

Sweetland/Swetland Lore #29

(formerly Swetland Lore)

March 2004

The President's Message

Special points of interest:

- The President's Message, p. 1
- A story of two Swetland families in 1895-1905, p. 2
- Lilith Swetland is an author, p. 2
- Frederick Luetchford Swetland, p. 3
- Gladys Swetland makes the newspaper. P. 4
- Robert Sweetland is not a mythical person, p. 4

This is an update from your SFA President. I am currently in Davenport, FL and am enjoying the pleasant warm weather while many of you are suffering in the cold. We left Pennsylvania on January 6th and arrived in Florida on January 9th.

We enjoyed the birth of our new granddaughter on October 17, 2003. Her name is Abigail Victoria Swetland. She is the daughter of our vice president Jamie Swetland and his wife Rebecca (Wells) Swetland. Christmas was enjoyable with children and grandchildren. Also 2003 has graced my mother Dolores Swetland with three other great-grandchildren: Daniel James Van Duzer, son of Derek and Kimberly (Williams) Van Duzer, born January 17, 2003; Korey James Renart, son of Kurt and Christine (Swetland) Renart, born August 12, 2003; and Kaitlynn Rose Stormer, daughter of Dale and Amy (Swetland) Stormer, born December 3, 2003. This is for those of you who may want to update your genealogy book or CD.

For those of you who may not remember Gladys Swetland's birthday is coming up on April 18, 2004 and she will be 112 years young. You can send her a card c/o Extended Care Unit, Charles Cole Memorial Hospital, 1001 East Front St., Coudersport, PA 16915.

Reunion time is fast approaching for

planning purposes and I have not received any input on where we should have it. Also volunteers for a reunion planning committee are needed. The committee is very crucial to achieving a successful reunion. Also SFA needs requests for our scholarship to be granted in 2005. We had no applicants for the 2003 scholarship.

Input for a location for the next reunion as well as volunteers for the planning committee may be sent to :

Roger Swetland	Mark W. Swetland
R. R. \$ Box 121A	13 Raymond Road
Montrose, PA 18801	Okatie, SC 29909

The article below mentions Mark Harrison and his e-mail address for those wishing to have S/S Lore sent to them via the Internet. Mark's company has an interesting web site which I suggest you contact. If you do not have a computer, many local libraries have computers which are usually available at no cost. Generally, a librarian will help you get started. With this help you can then travel the world wide web and see many thousands of sites. If you contact Cyndi Howell's web site, you will find many thousands of sites which help genealogists. Once you start, use the search engine Google. Just enter the words you want to see and Google does the rest.

In this issue

<i>The President's Message</i> <i>S/S Lore via the Internet</i>	P. 1
<i>David Wightman Swetland</i>	P. 2
<i>Frederick L. Swetland</i>	P. 3
<i>Via the Internet</i>	P. 3
<i>Have Fun with Your Ancestors</i>	P. 4
<i>Apologies</i>	P. 4
<i>Gladys Swetland 111 years old</i>	P. 4

Distribution of S/S Lore via the Internet

Mark Harrison distributed S/S Lore #28 by e-mail. To date no comments have come in. It seems to have been successful to those who requested it. If you are willing to receive the newsletter only on your computer, please send an e-mail to Mark at mark@genesistems.com. Also, send me a copy so I can remove your name from the set of mailing labels made

for future issues. My address is on page 4. I thank all the some 22+ members who are now receiving S/S Lore from Mark Harrison. Every copy sent via the Internet means less work for me to put a label on an envelope, fold the copy, insert it in the envelope, add a stamp and take it to the mail box. I thank you many special people.

David Wightman Swetland

Via the Internet

David sent me a letter in 1999 telling about the relation of his family to Horace Monroe Swetland who was mentioned in an earlier S/S Lore, I told him then I would use it in a future S/S Lore. The future took six years to arrive. His story follows:

“Here is a short note to add to the your recent article about H. M. My father, (Frederick Luetchford Swetland) and grandfather (Truman Monroe Swetland) were very close to H. M. during a 10+/- period 1895 to 1905. My family lived in Cleveland, OH; H. M. lived in Fredonia, NY. They probably became acquainted at the time of the first Swetland Reunion in 1896. Grandfather became President and H. M assumed another office. HM had four daughters and TM had four sons. They were all unmarried.

“From 1896 through 1900 there were countless “socials” at Fredonia and one at least at Bass Island, Sandusky, where the Swetlands had a camp. In July of 1900 Flossie, the second daughter of HM fell and drowned at Bass Island. My father (FL) was devastated over the loss of this young girl (20 yrs.) Rather than blame him or the other boys (FL was 28 years old at the time) HM invited father to join his firm and work in NY. Father had an aptitude for mechanical things and HM was then running amongst other things a magazine about automobiles. Father was his man on autos.

“This continued for five years. Father became close to Clara, HM’s wife and the oldest daughter Velma. In 1904 Velma married a local boy and father’s job disappeared in 1905. The son-in-law got the job.

“Father moved back to Cleveland and re-entered the family business, by then real estate. The ties were maintained at a much lesser degree than before. Velma and FL continued as friends and later my mother when FL and she were married in 1912. I have letters and photos from this period of family gatherings.”

David Swetland

“P.S. I am for the first time looking at these letters because I am trying to write my own history and these things all lead into it.”

David is still looking to finish his

history. Let’s hope that his history includes at least the histories of his father and grandfather and even his earlier ancestors. He has not told us the extent of his plans.

David’s grandfather and Horace Monroe Swetland both descend from Theophilus Swetland. David descends from Eli Swetland and Horace descends from Eleazar, two of the sons of Theophilus. Horace’s line has lost the Swetland name but David’s line continues.

This seems like a good time to tell a bit more about David’s ancestry. His father and grandfather are already noted in his story before. Doug Sweetland’s book tells only that Truman and his sons were leading confectioners and real estate owners and developers of Cleveland, OH. Actually, they are much more than this. While I would like to tell more here, David can tell a better story. One might suspect that his history would let S/S Lore continue for many years. Let us hope that he will let us have more stories about his family for future issues of our newsletter.

You may be interested to know that the Swetland Building is on the square in the center of Cleveland. I visited the building while our son Mark lived nearby but no Swetlands were in their offices the day we were there.

From a visit to the Internet I learned that his family founded the Swetland-Sears Foundation. Almost any contact with the Internet through Google for Swetland will provide a link to more information on this foundation.

At the 1986 reunion two of David Wightman Swetland’s children, his son David Sears and his daughter Polly came. David Sears offered to take photos of everyone present. Polly listed the names of each person in each photo. Thanks to them our photo record of the 1986 reunion is the best of any reunion. How wonderful it would have been to have similar people at every reunion! Today one can see who was at the Denton Hill Ski Lodge, remember their names and faces and marvel at how many of them have since passed away.

We all grow older. Gladys is now 111, Eunice Colson, 94, Ruth Sweetland, 2 years old than I am, and David Wightman Swetland, 5 years older than I am. How wonderful it is that we are still alive!

As said before the Internet has a tremendous amount of information, some of it directly related to Swetlands of all spellings. Are there disadvantages? Yes! When you read any information you rarely can learn when it went on the Internet. You may be reading something which is several years old, possibly now no longer correct. With this caution, you can now read a few items.

One article carries the date of July 21, 2002. Taken from www.thereporter.com the story tells about a preemie baby boy born six months into pregnancy. This was Brad Swetland. Born long before his lungs were fully developed, his life was precarious. Concerns existed throughout his early life. But 18 years later Brad enlisted in the Navy. Almost unbelievable!

Playbill.com reported the death at 90 of William Swetland, respected actor who made a career at Long Wharf. He died October 31, 2003 in Connecticut. He is survived by his sons William, Gregory and Dudley and stepsons Brian and Charles.

Early American Secular Music and its European Sources, 1589-1839 lists several pieces of music written by Benjamin Swetland of Connecticut.

Write Off by Lilith Swetland

This short story came from the Federation of BC Writers website. You can read this by going to bcwriters.com and searching. I found this the easy way. I let Google find it for me.

Roger Swetland, my grandfather, wrote up the story of his Swetland ancestors (also mine) about 1933. Regrettably, he made a major mistake. The Internet has shown me that his mistake has been repeated many times. John and Joseph Swetland, both sons of William and Agnes of Salem, MA, named a son William, after their father. Each grandson William named a son Aaron so now we have two Aaron’s. Jason Stevens, a cousin of mine, and I have found the correct Aaron. We have access to the book of births in Hebron, CT, which lists the Swetlands born there, a book which Roger did not have. I have sent the correction to some of the web sites with the incorrect data but no one has yet corrected their web site. If any one has a suggestions on how I can get the correction made, I would love to hear from you.

Frederick Luetchford Swetland, Jr.

Frederick L. Swetland, of Yellow Springs, OH, died at his home Hawk Hill Farm May 23, 2003. Born October 29, 1913, in Cleveland, OH, he was the son of Frederick L. and Pauline (Wightman) Swetland.

Fred went to the Hawken School in Cleveland, OH, and graduated from Williams College in 1935 with honors in English. He had three stints at teaching. He taught at Lakeside School in Seattle, WA, for two years, ran the American school on the Isle of Pines, Cuba, and taught Spanish at Mercersburg (Pennsylvania) Academy. He was a first rate teacher and enjoyed teaching, but a desk life was too circumscribed for his many talents.

He was an outdoorsman and an athlete. He wrestled and ran cross country at Williams, played tennis into his eighties and had a horse from the time he was a small boy until his last years. He sailed most of his life and believed it was not worthwhile unless he was racing.

He was drafted in the summer of 1942, a buck private in the infantry, while he was working for Cleveland Graphite Bronze. His expertise on bearings was valuable to the Air Force, so when he finished Officers Candidate School, he received permanent orders for Wright Patterson Air Force Base from 1943 until 1946 and lived in Yellow Springs. He retired as a captain.

Fred's life was segmented and most important for him was the time he spent on the Isle of Palms. He first traveled to the family's 10,000-acre tract as a baby, returning winters throughout his childhood, settling there in 1937, with time out for the war and back in 1946. He left in 1947 when his wife, Anita, was diagnosed with MS, although he returned winters and part of the summers from 1950 on. In 1952 he bought out his brothers' interest. He tried to operate the farm in Cuba part-time and still run the farm he owned outside Yellow Springs, but in 1957, he sold everything except his house and land and moved his wife, two young sons, three trucks, a tractor, dog, cat, horse and parakeet to the island.

During his tenure there Fred raised citrus and experimented with Sea Island cotton, managed the indigenous pine growth, built a sawmill from antique engines and parts and built up a herd of cattle. Fred was the mechanic, plumber, vet, carpenter and jack of all trades. The Swetlands also operated a guest ranch. Even though there was no electricity or telephone, the guess never complained. The biggest disappointment of Fred's life was the loss of that way of life — its pleasures, demands, and constant challenges — in 1961. It clouded the rest of his existence.

Fred was undaunted about putting his hand to new and different occupations. He worked at Leland Electric in Dayton following his discharge from the service. He operated a sawmill in Nicaragua for his brother, Paul, 1963-64, had an International Harvester dealership, and for a brief time owned an antique shop on Xenia Avenue in Yellow Springs. Fred, however, considered himself foremost a farmer.

He farmed the acreage he owned outside Yellow Springs from 1947 to 1957, returned in 1967, and spent the better part of his life there. He also owned a farm in West Union where he raised cattle for a number of years. He was an environmentalist — the old-fashioned kind, who love their land and do everything they can to improve it. He believed that people were not owners but stewards of the land. Early in his life he was influenced by the farming techniques Louis Bromfield, including crop rotation and contour plowing. As part of the Hereford Association, Fred advocated the eradication by culling the cows, bulls and calves involved and slaughtering them all (rather than just the calves) to clean up the herd.

Fred was a champion of the underdog and wrote letters to the editor on subjects that others could not or would not write themselves. In his later years, he signed himself as the *Yellow Springs News* "Correspondent from Mars." Fred enjoyed a lively political discussion about local issues and had a soft spot for bluebirds.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Anita (Fellner) Swetland; two sons and daughters-in-law, Frederick L, III and Theresa, and Eli B. and Michelle of Naples, FL; four grandchildren, Anastasia Swetland Wyckoff, Frederick L. IV, Eli, Jr., and Luke and one brother David Wightman Swetland.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his first wife, Natalie Penrose and a brother Paul.

My first letter from Fred is dated May 1987. In this he related a story about my grandfather that I had never heard from anyone. Fred wrote "I understand you are the grandson of Roger W. Swetland, headmaster of Peddie. I remember Roger or rather I remember that he, on a visit to my father in Cleveland, put a golf ball through a barn window, a goodly distance away which amazed all."

Fred and I exchanged letters or notes until late 2001. His last letter sent three bits of information. One was an address change. The second was to tell me he had a

portrait of Eli Swetland over the fireplace. He offered me a photo of it if he could get a clear picture. I answered and accepted his offer but the picture never came. The third point was to tell me his wife Anita was encouraging him to get a copy of his memoirs, mainly about life on the ranch on the Isle of Palms, Cuba, and Castro's revolution, into a family repository of history.

My answer a few weeks later was to encourage him also to write his memoirs. Did he ever do this?

Another letter in 1991 starts with, "Finally I find myself before my word processor, determined to respond to the interesting work you are doing and reporting in Swetland Lore. You have had a massive dose of what is involved in tracing ancestors and of the many false trails that are presented, based on anecdote rather than verifiable fact."

Later Fred comments on Castro and the expropriation. This letter also adds to David Wightman Swetland's story on page 2. Fred wrote, "My father worked for HM in New York on the Chilton Press and he and HM's daughter Velma who married Frederick Cushing Stevens were lifelong friends. Cousin Velma on driving from New York to visit her daughter Velma who was married to Richard Sater, lawyer, living in Columbus, OH, used to stop over with my parents in Cleveland. Further, Fred Stevens for a long time owned a 100 acre grove on the Isle of Palms which had been planted by my family in the 1910s as part of a large scale citrus and land development. It lay a mile east of the house complex built at that time, and in which I and my family were living when Castro determined that my land was being maladministered and that La Patria could do better. At no cost to the state, of course."

What could have happened to the word processor? All of Fred's subsequent letters and notes were written with his old Waterman pen, the one which he said seems to put more ink on his fingers than on the paper.

In latter 1991 letter Fred wrote, "No life story but do have my life in Isle of Palms, Cuba, from 1957 until the escape in Oct. '60."

Another question is where might his story on the Isle of Palms and leaving Cuba be today. Fred wrote well and his letters were always interesting.

Let us hope that one of his descendants will keep us well informed and send us other stories of his interesting life. He was an amazing man, one I enjoyed corresponding with.

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Have Fun with your Ancestors

The Hilton Head Island Genealogical Society of which I have been a member since 1985 decided last fall to ask members to give a five-minute talk on their favorite ancestor. My time came in February. I chose Roger W. Swetland, my grandfather. As time came closer, I wrote up a short talk to use as a guide to what I needed to say. After doing the first draft, I wrote another. Again, the result did not seem quite the way I wanted it to be so I began a third. By now time was short. I had to condense the talk to five minutes. That's impossible!

The day of the talk came. I began to speak, starting with the first draft and quickly departing from any of them. I continued and ended about twelve minutes after beginning. The applause rewarded the time I had spent researching my grandfather's life. Then a major problem came. The society president asked me to give him a copy of my talk.

I assure you that giving the talk in this manner means that I don't remember everything I said. My notes help but some of what I said was never written or, if it was, not in the way I gave it. The president will receive a set of notes but without my assurance that the notes are complete.

I enjoyed the reason to spend time looking up my grandfather's life and the events which shaped his life. The 206 letters he wrote his sister Kitt gave me far more material than I could hope for. Roger was a remarkable man. He came to life again for me.

Apologies

In *S/S Lore #28* I told of creating a mythical Robert Sweetland. Quite a surprise came from Ted Sweetland who knows a very much alive Robert Sweetland. In some time past Ted must have given me Robert's name and told me something about him. Whatever Ted told me was filed long ago and I had no prior memory of Robert's name when Ted called.

One of the wonderful results of writing the newsletter is learning about so many wonderful people who share our ancestry. Some carry the same name. Others carry the names of those who married into the family. In either case we have made them a part of our larger family. They do belong.

Be sure that you are loved for who you are, what you are and what you have done for others in the family no matter how you spell your family name

Gladys Swetland at 111

Gladys Swetland, soon to be 112, was recognized in *The Times Herald* on the occasion of her 111th birthday. Her next birthday will take place on April 18 this year. The paper included a picture of Gladys playing at an upright piano in the Long Tern Care Unit's recreation room in the Charles Cole Memorial Hospital. Gladys has not been able to read music for a number of years but as the paper wrote "Many titles have faded from her memory, but the notes still find their way from her mind to her fingers."

The article says that Gladys is now the oldest person in Pennsylvania, ninth-oldest person in the United States and the 23rd oldest person in the world according to the Gerontology Research Group. Gladys has now moved to the 230th oldest person on the all time list of world's oldest people.

Gladys would love to return

to the house where she was born in Mills, PA. Her father built the house as a wedding gift for her mother. She now is confined to a wheelchair and requires someone to look after her 24 hours a day.

Gladys has said she had a very happy time, a very happy childhood but she had two brothers who were pests. How many other young girls have felt the same about older brothers? She described herself as a tomboy that would sometimes cause trouble with her brothers Ben and Bob.

Gladys taught school first in Michigan and then back in Harrison Valley for a career that spanned more than half a century.

Today, she doesn't think much of being one of the world's oldest citizens. "She doesn't feel her age at all. There's a lot of old people in Mills." Let's all wish Gladys an even longer life.