The origin of the name Mifflin is unknown. It may be a British place name of great antiquity, in which the element "lin" might have come from the Gaelic, "linne", a pool or cascade.

SOMERSET

The county west of Bedford Town and east of Fayette County next asked for separate government. By the Act of April 17, 1795, a portion of Bedford County was taken away and erected into a county under the name of Somerset. This name was given it from the name of the county town, Somerset, which had been settled a generation or so before. The town took its name from the county in the west of England, south of the Severn River and the Bristol Channel.

Taylor has an interesting note on this name. "Somerset" (Anglo-Saxon Sumersaete) was originally like Dorset, Essex and Norfolk, a tribal name, denoting, not the land, but its inhabitants. The Chief place in the county was the royal "tun" of Somerton (A. S. Sumer-tun) which denoted a summer residence, like the Welsh, "Hafvd." If Dorset signifies the settlers near Durnovaria, Somerset might signify the settlers around Somerton, although Somerset is not a contracted form of Sumer-tun-set, as Wiltshire is of Wiltun-scir. In Welsh, Somerset was called "Gwald-yr-Haf," the "land of summer," but it is not certainly known whether Somerset is a translation of the Welsh name, or whether the Welsh name is merely a 12th century translation of Somerset. Professor Rhys inclines to the former view, believing that Gwald-yr-Haf was a term of mythical origin, which afterwards became attached to a definite locality—the region beyond the Severn, known in Welsh as Hafren the Summer or Southern River. In any case the Welsh names of the Severn and of Somerset are etymologically related. In Latin documents, Somerset was translated by "aestiva regio" the "land of summer." (1)
LYCOMING

The next county to come in was a big one. It covered a great portion of what might be termed the central northern part of the state. It embraced wholly, or partly, land now contained in fifteen counties. With a growing population it became too vast for administrative purposes when the county seat was east of the Susquehanna.

On April 13, 1795, an act was passed erecting Lycoming County from a portion of Northumberland. This county, apparently, took its name from Lycoming Creek which means in the Indian tongue, "sandy stream." (1)

GREENE

The following year the settlements in the extreme southwestern part of the state sought to be separated from Washington County. By the act of February 9, 1796, a portion of Washington County was erected into a separate county to which was given the name of Greene, in honor of Nathaniel Greene, that intrepid and skillful soldier who did so much to discourage the British and aid Washington during the War for Independence.

Nathaniel Greene was born August 7, 1742, in Rhode Island. Although a Quaker he enlisted as a private in 1774 in an independent company, the Kentish Guards. Once in uniform, his ability speedily made itself known, for in the following year he was appointed to the command of the Rhode Island contingent sent to the army at Boston, with the rank of Brigadier-General,—quite a promotion after military service of but one year. In 1796 he was promoted to Major-General and placed in command of troops on Long Island. In all his military service he acted with great skill and valor. At Brandywine he really saved the day by rallying the militia who had, as usual, given way in a panic. In 1780 he was sent to supersede the incompetent Gates in command of the Army of the South, where he had sole command in six states to raise supplies, appoint officers, command troops—and make it interesting for the enemy. Gates had made a mess of it. Greene speedily got the troops into condition, secured their confidence and fought and maneuvered, now losing, now holding his own, until he had gradually cleared Georgia and the Carolinas of British troops except in three coast towns. Greene failed to win striking victories, but
he accomplished what he was sent to do—clear the colonies south of Virginia of the British troops. He died in 1786.

The name Greene comes, of course, from the English “green” a bit of sward in the village where the inhabitants met or played. John atte Greene was a common name several centuries ago. (1)

WAYNE

From the extreme southwest to the extreme northeast of the state is a far jump.

The settlements up along the Delaware valley were growing rapidly, and the settlers wanted a separate county government. By act of March 21, 1798, a portion of Northampton County was set apart as a separate county to be known as Wayne County. It was named for the celebrated soldier Anthony Wayne, since known in our histories as “Mad Anthony Wayne” on account of his reckless courage and his resolute handling of military problems. He came of good fighting stock, for his grandsire had fought at the Battle of the Boyne back in the 17th century. This ancestor came to this country in 1722. Anthony was born in Chester in 1745. When the war broke out he raised a regiment and was appointed colonel. In 1777 he was made brigadier-general. He served with great distinction at Brandywine and at Monmouth, but his greatest claim on fame was the storming of Stony Point on the Hudson in July 1779 by troops under his command. He was wounded in this engagement; for his services here Congress gave him a vote of thanks and a gold medal. He aided at Yorktown where he rendered excellent services. Before this he had aided Greene in driving the British out of Georgia and the Carolinas. For this work Georgia presented him with a plantation where he afterward made his home. He gained considerable experience in Indian fighting in the battles with the Creeks in 1782. He occupied Charleston when it was surrounded by the British. After the war he retired to his Georgia plantation from which he was recalled by Washington who sent him into the then Northwest to end the Indian troubles there which Harmar and St. Clair had failed to stop. He began his campaign in Ohio in 1793, and in August 1794 at the cel-
ebrated Battle of Fallen Timbers signally defeated the enemy. In 1795 he signed on behalf of his country, at Greenville, the treaty with the twelve northwestern tribes, by which treaty the United States gained a great deal of territory. He died at Fort Presqu' Isle (now Erie) in 1796. He was brave to the verge of rashness, and for this he received his celebrated name of “Mad Anthony”, but with it all he was discreet, fruitful in resources, and very prompt and efficient in the execution of his plans.

The name Wayne is a variant of the name for wagon or cart, wain, an old Anglo-Saxon word. Chaucer occasionally spelled it wayne. (1)

ADAMS

The last year of the eighteenth century saw the erection of many new counties, the first of which was Adams County which was formed, January 22, 1800, from part of York County. It was named for John Adams who was then the President of the United States.

John Adams was born in Massachusetts in 1735 and died July 4, 1826. He lead a very active life. He first came into prominence when he boldly attacked the validity of the Stamp Act. In 1774 he was sent as a delegate to the Continental Congress. There he devoted his energies to plans looking to an organization of the different commonwealths on an independent basis, the formation of a federal government and the establishing of diplomatic relation with foreign powers. He seconded the original motion for the Declaration of Independence, and was one of the committee that drafted it. He was a hard worker in Congress. In 1778 he was sent to France to supersede Silas Deane, but did not stay long. He was our first minister to England but returned to America in 1788. At our first election he was elected Vice-President with Washington and served two terms. In the formative years of our political parties and in the time of nearly equal division of the Senate between the parties, he exercised a power seldom possessed since by any Vice-President. He opposed Jefferson, and supported Hamilton, in those times when the constant bickerings tried Washington's soul. He was recognized as one of the leaders of the Federalists party, but, it might be added, he slew it with his own hand.
He was elected as a Federalist, to the Presidency, but was in constant factional fights with Hamilton who was a far greater man than Adams. His greatest service to this country was the appointment of John Marshall as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

The name means "son of Adam." The name Adams goes back to the putative father of mankind. Adam (with the accent on the last syllable, by the way) means, in Hebrew, "red." The word for ground is "adamah." The word was originally a common noun denoting either a human being, or a man as opposed to a woman, or mankind collectively. The root, "adm" is variously explained as "to make" or "to produce" or "to be red." (1)

CENTRE

The next county to be formed was Centre County, so called from its relative geographical location in the state. It was erected by Act of February 13, 1800, from parts of Mifflin, Northumberland, Lycoming and Huntingdon counties.

The word "centre" comes from Latin centrum which in turn comes from an ancient Greek word "kentron" which meant a sharp point or prickle. (1)

ARMSTRONG

Next came the great County Act of March 12, 1800, which erected no less than eight counties from Allegheny, Butler, Beaver, Crawford, Erie, Mercer, Venango and Warren.

Armstrong County was formed from Allegheny, Lycoming and a bit of Westmoreland. It was named for General John Armstrong who was born in Ireland in 1725. (1) He led a successful expedition against the Indians at Kittanning in 1725. He became a brigadier-general in the Continental Army, but resigned to take the same rank in the Pennsylvania militia, which he commanded at Brandywine and at Germantown. He became a major-general in 1778. He served twice in the Continental Congress. He died in Carlisle in 1795.

The name is a very old one in England and southern Scotland and evidently points to an ancestor whom the name described. (2)
BUTLER

Butler County was named for General Richard Butler, who was killed when Gen. St. Clair was defeated by the Indians.

Butler was a native of Ireland. He was a lieutenant-colonel in the Pennsylvania line in the Continental Army, and also of Morgan’s Rifle Corps in 1777. He served throughout the war; and was agent for Indian affairs in Ohio in 1787. He was with General St. Clair in his unfortunate expedition against the Indians in 1791. Late in that year he was killed in battle.

The name Butler comes from the occupation of butler, the person who handled or attended to the wine cellar with its bottles, or from the occupation of maker of bottles. (1) It goes back to a Late Latin buttis and butta, a butt or cask.

BEAVER

Beaver County was named for the river which runs through the county and which in turn got its name from the animals which used to build their dams across its stream. The word “beaver” in a very ancient word and goes back to the early days of the Aryan peoples where it was then used to describe the animal which has been for ages a synonym for industry. (1)

CRAWFORD

This county was formed from a portion of Allegheny County. It was named for the unfortunate General William Crawford who was tortured and burned to death by the Indians at Sandusky in June, 1782.

William Crawford was born in Virginia in the same year, 1732, in which George Washington was born, and was an assistant surveyor with Washington. He served in the French and Indian War, and was with Washington on Braddock’s luckless expedition. He resigned from the army in 1781, but later, at the request of Washington, took command of the expedition sent against the Delaware and Wyandot Indians near Sandusky River. On June 4, 1782, near the present site of Sandusky, Ohio, the troops met a large force of Indians and British. Crawford’s troops were discouraged and he ordered a retreat which soon became a confused flight. He became separated from
the rest, was captured by the British and Indians and burned at the stake amid fearful tortures. His leadership on this expedition left a great deal to be desired.

The name comes from a local place names in southern Scotland. (1) It has been traced back as far as the 12th century when it was spelled Crauford. It is probable that it comes from crow and ford. Crow in early English is craw. (2)

ERIE

Erie County was formed of a portion of Allegheny County. It was named for the great lake which forms one of its boundaries. This lake was named by the early explorers from the Eries, a tribe of Indians which formerly lived along its shore. (1) They were known as the "Cat Indians", a rather far fetched translation of their name, except in the sense used by circus folk. The Eries occupied the land on the south shore of Lake Erie eastward to the foot of the lake. They were enemies and rivals of the Iroquois, who lived to the east of them, and were exterminated as a nation by the Iroquois about 1655 in a terrible battle of the Eries' own seeking. Jealous of the power of the confederacy known as the Five Nations, they staked all in a desperate attack on the Iroquois—and lost. (2)

The name has often been translated as meaning "cat," but cats, as we know them, were not known to the Indians prior to the advent of the whites. It should be translated "panther" or "wild cat." Some writers state that it comes from an Indian word similar in form and sense to the Huron Yenresh, which is said to mean "it is long-tailed" referring to the eastern panther; or to the Tuscarora word "ken raks", somewhat equivalent to "mountain lion" in modern use. It was gallicized into Erie and Ri, whence the locative forms Erie, Rique and Rigue, meaning approximately "at the place of the panther." It is probable that in the Iroquois tongue the puma and the wild-cat originally had generically the same name. (3)

MERCER

This county was formed from a portion of Allegheny County. It was named for General Hugh Mercer, the
young surgeon in the army of the Pretender at the Battle of Culloden, the companion of Washington in the Braddock expedition, and the courageous American patriot who died from wounds received at the Battle of Trenton in 1777. (1)

The name comes from the name of the tradesman, mercer, a dealer in silks and woolen cloths. This comes from French mercer, which comes from late Latin mercerius, a trader from the old Latin noun merx, merchandise, plus the suffix arius denoting agent. (2)

VENANGO

Venango County was formed from parts of Allegheny and Lycoming counties. It took its name from the name of an old Indian town which for centuries was situated at the mouth of French Creek (Venango River, or Riviere aux Boeufs), as shown by the refuse beds containing bones, mussel shells, flint chips, arrowpoints, pipe bowls and broken pottery.

It is said that name Venango, the distinguishing word used by the first white visitors to designate this ancient village, was a corruption of a name given to the stream by the Senecas. Some writers state that it formerly was pronounced as though spelled In-nun-gach. Rev. Timothy Alden, an early resident of Meadville, and an acquaintance of the celebrated Seneca chief, Cornplanter, said in 1816, that "the name was given to French Creek by the Senecas in consequence of a certain figure carved on the bark of a tree near its bank, noticed at an early period after they came to this region, and expressive of the representation made by the rude sculpture, but an explanation which decency forbids to record." This name became, it is said, in time. Weningo, Wenango, Vinango and finally Venango. If the foregoing be true—and its veracity is by no means obvious—tradition must have played a great part in retaining in the Indian memory the explanation of this origin, for if the town took its name from the river, and the river from the mark on the tree, and the village was several centuries old, the mark must have disappeared
many generations before Cornplanter was born. The nature of the sculpture on the tree must have appealed to that part of the human mind that has a leaning toward the phallic—and this leaning was quite pronounced among the Indian savages. The generally accepted meaning of the word is "interesting mark on a tree," but this possibly was a toning down for white ears—and especially reverend ears, of the full vigor of the original. (1)

WARREN

Warren County was formed from parts of Allegheny and Lycoming counties. It was named for Gen. Joseph Warren, an American patriot and soldier who fell at the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775. (1) He was born in Roxbury, Mass., in 1741, was an ardent patriot and a hard worker in the stirring days preceding our independence. He had much to do with the American success at Lexington. He was commissioned a major-general in the American army, opposed the fortifying of Bunker Hill, but when he was overruled went in as a volunteer and was killed as the American troops were leaving the trenches.

The name Warren is of French origin and is explained variously. One William de Warene or Warrena, who married a daughter of William the Conqueror, received great possessions in Sussex, Surrey, Norfolk, Suffolk and elsewhere, and became the progenitor of the Earls of Warrene and Surrey. His chief seat, before the conquest, was at Bellencombe, a small town in what is now the arrondissement of Dieppe, in Normandy, on the little river Varenne. (2) By this name the town itself, was anciently known, until, upon the erection of a fortress upon an artificial mound (bellus cumulus), it received from that circumstances the appellation of Bellencombe. The Norman de Warennes were, doubtless, the progenitors of many existing families of Warren; but it must not be forgotten that the surname may have a totally different source, namely warren, "a place privileged by the King for keeping conies, hares, partridges, pheasants and the like." A warren now is commonly applied to a colony of rabbits. In the latter sense it goes back to Old French Warenne (garenne) from Old High German Wehren or weren, "to keep safe." (3)
INDIANA

The first county to be formed in the nineteenth century was Indiana County which was erected March 30, 1803 from parts of Westmoreland and Lycoming.

It received its name from the aboriginal inhabitants of the state who were, from the advent of the whites, known as Indians (Indianos).

The name arose in the first place owing to the mistake made by Columbus when he discovered the Western world. On this name Taylor has a most interesting note: "It is one of the curiosities of nomenclature that the name of one of the States of the Union should have to be explained by the Greek corruption of the Persian form of a Sanskrit word meaning "river". That this should be the case is ultimately due to the curious misconception of Columbus, who believed, and died in that belief, that the lands he had discovered were what were then known as the Indies, and which we now call India and the East Indies. India is the Greek form derived from Hindu, the Persian equivalent of the Sanskrit "sindhu", meaning "a river", used especially to denote the Indus, the chief river of the land in which the Aryan invaders of India first established themselves." (2)

The natives of India can scarcely be said to have a word of their own by which to express their common country. In Sanskrit it would be called "Bharata-varsha" from Bharta, a legendary monarch; but Sanskrit is no more the vernacular of India than Latin is of Europe. The name "Hindustan", which was at one time adopted by European geographers, is of Persian origin, meaning "the land of the Hindus" as Afghanistan means "the land of the Afghans". According to native usage, however, "Hindustan" is limited either to that portion of the peninsula lying north of the Vindhya Mountains, or, yet more strictly, to the upper basin of the Ganges, where Hindi is the spoken language. The "East Indies" as opposed to the "West Indies" is an old-fashioned and inaccurate phase dating from the dawn of maritime discovery. (3)

JEFFERSON

Lycoming County, an immense extent of land had been growing more thickly populated, so much so that by
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one Act of Assembly, passed March 26, 1804, five counties were formed from parts of it, namely Jefferson, McKean, Potter, Tioga, and Clearfield, the latter including also a bit of Huntingdon County.

Jefferson County was named for Thomas Jefferson who, at that time, was President of the United States. He is noted for the fact that he was largely instrumental in phrasing the Declaration of Independence, and for the acquisition of Louisiana.

The name Jefferson comes from Jeffrey's son. The name Jeffrey, also written Geoffrey is said to come from the Teutonic Gottfried, divine peace, an old baptismal name. It is said it came to England from Godfrey of Boulogne the conqueror of Jerusalem during the early crusades. Previously Gottfried, as a name, had been taken up by the French, and was much used by the Angevin counts in the gallicized form of Geoffroi. Under the form of Geoffrey it spread among the English. Its variants are Godfrey, Geoffrey, Jeffrey, Jeff.

McKEAN

This county was named for Thomas McKean, who was, at that time Governor of Pennsylvania.

Thomas McKean was a noted man in the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries. He was born of Irish parents, in Chester County but studied law and was admitted to the bar in Delaware. He was elected to Congress from Delaware in 1765. The same year he was elected a judge in the Court of Common Pleas, and boldly ruled that only unstamped paper should be used in his court. He was elected to the Continental Congress in 1774 and served continuously until 1783, being the only member to serve throughout the war. He signed the Declaration of Independence. He helped to draft the Articles of Confederation. While still a member of Congress from Delaware he became prominently identified with Pennsylvania affairs, and was chairman of the Committee of Safety in this state in 1776, and in 1777 was chosen Chief Justice, a position he held until 1799. In 1799, having been one of the leaders of the Republican (now Democratic) party, and a strong supporter of Jeffer-
son, he was elected Governor of Pennsylvania and served until 1808. He died in 1817.

The name McKean, is a Gaelic name variously written McKeand and McKaehan. The word is the same as the English Johnson, and means “son of John”. The Gaelic Mac Iain or Mac Eoin, is made up of Mac, son and Iain (Eoin) John. (2)

The word John has much the same meaning in the Hebrew as the Greek name Theodore, gift of God. John is the English variant of the Greek form of a Hebrew word. The Hebrew is Johanan, which is a shortened form of Jehohanan, which means “Jehovah’s gift” or “whom Jehovah has graciously given”. (3) The Greek Ioannes, comes down to us in Johannes—and Honus.

POTTER

This county was named for Gen. James Potter, an officer in the Revolutionary War and a distinguished citizen of Pennsylvania.

The name is an occupational surname and indicates how at least one of the general’s forebears was employed. (1)

TIOGA

This name is an Indian name and has been the subject of much guessing and more discussion. It often was written in early days Diahogha. The name came from Tioga River. One of the meanings assigned to “Tioga” is swift current, and this seems the most probable explanation, but those who uphold the interpretation of “a gate, or place of entrance” have much to confirm their surmise. The other explanation “at the forks” does not seem probable; it is said to have come from the name of a village situated on the right bank of the Susquehanna near its junction with the Chemung.

Those who uphold “place of entrance” as the interpretation look to the celebrated missionary David Zeisberger as their authority. It was said to be a name given by the Iroquois to that neck of land where the East and West Branches of the Susquehanna form a junction. From the fact that the northern banks of both streams were
considered in the territory of the Iroquois this neck of land was the “place of entrance” that is, into the country of the Six Nations. Zeisberger who as early as 1750, had traveled that way into the country of the Six Nations, said that at that place some of the Six Nations were settled for the purpose of ascertaining who came into their country. Anyone who came in by any other way except by way of the Mohawk was suspected and generally treated as a spy and enemy. (2) The story does not ring very true.

CAMBRIA
This county was formed March 26, 1804 from parts of Huntingdon, Somerset and Bedford.

The name is the Latinized name for the land of the Cymry, the Welsh. This name was originally given to the well known “Welsh Tract” near the Schuylkill River, settled by immigrants from the northern counties of Wales.

The early settlers of Cambria county were Catholics from Maryland, Pennsylvania Germans and Welsh. The Welsh actively commenced making improvements in different parts of what was later known as Cambria Township. (1) The name which those Welsh settlers gave to their new home was in memory of their former home—Cambria. Cambria Township afterwards gave its name to the county. At the time these Welsh settlements were made that part of the future Cambria County was then a part of Somerset County.

CLEARFIELD
This county received its name from the name applied to the old Indian town on the site of which the town of Clearfield was laid out in 1805. The Indian name was Chinklacamoose. From the openings or clearings made by the Indians, which the first settlers found on their arrival there, the name of Clearfield was said to be taken. (1)

BRADFORD
This county was erected February 21, 1810 from parts of Luzerne and Lycoming Counties and named Ontario County for the great lake. Two years later, March 24, 1812, the name was changed to Bradford County, in honor of William Bradford, a Pennsylvanian, who in 1794-5 was
Attorney-General of the United States.

The name Ontario is an Indian name which is said to mean "beautiful lake". (2)

The name Bradford is an old English place name. There is a Bradford on the Avon in Wiltshire. The early form of the word was Bradanford, coming from "brad" broad and "ford" ford. (3)

SUSQUEHANNA

Susquehanna County was erected from a portion of Luzerne by Act of February 21st, 1810. It takes its name from the great river which enters Pennsylvania in this County. The meaning of the word is not definitely known. It is by some thought to be an Iroquois word. The Powhatan tribes called the Conestogas the Susquehannocks (1) which is said to mean "oily water". John Smith knew them as the Sasquesahannocks and as the Sasquesahanough (2). Gannett, in his compilation says the word means "water," from the Indian suckahanna (3). But suckahanna means "black stream". (4) Taylor says that it was formerly called "Crooked River" (5) Boyd takes it to mean "long reach liver" (6). If we may rely on the authenticity of the Walam Olum, however, there need be no uncertainty about the meaning of the word. At one stage in their progress the Lenni Lennape came to Saskwihanang (7), which is translated "straight river" but more correctly should be "the place of the straight river". Zeisberger in his vocabulary, gives "schachachki" as meaning straight. (8) The Delaware language has a word for "straight course in a river", schachachgachne, which is apparently the same word as Zeisberger's. Brinton also translates it as "straight stream" (9).

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