



# *Hottenstein Lines*

May 2026

*Hottenstein Lines* is a newsletter of the Hottenstein Family Reunions about the descendants and many lines of ancestry of Ernst Von Hottenstein of Esslingen, Germany who immigrated to America. Presently, three immigrant lines are identified: Johann Jacob Hottenstein settled in Kutztown, PA, his nephew also Johann Jacob Hottenstein settled in Lancaster, PA, and a descendant Phillip J. Hottenstein settled in Gleason, WI. It is for the descendants, spanning twelve (12) generations, to share items of interest about our family and information about our annual reunions. At least one newsletter each year will announce the date and location of the family reunions. Your suggestions are always welcome.

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## **Volunteers Wanted for Hottenstein Family Leadership Group**

This past year Sharon Laverdure continued the 90-year legacy of the Hottenstein Reunion, established first by her father and then maintained by her brother. Terry Schnure expanded the reunion with extensive correspondence including the newsletter, genealogical connections, picnic registrations and as a liaison with the Trust of Berks County. The family needs the younger generation to attend and participate in its leadership. Several members in the group have been thinking about successors for their responsibilities, and you may hear from them before the reunion. Meanwhile if you are interested in a leadership role, please contact Sharon at [HottensteinFamily@gmail.com](mailto:HottensteinFamily@gmail.com).

## **2026 PA Hottenstein Family Reunion Hottenstein Mansion Open House and Picnic to be Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>**

The 89<sup>th</sup> PA Hottenstein Family Reunion will be held on Sunday, June 7, 2026, beginning at the Hottenstein Mansion, on Route 222, east of Kutztown, Pennsylvania. The family reunion, as has occurred the past several years, will be in two phases and two locations. It will begin with an Open House at the Hottenstein Mansion beginning at 11:00 AM; the Picnic will follow, using the meeting facilities of the Masonic Hall just five (5) miles west of the Hottenstein Mansion on Route 222. All are welcome.

### **Hottenstein Mansion Open House**

The reunion will begin with the Open House at the Hottenstein Mansion. Plan to arrive between 11:00

AM and 12:30 PM to tour the house and grounds. Rob and Jennette Reynolds have invited us into the Hottenstein family home where they reside. There will be tours of the rooms, out buildings, and artifacts. It is also a time when family members visit, socialize, and share experiences.

*Please refer to the next page for parking details.*



1783 Hottenstein Georgian Mansion

### **PA Hottenstein Family Reunion Picnic**

The PA Hottenstein Family Reunion Picnic will begin at 1:00 PM at the Masonic Hall in Kutztown. The picnic will be a traditional catered meal, as has occurred in past years. Again, it will be a time when family members visit, socialize, and discuss reunion business. Rob and Jennette Reynolds will join us and he will update us on his role as curator and living in the Mansion with his family. Dr. Reynolds is the Freyberger Professor of Pennsylvania German Culture at Kutztown University.

**Hottenstein Mansion Parking  
Hottenstein Mansion Open House**

Parking at the Hottenstein Mansion will be along the West side of Hottenstein Road which intersects with Route 222. Please look for signs indicating Hottenstein Road. After turning onto Hottenstein Road, proceed past the Mansion, turn around, and park on the western side of the road or facing South toward Route 222.

Parking for those with limited mobility will be provided in the area on the eastern side of the Mansion.

The street address of the Hottenstein Mansion is 15441 Kutztown Road, Kutztown, Pennsylvania.



Hottenstein Road Parking

**PA Reunion Picnic Reservations**

We hope you will be able to attend the Reunion. Please print the attached reservation form to indicate your participation.

Cost for the reunion picnic to cover our expenses (including the catered picnic meal, facility rental, printing & mailings) will be as follows:

- Adults \$ 30.00
- Youth \$ 15.00 (10 yrs thru 17 yrs)
- Children No Fee (9 yrs and younger)

The reservation Email deadline is Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. For late reservations, which can be accommodated afterwards, please contact:

Jane Herlacher, Treasurer  
 Phone 781-259-1370  
 Email [hottensteinfamily@gmail.com](mailto:hottensteinfamily@gmail.com)

or

John L. Hottenstein, Historian  
 Phone 717-892-7209  
 Email [hottensteinfamily@gmail.com](mailto:hottensteinfamily@gmail.com)

**PA Hottenstein Family Reunion Picnic Location**

The PA Hottenstein Family Reunion Picnic will be at the Masonic Hall in Kutztown. This is a five (5) mile drive west of the Hottenstein Mansion. Travel southwest on Route 222 for 4 miles to the Virginville exit, then turn left onto Crystal Cave Road, then travel ½ mile to the Masonic Hall, on the left. A large parking area is located on the right side of the Masonic Hall.

The street address of the Masonic Hall (Huguenot Lodge) is 18 Crystal Cave Road, Kutztown, PA.

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**Family Reunion Leadership Group**

- |  |              |                               |              |
|--|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Sharon Laverdure, Interim President    | 570-424-5460 | Larry Herlacher, Newsletter   | 781-259-1370 |
| East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania         |              | Lincoln, Massachusetts        |              |
| Jane Herlacher, Interim Vice President | 617-899-5257 | Russel Hottenstein, PA Picnic | 484-577-9142 |
| Lincoln, Massachusetts                 |              | Fleetwood, Pennsylvania       |              |
| Bob Hottenstein, Secretary             | 610-652-2552 | Omar Hottenstein, Trust Board | 717-778-1986 |
| Zieglerville, Pennsylvania             |              | Gettysburg, Pennsylvania      |              |
| Jane Herlacher, Treasurer              | 781-259-1370 | Harriette Rensch, At Large    | 302-803-7017 |
| Lincoln, Massachusetts                 |              | Newark, Delaware              |              |
| John L. Hottenstein, Historian         | 717-892-7209 | Robert Reynolds, Ex-Officio   | 610-417-3046 |
| Landisville, Pennsylvania              |              | Kutztown, Pennsylvania        |              |
| Bill Spagnola, Webmaster               | 717-683-4039 | Bart Hottenstein, Ex-Officio  | 608-769-3415 |
| New York City, New York                |              | Holmen, Wisconsin             |              |

## **Hottenstein Scandal**

### **Uncovered during an Episode of PBS's "Finding Your Roots" Response by John L. Hottenstein**

On February 10<sup>th</sup> 2026, PBS had an episode of "Finding Your Roots" with a guest of Sara Haines who is a host on the American talk show "The View" titled *Westward Bound*. During the show, as Henry Louis Gates, Jr discussed the research into her family background, it was revealed that through her father she is a descendant of Johann Jacob Hottenstein through his son David Hottenstein and David's daughter Catherine Hottenstein. While they had researched her entire line, they discovered and presented some facts of interest pertaining to Johann Jacob and David, that are relevant to our family. Some of these were facts we already know, but as will happen when you have a team of professional researchers, some of them were surprises...including a scandal. Here is the list of the facts that were presented along with my response.

**Presented Fact #1:** Johann Jacob was originally from Ittlingen, Germany.

Response: This was already an established fact for our family line, and you can read in last year's newsletter my report from when we traveled there in the summer of 2024.

**Presented Fact #2:** From the court records of Ittlingen, Jacob was embroiled in a scandal in Germany in 1717 when the local innkeeper's maid "Maria" claimed he had impregnated her. Jacob tried to convince her take some natural herbs to have a natural abortion, and then abandoned her when she refused. Maria then went to the authorities, Jacob was then arrested and put in jail, and an investigation was launched, Jacob denied the claim, but another witness came forward to corroborate Maria's claim, and he finally admitted to the relationship. He was found guilty, ordered to pay a fine of 30 guilders (roughly 10% of a typical yearly wage), and also pay child support of 5 guilders annually for ten years. Maria ended up having twins, she married a farmhand and gave birth to 10 more children.

Response: This was a new fact of which I was previously unaware. Of course, most of my research had focused on births, marriages, and deaths, never court records. I have reached out to some contacts in Germany and am attempting to research this further.

**Presented Fact #3:** "As for Jacob, he seems to have escaped his responsibilities by heading off to Pennsylvania".

Response: While this was only mentioned in a single comment, this is the fact from the show that I have the most problems with because they seemed to imply that the reason Jacob came to Pennsylvania was to escape his financial responsibility. Let's look at some known facts about Jacob that were never mentioned but are significant to his immigration:

- From church records in Ittlingen, Jacob married Mary Dorothea Reber in 1718
- Jacob and Dorothea's first child Catharina Barbara was born in Ittlingen Germany on 14 October 1720.
- Jacob's and Dorothea's second child Dorothea B. was born in Maxatawny Pennsylvania on 14 November 1722.

So, Jacob did not immigrate to Pennsylvania as a single man but as a young family. We don't know the exact year because this was before ships records, however, we know that it needed to be sometime between the birth of his first and second child. Since you always sailed during the summer months,

and since their first child was born in October 1720, it was too late to sail that year. As such, we can assume they either came over during the summer of 1721 or 1722.

Germany faced economic challenges at that time period with little opportunity. William Penn had agents traveling along the Rhine recruiting people to come to Pennsylvania. Various people from the region of the Rhine river valley came to Pennsylvania. It was not uncommon to know people in the new world that you knew from the old one, and people would communicate back and forth. We know that immigrants would follow family and friends that had previously immigrated and reported back about the various opportunities. If you were trying to escape things from Germany, Pennsylvania might not be the best place to come because the chance that someone here would know you would be high. You would be better off going to one of the lesser German communities where your anonymousness was greater.

Furthermore, the show didn't present any evidence that he actually evaded his financial responsibility. Just because he left Germany before the 10 years of child support were up, does not mean he could not have made other arrangements, we may never know. But even if there is any truth that he was attempting to flee his responsibility, that does not mean that that was his sole reason for immigrating. In real life, things rarely only have a single factor. Based on the evidence, we can see that there could be many reasons that Jacob chose to immigrate his young family to Pennsylvania.

**Presented Fact #4:** In 1731, Jacob was listed on a resolution passed by the Pennsylvania legislature and became a naturalized Citizen.

Response: We already knew that Jacob became a naturalized citizen, but we did not know that it was by an act of the Pennsylvania legislature. I would like to get to the Archives and get a copy of that documentation.

**Presented Fact #5:** His son David helped found our nation, he joined a patriot militia and was a revolutionary war hero.

Response: We already knew that he was a Lieutenant in the Revolutionary War.

**Presented Fact #6.** David is listed as owning one slave in the 1799 tax register. Pennsylvania began to abolish slavery in 1780 and David relinquished his slaves soon after.

Response: Dr. Reynolds, who lives in the David Hottenstein Mansion in Kutztown, had previously also uncovered documents showing that slaves existed there before the Revolution.

While the show did a good job presenting a lot of facts, I did feel like some were distorted, especially as to how they portrayed Jacob's character and immigration. By only presenting the facts that are blemishes on Jacob's character, and not presenting any positive facts of his character, it painted him in a more negative light than reality.

I understand how TV works. You don't present all the facts, you present the ones that make for an interesting story or fit in the time allowed. There are parts of the story that get left out. However, that does a disservice to the story as a whole.

As they said in the show, "Family History is complicated."



The 2026 Hottenstein Reunion in Kutztown, Pennsylvania

## **PA Hottenstein Family Reunion Meeting Minutes, June 8, 2025, at the Mansion and the Masonic Hall, Kutztown, Pennsylvania**

The 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Hottenstein Reunion began at the Hottenstein Mansion in Kutztown, PA on June 8, 2025 with approximately 40 persons attending an open house from 11AM to 12:30PM. Rob Reynolds provided explanations of the history and details of projects underway or planned for the Mansion and the outbuildings.

At 1PM the reunion re-convened at the Huguenot F&AM Lodge No. 377 on Crystal Cave Road, Kutztown for the luncheon, meeting, and socialization. Sharon Schnure Laverdure welcomed everyone, called the meeting to order, and made some announcements, most critical being that her brother, Terry Schnure, our President for many years had passed away on July 7, 2024 and that the leadership group in November, 2024 had unanimously selected her to be Interim President. Bob Hottenstein then said the blessing and Sharon called for a moment of silence for all who had passed away since our last meeting.

Then the meeting was paused for a group picture outside followed by a buffet luncheon in the air-conditioned meeting room. The luncheon was provided by Kathryn's Katering from Blandon, PA and consisted of: fried chicken, ribs, baked beans, escalloped potatoes, rolls, tossed salad and assorted beverages. Russel Hottenstein provided the strawberry shortcake dessert with vanilla ice cream. Several family members assisted in serving the food and the cleanup.

The afternoon program began with Sharon announcing recognitions to:

Rob and Jeannette Reynolds for their hospitality at the open house and  
Russ Hottenstein and his family for the luncheon arrangements and service.

The business portion of the meeting commenced as follows:

The Secretary's 2024 report as printed in "Hottenstein Lines" was accepted;  
The Treasurer's report was distributed by Jane Herlacher, Vice President and Treasurer and was also accepted.

The current slate of officers as follows agreed to serve for another year:

Sharon Schnure Laverdure - Interim President  
Jane Herlacher – Interim Vice President

Bob Hottenstein - Secretary  
 Jane Herlacher – Treasurer  
 John L. Hottenstein - Historian  
 Bill Spagnola - Webmaster  
 Russel Hottenstein - Member at Large  
 Omar Hottenstein - Member At Large and Board Member of the Trust  
 Harriett Rensch - Member At Large  
 Dr. Rob Reynolds - Curator of the Mansion (Jennette)  
 Larry Herlacher - Interim Newsletter Editor

John L. and family talked about their trip to Germany and showed slides including the Hottenstein Rock. Rob spoke to all the work needed for the doctor’s office, the garage and the house and spoke about the proposed warehouses and two problems that would affect the Mansion. First, he computed that there would be a truck every 20 seconds, 24/7 all year and second, what the large trucks’ vibrations would do to the Mansion. Rob also announced that he is going to run for Supervisor of Maxatawny Township.

Sharon announced that Hope Spagnola was attending her first reunion and that we may meet at another venue next year. It was also brought up that the group should be registered as a non-profit entity with the IRS and have a EIN. John and Bob Hottenstein will look into this and file the necessary paperwork to make that happen.

Prizes were then awarded to the following:

- Oldest Woman -Trine Vergara
- Oldest Man - Fred Hottenstein
- Most Recently Married - Bill Spagnolas
- Most Grandchildren - Joe and Joyce Hottenstein
- Youngest Grandchild - Joe and Joyce Hottenstein
- Person with Most Keys - Joe Hottenstein
- Traveled the Farthest - Gary and Linda Keller
- Longest Married - Tie between Bob Hottensteins and Fred Hottensteins

Adjournment-2026 Reunion Tentatively Scheduled for June 7, 2026. Everyone was wished safe travels home.



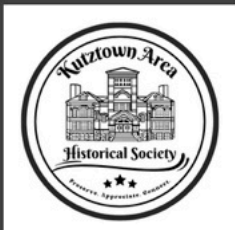
John, Josiah, and Jennifer Hottenstein discussing their trip to Germany in July 2024



The Spagnola Family  
 Bob is the Hottenstein Family Webmaster



Linda and Bob Hottenstein  
 Bob has been the long-time secretary for the PA reunion



# April 2026 Newsletter

Kutztown Area Historical Society

By now you should've already sent your RSVP for the 50th Anniversary celebration on Saturday, April 25. We will be unveiling some new things for the museum as well as hors d'oeuvres, beverages, and a celebratory cake. We will also raffle a quilt and other prizes. A lot of folks have said they're coming, so we should have a hearty crowd, ready to celebrate your historical society.

**Dr. David Hottenstein**  
The First President of the Society

20



On 18 March 1975, the Kutztown Area Historical Society held its first meeting where it elected its first slate of officers:

David Hottenstein – President

Erna Snyder – 1st Vice President

Robert Pawling – 2nd Vice President

Thomas Sanelli – Secretary

Harold Rothermel – Treasurer

Through the years, 136 people have served on the society's board of directors or as an officer. Hundreds more have volunteered their time and talents to make the society one of the Kutztown area's most active and visible civic organizations.

The society has many milestones in its history - too many to list in this newsletter. Below, however, is a brief list of some of the society's achievements.



### **1976 – 2000**

**April 1976** - Society incorporated

**1977** - First “Along the Saucony” periodical published

**1979** - 1892 Public School Building purchased

**1981** - First Christmas Tea & Art Show (later known as the Holiday Festival)

**1982** - First Kutztown Rotary Club-sponsored golf tournament to benefit society; Keith Haring participated in the second Christmas Tea & Art Show, during which he drew on chalkboards in Room 1

**1984** - 1876 Centennial Monument moved to society grounds and rededicated

**1985** - Mortgage on building paid off; Renovation of rooms, 1<sup>st</sup> floor hallway, front stairs

**1986** - First annual quilt show

**1988** – Exterior repairs 1990 - Helena Kutz Biehl sampler donated

**1992** - Society cookbook first published; 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1892 Public School House

**1993** - Plaque commemorating the centennial of the construction of the 1892 Public School Building installed

**1995** - Jacob George rifle donated

**1998** - Last annual quilt show; Sidewalk replaced by Kutztown Lions Club



### **2001-2007**

**2001** - Corrigan Room renovations/dedication; Trophy Room renovated; First apple butter demonstration at the Kutztown Folk Festival

**2002** - 1832 Horse Racing Broadside donated; Rebecca Rhoadarmel sampler purchased; Repairs to building exterior; Art Show; First train display at the Holiday Festival

**2003** - Meeting (Yoder) Room renovated and dedicated; Museum exhibition - Along the Saucony: The Kutztown Area’s Early Inhabitants; ATS publication – “Along the Saucony: The Kutztown Area’s Early Inhabitants; The Artifact Gathering Legacy of Henry K. Deisher”

- 2004** - PHMC designation of “historic district eligible” status for a large part of Kutztown; Museum exhibition - Mrs. America 1954; Publication of “A Most Agreeable Town, Volume 1”; First floor renovations
- 2005** - Publication of “A Most Agreeable Town, Volume 2”; “Along the Saucony” revamped from quarterly periodical to ad hoc status; Lavatories, kitchen renovated; 2<sup>nd</sup> floor renovated
- 2006** - Publication of “A Most Agreeable Town, Volume 3”; Basement work room created; Classroom renovations completed
- 2007** - ATS publication – “The Village of Bowers”; 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hallway, both stairways, and library renovate



**2008 - 2015**

- 2008** - ATS Publication – “Voices of Kutztown, Vol. 1”; New roof on the 1892 Public School Building
- 2009** - Special museum exhibition: “Pennsylvania’s Quilt Treasures: The Art of the Needle”; ATS publication - “Pennsylvania’s Quilt Treasures: The Art of the Needle”; Train display moves into current room

- 2010** - Kitchen upgraded; Last year with apple butter demonstration at the Kutztown Folk Festival; Newspaper announcing the death of George Washington donated
- 2011** - ATS publication – “Voices of Kutztown, Vol 2”
- 2012** - New front doors installed; ATS publication – “The ‘Lost’ 1876 Census of Kutztown”
- 2013** - Angelina Kutz sampler donated; ATS publication – “Variations About Architect Milton B. Bean”
- 2014** - ATS publication – “Historical Sketch of Kutztown & Maxatawny: A Centennial Memorial”
- 2015** - New furnace installed; Museum exhibition: “Kutztown’s Anniversary Celebrations”; ATS publication – “Memorabilia of the Past: Glimpses of Kutztown’s Anniversary Celebrations”; Kutztown bicentennial activities: Walking History Tour, Ice Cream Social, Society float in Kutztown’s bicentennial parade wins the Chairman’s Award



**2016 - 2026**

- 2016** – Building becomes handicapped accessible; Dedication of Bicentennial Park (walkway, landscaping)
- 2017** - 125<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for 1892 Public School Building; “Vergess Net” published
- 2018** - Peter Gift clock purchased
- 2019** - Angstadt long rifle purchased
- 2020** - New back doors installed; Bilingual (English/PA Dutch) signs installed
- 2021** - ATS publication – “The 1840 Joel Bates “America” Fire Engine”; Society assisted in campaign to save the Kemp Family Burial Ground from destruction

- 2022** - The 1849 Joel Bates “America” Fire Engine purchased and returned to Kutztown  
**2023** - The 1849 Joel Bates “America” Fire Engine repaired and restored; Reception for David Gill, Germany’s Consul General in New York (former Secretary of State for Germany, current German ambassador to Ireland) hosted by society  
**2024** - Dedication of Keith Haring PHMC Historic Marker; Museum exhibition - “Keith Haring: Kutztown’s Most Famous Native”; Keith Haring 32,000 piece jigsaw puzzle donated; Website re-designed; New logo adopted  
**2025** - Kitchen upgraded; 2<sup>nd</sup> Walking History Tour of Kutztown; Heating system repaired; Construction of Keith Haring jigsaw puzzle commenced  
**2026** - Society celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

**Society Calendar:**

Sunday, April 12 (1pm - 4pm): Museum Open & Trains Running  
Monday, April 20 (7pm): Board of Directors Meeting  
Saturday, April 25 (2pm - 5pm): 50th Anniversary Celebration  
Sunday, May 3 (1pm - 4pm): Museum Open & Trains Running

Work on the Keith Haring puzzle: Tuesdays (6pm - 8pm); Thursdays (9am - noon); also check the website for other dates (click the link below)

<https://www.kutztownhistory.com/>

Follow Us:



Legal Notice  
Kutztown Area Historical Society  
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Kutztown, PA 19530

Tel: 610-683-7697  
Email: [info@kutztownhistory.org](mailto:info@kutztownhistory.org)

President: Karen DeLong  
V President: Pam Berg  
Recording Secy: Meredith Strasser  
Corresponding Secy: Rita Robertson  
Treasurer: Janet Yost

## 2025 Hottenstein Mansion Annual Report

This year two artworks came to the Hottenstein mansion thanks to Betty and Bob Hottenstein, who previously donated a Hottenstein clock and kitchen dresser. The painting and the watercolor now hang in the dining room of the mansion as Betty wished.

The garage roof was replaced with asphalt shingles shaped like slates to better blend with the slate roofed historic stone buildings on the property. The failing aluminum chimney flashing was removed and replaced in copper, with kerfs cut into the stone to ensure a watertight seal. The existing asphalt roof was left on, and the new roof makes for two layers of roofing on the garage today. The ash cleanout door on the exterior garage chimney was re-mortared and is now operational. I located matching eagle snow guards, still in production, but choose aluminum rather than iron because so many of the 1968 snow guards were struck by branches breaking off wings and heads of at least half the old eagles.





New roof going on below, above is the finished look.





Rear slope partially roofed, chimney flashing before and after.

We were surprised when the furnace failed in late October. We replaced the furnace once before in 2007. What we learned was that many of the vents had been closed off when the house sat empty. When the 2007 furnace was installed, it ran for an entire season restricted by those closed vents causing the furnace to overheat and never run perfectly well until it died prematurely.

Replacing the furnace also necessitated having all the duct work professionally cleaned. We found one room's ductwork filled with chunks of plaster and debris. Because the duct cleaners need to drill and plug access holes to get their equipment through the system, it was clear that the ducts had never been cleaned in the sixty years this system has existed.



New furnace installed in November 2025.

In the next few months, I will be arguing my case on the impacts of a roundabout and the construction of a roundabout adjacent to the Hottenstein property in the two conditional use hearings that have been ongoing for the past four years.

The proposed roundabout means that as many as 17,000 vehicle trips per day will pass the mansion, with a tractor trailer decelerating every twenty seconds. When these trucks use their j-brakes the impact that

will have on the mortar, woodwork, glass, and on the lungs and sleeping patterns of the mansion residents needs to be established as a taking against the responsibility of the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County's long-term preservation of the building.

To adequately defend the Hottenstein mansion, we need an expert engineer to testify on the impacts of siting a roundabout next to the mansion. The j-braking immediately next to the mansion will shake the stone buildings apart. As no plan of the roundabout is to be provided in the conditional use hearings, the details of siting and lighting and its true location would not be worked out until the project is approved offering no means to mitigate the adverse impacts.

Betty Hottenstein donated funds for just this type of existential threat to the future of this landmark property. The Hottenstein family and the resident curator declare this concern an emergency and call on Larry Ward, Brad Kissam and the Trust Board to act on behalf of the mansion with the funds provided by Betty Hottenstein for this preservation purpose.

We will continue to address outbuilding exteriors over the coming years. The slate roof on the smokehouse will need replacement and is tarped in the meantime. The summer kitchen needs repair to one windowsill, and the root cellar/smokehouse, and Dr. Office will require carpentry repair before refreshing the paint. We plan to address the outbuildings serially and will likely expand to outbuilding interior repair and restoration as the exteriors are put back to excellent condition.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Reynolds, Resident Curator

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## The Mid-West Hottenstein Reunion



The 2025 Mid-West Hottenstein Reunion Group Picture

2025 marked the 91<sup>st</sup> reunion of the Hottenstein Wisconsin line. Approximately 40 people were in attendance. The reunion began at 11AM with a potluck meal to include the fish-fry at noon. Bart read Great Uncle "Fritz's" account of the Hottenstein 's travels and everyone enjoyed catching up from the previous year. Uncle Fred Hottenstein's grandson and great grandson were in attendance. The 92nd Hottenstein reunion will be held at Hickory Hill Park on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August in Potosi Wisconsin.

For Mid-West Reunion info, contact Bart Hottenstein at 608-769-3415 or email at [brettbear12@yahoo.com](mailto:brettbear12@yahoo.com). Hope to see everyone again this year.

### **Story about Early Hottenstein Adventures as told by Fred Hottenstein, Sr.**

Fred Hottenstein, Sr., AKA: Frederick Herbert Hottenstein, is a son of Phillip Jacob Hottenstein who immigrated to the U.S. around 1892. According to the genealogy information on the Hottenstein website, Frederick was born in Germany in 1891 and came to U.S. with his parents. He is the 3rd Great Grand Nephew of the Johann Jacob Hottenstein who came to PA in 1721-1722.

Bart Hottenstein contributed the following article:

We believe that the following speech given by Fred Hottenstein, Sr. at their 1949 reunion held at his home in Savanna, GA, should be here inscribed to be remembered always.

Folks and Friends:

I am going to try to tell you a story, the story that I am going to try to tell you is not going to be a pleasant story, it is a story of life and as we all know, life on this old ball of mud is not always a bed of roses.

In the very early winter, an adventuresome young couple with four children living in the Black Forest region of Germany, decided to uproot themselves and migrate to this great land of freedom and opportunity. Father came over first, followed about a year later by Mother and three of her oldest sons. It was not until in the early 1900's that the eldest child, a daughter, was brought to this fair land. They lived for a time in northern Illinois, later moving to the midwestern part of Grant County, Wisconsin, where six more children were born to this adventuresome couple.

Then before the present century was ten years old, the lure of the faraway places, the lure of the pioneer, lured them to that great big broad land north of our border, the Dominion of Canada.

One cold April day in 1909 we found ourselves on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River in the city of Edmonton, the place where the far west ends and that great big broad, silent cold, far Northland begins. They took up a homestead in the Athabasca River valley, northwest of Edmonton and while we were up there, we hunted, fished, trapped, worked and camped with men, men who could not remember when they first learned to set a snare and trap, nor in what remote and far distant part of that far northland, their lonely and lifelong quest for hides and furs began. We struggled along its oftentimes nameless lakes, creeks, and rivers, trapping for weasel, mink and muskrat, hunting for rabbits, partridge, wolves, deer, moose, and bear. We often camped alone many miles from human habitation on long cold and weird nights when the Aurora Borealis had that wild sky blazing and a paper white moon seemed to hang in the sky along with millions and millions of stars, when you were just a tiny human speck in the scheme of things, just you alone with God and the universe, surrounded by miles of cold, silent wilderness and you were so lonely up there, so all alone, when you thought you could not get any more lonely breaking that silent monotony you heard the dismal howl of the timber wolf as he howled out his mournful cry to those frozen snows. Then you learned and knew what it was to be lonely and lonesome. When it was so cold, that often you would wonder, will it ever get warm again?

We carried loads that would have done credit to a pack horse or mule through trackless forest and over miles of hammocky, mossy velvet like tundra and many more miles of oozing, quivering jelly-like muskeg, followed by swarms of hunger-maddened mosquitoes, who contributed their full share of misery and of torture to that far north frontier. Many grim heartbreaking ways. We helped harvest some of its golden grains. We worked on survey gangs, helping to measure, mark and subdivide some of that vast, forested plain.

We cut some of its tall spruce down and worked in saw-mills helping to saw them into lumber. We built log cabins, barns and houses. We helped in the construction of two of its northern most railroads. We hewed the fragrant scented spruce, tamarack and jack pine. We made log rafts and rafted supplies down

some of its big, wide and swiftly flowing rivers. Sometimes almost losing our lives in those churning, boulder strewn rapids of rivers, big rivers that seemed to be always in such an awful great hurry to empty their icy cold waters into the Arctic Sea.

In 1911, the eleventh and last child was born to that adventuresome couple up there on that far north frontier, and early in 1913 at a family conference it was decided that owing to the lack of facilities for even a meager education for the younger members of the family, that they sell what stuff they had gathered around them and move back again to those United States, and before 1914 was over, we were all back in the good old U.S.A.

Once more they lived again for a time in midwestern Grant County, Wisconsin, later moving to the pine forest region of north central Wisconsin, there never to migrate again. And before we had gotten fully re-established, we found ourselves in World War One. Three of us answered the nation's call. Two were overseas, one was with the 32'd Division, Wisconsin's own Red Arrow boys, those Red Arrow men who did so much to turn the Kaiser's victorious Teuton tide on those historic July days in 1918 at Chateau Thierry, Belleau Wood and Soissons, France, and who were in almost continuous front line combat until just a few days before the Armistice when he was gassed with the 107<sup>th</sup> at Montfaucon on that sad October day.

After World War I most of us got married, some tilled the soil, some worked in shops and mines. Then early in 1930, the first member, a daughter Louise of that adventuresome couple, answered the mortal call, followed a few years later by Father to that great land of beyond.

Then came that shameful attack on Pearl Harbor and we were in war again. In time, a 4<sup>th</sup> son of that adventuresome couple answered the call to arms, and seven of their grandsons, and I do not know just how many of their grand sons-in-law there were. They were in the Army, Navy, Marines, the Air Corps and Airborne Infantry. One helped crack and crumble Hitler's fortress of Europe when he dropped from a flack-filled sky on Europe's Invasion Day, into the most terrible carnival of Death the world has ever known and battled for 19 days and nights in Normandy's hedge rows of Hell until he was stopped by a high explosive shell from one of Rommel's tanks near a little town called La Haye du Puits in those apple orchards covered hills of historic Normandy. Another one on the other side of the globe, helped blaze and follow MacArthur's long, hard road back and was in on and helped capture Manila, to be later stopped by a Jap machine gun in the jungles of Luzon. Others swarmed ashore and fought the Japs on those far Pacific Islands. Some rode Uncle Sam's battle wagons helping to seek and destroy the hitherto undesecrated sea power of the Japanese. Places like Tarawa, Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, New Guinea, Borneo, The Callefer, the many islands of the Philippines, bloody, stinking, windy Okinawa. Many of these are all familiar names of the awful places to the boys of World War I!!

A little over two years ago the last one of that adventuresome couple went to her great reward and now they lie sleeping side by side, with a daughter in a quiet little cemetery in the upper Wisconsin River valley. The stately Pine trees, the Pines they both loved so well in life, stand silent guard, near their long, last resting place.

Now from their place with God on high, they are keenly watching the members of this family and our loved ones, as we go marching side by side down that long trail, that long road that leads to this family's and humanity's ultimate destiny.

I talked of yester-year and brought back fond memories to some of you of days long gone by. I've reminded some of you of long, dim trails and of hunger, hardships and cold. I told you of fierce battles that were not lost, but were not so easy won. I told you a story of a few of the highlights of the history, trials and triumphs of an immigrant couple and their family while living on this North American continent, and in these great United States for a period of considerably less than 60 years. And now in conclusion, we the members of this family can thank the Almighty God that those two adventurers pulled out of Europe some 50 odd years ago, so that we could become citizens of the United States, the greatest nation that God and man ever created this side of Heaven.

## Request for Person/Family Event Info for 2027 Hottenstein Historian's Report

Please send birth, adoption, marriage, death, or other family event which has occurred during the past three or previous years and has not been reported in a previous Historian's Report, or if there is a new or change of address, please send an email or note with this information by May 31<sup>st</sup> as indicated below:

For a birth, please include the full name, the parents' names, and the location of the birth. For a marriage, please include the names of the bride and groom with the location of the marriage. For a death, please indicate the descendant, the date of the death, the location of the death, and the place of interment. For all events, include family or parents' or family names. Available copies of birth or marriage announcements, obituaries, news articles, or event programs are welcomed.

To assist in updating, a Family Event Form to update is available on the Reunion website at <https://www.hottenstein.org>, click on Forms; click on Update Form. Simply complete it, as applicable.

Please also include your address and other contact information with the email, note, or form, to enable acknowledgement or further contact as needed.

Return this information, by May 31<sup>st</sup>, with any applicable notes, explanations, or news clippings to:

John L. Hottenstein, 17 South Avenue, Landisville, Pennsylvania 17538-1018

Telephone: 717-892-7209 Email: [hottensteinfamily@gmail.com](mailto:hottensteinfamily@gmail.com)

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Left: Jane Herlacher  
Middle: Larry Herlacher  
Right: Ursula "Hottenstein" Goetzberger

At a restaurant in Karlsruhe, Germany in August 2025 when Larry was on a business trip to Germany

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## Contributions Enable the PA Hottenstein Reunion

Contributions made to the Hottenstein Family Reunion assist efforts to continue our contacts with families and organizations, to establish initiatives maintaining family ties, and to understand more about our lineages and family history. The Reunion maintains about 450 family addresses. For some reason, more than 30 postcards were returned this year by the Postal Service because they were unable to be forwarded to a new address. If anyone is aware of someone who would like to receive the Hottenstein postcard announcing the reunion, please contact anyone on the PA Family Reunion Leadership Group with their correct mailing address.

Checks payable to the Hottenstein Family Reunion may be sent with the reservation form included with this newsletter, whether or not attending the reunion. All contributions are greatly appreciated.

