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Mershon News Bulletin

THE ASSOCIATION OF THE DESCENDANTS OF HENRY MERSHON
ORGANIZED AT TRENTON, NEW JERSEY, SEPTEMBER 8th, 1923

Mershon Name

MARCHAND (French) - MARCHANT (Middle-English) - MERCHANT (Modern-English) - MARSCHAN (Dutch) - Mershon (Phonetic)

May 25, 2021

2021 Mershon Annual Meeting & Reunion will be a Virtual Meeting

by Clare Mershon, Portland, OR

Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, our 2021 Mershon Association Annual Meeting & Reunion will be an online virtual meeting for the second straight year. We will meet online on Saturday, July 31st, at 4:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time (1:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time). This will be an abbreviated version of our normal full-day meeting in New Jersey. Our 2021 meeting is expected to last one hour. We will have a short business meeting followed by a Mershon family history program.

We thank Melissa Mershon of Louisville, KY, for volunteering to be the host of our virtual meeting.

While we will miss being together in person, this online virtual meeting will be a chance for family members who have never attended a Mershon annual meeting to join us from their homes.

As we get close to our July 31st virtual meeting date, we will email meeting registration details to our Mershon News Bulletin email address list. For family members who receive our printed bulletins by U.S. Mail, but also have email access, please send your email address to Gayle Murphy at gammurphy@comcast.net so you can participate in our 2021 meeting.

Announcing a Podcast Contest for Young Mershon Descendants

by Joan Swearer, Rahway, NJ; David Beun, Mt. Laurel, NJ and Clare Mershon, Portland, OR

Are you a Mershon descendant between the ages of 11 to 19? If so, you are eligible to enter a family history podcast* contest with cash prizes! The contest begins now and continues until September 30, 2021.

The history of our Mershon family's role in the American story is woven into the fabric from 1685 to present. Our ancestors played a part in almost every profession and many in significant ways. Do you know a story about a Mershon descendant worth sharing with the rest of our family? It could be current or historic, but it must be factual. Submissions must be supported by records from books, magazines, newspapers, awards or official documents (government, military, school, church, etc.).

If you have an interesting story to tell about a Mershon descendant and want to win up to \$500., this is your chance. First prize is \$500, Second prize is \$300, Third prize is \$200. Judges will be three members of our Mershon Executive Board.

The Mershon Association reserves the right to post selected podcasts submitted for this contest on our mershonfamilyassoc.org website.

A suggestion to build a podcast is to use Anchor at this link - <https://anchor.fm/?gclid=aw.ds>

Rules:

- Your podcast must be less than 10 minutes in length.
- Your podcast must be original work for this contest. You are encouraged to ask your parents about family history and perform research on your own.
- You may create your podcast yourself or with a group. You can tell the story yourself, or you can interview someone else to tell the story. The story could be told as a one-act play.
- Create a podcast that includes a complete listening experience with a clear beginning, middle and ending.
- Your podcast must contain no copyrighted material, including copyrighted music.
- Use appropriate language. Assume your listeners are your parents. No explicit language, please.

How to Submit: Podcasts should be in mp3 format and submitted on a flash drive or a CD. Submittals must be postmarked not later than September 30, 2021. If your podcast is about a living person, please include written permission from that person with your submittal. Mail submittals to: Mershon Podcast Contest, c/o Joan Swearer, 60 Maple Avenue, Rahway, NJ 07065.

* Podcast: a downloadable audio file.

Report on the 2020 Mershon Annual Meeting & Reunion

by Clare & Sharon Mershon, Portland, OR

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our 2020 Mershon Annual Meeting and Reunion was a video conference. We met online on Saturday, July 25th at 4:00 PM EDT (1:00 PM PDT). Melissa Mershon of Louisville, Kentucky, hosted our meeting on Zoom.

Our meeting began with three short polling questions to learn something about our meeting participants:

Q. 1 - Have you ever attended a Mershon Association Annual Meeting? About 60% of the participants had not attended a meeting in the past.

Q. 2 – Tell us where you live? We had over 130 Mershon descendants register in advance for our meeting from 32 states, British Columbia and England. We later learned a descendant was watching from Kiev, Ukraine.

Q. 3 – Which of Henry Mershon II's ten children are you descended from? The majority of the participants were Henry III and Andrew³ descendants, but all of Henry II's children were represented.

Participants answered the above questions online by checking appropriate boxes.

President Clare Mershon of Portland, OR, gave welcoming remarks.

Treasurer Joan Swearer of Rahway, NJ, reported that the Association's checking account has a balance of \$1,674.25. We also have a Certificate of Deposit for \$10,289.08. We do not charge dues for our Association and rely mostly on donations from Mershon descendants.

Genealogist Pam Caffrey of Ramsey, NJ, encouraged descendants to contact her if they are unsure where they are in our Mershon family tree. Family updates are welcome. Pam's email is pcaffrey24@outlook.com. Our genealogy database has over 35,000 individual records of Mershon descendants and spouses going back to 1685.

Vice-President Dave Beun of Mt. Laurel, NJ, reported on resetting the Henry Mershon II grave marker boulder that fell over in August 2019. Dave was the first family member to see the toppled four ton boulder during a family outing to Princeton that included visiting the nearby Lawrenceville Upper Cemetery. We previously believed that the boulder was embedded in the underlying concrete footing. Actually, the flat base of the boulder was sitting on top of the concrete footing with cement grout around the boulder base. The footing apparently settled unevenly over the years, causing the boulder to lean until it eventually fell over.

The Lawrenceville Cemetery Association paid a local contractor, Stuphen Memorials, to have the boulder reset on a new concrete footing. Our Mershon Association paid an additional \$1,900. for a steel reinforced concrete ring to be poured around the boulder base.

When the old concrete footing was removed, it exposed the original Henry Mershon II headstone that was partially encased in the bottom of the concrete footing. Dave was able to carefully chip away the old concrete to remove the original headstone in two pieces. Dave took the two headstone pieces home for cleaning. For the present, Dave has the headstone pieces at his home for safekeeping. Thank you to Dave and also Jeff Mershon of Monroe Township, NJ, for making multiple trips to the cemetery to monitor the work progress.



The fallen grave marker boulder. Note the broken grout in the foreground that was around the base of the boulder.

Photo by Dave Beun

(continued on page 4)

Merston Family Store – Dave Beun reported that our Merston polo shirts are now restocked and available in all sizes. Thank you Dave for ordering more stock!

Joan Swearer handles distribution of the Merston genealogy books by Grace Lucile Olmstead Merston. Also, our Merston coat of arms, 9.5” x 12.5”, printed in color on heavyweight glossy paper, is available from Joan.

The Andrew Merston Tavern Album, Video Tour of the Andrew Merston Tavern DVD and Merston Family History in New Jersey DVD can be ordered from Clare Merston.

For more information and how to order these items, visit our Merston website at this link - <http://merstonfamilyassoc.org/merston-store/> This information is also contained in our May 2020 Merston News Bulletin, page 10.

Merston Coat-of-Arms – Clare Merston explained the symbols on our family coat-of-arms. The red shield indicates defense. The cross on the shield is a Christian crusader symbol. The gold disks at each end of the cross symbolize gold coins, related to the family being merchants. The symbol in each quadrant of the cross may be a stylized fleur-de-lis, a three-petal flower that is a armorial symbol of the French royalty, or may be clover, indicating agriculture. The silver helmet above the shield indicates a “lesser noble”, not part of the French royal family.



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Added note: Originally, the coat-of-arms was an emblem on a coat worn over a full-length suit of armor. The emblem enabled warriors to distinguish friend from foe.

The Le Marchand coat-of-arms was researched many years ago by a person at the University of Pennsylvania using the accepted heraldry authority entitled Planches de L'armorie, General de J.B. Rielstap, IV, Paris, 1912.

Melissa Merston presented two more polling questions to our participants:

Q. 1 – Are you interested in having another Merston video conference? 95% voted yes.

Q. 2 – What subjects would you like covered in another meeting? This was a multiple choice question: More history (one verbal response), Famous Merston's (82%), Civil War Merston's (71%), Merston's in Princeton (40%), Merston's at Ohio State University (30%), Andrew Merston Tavern (55%), Family Show & Tell (55%).

Closing - Clare Merston reported on recent Association activities. We ordinarily elect new officers each year at our annual meeting. However, it seemed impractical to do that in our video conference this year. We appreciate that all our Association officers have agreed to extend their terms of office into 2021. New officers will be elected at our next in-person meeting.

Good news! Bill O'Neal of Ewing, NJ, is developing a new Merston Association website. You can check it out at merstonfamilyassoc.org

Upcoming: Our Executive Board has voted to sponsor a contest with cash prizes for youth to make podcasts about Merston family history. Guidelines will be developed in the coming year. The objective is to get young Merston descendants interested in our family history (see the contest announcement on page 2).

Clare thanked Melissa Merston for hosting our video conference. She was a great host!

Melissa reported a maximum of 98 family units participated in our conference. This is less than the 130 that were registered in advance, but many more than have attended our recent annual meetings in New Jersey.

Our meeting was about one hour in length. Starting with the end of the Treasurer Report, you can listen to a video recording of our meeting at the following link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2tRO7Fe9Cg>

Legacies of Washington, printed by Sherman, Mershon & Thomas

by Clare Mershon, Portland, OR

Legacies of Washington, an 1800 book printed in Trenton, NJ, by Sherman, Mershon & Thomas, is currently listed for sale on Ebay. The 283 page book is leather bound. The asking price is \$394.99.

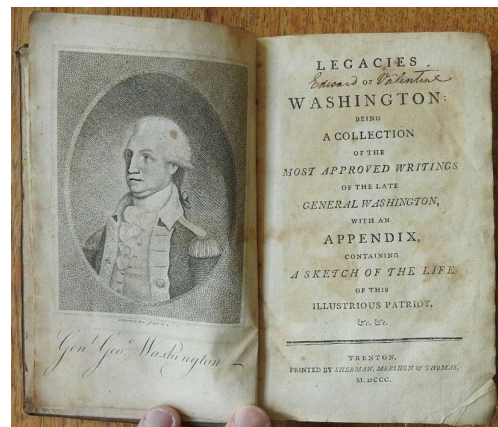
An internet search for publisher information reveals the printers as George Sherman, John⁵ Mershon and Isaiah Thomas. John⁵ Mershon (1775-1806) was the son of Andrew⁴ Mershon and grandson of Peter³ Mershon.

In other printing work, Sherman, Mershon & Thomas started a weekly newspaper titled the *New Jersey State Gazette* in 1799. In June 1800, they merged with another paper to become *The Federalist and New Jersey Gazette*. Isaiah Thomas apparently withdrew from the business in 1801. The paper was renamed the *Trenton Federalist* in 1802. Printing by partners Sherman and Mershon continued until December 1806 when John⁵ Mershon died at age 31 of a “cancerous affection.” The *Trenton Federalist* was continued by George Sherman until 1829.

When John⁵ Mershon died he left a young widow, Theodosia, and two young children, Mary Matilda⁶, age 3, and Daniel⁶, age 11 months. Theodosia likely needed and received support from other family members after the untimely death of her husband.

Mary Matilda⁶ Mershon married Thomas Booth of Philadelphia in 1833. As a sign of respect for her father’s former business partner, they named their son George Sherman Booth.

Daniel⁶ Mershon grew up to become the owner of the Mershon Patent Shaking Grate Works in Philadelphia. Two of Daniel’s descendants, brothers David¹⁰ and Dan¹⁰ Mershon gave an entertaining presentation on that innovative business at our 2013 Mershon Annual Meeting. You can read about this long-lived business in the November 2013 Mershon News Bulletin, pages 6 & 7, at this link - <https://secureservercdn.net/50.62.88.87/85j.ae4.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Nov.-2013-Mershon-News-Bulletin.pdf> Dan¹⁰ Mershon currently serves on our Mershon Association Executive Board.



Merhson Genealogy

Our Merhson Association Genealogist is Pam Caffrey, 232 Momar Drive, Ramsey, NJ 07446; Email: pcaffrey24@outlook.com; Cell Phone: (201) 739-2308. We have over 35,000 individual records in our Merhson genealogy database dating back to 1685. Contact Pam if you have updates to share or want to know what is in our genealogy database for your Merhson family line. For submitting updates, please include names, birth dates, marriage dates, death dates and the places these events happened to the best of your knowledge.

The Merhson Association Genealogy Group set up by Pam on Facebook now has 240 members. Check it out and please consider joining. In order to keep this group focused on Merhson Genealogy, there are a few questions that you’ll be asked to answer before being added to the group.

For privacy reasons, our Genealogist does not release information on living persons outside your immediate family (grandparents, parents, siblings, children, spouses) without their written consent, unless the subject persons would be over 110 years old. This is the guideline followed by the ancestry.com genealogy website.

In Memoriam

We are sad to report that our friend, **Elmer M. Smith**, age 90, co-owner of the former Andrew Mershon Tavern, passed away one year ago on May 14, 2020 from the COVID-19 virus. Elmer's wife Anne also contracted the virus, but thankfully recovered. One of Elmer's grandsons and his family are now residing in the former colonial tavern.

Elmer and Anne purchased the former Andrew Mershon Tavern house with 91 acres of farmland in 1976. The house was in a very rundown condition. Elmer and Anne with their three sons spent several years restoring the house to be their home while living in an adjacent house trailer.

We are grateful to Elmer and Anne for their gracious hospitality in opening their home to many tours over the years during our New Jersey reunions. Elmer was always an enthusiastic host as he described how their home was restored to its beautiful condition. Elmer and sons did most of the work themselves except for building new brick chimneys.

Elmer was negotiating to sell 70 undeveloped acres of the farm to the State of New Jersey to expand the Washington Crossing State Park. However, after Elmer's death the family decided not to sell the property when they learned the property would be developed for soccer fields. The property will remain in farm use for the foreseeable future.

You can read Elmer's obituary at this link - <https://obits.nj.com/obituaries/trenton/obituary.aspx?n=elmer-m-smith&pid=196305191&fhid=27064>



Elmer Smith (center) converses with Mershon descendants in the main room of the former Andrew Mershon Tavern. Dan Smith, Elmer's son, emailed "Elmer was always proud as a peacock to show off his/your house to your family."

2011 photo by Susan Mershon Arnold

Alice Elizabeth "Lallie" (Dozier) Jones Benkoski, age 94, formerly of Albany, GA, passed away on January 20, 2021 in nearby Sylvester, GA. She had lived in a care center since suffering a stroke in July 2017.

Lallie was an enthusiastic participant in our Mershon Southern Chapter and was a serious genealogist. She participated in seven different family associations. While serving in a volunteer position as a greeter at the YMCA Camp of the Rockies near Estes Park, Colorado, Lallie helped arrange the special Mershon Reunion in the late 1980s at that scenic location adjacent to Rocky Mountain National Park.

Lallie traced her Mershon ancestry through Andrew³, Lieut. Henry⁴, and Enos⁵ who moved from New Jersey to Georgia in the late 1700s.

We will miss Lallie's enthusiasm and good sense of humor. You can read Lallie's obituary at this link - <https://www.mathewsfuneralhome.com/obituary/Lallie-Benkoski>



Thank You! Thank You!

We thank **Vicki Knauff** of Hillsboro, OH, for sponsoring a Christmas wreath that was placed in December 2020 on the Lawrenceville, NJ, grave of our common ancestor, Henry Mershon II.

Listed below with our appreciation are our contributors during 2020. If any contributions were not recorded, we apologize and ask you to notify Treasurer Joan Swearer, 60 Maple Avenue, Rahway, NJ 07065, or by email at jtswearer@gmail.com.

David & Joanna Beun, Mt. Laurel, NJ
Ben Mershon Phillips, Basking Ridge, NJ
John Kaster, Debary, FL
Susan Filar, Palatine, IL
Vicki Knauff, Hillsboro, OH
Arlene M. Hutnik, Jonesport, ME
Diane Buroff, Lavina, MT
Beverly Smith, Bedford, TX
Melissa Mershon, Louisville, KY

George M. Bullock, Sun City, AZ
Willard E. Tayler, Reno, NV
Michael & Gayle Murphy, Simsbury, CT
Audrey Martini, Stockbridge, MI
Sally Garrison Thomas, Venice, FL
Vernon Thomson, Jr., Vermont, IL
Karen J. Zickert, Pittsville, WI
Clare & Sharon Mershon, Portland, OR

Your donations are our principal source of income. Thank you!

For Your Information

- 1. Contributions Needed.** We are a non-profit association without dues. We appreciate your donations to help pay the costs of printing and mailing our Mershon News Bulletin, preserving our family records, hosting our annual meetings and for outside program presenters. Please make checks to the “Mershon Association” and mail to our Treasurer: Joan Swearer, 60 Maple Avenue, Rahway, NJ 07065. Thank you!
- 2. Please send changes to your mail or email address to Gayle Murphy, 464 Firetown Road, Simsbury, CT 06070, or email Gayle at gammurphy@gmail.com.** There are currently 998 mail and email addresses on our mailing list. We need your help to avoid losing contact with you when your address changes!
- 3. If you can receive our Mershon News Bulletin by email, please send your email address to Gayle Murphy at gammurphy@gmail.com.** The advantages are you will receive our bulletin with color photographs and our Association saves the cost of printing and postage. Our May 2020 bulletin cost \$464.40 to print and mail approximately 300 copies at a cost of \$1.55 each.
- 4. Visit our Mershon Association website at mershonfamilyassoc.org**

Help ! We need more articles for our Mershon News Bulletin. Do you have an interesting story about a Mershon descendant or a family related artifact? If so, please write it up to share with our extended family. If available, photographs add a lot to a story. Email your contributions to Clare Mershon at ecmershon@aol.com, or mail to the return address on this bulletin.



Le Marchand

E. Clare Mershon
3809 NE 136th Place
Portland, OR 97230-2720

Return Service Requested

2021 Mershon Family Events Calendar

July 31, 2021 (Saturday afternoon) - Mershon Association Annual Meeting and Reunion.

Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, this will be an online virtual meeting beginning at 4:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time (1:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time). See the meeting announcement on page 1.

August 15, 2021 (Sunday afternoon) - Pacific Northwest Mershon Family Potluck Picnic.

12:00 noon to 4:00 PM at the Glenn Otto Community Park, 1106 E. Historic Columbia River Highway, Troutdale, OR 97060. This event is subject to change depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in August. For information, contact Clare Mershon at ecmershon@aol.com or by phone at (503) 679-7990.