
A Message From Our President

Clyde J Getman

As we look forward to the next couple of years in the Getman Family Association, there are a couple of things I see as important for us.

1. A need to build a database of descendants, with names and addresses of people who are interested in being a part of the association. We have said that all descendants of Frederick Getman (1693 - 1781) and his father Casper Getman (1676 - 1710) are members of the association, However it is more than this. More individuals are needed who are willing and able to accept some of the responsibility for making the business of the association more successful.

Some of the work is related to historical records, finding who has been part of the family. In another version, this newsletter listed some of the descendants, marriages, births, etc., that have been listed and are now posted to the webpage. We have progressed quite well with this aspect since September 2003, when we decided to go forward with the webpage.

2. Another area includes the collection of copies of historical documents, wills of the early family members, pension applications for veterans of the Revolutionary War and their widows. These can tell us even more about some of the early families.

3. There is a need to locate and record graves of family members in the cemeteries of the Mohawk Valley.

4. The burial ground at the family homestead needs cleaning, resetting of gravestones, and general restoration with ongoing maintenance. This is a project in which our association can take a leading part.

5. There are a number of family Bibles, whose location is no longer known. It will be helpful to locate, identify, and scan the appropriate pages to make the historical family material available to a wider public.

All of us can identify some of our Getman relatives, and send their name, address and some info to the historical committee. The committee will be pleased to follow up when we have received this information. Each of us is able to check our own backgrounds for at least a couple of generations back and add it to what is known. Since the 1975 publication of The Getman Family Genealogy, 1710-

1974 and the 1982 Supplement, there have been two generations of descendants about which little is known.

Within the past month I have been in contact with a lady who may be the last survivor of the 23 grandchildren of my great grandparents Jerome Hudson Getman (1856-1920) and Charlotte Ann Getman (1861-1917), children respectively of Stephen Getman 1825 and Peter Getman 1829, and descended from Abraham 1792, Christian 1772, Christian 1734, and Frederick 1693. Hopefully I will be able to meet with her soon and learn some of her story. Others can be doing similar activities. It is not as hard as it might seem.

Family Bibles Why are they so Important ?

Before the advent of the internet, the most sought after genealogical document may have been the family bible. Why was this so important, and does it matter today?

Lets start by putting old bibles in context. Most families could not afford a library, many were unable to read and the cost of a book was tremendous, especially when a family was engaged in subsistence farming or a low paying labor intensive employment. When a bible was purchased it was a large enough investment that it automatically became a family heirloom.

In addition to the relative value of the family bible they included bound pages created for the sole purpose of recording births, marriages and deaths. Families readily recognized the importance of this record and began to record these benchmark names and dates. Families who were unable to read and write would often have their clergyman or other educated person record information for them. Inclusion of the information in the bible vastly increased it's value as an heirloom. Traditionally the family bible would be passed to the oldest surviving son who would continue the record, either in the original bible or in a new one for his family.

In many cases the family bible is the only written record of genealogical information. Because of fire, moisture and neglect, many church records have been destroyed and still other genealogical data was never recorded in a central location because a family had no church affiliation. The end result is that the historical family bible often remains the only reliable source of critical information.