



Baggenstoss Shield

Baggenstoss

FAMILY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

FAMILY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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

VOLUME No. 11

SUMMER 2004

*Plan to attend our 72nd Reunion Sunday, August 8,
and celebrate the
Family's first 261 years in America!*

This year's gathering will be held Sunday, August 8, 2004 at the Hereford Township Park, located on the Seisholtzville Road, between Hereford (Rts. 100 & 29) and Seisholtzville, PA (see map).

The schedule this year will be as follows:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 12:00 Noon | Registration |
| 12:30 P.M. | Opening. Following the opening there will be a break for lunch, games and socializing. |
| 2:00 P.M. | Program. Mr. Troy Boyer, Hornsmilth. |
| 3:00 P.M. | Business Meeting
Call to Order of Annual Meeting, Invocation, brief reports of Secretary, Treasurer, Historian and President, and New Business. |
| 4:00 P.M. | Adjournment of reunion, followed by a meeting of the Board of Directors. |

Picnic fare will be provided – hot dogs and assorted sodas. We suggest you bring chips, cake, pie, other snacks and goodies in quantities that can be shared. Remember place settings for each family member and serving utensils for covered dishes. Family members are encouraged to bring along a favorite recipe to exchange. If making photocopies of the recipe is not convenient, use 3" x 5" cards.

**Recognized
Family Spellings:**

BACASTOW
BACKENSTO
BACKENSTOE
BACKENSTOES
BACKENSTOS
BACKENSTOSE
BACKENSTOSS
BACKENSTOW
BAGENSTOES
BAGENSTOS
BAGENSTOSE
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BAGGENSTOS
BAGGENSTOSS

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J. Harold Backenstoe
Ronnie Backenstoe
Elwood B. Backensto
Stanley P. Backenstoss, 2nd
Miriam Bagenstose
Dawn Rosenbaum
Newsletter Editor
Brian W. Bagenstose
*Directors

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello to all members of the Backenstoss Family Association of America.

This year's reunion will be held at Hereford Park on August 8th. As a slight change from the past, the official start is scheduled for 12:00 noon. Originally, we had hoped to hold the reunion at Belleman's Church in Berks County, near where the immigrant Hans Ulrich Baggenstoss settled, but that option proved unfeasible. Directions to Hereford Park can be found on the back of this newsletter. Hereford Park sports ample fields for various sports, as well as tennis and basketball facilities. The pavilion provides plenty of shade and there will be a grill in operation should anyone need to cook or heat anything on site. The Association supplies general picnic fare, such as hot dogs and soda. Additionally there is also a potluck component, with each family generally bringing a dish to share. With our Pennsylvania German heritage still with us, these dishes are usually very tasty. While the Association tries to bring extra plates and utensils, it is advised that each family bring what they need.

On the business side, the Directors are elected each year at the reunion. New participants for the Board of Directors or those willing to serve in support roles are always welcome. Anyone who is interested in joining the Board of Directors or is willing to serve the Association in some other capacity is encouraged to come to the reunion, or if that is not possible, contact one of the current Directors listed herein.

Anyone having information to report to the Historian is encouraged to send it in to him or bring it to the reunion. With Backenstoss descendants in nearly every state, including some which have not been connected to any established lineages, the Historian needs your help to improve and update the family records. The family books published by our previous historian, Elwood "Woody" Backensto, will forevermore provide a useful and enjoyable reference for us and our descendants. Our current and future historians will add to this rich legacy. Obviously, the more accurate and detailed the information we can provide now, the more useful these books will be. Additionally, from a financial standpoint, each year the Association spends money on many newsletter which are returned as undeliverable, so each address that can be updated translates to a direct savings for the Association.

As always, submissions or ideas for next year's newsletter are welcome. Please consider the newsletter for any family stories, announcements, traditional recipes, etc. Submissions should be made to the editor by April 15 each year.

Finally, please remember the Association survives solely through the generosity of its members. So, if possible, please consider helping the Association by paying the voluntary dues if you have not already done so.

I look forward to seeing all of you who can attend the reunion.

Jon Backenstose

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Historian' Report
2004

As a new historian who has never really worked in the field, I proceeded to my duties with a certain nonchalance that soon evaporated. As time progressed, I began to realize with increasing comprehension what an extraordinary job "Woody" Backensto has done over these many, many years. It was obviously a labor of love. It was also a true scholarly achievement. Our family has the benefit of thousands of hours of dedicated research. We should be very grateful indeed. Now having said that, I confess that I feel like the guy who replaced Knute

Historian's Report
(continued)

Rockne as the Notre Dame football coach. How can you live up to those accomplishments? I am not so sure anybody can. As a result I am appealing to the membership for volunteers to form a historical committee in an effort to continue the history of our family. If you are interested, please contact me. Here are the milestones of the family that I have received. Obviously, there are many more that have not been recorded. We can't put it in the history unless you send it to us.

DEATHS

Ray Albert Backensto, 86, August 16, 2003, Lehigh Valley Hosp., Lehigh County, Navy Seaman First Class, WWII Member St. Stephens Lutheran Church, 2 children

Roland (Ronald) Glenn Bagenstose, 68, October 6, 2003, Reading Hospital, Korean War Veteran, Boy Scout Leader, 4 children

Lilian Koons Backenstoe, 94, November 6, 2003, born 12-27-1909, graduate Wilson College, Librarian, married to Joseph Dungan Moore, 2 children

Daniel C. Bagenstose, 56, September 30, 2003, Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania, Office Manager, graduate of the Reading Business Institute. Married to Mary Louise Bauer - 2 children

John W. Backensto, 91, December 31, 2003, North Annville Township, Lebanon County. He and his wife, LaVaun (Kohli), were house parents for the Milton Hershey School, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Merritt K. Stoudt, 79, January 24, 2004, Dauberville, PA, son of the late Ammon D. & Laura Bagenstose Stoudt), 3 children, member of Salem Church, he was a 50 year member of the Central Berks Lions Club where he served as Tail-Twister

Edgar Miles Backenstoe, Jr., 88, February 20, 2004, Country Meadows, Bethlehem Township, PA, 20 years U.S. Air Force, 32 months overseas WWII, married to Olive A. Remaly, 2 children

Donald Bagenstose, 85, April 20, 2004, West Reading, PA, was primary agent for the Northwestern Life Insurance Company and a Berks County Commissioner for 16 years. He also served on the West Reading Borough Council and was Borough tax collector for four years. In 1995, he retired as the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania State Public School Building & Higher Education Facilities Board.

MARRIAGES

LINDA SUE BACKENSTO AND VINCENT EIRING, May 3, 2003, reside at 808 N. Halstead Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 18103

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(Editor's Note - Both the President's and Historian's messages have paid just due to the invaluable contributions of our association's previous historian, Elwood "Woody" Backensto. Woody composed the following thoughts on the occasion of his retirement as family historian. This selection not only records Woody's thoughts on the subject of genealogy, but is, in itself, a welcome contribution to our family's history)

RECOLLECTIONS OF A FAMILY HISTORIAN

by WOODY BACKENSTO

As a schoolboy, history was the most boring subject thrust on me. What good was it to memorize dates of historical events? Just to pass a test! One recollection I have is that Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1796, because my mother was born on the 100th anniversary of that occasion. Maturing beyond my school days, I began to wonder why history wasn't taught by story telling - therein resides the beauty, meaning inspiration, and lasting knowledge of history.

The dedication of my parents to family reunions rubbed off on me. I served as the Family Historian for more than 33 years. To me, family roots are important because they are a part of me. I ready, somewhere along the way, the searching of family lines was a hobby consuming more people than any other hobby. If that is true, why did most family members not respond to requests for information? Nonetheless, progress was made because our family has printed tests of information. Yet, I am disturbed that there remains a wealth of unrecorded family data that we were unable to document.

However, there were times when unsolicited information was sent to me. A few letters from overseas and our west coast came my way. Those times brightened my day! Let me share one of them with you. Richard Moyer Backensto, living on the west coast, thought his family historian would be interested in a sermon he heard. He sent me a taped sermon, "Tracing Your Roots," given on 12-11-1994 by Dr. Michael Wenning of Geneve Presbyterian Church in Laguna Hills, CA. I made copies to share with others. The sermon begins with the reading of the two New Testament references listed and summarized in the next paragraph.

The genealogy of Jesus appears in two distinct places in the Bible: the gospel of Matthew (1:1-17) records Christ's descent from patriarch Abraham; while Luke (3:28-38) reverses the process by tracing the ancestry of Jesus back through Joseph. David and Abraham to "Adam, the son of God." Matthew used the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament for his 41 names, and grouped them in three units of 14 generations each, the latter being multiples of the sacred number seven. Luke listed nearly twice as many names as Matthew and used the number seven as a basis for organizing Christ's pedigree in terms of 77 names. While these lists differ, their purpose, nonetheless, shows that Jesus Christ the Messiah was descended from the house of David. Matthew makes Jesus a legitimate heir through being adopted by Joseph. Luke's list reflects a wider concern by portraying Christ as the Saviour of all people, not only the Jews.

The sermon continues, "Why is it important to know the lineage of Jesus? For three reasons: (Summarized as follows.)

1. Jesus belongs to the Human Family. Jesus was fully divine and fully human. It's God's mystery of blending this together.
2. Jesus belongs to God's Family. We all belong to the Family of God
3. Finally, Jesus belongs to an imperfect family."

"We all have ancestors we may not be proud of. Maybe we all have skeletons in the closet. Our family is part of our roots. Jesus reveals that he came from an imperfect line. If our family has a lot to be ashamed of - is less than perfect - God knows it and he understands and God hurts for us - and he says, "I know who you are - I know - I have come to be with you."

"Christmas is the time when we are reminded that God has come into the Human Family. He knows who we are and knows what you need and can redeem your life and administers to your deepest longings." His closing prayer:

Thank you, Father, for Jesus who has come in human flesh. From a line which we can trace through history. A line that was less than perfect - to come to take away our sin, our shame, our guilt - and to raise us up as your sons and as your daughters to make us new. The special family. The bride of Christ, our Church, of which we are privileged to be a part. In Jesus name, we praise You, and we thank You. Amen."

As a schoolboy, I was taught that our Constitution which founded a free America was, "established under God." I was privileged to be born in a small town founded by Moravians. There was a Reformed Church a half block from my birthplace, a Lutheran Church downtown, and a Roman Catholic Church across the tracks; I can still recall watching a Mennonite Church being built as I walked to school. One of my best friends in high school was a member of the only Jewish family in town, and other trustworthy friends lived on the other side of the tracks. Our town fathers were a proud ethnic group that spoke Pennsylvania German with friends and relatives, but English was our official language for business communications. Today, all official business and learning in the USA must be available in any language desired by anyone living here. There are more than 230 languages. Can anything be more impractical and costly?

A study of family history shows that early immigrants to America came seeking religious freedom. More compelling was the need for land. Centuries ago, farming was the leading occupation, but land was hard to come by in most older countries. America had lots of land at an attractive price if one could get here. Today, there are millions of illegal immigrants in the USA. Why not? They have more benefits and rights than long-time established citizens. There's something wrong with this picture. Yet, if you were a destitute girl about to have a child, wouldn't it make sense to sneak across our borders to have that child born with all the advantages of USA citizenship?

During my school days we had regular student assemblies. We recited the Pledge of Allegiance to our country before "under God" was removed from the pledge. We used a song book with folk tunes and hymns which must have been discarded years ago. I was proud to be a Boy Scout and recite their oath, as were my three sons.

Did you know the following (which is quoted or paraphrased from "Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary." Thomas Nelson Publishers, copyright 1986)?

Family history occurs eleven places in the Book of Genesis in the phrase, "These are the generations of..." This phrase divides the book in such a way as to suggest that the units thus formed were the actual sources from which the first 37 chapters of Genesis were compiled. Genesis 10 includes genealogies in much the same way that tablets from ancient Babylonia would occasionally have "family trees" written on the back.

Genealogical records probably began with the king-lists that were drawn up in ancient Mesopotamia. People of the ancient world had far less access to written words than modern people do. Therefore, they committed a great deal of information to memory. To this day, it is not uncommon for a Bedouin Arab to be able to recite a list of his ancestors from memory for an hour without making any mistake.

Hebrew genealogies became very important in deciding inheritance rights and land allotments, deciding who was qualified by birth to act as priest, deciding the royal succession in the kingdom of Judah, and deciding the amount of taxes.

Although we can't trace our family lines back to Adam, we can go back several centuries before the creation of America. Let that history show what has benefitted mankind in this country and how we shared it with others. We are a nation of various religions and ethnic groups working toward the pursuit of happiness. If we distort our history, truths, ideals and principles to create narrow viewpoints that benefit a few, the majority will suffer. We need our majority to chant "God Bless America."

THIS YEAR'S SPEAKER

Besides being Executive Director of the Pennsylvania German Society, an instructor at Penn State - Harrisburg, and a Ph.D. candidate at Indiana University, Troy Boyer is a part of the seventh generation of Crouse hornsmiths and combmakers, a family tradition that began in America even before the founding of the United States. At one time, hair combs made from cattle horns were used by almost everyone, but the improvement of plastics in the 20th century made it much easier to make combs from plastic, so that now only the Crouses remain as craftsmen in the old tradition. Troy will discuss the history of this once well known but now forgotten art, detail the processes involved in making combs and other items from horn, and explain how one Pennsylvania German family from Reinholds (Lancaster County) ended up being the last people in America to practice this ancient craft.

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MINNESOTA BRANCH REUNION 2004

On June 22, 2003, 119 of us celebrated our 31st Annual Baggenstoss Family Reunion!

"Celebrate Your Family Tree in 2003" was our theme. We met at the Oak Leaf Park in Glencoe, Minnesota. A very rainy morning turned into a very beautiful afternoon!

After singing our prayer (from June and Mel Huberty), we enjoyed an abundance of delicious food at our potluck. We then settled in to listen to each family chat about what was "new" with them, their children - - adults to grandkids and great-grandkids! It was great to see how everyone fit on the "Family Tree."

We had Chelsey, who was influenced to come from California because the pictures in the flyer brought back many great memories. We had Dennis, who looked forward to the family reunion each year, on leave from the service. Then there were Lorraine and Bob who shared beautiful pictures of their one year old first great grandson recently adopted into their family. Some had sad news and tragic news we were first learning about. Thank you *everyone* for sharing - - It was important that we knew!

We wore Red, White and Blue and voted that Mel Huberty, in his bibs, white shirt and red hanky was the "best dressed." (Mel passed away in Dec. '03 after a battle with cancer. We'll remember him for his kind words and welcoming smile.)

Secretary/Treasurer, Lana Lewer, read letters she received from Woody Backensto and Hortense Collins. They were very touching and thoughtfully written.

Topping the end of our day were cool and refreshing ice cream treats for all!

As you President, I thank YOU for all your kindness - - it's because YOU show up and be a part of it - - and THAT is truly our "thank you" back!

It was great to have many of you come and join us who hadn't been to a reunion in a while. We sure had fun getting to know "who's who!" A good laugh and a good cry are good for the soul and are what we all need to grow closer!

So, *Thank You* again - - We are looking forward to seeing you in June!!

Your President (Minnesota Branch)
Leah (Baggenstoss) Rodriguez

Treasurer's Report
July 31, 2003

Balance as of July 31, 2003		\$199.73
Income:		
Dues and Contributions	\$959.00	
Interest	6.73	
Total Income	\$965.73	
Expenses		
Entertainment & Supplies	\$85.98	
Park Rent	\$75.00	
Newsletter		
Printing	\$632.95	
Postage	\$444.30	
Total Expenses	\$1,238.23	
Net Loss		(\$272.50)
Transfer from Publications Account		\$1,737.58
Balance as of July 31, 2003		\$1,664.81

Funds deposited in a savings account in Union National Bank

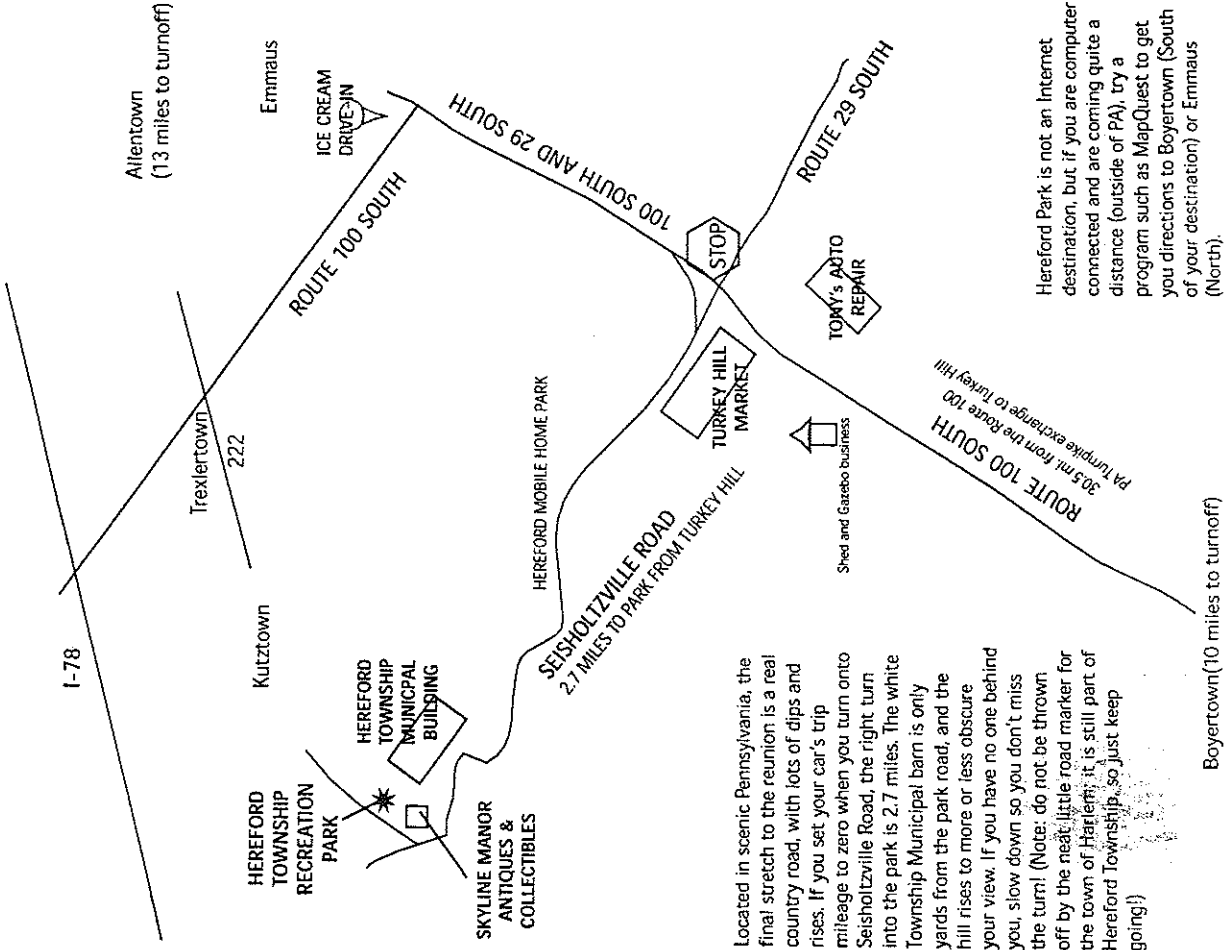
Submitted by Warren B. Backenstoe, Treasurer

Our association finances are sufficient for current operations. However, continued support for the newsletter, reunion and other family association activities will require additional funds. The Association directors, at their January 2003 meeting, voted to increase annual association dues to \$5.00. Please support our association by returning the following form along with your 2004 dues. The directors also ask that members consider making bequests of any amount to the Backenstoss Family Association. This practice is common among family associations and will help ensure the financial health of our organization through future generations.

To: Warren B. Backenstoe, Treasurer
18 East Berks Drive
Wernersville, PA 19565

Enclosed is my check To B.F.A. for support in 2004

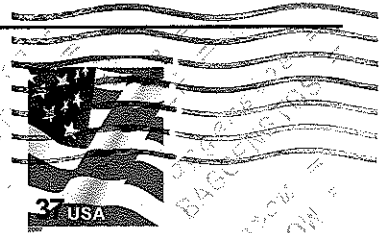
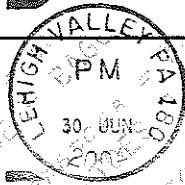
_____ 2004 dues (\$5.00)	Name _____
_____ Additional Contribution	Street Address _____
_____ Total Submitted	City, State and Zip _____



Located in scenic Pennsylvania, the final stretch to the reunion is a real country road, with lots of dips and rises. If you set your car's trip mileage to zero when you turn onto Seisholtzville Road, the right turn into the park is 2.7 miles. The white Township Municipal barn is only yards from the park road, and the hill rises to more or less obscure your view. If you have no one behind you, slow down so you don't miss the turn! (Note: do not be thrown off by the neat little road marker for the town of Harlem; it is still part of Hereford Township, so just keep going!)

Hereford Park is not an internet destination, but if you are computer connected and are coming quite a distance (outside of PA), try a program such as MapQuest to get you directions to Boyertown (South of your destination) or Emmaus (North).

Backenstoss Family Association of America
1495 Riverbend Road
Allentown, PA 18103



Thank you for your continued ge