



July 2021

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Society to visit house made from barn Thursday, July 29, 2021.



The Mottier Barn as it appeared on East Middle Road



Bill and Deby Macecevic have permitted the Historical Society to hold an open house of their barn-turned into a home. The Macecevic's have put together a video presentation on how they decided, planned and carried out this beautiful transformation of the 1890 Mottier barn to an attractive home on Buffalo Road 1 ¼ mile east of town. It will show how the barn was disassembled piece by piece from its original location behind the Mottier home on East Middle Road. Each piece was numbered so the barn could be rebuilt at its new location and converted into a house.

The event happens **July 29th from 5:00 to 9:00 PM**. The house is located at 11800 East Main Road. There will be a sign at the driveway. Come and meet Bill and Deby and welcome them to our town. Refreshments will be served. **Please RSVP to wagsicx@gmail.com with a name and number of people in your party by July 25th.**



The Macecevic home today

We are indebted to former North East teacher Beth Simmons for the following story of some of North East's earliest settlers.

**Pennsylvania: The Wild West - The Lowry Land Wars, July 1797,
16-Mile Creek (Freeport), Erie Township, Allegheny County, PA**

Excerpted from trial testimony taken in Pittsburgh in September, 1797, thanks to Mike Tarazski in CA and from Judah Colt's journal, thanks to Liz Peretz in London.

By Beth Evans Simmons

After Anthony Wayne's armed forces performed their superior sabering skills at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in September of 1794, the Natives changed their tune and signed treaties to allow settlers. That opened the way for the Pennsylvania Population Company to finally occupy the land they had purchased in the "Triangle," which now encompasses the northern part of Erie County, Pennsylvania. Every stream was a potential power source and some, like French Creek, were navigable by flat boat to Pittsburgh and from there to the Mississippi. Plus, of course, there were the waves of Lake Erie waters to Buffalo and Detroit.

However, there was someone there first! George Lowry and his family and their families had settled (squatted) on 400 acres of land at the mouth of 16-Mile Creek in northeastern Erie County, Pennsylvania, as early as 1795, and his mother Margaret settled 2,800 acres, 2,000 for which they paid the state (Bates, p. 724).

As an agent of the Company, Judah Colt was assigned to sell and settle the eastern portion of the Triangle. He chose the divide for his 9-Mile station (now called Colt's Station) between French Creek and the streams into lake shore, including 16-Mile Creek at what is now called Freeport. But the Lowry's were there already, having claimed the land in 1795. Judah Colt's men were under orders not to commit any violence. As an agent of the Company, Colt was in a position to evict squatters, but instead had offered the Lowry's terms to let them live in peace and harmony. As the building went on, if they would build a sawmill, he would let them have the mill irons and sawblade and take pay for it in boards.

On July 24, 1797, one of Colt's men, working for Colt for the Population Company while out at the "Station,"

Nathaniel Bunn, received information that the Lowry's were cutting down timber and filling up the Company's road. Mr. Davis, another of Colt's hired men, offered to go and prevent the Lowry's from obstructing the road. Eight others agreed to go with Davis to clear out the road. About two miles from the lake they saw James Lowry with others building a fence across the road. Lowry said that "Judah Colt should never have any of his goods or provisions hauled through his land! It was his land and he had strength enough to prevent Judah Colt's carrying any provisions across their lands."

The same day, Eliphabet Beebe, whose main task was to build ships, and Henry Brevort were chopping some timber on a tract of land the Lowry's claimed at the mouth of the 16-mile Creek for a sloop, the Washington, that Beebe was building for Colt. James Lowry and a boy came to them. Lowry said "you had better not cut anymore. Whatever you do in the daytime, I will destroy in the night." He then passed on toward his house.

Jack, Colt's cook boy who was at the lakeside tent, blew the conch shell horn which was a warning that something was the matter down at the lake. Brevort started off. When he down got to where Judah Colt's storehouse was being erected, he saw settlers Robert Lowry, William Brisby, and Joseph and John Dundas at the storehouse throwing down the logs and chopping them. Brevort came running down and jumped onto the storehouse and told Robert Lowry not to chop, but Lowry persisted. After Brevort picked up a stick but threw it away as inadequate, he took hold of Robert Lowry's axe to prevent more destruction; in the scuffle they both fell inside the storehouse. When Lowry was going off the timber, he gave several strokes with his axe at it. When Lowry got up, he and William Brisby mounted one of the hewed logs and started chopping it.

Eliphalet Beebe had charge of the Population Company storehouse at Freeport. He came running with gun in hand. He got on the logs and fired the gun off above everyone's head. A considerable altercation took place between Beebe and Robert Lowry. Beebe said that if he wanted to clear him of the law, he would "whip him," upon which Lowry said he would rather lose ten toes if he could strike him, for that was all he wanted. As soon as Beebe had fired off his gun, James Lowry came to the storehouse with a double-barreled rifle in his hand and pointed it to Beebe's back. Beebe jumped down off the house. James Lowry pointed the muzzle of his gun at Beebe's breast and swore that he would "Blow him through." Beebe told Lowry to "Fire away and be damned," and opened his jacket to him. James Lowry then struck Beebe with the rifle on his hip. The blow kept Beebe in bed a few days.

When William Scott, another of Colt's men, got onto the storehouse, Joseph Dundas shoved a gun at him and told him he would shoot him through if he did not come down. As Scott was coming out of the storehouse, James Lowry struck him with his rifle on the leg. Lowry also made an attempt to strike Beebe, but Scott fended off the blow. Beebe told Brevort to throw the ax at James Lowry and also told Scott to throw his ax at Lowry. Lowry called Beebe "a damned rascal" and swore he would shoot him for "one farthing." Robert Lowry stepped up to Brevort's left with his ax in hand and either Brisby or Dundas upon his right and swore they would knock Brevort's brains out if he stirred a step. When Brevort told the Lowry's and Dundases not to destroy the storehouse, John Dundas ran toward James Lowry's house and came back with a smooth bore gun, hollering, "Take care! Let me shoot the damned rascal!" About this time Lowry attempted to strike Scott over the head, but Scott received the blow on his arm.

In his usual subdued style, Judah Colt called the 20th "a most unpleasant day."

July 21st was no better. A number of Colt's men went down to rebuild the storehouse which had been pulled down by the Lowry's and Dundases. Henry Brevort said that when his party of workers had laid up a few logs for the storehouse, George Lowry, John Lowry, Morrow Lowry, one other Lowry and one of the Burrows, came and began to throw the logs down again. They got into the storehouse and swore they had possession; no logs should be laid up.

Judah Colt then ordered them out. They swore they would not go out. He told them if they would not go out, he would throw them out. Then Colt, with two others, took hold of John Lowry and threw him out upon which said Lowry hollered out. James Lowry ran from his house with three unsheathed swords about three feet long, and handed them to Morrow, John and the other Lowry. They swore they would kill any of Colt's party if they would come near them.

At this point, John Barron Esquire, a justice of the peace for Allegheny County who happened to be visiting Colt to buy some land, demanded peace. He repeated his order. But the armed men continued to repeat that they would

“take the lives of Colt’s party and Thomas Collins, the lawyer.”

Four days later on the 25th, Barron, the JP, issued a warrant for assault and battery against the Lowry’s. An altercation ensued in which even Barron was threatened and assaulted! Barron got up on the logs of the house and demanded the peace several times, without any effect. Thomas Collins Esquire, the Population Company’s attorney, come forward with a pistol in his hand and ordered the rioters to desist. After Collins got up on the house, which was then about five logs high, he swore he would shoot the first man that would strike a blow. Finally, the Lowry’s acquiesced. Before leaving for Pittsburgh to court, James Lowry and other prisoners asked to go (under guard) to their house to put on clean clothes. After a while, James Lowry came back with women (the four Lowry women were all Barr sisters!) and guns in each hand. Lowry swore that “they would die before they would permit the storehouse to be built,” “that they would kill any man that would attempt it.” Two of the Lowry’s were inside the storehouse with drawn swords, one of the Lowry’s being stripped to his buff. They swore they would kill any man that came to hinder them; they were also pulling down the timber that Judah Colt’s men had raised.

During the third “tedious, riotous day” on July 28th, a scuffle ensued when the prisoners, including women, resisted getting into the boat in the evening, with the provisions, to go to Erie and then on to Pittsburgh. Finally boarded, on the passage to Erie, James Lowry said, “There would be lives lost that night at the mouth of the 16-Mile Creek.” But fortunately, there weren’t.

It was September 8th before the trial was brought in front of JP Barron in Pittsburgh. Ennion Williams, a surveyor who was another Allegheny County JP, heard JP John Barron’s testimony. The case finally ended in the Supreme Court with the decision made in favor of the Population Company (Bates, p. 724; Nelson’s, p. 112). John Lowry, having to leave his beautiful land at what we now call Freeport, was so angry that he hung himself. Many of the disgruntled family moved east to Chautauqua County, NY, where they became prominent businessmen, owned water-powered mills or stores, or they moved south to join Hugh Lowry’s clan in Clarion County. Having purchased property from Thomas Rees, another Population Company agent, the Wilson’s (Mrs. Wilson was a Lowry) stayed in Harbor Creek at the corner of Davison and Buffalo Roads and James Barr and his Lowry wife appear on the early township road book at the corner of Davison and Side Hill Roads. Margaret Lowry’s children and grandchildren - future shopkeepers, lumbermen, lawyers, and congressmen- surrounded her in when she died in Mayville, NY, in 1812. Eventually one Lowry, Morrow (the Illrd), was even elected senator to the very legislature that had created the hassle for their grandmother and great uncles!

References:

Bates, Samuel, 1885, History of Erie County: [History of Erie county, Pennsylvania : Bates, Samuel P. \(Samuel Penniman\), 1827-1902 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

Nelson, John, 1896, Biographical Dictionary of Erie County: [Nelson's biographical dictionary and historical reference book of Erie County, Pennsylvania : containing a condensed history of Pennsylvania, of Erie County, and of the several cities, boroughs and townships in the county also portraits and biographies of the governor's since 1790, and of numerous representative citizens : Whitman, Benjamin, 1840- : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)