

Crescent Township's History

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History of Crescent Township

NOTICE

CRESCENT TOWNSHIP IS SEARCHING FOR A PERSON OR PERSONS INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING TO BECOME THE "TOWNSHIP HISTORIAN" THIS PERSON(S) WOULD MAINTAIN HISTORICAL ITEMS, DOCUMENTS, PICTURES ETC. ANYONE INTERESTED CAN CONTACT THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER AT 724-457-8100 DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS MONDAY TO FRIDAY.

The founding of what was to become Crescent Township on the Ohio River dates back to 1784-1785, when warrants were recorded for "Fortune", Limerick" and "Strabane" riverfront properties. An old English law required that any property sold must be named. Each property consisted of 400 acres. The area was settled by Revolutionary War soldiers who bought their land from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

A son of German emigrants, Peter Shouse came here with his family in 1822 after he had built boats in Monongahela and Pittsburgh, and after he had served in Ohio during the War of 1812. Intending to operate his own boatyard, he purchased "Limerick Landing", which was the location of a pool in the Ohio River approximately 20 feet deep. This spot provided an exceptional location for launching new boats. The boatyard brought many workers who cut timber from the thick virgin forests covering nearby hillsides.

Limerick Landing and the boatyard were incorporated into Shousetown when that new community was established by Peter Shouse, and the entire area was part of Moon Township, one of the first seven townships designated when Allegheny County was formed in 1788. Muddy roads made getting to the polls in Moon Township difficult, so a petition was prepared, asking that the Quarter Session Court in Allegheny County establish a separate Township. This was granted in 1855, and the new municipality was named "Crescent" because it was a small part of Moon.

The steamboat hulls built and launched at Shousetown by Peter Shouse and later boatyard owners were towed up the shallow Ohio River to Pittsburgh for rigging and furnishing before going into service. Many became famous, such as the "Buckeye State", which broke the speed record going from Cincinnati to Pittsburgh in 43 hours in 1850 - - a record that still stands.

The first home ports of these boats varied - ten went to New Orleans: the "Freeman Rawden" went to New York City for service between there and Washington D.C. The "Chamois" went to Apalachicola, Fl., nine went to St. Louis, Mo. and 76 originally were assigned to Pittsburgh. Some saw action in the Civil War after conversion to gun boats by the Federal government. A total of 102 boats were launched from Shousetown - the grand finale was the 1727 ton "Great

Republic", the biggest ship built there, constructed shortly before the boatyard was closed.

Railroad service on the northeast side of the Ohio River tied Pittsburgh to Sewickleyville (Leetsdale) and points west in 1856. On the southwest side of the river, train service from Pittsburgh to Beaver Falls started in 1879. A railroad station, a station agent and railroad siding eventually were added at Crescent. Commuting trains ran from Beaver Falls to Pittsburgh. Since the school in Crescent went only to eighth grade, high school students had their choice of attending Ambridge, Aliquippa or Coraopolis high schools. Transportation was at their own expense, with many using a train to Coraopolis or taking a commercial bus to Ambridge or Aliquippa. Going to Coraopolis on the train was a common Saturday occurrence - to shop, eat out or attend a movie.

Before the train came through Shousetown, a need to transport passengers, mail and freight across the river caused the establishment in 1845 of ferry service connecting the community to Sewickleyville from Ferry Street. A bridge was built in Sewickley in 1911 and when one was built in Ambridge in 1929, the ferry service ended.

Another thriving business, established in 1894, was a brickyard at Briggston on the main line of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad, situated about 100 feet back from the Ohio River, near the current location of Shouse Park. Owned by Pittsburgh Brick Company, the business employed 22 men and boys and produced about 30,000 bricks daily, using clay and shale found at the site.

Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh, who was named Commander of the Western Department in 1778, supervised the construction of a military supply road from Fort Pitt in Pittsburgh to Fort McIntosh in what is today Beaver County, along a ridge on the south side of the Ohio River. Colonel Daniel Brodhead succeeded to the command of Fort McIntosh in 1779, and the road was named after him. Brodhead Road serves as a boundary of Crescent Township. Along with the Ohio River and the railroad, it brought settlers to the area as well as pioneers passing through on their way to new lives in the West.

The town formerly called "Wireton" was originally named "Anderson Road", is located along the south side of the Ohio River, adjacent to the Beaver County line. Its major industry was the Phillips Power Station of Duquesne Light, now Orion Power. The town formerly had a railroad station and post office. These business are now located along State Route 51 between Crescent and South Heights.

Church worship in Crescent started in 1845 in a simple white frame building on High Street that was used by all denominations. This was destroyed by fire, but in 1856 but in early 1857 a new church once again for the use of all, and was dedicated on the same site occupied. Crescent's first Post Office was established in 1851, and a Civic Club started in 1922.

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