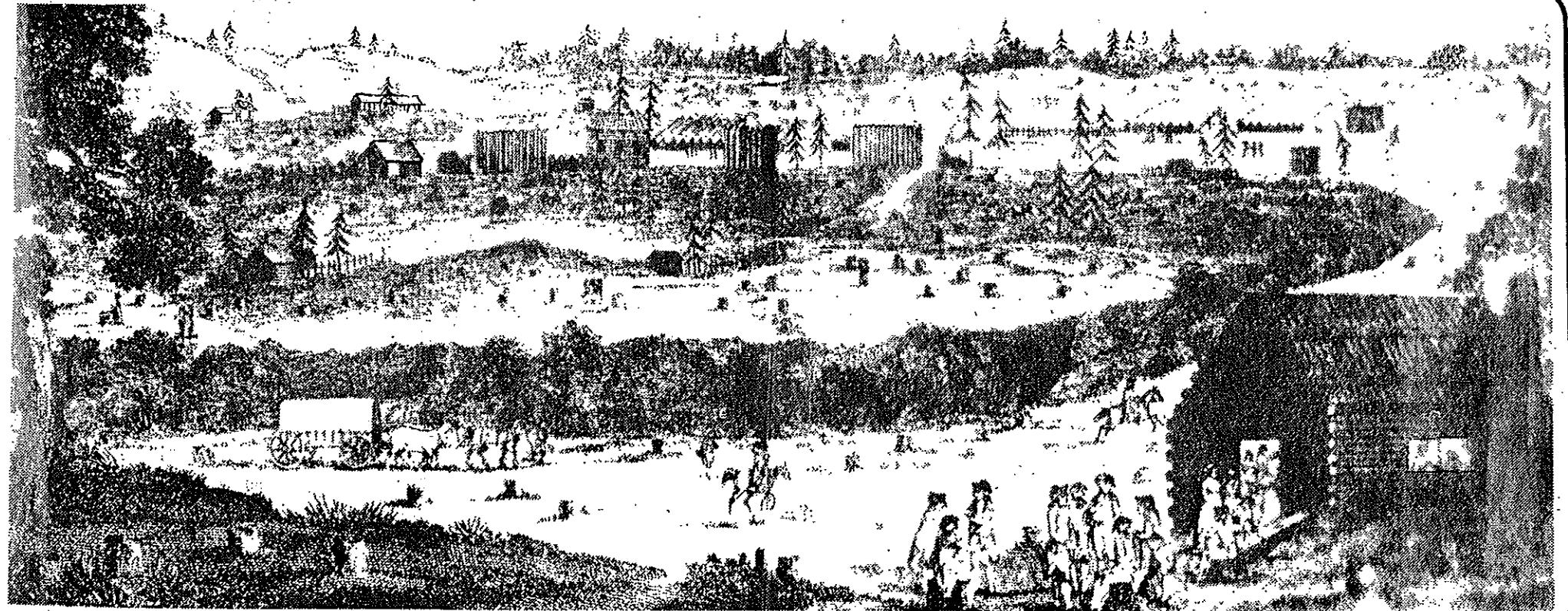


Prison

A British prisoner made this drawing of the Revolutionary prison camp at Charlottesville, Va., from which men of Burgoyne's army were marched to Camp Security near York in 1781. The York layout is believed to have been similar. A contemporary description: "A great number of trees were ordered to be cut down in the woods; these were sharpened at each end, and drove firmly into the earth, very close together, enclosing a space of about two or three acres. American sentinels were placed on the outside of this fence, at convenient distances, in order to prevent our getting out . . . Boards and nails were given to the British in order to make them temporary huts, to secure them from the rain and heat of the sun." The Charlottesville site is now "paved over."



They Want A Peaceful Park Where War Prisoners Once Died

The site of Camp Security, where British and Hessian war prisoners were held in the closing months of the American Revolution, is there for the preservation — if only someone can locate it exactly.

By a quirk of fate, Springettsbury Township's prime historical treasure is still undeveloped farmland lying up the ridge from Stony Brook, south of the old Lincoln Highway, in the southeast corner of the township. Somewhere near Clair Rowe's strong spring west of Locust Grove Road, British and Hessian troops waited out their imprisonment in a strange land far from their homes. An unknown number of them died there, victims of disease which swept their stockades, and are buried on the high slopes that give a long view of York and the hills north and west of the city.

Scott of the York County militia came to mind.

"The Convention Prisoners (troops under British General John Burgoyne captured at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1777) having been unexpectedly ordered into this State, it has been thought proper to station that Body in your City; and it is the Advice of the Council that you mark out some suitable Place, well wooded & watered, for their accommodation, where they may build Huts; which are to be picketed; if within a small Distance of York Towne so much the better . . .," Reed wrote to Scott on June 18, 1781.

The Convention troops, so called because of the arrangements or convention made at Burgoyne's surrender, were no strangers to York County. In '78 Continental troops had escorted Convention troops from Wright's Ferry on the Susquehanna River through York and Hanover



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"I'd like to see it really come to pass," says Dr. George E. Gardner about the possibility of creating a township park in the neighborhood so rich with York County Bicentennial history. "But it can't be put off too long," he warned.

Dr. Gardner is a township supervisor and one of the township officials who hope that a township park, which the Springettsbury comprehensive plan calls for on the upper branches of Kreutz Creek, can be tied to the Camp Security tradition. As development spreads eastward from Penn Oaks, the officials point out, Penn Oaks Park has been outgrown and the "obvious site" would be a long corridor park through the stream valley, they say.

Oldest Inhabited Stream Valley

The Camp Security park, if it comes about, is envisioned as a quiet or "passive" park as opposed to an active recreation facility, a scenic spot where the past can speak to those who would listen. Nothing has been done toward land acquisition. Funds mentioned for the project include those which a developer might pay in, at the rate of \$80 per building lot, or perhaps some future Community Bloc Grant money from the federal government.

There is a lot of the past to speak in this beautiful area of suburban York. The headwaters of Kreutz Creek is the oldest inhabited stream valley in York County. The old Monocacy Road passed through it, carrying settlers westward. In 1777 the Continental Congress used the road on its way to winter in York. Eighty-six years later, Confederate troops marched eastward over the road to the high water mark of their cause at Wrightsville, then fell back to the fateful meeting of the Northern and Southern armies at Gettysburg.

A prospecting party that included Dr. Gardner, Mrs. Rosaleen Hulshart, chairman of Springettsbury Township Parks and Recreation Board, and Charles Lease, York RD 9, a longtime resident of the neighborhood, was recently taken over the area by Rowe, a retired teacher and student of the area's history who has lived since 1944 in the historic Martin and Christina Schultz house, which was built in 1734.

Rowe took his guests first to the great spring up the slope from his house and farm buildings. Gravity flow from the spring provides Rowe's property with water and it is easy to believe, as tradition has it, that the spring was the one which served Camp Security.

Mark Out Some Suitable Place

Following directions Rowe had been given long ago by an old resident of the neighborhood, the party moved upward again about 400 yards. Here, on a flat field, is the spot where oldtimers have told Rowe the main prison stockade stood. Rowe surmises that a separate enclosure for officers was over an embankment on the east side of the spring.

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Notices Posted By Washington

"Wherever the Hessian prisoners passed, the people thronged to see these terrible beings, and they were hooted as hirelings to the trade of blood," records the Gibson History of York County. Some of the accounts of the prisoners' American experiences, which they published later, tell of the scoldings they received from the women

Washington even had to have notices put up through the countryside stating that the prisoners "were innocent of the war and had joined in it not of free will, but through compulsion." In the case of the Hessians, the money was certainly going elsewhere. Back home, the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel was keeping up a splendid court on some \$15 million he had received from the British government for the hire of 20,000 or more soldiers.

Now it was 1781 and the prisoners were being marched back from camps in Maryland and Virginia to keep them at a distance from a British offense that General Charles Cornwallis was mounting from the South. Lt. Scott picked a site four and a half miles east of York Towne in what was then Windsor Township and there "huted" the prisoners on land owned by Daniel Brubaker of Lancaster County.

The camp, according to the old accounts, was enclosed by a picket fence 15 feet high, with the fence made of posts stuck into the ground close together. Inside were the prisoners' huts, perhaps made of logs, perhaps stone. The posts were used afterwards by farmers for rail fencing and Gibson records a few could still be seen in the neighborhood 90 years ago. Essentially, though, Camp Security had all but disappeared only a little more than a century after it was closed in 1783.

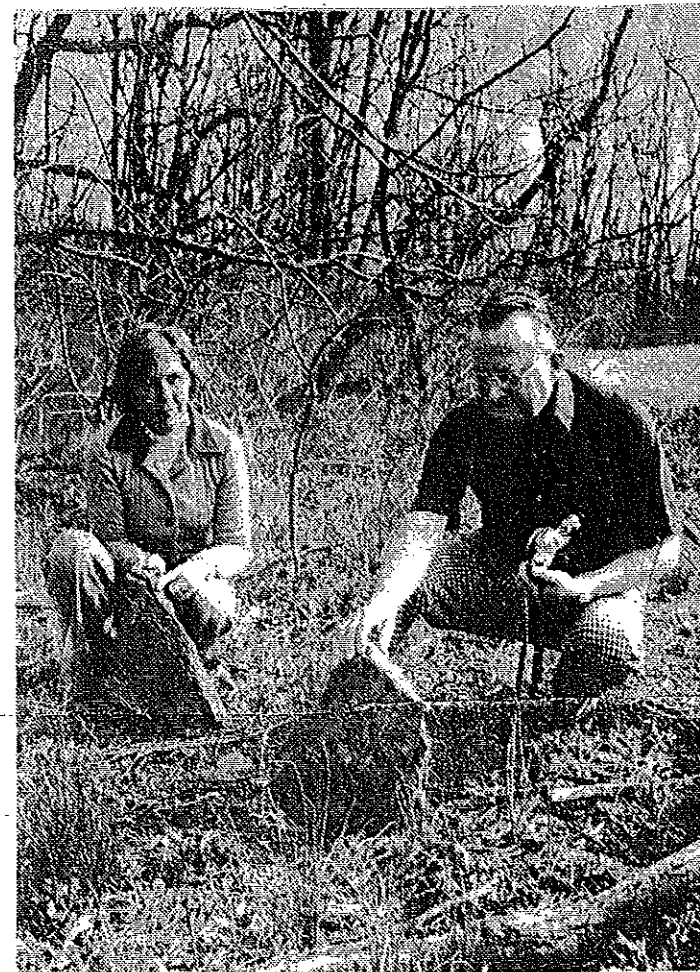
"This historic spot, though very rugged, is now nearly all farmed over, so that it is difficult to identify it unless pointed out by some old citizen of the neighborhood," Gibson wrote.

Grave Markers Identified

There was one adjunct of the camp, however, that was more enduring. That was a camp cemetery, locally called the Hessian burying ground, the remnants of which still existed in the memory of living persons. Charles Lease is one of these persons. As a young man he hunted the high fields, with older residents of the neighborhood and told the recent prospecting group that he could identify the area.

So Rowe and his rugged old station wagon made a run for a still higher area on the John Wiest farm, which lies parallel to Rowe's on the west, to an open farmed area at the top of the ridge, sloping slightly to the east.

It was in this field, Lease said, that there were still a few gravestones standing when he hunted it more than half a century ago. In a few minutes, he located a flat stone in the field and



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British Pennies And Bones Found

The location tallied with a description of the area given by Mrs. Lydia Landis Gable, Mt. Wolf, who lived on the Schultz-Rowe farm as a girl and young woman and remembers walking up to the old Isaac Landis (no relation) farm and seeing some gravestones standing just to the west, "right out the front gate." Mrs. Hulshart, who as a girl on the present Wiest farm, and Lease promptly located the foundation stones of this house and barn, further verifying the location of the cemetery.

(The late Mrs. Grace Kauffman Butler, who lived at 77 N. Keesey St. and who died in February, is on record at the Historical Society of York County as having been shown tombstones of "Hessians" or top of the hill south of the present Wiest house, then belonging to the Kauffman family. According to her account, there were six to 12 rough hewn stones set up "and she picked up English pennies and bones there.")

The "camp fevers" that swept Camp Security and populated the burying ground probably included smallpox, Dr. Gardner remarked. There is a contemporary account by Surgeon's Mate Benjamin Shield of the British Army reporting from York to a superior on Aug. 30, 1781, of the situation at York which indicates some of the prisoners were already ill when they got to the camp.



Hillside Spring

Clair Rowe tests the strong flow from the hillside spring which supplies his gravity flow water system, just as it probably did when Martin and Christina Schultz built their fine stone house, now the Rowe residence, in 1734. By tradition, it is this extraordinary spring around which the prison camp was laid out. (Record Photo)

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Andrew Anderson, a veteran of the Revolution who did guard duty at Camp Security in late 1781, has recollections of this time recorded in his federal pension file. "Many of the prisoners died of a complaint which seemed to affect only the prisoners but not the Americans, nor did the disease spread," as he remembered it. "The soldiers recalled that for some weeks at a time, they had nothing to eat but flour; no meat for several weeks at a time."

The prisoners, besides raising their own food, were sometimes allowed passes to go into the surrounding countryside. Sgt. Lamb of the Welsh Fusiliers commented on this in his journal, stating that the troops at "Little York" were confined to the "pen" portion of the camp, while about 200 yards away "a small village had been built by the remains of General Burgoyne's Army, who were allowed before great privileges with respect to their liberty in this country."

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traces of carbon and bones remaining.

From one such location, the outline of the stockade should be easily located, this historian said, because it would have been laid out in military fashion with an estimated 40 huts housing 12 persons each and arranged in four rooms of 10.

Campbell concurred with the merit of local handed-down accounts that the prisoners lived close to a good spring like the one on the Clair Rowe farm.

Camp Security is not historically unique, he said, since it was one of several such encampments. Others were located at Lancaster, Carlisle, Frederick, Md., and Charlottesville, Virginia. None of the other sites has been preserved.

"There's the possibility of locating it," Campbell said. "There should be some effort made to locate it precisely."



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Some 40 men, women and children (some prisoners had families accompanying them) already had died when Shield made his report. "The Men had laid the foundation for an Hospital," he wrote, "but falling Sick so fast there was not Men enough to attend the Sick." There was not enough medicine to go around, either.

Americans Didn't Get The Disease

Shield's account continued:

"I assure you it is a distressing situation and I have often been at a loss to distinguish which most deserved to be lamented by their Country in whose cause they have and are still hourly suffering, the sickening, the dying, or the Dead, but surely much pity and compassion are due from it, towards the relief of a many poor men, now here, who have been at the very jaws of Death, and yet live in hourly dread of falling a sacrifice to this infernal distemper, after having escaped perhaps three or four times, through a most excruciating, and lingering sickness: there is now in Camp a shocking instance of the distracted state of mind accompanying these poor men in their sickness of a man who is delirium Cut of (sic) the Head of his own Child with an axe He belongs to the Canada Companies, is now recover'd, and is thoroughly sensible of his own Wretchedness... I thought it a duty incumbent on

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130 Acres Of Woodland Cut

Sgt. Lamb recorded that some prisoners employed themselves making lace, buckles and spoons "and exercising other mechanical trades which they had learned during their captivity" and that "they had very great liberty from the Americans and were allowed to go round the country and sell their goods...."

Daniel Brubaker, whose "plantation" at Kreutz Creek had been taken for the camp, petitioned the state and Continental Army in December of 1781 in a formal document in which he averred that his 280 acres were being sadly misused. In addition to 100 acres already cleared, he said, another 30 acres of woodland had been cut for the stockades and huts; and that the guards had used and destroyed his rail fences, ruining the tenant's Indian corn crop and pastures.

Brubaker — or his lawyer — was philosophic, stating that he did not blame the colonel in charge, conceded that "A participation of the Common Burthens of Government must be the

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Tell Them What You Know

A history of Springettsbury Township as remembered by its residents is being planned by Mrs. Rosaleen Hulshart, who heads the Springettsbury Township Parks and Recreation Board.

The idea was born as a project for Golden Age groups, and Mrs. Hulshart especially hopes for their help in gathering the records and reminiscences of persons who live in the township, used to live there or have family ties to the area.

"There's a lot of good old history here — and a lot of it has vanished," Mrs. Hulshart said in expressing her intention to put the project in motion this year.

Records, pictures, artifacts and just memories of township places and people of other days are wanted for the record of this historically important township, where the oldest York County residence, the Schultz House, is still serving its purpose. Many other landmark buildings are in Mrs. Hulshart's "vanished" history and need to be recorded in the words of persons who remember them.

Persons who would like to help, or have information to contribute, can get in touch with Mrs. Hulshart at 4000 Old Orchard Rd. Her telephone number is 755-5334.

Find The Fireplace First

J. Duncan Campbell, director of the state's William Penn Memorial Museum, at Harrisburg, thinks the site of old Camp Security could be located precisely and he says the effort to do so should be made.

Several years ago, Campbell was among historians who made an attempt to pinpoint the camp site through scientific techniques of their profession. Aerial photos were taken and walking tours made. As recalled by John Heisey, a Yorker then on the staff of the Historical Society of York County staff, the search was dropped before it was carried to the point of archaeological probing.

Campbell said that the best way to determine the location of the stockade would be to find the evidence of a fireplace site. Unless the land has eroded badly in the nearly two centuries since the imprisoned British and Hessians lighted their campfires, he explained, there would be