

The
KERNEL
of
GREATNESS



An Informal Bicentennial
History of Bedford County

BEDFORD COUNTY HERITAGE COMMISSION

*Bedford
County*

BEDFORD TOWNSHIP TAXABLES IN 1771

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Adams, Elisha	Feather, Michael*	Proctor, William, Esq.
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Castleman, Denis	Hays, Thomas	Riddle, William**
Clark, William	Helm, Frederick	Rose, Allen*
Colvin, John	Hite, John**	Saam, Adam*
Croyle, Adam**	Imler, George*	Samuel (Sammel)
Croyle, John**	James, Henry*	Adam**
Croyle, Thomas**	Keefe, Michael	Samuel, Conrad**
Dalton, James	Kenton, Thomas	Shitacre, Valentine
Daugherty, Bernard	McCalister, Matthew	Sill, George*
Davidson, Samuel*	McCall, William	Sill, Michael**
Divert (Dibert) Michael**	McCashlan, Samuel	Skinner, Samuel
Drennin, Samuel	McCauley, Cornelius	Steel, Andrew
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Eaton, Thomas	Milligan, George	Swigart, George
Ellinger, John	Miller, John**	Watson, William
Elliott, William	Montgomery, John	Wisegarver, George*
Emler, John	Moorehead, Thomas	Wolf, Reynard
Espey, David	Naugle, Frederick	Woods, George, Esq.

COLERAIN TOWNSHIP TAXABLES IN 1771

Ammerman, Henry	Friend, Joseph**	Murphy, Henderson
Armstrong, Henry	Fry, John	Newell, James
Bennett, Joseph*	Hinish, John*	Parker, William
Bradshaw, Robert	Hunter, James	Patterson, James
Brown, Henry	Johnston, John**	Perron, John*
Buchanan, William	Johnston, Thomas	Perry, Samuel
Cessna, John*	Little, John	Piper, James
Collens, Daniel*	Martin, James	Piper, John*
Cox, Charles*	Maxwell, James	Ritchey, Gideon
Croyle, John**	McDonald, Daniel	Rose, Edward**
Croyle, Thomas*	McFerren, Robert	Rose, William**
Culbertson, Robert	McKinnie, Robert	Smith, William
Cunningham, John	Miller, Christopher	Sparks, George
Davis, Benjamin	Miller, Oliver	Spurgeon, Ezekial**
Defibaugh, Casper*	Mitchell, Abraham	Spurgeon, James**
England, John*	Moore, John	Spurgeon, William**
Ferguson, Hugh	Moore, Robert	Stewart, Charles
Finley, John	Moore, Samuel	Woods, Thomas
Frazier, John	Morrison, Joseph	Young, Adam
Friend, John*	Mortimore, John	

CUMBERLAND VALLEY TOWNSHIP TAXABLES IN 1771

Askins, Edward	Coulter, Thomas	Kelley, Joseph
Bishop, Jonathan	Culbertson, James	Lindsey, John*
Campbell, Robert	Davis, Thomas	McClannegan, James
Casteel, Shadrick*	Evans, Nathan	Montgomery, John
Cessna, Charles**	Fox, Jacob	Pollock, John
Cessna, Evan	Huston, Andrew	Rice, Andrew**
Cessna, John*	Jones, Thomas	Wilhelm, Jacob

N.B. Names marked with one asterisk are the progenitors of families with that surname still living in Bedford County. Those marked with two are ancestors of most of that name today. Lacking proof of living descendants of the remaining names, we have left them unmarked.

THE BLACK PEOPLE

Negroes may have come to this area the same time as the white men or soon afterwards. They did not enter as pioneers clearing the wilderness, and no records were kept for posterity of their activities. Since they were forced to come, forced to work, they must have played an important role in the early development of the county — without recognition.

The earliest date found concerning their arrival was in Hervey Allen's book, *Bedford Village*, where he wrote that in 1763, Negroes were owned by *Garrett Pendergass*, already an established innkeeper living near Fort Bedford. Another early date is revealed in the registration of slaves in 1780. *Hercules* was fifty-four, Negro *Ned* was thirty and Negro *Sam* was seventeen. In the 1790 State of Pennsylvania Census Directory, in Bedford County we find listed the name of "*Jim*," a free colored man.

How long these people had been here we will never know. Many other slaves were never registered, but their living here is revealed in the records of children and babies found in the County Prothonotary's office. Some of the information recorded on scraps and bits of paper reveals in the writing and spelling much about the masters. The owner's name on the earliest dated slip of paper was not decipherable, but his wife's name was *Jane*. He wrote to tell *David Espey*, Esquire, Clerk of the Peace of the County of Bedford that he had neglected to record his slave when asked to do so, but felt it was not injurious to anyone. In 1791 he listed a "wench" named *Patty* who was seventeen years of age. Another woman named *Jane Bonnett* sent in the names of two mulatto boys, four and six years old as her possessions.

A very enlightening record comes from the Everett area. *Michael Barndollar*, a slave holder, gave this information. He certified in 1798 that his Negro woman *Sall*, a slave, had a child born of her body the eleventh day of November, a "femele" named "*felis*," then three months old. *Sall* had another child named "*dina*," on "Augus" 24, 1803. On "Jany" 9th, 1806, the owner records a mulatto named "*Dina*,"

It cannot be said that **Henry Lloyd** of Huntingdon was lax about abiding by registry laws. "Cubit" was a one-day old infant when his name went into the court house files.

John Shirley of Woodbury Township "made his mark" before **Squire Espy** and registered one Negro girl named **Hannah**, aged one year on the eleventh day of June 1788. According to the Pennsylvania Act of Assembly passed in 1788 forbidding servitude past the age of twenty-eight years. **Hannah** had twenty seven years and nine months to go.

Bonaparte Johnson was born a slave since **Milla**, his mother, was already the property of **Jacob Fletcher**, Justice of the Peace in Bedford. This was in 1816. By 1844 the new arrival would be free — never knowing freedom until he was a full-grown man. "Sarah," **Robert Shannon's** girl, and "Charles," **Humphrey Dillon's** boy, also had a full twenty-eight years to be in servitude. (Dillon kept a tavern in Bedford for many years.)

Information of a different type, but still affecting people of color is given in the following court action. **Martin Reiley** in 1819 had purchased from a friend the time of servitude of a Negro "Wench" named **Sarah**, and seemingly soon after the transaction, **Sarah** had a baby. The petitioner had been put to great loss and damages, etc. He was asking for an extension of the time for her services to compensate him for his trouble. This case was to be heard at a later date and notice was to be given to the said **Sarah**. **Mr. Reiley** must have really been "put out" by this inconvenience as there is no mention of claiming the baby for twenty-eight years.

In *The History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties* compiled by **Waterman-Watkins**, we find an interesting account of **Benjamin Lyons** who was brought to Martinsburg about 1810 at the age of twelve. He was bound to **Jacob Snoberger** and remained a slave until he was twenty-eight years of age. After he was freed, he worked for a **John Berger**, then bought his own farm in Woodbury Township. He married **Mary Heck** and had five children. **Benjamin** died at about eighty years of age. His son **James** lived on the family farm. He married **Sarah Forsythe** of Maryland, and they had fifteen children. Recorded as the first Negro in Bedford County to exercise the franchise, **Mr. Lyons** was also postmaster at Salemville in the 1880's.

Mingo, described in Broad Top history as a celebrated African chief, was kidnapped in Africa when he was about twenty years of age. He was purchased by **Dr. Jeremiah Duvall** who traded a steer for him. **Mingo** was brought to Bedford County where a man wanted him for a hostler; thus this slave has the honor of being Bedford County's first stableman. **Mingo** worked for one or two other men around Bedford, but after becoming a freed Negro, made his way back to the Broad Top. He married **Black Rachel**, a servant of **Mrs. Duvall**, but after some marital difficulty, **Rachel** went back to old **Dr. Duvall's** household and remained there until she died. **Mingo** was given some land, and neighbors helped him build a cabin and clear a field around it. Near where the cabin once stood is a spring.

To this day people refer to them as "Mingo's field" or "Mingo's spring." He is supposed to have lived to be ninety-nine years of age.

The fate of the poor people today is a far cry from that of some unfortunates, one hundred fifty years ago. **Mariah Elizabeth Perry** came under this category. The Bedford Borough Overseer of the Poor, in 1834, placed and bound over **Mariah**, "a female of colour," to **Humphrey Dillon** in accordance with another Pennsylvania State Act of Assembly for relief of the poor. Her status was a little different from regular servitude. By law she could expect to enjoy sufficient meat and drink, apparel and lodging, and could even look forward to freedom dues of at least twelve dollars. She was bound to **Mr. Dillon** and his heirs to an obedient servant until the age of eighteen, or till 1850. This little miss was then two years old.

RUNAWAY SLAVES

There are three or four accounts on record of runaway slaves who tried to stay here but were hunted down and returned to their owners. Two men, "George" and "Henry" were taken back to Fauquier County, Virginia, in 1825. This is ironic because twenty-four or five years later between forty and fifty people from the same county were brought here to live.

In 1832, **Jane**, a Negro woman, was ordered back to Maryland to serve four years more as per indenture. **Peter Schell**, Associate Judge for Bedford County, made the ruling after a white man identified the fugitive as the servant of **James Stoddard**.

On the **Lester Imes** farm below Chaneyville one can still find the markers for twelve or thirteen graves of runaway slaves. **Mr. Imes** relates that when the slaves realized their pursuers were closing in on them, they begged to be killed rather than go back to the Southland and more servitude. **Someone obliged.**

Mariah Cooper was in reality a runaway slave even though she was urged and aided in her getaway by her white half-sister. As the story goes, **Mariah's** master expressed the desire to have his slaves set free at his death. The master's greedy son instead took **Mariah's** husband away to sell him. While he was gone, the master's full daughter helped her sister to escape and she arrived in Bedford. **Wilson Davis**, already a countian, later married this fugitive and they had two sons, **DeCharmes** and **Thomas**. At that time they lived in the vicinity of what is now Meadowbrook Terrace. Later the family moved to the southern end of Stoney Lane, west of Bedford. One son, **DeCharmes**, a Civil War Veteran, later a bootmaker and barber, married **Eliza Keys**, and five children came of this union. His son, **John Davis**, was the first Bedford County Negro to volunteer in World War I, serving in France. Four generations removed from slavery today we find **Alonzo Shaw** who works in the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States Senate, Washington, D.C. **Mariah's** grandson, **Thomas's** son

Richard, became a dentist, studying in Philadelphia. However, he worked as a Pullman porter because to him traveling was more exciting.

There were other isolated instances of runaway slaves coming to Bedford County. Judge Hall in his book of memoirs tells about four Negroes in 1847 or 1849 who made their way from Alabama and settled in the mountains below the Bedford Springs Hotel.

George Lewis, as a very young man got away from Romney, West Virginia, after seeing his mother and sister sold at auction, and he made it to our county. He had been taught to read and write and compiled two diaries now 100 years old, recording his life and work as a cooper in and around Bedford. George and Susan Graham were married by John Fiddler, pastor of the local church, and they had five children. George wanted to preach but was told by the bishop to get more training. He applied for help from the Job Mann Trust Fund, matriculated at Howard University, Washington, D.C., and after graduation became a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Direct descendants of this runaway are two daughters living today in Bedford Township, Emily Hagar, former school teacher, and Elizabeth Lewis. The daughters relate that their father never spoke about his life before coming to Bedford.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

The Underground Railroad played a part in bringing Negroes through and possibly to the county. Complete records were not kept, but the dramatic and daring work of the agents and helpers in the movement is a part of our history.

The fugitives used two routes mainly. One came up through Black Valley and crossed over the Bedford-Chambersburg Turnpike at Mt. Dallas, up the lower Valley Road to Snake Spring, to the Stuckey farm in the valley. Over in Morrison's Cove on this side of Woodbury, the runaways found temporary shelter with the Keagy family. When the timing was right, they moved northward, out of the county.

Another branch came up from the Cumberland Valley into Bedford County. There were no stations in this valley, and the route was rather dangerous because the whole area was carefully watched by slave catchers. Often the fugitives had to leave the road and skirt Evitt's Mountain on either side in order to arrive at Bedford. This accounts for the two-pronged road. The western side brought them up through Centerville, behind the Bedford Springs Hotel. The trek along the eastern side brought them through Chaneyville, Rainsburg; and along the present Route 326 to Bedford.

The Rev. John Fiddler, Elias Rouse, and John Crawley were the principal colored agents in Bedford Borough. In Bedford Township, James Graham used his wagon to transport slaves, ostensibly carrying hay to market.

The site on the southeast corner of Penn and West Streets, once a

butcher shop owned and operated by Aaron and Jacob Young and Moses Esrey, was a "stop over" for the slaves until safe passage could be arranged to take them to the Quaker settlement in Fishertown.

There they were cared for by the Penrose, Miller and Way families. The Gibson Antique Shop on the right side of Route 56 going to Johnstown is the original Way family house, once an underground station. Sometimes slaves hid under the Reynoldsdale bridge waiting for an operator to take them to Osterburg and from there north. Another spur from Fishertown took them to Benjamin Walker's farm in Pleasantville, then over the dirt road to Johnstown. It is recorded that Mr. Walker assisted fully five hundred fugitives to freedom.

John Jamison Moore, later a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, tells in his book about being reared in this county after his parents and two younger children were passed on by the Fishertown group. A kind-hearted Quaker taught him to read and write and helped him gain a knowledge of farming. The last part of his apprenticeship was spent with another family. This master exacted six extra months of time and refused to give him clothes and money as per the agreement. When he finally received his freedom, he remained to work in the area for six more months, saved his money, then left, and walked to Harrisburg.

FREED NEGROES

The Great Revival in the Evangelical churches of the South which took place during the years of 1777 to 1800, was also a factor in bringing Negroes to Bedford County.

Many slaves were set free when whites had to give up their church membership or give up their slaves. Thousands were released and sent with overseers to free territory. The caretakers who were instructed to buy land for them often bought cheap, rocky acres, pocketed the change, and left the Negroes to get along as best as they could.

Out from New Buena Vista in Juniata Township on land now owned by Michael Imgrund, there are still vestiges of Negro habitation in bygone days. Up on a hillside are gravestones that reveal a story about the Berry, Young, Burgess, Fry, Strong and other families. Standing there amid the dogwood, feeling the tacit security of an old stone fence, and listening to Mr. Imgrund talk about the location of the different houses (foundations still to be seen), the stables, and springhouses, one can imagine the valley alive with people. The settlement was almost wiped out by a smallpox epidemic in 1872; many of the tombstone dates bear this out. Nancy Burgess was buried in 1889, when she was "about" seventy-four years old. John Wes Barry was a Civil War veteran who died in 1915. Simon Burgess was the last of the settlers to be buried in this cemetery. Obeying a final request, his family who had moved to Ohio brought his body back to this

spot for burial. He does not have a tombstone. **Joe**, the last surviving **Burgess** died in the County Home and was laid to rest in the county lot.

Dan, John, Peter and Lincoln Young are listed in the 1900 Bedford County Directory as laborers in the same area. **Henry Mowry** of Manns Choice added some other notes about the settlers. He told about the fellowship with the "Hollow" people, as he called them, during hunting season when they always feasted together. He was especially friendly with **Dan Young**, who always rode a horse. This was significant because he mentioned that the other men, after working on farms all day, walked great distances to their homes. **Dan Young** was killed one night when his animal became frightened and bolted, crossing a bridge on the way home. **Dan** was thrown off and struck his head. The last of the **Youngs** from the area was **John** who bought land in Harrison Township, reared a family, and spent his last years farming in his own right.

These early Negro settlers may have gone to the New Baltimore Catholic Church. If not, the priest knew about them and administered to their spiritual needs. The children of this group attended the Ealy School.

There is a possibility that some of the **Berry** and **Johnson** families found their way to Pleasantville. In that cemetery we find those names on gravestones, just women and children. Several people recall the Negroes living in the area. The men worked in the tannery for a **Mr. Hench**, father of the late **Florence Hench Hammer**. The workers lived in a log house next door to the Methodist parsonage of that day, across the street from the old Methodist Church. Their children went to the Pleasantville Elementary School.

Before the movement of freed slaves from Virginia to Bedford, there must have been Negroes living in the area of Bedford Springs. The **Negro History Bulletin** of October 1967, carries a biography of **George W. Williams**, a historian, who was born at Bedford Springs in 1849. Also in 1849, about forty slaves from the plantation of **Thomas O. B. Carter** of Fauquier County, Virginia, were freed and came to settle south of Bedford. With the group was a two-year old girl **Mary**. She grew up here and later married **Preston Stewart**, who after the Civil War had accompanied the corpse of **Major Walter Anderson** to Bedford and remained to work for **Dr. William Watson**. In 1870 with the help of **Judge William Hall**, **Stewart** bought property on East John Street. He worked as a porter on the Bedford House coach and became very well known. **Mary Stewart** lived to be eighty-nine years old; her daughter, **Ida Washington**, was eighty-four when she died. Her grandchild, **Mildred Washington**, still lives in the homestead.

LAND OWNERS AND BREAD WINNERS

As soon as Negroes became settled, economics claimed their attention. Many of them considered purchasing land and houses as necessary as procuring food.

Benjamin Lyons, mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, bought his

first acres of ground in 1824 in South Woodbury Township. **James Lyons** followed his father's lead and became a land owner just sixteen years afterwards, even though later he inherited part of his father's land.

In Bedford Township **James Harris**, with sixth-generation descendants still residing in the county, purchased five acres of land from **Moses Wisegarver** and **Nelson Davis** in 1853. This property was in the vicinity of the present J. C. Smith Reservoir. Although Negroes had been in this section of the township for a number of years, they had merely lived on the land. **Mr. Harris** was the caretaker of the Hickok property on East Pitt Street for a number of years. In the 1850's, **John Crawley** bought a property for his family. From an early settlement in which **S. M. Barclay** was the administrator, **Mr. Crawley** secured land and possibly a log house on Gravel Hill.

During the Civil War, in 1863, **Elias Rouse** and **John Love** each bought half interest in Lot 7 in the borough, sold to them by **Judge William Hall**. In the last year of the war, in 1865, **James Graham**, who had come to the county as a lad, purchased his first piece of farm land from **O. E. Shannon**. This land adjoined the **James Harris** property.

Judge William Hall certainly must be given credit for helping Negroes to progress, women as well as men, for there are several deed transactions in which he was the grantor. During the period of 1865 to 1869, **Lydia Young**, **Catherine Gordon**, **Ann Elizabeth Marshall**, and **Philip Keys** were sold land by the judge. **John Harris**, a Civil War veteran, and his wife **Servilla** bought their West Street property in 1869. Early in 1870 **Cyrus Young** and **Elijah Bolden** also bought land in Bedford Borough.

1873 **Adam Weaverling** of Everett granted to **Joseph N. Bruce** acres in West Providence Township. In 1875 **Philip and Mary Bottomfield** sold to **Nancy Watkins**, a former slave, land and a house plus various out-houses in the Water Street area for fifty dollars.

There are more land purchase transactions for the 1880's and 1890's among the grantees being **Thomas Davis**, **Tamar Rouse**, **Mary Jane Davis**, and **Henry Barks**. In 1900 **William Edward Johnson** bought four contiguous lots from **Samuel Russell** on Sunnyside Road. **Mr. Johnson** put up a large structure with plans for a summer hotel, but this venture was not successful.

The writer is not able to tell about all of the early Negro landowners. Those selected will easily be recalled by present residents. This information will show that they have owned property in various parts of the county over one hundred fifty years.

Many of the Negro men worked throughout the county on farms and in other types of labor. A few were caretakers for the large estates of the early period. For some of the same families, grooms were hired to keep the horses in the finest condition. Some men, employed as coopers in the winter, traveled to other counties and nearby states and returned to work in

the local fields in spring and summer. Most of the local hotel chefs and porters were Negroes.

A small group of the men had been taught trades and worked as blacksmiths, tanners, butchers and bootmakers. **Henry Hamilton I** was a popular shoemaker. Most of the barbers were colored. **Elias Rouse, DeCharmes Davis, Frank and Orange Gordon, James Wagner** and **Henry Crawley** managed the early shops in Bedford.

In **Everett Gideon Boddy** and **Chester Banks** owned and operated a barber shop for over forty years. Their first place of business was on Main Street where the present post office stands. Later they located on Water Street. Several present-day barbers were apprenticed under **Mr. Boddy**, namely **Frank Logue, Thomas Harclerode**, and **Ronald Foor**. Also in **Everett**, as early as 1890, the names of **Bruce** and **Fisher** were found on a photography shop on Ridge Avenue. At one time this same business was owned by **James Fisher** alone.

Negro women were hired as cooks, laundresses, and nurses for children. When it was not convenient to live away, they worked by the day, and very often did laundry at home. At one time the popular work for women was in the **Heckerman Peanut Factory**. They were also employed in the hotels, serving as cooks, waitresses and maids. **Mrs. Lydia Gordon** was the cook at **Fungaroli's Restaurant** on South Richard Street for many years.

The name **Harris** seemed to be synonymous with good food. **John Harris**, the father of **Edward** and **Howard**, is given credit for the beginning of the **Harris Hotel**. **John** and **Servilla** lived on the northeast corner of West Street and **Vondersmith Avenue**. The three men of the family were chefs in local hotels or restaurants, and they also engaged in the business of housing and feeding Negro visitors in the town.

In 1906 **Edward** and **Alverta Harris** went to live in their "new home," a four-room log house, now a part of the **Penn West Hotel**. Following along the line of **Ed's** father, they housed the Negro help who came with their employers to Bedford, as well as other people.

During World War I the business was really stimulated when the proprietors took over the feeding of **Captain Heit's** detachment of soldiers stationed in Bedford. They set up a large tent across the way in a field now the **Rohm** property, and carried food across from the house three times a day.

After the war the **Harris** home was expanded. Finally when they had completed the addition of enough rooms to make it three stories high, it was classified as a hotel. The name of this inn located in the Pennsylvania mountains was spread abroad, and many professional people and their families came from **Pittsburgh** and **Washington, D.C.**, to rest and enjoy the specials of the day from the **Harris** cuisine. "**Aunt Bertie**" and "**Uncle Ed**" used their facilities for church dinners, teas, and any other community project when their help was needed. After **Mr. Harris's** death **Mrs. Har-**

ris became feeble, so **Mrs. George Burton** managed the business. The hotel was sold at "**Aunt Bertie's**" death.

At the time that the **Harris Hotel** was becoming popular, **Ed's** brother **Howard** and his wife **Elizabeth** established a restaurant in a part of what is now the **Graystone Hotel**. "**Miss Lizzie**" was famous for her pies. Bedford townspeople learned this quickly and frequented the restaurant. Some ladies of the town still recall walking down for some "good food" after spending an hour or two making compresses in the **Ridenour Building** during World War I.

For many years, one of the busiest restaurants at the **Bedford County Fair** was operated by **George Harris**. This well-known chef, famed for his culinary prowess, was already established in the village.

The only Negro to become a lawyer and set up a practice in **Bedford County** was **John Rouse**, a graduate of **Howard University, Washington, D.C.** The **Bedford County Directory of 1878-79** lists him as attorney-at-law. He was instrumental in helping **Civil War Veterans** receive their pensions. It has been said that given a larger clientele, **Mr. Rouse** would have had greater success, but he preferred to remain in Bedford. His law office was on **West Pitt Street**, and his family lived in the area of **Farber's Antique Shop** on the same street.

The accounts herein given are not intended to be a full history of the Negro in **Bedford County** but are designed to clearly interpret the important part played by one minority group as gleaned from authentic and recorded sources. While it is acknowledged that every instance of cooperation and progress have not been set down, space and time allotted could not permit the inclusion of all material.