

**VALENTINE WERKHEISER'S WILL**

**1788 - 1858**

**(Signed October 25, 1856)**

The following is a copy of Valentine Werkheiser's will which was proved on 3/8/1858. It is filed under #6809 at the Northampton County courthouse in Easton, Pennsylvania. Many wills are drawn up solely by lawyers or JP's, but this one has the mark of Valentine's composition.

In the name of God, Amen. I, Valentine Werkheiser of the Township of Forks in the County of Northampton and State of Pennsylvania, being of sound mind and memory do make this my last will and testament in manner and form following, viz..

I direct all my debts, including the dower of the widow Stecher, if it should remain unpaid at my decease, both the interest during her lifetime and the principal at her death together with my funeral expenses to be paid by my executors out of my estate.

I give and bequeath to **my beloved wife Sarah (Messinger, 1792 - 1867)** all the dividends which shall be decalred during her life upon two shares of the stock belonging to me of the Farmer's and Mechanic's Bank of Easton, which said shares of stock I hereby bequeath to my executor or executors to hold in trust for the use of my said wife as aforesaid during her life and after her death to transfer one of said shares to my son **Abraham (1826 - 1890)** and the other share to my son **Aaron (1826 - 1893)**.

I give and bequeath to my said wife the sum of \$180.00 to be paid to her yearly and every year during her natural life by my sons Abraham and Aaron as is herinafter directed, also all the furniture of the house in which I now live or so much thereof as she may desire to take, and I hereby direct my executors to provide for her out of my estate, 2 cows and 1 horse and wagon which she shall be entitled to so long as she shall live and if the cows or horse shall die or become useless, to supply their places others, so that my said wife shall at all time have 2 good cows and 1 good horse and wagon. I do further give to my said wife as much wood, stove coal, apples, and potatoes as she shall need during her life, to be furnished to her as she may require the same by my sons Abraham and Aaron. Also 9 bu. wheat and 9 bu. of rye and one hog weighing 200 lbs. to be furnished to my said wife yearly and every year during her life by my sons Abraham and Aaron. I also give and devise to my said wife the house where I now live together with the garden and necessary out buildings near the same to hold to her during the term of her natural life.

I give and devise to my sons Abraham and Aaron their heirs and assigns as tenants in common all the land of which I shall die seized, which is situated in the Township of Forks aforesaid subject to the life estate in the house and garden devised to my wife to the performance of the duties imposed and to the delivery of the articles directed herein to be furnished by them to my said wife, and subject also to the payment by my said sons of the sum of \$100.00 for each and every acre thereof to the following named persons at the times and in manner as follows: viz..

\$3,000.00 thereof at the death of my widow to my executor or executors hereinafter named, the interest of which said sum my said sons shall pay on the last day of April in every year to my wife Sarah during her life, \$1,000.00 thereof at the death of **Mary( 1815 - 1880), widow of Jacob Uhler deceased**, to my executor or executors, the interest whereof my said sons shall pay annually to my daughter Mary during her life. \$1,000.00 thereof within 2 years after my death to my daughter **Margaret (1816 - 1893), wife of George Uhler**; \$1,000.00 thereof at the death of my daughter **Sarah (1819 - 1904)**, wife of Charles Knecht to my executor or executors, the interest whereof my said sons shall pay annually to my said daughter Sarah during life; \$1,000.00 thereof within three years after my death to my daughter **Eliza Ann (no dates avail-**

able), wife of William Kahler and the residue of the said sum of money to be paid within 2 years after my death to my executor or executors to be by them distributed as herein described.

I give and bequeath to my son Solomon (1811 - 1878), or in case he shall die before me, to my sons Abraham and Aaron the sum of \$1,600.00 (which is to be considered as a full compensation for the work and labor of my son Joseph (1812 - 1880) for me since he has attained his majority), and also 1/5th part of the residue of estate and effects which shall remain after the payment of my debts and the specific legacies stated herein before that which said sums shall be held by them in trust for the use of my said son Joseph, during his life but that no part of the same shall be subject to execution or attachment for the debts, contracts, or engagements of the said Joseph the interest of which said sums shall be appropriated to support and maintenance of my said son Joseph. And I do direct that whenever in the opinion of the said Solomon or, in case of his death, of the said Abraham and Aaron, my said son Joseph shall be capable of managing his estate with discretion, that then and in that case, he or they, as the case may be shall pay the principal sum heretofore bequeathed for the use of my said son into proper hands and, if my said son Joseph, dies without issue, I give and bequeath all monies bequeathed to him or in trust for him, to my sons Solomon, Abraham, Aaron, and Tobias (1827 - 1898) their executors, administrators, and assignees to be equally divided between them share and share alike.

I give and bequeath to my son Peter (1823 - 1898) the sum of \$1,000.00 to be paid to him by my executors 18 months after decease. But in case a deed for a certain tract of land of about 20 acres and 8 perches of land in the Township of Forks which I have agreed to sell to him shall be delivered to him after the execution of this my will, then I revoke the bequest of the said Peter and in that case I give him only the sum of \$1,000.00 which will remain unpaid by him as some of the purchase money of the said tract of land.

All the rest and residue of my estate (real, personal, and mixed), I hereby direct to be sold by my executors and converted into money to be divided into 5 equal shares of which I give and bequeath one share to my son Solomon Werkheiser, one share to my son Abraham Werkheiser, one share to my son Aaron Werkheiser, one share to my son Tobias Werkheiser, and the remaining share as is herein before provided, to my son Solomon, or in case of his death before me, to my sons Abraham and Aaron in trust for my son Joseph.

I hereby appoint my son Solomon the executor of this will. And in case he shall die before me, then I appoint my sons Abraham and Aaron the executors hereof.

It is my will and I do hereby direct that the interest to be paid by my sons Abraham and Aaron to my daughters Mary and Sarah shall not begin to run until 2 years after my death nor shall my said sons be liable to pay the said interest until 3 years after my death. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 25th day of October in the year of 1856.

Witnesses: Peter S. Michler Melchior H. Horn Samuel Sandt

Note: not mentioned in the will were the following who died young:

Catherine (1821 - 1823)  
Edward (1829 - 1830)  
Valentine (1836 - 1836)

Some comments about Valentine's will from the Werkheiser historians are: Valentine was very thorough and detailed in his distribution of assets and estate. Pictures taken of Valentine's home which James Hay has owned for the past 40 years, shows Valentine's name printed across the top of the front door frame with the date 1846 plainly visible. A springhouse which is about 100 feet due east from the house. The initials O. S. and date 1816 cut into the outside stone wall at the peak of the roof. The S. could stand for Stecher. It was well built and is in excellent repair today. The stairway to the second floor could be pulled up to the ceiling and it is said that the early occupants would climb to the second floor and pull up the stairs when they feared an attack from the Indians. Also neat Indian arrowheads and other artifacts were found in the fields near the springhouse when they were ploughed and tilled. In the second paragraph of his will he refers to a "dower to the widow Stecher" which is a bit of history the we, the Historians had been unaware of( and for which there does not seem to be any explanation). Also lost in history are the reasons for the different ways that Valentine bequeathed an inheritance to his daughters.

A map for Forks Township in the 1874 Atlas of Northampton County in Pennsylvania, shows a string of Werkheiser names whose farms were probably connected by a private lane. Solomon's farm was near the township boundary line, then was the E. and A. (Abraham) farm and then Peter's farm. Warren Werkheiser lived on Peter's farm who was his great grandfather. Aaron lived on the E. Werkheiser farm. Tobias lived on the farm next to his brother Peter.

Warren Werkheiser has the following three deeds in his possession. Please note that 160 perches equals one acre.

indenture-Aaron and Abraham Werkheiser and wives sold to Joseph and Solomon Werkheiser. recorded-4/16/1862 in Book D, Volume 10, page 428 paid-\$175.00 for 149 perches This lot was the limekiln.

indenture-Aaron and Abraham Werkheiser sold to Joseph Werkheiser on 11/26/1864. recorded-5/18/1872 in Book E, Volume 13, page 650 paid-\$25.00 for 79 perches A 1/2 acre lot alongside the limekiln.

indenture-Joseph Werkheiser sold to Solomon Werkheiser on 3/29/1872. recorded-4/11/1872 in Book E, Volume 13, page 421 paid \$300.00 for 149 perches Solomon bought Joseph's interest in the limekiln.