

SOMERSET COUNTY TRIPLETS

The birth of a child was rarely, if ever, recorded in the newspapers of early New Jersey. However, a multiple birth usually warranted publication, sometimes for twins (see **SCGQ** page 122) and almost always for triplets.

Two such triple births are known to have been recorded for Somerset County in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. On 24 June 1794 the *Guardian; or, New Brunswick Advertiser*, published in New Brunswick, New Jersey, announced that:

On Sunday last [22 June 1794], were baptized in the Presbyterian Church in this city [New-Brunswick], three male children, brought forth at a birth, and were called by the names of WARREN, MONTGOMERY, and MERCER.

Though the children's surname was not given, an obituary of the one child identifies the family name, as recorded in the *Guardian* of 8 December 1795:

DIED at Boundbrook, on the third inst. WARREN SAYRE, aged one year and nine months, the eldest of three brothers born at a birth, to wit, Montgomery Sayre and Mercer Sayre.

The *Sayre Family* by Theodore M. Banta (New York: 1901), page 240, records that Montgomery, Warren and Mercer Sayre, the sons of Samuel Sayre (1761-1813) and his wife, Lydia Simpson (1765-1841), were born on 22 February 1794. The genealogy notes that the triplets were "born on Washington's birthday" and thus "named by General Washington after three of his favorite generals. He also sent them his check for \$150; fifty dollars for each child."

The Sayre family resided in Somerset County at the time of the Revolutionary War, where Samuel served in Captain Benjamin Corey's Company, First Battalion, Somerset County Militia. They were still living at Boundbrook in January 1796 when Samuel Sayre, taylor, posted notice that as the 20th of that month he was continuing his "business at the Yellow House Tavern, late the property of Michael Gorden, dec. at Boundbrook" (*Guardian*, 26 January 1796). The genealogy notes that the family eventually moved to Western Pennsylvania, where Samuel was a farmer. (512)

SOMERSET TRIPLETS

The Sayre triplets are the first known recorded instance of a multiple birth happening in Somerset County. The next known record of triplets born in the area came in April 1825. The *Somerset Messenger*, published in Somerville, New Jersey, notes in the issue of 21 April 1825:

The wife of Mr. Tom Sunderland, living near Flaggtown, in this county, was on Friday night last [15 April 1825] delivered of three infants, making four in the space of nine months.

No doubt there have been a fair number of triplets born in Somerset County since the time of these first recorded cases. Presumably a number of them were not published in the local newspaper, and only made the press if there was some sensational or human interest connected, such as the following which appeared one hundred years ago in the 18 October 1887 issue of the *Somerset Messenger*, of Somerville:

The wife of August Jantz, who arrived in this country a couple of weeks ago, presented her husband with triplets two boys and a girl -- last Wednesday [12 October 1887]. The family now have 9 children, 5 of whom are under 2 years of age, the last preceding birth being twins. The father is a cripple and unable to work, and the family are in needy circumstances. The parties live at Raritan.

FIRST BOOK OF MORTGAGES OF SOMERSET COUNTY

(Continued from Vol. 5, Page 394)

68: JAMES LESLIE to PETER SCHENCK

[p. 93] 31 March 1767 - James Leslie of Millstone . . . Gentlemen . . . and Peter Schenck of the same place . . . Merchant . . . All that a Certain Tract of Land and Premises and Griss Mills and Saw Mill and Mill Dams with all the Utensils thereunto belonging Situate Lying and being at the South Branch of Rariton . . . CONTAINING 83 Acres of Land & being bounded Northerly and Easterly by Land in Possession of John Ten Eyck and Peter Quick and Souther-