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“Doings” of the Advent Historical Society

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Memorial Day 2021 at the Advent Church and Cemetery



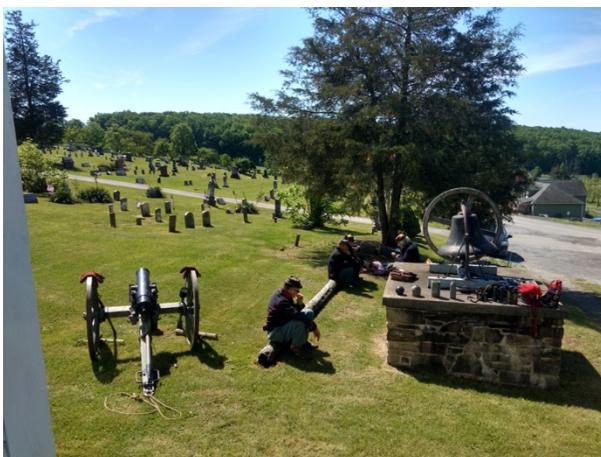
On May 31, 2021, the Memorial Day ceremony at the Advent Cemetery drew visitors, local residents, and members of the 4th Light Infantry to the hillside as a new flag was raised by the local Boy Scouts.

At the close of the program in the cemetery, the Advent Historical Society presented “Gone for a Soldier,” a special tribute to the 75 Civil War veterans who are buried in the Advent Cemetery. Wearing a uniform of the 148 Pennsylvania Volunteers, Jerry Hedges, a member of the History Committee, explained the causes of the Civil War, the recruitment of soldiers from Centre County, and the experiences of those who went into battle and saw “the elephant.”



Paul and Sam Confer presented musical selections of familiar hymns and songs from the Civil War period, and Paul explained the history and various alternate words that went with some of the tunes. “Aura Lee,” a ballad of the 19th century was clearly recognized as “Love Me Tender,” made famous by Elvis Presley.

Everyone was invited to visit the Advent Historical Society Museum and the Civil War Era Living History exhibits provided by board member Terren Smith, Randy Smith, and members of the 4th US Light Artillery.



It was a bright, sunny morning to explore the graveyard, learn more about the Civil War, and connect with the history of the Advent Church. We look forward to welcoming everyone to Memorial Day 2022.

For additional photos and information on future events, please visit us on Facebook or on our website.

Formation of AHS Music Committee



Dr. Jeffrey Watson

The Advent Church has a strong legacy of hymn tunes, musical talent, and the wonderful acoustics of the Advent Church building that was known for echoing down Moose Run Road. To preserve this musical heritage, the Board of Directors has established a Music Committee to develop musical programs designed to draw the larger community to the church site. Jeffrey Watson, a descendent of John and Emma Watson, has agreed to Chair this committee, and to plan a series of programs for the coming year. Dr. Watson is a member of the faculty at the Washington Conservatory of Music and previously was Executive Director of the Capitol Hill Art Workshop in Washington, D.C. Jeff's personal interest in the music of the Advent Church grew from his own experiences of sing-a-longs at hunting camp, the "parlor music" of the 19th century, and traditional American hymns. Whether your talent is as a singer or a musician, or if you are willing to help with an event, please let us know how you would like to be involved in supporting this new Music Committee. Jeff can be reached by mail at our P.O. Box address, or by email at AdventHistoricalSociety@gmail.com.

The Confer Families of Advent Cemetery, Part II

—Contributed by Justin K. Houser

Part I of this article was featured in the spring 2021 newsletter. For Mr. Houser's complete article on the Confer family history and to access prior issues of our newsletter, please visit our website: www.adventhistoricalsociety.org.

Part II: The Jonas Confer Branch

Jonas Confer (Aug. 3, 1792–1838 or 1839) came to Liberty Township with his family around 1800. He married first to Agnes Gunsallus (ca. 1792 – ca. 1827), daughter of Richard and Eustacia Ann (Lucas) Gunsallus, early settlers just to the east of Curtin and among the pioneers of the Curtin Methodist Church. They had five children—**Richard**, Eustacia Hannah, Elizabeth, James, and Austin. Anna Reed, Jonas's second wife, moved to the Pottersdale area after his death with their children, Isabella, William, John, and Elmira.

Richard Confer is the ancestor of those in the Advent Cemetery. Born in 1814, he married **Margaret Packer** (May 22, 1821 – Jan 14, 1914) on November 16, 1837. She was the daughter of Eli and Ann F. Packer and a descendant of the well-known Packer family from Howard that included Governor William F. Packer of Pennsylvania.

Jerome Armour Confer was born in what is now Liberty Township, Centre County, Pennsylvania, on August 31, 1840, the son of Richard and Margaret (Packer) Confer. The second of four brothers, he was only six years old when his father, a miller by trade, passed away in 1846 at the age of 32. In 1851, his widowed mother married Jonathan Haugh, himself a widower, and the blended family moved to Jefferson County, PA, in 1856.



Jerome A. and Margaret E. Confer
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Jerome returned to Centre County and on Feb. 20, 1860, married **Margaret Elizabeth Walker** (born May 5, 1844, in Beech Creek), daughter of James and Rachel (**Heaton**) Walker, another family with ties to the Advent Cemetery. For the first part of his married life, he engaged in lumbering, but in 1875 Jerome Confer gave up the woodsman's life and began renting a 184-acre farm in the Marsh Creek area near Yarnell from Adam Walker, and the next year he purchased this farm. The rest of Jerome and Margaret's lives were devoted to agricultural pursuits. According to an 1898 biographical sketch, "Mr. Confer is a man of great energy, of strong determination and resolute purpose, and carries forward to successful completion whatever he undertakes. All that he possesses he has secured through his own efforts, and his prosperity is certainly well merited." Ray Burd, Sr., would later remember his grandfather Confer's prize-winning corn from this farm. Ten of Jerome and Margaret Confer's 13 children are buried in the Advent Cemetery. (For a full list, see the complete article on our website.)

Jerome and Margaret were not members of the Advent Church but instead were members of the Church of Christ, also known as the Disciple Church, and most likely attended the Fairview Union Church, which included a Church of Christ congregation. Margaret Elizabeth (Walker) Confer passed away on February 15, 1917. Her funeral services were nevertheless held in the Advent Church. Jerome survived until September 10, 1929, dying at his daughter's home in Yarnell.

William Packer Confer was a younger brother of Jerome Armour Confer and was born in Liberty Township on December 21, 1844. At the age of 16, he enlisted in the Union Army at the outbreak of the Civil War. William served as a Private in Company L, 11th Pennsylvania Cavalry, from September 30, 1861, through August 13, 1865, practically the duration of the war. He witnessed the destruction of the ironclad Merrimac and was later captured by the Confederate Army during the war and spent almost a year in the horrific Andersonville Prison. He survived this ordeal and returned to Centre County after the war.

Soon thereafter, William married **Jane Walker**, daughter of Jacob C. and Margaret (Lucas) Walker. Jane was born August 13, 1847, in the vicinity of Runville, but died soon after her marriage, on December 16, 1869, at the age of 22 years. She was laid to rest in the Advent Cemetery. So far as is known, they had no children.

William then lived with his brother Jerome for a time. Later, he moved to Jefferson County, where he fathered a son, Samuel Packer Confer (1871–1965), who lived with his mother and her family in Jefferson County for the rest of his life. William returned to Centre County and on October 30, 1875, in Bellefonte, he married **Eva Margaret Williams**, (born on October 11, 1848), the daughter of James and Mary Elizabeth (Heaton) Williams of Milesburg. William worked variously as a laborer and liveryman, with several moves to Clearfield and Cameron counties as well as to Bradford and Pittsburgh. By 1920, however, they had returned to the Yarnell area for their retirement years.

William Packer Confer passed away on October 5, 1936, at his home in Yarnell, at the age of 91. Eva Margaret died on September 30, 1937, at the home of her daughter in Altoona. A Baptist by faith, her funeral services were held in the Advent Church and she was laid to rest beside her husband in the Advent Cemetery. Two of their children, daughters Emma (Confer) Jones Covert (1877–1947) and Louise A. (Confer) Reichard (1877–194?) are buried in the Advent Cemetery.



William P. and Eva M. Confer
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