

Sweetland/Swetland Lore #30

(formerly Swetland Lore)

June 2004

A Letter From Your SFA President

Special points of interest:

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I spent the winter in Florida again. In total, we were gone for four months. We stayed longer than normal because a friend of ours ended up in the hospital in cardiac intensive care for 42 days when we left. It was the result of a botched catheter procedure. They punctured the main artery on the left side of the heart. The hospital could not do open heart surgery and she had to be air-lifted to an Orlando hospital. She arrived blue and not breathing after dying twice in flight. Thanks to prayers and miracles, she is to come home next week.

We took the short cut home—Florida to Oklahoma City to Pennsylvania. Our youngest son and family are there as a result of his job and we needed to see them and our grandchildren before August or October. Our grandson is 2½ years old and our granddaughter is seven months old. She was two months when we last saw her.

Half of the year is already past and I've not heard anything from anyone about the next reunion or the scholarship. We need to get the reunion committee together and settle on a location, and start making plans. The rest of the year will go as fast or faster and we need to get reunion information out the first of the year so people can make plans. Volunteers are welcome and all help from them will be

greatly appreciated.

Hotel accommodations need to be worked 6 months to a year in advance for most occasions.

Where are we going to have the reunion? When are we going to have it? What type of atmosphere are we looking for? And finally what are we looking for as an agenda?

For those of you who have attended our reunions, renewing old acquaintances and meeting new ones has been the greatest rewards. Gathering new genealogy has also been rewarding to many.

March 2004 issue of Popular Science lists Charlotte Benkner of North Lima, Ohio as the oldest living person in the United States at 114 years of age. Hang in there Gladys!

For those who may not remember, Gladys Swetland celebrated her 112th birthday on April 18th this year. She is still going strong and may yet outlive many of us as she has already done. Without making a detailed check, 25% of those who attended the first reunion in 1986 are no long with us. At present Eunice Colson may be our oldest member at 94. How remarkable it is to realize that Eunice must live another 18 years to reach Gladys's age of 112. More power and strength to both of them!

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The SFA Scholarship

You will recall that we received no applications for the scholarship before the 2003 reunion. The lack of minutes of the 2003 reunion leaves us with no assurance on the plan for the next scholarship. Anyone with a strong recollection of the vote at the reunion should send the info to Roger Swetland at his address on the enclosure.

The Treasury has \$505.00 in the scholarship fund to be awarded to the selected 2005 applicant. Coming with this newsletter are the updated regulations for the scholarship. Please consider who among your young "Swetland" relatives would be a worthy recipient of the 2005 scholarship and send the data to Roger Swetland at the address on page 4.

David Wightman Swetland

This is the second straight newsletter with information from one of our distinguished members whose family contributed greatly to the development of Cleveland, Ohio. David's family love for Cleveland began with his grandfather, Truman Swetland, the first to arrive in Cleveland. Since David is writing his family history, you may look forward to its completion although we have no idea how soon it will be finished.

David writes wonderful letters so it is appropriate to let you read his words.

"Tried to call you today to remark on your David and Frederick stories. Swetland Lore #29 very nearly failed to reach me. It was mailed 5th March from Savannah addressed to me in Cleveland (Park Building). It reached Des Moines and was re-mailed (opened on 9 March), reached Cleveland in a USPS envelope and re-mailed to me in Maine on the 12th of March. I received same on the 18th of March. USPS says "an occasional mishap does happen." Wonder of wonders!

The point of this is to say not to worry about Frederick's "Life on the Isle of Palms." It is in my hands for editing and publishing. This is a tall order. The manuscript is in typescript 400+ pages long. I am not word processor equipped, a nearly fatal flaw with a book this long to work on and at the same time work on my own family history.

We don't know about Fred's word processor. I know he had one. His wife and son Eli say "no, he never put Isle of Pines on the processor."

I must agree with his letter to you about the Waterman pen. I personally use a Parker 51 when it deigns to work.

My family story includes a paragraph or two on H. M. Swetland. He was the proprietor of Power Publishing Co., not Chilton to my knowledge although he did have a few companies to do his work.

He did publish his own writing. I have two of his works, one about his fact finding tour of the WW1 countries and they both were finely done, 8 vo., half leather, rotogravure photos, etc. This volume is inscribed with well wishes to my grandfather, T. M., in 1919.

On another note, the portrait of Eli is still on the wall in Yellow Springs. I

will try to get you a copy. It so easy with digital photography.

As for F. L. Jr., I miss him greatly. He was a born raconteur, never without a story and retained them much better than I. I had forgotten about Roger driving the golf ball through the barn window. I assume it was a fair poke. The barn was 150-200 yards from the house. I assume the action took place in front of the house where all gatherings seemed to have taken place. My father was photographer of many of these gatherings and I have most of his plates (5 x 7 glass).

In another column in #29, I note the death of William Swetland. He began his acting career in Cleveland at the Playhouse. He married the wife of a good friend in Cleveland, Dick Newpher (divorced). Newpher (pere) was known for is sailing prowess and bested me often in one-design boats. My brother Fred was my crew in some of these defeats.

Anyway William took Shirley Newpher and went east. He and she did well at Long Wharf and NY where I saw the two of them in a production. The son Dudley is also a actor, sometimes in Cleveland.

Driven to it I have just examined William of Long Wharf fame in Doug's book and there it all lies. There in the fifth generation the lines diverged. John, Jr., has William. His brother, Joseph is my line. William was born within a few days of my brother Fred, Oct. 29, 1913, and died within a few months of Fred. They never met.

I continue to work sporadically on my family history. I moved with my wife to a farm in Maine (Lincoln County) and never seem to have time to time to finish the job. I have tried several strategies but none seem to work. If it isn't the garden, it is the building in Cleveland or the family estate in Coconut Grove, FL or just living in an old house with a huge barn (50 x 90) that seem to fill all hours. Patience and a high resolve are needed."

I never know when David will write another long letter but I treasure them, whether they come to me or another shares them with me. What is important is to have them to read.

Another letter from David talks about the picture of Eli Swetland. I may be able to show a copy of this picture in a future issue of S/S Lore.

This letter from David is dated 4-13-04, his 88th birthday. You can congratulate him on his long achievements at P. O. Box 108, Alma ME 04535. His letter reads,

"Well, another year! Lousy day, rain, cold in Me. My daughter called from Williamsburg, rainy there for last two weeks. She and husband are serious about moving out of Vt. We all (Swetlands) in our immediate family seem to move around a lot. Well, so did our forbears. Eli moved from Long Meadows, MA to Starkville, NY. Died there at age 48 (early for a Swetland). Truman moved a great deal, Rochester, Milwaukee, Grand Rapids after a stint in the far west as a teaming contractor, then on to Cleveland where wife Carrie said "enough." Father went east to Fredonia and NY with H. M., then went to Cuba, a life long love affair, back to Cleveland and died in Miami on the way back from Cuba.

Eli, the subject of this letter, is a print from a photo taken by Fred's daughter-in-law, Fred III's ex-wife. She also took some digital photos. I have not seen them yet. I will let you know. I know nothing about Eli, maybe you can tell me something. Grandfather Truman was only five when Eli died. Why did he go to Starkville? Cherry Valley is a beautiful valley but even now is not well populated. What did his wife Sophia do? She lived somewhere other than Starkville And was supported by her 11 children? I don't think so.

SFA Treasury

Priscilla Swetland, our Treasurer, reports that the expenses since January 1st are \$87.66 for S/S Lore #29 and one donation of \$20.00 has come in. This leaves \$1,098.44 in the general fund plus \$505.00 in the scholarship fund. The total in the treasury is \$1,603.44.

Unless costs increase more than in recent years, the balance in the general fund will cover a number of newsletter issues and reunion mailings. This should cover all of 2005. Future needs may increase so remember us whenever you can.

Notes From Our Members

Ted Wesley Sweetland, Jr.

A March letter came from Ted.

"My aunt was a Gladys Sweetland of Whitney's Point, NY, just north of Binghamton. She was born in 1892 and died in October 1971, She was my father's sister and bore two sons and two daughters and had over 15 grandchildren.

"Robert Merrill Sweetland (88) was born in New Kensington, PA and he and his wife Betty live now in Dunedin, FL They had two children and several grandchildren. Bob was a really brilliant pianist and organist and an engineer for Dravo Corp. between New Kensington and Pittsburgh. Robert and my father were cousins, their fathers being brothers. Robert's father, Arthur Adams Sweetland, was born in Lawrenceville, PA.

"Eleanor and I appreciate your efforts, (very professional) and so like your work. Keep on keeping on."

Kay Wroblewski

Older members will remember that Kay was our first treasurer for several years. Kay is a niece of Bob Wright who contributed so much to the early reunions. Kay's message came with her Christmas card

"Since Esther Margaret died in 2001, the family in and near Rochester has had differing paths to travel and the only thing that holds us together is truly the death notices. We need some of the determination to stick together that our grandparents had. Cousin Gladys used to do that but she is in a home near Coudersport, PA now and we are somehow out of close touch.

"My husband Leonard has Parkinson's and we have aides every day. As the 80s loom, we stay close to home and live on memories more and more.

"I have asked Janet Chisholm to field genealogy questions. She is youngest daughter of Bob Wright and more active than the rest of the clan. Janet's address is 59 Betwood Lane, Rochester, NY 14612."

Eunice R. Colson

Eunice may have thought I forget this letter but I save everything to my wife's deep regret. Eunice wrote last year but you can read it now.

"It is so long since I have used this machine that the ribbon has dried out—so has my mind.

"It is always a pleasure to hear from you and read about our kin. I hope the Association will be able to keep S/S Lore coming. There is little I can write about. Dot Hinkley is the only Sweetland kin I have left out of eight cousins.

"Now I am in the process of moving again — for the last time I hope. The apartment is in a more convenient location for those who take me to necessary appointments, a short walk through woods to the Community Building where there are activities and I can meet people near my age.

"Blessings to Gladys. I will never make her age, unless a miracle happens. I hope to survive the move.

"I have been intending to write about an article in S/S Lore #25, "Music and Our Ancestors." I can add two more musicians. My mother's father, Andrew Hall Sweetland, played "fiddle" for dancing in Feeding Hills, MA. Mother played the violin for her own pleasure. Occasionally, she would play the piano. I always enjoyed her music. I wanted her to give me lessons, but since I am left-handed, she would have had to re-string the violin. I am very clumsy with my right hand. I did play the piano but never in public.

"My ink eraser has disappeared since the last move, so has my white out. I hope that S/S Lore articles can keep coming."

Margaret N. Smith

In a much earlier letter Margaret supplied charts on the first John Sweetland from her files.

"Because we are having an electrical storm, I am writing out rather than using the computer.

"This is all I have on John's family. English research would be needed for marriage dates, places, etc. If we were a wealthier group, I would suggest we invest in an English researcher to find out.

"I believe some of my research was done in the Salt Lake City LDS Family Library so the booklet I found is probably there. This is early research so you know the pitfalls or omissions. It's a book and not vital records, so valuable mostly to point the way."

Gladys Sweetland

Many years ago, 1985 actually, Gladys Sweetland send me the transcription which she and Helen DeWolfe had made

from a monument in the Potter Brook Cemetery. The monument was in honor of John Henry Thomas, only son of Benjamin Thomas, my great-great-grandfather. You have read of John H. Thomas in earlier newsletters but never this transcription.

Gladys wrote a comment on their work which read, "This is as near as Helen and I could come to deciphering the verse which Grandfather Thomas had had put on his son's monument. Most of it sounds crazy!"

John Henry Thomas

Child of my heart with its grief and its care.
Prop of my age bewildered to bear.
I bear all that remains of thee
Down to thy grave
Oh! There to bear thee.

Willing hearts near call "My Brother! My son!
Sad oh sad where response is none.
From morning's faint beam to evening's ray.
Dreary and slow crept the dreary day.

Source of all hope 'neath the stroke of thy rod.
'Tis man's to submit, Thou only art God
Lend us thine aid to discern thru the gloom
That dawn's yet to break on the might of the tomb."

Some 16 of John Thomas's letters to his father are in my hands and more of them may be in the hands of other relatives. John wrote regularly throughout the Civil War until he died in Washington D.C. from a wound received at the battle of Cold Harbor, VA.

John was 19 years old when he enlisted and died at age 22 years 9 months 5 days on June 17, 1864.

John was the only son of Benjamin and Catherine Gorton Thomas. As such he could have applied for exemption from service. He chose to enlist for three years which he survived without an injury. He then re-enlisted and fought until the Battle of Cold Harbor where he was struck by a minie ball He died from infection after surgery. Such surgery today would have been performed under sterile conditions, conditions unknown during the Civil War. We can appreciate the advances since then.

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Notes From Your Editor

The Swetland Family Association has had one editor, me! That's not a complaint but a fact of life. Beyond any question, we will need a new editor within a few years. I am now 82, soon to be 83. No one can forecast how much longer I will be able to serve as editor. I write this to urge one of our many talented members to volunteer to replace me when necessary, meaning when I can no longer issue the newsletter regularly.

Mark Harrison is making a major contribution by delivering email copies, which saves me time and work. However, the new editor will assume the job of preparing and mailing the copies which go by USPS mail. If you are willing to take over some day, write me or let me have an email and I will give you a good picture of what is done for each issue.

I intend to go on for many years but that's not a guarantee. The knee replacement April 21st, which is doing well, has slowed me down more than expected. This issue comes a few weeks later than planned due to my energy level since the surgery. I hope it will improve but again that is not a guarantee.

Gladys Swetland

I spoke with Gladys this afternoon, June 16th. She answered the phone and we talked for about 15 minutes. She is in good health but so misses her home in Mills, PA. The hospital has told her she can go home when she finds someone to stay with her in her home full time. It may take two people to give her the care and the attention she now needs. She feeds herself but lives in a wheelchair when she is not in bed. To one who is not in her situation it appears that she is receiving wonderful care and all the attention that one could want. But she is separated from all the letters, pictures and possessions that she lived with for so many years. No wonder she is disappointed at not being home with her belongings and her cat.

Internet Ramblings

These ramblings should begin with a note that Mark Harrison who send out the newsletter via email works for an excellent company. I have gone to their website genesistems.com and found useful information. Those of us who have computers and access to the Internet may find it of help to look at the data which is on the site.

John B. Swetland of Duluth, MN has made a number of scale models of airplanes. Don Granlund's North Side Electric Flyers Web Page shows a picture of John with his Polish Spitfire. If I can get permission, you will see this picture in a future newsletter. The page gives his E-mail address, jbswetland@msn.com. Using a map website one can find his approximate address.

Four years ago I found the site <http://members@aol.com/calebj/mailto.html>. Caleb Johnson has done major investigation on the Mayflower descendants. The site is fascinating to

all of us who are descended from Stephen Hopkins, one of my ancestors. You will learn much information on Stephen from his website.

Using SurnameFinder.com and the name Swetland I was directed to a list of sites which may have information on the name Swetland. The listing showed which of the sites were free and which required a paid subscription to search. If you go this far, enter the full name of the ancestor you are researching and see what happens next. You may be greatly encouraged or enormously disappointed. You won't know until you try.

At museumstuff.com I learned that the Swetland search database was disabled due to a hoped for temporary technical difficulty. This was February 2004 and I have not gone back to see if the problem has been corrected. I will need to do this soon.