

# 14: MINEAR

## (Minier, Minnir)\*

Like many names, the name Minear has changed over the years. In Germany the family went by Minnir, and in America by Minier and Minear to name a few. Each branch of the family seemed to use their own spelling of the name—as was the case back in the early history of America: any spelling was all right as long as it was pronounced the same. An example and statement of the corruption of the name is found in the pension application of a Revolutionary War veteran who in 1833 was living in Ohio. The applicant stated his name was Abraham Minnir but that “sometimes and in early life among the Germans of Pennsylvania” he was called Abraham Minnigre. Persons who furnished his references for good character referred to him variously as Minnir, Minnir, Manier, and Minnigre.

For many years, the earliest known Minear ancestor was John Minear, born about 1730 in Germany, and who settled in what is now Tucker County, West Virginia. C. J. Maxwell in his book, *The Descendants of John Minear* (1948), Maxwell writes:

When and where was John Minear born? No one knows. When did he come to America? No one knows. Where did he live immediately after coming? No one knows. How many children had he? No one knows for certain. All certain information on these points is lost in the mists of the past. Only a few written evidences were left, but tradition furnishes a

good many items.

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Through his work, Charles Gillespie may have found who John Minear’s parents were and answered many of the question that C. J. Maxwell posed. Gillespie’s stumbling block was Christian Minier, John Minear’s half-brother. By finding information on Christian Minier, Gillespie may have uncovered information about our ancestor John Minear. Gillespie writes of the Minier family:

Many Minier descendants have conjectured concerning the origin of the family of Christian Minier, the first settler in Big Flats, Chemung County, New York. And because a name of much the same spelling is to be found in France, the supposition has often been that his ancestors were French Huguenots. Quite possibly they may have been; however, the wedding of Christian’s grandfather [another Christian Minnir] shows that his great-grandfather, Wilhelm, was living in Germany as early as 1703.

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A positive link between our John Minear and the Miniers in Germany was established when a niece of Minear researcher Aurale Huff went to Germany and found in the Mannheim Archives reference to a Johannes George Minnir (Minear, Minier, Mynher) born Feb. 11, 1730, and died 1780/81 “von Indianern ermordet” (killed by Indians). Along with this record also named John’s wife as Maria Ursula.

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\*. The information on the Minears (Minnirs) in Germany was researched by Charles Gillespie (died before 1993) and Helen B. Cox (died in the 1970’s). Helen was a well-known researcher, who left her research to the Oklahoma Historical Society. All this information was sent to me by Phyllis Mossing in Ohio in 1993.

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**WILHELM MINNIR\***  
**ABOUT 1656—AFTER 1703**

**EVA SUSANNE (EHL) MINNIR**  
**ABOUT 1650—UNKNOWN**

Wilhelm Minnir was a blacksmith (master of the forge) and armorer (one who make armor and weapons). In the year 1703 he was in the service of the Count of Hohenlohe at Ernsbach in the Odenwald, a region just east of the Rhine River where the Neckar meets the Rhine near Heidelberg in the former kingdom of Württemberg, Germany. Ernsbach's vital records, as well as much else there, was destroyed in World War II in the bombings of German metal working installations in that vicinity.

Gillespie writes: "It is more than possible that those destroyed documents might have shown that Wilhelm Minnir came with the French to this Palatinate countryside during the French and German conflicts of 1689 and 1693. If so, he may have stayed there quite voluntarily, for this place after the Revocation of the Edit of Nantes in 1685 still welcomed Protestants, as France did not." This does not seem likely since his twin sons were born in Michelstadt, Germany before the time of the French and German conflicts that Gillespie mentions. Wilhelm's son and grandson were married in the Reformed Protestant Church in the Palatinate region. The Palatinate was at first a state of the Holy Roman Empire, ruled by the Elector Palatine. It later became an Electoral District of the old German confederation of small governments near the middle of the Rhine River's course and south of the lands of the Duke of Hesse.

The following is further information on Wilhelm Minnir or Minieur

The date, October 3, 1709 is not the death-date of Wilhelm Minieur. At this time the administrative official Christian Friedrich Wibel noted a deal between the black-smith Wolfgang Meyerhöffer and the black-smith Wilhelm Minieur. Meyerhöffer was selling a little vineyard to Wilhelm Minieur. Because Wilhelm Minieur wasn't a citizen of Ernsbach another citizen of Ernsbach, Jacob Wolff, would to prevent the deal. All citizens of Ernsbach were right to prevent a deal, when a person, who was not a citizen, was buying a property immo- bil. Meyerhöffer was not just a citizen. He was just a black-smith in the hammer-mill as Wilhelm Minieur. The deal twenty and more years ago between a citizen from Ernsbach and Wolfgang Meyerhöffer was approved by Wolfgang Julius, Earl of Hohenlohe, himself. In connection with the deal between Wolfgang Meyerhöffer and Wilhelm Minieur, Christian Friedrich Wibel, the administrative official, was writing, that Wilhelm Minieur at this time was approximately by sixty years old and more than thirty years working working in the hammer-mill at Ernsbach. I don't know the death-day of Wilhelm Minieur. It's really after October 1709. You know, the hammer-mill at Ernsbach was founded in the 1660 years by Wolfgang Julius Earl of Hohenlohe

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\*. This information on Wilhelm Minnir was written by Charles Gillespie, but has been paraphrased to add some additional information

and she was in his ownership till December 1698, the month in which he was passing away. Then his widow was owner from 1698 to 1701.

Christian Friedrich Wibel leased the hammer-works from 1700 to his death in 1730 and he was in combination of the functions administrative official of the Earls of Hohenlohe.

Since 1695 he was factor of the hammer-works with a paper-mill under the ownership of Wolfgang Julius Earl of Hohenlohe and in combination of the functions administrative

official of Wolfgang Julius Earl of Hohenlohe. This is the reason, why in 1700 there was an inventory in the hammer-mill also with the

black-smiths Wolfgang Meyerhöffer and Wilhelm Minieur.

The problem is, that the written records are very thin in this time.

many many written records were buying out in the 1880 years by the Earls

of Hohenlohe-Öhringen, because they hadn't no more place for these

records and the church-books of Ernsbach and Sindringen are burned in

1945. Only a chance aids for new informations for this time. In the

Hohenlohe-archive at Neuenstein there are written records of the tax

authorities in the time 1676, 1702,1741 and 1773. From 1702 to 1741

there is no updating. In this records are lists of the owner of

properties. In 1702 Wilhelm wasn't owner of property and in 1741 there

Conrad Minieur named and his successor Johann Jacob Minieur. Probably is

Conrad Minieur a son of Wilhelm Minieur.

If you have further some questions more, you have to say that to me.

Sincerely

Eberhard Kugler

Wilhelm's wife was Eva Susanne, and their known children were:<sup>1</sup>

	Born	Died	Spouse	Married
Twins:				
1. Christian	Feb. 9, 1676 in Michelstadt	Before 1719	Anna Rosina (Gengelbach) Albert	Feb. 27, 1703
2. Hans Georg	Feb. 9, 1676 in Michelstadt	May 23, 1739 in Michelstadt		
3. Johann Crafft	Dec. 9, 1689 in Ernstbach	Oct. 4, 1769 along the Ruhr	Maria Salome Eberlin Eva Maria Egner (died Feb. 1772)	Nov. 22, 1718 in Ingelfingen Nov. 24, 1733 in Ingelfingen
4. Wilhelm			Anna Maria Ziegler	Dec. 5, 1749 in Ingelfingen
5. Johann Philipp			Marie Barbara Walter	

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### CHRISTIAN MINNIR

FEBRUARY 9, 1676—BEFORE 1719

### ANNA ROSINA (GENGELBACH) ALBERT MINNIR

ABOUT 1685—UNKNOWN

Christian Minnir was born February 9, 1676, the son of Wilhelm and Eva Susanne Minnir, in the town of Michelstadt, Germany. On February 27, 1703 in the town of Lützelsachsen, Mannheim, Christian married Anna Rosina (Gengelbach) Albert, widow of Johann Albert, a blacksmith of Lützelsachsen. Anna Rosina and Johann Albert were married on October

26, 1694. Anna Rosina Gengelbach's parents were Johannes Gengelbach, who was the magistrate of Lützelsachsen and the son of Jacob and Lucca Gengelbach. Johannes died in February of 1691. Christian was a blacksmith and gunsmith (armorers) as was his father, Wilhelm.<sup>2</sup> Christian and Anna Rosina had at least four children:<sup>3</sup>

	Born	Died	Spouse	Married
1. Christian	Feb. 2, 1704 in Lützelsachsen	1785 in New Jersey, USA	Maria Catharina Rudi	1730
2. Johann Georg	May 12, 1705 in Lützelsachsen, Palatinete, Germany	1779 in Penn., USA	Anna Catharina Meyer Maria Elizabeth Strunk Eva Meitzer	Nov. 23 or 28, 1728 In Penn., USA Jul. 3, 1764
3. Sabina Katharina	Sep. 1, 1707 in Lützelsachsen		Peter Smith	
4. David	Jan. 22, 1713 in Lützelsachsen			

The town of Lützelsachsen and its twin village of Hohensachsen (one and a half miles apart) are located along the an old road first laid out by the Romans to run from Heidelberg north to Darmstadt. This road is now called *bergstrasse* or “mountain road,” and it still connects the old villages of Lützelsachsen and Hohensachsen that lay on the west side of the hills near the city of Mannheim. Christian Minnir probably died in Lützelsachsen before the year 1719. In the

baptismal record for Christian Minnir—eldest son of Christian and Anna Rosina, dated January 7, 1719—it states: “Christian, aged 15 years, a surviving son of Christian Minnir, former citizen of Lützelsachsen.”

After Christian's death, his widow Anna Rosina may have moved to Michelfeld, just south of Heidelberg where in 1728 her son Johann (Hans) Georg was married and where his first child (our John Minear?) was born.

**JOHANN GEORG “GEORGE” MINNIR (MINIER)**

MAY 12, 1705—DECEMBER 14, 1779

**ANNA CATHARINA (MEYER) MINNIR**

ABOUT 1710—1745

**MARIA ELIZABETH (STRUNK) MINIER**

UNKNOWN

**EVA (MEITZER) MINNIR**

UNKNOWN

The child of Christian and Anna Rosina (Gengelbach) Minnir, Johann Georg Minnir, was born on May 12, 1705 in Lützensachsen, Mannheim, Germany. He was christened five days later on May 17, 1705. Johann Georg had two godfathers or sponsors for his christening: one was his uncle by the same name, Johann Georg (son of Wilhelm Minnir), and the other was Johannes Bauder (son of Johannes Bauder from Rutschmeyer). At the age of fifteen on May 17, 1720, Johann Georg became a confirmed mem-

ber of the Lutheran Church in Lützensachsen.

At the age of 23, Johann Georg married Catharina Meyer, daughter of Ulrich And Elizabeth Meyer in the town of Michelfeld, Nordbaden, Germany, which is just south of Heidelberg.<sup>4</sup> Johann Georg and Catharina had one son, John, in Germany before they immigrated to America—they had five Children in all, the rest were born in Conestoga, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania:<sup>5</sup>

	<b>Born</b>	<b>Died</b>	<b>Spouse</b>	<b>Married</b>
1. Johannes Georg “John”	Feb. 11, 1730 in Michelfeld, Ger.	Apr. 5, 1781 in (West) Virginia	Maria Ursula Elizabeth	
2. Maria Elizabeth <sup>a</sup>	Dec. 24, 1732 in Conestoga, Penn.	Jun. 26, 1769 in Gnadenthal, Penn.	Johann David Kunz	Nov. 21, 1762
3. Maria Catharina	Feb. 2, 1734			
4. Heinrich	Dec. 24, 1735			
5. Catherine	Sep. 15, 1740		Christian House	

a. Died of Childbirth fever.

In 1732, Johann Georg along with his wife and son emigrated to America. His brother Christian accompanied them. On the passenger list they were listed as Christian Menear, age 28, and Hans George Mineer, age 26. They sailed from Rotterdam then to Cowes on the ship “Mary of London” with John Gray as master; they landed in Philadelphia on September 26, 1732. Once in America, Johann Georg Minnir went by the name

George Minier.

George Minier’s first wife, Catharina (Meyer) Minier, died in 1745 in Conestoga, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. After her death, George married Maria Elizabeth Strunk, whose father was Weindert Strunk. George and Maria were living in Tulpehocken in Heidelberg, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania when they started having children. They had six in all—the first four being born in Heidelberg, Penn-

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sylvania. The last two children were born in Northampton County, Pennsylvania.

George and Maria's children were:

	Born	Died	Spouse	Married
1. Christina Barbara	Jun. 27, 1745	After May 20, 1832	Never Married	
2. Christian	Sep. 30, 1747	1837	Christiana Beck	1772
3. Daniel	Oct. 13, 1749			
4. Elizabeth	Mar. 31, 1751		Jacob Deatruck	
5. Lorenz				
6. Abraham				

While living in Tulpehocken in Heidelberg, Pennsylvania, George Manier joined the First Moravian Congregation—formed in Pennsylvania. There were twelve in the group who banded together on April 9, 1745 to establish this congregation. The Moravain church records contain other information about the life of George Minier, but first a little history of the church as written by Charles Gillespie:

The Moravians should not be included among the many peculiar sects of Pennsylvania's early history. Of all the religious bodies that came to Pennsylvania in the days of German pioneering, the Moravians alone professed to come for missionary purposes, especially to evangelize the indians. As far as the Moravians as sectarianism is concerned, the English Church as early as 1749 recognized the Moravians as a Protestant Episcopal denomination.

Although the proper name of the Church was Unitas Fratrum or United Brethren, so many of the early members had once lived in that part of Europe called Moravia, that the group came to be better known as Moravians. Their first congregation made up largely of followers of the reformer John Huss, had been organized about 1722. This happened in a village owned by the Count Zinzendorf in Upper Lusatia, Saxony. In 1735 through the efforts of the Count, a small congregation crossed the Atlan-

tic and settled near the Ogeeche River on land granted to them by the Colony of Georgia. In 1737 another settlement had been made by them at Savanna. However the next year both of these places were abandoned because of attacks made upon them by Spaniards from Florida. Historians claim the Jesuits did not wish to have Protestant settlers nearby. Those Moravians who survived went to Pennsylvania. Here in 1742 the Count Zinzendorf met the Deputies of the Six Indian Nations at Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania, and was given a belt of wampum signifying the assent of the Indians to the missionary plans of the Brethren. Before the Count returned to Europe, he gave the Lanapi chiefs, who claimed the place, what they had fixed as their price for the huts, orchards and cleared land at Bethlehem (after 1752 in Northampton County, Pa).

By the time the Indian massacres of 1756 and 1763 [during the French and Indian Wars], the Moravians had founded five settlements near Bethlehem. These were Nazareth founded in 1743, Gnadenthal or Vale of Grace and Friedensthal or Vale of Peace, Christian Springs in 1749 and in 1752 The Rose. All are now historical spots and some of the schools established about this time are yet in existence.

The Moravians usually lived with each other and held land in common, but

George Minier lived on his own farm. He did, however, send his children to the Moravian schools. After 1750 his farm was just west of Stroudsburg, then called Danbury near Cherry Creek, which was at one time called Scot's Run.

The winter of 1755-56 during the massacres by the Indians in the French and Indian Wars was the darkest in the annals of the Province of Pennsylvania and Moravian history. During that winter, George wintered with his wife and seven children in the fortified Moravian settlement at Friedensthal or "Vale of Peace."

In 1777 during the War of the Revolution, Pennsylvania demanded of its citizens an Oath of Allegiance concerning loyalty to the Commonwealth rather than to King George III. This was very distasteful to members of the religious sects who had earlier, when first coming to America, been obliged to take an oath of allegiance to the King of England. Many felt to adjure against him at a later date would be to perjure themselves before God. However, means considered legal were eventually found to satisfy the objectors who were not actually Tories (those colonist who were still loyal to England). In some cases the words "to affirm" were used as a substitute for "to swear to" and "Affirmation" for "Oath."

One of these Allegiance lists—dated October 8, 1778 and still in existence at Easton, Pennsylvania—shows that George Minier was a subscriber in Northampton County. George's names appears as Minniger (perhaps in script Minnijer). George's two sons, Christian and Daniel served in the County Militia in the 5th Battalion of Col. Jacob Stroud. In 1781 Christian's name had been copied as Minegar and Daniel's as Mernerger on the rolls. By 1782 Christian was a Sergeant and both his and Daniel's names were spelled correctly.

In May 1779 George Manier made his will and died sometime that year. The will is signed "G.M.," and is filed in the Surrogate's office at Easton, Pennsylvania

under both Menier and Menegar. The intent of George's will seems to show a parallel to the Old Testament story of the seven year service of Jacob and its promise of reward. The will is worded according to the usage of the times. Its provisions are given here:

To my oldest son John the sum of 20 shillings as his birthright and also one year after my death the sum of 40 pounds. This same amount of 40 pounds also to my daughter Mary Elizabeth' daughter to be paid two years after my death; three years after my death 40 pounds to my daughter Mary Charine wife of [illegible to the compiler]; to my daughter Chatrine wife of Christian House the same amount to be paid five years after my death; to my daughter Elizabeth wife of Jacob Deatruck the same amount to be paid six years after my death; to my son Abraham the same amount to be paid seven years following my death.

After my funeral charges and all my just debts are paid I give and bequeath to my sons Christian and Daniel Menegar and their heirs all of my lands, goods, chattels, Moneys etc. whatsoever of what kind to be equally divided among them, and I likewise appoint them my sole executors.

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The witnesses of George's will were: Jacob Stroud, Abraham Miller, Lawrence Kunkill, and Peter Frederick.

Since Christian and Daniel Minier were obligated to pay out to the other children of the family sums of money for seven years after 1779, no move to sell the farm on Cherry Creek was possible for that period. It so happened that the end of the seven years coincided with the time following the War of the Revolution when there was a movement of settlers into the previously Indian-held territory of central New York, which is where Christian Minier moved.

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### JOHN MINEAR

FEBRUARY 11, 1730—APRIL 5, 1781

### MARIA URSULA

UNKNOWN

John Minear, the eldest son of Johann Georg and Catherina (Meyer) Minnir was born on February 11, 1730 in Mitchelfeld in the Palatinate area of Norbaden, Germany. In the book *Descendants of John Minear* by C. J. Maxwell (1948), Maxwell estimates our John Minear's birth year as about 1732, while Hu Maxwell in his book *The History of Tucker County* (1871) states John's birth as 1730. Family tradition states that our John Minear also came from the Palatinate area of Germany, but around the year 1755, while Hu Maxwell states that he may have served under Fredrick the Great and that he came with his son David in 1867 when David was twelve years old; however, in David's Revolutionary War pension, David states that he was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1755. C. J. Maxwell writes of the possible connection of our John Minear and Johann Georg Minnir:

On September 26, 1732, the ship Mary, with John Gray as master, landed in Philadelphia. This vessel shipped from Rotterdam and stopped at Cowes. On it were Christian Minear, aged 28 and Hans Jerck (or George) Mineer, aged 26 years. . . . This branch has been well worked out by Mrs. Jessie Howell Finch. . . but no connection has been found with the John Minear of this book.

The John Minear of this collection, lived in Hampshire county, (West) Virginia. He left there in the 1770's and was killed by the Indians in 1781. There were other Minears in Hamp-

shire county at that same time. One John Minear died in Hampshire County, W. Va., June 13, 1796; his wife was Mary; there were four children, Isaac, William, Abraham and Mary Glaze. Reference is made in the Minute Book of Hampshire county (1795 to 1798, page 272), to the proving of the will of John Minear. His widow Mary Minear; Isaac Minear, (presumably his son) was executor. Isaac and Mary made deeds to some of the land Oct. 23, 1802. (Deed Book 13, page 203.) It seems that this John Minear entered and surveyed his land in 1790. Isaac Minear surveyed a road in 1798; he had law suits with several persons. There was a William Minear in that county in 1798. (deed Book 11, page 145.) In 1790 a Catherine Minear had some civil suits in the courts. This is all that is known about them. There seems to be no connection between them and John Minear of this collection. The fact that two Johns seem to have been in Hampshire at the same time is very confusing but the "Hampshire" John was living after the Tucker county John was killed.

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What is known of our John Minear is that he was first living in Pennsylvania, where it is presumed most of his children were born. There are records that he had at least ten or eleven children, the order of which is unknown. They were:

	Born	Died	Spouse	Married
1. Jonathan	About 1754	Mar. 1780		
2. David	Jul. 31, 1755	Oct. 21, 1834	Catherine Saylor	Apr. 24, 1787
3. Phillip	Mar 31, 1761	Oct. 17, 1846 in Ross Co., Ohio	Willie Farmer or (Halleck) Elizabeth Ritchart	Before 1797
4. Adam			Elizabeth Cobb	
5. John Jr. <sup>a</sup>				
6. Sarah			Benjamin Marsh	1799
7. Katherine			William "Nimrod" Haddox <sup>b</sup>	Before 1797
8. (Unknown)			Peter Buckalew	
9. Elizabeth			Philip Washburn	
10. Samuel	1780	Dec. 21, 1858	Charity Gough	After 1801

- a. The family stated that he went mad and disappeared, but he actually moved to Kentucky. It is believed that the family said that he disappeared so that they could split up his land grant.
- b. Broke his neck jumping into the mill-pond, which he often did in attempt to scare his wife, Katherine.

John Minear was a prominent pioneer in the settlement of what is now the town of St. George in Tucker County, West Virginia. Before 1774 he was living along the South Branch of the Potomac. While living there, he was first captivated and compelled to travel to what is now Tucker County, West Virginia (then Augusta County, Virginia) by the glowing tales of the Holly Meadows area of Tucker County by our Parsons ancestor Thomas and his brother Captain James Parsons (*See Thomas Parsons*). In the summer of 1773 John Minear arrived at Holly Meadows and surveyed the land along the Cheat River from Holly Meadows to Licking Falls with Colonel Thomas Cresap, a surveyor of proposed turnpikes in Western Virginia. John realized that the Parsons brothers were not exaggerating about the beauty of the land, and he had to claim some as his own, especially since the Parsons had done little to claim the land for themselves. He selected a suitable farm site along the Cheat River in an area known as the Horseshoe Bend, and the following year in March of 1774 he returned with his family and a party of forty or more settlers from the South Branch of the Potomac.

Due to his influence and the general desire of many to emigrate, John had lit-

tle trouble gathering his party of settlers, who looked upon John as the leader of the colony. Among those who came with John Minear and later figured prominently in the colony were: his two sons Jonathan and David, his son-in-law Philip Washburn, and Salathiel Goff, John T. Goff, Andrew Miller, Henry Miller, Daniel Cameron, Fredrick Cooper, Henry Fink, James Riddle, Joseph Hardman, Thomas Holbert, Robert Cunningham, and our Thomas Parsons with his sister Prudence (Parsons) Cunningham, wife of Robert Cunningham and Thomas Parsons' daughter Catherine (Parsons) Goff, wife of John T. Goff.

Minear's fort, although small and inconsequential, lay along the Seneca Trail—a noted Indian war path or military road used by the Iroquois empire that lead from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The Iroquois empire was the most powerful Indian confederacy in all history and was composed of six Indian nations: the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Tuscarora, and the Seneca. The Iroquois conquered and controlled nearly all the Appalachian Mountain areas ranging to the Mississippi River by defeating into submission other Indian nations such

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as the Erie, Susquehanna, Shawnee, Delaware, Cherokee, Mingo, and others. Laying along the Iroquois major military road, John Minear's settlers had reason to fear Indian attacks. The settlement immediately built a crude fortress at a spring—nothing more than a large log house, which also served as a dwelling house for all the families. During the day, the men would go out and clear land for corn fields, while the women and children remained in the fort. If any alarm sounded of an Indian attack, the men would run to the fort, bar the doors, and watch and shoot the enemy through cracks in the log walls. Indian track were soon found not far from the fort, and the settlers constantly feared being massacred. Nobody went beyond the range of the guns at the fort without the greatest of caution; however, they did need to venture out to hunt deer, bear, and

other meats since the corn was not ripe yet. Occasionally, the hunters were chased by the Indians. One incident of an encounter between an Indian and one of Minear's men—who ventured out to on the Sugar Lands on the Backbone Mountain some four miles east of the fort—is described in Hu Maxwell's book, *The History of Tucker County*:<sup>6</sup>

. . . He was hunting, and looking at the country, when he heard strange noises on the hill above him, and immediately heard answers from the valley below. He knew at once that it was Indians trying to trap him, having nearly surrounded him already. He affected not to notice the noises; but, he started off at a rapid rate down a cove that led into Coburn Run. When he passed over the bluff in his descent to the run, the noise of the Indians, who were whistling to each other and



Site of Fort Minear in St. George, West Virginia. Monument markers are for John Minear's sons David (right) and Jonathan—photo taken, August 1998.

gobbling like turkeys, died away in the distance, and for some time he heard nothing more of it. However, he did not slacken his speed, but hurried down the rocky bed of the run, and had gone nearly two miles when he was suddenly startled by a hooting like that of an owl, on the hill near above him. The imitation was not so perfect but that he could detect that it was not an owl. He knew that it was an Indian. He was yet three miles from the fort, and only by flight could he hope to escape. The channel of the stream was rocky, full of cataracts and falls, and trees that had lopped into the ravine from both sides. Over and through these blockades and obstacles he ran as fast as he could, and with as little noise as possible. From this point, there are two accounts of the affair. One says that, as he was climbing down over a fall, an Indian came sliding down the hill within a few steps of him. The Indian was snatching and grabbing at brush, and seemed to be doing his best to stop himself. It is thought that he had tried to run along the side of the hill, which was very steep, and, missing his footing, could not regain it until he slid nearly to the run, and was almost under the hunter's feet. But the hunter saw his enemy just in time to escape. He wheeled and ran under the falls of the creek into a dry cavern beyond. Then turning, he discharged his gun at the Indian; but, there is no evidence that the shot took effect. The Indian seemed to think that the white man was shooting at him from under the water; and, scrambling and clawing back up the hill, he disappeared in the weeds. The hunter made use of the opportunity and escaped to the fort.

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During the summer of the year John Minear and his party settled in Holly

Meadows, the Dunmore War against the Indians of Ohio began and culminated on October 10, 1774 in the battle of Point Pleasant (*See Samuel Bonnifield page 12-7*). With strife from the war, the colonist probably thought it best to move back beyond the Allegheny mountains until hostilities settled. One revengeful Indian known as Logan, Chief of the Minnongoes, returned from a raid in the Monongahela Valley (where Minear's settlement was located) with thirty white scalps on his belt. Early in the Fall of 1774 the band of settlers fled back to the Potomac and remained there for about eighteen months. John Minear and his settlers would have returned the following spring (1775), since the hostilities had stopped, had it not been for a dispute over the land's ownership in the Horse Shoe Bend and Holly Meadows between him and the Parsons brothers, James and Thomas. None of them owned the land, but they all wanted it. The dispute was settled by an offer from Minear who, quoting the example of the quarrelling herdsmen of Lot and Abraham on the plains of Jordan, gave the Parsons brothers their choice of lands, in as much as there were other lands nearby that were equally as good. James Parsons took the Horse Shoe Bend, while his brother Thomas took the Holly Meadows. Minear selected a site for his colony two to three miles down the Cheat River at a place called Mill Run, which later was renamed Minear Run, and where the town of St. George now stands.<sup>7</sup>

During the year of 1776 when our founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence, John Minear returned to what is now Tucker County, West Virginia. Some of his original settlers returned with him, but many did not, and there were some new settlers in the group. One of the first things the settlers did upon their return, was to build another fort in defense against Indian attacks. This fort stood on what is now

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the court house at St. George; in fact the remains of the original fort could be seen up to 1858 then the old foundation was uprooted to build the new court house. Hu Maxwell in his book, *The History of Tucker County*, described Minear's fort:

. . . It was a better fort than the one in the Horse Shoe, and was also four times as large. It was composed of a large log house, surrounded by palisades.

The logs, of which the house was built, were notched and fitted close, one upon another; and, so well were they placed that there was left not a crevice through which Indians could shoot. But, in the upper story, openings were made between the logs, so that those in the house could shoot at approaching Indians. The chimney ran up on the inside. This was to prevent the Indians from getting to the roof by climbing up the chimney. There were no windows in the fort. Light was admitted through the port-holes, as the openings between the logs were called. In cold weather, or when no light was wanted, blocks of wood were fitted in the port-holes. The door was made of split boards, so thick that bullets would not go through. The fort was surrounded by palisades, or a line of stout posts planted firmly in the ground side by side and fitted closely together. These posts were about twelve feet high. They resembled a huge paling fence, and enclosed over one fourth of an acre of ground, and gave the inmates command of the neighboring fields. No Indian could approach in the daytime without running the risk of being shot.

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While the settlers built the fort, John Minear returned to Moorefield on the Potomac—some eighty miles distance over the Alleghenies—to bring back the iron works for the first saw mill west of

the Alleghenies. Minear hauled the iron works over the Seneca Trail on pack horses and built the mill on the banks of Mill Run. It was a up and down sash mill that was also equipped with corn buhrs (a tough limestone impregnated with silica) so that the mill could function as a gristmill for grinding meal. Although it was the first saw mill west of the Alleghenies, it was not the first gristmill. That distinction belonged to the McCoy's Mill built in 1767 at the mouth of Blackthorn Creek in Pendleton County. John's saw mill remained the only mill in the county for nearly fifty years, until Arnold Bonnifield built the second in 1825 (see *Arnold Bonnifield*, page 12-38).

Fort Minear prospered, and by 1778 it became the center of all the settlements in that region—the three main settlements in the Monongahela Valley were Minear's colony on the Cheat River, one in Tygart Valley and the last at Morgantown. For the first forty years Minear's settlement was known as "Fort Minear;" for the next forty years it was known as "Westernized;" then the state of Virginia decreed that it be named "St. George."

The first residents of St. George were a rough hewn lot—poor in money and education, uncouth in speech, manners and dress. John Minear, himself, must have been a sight with two front teeth missing. Being contemporary pioneers of Daniel Boone (1734-1820), Minear's settlers dressed in much the same way, which Homer Fansler describes in his book on the *History of Tucker County*:<sup>8</sup>

Their outer garments were deer skin trousers and skirts, and deer skin coats, called hunting shirts. The edges and facing of the coats were decorated with fringes, made by cutting the border into narrow strips, and leaving them fast to the coat. Similar fringes extended down the outside of each trouser leg, and around the hems of skirts. The fastenings were

either leather thongs or homemade buttons. Bootwear was deer skin moccasins like those worn by the Indians, cut in one piece and closed by a draw string above the ankles. The tops were extended in two long flaps which were wound around the legs to keep out the briars of summer and the snows of winter. Often they were decorated with fringes to match their other clothing. They were no protection from dampness and the wearer's feet were always wet in damp weather. Drying the feet at night before the fire was a requisite. No socks were worn; frequently as a substitute leaves were stuffed into the moccasins. Headgear was a fur cap made from raccoon skin, fur side out, and the animal's tail hanging down the back for a tassel. Underwear, if worn by the males, which is doubtful, was of calico or linen. The children dressed like the adults. The men usually shaved or trimmed their beard and cropped their hair about three times a year. . . .

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Despite the Indians' defeat in the Dunmore War, the settlers at Fort Minear still had reason to be wary. They knew that their fort was vulnerable and could not withstand a long concentrated Indian attack. If they did not fall by burning or overwhelming numbers, they could fall by their water, food, or ammunition supply becoming exhausted. There was little fear of Indian attacks in winter when the cold and snow made traveling difficult for the moccasin-clad Indians, but in the spring, many warriors came down from Ohio and into western Virginia, Kentucky and western Pennsylvania. Such was the case in 1780 and 1781, two of the most disastrous years of Indian Wars for what was to become Tucker County, but at the time was part of Monongahela County, Virginia.

Although the Iroquois were the dominant Indian nation along the Seneca Trail,

the Shawnee of the Algonquin Nation from Ohio were greatly feared and often raided settlements in Western Virginia. There were many Indian villages along the Muskingum, Maumee, Miami, Cuyahoga, Hocking, Sandusky, and Scioto Rivers, as well as many other places in Ohio. Usually the Indians killed a frontiersman to acquire his horse and gun, but those from the Scioto Shawnee killed for the sadistic delight and pure lust for blood—a Indian named Killdeer usually led the band. The Indian raids started in March of 1780 when a band of Shawnee crossed the Ohio River near Parkersburg, (West) Virginia and proceeded to raid through the central counties of Western Virginia. News of the advancing Shawnee reached the settlers along the Cheat River, and all but a few moved into Fort Minear for protection. The families who were excluded from the fort had family members suffering from smallpox. This was harsh treatment, but the colony deemed that it was better that a few risk the threat of Indian attack rather than put the whole colony at risk of infection of the dreaded disease, smallpox.

Among those excluded was the Bernard Sims family. Bernard Sims had been brought to the area as a tenant farmer by Thomas Parsons and was living in a log cabin on the upper part of Thomas Parsons' land about three miles above Fort Minear. One of James Parsons' old negro slaves, a mother of fifteen children, was working and living with the Sims family at that time. On April 6, 1780, the Shawnee were sneaking up on the cabin when the old negro woman spotted them and gave warning. Sims, who was just recovering from smallpox grabbed his rifle and rushed outside, only to be shot by an Indian hidden behind a large sycamore tree. While the rest of the band of Indians rushed the cabin to kill the others, the one who shot Sims went to scalp him, but halted suddenly when he noticed the

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smallpox scars. The Indian let out a yell of warning and they all scattered into the woods—never to bother *that* cabin again.

Upon hearing of Sims murder, the settlers at Fort Minear knew that the Shawnee band had come down the river and concealed themselves on the ridge on the opposite side overlooking the fort. The settlers expected an attack at any moment, and a full guard kept watch day and night. No one dared venture out of the fort for any reason. Many of the men were away on their annual trading trip to Winchester, 130 miles east; and because of this, the fort attempted to create the impression that there was a stronger force present by having the garrison change into different clothing frequently and by walking about the yard of the stockade in full view of the Indians. The Shawnee did not attack and soon disappeared from the ridge; however, this was just a ruse to lull the settlement into a false sense of security, for they had just moved farther down the river to select a new hiding place just above the mouth of Clover Run.

The next evening, the men in the east returned, and the fear of attack subsided. Many of the settlers returned to their cabins to find them pilfered and vandalized. On the 16th of April, after another day or two had passed without incident, John Minear's son Jonathan decided to return to his farm to feed the livestock. Jonathan's brother-in-law Philip Washburn volunteered to accompany him—both on horseback. About a half mile from the fort, they met and were joined with Daniel Cameron, who was afoot. Jonathan and Philip's farms lay about two miles down the south bank of the Cheat River below the fort, while Daniel's was on the north bank. After a short while, Daniel separated from the two and went his way. Upon arrival at Minear's farm, the men tied their horses and Philip proceeded to the field to feed the cattle fodder, while Jonathan went to get corn

for the hogs. With a shock or bundle of fodder on his back, Philip was passing by the fence to the pasture when some Indians sprang out from the fence corner and seized him. Immediately there was a discharge of guns, and Philip saw Jonathan running toward the river with a dozen Indians chasing him.

Jonathan had been shot in the thigh, and the Indians rapidly gained on him—there was no escape. Upon reaching the river bank, Jonathan tried one last futile effort in dodging the Indian's tomahawks: he ran around and around a beech tree, bracing himself against the tree with one hand while fending off the Indians with the other. Rather than try to head off their pray by turning around and charging him from the front, the Indians ran in a line behind Jonathan, following him around and around the beech tree, all the while trying to crack his skull with their tomahawks. In the process of defending himself, Jonathan lost three fingers. Several time the Indians missed and struck the tree, which showed the tomahawk scars for 177 years until the tree blew over in a storm July 6, 1957. But the odds were too great for Jonathan and he fell at the beech tree with a cracked skull. In their murdering frenzy, the indians smashed Jonathan's skull and pounded the fragments into a nearby tree stump.

Philip was in such shock at seeing the attack on his brother-in-law that he nearly forgot that he was a prisoner of the Shawnee, for he still had the fodder on his back and did not put it down until ordered to do so by the Indians. All the while this was happening, Daniel Cameron was witnessing it from the north bank of the river. Cameron assumed that Philip Washburn was also dead and quickly ran back to the fort to give alarm. The shots were heard from the fort and Cameron ran into a group of mounted men from the fort who fortunately had traveled the northern bank and thus avoided an ambush that lay in wait along



Site of Jonathan Minear's ambush by Indians near St. George, West Virginia—photo taken August 1998.

the southern trail. After hearing Cameron's recount of the raid, the men figured that since Minear and Washburn were all ready dead, there was little use in avenging them since they did not know the size of the Shawnee band, and they feared an immediate attack on the fort. Under the circumstances, they decided that it was best to return to the fort to

prepare for an attack by filling their water supply, molding large quantities of bullets, and loading all the guns.

However, the day passed and no attack was made. The colonist then began to fear a night raid, and tried to come up with an idea that would impress upon the Indians that the colonist had a larger military force and that would keep



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the Indians at bay. Their plan involved dressing up as a soldier a gigantic negro named Moats, who the colonist then had march around the fort within the palisades, beating a drum all night. Very few got any sleep that night. Whether this display kept the Shawnee at bay is not known, but there was no attack.

The next morning, roughly twenty to thirty men prepared to return to the scene of Jonathan Minear's murder. Early in the frosty cold morning the men formed in a body and marched down the river on the north side. When they reached the point opposite where Jonathan was killed, they got poor Moats to do their dirty work and scout across the river for any sign of Indians. After Moats road across and checked the thickets up and down the shore, the rest of the men came across, using the greatest of caution lest they fall into an ambush. They found Jonathan where he had fallen, his arms splayed out to the slides; his faithful dog guarded his frozen, blood splattered body.

A search was made for Philip Washburn, but no trace of him could be found. Finally a trail was found leading up a ridge, later known as Indian Point. The men found tracks indicating that the Indians had passed that way the day before and that they had taken Washburn prisoner—his tracks being different from those of the Indians. The men resolved to follow the Indians in an attempt to locate Washburn as soon as Jonathan was buried. They bound Jonathan's body to a horse and carried back to Fort Minear for burial. Over the years, the burial site of Jonathan has been lost, but it is believed to be under a chestnut tree, about a half-mile east of St. George.

The morning after Jonathan's burial, all the men that could be spared went in pursuit of the Shawnee raiding party. They tracked the Indians for a night and two days, and would have lost them had the Indians returned immediately to Ohio

rather than hunting for more settlements about the Valley River. Awhile after dark on the second night, the settlers found the Shawnee camp. Jonathan's brother and our ancestor, David Minear, crawled up close enough to spy on the Indian's position and strength, and to see if they still had Washburn, which they did. The settlers then fell upon the Indians, killing three and wounding three more before the rest of the band scattered into the woods. Washburn was found unharmed, and while the settlers rejoiced their victory, a lone Indian rushed into the camp and grabbed a small pouch that was laying on the ground, disappearing back into the woods before the settlers had time to react. It was thought that the pouch contained some superstitious concoction of medicine.<sup>9</sup>

There is some discrepancy as to when Jonathan was murdered. In his brother David's pension papers, David states that Jonathan was murdered in March of 1783; however, Daniel Cameron, who witnessed Jonathan's murder died in 1781, so it could not be later than that. Another discrepancy is in that David states that he was in Kentucky in 1780 when Jonathan was murdered, and if both these facts are correct, David could not have been in the posse that went after the Indians.

Then next major loss for both the Minear family and Fort Minear happened just eleven days short of one year after the death of Jonathan Minear. This time it was John Minear who was ambushed by the Scioto Shawnee on April 5, 1781. Like other American pioneers, the settlers at Fort Minear had improved valuable land without title papers. The Virginia General Assembly had passed an Act providing for validating all claims to land that had actually been settled prior to January 1, 1778. Commissioners had been appointed to adjust these claims in Western Virginia and to execute the necessary legal documents pertaining to

claims and claimants. The commissioners met in Clarksburg and claimants, or their authorized agents, went there from all the surrounding area to present their claims. It was for this purpose that John Minear, Daniel Cameron, Frederick Cooper, Salathiel Goff(e), Andrew Miller, and Henry Miller went to Clarksburg. In her autobiography, Mary Katherine (Bonni-field) Swisher also recounts why her great-grandfather John Minear went to Clarksburg:

To encourage the settlement of that part of the country a grant of 400 acres of land was made to those who would clear off a spot of ground and raise potatoes, corn etc. This was an inducement to those who were not able to buy land. it was in relation to this land that his [David Minear's] father [John Minear] went to the land office and was killed by the Indians.

While in Clarksburg, John Minear entered two tract of land for himself: In Land Entry Book One, page 52, Harrison County, "400 acres mouth of Pleasant Creek to include the settlement of 1775;" and page 53, "400 acres opposite Clover Run to include his settlement of 1776 with preemption of 500 acres adjoining." The first tract of land was later owned by his son Adam Minear and the second track was the home place in St. George.<sup>10</sup>

On their way back from Clarksburg, just two miles below Philippi near the mouth of Hackers Creek, John Minear and his five companions were ambushed. It is thought that the Indians knew that Minear and his party would be passing by and set the ambush for them. Hu Maxwell describes the attack:<sup>11</sup>

The Indians placed themselves in a position commanding the road, and hung a leather gun-case by a string over the path. This was to attract attention, cause a halt and give the

savages an opportunity to take deliberate aim. The trap was well set, and the men came riding along the path, thinking nothing of danger. The path was so narrow that they could only ride in single file. They were almost under the leather decoy before they saw it. They instantly brought their horses to a halt. The truth flashed into Minear's mind, and quickly wheeling his horse, he exclaimed "Indians!" The whole party would have wheeled; but, instantly a discharge of guns from the hidden foe threw them into the wildest confusion. Horses and men fell together. Minear, Cameron, and Cooper were killed on the spot. Goffe and one of the Millers [Andrew] sprang from their horses and took to the woods. The other Miller [Henry] as not unhorsed. He wheeled back, and fled toward Clarksburg. The savages tried hard to catch him; but his horse was fleeter than they, and he made good his flight to Clarksburg.

[Andrew] Miller sought to escape by ascending the hill. He was on foot, and two or three Indians started in pursuit, armed only with knives and tomahawks. He had the start of them by less than twenty yard, and they seemed confident of overhauling him. Indeed, he had little hope of escaping; but he considered it better to make an effort for his life. His pursuers, close upon his heels, called continually to him to stop, and told him if he did not, they would most certainly kill him. They accompanied their threats by the most violent gesticulations. Had they exerted all their energy in the pursuit and done less yelling, they might have sooner terminated the chase. As it was, Miller did not stop in compliance with their demand, although he almost despaired of being able to get away. The hill was steep, and his strength

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was nearly gone; but he struggled upward, reached the summit, turned down the other side, and was out of sight of the savages. But the chase was not done. The Indians followed fast after him, and he ran through the tangled brush, dodged to left and right, and finally avoided them. He knew not but that he was the only one who had escaped. He had seen the others fall, and thought them killed. But it was not entirely so.

While Miller was thus getting away from his pursuers by a long and desperate race, Goffe was making a still more wonderful escape. When he leaped from his horse, instead of going up the hill, as Miller had done, he broke through the line of foes and ran for the river. A score of the savages started in pursuit, as confident of a speedy capture as those had been who followed Miller. But, in spite of their efforts to catch him, Goffe kept his distance. He looked back as he reached the river bank, and no Indians were in sight. He threw off his coat to swim, and leaped down the bank. But at that instant he heard his pursuers tearing through the brush almost immediately above him. He saw that it was impossible to escape by swimming; and, on the impulse of the moment, he pitched his coat in the water, and crept for concealment into an otter den which happened to be at hand.

By this time the Indians had reached the bank above him. He could hear them talking; and he learned from their conversation that they thought he had dived. They expected to see him rise from the water. He could see their images mirrored from the water of the river under him. He could see the glittering and glistening of their tomahawks and knives in the sunlight. His den was barely large enough to conceal him;

and his tracks in the mud would lead to his hiding place. He prepared to plunge into the water and take his chances of escape by diving. But the Indians had caught sight of the coat as it was floating down the river; and they began to move off to keep pace with it. They supposed that Goffe was either drowned or had made his escape. They abandoned the man for the moment and turned their attention to saving the coat. How they succeeded in this is not known; for Goffe did not wait to see the termination of the affair. He crawled from his den and made off, leaving them a hundred yards below. He started directly for St. George [Fort Minear], which he reached that night.

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The blow to Fort Minear over John Minear, Daniel Cameron, and Fredrick Cooper's murders was great, for they were all leading men of the colony. John



Monument erected for John Minear near Hacker's Creek, West Virginia—photo circa 1930. 138-4

Minear with his outstanding leadership and education, which was well in advance of the other farmers of that time, was looked upon as not only a military leader in expected wars with the Indians, but also as a counselor in civil affairs. He often handled disputes between the settlers regarding deeds, the settlement of lands, and other minor conflicts. Although John's death was a great loss to the fort, the loss could have been much greater had not Andrew Millers and Salathiel Goff escaped to warn Fort Minear that the Shawnee were heading its way. Two other scouts from the fort, James Brown and Stephen Radcliffe, also ran into the Shawnee raiding party heading for Fort Minear, but they also managed to escape to warn the settlers. With the element of surprise taken from them, the Shawnee decided not to attack Fort Minear but turned their raid on the settlements in Tygart Valley, which they attacked on April 10, 1781—one of the worst massacres in the history of West Virginia.<sup>12</sup>

With Henry Miller's escape back to Clarksburg, he warned the settlement of the Shawnee. Spies and were sent out to located the Indians, which happened at West Fork near the mouth of Isaac's Creek. A Colonel William Lowther gathered a group of men and went after the Indians and overtook them at Indian Creek, a branch of Hughes River in Doddridge County. Colonel Lowther's men killed five of the Shawnee raiding party before the rest escaped into the woods,

leaving all the guns, ammo, and booty. In the process of attacking the Shawnee, one of their white prisoners from Tygart Valley was killed by accident.

Once the settlers at Fort Minear had heard of John Minear's death, they went out to Hackers Creek to buried the dead. They proceeded with caution since they did not know where the Shawnee were. They found Minear, Cameron, and Cooper's bodies where they had fallen and had been scalped. Since it was impractical to carry the bodies back to the fort for burial, the three men were buried on the spot without caskets in the root hollow of a fallen tree as hastily and noiselessly as possible. Fifty years later, a road crew unearthed the three bodies. An aged man who had been acquainted with Minear, Cameron, and Cooper identified the bodies by the teeth: Minear having two missing front teeth, Cameron having worn down teeth by chewing tobacco, and Cooper having protruding upper teeth. The bodies were reinterred near by in a better grave. On July 29, 1928, descendants of John Minear erected a marker for him, but by 1948 it had been destroyed, and the grave lay unmarked. The grave site lay about 700 yards from the bridge at Berryburg Junction and thirty yards from Tygart River, in Barbour County, West Virginia.<sup>13</sup>

The Shawnee raids that Killed John Minear and those at Tygart Valley, were the last Indian attacks in what is now Tucker County, West Virginia.

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### DAVID MINEAR

JULY 31, 1755—OCTOBER 21, 1834

### CATHERINE SAYLOR

DECEMBER 10, 1771—FEBRUARY 9, 1833

David Minear was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania on July 31, 1755—the son of John Minear. The following information on David Minear is from Charles Joseph Maxwell's book on the *Descendants of John Minear*, 1948. Included in this information is David's pension application for service in the Revolutionary War. There is a conflict of dates between what is in his application and the information listed under the previous section on his father, John Minear. The date of the death of David's brother Jonathan is most in question. David

claims that Jonathan was killed in the spring of 1783. The problem with this is that one of the eye witnesses to Jonathan's murder was Daniel Cameron who was also killed by Indians but in 1781 with David's father John. This date is fairly well set in that John Minear and Daniel Cameron were killed on their way back from recording a land transaction in Clarksburg. One explanation that may account for this discrepancy of date is if there were two Daniel Camerons perhaps a father and son, but as yet to this writer there has been no evidence of this:



Memorial markers for David Minear and his wife Catharine (Saylor) Minear located at the former site of Fort Minear in St. George, Tucker County, West Virginia—photos taken August 1998.

David came with his father from Hampshire County to Tucker County about 1776; at the death of his father in 1781 he seems to have become the head of the family. He was married to Catherine Saylor (Sailor), April 21, 1787, the ceremony being performed by Rev. J. W. Loofborough. In those days the groom had to give bond that there "was no lawful cause to obstruct the marriage." This bond was signed by David Minear, Thomas Douglass, and John Haymond and witnessed by Benjamin Wilson. At the same time a certificate giving permission for the marriage was signed by John Sailor, Lizbeth Sailor and was witnessed by Frederick Sailor and Philip Minear; [John and Elizabeth Sailor were illiterate and just signed the document with "their mark."] Evidently John and Elizabeth Sailor were parents of Catherine; Philip Minear; was a brother to David; Frederick Sailor was a brother of Lizbeth [must be typo as last name would not be Sailor. Frederick was most likely a brother to Catherine.] (All these papers are on record in Book One, page 37, Harrison County, W. Va.)

David was much interested in the religious life of the colony. He went to the Methodist Conference "East of the Mountains" and had St. George included in the conference and a minister assigned to it. A separate room in his home was reserved for the minister on his visits and no other person ever occupied it.

John Minear built the first mill and his son David built the first stone house in Tucker County [1809. The stone house was used as a tavern, a place for religious meetings, a school house, and a jury room from 1856-1859.<sup>14</sup>] David was Overseer of the Poor in 1787 and Constable in 1789. He died of cancer of the throat in St. George, Oct. 21, 1834 and was buried

there. In 1928 he descendants erected a large native stone marker at his grave.

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## **Pension Application of David Minear for Service in the Revolutionary War**

Randolph County  
State of Virginia

Personally appeared before me, the subscriber, an acting Justice of the Peace, in and for the county of Randolph and State of Virginia on the 6th day of November, 1833, David Minear, a resident of the said county of Randolph and state of Virginia, aged 78 years and three months, who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7, 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as hereinafter stated. That in the year 1779 in the county of Monogahela in the spring of this year I volunteered in a company rangers commanded by Captain William Haymond. Our principal station was at Morgantown. From this place we were often out on Ranging Parties until the winter of 1779-80 set in. We were then engaged in guarding the fort or town until the spring of the year 1780. I was discharged having served this company of rangers near nine months. In the spring of the year 1780 after I had been discharged by Captain Haymond I went to Kentucky in company with my brother Phillip Minear in order to explore and view

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that country. We arrived at the Falls of the Ohio where Lewisville now stands. We arrived at this place about the 20th of March. We remained in this neighborhood until sometime in the month of June or July when we were drafted for a term of duty the precise length of which is not recollected. A few days after our company was formed we joined the army under the command of General Clark and marched up the Ohio River to the mouth of Licking Creek. As the canoes and boats appeared (approached) the river they were fired upon by the Indians and killed and wounded nine men of whom 4 were buried in the sand on the river bank. This attack was as well as this affiant remembers about the third day after the army left the falls.

From the mouth of Licking Creek we crossed the country then a wilder-

ness to the Indian town called Chillicothe. We found this town evacuated by the Indians and the houses and wigwams on fire as the Indians had fired the town before they fled. We stayed at this place no longer than to cut down and destroy the growing crops of corn which we did. We then marched to the Picua town about twelve miles from Chillicothe. At this place the Indians made a considerable stand as well as the affiant recollects the battle lasted about three hours. At this battle I believe there was fifteen Indians found dead, many having been removed as was the custom of the Indians to remove all their dead they possibly could I believe our losses was about 15 killed. We destroyed this town by burning the houses and we also cut down all the corn belonging to the Indians. It was



Monument to David Minear located at the former site of Fort Minear, St. George, Tucker County, West Virginia—photo taken August 1998.



Sons of the American Revolution plaque for David Minear located on his monument in St. George, West Virginia—photo taken August 1998.

supposed that at the two towns there was not less than 300 acres of corn destroyed. After the battle had ended we gathered all our dead and buried them in the floor of the Indian houses and then burned the houses down to disguise the graves. But the Indians made boast afterwards that although we had been cunning in disguising the graves they had found them and had raised the dead and had scalped them. After the battle of Picua town we marched back to the fort or station at the falls of the Ohio.

When this affiant was drafted he was placed under the command of Captain Brisco. This affiant also recollects that Col. Lyon was with the army as well as the affiant remembers this army was about one thousand strong when we left the falls but not quite so many when they reached the towns.

In the spring of 1780 the Indians had attacked the settlements in Kentucky and had taken two stations and led the captive prisoners to the Indian

towns. This as the affiant believes was the cause of the expedition of General Clark as described by affiant.

When we arrived at home from the expedition we were ordered to keep our selves in readiness to march at a moments warning as the Indians were expected to take vengeance the first opportunity and in fact it was but a short time after our arrival at home that they were again in small numbers plundering the country and in some instances killed some few who were hardly enough to leave the fort. I recollect that about 4 weeks after the arrival of the troops at the fort there was a man brought in who had been killed by the Indians. His name I do not recollect. I was employed the balance of that year until about the first day of December in guarding the fort and making short excursions in the country at which time I was discharged by Captain Brisco having served six months. I then with my brother came back to the county of Monogahela in the state of Virginia. In the spring of the year 1780 the Indians made an attack upon the settlement of Cheat River and killed first Barney Sims. This happened whilst I was in Kentucky. In the month of April, 1781 the Indians again made an attack upon the same neighborhood and killed three men one of which was affiant's father [John Minear] Frederick Cooper, and Daniel Cannon [Cameron]. This attack caused Col. Benjamin Wilson to order out the militia and affiant was drafted and placed under the command of Captain Salathiel Goff under whose command I remained during this term which as well as affiant remembers was six months. During which time they were employed in excursions in every direction for many miles around the fort and in guarding the fort and in going from one fort to other forts in the

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county. The fort to which this affiant properly belonged was called Manier fort upon the land of the affiant's father. In the month of March in 1782 this affiant was again drafted and placed under the command of the aforesaid Captain Salathial Goff and was engaged during the summer in Ranging the country from Maniers fort on Cheat River to Wilson's fort on the Tigaradt's [Tygart's] Valley and as far as Morgantown and Dunkers Creek and when not out on Ranging parties the affiant was engaged in guarding the fort until the time of the year had expired when the Indians usually committed their depredations. When this affiant was discharged having served full six months, that in the spring of the year 1783 in the month of April as well as the affiant remembers on the 16th day the Indians again made their appearance and commenced their depredations in the affiant's neighborhood. On this day they killed and scalped his brother Jonathan Manier. They the Indians took from his head a large piece of scull bone and stuck it in a stump by way of triumph. This affiant was again drafted and put under the said Salathial Goff and was again employed during the spring, summer and autumn of this year in Ranging and guarding the fort as aforesaid for the term of six months. When this affiant was discharged after having served full six months. From this period to the end of the war this affiant was often actively engaged in Ranging, spying and guarding the country against the depredations of the Indians.

This affiant hereby relinquishes every claim whatsoever to a pension or annuity except the present and he declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state. Subscribed and sworn to the day and

year aforesaid.

(signed) David Minear

The following are answers to questions but the questions are not in the record:

I was born in Bucks county, Pennsylvania in the year 1755.

I have. It is in a book in my possession. Taken from the family record.

I was living upon Cheat River in the county of Monongahela. I reside upon the same farm at this time but by division of counties now in the county of Randolph.

The first term I volunteered. Ever after I was drafted.

I am not certain that I knew any of the regular officers as I never served with any army except in Kentucky. I then knew Capt. Brisco, Col. Lyon and General Clark.

I have never received a written discharge.

I refer to Thomas Parsons and Aaron Loughry as persons who can testify to my character and belief of service.

(signed) David Minear

We, Thomas Parsons and Aaron Loughry residents in the said county of Randolph hereby certify that we are well acquainted with David Minear who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration, that we believe him to be 78 years of age, that he is reputed and believed in the neighborhood where he resides to have been a soldier of the Revolution and we concur in that opinion. Subscribed and sworn to this the 6th day of November, 1833.

(signed) Thomas Parsons  
Aaron Loughry

And I the said Justice of the peace do hereby declare my opine after the investigation of the matter and after putting the interrogatories prescribed by the War Department that the above named applicant was a Revolutionary soldier and served as he states and I the said Justice further certify that it appears to me that Thomas Parsons and Aaron Loughry who has signed the preceding certificate are creditable persons and that their statement is entitled to credit and I the said Justice further certify that there is no clergyman residing in the neighborhood of the above named applicant and that he from bodily infirmity is unable to travel (to the courthouse of the said county of Randolph from which he resides) 30 miles and I the said Justice further certify that the foregoing contains the original proceedings of myself in the matter of the application of David Minear for a pension. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this the 6th day of November, 1833

(signed)

Samuel Bonnifield J. P. Seal

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David Minear received his pension by certificate 23,565 on February 28, 1834, which granted him \$80 a year from March 4, 1831. His record number is in Survivors File 15932.

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Mary Katherine (Bonnifield) Swisher remembers her Grandfather David Minear in her autobiography of 1914:

Though I was quite young when my grandfather died yet I remember him quite well. He was a small man, very quiet, attended his own business and let others attend theirs. He went to the M.E. [Methodist Episcopal] Conference more than a hundred years ago to petition for a preacher in his

“back woods home. . . .”

. . . Do not know how grandfather [David Minear] came to get the home place [John Minear’s homestead]. Suppose he bought out the other heirs. After he got possession of the farm, he planted what was a large orchard for those days. Two of the trees are still standing and bearing [fruit]. Then the orchard was in its prime, I remember the red and yellow apples piled about the old time cider mill with a hopper over two crushers made of wooden rollers standing uprightly and with a beam to which a horse was hitched. It did the work perfectly. The cider press was a separate affair. A stout floor elevated a foot or two above the ground with a groove around it near the edge to convey the cider to a point with a piece of bent tin for a spout. On this floor was placed a layer of long straw; then a few inches of ground apples were placed in the center leveled and rounded. The protruding straw turned up over the apples. Then more straw and apples till enough layers were made for a cheese containing as much as a barrel of cider pressed out by a heavy beam. The end over the cheese was placed in mortise in a tree or large post. Then heavy weights were placed on the other end of the beam. He sold the cider for \$1.50 per barrel. Cheap! Yet a dollar stood for more then than now. He built the stone house which stood where St. George is. It served for a comfortable dwelling, also for a preaching place many years after his death, and till the M.E. Church was built in St. George. He was decidedly religious.

. . . He died with cancer of the face [other source says throat cancer] and is buried in the old graveyard on the home place. Being a pioneer and one of the few who risked their lives, I think it just that his grave should be

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marked, at least by a marble slab. But it is not!

While Uncle Enoch Minear lived, he kept it nicely fenced and cleaned up. He told me not long before his death that he had a clause in his will that the stones in the old house should be used to built a wall around the ranves [sic ravines]. But they were not, but are in the abutment of the bridge across the river. Uncle Enoch's mother [Catherine (Saylor) Minear], wife, sister, and quite a member of others besides relatives are buried there. . . .

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Despite Mary Katherine stating that her grandfather David Minear "attended his own business and let others attend theirs," this attitude did not extend to his children. One story involves David's eldest son Manassa and Manassa's future wife Lyda Holbert:<sup>15</sup>

It seems that Manassa Minear, son of David Minear, and brother to Enoch Minear, of St. George, and to Mrs. Dr. Bonnifield, of Horse Shoe Run, had formed an attachment for Miss Lyda Holbert, a beautiful girl, who lived on the bank of Holbert Run, four miles east of St. George. A match between the young people was in no manner objectionable to the Minears, only that Manassa was so young. He was but eighteen; and Miss Holbert was sixteen.

Manassa fell into the habit of visiting his affianced rather oftener than his father thought necessary; and, the result was a rumpus in the Minear family, and Manassa was told to go a little less frequently. This did not discourage the young man in the least. The next Sunday there was singing-school in the Horse Shoe, and all the youngsters for miles around went as usual. Manassa and Lyda were there, and between them they made it up

that he was to accompany her home. His brothers and sisters tried hard to persuade him not to go, as the old gentleman [David] would certainly grumble. But Manassa said, let him grumble, and went ahead. Lyda also said, let him grumble, and they two went off together, in company with the other young people who went that way. But, the rest of the Minears returned to St. George and reported what had taken place. Mr. Minear was much put out of humor, and after studying over the matter two or three hours, he decided to go in person and settle the matter.

Manassa and Lyda enjoyed the fine walk from the Horse Shoe to Holbert Run, about two miles. They had crossed the river at the Willow Point in a canoe; and, thence home, the path was a pleasant one. It lay across the wide bottom from the river to Low Gap, then all woods; and from the Low Gap home was about a mile, and this, too, was nearly all woods. No doubt, the walk of two miles on that fine June morning was a short one to them.

Tradition does not inform us how the day, from noon till evening was passed at the Holbert cabin; but circumstances justify us in supposing that all went merry and well. It could not have been otherwise; for, Manassa and Lyda could not quarrel, and the old folks were glad to have Manassa visit their daughter, for he belonged to one of the first families of the county and was, indeed, a promising young man. Be this as it may, he was there yet when the sun was just sinking behind Jonathan Point. He and Lyda were sitting alone in the yard, under a young walnut tree. . . .

The sun was just setting; and, no doubt, the world looked beautiful to Manassa and Lyda as they sat under that little walnut tree, with none near enough to hear what they might say.

The whole day had been pleasant; and, now so fair an evening to terminate all, was truly delightful. But, it was not to be so. The evening which now looked so beautiful to the young couple, soon appeared to them the ugliest they had ever seen. For, presently foot steps were heard approaching, and when Manassa and Lyda looked up they saw the massive frame of David Minear coming up. [Mary Katherine states that David was a small man, not of massive frame.] Manassa's heart sank within him; for, he knew what was at hand. Lyda also looked scared. But, they said not a word, and the old gentleman walked boldly up and commenced flourishing a hickory withe, and uttered words to the effect that he wanted the young man home early enough Monday morning to go to hoeing potatoes when the other boys did. Manassa making no movement toward starting, the old gentleman with still more emphasis ordered him to "skedaddle for home." He realized his situation; and casting toward Lyda one look, which seemed to say, good-bye, for the present, and receiving one of sympathy from her, he bounded off down the hill, with the old gentleman at his heels walloping him with the withe every jump. Poor Lyda felt for Manassa, but she could not reach him. She saw him dodging this way and that way to escape the thrashing, and saw him bound with extra buoyancy whenever an extra swoop fell upon his shoulders. She also heard some of the words which the old gentleman spoke, and they fell heavily upon her; for, he was telling Manassa that just as many jumps as it took him to get home, that many weeks it would be before he should come back. The young man apparently realized the force of the argument, and was trying to get to St. George with as few jumps as possible. Indeed, it looked to Lyda that he

was going ten rods at a bound. All the while, the hickory was falling across his back with amazing rapidity. The scene was of short duration; for, while she was still silently sitting under the tree and looking toward them, they disappeared in the thicket, and, after a little ripping and tearing through the brush, all was still.

The scenes and conversations that followed at the Holbert cabin, as well as at Minear's, we can only imagine. But, the result of the whole affair might plainly have been foreseen. Thrashing the young man is not the proper way to break him from waiting upon the girl of his choice. So it proved in this case. Manassa resolved to marry the fair young Lyda, no matter who should oppose. She was as fully resolved to brave all opposition in her attachment for him. When two young people arrive at this conclusion, it is useless for relatives or any one else to interfere. Such opposition may delay but cannot prevent the final consummation of the lovers' plans. In this case, however, the Holbert family did all they could to assist the young couple, so the opposition was all on one side.

Manassa and Lyda laid plans to elope and get married. But David Minear knew nothing of it. He supposed that the thrashing had broken up the affair, and that Manassa would pursue his foolish course no further.

It was again on Sunday, and the young people of St. George started to the singing-school in the Horse Shoe. Manassa Minear started with the others; but he had no intention of the singing. It was now in the fall of the year. He's course of love, since it had been interrupted on that summer evening, had not run as smoothly as a poetical river. However, he had managed to see Lyda in the meantime, and had arranged it with her and the rest

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of the family that she should elope with him at any time he should call for her.

On that morning, instead of crossing the river at the Horse Shoe Ford, as he should have done to have gone to the singing, he continued up the north bank, unobserved by his companions, who were some distance ahead of him. He was on horseback this time. He went directly to Holbert's and told Lyda to get on the horse behind him, and not to lose much time. He explained the nature of the case. She was a brave girl, and did not waste a moment in getting ready. Her brother caught the only horse belonging to the family, and was ready to accompany them. Lyda got on behind Manassa, and they were off for Maryland. It was not yet noon, but they did not wait for dinner. They knew that the Minears would follow them; and the success of the undertaking depended upon speed. They followed the little path leading up Horse Shoe Run. This they traveled seven miles, and then turned up Lead Mine, by the old trail marked out by Capt. James Parsons. Thus they reached Maryland, and were formally married.

When the young people who went to the singing returned to St. George, they reported that Manassa had not been there, nor Lyda either. It was at once suspected that he had gone to Holbert's, and David Minear followed again, determined to bring matters to a crisis. He went to Holbert's house,

and not seeing Manassa, asked if he had been there. They answered him that he called a few minutes, but must be twenty miles away by that time. Holberts expected to see him fly into a passion at this disclosure; but they were disappointed. He questioned them closely about the matter, and when the young couple was expected back. When they had answered him, he said that if they were married, it was all right, as it was no use to make a fuss about it. He left an invitation for them to come down as soon as they returned, and with this he went home. They were entirely successful, and got safely home the third day.

If the memories of old people are to be credited in the matter, the young couple did not find the course of married life as poetical as they had expected. For, though Lyda was young, she had a great deal of industry about her, and she made Manassa work harder than he wanted to, and he got tired of it, and, to keep from hoeing in the truck-patch, he dug a hole under the fence in a weedy corner and poled the hogs in [to have them eat the weeds]. This did not mend matters much, for Lyda found it out, and made him build new fences around every lot on the place; and, besides, made him build a pen for the hogs, and then pull weed all summer to feed them.

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The children of David and Catherine (Saylor) Minear were:

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	<b>Born</b>	<b>Died</b>	<b>Spouse</b>	<b>Married</b>
1. Manassah	Nov. 30, 1788	Jan. 11, 1852 Elkhart Co., In	Lyda Holbert Mrs. Sarah H. Middleton	
2. Nathan			Elizabeth Ferguson (widow of Gregory Bonnifield)	
3. William		1843, Harrison Co., WV	Elizabeth Losh	
4. Enoch	Jan 9, 1799	Apr. 13, 1889 St. George, WV	Catherine Stalnaker Mary Ann (Wiles) Gilmore	Jan. 1, 1827 Sep. 22, 1835
5. Elizabeth	Nov. 1, 1801	Oct. 17, 1888	Arnold Bonnifield	1825
6. Sarah Nancy		1840	Rhodham Bonnifield	
7. Jonathan	May 12, 1805	Mar. 4, 1842 <sup>a</sup>	Nancy Parrill	Jun. 12, 1828
8. Sarah		Age 14		
9. Mary	May 31, 1808	Apr. 22, 1893 St. George, WV	William Miller	Apr. 30, 1827

a. Drowned in Hocking River at Coalville, Ohio.

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### NOTES:

1. Protestant Parish house of Hohensachsen, county of Mannheim, Germany. Marriage Register #2, pg. 191 and Marriage Book #3 pg. 64 of Ingelfingen, Germany. Compiled by Helen Cox. The church at Hohensachsen, which contained the roecords for the towns of Hohensachsen and Lützensachsen burned down in 1959.

The following sources were supplied by Aurle Huff:

Early German records found in Evangelical Parish House of Hohensachsen, County of Mannheim; Marriage register, Book 2, p. 191, 1703; Baptisms, Book 2, p. 54 55, 59, 66. At Evangelical Parish at Michelfeld / Sinsheim, Norbaden are found: Marriage register, p. 102, beginning 1656. Blacksmith and armorer. See article by Mrs. Frank E. Finch, "The Minier Family in Germany," National Genealogical Society Quarterly, June 1954, p. 67.

From [Dr.] Carmen Finley quoting Helen Repair Cox (1980): Evangelical Parish House, Mannheim, Ger.; birth records K B II p. 408; Dedath Records, KB Michelstadt II, p. 803; Marriage Records, Jugelfinger, Book III, p. 64; Natl. Gen. Sox. Quarterly June 1954 p. 67-68; Hohensachsen Evangelical Parish records, Marriage Book 2, p. 191; Baptisms, Book 2, pp 54, 55, 59, 66; Ev. Parish at Michelfeld/Sinsheim, Norbaden, Marriage Reg. Page 102.

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The earliest records for this family come from Helen Repair Cox, 1205 South Drive, St. Charles, MO, 63301 last heard from in 1980. There is also an unsigned, undated excerpt (pages 62-64) sent by Mrs. Cox titled, "Christian Minnir, Immigrant 1st(?) Generation; Christianus, 2nd(?) Generation," containing background from the early 1700s. The family constellation is that given by Mrs. Cox which she documents with the following:

Records at Evangelical Parish House, Mannheim, Germany.

Birth records, KB II, p. 408.

Death records, KB Michelstadt II, p. 803.

Marriage records, Jugelfinger, Book III, p. 64.

Details on this first documentation can be found in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly, June 1954, page 67-68 in an article by Mrs. Frank E. Finch, "The Minier Family in Germany."

Above sources supplied by Aurle Huff.

2. Records from the church books of the Protestant Parish of Hohensachsen, county of Mannheim, Germany. Marriage Register, Book 2, pg. 191.
3. Records from the church books of the Protestant Parish of Hohensachsen, county of Mannheim, Germany. Baptism book 2, pgs. 54, 55, 59, 66.
4. Marriage register, Protestant parish at Michelfeld/Sinsheim, Nordbaden, Germany, pg. 102 in the church book starting 1656.
5. Moravian Church records in church archive Lancaster Co. PA. The church records are in old German script and were translated by the Archivist, Dr. Kenneth Hamilton.
6. Fansler, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1990, pg. 39, 53-55; and Maxwell, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1971, pg. 34-39.
7. Ibid
8. Fansler, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1990, pg. 425-427

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9. Fansler, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1990, pg. 30-33; and Maxwell, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1971, pg. 48-59.
10. Maxwell, *Descendants of John Minear*, Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1948, pg. 4.
11. Maxwell, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1971, pg. 61-66.
12. Fansler, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1990, pg. 37-38; and Maxwell, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1971, pg. 34-35.
13. Fansler, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1990, pg. 38; and Maxwell, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1971, pg. 65-68.
14. Fansler, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1990, pg. 435-436.
15. Maxwell, *History of Tucker County*, McClain Printing Co., 1971, pg. 81-86.

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