

Exploring the Cemetery: Stained Glass 6

Another month, another window.

This month's article concerns the window bearing the inscription: *Mr. and Mrs. M. W. Hess and Family*. The Hess family was among the very early Anabaptist settlers in the Warwick area, with a homestead just east of Lititz that includes a log house dating to the 1730s. Several of the earliest Hess men were Mennonite preachers, including Johannes Hess who died in 1830 and is buried in the old family graveyard within the homestead.

Johannes Hess's oldest son, Christian (1789-1855), lived closer to the Rothsville area and was buried in a now destroyed graveyard off the east side of Rothsville Station Road called the "Geyer Graveyard." Christian Hess's son, Joseph (1824-1895) is the first of the family line to be buried in the church cemetery, along with his wife, Elizabeth Weidler.

Joseph and Elizabeth (Weidler) Hess's son, Michael, is the head of the family mentioned in the window. Joseph was married first to Alice M. Kurtz, with whom he had five children, of whom only two, Sadie and Mary, survived childhood. Sadie never married. Mary graduated from Rothsville High School, and attended Boston University and Penn State University, after which she taught school. She was the second wife of William B. Schimp. All persons mentioned in this paragraph are buried in the church cemetery.

After Alice (Kurtz) Hess died, Michael Hess married Alice Neidermyer Hess who suffered from mental illness and apparently soaked her clothing in kerosene and set herself afire in 1932. Michael Hess lived until 1942.

Although I am still trying to date the windows, I believe that they were installed during the 1920's, perhaps the early 1930's. Nonetheless, none of the M. W. Hess family had any descendants, and so this memorial is especially poignant,

