

Glimpses of the Past

Schneck family history traced back to 1749

By Lisa Mitchell
Of The Chronicle

The German feminine noun *die schnecke* translates to *snail* in English.

It's only appropriate then that a picture of a snail appeared on the program for the Schneck family's 86th reunion. The event took place Aug. 7 at the Schnecksville Grange.

"Snails are pretty prominent in German vineyards," said Henry R. Schneck Jr. "When we were there in 1999, we toured Southwestern Germany and Switzerland. We came across snails in several places."

As the appointed family historian, Henry has researched the Schneck family in the United States and Germany.

In 1985, in collaboration with Laurine Schneck Williams, Henry published "Im Schneckengang" a genealogy of several Schneck families in America. Henry continues to collect information, attempting to tie the various Schneck family lines together.

The first Schneck to settle in North Whitehall Township was Adam Schneck.

"I've been searching for



Photo courtesy of David Schneck

The Schneck family celebrates their 86th family reunion Aug. 7, playing music at the Schnecksville Grange.

23 years to find an exact place in Germany where Adam came from," he said.

He searched through a large-volume history book

that listed all the families in North Whitehall section of Lehigh and Carbon counties living in 1884. The two counties were divided by Sept. 13, 1749 from towns at that time. The

the ship Christian.

Henry has been looking through church records in Württemberg without success. He does know that Adam settled in what is now Schnecksville in 1749.

In 1757, Adam bought his first property, which measured about 127 acres. He cleared the wooded areas to farm grains such as oats, barley, and wheat. Eventually he established an apple orchard.

As the years passed, he bought more parcels of land to farm until he had a total of five plots amounting to roughly 292 acres.

While Adam was a prominent farmer in the area, he was not technically the founder of Schnecksville.

In 1840, his grandson Daniel Schneck acquired some of the land and divided it into building lots. He had a brickyard, so he built some of the first brick houses that still stand on Route 309, including what was once a hotel and general store at the Game Preserve Road intersection.

"He's the one who really founded the village of Schnecksville," said Henry.

The Schneck family now has 10 generations linked to Adam. Henry is a descendant of the 8th generation. Descendants have branched out all over the nation and number well over 1,000 people.

"It's important to hold

the reunion to get the people together for a [social activity] and to honor the ancestors, the memory of the past, remember the ones who started the reunion, and to keep the family history and genealogy going," said Henry.

Typically, about 120 adults and children attend the family reunion every year.

"It teaches [the children] the value of family unity. They see what their ancestors did and it gives them some inspiration and guidance into how they should conduct their lives," he said. "Adam took a very dangerous trip across the Atlantic. Lots of them did not make it."

Adam, he said, came here where land was fairly inexpensive and newly developed. The Lehigh Valley had just been acquired from the Indians in the 1730s. There were Indian raids during the French and Indian War of the 1750s.

"These people were adventurous in some sense," Henry said. "They wanted to own their own land. They came here to start a new life with their families and it was rough, clearing land to farm. It should give young people a sense of how easy they have it because of what their ancestors did here."

For more information, visit www.schneckfamily.org.

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