

GOOFY GEOGRAPHY

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

If Pennsylvania schools ever decide to add the highly unlikely course of "Goofy Geography" to their curriculum, the newspaper in Muncy, the "Luminary" in a recent article suggested material around the state that could be included in the subject matter. Like our three-years ago story "What's In A Name?" and our "Pennsylvania Postmarks"--Goofy Geography is a matter of discussion for this series. For example, a geography teacher might have a bit of fun--and trouble--explaining why the Pennsylvania village of West Fairview, just across the river from Harrisburg, is 300 miles east of the village of Fairview in Erie County. Or that Upper Saint Clair is about 250 miles west of St. Clair. Geographic oddities are plentiful in Pennsylvania. They add fascination to the state's colorful history--and most of them are without explanation. The village of Camp Hill is not a hill or is it a camp. Roaring Springs has a spring, but it doesn't roar--it's a rather pleasant sound. The picturesque town of Ridgway in Elk County, supposedly named for its setting among the mountain ridges, was actually named for a Philadelphia merchant, Jacob Ridgway, who never set foot in the town. And then there's the town of Jersey Shore in Lycoming County, near the Grand Canyon; it's 150 miles from any New Jersey shore-line. You would think that the Allegheny River, flowing near the village of Port Alleghany would have some connection. Their spelling is different--there is no

explanation why...The county in nearby Maryland is spelled like Port Alleghany, not like the river--I don't know why. Women's Lib takes on meaning in Pennsylvania, Huntingdon County was named for the Countess of Huntingdon, who helped found the University of Pennsylvania, and Montour County was named for the French-Indian Madame Montour, who was a famous Indian interpreter, and quite a wicked woman. Why you would find villages with Latin names in Pennsylvania--especially when they are high in the Endless northern mountains, I don't know--Emporium, means "center of trade"--and Renovo, comes from the latin, "I renew". Funny, too that Clearfield is in Clearfiled County, Erie in Erie County, but Bradford is not in Bradford County, but in McKean; Chester, not in Chester County but in Delaware, and Franklin not in Franklin County but in Venango. The town of West Chester--that's in Chester County; but the village of McKean is not in McKean County but in Erie, and the village of Wyoming--not in Wyoming County but in Luzerne. That's what we mean by Pennsylvania's goofy geography. If you find others, send them to me. About every twenty miles along any road you'll come across more examples of "Goofy Geography".

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.