

# Wertman *Lines*

Newsletter of the Wertman Family Association

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## The Road They Traveled West: 2012 Wertman Family Reunion Site Follows Historic Pathways

by Brenda and Hal Merz, 2012 Reunion Chairs

When the frontier in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana was settled, there were individuals with vision that defined the settlement of various areas. Zane Gray was such a person. In 1796, he approached the government with a plan to clear the forest from Wheeling WV through Belmont County, westward through what would become Zanesville and Lancaster OH, then veering southwest, ending at Maysville KY. This road was known as Zane's Trace. When finished, it was really just a cleared path in the woods, wide enough to accommodate a horse and rider.

In 1804-05, the Trace was widened to allow wagons to travel. It was a rough road with trees cut to about a foot off the ground, just below a wagon's

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Return — Lester Wertman

### Save these Dates!

- 2012 Wertman Family Reunion
- Friday-Sunday, 17-19 August
- Circleville, OH

See [www.wertman.info](http://www.wertman.info) for more  
information and a registration form

## About The Wertman Family Association (WFA)

Since 2000, the rejuvenated Wertman Family Association has held annual reunions in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, New York, and Virginia. Those who attend learn more about relatives who lived before them, and form relationships with cousins from around the country. A unique feature of these events is a full-day session for researchers to share their discoveries. An earlier family association held reunion picnics in Pennsylvania and Michigan for a large group of relatives in the 1920s and 1930s.

Using the WFA website, <[www.wertman.info](http://www.wertman.info)>, strangers can discover long-lost family connections. The *Wertman Lines* newsletter and the WFA web pages disseminate accurate information about the family's heritage. In August 2007, the association dedicated a monument in the old graveyard at Ebenezer Union Church in New Tripoli, Lehigh County, PA. The black granite stone is in memory of the Wertman family that came to Lynn Township by 1749, including the "founding father," George Philip Wertman (a deacon at Ebenezer Church), and his five known sons, George Philip, Jacob, Johan Martin, Johan Michael, and Simon.

We invite you to join us!

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axle. The goal was to have wagons travel above the cut tree line. By and large this would be effective until the normal rainy season and erosion of the soil from storms and continuous use showed the marks of wear and tear on the road. Admittedly, it was an improvement from the narrow paths used by pre-1800 travelers, but a modern day traveler might well have said, "asphalt, please."

It was over such roads that our Shoemakers, Stumpfs, Reichelderfer's, Stebleton's, Delongs, Bouchers, Metzgers, Leists and others traveled to Ohio in the early 1800s. Among these were my G-G-Grandfather George Wertman and his mother Susanna Wertman Hines. Susanna and her husband, Andrew Hines, sold their land in Selinsgrove, Northumberland County, PA, in 1814 and bought land in Clear Creek, Fairfield County, OH, in March 1815.

The road and region has interest because this group of interrelated families from the same area of Pennsylvania all settled within a few miles, locating along the general area of Zane's Trace near the town of **Tarlton**. Tarlton, believed to be the first community settled in the area, was a well-known stop on the Trace, with Nye's Tavern and a post office to serve the needs of travelers. In 1801, founder Benjamin Newell wanted to name the town after himself, but residents complained, so to spite them Newell named it after Banastre Tarlton, a cruel British general of the Revolutionary War! Tarlton is on the line between Fairfield and Pickaway counties.

Pickaway County was carved from Ross County in 1810. Daniel Dresbach founded a new community and the county seat, **Circleville**, along the Scioto River, a few miles West of Tarlton, in 1810. The town received its name from circular earthworks that Hopewell Indians had constructed in the area. Dresbach laid out Circleville in a circular pattern, and the first courthouse was built in the middle of the earthworks. Residents grew tired of this unusual pattern, and in 1837 the Ohio legislature approved a redesign with more traditional rectangular streets. The process of redevelopment, completed in 1856, resulted in destruction of most of the native earthworks.

We look forward to being your hosts in August for the annual Wertman reunion in Circleville.

## Wertman Primary Source Document Project

by Kathy Bucher, Genealogy/Historical Secretary

Would you like to see the will of David Wertman who died in 1897 in Lehigh County, PA? Have you ever wished you had a copy of the Civil War pension application for Hiram Wertman from 1890 to 1915? What about the 1878 marriage certificate of Mary B. Wertman and William C. Heroy in Lockport, NY?

Primary sources (records that were created at the time of an event such, as wills, birth certificates, etc.) are very important in genealogy. While more and more of these resources are available online, many are not. Finding them often requires visits to distant courthouses and libraries.

To help members of the Wertman Family Association (WFA) find primary sources, we have started the Wertman Primary Source Document Project. The goal of this project is to identify which members have primary source documents that they are (1) willing to copy and share with others for the cost of the copying and postage, or (2) copy and send to me for the WFA Archives.

I am collecting information about the documents and will make the list available to WFA members. Here is an example of what the list will contain:

Owner of document:	WFA Archive – 29
Item:	Pension Application
Original Location:	NARA (National Archives)
Main Person:	Wertman, Elijah
Other significant person(s) mentioned:	Wertman, Levinia; Ellis, Mrs. Harry (nee Wertman)
Date:	1880-1918
Type:	Photocopy of original

If you would like to participate in this project, contact me at <[WFAArchives@hotmail.com](mailto:WFAArchives@hotmail.com)> or Kathy Bucher, 1229 Benefit Road, Chesapeake, VA 23322.

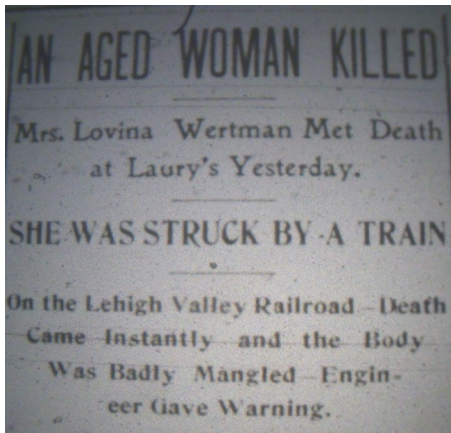
## Allentown Morning Call Obituaries

by Russell C. Dannecker

What can obituaries tell us? While there are many clues as to relatives, they can also provide a picture of a person's life. What follows are three examples. The first paints a graphic picture of a tragic accident; the second the achievements of a young life taken too soon; and the third a picture and accomplishments of the wife of a civic leader. My wife, Louise, extracted these obituaries on one of her first Wertman research trips.

### Thursday, May 4 1899; page 1

“Between ten and eleven o’clock yesterday morning Mrs. Lovina Wertman, aged 80 years, residing with her daughter, Mrs. Moses Newhard near Laury’s, was struck by a passenger train due here at 10:38 a.m. a short distance below the Lehigh Valley depot and instantly killed. She had



brought a pair of shoes to the shoemaker and was crossing the tracks at the Mauser Mills and apparently did not see the train as it came thundering along. When the train was almost upon her, she looked up but seemed almost paralyzed with fear and did not make a move. The engineer tried to stop the train but the momentum was too great and the woman was struck. She was thrown to one side and when picked up she was dead.

“Her face was crushed and her body mangled and nearly every bone in her body was broken. The remains were taken to the Laury’s depot and later removed to the home of her daughter, Mrs. Newhard, at Laury’s. Edward Seibert of 127 South Lambert Street, this city, is a son by a former husband. Deceased also has a sister living in Philadelphia and one in Michigan.

“The coroner’s jury rendered a verdict of accidental death.”

This newspaper obituary indicates that Lovina Wertman died on **3 May 1899**. But three other sources indicate a different date. The Church Records of St. John's Reformed Church at Millers, North Whitehall, Record of Burial (1870-1928), read — Lovina Wertman, widow of George P., died **5 May 1899** at age 79 years, 3 months, 9 days. The History of St. John's (Millers) Reformed Congregation, Laury’s, by Robert Allen Haas, reads — Lovina, widow of George P. Wertman, **May 5, 1899**, 79 years, 3 months, and 9 days; records of Rev. William R. Hofford, 1884-1901. But the Cemetery Records of Laury's Station, Miller's Cemetery, read — Wertman, Lovina, 24 Feb 1820-1 **May 1899**. So which record is correct?

Family History: Maria Magdalena Lovina Seibert, nee Hamm, married George Philip Wertman V, of New Tripoli. (He first married Christina Schmidt, then married her sister, Catharina.) He was born 9 August 1809 to George Philip Wertman IV and Maria Magdalena Brobst. George Philip IV was born in 1779 to Jacob Wertman and Maria. Jacob was the son of George Philip Wertman I.

### Saturday, June 23, 1928; pages 5 & 7

“Dying within an hour of receiving her high school diploma and pin denoting membership in the National Honor Society, Elaine L. Wertman, third honor student of the graduating class of the Palmerton High school, was deprived of realizing the honors that were



hers. Death resulted from perichondritis which developed following an illness of gripe which held her bedfast for five weeks, the last two weeks of which were spent in the Haff hospital where she died.

“The young student was seventeen years of age and was the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Mahlon A. Wertman and was born in Palmerton. Her parents are natives of Heidelberg Township, this county.

“Early this week the condition of the young lady

was improved and hopes were entertained that she might recover but a turn for the worse during the middle of the week changed the aspect and late Thursday afternoon sent J. N. Roeder, principal of Palmerton schools, and her sister LaRue Wertman, hurrying to the hospital with her diploma and honor pin.

“When the two arrived at the hospital they found Miss Elaine had lost her sight but was still conscious. Her sister forthwith read the contents of the diploma which brought forth the slightest reflection of a smile of satisfaction from the dying girl. The honor pin was fastened to her gown as the end drew near. At 6 o’clock she died.

“Mr. Roeder and the girl’s sister returned to Palmerton shortly after Elaine’s death and Mr. Roeder attended class night exercises conducted by the graduating class in the high school auditorium. It was with heavy heart that he sat through the program and not until its completion announced the death of the girl to the fellow members of her class. The news was received with sorrow and words of sympathy from her co-students all of whom held her in highest esteem.

“As third honor student of her class, Elaine was scheduled to deliver one of the orations at last night’s graduation exercises held at Palmerton and had hopefully and proudly looked forward to speaking on “Education for Democracy.”

“Elaine had been one of the most active and popular members of her class and school and was one of the six members of the graduating class elected to the National Honor Society. She was secretary of her class, a member of the staff of the Mirror, a member of the high school orchestra for four years and a member of the Camera Club of the school. She was also a member of the Sunday school orchestra of the First Reformed church of Palmerton.

“She is survived by her parents and an only sister, LaRue. The latter graduated from Ursinus College with this year’s class.

“The funeral will be held Monday afternoon with services at the home of her parents on Delaware avenue, Palmerton at 2 o’clock, daylight saving, followed by continued services in the First Reformed church of that borough. Interment will be made in the Heidelberg cemetery, Lehigh county. The Rev. Wolford, pastor of the First Reformed church, will

officiate at the funeral which will be attended by students of the high school. Her class in school will attend in a body and serve as honorary escort.”

Family History: Elaine Lizzie Wertman was born 29 May 1911 to Dr. Mahlon Andrew Wertman and his wife Lizzie F. Follweiler. Mahlon Wertman was born 24 December 1878 to Samuel D. Wertman and his wife Maria Bibelheimer. Samuel was born 19 October 1841 to Samuel (Simon) Wertman and his wife Elizabeth Daubenspeck. Samuel (Simon) was born about 1813 to Andreas (Andrew) Wertman and Maria Elizabeth Brobst. Andreas (Andrew) was born 10 October 1784 to Jacob Wertman and Maria. Jacob was the son of George Philip Wertman I.

### **Monday, November 16, 1942; page 5**

“Mrs. Follweiler of N. Catasaugua Dies in 69th Year  
Wife of President of Borough Council  
Was Active in Church Circles

“Mrs. Cora A. Follweiler, nee Wertman, wife of William A. Follweiler, president of North Catasaugua Borough council,



died early Sunday Morning in the family residence, 1042 7th St. that place in her 69th year. She had been in failing health for a number of months and during the past month as a surgical patient in the Allentown hospital.

“Having been married on Sept. 24, 1892, by Rev. J. Fritzinger, then pastor of St.

Mark’s Reformed church, Allentown, the couple had planned a golden wedding celebration less than two months ago. The observance was cancelled however, due to Mrs. Follweiler’s illness. For the past 46 years they have resided in Catasaugua, and 33 years ago took possession of their present home following its completion.

“A daughter of the late Louis and Matilda nee Guilder Wertman, Mrs. Follweiler was born at Moserville on Feb. 21, 1874. She was reared and educated in the community. A devoted member of Salem Evangelical and Reformed church, Catasaugua, she was active in its auxiliaries, including the Mite

Society, the Women's Guild and the Missionary Society, having been one of the organizers of the latter organization.

"Surviving are her husband, who for the last 40 years has been engaged in the general hauling business and deals extensively in explosives, two daughters, Helen I., wife of J. Lloyd Keller, Plumsteadville, and Evelyn, wife of Walter H. Haney, Doylestown; two sons, Warren, Washington D. C., and William of Catasaugua; two brothers, Howard A. Wertman, Orefield and Fred L. Wertman, Chapmans Station; and two grandchildren, Janet E. Follweiler and Franklin C. Lutz, Jr. A daughter Lillian wife of Robert J. Tosh, died at Scotia two years ago.

"The funeral will be held on Wednesday, with services at the Oliver S. Burkholder funeral home, 3rd and Walnut Sts., Catasaugua, at 1:30 p.m. Interment will be made at Greenwood cemetery, Allentown, Rev. W. A. Kratz will officiate. Viewing on Tuesday evening."

Family History: Cora A. Follweiler nee Wertman was born 21 February 1874 to Lewis Wertman and his wife Matilda Gildner. Lewis was born 3 March 1851 to Andreas (Andrew) Wertman and Maria Elizabeth Brobst. Andreas (Andrew) was born 10 October 1784 to Jacob Wertman and Maria. Jacob was the son of George Philip Wertman I.

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## A Few Ways for Name Variations

by Brenda and Hal Merz

Before beginning to search for your roots, there are some things you may consider to save hours of research time down the road. Speak your surname out loud. What do you hear? People wrote what they heard. Are there letters that can sound like other letters? Schaffer can be spelled several ways just because of the silent letters in the surname: Shaffer, Shafer, Sheaffer, or Schaffer for starters.

If you know the country of origin for your ancestors, learn the different spellings of your surname first. If you are of German descent, be aware of the pronunciations in German and English. When our Wertmans came to the new world, Englishmen may have recorded the first letter as a V. Different cultures say the same words differently. Searching for the land records of my ancestors had been un-

successful until, by accident, I saw a similar name under V. Further evaluation revealed that these actually were my ancestors. Now, I almost always check both spellings (especially in early records, but even the later records have many errors).

Wirtman, Wartman, Wortman and Workman can be other spellings of our surname. Unclear diction or mis-hearing was common. Our forebears lived in small homes, mostly made of wood, with large families of that era and farm animals contributing to the background noise. Have someone say your name, or vice versa, with a lot of background noise and see what discrepancies appear.

A common error is misreading the style of handwriting. Spellings such as Westman, Hartman or even Morkman may have come from incorrect transcribing. These variations change the sound of the name so much that a computer search might not find it. Check handwriting in other parts of documents for clues to other ways your surnames could have been written.

Then, there are typing errors. Note which letters on the keyboard are next to those in your surname. An example is the *n* next to *b*, bringing the accidental spelling of Wertmab. The letter *g* is below *t*, creating Wergman.

Werthmann is a spelling of our surname in German. Does that mean we may have our name spelled with an *f* in it? So far we have avoided this one.

Finally, there are just plain mistakes, or so it seems. I still find it difficult to believe my ancestors name was spelled Wetman a few times. This is the nature of genealogy.

Perhaps your ancestor is where you have been told he was all along. Don't leave any stones unturned if you cannot find him there. Happy hunting!

### More Spelling Variations

Shirley Daniels has found these possible spellings of our surname in German-language publications she searched at the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, IN:

Verkmann, Vortmann, Wardmann, Warthmann, Wartmann, Warttmann, Werckemann, Werdemann, Werthmann, Wertman, Worthmann, Wortman, Wortmann, Wuerdemann

## What's in the WFA Archives?

by Kathy Bucher, Genealogy/Historical Secretary

The Wertman Family Association Archives contain interesting facts about our ancestors. This issue highlights letters from George E. Wertman<sup>5</sup> (Jonathan Michael<sup>4</sup>, Daniel<sup>3</sup>, Michael<sup>2</sup>, George Philip<sup>1</sup>) who moved from Niagara County, NY, to Genesee County, MI, and sent letters to his family back home. Copies of several of these letters are in the WFA Archives in file WFA-1. They provide an interesting look at his struggles as a farmer.

**1882, May 21** - "As far as farming is concerned, I do not get along very fast though I am about equal with my neighbors. Some have planted but I have got the ground plowed and rolled and partly dragged - about 16 acres of it is all about such ground as your hill."

**1883, Dec. 16** - Things are "froze up solid.... [and it will be] a hard winter on our wheat." George complains that the taxes are high (\$37.88) and will go higher because of the new bridge over the river. Times are tough but "I ain't discouraged yet if I keep my health & have luck." But he notes that he can only raise \$150.00 on the interest that he owes on his farm. "There are lots of farmers far worse off than I am - lots hardly have their living let alone paying interest."

**1886, Nov. 29** - "We ain't had no fall rains, not enough to wet the ground to plow good. I tried to plow last week but the ground was so dry that I could not do very nice work and then it froze up so I didn't get but a little plowed.... My corn was pretty good, potatoes were light though we will have enough for our own use. Apples we have enough for our own use." He took a load of wheat to Flint to sell. "I am getting almost discouraged the prices are so low that it is almost impossible to raise money. I done my work alone again this summer, hired but very little. They built a school house in our district this summer so that will make our tax pretty high." He tells his father that he can not raise more than his interest this year again.

**1888, Jan. 8** - George continues to worry about his mortgage and asks his father to see if he can pay any of it off before it is due.

**1889, Dec. 1** - George notes that prices for crops are very low - 75 to 80 cents for wheat, hay \$7 to \$8 a ton. "The potato crop was light."

**1892, Jan. 6** - "I could not raise more than the interest and incidental expenses" but am "trusting in the future for better times." Sent \$240.00.

1894, May 20 - We've had a "fine spring up to last Thursday. It rained and Friday and yesterday it snowed about all day but it has not froze any yet." The fruit trees have blossomed very full this spring except the "peaches are light - now if they don't freeze they will be lots."

**1896, March 8** - Everyone had colds or the grip. Oll (Oliver) came home from school "and was home sick for a week. He isn't "rite" yet but he goes to school again and was hauling wood when I had it.... The roads were so rough that it shook it out of me but I don't feel rite yet." This winter George had to feed the cows "most all winter." He also fed his "horses straw all winter, something I never done before, but they are going well on it so one can do things that he things are almost impossible." George asked his father to help him pay the interest on his mortgage since he "will be 80 or 90 dollars short." Later this month, he sends his father \$140.00 - "all that I can possible raise this spring.... I have never seen such close times in my life, hoping the times will soon change."

**1897, March 28** - The weather has been "the wurst I have seen in Michigan.... The roads are so bad and have been for two weeks that is it impossible to drive a load without almost tiring out the horses." George notes that he is borrowing \$70.00 to send interest to his father. Prices are still down for crops and he hopes "the times will soon change." He adds a PS to Polly (Mary Beatrice Wertman Heroy, his sister) to ask her to persuade his father to "help me reduce the mortgage on my place as soon as we can. As long as the debts so large I can't get the money here."

**1897, April 10** - George is worried that he has not seen his family in years. "If I live I never will see any of you if I do not come." He cautions Polly to "try and make [your home] a happy home do not let sorrow always keep you sad but let us be looking forward."

**1898, March 29** - Money is the major concern for George. Two different ladies promised him "\$2000.00 on the place." George plans to send his father \$100 to pay on the principal and then to send \$2500 as "soon as the papers are made out."

**1898, Nov. 13** - George complains about working all the time. Other than going "to church or Sunday School, it is hurrah all the time." All the work is done except the plowing out a ditch and doing some fall planting. But, unless the snow goes away, nothing will get done. Thursday "when we got up it was snowing and blowing to beat everything. It was difficult to gather up the stock, chickens, turkeys, etc. and get them in their places." Crops (corn, potatoes) were fair but the prices "could only be better." The pain in his right shoulder & arm are so bad the he "can't rest at night." "Mary Ann had the rheumatism in her leg but she is better again."

**1899, March 16** - "Went to an auction sale. Things fetched a fair price and went off quick. It was a large sale." It was so cold that the "potatoes froze in cellars and lots more in pits.... This has been a very queer winter we have had.... We had a big snow storm, a regular New York blizzard." George wants to sell some pork and potatoes to raise \$100 and interest if possible.

**1902, March 30** - George notes that his "health is much better." Oll has gone to work on his father in law's farm and George hired a man who "lives in the two east rooms for \$24.00 a month and he boards himself." George notes that he is making arrangements to send his father money to pay the note. He may have to borrow some because he hasn't sold all of his beans or hay.

**1907, May 23** - George writes to his brother to discuss the probate of their father's will.

**1909, March 23** - Writing to his brother and sister, George notes that he has sold out everything – "farm & tools, stock & all except horse & buggy." He plans to move from Richfield, perhaps to Flint. The farm brought \$60.00 per acre. He gives his brother his permission to sell their father's farm in New York.

The following information about George is from the files of WFA President Russ Dannecker.

**Military:** Application of Invalid Pension dated July 5, 1866, — George Wertman, age 23, resident of Lockport, Niagara County, NY; Drafted and enlisted at Lockport 28 July 1863. Private, 97th Reg, NY Infantry Volunteers, War of 1861; Honorably discharged at or near Washington City, DC.

Became sick and contracted chronic diarrhea at or near Brandy Wine Station VA on or about 1

October 1863 from exposure, fatigue and privation; continued in feeble health and afflicted with general debility and permanent chronic diarrhea, producing extreme weakness until his discharge and since that time has not been able to labor but very little. Third Division Field Hospital, 5th Army Corps, October 1863, City Point General Hospital, July 1864, DeCamp General Hosp at Davis Island, NY Harbor, August 1864.

**1880 Census:** Flint, Richfield Township, Genesee County, MI — Wertman, George, born Aug 1842 NY, age 58, farmer; Mary A., born Apr 1846 NY, age 54; Oliver, born Feb 1875 NY, age 5

**1910 Census:** Flint, Genesee County, MI — Wertman, George, age 65, born NY; Mary A., age 64, born NY; Oliver, age 30, born NY

**Death:** In a letter to Mary (Polly) Heroy dated 31 Jan 1914, Anna Wertman Davis refers to the death, apparently recent, of "Uncle George."

## Officers, Wertman Family Association

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### Directors at Large:

Ken Cool '13; Shirley Daniels '13;  
HalMerz '14; Mary Ellen Wagner '13

**Newsletter:** *Wertman Lines* is issued twice yearly. We welcome articles for publication;. Please submit your article by e-mail to the President or the Editor, <[shirleyminerDaniels@verizon.net](mailto:shirleyminerDaniels@verizon.net)>. The next issue is scheduled for June 2012.

## Visiting the Old Homestead

by Joe Kistler<sup>9</sup>

(George Isaac Kistler<sup>8</sup>, Clara K. Leiby<sup>7</sup>, Catherine "Kitty" Ann Wertman<sup>6</sup>, Daniel H.<sup>5</sup>, David<sup>4</sup>, George Philip<sup>3</sup>, Johann Michael<sup>2</sup>, George Philip<sup>1</sup>)

In early October, my brother, two first cousins and I, four descendants of Daniel Wertman (1825-1916), set off on a quest to find the home he once occupied with his family near West Penn Township, Schuylkill County, PA. (Daniel, my g-g-grandfather, was pictured on page 3 of the June 2011 *Wertman Lines*.) We were successful in our search and found the home, at 61 Mantzville Road, Tamaqua, owned by Joseph and Charlene Whitbeck. In spite of an unfortunate incident on the front porch (see "Hazards," below), our charming hostess invited us into their home and showed us around.

The house is in very good condition, as is the large barn in back. In the dining room, one entire wall was made of sculptured hardwood (perhaps cherry). On one side was a dumbwaiter, the middle had two wood and glass doors and the left side had a door carved to match the dumbwaiter. The house had two chimneys but no evidence of fireplaces. My guess is that the home was heated with wood-burning fireplaces before oil heat was available. The joists in the house and barn were 4"x6".

Mrs. Whitbeck had a photograph of a Mary Wertman that a neighbor had given her. Mary was the second wife of Wallace A. Wertman, a funeral director, who had left a reminder of his practice in the barn -- a coffin lid.



There was also a large portion of a carriage, but both were off limits to visitors because of their hazardous location in the upper section of the barn. The barn also contained a large vise made completely from wood that is still used occasionally.

*Mary Wertman, the wife of Wallace A. Wertman, the mortician, must have outlived him because the house was sold when she died.*



### Hazards of Stepping into the Past

The lady had just painted a small portion of the porch by the front door. We saw the fresh, white paint and the paint can on the step, so I placed a finger on the new paint and it came up dry. Then, I placed my hand on the paint and it came up dry. Convinced that the paint was dry, I started across the porch to ring the doorbell. Just then, the owner came around the side of the porch, saying loudly, "Don't walk on that porch!" Still sure that the paint was dry, I took a few steps in her direction onto a portion of the porch that was grey. As I looked down to indicate that the white paint was indeed dry, I noticed white footprints (mine!) on the grey paint.

I dropped to my hands and knees while confirming that the paint was water-based, took a paper napkin from my pocket, wet it in a nearby sprinkling can, and began to clean up my footprints. She said, "Wait, I'll get a rag," as the napkin was disintegrating rapidly, and returned with an old shirt. During this attempt to clean up my footprints, still on my hands and knees, I was explaining to the lady why we were there. Strangely, the footprints were completely dry and I had to rub really hard to remove them from the grey paint.

I was looking at her periodically as I was scrubbing, and one of my cousins noticed that red from the shirt was beginning to run into the grey paint. The footprints had been mostly eliminated, so I concentrated on telling the rest of the story of why we were there. From that point, much to my our relief, she was receptive to our mission and was a very gracious hostess. After our visit, we agreed we were lucky she hadn't shot all four of us instead of being such a nice person about the porch episode.



## Remnants of Pioneer Life in 1928

by Brenda Merz

We strive to learn which family we belong to. Pioneers sacrificed for the common good in ways we may not consider culturally correct today.

Fellow researchers of the genealogy world, watch for those articles that bring home the various phases of our ancestors' lives. You may experience part of the unwritten pioneering life, as I did, when finding such articles. It was heartwarming. Sometimes we need to step back and take a look at the evidence when it isn't under a microscope to get a better view of the sacrifices made on the frontier. It may give us clues we would otherwise overlook.

The following article was in *The Circleville Herald*. A lot of those listed are descendants of the original pioneers to Pickaway and Fairfield counties OH. Many of the people worked, played, laughed, and cried together, from stories I heard from my parents. It isn't surprising to find this is just a small number of those who referred to themselves as "the Berks County Annex" from Pennsylvania. There is also a good contingent from Maryland in the area.

"Friends, Neighbors

Gather Golden Grain

Of Farm Couple, Ill

"This week persons driving past the corn fields of Byron Bolender in Washington-twp, saw a beautiful and unusual sight. There were some 50 or more men working fast and systematically, some husking the golden ears of corn from the fodder, others hauling the corn to the cribs.

"These men were neighbors, friends and brother members in Washington Grange No. 2240, of Mr. and Mrs. Byron Bolender who have been seriously ill with thphoid fever for a number of weeks. They are now reported to be convalescent.

"The love and friendship of a neighbor and a fraternal brother are to be more appreciated than silver and gold, and Mr. and Mrs. Bolender will never forget what their fellow members in Washington Grange did for them in this time of illness."

Among the 50 or so helpers at this unusual husking bee were the following familiar family names: Wertman, Delong, Stebleton, Bolender, Heffner and Drum, all Berks County descendants.

## One World War II Soldier Who Didn't Return—Lester Wertman

by Russell C. Dannecker

**Lester Allen Wertman**<sup>7</sup> (William Charles<sup>6</sup>, James Monroe<sup>5</sup>, Daniel F.<sup>4</sup>, Andreas<sup>3</sup>, Jacob<sup>2</sup>, George Philip<sup>1</sup>) was born 20 March 1921 in Lynn Township, Lehigh County, PA, and baptized 14 April 1921 at Ebenezer Church in New Tripoli, Lehigh County. School teacher Thomas Grim Fister wrote in his 1928 diary, "Before school this morning Lester Wertman climbed the flag pole. He can do this very well. His father warned him not to repeat this feat but will whip him if he does." He was confirmed 26 October 1935 at Ebenezer Church and married Ida S. E. Hartman on 1 January 1942 at Ebenezer. Their daughter, Darlene, was born 22 March 1943. He enlisted in the Army 1 June 1944, at New Cumberland, PA, and died 25 December 1944, in Grandmenil, Belgium.

### 1944 – War in Europe

By late 1944, Germany was unmistakably losing the war. The Soviet Red Army was closing in on the Eastern front, strategic Allied bombing was wreaking havoc on German cities, the Italian peninsula had been captured and liberated, and Allied armies were advancing rapidly through France from west to east.

The Battle of the Bulge, so named because of the westward bulging shape of the battleground on a map, lasted from mid-December 1944 to the end of January 1945. It was the largest land battle of World War II in which the United States directly participated. More than a million men fought in the battle – 600,000 Germans, 500,000 Americans, and 55,000 British. The battle was fought on an 80-mile front running from southern Belgium through the Ardenes Forest and down to Ettelbruck in the middle of Luxembourg.

The Battle of the Bulge began with a German attack on the morning of 16 December 1944. Under cover of heavy fog, 38 German divisions struck along a 50-mile front. Lester's Company D, 2nd Battalion, 36th Armored Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Armored Division was concerned with the Manhay Crossroads and Village of Grandmenil.

### Manhay Crossroads and Grandmenil

Manhay Crossroads was a very important German objective. The N15 road was one of the main

## The Battle of Grandmenil

www.grandmenil.com



roads to Bastogne and Liege. On 23 December at 9:00 p.m., German armored Grenadiers headed towards Manhay. The crossroads fell to the Germans. At the Village of Grandmenil, during a brief fight, both sides lose two tanks. The situation is hopeless for the Americans without the support of infantry – withdrawal is the only option. There are indications that the Germans have sent all their troops to the Grandmenil sector and Manhay, trying to find a place to break through. If the Germans succeed, the 2nd SS Corps can make its way to Liege.

Lester Wertman's unit was part of the counterattack. They left the LaGleize area after participating

with the 30th Division in a blocking action to contain the German Panzer column that was trying to break out to the North. Robert F. Kauffman, a soldier in the same unit, wrote his personal reminiscences in 1982 on the retaking of Grandmenil. Quotes are taken from his work.

### Christmas Eve Night, 24 December 1944

"Orders came to move out, everyone mounted up and our half-track crept slowly onto the roadway and fell into our assigned position in the Company order of march.

"Darkness now settled over the convoy of half-tracks as it rumbled and screeched its way through the hills and forests of the Ardennes. But as we traveled that night, there was one great, profound truth that began to emerge in all its loftiness and with all its triumph. This was Christmas Night, and this great truth is that there is absolutely nothing that can overpower that indomitable spirit of Christmas. Neither the fresh recollections of our engagement at LaGleize, with its inevitable casualties, nor that ugly scene of those four charred, armored mausoleums as they stood silently on that postage stamp size battlefield, nor the dread anticipation of what lay ahead in the darkness, could suppress the joy of Christmas ... somehow we found ourselves in the cold darkness of that open half-track standing and singing Christmas carols.

"We approached the wooded ridge overlooking the village of Grandmenil in the early evening... while we on board hurriedly gathered our equipment and prepared to dismount. After falling out on the roadway, there was the usual milling. Finally, after what seemed to be ceaseless waiting, the tanks began positioning themselves at intervals along the roadway, and then sat with their engines idling. As the signal was given to move forward, the column began emerging from the cover of the woods.

"Ahead of us was a long descending roadway with the village of Grandmenil lying at the foot, already on fire from the artillery shells that were falling into it and the reports of the explosions echoing back and forth across the valley. In an instant, the roadway was erupting with exploding shells. The volume of incoming fire was astonishing, and what compounded the awfulness of it was that it was our own artillery falling short. Tank Commanders could be heard over all of this noise screaming into their radios to lift the fire because it was falling on our own



photo credit to E. Monfort

responding German fire. Our Platoon Leader [was] Lt. Mellitz,

...  
“Occupying the tank on the left side of the intersection as we entered the edge of the village was an officer by the name of Capt. Jordan. He had ordered Lt. Mellitz to ... push further into the village. Mellitz called over to Jordan and asked him if he intended to send his tanks with us. Jordan replied that they would not be going with us. ... Mellitz asked, ‘Then what will we have for support?’ Jordan re-



men. The casualties among that lead platoon were so substantial that it could no longer function in the lead capacity, and our platoon passed through it and all the carnage that the damaging fire had inflicted on that lead element.

“The column again began to move forward toward the village. With our squad now in the lead position ... the column again resumed its movement which would carry it the final 200 yards to the village. By this time our squad had now spread out around the lead tank, with some of our men on both sides of the tank. ... the lead tank was hit. The driver immediately threw the tank into reverse, and those who survived the hit began trying to escape the doomed vehicle. The squad, being without its tank, moved off the left side of the roadway about 20 or 30 yards ... an officer approached us; it happened to be Maj. McGeorge.

“He ... told us that he would reorganize the attack and have the tanks leave the roadway and move in abreast in the final rush to the village. This was done with one tank to the left of the roadway and the other three tanks off to the right of the roadway, moving at a rush to the first buildings at the edge of the village. The tanks moved rapidly, delivering a heavy fusillade of fire as they made that final lunge to the village, with the Infantry following close behind. Our squad was dispersed among those tanks on the right of the intersection, with the foundation walls of those first houses as our line, also extending off to the right along a fence line. The firing was very intense, with cannon, machine-gun and rifle fire being poured into the village, intermixed with the

sponded, ‘You have your rifles!’ The reply that Mellitz then made would become his epitaph. ‘I’ll do it, but I don’t like it!’

“Lt. Mellitz formed us up and he led off with several men on the left side of the street and a few of us on the right .... We hadn’t moved more than a few yards down both sides of the street into the village when there was an explosion .... It must have been a round of high explosive from a nearby German tank. That shell left Lt. Mellitz dead, as well as a man by the name of *Lester Wertman*, and a number of our men wounded, so the attack never really got under way. It was quite obvious that the round fired from that tank was the opening phase of what





would certainly be a German counter attack. ... The Counterattack pushed the Americans from Grandmenil.

“When I got back to the half-tracks, I was surprised by the almost casual attitude that seemed to prevail there, in such a contrast to the desperate situation that we had just left .... I was feeling completely exhausted and so I climbed onto the hood of our half-track to rest, ... but no sooner had I done this when an irate officer, who I believe was a Colonel, pulled up in a Jeep. He demanded to know what we were doing there and why we were not down in the village. Within a very few minutes we again were on our way down that roadway, ...moving at a very quickened pace. ... No sooner did we reach the edge of the village, when again we were greeted with heavy machine gun fire. ... Once again we would have to pass the bodies of Lt. Mellitz and Wertman. The body of one man lay fallen over the hitch of a small

*In October 2011, my brother, Ronald H. Dannecker, visited the town, and with the help of a Grandmenil battle historian, located the exact spot of Lester Wertman's death.*



*Lester Wertman's remains are in plot D, row 12, grave 56 of the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery. His grave was adopted by the Belgian family of M. Jules Jadot, St. Georges sur Miese, 23 September 2010.*

trailer that had been abandoned in a previous engagement; the other man was right beside him.”

### **Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial**

Two miles northwest of the small Belgium village of Henri-Chapelle lies American soil, paid for in full by the blood and treasure of its sons. The 57-acre cemetery on the crest of a ridge affords an excellent view to the east and west. The site was liberated 12 September 1944 by troops of the U. S. 1st Infantry Division.

