

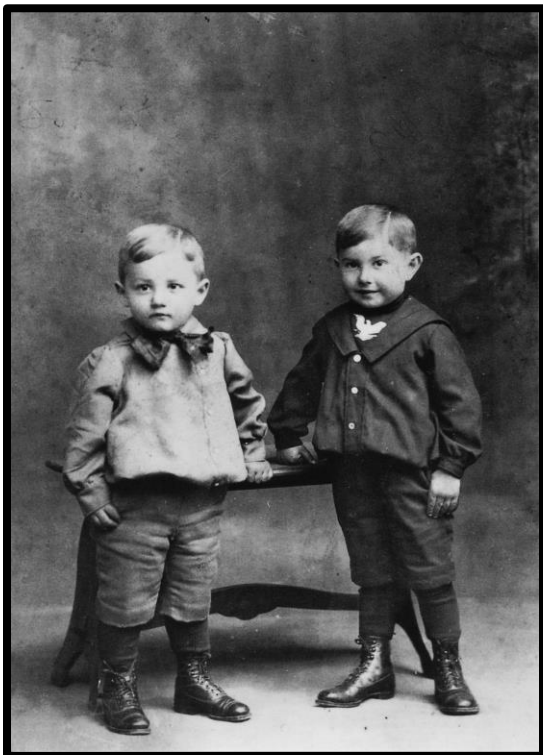
## EXPLORING THE CEMETERY

### Stained Glass Windows-2: Samuel Styer

This month I will ask you to enter the front of the church and turn to your left. At the top of the stairs is a stained glass window dedicated to Samuel S. Styer by his parents.



Samuel Stanford Styer, 17, died January 22, 1922, as the result of accidental drowning. Samuel and his brother John, age 19, and a friend, Earl Bissinger, ventured out onto the ice of the Conestoga River near Bushong's Mill, south of Oregon. The ice broke, and all were tossed into the creek. A neighbor, John Eichelberger, came to the rescue, and was able to save John and Earl. Samuel, too, almost made it to land, but was exhausted by the effort in the cold and sank before reaching shore.



Because it was late afternoon on a cold, winter day when darkness arrived early, Samuel's body was not recovered until the next morning. He was only 15 feet from the point where he went into the water.

Samuel and John were the children of William W. and Susan (Stark) Styer, both of whom are buried in the cemetery (Section 7). The Styers are an old Lancaster County family with a family graveyard in Caernarvon Township where William's parents lie. Susan Stark was the daughter of John and Anna (Kiel) Stark and was from Manheim Township.

Thanks to Gerald and Janice Styer, I have some lovely family photos to share. Here are Samuel (left) and John (right) who were born just 18 months apart in 1903 and 1905. They were likely bosom buddies even then.

A sister Helen was born in 1908 and another brother, Isaac, in 1913, followed by a daughter, Esther in 1915.

*(continued)*

This photo of the family was taken before the birth of Esther, probably about 1914. Susan (Stark) Styer has her hands on Helen's shoulders. Isaac is sitting in the chair. John and Sam are leaning on the wall next to their father, William Styer.



Helen never married. She died in 1973 and is buried next to her parents.

Isaac died in 1983 in Clifton Heights, Delaware, and is buried at Valley Forge Memorial Park.

Esther married H. Raymond Wenzel. Wenzel worked for the Hamilton Watch Company who sent him to St. Croix in the Virgin Islands for much of his career. The Wenzels retired to North Carolina and are buried there.



That leaves John. After surviving the accident on the ice, John lived to the ripe old age of 84. Until age 72 he worked as a carpenter for Wayne Grube. He married Alverta Rettew and had seven children: William, Gerald, Robert, Luther, Timothy, Mary Jane (Beam) and Ruth Ann (Kline). He too suffered a sudden demise while driving on Route 897 east of Kleinfeltersville. He was stricken while driving, pulled to side of the road, and died. John and his wife, Alverta, are buried in the same lot as his parents.

And herein lies a cautionary tale. We are all, at one time, young and immortal, and willing to take unnecessary risks. Most of us are lucky and survive. But no amount of preaching to our kids about the dangers of ice and other hazards really gets through. Most of us are lucky and survive our youth, but some don't.

*"We grow too soon old, and too late smart."*

