

# The 1995 Berks County Pennsylvania Reunion

The 1995 Savage/Sowash/Soash Family Reunion was held at the Holiday Inn in Reading, PA. on June 30, July 1 & 2. On Friday morning, the group traveled to Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church (formerly known as Mertz Church) where Heinrich Sowasch married Anna Esther Schneider on 27 Nov 1749. This was the son of Johannes H. Sauvage, the original immigrant. The group was able to view the original church book which recorded their marriage. The book also records the baptism of Johanna Elisabeth Sawash, born 13 Jan 1751 and baptized 26 Jan 1751. This was probably their first child. No other records have been found in the church record books to date. Church members also provided a brief history of the region and the church and served refreshments.

The group then headed west about two miles to the land that Johannes H. Savage first purchased on 20 March 1743. Amazingly, the present tract of land retains basically the same shape as it did when Johannes purchased it (see map p. ?). Just before Johannes death, the land went to Heinrich who owned the land until the late 1780's when he sold it and moved to Westmoreland County, PA. Some plat maps show a cemetery on the property, but it was vacated about 1865. This cemetery may have been the burial site of Johannes Sauvage and his wife Susannah.

At one o'clock, the group met at the Berks County Courthouse. Michelle Lynch gave a great presentation on early Berks County, especially Rockland Township and what life would have been like when the family lived in the county. The group could then view the original German will of Johannes H. Sowas, dated 16 Feb 1761 and proved 11 May 1761. Johannes made his mark, which appears to be **J H S**. Also still in the court records are the estate papers which list the items he owned and their value. It was indeed a remarkable experience that we were looking at the very paper that Johannes signed 234 years ago.

An excellent dinner was served in the Holiday Inn, followed by the craft auction. The auction raised \$339.25 for the project fund (see the list of donors and purchasers p. ?)

On Saturday, the group headed to Philadelphia on a great tour arranged by Merwin. We visited the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Christ Church, and Penn's Landing where Johannes and his family probably landed on 05 Sep 1738. We went to Reading Terminal market for lunch and shopping before going to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The Saturday evening meal was followed by the annual business meeting. Merwin welcomed everyone. Jane Brown won the 50/50 raffle, with the proceeds going to the project fund.

Richard reported on the cemetery projects. The stone for Susana Sowash (2C/W/) and several of her descendants has been installed at St. Clair Cemetery in Greensburg, PA. The stone of Michael and David Sowash (1F1F & 1F1E) in Brush Creek Cemetery in Irwin, PA. is currently being reset after it was broken. The group discussed engraving a large family plot marker stone in Union Cemetery in Irwin with the names of George and Elizabeth (Bankart) Sowash. The cost of putting two smaller stones in the cemetery would be \$1440. Moving, cleaning and engraving the plot marker stone would cost a total of \$744.20. Joan Sowash agreed to contact some family member in the Greensburg area to see how they felt. The group also discussed putting a marker of the original land of Johannes H. Sauvage/Sowash. Maxine Cornwell suggested attaching a bronze plate to a stone on the land for which Rockland Township was named. Richard will contact the possibility with the current owner of the land.

John Hamilton suggested that the group try to have stones erected at Brush Creek Cemetery in Irwin for Daniel Sowash (2) and his father Henry/Heinrich Sowash, both veterans of the Revolutionary War, since the Dept. of Veterans Affairs will provide new stones. Richard will investigate the option with Brush Creek Cemetery.

After a long discussion on how often to hold reunions, it was decided to hold reunions every year. Every third year, the reunion would return to Pennsylvania, probably either Westmoreland or Berks Counties although other sites may also be possible. These reunions would emphasize the history of our family. The reunions between would be spread geographically across the United States to allow people to attend more easily. These reunions will tend to be social reunions rather than family history.

The 1996 Sauvage/Sowash/Soash Family Reunion will be held ?? July in Grand Island, Nebraska. It will be hosted by Charles & Edith Soash and Hugh & Catharine Miner. A postcard will be sent to all names on the mailing list in January 1996 with a second letter sent to those who choose to join the association. The 1997 reunion will be hosted by Elinor Parish and Ruth Thomas in the northern Ohio area. The 1998 History Reunion will be held in Greensburg, PA. We need a host for this reunion. Any volunteers? We will be looking for hosts for the 1999 reunions, perhaps in northern or western United States. Please consider hosting a get-together.

The oldest member attending was Nellie Soash (1F6C4/W/) at 88. The oldest male attending was William Harold Sowash (2C1B1A2) at age 85. Amanda Sowash (1J7E4A2B) was the youngest attendee. Maxine (Soash) and Robert Cornwell (1F6C4A) had traveled the greatest distance from California.

### **Donations to the Project Fund**

Jean H. Churchill  
Glenn V. & Janelle Sowash  
Donald & Shirley Combs  
Charles E & Edith Soash  
John O. & Dorothy Sowash  
David G. & Harriette Soash  
Mary Slack  
G. William & Katherine Sowash  
Elizabeth & John Gray  
Albert & Christine Sowash

### **Special thanks for their very generous donations:**

William Harold Sowash  
Laurence "Larry" J. Sowash

### **Deaths**

Reva (Robinson) Haitbrink (1F2A3A)  
13 Apr 1995  
James R. Soash (1J7E4D)  
11 Apr 1995  
Ellwood Glenn Soash (1B4A3)  
27 May 1995  
Emmett James Van Nostrand (2B2A5A)  
04 Jan 1995

### **1995-1996 Officers**

President - Edith Soash  
Vice-President - Elinor Parish  
Secretary - Maxine Cornwell  
Treasurer - Richard Soash

Historian & Archivist - Richard Soash

### **Donations for the Craft Auction**

Teresa Anderson  
Jane Brown  
Myra Schroeder  
Edith Soash  
Richard Soash  
Christine & Albert Sowash  
Dot Sowash  
Joan Sowash  
John Curtis Sowash  
Ruth Thomas

### **Purchasers at Craft Auction**

Teresa Anderson  
Jane Brown  
Marijean Hawthorne  
Gail McQuigg  
Thomas McQuigg  
Mary Savage  
Myra Schroeder  
Edith Soash  
Peggy Soash  
Dorris Sowash  
Dot Sowash  
Joan Sowash  
Mary Sowash  
Nancy Sowash  
Kathleen Teter

## Reunion Attendees

Forty-four people attend the reunion from the following eleven states: CO, CA, IA, IL, KS, MI, MD, NJ, OH, PA, and VA. (\* indicates this was their first reunion)

Teresa Anderson* (NJ, 2E4C7A1)	Peggy Soash (PA, 1B4A3A/W/)
Jane Brown (IA, 1F6E2B)	Richard Soash (KS, 1B7E6B)
Jack Brown (IA, 1F6E2B/H/)	Amanda Sowash* (VA, 1J7E4A2B)
Maxine Cornwell* (CA, 1F6C4A)	Ann Sowash* (VA, 1J7E4A3)
Robert Cornwell* (CA, 1F6C4A/H/)	Cara Sowash* (PA, 1J7E7D6)
Doris Hamilton* (IL, 5C7B1A2)	Diane Sowash (MI, 2C12L3A2/W/)
John Hamilton* (IL, 5C7B1A2/W/)	Don Sowash* (OH, 2C1B1A2A)
Marijean Hawthorne* (VA, 5C7B1??)	Dorris Sowash (PA, 2D4J4)
Gail McQuigg (VA, 1J7E4A1)	Dot Sowash* (PA, 1J7E7D/W/)
Thomas McQuigg (VA, 1J7E4A1B)	Harold Sowash* (OH, 2C1B1A2)
Madeline Metzger (IA, 1F6E2/W/)	Jessica Sowash* (VA, 1J7E4A2A)
Elinor Parish (OH, 1B4B1A1 )	Joan Sowash (VA, 1J7E4A/W/)
Anne Savage* (PA, ??? )	John Charles Sowash (PA, 2D4J4)
Mary Savage* (PA, ???)	John Curtis Sowash (MI, 2D3C4A)
Wilbur Savage* (PA, ???)	John O. Sowash* (PA, 1J7E7D)
Doug Schroeder* (IA, 2B2A5B1)	Krista Sowash* (PA, 1J7E7D?)
Myra Schroeder (IA, 2B2A5B)	Larry Sowash (MI, 2C12L3A2)
Edith Soash (KS, 1B7E6/W/)	Mary Sowash (VA, 1J7E4A4)
Eric Soash* (PA, 1B4A3A3)	Nancy Sowash (MI, 2D3C4A/W/)
Merwin Soash (PA, 1B4A3A)	Kathleen Teter* (VA, 5C7B1???)
Michael Soash* (PA, 1B4A3A4)	Ruth Thomas (OH, 1B4B1A)
Nellie Soash (CO, 1F6C4/W/)	Eric Whitehair* (VA, 1J7E4A1A)
Dot Sowash* (PA, 1J7E7D/W/)	
Harold Sowash* (OH, 2C1B1A2)	
Jessica Sowash* (VA, 1J7E4A2A)	
Joan Sowash (VA, 1J7E4A/W/)	
John Charles Sowash (PA, 2D4J4)	
John Curtis Sowash (MI, 2D3C4A)	
John O. Sowash* (PA, 1J7E7D)	
Krista Sowash* (PA, 1J7E7D?)	
Larry Sowash (MI, 2C12L3A2)	