|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cecil Twp. (pp. 698-707)  History of Washington County, Pennsylvania[\*](http://www.chartiers.com/crumrine/twp-cecil.html#source)  Cecil was the third in the list of original townships of Washington County, and embraced in its territory the present township and all that portion of Allegheny County lying between Robinson Run and Chartiers Creek, and all the present township of Chartiers, as well as the northern portion of Mount Pleasant. The erection of Allegheny County in 1788 and the addition made to that county in 1789 reduced the territory of Cecil, which was further reduced to its present limits by the erection of Chartiers in March, 1790, and of Mount Pleasant in 1808. The township is bounded on the west by Mount Pleasant and Robinson; on the north and northeast by Allegheny County; on the east by Peters and North Strabane townships; on the south by Chartiers and Mount Pleasant townships. The only stream of any importance in the township is Chartiers Creek, which marks its eastern boundary.  **Settlements.-**One of the earliest settlers within the territory that is now Cecil township was Samuel Parks, who, in the autumn of 1777, came over the Allegheny Mountains in search of land on which to make a home. He purchased of Matthew Rodgers for four hundred and fifty pounds a parcel of land in two drafts on Chartiers' waters, containing five hundred and sixty-six acres. The bill of sale, marked No. 8, is dated Dec. 1, 1777. After the purchase he returned to his home at Lancaster and prepared to remove his family. He was to have possession of the land March 2, 1778. John and James, his sons, were sent on in advance to build a cabin, clear the land, and put in a crop. Their sister, Isabella, went with them as housekeeper. After a home was prepared the rest of the family removed to the farm. The land was afterwards warranted and surveyed. A portion of it was named "Deer Park." and contained four hundred and six and a half acres. On the 28th of June, 1782, by virtue of a land-office warrant (No. 1773) and in consideration of eighty pounds there was granted to Samuel Parks a tract of land which was surveyed to him Feb. 2, 1786, and containing one hundred and eighty-six acres and seventy-five perches, adjoining Thomas Braken; also a pre-emption warrant. On the 4th of September, 1786, the last tract was granted to John Parks, son of Samuel, and surveyed as "The Experiment," containing one hundred and seventy-five and seven-eighths acres, and deeded by Samuel and Margaret, his wife, Jan. 1, 1787; but in September following the patent was made out to Samuel Parks. He lived on the "Deer Park" tract till his death in 1794, aged sixty-five. His wife survived him till 1808. Their children were John, James, Mary, Isabella, and Hugh.  John Parks, son of Samuel, was born Dec. 18, 1758, in Donegal, Lancaster Co., Pa. In 1787 he married Sarah, daughter of John McDowell, of Strabane township, and settled on part of the Park Farm. On the 20th of April, 1809, John Park purchased the homestead in Cecil township, and removed to the farm. Of his children, Rebecca became the wife if James Rankin, and for some years lived in Pittsburgh, and later removed to Washington, where she died. James Rankin now resides in Denver, Col. William, a son of John and Sarah Parks, was born July 15, 1797. In 1831 he purchased three hundred acres of land in Peters township, and on the 29th of October, 1833, married Jane Law and settled on his farm. He was interested in sheep-raising and wool-growing. Soon after his marriage he purchased three hundred acres of land in Cecil township, including the tract "Experiment." He was for thirty years a trustee of Jefferson College, and for some years director of the Chartiers Valley Railroad Company. He died Nov. 6, 1870, aged seventy-three years, and left seven children. John, the eldest son, resides on the "Experiment" tract in Cecil; Robert and James reside in Peters township, and a daughter, Sarah, became the wife of J. L. Thompson, and resides in Westmoreland County.  McDowell Parks's, a son of John Parks, bought a part of the homestead farm in 1835, and lived there till his death, on the 24th April, 1877, aged sixty-seven years. He purchased other lands, and became a large land-owner, and wealthy. He never married, and the large estate was divided among the heirs. The home place was sold to A. J. Hopper in March, 1880. James Hickman, a son-in-law, now resides there.  The greater part of the home farm, "Deer Park," was intended for Hugh, the youngest child. He was born in 1767, and died when a young man, and before the death of this father. After the death of the mother in 1808 the farm was deeded to James Park by John Park and Col. John Marshall, executors, and was conveyed by James to John Park. It was purchased by William Boon, and is now owned by A. and J. Boon. William Boon was a soldier in the war of 1812, and was at Baltimore with the troops gathered for the defense of that city against the British under Gen. Ross in 1814.  James Parks, the second son of Samuel, was born in 1760, and came to Cecil township in 1778 to the new home. He was one of the volunteers who went out with Col. Crawford in 1782. He married Isabella, daughter of George Craighead, of Strabane township. He came into possession of part of the Park lands, and died Dec. 8, 1811, aged fifty-two years. His widow survived him twenty-two years, and died April 5, 1833, aged seventy years. Samuel, a son of James, inherited the farm, and married Sarah, half-sister of David Philips, Esq., of Peters township. In the fall of 1832 he sold out and removed to Wellsville, Ohio. Mary Park, born in 1761, the only daughter of Samuel, became the wife of Col. John Marshall, of Cross Creek, in 1782.  John Waits came from east of the mountains and located in a tract of land on the waters of Chartiers Creek in the spring of 1785. A cabin was built (under and oak-tree that is still standing), and he cleared off a small patch of ground. He died soon after, and a warrant was issued to Sarah Waits, his widow, dated April 5, 1786, "in trust for the use of the heirs of John Waits, deceased." It was surveyed and "The Charge," and contained three hundred and two acres, adjoining the land of Widow Moore, William McLaughlin, David McNary, and Samuel Brown. Patent for it was obtained Sept. 17, 1790.  Mrs. Sarah Waits was in 1788 assessed on two hundred acres of land. She died about 1810, and left three sons by a first husband, Joseph, Samuel, and John Blair, whose names are both mentioned in the assessment-roll of 1788. These sons emigrated to Kentucky. The children by John Waits, her second husband, were Betsey (Mrs. Daniel Welch; they settled on two hundred and forty acres in the township, and afterwards moved to Ohio), Richard, Reuben, Mary, Sarah and Jacob. Richard lived on the farm adjoining and died there, leaving a large family, none of whom are in the township. Mary became the wife of John Philips, of Winchester, Va., in 1799. They settled on the Wait homestead, and on the 31st of March, 1802, he purchased one hundred and sixty-acres adjoining. On this land they lived and died, leaving thirteen children. John, Aaron, and David settled in the township. James Philips is a son of John. De Kalb and Wayne Philips own the farm which Aaron settled upon, and David Philips resides on the homestead of his father and grandfather. His residence is under the shade of the great oak that stood near his grandfather's cabin in 1785, then a small tree.  Stephen Richards was one who took up lands under a Virginia certificate. It was surveyed to him as "Montgomery," and contained three hundred and forty-three acres, adjoining Thomas Faucett (whose land was in Allegheny County), Robert Hill, and Alexander Fowler. Hugh H. Brackenridge, as trustee, sold one hundred and ninety-one acres of the tract to Daniel South on the 22d of August, 1791. He sold the same property to Thomas Dunlap on the 26th of September, 1805. Dunlap emigrated from County Down, Ireland, with three sons, Thomas, James, and Alexander, and two daughters. James was the only one of the family who married. He settled on the homestead and had three children, John, Elizabeth, and Nancy. Elizabeth became the wife of Joseph Work and settled in Texas. Nancy married John B. Weaver and settled in North Strabane. John, the only son, settled on the homestead, where he still resides.  James Slater emigrated from Ireland and settled in Allegheny, where he lived and died. Three sons, John, William, and Thomas came to this township and settled. John lives near Venice. In 1843, William and Thomas purchased ninety acres of Matthew Harbeson, and lived together ten years, then each bought farmed, on which they now reside. Thomas bought one hundred and eighty-three acres of John Berry in 1855. William studied for the ministry, and in 1843, soon after coming to the township, became the pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church near his residence, but in Cartiers township.  David and John Reed, whose earlier history will be found in Mount Pleasant township, in connection with the Washington lands, came after their dispossession to this township. David, about the year 1788, purchased three hundred acres of land of Thomas Waller, which had been taken up by him before 1780, for which he received a Virginia certificate January 2d of that year. It was adjoining lands of Joseph Brown, David McNary, Matthew Acheson, John May, and Robert Miller. A warrant of acceptance was issued to David Reed by the board of property March 2, 1790, and patent granted April 21, 1813. He moved upon this farm when the contest for the Washington lands was decided, and lived there till his death in 1824, at seventy-seven years of age, leaving five sons and one daughter, ---Alexander, David, John, James,Joseph, and Mary. Alexander, the eldest son, married the daughter of Joshua Anderson, of Chartiers township, and settled in Ohio, where they remained several years, then returned to his father's farm and settled there and lived many years. He gave the portion that came to his possession to his sons, who sold to George Robb and removed to Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Alexander, the father, went with them and died there.  David, the second son of David Reed, located in Mount Pleasant township, and later removed to Allegheny County. He married Euphemia, daughter of James Paxton. The property he owned in Mount Pleasant township in now in possession of the Dinsmores. James Reed, the third son of David, married Jane, a daughter of John May, and settled on Miller's Run, in this township, where he lived and died. His sons George and Samuel now own the farm. James Reed, the fourth son, married Jane A. Allison, of Chambersburg, and located in Washington borough. He was a jeweler and watchmaker, and lived there many years, and finally removed to Pittsburgh and carried on the business there till his death in 1879. His sons James and George are living in Pittsburgh, and in the same business. Joseph, the youngest son of David Reed, married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Alexander, of Miller's Run. They settled on the homestead, but Mrs. Reed died only about six months afterward. Mr. Reed married as a second wife, Anna, the daughter of the Rev. David McClean, by whom he had four children, --- Margaret, a daughter, became the wife of Robert Henderson (a grandson of the Rev. Matthew Henderson), and settled in Chartiers; David settled at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, as a physician, and died in 1878. The youngest son is residing on the homestead and has charge of the farm. Joseph Reed, after the death of his second wife, married Martha Henderson, who is still living. Mr. Reed is now in his eighty-seventh year, and has retired from the active duties of life. His memory of the many incidents related by his father concering the Washington lands is still fresh, and many of the stories related of that affair are said by him to be without foundation.  Thomas Braken came to this territory about 1778, and took up a tract of land, for which he received a Virginia certificate in 1780. It was not surveyed until April 15, 1788, and was then named "The Three Shares," containing three hundred and forty acres, and was at that time adjoining lands of Samuel Parks and Robert Ralston. The patent for the tract was not obtained till March 30, 1802. On the 25th of November, 1783, he sold to William Hutton, who then lived on the place, one hundred acres adjoining Samuel Parks. Hutton sold the tract August 17th the next year to James Gaston, and he to William Cook. A deed was not given for the land till May 5, 1808. Thomas Bracken died between 1802 and 1806, leaving children, ---Thomas, Henry, John, Reed, Sally, Agnes (the wife of Rev. John Matthews), Hannah (Mrs. Joseph Thompson), Jane (Mrs. Richard Miller), and Mary Bracken. On the 25th of April, 1806, Reed and Sally Bracken sold to William Craighead one hundred and eighty acres of the estate, and on the 4th of October, 1816, the heirs sold to Henry Bracken one hundred and thirty-four acres, and to Richard Miller (husband of Jane Bracken) one hundred and thirty-four acres. Thomas became a Presbyterian minister, sold his land to Benjamin and Moses Coe, Erasmus Allison, and Thomas Kerr, and removed to Mercer County. John lived on the home place, and died there. Henry finally removed to the South, where he followed the profession of a teacher. Reed was educated at Canonsburg, and entered the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. Part of the property went from the Brackens to John Murray, and from him to James Craighead, and passed to Wesley Greer, by whom it was fold to the Pennsylvania Reform School, which now occupies the property.  Joseph Brown took out a warrant for a tract of land March 1, 1785, and warrant for another tract April 15, 1786. The first was surveyed as "Bon Ton," containing two hundred and two acres, adjoining land of Sarah Wait, Joseph Broen, and John Daniel, or Donnell. This tract was patented Nov. 24, 1791, after it came into possession of William Kerr, who bought it Sept. 11, 1789. The second tract was surveyed as "Bellgrade," and contained three hundred and sixty-seven acres; this tract was adjoining lands of John Daniel, or Donnell, Matthew Ritchie, and David Reed, and was on the banks of Miller's Run. This also was sold to William Kerr at the same time as the other and patented Nov. 25, 1791. He sold two hundred acres to William Cook, who lived there many years, and left three daughters and two sons, who are all dead except Mrs. Thomas McConnell. The farm is now owned by James White, of North Strabane township, and is occupied by his son Samuel. William also sold to James Jewell, his son-in-law, nearly the whole of the remainder, who lived there many years, and went to Ohio, where the family of Mrs. Jewell then resided. Mr. Jewell sold the property to different parties. Joseph Burnside purchased forty acres, where his son George now lives. About 1845, Nathan Tannehill purchased one hundred and thirty acres, where his son James now resides. Joseph Lindsey purchased a portion of the farm before the sale to Jewell, now owned by James Moore. Thomas Weaver bought of James Jewell eighty-six acres in 1848.  John Donnell came from Winchester, Va., in the year 1776, and settled in the territory that afterwards became a part of Cecil township. He located a tract of land under Virginia certificate. This certificate recites that "John Daniel is entitled to 400 acres of land in the county of Yohogania, situate on the waters of Shitree, to include his settlement made in the year 1776, also a right in pre-emption to two-hundred acres adjoining thereto." Another tract also was granted him on a Virginia certificate April 20, 1780. The first tract was surveyed to him Aug. 3, 1785, and was named "The Forrest," containing four hundred and eighteen acres, adjoining land of Thomas Bracken, Henry Donald, Matthew Ritchie on the 26th of January, 1788, and named "Hope," and contained four hundred and eighty acres. John Donnell was the son of Henry Donnell, who also came from Winchester, Va., and settled near John Canon. He came into possession of a portion of this land, and on the 19th of May, 1790, sold to his son John seventy-one acres of land adjoining that of John. Henry Donnell had three sons,---John, Joshua, and Charles. The last two came into possession of land adjoining their brothers. The land owned by Joshua is now owned by Andrew H. Griffin. The land owned by Charles is now in the possessions of the heirs of John Curry. Joshua and Charles, after a few years, sold their farm and went West. John Donald married Rebecca Evans, of Ten-Mile, in Amwell township. They settled on the land he took up, and had seven daughters and one son. The daughters married and settled in Mercer County, Pa. He married as a second wife Janet Lyle, of Peters Creek, in Peters township, by whom he had four daughters and three sons. The only on living of these children is Charles, a son, who lived on the old homestead. Henry, another of the sons, married Anna, the daughter of David Hay, of Chartiers township. They settled on the homestead also, where he died Nov. 9, 1881, in his eightieth year, leaving a widow and three children, of whom John H. Donnell and a sister live at the homestead. Mrs. Henry Donnell also lives there still, having reside there over fifty years. Of the eight hundred acres purchased by John Donnell, the present owners are Andrew H. Giffin, W. W. Gladden, John Conner, David Beaboat, John M. Smith, and John J. Donnell.  James Bunyan was from New York City, and had formerly been a sea captain. In 1795 John Morgan, a son of Col. George Morgan, married his only daughter Margaret, and as the Morgans removed to Morganza Mr. Bunyan was induced to come also to this section. He purchased two hundred acres of land belonging to Samuel Long and James Philips in the township of Cecil, on Chartiers Creek, opposite Morganza. John Morgan settled here; their son, Thomas Gibbs Morgan, became a leading lawyer in the State of Louisiana, and judge of the courts of that State. Another son, James, is now living in Pittsburgh. A colored man, Elias Prall, who came out with the family as a slave, is now living at Canonsburg at the age of eighty-five years.  Matthew Ritchie patented several tracts of land in this township. A part of one that was patented March 17, 1788, was sold to John Harper, who, on the 4th of April, 1814, sold to Hance McClelland two hundred and fifty-nine acres. Three years later he died and left it to his sons, John and Ebenezer. The latter sold his portion, one hundred and thirteen acres, Aug. 31, 1838, to Alexander McCloy, and purchased a portion of the Morganza tract.  There were many families of the name Fife, who settled early in what is now Allegheny County. John Fife came to this township, and on the 22d of February, 1799, purchased four hundred acres of land of Patrick Jordan, adjoining land of Reuben Waits. He had seven sons, William, Andrew, Robert, John, James, Thomas, and Nathaniel. The latter went West. William, Robert, Thomas, and James, all settled on the homestead. William and Thomas are still living there; the others are dead.  William Craighead, son of George Craighead of North Strabane township, came to Cecil in 1806, and on the 25th of April in that year purchased one hundred and eighty acres of Reed and Sally Bracken, heirs of Thomas Bracken, a part of the tract called "The Three Shares." His son George settled in Peters township. James and John, also sons, live on a farm adjoining Canonsburg. The homestead of William is now owned by William R. Craighead, son of George and grandson of William.  Robert Miller was a resident of the territory before it became Washington County. He took up under the offer of Virginia to settlers several tracts of land for which he received a Virginia certificate in 1780. One was surveyed Jan. 3, 1787, under the name of "The Cell," and contained three hundred and eighty-nine acres. It was at that time adjoining lands of Matthew Ritchie, William Hays, George Frazer, Robert Miller, Matthew Johnson. A warrant was granted to him by the Board of Property dated March 25, 1795, and returned April 1st, the same year. On the 27th of October, 1793, he sold ninety acres of this tract to Joseph McCombs. Another tract containing three hundred and eighty acres, called "The Valley," was surveyed Jan. 3, 1786. This tract was adjoining Joseph Brown, John May, and Matthew Ritchie. Patent for it was obtained in May, 1798. One hundred and one acres of it was sold May 16, 1794, to Nathaniel Caughey, and two hundred and one acre, April 10, 1795, to William Kerr. On the 28th of April, 1795, Robert Miller authorized Craig Ritchie to make a deed for John Hays and Nicholas Smith of a tract of land containing four hundred acres, adjoining land of William Kerr, John McCombs, Matthew Johnson, William Hays, and others, "in such sort that Joseph Hays is to have one hundred and one acres whereon he now lives, and Nicholas Smith the remainder where said Miller lived." Prior to the execution of the deed Miller moved to Kentucky. Joseph McCombs purchased ninety acres of land Oct. 27, 1793, of Robert Miller, and lived there till his death. He had seven or eight daughters who became widely scattered by their settlement in life. Joseph Thompson, a native of Ireland, emigrated to the eastern part of Pennsylvania, where he lived several years, and in 1802 came to this township and settled northeast of Canonsburg, where he had purchased forty acres of land. He had three children,—Joseph, William, and Elizabeth. Joseph married Hannah, daughter of Thomas Bracken, and settled on Pigeon Creek. William settled on the home farm, and lived there till his death. His son Joseph settled in Canonsburg over fifty years ago, and is still a resident. Elizabeth became the wife of a Mr. McMillan, and settled on Pigeon Creek near the Newkirks.  Robert and Thomas Hill came from Adams County, Pa., before 1781, and settled in Cecil township. Robert purchased two hundred acres of land now owned by Arthur Hooper. He lived to be over ninety years of age, and left three sons and six daughters,—William, Amos, James, Ann, Sally, Betsey, Polly, Temperance, and Jane. William and Amos settled on the homestead. James went West. But two of the family ever married, the oldest daughter and the youngest son. Thomas Hill purchased at sheriff s sale one hundred and fifty acres of what was known as the Rowley Patent. He married a daughter of William Hanna, who lived at that time in Allegheny County. In 1812 he built a log cabin on the site of the present residence of his son William. He died in 1824, and left two sons and four daughters. William was born in 1794, and now lives en the homestead. Thomas, the other son, was a carpenter and moved to Pittsburgh, where lie still resides.  Neil McCloy was a native of Ireland, and a physician. He emigrated from Lancaster with two sons, of whom Alexander became a physician, and practiced in that county. He came to this county in 1835, purchased, October 19th of that year, eighty acres of John Bracken, part of the Robert Miller tract, which had been sold to Kerr, and in 1838 purchased one hundred and thirteen acres of land of Ebenezer McClelland, now owned by Nathaniel McKnight and John Hays. David D. McCloy was the only son of Alexander by a first wife. Other children, by a second wife, emigrated West, except Samuel, who settled on the home farm, where he lived till well advanced in life, and sold the farm and moved to Canonsburg, where he died.  Alexander and Matthew McConnell, brothers, came from Cumberland, Maryland, and located in this township, and in 1785 patented a tract of land containing three hundred and twenty acres, now occupied by D. L. and J. P. McConnell, grandsons of Matthew. Alexander was a soldier is the Whiskey Insurrection. He bought part of a farm, on which his grandsons Alexander and D. T. McConnell now reside. Alexander, Sr., had three sons,—Alexander, David, and Matthew. Alexander bought part of the Morganza tract, and lived there till he died. The farm is now owned by John and Alexander McConnell, his sons. The former lives on the farm, the latter at McConnell s mills in Chartiers township. David settled on the home farm in Cecil, and his sons now own the farm. Matthew also settled on a farm adjoining, and his sons reside there.  William Berry, a son of John Berry, who lived on the Washington lands in Mount Pleasant township, bought the mill property and a farm at and near what is now Venice, where he lived until 1834, when he moved to and lived one year on the Slater farm, and in 1836 went to North Strabane township and purchased a tract of land of Craig Ritchie, now owned in part by his son Matthew Berry.  William Acheson bought lands now owned by Joseph Cowden. He had three children, who all emigrated. He sold a part of the farm to one Stephenson, who sold to Cowden. A part was sold to Benjamin Fisher.  James and Hugh Sprawls were early residents in the township. The former was assessed on four hundred acres, and the latter on two hundred acres, in1788. They lived on or near the county line.  Robert Wilson lived on a farm nearly opposite Morganza. Among his sons were Rev. Thomas Wil son and James and William Wilson.  Alexander May came from Lancaster, and purchased a tract of four hundred acres of land. He had five sons—Arthur, John, Alexander, Samuel, and David—and two daughters, Margaret and Mary. Arthur and Alexander were physicians, and practiced in Lancaster and Chester Counties, Pa. Arthur died in 1810. John married a Miss Ross, and settled in this township. Alexander, his son, married a daughter of John Berry, settled on the homestead, and died in Venice. His son, John B., lives in Canonsburg. John married the daughter of William Berry, Esq., and settled on land now owned by Mankadick and John Hays. Samuel was a teacher, and settled in Chanango, Pa., and died there. David settled on the homestead and died there, leaving two sons—Alexander and David—and a daughter, Jane. Alexander went to Virginia; David settled in Peters township; Jane became the wife of Lewis Grier, and settled in Smith township. Margaret, the eldest child of Alexander May, Sr., became the wife of David Reed and settled in the township. Mary became the wife of Joseph Cowden, and settled in Cecil.  A. J. Hopper is a son of Samuel Hopper, who settled in Allegheny County in 1812. In 1847 he came into Cecil and purchased the property on which lie now lives of the heirs of Joseph Hill, a son of Robert, who was a resident in the township from about 1791. In 1880 lie purchased the McDowell Parks estate.  Samuel McPherson came from Lancaster Co., Pa., in 1849. He married Rebecca, the daughter of Andrew Giffin, of Cecil and purchased of one Kennedy a part of the old Logan farm. He built the grist-mill and a distillery; the latter was running for many years. He was for many years an elder in the United Presbyterian Church of Canonsburg. He died in 1817. His sons, J. H., W. B., and Robert S., are now living in the township.  William Elliot came from Canton township to this section, and purchased a part of the tract of land taken up by Robert Ralston. On this farm he settled, and the farm was left to his son, J. S. Elliot, who was born on the place, and was at one time county commissioner. His son, J. S. Elliot, and his widow, now reside on the property.  Samuel Moorhead bought the farm on which his sons W. B. and J. Moorhead now reside. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Hugh Sprowls, of Cecil township. He was at one time justice of the peace.  William Gladden came from the East, and purchased lands in Cecil township, now owned by his son Richard. He married Mary, the daughter of Benjamin Kelso, of Allegheny County. She is still living on the homestead.  The family of Hickman were early settlers in Allegheny County when it was yet a part of Washington County, but it was not until 1832 that any of them came to this county. At that time Benjamin Hickman inherited a farm from his father which was in the limits of Cecil township, and on which his son John now resides. Moses Hickman, also a son of Benjamin, bought the old Logan farm in 1865, and still resides there.  James Little came from the north of Ireland, and took out a warrant in 1785 for a tract of land on a part of which his son Joseph and a grandson now reside. He had three sons and one daughter,—John, Nicholas, Joseph, and Isabella. John lived and died on the homestead. Nicholas was a bachelor. Isabella was unmarried. Joseph settled on the. homestead, where be still lives. He is now seventy-five years of age, and can remember hearing his father relate that when he first came to the county they were in the habit of working on the farm in the daylight, and at night going to the block-house at McDonald's. James Little married a Miss Robb.  Joseph Cowden a son of John Cowden, of Mount Pleasant, came to this township in 1848, and purchased the Oram farm, on which he now resides. He married Mary, the youngest daughter of Alexander May. Mrs. Ewing, of Allegheny County, who was killed by the Indians in one of their raids, was his grandmother.  Cornelius Borland came from Allegheny County in 1840, and bought the Rev. Dr. Riddle farm. His ancestors were early settlers in that section. He married Rebecca, daughter of Benjamin. Kelso. His sons, M. H., A. C., and J. K. Borland, now own the farm.  In 1781, when Washington County was laid out, John Armstrong lived on Miller s Run, where now the county line crosses the creek. He also had a mill in operation. Nothing has been learned of his history; the place, however, has been occupied as a mill-site through all these years. The present mill was built by Samuel Morgan, and was for several years owned by A. Greer. It is now owned by William Crane.  **Justices of the Peace.-**Following is a list of persons appointed and elected to the office of justice of the peace in Cecil township from its erection to the present time, viz.:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Matthew McConnell, July 15, 1781. John Reed, July 15, 1781. John Canon, Oct. 6, 1784. John Reed, Nov. 8, 1788. Craig Ritchie, Nove. 14, 1784. James McBurney, April 3, 1799. Alexander Murdock, April 2, 1804. George Morgan, Jr., Feb 6, 1807. Samuel Miller, Oct. 20, 1808. George Anderson, April 1, 1809. John Watson, April 14, 1809. John White, March 21, 1810. William Berry, Dec. 13, 1815. James Moore, April 14, 1819. John White, Jan. 23, 1819. William Colmery, Jan. 5, 1825. Jeremish Emery, Jan. 11, 1828. John Morgan, Oct. 15, 1832. David Hays, May 21, 1834. James McClelland, Marcy 15, 1836. | Joseph Vaneman, April 19, 1838. John McCord, April 9, 1850. Samuel McPherson, April 14, 1840. John Moorhead, April 14, 1840. Henry Donnell, April 15, 1845. John Moorhead, April 15, 1845. Samuel McPherson, April 9, 1850. Henry Donnell, April 10, 1853. Joseph Reed, April 10, 1855. John A. McCord, April 10, 1860. Henry Donnell, April 10, 1860. James S. Elwell, April 17, 1866. John A. McCord, May 2, 1866. W. B. Moorhead, June 17, 1870. James Epsy, April 1, 1871. W. B. Moorhead, June 17, 1874. James Epsy, Jan. 31, 1874. M. H. Borland, March 17, 1875 A. J. Hooper, March 17, 1875. M. H. Borland, March 30, 1880. Arthur J. Hopper, March 30, 1880. |   **Venice.-**The town of Venice was laid out by James McLaughlin in 1844, on land formerly owned by Ephraim Johnson and — Welch. It was bought by Samuel McLaughlin, who owned the mill property on Miller s Run at that place. A post-office and store were opened about 1848. The mill has been operated many years. At an early day it was owned by David Andrews, who sold to one Walker, and he to William Berry. It descended to his son John, who sold to McLaughlin. It is now owned by J. Byerly.  Venice contains a store, post-office, school-house, two carriage-shops, two blacksmith-shops, and about ten dwellings. The people of this section worshiped the Miller s Run Presbyterian Church and the United Presbyterian Church.  **Fawcett Church (Methodist Episcopal).—**The date of the organization of this church is not known, as no minutes were kept prior to 1842. The first record having reference to it is a survey of the lot on which the present church edifice is erected. The lot was donated by Andrew Fawcett, and was surveyed Aug. 12, 1812. A log meeting-house was afterwards built, and services were held occasionally when an itinerant preacher chanced to pass that way. The first mention of a board of trustees is in minutes kept by them from April 4, 1842, with regularity till 1850, when many years intervene before records were again kept. The old log church was used as a place of worship till 1883, when the present brick church was built. It has from the first been a station supplied by ministers from other charges. In 1877 the Rev. D. M. Hollister was appointed pastor of Canonsburg and Fawcett Churches. In 1878 the Rev. M. L. Weekly had the charge. After that time it was placed with Bridgeville in one change, and under the care of the Rev. B. C. Wolf. It is at present in the care of the Rev. George. Hudson. It has now fifty members.  **United Presbyterian Congregation of Venice.—**On the 4th day of September, 1849, a petition from certain persons living in the neighborhood of Venice was presented to the Associate Presbytery of Chartiers, asking for the organization of a congregation in their vicinity. On the 25th day of the same month a similar petition from persons residing in the same neighborhood was received by the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Monongahela.. Each Presbytery granted the prayer of its petitioners. The Rev. Thomas Hanna, D.D., by authority of the Presbytery of Chartiers, organized the "Associate Congregation of Miller s Run" on the 24th day of September, 1849, at which time Alexander Reed, James McPeak, and Joseph Little were elected ruling elders.  The Rev. James Greer, D.D., having been appointed by the Presbytery of Monongahela, organized the "Associate Reformed Congregation of Venice," about the 1st of March, 1850. John Cockins, John Rowan, and Samuel McLaughlin were elected elders.  The first named of these congregations enjoyed, almost from the date of its organization, the joint pastoral services of Drs. Anderson and Beveridge, who were professors in the theological seminary, then located at Canonsburg. By the death of Dr. Anderson (which occurred the 8th day of May, 18561, and the removal of Dr. Beveridge with the seminary to Xenia, Ohio, the same year, the congregation was left, for the remainder of its separate history, without pastoral care.  The Rev. S. L. Fairley was the first and only pastor of the Associate Reformed Congregation of Venice. His pastorate began June 28, 1853, and ended Dec. 25, 1855. Thus these two congregations, which had struggled into existence together, which had erected houses of worship thee same season on adjoining lots of gound, and which had obtained the pastoral services of good and faithful men, became "vacancies" the same year, and continued for about the same length of time dependent on their respective Presbyteries for supplies of preaching.  The union of the Associate and Associate Reformed Churches in the spring of 1858 prepared the way for a speedy consolidation of these hitherto rival organizations. They were formally united under the name and title of the United Presbyterian Congregation of Venice on the 8th day of November, 1858. The session of the united congregation consisted of James McPeak, Joseph Little, John Cockins Samuel Morehead, John B. White, and John P. McConnell. The present pastor was installed April 17, 1860. The present elders are Joseph Little, John P. McConnell, John B; Kelso, Joseph Cowden, John P. Scott, Charles Wallace, David White, and John Mawkinney. James Patterson, Andrew Borland, and S. W. Scott constitute the present board of trustees. Superintendent of Sabbath-school, S. W. Scott; Secretary and Treasurer of Sunday-school, W. W. Kelso. The present membership of the congregation is 215.  **Miller s Run Presbyterian Church.—**At a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of Rev. William Smith, D.D., held at the Miller s Run Presbyterian Church, May 14 and 15, 1873, Dr. Smith delivered an address, in which he gave a history of the congregation, from which the following account is mainly taken: The Miller s Run congregation was organized about the year 1800. This is inferred from the fact that its name appears for the first time on the records of the Ohio Presbytery for that year. On the 26th of June in that year Rev. John Watson was ordained and installed pastor. He died Nov. 20, 1802, and was succeeded by Rev. James Dunlap, who preached as stated supply till the 22d of April, 1312, when he removed to the bounds of the Redstone Presbytery. Rev. Andrew Wylie was ordained and installed June 23, 1813, and remained pastor till May 28, 1817. He was succeeded by Rev. William McMillan, who labored as stated supply till April, 1823. (All the ministers named above were presidents of Jefferson College.) At the April meeting of Presbytery in 1823, in accordance with a request of the people, Dr. Smith was appointed to supply the congregation without any limitation as to time, and on the first Sabbath of May in that year he commenced his labors as stated supply. He was ordained, sine titulo, to the office of the ministry Dec. 81, 1824, but was never formally installed pastor of the congregation. The following are the names of the elders who officiated in the congregation when he commenced his ministerial labors in it: Alexander McElroy, William Simpson, John Aiken, John Lindsay, Andrew Vaneman, and James Jerviss. The first meeting-house was built of logs, about the year 1790. It was very uncomfortable, and when the weather was favorable the congregation preferred to meet at the tent in the grove, a little below where the sexton s house now lands.  In 1828 the number of communicants was eighty-five. This increased to one hundred and thirty. Three hundred and fifty communicants were admitted on examination during the ministry of Dr. Smith. In the fifty years of his ministry seventeen young men in the congregation received a liberal education. Eleven became ministers of the gospel. When he commenced his labors in the congregation there was not a carriage, buggy, or vehicle of any kind to be seen on the ground belonging to the congregation. Those who had horses came to church on horseback; those who had none came on foot. It was not an a usual thing to see girls on their way to church carrying their shoes and stockings, which they put on when they came near the church. When the religious services were ended they proceeded a short distance from the church, unshod themselves, and returned to their homes barefooted as they came. This was customary not only at Miller s Run Church, but all over the Western country.  The ministry of the Rev. Dr. Smith was closed by his resignation after about a half-century of service. After his retirement the Rev. William Ewing, who has charge of the Canonsburg Academy, was appointed by the Presbytery as a supply, and is still in charge.  **Schools—**But little is known of the early schools of the township, except that they were scattered, kept irregularly, and by subscription. About 1804 and 1805, Joseph Reed remembers attending school on the farm now owned by Jane Oram. It was taught by Samuel May in a log cabin. He taught about one and a half years. The close proximity of the township to the Canonsburg Academy, and later Jefferson College, gave to the rising generation a great advantage over more remote townships, but it was not until the passage of the school law in 1834 that any step was taken towards the establishment or general education, and then Cecil was backward in accepting the provisions of the law. In 1835 there were 251 persons living in the township liable to taxation for school purposes, and in that year the amount raised by taxation and collected was $208.12. In the two succeeding years (1836 and 1837) the township did not accept the requirements of the school law, and only the State tax of $69.07 was raised in 1836, sad the State tax only in 1837. After that time the township fell into line with the others of the county. It was not, however, until 1838-38 that the people favored the erection of the township into school districts. At that time seven districts were laid out, and there remained practically unchanged until about 1878, when another district was erected. In 1883 there were 288 scholars enrolled, $1894.48 was raised for school purposes, and an expenditure of $2379.24. In 1873 there were 253 scholars; receipts for school purpose, $2259.46; expenditures, $2035.96. In 1880 there were 280 scholars; receipts, $2939.79; expenditures, $2482.91.  **Pennsylvania Reform School.—**The Legislature of the State of Pennsylvania, on the 22d of April, 1850, granted a charter for a "House of Refuge," to be located in Allegheny County, and under the control of twenty-six managers, a part of whom were contributors to the institution. An organization was effected in 1851, and a contract was made in August, 1852, for a building, which was completed and formally opened on the 18th of December, 1854. The institution opened with five inmates (as appears from the first report of the superintendent). The numbers increased rapidly, and inmates were received from Allegheny and adjoining counties.  The managers appointed by the Governor in 1869 were John W. Irvine. B. P. Nevin, James P. Barr, B. S. Waring, A. P. Keating, of Allegheny County; Thomas McKennan, of Washington County; and Jacob Weyand, of Heaver County. The following from the report of the managers made in 1878 shows the progress of the school and the change to Morganza, its present location:  From 1854, the time of its first opening, until December, 1876, the school was conducted under the congregate system, and the inmates were trained behind high walls and bolts and bars. With further light and a wider experience upon such matters, in 1872 the ‘family plan was discussed, and a committee of the board was appointed to visit the ‘congresses held for the advancement of such objects. After due consideration it was resolved to adopt the ‘family system, and to remove the school to a location some distance from the city. After a thorough examination of various sites, the ‘Morganza farm was purchased."  The amount of land purchased was five hundred and three acres, at a cost of $88,621.20. On the 1st of May, 1873, contract was made for laying stone for foundations of two main buildings and four family dwellings. In July the same year contracts for the buildings were given out, and on the 15th of July that year the corner-stone of the main building was laid by Governor John F. Hartranft, with imposing ceremonies. The estimates made for the different buildings were as follows: Main building, $80,000; girls department, $40,000; boys department, $25,000; church, $15,000; workshops and improvement of grounds, $40,000; total, $200,000. These buildings were not erected at once, and the church is not yet (1882) erected. The amount of money expended in 1873, according to the report of the managers (February, 1874), was $91,962.54. In May, 1874, another building was erected. The buildings were completed and ready for occupancy in the fall of 1876, and on the 12th of December of that year the inmates from the Allegheny premises were removed to Morganza.  In June, 1876, application was made in the Court of Common Pleas No. 1 of Allegheny County for an amendment of the charter. The amendment provided for putting the institution under control of the State, as under its provisions sixteen of the twenty-six managers are appointed by the Governor, subject to approval by the Senate, "instead of their being elected as heretofore by the contributors." In 1878 there were in the institution forty-five girls and two hundred and fifty-five boys, occupying the main and five family buildings. On the 3d of October, 1878, agreeable to an act passed by the Legislature, the managers transferred to the State all right, title, and interest in about fourteen acres of ground in the Ninth Ward, Allegheny, with buildings, engines, fixture, etc., known as "the House of Refuge property, Wood s Run," for the sole use and benefit of the Western Penitentiary, excepting certain lots mentioned as sold.  An effort was made to transfer the control of the school entirely to the State. The Washington County commissioners, who had a voice in the control of the school, relinquished all claim to the management on the 31st of January, 1879, and on the 30th of April of that year a bill passed the Legislature authorizing and directing the managers to transfer entire control to the State, which was done. The first meeting of the board of managers (consisting of sixteen members) After the passage of this bill was held on the 5th of May, 1879. The officers were Thomas Wightman, president; John F. Dravo, vice-president; A. J. Keating, secretary; and J. J. Gillespie, treasurer.  The obtaining of a supply of pure water was for a long time a source of considerable trouble and anxiety. The farm committee, in their report of 1878, said,—  "Your committee, after careful examination of all fact, in the case came to the conclusion that the only feasible plan of securing a good and sufficient supply of water for the institution was to filter and pump from Chartiers Creek. Acting on this idea they secured all the information on the subject of filtering they could find access to, and adopted the plan now under contract. The contract was immediately advertised and let to the lowest bidders, Messrs. C. G. Dixon & Co., for the sum of $3700. Your committee also received proposals for a steam pump, and adopted the "Eclipse," manufactured by H. D. McKnight & Co., of Pittsburgh. For furnishing which, together with boilers and necessary pipe to connect pump with main water line, contract was given to Messrs. D. McKnight A Co. to the sum of $1875 for pump and boilers complete, and eighty-two cents per foot for furnishing and laying necessary pipe make connection with main." The superintendent, in his report for 1878, said,—  "The important improvement for securing permanent supply of pure water is well under way also, and in the hands of the farm committee will doubtless be completed early in the coming month. It will include when finished large basin heavily walled with stone, and filled to the depth of seven or eight feet with the moat approved material for filtering purposes. It was built on the margin of Chartiers Creek, and supplied with valve inlets for the introduction of water as required. Much of the excavation necessary to secure a proper depth for this basin has been through beds of solid rock, and several fine springs have been opened which will help to make the supply inexhaustible.  "In connection will, this a receiving well is being sunk, having a capacity of fifteen hundred barrels, to be walled with brick, thoroughly grouted and cemented, and covered for protection from the weather with substantial roof.  "A new ‘Eclipse pumping-engine, with a capacity of three hundred barrels per foot, together with double flue boilers, are ready for the foundations now in course of construction, which, with buildings for protection of same, new under contract, will complete all the necessary arrangements for he purposes named.  "It may be well to state in this connection that, owing to important changes in the original plan of this improvement, made by your direction, the expense has been greeter than at first estimated, even under the most economical management, and will therefore neceesitate an appliction to our next Legislature for additional appropriations to cover the deficit. There can be no resonable doubt that with the present expenditures the institution will secure a full and lasting supply of spring and filtered water, except perhaps for laundry purpose.  "Plans for an ice-house large enough to store some three hundred tons have been submitted by the building committee. This will be placed near the creek and adjacent to the public waiting-room, in order to secure a steam connection for hoisting apparatus over an incline extending to the creek margin.  "Plans also for a new depot building have been furnished by the architect, and are now under supervision by the building committee. This is expected to include, in addition to a public waiting-room for passengers and a freight-room, sufficient accommodations for residence of the station-agent, dining- and lunch-rooms, and several lodging-rooms for the use of persons visiting the institution. It is expected also that the post-office will be removed to this building when completed. For the purpose named a structure will be required exceeding in cost the appropriation already made from twelve to fifteen hundred dollars."  In his report for 1880 the superintendent mentioned the improvements made up to September Both ‘of that year, as follows:  "The greater portion of all labor has been done by inmates, the number of days of farm labor aggregating three thousand one hundred and eighty-six and on improvements to grounds of the institution, seven thousand two hundred and sixty-seven days. During the summer a limestone quarry has been opened on the farm, for the purpose of securing stone for roadways; a crusher for breaking stone has been erected, and the roadways are being evenly covered with broken limestone; some four thousand feet of French drains have been dug at either side of main roadway and the sides laid with brick water tables; about two thousand yards of concrete pavement has been laid at rear of main building, and the passage-way between the main building and bakery graded, macadamized, and otherwise improved. The grounds about the main entrance have been graded and ornamented. Two additional green-houses, eighty by twelve feet each have been erected for propagating bedding-plants and growing early vegetables, most of the material for which had formerly been in use for hot-beds.  "Much difficulty has heretofore been experienced in securing sufficient quantity of ice from time the small stream skirting the grounds of the institution, and during the present summer an ice-pond has been prepared, covering some two acres of ground, from which we hope to secure an abundant supply of ice; and the sheet of winter will be quite an ornamental feature in the beauty of our lawns. In addition to the labor performed by inmates on the farm and grounds, we have five boys employed in the shoe-shop, who have during the year made 657 pairs of shoes, repaired 1135 pairs of shoes, repaired 25 sets of harness. Seven boys in the tailor-shop made 960 pairs of pants, 138 coats. 92 jackets, 38 vests, 20 curtains, 64 bed-ticks, 34 sheets, 40 pillow-slips, 643 napkins, 14 aprons, 70 towels, and repaired upwards of 402 pants and coats. Some twenty-five of the inmates are members of the brass band, which meets weekly for instruction and drill, under the direction of Prof. Aborgast, and perform in a very creditable manner.  "During the month of June a contract was entered into for the erection of workships, thirty-six by seventy-two feet in demension and two stories high, with basement, and the building is now in process of completion, and will soon be ready for occupancy. At a meeting of the board held May 10,1980, Col. G. A. Shalleberger resigned his position as superintendent. The resignation was accepted by the board, and Mr. J. A. Quay, the present incumbent, was unanimously chosen to fill the vacancy. We desire to hear testimony to the untiring effort of Col. Shallenberger for the interests of the school; and as well to the like efforts on the part of Mr. Quay, who was somewhat suddenly called to so responsible a position, and to the aid and assistance afforded by Mr. C. H. Reid, his worthy assistant. Mrs. Van Meter, the matron of the female department, tendered her resignation, and Mrs. Beacon was chosen to succeed her. It has been cause for congratulation that we were able at once to fill these important offices with so efficient and reliable men and women. No doubt very much of our success is due to the energy and watchfulness of the other officers, who are perhaps the best fitted for their respective duties of any we have ever had."  Following is a list of the present (1882) officers of the institution, viz.: Board of Managers—President, Thomas Wightman; Vice-President, James P. Barr; Secretary, A. F. Keating; Treasurer, J.. J. Gillespie; James Allison, T. J. Bigham, Josiah Cohen, C. Troutman, James McCullough, Thomas McKennan, John N, Neel, R. P. Nevin, R. S. Waring, Malcolm Hay, Joseph Woodwell, J. Weyand.  Resident officers: J. A, Quay, superintendent; T. B, Jackson, clerk; Alexander McMorrow, steward; J. W. Alexander, M.D., physician; Andrew Boland, chief engineer; J. P. Stewart, farmer; Mrs. E. H. Beacom, matron.  **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.**  **JAMES CRAIGHEAD.**  The Craigheads are descended from a Scotch missionary of that name who settled inVirginia in her colonial days. The first of whom the family in this section have any authentic record is George Craighad, who was a native of Virginia. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary war, and was wounded at the battle of Brandywine. He married Anna Bratton and came to Washington County about 1794, and settled in North Strabane township. Their children were Thomas, Isabel, Hester, Elizabeth, Millie, Margaret, and William, in uncertain order: The last named, William Craighead. followed his father s vocation, that of farming, in which he achieved marked success. He married Jane Boggs, and to them were born six children,—George, who married Elizabeth Neal, James, William, Nancy, Thomas, and John, of whom James and John are the only ones now living. James Craighead was born in North Strabane township, Washington Co., Pa., Feb. 10, 1805. He learned the carpenter s trade but never followed it, except so far as It was needed in the enlargement and improvement of his farm buildings. His life business has been farming. He has deserved to succeed, and has succeeded. Those who knew him best in his prime placed a high estimate upon his judgment and esteemed him for his uprightness. For many years he has been a member of the Presbyterian Church. In 1870 he was elected by the Democratic party commissioner of Washington County. He gave to the duties of his office the care and fidelity which he was wont to give to his private business, and his constituents were satisfied. His principal possessions are his farms, stock, and the Chartiers Woolen-Factory, of which be became the owner about five years ago. |

|  |
| --- |
| \*Boyd Crumrine, "History of Washington County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men" (Philadelphia: L. H. Leverts & Co., 1882).  Transcribed by Sharon McConnell of Coto de Caza, CA in April 1998. Published in May 1998 on the Washington County, PA USGenWeb pages at [http://www.chartiers.com.](http://www.chartiers.com/) |