests, with special attention to streamflow floods and erosion, and the effective utilization of forest products. The Department of Timber Management plans to harvest each year only the trees that are ready for cutting and doing so in such a manner that the amount cut will not exceed the growth during that period. Timber from the Allegheny National Forest is used in the furniture industry, the manufacture of paper, wood distillation products, shoe lasts, bowling pins, brush handles, as well as many other products.

One of the most important uses of the forest is to afford recreational opportunities. This includes fishing, hunting and camping. Two areas of virgin forest, where one may walk beneath an unspoiled canopy of ancient oaks, pines and hemlocks have been secured by the forest management. These are the "Hearts Content" area near Warren, and the Tionesta Natural and Scenic Forest which comprises a large tract of virgin hemlock and hardwood near the center of the Allegheny Forest where the four counties join. This tract includes nearly four thousand acres of virgin forest.

43. What may be said of the military history of McKean County?

Citizens of the county may be justly proud of its military record. At the time of the Revolution there was no McKean County. Records show only one Revolutionary war veteran to be buried in the county, which was hardly settled at the time of the War of 1812. During the wars of more recent date the deeds of the military units organized in the county, reflect the high patriotic spirit of its citizens. Thus we read in the Four County History a statement that nearly fifty men volunteered for service in the Union army in a township that had a few more than eighty voters. Nearly twenty of this number lost their lives in service. In 1884 this township organized at Rixford a G.A.R. post with forty-three charter members. It is also related that volunteers from Ceres marched in two days from that community to Emporium to join the Bucktail contingents. It is also a tradition that these men refused accom-

modations at the hotel, since known as the Butler House, because the proprietor was a Southern sympathizer.

Of the many famous regiments of the Civil War the Bucktails of McKean and neighboring counties take first rank with the greatest. To name the battles in which this regiment took part is to read the roll of the battles of the Army of the Potomac. The regiment was known as the First Rifles or the Pennsylvania Reserves. It was also known as the Forty-second Pennsylvania Volunteers, but the name which they made famous in their day and ours is the "Bucktails." Lincoln called for volunteers on the 15th of April in 1861. Two days before this Thomas L. Kane, founder of the town of Kane, had petitioned Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin for leave to organize a command in the so called "Wild Cat District" (McKean must have been pretty wild in those days to earn a name like that). Permission was given and on April 24th a group of three hundred men, three companies assembled on the banks of the Sinnemahoning at Driftwood, Cameron County, where three rafts were built upon which the men drifted down the Susquehanna to Harrisburg. This regiment has the honor of being one of the first organized for the defense and preservation of the Union. Company I commanded at that time by Wm. T. Blanchard was composed of eighty-two officers and privates from McKean. Records show that twenty-two of these men died in service. Twenty-eight were wounded. At Dunkard Church at Antietam the Bucktail regiment lost its colonel, a lieutenant, and twenty-eight men. Sixty-five members of this regiment were wounded. In two days this organization lost 110 officers in killed, wounded and missing. The men who volunteered in the Bucktails were hardy woodsmen who knew the use of the ax and the rifle. They were accustomed to hardship and danger and under the inspiring leadership of General Kane this regiment established a name for bravery and efficiency that was second to none in the armies of South and North.

Pennsylvania has named the highway which leads along the Sinnemahoning and Susquehanna rivers from Williamsport to Kane the Bucktail Trail in honor of the heroic band of men who in their eager patriotism offered their services to their country before their Governor and President had called for volunteers. This sparsely settled region also raised five companies that served with distinction in other regiments during the Civil War. In later times Company E. of Kane and Company C of Bradford, 12th Regiment Penn-

sylvania National Guard, served with equal distinction in the Spanish-American and the First World War. These companies were in the forefront of the Allied drive along the Vesle River and in the Argonne Forest that marked the end of World War I. In that conflict the sheriff's office under the direction of the late E. W. Jones had charge of all the selective service activities of the county. In World War 2, the Federal government organized the county into two Selective Service areas with headquarters in Mt. Jewett and Bradford. These centers have inducted McKean County men into their country's service.

44. What progress has been made in educational affairs in the county?

The foregoing pages of these data have recorded conditions existing in the early social and business life of the people. A comparison with conditions existing today shows a remarkable progress to have been made. The same holds true of educational matters.

It is recorded that the first school was established at Instanter, probably a Catholic Mission school. Little is recorded about the schools of early Quaker Ceres. It is quite likely that very rudimentary education was carried on in the homes of the first settlers. It is a matter of record that Richard Chadwick taught a school in Smethport in 1828 in a frame house located in the rear of the lot where the Methodist Church now stands. In 1879 M. O. Campbell, the county superintendent, makes the statement that a Miss Eliza Manning taught the first school under the common school act of 1834 near Port Allegany. McKean's nine school districts had voted unanimously in favor of this act, as had fourteen other western and northern counties of the State.

In 1837 Ceres, Hamilton, Sergeant, Shippen, and Norwich districts made reports under the act of 1834 to the State Department of Public Instruction. Eight teachers were employed in these districts with a total of three hundred four pupils enrolled. Two years later Bradford Township, Corydon, Keating and Liberty also filed reports. The nine districts showed a total of forty-three teachers and 900 pupils. The total expenditures for school purposes was \$1,233.00.

The law of 1854 provided for the election of county superintendents of public schools. Interesting items showing the educational trends of the early days are taken from their reports. Many of these superintendents did a tremendous amount of work at small salaries under adverse circumstances. Thus W. J. Milliken late in his life

told the writer that he visited wood's camp schools on Mead Run in Hamlin Township when he found it necessary to use a large pocket knife to blaze the trees so that he would be sure to find his way back to the railroad crossing near Lantz's Corners in time for the evening train. Only excerpts that are "different" are taken from these early reports.

F. A. ALLEN—1853

He makes the following statements in an annual report to the State Department. There are 70 one-teacher schools in the county. The monthly cost per pupil is 27 cents while the total amount raised by local taxation is \$1,723 with \$805 appropriated by the State.

This item is of interest, "There are 13 towns in the county, 12 of them have schools. All these schools were visited save one which was 35 miles away. This was not reached before the term closed."

"All the schools are in operation some time of the school year. The text books are antiquated with no uniformity. There is a glorious independence permitted, each child bringing his own. The school houses are miserable indeed, a few are supplied with blackboards."

The first teachers' institute in the county was held in 1855 with 40 teachers in attendance.

L. R. WISNER—1857

This superintendent says in an annual report, "There are 6,000 people in the county with 78 school houses. Some districts have a 13 mill tax for schools, but the people nobly sustain the burden of the common schools. The salaries paid teachers are liberal. The males receive an average of \$21, the females \$13 per month, respectively."

WARREN COWLES—1861

CHRISTOPHER CONFORTH—1864

Superintendent Conforth resigned to become chaplain of the 150th Reg. Penna. Volunteers. Hon. W. W. Brown, late resident of Bradford, was appointed to the position. Mr. Conforth was reelected but soon after resigned again to assume the principalship of a school for soldiers' orphans.

W. J. MILLIKEN—1870

During this period Bradford, Lafayette and Hamlin built two-room school houses. He mentions the Smethport graded school while that in Port Allegany was not yet in operation.

W. H. CURTIS—1873

At this time there were 89 school houses in

the county. Bradford and Smethport had graded schools.

M. O. CAMPBELL

A summary report of this period makes mention of Smethport Academy, established by Act of Legislature in 1829 with a yearly appropriation of \$100. The school was put into operation in 1837 with Luther Humphry as principal. Hon. Glenni Schofield of Warren was principal in 1841 and Hon. B. D. Hamlin was principal in 1844.

W. P. ECKELS—1887

This superintendent wrote in one of his reports, "The long term is being gradually substituted for the shorter summer and winter terms. Books are being furnished by several of the districts free of charge."

J. E. MYERS—1896

In a summary review he writes, "In 1881 there were one hundred thirty-two schools. In 1900 there are just one hundred more schools in the county." It was also a noteworthy event that seventy-eight pupils received eighth grade diplomas in 1900.

BURDETTE S. BAYLE—1905

In his report for 1910 Superintendent Bayle stated that of the six high schools under his jurisdiction, two have four-year courses, three have a three-year course, and one has a two-year course. He then adds, "The great problem of this county will always be that of her rural schools. Since Mother Nature has forbidden that we bring our children together into the best central schools,

it remains for us to provide the best possible single schools for them where they are."

C. W. LILLIBRIDGE—1911

During a third of a century since Superintendent Bayle wrote the statements quoted above, very considerable progress has been made in the organization of secondary schools, and in the number of pupils who attend the same. All county high schools are recognized by the State Department as being on a standard four-year basis. The number of township pupils receiving county diplomas has arisen from less than two score to a yearly average of five hundred twenty. Beginning in 1929 eight of the larger school districts of the county began a campaign of building construction, and consolidation of school activities that has resulted in a complete revolution of the school program. At the present time there is but one typical one-teacher school with all grades in the county. Some of the smaller districts have not been able to build new houses, but pupils in the grammar grades in these districts have been enrolled as tuition students in neighboring junior high school organizations. This program of consolidation of school activities has been greatly expedited by an accompanying good roads campaign that has placed every school in the county on an improved highway. More carefully graded courses of study, more efficient instruction, and enriched programs of school activities have resulted from the consolidation of the county schools. The wide margin that once separated the graded borough school from the ungraded township school has been practically eliminated in McKean County.

No period in educational history experienced the trauma of dramatic change as that beginning with Act 403 of the 1945 Assembly. This legislation triggered a constantly escalating salary schedule--the first since the Edmonds Act which set minimums for elementary teachers at \$1000 and high school teachers at \$1170. Each assembly following 1945 saw a continuous upgrading of the profession financially.

Salary mandates were followed by drastic changes in the level and method of computing subsidies to school districts including subsidies for school facilities and new school programs in special education, vocational education, etc.

Accompanying spiralling costs both at the state and local levels, was increased pressure to reorganize the circa 2500 school districts into larger administrative units. County Boards were mandated by Act 361 in 1947 to present County Plans to effect this reorganization. The 1947 County Plan, subsequently amended, called for six (6) administrative units in McKean County. The amendment reduced the number to five. Subsequently the County Plans were generally revised in 1953 and 1963 with minor revisions continuing through 1966.

The period from 1946-1953 saw slow movement toward the implementation of the County Plans, Special and increased subsidies for joint, union, and merged schools resulted in the first jointure effected in 1951 in the Port Allegany Area. The first union school district in McKean County was also created in this same school system.

The County Office, under the leadership of the Superintendent was in the thick of school district reorganization. Financial studies, proposed educational programs, joint board agreements, and a myriad of meetings preceded reorganization in each of the five administrative units. With the priceless assistance from local administrators and wise leadership among the several boards distinct progress was made in streamlining administrative control.

By 1958, Administrative Unit #1 had evolved a joint school system consisting of Bradford City, Bradford and Foster Townships.

Administrative Unit #2 had completed its organization of a joint school system comprised of Eldred Borough, Eldred and Otto Townships and the western part of Ceres Township.

Administrative Unit #3 had by July 1, 1955 effected a single school district by a vote of the electorate uniting the school districts of Port Allegany Borough and the Townships of Annin, Liberty, Pleasant Valley, and Roulette. The latter two from Potter County.

Administrative Unit #4 had through several stages moved to include a joint school system for Smethport Borough and the Townships of Hamlin, Keating, Norwich, and Sergeant.

Administrative Unit #5 had combined the Kane Union School District (made up of Hamilton and Highland (Elk) Townships and the Boroughs of Kane and Mt. Jewett) with Wetmore Township and a portion of Sergeant Township.

C. F. FEIT--1958

The next twelve years saw single school districts evolving. All administrative units were finally merged by the School District Reorganization Act 299 of 1963 with reorganization mandated effective July 1, 1966. Five administrative units were proposed by agreement of local school districts in the 1963 County Plan. This consensus was predicated on the assumption that legislative action on an Intermediate Unit would be requested to provide those services not financially feasible in the small local units. The following school districts resulted from Act 299.

Administrative Unit #1--The Bradford Area School District
Administrative Unit #2--The Otto-Eldred School District
Administrative Unit #3--The Port Allegany School District
Administrative Unit #4--The Smethport Area School District
Administrative Unit #5--The Kane Area School District

During the 1950s and 1960s, school plant facilities were expanded or replaced. New and/or expanded high schools were built in each of the five administrative units.

A new junior high school was constructed and the senior high school was extensively remodeled and enlarged in the Bradford Area School District.

The Junior-Senior High Schools in the Otto-Eldred and Port Allegany School Districts were enlarged by substantial additions.

Smethport Area and Kane Area both built new secondary facilities. In the latter school district a new junior high school was occupied in 1959. New facilities which include a senior high school and elementary school are due for occupancy in the fall of 1970.

New elementary schools or middle school plant facilities are being considered by several administrative units in the county. Port Allegany has presently entered the planning stage for such a building.

With the reorganization of school districts into five units formerly comprised of all or parts of 27 school districts in this and adjoining counties, the work of the County Office changed drastically during the 1958-1970 period. In 1946 the County Superintendent was the chief school administrator in all school districts except Bradford City and Kane Borough. By 1966, as a result of Act 299 in 1963, four of the five school districts in McKean County now look to their district superintendents for prime leadership. By July 1, 1970 all school districts regardless of size, will be so administered.

Since the middle 1960s, the McKean County Superintendent has had the responsibility for administering the vast bulk of cooperative projects in Cameron, Elk, McKean, and Potter County. Among these projects are the (1) Seneca Highlands Instructional Materials Center, (2) The CEMP Clinic for Emotionally Disturbed Children, (3) The Title I and Title III ESEA programs, and (4) "Operation Leader."

Programs in special education have increased significantly in McKean County with the County Board employing three speech therapists and operating for school districts some twelve classes for exceptional children. The 1956-57 Special Education Budget was submitted in the amount of \$34,400. Thirteen years later the annual budget amounted to \$265,371.00.

The first county film library in the Commonwealth, established in 1937 to serve the twenty-two school districts in McKean County and several districts in Potter and Cameron Counties became the nucleus for the Seneca Highlands Regional Instructional Materials Center serving Elk County in addition to the original consortium of counties. Lyle E. Weissenfluh, Regional Assistant County Superintendent became its director with the McKean County Superintendent its administrator. By 1969 the Center had grown to an inventory of some 26,000 items with a value of almost a half million dollars.

Companion House Bills #40 and 41 of the 1970 Session of the Legislature were finally passed by both Houses of the Legislature during the week of April 25th. Effective July 1971, twenty-nine Intermediate Units are established for the Commonwealth making Pennsylvania the first state to mandate such a system of service units whose primary function is to provide a program of services to the local operating school districts. At the same time, Act 192 of the 1970 Legislature continued the office of County Superintendent until the effective date of the Intermediate Unit establishment.

At the April 20th meeting of the McKean County Board of School Directors, Dr. Robert P. Stromberg was appointed Acting Superintendent effective July 1, 1970 subject to confirmation by the Secretary of Education. Dr. Stromberg thus becomes McKean County's last superintendent in a long line of illustrious school administrators and serves during the crucial initial stages in the transition from the County Offices to the Intermediate Unit.

Digitized: September 2013
By: Angela Nuzzo