

## PART 2

### EARLY HISTORY

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#### **LOCATION**

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Penn Township is located in the western part of Westmoreland County in Pennsylvania, approximately 25 miles east of the city of Pittsburgh and 7 miles west of the county seat of Greensburg.

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#### **PAST**

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Penn Township, officially referred to as the Township of Penn, was named after the founder of Pennsylvania, William Penn. Incorporated February 23, 1855, it was the twenty-second township organized in Westmoreland County. Back then, the township consisted of about 40 square miles of land and had a population of 2000. Much of the population was of Scotch-Irish (Irish living in Scotland), German, and English decent. Settlers came to the area to farm its rich lands. Farmers grew grains such as corn, wheat, rye, buckwheat, barley, oats, and flax (which was used in making linseed oil and clothing). In addition, many farmers maintained orchards. Later in Penn Township's history, coal mining contributed to the economy.

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#### **BUSHY RUN BATTLEFIELD<sup>1</sup>**

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The 185 acres of forested and grassy areas that comprise Bushy Run Battlefield can be viewed as one large historical entity. The events that transpired here in August 1763, during Pontiac's War, forever set Bushy Run apart as a place of



historical significance. The battle near Bushy Run and the events of Pontiac's War leading to the battle add to the understanding of the Indian-European culture clash, which is an

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bushyrunbattlefield.com/History.html>

important theme in American history. The battle also has a place in the broader study of American settlement and expansion, and possesses great significance in the realm of British, American and Indian military history.

### ***A Significant Story***

The British victory at Bushy Run was the critical turning point in Pontiac's War. It also prevented the capture of Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) and restored lines of communication between the frontier and eastern settlements. The British victory helped to keep the "gateway to western expansion" open.



Pontiac, an Ottawa chief in the Detroit areas, retaliated against British policies and control following the collapse of New France at the close of the French and Indian War. Because of Pontiac's successful advances against the British, Indian revolts quickly spread eastward. His plans were covert until 1763 when attacks on British outposts began. By the end of July, nine British forts were captured, a tenth fort abandoned, and the

great strongholds of Pitt and Detroit under siege. The geographic area affected included the present states of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and parts of Maryland and West Virginia. Truly this was the greatest Indian threat to the British colonies during the 18th century.

Because the Indians so thoroughly controlled the frontier, information about the war filtered slowly east to the British high command. Once the scope of the situation was realized in late June, an expedition was organized to march west to Fort Pitt and then to proceed north and west to re-establish fallen forts. Colonel Henry Bouquet, a Swiss born professional soldier, commanded the expedition as it left Carlisle, Pennsylvania on July 18th. Indian scouts observed Bouquet's army marching west along Forbes Road and reported this to the large force of Indians surrounding Fort Pitt. The Indians decided to temporarily end their siege and

attack the British expedition in the open. The attack took place one mile east of Bushy Run Station on August 5th and 6th, 1763. The engagement resulted in a victory for the British.

National Register of Historic Places		
<b>Bushy Run Battlefield</b>	Applicable Criterion	EVENT
	Area of Significance	MILITARY
	Current Function	LANDSCAPE
	Current Subfunction	PARK
	Historic Function	DEFENSE
	Historic Subfunction	FORTIFICATION
	Level of Significance	NATIONAL
	Nominator	National Historic Landmark
	Other name	Bushy Run State Park
	Owner	STATE
	Period of Significance	1750-1799
	Significant Year	1763

Penn Township's first-class form of government started January 1, 1958. Being a first-class township, Penn Township is divided into five wards, with each ward electing one commissioner to the governing body. Penn Township has and operates its own police force, also a requirement of being a first-class township.

Shortly after becoming a first class township, Penn Township organized a municipal staff to run the township's daily operations. In addition, it purchased land to build the current municipal building, on which construction was first started in 1961. Additional land surrounding the original municipal building was purchased in 1969, and since that time several

additions have been made to the original building, with the most recent one completed in 2001.

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## ***PRESENT***

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Currently, Penn Township is primarily a residential community of about 33 square miles, with a population of about 19,670. Some of the original township land was lost when the areas of Trafford, Penn Borough, Jeannette, and Manor became their own municipalities.

Township government activities are handled by a board of commissioners, which is assisted by many other specialty boards and commissions. Daily township operations are handled by several full-time municipal staff employees. Penn Township's emergency personnel includes members of the police department, five volunteer fire departments, and ambulance service. All emergency calls are handled by dialing 911.

Penn Township is split into nine zip codes and, as of February 1, 1998, two telephone area codes. While most of the township uses Western Pennsylvania's newer 724 area code, Level Green residents in the western part of the township remain in area code 412 because their telephone numbers are Allegheny County exchanges.

Penn Township is always working to better the community. Recent projects include an expansion of the community library, the completion of a comprehensive recreational plan, and renovation of the municipal offices, and this updated comprehensive plan.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://trfn.clpgh.org/pennntp/history.html>

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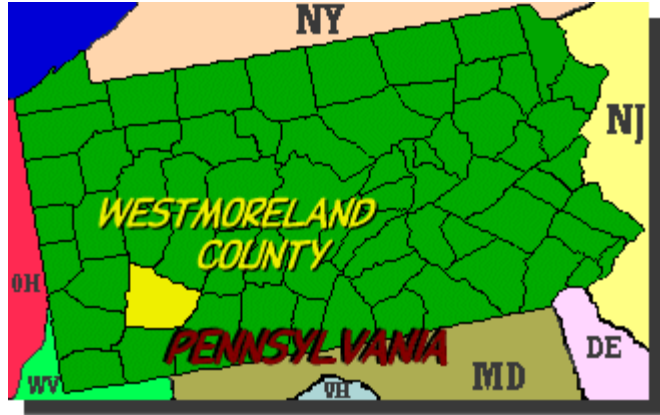
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## WESTMORELAND COUNTY

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Westmoreland County (population 370,000) was created on February 26, 1773, from part of Bedford County and named for a county in England. Greensburg, the county seat after 1785, was incorporated as a borough on February 9, 1799 and as a city in 1928. It was named for General Nathanael Greene. Hannastown, the original county seat, was burned by the British and Indians on July 13, 1782.



Westmoreland County, which is part of the Laurel Highlands, is the home of many historic sites, natural attractions, recreational activities and shopping services. A variety of dining establishments and lodging facilities can be found in the area. Westmoreland County offers countless quaint and interesting shops where you will find everything from arts and crafts to antiques. The region is dotted with pleasant little towns, many with historic significance.

Two hundred years will disappear before your eyes when you visit Westmoreland County and the Laurel Highlands. With its mountain vistas, historic highways, and scenic farmlands, the Laurel Highlands of Southwestern Pennsylvania is a beautiful place to visit throughout the year.

Come to visit Westmoreland County and enjoy its myriad of attractions tucked away in the Allegheny Mountains. Experience the legacy that helped to shape our nation.<sup>3</sup>

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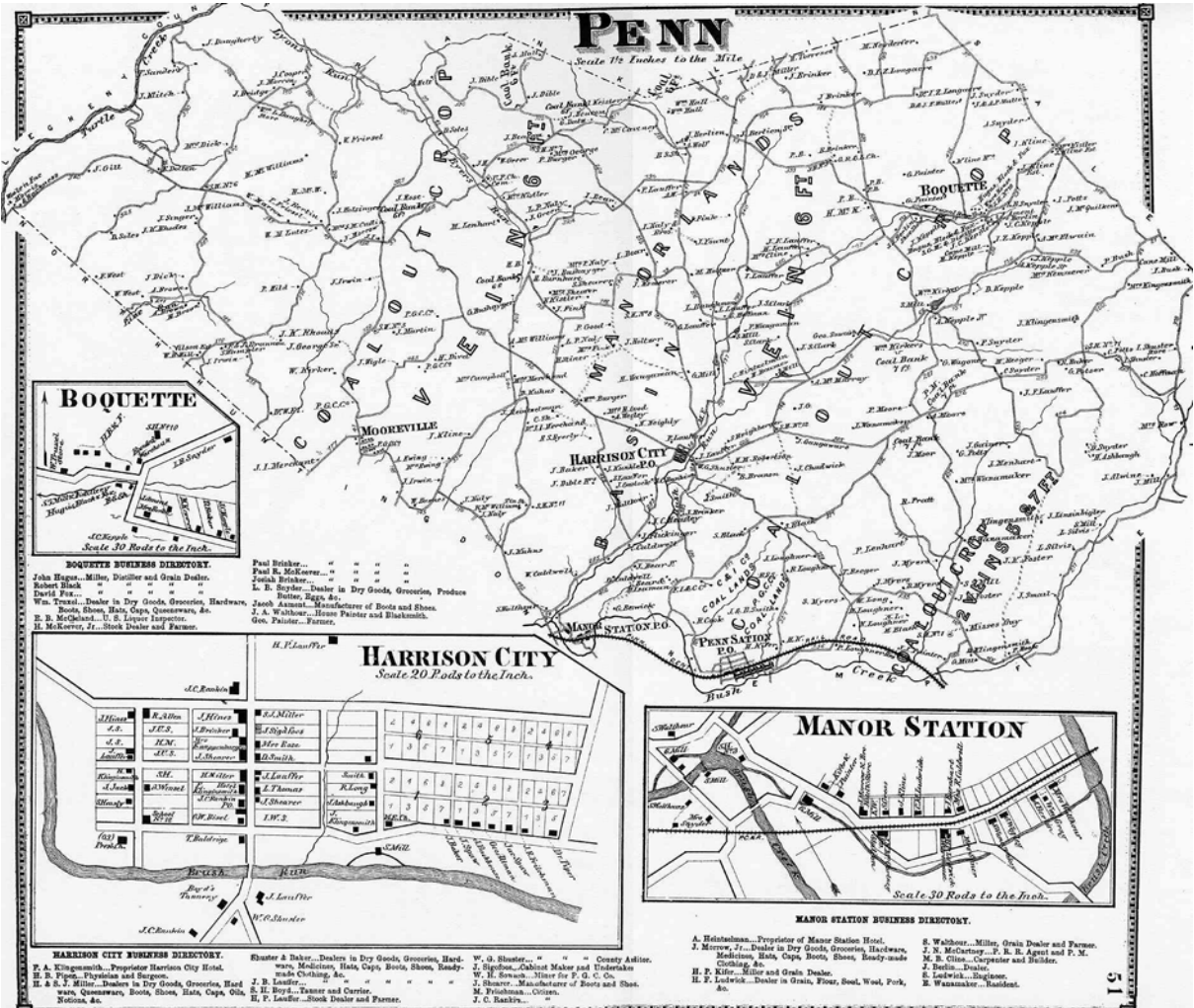
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pavisnet.com/westmoreland/are.html>

***SUMMARY OF EARLY HISTORY AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS (Section 301,  
Subsection a-4.1, Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code)***

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- Penn Township was incorporated February 23, 1855.
- Penn Townships' early economy was based on agriculture and coal mining.
- It organized as a Township as the 1st Class of January 1, 1958.
- At the time of incorporation, Penn Township was Westmoreland County's twenty-second Township.



Penn Township

1867<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> A larger, more legible version of this map is available for viewing at the Penn Area Library.