

Newsletter

Stone Family Reunion

President's Message from Betty Handrick Baldwin

Welcome to the 2023 newsletter. As we emerge from the restrictions of the COVID pandemic, we hope everyone survived unscathed.

We were able to have a reunion in 2022 for the first time since 2019 and it was really nice to reconnect with people that we hadn't seen in years. **Sara (Stone) Miller** had attended regularly with her father, our very own Olympian, **Curtis Stone** (read more about Curtis in the 2020 winter newsletter – archived on our website: www.stonefamilyreunion.com). Unfortunately, Sara had to come alone in 2022 because of the passing of her father near the day the 2021 reunion would have been held. **Sue Gorman**, who came with her parents **Marleta (Birchard)** and **David Shadduck**, described her work with the Susquehanna County Chapter of the DAR, and invited interested reunion members to contact her. The reunion included a celebration of the birthday of **Courtland Bradshaw Birchard** with a program reviewing the

continuum of his descendants who have lived on Stone Street and in the Birchardville area.

Having the reunion meant that we were able to discuss business matters in person, from updates on the Stone Street Cemetery to the state of our finances.

Thanks to all of you who have contacted us with family news. We typically summarize births, deaths, and marriages in the reunion invitation mailed in June. If you have family news, please let us know. Contact information can be found at the end of this newsletter.

We encourage anyone who is travelling in the area on July 29, 2023, and would like to spend some time with long lost relatives to come join us. The reunion invitation with more information will be mailed in June.



2022 Reunion, courtesy Jim Baldwin

Happy Birthday Courtland Bradshaw Birchard!



We had been waiting and planning to recognize the 90th birthday of one of our most active members, **Courtland Birchard**, at the 2020 reunion. Because of Covid pandemic cancellations, we did not get a chance to recognize Court's birthday until the 2022 reunion, when Court was 92. With belated happy birthday wishes, we celebrated his birthday with a photo-program looking back on Courtland's life and ancestors. Courtland's ancestors include surnames very familiar in

the Stone Reunion and include Stone, Birchard, Bradshaw, Ackerman, Taylor and more. Court's ancestors date to the first settlements in Birchardville and on Stone Street, and many of his family continue to live on Stone Street today. (Thanks to **Lyn Munn**, **Shirley Ewain**, and **Eileen Birchard** for helping put the program together.)

We're indebted to Courtland for his contributions to the Stone Reunion (his first reunion was as an unborn with his mother in 1930). Many of us recall his skill and good humor as he entertained us with his pal "**Joey Joker**" at several reunions. **Happy Birthday Court!**

The Warner Family, and the “Forest Lake Library Company”



Milton, Sophronia (Dayton), and Kathryn Warner

Some of us may recall individuals from the Warner family, long-time members of Stone Reunion. **Milton Warner** was the Birchardville mailman, and **Kathryn Warner** lived next door to the Birchardville Store and was a schoolteacher for more than 40 years. The Warner family were early settlers in Forest Lake Township, and Kathryn’s g-g-grandparents, **Phinis and Jehiel Warner**, settled in 1801 just north of Birchardville on what is now called Valley Rd. According to Stocker’s *History of Susquehanna County*, Jehiel recognized a need for reading materials to keep area settlers informed and educated. On Feb 7, 1831 a group of citizens met at the Warner home and formed the “Middletown Library Company” (the

name changed to “Forest Lake Library Company” when the area became part of Forest Lake Township in 1836). **David Baldwin** was appointed Moderator, **John S. Birchard** was appointed Clerk, and **Jehiel Warner** was appointed Librarian. The Library was



Asa Warner

located in the Warner home. Jehiel served as Librarian until his death in 1847, when his son **Azor M. Warner** succeeded him until his death in 1868. Azor’s son **Asa Warner** became

the next librarian and served until approximately 1886 when the Library included approximately 400 volumes. The ultimate fate of the Library is not known, but a newspaper article indicated that it was still in operation in 1906 in the Warner home. Asa Warner died in 1922 and may have been the final Librarian. (Note that Asa and brother **Stanley Warner** were recognized in last year’s newsletter as Civil War veterans.)

DAR Recognizes Revolutionary War Patriot Silas Beardslee

Silas Beardslee was a Revolutionary War Veteran. He and his wife **Catherine (Treadwell) Beardslee** were early settlers on the North Branch of the Wyalusing River in Middletown Township. They were the grandparents of **Amorillus Beebe (Mrs. James E. Stone)** who lived on the Stone Street farm where **Courtland Birchard** later lived. Unfortunately, Silas died from a fall from a haywagon in 1823 and was buried in the graveyard at his neighbor’s farm, **Andrew Canfield**. His large family gradually migrated to the Little Meadows, PA area, a few miles north of Middletown Center. Although Silas Beardslee’s grave was among neighbors and friends in the Canfield-Stedwell Cemetery, there are no graves of immediate family members with him.

Several years ago **John & Christine Buck**, of the Stone Reunion, began a search for John’s 4-g grandfather, and finally located Silas Beardslee in one of the earliest graves at the Canfield-Stedwell graveyard, alongside PA State Route 858. (This is just a few miles

from the Stone Street Cemetery.) The cemetery had several veterans’ flags and flagholders, but Silas Beardslee’s grave was unadorned. The Bucks began to visit the grave each Memorial weekend, but there was never a veteran’s flag. After discussing the situation with **Marleta and David Shadduck** at a Stone Reunion



John Buck, Sue Gorman, Christine Buck

meeting, they suggested that the Bucks talk with their daughter, **Suzanne Gorman**, who is the Regent of the Susquehanna County Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Sue came to the 2022 Reunion and indicated that the local DAR chapter was interested in the situation and would try to help – and they sure did!

The Chapter arranged a formal ceremony on October 1, 2022, that included prayers and speakers, after which flowers, a Revolutionary War Veteran flagholder, and American flags were placed at Silas Beardslee's grave. The ceremony concluded with the playing of "Taps". The ceremony was impressive and a credit to the women involved. Many thanks to Sue Gorman and the women of the DAR chapter for their efforts in making such a successful event to honor Silas Beardslee.



Ladies of Susquehanna County Chapter of DAR

The Stone Reunion – Looking Back

1923 – (100 years ago) – The 21st Stone Reunion at Forest Lake had 100 attendees. Officers were **A.J. Stone, F.J. Ball, and Cora Bradshaw**. The Finance Committee reported a funds balance of \$27.62 after all donations and expenses were accounted for. Entertainment included readings by **Nina Bradshaw, Alice Snell, and Arlene Ball**, and a song by **Bessie and Myrtle Stone**, "A Little Child Shall Lead Them". The Reunion closed with a singing of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again".

1973 – (50 years ago) – **R. Bruce Dayton** was President and **Watson Dayton** was Secretary/Treasurer. There were 55 attendees. **Dr. Clifton Birchard** played the piano and led the group in singing "This Stone Reunion Day". A gathering of paintings by **Canfield S. Dayton, Sophronia Warner, Amelia Gage Handrick, Edna Stone, and Robin Majka** was displayed.

A Man of Religion and Character – Elder Rev. William Clark Tilden (1829-1917)



William C. Tilden.

In August, 2022 the Stone Reunion received correspondence from **Katherine Dayton-Kistler** of South Jordan, UT. She wanted us to know of her efforts in placing a copy of the diary of **Rev. William Clark Tilden** (her g-g-grandfather) with the family history records of the LDS Church. Katherine particularly wanted us to be aware of the assistance of Deanna Johnson in sorting out the Tilden diary. Not being immediately aware of the Stone Reunion connection with Rev. Tilden, we did some research. It soon became clear that Rev. Tilden holds a prominent place in the history of the area, and is an ancestor of many of the Daytons in the Stone Reunion.

The photo at left is from Stocker's *Centennial History of Susquehanna County* at p. 494. Tilden's grandparents were from Lebanon, New London County, CT and lived on the family homestead. Tilden's parents were **Augustus and Melinda (Clark) Tilden**. They came to the area in April 1833 with three children, and settled on a farm on Chestnut Ridge Rd. in then Middletown Township (now Forest Lake Township). Their

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farm location is shown and labeled in the 1872 and 1855 Atlas pages. Today the location would still be described as on Chestnut Ridge Rd, a little south of the Griffis Rd. intersection, and about 2 places south of the Forest Lake Township offices. In later years, this farm appears to have been where **Horatio Bullock and Mary Alice (Baker) Stone** lived. Tilden's family were Baptists, and his uncle was a Baptist Minister in CT. Rev. Tilden's parents joined the Middletown Baptist Church upon their arrival in 1833. In 1842 William's father helped form the Forest Lake Baptist Church and became Deacon, which he continued until his death in 1872.

Our subject, William C. Tilden, was born in Connecticut in 1829 and made the trip to Chestnut Ridge Rd. as a 4-yr. old. Elder William Clark Tilden joined the Forest Lake Baptist church at 14 yrs of age and remained a member the rest of his life. He went to the District School and then Montrose Academy. In 1850 he married **Amelia Russell** of Bridgeport. Rev. Tilden and Amelia had two daughters, Emma Augusta (married Charles P. Ball of Forest Lake) and Sarah Melinda (married Clark D. Dayton) and they lived on the Tilden Homestead. He went to **New York Central College** (McGraw, NY) and entered "**Madison University**" (originally **Baptist Education Society**, now **Colgate University**) in 1853, graduating in 1857. Upon returning home he became the pastor of Forest Lake and Middletown (Birchardville) Baptist Churches until 1879, and for a time was also pastor at Liberty and Great Bend Baptist Churches. In 1868 and 1869 he was the principal of grade schools in Montrose. He was successful and admired as a teacher and in May 1869 was elected County Superintendent of schools. He was re-elected several times and served 9 years in that position, during which time he authored a history of education in Susquehanna County which was cited and used by Stocker. Rev. Tilden was long active in Temperance groups and ran for County office as candidate of the Prohibition Party

Stocker's book indicates that by 1887, Rev. Tilden had married 258 couples, performed 506 funerals, and preached 4,262 sermons. His service to the various Baptist churches and parishioners between 1857-1887 involved travelling 80,000 miles by walking or horse-powered conveyance. Through much of his adult life, Rev. Tilden and his family lived on (now) Valley Rd., slightly above the intersection with State Route 267. Virtually all the people mentioned in this account are buried at the Birchardville Cemetery. Rev. William Clark Tilden was an accomplished and very interesting man.

Donations

Special thanks to **Christine Niemann** (in memory of her brother **Gary Seelmeyer**) and to **Ruth Furman** for their generous donations last year. If you wish to help support the activities of our association, including the mailings and maintenance and care of the Stone Street Cemetery, we would appreciate any donations. Donations made as remembrances are welcome and will be acknowledged. Please make checks payable to SSCPA and mail to SSCPA, 605 Lake Avenue, Montrose, PA 18801. Donations to SSCPA qualify as charitable deductions.

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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