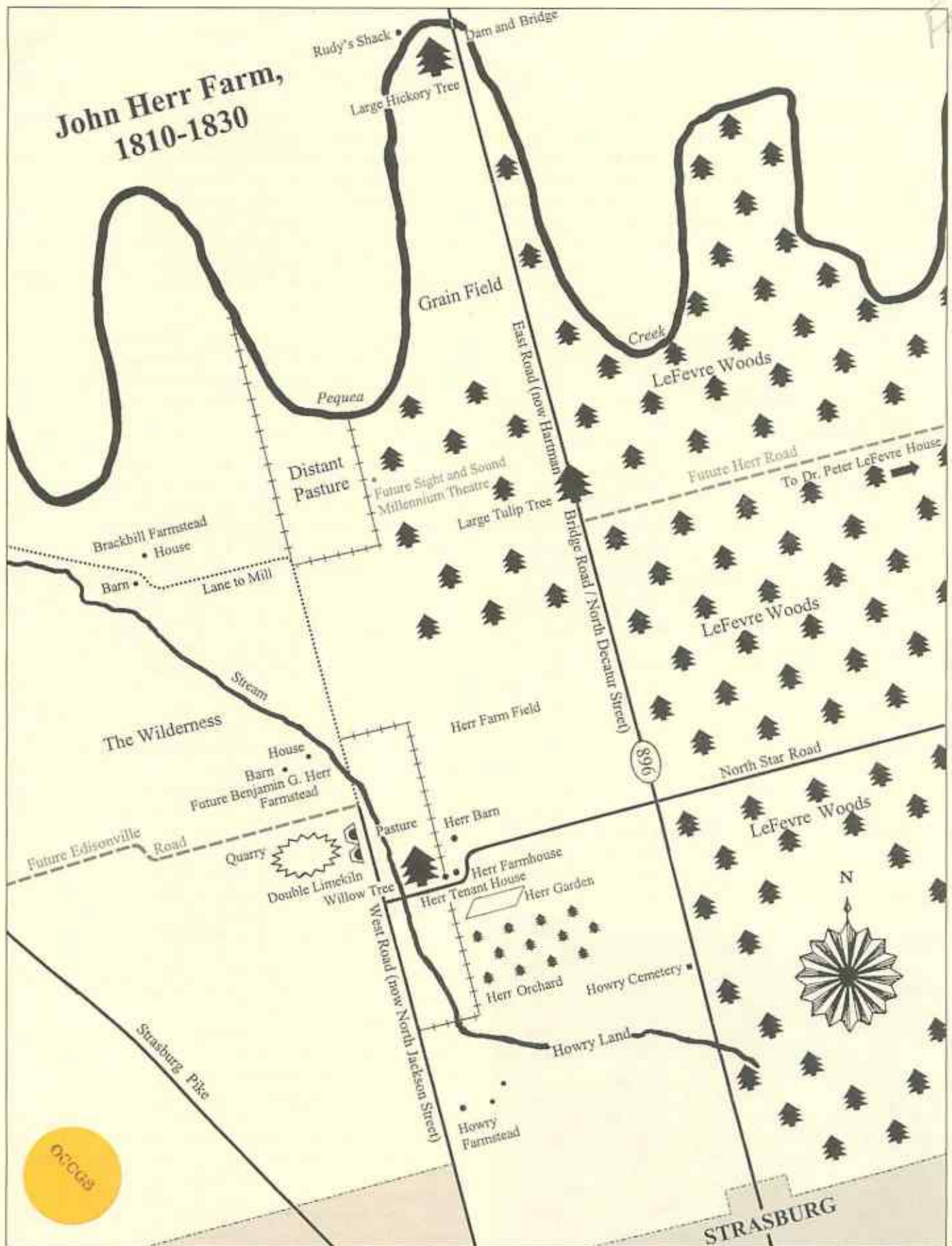


Herr Family



Map of the Bishop John Herr farm, about 1810 to 1830, as described in Benjamin Groff Herr's memoirs of his youth, plotted by Henry G. Benner, and confirmed by recollections of Mrs. J. Clarence (Edna V. née Groff) Groff (b. 1917) of life in later years on this farm. Mrs. Groff is a daughter of Enos H. and Martha (Brubaker) Groff. Later roads appear in grey.

the dog or the antipathy of the men. The marmots had their abodes in scores by the confines, like to the covert ways and mines in the approaches to a fortification. Snakes as long as rails were known to be its habitants; altho' I, myself, never saw one more than three or four feet in length in the neighbourhood and that was a viper, killed several hundred yards beyond, an old one no doubt, that had singly escaped the otherwise total destruction of a former time, since, I never had the fortune to behold thereabouts, another specimen of the same kind, and vipers and rattlesnakes had early been set upon, and sought to be exterminated with the most unremitting diligence. More than, once, at dusk in coming along on Fly[,] the lane that led by another neighbour's to the mill and past the enclosure, I found myself accompanied by one of these black[-]and[-]white[-]patched quadrupeds, with tail erect, marching in the most easy nonchalance at my pony's side. What to do at the bars which were, then, more abundant than gates, was a matter of concern. If I alighted, I was tolerably certain of trespassing upon the good nature of my unwelcome attendant, that would [45] not be likely to stand upon much ceremony with me; but Fly, aware of the presence of the important intruder, was docile, made up, sideways, to the obstruction, and I was enabled to open the panel with my feet. The creature waited patiently at a slight distance, till I had passed over, at three or four points of the sort, then, came up with the most earnest alacrity, till in the old position at the side. I was in hopes of losing the interesting pilgrim, at some intervening halting place or turn in the pathway, but he kept along with the most exemplary perseverance, till, passing beyond the wild, and emerging into a more civilized precinct, he allowed himself imperceptibly to linger in the imperceptible rear. It was to me not a slightly happy deliverance.

[Solitude]

The mind of a child, even at an early age, is sometimes more active than one would believe; but having exhausted the stores of narrative and facts of nature to be found in the books of the household and having few companions of my years, I spent many moments in solitude. I had little inclination for actual study, but was alive to

every sensible perception that could be grasped at once, and clothed in somewhat palpable images. The discussions held by the seniors were too abstract, and the feelings agitated too spiritual, to have any interest for me; but I was not unobservant of their manners and outward quality. Hours together I reclined in the orchard under some apple tree; or, in the decline of day lay on the mow, and watched the expanded sunshine on the opposite wall, where it had entered thro' the oriel-like opening, rising with mathematical exactness on it, as the orb of day descended; or roaming to the quarries and sandbanks, which had been excavated for building purposes, sat on the rocks, or explored the perforations, where the sand-swallows had made an hundred nests;—or went around

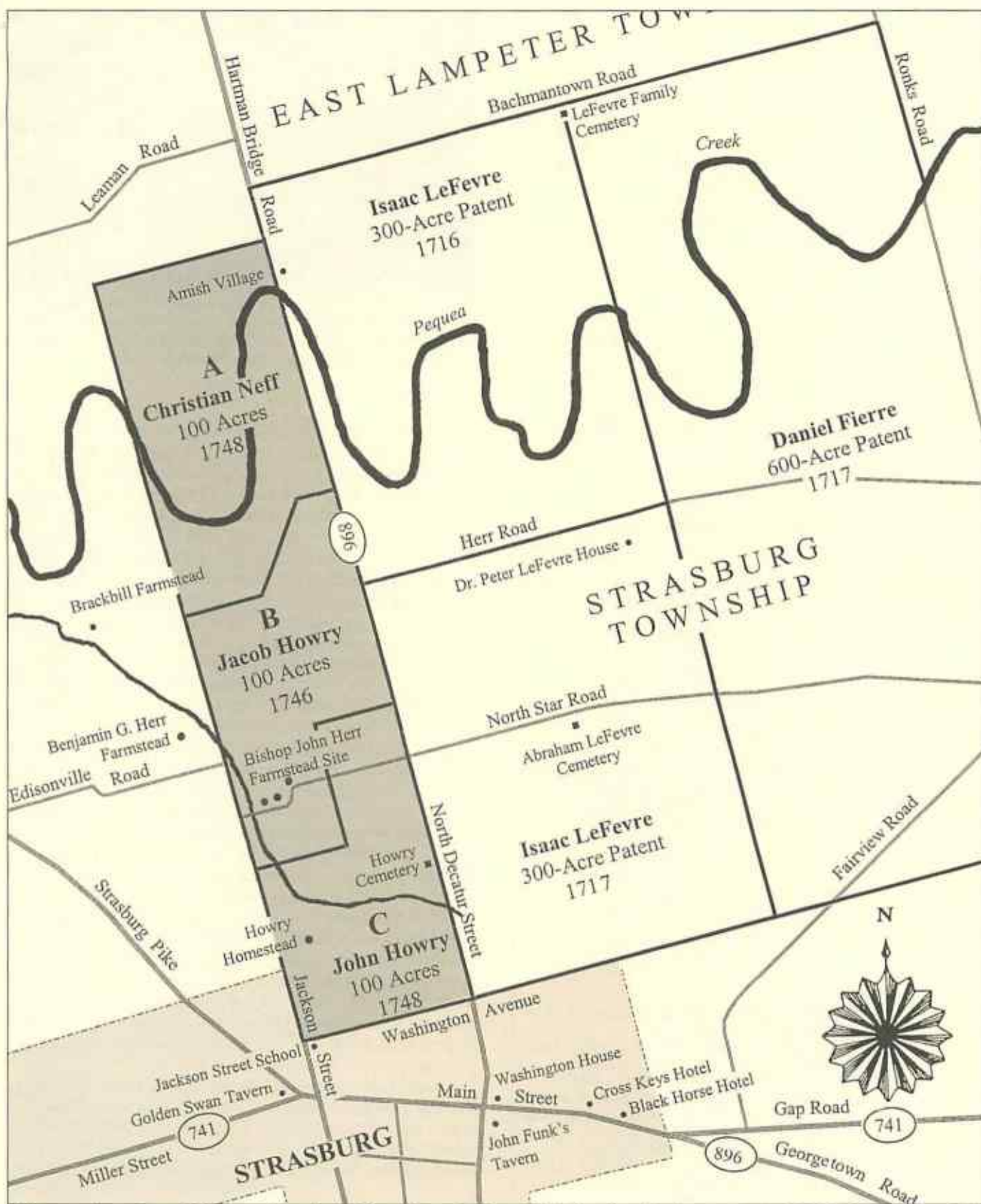
"Attimes, from some lonely window or corner at night-fall, I would gaze out beneath the stars into the gray and shadowy ether, and I seemed to feel infinitude."

the walls, where hosts of spiders looked out for prey in [/] from the crevices of the mortar, and drove them back with a pin into their inmost retreats. Thought I, how many of these animals must starve before a fly or other insects will come to the mouth of their den, and afford them a feast! But they spin nets, also, and weave snares. Attimes, from some lonely window or corner at night-fall, I would gaze out beneath the stars into the gray and shadowy ether, and I seemed to feel infinitude. Then, in the distance was heard the owl, while another, perhaps, responded in a right[-]jangled direction. [46] Ominous were the voices. I imagined them to be that of young colts where they could not remove under the lash or other modes of punishment[,] shouting with pain, or mysterious horses indulging their nightly mood in favourite neighings. Too much like Panemonium were the Sounds to indicate well-being. Oft, I peered into the burning West, when the clouds gathered in farther and farther fragments on the twilight; and it appeared as if the abstract notion of infinite distance were visible to me, and comprehensible in parcels like a surveyor's chain whose links you could inspect and count in every part, near and remote.

Dreams, too, and terrible phantoms would, now afflict me in my sleep. Fiery men that had their past in the hollows, before whom I was spell-bound, would observe me and follow me. With the utmost difficulty I escaped their horrid clutches by a mere hair's breath. Monsters of unexampled forms would pursue me from the outbuildings, where they had their haunts in vaults and covered chambers, from which I could only rid myself by the most elastic and unnatural speed, which happily I was on these occasions endowed with. Often, I was sinking at the side of some precipice, to which I clung with the tenacity of prospective despair—deeper, deeper, into the immeasurable abyss for hours without aid. When working in the midst of forlorn hope, how light beat my veins in the assurance of rescue; the reality of suffering could hardly have been more terrific. Sometimes, I was in the actual grasp of some indefinitu sp[h]ape, unable to move a muscle, pressed closer and closer, till choking and expecting death, by a tremendous wrench I tore myself from the dreadful incubus.



Polecat or skunk



This map shows the subdivision of immigrant Hans Howry's (d. ca. 1737) three-hundred-acre patent of 1717 (Tracts A, B, and C), originally surveyed for Joseph English. Tract A went to Christian Neff, married to Hans's daughter Frena Howry, and was sold in 1751 to David Longenecker. Tract B went to Hans's son Jacob Howry (d. ca. 1803) and in 1808 was sold to Francis Herr (d. 1810). It later became the Bishop John Herr farmstead where Benjamin G. Herr was reared. After the Herr family this farm was owned by several generations of Groffs. Tract C went to Hans's youngest son, John Howry (d. 1805). The original Howry homestead at 260 North Jackson Street was built before 1815 by either this John or his son, Minister John (d. 1829). It left the Howry family in 1835 upon sale to Adam Esbenshade. This map is based on research by Dr. Ivan B. Leaman, Strasburg, Pennsylvania, and Col. Robert Kean Weaver, Saint Augustine, Florida.

Herr Family

- H Hans Hauri/Howry, d. ca. 1737; immigrant; Feb. 18, 1717, patent, Strasburg Twp.
m. Anne, d. by 1746
- H1 Fronica/Frena/Veronica Howry, b. ca. 1718
m. ca. 1745 Christian Neff/Neave, b. ca. 1718; immigrant
- H2 Elizabeth Howry, b. ca. 1720
- H3 Jacob Howry, ca. 1721-ca. 1803; Strasburg Twp.; "oldest son"
m. Anna
- H31 John Howry ("John, the Younger"), d. 1791; "only son and child"; Strasburg Twp.
- H311 Elizabeth Howry
m. Jacob Fritz; Strasburg Twp.
- H312 Susanna Howry
m. Cheney Peiling; Lower Chanceford Twp., York Co., Pa.
- H313 Mary Howry
m. Joseph Withers; Lower Chanceford Twp.
- H4 Ann Howry, b. ca. 1723
- H5 John/Johannes Howry, ca. 1725-Jan. 22, 1805; Strasburg Twp.; youngest son
m. Sophia/Sophiana, 1736-Dec. 26, 1810
- H51 Ann Howry, b. ca. 1762
m. Abraham Downer
- H52 Elizabeth Howry, Sept. 12, 1764-Aug. 13, 1834
m.(1) 1789 John Lefevre, 1763-Oct. 20, 1795
m.(2) Peter Espenshied, Apr. 20, 1763-July 20, 1845
- H53 Mary Howry, b. ca. 1766
m. Nov. 18, 1792, John Hare/Herr
- H54 Susanna Howry, b. ca. 1767
m. Nov. 22, 1795, Henry Downer; Lampeter Twp.
- H55 Minister John Howry Jr. ("Hauri"), Mar. 24, 1769-Feb. 7, 1829 (59-10-14)
m. Mar. 25, 1792, Elizabeth Funck, May 25, 1773-June 16, 1846, dau. Martin Funck and Judith Wenger
- H551 John Howry, Feb. 27, 1793-Dec. 16, 1828; Martic Twp.; Mennonite; became "crazed of mind"; distant relative of Catherine Book; 4 ch.
- H5511 Mary Howry, minor in 1834
- H5512 David Howry, b. 1815; Cincinnati, Ohio
- H5513 Martha Howry, Oct. 30, 1819-Mar. 20, 1895
m. Abraham D. Lefever, Feb. 4, 1821-Feb. 24, 1879
- H5514 Ann/Anna Howry, Apr. 23, 1822-Jan. 2, 1903
m. Henry Weaver, Oct. 29, 1815-Sept. 29, 1898; Reformed Mennonite minister
- H552 Martin Howry, Nov. 25, 1794-July 17, 1806 (11-7-23)
- H553 Samuel Howry, Oct. 17, 1796-Sept. 4, 1875; "addicted to drink"; West Lampeter Twp.
m. ca. 1819 Catherine Keepports, June 17, 1797-Nov. 24, 1883; dau. Daniel Keepports and Veronica Miller
- H554 Anna Howry, b. Dec. 10, 1798
m. David Book, Sept. 29, 1794-1861; Pequea Twp.
- H555 Daniel Howry, May 18, 1801-Dec. 29, 1827 (26-7-11)
?H5551 E. Howry, d. 1825; Howry Cem.
- H556 Henry Howry, b. June 23, 1803; Methodist; to Warren Co., Ohio
m. Catherine Sides
- ?H5561 Mary Howry, d. Jan. 28, 1828; Howry Cem.
- H557 Jacob Howry, Jan. 11, 1805-1821
- H558 Abraham Howry, July 8, 1806-Feb. 19, 1871; Meth.
m. Anna Keagy, Sept. 22, 1809-July 17, 1892
- H559 Elizabeth Howry, Jan. 17, 1809-Nov. 6, 1881
m. Samuel Esbenshade, Aug. 15, 1806-Jan. 4, 1894
- H55a Elias Howry, Apr. 14, 1811-Feb. 10, 1829 (17-9-2); single; Strasburg, Pa.
- H55b Susan Howry, Mar. 14, 1813-Feb. 16, 1865
m. Benjamin Brackbill, Nov. 10, 1803-Sept. 11, 1891
- H55c Mary Howry, July 8, 1815-Aug. 31, 1870
m. Jacob Groff, Jan. 12, 1816-Sept. 4, 1874
- H55d Sophia Howry, July 31, 1818-Jan. 11, 1908
m. Jacob Hartman, Apr. 3, 1824-Sept. 18, 1852

Howry family chart showing the confusing maze of Hans/John/Johannes Howrys in the early generations of descent from immigrant Hans. Dates in bold italics are the probable deaths to which Benjamin G. Herr referred in his memoirs when he stated that five of the Howrys died within about a year.



The present buildings on the old Hauri homestead site at 260 North Jackson Street, Strasburg, Pennsylvania, are currently owned by Glenn M. and Shirley Eshelman, executive producers of Sight and Sound Theatres musicals.

[Old Hauri]

Hauri, or *Ald Hauri*,¹¹ was of Dutch descent, thick-set and corpulent, and a very good sample of a portly Hollander in person & [54] physiognomy. His abdominal region was unduly expanded, and was more apt to inspire with awe than ridicule. He was the tyrant of the place. Numerous were the allusions and remarks I had heard upon his severities and despotism. With little that was actually definite in action told of him, he was supposed to do and contemplate deeds of the most decided character, and every young person in the neighbourhood was in the most settled fear of him. He was held to be without mercy, and perfectly thorough-going in his prosecution of depredators, leaving no loop-hole by which to creep out of any difficulty with him, so that no one even trod his grounds without feeling surmises of vague insecurity. He guarded his fruits and orchards with the vigil of an hundred eyes; and in truth, as his lands adjoined the village, it is not unreasonable to conclude, that had he not exercised a little more than usual care, he would have found them a rather unproductive than profitable investment. I was not in reality afraid of him, but it was because I thought I could avoid him, or that he would have no chance of making me an example of his severity; for if Beelzebub himself had lived in the vicinage, I could not have been less inclined to incur his vengeful notice, and to fall into his angry power. Yet, I never had the least evidence of any but the best intentions towards me, and quite likely he would have done me as little injury as any other individual of whom I had any knowledge in the country. So powerful is the effect on the imagination of ambiguous innuendo.

Rural pipes were not a fiction on the farm. As soon as the sap flowed[,] they were constructed of willow[,] of which six large stems rose from one immense stump, in whose stately branches flocks of black-birds held their congregations, when first arriving in early spring from the

¹¹Probably John Howry (Mar. 24, 1769-Feb. 7, 1829), m. Elizabeth Funck (May 25, 1773-June 16, 1846). He is referred to as a Mennonite minister in Charles D. Spotts, *They Called It Strasburg (18th and 19th Centuries)*. Community Historians Annual, no. 7 (Lancaster, Pa.: Community Historians, 1968), 15; and in Edward Bowman Espenshade, *My American Ancestors and Their Descendants*, 2d ed. (n.p.: n.p., 1949), 317, 337, 340-41. See, also, John Landis Ruth, *The Earth Is the Lord's: A Narrative History of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2001), 367.

Herr
family

The author recalls varied visitors to his family homestead, work and leisure activities with relatives and neighbors, his father's church work and beliefs, ghost stories, epidemics and mental illness and medical nostrums, first impressions of Lancaster and Columbia, school days, and political affairs.

Recollections of Life in Strasburg Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1808-1829: Part Three

By Benjamin Groff Herr
Annotations by Carolyn C. Wenger
Transcription by Lola M. Lehman

[Book 2, Part 2]

Note: Title, boldface, and italics were added by the editor. Spelling, occasional misspellings, word repetitions, capitalization, and punctuation follow the original. Numbers in brackets refer to pages in the handwritten "Memorandum" of 1858. —Ed.

[Visitors at the Herr Home]

All sorts of people—all kindreds and all tongues except lawyers frequented my father's house. Pilgrims from the extremes of Germany, of the most differing and incorrigible dialects—Russians, Poles, and Scandinavians passed a night at various times under the hospitable roof. Students, soldiers, and broken[-]down philosophers were to be met with; while the invalid and blind—Beggars, vagrants, fanatics and drunkards, lunatics and cripples, from the ends of the earth, kept up a successive variety in the changeful moods and conditions of the human race. A learned German appeared of the most polished manners; religion, government, history, metaphysics, flowed from his lips, like household words, with the most familiar ease and natural volubility, as tho' they were born with him. In the morning, descending the stairs in his genteel, yet dilapidated dress, his blood-shot eyes, and distorted countenance, too plainly indicated the source of his inspiration. He shot out of the door, neither waited for breakfast or greeting; as tho' ashamed to show his aspect in the dawn, that would convict him of his low temptations and ignoble frailties. Can it be that a man of such politeness and innate knowledge can from his own deed or demerit, be so degraded—I murmured? No! It is his misfortune; and my eyes overflowed with sympathy and pity. A Russian sat at table, shaking with rage, or yet[-]remembered terror, and denouncing Bonaparte¹ in the most incoherent language with the bitterest curses. I stood beside him[,] looked into his face, quivering and darkly pallid, as tho' I would conjure and command him to refrain from too great a latitude in [68] his asseverations; for I could not believe Napoleon the bloodhound and tyrant that he represented him to be—and soon his muscles[/] features became passive and his invective silent.

Later than the period dilated upon, some years, two young Wirtemberg² students made one or two day's stay,

and left a painting on paste of Stuttgart[t] and the vicinity. They were persons of the most indescribable gentleness and the most refined politeness. Surely, if all the educated of Germany are of a stamp so delicate like these, that country must of all nations be the farthest removed from Barbarism. This I believe was the first true painting I had ever seen; the perspective was drawn in life-like colours, and the whole was a new [and?] fresh beauty to look upon, distinct and vivid. A student for the Presbyterian ministry from Maryland made inquiry and held discourse as to the peculiarity of the New-light³ tenets. Now, a Swedenborgian⁴ spake of God's revelations, now, a Universalist⁵ broached the nature of the Diety, now a disciple of Jacob Boehmen⁶ dwelt on[/] introduced the mysticism of his apostle, and, now, a solitary thinker, developed the solid fruits of his unassisted cogitation. Others came for knowledge and counsel, and so far from recommending any system, urged difficulties with an inexpressibly perplexed countenance—and listened. Now, they went away with doubts elucidated and fortified resolution. Then, one made his appearance, who wore on his features, at once, the most sublime apprehension and the most awful unbelief. First, at the inception of this religious order, the Penitents mainly sought to be redeemed from error, and inquired the direction;—now, they asked to be retrieved from despair, and, with groans

¹Napoleon Bonaparte I (1769-1821), emperor of the French from 1804 to 1815.

²Wirtemberg, a former state of southwestern Germany.

³Reformed Mennonite Church.

⁴Swedenborgianism, the basic theological philosophy of the Church of the New Jerusalem, claims direct mystical communication between the world and the spiritual realm. It affirms Christ as the true God. The followers of Emanuel Swedenborg/Svedberg (1688-1772), a Swedish scientist and theologian, named this religion after him.

⁵Universalists believe that salvation is extended to all humankind. In 1961 the Universalists merged with the Unitarians, forming the Unitarian Universalist Association.

⁶Jacob Boehm was a seventeenth-century German philosopher and mystic whose Pietism influenced colonial Pennsylvania, especially the Ephrata Cloister.

STAFF

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THE COVER

Isaac Herbert Witwer Ziemer (1887-1963) and his wife, Mary (Martin) Ziemer (1889-1984), of the Union Grove area in East Earl Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, with one of their first cars, a Chrysler, about 1920. This car was given to the Ziemers by car dealer and brother-in-law Barton M. Stauffer in lieu of repaying a thousand-dollar loan for the business that he was just initiating. He gave them the first car that came in to sell. In his younger years, as in this photograph, Isaac Ziemer smoked cigars. Mary became a Christian and joined the Weaverland Mennonite Church (Lancaster Mennonite Conference) prior to her 1908 marriage, but Isaac Herbert did not do so until about 1924. See page 30 of "Readers' Ancestry."

and trembling, implored pardon in the midst of their depravity, and consolation, and frequently they were or seemed to be facilitated in their seeking.

Beggars were a not unimportant item in the human catalogue. Germans, Britons, Italians, and Americans, presented themselves in that vocation, but never a pure Hibernian. Dougherty was a Scotchman, who went the rounds regularly, and never spoke, except emphatically. The workmen at their evening meal of hasty pudding⁷ were used to have one dish of milk[,]out of which each one dipped his portion with the half-filled spoon. On one occasion the Beggar was set to the table with the rest. Whether it was that his own modesty rebelled against the familiar association with prosperous and social men (for beggars were then considered outcasts & filthy), the inherent indifference of the mode struck him, after the conclusion of the repast and a pause—he said—he thought with Christian—that, “Every hog should eat out of its own trough.” Shortly after[,] the custom was abolished,—every man had his own bowl, and, so appropriate had been the remark, I could not help holding the beggar, tho’ in rags, in the greatest respect as a great man; but he appeared only once, again, to my knowledge.

[69] A blind man led by a boy, perhaps, his son, a blind woman, left several weeks in charge of the establishment, a man with a wooden leg, the consequence of engagement in battle, and the basket and broom maker of the neighbourhood on crutches were in contrast with the other examples of humanity. One sightless man there was from Canada, who remained several months. Venerable was he, with a venerable beard that rolled massively over his bosoms. He sat for hours and sang hymns or simply chaunts, and seemed to be cheerful and contented. Often, had Bomberger, a large man with a white hat, blowing his horn[,] frightened me, while younger. I always associated his trumpet with the last day; and, perchance, it was his own idea,—that his was the prelude to the summons that was to usher in the day of judgment. Now, persons came upon the stage in the deepest despondency, and with the most confused intellects, ‘mid which they could lay hold of no hope to rescue them, nor find a clue to guide them thro’ the intricacy of their humanitarian or spiritual relations. These mostly, having found grace or light, became members of the new Society; but some were in perdition beyond all the instrumentalities of redemption.

[Mary (Herr) Huber]

One day I was deputed for early summer apples to a neighbour’s near the mill.⁸ My father’s half cousin⁹ went with me to the orchard, half a mile from the dwelling near the other end of the farm. All the while, I was in a quandary of doubt and gladness. She was the most beautiful girl or woman I had yet seen. Her raven hair, her dark lashes, her large, expressive eyes, and fair complexion—reminded me of the dawn of morning, and made her almost magnificent; for she was, if not altogether, nearly grown. She piled my basket with fruit, and on my making an excuse for the trouble occasioned, unrestrained by the presence of aught so serious as to inspire gravity, she expressed herself in such natural terms of grace and freedom like the smile of nature, that I was completely enraptured and bear the image of that countenance with me to this day. Mary’s husband in after years committed Suicide, when she lived with her mother. The family were

numerous, mostly girls. Susan was sprightly[,] good[-] looking and agreeable, and a younger sister I only became acquainted with later. All were handsome, but the women outgrew the men.

[John Groff]

My mother’s brother,¹⁰ now, frequently called and lodged with us. He took jaunts to his farm[,] adjoining ours, given to him by his father, where he was engaged in eradicating the thorns and briers, that had well nigh overran the grounds.¹¹ He was becoming a bachelor, and his visits were a great gratification to me. To the religious, who were chiefly intimate in the household, I had become reserved. I appeared to flourish better at a distance from them than near to them, and, therefore, clung the closer to the relatives and others that were acquainted & social. Besides, his mode of speaking was a novelty, and in his dis[70]course with my father he exhibited a kind of frankness that none else did. He hinted that his strict and absolute interpretations, theologically, might not be always consonant to the nature of things, and that a certain policy in construing was not, therefore, necessarily, a falsehood, or the less true, because it was not immediately direct and literal, hence, this might be safely substituted for the former, in many instances, which would be a happy softening down of the theory and practice in their harsher features. Likewise, he suggested a doubt, whether any new truth or semblance of one had been discovered, or old one re-inaugurated by the New Society,¹² and whether it did not owe its whole animation and being to the force of talent and fervent zeal of its founders. My uncle thought it possible, whenever that fervour[]ardor[]spirit abated, it would be found on the old ground,¹³ as there was, not unlikely, nothing either positive or implied, in the organization, as a distinct basis upon which to rest. Some years after[,] my uncle married an English widow from the valley of Virginia, and removing to Lycoming, settled on the West Branch river and brought up a family of children.

⁷Hasty pudding was another name for cornmeal mush served with maple syrup, brown sugar, or other sweetening.

⁸This is evidently Wheatland Mills along the Pequea Creek in West Lampeter Township. It was owned from 1758 to about 1827 by a succession of John Herts and from at least 1864 to 1875 by John Musselman.

⁹She would have to be one of the grandchildren of John Herr (1720-1797) and w.(2) Esther Shenk. Martin Herr (Aug. 11, 1763-Jan. 18, 1821) of Strasburg Township and w.(3) Susan Buckwalter (Apr. 8, 1774-May 16, 1862) had a family of six daughters and four sons. The oldest daughter, Mary (June 17, 1797-May 1, 1858), m. Jacob Huber/Hoover (Nov. 16, 1792-May 20, 1834) of Lampeter. Jacob and Mary are buried in the Willow Street Mennonite Cemetery. Other siblings of Mary in order of decreasing age were Esther, Elizabeth, Susanna, Anna, and Martha/Magdalena. However, Herr’s comment that “the women outgrew the men” does not quite fit with this family if he is using “outgrew” in the sense of “outlived”—either for the siblings or the females and their spouses. Perhaps he means “outgrew” physically in height.

¹⁰John Groff (b. 1790), later of Lycoming, Pa., married Sallie Downing and had the following children, all of whom lived in Strasburg, Pa.: Samuel, Mary, John, Anna, Benjamin, Eliza. John was a son of Johannes Groff (1755-1821) and w.(1) Anna Forrer. Theodore W. Herr and Phillip E. Bedient, *Genealogical Record of Rev. Hans Herr . . .*, 3d ed. (Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 1994), 101.

¹¹This farm evidently became the homestead of Benjamin G. Herr sometime after his marriage in 1833.

¹²Reformed Mennonite Church.

¹³Religious foundation or traditional religious beliefs.

[Variations in Life's Monotony]

Among the incidents of the season was a flood on the Pequea. All night the waters poured over a wide extent of country; all day the waters rose on the stream, broke thro' the the [sic] breast-work of the dam[,] inundated the mill and submerged the acres below, uprooted trees and floated them like ships on the current, that like a wide river rolled, and nearly obliterated the Sweeping promontories. The rush of the waters was like the roar of the cataract. All went to behold the conflict at the narrow bridge, but this maintained its pedestal unmoved, tho' frequent shaking with the timbers, that, like battering rams, impinged upon



Red (left) and gray (right) squirrels were among the plentiful game in the forest east of the East Road, which extended from the bridge over the Pequea Creek, north of the Herr farm, south to the town of Strasburg (present Pa. Route 896).



"Crowds of them [turkey buzzards,] clustered on some dead tree, or on some dead branch, with their unmentionable hued necks, heads, and beaks, were a terror to look upon. Oft, I watched them in multitudes or singly, high as the cloud[-]built canopy, sailing direct, or in magic circles[,] sweeping, and admired their magnificent and easy flight. They are the birds of solitude, the desert, and ruin."

the piers and arches. Other variations in the monotony of life were an excursion with my father with the gun in the use of which he had been expert when young. The game was not very obvious, and all the spoil was a red squirrel, tho' gray ones were not un plentiful in the forest east of the East road, that extended unbroken a mile and a half from the upper bridge to the town. Sometimes, I surpassed scores of turkey-buzzards at the carcass, and enjoyed their fluttering consternation, when on my appearing suddenly[,] they belaboured themselves with heavy efforts to rise, which they had much difficulty in doing, from the ground, which gave no room for the necessary expansion of wing. Now, crowds of them[,] clustered on some dead tree, or on some dead branch, with their unmentionable hued necks, heads, and beaks, were a terror to look upon. Oft, I watched them in multitudes or singly, high as the

cloud[-]built canopy, sailing direct, or in magic circles[,] sweeping, and admired their magnificent and easy flight. They are the birds of solitude, the desert, and ruin.

[Catharine Book]

On Easter Monday¹⁴ Catharine Book¹⁵ died at the mansion, where she had lived from the time of my earliest recollection, of cancer in the breast. I and she could never agree. She would [71] reproach me with indolence, and called me good[-]for[-]nothing. I thought her my greatest enemy, and the veriest termagant. She was passionate, yet could put on the pleasantest countenance, finely formed, neat, and delicate and pale in expression, which pallor I deemed the effect of her angry disposition. She would complain of me and denounce me to my parents, and I, sometimes, indulged myself in no lukewarm in[m]preca-

- B Michael Buch/Book, July 17, 1740-Jan. 30, 1813 (72-6-13); Oct. 29, 1767, immigrant; Strasburg Twp.
- m. Nov. 5, 1770, Barbara Saltzer, Apr. 8, 1749-Dec. 14, 1801 (52-8-6)
- B1 David Book, Nov. 2, 1771-Feb. 12, 1850; Strasburg Twp.
- m. 1792 Catherine Hoke/Hooke/Hoak, May 10, 1769-July 10, 1831, dau. Adam Hoke and Catherine Seitz
- B11 Daniel Book, Feb. 10, 1793-Nov. 10, 1870
- m.(1) Christiana Neff, July 30, 1792-Sept. 4, 1831
- m.(2) Anna Hersh, Oct. 19, 1810-Oct. 10, 1859
- B12 David Book, Sept. 29, 1794-Oct. 29, 1861
- m. Ann/Anna Howry, Dec. 10, 1798-Apr. 21, 1868
- B13 Catherine Book, Sept. 30, 1796-Mar. 12, 1876
- m. Martin Shaub, Apr. 1, 1791-Apr. 8, 1847
- B14 Mary Book, Oct. 8, 1798-Dec. 14, 1861
- m. Philip Geist, Apr. 17, 1802-Oct. 31, 1862
- B15 Elizabeth Book, May 17, 1801-Sept. 16, 1880
- m. Jacob Fraelich, Feb. 20, 1797-Apr. 22, 1872
- B16 John Book, Jan. 30, 1804-Aug. 29, 1893
- m. Anna Geist, Dec. 22, 1807-May 14, 1881
- B17 George Book, Apr. 11, 1806-July 29, 1879
- m. Jan. 12, 1837, Harriet/Henrietta Geist, Mar. 7, 1814-Feb. 22, 1888
- B18 Adam Book, Feb. 15, 1809-Feb. 17, 1809
- B19 Michael Book, Jan. 23, 1811-Dec. 8, 1885
- m. Feb. 5, 1835, Sarah Spiehman, 1812-1887
- B1a Magdalena Book, Apr. 5, 1813-Feb. 20, 1889
- m. Feb. 17, 1842, John Smith, Oct. 8, 1809-Jan. 29, 1872
- B2 John Book, Apr. 17, 1774-Apr. 16, 1846; Mifflin (now Juniata) Co. in 1814
- m. Nov. 8, 1800, (wid.?) Barbara Witmer, Feb. 14, 1775-July 24, 1840
- B3 George Book, Dec. 7, 1776-Nov. 9, 1857; Strasburg Twp.
- B4 Catharine Book, Sept. 22, 1779-Apr. 23, 1821; single
- B5 Mary Book, May 9, 1782-Dec. 11, 1856; Strasburg Twp.
- m. Martin Miller, Feb. 3, 1778-July 19, 1842
- B6 Samuel Book, May 28, 1794-Apr. 11, 1881; Maytown, Pa.
- m. Rebecca Mockert, Oct. 5, 1799-Jan. 29, 1867

¹⁴Easter Monday, until at least the early 1900s, was celebrated as a holiday by the rural Pennsylvania Germans. This was primarily a time for families to go visiting. During the mid-1800s it also became a popular time for secular festivities and military parades in some of the larger urban communities. The special nature of the day evidently helped Herr to remember when Catharine died.

¹⁵Catharine Book (Sept. 22, 1779-Apr. 23, 1821), daughter of October 29, 1767, immigrant Michael (1740-1813) and Barbara (Saltzer) Book. She was also an aunt of the David Book (Sept. 29, 1794-Oct. 29, 1861) who married Anna Howry (b. Dec. 10, 1798), daughter of Minister John Howry (1769-1829) and sister of John Howry (1793-1828). Edward Bowman Espenshade, *My American Ancestors and Their Descendants*, 2d ed. (U.S.A.: Edward Bowman Espenshade, 1950), 429.

tion upon her, yet, I never was conscious of any permanent malice against her. Without permission I had possessed myself of and wore a *hoot*,¹⁶ which she had worn in her fashionable days.¹⁷ It seemed to suit me; I hid it from her, and I never heard any remonstrances. Now, as George and I stood by the stove, she opened her bosom. There, were the traces of the dreadful disease, that in red and swollen radiations was fast taking possession of her frame, like a horrible vulture gnawing at the heart. How sorry was I, that I had ever harboured any bitter reflection

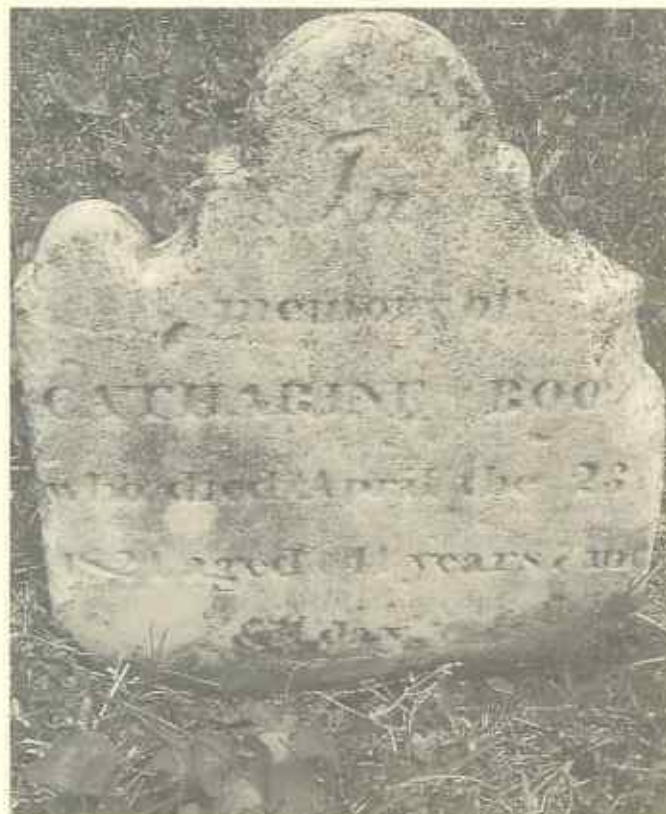
"There, reposed she, stretched, out and somewhat bent, as if arrested in a glad and pleasant yawn; But the pulse was stilled, forever, and would beat no more to the impulse of joy or pain or sorrow."

tions towards her! On the day mentioned I was in her room, where she lay contending with pain in mortal struggles. I went out of the house, but soon was recalled from the outbuilding by the maid, saying, Katy was dying. I hastened back,—already, had the spirit departed. There, reposed she, stretched, out and somewhat bent, as if arrested in a glad and pleasant yawn; But the pulse was stilled, forever, and would beat no more to the impulse of joy or pain or sorrow.

[Hauri's Son]

Several years before, a distant relation of the above-mentioned, Hauri,¹⁸ Hauri's eldest son & child,¹⁹ became crazed of mind. Strong men it required to hold him. He

would run along the surbase of the room, and leap into the recess between the top of the cupboard and ceiling with the agility of a cat, crouching. Once, he was brought to our dormitory and lodged in a room, as it was thought a change of situation might have a good influence. Soon as he observed a chance of freedom, he sprang along the surbase in the strange apartment, as if he had been a spider. When he came[,] he was guarded he was guarded [sic] on each side, as tho' a tiger was held muzzled, and in garrulous and unremitting accents, gave birth to a medley of confused exclamations. He was taken back, somewhat composed, but remained a long time in a state, almost hopeless. I went along part of the way, going and coming, and had been in his lodge at home several times, once throughout a night in company with those who had gone there to assist in watching, but I never saw more than a brief gleam of old Hauri, himself, during this intercourse, of whom I was actually far more in awe than I was of the madman. Young Hauri was a good-looking man, tall and slender like his mother, & died seven years, thereafter, never, since that time entirely reliable in his rational faculties.



"In / memory of / Catharine Book [1779-1821], / who died April the 23 / 1821 aged 41 years 7 mo / & 1 day." She was buried in the Abraham LeFevre Cemetery on North Star Road north of Strasburg, Pennsylvania.



Tombstone of Johannes Groff (1755-1821), the author's maternal grandfather, in the New Providence Mennonite Cemetery

¹⁶Probably a phonetic spelling of the Pennsylvania German dialect term *Hut*, for "hat."

¹⁷Prior to becoming members of the Reformed Mennonite Church, women dressed in the fashionable attire of the society around them. Afterwards they dressed "plain" (see page 12 for a more detailed description of church-regulated attire among the Reformed Mennonites at this time).

¹⁸Minister John Howry (Mar. 24, 1769-Feb. 7, 1829).

¹⁹John Howry (Feb. 27, 1793-Dec. 16, 1828).

[Grandfather Johannes Groff]

[72] Late, in the winter my grandfather, Groff,²⁰ deceased one day after his birthday, which was the 22^d Febr., aged 66 yrs. 1 day, with asthmatic consumption. I looked upon the insensible body, but was not at the funeral. He was buried at the Men.[nonite] burial ground New Providence.

[Fiction, History, and Theology]

1822 to 1825.—Ann, a woman from Germany lived a while at the homestead, and when she removed[,] left several books which I took in charge, one of which was a novel, *Florentine von Fahlendorf*, by Heinrich Stilling. She was a well-formed person of regular features, marked by the smallpox, and possessed that amenity for which some of the Germans are so remarkable. Some years afterward she called for the volumes, which I had read and preserved with the utmost carefulness.



This woodcut from M. L. Weems's *Das Leben des Georg Washington* (The Life of George Washington) depicts the capture of the polished British major John André as a spy during the Revolutionary War.

Two pamphlets—"God's revenge against adultery," and "God's revenge against gambling," with an Octavo "Life of Washington"—by Rev. Ewell Weems of S. Carolina—now came in my way. These, with the German work and "Riley's Narrative,"²¹ were great and uncommon acquisitions, and I digested their contents with the amplest eagerness. The former author's almost tropical style, his child-like exclamations, and florid eulogies and dedication, were akin to my own sympathies, and more sensuously impressible reflections. They were like the "Fathers of the Church"—of which I had a sample in a folio volume on the "Ersten Christen,"²² but which were nevertheless too vague and theological, and too diffuse and affected for that early age, to be read except in fragments. Here, were extracts from, Justin Martyr, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, Hilary, the two Gregories, Tertullian, &c. which I mostly selected, and found a force and charm in that were not to be met met [sic] with in the context, and sufficed to stand by themselves without preliminary or explanation.²³ The "Narrative" introduced to a fresh scene, the desert, and a new people, the wandering Moors and Arabs.

That part of "Deknatel's²⁴ Sermons" [Sermons] which had reference to the destruction of Lisbon by the earthquake of 1755, the "Saint's Rest,"²⁵ and Law's "Call to the Unconverted"²⁶ were the only works of pure theology I

had the patience to read through; with the rest, I mostly stagnated before I reached the middle of the first chapter. Of that religion, which was separate [sic] from creeds and controversy, I had sufficient example & information in the devotional exercises and communications kept up in the household, and with frequent visitors, who, with slight exceptions, were always fraught with that affluence. I had heard enough of controversial discussion, both indoors held and out. My father was often wont to restate his arguments and relate his experience at home, when he had met with strangers abroad of differing and varied persuasions in disputation, and he never failed in a fair encounter to convince or silence the objector; for his fervency of spirit would not allow him to leave any [73] stone unturned in enforcing his convictions, nor permit any capricious assumptions to weigh against the palpable and logical evidences of which the Scriptures were the infallible exponent. Thence, it was no motive and edification to beat the same path, written, upon the track of which as ardent & energetic I was almost daily put, orally.

[Hannes Hershocks]²⁷

Direct from Germany a family of Bavarians[,] parents and children[,] arrived one evening. They had the ship disease,²⁸ were abundantly worn down, and in evident lassitude of spirits. My father was from home; my mother was doubtful as to affording them quarters: at last, a lodging for them was provided. Harmless and prospectless, they remained several months till a dwelling was gotten at my Uncle's, Abraham, the sawmiller,²⁹ so designated to distinguish him from Methodist Abram.³⁰ I made it a point to inquire of emigrants, whenever opportunity offered, of the condition of Germany,—its divisions, localities, products, customs, and governments. Old Hershocks informed me in many things; frequently, we

²⁰Johannes or John Groff (Feb. 22, 1755-Feb. 23, 1821) m.(1) Anna Forner; m.(2) Oct. 4, 1797, Maria Hackman (May 9, 1760-Oct. 11, 1834).

²¹James Riley (1777-1840), *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce, Wrecked on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Month of August, 1815. With an Account of the Sufferings of Her Surviving Officers and Crew, Who Were Enslaved by the Wandering Arabs on the Great African Desert [sic], or Zabuhrab; and Observations Historical, Geographical, &c., Made during the Travels of the Author, While a Slave to the Arabs, and in the Empire of Morocco* (Hartford: author, 1817). A classic travel book regarded as America's first best seller, it reportedly sold more than a million copies through various editions. Though it reads like fiction, it is based on solid fact. Starved, then marched across the desert, the sailors were separated; many were never seen again and were presumed to have spent the duration of their days in slavery. Riley was the first American to venture near the legendary Timbuctoo. Yet the conditions were so barbaric, the food so scanty, and the beatings so regular that he dropped from 240 to 90 pounds. He and a handful of his men were eventually ransomed. Upon returning to the United States, he was hailed as a hero and was urged to record his adventures. While the United States was grappling with the issue of slavery, Riley's book told a tale of Caucasian Americans under the whip and in the chains that held millions of Black Americans at the same time. Scholars are currently trying to substantiate a statement reputedly made by young Abraham Lincoln that this book helped to formulate his views against slavery.

²²First Christians.

²³Herr evidently gained access to a set or partial set of the writings of the early church fathers—Ante-Nicene, Nicene, or Post-Nicene fathers—or possibly some other abridgement of Christian antiquities.

²⁴Jeme Deknatel (1698-1759)—or Johannes, as he later called himself—was a Dutch Mennonite preacher and author of widely used devotional books. He was the chief promoter of Pietism among the Dutch

conversed. Often, he would exclaim in phrases like this: "Die Franzosen, die sind aber der deuvel."³¹ Of Bonaparte he remarked: "der hat auch Naßen kant."³² Speaking of other characters, desperate or wicked, in his apprehension—he said: "der ist auch kaput gang."³³ After his removal[/] departure he annually came & pruned and dressed the grape vines.

Hannes, his son, extended his stay, employed on the plantation. He was an excellent specimen of the rural *Buroche*,³⁴ wore "hoddin grey"³⁵ and a roundabout or *Wammes*,³⁶ that extended scarcely any length below the shoulder, with a large bunch of tucks on the center of the back. He was of a most inveterate temper, and withal strong and compactly built. Perhaps, in no part of the world is the timber of a more adhesive fiber than in this. It not only grows large and stately, but solid, and often convolved and extremely rugged. After the workable portion is wrought into lumber, much of the firewood that remains is composed of the most inseparable [*sic*] texture and incorrigible convolutions, which it would be Quixotic³⁷ to expect to[,] and even Hercules³⁸ could not[,] render into sufficiently diminutive parcels for consumption in a moveable fireplace. It was Hannes's task to prepare the wood for burning. In the old country fuel was a precious article, and the timber was seldom found except in the smallest proportion since the little that existed was unavoidably needed and cut down long before it had arrived at its greatest magnitude. He, therefore, had no notion of setting aside some valuable black but contorted block that in rotation offered itself to his dexterity, but plied his weapon with the full impetus of all his powers. His axe stuck fast, or rebounded from the assault without having effected the least breach in its invincible tenacity. Long did he persevere. He was not alone; I stood by with exemplary attention, but too great was the provocation for his fortitude, at last. "Das das feuer dich verzehr,"³⁹ he

exclaimed in intense tones to the object of his energies. Still, he continued the conflict without taking any dishonest advantage of the grain or fraudulent skinning the out-sides; and still I looked on half as indignant as he, when louder & intenser than before he burst forth with: "*Das das feuer dich verzehr*." [74] Now, I first assumed to speak. "Why," said I, "you need not waste the time in wishing, only split the wood, and that will be the consequence without any more ado." This but prepared him for the denou[ement]. With Sturdier strokes and in quicker succession than before, he beat at the invulnerable material. Once more, he broke out in hollow and shrieking tones: "*Das das feuer dich verzehr*"—and flung his implement with the most prodigious force and violence circularly from him perfectly regardless or unconscious of consequences, stalking from the place in the most ungovernable excitement and fury. Had the insensible tissue been endowed with flesh and feeling, he would no doubt have torn it, piecemeal.

In his management of horses, Hannes was no less unhacknied than in mauling & disintegrating firewood. Altho' I was usually more seriously disposed than otherwise, and spells for laughter such as I had witnessed, sometimes, in others, if invading myself, gave me more pain than pleasure, yet, having a horse at one time harnessed in a sled, his unskilful mode of guidance, and unsuccessful efforts in retrieving his awkwardness, were so mirth-provoking, that I involuntarily burst into the most hearty and pervading demonstrations of that kind. He ran against the door-post, then, extricated the vehicle with difficulty. Again, he went fowl of the same obstacle, muttering brief curses at intervals, and boiling over with vexation at the animal, that was, indeed, little to blame; for he was very far from leading it in the strict direction to ensure his clear passage. Yet, he maintained a sort of grim & comparative composure for a considerable period, but

Mennonites and, through his writings, among the Mennonites of the Palatinate. Many of his works were translated into German and were widely read in the Palatinate and America, including *Acht Predigten über wichtige Materien* (Allentown, Pa.: A. A. and W. S. Blumer, 1835).

³²Richard Baxter (1615-1691), *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*.

³³William Law (1686-1761), *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1728).

³⁴A John Herschok (Jr.) (Nov. 11, 1799-Sept. 16, 1879), born at Winterborn, France (according to tombstone in Byerland Mennonite Cemetery, but Germany today?), arrived in America on March 28, 1820, and came to Lancaster County. He had a farm at Lines town, close to Byerland Mennonite Church, and married Magdalena/Martha Brenneman (Jan. 15, 1811-Apr. 20, 1897). Albert H. Gerberich, *The Brenneman History* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1938), 669. This immigration date for the above family seems about right, according to Herr's memoirs; but the death date for John Jr. is too late in view of Herr's statement—he was writing in 1858—further on that Hannes Jr. died "a few years" later, presumably a few years after the family immigrated and at least by 1858. John Herschok (1799-1879) had the following children: Catharine (1834-1891), John (1834-1886), Jacob B., Christian B. (1840-1921), and Mary (1844-1922), m. Adam Rush Groff.

³⁵Possibly scurvy, a common shipboard disease caused by deficiency of vitamin C and characterized by spongy bleeding gums, bleeding under the skin, and extreme weakness. If cholera, a stomach and intestinal infection, struck on shipboard in this era, no one knew how to treat it. Most captains kept on going and carried numerous passengers to death. Less common but even more feared was an outbreak of smallpox. Pneumonia, encephalitis, blood poisoning, and other ailments often accompanied it, and the mortality rate rose as high as ninety percent. The worst killer on sailing ships was typhus—a lice-borne disease that afflicted the skin and brain, causing dizziness, headaches, pain, bloodshot eyes, a dark-red rash, and a dull stare. Common in crowded

conditions, it eventually acquired the name "ship fever."

³⁶"Sawmiller" Abraham Groff (Dec. 13, 1773-July 22, 1846) m.(1) Mattie/Martha Herr (sister of the author's father) and m.(2) Maria Barr (Nov. 24, 1791-Sept. 23, 1853). Ordained on May 30, 1812, he served as a deacon in the Reformed Mennonite Church.

³⁷This annotator has been unable to ascertain the identity of "Methodist" Abraham Groff.

³⁸"The French, they are really the devil."

³⁹"He was also able to get away." K. Varden Leasa, Downingtown, Pa.

⁴⁰"He also went to ruin."

⁴¹Evidently Herr's variation on *Bursch*, a German word for youth. K. Varden Leasa.

⁴²Hoddin grey or "hoddin gray," as spelled by *The American Dictionary of the English Language* . . . (Akron, Ohio: Saalfield Pub. Co., 1900), 555, refers to cloth made of wool in its natural state without being dyed, or a coarse grey woolen homespun fabric. Information supplied by Alan G. Keyser, East Greenville, Pa.

⁴³A *Wammes* or *Wammus* was a short, close-fitting outer working jacket, similar in appearance to a "roundabout" but more full. Made of tough, long-lasting fabric, it was worn by the Pennsylvania Germans in the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries although the cut and fabrics have changed. See Ellen J. Gehret, *Rural Pennsylvania Clothing, Being a Study of the Wearing Apparel of the German and English Inhabitants, Both Men and Women, Who Resided in Southeastern Pennsylvania in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century* (York, Pa.: Liberty Cap Books, 1976), 169, 288.

⁴⁴Romantic but impractical; allusion to Don Quixote.

⁴⁵Hercules, a hero of Greek and Roman mythology known for his extraordinary strength and size, won immortality by performing twelve labors demanded by Hera.

⁴⁶"May that fire consume you."

Herr Family

continued cachinnations, now, brought him to an explosion with me. "Nu—steh dahin und lache, wenn alles zum deuvel ging, thättest du auch dahin stehen und lachen"⁴⁰—he spake[/]said, it appeared, more in grief than anger, whereas I esteemed the whole affair as a very light & insignificant matter. Notwithstanding, I convicted myself of impropriety, as I knew the mode of industry was so altogether different, where he came from, that with many of its phases here he had been entirely unacquainted, till called upon to labour according to their indications, and that tho' his manifestations were ridiculous, he himself did not deserve ridicule, in which latter meaning he might construe my levity or jovial humour. But the more I endeavoured to restrain my [vi?]sibility, the more uncontrollably it grew upon me; and the more he remonstrated with me, the more undeniably and consolidated beyond revocation became my mirth, till I was forced to absent myself in haste and leave him to his unpracticed, imperfect condition, which how he mended[/]perfected, at last, I have, therefore, no means of knowing.

Yet, Hannes was well disposed. He had acquired a smattering of French[,] of which he taught me some phrases, to wit: "Maitre l'ecole, schoolmaster; Couchant, sunset; Tailleur travailleur, labor boldly; Admirable mais imitable, admirable but but [sic] imitable."⁴¹ His mother was a mild, passive and seemingly broken[-]down woman.

[75] Afflicted with pulmonary complaints, Hannes, a young man[,] at intervals, now, detained at the habitation. He was seeking peace of mind in the prospect of never regaining his health, related his experience, and the scruples he had contended with as regards the position on the stage of Salvation of men of great reputation, and noble persons, of both late & early epochs, who often had suffered from their contemporaries, for their firm adherence to certain truths, good deeds, or exalted sentiments. By him I first heard the name[s] of Shak[e]speare and Pope mentioned. The first he said was a writer of plays; the second had raised himself to the first poetical eminence over his rivals, by such indirect arts, as were sometimes charged upon the literary fraternity in other instances. These, therefore, he could have little difficulty with on moral grounds; but on some of the heroes and philosophers of antiquity, as well as modern philanthropists[,] he dwelt with greater admiration, and taking into consideration their good principles, tho' oft, in error; which appeared to him to be rather the consequence of the darkness by which they were surrounded, than a willingness in its adoption, he could not find it in his heart to condemn them, or to suppose them in the balance of perdition. Hours together on his easy chair, he would dilate on this and kindred subjects to the women, of whom there were often a company together, in soft and weakly pronounced language to which I listened with marked and interested attention. This young man lived a few years longer before he succumbed to his fatal enemy.⁴²

[Father's Visitation Work]

Known thro' a wide district[,] my father was, ofttime, called upon to visit the sick, the hopeless, and the dying, haply, near their last moments. At one time he had been to the bedside of an elderly man in the vicinity with a large family in the last state of the venereal disease. His cries, his remorse, his loathsome condition, as they were

represented, were of a nature to strike one with horror, and be a warning to the witnesses. He had been[,] one night in the city of Phil[adelphia], seduced by sharpers into a house of prostitution, of which he had no true information or knowledge. He came home vitally affected, and the suffering prey of an incurable disorder.

Another time my father attended a man sunk in mental aberrations, brought on by intemperance in drink. He had visions, had been in hell, and related its mysteries, giving a description of its different departments, which my father repeated to the family, and which might have had a place in the *Divine Comedy*,⁴³ itself, at least, in naturalness if not in Rhetoric[/]elevation. There, all the vices were represented in separate [sic] divisions, but Drunkenness bore the precedence among them all.⁴⁴ Vivid were his portraiture of the wretches afflicted with that unhappy thirst, shuddering were their invocations and expressions. His abhorrence of his own proclivity was overpowering. He promised amendment. He recovered, but in process of time relapsed into the same category, that took him, at last, from the stage of the Living.

[Ghost Stories]

Ghost stories were a common ingredient in the conversational entertainments of the place by all classes; but they were mostly told as the experience [76] of others, instead of the tellers, or as, tales, probably, *fictions*, of the Past, doubtful, whether they should be believed; yet, I never heard the fact of haunted localities seriously disputed, houses uninhabitable, and spots where crimes or murder had been committed, rendered awful by the presence of intangible forms, as the victims were supposed never to have rest, till atonement had been made for the deeds by which they suffered. The progenitor of the Hauri's⁴⁵ was said to have wandered after his decease. He had[,] while living[,] a dispute with his neighbours as to the boundary between their lands. Now, when he had been laid in the grave, he could be seen, many a night, to rove along the line in question; and it was a settled opinion, that if a person died without having a quarrel appeased, the disturbed shade of one or more of the parties would appear, till the cause of their ghostly perturbation was neutralized or obviated. *Ignis Fatuus*⁴⁶ were held to be the demonstrations of a playfully malicious spirit. By the freaks of

⁴⁰"Now—stand back and laugh; if everything went to the devil, you would still stand back and laugh."

⁴¹In his "word study" Herr evidently did not learn to apply the French diacritical markings, such as *maitre l'ecole*.

⁴²Apparently he died of tuberculosis.

⁴³Italian literary classic by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321).

⁴⁴On December 5, 1831, Herr wrote a "Comparison between War and Intemperance," in which he concluded that intemperance was a greater evil than war because there is no intermission from its insidious and extensive ravages; intemperance paralyzes every noble faculty of man's soul; and the drunkard is a curse to himself and to his most intimate associates.

⁴⁵He is probably referring to February 18, 1717, immigrant Hans Hauri (d. ca. 1737) of Strasburg Township.

⁴⁶*Ignis fatuus* (singular), *ignes fatui* (plural)—medieval Latin for "foolish fire" or "fatuus fire," something that misleads or deludes; derived from a phosphorescent light that hovers or flits over swampy ground at night, possibly caused by spontaneous combustion of gases emitted by rotting organic matter; known variously as "Jack o' Lantern," "Friar's Lantern," "Will-o'-the-Wisp," "Walking Fire," and other names.

BEATRICE E. GRAVES
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SEAL BEACH, CALIF. 90740

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HANS HEER

Openly
Hans Heer



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London, Aug. 72

The water color painting of the 1719 Herr House and Meetinghouse, was made by America's foremost contemporary artist, Andrew Wyeth, and is used with his permission.

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Dr. J. G. Wenger, a native of Pennsylvania, has for many years had an interest in Mennonite History. He holds a Th.D. from the University of Zurich, Switzerland. He is currently on the faculty of Goshen Biblical Seminary where he is a Professor of Historical Theology.

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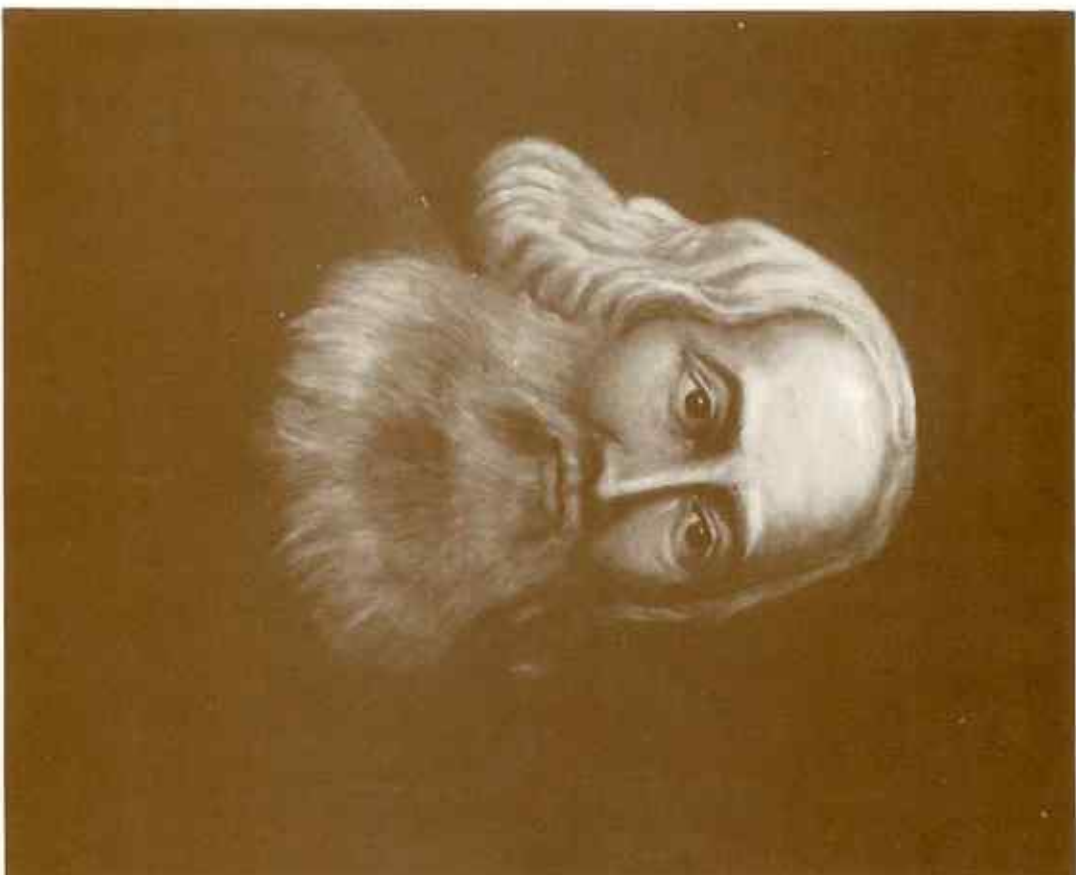
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HANS HERR



1639-1725

Photo of a Painting of Hans Herr made from a
description of him By Von Oesko in 1894

The Lancaster Mennonite Patriarch

J. C. Wenger

Swiss Background

IT WAS a great day for the cause of church renewal when Huldrych Zwingli of Switzerland became pastor of the Great Minster in Zurich in 1519. What Christ enabled him to accomplish for the cause of the Reformation is today a well-known story. The beginnings of Swiss Anabaptism through Conrad Grebel and his youthful colleagues are also becoming better known. Grebel had a tremendous dream. That dream was to return all the way to the Apostolic model of the Christian Church, and Grebel understood that model to have been a Free Church, completely separate from the state. It was to be a Christian Brotherhood, composed of men and women who had turned from sin and voluntarily taken upon themselves the obligations and privileges of Christian discipleship. Grebel understood discipleship to Christ to mean walking in love, as Christ walked, not in human strength but in the strength supplied by the Holy Spirit. It meant a careful following of the New Testament, both in the corporate life of the Christian Church and in the life of the individual believer. It meant, as his fellow-servant of the Word, Michael Sattler, put it, "Walking in the resurrection."

THE HERR family is believed to have been founded by a "Swabian" knight named Hugo, Herr (Lord) of Bilried, possibly five centuries before the Reformation. Swabia is said to have earlier embraced much of northern Switzerland, the territory of the German tribe known as the Alamanni or Allemanni. "Alamanni" was often used synonymously with the name of another Germanic tribe, the Suebi or Suabi, from which the name Swabia derives. In the case of the Herr family, the title "Herr" became a name, variously spelled as Herr, Heer, Hohr, and Hor in European documents, and Herr, Heer, and Hare in Pennsylvania. In 1450, for example, there was a Christian Herr and a Hans Herr at Glarus in northern Switzerland. About the same time a Hansli Herr of the Canton of Zurich distinguished himself militarily in the defense of the Greifensee

Castle. (Greifensee, that is, Lake Greifen, is east of the city of Zurich.)

CONRAD GREBEL founded what is now known as the Mennonite Church in the year 1525. At what date the first member of the Herr family united with Grebel's "Swiss Brethren" is not known. It is possible that Hans Herr (born 1608) was a member, but we do not know. His son, Hans Herr (1639-1725), however, was not only a member of the brotherhood, but also a bishop. Since the final struggle of Zurich with its Anabaptists began in 1633, it is possible that among the Zurich families who migrated to the Palatinate around the middle of the seventeenth century was the Hans Herr who was born in 1608. (He is referred to on p. 779 of the Herr Genealogical Record, 1908.) Bishop Hans Herr was probably born either in northern Switzerland or in the Palatinate to this Herr family from the area of Zurich. Harold S. Bender, in his article, "Zuerich," in the Mennonite Encyclopedia, estimates that seventy-five per cent of the Mennonites of the first Lancaster settlement, 1710-1717, were of Zurich families.

The Palatinate

IT WAS not until the year 1664 that a limited number of Swiss Mennonites were officially permitted to settle in the Palatinate, but various families had even earlier quietly located there, joining the tiny remnants of the original Anabaptist families in the land since the days of the Reformation. (See "Palatinate," in the Mennonite Encyclopedia.) In the census lists of the Palatine Mennonites, 1664-1774, the name Herr occurs occasionally. (These lists were published in the Mennonite Quarterly Review, 1940, 1941.) For example, a Christian Herr was living in Oberamt Neustadt in 1685. (Neustadt was south-southeast of Strasbourg and northeast of Basel.) Unfortunately these Palatine Mennonite census lists are incomplete; in some cases they give only numbers of Mennonites, not names. We cannot tell how long the Hans Herr family lived in the Palatinate before coming to America. Living in the Pfalz, as it is called in German, the Mennonites dropped much of their Swiss accent and distinctive Swiss-German vocabulary in favor of Pala-

tine German which we now refer to as "Pennsylvania Dutch" (Deutsch) in America.

To Penn's Woods

THERE IS a persistent tradition among the Mennonites of Pennsylvania that they came to this land of liberty upon the invitation of William Penn himself. The longer one works in Mennonite historiography, the less inclined he is to reject a given tradition for which there is no immediate documentation at hand. The finest and most complete monograph on the subject at hand is C. Henry Smith's *Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania*, 1929. But authors as early as I. Daniel Rupp report correctly that the first Lancaster County settlers were Swiss refugees who had remained "for some time" in the Palatinate, and then came to Pennsylvania (*History of Lancaster County*, 1844). He also says that about 1706 or 1707 a number of these "persecuted Swiss Mennonites" went to London and contracted with William Penn "for lands to be taken up" in Pennsylvania (pp. 72, 74). And C. Henry Smith quotes a letter from Penn himself, dated April 4, 1710, which indicated that fifty or sixty "Swissers called Menonists" were then on their way from Holland to England in order to emigrate to Pennsylvania (p. 65). But the really significant item in Penn's letter is this explanation: "... for as much as one Mitchell, their agent has contracted with me for them for lands, etc." The "Mitchell" to whom Penn refers was a man named Franz Ludwig Michel from Bern, Switzerland. It is impossible, however, to connect Michel directly with the settlement of the first Mennonites in the Willow Street area of what was then Chester County in 1710. (Lancaster County was carved out of Chester in 1729.) Furthermore, as Martin H. Brackbill has ably demonstrated, the "Swissers" who came to Willow Street were Palatine Mennonites, not refugees directly from Switzerland. This point was carefully made by the earliest historians, both Mennonite and non-Mennonite. We have already quoted Rupp, 1844. Benjamin Eby moved from Lancaster County to Ontario in 1807, a young bridegroom of twenty-two. In 1841 Bishop Eby wrote as follows of the first Willow Street settlers: "In the year 1709 a number of families came from the Palatinate, families which descended of exiled Swiss, and settled in Lancaster County." (Further evidence, however, has compelled historians to date this immigration to Lancaster County as of 1710.)

WE ARE indebted to no less a man than Penn himself for a description of what southeastern Pennsylvania was like in those days. Writing in 1683 Penn declared: "Of living creatures, fish, fowl, and the beasts of the wood, here are divers sorts, some for food and profit . . . the elk, as big as a small ox; deer, bigger than ours [in England]; beaver, raccoon, rabbits, squirrels . . . some eat young bear and commend it. Of fowl of the land, there is the turkey, (forty and fifty pounds weight) which is very great; pheasants, heath birds, pigeons and partridges in abundance . . . Of fish, sturgeon, herring, rock, shad, catshead, eel, trout, salmon, etc.

"The fruits which I find in the woods, are the black and white mulberry, chestnut, walnut, plums, strawberries, cranberries, burtleberries, and grapes of divers sorts. The red grape [is] called by ignorance, the fox grape" (Rupp, 79, 80 n).

A CENTURY after the 1710 settlement, Conyngham, a local historian, described the Willow Street area as "a rich, limestone country, beautifully adorned with sugar maple, hickory, and black and white walnut, on the border of a delightful stream, abounding in the finest trout . . . The water of the Pequea was clear, cold, and transparent; and grape vines and clematis intertwining among the lofty branches of the majestic buttonwood, formed a pleasant retreat from the noon beams of the summer sun" (Smith, 152).

MANY OF the Mennonites who fled from the area of Zurich to the Palatinate, and some of whom later emigrated to Pennsylvania, were quite poor. The Mennonites of the Netherlands aided them graciously and generously. In response to this help, a number of Mennonite men, en route to Pennsylvania, wrote a letter of thanks to their Dutch brethren on June 24, 1710, and thereby provided us with the names of at least six of the party. This letter, translated from the German, reads as follows:

Worthy and Beloved Friends:

Besides wishing you all temporal and eternal welfare we have wanted to inform you how that we have safely received financial aid which the dear friends out of their great kindness of heart have given toward our journey; and this kind contribution came very opportunely to

us, because the journey cost more than we had imagined. God bless the worthy friends in time and eternity; and whatever may be of good for the body and wholesome for the soul may the merciful God give them and continually be and remain their rewarder. But of our journey we report that we were detained almost ten weeks, before we were put on board ship; but then we actually entered into the ship on the 24th, were well lodged and well cared for, and we have been informed we will set sail from here next Saturday or Sunday for Gravesend, and wait there for the Russian convoy. God be with us and bring us to land in America as happily as here in England. Herewith we commend you to the merciful God; and, should we not see one another in this life, may God permit us to see one another in eternity. Herewith we commend you all to the merciful God (together with a courteous greeting from us all) and remain your true friends.

London, the 27th of June 1710.

MARTIN OBERHOLTZER
MARTIN KUENDIG
CHRISTIAN HERR
JACOB MUELLER
MARTIN MEILI
HANS HERR

MARTIN H. BRACKBILL has presented a convincing case for the probability of Hans Herr the signer being Hans Herr, Jr., as well as the owner of the John Heere tract of 530 acres at Willow Street. (Smith, Mennonite Immigration, p. 153) This John Herr [Jr.] is identified in a document made in Rotterdam on June 21, 1709, as a Palatine, and is listed as "Heer, John and vrouw, three children." Brackbill reports also that according to tradition, three of the children of John Herr, Jr., were born in Europe. The Herr Genealogical Record of 1908 indicates that John Herr, Jr. (1685-1765) and his wife Francis were the parents of six children (p. 2), but of only one is the birthdate known. Hans is, of course, a German name for John. So Hans Herr, the 1710 signer, could have

been either the bishop-father (1639-1725) or his son, John Jr. (1685-1765).

NO RECORD has been preserved of the immigration date of Bishop Hans Herr. Historians generally assume that he came with his son John and the other pioneers in 1710. A letter of July, 1711, refers to "six or seven families of Palatines at Pequea" (Smith Mennonite Immigration, p. 155), although the ship on which the Pequea settlers crossed the ocean had on it some twenty Swiss Mennonites from the Palatinate (Brackbill, Historical Papers, Lancaster County Historical Society, 1935, p. 73). The name of the ship was Mary Hope, with John Annis as Master. Annis sailed from Gravesend, England, with ninety-four on board on June 29, 1710, spent many weeks on the ocean and one week in the Delaware Bay, and finally landed at Philadelphia on September 23, 1710. A Quaker Minister, Thomas Chalkley, and a Reformed minister, Samuel Gulden, kept diaries of the voyage. The diary of the Quaker minister mentions the English services which he conducted each Sunday and each Thursday, and a single service which he held on the deck for the German Palatines, on which occasion someone interpreted for him. He also reported the impressions of the Palatines when they got to Pennsylvania. They were, he said, "wonderfully pleased with the country, mightily admiring the pleasantness and fertility of it" (Landis, Lancaster Mennonite Conference, p. 50).

Beginnings in the Pequea Valley

SOME OF the Mennonites who reached the port of Philadelphia in September, 1710, hurried out to the area in which the present Willow Street Mennonite meetinghouse now stands. There they purchased ten thousand acres of land for £500, which would amount to about a quarter-dollar per acre (older historians estimate it at sixteen cents per acre, more recent ones at about thirty-eight cents per acre). The agent of these Palatine Mennonites was a Swiss, John Rudolph Bundeli, who lived in Pennsylvania from 1704, but who later returned to his native Switzerland. On October 10, 1710, a warrant was issued to the following persons for this ten thousand acres: John Rudolph Bundeli, Martin Kendig, Jacob Miller, Hans Graeff, Hans Herr, Christian Herr, Martin Oberholtzer,

Hans Funck, Michael Oberholtzer, and one [Wendell] Bauman, "Swissers, lately arrived in this Province" (Rupp, pp. 76-78, Smith, 152, Landis, 52). The land was surveyed October 23, 1710, and was divided among the settlers the following spring (April 27, 1711). Those finally taking up the land were not quite the same men as those to whom it was originally warranted, but John Herr, [Jr.] and Christian Herr are on both lists. Evidently John Herr, Jr., was commonly known by his German name Hans (like his bishop-father) for Penn referred a year or two later to "John Rudolph Bundeli, Hans Herr, and divers other Germans, late inhabitants in or near the Palatinate of the Rhine" (Rupp, p. 85).

J. DANIEL RUPP (1803-1878), a learned scholar of eastern Pennsylvania, a man who read eight or nine languages, the "father of local history in the southeastern counties of Pennsylvania," diligently collected every scrap of information he could on the pioneer settlers of Lancaster County. Rupp could easily have talked to the grandchildren of the 1710 settlers. (The present writer, for example, had long conversations with Elihu Clemmer (1842-1938), father of Bishop A. G. Clemmer (1867-1939) and son of Deacon Abraham M. Clemmer (1793-1879). In 1844, Rupp, then a man of forty-one, described the first Pequea settlers as "... several families from the Palatinate, descendants of the distressed Swiss Mennonites ... With this colony came Hans Herr [1639-1725], a Mennonite minister, who dispensed to them the word of life. The Mennonites were of course the first regularly organized denomination in the county" (History of Lancaster County, p. 456).

C. HENRY SMITH, whom Harold S. Bender described as the Dean of American Mennonite historians, traces carefully the early years of the Pequea settlement in his monograph, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania*, 1929. Two of Bishop Hans Herr's sons bought land in 1710: Hans [Jr.] and Christian (p. 152). A warrant for additional plots of land was taken out September 22, 1717, and on this list of purchasers are the names of two more of the bishop's sons: Emanuel and Abraham (p. 157). In 1719 land was purchased for Isaac Herr who was explicitly described as a brother of Hans Herr [Jr.] and of Abraham (p. 169). (See also

Brackbill, *Historical Papers*, 1935, p. 98). The *Genealogical Record of the Herrs* (1908) lists seven sons and one daughter to Rev. Hans Herr (1639-1725) and his wife Elizabeth Kendig (1644-1730): Abraham (born 1660); Rev. Christian (died 1749); John (Hans), Jr. (1685-1765); Samuel (born 1686); Emanuel (1689-1740); Henry (died 1785); and Maria Brackbill, (died 1725, the same year as her father). Christian the minister attended the 1725 Conference of Mennonite ministers which was held in the Franconia district, possibly at Hereford, at which time the Pennsylvania Mennonites adopted the Dordrecht Confession of Faith, which had been drawn up in 1632 in the Netherlands. In the record his name is given as Christian Heer (Wenger, *Franconia History*, p. 318).

IN THE first assessment list of "Conestoga Township", made in 1718, and which included the Pequea settlement, we find over sixty named persons whom C. Henry Smith is confident were Mennonites (*Mennonite Immigration*, pp. 158:165). Included in this list were five Herrs: (1) Christian Herr, the Mennonite minister; (2) Hans Herr [Jr.]; (3) [Bishop] Hans Herr; (4) Immanuel Herr; and (5) Abraham Herr.

Messenger Sent to Europe

FOR THE first winter the 1710 settlers probably erected log dwellings, and when they were well established, they constructed better homes. How often their thoughts went back to the Palatinate where so many of their relatives and loved ones were living in less than ideal conditions! In the course of time they called a meeting of the church to discuss what to do about making known to their fellow Mennonists in the Pfalz (Palatinate) what a delightful land of freedom and opportunity they had found in the New World of America. Rupp reports how lots were cast to select a brother to return to Europe. To their dismay the lot fell on their aged bishop, Hans Herr [Sr.]. Although he would have been ready to undertake the long and hazardous journey, everyone was relieved when Martin Kendig offered himself as a substitute for the mission. It is said that when Kendig reached the friends in Europe he reported in German, "Ich hab' 'n Haus vun lauder Niss Bloeck'" (My house is constructed exclusively of walnut logs). This would have indicated to his Palatine acquaintances what excellent soil Penn-



sylvania had. (This anecdote of the lot was repeated in many later histories: Mombert, 1869, Harris, 1872, and Ira D. Landis, 1956.)

BISHOP HANS HERR is described as "of medium height, with long grey hair curled under at the ends and parted in the middle, . . . heavy brows, dark hazel eyes, aquiline nose, mouth rather small with heavy lips, complexion florid, with full beard covering the face, the whole lighted by a countenance in which sweetness and austerity were gracefully blended. Clad in the coarsest homespun, his feet shod with wood, he at last arrived in the far-off land in which some strange prophecy told him he and his people would be prosperous and happy, however poor when arriving." (C. H. Martin, Papers Read Before the Lancaster County Historical Society, 1925).

The 1719 Stone House

IN THE year 1719 Christian Herr, the son of Bishop Hans, erected on his 530 acres a beautiful stone structure which served as his home for his remaining thirty years, as well as a Mennonite meetinghouse for well over a century following. The Willow Street Mennonites built a new meetinghouse near their present so-called "Brick" meetinghouse in 1849. This Brick Meetinghouse adjoins the ancient "God's Acre" in which Hans Herr's body was interred following his death, which C. H. Martin gives as October 11, 1725, "in his 87th year" (1925 Papers, p. 82). Theodore W. Herr, genealogist, gives his birthdate as September 16, 1639. Both these birth and death dates are of course "Old Style", which means that they are given as per the Julian Calendar which was used in British lands until 1752 when twelve days were lifted from the calendar after the Gregorian calendar of 1582 was adopted. (In 1582 the Gregorian calendar had lifted but ten days out of the calendar, but if the Julian calendar were in use in 1970 it would be thirteen days "wrong". September 16, 1970, Julian or "Old Style" would be September 3, 1970, "New Style").

THE LAND on which the 1719 stone building stands is a part of the farm now owned by D. Mark Huber, and it was earlier owned by his father, David H. Huber, and by his father, David Huber, in

turn. In 1968 D. Mark Huber prepared a paper on the famous 1719 Herr House for presentation to the Lancaster Rotary Club. In this paper we find the following beautiful description: "The Christian Herr house is built of sandstone quarried close to the location of the house, and it was the first substantial house built in the area. Most of the original houses were made of logs. It was used for the Mennonite church services until the time a church was built. It has been passed down (how true I do not know) that these early settlers were friendly with the Indians, and following a very cold night, upon arising in the morning would find Indians lying by the fireplace—which in size is ten feet long, five feet high, and four feet deep. (Using logs eight to nine feet long certainly reduced the wood-cutting chore!) The house is 38 feet by 31 feet, and has a second story and an attic. The steps leading from the second floor to the attic are hand-hewn logs, and all the heavy timbers in the house are hand-hewn. The joists have hand-hewn grooves, and hand-hewn slats wrapped with rye straw and mud were fastened between the joists, and then they were plastered over to make the ceiling. This construction gave good insulation to hold heat on the first floor. A smaller fireplace three and one-half feet high, three and one-half feet deep, and three feet wide, furnished heat for the second floor.

"A cellar in the form of an arch is under about one-half of the house. This masonry work shows there were experienced stone masons among these early settlers. The windows in the cellar are thirty inches wide on the inside, and narrow to a six-inch slit on the outside. Apparently this was for protection in case of an unfriendly Indian attack. It is assumed that the house could have been burnt down, and the settlers would have remained safe in this arched cellar.

"A corner cupboard on the first floor was built around 1790. The house has not been used as a residence for over a hundred years."

A BIBLIOGRAPHY appended to the end of this essay indicates something of the wealth of sources which refer more or less to the 1710 Pequea Mennonite settlement, and/or to the 1719 historic Herr house. But there are many other references. For example, there is a recent (1963) catalogue of the paintings of the disting-



uished artist, Andrew Wyeth, who is himself a descendant of Bishop Hans Herr. The work is entitled, ANDREW WYETH: Dry Brush and Pencil Drawings. No. 6 is the famous 1719 "Hans Herr House," which Wyeth described as "built on a rock formation which makes the building seem as if it's a part of the earth." He also made a sketch of the huge fireplace of the first floor. He refers to the fireplace as "the first thing that hits you as you come in the front door". He describes the large oak beam above the fireplace as being of "a rich smokey color". This same booklet also quotes a letter of Christian Herr, written in 1740 when a snow-storm was raging in the county. Herr reported that his only light

came from the fireplace. He added that the room was "filled with Thirty Indians which made the room smell of bear grease!" On February 11, 1970, Andrew Wyeth graciously made a new water-color painting of the Hans Herr house to be used in this booklet.

BEFORE ME as I write is also the Programme Souvenir which was published in 1910 on the occasion of the dedication of the historical monument and historical tablet in front of the Willow Street or Brick Mennonite Church. Besides much valuable information and many illustrations, the booklet also contains the program which was given in the Brick Meetinghouse on the occasion (September 8, 1910). A half-century later another historical anniversary was celebrated in the same meetinghouse (September 30-October 2, 1960) with many distinguished speakers from the county and Harold S. Bender of Indiana. On this occasion a historical marker was placed near the "Hans Herr House"—for he is said to have lived there with his preacher-son Christian in his latter years. Finally, one of the finest pieces of information on the Pequea settlement of 1710 is Ira D. Landis', "For a Faith's Pure Shrine," in the Mennonite Research Journal (Vol. 1, No. 3, October, 1960).

Restoration Envisioned

IT WAS a joyful word indeed when in 1969 the owner of the farm on which the 1719 Herr dwelling and ancient Mennonite Meetinghouse stands, D. Mark Huber, made known to H. Elvin Herr of the Lancaster Conference Mennonite Historical Society that he was willing to sell an acre of land containing the 1719 stone house and meetinghouse to the Mennonites, who were, as Herr had indicated to him, eager to acquire it. The society in turn quickly decided to meet the purchase price, and the Bishop Board of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference voted their approval immediately. We are confident that the vast Herr clan and the many Mennonites who are deeply grateful for the rich heritage of faith and life symbolized by Bishop Hans Herr and his distinguished son Christian will quickly raise the necessary funds for the purchase and restoration of this historic shrine, the oldest dwelling and meetinghouse in Lancaster County. The present writer is happy to know that through Barbara Herr, wife of Immigrant David Martin and daughter of Abraham Herr, son of Bishop Hans, he too is a lineal descendant of this distinguished Mennonite patriarch.



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