

The year 1992 marks the three hundredth anniversary of the creation of separate townships in Bucks County. As early as March 12, 1690 (Twelfth day of the First month 1689 Old Style) colonial records in the Court of Quarter Sessions

note the necessity of the county being divided into townships. The division was reported complete on September 27, 1692 (Seventh month, Old Style). At that time Newtown and Wrightstown were considered one township.

INTRODUCTION

Wrightstown Township is a small township located in the central portion of Bucks County, one of the three original counties established in Pennsylvania. Despite receiving a royal charter in 1681 officially granting him all the land in Pennsylvania, William Penn opted to also purchase the land from the native Lenni Lenape inhabitants. On July 15, 1682, William Markham, William Penn's cousin and Deputy Governor, made his first purchase of lands from the Indians. This land purchase included most of the townships of Bristol, Falls, Makefield, Middletown, Newtown, and Wrightstown, and opened the way to settlement of much of the county. As the population increased, the county was divided into townships.

The rationale for naming the

township is unclear. The first known reference to the name is in a letter from Phineas Pemberton to William Penn in 1687 in which he refers to land he purchased in Wrightstown. The letter notes that "The people hereabout are much disappointed with sd (said) Wright and his cheating tricks he played here. They think much to call it after such a runagadoe's (sic) name." [Battle p.465]. Pemberton, a major property owner in the township as well as the leading political figure in the county, preferred the name Centertowne. The letter states that "I have sometimes called it Centertowne, because it lyes (lies) near the center of the county, as it may be supposed, and the town is layd out w' (with) a center in the middle of six hundred ackers or thereabouts".



Figure 1: Eighteenth century home of Richard Mitchell, miller at Rush Valley. This well preserved, stone house is located at 991 Penns Park Road.