

Timeline of Ownership of the Immigrant Adam Kerchner's Tract of 50+ Acres of Land
In Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County, PA Which Came Into Possession of the
Whitenight Family during First Half of 1900s and In Recent Time the Miller Family

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Research note: The original 50+ acre tract of Adam Kerchner's land was sub-divided at various times in the 1800's into three main tracks and a few other smaller pieces. The three main remaining larger tracks are in this report referred to as Tracts 1, 2, and 3. They were purchased over a period of a few decades in the first half of the 1900s by the late John A. Whitenight, Sr. Thus, via him, most of the original 50+ acres were brought back together into singular ownership after being separate parcels owned by various people for over a century. John A. Whitenight, Sr., and his wife Lula resided in the home on Tract 1 located at 7447 Salem Bible Church Rd for many years. Mr. and Mrs. Brian Miller now live there.

1750 Apr 04: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grants warrant for 50 acres of land in Upper Milford Township, Bucks County, PA to Peter Keler (sic) of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Sources: Name of original land warrantee found to be Peter Keeler (sic, a spelling transcription error) reported in an 1828 survey as being the original land warrant owner. This was called to my attention via email dated 6 Jun 2015 from Michael Miller, land researcher and (?surveyor?); the hand written transcribed warrant grants listing pages in the online Warrant Register indexes first found in the online PA Historical & Museum Commission website found online by me on 20 Apr 2022; the "By the Proprietaries" document image found online at Ancestry.com by Jim Gilbert and sent to me via email dated 20 Mar 2023. Research note: The original land warrant owner was most likely Peter Keller of Bedminster Township, Bucks County PA and the spellings of his name as Keler or Keeler were phonetic spelling or transcribing errors by the scribes handling the records. This statement about Peter's probable correct family name is based on my genealogy research and surmises made by myself over the last few years in trying to learn who Peter Keeler (sic) was since I first saw the name spelled that way in 2015 via that 1828 survey of the land that once belonged to Adam Kerchner.

1751 (about): The 50 acres tract of land warrant was conveyed to Adam Kerchner by some unknown process at that time. Adam Kerchner was living on this land from the early 1750s to Aug 1768 when he died. Sources: Various very early land plot surveys found by me at the Schwenkfelder's Library on 24 Jan 1996, abutting land deed descriptions showing meets and bounds mentioning them lying along Adam Kerger/Kergner/Kerchner land, and various land and property tax records already in my possession.

1769 (about): Conrad Shoup/Schaub obtains ownership of the land by marriage to the widow of Adam Kerchner, Anna Barbara (nee ____) Kerchner. Conrad Shoup/Schaub was their neighbor and co-executor for Adam Kerchner's Last Will and Testament. With that marriage the land passes solely into ownership/possession of Conrad Shoup/Schaub upon the death of Barbara. Her date of death is unknown. Source: Copy of Adam Kerchner's Aug 1768 Last Will and Testament and estate file probated and on file at the Berks County PA Courthouse in Reading PA. I obtained copies of those records many years ago. It must be noted here that while Adam Kerchner's original 50+ acres was situated for jurisdiction purposes in Lehigh (in 1752 Northampton County) PA and there are records for his family being there on that side of the county line, at some point in time Adam Kerchner acquired an additional 150 acres and moved his primary residency across the nearby county line into Berks County, which is where he died suddenly "on old Seiler's place" per a contemporaneous account in the personal journal of surveyor David Shultze, copy in my possession. There is no existing record of him buying the additional 150 acres. But he paid tax on 200 acres in Berks County PA in both 1767 and 1768. I am not even 100% sure which nearby 150 acres he could have acquired or was acquiring and/or just was paying the taxes for until such time to make it official. A lot of land transactions back then never got recorded. I have sometimes thought the additional 150 acres could have been the abutting land of Jacob Christman who died suddenly in 1761 due to a farming accident and left a widow and minor children. Or it could have been the Frederick Seiler track located further away abutting to the west of the Jacob Christman tract. I have visited all these tracts of land but have never been able to determine the accuracy of any of my theories. Research note: In my genealogical research on this early family I have found the family name spelled as Shoup, Schoup, and Schaub. In these land transactions covered by this timeline the predominant spelling was Shoup, aka Schaub. See my report on German Name Spelling: <http://www.kerchner.com/spelling.htm>

1797 Feb 24: Johannes Shoup/Schaub, son of Conrad, obtains the land from his father Conrad Shoup/Schaub. Johannes at that time was married to his step-sister, Anna Barbara (nee Kerchner), a daughter of Adam Kerchner..

1809 (about): David Heimbach and "Wisselmann and Covely" (maybe a company) buys the land and erects a furnace to manufacture charcoal iron. Source: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub.1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article. Sigmund Furnace was in prior times known as Hampton Furnace and became known as Sigmund Furnace after Frederick Sigmund purchased it in 1850 at a Sheriff's Sale and continued to operate it for 10 years. See the 1850 entry in this time line for more details about Frederick Sigmund's, and later his son's, ownership of this land after 1850.

1812 (about): David Heimbach became sole owner of the land. Source: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub.1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article.

1832 (about): John V. R. Hunter of Allentown PA purchased the land and furnace from David Heimbach. Source: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub.1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article. John V. R. Hunter was married to Sarah A. Heimbach, a daughter of David Heimbach.

1834 (about): Daniel V. R. Hunter of Oley Township, Berks Co PA, buys the land from John V. R. Hunter of Allentown PA. Source: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub.1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article.

1838 – Inserted here for information purpose only -- Jonathan Shoup/Schaub, son of Johannes and grandson of Conrad, buys some land from his father Johannes. Research note: This land that Jonathan purchased was land originally owned by Conrad Shoup/Schaub plus some of the land that Conrad purchased in 1771 from Catherine Eck. Thus it would not be connected to any of the land Conrad Shoup/Schaub got by marrying c1769 the widow of Adam Kerchner. The land in this transaction is not part of any land that Adam Kerchner owned. The mention of abutting property of John Stahlnecker and Mary Fretz in this 1838 deed description's meets and bounds was for lands formerly part of lands owned by Catherine Eck which Conrad Shoup/Schaub purchased from her in 1771. Those Stahlnecker and Fretz lands were not part of any of Adam Kerchner's land. The Eck land was a 37+ acre tract located between Conrad Shoup/Schaub's original land and Adam Kerchner's 50+ acre tract of land.

1840 (about): Per the Lehigh County PA history, several different parties carried on business operations on the furnace site. But to this researcher it is not known if the land title changed hands or they just rented the facilities. I believe I have found the name of one such business entity thus far, i.e., "Hunter & Miller". Source: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub. 1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article and various deeds and early survey plot plans I obtained over the years. Research note: I found the business name of "Hunter & Miller" listed in the meets and bounds of the 1838 deed description discussed immediately before this entry in this timeline report. From my analysis thus far, the boundary in said meets and bounds which mentions that business entity name would be the one for the land immediately to the south of the Tract 1 which has the house and barn on it, i.e., directly across Salem Bible Church Road and east of the county line. That piece of land and much more is now owned by some church(s) which now has the Victory Valley camp ground on it. And as we know the Adam Kerchner's 50+ acres of land was on both sides of parts of what is now known as Salem Bible Church Road, part of which abutted the north-east corner of the land owned by the early immigrant Jacob Christman, and later owned by his son George Christman. This Christman land was researched by me over many years in my research of the Christman family who are in my bloodline ancestry. See: <http://www.kerchner.com/christman/jacobchristmanland.htm>

1850: Frederick Sigmund purchased the land and what was then known as the Hampton Furnace at Sheriff's Sale. He purchased additional land and operated the furnace facilities on this land until his death in 1860 when his two sons in 1861 were granted ownership as part of the process of settling Frederick's estate. Source: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub.1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article.

1861 May 21: Henry M. Sigmund and Dr. Alfred M. Sigmund, sons of Frederick, inherit the land and furnace facilities from their deceased father Frederick Sigmund. Source: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub. 1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article and the 1883 deed description for Peter Faust selling 9+ acres to George W. Snyder, also known in this timeline as Tract 1 of the original 50+ acres of Adam Kerchner's land.

1865 Nov 01: Henry M. Sigmund purchased from his brother, Dr. Alfred M. Sigmund, his interest in the land and the facilities. Henry continues operation of the furnace until 1868 when he suspended its operation. Source: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub. 1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article and the 1883 deed description for Peter Faust selling 9+ acres to George W. Snyder, also known in this timeline as Tract 1 of the original 50+ acres of Adam Kerchner land. This 1883 deed description details prior owners of the larger tract owned by Peter Faust from which he sold the 9+ acres to George W. Snyder. See the 1883 entry in this timeline for more details.

1870 Mar 14: Peter Faust (Mar 1835 – Nov 1900), listed as a Powder Maker (the explosive kind) in the deed description for the land, purchased the land and furnace buildings from Henry M. Sigmund for \$6000 and converted it to a Powder Mill and carried on that work until four years later when during a storm a lightning strike started a fire and the facility exploded. An employee named James Watson was killed in the explosion. Sources: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub. 1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article and the 1883 deed for Peter Faust selling 9+ acres of his land to George W. Snyder in which that said 1883 deed details prior owners.

1875 Nov 05: Peter Faust buys for \$20 from his abutting neighbor to the west John Nuss a small 75 perches piece of land which is now located at the southwest corner of the tract of land with the barn and house on it and which is along the Salem Bible Church Road. This small piece of land is now part of the land that the Miller family owns, and is part of what is called Tract 1 of the original Adam Kerchner land. I'm not sure of the reason for this transaction. I speculate that Peter Faust bought this small piece of land to possibly provide a better access point from the road to his property on which the house and barn is located. Or maybe it was done to settle a minor border line dispute. Source: The 1883 deed between John Nuss and his wife and Peter Faust.

Tract #1 Created:

1883 Apr 27: Tract 1 created by subdividing off some of the land owned by Peter Faust. George W. Snyder buys 9 acres and 114 perches as a building lot from Peter Faust and his wife Amanda (nee Kerchner). Sources: Personal meeting with Brian Miller and his wife at their home on this tract in April 2022; various deed copies and emails received from Brian Miller Apr 2022. Research note: This land sale by Peter Faust created what we call in this timeline Tract 1 of the Adam Kerchner land. Later this track and two other tracks were combined back together by John A. Whitenight, Jr. in 1994, after John Jr. gained ownership of the land from his father. See the 1994 entry in this timeline.

1886: Peter Faust and his wife Sarah “Amanda” (nee Kerchner) who was the 2nd great-granddaughter of the immigrant Adam Kerchner, erected a Creamery building near the former furnace location which was near the bend in Salem Bible Church Road before the road crosses the east branch of the Perkiomen Creek. Much of the stone used to build the Creamery building was salvaged from the old furnace stack and cast house. There was also a stocking factory on the second floor of the Creamery building. Sources: History of Lehigh Co PA, Roberts, pub. 1914, Vol.1, page 788, Sigmund Furnace article (this article wrongly states the Creamery was built in 1900 by Peter Faust, Jr.); The book A History of Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh Co PA, by their U.S. Bicentennial Committee, 1st Edition, pub.1976, page 170, Hampton Furnace article, in which it correctly detailed the building of the Creamery in 1886 by Peter J. and Amanda Faust at the furnace location and land owned by them; Kerchner and Faust Families genealogy research by Charles F. Kerchner, Jr. Research note: Even though the Creamery was in Upper Milford Township, not in Lower Macungie Township, I believe the article was included in that history since Peter Faust’s wife Sarah “Amanda” Kerchner was a native of Lower Macungie Township and the business served many customers in Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh Co PA. Research note: Peter Faust died in Nov 1900.

1893 Mar 25: Joseph Fromm buys the 9+ acre Tract 1 land with the house and buildings on it from George and Eliza Snyder. Source: Brian Miller email dated 10 Apr 2022.

1928 May 14: John A. Whitenight, Sr. buys the 9+ acres Tract 1 land with the house and buildings from Joseph and Hanna Fromm (deed transferred for \$1). Source: Brian Miller email dated 10 Apr 2022.

Tract #2:

1938 Feb 03 John A. Whitenight, Sr., and wife Lula, buy Tract 2, a large part of the previously sub-divided and broken up original Adam Kerchner 50+ acre tract, from Samuel M. Herman and Helena C. Herman and unifying the ownership of it to the land with the home and buildings on it, i.e., Tract 1. The previous owner of Tract 2 was the Travelers Building and Loan Association. The property description for this Tract 2 said it was being conveyed to Whitenight “less and excepting” a 2.7 acre tract (containing a residence) and 3 acres north of it. Source: Brian Miller email dated 10 Apr 2022. Research note: At this time I do not know how that building and loan association got ownership. Maybe they obtained ownership via a mortgage payments default and foreclosure action during the great depression and then subsequently sold it to Samuel and Helena Herman.

Tract #3:

1908 Mar 23: Charles E. Delong buys Tract 3 from Charles A. and Amanda Dierolf, et al. The deed included other property on Tollgate Road and noted this property being next to lands of Peter Faust (Jr.). Also being a part of the same premises that Sarah L. Kemmerer, the widow of Daniel W. Kemmerer who died in 1886, by her indenture of her marriage contract did convey her land onto Charles A. Dierolf on Oct 27th 1887. Sources: Brian Miller email dated 10 Apr 2022 and genealogy research done by myself. My research notes: Sarah L. (nee Siesholtz) Kemmerer Dierolf (1842-1904) in 1887 was the widow of Daniel W. Kemmerer (1821-1886). In 1887 she remarried to Charles A. Dierolf. Sarah died in 1904 and is buried alongside her first husband Daniel W. Kemmerer at the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Cemetery in Old Zionsville PA. I also researched the genealogy of this Charles E. Delong since I have Delong family ancestry in my mother's family tree. I have more data on him in my genealogy database. Charles E. Delong was married to Minnie C. (nee Druckenmiller aka Truckenmiller). The Truckenmiller family is also an early settler and nearby family in this mountainous area who intermarried with some of Adam Kerchner's descendants.

1950 May 17: John A. Whitenight buys Tract 3 from Minnie Delong (the widow of Charles E. Delong). Sources: Deed Book Volume DBV 739, page 483. Brian J. Miller email dated 10 Apr 2022 and my Delong family genealogy research.

Tracts #1, #2, and #3:

1994 Aug: The ownership of the three tracts was transferred from John A. Whitenight, Sr, to his son John A. Whitenight, Jr. Three deeds were used in this process to convey Tracts 1, 2, and 3 from father to son. Each deed transfer was done for \$1 per country records. The data in the online public county land and tax assessment records fails to denote the (Sr.) and (Jr.) suffixes. Doing that would have helped researchers now and in the future in sorting which of the two same primary named persons, the father and son, were doing the land transactions at various times currently shown online in the county records. Sources: "<http://www.lehighcountry.org>" and telephone conversation on 22 May 2023 with Brian J. Miller and Lehigh County, PA public land record research done by me. Research note: John A. Whitenight, Sr., died in May 1977 and the property ownership was by surviving widow, Lula M. (David) Whitenight from 1977-1999. Source: Online public records searches and genealogy research by me.

1999 Aug 06: The ownership of the three tracts was transferred from John A. Whitenight, Jr., to the John Whitenight Living Trust, with Lisa J. Green (John A. Whitenight, Jr.'s daughter and now married to Brian J. Miller) as the Trustee. Transfer was done for \$1 per country records. Three deeds were combined in this process to convey Tracts 1, 2, and 3 to the living trust as one unified tract. Research note: Johan A. Whitenight, Jr., died 12 Aug 1999.

2019 Jul: Lisa J. Miller (nee Whitenight), the wife of Brian J. Miller, purchased the unified three tracts from the Whitenight Family Trust and estate. The unified track now totals 40.5 acres per Lehigh County, PA online property and tax assessment records. Source: "<http://www.lehighcounty.org>"

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