



## Back/Bach Genealogical Society

# Descendant News

Volume 5, No. 1

June 1998

## Membership Drive Kickoff

*...a challenge to honor our ancestors and to continue to learn from their rich heritage.*

The Society's current membership year ends June 30, 1998. If you are not a lifetime member, your renewal is due! Please submit the enclosed form right away to help keep our mailing expenses low. Also, please extend a personal invitation to others who might like to join; you may copy the form as needed, or call Mona Proctor at (606) 987-7600 to request copies. Benefits of membership include the annual directory, a subscription to the Descendant News, and an invitation to the reunion.

Our Back/Bach ancestors created a rich heritage. History tells us that they, as part of a greater German-American citizenry, made significant contributions to the development of both countries. Many descendants want to learn more about their heritage and to build on it. This call for membership is a challenge to honor our ancestors and to continue learning from and about their rich heritage. We hope you will join your many cousins and other kinfolk in responding to the challenge *today!*

*Mark Your Calendar!*

## 1998 Annual Reunion Plans

*Don't miss this fun-filled October weekend in the heart of the beautiful Appalachian mountains.*

The 1998 reunion of Back/Bach descendants is scheduled for Saturday, October 10, at the Pine Mountain Grill in Whitesburg, Ky. This new, family-style restaurant and meeting place is well-equipped to handle our reunion. The private banquet/meeting room is attractive, and the hospitality promises to be excellent.

There are two motels nearby where you may make your own reservations. There will NOT be blocks of rooms held at either motel, so call early!

**Super 8 Motel**  
Whitesburg KY 41858  
800-800-8000 or 606-633-8888

*(Super 8 will offer some discount to those who are attending the Back/Bach Genealogical Society meeting, so be sure to mention this when you call.)*

**Parkway Inn**  
Whitesburg KY 41858  
606-633-4441

As in the past, no formal activities are planned for Friday evening, October 9. For those who arrive on this day, the restaurant will be available for eating, visiting old friends and meeting "new cousins." The plan for Saturday is to visit some interesting spots nearby, followed by a buffet dinner and an entertaining program in the evening.

Detailed information about the reunion activities and registration forms will be mailed to you later. For now, be sure to mark your calendar, make your reservations, and invite other family members to attend this fun-filled October weekend in the heart of Kentucky's beautiful Appalachian mountains.

If you have questions or suggestions, contact any of the reunion planning committee members listed inside. We hope to see YOU there!

## INSIDE:

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Ancestral Family in  
Colonial America*

## **Regional Volunteers**

Two descendants responded to the call for regional volunteers which was published in the 11/97 Descendant News. Many thanks to these folks for their interest:

### **NEW ENGLAND AREA:**

**Karen Back**  
124 The Heights  
Gloucester MA 01930

### **HOUSTON, TEXAS AREA:**

**Patrick J. Back**  
12407 Sherman Hills Dr  
Houston TX 77099

## **Reunion Planning Committee**

**Stella Elam**  
HC 71 Box 282  
Blackey KY 41804  
606-633-9974

**Watson & Minerva Craft**  
23 Old Stephenson Mill Rd  
Walton KY 41094  
606-485-7757

**Ray & Beulah Back**  
Box 282  
Blackey KY 41804  
606-633-9974

**Reedus & Carrie Back**  
440 Forest Hills Dr  
Morehead KY 40351  
606-784-4730

## *First of a Series*

# **A Look at the Back/Bach Ancestral Family in Colonial America**

*by Reedus Back*

Research has given us little information about the characteristics of our Back/Bach ancestral family, as a unit, in early America. Available genealogy reports cannot complete this unanswered inquiry because genealogy deals with individuals, not the family as an entity. However, there are several good books available that describe the German-American people as a total group in early America.

Since our Back/Bach family was an integral part of the total group of German-Americans, this same literature can be useful in building a portrait of our ancestors. This notion is based on the logical assumption that, for the most part, the major characteristics of the larger group would be reflected in the smaller family unit. By examining the German-Americans' feelings about or reaction to selected defining factors or issues with which they dealt as a total group, it helps us, by inference, to understand our smaller ancestral family unit. Following are the defining factors or issues which I chose to examine: Religion, Literacy, Leadership, Community Responsibility, Occupations, and Slavery.

In consideration of available space in this newsletter, I will examine only the topic of Religion in this issue. Other topics will be covered in future issues.

By most accounts, the early German-Americans were a strongly religious people. Their religious faith seems to have been a binding ingredient that held them together in identifiable groups.

Once they left Germanna, the first community of German-Americans in Virginia, those who embraced the Reformed Faith established two other settlements: Germantown, on the Licking River, and another about ten miles away on the Rappahannock (The German Element in the United States, Albert Bernhardt Faust, p. 80). Those of the Lutheran faith established a community where in 1740 they built the famous Hebron Church and School.

Other factions of the early German-Americans chose the Baptist and other religions. Whatever their choice, they saw their faith as a powerful force by which to shape their daily lives. It influenced the performance of their daily activities, and the formation and maintenance of their relationships with others.

These early ancestors did not let frontier hardships get in the way of their religious worship. Often, the Reformed were financially unable to build a church facility or to hire a regular minister. This did not weaken their deeply felt desire for spiritual sustenance, so they looked to each other and to the occasional visit of a traveling minister or missionary to fulfill that need.

It is from a Moravian missionary that a description of the nature of the German Reform People was left for their descendants. A Brother Gottschalk referred to them as "*a very fine neighborly and friendly people who did not look so much upon religion, but rather that Christ be preached to them.*" (Faust, op.cit., p. 81).

— To Be Continued —

June 1998

## Genealogy Updates

*As in previous issues, we continue to publish with this newsletter significant corrections to the genealogical information contained in A Back/Bach Family History: The Story of a Major Branch of the Back/Back Family. We will continue to do so, and will include other updates and additions, as funds permit. Please store these pages with your book for easy reference.*

*To submit genealogy updates for publication in this newsletter, send to: Reedus Back, Back/Bach Genealogical Society, 440 Forest Hills Drive, Morehead KY 40351. Please identify sources or list documentation and type/number/format whenever possible.*

*If you did not receive earlier copies of the newsletter, you may purchase a complete set of corrections published to date for \$10.00. Make check payable to Back/Bach Genealogical Society and send to: Mona Proctor, 1303 South Main St, Paris KY 40361-1715.*

**Diane F. Hale** submitted this information:

**75F 2-1 Henry "Hitch" Back**, born 21 Oct 1843. He married, second, Polly Fugate. They lived in Breathitt Co, KY. Henry died 17 May 1917. Polly died 5 Mar 1900.

Children of Henry and Polly (Fugate) Back:

**75F 2-1-1 Eliza Mae Back**, b. 10 Jul 1896. She married Ambrose Francis, 5 Aug 1914. He was born 8 Aug 1890 and lived in Breathitt Co, KY. Eliza Mae died at the Bach Hospital in Jackson KY after giving birth to twin daughters in 1931. The death certificate

was signed by Dr. Wilgus Bach. Ambrose died 22 Oct 1933. The cause of his death was listed as a shotgun wound to the back. His 17-year-old son, Earl, was wounded in the same ambush; he died seven days later from a shot to the chest. Both death certificates were signed by Dr. Wilgus Bach. Eliza, Ambrose, and Earl are buried in the family cemetery near their home in Ned KY.

Children of Eliza Mae (Back) and Ambrose Francis:

- 75F 2-1-1-1 Earnest Francis**, b. 1915, d. 1924.
- 75F 2-1-1-2 Earl Francis**, b. 1916, d. 1933.
- 75F 2-1-1-3 GeorgeAnn Francis**, b. 1917, d. 198?.
- 75F 2-1-1-4 Pearl Francis**, b. and d. 1919.
- 75F 2-1-1-5 Taylor Francis**, b. and d. 1920.
- 75F 2-1-1-6 Burnam Francis**, b. 1922.
- 75F 2-1-1-7 Bertha Francis**, b. 1923.
- 75F 2-1-1-8 Frances Francis**, b. 1925.
- 75F 2-1-1-9 Edward Francis**, b. 1927.
- 75F 2-1-1-10 Filmore Francis**, b. 1929.
- 75F 2-1-1-11 Maude Francis**, b. 1931 (twin).
- 75F 2-1-1-12 Mable Francis**, b. 1931 (twin).

**75F 2-1-2 Bertha Back**, b. 9 Sep 1898 in Breathitt Co KY. She married Harry R. Bell in Norway, Maine. Bertha died in 1957. She and Harry are buried in the Norway Pinegrove Cemetery in Norway, Maine.

Bertha and Harry Bell did not have children of their own. After the death of Bertha's brother-in-law, Ambrose Francis, in 1933, she came to Kentucky and took the orphaned children (see above) back to Maine. She and Harry reared them as their own.

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**Old photograph to share...** *We recently heard from Anna Lutz about some old photographs from the 1800's owned by Ann Nunamaker Smith. Among them is one of Rolla Back, his wife, and son Harry, made in a studio in Lawrenceville IL. Anyone claiming this ancestor may wish to contact Anna Nunamaker Smith, PO Box 9766, Tulsa OK 74157-0766.*

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## Obituaries

**Wardie Craft** (75A 3-1-3-3-6), of Caney, Ky., died in February 1998. He was a charter member of the Society and continued to attend the annual reunions when his health permitted. He was a Baptist minister and when present offered the opening prayer at our meetings. He and his wife, Hazel, had no children of their own, but they were foster parents to 85 orphaned and needy children, five of whom they adopted. Hazel continues to live at Caney where she cares for their well-known Memory Hill Museum.

**James Morris Back** (73B 1-3-9-2-2), of Pasadena, Texas, died in April 1997. Morris was a charter member and a strong supporter of our Society. He and his wife, June, attended the first meeting (held in Morehead, Ky.) to discuss writing the book, A Back Family History, before the Society was founded.

**Margaret "Mag" Back**, wife of Troy Back (75F 10-4-6) preceded him in death, but it was not reported at the time. She and Troy were charter members of the Society. She supported his work as one of the authors of A Back Family History. At the time of her death, they lived in Viper, Ky.