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DANIEL LEVAN, JR.

Tavernkeeper, Berks County, Pennsylvania, by 1765

DANIEL LEVAN, JR., son of Daniel and Marie (Beau) LeVan, settled in Maxatawny Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, approximately one mile from his brother Jacob. There he built his stone homestead just over the hill from the present eastern terminus of Kutztown, and beside the unimproved highway that ran from Reading to Easton, Pennsylvania. In 1755 this road was improved by order of the court after petition of thirty citizens of Berks and Northampton Counties, among whom were Daniel and Jacob LeVan. There he set up in business as a proprietor of what is said to be the oldest hostelry in the eastern part of Berks County. Traffic soon grew to such a volume that Daniel enlarged his original homestead, built probably as early as 1740, so that by 1765, it was nearly double its original size. In one of the longest and most explicit wills imaginable, Daniel left his property to his son, Daniel (III). In 1788, the property came into the possession of Susanna LeVan Kemp and her husband, Capt. George Kemp, who served in the American Revolution. Capt. Kemp conducted the business for 52 years, and it is still owned by Kemp descendants today.

In 1775, some of the first defenders of the nation-to-be marched from Reading to Cambridge over the road that passes immediately in front of the LeVan Tavern, now known as the Kemp Hotel. At the approach of Howe's army, the Continental Congress, in session at Philadelphia, adjourned precipitously on September 18, 1777 to meet in Lancaster, making their journey thence by way of Bethlehem, Allentown, Kutztown and Reading. John Adams, in his diary, mentioned stopping overnight at the LeVan Tavern. On the evening of November 12, 1777, there was a group of half a dozen men at LeVan's whose conversation one might wish had been more fully reported. Among them was the Hon. William Ellery, a Signer of the *Declaration of Independence* and a member of the Continental Congress. From Adams' diary under that date, we learn "from thence to LeVan's about 15 miles from Snell's, where we lodged. Here we met Col. John Brown and four other New England Men. Brown gave us an account of his expedition to Ticonderoga and of the Mode of Surrendry of the Vaunting Burgoyne."

The Taverner, Daniel LeVan, Jr. was born about 1709 and died in the year 1777, leaving a wife Susan and eight children, viz': Peter, Barbara (Mrs. Peter Reeser), Catharine, Mary (Mrs. John Siegfried), Susanna (Mrs. George Kempf), Magdalena, Margaret and Daniel.*

Additional Bibliography

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Richard H. Breithaupt, Jr., #92-19

* Ammon Stapleton, *Memorials of the Huguenots in America...* (Carlisle, PA: Huguenot Pub. Co., 1901), p. 69, n. I.