



THE POTENTIAL LOCATION OF FORT REED
 Clinton County Historical Society
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 Heisey Museum
 362 East Water Street
 Lock Haven, PA

INTRODUCTION



To take a virtual tour of our dig click on the picture!

Fort Reed was built in the Lock Haven area in the 1770s as a defense against Indian attacks. It was built by William Reed and his wife Jenny, who had a cabin in what is now the Lock Haven area. They built a stockade around their cabin, and Fort Reed became the westernmost station on the line of forts that began with Fort Augusta, in Sunbury.

In 1778, Fort Reed was abandoned during the Great Runaway. When the Indians attacked, the people of Fort Reed fled to Fort Augusta, not returning for years. The Reeds themselves went to Chester County, and returned eight years later to their cabin. Not long after, they purchased other properties of their own, and continued to live in the area until William's death in 1808.

The location of Fort Reed has been thought to be a mystery, and improvable for years. In 1899, a monument was placed by the Grafius House, at 217 East Water Street in Lock Haven. This was widely declared to be the location of Fort Reed, though there has been some doubt about that over the years.

The Clinton County Historical Society advances the theory that part of Fort Reed may have been on the property now known as the Heisey Museum, at 362 East Water Street, and not where the monument is place by the Grafius House. There is some evidence to suggest this.

COUNTER-ARGUMENT

Some believe the fort to have been at the Grafius House, west of the museum. This has been the prevailing belief for many years. This belief is based on the fact that the Daughters of the American Revolution placed the monument there, which states that it is within the stockade of Fort Reed. It says, "Located in the stockade of Fort Reed, built in 1775 for defense against the Indians."

This belief also comes from the first edition of *History of the West Branch Valley*, by John F. Meginniss, in which he states, "Reed's Fort was erected on the site now occupied by the J. Grafius House in Lock Haven."

In *Past and Present of Clinton County*, by J. Milton Furey claims, "[Reed's] cabin was constructed of hewn logs, and was located near or perhaps on the site of the Hotel Meitzler."

ARGUMENT

Background

In all the time the Historical Society has owned the museum, the grounds have never before been excavated and fully explored. In the summer of 2006, the staff became interested in discovering more, and staff and volunteers began to hold test digs in various locations around the grounds.

In early August, a foundation was discovered behind the museum. The foundation was made of stone and mortar. The southwest corner of the foundation is 9 meters and 25 centimeters south of the southern wall of the museum. The top of the foundation is 70 cm below land level, and extends 52 cm deep. It's 50 cm thick, and runs 3 m 21 cm in length along one side. The other dimension of length cannot be determined yet—Further excavation is needed, and the museum's outhouse will have to be moved to accomplish this. So far, the uncovered portion is 170 cm long.

The property of the museum itself is 120 feet by 160 feet, bordering on Water Street to the north. It is 210 feet east of the Bald Eagle Canal. The building that now houses the museum was built in 1831, and was purchased by Jerry Church and sold to the Devling brothers, who ran a hotel in the building. The foundation of the museum is 2 m 14 cm tall, including the basement. It extends 26 cm above current ground level, which would be 96 cm above the old foundation.

The Clinton County Historical Society feels that this foundation may have been one of the buildings located within the stockade of Fort Reed.

The Monument

It is widely believed that the monument placed at the site of the Grafius Building was in the correct location, and marks the site of Fort Reed. But there is some doubt about this. In fact, there has always been some doubt.

In a newspaper article from the Clinton Democrat dated July 27, 1899, it described the placing of the monument by the DAR. Their methods for proving the location were less than exact: "There has been some criticism of the spot chosen for the 'marker,' but it seemed the most suitable place to the committee....It is impossible now to determine the exact spot....If the exact site of the fort could be determined it would doubtless be better to place the 'marker' upon that spot."

The Buckalew Report

The argument that Fort Reed is the Grafius House does not take into account the Buckalew Report, which flatly contradicts it.

In 1894, five years before the monument was placed, Governor Pattison selected a committee of five men to determine where Fort Reed stood. This was led by John Buckalew of Columbia County, known as a thorough and competent historian. The Buckalew Committee took measurements and interviewed people who last remembered seeing remains of the fort about 1820. They concluded that Fort Reed lay to the east of the canal, on the eastern side of some Indian burial mounds, one of which was described as "As high as a two-story house." Buckalew claimed to know within thirty feet where the fort stood.

In *Frontier Forts Of Pennsylvania*, by Thomas Lynch Montgomery and John Buckalew, it states, "Reid's Fort...is on Water or River Street, in the built up part of town east of the Bald Eagle canal....A large Indian mound existed at this place on the river bank, described as high as a two-story house, surrounded by a circle of small ones...Immediately to the east of the mounds and close thereto stood Reid's Fort, traces of which could be seen after 1820."

The building that is now the Heisey Museum was built in 1831, roughly a decade after Fort Reed was last visible. Lock Haven was not founded until 1833, by which time the remnants of the fort may have been gone.

The Grafius Properties

Deeds at the courthouse describe the properties that were purchased by the Grafius brothers in the 1840s. They purchased the property of the Grafius House, at 217 East Water Street, widely thought to have been the site of Fort Reed. However, though the monument may stand at that location, this may not have been the correct site, according to the 1899 article.

The Grafius brothers also purchased a property east of the canal, where the Horizon House now stands. They may have owned property here that was on or near Fort Reed, though that is unprovable. Perhaps excavation of the area, or a study with ground-based radar, would be able to tell us more.

The stockade of Fort Reed, which would have surrounded multiple structures, is universally described as being large, though no maps or pictures remain to show the exact area covered. It is conceivable that the stockade may have overlapped the Grafius property on the east of the canal, and still covered the area that is now the Heisey Museum. This could have been later confused with the Grafius House property on Water Street, which may have mistakenly been thought to be the property that covered part of the fort.

The Stuempfle/Tyson Maps

To assist us in our research, ex-mayor of Lock Haven Diann Hanna Stuempfle brought in the genealogy of her family, *The David Hanna Genealogy*. This states on page 4, "David [Hanna]...reluctantly left his prized, rough-hewn home *on the hillside across from Reed's Fort.*" (Italics mine.) The book provides a rough map, showing approximately where the Hanna property was.

Bill and Pat Tyson, members of the Historical Society, then brought in a map showing the survey of where the land warrants were, overlaid on a modern map. This shows who owned the land, and what it now is. Careful examination of this map will show that the Grafius House could not be considered across the river from this property.

The Grafius building is beside the Jay Street bridge, and across the river, the Hanna property ends by the bridge. This means that the Grafius House was barely across from the most southwestern corner of the Hanna property, where a cabin was unlikely to be built. The Heisey Museum property is closer to being across from the middle of the property, where it was much more likely to have a cabin. Again, perhaps excavation or ground-based radar might shed more light on this subject.

Misconceptions

There are supposedly at least two misconceptions about Fort Reed. The first is that it was burned during the Great Runaway; but there is some evidence to show that it remained intact, and the Reeds returned to it in the 1780s. *Old Town* by Isabel Winner Miller states, "After their return to the fort and log-cabin home, which fortunately was in fair condition, they soon made it livable once more."

The second misconception is that the Reeds owned the property, which is untrue. Though they later bought other properties within the area, they never owned the land on which the fort stood. This was owned by John Fleming, who left it to his daughter. She married Doctor John Henderson, who sold the property to Jerry Church when he founded Lock Haven. This would include the grounds of the Heisey Museum.

Miller, in her book, states, "As they [the Reeds] had never owned the land, which belonged to John Fleming, they purchased a tract across the river where William Reed died in 1808."

Appearance

The foundation behind the Heisey Museum is made from stone, with a dirt floor.

The journal of Revered Fithian, reprinted in book form, described the Reed house as "earth-floored." An excerpt from a letter written in 1939 by a Reed descendant, Elizabeth Rosborough, mentions a stone springhouse, also within the stockade. This suggests that the buildings, while dirt-floored, may have been fully or partially made from stone.

Age

Fort Reed was built in the 1770s, and by all accounts was last visible in the 1820s. There is some question of the exact year, as various sources place it at 1773, 1775, or 1777.

The foundation, whatever it may be, was gone completely by 1891. A Sanborn map of that year shows no sign of a structure in that location, and the structures and outbuildings since that time have been well-documented—With no indication of a foundation there.

So whatever structure stood on this foundation, it certainly was built and removed before 1891.

CONCLUSION

We believe, based on the evidence provided, that part of Fort Reed might have stood on the property that is now the Heisey Museum. In order to continue researching this, we have asked the public to come forward with any knowledge or documentation they may have either for or against this possibility. In that sense, this project is a work in progress, and will be rewritten and expanded as new evidence comes to light.

In the future, we plan to raise the funding to continue the excavation with the assistance of professional archaeologists. Our goal is to uncover the entire foundation, which will require the moving of the display outhouse in the backyard. After excavating the foundation thoroughly and documenting fully that it

is Fort Reed, we plan to preserve the remains of the foundation and make it part of our educational tour.

APPENDICES

Refutation of the Winner Letter

(See Document 15 for Winner Letter)

On September 18, 2006, the Clinton County Historical Society received a letter from Doctor Fred Winner, a copy of which was also sent to the Express. It states with certainty that Fort Reed was on the site of the Grafius building, but the research to back that up seems incomplete.

Dr. Winner cites the J.F. Meginness book as proof of his theory. It's true that Meginness makes the claim of the Grafius House being Fort Reed in an early edition, written in 1857. But Meginness, in later editions, made no such claim, listing Fort Reed as "near the site of the Montour House" [Today's Lindsey Place.] Either location, the Heisey or the Grafius House, could have been considered near the Montour House.

Dr. Winner conveniently doesn't mention the writers who don't support his theory, such as John Blair Linn or J. Milton Furey, both of whom are vague about the fort's location. Linn states, "William Reed's log or block-house stood on or near the site of the Montour House." Furey says, "His cabin was constructed of hewn logs, and was located near or perhaps on the site of the Hotel Meitzler." [Another name for Lindsey Place.] As previously mentioned, this does not rule out either location, as both could be considered near the Montour House.

Dr. Winner completely omits mentioning the Buckalew report. In 1894, Governor Pattison appointed John Buckalew to supervise a committee of five men. Their job was to figure out where the forts of the area were. Buckalew spoke to people who remembered seeing the remains of Fort Reed in 1820, and wrote, "It's location is on Water Street, in the built up part of town east of the mouth of the Bald Eagle Canal....A large Indian mound existed at this place on the river bank, described as high as a two-story house, surrounded by a circle of small ones....Immediately to the east of the mounds and close thereto stood Reed's Fort, traces of which could be seen after 1820. This gives us the exact site within, say thirty feet, of the chimney of the Reed house and brings us within the stockade."

The statement in Scott Kulah's article attributed to Dr. Winner was correct, and did come from Dr. Winner. This was no misprint. He cannot find it on the menu cover because it didn't come from the menu cover. As Kulah's article stated, it was taken from a piece in the Express on July 3, 1776, in which Dr. Winner wrote, "Some have felt that the fort was to the east of the river bridge near Canal Park. There was an Indian burial mound here, but there is no evidence whatsoever of foundations which would be necessary for shelter."

Dr. Winner may have made an effort to retrieve timbers from the river in 1959 and rebuild the stockade, but that doesn't prove that the stockade was there in the first place. And there may have been a well in the basement of the Grafius House, but there is also a stone circular well in the basement of the Heisey Museum. If early settlers needed a well within the stockade of the fort, there's one at each site.

As stated in the article, there was some doubt about the DAR's location of the monument at the time. The Clinton Democrat, on July 27, 1899, stated, "There has been some criticism of the spot chosen for the marker....It is impossible now to determine the exact spot of where the fort stood, as different authorities locate it at various places in the vicinity of the courthouse and canal....If the exact site of the fort could be determined, it would doubtless be better to place the marker upon that spot."

The Clinton County Historical Society has a goal: To find out the truth. We would like to find the true site of Fort Reed once and for all, wherever that might be. The Heisey Museum is open from ten AM to four PM, Tuesday through Friday. The public is welcome to come and discuss the fort's location, and to view the evidence as to where the fort may have stood.

References

Document 1: *Next Saturday Evening Is the Time Selected to Unveil the Fort Reid Monument*; Article from the Clinton Democrat, July 27, 1899

Document 2: *Locating Old Forts*, Article from the Clinton Democrat, May 10, 1894

Document 3: *Site of Fort Reid*, Article from the Lock Haven Express, October 24, 1898

Document 4: *History of Centre and Clinton Counties*, John Blair Linn, 1883, page 472

Document 5: *History of the West Branch Valley*, J.F. Meginness, 1888, page 484-485

Document 6: *Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania, Volume I*, edited by Thomas Lynch Montgomery, portion written by John F. Buckalew, 1916, pages 416-417

Document 7: *Past And Present of Clinton County*, J. Milton Furey, 1892, page 104-105

Document 8: *Old Town*, Isabel Winner Miller, 1966, page 22-23

Document 9: *Historical and Biographical Annals of Columbia and Montour Counties, Pennsylvania, Volume I*, 1915, page 406. Supplied by Columbia County Historical Society.

Document 10: Deed to the property east of the canal, purchased by the Grafius brothers, 1840. Found at Clinton County Courthouse.

Document 11: Deed to the property of the Grafius House, purchased by the Grafius brothers, 1843. Found at Clinton County Courthouse.

Document 12: Letter written by Elizabeth N. Rosborough of Lewisburg, PA, descendant of the Reed family. Circa 1939. Found in the Reed genealogy folder at the Ross Library.

Document 13: Excerpt from Clinton County Historical Society pamphlet.

Document 14: Section of Sanborn-Ferris map of Lock Haven, page three, 1891

Document 15: Letter written by Dr. Fred Winner, September 12, 2006

Document 16: *The David Hanna Genealogy*, 1770-1988, Charlotte Hanna Shoemaker.

Document 16-B: Warrant Map, showing the original land warrants of the area and comparing to modern locations.

Transcriptions

From Document 10:

"...To Jacob Grafius and Abraham Grafius and to their heirs and [illegible] the other undivided hail part of four certain Lots of grounds situate on the Town of Lock Haven, aforesaid and described as follows, for here of adjoining each other and bounded on the North by Main Street on the West by the Bald Eagle Canal, on the South by Willards Alley and on the East by Lot No. 69 and known on the general plot of said Town as Lots number seventy (70) and seventy one (71) containing each one quarter of an acre more or less according to the town plot."

From Document 11:

"John Miller, Sheriff of Clinton County To J+A Grafius"

"...Frame house and lot of ground in the Western Addition of the town of Lock Haven containing about one fourth of an acre situate on Water Street and known as the part of the said Western addition....."

From Document 12:

"Miss Jane Reed never trusted her servants to look after the butter and milk. One morning when she was down in the old stone "Spring" house, a warrior and his braves paid her a visit, dancing around her with their tomahawks chanting some Indian song."