



Backenstoss

FAMILY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

"For the perpetuation of the history and traditions of the family and its social enjoyment"

VOLUME No. 10

SUMMER 2001

*Plan to attend our 69th Reunion Sunday, August 5,
and celebrate the
Family's first 258 years in America!*

This year's gathering will be held Sunday, August 5, at the Hereford Township Park, Zionsville, PA.

The schedule this year will be as follows:

10:00 - 12:00 Noon	Arrive early for socializing, quiet times, or games before the meeting begins. Registration Sign in, get your name tag and get acquainted.
12:00 Noon	Opening. Following the opening, there will be a break for lunch, games, and socializing.
2:00 P.M.	Business Meeting Call to Order of Annual Meeting, Invocation, brief reports of Secretary, Treasurer, Historian and President, and New Business.
2:45 P.M.	Games and prizes
3:00 P.M.	Adjournment of reunion, followed by a meeting of the Board of Directors.

Picnic fare will be provided – hot dogs, sandwiches and assorted sodas. We are suggesting that you bring chips, cake, pie, other snacks and goodies in quantities that can be shared. Remember place settings for each family member. It has also been suggested that we bring along our favorite recipe, (and the food itself, if practical, for us to sample), to exchange with one another. If making photocopies of the recipe is not convenient, use 3" x 5" cards.

**Recognized
Family Spellings:**

BACASTOW
BACKENSTO
BACKENSTOE
BACKENSTOES
BACKENSTOS
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Historian's Report

First, the good news! The Final Addendum to the 1993 Family History should be at the printer by the end of the year. No, the last 50 copies of the Family History have not been sold, but life moves on.

Now, the bad news! October 1, 2001 is the cut-off date to receive information for the final Addendum. Please implant that date in your mind.

What's needed? The help of all family members to make the Final Addendum as accurate and up-to-date as possible.

Who are family members? By definition in our Constitution — any person having the name Backenstoss (or recognized variations), or being in any way related, either by descent or intermarriage, is regarded as a member of the family.

Details desired? Full names with birthplace & birthdate. Marriage place & date. Same for spouse. Education with graduation or degree year. Employment information. Share anything of interest.

What is a Family History? They are about you and your family. Your genealogy. Your heritage. I'd like to brag that all with our family-name relative are in our records. I know some are missing. Help me place the missing members. If you don't know whether your children and grandchildren are in the Family History, please ask me.

Do you want a Final Addendum? It's not for sale. It is FREE to all those owning the 1993 book. It is an extension of that book and can not stand alone.

How to obtain the Family History? By one, only from the Family Historian. (See details later)

Why own a Family History? It's a rare book for only a limited number were produced. The cost is low and potential value is great — especially in eventual sentimental value to your children and grandchildren. Since the world population is over 500 million, less than one in a million can own our Family History.

Will the family concept survive? I hope so! But the doom-sayers are at work. We are in the 3rd century of our ancestors coming to America. As most immigrants, they left their birthplace looking for land and opportunity where their God-given family could find unlimited opportunity. These centuries have produced tremendous changes. Someone defined these centuries as dominated by chemistry, then technology, and now bio-technology.

To our fingerprints we can add a blueprint called DNA. Predictions assure us that "designer children" will be a real option for families. When the first test-tube baby was born in 1978 there was a big uproar. Now thousands of babies are born each year by in vitro fertilization. Reports state over 200,000 test-tube babies are alive today. With half the marriages ending in divorce, think of that impact on families. Now nearly half our states recognize same-sex marriages --- can they relate to families? I read recently that a comic book brought far more at auction than a Bible of historic vintage. Considering all of this, how priceless will our Family History become?

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ORAL HISTORY - THE BACKENSTOSS FAMILY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

by Elwood Bruce Backensto

Oral histories became the vogue in the late twentieth century. Oral histories are recorded by a scribe asking another person's recollections of the subject matter — often resulting in a biography or the historical development of an organization. This oral history is unique in that the scribe/interviewer and responder are one and the same. (The formation of the Family Association is described on page 345 of the 1993 Family History)

In the Beginning

I recall my parents took my sister and I to a picnic in a large park in Kutztown, PA. I was barely school age. We got there by car. It was the longest car ride of my life — probably less than 20 miles. There were swings to swing on, see-saws to ride on, things to climb on, kids to run with, and food to eat. This may have been the day the Family Association began.

My father, Lloyd Benjamin Backensto (1893-1972), made sure his family attended every annual gathering. It wasn't until years later, I realized my dad was the backbone of this Association. He chaired the committee that wrote our Constitution and Bylaws. He served 33 years as Treasurer, 4 years as President, 3 years as Honorary President, doubling as assistant historian from 1961 until his death.

Practically every Director's meeting or planning session through 1983 was held at my parent's house. Even though my father died in 1972, the meetings were held in our Emmaus, PA home — a convenient central location. By that time I was living in Woodbury, NJ but traveled home for the Directors gathering. Mother served cookies or pretzels with cider, mint tea and/or soda refreshments. Starting with Hon. John E. Backenstoe as President in 1984, most of the Directors meetings have been held at the home of the current President.

Entertainment

My father was in charge of arranging the entertainment at the annual meetings during the early years. The entertainment usually contained brief remarks by a prominent person as well as some musical renditions. Having learned to play the trumpet at age 8, I was pressed into service to play a solo at Bellemans Church, probably 1930. In 1932 at Schaefferstown, PA, I played a "cornet solo" on my trumpet and Dr. D. Lee Backenstose gave the "oration". By 1938 I was preparing to be a senior in High School and became less receptive to being the featured soloist, so I recommended the Four Heralds entertain instead. The Heralds were a trumpet quartet I organized to play at an important Boy Scout event in Smyrna, DE. We played over 100 engagements in three years, including the 1938 reunion at the Western Salisbury Church near Emmaus.

The First Family History

Our 1949 Family History shows a picture of the large group attending the 1934 reunion at the Western Salisbury Church. My sister and I are sitting in the front row. I can identify my parents, my grandfather, cousins, aunts, and uncles in that photograph.

Prof. Albert H. Gerberich was the Association's first Historian. My father encouraged him to write our first Family History, since he had already done other histories. The Family Association commissioned him to do so.

However, it was my father that arranged for the printing of the book, getting the bronze blocks for the pictures in the publication, as well as the copy of the Constitution and Bylaws and list of Association members with their addresses included in the book. The members numbered 287 in 1949. Dad also handled the sales of the book until all copies were sold.

The Addressograph

The Addressograph was the state-of-the-art device for addressing envelopes. An Addressograph was in our home for dad to use. It required metal plates with raised letters of members names and addresses. Envelopes were placed on one side of the machine and the metal plate on the other side. Carbon paper was placed between the two components which when pressed together manually addressed the envelope. As a youngster, I often helped dad with sealing envelopes for quarterly lodge statements or mailings for several other organizations.

Away from Home

While attending nearby Lehigh University, I was expected home on family reunion weekends so that our family presence could be noted. I married graduation weekend and moved to Woodbury, NJ. We always planned to visit home on family reunion weekends which continued after my sons became part of the family. Studying chemical engineering, I joined

ORAL HISTORY (continued)

the American Chemical Society (ACS). In the national register for the ACS I found the name of Dr. Alois C. Baggenstoss. I contacted him who, at that time, owned Gaston Chemicals, Inc. in Gastonia, NC. (See pages 2 & 326 of 1993 History for more about him) Our correspondence was turned over to my father serving as assistant historian for the BFA. Then during my 39-year career with Mobil R & D Corp., my work took me to most company installations in the USA and around the world. I checked every phone book available in these locations for family-name spellings. Again, such information was relayed to the BFA.

Visits Abroad

Knowing that August Baggenstoss of Herligerg, SW had attended our family reunion in 1958, I contacted him on my first trip to Switzerland (see page 383 of 1993 Family History). He became a gracious host, showing me family-related sites as well as other parts of beautiful SW. He had his Stansstad line professionally researched and gave me the information on pages 382-4 of our 1993 history.

Whenever a weekend day was available to me in Europe, I visited with August. In 1965, accompanied by my wife, August took us to his home in Herrliberg specifically to see his son Thomas. At age 7, Thomas had contracted a high fever and was confined to a dark room till the fever subsided. A small red light was the only illumination to see this sick boy.

Backenstoss in Germany

While visiting the Mobil Wilhelmshaven refinery in Germany in 1975, I located Adolf Backenstoss of Karlsruhe-Auerbach. An associate at the

refinery contacted him and arranged for a meeting. We were given a royal welcome. Adolf is dG1 dH2. On page 388 of the 1993 History and is responsible for the research on pages 386-389.

Our Historians

Dr. Gerberich, as mentioned, was the first BFA historian (see E2 F1. Page 142 of 1993 History) until 1950. He was followed by prof. Matthew J. A. Smith (D5 E1 F1. Page 178) through 1962. Next, he was followed by Ellwood J. Schantz (E5. Page 193) whose death was announced at the 1969 reunion. By this time I had supplied historical information to my dad for the historians. Yet, year after year, the annual historian's reports sounded like this: "No new information has come to my attention, so I have nothing to report." At this point, probably initiated by disgust, I volunteered to be the family historian.

The 1973 History

There was work to be done. Our initial Family history was now 20 years of age. Half the information in it was unconnected. The original family spelling Gabbenstoss had been ignored. Information on our roots was sketchy.

The decision was made to update our history. Members previously uninformed had to be contacted. As new data found its way to the historian, an updated history took form. Book publications were expensive. How could the publication costs be subsidized? How many copies were needed? Our mailing list had grown by several hundred more. We asked relatives to underwrite the projected history at \$10 per copy. When 200 books had a sponsor, the project was finalized by the end of 1972. In 1973, 500 copies were printed. Within 10 years that

supply was depleted.

Decreased Responsibilities

After my dad retired, my mother encouraged him to reduce his activity in his organizations. At the end of 1965 he resigned as President of the BFA and encouraged Lester R. Backenstoss (G1., page 137 of 1993 history), who became a Director in 1961, to assume the leadership. Lester served as President through 1973, and in honorary position through 1993.

At this same time the BFA needed a secretary. My father recruited my cousin, Ethelmae M. Marushak (F2 G1., page 181 of 1993 book), who has been serving honorably in that capacity to this day. Also, when ill health caused our Treasurer of 5 years, Eldon H. Shelly (F5. On page 190 of the 1993 history), to resign, my father recruited another cousin of mine, Russell B. Backenstoss, to take over those duties in 1967. Russell (G3., page 185 of 1993 book) continued as Treasurer to 1988 and as a Director through 2000.

Reunion Announcements

From the beginning, Association members received a notification of the annual gathering. It was a half-page pamphlet, printed on both sides. It contained: the date and place of the reunion, program information, a brief President's message, and the list of Officers and Directors. The current historian was granted space for the short report. The "did you know?" feature was used when space allowed. Our mailing list was 800 in 1982. As more and more information was gathered, the historian's report became a separate full-sized page printed on both sides in 1983.

Featured by the historian was: a visit with August Baggenstoss of

Enclosed is my check to B.F.A. for support in 2001 (dues contribution)

\$ _____

Name _____
Street Address _____
City, State and Zip _____

To: Warren B. Bagenstose, Treasurer
7523 Stein Road, Zionsville, PA 18092

TENNESSEE BAGGENSTOSS FAMILY REUNION Labor Day Weekend

For the past 25 years the Bagenstoss Family of Tennessee has celebrated its family reunion in Tracy City, TN at the home of Mary Elizabeth (Aunt Missie) Bagenstoss. It is normally a three-day event beginning Friday night of Labor Day weekend and ending Sunday night. This year was no different with the exception that the Cardwell family was not in attendance due to the health of James C. Cardwell. Also we lost Robert W. Bagenstoss, the last of the six brothers of the Tennessee clan. This year the third generation organized and took over the preparation of the food that is necessary to feed a crowd of 50 people.

Again this year we had Bagenstoss family members from Minnesota. Lois (Bagenstoss) and Ed Schlichting. We are always glad when other members of our extended family can be with us. If you'd like to come, let us know and we will add your name to the pot (barbecue grill). We'd love to have some of you Pennsylvania kin come and see us.

Reported by John E. Bagenstoss, 723 Dogwood Drive, Monteagle, TN 37356-2027

MINNESOTA BRANCH REUNION 2000

Our 2000 Reunion is now history. We had a beautiful day with 121 present. This is down some from previous years possibly because of the change in location and other activities of a busy early summer weekend. The pot luck was as usual plentiful and delicious. After the business meeting the children were entertained by the young adults of the David Bagenstoss family. There were games, contests and prizes for everyone the remainder of the afternoon. They have such a good time and look forward to all the camaraderie. The adults enjoy watching all the activities and spend time visiting.

We did have as our guests, Dr. Arthur & Lee Backensto from Crown Point, IN. A most welcome surprise! We also had a few first-timers attend who have been on our roster for years. Good to see new faces.

We did have election of officers and a change at the helm. Glen Bagenstoss has served as President for the past 25 years. I have had my job since our inception 28 years ago. Time for a change! Results:

President: Leah Rodriquez, 23499, 3rd Avenue, Mankato, MN 56001
Sec.-Trea.: Lana Lewer, 12326 Zea Street, N.W., Coon Rapids, MN 55433

Both girls are the daughters of Kelly & LuAnn Bagenstoss from the line of August Bagenstoss via Fred Bagenstoss.

Lois Schlichting has consented to stay on as historian for now. She wants to continue working with Woody Backensto until the new Addendum is published. We also established a Board of Directors, consisting of the past officers, namely: Glen Bagenstoss, Joyce Lobitz, Lois Schlichting & Leon Bagenstoss. I'm sure all will work out just fine. The new officers seem to be coming in with lots of enthusiasm, and we really need some young blood in charge.

I am sending a check for the Pennsylvania dues collected and an extra \$100.00 from the Minnesota Branch to your Treasurer. We hope this helps out with your expenses.

Reported by Joyce Lobitz

(More) ORAL HISTORY (continued)

Rafz, SW in 1985, "Did You Know?" in 1986, a relationship chart appeared in 1987, original Backenstoss land warrants in 1988, and family shields in 1989.

New Newsletter Format

In 1989 our President, Henry B. Backenstoss (E5 Fl., page 200 of 1993 book), suggested expansion of our Newsletter to eight pages with the intent to add interest by using photographs. Our mailing list had approached 1,000. The mobility of members, as opposed to the stability of permanent addresses prior to WW II, made it difficult to maintain an accurate mailing list.

The 250th Anniversary

The year 1993 became very special — the 250th anniversary of our forefather's arrival in America. Three major events were scheduled to commemorate the year. First, with limited forewarning, a 432-page, extensive *Backenstoss-Baggenstoss Family History* was published to report another 20 years of more family-name research by this historian since our previous updated History. Second, a "Roots Trip" was organized by the historian. On

May 19-26, a 48-member group enjoyed a once-in-a-life-time trip to Switzerland to visit sites in Rafz, Gersau, Constance, Luzern, & Zurich; at most locations we were welcomed by our Baggenstoss relatives. And, Third, a special-event annual reunion was held in August at Schaefferstown, PA.

By this time our list for mailing passed the 1,200 mark. The special year brought in late family data. As a result of this I was moved to publish a 90-page paperback Addendum to the 1993 book. The Addendum was dedicated to our gracious Swiss hosts during that 1993 trip and sent free to all owners of our 1993 History.

Coda

After over 30 years of service as the family historian, I have concluded it is time to retire. During those years, many technological changes have brought about different communities, philosophies, and lifestyles. Although not all the 1993 books have been sold, I feel that the desires of our founding fathers, especially my dad, of the BFA be honored. They said the purpose of this Association "shall be for the perpetuation of the

history and tradition of the family."

Therefore, my retirement gift becomes my paid-up legacy — a Final Addendum to our 1993 Family history (which will include all the material in the 1995 paperback Addendum. In others words, this is my "swan song."

I visualize another 400-page, hardbound book made to match the original; a free copy of the Addendum goes to each owner of the 1993 Family History. Unfortunately, the Final Addendum can not stand alone, nor is it for sale. It is an extension of the 1993 book, and by definition contains "additions and corrections." Hence, the 1993 book contains "only part of the story" and the Addendum "the rest of the story."

Let it be known that family histories are "compiled by the family." The historian is the editor that finalizes the compilation. God willing, the Final Addendum will be printed in 2002. May God bless all family members who contributed to this history, and may God grant compassion to family members who failed to respond to our call for help.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Our original family line in Switzerland still exists in Rafz. The newest Baggenstoss in Luco, born 10-2-2000, grandson of Kurt & Margrit Baggenstoss who attended our 1996 reunion at the Berks Leisure Area, Reading, PA.

- Item from the *Hearthstone Town and Country*, a Pennsburg, PA weekly paper:
From Our Early files

90 Years Ago — Week of February 8, 1908

Henry Walker, of Emmaus, underwent an operation under Drs. M. J. Backenstoe and I. J. Weida of that place and a splinter nearly two inches long was removed from his abdomen. Mr. Walker does not know how the splinter lodged in his abdomen, but for the past twenty-two years he experienced pain in that part of his body and it is believed that the splinter had been lodging there all this time.

- Our Family Historian has two daughters-in-law with the same name: Sandra Lynn Backensto.
- Frank M. Backenstoe of Columbus, OH died 1896 at age 23. Several months before, he took out a \$5,000 life insurance policy with his parents as beneficiaries, with a forfeiture in case of suicide. Later the insurance company requested an autopsy because suicide by poisoning was suspect, even though doctors declared death was by natural causes. Apparently, the day before, Backenstoe was overheard asking his barber the price of shaving a corpse. When he was told between \$2.50 and \$5.00, he said, "Well, I'll just fool you and get shaved for 10-cents right now." The autopsy showed no poison but a blood clot in the brain. Apparently the insurance was paid.