

Service of Commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the Massacre of Members of the Hostetler Family

September 19-20, 1757, Bern Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, September 22, 2007

When no one else seemed to pick up on the idea of calling for a public commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the 1757 Indian attack, James McMahan, Mackungie, PA., and his sister Jo Ann Krecke, Bethesda, MD took it upon themselves to plan such a meeting for their immediate families at the Shartlesville, PA, historic site. Another descendant not closely related, Roselle Gottfried, Pottsville, PA, and her husband and joined them for the ceremony during the anniversary week. Here is their program outline and the script for the Introduction and the Closing by the primary planners. Editor

1. Introduction	James McMahan	6. French & Indian War	Alma McMahan
2. Genealogy	Timothy Krecke & Jennifer Morfino	7. Indian Unrest	Chris Krecke
3. Why Come to America?	David Krecke	8. The Massacre	Jason McMahan
4. Arrival in America	Rebecca Krecke	9. The Captivity	Emily Krecke
5. Life on the Farm	Mrs. Eric Gottfried	10. Closing	Jo Ann Krecke



*In memory of our ancestors killed
or captured by Indians*

**250
YEARS AGO**

*On September 19-20, 1757
in Berks Co., Pennsylvania*

The participants at the 250th anniversary of the 1757 Indian attack of the Jacob Hochstetler family, on the historic site, near the memorial marker. On the far left is Sandra Schlappich who, with her family, now own the homestead and graciously hosted the group. Jo Ann Krecke is second from the left, and James McMahan is the third person to the right of the monument. They are the children of Anna, DJH 5392, and planned the 45-minute ceremony.

1. Introduction, by James McMahan

We are gathered here today to commemorate an important event in the lives of our ancestor Jacob Hochstetler and his family. Since there are many variations of the family name, during this commemoration service we will use the version "Hostetler" which was the legal name of our most recent male ancestor, Menno Hostetler [DJH 5392]. It should be noted that

no fewer than three deeds bearing three different spellings of the name have been located, pertaining to Jacob's land acquisitions after he returned from captivity.

There are seven of us in attendance who represent two generations of Hostetler descendants. If we think of Jacob as representing the first generation, then Generations Eight and Nine are represented here. Generation Eight includes Jo Ann Krecke and James Malcolm McMahan; Generation Nine includes, in order of age, Timothy Joseph Krecke, Jennifer Ann Krecke Morfino, Christopher David Krecke, Jason Dylarl McMahan, and Emily Ruth Krecke. There are two "no bloods," individuals who are not descendants but who have had the good fortune to marry into the Hostetler bloodline They include David Karl Krecke and Alma Claire Coester McMahan.

During the early morning hours of September 20, 1757, 250 years ago this past Thursday, the Hostetler family was subjected to a vicious assault by Delaware Indians. Mrs. Hostetler and two of the children were killed and mutilated. Jacob and two of his sons were taken prisoner and removed to what is now the state of Ohio. Subsequently, at different times, because they had been separated, they escaped, or were released, and returned to this general area of Pennsylvania.

We are standing on the very ground where the Jacob Hostetlers lived, worked, played, worshipped, and died. When we look to the mountain to the north, the Kittatinny Ridge or "Endless Mountain" as it was known to the Indians, and what we now call the Blue Mountain, we are taking in the very same view which Jacob would have enjoyed when he was plowing the ground, or resting in the shade of an apple tree and considering his good fortune to have come to a land as great as ours. If we could have asked Jacob to describe what he thought this area would look like in 250 years, in the year 2007, do you think he could have even come close to describing what is actually here now, for example, Interstate 78 less than a mile to the north and the vehicles which travel it, going between 70 and 80 miles per hour? Does it not stagger the imagination to even attempt to conjure up what will be the scene here in the year 2257, on the 500th anniversary of the massacre?

Let us now summarize the intervening generations which brought us to this place.

[Parts 2 to 9 give the family connections of the participants from the immigrant to the present, and then a rehearsing of the Jacob Hochstetler story from the "Historical Introduction" of Descendants of Jacob Hochstetler. James and Jo Ann are the children of Anna Loleta (Hostetler), DJH 5392.]

10. Closing, by Jo Ann Krecke

As can be seen by the references in the genealogy to the places of burial of our Hostetler ancestors, after the massacre and their return from captivity, the Hostetlers were very much a

part of the push westward by first colonial Hostetlers, and then Hostetlers who were citizens of the United States of America. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and then Iowa and Kansas became the home ground for these people of Swiss and German descent. Initially they farmed the land, but eventually filled all walks of life, including doctors, lawyers, teachers, businesspeople. The book of Hostetler genealogy, which provided the content for most of this service of commemoration, contains 970 pages of references to descendants of Jacob Hostetler, and this book itself is almost 100 years old. The Hostetler descendants who have been born since the book was published would fill another several hundred pages. We are certain that Jacob would have been proud of his progeny.

We know that Jacob refused to fight other men. He believed so strongly in this ideal that he would lay down his own life rather than take that of another human being. Yet he was anything but cowardly. He left his beautiful Switzerland in order to emigrate to a strange land, bringing his wife and son John with him. In doing so, he left the rest of his family behind, never to see them again. This in itself took much courage. Upon arrival in America, he made his way to the northwest of Philadelphia, into a forest which stretched for hundreds of miles, filled with wild beasts and savage men. He cleared the land one tree and rock at a time, while protecting his family from the threats of drought, storms, blizzards, freezing winters, blistering summers, bears and panthers, and desperate native warriors who at times went on murderous rampages. His actions are hardly hallmarks of timidity and faintheartedness. There is no doubt he was a brave man.

Does his spirit still reside in this valley, near where the Northkill flows, on its way to the Schuylkill, and Philadelphia, and the sea? When we look northward to The Kittatinny Ridge, when we view the same mountain on which he fixed his gaze, when we see the hawk soar over the ridgeline in September as it wends its way to the southlands, as he did 250 years ago, can we feel his presence, at least in our hearts?

When the idea of a champagne toast was first broached, there was concern that Jacob would not have approved, given his strict Amish background. However, as a result of researching the material for this service, and thereby determining Jacob operated a distillery on this farm, it was concluded that he would not mind if we indulged in a bit of the bubbly. So let us crack open a magnum, and toast the Hostetlers on this historic occasion!



Joann Krecke giving the final presentation at the ceremony commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Indian attack at this very location in 1757. Eighteen persons were present. In the back is the memorial built in the 1960s with stones from the dismantled outdoor bake oven around which the Indians were observed the night of the attack. The present house where the Kevin and Sandra Schlappich family live is across the driveway behind the chairs.