

# Muncy Township

Both Northumberland County and Muncy Township were formed in 1772. Muncy Township covered a vast area, largely a heavily forested wilderness with some land suitable for farming.

By 1774 seventy-eight different family names had settled on land that met three requirements – open area for farming, a wooded area for the lumber to build a house and to heat it once built, and a water supply from a nearby creek or natural spring.

John Alward built a grist mill two miles along Muncy Creek where he ground wheat and corn for his neighbors. He sold it to Henry Shoemaker.

After the 'Runaway' there were still marauding Indian parties in the area. On August 18, Andrew Flatt and James Brady left the rebuilt Fort Muncy to protect a group of men returning to their fields to harvest their crops. Brady set his weapon aside to help with the crops when Flatt exclaimed: "Egads ... It's Injuns." James Brady, John Brady's son, was scalped, and died from his injuries.

Some early settlers stayed only a short time or left following the Runaways. The Valley was deserted and only 'Muncy Farms' is known to have escaped the Indian torches. When peace came and the Indians of the north – the Iroquois – retreated; some settlers returned and rebuilt their cabins; and new settlers came into the township.

Muncy Township ended up being basically a Quaker settlement. It is unique for the large number of limestone houses which the Quakers built. These homes are scattered far apart because each represents a farm of several hundred acres.

The Quakers who settled in early Muncy Township migrated from southeastern Pennsylvania, eastern New Jersey and northern Virginia. The Quakers were against slavery even though it was allowed in Pennsylvania; they were a strong peace-loving people who refused to participate in war; and the Quakers felt that women were equal to men for preaching the word of God.

The Webster, Ellis, Carpenter, Robb and Warner families settled here. Their limestone homes, built from the stone harvested from the local quarry, still stand.

The village that grew up in Muncy Township was once known as Goosetown, and presently, Pennsdale.



Before moving into 'Wolf Run' William and Mercy Ellis lived here, in the Ellis-Adlum House. Adlum came to Pennsdale in 1794 with impressive credentials - a major in the Provisional Army of the American Revolution, a brigadier general of the Pennsylvania Militia, and a highly regarded land surveyor. He built the stone portion, with woodwork touted as the finest example of 18th century woodwork north of Harrisburg.



Henry Shoemaker's Mill stood on Muncy Creek, between Muncy and Hughesville. He first built a sawmill to prepare suitable lumber for his mill's construction, and then in 1783 Shoemaker built a new grist mill on the same spot where Alward's mill once stood.



William Ellis came to the West Branch Valley as a land agent and general superintendent of Samuel Wallis's significant land interests in northcentral Pennsylvania. In 1792 William and his wife, Mercy, moved into a stone house that would be known as 'Wolf Run'. In William's will, he directed his eldest son to build Mercy a 'cottage' which over time would become known as Mount Equity.



Built circa 1807, and originally known as Bull Tavern, the House of Many Stairs was a store, a taproom and a "loafing place" for the area residents. Job Packer was one of its owners – a very eccentric man who was relieved of his Friends' membership because of his constant bickering with his neighbors.





*The House of Many Stairs in Muncy Township played a role in the Underground Railroad as a safe house. The Wolf Run House was another that harbored runaways.*



*This short stairway to a hidden room offered safety to runaway slaves until they moved on their journey north.*



Mercy and William Ellis' granddaughter, Anna Morris (Ellis) Holstein grew up in Muncy Township.

As a young lady, she began ministering to the wounded soldiers of the Civil War's Battle of Antietam. She also cared for the wounded after the battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. At the Battle of Gettysburg, she tended soldiers at the General Hospital, a third of whom were Confederates.

Anna Holstein stood on the platform in Gettysburg with President Lincoln when he gave his famous address. She was the most influential patron of Valley Forge National Park and also advocated for the restoration of Mount Vernon. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association is the forerunner, or birth, to all preservation efforts.



*When William Ellis died, he left a will in which he directed his executor to build his wife, Mercy, a 'cottage' – the stone portion is the original part of this home.*

*Mercy was a Quaker minister and often her ministering took her to New York and into Canada.*



*Anna Ellis Holstein purchased the flag which flew over the stage during President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.*



*This circa 1789 home features twelve over twelve double hung windows and four fireplaces.*

*John Adlum purchased the home from the Thomas Ellis estate. Adlum was a soldier in the Revolution, later a Major in the Provincial Army He was afterwards a Brigadier General in the Pennsylvania Militia. He was a friend of Dr. Joseph Priestley and took a deep interest in his chemical experiments. As a scientific agriculturalist he was highly successful. He lived here, on and off, until about 1810 and while here, Adlum perfected the growing of the "catawba" grape on his property. Being an expert in the art of wine manufacturing, he wrote the first book on the art of growing grapes in 1797.*



*After he left Lycoming County, Major Adlum managed a large vineyard near Georgetown known as "The Vineyards". It is said that Adlum and President Jefferson exchanged wine-making tips.*





*Village Road, Pennsdale – from the Friends Meeting House to the House of Many Stairs (HOMS) – by Jean (Rogers) Heincelman. Bruce Saunders, one of the past owners of the HOMS, donated this artwork to the Muncy Historical Society.*



*William 'Bill' Kennedy, a master craftsman, built rifles and pistols from raw materials*



*Lou Gansell was an expert wood carver known for his "eagle" carvings.*



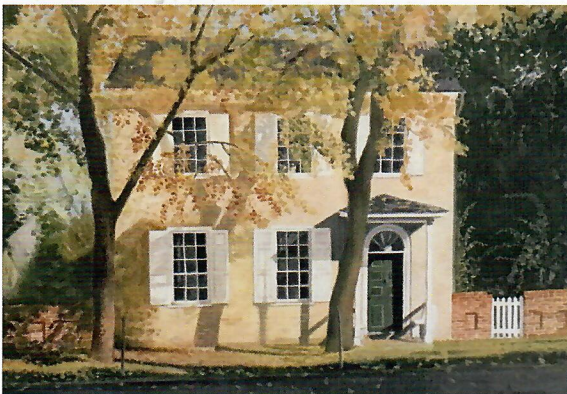
*William 'Bill' Thomas spent a number of years perfecting his inlaid wooden bowls.*



*A piece of pottery by Katherine Fetter*



*A watercolor by Lois (Blakeslee) Hopkins*



*Roscoe Manley Alexander painted the Rankin-Douglas home located on S. Main Street.*



*Severin Roesen, a German immigrant, settled in Pennsylvania in the 1860s. He is known for painting fruit and flowers in his still lifes.*



*Painting toleware was a hobby for Peg Daniels*