

THE HEADSTONE

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Issue VII

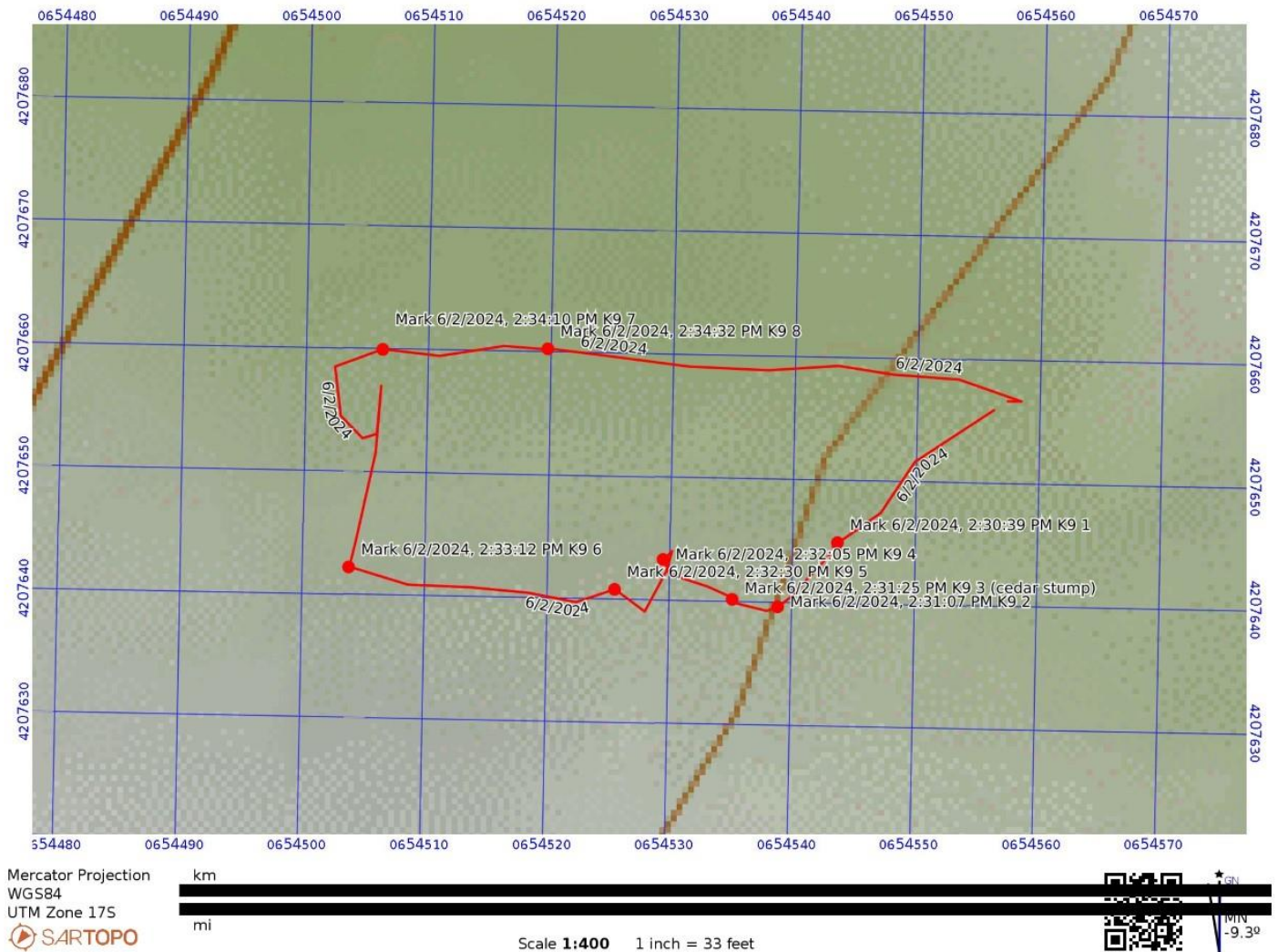
Greetings members and guests!

Hot and dry seems to be our official introduction to summer here in the Shenandoah Valley. While we are still above average for the year, we are dreadfully short for the month of June. Corn has rolled up and pasture and hay have just plain stopped growing. As I write this first part of the newsletter just a few days before summer solstice, I still hope for rain long before we celebrate Independence Day. I also hope that wherever you are as you read this newsletter, my hope has come to fruition for some of you.

In the April newsletter I reported that I had submitted a grant to Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) through their Operation Roundup program for funds to do work on the cemetery lane and with any money left over, remove some all-but-dead trees. We were awarded the grant and on June 3rd, I and our two other board of directors' members were on hand at the cemetery to receive a check for \$2,000.00 from SVEC representative Lydia Weaver. This will be a great help to our efforts. We also received notification from Gary Corder, Project Manager for Augusta County-Economic Development and Tourism, that we were not awarded funds as a result of the \$5,000.00 grant I applied for in May but were encouraged to reapply in 2025.



Dr. Connor and her noble canine Seamus returned to the cemetery on June 2nd and did some more work. Eight more canine alerts of potential unmarked graves. Below is a printout of the track Seamus followed and the locations of each alert. Two were outside the cemetery fence and in proximity to the one located last year outside the fence. They are marked as K9-1 and K9-2 on the map below. These two alert locations and the one from last year will be a priority for the radar to verify if Dr. Nash is able to return with that equipment in the future.



I have begun to record the correlations between the canine alerts and the verified graves located using the ground penetrating radar. The evidence is clear that Seamus can detect two-hundred-year-old graves! In addition to this documentation, I am resetting unmarked fieldstones found at the cemetery along the old fence line to mark these confirmed gravesites. I am also adding them to the Find A Grave database. While they don't provide any information given that they are unknown, they do document the existence of a grave, and I see that as just as important. Below is a photo of one such stone that has been set.

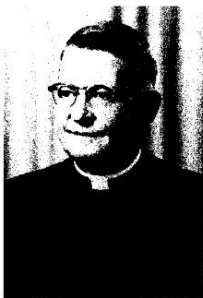


The stone below was also reset and was one that I found, documented, and removed during cleanup in 2021. It was originally found right where the GPR indicated a grave was located so I put that same stone right back where it belongs.



On a personal note of sorts, I have wondered for some time just how the cemetery might be cared for after I am too old or too dead to do it myself. My son Adam, who has been a big help on the cemetery work, has decided to build his house here in Dutch Hollow just up the ridge from our home, and but for the trees, within sight of the graveyard. He married his sweetheart on June 8th and while it is a comfort to know that someone will be nearby to tend to the cemetery, it is by far a greater comfort to know that they are close by to us. A Blessing I am grateful for. And maybe, just maybe, if they are so Blessed to have children, I will still be around to share a little about the cemetery with them.

Because we have started construction on the house and doing a lot of the work ourselves, I have been remiss in uploading a lot of anything new to the website recently but fear not, I did get about 20 obituaries and Life in Dutch Hollow files uploaded, however. Also, one additional file is a 48-page Hanger family research document compiled in the early 1960s by Reverend J. Lester Link, minister for Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church from 1961-1965 which has been uploaded to the Misc. Research Files Module. This document was provided to me by Sam & Beth Rowe. Below is a little about Rev. Link which I took from the book, *A Sesquicentennial History, Mount Tabor Lutheran Church 1839-1989*¹. He did all of his work the old-fashioned way, and his research documents were all compiled using a typewriter!



Rev. Thomas J. Weeks

has been in active service, including several tours of duty in Vietnam, since his ordination. An interesting note concerning the Lutheran presence and influence in the chaplaincy ranks is found in the *Lutheran Magazine* for September 28, 1988. It states that the Air Force Chief of Chaplains, the Navy Chief of Chaplains, the Army Chief of Chaplains, and the Chaplain of the Marine Corps are pastors of the E.L.C.A.

Pastor Weeks returned to a parish in South Carolina and served there until his death in March, 1969.

Pastor Otis W. Zirkle, 1954-1959, served in the marine corps before coming to us as pastor. He was educated at the University of Virginia and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He and his family made a much loved place for themselves in the hearts of all the Mount Tabor community. Their love and concern was evident in the way they became involved in our everyday

lives. Judy, his wife, is especially remembered for her vibrant spirit and her loving concern shown to all of us. An example of this is the patience and love she exhibited as she helped Antha Lucas get her driving permit. During his pastorate the new educational building was built and was dedicated on Sunday, December 1, 1957. A newspaper clipping in the scrapbook kept by Miss Irma Spirtler gives a detailed account of the building of this addition. After leaving Mount Tabor, Pastor Zirkle served at Christ Church, Radford, from 1959 to 1964. Since 1964 he has been at Holy Communion, Portsmouth.

Pastor J. Lester Link, 1961-1965, came to us after 23 years as pastor of Redeemer Church, Bristol, Tennessee. He was educated at Roanoke College and the Lutheran Southern Seminary. Pastor Link was known throughout the synod as a sound theological student and could be relied upon to give guidance when the need arose to get Biblical answers to questions. He was also much interested in genealogy and often could be found searching court records and visiting cemeteries to trace the roots of many of our families. He continued this interest after retirement in West Virginia and would spend considerable time in pursuit of his hobby. He was not a man to spend his time and money foolishly, and once when someone suggested that he could use a new suit, he gently replied that a man could wear only one suit at a time. At the time of his retirement he noted that he was interested in pure genealogy. "... not just to find out if one of my ancestors was a prominent figure in his day." During his study he had traced the records of more than 1,500 Links and 2,000 Coiners. His letter of resignation illustrates the kind of man and pastor he was:

I offer the following in lieu of an oral announcement. The time has now arrived for me to terminate my active ministry as a Lutheran pastor. I could not have wished it better than for this event to have occurred right here at Mount Tabor, which I consider to be the oldest Lutheran Stand in what is now Augusta County. I feel that this pastorate of seven years and eleven months, for better or worse, has been one of mutual fellowship of love in Christ, or at least I have desired it to be. Your patience and forbearance through the years is deeply

appreciated. You have amply provided and cared for me and mine above measure, and I am grateful for your every kindness. I have no treasure to leave with you other than to commit you to the eternal love and care of our Heavenly Father through his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sincerely,
Pastor Link



At the dedication of Mount Tabor parsonage, June 25, 1961. Left to right: Pastor J. Lester Link, Dr. J. Luther Mauney, President of Synod, Gene W. Spirtler, Wallace C. Rosen

One unusual aspect of his ministry occurred when an ordination service was celebrated at Mount Tabor for the ordination of the Rev. Yasusaki Faikada, a former Japanese soldier. The circumstances leading to his ordination are described in a clipping in Miss Irma Spirtler's scrapbook. It is enough to say that Pastor Link had befriended Mr. Faikada in Bristol some years before.

Mrs. Martha Coiner Link, Pastor Link's wife, was of an old Augusta County family and was very active in many areas of the church women's work, including service as President of the United Lutheran Church Women of the Synod of Virginia. Her sudden death so soon after coming to Mount Tabor was a deeply felt loss, not only to Mount Tabor, but to the whole church.

Pastor Link retired to the family home near Shepherdstown, West Virginia, and died in North Carolina on March 9, 1987. He is buried in Zion Lutheran Church Cemetery, Waynesboro.

For several years following the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Link, Mount Tabor was ably served by the Rev. Charles E. Spraker, formerly pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Staunton, who was also a vocational rehabilitation counselor at Western State Hospital. Pastor Spraker is a graduate of Roanoke College and the Southern Seminary. He

¹ Mount Tabor Historical and Anniversary Committee. *A Sesquicentennial History, Mount Tabor Lutheran Church 1839-1989*. Pp. 126-127.

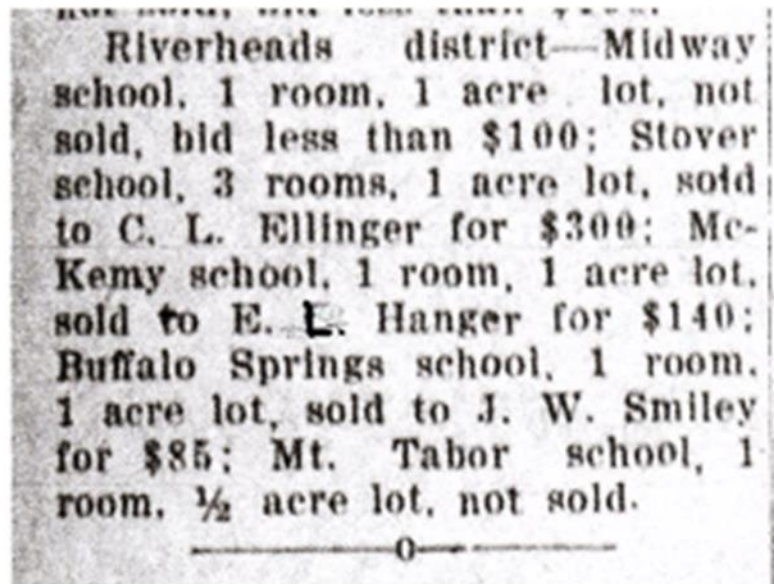
Richard Jones, a faithful member and descendant of folks buried in Dutch Hollow, emailed me the other day about Summerdean Schoolhouse where one of his ancestors had attended. While I have a fair amount of documentation on schoolhouses in the Dutch Hollow area, I did not realize at the time of his email that there was a Schoolhouse in Summerdean. This led to a little work on my part which resulted in a bigger project, a spreadsheet containing the names and locations of twenty-six schoolhouses just in the Riverheads District alone. All during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Needless to say, I have found that my research heretofore has only scratched the surface of our schoolhouse history in the Dutch Hollow area. Many of these schools are found on the 1885 Hotchkiss Map, but several are not listed there.

I plan to continue to compile information on these twenty-six schools to the extent that documentation can be found. I have included a little research on the McKemy Schoolhouse No. 7 (frequently spelled McKamy) which is what I would like the complete file to look like one day for all the schools, but I know that many of these structures are remembered by no one, with little documentation in existence and even fewer photos. My family owned McKemy Schoolhouse No. 7 until this May. My father attended grades 1 through 4 there from 1921 until 1926 when it closed. A little more about McKemy follows.

Ernest Hanger, Sr., my grandfather, purchased the schoolhouse and one acre in 1926 as the article at right describes². Around 1943 my uncle Granville and his wife Elsie purchased the property and remodeled the schoolhouse into a cottage-style home where they raised two children. They

sold the property to my mother and father in 1974 at which time my mother and father gave up 38 years of renting as a sharecropper and on July 4, 1974, we moved there, celebrating two forms of independence if you will. I and my two sisters sold the property in May of this year to a wonderful person who had been renting it for several years. But for a front and back porch being added, the structure has the same footprint as it did when built in 1878.

One of the goals I have is to try to compile a little about the teachers at these schools, at least the names, but I am not sure how successful I will be at locating information on that. I did find the article below of interest regarding McKemy Schoolhouse³. What I have compiled so far is the school's name and number, general location, whether it is still standing or not, number of rooms and acreage, sale/closure date, and the person who purchased the building and land and price paid. The names of students attending these schools will also be listed when found. Obviously, I won't find everything for all the schools but that is the overall goal.



² Newspapers.com. *The Daily News Leader*, Staunton, Virginia. 10 August 1926. Page 6.

³ Newspapers.com. *Staunton Spectator*, Staunton, Virginia. 20 March 1908. Page 3.

A vintage sepia-toned studio portrait of a man and a woman. The man is seated on the left, wearing a dark suit and a full beard. The woman stands to his right, wearing a dark, long-sleeved dress with a high collar and a full skirt. She has her hand on the man's shoulder. The background is a plain studio backdrop.

A distressing accident occurred to Miss Lottie Smith, only daughter of D. M. Smith, of this place, last Thursday. She is teaching school at McKemy and was playing with the children at noon, she jumped from the window to the ground a distance of four feet, and broke her right leg above the ankle, one bone being broken in two places. She is doing as well as could be expected. Miss Smith was preparing to go west where she expected to teach the coming winter. This accident will result very sadly to her. Her father will bring her home as soon as she can stand the trip.

Names and addresses of persons interviewed

Plan (Indicate locations of rooms, doorways, windows, alterations, etc.)

Site plan (Locate and identify outbuildings, dependencies and significant topographical features.)

The data sheet below was completed by Ann McCleary in October of 1979. She was an architectural historian who did a huge survey in the late 1970s through JMU and in conjunction with the Virginia Historical Landmarks Commission. Most if not all of her work is now recorded with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.



VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

SURVEY FORM

File no. 07-574

Negative no(s). 4938

Historic name	McKemy Schoolhouse #7	Common name	McKemy Schoolhouse
County/Town/City	Augusta		
Street address or route number	Rt. 726		
USGS Quad	Brownsburg 7.5	Date or period	1878
Original owner	Riverheads School District	Architect/builder/craftsmen	
Original use	Schoolhouse		
Present owner	Ernest H. Hanger, Jr.	Source of name	Hotchkiss & Waddell Map
Present owner address	Rt. 1, Box 112 Middlebrook, VA 24459	Source of date	Deed; style
Present use	Dwelling	Stories	One
Acreage	1 acre	Foundation and wall const'n	Frame with stone
		Roof type	Gable

State condition of structure and environs Good

State potential threats to structure
Note any archaeological interest

Should be investigated for possible register potential? yes ____ no ____

Architectural description (Note significant features of plan, structural system and interior and exterior decoration, taking care to point out aspects not visible or clear from photographs. Explain nature and period of all alterations and additions. List any outbuildings and their approximate ages, cemeteries, etc.)

This is a common schoolhouse form for this area in the late 19th century--a simple, rectangular building with the gable end towards the road with a front door flanked by windows and two windows on each side wall. The building contained one large room with a central stove flue. The Hangers have added the front porch, lowered the ceiling, and added two rooms in the attic

Interior inspected? Yes

Historical significance (Chain of title; individuals, families, events, etc., associated with the property.)

On September 21, 1879, William C. McKemy and his wife deeded one acre of land to the Riverheads School District for the schoolhouse (DB 94:136). The schoolhouse was used for grades one through seven until 1925, and in 1934 was sold to Ernest Hanger, Sr. The Hangers remodeled the house into a dwelling and moved here in 1943. Mr. and Mrs. H. Hanger bought the house in 1974.

I plan to build a new module just for files on the schoolhouses when time permits. I have nine schoolhouses already partially researched that can be uploaded and then added to as material is discovered. Some currently contain only one file, some have more. They are: Broadhead, Buffalo Springs, McKemy, Moffatt's Creek, Newport, Old Providence, Stover's, Summerdean, and Summit.

In finishing out this newsletter here on the cusp of July, we are still in desperate need of rainfall. I would argue that this is the worst I have seen in my time, partly due to the absence of any precipitation, but the greater culprit in my opinion has been the many days of sunshine with temperatures over ninety degrees. As an example of the impact here locally, the graveyard was last manicured on May 29th and is still not in desperate need of being mowed. Come rain, please come.

Website Updates: Members Section

In The Library / Archives Section

Ship Passenger Lists 1732-1754 - 15 Total

Unpublished Documents - 9 Total

Published Documents - 11 Total

Life in Dutch Hollow - 144 Total

Obituaries & Death Notices - 678 (Still several hundred, thousand to go)

Lucas-Fix Private Collection 109 Total

Department of Historical Resources Augusta County Archaeological Site Surveys - 16

DHH Cemetery Forensics, Etc. - Preliminary Findings of Ground Penetrating Radar for lower 35 feet of Cemetery and GPS of entire cemetery - 2

Frederich Hanger Descendants Over 200 pages of his descendants' names with city, county, and state of residence when known.

Cook-Teaford Cemetery - 2 Files

Coming Soon:

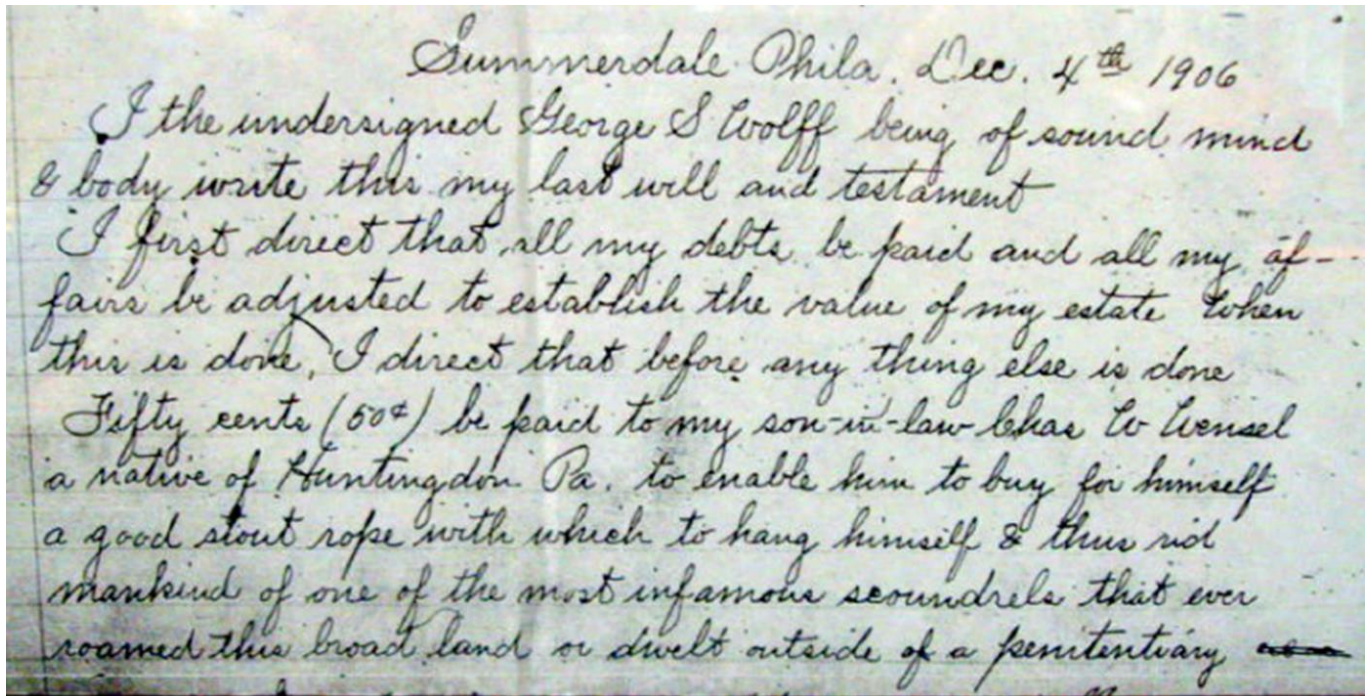
Elijah Jacob Hanger Private Collection (Approximately 450 files to be uploaded as time permits)

In The Focused Research Section

18 Files (40+ more to be researched, formatted, and uploaded as time permits)

The **Miscellaneous Research Files** module now contains 39 files. There are over 350 files contained within those 37 files. Please use them. All of that work is for your benefit. Take advantage of it!

To close out this month's newsletter I thought I would share a snippet from the last will and testament of George S. Wolff that Jim Liptrap apparently stumbled across when he was researching information for his book on the Liptrap family some years ago. As far as I know neither named men were any relation to Jim or anyone else that I know. Funny to read now....maybe not so much back then if you were the son-in-law, Charles W. Wensel.



Summerdale Phila. Dec. 4th 1906

I the undersigned George S. Wolff being of sound mind & body write this my last will and testament

I first direct that all my debts be paid and all my affairs be adjusted to establish the value of my estate When this is done, I direct that before any thing else is done

Fifty cents (50¢) be paid to my son-in-law Charles W. Wensel a native of Huntingdon Pa. to enable him to buy for himself a good stout rope with which to hang himself & thus rid mankind of one of the most infamous scoundrels that ever roamed this broad land or dwelt outside of a penitentiary

Until next month, Blessings & Happy Trails.

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery