



Happy Holidays To All Our Readers

By Jamie Swetland, SFA President

We have some interesting reading for you this quarter that I hope you will enjoy. We revisit the impact of the Swe(e)/(a)tlands on the literary arts slightly as we include some excerpts from a recent article in the Wilkes-Barre, PA newspaper the *Citizens' Voice*. Once again, not only does Luke Swetland's captivity become the center point of the article, but also his legacy impacts his present day generations. These generations include your current and past SFA presidents and their children.

In addition to taking our families to places where our ancestors lived, we keep the anchors of heritage strong by attending the SFA reunions. Details and plans will be coming soon for the next one on July 22-24 of 2011. Be sure to visit the website (www.swetland.org) to make your suggestions on the message board and for updates on plans.

Newspaper Interviews SFA President

This fall, William Kashatus, who teaches history at Luzerne County Community College, asked Jamie Swetland for an interview for the Wilkes-Barre, PA newspaper, *Citizens' Voice*. With the newspaper's permission, excerpts from the 3 Oct. 2010 article follow.

A Family Legacy

by William Kashatus



Three Generations of Swetlands. From left: Samuel, Roger, Jamie and Zach.

During the summer of 1976, 5-year-old Jamie Swetland, his father Roger, grandfather and great-grandmother traveled from Tunkhannock to the historic family homestead at Wyoming [Pennsylvania].

Operated by the Wyoming Valley Historical and Geological Society, the Swetland Homestead was open to visitors and staffed by volunteer college students.

As the family approached the front door, they noticed a sign that read, 'Direct descendants of Luke Swetland admitted free of charge with ID.'

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SFA Reunion 2011

Mark your calendars for the weekend of 22-24 July. Details will be forthcoming.

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Correction:

In the September 2010 issue about the scholarship, the amount stated for the scholarship was incorrect. It is **\$300**.

That was all it took for great-grandma to produce the family bible, complete with the Swetland genealogy. Not only did little Jamie get a free tour that day, but also the inspiration to learn more about his family's rich past.

"Since then, Luke Swetland has been a major figure in my life," admitted Jamie, now 39 years old.

Today, the Swetland Homestead, 885 Wyoming Ave., Wyoming, is operated by the Luzerne County Historical Society, which is a bit more careful in exempting family members from the admission fee. What's more, Jamie Swetland, an eighth generation grandson of Luke, finds himself taking his own two sons, Samuel and Zachariah, to the family homestead for a history lesson of their own.

That history is inextricably tied to the American Revolution and dates to 1772, when Luke Swetland, a native of Kent, Conn., relocated to the Wyoming Valley to farm his own land.

He, along with other Connecticut Yankees, helped to build a wooden stockade called "Forty Fort" to protect the settlers from Indian raids and the Pennsylvania militia (Pennamites) which battled Connecticut for title to the region.

When British Rangers and their Iroquois allies engaged the Connecticut militia in early July, Swetland and Capt. Blanchard were assigned to Forty Fort to protect the women and children of the region. It was this stroke of luck that allowed them to survive the bloody Battle of Wyoming and the massacre that followed.

In August, Swetland and Blanchard, while heading to the grist mill at Fishing Creek, were kidnapped by the Seneca. En route to their village in upstate New York, the Seneca came across a party of Pennamites who had remained loyal to Britain.

"I was well acquainted with some of these Tories," wrote Luke Swetland in his diary. "They told me that they were glad I was taken captive by the Indians and only sorry that they hadn't killed me. I was tied to one of their huts that night, and, in the morning, given a razor to shave. The Tories also spoke on my behalf as an honorable man to my Indian captors."

The Seneca took Swetland to their village at Appletown, near present-day Romulus, N.Y. Although most adult captives were tortured and killed, Luke's upstanding reputation spared him, and he was adopted by the tribe. He spent the next year in captivity.

Despite poor health, the tribe put Swetland to work farming their corn. "Luke was still sick from the trials of his captivity and the journey to Appletown," said Roger Swetland, a seventh great-grandson. "The winters were especially brutal and the Indians allowed him to take refuge in a cave in the side of a hill not far from their village. It was the only concession they made. It was there that he would pray for his eventual release or escape. It was the one thing that kept him alive."

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On Sept. 5, 1779, Swetland, who had finally regained his health, seized the opportunity to flee. He stole a horse and headed south toward the Pennsylvania border. American scouts attached to General John Sullivan's expedition against the Indians discovered him near the Indian village of Kendaia.

"But they were confused by his appearance," explained Jamie Swetland. "He looked like an Indian, with a deep tan and dressed in buckskin. Some of the scouts, noting his English accent, mistook him for a British loyalist, a so-called 'Tory.' So they stripped him, beat him and stole his silver broach. Not until one of the regimental officers recognized him, and testified to his 'honorable character' was Luke spared further harm."

Swetland remained with the Sullivan campaign serving as a scout until the soldiers returned to the Wyoming Valley only to discover that his family had given him up for dead and returned to Connecticut. Luke rejoined them and remained there for almost 10 years. In 1797, Swetland, his wife, Hannah, and their son, Belding, returned to the Wyoming Valley to stay.



Parlor in Swetland Homestead

Unlike most people, who only begin to take an interest in family history during their senior years, Jamie, who embraced his family's past at age 4, continues to see that history as deeply relevant. It allows him to make a personal connection with the colonization of Pennsylvania, the War for American Independence, and the early era of Indian removal, significant events that shaped our nation's history.

Just as important, Jamie and his wife, Rebecca, have cultivated a strong interest in the family's history in their own children: Abigail, age 6; Michaiah, age 3; Samuel, age 8; and Zachariah, age 4. It's a wonderful way of preserving the legacy of one of the Wyoming Valley's founding families.

(To read the full article on the Internet go to:

http://citizensvoice.com/arts-living/a-family-s-legacy-1.1038356?sms_ss=email&at_xt=4ca9471a209a1807.0)

Visiting The Family History Library in Salt Lake City

When our newsletter editor, Anne Kirby, recently returned from the Family History Library, at 35 North West Temple St. in Salt Lake City, Utah, SFA President, Jamie Swetland, invited her to answer some of his questions about the library and share them with readers.

Jamie: What's it like to go to the largest library of its kind in the world?

Anne: It's a genealogist's dream! This five-level, state-of-the-art facility stands across the street from Temple Square, right downtown. It's open free to the general public.

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Just before the doors opened at 8 a.m., I joined the line of people outside. Many carried notebooks, briefcases or laptops, eager to start their research. I met a lady from England on her first visit to the library. Once inside the large foyer, a friendly volunteer greeted us and the English lady opted for the 10-minute library orientation which is repeated throughout the day.



Family History Library

Jamie: What is the atmosphere of the building?

Anne: To answer that literally, the humidity, temperature, and lighting are designed to protect the collection from deterioration. This includes over 2.4 million rolls of microfilmed genealogical records, 727,000 microfiche; 356,000 books and 3,725 electronic resources. It's exciting to see all of this accessible to the public. I felt like a kid in a candy store!

Jamie: What are the people like who work there?

Anne: Since this was my first foray into English research, I asked a woman at the information desk on the British floor how to start. She invited me to sit down and described the library and Internet resources available to me for about an hour. What a great way to begin! I took notes and used them the whole two weeks. Many of the 700 highly-trained volunteers have come from other states and countries at their own expense to help at the library. It was always easy to find assistance. I observed a library worker helping a patron for hours at the computer. Then I heard him excitedly say, "That's her! I just found my second great-grandmother!"

Jamie: How is the library organized?

Anne: The main floor emphasizes FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org), and contains the books of family history and biographies. It's a good place to begin. Floor two has the U.S. and Canada microfilms, floor three U.S. and Canada books. Meanwhile, basement one contains the international books and films, while basement two is where I spent all my time this year—British Isles books and films. The workers specialize in the areas on the floor where they work. I soon saw my British friend looking very much at home. As for me, I will be back next year.

To access the library online, go to familysearch.org and click on "library".



Library patrons peruse microfilms

(Look for answers to more of Jamie's library questions in the March 2011 issue of S/S Lore.)

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