

FREEPORT.

Historical and Descriptive.—Freeport is a prosperous borough situated on the west bank of the Allegheny river, twenty-eight miles north of Pittsburg, at the confluence of Buffalo creek with the above-named river. It was laid out by William and David Todd in 1796, and was incorporated as a borough on April 8, 1833. It is supposed that a detachment of the French soldiers who evacuated Fort Duquesne in 1758 camped on its site for several months. Prior to 1792 Craig's block-house was built on what is now Water street, and but a short distance down the river stood Reed's Station, near which the Indians captured Mrs. Massey Harbison, whose captivity and sufferings have so often been related in the histories of the frontier. In 1807 it contained but eight houses, but boat-building was inaugurated that year by Captain Edward Hart, of Boston, and by 1832 it contained over fifty dwellings. The Pennsylvania canal was then constructed through the town, and it increased rapidly in population and wealth, until its growth was checked for a time by the closing of the canal. Its present prosperity dates from the building of the West Pennsylvania railroad through it, and the construction of the Butler Branch of the above-named railroad. In 1820 salt-water and oil were obtained in a well sunk on the Allegheny river just opposite the borough, and in 1857 J. A. McCullough and W. S. Ralston shut off the salt-water and began pumping the oil. From 1830 to 1855 ice-cutting for the southern market was prosecuted very successfully. The post-office was established in 1806, with Jacob Weaver as postmaster. Its population from 1850 to 1880 is given by the census reports as follows: 1,073, 1,701, 1,640, and 16,614. In 1855 it had two schools running five and one-half months, with four teachers and enrollment of four hundred and sixty-five pupils. Freeport was the prospective capital in 1845 of the then projected county of Madison.

Freeport was first known as Toddstown, but David Todd, its founder, had intended the town to always be a *free port* for all river craft, and accordingly named it Freeport, under which name it was incorporated. The first physician was Dr. C. G. Snowden, who came in 1830, and the earliest resident lawyer was James Stewart. In 1855 Williamson & Rhey established a distillery, which in 1866 passed into the hands of Guckheimer Bros., whose Freeport distilleries to-day constitute the largest manufacturing liquor plant in the United States. Their plant covers thirty acres of ground, and has a capacity of five thousand gallons of whiskey per day. They employ one hundred and fifty men, and use twelve hundred bushels of rye every twenty-four hours.

The Presbyterian church was organized prior to 1825. The Associate Presbyterian and St. Mary's Catholic churches were formed about 1826. The Baptist was organized December 11, 1830. The Methodist Episcopal in 1833, the Lutheran, 1835, and the Associate Reformed in 1850. Freeport numbers among its prominent industries the Long lumber and planing mills, the Freeport planing mill, and the Freeport flouring mills.