STUDIES IN AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

Number 1

# AARON LEVY

## FOUNDER OF AARONSBURG

BY

SIDNEY M. FISH, PH.D.

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BY

SIDNEY M. FISH, PH.D.

*Gratz College, Philadelphia, Pa.*

WITH A FOREWORD BY

LEE M. FRIEDMAN, D. H. L.




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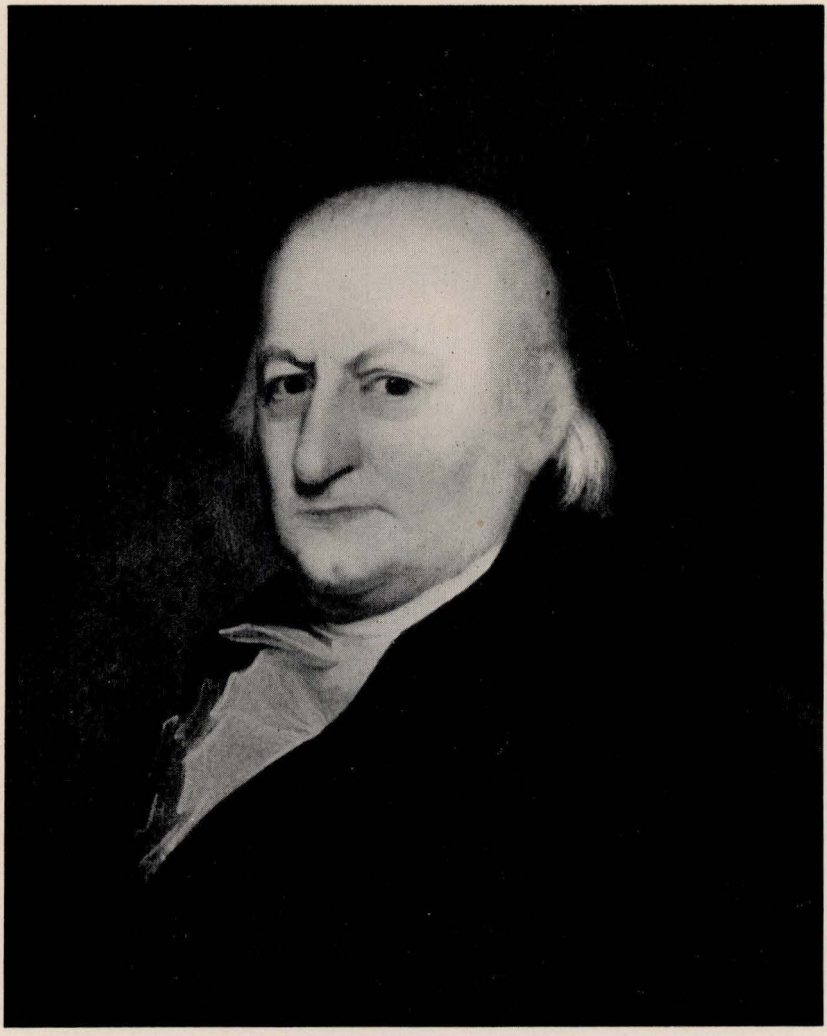
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AARON LEVY

From a painting by ROBERT EDGE PINE

*Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

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# FOREWORD

It is well indeed that the inauguration by the American Jewish Historical Society of its series, *Studies in American Jewish History,* be made with this monograph by Dr. Sidney M. Fish on *Aaron Levy: Founder of Aaronsburg.* This study, in a large degree, presents the life and achievements of an American Jew who left an indelible mark on the American scene and withal remained a faithful Jew. In some measure his rôle is similar to that of many a Jew in other communities who migrated to these shores, established a home here, following implicitly throughout life the sage counsel of Jeremiah to the Israelites:

> And seek ye the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

Aaron Levy fully identified himself with the welfare and interests of the country whither he had come. Here he struck his roots: witness the fact that his name from the end of the eighteenth century to this very day is identified with the community which he helped found. He associated himself with the development of the spiritual life there by donating the land upon which the Salem Lutheran Church stands today. The opportunity and privilege to do such things were granted him on the free soil of America. The spirit which motivated Aaron Levy, the dream that he sought to realize, and his enlistment in our great American enterprise — the bold experiment of freedom and liberty for all men — have been pertinently described by Dr. Ralph J. Bunche and Justice Felix Frankfurter respectively, in their remarks delivered at Aaronsburg,

Pa., October 23, 1949, at the commemoration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Salem Lutheran Church. These remarks they have graciously consented to have published in the pages of this volume.

Dr. Fish, in the preparation of this study, has painstakingly and competently endeavored to gather all material available in the various governmental and congregational archives, libraries and historical societies of New York and Pennsylvania, as well as in the private collection of our Honorary President, Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, in order to delineate fully the life and times of Aaron Levy.

The publication of this monograph has been made possible by a contribution from an anonymous member who hoped thereby to stimulate others to follow his example. It is hoped, therefore, that this study will be but a forerunner of other equally valuable contributions to American history and will, like the other *Publications* of our Society, expand the knowledge of the rôle played by Jews in the development of our country and its noble heritage and at the same time enhance and advance American Jewish historiography.

LEE M. FRIEDMAN

# PREFACE

On Sunday, October 23, 1949, an inspiring event took place in the little town of Aaronsburg, Centre County, in the heart of Pennsylvania. Some thirty thousand Americans from nearby communities and from distant cities came there to join the four hundred residents in celebrating the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Salem Lutheran Church. They came to do honor to the memory of Aaron Levy who founded this town in 1786, and donated the ground upon which the church was erected.

While the initiative for this observance came from local and neighboring residents, the grand scale on which it was planned, making it one of the highlights of the observance of Pennsylvania Week, required the aid of state authorities and educational institutions, and the co-operation of social and civic organizations such as the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the B'nai B'rith. A Rededication Service and several seminars and panel discussions on racial and religious problems were held. An historical pageant, "The Issue of An Ideal," written especially for this occasion by Professor William R. Gordon of the Pennsylvania State College, was enacted by more than one thousand performers, while another thousand, representing various local and nearby civic and educational groups, volunteered their services in its preparation.

Another feature in the day's proceedings was the display of Aaron Levy's Hebrew Bible, his portrait, documents and other family heirlooms. This exhibit was arranged by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and by Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach of Philadelphia, Honorary President of the American Jewish Historical Society and a collateral descendant of Aaron Levy, as well as by other members of this family, a number of whom

attended the festivities. The day-long celebration was brought to a fitting close with Governor James H. Duff's proclamation declaring the last Sunday in October as "Tolerance Day," to be observed annually in the State of Pennsylvania.

"The Aaronsburg Story" assumed national importance through the participation of such distinguished individuals as the United States Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter; Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, former Mediator of the United Nations Palestine Commission; Sir Mohammed Aly Z. Khan, Vice-President of the United Nations General Assembly and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan; the Honorable James H. Duff, Governor of Pennsylvania; General William J. Donovan, former Director of the Office of Strategic Services; Dr. Daniel A. Poling, Editor of *The Christian Herald*; as well as the heads of several leading colleges and universities and spokesmen for numerous social, religious and civic bodies from various parts of the country. The wide press, screen and radio coverage and the favorable editorial comment on "The Aaronsburg Story," accorded by some of the nation's leading newspapers, brought this event to the attention of a considerable part of the American people.

Much praise was showered upon Aaron Levy, founder of "Jewstown," as Aaronsburg has sometimes been called, for his generosity and goodwill toward the founding fathers of this pioneering community. However, the real significance of this event lies, perhaps, not so much in what this Jewish pioneer did for his town as in the unprecedented manner in which the descendants of those first settlers, and tens of thousands of other Americans, demonstrated their gratitude and paid homage to his memory six generations later. Viewed in this light, Aaron Levy has rendered this country a service beyond anything he could ever have hoped for, or dreamed of.[1]

[1] For a detailed account of the celebration see the *Centre Daily Times* (published at State College, Pa.), October 21, 22 and 24, 1949; the New York *Times*, the New

In preparing this study I have been especially encouraged by Dr. Lee M. Friedman, President of the American Jewish Historical Society, whose generous and continued interest in the progress of this work made its appearance possible. I am also indebted to Professor Jacob R. Marcus, Vice President, and Rabbi Isidore S. Meyer, Librarian of this Society, for many valuable suggestions. I further wish to express my grateful appreciation for the many courtesies extended to me by Miss Miriam E. Levy and Mr. Edwin Wolf 2nd of Philadelphia, collateral descendants of Aaron Levy; Mr. Jerome Weinstein, Editor of the *Centre Daily Times*; the Reverend James S. Shannon, Minister of the Salem Lutheran Church of Aaronsburg; Mrs. Doris Mamolen of Millheim, Pa.; Mr. Martin Luther Heisey, Editor and Librarian of the Lancaster County Historical Society; the Librarians and staff members of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and of the Library Company of Philadelphia; Messrs. Lester Albright, James H. Schreck, Verus M. Kiess and H. Earl Barr, the respective Recorders of Deeds of Northumberland, Centre, Lycoming and Mifflin Counties; Mr. Henry Hurwitz, Editor of *The Menorah Journal*; and Mrs. Clifford L. Pelton of Claremont, California.

SIDNEY M. FISH

York *Herald-Tribune*, the *Philadelphia Daily Bulletin*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Boston Post*, October 24, 1949. The *Centre Daily Times* has an extensive collection of news releases and editorial comments concerning the "Aaronsburg Story," printed in the United States and in several foreign countries. For text of the program of "The Aaronsburg Story" and of the addresses delivered on the occasion by Dr. Ralph J. Bunche and by Mr. Justice Felix Frankfurter, see *infra*, Appendix I, pp. 47–55.

We wish to thank The Menorah Association, Inc., for its kind permission to reprint Justice Frankfurter's address which was published in *The Menorah Journal*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 1 (Winter, 1950), pp. 1–5, under the title, "The Bold Experiment of Freedom: What's Past Is Prologue."

Aaronsburg has been sometimes referred to locally as "Jewstown." See D. S. Maynard, *Industries and Institutions of Centre County* (Bellefonte, Pa., 1877), p. 165.

# AARON LEVY: FOUNDER OF AARONSBURG

## I

### FAMILY BACKGROUND

Very little is known about Aaron Levy's ancestral origin or his early youth. A family tradition has it that he was born in 1742, and that he came to the American colonies eighteen years later, in 1760. His Hebrew signature, Aaron, son of Aaron [אהרן בר' אהרן], indicates that he was born either fatherless or that his father had died before the infant had reached his eighth day.[2] Since an older brother and other members of the Levy family are known to have lived in Amsterdam, it is believed that Aaron, too, had spent his early life in that city, and he is therefore generally regarded as being of Dutch Jewish origin. Several Hebrew documents, now brought to light for the first time, reveal some interesting facts concerning the social and religious environment in which the several members of the Levy family in Holland were brought up. These may well provide an important clue to Aaron's early religious training. The primary source consists of an ethical will, com-

[2] The original Hebrew signature of Aaron Levy is found on a Hebrew document, dated Lancaster, the third day of Passover, 1782. See *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* (=*PAJHS*), no. 34 (1937), p. 68. It also appears on the *ketubah* of his nephew Aaron Levy, Jr., dated Philadelphia, the twenty-ninth of Sivan, 1801 (the Levy Family Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania [=HSP], a copy of which has been preserved in the "Records of Marriages, Births and Deaths," archives of the Congregation Mikveh Israel, Philadelphia, Pa.).

It should be noted that Jewish male children are admitted into the covenant of Abraham (circumcision) and given their names on their eighth day. In accordance with an ancient tradition observed among Ashkenazic Jews, no Jewish child is named after a living member of the family.

posed by Aaron Levy's older brother, Moses Ḥayyim of Amsterdam, on the occasion of his son's [Aaron b. Moshe Ḥayyim (אהרן בר' משה חיים)] departure to Philadelphia in the fall of 1795. Written in the form of a Hebrew acrostic, this document represents a moral code for the guidance of his youthful son.

The anxious father, in charging his son with the faithful observance of his instructions, re-enforces his exhortations with paternal blessings and with invocations for divine reward. Above all, he commands his son to fear the Lord, to put his trust in Him and to walk justly in His path. He admonishes his son to shun evil and to pursue only that which is good; to subdue temptation and follow only wholesome inclinations; to deal honestly in all his pursuits and to keep the Sabbath holy. The son is also instructed to open his doors to the poor, to support them generously and to deal kindly with all people. He is enjoined against forgetting his motherless brothers and sisters, and is asked to act charitably toward his relatives. The father requests due honor while alive, and upon his death the mourners' Kaddish is to keep his memory sacred. This intimate family document reflects the deeply religious and moral spirit which permeated the Levy household in Amsterdam. Through this instrument, Moshe Ḥayyim, the brother of Aaron Levy, typical of most Jewish parents of that generation, charges his son with the faithful adherence to a sacred heritage into which the family was born. We may therefore assume that these revered principles were also part of Aaron Levy's early training, and that they were deeply imbedded in his character.

Although suffering from a complete disregard for the sensibilities of even the kindest Hebrew grammarian, this composition nevertheless indicates a fair degree of scholarly accomplishment. The mere fact that it was composed in Hebrew is in itself a strong indication that the members of this family were

raised in a tradition of Jewish learning. It is therefore quite likely that young Aaron Levy was no exception, and that he too had received at least some basic training. It should also be noted that during that period Amsterdam ranked as a great center of Jewish scholarship and was especially known for its good schools.

For additional evidence we now turn to the young man (Aaron Levy, Jr.) for whose guidance this document was intended. How this fatherly advice was taken is clearly indicated by the type of books he took along with him as he set out for the New World. A few of these books have been preserved and we may use them as a reliable index in determining the extent of the intellectual and spiritual equipment with which he left his father's house.

It is therefore interesting to find among these books the first volume of Joseph Caro's *Shulḥan Arukh* with all the standard commentaries thereto. Only a person possessing some Talmudic training could ever make use of this code of Jewish law. Another item of this collection consists of a *Megillah*, a manuscript parchment scroll of the Book of Esther, read in the synagogue on the Purim festival. These, together with some Bibles and several fine editions of special prayer-books for various occasions, some brought along from his native Amsterdam, and others acquired in later years, afford ample proof that the son of Aaron Levy's brother was conversant with Hebrew lore and Jewish religious practice.

These documents further enable us to establish the origin of the Levy family. Although the prayer-books referred to are based on the Spanish-Portuguese custom, known as the Sephardic ritual, the numerous family records contained in them are written in Yiddish, a language then used only by Eastern and Central European Jews. It therefore follows, beyond any doubt, that Aaron Levy's parents, or their immediate ancestors, had settled in Holland along with other

Jewish immigrants from Poland and Germany, toward the end of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century.[3]

## II

## Pioneering Years

Having traced some aspects of Aaron Levy's family background, we may now proceed with the story of his career as an American pioneer. As already stated, Aaron Levy is said to have arrived here from Europe during 1760. It is very likely that he spent the next decade or so in Philadelphia and in Lancaster, where some of his relatives and friends had already been firmly established. It was in these important trading centers that he gained his first American business experience, and it was probably also during this period that he married Rachel.[4]

[3] The ethical will of Moshe Ḥayyim of Amsterdam is located in the Levy Family Collection, HSP. Its text is reproduced *infra*, Appendix II, p. 56.

The Hebrew books hereinafter referred to are in the possession of Miss Miriam E. Levy of Philadelphia. The following are some of the titles: *Maḥzor* [for the High Holidays, Sephardic rite] (Amsterdam, 1716), bearing the inscription of Aaron b. Moshe Ḥayyim of Amsterdam: *Shulḥan Arukh, Tur Oraḥ Ḥayyim* (Amsterdam, 1730); *Pentateuch and Five Scrolls* (Amsterdam, 1759 ?) [this is believed to have belonged to Aaron Levy (the elder) the subject of this study]; *Seder Mo'adim* [Sephardic rite] (Amsterdam, 1792), bearing the inscription of Aaron b. Moshe Ḥayyim of Amsterdam; *Seder Tefillot* [Sephardic rite] (London, 1810). Another Hebrew Bible containing important family data, written in Yiddish and bearing the signature of Aaron Levy, Jr., the nephew of Aaron Levy (the elder) is found in the Levy Family Collection, HSP.

On Aaron Levy, Jr., see Henry S. Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1894), pp. 50, 58, 144, 177, 446 and 543.

[4] Nothing definite is known about her family background. In a deed, dated Oct. 18, 1814, she is referred to as the aunt of Benjamin Philips of Philadelphia. According to William Vincent Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754–1798* (Jefferson City, Mo., 1916), p. 257, note 2,

> A portrait of Mrs. Aaron Levy is now owned by Mr. J. Bunford Samuel of Philadelphia . . . coming down in the family after being originally presented by Simon Gratz.

Rachel Levy's maiden name was Phillips (also spelled Philips), and that of her



MRS. AARON LEVY

*Courtesy of Mrs. Clifford L. Pelton*

The earliest official record of Aaron Levy's activities in Pennsylvania, known to this writer, refers to an application made by him to the Proprietaries for a town lot in the newly laid out frontier town of Sunbury, Northumberland County, dated July 3, 1772, hardly three months after the establishment of this county. The patent to this lot, located on Dewbury Street, was granted to Levy on April 27, 1774, and is signed by John Penn. Two days later he was granted an additional lot in that town on a warrant issued to Moses Levy in 1772.[5]

Another early document refers to a deed by which Reuben Haines, one of the leading pioneers in Central Pennsylvania, conveyed to Aaron Levy certain tracts of land in Northumberland on October 3, 1773, about a year and a half after that part of the Province of Pennsylvania had been incorporated into a county.[6] A similar entry reveals that in December, 1773,

mother — Samuel. The fact that her signature, found on numerous Levy documents, is invariably written in Hebrew (Ashkenazic script), may be considered definite evidence that she was of Polish or German-Jewish ancestry.

The circumstances under which Aaron Levy is believed to have made the acquaintance of Rachel are related in a letter written by David Samuel of Philadelphia to Maria Phillips of London, in October, 1858. According to this source, Rachel had been a servant of the Chew family in Philadelphia. Aaron allegedly met her on a Saturday as she was tearfully scrubbing the front steps of the Chew house (then on Third Street, below Walnut). Asked for the cause of her grief, Rachel attributed it to her being obliged to work on the Sabbath. For this information the author is indebted to Mr. Edwin Wolf 2nd, of Philadelphia. Obviously of an apocryphal nature, this incident is quoted here simply for the record. In Hannah London, *Portraits of Jews by Gilbert Stuart and Other Early American Artists* (New York, 1927), pp. 30–31, this story is also related, and Rachel Levy's portrait, which was in the collection of Mr. J. Bunford Samuel of Philadelphia, appears there on page 115. Mrs. Aaron Levy's portrait is now owned by Mrs. Clifford L. Pelton of Claremont, California.

[5] The two Sunbury lots granted to Aaron Levy on April 27 and 29, 1774, were numbered 112 and 291. They were 60 by 200 ft., and 60 by 230 ft. respectively, and were subject to a yearly ground-rent of seven shillings each (recorded in the Northumberland County [=NC] Deed Books F, p. 44, and I, p. 529). On Moses Levy (1757–1826), see *infra*, note 49.

The town of Sunbury was laid out in 1772 by John Lukens, Surveyor General of the Province of Pennsylvania. The first three stone houses erected there between 1772 and 1775, belonged to John Lukens, William Maclay, and James Tilghman (Northumberland County Historical Society *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 15).

[6] Deed, Aaron and Rachel Levy to William Antes, gunsmith of Philadelphia, Jan. 13,

Aaron Levy purchased from the Proprietaries two more tracts situated in the same section.[7] Other records show that during the next two years Levy took out at least six more land warrants, totalling close to 1,000 acres in or near Sunbury, and that he also owned land in Buffalo Township and a 1,300 acre tract in Lancaster County.[8] It is therefore clear that at the outbreak of the War of Independence Aaron Levy had already acquired considerable land holdings in that frontier region.

Situated deep in Indian territory, at the confluence of the North (East) and West Branches of the Susquehanna, hard by the Indian town of Shamokin, some 150 miles from Philadelphia, and about 120 miles from Baltimore, the village of Northumberland occupied a particularly strategic position as an important frontier defense outpost, communication and trade center. Aside from being advantageously located on a major inland waterway, it also served as a valuable connecting link between the northeastern and northwestern Indian trails and traders' routes winding their course toward Harris' Ferry, now Harrisburg, some fifty odd miles to the south, whence another great trail cut through the mountain forests on its westward course to the Ohio country and points beyond.

To protect this vital region against the attacks of the enraged natives during the French and Indian War, a fort was erected in 1756 at the junction of the two arms of the Susque-

1779, states that Aaron Levy had bought this land from Reuben Haines, Oct. 6, 1773 (NC Deed Book B, pp. 10–11, in Recorder's Office, Sunbury, Pa.). Northumberland County was established by an act of the Provincial Assembly, March 21, 1772.

[7] Deed, Aaron and Rachel Levy to Frederick Antes, July 1, 1778 (NC Deed Book B, p. 159).

[8] Warrantees of Land, Feb. 2, April 27 and 28, 1774; April 25, 1775; Feb. 27, 1776; *Pennsylvania Archives* (=*PA*), third series, vol. XXV, pp. 212–213. On April 3, 1775, Aaron Levy sold John Teel a parcel of land in Sunbury (NC Deed Book F, p. 38). On Sept. 20, 1776, Aaron Levy deeded to Samuel Miles and William Wister of Philadelphia a 306 acre tract, known as "Wild Cat Hill," in Wiconisco Valley, Lancaster (now Dauphin) County; a 103 acre tract, "Palestine"; and a 106 acre tract, "Aaron's Staff," in Buffalo Township, Northumberland County. Joseph Simon witnessed the deed; recorded, March 7, 1777, Lancaster County (=LC) Deed Book I, p. 258.

hanna. Known as Fort Augusta, it remained for many years a stronghold against hostile Indian attacks.[9] Among the major concessions made to the Iroquois and Delaware Indians inhabiting the upper Susquehanna region during the peace conference held at Easton in the summer of 1757, was the provision calling for the removal of the imposed ban against trade in that region and for the establishment of an Indian trading post at Fort Augusta. These Indian requests were granted by the colonial authorities as part of an effort to regain the loyalty and friendship of the natives who had turned pro-French during the conflict.[10]

Until a few years before the outbreak of the Revolution the site of the town Northumberland was considered as being some ten miles outside the Indian boundary line in Pennsylvania agreed upon at the Indian Conference held at Easton in October, 1758.[11] It was not until early in November, 1768, that this region, along with other vast bodies of territory, was acquired by the Proprietaries of Pennsylvania from the Six Nations Iroquois at the conclusion of the historic treaty then held at Fort Stanwix (Rome), New York, and has since been known as the "Last" or "New Purchase."[12] Thus the Northumberland region became part of Penn's private acquisition.

As soon as the preliminary surveys of "the lands lately purchased by the Honorable the Proprietaries" were returned to the Board of Property, this territory was opened to white settlers. The first to receive grants were the officers of the First and Second Battalions of the Pennsylvania Regiment who had served in the French and Indian War. On February 3,

[9] For a detailed account of the history of this fort, see Herbert C. Bell, *History of Northumberland County* (Chicago, 1891), p. 75; and *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, vol. IX, pp. 244–245.

[10] Albert T. Volwiler, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement* (Cleveland, 1926), pp. 133–136.

[11] See map showing Croghan's activities as an Indian trader, *ibid.*, frontispiece.

[12] Ohio Company Papers, Etting Collection, HSP; see typescript edition of same by Kenneth P. Bailey (Arcata, Calif.), pp. 186–196.

1769, they were granted 24,000 acres on the West Branch of the Susquehanna, to be divided among the members of this group, at five pounds per hundred acres, and subject also to an annual ground-rent of one penny per acre. Three weeks later the Land Office gave public notice that beginning with April 3rd it would receive applications from all persons "inclinable to take up lands in the new purchase."

Although the price fixed for this land was the same as that charged to the officers, other terms were considerably more stringent. Surveys on all applications had to be made at the expense of the purchasers and returned within six months, and patents taken out within one year from the date of application. Land purchases were limited to three hundred acres per application, unless a special license for larger tracts be first secured from the Proprietaries or the governor. The full amount of purchase money, together with interest and quit-rent from six months after the application, was payable at the issuance of the patent. In view of the strict terms of sale the prospective applicants were "warned and cautioned not to apply for more land than they will be able to pay for in the time hereby given for that purpose."[13]

On that anxiously awaited day, April 3, 1769, the Provincial Land Office was swamped by 2,790 applications from land-hungry pioneers and from speculators whose appetite for more land had been checked for nearly two decades, due to the French and Indian War, Pontiac's savage uprising and the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which followed in its wake. One million acres of the best land was sold during the first four months. One of the greatest westward movements in American history was on. During the next few years thousands of families crossed the great Appalachian divide, settling as far west as Pittsburgh and in the Ohio country.[14]

[13] H. C. Bell, *History of Northumberland, supra*, p. 82–84.

[14] Volwiler, *supra*, pp. 223–224. See also, Gibson Collection, Northumberland Papers, HSP. For Secretary James Tilghman's statement, Jan. 1, 1771, regarding

Of the three new counties organized in Pennsylvania between 1771 and 1773, as a result of this great westward migration, that of Northumberland was by far the largest. As constituted in 1772, it embraced most of the territory acquired by the New Purchase, and accounted for more than one-third of the total area of Pennsylvania. With the New York line as its northern border, this immense domain extended from the Lehigh to the Allegheny rivers. Northumberland has therefore been justly called the "Mother of Counties" of Pennsylvania, for no less than twenty-eight counties were subsequently carved out of the territory originally situated, wholly or partly, within its limits.[15]

It is difficult to determine exactly when Aaron Levy arrived at the town of Northumberland. In the spring of 1774, we find him there already well established. His name appears on the earliest known list of taxables of that infant pioneering village, and he is believed to have been one of its principal inhabitants. In a power of attorney granted by him to Henry Haines, dated June 30, 1774, he is described as a "Merchant," a definite indication of considerable commercial attainment, as business people of lesser standing were then generally styled by the less dignified designation of "shop keeper."[16] It is

the Land Office policy towards "New Purchase" lands see Wallis Papers, Microfilm, Roll 1, HSP.

[15] The following counties were wholly or partly within the original limits of Northumberland County; Armstrong, Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Elk, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Lycoming, McKean, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Venango, Warren and Wyoming. See H. C. Bell, *History of Northumberland, supra*, p. 149.

[16] Power of Attorney, Aaron Levy of Northumberland, Merchant, to Henry Haines, June 30, 1774, recorded in NC Deed Book A, p. 71. One of the witnesses to the signing of this document was Israel de Lieben.

In a list of taxables of Turbut Township in which the town of Northumberland was situated, prepared prior to 1775, Aaron Levy is assessed for a house and lot. Commenting on this list, H. C. Bell, *History of Northumberland, supra*, p. 519, writes: "It is fair to presume that this list includes the names of its principal inhabitants at this time." Cf. Isabella H. and A. S. W. Rosenbach, "Aaron Levy," in *PAJHS*, no. 2 (1894), p. 157.

therefore obvious that Aaron Levy had been a resident of Northumberland for some time previous to the signing of the aforementioned document. It may also be assumed that he had come there with the first wave of new settlers during the summer of 1769, or shortly thereafter.

The nature of Levy's business interests may best be determined by his close connections with the Gratz brothers of Philadelphia and with Levy Andrew Levy of Lancaster, whose name also appears on the first known tax list of Northumberland. The latter was a nephew, subsequently also a son-in-law and junior business associate of Joseph Simon of Lancaster, a leading merchant, Indian trader and land dealer in colonial Pennsylvania. Most likely Levy had gained his experience through contacts with many friends in Philadelphia and Lancaster who may have been responsible for his settling in Northumberland. Judging by these and other known facts of prevailing practices under similar circumstances, and relying upon an intimate knowledge of the various types of enterprises pursued by those connected with this group, we may safely conclude that Aaron Levy's business during this period consisted mainly in supplying provisions, equipment and other needs to the local and neighboring farmers and in purchasing their produce, as well as in Indian trading, and in furnishing supplies to the military units and government agents stationed in that area.[17]

This kind of business usually resulted in an ever increasing interest in land speculation. Thus, in addition to the numerous tracts which he secured directly from the Land Office, Aaron Levy engaged in buying land warrants and other claims from individuals who either found it too difficult to meet the prescribed terms of sale or from those who took out warrants for purely speculative reasons. Land speculation was rampant; the prospects for quick, worthwhile returns seemed bright. The

[17] *PAJHS*, no. 2, p. 158.

choice lands having been quickly taken up, the demand for good soil increased with each successive surge of new pioneers, and continued until it was abruptly halted by renewed Indian outbreaks during the Revolutionary period.

A vivid description of the boom-town conditions then prevailing in the village of Northumberland is found in the *Journal* of Philip V. Fithian, a traveling Presbyterian preacher, who toured that region in the summer of 1775. He found there, among others, a large number of boatmen employed on the Susquehanna. "With these and others from the country," he noted, "this infant village seems busy and noisy as a Philadelphia ferry-house." In his lodging place he was obliged to share his room "with seven of them, and one for a bed fellow."[18]

The impact of the Revolution brought about a profound change in the mood of the hardy pioneers of this frontier community. On July 20th, the day set aside by the Continental Congress for humiliation and prayer, the village was quiet and mournful. All stores were closed and all business laid aside. There being no church in town, the religious service was held in a large, half-finished private house. So thronged was this structure, including the cellar, with patriotic worshippers that many were obliged to remain outside. Mr. Fithian, who had never spoken "on so solemn a day," delivered his sermon "in great fear and dread." In recording this inspiring event the preacher notes: "There were two Jews present, Mrs. Levy and her nephew of this town."[19]

[18] *Philip V. Fithian, Journal, 1775–1776*, edited by Robert Greenhalgh, Albion and Leonidas Dodson (Princeton, 1934), p. 64.

[19] *Ibid.* The editors of Fithian's *Journal* (note 32) brand Aaron Levy as a "would be profiteer," and "hoarder," basing their opinion on a recorded complaint against him and John Bullion for refusing to sell a quantity of salt that they had on hand, until ordered by the Committee of Safety to do so at fifteen shillings per bushel, about one-third of the prevailing market price. Salt was then among the scarcest commodities on the constantly rising market. In May, 1776, prices were four to five times higher than usual. Between April and July, 1777, the wholesale price of salt, when obtainable,

The war against England resulted in new Indian attacks on many isolated and exposed settlements in the back country. Encouraged by British agents, the natives availed themselves of the many opportunities for pillaging and destroying unprotected homesteads. No part of Pennsylvania felt the brunt of their fury more severely than did Northumberland County. Alarmed by frequent reports of abominable atrocities many villages were abandoned, their inhabitants fleeing for safety to the larger and better protected towns. Whatever resistance the local settlers and the provincial militia could muster proved unequal to the task and, at best, brought but little relief.

The news of the massacre which had occurred in neighboring Wyoming on July 3, 1778, precipitated a general panic among the inhabitants of Northumberland County, causing a hurried and disorderly exodus which has often been described as the "Great Runaway." A description of the plight of these refugees is found in a letter addressed to the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania by one of its members, William Maclay, upon his safe arrival at Paxtang, near Harrisburg, on July 12, 1778, after a hazardous journey of four days. In relating his experiences he wrote:

> I left Sunbury and almost all my whole property on Wednesday last . . . I never in My life saw such a scene of distress. The river and the roads leading down to it were covered with men, women and children, flying for their lives, many without any property at all, and none who had not left the greatest part behind; in short Northumberland County is broken up.[20]

in Philadelphia and Lancaster, rose from fifty-five shillings to about five pounds per bushel. See letters, M. Gratz, Philadelphia, to B. Gratz, Pittsburgh, May 3, 1776; Joseph Simon, Lancaster, to David Franks, Philadelphia, April 20 and 30, May 23, July 16, 1777, Etting Collection, HSP. Under these circumstances it is unfair to label Levy as a "war profiteer" or "hoarder." This salt incident is also referred to in the *Proceedings* of the Northumberland County Historical Society, vol. VIII, p. 59. Fithian also mentions Levy on p. 66 of his *Journal.*

[20] H. C. Bell, *supra*, pp. 120 ff. William Maclay was also a Deputy Surveyor of the Pennsylvania Land Office. In 1789, he and Robert Morris were elected the first

It was under such circumstances that Aaron and Rachel Levy left Northumberland. A few days before the outbreak of the panic they were still there, transacting business and conveying some of their lots.[21] When we hear of them again some five months later they are already referred to as residents of Lancaster.[22] Although the Indian menace was checked and order restored, the Levys remained in this important inland trading center until after the conclusion of the war.[23] Upon his removal to Lancaster, Aaron Levy soon resumed his interest in land transactions involving not only extensive tracts situated in the neighborhood of Lancaster but also numerous other parcels located in various parts of Northumberland County, as well as some shares in the Illinois-Wabash Land Company.[24]

United States Senators from Pennsylvania. The Maclay Mansion in Harrisburg, Pa., is one of the historic shrines of that city.

[21] Deed, Aaron and Rachel Levy to Frederick Antes, July 1, 1778, NC Deed Book B, p. 159; agreement between Aaron Levy and Andrew Stroube, March 25, 1778, *ibid.*, p. 143.

[22] Deed, Aaron Levy and wife to William Antes, Jan. 13, 1779, NC Deed Book B, pp. 210–211. See also *infra*, note 24.

[23] Power of Attorney, Aaron and Rachel Levy, Lancaster, to David Samuel, London, June 11, 1783,— Gratz Collection, Non-Importation Resolutions, case 1, box 2, HSP.

[24] The first mention of Aaron Levy as being a resident of Lancaster during the war years is found in connection with his purchase from Levy Andrew Levy of some shares in two large tracts of land situated: (1) east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio River; (2) east of the Mississippi and near the mouth of the Missouri River, in a deed, Dec. 24, 1778, witnessed by Joseph Simon and Eliazer Lyon, LC Deed Book U, pp. 43 ff. A detailed account of the leading part played by the Gratz brothers, Joseph Simon, Levy Andrew Levy, David and Moses Franks of Philadelphia, Moses and Jacob Franks of London, and other prominent colonial figures in the founding of the Illinois and Wabash Land Companies will be found in this writer's forthcoming book on Barnard and Michael Gratz.

The following are some other documents in which Aaron Levy appears as a resident of Lancaster: deed, John Weitzel to Aaron Levy, June 7, 1779, NC Deed Book B, p. 176; deed, Aaron and Rachel Levy to Robert and John Faulkner, Northumberland Township, Oct. 11, 1780, NC Deed Book D, p. 75; deed, Henry Hoffman, Martick Township, to Aaron Levy, Aug. 22, 1782, LC Deed Book V, p. 250. See also "Effective Supply Tax on Land," *PA*, third series, vol. XVII, pp. 597, 610 and 705.

## III

### Land Operations

As a loyal citizen Aaron Levy took an active interest in the Revolutionary cause. Early in the war, he had served in a Northumberland unit of the state militia.[25] In 1778, when the frontier settlements were being devastated by British-led savage Indian onslaughts, Levy, along with other neighbors, joined his old friend, Colonel Samuel Hunter, commanding officer of Fort Augusta, in an urgent appeal to the military authorities for desperately needed re-enforcements.[26] An entry in the *Journal of Continental Congress* reveals that before 1781 he had invested some money in treasury loans.[27] His name also appears among those who served in Captain John Ewing's company of the Lancaster County state militia.[28]

A simple but revealing letter, addressed to him by one of his former neighbors who apparently had joined the British colonial forces and was subsequently taken prisoner and confined to the Philadelphia gaol, shows that Aaron's political convictions did not prevent him from taking a sympathetic view towards some of his less far-sighted friends who were caught on the wrong side of the conflict:

New Gaol Philadelphia March the 20th 1781

Dear Sir —

I take this opportunity of acquainting you that I and my wife is in good health at present Hoping that these Lines will find you

[25] Aaron Levy, private, listed as applying for depreciation pay among those who served in the Northumberland County Militia. *PA*, fifth series, vol. IV, p. 371.

[26] Isabella H. and A. S. W. Rosenbach, *supra*, *PAJHS*, no. 2, p. 157. Colonel Samuel Hunter lived at Fort Augusta until his death in 1784.

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 160–161; see also Herbert Friedenwald in *PAJHS*, no. 1 (1893), p. 89, quoting from an entry in the *Journal of Congress*, March 29, 1781.

[28] The name, Aaron Levi, is also found on the Roll of the Eighth Battalion, Second Company, John Ewing, Capt., June 27, 1781. Another list, of June 26, 1781, states that Aaron Levy furnished a substitute (*PA*, fifth series, vol. VII, pp. 819, 829, 848).

[and] your wife In the Same. I have Been very poorly within this Short time past which was the Reason of my No answering your Letter you was pleased to Send me. I Return you Ten Thousand Thanks for troubling your Self so much upon my account In trying to get me my Liberty. If your Business Should Lead you to Come to Philadelphia I Should be Greatly obliged to you if you would take the trouble to Call and See me There is Some talk Here of an Exchange Being in . . . which I heartily wish for but If not I should Be very proud if I were Living along with you again So no more at present But Remains your Humble Servant

JOHN EDWARDS

P. S. you will please to Remember my Best Respects to my old Shop mate John Moffatt — he is in Lancaster.[29]

The close relationship existing between Aaron Levy and the Gratz-Simon families was further strengthened during his five war years spent in Lancaster. It was largely through these contacts that he was introduced to some members of the ever widening circle of their business affiliates. Many of those associated with this group represented the uppermost levels in the economic, social, political and military structure of eighteenth century American society. Two of these, Robert Morris, the celebrated financial strategist of the Revolution, and James Wilson, the equally famed jurist, signer of the Declaration of Independence and statesman, are of particular interest to us since Aaron Levy subsequently became closely linked with their ill-fated land schemes. Both Robert Morris and James Wilson were for many years actively interested in the Indiana and Illinois-Wabash land companies with which Joseph Simon and Barnard and Michael Gratz were particularly concerned.[30] In addition, the Gratz brothers, especially Michael, often served as one of James Wilson's major land purchasing agents.[31]

[29] British Army Prisoners, Bradford Papers, HSP, vol. IV, p. 32.

[30] See note 24, *supra.*

[31] Articles of Agreement between Michael Gratz, Samuel A. Ripley and James Wilson, May 29, 1794; Agreement between Michael Gratz, Thomas Stokeley, Peter

It may further be added that, among several other vital war projects, Michael was also engaged with Robert Morris in war shipping, blockade running and privateering.[32] All told, the various business relationships between the Gratz-Simon interests and those of Robert Morris and of James Wilson cover a period of twenty-five to thirty years. It is safe to conclude that Aaron Levy's first contacts with these two noted personalities may be attributed to his connection with the Gratz-Simon families.

Aaron Levy's interest in land speculation was greatly stimulated by the new waves of westward migration which followed the victorious end of the war in the spring of 1783. While the Congress of the Confederation was enacting land ordinances, and carving up the vast, unpopulated empire it had inherited from the British crown, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was busy disposing of the Penns' private domain to which it fell heir. As in the case of the impoverished Congress, Pennsylvania was liquidating its debts by issuing land certificates and by compensating the discharged members of its militia who had received their allowance in almost worthless paper currency by granting them an additional depreciation pay in

Benson and James Wilson, May 29, 1794; Agreement between Benjamin Chew, Thomas Stokeley, Zachariah Connell and James Wilson, May 30, 1794,— Wilson Papers, HSP, vol. IX, pp. 38 ff. Letter, James Wilson, Bedford, to Barnard Gratz, Philadephia, Oct. 13, 1773, Etting Collection, HSP. Bill from B. and M. Gratz to James Wilson, Dec. 2, 1773, Library Company, Ridgway Branch, McAllister Collection, 7309 F42; Deed, Patrick Henry, Esquire, Governor of Commonwealth of Virginia, to Michael Gratz, Barnard Gratz, James Wilson and others, Feb. 8, 1786, William V. Byars, *B. & M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, supra*, pp. 23–24 and 232–233.

[32] Two agreements [dates torn off] between Willing, Morris & Co. and Michael Gratz, Connoroe Papers, HSP, vol. I, p. 45; Cornelius Dabney, Cumberland, Md., to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, Nov. 3, 1776; Gratz-Croghan Papers, HSP, vol. I, p. 53; Robert Morris, Richard Henry Lee and William Whipple to Caesar Rodney, April 25, 1777, Gratz Collection, Declaration of Independence, HSP, case 1, box 20; letter, Carter Braxton to Michael Gratz, May 12, 1784, Connoroe Papers, vol. I, p. 48; bill, Michael Gratz in account with Morris & Braxton, New York Public Library, Miscellaneous Mss. Cf. Byars, *supra*, pp. 27 and 29.

land grants. It is worth noting that the State of Pennsylvania generally followed a more liberal land policy than that adopted by the Congress, by limiting its grants to about 400 acres per application, thus preventing wealthy individuals or companies from cornering most of the available land supply, and by fixing the purchase price at forty pounds, Continental money, per 400 acre tract, far less than the lowest official rate set by the Congress for land in the Northwest Territory.[33] Thousands of people from all walks of life were therefore given an opportunity to secure tracts of land in the central and western parts of the state at a nominal price.

The procedure in making a land purchase was as follows: the prospective buyer made an "Entry" or "Location" at the Land Office, indicating his intention of "locating" an unclaimed or "vacant" lot in a given area. He was then given a "Certificate of Entry," establishing his claim, or right, to a tract of land in the general neighborhood asked for. The Land Office then issued to the applicant a warrant to have his grant surveyed. When the survey establishing the exact location of the lot was returned to the Land Office, and if no conflicting claim or caveat was entered, the warrantee could then pay the full purchase money to the Receiver General's Office, whereupon he was granted a patent. The recording of this patent was the final step in establishing full title to the grant. The time required for the completion of all these steps varied with the circumstances and the urgency with which the grantee pressed his case.[34]

The above procedure was substantially the same as it had been in colonial days, except that the terms of sale were now

[33] On the Northwest Territory ordinances, see Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (New York, 1939), vol. I, pp. 510–514; also, Ernest Ludlow Bogard, *Economic History of the American People* (New York, 1931), pp. 272–276.

[34] The description of this procedure is based on a careful study of the Minutes of the Land Office and of the Board of Property, of numerous warrants, deed polls, agreements and deeds involving many hundreds of thousands of acres.

greatly liberalized. Due to administrative and strategic reasons the British policy was based on the principle of confining white settlements within limits as close to the seacoast as possible. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was therefore among the chief causes which brought about the Revolution. Now, the free Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in line with national policy, was most anxious to see its vast western hinterland populated in the quickest possible way. The economic crisis which gripped the country during the post-war period acted as an additional incentive to many who hoped to find a more abundant life on the western frontier. Under these circumstances, thousands of people from all walks of life availed themselves of this rare opportunity to acquire claims to large tracts. Large numbers actually settled on their grants and joined the pioneering founders of many frontier communities. Others who, for various reasons, never reached this goal held on to their claims in the hope that they or their children might eventually be able to do so, or else get an attractive offer for their certificates. Among the thousands of applicants there were also a great many who had neither the desire nor the need for exchanging the comparative security and comfort of an established community for the hazards and hardships of a frontier settlement. Their only purpose in making an entry or in securing a warrant was to wait until desirable locations were exhausted and then sell their rights to the highest bidder.

As one may readily see, this situation was bound to create an active market for various types of land claims, affording almost unlimited opportunities for large scale investments for those experienced in this field or in a position to finance extensive speculative land schemes. With Northumberland County as one of the principal regions affected by the westward expansion, land speculation became Aaron Levy's chief interest since his return to Northumberland late in 1783, or shortly thereafter. His activities covered every branch of this trade prac-

ticed during that period. He applied directly for as many grants as he could obtain in his own and his wife's name. He also bought up innumerable claim certificates, and having these grants surveyed he paid the full purchase money to the Receiver General, following which they were patented and recorded in his own and his wife's name. Many of these tracts were subsequently divided into smaller parcels, "improved," and sold to sundry customers. Since his own funds were limited, he often resold large blocks of warrants to other individuals or land companies who were in a more favorable financial position to complete the process in the acquisition of the full titles. On other occasions he acted as purchasing agent for such individuals or companies on whose behalf he would undertake to seek out large quantities of land claims and warrants, to arrange for and superintend the surveying of the same and to prepare all the necessary papers. In such cases Aaron Levy was paid a specified commission, plus travel and other expenses. It was in connection with these last two branches of his business that he became for some time most actively concerned with Robert Morris and with James Wilson.

The extent of Aaron Levy's old and newly acquired holdings may be judged by the frequency in which his name appears on the tax lists of various townships in central Pennsylvania, at one time or other, during the latter part of the eighteenth century. In addition to the considerable acreage listed in his name in the town of Northumberland and nearby Sunbury he is also credited with numerous tracts, varying in size from fifty to 1,500 acres, situated in the townships of Augusta, Bald Eagle, Bloomsburg, Buffalo, Haines, Loyalsock, Mahanoy, Muncy, Nipponose, Penns Valley, Potter, Turbut, Wyoming and in many other places. During the same period he is frequently mentioned among the warranties of land in the counties of Bedford, Cumberland, Dauphin, Huntingdon, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mifflin, Northampton, Northumberland

and Westmoreland.[35] Aaron Levy must have indeed been a familiar figure to the members of the State Board of Property, such as Daniel Broadhead, Surveyor General, Francis Johnston, Recorder General, and David Kennedy, Secretary of the Board, since much of their time was consumed by proceedings to which Aaron Levy was a party. The same applies to the Recorders' Offices of Northumberland and Centre Counties where the entries of Levy's deeds, agreements and other transactions cover hundreds of pages.[36]

## IV

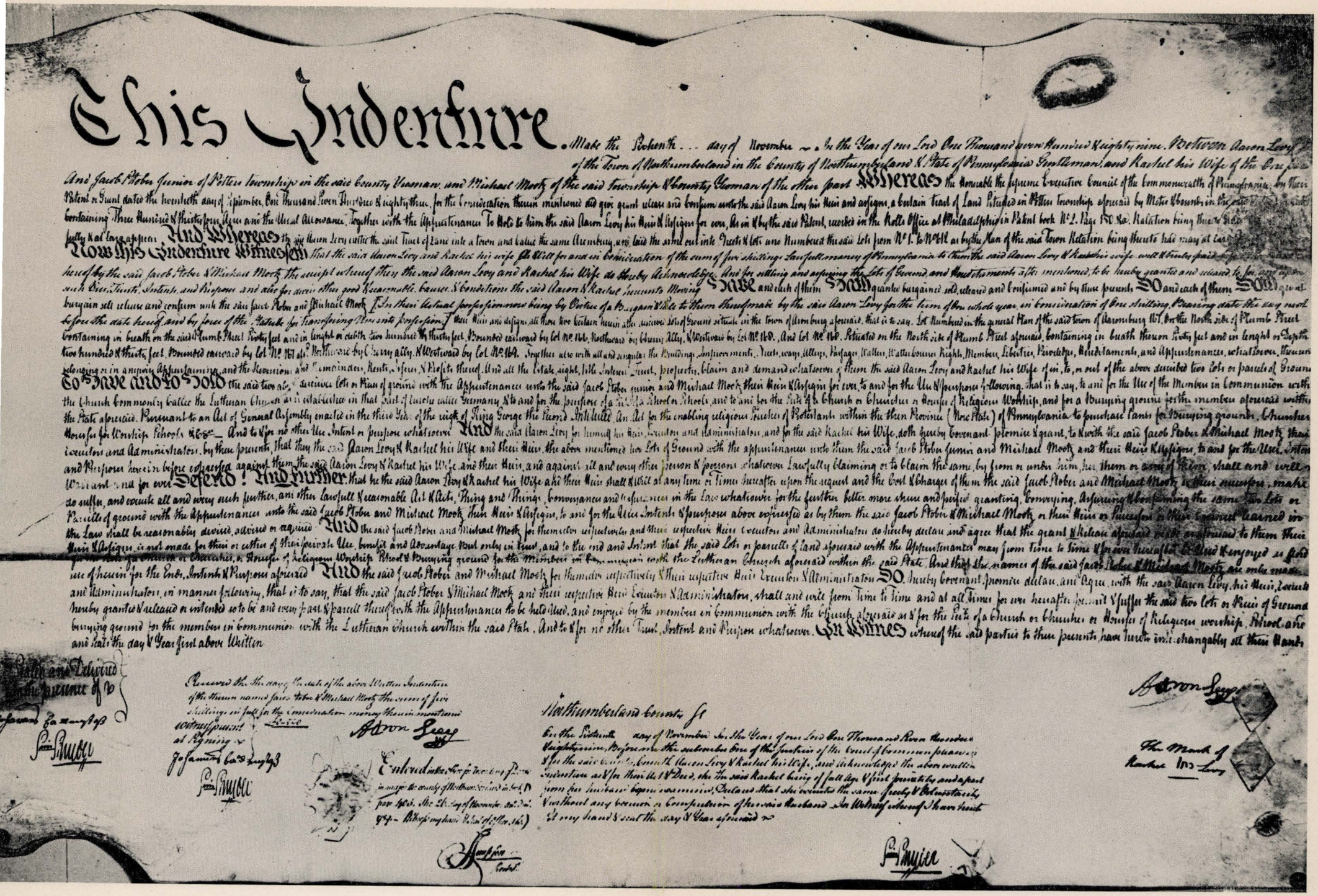
### The Founding of Aaronsburg

Of the innumerable tracts involving hundreds of thousands of acres which passed through Aaron Levy's hands in his long career as land promoter, one comparatively small area of some 334 acres deserves special attention, for through it he earned an honorable place as the founder of an American frontier community. "Levi the Jew" seems to have had a particularly high opinion of the beautiful and fertile countryside of Penns Valley, situated some thirty miles west of Northumberland, where only some twenty odd families had settled by 1775. On June 7, 1779, during his sojourn in Lancaster, Aaron Levy purchased from John Weitzel of Sunbury a tract of land known as the White Thorn Grove, consisting of 334½ acres, and

[35] For location of each tract, acreage, nature of tax, valuation, tax assessment of each parcel, dates and other details see the following: *PA*, third series, vol. XIX, pp. 220, 460, 464, 477, 487, 489, 505, 518, 524, 547, 550, 564, 584, 588, 598, 607, 625, 632 ("Levi the Jew" — Potter Township), 635, 649, 666, 667, 676, 680, 694, 704, 707, 724, 743, 753, 755, 758, 765, 772, 786, 794, 800 and 804.

For Aaron Levy as warrantee of lands see *ibid.*, vol. XXIV, pp. 245, 593 and 710; vol. XXV, pp. 212, 213, 214, 216, 218, 219, 220, 221, 223, 563, 731 and 732; vol. XXVI, pp. 120, 462 and 765. The above entries extend from 1774 to 1806, reaching their peak during the 1790's. In a few cases the name is spelled "Aaron Levi," but there is no reason to assume that the reference is to any person other than our subject.

[36] See list of Aaron Levy's land transactions, *infra*, Appendix III, pp. 57–71.


This Indenture. Made the Fifteenth ... day of November ~ In the Year of our Lord One Thousand seven Hundred & Eighty nine. Between Aaron Levy of the Town of Northumberland in the County of Northumberland & State of Pennsylvania Gentleman, and Rachel his Wife of the One part And Jacob Plotter Junior of Potter township in the said County Yeoman, and Michael Mootz of the said Township & County Yeoman of the other part. Whereas the Honorable the Supreme Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by their Patent or Grant dated the twentieth day of September, One Thousand Seven Hundred & Eighty three, for the Consideration therein mentioned did give grant release and confirm unto the said Aaron Levy his Heirs and Assigns, a certain tract of Land Situated in Potter township aforesaid by Metes & Bounds in the said Patent or Grant mentioned containing Three Hundred & Thirty four Acres and the usual Allowance. Together with the Appurtenances To Hold to him the said Aaron Levy his Heirs & Assigns for ever, As in & by the said Patent, recorded in the Rolls Office at Philadelphia in Patent book No 2. Page 170 &c. Relation being thereto had may at large appear. And Whereas the said Aaron Levy entered the said Tract of Land into a Town and called the same Aaronsburg, and laid the same out into Streets & Lots, and Numbered the said Lots from No 1. to No 114. as by the Plan of the said Town Relation being thereto had may at large appear. Now this Indenture Witnesseth that the said Aaron Levy and Rachel his wife for and in Consideration of the sum of four shillings Lawfull money of Pennsylvania to them the said Aaron Levy & Rachel his wife well & truely paid at or before the sealing & delivery hereof by the said Jacob Plotter & Michael Mootz the receipt whereof they the said Aaron Levy and Rachel his Wife do hereby acknowledge. And for settling and assuring the Lots of Ground and Hereditaments after mentioned, to be hereby granted and released, to him the said Jacob Plotter and his Heirs, and for the better securing to him the said Jacob Plotter such Rent, Profits, Interests, and Purposes and also for divers other good Reasonable, Causes & Conditions the said Aaron & Rachel hereunto Moving Have and doth of their Own Proper Motion Full power certain Knowledge & meer Motion Have Given Granted Bargained Sold Aliened and Confirmed and by these presents Do and each of them Doth Give Grant bargain sell alien and confirm unto the said Jacob Plotter and Michael Mootz (In their Actual possession now being by Virtue of a Bargain & Sale to them thereof made by the said Aaron Levy for the term of One whole year in consideration of One shilling, bearing date the day next before the date hereof, and by force of the Statute for transferring Uses into possession) their Heirs and Assigns all those two certain Lots of Ground situate in the Town of Aaronsburg aforesaid, that is to say, Lot Numbered in the general Plan of the said Town of Aaronsburg No 67. on the North side of Plumb Street containing in breath on the said Plumb Street Sixty feet and in length or depth two hundred & thirty feet, Bounded eastward by Lot No 161 alias No 68. Northward by Cherry Alley, & Westward by Lot No 169. And Lot No 160. Situated on the North side of Plumb Street aforesaid, containing in breath thereon Sixty feet and in length or depth two hundred & thirty feet, Bounded eastward by Lot No 161 alias No 68. Northward by Cherry Alley, & Westward by Lot No 159. Together also with all and singular the Buildings, Improvements, Woods, ways, Alleys, Passages, Waters, Watercourses, Rights, Members, Liberties, Priveledges, Hereditaments, and Appurtenances, whatsoever thereunto belonging or in anywise Appertaining, and the Reversion and Remainder, Rents, Issues & Profits thereof. And all the Estate, right, title, Interest, Trust, property, claim and demand whatsoever of them the said Aaron Levy and Rachel his Wife of in, to, or out of the above described two Lots or parcels of Ground To Have and To Hold the said two above mentioned Lots or Pieces of ground with the Appurtenances unto the said Jacob Plotter Junior and Michael Mootz their Heirs & Assigns for ever, to and for the Use & purposes following, that is to say, to and for the Use of the Members in Communion with the Church commonly called the Lutheran Church as it is established in that part of Europe called Germany & to and for the purpose of a Burying Ground for the members aforesaid within the State aforesaid. Pursuant to an Act of General Assembly enacted in the third year of the reign of King George the third entitled An Act for the enabling religious Societies of Protestants within this Province (Now State) of Pennsylvania to purchase Lands for Burying grounds, Churches Houses for Worship Schools &c. — And to & for no other Use Intent or purpose whatsoever. And the said Aaron Levy for himself his Heirs, Executors and Administrators, and for the said Rachel his Wife, doth hereby Covenant Promise & Grant, to & with the said Jacob Plotter & Michael Mootz their Executors and Administrators, by these presents, that they the said Aaron Levy & Rachel his Wife and their Heirs, the above mentioned two Lots of Ground with the appurtenances unto them the said Jacob Plotter Junior and Michael Mootz and their Heirs & Assigns, to and for the Uses, Intents and Purposes herein before expressed against them the said Aaron Levy & Rachel his Wife and their Heirs, and against all and every other person & persons whatsoever Lawfully claiming or to claim the same, by from or under him, her, them or any of them, shall and will Warrant and for ever Defend. And further, that he the said Aaron Levy & Rachel his Wife and their Heirs shall & will at any time or times hereafter upon the request and the Cost & Charges of them the said Jacob Plotter and Michael Mootz & their successors, make do suffer, and execute all and every such further, and other lawfull & reasonable Act & Acts, Thing and Things, Conveyance and Assurances in the Law whatsoever for the further better more sure and perfect granting, conveying, Assuring & confirming the same two Lots or Parcells of ground with the Appurtenances unto the said Jacob Plotter and Michael Mootz their Heirs & Assigns, to and for the Uses Intents & purposes above expressed as by them the said Jacob Plotter & Michael Mootz or their Heirs or Successors or their Counsel learned in the Law shall be reasonably devised, advised or required. And the said Jacob Plotter and Michael Mootz for themselves respectively and their respective Heirs Executors and Administrators do hereby declare and agree that the grant & Release aforesaid made or intended to them their Heirs & Assigns is not made for their or either of their private Use benefit and Advantage but only in Trust, and to the end and Intent that the said Lots or parcells of land aforesaid with the Appurtenances may from time to time & for ever hereafter be used enjoyed as for the use of therein for the Ends, Intents & Purposes aforesaid. And the said Jacob Plotter and Michael Mootz for themselves respectively & their respective Heirs Executors & Administrators do hereby covenant promise declare and agree with the said Aaron Levy his Heirs, Executors and Administrators, in manner following, that is to say, that the said Jacob Plotter & Michael Mootz and their respective Heirs Executors & Administrators, shall and will from time to time and at all times for ever hereafter permit & suffer the said two Lots or Pieces of Ground hereby granted & released or intended so to be and every part & parcell thereof with the Appurtenances to be held used, and enjoyed by the members in communion with the Church aforesaid as & for the Use of a Church or Churches or House of Religious worship, School and burying ground for the member in communion with the Lutheran Church within the said State. And to & for no other Trust, Intent and Purpose whatsoever. In Witness whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto interchangably set their Hands and Seals the day & Year first above Written

Sealed and Delivered in the presence of us

Received the Fifteenth day of the date of the above Written Indenture of the therein named Jacob Plotter & Michael Mootz the sum of four shillings in full for the Consideration money therein mentioned

Witness present at Signing

Aaron Levy

Northumberland County ss

Be it Remembered that the Fifteenth day of November in the Year of our Lord One Thousand seven Hundred & Eighty nine. Before me the subscriber one of the Justices of the Court of Common Pleas & for the said County Personally came Aaron Levy & Rachel his Wife, and acknowledged the above written Indenture as & for their Act & Deed, the the said Rachel being of full age & first privately & apart from her husband examined, declared that she executed the same freely & Voluntarily & without any Coercion or Compulsion of the said husband In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal the day & Year aforesaid

The Mark of Rachel Levy

Entered in the Book for Records of Deeds in and for the County of Northumberland in Book D page 564. the 26th day of November 1789 (Whereupon Patent of Aaron Levy)



FACSIMILE OF ORIGINAL DEED TO TWO LOTS OF LAND GRANTED BY AARON AND RACHEL LEVY TO THE LUTHERAN CONGREGATION OF AARONSBURG, DATED NOVEMBER 16, 1789 AND RECORDED NOVEMBER 26, 1789

*Courtesy of the Reverend James S. Shannon*

situated in Potter Township. Additional adjacent land was granted to Aaron and Rachel Levy by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by letters of patent, on April 20, 1783.[37] Convinced that this spot was "capable of every improvement," and that it "recommends itself as one of the first situations on the continent for an inland city," he resolved to turn it into a populated center. He believed that such a town, in the heart of a fertile region, would in time develop into an important trading center where farmers could sell their grain and other country produce. Since the site of this proposed town was situated in the exact center of an area that was soon to be incorporated into a new county he expected it to become the seat of the county government. Furthermore, his projected town was astride a road leading to Philadelphia, and the new highway to Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh), then about to be laid out, was expected to connect with it at that point. The navigable waters within relatively easy reach would link this prospective community with the coastal cities. The excellent timber and the fine quarries found in abundance in this neighborhood could provide ample material for good homes. In short, a town thus situated would have great potentialities of becoming a thriving center, able to support a prosperous community.[38]

Having made his decision, Aaron Levy proceeded to carry out his plan for converting his White Thorn Grove into a town which he named "Aaronsburg." Using the town plans of Sunbury and Northumberland as models, Levy had the tract laid out into streets, fifty feet wide, intersecting each other at

[37] This tract had originally been granted by the Proprietaries to Alexander Grant on Sept. 10, 1773, and was sold to John Weitzel on April 9, 1774, for the price of £30. On June 7, 1779, Aaron Levy acquired this tract from John Weitzel, paying for the same £1,000, "Lawful money in Pennsylvania," and the deed was recorded at Sunbury on July 1, 1779, NC Deed Book B, p. 176. A patent to additional tracts, adjoining the White Thorn Grove is recorded in the NC Deed Book C, pp. 247 ff.

[38] Aaron Levy's Proclamation, broadside, May 23, 1786, reproduced by A. S. W. Rosenbach, *PAJHS*, no. 30 (1926), item 75, p. 85.

right angles. The central avenue, running north and south was called "Aaron's Square," and was given a width of 160 feet between North and South Streets, so as to provide suitable locations for any future public buildings. The other main thoroughfare, one hundred feet wide, extending east and west, was named "Rachel's Way" in honor of his wife. The square blocks were then subdivided into 612 individual lots, each having a frontage of either fifty-five or sixty feet and a depth of either 190 or 230 feet. The rear portions of the adjoining properties were separated by wide alleys which could be used as secondary public lanes. Several lots were reserved as future sites for schools and houses of worship "of every denomination"; similar provisions were made for burial places.[39]

On May 23, 1786, Aaron Levy issued a circular informing the public of his new venture. According to the terms of sale stated in this broadside the lots were to be sold by means of lottery tickets, each bearing a certain number entitling its purchaser to such lot, or lots, that would be drawn against his name. The price of each ticket was six dollars, and the land acquired thereby was subject to a yearly ground-rent of one dollar. However, the purchaser could at any time get full title to the land by paying twenty Spanish silver milled dollars. The public drawing was to take place at the town of Northumberland as soon as three hundred lots were sold, but a tentative date was set for next October 1st. For the convenience of the prospective buyers a copy of the plan of the projected town as well as tickets for sale were placed with certain agents located in Philadelphia, Pottstown, Reading, Lancaster, Carlisle and York Town (York), or they could be bought directly from Aaron Levy at his place in Northumberland. To those interested in buying additional ground, Aaron Levy offered to sell

[39] For Aaron Levy's plan of the town of Aaronsburgh, Oct. 4, 1786, see Isabella H. and A. S. W. Rosenbach, *supra*, *PAJHS*, no. 2, pp. 159–160, and NC Deed Book C, pp. 247 ff.

at reasonable rates small parcels of farm land adjacent to the town. The plan of Aaronsburg was registered in the Recorder's Office of Northumberland County on October 4, 1786, thus launching the first town in Penns Valley.[40]

A sufficient number of tickets were sold, and the drawing was held on or close to the appointed time, for during the next few months a number of deeds to Aaronsburg lots were signed, and recorded in the names of their new owners. The first to receive these deeds were, in the order given, Herman Bake, Lewis Noah, Samuel Smith, John Friend, Frederick Greiner, Henry Bedkin, Simon Gratz (thirteen year old son of Michael), Daniel Aurandt, Jr., and Nicholas Schreiner, Jr. All the above received their deeds between November 20, and December 22, 1786. Among those who were deeded Aaronsburg lots during the next four months were: Solomon and Reuben Etting (sons of Elias), Peter Cress, Hugh Ogden, Charles Cooper, Henry Kammerer, Benjamin Philips (nephew of Rachel Levy), John Greiner, Christian Miller, Christian Miller, Jr., Jacob King, Peter V. Dorey and Samuel Miles.[41] As in most other land transactions all Aaronsburg deeds were signed by Aaron and Rachel Levy, the latter affixing her signature in Hebrew, the only language she could write.

Once the venture had been started, the unsold lots fetched somewhat higher prices. Early in 1788, for instance, James Stokes paid £68:15–, specie, for seven Aaronsburg lots.[42] With the gradual development of the town and with the ever-growing scarcity of desirable town lots, Aaron Levy proceeded to sell his farm lands, located in the adjacent areas of Potter,

[40] See *supra*, note 38; for facsimile of an "Aaronsburgh Lottery" ticket, see *PAJHS* no. 30 (1926), item 74, p. 84.

[41] See list of Aaron Levy's land transactions, *infra*, Appendix III, pp. 57–71.

[42] Deed, Aaron and Rachel Levy to James Stokes, March 12, 1788, for seven Aaronsburg lots, NC Deed Book D, pp. 146–147. The original deed, signed for the Levys by their attorney, Christopher Baker, is located in the Etting Collection, Uncatalogued, HSP. The power of attorney granted to Baker by the Levys, Jan. 17, 1787, is recorded in the NC Deed Book C, p. 384

Bald Eagle, Haines, and Penns Valley townships.[43] By 1799, thirty-two families had settled permanently in Aaronsburg, and a post office was opened in that year.[44]

With the growth of population there arose the question of a suitable place for religious worship. The first settlers of Penns Valley were chiefly of Scotch-Irish descent; the new arrivals were mostly of German stock. Prior to the founding of Aaronsburg most worshippers of that region used to meet at a village now known as Wolf's Store, a few miles east of Aaronsburg. After the new town was founded, the local residents and those living west of it found it more convenient to gather for worship in this place.[45] On November 16, 1789, three years after the founding of the town, Aaron and Rachel Levy conveyed to Jacob Stober, Jr., and Michael Mootz, both yeomen of Potter township, "in consideration of five shillings," Pennsylvania currency, two lots, numbered 167–168, of those which had been reserved for religious purposes in accordance with the original plan of the town. The deed specified that the two pieces of ground were for the use of the "Members in Communion with the Church commonly called the Lutheran Church" as established in Germany, and were to be used as sites for a school, a church and a burying ground. On November 26, 1789, this deed was recorded in Northumberland.[46] However, there seems to have been some disagreement among the people as to the most suitable location for a church, for it was not until some time later that Aaronsburg was unanimously selected for that purpose. The corner stone for the Salem Lutheran Church

[43] See *infra*, Appendix III, pp. 57–71.

[44] John Blair Linn, *History of Centre and Clinton Counties* (Philadelphia, 1883), p. 33.

[45] James S. Shannon, *The Aaronsburg Story* (Aaronsburg, 1950).

[46] Deed, Aaron and Rachel Levy to Jacob Stober, Jr. and Michael Mootz, Nov. 16, 1789, NC Deed Book D, p. 403. This indenture was drawn up, witnessed and certified by Judge Simon Snyder of the Court of Common Pleas of Northumberland County and bears the Hebrew signature of Rachel Levy. See facsimile facing p. 20.



SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, AARONSBURG, PA.

*Courtesy of the Reverend James S. Shannon*



COMMUNION SET OF THE SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, AARONSBURG, PA.

GIFT OF AARON LEVY

*Courtesy of the Reverend James S. Shannon*

was laid on May 16, 1794, and the ceremony was conducted by the Reverend Christian Espich, Evangelical Lutheran preacher of Sunbury, a neighbor of Aaron Levy. An appropriate scroll, stating the history of and the circumstances under which the church had progressed was placed in the cornerstone, a copy of which is still in the possession of the church that was dedicated in 1799.[47] It may have been in connection with these ceremonies that Aaron Levy presented the Lutheran congregation with a communion set, now a prized heirloom of that church. On May 20, 1796, while the Lutheran Church was under construction, Aaron and Rachel Levy granted two additional lots, numbered 344 and 345, to Adam Harper and Frederick Henney, "Trustees and Administrators" . . . for the use of the members "with the Church Commonly called the Calvinist — or Reformed Church," on the same terms accorded to the Lutheran congregation.[48]

There was also another side to the story of Aaronsburg. Some settlers did not pay the ground-rent on time or failed to live up to other conditions of the sale. It was therefore necessary for Aaron Levy to "re-enter" and take possession of such properties, a procedure that involved unpleasant and time-

[47] See James S. Shannon, *supra*, note 45.

[48] Each of the four pewter pieces of the communion set bears the following inscription:

Das Geschanke Zu Denen Deutschen Gemeinden in Arensburg von Aron Levy

and carries the trade mark of Will Wills, a well known Philadelphia silversmith.

Following the dedication, Levy's interest in the church continued. In a German letter to Jacob Stover [Stober], dated Philadelphia, March 10, 1800, he recommended a suitable preacher for the Lutheran Congregation (private collection of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach).

The deed to the Calvinist or Reformed Church, from Aaron Levy, Philadelphia to Adam Harper and Frederick Henney, Haines Township, May 20, 1796, was recorded on Feb. 11, 1839, in Bellefonte, Centre County Deed Book M, pp. 190–195. This deed was also drawn up, witnessed, and certified by Simon Snyder.

consuming litigations.[49] In spite of Levy's high hopes, the growth of the town was slow, and when in August, 1800, this section was incorporated into a new unit, called Centre County, it was Bellefonte, some twenty odd miles to the west, and not Aaronsburg, that was selected as the county seat. The fact that Aaronsburg was by-passed must have been very disappointing to Levy. In planning this new town he had hoped that the restoration of peace would be followed by a renewed stream of immigrants from Great Britain and the Continent, and that many of these landless newcomers would be attracted to the rich soil awaiting them in the back country. That this was his hope is evident from the fact that soon after the news of a victorious peace, Aaron Levy authorized David Samuel of London, a kinsman of Rachel, to dispose of some of his land among prospective buyers in England.[50] Instead, the anticipated wave of mass immigration was reduced to a mere trickle as a result of the severe economic crisis which descended upon the young country, and of the revolutionary upheavals in Europe. No doubt that these developments, together with Levy's strained financial resources, affected considerably the progress of Aaronsburg.

[49] Directions for re-entry on Aaronsburg lots, Moses Levy to Aaron Levy, endorsed by Aaron Levy in Hebrew characters:

דרעקשין פר דיה ריאענטרה אן ערינשבוארג לאטש טוא ביא אינענשט טוא מייא אדיר פראפרטיה אז ביפאר [Directions for the re-entry in Aaronsburg lots to be annexed to my other property as before].

(Etting Collection, American Lawyers, HSP, case 3, box 38.)

Judge Moses Levy (1757–1826) served as Recorder of the Mayor's Court of Philadelphia from 1802 to 1808 and as Presiding Judge of the Philadelphia District Court, Dec., 1822 to March, 1825. In 1805, he was one of the founders of the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. For his biography, see Lee M. Friedman *Pilgrims in a New Land* (Philadelphia, 1948), pp. 79–96.

[50] Power of Attorney, Aaron Levy and Rachel Levy, Lancaster, to David Samuel, London, June 11, 1783, Gratz Mss. Collection, Non-Importation Resolutions, HSP, case 1, box 2.

## V

## Ties with Robert Morris and James Wilson

The accumulation of considerable land holdings and the founding of Aaronsburg appear to have put a heavy strain on Levy's finances. This is evident from the fact that in March, 1789, he was obliged to mortgage some of his holdings in Penns Township to Joseph Simon of Lancaster, and some of his land in Buffalo Township to Samuel Miles and Jacob Morgan of Philadelphia. Two tracts of this land, known as "Aaron's Staff" and "Mount Pleasant," bordered on Robert Fulton's property.[51] His major efforts were now diverted to seeking out or "discovering" available unsettled lands, or to buying up various land claims and turning them over to the financially powerful land interests, especially those headed by Robert Morris and General Walter Stewart, and by James Wilson. Thus, in an agreement with Robert Morris and General Walter Stewart, on August 22, 1792, Aaron Levy undertook to

> find out and discover a Tract or Tracts of Land the full quantity of at least forty thousand Acres not already taken up on the north side of the large West Branch of Susquehanna River & West side of little Mushanan Creek in what is termed the New Purchase . . . [Morris and Stewart agreed to pay for the] Warrants . . . Surveys . . . Purchase Money to the Commonwealth . . . and Patenting . . . [also] Cost and Expenses of Chaincarriers, Packhorses and Provisions.

It was agreed that

> for the Discovery of the said Lands and the time and trouble . . . in procuring and bringing down Locations superintending and seeing the Warrants duly Surveyed returned and patented,

[51] Indenture between Aaron Levy, Northumberland, and Samuel Miles and Jacob Morgan, Jr., Philadelphia, Pa., March 5, 1789, NC Deed Book D, p. 313. The original document is found in Etting Collection, Uncatalogued, HSP. See also, Indenture between Aaron Levy and Joseph Simon, March 13, 1789, NC Deed Book D, p. 34.

Levy was to receive from them fifteen pounds per thousand acres. On the same day a similar agreement was signed between Levy and Stewart for the "discovery" of at least 50,000 acres in the same region. In this case Levy was to receive for his "time and trouble . . . one equal third part" of all lands purchased.[52]

Three days later Robert Morris paid Aaron Levy £1,144, representing the former's half share of the cost and other charges for sixty land warrants for tracts located in Northumberland County which he had bought earlier in partnership with General Walter Stewart.[53] In the fall of 1792 Levy indicated "that from 150 to 200 Thousand Acres may still be taken up" for Morris and Stewart. Although "nothing of consequence could be done before Winter sets in," they instructed him to have part of these tracts surveyed and to bring all the necessary papers on his next visit to Philadelphia. Morris and Stewart would then either take out the warrants for these lands, or "would get some other persons to enter into the Business."[53a] Again, on April 12, 1794, Morris paid Levy $287.60 for his share of the expenses advanced by Levy for the surveying of large tracts that the latter had sold to Morris and Stewart.[54] When, on April 24, 1794, Robert Morris and

[52] The original agreement between Aaron Levy and Robert Morris, in Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach's private collection, is reproduced *infra*, Appendix IV, part A, pp. 72–73.

The indenture between Aaron Levy and Walter Stewart, Aug. 22, 1792, and a supplementary agreement between Robert Morris and Stewart is located in the Rosenbach Collection, American Jewish Historical Society and is reproduced *infra*, Appendix IV, part B, pp. 73–75.

[53] Robert Morris and Walter Stewart in account with Aaron Levy.

"Paid Aaron Levy to pay half the cost of 60 Warrants of Land in Northumberland County ——————————————————1046:10
Paid said Levy for my half advances to him for expenses on said Lands———97:10"

(Robert Morris' Journals, HSP, vol. VI, p. 79; p. 302, item 167).

[53a] Letter, Walter Stewart and Robert Morris to Aaron Levy, Nov. 3, 1792 (Rosenbach Collection, American Jewish Historical Society), see *infra*, Appendix IV, part C, p. 75–76.

[54] "Aaron Levy — paid him to pay my half of Jos. J. Wallis's Acct. for Surveying

John Nicholson formed the Asylum Company, "for the purpose of settling and improving . . . tracts of country within the State of Pennsylvania," Morris was indebted to Levy for 26,687 acres, at one dollar per acre, in Loyalsock Township, for which he had given Levy bonds and notes spread over a period of five years. This obligation was now assumed by the newly formed company and Morris charged Nicholson with half of this amount.[55] Since this Asylum Company, along with Morris' other ill-fated land schemes collapsed some two years later, it is clear that Aaron Levy was among its heavy losers.[56] It is worth noting that, notwithstanding the above fact, Aaron Levy still had enough confidence in Morris' integrity to accept his promissory note for three hundred dollars, as late as July 25, 1796, when his financial empire was already seriously threatened.[57]

In spite of his close relationship with Robert Morris, Aaron

Lands held in Company with Gen'l Steward — Dolls 287.60" (Robert Morris' Journals, vol. II, p. 3).

[55] "Asylum Company, The General account Dr to Aaron Levy of Northumberland for 66 Tracts situate on the Waters of Loyalsock & Towandi in Loyalsock Twshp. Northumberland Co. containing 26,687 acres of Land as pr. his Indenture and agreement under his hand & Seal dated the 4th March 1794 @ one Dollar pr Acre is———————————————————26,687.00

. . . John Nicholson for half the cost of 26,687 acres of land bought from Aaron Levy for which he is to pay at one Dollar pr acre—Dolls 13,343.50

Asylum Comp my Acct. for half the cost of the above for which I am to pay———————————————————13,343.50 (*ibid.*, vol. II, p. 7)."

"May 31, 1794, Aaron Levy — paid him 29th inst.———————— 1,000 (*ibid.*, vol. II, p. 26)."

[56] Isabella H. and A. S. W. Rosenbach quote the following excerpt from Robert Morris' accounts:

> Aaron Levy. Although a considerable sum stands at the debit of this account, yet he is entitled to credits that will bring a balance in his favor, exclusive of Bonds and Notes which he holds (*supra*, *PAJHS.*, no. 2, p. 161).

[57] Promissory note for $300, from Robert Morris to Aaron Levy, July 25, 1796. It is signed by Robert Morris and endorsed on the back by Aaron Levy, including the latter's Hebrew initials. Gratz Collection, Non-Importation Agreements, HSP, case 1, box 2.

Levy found it more advantageous to deal with the more dependable James Wilson. This distinguished jurist was interested in an economically sound, well planned, long range colonizing project, calculated to benefit the new settlers, the sponsors and the country at large, rather than in mere speculative land ventures.[58] It was with that purpose in mind that he began to acquire huge quantities of western claims, involving hundreds of thousands of acres of land. The amount of land involved in the Levy-Wilson transactions may be judged by the five separate agreements signed by them between April 3 and June 10, 1794, whereby Levy agreed to sell to Wilson various land claims totalling close to 500,000 acres. These agreements involved only such lands to which Levy's rights had already been reasonably well established prior to the signing of these contracts, and not tracts yet to be "discovered," or "located."[59]

In assembling such large quantities of land for sale Levy used several methods. He disposed of many warrants he had taken out in his own name over a period of years. He bought up various types of claims from others. Moreover, he often "went out into the woods," to locate or "discover" vacant country and then enter applications for it, or have someone else do so, only to have their claims assigned to him. The indiscriminate methods used in issuing land grants, and the inaccuracy of the preliminary surveys often gave rise to conflicting claims. The Board of Property of the State of Pennsylvania was therefore frequently called upon by numerous claimants, especially by large land promoters, to determine the

[58] James Wilson is believed to have written a special paper "On the Improvement and Settlement of Land in the United States." Although his authorship of this plan cannot be definitely established, the document is endorsed in Dr. Benjamin Rush's handwriting, on p. 34, "Judge Wilson with two letters" (Library Company, Ridgway Branch, Philadelphia, Yi2/7406 F40).

[59] For abstracts of five agreements between Aaron Levy and James Wilson, at the HSP, see *infra*, Appendix V, pp. 77–78.

priority rights of the contesting parties. In such cases the losing side was usually given the choice of either accepting a refund or of locating comparable tracts elsewhere. Since the minutes of this Board contain numerous accounts of contests to which Aaron Levy was a party, they provide us with a valuable source of information on the nature, inner workings and extent of his land business. This information is supplemented by several documents not found in the printed minutes, but which have been preserved in the private papers of Samuel Wallis, one of the principal land promoters of his day and a major competitor of Aaron Levy.[60]

These sources also reflect Levy's persistence and determination in asserting his rights. Among those contesting Levy's claims were such men as Richard Peters (the younger), the Reverend Doctor William Smith, Daniel Broadhead (Surveyor-General and Chairman of the Board of Property), Francis Johnston (Receiver General), Matthew Irwin (Master of the Rolls of the Land Office), Judge Thomas McKean (later Governor), Samuel Wallis and scores of other prominent citizens of the state.[61]

## VI

## The Levys Move to Philadelphia

Levy's frequent dealings with the various land officials, and other urgent matters pertaining to this business, made it necessary for him to spend a great deal of time in Philadelphia.

[60] The private papers of Samuel Wallis have been preserved by his descendants and are now owned by them. They consist of thousands of documents, chiefly legal and business papers, and represent a valuable source of important and hitherto little known historical material on land speculation in Pennsylvania. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania was granted permission to microfilm the entire collection and has since made them available for research purposes.

[61] For a list of Board cases involving Aaron Levy, which have come to the attention of this writer, see *infra*, Appendix VI, pp. 79–81.

Eighteenth century travel, especially in the back country, was extremely tedious and hazardous. A journey from Northumberland to Philadelphia, if and when the roads were passable, would take the better part of a week. To save himself the inconvenience of traveling back and forth Aaron was often obliged to stay in Philadelphia for long periods at a time. The Levys were getting along in years and their health was beginning to fail. Besides, it is reasonable to assume that people like Aaron and Rachel Levy would miss the social and religious atmosphere of a Jewish community. Having no children of their own and living so far away from their nearest relatives must have made their loneliness even more depressing.

In earlier years, when the young couple had settled in the pioneering village of Northumberland, they probably believed that a small Jewish community might eventually develop in that neighborhood. In 1774, we find there Israel de Lieben, a native of Bohemia, who had spent some years in Holland, whom the Levys certainly welcomed, since he was a qualified *shoḥet* (ritual slaughterer), but he left them shortly thereafter to practice his calling in Philadelphia.[62] Ezekiel Levy, probably their nephew, is also known to have kept a store in Northumberland. But he, too, left that town to join the Revolutionary Army, and subsequently settled in Charleston, S. C.[63]

[62] Israel de Lieben's signature, signed as witness, is found on the Power of Attorney, granted by Aaron Levy to Henry Haines, dated Northumberland, June 30, 1774. See *supra*, note 16. More about Israel de Lieben and the controversy about his religious qualifications in Philadelphia, in 1774, will be found in this author's forthcoming book on Barnard and Michael Gratz. For De Lieben's subsequent career in Charleston, S. C., see Barnett A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina* (Philadelphia, 1905); Charles Reznikoff and Uriah Z. Engelman, *The Jews of Charleston* (Philadelphia, 1950); *PAJHS*, no. 19 (1910), pp. 80, 81, 84, 86 and 89.

[63] Deed, Aaron and Rachel Levy to Ezekiel Levy, Feb. 16, 1777, NC Deed Book D, p. 196; deed, Ezekiel Levy, shopkeeper in Northumberland, to John Shuler, May 19, 1778, *ibid.*, p. 195. Ezekiel Levy's letter, written on the battleground of Germantown, to the Gratz brothers is quoted in this writer's forthcoming work on Barnard and Michael Gratz. Ezekiel Levy was among the original members of the Congregation Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia in 1782–83. For his activities in South Carolina, see

And so the aging couple, as far as can be ascertained, remained the only Jews in that whole region. The twenty years they had spent in Northumberland were amply rewarded. Aaron Levy became known and respected in many sections of the state. Among his innumerable friends and business affiliates were people of high standing in local, state and national affairs. The Levys had built up a sizeable business and accumulated considerable wealth. In spite of all this, they resolved to move to the big city.

Aaron Levy spent the winter and spring of 1794 in Philadelphia. During his stay in this city he acquired three lots of land near the south-west corner of High (Market) and Seventh Streets.[64] This purchase was most likely connected with his plan to settle in Philadelphia, because within two years we find the Levys already permanently established in their new home, located at 58 North Fourth Street, opposite the Lutheran Church, and about a block from the Mikveh Israel Synagogue on Cherry Street.[65] Their major income, however, still depended on revenues derived from their properties in Northumberland and Aaronsburg, as well as from their land holdings and other interests in the back country. The management of these affairs was entrusted chiefly to their old friend, Simon Snyder, of Selins Grove (Selinsgrove), a few miles south of Northumberland, while Aaron Levy made occasional visits to deal personally with certain matters. On the other

Barnett A. Elzas, *supra*, pp. 95, 134, 145, 279; Reznikoff and Engelman, *supra*; *PAJHS*, no. 1, (1893), p. 18; no. 2 (1894), p. 175; no. 19 (1910), pp. 58–59, 152, 154.

[64] Deed, John Hubley, Lancaster, to Aaron Levy, Northumberland, April 26, 1794, for lots, no. 1830 and no. 1832, on south side of High (Market) Street, Philadelphia, recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book D., pp. 55–57; also deed from William Shannon, auctioneer, Philadelphia, to Aaron Levy, May 21, 1794, lot no. 1831 on south side of High, near Seventh Street, Philadelphia, recorded *ibid.*, pp. 60–61.

[65] Simon Snyder, Selinsgrove, to Aaron Levy, Philadelphia, Jan. 29, 1794, writes: "As you make some stay in Phila .... I shall endeavour to pay you immediately on your return home." In another letter, Jan. 13, 1796, Levy is addressed by the same writer as a permanent resident of Philadelphia (Gratz Collection, Governors of Pennsylvania, HSP, case 2, box 33B).

hand, Levy attended to many of Snyder's business affairs in Philadelphia.

The friendship between the Levy and Snyder families dated back at least a decade earlier, when Simon Snyder began to operate a mill and a general store in Selinsgrove.[66] Fortunately, part of the correspondence between Aaron Levy and Simon Snyder has been preserved. Important as these documents are as additional source material on the business interests of these two former neighbors and life-long friends, they are of even greater value for revealing the intimate friendship between their families, and for many other interesting items of a personal, social and political nature. These letters, all written in Simon Snyder's own hand, extend over a period of thirteen years that correspond with his political rise from a judgeship in the Northumberland County Court until after his first unsuccessful attempt to capture the governorship from Thomas McKean in 1805.[67] Some mention should also be made of earlier documents which antedate this correspondence by several years. The deed to the Lutheran Church of Aaronsburg, granted by Aaron and Rachel Levy on November 16, 1789, was drawn up by Simon Snyder and his signature appears on it three times; as witness

[66] Simon Snyder, a son of poor immigrants from the Palatinate, was born in Lancaster and received most of his education at a night school in York, Pa., where he was apprenticed as tanner and currier. His political career began soon after his settling at Selins Grove with his appointment as a Justice of the Peace, followed by a judgeship of the Court of Common Pleas of Northumberland County. In 1789–90 he served as a member of the State Constitutional Convention, and in 1797 he was elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly. He soon gained a wide reputation as an able spokesman for Jeffersonian Republicanism, and as a powerful political enemy of the Federalist Governor of the state, Thomas McKean. During his eleven years in the Assembly he served four terms as its Speaker. In a heated political contest, 1808, he finally succeeded in defeating McKean in the race for the governorship. Snyder remained in this office until 1817, having been re-elected twice.

[67] In the course of this study, this writer has been fortunate in locating sixteen letters addressed by Simon Snyder to Aaron Levy. Fifteen of these are found in the Gratz Collection, Governors of Pennsylvania, HSP, case 2, box 33B, and one at the American Jewish Historical Society. All the above letters, together with some other interesting Levy documents, are scheduled for publication by this writer in the *Proceedings* of the Northumberland County Historical Society.

to the indenture and to the receipt of the token payment of five shillings paid to Levy by Jacob Stober and Michael Mootz, and in his capacity as Justice of the Court of Common Pleas of Northumberland County certifying the conveyance. The same is true of the deed granted by Aaron Levy to the Reformed Congregation in 1796.[68] Other documents involving land transfers bear dates of 1792–93.[69] Our documentary evidence of the Levy-Snyder relationship, therefore, spans a period of nearly two decades.

From the first letter, dated January 29, 1794, it is evident that the two former neighbors had already been closely associated for some time past. Levy, then on a visit to Philadelphia, is asked to attend to a number of Snyder's business affairs, such as the collection of accounts and payments to creditors, the securing of patents, and other legal matters. Numerous similar subjects are discussed in all the letters. Levy is frequently called upon to look after Snyder's interests in Philadelphia, covering a multitude of items and ranging from the disposal of large quantities of flour from his mill, important Land Office business, settling of various accounts, to the procurement of "Lamp Oyle," "Copperas," "India Nankeens" and "Low priced Clouting diaper," which Mrs. Snyder insists should be properly described as "Towelling Diaper," ("a point of delicacy" which the noted judge and legislator "will not undertake to resolve").[70] Simon Snyder often reports on the state of Levy's property in Northumberland and in various other places. He collects rents, serves notices of eviction, finds suitable tenants and manages these affairs as well as circum-

[68] NC Deed Book D, p. 403; Centre County Deed Book M, p. 190; see *infra*, Appendix III, pp. 60, 71.

[69] Deed Poll, Simon Snyder to Aaron Levy, Aug. 15, 1792, four hundred acres in Loyalsock Township, — "adjoining land lately granted to Levy Phillips" — Etting Collection, Uncatalogued, HSP. Simon Snyder's name also appears among those under whose warrants Aaron Levy appealed to the Board of Property on April 15, 1793. See *infra*, Appendix VI, p. 80.

[70] Letter, March 20, 1797.

stances allow. Some of his difficulties are reflected in such lines as these:

> I shall attend to the Letting of Bollmans place on the best terms that can be had, it is the Interest of some of your neighbor[s] to keep the place without a Tennant, it is therefore attended with difficulty to find one. They will tell a Stranger the place is good for nothing to secure the pasturing of the cleared ground.[71]

The letters invariably contain some interesting family news and other personal notes. We learn how glad the little Snyder sisters were to receive Mr. Levy's presents.[72] Five years later, when the "little girls," Agnes and Amelia, having grown up into young ladies, were sent off to a boarding school, the news of this happy event is imparted to the Levys.[73] We hear of the intermittent fever and other ailments, which at one time or another afflicted the members of the Snyder household. Likewise, the Snyders were grieved when Aaron Levy's health was "not sufficiently established" to undertake a journey to Selins-Grove, but were happy to learn that "Mrs. Levy's health is nearly recovered since her residence in the country."[74] Both families always looked forward for an occasion to play host to each other. However, Mrs. Snyder, who never missed an opportunity of inquiring about the welfare of the ailing Levys, was rather unpredictable. She usually exercised sole jurisdiction over the social doings of the family, to which her politically minded husband either had to submit or suffer the consequences. In discussing an expected visit of Mrs. Snyder to Philadelphia in the spring of 1804, the astute Speaker of the Assembly adds plaintively:

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Letter, Jan. 13, 1796.

[73] Letter, Feb. 13, 1804. At an earlier date, Feb. 1, 1801, Snyder asks Levy to inform his "Worthy Spouse" that "Mrs. Snyder on the 2$^{d}$ Jan$^{y}$ was safely delivered of a third son and is better than she has been at any time before when similarly situated." This letter is in the Rosenbach Collection, American Jewish Historical Society.

[74] Letter, Aug. 6, 1806.

> Unless she takes it into her mind to come here [Lancaster] before we adjourn to bring me home, in that case she will forego her journey to Philad[a] — She will be very apt to do this — for she is as apt to goe rong as her friend in Philad[a].[75]

Simon Snyder seems to have been especially fond of Mrs. Levy, whom he occasionally rewarded with "Drink gelt" in appreciation of some particular kindness. Besides, in Snyder's opinion, Mrs. Levy "was all along a good democrat."[76] In his contacts with his Jewish friends Snyder enriched his vocabulary by learning some popular Jewish expressions and made effective use of them on appropriate occasions.

The Levys were also kept well posted about the welfare of their former neighbors whose friendship they retained long after their removal to Philadelphia. The busy legislator found time to inform them that "your friends here are well, and one and all wish to be remembered to you," or that

> . . . your friend Kitty Antes . . . complains in her last letter she is afflicted with the third day Ague, but never forgets yourself nor Mrs. Levy, accept through me her best respects,— In one of her late letters she mentions that Peter Hosterman is exceedingly ill and not expected to live to Spring.[77]

On another occasion we hear that "Sam'l Scott was drowned, & Galbreth Patterson died suddenly — The late Sheriff of Lycoming is dead — all your friends here are well."[78] We also see Snyder soliciting Levy's aid in his effort to help an ailing and needy friend who would like to sell patent medicines if he could open a credit account with a reliable Philadelphia apothecary. Levy is asked to guarantee the account with the assurance that Snyder will see that it is paid.[79] When Snyder's church needed German hymn books he asked Aaron Levy to procure

[75] Letter, Feb. 13, 1804.
[76] Letter, July 30, 1806; letter, May 7, 1806.
[77] Letter, Jan. 11, 1805.
[78] Letter, March 12, 1801.
[79] Letter, March 20, 1797.

for him three dozen Lutheran and a like number of Reformed "Marburger gesang bücher — with black or flowered covers."[80]

Aaron Levy, on the other hand, often enlisted Snyder's assistance in obtaining political favors for his friends. Interestingly, Levy did not share Snyder's political views. Having Federalist leanings, Levy favored a more liberalized banking system, to which Snyder, a staunch Jeffersonian Republican, was unalterably opposed. Referring to the Banking Bill which was heatedly debated by the Pennsylvania Assembly in February, 1804, Snyder wrote:

> You are as rong about Banking as you are in your political opinions generally when I see you I hope to be able to convince you. I know I shall have Mrs. Levy on my side for she also knows that you are always rong.

In a postscript to the same letter which was delivered to Levy "per favor" of the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Snyder added dejectedly

> your favorite bank bill passed the house of Representatives this day. Yeas 46. Nays 35 — paper enough soon — and soon we shall be as rich in paper — as we were in Continental money in days of yore.[81]

In spite of these differences of opinion, we find that eleven months later Snyder was trying to secure an appointment for one of Levy's friends to a directorship in one of the newly created banks.[82] Another example of the use of Snyder's political influence is seen from the following excerpt:

> I have sent Mr. Phillipsons petition to Mr. Gregg at Washington inclosed in a letter in which I pressed him to do what he can to have justice done to our Indolent Chammer.[83]

Levy was also kept up to date on the latest political developments at Lancaster, where the Pennsylvania Legislature then held its sessions, having left Philadelphia in 1799, on account

[80] Letter, Jan. 13, 1796. [81] Letter, Feb. 13, 1804. [82] Letter, Jan. 17, 1805.
[83] Letter, Feb. 13, 1804. *Chammer* is a Yiddish expression for jackass or fool.

of the yellow fever. The last letter extant concludes with this note:

> Dont get the horrors old friend two arrant Jacobins are at the head of the Legislature, this Session.[84]

As stated above, the Levy home was located on North Fourth Street between Mulberry (Arch) and Sassafras (Race) streets, opposite the Lutheran Church. They apparently occupied this house as tenants until 1801, when they bought it from Isaac Walpole.[85] Nine years later they bought another house from Henry Hoffner on Mulberry Street, between Ninth and Tenth Streets.[86] That their home was maintained in true Philadelphia tradition is clear from the quantity of fine silverware, the miniatures, paintings and other substantial household goods with which it was furnished.[87] Since 1797 the Levys are known to have employed an indentured German servant girl, Catharine Simon, apprenticed to them for a term of nearly eight years, during which time they undertook to teach her the "Art, Trade, and Mystery of Housewifery & plain Sewing," in addition to allowing her four quarters of English and one quarter of German Schooling. Judging by what Catharine agreed to do and, especially, what she agreed not to do, Mrs. Levy should have had very little or no maid trouble during Catharine's term of service.[88]

[84] Letter, Dec. 2, 1806.

[85] Deed, Isaac Walpole and others, to Aaron and Rachel Levy, Philadelphia, April 9, 1801, recorded in Philadelphia, April 29, 1801, Philadelphia Deed Book EF–7, pp. 34–36.

[86] Articles of Agreement between Aaron Levy and Henry Hoffner, Philadelphia, Jan. 27, 1809, recorded, Philadelphia, June 13, 1809, Philadelphia Deed Book IC –3, p. 371. Deed, Henry Hoffner to Aaron Levy, Philadelphia, June 2, 1809, recorded, Philadelphia, June 14, 1809, Philadelphia Deed Book IC–2, pp. 251–252. It seems that the Levys sold their North Fourth Street house in Philadelphia. See deed, Aaron and Rachel Levy to Margaret Longstreet, Philadelphia, June 5, 1810, recorded June 25, 1810, Philadelphia Deed Book IC–7, pp. 665–667.

[87] See *infra*, note 97.

[88] Indenture between Aaron Levy and Catharine and Henry Hogerman, Philadelphia, Dec. 26, 1797 (Etting Collection, Uncatalogued, HSP).

## VII

### The Levys Adopt A Son

Having no children of their own, Aaron and Rachel Levy found happiness in bestowing their affection upon the ten children of Michael and Miriam Gratz who then lived at the north-west corner of Fourth and Market Streets, only a few doors away from the Levys. The oldest of these children, Simon, was adopted by Aaron Levy as his son. We have already seen Simon's name mentioned among the first grantees of the Aaronsburg lots in 1786, when he was still a very young boy.[89] The wholesale grocery store which Simon and his brother Hyman established in 1798, at the corner of Seventh and Market Streets, Philadelphia, frequently served as headquarters for Levy's business affairs. Moreover, the Snyder correspondence and other documents show that Simon Gratz was often entrusted with the management of a considerable part of Levy's interests.[90] The building in which the Gratz store was located was acquired by the two brothers in 1801. The three Market Street lots belonging to Aaron Levy were contiguous to this property and were sold to Simon Gratz on May 5, 1809.[91]

[89] Deed, Aaron Levy to Simon Gratz, Northumberland, Dec. 12, 1786, NC Deed Book C, p. 504.

[90] Letter, Simon Snyder to Aaron Levy, July 30, 1806, addressed to Mr. Aaron Levy

No 58 North fourth Street
Philad[a]
In his absence to Messers Simon & H Gratz
Market Street.

See also letters of Dec. 30, 1801, and May 7, 1806.

[91] This building was of special historic significance, for it was in one of the rooms of this house which Thomas Jefferson had occupied while boarding with Mrs. Clymer that the Declaration of Independence was written. *Watson's Annals of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1927), vol. II, p. 309; W. V. Byars, *supra*, p. 256; H. S. Morais, *supra*, p. 271.

The deed to the lots, Aaron and Rachel Levy to Simon Gratz, May 26, 1809, is

The extent of Aaron Levy's land holdings around and after the turn of the century, and the intimate connection of the young Gratz brothers with the various legal manipulations and with the ultimate disposition of those properties are demonstrated by the following facts. On July 22, 1800, Levy sold to the twenty-four year old Hyman Gratz a one-half interest in three Haines township tracts, containing over 1,300 acres, for the sum of 1,308 dollars.[92] On November 18, 1802, Levy transferred to Simon Gratz, in consideration of "One Eagle," all his unsold properties in and around Aaronsburg, including certain tracts situated south and west of that town; also, the right to all ground-rent and other rent charges due Levy. Additional land involved in this deal consisted of (1) twenty-five contiguous tracts, bounded in part by the out-lots of Aaronsburg, containing together 9,927 acres; (2) three "Plantations" (farms) and four contiguous tracts in West Buffalo Township, containing together 661 acres; (3) a grist mill, a saw mill and four tracts in Fishing Creek Township, containing 625 acres.[93] In 1804, Levy conveyed to Simon and Hyman Gratz, sixty-one tracts in Bald Eagle Township, Northumberland County, and sixty-seven tracts in Tyrone and Franklin Townships, Huntingdon County. The area involved in these transactions totalled close to 55,000 acres. The consideration, as given in the several deeds, amounted to about 10,000 dollars.[94] On July 9, 1811, Simon Gratz was deeded by Aaron Levy thirty-three tracts in Bald Eagle Township, Northumberland County; sixteen tracts in Lycoming and two tracts in

recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book IC–4, pp. 192–194. Two years later Aaron Levy also conveyed to Simon Gratz his Mulberry Street property (deed, Philadelphia, May 28, 1811, Philadelphia Deed Book IC–20, pp. 104–105). On earlier transactions related to these lots, see Philadelphia Mortgages, Book X 20, pp. 264–265, Book MI–7, pp. 416–417 at Recorder's Office, Philadelphia.

[92] Centre County Deed Book H, p. 246. For this and subsequent transfers to the Gratz brothers, see *infra*, Appendix III, part B, pp. 63–71.

[93] Centre County Deed Book C, p. 148.

[94] *Ibid.*, Book B, pp. 135, 166 and 168.

Dauphin Counties, a total of fifty-one tracts containing well over 21,000 acres, for which Simon was charged $6,000. Included in this transfer were tracts known as "Levyburg," "Levy's Delight," and "Levy's Grove".[95] On May 25, 1812, Joseph, Jacob and Benjamin Gratz were granted by Aaron Levy, in consideration of one thousand Dollars, 124 tracts located chiefly in Frankstown and Bald Eagle Townships, containing some 50,000 acres.[96] Actually, most of the above conveyances do not represent bona fide transfers. Quite obviously, they were intended merely as legal devices, either for protecting himself against possible court action, or for safeguarding the heavy financial interests which the Gratz brothers now held in Levy's land enterprises.

Aaron Levy's attachment to the Gratz children is best demonstrated by his will, drawn up in June, 1802. He appointed Simon, his "adopted son," administrator of his entire estate, from the income of which the latter was to provide Rachel Levy with a nine hundred dollar annuity during her natural life. After Rachel's decease Simon was to inherit nearly all of Levy's estate, real, chattel, personal and of any other description, subject only to certain provisions specified in the will. This testament further provided that

> from and immediately after the decease of my Said Wife, I give to my Said Adopted Son Simon Gratz, my Silver Coffee Pott and Large Tankard, To his Brother Hyman Gratz my Silver Tureen and Silver Waiter and my Time Piece, To Fanny Etting, my Silver Tea Pott and Caddy, To Joseph Gratz my Mahogany Book Cases, My Cap$^{t}$ and Jewelled Watch and two Silver half Pint Tankards, To Jacob Gratz all my English Books Except the Prayer Books, To Benj'n Gratz all my Hebrew Books & English Prayer Books, To Sarah Gratz my Silver Sauce Bowls and one Silver Slop Bowl, To Rebecca Gratz my gilt Silver Oval Sugar Bowl with lid and Silver Bowl without lid, To Rachel Gratz my Silver Sugar Bowl with

[95] *Ibid.*, Book E, pp. 150 ff.
[96] *Ibid.*, Book D, pp. 423 ff.

pine apple Cream Jug and Soup Ladle, to Richey Hay [Hays] my Silver fruit Basket, and to the said Simon Gratz my Miniature and the Miniature of my Wife, if she my said wife should not otherwise dispose of the Said Miniatures.[97]

It is difficult to explain why none of the Levy kinsmen were remembered in this will. Only a year previous to the signing thereof Aaron Levy attended the wedding of his nephew, Aaron Levy, Jr., and his Hebrew signature appears on the *ketubah* (marriage contract) as one of the witnesses to the ceremony.[98] A family tradition ascribes Aaron's decision to deny his relatives appropriate shares in his estate to some serious ill-feeling which is believed to have existed between them. If that be the case, it is possible that this breach occurred shortly after his nephew's wedding. However, toward the end of his life Aaron Levy evidently adopted a more benevolent attitude toward the young children of his disinherited kinsmen. Thus, on October 18, 1814, Rebecca, Benjamin, Joseph, Hannah and Rishkey (Richea) Levy, all minor children of his new nephew, Aaron Levy, Jr., each received gifts of two tracts, containing some 800 acres, in Bald Eagle Township. Similar gifts were presented to Julia, Benjamin and Leon Hyneman, all minor children of Rachel Hyneman, a niece of Aaron Levy. Solomon and Sarah Pollock, minor children of Rebecca Pollock, a niece of Aaron Levy; and Benjamin Franklin Philips, a minor son of Rachel Levy's nephew, Ben-

[97] A copy of this will was published by Isabella and A. S. W. Rosenbach in *PAJHS*, no. 2, pp. 162–163, and was reprinted by William V. Byars, *supra*, pp. 281–282. However, the text of the document quoted here is based on a manuscript copy of the original will as it was transcribed for Aaron Levy, Jr., nephew of our subject. It is recorded in Philadelphia Will Books, vol. V, pp. 453–455 and was probated, March 1, 1815. It is endorsed: "copy of the Will and Testament of my late unkel Aaron Levy, Senior. Deceased Feb$^{y}$ 23rd, 1815" (Levy Family Collection, HSP). Aaron Levy attended Rachel Gratz's wedding to Solomon Moses in New York on Tuesday, 8 Tammuz, 1806. Levy's signature, together with that of the Reverend Gershom M. Seixas, appears on the *ketubah* (original in archives of the American Jewish Historical Society).

[98] The original *ketubah* is found in HSP. A copy thereof is at the Congregation Mikveh Israel, Philadelphia. See also note 2, *supra*.

jamin, were each granted one tract of approximately 430 acres of the Bald Eagle lands.[99] Joseph Henry, a nephew of Barnard and Michael Gratz, is also known to have received from Aaron Levy one Aaronsburg lot some years earlier.[100]

Rachel died on December 23, 1810, and was joined by her husband four years and two months later, on February 23, 1815.[101] Both were laid to their eternal rest in the Spruce Street burying ground of Mikveh Israel, the congregation in which they had worshipped for many years. Having made what he considered ample provisions for the benefit of his kinsmen during his lifetime, Aaron Levy made no changes in his original will during the last thirteen years of his life. Upon his death, Simon Gratz became the sole beneficiary of the residue of Aaron's estate.

## VIII

### EPILOGUE

On September 14, 1829, Simon transferred to his brother Hyman, in consideration of one dollar, thirty-eight of the remaining Aaronsburg town lots and one-third interest in fourteen similar properties, as well as all the rights to the

[99] See *infra*, Appendix III, part B, pp. 69–70. For references to these families, see H. S. Morais, *supra*, index.

[100] Letter, Simon and Hyman Gratz, Philadelphia, to Jonas Hirschell Bluch, Langendorf, Silesia, Sept. 15, 1799:

> Exclusive of the property already sold of your late son, there still remains one lot of ground in the town of Aaronsburg that was made a present to him by the Proprietor, Mr. Aaron Levi,

in William V. Byars, *supra*, p. 252. A deed, Aaron Levy to Joseph Henry, Dec. 31, 1787, which states that Henry had paid Levy twenty-six Spanish milled silver dollars for an Aaronsburg lot, number 508, was called to our attention by Mr. Edwin Wolf 2nd.

[101] Isabella H. and A. S. W. Rosenbach, *supra*, *PAJHS*, no. 2, p. 162.

income derived from rents on Aaronsburg land. In addition, Hyman was given title to all the farm lands outside of this town which Aaron Levy had conveyed to Simon Gratz on November 18, 1802.[102] On June 6, 1832, the two Gratz brothers sold one town lot, number 343, to John Nighdigh and Philip Dingis, trustees for the Presbyterian Congregation of Aaronsburg.[103] All three churches of that town, therefore, were built on ground obtained directly from the original Jewish proprietors.

By 1839, the year of Simon's death, most of the land holdings he had inherited from Aaron Levy had already been disposed of.[104] In 1873, his heirs granted a parcel of land in Haines Township to the Aaronsburg Schools Trustees who subsequently erected a fine school building on this site.[105] Thus, the work begun by Aaron and Rachel Levy was brought to a fitting close by the children of their adopted son nearly a century later.

Aaron and Simon were destined to share their fame in another historic venture. In the year 1805, following in the footsteps of his adopted father and benefactor, Simon Gratz laid out a town on a tract known as "Wildcat Hill," in the Wiconisco region of Lancaster (now Dauphin) County, which Aaron Levy had acquired more than a quarter of a century earlier. This town, named Gratz, was later, in 1852, incorporated into a borough and has since grown into a thriving community. Located in the heart of a prosperous dairy farming district, with

[102] Deed, Simon Gratz to Hyman Gratz, Centre County Deed Book H, pp. 246 ff.

[103] *Ibid.*, Book M, pp. 192–193.

[104] Will of Simon Gratz, probated July 19, 1839, Philadelphia Registry of Wills, Book XIII, pp. 598–601. Certain tracts in Lykens Valley, Dauphin County, were bequeathed to his sons, Theodore and David. Two tracts of land in Huntingdon County were left to Simon Gratz, Jr., but they had been purchased from Joseph Simon.

[105] Deed, [Estate of] Aaron Levy to Aaronsburg Schools Trustees, Haines Township, 1873; recorded Centre County Deed Book N–2, p. 95.

a population of 800, double that of Aaronsburg, the Borough of Gratz now has three churches, a bank, several manufacturing plants and, to bring us up to date, an airport.[106] Aaronsburg and Gratz now stand as two historic American landmarks forever linking the names of their pioneering founders.

[106] William H. Eagle, *History of the Counties of Dauphin and Lebanon* (Philadelphia, 1883), pp. 452–453. Up to date information on the progress of Gratz was obtained from local residents during the author's recent visit to that town.

## APPENDIX I

### A: The Aaronsburg Story

# COMMEMORATION PROGRAM

**Centre County's Share in the State-Wide Observance of "Pennsylvania Week"**

## AARONSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

## October 23, 1949

"The history of Aaronsburg typifies what this nation and the world are trying to do in erasing intolerance of religion, race, and color."—Governor James H. Duff

**8:45 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE**—Salem Lutheran Church

Speaker—Dr. Frederick Keller Stamm, Former Pastor, First Congregational Church, Chicago, Illinois
Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, Vice-President of Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rochester, N. Y.

**10:00 A.M. PUBLIC MEETING DEDICATED TO RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL UNDERSTANDING** (Pageant Site)

Co-Chairman, Dr. J. W. Claudy, Aaronsburg Story Committee
Presiding—Honorable James H. Duff, Governor of Pennsylvania
Dr. Daniel A. Poling, Editor, The Christian Herald
Honorable Felix Frankfurter, Associate Justice, United States Supreme Court
Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, Former Mediator, United Nations Palestine Commission
General William J. Donovan, Former Director, Office of Strategic Services

**11:00 A.M. BROTHERHOOD INSTITUTES** (Held simultaneously)

Chairman—Mr. Clarence A. Peters, Director, Northeastern Division, National Conference of Christians and Jews

**NUMBER 1**—Salem Lutheran Church

"Techniques of Handling Prejudice and Prejudiced People"
Coordinator—Mr. Clarence Zorger, Superintendent of Schools, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Resource Speaker—Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, President, The Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Panel Speakers:

Rabbi Philip D. Bookstaber, Temple Ohev Shalom, Harrisburg, Pa.
Dr. Andrew Gottschall, Philadelphia Director, National Conference of Christians and Jews

Mrs. Myra Blakeslee—Director of Education, Division Against Discrimination, State of New Jersey
Mr. Julius Thomas, Director, National Urban League
General William J. Donovan, Former Director, Office of Strategic Services

**NUMBER 2**—Evangelical and Reformed Church

"Religious Intolerance and American Society"
Coordinator—Dr. William Edel, President, Dickinson College
Resource Speaker—Dr. Abram L. Sachar, President, Brandeis University
Panel Speakers:
Mr. Maurice Fagan—Director, Fellowship Commission, Philadelphia, Pa.
Sir Mohammed Aly Zafrulla Khan, Vice-President of the United Nations General Assembly, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Commonwealth Relations, Government of Pakistan.
Mr. Allyn P. Robinson, Director, Commission on Religious Organizations, National Conference of Christians and Jews
Mr. John Sullivan, Director of Education and Public Relations, New York State Commission Against Discrimination
Dr. Frederick Keller Stamm, Former Pastor, First Congregational Church, Chicago, Illinois
Rabbi D. A. Jessurun Cardozo, Mikveh Israel Synagogue, Philadelphia, Pa.

**NUMBER 3**—Evangelical United Brethren Church

"How to Assure Minority Groups Their Rights and Dignities as Americans"
Coordinator—Mr. James Milholland, Acting President, Pennsylvania State College
Resource Speaker—Dr. Charles S. Johnson, President, Fisk University
Panel Speakers:
Mr. J. Harold Saks, Community Services Director, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
Mr. Russell Bradley, Pittsburgh Director, National Conference of Christians and Jews
Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, Vice-President of Central Conference of American Rabbis
Dr. Channing H. Tobias, Director, Phelps-Stokes Foundation
Miss Marjorie Penny, Director, Fellowship House, Philadelphia, Pa.

**12:30 P.M. LUNCH**

**2:00 P.M. OPEN AIR HISTORICAL PAGEANT**—"The Issue Of An Ideal."

**5:00 to 6:00 P.M. SYMPOSIUM**—Brotherhood for Peace and Freedom—Salem Lutheran Church

Presiding—Honorable James H. Duff, Governor of Pennsylvania
Sir Mohammed Aly Zafrulla Khan, Vice-President of the United Nations General Assembly, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Commonwealth Relations, Government of Pakistan
Dr. Abram L. Sachar, President, Brandeis University
Dr. Channing H. Tobias, Director, Phelps-Stokes Foundation

Presented by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in cooperation with the
National Conference of Christians and Jews
Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
The Pennsylvania State College
B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation of America
Centre County Public Schools
Centre County Granges and Affiliates
Centre County Veterans Organizations

## B: Remarks of Dr. Ralph J. Bunche at Aaronsburg, Pa., Sunday, October 23, 1949

On this beautiful Sabbath morning we are gathered in this lovely Pennsylvania country side in good fellowship. A man's dream is realized here this morning. It has been aptly written that "The dreamer dies, but never dies the dream."

One hundred and fifty years ago, this little village of Aaronsburg was founded by and named after Aaron Levy. Aaron Levy, the Jew, was a citizen of the world. History attests that to him all men, irrespective of race or creed, were brothers. He was a man of tolerance and vision. It is fitting that on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the village which he founded we should gather to muster new strength for the ideals and human values which Aaron Levy personified. Were Aaron Levy here with us today, he would find himself in a strange new world. His village is no more remote. Man's progress in science, in the harnessing of nature, in transportation and communications, would confront him with an amazing and incomprehensible world.

Yet, in another and unfortunate sense, he would find himself not in unfamiliar surroundings. For despite the spectacular progress which man has made in this past century and a half, in things material, no parallel progress has been made in the spiritual realm, in the art of human relations. Aaron Levy would find in the world of today, and in abundance, the same racial and religious intolerances and prejudices, the same bigotries, the same hostility toward that which is strange, as characterized the life of his day and age. But why? Why is it that man, with all his genius, has never been able to master the art of living with himself?

Who can doubt that there is anything so sorely and urgently needed in the dangerous world of today as a universal recognition of a fraternal bond of kinship among peoples, the realization of a sense of brotherhood among all men, of human understanding, of a broad spirit of tolerance toward those whose races, creeds, cultures and ideologies may differ from one's own?

There can be but one secure foundation for peace and justice in the world. That foundation must be in the hearts and minds of man. Without an all-pervading spirit of human understanding and brotherhood, the most perfect international machinery for peace will be of

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little avail. It is not the atomic bomb we must fear. It is in man's perversity, suspicion and intolerance that our real danger is to be found.

No mechanical device, no charters or pacts, can serve to save mankind from self-destruction if man in his spirit remains mean and brutish. There is but one road to peace and that is the road of human understanding.

Throughout man's recorded history his inter-group relations have been cursed by intolerances and bigotries. Yet there have always been individual Aaron Levys, men and women whose souls have transcended the narrow pettinesses of their fellow-beings. In the meanest circumstances, in situations of sharpest conflict, there can always be found instances of man's ability to let his essential goodness shine through.

In the past two years I have spent much time in the troubled Near East. In that region, the Palestine issue had stirred emotions and animosities mightily. People, Arabs and Jews, had been speaking grimly of bitter hatreds, of enemies, of fighting animal-like to the death. Arabs and Jews were shooting each other down like cattle. Yet, even in that frightening atmosphere I have witnessed many evidences of man's innate ability to love his fellow-man. I have seen Jewish doctors and nurses of the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem attend Arab patients in that hospital with kindest solicitude. I have seen, in the midst of the war, Arab Legion troops lining the road between Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem, daily watch unarmed convoys of indispensable food and medical supplies for the beleaguered civilian Jews of Jerusalem pass through their lines, unmolested. I have seen in the Hotel des Roses at Rhodes the head of the Israeli Delegation in the room of a member of the Transjordan Delegation, sharing, in deep compassion, the sorrow of the Arab Delegate at the word he had just received of the loss of his entire family in a tragic accident at his home. As I walked into the Arab's room to express my own sorrow, I saw there in silent mourning, not an Arab and a Jew, but only two sorrowful men, who though enemies yesterday were bound together today in a warm bond of human brotherhood by the stark tragedy which had befallen one of them. I have seen, last Christmas, Arab and Israeli military commanders open their tense military lines in order that civilians might pass through to worship at Bethlehem.

It is of very great significance that the fifty-nine members of the United Nations have solemnly pledged themselves in the Preamble of the Charter

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity

and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women . . .; and

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours . . . .

It is peoples with which the United Nations is concerned, for it is recognized that in the attitudes of peoples must depend the success or failure of this tremendous effort to achieve a peaceful and a just world. It is in the day-to-day relations of man with man that the future of all mankind is being determined.

In the modern world, the really challenging problem is the imperfect relations among its peoples. The costs to societies, domestic and international, of bad human relations have been beyond calculation. In an atomic age, the future costs would appear prohibitive. Suspicions among peoples, group exclusiveness and chauvinistic pride, "holier than thou" attitudes, racial and religious bigotries, master race theories, nationalist egoisms — these are all cancerous growths which attack the very foundations of peace in the world. Indeed, the combination of bad human relations on the one hand and the development of the weapons of modern warfare on the other can only mean that all of us are living on borrowed time.

There is nothing in the nature of mankind which renders it impossible for men to master the art of tolerant and peaceful living.

The future before us would be bleak and hopeless indeed were it to be doubted for an instant that man has it in his power to purge himself of those iniquitous attitudes and practices which are leading him along the road to doom. I do not doubt it. For I believe in man. I believe firmly in his reason and essential goodness. Bigotry, race-hate, intolerance, prejudice are not innate human traits. They are the products not of nature but of man's social experience. What society does it can undo. It is the will that we have lacked, not the means. We need desperately an intensive mobilization for world brotherhood. It is in our schools, our churches, our homes that the determined effort must be made, that the transformation in peoples' attitudes must take place. The obligation rests solemnly upon every individual who believes in democracy, who cherishes the American way of life, who loves peace and justice.

It is to men of good will, to men of tolerance, that the world today owes tribute. May their tribe increase. Our future, the world's future, depends upon it.

## C: Remarks of Mr. Justice Felix Frankfurter at Aaronsburg, Pa., Sunday, October 23, 1949

By its founders this nation was committed to democracy, in which we all profess our faith. Even its enemies pay democracy the tribute of appropriating its name. For democracy is the only form of social arrangement which fully respects the richness of human society and, by respecting it, helps to unfold it. Democracy is thus the only adequate response to the deepest human needs and justified as such by the long course of history. All the devices of political machinery — parties and platforms and votes — are merely instruments for enabling men to live together under conditions that bring forth the maximum gifts of each for the fullest enjoyment of all. Democracy furnishes the political framework within which reason can thrive most generously and imaginatively on the widest scale — least hampered, that is, by the accident of personal antecedents and most regardful of the intrinsic qualities in men. Not only the experience to which history testifies, but nature herself vindicates democracy. For nature plants gifts and graces where least expected, and under circumstances that defy all the little artifices of man. To meet nature's disregard of distinctions that are not intrinsic, but merely man-made, we need political and economic institutions which allow these mysterious natural bounties their fullest outlet.

Thus we Americans are enlisted in a common enterprise — whatever our antecedents, whatever the creed we may avow or reject — the bold experiment of freedom. It is bold because it cannot be realized without the most difficult and persistent collaborative effort. It demands the continuous exercise of reason, and self-discipline of the highest order. This is so because it places ultimate faith for attaining the common good in the responsibility of the individual. We are thus engaged in the most difficult of all arts — the art of living together in a free society. It is comfortable, even if slothful, to live without responsibility. Responsibility is exacting and painful. Democracy involves hardship — the hardship of the unceasing responsibility of every citizen. Where the entire people do not take a continuous and considered part in public life, there can be no democracy in any meaningful sense of the term. Democracy is always a beckoning goal, not a safe harbor. For freedom is an unremitting endeavor, never a final

achievement. That is why no office in the land is more important than that of being a citizen.

And we can say with all humility that the United States has a special destiny because its moral cohesion derives from a unique circumstance. No other nation has been composed of such heterogeneous elements. We represent a confluence of peoples whose bond of union is their common intrinsic human qualities. From its very beginning this country has bestowed upon those born under other skies the great boon of participation in its fellowship, with a single exception that created a moral lesion in the nation, requiring the healing forces of a civil war and its aftermath. The saga of our republic is the story of the most significant racial and religious admixture in history. The fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were men of varying religious outlook and eighteen of them of non-English stock. It cannot be too often recalled, that when the Continental Congress chose John Adams, Franklin and Jefferson as a committee to devise the national emblem, they recommended a seal containing the national emblems of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, and Holland, as representing "the countries from which these States have been peopled." The event that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is so worthily commemorating today makes the reminder especially pertinent. Our cultural history — the sciences and the arts — reflects the genius and labors of men and women who came to these shores from all corners of the world. If a single faith can be said to unite a great people, surely the ideal which holds us together beyond any other is our belief in the worth of the individual, whatever his race or religion. In this faith America was founded; to this faith have her poets and seers and statesmen and the unknown millions, generation after generation, devoted their lives.

The opportunity which America has afforded implies the deepest obligations. What have those who have come here, beckoned by America's hospitality, made of this opportunity? Franklin Roosevelt gave the final answer. What he said on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Statue of Liberty was true of the stream of immigrants that came here, like Aaron Levy, before the Revolution; it is no less true of those who made their discovery of America more recently:

> I like to think of the men and women who, with the break of dawn off Sandy Hook, have strained their eyes to the West for the first glimpse of the New World.
>
> They came to us speaking many tongues — but a single language, the universal language of human aspiration.

> How well their hopes were justified is proved by the record of what they achieved. They not only found freedom in the New World, but by their effort and devotion, they made the New World's freedom safer, richer, more far-reaching, more capable of growth.

I shall not call the roll of the foreign-born and those who have been treated like aliens who, since this nation was founded, have performed distinguished service on the field of battle, in legislative halls, in executive offices, on our judiciary. For the ultimate heroes are always the unknown — the unnumbered, obscure people who have brought and today bring the dreams of America nearer to living truths.

This is our heritage. In confidence that their successors will maintain it the founders built this nation. That heritage is always endangered by inertia and complacency, by timidity and reluctance to keep abreast of the needs of a progressive society. This is a graver challenge than any from without. With active devotion to the ideals we profess it would be unworthy of our whole past to fear challenge by any rival system.

Love of country, like romantic love, is too intimate an emotion to be expressed publicly except through poetry. Happily one of the statesmen of the Wilsonian era, Franklin K. Lane, himself a naturalized citizen, was possessed of a poetic vein, which made the flag, for him, express the meaning of America:

> I am not the flag, not at all. I am but its shadow.
> I am whatever you make me, nothing more.
> I am your belief in yourself, your dream of what a people may become.
> I am all that you hope to be, and have the courage to try for.
> I am song and fear, struggle and panic, and ennobling hope.
> I am the day's work of the weakest man, and the largest dream of the most daring.
> I am the Constitution and the Courts, statutes and the statute makers, soldier and dreadnaught, drayman and street sweep, cook, counselor, and clerk.
> I am the battle of yesterday, and the mistake of tomorrow.
>
> * * *
>
> I am no more than what you believe me to be and I am all that you believe I can be.
> I am all that you make me, nothing more.
> I swing before your eyes as a bright gleam of color, a symbol of yourself, the pictured suggestion of that big thing which makes this nation. My stars and my stripes are your dream and your labors.

They are bright with cheer, brilliant with courage, firm with faith, because you have made them so out of your hearts. For you are the makers of the flag and it is well that you glory in the making.

The upheavals of the war let loose forces from which hardly a corner of the world is immune. Over vast areas the very foundations of society have been shaken. Great events are in process, and great events must be met by greatly daring. The ultimate task of the statesmanship of today is to translate edifying precepts about the dignity of man into their progressive fulfillment. Here in Aaronsburg, at the very birth of the Republic, a handful of men, of whom Aaron Levy was only one, well realizing that faith without works is sterile, proved by deed their belief in the common humanity. Thereby they stored this very spot with electric example. Thus it has fallen to the honor of this tiny village to charge the conscience of this nation and to invigorate its endeavors.

You and I are heirs of a noble past. But . . . *what's past is prologue, what to come, in yours and my discharge.*

## APPENDIX II

### ETHICAL WILL OF MOSHE ḤAYYIM B. AARON OF AMSTERDAM, 1795

[torn] ב מרחשון שנת תק"נו לפק

זה הצוואה שנתתי לך אבי' ה"ק משה חיים בן כהרר אהרן זצל לבני אהרן ב"ר משה חיים

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| א | את ה' תירא ובו תדבק | למען יצליח דרכך |
| ב | בלבבך תעבוד את ה' | בעבור שישמור את כל נפשך |
| ג | גבורתך יהיה שתמשול ביצר הרע | וה' הוא יסייעך |
| ד | דלתותיך פותח לעניים | בעבור שהשם יתברך יעשרך |
| ה | הרם את עינך לה | והוא יהיה עמך בכל דרכיך |
| ו | ואתה תשמור את יום השבת | בעבור שתצליח בכל מלאכתיך |
| ז | זכור תזכור את ה' אלהיך | וגם הוא אורך ימיך |
| ח | חסד ואמת תעשה בכל ימיך | וה' יתן חן בעיניך |
| ט | טוב תהיה בכל מעשיך | בעבור ה' ישמור רגליך |
| י | יצר טוב [תמי]ד יהיה בכל מחשובתיך | וה' ישמור מכל צרותיך |
| כ | כבד את אביך בכל כחיך | בעבור ה' יפתח מאוצרותיו ויתן לך |
| ל | לא תשכח את אחיך ואת אחותיך | בעבור שהם יתומים מאימך |
| מ | ממון תתן לעניים | בעבור השם יתברך יתן ברכה בכל מעשיך |
| נ | נגד ה' תמיד תשוה עינך | והוא ישמור בכל צאתך [ובואך?] |
| ס | סור מרע ועשה טוב | וה' הוא יסלח מכל עונותיך |
| ע | ערב ובוקר זריז אשר ידבק | [torn] |
| פ | פועל תהיה לדודתיך | בעבור שהם [torn] |
| צ | צדקה תעשה בכל קרובתיך | בעבור שהם נד[לוך] מילדותיך |
| ק | קדיש לא תשכח תאמר אם אביך תמות [*sic*] | בעבור [illegible] יצא מחיקך |
| ר | רגליך תהיה ברגל חברך | והוא יהיה [תמ]יד בעצתך |
| ש | שלום יהיה עליכם ובשלום תביאם לאחי | והוא יהיה לפטרוניך |
| ת | תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיכם בכל מחשבותיכם | בעבור שהוא יתן חן בעיני שכל |

[torn] ויתן ברכה בכל מעשיכם ויצלח דרכם וישמור נפשכים [*sic*]
מכל פגע רע ומכל משטין רע ומכל עיני בישי ומכל צרות רעות ומכל חולי
ומדוי ויוסיפו לכם ימים ושנים
אמן סלה.

זה נתתי לך אביך בעבור שלא תשכח את אשר כתבתי לך היום ב' מרחשון שנת תקנו
שהלכת ממני לזכרון שתעבוד את ה' אלוהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך
ובכל מאודיך ולא תשכח את אחיך ואת אחותיך ואת כל [torn]
עם בתיכם [torn] היו עמך מיום שאמך מתה בכל צרותיך
וגדלוך [עד] היום הזה ואם עש [torn]
והצלחה בכל מעשה ידיך ואורך ימיך ושנ[ותיך]

# APPENDIX III

## List of Deeds Granted by Aaron Levy or by Aaron and Rachel Levy, and Recorded in Northumberland and in Centre Counties[107]

### A. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Andrew Stroube | East Branch of Susquehanna | 1,200 acres | 1,019 acres on Loyalsock Creek | March 25, 1778 | June 1, 1778 | B | 143 |
| Frederick Antes | Northumberland Township | 2 town lots | £325 – | July 1, 1778 | Dec. 19, 1778 | B | 159 |
| William Antes | " " | 2 town lots | £1,200 – | Jan. 13, 1779 | Nov. 28, 1779 | B | 210 |
| Simon Fishbaugh | Augusta Township | 127 acres | £65 | Dec. 16, 1785 | Jan. 10, 1786 | C | 198 |
| Daniel Aurandt, Jr. | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | £2/5/– and ground-rent | Dec. 22, 1786 | Jan. 21, 1787 | C | 386 |
| Daniel Aurandt, Jr. | " | 1 " " | " | Dec. 22, 1786 | Jan. 21, 1787 | C | 387 |

[107] This list is limited to such instruments in which Aaron, or Aaron and Rachel Levy acted as grantors, and not as grantees, and were recorded in these two counties only. While additional deeds are recorded in several other counties of Pennsylvania, this list is sufficiently illustrative for our purpose.

Certain instruments included in this list obviously represent technical rather than actual transfers and were no doubt executed as legal procedures to cope with certain exigencies.

Whenever the stated consideration consists of "five shillings," or "one dollar," or "one Eagle," it is to be understood either as a technical device for legalizing a contract in which "other valuable consideration" is usually involved but not specified, or as an outright gift.

A. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reuben Etting | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | $80 | Jan. 3, 1787 | Jan. 22, 1787 | C | 388 |
| Solomon Etting | " | 1 " " | $76 | Jan. 2, 1787 | Jan. 23, 1787 | C | 389 |
| Solomon Etting | Penns Township | Tract "Edom" 259 acres | £194/5/– | Jan. 4, 1787 | Jan. 23, 1787 | C | 389 |
| Hugh Ogden | Aaronsburg | 3 town lots | $78 | Jan. 16, 1787 | Jan. 23, 1787 | C | 390 |
| John Friend | " | 3 " " | $78 | Dec. 1 & 5, 1786 | Jan. 24, 1787 | C | 391 |
| Charles Cooper | " | 2 " " | $52 | Jan. 16, 1787 | Jan. 25, 1787 | C | 394 |
| Henry Kammerer | " | 2 " " | £4/10/– | Jan. 16, 1787 | Jan. 26, 1787 | C | 394 |
| Frederick Greiner | " | 4 " " | $104 | Dec. 2, 1786 | Jan. 27, 1787 | C | 397 |
| Nicholas Schreiner, Jr. | " | 1 " lot | £2/5/– and ground-rent (=g. r.) | Dec. 22, 1786 | Jan. 28, 1787 | C | 398 |
| Lewis Noah | " | 1 " " | $6 and g. r. | Nov. 29, 1786 | Jan. 29, 1787 | C | 399 |
| Herman Bake | " | 3 town lots | £ 6/15/– and g. r. | Nov. 25, 1786 | Jan. 30, 1787 | C | 401 |
| Samuel Smith | " | 6 " " | £13/10/– and g. r. | Nov. 30, 1786 | Jan. 30, 1787 | C | 402 |
| Peter Cress | " | 2 " " | £ 4/10/– and g. r. | Jan. 3, 1787 | Feb. 1, 1787 | C | 405 |
| Peter Cress | " | 2 " " | £ 4/10/– and g. r. | " | " | C | 406 |
| Jacob King | Lancaster | 1 town lot | £50/– | March 15, 1787 | March 16, 1787 | C | 426 |

A. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Christian Miller, Jr. | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | £9/15/– | March 15, 1787 | March 17, 1787 | C | 427 |
| Jacob Reiger | " | 1 " " | $26 | March 1, 1787 | March 18, 1787 | C | 428 |
| John Greiner | " | 1 " " | £9/15/– | Feb. 26, 1787 | March 18, 1787 | C | 428 |
| Benjamin Philips | " | 1 " " | £ 5/ 5/– and g. r. | Feb. 20, 1787 | March 20, 1787 | C | 429 |
| Simon Gratz | " | 1 " " | $26 | Dec. 12, 1786 | July 18, 1787 | C | 504 |
| John Francis de Beyerle | " | 1 " " | 5 shillings | Nov. 17, 1786 | July 27, 1787 | C | 506 |
| Peter Victor Dorey | " | 3 town lots | £ 6/15/– and g. r. | March 3, 1787 | March 30, 1787 | C | 507 |
| John J. Faulkner | Northumberland Township | 1 town lot | £115/– | Oct. 11, 1780 | Jan. 9, 1788 | D | 75 |
| James Stokes | Aaronsburg | 7 town lots | £68/5/– | March 12, 1788 | May 28, 1788 | D | 146 |
| Ezekiel Levy | Northumberland Township | 1 town lot | £50/– | Feb. 16, 1777 | July 29, 1788 | D | 196 |
| Samuel Miles & Jacob Morgan | Buffalo Township | 400 acres | security on mortgage | April 25, 1787 | May 2, 1789 | D | 313 |
| Samuel Miles & Jacob Morgan | Groves Valley, Bald Eagle Township | 400 acres | " | April 25, 1787 | July 2, 1787 | D | 345 |
| Samuel Miles & Jacob Morgan | " " | 400 " | " | April 26, 1787 | July 2, 1787 | D | 346 |

## A. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Joseph Simon | Penns Township | 339 acres | security on mortgage | March 13, 1789 | — | D | 334 |
| Jacob Stober & Michael Mootz | Aaronsburg | 2 town lots | 5 shillings | Nov. 16, 1789 | Nov. 26, 1789 | D | 403 |
| John Reighnback | Penns Township | 124 acres | £20/– | Sept. 9, 1789 | Dec. 25, 1789 | D | 417 |
| Josiah Matlack | Northumberland | 1 town lot | — | Feb. 19, 1790 | March 8, 1790 | D | 450 |
| Samuel Miles | Bald Eagle Township | 250 acres | 5 shillings | April 25, 1790 | April 27, 1790 | D | 466 |
| Henry Kammerer | Aaronsburg | 2 town lots | £19/10/– and g. r. | March 22, 1790 | April 26, 1790 | D | 466 |
| Stephen Dulith | " | 2 " " | $52 and g. r. | Jan. 4, 1789 | May 3, 1790 | D | 467 |
| Stephen Dulith | " | 2 " " | $52 and g. r. | Jan. 5, 1788 | May 29, 1790 | D | 481 |
| Henry Bedkin | " | 5 " " | $30 and g. r. | Dec. 9, 1786 | May 29, 1790 | D | 482 |
| Lazarus Levy | " | 1 town lot | £5/15/– | July 27, 1790 | Nov. 28, 1790 | E | 60 |
| Samuel Miles | Bald Eagle Township West Branch of Susquehanna River | Deed Poll 388 ¾ acres | 5 shillings | March 10, 1790 | Aug. 29, 1791 | E | 228 |
| William Egan | Northumberland County | 150 acres | £150/– | Nov. 28, 1783 | May 22, 1792 | E | 398 |
| John Teel | Sunbury | 1 town lot | £ 15/– | Jan. 10, 1793 | Jan. 14, 1793 | F | 38 |
| Frederick Henney | Aaronsburg | 1 " " | 5 shillings | May 8, 1792 | April 26, 1793 | F | 132 |

A. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Peter Lawyer | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | 5 shillings | May 20, 1793 | May 26, 1793 | F | 182 |
| Christian Storm | " | 1 " " | " " | May 20, 1793 | May 26, 1793 | F | 183 |
| John Brown | " | 1 " " | " " | May 20, 1793 | May 26, 1793 | F | 184 |
| Adam Stephy | Penns Township | 125 acres | £ 20/- | Oct. 6, 1793 | Nov. 29, 1793 | F | 296 |
| John Reichenback | " " | 124 acres | £ 5/- | Dec. 12, 1792 | Nov. 29, 1793 | F | 297 |
| William Sowerwine | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | £ 15/- | June 26, 1796 | Aug. 23, 1796 | I | 61 |
| John Brown | " | 1 " " | 5 shillings | June 26, 1796 | Sept. 24, 1796 | I | 94 |
| Thomas Cooper | Northumberland | House & Lot | " " | Sept. 20, 1796 | Nov. 17, 1796 | I | 165 |
| Benjamin Van Gundy | Sunbury | town lot | £ 40/- | July 5, 1785 | Sept. 22, 1797 | I | 530 |
| David Kennedy | West Branch of Susquehanna | 221 acres | £130/- | June 19, 1795 | March 30, 1798 | K | 124 |
| Charles Beyer | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | £ 25/- | June 18, 1798 | Nov. 15, 1798 | K | 298 |
| Jacob Stover, Jr. | " | 1 " " | £ 5/- | June 27, 1799 | July 2, 1799 | K | 434 |
| George Bowersox | " | 1 " " | £ 33/15/- | June 27, 1798 | July 2, 1799 | K | 435 |
| Michael Bollinger | " | 1 " " | £ 5/- | June 27, 1799 | July 2, 1799 | K | 435 |
| Christian Storm | Haines Township Aaronsburg farmland | 6 acres | £ 10/- | June 7, 1799 | July 9, 1799 | K | 437 |

## A. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Francis Gordon (late of Europe) | Mahoning Township | "Aarons Fancy" 152 acres | 100 guineas = $466 2/3 | Aug. 9, 1799 | Aug. 27, 1799 | L | 24 |
| Simon Hibler | Turbut Township | "Wheat Fields" 136 acres | £529/6/10 | Aug. 27, 1797 | Dec. 24, 1800 | L | 354 |
| John Stephy | Penns Township | 184 acres | $666.37 | Aug. 27, 1804 | Nov. 11, 1804 | N | 121 |
| John & Henry Sellers | West Buffalo Township | 182 " | $1,002 | Feb. 18, 1806 | Aug. 22, 1806 | N | 394 |
| Joshua Hansel | " " " | 221 " | $1,480 | March 25, 1806 | June 13, 1807 | O | 56 |
| William Marr | Bloom Township | Grist Mill & 78 acres | £1,800/- * | Feb. 28, 1809 | July 6, 1809 | P | 221 |
| " " | " " | "Draketon" 66 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " | "Aronton" 116 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " | "Aronmore" 116 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " | "Manington" 221 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| John Young | Penns Township | "Chester" 411 acres | $1,233.75 | March 12, 1810 | April 29, 1810 | Q | 342 |

* The purchase price £1,800 covers the entire transaction.

## B. CENTRE COUNTY

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nathan Dorsey | Haines Township | "Dungannon" 400 acres | $400 | 1801 | June 11, 1801 | A | 24 |
| Samuel Miles | Bald Eagle Township | 2 tracts, 600 acres | — | 1799 | Nov. 5, 1801 | A | 85 |
| Samuel Miles | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | $ 36 | 1798 | Nov. 5, 1801 | A | 120 |
| Lyon Mussina | " | 1 " " | £22/10/– | 1801 | Dec. 10, 1801 | A | 80 |
| Elizabeth Hennigh | " | 1 " " | 5 shillings | 1800 | Jan. 27, 1802 | A | 60 |
| James Duncan | Aaronsburg | 2 Town lots | £30/– | 1801 | Aug. 18, 1802 | A | 218 |
| Lyon Mussina | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | £24/7/6 | 1803 | Sept. 2, 1803 | A | 342 |
| Simon & Hyman Gratz | Bald Eagle Township | 61 tracts 26,442 acres | $3,050 | 1804 | Aug. 9, 1805 | B | 135 |
| Simon & Hyman Gratz | Tyrone Township Huntingdon County | 12 tracts 4,800 acres | $4,836 † | 1804 | Sept. 21, 1805 | B | 166 |
| Simon & Hyman Gratz | Franklin Township, Huntingdon County | 12 tracts 4,836 acres | " † | " | " " " | " | " |
| Simon & Hyman Gratz | Huntingdon County | 43 tracts 18,591 acres | $2,157 | 1804 | Sept. 21, 1805 | B | 168 |
| John Matthias Beuch | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | $50 | 1804 | Aug. 28, 1806 | B | 283 |
| Fred Stover | " | 1 " " | $20 | 1807 | Jan. 26, 1808 | C | 86 |

† The purchase price $4,836 covers the entire transaction.

B. CENTRE COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Christian Crebs | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | $50 | 1807 | Jan. 26, 1808 | C | 87 |
| Simon Gratz | " | All of Aaron Levy's unsold land, and all ground rent | "One Eagle"‡ | Nov. 18, 1802 | Jan. 26, 1808 | C | 148 |
| " " | Haines & Potter Township | 25 tracts 9,927 acres Aaronsburg farm lands | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | Buffalo Township | 3 "Plantations" & 4 tracts = 661 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | Fishing Creek | Grist and Saw Mill and 625 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| Philip Danner | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | £30/- | June 1, 1798 | Dec. 26, 1808 | C | 228 |
| Peggy Deal | " | 1 " " | $1 | Aug. 26, 1803 | Jan. 16, 1808 | C | 231 |
| Henry Harper | " | 1 " " | $40 | June 30, 1796 | Jan. 16, 1809 | C | 234 |
| Henry Crebs, Sr. | " | 1 " " | $1 | 1803 | Oct. 16, 1810 | C | 442 |
| Dr. Michael Clepper | " | 1 " " | $1 | 1803 | Jan. 7, 1811 | D | 14 |
| Simon Gratz | Haines Township | 81 acres | $1,000 | 1812 | March 19, 1812 | D | 171 |

‡ The consideration of "One Eagle" covers the entire transaction.

B. CENTRE COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Philip Hennig | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | $50 | 1798 | June 18, 1812 | D | 243 |
| John Greiner[108] | Frankstown Township, Huntingdon County | 20 tracts of 400 acres = 8,000 acres | $980 * | April 27, 1812 | May 13, 1813 | D | 420 |
| " " | Bald Eagle Township, Northumberland County | 30 tracts of 400 acres = 12,000 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | Bald Eagle Township Mifflin County | 25 tracts of 400 acres = 10,000 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | Bald Eagle Township, Mifflin County | 40 tracts of 400 acres = 16,000 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | Frankstown Township on waters of Mushannon Creek | 44 tracts of 400 acres = 17,600 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| Joseph, Jacob & Benjamin Gratz | Frankstown Township, Huntingdon County | 11 tracts of 400 acres = 4,400 acres | $1,000 † | May 25, 1812 | May 20, 1813 | D | 423 |
| " " | " | 50 tracts of 400 acres = 20,000 acres | " † | " " " | " " " | " | " |

[108] This deed was executed as a legal formality and was not a bona fide sale, for on the next day, April 28th, John Greiner reconveyed to Aaron Levy all this property for the same consideration.

* The sum $980 covers the entire transaction.

† The sum $1,000 covers the entire transaction.

B. CENTRE COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Joseph, Jacob & Benjamin Gratz | Frankstown Township, Huntingdon County | 19 tracts of 400 acres = 7,600 acres | $1,000 † | May 25, 1812 | May 20, 1813 | D | 423 |
| " " | Bald Eagle Township Northumberland County | 19 tracts of 400 acres = 7,600 acres | " † | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " | 25 tracts of 400 acres = 10,000 acres | " † | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| Simon Gratz | Aaronsburg | 2 town lots | $50 | 1812 | July 28, 1814 | E | 149 |
| Simon Gratz | Baker Run, Bald Eagle Township | 4 tracts | $6,000 ‡ | July 9, 1811 | July 28, 1814 | E | 150 |
| " " | " | "Amherst" 459 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " | "Ensfield" 401 1/4 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " | "Farmers Delight" 332 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | Lycoming County | "Levy's Delight" no acreage stated | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |

† This is a continuation of the same transaction, covered by the purchase price $1,000.
‡ The purchase price $6,000 covers the entire transaction.

B. CENTRE COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Simon Gratz | Lycoming County | 15 other tracts, no acreage stated | $6,000 ‡ | July 9, 1811 | July 28, 1814 | E | 150 |
| " " | Dauphin County, Wiconisco district | 2 tracts, "Wildcat Hill" no acreage stated | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | Northumberland County | "Levy's Grove" no acreage stated | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " | 3 other tracts | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | Bald Eagle Township | 26 tracts consisting of "Middleton," 415 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "St. Georges" 415 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Liverpool" 415 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Greenland" 366 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Elkton" 442 ¼ acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Londonderry" 415 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |

‡ This is a continuation of the same transaction, covered by the purchase price $6,000.

B. CENTRE COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Simon Gratz | Bald Eagle Township | "Hill Grove" 415 ½ acres | $6,000 ‡ | July 9, 1811 | July 28, 1814 | E | 150 |
| " " | " " " | "Fredericksburg" 405 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Lowdon" 415 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Kent" 411 ¼ acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Kingsbridge" 405 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Genoa" 405 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Kilkanny" 440 ½ acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Greenfield" 423 ¾ acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Dansbury" 431 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Fairview" 405 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Fairfield" 414 ½ acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |

‡ The same transaction continued.

B. CENTRE COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Simon Gratz | Bald Eagle Township | "Greenwich" 405 acres | $6,000 ‡ | July 9, 1811 | July 28, 1814 | E | 150 |
| " " | " " " | "Guilford" 414 ½ acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Hopewell" 405 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Mt. Pleasant" 400 ½ acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Green Castle" 466 ½ acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Framingham" 414 ½ acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "St. Thomas" 406 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Levyburg" 371 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " " | "Hampton" 415 acres | " ‡ | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| Julia Hyneman | Bald Eagle Township Lycoming and Northumberland Counties | 2 tracts 866 acres | $1 | Oct. 18, 1814 | July 24, 1815 | E | 279 |

‡ The same transaction continued.

B. CENTRE COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rebecca Levy | Bald Eagle Township Lycoming and Northumberland Counties | 2 tracts 843 acres | $1 | Oct. 18, 1814 | July 24, 1815 | E | 280 |
| Benjamin Hyneman | " | 2 tracts 812 acres | $1 | " " " | " " " | E | 282 |
| Leon Hyneman | " | 2 tracts 860 acres | $1 | " " " | " " " | E | 283 |
| Benjamin Levy | Bald Eagle Township Lycoming County | 2 tracts 798 acres | $1 | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| Joseph Levy | " | 2 tracts 857 acres | $1 | " " " | " " " | E | 284 |
| Hannah Levy | " | 2 tracts 861 acres | $1 | " " " | " " " | E | 285 |
| Reishky Levy | " | 2 tracts 866 acres | $1 | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| Solomon & Sarah Pollock | " | 1 tract 436 acres | $1 | " " " | " " " | E | 286 |
| Benjamin Franklin Philips | " | 1 tract 430 acres | $1 | " " " | Nov. 11, 1815 | E | 337 |
| James Duncan | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | £10/13/– | Aug. 23, 1803 | April 29, 1817 | E | 493 |

B. CENTRE COUNTY (*Continued*)

| Grantee | Location | Quantity of Land | Consideration | Date of Transaction | Date of Recording | Vol. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| James Duncan | Aaronsburg | 1 town lot | $60 | May 13, 1806 | Jan. 28, 1818 | F | 28 |
| Hyman Gratz | Haines Township | ½ share in 3 tracts | $1,308 * | July 22, 1800 | Oct. 16, 1829 | H | 246 |
| " " | " " | "Union" 435 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " | "Richland" 436 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| " " | " " | "Partnership" 435 acres | " * | " " " | " " " | " | " |
| Trustees of Reformed Church Adam Harper & Frederick Henney | Aaronsburg | 2 town lots | 5 shillings | May 20, 1796 | Nov. 27, 1838 | M | 190 |

* The sum $1,308 covers the entire transaction.

## APPENDIX IV

### A: Agreement between Aaron Levy and Robert Morris and Walter Stewart, 1792[109]

Agreement indented made and concluded upon this twenty-second day of August one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two between Aaron Levy of the County and Town of Northumberland in the State of Pennsylvania of the one part and Robert Morris and Walter Stewart of the City of Philadelphia in the State of Pennsylvania aforesaid of the other part Witnesseth that it is mutually covenanted and agreed between the said Parties to these presents in manner following:

Viz[t] — That the said Aaron Levy will find out and discover a Tract or Tracts of Land the full quantity of at least forty thousand Acres not already taken up on the north side of the large West branch of Susquehanah River & West side of little Mushanan Creek running into said River or to include said Creek and to be situated in what is termed the new Purchase. — That the said Robert Morris and Walter Stewart will take out and pay for all Warrants for the said land so discovered as speedily as Circumstances will permit, the Surveys to be made as soon after as possible and that they will pay the Purchase Money to the Commonwealth the office fees for warranting surveying returning and patenting said Lands and the reasonable Cost and Expenses of Chaincarriers Pack Horses and Provisions; the drawing and Executing the necessary Deeds Poll and Assignments shall also be advanced and paid by the said Robert Morris & Walter Stewart. And that for the Discovery of the said Lands and the time and trouble of the said Aaron Levy in procuring and bringing down Locations superintending and seeing the Warrants taken out and the Lands mentioned in said Warrants duly Surveyed returned and patented for and in the names of the said Robert Morris and Walter Stewart or such other person or persons as they shall direct (all which the said Aaron Levy for himself his heirs and Assigns faithfully promises to perform or have done) after which he the said Aaron Levy shall have and receive from the said Robert Morris & Walter Stewart the Sum of fifteen Pounds Pennsylvania Currency per thousand Acres — The said Aaron Levy binds himself to visit the Land previous to its being surveyed (if not

[109] Original in Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach's private collection.

already done) and that they shall be deemed by competent Judges to be at least equal to second rate Lands, otherwise this Bargain to be null and void, Robert Morris and Walter Stewart, sending a person well informed on the subject previous to the Surveying, to inspect the Land — That the said Aaron Levy shall and will not on any account whatever lay off for himself, sell, locate or otherwise dispose of any Land in the vicinity of those he takes up for the said Robert Morris and Walter Stewart without informing them that there are such Lands in the vicinity of theirs, and giving them the offer of it on the same terms as those he may have surveyed, or, previous to surveying, their Choice of the whole.

For the true performance of the foregoing Articles the said Parties hereby mutually bind themselves, their Respective Heirs Executors Administrators and Assigns each unto the other in the Penal Sum of two thousand Pounds Specie firmly by these Presents — In Witness whereof they have interchangeably set their hands and Seals hereunto the day and year first above written. —

Sealed and Delivered
In presence of us.

ROBT MORRIS

GARRETT COTTRINGER

WALTER STEWART

JOHN JONES

AARON LEVY

## B: AGREEMENT BETWEEN AARON LEVY AND WALTER STEWART, 1792[110]

Agreement indented, made, and concluded upon this Twenty second day of August One thousand Seven Hundred and ninety two Between Aaron Levy of the Town & County of Northumberland in the State of Pennsylvania of the One part, and Walter Stewart of the Other part Witnesseth, That it is mutually covenanted and agreed by and between the said Partys to these Presents in Manner following viz[t] That the said Aaron Levy will find out and discover a Tract or Tracts of Land the full quantity of at least Fifty thousand Acres not already taken up on the West Branch of Susquehanah, or the following Waters falling thereinto viz[t] One tract to begin on the Big Mushanan & to extend up to Chinclaclamouse Path North and South. The other to begin

[110] Original in the Rosenbach Collection, American Jewish Historical Society.

on the West Branch of Susquehanah opposite to Big Salt Lick & to extend back, and nearly to include the Heads of Beech Creek. Each tract to contain at least ten thousand Acres & to be situated in what is termed the Old Purchase. That the said Walter Stewart will take out and pay for all Warrants for the said Land so discovered, as speedily as Circumstances will permit; the Surveys to be made as soon after as possible, and that he will pay the Purchase Money to the Commonwealth, the Office fees for warranting, surveying, returning, and patenting said Lands & the reasonable Costs and expences of Chain Carriers, Pack Horses, and Provisions, the drawing and executing the necessary Deeds poll and Assignments shall also be advanced and paid by the said Walter Stewart. And that for the discovery of the said Lands, and the Time and Trouble of the said Aaron Levy in procuring and bringing down Location, superintending and seeing the Warrants, taken out, and the Lands on said Warrants duly surveyed, returned, and patented for and in the name of the said Walter Stewart or such other person or persons, as he the said Walter Stewart shall direct (all which the said Aaron Levy for himself his heirs and Assigns faithfully promise to perform or have done) After which he the said Aaron Levy shall have & receive from the said Walter Stewart One equal third part of each and every of the said tracts of Land, the other two third, remaining the property of the said Walter Stewart his Heirs and Assigns for ever. And the more justly to determine the several rights, it is agreed that each tract shall be divided into three equal proportions, & that the part belonging to each shall be determined by Lott. The said Aaron Levy binds himself to visit the lands previous to the Surveyors going out to survey them (if not already done) and that they shall be deemed by competent Judges to be at least equal to second rate Lands, otherwise this bargain to be null & void. Walter Stewart sending a person well informed on the Subject previous to the surveying to inspect the Land. That the said Aaron Levy shall and will not on any account whatever lay off for himself, sell, locate, or otherwise dispose of any Land, in the Vicinity of those he takes up for the said Walter Stewart, without informing him that there are such Lands in the vicinity of his, and giving him the offer of them on the same terms as those he may have surveyed, or previous to surveying his Choice of the whole. For the true performance the said Partys hereby mutually bind themselves, their respective Heirs, Executors, and Administrators, each unto the other in the penal sum of Two Thousand Pounds Specie

firmly by these Presents. In witness whereof they have interchangeably set their hands & Seals hereunto the day & year first abovewritten.

Sealed and Delivered in presence of Us

WALTER STEWART

AARON LEVY

GARRETT COTTRINGER

JOHN JONES

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It is agreed between Robert Morris of the one part and Walter Stewart both of the City of Philad[a] of the other, that the before mentioned fifty thousand Acres of Land to be taken up by Aaron Levy is for their joint account and that they are to be equally concerned therein. After being surveyed the whole to be divided into two equal parts and numbered 1 & 2 and the part belonging to each shall be determined by Lot.

The said Robert Morris and Walter Stewart bind themselves, their Heirs Executors Administrators and Assigns in the payment when called for by either of them their Heirs Executors Assigns etc. . . . of their one half part of all Moneys requisite for carrying said Agreement into effect.

Witness
GARRETT COTTRINGER

Philad[a] August 22, 1792
ROB[T] MORRIS
WALTER STEWART

## C: LETTER OF WALTER STEWART AND ROBERT MORRIS TO AARON LEVY, 1792[111]

Philadelphia Nov. 3[d] 1792

Sir

Mr. John Baker handed Mr. Morris & Myself on yesterday your favor of the 22[nd] Oct[r]; We feel ourselves Satisfied with the Exertions you have made to serve our Interest, and are pleas'd to find the land you are Surveying for us proves better than you Expected.

[111] The letter is addressed to Mr. Aaron Levy, Northumberland County, and is in the Rosenbach Collection, American Jewish Historical Society.

We observe it is your opinion that from 150 to 200 Thousand Acres may still be taken up for us in Canans(?) & Hunter's district; was it Earlier in the Season We might Immediately take out Warrents [*sic*] for at least a large part of it, but it will be so late before the messenger joins you, that nothing of consequence could be done before the Winter sets in.

We therefore Wish You if possible to get a part of this Land Survey'd as it Stands, bringing with You all the requisite drafts & papers, & when you are on the spot we will either take out the Warrents [*sic*] Ourselves, or assist you to get some other persons to enter into the Business.

It is unnecessary for us now to Answer the Other parts of Your letter as it can best be done when We meet.

We Are Sir
Your obe$^{d}$ Sev$^{ts}$

WALTER STEWART for self &
ROBERT MORRIS

# APPENDIX V

## Abstracts of Agreements between Aaron Levy and James Wilson

1. April 3, 1794

159,200 acres, 398 tracts, located in Northumberland, Huntingdon and Mifflin Counties. Price, £2, specie, per 100 acres, amounting to £3,184–; additional charge for expenses (surveying, chain carriers, markers, provisions and wood) twenty shillings per tract; £178 to be paid at the time of signing of agreement; £3,006 to be divided into three equal installments, payable on Jan. 1, 1795; March 1, 1796; Nov. 1, 1796; respectively (Etting Collection, Washingtonia, HSP, p. 100).

2. April 14, 1794

207,600 acres, in Northumberland and Mifflin Counties. 519 tracts, at seventy-five shillings, specie, per 100 acres, £7,785–, plus expenses of twenty shillings per tract; £375, payable at signing; £7,410, payable in three equal annual installments, due on April 1 of 1795, 1796 and 1797 (*ibid.*, p. 101).

3. April 17, 1794

105,400 acres, in the townships of Deer, Bald Eagle, Haines, and Pleasant Valley, Northumberland County; Frankstown, Huntingdon County. Prices vary between £5 to £10 per 100 acres, plus twenty shillings per tract for expenses; £6,020, specie, divided into three payments, one-quarter due on Dec. 15, 1794; one-quarter on July 15, 1795; balance due on April 17, 1796 (*ibid.*, p. 103 [Levy' copy]; Wilson Papers, Agreements, HSP case 12, vol. 9, p. 35 [Wilson's copy]).

4. April 17, 1794

8,380 acres, in Bald Eagle, Haines and Nipponose Townships, twenty-two tracts; price, £225, specie, for one 180 acre tract in Bald Eagle; others at seven shillings and sixpence per acre. £1,100, payable on July 17, 1794; one-half of balance due on July 15, 1795; remainder due April 17, 1796 (Wilson Papers, Agreements, HSP, case 12, vol. 9, p. 36).

5. June 10, 1794

7,600 acres, Bald Eagle and Haines Townships, 19 tracts at seven shillings and sixpence, specie, per acre; £950 due on July 15, 1794; half of balance due on July 1, 1795; remainder due on April 1, 1796. (Wilson Papers, Agreements, HSP, case 12, vol. 9, p. 36).

Note: A tract, unless otherwise specified, usually contained 400 acres, plus six per cent allowance for roads and highways. By specie is meant "Gold or Silver money Current in Pennsylvania." The ratio between a Pound, specie, and a "Spanish Silver Milled Dollar" was about £1 to $2.75–3.00. Levy's copies of these agreements usually have notations, written by him in Hebrew characters, for example, עקרש אף לענד 159,200 טרעקש אף לענד 398 (159,200 acres of land, 398 tracts of land).

## APPENDIX VI

### List of Board of Property Cases Involving Aaron Levy

1. July 23, 1792; Aaron Levy vs. John Loudon Company (Minutes of the Board of Property, *PA*, third series, vol. II, p. 31).
2. Aug. 17, 1792; Aaron Levy vs. John Humbright (*ibid.*, p. 35).
3. Dec. 26, 1792; Aaron Levy vs. James Craig, Peter Baynton, Matthew Irwin and thirty others (Wallis Papers, HPS, Roll 1).
4. March 14, 1793; Aaron Levy vs. James Craig, Peter Baynton, Francis Johnston, Richard Peters (the younger), Samuel Wallis and thirty-two others (*PA*, third series, vol II, p. 81); attested copy of judgment against Aaron Levy (Wallis Papers, HPS, Roll 1).
5. Jan. 24, 1794; Rev. William Smith, Doctor of Divinity, vs. Aaron Levy (*PA*, third series, vol. II, pp. 92–93).
6. Feb. 10, 1794; John Loudon & Alex Scott vs. Aaron Levy and others (*ibid.*, p. 97).
7. Feb. 13, 1794; Aaron Levy vs. John Lowdon (Loudon) (*ibid.*, p. 98).
8. Feb. 28, 1794; Aaron Levy vs. Samuel Wallis (*ibid.*, p. 102).
9. March 13 and 21, 1794; Aaron Levy vs. Samuel Wallis (*ibid.*, p. 104); certified copy of judgment against Wallis, with maps of surveys made of lands in dispute, (Wallis Papers, HSP, Roll 1).
10. April 11, 1794; Aaron Levy vs. Daniel Broadhead (*PA*, third series, vol. II, p. 70).
11. Feb. 2, 1795; Margaret Duncan vs. Aaron Levy (*ibid.*, p. 140).
12. Feb. 12, 1795; Aaron Levy vs. Thomas McKean, Esquire (*ibid.*, p. 142).
13. March 2, 1795; Isaac Connolly vs. Aaron Levy (*ibid.*, pp. 146–147).
14. March 13, 1795; Thomas Fitzsimons, Dr. Hunt and Jacob Lewis vs. Aaron Levy (*ibid.*, p. 152).
15. May 30, 1795; James Wilson, Esquire, and Aaron Levy vs. Tench Cox and Major Jackson (*ibid.*, p. 155).
16. March 31, 1795; Aaron Levy vs. Thomas Ormat and Samuel Fisher (*ibid.*, p. 157).

17. April 1, 1795; James Wilson and Aaron Levy vs. Isaac Richardson, Andrew Kennedy and others (*ibid.*, p. 156).
18. Jan. 11, 1796; Samuel Wallis vs. Aaron Levy (Wallis Papers, HSP, Roll 1).

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The following is a sample of a proceeding on conflicting land claims:

"At a Special Meeting of the Board at the Surveyor Gen'l on Monday 15th April 1793

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Present | DANIEL BROADHEAD ESQ'R. | Surv$^{r}$ Genl |
| | DAVID KENNEDY | Sect'y Ld Office |
| | FRANCIS JOHNSTON | Rec'r Genl |

AARON LEVY
*vs* } on caveat
SAM'L WALLIS

The parties having been heard it appeared to the Board that Aaron Levy's Warrants were dated respectively 21st July 1792 and issued in the names of John Witzel, John Simpson, Jasper Ewing, Christian Getting, William Gray, William Brady, Henry Ourant, Robert Shaw, Andrew Douglass, Jacob Morgan, John Morgan, Edward Hand, Mathias Slough, Jacob Cook, Casper Shaffner, sen$^{r}$, Casper Shaffner, Jun$^{r}$, Aaron Levy, Simon Gratz, Michael Gratz, Barnard Gratz, Solomon Lyons, Lewis Farmer, John Singer, Abraham Singer, William Wistar, Samuel Miles, James Miles, James Hepburn, John Cowder, Frederick Antes, Levy Phillips, Simon Snyder, Andrew Carson, John Boyd, William Willson, Barney Hubley respectively dated 21st July 1792 and also Frederick Antes, Henry Antes, William Wister, John Price, John Singer, Abraham Singer, Robert Shaw, John Greiner, Solomon Lyons, John Friend, Henry Kamarar [Kammerer], Jacob Reiley, John Cook, William Chancellor & Casper Haines respectively dated the 30th July aforesaid adjoining each other describing lands on the dividing Waters of Loyalsock & Towandie, and that Saml Wallis claims under Sundry Applications Deposited in the Secretarys Office bearing date the 25th day of February 1793 for which warrants are made out but no Purchase Money paid describing Lands in different places. Upon examining the dispositions of Levy's Warrants which were prior to Mr. Wallis's

applications and which the Board Conceive to be sufficiently descriptive. It is ordered that Levy's Warrants be executed, and if Mr. Wallis shall nevertheless think proper to pay the Purchase Money & compleat his warrants, the Deputy Surveyor is hereby directed to point out with precision, any interference that may arise between them, and said Levy's warrants and make report thereof to the Board."

Transcribed from a certified copy, signed by David Kennedy, April 22, 1793, with instructions by Daniel Broadhead, Surveyor General, to Joseph J. Wallis, his deputy, to carry out the above orders of the Board. (Wallis Papers, HSP, microfilm, Roll 1. Cf. Minutes of the Board of Property, *PA*, third series, vol. II, pp. 72–73.)