

# Newsletter

## Stone Family Reunion

### President's Message from Betty Handrick Baldwin

Welcome to the 2021 Winter Newsletter. It's been a long difficult year with the problems associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. As this is written there is growing optimism as several vaccines have been approved, and vaccination of the public seems to be taking hold.

The planned 2020 (118<sup>th</sup>) Stone Family Reunion was not held due to governmental guidance against public gatherings. The 2020 cancellation was only the second since the original reunion in 1903. The 1943 Stone Reunion was not held during the second world war.

The 2021 Stone Reunion would traditionally be held on 7/31/21. There has been no decision on whether we can hold the Reunion this year, but all members will be notified by early June when we typically mail invitations. In the meantime, let's all celebrate getting last year behind us, keep our fingers crossed, and hope that 2021 is a better year.

Best wishes to everyone and remember:

*"A stranger is only a friend (or relative) that we haven't met yet."*

### Our New England Roots - New Milford, CT (a trip report from John & Christine Buck)

Many of the active members of the Stone Reunion live in Northern PA, or in the neighboring southern tier of New York State. Many others around the country grew up in these areas. Local history communities like Montrose, Birchardville, Forest Lake, Friendsville, Lawton, Rush, Jessup, etc., are all located in Susquehanna County, PA, and just a few miles south of the New York State border.

We know that this area of northern Pennsylvania was largely settled by people who came from Connecticut in the late 1700s or early



**Canfield and Mary (Platt) Stone's Home-2019**

1800s. For example the Stones, Bostwicks, Canfields, Daytons, Booths, Platts and many others came from a place called Litchfield, CT. Actually they came from a township called New Milford, which lies within Litchfield County in Connecticut. The Birchards originally came from the area near Norwich, CT a little further east. On a map we can see that Birchardville, PA is only 140 miles due west from New Milford, CT.

Because my wife and I had heard and read the names New Milford, New Preston, Milford, Upper Merryall, Pawling, etc. but had never been to the area, we were curious. We were



**Upper Merryall Cemetery - New Milford CT**

aware that Dayton, Clifton, and Don Birchard, as well as Dick Handrick and others, had made several trips to the area in the 1970s. In 2019 we finally travelled to New Milford and stayed at a B&B for a few days to explore. New Milford is a pretty village within a Town of about 6,000 people, and it is just over the NY/CT state line. As we settled in and tried to get our bearings, we learned some things:

- The countryside is very similar to the area around Montrose, PA. Hills, forests, bedrock outcroppings in the fields, and a very picturesque rural setting (we had imagined a more urban, developed area).
- The Stone family did not live in the small community of New Milford, but lived in the northeastern corner of New Milford Township. The area was informally termed “Merryall” (Upper and Lower) in much the same way that people would say they live in “Birchardville”, when their mailing address is Montrose, PA. The Stones lived out in the country. This was a surprise to us.
- The Upper Merryall Cemetery that we had heard so much about, is actually smaller than the Birchardville Cemetery (but about five times larger than Stone Street Cemetery).
- When we found the home of Canfield Stone (at 3 Cherniske Rd), we were very surprised to find it on a country road, less than a mile from the cemetery where he is buried. The home is a small, but beautifully maintained home with several outbuildings.
- After finding Canfield’s home, we looked across the street (at the corner of Cherniske and Squire Hill Roads) and saw a beautiful old stately home for sale. It was in a state of disrepair, but had obviously been a home of some stature (see “Mystery Home” article).
- We felt right at home in the local cemeteries as we found Canfield and Mary (Platt) Stone’s graves and several of their family. Gravestones included the same names we would see at Stone Street and Birchardville, including Stone, Bostwick, Dayton, and many others.

Due to unfortunate timing we were unable to visit the New Milford Historical Society. We plan to return on another trip and encourage any interested members to explore the area. Much of our family heritage originates in this area, and it’s fun to visit.

## Cemetery Maintenance Continues

Despite the unusual year with Covid-19 disruptions, maintenance activities continued uninterrupted at the **Stone Street Cemetery**. The Cemetery is located on Stone Street in Forest Lake Township and continues to be one of the major responsibilities of the Reunion via the **Stone Street Cemetery Preservation Association, Inc.** Special thanks are extended to **Sheila Birchard** for her efforts in keeping the Cemetery mowed and looking very nice.

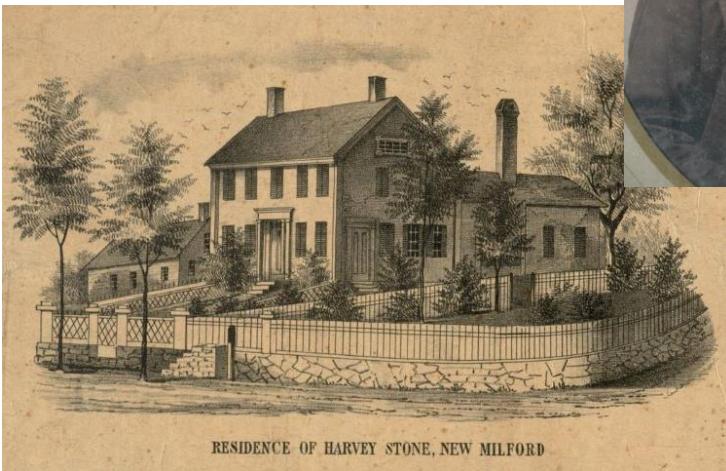
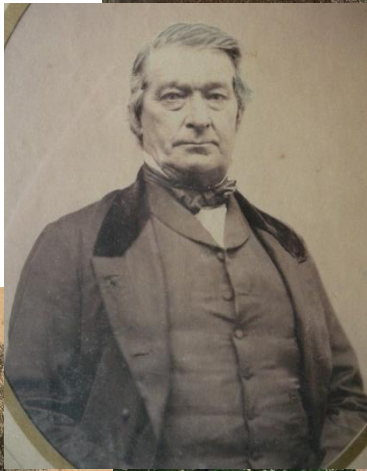
## The Stone Reunion – Looking Back

1921 – (100 years ago) – The 19<sup>th</sup> Stone Reunion at Forest Lake had 170 attendees. Officers were **A.J. Stone, F.J. Ball, and Cora Bradshaw**. The Finance Committee reported a funds balance of \$60.57 after all donations and expenses were accounted for. Recognition was given to **Canfield Stone Dayton**, his daughter **Dora Seelmeyer**, Dora’s daughter **Ethyl**, and Dora’s son **Elmer Seelmeyer**, all of whom travelled from Cincinnati, Ohio for the Reunion. Births of Selden Ball and Edward Birchard were announced. There were various readings and songs performed by **Kenneth Dayton, Amy Ball, Esther Bradshaw, Elmer Dayton, Dorothy Ball, Annette Ball, Nina Bradshaw, Ellice Dayton**. The Reunion was concluded with the singing of “*Blessed be the Tie that Binds*”.

1971 – (50 years ago) – **Dr. G. Richard Handrick** was President and **Watson Dayton** was Secretary/Treasurer. The announcements included the birth of **Dana Beth Blair** (now Carroll) and **Andrew Clark Dayton**. **Andrew Neilly** and family were present and were recognized for their many years of donating the printing of the beautiful Reunion invitation cards. (**Andrew Neilly** is retired from a longtime career at John Wiley and Sons, book publishers, and his wife is **Janet Eleanor (Dayton) Neilly**.)

### The Mystery House in New Milford, CT

On the Bucks' trip to New Milford, we had noticed a beautiful, stately home across Cherniske Rd. from the Canfield and Mary (Platt) Stone home. It was in sad repair in 2019 but had obviously been a home of some prominence, and it was for sale. As we looked at old maps trying to identify the property, we noted that it was the "H. Stone" property. In a fortuitous glance at the side of the old map was a drawing of the very home we were looking for. The owner was Harvey Stone, son of Mary and Canfield Stone and brother to the various Stones that came to live on Stone Street in Susquehanna County, PA. We can speculate that the house may have been built on a portion of his father Canfield's farm.



Although we were concerned that the building might be demolished in the name of progress, in recent research we found that the property had been sold and refurbished. The property is for sale in 2021 and the sale price went up by over 50% from the 2019 price.

Home of Harvey Stone (1806-1873) in 2021  
108 Squire Hill Rd, New Milford, CT

**(Deacon) Samuel Canfield, Esq. (1702-1754)**

As we thought about the overwhelming number of ancestors that came from New Milford, CT we tried to come up with an example of someone that virtually all of us are descended from. We chose to look at the life of (Deacon) Samuel Canfield. You may recognize that the name “Canfield” appears as the first name of several Stones, Daytons, Leets, and other ancestors in our family. Samuel is a direct line ancestor, i.e., a grandfather, of over 90% of our Reunion members. (For example, Samuel is the 6<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather of Courtland Bradshaw Birchard, Betty (Handrick) Baldwin, Watson Jarrod Dayton, and Andrew C. Stone, along with hundreds of the rest of us.)

Samuel was born in Milford, CT and was one of the first, and most prominent, settlers of New Milford, CT. Samuel’s life was lived entirely as a colonial under British rule as he did not live to see the revolution. At various times he was the Town Clerk, the Justice of the Peace, and was one of the first justices from the Town in the “Quorum”, the highest court in Connecticut at that time (his suffix “Esq.” likely relates to his judicial duties.) He also served as the County’s agent in overseeing the construction of the Litchfield County Courthouse and was on a three-person committee organizing the construction of the first bridge across the Housatonic River at New Milford. Samuel was elected Deacon of the first church in New Milford (Episcopalian) and was thereafter referred to as “Deacon”.

Samuel Canfield’s son, later known as Colonel Samuel Canfield, was the moderator of a community event at New Milford, CT on 9/20/1774 when the community proclaimed its alliance and support for the Province of Massachusetts Bay at Boston. The dispute was between the Bostonians and the “unconstitutional measures lately enacted by the British Parliament”. As we know, the dispute evolved into our War of Independence.



**Samuel Canfield, Esq (1702-1754)  
Center Cemetery New Milford, CT**

*Much of the information for this article was obtained from History of New Milford and Bridgewater, Connecticut, Samuel Orcutt, 1882, reprinted by New Milford Historical Society.*

**Please Keep in Touch!**

Please keep in touch with family news and vital statistics updates. If you have suggestions for newsletter topics or would like to know something about your Stone family genealogy, please contact any of us.

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