

HONORING THE FAMILY OF SOLOMON GLOTFELTY (1738-1818)

By action of the board of directors, the 92nd annual reunion on July 27, 1997 will be devoted to commemoration of Casper Glattfelder's oldest surviving son, his wife, and their many descendants.

Born in 1738, when he was five years old Solomon left his native Glattfelden, Switzerland, in company with other members of his family, bound for America. The evidence indicates that his maternal grandfather, mother, and infant brother were among those who died on the ocean crossing. Solomon was among those fortunate enough to survive the ordeal.

By the time the family settled in Codorus Township, York County, Casper had remarried. Between about 1747 and 1758 Solomon acquired five new half brothers. Also during that time he was apprenticed to a blacksmith to learn a trade. Such hiring out occurred in many families. It was certainly not something unusual in this case.

Solomon came of age in 1759. We know very little about where he lived or what he did during the next five or six years. He should have shown up in the 1762 tax list, the earliest one we have for York County. The fact that not all of its pages have survived in their entirety may explain why one cannot find his name among those still legible. We do know that in 1758 and again in 1763 he stood as godfather at the baptism of cousins, whose parents had accompanied the Glattfelders to America.

About 1766 Solomon married Maria Eva Freinsch, who at eighteen was ten years his junior. Her father, Philip, died in Shrewsbury Township in 1750, leaving a widow and two young children, both under three years of age. The first child of Solomon and Eva "Klabfelder" was born in June 1767 and baptized six weeks later. The record of this act is in the register of Wolf's church, Manchester Township. The child was named Maria Magdalena, after her maternal grandmother. No record of the baptism of the second child, born in April 1769, has been found.

Soon Solomon and Eva made the fateful decision to leave York County. Baptisms of three of their children were recorded in the register of the Reformed church in Frederick, Maryland: in December 1770, May 1773, and April 1775. A list of 152 members of that congregation made in 1775 includes the name of "Solomon Glattfelder."

We do not know whether Solomon and Eva intended to remain in Frederick County or whether residence there was but one part of a longer journey in search of a permanent new home. What we do know is that in April 1777 (not 1776) John Markley sold all of his right to a certain "Improvement of Land" in Brothers Valley Township, Bedford County, to "Soliman Clotfelter Late of Frederic County In maryland." Markley, who became one of the largest landholders in the area, had established a formal claim to several hundred acres in December 1774.

Solomon and his family had moved into the newly established county of Bedford during some of the darker days of the American Revolution. No tax lists for 1777 and 1778 appear to have survived, but in 1779 "Solomon Gladfield" is assessed for 50 acres of land, 2 horses, and 2 cows. Four years later, in 1783 "Solomon Claufelty" has the same number of acres, horses, and cows. This year's entry also lists nine persons in his household.

Families coming from Europe and later others moving south or west to a new place in America usually did not travel alone. Solomon and Eva were no exceptions. Eva's stepfather and mother, Henry and Magdalena Gerlach, as well as her brother-in-law and sister, Frederick and Magdalena Altvater (or Oldfather), also went to Bedford County. In fact, Altvater's name appears in the Brothers Valley tax list in 1776, even before Solomon's. In addition, the names of Isaac and Anna Jauler (or Yauler) appear with those of Solomon and Eva in the Frederick church records; they are godparents for each other's children. Isaac arrived in Bedford County about the same time as Solomon.

It appears that sometime in the 1780s Solomon and his family left the land they had purchased from John Markley and moved to a place southeast of the present Salisbury. In 1793 Solomon took the first step in acquiring his own title to some hitherto unclaimed land by purchasing a warrant for 200 acres. According to the warrant, he was charged interest on this land, which indicated the approximate time of his settlement, beginning on May 1, 1787. In 1801 he took out a second warrant, this one for 182 adjoining acres. These two warrants resulted in two surveys, one for 201 acres and the other for 169 acres 40 perches.

All that then remained for Solomon to do in order to acquire a clear and complete title to this land (warrants and surveys did not convey such titles) was to secure a patent deed from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He took this step on May 28, 1804, when the state issued a deed to "Solomon Clotfelty alias Claufelty" for 370 acres 40 perches in Elk Lick Township, by then Somerset County. As was the case with many patent deeds, this one gave the property a name: Green Park.

We can trace Solomon through the tax lists as he relocated and acquired more land. After being assessed regularly for only 50 acres, in 1786 he was charged for 100 acres. In 1796 his assessment was increased to 210 acres. In several later years it was 262 acres.

Probably our most accurate look at Solomon's homestead as it existed at the end of the century comes from the federal direct tax assessment of 1798, which Congress authorized in anticipation of a war with France. "Solomon Clotfelty" then owned 260 acres of land and lived in a 24 by 30 foot log dwelling, with two stories, five windows, and sixty lights or panes. It was clearly one of the better dwellings in Elk Lick Township.

Evidently Solomon acquired a patent deed for Green Park in anticipation of going into retirement. In January 1805, as he approached his sixty-eighth year, he and Eva sold

253 acres 40 perches of Green Park to two of their sons, Henry and Jacob. On the same day, in a separate agreement, these sons made two formal promises. The first was to care for their parents for the remainder of their lives, providing them with food, clothing, and shelter, and then arranging for their burial in "a decent christian like manner." The second promise was to pay their six brothers and sisters, following a carefully prescribed order from oldest to youngest, what amounted to a fair price for the farm. Eva made her mark in subscribing the agreement, but her husband wrote "Salomon Gladfelder." How long after this Eva lived we do not know. Solomon died in 1818 and was buried in the cemetery at Salisbury, where his tombstone can still be seen. Because he had disposed of most of his possessions thirteen years before, there was no need for an estate.

Solomon and Eva had nine children, all but the eldest of whom reached maturity. In order of age they were Maria Magdalena , Eva Margaret (married John Durst), Adam (eventually moved to Ohio), Anna Mary (married Adam Fadeley), Elizabeth (married John Welch), Casper, Henry, Jacob, and Catharine (married Frederick Deal and died in Ohio). The sons and sons-in-law begin to appear in the township tax lists in the 1790s. Several were blacksmiths. Eventually the descendants of Solomon and Eva spread about as far and widely as those of Casper's other sons. For almost fifty years Glotfelty family reunions have been held near Oakland, Maryland. The records show that Mr. and Mrs. Milton J. Glotfelty, of Elk Lick (now Salisbury), attended the second Glattfelder reunion (we hope as members, not as just visitors) in September 1907. In the years since, Glotfeltys have continued to come. The recognition accorded them today is fully warranted, and it is overdue.

Three brief final comments are in order. First, we cannot escape the way Casper treated Solomon in his will or that Solomon elected to leave York County while his father was still alive. On the other hand, nor can we escape the fact that in 1767 Solomon chose his half brother, Felix, as godfather for his first child or that ten years later, in Bedford County, he named his second son Casper, after his father.

Second, in this paper Solomon's last name has been spelled in many ways, in quotation marks, as it appeared in documents prepared by others during the years of transition from Glattfelder to what became the usual, but not universal, spelling for his descendants, Glotfelty. Note the way Solomon spelled his name when he signed the 1805 agreement. This is proof that he wanted to spell it in just about the way his half brothers in York County were spelling theirs.

Third, there is a belief that the Bible which Casper Glattfelder willed to his youngest son and namesake in 1775 somehow found its way into Solomon's family. There is no evidence whatsoever that this ever happened and the claim cannot be taken seriously.

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