

2023 Dreibelbis Cousins of America Reunion Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the John Jacob Dreibelbis Cousins of America, Inc., annual family reunion held August 20, 2023, at the Dreibelbis Historic Farm in Virginville, PA. This reunion celebrates the 291st anniversary of our ancestors' arrival on America's shores. There were 68 in attendance and five of these reported that this was their first time attending the reunion. Cousins were in attendance from Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Nevada, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Washington states.

The weather this year was mostly sunny with lower humidity than is typical for this time of year. Free house tours were available for cousins to enjoy with several volunteers stationed throughout to explain its history. Outdoor activities included hayrides, walking the nature trail or strolling the property to see the barn, outside structures and farm equipment. Fred Polaski continued to update our genealogy as folks stopped by to discuss their heritage. The Dreibelbis store was open for cousins to peruse and buy memorabilia. Amy Langman had artifacts out on display and continued to photograph families for genealogy records.

As in previous years, lunch was provided by the Dreibelbis Farm Historical Society from 11:30am to 1:00pm. Janine Dreibelbis and several volunteers prepared and served lunch. This year, Diane Dreibelbis provided a birthday cake for Dorothy Miller, which was enjoyed along with ice-cream after singing "Happy Birthday."

The Dreibelbis Cousins of America yearly meeting began at 1:03pm. with President Eric Dreibelbis presiding. In keeping with tradition, the meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of "Proud to Be an American."

Simone Sauers-Houck brought the kids to the front where she explained what it was like to be a young girl on the Jacob B. Dreibelbis farm. She and her brother spent time with Parker, Sally, and Jacob and always felt included when visiting. Simone shared some funny stories about bringing the cows in, taking walks, gathering eggs, and how Parker tried to teach her how to milk the cows. She ended with talking about Sally's wonderful cooking on the wood stove with her frying pan. There were always vegetables from the garden along with home-made jam and butter on the table. Once her presentation was over, she took the children to Diane Dreibelbis' "Kids Corner," for activities and their enthusiasm could be heard throughout the barnyard.

Eric motioned to accept the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports, which were posted outside the barn. The motion was approved unanimously.

Eric presented to Carolyn Hollenbach an old picture of her family farm as a thank you for the years of service as DCOA secretary. She expressed her gratitude and admiration for the officers for all they do to continue keeping the family history alive. Next, Eric thanked Paul and Dorothy Miller for all the time and energy they put into the organization over the years.

Eric then motioned to appoint Kelly Leisey as a Vice President of DCOA and Aimee Dreibelbis as Secretary. The motion was approved unanimously.

Fred Polaski gave a brief explanation of expenditures and income of the organization, sharing that our balance is \$200 more than it was last year at this time.

Fred Polaski spoke about his genealogy work. He reported that there are more than 25,000 names in our

genealogy, which ends at the fourth generation in many cases. He believes we would have about 100,000 more cousins on record if more information was received for generations beyond that. He also explained how to receive access to our private ancestry.com pages. While he gets many deceased names, he is hoping to receive more newborn names and asked the family to spread the word. Fred provided an update about a cousin that had errantly been reported as deceased and then read the names of family members recently deceased. A moment of silence was observed in their memory.

Amy Langman welcomed folks to the artifacts tent to see pieces of the family history. She also encouraged anyone who hasn't had their photo taken for our records, to do so and explained the pictures would not be shared on social media but are used for recording family history.

Mark Dreibelbis, owner of the Dreibelbis Historic Farm, spoke about the vision he and his wife Janine had over 25 years ago when they purchased the farm. He went on to explain the purpose of the Dreibelbis Farm Historical Society, events that are held annually, which include hosting DCOA reunion, and expressed his gratitude for the volunteers that continue to keep the vision alive.

Jean Davis asked for any first-time attendees to raise their hands and let them choose from an assortment of \$10 gift cards.

Prizes were presented by Jean Davis and recipients could choose from \$10 Walmart and \$10 McDonald's gift cards. The oldest man present was determined to be Paul Miller, of Shoemakersville, Pennsylvania, age 93. The oldest woman, at age 93, was Eleanor Dreibelbis of Mertztown, Pennsylvania. The youngest child present was Lily Dreibelbis of Downingtown, Pennsylvania, 2 years old. Coryn Dreibelbis of Reno Nevada, married in 2019, was the most recently married. The greatest distance traveled was also won by Coryn Dreibelbis. Registration number winners were #20, Carl Hollenbach of Shoemakersville, Pennsylvania, and #24, Linda Fix of Hamburg, PA.

Several collection baskets were distributed to pass around for donations.

Fred Polaski briefly shared about his trip to Switzerland where he visited Holderbank Reformed Church and saw a stained-glass window which was paid for by five Dreibelbis brothers. There are still many Dreibelbis cousins in this region, from where the family originated. He went on to talk about the Church of Hassloch and the Rhine River, also areas where our ancestors resided.

In closing, we sang "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." It was time for cleanup, and any help was appreciated as chairs and tables were put away, along with all the other things brought out for the reunion. It is our sincere hope that everyone had a fun and interesting visit to the farm and that many of you will return next year on Sunday, August 18, 2024.

Slate of officers of the Dreibelbis Cousins of America, Inc. for the year 2023:

Eric P. Dreibelbis, President
Jean Davis, Vice President
Amy Langman, Vice President

Kelly Leisey, Vice President
Fred Polaski, Treasurer
Aimee Dreibelbis, Secretary

Respectfully submitted, Aimee Dreibelbis, Secretary