ORIGIN OF THE NAMES GIVEN TO THE COUNTIES IN PENNSYLVANIA

By James McKirdy

Proper names, i.e., names given to particular persons or places or things constitute one of the greatest savers of time and labor ever invented by man. An interesting experiment might be made by way of testing this. Let anyone try to converse on general topics for a period of, say, five minutes, without using a proper name, but substituting for each proper name an adequate description of the person or thing or place that would otherwise have been identified by such particular name. This use of proper names is an inborn tendency of humans, as is shown by the fact that all races, be they low or high in intelligence, resort to this means of identification.

While the study of surnames is full of interest and affords a curious insight into human nature, the study of place names is far more instructive. As an insect of bygone ages is preserved in the bit of amber, so a great deal of the history of peoples and communities is concealed in many, if not most, names of places. Worn and rounded and polished, like the round stones of a river bed or the shingle of a beach, they have been greatly changed in most instances from the original rugged form. An intensive, exhaustive study of a single place name, such as Indiana, the name of one of our States and the name of one of Pennsylvania’s counties, would include a study of many peoples from the original Aryan invaders of the peninsula of Hindustan down thru the story of the Mohammedan conquests to the great explorations of the fifteenth century. So much of history is concealed in one familiar place name.

Not the least interesting, in this study, is the search for the original meanings bound up in the names that have been given to the counties of this State, from the original Philadelphia, Chester and Bucks on down to our sixtysventh and latest county, Lackawanna. This search takes us back to the earliest times in India, in Great Britain, in Ireland, and thence down thru France and Holland to the vigorous contest between the Indians and the early settlers for supremacy in the Keystone State, and the shorter but
more noted struggle by which we achieved our independence of the British.*

In representing this little study of the origin of the names of our counties, there are two obvious methods of exposition—one is the coldly alphabetical way, taking each county in strictly alphabetical order from Adams to York—the other is the chronological and, of course, historical sequence from the three "original counties" formed in 1682 on down to Lackawanna formed in 1878. The latter plan has been chosen as being far more interesting and as showing, after a fashion, the settling and development of Pennsylvania from the Delaware to the Ohio.

We now have sixty-seven counties, Philadelphia being a city and county in one. Montour County is the smallest and Lycoming County the largest. They range in area from 130 square miles to 1,220 square miles (land area) and in population from Cameron County's 6,297 inhabitants to Philadelphia's 1,823,779 (census of 1920).

PHILADELPHIA

When William Penn came over to survey the vast domain given him by the King of England, his first object was, of course, the organization of the province for administrative purposes. His main thought had been for months the founding of a city which was to be the center of government for the province. To this he had given earnest study and indeed had determined upon a name for it before even the site was actually decided upon.

In his "Certain Conditions and Concessions" agreed upon between himself and "those who are the adventurers and purchasers in the province" dated the 11th day of July, 1681, he outlined some of his plans relative to the proposed settlement which had been called "Pennsylvania" by the King in honor of Penn's father, Admiral Penn. First and foremost in the scheme were provisions relating to the intended city. Without, as yet, assigning it a name, Penn roughly outlined its plan in the first two sections of the document. The opening words are:

"1. That so soon as it pleaseth God that the aforesaid persons arrive there, a certain quantity of land or ground shall be laid out for a large town or city." (1) Penn
wanted to have "a green, country town," that is, each house was to have ample space about it, what we should now call a yard. (2) Well, he didn't get it, at least not within the memory of most men. Green it has never been, actually or metaphorically.

Penn, in his letter to Thomas Lloyd, in 1684, written on board the vessel that was to convey him to England after his first visit to his province, breaks out in an apostrophe to the infant city "And thou, Philadelphia, the virgin settlement of this province, named before thou wert born." (3)

The name, "Philadelphia", Clarkson says, "was chosen by its founder for its scriptural and historical associations which were probably present in his mind, but the chief object of this choice of name was a lesson to its inhabitants touching brotherly love which he had shown to Dutch, Swedes, Indians and others alike; and which he wished might forever characterize his new dominions." Sancta simplicitas! Little he knew of human nature! And little of the clairvoyant or prophet had he in him when he thus hoped that "brotherly love" might forever be shown by the inhabitants of the town!

It has been generally assumed by historians that the city was named for the ancient city in Asia Minor to whose church John, on the Isle of Patmos, records that he was directed to write. (4)

Young, in his monumental history of Philadelphia, notes that "the plans of Penn included from the first the building of a city. The thought of it was announced almost as early as that of his colony. Even the name of it had been in the founder's mind. The instructions to his commissioners, whom he had sent out in September following the grant, directed them particularly to examine the rivers and creeks 'in order to settle a great town'." (5) He goes on, "When and how the name Philadelphia first suggested itself to Penn can only be conjectured. No records are left to establish with certainty whence he took the name; but the probabilities point to two passages in the New Testament, Revelation I, 11, and III, 7, as the immediate source. In these verses is mentioned the City of
Philadelphia, in the Province of Lydia, Asia Minor, as the seat of an early Christian congregation. As is well known from the old geographers, this city was so named by Attalos II Philadelphos, who in 159 B.C. became ruler of the neighboring city of Pergamos. To perpetuate his name, this king bestowed upon a city in Pamphylia the name of Attaleia and upon the Lydian city that of Philadelphia. As appears from his countless citations, Penn's acquaintance with the scriptures was extremely full and accurate. He was familiar with the names of the Seven Churches in Asia Minor, as appears from his 'Address to Protestants, etc.' (Selected Works, London 1771) where he names over the seven cities, including Philadelphia. This address was written in 1679, scarcely more than a year before he received his patent; and it may well have been during the composition of this work that he was struck with the suitability of the name for a city where Christian principles were to be the foundation of the political system. Penn had a good knowledge of Greek, and in reading his own Greek Testament his earnest and peace-loving nature was often impressed with the euphony of the word philadelphia (brotherly or sisterly love), and with the beauty of the sentiment which it designates.” (6)

Young, in his speculations, notes that two other cities in Asia bore the same name, one in Cilicia Aspera, the other in Palestine. He also touches the question whether the name could have come from the “Society of the Philadelphians” a congregation of followers of Jane Leade (1623-1704) in England, and of Jacob Bohme (1608-1698) in Germany. “Some have seen in this society, whose beliefs differed but little in essentials from those of the early Quakers, the prototype of that ideal community which Penn aimed to establish in the New World. While this cannot, perhaps, be disproved—direct evidence failing on this point as on others—it appears that there was no movement among the Philadelphians to form an ideal community separate from the world, until long after the city was named.” (7)

While nothing new on this disputed point can now be offered, the following is advanced with all due humility.
The city in Asia Minor to the Christian congregation in which John wrote, was called Philadelphia. Most qualified historians agree that this name was given to the city by Attalos the second of that name, surnamed Philadelphos. Nor is there any doubt that this monarch gave his name to two cities, Attaleia and Philadelphia. This being the case the city in Lydia was not the City of Brotherly Love, but Philadelphostown and the one in Pamphylia was Attalostown. If old John Harris who kept the ferry on the Susquehanna where Harrisburg now stands had founded two towns and split his name between them, one would have been, let us say, Johnstown, the other Harrisburg. Penn did not know the history of the Lydian town, it is quite likely. He did know his Greek. He assumed in his exalted state of mind and with the reverent feeling of one who peruses the Scriptures, that the name of the city really meant the same as the Greek word “philadelphia”, a common noun, which occurs in several passages in the New Testament, and which is translated in the King James version as “love of the brethren” and “brotherly love”; and took that name as a fit name for his projected city. If this is so, the city on the Delaware is not named for the ancient city in Lydia, but for a thought in Penn’s mind—a thought and a hope. ((8))

**CHESTER**

In the latter part of 1682, Penn, with the consent of the purchasers under him, divided the province and the “territories”, each into three counties. The “territories” were practically what is now the State of Delaware. The Province stretched indefinitely westward from the Delaware. These three counties of the Province were called Philadelphia, Chester and Bucks. (1)

There is an old, and now generally discredited, tradition surrounding the name of Chester for one of the three original counties. The Swedes had settled on the Delaware, before Penn received his grant. One of their settlements was the town of Upland, so named by them. The tradition runs that Penn went first to Upland in order to call the
first General Assembly. This was a memorable event, and to be distinguished by some marked circumstance. He determined, so the story goes, to change the name of the place. "Turning round to his friend Pearson, one of his own society, who had accompanied him in the ship Welcome, he said 'Providence hath brought us here safe. Thou hast been the companion of my perils. What wilt thou that I should call this place?' Pearson said 'Chester, in remembrance of the city whence I came.' Penn replied that it should be called Chester; and that, when he divided the land into counties he would call one of them by the same name also." Clarkson, in his life of Penn, who lends full credence to this tradition, goes on to say that when the land was divided into counties, one of the new counties received the name of Chester, in keeping with Penn's promise to Pearson. (2)

So far as can be ascertained no person named Pearson came over with Penn in the "Welcome." (3) The whole story is of the Ben Trovato type—se non e vero e ben trovato. (4)

Historians are in accord, however, in the belief that the name of the town of Upland was changed to Chester in remembrance of the city on the Dee in Cheshire, England. This same word Chester in various guises figures largely in the names of various places in England, and, by adoption, in the United States. In Pennsylvania alone, we may cite Lancaster, Rochester, Manchester, Worcester, Upper Chichester. It is the old Latin word castrum (castra) which we encountered in our early school days in following the adventures of Caesar and his men through what is now modern France. It means "military camp" and comes from an ancient Latin word for "hut" "casa", a word, by the way, that is still in use in Italy as the modern Italian word for "house".

Chester, the county town of Cheshire (Cheshireshire) was the "Deva" of the Romans, so called, it is said, from its position on the Dee, the "divine river" of the ancient Britons. Being the station of a Roman legion, it acquired the name of Civitas Legionum or "City of the legions". This became the British Caerleon, from the old Welsh word
Caer "a city" and "leon" a corruption of the word "legione". Taylor says that this city of Caerleon, on the Dee, became in Anglo-Saxon Lega-ceaster or Lege-ceaster, the "legion Chester" and finally, when the prefix was dropped, Chester. (5) That word "caer," appears in the names of many English and Scotch place names that have been adopted in this country, as Carlisle, for instance.

BUCKS

The third of the three original counties of Pennsylvania was named for Buckinghamshire in England. Clarkson says that it was so named because it was the original home of Penn's ancestors. (11) Other historians aver that it took its name from the English shire because a number of the passengers in the "Welcome" came from that county. (2) The fact that the old English home of the Penn family was in Buckinghamshire must have had considerable weight in naming the new county, in fact may have been the controlling reason. The Manor of Pennsbury in Buckinghamshire was long the residence of the Penns. In England the common name for Buckinghamshire is Bucks. In a letter to the Free Society of Traders, written early in 1683, Penn speaks of the new county as Buckingham County, and this seems really to have been its original name, a name that soon colloquially and later officially was shortened to Bucks in imitation of the colloquial practice in England. (3)

The name Buckinghamshire in England came from the name of the county town, Buckingham. In the old Saxon Chronicle this was called Buccingaham. Many writers claim that this name means the "ham" or "home" of the men of the beech forest (Anglo Saxon boc, "a beech"). But in this case the Anglo Saxon name would have been Boc-ingaham. The best opinion is that the name must be referred to the family or clan of the Buccings who took their name from an ancestor called Bucca, "the Buck", or whose totem was a buck (A. S. bucca or buc, "a he-goat"). (4)

LANCASTER

For almost half a century the Province continued thus with the three original counties, gradually increasing in population. It was growing steadily westward and north-
westward, and there came a time when the settlers living westward toward the Susquehanna found it very inconvenient and expensive to be compelled to go back and forth to Chester, the county town of Chester County on legal and other matters. The question of the separation of a portion of the territory from Chester County and the erection of a new county was often proposed and discussed. Finally in 1729 on May 10, an Act of Assembly was passed erecting a new county from part of Chester County, and giving to it the name of Lancaster County. It is said that the name was suggested by one John Wright, a surveyor who was a native of Lancashire (Lancastershire). (1) The English town of Lancaster is a very old one. Its Anglo Saxon name Lunceaster shows that it meant the "chester" on the river Lune. This name Lune is a corruption of the name Alauna which was the name by which this river was known to the Romans when they held Britain. This Roman station on the Alauna was known as Ad Alaunam. (2)

YORK

The settlers were steadily pushing westward to and beyond the Susquehanna. The distance to the county seat and the trouble of crossing the Susquehanna caused those who lived in that part of Lancaster County immediately west of the river to urge the erection of a new county lying wholly westward of the Susquehanna. An important town had already sprung up on Codorus Creek, the town of York. Finally on August 19, 1749, an act was passed erecting the county of York, which was named from the town, having in memory at the same time the important county in England, Yorkshire. Whether the important historical association of the two names in English history, Lancaster and York, especially in the long series of wars known as the Wars of the Roses, had any influence in naming the new county, is not certainly known; but juxtaposition of the two names as names of adjoining counties seems more than fortuitous.

The English county, Yorkshire, long noted as one of the most important of England's shires, was named from the city of York. Before the Roman invasion York was one of the chief towns of the Brigantes, the most numerous
and powerful of the British tribes. It was made a Roman station under the name of Eboracum, by Agricola, about '79, and became the principal seat of Roman power in the north, perhaps in all Britain. Emperor Hadrian lived there. Emperor Severus died there. The father of Constantine the Great lived there, and it is said that the son, himself, who did so much for the Christian religion, was born there. It was long a bulwark in the stern conflict waged between the Britons and the Picts. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle the Roman name is transformed into Eoforwic or Eoferwic. The ending—wic seems to be the old Latin vicus, which appears in modern English names as wick, e.g., Warwick. In the Anglo Saxon translation of Beda it is enlarged to Eoferwic-Ceaster, and the inhabitants were called Eoferwicingas. The Danes called Eoferwic, Jorvik, whence the transition to York is easy, especially when the true Scandanavian value is given to the sound of "j" and not the English or French. Taylor notes that possibly this form was influenced by folk-etymology, against which every student of proper names must guard himself at all times. Taylor shows that the Saxon name for the town meant "wild-boar town" (compare the German word for boar, "Eber"); but that actually the name came from the name of the stream on which York stands, the Ure. His line of reasoning is plausible.

The Welsh name Caer-Ebroc or Caer-Ebrauc was derived from the primitive British name Ebur-ac-on, where according to Taylor, the "ac" is plainly the common Celtic formative, thus leaving to be determined the meaning of Ebur. To do this Taylor takes into account numerous similar names. "There were three places," he says, "called Eburodunam. One of them is now Yverdin in Switzerland, and another is Embrun in the Hautes Alpes (France). Eburobriga has become Brimont; Eburbritium is now Ebara, and Eboriacense monasterium became Faremontiers. Evreux was the capital of the Eburovices, and Ivry (in Normandy) was Eburovicus. To these names may perhaps be added that of Ierus, now the Ebro. Some of these names may be derived as d'Arbois de Jubainville has suggested, from Eburus, a Celtic personal name, which is
found in several inscriptions; but Ivry, formerly Eburovicus, must be from the name of the Eure, formerly the Ebara, the stream on which it stands. York seems to be an analogous case. The river above York is called the Ure, a name probably identical with that of the French Eure, formerly the Ebara, in which case Eburac or Eburacum, the Celtic name of York, might mean the place or town on the Ebara (Ure); so that the name York, assumed by the Saxons to come from the name for a wild boar, really came from the name of the river on which the town stands. (1)

CUMBERLAND

The territory immediately west of that erected into a county under the name of York, was filling up. The British, Scotch-Irish and Germans were rapidly taking up the available land. That part of Lancaster County lying north and west of the old range of hills called South Mountain was cut off from the county seat at Lancaster not only by the mountains and the river but also by the fact that the inhabitants of what is now the Cumberland Valley had to go across York County to reach their county town. This was an intolerable situation, which was remedied in 1750 by the passage of the Act of Assembly erecting Cumberland County out of a part of Lancaster. This was approved January 27, 1750.

Cumberland County was named for the hilly, picturesque county in the North of England, (1) Cumberland-shire or Cumberland. This was the fifth county to take its name from England, a clear indication of the original home of the early settlers. In a sense the name can be said to mean Welshland, for the ancestors of the present Welsh were the Cymry or Kymry. The land of the Cymry, which the Anglo-Saxons called Cumbria, and the English, later called Cumberland, was an ancient British principality including Cumberland in England and most of Scotland as far north as the Clyde. The present Cumberland in England is a small part of the district which in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle appears as “Cumbraland”, the land of the Cymry, which is said to have meant “fellow-countrymen”. After the Northumbrians had taken Chester the divided lands of the Cymry were called indifferently Cambria and
Cumbria. The latter, which is the more correct term, was gradually specialized to denote the land of the Stræceld Wealas, or Welsh of Strathclyde. (2) It had a mixed population of Britons, Goidels and Picts. The early Cymry waged a long, losing contest with the Romans and were really not subjugated until about 79 under Vespasian. When the Roman Empire began to go to pieces these Cymry regained some of their original land, but in turn were confronted by a new invasion from the continent, the Saxons. The Celtic inhabitants fleeing before this wave of Anglo-Saxon invasion took refuge in what is now Wales, merging there with their native kinsmen and succeeded for many centuries in maintaining their independence. The conflict went on till 1301 when Edward I, King of England, conferred on his son, Edward, born at Carnarvon, Wales, the title of Prince of Wales, but the skirmishes went on in diminishing degree for over a century after that, until about 1415, when, after so many centuries of brave and determined and really successful resistance, the Cymry (or Welsh) submitted to Henry IV, whom, from his Welsh birthplace, they regarded as their countrymen. It is probable that the people had become weary of years of warfare and found in this a good way to save their face. In 1536 Wales was incorporated with England. They take their revenge on the English (and the rest of the world, too) by the use of place names that may be measured by the yard, liberally besprinkled with "w's" and "ll's", and also by singing wild choral songs in the Welsh tongue.

Cumberland, when erected, included a wide expanse of territory. To quote from the act of incorporation "all and singular the lands lying within the Province of Pennsylvania, to the westward of the Susquehanna, and northward and westward of the county of York, bounded northward and westward with the line of the Province, eastward partly with the Susquehanna and partly with said county of York."

BERKS

While the Province of Pennsylvania was growing steadily westward, it was also filling up along the valley of the Schuylkill and the Lehigh. By 1752 the population
had grown to such an extent that the settlers thought they were entitled to separate county governments of their own, and steps were taken to erect two more counties. The first of these was Berks County. It was erected by Act of March 11, 1752, from parts of Philadelphia and Chester and Lancaster Counties.

It was named for the English county Berkshire, where, it is said, the Penn family held large landed estates. (1)

The origin of the name is not clear. Many guesses have been made ranging from impossible conjecture to surmises based on narrow scientific foundation. When Alfred divided the country into shires this county received the name of Berrocscir. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle it went under different names, Bearuc-sir, Bearroc-sir and Bearruc-scir. Asser called it Bearruc-scir or Bearwuc-scir. In the Anglo-Saxon charters it appears as Bearruc-scyr and Baroc-scir. The meaning is doubtful. Brompton, who was abbot of Jervaulx in the 13th century, tells us that Baroc-scir was so called from a certain polled oak in Windsor Forest, at which the shire-mote assembled. This is a fine example of folk-etymology. This guess was repeated in the next century by Hedgon in his Polychronicon, “Baroc-shira quae sic denominata a quadam nuda quercu in Foresta de Windesora”. Asser, in the ninth century said that the name came from a forest (Windsor Forest) called Berroc, in which box-trees grew. In this case Bearwuc might be a diminutive of the Saxon bearu a “wood or grove”. Ettmuller takes bearuc to be an equivalent of bearovic “vicus saltosus”, which Taylor regards as impossible. Another conjecture is a derivation from Saxon beorc, a “birch” or from Saxon “bearug,” which means a “barrow-pig” or “porker” because fed on the mast in a “bearu”, a “wood” “wooded hill” or “barrow”. Professor Rhys, the noted Celtic scholar, offers a conjectural derivation from the tribe name of the pre-Saxon inhabitants, the Bibroci, or “beavers”, who have left a trace of their name in the place named Bray (Hundred of Bray) (2)

NORTHAMPTON

The other of the two counties formed in 1752 was Northampton. The settlements had extended up the Dela-
ware and up the Lehigh Valley, and the distance to the county seat of Bucks County was too great. The movement for a new county culminated in the Act of March 11, 1752, whereby part of Bucks County was segregated to form a new county to bear the very English name of Northampton.

Northampton received its name from Thomas Penn, who in a letter from England, dated September 8, 1751, to Governor Hamilton, says, "Some time since I wrote to Dr. Graeme and Mr. Peters to lay out some ground in the forks of the Delaware for a town, which I suppose they have done or begun to do. I desire it may be called Easton, from my Lord Pomfret's house, and whenever there is a new county, it be called Northampton". (1)

The "Forks of the Delaware" referred to in Penn's letter was the name given to that triangular tract of land included between the Delaware and its west branch, the Lehigh, on the east, south and west, and the Blue Mountains on the north, including all the present Northampton excepting two townships.

This county included a part of that celebrated piece of trickery called the "Walking Purchase" whereby the Indians were swindled out of considerable land by the whites who thus early put into practice the political ways we are familiar with in Pennsylvania politicians. (2)

About the name of this county, as about the name of Berks, a great controversy has raged, without definite results. Taylor sums up about all that can be said. "Northampton is a name as to which nothing very definite can be said, since we have no early mention of the town or of the shire. In a doubtful copy of a charter, professing to be dated in 664, but which cannot be earlier than the 12th century, we have 'villa de Northamtoine'. In a late and doubtful copy of a charter of 948, we have Northamtonshire; and Norhamtun in an undated charter. In the Saxon Chronicle, A. D. 917 we have Hantun; and North-hamtun in 1087. In Domesday Book the name appears as North Antone, and the forms Hantone and Amtune are also found. The name is probably to be explained in the same way as Southampton, but it has been conjectured that the stream
on which it stands may be the misread Antona of Tacitus, in which case the town might have derived its name from the river.” (3) Southampton was so called to distinguish it from Northampton. As it stands on the River Anton or Ant, it has been supposed that the name is equivalent to Suth-Ant-tun, but in a charter dated in 985, and supposed to refer to Southampton, we read “in loco qui dicitur aet Heantune” where Heantune is the dative case of Heantun, the “high tun”. The word “tun” is an old name for a “yard, enclosure, village or town”.

An interesting suggestion is advanced by one writer that the A. S. term, hamn tun, means “enclosure in a bend in the river”. Thus he gives us the variants for Hampton as Hometun (A. D. 781), Hammtone (A. D. 1086), Hampton (A. D. 1200), Hampton (A. D. 1237). He suggests as an explanation of the early form Hammtone an error for Hammtone. (4) From this we may surmise an early Hammtun, then a somewhat later one called North Hamp- tun to distinguish it, then the use of south with the earlier name to make the distinction between the two towns clearer.

BEDFORD

The oncoming rush of settlers was steadily driving the Indians farther west. Pontiac tried to stem this flood, but the issue was largely settled at Bushy Run. The trail to Fort Pitt or Pittsburgh was becoming daily a more traveled road, not alone for Pennsylvania settlers but for those who went overland to reach the Monongahela and Ohio. It was unreasonable to expect that the settlers in this great region west of the Cumberland Valley would continue without protest to go back and forth to Carlisle on legal and other matters.

In 1771, on March 9, a vast portion of Cumberland County was cut off, erected into a new county and named Bedford County.

The area of this county, once so immense, was gradually diminished by the erection of Northumberland County in the following year, Westmoreland County in the year after, Huntingdon County in 1787, Somerset in 1795, Cambria in 1804, Blair in 1846 and Fulton in 1850. This one
jurisdiction has, in time, been divided and sub-divided, un-
til some twenty counties or portions of counties now occupy
the territory of the original County of Bedford.

The name of Bedford County was evidently given to it
from the fact that the town of Bedford was selected as
its county seat. The town (originally Raystown) was so
called from the fort—Fort Bedford—that was once located
there. In fact this name was assigned to the town when
it was laid out in 1766, although it was commonly so design-
nated as early as 1759 or 1760, and, there is some reason
for believing, at a still earlier period. The reasons for
thus naming Fort Bedford are, so far as can be learned,
only traditional. It is probable that the tradition is cor-
rect that the fort, erected at Raystown, during the latter
part of the reign of George II received its name in honor
of one of the dukes of the house of Bedford in England.
Various other reasons have been assigned, but they are
questionable. (1)

The county in England is Bedfordshire. The ducal
house, of course, took its name from this English county.
The shire in turn, took its name from the county town of
Bedford. In Anglo-Saxon documents the name appears suc-
cessively Bedicanford, Bedcanford, Beadcanford, Bedan-
ford, Bedford. Bedican is the Anglo-Saxon genitive of
the personal name Bedica. (2) This may have been the
name of the stream or of some particular person.

NORTHUMBERLAND

At the same time that the stream of settlers was go-
ing westward to the Ohio, the valley of the Susquehanna
also was not overlooked and was being dotted with home-
steads. The center of this was Fort Augusta, where the
modern Sunbury is located. For the convenience of
the great stretch comprising roughly a large part of the drain-
age basin of the main Susquehanna and the West Branch,
a movement was set on foot to erect a new county with
its seat at Fort Augusta. Accordingly on March 21st,
1772, an act was passed erecting the County of Northum-
berland from parts of the counties of Berks, Bedford, Cumber-
land, Lancaster and Northampton.
In naming this vast tract, recourse was again had to the names of English shires, and the name of one of England's northern counties was chosen.

The Humber is a large river in the eastern part of England, emptying into the North Sea. Back in the Ninth Century the land north of this river and east of the land belonging to the Cymry (Welsh) and extending as far north as the Forth River, was known as Northumberland or the "Land North of the Humber". (1)

WESTMORELAND

In the following year, 1773, another large portion of Bedford County's territory was taken to form the County of Westmoreland. To the land allotted to this new county was added the land purchased from the Indians in 1784 so that in 1785 Westmoreland County comprised the entire Western end of the State from Virginia to Lake Erie and the New York State line. What would be more appropriate, then, than to bestow on the new county an English name that would indicate this position? The Act of February 26, 1773, erecting the new county named it Westmoreland County.

Westmoreland is a county in the North of England. (1) In the olden days it was the land of the "Westmor-ingas" or people of the Western Moors. It was also spelled Westmereland. (2)

WASHINGTON

Eight years later, March 28, 1781, toward the end of the Revolutionary War, a portion of Westmoreland County lying west of the Monongahela River was separated from it to form a new county. To this county was given the name of the outstanding hero of the War that was then drawing to its close. Washington then was the foremost citizen of the colonies and it was quite appropriate that the first Pennsylvania county to be named for an individual and the first, since 1682 to bear a name other than that of an English shire, should be give that of Washington.

The name was quite English at that. Washington is the name of two places in England, one in Durham and the other in Sussex. The name is a Saxon one. In Anglo-Saxo, Hwessingatun or Wassingatun signifies the "tun" of
the Hwessings or Wassings. From the Durham village the ancestors of George Washington are believed to have derived their family name. (1)

**FAYETTE**

Two years later, September 26, 1783, another portion of Westmoreland County was taken away to form a new county, to which was given the name of Fayette in honor of that enthusiastic Frenchman who, in so many ways aided the American cause during the War for Independence. (1)

Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de la Fayette, was born in Auvergne, France, on September 6, 1757. He was left an orphan at thirteen with a "princely" fortune. Extensive research does not disclose whether this fortune came from rich relatives for each of whom a name was given to the boy when christened. Having this princely fortune he naturally married into one of the most influential families in France. He was nineteen and a captain of dragoons when the American colonists proclaimed their independence. As he himself says, "At the first news of this quarrel, my heart was enlisted in it". History does not say what part dislike of England and the English had in this rapturous feeling. He made up his mind to go to America and get into the army. His friends attempted to dissuade him, but through Silas Deane, the American agent in Paris, an arrangement was made whereby La Fayette was to enter the American service as a Major-General. The French Government, with an eye to that "princely fortune", tried to prevent his leaving France, but he got away to Spain, and thence to America. When he reached America he found that promises from politicians should be largely discounted, but was sensible enough to realize conditions and adapt himself to them. He immediately expressed his desire to serve America on two conditions—that he should receive no pay, and that he should act as a volunteer. He met Washington and became his lifelong friend. He was wounded at Brandywine, and shortly thereafter secured command of a division.

Of his military career in this country there is not much to be said. Though the commander of a division,
he never had many troops in his charge, and whatever military talents he possessed were not of the kind which appeared to conspicuous advantage on the theater to which his wealth and family influence, rather than his soldierly gifts, had called him. No citizen of a foreign country has ever had so many and such warm admirers in America. The reason is not far to seek. He represented the sympathy of France to us in our darkest hours; his enthusiasm and youth and disinterestedness touched America's heart. His tangible services were little, his intangible services were great.

After his return to France he took a prominent part in the Revolution. It is said that he proposed the combination of the colors of Paris, red and blue, with the royal white, into the famous tricolor cockade of modern France. Few men have owed more of their success and usefulness to their family rank—and still fewer have abused it less.

(2) He died May 20, 1834.

The family of La Fayette, to the cadet branch of which he belonged, received its name from an estate in Aix, Auvergne, which belonged, in the 13th century, to the Motier family. The name is really "de La Fayette," and indicates that the title was based on some local name in Auvergne. There may have been a small stream there called La Fayette. The estate would take its name from that, and the title of the marquisate from the estate.

It is a mystery why the county was called Fayette instead of La Fayette. The man himself has always been referred to as La Fayette, which is almost invariably pronounced as though the La were written Lay. One large community in Indiana calls itself, and properly, La Fayette, as that, and not Fayette, was the name of the estate. There is an important family in Delaware called Du Pont, which is a contraction for du Pont de Nemours, as at one time their ancestors lived at or near the bridge crossing the stream at Nemours. Would it not sound curious to hear that family referred to as the Pont family? Yet it is no more strange than to hear "Fayette" used for "de La Fayette."

It is said that the original family name was de La Fayette or Delafayette but that by a decree issued during
the French Revolution the use of "de" as a preposition used with a place name to form a surname was forbidden, and the name became simply Lafayette. (3)

FRANKLIN

The population in the southern part of the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania, was growing and wanted to have their own county government. Accordingly an act was passed September 9, 1784, erecting part of Cumberland County into a separate county to be called Franklin in honor of that great outstanding character who did as much on the field of diplomacy for our country as Washington did on the field of arms. (1)

Franklin was of English descent, and was born in Boston in 1706. His father, a tallow-chandler, had come from England in 1685. Let us hasten to say by way of explanation in these brilliant days of electricity that a tallow chandler was one who made candles of tallow. The father intended Benjamin, who was the tenth son, for the ministry, as a sort of tithe offering to God. That idea was given up early, a conclusion heartily approved by those since who know Franklin’s proclivities and tastes. The great bent given Franklin’s life was his being apprenticed to his brother James, a printer. Franklin learned his trade well, read diligently, and what is more, learned to write pithily and vigorously in lucid English. Brother James and he could not get on well, and Ben bolted. He went to New York, but could get no work, and went on to Philadelphia where he arrived at the age of 17, friendless and well nigh penniless. A man of Franklin’s personality could not be long without either friends or work, and he soon found both. In 1725 Governor Keith induced him to go to England to buy type for a printing shop of his own, promising him a letter which would give him aid in the way of money. When he got to England he soon found, what thousands of Pennsylvanians have since learned, that it is imprudent to rely on the promises of politicians. Franklin had to shift for himself, but he maintained himself—and enjoyed himself—for upwards of a year. He came back to Philadelphia in 1726 and went to work in a drygoods shop. But he was a born printer and nothing could keep
him from that trade. In 1729 the gods poured success into his lap, when he got control of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. His conduct of this paper won him a competence and high favor in the colony. From this time on he was increasingly interested in public activities. One thing next to the kite episode, associated most closely with his name, was his *Poor Richard's Almanac* which he started in 1733, over the pseudonym of "Richard Saunders". For twenty-five years his witty and worldly-wise sayings in this Almanac which had a large circulation in the colonies, were very influential in molding the American character—more so in fact than the influence of any other man. In 1734 he was Clerk to the General Assembly; in 1737 Postmaster in Philadelphia. In 1743 he proposed an academy which later developed into the great University of Pennsylvania. In 1744 he founded the American Philosophical Society. He invented a very practical stove, improved the city's lighting, paving, police and fire department. In 1752 he performed the celebrated experiment with the kite.

In 1754 he was Commissioner from Pennsylvania to the Intercolonial Congress at Albany, which met to take measures in view of the threatened French and Indian War, that American reflection of the great European struggle between Great Britain and France for leadership. At this Congress he proposed a plan combining local independence with union. It seems probable that if his plan had been followed many of the causes which led to the Revolution would have been avoided.

When the descendants of William Penn, the proprietors of the colony, refused to allow their private lands to be taxed for the support of the troops, Franklin was sent to England in 1764 to petition the Crown against the Penns. He was so successful in this that he remained in England as the leading representative of the colonies. His influence, in 1766, helped secure the repeal of the Stamp Act. He came back to Philadelphia in 1775, and was chosen a delegate to Congress. He was on the committee to draft the Declaration of Independence and was one of the signers.
During the war he represented American interests in France where he was extremely popular. He signed the Treaty of Paris on behalf of the colonies in 1783.

In 1785 he was chosen a member of the Executive Council, and soon afterwards took the position which now corresponds to the governorship. What would Franklin think of our latter-day governors? He died in 1790. His greatest service to America was due to his wondrous skill in diplomacy. He had great common sense, sagacity, great firmness of purpose, matchless tact and broad tolerance.

The name Franklin is an old English name for a freeholder or freeman. Middle English, frankeleyn, shortened to franklen; Late Latin francalanus; Lat. francus, free; Old High German, franks, a Frank or free man. The suffix is from Old German linc, coming down in the modern German and English as "ling", e.g. darling. (2)

REFERENCES

*A bibliography of the more important works consulted will be given on the completion of the study. The footnotes are organized separately by counties.

PHILADELPHIA:
7. Ibid., p. 36.
8. For Penn’s own views of his new colony, see his “Account of the Province of Pennsylvania,” 1681, in Myers’ Narrative of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey and Delaware, p. 199.

CHESTER:
2. Clarkson, William Penn, I, 332. Weems, in his life of Penn, also mentions this mythical Thomas Pearson.
3. See Passenger list of the “Welcome” in Young, Philadelphia, I, 78.
5. Taylor, Names and Their Histories, p 91.

BUCKS:
4. Taylor, Names and Their Histories, p. 77.

LANCASTER:
2. Taylor, Names and Their Histories, p. 168.

YORK:
1. Taylor, Names and Their Histories, p. 299.
Origin of the Names Given to the Counties in Pennsylvania

CUMBERLAND:

BERKS:
2. Encyclopedia Britannica.

NORTHAMPTON:
2. Ibid., p. 965.
3. Taylor, Names and Their Histories, p. 208.
4. Gover, Place Names of Middlesex, p. 37.

BEDFORD:
2. Taylor, Names and Their History, p. 65.

NORTHUMBERLAND:
1. Taylor, Names and Their Histories, p. 208.
   Encyclopedia Britannica, s. v. Northumberland, Northumbria.

WESTMORELAND:
2. Taylor, Names and Their Histories, p. 293.

WASHINGTON:
1. Taylor, Names and Their Histories, p. 291.

FAYETTE:
2. Encyclopedia Britannica, s. v. La Fayette.
3. Kremers, Beiträge zur Erforschung der französischen Familien-
   namen, p. 33.

FRANKLIN:
2. Weekley, Etymological Dictionary.