Early Towns Of Guernsey County

The permanent settlement of Guernsey County, is believed to have begun with the arrival of Ezra Graham, who operated the ferry across Wills Creek in 1798, followed by the Beymer brothers, George and Henry, in 1800. Other white folks had passed through the area, but they were hunters, surveyors or soldiers. The Beymers are the County's oldest family, as they located here three years before the Beatty-Gomber group and six years before the immigrants from the Isle of Guernsey.

OLD WASHINGTON. Henry Beymer bought a tract of land eight miles east of Wills Creek and built a tavern. Then he and George together planned and laid out a town near there which they called New Washington, or Beymerstown (now called Old Washington.) The town, eight months older than Cambridge, is the oldest permanent town in Guernsey County. Frankfort, laid out a few days before Old Washington, would hold that honor had it survived. At one time the town was a contender for the title of county seat. The Guernsey County Fair is held at Old Washington every year, originating in 1855 and still attended today by direct descendants of the county's first settlers. It was at Old Washington also, that the Confederate general, John Morgan had a brief but historic skirmish during the Civil War with pursuing federal cavalry.

CAMBRIDGE. In 1797 "Zane's Trace" was cut through what is now Guernsey County. Ebenezer Zane, his brother Jonathan, John McIntire, Joseph Worley, Levi Williams, Ebenezer Ryan, John Green and an Indian guide, arriving at the Wills Creek crossing, (near the present viaduct) found it too difficult to ford due to the clay bottom and huge amout of driftwood. The Zane brothers named the stream Wills Creek after a river in Maryland, their home country. The government surveyors were busily surveying the United States military lands in this area and had made camp on the creek banks. A man by the name of Ezra Graham was persuaded to build and operate a ferry across the stream. No one seems to know where this man came from, but he operated the ferry service for two years, the first ferryman west of Wheeling, Virginia on the "Trace". He was succeeded by George Beymer from Somerset, Pennsylvania, a brother-in-law of John McIntire, of Zane's party. McIntire was a son-in-law of Ebenezer Zane. Both of these persons kept a house of entertainment and a ferry for travellers on their way to Kentucky and other parts of the West. Mr. Beymer, in April, 1803 gave up his tavern to Mr. John Beatty, who moved in from Loudon county, Virginia. Beatty's family consisted of eleven persons. Among them was Wyatt Hutchison, who later kept a

tavern in the town. The Indians then hunted in this vicinity, and often encamped on the creek. In June, 1806 Cambridge was laid out; and on the day the lots were first offered for sale, several families from the British Isle of Guernsey, near the coast of France, stopped here and purchased lands. These were followed by other families, amounting in all to some fifteen or twenty, from the same island; all of whom, settling in the county, gave origin to the present name. Among the heads of these families were William Ogier, Thomas Naftel, Thomas Lenfesty, James Bishard, Charles and John Marquand, John Robins, Daniel Ferbrache, Peter, Thomas and John Sarchet and Daniel Hubert.

The first frame house in Cambridge was built by Zacchaus A. Beatty, eldest son of John Beatty. It was located on what is now the corner of Wheeling Avenue and Sixth Street, the present site of the Moose Lodge. The town was platted in 1806 by Beatty and Jacob Gomber, partners in promoting business enterprises and stimulating the town's settlers to action. George Metcalf, a young surveyor laid out the first lots, and he was later appointed as county surveyor to build roads out of the forest trails through the county, connecting Cambridge to the many small new settlements springing up.

QUAKER CITY, then called Millwood, was founded by Joseph Williams, who moved his family there in 1801. A firm Quaker, he was soon joined by John Hall and other families of Quakers wanting to be free to follow their way of life. Like the Pilgrims, their minds were on religion and they were soon holding meetings in their homes, until they built a log meeting-house on a hill which is now called "Friends Cemetery", this was used for both church and school. In the year 1834 the town was platted by Jonah Smith. In the years that followed, it was the scene of many yearly "Homecomings" and today is known far and wide for the location of the "Ohio Hills Folk Festival."

BYESVILLE, the largest of the ten incorporated villages in Guernsey County, was platted in 1856, and named for it's first permanent settler, Jonathan Bye. It was a slow-growing community, helped eventually by the coming of the railroads and opening of coal-mines nearby. At one time there were 10 mines near the village and 19 within working distance. Today, there is not much activity in the once-busy coal mines but Byesville is enjoying a period of prosperity, long over-due, because of it's important location near the large inter-state highway and many new industries in or near the town.

SENECAVILLE, in the southern part of the County was platted in 1815 by David Satterthwaite. It was near here that oil was first discovered. As it resembled the oil found in New York by the Seneca Indians, the name "Seneca" was given the stream on which it first appeared, and later, the town. Several large coal mines operated in this area, and the town grew steadily and was incorporated in 1841. It was noted also for the site of the large "Cambell's Mill", where folks for miles around brought their grain, assured of a superior grade of flour and feed. Senecaville is now known for the beautiful Senecaville Lake and Dam, a resort area for fisherman and vacationers.

These are but a few of the towns and villages in the County. Many other areas should be noted as "firsts". For instance; Washington Township claims the first white child born in the County; Westland Township was the scene of the first church service; Jefferson Township had the first large Country store; Oxford Township the first distillery, and many others.

Since Guernsey County was formed, many towns platted within it's boundaries have passed away. Some of them sprang up under the most favorable auspices, passed through a period of prosperity, then gradually declined and vanished. In some instances not only the locations but even the names of these towns are not generally known. Within 30 years county towns had been started in every part. There seemed to be a mania for town building, and early records showed a total of 30, some platted in the midst of the dense forest around Cambridge. Streets were staked out and named, lots set aside for public buildings, churches and graveyards. Dissatisfaction and numerous disappointments among the settlers eventually wore away their original enthusiasms and their plans and towns vanished.

PLEASANT CITY

Point Pleasant (the original name of Pleasant City) was laid out by Joseph Dyson on August 29, 1836. Most of the early settlers came from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. An enterprising citizen of early days was Harrison Secrest, who owned and operated a woolen factory, burnt brick and built the first brick house in Point Pleasant, conducted a store, built the first frame schoolhouse in town, and in general, contributed a great amount of his time and resources to the betterment of the town. In 1870, he was even operating a hotel.

FAIRVIEW

The town of Fairview was laid out by Hugh Gilliland on March 24, 1814. It is said that the name was suggested by Ralph Cowgill, one of the first settlers of Oxford Township because of the "fair view" of the town that could be had from even far-away hills. Jesse C. Weir and Martin and James Rosemond opened stores, John Duncan started a carding machine and others opened up businesses of one kind or another, as the town grew and prospered. The coming of the National Road brought even more business to the town, and there were even suggestions that it become the county seat of a new county to be formed from Eastern Guernsey County and Western Belmont County. Nothing came of this, however.

CUMBERLAND

James Bay platted Cumberland on April 24, 1828. Stephen Charlotte opened the first tavern, afterwards known as the Bradley House. James Annon was the first tailor, and William Cosgrove had a chair factory operated by dog power. He moved it near the stream running through town, which has since been called Dog run. This was the first town in Guernsey County to play host to Morgan's Confederate Raiders, on the evening of July 23, 1863. The Globe House, a popular tavern, was used by many of the Confederates during their stay here.

ANTRIM

Antrim was laid out by Alexander Alexander, on March 1, 1830. Although it never became a large town, at one time it did have a college, Madison College, founded by the Rev. Samuel Findlay. Founded in 1837, the school did well for a number of years, but finally ran into financial difficulties, due to an over-ambitious building project. The coming of the Civil War caused a further loss of interest in the school, and it finally closed.

A Tribute

Our forefathers — men of vision
As they cleared the virgin soil;
We look to a bright Tomorrow
Remembering Yesterday's toil.

—Bernadine Baldwin

The Lost Town

Frankfort, Frankford, Frankley . . . . . or Smithtown

For years, our county histories have told us of the "Lost Town, Frankfort, and of its founder, Joseph Smith. They have also said that no one knows where he came from, or where he went. The town died when the National Road by-passed it and nothing at all is there now except a few foundation stones.

But it *was* Guernsey County's first platted town, and, according to Wolfe, grew until it had a population of 200, a tavern, two stores, a mill and a distillery.

With a little time spent in the courthouses at Cambridge, Zanesville and Marietta examining deed and will records, and a lot of luck in finding the graves of Joseph Smith and his wife, a goodly amount of information is now known about the founder of our first town.

He was born in about 1770 and his wife, Charity, was born in about 1776. She could not write her name, (not unusual in those days). He platted *Frankley* on September 13, 1805, but when he conveyed lots in Frankley, he used the name Frankford for the town.
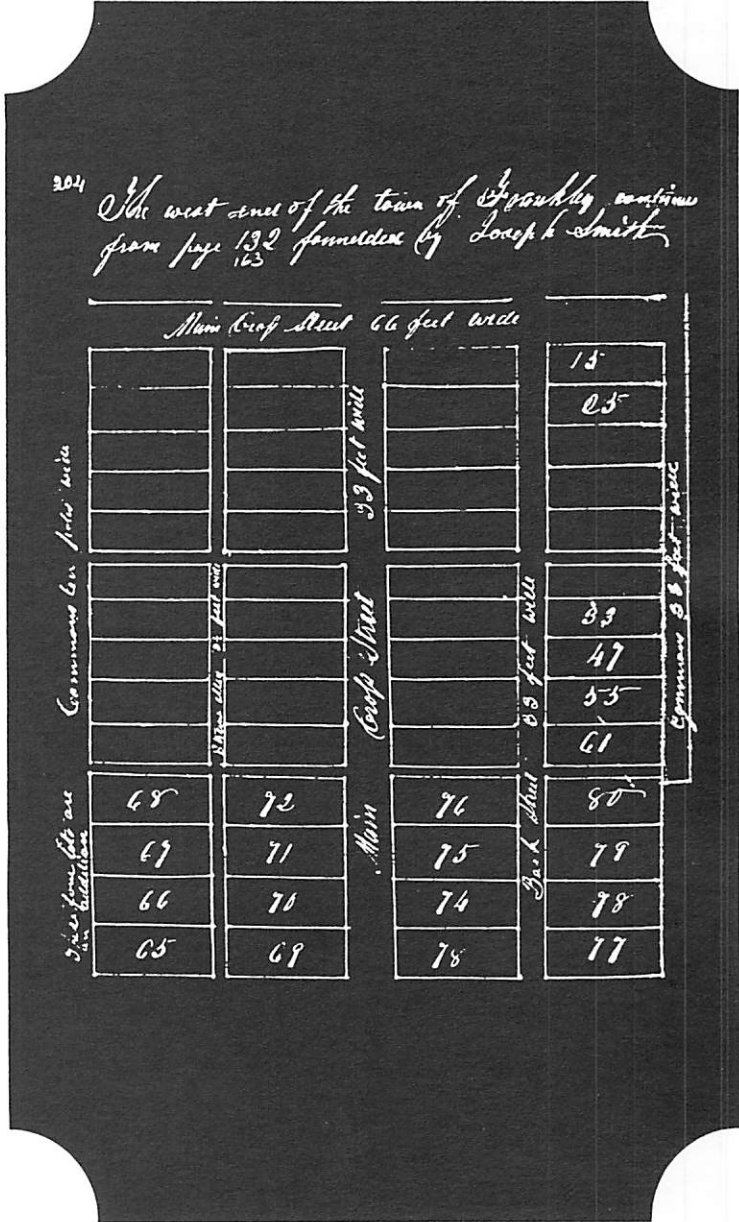
On June 17th, 1814, he sold his remaining lands and lots to Jacob Gomber for $2,000.00, moved to Muskingum County, and on December 9, 1814 purchased for the sum of $2,500.00, 500 acres of land east of Zanesville, straddling what later became the National Road just east of the Adamsville exit of Interstate 70.

His wife died on January 30, 1849, aged 73 years, and he died on December 12, 1857, aged 87 years. They are buried in the Pleasant Grove Cemetery, just north of the Interstate at the Adamsville exit.

They were the parents of at least 11 children; Francis, Daniel, Andres, Susan Twaddle, Betsy Little, Mary Church, James B., John, Harrison, Samuel and Washington Smith. It would appear that hundreds of their descendants probably live in the Zanesville area.

He probably came from Peekskill, New York, since Fortescue Cummings, quoted earlier, mentions the great number of people at Smithtown, or Frankfort, who had come from that area.

Joseph Smith is no longer a man of mystery in our history.

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