

Breyfogle Sentinel Dispatch

September - 2005

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From the Editor

According to the calendar the summer is nearly gone! Labor Day announced the end of what most of us think of as summer and most children are back to school. As we write this newsletter our thoughts can only be drawn to the horrible scenes we are seeing in the gulf coast area after hurricane Katrina. We encourage everyone to donate towards the relief effort and hope that if any of our subscribers have family and friends in this area that they are safe.

The Convergence announcement was mailed out in early August and at this time we have heard from about half of the mailing list (more on this later). We certainly hope that if you have not returned your reply card that you do so before the end of September so planning can continue. We need to make a commitment to the hotel by October 1st and with only half the cards in we don't know where we stand.

News From Todd & Angela Breyfogle

Dennis Todd Breyfogle, son of Donald Lee and Cindy Lou (Andersen) Breyfogle of Ohio joined the United States Air Force in August of 2005. He has enlisted as a Medical Services Apprentice and plans to attend college to become a Physicians Assistant. At the time of this announcement Todd, Angela, and son Jake, made their home in Thurman, OH.

We know that you will join us in congratulating Todd on his new career path and we will keep you up to date on any news we receive. Pictured are Todd and son Jake.



18th Century Pennsylvania

In the June 2005 Issue of the **Breyfogle Sentinel Dispatch** we started a series of articles about what life in mid 18th century Pennsylvania would have been like. As you will remember we outlined the perils of the ocean voyage and we discussed the arrival of immigrants in Pennsylvania.

Since there are no known diaries, journals, or letters from the period that are connected to the Breyfogle's or their extended family most of what we know is based on other historical perspectives. And much of the information we will share in this issue comes from a book written by an author from Kutztown, the location where Johann Petar Breyvogel settled in the mid 1700's.

So to begin I will give a few details about the book itself. It is written by Brendan D. Strasser, Ph.D. and is titled [A Most Agreeable Town](#), with a subtitle of "A Photographic History of the Borough of Kutztown, Volume 1". We purchased this 2004 publication through the Kutztown Area Historical Society and in the event that you'd be interested in a copy we will provide a few details about the society towards the end of this newsletter. It is not our purpose to publish the entire work but to give excerpts that we feel will give a better feel for what life was like at the time that the early Breyfogle's settled near Kutztown.

Kutztown is the closest town to one of the earliest known farmsteads to be owned by a Breyfogle, specifically George Breyfogel, son of Johann Petar Breyvogel, more on this in a future issue. Since we do not have any specific reference to property owned by Johann Petar Breyfogel we can only rely on the work of Lewis W. Breyfogle in the regard to early property ownership with this passage from his work titled, [What I Know About The Breyfogle Family](#):

"In 1752, or thereabouts, the first tax rolls in Berks County show a Peter Breifogel on the Ruscomb Manor Township tax list. In 1758, the same Peter Breifogel shows up on the tax rolls of Rockland Township. This must have been John Peter, as his son Peter (born 1746) was not old enough to pay taxes at the time."

Our 1876 map of Berks County shows Ruscomb and Rockland townships being south of Kutztown and Maxatawny Township, but close enough to assume that Johann Petar and his family would have been familiar with the Kutztown settlement.

We say settlement as the town was not formed until 1815, but according to Strasser's book, "Organized as Berks County's second borough in 1815 but settled perhaps as early as the mid 1720's largely by Palatine German and French Huguenot families migrating over the South Mountain from the Oley Valley in southeastern Berks County..." Knowing this we can assume that although Johann Petar was not named as one of the earliest settler, the settlement surely had begun to form as Johann Petar settled in the area.

Perhaps the most important passage in the book as it applies to our family origin is Strasser's opening passage in the chapter titled "Origins of the Borough of Kutztown."

"When, 15 years after it founding, Theophile Cazenove, first general agent of the Holland Land Company, visited a tiny hamlet then still known as "Coots's Town" in remote Maxatawny Twp., a full tow days' journey from Philadelphia, on 30 October 1794, he provided this less than flattering portrait of its inhabitants: "The German farmers . . . are thrifty to the point of avarice; to keep seems to be their great passion; they live on potatoes and buckwheat cakes instead of bread. They deny themselves everything costly; but when there is snow, they haunt the taverns. They are remarkably obstinate and ignorant."

As I have stated on many occasions, my curiosity about things is what leads to research, and my interest and subsequent research into life in mid-1700's Pennsylvania could probably be summed up in this single paragraph. Although the author, whom Stasser calls a "refined and critical Frenchman", had a negative view of the Germans of the day and their lifestyle, what he observed was the making of a life out of nothing, and the short quotation speaks volumes about the lifestyle of our ancestors.

As we have surmised, when Johann Petar Breyvogel left the Palatine area of Germany he more than likely left with few possessions and certainly not a lot of money, and based on our research, most of the immigrants like him had little more as they began life in rural Pennsylvania than the clothes on their back. Life most certainly was hard, and as we discussed when we looked at life during the 30 Years War in Germany, the people of the day were used to sacrifice.

But we could further conclude that although life was hard, food was plain and perhaps a bit scarce, the immigrants had one great advantage over life in Germany. As we discussed in the last issue, foreign powers invaded their lands and seized, burnt, and destroyed property and crops. This did not occur in Pennsylvania.

Strasser spends a considerable amount of space in his book trying to trace down the earliest settlers and details parcels of landed owned by these settlers. But not a single Breyfogle is mentioned in this research leading us to believe that Johann Petar may not have actually owned any land but perhaps his son George was the first to actually have property in his name.

The research by Strasser indicates that the "Great Road" was established along the Maxatawny Path that was "cut through scrub oak from the Forks of the Delaware (Easton) to Reading. Although westward migration into the East Penn and Susquehanna Valleys soon widened this trail enough for wagon passage, Conrad Weiser in 1753 gathered the signatures of 30 Berks and Northampton Co. residents to present to the Proprietary Council a petition to lay out a formal "Great Road" along the Maxatawny Path."

Again Johann Petar is not mentioned but certainly he was in this area as the "Great Road" was established. As important as establishing roads and the start of settlements that later turned into towns was, we are sure that the first thought by Johann Petar was shelter on whatever tract of land that he owned, rented, or worked upon.

In John T. Humphrey's work, Life in Mid Eighteenth Century Pennsylvania, shelter was described in two forms. The first was a temporary shelter without a chimney, doors, or windows. He continues by stating that "often a blanket over the entrance to try to keep the cold raw winter wind away from the residents." Humphrey quotes Pastor Muhlenberg's journal as "he preached in barns and transparent [meaning drafty] wooden churches. The poor assembled from miles around. They were cold and wet and wore poor think clothes."



This passage certainly echoes the earlier passage from the Kutztown book about the poor living conditions of the Germans. The second form of shelter (see picture on page 2) came after establishing temporary shelter. This second shelter, generally a log structure, came as part of clearing the land for farming.

The picture of the settlers cabin on page 2 came to us from the Somerset Historical Center (<http://www.somersethistoricalcenter.org/>) and is a reproduction of a 1773 settler's log cabin that was typical in southwestern Pennsylvania. We can only imagine that cabins in southeastern Pennsylvania were similar. This web site tells us that settlers used whatever material was at hand, usually logs notched on the ends with the cracks filled with pieces of wood and plastered with a mixture of clay and straw.

The roof structure is called a "weight pole" system that holds the split oaken clapboards in place. We are reminded that iron nails were scarce and expensive and were not used to construct this style of roof. Most cabins offered the residents "a sleeping loft, fireplace for heat and cooking, and earthen floor." This website article concludes by saying that cabins of this sort were considered temporary shelter, perhaps for as much as 5 to 10 years, or until the farmstead was successful enough to begin thinking about more elaborate dwellings.

This area of Pennsylvania is known for its hardwood forests and Humphrey quotes another journal as the author describes the travel through the heavily wooded area. "Reaching a settlement is like a feast for an inexperienced traveler – to see sun shine on some open grounds, to view clear fields. You seem to be relieved from that secret uneasiness and involuntary apprehension which is always in the woods."

It is interesting to note that the Germans used a drastically different method of clearing the land than did the British and Irish settlers. Instead of girdling or stripping the bark on the trees and leaving them to die as the British and Irish were known to do, the Germans cut the trees down and burned what they did not use to construct their buildings and fences. They would then dig the roots and stumps out to make the field ready for cultivation.

Humphrey notes, "The farmer could plow and harrow the field; he did not have to spend years working around dead trees and stumps; he did not take the risk of dead branches falling from trees and destroying valuable crops. He avoided the risk of breaking or damaging his plow with roots still embedded in the soil"

Humphrey also points out that the tax assessments of the day indicated the number of acres of land that

was tillable and the number of acres in woodland. One earlier settler's tax assessment showed that he cleared about 4 acres a year without the aid of mechanical equipment.

Clearing land, it was noted by Humphrey, began near a stream or river since the cabin was located near a water source and clearing land around the cabin also produced the cabin itself. He further noted that land was cleared starting at the bottom of a hill rather than the top because the land was more fertile near the bottom and was easy to irrigate for the hay crop.

At about the time Johann Petar settled in this area Gottlieb Mittelberger's journal records interviews of Germans who immigrated to Pennsylvania during and before 1752 and 1753. They reported, "Life was very hard; they lived in constant fear of the Indians and lacked tools, equipment, horses, and cattle. Meat was available, but salt and gunpowder were in short supply. Reports noted large fires, a by-product of deforestation, continually burned around their cabins."

(To be continued)

Early Farmstead Revisited

We recently heard from Annie May and Lowell Pierce concerning the Breyfogel farmstead in Maxatany Township. We will cover more of the historical data in a future newsletter, but thought that this article, written in 1990, fits nicely with our current series about life in the mid 18th century and a 2005 visit to this same farmstead by Steve Breyfogle. So first we present Annie's work on this subject.

1990 VISIT TO OLD BREYFOGEL FARM NEAR KUTZTOWN, PA

by Annie May and Lowell Pierce

The farm is located as follows: from Kutztown take Hiway 222 (which is Main Street in Kutztown) N.E. toward Allentown. At about 0.6 miles from Kutztown (measure from the bottom of the ramp leading to 222) there is an inconspicuous gravel drive to the top of the hill and you will see the farm ahead of you in a hollow. There is a large red brick house and a big white barn with a stonewall on the east side. A silo is built into the northeast corner of the barn, as is a cement block milking shed.

We talked to Wayne Hoover, a young, newly married boy of 18. He was taking care of the farm for the summer, after which the new owner, Aman Zimmerman, planned to take over. Aman had just bought the farm from his brother, Edwin Zimmerman, Jr. The Zimmerman's and also Wayne Hoover are Mennonites. The barn had been almost completely destroyed by a tornado in 1963 - - only a portion of the east wall remained standing. However, Edwin Zimmerman writes that a barn-raising was held and a

new barn "was assembled in one day by 275 men, mostly church people". The only part of the original barn left, the portion of the east wall that was still standing, is now not visible from the outside as the milking shed was built onto it.

2005 Visit by Steve Breyfogle

Steve and I have been corresponding via e-mail about family history and since he lives on the east coast he decided to take a day trip to Kutztown to visit the old Breyfogle farmstead, now owned by the Zimmerman's. Steve used Annie's writing as a guide to find his way to the farm and he filed the following report.



Kutztown Visit 2005 by Steve Breyfogle

Our visit to Kutztown and to the old Breyfogle farmstead was pretty much unplanned and for that reason our visit with the Zimmerman's was a bit awkward at first. We would suggest that anyone planning to make this trip should do a bit of planning and perhaps contact them prior to arriving unannounced. Mr. Elmer H. Zimmerman and one of his sons were in the fields working when we arrived. Mrs. Arlene Zimmerman took me on a tour of the area around the house. She showed me the small white house behind the main house and thought it was the original building. If so, it could have well been the home lived in by George, Sr. and his descendants? She said there was nothing with a date on it for that building but they had been told it was built prior to the current house, which was built in 1857.



When Mr. Zimmerman arrived from his fieldwork he showed us around the property. He took me to the attic where he showed me the "1857" carved into the cement when the red brick house was constructed by the Schaeffer family. There were some other names on another wall, but they weren't legible. He then took me to the old barn. He was unaware of any dates other than a couple he showed me, which were more recent (1957, etc.). Unfortunately I didn't get to see the original remaining barn wall and I am not sure Mr. Zimmerman was aware of it or I am sure he would have pointed it out.



As we entered the barn from the farmyard, the ceiling appears to be original, which he indicated it was. The support beams were all hand-hewn timbers, perhaps cut by George Breyfogle, Sr. when the barn was constructed (1831).

As it turns out, Mr. Elmer Zimmerman (age 32), father of 5 children, ages 9 and below, is the son of Ammon and Erma Zimmerman. Ammon is the son of Edwin, the owner noted in the L.W. Breyfogle genealogy. He told me they've lived in the house for 10 years and that the land had been split in half between he and his brother, leaving his portion about 86 acres if I remember correctly. He said his brother lived nearby, so my next trip, I hope to meet him.

Mrs. Zimmerman gave me the name and number for a Dorothea Schaeffer whose husband is descended from the Schaeffer's who farmed the land after George Breyfogle, Jr., sold it. I spoke to her on the phone and she indicated a great interest in genealogy also. She's been extremely helpful to me in learning about the Kutztown area. She is a retired realtor from Kutztown and said she has some pictures of the farm she will share with me. I'm anxiously awaiting them. She asked if we had any pictures of our descendants that had lived on the farm. The only one I knew of was the one of Charles, grandson of George, Sr., which I sent her.

This a small farm with some dairy cattle and a corn crop. I did not ask what other crops they might be raising, but the Zimmerman's are able to support themselves with proceeds from the farm. And as far

as the directions from Annie and Lowel, I will say that they got me there pretty easily. I drove past the entrance off of US 222 the first time. When you're going north out of Kutztown, it's exactly .6 miles just as they said, but I will add that the entrance is on the right side and the road entrance is very inconspicuous. Once you go down the road, you see a farm on the right fork (Ammon's house), but you take the left fork and go on down the hill to the old Breyfogel property.

We will continue our research at this end but want to mention again to all that read this that preparation is key to this sort of trip and as a courtesy to the property owners please make arrangements for your visit in advance. Although the Zimmerman's were cordial to us, we can't forget that we might be intruding on their day and the work they need to accomplish. I am sure they, as would we if we were in their position, be concerned if the extended Breyfogle family started planning summer vacations around a visit to their farm and home. So please call or write before you plan a trip. I have provided Dan Breyfogle, the publisher of www.breyfogle.com with the contact information and he will provide it upon request.

Who is this?

How many times have you pulled out a box of old photographs and asked the question, "Who is this?" Well we had one of those moments a few months back when we ran across a website that published this picture.



This photograph came from the 1906 Haverford College Senior Yearbook (note, NOT Harvard) and the person was identified as Frank Seneca Breyfogel and listed as having a home residence of Reading, PA. It also indicated that he entered class as a freshman year from Reading High School, was in the Glee Club as a

sophomore through senior years and was Class Vice-president during his junior year.

With all this information I am sure you are wondering why we'd ask, "Who is this?" The reason we ask is that we think this is the son of Kate E. (Boas) and Sylvanus Charles Breyfogel as our records indicate their lifelong residence was in Reading, PA and Flora Grumman's work records a son Frank. But the question arises when we note that Flora identifies him as Frank Ely Breyfogel with no reference to the middle name of Seneca.

The plot thickens when we look back a generation and see that the parents of Sylvanus C. Breyfogel were Sarah (Ely) and Seneca Breyfogel. We can

understand how Ely would have been an obvious middle name for a grandchild as well as Seneca. So who among our readers has an answer to this riddle?

We do find two references to this name (spelled as Breyfogel) on www.ancestry.com. The first is from the [Berks County Pennsylvania Register of Wills – City of Reading PA Birth Records 1876 – 1905](#). This document records that Frank E. Breyfogel was born October 2, 1885, which agrees with the date that Flora Grumman provided. The other reference is the 1900 Federal Census for Reading, PA in which Frank is listed as the son of Sylvanus and an approximate birth year of 1886 (census birth years are based on age at last birthday before census was taken).

When we search using the current spelling of Breyfogle, we find several references, the first being a WW I draft card. This is obviously the Frank we are discussing because although he has assumed the current spelling he also lists his nearest living relative as S. C. Breyfogle. It is interesting to note that he spells his fathers surname the same as his even though Sylvanus maintained the earlier spelling on everything we can find about him.

His occupation is listed as an Industrial Manager for the Chamber of Commerce in New York. His residence is listed as Queens, NY and the card is dated September 12, 1918.

Now if this all isn't confusing enough we find Frank H. Breyfogle, a traveling salesman from New York speaking to a Trenton New Jersey group at Association Hall encouraging the salesman to "frequent places of worship rather than places of amusement." He continued by indicating that a recently formed Gideon Camp was a perfect example of a place of worship.

This information was published in the May 15, 1906 Trenton, NJ newspaper, The Trenton Times. We are assuming that even though the middle initial has changed that this is the son of Sylvanus since the religious background of his father and grandfather would more than likely have been passed down to him and we can't find another Frank that fits this time period.

A search of the Federal Census files does find a Frank Breyfogle in New York in 1920 and 1930. Neither references a middle initial, and the 1930 entry shows parents born in Virginia and we assume this is not this Frank Breyfogle. But the 1920 Federal Census for New York City shows Frank Breyfogle (born in Pennsylvania) living in the Hotel Wellington. His occupation matches the WW I draft card, Manager – Chamber of Commerce.

As you can see, this is like a giant jigsaw puzzle and I may have a piece or two out of place. So if you have

further information on Frank we'd love to publish it. We don't find any further reference to him on any on-line research tool and Lewis W. Breyfogle notes that he did not have any children but does not indicate if he had a wife.

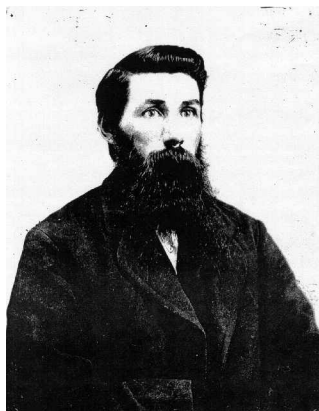
Israel Breyfogle, Jr. of Sr.?

In our first newsletter we published a picture of Israel Breyfogle and asked the question, "Is this Israel senior or junior?"



We have received a letter and picture from Annie May Pierce that she indicates the picture is marked on the back as Israel Breyfogle, Jr., her great-grandfather. In her letter she comments, "I've compared them with the picture you have in your first newsletter, which you thought might be Israel Breyfogle, Sr., and I see a great resemblance. It's hard to tell because of the beard,

but I think they may be one and the same man. What do you think?" We present her picture here and ask all those reading this to let us know, are they one in the same or two different people? In our opinion it is two different people as the eyes seem more deeply set for the picture below, perhaps this is just the shading on the photograph.



Israel Breyfogle, Jr.

Convergence Report

The 2006 Breyfogle Convergence announcement was mailed around the first of August to a total of 118 addresses. At the time of this writing we have the following results from the reply cards:

Responses	53
Attend YES	15
Attend NO	29
Attend Maybe	9
No Response	65

We have a total of 30 people that will attend and 19 that are still considering attending. This is far from the number we need to proceed with plans as outlined in the invitation. We really need to hear from the 65 addresses that did not respond so we can make a commitment to the hotel. If we are unable to increase the attendance to 113 to meet the financial commitment to the hotel we will start the planning over again to find a way to accommodate the number that will commit to attending.

We realize that July of 2006 is a ways off, but we must know the number of those planning to attend in order to make sure we have plenty of room for a comfortable meeting. Please help us by returning your cards by the end of September.

If you have any family members that did not receive the announcement please let us know so we can get mail out to them right away. Our mailing list is far from complete so we continue to ask for your help in finding missing names.

A Most Agreeable Town

Over the next several newsletters we will be featuring excerpts from the book I recently purchased. This hardcover book, written by Brendan D. Strasser, Ph.D. is titled A Most Agreeable Town, with a subtitle of A Photographic History of the Borough of Kutztown, Volume 1. This 200-page book is wonderfully bound with very clear pictures on glossy paper. I'd call it a limited edition as it is noted that there are only 1,500 copies in print.

As we all know, the Breyfogle's departed the Kutztown area somewhere around 1850, 35 years after the town was officially established, but this book provides a glimpse at the area where the Breyfogle's got started in this country and would make a great addition to anyone's library. You may purchase a copy by contacting the historical society at this address (The cost is \$45.00 plus shipping):

Photo Book
Kutztown Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 307
Kutztown, PA 19530

We would like to clarify that we do not receive any funds from the sale of this book but offer this address and information for those that are interested in a book of this type.

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