

Wertman

Lines

Newsletter of the Wertman Family Association

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Make Plans Now to Attend

- **WFA Annual Reunion**
Friday-Sunday, 13-15 August 2004
Danville, PA

Reunion Rooms at Group Rate

The 2004 Reunion Committee has made arrangements at the Hampton Inn, 97 Old Valley School Road, Danville, PA, 17821 (Exit 224 from Interstate 80) for a group rate of \$89 per night (plus taxes) for Thursday-Sunday, 12-15 August. To make your reservations, call 1-570-271-2500. Please tell them that you are with the Wertman Family Reunion 2004 (Tracking Code WFA). Make your reservations as early as possible! The block of rooms will be held until 12 July 2004.

Where Was George Philip Wertman's Homestead in Lynn Township?

by Russell C. Dannecker

When George Philip Wertman I (GPI) settled in what we call Lynn Township of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, where did he build his home? According to the *History of Lynn Township* by Arthur K. Klingaman, the township was settled shortly after John, Thomas and Richard Penn, sons of William Penn, purchased territory between the South and North mountains from the Indians on September 7, 1732. When a pioneer found a tract that suited him, he staked it out by pacing distances, blazing trees, and noting landmarks, streams and adjoiners. At Philadelphia, he applied to the Proprietors for a "warrant" for his selection and requested that a survey be performed by the Surveyor General or his deputies. When issued the

warrant, he purchased a wagon and team or a few pack horses, loaded his family and worldly goods, and set out. Arriving at the warrant, they set up a campsite, usually a small lean-to at a spring near the protected head of a low valley. Sometimes the wagon was the only shelter for the first several months until a cabin could be constructed. So, where did George Philip Wertman bring his family? The answer may lie in information from the Federal Direct Tax Census or "glass tax."

Federal Direct Tax of 1798

In 1798, Congress levied a direct, universal tax on dwellings, land and slaves, to raise \$2 million to reduce debt incurred by the Revolutionary War. It was apportioned among the states on the basis of the census, which was also the basis for the number of representatives each state had in Congress. The Direct Tax was assessed and collected only once. It did not provide for any deductions or exemptions and was progressive in nature, with owners of larger homes paying more. Although the tax was federal, each locality was to keep records and levy the tax. Recreating the early American landscape of 200 years ago from 1795-1801 is a paper chase. Many of the documents have been lost, but Pennsylvania's Direct Tax records are in the National Archives.

For the Direct Tax, a property owner was required to list his or her name and occupation and describe the principal dwelling in terms of construction materials, square footage, the number of stories and number of windows. The tax also documented some tenant-occupied properties. Schedule A applied to houses worth more than \$100; schedule B to those less than \$100. Another part of the tax focused on land holdings and other structures on a property. In the case of farms, this included barns and other agricultural buildings. The third part of the tax listed the number of slaves. The tax

not only applied to homes and farms, but to mills, shops, warehouses and other commercial sites.

The tax was informally known as the “glass tax” or “window tax.” The wilderness forests of the 18th Century were seemingly boundless, and the wood and land on which that wood thrived (unless warranted by someone else) were there for the taking. Construction of a log or wood structure depended primarily on the homesteader’s motivation and abilities. Because physical exertion could not be measured and taxed in any equitable manner, and because the wood did not carry much value, window glass was the next best item to measure the value of a house. In the 18th Century, glass was produced by hand blowing, a difficult and dangerous process for the craftsmen who risked their lungs and general health to make it. The consumer, therefore, paid dearly for each pane. Estate inventories prior to the mid-1800s often list panes of glass as household items. Not only were they of direct value to the property, but they were good to use for barter when currency was not readily available.

The Direct Tax was like the county assessments that had been employed for decades, except county assessments tended to be based on the value of the land and livestock, while this tax was based on the valuation of the buildings owned by the residents. The assessment consisted of three different lists: the Particular, the General, and a Summary list. There were two slightly different “Particular Lists.” The larger of the two was for property consisting of more than two acres of land and cultivated as a farm. If the dwelling house was valued at more than \$100, the space for its description would be blank. The second, smaller list gave the same information, except that the properties which contained dwelling houses valued at more than \$100 would be included and described. A single property owner, therefore, might have been recorded on the larger list or on both, depending on the value of the house. The Summary List abstracted the total valuations. Although the number of panes of glass influenced the valuation, the actual number is seldom, if ever, mentioned in the assessment returns!

The 1798 U.S. Direct Tax, especially the Particular List, is very useful in historical research because of the descriptions of buildings that appear on it and because it records adjoining property owners. Information I obtained at the National Archives includes the following for the Wertman families of Lynn Township.

Particular List #1 (as of 1 October 1798)

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Owner and occupant | Jacob Wertman | Michael Wertman |
| Description of buildings | 1 springhouse 1 old log barn | 1 stone & log barn; Other poor buildings |
| Subject to valuation | 300 | 147 |

Particular List #2

| | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Occupant | Jacob Wertman | *Daniel Wertman | Michael Wertman |
| Owner | Jacob Wertman | Jacob Wertman | Michael Wertman |
| Dwellings valued over \$ 100 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Dimensions | 34 x 24 frame 2 stories | 22 x 14 log 1 story | 32 x 22 log 1 story |
| Dollars | \$150.00 | \$101.00 | \$160.00 |

*Daniel Wertman was Jacob’s son

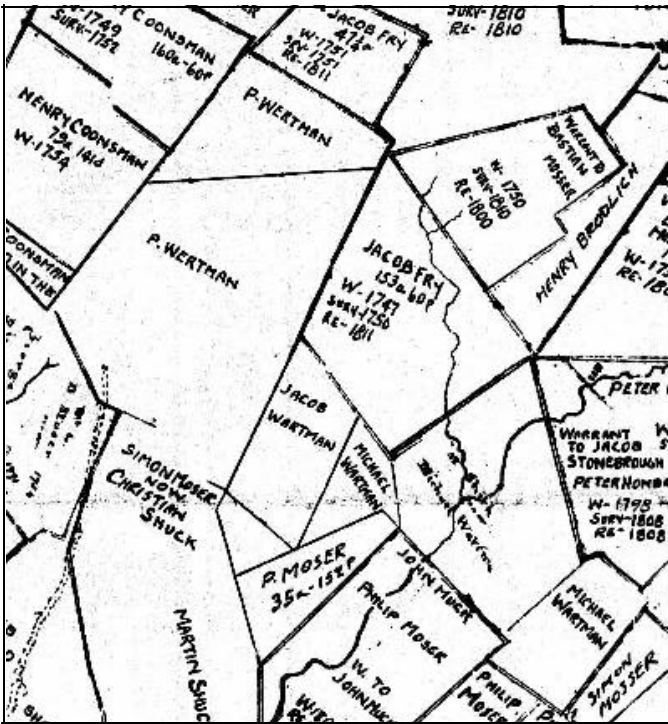
General List

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Occupant/ Owner | Jacob Wertman | Michael Wertman |
| Dwellings | 2 | 1 |
| Acres | 3 | 1 |
| Valuation | 255 | 160 |
| Revised Value | 318.75 | 200.00 |

GPI homestead

On 15 December 1749, George Philip Wertman took up a warrant for 100 acres in Lynn Township, Bucks (now Lehigh) County, PA, eventually surveyed at 197 acres. On 8 August 1750, George Philip Wertman took up a warrant for 50 acres in Lynn Township, Bucks County, eventually surveyed at 123 acres. This totals 320 acres.

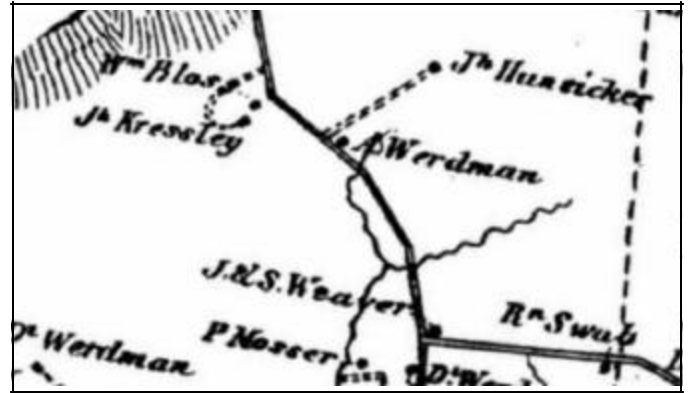
In 1781, the following item appears in the *Pennsylvania Archives* 6th series, volume XII: “Philip Wertman of Linn township, the one halfe of a plantation in s’d township, containing about 300 acres, a good frame house and barn thereon, about 100 acres thereof clear and under good fences.” But where in Lynn Township was this



land? In *Wertman Lines*, November 2001, "Finding Wertman Land from Old Deeds," Richard Daniels showed the location. A "Draft of the Original Surveys of Lehigh County" by Isaac Chapman, dated 1816, shows land belonging to Philip Wertman, Jacob Wertman and Michael Wertman, in six parcels. (See portion of map, above.) With a street atlas and Lehigh County survey maps, using streams and roads or boundary lines on both maps, a reasonable match in Lynn Township showed that GPI's land extended from just west of Gun Club Road, east along Springhouse Road to Sassafra Road, north to Lentz Road, and south almost to Raberts Corner (see map, page 8), with a few parcels not included in his holdings.

George Philip Wertman I had a son, Jacob Wertman. The 1798 Direct Tax records show that Jacob Wertman owned 300 acres, had a 34 x 24, frame, two-story dwelling with one stone and log barn, and one springhouse. His son Daniel lived on the same property in a 22 x 14, log, one-story dwelling. From the number of acres, type of dwelling, and barn, it seems that the 1781 and 1798 descriptions are of the same property.

The description of the homestead does not tell us where the homestead was, but we have some clues. Dis Wartmann's Schtross (Wertman Road) was built in the 1840s. It was the extension of the road from Lynnville to Raberts Corner and was built across the mountain to West Penn Township. The *History of Lynn Township* reports that it was named Wertman Road because several families of



that name lived along it. An 1816 map shows the road only going to the southern boundary of P. Wertman's land, but a 1917 map shows the road's extension.

The 1917 map (above) also shows property labeled A. Werdman. Because the map labels other known Wertman property as Werdman, this site probably belonged to A. (Andrew) Wertman (1818-1904), the son of Andreas (1784-1822), who was the son of Jacob, one of GPI's sons. According to the *History of Lehigh Co.*, by Matthews & Hungerford, Jacob Wertman Sr. left four sons, Andrew, Philip, Jacob, and Daniel, and five daughters. Jacob and Daniel moved to Northumberland Co., while Andrew (Andreas) and Philip kept the homestead.

During the WFA 2001 Reunion, we visited a stone home (see old photograph below) at the corner of Lentz and Gun Club (formerly Wertman) roads, that matches the location of the A. Wertman property. This home, at the foot of the Blue Mountain, would be sheltered from the north winds. It was probably built before 1840. The placement fits

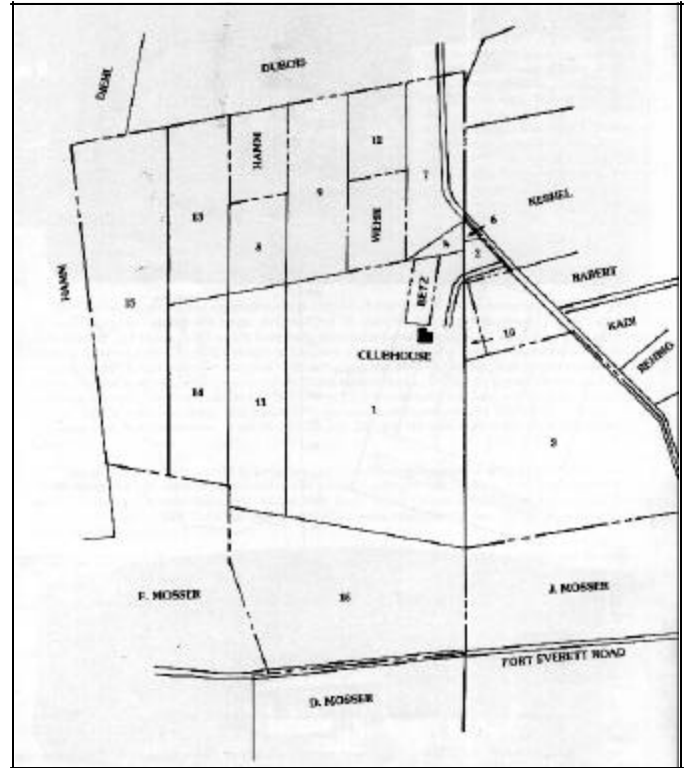


the description, “at a spring near the protected head of a low valley.” While in the correct location, however, the stone house does not fit the homestead descriptions of 1781 and 1798. So where could the original home’s location be?

Since George Philip Wertman’s land was on both sides of Gun Club Road, I decided to check out the Gun Club. The caretaker told me that a log cabin on the property had served as the original clubhouse, and that the father of Club Treasurer Edgar Kern was a founding member. Much later, I was able to meet with Mr. Kern and relate facts and stories obtained over the years. With a copy of the Ontelaunee Rod and Gun Club, 1935-1985, 50th Anniversary booklet (donated to the WFA), he put to rest the rumor that foundation stones of the original Wertman homestead were under the Gun Club pond (on the east side of Gun Club Road). A photograph of the fishing pond before it was filled shows **no** foundation stones. The booklet says, “One of the most important events of the ‘60s was the planning and completion of the dam. The club dam was named after and built on property owned by Jacob and Annie Everett, descendants of the early settlers of Upper Lehigh County.”

Mr. Kern did not remember any remains of a home or building near the pond, but did remember a log cabin at another location. As a young boy, he met with the founding fathers of the club in a log cabin, by lantern light. In the anniversary booklet, he showed me a photograph of the original clubhouse, a two-story building of frame construction, not a log cabin. He said that it was built at two separate times, one part a two-story log cabin, the other section of frame construction. When I showed him the information from the 1798 Direct Tax, he confirmed that the cabin’s size matched the description of the home occupied by Jacob Wertman.

But where was this building? A map in the anniversary booklet showed it where the present access road to the clubhouse turns south. This location is within 500 feet of the A. Wertman home



at Lentz and Gun Club roads. The booklet provides the following insight: “At the February 12, 1947 meeting, talk was heard about bringing electricity into the Club House. The electric company did bring the electrical lines to the Club House by September 14, 1947, but not until December 21, 1949 was the wiring completed to use the electricity. Until that time the meetings of the Ontelaunee Rod and Gun Club were held by kerosene lamp light.” The old clubhouse was used until 1956, when a new, 22 x 75 ft. structure was built. (Randall Wertman was listed on the building crew.)

But what about the second home of Daniel Wertman mentioned in the 1798 Direct Tax? Was there another building nearby? Mr. Kern answered that ruins of a home, farm buildings and spring-house were just west of the present clubhouse. He confirmed the approximate size of the home and remembered that it was a log home with square-cut stones at the top and bottom of doors and windows. These stones were used in other Gun Club construction (perhaps the origin of the foundation-stones-in-the-pond story). Nothing remains at the second site (within 800 feet of the A. Wertman site and 500 feet of the original clubhouse).

Could the original GPI homestead have been on today’s Gun Club property? Perhaps. Do we know for sure? No, not 100 percent, but it is a very strong possibility that this was where George Philip Wertman I built his first home.

Forts Franklin and Everett: Frontier Defenses along the Blue Mountains

by Shirley Daniels

Family researchers have debated where George Philip Wertman (GPI) lived in May 1757 and whether he was party to the petition protesting the closing of Fort Franklin, and/or if he signed a Lynn Township petition asking the Provincial Government for better protection against Indian raids. Since I knew nothing about the defenses along the Blue Mountains, I was delighted to find two volumes on Pennsylvania's frontier forts at the Ohio Genealogical Society library in Mansfield. In 1893, the Governor of Pennsylvania appointed a Commission to locate sites of frontier forts built to protect settlers from Indian attacks. The five men on the commission divided the state into five areas and presented their reports in 1895.

Why Were Forts Needed?

Even though the King of England had granted him land, William Penn bought land fairly from the Native American occupants. Since 1682, the Delawares (Lenni-Lenape) had annually renewed a Treaty of Peace, and they were peaceable for 70 years. But by 1754, power and politics had shifted allegiances. The Delawares felt cheated by those they had trusted (particularly after the infamous Walking Purchase). They repeatedly complained to the government about fraudulent land sales, the rum traffic, and squatters on land the Province had not purchased. The Governor issued proclamations and posted warnings, which the settlers ignored. Life in the wooded wilderness beyond civilization was difficult and dangerous for these Scotch Irish and German frontiersmen and they couldn't be bothered by politics in far-off Philadelphia.

After the French rout of General Braddock and his British army in July 1755, Delaware warriors allied with the French launched raids on

Sources: **Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania, Report of the Commission to Locate the Sites of the Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania**, Volume 1; Thomas Lynch Montgomery, Editor; Harrisburg, PA; Wm. Stanley, State Printer, 1916. Fort drawings from the report on Blue Mountain forts by Commissioner H. M. M. Richards. Diary and letter quotations in Richards' report were taken from the Pennsylvania Archives.

white settlements along the frontier. The settlers' defenses were no match for scalping parties who appeared quietly and disappeared quickly.

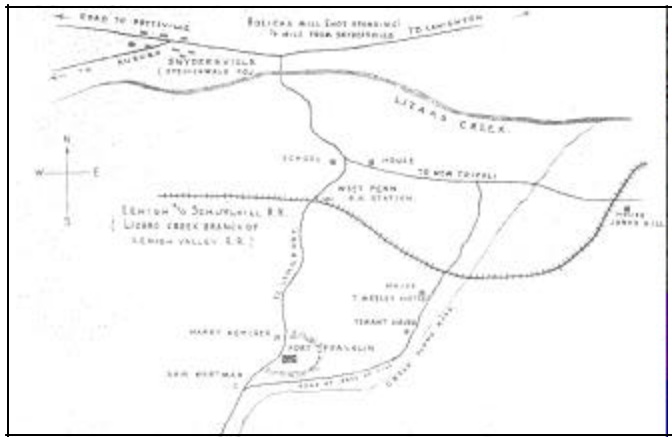
Blue Mountain Forts

In 1756, because of this border warfare, the Provincial Government built a chain of forts 10-15 miles apart. They put Benjamin Franklin in charge of organizing the defenses along the Blue Mountains — a natural barrier, good defensive position, and generally the limit of white settlement. Locations were picked for the best view of approaching danger, with water nearby, and convenient for refuge by settlers. Each fort usually had a stockade, block houses with gun slits, and quarters for soldiers and refugees. By 1758, Indian outbreaks had decreased and the Government decided to abandon all except the most important forts. By 1894, only slight traces of some remained.

Fort Franklin

Fort Franklin was north of the Blue Mountains in Northampton County (now Schuylkill). It was probably finished early in February 1756. Commissary James Young, on a tour of inspection, wrote in his diary (June 21, 1756), "it is Ab't 19 miles N. E. from Fort Lebanon, the Road a Narrow Path very Hilly and Swampy; ab't half way we came thro' a very thick and dangerous Pine Swamp; very few Plantations on this road, most of them Deserted, and the houses burnt down; ½ a mile to the Westward of this Fort is good Plantation, the people retires to the Fort every night. This Fort stands ab't a mile from the North Mountain; only two Plantations near it. This Fort is a square ab't 40 foot, very ill staccaded, with 2 Logg houses at Opposite Corners for Bastions, all very unfit for Defence; the Staccades are very open in many Places, it stands on the Bank of a Creek, the Woods clear for 120 yards."

H. M. M. Richards recounted his difficulty in correctly locating Fort Franklin, but local residents told him where "a place known as the 'Fort Field'... was to be found," in an isolated position. It was, he continued, "on a hill, a part of what was at one time the Bolich Farm.... It had a most commanding view of the entire country. It was distant from Snydersville about 3/4 mile, on the North, and distant one mile from the base of the Blue Mountains on the South. It stood directly on the road across the mountain to Lynnport, the location of Fort Everett.... At the base of the hill is a fine creek of water, coming from the mountain and emptying into Lizard creek, about ½ mile distant...."



Mr. Richards regretted that, although nobly named (for Benjamin Franklin), the fort's role was unimportant. It was poorly constructed and "in a part of the Province as yet but poorly settled. Being north of the Mountain, the district was entirely open to the assaults of the savages. Already many of the plantations... had been deserted; buildings and property had been destroyed or were fast going to ruin, and their owners had fled across the mountains... to find a more thickly settled region and greater safety." He thought the fort was built only to "fill in the long gap in the chain of defences between Forts Allen and Lebanon."

Conrad Weiser, who with the First Battalion of the Pennsylvania Regiment was in command of the area from the Susquehanna to the Delaware, wrote on 24 November 1756, "I saw that the Fort was not Teanable, and the House not finished for the Soldiers, and that it could not be of any Service to the Inhabitant Part, there being a great Mountain between them. I ordered Lieut'n Engle to Evacuate it."

On 7 May 1757, George Wartman and others, "all Inhabitants of Berks [or Bucks?] County... within four miles of and about Fort Franklin, over the Blue Mountains," sent their petition (see right) to Lieutenant Governor William Denny, "That your Petitioners are informed that Fort Franklin aforesaid is to be removed to this Side of the said mountains and a considerable way into Albany Twp.;

"That if in Case the said Fort is to be Removed your Petitioners will be Obligated to Desert their Plantations, for their Lives and Estates will then lye at Stake, and a greater part of this Province will lye waste and your Petitioners humbly conceives that it would be the

Safest way to have the said Fort continued & rebuilt, as it is very much out of order and repair...." George Gilbert and Adam Spittlemeyer signed the petition, "at the request and on behalf of all the petitioners."

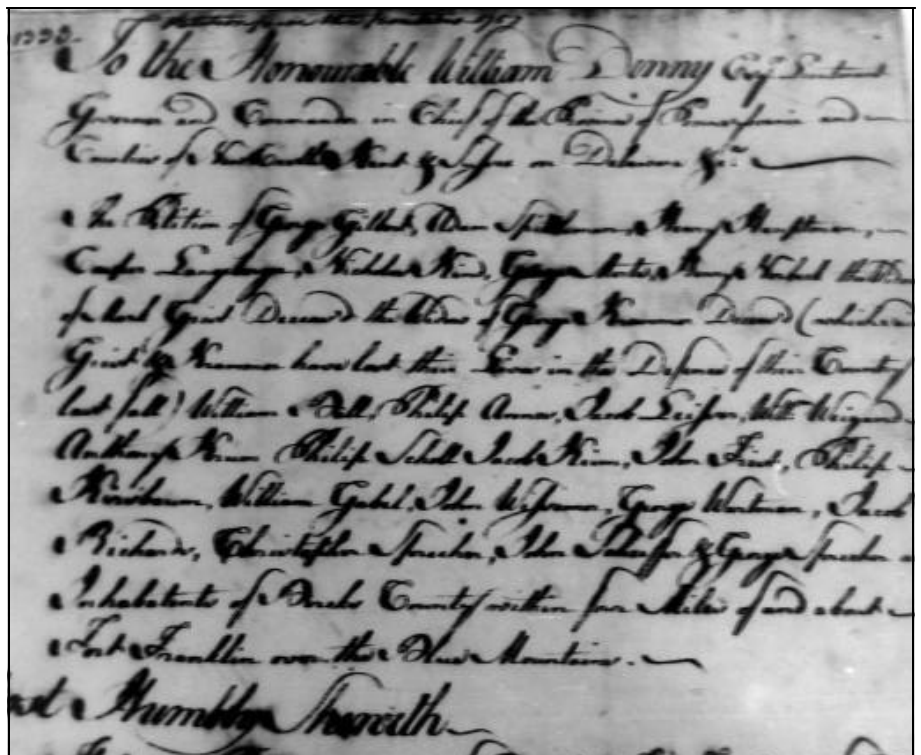
Mr. Richards cited sources showing that Fort Franklin was repaired and soldiers kept there, but he believed that it was abandoned in late 1757.

Fort Everett

Fort Everett was near Lynnport. Mr. Richards recounted that there was not much recorded information about this fort, even though it was in an important position in a populated area, "doubtless owing to the fact that it was the only defensive station on that side of the mountain between the Schuylkill and Lehigh Rivers, and, because the territory was so large, the garrison was ranging around the country literally all the time."

On 4 May 1757, Lynn Twp. residents on behalf of all of Northampton County south of the mountains petitioned the Governor for better defenses with the expenses borne by the entire province. The published archives state that the petition was "signed by 41 persons, whose names appear chiefly in German." A microfilm in The Pennsylvania

Petitions on this page and page 7 from *Records of the Provincial Council*, "Papers August 1756-July 1757," Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania State Archives, Record Group 61, microfilm 0583 D1420. Digitally photographed by Richard Daniels, 2003.



towards his own house; but before he got quite home, he saw his house and stable in flames; and heard all the cattle bellowing, and thereupon ran away again.

"Two of his children were shot, one of them was found dead in his field, the other was found alive, and brought to Hakenbrook's house, but died three hours after. All his grain and cattle are burnt up. At Jacob Gerhart's they have killed one man, two women, and six children. Two children slipped under the bed; one of which was burned; the other escaped, and ran a mile to get to the people. We desire help, or we must leave our homes."

Were Site Determinations Accurate?

Mr. Richards relied heavily on oral history passed down through three, four, or five generations. His information was probably as good as it could be, considering he was working 140 years after the forts had been abandoned. He did have a sense of history and took his task seriously: "The old forts have crumbled away, never more to be rebuilt, and the peaceful plow has long since leveled to the ground the little mounds which marked the line of their stockades. Even their existence was fast passing out of the memory of man, and in a few brief years the location of the spots on which most of them stood would have been buried in utter oblivion had it not been for the wisdom of our Legislature in the appointment of the Commission whose labors have just been completed.... As my

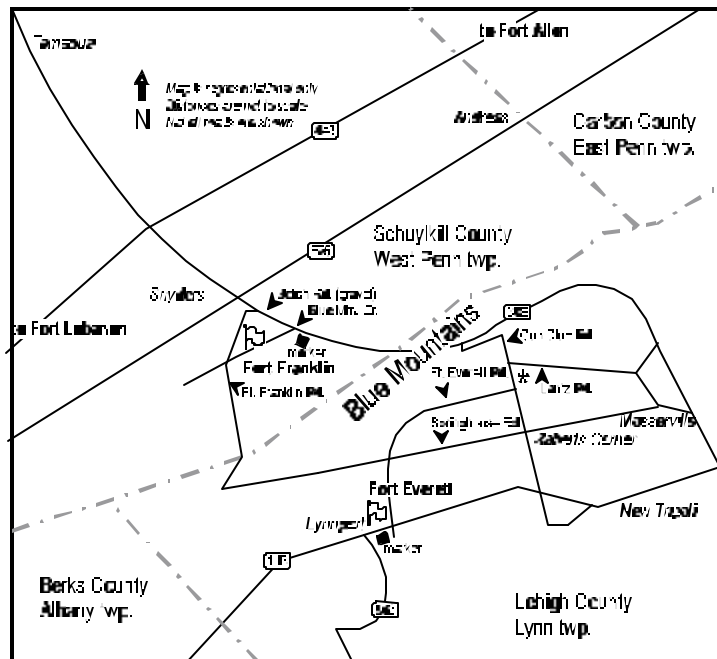


investigation into the task assigned me progressed, I was very greatly impressed with its importance.... I have aimed to insert nothing in this record which is not actual and true history, and, to that end, have written nothing until, after most careful scrutiny and comparison with the statements of reliable authors on the same subject, I have felt assured of its authenticity." The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission considered his findings on forts Franklin and Everett accurate enough to erect commemorative markers nearby.

Finding the Fort Sites

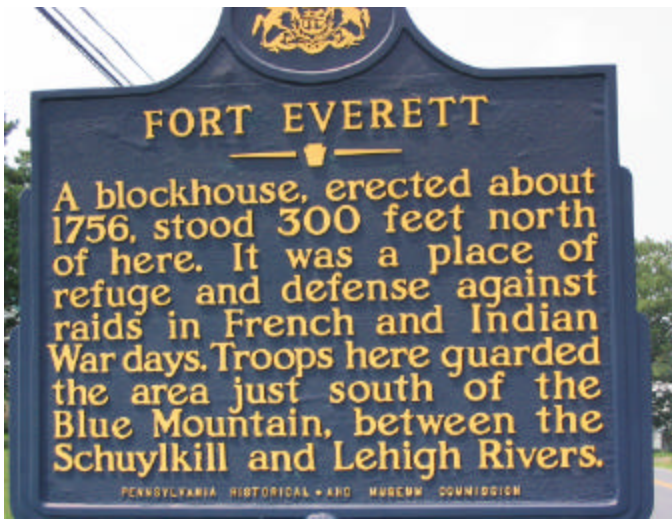
In July 2003, after comparing features on the maps in the Commission's report with a current map, we were ready to hunt for the fort sites. The Fort Franklin marker is on Route 309, about 1/10 mile south of Blue Mountain Drive. In the triangle where the fort was probably located, the land is flat and has been farmed. A creek still runs along the road. We talked with Warren Miller, who lives across from the site, and he said that Penn State University archaeology students and professors had done two digs there and believed it to be the correct location, but found no definitive evidence. He pointed out Clarence Wertman's land.

From the Fort Franklin marker, we continued over the mountain, passed land owned by GPI, and drove to Fort Everett's site. The driving distance from Fort Franklin to Andrew Wertman's stone farmhouse was about 4 miles, and from there to Fort Everett, about 2 miles. The Fort Everett site, just east of Lynnport, is also farmland. The historical marker is nearby, on Rt. 143.



Fort Franklin and Fort Everett sites, 2003. Drawing by Shirley Daniels. * George Philip Wertman property

Photographs of Fort Franklin marker (above) and Fort Everett marker (page 9) taken by Richard Daniels, 2003. The Fort Franklin marker had been repaired after being vandalized.



Wertman Land Near Fort Franklin

Richard and I researched land records in the Schuylkill County Courthouse in Pottsville to trace ownership of the Sam Wertman land on the Commissioner's 1895 Fort Franklin map. Clarence Wertman bought six parcels from his widowed father, Samuel D. Wertman, in 1923. While following these land transactions, keep in mind Clarence's lineage [furnished by Russell C. Dannecker]: Clarence (1892-1967), son of Samuel D. (1841-1930) and Maria (*Bebelheimer*), son of Samuel (1813-bef. 1916) and Elizabeth (*Daubenspeck*), son of Andrew (1787-1822) and Maria Elizabeth (*Brobst*), son of Jacob (1743-1820), son of George Philip Wertman I.

Tracts 1 & 2: 143 acres partially by land of late Valentine *Brobst*, and another 20 acres (deed 4 July 1877, V. 193 p. 301)

Tract 3: 21 acres partially by lands of David Bolich and Daniel Bolich, from *George Wertman* and wife Catherine (deed 9 Feb 1883 not recorded but intended to be; V. 447, p. 277) 2 Apr 1923;

to George and Catherine Wertman from Michael Schuck and wife Tracy, "part of the old improvement tract [some improvements made on it] of Jacob *Wertman*" (deed 22 Apr 1859, V. 60 p. 297);

36 acres granted to Michael Schuck; the land contained three one-story log houses, one occupied by Michael Schuck erected 50 years ago; the second erected 13-14 years ago by *George Wertman*; the third erected 8-10 years ago by *Christina Bebelheimer*; with six acres of land cleared, apple and cherry trees, some 50 years old (PA State Archives, Land Records, Warrant 2 Feb 1856, Survey 17 Mar 1856, Patent 18 Mar 1856, Harrisburg, PA; Microfilms 28.191, C208-63; Patent Book H, V. 53 p. 48, microfilm 29-61);

Tract 4: 57 acres partially by lands of Philip *Daubenspeck*, from William L. *Daubenspeck* and wife Alvena (deed 6 Jan 1900 V. 268 P. 530);

Tract 5: 101 acres partially by lands of *Martin Brobst* (patented 19 Mar 1873, H p. 751); and

Tract 6: 6 acres partially by lands of late Christian *Bebelheimer*, through several sales but originally from Jonas L. *Brobst* and wife (17 Mar 1874, deed not recorded but intended to be).

More Questions Raised

Was the Fort Franklin petitioner, George Wertman, our ancestor? Was Philip Wertman a signer of the Lynn Township petition and was he our ancestor? Was GPI a party to both petitions? Which Jacob Wertman owned the land near Fort Franklin, and did Jacob plant the fruit trees and build the cabin circa 1806? Were Wertmans on this frontier land earlier than 1806? Possibly, but this section of Pennsylvania belonged to the Native Americans until 1732, and the Fort Franklin report says few "plantations" were nearby in 1756. The deeds showed no landowners before 1850.

Was GPI living on his Lynn Township land in 1756? In 1749 and 1750, he took up warrants in Lynn Township. Philip Wertman was on the Lynn Township tax list in 1761. This land was south of the Blue Mountains within four miles of Fort Franklin, within a few miles of the county line — in Bucks, not Berks County, but at that time the Allemandle area included Lynn and Albany (Berks Co.) townships. GPI's land was in a vulnerable position south of Fort Franklin and north of Fort Everett, between the mountains and refuge.

We went to Harrisburg in August 2003 to do further land record study at the State Archives, keeping in mind that county identities changed as new counties formed. These dates are important because records are located by the county of origin. Specifically, in 1729, Lynn Township was in Bucks County; 1752 in Northampton County, and 1812 in Lehigh County. Albany Township was in Philadelphia County; then Lancaster County in 1729; and Berks County in 1752. Fort Franklin was in Northampton County; but before 1752 the area was part of Lancaster County and after 1811 it was in Schuylkill County. A second consideration was, who and where were the neighbors? We looked for other petition signers on warrant maps, and searched warrant indices, hoping to find at least several of the petition signers. We met with little success, partly because the warrant maps are incomplete. Further study may reveal answers!

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