



# OUR HERITAGE

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## Recognizing Henry William Stiegel's Gift Second Sunday In June

Much has been written about Henry William Stiegel's gift of land to the Zion Lutheran Church of Manheim and the church's payment as required by a stipulation in the 1772 indenture, but what you will read in the following was written by George Heiges specifically for the Baron Stiegel Coin Club and the gold medal that the organization issued in 1968.

### THE FESTIVAL OF THE RED ROSE

On each second Sunday in June since 1892 many thousands of Americans have journeyed to the town of Manheim in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania to participate in the Festival of the Red Rose. While the story of this event begins in the aforementioned year, the red rose as it is intertwined with the history of Zion Lutheran Church takes us many years into the past. It was in 1769 that the congregation was organized in the residence of Manheim's founder and celebrated glassmaker, Henry William Stiegel; and it was several years later — 1772 — that Mr. Stiegel and his wife Elizabeth conveyed to their fellow Lutherans a piece of ground on which to erect a church. The consideration was but nominal, it being only five shillings *"and in the month of June yearly forever hereafter the rent of one red rose if the same shall be lawfully demanded."* Whether the Stiegels at any time received this unique rent is a moot question, even though a tradition has persisted that twice in Mr. Stiegel's lifetime he actually received the rental of a red rose. Certain it is that with the passing of years, this annual stipulation was neither paid nor demanded and all but forgotten, too, was Henry William Stiegel, patron of the town and donor of the church lot.

Then came the year 1891 and the building of a new edifice for the Manheim Lutheran congregation. By this time the name of Stiegel was indeed a very vague memory and even the exquisite glass that bears his name had not become the delight of antiquarians. Yet there was some legend abroad which linked a red rose with the history of Stiegel and the church. Dr. J. H. Sieling, a physician as well as a local historian and member of the congregation resolved to search the parish records to learn, if possible, the source of these legends. Fortunately, the original deed from the Stiegels to their fellow believers was extant (even as it is today) and in that ancient document — dated December 4, 1772 — Dr. Sieling was thrilled to read the stipulation of the rental of a red rose. Almost at once, the enthusiastic doctor visualized for the chancel of the new church a window which would bear the image of a red rose and the name of Henry William Stiegel as well as the name of the Reverend John Hershey Menges, who was pastor at the time.

With the memorial window in place, Dr. Sieling was still not fully satisfied with his efforts to bring the history of his beloved church into proper focus. He next proposed that a special annual service be held in the month of June when one red rose would be paid to a descendant of Stiegel, although at the time it was not known if any descendants of Manheim's founder were living. Nevertheless, plans proceeded for such a program, which was titled the "Feast of Roses," and several weeks before the second Sunday in June, 1892, John C. Stiegel of Harrisonburg, Virginia came forward and having proved his lineage — he was a great-great grandson — was invited to come to Manheim as a guest of the town and receive the church ground rental as appointed by his ancestor.

On the day before the scheduled rose payment service, John C. Stiegel was welcomed to Manheim by the music of a brass band and by the booming of a cannon, carrying out, according to legend, the manner in which the first Stiegel was wont to be welcomed to his town after a sojourn in Philadelphia or some more distant point. At the Manheim railroad station on that Saturday evening in 1892 there was waiting a blank landau drawn by two coal black horses, this again simulating, according to legend, the elaborate equipage of the founder. With honor guest John Stiegel seated in the landau and escorted by the band and members of Stiegel Castle, Knights of the Golden Eagle in their resplendent uniforms, the precession passed through the streets of the town before it came to a stop at the K.G.E. Hall, where appropriate addresses of welcome were delivered.

On the following day — June 5, 1892 — as many of the thousands of visitors as were able, crowded into the new church of Zion Lutheran congregation and witnessed the inauguration of the Feast of Roses and the payment for the first time of *one red rose* to a scion of Henry William Stiegel, exactly as written in the deed of 1772. The presentation at that first Feast of Roses was made by Pastor Menges on behalf of the congregation but since 1894 attorneys have been chosen to represent the congregation in this portion of the service and thus lend to the presentation a semi-legal aspect. This innovation has brought to the service as active participants many of Pennsylvania's eminent men of the bench and the bar as well as six governors of the commonwealth.

Only twice since its inception has this annual service been omitted and that was in the two years of World War One. Now known as the Festival of the Red Rose, it continues to be an event which brings folks from far and near, but no longer do thousands come aimlessly as was true in the past. Those who now travel to Manheim to be present and be part of the Festival of the Red Rose do so because they have a deep and abiding interest in the Christian Church and its tremendous importance in the history of our nation.

George L. Heiges (1968)



The artwork on the medal was created for the Baron Stiegel Coin Club by Mrs. Berl Hahn.



The pictured Two Shillings and Six-pence Pennsylvania Colonial note dated April 3, 1772 could have been the type of payment given to Henry William Stiegel. It would have taken two notes to equal the full Five Shillings payment.



The above picture of Catherine Black, a 9th generation descendant of Henry Wm. Stiegel and his wife Elizabeth Holtz, was taken in our garden in 2002. Catherine accepted the Zion Lutheran Church red rose payment in 1993.