

Wertman

Lines

Newsletter of the Wertman Family Association

ISSN 1535-7856 / January 2011 / Vol. 10 / No. 2

Save the dates

- 2011 Wertman Family Reunion
- Friday-Sunday, 19-21 August
- Lehigh County, PA

Make Your Reunion Plans Now

By 1749, George Philip Wertman had settled in Lynn Twp., Northampton Co. (now Lehigh Co.), PA. This year, the Wertman Family Association will return to Lehigh County for a three-day reunion being planned by Shirley and Larry Wertman and Minerva Arner.

Look for reunion details in the June *Wertman Lines* newsletter or on the WFA website, www.wertman.info. We look forward to seeing you in August.

Russell C. Dannecker, President, WFA,
6th G-Grandson of George Philip Wertman

Nominees for Office

Please submit your nominations for President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Genealogical/Historical Secretary, Treasurer, Webmaster, and two Board Members for election at the August 2011 WFA Business Meeting to the Nominating Committee. There are four board members who serve overlapping terms of four years; the other officers serve two-year terms. Any WFA member in good standing may suggest one nominee for each position to Shirley Daniels at 410-871-3008 or e-mail <shirley_minerdaniels@verizon.net>. The nominating committee (Shirley Daniels, Chair; Richard Daniels; Pete Wagner) needs to obtain the consent of each nominee before finalizing the ballot.

Memorial Ceremony for

Private John Levan Wertman

[Editor's note: The 2010 Wertman Family Association Reunion held 20-22 August in Fredericksburg, Virginia, was filled with thought-provoking, poignant and extraordinary moments. Sunday's highlight was this private, reverent, family ceremony at the grave of John L. Wertman in the National Cemetery on Marye's Heights, conducted by WFA President Russell C. Dannecker, incorporating a traditional Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) ceremony.]

Opening remarks, after the procession and invocation

My search for this soldier started in the 1960s with my parents, who thought their teenage boys should not miss the opportunity to learn a little history during the Centennial of the Civil War. On a vacation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, our first stops were Gettysburg and Antietam, then fields of honor in Virginia. We took many guided tours of the battlefields. One particular guide at Fredericksburg, VA, made an impression on me as he described the frontal assaults made by Union forces against the sunken road and Marye's Heights. For years afterward, my journeys in the area would lead me back to this battlefield. Since the 1960s, the question was always in my mind, "Did any of my family fight in this war?"

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My search for information about the Wertman family of Pennsylvania caused me to post an inquiry on an Internet message board. The late Richard Hull responded from Florida. His late wife, Phyllis, and I had common ancestors, John Wertman and Susannah Levan (my third great grandparents). Richard mentioned a family bible that lists John Wertman and Susannah Levan and their 10 children. This list was clearly written in ink, but a barely readable notation was penciled in the margin, "John died in (unreadable) war." Also in the bible was a post card titled "Christmas Day, 1862, on the Rappahannock." On the back were the words, "This print is dedicated to all comrades who were there as 'Boys in Blue' in 1862" The post card referenced Fredericksburg. A search of veterans buried at national cemeteries revealed a John L. Wertman, buried atop Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg. Why had that guide's words 35 years earlier about the attack on Marye's Heights meant so much to me? As it turns out, John Wertman made that charge. Why had I been drawn to this battlefield so many times? The answer was just a few hundred feet away -- John Levan Wertman was buried there.

With the advent of the Internet, it became possible to search the U.S. Military and Pension records index at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C. In September 2000, I spent a week at the Archives reading both the military and pension records of Wertmans I had found in the index. There were both military and pension records for a John Wertman of PA. But if he died in the war, why would there be a pension record? From my journal entry for 14 September, "I found a John Levan Wertman who was the son of John and Susannah Wertman. He died of disease during the Civil War. The pension was contested, so there was a lot of information. It contained the soldier's letters and a photo. What a find! He is buried at Fredericksburg."

Mrs. Lucy Messinger Wertman claimed the pension of John Levan Wertman by virtue of marriage. Susannah Levan Wertman stated, "that said son John Wertman left neither widow nor child; that she was wholly dependent on said son for support; that her husband the aforesaid John Wertman Sr. who is now age 80 years, was at the date of said son's death un-

able to support her;" therefore, she was entitled to the pension. So who was the correct claimant? A special examiner of the Pension Office was sent from Philadelphia, PA, to investigate the case of Susannah Wertman and Lucy Wertman.

Examiner C. D. Sloan took depositions from Susannah Wertman; her sons, Philip Levan Wertman and Daniel Peter Wertman; Daniel H. Hartung, boyhood friend of John Levan Wertman; and William S. Allebach, 1st Lieutenant commanding Company E, 129th Regiment, PA. Perhaps most important was the deposition of Susannah Levan Wertman. She detailed the family's history, including where she met her husband, where they married, where and when all the children were born, and described their lives and circumstances. To prove that her son, John, did not marry, she turned over to Mr. Sloan the letters John sent home from the war and a glass plate daguerreotype (picture) that had been taken as he began his military service. Another "coincidence" -- had she not turned them over to Mr. Sloan, and had he not put them in the pension file, they probably would have been lost. Now, 137 years after they were written, copies of these letters were returned to family. When I asked how unusual it was to find a picture in the files, the Achieves employee responded that there were no pictures in the files because years ago the pictures were removed. No indication would have been in the file regarding a picture. For some reason, John's picture was "overlooked."

Traditional GAR ceremony continues

So here we are today, called together to fulfill this last sad duty of respect to this comrade of the war. The present, full of cares and pleasures of civil life, fades away, and we look back to the time when, shoulder to shoulder on a bloody battlefield or around the guns of our men of war, these men fought for our dear old flag. We may indulge the hope that the spirit with which on land and sea, hardship, privation, dangers were encountered by our dead heroes -- a spirit uncomplaining; nobly, manfully, obedient to the behest of duty, whereby our homes today are secure and our loved ones rest in peace under the aegis of the flag, will prove a glorious incentive to the youth who in the ages to come may be called to uphold the destinies of our country. As the years roll on, we, too, shall rest, our

souls following the long column to the realms above, as grim death, hour by hour, shall mark its victims. Let us live that when that time shall come those we may leave behind may say above our graves, "Here lies the body of a true hearted, brave and earnest defender of the Republic."

Laying of Wreath, Rose, & Laurel

Let us pay our respects to our ancestor.

(Tom Young, laying a wreath) - In behalf of the Battery and Regiment, I give this tribute, a symbol of an undying love for comrades of the war.

(Shirley Daniels, laying a rose) - Symbol of purity, we offer at this lowly grave a rose. May future generations emulate the unselfish devotion of even the lowliest of our heroes.

(Earl Maurer, laying a laurel leaf) - Last token of affection from comrades in arms, we crown these remains with a symbol of victory.

United States Colors

(Patrick Cronk, placing the flag) - In behalf of the Grand Republic for whose integrity and unity our late ancestor John Levan Wertman offered his services during the War of Rebellion, I deposit this flag.

The Soldier

(Russell C. Dannecker) John Wertman was born 29 August 1840 in the village of Wessnersville, Berks Co., PA. When he was a baby, his family moved to West Penn Twp., Schuylkill Co., PA. By the start of the Civil War, he had learned the trade of coach maker, building carriages. He was engaged to be married to Mary Hill from West Penn. They had pledged to marry when he returned from the war. When he enlisted he was age 22; his height was 5 feet 5 ¼ inches; he had a dark complexion, gray eyes, and brown hair. He enlisted 07 August 1862 at Tamaqua, PA, in Company E of the 129th PA Infantry for nine months service. Traveling by train to the State Capital, he was mustered into service 14 August 1862 at Harrisburg by Capt. Lane. A few days later the unit was in Virginia.

Four letters John sent home survive and are summarized below. [The entire text can be found in *Wertman Lines*, January 2005, Vol. 4, No. 2.] Through him I believe we can gain a better understanding of many of the young men who fought this

war. His attitude towards the war changes in each. He wrote them to his mother, but since she could neither read nor write, the letters were addressed to his brother, my great, great grandfather, James A. Wertman.

(First letter, read by Minerva Arner)

VA, 25 August 1862

John's group stopped in Tamaqua, went to Harrisburg and stayed overnight before going to Camp Curtin for a week; then traveled to Washington, D.C. on the train, Camp McCall, and central VA. He thinks the war "will soon be finished."

(Second letter, read by Dean Wagaman)

Fairfax, VA, 02 September 1862

Based on the Regimental History, this letter was probably written at Fairfax Seminary. The history describes guarding an ammunition train and a bombardment in the woods. The realities of war are setting in. He had his picture taken in Tamaqua, and he lost his money pouch and \$4. He talks of the fear while being attacked, Confederate prisoners, and the importance of letters from home.

(Third letter, read by Mary Ellen Wagner)

Camp Jones, MD, 30 September 1862

Based on the Regimental History, when John wrote this letter he was near the Antietam battlefield. He talks about the long, tiring march and falling asleep in the corner of a fence until morning. He brewed coffee and caught up with the regiment by evening. Their artillery was firing and he wanted to use his rifle to shoot a rebel. He has seen war wounds.

(Fourth letter, read by Suzanne Arner)

VA, 28 November 1862

He asks for money from home and chewing tobacco, which he apologizes for using, but the water tastes so terrible. "I can tell you that during this time away from home I have drunk water that you would find too filthy to put into the pigs' bucket." There is no mention of the war. This was his last letter. The day of the Battle of Fredericksburg he fell ill, not from a bullet, but from the water.

I wonder if John's last moments were those described in the following passage from a nurse's diary: 01 January 1863 / In one bed a young man, Company E, 129th Pennsylvania – sick with typhoid fever – pretty critical case – I talk with him often –

(Continued on page 6)

2010 Reunion Photographs



Above: A typical winter tent, at the White Oak Civil War Museum. Below: Starting out on our air-conditioned bus!

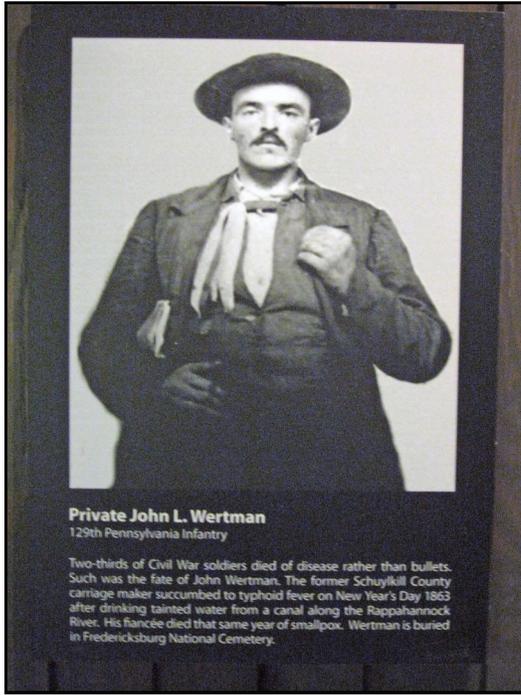


Civil War expert D. P. Newton from the White Oak Museum shows where John L. Wertman was buried in the camp.



The family gathered on Sunday for ceremonies at John L. Wertman's grave in the National Cemetery at Fredericksburg.





Unveiling John L. Wertman's plaque on Chancellorsville's wall of honor.



Photos by Richard Daniels, Earl Maurer, and Michele Wagaman

Above: Junior artillery crew; Right: Our guide, Don Pfanz, NPS historian; Below: Our group at historic Massaponax church.



(Continued from page 3)

he thinks he will die – looks like it too. / I let him talk to me a little, but not much. Advise him to keep very quiet – do most of the talking myself – stay quite a while with him, as he holds on to my hand – Talk to him in a cheering, but slow, low and measured manner – talk about his furlough, and going home as soon as he is able to travel. He suffers horribly, has to be constantly dosed with morphine, his face ashy and glazed, bright young eyes. He asked me to read to him a chapter in the New Testament – How Christ rose again. / Matthew, Chapter 28 / I read very slowly, and he was feeble. It pleased him very much, yet there were tears in his eyes. / He asked me if I enjoyed religion. / I said “Perhaps not in the way you mean.” He said, “It is my chief reliance.” / He talked of death and said he did not fear it. / I said, “Don’t you think you will get well?” He said, “I may, but it is not likely.” / And he turned his face away from me, and died.

January 1863 / Mr. John Wertman / West Penn, PA / Dear Mr. Wertman, / You may remember me as I first became acquainted with you when John and I was [sic] boys going to school. We grew up together. You know we enlisted at the same time and place and in the same Company and Regiment. Sometimes we bunked together in the tents, and sometimes we were separated. We used to be Buddy [sic] before we left home and so we were in service. / John died on the east side of the Rappahannock River, near what we call Stonewall Switch, it was a branch of a railroad running up from Aqua [Aquia] Creek. We were laying there all winter. He died after the Battle of Fredericksburg, he was in ranks the day we went down to the battle of Fredericksburg, he fell out of ranks there, got a pass from the doctor, and went back to the hospital and he died in a couple of weeks afterwards. I do not remember the day exactly or of what disease he died. That is more than I can tell now. / Sorry for his death. / Daniel H. Hartung

January 1863 / Dear Mr. Wertman, / It is my sad duty to inform you of the death of your son, John L. Wertman. He died on January 1st 1863 in the Regimental Hospital in camp near Falmouth, VA. He died of Typhoid Fever. He was buried in the Camp near Falmouth, VA. I had the honor of assisting at his funeral where he received full Military Honors. /

Yours sincerely, / William S. Allebach, / 1st Lieutenant, Company E 129th Regiment. PA.

John now lies in the National Cemetery on top of Marye’s Heights. His remains were moved there after the war. While he could not reach the top, nor even the stone wall at the bottom, in life, he did make it in death. Mary Hill of West Penn, PA, John’s fiancée, died of smallpox, and perhaps a broken heart, a few months after his death.

So as you walk on this battlefield, as you view these monuments, stop, take a moment, and remember the individuals who fought on this and every other battlefield. They were just like you and me. Amen.

Chaplain's Address (Chaplain Russell C. Dannecker)

The march of another comrade is over, and he lies down after it in the house appointed for all the living. Thus summoned, this grave reminds us of the frailty of human life and the tenure by which we hold our own. “In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.”

It seems well we should leave our comrade to rest where over him will bend the arching sky, as it did in great love when he pitched his tent, or lay down, weary and footsore, by the way or on the battle field for an hour’s sleep. As he was then so he is still - in the hands of the Heavenly Father. “God giveth his beloved sleep.” As we lay our comrade down to rest, let us cherish his virtues and learn to imitate them. Reminded forcibly by the vacant place so lately filled by him, that our ranks are thinning, let each one be so loyal to every virtue, so true to every friendship, so faithful in our remaining marches, that we shall be ready to fall out to take our places at the great review hereafter, not with doubt, but in faith that the merciful Captain of our Salvation will call us to that fraternity which, on earth and in heaven, remains unbroken. Jesus said, “Thy Brother shall rise again. I am the resurrection and the life.” Behold the silver cord is loosed, the golden bowl is broken; we commit the body to the grave where dust shall return to the earth, and the Spirit of God who gave it. Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, looking for the resurrection and the life to come through our Lord Jesus Christ. let us dedicate this grave as the final resting place of comrade John Levan Wertman.

Follow the Neighbors and Friends

By Kathy Bucher & Shirley Daniels

Many experts recommend following friends and neighbors of ancestors to find possible connections. Here are some names mentioned before 1800 with Wertmans in church, land, and other legal records.

- **1758** Jacob Werdmann & Catharina Sprechern, bapt. spons., Jacob, s/o Dieter & Anna Maria Seidler/Siedler
- **1760** George Philip Wertman, witn., will of John Flack
- **1760** Jurg Philipp Werdmann & Elizabeth Puhlen, bapt. spons., Jurg Philip, s/o Jurg Christoph & Margaretta Heringh
- **1760** Jacob Werdmann & Maria Barbara Steenbruchen, bapt. spons., Maria Barbara, d/o Friderich & Maria Barbara Moser
- **1760** Magdalena Werdmannin & Daniel Oswaldt, bapt. spons., Daniel, s/o Valentin & Anna Elisabeth Schuck
- **1761** Philip Wertman, deacon at Ebenezer Church, also Philip Mosser, Heinrich Widerstein, Peter Beissel
- **1761** Jacob Werdmann & Catharina Maria Flachin, bapt. spons., Jacob, s/o Michael & Catharina Werdmann
- **1762** Johann Michael Werthmann, bapt. spons., Johann Micaell, s/o Peter & Maria Elisabeth Heymbach
- **1762** Catharina Magdalena Werthmann & Daniel Straub, bapt. spons., Catharina Magdalena, d/o Carl & Maria Catharina Straub
- **1763** Jurg Phillip Wertman & Anna Maria Flachin, bapt. spons., George, s/o Johan Michael & Catherine (Flack) Wertman
- **1764** George Phil. Wertman witness at marriage; Daniel Oswald, John Everits, Catharina Everits, Henry Geiger
- **1766** Philip Wertman, neighbors, William Meyer, Mark Wannemaker, Jacob Beal, Mathew Shutz, Lynn Twp.
- **1766** J. M. Wortman, neighbors, Jacob Muntz, Stephen Kistler, Simon Mosair, Peter Heimbeck, Jacob Manss
- **1768** Simon Wertman marries Barbara Stabelton
- **1769** Michael Wertman, neighbors, Lynn Twp., Philip Moser, David Moser, Jacob Wertman,
- **1773** Philip Wertman, neighbors, Lynn Twp., Henry Bredney, Melcher Terr, Peter Miller, Martin Schuck, Philip Moser

- **1774** Philip Wertman, neighbors, Peter Miller, Melchior Terr, Martin Shuck, Henry Bredney, Burghart Mosser, Martin Shuck, Michael Hittinger
- **1779** Martin Wertman & Elizabetha, bapt. spons., Margareda Catharina, d/o Carl & Maria Catharina Straub
- **1780** Simon Wertman & wife, bapt. spons., Barbara, d/o Michael & Susanna Reichelderfer
- **1780** Martin Wertman, executor for Jacob Weitzel; wife Susanna, sons John Martin, Jacob; witn., George Breisch, Mathias Brobst; neighbors, Geo. Breisch, Henry Rubrecht, Leonard Billman
- **1782** Jacob Wertman, neighbors, Lynn Twp., Philip Anthony, Jacob Hartman, Martin Shuck, Michel Shuckley, Henry Coonsman, Jacob Frey, Philip Moser
- **1786** Jacob Wertman, valuation of Miller farm; Christian & John Miller, Peter Ealer, John Shuck
- **1786** Geo. Phillip Wortman, N.S., Loyalists, Wm. Thomas, Wm. Maxlin Stewart, Hugh Pugh, Henry Steininger, Wm. Lunn, David Shuch, Jonathon Walton, Hermanus King, Dennis Dowling
- **1788** Simon Wertman & Barbara, bapt. spons., Simon, s/o J. Nicholas & Catharine Strasser
- **1788** Michael Wertman, neighbors, Simon Moser, George Shnyder, Casper Baldauf, Jacob Heimbach, Philip Moser, William Rex
- **1789** Simon Wertman & Barbara, bapt. spons., Mary Magdalene, d/o John & Anna Elisabeth Reichelderfer
- **1789** Magdalena Wertman & Philip Dauscher/Bauscher, bapt. spons., Daniel, s/o Anthony & Christina Dauscher/Bauscher
- **1795** Philip Wortman marries Jane Purcell
- **1795** Simon Wertman an executor for Henry Reichelsdorffer; sons Henry, Michael, witn., Christian Brausher, Franz Fory
- **1796** Simon Wertman & Peter Spengler executors for Jacob Kuntz; children John Peter, Henry, John, Susanna, Eve Elizabeth (Hagenbuch), Christina (Smith); witn., James & Jasper Scull
- **1798** Jacob Wertman signed agreement for Ebenezer Church, also Michael Heilman, Jacob Hans, Burkhart Mosser, Peter Kirschner
- **1798** Simon Wertman, Albany Twp., neighbors, Michael, Henry, John, Valentine Brobst; Michael & John Reichelderfer; John Stabelton Jr.

Wertman researchers have identified some of these people. Has anyone looked at the other families for clues?

About The Wertman Family Association (WFA)

Since 2000, the rejuvenated Wertman Family Association has held annual reunions in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, and New York. 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.

Through the WFA website at 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 Twp. by 1749, including the "founding father," George Philip Wertman, and his five known sons, George Philip, Jacob, Johan Martin, Johan Michael, and Simon.

We invite you to join us!

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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>. The next issue will be published in June 2011.

Plan now for the annual Wertman Family Reunion 19-22 August 2011 in Lehigh Co., PA

Wertman

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