

# **The George Christian & Anna Catherine *Blank* Spangler National Historic Farm**

**by Tony Noll**

## **Back Story:**

The story of the George Christian Spangler Historic Farm and its Spangler family heritage goes back over 250 years. Twenty-one-year-old George Christian Spangler, Sr. left his native Prussia, emigrated from Holland on the ship *Jacob*, and arrived in Philadelphia on October 2, 1749.

He settled in Moore Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania and married Anna Marie Kreider in Northampton County four years later. Together they owned land, farmed, and raised ten children - George Christian, Jr., Barbara Margarete, Johann Henry, Johann Christopher, John, George Peter, Johan Michael, Suzanna, Johann George, and Anna Maria. Spangler also served in the Northampton militia during the Revolutionary War. Around 1794 George Christian and Anna Marie moved to Rebersburg, Centre County. George Christian Spangler, Sr. died there in 1802 followed by Anna Marie-thirty years later.

In 1791 George Christian Spangler, Sr. and his wife Anna Marie (Kreider) Spangler transferred land in central Pennsylvania to their eldest son George Christian Spangler, Jr. This land was located along the northern bank of Penns Creek in what was the original Northumberland County (Union and Snyder Counties would be created out of the western area in Northumberland County.) Today this land is in Limestone Township, Union County.

George Christian Spangler, Jr. was born on November 2, 1755. He, like his father and at least one brother, also served in the Northampton Militia during the Revolutionary War. He married Anna Catherine Gramley in 1781. In 1802, the forty-seven-year-old George Christian, Jr. built his stone house and farmed on the land he was deeded along Penns Creek, approximately five miles west of New Berlin, Union County. Together, George Christian and Anna Catherine raised eight children on the farm: Jacob, Christopher, Susanna, twins Jonathan and Daniel, Elizabeth, John, Saloma, and Catherine. George Christian Spangler, Jr. died on March 2, 1829, and Anna Catherine (Gramley) Spangler died on July 7, 1841. Both are buried in the New Berlin Cemetery, New Berlin, PA.

It was this union between George Christian Spangler, Jr. and Anna Catherine (Gramley) Spangler, along with the creation of their farm along Penns Creek that began a long era of farming in the Spangler family; the farm was owned and operated by a Spangler descendent for well over 145 years. It is a farming legacy lasting over 200 years to the present.



### **The Legacy:**

In 1802, when the stone farm house was built by the Spangler family, the nation was only twenty-six years old. At that time Thomas Jefferson was serving as our third President, and he would purchase the Louisiana Territory from France the following year (1803). In 1802, Lewis and Clark had not yet set off on their grand expedition. The Lewis and Clark Expedition took place from 1804-1806.

Our nation, largely unexplored, was stretching and growing. Pennsylvania was a sea of trees stretching from the Delaware River to the Ohio country, with parts of the state still unsettled. With a growing influx of settlers came an increased need for agricultural products.

The Spangler farm was also growing and would play a vital role in the growth of the region. From 1840-1880 canals and railways reached farther into the area and began opening up a larger market for the farms to sell their goods. It was also at this time that other types of manufacturing began to take hold in local towns like Mifflinburg and Lewisburg. This brought an increase in settlers to the local economy and in turn increased the need for agricultural goods. The growing economy and improved roads, canals, and railways all strengthened the business of

farming. Through agricultural census data collected in 1850, 1880, and 1927 it is clear that the Spangler farm frequently produced at a rate above the average compared to other farms in the township. The Spangler farm led the way in agricultural production for the area and played an important part in the region's growth.

The Spangler family would pass down this farming legacy for over 145 years. With time, the family would add other farm buildings to the property. They cleared more acreage and diversified agricultural production to sustain the Spangler family's needs, as well as the needs of a growing economy.

George Christian Spangler, Jr. would later pass the farm to his son Daniel, who in turn passed the farm to his son Jonathan (John) Spangler. John's son Reno and his wife Annie V. assumed ownership on October 22, 1908. Thirty years later, the farm was transferred one last time to a Spangler heir. Reno Spangler's daughter, Helen (Spangler), and her husband George F. Musser took ownership. The Mussers lived on and farmed the property until 1947. At this time the farm was bought by William and Nina H. Showers, who rented it to tenant farmers. The Showers sold the farm to Richard and Grace (Kistler) Noll in 1963. They have lived on, maintained, and farmed the historic Spangler farm for well over 50 years, and they plan to continue this agricultural legacy well into the future!