

BGB 531 Will of Abraham Wenger of Berks County Pennsylvania 1792

Abraham Wenger of Union Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania wrote his will on 2 September 1792. It was proved 7 May 1794 and can be found in [Berks County Wills, Volume B, page 343](#). I have also placed [a transcript online](#). The will is of importance to those researching the Brower families of Berks and Chester Counties, Pennsylvania, and Randolph County, North Carolina.

Abraham Wenger, whose name also appears as Wanger, Wagner, Wenghert and other variations, died 3 May 1794 and is [buried in the East Coventry Mennonite Cemetery in Chester County, Pennsylvania](#).

Abraham's age at death was 64 years, 1 month and 4 days, which gives him a calculated date of birth as 29 March 1730. He was married twice. His first wife was named Anna, who is said to have been Anna Brower, a daughter of Christian Brower (d. 1771) of Coventry, Chester County, Pennsylvania. [Anna died 11 March 1792, age 59 years](#). Proof that she was in fact a daughter of Christian Brower is sought.

Abraham Wenger's second wife was Barbara Brower, nee High (Hoch), the widow of Henry Brower (1720-1784) who is said to be a brother of the mentioned Christian Brower. Barbara (High) (Brower) Wenger died 17 January 1797, age 69 years, 9 months and 16 days, so born 1 April 1727 (her [Find-A-Grave page](#) then being in error). Barbara had written her own will 24 January 1791 ([Berks Co. Wills, Vol. B, pp. 472-473](#)). It was proved 2 February 1797. At the time he wrote his will, Abraham Wenger was a widower and had not yet married Barbara. A codicil to his will dated 3 May 1794 addresses his marriage to "Barbara Brower, the widow of Henry Brower."

Abraham Wenger does not mention any children or grandchildren of his own in his will and it is therefore assumed that he either never fathered children, or if he did, they died prior to 1792 and left no heirs of their own. As no burial records for children have been located, it may be that he never had children of his own.

Abraham Wenger leaves his house in Union Township and his plantation and tenements to **Abraham Brower**, who is described as "my beloved Friend," and as the son of "**John Brower** in Carolina." Abraham Brower is required to pay five hundred pounds to various named legacies, and so the transaction was not so much a bequeathment from Abraham Wenger to Abraham Brower as much as it was a sale. Five hundred pounds was a fair sum of money in 1792. However, Abraham Brower also received Wenger's riding horse, working sleigh, hogsheads, vessels, half of his smith tools, anvil and more.

The second legatee mentioned in the will is "**John Brower Junr** a son of **John Brower Senr** which Livith in Carolina." John Brower, Jr. received fifty pounds in silver or gold and Wenger's silver watch.

Also receiving legacies is **Annah Brower**, a daughter of the above named Abraham Brower, and Benjamin Bennit of Coventry Township, Chester County, who received the other half of Wenger's smith tools. And finally, Abraham Brower's young son Abraham, is to receive "my new hat."

It is important to note that all of the mentioned legatees of Abraham Wenger are not referred to by the testator with any familial qualifier. In other words, with the exception of the widow Barbara Brower, there is no stated relationship, either by blood or marriage, between Abraham Wenger and

Abraham Brower, John Brower Jr., John Brower Sr., Annah Brower, Abraham Brower's son Abraham or Benjamin Bennit.

After leaving property to the above individuals, Abraham Wenger then goes on to list family members who are to receive money, including shares of the five hundred pounds that Abraham Brower is to pay for Wenger's real estate. He names brothers and sisters, and nieces and nephews, and in that regard this will is a very valuable document for reconstructing the extended Wenger family. I would refer you to the [online transcript](#) for the complete list.

The Abraham Brower mentioned in this will was a son of John Brower and Hannah Echelbaur. According to the record of his baptism at the Trinity Reformed Church in York County, Pennsylvania, Abraham was born 10 June 1758 and was baptized 24 June 1762 as Abraham, son of Johannes Brauer and Hannah (nee Echelbauer)*. His brother's Christian (b. 17 May 1756) and David (b. 18 Oct 1760) were baptized the same day. Abraham Brower remained in Berks County, Pennsylvania, married Mary Bunn and had eight children whose descendants are well documented. Just recently a direct male descendant has taken a Y-DNA test with the [Brewer DNA Project \(Family Tree DNA\)](#).+ To date it has generally been believed that Abraham was a son of John Brower and his wife Susanna, who some refer to as Susanna Wanger/Wenger (we seek proof of this identification), and was a grandson of [Hubert Brower](#) who immigrated to Pennsylvania in 1726. The descendants Y-DNA matches and the above mentioned baptism record, requires us to reconsider this generally believed account of Abraham Brower's parents and ancestry. This will be examined further in future posts.

*Henry James Young, *Register of the First Reformed Church, York, Pennsylvania and of Trinity Reformed Church, Vol. 1*. Typescript, 1935. Online at Ancestry.com, "Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Church and Town Records, 1708-1985" database), page 19.

+The Brewer DNA Project is presently seeking direct male descendants of Christian Brower (d. 1771) and of Henry Brower (1720-1784) both of Coventry Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. Interested participants should [contact the administrators of the Brewer DNA Project](#) for additional info.

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