

## Hopewell Furnace: Industrial Site to National Historic Site (c. 1771 to 1938)

c.1771 Hopewell Furnace established by Mark Bird

1784: Mark Bird applies to have taxes reduced; claiming Furnace has not been in operation "for some time"

1780s: Post-war surplus of bar iron overall affects iron industry

1786: Mark Bird sells HOFU to John Nixon

1788: Sheriffs sale to Cadwallader Morris and James Old

1790: Cadwallader Morris sells out to brother Benjamin Morris.

1791: James Old sells to Benjamin Morris as well.

1793: James Old buys it back.

1793: James Old sells to James Wilson. Wilson acquired Birdsboro Forge as well.

1793: James Wilson enters into agreement with John Lewis Barde, John Rene Barde, and Paul Henry Mallet Prevost to buy cast iron from their forges at low prices.

1795: Birdsboro Forge damaged by flooding, weakening Wilson's financial position.

1796: Wilson sells his forges to John Lewis Barde

1796: Sheriffs sale of HOFU to James Old (again)

1797: HOFU in financial failure (again), but under management of John Bishop and Matthew Brooke

1799: Sheriffs sale of HOFU (again) to Benjamin Morris (again)

1800: Morris sells to Daniel Buckley, Thomas Brooke, and Matthew Brooke. (Includes Birdstown and Jones Good Luck Mines.) (Paid in bonds for future redemption)

1800s: New owners make extensive renovations and alterations to the furnace.

1805: Stamping mill installed (crushed pieces of slag to recover beads of iron)

1805-1807: Total value of iron produced in two blasts was less than \$1000 more than wages and salaries paid. Other expenses would certainly have netted an operating loss.

1807: Dam broken by flood twice; then lightning strikes it and breaks it again.

1807-1808: Furnace business continued but in a most precarious condition.

1808-1816: Furnace out of blast.

1809: Wages only for maintenance operations. Some men were given employment in other places in the Company, including Birdsboro Forge.

1809: Furnace store closed.

1812: War of 1812: HOFU was not making iron at this time although the demand was high. This is because of general business conditions, financial problems, technical difficulties, and lawsuits centering on land titles.

1816: Furnace prepared to resume operation after long shut down. Some debts paid. Furnace put back into blast some time in this year.

1816: Overall iron industry is in decline due to foreign competition.

1818-1820: Furnace firing and showing small profit (about \$5000 more than wages and salaries paid)

1819: Furnace hampered by business panic of the time but emerges into era of great prosperity. United States in depression.

1820-21: Decline in production due to no demand; iron mostly made into pigs. But even in the midst of a depression Hopewell's credit was still considered as good as cash.

1822: Back in production of stoves.

1824: In general business through the country began to improve.

1825-1827: Furnace producing iron valued at \$36,000 over wages and salary.

1829-1830: 168 Employees, 1000 tons of pig iron produced, 700 tons of castings produced.

1830-1838: Most prosperous period. Longest blast was 445 days. (Best two years were 1836-37)

1836: PA legislature authorized formations of corporations to make iron with coke

1837: Business depression becomes severe.

1838: PA legislature authorized formations of corporations to make iron with anthracite.

1839 - 1850: 27 sheriff's sales of cold-blast furnaces in Eastern PA.

1840s: End of the "boom" of the 1830s - can be blamed on Jacksonian money supply and the increased in productive capability in the iron industry.

1841: Clement Brooke also purchases Robesonia Furnace

1842: Masking castings for which they had no contract; offered to fill

orders immediately.

1844: Stove-casting is halted. Molders leave the furnace. From here on the Furnace operates primarily to produce pig iron, on which it survives for another 40 years (partly due to Civil War).

1845: Robesonia begins anthracite furnace

1848: Clement Brooke retires from day to day managing of the furnace but still owns part of it.

1850: Charcoal furnaces still outnumber anthracite furnaces in Eastern PA 103 to 100.

1852: Brooke, Brooke, and Buckley partnership dissolve, removal of Charles Brooke from company (possibly because he was against the idea of an anthracite furnace).

1853: Anthracite furnace built at HOFU

1857: Furnace machinery was moved from Hopewell to Monocacy on the canal, where smelting operations began in 1857.

1859: HOFU's anthracite furnace sold to another firm and operated as Monocacy Furnace.

1874: Charcoal furnace out of blast.

1877-1878: Charcoal furnace out of blast.

1880: Rise in price of iron encouraged owners to repair the furnace and resume operations.

1881: Water wheel frozen during cold spell, and furnace is shut down due to lack of blast. Boiler installed to run steam engine as auxiliary power.

1882: Ore roaster added to improve quality of ore. 1883: Last blast ended. 1894: Buckley transfers his shares to Clingan family (heirs of Clement Brooke); they are now full owners.

1894-1915: Clingan family uses mansion house as summer home; Rear wing occupied by Long, followed by Nathan Care.

1894: Agreement to quarry stone on HOFU property reached.

1935: United States Government purchases land from Brooke family.

1935: 2 Civilian Conservation Corps camps were in the area, with about 400 men, working on French Creek Recreational Demonstration Area

1938: Hopewell Furnace is admitted into the National Park Service as Hopewell Village National Historic Site