

Early Settler History of Warren Township (pp. 428-433)

Despite the official Pennsylvania titled warrantees of 1784, and patent deeds that soon followed, few settlers from Pennsylvania ventured northward to stake claims. In fact, none of the earliest known settlers in Warren Township came from Pennsylvania. They held the land in name only. Warren Township was not claimed for Connecticut until the later separate Delaware Company's treaty of 1795. There were no European settlers in Warren Township (Martell) before 1798.

As previously noted, the Susquehanna Company document of 11 July 1754, by default had established a different history for Warren Township from the rest of the county, for in it this area was excluded from the rest the Connecticut claim for what would eventually become Bradford County. This division was due to the geographically based Native American concept of land divisions. Thus, the area of Warren Township should not have been officially included in any Iroquois treaty. It had been part of the lands controlled by the Delawares and on that basis a second land speculation body from Connecticut, known as the Delaware Company, again attempted to stake a western claim for that state here in 1795. The Delawares ceded all control of their lands to the United States in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville. In the same year, the Delaware Company acquired the last lands previously held by the Delaware in the east. A deed to Hezekiah Huntington and 360 of his associates, was obtained from the Delawares (the Ninnepuncs or Lenape, as they called themselves) for a tract of land extending through the breadth of the Connecticut charter, from the Delaware River on the east to the line of the Susquehanna Company's purchase on the west. This included the northeastern part of Bradford County, comprising the township of Warren, with adjacent parts of Windham, Orwell and Pike. After 1800, remaining Delawares went to Missouri, Texas and finally Oklahoma. The most complete record of Delaware migration is by John Heckewelder.

Once acquired from the Delaware Indians, the Delaware Company surveyed this territory into townships of six miles square, appointed Elisha Hyde of Norwich, Conn., their agent to negotiate the sale of townships to companies of settlers. Andrew Tracy, Oliver Crary, Robert Gere (2nd), and William Young, Jr. formed a committee to grant townships for the company. Of the two townships located in Bradford County, Warren Township (known then as "Martell") was granted to Elisha Hyde on 14 Oct. 1795, "to defray his expenses as agent," and "Minden" was granted to Elisha Hyde and Elisha Tracy (both of Norwich, Conn.) on 25 April 1796. These two men subsequently sold parcels to the settlers of Warren and Orwell Townships. The Delaware Company was not a conspicuous party to the land controversies in Bradford County, only so far as their interests were blended with those of the Susquehanna Company to promote Connecticut claims to the area of Warren Township. However, these parcel sales directly conflicted with the Pennsylvania property divisions of 1784, completely ignoring Pennsylvania's prior claims to the land, of at least eleven years earlier.

Three years after Warren Township (known then as "Martell") was granted through Connecticut to Elisha Hyde, on 14 Oct. 1795, the first four settlers arrived: James Bowen, William Arnold, Mr. Harding and Thomas Gibson. Previous to 1798, this remote section of Bradford County was an unbroken wilderness, inhabited by a few Delawares and the wild beasts which roamed unrestrained over the hills and through the valleys.

The four settlers first made a clearing on the south branch of the Wappusening Creek, at a place called for many years thereafter "the old clearing." But they found that they were not on the correct tract of land that they had been provided to settle, so after obtaining their first crop they abandoned the site. They went further north, to a place which has been known ever since as "Bowen Hollow" and is now the center of Warren Center. There James Bowen built a grist-mill on the middle branch of the Wappusening. James Bowen's son Harry was the first child born in Warren Township, in the fall of 1800.

William Arnold returned with his wife Elizabeth from Swansey, Mass., in 1799. They came with three sons: James, William and Andrew, who all lived to be aged men, and reared families. A fourth son, Benedict Arnold, was the second European child born in Warren Township, born a few weeks after Harry Bowen. The third child in the township was born on 10 August 1801, A. S. Coburn, son of Parley Coburn.

In the spring of 1800, two brothers, named Capt. Ebenezer and Jonathan Coburn, came with their sons from Connecticut and bought, under a disputed Connecticut title, 23,040 acres of land and made a clearing on the same farm where they lived and died.