

CURATOR'S REPORT

THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 9, 2024



ELMER C. ALTFATHER AT THE FREDERICK ALTFATHER FAMILY CEMETERY

**LOCATED ON THE HILLSIDE OFF SERENITY
LANE AND SLATE HILL ROAD**

BROTHERSVALLEY TOWNSHIP



Altfather Cemetery

Lewis and Helen Altfather (at right) of 800 E. Main St., Somerset, look over the restoration work at the old Altfather Cemetery in Brothersvalley Township, with some of their

family; from left, son Lewis C. and his wife, Jane Altfather, and Marilyn Carouse.
(Staff photo by Bobbie Black)

Maple Valley News, Shopper Supplement, Wednesday, October 16, 1985

THE FREDERICK ALTFATHER FAMILY CEMETERY

Family restores ancestral cemetery

A restoration project in the original Altfather Family Cemetery in Brothersvalley Township has been completed by Lewis F. and Helen (Miller) Altfather of Somerset and their children.

There are 21 graves in the cemetery, including those of the pioneer ancestors of the Altfather family, Frederick and Magdalena (Freundschin) Altfather who immigrated to Pennsylvania about 1769 from the Berlin, Germany, area.

Members of the first four generations of the family to come to America are also buried in the cemetery, located at the edge of a woods on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Glessner of Berlin RD 3.

This farm was included in what was the pioneer's nearly 1,000 acres of unclaimed territory he obtained and passed down through the Altfather family for several generations.

Restoration work

The restoration work included cleaning the brush off the cemetery, gathering the tombstones, building a storage vault to preserve the original monuments, copying of the inscriptions onto a long-lasting bronze marker, and permanently attaching the bronze marker to the top display area of the vault. A white, wooden fence was built around the vault and

later four posts will mark the exact boundaries of the original cemetery.

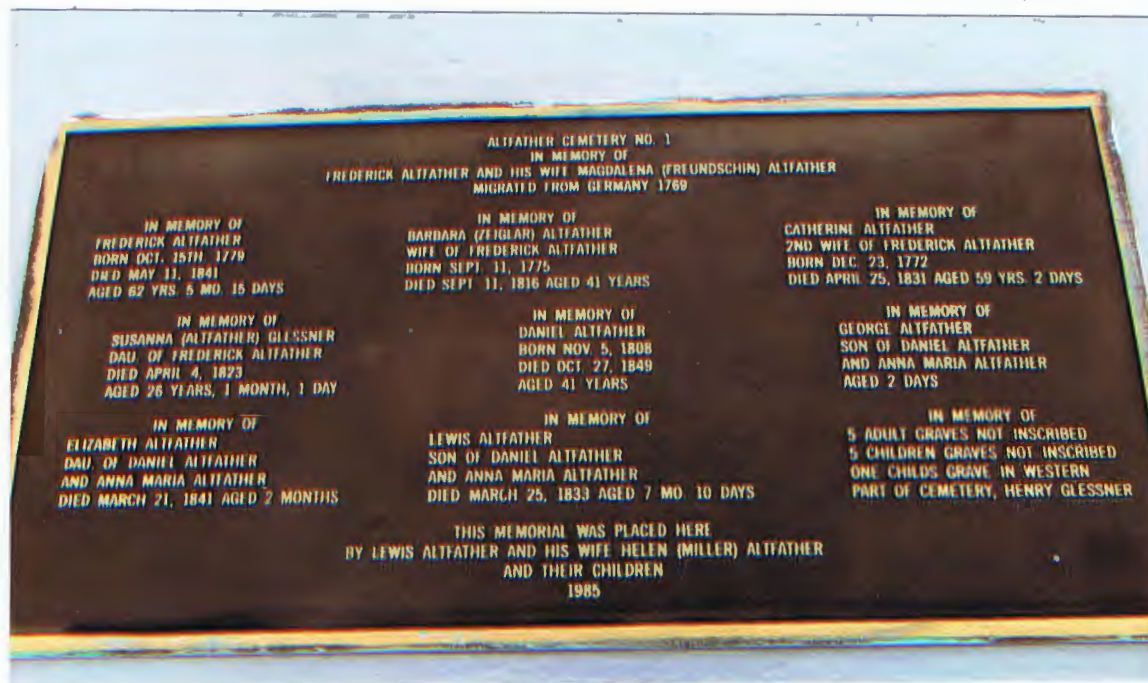
Financing project

The financial support was covered by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis F. Altfather, who are among the sixth generation of family descending from Frederick Altfather Sr. The planning, drafting and physical labors were undertaken by their family. Son, Walter R. Altfather Sr. of Sarver, was overseer and completed much of the labor. His helpers included his wife, the former Elaine Maust; brothers: Lewis Clay of Berlin RD 3 and Elmer C. of McKeesport; and his nephew, Reon M Froleka Jr. of Berlin.

Walter also involved two of his grandsons, Chad Altfather, 7, of Tarentum and Mike Serman Jr., 9, of Sarver, in the labor to instill within them the value of caring for the family burial grounds.

In 1793-94 pioneer Frederick Altfather and his son, Frederick Jr., built a flour mill on the part of the farm where the mining town of Macdonaldton was later developed. The original farm was later divided into four different plots and today various persons own parcels of the original Altfather tract.

(This story was supplied by local historian, David R. Hay of Somerset.



THE JOHN S. ENGLE ROLL-TOP DESK



ELMER C. ALTFATHER, PICTURED ABOVE, RESTORED THE JOHN S. ENGLE ROLL-TOP DESK DURING THE WINTER MONTHS. JOHN S. AND MAGGIE (ESCHRICH) ENGLE OWNED AND USED THE DESK WHILE OPERATING THE ALTFATHER FAMILY GRIST MILL IN THE 1880S.

The John S. Engle desk has been donated to the Berlin Area Historical Society from the estate of Daniel G. Hay (1951-2023). It is hoped that the restored roll-top desk can find a home in the Saylor log house along with the large picture of the Altfather grist mill and a small spinning wheel from the early Altfather family.

THE CREW MOVING THE JOHN S. ENGLE ROLL-TOP DESK



Left to right: David R. Hay, Elmer C. Altfather, Mark H. Yoder, and Marshall L. Dickey. Not pictured is Donald E. Stotler, the truck driver who also captured the above picture.

HISTORY OF THE ROLL-TOP DESK!

We know that John S. Engle used the roll-top desk during the decade or more (1880s) when he operated the Altfather Grist Mill. He transacted his milling operations at his desk. He made diary entries in almanacs stored in the desk which recorded customers, weather, and activities. The roll top desk went with him when he and his wife, Maggie (Eschrich) moved from the mill to the farm they bought, which in more recent years has been owned by Gary and Garland Hillegass. After Maggie died in 1909, John Engle moved to the adjoining farm to live with his son-in-law and daughter, J. Nevin and Edith Hay. The desk went with him and after his death in 1914, its ownership passed to his daughter Edith Hay.

Following Edith Hay's death in 1964, the desk passed into the ownership of her grandson, Daniel G. Hay. In the late 1980s, Dan moved the desk to Cumberland, Maryland to his residence. Following his passing on July 27, 2023, the desk was donated by his family to the Berlin Area Historical Society. It was moved to BAHS's barn in the fall of 2023. During the winter months, it was restored in the workshop of Elmer Altfather. On March 2, 2024 the above crew moved the desk from Elmer's home back to the historical society's barn along Vine Street in Berlin.



EARL M. MEYERS OF STONYCREEK TOWNSHIP

WENDY (WALKER) STEMPL donated the above picture and a number of others from the estate of her father, Grant Walker and grandfather, Clyde Walker. Earl M. Meyers was a retired Stonycreek Township farmer, likely living in the Boone area.



THE WILD WEST COME TO BERLIN! NO – JUST TROY McKENZIE SHOWING GARY ESTNICK ON MARCH 6 TWO RIFLES HE BUILT.

TALES OF THE ALLEGHENIES

EPISODE 9 ON FACEBOOK

THE STAUFFER MURDER

CREATED BY RICHARD STURTZ

(CATHARINE STAUFFER – WIDOW OF WILLIAM A. STAUFFER
WAS MURDERED ON NOVEMBER 8, 1906 IN STONYCREEK
TOWNSHIP IN HER FARM HOME) The Stauffer home once stood
on the property where Richard Sturtz resides in 2024



RICHARD STURTZ REPORTED A BLACKSMITH
HAMMER WAS USED TO COMMIT THE MURDER!

CATHARINE STAUFFER'S GRAVE IN THE
LAMBERTSVILLE CEMETERY



**THE LAST DAYS FOR THE FORMER BERLIN BRETHERN CHURCH PARSONAGE
AND GARAGE ON MARCH 13, 2024.**

DONATIONS:

Don and Doug Mason donated a CD containing pictures of old farm deeds for the Mason and neighboring properties. **Robert Caton** donated a cookbook library from his late wife, Helen. We received a generous check from **Kay Ann Cober** toward our John and Lucille Lichvar Sports Center. **Richard Sturtz** donated a souvenir sketch of the former Bauman one-room school house in Northampton Township. **Carolyn Payne** donated an item from the Berlin IOOF Lodge and a hammer from the estate of C. Edward LaBute. **Don Golby** donated Richard Golby's Berlin High School sweater and sports letters from the 1955-56 season.

Alice Gary donated old newspapers and several books from the estate of her father, Elmer Stahl that included "The operation, Care, and Repair of (John Deere) Farm Machinery". Joyce Knotts donated the 1994 listing of persons who purchased the pottery created by Dave Sarver for the very first year of the Whiskey Rebellion.

Thank you to our many volunteers including Carolyn Payne for organizational work, Karen Bittner and Leanna Coughenour for inventory work, Carol and Ken Miller for looking after the Heritage Haus and the Pious Springs lawn and garden, and Megan Evans and Robert Schmucker for caring for the Glade one-room school house.

David R. Hay, Curator

**IN MEMORY OF LEWIS W. BERKLEY (1931-2024), A FORMER BOARD
MEMBER OF THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.**