

2024 Dreibelbis Cousins of America Reunion Meeting Minutes

The annual meeting of the John Jacob Dreibelbis Cousins of America, Inc., took place on August 25, 2024, at the Dreibelbis Historic Farm in Virginville, PA, commemorating the 292nd anniversary of our ancestors' arrival in America. A total of 58 members attended, representing Delaware, Georgia, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

The event was blessed with sunny weather. Attendees enjoyed free house tours led by Jean Davis at 10:45 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Outdoor activities included walking the nature trail and 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 and run by Kelly Leisey for cousins to peruse and buy memorabilia. Amy Langman had artifacts out on display and continued to photograph families for genealogy records.

Two draft versions of the DCOA logo were displayed at the registration table to gather input from cousins on their preference. The circular design received 17 votes, while the square design did not receive any.

Each attendee received a Reunion Survey upon registration and was encouraged to complete it before leaving. The feedback will help the officers better understand attendee satisfaction and gather suggestions for future reunions.

This year, we introduced a catered lunch from Kathryn's Katering, Blandon, PA, served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Dreibelbis Cousins of America provided beverages, and dessert was a cake generously supplied by Diane Dreibelbis.

The annual meeting of the Dreibelbis Cousins of America commenced at 1:25 p.m., presided over by Treasurer Fred Polaski and Vice President Jean Davis. In keeping with tradition, the meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of "Proud to Be an American."

Fred Polaski explained that this year's reunion was moved to the fourth Sunday of August to attract more cousins traveling from afar, giving them the opportunity to also attend the Dreibelbis Farm Historical Society's annual farm festival the day before. He encouraged everyone to complete the Reunion Survey and noted that our current officers "aren't getting any younger," urging others to get involved and spread the word among other cousins to ensure the continued vitality of our organization for future generations.

Fred mentioned that the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were posted on the bulletin board to review and provided a brief explanation of expenditures and income of the organization over the last year.

Fred Polaski provided an update on genealogy efforts, reporting over 25,400 names recorded in our family history. He noted that many branches end at the fourth generation and encouraged contributions of information for further generations. He believes we would have about 100,000 more cousins on record if more information was received for generations beyond that. Fred 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, explained the mission of the Dreibelbis Farm Historical Society and his gratitude for the donations and volunteer support the organization continues to receive. He went on to explain the reunion had been moved to the day after the annual Farm Festival, in hopes of Cousins who are out of the area being able to attend both events.

Jean Davis presented prizes, offering recipients a choice between \$10 Walmart and \$10 McDonald's gift cards. The oldest man present was determined to be Terry Michael, of Whitehall, Pennsylvania, age 85. The oldest woman, at age 94, was Eleanor Dreibelbis of Mertztown, Pennsylvania. The youngest child present was Lily Dreibelbis of Downingtown, Pennsylvania, 3 years old. Jacob and Rachael Dreibelbis of Hoboken, NJ, were the most recently married at just one month! The greatest distance traveled was Jim Trivelpiece from Duluth, Washington. Registration number winners were #39, Debra Rodgers, and #59, James Hess.

Several collection baskets were distributed to pass around for donations.

Jean Davis delivered an engaging presentation on the women who journeyed westward to Oregon and California in the 1800s, highlighting their quest for a better life.

Three games of Dreibelbis Bingo were played as a last activity which proved to be quite educational as Jean read trivia questions (and provided answers) about the Dreibelbis family. \$10 Walmart and \$10 McDonald's gift cards were handed out as prizes for regular Bingo, diagonal Bingo and a full card winners.

The event concluded with a collective singing of "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." Volunteers were greatly appreciated in assisting with the cleanup of chairs, tables, and other items used during the reunion.

Slate of officers of the John Jacob Dreibelbis Cousins of America, Inc. for the year 2024:

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