

Apostles message for Friday, March 27, 2020.

Hello Friends!

My mind has been in the early 1800's this week. As many of you know, Bert and I are volunteers and docents at the Renfrew Park and Museum. One of the Renfrew programs we support is the Traveling Trunk Program. Simply put, we have a trunk full of various artifacts from the Renfrew Museum, dress in early 1800's attire and we take a small piece of Renfrew's Museum to folks who can't come to Renfrew themselves. Traditional audiences are the residents at Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities or attendees at Senior Centers or Adult Day Care facilities, but we have also presented at AARP meetings and similar type groups. It is a fun time to connect with new people, share the history of Renfrew, tell Daniel Royer's story and have a guessing game of the identity and uses of artifacts from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sharing a time of fellowship, engaging the mind and learning new information is rewarding for everyone. We have new artifacts in our Trunk for 2020, and this week we had three (3) programs scheduled.

Even though this week's programs have been postponed, I found myself reflecting on what it would have been like for Daniel Royer and his family to live during a pandemic, and how his faith in God would have sustained them. For anyone not familiar with Daniel Royer, Daniel was a German American farmer, tanner and businessman who settled 150 acres between 1788 – 1794 on what is today the grounds of Renfrew Museum and Park, Waynesboro PA. Daniel's great-grandfather, Sebastian Royer, migrated from Germany in 1718 with his wife and children to the United States for fear of religious persecution. Sebastian settled in what is now the Ephrata, Pennsylvania area. Daniel's father, Samuel Royer left the Ephrata area and settled in what is now Five Forks Pennsylvania.

With his family, Daniel built a Pennsylvania German farmstead on the Renfrew land and farmed with his family from the late 1700's until 1838, the year of his death. Daniel and his wife, Catherine, had 10 children. They originally lived in a 24 ft x 24 ft log cabin on the property. They soon outgrew the log cabin, and Daniel built the beautiful stone house (now the Renfrew Museum House we see when from Route 16 when we drive by the Renfrew Park Grounds) in 1812 for his family. A farmstead is the "whole" of the pastures, livestock, woodlands, sheds, buildings, houses, that made the environment of the family businesses and farm. Within the farmstead there was a tannery, a grist mill and a limestone kiln. The males of the family worked the farm and businesses while the women prepared the meals, stored the food, made and mended clothing, and tended the garden. Out of necessity everyone in the household worked from a very young age, and the farmstead work was relentless. It gave an entirely different meaning to the phrase "work from home," and it wouldn't have stopped in a pandemic. Times were much different than we know today – they did not have running water or electricity in their home. Water was brought from the stream of nearby pump, and the home was heated by fireplaces. A kitchen was added onto the house in 1815 allowing food to be cooked or baked in a large open hearth in the kitchen. They used ingenuity and extra

effort to overcome problems and life events, even creating tools and devices to assist them in work and everyday life. Medical supplies were crude by today's standards, and medicine consisted of herbs and other plants grown in their gardens. Many who fell ill simply could not be saved. Look how far we have come today in all facets of life.

The Royers were members of the German Anabaptist sect, which later grew into The Church of the Brethren, and were very devout in their faith. Despite long days of work, very little time for play and fatigued bodies, the family gathered around the hearth every evening for scripture reading, devotions and prayer. A heartfelt blessing was given for each meal prepared. Their belief and devotion to God not only comforted them in times of need but gave them focus and appreciation in times of joy.

Although there are many different religions throughout the world, all have a common thread – that of “belief” in someone or something that gives meaning to our lives. Our belief in God is wonderful and a powerful source of inspiration. As we individually and collectively cope with today's health crisis, the interruptions to our plans, the uncertainty we face in terms of job stability and financial health this we can rely on: our belief in God and his love for us. This belief will sustain us and allow us to become even stronger as we face adversity. As written in Mathew 7:24, “Listening to God, and believing him, is like building your house on a rock, not sand.” Remembering to center ourselves daily by setting aside some time to connect with God and realize that he has us in his hands is a wonderful reassurance in times of distress and times of happiness.

I hope you found my brief history lesson above interesting, a bit thought provoking about life in the 1800's, and at least informative. We are blessed to have such a beautiful historical treasure in our local community.

I close my communication with a Prayer by Catherine Wilson:

*Loving God, in the height of this day we pause to rest in you. Quiet our minds that they may be still, fill our hearts that we may abide in your love and trust. Illumine and guide Christ as a light shield over me. Amen.*

Blessings to all of you.

Laurie