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SIMON HELLER 1721 - 1785

Heller's Tavern, Wind Gap, Pa.

Simon Heller was born on 18 June 1721 in Petersheim, Germany, on the Rhine River; died in Northampton County, Pa. on 20 May 1785. He married in 1744 Louisa Deitz, born 12 June 1726. She died in 1768.

At the age of 17 years, Simon Heller came from Germany on the ship "Winter Galley" with his father Christopher Heller, arriving at Philadelphia on 5 September 1738. By 1742 the family had settled on 176 acres of land known as "Delay", in Lower Saucon Township, Northampton County, Pa., south of what is now Bethlehem. The areas today known as Hellertown.

In 1746 Simon started accumulating land of his own and by 1763 had 215 acres and had acquired a wife and 12 children. At this time he sold his land and relocated about 20 miles to the north in Plainfield Township, purchasing 600 acres upon which was located a hotel. The hotel came to be known as Heller's Tavern.

Simon was a prime mover in the organizing of the Plainfield Reformed Congregation and the principal man on the board of viewers to lay out the road from Easton to Wyoming. This road came to be known as Sullivan's Trail after the General used the route on his march northward against the six allied nations of Indians, British and Tories in 1778-9.

While Simon Heller lived in his hotel-tavern there were four more children born and his wife Louisa died after having had 16 children. Simon took a second wife and when he decided to move again, he deeded the land and hotel-tavern to his son Jacob. Since colonial times the tavern has changed hands several times and is presently no longer used as a public house although the unpretentious building still stands.

When Simon moved he went northward, over the Blue Mountains to Hamilton Township which is now in Monroe County. It was here, on a plantation of 500 acres that he spent his last days and died on 20 May 1785, just short of his 64th birthday.

-by Richard Carl Schlenker

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