

JOHN AND ROBERT BROWN SETTLE HERE



WHILE Berwick owes its beginning largely to the efforts of Evan Owen as shown in his interest in real estate along the Susquehanna River, the history of the town so far as life and activity are concerned really began with the arrival of the first residents, John and Robert Brown. It is therefore important that something concerning the early life in Berwick be included in this historical booklet.

John and Robert Brown were members of a family that resided for many centuries in the South of Scotland. According to family records the two brothers came to America for religious freedom. After living in Philadelphia for ten or more years they were induced by Evan Owen to settle in this region, where each of them bought sixty acres of land in addition to several town lots. The first two homes in Berwick were built by the two Scotchmen and stood, as told earlier in the history, on the corner of Second and Market Streets.

Later John Brown built a hotel at the corner of Second and Market Streets. The hotel was the favorite stopping place for the Judges of the Supreme Court who were on their way, by the old-fashioned stages and four, to hold court at Wilkes-Barre. These judges were usually given the best straw beds in the building on which to sleep.

First Berwick Marriage

The first marriage in Berwick took place on November 15, 1809, when Anne Brown, nineteen year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brown and the first daughter born in Berwick, became the bride of Jesse Bowman. After the ceremony the couple went to house-keeping in their new home which still stands along the Berwick-Orangeville highway near the point where the concrete ends. Passers-by may see the building between the bushes to the right of the road. At that time the region where the newly-weds lived was nothing but wilderness, there being few paths and no roads of any size. Few houses had been built that far from any settlement until some years later.



Above is pictured one of the oldest buildings in this section, the structure having stood since Post Revolutionary Days. The building can be seen through the bushes to the right of the highway along the Orangeville Road.

Berwick's History Begins To Develop

Fifty years ago, when Berwick was celebrating its centennial, R. S. Bowman, then the editor of the Berwick Independent, brought to light many interesting items dealing with the "firsts" of Berwick. Mr. Bowman's action in tracing the early history of Berwick at that time was especially admirable in that many of the residents of the early days were still living. It was from those older citizens that the editor of the Berwick Independent drew much of his information, thus eliminating the chance of error in tracing the history from uncertain records, although the work of those who spent so much time on gathering the history of the town for the Sesquicentennial celebration did much to complete the history which really had only its bare beginning in the accounts from fifty years ago.

First Turnpikes Built

The Nescopeck turnpike was constructed in 1805; the Tioga and Susquehanna in 1818. The head contractor for the projects was Andrew Shiner, who ran the first stage coach to Mauch Chunk, and employed, for the first trip, a man by the name of Christjohn Bowman. Bowman hauled the first load over the turnpike as far as Easton. Years later staging was carried on by Phillip Abbott, who was followed by Horton Brothers between Northumberland and Wilkes-Barre.

Firsts In Business And Professions Listed

The first lawyer was Bancroft; first doctors, Moreland and Beisswick; first postmaster, William Brien; first schoolmaster, Isaac Holloway; first Sunday School man, D. Bowen; first preachers, Carson and Painter; first cooper, Burlingame; first carpenter, John Brown; first blacksmith, Aquilla Star; first tailor, Benjamin Doan; first chair-maker, Abel Dalby; first mason, Jonathon Cooper, sr.; first dyer, Bush; first tanner, Henry Troch; first dentist, Vallerlshamp; first tinner, Hiram Inman; first gunsmith, Sleppy and Company; first wheelwright, James Evans; first silversmith, Marshall.