

# Hopewell Monthly Meeting

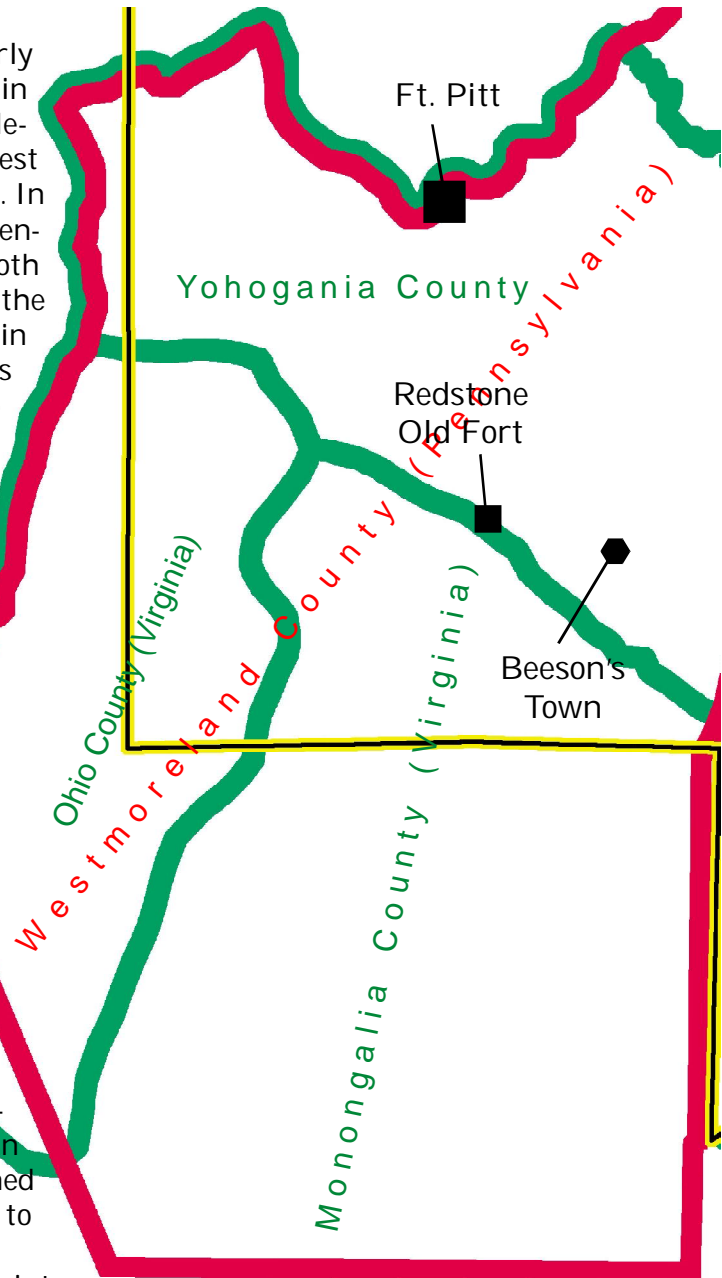
## Land Disputes in the Redstone Settlement

The earliest meetings that later became Ohio Yearly Meeting were located in southwestern Pennsylvania in a large geographical area called the Redstone Settlement. King George had banned English settlement west of the Continental Divide in his Proclamation of 1763. In keeping with the Proclamation, Maryland surveyors identified the northwest corner of that colony in 1769. Both Virginia and Pennsylvania claimed the area west of the northwest corner of Maryland and moved forward in deeding land to settlers. Friends began to settle in this disputed area by the time of the Revolution. The map here shows an approximation of the county lines as they existed in 1775.

At the time, maps of Virginia showed Fort Pitt much further south than it actually was. Gibson's *Map of the Western Parts of the Colony of Virginia*, published in 1754, showed Fort Pitt on the 40th parallel, almost due west of Philadelphia. Virginia created three counties south of Ft. Pitt that overlapped into today's Pennsylvania: Ohio and Monongalia Counties (which survive in reduced size in today's West Virginia) and Yohogania County, later dissolved. Virginia also created an Illinois County on the northwest side of the Ohio River; it was dissolved in 1784 when Virginia abandoned its claim to the Northwest Territory.

Pennsylvania followed Virginia's lead. Its maps showed Fort Pitt further north, closer to its actual location. William Scull's *Map of Pennsylvania*, printed in 1770, shows that Pennsylvania's provincial border turned south at Maryland's northwest corner and proceeded to the 39th parallel. When Westmoreland County was created in 1773, it reached from the Ohio River, deep into today's West Virginia and covered the same area as Yohogania, Ohio, and Monongalia Counties.

The two colonial governments actively sought to remedy the overlapping counties. After weighing several options, it was decided to extend the Mason Dixon Line west to a point five degrees of longitude from the Delaware River and then run a line north from that point to Lake Erie. Surveyors identified the southwest point of Pennsylvania in 1784. After this time, English settlers were able to file uncontested deeds for property in the Redstone settlement.



## Beeson's Town

On 7/4/1776, the same day that the Continental Congress declared independence from England, Henry Beeson laid out a new town in the Redstone Settlement. The lots he laid out surrounding his grist mill are today's Main Street in Uniontown. Beeson originally wanted to call the village Union, but throughout the 1700s it was usually called Beeson's Town.

# 1775 to 1778

## Lobbying for Membership

In 1775, Hopewell Monthly Meeting was overextended. It held its business meetings in the Hopewell Meeting House in Virginia, but it had many preparative meetings and worship groups. Monthly Meetings were major, day-long events at Hopewell. Each preparative meeting appointed Representatives, some of whom would travel two days to reach Hopewell. Much of the business dealt with matters of the behavior of members.

In 1776, a Friend living in Westmoreland County (Pennsylvania) asked to have his membership transferred to Hopewell. The MM was divided over whether to accept the membership because it could not provide oversight of his conduct. Warrington & Fairfax Quarterly Meeting (W&F QM) discussed the situation on 6/17/1776. It forwarded a note to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting stating that 18 families of Friends were living in the Redstone Settlement. The yearly meeting directed Hopewell to send a visiting committee and receive the Friend into membership. Hopewell ignored this directive.

The topic was discussed again at W&F QM on 6/22/1778. No one had travelled to visit Friends in the Redstone settlement yet. The QM informed the YM that many of the Friends formerly living there had relocated to the east side of the mountains, but the YM reiterated its directions of 1776. Neither Hopewell MM nor W&F QM took action in 1778.

