

Johann Peter Hoffman (1709-1797)  
Charles W. Riegle Sr. #144660  
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One of the more interesting ancestors in my family was John Peter Hoffman.

John Peter Hoffman, a native of Riegenroth Germany, born in 1709, was one of the earliest settlers of what was originally known as the Wiconisco Valley, taking its name from the creek flowing through it and called by the Indians, "Whiconescong". With his brothers, Hannis, Martin and Daniel and some friends he came to America from Rotterdam, and Cowes, England, on September 3, 1739, in the ship 'Robert and Alice' (Captain Walter Goodman), arriving in Philadelphia. He first located in Berks County, where he worked at his trade as a carpenter. During the early Indian troubles on the frontiers, he served as a soldier in the Provincial forces. About the year 1750, he came to the end of Short Mountain in Lykens Valley, where he built a small log house. He was a contemporary of John and Andrew Lycans (or Lykens), Ludwig Shott, John Rewalt, and others, and they all were driven off into Powell's Valley by the Iroquois Indians in their marauds of 1756. Sometime after this he returned with his family to Lykens Valley. Here he followed farming and carpentry and died in 1798 at the age of eighty-nine years.

His remains with those of his wife, Maria Sara Snyder, who had predeceased him, were interred in the field near the present house on the old farm.

As John Peter was a famous Indian fighter in the French and Indian Wars of the 1750's, he received a land grant from William Penn. He is buried at the end of Short Mountain near the turn off to Gratz -Specktown Rd. - from the road to Loyalton. The marker is visible from the road, provided no corn is growing there. John Peter's daughter Catharine and son-in-law Andreas Riegel are buried with him.

"John Peter Hoffman was not alone a pioneer citizen, helping to lay the foundations of this republic by conquering the wilderness and opening it for the habitation of other religious refugees from foreign fields, but he was a soldier in the Provincial forces, repelling the Indians who constantly menaced the white settlers' peace and safety, and he contributed of his own sons as soldiers of the American Revolution, for the establishment of that freedom which he sought when setting out on his pilgrimage from Rotterdam, Holland, and which we, his numerous descendants, with the rest of our countrymen now enjoy."

The Hoffman Family Association dedicated a monument to his memory bearing this inscription, "John Peter Hoffman, Pioneer, arrived from Holland in 1739. He settled here in 1750, Born 1709, Died 1798. His remains with those of twenty-six contemporaries lie buried here. Erected by Hoffman Association, 1924." And we, their descendants, may our sympathies go out to them in their sufferings, our gratitude for their labors, our admiration for their virtues, our veneration for their piety, and above all, our attachment to their never-dying principles of civil and religious liberty, for which they were willing to suffer and die.

Submitted by:  
Charles W. Riegle Sr  
SAR# 144660  
Saramana Chapter SAR