
MTHS NEWS

Published by the Manchester Township Historical Society

March-April 2017

Fact or Fable: George and Frederick Bonge at Appomattox

By Charles Stambaugh

North Eastern York County History in Preservation (NEYCHIP)

From 1853-1861, Henry B. Bonge was the postmaster of Mount Campbell. At that time, Mount Campbell, which later became Mount Wolf, was part of Manchester Township. Bonge had a house at the present corner of Main and Walnut streets, and was a very respected man in the community.

His oldest son, George Fredrick Bonge, enlisted in the US Army to fight with General Taylor in Mexico, and, after that conflict, George stayed in the southern states. When the Civil War broke out a few years later, George joined the Confederate Army. This did not make his father or family very happy. When the Confederates invaded the area, it made the hate for the Rebs even greater.

George had two younger brothers, Fredrick M. and Daniel, who joined the 87th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry. It's likely they thought about what they would do if they met their brother in battle. At war's end, the 87th Regiment was at Appomattox during General Lee's surrender. Fredrick was discharged from the Union Army a few months later. When he got home, it is said he had met his brother George from the Army of Virginia. (Rentzel 2010, 21)



Frederick Bonge

The Civil War tore families and communities apart both in the South and in the North. There was much loss, sorrow, and pain on both sides. Stories were sometimes filled with half-truths to make the pain easier to bear or to make a happy ending. Also, there was no good means to trace the facts, or the facts were simply ignored or interpreted incorrectly.

Fact or Fable?

So, is this story fact or fable? As a local historian, I wanted to prove this with facts. Here is what my recent research for posting the correct story on NeyChip.com:

Fact: York County Military records and documents show that Fredrick and Daniel Bonge were in 87th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry.

Fact: The 87th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry and the Army of Virginia was at Appomattox.



Mt. Wolf Civil War veterans

Possible: Fredrick and Daniel were at Appomattox because their discharge papers were issued after this event.

Fact: George was the oldest son of Henry B. Bonge. Their family tree has him removed but there are other documents proving it.

Fact: George Fredrick Bonge joined the Confederate Army. Confederate records show a Fredrick Bonge joined from Virginia. George could have used his middle name to enlist. There are no records of his discharge or fate.

Fable: George, from the South, and Fredrick, from the North, met peacefully at Appomattox symbolizing a united family and country. In trying to prove this, I found that another brother, William Bonge, had moved to Indiana and became a leading citizen like his father. His family lineage and memoirs from this area were listed in *A Chronicle of their People Past and Present with Family Lineage and Personal Memoirs*. (Shinn 1914) It shares a different fate about his brother: *The eldest of the children, George, became imbued with the wanderlust when a youth, and he traveled extensively throughout the country. He was in the South at the outbreak of the Civil War and was impressed into the Confederate service, and he was killed by the discharge of a cannon.*

See this story and other Civil War history in the Mount Wolf area at: www.neychip.com/1850-1910.html

Sources:

Rentzel, Bradley. 2010. *A History of Mount Wolf Borough: The Centennial Edition*. Charles Stambaugh, editor.

Shinn, Benjamin G., ed. 1914. [*Blackford and Grant Counties, Indiana: A Chronicle of their People Past and Present with Family Lineage and Personal Memoirs*](#). New York: Lewis Publishing Co. Submitted by Peggy Karol.

Manchester Township Historical Society

This newsletter is an educational outreach of the Manchester Township Historical Society. If you'd like to help us share the rich history of our area through oral history, photographs, or other memorabilia, we'd be interested in whatever you have to offer.

Contact the Society at: 717.467.1732

ManTwpHistory@gmail.com

www.ManTwpHistory.com

Editor: Bill Einsig