

## LOOKINGBACK

# Church reunited with pewter donation

By Rich Kerstetter

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One of Centre County's best-known and most-cherished historical tales is the Aaronsburg Story.

Aaron Levy, a Jewish land speculator who founded Aaronsburg, donated a pewter Communion set to the town's churches, an act of charity celebrated in pageant as an example of brotherhood and tolerance.

Levy's gift actually mirrored another donation by a man who eventually settled in Aaronsburg and is buried in Wolf's Chapel in Haines Township.

Michael Weber (often written as Weaver) was born in Germany in 1722 and came to America in 1741 aboard the ship Lydia.

Michael and his wife, Anna Barbara, settled at Schaefferstown in what was then Lancaster but today is Lebanon County.

In 1764, as recorded by Pennsylvania historian William Henry Egle and cited in Charles Fisher's "Snyder County Pioneers," Michael and Anna Barbara "presented a pewter communion set to the Lutheran Church of Heidelberg Township."

Like many families of that time, the Webers eventually moved toward the frontier. During the Revolutionary War while living near Freeburg in what became Snyder County, he served as a captain in the Northumberland County Militia.

The Weber/Weaver family relocated again and his name appears on early assessment lists for Haines Township and Aaronsburg reprinted in John Blair Linn's "History of Centre and Clinton Counties, Pennsylvania."

Weber died in 1801 and was buried in Wolf's Chapel Cemetery.

His generous gift to St. Luke Lutheran Church was also buried — locked away in a vault and nearly forgotten — until descendants John Weaver and Debbie Nydegger, historians acting independently of each other, asked church officials about the Communion set.

Church members eventually located the two large flagons, a chalice and a tankard in a vault,

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Photo provided by Debbie Nydegger

**This pewter flagon is part of a Communion set donated to St. Luke Lutheran Church in Schaefferstown, Heidelberg Township, in what was then Lancaster County, by Michael Weber.**

Carl  
Weaver  
466-7152



# Gift rededicated to church

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where they had been stored for three decades.

On Oct. 30, as part of the church's 275th anniversary celebration, Weber's descendants — including Nydegger and her father, retired State College high school teacher Carl Weaver, of Linden Hall — re-enacted the original presentation, complete with a historian in period dress portraying the church's horseback-riding pastor, the Rev. F.A.C. Muhlenberg.

"Carl Weaver and his daughter walked up the aisle bearing the historic communion set so imbued with meaning," Nydegger wrote about the ceremony. "It was a gift from their ancestors that still seemed to bind people together."

*This is part of a series, appearing Mondays, of historical photographs from the Centre County region. If you have a historical photo that can be used for publication, contact Rich Kerstetter at 231-4621, or via e-mail.*



Photo provided by Debbie Nydegger

Michael Weber, whose name was often Anglicized as Weaver, served as a captain in the Northumberland County Militia during the Revolutionary War. While living at Schaefferstown in what is now Lebanon County in 1764, Weber donated a pewter Communion set to the Lutheran church there. Descendants, including Carl Weaver, of Linden Hall, recently reenacted the presentation as part of church's 275th anniversary celebration. Weber later moved to Freeburg in what is now Snyder County, and then to Aaronsburg. He is buried in Wolf's Chapel Cemetery and, while his tombstone is no longer there, it can be seen in this photograph by another descendant, John Weaver, of Florida.