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Rural Fairfield Property Histories

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Rural Fairfield Property Histories

Abstract

Each lot history give the original lot number, original owner, the current address, the owner of the lot in 1860, a description of the lot or dwelling in 1860, a recital of ownership with as much detail as is known, a comprehensive lot history, any known residents in 1860 (may be different than lot owner), and any family notes on any residents mentioned in the lot history. The research is comprehensive, but not necessarily exhaustive. Thorough information for all lots was not always available to the researcher.

Keywords

Adams County Historical Society, ACHS, Adams County, Pennsylvania History, Fairfield, Town Lots

Outlying Properties

Outlying Lot A: Daniel Musselman Farm. **Current Address:** 203 East Main Street. **Description:** Two-story, brick, dwelling-house. **1860 Owner:** Daniel Musselman. **Recital:** Charles Carroll to Andrew Hart, December 19, 1755; Heirs of Andrew Hart, by 1787; James Brice, Sr., August 26, 1793; James Brice, Jr., May 31, 1798; Frederick Myers, April 2, 1801; Reverend William Paxton, March 1, 1809; James Dunlop Paxton; May 7, 1845; Daniel Musselman; November 10, 1854.

History of the Lot: The Musselman property was adjacent to Miller's original 247 acre tract of land and never owned by the latter's family. In 1809, the farm at the property was purchased by Reverend William Paxton, the Presbyterian Minister for many years at the Lower Marsh Creek Presbyterian Church. In 1845 the property was purchased by one his sons, James Dunlop Paxton, and during his ownership a terrible fire destroyed the original home. According to the *Gettysburg Star and Banner* of September 29, 1848: "It is with feelings of the deepest regret, that we announce the total destruction, by fire, on Friday last, of the large brick residence of Col. James D. Paxton, at the east end of Millerstown, in this county, and for many years the residence of the venerated Rev. Dr. Paxton. The roof took fire from a spark from the kitchen chimney, and before it was discovered, had made such progress, as to render any attempt to save it entirely fruitless. The Colonel was in Gettysburg at the time, with many other citizens of Millerstown, and none but his aged mother [Jane Dunlop Paxton] and his wife [Sallie Slemmons Paxton] were in the house at the time." It is not clear whether the house was entirely rebuilt, or if some of the original structure is still retained in the modern house, but in 1854 the property was the property of about 100 acres was sold to Daniel Musselman. Among the joiners listed in that early deed were Maria Loudon and the Presbyterian and Reformed Church. It is evident that at this time there were no houses between the Musselman Farm and the above described properties. As well, no houses are shown between those structures on the 1858 map. About 1864, Daniel Musselman encountered some financial difficulties, and his land was assigned to Jacob Musselman and George W. Wortz. Shortly after, portions of the farm were subdivided into building lots,

and as time passed they were slowly improved and sold off. Speaking of these improvements to Fairfield, the 1886 *History of Adams County* specifically mentions George W. Wortz as “adding largely to its growth and prosperity,” being responsible or partly responsible for “twenty-eight houses in the town.” The development of the eastern edge of Fairfield along Main Street, Water Street and Centennial Street (on what was the Musselman Farm) greatly increased the size and population of the town, between the time of the American Civil War and the official incorporation of the borough in 1897. These post-civil war properties are beyond the scope of this study, but in conducting the research for the early lots of Fairfield, the histories of many of these later properties were uncovered and placed in the files of the Adams County Historical Society.

1860 Residents: Daniel Musselman (1826); Sarah H. Wortz Musselman (July 4, 1833-- 1903); Agnes Musselman (1856); Louisa E. Musselman (1858); Clayton M. Musselman (1860).

Family Notes: Captain John Paxton, only child of John and Grazell Paxton, was born in Ireland, apparently in 1736. He came with his parents to Bart Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1740. This family was among those who did not move on to Virginia but chose to stay in Pennsylvania. John married Jane McNeely, about 1759. She died in 1823. During the Revolutionary War, a battalion was newly raised in the vicinity of his home. John was elected, by ballot, Captain of Company D, 2nd Battalion, York County Militia. Among other engagements, the Battalion participated in the battle of Brandywine and of Germantown. Captain John was severely wounded in the latter battle. After the war he returned to his mill. John and Jane had several children. Reverend William Paxton was the first (April 1, 1780-April 16, 1845). “On January 20, 1794 he married Jane Dunlop who died in 1862. He was ordained October 3, 1792 and served two Presbyterian Congregations -- Lower Marsh Creek and Tom’s Creek -- for 49 years. They had 6 daughters and 2 sons: John and James. John had at least 1 son, William who was thought to be a professor at Princeton....” Other children included: Dr. John Paxton, who married Sallie Slemmons; James Paxton [see lot 1E]; Grace Paxton, who married John Coughy; Jane Paxton, who married Joseph McGinley; Mary Paxton; and Samuel Paxton, who married Martha Kerr

Civil War Notes: Daniel Musselman had a horse taken during J.E.B. Stuart's Raid and was a witness for Daniel Mickley in his claim for the loss of a horse that day.

Sources: Frederick County Deed Book, F-956, O-394; YCDB II-544, 2N-332; ACDB C-406; Civil War Border Claims Files, Daniel Mickley, PHMC; "Fire," *Star and Banner*, September 29, 1848; "More about the family of the Rev. Dr. William Paxton," *Gettysburg Times*, March 8, 1963; Lillian and Walton Leedy, *The Samuel J. Paxton Family History*; Paxton Family File, ACHS; H. C. Bradsby, *1886 History of Adams County*, Reprint (Knightstown, Ind.: The Bookmark, 1992).

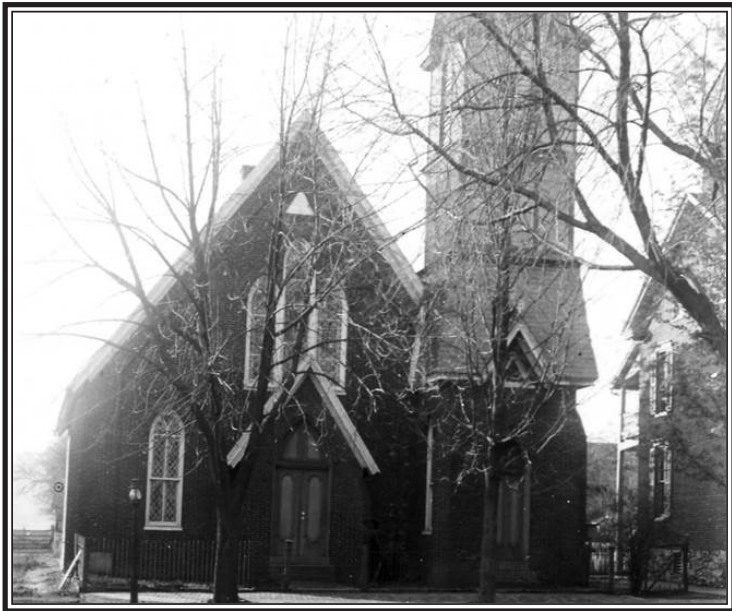
Outlying Lot B: Saint John's German Reformed Church. **Current Address:** No current address. **1860 Owner:** Congregations of the Presbyterian and German Reformed Congregations. **Description:** Large brick structure, no longer standing. **Recital:** James Brice, in 1796; James Brice, in 1800; Frederick Myers, in 1806; Reverend William Paxton, March 1, 1809; Daniel Musselman, 1854; Congregations of the Presbyterian and German Reformed Congregations, June 17, 1878; Charnita Inc., November 28, 1969; Borough of Fairfield, 1978.

History of the Lot: *A History of St. John's Reformed Congregation* (1880) noted that "the first church was built about 1824 at the east end of the town, on lands donated by Rev. Paxton. This church was used by the Presbyterian and German Reformed congregations. When the church was built, the scaffolding had been put up on some large locust trees, then growing nearby, and when the walls were almost ready for the roof, a terrible storm came up and shook the trees so that the walls were thrown down. They were rebuilt in the following spring." Among the prominent members of the two congregations were Alexander Mock and John Hoke (reformed) and James McGinley, William McMillan, Daniel Witherow and Joseph and Martin Hill (Presbyterian). About 1878, a new brick church was built on the site of the original. It was built by the Reformed Congregation, but by mutual agreement, "the Presbyterians were allowed to hold services in the building for ten years, in lieu of the claim they held against the old church." The new church was dedicated in December 1878. According to an article at the time, the church is an

ornament to the town and a credit to the congregation. The style is gothic.” It appears that the land that the original church sat upon was never actually deeded over to the congregation, and so in 1878 a deed was issued to the church by Daniel Musselman and his wife to the Reformed Congregation. In the 1960s that church was removed, the Reformed Congregation merging with that of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran church in 1967.

Notes: As mentioned, Lot 10N was the original eastern boundary of the Miller property and the edge of the original town. The Reformed Church was the only structure known to have been standing on the north side of the road between the town property and the Paxton/Musselman Farmhouse (current 203 East Main Street) at the time of the Civil War.

Sources: ACDB 58-590; 187-74, 188-371; 339-587; *History and Directory of the Boroughs of Adams County* (1880), 153; “Out of the Past, Fifty years ago,” *Gettysburg Times*, November 27, 1928; *A History of St. John’s Reformed Congregation* (1880).



*St. John’s Reformed Church (Outlying Property B),
J. B. Waddle, c. 1910, ACHS.*

Outlying Lot C: Maria L. Louden Residence. **Current Address:** 100 East Main Street. **1860 owner:** Maria L. Louden. **Description:** Dwelling-house, built in 1820. **Recital:** Rev. William Paxton to Reuben B. Carley, May 1, 1820; Peter Zollinger, March 20, 1822; Henry Newcomer, September 11, 1824; John Marshall, April 1, 1827; Mary Leckrone, March 15, 1842; Maria L. Louden, April 8, 1854; Sarah Musselman, April 10, 1864; John S. Rider, April 9, 1869; Abraham O. Scott, March 11, 1873.

History of the Lot: In 1820 this lot was sold by the Reverend William Paxton to Reuban B. Carley for \$100. In 1822, Carley sold it to Peter Zollinger for \$1,000, indicating that a structure was built on the lot by Carley. An 1842 deed notes the sale of the property for \$650. The 1864 tax list shows this property as a house and lot valued at \$400. In 1869, John S. Rider of Waynesboro purchased this lot from Sarah and Daniel Musselman, and Rider is shown as the owner of this house and lot in the 1872 *Atlas*. Current Water Street is the boundary of the Miller and Paxton properties and the boundary of the original town. This lot, laid out in 1820, is the first known addition to the eastern edge of Fairfield. The early deed references for this lot describe it as being a rectangle, 60 feet by 240 feet, likely an attempt to match Miller's configuration. But the angle of Miller and Paxton's properties with the public street made this difficult and the orientation shown for this lot on the map in the 1872 *Atlas* does not match the description in the early deeds. In an 1869 deed the road to the west of the lot is referred to as "Chestnut Street," and not Water Street.

1860 Residents: Maria L. Louden (1810-1877); Sarah M. Knox (1832); Euphemia Knox (1835); Charles M. Knox (1837); Elizabeth Knox (1842); Virginia Knox (1844).

Civil War Notes: Following the Civil War, Maria Louden filed a claim for "one falling top buggy worth \$80" taken by Confederate army during their retreat on July 4, 1863. Sarah Amanda Blythe, Lot 5E, was a witness to the claim, it being her shed where the buggy was being stored and from where it was taken.

Sources: ACDB K-31, K-32, L- 13, P-325, AA-73; AA-75; 57-62, Civil War Border Claim of Maria Louden, PHMC.

Outlying Lot D: Henry Landis Residence. **Current Address:** 23 North Miller Street. **1860 Owner:** Henry Landis. **Description:** Two-story, brick, dwelling-house. **Recital:** John Miller to James Wilson, October 31, 1823; Isaac Robinson, September 27, 1845; James Wilson, October 7, 1852; Henry Landis, March 29, 1854.

History of the Lot: In 1854, much of the original Miller property, described as 142 acres, was sold by James Wilson to Henry Landis for \$6,500. According to Landis Family legend, the house that once stood on Lot 3N (the Lutheran Church lot), was removed to this site around 1854.

1860 Residents: Henry Landis (1831); Ann E. Landis (1838); Mary B. Landis (1856); Rebecca Mehring (1845); Solomon Buamgardner (1839), farmhand; Henry Terrell (1844), farmhand. **Family Notes:** According to his obituary, Henry Landis was a native of Lancaster County and lived the early part of his life in Littlestown. At the age of 24, he moved to Fairfield, where he farmed until his retirement.

Sources: ACDB K-269; II-45; “A Valuable Limestone Farm,” *Compiler*, September 27, 1841; “Fairfield being prepared for reception of former residents at celebration,” *Gettysburg Times*, June 28, 1926; Obituary of Henry Landis, *Compiler*, February 19, 1913.

Outlying Lot E: Jonas Hemmons Residence. **1860 Owner:** Rufus C. Swope. **Recital:** Sheriff’s Sale to James D. Paxton, January 9, 1847; Rufus C. Swope, March 21, 1848; Stephen Butler, March 3, 1870; Jonas Hemmons, April 25, 1871; Heirs of Jonas Hemmons, July 10, 1875; Washington C. Rogers, April 1, 1878; Charles Bramen, January 23, 1880.

1860 Residents: Jonas Hemmons (1807-July 10, 1875); Cynthis A. Hemmons (1818-November 23, 1890); Mary Cole (1847).

Family Notes: Jonas Hemmons and his family were one of two “mulatto” families who lived in Fairfield at the time of the Civil War. Hemmons owned part of Lot 11E but apparently lived at this site as shown in the 1860 census. They were from Virginia, and the will of Jonas Hemmons refers to Rockingham County, Virginia. Hemmons

and his wife are buried in Fairfield Union Cemetery. Today, this tract which was described as 68 perches, is a vacant lot, but it retains its historic configuration.

Sources: Estate of Cynthia A. Hemmons, ACHS; Heirs of Jonas Hemmons to Washington C. Rogers, April 1, 1878 and Washington C. Rogers to Charles Bramen, January 23, 1880, abstracts of unrecorded deeds, ACHS.

Outlying Lot F: Rufus C. Swope Tannery. **Recital:** James Hill, by 1821; David Blythe, by 1846; James D. Paxton, 1846; Rufus C. Swope, March 21, 1848; John Artzberger, March 22, 1882; Louis Artzberger, March 22, 1882.

History of the Lot: A sheriff's sale from January 1821 describes this property as "a certain two-story log dwelling-house, stable, tan-house, & tan-yard, situate in Millers-town, Hamiltonban Township, Adams County. Seized and taken in execution as the estate of James Hill." Again, in June 1821, it was advertised as "a lot of Ground in Millers-town . . . containing about one acre, adjoining lands of James Wilson Esq. and town lots, on which are erected a log dwelling house and tanyard, with necessary buildings, late the estate of James Hill." An 1846 deed describes the property as "10 acres of limestone land . . . on which are erected a one and one half story log dwelling house, and frame stable, with sheds and corn cribs attached thereto—also a tan yard with about 30 vats, bark shed, mill house, currying shop with a machine for rolling leather—there is also a never failing well of water with a pump in it—with a never failing stream of water running through the premises with a variety of fruit trees . . . adjoining the lands of John McGinly, James Wilson and others." An 1848 public sale for the property of James D. Paxton, describes this as "a valuable tan yard, to which is attached all the necessary vats, pools, bark sheds, tan shops, bark mill and leather roller. Also a log dwelling house, and good stable, together with about one acre of ground. There is running water through the premises." The tannery was located partly on Lot 1E and extended onto the land south of the town, through which "Spring Run" passes. Rufus Swope acquired the property in 1848. At the time of the Civil War, Joshua Cease (or Ceas) was foreman of the tannery and as indicated by the census, he was living with his family in a house at this location. This property is shown as

“J. Arzberger” on the 1872 map, so he must have leased the property from Swope following Cease’s departure in 1866, finally gaining title to the property in 1882.

1860 Residents: Joshua Cease (1829-December 29, 1905); Hannah Miller Cease (1837- December 1908); Henriette Cease (1857-July 7, 1932); Charles W. Cease (1859).

Family Notes: In 1866 Joshua Cease purchased the tannery property at Lots 3W, 4W and 5W, and started his own business at that location.

Civil War Notes: According to a claim filed after the war, the Confederates visited Swope’s Tannery at least twice during the Gettysburg Campaign. An affidavit given by Joshua Cease, “foreman in the tannery,” indicates that on June 30, the Confederates absconded with 17 sides of leather at \$7.20 per side and 20 gallons of oil at \$1 per gallon. On July 5, they took one sorrel mare. The items were taken in Cease’s presence. Swope’s total loses were given as \$192.40. Cease also filed an affidavit in the claim of Peter Shively, stating that he was an eyewitness to the theft of lard from the latter’s spring house (presumable located on lot 2S). Along with other residents of the town, Joshua Cease served in Company G, 209th Pennsylvania Infantry, in 1864-1865.

Sources: David Blythe to James D. Paxton, 1846, URD, ACHS; “Sheriff’s Sale,” *Adams Sentinel*, January 30, 1821; “Sheriff’s Sales,” *Adams Sentinel*, July 21, 1821; “Valuable Tan Yard Property,” *Star and Banner*, February 4, 1848; Adelaide Paxton Doran, *The Paxton Family, A Genealogy* (Glendale, CA; 1987); Civil War Border Claims Files for R. C. Swope and Peter Shively, PHMC; Obituary of Joshua Cease, *Compiler*, January 10, 1906; Obituary of Hannah Miller Cease, *Compiler*, December 30, 1908; Adelaide Paxton Doran, *The Paxton Family, A Genealogy* (Glendale, CA; 1987).

Outlying Lot G: Vacant Lot. **Current Address:** No current address. **Recital:** William H. H. Low, by 1872; Mary H. Low, April 2, 1912; Fairfield Fire Department.

History of Lot: No structures are shown at this location on the 1858 Adams County wall map. In 1872 this is shown as the property of W. Low, so the dwelling at this site was built by that time. William H. H. Low was the son of Andrew Low. Andrew was a justice of the peace at the time of the Civil War, and was one of those unfortunate civilians taken prisoner by J.E.B. Stuart and his men when they passed through the area on October 11, 1862. *Boyd's Business Directory* (1860) lists Andrew Low of Fairfield as being the owner of a brickyard. William H. Low is listed in the tax records with no property for several years following the Civil War. In 1871, he is listed for the first time with a lot valued at \$100, transferred from G. W. Wortz. In 1872 he is listed with a lot valued at \$150. In 1874 the value of the lot was increased to \$400. The 1919 Fairfield tax records describes this as a lot still valued at \$400, the property of Mary H. Low (daughter of William), with an additional 11 acres nearby valued at \$825. This property, which was located along the south side of what is now Steelman Street, is today the site of the Fairfield Fire Department. According to descendants, the house was a two-story log-and-frame structure.

Civil War Notes: According to his record of service in a book associated with the Fairfield GAR, William was born in Fairfield on March 18, 1839. Obviously, he was named for William Henry Harrison, the hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe who was running for President at that time of his birth. In the fall of 1862, William was mustered as a second lieutenant of Company C, 165th Pennsylvania Drafted Militia and served until July of 1863. "His most intimate comrades while in service" were listed in the G.A.R. book as "Captain E. McGinley, Quartermaster Evan T. Rinehart, Lieut. C. J. Sefton, Peter Overdeer, Maj. Nash G. Camp, Captain Warren, Lieut. Stonesifer & Captain Webb." One can only imagine what thoughts were going through William's mind at the time of his service while his father was being held in a Confederate prison. William H. Low died on July 3, 1913, fifty years after his service in the Union Army during the Civil War.

Sources: ACDB 73-39; Fairfield GAR Book; *Boyd's Business Directory* (Philadelphia, 1860).