

# Penn's Manors

## *Their Origin, Location and Number*

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A grant given to William Penn on March 4, 1681, contained several powers to erect manors. The following July 11, he agreed with the "adventurers and purchasers" in England, who were interested in his grant and the settlement of the province on certain "conditions and concessions." The ninth of these was, that "in every one hundred thousand acres, the Governor and Proprietary, by lot, reserveth ten [thousand] to himself which shall lie but in one place." The name of "manor" was given to these portions of reserved land in its genuine legal sense. The nineteenth section of the charter empowered him, "his heirs and alienees, to erect manors, with a court baron and view of frank pledge [or court leet], to be held by themselves, or lords of other manors, and every person erecting such manor, shall grant lands to any person in fee simple, to be held of the said manor so as no further tenures shall be created, but further alienations shall be held of the same lord and his heirs of whom the alien did then before hold."

The proprietaries of Pennsylvania, on September 17, 1735, by letters patent, recorded at Philadelphia in Patent Book Vol. VII, p. 264, granted and conveyed to John Page a large tract of land, which contained 5,165 acres, extending across Tulpehocken Creek into Heidelberg Township. It was surveyed in 1734, "and the said proprietaries do erect the said described tract of land into a manor, and name it the Manor of Plumton, and they do further give and grant to the said John Page, and to his heirs and assigns, full power and authority to erect and constitute within said manor a Court Baron, with all things whatsoever which to a Court Baron do belong." Two of the adjoining land-owners were Wm. Allen and Penn's granddaughter, Gulielma (Wilhelmina) Maria Fell. In 1743, John Page's attorney-in-fact conveyed a part of this manor, 347½ acres, including the privileges of the Court Baron, to Conrad Weiser, Esq. The manor was not held together, and the Court Baron was not established.

A Court Baron, it should be explained, was a court in which a lord exercised his private jurisdiction, usually the court of a manor; and a Court Leet one in which the lord exercised the criminal jurisdiction granted by royal franchise, being a police court of record, presided over by the steward and coordinate with the sheriff's turn, with jurisdiction over affairs of a public nature, and to present offenses and punish offenses below the grade of felony.

At one time, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission planned to mark every prominent manor which the Penns established. The first marker in this project was placed on the Baltimore Pike, a quarter of a mile west of Kennett Square, showing the location of Steyning (Stenning, Stansing) Manor, of 15,500 acres, patented in 1701 by William Penn to his daughter, Laetitia. The Chester County Historical Society cooperated with the Commission in placing this marker, October 23, 1926.

The present Manor Township embraces the original Manor of Conestoga with an additional 8,700 acres on the north to the Columbia Pike bordering East Hempfield, and the ridge on the hills bounding West Hempfield Township.

Springettsbury, the largest of the Penn Manors, contained 64,520 acres, and was located on the west side of the Susquehanna River, reaching to York

(see map on page 24). Later, this manor was resurveyed, and then extended beyond York.

In the Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, Vol. 4, is found a list of seventy-nine manors, many of which are shown in excellent charts. From the list, the following of local interest are described:

<i>Chart No.</i>	<i>Name of Manor</i>	<i>Surveyed for</i>	<i>Year of</i>	<i>No. of Acres</i>	<i>County of</i>
	<b>Hempfield</b>	Proprietaries	1720	2,816	Lancaster
11	<b>Conestoga</b>	William Penn	1717	16,000	Lancaster
23	<b>Freame</b> (On the Swatara Creek.)	Thomas Freame	1741	10,000	Lancaster (now Dauphin or Lebanon)
44	<b>Paxton</b> (On the Susquehanna, beyond John Harris's land, Paxton Creek coursing through it.)	Thomas Penn	1732	1,272	Lancaster (now Dauphin)
	<b>Fell</b> (On Tulpehocken Creek)	Gulielma Fell	1727	10,000	Lancaster (now Berks)
63	<b>Springettsbury</b>	Springett Penn	1722	64,520	Lancaster
			1768	(re-surveyed)	York
	<b>Fagg</b>	Letitia Aubrey	1737	39,250	Chester
32	<b>Letitia Aubrey's</b> (On the Elk River.)	Letitia Aubrey	1737	5,000	Chester
34	<b>Lowther</b> (On the Susquehanna River, opposite Harris's Ferry, and adjoining Peter Chartier's Tract.)	Proprietaries	1764	7,551	Cumberland
35	<b>Maske</b>	Thomas and Richard Penn	1741	43,500	York (now Adams)
	<b>William Penn's</b> (On branches of the Elk River, and near Muddy Run, a branch of the Octoraro Creek.)	Wm. Penn, Jr.	1740	5,000	Chester
	<b>Springton</b> (About the northwest branch of the Brandywine, adjoining Uwchland, Nantmeal and West Caln Townships.)	William Penn	1701	10,000	Chester
69	<b>Tulpehocken</b>	Richard Penn	1765	7,510	Berks
70	<b>Vincent</b> (Opposite Peter's Isle in the Schuylkill, and near French Creeks.)	Vincent, Cox and Thompson	1686	30,000	Chester
	<b>Yorktown</b>	Proprietaries		421	York (part of Springettsbury)