

## History of Mansfield



When speculators began exploring this area of north central Pennsylvania in the 1790's, Tioga County was heavily forested with dense evergreens and white pine. Before any settlements were established here a road was built, following old Indian trails, to enable 500 English and German immigrants to make their way from Philadelphia to populate the Genesee Valley and Finger Lakes Regions of New York State. The road was built by Captain Williams and is known as the Williamson Road. Route 15 follows sections of the old road along the Tioga River valley.

Soon after the building of the road a man named Carter settled in this area but the first permanent settler within the bounds of what is now known as Mansfield was Benjamin Corey. His first home was a bark cabin. The following year he built a log cabin. For the next few years settlers, mostly from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont and New York staked out their claims along the Williamson Road.

In 1800 Asa Mann, an Englishman from Rhode Island, settled at the northern end of what is now the borough of Mansfield. He was the first to clear any considerable amount of land, about 25 acres. His holdings became known as Mann's Field and hence became Mansfield. He soon divided his cleared land into building lots. He opened a store and a hotel in 1804. He also owned a distillery and acted as Post Master.



The borough was incorporated in 1857 and the first official map was drawn. On March 27, 1857 the first borough officials were elected. The library was founded in 1901.

The earliest industry recorded in the Mansfield area was a sawmill which opened in 1803. A Gristmill opened in 1805 to grind rye into flour to bake bread. Many other industries followed, such as a tannery, iron works, brick manufacturing, a planing mill, woolen mill and a chair factory. The most predominant industry in the area today is Marcellus Shale. Mansfield University is one of the areas larger employers.

The Mansfield Classical Seminary was built and opened in 1857 at a cost of \$20,000. When the building burned to the ground later that same year, Mansfield University on the hill. there were 150 students enrolled. With an outstanding debt of \$6,000 and only \$12,000 from insurance things looked pretty bleak. Times were hard in the entire nation but with enthusiasm and determination the towns people set about raising funds to

rebuild the school. By 1859 the Seminary was rebuilt and open again. In 1862 it became a State Normal School, later a State Teachers College, a State College and is now Mansfield University.



In 1996, a 9 million dollar renovation of North Hall was completed. The six-story building, built in 1874, housed the women's dormitories. Today it holds three libraries and is considered one of the most progressive electronic libraries in the United States. Much care went into maintaining the building's integrity, including the restoration of such Victorian elements as the Doric columns and expansive porches and the five-story open well. The 80,000 square foot building provides a breathtaking look at M.U.'s heritage and a doorway into the 21st century.