



103 S. 2nd St., Lewisburg, PA 17837  
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Winter 2021

*“Exploring Union County’s past to inform the present and future.”*

Dear Society Members and Friends,

Time has a way of altering our perspectives, both as individuals and as members of human society. While some offensive attitudes persist everywhere in the world, the language reflecting those emotions waxes and wanes as the seasons spin into years, and the decades become centuries.



Years before I met my predecessor, Lois Huffines, I clipped something she wrote for *Pennsylvania Folklife*. The article, “The Trunk in the Attic was a Window,” told how her translations of letters from the middle of the nineteenth century let her peek into the world of an immigrant family in Central Pennsylvania.

Topics in these letters ranged from farming to politics to reports on the routine exchanges of labor and services governing the local economy. The lessons they learned and shared with their friends and relatives back in Germany still resonate with us today.

One writer found the freedom of expression in his adopted country astounding: “... everyone here can say what he thinks and may say the truth against the officials. Everything gets into the newspapers and is made known to the people... That is the biggest part of freedom, freedom of the press, and freedom of contentment.”

He also appreciated the value of maintaining community identity and cohesion. This writer complained how some – united by language but divided by regional dialect – were carrying over ancient prejudices and insults by calling each other “dumb Schwabian,” “sly Prussian,” and “blind Hessian.” He knew these sentiments could easily rip apart the fragile ties carefully cultivated by neighbors who were enthusiastically, yet slowly, embracing their new country.

New political entities gradually absorbed the old duchies and principalities. They, in turn, redrew national borders as calls for unity took precedence and redefined regional futures. Swabia and Prussia no longer exist, but Hesse is now an official state within the Federal Republic of Germany.

As a result, those 150-year-old barbs have lost their power and make little sense to our ears today. Given the fate of these words and attitudes, it wouldn’t be surprising if similar expressions today become just as obsolete as our society matures and we all strive to create a more perfect union.

Though written in 1775 while traveling through Central Pennsylvania, the words of diarist and Presbyterian minister Philip Vickers Fithian still ring true: “...the way of improvement leads home.”

*Bruce*

#### **OFFICERS & BOARD 2021**

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#### **THANK YOU**

The society is grateful for donations from members

Maryellen Paulhamus  
David Mensch  
David Beckley  
Mary Kay Harper  
John Huckaby  
Mary Zimmerman  
Gary Truckenmiller &  
Barb Ritchey

Lois Huffines  
Tom & MaryLou Rich  
(toward *Heritage* publication)  
Craig Miller & Nancy Morgan  
(unrestricted and for *Heritage*)  
Louise Knight  
(for Dale-Engle-Walker signs)

**Thanks** to all who have renewed their membership for 2021.



#### **Welcome new members**

Ralph Sayers, Lewisburg  
Heather LeBlanc, Cogan Station  
Cathleen Wagner, Mifflinburg

Since the spring of 2020, society programs have been cancelled or changed due to Covid-19 restrictions and guidance from the CDC and our Governor for community safety. We are planning some outdoor programs for members in 2021. Watch for emails and postings on the UCHS website; the Susquehanna River Valley Visitors Bureau website ([www.VisitCentralPA.org](http://www.VisitCentralPA.org)); the Union County Library website ([www.unioncountylibraries.org](http://www.unioncountylibraries.org)); and in local newspapers. We look forward to seeing you all soon. Stay safe.

### Forest School Day Camp for Children and Educators at the Dale-Engle-Walker House

Susan Chlebowski, with funding from Bucknell University, will provide an outdoor educational program on the Dale-Engle-Walker property February through April. Groups of 10-12 children (ages 5-8), will spend a half day each week engaged in child-led, hands-on learning, playing, and skill

building, led by Bucknell education students and a certified teacher. The program benefits local children who have limited opportunity to socialize and learn with other children during the pandemic.

The program is modeled after the Scandinavian and UK Forest Schools, and the growing US model of "Forest Days." A short documentary on forest kindergartens in VT

describes the model: [www.pbs.org/video/best-day-ever-forest-kindergartens-in-vermont-tgjldc/](http://www.pbs.org/video/best-day-ever-forest-kindergartens-in-vermont-tgjldc/)

This is a community outreach program, available to any interested family regardless of ability to pay, and represents a collaboration with the Lewisburg Children's Museum, the Union County Historical Society, the Merrill Linn Conservancy, and Bucknell University.



Winter..... ..turns to spring

### Union County Historical Society Next *Heritage* Volume

Many readers of this newsletter will recognize the name Richard (Rick) Sauers. He was the long-time director of the Packwood House Museum in Lewisburg. A few years ago he moved to Colorado, where he currently serves as the curator of the Western Museum of Mining and Industry in Colorado Springs ([wmmi.org](http://wmmi.org)).

Lucky for us, Rick has not forgotten Union County, Pennsylvania! He is using his knowledge of Civil War history and his expertise in primary source research to comb the Union County local newspapers, diaries, letters, and other accounts from the Civil War era to tell the story and provide the context for an analysis of Union County's Civil War experience.

Rick's work is slated to appear as the 2022 volume of the *Heritage* series published by the Union County Historical Society. The volume is expected to be available by November 2021. It will be an exciting and much needed addition to the *Heritage* series of books based on primary research on Union County history.



Civil War unit

Make sure you renew your UCHS membership (renewal material will be sent out in the fall 2021) to be the first to receive a copy of historian Rick Sauers' *Union County and the Civil War* (tentative title).

M. Lois Huffines, Editor of the *Heritage*

## COLLECTION NEWS by Tony Shively

*The Archives & Collections Committee of the Union County Historical Society fosters the collection of Union County manuscripts, ephemera, local advertising, and decorative arts through gift and purchase.*

*The committee would like to thank everyone who donated and gifted to the society this year. Your gifts and donations to the collection of materials held by the society supports its mission of enhancing the appreciation and visibility of Union County history.*

**Emilie Jansma** of State College for donating a three-ring binder containing information pertaining to the life of William “Pappy” McColm of Weikert and his service to his country during the Civil War, including copies of his military service records.

**Vivienne Slear** of Gillett, PA for donating a large reproduction photograph (22" x 16"), matted and framed, taken at the Michael Slear Sawmill. The photograph shows Michael Slear, along with several sawmill workers.

**David McCord** of Lewisburg for donating the original 18” x 13” Charter issued in 1920 to the Lewisburg Chapter of the International Association of Rotary Clubs, along with the large brass bell from the club and two wooden gavels used by the organization.

**Delores Beard** of Turnersville, NJ for donating two CD’s containing 28 photographs from the 1940s that were taken at the Lewisburg Orphanage.

**Janet Zimmerman** of Lewisburg for donating numerous items that belonged to William Schooley, including two large photo albums, maps, deeds, and other information from the Uniontown Cemetery in Gregg Township, and a Union County Historic Site Survey book from 1976.

**Randy W. Hackenburg** of Boiling Spring, PA for donating items that belonged to Paul Aaron Libby of Laurelton, PA, including his WW II U. S. Navy uniform, wallet with identification and photographs, a notebook, and numerous “On The Beam” newsletters from 1944.

**Kenneth O. Houts** of Westville, NJ for donating a calendar from Strickler’s Grocery in Glen Iron.

**Evelyn Miller** of Mifflinburg for donating two sections of wooden water pipe that came from the church property located on the south side of Penns Creek opposite the Village of Glen Iron.

**Terry Shingara** of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania for donating a coverlet made and signed by Benjamin Angstad of Lewisburg dated 1844.



*Signed in lower corner, as was typical of coverlets made at the time.  
This is a beautiful example of weaver Benjamin Angstad's work.*

## Society Awarded Gold

The American Association for State and Local History recently awarded a Gold certificate for Mission, Vision and Governance to the Union County Historical Society. This recognition is part of AASLH's STEPS (Standards and Excellence Program) for small to mid-sized museums and historical societies. It is also the first time the historical society has achieved the highest level of recognition in one of the program's six self-assessment categories.

UCHS has received certificates for completing different levels in the STEPS program's other categories. These include Audience and Community Engagement, Interpretation, Management, Stewardship of Collections, and Stewardship of Historic Structures and Landscapes.

"Our Board of Directors and our Governance Review Committee completely overhauled our Articles of Incorporation and by-laws so they now reflect the ever-changing needs of UCHS," said Bruce Teeple, UCHS president. "This is something any responsible group should do periodically. It's all part of our board's commitment to improving and aligning our operations within the scope of accepted practices."

## Board Member Retires

**Louise Knight**, a life member of UCHS, has retired from the UCHS board after serving a term of three years. We are grateful for her work on the new Articles of Incorporation and Special Bylaws for the society (which contributed to the AASLH award for the society's efforts). Historical society members voted on adopting the Articles and Bylaws in 2019.

Also, thanks to Louise's tireless efforts, the society has applied for new Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) for the Dale-Engle-Walker site. The new signs will be made by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and installed on Rte 192.

## The society notes the recent passing of members of the society



**Mary Belle Lontz**, of Lewisburg and Milton, was a life member of the society, and served on the board some years ago. She compiled and wrote many reference books on local history, and often assisted with genealogical research. As they say, she forgot more about history than most people know.



**David Goehring**, of Lewisburg, was a life member, serving on the board and many committees over the years. He was an office volunteer, staffer at UCHS booths at Christkindl Market and New Berlin Day, guide for school children's Union County tours, and host/guide at the Dale-Engle-Walker House.



**Hertha Wehr**, of Mifflinburg, was a life member of the society, past board director, and donor to the society's dairy/farming artifacts collection. She contributed to the *Heritage* book *Cows on the Landscape and a Milkman at Your Door: Dairy in Union County 1900-2005*, drawing on her many-years experience in family dairy farming. She also wrote articles for the *Millmont Times* and the *Mifflinburg Telegraph*.

## Recent Genealogy Searches and Their Researchers

*If you have information to share, please contact UCHS or the researcher (address / email below)*

BARKELOW, Elizabeth (c.1780s- c.1845) w/o James Barkelow of West Buffalo; Questions: daughter of Robert Chambers, widow of Jacob Shriner. [records found for Chambers, Bartloe/Barklow, Shriner; and Barkelow material on file]. Ryan Wadleigh ryanwadleigh@yahoo.com

The REVEREND S. WOLF. Officiated the marriage of Wm Waughen and Susan Zechman c.1873. Also SUSAN SECHMAN (Zechman-Vaughn) listed in 1870 census as a domestic servant in Wolf household. Seeking additional information on Rev. Wolf and Susan S/Z. Ryan Vaughan; rvaughan93@gmail.com

KNEPP, George and Peter Knepp in Union County in 1820, 1830, 1840, and 1850; Peter, son of George and Anna Maria Knepp, buried in Black Oak Ridge Cemetery, Snyder County. Also Knepp, Jackson, born 1827, in Holmes County, OH in 1850 census [records for George and Peter found and sent]. Linda Rosenblum, 200 Tonawanda Trl SW, Hartsville, OH 44632; lsrosenblum@hotmail.com

SWINEFORD, Charles Winfield 18 Sep 1852 – 13 Nov 1895 Mifflinburg + Ella Mina Bartley 1851-1898; children Ernest Clarison 1876-1949 and Iva Pearl 1886-1959. [probate records found and sent]. Irene Sheriden, 3308 Lakeside Dr., Williamstown, NJ 08094; sheriden44@verizon.net.

CULP/ KULP, John 14 Dec 1806 – 7 Feb 1899 [seeking his parents] + Ester L. Zimmerman 5 Jan 1812 – 17 Sep 1905; also Charles William Culp 1880-1964. Jason Straut; jason.straut@gmail.com

CORNELIUS, Jesse, blacksmith shop in New Berlin [information and photos sent] Robert J. Jansen, Jr.; robertjansenjr@yahoo.com

SMITH, Charles H. b. 24 Nov 1906 Laurelton; parents James W. Smith 2 May 1849 Millheim – 13 Aug 1918 Hartley Twp., Union + Hanna C. J. Styers 4 Oct 1863 – 1 Sep 1937 Laurelton. Seeking confirmation on James' parents, possibly Michael Smith 21 May 1818 – 24 Apr 1877 + unknown [no information found], and connection to Adam Smith III 1786-1836 + Mary Ditto 1788-1861. [Connection of James Smith to Michael Smith not found. Contradictory and unverified info on-line]. Tom Smith, 237 Jacksonville Re., Apt 104E, Hatboro, PA 19040; tom6904@gmail.com

DORMAN, Peter 1791-1874, son David Dorman 1829-1905; g'son Henry Franklin Dorman 6 Mar 1858-6 Aug 1931, his daughter Marian Anna Dorman Bailey, Millmont + Bright Homer Bailey, Millmont, died in Albion NY. [provided probate records for Ludwig Dorman 1820, LOA for Mary Dorman 1842; deeds, and other records; info from "Genealogy of Dorman Family"] Josh Kirby, State College, PA josh@kir.by

BAUERSACHS, Paulus 1744-1806; George Adam 1774-1852; Jesse (aka Josiah? Jackson?) Bowersox 1819-1860; Elias Bowersox 1846-?, his parents, marriage and children. [documents provided including census, cemetery and marriage lists; deeds; will for George 1852; referred researcher to Northumberland County for LOA for Paulus filed 1806, and to Snyder County for LOA for Jesse and Mary, both filed 1860]. Donald Marencic, Jr., 6 Oakglade Cir., Hummelstown, PA 17036; cyantech@verizon.net

BLISS, George Ripley, at Bucknell in the 1800s. [Information provided from references on Bucknell University] David Bliss; dbliss17@gmail.com

CRONRATH family members buried in White Deer Cemetery c.1800s, and Elizabeth Cronrath Cooper d. 1902 [list provided; Elizabeth not found in Union County tombstone list]. Roger W. Cronrath, 22911 Delphi Lane, Charlottesville, Virginia 22911; rwcronrath@msn.com

HOUSEL, Jacob Wabash of Forest Hill area [seeking will, letters of administration, deeds – none found; note there is another Jacob Housel in Lewisburg, same time]; Eric Averkamp eric@awerkamplaw.com

\*Looking for a copy of the Lewisburg High School yearbook from 1986. Reply to UCHS office.\*



## *Union County Revolutionary War Pensioners Living in 1832 by Kathy Swope*

A remarkable gathering occurred in New Berlin on July 4, 1832 according to an article in the "Union Times of New Berlin." A public dinner was held to celebrate veterans of the Revolutionary War at Mr. Aurand's hotel (Samuel Aurand House B&B today). Twenty-six of thirty-seven surviving veterans who resided in Union County assembled to share a meal and tales of war.

Isaac Slenker, Esq. delivered a speech to the group. Slenker, of New Berlin, would in 1835 be elected to the Pennsylvania State Senate, and in 1862 elected as Auditor General of Pennsylvania. After the dinner, Slenker entertained the veterans in his home. The newspaper included this interesting observation, "Ice was just coming into use, and one old gentleman was observed picking the pieces out of his brandy. He thought it was glass." The gentlemen, ranging in age from 68 to 88 years, were required to appear in court to make declarations regarding their military service. Each veteran presented evidence to prove he had served in the military for at least a total of six months during the Revolutionary War in order to be deemed eligible to receive a pension under the General Pension Act of June 7, 1832. New Berlin was the county seat from 1814 to 1855.

<u>Soldier</u>	<u>Age</u>				
Lieut. Robert Barber	81	George High	80	George Miller	71
James Bartelow	79	Baltzer Houtz	75	Nicholas Moyer	73
Adam Beaver	78	Christopher Huffnagle	72	Philip Neitze	78
Lieut. Jacob Bickel	75	Capt. Christopher Johnson	80	George Orwig*	74
Joseph Bitting	74	Benjamin Jones	78	James Smith Poake*	70
John Brobst	73	George Kerstetter	75	Adam Shout	77
David Connor	74	Jacob Kinney	80	Henry Shreffler*	81
Martin Cronemiller	72	Peter Kuester	70	John Stahl	76
John Derr	79	John Kuntz	78	George Stock	77
Ludwig Dersham	72	George Lashells	76	Capt. James Thompson	88
George Engle	78	Michael Lebkieher	73	John Wilson	68
Robert Forester	74	Michael Lincoln	70	David Walter	71
Philip Hain	73	Joseph Long	75		

\*Designates listed as totally blind

Their written declarations included details about their military service, year of birth (if known), birthplace, recollections of movements of their military companies as well as battles and skirmishes, and individuals with whom they served who could attest to their statements. It is a remarkable collection that allows us a glimpse into the settlement of Union County and the origins of our early inhabitants.

The youngest attendee was John Wilson of Hartley Township, Union County. In his declaration, he described his service in the militia beginning in 1778 in the company of Capt. James Thompson, Lieut. Jonothan Iddings, Ensign Alexander Ewig, and Col. John Kelly. Like many of the militia, he was called into duty "in guarding the frontier against the incursions of the Indians." He attests, "That he has been informed by his father that he was born in 1764 in Chester County, Pennsylvania, [and] that he has no record of his age, as his father's books were mostly destroyed during the war." His father was Peter Wilson who served in the same company.

John Wilson states he was living in Union County, then part of Northumberland County, at the time he was called into service and he "has resided here ever since the war." He noted that he served not less than nine months in the militia in 1779 and 1780. He explained, "That during the open parts of the year, he was constantly under arms," meaning the summer season when Indian incursions usually occurred, because during the winter or "closed season" there was less frequent Indian activity according to the record. The militia stood watch protecting farmers as they prepared their fields.

John Wilson died Oct. 5, 1836 and his widow (Agnes) Nancy (Forester), daughter of Capt. John Forester, applied for and received a widow's pension. According to her application, she married John Wilson Feb. 26, 1787. Several affidavits were submitted to prove that Nancy was the lawful wife of John Wilson. The affidavit of Robert Van Valsah, a practitioner of medicine, attests that, "He finds in his book of entries, that in February 1799, he inoculated three children of the said John Wilson for the smallpox."

The record includes a page taken from the family Bible (Collins & Co. Edition of the Holy Bible printed in 1816), recording the births of each of the nine children of John and Nancy Wilson.

Jane	b. Sunday, August 31, 1788	William	b. Friday, March 20, 1801
James	b. Saturday, Dec. 25, 1790	Alexander	b. Thursday, September 16, 1804
John Forester	b. Feb'y 18, 1793	Nancy	b. Monday, Feb'y 1808
Mary	b. September 16, 1795	Dorcas	b. Friday, October 12, 1810
Peter	b. Sunday, Feb'y 18, 1796		

The account provides further information, including maiden names of the marriages of several of John and Nancy Wilson's children and declarations from two of her sons. A declaration from John Forester, brother of Nancy, also appears in the records. Captain John Forester was the father of Nancy (Forester) Wilson and lived in an old log house that stood to the left of the road to Hoffa Mil. His second son, William is said to be the first white child born in the valley. This reference indicates the early settlement of the Forester family in the area.

The details contained in these Revolutionary War pension applications provide insights into the personal lives and the difficulties of everyday life on the frontier. In addition, we are afforded the opportunity to better understand the struggles and sacrifices of our forebearers as they fought for our country's independence.



**The Union County Historical Society office is temporarily closed to visitors.**

The county courthouse also has limited access for researchers at this time, due to Covid-19 precautions. Please call or email ahead of any visit so we can advise you on the current situation.

**Research services are provided by our staff.** Please email your research questions prior to payment.

- General genealogical search (one family) – fee of \$50 includes copying up to 20 pages of documents, including probate files, deeds, marriage and death data, local and family histories – as available; extra fees for extensive searches and/or additional copying. UCHS staff will advise.
- Copy of specific wills, letters of administration, or orphans court records only – \$5 plus \$1/copied page.
- Obituary search and copy (please provide year and approximate month of death) – \$5 per person.
- Property deed searches are negotiated on an individual basis. Please inquire.

See [www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org) / Research Resources for documents list and more.

**Donations of Union County family histories** (printed or digital) are accepted for the society's library. Please email to make arrangements.

**Added to the library:**

*The Bridge Builder*; 46 assorted volumes 1968-2020, published by the Pontius Family Association.

*Descendants of Matthew Russell and related families of Jackson County, Alabama.*

Some family connections to Union County. Donated by Glenda Sheaffer.

*Youngman: Descendants of Elias Younkman / Youngman.*

Compiled by Glenda Sheaffer and the late Carl Catherman. Donated by Glenda Sheaffer.



"Extracts from the PA Archives concerning Frederick Bingaman, A Survivor of the American Revolution...." containing genealogy of Fred and John Wolfe et al. Donated by Linda Wilkinson

Keefer Family Association Newsletter, Dec. 2020

**Union County Historical Society**

Union County Courthouse

103 South 2nd Street

Lewisburg, PA 17837

Return Service Requested

**Membership:** The Union County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. Membership is tax deductible as allowed by law. Your membership supports programs, the research library, and the growth of our collections. It also helps us maintain the Dale-Engle-Walker House, which offers tours, exhibits, and programs. In addition to membership, we gratefully accept donations promoting UCHS's mission. Volunteers are welcome. **Member benefits** include newsletters, a discount on society publications, and free use of our extensive reference library with access to on-line resources.

If you wish to purchase a new or gift membership, or if you want to renew, please mail this form to:  
Union County Historical Society, 103 S. 2nd St., Lewisburg, PA 17837

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Membership level:

Annual Membership:  \$250  \$150  \$100 \$45  Student (K-12) \$10  
 Lifetime (per person) \$800

Please visit [www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org) for events, articles, resource list, and more.