

## **McKean County**

Created on March 26, 1804 from part of Lycoming County and named for Governor Thomas McKean. It was attached to Centre County until 1814, when it was combined with Potter County to elect commissioners jointly, and was also attached to Lycoming County for judicial and election purposes. It was formally organized in 1826. Smethport, the county seat, was laid out in 1807, and named in honor of Raymond and Theodore de Smeth, Amsterdam bankers. It was incorporated as a borough on February 11, 1853.

Although Indian leaders yielded the land at the second Treaty of Fort Stanwix, the “Last Purchase” (1784), distance and dense forest delayed settlement. After 1798 settlers from New York arrived, many originally from New England. Except for Sergeant Township, all early settlements were on the Allegheny River and its tributaries. Lumbering controlled the economy and settlement spread with each new cutting operation. Bradford grew from a lumber camp. Deep drilling brought an oil boom in 1871, lasting two decades, and the water injection method revived production for another boom, 1930 to 1950. Railroads arrived in the late 1860s to revive the lumber industry, and tanning and wood chemical industries (turpentine, creosote, etc.) flourished while the forests lasted. But by 1925 little timber remained. The Civil War leader Thomas Leiper Kane did much to develop the area. The county led the nation in natural gas production from 1895 to 1905. A lumber industry revived after World War II using managed forest systems, and there is a little crude oil production. Other products today include motor oil, Zippo Lighters, electronics, corrugated boxes, furniture, glass containers and construction blocks, and oil and gas pipes and equipment. The county’s success is attested to by the value added to the economy from its manufactures, which increased 66 percent between 1987 and 1992. Commercial forest lands and the National Forest cover much of the county; only 7 percent of the area is farmed.

McKEAN COUNTY - 6th Class

Formed on March 26, 1804 from part of Lycoming County

Third Class City

| <u>Name of City</u> | <u>Incorporated</u> | <u>Prior Status</u>  |
|---------------------|---------------------|--|
| Bradford            | Feb. 1879           | Laid out as a town in 1839.<br>Incorporated as a borough<br>on February 26, 1873 |

Boroughs

| <u>Name of Borough</u> | <u>Incorporated</u> | <u>Town Laid Out<br/>or Settled</u> | <u>Incorporated From</u> |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Eldred                 | Dec. 22, 1880       | 1815                                | Eldred Township          |
| Kane                   | Feb. 15, 1887       | S 1859                              |                          |
| Lewis Run              | Mar. 4, 1911        |                                     |                          |
| Mount Jewett           | June 6, 1893        |                                     | Hamlin Township          |
| Port Allegany          | Apr. 4, 1882        | 1815                                | Liberty Township         |
| Smethport              | Feb. 11, 1853       | 1807                                |                          |

Second Class Townships

| <u>Name of Township</u> | <u>Incorporated</u> | <u>Settled</u> | <u>Incorporated From</u>                      |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|
| Annin                   | 1857                | 1836           |   |
| Bradford                | 1828                | July 1793      |   |
| Ceres                   | 1798                | 1798           | Incorporated while part of<br>Lycoming County |
| Corydon                 | 1829                | 1810 - 1812    |   |
| Eldred                  | 1843                | About 1785     |   |
| Foster                  | 1880                |                | Bradford Township                             |
| Hamilton                | 1834                | 1810           |   |
| Hamlin                  | 1844                |                |   |
| Keating                 | 1824                | 1807           |   |
| Lafayette               | 1842                | About 1823     |   |
| Liberty                 | 1828                | About 1785     |   |
| Norwich                 | 1835                | 1815           |   |
| Otto                    | 1854                | 1842           | Eldred Township                               |

McKEAN COUNTY - 6th Class (cont'd)

Second Class Townships (cont'd)

| <u>Name of Township</u> | <u>Incorporated</u> | <u>Settled</u> | <u>Incorporated From</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Sergeant                | 1854                | About 1809     |                          |
| Wetmore                 | 1856                | 1820 - 1821    |                          |

Frederic A. Godcharles, Pennsylvania, Political, Governmental, Military and Civil: Political and Civil History Volume (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1933).

History of the Counties of McKean, Elk and Forest, Pennsylvania (Chicago: J. H. Beers and Company Publishers, 1890).