

Just Write

Gloucester County Library System

Logan Township Branch

Writers Group

Selections

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Freeholder Director, **Robert M. Damming** | Freeholder Library Liaison, **Lyman Barnes**



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Faith Says

By Marian M. Fay from her blog,
“Tea and Reverie”

For every soft caress that brushes away your tears of pain, anger, and frustration
There is goodness deeply felt, God is good.

For every outstretched hand that catches your stumbles, scrapes, breaks and hidden
bruises.
There is strength lifting you up and building your trust. God can be trusted. He is
faithful.

For every gently spoken word of encouragement that dispels feelings of not good enough,
and who cares?
There is an abiding flame of hope. God is hope.

For every hug that shuts out distractions that weigh heavily on your shoulders and
intensely in your muscles.
There is a loving release of peace. God is love and He gives you His peace.

For every celebration of revelation of whom we really are and who created us.
There is true joy in the knowledge you have a place of love to come home to.

To God, From M.

By Marian M. Fay from her blog, "Tea and Reverie"

It's freezing, deathly bone chilling cold outside
May I offer you a roof and four walls, come and sit by the fire
I had to turn my only child out to the streets
My shoulder is dry, cry on it
I have difficulty helping my husband pay all the monthly bills
My wealth is vast, all you need to do is ask
I've lost my parents and my sisters live far away
Make me your family for I've always been here for you
I am getting older and frailer
My strength is everlasting, lean on me
I must say you have an answer for everything
My comprehension of life is beyond your experience
I have to say bye for now but we will talk again soon
My time is always yours

Thanks,
M.

WORDS

Jane Harre

Words are magical, powerful things. They almost have a life of their own; you can tell by the reactions they cause. Sweet words, angry words, words of caution; even as you read these categories, your mind is probably supplying examples of some you have heard or used. Some folks like to talk a lot, some like to read a lot, others prefer to listen, and, of course, there are those whose passion is to string words together in written form.

Since you are reading this publication put out by the Logan Library's writing group, perhaps you are a bit interested in pen on paper yourself.

Several months ago someone found a book on the library shelves with which the group has experimented a bit. There are exercises and suggestions, including the most common advice given would-be writers: Write! Whatever you do, write.

In The Writer's Path by Walton and Toomey, an early exercise recommended choosing one word and then writing ten or so random sentences containing that word. Waiting at the dentist office for the grandchildren, I found it entertaining to search my mind and jot some sentences. It is surprising how varied one topic can be.

I chose "trees".

1. When my grandmother saw a new house, her first comment would be that it needed shade trees.
2. My sister Betty and I love trees of many kinds especially unusual ones.
3. Delicious ground cinnamon comes from the bark of a tree.
4. The old trees at Red Bank Battlefield have wonderful trunks with many oddities.
5. I have a new willow tree; my husband bought it and my grandson planted it.
6. Our other trees drop branches and need attention.
7. Mr. Borrie, the lawnmower salesman, suggested trimming the red maple for ease in mowing.
8. We live across the street from a woods.
9. Mr. du Pont bought the Pennsylvania property that is now Longwood Gardens because he wanted to save its trees.
10. The cross of Christ is sometimes referred to as "the tree". A verse in the Old Testament speaks of the curse on one who dies on "a tree".

Taking any of these sentences and adding more could lead to a short piece. Our minds are full of ideas but one must begin somewhere to write them down, even if they don't seem valuable at the moment. All advisors say the action must begin. Just write!

A FAVORITE COLOR

Water droplets falling as overripe fruit from a tree.
Shaken, we call this rain.
Do you have a favorite color?
Would this be it... blue?

This artwork fills the sills
Seems verily it contains blue
And all its hues.
But wait! Here pause... time for these views.

The artist labeled this painting with the words dance rain
As the poet artist V Greene quotes
"... learning to dance in the rain."
To provide relief from pain.
Move your feet...those hues of blues be flute.

Then those dark shades be cello don't you hear?
As perceived by this fellow the music mellow.
Kachina Dance Doll prance.
Out of the dream to see.

Not sure, pure perception
There they be... multiple depictions
In the mist Mayan faces by prescription
Including many faces with figure images by subscription.

Our Artist gifts us by abstraction
Visual language by lines, shapes, and color
The gist by composition progression
Upper right Mayan: with sculptures busts.

How many to see, that are musts?
For with color, form, and much imagination
These forms are multiple faces and traces
Whoa! Watch out! The tub overflowed its braces.

Subliminal suggestion, phantasm, illusion
Out of the deluge ...music, art, peace
Our thanks to our artist
And to Thee the ancient Shaker.

**General John A. “Black Jack” Logan – Namesake of Logan Township,
New Jersey (Part I) – by Ben Carlton**

On March 7, 1877, the New Jersey State Legislature carved off a slice of Woolwich Township and pronounced it, “West Woolwich.” Only one day shy of a year later, West Woolwich was renamed, “Logan Township,” after the famed Civil War general and illustrious politician, John Alexander Logan of Illinois. Now the question remains, “Why was this particular area of New Jersey named after this man, a native Illinoisian?” After all, John Logan had no direct connection to Woolwich, Gloucester County, or even to the state of New Jersey (other than the occasional family vacation to Atlantic City Logan took as a Republican senator when living in Washington, DC, in the 1870s). By answering a second query, “Who was John A. Logan?,” this article will attempt to answer the former question and also definitively demonstrate why Logan Township is named after this distinguished son of Illinois.

John A. Logan was arguably the Union’s premier civilian combat general of the Civil War. With no military training to speak of, Logan rose to command, albeit briefly, an entire Union army. He was decidedly not one of those political generals in the same mold as a Benjamin Butler, Nathaniel Banks, or even his fellow Illinois politician, John McClernand. John Logan had two great, God-given talents: war and politics.

John Logan was born February 9, 1826, on a farm in Jackson County, Illinois, in an area know as Little Egypt. This particular region of southern Illinois was a democratic stronghold that had been settled largely by former inhabitants of the slave states, who were destined to sympathize, if not entirely embrace, the southern cause when Civil War erupted in 1861.

Logan's father, Dr. John Logan, was an immigrant from Northern Ireland, who practiced frontier medicine in his adopted country in the region of Little Egypt. He also dabbled in horse trading, his true passion. In fact, even as a young boy, John became a celebrated jockey, riding his father's favorite steeds in the races. Thus John would remain a superb horseman and always have a lifelong love for fast horses.

John's father wanted his son to follow in his footsteps and become a physician. Instead, John, being an independent young man of his own mind, began reading the law and soon became a successful lawyer, which led him eventually into local politics.

Logan served in the Mexican War as a Lieutenant in the 1st Illinois volunteer regiment. His unit never saw any action on the battlefield, but many of their number came down with measles, including Logan. Logan recovered, but nine of his fellow soldiers did not and perished from the effects of the disease.

After the war with Mexico, Logan returned to the law and politics. He became the prosecuting attorney for the Third Judicial District of Illinois, and served in the state House of Representatives. Logan helped draft a law in 1853 that prevented blacks, including freedmen, from settling in the state of Illinois. In 1858 he was elected as a Democrat to the U.S. House of Representatives. He supported Stephen A. Douglas for the Presidency in 1860.

After fellow Illinois lawyer and politician Abraham Lincoln was elected President, the deep-south slave states began to secede from the Union one by one, starting with South Carolina in December 1860. Although later he would claim he had always been strong for the Union, Logan remained publically silent during the national crisis, leading many to believe that he would side with the dis-unionists. He went so far as to denounce the incoming administration, comparing Lincoln to Nero, the emperor who fiddled while Rome burned. Logan's brother-in-law joined the Confederate Army, and Logan's sister, Annie, was known, as a rabid secessionist. And, of

course, his constituents from Little Egypt from whence came his political support, were by in large sympathetic to the South. It was also a known fact that prior to the Civil War, no one despised an abolitionist more than John A. Logan.

Yet, Logan's transformation from southern sympathizer to staunch Unionist seems to have begun at the First Battle of Bull Run, or, more specifically, at the preliminary skirmish at Blackburn's Ford near Manassas, Virginia. Logan had been in Washington for a special session of Congress. When the session adjourned, Logan and a small contingent of congressmen and civilians followed the Union army as it approached the Confederates holding the strategic crossings on the opposite side of Bull Run Creek.

As Logan and his political cronies watched, a sharp skirmish developed as Union troops from Michigan and Massachusetts sparred with the Rebels holding the ford. Shells and solid shot from a Confederate battery began to land uncomfortably close to the gaggle of congressmen. But instead of moving back out of range, Logan instinctively moved forward to the sound of the guns. What he saw next infuriated him: five skulking Union privates being led out of the fight by a corporal. Logan walked up to one of the soldiers and gave his first command of the war - "Give me your gun!" Logan took the man's musket and cartridge box and entered the fray alongside the Michigan boys. Wearing a black frock coat and silk top hat, Logan fired several rounds at the enemy. After exhausting his ammunition, he helped carry the wounded off the battlefield, ruining a good suit of clothes in the process.

After the skirmish petered out, Logan walked back to the Union camp at Centerville. He wasted little time in approaching President Lincoln, who, with no apparent hesitation, signed Logan's commission as colonel of volunteers. Logan boarded the next available train out of Washington City to return to his native state to raise a regiment from the Little Egypt area of southern Illinois.

Back home, standing on a wagon in the town square of Marion, Logan spoke passionately to a crowd for two hours. When he finished, men and boys of all ages rushed forward to enlist. Logan succeeded in recruiting the 31st Illinois Regiment and became its colonel.

Logan had stumped all over Little Egypt to raise his regiment. Despite the area being known as a democratic stronghold with many openly in support of secession, Logan had little trouble recruiting the requisite number of men for his regiment. However, his stand for the Union did cost him the love and support of many in his family. Most cruelly, Logan's own mother rejected him. She bluntly told her son that she never wanted to see him again. She could not countenance any animosity toward her beloved South. Logan's sister, Annie, whose husband had already enlisted with the Confederates, was violently opposed to her brother's position. When Logan had his men, resplendent in their new uniforms, paraded past the Logan house at Murphysboro, Annie stood watching alongside Logan's wife, Mary. The sisters-in-law came to blows after Annie shouted down to her brother: "Damn you, I hope you get killed before you get to Cairo!" Such was the nature of the Rebellion that it divided friends, neighbors, and families.

To Be Continued in the next issue of *Just Write*

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Meetings Held 2nd & 4th Wednesdays @

Gloucester County Library System

Logan Township Branch

498 Beckett Road

Logan Township, NJ 08085

Phone: (856)241-0202 Fax: (856)241-0491

Website: www.gcls.org

Anne Wodnick, Library Director (856)223-6000

Carolyn Oldt, Branch Manager coldt@gcls.org

Ben Carlton, Liaison bcarlton@gcls.org