



*Christian Waldschmidt House
Camp Dennison, Ohio
Built in 1804
Patriotic Shrine of Ohio Daughters of the American Revolution*

WALDSCHMIDT HOUSE

1804

Owned by Ohio Society
Daughters of The American Revolution

WALDSCHMIDT

Our story begins in the Rhine Valley of Germany, the home of Simon Waldschmidt and the birthplace of his son, John Waldschmidt. Simon Waldschmidt was a well-to-do man, possessed of extensive farm lands, operator of a paper mill on the Kinzig River, and was the owner of a prosperous Dry Goods Store in the village of Gergenback. John was able to attain a college education. He attended the University of Tubuegen and prepared for the ministry. However, upon the death of his father, he quit school and managed the vast holdings inherited from his father.

The family was of Lutheran persuasion, but young Waldschmidt, during his theological studies, had become interested in "Pietism," which was a stricter form of the Lutheran faith. Because of his deviation from the State Church, he and other followers encountered many severe persecutions. Then in 1751 and 1752 Mr. Schlatter visited John's native land to secure ministers for America. John, knowing that this would afford a fine opportunity to practice his religion of Pietism, volunteered his services.

In 1752 John sold his lands and other possessions and left his fatherland for America. He arrived in America July 28, 1752 after many days at sea. John was to go to Pennsylvania where he was installed as Pastor of Cocallico (since called Swamp) of Weisechenland, of Modecreek and Zeltenriech Churches.

After a short time he met Maria Elizabetha Grube, the daughter of Christian Grube, and married her May 14, 1754. They established their home in Lancaster County, Pa., close to John's churches and his paper mill, which he had located in Montgomery County, Pa. On March 23, 1755 John and Maria Elizabetha were blessed with a baby boy, which they named Christian after Maria Elizabetha's father.

In 1775 when war broke out between England and the colonies, Christian Waldschmidt was a young man twenty years old. He immediately enlisted and fought for his country

as a private in the Pennsylvania Regiment from Berks County. He fought until the end of the war. However, three years before the war ended Christian married Catherine Bollender, in Reading Town, Pa., August 15, 1780.

In 1786 John Waldschmidt died. He was buried in the graveyard connected with the church called Swamp (earlier called Cocallico) in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Christian's father had given work in his paper mill to all the men, except one, who had come to America with him from Germany. A man named Bockenheim did not go to Lancaster or Montgomery Counties, Pa., but remained in Philadelphia. One day Bockenheim came to visit his old friends from Germany. He brought them news of settlements that were being made in the North West Territory. He spoke of the fertility of the land and the many business opportunities this new country offered. In 1794 Christian Waldschmidt and several companions journeyed over the rugged Allegheny Mountains on horseback, then by flat boat down the Ohio River to a small town at the mouth of the Little Miami River, named Columbia. They stopped at the Tavern of Kasper Schutz, who had served in the war with Waldschmidt in the Company of Captain Strong. From Columbia they set out to explore the land between the two Miami Rivers.

They were pleased with the Valley for two reasons. First, they foresaw the possibility of the old Indian Trail leading to present Chillicothe, Ohio, becoming a high road. Secondly, the river was navigable for canoes and flat boats. Waldschmidt at once felt he must own a site in this area for a mill. He hastened to Cincinnati, Ohio, to make a purchase from John Cleves Symmes, who owned most of the land between the Great Miami and the Little Miami rivers. He completed his purchase in 1795 and returned to Pennsylvania. Three men were left in the new country to clear the land and erect block houses, forming a fortress against the Indians who were still troublesome even though the Treaty of Greenville had been signed in August of 1795.

Waldschmidt disposed quickly of his property in Pennsylvania. He sold his mill to David Saur who owned a printing establishment. Most of the settlers were ready to leave in

1795, the rest followed in 1798 including some new additions.

Waldschmidt's fortune flourished in the new country. He built a paper mill, cooperage, distillery, woolen mill and dying house, blacksmith shop, and started a school. By 1804 he had built for himself a large home. It was built of field stone, held together with white mortar. He lived in this house until 1814 when he died of "cold plague" or influenza. He is buried in Camp Dennison, Ohio, cemetery. His grave has a bronze DAR marker on the stone.

Johannes Kugler, one of the original colonists from Germany, had died shortly after his arrival in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. His son, Mathias Kugler, joined the settlers going to the Ohio Country. He worked for Christian Waldschmidt. Kugler was then a handsome lad of seventeen, and while working and living in the Waldschmidt home, he fell in love with Catherine, the daughter of Christian Waldschmidt. They were married, and the once poor Mathias Kugler became the son-in-law of the rich Christian Waldschmidt, and the successor in the management of "New Germany" as the community was then known. The Kugler family lived in the lovely stone house until 1849. The Kugler fortune was lost through over-speculation, and Waldschmidt House saw a succession of tenants. During the Civil War it was the headquarters of General Joshua Bates. After the war it was used for storage of corn, wheat and hay. Soon the walls began to sink and crack and the once lovely home became an eye sore in the community.

In 1941 Mr. and Mrs. Chester Kroger bought the house and immediate grounds and gave it to the Ohio Society Daughters of The American Revolution. Their gift was accompanied by a check for five thousand dollars to assist with the restoration. After months of research in the Pennsylvania Dutch country, restoration began. Then came World War II and all worked stopped. In 1947 it began again and proceeded slowly and expensively. The House was dedicated in 1952.

Waldschmidt House has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, thus insuring its future. The house is indeed unique, having been built and lived in by a soldier of

The American Revolution, and now being owned and operated by a society dedicated to the purpose of preserving this period of our history. The Ohio Society Daughters of The American Revolution proudly share this bit of Americana with all who visit this beautiful old stone house.

Compiled

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