History of Clinton Township

Clinton Township was established on November 17, 1834, from parts of Canaan, Mount Pleasant, and Dyberry townships. It is situated on the western border of the County line, just north of the midline of the County. The Moosic Mountain range follows along the western border of Clinton Township and the County line itself. The importance of the Moosic range is that it is from this region that coal was found in abundance.

Clinton Township was named in honor of DeWitt Clinton, Governor of New York, at the suggestion of Judge David Scott. It was Judge Scott for whom Scott Township was named. He also named Preston Township. Obviously, his political influence was very great.

Clinton Township is divided into two valleys, with the largest population center being in Aldenville on the eastern side of the Township. Another population center is Forest City, which is just over the Township line in Susquehanna County, on the western edge of the Township. The terrain of more than a quarter of the Township is taken up by the Moosic Mountains and is unfit for farming. In the western part there is some anthracite coal, the only part of the County in which coal is found. The west branch of the Lackawanna River runs through the Township for several miles. The branch of the Lackawaxen River and its tributaries afford ample waterpower for mills. The chief ponds are Elk, Alden (or Long Pond), Swamp, and White Oak.

The old "coal road," laid out by Thomas Meredith who owned large tracts of coal land along the western base of the Moosic Mountains west of the Wayne County line, is still in existence. This road extended from about the midpoint of the Township at the northern edge south westward to Forest City. At its most northern point, it intersected the Belmont and Easton Road, which was built in 1819 and ran from north to south through the middle of Clinton Township, as well as through all of the townships on the western edge of Wayne County.

As were many roads in the area, the "coal road" was built by "bees" in about 1814. A "bee" was when the neighbors turned out to assist in some large project requiring the efforts of many men and women. The men did the work of clearing the trees, while the women prepared the food and did other supportive tasks often as arduous as the work of the men. Common to this area, the bees provided social interaction for the people as well as enabling them to accomplish tasks too great for the members of a single family to undertake. Bees were held for projects such as road building, building houses and barns, sewing, quilting, and clearing land for farming.

The Lackawaxen Turnpike was chartered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1828. It began near Belmont at the Cochecton and Great Bend Turnpike, ran along the west bank of the Lackawaxen River, past what is now Aldenville, and intersected the Turnpike at Prompton, a distance of more than fourteen miles.

Michael Grenell was one of the early settlers of the area that became Clinton Township. He was born in Saybrook, Connecticut, in 1752 and served in the Revolutionary War. Grenell was in New York City when news of the signing of the Declaration of Independence was received and he assisted in tearing down the statue of King George, which stood at the foot of Broadway. It is likely that the government sold land in Wayne County to him at reduced prices, as it did to many veterans of the War. Grenell voted for George Washington in every presidential election. He died in Clinton Township in 1858.

The early families of Clinton Township include the names of Grenell, North, Norton, Loomis, and Griswold. Sylvester North early cleared a "beautiful and fertile farm," leaving behind fruit trees that produced for many years after his death. Identified as an "ardent Democrat of the old school," he was proud that he had never taken any of the government's "shin plasters."

Levi Norton built the first sawmill in the Township in 1813, followed by a sawmill at the outlet of Mud Pond, built by Sheldon Norton in 1819. Levi Norton built a sawmill at the outlet of

White Oak Pond in 1818 and hauled his lumber to the Dyberry River. From there he transported it by raft to the Delaware River and then on to Philadelphia.

The Central Baptist Church was organized in 1831, but their building, the oldest in the Township, was not completed until 1846. A cyclone destroyed the building in 1851 and a new church was constructed on the same spot. It was completed in 1855. The Methodist Episcopal Church was started after the Baptist Church.

A tannery was built in 1849-50 by a Colonel Zadock Pratt and continued to operate until about 1882. When the tannery closed, the plant made shovel handles.

The village of Aldenville was the home of the Clinton Cut Glass Company and the Elite Cut Glass Manufacturing Company. The plant was located on the bank of the Lackawaxen River just below a small dam, which provided waterpower to turn the cutting wheels and the dynamo for electrical power. Charles C. Wilmarth started the company in 1905, but upon his death the company was sold to Royal and Charles Reichenbacher. The original building burned in 1918, but as there was a shortage of building supplies due to the first World War, they resorted to dismantling the abandoned Pleasant Mount High School (formerly the Pleasant Mount Academy) and rebuilt an imposing structure in Aldenville for the glass factory. The factory continued to operate until 1924 when it closed.

The first post office was in the home of Alva Norton from 1820 to 1852 and was named Mount Republic. The Clinton Center post office was then established and operated until 1906. Aldenville had its own post office from 1870 until the 1980s.

The former Aldenville School, closed when the Western Wayne School District formed, is now the Township building for supervisor meetings and public voting.

Population figures for Clinton Township are as follows:

Year	Population
1890	863
1900	954
1910	1,176
1920	1,573
1930	1,848
1940	1,643
1950	1,266
1960	1,132
1970	1,105
1980	1,399
1990	1,582
2000*	1,926
2010*	2,053

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*Population figures for these years obtained from Wayne County Population Counts provided by the Wayne County Planning Commission.