

Searching an Old House's History:

The Sittig House in Shawnee

As presented to the Shawnee Preservation Society annual meeting May 1, 2017

553 River Road, Shawnee on Delaware, PA

(corner of Hollow Road)

Pete Sauvigne

To follow are the images presented along with text to approximate the oral presentation. The order is reverse chronological, following the direction of the search for this information. At the end of this document is a forward chronological trace of the land ownership, complete with all references.



Since 2012 Pete and Linda Sauvigne have owned this old house. The red frame house and the stone storehouse were built in the 1810-1819 time frame. Local legend had said that the stone structure dated to 1740 and was the gunpowder store for the village during the French and Indian War. Recent discoveries refute these stories. The waterfall was the source of power for a grist mill for many years.



Gwen and Bill Caldwell owned the house for 12 years beginning in 2000. They operated an art studio and B&B.

Shawnee Falls
STUDIO, GALLERY & GUESTHOUSE

The Sittig family owned the house for almost 60 years beginning in 1941. Egdar had been a famed international musician. Together with Charlotte they became renowned antique dealers sought out far and wide. They raised 6 children in the house.

They performed a major restoration of the stone house in the early 1940's and connected it with the frame house. Previously they had been separate structures, sometimes with a covered walkway between.

Charlotte was key in organizing resistance to the Highway Department's plans to replace the Shawnee Creek's Old Iron Bridge with a stark concrete, span complete with 8" concrete curbing through the entire intersection. This would alter the historic charm of the heart of the village. In the end, the bridge was faced with stone, and recess stone curbing was used, modeled after Colonial Williamsburg, VA.

For simplicity the property is referred to as Sittig's throughout this document, although it is called the Shrawder-Sittig House in its National Register of Historic Places nomination. The village is called Shawnee, not Smithfield, Lower Smithfield, Bushtown, or DuPui's.



Eldest daughter: Mary Charlotte & Edgar Sittig



1948 House

After major work

Beginning in 1938, James and Belle O'Gorman owned the house(s) for 3 years.

Starting in 1919, William and Hattie Treible owned the property for 19 years. They operated a store in the frame house and her occupation stated in the 1930 census was "cigar store merchant".



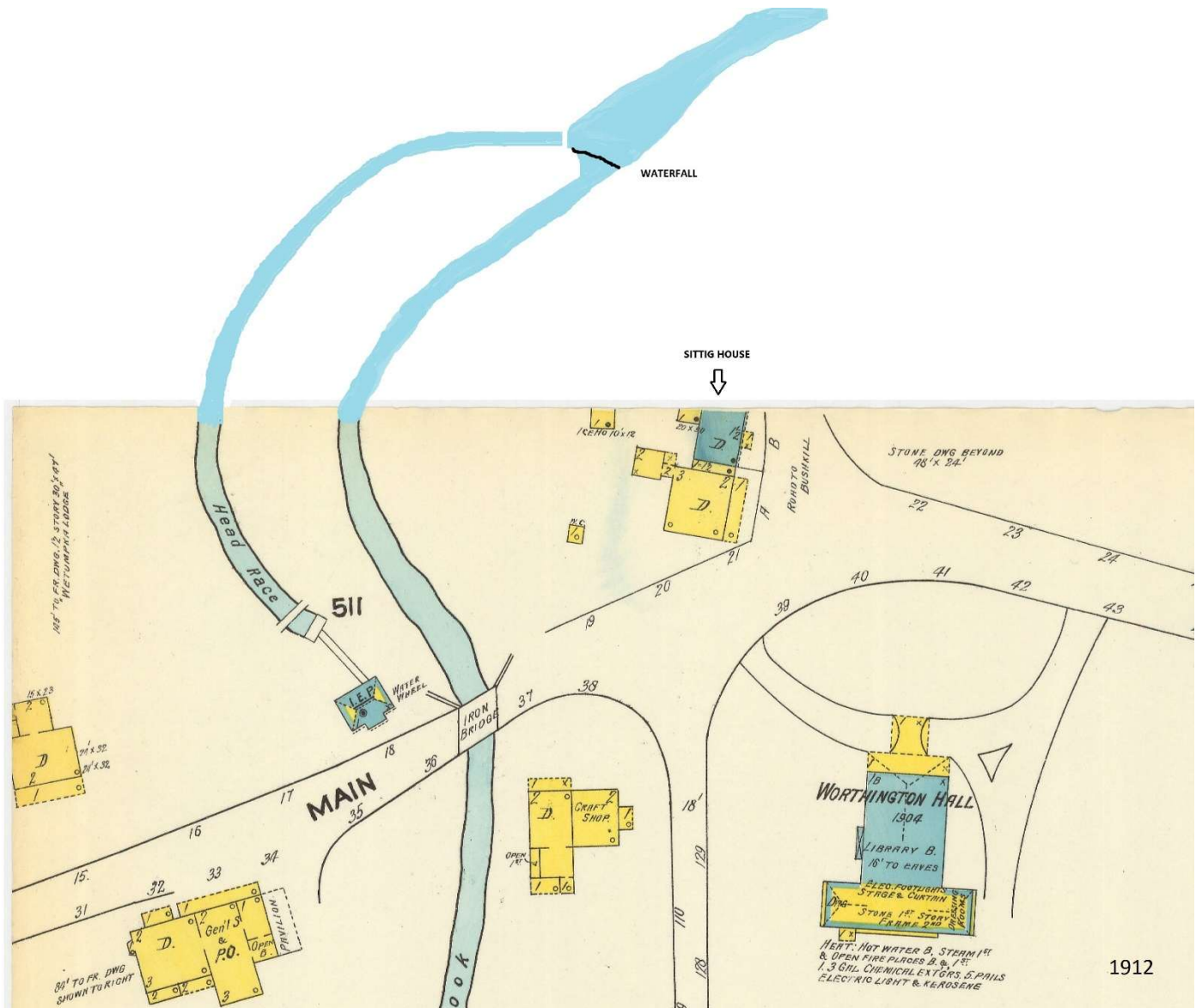
Hollow Road circa 1920 showing two of the oldest houses in Shawnee.

There was a dye house attached uphill of the stone house, which processed cloth. Creek water was used in the operation, and the dye house was gone by 1935.

From 1911 to 1919 the property was owned by Harry Hibbit. A second small tract (0.17 acres) is also in the Hibbit deed being a strip of land in front of Worthington Hall, which was built in 1904.

Shawnee changed greatly in the years 1900-1915. In 1903 there was a devastating flood, and about the same time the long-standing grist mill was torn down. C.C. Worthington bought much land, built the Buckwood Inn, expanded the 1785 building later called "Fort DePuy", built the "Post Office" building, etc. Minisink Avenue was subdivided for home building.

Sketched into the following Sanborn Insurance map is the approximate flow of the main stream of Shawnee Creek, plus the head race, which was built on the hillside to carry elevated water to the Grist Mill. By 1912 a small water-powered generator (labeled I.E.P., Independent Energy Provider) provided power to the Worthington Mower Company .



Above is the first Sanborn map of Shawnee, dated 1912. Prior to then, there was little property in Shawnee that needed insurance. Local Sanborn maps from 1885 are available for major properties such as the Kittatinny House, the Paper Mill, downtown Stroudsburg, etc.

The old mill and the building presently on that site can be compared in the following 2 pictures. Notice the relationship to the Old Iron Bridge. The mill extends to almost the middle of the present road.



General Store

1921

Post Office = Shawna Shop



General Store

1901

Shawnee Grist Mill



C 1901 Shawnee Grist Mill

millers Daniel Bennet bottom center,
his son to his left

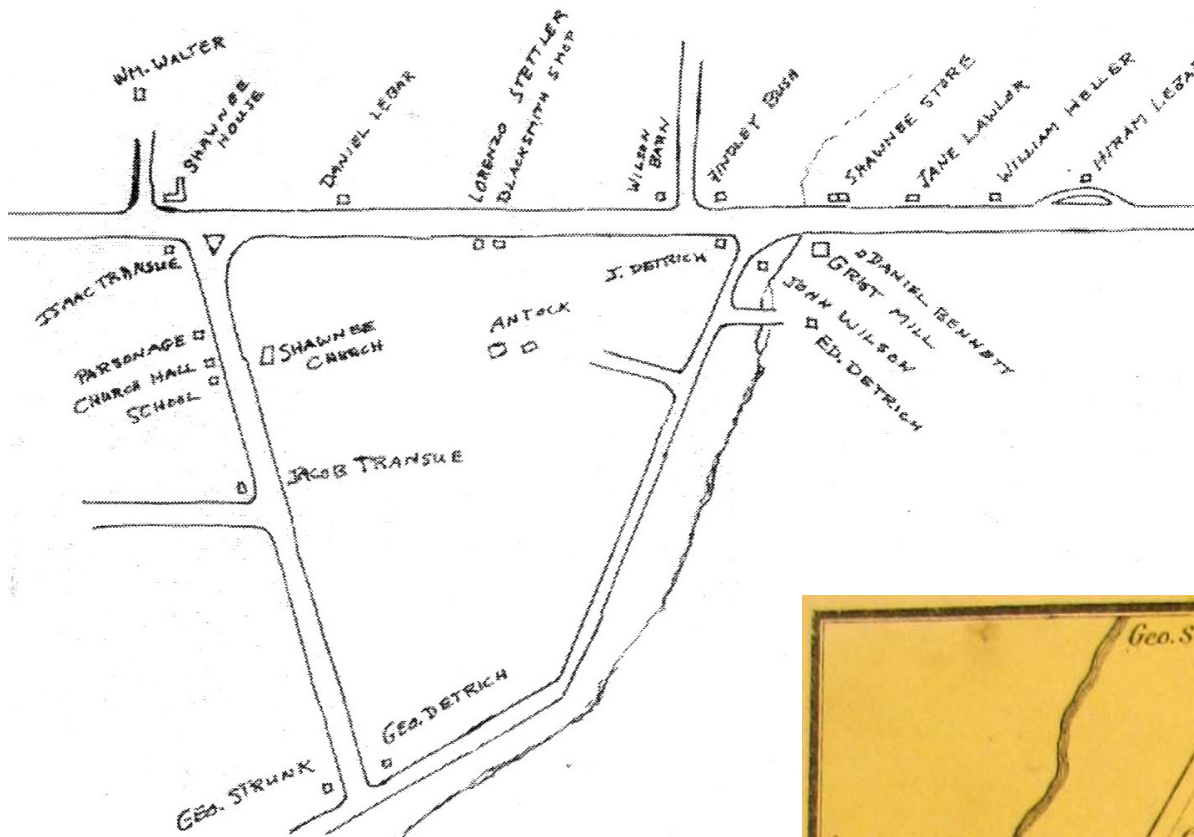


c 1895

Sarah Wilson and Libbie Fenner in oldest
known photograph of the house

The mill had existed for about 170 years, although likely smaller in the early days. Shawnee Falls is mostly natural but was raised by 2-3 feet before 1900, undoubtedly for power and water storage. Total head: 26 feet, variable flow.

The Wilson family were on the property from 1847 until 1911. Sarah Wilson and her sister Libby Fenner lived in the frame house in 1910, while the family of David Nye lived in the stone house. A great trove of information from this period is contained in the book When the Days Were Not Long Enough, by Frank Labar. This book is still available.

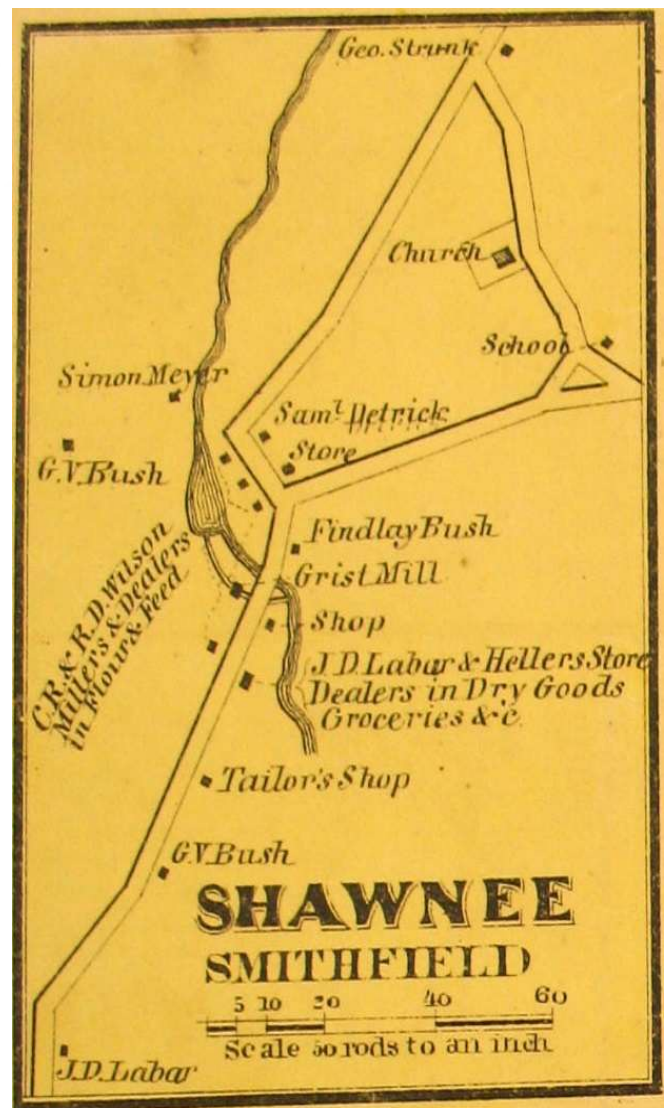


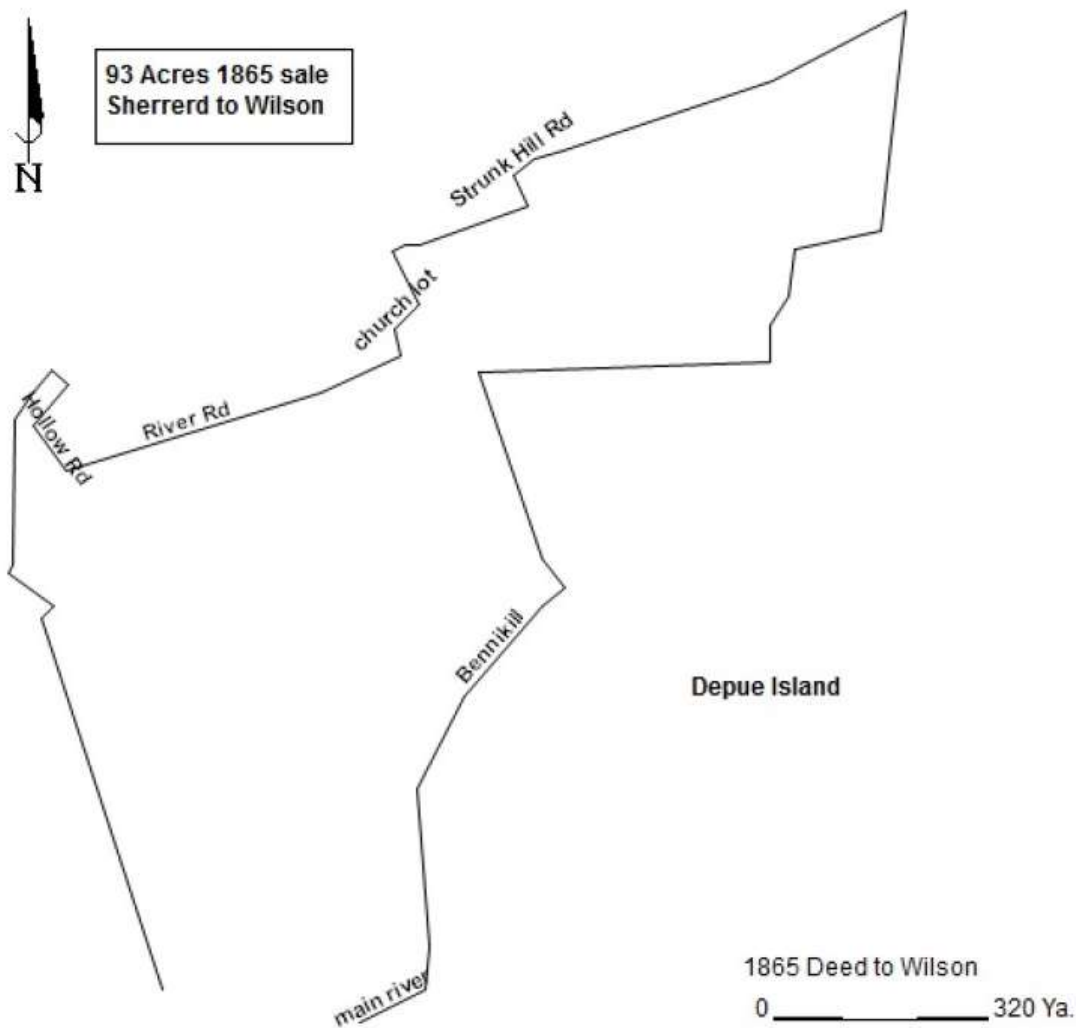
The map on the left is from this book, and shows a Wilson barn on the site of Worthington Hall.

1890-1900
Facing South

1860
Facing North
As are all following maps

The map on the right includes the Wilson enterprises shortly after the Shawnee General Store opened (shown as Labar and Heller's). The Wilsons had refitted the grist mill and earlier operated a store in the stone part of the Sittig house. They were major landowners in Shawnee.

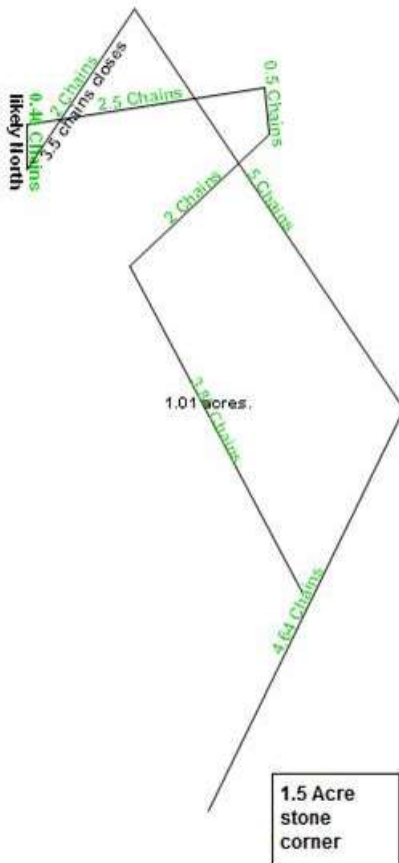




This survey is from the 1865 deed from John Sherrerd, of Belvedere, to the Wilsons. It was discovered with title search methods from the Sittig deed.

It was difficult to trace the origin of the Sittig property from this 93 acres. The recital section of the deed referenced 13 different tracts, with vague descriptions. Although most surveys are precise in direction and distances, there were few mentions of anything recognizable today. Structures were usually not mentioned unless of major significance, such as the Shawnee Church, or the grist mill. Typical landmarks were as: from a stone... to an elm tree... to a fence post... to a stump by the river bank, etc. It was often easy to identify the shape, but not the location of a tract.

After tracing some incorrect tracts, it became apparent that the following tract included the Sittig land:



N 28 W 3.85 Chains
 N 47 E 2 Chains
 N 6 W 0.5 Chains
 S 81 W 2.5 Chains
 S 0 W 0.46 Chains - likely North
 N 34 E 2 Chains - 3.5 chains close
 S 34 E 5 Chains
 S 26 W 4.64 Chains

However, there are clearly

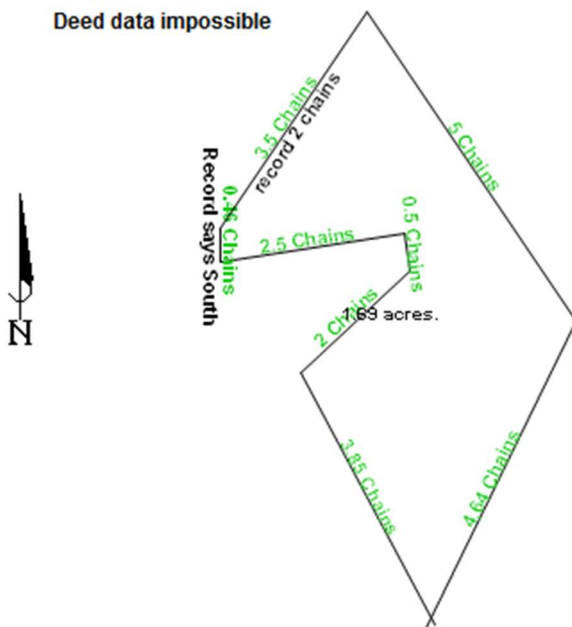
ERRORS

in the survey. The outline of a property cannot have crossing lines. Data was checked on multiple deeds and found with the same errors.

Exactly per data 1852 and 1847
 Impossible, transcription errors

1847 deed Sixth thereof 1847 deed Richard to Wilson
 0 120

2 calls adjusted to permit closure
 Deed data impossible



N 28 W 3.85 Chains
 N 47 E 2 Chains
 N 6 W 0.5 Chains
 S 81 W 2.5 Chains
 N 0 W 0.46 Chains - Record says South
 N 34 E 3.5 Chains - record 2 chains
 S 34 E 5 Chains
 S 26 W 4.64 Chains

1.5 Acre

Left is approximately what the tract really looked like, with the house(s) on the corner on the right.

ADJUSTED

1852 deed Sixth thereof 1847 deed Richard to Wilson ADJUSTED
 0 120


The preceding tract was part of the 93 acres that the Wilsons bought in 1865. From 1852 to 1865 it was owned by John Sherrerd, of Belvedere, NJ. The Wilsons were living on the land during this period, maybe as tenants. Perhaps Mr. Sherrerd was acting on the Wilsons' behalf accumulating land in Shawnee. John Sherrerd's sister Elizabeth was married to Joseph V. Wilson.

The Wilsons originally purchased this tract from John and Wilhelmina Reichard in 1847, before deeding it to Sherrerd in 1852. John Reichard was a brewer from Wilkes-Barre. His wife was born Wilhelmina Shrawder, a niece of Philip below. Later the name was also spelled "Schrader" and old PA records refer to the "Shrader-Sittig House".

Reichard purchased this and other lands in 1841 at a sheriff's sale at the property of Geroge V. Bush, Innkeeper in Shawnee. This sale was the result of court proceedings to settle the estate of Philip Shrawder, who had died in 1820, some 21 years earlier. Shrawder died with many lands, no direct descendants and a complicated will with multiple contingencies. The deed from the sheriff's sale did not include a recital section, where deeds usually indicate how the land had been acquired. The property was described as: "2 ½ acres designated by said Philip Shrawder, deceased, in his last will and testament as his New house, store house and barn and the lots whereon they stand". This land included a one acre tract containing the barn (where the Shawnee Playhouse now sits) and 1 ½ acre tract containing the Sittig property.


Captain Philip Christian Shrawder

December 6th 1745
March 17th 1820



A new headstone presented by
the Shawnee Presbyterian Church
to honor his service in
America's Revolutionary War
September 11, 2016

1745	Dec 6	Born – Frankenthal Germany
1776	Aug 9	Enlists in Continental Army in Philadelphia
1776	Dec 25	Crosses Delaware with General Washington at Battle of Trenton
1777	Jan 3	Battle of Princeton, NJ
1777	Jan - May	Morristown Encampment
1777	Sep 11	Battle of Brandywine, PA
1777	Oct 4	Battle of Germantown, PA
1777	Dec	Valley Forge Encampment
1778	Jan-Jun	Valley Forge Encampment
1778	Jun 28	Battle of Monmouth, NJ
1778	Jun-Dec	Northern PA Campaign
1779	Jul-Oct	Sullivan's Indian Campaign
1779	Aug 13	Battle of Newtown, NY
1780	Dec	Morristown Encampment
1781	Jan 1	Discharged from Continental Army
1781	Feb 10	Forms Rangers as part of Pennsylvania militia to protect against attacks
1783	Nov	Retires from Pennsylvania militia
1783	Dec	Becomes member of Pennsylvania Society of Cincinnati
1793	Feb 19	Marries the widow Rachel Van Campen
1797		Opens Shawnee's first store
1805	Sep 29	Wife Rachel dies in Shawnee
1806	Apr 1	Commissioned Justice of the Peace for Northampton County
1810		Built stone storehouse at Shawnee and engages in mercantile business
1818		Visited Frankenthal, Germany to encourage family to settle in Pennsylvania
1820	Mar 17	Dies at Shawnee



Multiple references describe that Captain Philip Shrawder built the house(s) in 1810, ten years before his death. Curiously, during the above gravesite ceremony the Shrawder family did not know that his house still stood, nor had the author yet traced ownership to Shrawder.

Around Shrawder's time, tracing the Sittig land ownership involved more wills than deeds. Shrawder left some lands to minors contingent upon them surviving to the age of majority. He also tried to encourage German family to resettle on his land in the new country that he fought to create. Contingencies in his will required these family members still live here 20 years after his death before obtaining title. 21 years later it was settled in court.

Philip's wife Rachel died in 1805 and bequeathed to Philip several properties under the condition that he continue to reside for 4 more years in the house that they had shared. That house was on 75 acres somewhere other than the Sittig land. After 5 years, Philip built the house(s) that he wanted, on the Sittig site.

Rachel was the widow of Benjamin Van Campen. Benjamin died in 1789 and left her many lands with a vague description. He also gave her all of his "moveable estate" with one condition: that several of his 9 slaves be freed upon reaching 28 years of age. Rachel, Benjamin and Philip all died childless.

Shawnee Presbyterian Church Cemetery 2017

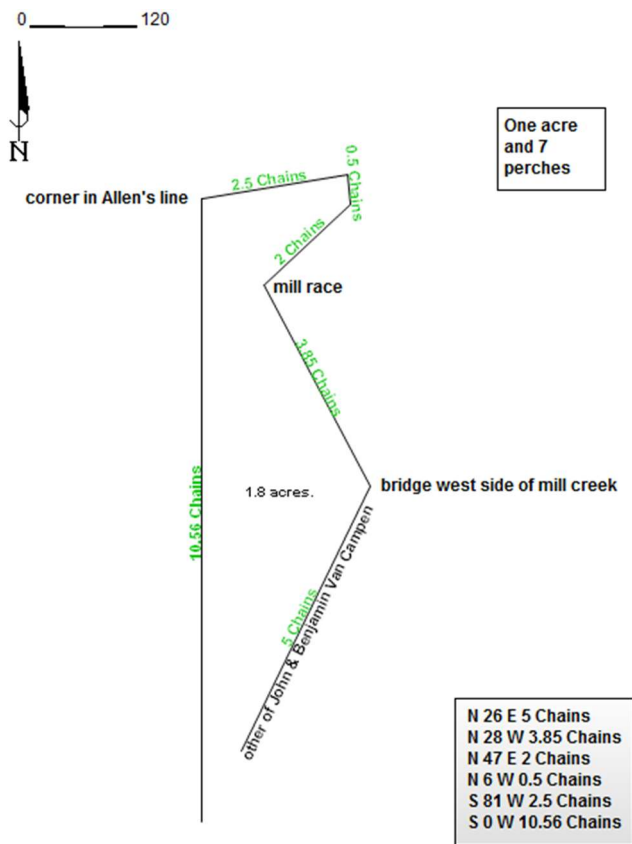


Capt. Philip Shrawder

Rachel Johnson Van Campen Shrawder

Benjamin Van Campen

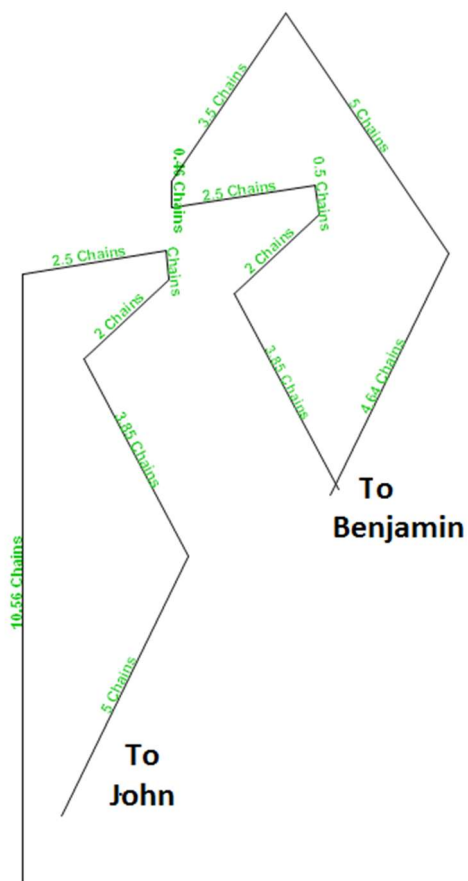
Prior to Establishment of Monroe County in 1836 Shawnee was in Northampton County. A broad search was made of the deeds in Easton in the late 1700's, looking for familiar names such as Shrawder or Van Campen. The following survey was found in a deed which facilitated further discovery:



Mill Lot 1784 Benjamin Van Campen to brother John

1784 Sale by Benjamin Van Campen to his brother John Van Campen

This deed was found with clear descriptions: It included the grist mill near the bridge on the west side of mill creek, and the mill race. This land certainly adjoins the Sittig property.



Further looking revealed that up until 1784 the brothers John and Benjamin Van Campen had jointly held a tract containing the grist mill. In that year they split the lot, with John taking the grist mill and Benjamin taking the eastern part up to Hollow Road and including the Sittig property.

The deed to Benjamin contained the exact same survey information as in the 1847 and 1852 deeds, including errors. Shown to the left is the ADJUSTED survey.

1784 Van Campen Brothers Split Jointly Held Tract

In 1766 John and Benjamin received a deed of gift for the larger grist mill lot from their father Abraham Van Campen. Abraham was one of the earliest settlers of the Lower Minisink. He settled in Pahaquarry, Hunterdon County, West Jersey about 5 miles upstream of Shawnee. He built the oldest home still standing in what is now Warren County, New Jersey. He was among the many Dutch settlers that settled the continuous valley extending south from the Hudson River at Esopus, New Netherland, now called Kingston, New York.

In 1754 Abraham Van Campen purchased 54 acres, including the grist mill and a dwelling house from Daniel, Samuel and Nicholas DuPui and their wives Elizabeth, Jane and Winkie, respectively. Nicholas was the father of Samuel and Daniel. Nicholas' sister Susanna was married to Abraham Van Campen in Kingston, and several DuPui-Van Campen intermarriages came later. In 1752, three of the parties of this deed left their initials in the foundation of the Dutch Reformed Church or "Old Stone Church" in Shawnee. That part of the foundation still exists in the Shawnee Presbyterian Church.



Abraham Van Kampen

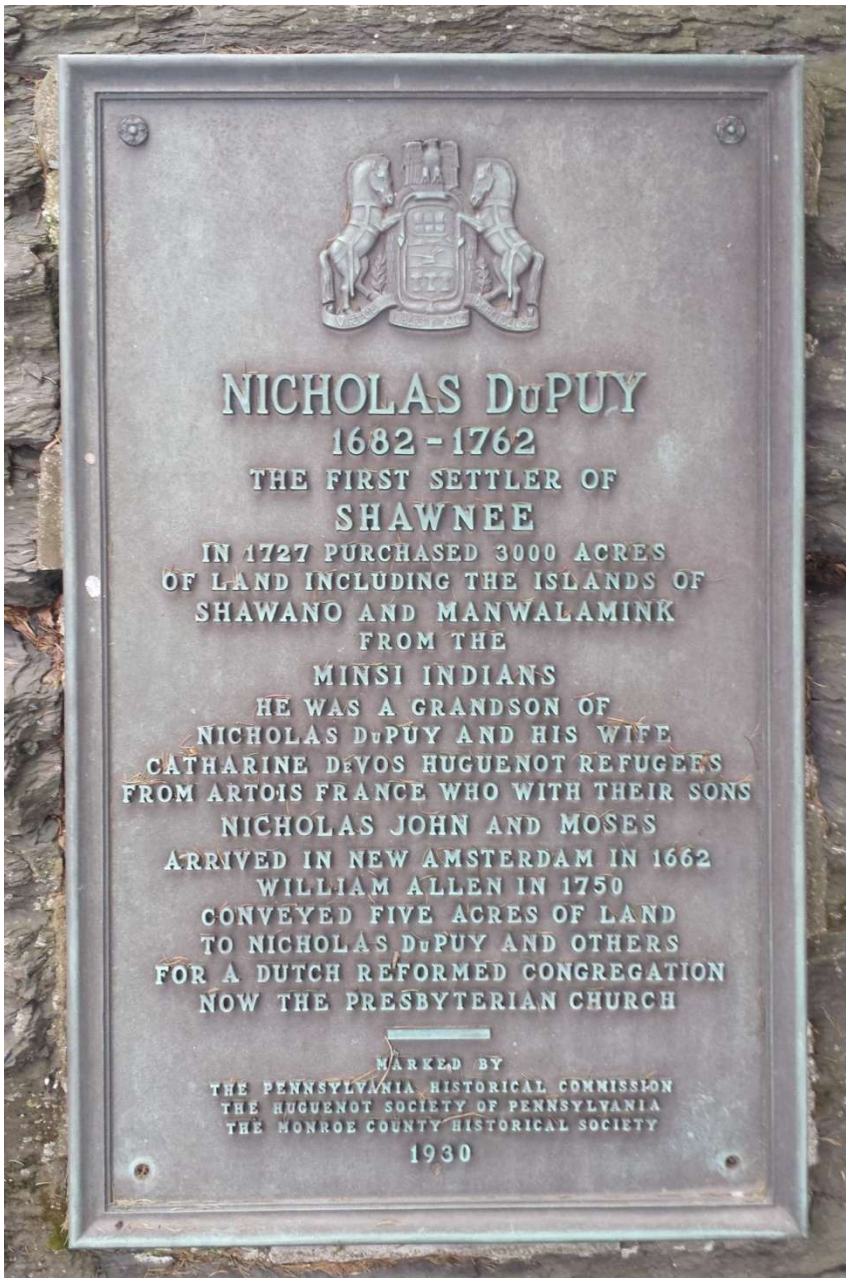
Nicholas DuPui

Samuel DuPui

In 1755 the French and Indian War began and the DuPui home was garrisoned as one of the frontier forts under orders of Benjamin Franklin. A square stockade was built around it and swivel guns mounted on the four corners.

Daniel DuPui owned this 54 acre tract for just one year beginning in 1753.

Prior to 1753 the land was owned by Nicholas DuPui, the first permanent settler of Shawnee.



Nicholas DuPuy's 1727 purchase from the Indians was not recognized by the government of Pennsylvania and he was forced to buy the land again.

In 1733 he bought several tracts containing about 640 acres from William Allen. He first leased these lands, then purchased them as recorded in Doylestown, Bucks County.

Northampton County was formed in 1752 from Bucks County.

William Allen was a wealthy Philadelphia land speculator. He was once the mayor of Philadelphia and justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. He founded Allentown.

Allen purchased 10,000 acres in 1728 from the grandson of William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. Grandson also named William.

William Penn, the founder, left each of his 3 grandchildren 10,000 acres when he died in 1717.

The founder was granted 45,000 square miles by King Charles II in 1681 to settle a debt that he had owed to Admiral William Penn, the founder's father.

END OF WRITTEN HISTORY SEARCH

Marker on Sittig property facing River Road, Open to the Public

COMMENTARY:

Although the land ownership is clear, it is uncertain what existed on the property prior to 1810. There may have been the dwelling house mentioned in the 1754 deed to Abraham Van Campen. It was very likely associated with the nearby grist mill.

A deed dated 1748 mentions the "grist mill, dwelling house of Moses DePui with the mill pond". Moses DuPui (1713-1748) was Nicholas's eldest son and stood to inherit the DuPui estate. He reportedly operated the grist mill until his early death. An early mill may have been located closer to the waterfall and the stone house. By 1784 the long mill race existed.

One theory is that Aaron DuPui ran his store at this location. It would be a great site for a store. Aaron was a son of Nicholas who operated a store in Shawnee as early as 1743. The store ledger survived, but not the location. Much of the store register is for mill products, although many various items are shown including linen, combs, bridles, rum, tools, barrels, tar, shingles, sheep, etc. Also listed are lead, shot and gunpowder. This could have sourced the legend that the building was the gunpowder store for the village.

It is also possible that Philip Shrawder operated his 1789 store from this location. Exhaustive searching revealed no accurate records prior to 1810, and architectural evidence indicates that the existing buildings could be no older.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of the grist mill. Nicholas built his log home in 1725, before his permanent relocation to Shawnee with his family in 1727. The grist mill came next so that he could process his crop. The mill stood long before the large stone house called Manwalamink.

Nicholas' land purchases in 1733 were for farming. This was almost entirely tillable lowlands near the river and on islands. The tract of land around present-day Shawnee Village includes only such lowlands, except for a small extension up Shawnee Creek above the waterfall, to provide power for his mill.



1733

One of several tracts deeded to N. DuPui by Wm. Allen including the islands of Manwalamink and "Great Shawna up against Shawna Town".

Shawna Town was on the lower end of Great Shawna Island, now Prices Landing , Rivers' Edge Park and an archaeological site.

86 Acre tract from 1733 deed, over modern satellite view of Shawnee

APPENDIX

FORWARD CHRONOLOGICAL LAND OWNERSHIP TRACE & REFERENCES

553 River Road, Shawnee on Delaware PA:

3/4/1681 King Charles II grants to William Penn 45,000 square miles west of New Jersey and north of Maryland.

7/30/1718 William Penn, the founder, dies and wills 10,000 acres to each of his grandchildren, including Wm. Penn 3rd.

9/18/1727 Indians owners sell 3000 acres to Nicholas DuPui. "From Peter Kettle to Peghoquery" This purchase from Indians was not recognized by Pennsylvania government

8/29/1728 William Penn (grandson of the founder) sells to William Allen 10,000 acres. Philadelphia Deed Book F Vol. 5 Page 92.

9/26/1733 William Allen sells multiple tracts to Nicholas DuPui including 86 acres along the river and extending up to the grist mill site. Second tract in Bucks County Deed Book B Volume 2 Page 91.

10/24/1753 Nicholas DuPui sells to Daniel DuPui 2 tracts the 2nd one being where the grist mill stands and containing 40 acres. (later corrected as 54 acres) Northampton Book A Vol 1 P 142 recorded 11/15/1758

4/29/1754 Daniel & Elizabeth DuPui, Nicholas & Winkie DuPui, Samuel & Jane DuPui conveyed to Abraham Van Campen 54 acres of land including the grist mill and dwelling house. The deed reports a survey error in 1733 deed and that the 1753 deed "40 acres" was actually 54 acres. Northampton County Book A Vol 1 page 136 recorded 11/15/1758

10/25/1766 Abraham Van Campen, Esquire of Walpack, West New Jersey gifts to sons John and Benjamin Van Campen 2.5 acre mill lot. Northampton County deed book B1 page 203.

11/13/1784 The brothers John and Benjamin Van Campen divide the mill lot that they jointly own. John grants to Benjamin a 1.5 acre lot where the Sittig House now stands, and Benjamin grants to John the remaining 1 acre, including the grist mill. Now John will run the mill and Benjamin gets the house lot. Northampton County deed book H1 page 38.

11/26/1789 Benjamin Van Campen dies leaving all lands to widow Rachel. Will recorded Oct 27, 1789 Northampton County page 59.

2/19/1793 Capt. Philip Shrawder marries widow Rachel Van Campen.

9/29/1805 Rachel dies and leaves the house lot and other lands to Philip Shrawder. Will recorded Northampton County 11/11/1805 page 221

1810 Capt. Philip Shrawder builds his new stone storehouse. The plank frame construction was completed within the next few years. There may have been pre-existing structures on the site.

3/17/1820 Philip Shrawder dies with no descendants and a complicated will with many lands, annuities, a trust and contingencies about German family relocating to the US and a local child living to maturity. Will mentions "new house, store house and barn". Will recorded Northampton county 3/28/1820, page 574

9/11/1841 After proceedings in Court of Common Pleas, sheriff sells lots containing Shrawder's "new house, stone house and barn" (2.5 acres) to John Reichard and wife Wilhemina Shrawder Reichard. The barn was standing about 1900 in the site of the Shawnee Playhouse. The house was red. The barn stands on 1 acre, but not the 1 acre lot that contains the mill. It is just coincidence that prior to 1784 the original mill lot was 2.5 acres. Monroe County deed book 2 p.234

6/10/1847 John and Wilhelmina Reichard sell 2.5 acres to Charles R. and Joseph V. Wilson. Now shown as 2 lots, first lot northwest of River Road containing the houses, second lot southeast containing the barn. The house lot description exactly matches the 1784 deed from John to Benjamin Van Campen. Monroe County deed book 4 p.28

12/18/1852 Charles R. & Joseph V. Wilson sell many lots to John M. Sherrerd. The 2 lots containing 2.5 acres are near the top of page 17 following the words: "The Sixth thereof". Monroe County deed book 6 p.15

4/1/1865 John Sherrerd sells back to Elizabeth Wilson (his sister and widow of Joseph V.) and Charles R. Wilson. Lands have been combined into one tract totaling 93 acres. The land extends to the river and up Strunk Hill (Mosiers Knob) road. Monroe County deed book 13 p.46

11/23/1911 Sarah H. Wilson estate sells to Harry Hibbit. Tract 1 is the lot containing the houses and 0.78 acres including the road corner, extending near but not into the creek. Tract 2, 0.17 acres is near Worthington Hall. Monroe County deed book 70 p.395

11/26/1919 Harry Hibbitt and wife sell to William V. Treible and wife. Same tracts as 1911 sale. Monroe County deed book 81 p.475

6/10/1938 Hattie Treible sells to James O'Gorman and wife. Tract 1 only, 0.78 acres Monroe County deed book 129 p.406

4/9/1941 James O'Gorman and wife sell to Edgar H. Sittig and wife. Same lot but resurvey shows slightly less extension into the roads and the area measures 0.69 Acres. Monroe Co deed book 6 p.91

2/29/2000 Estate of Charlotte Sittig sells to William L. & Gwendolyn E. Caldwell. Now includes a narrow tract extending the back yard to the middle of the creek, totaling 0.86 acres. Monroe Co deed book 2076 p.106

3/23/2012 William and Gwendolyn Caldwell sell to Peter C. and Linda A. Sauvigne same 0.86 Acres. Monroe County deed book 2400 p.1817