

2006 JFA and JAY FAMILY REUNION

August 17-August 20, 2006

Hagerstown, Maryland



**Near Vestal's Bloomery and Eavitt's Run
on the banks of the Shenandoah River**

The Jay Family Association's reunion started on Thursday evening, August 17th at the Hampton Inn in Hagerstown, Maryland with the gathering of cousins from all over the US.

As some of the cousins met in the lobby, one noted "Isn't it interesting that we are meeting and there is a large truck outside with Jay Trucking on it? What a coincidence!" As another cousin ran out to make a picture, the group found it wasn't a coincidence at all, but newly found cousins, Joe and Candy Jay, mixing business and pleasure. Joe and Candy introduced brother Fred and his wife Cheryl, who flew from Texas to meet us there. What a great start for a fun weekend.

On Thursday evening, there was a gathering in the lobby where folks introduced themselves and Vince King gave information as to how those in attendance were related and who their ancestors were. Those who attended the reunion were:

Vince King, TX; Karon & Glen Lemming, TX; Ann Jay, TX; Lee & Gail Hedden, FL; Joe & Sue Bailey, GA; Bud Jay, MD; Amanda Campbell, TX; John & Mary Hancock, TX; John & Joanna Jay, GA; Demaris Vinson, GA; Richard & Nanette Chuck, CA.

First-time attendees were Sharon Jay, CA; Jim & Cyndy Jay, MD; Judy Schneider, OH; Joe & Candy Jay, TX; Fred & Cheryl Jay, TX; John & Mary Campbell and daughters Mary & Emma, MD; and Jasmin Parsons, granddaughter of Richard & Nanette Chuck, CA.

Friday morning came and the group broke up into car pools to begin the caravan to Eavitt's Run. First stop was in the Bloomery Neighborhood along the Shenandoah River where William Vestal once lived and ran an iron bloomery. Vestal's iron bloomery was said to have been the first one erected east of the Blue Ridge Mountains in West Virginia. Information was shared about Vestal's time in this area. This stop provided the group's first photo opportunity.

The group then drove about a quarter mile inland to the falls on Eavitt's run and walked William Jay's 1734 rolling grant and discussed what crops might have been grown there almost 200 years ago. It was on this property that William Jay likely met Elizabeth Vestal, daughter of William Vestal.

By that time, the group was thinking of lunch, so on to Harper's Ferry for lunch and an afternoon of browsing shops and exploring one of our country's Civil War landmarks. The group then rejoined and headed back to Hagerstown. Some of the group visited local antique shops while others chose to rest before dinner. After dinner, the group once again came together for more visiting, information sharing and fellowship.

On the morning of Saturday, August 19th, the group prepared to car pool to Bedford County PA to attend the Thomas Jay Family's Reunion. What a day! We journeyed over the hill and through the dale and past the Mason Dixon line to a lovely spot where the family gathers. The reunion is held on the grounds of the old Pine Grove church where no facilities such as electricity and running water exist. However, I did note that they had one of the most elegant out-houses I have ever visited!

The Jay Family has erected a very nice pavilion where approximately 150 cousins meet with mountains of food and have a day that's well planned. Before lunch is general visiting, then the delicious homemade food is

shared, followed by games for the adults and children, and around 2:00 PM, a gathering in the church for singing, show and tell, a family business meeting, recognition of the youngest in attendance, oldest, most recently married, longest married and attendee from farthest away (which our Sharon Jay won!). The final item on the agenda was a memorial service for all their family members who passed away during the past year. Following the service, there were more planned activities, but it was time for us to leave to head back to Hagerstown. This reunion was held for the 81st time in 2006. We appreciate the hospitality and welcome we received. For those who have attended other Jay Family Association Reunions, you may remember Alan Shanholtz---this is his direct Jay Family line.

Back in Hagerstown, some folks once again hit the antique shops while others rested. We gathered again at 8:00 PM for the official Jay Business meeting followed by more visiting and sharing time.

Sunday morning meant time for some of us to begin the journey home. Those who had time gathered for a tour of Antietam National Battlefield.

What a moving visit this was as we watched a film about the place where the bloodiest one-day battle of the Civil War was held. Two of our forbears, James L. Lusk and William Rutherford Lusk, sons of Elizabeth Jay Lusk were killed and buried at Antietam. It's possible other Jays are buried there as well. The Reunion ended with Antietam visitors heading out for home.

This Reunion was unique for our visitation of sites of our ancestor, William Jay and his father-in-law, William Vestal; the camaraderie we shared with the Thomas Jay Family's Reunion; and the somber ending at Antietam where the true struggles of our ancestors was felt. But, as usual, the Reunion provided an opportunity for us to meet and share with Jays from all over the United States. Everyone left looking forward to the next Jay Family Association Reunion.

Gail M. Hedden

Secretary 2004-2006

Jay Family Association