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JOHN FILSON IN PENNSYLVANIA

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Lexington, Kentucky

It was the privilege of the writer, during the month of June, 1939, to visit Wilmington, Delaware, and Philadelphia and West Chester, Pennsylvania, three places rather closely associated with the life of John Filson, the Kentucky historian.

At Wilmington, in the collections of the Historical Society of Delaware, he was permitted to examine the original parchment *Map of Wilmington*, which was drawn by John Filson in or about the year 1785, and, also, to have a photostat made of it on the same scale as the original. This photostat *facsimile* has been presented to The Filson Club, in whose hands it may usefully supplement the photostat, on a smaller scale, of the same map, which was presented to the Club by Dr. Willard R. Jillson in 1933. The gift of Dr. Jillson was accompanied by an article of his on "Filson's Map of Wilmington, Delaware," which was published in *THE FILSON CLUB HISTORY QUARTERLY* for October, 1933, Volume 7, No. 4, pages 209-213. That article sufficiently covers the subject and no attempt shall here be made to add anything to it.

Through the courtesy of a friend, Rev. Dr. John W. Christie, minister of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, of Wilmington, the writer was enabled to make two visits to West Chester, Pennsylvania, the three places, Wilmington, West Chester, and Philadelphia, all being within an easy hour's drive of one another by automobile. At West Chester, on his first visit, he spent several hours very delightfully, browsing at will among the valuable collections of the Chester County Historical Society, which are housed in an ancient but attractive building, the front part of which was once used as a Horticultural Hall. On his second visit, following the first by the interval of a single day, he devoted

all the time at his disposal to research among the records of Chester County in the custody of the Register of Wills and the Register of Deeds, kept in two separate and distinct offices in the county court-house. The quest, thus conducted, had to do almost entirely with John Filson, the first historian of Kentucky.

After what has been so ably and adequately written by Colonel Reuben T. Durrett, Mr. R. C. Ballard Thruston, Mr. P. Lee Phillips, Colonel Lawrence Martin, Dr. Willard R. Jillson, and others, concerning the life, writings, and work of Filson, one must have something really substantial to offer before presuming to come forward with anything purporting to be a new biographical contribution. In this paper, all that is attempted is to assemble a few facts, not hitherto generally known, or overlooked in the various writings on John Filson and his antecedents or with respect to his celebrated History and Map of *Kentucke*. Insofar as these fragments may fail to supplement existing knowledge touching the historian, it may be that they will serve to confirm or fortify several interesting facts previously ascertained and published, particularly with reference to his activities and interests in Pennsylvania.

Bearing in mind that Colonel Durrett's valuable monograph, *John Filson, the First Historian of Kentucky, An Account of His Life and Writings*, which appeared in 1884 and inaugurated the ensuing series of Filson Club Publications, is our earliest and most reliable source of information on the subject, it may be stated, first of all, that not only are the last wills of John Filson, of Davison Filson, his father, and of his grandfather, John Filson, the Elder, all of record in Will Books of Chester County, Pennsylvania, but the original wills themselves are still preserved among the archives of that county in the office of the Register of Wills. When he wrote, Colonel Durrett had knowledge of these wills and they are each reproduced in his monograph, probably from the record books, however, rather than from the originals.

The writer was able to have a photograph made of the original will of John Filson, the historian, upon a reduced scale, and a print from this photograph is presented herewith, preceded by a line-for-line transcription of the will in type.

The original will occupies one side of a single sheet of paper, measuring $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $15\frac{1}{4}$ inches in size. Students desiring to examine this document will find the original in File No. 3985,

and the recorded copy in Will Book "H" (Volume 8), pages 261, 262. The envelope containing the original will also contains an "Inventory of Jno. Filson's Estate—filed 8th Decemr., 1788," and an "Acco't. of Admini'r. Jno. Filson's Estate—filed 21st of Dec'r., 1790." These papers will be referred to more in detail hereafter.

The original will of Davison Filson, father of John Filson, the historian, is in File No. 3008, and of record in Will Book "F" (Volume 6), pages 194–196. The original will of John Filson, the Elder, grandfather of the historian, is in File No. 1372, and of record in Will Book "C" (Volume 3), pages 279–281. The usual papers, embracing Inventory, Appraisement, and Settlement of the respective estates, are also on file with each of these original wills.

Numerous deeds in which the name Filson appears as that of one or both of the parties, grantor and grantee, are to be found in the office of the Register of Deeds of Chester County, beginning with the year 1747 and extending down to or beyond the year 1874. Other Filson wills, besides those here mentioned, are also to be found in the office of the Register of Wills of said county.

It is from the deeds discovered, however, that information of a genealogical nature is mainly to be derived, and to certain of these deeds attention will now be directed. With a single exception, to be hereafter more particularly noted, all of these deeds are of record in the office of the Register of Deeds of Chester County, and appropriate references will be given so that anyone hereafter desiring to inspect these records may do so conveniently and without unnecessary loss of time. Listed in chronological order, the deeds in question are as follows:

1. Edward Woodward & wife to John Filson, Jr.,
Dated January 26, 1747/'48; recorded August 23, 1786;
Deed Book "B-2" (Volume 26), pages 84–85.
2. Davison Filson & wife to Samuel Filson,
Dated December 10, 1753; recorded August 23, 1786;
Deed Book "B-2" (Volume 26), pages 85–88.
3. Robert Filson, the Younger, & wife to Hugh Stuart,
Dated November 11, 1771; recorded August 23, 1786;
Deed Book "B-2" (Volume 26), pages 88–91.
4. Robert Filson, the Younger, & wife to Hugh Stuart,
Dated January 9, 1773; recorded August 23, 1786;
Deed Book "B-2" (Volume 26), pages 91–92.

LINE-FOR-LINE TRANSCRIPTION OF JOHN FILSON'S WILL

In the name of God amen, I John Filson of East Followfield township in Chester County, State of Pennsylvania being in perfect health and sound memory, and Calling to mind the mortality of my body, knowing it is appointed for all men once to die, do Constitute, make and ordain this my last Will, and Testament in manner and form following Viz, I first and principally, Commend my soul to God who gave it, hoping to receive the same again at the genneral resurrexion, My body I also commend to the Care of providence, and the discretion of my friends or fellow Creatures, to be buried in a Christian like manner. . . And as to such worldly substance wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me, I give and bequeath the whole, and every part thereof, both real and personal to my dear brother Robert Filson and his heirs for ever Viz five hundred acres of Land in Jefferson County in Virginia and one thousand acres in the same County and State as will appear due from Squire Boone of Sd. County upon two Certain bonds to John Kephart which Sd. bonds were assigned to me, also all the propriety of the lands entered on big bone and Stepstone Creeks, as will appear by entries in Colo. Marshal's office in Fayette County in Virginia affores'd, also all the amount of bonds due to me in Kentucke & recovering by law, as will appear by a list thereof in the hands of Capt'n James Patton my attorney at the falls of Ohio, also all the amount of my property in Post St. Vincent, as will appear by a list of notes deeds and &c in the hands of Colo. John Small my attorney in Sd. town of St Vincents, hereby Constituteing and ordaining my brother Robert Filson affores'd, my true and lawful Executor of all my my estate both real and personal and by his discretion to be ordered as may be most Just and equitable in every of my affairs wherewith he is or may be acquainted in Witness whereof I have to these presents Set my hand and Seal ordaining as affores'd, this to be my last Will and testament & no other hereby revoking & disanuling all other will or wills heretofore made by me. Signed Sealed & delivered this 21st [20th] day of Nov'r. A.D. 1786.
 John Filson (Seal)

In presence of

Mary Hartt } Bryan McCune

[Sworn]

}

[Sworn]

[Invy. 1 Mo.]

[Proven 28th Novr. 1788]

In the name of God amen, I John Filson of East Salisbury Township in Allegheny County, State of Pennsylvania being in perfect health and sound memory, and calling to mind the frailty of my body, knowing it is appointed for all men once to die, do constitute, make and ordain this my last Will, and Testament in manner and form following Viz. I first and principally, commend my soul to God who gave it, desiring to receive the same again at the general Resurrection, my body I also commend to the care of Providence, and the direction of my friends or fellow creatures, to be buried in a Christian like manner. And as to such worldly substance wherewith I hath ^{stand} God to bless me, I give and bequeath the whole, and every part thereof, both real and personal to my dear brother Robert Filson and his heirs forever Viz five hundred acres of land in Jefferson County in Virginia and one thousand acres in the same County and State, as will appear due from Squire Boone of said County upon two certain bonds to John Peppersart which bonds were assigned to me, and all the profits of the same lands entered on by him and Stephen Creech, as will appear by entries in Col. Marshall's office in Fayette County in Virginia aforesaid, also all the amount of bonds due to me in Kentucky Recovering by law, as will appear by a list thereof in the hands of Capt James Patton my attorney at the date of this, also all the amount of my property in Col. St. Vincent, as will appear by a list of notes due and to be in the hands of Col. St. Vincent, I do give and bequeath to my dear brother Robert Filson aforesaid, my true and lawful Executor of all my my estate both real and personal and by his direction to be ordered, as may be most just and equitable in every of my affairs wherewith he is or may be acquainted in witness whereof I have to these presents set my hand and seal concerning as aforesaid, this to be my last Will and Testament None other hereby writing, or granting all other Will or Will hereafter made in any shape or device this 21st day of Nov. 1798.

John Filson
 Attest
 Bryan McCune
 John Filson
 21st Nov 1798

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF JOHN FILSON'S WILL

For line-for-line transcription see page 182

5. William Filson to Davidson Filson,
Dated June 8, 1767; recorded October 11, 1786;
Deed Book "B-2" (Volume 26), pages 154-156.
6. Davison Filson & wife, Agnes Filson, to John Filson,
Dated July 31, 1775; recorded January 30, 1776;
Deed Book "V" (Volume 20), pages 193-196.
7. Davison Filson to Robert Filson (LEASE),
Dated March 25, 1776; recorded August 24, 1776;
Deed Book "V" (Volume 20), pages 397-399.
8. Robert Filson, surviving Executor of Davison Filson, deceased, to John Jorden,
Dated March 31, 1777; recorded August 23, 1786;
Deed Book "B-2" (Volume 26), pages 93-95.

An unrecorded original deed, bearing date September 8, 1787, from John Filson, the historian, to his brother, Robert Filson, is in the possession of the Chester County Historical Society, to which it was presented on February 14, 1939, by the former owners, Mr. and Mrs. Francis D. Brinton, of West Chester, Pennsylvania. This deed is engrossed on a beautiful sheet of parchment, which is still in a perfect state of preservation, and a photostat thereof, on the same scale as the original, has been procured by the writer and presented by him to The Filson Club. At first glance, it would appear to be wholly in the handwriting of John Filson himself, but closer study will be required to determine this point with certainty.

Chester County is one of the three original counties of Pennsylvania, established by William Penn, the Proprietary, in 1682, and it was the first of the three counties to be organized. The original county seat was the town of Chester (first called Upland), located at the extreme southeastern border of the county, but, by an act passed in 1784, commissioners authorized to do so fixed upon a central point, "near the 'Turk's Head Tavern,'" at the intersection of the great road leading from Wilmington, in Delaware, to Reading, Pennsylvania, and the road leading from Philadelphia to Strasburg, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, as a more suitable site for the county seat, and the court records were removed to this place in 1786. In 1788, the new county seat was made a town or borough and given the name "West Chester," being some sixteen miles northwest from the former county seat at Chester, which is the present county seat of Delaware County, formed from Chester County in 1789. The

first court at West Chester was held on November 28, 1786, in primitive quarters which were later superseded by a more commodious building. The present handsome court-house at West Chester was erected in 1846.

The counties of Pennsylvania, as is well known, are subdivided into townships, which may be said to correspond roughly to the magisterial districts or voting precincts of a Kentucky county. But whereas Kentucky has 120 counties, the State of Pennsylvania, with an area 5,000 square miles greater than that of the Blue Grass State, has a total of only 67 counties. The larger size of these counties naturally calls for a considerable number of townships in each, and, accordingly, one need not be surprised to find that, in Chester County alone, there are, at the present day, some 56 townships.

The interest of Kentuckians is chiefly centered in that one of these townships known as "East Fallowfield," which lies in the fertile region, underlaid by primitive limestone, called in early times "The Great Valley," but now more commonly referred to as "Chester Valley." A much-used thoroughfare passed through this valley from the first settlement of the country by the whites.

In an elaborate *History of Chester County, Pennsylvania*, by J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, published at Philadelphia in 1881, the authors, at pages 175-177, give a concise account of the two townships of East Fallowfield and West Fallowfield, originally comprised within a single township called Fallowfield. From this account the following extracts are taken:

"Fallowfield is supposed to have been named in honor of Lancelot Fallowfield, of Great Strickland, in Westmoreland County, England, who was one of the first purchasers of land from William Penn. John Salkeld, a noted Quaker preacher, who came from that part of England, bought the right of Lancelot Fallowfield, and took up land in that township in 1714, and may have suggested the name. In 1718 the name appears in the assessment with only three taxables,—Thomas Wooddell, George Lenard, Robert Holly. . . .

"February, 1731/32, petitions were addressed to the court for a division of the township by the north branch of Doe Run, now called Buck Run, and the request renewed seven years later, but it was not till 1743 that the matter was accomplished. At the time of this division we find among the inhabitants of the eastern part the names of Blelock, Bentley, Dennis, Fleming, *Filson*, Hanna, Hayes, and Mode; and in the western part the

names of Adams, Cochran, Moore, Parke, and Wilson. A part of West Marlborough was subsequently added to East Fallowfield. . . .

"In 1853, West Fallowfield, then the largest township in the county, was divided, and the eastern division called Highland township; the western division, adjoining the Lancaster County line, retaining the old name. Highland township thus intervenes between East Fallowfield and West Fallowfield, which is not the case with any other townships in the county bearing the same general name."

At page 176, of the work last mentioned, there appear, among the "East Fallowfield Taxables," for the year 1753, the names of Will Filson, Davison Filson, and Samuel Filson; and, at the same page, among the "Land Owners," for the year 1774, are the names of Davidson Filson and John Filson.

In his *History of Pennsylvania*, published in 1876, Dr. Wm. H. Egle (Volume I, page 540) also mentions the Filsons as among the inhabitants of the township of East Fallowfield, in Chester County, in the year 1743. Since this antedates the supposed year of the birth of John Filson, the historian, viz., 1747, it is altogether probable that he was born in East Fallowfield Township and in the section of that township hereafter to be more particularly pointed out.

Futhey and Cope, in their *History of Chester County*, above mentioned, give an extended and very interesting account of the Presbyterian churches of that county and of the Scotch-Irish immigrants who constituted so large an element in the composition of the congregations of this denomination. At pages 248 and 249, of the work cited, are found these statements:

"The oldest Presbyterian church in Chester County is the 'Great Valley,' in Tredyffrin township, where there was a congregation as early as 1710, but which was not regularly organized until 1714. That township having been settled by the Welsh, this congregation was in its earlier days largely Welsh in its composition, although there was from the commencement a commingling of Scotch-Irish and English with them. . . .

"The first settlement of the Scotch-Irish within the present bounds of Chester County was made about the year 1718. They gradually spread over the whole western portion of the county, from Maryland and Delaware on the south to the chain of hills known as the Welsh Mountain on the north; and the greater portion of the population of this district of country at the present day are their descendants. These early emigrants planted the Presbyterian Churches at Upper Octorara, Fagg's Manor,

Brandywine Manor, New London, and Oxford, in this county; and these churches abide in strength to the present day. . . . Pennsylvania owes much of what she is today to the fact that so many of these people settled within her borders."

At page 252 of the *History of Chester County*, from which we have quoted, the authors tell of a Presbyterian church, in which there is good reason to believe that John Filson, the historian, when an infant, must have been baptized. Only so much of the history of this church as embraces the entire period of John Filson's life will here be repeated. The narrative reads:

"About the year 1740, *John Filson*, William Hanna, Francis Boggs, James Blelock, and others, residing in East Fallowfield township and vicinity, erected a house of worship on the Strasburg road, in that township, and were organized into a congregation under the name of the 'Doe Run Presbyterian Church.' The building, which was of logs, stood within the grounds of the graveyard as at present inclosed. This was about the time of the division of the Presbyterian Church into 'Old Side' and 'New Side,' and this organization belonged to the latter body. They had supplies from the New Side Presbytery of New Castle until about the year 1747, when the Rev. Andrew Sterling became their pastor, in connection with the Second Congregation of Upper Octorara, and continued in that relation about eighteen years, when he resigned. He died in August, 1765, shortly after his resignation. About the year 1743, the celebrated George Whitefield, in the course of his visitations in this county, preached at Doe Run, and also at the New Side Church of Upper Octorara, and at Fagg's Manor.

"In 1768, Rev. William Foster became pastor of the church, in connection with that of Upper Octorara, giving Doe Run one-fourth of his time. In 1771 their second church edifice was erected. It stood between the present church and the graveyard, and was of hewn logs.

"In 1785, Rev. Alexander Mitchel became pastor, and divided his time between this church and Upper Octorara, as Mr. Foster had done. His pastoral relation with the latter church was dissolved in 1796, but he continued to take charge of Doe Run until 1809, when the infirmities of age prevented further service. . . . The present house, which is of stone, was erected in 1821."

To prevent mistake as to the identity of the Doe Run Church, it should be added, perhaps, that a nursling or offshoot of that church, known as the "Doe Run Valley Presbyterian Church," was incorporated October 22, 1849, and a church building erected in the village of Doe Run, which is used for public worship in

connection with the Doe Run Church. (*Op. cit.*, pages 252, 253.) A post office was established at Doe Run village on February 27, 1827, but it, apparently, has been discontinued since the advent of rural free delivery of mail.

Not only was John Filson, the paternal grandfather of the historian, one of the founders of the Doe Run Presbyterian Church but his son, John Filson, Junior, an uncle of the historian, who died in or about the year 1750 and prior to the death of his father, devised an acre of ground to this church as the permanent site of its meeting-house previously erected thereon. While the last will of this testator, dated May 2, 1750, cannot be found of record and appears never to have been admitted to probate, the execution of such will and the devise of the church-lot therein made are facts established by references made to them in the deeds designated as Nos. 2 and 3, in the list of Filson deeds furnished above.

After Colonel Reuben T. Durrett's excellent monograph on John Filson, the historian, was published in 1884, considerable interest was excited or revived in this worthy native son of Chester County, Pennsylvania. The *Village Record*, a long-established local newspaper of West Chester, in its issue of March 10, 1887, published a comprehensive sketch of Filson, contributed by Mr. J. Smith Futhey, the Chester County historian. In the course of this article, which draws rather heavily upon Colonel Durrett's monograph, Mr. Futhey writes as follows:

"The name at the head of this article [John Filson] is that of a native of Chester county, of whom scarcely any of the present inhabitants of the county have ever heard. As he was a man of note in his day, and had a somewhat romantic history, I propose to give your readers a brief sketch of his career, so far as it is known.

"The Filson family were of Scotch-Irish origin, and on their emigration to this country settled in East Fallowfield township, at and around where the old Doe Run Presbyterian Church now stands, on the Strasburg road. The emigrant ancestor of the family in this county was John Filson, the grandfather of the subject of this sketch. He came over prior to 1740, as in this year he and others, associated with him, were instrumental in the organization of the Doe Run Presbyterian Church, and the erection of its first place of worship on the grounds, and near to the site, of the present church buildings. In 1743, the celebrated George Whitefield, in his visitation to this country, preached in

this church. This John Filson died in 1751, and devised his lands, estimated at two hundred acres, to his son, Davison Filson [who was twice married] . . .

"John Filson, the subject of this sketch, was the second son of Davison Filson by his first wife, and was born about the year 1747. He received such an education as the common schools of the vicinage could give, and he then went to the Nottingham Academy,¹ kept by Rev. Samuel Finley. This was a very thorough institution of learning and here he appears to have received a good classical and mathematical education. . . .

"Major John Filson, who, half a century ago, and more, kept the public house now known as the Humphreyville Inn, on the Strasburg road, in East Fallowfield township, was of the same Filson family as the subject of this sketch. This house was for many years known as 'Filson's Tavern.' The long level stretch of ground on the Strasburg road east of the house was in those days used as a race course, where the young bloods of the neighborhood were wont to try the speed of their horses. It was somewhat famous in its day.

"The Filson family were once numerous in the western part of the county, but have died out or removed away or been absorbed by marriage in families of other names, and there are now none of the name in the county, so far as the writer of this sketch is aware."

As we now know, from the deed of December 10, 1753, from Davison Filson to Samuel Filson, listed above as No. 2, the name of Davison Filson's first wife was Elener or Elinor (Eleanor) Filson, and, from the recitals in the deed of August 31, 1775, from Davison Filson and wife, Agnes Filson, to John Filson, listed above as No. 6, the grantee, John Filson, was not the "second son" of Davison Filson but his *eldest* son "by a former wife," to-wit: Elener Filson. These well-established facts serve to clear up the obscurity which surrounded the subject, when Colonel Durrett wrote in 1884. (See Durrett's *John Filson*, pages 8, 9.) And from all that we now know, it looks as if John Filson, Robert Filson, Ann Filson, and Elener (or Eleanor) Filson were the children of Davison Filson by his first wife, Eleanor Filson; and that Moses Filson, Jean Filson, Elizabeth Filson, and an unnamed child were all born of Davison Filson's second marriage to Agnes

¹ Nottingham Academy, where John Filson is reputed to have gotten the basic elements of his education, is a prosperous school of secondary grade, which has had a continuous existence from 1741 down to the present day, a period of almost two hundred years. Better known as "West Nottingham Academy," it is located in Cecil County, Maryland, near the Pennsylvania line, with the post office address of Colora, Maryland. It is said to be the oldest existing Presbyterian educational institution of any kind in the New World.—S. M. W.

Boggs, which occurred on February 9, 1768, in the First Presbyterian Church, of Philadelphia.²

Despite the intimation of Colonel Durrett to the contrary (Durrett's *John Filson*, pages 44, 45), insofar as we are able to judge the matter from the available evidence, it seems reasonably clear that John Filson never renounced or surrendered his citizenship in Pennsylvania, or seriously contemplated doing so. In his last will, dated November 20 or 21, 1786, the testator describes

² Besides his wife, Jane Filson, the children of John Filson, the Elder, as mentioned in his will of September 3, 1748, were four in number, to-wit: Davison, John, William, and Margaret. But the deed of December 10, 1753 (No. 2 in the above list of deeds), from Davison Filson and others to Samuel Filson, and the deed of June 8, 1767 (No. 5 in the above list of deeds), from William Filson to Davidson Filson, show that John Filson, the Elder, had four other children in addition to those named in his will, viz., Robert Filson, Samuel Filson, Elizabeth Filson, the wife of George Liggett, and Jane Filson, the wife of James Patton. This means that the testator had, at least, eight children in all, of whom one, John Filson, the Younger, died prior to his father.

Of the three grandsons mentioned in the will of John Filson, the Elder, viz., John and two Robert Filsons, the John so mentioned was a son of Davison Filson, as was one of the two Robert Filsons so mentioned also, whereas the other Robert Filson was a son of Samuel Filson. William Filson also appears to have had a son, John Filson, who may have been born after the date (September 3, 1748) of the will of his grandfather, John Filson, the Elder.

The testamentary records of Chester County, Pennsylvania, show that administration issued on the estate of William Filson, deceased, in March, 1768, and that letters of administration were granted to John and Jane Filson, who are thought to have been his son and widow respectively. It is shown by the deed of December 10, 1753 (No. 2 in the above list), that the name of the wife of William Filson, one of the sons of John Filson, the Elder, was Jane.

It further appears from the same testamentary records that Samuel Filson, of East Fallowfield Township, died intestate and that letters of administration on his estate were granted on June 9, 1766, to Robert Filson, "eldest son and heir of Samuel Filson," the decedent. (File No. 2263, in office of Register of Wills, and D.B. "B-2," Volume 26, pages 88-91, being deed No. 3 in the above list of deeds.) The sureties in the administration bond of Robert Filson were John Fleming and William Grant. The appraisal of this estate was made December 24, 1765, but the Inventory was not filed until June 9, 1766, and not signed by Robert Filson, the fiduciary, until October 13, 1766. The administrator's Account was filed September 16, 1767.

There was a Benjamin Filson, of the Township of West Caln, in Chester County, Pennsylvania, upon whose estate letters of administration were granted on November 10, 1788. The administratrix was Margaret Filson, probably the widow of the deceased intestate, whose maiden name appears to have been Margaret Bailey. The sureties in her bond, dated November 10, 1788, were Robert Filson and David Bailey. The Inventory is dated November 6, 1788, and the appraisers were sworn November 22, 1788.

Margaret Filson, of the Township of West Caln (evidently the widow of Benjamin Filson, last mentioned above), left a will, recorded in Will Book "L" (Volume 11), page 134. This will bears date June 22, 1805, and was probated March 22, 1806. The testatrix mentions her sons, David and Samuel Filson, and a daughter, Betsey Filson. She also refers to "a bequest to me by Robert Bayley."

Just what the relationship, if any, of Benjamin Filson, of West Caln, may have been to the Filsons of East Fallowfield Township, we are unable to say, though there is a bare possibility that this Benjamin Filson may have been a son of Samuel Filson, who died, apparently, toward the close of the year 1765, and, if so, then Benjamin Filson was a grandson of John Filson, the Elder, of East Fallowfield Township. West Caln (originally a much larger township) lies northwest of East Fallowfield, with Valley Township in between.

himself as "I, John Filson, of East Followfield township, in Chester County, State of Pennsylvania," and the will itself was executed when the maker of it was personally present in Chester County.

In the recently discovered and unrecorded deed of September 8, 1787, from John Filson to his brother, Robert Filson, hereinbefore mentioned, the grantor, then likewise present in Chester County, is described as "John Filson, of the township of East-followfield, in the County of Chester, in the State of Pennsylvania, Yeoman." The witnesses to this deed were all Chester County people, and it was acknowledged, on the day of its date, before William Clingan, a well-known magistrate of Chester County. And, after the death of Filson, on or about October 1, 1788, somewhere amid the wilds of the Miami River, north of the Ohio, his will was offered for probate, not in Jefferson County, Virginia (now Kentucky), but before the Probate Court of Chester County, Pennsylvania, recognized by all concerned as the place of his legal domicile or residence.

It is true that, in the title bond, executed by John Filson to Daniel Henry on October 14, 1785 (Durrett's *John Filson*, pages 115, 116; *THE FILSON CLUB HISTORY QUARTERLY*, October, 1932, Vol. 6, No. 4, page 407; Jefferson County, Kentucky, *Minute Book No. 1*, page 155; *THE FILSON CLUB HISTORY QUARTERLY*, January, 1933, Vol. 7, No. 1, page 45; Jefferson County, Kentucky, *Bond and Power of Attorney Book No. 1*, page 43), which was acknowledged by Filson in open court on November 2, 1785, at the November, 1785, term of the Jefferson County Court, the obligor is described as "I, John Filson, of Jefferson County, and Commonwealth of Virginia," but this may be taken as merely *descriptio personae* and not sufficient, of itself alone, to fix the permanent legal residence of John Filson as in Jefferson County.

An entry in the Jefferson County *Bond and Power of Attorney Book No. 1*, at page 44 thereof (*THE FILSON CLUB HISTORY QUARTERLY*, January, 1933, Vol. 7, No. 1, page 45), shows that, for the 240 acres of land in Pennsylvania, which John Filson sold and covenanted to convey to Daniel Henry, the vendor, Filson, on October 15, 1785, received £735 "lawful money of Pennsylvania," the stipulated price. If, indeed, John Filson had deliberately decided to become a permanent citizen of Jefferson County, or anywhere else in the "Commonwealth of Virginia," it seems a bit strange that he should have been willing to accept

Pennsylvania currency in payment for the land he contracted to convey. But, of course, there may be another complete explanation of his choice of such "lawful money" to satisfy the agreed consideration for his promised deed.

The script of the original will of John Filson, the historian, would seem to show unmistakably that it was dated "this 21st day of Nov'r. A.D. 1786." But a question arises whether the day of the month so indicated should not be read "20th" instead of "21st." On the back of the original will appears the following certificate:

"Westchester—Nov'r. 28th, 1788—Then personally appeared Mary Hart & Bryan McCune and on their solemn oaths according to Law did declare, depose and say that they were personally present and did see & hear John Filson the Testator within Named sign, seal publish pronounce and declare the within instrument of writing as and for his last Will and Testament and that at the doing thereof he was of a sound and well disposing mind and memory to the best of their understandings.

"Sworn before—"

Following the words "Sworn before," at the end of the certificate, there is no signature, although, in the Will Book record, these words are immediately subscribed—"Pers'r. Frazer, Reg'r." But, more interesting than all of this, directly below where the unsigned certificate is endorsed on the original will, there are written (almost certainly in the testator's own handwriting) these words:

"Will signed this 20th [November] 1786
by John Filson."

It is a small matter, no doubt, but we are simply trying to give the facts as we have found them.

By the title bond of October 14, 1785, mentioned above, John Filson bound himself to convey to Daniel Henry, "against the first day of April, in the year one thousand, seven hundred and eighty-seven," the following land:

"A certain tract of land, lying and being situate upon the West Branch of Brandywine Creek, about two miles South of the Gap Road, in East Fallowfield Township, Chester County, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, containing two hundred and forty acres," etc.

Since John Filson is not known to have owned any other land in Chester County besides that described generally in the above bond, it must be that he intended to convey practically, if not identically, the same tract of land to his brother, Robert Filson,

by the unrecorded deed of September 8, 1787, herein previously mentioned. The description of the land conveyed by that deed is as follows:

"All that tract, piece or parcel of land, situate, lying and being in the said township of East Fallowfield, part of the affores'd. two tracts and that which Davidson Filson affores'd. and Agnes, his wife, did convey unto John Filson affores'd, Beginning at a Corner marked Chesnut tree in a line of land once the property of Israel Pemberton, being a Corner of Hugh Jordon's land, thence North 76 39' East 64 perches and one half perch to a hickory, thence S. 68 E. 79 perches & one half perch to a Black oak, thence S. 35 E. 40 perches and one half perch to a Black oak, thence S. 40 E. 60 perches & one half perch to a post, thence N. 80 E. 34 perches and one half perch to a post, thence N. 1½ E. 74 perches to a mayple standing by the side of Brandywine Creek, thence across the Creek North 4 perches to a post, thence up the Creek by Pusey's land N. 17 W. 34 perches & one half perch to a White Oak, thence S. 52¼ W. 4 perches to an Ash tree, a Corner of Robert Filson's land, thence by his line up the Creek N. 27½ W. 107 perches to a Stone, a Corner of Robert Morrel's land, thence N. 33 W. 22 perches to a marked Spanish Oak, thence by Morrel's line N. 72¼ W. 114 perches to a post, thence by land of Alexander Moode S. 16¼ W. 172 perches, crossing Brandywine, to the place of beginning, Containing one hundred and ninety-four acres and one quarter of an acre, strict measure, be the same more or less."

The expressed consideration for this conveyance was "the sum of three hundred pounds pennsylvania Currency," but, in the signed receipt at the bottom of the deed, John Filson, the grantor, acknowledges the payment by Robert Filson to him of "three hundred pounds *Specie*," a rather sizable sum in those days.

Just how John Filson satisfied or discharged the title bond theretofore given by him to Daniel Henry for this very same land, we have no means of determining, but it may be that he used some or all of the proceeds of the sale to his brother Robert to pay off or liquidate his bond to Henry.

From the two descriptions of Filson's patrimonial estate, derived from the title bond and deed, here under consideration, it should be possible to define with approximate precision the site of the old homestead, in East Fallowfield Township, where the historian was born and reared. To do this it is necessary to take note of certain of the landmarks mentioned in these ancient documents. Most noticeable in the language of the title bond are the references to "the West Branch of Brandywine Creek"

and to "the Gap Road." Fortunately for us, any good map of Pennsylvania will enable one to determine with entire accuracy what is meant by these references.

In his *History of Pennsylvania* (Volume I, page 524), Dr. Egle tells us that "The Brandywine, at its upper end, is composed of two branches, called the east and west branches. . . . The Pennsylvania Railroad crosses the East Branch at Downingtown, and the West Branch at Coatesville. . . . They unite at a point nearly west of West Chester." Again, he says (Volume II, page 853), "The ancient road from Lancaster to Philadelphia ran through this place [i. e., the borough or town of Strasburg, in Lancaster County], and from it was called the Strasburg Road." Now, the "Strasburg Road," as shown on any modern map of Chester and Lancaster counties, in Pennsylvania, answers perfectly to the "Gap Road" called for in Filson's title bond to Daniel Henry. A village called "Gap," in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, is situated a short distance west of the boundary line between Chester and Lancaster counties, and on or near the "Strasburg Road." This place, called "Gap," became rather noted in very early times by reason of the fact that copper mines were discovered near there prior to 1733, and in later years nickel ore also was obtained from these mines. (Egle, Volume II, pages 817, 818.) In *Pennsylvania, Colonial and Federal*, by Howard M. Jenkins (1903, Volume III, page 264), mention is made of "Gap Tavern" on the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike, and it is there stated that a branch road ran from a point near "Gap Tavern" to Newport and Wilmington, in Delaware. These authorities, read in the light of a reliable map of the region in question, render it absolutely certain that what John Filson termed the "Gap Road" was substantially identical with what today is more commonly called the "Strasburg Road."

Looking once more at any up-to-date topographical map of Chester County, Pennsylvania, it will be seen that the "West Branch of Brandywine Creek," in its upper reaches, is formed or fed by a number of smaller streams, any one of which may be loosely spoken of as "Brandywine Creek." Chief among these tributaries, in East Fallowfield Township, after the "West Branch" itself, are Dennis Run, Buck Run, and Buck and Doe Run.

Taking all of this data into consideration, it seems fairly certain that the Filson lands, in East Fallowfield Township, lay about two miles or less south of the Strasburg Road, and somewhere between the West Branch of Brandywine Creek and Buck

and Doe Run; and that it was in this locality that John Filson, the historian and cartographer, first saw the light of day.

Before passing to other things of more or less importance, notice may be taken of the fact that Colonel R. T. Durrett, in his *John Filson*, has been able to trace pretty accurately the whereabouts and transactions of John Filson from the time, in 1783 or, possibly, in 1782, when he first visited Kentucky, through the years 1783, 1784, 1785, and 1786. Of Filson's movements in 1787, however, Durrett (page 69) says: "But little is known of him for this year, however, except what has been gleaned from the records of courts."

We know that Filson was in Pennsylvania and Delaware, in 1784, attending to the printing of his book and the engraving of his map and the publication and sale of both book and map. In the early part of 1785, he must have been in Wilmington, Delaware, conducting surveys and drawing his "Map of Wilmington." In the latter part of 1786 he was again back in Pennsylvania, for, in November of that year, in Chester County, he executed his last will, making his brother, Robert, his executor and sole devisee. And now, at last, it is ascertained from the unrecorded deed of September 8, 1787, from John Filson to Robert Filson, that the ubiquitous and indefatigable traveler was in Pennsylvania, once more and for the last time, in the fall of 1787, the year preceding his death. With the "three hundred pounds Specie" paid him by his brother Robert for the Fallowfield farm, in Chester County, in his saddle-pockets, and after bidding farewell to the familiar scenes of his childhood and youth, he set out into the bewitching and boundless "West," on his final ill-starred adventure, which ended so tragically for the intrepid pioneer in the fateful year 1788.

In an old time-stained letter, preserved among the Shane Papers in the collections of the Presbyterian Historical Society, in Philadelphia, there is a terse reference to this mournful event. This letter was written from "Fayette County" (then Virginia, now Kentucky), and dated "Octr. 11th, 1788." It was addressed to "Captain McDowell," in Richmond, Virginia, probably by one of his McDowell kin then residing in Fayette County; and the writer (whose name cannot be determined with certainty) concludes his messages with this statement:

"I have nothing new to inform you of except Mr. Filson being killed over the Ohio River."

From this and other contemporary records of the fact, heretofore discovered, it seems reasonably clear that Filson's death must have occurred on or very near to October 1, 1788.

As matter worthy of further and more careful study, it may not be amiss to reproduce, at this point, a literal transcription of the Inventory and Settlement of John Filson's unpretentious personal belongings, which, at his death, constituted his whole estate, as same were reported to the Chester County Court by the Appraisers and the Executor of the decedent.

INVENTORY

"Inventory of Jno. Filson's Estate—filed 8th Decem'r., 1788."—"No. 3985."

"An inventory and appraisement of all the goods and Chattels of John Filson, Deceased, made by us the Subscribers, this second day of December, 1788—

"To A Dictionary	0	7	6
Buchan's Family Medicle book	0	7	6
"To 2 Hym books	0	5	0
"To Book accomp	2	1	5

"Examined by us

"Jos. Leonard
"John Worth."

The Settlement bears the following endorsement:

"Acco't. of Admini'r.—Jno. Filson's Estate—filed 21st of Dec'r., 1790."

SETTLEMENT

"Acco't. of Robert Filson, Ex'utor of the Last Will & Testament of John Filson, Deseast'd. (*sic*) as well of all & singular the Goods & Chattels, rights & Credits of the said Deceast'd (*sic*) that Came to his hand as of the payments Disbursment thereunto—

"Imprimis—

"The said accomptant Charges himself with all & Singular the Goods & Chattels, Rights & Credits of the said Dec'ad mentioned & specified in an Inventory and appraisement thereof made & executed into the Reg'r's, office at—

	£	s.	d.
"The amount of 'Praisement		3	1 5
"By Cash from Jonathan Rumford, Merchant in Wilmington, August 11th, 1790,		123	1 0
	£	126	2 5
"Balance due the Executor		208	6 6
	£	334	8 11

"Errors Excepted, West Chester, 21st Decem'r., 1790.

"Robert Filson."

"Item—

"The said accomptant prays allowance of the following payments & disbursments—

	£	s.	d.
"1—Pr. Certificate from the Supreme Courtt of Kentucke after Settlement.....	280	6	7
"2—paid Daniel Jenefer Addams, Merchant in Wilmington—August 11th, 1790,.....	28	13	7
"3—paid Wm. Pluright of Wilmington.....	0	3	9

£309 3 11

"By Register's fees in Settlement Commiss'ns pr. agreement.....	25	5	0
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£334 8 11"

This is all there is to it. But on the face of this pitifully short and simple statement of his accounts by John Filson's executor, some interesting queries arise. Who was "Jonathan Rumford, Merchant in Wilmington"? And on what account did he become indebted to John Filson in the comparatively large sum of £123, 1s.? Who was "Daniel Jenefer Addams, Merchant in Wilmington," and how, if at all, was he related to James Adams, the printer? For what did John Filson come to owe him the sum of £28, 13s., 7d.? Who was "Wm. Pluright of Wilmington," and for what did John Filson owe him 3s., 9d.? And what were the legal proceedings in the Supreme Court for the District of Kentucky, on account of which Filson's executor was compelled to pay the large sum of £280, 6s., 7d.? This last question, perhaps, can be easily answered, but the others must await further investigation.

In this connection attention may be called to the fact that, in the earlier public records of Chester County, Pennsylvania, such as deeds and wills, the name *Filson* is sometimes written *Philson*, not, however, by persons bearing the name but by others, the scribes and clerks. This naturally leads one to conjecture that the name *Filson* may have been a variant of *Philson* and, if so, this, we think, would itself have been a contraction for *Philipson*, which may have been the original family name.

Alluding to "the shabby report" that the Boone Narrative, reported and preserved by Filson, had been written by Humphrey Marshall, the Kentucky historian, Colonel Durrett (*John Filson*, pages 43, 44) observes: "This report probably grew out of the fact that Filson may have submitted his manuscript to Marshall for correction. There is some indication in the narrative of the pen of Marshall having made revisory touches here

and there. . . . It was lucky for him [i. e., Filson] if his manuscript could pass under the correcting hand of such a scholar as Marshall and I doubt not this was done." With the utmost deference to so high an authority as Colonel Durrett, the writer is inclined to reject the concession thus made by him, based, as it is, upon mere surmise or upon what is thought to be insufficient evidence. Certain it is that Humphrey Marshall, the historian, never claimed either to have written the Boone Narrative or to have aided in the composition of that or of any other part of Filson's *Kentucke*; and, from the well-known candor and guilelessness of John Filson, it is not unreasonable to assume that he would have frankly acknowledged such assistance if he had ever received it.

If, however, speculation on this point may be indulged, the supposition seems much more plausible to us that Filson's manuscript was edited—i. e., revised or corrected—by James Adams, his printer, of Wilmington, Delaware, who was entirely competent to do such editing, since he had a fair education and had been engaged in the printing and publishing business for more than twenty-five years before he put Filson's little book to press in 1784. In an obituary notice of his death, which occurred on December 11, 1792, it was said of James Adams (*Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 29, 1792) that he "was always diligent in his business, and remarkable for the regularity, neatness and correctness of his printing." Furthermore, it is almost certain that James Adams designed the title page of Filson's *Kentucke*.

On the other hand, if James Adams had naught to do with any revision of Filson's hand-written sheets, it is not beyond the range of possibility that, in preparing or recasting his work for the press, Filson may have received some help from an old Pennsylvania neighbor, Humphry Marshall, the celebrated American botanist (born October 10, 1722; died November 5, 1801) who was himself born in Chester County, in the township of West Bradford, which lies directly east of and immediately next to East Fallowfield township. "Marshallton," the home of the distinguished naturalist, in West Bradford township, built by Marshall himself in 1773, is on the Strasburg road, not more than ten or twelve miles distant from the old farmstead of the Filsons, and on the most direct route from the Brandywine and Doe Run section of East Fallowfield, where the Filsons lived, to West Chester and Philadelphia.

Humphry Marshall, the botanist, was a cousin of John Bartram (born March 23, 1699; died September 22, 1777), another noted American botanist, born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, who, in 1728, founded the first botanical garden in America. In 1785, Humphry Marshall published a book of his own, entitled *Arbustum Americanum*, a manual relating to trees, and, on January 20, 1786, he was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society, in recognition of his merit as an author, his scientific attainments, and his worth as an eminent citizen. A small park in West Chester, Pennsylvania, has been named "Marshall Square" in his honor.

Considering all of these facts, it seems more than likely that Humphry Marshall, "The quiet Quaker of West Bradford's hills," would be intensely interested in whatever Filson had to say about the mineralogy and plant life of Kentucky, and Filson could hardly have been so stupid as not to think of this. Hence, if Marshall glanced over Filson's manuscript for such information of a scientific nature as he might glean from its pages, what more natural than that the historian of Kentucky should ask him, while doing so, to give the author the benefit of a little literary criticism, with the view of improving its arrangement and style, polishing up its uneven English, and reducing capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to tolerable consistency? There is, at least, the bare chance that something of this kind may have happened and, if so, that the report, circulated in after times, that, before publication, John Filson had the benefit of criticisms and corrections at the hands of "Humphrey Marshall" had reference, not to the Kentucky historian of that name, but to the Pennsylvania botanist bearing the same name; and that, by openly admitting that he had submitted his manuscript to the critical inspection of an old and trusted acquaintance, before committing it to print, Filson himself may have given currency to the very report which has sometimes been used to his discredit. For aught that appears from any authentic source, Filson, we may well believe, was quite as intimate with Humphry Marshall of Pennsylvania, as he ever was with Humphrey Marshall of Kentucky.

We have reserved for the close of this paper an item which seems hitherto to have escaped the observation of specialists and explorers in *Filsoniana*. In *The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily*

Advertiser, No. 1782, of Friday, October 22, 1784, on page 3, second column, and midway of the column, appears the following advertisement:

"This Day is Published,

"(*Price One Dollar and a Half*)

"And to be sold by Dunlap & Claypoole, Philadelphia, and James Adams, in Wilmington,

"*The Discovery, Settlement, and present State of Kentucky, and an Essay towards the Topography, and Natural History of that important Country: To which is added, An Appendix—Containing, 1. The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boon, one of the first settlers; comprehending every important occurrence in the political history of that district; 2. The Minutes of the Piankashaw Council, held at Post St. Vincents, April 15, 1784. 3. An Account of the Indian Nations inhabiting within the limits of the United States, their manners and customs, and reflections on their origin. 4. The stages and distances between Philadelphia and the falls of the Ohio, by land; from Pittsburg down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, to the Mexican Gulph. The whole illustrated by a new and accurate map of Kentucke, and part of the Indiana territory adjoining; drawn from actual observations, by John Filson.*

"The gentlemen who have favoured this work with their subscriptions, will please to send for the copies to either of the place[s] mentioned above, or to major HAREER'S tavern, in Chester, Mr. Edge's store, in Downing's-town, or Mr. Jordon's tavern, in Lancaster."

Substantially the same advertisement of Filson's book and map is repeated in the following issues of *The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser*:

Wednesday, October 27, 1784, page 3, column 2, near bottom of column;

Wednesday, November 10, 1784, page 3, column 3, near bottom of column;

Wednesday, November 17, 1784, page 3, at bottom of column 4;

Monday, November 22, 1784, page 3, column 3, near top of column;

Thursday, November 25, 1784, page 3, at bottom of column 4;

Wednesday, December 1, 1784, page 3, column 3, about midway of the column. This appears to have been the last insertion.

The advertisement of Filson's book and map, in the issue of the above-mentioned newspaper for October 27, 1784, contains certain corrections or variations in the wording of the advertisement as first printed therein on October 22, 1784. These changes

are as follows: (1) *Kentuckey* (in the title); (2) *Kentuckey* in the body of the advertisement; (3) after the words "from actual observations," a period (.), followed by a dash (—) and "By John Filson," the word "By" now having an initial capital; (4) "places" is in the plural, as it should be; and (5) HARPER's takes the place of the incorrect HAREER's.

In the issue of the same newspaper for November 10, 1784, these changes in the advertisement are noted: (1) the caption words "This Day is Published" are in larger and bolder type; (2) the word "half," in the statement of the price, has a lower case initial letter instead of a capital; (3) the opening words read: "And to be sold by *Dunlap & Claypoole*, Philadelphia, *Jacob Baily*, in Lancaster, and *James Adams*, in Wilmington"; (4) the spelling *Kentuckey* appears in the title and likewise in the body of the advertisement below; (5) initial capitals displace lower-case type in: "The Stages and Distances," "Falls of the Ohio," and "Map of *Kentuckey*"; (6) the word "to," before "major Harper's tavern," is omitted, and (7) the words "or Mr. Jordon's tavern, in Lancaster," are omitted and, in lieu thereof, are printed the words, "also a number will be sent to Princeton and Trenton."

The form of the advertisement in the issue of *The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* of November 17, 1784, is identical with that found in the issue of the same newspaper for November 10, 1784; and this same form is retained in the issue for November 22, 1784, except that, at the very end of the advertisement, these words are added: "N.B. Considerable allowance to those who buy quantities." Thereafter no further change in the advertisement was made in the issues of November 25, 1784, and December 1, 1784, in which it was published.

The foregoing information was obtained by the writer from an excellent file of *The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser*, in the possession of the Chester County Historical Society, at West Chester, Pennsylvania. After this was done, a careful and thorough search was made of the files of *The Pennsylvania Gazette* and *The Pennsylvania Journal*, in the Pennsylvania Historical Society, in Philadelphia, for the months of May to December, both inclusive, of the year 1784, but no notice or advertisement of John Filson's book or map was found in either of these contemporary newspapers.

The Pennsylvania Packet and General Advertiser (as it was originally called) was founded by John Dunlap, in Philadelphia, on October 28, 1771. In 1784, when Filson's advertisement appeared therein, this paper, published daily, except Sunday, under the title, *The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser*, was printed and sold by John Dunlap and David C. Claypoole, "on the South side of Market Street, the third House East of Second-street, where Subscriptions, Advertisements, &c., for this Paper are thankfully received."

All that the author of the present paper on JOHN FILSON IN PENNSYLVANIA has to ask is that his slight and somewhat conglomerate contribution to the accumulated lore concerning Kentucky's first historian may be "thankfully received."