

The Rhode Island Purchase (ca. 1800-1820)

The first major influx of settlers into Warren Township was initiated by the Rhode Island Purchase of the esteemed mercantile firm of Brown & Ives, of Providence Rhode Island. This firm arranged for the purchase of the township by New England settlers in units of approximately 100 acre lots. How the firm of Brown & Ives got involved with land sales in Pennsylvania is still unclear. Brown & Ives, as landowners, were anxious to induce settlers to come upon their lands, and made great inducements to secure the settlement of the first-comers upon their lands. Nicholas Brown Jr., a graduate of Rhode Island College and heir to a family fortune that was built on shipping and the slave trade, had founded the firm. The life of Nicholas Brown Jr. was so intertwined with that college that Brown University was named after him. Nicholas graduated from their in 1786 at age seventeen, and by age twenty-two was already a trustee. He just as quickly assumed a leading role in Providence's (and Rhode Island's) economic life by establishing the firm of Brown & Ives, which became one of New England's largest mercantile houses. His benefactions to Brown, totaling \$160,000 over his lifetime, but it was his management of the Rhode Island Purchase of Warren Township that has left its mark on the history of our community. Many of the original families who purchased land through Brown & Ives still have descendants residing and owning property in Warren Township (<http://www.brown.edu/webmaster/about/history/part1.shtml>).