

The East Ender

A Publication of the East Liberty Valley Historical Society

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Peter Perchment: Revolutionary War Soldier, Frontier Scout, Early Settler in the East Liberty Valley

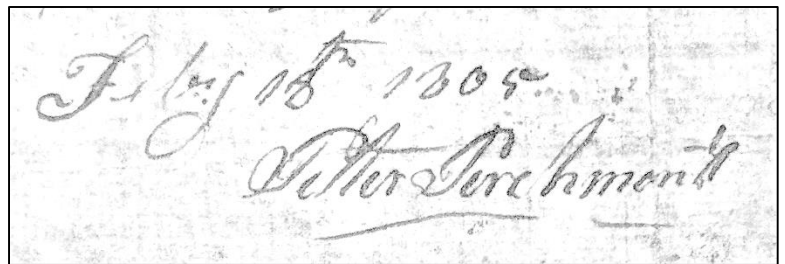
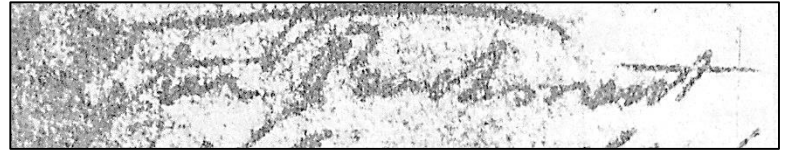
George A. Clark

Peter Perchment was a Revolutionary War soldier. He was not unlike the thousands of other brave men who left plow and hearth to fight with General George Washington to win our independence as a nation. What makes his life story interesting is that we have some detailed information about his exploits during those war years and later, and that he spent most of his long life on the eastern edge of the East Liberty Valley.

To begin with, the name Perchment, often spelled Parchment, always has been an extremely uncommon name in this country. The name originally might well have been Parchment, but for whatever reason, Peter began signing the name as Perchment as early as 1791. His earliest signature is found on the petition for the establishment of Allegheny County from Westmoreland and Washington counties in 1787. Since the signature isn't clear, it is impossible to be sure if it is Perchment or Parchment. His signatures in 1805 and thereafter are clearly Perchment. We also know that he had a brother, Jacob Parchment, and relatives Nicholas Parchment and Philip Perchman. Peter, Jacob, Nicholas and Philip are all Germanic names, which prompted me to look up the word parchment in a German dictionary. The German word is *pergament* and would be pronounced "perka-ment". This made me think that the name is possibly of German origin and might explain the Perchment/Parchment quandary.

Peter Perchment Family: The Earliest Years

Lyman Draper (1815-1891) was a student of early American history. In the 1840s he took research trips through the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys and interviewed people who were involved in the early struggles on the frontier. In 1846 he was



Examples of Peter Perchment's Signature. Above: dated 1787, Below: dated July 18, 1805. Source: G.A. Clark

advised to interview Peter Perchment, but found he had died in 1844. He did interview his son, John Perchment, living on the old Perchment farm, who gave a detailed account of his father's early life and exploits during the American Revolution and Indian Wars. Much of the following is drawn from the Draper Manuscripts in the collection of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

John Perchment stated that his father said he was born in 1754 in Virginia. This would correlate within a year or two of the age Peter Perchment himself gave in pension documents. But John further states that Peter's aged sister-in-law (not named) declared she well knew he was eight or ten when Braddock's defeat occurred in 1755. This would make him about ten years older but would be hard to verify. The earliest date of specific location for the Perchment family is 1773, when a Nicholas Parchman is enumerated in the tax lists for Hempfield Township, Bedford County. Hempfield Township at that time would have composed most of what is now Westmoreland County. Later the same year, Westmoreland County was created from Bedford County. By 1774, Peter Perchment probably was living in the area now known as Allegheny County, since he joined Lord Dunmore's army at Fort Pitt in that year and on Jan. 1, 1777 volunteered for service in the Continental Army also at Fort Pitt.

A 1783 Pitt Township tax list shows Nicholas Parchment owned a horse, two cows and a sheep and Peter owned a horse and a cow; neither owned any land.

Pitt Township at this time would have covered most of present Allegheny County. In 1788 Allegheny County was created from Pitt Township with the addition of a section of Washington County. Was Nicholas Parchment the father of Peter Perchment, or a brother or an uncle? And was Hempfield Township the home of Peter Perchment in 1773? Probably, but not proven. All males 21 and over are listed in tax records at this time. If Peter Perchment was born in 1754, then he would have been too young to be listed in 1773, but he was over 21 by 1783 and was listed.

In 1759 Andrew Byerly and other Germans established the Brush Creek settlement near the Bushy Run Battlefield site. This is in the Hempfield Township area of Westmoreland County. Could the Perchment family have been part of this settlement?

For the earliest period of Peter Perchment's life we have some pieces of the puzzle, but even though many are missing, a picture does seem to take shape. The family were real pioneers living on the edge of civilization, probably in northwestern Virginia (now West Virginia) at the time of Peter Perchment's birth and then later moving farther north into Pennsylvania. As settlers in the 18th century pushed west across Pennsylvania, the Appalachian Mountains forced many of them southward into Maryland and Virginia and then later they moved north through the valleys into Pennsylvania. This was common for many of the early Germans who came to America via the port of Philadelphia. Many of them settled in central Maryland and northern Virginia.

The 1774 Battle of Point Pleasant, or Lord Dunmore's War

We all learned in our American History class that the Battle of Lexington and Concord, Mass., in April 1775, was the beginning of the American Revolution – “the shot heard around the world.” Well, there was a battle six months earlier in October 1774, at Point Pleasant, W.Va., also known as Lord Dunmore's War, that some now recognize as the real beginning of the American Revolution and Peter Perchment was among the 1,081 men who fought there. John Perchment stated that his father, Peter, was out with Lord Dunmore, Virginia's governor, in 1774. And there is proof: A granite shaft 84 feet high was erected on the battle site in 1909 and Peter Parchment is among the names on a bronze tablet at the monument's base.

Many are not familiar with the events concerning this battle. In 1773, Dunmore took what was said to be a pleasure trip to Fort Pitt where he established contact with Dr. John Connolly (who later sided with the British), making him Indian Agent and Land Agent. At this time both Virginia and Pennsylvania

laid claim to the area of western Pennsylvania around Fort Pitt. Connolly at once began fomenting hostilities between the two colonies, as well as alerting the Indian tribes to the advancing settlers and inciting them to side with the British against the colonies when hostilities began. Connolly changed the name of Fort Pitt to Fort Dunmore and claimed the land for Virginia. The Indians, meanwhile, had united and were threatening war.

In 1774, Lord Dunmore and General Andrew Lewis of Virginia were organizing an army to march from Williamsburg, Va., westward, supposedly to make peace with the Indians. Dunmore divided the army, taking the much larger half himself. He would march by a long detour to Fort Pitt and then down the Ohio River to where the Kanawha River joins it at Point Pleasant, W.V. Lewis and his men were to take the much shorter route directly to the same point on the Ohio where they would rendezvous. Dunmore was said to have picked up Connolly and Indian scouts Simon Kenton, Simon Girty (the notorious turncoat) and Peter Perchment while at Fort Pitt.

Instead of rendezvousing at Point Pleasant, Dunmore with his army delayed at Fort Pitt and then marched west to the Indian camps. This was to give the Indians time to defeat Gen. Lewis' smaller army. Instead, Lewis and his troops defeated the Indians on Oct 10, 1774. Lewis had been suspicious of Dunmore's loyalty to the colony for some time, and with his large force not arriving where appointed, he was sure of the treachery. The day before the battle, Dunmore's three scouts delivered a letter for Lewis -- a dangerous mission through hostile territory. Peter Perchment was said to have been one of these scouts and ended up in the battle with Lewis' men.

Later events proved Lewis correct that Dunmore was a Tory, since after the battle at Lexington in 1775, Dunmore had all the gunpowder secretly moved from the magazine in Williamsburg and hidden so the colonists could not make use of it.

Peter Perchment and the American Revolution

A little over two years later, on Jan. 1, 1777, Peter Perchment enlisted in Pennsylvania as a private in the 13th Virginia Regiment commanded by Col. William Russell, later replaced by Col. John Gibson, in the company led by Capt. James Sullivan. A Virginia regiment might seem odd in Pennsylvania but remember, at this time both Virginia and Pennsylvania claimed the area around Fort Pitt. The regiment was made up largely of western Pennsylvanians.

On Sept. 11, 1777, the 13th Virginia fought under Gen. Washington at the Battle of Brandywine and on Oct. 4, at the Battle of Germantown. Muster rolls show that Peter Perchment participated in these battles. Recently I received photocopies of all extant Peter Perchment military records contained in the National Archives. (Not all records exist; some were lost or

The muster roll dated Dec. 4, 1777, shows Peter Parchment deserted on Nov. 22, 1777. This was not an uncommon occurrence. In Joseph Lee Boyle's book on military desertions during the American Revolution, he reports that up to 25% of those who served deserted at some point. The majority of these men were not professional soldiers. Many were from local militias, which served 30 or 60 days. Most were farmers and would go home for a while to tend to the farm and plant or harvest crops. Many would rejoin their units and no one seemed to think much of it. Enlistments were short, some only two months. Food and sanitation were poor and disease was rampant. Clothing was not always available and paydays often were skipped. The American Colonies were short on cash (Peter Parchment had received 6 2/3 dollars in November 1777 and received no further pay until the end of the war, in June 1783). Parchment certainly was not afraid of battle, as he had grown up on the rugged frontier and already had served in two battles of this war, as well as in Lord Dunmore's War.

We do not know if Peter Parchment was at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777 to 1778. Records state that the 13th Virginia Regiment was at Valley Forge from Dec. 19, 1777 to June 19, 1778. But there is some conflict with these dates, as a letter from Col. John Gibson, of the 13th Virginia Regiment, dated Fort Pitt, Dec. 5, 1777, to Gen. Washington states that three companies of the 13th Virginia were stationed at Fort Pitt. Could Peter Parchment have deserted to come home for some reason and later rejoined his regiment at Fort Pitt? We do know that he is listed with his company at Fort Pitt in a March 1778 report and there is no mention of his absence.

While the fighting in the earlier part of the war was concentrated in the eastern sections of the colonies, the war on the western frontier was later and different. The colonists and the British had the same problem of not having adequate fighting men for both the eastern and western campaigns. Through encouragement with trade goods, most of the Indian tribes had aligned themselves with the British. Only the Delaware tribes remained neutral in the Ohio country. On the western frontier, the war was fought by a smaller number of colonial troops against the Indians backed by the British.

The British center of operations in the west was at Detroit, a large and strong fortification. It was from there that the allied Indians were instructed to harass the colonial settlements. In Pennsylvania many of these settlements were within the land that already had been sold by the Indians to the colony in the Fort Stanwix New Purchase of 1768. Settlements were being attacked and there was no means of defense. In the summer of 1778, Washington and the Continental Congress

determined that 3,000 soldiers would march to subdue Detroit.

Two regiments consisting of companies from the 13th Virginia and the 8th Pennsylvania were authorized to defend the frontier. General Lachlan McIntosh was to lead the regiments. Later the plan was scaled back to 1,500 men who would advance only as far as the Indian settlements on the Sandusky River. Daniel Brodhead's 8th Pennsylvania soldiers and Col. Gibson's 13th Virginia soldiers under McIntosh left Valley Forge and arrived at Fort Pitt in August 1778.

In September, a council with the Indians was held at Fort Pitt. The Delawares were the only ones willing to allow the army to cross their lands and erect a fort in Delaware territory. They were in a difficult spot and did not want to antagonize the other tribes who had sided with the British. To avoid war with them, they had to appear neutral.

The expedition left Fort Pitt in October 1778. They marched for two days, arriving at the future site of Beaver where they erected Fort McIntosh, along the Ohio River, as a place to store supplies sent from the east for the advance into the Ohio country. There was urgency to get the soldiers to their destination as soon as possible, as it was getting late in the season and some of the militia's term of service was to expire Jan. 1, 1779. Supplies finally arrived on Nov. 4th and McIntosh set out with 1,200 men.

It took two weeks for the army to cover 70 miles to reach the banks of the Tuscarawas River in the Ohio country. They averaged only five miles per day because of snow and rainy weather and less daylight due to the lateness of the season. They also did not get an early start each day since they had to gather their pack horses that they had let loose to forage for food. They arrived Nov. 11, 1778.

Fort Laurens

They began building Fort Laurens on the elevated bank of the Tuscarawas (less than a mile now from Bolivar, Ohio). The fort was a square stockade with bastions in each corner and an entrance on the river side and a gate on the opposite land side – about 240 square feet from bastion tip to bastion tip. The soldiers were weary from the difficult march from Fort McIntosh and it took some time for the men to cut and prepare the trees for building the fort. Already the food rations were getting low. Since it was by now so late in the year, McIntosh decided that they would not proceed beyond this point until spring. McIntosh, a Southerner from Georgia, was not familiar with the severe northern winters of the Ohio country. It was then decided that the bulk of the army would return to Fort Pitt, leaving 150 men (including Peter Parchment) and five women to guard the fort over the winter.

On Dec. 9, 1778, McIntosh with the rest of the army started their

march back to Fort Pitt, leaving Gibson in charge and short on supplies. There was six inches of snow on the ground.

Peter Perchment Shot Near Coshocton

In January, Col. Gibson realized they couldn't wait for supplies to come from Fort McIntosh or Fort Pitt as the situation was getting desperate. Gibson had Samuel Sample, a Pittsburgh merchant serving as Fort Laurens' commissary, go to Coshocton, Ohio to trade for or purchase what was needed. Sample took a small detachment of troops from the 13th Virginia that included Peter Perchment. Coshocton, located on the Muskingum River, was the principal town of the Delaware Indian nation. They arrived there on Jan. 22, 1779. The next day John Nash, who was left to guard their camp while the others were gathering supplies, was killed and scalped by a Delaware Indian. This was unexpected as the Delawares were thought to be on friendly terms with the Americans, but not all of them proved trustworthy. On Jan. 27, while Peter Perchment and another soldier were returning from Lichtenau, the Moravian mission, they were fired upon by an Indian within sight of Coshocton. Peter Parchment's right arm was badly shattered and the bullet pierced his breast. Perchment dropped his gun, ran a few yards and fell. The Indian caught up with him and was about to finish the deed

when a sympathetic Delaware chief prevented him from doing any more damage. The bullet was removed, but his arm healed partially crooked. On Jan. 31, friendly Indians escorted Sample and the soldiers back to Fort Laurens with the supplies.

The Long Winter

Fort Laurens was built only as a temporary supply point for the march on the Sandusky Indian towns. It was not to be a permanent fort and it could not withstand cannon attack. The weather was getting severe and hostile Indians were now aware that the fort was not heavily armed. The orders from Detroit were for the Indians not to attack the fort until spring. The soldiers knew that they were being watched.

Supplies of clothing and rations arrived on Jan. 21, 1779 with the 8th Pennsylvania. They saw firsthand the dire circumstances of the garrison and would report back to Gen. McIntosh when they returned to Fort Pitt. The supplies received in January were almost gone by mid-February. On Feb. 23, unaware that the fort was besieged, Col. Gibson sent a wagon and about 20 men to gather horses that had strayed. Seventeen of those men were killed and scalped and the others were taken prisoner, all in sight of the helpless garrison. There were about 172 soldiers at the fort, but only about 100 fit for duty.

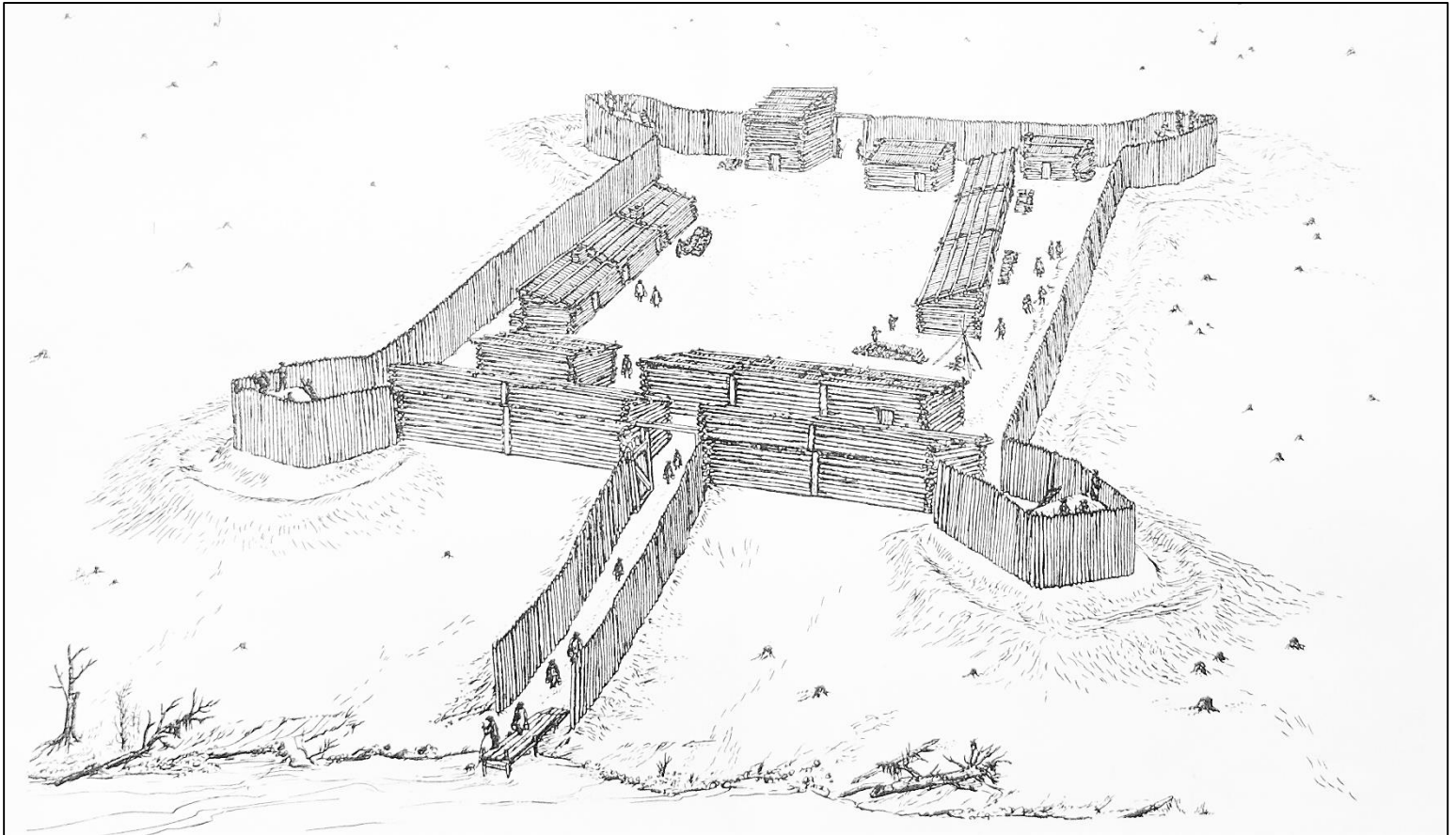


Illustration Depicting Fort Laurens. Source: G.A. Clark

The Indians could have attacked but didn't, probably because they had received word about the alliance of the Americans with the French. Most of the Indians left, leaving about 60 remaining.

The rations were soon gone and the men had to find their own food. Peter Perchment related to his son that he and Capt. Samuel Brady would sneak out at night by the riverside entrance to hunt for game for the garrison when the Indians besieged it. They would go some miles, kill their game, then make a raft, pack on the meat and cover it all with brush. They would then put the raft in the river, climb on, hide under the brush and float down to the fort, located at a curve in the river. The raft would be carried ashore by the current and thus not suspected by the Indians. Such dangerous exploits would only hold the fort over for a short time.

Some soldiers cooked dried beef hides they had at the fort, while others, unable to get these, washed their moccasins and roasted them to eat. Sometimes they would scrape the coarse meal from the meal bags and cook them with strips of hide. Peter Perchment told a son-in-law that the "butt of the ears" proved the best. Eventually, the men were reduced to eating roots and herbs, although many men were too weak to forage for themselves. Two men died from eating poisonous roots.

About Mar. 20, 1779 the Indians left the area of the fort when the British decided not to attack it. Gen. McIntosh had arrived with supplies on March 19, and Col. Gibson and the men of the 13th Virginia, including a wounded Peter Perchment, were released from their harrowing ordeal. They reached Fort Pitt about the end of March.

McIntosh left supplies for two months for the remaining 106 men of the 8th Pennsylvania. Instead of marching on the Indian town of Sandusky in the spring, the plan and the fort were abandoned. It would take too much manpower and supplies and put the troops too far away from safety and reinforcements. Other battles would need to be fought to end the war in the west.

Peter Perchment after Fort Laurens

In those early days, the shattered arm wound Peter Perchment received would have been a very serious matter and death from infection would have been a common result. Eventually, he recovered but it must have taken some time as the company muster rolls for October, November and December 1779 list him with the remark "Absent - sick." In later years he lost some of the use of this arm. His term of service would have ended Jan. 1, 1780, but the records in the Virginia State Archives assert that he served with Col. Gibson near Fort Pitt from Jan. 1 until Dec. 22, 1780, when he was discharged. Gibson wrote at

the time that Peter Perchment "always behaved as a good, honest and faithful soldier."

The Indian Wars

The American Revolution ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1783. This terminated hostilities with the British but it was not the end of the Indian conflicts. There would be horrific crimes perpetrated by both sides before the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 and the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, which at last ended the war in Pennsylvania and surrounding areas.

Sometime in this period, Peter Perchment served with Capt. Samuel Brady and a company of others, who were called out to rescue two children of Frederick Henry who were kidnapped by a small group of Indians from the father's homestead four miles west of Greensburg. Their mother and four siblings had been killed. The company was able to follow the trail to the camp of the fleeing Indians and, with a surprise attack, scare them off and rescue the captive children.

On another occasion, when Peter Perchment was pursued by Indians, he had to swim across the Beaver River by Fort McIntosh to escape capture. It was wintertime and ice was floating in the river. He had been in a heated state from running and caught severe cold that settled in his eyes. They were ever after inflamed and he eventually lost sight in one of them.

From June 27th to July 5th, 1793, Peter Perchment served as captain of a volunteer corps of scouts. Also that year, Governor Mifflin commissioned Perchment as captain of the 5th Company, 2nd Regiment of the Allegheny County Militia.

Other Perchments' Military Service

A Phillip Perchman (also listed as Percham), probably a brother of Peter, served in the Revolution in a Washington County Militia in 1782 and 1783. His name later turns up as a witness for a Peter Perchment deed in the 1820s.

Jacob Parchment, a brother of Peter, was with a hunting party (including Peter Perchment) to procure meat and was left to guard the camp as the others were out hunting. He was killed by hostile Indians. When the party returned and found the body, Peter could not prevail on any of the others to help bury his brother's remains. Peter resolved to do it himself, carrying his large, heavy body some distance to find a good place for burial. Sometime later, Peter met a couple of Indians, one drunk and the other sober, who boasted of having killed Jacob Parchment. Set on revenge, Peter shot the sober one dead and then had a hard scuffle with the other one, who possessed great strength and the excitement rapidly sobered him.

The Indian almost overpowered him, but finally Peter prevailed

with his knife. Other sources state that Jacob Parchment was shot in the back by Indians while crossing a run in a little hollow. There is a Parchment Creek running through Parchment Valley in Jackson County, W.V., said to be named for Jacob Parchment who was killed and scalped in the fall of 1790. Jacob Parchment was living in the area by 1785. At the time of the murder he was attached to the Belleville garrison, which was built in 1785 by men from Pittsburgh (possibly Peter, Jacob and others). The Fort would have been near Point Pleasant, W.V.

Peter Perchment's Post-Military Life

After the harrowing events of his military career, Peter Perchment probably was ready for a more settled life. Nicholas and Peter Perchment, as noted earlier, were living in Pitt Township, Allegheny County by 1783. They were more than likely living in or near the area of Turtle Creek, which had been settled in the early 1760's. Nicholas Perchment does not appear in any records after 1783.

On Oct. 28, 1785, Peter Perchment received a land grant of 100 acres for his services in the Revolutionary War. He named his plantation "Peter's Chance." Located on the Forbes Road to Pittsburgh, today the land straddles Penn Hills and Pittsburgh, bisected by Frankstown Avenue as it runs through eastern Homewood and East Hills.

In the period right after the Revolution, pensions were paid out through the state in whose service the soldier had enlisted. Since Peter Perchment was in the 13th (later renamed 9th) Virginia, it was Virginia that paid the pension. Peter Perchment was paid 82 pounds, 7 pence from 1781 to 1783. In 1785, despite his disability, he was put on the pension rolls at half pay. In September 1789, Peter must have petitioned about the reduction because he appeared before a military review of his case. He showed them the wound to his right arm and they determined he was unable to make a living by labor. In June 1791, the pension amount was changed to 12 pounds annually beginning January 1786 through January 1789. The payment of pensions was taken over by the federal government about this time. Beginning in September 1789 through 1814, Peter Perchment received a U.S. pension of \$40.00 annually up until the destruction of the War Department records in the War of 1812.

On April 12, 1790, at about age 36, Peter Perchment married Mary Powell, age 20, daughter of Mrs. Agnes Powell, widow of William, at her farm on Turtle Creek. William Powell and family, as well as his mother-in-law, Martha Myers, and family, had come over the mountains from Bedford County in 1766. At one time the two families owned a large portion of the Turtle Creek Valley, well over 2,000 acres.

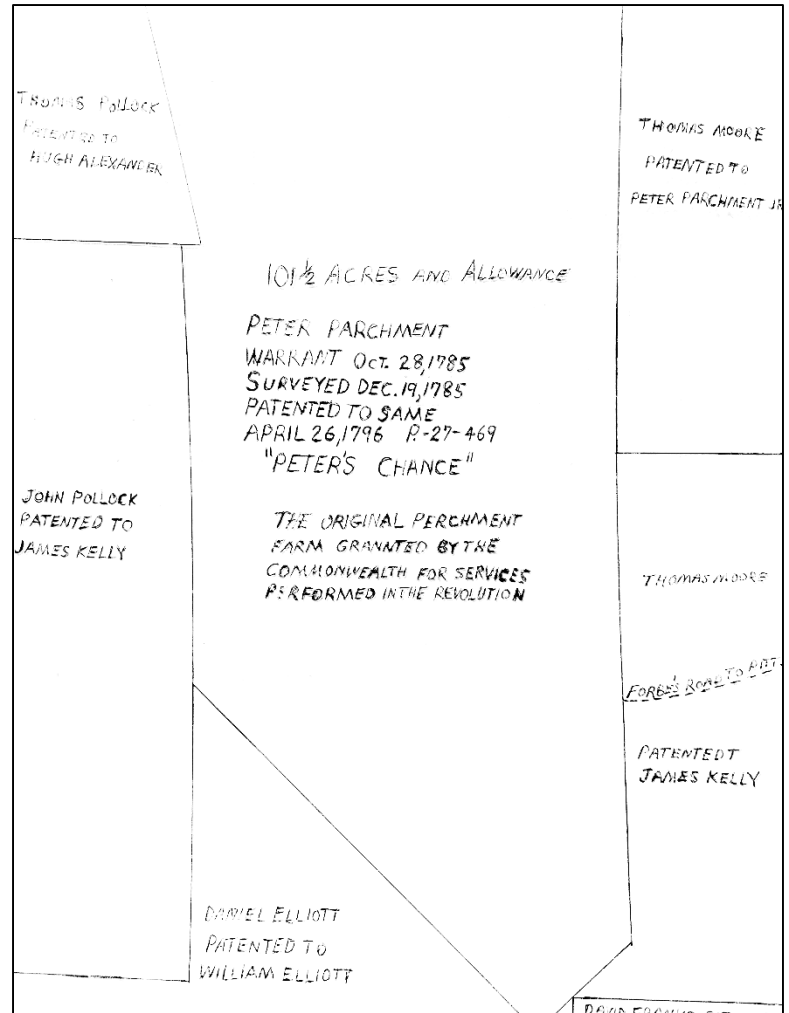


Illustration of Peter Perchment's 101-1/2 acre land grant, "Peter's Chance," located in the East Hills of Pittsburgh. Source: G.A. Clark

Peter and Mary settled on his 100-acre land grant. He was a farmer, but you have to wonder how difficult it must have been with his damaged arm. Between 1791 and 1814, they had 12 children, who all lived to adulthood and married. A farmer always hopes for sons to help on the farm. Peter and Mary Perchment had ten girls and two boys. We can be sure that the girls worked hard on the farm, too. The children married into families that became old established names in the area: Sprague, Dietrich, Kain, Forsythe, Price, Amberson, Thompson, McWilliams, Grant and Delaney.

Life for the Perchment family was hard but went along routinely until financial troubles emerged. In 1828, after not receiving a pension since 1814, Peter Perchment reapplied for one. From these pension records we learn he had not done this sooner because he had owned, for nearly 30 years, two tracts of land comprising 275 acres -- 150 acres in his own right (the 100-acre land grant and 50 acres adjacent purchased from Dunning McNair) and 125 acres in Turtle Creek in right of his wife. He stated that he was able to make a living off the profits of these farms. There must have been hired men or tenant farmers

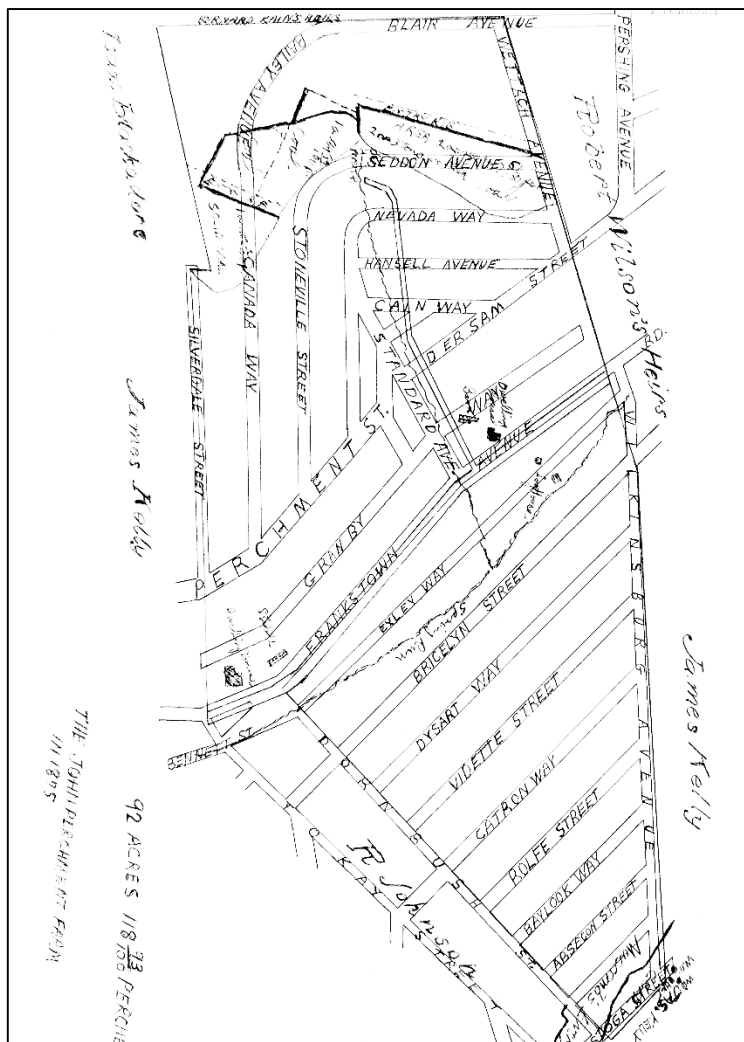


Illustration of Peter Perchment's land grant with a modern street grid superimposed. Source: G.A. Clark

working this land to produce enough profits for an income for Peter Perchment and his large family. The pension records further state that in 1817, the 275 acres became bail payment for Peter's brother-in-law and war comrade, James Amberson, due to a large sum of money that was owed. There were two judgments against Amberson and Perchment for \$1,067.71 and \$1,106.46. There were also judgments against Perchment for \$500 and \$347.31. (Amberson and Perchment were close comrades in the war and later in the militia, and they were married to sisters.) No documents could be found in court records to gain further information about these financial woes. In 1822, all the property was sold at sheriff's sale for \$1,000 to Isaac Harris. Curiously, the next year the same property was sold again for \$1,000, to John Perchment, son of Peter Perchment. Where did John get that kind of money -- worth about \$21,000 today? Maybe John's wife's family or the whole family pulled together to raise it. Whatever, the property returned to the family.

Peter Perchment also stated that he is a farmer but unable to perform labor; he would have been about 74 years old at the

time. And, along with his wife, he had five daughters residing with him, ages 14 to 33 years. Because of financial hardship as listed in the above pension records, Peter Perchment was granted a new pension of \$96 annually. This was paid until his death on Feb. 12, 1844. Mary Perchment applied for a widow's pension, which was approved for \$80 annually. Later in 1848, her son John requested that she receive the same amount that her husband had received -- \$96.

This also was approved and she received this amount until her death on April 23, 1850.

Peter Perchment lived out his long life on the old farm. He must have been made of sturdy stuff, as he lived to be about 90 years old. Many of his children resided on adjoining farms so he and his wife were able to enjoy the company of their children and many grandchildren. They are buried side by side amongst other family members in the old graveyard of Beulah Presbyterian Church in Churchill. The birth date on Peter's gravestone is 1749; as this is a replacement stone and there is no other documentation for this date, it may not be accurate.

Musings

Peter Perchment always said that Simon Girty was unkindly treated by the Americans and accusations made against him which were not true. Perchment had served with him and known him long before and during the early part of the Revolutionary War. Peter Perchment has been characterized by some as a fierce Indian fighter. Growing up on the edge of the frontier, he saw firsthand family and friends brutally killed by Indians. It was a battle for survival. He never went aggressively hunting to do harm for no reason, only to rescue, defend and avenge wrongs committed against his family and community.

It is easy for us, in our nice safe upholstered lives, to pass judgment on the actions of people over 200 years ago. Life was hard and raw on the frontier. People died brutally. What will people say about us in 200 years? Will they say we gave the best years of our lives to create a new nation?

George A. Clark, an East Liberty Valley Historical Society board member and Highland Park resident, is a direct descendant of Peter and Mary Perchment.

Sources:

1. "Fort Laurens, 1778-79: The Revolutionary War in Ohio," by Thomas I. Pieper and James B. Gidney, 1976
2. Lyman Draper Manuscripts, Wisconsin Historical Society
3. Pennsylvania State Archives
4. Virginia State Archives
5. Allegheny County Recorder of Deeds and Court of Common Pleas records
6. Revolutionary War Pension Records, National Archives
7. "The Forsythe Log House," by Thomas Mellon II, 1935
8. "Battle of Point Pleasant," by Livia Simpson Poffenbarger, 1927
9. "He Loves a Good Deal of Rum - Desertions During the American Revolution" by Joseph Lee Boyle, 2009

Q & A: Ask the E.L.V.H.S.

What are those big iron pylons at the end of Washington Boulevard?

If you've ever found yourself waiting for the stop light at the intersection of Washington Boulevard and Allegheny River Boulevard, you've probably noticed the two iron pylons flanking the entrance to Lock Way and the PWSA Brilliant Yard. Atop either pylon is perched a proud eagle, surmounting the seal of the City of Pittsburgh.

But what are they? Where did they come from?

The answer can be found by taking a stroll around the backside of the eastern pylon. There, an inscription reads:

**MURRAY AVENUE BRIDGE
OVER BEECHWOOD BLVD
ERECTED A.D. MCMXIV**

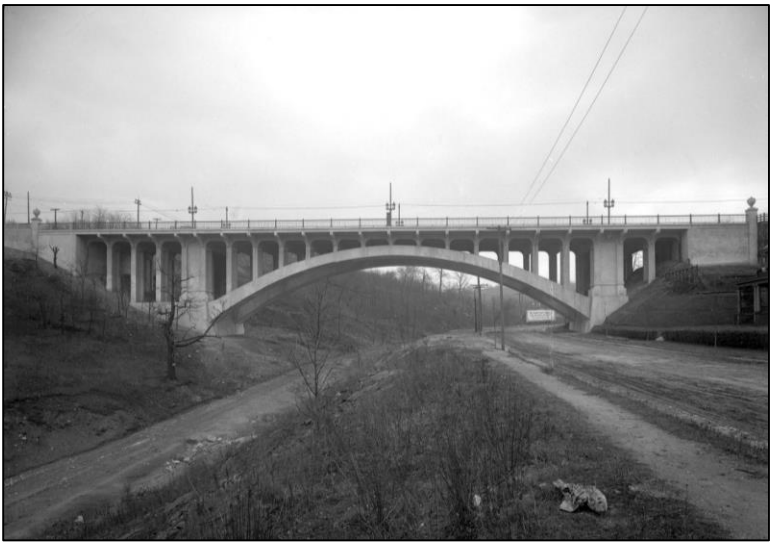
**JOSEPH G. ARMSTRONG, MAYOR
ROBERT SWAN, DIRECTOR DEPT. OF
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The Murray Avenue Bridge once stood in Squirrel Hill, spanning Beechwood Boulevard. Similar to the Larimer Avenue Bridge, the 1914 Murray Avenue Bridge was among the many grand, open-spandrel concrete arch bridges that graced the hills and valleys of Pittsburgh. These pylons anchored the bridge's balustrade, standing at the center of the bridge, at the apex of the main span.

If you're trying to picture where this bridge was, it once spanned Beechwood Boulevard, to the southwest of the western Squirrel Hill Tunnel entrance. The bridge was imploded and replaced in 1977/78. These pylons were likely moved to their present location at the time of demolition.



Do *you* have a question about the history of
Pittsburgh's East End?
Ask the E.L.V.H.S.

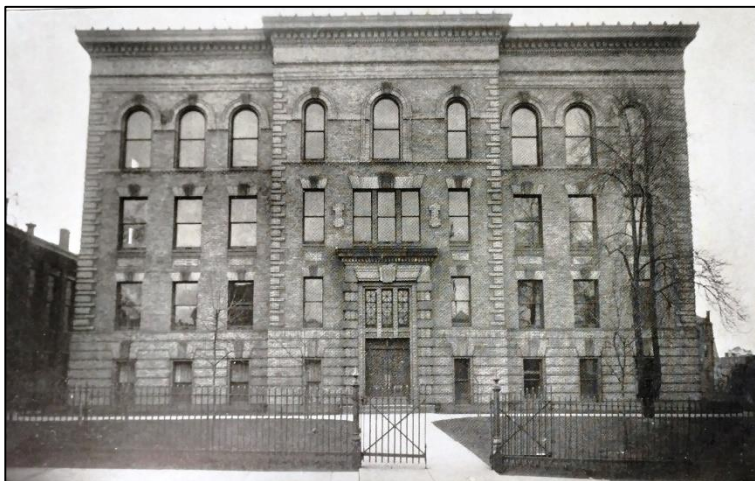
Write us at:
eastlibertyvalley@gmail.com

Above: Murray Avenue Bridge balustrade pylon, May 2015.

Source: J. Greenawalt

Below: Murray Avenue Bridge, January 8, 1915. Source: City of Pittsburgh City Photographer Collection, Public Domain

Mystery Photo



Do you recognize this handsome East End building?

Clue: This building was constructed c. 1903. Although still standing, its front façade is seldom seen.

The first three respondents who correctly identify this building *and* its location will win a free 2020 membership to the East Liberty Valley Historical Society.

Please email all responses to eastlibertyvalley@gmail.com. Responses will be accepted until December 1, 2019. The answer will be revealed and winners will be recognized at the last lecture of the Autumn 2019 Series on Friday, December 6, 2019.

Did you identify the Mystery Photo from our last issue?



The Highland Automobile Company still stands (although much altered) at 5817 Centre Avenue. The building was built in 1906 to the design of architect James Steen. It is possible that this building will be lost in the near future for new development.

Board of Directors

East Liberty Valley Historical Society

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Your Membership Matters!

Your East Liberty Valley Historical Society membership supports quality programming, reinforces a commitment to high-caliber research and documentation, and demonstrates dedication to the indispensable historic assets of Pittsburgh's greater East End.

Join or Renew for 2020

Questions? Write us:
eastlibertyvalley@gmail.com

East Liberty Valley Historical Society

P.O. Box 4922
 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15206

Pittsburgh's East Liberty Valley

Few places in Pittsburgh can claim the historical significance that is found in the East Liberty Valley; even fewer can claim the resiliency to constantly adapt and reinvent.

Over the past 200 years, the only constant in the Valley has been change. From farm community, to railroad hub, to commercial and industrial center, to urban renewal experiment, to pioneer in urban renaissance, the East Liberty Valley has boldly endured.

The East Liberty Valley Historical Society. Who we are.

The East Liberty Valley Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the unique history of the Greater East Liberty Valley.

Through the preservation of our history and the education of the public, we aim to enhance a sense of self and place within the residents of the East End; to encourage community esteem. We work to develop a renewed awareness of the area's significant sites, historical events, and momentous contributions. But most importantly, we strive to foster future growth and development through a broad understanding of our past.



What you can do.

As someone who cares about the history of your community, your membership is critical to the preservation and promotion of the East Liberty Valley. We welcome your participation; as a member, as a donor, as a committee member, or as a contributor to our various publications. It is through **your** participation that we are able to accomplish our mission.

If you have any additional questions, please write us at P.O. Box 4922, Pittsburgh, PA 15206 or email us at eastlibertyvalley@gmail.com.

Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/EastLibertyValley/>



Interested in Becoming a Member?

Tell Us About Yourself!

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

Please make all checks payable to:
East Liberty Valley Historical Society

Choose a Membership Level:

Student \$10

Adult \$20

Business,

1-10 Employees \$35

11-30 Employees \$100

30 + Employees \$200

I am interested in potentially serving on a Committee.

Online Donations may be made with Debit, Credit, or PayPal at: <https://tinyurl.com/ELVHS02>

The East Liberty Valley Historical Society

Autumn 2019 Marilyn Evert Lecture Series

First Fridays This Autumn

September 6, 2019

“Amazing Women You’ve Never Heard Of:
Stories from The Homewood Cemetery”

Jennie Benford

Director of Programming,
The Homewood Cemetery Historical Fund

October 4, 2019

“Long Life, Loose Fit: Renovations to East Liberty Presbyterian Church”

Rob Pfaffmann and Greg George

Architects, Pfaffmann + Associates

Jan Irvin, Archivist and **Stefani Danes**, Parishioner
East Liberty Presbyterian Church

November 1, 2019

“A Home and a Hub in Wilkesburg:
The Singer Mansion and the Pennsylvania Railroad Station”

Anne Elise Morris

President, Wilkesburg Historical Society

December 6, 2019

“Voices from the Attic: The Williamstown Boys in the Civil War”

Dr. Carleton Young

Historian

East Liberty Presbyterian Church
116 South Highland Avenue, Chapel
Each Lecture Begins At 7:30PM
- Free and Open to the Public -

East Liberty Valley Historical Society

P.O. Box 4922

Pittsburgh, PA 15206