

Berks County

Created on March 11, 1752, from parts of Philadelphia, Chester, and Lancaster Counties, and was named for Berkshire in England. Reading, the county seat, was named for Berkshire's county town. It was incorporated as a borough on September 12, 1783 and as a city on March 16, 1847.

The fertile Lebanon and Oley Valleys and the presence of iron ore attracted settlers by the 1730s. Thomas Penn worked to create Reading in 1748, which was connected by roads to Lancaster and Lebanon to the west. Conrad Weiser was an important colonial leader, and the Pennsylvania German element that he led has always prevailed in the county. The formation of Schuylkill County from Berks in 1811 left Berks without coal but having begun an iron industry early, Reading grew to be Pennsylvania's third largest manufacturing city by 1900. It boasted steel mills and turned out heavy metal products such as locomotives and autos. Textiles, hats, and beer are Berks County traditions. Many small factory workers' homes gradually enlarged Reading until a period of extreme deindustrialization began in the 1960s. Agriculture has always been strong and today features fruit, wheat, corn, mushrooms, and dairy products. Farms cover 44 percent of the county's area.

BERKS COUNTY - 3rd Class

Formed on March 11, 1752 from parts of Philadelphia, Chester and Lancaster Counties

Third Class City

<u>Name of City</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Prior Status</u>
Reading	Mar. 16, 1847	Laid out as a town in 1784. Incorporated as a borough on September 15, 1783

Boroughs

<u>Name of Borough</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Town Laid Out or Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Bally	1912 ^{1,2} 1913 ³		Washington Township
Bechtelsville	Sept. 11, 1890	S 1869	Washington Township
Bernville	1851	S 1819	Penn Township
Birdsboro	July 11, 1872 ¹ Nov. 1872 ^{2,3}	1740	Robeson Township
Boyertown	Oct. 20, 1866	1835	Colebrookdale Township
Centerport	1884	S 1818	Center Township
Fleetwood	Oct. 4, 1873	1868	Richmond Township
Hamburg	Apr. 3, 1837	S 1732	Windsor Township
Kenhorst	1931		Cumru Township
Kutztown	1815	1779	Maxatawny Township
Laureldale	Apr. 8, 1930		Muhlenburg Township
Leesport	1901	1842	Ontelaunee Township, called West Leesport Borough until 1958
Lenhartsville	1887	1854	Greenwich Township
Lyons	June 20, 1927		
Mohnton	Mar. 18, 1907	S 1846	Cumru Township
Mount Penn	Nov. 7, 1902	1800	Alsace Township
Robesonia	1913 ^{1,2} 1903 ³		Heidelberg Township
St. Lawrence	Apr. 23, 1927		Exeter Township
Shillington	Aug. 18, 1908	S 1844	Cumru Township
Shoemakersville	1921		Perry Township
Sinking Spring	1913 ^{1,2} 1911 ³		Lower Heidelberg Township
Strausstown	1920		Upper Tulpehocken Township

BERKS COUNTY - 3rd Class (cont'd)

Boroughs (cont'd)

<u>Name of Borough</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Town Laid Out or Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Temple	1920 ^{1,2} 1922 ³		Muhlenberg Township
Topton	Jan. 18, 1877 ^{1,2} 1875 ³	S 1859	Longswamp Township
Wernersville	1914		Heidelberg Township
West Lawn	1920 ^{1,2} 1923 ³		Spring Township
West Reading	Mar. 18, 1907	1873	Spring and Cumru Twps.
Womelsdorf	1833	1762	Heidelberg Township
Wyomissing	July 22, 1906	1896	Spring Township
Wyomissing Hills	1920		Spring Township

Second Class Townships

<u>Name of Township</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Albany	1752	1743	
Alsace	Mar. 4, 1745 ¹ 1744 ^{2,3}	1735	Incorporated while part of Philadelphia County
Amity	Mar. 3, 1744	About 1693	Incorporated while part of Philadelphia County. In 1719, a petition was made to the Court to erect Amity Twp. and the Court granted the petition. However no record was made of the proceedings and the petition was renewed 25 years later in 1744.
Bern	1738	About 1734	Incorporated while part of Lancaster County
Bethel	May 1739	1735	Incorporated while part of Lancaster County
Brecknock	1741	1729	Incorporated while part of Lancaster County
Caernarvon	1729	1700	Incorporated while part of Chester County
Centre	Jan. 2, 1843		Bern, Upper Bern and Penn Townships
Colebrookdale	Sept. 7, 1741	1720	Incorporated while part of Philadelphia County

BERKS COUNTY - 3rd Class (cont'd)

Second Class Townships (cont'd)

<u>Name of Township</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Cumru	1737	1732	Lancaster County
District	1759		Oley and Colebrookdale Townships
Douglass	June 7, 1736	1720	Erected while part of Philadelphia County
Earl	Nov. 1781		Oley Township
Exeter	Dec. 7, 1741	1718	Erected while part of Philadelphia County
Greenwich	1755	1749	Albany Township
Heidelberg	1734	1723	Incorporated while part of Lancaster County
Hereford	Feb. 1, 1753	1732	Colebrookdale Township
Jefferson	Jan. 28, 1852 1851 ^{2,3}	About 1723	Upper Tulpehocken Twp.
Longswamp	May 1761	1734	Rockland Township
Lower Alsace	1888	1714	Alsace Township
Lower Heidelberg	Sept. 15, 1842	1730	Heidelberg Township
Maidencreek	Dec. 1746 ^{1,2} 1748 ³	1732	Incorporated while part of Philadelphia County
Marion	Apr. 6, 1844 ¹ 1843 ^{2,3}	1723	Tulpehocken and Heidelberg Townships
Maxatawny	Sept. 6, 1742	1732	Incorporated while part of Philadelphia County
Muhlenberg	Feb. 10, 1851		Alsace Township
North Heidelberg	Jan. 9, 1845	About 1736	Heidelberg Township
Oley	Sept. 1, 1740	1700	Incorporated while part of Philadelphia County
Ontelaunee	1849	About 1721	Maidencreek Township
Penn	Nov. 5, 1841		Bern and Upper Bern Twps.
Perry	1852	1735	Windsor Twp. made a separate election district in 1821
Pike	Aug. 1813 ¹ 1812 ^{2,3}		Earl, Oley and Rockland Townships
Richmond	1752 ^{1,2} 1755 ³	1740	
Robeson	Aug. 1729	1720	Incorporated while part of Lancaster County
Rockland	1758		Oley Township
Ruscombmanor	1752 ² 1759 ³	1749	

BERKS COUNTY - 3rd Class (cont'd)

Second Class Townships (cont'd)

<u>Name of Township</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
South Heidelberg	June 20, 1914	About 1730	Lower Heidelberg Twp.
Spring	Nov. 23, 1850	About 1728	Cumru Township
Tilden	1887		Upper Bern Township
Tulpehocken	1729	About 1707	Incorporated while part of Lancaster County
Union	1752 ^{1, 2} 1753 ³	1684	Coventry Township
Upper Bern	1789	About 1730	Bern Township. Upper Bern Township did not operate as a separate township until 1820
Upper Tulpehocken	Nov. 6, 1820	About 1730	Tulpehocken Township
Washington	1839	1736	Hereford and Colebrookdale Townships
Windsor	1752	1740	

1 Godcharles

2 Morton L. Montgomery, Historical and Biographical Annals of Berks County, Pennsylvania (Chicago, Ill.: J. H. Beers and Company, 1909).

3 Berks County Commissioners, Berks County Governmental Functions and a Brief Historical Review, 1959.