

101-Year-Old Looks To The Turn Of The Century

GAIL STROCK

Mifflin Co. Correspondent
LEWISTOWN, (Mifflin Co.)

— Like most of us, Walter Stumpff's goal is to see this century turn into a new millenium. That's not so unusual, except that, at 101, Walter saw the turn of the last century.

Walter was born in 1897 when President William McKinley took office. The following year, the Spanish-American War broke out. Walter remembers seeing Hayley's Comet in 1910 as a 13-year-old. He remembers the Titanic tragedy two years later.

Originally from Lewistown, Walter now lives with his daughter, Nancy, and her husband, Wallace Rummel, in Florida. Tenant farmers Raymond and Janet Witmer live at the farm year round. Each summer, Walter, Wallace, Nancy return to the Stumpff farm on Middle Road near Lewistown to make repairs and to reminisce.

"My mother was a southern belle," Nancy begins "She was raised with maids in the home. My father waited eight years to marry her. He waited until he paid off the farm debt. A lot of her relatives barely forgave her for marrying a Yankee. It was a hard life. He worked the farm and worked full time at the post office too."

The Stumpffs sold milk, eggs, chickens, and fruit from their farm. The basement of the farmhouse still houses the 6,000-egg electric hatchery. Walter's father bought the farm in 1920, dashing Walter's dream of becoming a veterinarian. Walter served in World War I, but never saw battle.

"The doctor processing the men to go overseas told my father that he (Walter) had some fatal disease and that he wouldn't live long! I think the doctor died long before Dad!" Nancy said.

During the war, Walter served at Camp Lee in Richmond as a Sergeant First Class in charge of the motor pool. Following church one Sunday, a man invited several soldiers to his home for dinner. There, Walter met Jessie, his future wife. Walter courted Jessie for eight years before bringing his bride to Pennsylvania. He started working for the post office in 1922, delivering mail by horse and buggy. Daughter Nancy and son



Walter Stumpff lives with his daughter and husband, Wallace and Nancy Rummel, but he delights in visiting his Mifflin County farm to reminisce with tenant farmers.

Walter, Jr., were born, and Walter advanced to delivering mail by motorcycle with side car.

"Tell about the time you delivered the artificial leg," Wallace prompts.

"I delivered from Lewistown to McVeytown to Ryde and retraced to Hawstone then back to the post office—67 miles. After World War II, a man up at Ryde needed the artificial leg. It came in the mail.

"I used to tease these girls during the war too. I pretended there wasn't a letter for them (from their boyfriend) and start to drive away. They'd chase me."

Walter delivered mail for 35 years. People often placed money for mail orders, grocery lists and baked goods in their mailboxes for Walter. At the end of the day, Walter always returned home to the farm to work. Nancy remembers working beside her father well past

dark. She also remembers his favorite sayings.

"The two I remember most are, 'Eat it up, wear it out, or make it do, and 'A tired body and good conscience makes for a good night's sleep.'"

A man of faith, Walter still kneels to pray twice a day. He keeps Susanna Wesley's definition of sin posted on the wall of his farmhouse.

"What is Sin?"

Whatever weakens your reason,

Impairs the tenderness of your conscience,

Obscures your sense of God, Or takes off the relish of spiritual things—

Whatever increased the authority of your body over your mind.

That thing to you is Sin."

What's Walter's secret to living to 100?

Don't die at 99!

Book Harvest

MORGANTOWN (Berks Co.) — Books, books, and more books — both new and used books — will be everywhere at Masthof Bookstore, Morgantown, on Saturday, October 3, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hundreds of used books, as well as four new book titles just off the press with their authors to autograph the books will be featured.

Enjoy browsing through tables of used books brought by Jane Adams Clarke from The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, Kendra Brill from Bookworm's Nest, Annette K. Burgert, Gary Hawbaker, Dudley Lighty, Thomas DeLong, Dorothy Rodgers, Martha K. Weaver, and others.

The four authors with their new books to autograph include:

- Allen R. Beiler, author of "Family History and Genealogy of Pioneer Jacob (1698-1771) Beiler - Boiler - Byler," a 680-page encyclopedia on the Beiler family.

- Barbara Godfa, author of "Ladies of Readingtown . . . and Beyond," series of 10 Berks County women who connected in one way or another to Reading from 1742 to 1956.

- Ed Klimuska, author of "Lancaster County — A Pictorial Discovery Guide," is a colorful and stunning pictorial story of a remarkable Pennsylvania county!

- Brian E. Martin, author of 1723-1998 "275th Anniversary

Weaverland Mennonite Church," a must for any Mennonite living in the Weaverland Valley.

In addition, a number of other new book titles will be available for purchase.

Horse-drawn Gruber wagon rides, refreshments, homemade freshly-squeezed cider, and other harvest activities will be available for all ages at Masthof Bookstore located along Mill Road, just south of Morgantown, about two miles from exit 22 of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. In the center of Morgantown, turn south on Mill Road and watch for Masthof Bookstore about one-half mile ahead on your left.

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