



Charles II is the King Charles whose name is attached to a dog breed. His fondness for the toy spaniel popularized the dogs in England, which is why the dogs now carry his name.

Historic Connections

In April 1780, General George Washington directed the executive council to have Berks County millers furnish his army 220 barrels of flour, 180 tons of hay and 14,000 bushels of corn.

In June of that year, Colonel Nicolas Lotz, the county commissioner of forage, reported a shipment to General Washington’s army of 40 tons of flour purchased at Bishop’s Mill.

What’s more, the land was once owned by George Boone, an uncle of Daniel Boone.

King Charles II: More than a Small Dog

Before there was golf, there was a grist mill. Before there was a mill, there were native people.

Members of the Lenni Lenape tribe lived in the eastern Pennsylvania forests long before Europeans. They no doubt roamed the land that falls from the hills in eastern Berks County and cradles the Antietam Creek as it flows into the Schuylkill River. A portion of that land is now home to Reading Country Club.

European possession of the land now encompassing Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Delaware and Maryland was sorted out in the mid-17th century through a series of scrums between Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden. The British prevailed under King Charles II, who, on February 28, 1681, granted William Penn a land charter as payment for a £16,000 debt the King owed Penn’s father, Admiral William Penn. The land included present-day Delaware and Pennsylvania. Penn and his family would profit from the land and its sale.

A *Reading Eagle* article published on March 9, 1969, states that earliest land title is dated October 10, 1651, when John Beckley purchased the tract that includes the current golf course from the Penn family.

There appears to be an inconsistency with this date when compared to the date of the Penn land grant, 1681. William Penn would not have had the authority to sell land he did not own. What’s more, Penn the younger was born in 1644, so it seems unlikely that the King would grant land to a seven-year-old in payment of a debt to his father, especially when the father was still living. Admiral Penn died in 1670.

Further research turned up the following on page 598 of the Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Volume XIX, printed in 1890.

The Proprietor, by Deeds of Lease and Release, dated the 10th and 11th days of 8ber, 1681, granted to John Beckley, of London, Perfumer, 250 acres of Land in this Province, who by his Deed, dated 10th day of 7ber, 1688, Conveyed the same to Tho. Place, of Edington, in the County of Somerset, in Great Britain, who by his Deed of Gift, dated 30th 6 mo., 1704, granted the said Land to his Son, Joseph Place, of Long Island, whose Son and Heir, Thomas Place, of the said Island, by his Deed, dated ye 2d day of 9ber last, conveyed the same to Mordecai Lester, Henry Seaman and Adam Mott, all of the said Island, who desire a Warr’t for laying out the said Land w'ch is granted and Signed, dated ye 23, 9ber, 1715.

The Proprietor was William Penn. The Province was Chester County. [Editor's note: Berks County was formed in 1752 from parts of Chester, Lancaster and Philadelphia counties. The name is taken from Berkshire County, England, William Penn’s family home.] The archaic 8ber refers to October, which was the eighth month of the year under the old Roman calendar. 7ber was September, 9ber, November.

John Beckley purchased the land in 1681, not 1651. The erroneous information is no doubt nothing more than a typo.

Advance to the next page to read the *Reading Eagle* article of March 9, 1969.



The Golf Chronicles

The story of golf at Reading Country Club and in Berks County

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Sorting It All Out

The article to the left is from Heritage of Berks: Tales of Exeter, by Wayne E. Homan., printed in the *Reading Eagle*, March 9, 1969.

There can't be too many golf courses with a connection to Daniel Boone!

The date is properly 1681.

The name is given as Adam Mott in the Pennsylvania Archive. The date of the transaction is reported as "...ye 2nd day of 9ber [November] last." 9ber refers to November and 'last' to the year before the entry was written, meaning the transaction occurred in 1714.

The *Reading Eagle* reported on June 19, 1922, that "A charter has been granted by the court to the new Reading Country Club...". The article goes on: "...work will be started on the location along the Philadelphia pike, near Wamsher's Mill, in a month or more.". Clearly, the club had access to the land before 1926, although title may not have been conveyed until that time.

This undated photo of Bishop's (Wamsher's) Mill appeared in the *Reading Eagle* on March 9, 1969.

https://books.google.com/books?id=8_sPAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&authuser=1&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=john%20beckley&f=false

ONLY OLDSTERS RECALL it, but once along the Philadelphia pike there stood a grain mill that supplied flour to George Washington's army. The mill was demolished in 1926, 158 years after it started operating.

The mill, last known as Wamsher's, was removed in the construction of the Reading Country Club golf course. It stood along what was long called Stony Creek but now is known as Antietam Creek. George Boone, an uncle not the grandfather, of Daniel Boone, was one owner of the land before the mill existed.

Title has been traced back to Oct. 10, 1651, when John Beckley purchased it from the Penns. On Sept. 10, in 1688, he sold 250 acres to Thomas Place of Edington, Somerset, England. Later, the 250 acres were acquired by Adam Moll, although no date is given for this transaction. Moll is believed to be the first American owner.

In 1716, Moll sold the 250 acres to George Boone and Nicholas Scull and in 1761 they sold it to George Henton who built the first mill there. Henton acquired the right from Christopher Boyer to build a race through the Boyer farm. The right has been mentioned in every deed since. On Dec. 16, 1768, the mill and land was purchased by John Bishop, whose name the mill bore for more than a century.

IN 1830, AFTER Bishop's death, the sheriff sold the property, now 115 acres, to Amos Esterly for \$7,900. Esterly sold it in 1845 to Isaac Herbine for \$9,600, and on Sept. 13, 1849, the Herbine estate sold it to Jonas Esterly, a brother of Amos. On April 1, 1853, Jonas Esterly sold it to Nicholas Jones of Schuylkill County for \$7,200. He, in turn, sold it to Thomas Mull in June 1864 for \$14,000.

That year, a fire partly destroyed the mill. Mull rebuilt the damaged section, using the same stone on the same foundations. In 1866, George Ammon bought it for \$15,000 and in 1868 Jacob G. Hertzog paid \$8,250 for the farm and mill. Hertzog's widow sold it to Mrs. Maggie O. Leinbach on Oct. 23, 1897 for \$4,000, but a mortgage was involved.

Mrs. Leinbach sold it to George H. Wamsher Dec. 1, 1897, for \$7,737, with a mortgage still standing. From then on it was known as Wamsher's Mill. Wamsher sold it to his granddaughter and her husband, Monroe and Jennie Wenger, in 1921 and the country club acquired the land and mill in 1926.

By then, Wamsher's Mill was the oldest in the county still in operation. The ruins of the mill's foundation could be seen along the south bank of Antietam Creek between the Philadelphia pike and Shelbourne road until recent re-grading for sewers.

