

ARCHIVAL RECONSTRUCTION & SURVEY METADATA

A Study of Key Original Documents of the First Connecticut Settlement at Cushetunk

Project Scope: Under the legal and genealogical proof rules of the early Upper Delaware Valley, researchers must isolate and verify primary land grants and fraternal records to reconstruct pioneer pedigree lines. This catalog sheet registers the provenance, transcription standards, and structural contexts of two vital local holdings: the 1755 Ackhake Place Deed and the 1800 St. Tammany Masonic Lodge Warrant.

I. RECORD GROUP A: THE 1755 ACKHAKE PLACE DEED

Record Name:	Deed of Joseph Skinner to Daniel Skinner for St. Tammany's (Ackhake) Flats
Date of Origin:	September 8, 1755 (Executed in Cushetunk, Ulster County, NY)
Material Structure:	Linen/rag sheet; handwritten in ink with wax seal; witnessed
Signatories:	Joseph Skinner Sr. (Grantor), Daniel Skinner (Grantee); William Price, Benjamin Ashley (Witnesses)
Current Custody:	Private collection of Skinner descendants / Transcribed in Doris Wahl's 'Skinner Kinsmen'
Evidentiary Grade:	Original Source (Primary) — Resolves original Yankee Purchase borders and dates

Historical Narrative & Structural Context: On July 11, 1754, twelve hundred Yankee pioneers associated under the Connecticut Delaware Company and obtained a sweeping Indian Deed from eighteen principal Sachems of the Iroquois Confederacy. To establish the first white colony at Cushetunk, the proprietors partitioned the river bottom lands. Joseph Skinner Sr., formerly of Canterbury, Connecticut, settled on the fertile west flats, which the Munsey (Lenape) Indians called *Ackhake Place* (meaning 'Wolf Place'). To secure his third-born son Daniel's residency, Joseph executed this primary deed on September 8, 1755, granting a quarter-part of his proprietorship for five pounds New York currency.

Literal Transcription of the 1755 Deed Text:

"KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that I, JOSEPH SKINNER, Formerly of Canterbury in New England in Windham County and Colony of Connecticut, now for the late Purchase on the West side of the Delaware River, for and in consideration of five pounds current money of the province of New York to my full content by DANIEL SKINNER on the said purchase, do give, grant, sell and convey to the said DANIEL SKINNER, his heirs, executors and administrators to the one quarter part of the 100 acres of land purchased on the West side of the Delaware River, Ackhake Place in quality and quantity. Furthermore I do, the said JOSEPH SKINNER, his heirs, executors and administrators, a quit claim by me or anyone under me whatsoever. Witness my hand and seal this 8th day of September - 1755."

Delivered in the presence of:

JOSEPH SKINNER [Seal]

Benjamin Ashley — (Pioneer settler later killed in native scuffles)

William Price — (Official surveyor employed by the Connecticut Delaware Company to lay out Cushetunk town lots)

Technical Mapping Note: This document proves that Daniel Skinner's title to his St. Tammany's Flats homestead originated strictly with his father Joseph Skinner's Yankee Purchase claim. William Price's signature as a witness confirms that the early Cushetunk pioneers had begun formal cadastral surveys and town planning (including selecting the meeting house and parsonage lots) as early as the autumn of 1755, significantly predating the Pennsylvania boundary surveys of George Palmer.

II. RECORD GROUP B: ST. TAMMANY LODGE NO. 83 (CHARTERED 1800)

Record Name:	Charter and Officers Ledger of St. Tammany Lodge, No. 83 F.&A.M.;
Date of Warrant:	June 24, 1800 (Warranted under the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania)
Original Location:	Old Log Storehouse, St. Tammany's Flats, Damascus Township, Wayne Co., PA
Founding Officers:	Reuben Skinner (first Master), Aaron Pierce (Senior Warden), Jonathan Dexter (Junior Warden)
Loss and Destruction:	Primary papers burned in 1812 (Flats) and 1851 (Honesdale fire loan transfer)
Evidentiary Status:	Derivative Reconstruction (Secondary) — Reconstructed from GLP archives and early publications

Fraternal & Legal Context: Daniel Skinner Sr. (the 'Lord High Admiral') was the prime mover in establishing the first Masonic lodge in the Upper Delaware Valley. On June 24, 1800, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania issued a formal warrant establishing St. Tammany Lodge, No. 83, in Damascus Township. The meetings were held in a secure upper chamber of Daniel Skinner's two-story log storehouse on the flats. To protect the 'secrets of the craft' from non-members and eavesdroppers, the brothers climbed an exterior wooden ladder to the second-story door and physically hauled the ladder inside once everyone had assembled. The name 'St. Tammany' was explicitly selected because the lodge sat upon the flats traditionally associated with the Delaware Chief Tamanend, whose post-Revolutionary canonization represented the ideal of American civic liberty.

The Chronology of Record Loss (1800-1851):

Year/Era	Meeting Site	Structural Developments & Record Status
1800 - 1812	Skinner's Flats Log Storehouse	Lodge meets in log room with 15-inch tanbark acoustic insulation in ceiling. Storehouse burns down completely in 1812; all early minute books and charter registers are lost.
1812 - 1815	Damascus Manor (Caleb Laggett's)	Meetings resume at Caleb Laggett's Damascus Tavern near Cochetcon Bridge. Tradition notes a woman hidden in a closet was caught eavesdropping and severely admonished.
1815 - 1828	Milanville 'Red House' (Land House)	Lodge moves to the three-story 'Red House' (Milanville's oldest standing home). On August 2, 1828, the lodge is suspended for Grand Lodge dues delinquency.
1837 - 1843	Forfeiture & Disbandment	Warrant is officially vacated for delinquency on February 6, 1837. Surviving jewels, columns, and solid mahogany furniture are stored by the Skinner and Fisher families.
1843 - 1851	Honesdale Lodge No. 218	Surviving St. Tammany No. 83 furniture and ceremonial regalia are loaned to the newly chartered Honesdale Lodge. Everything is completely consumed in Honesdale's great fire of April 25, 1851.

Reconstructed Membership via Printed Records:

The Harris's Discourses Subscriber List: Because the primary rosters were destroyed by successive fires, the actual membership must be reconstructed via secondary sources. A key source is the subscription list of *Harris's Discourses*, a prominent early American Masonic publication. The following Damascus and Cushetunk pioneers are officially recorded as subscribers credited to St. Tammany's Lodge, No. 83:

- George Bush, Dudley B. Clark, Reuben Condit, and Jesse Drake.
- George Guinnipp, David Guinnipp, and Joseph Guinnipp.
- Samuel Hankins, Nathan Monington, Noah Phillips, Silas Tyler, and Jacob Tyler.