

Rental of One "Pepper Corne"

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

Unique and novel things are contained in the old record books which are carefully treasured in the office of the Recorder of Deeds in the Lancaster county court house. These records contain much that the people of other years desired to have permanently inscribed in public documents, — including deeds, mortgages, agreements, affidavits, charters, etc.

In Book N, page 66, appears an indenture dated June 7th, 1728, "in the first year of the reign of our sovereign Lord George the Second by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc." In this indenture James Philips, of the Northend, within the parish of Tuwill, in the county of Bucks, England, practitioner in physicke, and Elizabeth, his wife, for the sum of five shillings lawful money of Great Britain, sold to Robert Hoar, of Kennett township, Chester county, Pennsylvania, a tract of land containing 250 acres in the Province of Pennsylvania, subject to a quit rent, described in the document as "yielding and paying therefore during the said terme unto the said James Philips and Elizabeth, his wife, their heirs and assigns, the rent of one Pepper Corne at the feast of Saint Michaell, the Archangell, only if the same shall be then lawfully demanded."

The document was "sealed and delivered" in the presence of "Thomas Burton" and "Ri: Toovey". It was not recorded in the local court house until February 20th, 1769, — 41 years later — Edward Shippen being the recorder at that time. It would be interesting to know the reason for this delay.

Attached to the indenture is a replica of three old English documentary six penny tax stamps of the reign of King George the Third.

An interesting feature of this ancient document is the stipulation that the rental of the property, if demanded, shall be one "Pepper Corne." Few people in this modern day know what a pepper corn is; and if they did, it is doubtful whether they would accept it in lieu of rent. Webster describes it as the dried berry of the black pepper plant.



“Pepper corne rent” originated during the Middle Ages. Webster defines it as follows:

“A rent consisting in supplying a certain amount, usually a pound, of black pepper cornes, at stated intervals;” also “a nominal rent in kind operating to keep alive the paramount or dominant title to a property.”

News of the President's Proclamation of Peace by Treaty Ending War of 1812 Received in Lancaster

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ON Saturday, February 11th, 1815, the citizens of Lancaster rejoiced over the news of Jackson's great victory at New Orleans. Ten days later, the announcement of the President's ratification of the treaty of peace was celebrated in the borough with clamorous rejoicings. Business was suspended and the citizens spent the day in celebrating the glorious termination of the war.

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, February 24th, 1815, states:

“The confirmation of the news of Peace having arrived here on Monday night last [February 20th], the following morning was ushered in by the ringing of the bells and the beat of the reveille. All business appeared to be suspended except that of providing transparencies and decorations for the evening's illumination, which was general, and was superior in brilliancy to any we have ever witnessed.”

Wednesday, the day following, was Washington's birthday, and the celebration was continued in honor of the immortal “Father of his Country” by the ringing of bells and display of flags.

The Lancaster Journal states:

“The different volunteer companies paraded and performed many evolutions and firings, in a truly soldier-like manner. They were accompanied by a band of music, composed of gentlemen amateurs. The ringing of bells, the repeated volleys of rifles, musketry and pistols, the variety of music and the shouts of the populace, were calculated to fill the mind with extraordinary emotions.

“An appropriate and excellent oration was delivered in the court house to the Washington Association, pursuant to their request, by Jasper Slaymaker, Esq., after which about 80 members of the Association sat down to an elegant dinner, at the house of Col. Slough [White Swan tavern].