

to Ann's connection to the Hepler family. Another of her ancestors, Philip Wolf, was a shipmate of Caspar's family on the 1748 voyage of the *Patience*.

After doing research for this talk, Ann discovered that the widow of Christoph Hepler, Maria Christina Gerlach, became the third wife of her 7th great-grandfather, Michael Reiher (Royer).

We need to think of **Ann Thompson** as more than an Honorary Hepler. Following are the prepared notes of her address.

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According to *Pennsylvania German Pioneers* by Strassburger and Hinke, 324 ships came to the port of Philadelphia between 1727 and 1775. In 1748 seven ships arrived, in 1749 22 ships, and in 1750 15 arrived. (1750 was when Caspar Hepler's brother Christoph embarked on a journey to Philadelphia. He died on the voyage leaving his widow and children to arrive without him.)

Caspar Hepler's ship, the *Patience*, qualified 16 September 1748 with 122 men on the A List, which was the Captain's list. They came on a smaller ship from Rotterdam to the Isle of Wight. There, another week or two wait occurred for customs and favorable winds before the *Patience* left for Philadelphia. To begin the journey, the Heplers would have boarded a river vessel at Heilbronn, 23 miles from their home in Vaihingen/ENZ. The trip from Heilbronn to Rotterdam is 557 km or 346 miles. Today, that journey by car would take approximately 5½ hours. In 1748, by boat, it could take 4, 5, or even 6 weeks.

There were 26 custom houses (Robber Barons) on the river. (Perhaps you have seen pictures of those castles on the Rhine.) Inspections were made, and money had to be paid. Inspections were not timely, so travelers had to spend money for food and other essentials while being detained. Once the travelers reached Rotterdam, there was another 5 or 6 week wait. In Rotterdam, things were expensive.

The ship from Rotterdam sailed to the English port of Cowes on the Isle of Wight. There, another week or two wait occurred for customs and favorable winds before the larger vessel, in this case, the *Patience*, set sail. With the best winds it took seven weeks to get to Philadelphia. With unfavorable winds it might take eight to twelve weeks. Problems on the voyage, included lack of proper food and water, storms and gales, and disease such as dysentery, scurvy, typhoid, and small pox.

Once the ship reached Philadelphia, it could not dock until a health officer inspected the voyagers for disease. If infectious disease was discovered, the ship had to remove one mile from the city. In 1750, a hospital at Province Island, at the junction of the Schuylkill and the Delaware was founded. In 1754, undertakers reported burying 253 people from the hospital that year. Because ship captains had to pay for sick immigrants, some with illnesses were thrown into the Delaware River to avoid payment. People from the local German churches were known to follow ships to save those thrown into the river.

Travelers usually began their journey in May, so by the time they landed in Philadelphia, they had the trials of winter facing them. Many had a more immediate problem of paying for the voyage. Reverent Henry M. Muhlenberg in 1769 wrote to his headquarters at Halle the following description as shown on page XXXVII, *PA German Pioneers*, Strassburger and Hinke:

"After much delay one ship after another arrives in the harbor of Philadelphia, when the rough and severe winter is before the door. One or more merchants receive the lists of the freights and agreements which the emigrants have signed with their own hand in Holland, together with the bills for their travel down the Rhine and



Russ Hornung and **Rhea Nowacki** observing the stove in the Dillingersville Schoolhouse. **Terrald Knorr** is standing in the background.



Mae Ann Rehrer sitting at an historic desk.



Tara Druckenmiller (in a familiar schoolday pose).

the advances of the 'newlanders' for the provisions, which they received on the ships on account. Formerly the freight for a single person was six to ten louis d'ors, but now it amounts to fourteen to seventeen louis d'ors. Before the ship is allowed to cast anchor at the harbor, the passengers are all examined, according to the law in force, by a physician, as to whether any contagious disease exists among them. Then the new arrivals are led in procession to the City Hall, and there they must render the oath of allegiance to the King of Great Britain. After that they are brought back to the ship. Then announcements are printed in the newspapers, stating how many of the new arrivals are to be sold. Those who have money are released. Whoever has well-to-do friends seeks a loan from them to pay the passage, but there are only a few who succeed. The ship becomes the market-place. The buyers make their choice among the arrivals and bargain with them for a certain number of years and days. They then take them to the merchants, pay their passage and their other debts and receive from the government authorities a written document, which makes the newcomers their property for a definite period."

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Siblings **Russ Hornung** and **Vicki Reyes** at the outbuilding at the location of the Caspar Hepler home in the late 1700s.

At the conclusion of Ann's enlightening presentation, it was time, driving in procession and using GPS coordinates as backup, to navigate about three miles to the *The Schoolhouse Near The Old Spring* (see *Heple* #36, p.5 for further information).

The current building, a one room schoolhouse in Dillingersville, was built in 1885 to replace the earlier one, which had been built in the mid-1700s by Lutheran, Reformed, and Mennonites faiths. It not only served as a school but as a community meeting house and church.

Barry Williams, continuing as moderator, pointed out that most features — desks, "chalk" blackboards, library, furniture, wall hangings, and stove — were from the 1940s, when it ceased to function as a school. It is now a community museum. At the conclusion of his presentation, and after fielding a few questions, Barry invited everyone to examine and experience the building's elements.

When it was time to move to the site of the original Caspar Hepler homestead, a few people who had been there in the past, because of the narrow road and limited parking spaces, opted to stay behind in order to not hinder others.



Thomas E. Hepler and **Terrald Knorr** in a profound discussion.



Kathy Oko, **Mary D. Hepler**, **Bernice (Hepler) Francisco**, and **Jim Oko** in conversation(s).



reaction which turned the fern leaves white against the gray of the slate, so they stand out to a remarkable degree.

— **Richard & Betty Forsyth** and **Mary D. Hepler**

Complete set of Heppie Newsletters (**Joan Knarr**) — **Gary Biskeborn**

Two pans of Peggy's Famous Fudge (**Peggy Hepler**)

— **Bernice Francisco** and **Mae Ann Rehrer**

Acknowledgements and Awards.

This year's questions were set up by **Mary D. Hepler** and intended, in some cases, to add a bit of levity. Helping to identify winners, logging names, and assisting with the award selections were **Bernice Francisco** and **Lois Demore**.



Mary D. Hepler
calling out the award categories.

1. Caspar Hepler's birthday was July 10. Instead of the closest birthday, let's see who has the birthday that is 6 months away, January 10? — **Will Paul** (Jan. 17).

2. Susanna Scheible Hepler's birthday was December 18. Same as above, who has a birthday closest to June 18? — **Ryan Nowacki** (June 19).

3. Born with the last name of Hepler, who is the oldest? — **Miles Hepler** (1932).

4. Of all the women here who have the last name of Hepler by marriage, who is the oldest? — **Dolores Hepler** (age 89). It should be noted that Dolores not only married a Hepler, she is a Hepler in her own right.

5. Of all the people here, NOT born with the last name of Hepler, who is the youngest? — **Kennedy Loveless** (4).

6. The Heplers came to Philadelphia in 1748. Who was born in Philadelphia? — **Barbara Hepler**.

7. We know from extensive research that Caspar enjoyed going to the movies. Who saw a movie in a theater most recently? — **Juniper Crocker** and **Kathy Oke**.

8. The Wright Brothers are related to us through Susanna Scheible's line. So, in a nod to our aviation heritage, who took the most recent flight? — **Richard Forsyth**.

9. The Wright Brothers first flight was at Kitty Hawk NC in 1903. Was anyone born in North Carolina? If not, has anyone lived in North Carolina? — **Dawn Moffett** and **Alice Rehrer** were born there.

10. The Heplers arrived before there were any states. Let's work backwards now. Was anyone here born in Hawaii, if not, then Alaska, if not, then Arizona, then New Mexico, then Oklahoma, then Utah, then Wyoming, then Idaho and so forth? — **Gary Biskeborn** (South Dakota).

11. In a nod to our grape growing heritage, is there anyone here who grows grapes? — **Cindy Baum**.

12. Who visited a winery most recently? — **Kendra Hepler** and **Linda Finken**.

13. Who drove the longest distance to get to this reunion? — **Holda Crocker**, **Juniper Crocker**, and **Haley Graves** (Oregon).



Dolores Hepler,
oldest Hepler AND
Kehler, greeting
her niece,
Ruth Hoch Boyer

14. In acknowledging our Kehler kin, who is the oldest Kehler in attendance? — **Dolores Hepler** (age 89).

15. Most recently married? **Sandy Cooper** and **Gene Dawson**, December 2018. (Sandy has opted to keep her name.)

50/50 Drawing

Only at a Hepler Reunion can one come up with the math that allows for three winners of such a contest.

— **Dave Knerr**, **John Fetterolf**, and **Robert Golden**

(**Jamie Finken**, a winner in 2017 and 2018 did not win this year. When asked for her reaction she is alleged to have said, "I'll be back.") **Ferne Druckenmiller** deserves a shout out for her effort in coordinating this fund-raiser

2019 POTentate Award

Thomas E. Hepler had been working behind the scene with other members of the committee, helping to select this year's winner, as he had done in prior years. When it came time for the award and his name was called, he realized he had been sandbagged. After gaining his composure, he said, "Instead of displaying the pot at home, I am going to find a zoo and take it to the reptile house to be used by a snake that doesn't have a pot to hiss in. Next year, I'll retrieve it and bring it back; BEWARE!"



Cake Walk (To the music of the Pitman Trio.)



Lois Demore and **Ryan Nowacki** each won a cake. Both were made by **Ken Fetterolf** of Pitman, a local professional baker.

Call of States

Twenty-five people accepted the microphone to say a few words about themselves, their immediate family, where they live, their particular interests in family history, and whatever else came to mind in the moment. While so many participated and seemed to enjoy it, not so with others. Nothing can clear a room as quickly as the fear of having a microphone handed to them with the imperative to "say a few words."

That said, it is becoming apparent that this particular activity has lost its verve; yet those who did stay to speak and listen might consider it the afternoon's highlight.

At its inception in the early 1980s, the "Call" was voluntary. Perhaps we need to go back to its roots or re-engineer it. This will be addressed during the planning meetings this fall and next spring.

Hobnobbing

The "Call" people joined those who had bailed earlier and became part of the official period for hanging out or visting local points of interest.

End of Day

Following the tradition of reunions in the 1930s, it has become customary, in recent years, to end the day with the hymn *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*. With **Alice Rehrer** leading those voices still

2019 Memory Board

Display prepared by **Tara Druckenmiller**, listed the following who, for the most part, had passed since last year's reunion:

Kent Druckenmiller
Dorothy (Hepler) Gressens
John Hatten
Joanne (Bentz) Hepler
Peter Hepler

Grace Hepler Hoch
John Kehler
Ernest KlindtDoris
(Wolfgang) Knerr
Robert Maurer

Larry Meyer
Blanche Rattigan
Clay Stehr
William Wagner
Miriam (Maurer) Wetzel

Some of those listed have already appeared under our **Rest In Peace** column. We rely on our readers to make us aware of those who should be remembered.

