

“Cranberry Township: A History of Our Community,” Cranberry Historical Society, 1989

Chapter 1: Indians Once Lived Here

Imagine a land of rolling hills covered with virgin forests. Among those hills, visualize a meandering stream flowing through marshes and brushy bottomlands. There are no roads or homes. No schools, no playgrounds, no stores. Just a winding stream bordered by marshy thickets extending back to sloping hills covered with dense forests. That's what Cranberry Township was like for thousands of years before Christopher Columbus discovered America. It remained that way for over three hundred years.

The first people to come here were Indians, or Native Americans. They came to hunt and fish along Brush Creek. They hunted for beaver, muskrat, raccoon and wild ducks. In the surrounding hills they hunted for deer, bear and wild turkey. The Indians used the hides of deer, bear, beaver, fox, muskrat and raccoon for clothing and blankets. They used deer antlers for tools. They used wild turkey feathers for ornaments.

The Indians gathered and ate many kinds of wild plants and roots. They ate walnuts and hickory nuts, wild grapes and blackberries. In marshy areas, or bogs, along Brush Creek they gathered wild cranberries. They mashed the cranberries in dried venison, or deer meat, to make meat patties they called pemmican. They used cranberry juice as a dye.

There is no evidence that the Indians had any permanent villages in Cranberry Township. They came to fish and hunt when they depleted the supply of fish and game close to their home villages. Year after year, they came to establish hunting camps to gather food to take back to their villages. They gathered supplies of edible roots and plants. They dried and smoked fish and meat for use during the winter months when food was less plentiful.

One of their hunting camps was located along Glen Eden Road not far from Brush Creek. We know that because many Indian arrowheads, spear points, tools and other artifacts have been found there. The Indians also came through Cranberry Township while traveling between their villages in Allegheny, Beaver and Lawrence Counties and elsewhere in Butler County.

One of those villages was the Delaware Indian town of Kuskusky where New Castle is today. When traveling from the forks of the Ohio (now Pittsburgh) to Kuskusky (New Castle) the Indians traveled on the Kuskusky trail. Marshall Road was originally a section of the Kuskusky trail. It was later developed into the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road or Perry Highway.

Another important Indian village was the Seneca Indian settlement of Venango. It was located at the mouth of the French Creek on the Allegheny River, about 50 miles north of Cranberry Township, where the town of Franklin is today.

From Venango, the Indians could travel by canoe down the Allegheny River to visit and trade with Indians in downriver communities. One of those downriver villages was a Delaware Indian town called Shannopintown. It was located where Lawrenceville is today, about three miles upriver from downtown Pittsburgh.

Because the Allegheny is a swift, rocky river, the Indians could not easily return by canoe to their home village. Also, the Allegheny is such a winding river that the distance from Shannopintown back to Venango is much longer than a direct overland hike through the forests. So the Indians used a footpath, the Venango trail, to walk back to Venango.

The Venango trail began on the north bank of the Allegheny River opposite Shannopintown (Lawrenceville). It went downriver to where the Sixth Street Bridge is today. There it turned north through West View, Perrysville and Wexford. From Wexford the trail continued north through Cranberry Township, Evans City, Prospect and Moraine State Park to Franklin, the site of Venango.

In 1796 the Venango trail was widened to become the first wagon road leading north from Pittsburgh. It was called the Franklin Road because it was the road from Pittsburgh to Franklin. The Franklin Road provided wagon access for early settlers seeking land in the region north of Pittsburgh.

As more and more settlers moved into Western Pennsylvania, there was a greater clash of cultures, or lifestyles, between them and the Indians. The early settlers wanted to clear land to make homes, plant crops and graze their cattle. The Indians wanted to keep the land as it had always been for hunting and fishing. This conflict of interest caused the Indians to attack the settlers and their families.

When entire tribes of Indians joined together to make war on the settlers, army troops were brought in to put down the uprising. Fighting waged back and forth across the border between Pennsylvania and Ohio. In 1794, General Anthony Wayne defeated the Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, where Toledo, Ohio is today. The government then purchased the land from the Indians, opening the region for peaceful settlement. Many of the Indians moved to the midwest. Some of them stayed and adapted to a new way of life.

Wolves and bears disappeared many years ago. But placenames such as Wolf Run and Wolf Run Road as well as Bear Run and Bear Run Road remind us of the times when they roamed our hills. Many of the other animals the Indians hunted are still found in Cranberry Township. They include deer, fox, squirrel, muskrat, rabbit, raccoon and opossum. There are even a few ruffed grouse and wild turkey.

Today, we find many links between past and present to remind us of the times when the Indians came here to hunt and fish. Cranberry Township is still a land of rolling hills. Many of the hills are covered with woodlands. Some of the largest oak trees are between 200 and 250 years old. That means they were growing when the first settlers arrived in the 1790s and early 1800s. Brush Creek still meanders through the southwest part of the township. In places its banks are still marshy and brush-covered.

When we ride or hike along the Franklin Road, we can be very sure we are traveling in the footsteps of the Indians and early settlers who came through Cranberry

Township on the Venango Trail. The placename is preserved by the nearby Venango Trail Golf Club. Seneca Valley High School is named for the Seneca Indians who fished and hunted along the Connoquenessing Creek. Varsity sports teams are called the Raiders because the Indians once made raids on the white settlers. For those who know where to look, Indian arrowheads and other artifacts still await discovery...right here in Cranberry Township!

Chapter 2: George Washington's Remarkable Journey

Late on the night of December 27, 1753, two men trudged wearily through the snowy forests in what is now Cranberry Township. They had been hiking steadily since dawn. Earlier that day, they narrowly escaped death when an Indian took a shot at them. Fearful of another attack, they were determined to put as much distance as possible between them and any hostile pursuers.

The older of the two men, Christopher Gist, was a frontier scout. The other was a 21-year-old Major in the Virginia militia. In his knapsack, the young officer was carrying a message that was destined to change the course of history. His name was George Washington.

For Washington, the journey had begun two months earlier when he was summoned to the Governor's mansion in Williamsburg, Virginia. There, Robert Dinwiddie, Governor of the Virginia territory, handed him a letter to take to the commander of French forces in Pennsylvania.

The French were then in possession of Canada. They also had a colony in Louisiana. Governor Dinwiddie had learned that French fur traders and soldiers were coming across Lake Erie into Pennsylvania. They were building forts along French Creek, a tributary of the upper Allegheny River.

If the French continued moving south down the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers to the Mississippi River, they would link their Canadian provinces with their Louisiana colony. That would give them control of America's heartland. Great Britain and its American colonies would be confined to the Atlantic coast, blocked from westward expansion.

The letter Governor Dinwiddie handed to George Washington informed the French that they were intruding into British-claimed territory. It ordered them to withdraw from northwestern Pennsylvania.

Setting out on horseback, Washington rode to Frederick, Maryland. There he persuaded Jacob Van Braam to accompany him as a French interpreter. The two men then proceeded to a frontier outpost established by Christopher Gist. Two years earlier, Gist had explored the upper Ohio River Valley for the Ohio Company, an English trading company. He knew the way.

Washington and Van Braam met with Gist at his outpost at the mouth of Wills Creek on the Potomac River, where Cumberland, Maryland is today. Washington explained the purpose of his mission. On November 13, 1753, Christopher Gist and four

frontiersmen joined Washington and Van Braam on their journey into the wilderness. The expedition had now grown to a total of seven men.

One week later they reached a trading post on the mouth of Turtle Creek on the Monongahela River, nine miles upriver from the forks of the Ohio River. There, they were greeted by John Frazier. Earlier, Frazier had operated a trading post at their destination, the Indian village of Venango. It was located at the mouth of the French Creek on the Allegheny River, where the town of Franklin is today. But he was forced to move south to his new location when he learned that the French were coming.

John Frazier told them everything he knew about the rugged mountain wilderness they would be entering. He also arranged to have canoes sent downriver to meet them at the forks of the Ohio.

Continuing on horseback, Washington and his expedition proceeded to the forks of the Ohio River, where downtown Pittsburgh is today. While awaiting the canoes, Washington observed that the forks of the Ohio would make an ideal location for a fort. Cannons placed at that location would control any boats coming down the rivers.

When the canoes arrived, Washington and his men crossed the mouth of the Allegheny River. Their horses swam along behind them. That night they made camp about where Three Rivers Stadium is today.

The next day, they rode along the Ohio River to the Indian village of Logstown. It was located two miles north of Ambridge. Four Indians agreed to join them to act as guides for the rest of the trip.

On November 30 they left Logstown and rode northeast to reach the Venango Trail leading to Venango. Their route took them through what are now Zelienople, Harmony and Evans City. There, they turned north on the Venango Trail through Prospect and Moraine State Park to present day Route 8, and up Route 8 to Franklin.

They arrived in Venango on December 6. The French soldiers who met them were very courteous. They told Washington and Gist that their commanding officer wasn't there. He was then at French Fort LeBoeuf, 40 miles upriver on French Creek. Several French soldiers agreed to escort them to Fort LeBoeuf, where the town of Waterford is today in Erie County.

Six days later, on December 12, Washington finally arrived at Fort LeBoeuf. He presented the letter from Governor Dinwiddie to the French commanding officer, Legardeur de St. Pierre. Again he was treated with courtesy. He was given a reply to take back to Governor Dinwiddie. The French provided Washington and his men with canoes and soldiers to escort them down French Creek to Venango.

During his stay at Fort LeBoeuf, Washington saw many dugout canoes lined up along the riverbank in readiness for an invasion. From his conversations with French soldiers, he knew that the French had no intention of withdrawing. So when he arrived back in Venango on December 22, he realized the urgency of the message he was taking to Governor Dinwiddie.

It was now mid-winter. The forests were covered with snow. They couldn't carry enough food to feed their horses. And there was no grass for the horses to graze on. Two men could travel faster than a party of seven men accompanied by Indians.

On December 26, Washington and Gist set out alone, on foot, leaving the others to return later.

Through snow and bitter cold, they retraced their route down the Venango Indian Trail along what is now Route 8 south of Franklin. That night, they made camp in an abandoned Indian cabin. The next day they passed through an Indian village called Murderingtown about two miles east of where Evans City is today.

There they met an Indian who offered to guide them. But when they followed the Indian into a clearing in the forest, the Indian turned and shot at him with his musket. While the Indian was reloading his musket, they took him captive and left the trail until nightfall. Gist wanted to kill the Indian, but Washington spared his life and set him free.

That night, they resumed their hike down the Venango Trail along what is now the Franklin Road in Cranberry Township. By daybreak, they were at the head of Pine Creek south of Wexford. They followed Pine Creek through what is now North Park. That night they camped at the mouth Pine Creek on the Allegheny River, now Etna.

The next day they hiked two miles downriver and built a log raft. While crossing the river, Washington used a tree branch to push the raft free from flowing ice. He lost his balance and fell overboard into the freezing water, but he saved himself by grabbing onto the raft. Gist managed to beach the raft on a small rocky island. There they gathered driftwood, built a fire, and spent the night. By morning, the river had frozen solid. So they walked across to the opposite side and hiked back to John Frazier's trading post at the mouth of Turtle Creek on the Monongahela River.

After walking about 80 miles in snow and bitter cold, they arrived back at John Frazier's camp. There they rested and secured horses for the rest of their trip. On New Year's Day, January 1, 1754, they said farewell to John Frazier and headed back to Christopher Gist's outpost.

They were nearly there when they met a party of soldiers and workmen headed for the forks of the Ohio. They were on their way to build a British fort. After reaching Gist's outpost, Washington continued on to Williamsburg with the reply message for Governor Dinwiddie. But the message arrived too late to stop the French invasion.

Work on the fort began in the spring of 1754. It was half-completed when the French came down the Allegheny River and captured it. They named it Fort Duquesne. It remained under French control for four years.

In November 1758 British General John Forbes and George Washington, by then a Colonel in the Virginia militia, led an army to recapture the fort. They named it Fort Pitt. The French retreated back to Canada.

Great Britain and its American colonies thus won the French and Indian War. But the war was very costly to the British. To recover part of the cost of financing the war,

England began imposing new taxes on its American colonies. Those taxes led to the Boston tea party, the battles of Lexington and Concord, and the outbreak of the American Revolution.

George Washington's journey in 1753 was part of a chain of events that resulted in America's independence.

Today we can find many links to remind us of Washington's remarkable journey. Two miles east of Evans City on Route 68 is a monument marking the area where the Indian took a shot at Washington and Gist on their return from Venango. The remains of the fort in the forks of the Ohio may be seen in Pittsburgh's Point State Park.

Between Etna and downtown Pittsburgh, the Washington Cross (40th Street) Bridge spans the Allegheny River as the spot where Washington and Gist crossed over. In Waterford, Erie County, we can visit the Fort LeBoeuf museum and attend a color slide program about Washington's journey. Directly across the street in a grassy parklet is a life-sized statue of George Washington. The statue shows him in the act of presenting his letter from Governor Dinwiddie to the French commander.

The Venango Indian Trail traveled by George Washington and Christopher Gist was later developed into the first wagon road pushed north from Pittsburgh. School buses carrying students to and from school every day drive on and across that road. It's a narrow, winding road, exactly what one might expect of a road laid out along the route of an Indian trail. We know it today as the Franklin Road right here in Cranberry Township.

Chapter 3: Why Cranberry Township is Called Cranberry Township

We live in Cranberry Township in Butler County, Pennsylvania. A county is a division of government serving the people just between the community and the state level. Just as the United States is divided into states, most of the states are divided into counties, and most of the counties are divided into cities, boroughs and townships.

County governments issue marriage licenses and dog licenses. They record important documents such as property deeds. Butler County also operates courts and jails. The county health department issues restaurant permits and inspects restaurants for sanitation. The City of Butler is the county seat (like a capital) of Butler County.

Many years ago Pennsylvania had far fewer counties than the 67 counties which make up our state today. But each county was much larger. For example, all of Pennsylvania to the north and west of the Allegheny and Ohio rivers was once in Allegheny County.

In 1800 the area comprising Butler County was partitioned (set apart) from Allegheny County and divided into four townships. The township in the southwest

corner (where we live) was named Connoquenessing Township, so called for the Connoquenessing Creek.

In 1804 Butler County was officially designated as a county, and the original four townships were divided into 13. Some of those townships were named for prominent citizens or for physical features such as streams flowing through them. Our township was named Cranberry Township for the wild cranberries then growing along Brush Creek. In 1854 the 13 townships were further divided into the present 33 townships.

Cranberries grow in bogs. A bog is a name for soft, moist, spongy soil, such as a swamp or marsh. Other plants found in bogs, or swamps, include cattails, ferns and mosses. Cranberries grow on vines which spread along the ground. The berries turn red when they ripen in the fall. Wild cranberries are like the ones we buy in stores except they are smaller.

When the early settlers arrived in the 1790s they found wild cranberries growing along Brush Creek. But cranberries were not unique to this area. Years earlier, when the Pilgrims arrived in America, they found cranberries growing in New England. Cranberries are said to have been among the foods eaten at the first Thanksgiving feast in 1621. As people moved inland, they continued to find cranberries growing in low-lying, marshy areas. Because cranberries prefer a cool, moist climate, they are rarely found south of here.

During the 1800s, the early settlers dug ditches to drain many of the marshy areas. They then used the land to plant crops and graze their cattle. The land where Fernway is today was once a swamp. It was later a cornfield. Still later it became a housing development. Gradually, as the marshlands were drained for farmland, the wild cranberries lost much of their habitat. Habitat is a place where plants, birds and animals grow and live naturally.

No one living today remembers when cranberries were still growing in Cranberry Township. But some older people recall being told by their parents and grandparents about seeing cranberries growing here. From those recollections, we know that cranberries were growing here in the 1860s and 1870s. But they seem to have disappeared by about 1900. What might have happened?

No one knows for sure. But we do know that cranberries prefer a cool, moist climate. And 1884 was one of the hottest, driest years on record. Corn shriveled in parched fields. Streams dried up and wells went dry. Vegetation in marshy areas withered as the soil lost its moisture. It is likely that the last of the cranberries died out during the drought and heat wave of 1884.

Early in 1989 members of the Cranberry Township Historical Society decided to try to bring cranberries back to Cranberry Township. They received permission to plant cranberries in a marshy, undeveloped area of Cranberry Community Park. The University of Massachusetts sent a supply of cranberry cuttings.

Students from Haine and Rowan schools helped cut away the brushy thickets to clear the area. Many people volunteered to plant the cranberry cuttings in 1989, 1990 and 1991. By the summer of 1991, many of the plants were in blossom and new growth was spreading. The plants are watered during the dry summer months to keep them healthy and growing.

Today cranberries are back in Cranberry Township. No one knows if they will continue to grow here. The recreated cranberry bog is still in experimental stages. With good care and the cooperation of Mother Nature, there's a good chance that Cranberry Township will have cranberries again for many years.

Chapter 4: The Early Settlers

Look at a map of Cranberry Township. You will find roads with names like Garvin, Vandivort, Goehring, Rowan and Marshall. They are named for early settlers who came to the township in the 1790s and early 1800s.

The early settlers were much like the people who are still coming to Cranberry Township today, except they were farmers. Most of them were young people and young married couples. They came to Cranberry Township to buy land for homesites and farming.

Land was readily available. Pennsylvania was trying to attract settlers into the wilderness northwest of the Allegheny River. Pennsylvania was also looking for ways to redeem the certificates it issued to its Revolutionary War militiamen. It gave them certificates to compensate them because their army pay had depreciated (lost much of its value).

So the state offered land in exchange for the certificates. The land was known as Depreciation land. Some Revolutionary War veterans redeemed their certificates for land. But many veterans sold their certificates to other people. Those people exchanged the certificates for land. They then sold the land at a profit.

Most of the early settlers came through Pittsburgh. They came through Pittsburgh to reach the only wagon road leading to northwestern Pennsylvania. It was the same road we know today as the Franklin Road. Earlier it had been the Venango Indian trail. By 1795, work was underway to widen the trail so horses and wagons could get through. Pittsburgh at that time was a frontier village. It had about 500 buildings, mostly log cabins, and a population of under 1,000. There were no bridges across Pittsburgh's rivers. Ferryboat operators charged fees to take travelers across the rivers. The flatbed raft ferryboats also transported horses, cattle and wagons.

On the north bank of the Allegheny River, the Franklin Road extended into a vast wilderness. Bear and wolves still roamed the hills. Most of the Indians had moved westward. Other Indians remained to hunt, fish and trade with the settlers.

In August 1797 John Reynolds, then age 15, accompanied his father on a trip on horseback from Pittsburgh to Franklin seeking land for a new home. An account of that journey through what is now Cranberry Township is recorded in his autobiography:

...Immediately after crossing the Allegheny River we were in the unbroken forest. Mr. James Robinson was then, I think, the only settler in what is now Allegheny City (North Side). He lived in a log cabin on the bank of the river. Ascending the hill from the river (along Franklin Road) we met several

persons on foot, each with a rifle and tomahawk; and as we were now in the great wilderness extending to Lake Erie my fears of wild beasts were excited. We halted at the cabin of a new settler, nine miles from Fort Pitt, to eat our breakfast and feed the horses. The young wife of the settler was cooking at a fire outside the cabin, and I took the opportunity to ask her if the panthers, wolves, etc. were numerous and dangerous. She replied, there were some panthers and many wolves, and that she was surprised we had no guns with us. Her words did not quiet my fears.

Like John Reynolds, who eventually acquired land on Cherrytree Run, Venango County, relatively few northbound travelers settled in Cranberry Township. Many of them acquired land in northern Allegheny County. They cleared land and made homes in Pine, McCandless and Marshall townships. Others pushed farther north into northern Butler County, Mercer, Lawrence and Venango counties.

But some found what they were looking for in the fertile rolling hill country of Cranberry Township. Matthew Graham was 16 years old when he came to Cranberry Township in 1796. He was accompanied by his brother William, age 13. They were wolf bounty hunters. The state paid them to hunt wolves because the wolves killed sheep, pigs and young cattle.

Matthew Graham's father, a Scot immigrant, had died when Matthew was six years old. The year after his father died, his mother had been cheated out of their land in the McKeesport area. So the young Graham brothers road pack horses to Cranberry Township to buy land.

They each bought 200 acres. Their mother joined them the following year. Matthew built a log cabin on an old Indian trail. He offered food and shelter to teamsters, or men who drove horse-drawn freight wagons hauling supplies. He cleared land and became a farmer. In 1801 Matthew married Mary Freeman. In 1813 he built the Black Bear tavern. It became widely known as a lodging place for travelers.

Matthew Graham became successful as a builder as well as a farmer and innkeeper. In 1831 he built a sawmill. Two years later he built a gristmill where farmers could bring grain to be ground into flour. The grist mill was run by John Vandivort, who married Matthew Graham's daughter, Hester.

In 1839 Matthew Graham helped build a brick church to replace an earlier log church to accommodate the Plains Church congregation. Between 1830 and 1840 he built five brick homes on what is now Glen Eden Road. Four of those homes are still standing today.

Matthew Graham was a founder of the Cranberry Township school system. Graham School Road is named for a school he helped open. He died in 1850. His wife Mary died in 1866. They are buried in Plains Church cemetery.

Another early settler was Samuel Duncan. Like Matthew Graham, he also arrived in 1796. Samuel Duncan was born in Carlisle, not far from Harrisburg, where he became an Indian trader. He was 27 when he moved to Cranberry Township. He purchased land from a Revolutionary War general. He cleared land and became a farmer. He built a distillery along Brush Creek to make corn and grain into whiskey.

In 1813 he was recommended for a license to open a tavern, but there is no evidence he ever operated one.

Samuel Duncan married Nancy Boggs, whose father operated a ferry across the Allegheny River. They had six children. Samuel Duncan died in 1821.

Another early settler was Benjamin Garvin. In 1800 Garvin came to Cranberry Township from Virginia. He was accompanied by his wife and 10 young children. He acquired 400 acres of land. Like Matthew Graham, he opened a log cabin tavern to provide food and shelter to travelers. He was issued a tavern license in 1805. In 1811 his son David took charge of the tavern. During the 1820s the original log cabin tavern was replaced by a much larger two-story brick home. David Garvin operated the home as a tavern, stagecoach inn and boarding house. It is still standing today.

Before his death, Benjamin Garvin divided his land among his children. Their descendants are still living in the area today. Garvin Road is named for the Garvin family. One of Benjamin Garvin's sons donated the land on which a schoolhouse is built.

Some of Cranberry Township's other early settlers were the Johnstons, Henrys, Vandivorts, Davises, Ramseys, Goehring's, Stouts, Crofts, Marshalls, Rowans, Cooksons, Meeders and Samples. Space does not permit us to relate their individual family histories. But most of the early settlers had several things in common.

Most of them had large families ranging from six to ten or more children. Their children tended to marry among neighboring families. Most of them were farmers. Some of them started small businesses. They were all very proud of Cranberry Township. They were interested in education and in creating a better life for their children and grandchildren. Many of them are buried in cemeteries at Plains Church and Dutilh Church.

The early settlers came into an untamed wilderness. They cleared land, built homes, and established farms. They built roads, churches and schools. They faced many hardships and dangers. They bequeathed to their children, and to future generations, the legacy (inheritance) that today is Cranberry Township.

Chapter 5: Long Cabin Days...Pioneer Life

When the early settlers arrived in Cranberry Township their first need was for shelter. So the men cut down trees to build log cabins. The logs were cut to the proper lengths. The bark was stripped off for use as roofing shingles. The logs were then laid atop another and fitted into notches at the corners. Gaps between the logs were filled in with clay or mud.

Doors, floors and roofing were made of logs split lengthwise. Doors were hung on leather hinges. Most log cabins were one-room buildings with a fireplace and chimney erected at one end. They often had a ladder leading to an upper level loft used for sleeping and storage.

Log houses were located near a spring or brook to provide water for drinking, cooking and washing. If the spring or brook went dry during the summer months, the men dug a well. Several log houses are still standing in Cranberry Township. Some of them are no longer recognizable as log houses because the outside walls were later covered over with flatboard siding.

Since household goods had to be hauled in by horse and wagon, most log cabins were sparsely furnished. Tables, chairs, benches and bed frames were handmade. Carpets, pictures and mirrors were rare.

As soon as the log house was finished, a family's next need was for a barn to shelter and care for the horses and cattle. The earliest log barns were very primitive. But as quickly as local sawmills began operating, the barns became much larger. These timber-framed, flatboard-sided barns were usually built into a hillside at one end. They had upper and lower levels.

Barn raisings were often a cooperative effort. Neighboring families came from miles around to help with the work. Barn raisings were also social events. They gave people an opportunity to meet their neighbors, exchange news and share food.

While working on their log cabins and barns, the men and older boys cleared land for farming. Corn and wheat were the main crops. The women and younger children planted vegetable gardens. Families who had arrived earlier shared food with newcomers awaiting their first harvest. The early settlers also supplemented their diet with wild game, berries, nuts, and other edible wild foods.

As quickly as families completed homes and barns, they began making improvements. Over the years a typical homestead grew into a cluster of buildings. These included an outhouse (or toilet), washhouse, springhouse, pig pen, corn cribs and wagon shed.

When families outgrew their one-room log houses they either made additions or built larger homes. The larger homes were mostly two-story frame homes of four to eight rooms. Brick homes began appearing in the 1820s and 1830s. They were built of brick made from local clay. The original log cabins were then converted to smokehouses or summer kitchens.

In their log cabins the women cooked over open fireplaces. Cast iron kettles suspended from chimney hooks were swung over the fire or set in hot coals. By the mid-1830s, when families were moving into larger frame and brick homes, waist-high cookstoves had become available. They relieved the drudgery of constantly stooping over an open-hearth fireplace.

Life for the early settlers was closely attuned to the seasonal rhythm of agriculture: spring plowing and planting, cattle breeding, harvesting, slaughtering and butchering, smoking and preserving food...all in an endless cycle. Chores such as corn husking and quilting were used as the basis for social gatherings.

Food

The food people ate was considerably different from the varied diet we enjoy today. Except for wild game such as venison, fresh meat was available only at slaughtering time, usually in November. Chicken, duck, goose and turkey were served on special occasions, but only when surplus poultry was available. At other times people ate smoked or salted beef and pork (hams and slab bacon).

Fresh fruits and vegetables were available on a seasonal basis. During the rest of the year people ate dried food such as dried corn, beans, peas and apples. Potatoes, onions, carrots, turnips and beets were stored in root cellars, protected from freezing and spoilage under piles of straw.

Dried corn was used to make cornbread and cornmeal mush. It was also mixed with meat, potatoes, onion and cabbage to make stew.

Families also dined on eggs, cheese and homemade bread. Bread was baked in a Dutch oven. A Dutch oven was a cast iron pot which was placed on hot coals, with more hot coals placed on the lid to apply heat from both top and bottom.

People drank milk from a glass or cup as we do today. But more often they took milk in a bowl with cornmeal mush, or sopped brown bread into the milk. The early settlers and their families drank a lot of water, much more than we do today. Farmers going to work in the fields often took along a jug of spring water.

Wild bee honey and maple sugar were the common household sweeteners until cane sugar became more readily available. Wild chicory was brewed into a coffee substitute. Regular coffee, tea and spices were not plentiful until the first stores began opening in the 1830s.

Salt was gathered in small amounts at salt licks, or places where salt formations outcropped on the surface. By 1800 barrels of salt were being shipped from western New York State to Erie. From Erie the salt was shipped down French Creek and the Allegheny River to Pittsburgh, where it was sold to country storekeepers supplying settlers throughout the region.

Clothing

Many people imagine that the early settlers wore coonskin caps, fringed buckskin hunting jackets and deerskin trousers and resembled pictures of Daniel Boone or Davy Crockett. And that may well have been true of the frontiersman of Kentucky, Tennessee and the early west. But very few of the early settlers of Cranberry ever dressed that way.

Deerskin was readily available, but it became stiff and cold when it was wet. It was uncomfortable when worn next to the skin. Besides, Cranberry Township's early settlers associated deerskin clothing with Indian attire; and they regarded the Indians as primitive and unsophisticated.

Farm families of the early 1800s wore homespun clothing. Women grew flax plants and used spinning wheels to twist the flax fibers into yarn. The yarn was then woven on a loom into linen fabric. Sheep's wool was also spun into yarn and woven into cloth. A favorite material for making clothing was linsey-woolsey, a homemade

material of part linen and part wool. The coarse-textured, home-dyed cloth was used to make shirts, trousers, dresses, petticoats, coats and jackets. Because of the time and labor required to make clothing, most people didn't have large wardrobes. Most rural housewives owned only three dresses, or gowns--two for everyday wear and a "dressy" dress to attend church and social functions. Men and boys often wore shirts, trousers and jackets made of towcloth, or coarse linen made from the shortest fibers of flax.

Footwear was scarce and expensive. Most children and many adults went barefoot except in cold weather or when attending church or social events. It was commonplace to see men plowing their fields and women hoeing their gardens in their bare feet.

By the mid-1830s New England mills and factories were producing machine-made cotton fabrics and ready-made footwear. By that time Cranberry Township had several stores offering a variety of merchandise. Storekeepers regularly made trips to Pittsburgh and returned with wagonloads of fabric, clothing, boots and shoes, kitchen utensils, coffee, tea, salt and spices.

Then as now, styles were constantly changing. Men wore their hair short and were clean shaven until the 1850s when beards and sideburns came into fashion. By the early 1900s people could order the latest fashions from the Sears Roebuck catalog. After 1908 they could ride down the Harmony Line railway to shop in downtown Pittsburgh.

Health Care

One of the harsh realities of life in the 1800s was the high death rate among infants and young children from illnesses, respiratory infections and inadequate medical care. Among newborns, one infant in every six or seven did not survive the first year. After age one, one child of every four or five did not live to adulthood.

Even among adults, epidemics were common and doctors were few, especially in rural areas such as Cranberry Township. Many people suffered from illnesses for which there were no known cures except for the herbal medicine lore practiced by the Indians. Commonly-used remedies were the roots of sassafras, ginseng and wild ginger. Sassafras was either chewed or brewed into tea to treat arthritis, dysentery, stomach disorders and nervousness. Whiskey and brandy were the most widely used pain relievers.

By the early 1900s a wide variety of tonics, homeopathic remedies and patent medicines were available in stores and by mail order through the Sears Roebuck catalog. They were used to treat common colds, sore throat, constipation, skin problems, insomnia, stomach disorders and loss of appetite. Most of the tonics had a high alcoholic content.

People who lived in sparsely-settled rural areas were mostly spared from tuberculosis, typhoid and cholera. But those who were hurt in farm accidents ran a high risk of tetanus or complications. Appendicitis was often fatal.

People born with birth defects such as harelip, cleft palate, club foot, bone malformations and eye problems learned to live with their conditions. There were no corrective treatments for stuttering, crosseye, protruding, or irregular teeth and many disorders which are routinely treated today.

Many people suffered from decaying or rotting teeth. Extraction (pulling the teeth) was the only remedy. Toothbrushes were available in the stores by the 1830s. But they were not widely used until dental hygiene was taught in schools.

Social Occasions

The early settlers of Cranberry Township lived in relative isolation from the rest of the world. They worked from dawn to dusk, and had little opportunity for socializing. Visiting with neighbors was often their own social contact.

After the first churches were built, attending Sunday services provided opportunities to meet with friends and relatives. Plains Church dates to 1806 when services were held in a tent. Weddings, christenings and funerals were occasions for social gatherings.

Families often gathered for cooperative labor. Activities included corn husking, apple paring, barn raisings and pulling stumps from fields. Women held sewing bees and quilting parties. During the snowy winter months, people often hitched their horses to sleighs and went for sleigh rides. Such events were usually followed by games, singing, dancing and feasting.

There were fewer holidays than we observe today. Prior to the 1830s Christmas was not widely observed except by German Lutheran immigrants. They decorated a Christmas tree, burned Yule logs, and told their children the story of Santa Claus.

Thanksgiving was the annual harvest festival. It was not yet a holiday, but proclaimed as a state holiday by the governors of Pennsylvania and nine other states. People attended church services, feasted at family gatherings, and held family reunions.

The Fourth of July was the biggest event of the year. America's independence was observed with parades, patriotic speeches, foot races, wrestling contests and picnics. The holiday gave farm families a welcome rest in the midst of the haying season. Another commonly observed holiday was Washington's birthday (February 22).

Perspective

Many people living today look back with nostalgia on the so-called "good old days" when families were closer-knit and life was simpler and less stressful. They overlook the long hours of hard physical labor, the frugal and often monotonous diet, inadequate medical care and primitive standards of sanitation.

Farm families were accustomed to living amidst dirt, flies, manure and barnyard smells. Their clothing was often dirty and sweat-stained. They washed their hands, faces, arms and necks at a wash basin, scrubbing off the dirt with coarse towels to save homemade soap for laundry use.

Alcoholism was widespread prior to the temperance movement of the 1830s and '40s. Many people clung to superstitions and prejudices which have since been dispelled. Clothing was coarse compared to today's modern fabrics. Career opportunities for young woman were limited to marriage and motherhood.

It is true enough that the death rate from cancer, heart attacks and strokes was lower than it is today. But the main reason is that many people didn't live long enough to become susceptible to those diseases. The average life expectancy in 1900 was 47 years. To the people of the 1800s and early 1900s, the average family of today would appear to be living in wealth and luxury beyond imagination.

Chapter 6: Why Route 19 is Called the Perry Highway

Compared to the American Revolution, the Civil War, and World Wars I and II, the War of 1812 seems a relatively insignificant conflict. It didn't resolve any of the issues that led to the outbreak of war.

But the War of 1812 gave a big boost to national unity and patriotism. It contributed to the growth of Pittsburgh as a manufacturing and inland waterway transportation center. And it established Cranberry Township on the corridor between Pittsburgh and Erie.

The previous war, the American Revolution, gave the United States independence from Great Britain. But the struggle left the colonies weak and disorganized. As a mostly agricultural nation, the United States continued to depend on Europe for trade, especially for manufactured goods. In 1812 that trade was disrupted by war with Great Britain and France, which was then ruled by dictator Napoleon Bonaparte.

Great Britain's powerful fleet of over 100 battleships and many smaller vessels controlled the seas. To curtail trade with France and French-controlled European nations, British ships began interfering with American merchant ships. They searched American ships and seized seamen who they claimed were deserters from the British navy.

In June 1812, at the request of President James Madison, Congress declared war on Great Britain. At the time, the United States had no battleships and fewer than 20 warships of any kind. The armed forces had about 10,000 troops and few trained officers. The British responded by imposing a naval blockage of American shipping ports on the east coast and the Great Lakes. British troops came across the Great Lakes from Canada to seize Detroit and much of Michigan.

During the War of 1812, British warships bombarded Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor. Francis Scott Key, who witnessed the all-night bombardment, observed that "by dawn's early light...our flag was still there." He was inspired to write "The Star Spangled Banner." The song was later adopted as our national anthem.

Early in 1813 an American naval lieutenant, Oliver Hazard Perry, went to Erie, Pennsylvania to take charge of a campaign to regain control of the Great Lakes. As a wartime naval commander he was entitled to the rank of Commodore. In March 1813

he visited Pittsburgh to arrange for the shipment of materials to build a fleet of warships. Troops, munitions and supplies were soon arriving in Pittsburgh from as far away as Philadelphia. Boats loaded up with building materials came up the Mississippi and Ohio rivers to Pittsburgh.

From Pittsburgh the supplies were transported to Erie by three different routes.

First, barges were rowed and pushed by poles up the Allegheny River to Franklin, and then up French Creek to Waterford. There they were loaded into horse-drawn wagons for the overland trip to Erie.

Second, wagons pulled by horse, mules and oxen went up the Franklin Road through Cranberry Township to Franklin and Meadville and on to Erie.

Third, eight years earlier--in 1805--a new road had been opened through Cranberry Township and Zelienople to Mercer and Erie. Known as the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road, it paralleled the Franklin Road to the west. The shorter, more direct Pittsburgh-Mercer Road was improved by laying logs across muddy stretches in order for the wagons to get through.

The massive effort to rush munitions and supplies to Commodore Perry in Erie was a very difficult and hazardous undertaking. There were many accidents when workmen and horses lost their footing on steep slopes. Some of the wagons never reached their destination.

For example, a horse-drawn wagon loaded with cannonballs, bayonets and hemp rope became bogged down in a pond along the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road south of Mercer. Soldiers quickly unhitched the horses and led them to safety. But the wagon and its supplies sank out of sight.

Many years later, in September 1959, several cannonballs and a bayonet were recovered. They are now on display at the Mercer County Historical Society Museum in Mercer.

When the soldiers and supply wagons passed through small villages, people lined the roads to wave American flags and cheer them on. At the village of Hope Mills, south of Mercer, a 12- year-old farm boy, Peter Barnes, joined the troops. He hoped to enlist as a drummer boy. He accompanied the soldiers to Erie where he was sent home because he had no shoes. He had walked the entire distance in his bare feet.

By September 1813 Commodore Perry had assembled a fleet of nine warships. He set out from Presque Isle Bay to engage the powerful British fleet. At first the British had the advantage. Commodore Perry's ship, the Lawrence, was disabled by cannon fire. But he transferred to another ship, the Niagara, and kept directing the battle. After intense bombardment the British fleet finally surrendered. Commodore Perry then sent to American military commander General William Henry Harrison, his famous message: "We have met the enemy, and they are ours."

Although the War of 1812 was to drag on for nearly two more years, Commodore Perry's victory in the Battle of Lake Erie marked a decisive turning point. With the American navy in control of the Great Lakes, the British were forced to withdraw

from Detroit and the Michigan territory. American troops were able to cross the Great Lakes and invade Canada, placing Great Britain on the defensive.

Commodore Perry was acclaimed a national hero. Many families who had a son born that year named the baby for Oliver Hazard Perry. In Cranberry Township, a new arrival in the Graham family was named Oliver Hazard Perry Graham.

The Pittsburgh-Mercer Road used to haul munitions and supplies through Cranberry Township to Erie was named the Perry Highway. In the early 1950s, when Route 19 was pushed through, paralleling the old road and bypassing Warrendale and Criders Corners, it became known as the new Perry Highway.

The War of 1812 had more far-reaching significance than making a hero of Commodore Perry. The British blockade forced the United States to develop its own manufacturing plants. It compelled the nation to rely more heavily on its inland waterways, including Pittsburgh's rivers, for transportation. And the Perry Highway through Cranberry Township became the main road linking Pennsylvania's second- and third-largest cities--Pittsburgh and Erie.

Chapter 7: Early Road Developments...The Stagecoach Era

The earliest settlements in Cranberry Township, and the spectacular growth in the area has experienced in recent years, can both be traced to the same reason: access roads and highways.

Before people could come to Cranberry Township, they first had to get here. In the early days that meant by walking, on horseback, or by horse and wagon. Since household goods and farming equipment had to be hauled in, the only practical method of transportation was by horse and wagon.

The first wagon road through Cranberry Township was originally an Indian trail. Known as the Venango Trail, it was a footpath used by the Indians to travel from the forks of the Ohio (now Pittsburgh) to the Indian village of Venango (now Franklin). In 1796 the footpath was widened so horses and wagons could get through. It was then called the Franklin Road because it was the road between Pittsburgh and Franklin.

The Franklin Road began at what is now the north end of Pittsburgh's Sixth Street Bridge, where settlers headed north were rafted across the Allegheny River. (There were no bridges in those days.) The road went up Federal Street and Perrysville Avenue to West View. West View's famous horseshoe curve is a relic of the original Venango Indian Trail before it was widened into the Franklin Road.

From West View the Franklin Road continued north through Wexford and Cranberry Township to Evans City and Prospect. It went through what is now Moraine State Park (via Route 528) to Route 8 and on north to Franklin. The road we know today as the Franklin Road was the original Franklin Road developed on the path of the Venango Indian Trail.

In 1805 a second road--the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road--was opened. It was identical to the Franklin Road as far north as Wexford. There the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road branched off to parallel the Franklin Road to the west. It went through Warrendale and along what are now Dutilh and Marshall Roads. During the War of 1812 the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road became known as the Perry Highway. Both the Franklin Road and the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road were unpaved dirt roads. During wet weather stretches of those roads became so muddy as to be nearly impassable. At that time it was impossible for the state to maintain thousands of miles of dirt roads. So a group of businessmen and farmers decided to build a new road and operate it as a toll road. Similar schemes were being tried elsewhere across the country, but few of them were successful.

In 1849 the businessmen organized a company to develop the Perrysville and Zelienople Turnpike or "Plank Road." The term "plank road" was generic since virtually all main roads were planked; that is, timber planking was laid across low-lying stretches so horses and wagons could get through during rainy weather.

The exact route of the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road is impossible to determine. It appears to have paralleled and in places criss-crossed the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road. The route from Warrendale north generally followed Dutilh Road (old Perry Highway) to the present site of the Doyle Equipment Company. There the plank road forked off from the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road to merge into what is now Route 19 north to North Boundary Road.

In order to continue directly north beyond North Boundary Road the road builders had to cross a deep narrow ravine. Since there were no bulldozers or earth moving equipment in those days, they had to detour around the ravine. So they made a semi-circular detour up what are now known as Glen Eden Road and Old Route 19 to merge into present-day Route 19 by Reed Homes.

The businessmen who developed the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road soon discovered that there's more to operating a turnpike than collecting tolls and raising and lowering the tollgates. Maintenance costs, tollkeeper wages and other expenses eventually forced their company into bankruptcy. But the roadbed was never abandoned. People continued to use the plank road as an alternate to the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road, depending on which one of the two roads was in the best condition for travel. The section of the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road north from Doyle Equipment Company was later selected as the route for Route 19.

The effect of all these highway developments was to place Cranberry Township on three major north-south roads. They were (1) the Franklin Road; (2) the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road; and (3) the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road which later became Route 19. This meant that virtually all traffic moving between Pittsburgh, Franklin, Mercer, Meadville and Erie passed through Cranberry Township.

The Stagecoach Era

With the opening of new roads and the improvement of older roads, people began traveling more extensively. Farmers could more readily haul their crops to market. Commerce developed between Pittsburgh and Erie and communities between those cities. A fabulous new era was at hand.

Elsewhere in the eastern United States, stagecoaches began appearing about 1790. The earliest stagecoaches were no more than horse-drawn freight wagons fitted with board seats for passengers. By the 1830s they had evolved into coaches with seats inside for nine passengers, and space for another passenger alongside the driver. Leather bracing straps were used as shock absorbers to partly relieve the jolting and bouncing of travel on rocky, rutted country roads.

In 1804 a stagecoach line was opened from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia. The trip required six to seven days. The passengers stayed overnight at taverns (or boarding houses) along the way. This was the only stagecoach operating in Western Pennsylvania until after the War of 1812.

The stagecoaches were drawn by teams of four to six horses. When the horses grew tired, they were replaced by teams of fresh horses at scheduled stops along the way. On steep hills the passengers often got out and walked to lighten the load. When a stagecoach bogged down along a muddy stretch of road, the passengers helped the driver maneuver through to drier ground.

Stagecoach travel was hot and dusty during the summer months, and freezing cold in the winter. But the horses moved along at a steady clip, averaging eight to ten miles an hour. The passengers were sheltered from rain and snow. Travel was an improvement over the horse and wagon method.

The stagecoach era was an exciting time in Cranberry Township history. Stagecoaches carried the mail and news of the outside world. They also brought local residents into contact with people from the outside world.

Businessmen, land speculators, gamblers, soldiers, lumbermen, bankers, traveling salesmen, circuit court judges, pretty ladies in fancy gowns...they all rode the stagecoaches. By the mid-1830s stagecoaches were regularly traveling through Cranberry Township on the Franklin Road and the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road.

To what extent the stages later ran on the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road is not known. The stock certificates issued to finance the toll road were illustrated by a sketch of a stagecoach drawn by a four-horse team. This would indicate the road was at least intended for use by stagecoaches.

Stagecoach travel was expensive by today's standards. The fare from Pittsburgh to Meadville was \$4, equivalent to about three days wages for a craftsman or a skilled road worker. The fare from Pittsburgh to Erie was \$6.50.

Early Taverns

To accommodate stagecoach passengers and supply teams of fresh horses, taverns or wayside inns were opened at intervals along the stagecoach routes. The taverns of the 1800s were different from those of today. They provided meals, overnight lodging, and resting places for passengers and drivers. They also maintained blacksmith shops and wagon repair shops.

At least four taverns were operating in Cranberry Township during the stagecoach era. One was on the Franklin Road, two were on the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road, and one was on the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road.

The tavern on the Franklin Road was operated by Robert McKee. He is said to have kept a tavern as early as 1830. The earliest recorded date when he was issued a tavern license was 1838. In the interim he may have operated a "tippling house," or unlicensed tavern. Although there was a fine for keeping a tippling house, such establishments were rather common, especially in outlying rural areas.

Robert McKee also operated a wagon shop and probably a blacksmith shop. The location was on the Franklin Road at the junction of Old Mars-Criders Road in what was later known as the village of Hendersonville. The present site is one-third mile north of Stop-N-Go Plaza.

The two taverns on the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road (Perry Highway) were Matthew Graham's Black Bear Tavern, built in 1813, and the Garvin tavern, built probably in the 1820s. Both were successors to log cabin taverns dating to about 1800. They were located near what are now Marshall Road and North Boundary Road.

The Black Bear tavern is referred to in the History of Butler County (Wawterman, Watkins & Col, Chicago, IL 1883):

This hostelry was the general stopping place of all who traveled from Pittsburgh to Mercer for thirty years, and is still standing [in 1883], but unoccupied. The early settlers in this section of the State were frequently gathered around the great fireplace of the 'Black Bear', and there related stories of their struggles with poverty, of a desperate encounter with Indians and wild beasts, and talked of the time when their great tasks would be completed, and they in possession of comfortable homes, surrounded by their children and the comfort and luxuries of civilization.

The site of the Black Bear tavern is now an ivy-overgrown ruins on a bypassed and abandoned stretch of Old Perry Highway paralleling the northern end of Marshall Road. The most recent resident was a Mr. Arndt who operated a machine shop on the property.

The Garvin tavern, a two-story brick farmhouse, is still standing and is now a private residence. A photocopy of a tavern license issued in 1833 to David Garvin, son of Benjamin Garvin, is displayed there. It, too, is referred to in The History of Butler County (1883): The Cornplanter and other Indian bands made this hotel their stopping place on their way to and from Erie...Their business principally was running rafts on the Allegheny [River], and their demeanor and manner was quiet, when not under the influence of 'fire-water.'" Another early tavern is identified on the Cranberry Township map of 1874 as the Union Hotel and Store. It was on the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road, now Route 19, northwest of the present Cranberry Medical Arts building. The innkeeper was Frederick Meeder. To what extent this two-story brick building was a stagecoach stop is unknown. Built around 1830 or 1840, it had a barroom and was a stopping place for drovers herding sheep, pigs, turkey and cattle to the Pittsburgh market. It's still standing and now is a private home.

End of an Era

The taverns of the 1800s were local gathering places as well as stagecoach stops. Local farmers visited them regularly to exchange information, hear the latest news, and conduct business. The walls were posted with messages, stagecoach schedules, advertisements, legal notices, and notices of auctions and sheriff sales.

Women stagecoach passengers were accommodated at the taverns, and rooms could be rented for dances and social activities. But the barrooms were used exclusively by men for drinking, gambling and conversation. As public gathering places, the taverns were the center of community activities during election campaigns and holiday celebrations. Traveling shows and entertainers stayed at the taverns and put on performances on the tavern grounds.

The stagecoach era phased out so gradually that most people were scarcely aware of its passing. In 1878 the Pittsburgh and Western (later B&O) Railroad began operating train service through Butler County. Train stations were opened in Mars, Evans City and Zelienople. Other railroads began extending their lines throughout northwestern Pennsylvania.

Several early stagecoach inns have been restored and designated as historic landmarks. One is the Johnston Tavern on Route 19 (the original Perry Highway) near Leesburg, just south of Mercer. Another is the Old Stone House on the Franklin Road (now Route 8) north of Butler.

In Cranberry Township, two taverns dating to the stagecoach era are still standing and used as private homes. One is the Garvin tavern beyond the northern end of Marshall Road. The other is the Union Hotel and Store on Route 19 (formerly Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road).

Chapter 8: There's 'Black Gold' in Them Thar Hills

Scattered throughout Cranberry Township are the ruins of old abandoned oil wells. They are so commonplace that we pass them every day without a second glance, nor do we wonder how they got here. Yet the oil from those wells, and others like the, so profoundly changed the world we live in that it's difficult to imagine what life might be like without petroleum.

The word petroleum comes from two Latin words--petra, meaning rock, and oleum, for oil. Oil is sometimes called "black gold" because it can be refined into so many valuable products. Those products include gasoline, diesel fuel, jet aircraft and rocket fuel, kerosene, lubricants, plastics, nylon and synthetic fabrics, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals...a dazzling diversity of the products we use every single day.

The story of petroleum can be traced back to a centuries-old search for improved methods of lighting. For over 2,000 years people had used candles from animal fat as their main source of light.

Ancient people knew that torches saturated in oil from ground seepages burned brighter and longer than other torches. Oil oozing to the earth's surface was also used as a lubricant to grease chariot and wagon wheels. American Indians used the oil as a medicine.

In 1854 a Canadian doctor and a geologist, Albert Gesner, patented a process to distill kerosene from coal. Coal oil was less expensive than whale oil. But it produced a poor flame for lighting purposes and gave off smoking fumes when burned in kerosene lamps.

Then Samuel M. Kier, of Pittsburgh, found that kerosene distilled from rock oil (petroleum) burned brighter and produced less smoke and fumes than coal oil. But oil to produce the cleaner-burning lamp fuel was available only in limited quantities from surface oil seepages.

If oil oozed out of the ground, people reasoned, maybe there was more of it under the ground. So in 1858 a group of businessmen hired Edwin L. Drake, a retired railroad conductor, to drill for oil to produce lamp fuel.

Drake began drilling near Titusville, Pennsylvania, about 70 miles northeast of Cranberry Township. On August 27, 1859, after drilling to a depth of $69 \frac{1}{2}$ feet, he struck oil. America's first oil well produced 10 to 35 barrels a day. The oil was sold at \$20 a barrel to be distilled into lamp fuel.

After observing Drake's methods, other men began drilling for oil. By the end of 1860 they had brought in 74 wells producing about 1,200 barrels per day. As drilling continued, it became evident that vast fortunes could be made from oil. For example, one well produced 900 barrels a day and netted its owners about \$1.7 million. Profits from another early well exceeded \$5 million.

The effect of Drake's oil well, and others which followed, was to set off a stampede comparable to the California gold rush of 1849.

Leasing agents and speculators swarmed into the countryside to persuade farmers to lease drilling rights on their properties. As quickly as leases were signed, giving landowners a percentage of the oil proceeds, horses and wagons moved in with drilling equipment.

When oil production slackened in one area, the drillers hurried elsewhere--including Clarion, Armstrong and Butler counties. In 1872 a well producing over 100 barrels a day was struck at the village of Petrolia--so named for petroleum--12 miles northeast of Butler.

Continuing south, the drillers moved into the Thorn Creek valley along Route 8 midway between Butler and Mars. There they blew in three fabulous gushers, including the Christie well which produced 7,000 barrels of oil a day.

From the Thorn Creek area the drilling activity moved south along present-day Route 8, reaching Cooperstown in 1884 and spreading into the Mars area in 1885. Well drilling equipment was rushed to Mars on the Pittsburgh and Western Railroad,

opened seven years earlier. Mars soon became the largest rail center between Pittsburgh and Butler.

From Mars and surrounding Adams Township the drilling activity moved southwest into Cranberry Township and the Warrendale area. Oil field workers--teamsters, tool dressers, roustabouts, pumpers, rig and tank builders--swarmed into the township.

The crossroads village of Hendersonville on the Franklin Road became a scene of feverish activity as dozens of teams of horses came through pulling wagonloads of drilling equipment. To the west, residents of Criders Corners found themselves surrounded by oil well derricks. Local taverns, blacksmith shops and stores did a thriving business.

Since drillers were not required to register wells with the state until 1956, there is no way of knowing how many wells were drilled in Cranberry Township. However, maps dating to the 1940s show at least 150 active oil wells plus over 30 that had been shut down and abandoned.

Drilling activity was not uniform throughout the township. It was clustered in about five areas. The largest concentration of wells were in the Seven Fields, Hendersonville and Criders Corners areas; on the Duncan farm along the south side of Peters Road; along Glen Eden Road; and in the northeast corner of the township.

The oil produced in Cranberry Township came from two different levels of underground rock formations. The uppermost was 1,300 to 1,500 feet deep. The other was at a depth of 1,600 to 1,700 feet.

When a drill bit broke through the overlaying rock strata, underground pressures forced the oil into the well shaft where it came gushing to the surface. After the initial pressure subsided, the oil had to be pumped to the surface. As pressure continued to subside, the oil ceased flowing, causing drillers to think that the well had gone dry.

What the old-time drillers didn't know was that they were scooping off the most easily recoverable oil and leaving three-fourths of it in the ground. Today's technology makes it possible to recover those valuable oil deposits. But with oil selling at about \$20 per barrel (in 1990) and drilling costs ranging up to \$2 million per well, recovery isn't commercially feasible. Besides, Cranberry Township's greatest wealth today is in the real estate value of its surface acreage rather than the "black gold" beneath it.

Incidentally, the term "black gold" is erroneous when applied to the oil found in Cranberry Township and elsewhere in Pennsylvania. Local oil is actually amber in color. Known as Pennsylvania grade crude oil, this oil is rich in paraffin, a valuable lubricant. It ranks among the finest quality oil found anywhere in the world.

Today we find many links between past and present to remind us of Cranberry Township's oil boom days. Many roadsides are lined with rusting pipelines once used to pipe the oil to gathering tanks to await shipment to refineries.

One of the most conspicuous of the old wells is a pumping jack at Route 19 and old Freedom Road within sight of the Cranberry Mall. Thousands of motorists pass that well every day without even noticing it.

Most of the oil well derricks have long since been dismantled and sold for scrap metal. But two 40-foot high derricks can be seen today along Burke Road. At least two wells are still being pumped regularly. One is on Burke Road and another on Franklin Road. The oil is pumped into gathering tanks which are emptied periodically by Quaker State tanker trucks.

Would you like to own an oil well? Two wells in the Criders Corner area were recently available for sale at \$10,000 apiece. However, the cost of restoring them to production might vastly exceed any income over a long period of years.

To summarize, the petroleum industry began with a search for clean-burning fuel for lighting purposes. The invention of electric lighting made kerosene lamps obsolete. But the availability of petroleum products--namely gasoline--set the stage for the emergence of the automobile and aviation industries.

By 1910 more than 450,000 automobiles were traveling America's highways. The expanding network of roads created a need for road paving materials--including asphalt, another petroleum product.

Thus, step by step, petroleum research and petroleum products gradually led American into the modern world we live in today. And it all came about, in part, because of oil found right here in Cranberry Township.

Chapter 9: All Aboard the Harmony Line

Can you imagine the excitement if a space shuttle launch pad were to open in Cranberry Township? Every day, rockets would blast off into space carrying passengers to the moon and nearby planets. Earth-orbiting excursion flights would leave and return at regular intervals on sight-seeing trips around the world.

Something much like that happened, on a more limited scale, in Cranberry Township in the early 1900s. Or so it seemed to the people living here at that time. The only difference between them and us is in our modern concepts of transportation.

Compared to today's highly mobile society, Cranberry Township's past generations lived in relative isolation. The narrow, deeply rutted dirt roads were virtually impassable during wet weather and not suitable for speedy travel at any time.

People of the early 1900s were aware of the world beyond the confines of their daily experience. But few of them had ever visited that world. To them, a horse and buggy trip to Wexford or Zelienople was a great adventure.

The Harmony Line changed that dramatically. The Pittsburgh, Harmony, Butler and New Castle Railway (Harmony Line) was an electric power-generating plant were at Harmony Junction on Route 68 midway between Evans City and Zelienople.

The Harmony Line began operating through Cranberry Township on November 14, 1908. The maroon and gold passenger cars ran every hour. Each car had a motorman, a conductor, and seats for 45 passengers.

Some of the cars stopped at every passenger station or wherever the motorman saw passengers waiting. But express cars traveled at speeds of over 75 miles an hour with only limited stops. Within 45 minutes after boarding a car in Cranberry Township, people could step off at Sixth Street and Liberty Avenue near Horne's Department Store in downtown Pittsburgh.

For the next 23 years, from 1908 to 1931, the Harmony Line provided Cranberry Township and the surrounding region with speedy, dependable, low-cost transportation.

On Sunday mornings, instead of hitching up the horse and buggy, families rode the Harmony Line to attend church services. Housewives rode the Harmony Line to go shopping.

After 1910, when freight cars were added, farmers used the Harmony line to ship fresh milk, butter, eggs, cheese, poultry and farm crops to the Pittsburgh market.

In 1912 the Harmony Line added special "party cars." These cars were used by groups of people to attend concerts, plays and the theater in Pittsburgh and elsewhere. They were equipped with movie projectors. Ice cream, soda pop and other refreshments were served.

The Harmony Line was a great benefit to social life. People could regularly visit friends and relatives they had previously seen only once a year or on special occasions. Families took the Harmony Line to amusement parks for picnics and outings.

The Harmony Line extended diagonally across southeast Cranberry Township. The passenger stations, north to south, were as follows:

1. West. At the end of Wolfe Run Road.
2. Plains Church. By the stonewall abutments on Plains Church Road, just east of the Plains United Presbyterian Church.
3. Franklin Road. At the corner of Franklin Road and Hope Road.
4. Criders. Present-day Dutilh Road near Burger King.
5. Dutilh. Rear of the Boron Station on Route 19.

Continuing south from Cranberry Township, the railway went through Warrendale on Harmony Drive, crossed Route 19, and went on to Bradford Woods and Wexford.

Ironically, at the very time the Harmony Line was at the peak of its popularity, developments were underway which ultimately caused its demise.

In 1896 Henry Ford had developed the first gasoline-powered automobile. And in 1908--the first year the Harmony Line began operating through Cranberry Township--he began mass-producing the Ford Model-T automobile.

Because Cranberry Township's unpaved dirt roads weren't suitable for automobiles, it took a while for the new-fangled "horseless carriages" to appear locally. But gradually some of the more daring drivers began venturing into the countryside.

By the mid-1920s traffic on the Perry Highway had become equally divided between automobiles and horse-and-wagon. Thereafter, with each passing year there were more and more automobiles and trucks and fewer horses.

As people became accustomed to traveling by automobile, the Harmony Line lost passengers. As farmers began shipping crops to market on trucks, the Harmony Line's freight business began dwindling.

Sensing the end of an era, the Harmony Line's owner, David I. McCahill, began organizing a bus company. On April 6, 1931, the last Harmony Line passenger car made its final run. The tracks became silent. The passenger stations were empty, and the next day the buses were running.

Today we can find many links between past and present to remind us of the glory days of the Harmony Line railway. The stonewall abutments of the bridge crossing over Plains Church road are still plainly visible. So is a stretch of the original roadbed extending north from Rowan Road at Old Farm Road in the Fox Run plan.

Many people living in Cranberry Township today recall riding on the Harmony Line. At Arden Trolley Museum at Meadowlands, Washington County, one of the original cars is being restored to provide rides for visitors.

Chapter 10: School Days...1800-1960

Attending school in the 1800s and early 1900s was vastly different from what it's like today. Most of the pioneers who settled Cranberry Township were self-educated people. Few of them had received formal classroom instruction. But they were determined that their children get a better education than they had received. So they enrolled their brightest and most talented youngsters in subscription schools, or what we would now call private schools.

The schools were conducted by men of good reputation who knew how to read, write and do arithmetic. Attendance was not compulsory, and teacher certification was not required. Parents paid tuition in cash or the cash equivalent of butter, milk, cheese, eggs, meat or firewood. Children whose parents couldn't afford to pay performed chores such as splitting firewood, tending the woodstove, emptying ashes, shoveling snow or cleaning the floor.

Classes were held in a teacher's home, often a log cabin, or in a log cabin built for educational purposes. The log cabins were built of rough-hewn logs and had small windows covered with oiled paper instead of glass. They were headed by a stone fireplace or a potbellied cast iron wood stove placed in the middle of the room. The seats were plank boards or logs cut flat on top. The seats had no backrests, and the legs of the youngest children often didn't touch the floor. Desks were pieces of flat timber attached to the wall by wooden pegs.

Books and paper were scarce and expensive. Often a Bible or dictionary was the only book available. Some teachers provided a box of sand which was moistened and smoothed on the surface. The students were taught to use sticks to scratch letters and numbers in the sand.

Another early teaching aid was the hornbook. The hornbook was a flat wooden board on which was pasted a sheet of paper printed with the alphabet, the numbers one through ten, and the Lord's Prayer. The paper was protected under a transparent sheet of flattened cattle horn. Hornbooks were used to teach spelling, reading, writing and basic arithmetic.

Students were expected to provide their own slates. Slate is a naturally occurring type of rock which can be split apart into flat sheets. Slate was found locally, among other places, along Coal Run on the Rowan farm, where the Fox Run homes are today (on Rowan Road). Stubby pieces of soft, fine-grained white limestone were used as chalk.

Students attended grades one through eight in the same room, taught by the same teacher. While one class recited or received special instruction, the others listened or studied quietly. School was held from September to April so the children could help their parents with farm work and house work the rest of the year.

In 1835 Pennsylvania adopted the "common school system" by enacting a law which permitted communities to tax landowners in order to pay teacher salaries and buy textbooks. In 1852, Cranberry Township teachers held their first conference--comparable to an in-service day--at Plains Church on the Franklin Road. Later, teachers from throughout Butler County met in Butler.

By the mid-1850s, textbooks had become more readily available. Those recommended for use in Butler County schools were the McGuffey Primer, McGuffey Spelling Book, and the McGuffey Reader series, Numbers 1 through 5. Also Ray's Practical Arithmetic, McNally's Geography, and the Graham Series of grammar books.

The McGuffey books were compiled by William Holmes McGuffey, one of the leading educators of his day. They had a tremendous impact on education. Previously, students had proceeded from the ABCs to spelling, and were expected to master words of up to four syllables before they began reading. Under the McGuffey method, first-year students went directly from the alphabet to reading; and through reading, they learned spelling. The books were illustrated with sketches of dogs, cats, birds, farm animals and children at play. Associating words with pictures speeded up the learning process.

Education in the 1800s and early 1900s proceeded at a slower pace than it does today. But what the students learned they learned exceedingly well. In arithmetic, for example, a full year was devoted to the numbers one through ten--adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing--before higher numbers were taught.

By the mid-1800s both men and women were teaching in Cranberry Township schools. They were paid \$20 to \$22 a month. By 1876 the pay was raised to \$30 to \$38 a month. Daily classes began with a reading from the Bible, the Lord's Prayer,

and the Pledge of Allegiance. The practice continued until 1962 when a Supreme Court decision prohibited prayer in public schools.

By 1874 Cranberry Township had six one-room schools. With the exception of Bear Run School, the schools were named for the landowners on whose property they were built. There were then four men teachers, two women teachers, and an enrollment of 230 students.

In 1911 Pennsylvania enacted the "Compulsory Education Act." It required young people to attend school until age 13. The age limit was later increased to 17. Those who lived more than two miles from the nearest school were exempt. Until 1923 youngsters could also be excused, with parental permission, in order to work.

Cranberry Township appears to have anticipated compulsory education since its schools were equally distanced throughout the township. Virtually all young people lived within two miles of school. Each school had a bell which was rung 15 minutes before the start of daily classes. Students hiking in from the countryside would hear the bell and walk faster to be in their seats for the start of classes.

The school buildings of the early 1900s were greatly improved over the log cabins that preceded them. With the exception of Johnston School, which was of red brick, the buildings were timber-framed with flatboard siding and had glass windows. Wooden desks and chairs with backrests had iron frames and legs mounted to the floor.

Teachers not only conducted classes, but served as building custodians, playground supervisors and nurses. They started the fire in the morning and assigned older boys to carry in locally-produced coal from the coal bins outside. Drinking water was carried in metal buckets from a pump in the schoolyard. During severe winter weather, when students arrived numb with cold, the teacher kept a basin of water for them to thaw their hands. Students were expected to raise their hands and ask to be excused to use the wooden outhouses (toilets)--one for boys, another for girls--located on the outskirts of the schoolyard.

Discipline was very strict. Most teachers kept a slender tree branch or a flat-edged wooden yardstick beside the desk. They did not hesitate to use them on students for disrupting class, talking back to the teacher, or other violations. Often, if parents learned that a child had been switched at school, that youngster received another strapping when he or she arrived home.

School buildings were used as social centers as well as for education. Literary societies and musical groups held meetings there. The students also put on plays, musicals and speech recitals to which parents and the public were invited.

The schools were as follows:

- **Hoehn (Haine) School** was on Haine School Road at or near the present site of Sandherr's True Value Hardware Store. Closed in 1952, the schoolhouse deteriorated until it was finally burned by vandals. (New Haine School, also on Haine School Road to the north of the original one-room schoolhouse, opened in 1967.)

- **Graham School** was named for Matthew Graham, one of the township's oldest settlers and a founder of the school system. It was on the east side of Graham School Road about a mile from Rochester Road. A stone and earthen house marks the location. It closed in 1952. The building was used by the Graham family for storage until it was destroyed by fire.
- **Bear Run School** was on the Kline farm on the south side of Bear Run Road .09 mile west of Route 19. It closed in 1946 because of declining enrollment. A private home now stands on the location.
- **Garvin School** was on Garvin Road .07 mile west of Franklin Road. Named for the Garvin family, it closed in 1937 because of declining enrollment. Remaining students were bussed to Graham School, marking the beginning of bussing in Cranberry Township. The building was dismantled and the wood used to build the house at the corner of Franklin and Callery Roads. The private home at the original location was built on the foundation of Garvin School.
- **Sample School** still stands on Rowan Road near Olde Town Apartments. It was closed and students transferred to nearby Rowan School in 1952. The building is owned by the township and used for storage.
- **Johnston School** was built in 1851 as a successor to an earlier log cabin school opened in 1835. This one-room red brick schoolhouse was (and still is) on the old Mars-Criders Road .03 mile west of Franklin Road. The original log cabin school was about a quarter mile east of the present location. Johnston School closed in 1952 and is now a private home.

By 1951, only three of the original six one-room schoolhouses--Sample, Johnston and Haine-- were still in use as schools.

On the evening of Thanksgiving Day, 1951, Cranberry Township was rocked by a tremendous explosion caused by the rupture of a high-pressure natural gas transmission pipeline. Fortunately, no one was killed or injured.

But because the same pipeline passed close to Sample School, people feared for the safety of their children. So Sample School was closed. Its students completed the 1951-52 school term by attending classes in the basement of the old Hope Lutheran Church on Franklin Road.

Plans were then made to consolidate students from Johnston and Haine schools, plus those dislocated by the closing of Sample School, in a modern elementary school scheduled for construction on Rowan Road.

But Cranberry (later Rowan) school wasn't completed on time for the September 1952 semester. So classes were held at Plains Church, Hope Lutheran Church and Dutilh Church.

Cranberry (later Rowan) School was finally completed and opened. It had six rooms, four teachers and 110 students. To accommodate growing enrollment, the present Haine School was opened in 1967.

By that time, Cranberry Township had (in 1960) joined Southwest Butler (later Seneca Valley) School District. Since then, junior and senior high school students have attended Seneca Valley. (They formerly attended high schools in Evans City and Mars.)

Today, Cranberry Township's last surviving one-room schoolhouses have outlived their usefulness for educational purposes. Sample School is owned by the township and is used for storage. Johnston School is now a private home. In 1990 their original schoolbells were installed at Rowan School as part of an expansion and renovation project.

But the days of the one-room schoolhouses still linger on in the memories of those who attended them. Every September, graduates of Cranberry Township's one-room schoolhouses gather in reunion to recall their experiences while attending school during "the good old days."

Rules for Teachers, 1872

1. *Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys.*
2. *Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.*
3. *Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.*
4. *Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.*
5. *After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.*
6. *Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.*
7. *Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.*
8. *The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.*

Chapter 11: How Modern Inventions Came to Cranberry Township

Once upon a time there was no television. If that sounds incredible, there was an earlier time when there was no radio. Also, no telephones. Even if people had owned radios, TV sets and telephones, they couldn't have used them. Their homes were not wired for electricity or telephone service. All of those inventions, and many others, came into widespread use in Cranberry Township within the lifetime of the oldest people living here today!

Most modern inventions were introduced in large cities such as Pittsburgh. Their use gradually spread to smaller towns like Butler. Finally they arrived in still smaller towns like Mars, Evans City, Zelienople and Wexford. Because Cranberry Township was a rural area with a widely scattered population, most inventions were late in arriving here.

Telephones

In 1878, three years after Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, the first telephones were installed in downtown Pittsburgh. Eleven years later phone service became available in Butler. By 1895 the phone company in Butler had about 100 customers.

In 1906 a group of businessmen from Gibsonia went to Pittsburgh to ask the telephone company there to extend service to their area. But the phone company had more requests for service than it could handle. The men were urged to start their own local telephone company. So they organized the North Pittsburgh Telephone Company to service northern Allegheny and southern Butler counties.

By 1908 the telephone company had 147 customers, mostly in Richland Township along Route 8. In 1910 a telephone exchange office was opened in Wexford. By 1912 phone service had reached Warrendale.

Telephone lines were then extended north from Warrendale and west from Mars into Cranberry Township. But many people didn't subscribe to phone service until the 1920s and 1930s. In fact, only about one third of U.S. farms had telephone service in 1950.

Early telephones had no dials or pushbuttons. To make a call, people picked up the receiver, turned the handle, and waited for an operator to place their call. Antique telephones of the type used in the early 1900s may be viewed today at the North Pittsburgh Telephone Company offices in Gibsonia.

Six to ten families shared the same party line. If someone else was talking when you wanted to call, you waited until they were finished. The first private line was installed at Meeder's Market at Criders Corners. A telephone exchange office was opened nearby on the old Mars-Criders Road. It is still known as the 776-Criders Corners exchange.

Today much of Cranberry Township continues to be served by North Pittsburgh Telephone Company. However, some areas are served by United Telephone and others by Bell Telephone Company.

Electric Lighting

Electricity is the power source for many of the appliances we use every single day. They include radio, television, toasters, refrigerators, freezers, microwave ovens, alarm clocks, heating and air conditioning, washers and dryers, vacuum cleaners and many others. Residential electrical service which makes it possible to operate those appliances can be traced to one single invention.

In 1879 Thomas Alva Edison invented the electric light bulb. Before that time people had used candles and kerosene lamps. Some cities had gas street lighting. Some wealthy families had gas lights in their homes.

In 1882 the nation's first electric generating plant was supplying power to electric light bulbs in New York City. Two years later electric lights were installed in a

Pittsburgh restaurant. That same year George Westinghouse began manufacturing electric light bulbs in New York City.

In 1892 the city of Butler began installing electric lights on street corners. By 1913 local electric plants were supplying power in Evans City, Warrendale, Harmony, Zelienople and Cranberry Township. Those local electric companies merged into Harmony Electric Company which later became part of Pennsylvania Power Company.

Probably the first business in Cranberry to have electric lighting was Meeder's Market at Criders Corners. It operated its own electric power generating plant.

By 1932 fewer than one-third of the farms in rural areas such as Cranberry Township had electricity. During the mid-1930s the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) funded electric line extensions into the areas east and west of Route 19. By 1940 nearly 70% of the farms and homes in Cranberry Township had electric lighting. Almost all of them were wired for electric services by the end of 1950.

Today when we lose our electrical service during a severe storm or power outage, we can imagine what it was like in the years before electric service was available. No lights, no radio or TV, no central heating or air conditioning...even schools and businesses must close. Yet the people of earlier days got along very well without electricity. They had not become accustomed to modern conveniences.

Refrigeration

One of the greatest benefits of electrical power service was the introduction of modern refrigeration.

Since pioneer days, people had kept milk, butter and eggs in springhouses or in a cool corner of the basement. Apples, potatoes, carrots, turnips and cabbage were kept in root cellars. A root cellar might be a cave dug into a hillside or a wooden bin lined with straw.

Without refrigeration there was no way to keep meat fresh during warm weather. Meat was limited to freshly killed chickens, ducks or turkey, or whenever a farmer slaughtered a pig, lamb or steer. At other times people ate smoked or dried meat.

During the early 1900s some communities had ice-making plants. Blocks of ice were sold door- to-door. The ice was placed in insulated wooden ice boxes where butter, milk, eggs and meat could be kept cool.

In Cranberry Township, the Ellwood City Ice Company delivered to restaurants, taverns, stores and gas stations. The ice was used in commercial ice boxes and coolers to chill drinks and food supplies.

Most families continued to use springhouses and basements for refrigeration. In the mid-1930s fewer than one of every three families had electrical power to operate a modern refrigerator even if they had owned one. A few homes had gas refrigerators.

Several Cranberry Township residents recall buying their first electric refrigerator about 1940 or 1941. But with America's entry into World War II on December 7, 1941, production of refrigerators ceased when assembly lines were converted to wartime materials. Those people who didn't own a refrigerator couldn't acquire one until after the war ended in August 1945.

Automobiles

Owning an automobile in Cranberry Township before the mid-1920s was like owning an electric lamp before the house was wired for electricity. Even if people had owned automobiles, they couldn't have driven them very far. There were no paved roads.

The dirt roads were either knee deep in muds or rutted and dusty in dry spells. The first automobile to reach Cranberry Township probably didn't travel very far without being hauled out of a ditch by a team of horses.

During the early 1930s the Perry Highway, then a narrow two-lane road, was paved through Wexford and Warrendale as far north as Dutilh Church. From there it continued as a gravel road through Cranberry Township to Zelienople. Many secondary roads remained unpaved until 1945 or 1950.

Radio

Commercial radio broadcasting began in 1920 on KDKA in Pittsburgh. But not many families in Cranberry Township owned a radio because so few homes were wired for electricity.

The first radio broadcasts heard here were tuned in on crystal sets. A crystal set was a very simple radio that did not require electricity. Instructions to make crystal sets are found in most encyclopedias. Parts are available in hobby shops and electronic stores.

By the 1930s and 1940s--the "Golden Age" of radio broadcasting--more and more homes were wired for electricity. Butler County's first radio station, WISR in Butler, began broadcasting in 1941.

Television

Television is so much a part of our lives one might expect that its arrival in Cranberry Township was a momentous event. Actually, television slipped in rather unobtrusively. Pittsburgh's first television station, WDTV (later KDKA-TV), went on the air in 1949. By that time most homes in Cranberry Township already had electric lights, telephones, radios and other electrical appliances. As TV sets became available in appliance stores, Cranberry Township joined the "Age of Television" as readily as the rest of the country.

Chapter 12: Why Cranberry Township [Had] No Post Office

(Editor's Note: Cranberry Township secured its own post office in 1994 after demand on the other post offices serving the region became too heavy. For many years before this, however, township residents had been proclaiming the need for their own zip code. They have it now - Cranberry Township, PA 16066.)

Regular mail delivery is so much a part of everyday life that many people take the service for granted. But for many years there was no mail delivery. In Colonial America, letters were delivered by private messengers.

In 1775 the Continental Congress created the postal service. Benjamin Franklin was the first postmaster general. Mail service between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia was started in 1795.

In 1796, the same year the Franklin Road opened, a privately operated mail service began operating from Pittsburgh to Erie. Every two weeks a mail carrier rode horseback carrying the mail in saddlebags. The mail route went from Pittsburgh through Cranberry Township and Evans City to Franklin, Meadville and Erie. The trip took three to five days, depending on weather and travel conditions. By 1801 the U.S. government postal service had taken over this mail run, and in 1803 post offices were operating in Pittsburgh, Franklin, Meadville, Waterford and Erie.

In 1805 the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road opened. The Pittsburgh-Erie mail route was then changed to a shorter, more direct road. It went through Cranberry Township and Zelienople. Mail from Pittsburgh to Franklin continued to go on the Franklin Road through Evans City. Local mail deliveries were dropped off at the nearest tavern or store along the way.

At first the mail was carried once a week. In 1818 it was increased to twice a week. Mail delivery was later changed from horseback to stagecoach. Stagecoaches drawn by teams of four to six horses carried passengers and packages as well as mail. Daily mail service was started in 1827.

In those days people didn't use envelopes. Sheets of paper were folded and closed with a red seal. The cost of sending a letter was 8 cents for the first 40 miles, 10 cents for 40 to 60 miles, and 25 cents for over 500 miles. The first U.S. postage stamps were introduced in 1847.

In 1850 Cranberry Township's first post office opened at the village of Ogle. Originally, Ogle was on the Perry Highway (now Dutilh Road) in the present vicinity of Hartner's restaurant. It later moved north to the corner of Route 19 and Unionville Road. Two buildings at this later location alternately served as post offices. One was John Frantz's store on Unionville Road south of West View Savings. The other was the Garvin store, now the Comtra office building, on the opposite side of Route 19.

In 1896 another post office opened on the Franklin Road at the junction of Old Mars-Criders Road. It was named Trail, Pennsylvania, an abbreviation for the Venango Trail, predecessor of the Franklin Road. The first postmaster was J.M. Dight. The name of the surrounding village was later changed to Hendersonville.

Meanwhile, post offices were opening in other communities throughout the region. The Mars post office was established in 1873. Once a week the postmaster's son

rode horseback to Wexford to meet the stagecoach and exchange outgoing mail for incoming mail.

In 1878 the Pittsburgh and Western (later B&O) Railroad began operating through Butler County. Railroad stations were opened at Mars, Evans City and Zelienople. After the railroad opened, mail service was changed from stagecoach to trains.

In 1902, when the Postal Service began making rural deliveries, Cranberry Township's two post offices were closed. Since then Cranberry Township has received its mail from the Mars, Evans City and Zelienople post offices....

[A portion of this chapter has been omitted because it is no longer accurate.]

Where was Criders Corners?

Years ago many localities were named for a prominent crossroads. Criders Corners refers to the junction of old Perry Highway (now Dutilh Road) and Old Mars-Criders Road (since superseded by new Route 228). The area is named for Jacob Crider (1823-1902). In 1871 he purchased 50 acres of land at that location. Jacob Crider was a trustee of Dutilh Methodist Church.

For many years Criders Corners was Cranberry Township's business district. It was the site of Meeder's Market, later the Whale's Tale antique shop. The building was razed to provide space for the Burger King parking lot. Directly opposite was Criders Garage, now Instant Print King, where an aerial view of the original Criders Corners, circa 1940, is on display. From 1908 to 1931 Criders Corners was a stop on the Harmony Line railway.

Chapter 13: Later Road Developments...The Modern Era

One of the greatest attractions of Cranberry Township is its accessibility. It's an easy place to get to. Also, from Cranberry Township it's easy to travel elsewhere. Modern, well-maintained roads converge (come together) in the township from all directions.

Much of the history of Cranberry Township is related to its roads and highways. Within a century, from 1790 to 1890, Cranberry Township grew from a wilderness criss-crossed by Indian trails to a prospering agricultural region situated on three north-south highways.

One of those roads was the Franklin Road. Another was the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road, also known as the Perry Highway. Both were state highways, but very difficult to maintain during long periods of rainy or snowy weather. At times they were so muddy as to be nearly impassable.

The third north-south road--the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road--was built with private funds and opened as a toll road about 1850-1852. The Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road was used as an alternate to the paralleling Perry Highway. It eventually superseded (took the place of) the original Perry Highway and became part of Route 19.

To get to those north-south roads, and also to travel to stores, schools, churches and nearby communities, a network of roads was opened to the east and the west. Those roads included Freedom, Rochester Road, Unionville Road and the Mars-Criders Road. The roads existing in 1874 are shown on the accompanying map.

In the years that followed, more roads opened. Four of those roads brought Cranberry Township into the world we live in today. They were (A) Route 19; (B) the Pennsylvania Turnpike; (C) Interstate 79; and (D) I-279. Each of them played an important role in contributing to the growth of Cranberry Township.

Route 19

During the early 1930s, with the growing use of automobiles, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania rebuilt the Perry Highway (originally the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road) and renamed it Route 19. However, it continued to be known locally as the Perry Highway. This was a two-lane road.

Originally, Route 19 was different from the Route 19 as we know it today. It went through Criders Corners (now the location of Burger King and Instant Print King) north to the present site of the Doyle Equipment Company. There, instead of following the Pittsburgh-Mercer Road, it merged into the roadbed of the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road. It went past the present sites of LaSalle Plaza, West View Savings and the Cranberry Community Park entrance, exactly as Route 19 does today.

Opposite North Boundary Road, Route 19 continued on the semi-circular detour up present day Glen Eden Road and along what is now known as Old Route 19 to the present site of Reed Homes. From there it continued north to Zelienople much as Route 19 does today.

Twenty years later, during the early 1950s, Route 19 was again rebuilt, this time as a four-lane highway. Many of the meandering loops between Wexford, Cranberry Township and Zelienople were bypassed and the road was straightened. Some of those bypassed loops can still be seen today. The stretch of road through Warrendale was relocated to the west. It then followed the present course of Route 19 through Cranberry Township.

Opposite North Boundary Road, instead of turning up Glen Eden Road and Old Route 19, the new four-lane highway was pushed straight north past Mashuda Corporation and the present site of the Butler Auto Auction. The deep ravine which had caused the semi-circular detour of the Perrysville and Zelienople Plank Road, and later of old Route 19, was filled in by heavy earthmoving equipment. A new roadbed was built across the filled-in area.

Pennsylvania Turnpike

While work was underway on the reconstruction of Route 19, another important road was opening. In 1951 the western extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike opened through Cranberry Township. The Turnpike was the first of America's superhighways. It extended across Pennsylvania to Ohio and eventually to the midwestern United States.

The Turnpike placed Cranberry Township at the crossroads of an east-west interstate highway (the Turnpike) and a major north-south highway (new Route 19). Because of this location, Cranberry Township became an ideal place for growth and development.

Interstate 79

In the early 1960s another important new road, Interstate 79, opened through Cranberry Township. It was eventually extended through southwest Pennsylvania and into West Virginia.

Known as the Pittsburgh-Erie Expressway, I-79 gave Cranberry Township speedy access to the areas to the west south of Pittsburgh. By linking with the Parkway West, it also provided an alternate route to Pittsburgh's South Hills and downtown Pittsburgh.

Most importantly, from the viewpoint of Cranberry Township's future growth, I-79 provided Cranberry Township with speedy access to greater Pittsburgh. Travel time to the Pittsburgh International Airport was reduced by about one half.

That left only downtown Pittsburgh as the one area to which Cranberry residents did not have speedy access. The most direct route was via Route 19 and McKnight Road. A roundabout way was via I-79 and the Parkway West. People traveling on either road ran a high risk of traffic congestion during commuter rush hours.

I-279

In 1989, I-279 opened to give I-79 southbound traffic a speedy access road to downtown Pittsburgh. This new road cut travel time from Cranberry Township to downtown Pittsburgh from about one hour to roughly 20 minutes. It had much less traffic congestion than McKnight Road or the Parkway.

The effect of all of those new roads was to make Cranberry Township more and more accessible (easy to get to) for increasing numbers of people. As Cranberry gained in accessibility, it continued to attract new businesses and new residents. That was particularly true of families who enjoy country living with modern conveniences. Population grew from 1,045 in 1950 to 14,816 in 1990.

But land for new homes--like land for new highways--must be acquired at the expense of those elements which comprise country living; namely, farms, meadows, woodland, open spaces and wildlife. Entering the 1990s, that was the dilemma (difficult choice) confronting the people of Cranberry Township.

