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Outreach Activities for the SAHS

by Rob Sherwood

On July 5, 2022, I visited Jan Sparkman at the Laurel County Historical Society, London, Kentucky. Ms. Sparkman is no longer the President of the of the Society, but she was the contact point that I had made. They have been in their building, a former County Health Department since 2007. They do not pay any rent nor utilities. It is a good space with lots of local history items, cemetery records, family history, etc. They have a small museum with images and artifacts about local history and have saved many primary records (marriage, land deeds, etc., from a neighboring county).

They had a copy of a book about the Swiss Colony that was written in the 1890s by one of the Swiss immigrants. It was about 40 pages with lists of all the immigrants as well—a great treasure!

Income for the society comes from memberships and books. They are about to begin a new website that will allow memberships and books to be purchased online. It went live in the summer of 2022. This will be the first time they will have more than a standard membership of \$15. I did not get what the new number will be.

We also visited three churches and cemeteries including St. John Swiss Reformed Church, Former Catholic Church (St. Jerome's?, by the East Bernstadt Methodist Church), and The Swiss Colony Church.

Each church had a cemetery with either a first- or second-generation Swiss Americans buried in them. Some had a third generation. In the Swiss Colony Church Cemetery, there were at least two gravestones that were in German.

The Swiss Colony Church has a building for the Swiss Descendants Club. This is a group that might be open to more discussion with the SAHS. What does she want—“That we know about them.”

*~ Rob Sherwood, Professor of History
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