



Backenstoss

FAMILY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Est. 1927

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

Summer 2018

Plan to attend our 86th Reunion on Sunday, August 5,
And celebrate the
Family's first 275 years in America!

This year's reunion will be held on Sunday, August 5, at Belleman's Church, 3740 Belleman's Church Road; Mohrsville, PA 19541. Belleman's Church has been the site of many Backenstoss reunions and is located only a few miles from the earliest family homestead. Generations of our ancestors, including members of the original group who emigrated from Switzerland in 1743, are buried in the church graveyard. The reunion will include a tour of the 1815 Old Belleman's Church, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is now used only on special occasions. The reunion will be held in the separate air conditioned church hall which is equipped with a full kitchen, lavatories, and plenty of tables and chairs. There is ample parking adjacent to the hall.

Reunion schedule:

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12:00 Noon | Relaxation/Meeting of old and new friends Registration |
| 12:30 P.M. | Opening announcements followed by lunch, games and socializing. |
| 1:30 P.M. | Tour of Historic "Old Belleman's Church" |
| 2:30 P.M. | Reconvene in the church hall for a demonstration of the new Backenstoss genealogy website. |
| 3:45 P.M. | Adjournment of reunion, followed by a meeting of the Board of Directors. |

Sandwiches, iced tea, lemonade, soda and condiments will be provided. Please bring your own additional picnic fare, plates, napkins and utensils. Directions to Belleman's Church will be posted on our website at www.backenstoss.org. no later than July 1. For further information, please visit our website or contact any of the officers listed on Page 2.

President's Message

Recognized

Family Spellings:

BACASTOW
BACKENSTO
BACKENSTOE
BACKENSTOES
BACKENSTOS
BACKENSTOSE
BACKENSTOSS
BACKENSTOW
BAGENSTOES
BAGENSTOS
BAGENSTOSE
BAGENSTOSS
BAGGENSTOS
BAGGENSTOSS
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Dawn Rosenbaum
Newsletter Editor
Brian W. Bagenstose

It is with the greatest pleasure that I am able to announce 2018, the 275th anniversary of our family's arrival in America, will be remembered as a watershed moment in the history of the Backenstoss Family Association. For several years, these President's messages have described our association's efforts to modernize the process by which our family records are preserved. The first step was to transfer the entire contents of our family's published volumes to a Backenstoss genealogy website. That transfer has been successfully completed, and the website can now become the means by which current and future Backenstoss generations will record and preserve our family's history and genealogy.

I urge you to visit www.backenstoss.org and explore the history of your immediate family from 2002 back to our family's 1743 arrival in America. For anyone who has wondered about the identify of their great grandfather or great great grandfather, you will find those answers and many others readily available in these digital records. To put it simply, Backenstoss descendants can now use our family website to access and search the entirety of our family genealogy. An article on pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter describes the simple steps that will allow you to navigate the site. While this is a significant achievement, much remains to be done. Our published records end in 2002, so information from the last 16 years must be added. Also, despite the comprehensive and meticulous efforts of our early historians, Dr. Albert H. Gerberich and Elwood (Woody) Backensto, the published records (1743-2002) can be expanded and occasionally corrected.

Every living member of the Backenstoss family has a role to play in this ongoing effort. On Pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter, you will find forms that will enable you to add information to our records. Please forgive me for addressing you, the reader, directly, but the only way additions to the history of YOUR immediate family can be recorded is if you or a close relative send the information to us. New and modified information will be entered as quickly as possible, but we ask for your patience in that regard. If family members respond as we hope they will, the effort needed to enter the new data will be substantial.

Next year's President's Message will detail the number of responses received and the timeline for adding the new information to our website. If we receive ten responses, there will be no problem. If we receive ten thousand, then there WILL be a problem, but it will be a good problem to have. Genealogically speaking, we are heading into uncharted territory, but it is nothing compared to what Hans Ulrich Backenstoss and his family faced when they emigrated from Switzerland to America. They figured things out. So will we!

The successful effort to transfer our history and create an interactive Backenstoss website is a direct result of the efforts of Kenneth C. Bagenstose, Treasurer of the B.F.A. Working in coordination with Salks Systems Inc., Ken labored tirelessly to bring our family's genealogy records into the digital age. Our heartfelt thanks go out to him as we also honor the memory of Rose Mary (Bacastow) Eberly, whose bequest made these efforts possible.

We will have much to celebrate on August 5, when we gather at Belleman's Church to mark the 275th anniversary of our family's arrival in America. Please see the article on Page 7 of this newsletter to learn about this historic site and its important role in our family history. For directions and additional reunion information, visit our website or contact any of the officers listed on this page. We hope to see you on Sunday, August 5!

Brian W. Bagenstose

BACKENSTOSS GENEALOGY ENTERS THE DIGITAL AGE

by Ken Bagenstose, BFA Treasurer

The records transferred to our Backenstoss Genealogy website came from the two most recent BFA history books published by Elwood (Woody) Backensto in 1993 and 2002. These updated volumes contained all information from the 1949 and 1972 editions. The contents of the 1993 and 2002 books were scanned to digital data, screened for accuracy and converted to web pages. The information is now available on our BFA website at www.backenstoss.org.

The following headings and instructions will enable you to access and navigate our website. I am sure you will enjoy exploring the history of your immediate family, but I also recommend browsing through branches of the Backenstoss family previously unknown to you. You are sure to stumble over some interesting personalities!

BACKENSTOSS GENEALOGY RECORDS MAY BE ACCESSED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

- Visit the BFA Family website at www.backenstoss.org
- At the top of the Home Page there is a horizontal bar containing tabs. Click on the far right "Genealogy" tab.
- You will now see a link in blue labeled "BFA Genealogy - under construction, view only." Click on that link.
- You will now see two "search boxes." One is simply labeled "search" and the other is labeled "Google Custom Search." You may use either one. Type in the name that is the target of your search. It is important the name appear exactly as listed in the 1993 and/or 2002 Backenstoss volumes. Entering a name in either box should take you to a list of names with your "target name" appearing at or near the top of the list. The name will appear in blue.
- Move your cursor over your target name and click when the cursor changes to a "hand." At this point you should see listed the entire lineage of ancestors and descendants for your target individual. All the names in those lists or "tree" will also be in blue, and you can click on each name to see that individual's siblings, marriages, occupations, military service, dates and places...all the information that was contained in the original Backenstoss texts.

It might take a little getting used to, but as long as your get the target name correct, you should be able to navigate through your whole family tree!

SUBMITTING BFA GENEALOGY UPDATES:

As our published records end in 2002, there is much new information we would like to collect and add to our family record.

Please use the form on Page 5 to submit post 2002 information about your immediate family. Use the information on the webpage as a guide. Births, deaths, marriages, dates and locations of those

events, education, employment, military service, notes of interest, and other pertinent information may be submitted. In cases of multiple marriages, please indicate MAR1, MAR2, etc. before listing information about dates, places, children, etc.

The key to successfully submitting new data will be your ability to provide an accurate lineage connection so that the information can be properly inserted into our existing family tree. As long as you correctly identify the names of bloodline parents and grandparents, there should be no difficulty. You may want to include dates of birth for the parent and/or grandparent of your new Backenstoss entry to prevent confusion with others who may have the same name. If there is any doubt about dates or spelling, our website will provide accurate information.

Please be advised we will not collect or publish any private personal information such as phone numbers, addresses, or anything that might expose our members to unwanted solicitation or other internet-related problems. The only information available on the Backenstoss website is that which was previously published in our printed volumes.

Initially, updates and corrections will be entered into BFA records only by association officers or directors. If the need arises (as we hope it will), there may be a future call for volunteers to help with this task. After an initial training session or two, family members who possess basic computer literacy and keyboarding skills could become "BFA Genealogy Volunteers," and provide valuable assistance in the effort to record our family history.

When new information is received, it will be reviewed for inclusion in the family history. The website will be updated when a sufficient number of new entries have been recorded. These updates should occur several times each year. Please be patient in this regard, as an initial large volume of information will hopefully be submitted. We assume a lot has happened between 2002 and 2018!

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to receiving your help and information as we keep our family history living and growing for the benefit of future Backenstoss generations.

Backenstoss Reunion 2017 Cumru Township, PA



Return form to Kenneth C. Bagenstose; 1015 Conifer Road; Leesport, PA 19533

| |
|---------------------------------------------------|
| Name of Person Submitting Information |
| Date Submitted |
| Relationship to Family Member Being Added/Updated |
| Your Contact Phone |
| Your E-mail address |

Check one: New Entry Additional/Edit Info of Existing Record

| |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FAMILY MEMBER NAME <i>First Nick Middle Maiden Last Suffix</i> |
| DATE of BIRTH [DOB]: Location, country, state, town, twp, county, etc. |
| DATE of DEATH: Location(s) of death and burial: |
| PARENT NAME: Name and DOB of parent |
| GRANDPARENT: Name and DOB of grandparent |
| OTHER INFO: Education, Employment, Military, etc. Include additional sheets if necessary |

| |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MARRIAGE INFO: <u>Specify: 1st, 2nd, etc. or Unmarried.</u> Use additional sheets for Multiple Marriages |
| NAME of SPOUSE <i>First Nick Middle Maiden Last Suffix</i> |
| SPOUSE DOB: Location, country, state, town, twp, county, etc. |
| SPOUSE DATE of DEATH: Location(s) of death and burial |
| MARRIAGE DATE/LOCATION: country, state, town, twp, county, etc. |
| CHILDREN: Specify from each marriage, Name and Birthdate |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

NOTE: Bloodline children born after 2002 should be submitted as new individual family members

| |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OTHER SPOUSE INFO: Parents' Names, Education, Employment, Military, etc. Include additional sheets if necessary. Please, Indicate Spouse 1, 2, 3, etc. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

2018 Backenstoss Contribution

The directors of the Backenstoss Family Association ask that each member contribute \$5.00 annually to support our organization's ongoing activities. These activities include organizing the annual reunion, maintaining the association website, and publishing the association newsletter. Please support our association by returning this form along with your 2018 contribution. The B.F.A. budget is funded exclusively by our members' \$5.00 contributions and generous voluntary contributions and bequests from individual members. The B.F.A. is grateful for additional contributions and bequests of any amount. This practice is common among family associations and helps ensure the financial health of our organization through future generations.

Enclosed in my check payable to the "Backenstoss Family Association:"

Name(s) _____

Street Address _____

City, State and Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

_____ Total 2018 Member Contribution(s) \$5.00 each

_____ Additional contribution

_____ Total Amount

_____ Check if you wish to receive the 2019 newsletter by email rather than U.S. Mail.

Email address: _____ Please return this form to B.F.A. Treasurer, Kenneth C. Bagenstose; 1015 Conifer Road; Leesport, PA 19533.

* * * * *

Please use this space to send additional information to be entered on the Backenstoss genealogy website. (See article on Pages 3 and 4)

THE OLD BELLEMAN'S CHURCH

The original Belleman's Church was made of logs and erected in 1746. It was the church where the family of Hans Ulrich Backenstoss (1726-1793) worshipped and where he and his wife, Maria Catharina (Mogel) (1731-1806), along with several of their children are buried. Records of that time show that "Ulrich Backenstoss" applied for land warrants in 1753. The resulting tracts of land, now the Zimmerman Dairy farm, are located only a few miles from the church. Belleman's Church has been a Union Church since 1746.

The following historical information is taken from current publications provided by Belleman's Church.

In 1813, both the Reformed and Lutheran congregations met in order to decide whether or not a new church should be built. It was decided to build, because it was highly necessary. It was further decided that the church be built of stone. Only three votes were cast for a brick church. How it came about that the church was erected of brick is hard to understand. The two congregations, Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed agreed to obligate themselves to build and pay for the church. The church was erected in 1815. A partial list of interesting facts about the church includes:

- The altar is free standing with a beautiful wine-glass pulpit behind it.
- The oil-cloth and carpet around the altar are original. At both ends of the oilcloth is where the two pot belly stoves stood with stove-pipe going through the ceiling to a common chimney above. The pot belly stoves kept the building warm when services were held there for ten months in 1950-51 due to renovation work on the 1924 church.
- The first two pews had doors and this is where the big contributors sat. The doors kept the warmth in and the occupants were close to the stoves.
- As you look at the stairs you see nursing benches, on both staircases, so that mothers would have privacy and still be able to hear the service. Services were normally three hours in length.
- The Buhler organ was probably installed in the late 1860's or early 1870's as that is when Mr. Buhler was building organs in Reading.
- Currently, three services are held annually in the summer with a PA German service in September, plus weddings. Occasionally historical groups schedule tours and visit the Church. The church may be reserved for visits, weddings or any appropriate purpose.
- The church cemetery contains the graves of soldiers of the Revolution and War of 1812.
- During the 1930's, the Backenstoss Family Association erected a large marker in the original cemetery to commemorate the early Backenstoss settlers and the 1927 founding of the family organization. (editor's note)

Backenstoss Family Association of America
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Thank you for your continued genealogical support!

