BEGINNINGS OF THE IRON INDUSTRY IN TRENTON, NEW JERSEY.

BY WILLIAM NELSON.

The steps that led up to the establishment of the iron industry in Trenton may be regarded as having their beginning in a certain deed dated September 23, 1721, from Richard Newcombe of Lewistowne, in the county of Sussex, upon Delaware, Mariner ("only Son and Heir at Law of Richard Newcombe, also Newcome, dec'd and Mary his wife, also dec'd"), to Thomas Lambert of Nottingham, Burlington county, for two-third parts of one-fourteenth of one-ninetieth of ninety one-hundredths of West New Jersey. This deed recites that by a certain deed dated April 4, 1683, between William Welch, Tanner, of London, Merchant, and John Marshal of Limehouse, in Middlesex county, Mariner, the former sold one-fourteenth of one-ninetieth of ninety one-hundredths of all the tract called West Jersey, warranted to contain 1400 acres; that Elizabeth Marshal, of Limehouse in the Parish of Stepney of Middlesex county, widow and executrix of John Marshal, conveyed to Richard Newcombe, the father, and Richard Newcombe the son, the tract by them above conveyed to Thomas Lambert.\(^1\)

The next step is a deed dated July 12, 1723, from Samuel Green of Amwell, Hunterdon county, West New Jersey, yeoman, to William Trent, Esq., of Nottingham Township, Burlington county, John Porterfield, Esq., of Trenton, Hunterdon county, and Thomas Lambert, Gentleman, of Nottingham Township, Burlington county. This deed recites that William Trent, above mentioned, conveyed to said Samuel Green fourteen acres of land situate in Trent Town on the North side of Assunkpink; that Thomas Lambert

\(^1\) *N. J. Deeds, Liber D.D.*, 101, Secretary of State's Office.
conveyed sixteen acres to said Samuel Green, situate in Nottingham aforesaid on the South side of Assunkpink and adjoining the above said tract of Trent. This deed of July 12, 1728, thereupon witnesses that Samuel Green for five shillings paid him by said Trent, Porterfield and Lambert, conveyed thirty acres of land situate in the Township of Nottingham aforesaid, being in two parcels, the first comprising fourteen acres purchased of William Trent, and the second comprising sixteen acres purchased of Thomas Lambert, excepting the Grist-mill and other mills erected on the Assunkpink brook and now in possession of the Messrs. Trent; the above thirty acres to be held as tenants in common, that is, one-half to William Trent and his heirs, one-third to John Porterfield and his heirs, and one-sixth to Thomas Lambert and his heirs. This instrument was witnessed by Jacob Bailorjean and John Vanlaer.

This transaction was evidently for the purpose of carrying out a project in partnership, probably the establishment of an iron manufactory on the tract thus held by the three men in common. Just when the iron works were established does not appear, but by the next deed to be recited, bearing date June 20, 1729, we are able quite distinctly to locate the beginning of this industry as having taken place within the six years elapsing between 1723 and 1729.1

On June 20, 1729, James Trent, eldest son and heir at law of William Trent, Esq., late of Nottingham, Burlington county, New Jersey, dec’d, conveyed to Anthony Morris, of the city of Philadelphia, Brewer, for the consideration of five shillings, two-thirds of one-half of two pieces or tracts “contiguous on Assunpink Creek in the township of Trenton in Hunterdon county, New Jersey, and of the Forge Iron Works and Buildings thereon with Water Wells, Bellows, Hamer, Anvil, and other utensils to the Forge belonging:” one being a tract of fourteen acres on the North side of Assunpink, and the second being a tract of sixteen

acres on the South side of said Creek. By this deed, it will be seen, Anthony Morris acquired an interest in the tracts in question, and became a tenant in common thereof with Thomas Lambert, John Porterfield and James Trent, as the heir of William Trent. These four men thereupon entered into a co-partnership on the same day that the last-mentioned deed was executed. The articles of partnership set out so fully the purposes of the Company, and give so excellent an idea of the condition of the iron works at the time, that they are herewith reproduced in full:

Articles of agreement indented made concluded and agreed upon this twentieth Day of June in the Year of our Lord One thousand Seven hundred & Twenty nine Between Thomas Lambert, John Porterfield, Anthony Morris and James Trent in Manner and form following (Viz)

Whereas the said partys to these presents owners of the forge already erected & built situate lying and being in the Town of Trenton on a River or Brook called Assunpink on the North side thereof together with the Lands thereunto appertaining on each side of said Creek with all the Buildings Dams Water Courses & all other conveniences and appurtenances belonging or any wise appertaining to the premises for the making of Bar Iron according to their respective Shares and parts, and to hold and manage and carry on the same in Copartnership, and shall bear and pay a proportionable part of the Charges and Expenses which hereafter shall be laid out in putting and preserving the said forge in good and sufficient Repair together with the whole premises there unto belonging (that is to say) the said Thomas Lambert, John Porterfield, Anthony Morris and James Trent partys to these presents do declare and agree that in Consideration of the Trust and Confidence that they have and do repose in each other have concluded agreed and by these presents do & each of them doth hereby covenant and conclude & agree to be copartners in providing getting & bringing their respective Shares and proportion of pig Mettle to the forge aforesaid, & in carrying on & managing the work and business aforesaid for the Manufacturing the said pig Mettle into Barr Iron which they do hereby oblige and bind themselves their Heirs and Assigns

\(^1\text{N. J. Deeds, Liber D. D., 387.}\)
to perform fulfill & observe according to the true intent & Meaning hereof at their own proper cost & Charge & shall also pay their respective Shares & proportions of all the cost & charge in providing workmen finding Stock of Coal and bringing the same to the Coal houses with all other things necessary for refining hammering and drawing the said Iron into Bars as aforesaid and when made shall have their and every of their respective parts Shares portions and Dividends delivered to each and every of them or their Assigns at the forge aforesaid, But in case any of the partys shall fail or neglect in providing bringing or delivering at the forge aforesaid his or their full proportionable part or Share of pig Mettle Coal or other necessary Stock, then and in such Case it is hereby covenanted concluded & agreed on by and between all the said partys to these presents that such person or persons so failing or neglecting in providing bringing and delivering at the forge aforesaid his or their full parts shares and portions of the Mettle Coal and other necessary Stock aforesaid shall nevertheless pay their proportionable part according to their respective share they hold in the Works of all Moneys disbursed for putting and keeping the same in good Repair and Shall receive no greater or larger Dividend of the Iron when made than in proportion to the stock of Mettle Coal by them delivered in, (the workmens wages for making the same being first deducted) And for the better managing of all the Matters and things relating to the Copartnership aforesaid each of them the said partys by and for himself his Executors Administrators or Assigns shall and will on the first day of every third Month from the Date hereof during the said Copartnership meet and consult together in about and concerning the premises or at any other time or times and at such place and places in the said County of Hunterdon as they or a Majority of them to be reckoned according to their respective Shares and Interests as after mentioned shall from time to time appoint in the monthly Meeting aforesaid at which or any other Meetings so to be appointed all the said partys to these presents their Executors Administrators or Assigns or a Majority of them so meeting are to conferr and deliberate, also fix and determine concerning the Copartnership aforesaid (viz) what sum or sums of Money or Stock will be necessary for carrying on said Iron Works and what Number of Workmen or Servants with Horses Cattle and Carriages
and other Tools and Utensils may be requisite and necessary and what Wages to the Workmen when and how to be paid and for making provision for subsisting the Workmen and Teams and to whom the Care and oversight thereof shall be committed, also when and in what manner the Forge Engines building and repairing Dams Pranks Water-courses Races and all other things thereunto belonging are to be kept up cleaned repaired or altered and what additional Works or Conveniences shall be made thereunto, and how the Work and Business aforesaid shall be carried on and the said Forge provided & supplied with pig Iron Coal and other Necessaries and how and when each of the said party's his Executors Administrators or assigns shall find his proportion of Wood for Coals and about the division of Iron made in said Forge and concerning any addition or alteration in the said Copartnership, all which before mentioned, or whatsoever Matters or things are necessary tho' not herein contained to the better carrying on the Works shall be by the Majority of the said Company determined at their said Meetings and shall be binding and conclusive to and amongst all and every of the said party's these presents and to their Executors Administrators and Assigns, And it is further agreed that each and every of the said party's their Executors Administrators and Assigns respectively in disposing of any Iron to be made at the forge aforesaid shall not directly or indirectly undersell or sell at a lower or lesser price than what the said party's their Executors Administrators or Assigns or a Majority of them to be reckoned as aforesaid shall in their Meetings aforesaid from time to time order and appoint without first offering the same to the rest of the Company at the prices so to be appointed at the Meetings aforesaid, And that if any of them the said party's his Executors Administrators or Assigns shall at any time hereafter be minded or willing to dispose of his part Share and Interest of & in all & singular the said premises in Copartnership aforesaid including the Land thereunto belonging he or they so minded shall communicate & offer the same to the other partners at their Meeting aforesaid to the End & Interest that the rest of the Company aforesaid may have if they think fit the refusal thereof at the greatest price that the party minded to sell can bona fide have of any of the sd partners or of a Stranger to be approved of as hereinafter mentioned, And if the rest of
the Company refuse to buy at that price then he or they may sell to any one of the said Company and if none of the Company be minded to buy at the same prices then he or they may sell to a stranger, provided always nevertheless that such a Stranger be a person approv'd of by a Majority of the Company aforesaid in Copartnership at some of their said Meetings so that in selling of the Interests of any of the partys aforesaid preference shall be given to the Rest of the Company before a Stranger. And it is further covenanted concluded & agreed on by and between all & every of the said partys to these presents and each of them by and for himself his Executors Administrators and Assigns doth covenant promise and grant to and with each other of them his Executors Administrators and Assigns by these presents that no Right of Survivorship shall take place or have effect in or for any Matter or thing touching the Copartnership aforesaid or any Stock of Money advanced or to be advanced or other Gains profits or Increase thereof But that the Survivor or Survivors of them the said Copartners shall & will promise & suffer the Executors Administrators and Assigns of him or them dying or departing this Life before the other of them to have possess occupy and enjoy his and their proportionable part of the proceeds of the forge aforesaid and of all other the whole premises aforesaid in Copartnership. And also that the Survivor and Survivors of them shall permit and suffer his & their Name and Names or the Name or Names of his or their Executors Administrators or Assigns as occasion shall require to be made use of by the Executors and Administrators or Assigns of the other in Commencing or defending any Action or Suite as occasion may require. And if any Variance or Difference Doubt Question Controversy or Contention shall at any time or times hereafter arise or happen among the said partys or any of them the Executors Administrators or Assigns of any of them for or by reason of any Matter Clause Sentence or thing herein contained or Construction thereof or by reason or means of the copartnership aforesaid or any matter or thing thereon depending which they the said partys their Executors Administrators or Assigns or a Majority of them to be reckoned as before mentioned in their Meetings aforesaid cannot reconcile and determine the same that then from time to time and so often as the same shall happen and before any Suite Arrest or Trouble
shall be attempted or begun by any of them against the other, all and every of the said Variances Differences Questions Doubts Controversy & Contentions shall from time to time be referred & submitted to the hearing Order Award & Determination of a competent Number of honest and lawful Men not exceeding five in Number whom they the said partys their Executors Administrators or Assigns shall nominate and chuse as Arbitrators in & for all & every the said premises & being so chosen shall deliver up their Award & Determination thereof in writing under their Hands & Seals or the hands & Seals of the Major part of them within thirty days after the same before referred to them. And also that each of the said partys to these presents his Executors Administrators & Assigns respectively for their several and particular parts shall & will from time to time stand to observe perform fulfill & keep all & every such Award Order Judgment final End & Determination as the referees so to be chosen as aforesaid or a Majority of them shall from time to time make and give in Writing in Manner aforesaid for or in Behalf of the said partys their Exrs. Admrs. or Assigns respectively or any of them. Its hereby ascertained that the partys and Shares of the partys hereunto are as followeth Viz. Thomas Lambert one equal Sixth part of the whole premises, John Porterfield one equal third part and Anthony Morris one equal third part and James Trent one equal Sixth part AND Lastly for the true performance of all & every the Covenants Grants Articles provisoes and agreements herein contained which on the parts & Behalf of every or any of them the said partys are and ought to be observed kept done and performed the said partys to these presents do bind and oblige themselves their and every of their Heirs, Executors and Administrators each to the other his Executors Administrators or Assigns in the penal sum of five hundred pounds lawful Money of America firmly by these presents.

In Witness whereof the said partys to these presents have hereunto set their Hands and Seals the Day and Year first above written.

Thomas Lambert (L.S.)
John Porterfield (L.S.)
Anthony Morris (L.S.)
James Trent (L.S.)
Sealed and delivered in the presence of Enoch Andrews, Mahlon Stacy, Will Yard.¹

The execution of this instrument was proved June 17, 1738, by Enoch Andrews (Anderson) who deposes that he saw Thomas Lambert, John Porterfield, Anthony Morris and James Trent severally sign the same as their act and deed and deliver the same for the uses therein mentioned.

Another deed was executed June 21, 1729, by James Trent, eldest son and heir at law of Wm. Trent, late of Nottingham, Burlington county, New Jersey, to Anthony Morris of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Brewer, which contains the following recital:

"On July 11, 1723, Wm. Trent & Mary his wife granted to Samuel Green fourteen acres of land for use of a Forge or Iron works the land lying on the Brook Assunpink on North side thereof in Township of Trenton, Hunterdon county, being part of a large tract purchased by Wm. Trent from Mahlon Stacy, late of Nottingham, and by deed made July 11, 1723, between Thomas Lambert, gentleman, of Nottingham, and said Samuel Green, said Lambert sold to Samuel Green sixteen acres on South side of Assunpink Creek, and said fourteen and sixteen acres were laid out for the use and service of a forge or Iron works now erected thereon, and the said Samuel Green granted the same to Wm. Trent, John Porterfield and Thomas Lambert by deed dated July 12, 1723." This indenture shows that James Trent for thirty-three pounds, six shillings and eight pence conveyed to Anthony Morris the two-thirds of one-half part of the fourteen acres and sixteen acres and the Forge, &c.²

In 1730, the Company bought by deed dated July 6, of that year, an additional tract of land from Thomas Biles of Bucks county, Pennsylvania, yeoman, the grantees being described as Thomas Lambert of Nottingham, Burlington

¹ N. J. Deeds, Liber E., 339.
county, yeoman, William Morris of the same place, Merchant, Anthony Morris of the City of Philadelphia, Brewer, John Porterfield and James Trent, both of Trenton, Hunterdon county, gentlemen, the tract being described as ten and three-fourths acres and fourteen perches, situate near Trenton:

Beginning at a post in the line of Enoch Anderson's land; thence running South twenty-four perches to Assunpink Creek; thence up the same South eighty-seven degrees East twelve perches to a corner; thence North forty-nine degrees East twelve perches to a post; thence North forty-five degrees East thirty-two perches to another post; thence North thirty-seven degrees East sixteen perches to a corner post, near the Forge; thence North fifty-two degrees West twenty-nine perches to a stone; thence South forty-six degrees West forty-seven perches to the place of Beginning.

The deed recites that James Trent conveyed the above ten and three-fourth acres and fourteen perches to Thomas Biles by deed dated July 3, 1730, and Thomas Biles by deed of July 6, 1730, conveys the same to the grantees first above mentioned.¹

James Trent of Trenton, Hunterdon county, Esq., conveys by deed dated January 26, 1731-2, to Isaac Harrow of the same place, blacksmith, for the consideration of 16 pounds, a lot lying in Trenton bounded as follows:

Beginning at a stone on South side of a certain run commonly called Pettit's run; thence North 71° East 12 perches to a stone for a corner; thence North 39° East 16 perches to another stone for a Corner; thence North 47° West 7 perches across the said run to a stone for another corner; thence South West 12 perches; thence South 60° West 9 perches to a stone by the King's Road; then 6 chains & 40 links across the said run to ye first Station, containing 1 acre.²

Isaac Harrow, blacksmith, of Trenton, added to the above purchase by virtue of a deed from James Trent of Trenton,

¹ N. J. Deeds, Liber D.D., 398.
gentleman, dated April 16, 1734, from whom he purchased for the consideration of forty-six pounds, a lot of land lying in Trenton, bounded as follows:

Beginning at a stone for a corner, being on the line of Benj. Smith’s plantation on North side of Pettit’s run; thence along by said James Trent’s fence South seventy-one degrees East five chains & eighty links to a stone for a corner by the said James Trents Fence, and from thence runs South sixteen degrees West by the West End of Wm. Allen’s stable three chains & sixteen links to a stone, being a corner of Coll Coxe’s Lott of land and from thence runs along the Rear of the said Coxe’s lott North ninety degrees West to a stone one chain . . and is another of the said Coxe’s Corners, and thence along said Coxe’s line & which said stone is also a Corner of Dr. Patterson’s Lott; thence along rear line of Dr. Patterson’s, Henry Carters, James Bells and John Chambers Lotts of land North 79° West 4 chains & 25 links to a stone for a corner; thence North 3° East over said Pettits run, 4 chains & 50 links to a stone by the road in the said Benj. Smith’s line; thence along said Smith’s line North 27° East 2 chains and 20 links to beginning. Containing 3¼ acres.

Witnesses: Joseph Yard, William Pierson, Isaac Ivens.¹

The American Weekly Mercury, published at Philadelphia, under date of September 5, 1734, contains this advertisement:

“Lately set up at Trenton in New Jersey, a Planing and Plate Mill by Isaac Harrow, an English Smith, who makes the under named goods,”—and then follows a long list of dripping pans, frying pans, chafing dishes, broad axes, falling axes, knives, spades, shovels, ladels, pans, shears, saws, coffee roasters, &c., “likewise also too, iron plates fitted for Bell Making or any other Use.”²

Isaac Harrow did not live long to enjoy, or otherwise, his new industrial venture. His will, dated the 7 mo. 28, 1738, was admitted to probate April 6, 1741, showing that he

¹ N. J. Deeds, Liber E F, 446.
² N. J. Archives, XI., 355.
had carried on this enterprise less than seven years. By this will he gave to his son James his wearing apparel and ten shillings, and "no more of my estate." All the rest of his estate he gave to his wife Temperance, naming her and his friends Anthony Morris and William Morris, Executors, whom he empowered to "sell my estate the better to enable them to pay my debts." The will was witnessed by Henry Carter, Josiah Appleton and John Yard.¹

The *New England Weekly Journal*, Boston, March 19, 1733, quoting doubtless from a Pennsylvania newspaper, gives an account of great damages done by the breaking up of the ice and consequent freshets:

"We likewise hear that the Freshes have done much Damage at Trentown, that it carried away the Dam of the Iron-Work, & the Dam of the Grist Mill, Bridge, & Dying-House, with a large Copper was carried down the Stream, & abundance of other Damage——."²

Temperance Harrow, Anthony Morris, Esq., and William Morris, Esq., executors of Isaac Harrow, deceased, by deed dated September 9, 1743, conveyed to John Coxe of Trenton, Hunterdon county, Attorney at law, for the consideration of sixty pounds, a tract situate in Trenton, bounded as follows:

Beginning at a Lott of John Chambers on the East side of the River Road and runs from thence along said Road North four degrees East twenty-one links to a stake; thence North sixty-five degrees East three chains and sixty links to a stake; thence South eighty-six degrees thirty minutes East one chain forty-three links to the corner of John Coxe's Lott; thence along said Coxe's Line two and one-half chains to the corner of Dr. Patterson's Lott & so is bounded along by the rear of said Patterson's Lott, David Cowells, Clotworthy Reeds, James Bell and John Chambers to place of Beginning. Containing two Rodd and thirty-two Pearches. Witnessed by John Clark and Alexander Chambers.³

¹ *N. J. Wills*, Liber 4, 277.
³ *N. J. Deeds*, Liber E F, 326.
The mill, however, was not included in this transfer, but was advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 15, 1745, as follows:

“To be sold, in Trenton, by publick Vendue on the 3rd of September next.

“The Iron Plaiting Works, Smith’s Shop, and all the Tools and Molds, for making Frying-pans, Dripping-pans, &c., said Works being now fit for Use: Also a good new Dwelling-house, Lot and Outhouses, all of the Estate of Isaac Harrow, deceased. The Conditions of Payment to be known of Anthony Morris, in Philadelphia, or of William Morris in Trenton.”

By the recitals in a deed dated September 17, 1762, from Benjamin Yard to Owen Biddle and Timothy Matlack, it appears that Isaac Harrow’s mill property was sold October 17, 1745, to Joseph Higby, and that Higby sold it the next day to Anthony Morris, who on November 1, 1745, sold it to Benjamin Yard. The sale to Higby probably took place at the auction sale above advertised.

William Yard was interested in 1748 in the iron works on Black Creek, about half a mile from Bordentown. He was probably a relative of Benjamin Yard, perhaps his father.

In 1750 the British Parliament passed an act providing that on and after the twenty-fourth day of June, in that year, all “Subsidies, Customs, Impositions, Rates and Duties then payable on Pig Iron, made in and imported from his Majesty’s Colonies in America into any part of Great Britain,” should cease. The act further provided: “And that Pig and Bar Iron made in his Majesty’s Colonies of America, may be further manufactured into this Kingdom, be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That from and after the Twenty-fourth Day of June, One thousand seven hundred and fifty, No Mill or other Engine for Slitting or Rolling of Iron or any Plating-Forge to work with a Tilt Hammer, or

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any Furnace for making Steel, shall be erected, or after such Erection, continued in any of his Majesty's Colonies in America; and if any Person or Persons shall erect, or cause to be erected, or after such Erection continue or cause to be continued, in any of the said Colonies, any such Mill, or Engine, Forge, or Furnace, every Person or Persons so offending, shall for every such Mill, Engine, Forge or Furnace, forfeit the Sum of Two hundred Pounds of lawful Money of Great Britain." The act also declared "that every such Mill, Engine, Forge or Furnace so erected or continued contrary to the Directions of the Act, shall be deemed a common Nuisance," and made it the duty of the Governor of any Colony to order and cause the same to be abated within thirty days.

Governor Belcher issued a Proclamation September 15, 1750, requiring the "Owner or Owners of every Mill or Engine for slitting or rolling of Iron, and of every plateing Forge that works with a tilt Hammer, and of every Furnace for making of Steel," which were erected before June 24, 1750, to transmit a particular account under their hands of the situations of their respective works, etc.; also requiring the Sheriffs of the several counties to notify him on or before the twentieth of October following, of the number of such mills, etc., in their respective counties. In accordance with this Proclamation, John Allen, Sheriff of Hunterdon county, reported to the Governor that he had found:

One Plateing Mill Scituate in Trenton in the County of Hunterdon said to belong to Benjamin Yard which to my Certain knowledge was Erected before the said Twenty fourth day of June Last past and is now in Use.

Also one Furnis for making Steel belonging to the above sd Yard which Also to my own knowledge was Erected before the Twenty fourth day of June last past but is not now in use. And after a strict Inquiry I can Discover no other Mills or Engine for Slitting or rolling of Iron or plateing forges which work a Tilt Ham'er or Furnaces for making of steel within my County.
On November 10, 1750, Governor Belcher transmitted a report to the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, setting forth his Proclamation and the report of Sheriff Allen, and embodying in his own report, the substance of such report.¹

No other reference to any steel works in New Jersey has been discovered, and it would therefore appear that Benjamin Yard is entitled to the honor of having established the first steel works in New Jersey, if not in America.

By deed dated September 17, 1762, Benjamin Yard of Trenton, blacksmith, and Ann his wife, conveyed to Owen Biddle, watchmaker, and Timothy Matlack, merchant, both of Philadelphia, for the consideration of one hundred and fifty-five pounds, each an equal undivided one-half part of a certain Lot of land in Trenton "Beginning at a stone standing on the Bank of the plating Mill race and bears South West seventy-two degrees at twenty-eight links Distant from the South West Corner of the Plating mill wall, and thence South eighteen degrees West one chain and nineteen Links to a stone standing in the Bank of the Run and is a corner of the said Benj. Yard's plating mill Lott and from thence runs North seventy-five degrees West two chains to a stone standing in a line of land late belonging to Benj. Smith deceased, and from thence runs along that Line North twenty-six degrees East two chains and thirteen links to a stone standing six links to the South of a black walnut tree & from thence runs South seventy-six degrees East two chains & sixteen links to the First mentioned corner or place of beginning."²

Another deed appears on record dated March 29, 1768, from Benjamin Yard of Trenton, Hunterdon county, blacksmith, and Isaac Yard of the same place, hatter, to Nathan Dakes of the township of Trenton, yeoman, wherein and whereby for the consideration of £111 the Yards convey a

¹ N. J. Archives, VII., 558–570.
² N. J. Deeds, Liber S., 261.

vol. xxxv.—16
The Iron Industry in Trenton.

lot of twelve and nine-tenths acres in the township of Trenton, Beginning at Nathan Dakes corner touching Nield Levinstone line and Maiden Head Road, and also another lot No. 6 in the plan, beginning at Benjamin Yard's corner and bounding on Maiden Head Road, John Yard and Jethro Yard's deceased corner, 8 acres; also lot No. 7 of the plan, eight and one-half acres. This deed recites that William Yard, late of Trenton, inn keeper, deceased, became seized of lands in Trenton or thereabouts, and by his will dated February 12, 1742, devised all his lands in Hunterdon county, to his five sons—Joseph, William, John, Benjamin and Jethro,—the real estate to be equally divided among them, &c.¹

By another deed dated April 16, 1781, Benjamin Yard of Trenton, Hunterdon county, conveyed to Nahor Yard of the same place, the consideration being love of his son and five shillings, a lot of land in Trenton:—

Beginning at a stone corner to a lot late of Joseph DeCou, now belonging to Wm. Roscoe in Stanton's line, thence running along Second Street North seventy-nine degrees West forty-seven feet to a stone corner to other land of said Benjamin Yard, thence along same Street South one hundred and fifty-one feet to a lot now or late belonging to Sarah Panier; thence along the same South seventy-seven degrees East forty-eight feet to a stone for a corner in said line of Hugh Stantin; thence along the same North one hundred and fifty feet to place of Beginning.²

The last three conveyances seem to refer to the site of the steel plant owned by Benjamin Yard in 1750.

The venerable Judge William S. Yard, of Trenton, has been engaged for several years in delving into the history of his ancestor's steel works.

Pettit's or Petty's run ran across West State street about one hundred feet east of the New Jersey State House grounds. It was diverted into a sewer many years ago.

¹ *N. J. Deeds, Liber E*, 404.
² *N. J. Deeds, Liber A T*, 188.
The exact site of the plant first mentioned above has not been determined. It was probably west of the present Warren street, lying on both sides of the Assunpink Creek.

It is to be regretted that we have no account of the progress, decay and final abandonment of this earliest iron enterprise in Trenton.

The forge was doubtless supplied with iron ore from up the Delaware river, and possibly the records of the Durham and other iron furnaces and forges may reveal transactions with the Trenton works.

In August, 1772, there was uncovered the foundation wall of an old building at the corner of Ferry and Bloomsbury (now Warren) streets, in Trenton, which was octagonal in shape, and about sixty feet in diameter. These walls were composed of hard gray stone, two feet thick, and six feet in depth, with four openings, each about three feet wide, facing north, south, east and west. In the northwest corner was the foundation of a stone and brick chimney, about six feet wide and extending six feet deep below the surface. What was this building? It has been conjectured that it was a fort or block house built for the protection of the original iron works, which is unlikely. No record has been found of its erection, nor of the purpose to which it was devoted. It is probable that it was one of the forts erected during the French and Indian War, when the inhabitants of New Jersey were under the apprehension of an Indian invasion from New York and Pennsylvania.¹