

STATEMENT
OF
REBECCA W. LUKENS

In connection with adjustment of her interest in her Father's estate,
and a History of her Labors in conducting her business affairs.

Brandywine, September 10th.-1850.

You ask what advancements I have received from the personal property of my Father, Isaac Pennock, left in the charge of my Mother for the benefit of his children; I answer NONE.

In the year 1815, I believe, Isaac Pennock settled with his partner, Jesse Kersey, joint owner with himself of the Brandywine Iron Works, and took that property for the sum of \$14000.00. I had then been married several years and lived with my husband, Dr. Charles Lukens, at the Rokeby Works, then known as the Federal Slitting mill. My Father offered my husband Brandywine for the same price he had taken it at, and urged our removing there. Dr. Lukens declined the purchase and talked of removing to the City of Phila., to practice medicine. My Father then urged us to come here and rent the property, which he then said at his death should be mine. We concluded to come, which I think was in the latter part of the year 1815 or 1816. We found the place truly needed an owner's care. Everything was in a very delapidated state about the Mill, house and farm. So much was to be done that Dr. Lukens was quite discouraged; and although the rent agreed on appeared low, the numerous repairs raised it to more than he thought it was worth. The mill had been hastily built and the harness on which the weight of heavy castings were placed, was in such a state, that either through decay, or weakness, the mill could not be kept in center, which caused tremendous breakage. The state is pretty clearly shown by referring to-Alban Hook, Enos Waters and Thomas Ellis's testimony. We were continually repairing and bore the whole expense. In the winter of 1821 or 1822, (I am not certain as to the exact date) the whole mill dam was carried away in a freshet. This we rebuilt and about or near that time, we put in a new large water wheel and a new head.--all these repairs were very expensive and Dr. Lukens bore them himself, though he both thought and said they were too heavy. He also, put in new pinion housing and other castings in the mill. I told my Father, I thought it was scarce right for us to have so much to do, that the Works should have been put in repair before we came, even if we kept all up afterwards. His reply invariably was, "What you are now doing, will make it so much the better for yourselves, for when I am gone this property will be yours." Soon after the rebuilding of the Dam, Father left Wilmington (where he had been residing for some time), in very poor health and shortly after his return began to settle up his affairs. Dr. Lukens had been a Partner with him in the old Federal Slitting Mill, from the time of our marriage, until we removed to Brandywine, when this partnership was dissolved. They settled up the old Books and divided the out standing debts of the Firm of Pennock and Lukens, between them. Dr. Lukens giving his Father-in-law an obligation for the money loaned him, with interest to that period, and shortly before my Father's decease, he had a final settlement with Dr. Lukens, and received a sealed note for near \$9000.00, with two notes made payable on demand for each a little over \$500.00, which the books went to show were for interest due on the principal sum. At this time, also, the rent on the Brandywine was fixed at \$420.00 per year. With this settlement, Dr. Lukens was far from being satisfied. Thomas Ellis in his testimony speaks of this dissatisfaction after this settlement, my Father made his will and spoke to me concerning both. He told me, "The sum for which my husband had given his note would be part of my portion at my mother's death, but that during her life we must pay her interest, if she required it. He had left all his personal property to her while she lived, but he thought with her saving habits, she would add much to it and at her decease it would be divided equally among his children, that we must pay her \$420.00 yearly for the Brandywine, until our sister Mary Ann became of age, when by a codicil to his will, he had directed that his daughters should each receive the share of real estate that he had left to them, from this period it would be entirely ours, and

our Mother's right would cease-- Brandywine would be mine as he had promised. (He did not say anything, I think, of an appraisement, and I supposed he had left it by name to me. It was an understood thing by all that this was my portion, after we came here to reside Mother more than once spoke of it to me. After my Father's death the manner in which we were to obtain our portion of real estate was explained by his will, and as it regarded mine, Dr. Lukens felt, when he considered what he had done since removing to Brandywine, that to be appraised as it then was, would be like paying twice over for the improvements he had put on the property, but there was no help for this. Time wore on--my brother Isaac was joint executor with my Mother, who in a very short time informed Dr. Lukens, she would want him to make her a payment on the large note, he had given to my Father. This was a surprise to me, after what Father had said, but Dr. Lukens thought it should be done, observing to me that he would have less interest to pay, and as she had asked for it, it would be better to lessen the claim.. He then paid, I believe, some \$3300.00 to my Mother. I think she wanted it to assist Isaac. In the summer of 1825, I lost my dear and excellent Husband, and then commenced my hard and weary struggle with life. During the whole period of our being here, the iron business had been very poor and added to this the serious outlay I have alluded to in our constant expense in repairing the Works, it was utterly impossible there should be a support left for the young and helpless family now dependent solely on me. Dr. Lukens had just commenced the Boiler Plant Business, and secured sufficient workmen to carry it on. This was a new branch in Pennsylvania, and he was sanguine in his hopes of success, and this was his dying request--he wished me to continue and I promised him to comply. Indeed I well knew I must do something for the children around me. The estate showed an alarming deficiency when the books were examined. I will not dwell on my feelings, when I began to look around me. There was difficulty and danger on every side. Nearly two years were wanting to complete Mary Ann's coming of age, and until that period there could be no division of our property. Mother wanted me to leave Brandywine, and said it would be folly for me to remain. Necessity is a stern taskmistress, and my every want gave me courage, besides I had promised my dying husband I would remain, and where else could I go and live. I pleaded with her, and grief made me eloquent. I urged my promise to my husband, my duty to my children, and that in a little while Brandywine would be mine by Father's will. Mother then startled me by declaring that it was optional with her when the appraisement should be, neither did that weaken her claim to it during her life, if she choose to hold it (she spoke of the whole real estate left to her daughters). She offered me no assistance if I left, but thought as a female I was not fit to carry on such a concern. I then firmly but most respectfully told her I must make the attempt. She then said, I should pay her the whole of the claim my Father had held against my husband. This I said should be done as soon as practicable, with every other debt my husband owed. Dr. Lukens had many good and firm friends, and they all stood by me in my hour of need, and encouraged me to carry on the business of the mill. The workmen were tried and faithful, and so with some fear but more courage I began to struggle for a livelihood. I think at this period I must have possessed some energy of character, for now I look back and wonder at my daring. I had such strong, such powerful incentives for exertion, that I felt I must succeed. About this time Solomon Lukens came to live with me and assist in managing my business. He soon became aware of the state of affairs, and plied himself zealously in endeavoring, not only to aid me at Brandywine in all that was going on but in effecting a settlement with my Mother, which I had much at heart. His testimony with that of Charles Brooke, who came to assist him, will show how many attempts were made and failed, before the object was accomplished. About this time Mother made a sale of the Old Federal Slitting mill property, which was a part of the real estate willed to us, bought it from Maris Taylor, who had bid it in for her and commenced building the present Rokeby Works. We were all astounded at this act, which we felt to be wresting our rights from us. Things went on in this way for some time. I had paid her, I think \$4000.00, when she made the proposal for an appraisement and division of our property. This was, I think, more than a year after Mary Ann attained the age of 21. This was accordingly entered into and completed after the manner described by our Father's will and I became the possessor of Brandywine (as the eldest I had the first choice with the condition that I paid out to my sisters Sarah L. Pennock and Martha W. Coates, some \$5000.00, or near it, being the sum necessary to equalize their shares of real estate, and now I felt

I held Brandywine by a stronger tenure. Mother had always known that we thought with this appraisal her claims ceased and ours commenced but she would not admit it. After awhile (and I believe this was the period in which the payment of the \$4000.00 was made, and not so early as stated above) my Mother made me this proposition through Solomon Lukens "now said she, if Rebecca will pay me what she owes me, or rent on her own account, and the whole amount owed by Dr. Lukens (a very considerable sum by this time) with interest on it, and settle the whole account, and will pay her sisters Sarah and Martha, the sum coming to them from Brandywine, and me an annuity of one hundred dollars yearly, she may take her property repair and improve it and do what she pleases with it, but mind I must be paid off, and the girls have theirs. If I do not need my annuity I will not take it, but all this she must agree to do and I shall be satisfied." This was the purport and I think nearly the words of the message Solomon conveyed to me, after an interview with her. I must remark that before this period, the old mill had pretty nearly gone down, and the repairs which were continually required were now so ruinous, besides the delay that the last year we run the mill there was \$1200.00 of castings actually broke in that time, and we found we could go no longer, but must build anew, part was down before and part after the settlement and I think the larger part, Solomon Lukens gives in testimony an account of all the sums paid to my Mother of rents, different notes and interest due on them. He gives a detail at the whole as well as that paid my sisters, and if you will observe the interest on the two sums paid to them with the annuity paid to my Mother amounts to within a few dollars of the whole rent my Father had fixed for Brandywine, and which I had paid her up to this settlement, which was in September 33 or 34. From this time the rebuilding went on rapidly, Mill, Farm, Mansion House all underwent a renovating. The mill has been entirely remodeled and rebuilt from the very foundation. Dam entirely newly built, Wheels put in, castings, furnaces, mill head, mill house much larger, all were built anew; not a vestige of the old remained and not a dollar of all this or any part of it came from my mother or father's estate. Nor never have I during my mother's life received the smallest amount from her, (I think I can remember 5 or 10 times our mill dam was carried away since we came to Brandywine) I have thoroughly repaired the Mansion house, built good and substantial tenant houses, for my workmen, put much lime and fencing on the farm and have been at the whole expense of defending the property from an attempt made to destroy the water right, which carried on the Rolling Mill. Now it does seem very strange to me, when I think of all that has passed to hear the arguments that have been made against me. In 1815 this property was taken by Isaac Pennock and offered by him to Dr. Lukens for \$14000.00. The mill was badly built, the harness too light to bear the weight of the necessary castings, and the consequence was, continued breakage, to a ruinous amount, besides delay, the loss or making up the men's time and the necessary expense of putting new housing rolls and etc., in. Indeed the whole concern was in a forlorn and wretched state when we came here, yet for ten years did Dr. Lukens and afterward myself go on paying rent, mend and repair to try to make a living for our family until after his death, with all that I have enumerated as put in new by him. Brandywine was again appraised and taken by me at \$11000.00, and then when the old Mill could no longer go, and was ready to fall on the heads of the workmen, and the harness was entirely decayed, a new and larger one was built where it had stood, with fixtures, furnaces and entirely different from the old one and all this at my own cost. And when I had complied strictly with the firm agreement I had made with my Mother, and paid her principal and interest in full. Even to the sum my dying Father had assured me would on Mother's decease be a part of my portion of his personal property; paid off my two sisters and spent long and weary years in realizing an independence for myself and those committed to my care with no assistance and little sympathy, it does seem very preposterous that any attempt should be made to shew that by a reduced rent I had received an advancement from the trust fund; a trust never acknowledged by my Mother, though urged on her by myself, when I feared that all she had would be worse than lost on George. I repeated to her my Father's words and besought her not to forget the sacred trust reposed in her. My mother passed more of her time with me than with any one else of her children, I was ever kind and respectful to her. She often said to the others, I had never spoken disrespectfully to her in my life and in truth I never did. But there was a dark, a maligne influence continually exerted against me by those around her, and my

being prosperous as the mistress of Brandywine was the cause, though never until Sarah spoke openly against me was I aware of her bitter and vindictive feelings, and now I have little more to add. Solomon Lukens was ever the negotiator between my mother and myself, in all business arrangements. His testimony shows the contract emanated from Mother and related merely and entirely to real estate alone, and instead of taking from her every dollar I paid was adding so much to her income and the undisturbed possession of Brandywine I considered the greatest advantage I gained by this contract, as I as well aware, at once that the interest on the sum I paid my sisters and the annuity I was to pay her amounted to within a fraction of the rent fixed on by my Father as an equivalent for the use of Brandywine. I think the expenses of my suit with the Yearsley's amounted to upward of \$800.00 including what I paid Solomon Lukens for attending to it for me, it would be more. Mother never was kinder to me or seemed better pleased than she did for a long time after she entered into this contract with me. I paid her a vast sum of money, and including the \$3300.00 paid by Dr. Lukens I think the whole amount received after Father's death by her was fourteen or fifteen thousand dollars. S. Lukens I think states it exactly in testimony. When I had rebuilt the mill and mother would not appear satisfied with the sum agreed on though she never named a specified amount to me, I wrote to her and finally commissioned S. Lukens to tell her, that if she would repay me all that I had expened upon the property, I would give it up to her while she lived and seek another home. This she declined. I do not think at Father's death Mother had any idea her claims extended beyond the period that Mary Ann became of age. She knew the codicil was added to give us our real estate from that time, but there was an ambiguity in its wording which did not convey this intention clearly, and we could not contend with her, though I well remember saying to Solomon, when he bore Mother's proposal to me, "I have no right now to pay anything for Brandywine and Mothers knows it well, yet if by paying this sum (100 dollars) yearly, will bring peace with it, I will gladly comply. There were many causes to make me an object of jealous observers:- I had built a very superior mill, though a plain one and our character for making boiler iron stood first in the market, hence we had as much business as we could do, prices were then good. I had few competitors, and the opening of the Pennsylvania Railroad gave our iron ready access to market. Now our business is dull enough and our competition is all around us. In this long and weary struggle to gain a living, the estrangement, and protracted suit so long pending, the very energies of life seem exhausted. Let me then in conclusion beg you to use all the power you are so ably endowed with to bring this suit to its final close. I know and feel that in this lengthy communication I have been very prosy, yet you promised to glean from the mass anything if you found it to help my cause. Now I leave this to your mercy. The first money I ever made was spent in satisfying the claim against the estate of my husband, the rest in paying off my mother, and few at this day know that but for my exertion the estate of Dr. Lukens would have failed to reach the claims against it. There is a good deal said in Solomon Lukens testimony before Ziba Pyle relating to my business. I hope you will oppose Sarah Pennock being heard as a witness, she will only cause confusion and hurt our cause. I do think on this subject her mind is quite unsettled and indeed she is very peculiar. I felt deeply hurt when I had heard that in open court Mr. Williams had stated that at 12 o'clock at night I had turned my Mother from my door. This was as cruel as it was false. I ever strove to pay the attention and the duty as a child and after her disease her funeral took place from my house and never did I dream of handing in a bill to her executors for any cost or expense, though I made provision for a large company, and had several persons employed in attending and giving notice to my friends, some of them living distant. I have never named this before and only do so now to shew I tried by every means to shew her respect. I know Mother ever valued me, and had it not been for the "dark shadow" by her side ever prompt to check each kindly feeling, she would have acted very differently by me, indeed there were times when she shewed much kindly feeling. Poor Mother, she was often I think rendered very wretched by George's actions, and I think it would have broken her heart, could she have in everything known and believed the truth, as related to him. I have written this hastily and mainly at night, there are many repetitions, I find, and I would copy it over and avoid them were it a paper of any moment, as it is only to give you a detail of some points in my case which has struck my own mind and after you glance over it, will be of no further use, I send it as it now is with all its imperfections.