

# **HELLER FAMILY HISTORY**

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Heller Family History by W. J. Heller

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**W. J. HELLER**

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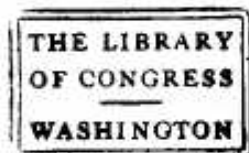
# HELLER FAMILY HISTORY.

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W. J. HELLER,  
EASTON, PA.

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GENEALOGY OF  
CHRISTOPHER HELLER AND HIS  
SIX SONS.



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1908

Paper Read by W. J. Heller at the Fifth  
Reunion of the Heller Family Asso-  
ciation at Island Park, Easton,  
Pa., August 29, 1908.

Gently gliding down the sunny slope of Lehigh mountain on a south bound electric car, one is very much impressed with the extensive view to the south, also to the east and to the west, a magnificent panoramic display of fertile cultivation. The eastern end of the long valley which stretches southwesterly to the southernmost part of Pennsylvania, is known as the greatest productive valley in the world.

Blind, indeed, to the perfections of God's handiwork in nature; and inlets to a sluggish soul, must be the eyes that fail to see, or that grow weary of resting upon the beauties of the landscape which is here unfolded to view.

Far down in this valley of the Saucons; nestling in a well chosen place, just on the east boundary of the charming village of Seidersville, in Lower Saucon township, Northampton county, is an ancient log house, a pretentious habitation even long after the log cabin days, a mute reminder of the times fast being forgotten, the period when the red man held undisputed sway and the white man was the interloper. Constructed purposely to withstand an onslaught of the wily Indian, a snug domicile standing some distance from the mountain foot hills, a place selected probably to avoid surprises from any lurking enemy. It was a safe retreat after a hard day's toil. This old

log house and plantation, known by the title of "Delay" was the American home of Christopher Heller, who landed at Philadelphia, September 5, 1738. The tract upon which he erected this log cabin was his original purchase of 176 acres under warrant dated September 8, 1742. Here he resided until the end of his days.

Christopher Veller, aged 50, and his son Simon, aged 17, were passengers on the good ship "Winter Galley," from Rotterdam, September 5, 1738. Whether any other members of the family were included among the passengers is unknown. All research to the present time, establishes the family only as the father and six sons. The oldest of these was John Dieter, much of whose life is yet shrouded in oblivion. We find his name on the books of the Durham Furnace in various vocations. At one time he was a teamster for the company and transported cannon balls to Philadelphia during the revolution. He enlisted at Germantown in Captain Calhoun's company, Tenth Pennsylvania line, served four years and was discharged in 1781. He was a pensioner as late as 1818, when he was living in Luzerne county. Tradition among his descendants, who principally inhabit the country around the Susquehanna, is to the effect that he took up a large tract of land, about ten miles southeast of Sunbury on the road leading to Pottsville, he having accepted the land allotted to veterans who served in the Revolutionary war, in payment for their services, from which he was ejected owing to a prior claim of some former purchaser, when he removed to some other place. Unfortunately, the genealogy of this line has never been chronicled. The Hellers living in and around

these same regions are the descendants of several of his other brothers, principally of Daniel. Rev. A. J. Heller, of Connellsville, Pa., and some of the Hellers in and around Williamsport, are descendants.

#### **Simon, the Second Son of Christopher Heller.**

The second son of Christopher was Simon, the fellow passenger of his father. Simon took up a tract of land on warrant dated October 3, 1746, on which he built a saw mill. This was a parcel of 25 acres belonging to a larger tract along the Saucon creek, at the southern boundary of what is now Hellertown and known as Wagner's mill. The other part of the tract was on the west side of the creek and south of the wagon road and contained 150 acres. To this, Simon added in the year 1749, 40 acres more, making a total number of 215 acres in this one tract. Simon also built an addition to the saw mill in which he ground grain. This mill tract, after several transfers, passed into the hands of the Wagners in the year 1771, and is still controlled by them. Simon and also his father were active members of the Chestnut Hill Reformed church in Upper Milford township, now the most southern part of Lehigh county. After taking up his abode on Saucon creek, he was instrumental in organizing the Lower Saucon Reformed congregation which, prior to his time, held their services in private houses and principally at the house of George Hartzell. Their burying ground was the ancient cemetery at what is now the Lime Kiln school house, immediately west of the furnace near Hellertown. He was the first trustee of the congregation



and purchased the book in which the first records of the congregation were kept, wherein he entered the names of his father and all of the sons, also all the baptisms in the Heller family prior to the year 1756.

Simon, in 1764, conveyed his mill site to Blasius Beyer and the farm to Christian Baehman, removing with his entire family to Plainfield township, where he purchased at sheriff's sale a large tract of land of some 600 acres on which was a saw mill and a hotel, now the Woodley house at Wind Gap. He was a prime mover in organizing the Plainfield Reformed congregation. He also acted in various interests of the government in border affairs. He was the principal man in the board of viewers to lay out the road through the Wind Gap and on to Wyoming. This was the principal reason why the road was laid out to accommodate the few people living along the line. At Saylorburg lived one of his daughters, the wife of Jacob Saylor. At Houser's Mills, lived another daughter, the wife of one of the Housers. It was over this road that Sullivan passed with his army and which he was compelled to reconstruct through the swamp known as the "Shades of Death." It is known as Sullivan's road to this day.

Simon's wife, who was Louisa Dietz, of Milford township, finally passed to the great beyond and was buried at Plainfield church. Simon, in due course of time, took unto himself a second wife, transferred all of his property to his oldest son Jacob, severed his connection with the Plainfield Reformed congregation which he helped to organize, and removed over the mountain to a plantation of some 500 or more acres which he had purchased some time pre-

vions. Simon no sooner had his house constructed on this tract when he began organizing the Reformed congregation of Hamilton township. His old log house is still standing within a few feet of the church. Of his second marriage there were a number of children, the principal one being Anthony, who became a legatee of all the properties above the mountain. The rest of the children, consequently, loved Anthony about as well as those of his first wife loved their other brother Jacob. The mountain divided the two branches of Simon's descendants and they grew up to forget the relationship existing between them. Simon died in 1783 and was buried by the side of his first wife in the cemetery adjoining the Plainfield church. His second wife lies in a neglected grave in Hamilton township churchyard. Chiseled in marble over the grave of Simon is the following inscription, "Here rests in God, Johan Simon Heller, born June 18, 1721, in Germany, at Petersheim, in Palatinat, died May 20, 1783. In his marriage he begat 16 children. He lived to see sixteen grandchildren and fifty-four great-grandchildren, and reached the age of sixty-four years, less five weeks and two days. His selected funeral text was 4th chapter Romans, 1st verse." (Then follows a German rhyme taken from a German hymn book of that date and which, translated, means as follows): "The body in the earth shall rest until the final day. Grant to me a joyful resurrection and intercession at the judgment."

I will read the will of Simon Heller to illustrate the conditions of that early period and the manner of disposing of real and personal property:

### The Will of Simon Heller.

In the name of God, Amen. I, Simon Heller of Hamilton township, Northampton county, state of Pennsylvania, being weak in body, but of sound memory blessed be God, do this day, the eighteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five, make and publish this my last will and testament in manner following, that is to say—First I give and bequeath to my son Daniel Heller all my land messuage or tenement, situate in Hamilton township, Northampton county, wherein I now live, to have and to hold forever, except forty acres thereof and my son Daniel Heller shall pay therefor three hundred pounds, good and lawful money to his brothers and sisters hereafter named, And I give to my son Anthony Heller the above said forty acres land in the corner adjoining to Christian Willaner and Michael Roup and Melcher Bussert and the meting house, and my son Antony shall pay therefor forty pound to his brothers and sisters, and my son Antony shall have the said forty acres land forever, this is my last will and testament.

Secondly I give to my beloved wife Margareth thirty pound good and lawful money, and fifteen pound six months after my decease, and the other fifteen pound to be paid to her a year after, fourthly, I give to my wife a bed stet three sheets, a new coverlet, and the old coverlet, two pillow and the chafe back, if my wife will go of or from my plantation and makes hereafter no demand of my heirs forever, I say then shall have my wife the above said sum money and not else, and if now, I Simon Heller give to my beloved wife time, twenty eight days,