



**South Central
Pennsylvania**
Genealogical Society

Our Name's The Game

www.scpgs.org

Monthly Newsletter Vol. 43 No. 3 November/December 2017

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Sunday, January 7, 2018

Share Your Findings

This month's meeting will be held in the meeting hall at the York County History Center, 250 East Market Street, York. A brief business meeting will begin at 2:15 PM and the program will immediately follow.

Our members and the invited public attending are encouraged to share interesting genealogical stories and artifacts they have come across in the pursuit and research of their ancestors. This is a wonderful opportunity for the audience to become the program. You never know what you may hear about or learn from fellow genealogists.

Sunday, February 4, 2018

Reflections on the African-American Experience in York

This month's meeting will be held in the meeting hall at the York County History Center, 250 East Market Street, York. A brief business meeting will begin at 2:15 PM and the program will immediately follow.

Our speaker, Jeff Kirkland is a lifelong member of the York community and has been a leader in York's African-American community. He has also had a lifelong interest in history and in recent years has been researching the history of York's African-American community. For this presentation Mr. Kirkland will give us incite and reflections on the history and experiences of the African-American community in York.

UPCOMING MEETINGS ...

Sunday, March 4, 2018

The Scotch Irish: Their Origins in the British Isles and Their Impact in South Central Pennsylvania

Sunday, April 8, 2018

Navigating Pennsylvania's Revolutionary War Militia Records

Sunday, May 6, 2018

Tour of Prospect Hill Cemetery

Sunday, June 3, 2018

Henry James Young Awards

Notice regarding winter meetings and inclement weather: To avoid placing speakers and members in potentially dangerous situations, SCPGS will cancel meetings if roads are snow covered or icy, or if there is the possibility roads will become snow covered or icy before those attending a meeting would be able to return home. Cancellations are made on the conservative side. To learn the status of a winter meeting that could be cancelled because of the weather, please visit our website scpgs.org, Facebook page, or call Richard Konkel at 717-843-7043.

From the President

Jonathan Stayer

As 2018 approaches, thoughts turn to resolutions (goals?) for the New Year. When you make your list, don't forget to include your genealogical society. In 2018, resolve to support the South Central Pennsylvania Genealogical Society in the following ways:

1) Attend monthly meetings. Unless announced otherwise, they are held at 2:15 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month in the meeting hall of the York County History Center, 250 East Market Street, York, PA. On January 7, we will provide an opportunity to share interesting findings from your research or to seek advice for stalled investigations. I plan to bring a letter written by my great-grandmother from California in 1932 wherein she observed that "here in California you can hear much that is Satans will instead of Gods will" [original spelling and punctuation retained].

2) Write an article for our newsletter. It doesn't need to be lengthy; simply tell a story about something you uncovered in the course of your research. Or maybe you have become aware of a resource that may prove valuable to others. Tell us about it. Our outstanding editor Cindy Hartman can clean up the grammar and punctuation as needed, so don't be constrained by your personal concerns about your writing ability.

3) Nominate someone for the Henry James Young award. Do you know a person who has made a significant contribution to genealogy or local history in south central Pennsylvania? Send us a letter describing that individual's accomplishments for consideration.

4) Volunteer to help us with publications. In addition to writers for the newsletter, we need people to abstract and transcribe records for our Special Publications. Currently, we are seeking help to transcribe the names on York County's Civil War enrollment lists. We are about one third of the way through this project. We need proofreaders to check what has already been done, and we need abstracters to type the names from the original records of the remaining townships.

5) Assist us in staffing information tables at genealogy conferences. We plan to have a booth at the Lancaster Family History Conference on April 21, and we can use help registering attendees, selling publications, and assisting vendors and speakers at our own genealogy conference on September 22.

If you would like to adopt one of these goals, e-mail us at scpgswebsite@wildblue.net or feel free to e-mail me personally at slrzt@aol.com. Have a great year!

Do You Know the Limitations?

from Michael John Neill's Genealogy Tip of the Day
November 20, 2017

Every database, index, record, or compilation has limitations. Do you know at least one limitation for each finding aid or actual record you use?

- Transcriptions may include errors.
- Search engines may not work the way you think they do – or the way another site does.
- Informants on death certificates don't have to *prove* every statement they make.
- Census takers may guess at information or ask uninformed neighbors.
- Probate records generally will not list relatives who died without descendants.
- Land records do not include those who rent land.
- Indexes are not always full-name indexes.

- Affidavits in pension claims can contain lies or exaggerations.
- And so it goes.

For every source you use, every database you query, every book you read – ask yourself what limitations there may be.

Knowing the limitations doesn't mean that we don't use the item.

Knowing the limitations makes us better informed users.

Don't Forget the Ladies

The Legal Genealogist, Judy Russell was the speaker at our November meeting.

Understanding the law as to the legal status and rights of women as it existed and changed over the years helps explain the records that we find of our female ancestors.

Under English common law, followed in most of the American colonies and largely incorporated into American law after the Revolution, the legal status of women depended largely on their age and their marital status. A minor woman was entirely under the control of her father or guardian and only gained some measure of legal independence when she came of age.

The term *feme sole* refers to an of age single woman (including those either widowed or divorced). She could buy, own, sell and dispose of property by will. She could earn and keep wages, incur debt, and sue or be sued in her own name in the courts.

A married woman (*feme covert*) lost her separate identity under the English common law. She couldn't dispose of property on her own, had no right to her own wages, couldn't sue or be sued in her own name. She was compelled to act in most instances only through or with her husband.

Despite the limited public existence of women under the law, there are many legal records left by, about or relevant to our female ancestors.

- * *Vital records* of births, marriages, and deaths record those events for both men and women. A mother's maiden name may be recorded on the birth or death record of her child.
- * *Divorce records* may contain complete details including the wife's maiden name, date and place of marriage and place or places of residence.
- * *Probate and estate records* may contain numerous references to wives and daughters in wills, estate inventories, etc.
- * *Land records* do include records of women. Single women could own land and do appear in deed records on their own.
- * *Court records* may include criminal cases against women, women as witnesses, suits by women through a "next friend", and their joinder in suits by husbands, as well as bastardy and child support cases.
- * *Legislative records* may include petitions signed by women.

Beyond the legal records, references to women can

also be found in ...

- * *Church records*, as members and congregants. Their membership was usually independent of their husband. They also may appear as baptismal sponsors.
- * *Newspapers* commonly reported women's activities especially in social and church news columns. Obituaries of women were common. Legal notices affecting women and naming them were often published.
- * *Cemetery records* record both male and female burials without discrimination.
- * *Census records* begin to list females by name in 1850.
- * *City directories* frequently recorded single and widowed women who owned businesses.
- * *Military records* of women who served in the military or with the camps, and *military pension applications* where they may be named by husbands or apply on their own.
- * For widows with no assets, check *records of poorhouses or almshouses*

There were exceptions to English common law (the law in Dutch, Spanish and French colonies was more favorable to married women) but generally, women had good cause to wish, as Abigail Adams did, that their husbands would "remember the ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors."

BURKITTSVILLE.

—There will be service in the Episcopal church next Sunday morning at 9 a. m. There will also be service in the Lutheran church at 10.30 a. m. and service in the Reformed church at the same hour.

—Miss Vernie Koontz, of Baltimore, is here on a visit to Mr. Franklin Koontz.

—Mrs. W. O. Keafauver and son, of near Montevue, spent Sunday with Mrs. Mary O. Akers.

—Mrs. Franklin Koontz spent Whit-Monday at her home near Feagaville

The News, Frederick, Maryland, 28 May 1904

Tales of Long Ago: John Mathias Becker, Justice of the Peace and Churchman

from *The News*, a newsletter of the Kreutz Creek Charge of the Reformed Church; January 1930, Vol. XIII No. 1

The Old Canadochly Cemetery was the scene of an impressive ceremony, on the afternoon of September 20, 1929. At that time, the Yorktown Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution gathered to unveil a marker in honor of John Mathias Becker, a Revolutionary soldier, a justice of the peace, and an active churchman, being a member of Canadochly Lutheran Church about a century ago.

The tablet was unveiled by Robert Woodruff, aged three years, a grandson of Mrs. George L. Stallman, who is the present regent of the D.A.R., and who is also a lineal descendant of John Mathias Becker, the subject of this month's tale. Mrs. Stallman read an interesting sketch of Becker's life, including his services in the Revolution, which we hope to have in hand for another tale. The Pastor was asked to give an address on this occasion. At the request of the ladies, he gave some facts concerning Canadochly. But his main thought was centered on "John Mathias Becker, the Justice of the Peace and the Churchman." This angle of Becker's life will form our tale this month.

John Mathias Becker was born March 24, 1764, and died February 12, 1833, at the age of 66 years, 10 months and 19 days. He lived somewhere near East Prospect, the exact location not yet having been determined.

The Canadochly records show two John Beckers, or, to speak more correctly, a John Mathias Becker and a John Becker. At first we thought these were one and the same person. But in looking over the Communion records, we found they are two distinct persons. For in the communion of May 25, 1828, John's wife is given as Elizabeth. And at the same communion the names of Mathias Becker and wife are recorded. The names of the wives seldom are given. But it is definitely known by the tombstone record that John Mathias Becker's wife was Esther. Furthermore, in the execution of the wills and deeds, the two names are found very often one under the other. Also the fact that Mathias was elected president and John secretary of Canadochly Church, as seen below, shows plainly they are two men. So the separate identity of the two Johns was established. But this required years of research on the part of the Pastor.

John Mathias Becker, or as his name often appears, Mathias, spelled also Matthias, was a justice of the

peace, living near East Prospect. The Pastor has seen his name on at least eight or ten different documents. Just last month, in looking over the deeds of the farm now owned by Charles E. Kline, of Lower Windsor Township, Becker's name was seen on one of the oldest deeds. John Becker was his son. He was also the Secretary of Canadochly Church, to whom we are indebted for the short historical sketch of the Canadochly Church, both Reformed and Lutheran, which is the fountain source of all the history we have of Canadochly, and which will form another very interesting tale.

If you refer to our Kreutz Creek History, on page 81, you will find that John Mathias Becker executed the Penn Deed by their attorney, to Canadochly Church, December 20, 1825. Please note "L. S.," after Squire Becker's name, which is the Latin for "Locus Sigilli," which means, "The place of the seal." This is still found on legal documents in our day.

We have seen Becker's name on a Release, dated January 11, 1810, with the usual notation, "Sealed and delivered in the Presents (presence) of Matthias Becker." This release is printed in THE NEWS of January, 1927, and is of more than ordinary interest to us because it concerns the Pauleses and the Lieberknechts.

John Mathias Becker was also interested in the church activities of his day. This is proved by the few records which are preserved in the Canadochly Records, and which show that many other deeds were done by our Subject which are not recorded. We will quote what we have been able to find:

"Matthias Becker was elected president (of the consistory) and John Becker secretary, on September 24, 1820. They were re-elected annually till 1833" — Vol. II, page 11.

It will be remembered that 1833 is the year Squire Becker died; and it is also a significant fact that after that date no more entries are made. Was Mathias the secretary in fact, rather than John who filled the position? This is an interesting question to ponder over.

Mathias Becker was also treasurer of the Building Committee for the Canadochly Church, which was built in 1801. This building was the immediate predecessor of the present Lutheran Church, which was built in 1867. This record, which is also given, though in a little different form, is found in Kreutz Creek History, page 76, and is as follows:

“Trustees were chosen and a Treasurer, who was Mathias Becker. In the year 1801, beginning April 3rd, a subscription for the new church was opened. The money was collected and handed to the treasurer, who paid it out to those who worked in building the church.” — Vol. II, page 6.

This gives us a brief sketch of the busy life that one of the old worthies led in the Canadochly community about one hundred years ago.

Tales of Long Ago: John Mathias Becker, Revolutionary Soldier and Patriot

from *The News*, a newsletter of the Kreutz Creek Charge of the Reformed Church; February 1930, Vol. XIII No. 2

The Last month's Tale was concerned with "John Mathias Becker: Justice of the Peace and Churchman." The present Tale should have preceded Tale No. 28, in point of time and life sequence. But it became available only by the end of the year through the kindness of Mrs. George L. Stallman, York, Pa., R. 7, who is a lineal descendant of John Mathias Becker. At the time she read this paper and thus it can be made one of our Tales. Mrs. Stallman is the present Regent of Yorktown Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, through which organization the marker was placed on Becker's grave.

This Tale will be a copy of a record made by John Becker, the son of Canadochly Secretary mentioned in last month's Tale. This history was written June 16, 1860, when he was seventy years of age. He furnished each of the "Squire's" children, his own brothers and sisters, with a copy. This document was copied by Walter G. Trout, Secretary of the York County Sunday School Association's Adult Division and a teacher in the County Public Schools. He is a great-great-grandson of the John Becker whose descendants are here given and great grandson of John Becker who has written the history here given. This was copied October 22, 1922, when Mr. Trout was 22 years old.

The following is the copy of this most interesting record: "My grandfather's father, whose name was Melchior Becker, lived in Germany, in a town called Frosnersheim, not very far from the Pfaltz. This Melchior had one son, named Arnold, who was married to Barbara, the daughter of a Mr. Hinkle; who in the early part of their lives emigrated to America, the called the "New Country" and settled in the colony of Pennsylvania at the Schuylkill River near Philadelphia.

And in the course of some years moved to Lancaster, in Lancaster County, long before the Revolutionary War, when Lancaster was a new settlement. During the time they lived in Lancaster, my father was born, John Mathias Becker, they having at that time two daughters older than my father, which is now, in 1860, nearly one hundred years ago.

When my father was but seven years of age, (1771) his father with several others of his friends took a notion to see the Western Country called "The Backwoods," west of the Susquehanna River.

Having made things ready for the journey, filled their knapsacks with provisions, bid adieu to their families and friends, under the impression that they might never return again from the Western Wilderness; they set off, crossed the Susquehanna River, which was then called the Rogues Creek.

After their arrival at the west side of the Susquehanna, they explored the land from Wright's Ferry, down to Conjohah, now Windsor township; and being satisfied with the country, returned to Lancaster, got their things ready and moved to the "Backwoods," about one mile west from the Susquehanna river, in the northern part of Windsor township, in York County.

When my father was nine years old, his father died in York county (this would be 1773). At thirteen years of age he went to Paul Dritt, who was then married to one of his sisters, to learn the blacksmith trade. Stayed two years, then went to Lancaster to Jacob Heiffer, three years more; was then free at eighteen and joined the American Army under General Wayne, then in Lancaster in 1782; was a soldier to the close of the war and after peace was restored, he returned to York County and followed his trade.

His other sister was then married to Aaron Ralph Snyder and both his sisters with their husbands, moved to Western Virginia near Morgantown.

In the year 1788, he was married to Ester Holder, a daughter of Michael Henry Holder, and lived during his life in Conjohah, commonly called Canadochly, in Winsor township and died at the age of nearly sixty nine years; buried at the Canadochly Church, was a pious Christian, of the Lutheran Church and charitable to all benevolent institutions.

He was a friend of Thomas Jefferson, for President of the United States, when the United Colonies were combined into one common Confederacy, the United States of America. He was one among the first to establish a democratic republican government to rule their free and Independent Nation."

**Tales of Long Ago: John Becker,
Canadochly's Faithful Secretary**

from *The News*, a newsletter of the Kreutz Creek Charge of the Reformed Church;
March 1930, Vol. XIII No. 3

Two names are linked together inseparably in the early history of Canadochly. These are John Mathias Becker and John Becker. As stated in the Tales 28 and 29, bearing on John Mathias Becker, at first, with imperfect data at hand, it was impossible to know whether these were not one and the same person. In the early days, more so than now, a man's name was shortened. John Mathias Becker's name often appears as Mathias Becker. So it could be reasoned that John Becker was but a shortened form of John Mathias Becker. But it has been conclusively shown in Tale 28, by quotations from the Church Records and by deeds drawn up by Squire Mathias Becker and witnessed by John Becker, that they were two separate persons. The Tale of this month will concern itself with John Becker, the son of John Mathias Becker.

John Becker, as was said, appears as the witness to deed drawn up by Justice of the Peace John Mathias Becker in many of the old deeds around the Canadochly section.

But it is as Secretary of Canadochly Lutheran Church that we are most interested. In fact we hold a fond veneration for his ability and his painstaking care in some of the events of the past for our inspiration and information today.

We have four different records, establishing this fact. The one was quoted in Tale 28, and we repeat it again for its reference to John Becker, the Secretary. It is found on page 11 of Volume II, and is as follows:

"Matthias Becker was elected president (of the consistory) and John Becker secretary, on September 24, 1820. They were re-elected annually till 1833."

The second reference is found at the bottom of page 34 of Volume II, Canadochly Records, where the simple statement is made: "Johannes Becker, Secretarius, May 23, 1824." This is the only time it occurs in the Records. This is translated, "John Becker, Secretary, May 23, 1824."

A third evidence of his secretaryship is found in the title page to the same volume of the Church Records, where the following quotation is inscribed in beautiful handwriting, with fine flourishes, as only a good penman can do:

"O that this Dry and barren Ground
With Springs of water may abound,
And Fruitful Soil become,
And fruitful soil Become.
The Desert Blooms, the Lord is come,
To make his People Join in one,
And party zeal be gone,
And party zeal be gone."

In the original, these are four lines instead of eight, as we have them here, in order to fit in our column of THE NEWS.

The above quotation is preceded and followed by elaborate scroll work, as we said. In one of these lower scrolls are the initials, "J. B.," which doubtless stand for our scribe, John Becker.

But we owe John Becker a greater debt of gratitude than his fine penmanship and the date of his term as Secretary and the dates of a few other officers. We owe to him all the knowledge of the early history of Canadochly Church. For it is to these few pages that all our history comes as to a fountain source. It is love for recording these facts that has given us the priceless legacy of the past history of Canadochly. Poor indeed would we be as to our origins in Canadochly, if it were not for the painstaking care of Secretary John Becker. He must have been a scholar, as he used a Latin quotation in his Introduction, which is as follows:

"PROTOCOL
Um ein Geanolisches Register zu
fuhren, um gewisse Punkten aufzus-
chreiben, in der Evangelical
Lutherischen gemeinde
in der
Canadochlier Kirche
In Windsor Taunschip, York County
In Staat Pennsylvania
October den 25ten 1820
Deo sit Gloria. Omne Laus and honor."

which is translated:

"REGISTER
to contain a Genealogical Register and
in which to enter certain points
for the Evangelical Lutheran congregation in the
Canadochly Church
In Windsor Township, York County
In the State of Pennsylvania
October 25, 1820
To God be the Glory. All Praise and Honor."

Concerning the building of the old church John Becker says:

"In the year 1763, the old church was built for the Lutherans and the Reformed people in Windsor township, York County and was called the Canadochly Church by the inhabitants of this region. The building lumber was contributed by the members. None was paid for his work, except the carpenter, one named Gosler. He built the church, another, Henry Amend, did the carpenter work assisted by Michael Kaufelt, who related this to the Secretary."

We are just now concerned with this last clause, "who related this to the Secretary." Often we wondered who this secretary was. And now we know that it is this same John Becker, the subject of our Tale. For he says he was elected secretary September 24, 1820, and was re-elected with President John Mathias Becker, his father, for thirteen years. And Volume II is his own work running from 1820-1853.

John Becker divided his Records into the following heads:

List of communicants, pages 12-64, from 1820-1853. No doubt this was carried out by his successors after 1833.

List of elders and deacons of the congregation, pages 70-71, 1820-1833.

Payments to Synodical Treasury, pages 80-81, 1820-1831.

Church Constitution for the two congregations, Reformed and Lutheran, in Conaschockly.

On page 80, under date of May 31, 1820, he has the following entry: "John Becker, as authorized, paid into the Synod, held in Lancaster, on the festival of Trinity, to the Rev. G. A. Muhlenberg, Treasurer of the Synodical Treasury, the sum of \$3.00." This is the only entry in which Becker's name is mentioned.

On page 100, of Canadochly Records, Vol. II, we find this interesting notation made by Secretary John Becker:

"Whereas Henry Y. Slaymaker Made application to the Vestrymen and Congregations of the German Lutheran and Reformed Church in Canadochly, in Windsor Township, York County, to allow him to get English Ministers or Preachers in said Church to perform Divine Service — which Liberty was granted to him and he commenced English Preaching on the 10th day of June, A.D. 1827, according to an article Made and Drafted by and between the said Parties — by the Secretary of Said Church. Per John Becker."

"The first English Preacher that Preached in the Church under the above Articles was Mr. Martin, the Second Mr. W. F. Houston the third on the 3rd day of September A.D. 1827, was Mr. Ashmead of Lancaster the fourth was Mr. Park in the presence of Mr. Martin & Mr. Houston — Houston the 5th & 6th successive —."

The News, April 1930, Vol. XIII No. 4

"This first sermon was preached, therefore, a year before that at Kreuz Creekj. It was also under the preceeding pastorate, that of Rev. George Geistweit (1804-27)." — The News, December, 1925.

This while he was methodical and careful to record many facts, which are invaluable to us, his successors failed to do so. Hence we have an incomplete record. How we would appreciate it if his successors had been as good a secretary as was John Becker. The same is true of the Kreuz Creek Records.

The Canadochly Constitution which was translated by Dr. Hinke, and appeared in THE NEWS of November, 1926, alone is one of the most precious documents of the past. And it is due to the faithful and loving interest of Secretary John Becker that we have it today.

We therefore gladly give him a place in our Tales of the Long Ago. And may all secretaries be led to see the importance of full and complete records in the day in which they are elected to office.

Legatees Versus Devisees

from Michael John Neill's Genealogy Tip of the Day
November 22, 2017

If a will or estate settlement refers to some individuals as legatees and to others as devisees, there is a difference.

Generally speaking legatees take legacies (personal or chattel property) from the estate and devisees take devises (real property) from the estate. They are bequeathed the property in the individual's will.

They are different from heirs. Heirs are individuals who have the right to inherit from an individual based upon their biological relationship to the deceased and contemporary statute. Legatees and devisees can be heirs, but they do not have to be.

A testator can bequeath property in their will so that heirs receive nothing.

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SCPGS INC.
P.O. BOX 1824
YORK, PA 17405-1824**

DATED MATERIAL—DO NOT DELAY

The Cat On the Counter

from Michael John Neill's Genealogy Tip of the Day
November 23, 2014

The cat didn't mean to, but he was the "thought prompt" for today's tip.

Are you breaking your research down into smaller tasks? Achieving your goal in one step may simply not be possible. And if researching a family seems like a project which you will never finish, consider focusing on one person or one problem at a time and not be concerned with getting "it all done" right away. Ask yourself what one little thing can I do today to help me solve my genealogy problem?

After all, Sammie (the cat) got on the kitchen counter one step at a time.

And your ancestor migrated from one place to another one step at a time as well. What was the most logical route to travel, where might he have stayed for a short time, and where might he have left records?

Your ancestor may have ended up on the counter, but he may have left a trail in several other places.

Your research may be more successful if you tackle things one step at a time!

Reminder

We are currently seeking nominations for the Henry James Young award(s) to be presented at our June 2018 meeting. The Henry James Young Award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the preservation of history and genealogy. Nominees, living or deceased, will be considered and membership in the South Central Pennsylvania Genealogical Society is not required.

Nominations should be in the form of a letter that describes the nominee's contribution and/or accomplishments, must be signed by the nominator, and may be submitted to the SCPGS Board of Directors at any time or sent to the Society's email scpgswebsite@wildblue.net. To be considered for the awards to be presented in June, nominations must be received by January 31, 2018.

Save the Date

SCPGS and the York County Heritage Trust are jointly sponsoring a genealogy conference on Saturday, September 22, 2018... *Researching Pennsylvania Germans*. Watch for more information in the coming months.