

The Jacobsburg Record

MAY/JUNE 1987

VOLUME XV No. 3

SPRING DINNER AND HONORARIUM TO THE LOPRESTIS

The Stockertown Memorial Hall was the gathering place for over 150 friends of Joseph and Virginia Lopresti May 14th at the Society's Spring meeting. Besides the excellent country-style dinner the evening was a warm and heartfelt acknowledgment by public and private organizations of the contributions the Loprestis have made to local history.

While we think of Joe and Virginia in conjunction with the archeology of Jacobsburg and the Benade House sites and as founders of the Jacobsburg Society, their interests also covered active work with Hunter-Martin Settlement group of Martins Creek, Hellertown Historical Society, Forks of the Delaware Society for Pennsylvania Archeology, Northampton County Historical Society and Governor Wolf Society.

The event brought forth acknowledgments from a number of organizations including a citation from the Pennsylvania Legislature and a letter from the Governor as presented by Representative Leonard Gruppo. Also George Kaufman, Chief of the Division of operations provided a citation from the Bureau of State Parks.

Locally the Bushkill Board of Supervisors voted to give the Loprestis the first non-resident Outstanding Citizens Award which was presented by Supervisor Joseph DiGerlando who also acted as master of ceremonies. The mayor of Stockertown, Sherman Metzger, also gave a letter of commendation.

A number of letters and citations were received from others, including the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society, the Society for Pennsylvania State Archeology, the Hunter-Martin Settlement Group of Martins Creek, the Forks of the Delaware Branch of the Society for Pennsylvania Archeology as well as good wishes from a direct descendent of the Henrys, Mr. James Henry of Marietta, Georgia.

On a personal basis Dale Prinkey, superintendent of the Jacobsburg Environmental Center, gave Joe and Virginia a framed photograph of the Benade cottage and spring house and also a worn out trowel. Earl Van Norman, president of our society, surprised the Loprestis with a rare copy of the book Penn Patent, a plaque acknowledging their contributions since 1972, a scrap book documenting their many achievements, and a purse provided by the generosity of the Loprestis' many admirers.

The evening of good fellowship was topped off with a slide presentation given by Joe and Virginia illustrating the advancements made in their "digs" at Jacobsburg over the years and showing many of their significant finds.

Joe and Virginia pledged to continue their support and interest in our organization and in furthering our understanding of local history.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

I wish to extend a hearty thank you to Hilton Rahn and his committee for the wonderful Spring banquet. Their behind-the-scenes work was more than visible when it came to show time. My special thanks to Joe and Virginia Lopresti for their slide presentation. Here we are having a dinner to honor the Loprestis and they wind up entertaining us. It certainly was interesting seeing them in action.

It was also nice to meet Ben Johnson who recently had an article published in the AMERICAN RIFLEMAN magazine about the Henry gun making business and one gun in particular. It's rather curious because when I read the article I thought I would contact the NRA and get Ben's address so I could tell him how much I appreciated his writing. Then someone told me that I needn't do that because "he's a member of our Society and lives in Bangor." Ye Gads! Forgive me folks, I'm the new kid on the block around here and I don't know all the members. I'd like to and, if you'll introduce yourself to me, it would be a great help. Ben --- thanks again for a great article and let's get together and talk guns!

Two fellows I do know, however, are in the spotlight again. Don Graves and Mike Colby have had a fine article published in the Spring 1987 issue of PENNSYLVANIA FOLKLIFE magazine. Every time I turn around, they're publishing something somewhere. GOOD JOB, GUYS!

I'm just beginning to realize how much talent there is in this Society. I mean that sincerely. We can be very proud of all our members for their knowledge and ability. I wouldn't begin naming them because I don't know them all and I might leave someone out. I would in no way wish to slight any of our fine members because they all deserve so much credit.

I think it is altogether fitting and proper to single out different people from time to time and honor them. So it was that the recent banquet was dedicated to Joe and Virginia. Were it not for the Loprestis and some others of equal concern and dedication, we very well might not have a Jacobsburg Historical Society, a Henry Homestead or, for that matter, a Jacobsburg State Park. How can we possibly say "thank you" to those men and women who joined together for a common purpose and with great effort and resolve overcame the obstacles that cropped up from every quarter. The whole of Jacobsburg stands as a monument to them. You might say, "Earl, that cliché fits every cause there is." Perhaps. That does not, however, change the fact of the matter, nor does it answer the question of how we can honor these people. Well --- let me give it a try.

I SUBMIT TO YOU THAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE NOT BUILT AN EDIFICE BUT A FOUNDATION. It is written that one man "laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon". It goes on to say that the "fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is". These words were not written about Jacobsburg Historical Society, of course, but they were written about "works" and it is "works" on our part, those of us who have had the baton passed to us, that will show appreciation to our predecessors. The principle can aptly be applied to what we do and how we go about doing it. We should take heed how we build.

I submit, also, that the buildings, the grounds, the information we disseminate, the entire portrayal of Jacobsburg is not ours to alter, destroy, portray, or in any way prostitute, to satisfy our whims or desires. An extreme example of this might be if we were to somehow obtain possession, to buy for our very own use, the MONA LISA; suppose, also that we thought it might be nice to put a happier smile on her face. So, we hire the most skilled artist in the world (or somebody's cousin Louie because he'll do it cheap) to paint a pleasing smile to what heretofore had been a mysteriously haunting smile. Perhaps someone gets the idea that she would look neat with a moustache or a "punker" hairdo. Obviously, we have absolutely no right to do such a dastardly thing simply because we "own" it. We don't "own" it; we are merely the present "stewards" of it. So it is with Jacobsburg. We don't own it, we are the stewards who are presently entrusted with it.

It is also written: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful". We can be found faithful as good stewards to adhere to the stated purpose of our founding members to "discover, collect, preserve, restore, and present the history, artifacts, buildings, documents, grounds and all material which will illustrate and demonstrate the history and culture of Jacobsburg, the Henry Gun Factory, Henry's Woods, and related areas".

Perhaps this says --- "Thank you"

Earl Van Norman

And, A Good Time Was Had By All!!

In spite of the rainy and unusually cool weather, 40 of us had a great overnite trip to Baltimore - Inner Harbor on May 19 and 20. Actually, we feel as though we ate our way to, through, and from Baltimore.

Probably the highlight of the trip was the Aquarium. The Science Center was fun in that it's a "hands-on" facility and we could play with various computers and experiments.

The luncheon cruise on the "Lady Baltimore" with entertainment by the waiters and waitresses is all that the brochure says it is.

Before returning home Wednesday night, we stopped at the Hotel Yorktowne in York, PA. What a grand old hotel it is!

Now it's back to the drawing board to plan the fall trip. We have an idea a-bornin!

HELLER FAMILY ANCESTRY
By Charles M. Sadwick, Sr.

The pioneer ancestor of most or perhaps all of the early Heller families of Northampton County was Christopher Heller, who immigrated on the ship Winter Galley and arrived at Philadelphia 5 Sep 1738. He was accompanied by his children of whom the eldest was Johan Simon Heller. On 8 Sep 1742 Christopher Heller received a patent for land in Lower Saucon Township. He settled with his family in what became Hellertown. We do not know his wife's name.

Christopher Heller was born in 1688 and died in 1778. He had at least six children. (1) Johan Simon (called Simon) was born at Petersheim in the Palatinate 18 Jun 1721 and died in either Hamilton or Plainfield Township 20 May 1783. In 1744 he married Louisa Dietz of Wilford Township, Bucks County, who was born 12 June 1726 and died 13 Apr 1768, daughter of Adam and Anna Catharine Dietz. Both Simon and Louisa were buried in the old cemetery of St. Peter's Union Church (now Lutheran), southeast of Wind Gap in Plainfield Township. They were of the Reformed denomination.

The next child of Christopher Heller of whom we know was (2) Michael, who was born 12 Feb 1724 and died in 1803. He married Magdalena Catharina Keiper. After Michael was (3) Daniel, who was born in 1726 and died in 1803; his wife was Elisabeth. Next was (4) Ludwig, who was born about 29 Dec 1728, and died in Hamilton Township about 24 Feb 1807; his wife was Anna Margaret.

The next child of Christopher Heller was (5) Christopher, who was born 5 Apr 1731 and died at Mount Bethel 23 Mar 1805; his wife was Elisabeth. The last child of Christopher Heller was Elizabeth, who was born in 1732 and died without issue in 1795. So far as we know, she never married.

About 1763 Simon and Louisa (Dietz) Heller moved from Lower Saucon Township to Plainfield Township. They had at least fifteen children, of whom the first seems to have been (1) Veronica. We do not know Veronica Heller's date of birth, but by 1763 she was married to Peter Conrad, who was born 16 Aug 1737 and died 22 Nov 1789. In a militia roll dated 21 May 1777 he was listed as First Lieutenant of the 5th company, commanded by Captain Henry Sawitz, in the 6th Battalion, under Colonel Jacob Stroud, of the Northampton County Militia. (Pennsylvania Archives, 5th Series, vol 8, pp 401-403.) Peter Conrad, with the rank of lieutenant, received depreciation pay for service with the Continental Line. (Pa. Arch., 5th Ser., vol 4, pp 316 and 483.) Although the name of Peter Conrad appears as a private on the rolls of two different companies in June and July 1782, it is well established that the husband of Veronica Heller was Lieut. Peter Conrad. (DAR Patriot Index, 1966, p 149, col 2.)

Peter and Veronica (Heller) Conrad had at least twelve children, possibly as many as fourteen. Their first child, Susanna, was baptized in the Plainfield Reformed congregation. Ten of their children were baptized at the Union Church in Hamilton Township. Their family may be the subject of a future article.

The second child of Simon and Louisa (Dietz) Heller, so far as we know, was (2) Sophronia, who was born 24 Jan 1747. The next child was (3) Elizabeth, born 9 Mar 1749. She was followed by (4) Jacob, who was born in Lower Saucon Township 6 Mar 1750 and died in Plainfield Township 8 Oct 1822. He married first, about 1775, Susanna Weyland (or Wayland), who was born 21 Jun 1757 and died 28 Dec 1797. He married second about 1798 Hannah Whittier, who was born about 18 Aug 1770 and died 27 Jun 1841. Jacob Heller's family is the subject of continuing research.

The next child of Simon and Louisa (Dietz) Heller was (5) Abraham, who was born in Lower Saucon Township 8 May 1751 and died in Plainfield Township 15 Oct 1824. He married about 1774 Elizabeth Gemanton, who was born 8 May 1749 and died 26 Aug 1834. They had nine children. Abraham's family is also undergoing further research.

The next child of Simon and Louisa Heller was (6) Margaretha, who was born 3 Dec 1752 and died 16 Aug 1797. She married Henry Hauser who was born 19 May 1748 and died 14 Aug 1810. They lived in Cherry Valley in Hamilton Township, Monroe County. The next child of Simon and Louisa was (7) Sarah, who was born 18 Feb 1754.

The next child, (8) Johannes Heller (also called John), was born 29 Oct 1756. He married Susanna Lahr. Next was (9) Anthony, born 1 Feb 1758, who died in infancy. (10) Catrina, or Catharine, was born 4 Mar 1759. (11) Anna Maria was born 18 Nov 1760.

The twelfth child of Simon and Louisa (Dietz) Heller of whom we have any information was (12) Anthony, who was born in Lower Saucon Township 20 Mar 1762 and died in Hamilton Township in 1817. We haven't learned the maiden name of his wife, whose Christian name was Catharina. The next child (13) Daniel, who was born 31 Jan 1764, was the first of the Heller children to be baptized in the Plainfield Township Reformed congregation. He may have been the Daniel Heller who, with his wife Eva, had a child baptized in Hamilton Township 7 Jul 1787, for whom the witnesses were Philip Heller and Margaretha Conrad. After Daniel came (14) Louisa, who was born in Plainfield Township 10 Jun 1765.

The last child born to Simon and Louisa (Dietz) Heller was (15) Simon, who was born in Plainfield Township 13 Mar 1767 and died in Hamilton Township 26 Jul 1833. About 1786-7 Simon Heller married Christina Bossardor Bossert.

HELLER-STOCKER: A CORRECTION

We confess that a statement made in the historical article in the previous issue of the Jacobsburg Record contained an error. The incorrect sentence stated, "The other Rebecca, daughter of Peter and Sarah Heller, married Samuel Stocker." The marriage record at the First Reformed Church of Easton (now the First U.C.C.) gave the groom's name as Samuel Stocker. The Easton Centinel of 14 March 1828 carried this announcement: "Married--On the 14th of February, by the Rev'd Mr. Pomp, Mr. Samuel Stocker of Forks township to Miss Rebecca Heller of Plainfield."

As a general rule, church records are among the most reliable primary sources of genealogical information, but in this case, both the church record and the newspaper item erred. We now have conclusive evidence that the husband of Rebecca, daughter of Peter and Sarah Heller, was Simon Stocker (1801-1857), not Samuel. This Rebecca, who was born 6 Apr 1809 in Plainfield Township, died in Hamilton Township 28 Oct 1883 as Rebecca Arnold, having remarried after the death of Simon Stocker. However, in the burial records of St. Peter's Cemetery in Plainfield Township, she is identified as Rebecca Stocker, wife of Simon.

Simon and Rebecca Stocker had seven children baptized at the Forks Church in the interval 1828-1841, of whom Josiah was the third. Josiah Stocker was born 12 Feb 1833 and was baptized at the Forks Church (as Josia Simon Stocker) on 11 Mar 1833. Josiah died in 1864. According to Stocker Family, vol. 1, page 97: "Rebecca Arnold who declared herself the mother of Josiah Stocker renounces her right to administer his estate in favor of Jacob S. Heller of Plainfield." Jacob S. Heller, who was born 13 Dec 1807 and died 20 Feb 1867, was a brother of Rebecca (Heller) Stocker and therefore an uncle of Josiah Stocker.

Peter Heller (1785-1814), the father of Rebecca (Heller) Stocker-Arnold, was a son of Captain Jacob Heller.

UPDATE ON THE JACOBSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S GUN COLLECTION

After doing some very serious shopping, the gunnery committee thought it best to inspect the arsenal and share the contents with interested society members. At this writing, we now own seventeen long guns of different types, and have one excellent HENRY flintlock long rifle on permanent loan. Ten of our long guns are HENRY pieces of different types and periods. Four are flintlocks, and include two civilian rifles, a militia rifle marked "SOUTH CAROLINA", and a "J. HENRY PHILA" marked 1808 contract military musket. The other HENRY long guns are later percussion pieces, and include four half-stock rifles, one half-stock shotgun, and a full-stock Indian trade rifle. A recent addition to our collection is a HENRY flintlock military pistol that was manufactured about 1830. This gun is a version of the Simeon North Model 1826 U.S. Navy pistol. The pistol was sold at a well advertised public auction which brought out some major antique gun collectors, and the price was high. This piece was purchased because of the great rarity of HENRY handguns. As compared to the many thousands of shoulder arms produced by the firm over the years, known HENRY pistol production was in the hundreds, and the new piece was worth stretching our budget (considerably) for. It should also be pointed out that many of our guns were gifts from friends and members, and that our other purchases over the years have been priced quite reasonably. Our group owns six other handguns that, when displayed together, do rather a nice job of showing the development of the pistol. The collection also includes five attractive powder flasks from the muzzle-loading era.

Bob Newell
Gunnery Committee

HOMESTEAD OPEN HOUSE EXHIBIT

Sunday, June 28th, 2-5 pm - Exhibit - Band Boxes by Shirley Frey, Nazareth

Sunday, July 26th, 2-5 pm - Exhibit - Hooked Rugs by Sherry Koehler, Tatamy

JACOBSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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----- MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR JACOBSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Student	\$2.50	Sustaining	\$10.00	Contributing	\$15.00
Individual	\$5.00	Family	\$12.50	Organizations	\$25.00

NAME CONTRIBUTIONS

Tannery Club	\$100	Boulton Club	\$500	Henry Rifle Club	\$1000
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NAME AND ADDRESS _____

TEL. NO. _____

Please return this slip with your check, payable to Jacobsburg Historical Society. Send to P.O. Box 345, Nazareth, PA 18064. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. Cancelled check is your receipt.