

The Maternal Line of Elizabeth (Niesz) Titus

By Connie Lenzen, CGSM

Ordinary women are rarely mentioned in history books. They are treated as appendages and are named as the “daughter of” or the “wife of” some man. Yet, without women, the story of the family and of society would be only half a story. Tracing women and reconstructing their stories is difficult because they left few records. We must inspect records left by the men in their lives and consider the impact those records had on our female ancestors. We must examine the world in which our female ancestors lived through the eyes of their males.

Elizabeth Niesz, her mother, and her grandmother, were wives of farmers in German-speaking communities in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Two of these women were wives of United Brethren ministers. The third was a member of the denomination and the mother-in-law of a minister. The denomination to which these women and their husbands subscribed was formed in the late 1700s during the interdenominational renewal movement that is sometimes called the Great Awakening. The German-speaking Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, ministers Martin Boehm and William Otterbein declared, “Wir sind bruder” or “We are brethren.” Their church spread as circuit-riding preachers carried their interpretation of the Gospel from community to community.¹

First Generation, Ascending; Elizabeth (Niesz) Titus

1 Elizabeth Niesz was born on 27 August 1820 in Stark County, Ohio, and died 8 December 1891 in Charlotte, Eaton County, Michigan.² On 21 October 1845, in Canton, Stark County, Elizabeth wed William Sanford Titus.³ He was born 23 March 1818 in Harrison County, Ohio, the son of Timothy and Mary (Guthrie) Titus, and died on 11 January 1905 in Charlotte.⁴ Elizabeth and William are buried in Charlotte’s Maple Hill Cemetery.⁵

Elizabeth’s Parentage

Elizabeth’s death certificate does not name her parents, and she is not found with her parents in a census. Her obituary states, “Mrs. Elizabeth Titus, whose death was announced in our last issue, was ... the eldest daughter of Rev. John Niesz [sic], a faithful minister of the U.B. church.”⁶ A handwritten “Titus Family” history, created by Elizabeth’s husband, names Mary “Polly”⁷

¹ “How We Began,” article, *Church of the United Brethren in Christ USA* (http://www.ub.org/about/how_began.html; viewed 11 April 2006), paras. 2–3.

² Elizabeth Titus, death certificate no. 115 (1891), Department of Public Health, State of Michigan, Lansing.

³ Stark County Marriages, B: 118.

⁴ William S. Titus death certificate, no. 59 (1905), Department of Health, State of Michigan, Lansing.

⁵ Personal inspection of tombstone by Connie Lenzen, 28 June 1989.

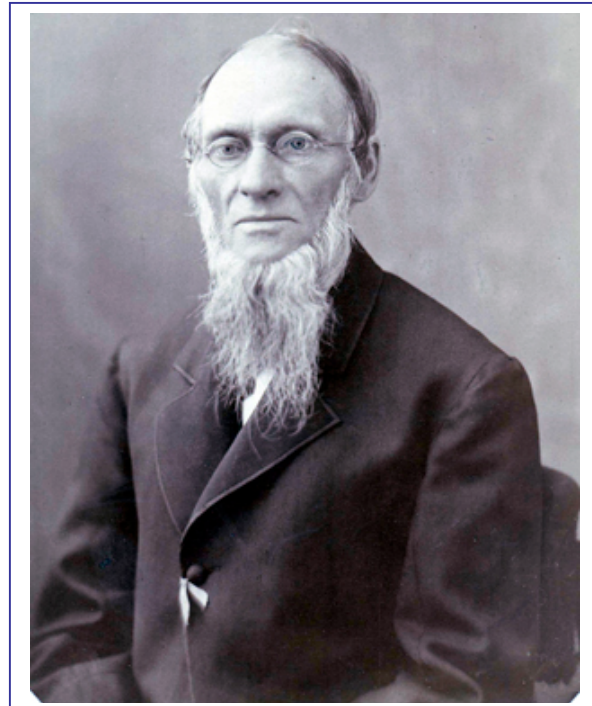
⁶ *Charlotte Republican*, January 1892, no day or page given; clipping in possession of the author.

⁷ Polly is a common nickname for Mary. Christine Rose, CG, CGL, FASG, *Nicknames Past and Present*, 3rd edition (San Jose: Rose Family Association, 1988), 14.

Young as her mother and the wife of John Niesz,⁸ a couple who had married in Stark County.⁹ Clearly, Elizabeth Niesz was the daughter of John and Mary (Young) Niesz.

Life Story

Photos of Elizabeth and William exist. Their eyes capture the spectator. Elizabeth's dark eyes look to the side, as if to avoid eye contact. William's light-colored eyes look through small, wire-rimmed glasses and bore into the viewer with a piercing stare. Elizabeth's dark curly hair, pulled back from a center part, shows a few strands of gray. William's hair and beard are silvery gray. There is a hint of a smile around Elizabeth's mouth, but William's mouth is turned down. A standing collar with a ruffled bow and edging adds ornamentation to Elizabeth's buttoned dress. William's gray whiskers brush the lapels of his well-tailored suit, and a buttonhole ribbon



indicates affiliation with some society. With his upright, alert posture, it is clear that he had a sense of self.

Other traits that photographs cannot reveal are described in the obituaries that closed out Elizabeth and William's lives. Elizabeth's unnamed memorialist, who may have been her husband, summed up her life's role with the observation, "It takes zeal and Christian fortitude to thus labor a lifetime for others.... She cheerfully shared ... the privations and hardships of an

⁸ William Sanford Titus Sr, "Titus Family," handwritten notes. In February 1932, the notes were transcribed by his daughter, Mary Melissa Titus of Charlotte, Michigan, and sent to Tzilla (Titus) Miller of Portland, Oregon, the author's grandmother. (Mary Melissa and Tzilla are deceased.) In her letter to Tzilla, Mary Melissa said that her father obtained the information on his last visit to Ohio. Notes in possession of author.

⁹ *Early Marriages of Stark County, Ohio, 1809–1840* (Alliance, Ohio: Alliance Genealogical Society, 1986), 68.

itinerant life.”¹⁰ Elizabeth shared a life and she labored for others. It is her life that her offspring want to learn.

Elizabeth was the eldest of nine children who survived to adulthood. Her father was a Stark County farmer, United Brethren minister, and homeopathic physician.¹¹ Her mother was a housewife. Elizabeth would have been her mother’s helper, and there would have been ample opportunity to learn how to do the household chores. The typical activities associated with getting a meal on the table included chopping firewood, hauling water, planting and raising vegetables, raising and killing poultry, preparing and serving the food, and doing the clean-up. Somewhere in between, women helped with the farm work, tended children, and made clothes.

Flax seeds were one of the county’s principal agricultural products. The plants provided the raw materials for linen cloth.¹² One of Elizabeth’s tasks was to twist and spin the fibers into thread and weave it into fabric that was used for wearing apparel and household linens.¹³ This brown and beige check is a sample of her work, woven, perhaps, with the loom gear that her father purchased in 1828 from the estate of his mother, along with a knitting bench that could hold yarn skeins in its storage trunk.¹⁴



In 1831 death visited the household, and life changed for the family. One of Elizabeth’s siblings died, shouting praises to Christ. This made an impression on her father who had previously held no religious views. He vowed to change his ways and, in 1832, he was received into the United Brethren church.¹⁵ In a male-dominated society, it is certain that the rest of the family joined the church also.

John Niesz not only adopted the tenets of this evangelical denomination but also became an itinerant minister, riding circuit while the family would have taken care of the farm work. In 1841, he built a United Brethren church in the northwest corner of his farm and set off land adjacent to the church for a cemetery.¹⁶ Together, these were known as the Niesz Evangelical United Brethren Church and Cemetery.¹⁷ He also gave land for a private academy the Niesz School, for whom one teacher was a young United Brethren itinerant minister named William Sanford Titus.¹⁸ William had a fair common-school education and had attended college a few

¹⁰ *Charlotte Republican*, January 1892.

¹¹ The life of John Niesz is included in the next chapter of this lineage.

¹² Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio: Containing a Collection of the Most Interesting Facts* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Derby, Bradley & Co., 1848), 466.

¹³ Letter from Mary Melissa Titus to Tzilla (Titus) Miller, 21 June 1935; letter in possession of author.

¹⁴ An Account of Sales of Personal Property, Elizabeth Niesz Estate, Stark County Probate #348 O.S.; Genealogy Division, Stark County District Library. Sample of check fabric in possession of author.

¹⁵ John Niesz obituary, *Religious Telescope*, 27 March 1872; clipping in possession of author.

¹⁶ Letter from Kenneth E. Niesz (Canton, Ohio) to Connie Lenzen, 7 November 1972; letter in possession of author. Mr. Niesz, whose family attended the church since its founding, was the church historian.

¹⁷ Edward Thornton Heald, *The Stark County Story*, vol. 4 (Columbus, Ohio: The Stoneman Press, 1959), 420.

¹⁸ Interview with Kenneth E. Niesz (Canton, Ohio) by Dorothy (Titus) Horne (Burbank, California), 8 January 1978, both deceased; notes in possession of author.

terms. He had joined the Muskingum Conference, where he had traveled for several years before arriving in Canton.¹⁹

After Elizabeth wed William on 21 October 1845 in Canton, she embarked on the life of a minister's wife.²⁰ Their challenges were many, as Ohio struggled to recover from a financial depression caused by the Crash of 1837. The mission and the privation the couple shared would be described in Elizabeth's obituary, a memorial probably penned by William who survived her. "She cheerfully shared the hardships and privations of an itinerant's wife. ... With little thought of the pay, for [it] was necessarily scant, they knew no permanent home for many years, but moved from one field to another full twenty-one times."²¹

Elizabeth undoubtedly needed to call upon her inner resources. As an itinerant minister, William would have traveled on horseback from one community to another, greeted by the crowds that gathered for the special occasion of a preacher's arrival.²² That left Elizabeth alone to tend the home chores. When she was in Canton, her parents and siblings would be nearby, and they could be called upon for emotional and physical support.

This would soon change as Elizabeth followed William on their twenty-one moves. Surviving deeds and censuses provide some details. On 12 August 1847, Elizabeth bore her first child in Canton.²³ In early October, William paid \$1,500 for 120 acres of land more than 140 miles to the east in Hancock County, Ohio.²⁴ Elizabeth would have made the move without parents, siblings, or friends to help her with their new infant. The 1850 enumeration places the family in Hancock's Washington Township, where the 31-year-old William is cited as a United Brethren clergyman, together with the 29-year-old Elizabeth and their one child, the 3-year-old Mary Melissa.²⁵

A photograph taken about the time of that census symbolizes Elizabeth's aloneness amid William's frequent absences from the family. The look on her face is tender but wistful, as Mary Melissa leans on her shoulder. William is not in the picture. The photo illustrates Elizabeth's medical conditions, fashion sense, economic condition, and skill as a craftswoman. Elizabeth's right eye turns inward and suggests she was afflicted with strabismus, a hereditary condition reported by her descendants. There is no trace of the goiter that she had when she was young. She had been treated for the condition by wearing an amber necklace.²⁶ The sleeves of her dress appear to be full in the upper arm rather than the lower arm that was in fashion; perhaps it was a dress acquired before her marriage. She had compensated for the age of her dress by wearing heavy side wings of hair over her ears in the latest style, and by adding a fashionable wide lace

¹⁹ *Religious Telescope*, 25 Jan 1905; clipping in possession of author.

²⁰ *Early Marriages of Stark County, Ohio, 1841-1855* (Alliance, Ohio: Alliance Genealogical Society, 1988), 102.

²¹ *Charlotte Republican*, January 1892.

²² *Religious Telescope*, 25 Jan 1905.

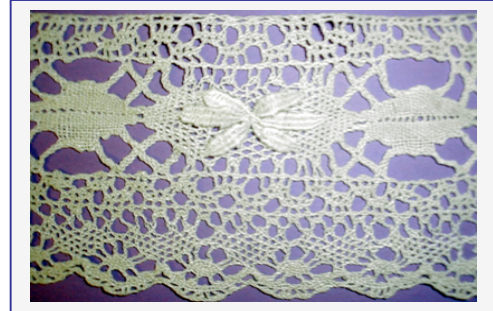
²³ "Titus Family."

²⁴ Hancock County Deeds 6: 314-17; FHL film 914,920.

²⁵ 1850 U. S. census, population schedule, Hancock County, Ohio, Washington Twp., District 48, p. 432 (penned), dwelling 25, family 30, Wm. S. Titus household; digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 26 February 2006); from National Archives microfilm M432, roll 699.

²⁶ Mary Melissa Titus' handwritten note on a scrap of tissue paper that was included in the envelope containing her mother's amber beads, "Mother's amber beads that she wore for her goiter." Date of writing unknown.

collar,²⁷ likely her own creation that speaks to her reported skill at lace making. Mary Melissa, who would live into her 90s, would preserve that photo and a piece of Elizabeth’s lace.



Bobbin lace, linen thread.²⁸

Amid that financial crash of 1837, the United Brethren had set a salary of \$200 per year for a married minister, hardly enough to support a family. As a consequence, most ministers also farmed.²⁹ Their pittance from the church was undoubtedly raised as the nation recovered in the late 1840s. Still, Elizabeth and William’s 1847 investment of \$1500 in Hancock County land represented a substantial sacrifice. In the decade that followed, their financial situation would ease somewhat. The American economy boomed in the 1850s, as all sectors recovered from the depression, and the Tituses shared that growth. The \$2000 attributed to them on the 1850 census rose by 1860 to \$2,000 for real estate plus \$1,000 for personal property.³⁰

Even so, the family paid a heavy price for their farming venture. William’s brother, the Rev. Timothy Taylor Titus, would later say that William “was blessed with plenty of this world’s goods,” but he also reported that William was of “delicate physique” in his youth and that he “broke down on the farm.”³¹ That physical breakdown may have been the reason why William and Elizabeth sold their Hancock County land in 1852 and 1853 and moved to Adrian, Michigan, with Mary Melissa and their new baby, Barbara Ellen, who had been born 18 September 1850.³² A picture of William and Elizabeth, taken apparently in that era, reflects the couple’s improved prosperity. William’s double-breasted silk vest and light-colored pants with wide tubular legs and no creases were popular with stylish dressers. Most men were clean-shaven in the 1850s, but

²⁷ “Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840–1900 (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University, 1995), 66.

²⁸ Lace in possession of the author.

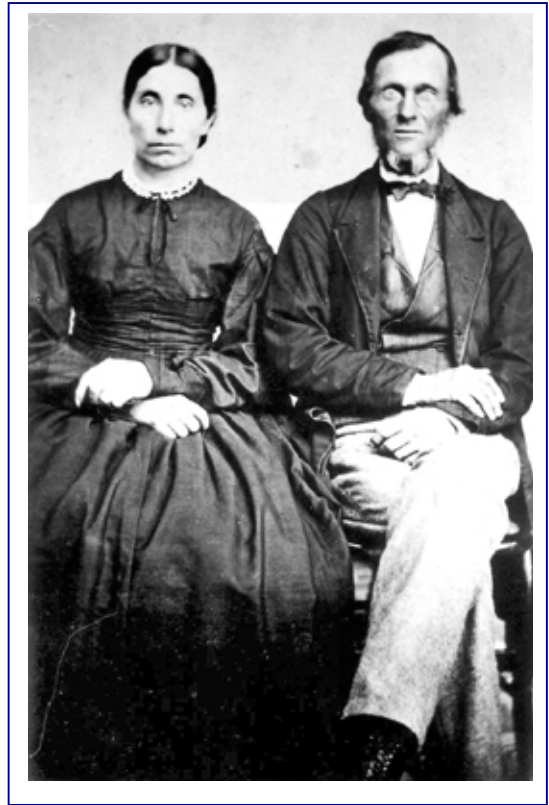
²⁹ A Quick Run through Our History,” article, *Church of the United Brethren in Christ USA* (<http://www.ub.org/about/history.html> : viewed 11 April 2006), paras. 20–21.

³⁰ 1860 U. S. census, William S. Titus household.

³¹ Rev. W. S. Titus obituary, *Religious Telescope*, 25 January 1905; clipping in possession of author.

³² Barbara Ellen Meyers’ obituary, undated newspaper clipping; in possession of author.

a fringe around the cheek with a little beard was popular with the well-dressed man. Elizabeth's dress appears to be made out of heavy silk.³³ Her face looks towards the camera, but her expression reveals little. The photo also reveals William's frailty. His face is gaunt. His thinning hair is combed over his receding hairline. His eyes bore into the onlooker.



In Michigan, both Elizabeth and William's lives heavily focused upon children, each within the realm that society dictated or allowed. Elizabeth, immersed in childrearing, rarely appears in a record. William, still an active minister, was a strong proponent of public education. At Adrian, Elizabeth bore their third daughter and a son: Amanda Ann Titus on 10 September 1854 and William Sanford Titus Jr. "Will," on 24 December 1857.³⁴ William, meanwhile, attended the first Sandusky Conference general meeting in a schoolhouse south of Eaton Rapids³⁵—a conference that he, as a minister, likely helped to organize. By 1860 they had moved yet again, this time to Leoni in neighboring Jackson

County,³⁶ where William established a school with substantial buildings.³⁷ At the church's general conference of 1869 in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, the bishops were instructed to appoint a board of education to be charged with devising and adopting a plan for founding a seminary. William was one of the ten ministers appointed to this board. They met on 29 July 1870 and named the proposed institution, to be built in Dayton, Ohio, the Union Biblical Seminary.³⁸

The family's last move was to Charlotte, Michigan, in 1873.³⁹ William raised \$3,000 to build the town's first United Brethren church. On 1 November 1874, the congregation held the first

³³ *Dressed for the Photographer*, 105.

³⁴ *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, Together With the Apocrypha* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1864). Bible owned by William Sanford Titus Sr. and hereinafter called Titus Bible.

³⁵ John Lawrence, *The History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, vol. 1 (Dayton, Ohio: W. J. Shuey, 1861), 401–2; *Google Book Search* (<http://books.google.com> : accessed 20 July 2006). William Titus obituary, *The Christian Conservator*, 1 February 1905.

³⁶ 1860 U. S. census, population schedule, Jackson County, Michigan, Leoni, p. 298 (penned) p. 347 (stamped), dwelling 2131, family 2171, William S. Titus household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (accessed 26 February 2006); from National Archives microfilm M653, roll 547.

³⁷ *The Christian Conservator*, 1 February 1905.

³⁸ Rev. A. W. Drury, *History of the City of Dayton and Montgomery County, Ohio*, vol. 1 (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1909), 466.

³⁹ *Religious Telescope*, 25 January 1905.

service in the brick structure called “The Centenary Church” in honor of the one hundred years that the denomination had been in existence.⁴⁰

Victorian-era women such as Elizabeth were expected to take care of home and family. By keeping a clean and pious home, women achieved their highest calling. Women’s literature provided guides for women’s work. Typically, each day was dedicated to a chore. Housewives began the week with laundry on Monday. Ironing with a heavy hot iron was done on Tuesday. Baking was usually done on Wednesday, and the rest of the weekdays had its own bit of drudgery. These chores were in addition to preparing and tending fires and feeding and clothing family members. Elizabeth’s daughters would later recall how she also taught them to weave, sew, quilt, embroider, tat, crochet, and to make lace.⁴¹



Motif from a quilt created by Elizabeth’s daughters.⁴²

Motif from linen doily.⁴³

Women’s roles outside of the home were limited to missionary and temperance work. On 20 March 1874, an article in the *Charlotte Republican* newspaper reported that Mrs. Titus was in attendance at the Women’s Temperance Union meeting held at the M. E. Church.⁴⁴ The mission of the WTC was expressed in a resolution, “Whereas – Intemperance has become a great evil in our city, we are admonished that the time has come when the women of Charlotte should engage with united strength and persistent effort to entirely suppress the manufacture, sale, and use of all intoxicating drinks in our city.”⁴⁵ Elizabeth was also a member of the United Brethren Ladies’ Aid Society and the Women’s Missionary Society.⁴⁶

In 1877, the family moved into the newly constructed parsonage on Horatio Avenue.⁴⁷ Continuing the clergy-farming connection, William purchased 60 acres in the southeast quarter

⁴⁰ “Church Celebrates Sixtieth Anniversary,” unnamed Charlotte newspaper, 19 October 1934; yellowed clipping in possession of author. *The Past and Present of Eaton County, Michigan, Historically Together with Biographical Sketches* (Lansing, MI: The Michigan Historical Publishing Association, n.d.), 79.

⁴¹ Letter from Mary Melissa Titus to Tzilla (Titus) Miller, 11 December 1934; letter in possession of author.

⁴² Quilt in possession of the author’s daughter.

⁴³ Doily in possession of the author’s daughter.

⁴⁴ Joyce Marple Liepins, *Eaton County, Michigan, Newspapers*, vol. 3 1872–74 (Charlotte: Privately printed, 1990), 89.

⁴⁵ *Charlotte Republican*, 16 March 1874; p. 2, col. 3.

⁴⁶ *Christian Conservator*, 24 February 1892, p.7.

⁴⁷ “Church Celebrates Sixtieth Anniversary”; clipping in possession of author.

of Section 23, Township 3 North, Range 5 West for \$5,500.⁴⁸ The farm was about three miles from town, and the family could walk or ride between the two places. The farm may have been purchased to provide for twenty-year-old Will. Entries in Will's 1881 diary show that working on the farm was a joint effort between father and son. Elizabeth is mentioned only once, and that entry is like an afterthought.⁴⁹

Wednesday, January 5; Markham & I helped Pa butcher in the forenoon.

Thursday, January 6; Helped Pa bring the cook stove down to the house.

Monday, January 17; Pa and I went out to the farm in the forenoon and brought the organ back.

Wednesday, April 6; Went down town and stayed most all forenoon, came back home, helped Pa fix the stable door, went down town in the afternoon.

Thursday, May 12; Went down town, met the old gent there, went back to my room and talked with him a while...came home with Pa, went to a concert in the evening.

Tuesday, May 31; Pa and I went out to the farm after a load of hay. Came back home with the horse and carriage, got home about half past nine.

Tuesday, June 14; Worked at the shed in the forenoon. Pa and I went to the farm, went down town in the evening.

Friday, July 2; Plowed until about four o'clock, then drew stone the rest of the day. Pa and Ma were there today.

In 1889, the United Brethren Church experienced a division over membership in secret societies. William believed such societies were the work of the devil; and, staying true to his convictions, he supported the minority of his church brethren who wanted to ban members of these societies.⁵⁰ This put stress on the family for Will was an active member of the Knights of the Maccabees.⁵¹ While it cannot be said conclusively that the stress led to Elizabeth's death, two years later, she died.

William penned the first entry in the "Deaths" section of his leather-bound Bible: "Elizabeth Titus Died Dec 8th 1891."⁵² Elizabeth's daughters would have laid her out for viewing in the family parlor, and her female neighbors would pay their last respects.⁵³ Elizabeth's tombstone in Charlotte's Maple Hill Cemetery reads, "Last words All's well" and "In her thought is the law of kindness."⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Eaton County Deeds, Liber 68: 480.

⁴⁹ Diary of Will S. Titus, *Excelsior Diary for 1881*; in possession of the author.

⁵⁰ *Religious Telescope*, 25 January 1905.

⁵¹ Interview with Tzilla (Titus) Miller, 5 February 1975.

⁵² "Deaths," Titus Bible.

⁵³ Tzilla (Titus) Miller to Connie Lenzen, 18 September 1969. As a young child, Tzilla went with her mother to these viewings.

⁵⁴ Personal inspection of tombstone by Connie Lenzen, 28 June 1989.

The family posed for one last photo.

L-R: William Sanford Titus Jr., Amanda Ann (Titus) Culbertson, Mary Melissa Titus, Barbara Ellen (Titus) Meyers, William Sanford Titus Sr. Elizabeth's photo is on the wall.



After Elizabeth's death, William continued to walk from the farm to town with his coat tails flying, his elbows akimbo, and his cane and feet thumping out a steady, swift tread. For several years before he died, he was confined to a wheel chair. His daughter Mary Melissa took care of him in his last illness. When he was on his deathbed, he called his children for a last meeting. When it was Will's turn, William bade him farewell and told him they would not be meeting in heaven. To the end, he had remained true to his convictions about secret societies.⁵⁵ This led Will to tell his children that too much religious passion could cause as much damage to individuals and families as other compulsions.⁵⁶

Mary Melissa Titus penned in her father's bible, "William Sanford Titus Died Jan. 11th 1905,"⁵⁷ and the family inscribed "At Rest" on his tombstone.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Interview with Tzilla (Titus) Miller by Connie Lenzen, 5 February 1975.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 18 September 1974.

⁵⁷ "Deaths," Titus Bible.

⁵⁸ Personal inspection of tombstone by Connie Lenzen, 28 June 1989.

Children

The children of Elizabeth (Niesz) and William Sanford Titus are as follows:

- i. MARY MELISSA TITUS, born 12 August 1847 in Canton; died 10 May 1946 in Charlotte. She was unmarried.⁵⁹
- ii. BARBARA ELLEN TITUS, born 18 September 1850, Hancock County, Ohio; died 10 January 1933, Grand Ledge, Michigan.⁶⁰ She married JOHN MEYERS on 9 December 1874.⁶¹
- iii. AMANDA ANN TITUS, born 10 September 1854, Adrian, Michigan; died 8 April 1942.⁶² She married BYRON CULBERTSON.⁶³
- iv. WILLIAM SANFORD TITUS JR., born 24 December 1857, Adrian, Michigan; died 28 March 1957, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.⁶⁴ He married SUSAN JOSEPHINE DUDLEY on 21 October 1884 in Charlotte.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Mary Malissa [sic] Titus death certificate no. 50 (1946), Michigan Department of Health.

⁶⁰ “Barbara Ellen Meyers death certificate, Eaton County Deaths, Liber 8: 575, record no 2; County Clerk’s Office, Charlotte, Michigan.

⁶¹ “Barbara Ellen Meyers obituary, unnamed and undated, probably a Charlotte newspaper; clipping in possession of author.

⁶² “Births” and “Deaths,” *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, Together with the Apocrypha* (N.p.: n.p., 1881). William Sanford Titus Jr., who entered the names and vital dates of his siblings, his children, his grandchildren, and his great-grandchildren, owned this Bible. Bible in possession of the author’s daughter. Hereinafter called Will’s Bible.

⁶³ Tzilla Miller to Connie Lenzen, 1 February 1968. 1880 U. S. census, population schedule, Eaton County, Michigan, Eaton Rapids, SD 2, ED 68, p. 3 (penned) p. 155 (stamped), Byron Culbertson household; digital image by subscription, *HeritageQuestOnline* (<http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/census/search/basic> : accessed 16 January 2007); from National Archives microfilm T9, roll 578.

⁶⁴ William Sanford Titus death certificate no. 3488 (1957), State of Oregon Board of Health.

⁶⁵ Eaton County Marriages, Liber 5: 92, record no. 137.

Second Generation, Ascending: Mary (Young) Niesz

A picture is worth a thousand words. An ambrotype of John and Mary (Young) Niesz preserves the images of a couple living in pre-Civil War Ohio. He embodies strength, firmness, and power, and she embodies the quiet acquiescent female. However, she had a story to tell; one that is told by interpreting documents and historical events created around her.

Mary is dressed in a heavy dress and cape-jacket. The sprightly gathered ruffle framing the bonnet and the small clutch purse in her right hand are her only adornments. Her straight hair is pulled back from a center part and tucked into a white bonnet. The white dusting on her skirt could be flour. She clearly is not impressed with herself. The way she lightly touches the back of her husband's sleeve with her arm suggests she is used to following him.

Mary's husband is dressed in a vest, suit, white shirt, and tie. Deep dimples in his chin and cheeks frame a firm downturned mouth. If he spoke, one would expect to hear a lecture. Dark, curly hair is slicked down for the photo, but it probably blew in the breeze as he walked. The book in his right hand and his spectacles in his left hand, bespeak his literacy. His erect, almost assertive, posture tells the viewer that he is the most important person in the photo.



2. John Niesz, the son of George Niesz and Elizabeth Weaver, was born 2 January 1798 in Aaronsburg, Centre County, Pennsylvania. He died on 6 March 1872 in Canton.⁶⁶ He married 23 May 1820 in Canton.⁶⁷

3. Mary Young, daughter of Jacob Young and Barbara Herchelroth, was born 9 April 1798 in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and died 28 October 1868 in Canton, Stark County, Ohio.⁶⁸ Both John and Mary are buried in the Niesz Cemetery in Canton.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Certified Copy of Death Record, John Niesz (1872); transcript Stark County Record of Deaths 1: 80.

⁶⁷ *Early Marriages of Stark County, Ohio, 1809–1840*, 68.

⁶⁸ Record of Deaths, Stark County Probate Court 1: 18, no. 388; FHL film 897,621. For a further discussion of her parentage, see the section “Mary’s Parentage.”

⁶⁹ Niesz Cemetery,” *Cemetery Records, Stark County, Ohio* (Canton: Canton Public Library, 1955), 201.

Mary's Parentage

Neither Mary's death certificate nor her marriage record names her parents. However, her death certificate gives her birthplace as Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and her calculated birth date as 9 April 1798.⁷⁰ Her maiden name was given as "Young" by her son-in-law, Reverend William Sanford Titus. William further recorded that her mother was Barbara Herclerode⁷¹ and that she had a sister Catherine Young and half-brothers named John Newman, Lawrence Newman, and Henry Newman.⁷² On 19 October 1798 in Franklin County, letters of administration for Jacob Young, deceased, were granted to Barbara Young, widow, and John Herkelroad. George Rock of Guilford Township, Franklin County and Samuel Harkleroad of Lancaster County were named as sureties.⁷³ In many cases, a widow's relatives serve as co-administrators and sureties, a point that supports the son-in-law's statement of her identity. The case is considerably strengthened by evidence that developed during the administration of Jacob Young's estate.

Barbara and her co-administrator filed the estate inventory which listed annual payments from 1799 through 1803 of 33 pounds to an Andrew Leymaster. Along with three tax payments, this suggests property is involved. On 4 May 1797, Jacob Young, of Guilford Township, purchased 55 acres from Andrew Lemaster, also of Guilford, for 536 pounds and 5 shillings. The neighbors were Jacob Snider, John Painter, and John Dixon.⁷⁴ On 13 May 1805, Barbara, who was then Barbara Nighman, and John Harklerode, filed the estate's final account.

Guardianship papers for Catherine Young and Polly Young, minor orphan daughters of Jacob Young, were filed in February 1806. The appointed guardians were John Leshner and Jacob Lyter.⁷⁵ Barbara Young, their mother, was married by this time, and as a married woman, she could no longer manage their property. Her husband was not appointed guardian, and that suggests the family may have been in the process of leaving the county.

On 2 June 1819, Mary and Catherine sold the land that Jacob Young owned at his death. Married women were considered *feme covert*, or under the protection of their husbands. Their husbands acted as their guardians and managed the finances and property. In 1819 Catherine was married to Frederick Shafer of Stark County, and he sold the land for her.⁷⁶ The names of the girls in these documents match those William Titus reported for his mother-in-law and her sister.

The final piece of evidence that links Barbara Young–Barbara Nighman to Barbara Herclerode–Barbara Newman is the distribution of Lawrence Hergelrode's Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, land. A deed named Barbara as his daughter, but more explicitly states, "Barbara who was at the

⁷⁰ Mary Niesz obituary, *Religious Telescope*, 18 November 1868, p. 86, col. 3, digital image, *United Brethren Heritage Center, Huntington College* (http://www.huntington.edu/ubhc/publications/telescope/1868/11/18681118_086.pdf : accessed 1 November 2006).

⁷¹ Common variations of the surname include Herchelroth, Harchelroth, Hartlerode, Herglerode, and Heygelrode. In this text, the name is written as found.

⁷² "Titus Family."

⁷³ Jacob Young Estate Records (1798), Franklin County Register of Wills – Estate Records, #463; Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg.

⁷⁴ Franklin County Deeds, Book 4: 146; FHL film 323,796.

⁷⁵ Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Orphans Court Docket A: 200–1; Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg.

⁷⁶ Franklin County Deeds, Book 12: 252; FHL film 323,802.

time of the [1804] death of the said intestate intermarried with one John Newman. ... John and Barbara appointed Lawrence Newman of Stark County, Ohio, as attorney.”⁷⁷

Clearly, the deeds, estate records, and guardianship proceedings provide proof that Mary and Catherine Young were the children of Jacob and Barbara (Herclerode) Young and that Barbara married John Newman.

Life Story

In 1806, the family did leave Franklin County for Canton, Ohio, a newly laid-out town.⁷⁸ The family would have piled their possessions into a canvas-covered Conestoga wagon for transport over the almost 300 miles from Chambersburg to Canton. As noted by John Niesz, an 1807 settler, the trail from Pittsburg to Canton, was “where the heavy teams would frequently stick fast in the deep and tough mud. Occasionally they would have to pry up the deepest sunk wheels, and relay a span or two of horses to drag the wagons to a more solid part of terra firma.”⁷⁹ When Mary’s family arrived, they found heavily forested lands and Indians.⁸⁰ John Niesz recalled,

We were frequently annoyed by Indians who would paint their faces in red or brown stripes or spots, with half a dozen or more strings of deer-claw beads around their legs, to rattle while they were stamping or dancing around. At times they had bows and arrows in their hands, with tomahawk and butcher-knife in their belts, frequently a gun and powder-horn instead of bow and arrows, and endeavored to annoy or scare dogs, women, and children, at a distance of five or six rods from the cabins, by yelling, stamping, and shaking their rattling strings of beads. They were anxious to trade deer and bear meat and moccasins, some of which had ornamental or checkered work upon them. In the fall of 1812, three hundred camped for three months almost in sight of Browning’s mill.⁸¹

Mary attended school and “was given as good an education as could be obtained in the pioneer schools.”⁸² An 1824 deed shows she made her mark rather than her signature, so this education may have been minimal.⁸³ John Niesz described the local schoolhouse:

In 1812, we had a log school-house built two miles from home. ... Seats were made of slabs brought from Nichol’s sawmill, not far off. We made a large chimney on the outside, with a stone back wall, for log fires, with logs generally a foot or more thick and four or five feet long. ... Reading, writing, and ciphering

⁷⁷ Lancaster County Deeds L5: 184; FHL film 21,434.

⁷⁸ *Portrait and Biographical Record of Stark County* (Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1892), 345–46, “William Niesz.” Barbara Newman obituary, *Religious Telescope*, 25 April 25 1868, p. 270, col. 5; digital image, *United Brethren Heritage Center, Huntington College* (http://www.huntington.edu/ubhc/publications/telescope/1868/04/18680429_270.pdf: accessed 1 November 2006). Heald, *History of Stark County*, 1.

⁷⁹ *Combination Atlas Map of Stark County, Ohio* (1875, reprint, Knightstown, Ind: The Bookmark, 1974), 19, “[John Niesz] Personal Reminiscences.”

⁸⁰ Heald, *History of Stark County*, 1.

⁸¹ *Combination Atlas Map of Stark County*, 19, “Personal Reminiscences.”

⁸² *Portrait and Biographical Record*, 346, “William Niesz.”

⁸³ Stark County Deeds E: 343–44; Stark County Library.

were taught, and the best scholar aspired to the next winter's position as teacher."⁸⁴

Mary was 18 years old in 1816, the "year without a summer" that history also calls "eighteen hundred and froze to death."⁸⁵ An extremely harsh winter and a cold wet summer meant food was scarce and prices were high. Farmers could not keep up with their payments and banks closed. The economic downturn resulted in the United States' first financial panic.⁸⁶

In June 1819, Mary, her mother Barbara, her stepfather John Nighman, her sister Catharine, and Catharine's husband Frederick Shafer returned to Franklin County to settle Mary's father's estate. Barbara gave up her dower rights, and the land was sold to Jacob Grossman of Franklin County for \$2,750.⁸⁷ Mary's inheritance would have been a significant sum, one that the family could use. It could also be considered a valuable dowry. In her home community that had fifty percent more men than women⁸⁸ and with her half of the proceeds from the sale of her father's land, twenty-one-year-old Mary would not remain single for long.

Less than a year after receiving her inheritance, Mary Young wed neighbor John Niesz. The marriage was off to a challenging beginning for several reasons. John's later obituary characterized him as "naturally very irritable and possessed with uncommon will-power.... In early life [he] had imbibed infidel views, and at one time belonged to an organization in Canton that published a paper advocating infidelity."⁸⁹ In 1810, Mary's family had joined the United Brethren Church,⁹⁰ but Reverend Anthony Weyer, who conducted the marriage, was Lutheran, not United Brethren.⁹¹ Mary was pregnant with her first child.

Mary and John's families are listed next to each other in the 1820 census, but John Niesz's name does not appear as the head of a household. Young married couples often lived with relatives until they could establish their own home. The Jno. Newman household consisted of five individuals. The only female was over 45 years of age and was probably Mary's mother. Mary had three brothers and a stepfather who were undoubtedly the four males.⁹² The George Nease household consisted of nine individuals. Mary could have been the female between 16 and 26, and John could have been one of the males between 16 and 26.⁹³

⁸⁴ *Combination Atlas Map of Stark County*, 19, "Personal Reminiscences."

⁸⁵ David Hackett Fischer, *The Great Wave: Price Revolutions and the Rhythm of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 155.

⁸⁶ Fischer, *The Great Wave*, 156. "The Era of Good Feelings: The Growth of Political Factionalism and Sectionalism," *Digital History* (http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=574 : accessed 3 June 2006), paras. 3–6.

⁸⁷ Franklin County Deeds 12: 251–52; FHL film 323,802.

⁸⁸ Totals for Canton Township, 1820 U. S. census, Stark County, Ohio, Canton Twp., p. 175, line 13; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 6 July 2006); from National Archives microfilm M33, roll 194.

⁸⁹ John Niesz obituary, *Religious Telescope*, 27 March 1872; clipping in possession of author.

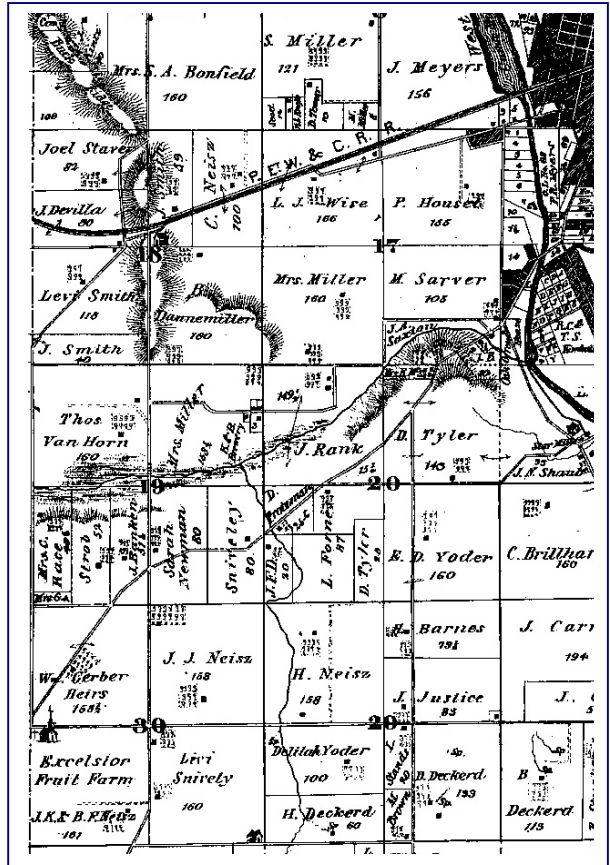
⁹⁰ John Newman obituary, *Religious Telescope*, 25 February 1863, p. 104, col. 4–5, digital image, *United Brethren Heritage Center, Huntington College* (http://www.huntington.edu/ubhc/publications/telescope/1863/02/18630225_104.pdf : accessed 25 November 2006).

⁹¹ Stark County Marriages B: 18. Esther Weygandt Powell, "Early Records of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church," *Stark County, Ohio, Early Church Records and Cemeteries* (Akron, Ohio: Privately printed, 1973), 146–47.

⁹² 1820 U. S. census, Stark County, Ohio, Canton Twp., p. 173, line 30, Jno Newman; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 3 June 2006); from National Archives microfilm M33, roll 194.

⁹³ 1820 U. S. census, Stark County, Ohio, Canton Twp., p. 173, line 29, Geo Nease.

On 25 December 1822, John Niesz purchased 100 acres from his parents for \$800. The land was “a part of Section number thirty in Township number ten in Range number eight ... bounded as follows[:] one hundred acres of the south west corner of said section running thence east thirty nine chains to the original quarter part thence North twenty five chains and sixty five hundredths to a stone thence west thirty eight chains and Ninety six hundredths to the section Line thence south twenty five chains and sixty five hundredths to the place of beginning.”⁹⁴ This 1875 map shows section 30, the location of the Niesz farm and the church, in the bottom left corner. Canton is in the upper right corner of the map.⁹⁵



Historically, women have been assigned the home as their area of responsibility. It was that way for Mary, but perhaps even more so. As the wife of an itinerant minister, while John was riding the circuit, she would have responsibility for the home, farm, and growing family. The work was hard; according to the writer of her obituary, she “endured many exposures in her pioneer life.”⁹⁶ By her tenth wedding anniversary in 1830, the family consisted of eight persons; seven would be family members.⁹⁷ The 1840 census shows eleven persons to tend and feed; ten would be family members.⁹⁸ The unknown males in the 1830 and 1840 censuses could have been farm laborers, or they could have been extended family members. On 17 January 1849, the Canton newspaper announced the death of a Henry Niesz of Wyandotte County, Ohio, at the John Niesz home. Fifty-year-old Henry died of scrofulous inflammation of the brain and chest. Scrofula is the Latin word for brood sow, and it is the term applied to tuberculosis of the neck.⁹⁹

Mary and her family also belonged to the United Brethren Church, a denomination that was bilingual with German being the original language. During the 1830s, most U.B. congregations

⁹⁴ Stark County Deeds E: 143–44; Genealogy Division, Stark County District Library.

⁹⁵ “Map of Canton Township,” *Combination Atlas Map of Stark County, Ohio*, 47.

⁹⁶ Mary Niesz obituary, *Religious Telescope*, 18 November 1868.

⁹⁷ 1830 U. S. census, Stark County, Ohio, Canton, p. 288, line 23, John Niesz; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 3 June 2006); from National Archives microfilm M19, roll 140.

⁹⁸ 1840 U. S. census, Stark County, Ohio, Canton, p. 112, line 5, John Niesz; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 3 June 2006); from National Archives microfilm M704, roll 427.

⁹⁹ *Ohio Repository*, 17 January 1849, p. 3, col. 5; digital image, Ancestry.com (accessed 15 August 2006). “Scrofula,” article, *E-medicine from WebMD* (<http://www.emedicine.com/ent/topic524.htm>; accessed 15 August 2006).

were using English. However, some congregations clung to their German past, and John was an advocate for those German-speaking members.¹⁰⁰ Mary and her family did not need to go far to church. John built the Canton United Brethren church on their property.¹⁰¹

Niesz Church.



Mary's family saw economic conditions improve in the 1850s. The building of the Ohio-Erie canal enabled Stark County farmers to get their products to market and to obtain needed items at reduced cost, greatly improving the farmer's financial stability.¹⁰² Even with the general increased prosperity, Mary and John would be considered wealthy in comparison to their neighbors. The 1850 Canton census lists \$16,000 as the value of their real property while other householders on the census page had real property valued at \$3,000 and \$2,000.¹⁰³ Mary and John's wealth is further shown in a comparison of their entry in the 1850 agricultural census.¹⁰⁴ The \$16,000 cash value of their farm is highest in the township. Their 610 acres were broken down to 260 acres that were improved and 350 that were unimproved. The \$1,045 value of their livestock was greater than their neighbors. The 200 head of sheep produced 580 pounds of wool. Merino sheep were raised for their wool; thus the 580 pounds of wool would be a cash crop.¹⁰⁵

The family had nine milch cows, which was five more than the average number of cows for the neighborhood, and each one of the cows needed to be milked twice a day. The thirty-one other cattle on the farm were probably beef cattle. The \$90 value of animals slaughtered was about average for the neighborhood where less than ten cattle was the norm. Quite possibly, the family raised cattle for sale. The family harvested 300 bushels of wheat, 80 bushels of rye, 350 bushels of Indian corn, 300 bushels of oats, 15 bushels of potatoes, and 300 pounds of butter. In 1852, Mary won a "best in class" at the county fair for her butter.¹⁰⁶

Mary would have had the responsibility of managing the large farm and house while John was doing his ministering. The kitchen area, traditionally the seat of women's labors, was well stocked. When John Niesz died, the house inventory included bread pans, a coffee pot, sad irons, a copper teakettle and copper boiler, candle molds, a wash tub, a cook stove and other stoves,

¹⁰⁰ Blake S. Arnold, *History of the East Ohio Conference, United Brethren in Christ* (N.p.: n.p., ca. 1951), 9.

¹⁰¹ Kenneth E. Niesz, church historian, to Connie Lenzen, 7 November 1972.

¹⁰² Heald, *History of Stark County*, 18.

¹⁰³ 1850 U. S. census, population schedule, Stark County, Ohio, District No. 129, Canton Township, p. 527, dwelling 428, family 454, John Niesz; digital image *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 3 June 2006); from National Archives microfilm M432, roll 730.

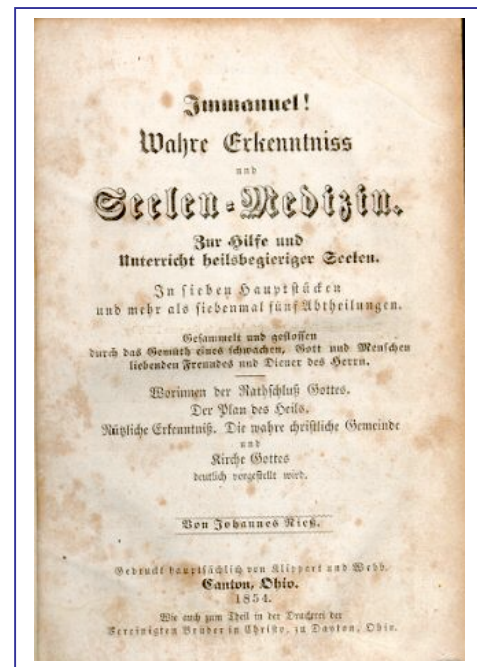
¹⁰⁴ 1850 Stark County, Ohio agricultural census, District No. 139, Canton Township, pp. 172-78; FHL film 1,602,333.

¹⁰⁵ Heald, *History of Stark County*, 12.

¹⁰⁶ "Proceedings of the Fair for 1852," *Ohio Repository*, 20 October 1852, p. 1, col. 3, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (accessed 18 August 2006).

pots and pans, a coffee mill, an oil press, a wine press, a double kraut cutter, a butter box and churn, crocks, two sets of dishes, a dozen and a half chairs, a rocking chair, a looking glass, and a cupboard.¹⁰⁷

Mary, who was barely literate, probably did not keep the home and farm account books. This task would go to John, who was highly literate in that frontier society. His writing skills were tapped in 1841 when he was appointed Conference secretary.¹⁰⁸ He translated the Conference minutes that had been written in German from 1818 to 1840 into English.¹⁰⁹ John also wrote four books; two were about homeopathic issues, and the other two were religious. In 1851, he wrote the *Short Treatise on the Use of Arnica* (Canton, Ohio).¹¹⁰ Arnica is a homeopathic remedy for muscle strain and soreness and is made from the dried flowers and sometimes roots of a few members of the daisy family. Also in 1851, he wrote the 376-page *Family Guide to Health and Husbandry* (Canton, Ohio: Daniel Schell).¹¹¹ In 1854, he penned the 740-page *Immanuel!*, a series of writings about the gospels.¹¹² Also in 1854, he wrote “A True Scriptural Representation of Temperance and Intemperance.” As a minister, he was a temperance advocate,¹¹³ but whiskey had been part of his growing-up years.¹¹⁴



In 1864, Mary’s husband and their son-in-law, Elam G. Smith, opened a drug store, Niesz & Smith, in Kentland, Indiana.¹¹⁵ John’s probate inventory lists numerous medical jars and mortars and pestles that may have been used in the business.¹¹⁶

Mary died of pneumonitis on 28 October 1868.¹¹⁷ On 6 February 1870, Mary’s widower wed Mary E. Berg.¹¹⁸ John died two years later on 6 March 1872.

¹⁰⁷ “Sale Bill [John Niesz estate],” Stark County Probate Court Estate Record #657 N.S.; Genealogy Division, Stark County District Library.

¹⁰⁸ Esther D. George, United Methodist Church Librarian, EUB Library, 601 W Riverview, Dayton, OH 45406, to Connie Lenzen, 31 October 1972.

¹⁰⁹ Arnold, *History of the East Ohio Conference*, p. 10.

¹¹⁰ Thomas Lindsley Bradford, “Index to Homoeopathic Provings,” article, *Homéopathe Internationale* (<http://www.homeoint.org/seror/indexprovings/bibliographie.htm> : accessed 4 September 2006).

¹¹¹ *Transactions of the World’s Homeopathic Convention*, vol. 2 (Sherman: n.p., 1881), 1030, digital book, *Google Book Search* (<http://books.google.com/books> : accessed 4 September 2006).

¹¹² Copy of book in author’s library.

¹¹³ John Niesz obituary, *Religious Telescope*, 27 March 1872.

¹¹⁴ *Combination Atlas Map of Stark County*, 19, “Personal Reminiscences.”

¹¹⁵ *Counties of Warren, Benton, Jasper and Newton, Indiana: Historical and Biographical* (Chicago: F. A. Battey & Co., 1883), 743–44, “Elam G. Smith.”

¹¹⁶ Stark County, Ohio, Probate Court Estate Record #657 N.S.; Genealogy Division, Stark County District Library.

¹¹⁷ Stark County Record of Deaths 1: 19; FHL film 897,621.

¹¹⁸ Stark County Marriages 7: 269. Mary E. Niesz probate, Stark County Probate Court, #3427 N.S.; Genealogy Division, Stark County District Library.

Children

The children of John and Mary (Young) Niesz are as follows:

- +1 i. ELIZABETH NIESZ, born 27 August 1820 in Stark County, Ohio; died 8 December 1891 in Charlotte, Michigan.¹¹⁹ She married WILLIAM SANFORD TITUS on 21 October 1845 in Canton.
- ii. WILLIAM NIESZ, born 28 May 1822 in Canton; died in 1913. He married (1) DELILAH ROUSH 21 November 1844 in Stark County and (2) ANN ELIZA NIESZ on 4 May 1854 in Stark County.¹²⁰
- iii. MARY NIESZ, born 29 May 1824. She married SAMUEL S. BARD.¹²¹
- iv. JACOB J. NIESZ was born 18 November 1825; died in August 1891 in Seattle, Washington. He was unmarried.¹²²
- v. CATHERINE NIESZ, born 20 October 1827. She died young.¹²³
- vi. GEORGE W. NIESZ, born 12 September 1829 in Canton; died 26 March 1904. He married a woman known only by her first name, JOSEPHINE.¹²⁴
- vii. BARBARA ELLEN NIESZ, born 8 April 1833; never married.¹²⁵
- viii. JOHN KOSSUTH NIESZ, born 22 November 1836. He married MAGGIE BILLINGS.¹²⁶
- ix. SARAH ANN NIESZ, born 19 January 1840. She married ELAM G. SMITH.¹²⁷
- x. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN NIESZ, born 16 November 1842. He married a woman known only by her first name, ROSALIE.¹²⁸

¹¹⁹ Elizabeth Titus, death certificate.

¹²⁰ *Portrait and Biographical Records*, 345–46, “William Niesz.” *Cemetery Records, Stark County, Ohio*, p. 201, “Niesz Cemetery.” *Early Marriages of Stark County, Ohio, 1841–1855*, 74. See also Rev. William Titus, “Titus Family.”

¹²¹ “Titus Family.” 1880 U.S. census, population schedule, Cass County, Indiana, Logansport, SD 5, ED 29, p. 30 (penned) p. 303 (stamped), dwelling 310, family 321, Samuel Bard household; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 23 January 2007); from National Archives microfilm T9, roll 268.

¹²² “Titus Family.” 1900 U. S. census, population schedule, Allen County, Indiana, Wayne Township, Fort Wayne, SD 71, ED 40, p. 15 (penned) p.170 (stamped), dwelling 306, family 322, Mary Bard household; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 2 January 2007); from National Archives microfilm T623, roll 359.

¹²³ “Titus Family.”

¹²⁴ “Titus Family.” Woodlawn Cemetery (Canton, Ohio) card file.

¹²⁵ “Titus Family.” 1900 U. S. census, population schedule, Allen County, Indiana, Wayne Township, Fort Wayne, SD 71, ED 40, p. 15 (penned) p. 170 (stamped), dwelling 306, family 322, Mary Bard household; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 3 January 2007); from National Archives microfilm T623, roll 359.

¹²⁶ “Titus Family.”

¹²⁷ “Titus Family.” *Counties of Warren, Benton, Jasper and Newton, Indiana*, 743–44, “Elam G. Smith.”

¹²⁸ “Titus Family.” Daniel Hough, “Our Eminent Educators,” from *The Schools of Indiana: 1876* (Cincinnati: Wilson, Hinkle & Co.), digital transcription (<http://www.countyhistory.com/books/schools/003d.htm> : accessed 5 January 2007).

Third Generation, Ascending; Barbara (Herchelroth) Young Newman

6. **Jacob Young**, birth information unknown; died before October 1798 in Franklin County, Pennsylvania.¹²⁹ About 1795, he married Barbara Herchelroth. No marriage record has been found, but Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where Barbara's family home was located, is a likely place.

7. **Barbara Herchelroth**, was born on 6 June 1773 in Lancaster County, the daughter of Lawrence and Catherine Herchelroth.¹³⁰ She died 15 March 1868 in Stark County and is buried in the Niesz Evangelical United Brethren Church Cemetery in Canton Township.¹³¹

Barbara married second John Newman, born 2 August 1774; died on 26 December 1862 in Stark County.¹³² While no marriage record has been found, their first two children were born in Pennsylvania.

Barbara's Parentage

Four pieces of direct evidence provide proof that Barbara Herchelroth who was born in Lancaster County is the same person as the Barbara Newman who died in Stark County. (1) The baptismal records for Reiher's Church in Lancaster County show the baptism of Barbara Herchelroth, daughter of Lawrence and Catherine. She was born 6 June 1773 and was baptized July 11.¹³³ (2) Notes created by Rev. William S. Titus Sr., Barbara Newman's son-in-law, give her maiden name as Herclerode and the surnames of her husbands as Young and Newman.¹³⁴ William knew Barbara and would have been in a position to know the family history. (3) The death certificate for Barbara Newman of Stark County provides a calculated birth date of 6 June 1773.¹³⁵ (4) Barbara Newman of Stark County, the wife of John Newman, is named as one of the heirs to Lawrence Herchelroth's Lancaster County estate, and Catherine Herchelroth is named as Lawrence's widow.¹³⁶

¹²⁹ Franklin County Register of Wills – Estate Records. #463 for Jacob Young, 1798; Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg.

¹³⁰ William J. Hinke, "Church Record of the Cocalico Reformed Church, Now Bethany at Ephrata, Ephrata Township, Lancaster County, 1766–1861; Church Record of Reiher's Reformed Church, Now Zion's Reformed Church Near Brickerville, Lancaster County, 1766–1831, Continued as Record of Bethany Reformed Church Near Ephrata, Pa., 1832–1862" (typescript, 1942), 8, cotomg "Baptisms by Rev. John Christopher Gobrecht, 1770–1779." page 21; FHL film 1,671,347, item 1.

¹³¹ *Holy Bible* (Philadelphia: Miller and Burlock, n.d.); Newman family bible in possession of Peter E. Broadbent Jr. Richmond, Virginia, copy sent 24 Sept. 1995; Hereinafter called Newman Bible. *Cemetery Records, Stark County, Ohio*, p. 201, "Niesz Cemetery."

¹³² Newman Bible.

¹³³ Hinke, "Church Record of the Cocalico Reformed Church [Etc.]," p. 8.

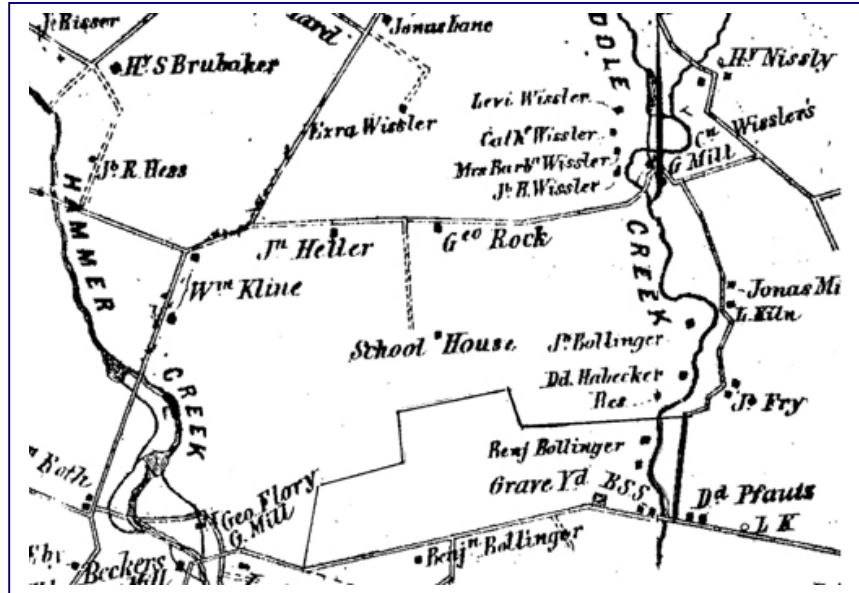
¹³⁴ "Titus Family."

¹³⁵ *Cemetery Records, Stark County, Ohio*, p. 201, "Niesz Cemetery."

¹³⁶ Lancaster County Deeds, Book Lb: 184–85.

Life Story

Barbara was one of nine children¹³⁷ who lived on the 115-acre land patent that John Hercleroad, her grandfather, took out in Warwick Township (now Clay Township) in 1747. Upon his death, Barbara's father, as the eldest son and heir-at-law, paid his siblings their share of the three hundred and twelve pounds value of the improvements and the land, and purchased the land on the west side of the Middle Creek, a branch of the Cocalico.¹³⁸ The land survey is outlined on this portion of a reprinted 1825 map, and the owner of the land was Benjamin Bollinger.¹³⁹



John Herchelroth's estate inventory listed a distillery, as well as shoe-making and barrel-making materials, all items that indicated the presence of outbuildings. Additionally, the wagons and horses listed in the inventory would have required shelter.¹⁴⁰ By 1779, the family was taxed on three horses, four horned cattle, and the distillery.¹⁴¹ By 1782, the family was taxed on three horses, four cattle, and seven sheep. Sixty gallons of whiskey were produced with the still.¹⁴² The distilling of rye and corn was common in Lancaster County. While much of the production was kept for home use, sixty gallons suggests this was a cash product that would provide funds to pay for flour and other necessities.

Shed built on the original Herchelroth house foundation.

Photo by Gerry Lenzen, July 1987.



¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Pennsylvania Bureau of Land Records, Patent Book AA5: 473–75; FHL film 1,028,836. Lancaster County Deeds R: 210–13.

¹³⁹ *Bridgens' Atlas of Lancaster Co. Penna.* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania: D. S. Bare, 1864), 18. "Elizabeth and Clay Townships." Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1883), 701.

¹⁴⁰ John Herchelroth dec'd 1847, Inventory, Lancaster County Orphan's Court, no book or page number.

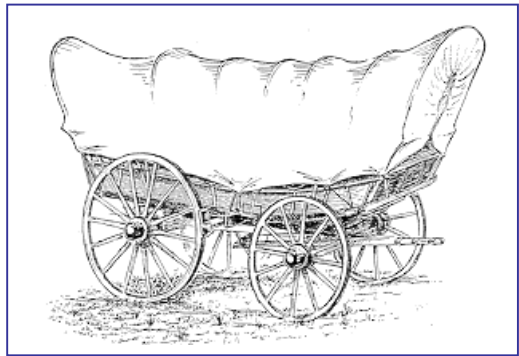
¹⁴¹ 1779 Warwick Twp. Tax Records; FHL film 1,449,298.

¹⁴² 1782 Warwick Twp. Tax Records; FHL film 1,449,298.

Barbara made her mark on deeds, and it is likely she had minimal book formal schooling. As a female, she would have been instructed in the activities associated with a self-contained farm. The seven sheep were likely raised for wool that Barbara and her sisters would spin into yarn and then weave into cloth for the family's clothes. Wool was a luxury because few people had sheep. Linen was the usual fabric, and it was made from flax plants raised on small patches of land. When the flax was ripe, it was pulled and tied into small bundles. When dry, the stalks were beaten against a log or stone. The broken stalks were separated, and the inner fiber was made ready for spinning.¹⁴³ The young ladies of the family would typically have this responsibility.

Barbara was 16 years old when the 1790 census was taken. The Herchelroth household then consisted of four males aged sixteen and above and five females.¹⁴⁴ Before 19 October 1798, when letters of administration were granted to the widow Barbara,¹⁴⁵ she married and had two children. Reiher's Reformed Church would have been a likely place for the marriage, but the marriage records for that church are silent for the period between December 1779 and June 1823.¹⁴⁶ Barbara's husband was likely a man from her Warwick Township neighborhood, and a 1792 non-alphabetical tax list of single men lists a Jacob Young. His name is two away from Henry Herchelroth who is probably Barbara's 21-year-old brother.¹⁴⁷ A clue to Jacob's birth family appears in a list of money paid to his estate; John Young paid ten pounds, and Peter Young repaid a five-pound note.¹⁴⁸

Barbara's first child, daughter Catherine, was born around 1796,¹⁴⁹ suggesting that Barbara and Jacob married around 1795. Jacob purchased the Guilford land in May 1797. It is likely that Barbara and family moved after birth of her daughter and before the land purchase. The Great Valley Road goes from Lancaster County to Franklin County via York to Gettysburg to Hagerstown and then north to Chambersburg, the major town in Franklin County. The distance is approximately one hundred miles. Typically, people loaded their household goods into a Conestoga wagon, and horses or oxen pulled the load. The wagon had broad wheels; the rear wheels were larger than the front and provided good stability.



Conestoga wagon.

¹⁴³ "Clay Township," *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*, p. 699.

¹⁴⁴ 1790 U. S. census, population schedule, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Warwick Twp., p. 159, line 25; National Archives microfilm M637, roll 8.

¹⁴⁵ Franklin County Estate Records, #463 for Jacob Young.

¹⁴⁶ Hinke, "Church Record of the Cocalico Reformed Church [Etc.]," p. 40.

¹⁴⁷ Warwick Township Tax List, dated 12 June 1792, unpaginated; FHL film 1,449,298.

¹⁴⁸ Franklin County Estate Records, #463 for Jacob Young.

¹⁴⁹ 1820 U. S. census, Stark County, Ohio, Canton Township, p. 173, line 27, Fredk Shafer; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 2 January 2007); from National Archives microfilm M33, roll 94.

1796 Pennsylvania road map showing the route from Lancaster to Franklin County.¹⁵⁰



Barbara, as a married woman, was considered a *feme covert*. Married women did not buy land in their own right, and their names rarely appear on purchase deeds. Jacob Young bought 55 acres in Guilford Township, Franklin County on 4 May 1797. Andrew Lemaster, also of Guilford, sold the land for 536 pounds, 5 shillings. Geographical names are not given in the deed, and it has not been possible to determine where the land was located. However, the neighbors were Jacob Snider, John Painter, and John Dixon.¹⁵¹

On 19 October 1798, Barbara Young, as Jacob's widow, was granted letters of administration for his estate.¹⁵² Only six months had passed since the birth of her daughter Mary, and the harvest season was drawing to a close. A young widow would typically receive the support of family members, and Barbara was no exception. John Herchelroth, her brother, was her co-administrator. The sureties were George Rock of Guilford Township, and Samuel Harkleroad of Lancaster County.¹⁵³ George Rock was her brother-in-law, but she did not have a brother Samuel. The identity of this "Samuel Harkleroad" remains unclear; possibly the name was misspelled by the court clerk.

Barbara's husband left little to mark his existence, and his estate inventory provides a cursory glimpse into his life. His wearing apparel consisted of two pairs of overalls and a pair of boots that were presumably used for farm work. In addition, he had two pair of britches, two shirts, two coats, four jackets, and a great coat with an inside coat. Two pairs of shoes, two hats, and six pairs of stockings completed his wardrobe.¹⁵⁴

The farm tools were the essential ones; a hand saw, an augur, axes, a maul, a mattock, a spade, a corn hoe, and a harrow and plough. With these tools and a horse, Barbara and Jacob had planted nine acres of rye and four acres of wheat, both of which were still in the ground. Wheat, rye,

¹⁵⁰ Abraham Bradley, "1796 Pennsylvania Road Map," digital image, *Road Maps of Pennsylvania* (<http://www.mapsofpa.com/18thcentury/1796bradley.jpg> : accessed 7 January 2007).

¹⁵¹ Franklin County Deeds, Book 4: 146; FHL film 323,796.

¹⁵² Franklin County Estate Records, #463 for Jacob Young.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

oats, and clover seed were put away for winter, and the flax was on the breaking frame. The flax would have been for Barbara to process into linen thread. Two cords of hickory wood were put aside for winter, and an equal amount of cordwood and firewood were waiting in heaps for someone, probably Barbara, to put them into racks.¹⁵⁵

Barbara Young no longer had a husband. It is she who was charged with paying the taxes on the family land in 1798, when Guilford Township compiled its assessment list for the federal direct tax. The names given for neighboring landowners, John Painter and John Dickson, verify that her land was the same land purchased by Jacob Young in 1797.¹⁵⁶ The 1 October 1798 date for her assessment further defines his death; it occurred before that date but after the winter rye and wheat had been planted.¹⁵⁷

Barbara's log house was 20 feet by 17 feet in size and contained two windows with ten lights (panes of glass). The cabin was valued at \$200.¹⁵⁸ The log barn was 45 feet by 19 feet,¹⁵⁹ and the 53 acres were valued at \$573.¹⁶⁰ The log cabin contained one bedstead, bedclothes, a table, chests, a coffee mill, a butter churn, earthen crocks, and dishes. A ten-plate stove that also provided a cooking surface for the skillet, pots, and pans warmed the occupants of the house.¹⁶¹

The presence of rye and wheat still in the ground suggests Barbara's husband died suddenly. Clues for Jacob's cause of death are found in the estate proceedings. Dr. Abraham Senseney received five shillings and six pence from the estate, probably for providing services during Jacob's final illness. Dr. Senseney, of Chambersburg, was one of the first physicians in the county.¹⁶² One might call in a physician when seriously injured, and farm work could be dangerous.

Barbara, as a young widow, would be faced with burying her husband. For his funeral expenses, she paid two men three pounds and twelve shillings.¹⁶³ Given that the value of a horse was three pounds, this sum was considerable. One man might have performed the grave-digging duties, and one man might have constructed a tombstone to mark Jacob's last resting place in a cemetery. The 1797 deed provides no geographic description by which his burial site could be matched to one of the twenty-three known cemeteries in Guilford Township.¹⁶⁴ However, Andrew Lemaster and John Leshner, who were associated with Barbara, lived one mile north of

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Particular List or Description of each Dwelling-house, which, with the Outhouses appurtenant thereto, and the Lot on which the same are erected, not exceeding two Acres in any Case, were owned, possessed, or occupied, on the First Day of October 1798, in Guilford Township, List B, frame 239, 1798 Direct Tax Lists of Pennsylvania; National Archives microfilm M322, roll 118.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ 1798 Tax, List #1, frame 361.

¹⁵⁹ 1798 Tax, List B, frame 329.

¹⁶⁰ 1798 Tax, List #2, frame 373.

¹⁶¹ Franklin County Estate Records, #463 for Jacob Young.

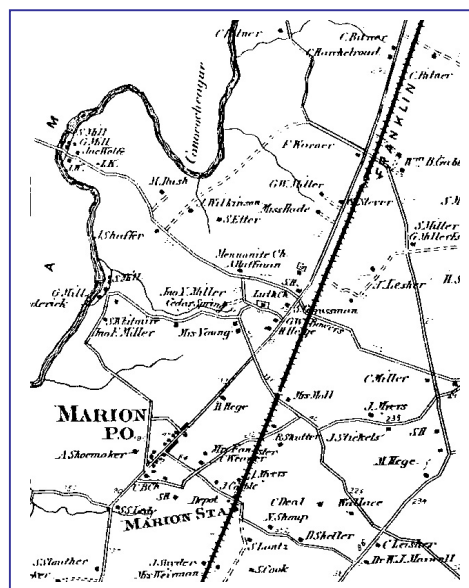
¹⁶² *Biographical Annals of Franklin County, Pennsylvania*, vol. 1 (1905; reprint, Westminster, MD: Family Line Publications, 1992), 355.

¹⁶³ Franklin County Estate Records, #463 for Jacob Young.

¹⁶⁴ James William Houpt, *Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Cemetery Locator* (Port Orange, FL: Houpt Publications, ca. 2000), 107–8.

present-day Marion, Pennsylvania.¹⁶⁵ One mile north of Marion falls in the center of this 1868 Marion area map.¹⁶⁶

Five cemeteries are near Marion.¹⁶⁷ An every name index for extant Franklin County cemetery records contains three Jacob Youngs, but none are Barbara's husband.¹⁶⁸ However, the index cites a burial for Lorentz Herchelroth in the Marion Mennonite Cemetery. His birth date of 18 January 1739 is a match for Barbara's father's birth date. His death date of 27 October 1804 coincides nicely with Barbara's father's November 1804 estate inventory.¹⁶⁹



Barbara Young paid tax on 53 acres in 1801. The period of taxation covered by this 1801 list would have included the official census date of 4 August 1800.¹⁷⁰ However, her name does not appear in the 1800 Franklin County census. The line items for rental income for six years that appear in the 1805 final account of Jacob's estate settlement suggests she rented out the property and lived with someone else. Widows, especially those like Barbara who had young children, typically remarried. Unfortunately, no marriage records exist for Franklin County in the early 1800s.¹⁷¹

Barbara was married to John Newman by the time her father died [in 1804]. That parental estate distribution says that Lawrence left "Catharine Hargelrode his widow and nine children his heirs at law among whom was Barbara who was at the time ... intermarried with one John Newman."¹⁷² Barbara's marriage date can be further narrowed down for she is not named in the 1802 Guilford Township tax list, suggesting she had married during that tax year. In 1803, John Nighman is taxed on 55 acres, one cow, and one horse, suggesting Barbara is again a *feme covert*.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁵ L. James Schaff, "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ in Franklin County," *The Kittochintny Historical Society Papers Read before the Society February 1912 to February 1915*, vol. 8 (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania: Franklin Repository Press, 1915), 143. Daniel Richard Lehman, "The Leshner Family," *Mennonites of the Washington County, Maryland, and Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Conference* (Lititz, Pennsylvania: Publication Board of the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church and Related areas, ca. 1990), 81–82.

¹⁶⁶ Guilford," *Atlas of Franklin County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Pomeroy & Beers, 1868), 16.

¹⁶⁷ Houpt Jr., *Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Cemetery Locator*, 113.

¹⁶⁸ James W. Houpt Jr., *Cemetery and Burial Records, Early 1700's to 1985; Index for Franklin County, Pennsylvania* (Port Orange, Florida: Houpt Publications, ca. 2000).

¹⁶⁹ Mennonite Cemetery Records, Marion, Franklin, Pennsylvania; FHL film 833,492. Frederick Weiser, *Records of Pastoral Acts at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Known in the Eighteenth Century as the Warwick Congregation Near Brickersville, Elizabeth Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1743-1799* (Breinigsville, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania German Society, 1983), 17.

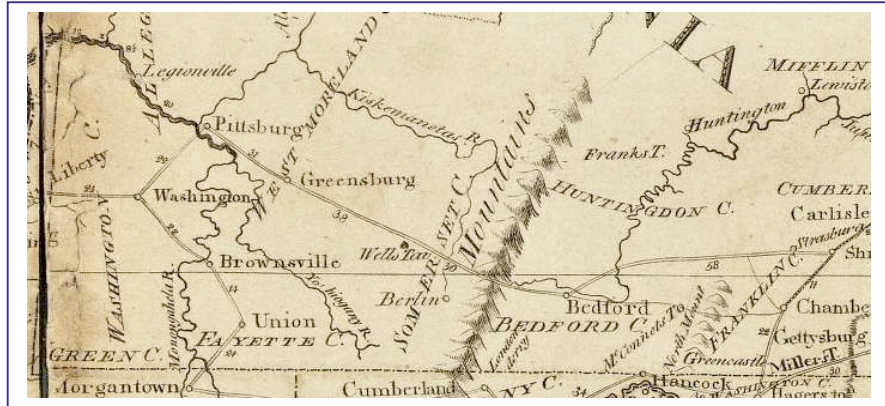
¹⁷⁰ Franklin County Tax Lists, Guilford Twp., roll 2185; Pennsylvania Museum and Historical Commission.

¹⁷¹ Roger D. Joslyn, CG, FASG, "Pennsylvania," *Ancestry's RedBook; American State, County & Town Sources Revised Edition* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Ancestry, 1992), 620.

¹⁷² John Newman et ux. to Laurance Herchelroth, Lancaster County Deeds L5: 184–85.

¹⁷³ Franklin County Tax Lists, Guilford Twp., roll 2185.

Barbara Nighman and John Harkelrode submitted the final account for Jacob Young’s probate in May 1805.¹⁷⁴ On 17 February 1806, guardians were appointed for Barbara’s daughters, and the family moved to Ohio where land was selling for \$2.00 per acre. They likely traveled on The Great Wagon Road.¹⁷⁵ By 1804, a stagecoach carried the mail from Chambersburg to Pittsburgh, but the road was rough and narrow.¹⁷⁶ This 1796 map shows The Great Wagon Road from Chambersburg to Pittsburgh and beyond.¹⁷⁷



John Niesz, in his “Reminiscences,” described the Canton area as it appeared when his family arrived in the spring of 1807:

There was a dim wagon-track thither, which had been opened by the Reeds and Newmans the preceding year . . .” A few weeks after squatting there we had cabin logs cut, and by gathering six or eight men and a few women in three or four miles around, we had a cabin raised and a clapboard roof put on, which made a comfortable shelter, with an earthen floor and large cracks to let the mosquitoes in and the smoke in the house to drive them out, for we had no flue nor chimney.¹⁷⁸

Barbara always lived on a self-contained farm, but her new farm was different. There were no nearby towns, no churches, and very few neighbors.¹⁷⁹ Barbara’s sister and brother-in-law, Catherine and George Rock, settled near Barbara.¹⁸⁰ On the map, each square is one-fourth

Twp 10, Range 9, Perry Township		Twp 10, Range 8, Canton Township	
24		19	
George Rock	John Newman	John Newman	
25		30	George Niesz
		George Niesz	

¹⁷⁴ Franklin County Estate Records, #463 for Jacob Young.

¹⁷⁵ Heald, *History of Stark County*, 1.

¹⁷⁶ David Eby, *Retracing of Famous Old Turnpike between Chambersburg and Pittsburgh* (N.P.: n.p., 1908), 11, digital book, *Franklin County Library System* (www.fclspa.org/books/turnpikel.pdf : accessed 3 January 2007).

¹⁷⁷ Abraham Bradley, “1796 Pennsylvania Road Map.”

¹⁷⁸ *Combination Atlas Map of Stark County*, 19, “Personal Reminiscences.”

¹⁷⁹ Heald, *History of Stark County*, 15.

¹⁸⁰ Carol Willsey Bell, CG, *Ohio Lands: Steubenville Land Office, 1800–1820* (Youngstown, Ohio: Privately printed, 1983), 12. John Newman Final Certificate No. 3380, Steubenville Land Office, Record Group 49, Records of the Bureau of Land Management, National Archives, Washington. 1812 Ohio Tax Duplicates; Genealogy Division, Stark County District Library.

of a section and measures one-half-mile by one-half-mile. The Rock family did not stay long; they are absent from the 1820 and later censuses. Barbara was born and raised in a German-speaking community. As new neighbors moved in, many spoke English. Her husband spoke German and subscribed to German-language newspapers, but life was surely not the same as when she was young and lived in an ethnic enclave in which everyone spoke her language.¹⁸¹

Barbara and John provided for their children as they aged. They sold parts of their land to Lawrence and Henry Newman, two of their sons. In 1832, Lawrence paid \$700 for the southeast quarter of section 24 in Township 10, Range 9. This appears to be the same land that George and Catherine Rock owned at one time.¹⁸² In 1833, Henry paid \$50 for ten acres in section 19. By 1850 all their children had established independent households, prompting the aging Barbara and John to bring in two younger people to live with them and, presumably, help them on their farm.¹⁸³

John Newman died on 26 December 1862. He bequeathed all his property to Barbara during her natural life and gave his son John Newman the east half of his land in section 24.¹⁸⁴ Barbara's health continued to decline, and in May 1865 she moved in with Sarah Newman, her daughter-in-law.¹⁸⁵ Barbara died on 15 March 1868. Her son-in-law John Niesz memorialized her by writing, "She would sing, pray, and feel the blessings of vital religion."¹⁸⁶ Both Barbara and John are buried in the Niesz Cemetery.¹⁸⁷



Barbara's tombstone bears her pet name, Barbary.
Photo by Peter Broadbent Jr., June 1999.

¹⁸¹ Stark County Probate C: 511. Stark County Probate #302, John Newman, intestate; Genealogy Division Stark County District Library

¹⁸² Stark County Deeds, Book I: 347-48.

¹⁸³ 1850 U.S. census, population schedule, Stark County, Ohio, Dist. No. 139, Canton Twp., dwelling 424, family 450, Jno. Newman household; National Archives microfilm M432, roll 730.

¹⁸⁴ Stark County Probate C: 511.

¹⁸⁵ John Newman personal inventory, Stark County Probate #302.

¹⁸⁶ Barbara Newman obituary, *Religious Telescope*, 25 April 1868.

¹⁸⁷ *Cemetery Records, Stark County, Ohio*, 201, "Niesz Cemetery."

Children

The children of Jacob and Barbara (Herclerode) Young are as follows:

- i. CATHERINE YOUNG, born before 1798. She married FREDERICK SHAFER on 3 July 1817 in Stark County, Ohio,¹⁸⁸ and had children Jacob, Andrew, John, Elizabeth, and Barbara.¹⁸⁹
- +3 ii. MARY “POLLY” YOUNG, born 9 April 1798 in Franklin County, Pennsylvania; died 20 October 1868 in Canton. She married JOHN NIESZ on 20 May 1820 in Canton and had children Elizabeth, William, Mary, Jacob J., Catherine, George W., Barbara E., John K., Sarah A., and Benjamin F.¹⁹⁰

The children of John and Barbara (Herclerode) Newman are as follows:

- iii. JOHN NEWMAN, born about 1803 in Pennsylvania.¹⁹¹ He married a woman named ELIZABETH and had children Margaret, Haman, Barbara, Peter, and Henry.¹⁹²
- iv. LAWRENCE NEWMAN, born about 1804 in Pennsylvania.¹⁹³ He married ISABELLE MCGAUGHEY on 29 October 1829 in Stark County¹⁹⁴ and had children Barbara, Lucinda, John, Henry, and Eliza.¹⁹⁵
- v. HENRY NEWMAN, born 6 March 1811,¹⁹⁶ died 10 September 1898.¹⁹⁷ He married SARAH HANE on 29 November 1832¹⁹⁸ and had children John L., Barbara E., Amanda, and Catharine.¹⁹⁹

Conclusion

The three women in this lineage are typical of women who left their father’s hearth to go to their husband’s hearth. They bore children, they tended the home and farm, and they left this world with little to mark their existence. Yet, these women were true American pioneers. They established homes in new lands. They taught their daughters the skills that women needed to possess. They took their culture to new areas. They fought loneliness and economic insufficiency. It is their existence that this lineage celebrates.

¹⁸⁸ “Titus Family.” *Early Marriages of Stark County, Ohio, 1809–1840*, 80.

¹⁸⁹ “Titus Family.”

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ 1850 U. S. census, population schedule, Huntington County, Indiana, District 52, p. 22, dwelling 151, family 151; John Newman; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 17 January 2007); from National Archives microfilm M432, roll 152.

¹⁹² “Titus Family.”

¹⁹³ 1850 U. S. census, population schedule, Richland County, Ohio, Springfield Twp., p. 369, dwelling 406, family 406, Lawrence Newman; digital image, *HeritageQuestOnline* (accessed 17 January 2007); from National Archives microfilm M432, roll 724.

¹⁹⁴ *Early Marriages of Stark County, Ohio*, 80.

¹⁹⁵ “Titus Family.”

¹⁹⁶ “Births,” Newman Bible.

¹⁹⁷ “Deaths,” Newman Bible.

¹⁹⁸ “Marriages,” Newman Bible.

¹⁹⁹ “Births,” Newman Bible.