

THE

GETMAN NEWS

March 2022

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Research Data: getmandata.org

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Reunion 2022

August 5, 6, 7

Johnstown / Stone Arabia, NY

Plans are under way for the Getman Association Reunion and Annual Meeting to be held the first weekend of August. Details will be announced as they become available.

Arrangements have been made for a block of rooms at the Johnstown Holiday Inn. Reservations must be made directly with the Inn. Call 518-762-4686 and identify yourself as a member of the Getman Reunion.

Also notify Wayne Getman so appropriate other arrangements can be made.

315-845-8014 or wayget@ntcnet.com.

Message from the president:

My dad had an old saying that the last Friday of each month was called "Calendar Day" which predicted the weather for the following month.

Where this came from I don't know, but probably from his father, grandfather, and other ancestors who were farmers.

So as I write this, Friday March 25 was calendar day, and here in southeastern Minnesota the weather does not look good for April. It was cold, extremely windy, and we had snow squalls off and on throughout the day. Supposedly, in April, the temperatures will be colder than normal, with precipitation. I have noted this and will see if it actually happens!

Many of our Getman ancestors were farmers, and I wonder if they followed the Farmer's Almanac or the Old Farmer's Almanac for their seasonal gardening/planting trends.

The Old Farmer's Almanac was founded in 1792 by Robert B Thomas. It is a reference book containing weather forecasts, planting charts for climate zones, astronomy, trends in fashion, food,

and home living tips. It compares solar patterns and past weather patterns to predict future trends for 18 US climate zones. According to Wikipedia, it is the oldest continuously published periodical in America. It follows in the heritage of Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanac.

The Farmer's Almanac was first printed in 1818 by David Young. It predicts forecasts for seven US climate zones, based on sunspot activity, tidal action, the position of the planet, and other factors to derive future trends.

As for me, I am not a gardener, (and I say I live in the Twilight Zone!) I only know that I am ready for spring, to put away my winter clothes and get out my spring/summer clothes!

My golf clubs are in my travel bag and I am on my way to warmer Arizona to golf with one of my Getman cousins!

On behalf of the Getman Board of Directors, I would like to wish you all a very Blessed Easter!

Marjorie Rosendahl, President

Getman Genealogy Book Available

A book covering the first six generations of Getmans, starting with Caspar is available. This book was published in 2013. Included in the book are the known descendants of all of the family lines, including daughters.

500 pages in length on 8 ½ x 11 paper this represents countless hours of research by our predecessors as well as input from many current researchers. Printing costs are high, so the print run is small.

The book will be available at a price of \$42.00 per copy plus shipping, of \$5.00 each.

Copies purchased or picked up at the reunion will not have a shipping charge.

Orders with payment should be sent to: Wayne Getman, 2672 Newport Road, Poland, NY, 13431. Checks should be made to Wayne Getman.

Getman News From The Past

The Getman Family

The history of this family is interwoven with the history of Montgomery county, from Revolutionary times till now and the family is spread over a goodly section of the western end of the county, in St. Johnsville, Canajoharie, Fort Plain, Fonda, Tribes Hill, Johnstown. N. Y. and other towns and villages. A genealogy of the family would show them to have entered in most every walk of life, farmers, merchants, lawyers and businessmen of all professions, thereby giving a good cross section of the history of the Mohawk valley.

(Saint Johnsville, New York, ENTERPRISE AND NEWS, Wednesday, February 19, 1936)

Magic Tree

Utica Observer-Dispatch, Utica, NY
Sunday, July 12, 1925

Ancient Oak Whose Magic Powers Were Believed to Include Healing, Still Stands in Herkimer

Indian Medicine Man Used to Put Locks of Hair of Ailing Papoose in Tree to Affect Their Cures.

Deep in the heart of an ancient oak standing in Herkimer are still imbedded locks of hair place there a century or more ago. Curly golden locks cut from the heads of children of early settlers, glossy raven locks clipped from Indian papooses, these bits of hair were placed in bored holes by old John Hilts, "the healer," who early settlers believed, possesses God-given power to cure whooping cough, rickets and other diseases of children.

To this day the tree, which still stands majestically at the intersection of Dayton place and Charles street, is known as the magic tree. The secret of its "healing" power was confided to venerable John Hilts by an Indian "medicine man," who along with the secret gave the pioneer settler a formula for anointment that was to be used jointly with the tree in effecting cures.

Magic Ointment

This ointment was applied to a felon with a sliver which was taken from the tree. The sliver was then buried in its trunk. Some say there was an incantation, part Indian, part Dutch, to be muttered at the time of applying the ointment and again during the

ceremony of burying the sliver or lock of hair in the tree.

Today little Herkimer children refer to the tree as the Witch Tree. Countless fables have been inspired by the old oak and its history and more than one native who has heard these stories looks upon an ancient tree superstitiously in passing by. It's 500 years old, at least, say tree surgeons who have inspected in and it has been giving shade and shelter from the hillside which was once the orchard of John Hilts and his father's before him.

Years before, a lookout and stockade stood on that hill, a defense for the settlement below. It is said that the hostile Indians burned all but two houses in an attack one night that was probably planned under that oak, for it was used as a council tree by the redskins.

Not "Witch Tree"

The appellation, "Witch Tree," which clings to the old oak today is a misnomer. Witches had trees for healing but their methods were entirely different from those of John Hilts and the Indian medicine man before him. Salt Pork was the medium they utilized, placing it in the tree. If the meat decayed, the patient would recover, so they maintained. If the meat did not decay, then the evil spirits would take the patients. That's why the old oak is not a Witch tree. It was called the "healing Tree" in John Hilts day.

Children who were sent to the Hilts farmhouse looked upon the healer with awe. They saw a very tall, thin, stooped man with

the type of fringed whiskers usually worn by the Dutch settlers of that section. Their eyes would grow wide at the thought of his magic.

Their eyes were wider still when they saw old Mrs. Hilts sitting on the doorsill of the lean-to of her house, her tame goose picking the pins out of her clothing. Most of those youngsters expected any moment to see her mount the goose and fly away down the valley.

Indian Thefts

But Mrs. John Hilts was not a witch. She was a practical housewife. Behind her in the lean-to, hams and bacon hung from the rafters and barrels of sauerkraut stood as preparation against the long winter. From brick ovens behind the house came the fragrance of baking. Indians sometimes caught the appetizing odor and more than one an entire baking disappeared from the ovens. The Hilts family, however never interfered with the Indians. If they were at home at the time of the pilfering they sat quietly and allowed the efforts of their hard work to disappear. It was well to be friendly with the Indians in those days.

That the Hilts family were indeed friends of the Indians was attested not only by the gift of the "magic formula" and the secret of the "healing" tree, but by a curious gift presented to John Hilts's father by the same medicine man. It was a cane made of twisted grapevine surmounted by a carved head of an Indian. This handiwork from the tepee is now a treasure of a modern medicine man, Dr. Cyrus Kay of Herkimer. Mrs. Kay, who, as Clara Hilts, the small granddaughter, sat on the healer's lap and heard Indian stories, says she felt no awe of the mystery of the tree. She took it as a matter of course.

Holes Visible

The holes bored in that tree by John Hilts and the Indian medicine man before him are still visible. They can be easily

distinguished in its trunk. From what can be gathered, the practice of mothers whose youngsters were not well was to take them to John Hilts, tell him just what was wrong with the children and ask him to heal them. If the disease was whooping cough, rickets, colic, measles or any one of the countless ailments to which children are subject, the old farmer would first clip for the head of the little patient a lock of hair. This was done with all solemnity. That accomplished, he would go to the magic tree accompanied by the mother and the ailing babe, bore the hole and carefully place the lock in the opening. The hole would then be plugged up and the mother would return to her home certain that the child's disease would be speedily cured. The healing process for felons and other swellings was somewhat similar in that the tree was also used. However the magic ointment was brought into use here, applied to the swelling with a sliver from the tree and the sliver placed in one of the holes with the same solemnity that marked the other treatment.

Kept Secret

The Indian who gave John Hilts the formula for the ointment exacted a promise of secrecy, that promise was kept. Though John Hilts's son often asked for the formula, he never received it and the mystery of the tree lies buried with old John Hilts, whose body lay for years in the Dutch Reformed Church yard. Later it was removed to Oak Hill connecting in death as in life, the association of John Hilts with the word "Oak."

One most remarkable thing about this tree as it stands today is its state of preservation. Oaks are natural targets for lightening. The hillside on which the "Healing Tree" stands is often swept by windstorms, but the tree stands as sturdy as it did 50 or 100 years ago. Some of its massive limbs are bare, its roots have been cut away to make the street level and its

very heart is exposed to the elements as well as its insect enemies. Like a witch of old, fires have been built at its foot, but it has not weakened, it has not revealed its secret.

Three Answers

Last year men standing under its shade looked it over and decided that it might have to be taken down. It appeared as if the old oak was breathing its last. This spring however as though it still possessed the magic power credited to it back in the pioneer days, it through out more leaves than it had for a decade. It seemed to answer the suggestion that it be torn down with startling negative emphasis. The oak is being carefully watched today [1925]. Any abuse or vandalism is not tolerated and it retains the respectful admiration and affection of scores of people.

However it needs more than veneration and protection. It seems to be appealing in the present generation for help. A modern tree surgeon could prolong its life and a strong fence about it could help preserve it. Herkimer people, it is said, are planning to do something for it along this line now.

This interesting article may refer to John George Hilts, 1744-1820 and Maria Myers (GFG - I) 1743-1830.

Fatally Tramped By Team

Ezra Saltsman Dies From Injuries

Received on Friday

St Johnsville News, NY

Wednesday, May 8, 1912

Ezra G. Saltsman, aged 62 years, died Sunday morning at his home near Ephratah, as the result of injuries received last Friday. While driving a team of colts that had been broken only a short time, a strap broke and after stopping the team he climbed over the front board and stood upon the wagon tongue. While trying to adjust the harness the colts swung apart causing Mr. Saltsman to lose his hold and fall down between the

animals. They became frightened and ran away, the wheels of the wagon passing over Mr. Saltsman's chest, breaking several ribs and injuring him internally. Medical assistance was at once called and it was found that his his condition was such that death was a question of but a few hours. Mr. Saltsman was well known and popular and was highly respected. Beside his widow he leaves one son, Carl; two daughters, Miss Dorothy Saltsman and Mrs. Sidney Gray, and one brother, Dr. Ward B. Saltsman of Buffalo. The funeral was held at the home at 1 p. m. today, Rev. Wright of Fort Plain officiating, and burial made at Fort Plain.

Ezra Gray Saltsman (GFG A 1014) 1859-1912 was a great-great grandson of Elizabeth Getman (GFG A 7) 1771-1857 and Johannes Saltsman 1767-1832. His first wife Cora C. Saltsman (GFG B 670 / A) 1865-1884, was a 2nd cousin and possibly died as a result of childbirth. His second wife and mother of his children was Mary Elizabeth Nellis 1859-1918.

Baseball Fans Please Note

Obituary: Dr. Ernest Leroy Pitcher

The Otsego Farmer, Cooperstown, NY

August 17, 1932

Many Cooperstown friends were shocked to learn of the death, briefly mentioned. in these columns yesterday, of Dr. Ernest Leroy Pitcher, fifty-nine years old, which occurred shortly after 9 o'clock Tuesday morning at the home of his daughter, Mrs. L. J. McKenna, No. 132, Chestnut street, where he had been ill for the past two weeks with pneumonia.

Dr. Pitcher was a native of Central Bridge, Schoharie county, where he was born September 18, 1873, the son of John Wesley and Roxie Livingston Pitcher. He was educated in the public schools of the locality, following which he attended the University; of Pennsylvania, from which he was graduated in 1893, with; the degree of D. D. S. Following his graduation he came to Cooperstown, and entered the dental

office of the late Dr. Datus E. Siver for the practice of his profession, Here he remained until the retirement of Dr. Siver, when he assumed his business which he continued with marked success until 1927. For the last five years Dr. Pitcher has maintained a dental office at No. 27 South Hawk street, Albany, where he was practicing up to the time of his last illness.

In 1900 Dr. Pitcher was united in marriage with Miss Florence Eugena Weller of Fort Plain, whose death occurred April 6, 1921. Four children were born to them, Mrs. L. J. McKenna and Dr. Leroy E. Pitcher of this village; Mrs. Frederick D. Call of Lewiston, Me.; and Ensign Neil W. Pitcher, at present stationed with the U; S. Navy on a receiving ship in the Charleston Navy Yard. The aged mother, Mrs. Roxie L. Pitcher, now eighty-four years old, whose home is here with her granddaughter, Mrs. McKenna, also survives, together with one brother, Harry C. Pitcher, of Port Crane, Broome county; and three grandchildren, Rona G., Barbara Jean and Donald Fay McKenna, all of this village.

Dr. Pitcher, at his death, was a member of Otsego Lodge, No. 138, F. & A. M., of this village, and a former Past-master of the Lodge. He also was affiliated with the State and National Dental Societies, and was a former officer of the Sixth District Dental Society, having at different times held the office of President and treasurer in that society. He served for some time on the Board of Village Trustees, and in connection with his affiliations with the First Presbyterian church of this village he had held the offices of trustee and also treasurer of the church, and had also given many years of service as a member of the church choir.

Probably one of the most outstanding civic activities to which he devoted much energetic effort and many months of his time was the raising of funds through

public subscription among former residents and baseball fans for the purchase from private ownership of the present Doubleday Field, thereby perpetuating its historic associations, and preserving it for all time as the original field upon which the game of baseball was first lined out and played, as well as a public playground for the youth of the village. the undertaking of raising the necessary fund for the purchase of the plot proved a long and at times a most irksome task, which however, was full accomplished by Dr. Pitcher, and to him it should now serve as a fitting memorial to one who gave his best endeavors for the fulfillment of something worth while to the community which he best loved.

In his passing many will experience a real personal loss of a friend, and the deepest sympathy of the community will go out to the members of his immediate family in their bereavement.

The funeral was held Thursday afternoon at 2 o'clock from the First Presbyterian church, of which he had been a member for nearly forty years The Rev. Dr. Edward C. Petrie, pastor, officiated, and the interment was made in Lake wood cemetery, with a Masonic committal service, conducted by the members of Otsego Lodge, No. 138 F. & A. M.

Dr. Ernest Leroy Pitcher, 1873-1932 married Florence Eugenia Weller (GFG – B) 1880-1921.

Send Us Your Stories

**Share your Getman histories
and traditions with
your cousins, near and far.**

wayget@ntcnet.com

Old Farmer's Advice:

Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.
Keep skunks and bankers at a distance.
Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.
A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.
Words that soak into your ears are whispered... not yelled.
Meanness don't just happen overnight.
Forgive your enemies; it messes up their heads.
Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you.
It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.
You cannot unsay a cruel word.
Every path has a few puddles.
When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.
The best sermons are lived, not preached.
Most of the stuff people worry about, ain't never gonna happen anyway.
Don't judge folks by their relatives.
Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
Live a good and honorable life, then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.
Don't interfere with something' that ain't bothering you none.
Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.
If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.
Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got.
The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every morning'.
Always drink upstream from the herd.
Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.
Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.
If you get to thinking' you're a person of some influence, try ordering' somebody else's dog around.
Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and enjoy the ride.
Don't pick a fight with an old man. If he is too old to fight, he'll just shoot you!