

ANNA MARIA ELIZABETH BENESCH

1725 - 1802

Wife of John George Herrold, Sr.

"Mother of all Snyder County Herrolds"



PREFACE

Several years ago, I attempted to write the first ever biography for *Anna Maria Benesch Herrold*, the "Mother of all Snyder County Herrolds", based on the best historical information at hand.

Since then, some additional facts have been uncovered in the records of the Christ Lutheran Church in Stouchburg, PA, the Womelsdorf Historical Society and the passenger list records of the ship *Adventure*, which "qualified" in Philadelphia on September 13, 1732, eleven years before the Herrolds arrived in Philadelphia. In addition, we were finally able to ascertain her birth date, which had been a matter of speculation.

When some facts are not available, logic must prevail, such as how the Benesch family migrated from Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) to Western Germany. Historical events logically dictate the circumstances for such migration.

Accordingly, while the biography is concise and to the point, it is the first ever detailed effort to attribute our genealogy to the Benesch family.

After all, we are not only Herrolds, we are also a part of the Benesch clan.

June 3, 2003

William J. Brennen, Jr.
President
Herrold Reunion Association

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Anna Maria Elizabeth Benesch was born in 1725 in Muhlbach, Miesau, Germany, the daughter of Nicholas and Susanna Benesch. (A)

The Benesch family originated in Bohemia, a section of the present-day Czech Republic. They probably lived in the area located about 40 miles west of Prague, in the general vicinity of Rakovnik, about 40 miles from the German border.

Since the Benesch family was Lutheran, it is assumed they must have migrated to Western Germany over the Prague-to-Paris trade route before, during or after the Thirty Years War between Protestants and Catholics (1618-1648). Because of Martin Luther's activities, Western Germany was a hot-bed of Lutheranism, which offered protection after Bohemian Protestants were defeated in 1620. (B)

Anna Maria's father, Nicholas Benesch, died in Germany about 1726 when she was one year old. Anna Maria's mother, Susanna, remarried John Artz with whom she and Anna Maria came to America on the ship "Adventure" from Rotterdam. The family included three Benesch children and their half-brother, Johannes Artz. They "qualified" in Philadelphia on September 13, 1732. (C)

Following is the ship's listing with the actual spelling:

Credeless Bennesch, age 18; Margaret Elizabeth Benesch, (born 1714);
Merreless Benesch, age 7; Anna Maria Benesch, (born 1725); and,
Simon Bennites, age 13 (born 1719).

They settled in the Stouchburg area of Lancaster County (now Berks County), Pennsylvania. They attended Christ Lutheran Church which was built in 1743 on land donated by the Fisher family, ancestors of Dr. Charles Adam Fisher.

The George Christopher Herrold family attended the same church. Anna Maria and John George Herrold became acquainted in 1744, an association which developed into a courtship and ultimate marriage.

On April 1, 1744, one of the confirmands listed in the Christ Lutheran Church records is identified as Maria Elizabeth Binetch, daughter of Nicholas Binetsch. Please note they used her deceased father's name. (D)

George Christopher Herrold died on October 26, 1749 and is buried in the old Christ Lutheran Church cemetery adjacent to the site of the original log church. One of the signers of his will and inventory, was Simon Benesch, brother of Anna Maria Benesch. (E) Anna Maria Scheelkopf Herrold,, George Christopher's wife, died in 1760 and is also buried there.

Anna Maria and John George Herrold were married in 1750 or 1751. Their first child, Anna Maria, was born in 1752. The Christ Lutheran Church records her confirmation in 1766 as "An. Maria Herrold, age 13-1/2. (F)

Anna Maria Benesch Herrold and John George Herrold lived in Chapman Township, in present Snyder County, for over 30 years. With their pioneer and entrepreneurial spirit, they built a two-story log house, a grist mill on Herrold's Creek, a saw mill, hemp mill, fishery, ferry, distillery and, in 1784, a tavern.

Anna Maria preceded her husband in death in 1802. John George died in 1803. They are buried in the Old Pioneer Cemetery, sometimes called, "Old Herrold's Graveyard", just off old Routes 11 & 15, south of Port Trevorton.

The monument honoring John George Herrold, Sr. was dedicated on July 3, 1937.

The monument honoring Anna Maria Benesch Herrold, "the Mother of all Snyder County Herrolds", was placed on September 29, 2002 by the Herrold Reunion Association.

Other children born to this union were:

Simon, 1754; John George, Jr., 1756; Susannah, 1759; Catherine, 1761; Elizabeth, 1765; and, John Frederick, 1765.

The baptism of John Frederick Herrold is listed in the Christ Lutheran Church as follows: "John Frederick, son of Georg and An. Maria Herrold, born 18 Sept. 1765. Baptised, 6 Oct. 1765. Sponsors: Friederich Weiser and wife" (actual spelling). No confirmation or baptism records for the other children have been found.

In 1771, the Herrold family moved to present-day Chapman in Snyder County. Anna Maria's mother, Susannah Benesch Artz, died in 1772 and is buried in the Christ Lutheran Church in Stouchburg.

An appropriate dedication ceremony was held on July 27, 2003, prior to the 91st Annual Herrold Reunion with the following program:

DEDICATION

Monument in Honor of
Anna Maria Benesch Herrold
"Mother of All Snyder County Herrolds"

OLD PIONEER CEMETERY
(Also called "Herrold's Graveyard")
Old Routes 11 & 15
Port Trevorton, PA
Sunday, July 27, 2003
Time: 1:00 PM

Program

Presiding.....	William J. Brennen, Jr. Pres., Herrold Reunion Association
Invocation.....	Rev. Ryan Gephart Pastor, Hope United Methodist Church
Recognition.....	John Mease & Family Caretaker, Old Pioneer Cemetery
Address.....	Margaret Keller Regent, Conrad Weiser Chapter D.A.R.
Dedication Address.....	Kenneth F. Mease Vice Pres., Herrold Reunion Association
Benediction.....	Rev. Ryan Gephart
Adjournment.....	To: 91 st Herrold Reunion Port Trevorton Fire Co. Time: 2:00 PM

DEDICATION CEREMONY

Sunday, July 27, 2003

Bill Brennen, President of the Herrold Reunion Association, convened the Dedication Ceremony of the Anna Maria Benesch Herrold monument

Invocation

Pastor Ryan Gephart, pastor of the Hope United Methodist Church of Port Trevorton, gave the invocation.

Opening remarks

Rev. Gephart, fellow Herrold descendents and friends.

We are here today to honor and remember Anna Maria Elizabeth Benesch Herrold with the dedication of this beautiful monument.

This brief but poignant ceremony corrects a long-standing oversight of countless years by finally giving due recognition to the "Mother of all Snyder County Herrolds".

The complete renovation of this Old Pioneer Cemetery, sometimes called "Herrold's Graveyard", was possible by the financial support of the Herrold Reunion Association. The placement of the Anna Maria Elizabeth Benesch Herrold monument, next to her husband, John George, is the culmination of that effort.

Recognition of the John Mease Family

Bill Brennen presented the following remarks, recognizing the John Mease Family, caretakers of the Old Pioneer Cemetery, sometimes called the "Herrold Graveyard":

In recent years, John Mease and Family, Herrold descendents, have undertaken a family responsibility to maintain this unique and one-of-a-kind cemetery.

After the unveiling exercises in 1937, for the John George Herrold shaft, the cemetery was maintained by Blake Reichenbach for a number of years and then by local Boy Scout Troop 401.

In 1986 and 1987, Ryan Barner undertook a project to clear the overgrowth and renovate the cemetery for his Eagle Scout badge. He built a rail fence, laid railroad tie steps and a walkway with landscaping. He then constructed an informative billboard which is still very evident today. As a matter of fact, the recent renovations of the cemetery exactly follow the layout installed by Ryan.

After Ryan left the area, his parents, Rudy and Judy Barner continued to care for the cemetery until, a few years ago, the Mease family took over.

We honor all those for their past devotion and, today, honor the John Mease family for their present and on-going attention to this cemetery of our ancestors and patriots.

Address by Margaret Keller, Regent
Conrad Weiser Chapter, D.A.R.

As Regent of the Conrad Weiser Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Selinsgrove I bring you greetings from our chapter. We, Daughters, are delighted to share with you this special occasion that you have chosen to dedicate this monument in honor of the mother of all Snyder County Herrolds, Anna Maria Benesch Herrold.

Herrold women have played a large part in the our society. Among our past and present members from the Herrold line are Marie Gaugler, Hanni Gleason, Sara Tyson, Edna Klingler, Arlene Parsells, Rose Parsells, Orpha Rishel, Marion Salerno, Dora Schlagel, Marion Tandyrak, Harriet Metrolis, Anna Wolfe, Beulah, Grace, and Wilma Herrold and Doris Sears.

In addition, I have a personal reason to be pleased to share this time of celebration with you since my husband, George, is also a Herrold. He is a Herrold from two lines. Looking at the Herrold genealogy shows us that George's great great grandmother on Grandpa Keller's lineage was Sarah A. Herrold, who was born March 9, 1840. Sarah was married to George Calvin Arnold; while George's great great grandmother on his Grandma Keller's lineage was Louisa Herrold born March 18, 1832. Louisa was married to William Carvell. Sarah and Louisa shared a common grandfather, John Frederick Herrold who was the son of John George Herrold and Anna Maria Benesch Herrold.

We want to thank all of you who spent many hours researching the Herrold family and the faithfulness you have shown as we celebrate the 91st Herrold Reunion.



Left to right: Margaret Keller, Bill Brennen, John Mease, Ken Mease

ANNA MARIA ELIZABETH BENESCH HERROLD DEDICATION

Remarks by Ken Mease

Sunday, July 27, 2003

It is impossible for any of us, in our time, to relate to the difficulties of a trip across the Atlantic Ocean in the early 1700's, especially for a young girl of 7 years of age, as was Anna Maria Elizabeth Benesch.

In 1771, a family move from the Lancaster area to resettle in this location had to have been another major difficulty.

Our ancestors, who lie here and whom we are honoring today, lived in a world which we cannot even imagine. When they arrived here, this was a wilderness.

There were no houses or sheds or barns. There were no paved roads. In fact, there were no roads. They had to clear the forests, split the logs for lumber; break, shape and haul the stones for the materials to build their homes and adjacent buildings. They had to build their own boats to navigate the river, which was the major means of transportation. And they had to keep peace with the native Americans who were living here.

Without refrigeration, they constructed ground cellars to keep and preserve some of their home grown foods and home made supplies which they had to provide for themselves. In the winter, they harvested huge chunks of ice from the frozen Susquehanna, which they kept in "ice sheds" for use during the summer.

I believe the great majority of people today who discuss those who preceded us, even in their wildest imagination, fail to realize what it was really like at that time.

The laborious duties and responsibilities of women in those days, had to be constant, never-ending hardships. Yet, women were very rarely credited with the unselfish support they gave their husbands, children and other family members.

John George Herrold's entrepreneurial accomplishments must have been quite a chore for his wife, Anna Maria, but I'm sure her pioneer spirit held the family together, especially when, in 1779, their son, John George, Jr., was killed and scalped by Indians at Fort Freeland. He, too, rests here with his parents.

Today, we honor her support and dedication to her family and her incomparable part in helping to build a good life in this unsettled land.

This long overdue monument honors the life of Anna Maria Benesch Herrold..

EXHIBITS

- A. Herrold Ancestry Book.....Page 8
- B. Herrold Newsletter, 2002.....Bill Brennen
- C. Early Tulpehocken Settlers...Dr. Charles A. Fisher
- D. F. & G.....Recording Pastoral
Acts at Christ Lutheran, Stouchburg, PA.
Part I and II. Edited by Frederick S. Weiser, 1989.
- E. Exhibits L & M.....Herrold Ancestry Book

Heritage

Pioneer cemetery dates to 1802

Revolutionary War heroes' legends a history lesson

By Joanne Marquardt
For The Daily Item

PORT TREVORTON — When Mort and Lois Stitch came to Port Trevorton from Missouri, what they found was well beyond their expectations.

On a small plot of ground just behind Keller's Marine on a long, winding country road, five headstones are placed near each other, surrounded by a split-rail fence and ivy bushes. At the bottom of a small flight of wooden steps, a poster displayed under a small roof tells about the plight of the continental soldier in the Revolutionary War.

Within the confines of the split-rail fence lie the remains of Lois' great-great-grandfather, Captain Casper Reed, along with four others who fought beside him during the Revolutionary War.

"We were so tickled to see it," Mort Stitch said.

According to a history of Snyder County pioneers written by Dr. Charles A. Fisher in 1938, Reed owned a home along the Susquehanna River in Port Trevorton and also had a tavern there.

He was once a commissioner of Northumberland County and was very wealthy, owning 200 acres of land.

Casper Reed's gravemarker is very simple and has withstood nearly 200 years of weather erosion. The inscription, which is still very clear, reads "CASPER REED, CAPTAIN 3 BN. P.A. MIL., REV. WAR, August 1802." A quick translation of abbreviations tells a story not often seen in most cemeteries. Casper Reed was a captain in the 3rd Battalion of the Pennsylvania Militia for Northumberland County.

But it's not just the grave of Casper Reed that the Stitches were so taken with — it was the beauty of the area and the individual histories of the people who are buried there.

"That cemetery is unique," Mort Stitch said.

The grave markers of the other four men buried near Reed tell a similar story — they were all men who fought for the independence and creation of the United States.

John Nicholas Straser, a private in the Sixth Battalion of the Berks County Militia, was buried in 1814. His remains lie directly to the left of Reed's. Philip Burket is next, a private in "Harris's" Pennsylvania Regiment who was buried in the 1830s.

The next headstone is for John George Herrold, Jr. who was a private for the same battalion as Casper Reed. However, he was not as lucky as the others. He was killed during his service in the Revolutionary War in April of 1779, while guarding the McKnight farm at Fort Freeland.

Directly in front of the other four headstones is a very large headstone honoring John George Herrold, Sr., the "first Herrold in the Susquehanna Valley." The marker was dedicated July 3, 1937 by the Memorial Committee of the Herrold Reunion Association.

Herrold died in 1803. The cemetery is named for him because much of the land surrounding it was once his land. But that's not the only reason.

William J. Brennan, Jr., Northumberland, is a



Daily Item photo by Josh Muchler

The Mease family of Port Trevorton helps maintain the grounds of Herrold's Cemetery. Pictured from left to right is Andrew, John, Rachel, Ben, Daniel, Holly and Rebekah.

descendant of John George Herrold and is currently president of the Herrold Reunion Association. Brennan said Herrold was "quite an entrepreneur."

"He had a tavern, a grist mill, a hemp mill, a fishery, a ferry and a distillery," Brennan said. He left a legacy that can be seen still today, since many of the Valley's residents are related to the Herrold's in some way.

"If you're not related, someone in your family's probably related," Brennan said.

The stories of the Revolutionary War heroes buried in Herrold's Cemetery are intriguing, but none match the legend of the man thought to be buried in the very rear of the small cemetery.

The grave is covered by a large stone that no longer says anything because the marker and the bubble that used to protect it have both been broken.

His name was Long John, an American Indian, who was said to have served in the Revolutionary War, posing as an American soldier. According to legend, Long John got his name because of his height, which was 7-feet, 10-inches. He befriended John George Herrold, Sr.

"With the added story of the Indian who fought for the Americans, (the history of) the cemetery is fascinating," Mort Stitch said.

Brennan said Anna Maria Benesch, the wife of John George Herrold, Sr. is said to also be buried in the cemetery beside Herrold.

"Supposedly there's a number of other people buried in that area," Brennan said. "However, there's no way of knowing."

Rudy and Judy Barner took care of the cemetery until approximately two years ago. Rudy is in the process of repairing Long John's headstone. The Barners took over the care of the cemetery after their son rehabilitated it as part of an Eagle Scout project.

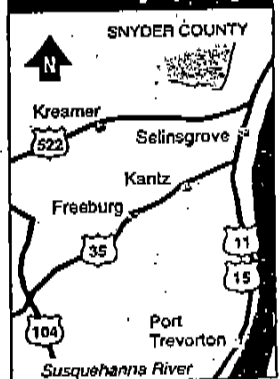
Now, John and Holly Mease of Port Trevorton along with their five children, Benjamin, 14, Daniel, 12, Rebekah, 8, Rachel, 7, and Andrew, 5, mow the grass and do general up-keep for the cemetery.

"It needs to be done," John Mease said. "It's an important part of our history and we feel it needs to be preserved."

To Mort and Lois Stitch, the Meases' work means a great deal. They searched all of Pennsylvania to find Lois' heritage and Mort Stitch said of all the places they visited, Herrold's Cemetery was one of the most interesting parts of their journey.

"Perhaps our greatest thrill was visiting the grave site of Captain Casper Reed."

Community spotlight



Daily Item graphic by Tracy Cox