

## Brief of Title to the WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS PROPERTY 1681 to 1879

Excerpted from the brief prepared by the Solicitor for the Centennial and Memorial Association, Col. Theodore W. Bean.

*The Charter of Charles the Second of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c., unto William Penn, Proprietary and Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania.*

*Witness ourself at Westminster the fourth day of March in the three and thirtieth year of our reign, A. D. 1681.*

Patent from **William Penn** unto his daughter **Letitia Penn** for 7800 acres, paying one beaver skin. Recorded in patent book A, Vol. 2, p. 405. 24, October, 1701.

Said Letitia intermarried William Aubrey of London, merchant. Deed, **William Aubrey and Letitia his wife** unto **Sir Archibald Grant** for such parts of the above Tract as remain unsold. Recorded in Book G, Vol. 2, p. 400. 10, July, 1730.

Deed. **Sir Archibald Grant**, to **William Wilkinson**, for the above lands in fee. Recorded in Book G, Vol. 2, p. 405. 10, December, 1735.

Indenture, in partition, between William Wilkinson of Middlesex of the first part, John Thomson of London of the second part, and William Penn, son of the aforesaid William Penn, of the third part, whereby the said **William Wilkinson** granted the above premises unto **William Penn the son** in fee. Recorded in Book G, Vol. 2, p. 412. 22, June, 1736.

Letter of Attorney. The said **William Penn** (the son) authorizes and empowers **James Logan and William Logan** his lawful attorney, jointly and severally, to sell and dispose of the said land or any part thereof unto any person or persons whatsoever, &c. Recorded in Book D, Vol. 2, p. 270. 15, February, 1740-41.

Deed. **James Logan and William Logan** unto **Stephen Evans and Daniel Walker** for 175 acres of the above lands being part of the above large tract called Mount Joy. Recorded in Book G, Vol. 3, p. 97. 3, February, 1741-42.

Deed. **Stephen Evans and Daniel Walker** unto **Isaac Walker** for the above 175 acres in fee of which the within granted premises is part of. 13, December, 1742.

Deed. **Isaac Walker** unto **Stephen Evans, Daniel Walker and Joseph Williams**, one undivided one-third part each in fee. Recorded at Phila., in Book G, Vol. 5, p. 133. 18, December, 1742.

Deed. **Daniel Walker**, et ux. to **Abraham Williams** for the said Daniel Walker's third part of the said 175 acres in fee. 10, February, 1755.

Deed Poll. James Coulter, Esq., Sheriff of Phil'a County, conveys one undivided third part of 175 acres as the **estate of Joseph Williams** unto **John Potts**, in fee. 11, March, 1757.

Deed. Mary Stephens and Abijah Stephens, executors of Stephen Evans, convey the said **Stephen Evans' one-third part** of the 175 acres unto the said **John Potts** in fee. Recorded in Book I, Vol. 6, p. 197. 12, March, 1757.

Deed Poll. James Coulter, Esq., Sheriff of Phila'a County, conveys one undivided one-third part of said 175 acres as the **estate of Abraham Williams** unto the said **John Potts** in fee. 20, February, 1758.

Deed. **John Potts the elder and wife** unto **John Potts the younger**, for the above lands with other lands in fee, 350 acres. Recorded in Book I, Vol. 6, p. 228. 24, March, 1768.

Deed. **John Potts the younger and wife** unto **John Potts, the elder**, for part of the above Tract and Grist and Saw Mill in fee. Recorded in Book I, Vol. 6, p. 230. 25, March, 1768.

Deed. Indorsed **John Potts the elder et ux.**, unto **Joseph Potts** for the Grist Mill, Saw Mill, land and premises granted him by the said John Potts the younger to hold him the said Joseph Potts in fee. Recorded in Book I, Vol. 6, p. 231. 20, May, 1768.

Deed. **Joseph Potts** to **Isaac Potts** for two Tracts of land. Grist Mill and Saw Mill, not recorded. 30, September, 1773.

Deed. **Isaac Potts and wife** to **Norris Jones** for three-eighths of 105 acres. Recorded in Deed Book, No. 65, p. 59. 31, December, 1784.

Deed. **Isaac Potts and wife** to **Benj. Rowland** for one-eighth of 105 acres. Recorded in Deed Book No. 65, p. 68. 31, December, 1784.

Deed. **Benj. Rowland and wife** to **Norris Jones** for one-eighth of 105 acres. Recorded in Deed Book No. 65, p. 78. i, September, 1787.

Deed. **Isaac Potts and wife** to **Jacob Paul** for one undivided moiety or equal one-half part of 105 acres. Recorded in Deed Book No. 9, p. 243. 16, December, 1793.

Deed. Joseph L. Thomas, et al., **executors of Norris Jones**, to **Jacob Paul**, for one undivided moiety or equal one-half part of 105 acres. Recorded in Deed Book No. 9, p. 245. i, April, 1795.

Will. **James Jones** to his daughters, **Ann and Hannah nee Ogden**, 2 acres and 4 perches with appurtenances, proven and entered of record in the Register of Wills Office, Norristown, July 30, 1849. 27, February, 1848.

Deed. **Ann Jones** to **Hannah Ogden**, for one undivided moiety of a house and lot of ground containing 2 acres and 31 perches, more or less, at Valley Forge, The Washington Headquarters – not recorded. 23, September, 1850.

Deed. May 1, 1879. **Hannah Ogden** to **William H. Holstein**.

May 1, 1879. Deed of Trust. William H. Holstein to the Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge.

Deed. November 9, 1886. **Wm. H. Holstein and Anna Morris Holstein** to the **Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge**.

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This information can be found on page 14 of an online, archived copy of the History of the Centennial and Memorial Association published in 1911. It is available here...

<https://archive.org/details/historyofcentenn00stag/page/n11>

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NOTE: In addition to William Penn's ownership of the land as granted by King Charles II on March 4, 1681 in payment of a debt owed Penn's father, Admiral Penn, William Penn also purchased it from both the Native Americans and from the Swedes who were already settled there.

ALSO NOTE: The Patriotic Order Sons of America had a prominent part, financially and otherwise, in the preservation of Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge. All the male directors of the Centennial and Memorial Association were members of this order.

## VOCABULARY

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Solicitor    | a lawyer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Proprietor   | legal owner                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Province     | an administrative division or region of a country                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Patent       | an official document that grants official title to an individual                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Deed         | official document detailing a change in ownership of property                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Indenture    | a written contract or agreement between two or more parties                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Tract        | a measured area, especially of land                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Convey       | to transfer ownership of something                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Executor     | someone named to carry out the instructions in a will                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Grist Mill   | a mill for grinding grain                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Partition    | the division of property among interested parties                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Moiety       | a part or share of something divided into two parts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Acre         | a unit of area equal to 4, 840 square yards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Perch        | a unit of land area measurement in the English system                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Appurtenance | a right, privilege, or property incident to the principal property for purposes such as passage of title, conveyance, or inheritance; an object attached to or a right to be used with land as an incidental benefit but which is necessary to the complete use and enjoyment of the property. |

## QUESTIONS

1. What was Letitia Penn's payment to her father William Penn for the 7,800 acres, including the property where Washington Headquarters is?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What year did William Penn, the son of William Penn the Proprietor, acquire title to the land where Washington's Headquarters is located?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Isaac Potts owned what is now known as Washington's Headquarters from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. John Potts, Isaac Potts' father, acquired his first portion of the property in what year? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Isaac Potts purchased the property from \_\_\_\_\_ .

Interesting Footnote: Letitia's tract was confirmed to her by her father's patent, dated October 23, 1701, in consideration of one "Bever skinn" yearly and "the fatherly love and natural affection I bear to her my said daughter."