

(25) THE OLD LOG HOUSE in Terrytown

Believed to have been built in 1806 by some of the same workmen who erected houses at French Asylum. It gives us a good idea what the houses looked like at the French settlement. It is currently owned by Charles Welles III and is on the National Register.



The Old Log House in Terrytown

BACKGROUND

WYALUSING and 1752

Did you know that Wyalusing Township is older than Bradford County? How can that be, you say? Wyalusing was formed as the northern part of Northumberland County in 1780. When Luzerne County was created in 1787, Wyalusing Township remained but now as part of Luzerne County. When the new county of Ontario was established in 1810 and renamed Bradford in 1812, Wyalusing Township was greatly reduced in size as new townships were designated. The name Wyalusing is of Indian Origin, derived from M'chwihilusing, meaning "place of the hoary veteran," and appears in white man's records as early as the 1760s. The appellation was attached to the Indian village established in 1752 about a mile south of the Borough on Route 6. It is that Native American town to which the community traces back its origin.

In 1803, a mail route was established from Wilkes Barre to Tioga with John Hollenback as the first postmaster. John was a nephew of river trader Mattias Hollenback and established a shad fishery in 1797, a store in 1801.

THE REVOLUTION

Upon the outbreak of the Revolution, there were about 20 families in the Wyalusing area. As elsewhere in the country, the settlers were divided by the Revolution. Whigs, who favored independence, included the Welles, York, Robbins, Kingsley, Tyler, Dunn, Skiff, and Gaylord families. The Berry and Page families, among others, remained pro-British or Tories. Others, such as the Pawlings, cannot be identified in either camp. Rivalries between Connecticut and Pennsylvania settlers also influenced one's political orientation. The Wyalusing Valley was used as an invasion route by both sides, and numerous kidnappings and murders of those who attempted to remain at Wyalusing took place. Butler's Rangers and a pro-British Indian force passed through Wyalusing on the way to the Battle of Wyoming (near Wilkes-Barre) where they defeated and destroyed a Patriot force in 1778, killing hundreds. Many Wyalusing families participated in this battle. In reprisal, George Washington sent an expedition headed by General John Sullivan up the Susquehanna River Valley; on their march, which included camping at Wyalusing, Sullivan and his men killed and dispersed hundreds of Native Americans between the Wyoming Valley and the Finger Lakes region of New York State.

WAR IS OVER, SETTLERS RETURN

As the Revolutionary War came to a close, settlers returned to the Wyalusing Valley. Isaac Hancock started a tavern at the site of the Sugar Run Ferry. Henry Elliot and Revolutionary War hero, Joseph Elliot, settled in Merryall. The Ackley, Benjamin, and Bennett families settled north of the Wyalusing Creek. Joseph Stalford and his wife, Catherine Pawling, inherited the Pawling farm, at the site of the old Moravian Mission, which had been purchased by the Pawlings from Job Chillaway in 1775. Nathan Kingsley survived captivity with the Indians to return with his wife to their old home at Wyalusing.

CONNECTICUT LAND CLAIMS AND EARLY SETTLERS

The State of Connecticut, with its "sea to sea" charter, claimed this part of Pennsylvania. By 1773 and 1774, settlers from both states had begun to filter into the Wyalusing Valley. The Connecticut settlers were brought by the Susquehanna Company and formed into Springfield Township on the east side of the River. John and Sebastian Strobe and Isaac VanVankenburg were the first to do so. Other early Connecticut arrivals included James Wells, Robert Carr, and Amos York. Three Pawling brothers, Benjamin, Jesse, and William, occupied the site of Friedenschutten along with the Hancock (1776), Berry, and Page families. The Pawlings came from Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Additional people located in the Wyalusing area at this time include Nathan Kingsley, Isaiah Pasco, Miner Robbins, James Forsyth, Abraham Bowman, Ephraim Tyler, William Dunn, Benjamin and Stephen Skiff, Ambrose and Justus Gaylord Jr., Caleb Atherton, Jacob Burt, Josiah Dewey, Casper Hoover, John Segar, and Parker Wilson. Some had Pennsylvania land titles and others papers from Connecticut. The Pennsylvania and Connecticut land dispute, interrupted by the Revolution, continued until 1799 when a compromise law passed by the Pennsylvania Legislature ended most Connecticut opposition. Under its terms, Connecticut settlers paid a fee to receive a Pennsylvania title. These difficulties are also known as the Yankee Pennamite Wars.

EARLY TRAVELERS' COMMENTS

Frenchmen traveling to Asylum provided several written descriptions of Wyalusing: "There is not one Inn on the whole road." They were forced to stay with local residents. "We found in this house Indian corn for our horses, but neither oats nor hay and no milk for ourselves, nor even an egg. In the morning we halted at one Mr Gaylord's. All the dwelling houses are of the same sort. We pursued our journey to Asylum by Wyalusing, the latter is a considerable village, seated on a creek from which it takes its name." In 1804, an ornithologist named Wilson passed through Wyalusing and commented: "Rich fenceless pastures of rank luxuriant grass with huge towering walnuts. Oer wretched huts that lie below."

According to pastor David Craft, in 1795 there were 45-50 families within the Wyalusing area with 8000 acres assessed but only about 20 percent cultivated. The buildings were log, until the first sawmills were established. In 1801, John Hollenback floated lumber from Town's mill on the creek and may have housed passengers overnight.

Wyalusing Community Corporation

PO Box 813 • 121 Main Street • Wyalusing, PA 18853



Funded by The Bradford County Room Tax



WYALUSING HISTORY TRAIL: Old Wyalusing Historical Sites



Wyalusing Community Corporation

PO Box 813 • 121 Main Street • Wyalusing, PA 18853
570-746-4922 • wchamber@epix.net • www.wyalusing.net

