

Breyfogle Sentinel Dispatch

September 2006

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From the Editor

This edition was planned for late July following the Breyfogle Convergence. As you all know by now, we cancelled the Convergence because we failed to meet the numbers needed to make commitments to the hotel and other vendors. So we postponed this edition until we returned from vacation that took us to the east coast for a family wedding.

As part of that trip we spent a day in Kutztown, PA and will use space in the newsletter to cap off our series on life in the mid-eighteenth century Pennsylvania with a report on life in Kutztown today.

Convergence 2006 & Beyond

As you know the Convergence for 2006 was planned for the last weekend in July and we cancelled it because the numbers were too low to support the venue. Nick and Pam Casida, the organizers for the 2008 event came to Mason City on that weekend as they had made airline reservations far in advance and could not cancel them.

During their visit we had time to discuss the Convergence and tried to decide why the registration process did not produce the number of attendees to make the Convergence a reality. But as you probably realize, a couple people sitting around a table trying to analyze the problem did not bring any hard and fast conclusions. So we decided to survey the group to find out your thoughts on this event.

For those that have not attended a Convergence in the past, or are new to this event I thought we should dedicate a few paragraphs to discussing the gathering. In the past this event has run on a 3-year cycle, and began with the first event on July 4, 1984 in Decatur, IL. The convergence has been held in Kent, WA; Overland Park, KA; Gundersheim, Germany; Denver, CO; Hot Springs, SD; Berea, KY.

Attendance at these events has slowly declined in number and this year we had a total of 11 people registered before the deadline for making a decision on contracting the venue.

In our experience having attended two of these events, we note that this is not strictly a family history related gathering, but also includes meeting others who share the Breyfogle name (or perhaps a Breyfogle ancestor). There is good food, conversation, and a sense of an extended family as we meet families from all over the US, Canada, and even Germany.

As the survey enclosed states, the future of this event is under your control. We realize that travel may be difficult for many based on age, work and family commitments, and the distance you need to travel from home. So instead of automatically scheduling the next event we thought we'd survey the group to gather input. We have heard from some of you in the past that travel is simply not in your future and we respect that fact.

We also realize that some names on our mailing list are individuals and organizations with a general interest in our research and are not related to the Breyfogle family. With this in mind, we have not included a survey in the interests of reducing the cost of printing and mailing.

Future of this newsletter!

In previous newsletters I have tried to clarify that this publication is NOT tied specifically to the Convergence. Although we have dedicated space to discussing the event, the primary goal of this newsletter is to broaden the knowledge of our shared history to any person or organization with an interest.

We will continue publishing this letter as long as there are those interested in receiving it. So your response to the Convergence Survey will not affect the future of the *Breyfogle Sentinel Dispatch*. We appreciate the kind comments we receive about this effort and look forward to bringing you more information in the future.

Kutztown, Berks County, PA

As we all know, Johann Petar Breyvogel, settled in Berks County, PA in 1744 very near what is known today as Kutztown. At the time he settled here the town was merely a gathering of small cabins, hardly what would pass for a town even in this early time. It is located about half way between Reading and Allentown, PA in what is known as the East Penn Valley.

The town today has a population of about 5,000 people and our view of the community was that it is full of historic homes, businesses, and of course the Kutztown University site. Our goal with this trip was to get a feel for the region and to visit the burial

ground where some of the earliest Breyfogle family members are buried.

We are members of the Kutztown Historical Society and have read some of their publications so knowing some of the street names and some of the early history of the town enhanced visiting the community.

We began our visit with a stop at the St. John's United Church of Christ on the corner of West Walnut Street and North Whiteoak Street. When Lewis Breyfogle visited this church and cemetery in the late 1950's this was known as the St. John's Reformed Church, but based on the corner stone that tells us the church structure was built in 1876 and other than the steeple design we are sure this is pretty much the same structure Lewis noted.



The cemetery is located on the north side of the church and extends up a gently sloping hill. Brendan D. Strasser, author of [A Most Agreeable Town](#) and Jay Druckenmiller provided us with the grave locations prior to leaving on our trip so our search for the headstones took but a few minutes. In Jay's e-mail he said, "With your back to the church, go to the second row. There are two Bieber stones and then the three Breyfogle stones."

We found George and Catherine's headstones but could not find Solomon's. As mentioned by Lewis Breyfogle in his work, the stones are inscribed in German so other than recognizing the names we were unable to determine what was written on them.

We considered doing a rubbing but the stone is so covered in lichens that the result would not have provided a legible copy of the stone.



The other problem with recording the information on the stone was the deep shadow from the church and a tree. We did return later in the morning and were able to get a picture with some clarity.



George's headstone was the more legible of the two and we also noticed the Revolutionary War Service plaque set beside his stone.

For those with an interest in this sort of research the cemetery also has the gravesites for several Hinterleiter's (George and Catherine's daughter Ester married Johann Jacob Hinterleiter) and Mary and Issac Zimmerman, the parents of Sarah who married Solomon D. Breyfogle's son George Peter Breyfogle.

The cemetery is very well kept and we noticed many names we have become familiar with from reading history about Kutztown. In fact the reference to the Bieber headstones reminds us that as we were in the cemetery we saw a tour bus owned by the Bieber family drive by, obviously some distant relative to those buried here in the early 1800's.

Our time in Kutztown was very limited so we felt it necessary to move on so we drove back down to Main Street and "up the hill" to Kutztown University. This steep incline seems to mark the division between the town and the college campus. We knew in advance of our trip that the university was here, but did not know just how extensive the facility was. Main Street passes through the campus and is marked with large pillars that mark the entrance to the campus.



This university, founded in 1866, was first established as a teacher's college. It is a public university and is one of 14 schools that make up the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

Instead of driving through the campus we parked and walked most of the area, which gave us a very nice feel for this school. The college was on summer break during our visit so there weren't a lot of people in the area. One of the most impressive buildings on the campus was "Old Main," the original building on the campus. A passerby told us that this very large structure once housed the entire operation of the college, including student housing.

From our sidewalk perspective we felt that the building was very well maintained and added a sense of history to the college as well as Kutztown itself.



The campus is a mix of the very old and new buildings. It was more like walking through a park than a campus with all the flowers and the lawns kept so well. The university includes a wide variety of majors, including 21 courses leading to a Masters Degree.



As we left the university and going downhill into Kutztown we were impressed with the feeling of

history in this small community. We saw homes and businesses stair stepping down the hill to the business section. One shop owner told us that there has been a strong effort by the community to encourage restoration of the buildings many of which, have stood on this street for well over 100 years.



While visiting an antique shop we learned that Kutztown University had recently purchased a working farm and converted it into the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center. We visited the site and found several restored buildings including a stone farmhouse, two log cabins, a one-room school, and a large barn. The center was not open during our visit but we did look around and made us wonder if this would be a good location for the Breyfogle Convergence.

The center director has an office on the site and we spoke to her about our thoughts and were told this is one of the intended purposes of the site. As part of this service they are able to cater the event to suit the group, which could include demonstrations of farm life, blacksmithing, and other work typical of the mid 18th century through the 20th century.



Among the buildings on the property was this limestone farmhouse that dates to the early 1800's.

We wrapped up our visit to Kutztown by driving out by the location of the homestead of George and Catherine Breyfogle. We did not visit the farm or its family but did take the cover picture, which depicts the view that the Breyfogle family must have seen as they decided to settle on this spot. We noticed that the soil conditions were rather rocky and wondered what it would have been like trying to eke out a living on this ground

Letter to the Editor

Dear Dan,

I really enjoyed the most recent newsletter edition, and I wanted to reiterate your suggestion about researching the women who have married into (and out of) the Breyfogle family during several centuries in America. As you pointed out, my family's direct connection to the name ended in 1902, when my grandmother, Grace Breyfogle, married Charles W. Jones – but more than 100 years and four generations later, my little grandson will grow up knowing about his Breyfogle heritage, plus his other family lines. I truly believe you bloom best when you have roots!

Of course, women can be a bit harder to trace in adulthood, since most take a husband's family name when married, but some good sleuthing can uncover quite a bit. In most families, women were the ones who kept family ties close, writing Christmas notes, birthday cards, newsy letters and notes of condolence. If you were lucky, some were saved, and that's a start. Women also tended to tuck away things of importance in their lives: love letters, snapshots, babies' first shoes and the program from a high school graduation. In that way, they have left more clues to help us understand who they were as a person, which to me is as important as noting dates, places and names. In each generation, we see wives and daughters, who in turn became wives and mothers – and each is interesting in her own way.

When searching U.S. Census and other documents, some clues also help us. For example, in past generations many boys were given their mother's maiden name as a middle name, so that can help track and connect a mother's family. Most important is to talk with any friends or family members who might be able to add something to information we have. Sadly, much is locked away in memories but never written down, because someone always is going to do that "later." I sincerely recommend that readers not delay with what can be a very interesting way to personalize our own chapters of this extensive family history.

Mary Jane Foster

In the News

We offer this look back in time from the newspaper archives at www.newspaperarchives.com. This is a subscription site that contains hundreds of publications.

Frederick Sherman Breyfogle, son of Charles and Matilda Jane (Cloud) Breyfogle, is married in this month in 1892. His father Charles traveled to California during the 1849 gold rush.

The Ohio Democrat

New Phildelphia, OH September 22, 1892

Mr. Fred S. Breyfogle, of Louisville, Ky., and Miss Harriet B. Newburgh were married at St. Paul's Episcopal church yesterday. The bride is the daughter of Aaron O. Newburg, of 616 East Main street, Columbus, O., and a niece of the late Hon. J. W. Newburg, of Canal Dover.

We need our readers help in identifying this couple as Dr. Breyfogle is not identified further and we do not have a reference to a spouse with a given name of Ella. This is taken from the Oakland Tribune, Oakland, CA September 6, 1921.



EN ROUTE TO EUROPE.

Mrs. Ella Pierce Breyfogle and Mrs. Raymond Rusk, who have been guests at the Fairmont hotel for the past two months, are leaving the latter part of the week for the east and Europe, where they will remain indefinitely. En route they will visit Lake Luise and Banff, and Lake George, where the summer home of Dr. Breyfogle is one of the attractive places in that vicinity.



The following article pertains to Arthur Berton Breyfogle, son of William A. and Ida Mae (Conrad) Breyfogle of Alta, Iowa. Arthur retired after a long naval career.

The Iowa Recorder, Greene, IA

September 17, 1924

Alta.—Arthur Breyfogle has just enlisted in the United States navy for the fourth time. He has served for ten years and is entering on another service period at the end of which he will have a rating as a first class gunner. His work has taken him into all European ports, as well as to the Orient and South America. He served all during the world war.

Helen Cox Breyfogle is the daughter of Lawrence George and Wanda Elizabeth (Del Manzo) Breyfogle.

Winnipeg Free Press

Winnipeg, Ontario August 30, 1941

Mr. and Mrs. L. G. Breyfogle of Union Point, Man., announce the engagement of their eldest daughter, Helen, to Mr. Donald Smith, only son of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Smith, of Otterbourne, the wedding to take place September 20 at Union Point.

A Request for Assistance

We would like to ask all our readers to help us with the December issue of this newsletter. We all know that the Breyfogle family got its start from a solid German background, but as the years have passed we have become a blended group with an untold number of nationalities among us.

We'd like to produce a Christmas themed newsletter with your Christmas traditions. This could include the way you celebrate the holiday or simply your favorite holiday recipe. Our December 2005 issue was a collection of information we found on the Internet, this time we'd like to know how you celebrate.

You can send your thoughts by e-mail or send them by mail.

If you have a comment or suggestion you may contact us by mail or e-mail. We are happy to publish comments, articles, or questions submitted to:

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Breyfogle Sentinel Dispatch

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To:



A visit to Kutztown, PA near where Johann Petar Breyvogel settled in 1744

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