

Sheepskin deeds date Manorfield Farm to 1761

COLUMBIA — Manorfield Farm is situated along a bend on a quiet country road in both Manor and West Hempfield townships. The farm is owned by seventh-generation Shellenbergers whose forefathers arrived in Philadelphia on September

30, 1727, according to a ship's list.

Charles Shellenberger and his wife Mary live on the farm, but it is jointly owned by Charles, his brother John, of Carlisle, and Robert, who is in the Peace Corp in Thailand

Charles and Mary are the keepers of the records, which include original sheepskin deeds from Richard and Thomas Penn, sons of William Penn, for 109 acres in 1761 Shellenberger notes that the deed states that the price paid was a half-penny sterling per acre annually. The number of years is not indicated.

Mary is not awed by the history which the farm represents because she knows that her family landed by ship on October 2,

1727, also in Philadelphia. Her family came from the Palatinate and now lives in Donegal, although she was born in Manor Township

The present farm consists of 138 acres, and is crop farmed in corn and tobacco, with a few sheep being raised. The farm, according to Shellenberger had always been a crop and general farm. He says, "It was in general farming until my father went into the dairy business. I can remember feeding hogs"



Mary and Charles Shellenberger examine sheepskin deed which has been in family for seven generations.

Since 1930, his father and mother had had a herd of Jersey cows, which was sold after 50 years when a decision about modernization of facilities had to be made

Charles credits his father, D Lehman Shellenberger, with making the farm into a progressive, modern farm. He notes, "He did a lot with soil conservation, using contouring and adding diversion ditches. He was also active in Farm Bureau and Extension He was very progressive - more than any before him"

There are actually two deeds available, one for Manorfield and one for an adjoining property which was the first purchased by the Shellenbergers when they settled here. The deed to the neighboring land was dated 1748, and the Shellenbergers have found a note from 1750, stating that 30 shillings were paid for a

survey of the property in Hempfield Township.

The Shellenbergers hailed from the Canton of Uri in Switzerland which is now part of Lechtenstein, and there is a "Shellenberger" coat of arms, complete with a history of the Shellenberger family from the Middle Ages. Mary points out that there is a town of Shellenberger and a Mt Shellenberger in the present country of Lechtenstein

Ulrich was the original Shellenberger in this country, and the farm was passed down by the male heirs through seven generations. The main farm house was built in 1859, and the barn in 1846. There is a tobacco shed which is believed to have been built earlier, but no original buildings survive. A nephew, Robert, lives in the main farm house.

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Manorfield Farm, named because of its location in both Manor and West Hempfield townships, has large farmhouse dating to 1859.

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