

Dreisbach Family Association Newsletter September 2014©



Martin Dreisbach Sr's farm in Buffalo Valley, Union County, PA. as it looks in 2014

Revisions and New Information: A June 2014 research trip to Lewisburg, PA, home of Martin Dreisbach Sr, provided much new information including positive identification of the site of Martin Dreisbach's home, which is NOT the site identified as Martin's home at the 2004 DFA reunion!

Additionally, the former and present occupants of the farm that once belonged to Martin, gave me a large amount of information, some of it otherwise unrecorded!

Records stored in the court houses of Sunbury, in Northumberland County and Lewisburg in Union County, and at the Union County and the Northumberland County Historical Societies provided more documentation. As a result, this issue of the DFA Newsletter presents brand new information and corrects errors and omissions made in previous newsletters.

Just a brief review of a few facts:

Martin settles in Bucks County, PA: Martin Dreisbach Sr, his wife, Anna Eva, and their three children arrived in Philadelphia on 4 October 1751 aboard the "Queen of Denmark". By or before 1754, Martin and his family were settled in Cocalico Township, Berks County, PA.

Martin moves to Berks County, PA: About 1763, Martin moved his family to a farm in Alsace Township along present day Route 222, some three miles east of Reading. This move appears to have been due to the tragic death of his oldest son.

In 1773 Martin moves again - to Buffalo Valley: Martin's oldest daughter, Margaret, married Henry Aurand in 1772 and the couple moved to Buffalo Valley (then part of Northumberland County but now in Union County, PA) to join the Aurands who had already settled there. By 1773 Martin also decided to purchase land in Buffalo Valley.

Getting land in Buffalo Valley was not easy or simple. Opened for settlement in 1768, the land office was overwhelmed with settlers staking claims. Almost no claims were surveyed and without a survey, it was impossible to sell or buy land with a clear title. The only exceptions were the Officers' Tracts¹

which had been awarded by the government to 26 officers, as a form of back pay, for their service in the French and Indian War. All these tracts had been accurately surveyed, had clear titles and could therefore have a clean bill of sale. Understanding this, Martin Dreisbach Sr chose to buy one of the Officers' Tracts – the tract called "Isabella" that had been awarded to Capt. William Plunket.



Fig. 1. Aerial view of the outlines of the Officers' Tracts in Buffalo Valley. The "Isabella tract" that Martin Dreisbach bought from Captain Plunket is shown with white fill. The tract to the right, with red fill, was bought by Martin's friend, John Aurand. Google Earth

New discoveries and information: From this point onward the newsletter contains new discoveries and corrections. There is a lot of new material but much more information remains to be discovered.

The "Isabella" tract: The March 2013 newsletter discussed the tract of land that Martin Dreisbach Sr purchased from Captain Plunket - the tract that Plunket called "Isabella". The information available when the March 2013 newsletter was written, suggested that Martin had purchased only a portion of Plunket's 619.7 acre tract. This is incorrect.

The indenture (document of the sale) for this land is in Deed Book B page 491 in the Northumberland County Court House, Sunbury, PA. It says that William Plunkett "...in consideration of the sum of eight hundred pounds lawful money...paid by the Martin Treisbach, blacksmith, doth release...to Martin Treisbach...all that land above mentioned...containing 600 and nineteen acres and one hundred and thirty four

perches...together with all the houses, outhouses, buildings, barns, stables and gardens whatsoever there... Witnessed and dated 14 July 1775. Clearly Martin bought the entire Isabella tract. Below, in Fig. 2. is the survey of this tract.

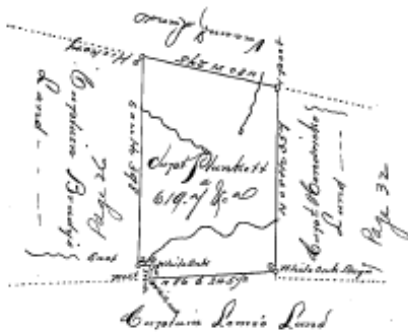


Fig. 2. Survey of Captain William Plunket's tract called "Isabella" as recorded in the online Pennsylvania Archives, Book A, page 70.

Problems with the sale of the land: There are interesting documents associated with the sale of this tract to Martin Dreisbach. One of them is an agreement, not a bill of sale, made between William Plunket and Martin Treasbough (sic) on 30 April 1773, and recorded in Deed Book D, page 41.

Plunket says "in consideration of Martin Treasboughs three obligations for the sum of 850 Pounds good money" he, that is Plunket, *promises* to release all right title of the property situated upon Turtle Creek (e.g. the tract later called Isabella) to Martin. Plunket further says this cannot happen until "the other Officers can obtain patents in conjunction with me for their several shares of land." So there is a complication and a hold on the sale.

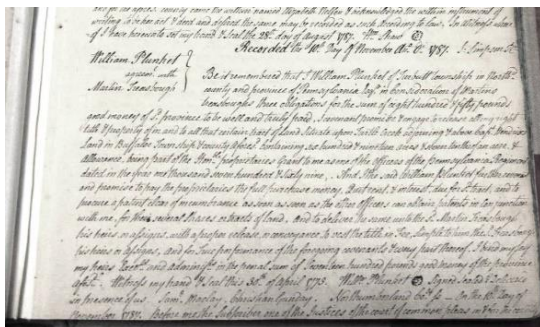


Fig. 3. William Plunket makes an agreement to sell the Isabella Tract to Martin Treasbough.

Essentially, Plunket promised to sell the Isabella tract to Martin, some time in the future, and acknowledged that Martin had already paid him 850 Pounds. The problem with the sale was not of Plunket's making but was related to the fact that the officers' tracts were awarded to the group as a whole. All the officers had to file for possession of their tracts of land and until this was done, no other transactions could take place.

Another promisory agreement: Martin must have been quite nervous about laying out so much money with only Plunket's bill of agreement. So about six months later, Martin asked another person, William Patterson, to guarantee that the sale would go through. It is not known how Martin was acquainted with William Patterson, an early settler who owned large tracts of land in Northumberland Co. However Patterson signed a document saying that Plunket would keep his bargain and contracts with "Martin Treasbough of Berks county".² Indeed, William Patterson promised to pay 1700 Pounds to Martin if Plunket failed to keep his promise to sell the Isabella tract to Martin. A third person, Christian Gundry, was a witness to the above agreements.

Finally, the sale goes through! Plunket received the patent (ownership) papers for the Isabella Tract on 9 March 1774³. He was then free to sell it to Martin. Even so, the indenture (the bill of sale) between William Plunket and Martin Treisbach, blacksmith, of Buffalo Township, Northumberland Co. was not made until 14 July 1775. Martin finally owned the Isabella Tract, more than two years after paying for it.⁴ Martin must have bought this large tract intending to divide it among his four sons – but Indian attacks intervened.

Indian attacks: On 5 July 1778 the "Great Run Away" took place as almost all the inhabitants of Northumberland County fled south in the face of Indian attacks⁵. Martin and his family went back to Berks County. Martin's neighbour, Samuel Maclay left on 12 July, leaving "my whole property".⁶ However it appears that Martin's oldest son, Jacob, stayed behind, along with his wife, Magdalena Buchs.

Indian attacks continued. Baltzer Kleinsmith, who, like Jacob, had stayed behind, was killed by Indians very close to the Dreisbach farm in 1780. A survivor said Baltzer was set upon by Indians and killed and "Mrs Dreisbach, mother of Judge Dreisbach, helped carry the body to the church yard and bury it."⁷ "Mrs Dreisbach" seems to refer to Jacob's wife, Magdalena Buchs. Baltzer was the first known burial in the cemetery of the Dreisbach Church. His tombstone is beside those of Eva and Martin Dreisbach.



Fig. 4. Tombstone of Baltzer Kleinsmith (Clinesmith), killed 14 July 1780 in an Indian attack very close to the Dreisbach farm.

Martin divides the 619 acre tract: Martin may have divided his land shortly after settling in Buffalo Twp. By giving (or selling) the southeast corner portion to his son, Jacob, who was

already married at that time. His son, Henry, may have received land about 1775, when he married.

Tax rolls: The tax rolls show that Martin's sons, Jacob and Henry, owned land quite early. The 1778-80 State Sale Tax for Northumberland County⁸ lists Henry Tresbaugh paying 371 Pounds, 13 Shillings and 0 Pence (listed as 371.13.0). Jacob Tresbaugh is taxed at 447.10.0 and Martin Tresbaugh (Sr) at 485.0.0. Similarly, the 1782 the State Tax for Buffaloe (sic) Twp., Northumberland Co. shows Jacob Treisbaugh with 150 acres, Henry Treisbaugh with 150 acres and Martin Treisbaugh Sr with 300 acres, an indication all are confirmed land owners.

Martin divides the Isabella Tract: By 1793 or more likely well before, Martin had divided the original 619+ acres into four farms. It appears that the division of land was a 'family affair' because at this point in the research, no indentures (bills of sale) have been found for the lands Martin gave, or sold, to his sons. Additionally, in 1788 he gave 7+ acres to build both a church AND a school! This is the FIRST evidence that Martin was involved in providing land for a school.



Fig. 4. Isabella Tract divided into farms for Martin's sons. More work needs to be done on the earliest records for each plot of land. Division appears to have been done informally, not all indentures (bills of sale) were recorded. Note the white fill indicating land donated for the church and right below it, land for a school. Information from Jack L. Fisher.

What we can learn from tax lists: By 1793 Martin Jr, now 29 years old and married, has 150 acres, 2 horses and 3 cattle. Henry Dreisbach has 130 acres, 4 horses and 5 horned cattle. Jacob Dreisbach has 150 acres and Martin Dreisbach Sr has 50

acres and together they share 1 horse and 2 horned cattle. This is only an approximate "picture" but it does indicate that all the sons have land of their own and that Martin Sr is still nominally involved in farming but seems to have few animals. However in a family operation such as this, it was common practice to reapportion cattle and horses to minimize taxation. Therefore Henry Dreisbach may be "sheltering" some of the horses and cattle that actually belong to Jacob and/or Martin Sr.

Quest to find Martin Dreisbach's house: The house shown below is NOT the house of Martin Dreisbach.



Fig. 5. This house was NOT the house of Martin Dreisbach. He never lived here. Photographed during a 2004 DFA Reunion tour, many people believe these pictures show Martin's house. This is not correct. Nothing is known about this house other than that it once belonged to Dr. Fasano, now deceased, and that Martin Dreisbach was not associated with this house.

Using Google Earth to search for the site of Martin Dreisbach's house made one thing very clear – the information about Martin Dreisbach's house presented at the 2004 DFA reunion was wrong. That house is NOT located on the Isabella Tract. Martin would not build a house on land he didn't own so we can be sure that the house in the photo above, which is located on land Martin didn't own, never belonged to Martin Dreisbach. And we are now equally certain that he never lived in it. More research needs to be done to ascertain the history of this house and why there is story that it is associated with Martin Dreisbach.

Where, then, did Martin live? A major goal of the June 2014 research trip was to find where Martin Dreisbach lived. The assumption was that his house must have been located on his own property. Further, it must have been on the section of the 619 acres that Martin Dreisbach retained for himself. The southern half of the tract, below the Dreisbach Church, went to his sons, Jacob and Henry. Therefore Martin's house must have been located to the north of the church.

Dreisbach Church Road forms the western boundary of the Isabella Tract, now Martin's property. Driving along Dreisbach Church Road, north of the church, we saw a beautiful farm on the east side of the road (see the masthead of this newsletter). It was located where Martin's farm and house logically would be sited. We drove up to the farmhouse. A young man came over to talk to us. I told him we were researching Martin Dreisbach

who had owned this piece of property about 250 years ago. The young man, who wishes to remain anonymous, knew a great deal about the history of his farm and was a source of much information. He showed us a hand-made book, “History of the Farm”, that Jack L. Fisher, a local historian, had prepared for him by searching all of the land records. Unfortunately I did not record all of the information that was in the book and to search for these same documents would have required several more days of work in the court houses of both Northumberland and Union Counties. However I did learn that Martin Dreisbach had lived on this farm in more or less this same spot!



Fig. 6. The present farm house located on land once owned by Martin Dreisbach.

A History of Martin Dreisbach’s house: The young man told me the story of the white house (shown above and in Figs. 9 and 10). The Iroquois Indians originally owned this land. It was bought from them under the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1769 as the “New Purchase Lands”. Part of this land, including the Isabella Tract, was given to Capt. William Plunket by a warrant dated 1774. On 14 July 1775 it was sold to Martin and Anna Eva Dreisbach⁹ who divided it into four parts. The house stands on the part that was worked by Martin himself and then, informally, passed on to his son, John Dreisbach, and then, on 16 Feb 1793 passed to Martin Dreisbach Jr and Sophia Frederika Buchs (parents of Rev. John) in an unrecorded indenture.

Martin Dreisbach III, was born here on 6 Dec 1800, to Martin Jr and Sophia Frederika. He married Elizabeth Kleckner (b.12 April 1802) on 14 Oct 1824. A year before his marriage, on 3 Jan 1823, his father gave or sold this part of the farm to him.

When Martin III died on 15 March 1880, his estate included this farm and the executors were his sons, Solomon (b.1825 – d.1898) and Cyrus (b.1826 – d. 1895). They sold Martin III’s farm to Amos and Catharine June Kauffman by an indenture dated 1 April 1882.¹⁰ From here the portion of the farm, now consisting of 128 acres, with Martin’s homestead on it, went to their children, winding up in the hands of their daughter Catherine Alice (Kauffman) and her husband John Kaup. The remaining acres (619 minus 128) were sold to various people at various times. It would be interesting to research and record the fate of the entire tract, but that is not for now.

Now the story gets interesting! When the Kauffman’s bought the farm, there was a two storey stone house on the land! There are no known photos of this house which was built in 1797.¹¹ Martin Dreisbach Sr certainly had a log house. Then he, or perhaps more likely, Martin Jr, commissioned a stone house to be built. Like today’s housing developers, stone masons would build several houses in the same area. Nearby are two almost identical stone houses from the late 1700’s, one probably was built for Jacob Dreisbach and then sold to Conrad Dunkel on 1 April 1807. Another stone house was built for Martin Sr’s neighbour, Samuel Maclay. From these, we can infer that the house built for Martin (Sr or Jr) would have looked very similar to the two remaining houses.



Fig. 7. The Jacob Dreisbach/Dunkel house on Furnace Road. From “Dunkle/Dreisbach Family History”.¹²



Fig. 8. The Samuel Maclay House is located on the west side of Dreisbach Church Road, across from Martin’s house.¹³

Both of these stone houses have two stories, five double hung windows on the front and an offset front door. We cannot be sure, but it is likely that all three stone houses, Dunkel’s, Maclay’s, and Martin’s, were designed and built by the same person or persons. If two of the stone houses have survived, what happened to Martin Dreisbach’s house?

A new house! In the late 1800's, Catherine Alice Kauffman Kaup was not happy with her stone farm house. It was over a hundred years old and in need of repair. It may have been cold in winter and damp in summer – and it most definitely was out of fashion! She wanted it torn down. It was, but before that happened, her husband, John Kaup built a small house for the family to live in while the new one was being built. According to oral tradition – this little house later became the butcher shed now standing behind the present house (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. Aerial view of the farm from 1977. Red arrow points to the butcher shed where the Kaup family lived while the present house was being built.

John Kaup hired a local carpenter, William Klingman, to build a big, white, clapboard house – a fashionable, airy and most important of all, a *new* house that his wife would be happy with! While he was building the house, Klingman put his signature into the wet plaster of the foundation wall. It's still there and it reads – “William Klingman 1895”.



Fig. 10. Frame house, built in 1895, sits behind the place where Martin Dreisbach's stone house was located. The site of the stone house is shown by a dark rectangle added to the photo (yellow arrow).

The new wood frame house was built directly behind the site of the old stone house (see Fig. 10). The flat area where the stone house stood is distinctly visible today. No Dreisbach was ever born in this wooden house. The June 2014 DFA Newsletter shows a picture of a white clapboard house and calls it “Rev. John's birthplace”. It is an early photo of this same house (above), but it is not the site of Rev John's birth – that took place in the stone house that sat directly in front of this one.

An 'original' barn: There is one structure on the property that was built and used by the Dreisbachs. It is the barn. The current owner told us that the timbers in the barn are all hand hewn and secured together with wooden pegs. The age of the barn is not known, but it is believed to be contemporary with the stone house – so it, too, was built in the late 1700's and was therefore built by one of the Martins, probably by Martin Jr.



Fig. 11. Side view of the barn as it appears today. It was built in the late 1700's, possibly by Martin Dreisbach Jr.



Fig. 12. Another view of the barn, with cows inside.

Another piece of useful oral history! We also had the privilege of meeting the former, now retired, owners of this same piece of property. Having farmed this land they also knew about its springs and streams. When Martin Dreisbach Sr chose this land, it had to meet several criteria, chiefly, a clear title - but even this would not have been a sufficient reason to buy it unless the land had a reliable water supply.

Water supply: Turtle Creek, which provides year round water, flows right through the bottom of the 619 acre Isabella Tract. The importance of access to this creek was demonstrated by how the boundaries of the original Officers' Tracts were drawn. All the maps show a "bite" out of the southwest corner of the Isabella Tract. This was done, we were told, to allow the property to the west to have access to Turtle Creek. Originally, this property was awarded to Captain Brady and then sold to Samuel Maclay, a neighbor and possibly a friend of Martin Dreisbach.

In addition to Turtle Creek, the Isabella Tract had several springs, one of them was especially good. It arises behind the Dunkle stone farmhouse and provides water year round. It even, according to the previous owners, flows during drought years. The small stream that results from this spring flowed past the Martin homestead and no doubt was their water source. It then crossed (under) Dreisbach Church Road and flowed past the stone Maclay farmhouse and continued on to become Beaver Run Creek which empties into the Susquehanna. It has the same course today!

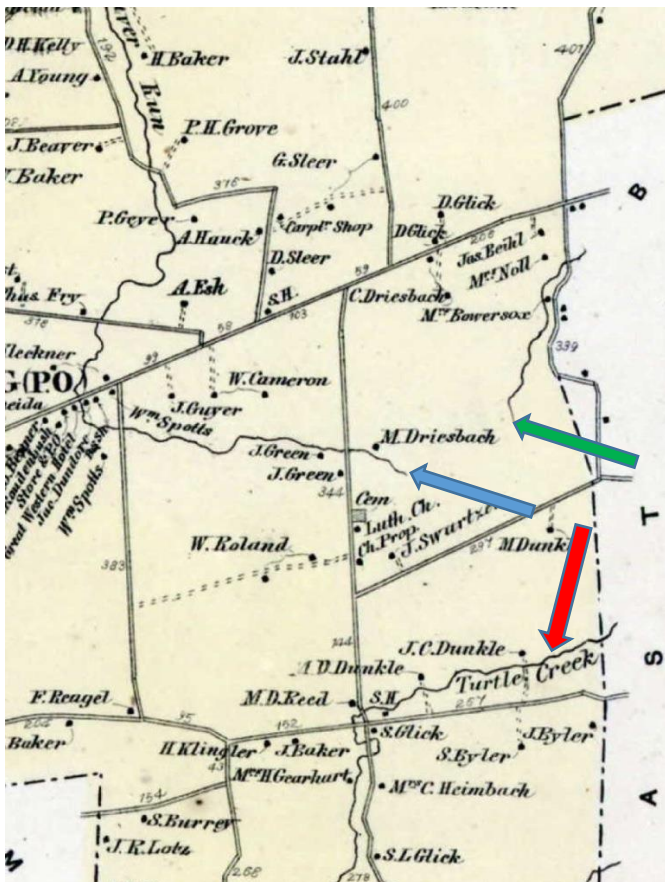


Fig. 13. Water courses running through Martin's land. Blue arrow points to the spring that provided water for the house and is the headwater of Beaver Run. Red arrow points to Turtle Creek which continues to the right on another map. Green arrow points to another spring on Martin's land that is the headwater of another stream of unknown name.

The map was made in 1868.¹⁴ It shows the names of people living in buildings as well as roads and water courses. The "M. Dreisbach" on the map is Martin Dreisbach IIIrd, and the "C. Dreisbach" is his son Cyrus. The cemetery of the Dreisbach Church is marked, as is the church. Directly below the church is a building marked "Ch. Prop." It is believed this is the building that was used as a school house.

As indicated on the map, there were, and still are, two strong springs on the Isabella Tract, plus Turtle Creek, promising sufficient water supplies even in times of drought.



Fig. 14. Another spring located in the eastern portion of the land that was farmed first by Martin Dreisbach Sr and then by his son John, then Martin Dreisbach Jr and finally by Martin Dreisbach IIIrd.

Martin Dreisbach Sr dies: Martin died on 24 April 1804, nearly 87 years old. He died intestate (without leaving a will) which suggests he either was too feeble to make a will or he did not expect to die soon! He is buried beside his wife, Anna Eva, in the cemetery of what is now the Dreisbach United Church of Christ on land that he gave to the church in 1788!

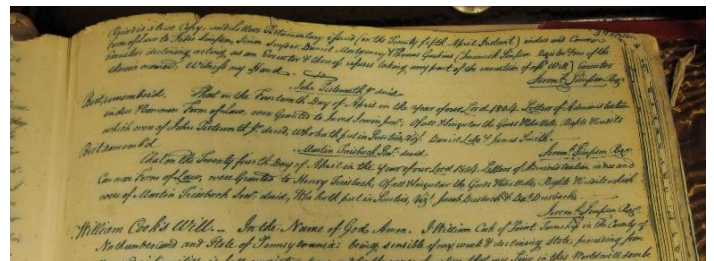


Fig. 15. Record of Martin's death without a will.¹⁵

The record shown above in Fig. 13 reads: "Martin Dreisbach Senr, Decsd. That on the 24th day of April in the year of our Lord 1804 Letters of Administration in free and common form of law; were granted to Henry Triesbach, of all & singular the Goods & Chattels, Rights, Credits which were of Martin Dreisbach Snr dec'd, who hath put in Sureties Viz Jacob Dresbach and Dn'l Dresbach". It is interesting to note the three different surname spellings all recorded in the same document!



Fig. 16. The tombstones of Anna Eva (on left) and of Martin Dreisbach Sr (on right) in Dreisbach United Church of Christ cemetery.



Fig. 17. The imposing tombstone of Samuel Maclay, surveyor, Congressman and Martin Dreisbach's neighbor is located at entrance to the Dreisbach United Church of Christ cemetery.

Stories that need to be told: The story of Martin Dreisbach's land is still not complete, in particular the division of his land to his sons. There are more records in the court houses of Sunbury and Lewisburg that need to be researched. The connection, if any, between the "Fasano house" and the Dreisbachs also should be pursued.

There are other stories waiting to be told as well: the story of John Dreisbach, Martin's son, who moved to Mifflinburg and became a well known gunsmith; the relationship between the Dreisbachs and the Dunkles who purchased some of the Dreisbach lands; the story of Martin's neighbour, Samuel Maclay, and the stories of Martin III's children who stayed in Lewisburg, Solomon, Cyrus, Charles (who died during the Civil War), Hiram, William, Miriam, and Martin L.

The Dreisbach Hardware Store: Another story that needs telling concerns The Dreisbach Hardware Store on 4th and Market Streets in Lewisburg. The business was started in 1874 by Cyrus Dreisbach and burned down in 1941. Two firemen lost their lives in the fire. The structure was rebuilt and used by a number of different businesses from 1941 until 2012 when it was refurbished to house the Bucknell University bookstore.



Fig. 18. The smoldering ruins of Dreisbach Hardware Store after the 1941 fire. The building was erected in the 1800's. After the fire the iron safe was found inside an interior wall and inside the safe were the plans for the building. The safe can be seen in the Bucknell Bookstore!



Fig. 19. Side of what was Dreisbach Hardware Store – you can faintly see the name "DREISBACH" painted above the 2nd floor windows. It is now the bookstore for Bucknell University.

This is an incomplete recounting of a research trip to Lewisburg, PA in June 2014. The highlight was finding the site and some information about Martin Dreisbach's house. Although the trip was valuable and fun, it was too short. So much more remains to be discovered and documented.

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References:

¹ See DFA Newsletter of March 2013 for details about the settlement of Buffalo Valley and for information about Captain William Plunket.

² Agreement, William Patterson for William Plunket, to Martin Treasbough, Northumberland County Court House, Deed Book D, p. 42. 19 Nov 1773.

³ Patent AA-14-202.

⁴ Deed Book B, p. 491. Date of deed 14 July 1775. Date of Record, 30 June 1784.

⁵ See DFA Newsletter of March 2013.

⁶ Daily Stories of Pennsylvania: Prepared for Publication in the Leading Daily Newspapers of the State By Frederic A. Godcharles, Milton, Pennsylvania Hardcover. 1924, p. 461.

⁷ Linn, J.B. Annals of Buffalo Valley, Union Co., Penna. 1755-1855. Harrisburg, Pa., 1877. p 180.

⁸http://genealogytrails.com/penn/northumberland/State_Sale_Tax_1778_80.html

⁹ Northumberland County Court House, Deed Book B, p. 491.

¹⁰ Union County Court House, Deed Book AA, p. 259.

¹¹ *John Kaup, 1855-1934, John Kaup's Biography.*

Commemorative Biographical Record of Central Pennsylvania. Pub. by J.H. Beers & Co. 1898. pp 944-945

¹² Reish, George, A. with Kristin J. Gibson. *Dunkle/Dreisbach Family History, Union County, Pennsylvania.* 2007. Aurora, Colorado. A copy in possession of the Union County Historical Society, Lewisburg, PA.

¹³ Photo of the house is from Union Co. Hist. Soc. Website: <http://www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org/Article50.pdf>

¹⁴ *1868 Atlas of Union and Snyder Counties, Pennsylvania.* Pub. By Pomeroy & Beers.

¹⁵ Will book 1, p. 322. Northumberland Co. Court House, Sunbury, Northumberland, PA.