

TOWNSHIP PROFILE, HISTORY AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Local History

Warren County--named after General Joseph Warren, killed at the Battle of Breed's (Bunker) Hill during the Revolutionary war--was established in 1803 as one of Ohio's original 17 counties. Part of the Northwest Territory, Ohio's entry as the 17th State in the Union was provided for in the Northwest Ordinance. Enacted in 1787, it was the first legislation by the Continental Congress affecting real property, also predating the Constitution of the United States.

The influence of humans within Ohio, of course, significantly predates this period. Earthworks constructed by prehistoric "Mound Building Indians" are found in many areas of the State. From approximately 100 B.C. to between 500 and 600 A.D., the Hopewell peoples occupied portions of Warren County, constructing earth and stone works from four to 23 feet in height. Locally, the most renown is "Fort Ancient", located along the eastern banks of the Little Miami River in Washington Township. Long thought to be strictly for defensive purposes, it is now believed to have served elaborate social and ceremonial functions as well. Subsisting on wild game, corn and other wild plants, the Hopewell's were permitted the luxury of spare time to develop earthworks and on artistic endeavors. Artifacts even suggest trade with neighboring cultures from as far away as Montana, Missouri, Michigan, as well as the Gulf and Atlantic coasts.

Around 1200 A.D., groups of what have become known as Fort Ancient Indians re-occupied many of the Hopewell sites. Evidence indicates that this group, primarily farmers, constructed homes and took advantage of the previously created earthworks. It is not fully understood why both cultures ended, Fort Ancient being uninhabited when the first Europeans arrived. More recent native habitation in Ohio is dated from the mid-1600's. Early European traders have recorded that Indian peoples occupying the land had no knowledge of the Mound Builders, or their culture.

Title to land claimed by the various Indian tribes for hunting, fishing, farming and settlement purposes (Indians did not claim actual ownership of the land), was removed or awarded by several treaties. Warren County land was impacted first by the Treaty of Ft. McIntosh (1785) and the subsequent Treaty of Greenville (1795). In all, 11 tribes were involved in the later document, the Miami and Shawnee peoples being directly impacted in Southwestern Ohio.

France claimed what is now Ohio until 1763, when the "Great West" was assigned by treaty to England following the French and Indian War. During the Revolutionary War, George Rogers Clark and his troops defeated the British at Vincennes, Indiana in 1779, the Americans thereby taking control of the Northwest Territory. Virginia and Connecticut retained reservations of territory in what was to eventually become Ohio. Prior to settlement, military expeditions through Warren County were led along the Little Miami River by Bowman (1779), and Clark (1780) and up the Mill Creek valley and through present-day Deerfield Township and Mason by Harmar (1790).

Nine original major land surveys eventually subdivided Ohio lands. Warren County is unique, in that portions of four of these cover its 408.4 square miles of territory. These include the following:

The Miami River Survey, which concerns all land west of the Great Miami River, involves the northwest quadrant of present-day Franklin Township. Originally known as the Congress Lands West of the Miami River, this survey received official recognition by act of Congress in 1796. It was laid-out using the Federal Rectangular Survey System, established in 1785, in six square mile townships.

Territory between the Great and Little Miami Rivers is in two original surveys--the Symmes Purchase (also known as the Miami Purchase) and the Between the Miami's Survey. This area includes Deerfield, Union, Turtlecreek, Clearcreek and portions of Franklin, Wayne and Salem Townships. The Symmes Purchase dates from 1788, but the U.S. Patent was not signed by President Washington until 1794. Privately surveyed, it is the only original survey in the United States which has ranges running south to north and townships west to east. The north boundary of the Symmes Purchase runs through what is now Turtlecreek Township, the Village of Monroe and City of Lebanon. The federal government originally reserved in each township Section 16 for educational purposes, Section 29 for religion and Sections 8, 11 and 26 for "future public use". Other land grants were made to the State of Ohio for certain key land uses, such as canal construction, turnpikes, salt reservations, swamp lands and land grant colleges (Ohio University, Miami University and The Ohio State University). John Cleves Symmes, who paid \$0.66 per acre for the land, also conveyed the entire third range of his townships for military bounty warrants for Revolutionary War soldiers who desired settlement in the Northwest Territory--an area often referred to as the Military Range in Warren County records. Symmes actually sold land north of his Patent. These settlers, technically squatters on unsurveyed federal land, were granted relief by Congress in 1799. The balance of the lands between the Miami's was officially laid-out in 1802-03.

The eastern-most tier of Warren County falls within the Virginia Military District (VMD) lands, an area reserved by the State of Virginia to satisfy military bounty warrants to its Revolutionary War veterans. It is unique, in that it is described entirely by over 16,000 metes and bounds surveys begun in 1797, creating somewhat of a patchwork. This "jigsaw puzzle" approach has affected land use patterns to this day, with few true north-south/east-west roads and ownerships. Virginia permitted a five percent error factor for surveys, which was often exceeded, with the result that VMD lands are amongst the most litigated in Ohio. It covers Hamilton, Harlan, Washington and Massie, as well as portions of Salem and Wayne Townships in Warren County.

William Henry Harrison, the Northwest Territory's first delegate to Congress, introduced legislation to establish federal land sales offices which passed in May, 1800. The local office was established in Cincinnati. Opening in 1801, it remained in business until 1840. The minimum quantity of land that could be purchased was 320 acres, at \$2.00 per acre. One quarter was due as a cash down payment, with three annual installments due thereafter, at six percent interest. Defaults eventually ran as high as three in ten, the "Panic of 1819" being particularly

hard on the western frontier economy. In 1820, Congressional act reduced land prices to \$1.25 per acre, abolishing sales by credit and set minimum purchases at 80 acres.

Clearcreek Township is located in north-central Warren County. The Township is bounded by Montgomery County on the north, Wayne Township on the east, Turtlecreek Township on the south and Franklin Township on the west. It was created in October, 1815 from portions of Franklin and Wayne Townships, two of the original four such political subdivisions in Warren County. Approximately two-thirds of Clearcreek's 44.7 square miles came from Franklin Township and the balance from Wayne Township. The Township accounts for just under 11 percent of the total area of Warren County.

Prior to the organization of the Township, settlements had been established around Red Lion (1796) and Ridgeville (surveyed in 1814 by Fergus McLean). Other early settlements in the area included Pekin and Utica. Springboro was laid-out in 1815 by Jonathan Wright as a "dry", alcohol-free community and remains the only incorporated area in Clearcreek Township.

The springs from which Springboro derived its name provided the energy for early manufacturing in the vicinity. Clear Creek and its tributary streams also supplied the energy for mills. Unfortunately, as the area was cleared and improved, Clear Creek dried up and is now mainly a wet weather stream. The initial clearing of the Township also put a virtual end to the processing of commercial quantities of maple molasses, sugar and syrup. Other manufacturing establishments in early times included a woolen factory, saw mill, drain tile factory and pottery works. From 1840 to the early 1860's, a match factory existed at Red Lion. The Township also had its share of the more traditional industries of the era, such as blacksmiths, cobblers and wagon makers.

It is claimed that Clearcreek Township, by 1840, had one of the best unpaved roadway systems in the State. The first free turnpike in the Township ran between Springboro and Ridgeville, now known as Lower Springboro Road. Toll roads from Dayton to Lebanon (State Route 48) and Franklin to Lebanon (State Route 123), were eventually taken over by Warren County, opening these routes for public use.

The Clearcreek Baptist Church, founded in 1797 in Ridgeville, holds the distinction as the first church in Warren County. The Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers, was also quite active in early Township religious and educational life, opening the Miami Valley College in 1870 near Springboro. The College closed in 1882.

Railroads did not serve the Township until 1881, when the Cincinnati, Lebanon & Northern Railroad put in a line through the Dodds-Utica area. Though abandoned, the right-of-way still accommodates a petroleum pipeline, a common co-location in railroad uses past and present. Inter-urban rail service once also connected Franklin with Lebanon, through Red Lion, as well.

Through the mid to late 1880's, the populations of both Clearcreek Township and Springboro fluctuated. Between 1815 and 1840, the Township population increased by 336 percent, from 840 to 2,785, but either dropped or remained essentially steady thereafter. Springboro

experienced slow, steady gains until the 1870 census, which documented a five percent loss, leaving the Village at approximately 1850 levels, or 477 residents.