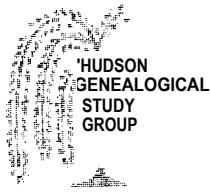


THE HUDSON GREEN

NEWSLETTER OF

Chapter, The Ohio Genealogical

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My Genealogical Adventure

by Sherry beam

It has been almost three years since my introduction to the wonderful world of genealogy. I have joined several organizations, attended numerous workshops and conferences, and gleaned much valuable information in the Hudson Archives and from other library materials. After attending the Ohio Genealogical Society and National Genealogical Society Conferences this year, I realized that I had never "spread my wings" and researched farther afield.

Until I became interested in genealogy, the history of our country and how it was formed were mainly names, dates and places to memorize for school. Now, as if a light bulb went on, I realized that so many of the ancestors each of us is researching are the very ones who helped to build, fight for, and form this nation.

From the beginning, I was drawn to the information I had obtained about John Christopher East. He is my husband Rick's great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather. I first read about him in the 1906 *History of Van Wert County, Ohio and Representative Citizens, Indexed*. It referred to the fact that he had been a Hessian soldier.

The Hessians were mercenaries from Hesse, Germany who were paid by the British to fight against the American revolutionists. They fought well, but were paid little, the bulk of the money going to their ruler. I wondered why this Hessian, like many others, would have remained in this country.

What made me choose John Christopher East for my first "outing" was a hit on Ancestry Plus. I was typing various family surnames into the *Abstract of Graves of Revolutionary Patriots*. I had just typed the name East, when to my shock and amazement, John Christopher appeared! How could this be? He was a

Hessian, not a Patriot—but there on the computer screen was the *Name, Cemetery, Location and Reference*. I printed the page, and kept looking at it and wondering what it meant. I shared my finding with several fellow genealogists, and the consensus was that at some point he changed sides and fought with the Colonials. The information stated that he was buried in Pickaway County near Circleville. The rest of the family had settled in Allen and Van Wert Counties.

In July (2003) I was going to be staying in Athens for a few days, so I thought maybe this was the perfect opportunity for me to do a real hands-on research trip. I gathered all the information I thought I would need, remembering the experiences related in lectures and workshops from those who had previously done this. I checked with both Pickaway and Fairfield County about the location, days and open times of their libraries and courthouses. I also did an Internet search for additional genealogical resources, and Map Quest for directions to and from all the places—including the cemetery—that I was planning to visit. I was off and ready!

Day 1: I drove to Fairfield County Library in Lancaster to research in their archives. I already knew that a John East had married an Elizabeth Huffer on April 3, 1817 in Fairfield County. It gave me a starting place and my first lead. After spending a few hours going through many of their reference books on local counties, I made a few copies of possible relatives (at 20c each), hoping that this was in preparation of something big. I next went to the well-secured courthouse a few blocks away to locate a copy of the East/Huffer marriage license. I wasn't prepared for it to be so simple. I was directed to a book about when the county was founded, checked the index and went right to the page. For a nickel a copy, I walked away