

# Stories Radiating From Conestoga Centre

BY M. LUTHER HEISEY

One of the names given in early times to Conestoga Centre was the rather inelegant, but withal descriptive, term of "Pinch Gut." It is irrefutably shown as such on a map of 1824. A wandering bard looking about the place was tempted to exclaim:

"Pinch Gut Stadt, Du Arme Stadt,  
Molassich Brot ant Sell Net Sot."

or as you would say in English:

"Pinch Gut town, you poor town,  
Molasses bread, and not enough of that."

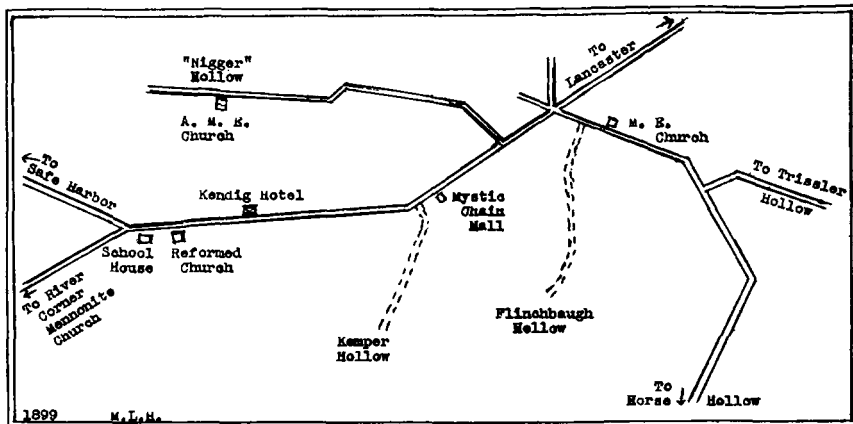
Did it then indicate an unproductiveness of soil, a "Beggar Row" community, where lack of sufficient nourishment caused one to draw in his belt until it pinched? Whatever early conditions were like, Conestoga Centre is now a prosperous and neat-looking village.

But the Centre also has the reputation of being as full of "hollows" as a Swiss cheese of holes. This village, situated on a high ridge, overlooks the Conestoga River, Camp Chiquetan, and in the distance the Susquehanna; it is in the center of many dells, known to the natives as "hollows." To the right, or north, you will find one called "Nigger Hollow," and it was there that the name "Pinch Gut" or "Pinch Gut Hollow" was applied rather than to Conestoga Centre proper, which rested on the ridge above this Hollow.

The name no longer applies but here existed, in days gone by, a Negro colony with church and cemetery, and one of the principal characters was Harriet Sweeney, who had gained some notoriety as a sorceress and witch-doctor. Many were the tales told of her charms and hexes. She put "spells" on people, practiced hexeri, and could pow-wow. Should any cut across her field, even after repeated warnings, she would put a spell on them. One such person, A..... H....., walked through, came to the far fence, and owing to the spell could not climb over, but was able to proceed only on the way she came. Another woman, M..... R....., was accused of being a witch, who put spells on cows, causing blood to appear in the milk. Harriet came to the rescue; she had a powder to be given to the cows, and instructed the owners to burn the hair off the cows' chains. They did. The cows were cured, and as the chains were put into the fire, the witch in turn was afflicted with "wild fire."

You could identify Jennie Rice's house by the trumpet vines growing around the doorway. Gone are all the familiar landmarks of this Hollow. The church has disappeared. The cemetery of the colored folk is covered over with myrtle and briars, and canopied by huge trees; located back from the road on a steep hillside, it can be found only by following a guide familiar with the surroundings.

Then there were Trissler, Flinchbach and Kemper Hollows, all off of the beaten path, and leading into somewhat secluded sections.



THE "HOLLOWs" ABOUT CONESTOGA CENTRE  
Scale: one inch, 1200 feet.

### Horse Hollow

More remote, and yet attached to Centre by many ties, was Horse Hollow, on the banks of the Pequea Creek. Few hills in the county made the old pioneer motor cars chug so energetically as a climb out of this Hollow, either by the elbow corner to Marticville or up Sand Hill to Centre. The mill and the magnetic iron ore mine nearby helped to make the place known to the outside world, otherwise few would have learned of its existence.

How did the name Horse Hollow attach itself to the place? There are traditions and legends. One source tells of the presence of horses tethered there as the Confederates threatened to pour across the waters of the Susquehanna, and had they proved successful, the retreating Union troops planned to retrieve their mounts and flee in a comfortable and hasty manner. But the name was attached to this place long before the Civil War.

David Eshleman, who lived near the Hollow, repeatedly told his son, H. Frank Eshleman, Esq., of an accident which occurred there. Driving along "Mud Lane," which ran from the present Marticville Methodist Church to the Hollow, on an icy, wintry day, the driver, as he approached the hill, found his team slipping toward the cliff, unable to make the turn in the lane leading to the Hollow road. Down over the high bank went wagon,

horse and driver with fatal results. Ever after that accident, the place was known as Horse Hollow.

It may well be that the fatal accident to Frederick Pfeifer, on December 1, 1845, inspired this story. Mr. Pfeifer, a member of the Lancaster County Poor Board, and father of a former mayor of Lancaster City, Frederick, Jr., lost his life when driving to the mill on the Pequea in a dearborn carriage loaded with wheat. While going down the icy, hilly road, his horse slipped, and Mr. Pfeifer, jumping from the wagon, got caught in the harness and was thrown under the horse, with tragic results. And so, Horse Hollow had its romances even as did Sleepy Hollow!

### **Conestoga Centre in 1875**

An account printed in 1875 tells us Conestoga Centre was "a village situated a little north of the center of the township, containing one hundred dwellings and five hundred inhabitants, four general stores, one shoe store, two hotels, two restaurants, two wagon and two blacksmith shops, and several other places of business; also four churches, one each of the Methodist, Old Mennonite, German Reformed, and African Methodist denominations, and three common schools.

"The first house erected in this village was a log cabin, built on the present site of Adam Kendig's hotel, by John Kromel, about the year 1728. The oldest living inhabitant of the place [in 1875] is Dr. John Kendig, now in his seventy-sixth year, who was born there. He has practiced medicine in the village and surrounding country for at least half a century. Among the most enterprising business men of Centre is J. R. Yentzer, who manufactures upwards of one million cigars annually, to supply his wholesale and retail trade.

"John W. Urban, of this place, offers a good example of an energetic business man and a first-class citizen. He was born in Conestoga Centre in 1845, and enlisted in the Union army at the age of seventeen, and served faithfully for four years and three months. During his service he was thrice taken prisoner, and served seven gloomy months in the notorious Andersonville prison. After his return home he was elected, in 1867, to the office of township assessor, and in that capacity served six years, during which time he also filled the appointment of assistant United States marshal, and helped with the United States census. In 1872 he was elected clerk of the Court at Quarter Sessions, which position he now fills. He also attends to his general store business. The post office is known as Conestoga; postmaster, Peter M. Bruner.

"The chief feature of the township is agriculture, and it contains many good practical farmers, among whom might be mentioned Alexander Zercher, Christian E. Miller, Adam Bottsfield, Jacob Thomas, Christian Warfel, John Hess, Abraham Kendig, Christian Good, David H. Hess, and others."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New Historical Atlas of Lancaster County, Pa., Everts and Stewart, 1875, p. 10.

The above-mentioned Dr. John Kendig was the dean of Conestoga physicians, serving the community faithfully for years. Often after continuous and strenuous rounds of visitations, he would hide away at the residence of John Sweigart, Sr., in Horse Hollow, where a room and bed always awaited him, and where he could sleep unmolested until completely refreshed. Slinging his saddle bags across his horse, he would mount and hie away, ready for another round of steady, unrelenting riding on calls to his patients.



#### KENDIG'S HOTEL, ABOUT 1900

Portion of white building shown on extreme left was the office of Dr. Maris Kendig. To the right of the sign post is the old pump and watering trough.

Years ago Henry L. Fisher, Esq., of York, put into verse a description of the doctors of olden times, and from a few lines we learn —

“They always rode on horseback, and gen'rally the gallop,  
With saddle-bags and pockets full of calomel and jalap.

And epsom salts and senna, too, and hellebore and borax,  
And herbs and teas for stomachache, the bowels and thorax;  
And aloes for cathartics mild, and ipecac emetics,  
Peruvian bark in Holland gin, for gentle diuretics.”

P. S. Clinger, another of Conestoga's doctors, also gained great popularity among his clientele. This is attested by the fact that a number of children were named for him.

Dr. Benjamin F. W. Urban was born in 1847 in Conestoga Township, as were his father and grandfather. His maternal grandfather was Conrad

Sourbeer, Jr. Benjamin and five of his brothers served in the Civil War; John W., wounded and taken prisoner, memorialized his experiences in a stirring book, "Battle Field and Prison Pen." Dr. Urban studied medicine with Dr. Clinger, and in 1867 entered the University of Pennsylvania medical department, and was graduated two years later. The urge to write also seized the mind of the doctor, who in 1911 published "Dreaming on the Conestoga," a book of mystic and lofty poems and sonnets, second in beauty only to the works of Lloyd Mifflin. He loved the Conestoga River, stream of his youth, even though

"A dull, prosaic stream to some thou are,  
Whose cradling mountains are but gentle hills,  
From off whose kindly breasts, the new-born rills  
Are fed by limpid floods, that upward start  
From fountains deep within the mother-heart.  
Thy fields of gold the sturdy yeoman tills,  
And frowning castles are the vine-clad mills, —  
Of tranquil scenes a sweet, harmonious part.

Thou calm reminder of my boyhood days,  
Let others slight thy charm, —so will not I,  
And as I tread the old familiar ways,  
I dream beneath the soft, sad autumn sky,  
And pray that I may dream while mem'ry stays,  
Though ev'ry joy be wedded to a sigh."

For us, we will let the poet dream of his sad autumn sky, but turn our thoughts to rambles along the Conestoga below Rock Hill, where under bright springtime skies the sun-soaked hills yield a profusion of wild flowers of boundless variety and beauteous colors. Truly, an artist's paradise—a spot that lured one painter, J. Earle Pfoutz, to dwell right there.

Dr. Jacob L. Mowery was born June 23, 1855, the son of Jacob and Emma Lefever Mowery, being descended on his maternal side from the pioneer Lefever family of Strasburg Township. Dr. Mowery was graduated from the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia in 1878, and immediately began practicing in Conestoga Centre.

There was rivalry between Dr. J. L. Mowery, of Centre, and Dr. L. M. Bryson, of Marticville, at least at a chance ticket contest, when the German Reformed Church held a strawberry festival, back in the 1870's, to raise funds for the purchase of a new roof for their edifice. The event was enlivened by music furnished by the General Reynolds and the Marticville Cornet bands.

## **The General Reynolds Cornet Band**

One of the bright social features of a rural community was the village band. Conestoga was not far behind other sections, for about the time of the close of the Civil War, and in honor of a fallen hero at Gettysburg, a band was organized. It was surely a recreational pleasure to travel to festivals and other affairs, albeit, the heavy, old band wagon, with gaudy colorings, could not compare with the luxury of a modern sedan; and what a lark it was to travel to the county seat and participate in a great

political parade and blare forth with the full strength (and some lack of harmony) of an "all brass" aggregation, sometimes to the amusement of the "sophisticated" city dwellers. Such were the delights of a county band. On March 1, 1880, a charter was sought, for the members "agreed to associate themselves for the cultivation of instrumental music and are desirous of acquiring and enjoying the powers and immunities of a corporation or body politic at law for the furtherance of such purpose." The charter was recorded April 30, 1880, and was signed by

B. S. McLane	B. K. Maynard	J. B. Urban	H. H. Rhinier
D. K. Kendig	John M. Smith	J. M. Witmer	Valentine Shenk
M. H. Benedict	A. C. Maynard	Wm. C. Smith	Martin Cramer
J. B. Lawrence	Christian Eckman	Albert W. Guiles	John Carrigan
B. F. Warfel	William Henry	Daniel Rhinier	Benjamin Smith



**GENERAL REYNOLDS CORNET BAND, CONESTOGA, PA.**

First row, Grant Gardner, B. Frank Zercher, David Caldwell, Grant Warfel, Mart Markley, Abe Aston, . . . . . Preis.

Second row, Mace Jones, unknown, Earl Preis, John Zercher, Charles Kreider, Amos Aston, Christian Smith, Edward Wade. Picture was taken about 1900 in front of Dr. Kendig's office. Notice the horse-drawn ornamental band wagon in the rear, ready for a trip to Ironville, Pa.

**Trials of Traveling**

The old stage coach, with its letters and weekly newspapers, had a faculty of finding its way to remote and out-of-the-way places, among which let us include Conestoga and Safe Harbor. Not even Horse Hollow was neglected! It was a welcome sound to the ear to hear the clatter of the stage horses' hoofs on the floor of the old covered bridge at Sickman's mill, or the increased clatter which indicated it was Saturday night, as the well-

groomed swains urged their steeds onward to the homes of waiting maidens.

The Pequea trolley line gave scant improvement to travelers destined to and from Centre, for the line passed Morton's blacksmith shop and skirted the edge of Marticville on its way to the river. And what poor and irregular motive power they had at times!

After 1876, the "Port Road" along the river, from Columbia southward, gave Harbor and Centre some accommodations in rapid transit, but the "low grade" line through the township, built in 1906, was labeled "for freight only." But now the township, with its proportionate share of good roads, is readily accessible to motorists, with its "capital" only seven miles from the county seat.

The "River Road" continues on its way through the township—a highway more ineptly named could not be found, for the river is lost to view for most of the way.

### Mills and Mines

The area had a full quota of the old-time mills; some to good purpose, some to evil. The Horse Hollow Flour Mill was erected as early as 1793 by a Mr. Good, and was successively and successfully operated by John Haskell, Abram Herr, George L. Buckwalter, Daniel Good, William and Samuel Pugh, and Fred H. Sickman. It was used as a distillery until 1830, then as a flour and feed mill, with improved methods and machinery through the passing years.

Up the Pequea Creek, a mile above "The Burnt Mill," we find Baumgardner's Mill, erected by Jacob Smith, the ingenious millwright, and father of the Honorable A. Herr Smith. The former lies buried in the Marticville Methodist graveyard. The mill, long in disuse, is now owned by a former president of this Historical Society, H. Frank Eshleman, Esq., who was born and spent his boyhood in the immediate vicinity.

Approaching Marticville from the north, we find the Pequea, once spanned by another old covered bridge, now crossed by a wide, modern concrete structure, erected in 1935. On the north side, to the right, was a mill widely known as "The Burnt Mill," a name bestowed upon it after a disastrous fire. As a flour mill it operated legally; as a distillery illegally, for it brought upon itself the suspicions of government revenue agents, and for good reasons.

Into a legally-stamped barrel the whiskey was poured to the brim, but other barrels, unstamped and skillfully concealed over the waters of the Pequea, were also filled and constantly drawn from as consumers appeared. But on the approach of revenue agents the contents of the barrels were quickly dumped into the stream, and away flowed the evidence of illegal manufacture and possession. Two of the operators of this flour mill were Christian Keeports and David Heiney.

Others, not involved in the manufacture of liquor, suffered losses through this incident. Benjamin Eshleman, 5th, lost his entire fortune, which included all real estate and personal possessions, by sheriff's sale; as learned from information told by the family and also by John Good, of Rohrs-

town, who was the grandson of John J. Good (Gentleman John Good) of Conestoga Township, who lost everything he possessed at the same time and in the same manner.<sup>2</sup>

The Burnt Mill, of Pequea Township, and the Horse Hollow Mill, of Conestoga Township, were operated by Jake, Bill and Ben Good, who were in no way related to Gentleman John Good. For the illicit making of whiskey the court placed upon them a heavy fine, which they were unable to pay. Both Gentleman John Good and Benedict Eshleman, 5th, signed the bond for Jake Good on his request, as they were friends, and possessed of large land holdings. The fine caused the three operators and their bondsmen to lose their entire possessions.

On August 19, 1872, the sheriff, Frederick Myers, sold property of Martin Good, John J. Good and Benedict Eshleman, for \$1100 to Jacob Bausman. On April 26, 1873, three properties of Benedict Eshleman were sold by the sheriff, Amos Groff, the sale realizing nearly \$31,000.

Another version would have us believe that a humble workman, pleading guilty to illicit manufacturing was sentenced by the court, and languished in durance vile, having been assured by the real operators that his family would be well cared for.

By following the unimproved road, passing beyond the site of "The Burnt Mill" for a mile, you come to the stone house of Joseph C. Miller, and by turning to the right and walking along Mine Run for a short distance, you reach the weed-cluttered mouth of one of the group of three abandoned silver mines, at times successfully operated and which yielded two hundred and fifty ounces of silver to a ton of ore. What a pity this Lancaster County "Silverado" did not continue in a profitable existence!

Going downstream, until we pass Sickman's Mill and Horse Hollow, we find evidences of another mining operation, now abandoned but once quite successful in securing magnetic iron ore. Little remains as a sign of a once profitable mining venture. So again Conestoga Township misses fame and fortune.

But there is an operation in later years in the township that, while not yielding precious ores, or working "underground" or "strip" mines, is rather engaged in "refining"—refining the minds and hearts of boys of Lancaster County—her most precious asset. Yes, Camp Chiquetan<sup>3</sup> is a gold mine for the processing of good citizenship in the lives of her numerous Boy Scouts.

### God's Acres

In the present well-kept Reformed (formerly Reformed and Lutheran) graveyard are found near the center of the plot, thirty-four uninscribed rough field stones which mark the resting place of the oldest settlers, and they attest to the antiquity of the place. Here also are the remains of

<sup>2</sup> From Eshleman History, as compiled by Mrs. Irene R. Donovan, of York, Pa., in the library of the Lancaster County Historical Society.

<sup>3</sup> On the farm once owned by Jacob K. Pickle.



THE  
HEART  
OF  
HORSE  
HOLLOW



THE  
HORSE  
HOLLOW



THE  
HORSE  
HOLLOW

gallant soldiers of many wars. A large stone marks the resting place of Captain George Hess, commander of Company D, First Pennsylvania Regiment, who was wounded at the battle of City Cross Roads, near Richmond, Virginia, and who died there July 4, 1862, at the age of thirty-four years. Other heroes of the Civil War buried there are Gustavus Adolphus Kendig, who was killed at the storming of Fort Fisher, North Carolina, January 15, 1865; Calvin B. Kendig, James H. Barton, Martin Bruner, Corporal Henry Burd, John Davaler, John A. Deal, Benjamin C. Fralich, Godfried Grossman, Robert McMillen, John Sawyer, John Sourbeer and Frederick Virling.

Captain Hess, born in 1828, married Sarah (Sallie) McMillan, of a family well-known in Centre; among their children were Josephine Catharine, who married Phares W. Fry; Georgianna, who married Menno M. Fry, a brother of Phares; Sarah S. married John F. Heiland (each of these men at one time being in the tobacco business in Lancaster); his son, George, was a familiar figure at the old Flinn and Breneman store. Captain Hess and his father kept the Mansion House at Safe Harbor, and later the G. A. R. Post was named for the captain. Daguerreotypes of the captain, his father and mother, Abraham and Mary Hess, are owned by this Historical Society.

Soldiers of the Revolutionary War found in the Reformed Cemetery are Captain Jacob Metzger, John Yentzer and Peter Kline.

Some of the oldest stones are those of Peter Kline, born 1729; Jacob Metzger, born 1734; and Andreas Martin, born 1735.

Captain Elias McMellen, born November 23, 1839, was a native of Conestoga, the son of Joseph and Barbara McMellen (McMillan), the latter the daughter of John and Barbara (Hess) Derredinger. The captain was wounded several times during the Civil War, at the close of which he resumed the contracting business in Lancaster, held office as select councilman and prothonotary, and was active in politics. He was also proprietor of the Exchange Hotel.

The plot of one acre of ground on which the River Corner Mennonite Meeting House stands was deeded in 1773 by Benedict Eshleman to that congregation. Benedict settled in Conestoga Township in 1732. In the adjoining graveyard are found Eshlemans, Harnishes, Shenks, Lines, Goods, Warfels, Charles (Curli), etc. An old stone is that of George Warfel, born May 16, 1715, died September 14, 1806.

There were only four stones found uncovered and decipherable in the Negro cemetery; one was that of Samuel R. Cooper; a soldier in the Civil War, who died at Falmouth, Virginia, May 9, 1863.

Few old stones are found in the Methodist and Evangelical cemeteries, but we can pass from a somber to a gayer note as we recall some stories concerning the latter church, stories of levity and irreverence, of actions that would not be tolerated today.

## Old Time Revivals

In former days, revivals in the rural districts sometimes afforded amusement for the young men who had no respect for God's house, and it took

pastors with great patience and tact to ignore disturbances. Conestoga Centre had its quota of such hoodlums. The Methodist Church at one end of the village and the Evangelical at the other often held special services at the same time.

It was said that the pastor of the Methodist Church could handle these rogues better than the one at the Evangelical Church, who being an older man was much perturbed. These young men would devise many ways to disrupt meetings. They would come into the church in groups of three or four, sit awhile, then retire, to be replaced by other groups. Angered, the pastor would follow them; some hid behind the gravestones in the adjoining cemetery; others, bolder, jostled him about.

At times, coming down the village street, these lads endeavored by their shouting and loud singing to annoy the worshippers. On one such occasion the preacher stopped the service, and going to the door said, "Brieder und Schwestere kum eemool do raus do kummt der Teufel's artillery." That church is gone; all that remains is the cemetery in which the old pastor is buried. And no doubt the rowdies who provoked him, learned through life the hard way that it does not pay to show disrespect to the house of God and its workers.

## *Conestoga Lutheran Church*

In the early days of this settlement a Lutheran church was established to the west of the site of the present Reformed Church, and here the members buried their dead. Ancient tombstones tell of the ancestors of



Rev. John Jacob Strine



Mrs. John Jacob Strine

many now living thereabouts. This was the church to which the Rev. Henry Ernest Muhlenberg walked many times, and served as a preaching station, during the time he was pastor at Old Trinity in Lancaster, in 1780 to 1815.<sup>4</sup> Interested not only in the welfare of his people, he found the nearby river hills teeming in flowers and plants, which this "American Linnaeus" delighted in gathering and classifying. Nothing remains of the little church and congregation—the members sleep in the well-kept God's Acre by the present Reformed church. The only tangible thing remaining is the church treasurer's book<sup>5</sup> that recorded the contributions of those who were members in 1818 to 1829. The family names on record are well-known in that vicinity — Kleins, Rathvons, Pfeifers, Henrys, Kendigs, Sourbeers, Sweigarts and Zerchers. The complete list is as follows:

Names of the Subscribers	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822	1823
Brenner, George	\$1.00	\$1.00				
Brenner, John	1.00					
Brenner, Adam	2.00				.50	
Brenner, Philip	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00
Bowen, William				1.00	.50	
Duke, Jacob	2.00		1.00	1.00		
Duke, Thomas	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	
Duke, Adam	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00		
Dotter, Andrew	2.00					
Dietrich, Henry, Jr.		3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Dietrich, Henry, Sr.			5.00		3.00	
Debler, George			1.00			
Fehl, Jacob	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Fehl, Jacob, Sr.	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00		
Fehl, Jacob, Jr.			1.00			
Fogle, Adam	1.00					
Fisher, John		1.00	1.00			.50
Gardner, Valentine	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Gardner, Philip	1.50	1.50		1.00	1.00	
Good, John	1.00	1.00				
Gall, Henry	1.00	1.00		1.00	1.00	
Heidelbaugh, Jacob	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Henry, John	1.00	1.00				
Henry, Michael	1.00	1.00	1.00			
Hockley, Samuel				1.00		
Kline, Peter	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Kline, Henry	2.00	2.00		.50	1.00	
Kendig, Daniel				1.00	1.00	
Kindig, John		2.00		1.00		1.00
Kindig, John				1.00		
Kindig, Martin				.50		
Lingafelder, Daniel	2.00	1.50				
Litzenbargar, Hannah,	1.00					
Leity, William				.50		

<sup>4</sup> The records of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pa., abound with baptisms performed by Rev. Muhlenberg of children of Conestoga Township families. On May 29, 1796, ten children were baptized; on July 16, 1806, seventeen.

<sup>5</sup> This book is owned by Mrs. M. Luther Heisey, whose ancestor, Felix Sweigart, was a member of the old church.

Names of the Subscribers	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822	1823
Miller, Peter	1.00		2.00			
Morry, Henry			1.00			
Miller, Catherine				1.00	1.00	
Miller, Adam					1.00	
Nestelrote, Israel	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Nestelrote, John	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00		
Nestelrote, Susan					1.00	
Ohmet, Jacob	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		
Ohmit, John						1.00
Otto, Christian			1.00			
Otto, Jacob				.50		
Pfeiffer, Frederick	1.50		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Prosch, William	3.00					
Peters, John	2.00					
Rapp, Jacob	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Ressel, Michael		.50	.50	.50		
Rheem, William			1.00	1.00		
Rathfon, John		2.00		1.00		
Resh, John				.50		
Swigart, Felix	2.00	2.00	2.00			
Shmeltz, Jacob	1.00	1.00				
Sourbeer, Henry	1.00					
Shoafstall, Adam			1.00			
Stoner, George			3.00			
Stehman, Tobias				5.00	5.00	
Urban, George	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00
Urban, Lewis	3.00	2.00				
Urban, John		2.00			2.00	
Yentzer, George	1.50	1.50		1.00		
Yentzer, John, Sr.		2.00				

During the following six years, these additional names were found among the list of subscribers: Tobias Dietrich, Elizabeth Dietrich, John Darveddinger, George Fehl, Susanna Fehl, Philip Franckford, Martin Huber, Isaac Heiney, John Hiller, Michael Henry, Jr., Jacob Holl, Jacob Hetterich, Christian Henry, Frederick Kepperly, John Kneereamer, John Mohr, John Miller, Frederick Ohle, John Parker, Christian Stoner, John Sweigart, and Joseph Urban.

Our interest was drawn primarily to Conestoga Centre through the history of the Lutheran church and a pastor who served there. The preacher passed away in 1870, and with him went all activities of the church. From Muhlenberg's record of marriages and baptisms of persons about Centre we can assume that there was a congregation established some years before 1790. It became a union church of Lutheran and Reformed adherents before 1812, for a deed (Book X, vol. 3, p. 744) of land sold to Philip Harman shows the plot to be situated by land of the "Reformed Congregation of Protestants" (and also Lutheran), and by land of John Kindig, Conrad Sowerbeir and John Hess.

Then fifteen years later, this "Lutheran and Reformed Church" is mentioned in Deed Book Y, vol. 7, p. 201, 1827, when Enoch McMegredy sold land to Christian Hess, George Yentzer and Hugh Mehaffy, trustees, "to build and erect a schoolhouse thereon to be called the Conestoga English

and German Schoolhouse." The cost was \$10. The maps of 1824 and 1843 show only a Lutheran church at Centre.

The Lutheran pastor from 1816 to 1870 was the Rev. John Jacob Strine, who served faithfully twelve other charges in the county. He was one of the popular "marrying" parsons, for the number of couples joined together by him was 4533, which he recorded in three books.<sup>6</sup> The items are beautifully written in bold, clear characters, making research through them a delight.

The constitution, for the "German Evangelical Lutheran Zion's Congregation" in and around Conestoga Centre, was written in German, in the Record Book for that church by Pastor Strine, October 16, 1816. It was patterned after the constitution written by the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg for Trinity Lutheran Church in Lancaster, in 1769. The names signed to the constitution were Trustees, Jacob Fehl, George Urban; Elders, Jacob Rapp, Jacob Ohmet; Wardens, Peter Klein, Lewis Urban; followed by one hundred and thirty-six names of male heads of families, among which we find familiar ones as Henry, Fehl, Klein, Sweigart, Urban, Nestelroth, Gardner, Sourbeer, Bortzfield, Duke, Kendig, Gall, Peiffer, Lines, Brener, Shoff, Hillar, Rathfon, and Virling.

### **The Family of Pastor Strine**

The father of Pastor Strine,<sup>7</sup> John Jacob Strine, Sr., born 1756, was a native of the Province of Saxony, and was tutor to the children of the Royal Family of that era. He emigrated to America, settled at White Hall, Lehigh County, and there he married. In 1797, Trinity Lutheran Church, of Lancaster, urged him to fill the position of schoolmaster, but he was unable to come. In 1802, the opportunity again presented itself, and then he was engaged as schoolmaster and organist. The position required him to give instruction in reading, both German and English, writing, arithmetic, and other branches of knowledge. He was to lead the singing at public worship and funerals, and play the organ and have charge of it, and have custody of the key to the steeple. Mr. Strine resigned March 3, 1828, and was succeeded by Jacob Slemmer, who in 1832 was in turn succeeded by George Christian Strine, a son of the former teacher. The elder Strine died October 28, 1831, aged 75 years, 8 months and 23 days, at the home of his son-in-law, Herman William Vilee (of whom more later), a printer and a publisher of taufscheins. The bones of pedagogue Strine and his wife, Maria Barbara (nee Hora), who died July 4, 1822, aged 50 years, 4 months and 10 days, rested peacefully for over one hundred years in the ancient Trinity graveyard, until they were removed (with all others) several years ago.

The will of John Jacob Strine, Sr., is found in Book Y, vol. 2, p. 32, dated May 16, 1831, and mentions his wife, Maria Barbara; two brothers, Jno. Adam (1741-1803), and the youngest, Jno. Peter.

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<sup>6</sup> These books were presented to the Lancaster County Historical Society in 1950, by Dr. Charles W. Ursprung, a descendant of the preacher.

<sup>7</sup> Throughout all records the family name is spelled Strein and Strine; we prefer the latter.

His daughters were: Sarah, unm.

Maria B. (m. Samuel Danner, April 28, 1812).

Catharine E. (m. George Keller, March 29, 1827).

Elizabeth Ann (m. Jacob Auxer, of Elizabethtown, February 10, 1825. She died February 19, 1877, in her 71st year).

Regina Matilda (m. Herman W. Villee).

The sons were: George Christian

Michael [Justice of the Peace in 1825]

Ferdinand

John Jacob (who, besides his share of the estate, was given "my gold watch in consideration of his filial love towards me and faithfulness during my lifetime").

Executors: John Jacob Strine and George Keller.

Witnesses: Ernst Freund and Christopher Gumpf. October 31, 1831.

The Rev. John Jacob Strine, b. Jan. 1, 1793, d. April 4, 1870, was married by the Rev. Christian L. F. Endress, May 24, 1827, to Mary, daughter of William Brown and his wife Anna. Mary was born March 28, 1804, died 1886. Their children were:

Emma Rosetta, b. Mar. 19, 1828, d. 1897, unm.

Anna Maria Brown, b. Aug. 14, 1830, d. 1906, unm.

William Brown, b. Sept. 29, 1832

James Buchanan, b. Nov. 24, 1834, d. Jan. 29, 1902, unm.

Deborah Frances, b. Apr. 9, 1837, m. Webb Michael

Mary Louisa, b. July 30, 1840, d. 1912, m. Daniel W. Rickerson, 1833-1902

John Jacob Astor, b. Jan. 2, 1844, died in Texas, m. 1st Mollie Kauffman, 2d .....

The parents and four of the children are buried in Woodward Hill Cemetery.

William Brown Strine married Susan Groff, Dec. 7, 1856. Their children: Lillian, unm.

Kate m. Charles Ursprung. Their son is Dr. Charles W. Ursprung

Mame Emma, b. Sept. 26, 1858, d. 1941, m. C. Alfred McGlinn, b. 1859, d. 1937

Their children were:

Walter Strine m. Floretta Constein

Mary m. Christian Hebble

The children of Walter S. McGlinn<sup>8</sup> and Floretta Constein:

Mary Louise m. Rev. W. Frank Carpenter, of Philadelphia

Anna Catharine<sup>9</sup> m. Galen Martin, of Mountville

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<sup>8</sup> Two books, containing the birth, baptismal and burial records, kept by Pastor Strine, for Conestoga Centre, Columbia, Chestnut Hill, and vicinity, 1815 to 1868, were donated to the Lancaster County Historical Society by Walter S. McGlinn, 1950.

<sup>9</sup> The portraits, painted by Jacob Eichholtz, of the Rev. John Jacob Strine and his wife, Mary, are now in possession of Mrs. Anna Catharine Martin, a great-great-granddaughter of Pastor Strine. See page 11.

## The Villee-Strine Family

Herman William DeVille (pronounced DeVil-e-a, later changed by Court order to Villee) was born 1791 in France, son of a governor of Paris, fought under Napoleon as captain, and came to America in 1820. Mr. Villee was a printer in Lancaster from 1826 to 1830, and published a German monthly paper, *The Lancaster Adler*. The only book, among the many bearing the imprint of Herman W. Villee, owned by the Lancaster County Historical Society, is "The Way to Heaven," 1828, a song book of three hundred pages, by the Rev. Daniel Hertz. He died August 10, 1877, and was buried in David's churchyard, Jackson Township, Northumberland County, but in 1870 the remains were reinterred in Woodward Hill Cemetery, Lancaster, Pa. He married Matilda Regina Strine, October 26, 1828. She was born August 18, 1809, died August 10, 1877.

Their oldest son, Adolphus Strine Villee was born May 24, 1832, died 1914. For fifty years he was superintendent of the Conestogo Cotton Mills. He married Julia Ann Hammond, b. August 16, 1832, d. December 3, 1809. Their son,

Charles Adolphus Danner Villee was born March 28, 1856, died April 2, 1947, aged ninety-one years. He too served the Conestogo Mills for fifty years, as foreman of the weaving department. He was an Odd Fellow for seventy years, and a member of Lamberton Lodge of Masons for fifty-six years, serving as Tyler for forty-one years, and never missing a session. In 1929 he became a tipstaff at the Lancaster County courthouse, and served until his death. He was married November 14, 1877 to Maggie E. Fortney.

Claude Alvin Villee, son of Charles, was born in Lancaster and lived there until 1935, when International Correspondence Schools transferred him to Chambersburg, Pa., as Field Representative for nine Pennsylvania and Maryland counties. His two sons are Dr. Claude Alvin Villee, Jr., of the Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, and Donald Richard Villee of Los Angeles, California. Dr. Villee is a graduate of Franklin and Marshall College, class of 1937, and of the class of 1941 University of California at Berkeley. Donald, after graduating at McCaskey High School, class of 1940, entered University of California at Los Angeles (U.C.L.A.), and majored in Business Administration. He is now a member of the firm of Teasley, Villee and Co., Certified Public Accountants of Los Angeles.<sup>10</sup>

The necrologist of Pastor Strine wrote: "He was universally beloved for his kindness of heart, and for his forbearing, forgiving and conciliatory manner." At his funeral, April 8, 1870, the sermon was preached by the Rev. Emanuel Greenwalt, assisted by the Revs. H. H. Brunning, William Hoppe, Amos H. Kremer, B. C. Suesserott and D. P. Rosenmiller. He was buried in Woodward Hill Cemetery.

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<sup>10</sup> Facts about the Villee family were gathered from the Villee Bible, now in possession of the Lancaster County Historical Society, from Portrait and Biographical Record of Lancaster County, 1894, and from Claude A. Villee of Chambersburg, Pa.



## CHRONOLOGICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. JOHN JACOB STRINE

Born January 1, 1793

Died April 4, 1870

(See Minutes of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, pp. 442 to 583)

J. J. Strine (Strein) received a loan of \$50 to aid him in his studies, May, 1812.

Dr. G. H. E. Muhlenberg recommends Strine as a worthy candidate for the ministry, June, 1814.

Strine's application for admission into the Ministerium was granted, and he was licensed to preach, 1814.

Attended meetings of the Ministerium at Frederick, Maryland, May, 1815; and Philadelphia, Pa., June, 1816; as pastor at Elizabethtown.

Strasburg wants Strine as pastor, 1816.

Thursday, May 21, 1818, Strine ordained deacon "by the laying on of hands."

Reports five congregations, three hundred and fifty communicants, four schools, 1819.

At Columbia, 1820; resided there 1820 to 1840. After that time, he resided in the southwest angle of Centre Square, in the second and third floor rooms over Haberbusch's Harness and Trunk Shop (#30).

"Advanced to the grade of pastor," June, 1820.

Served the following churches:

Elizabethtown, 1815-1823.

Maytown, December 31, 1815-1825.

Strasburg, 1816-1865.

Conestoga, 1816-1870. Announcement in county directory for 1869-1870—church service July 18, and every four weeks thereafter.

Mount Joy, 1816-1822.

Columbia, 1817—October 25, 1857.

Leacock, 1818.

Marietta, 1822.

Rohrerstown, 1823-1825.

Landisville.

Mount Pleasant (Mountville), 1826.

Concordia, near Columbia, May 29, 1859, to May 29, 1862.

Manor Schoolhouse.

## What the Maps Show

1824—"Pinchgut" (Conestoga).

Lutheran church only at Conestoga (and New Providence).

1843—Lutheran church only.

Kendrick's (Kendig's) tavern.

1851—The Conestoga Navigation Company's towpath.

Rudy Myers' tan yard.

J. Hess's mill (Sickman's). Burnt mill.

German Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist and African churches.

Drytown (near Sand Hill) east of Conestoga Centre.

River Corner Meeting House.

Stoner's and Shenk's ferries.

Mundorf's (Wise's) Island.

C. Brenner's clover mill on run west of silver mine run.  
Iron ore mines near Shenk's Ferry.

1858—(Pequea Township formed from Conestoga in 1853.)  
German Reformed, Lutheran and African churches.  
Methodist meeting house to the west of Centre.  
Drytown. Slackwater. Rockville (Rock Hill).  
Rudy Myers' tan yard.  
Grist mill at Horse Hollow.  
Geo. H. Hess's Mansion House (Hotel).  
Safe Harbor iron works.  
Shenk and Bowers' grist and saw mill at Rockville.  
Nine schoolhouses.

1864—Reformed and Lutheran churches.  
Daniel Good's Horse Hollow mill.  
Burkholder's Ferry, by Wise's Island.  
Shenk's Ferry.  
G. Dawson Coleman's rolling mill and forge, at Colemanville.  
Reeves and Miller's rolling mill.

1870—Rudolph Shank's grist mill.  
William Shober's paper mill at Slackwater.  
Safe Harbor iron works.  
William Good's grist mill at Horse Hollow.  
    In Pequea Township—Baumgardner's (B. Harnish's) mill.  
    David Heiney's (burnt) mill.  
(The population of Conestoga Township was 1007 in 1950.)

### Conestoga Township Assessment List, 1751

Ulrich Houser, Collector

(This list, in the County Commissioners' Office, Lancaster County Courthouse, is the oldest found for Conestoga Township, and has never appeared in print.)

David Jones	Jacob Myer	Francy McDannol
Jacob Good	Adam Brinaman	Michol Hess
Abrhame Burkholder	John Burgholder	Philip May
John Stinman	Georg Kendrick	Christon Shonor
John Mundorff	Abraham Kegey	John Houbert
Roudolph Wilson	Christian Brinaman	Samuel Byers
Benedick Ashliman	Abraham Blazer	Henry Boyers
Adam Coul	Stophel Brinaman	John Lyne, Junor
James Malson	Jacob Stoner	Jacob Byers
Jacob Rupley	Melchor Hoffer	Jacob Coghoman
Michol Haubershik	Michel Shank, Senr.	Michel Bower
Hannis Nickle Klein	Michol Shank, Junor	Abraham Beam
James Bower	John Bean	Jacob Beam
Mickel Quickle	Tobias Stone	David Miller
Joseph Stoniman	Joseph Pugh	Benjeman Price
Jacob Shank	Frederick Menen	Daniel Keepart
Stophel Mans	William Moore	Philip Knight
Jacob Kendrick	Samuel Moyer	Cunrad Seller
Jacob Miller	Jacob Schoik	Frederick Rodforth
Abraham Miller	Jacob Harnist	Michel Brinaman
Ulrich Haeuber	Michel Harnist	Gasper Weaver
Samuel Moyer, distiller	John Houbert	Frederick Sigler
Widdow Hos	Hondrey Line	Albright Keeller—70
Marton Kendrick		

## FREEMEN

John Carrigan  
 Petton Rush  
 Hendrey Rush  
 John Alexander  
 Thomas Alexander  
 Petter Klein

Samuel Scott  
 James Camp  
 Lucis Murrion  
 Frederick Reismer  
 Thomas Jones  
 John Burachfield

Jacob Gajan  
 Hendrey Stein  
 William Foy  
 Tobias Beirs  
 Jacob Houber—17

There is no better way to end our story of Old Conestoga than by using another selection from Dr. Benjamin Urban's book of verses —

The old stone mill, whose creaking wheels,  
 Weird music made,  
 Stands desolate and ghostly now,  
 In cheerless glade.

O memories that come and go  
 To ease our pain, —  
 To woo our hearts to childhood's home  
 And love again.  
 We are but drifting down the stream,  
 With broken oars, —  
 No backward tide may sweep our bark  
 To erstwhile shores.  
 But when we on its restive breast,  
 Or eddy lie,  
 Our dreams, unbound, like homing doves,  
 Take wings and fly.

### Gifts Presented, January 4, 1952

- By Mrs. H. A. Showalter, Lancaster:  
 A clothes tree for the front hall.
- By Mr. Walter S. McGlinn, Lancaster:  
 Two books of baptismal, confirmation and burial records for Conestoga Centre, Columbia and Chestnut Hill, kept by the Rev. John Jacob Strine, 1813-1870.
- By the State Museum, Harrisburg:  
 "Henry William Stiegel and Stiegel Glass," by Charles M. Steese.  
 Papers of Henry Bouquet, Vol. II., The Forbes Expedition.
- By the Long and York Studio, Lancaster: Photograph of Conestoga Wagon.
- By the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pa.:  
 Photographs of Lancaster County churches and cemeteries.  
 Deeds, bonds, mortgages, agreements, draughts of land, reports, letters, warrants, etc.
- By Mr. John J. Crumbaugh, Eldred, McKean Co., Pa.:  
 Lincoln Literary Collection by J. P. McCaskey, 1897.  
 Donor, the grandson of the Rev. John S. Crumbaugh who organized and was first pastor of St. John's Evang. Lutheran Church, West Orange and Arch Sts. 1851-53 he was principal of Lancaster Boys' High School. He was County Superintendent of Schools also. He died at the age of 27.