

Why “Whiteland?”

Until 1765, East and West Whiteland Townships were a single township called Whiteland. Whiteland was the western edge of the Welsh Tract, an area of more than 40,000 acres that William Penn sold to an association of wealthy Welsh Quakers in 1684. One likely source of the name “Whiteland” is the Welsh village of “Whitland” – no “e” – in Carmarthenshire County. Settlements near Whitland include Haverford and Narberth, also the namesakes of towns in our region.

Whitland was the site of the first Welsh parliament convened by Hywel the Good. According to [Whitland's website](#):

“Hywel Dda was a Prince of Deheubarth, (the ancient region containing Whitland) who became eventual ruler of most of Wales through inheritance. He is noted in history as being responsible for codifying the laws of Wales, laws which stood for nearly 400 years until Henry VIII combined them with those of England. The “Dda” in Hywel’s name means “good”, indeed his laws were considered forward thinking and fair, with emphasis on common sense and rights for women and compassion rather than punishment.”

Another guess is that the name derived from the frequent views of fog in our valley. The Chester Valley (or Great Valley) is a prominent feature of both East and West Whiteland. When weather conditions are right, the valley is filled with fog and the land does indeed appear to be white.

Why Exton?

There also is no clear origin of the name “Exton.” Some claim it’s from the crossroads of Lincoln Highway and Pottstown Pike or from the “X” formed by the crossing of the former Chester Valley Railroad (now Chester Valley Trail) over Lincoln Highway, with one or both crossings inspiring “X-town” or Exton.

Because the earliest European settlers of the Township were British subjects, others say it’s named for a village in England. But which one? But there are at least four Exton’s in England; which one was our namesake? While none have any discernable connection to West Whiteland Township or the early settlers, a while back, some Township residents fastened the village of Exton in Rutland, England as our namesake for reasons unknown; the Township has pictures of the village and its surroundings taken in the late 2000’s. The village has about 600 residents surrounding the Saints Peter & Paul Church in the East Midlands, about fifty miles northeast of Birmingham. It even has an [Exton Park](#).