

Breyfogle Sentinel Dispatch

April 2006

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Volume 2 – Number 2

From the Editor

Spring is nearly here, at least here in Iowa. We have had rain, hail, sleet, and snow all within the last two weeks as March went out like a lion. By the way, it came in like a lion as well. And like the fresh new look that spring brings we have made a few changes in this edition of the Dispatch.

After a great deal of research and thought we have decided to make a change to the format to the Breyfogle Sentinel Dispatch. Instead of folding it and mailing it out in an envelope we have decided to send this out as a folded mail piece, thus saving the cost and work of envelopes.

Since we eliminated the envelope for this newsletter we can now move to as many as 12 pages without increasing the postage, which gives us more room for information and pictures. We look forward to your comments on these changes and encourage all readers to dig out those old photographs to contribute to our effort. We also continue to ask for your ideas on article subjects.

Convergence 2006 Update

With this newsletter comes a registration letter for the July 2006 Convergence. Instead of sending out a separate letter to just those who returned a card we decided to send out the letter to everyone on the mailing list. This gives everyone the option of considering the event again, but of course if you have all ready decided not to attend there is NO need to return anything to us.

As of today we have approximately 40 participants and would like the registration letter returned to us by June 1st so that we can continue planning with the Holiday Inn. As soon as we have a registration letter from those attending we will send out a packet with brochures about Mason City and the surrounding area. If you indicate your travel plans (drive, fly, etc) we will provide specific instructions on finding Mason City and the

Holiday Inn. We are a community of 30,000 so you do not need to be concerned with rush hour, traffic jams, or complicated interchanges to get here.

18th Century Pennsylvania

This is the third and final article on life in 18th century Pennsylvania. The goal of this three part series was to outline as closely as possible what our research on the common experience of the 18th century pioneer would have been like. Our first article described the ocean voyage and arrival to the new land.

The second article centered on establishing a home, clearing the land, and a description of the early settlement of Kutztown, PA. This final article will detail some of the daily life that pioneers of the time would have experienced and a few customs of the community of German emigrants.

As we think of emigrants coming to a new land we often think of the obstacles they faced and how they tried to fit in as quickly as possible in the new settlements. In John T. Humphrey's work, Life in Mid Eighteenth Century Pennsylvania, he discusses one of the hardships that would not have come to my mind until I read a bit of the historical references he refers to.

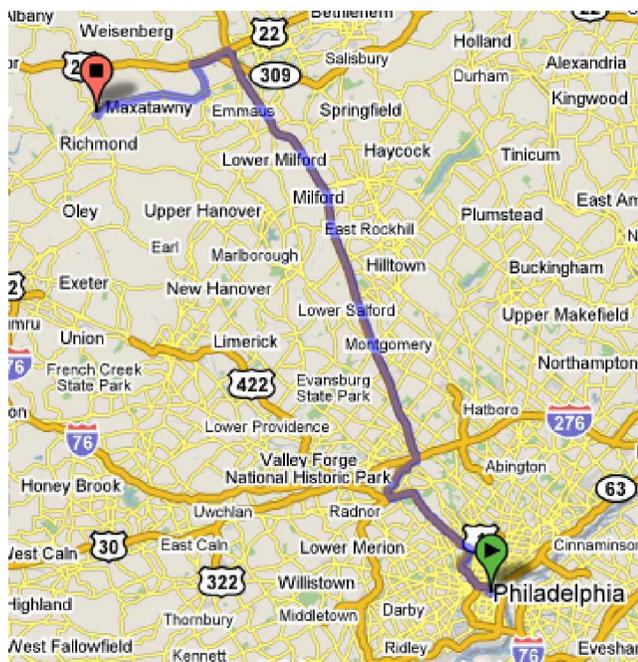
In his opinion he felt that the most difficult adjustment would have been the isolation the settlers felt as compared to small farming villages they would have come from in the Palatinate. In this area of Germany he notes that, "settlements were extremely close to one another, they were so close that one could normally stand on the periphery of one village and see the next village just down the road or across some open fields."

One other source pointed to the fact that in middle 1700 Germany most farmers lived within the village among their neighbors and traveled outside the village walls to work the fields during the day. This gave them constant contact with their local community of friends, neighbors, and

extended family. The work was no less toilsome so there was little time for leisure, but there was a strong feeling of community. The new settlers to southeast Pennsylvania, on the other hand, lived on their small parcel of land sometimes 2 to 3 miles from their nearest neighbors. Villages were very small, sometimes just a few cabins in a clearing many miles away.

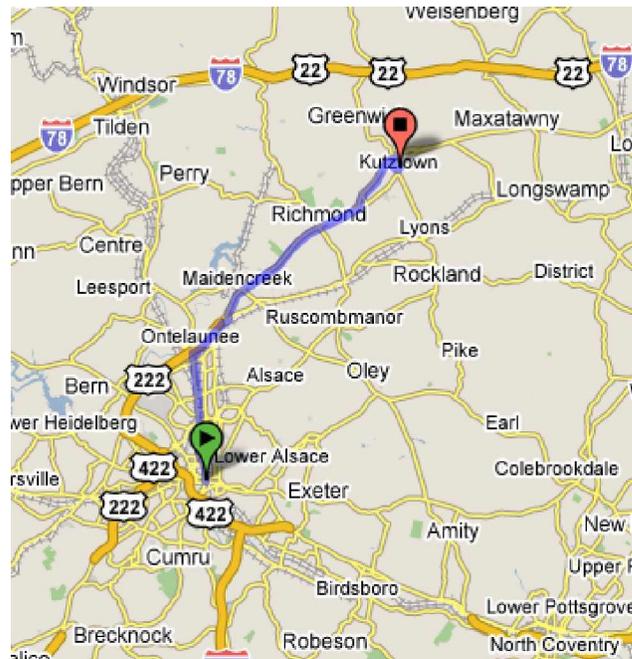
In his work Humphrey notes that if a settler lived in the center of a 500-acre tract, and his neighbor lived in the center of his 500-acre tract the distance between the two homes would be 3 miles. Of course larger tracts of land meant more distance between neighbors. Keeping in mind that travel was by foot or at best by horse and wagon, these distances did not lend to a feeling of the close-knit settings they were used to.

In our second article about life during this time in Pennsylvania we traced some of the origins of the counties and communities that made up the neighborhood where Johann Petar Breyvogel settled. If we refer back to this information we again find that the earliest community near where Johann settled was the city now called Reading, PA, the county seat of Berks County. The first attempt to form Berks County came in 1739 when 170 men presented a petition to the Assembly but no action was taken. This petition was presented again in 1750 and 1751 with the same result, no action. The reason was again given that without a town for the county seat a new county would not be formed.



This leads us to believe Humphrey's contention about the isolation of the early settlers. By today's standards, Kutztown is a little over an hours travel from Philadelphia, or about 72 miles. But in the middle 1700's travel over dirt roads would have made this a very long trip, perhaps as much as a week by horse and wagon, longer by foot.

It is noted by historians that Thomas Penn is perhaps most responsible for the idea of forming Berks County and for the establishment of Reading, PA. He was the son of William Penn who established the area now known as Pennsylvania, and visited the area in 1739 noting that the area now known as Reading would be an excellent location for a county seat, although there was nothing established in this location such as a mill or settlement.



But over the next 14 years numerous petitions and efforts were made to establish the county and the county seat of Reading, PA. The Berks County Historical society published an article titled, The Birth of a County – 1752 by Kathy M. Scogna, in which it is noted that by 1752, “. . . Readingtown, upon the Schuylkill, had been settled by numerous business and residences.” The article goes on to note that the petition to the Assembly noted there were 130 dwellings in the area, although research also noted that it was a good thing that there was not an inspection to make an actual count as the number of buildings was not nearly that many.

Regardless of the number of dwellings and business, the settlement was the largest one near the Kutztown area and it was established as the county seat of the newly formed county. This meant that legal business of the day, such as land disputes and sales, wills, and etc. could now be conducted about 18 miles away, perhaps not more than a day away from where Johann called home.

Establishment of Berks county and Reading, although not clearly defined by an exact date, does indicate that for an 8 to 10 year period the Breyvogel farmstead was as isolated as any other. Life certainly was not easy with very little contact with neighbors or a community close at hand.

Early diaries and writings from this region of Pennsylvania revealed another obstacle was the extreme poverty experienced by the new settler. One Moravian missionary wrote about the poverty he saw while visiting the home of John Hillman in 1754, "We found their children very poorly clad, so poorly they would not let themselves be seen. Some of the older ones had taken the younger ones on their laps to hide their poverty in clothing."

If one considers that during this time all the clothing was made from homespun yarns and thread, it is easy to understand that clothing served only a utility function and not to make a fashion statement. Shoes seemed to be in short supply as well as another diary entry remarked about some family members not traveling to church services because they had no shoes at all.

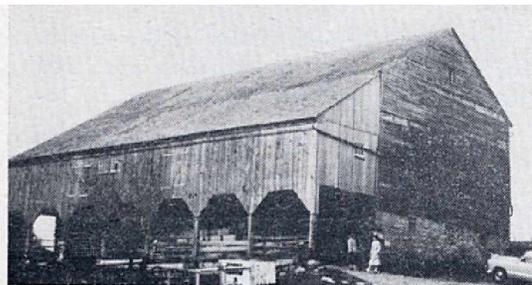
The farmstead itself suffered as great a poverty as the family members. Most historians' record that it was rare to see a stable or barn for several years after the family established their farm. With the priority on building a home and clearing the land there was little time or energy for building such structures. During these initial years of settlement Humphrey contends that, "These early German settlers had no time or energy left to construct a barn . . . the barn was probably considered a luxury."

Livestock such as the cows were either chained to a post or left to roam free, with a family member tracking them down in the evening for milking. Pigs were not penned; rather they were left to roam free in the forest where they could forage for themselves. Another historian noted

that the pig was a very important part of the family's production since they were not taxed and cattle were.

Early writings also indicated that most farmers did not pen their chickens but left them free to roost in the nearby trees. We do wonder how the eggs were gathered since Humphrey leaves this as a question for the reader. He also notes that the chickens were, for the most part, protected from predators by the family dog that roamed freely on the farm.

Since we do not have any diaries or letters that tie Johann Breyvogel to a particular piece of property it is difficult to know just what the farmstead looked like. Lewis Breyfogle, in his work, noted the very large barn that was probably built by Johann Petar Breyvogel's grandson Solomon. Solomon's father George bought the farm in about 1797; about 50 years after Johann Petar Breyvogel came to this area. We present this 1950's picture of the newer of the two barns found on the farmstead by Lewis Breyfogle in 1956.



BREYFOGEL BARN, built by the early Breyfogels, as it looked before being partially destroyed by Hurricane Hazel, 1962. Described on p. 25 of this history . . . "the immense old two-level stone barn (built in 1831) . . . has about as much floor space as a modern movie theater. It is 50' x 80' in outside dimensions, and is built of stone 28 inches in width." Wooden siding was added by later owners, over the stones.

Located 1/2 mile N.E. of Kutztown, Pa., on the original Breyfogel farm, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Zimmerman.

Image courtesy of Steve Breyfogle, Woodbridge, VA

Although we know this barn was certainly not an original from the first Breyfogle settlement, and may not even be near where Johann Petar settled, we present it here to represent how far the settlement advanced from those very humble days of chaining a cow to a stake, letting the hogs roam freely, and chickens roosting in the nearby trees. Certainly Johan Petar Breyvogel would have been amazed to see such a structure based on his start near this location.

Humphrey notes that the typical “eighteenth-century farm in southeastern Pennsylvania contained about one hundred twenty-five acres, twenty six acres typically devoted to raising grain – a crop used to feed livestock and for baking bread.” This grain, most often wheat, was the cash crop for most farmers of the day and the excess would be sold on the open market to raise cash for items that could not be fabricated by the family.

He continues, “Eight or nine acres on the farm were given over to the cultivation of flax, vegetables, and fruits. The meadow, a source of hay for cattle, contained thirteen to fifteen acres.” He concludes from his research that the farmer of this period needed about 50 acres of cleared land to produce the crops needed to support his family and farm.

When one studies history about early settlements in a new land, regardless of the era, flour and gristmills are generally one of the first businesses to be established and flourish. In some historical reference we have found that often this mill also included or perhaps began as a sawmill to produce lumber for construction of buildings and bridges. The gristmill often came after the sawmill was in full production.

Humphrey also reports that petitions to the court for the construction of roads often stated the need for the road was access to the gristmill in their area.

And finally we will turn our attention for a moment to the home itself. Humphrey indicated that a study of estate inventories as part of the owners will often provided the clearest picture of the home itself. In one document he notes that the kitchen equipment consisted of two iron pots, two iron kettles, a teakettle, coffee pot, and a frying pan. This modest inventory did not list any eating utensils, perhaps an oversight by the appraiser.

This inventory listed the family with 3 chests, 6 chairs, and one table. The furniture list concluded with three beds and bedsteads. There were no lamps or lanterns listed so it was obvious the only light in the home was from candles. This meager list of possessions leads one to wonder how the Breyvogel family compared in those early days. Certainly Johann Petar Breyvogel did not come to this land with a large sum of money and the fact that he did not leave a large estate tells us that his possessions

were probably far less than those noted in Humphrey’s work.

This concludes our first series of articles on the early life of the Breyfogle family in America. We have painted this picture with pretty broad strokes, as we do not have any real clear reference to our common ancestor outside of the shared common experience of the settlers of the day. Lewis Breyfogle did an outstanding job of detailing the next generation of Breyfogle’s in America and we plan to reprint excerpts of his work with additional research on life during the early 1800’s, a period which saw the Breyfogle family begin a westward movement to Ohio.

Fields E. Breyfogle

Fields E. Breyfogle, 81, of Sioux City died Saturday, March 11, 2006, in Sioux City.

Services will be 11 a.m. Wednesday at First United Methodist Church, with the Rev. Don Wood officiating. Burial will be in Memorial Park Cemetery, with military rites. Visitation will be 3 to 8 p.m. and a prayer service at 7 p.m. at Meyer Brothers Colonial Chapel.

Fields was born Jan. 18, 1925, to Earl E. and Ethel E. (Grimm) Breyfogle, in Sioux City. He grew up and attended Central High School in Sioux City. He entered the U.S. Army in March 1943. He was stationed with the Ninth Army Air Corps working with signal air warning. He landed at Utah Beach one day after D-Day. He also fought in the Battle of the Bulge and participated in the liberation of Germany. He was honorably discharged on Dec. 8, 1945.

He married Shirley Steck in 1947. He later married Dorothy Hinde in 1956 in Sioux City. He worked for many years at Dependable Music as a repairman until he retired in the early 1990s.

He was active in the Nordic Male Chorus in the 1950s and 1960s. He also was an avid bowler with a high average in the Classic League at Harmony Lanes.

He is survived by a son and his wife, Steve and Barbara Breyfogle of Woodbridge, VA; three daughters, Judy McConnehey of Sioux City, Debra Kolln of Lacey, Wash., and Lisa and her husband, Charles Hanner of Lincoln, Neb.; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and three brothers and their wives. Richard and Colleen Breyfogle of Sioux City, Roger and Cora

Breyfogle of Mesa, Ariz., and Gerry and Geri Breyfogle of Tucson, Ariz.

He is preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Dorothy on May 18, 2004; and a sister Lois Reiser.

The Big Picture

Many years ago I started this research project as part of a college history assignment. Like so many others who begin the study of their family history, I fell into the trap of looking at only those names that were the same as mine. So I used the work of others to trace my lineage back to Johann Petar Breyfogle, wrote a short essay on the subject, and then felt my work was complete.

Of course, like so many other hobbies, I felt a need to go further with my work and expanded my search to include all the surnames within my immediate family including, Bevins and Lock (my mothers family) Sins (my fathers maternal grandmother), and my wife Sandy's family names (Keeler, Pride, Paris, and Martz). As I added these names it became evident to me that trying to restrict the search to just those names was a little short sighted. Yet how far can one take the research, since after all if you believe in the story of creation we are all the product of a single couple, Adam and Eve.

I was again reminded of how little I knew of those families who were not included in the research when we completed work on the January issue of the Breyfogle Sentinel Dispatch that focused entirely on a surname that was related to the Breyfogle family by marriage. Like our Breyfogle families, the marriage of Grace Breyfogle to Dr. Charles W. Jones produced children that were connected to the Breyfogle surname even though their names did not match their mother's maiden name. This led Mary Jane Foster, the contributor of much of the January issue, and I to a discussion of the research of those descendents of Johann Petar Breyvogel who did not carry the Breyfogle surname, yet were forever tied to the main line of Breyfogles.

How many Breyfogle daughters did Flora Grumman and Lewis W. Breyfogle drop from the initial research because their names changed with marriage? And was I doing the same even though I had expanded my research to include my extended family?

Admittedly researching lines of the daughters of Breyfogles becomes more difficult since they often married Millers, Smiths, Jones, and other names that were not as unique as ours. But their connection and their children's connection to the main line of Breyfogles are as strong as those of us who carry our ancestor's names.

This of course expands the breadth and depth of the database, which at this moment contains 1314 unique surnames, of which the direct Breyfogle surname is a total of 3 surnames (Breyfogle, Breyfogel, Breyvogel).

This brings me to the title of this article, "The Big Picture." If we look at just those family connections that lead back to our common ancestor the list is pretty short, about 10 or 11 generations for most of us living today, and three spellings of the Breyfogle surname. Then add the surname of the spouse of those Breyfogles and we would have a list of about 20 to 25 surnames total.

So how many surnames did the early researchers include in their study? It is hard to separate the Flora Grumman work from that of Lewis since, like my research, he began by using Flora's Genealogy as a basis for his work. So with the "Big Picture" in mind I counted all the surnames in publication, What I Know About the Breyfogle Family, by Lewis W. Breyfogle, and found a total of 41 surnames, a very short list indeed, even though his work spanned nearly 200 years of Breyfogle history and 50 pages of text.

The current database I use to document my research, if printed in report form, would span 262 years and be 310 pages long. And the research continues on a weekly (sometimes daily) basis as I fill in the blanks of all those connections.

As we conclude this newsletter we will again ask for the assistance of our readers in researching the Breyfogle family. At this point the low hanging fruit on this tree has been nearly picked clean, if our research is to continue we need to reach higher and fill in the family members whose name changed with marriage but are still part of our collective family.

You may contact us by mail or e-mail with comments, articles, or questions:

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To:

In Memory of Fields E. Breyfogle

We were deeply saddened to learn of the recent death of Fields E. Breyfogle. His son, Steve Breyfogle, of Woodbridge, VA, is a contributing writer to the Sentinel Dispatch. We offer this dedication to the memory of Fields Breyfogle and his entire family in the hope that knowing that you are in our thoughts and prayers will bring you strength.



Fields E Breyfogle, 1943

www.breyfogle.com A Family History Website