A Swisher Family

Some Descendants of Mary and Peter Swisher, West Virginia Pioneers

by

ROBERT EDWARD SWISHER

with some sections by Albert Willis Swisher

Richmond, Virginia

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On the cover: vacationers at Webster Springs, West Virginia. See page 62.
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There are, no doubt, thousands of descendants of West Virginia pioneers Mary and Peter Swisher living all over the United States. This book is primarily about one line of their descendants, the line that descends through my father, John Hugh Swisher. I have written this book mainly for my own family but also, I hope, genealogists of other lines from Peter and Mary will find it useful.

In 1974 I published a Swisher family history. The present volume supplements and updates that work with some recent discoveries about our earliest American ancestors and with vital data of the newest members of our family.

Over the years many people have worked on the genealogy of Peter Swisher and his descendants including Louis Bush Swisher (1907 – 1989) and his wife Mildred Lorraine King Swisher (who died in 1990) of Morgantown, West Virginia. Bush and Lorraine’s papers are now in the West Virginia Collection of the West Virginia University Library. For the present book Paul Pettit of Sun City, California and Boyd Lantz Swisher (Rocky) of
Harrisonburg, Virginia have both provided me with valuable guidance based on their extensive knowledge of the Swishers.

All of us who have worked on Swisher genealogy and family history since their time have followed in the footsteps of Albert Willis Swisher (1866 – 1949) and Carl Brent Swisher (1897 – 1968). Beginning around the 1930s Albert and Carl researched the Swishers of Harrison and Lewis counties, West Virginia. (Carl later became a respected political science professor at Johns Hopkins University and the author of books on the Supreme Court and the Constitution.)

Albert Willis Swisher and my great-grandfather, Thomas Ervin Swisher, were brothers. In 1932 Albert produced a remarkable document, portions of which I published in my 1974 book, *The Swisher Family of Harrison and Lewis Counties, West Virginia* (somewhat inappropriately titled as it focuses on only a couple of lines). Albert did not give his work a title. I titled it (appropriately, I think) *The Swishers of Lewis County, West Virginia: A Genealogy and History* when I sent copies of it to several libraries in 1985.

I have re-visited Albert’s work for the present book as the document he produced in 1932 is a treasure trove. It contains not only names and vital statistics but also wonderful stories about our ancestors and their relatives, many of whom Albert knew personally.
Albert corresponded with people about Swisher family history and, apparently, did some research into public records at the Lewis County courthouse. (He was at one stage a land surveyor so he was probably familiar with land records.) He also checked out some local cemeteries. Much of his work, though, is based on first-hand knowledge plus oral traditions that came down to him from his father, George Washington Swisher. Albert’s granddaughter, Mary Alice Rogers, sent me his 1932 compilation.

Around the time that Albert compiled his history there were 71 Swishers living in Lewis County, West Virginia, 62 of them in the Hacker’s Creek area, according to the United States census of 1930. Of course, this does not account for the Swishers with Lewis County roots living elsewhere in 1930. Albert managed to cram information on what seems like hundreds of Swishers into the 31, letter-size, single-spaced, typed pages of his 1932 work. At this time, however, I am publishing only the parts about my line of descendants. I am including some passages that I did not use in 1974.

In the current volume passages from Albert’s work are in the Papyrus font and run from page 26 through page 78. Interspersed are some comments by me which are in the Times New Roman font. A few quotations from some other sources are set within quotation marks in Times New Roman.
After I have given copies of this book to my family and a few libraries I will have some left over for sale. To inquire about price and availability email me at BobSwisRic@aol.com or contact me on Facebook (Bob Swisher).
CHAPTER 1

*German Roots*

Records indicate that our ancestors, Peter Swisher and his wife Mary, were living on the frontier of northwestern Virginia (now West Virginia) by the late 18th century. Back beyond that we can only guess about our family history. Previously, genealogists, including this writer, thought we could trace our Swisher family back to when they came to this country from Europe. However, applying the more rigorous standards of modern genealogy, no one working in recent times on Swisher genealogy has been able to prove our ancestry back beyond Peter and Mary. As one of the people working on Swisher genealogy put it, we've "hit a brick wall." It will take a good deal more research to break through the wall to earlier generations.

Though we may be unable to trace individuals in our family back to when they came to this country, we can make safe assumptions about the ethnic group to which they belonged and the migration of which they were a part.
We know that Peter and Mary Swisher spoke a German dialect and that the surname originally was spelled Schweitzer (and variants thereof). In a passage in her 1911 *History of Ritchie County* (West Virginia) about James Gaston and his wife Charlotte Swisher Gaston, who was a granddaughter of our Peter and Mary Swisher, author Minnie Kendall Lowther writes, "...James and Charlotte Swisher Gaston. The Gastons being of Irish descent, and the Swishers (or Sweitzers as the name was originally spelled in the native land), of German. Mrs. Gaston was able to speak both German and English, fluently."

Almost surely our immigrant Schweitzer ancestor was one of the tens of thousands of German immigrants who poured into Pennsylvania in the 18th century and whose descendants spread into the valleys of western Maryland and western Virginia. These were the so-called Pennsylvania Dutch (*Dutch* in this case being an anglicized corruption of *Deutsch* which is German for *German*). These people came mostly from the Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg regions of what is now southwest Germany and from the German-speaking part of Switzerland. They were Protestants, mostly Lutheran and Reformed, though there were also Mennonites and other religious dissenters among this immigrant group.

The country of Switzerland takes its name from the Swiss canton of Schwyz. Originally, the surname
Schweitzer meant “man from Schwyz” or “man from Switzerland,” though, as explained below, after the Thirty Years War farmhands who worked with cattle on some German farms were called schweitzers. This little nugget of information comes to us from the great Albert Schweitzer himself, the most famous person ever to bear the surname.

Around 1940 a lady in Iowa, Nondas Richardson, who was working on the genealogy of the Swishers and Switzers of West Virginia’s Eastern Panhandle (apparently no relation to our Lewis and Harrison County Swishers) wrote to the famous humanitarian and future (1952) Nobel Peace Prize winner at his hospital in French Equatorial Africa for “information regarding the origin of the name of Schweitzer.”

Miss Richardson’s chutzpah paid off for on 24 March 1940 Dr. Schweitzer thoughtfully responded. A nurse at his hospital translated his letter into English for Miss Richardson: “I am a nurse of Dr. Schweitzer’s Hospital. There I know a little English. Dr. Schweitzer asked me to translate his lines, so that his tired handwriting in French may not give you troubles. Please excuse my imperfect English. With best greetings, Yours sincerely, Emma Haussknecht.”

Dr. Schweitzer wrote (as translated by Ms. Haussknecht):

Dear Miss Nondas Richardson,
Thank you for your kind lines. Here is what I know about Schweitzers. The name comes from the Canton of Schwyz in Swizzerland. Consequently Schweitzers have been in Swizzerland. They lived especially in the East Part of Swizzerland. After the war of thirty years in Germany, numerous Swiss left their country and went to live in the valley of the Rhine, where the population had disappeared during the war. According to our tradition my family...lived in Swizzerland in the region of Taggenburg.

There are also Schweitzers who got their name because of their occupation with cattle as farmhands in German farms. Even nowadays these farmhands are called Schweizr....I think that the Schweitzers (with "tz") have already been called so in Swizzerland, being originally from the Canton of Schwyz (or Schwitz, as it has been written formerly) and that the Schweitzer got their name in foreign countries in consequence of their occupation as farmhands coming from Swizzerland.

When you have finished your history of the Schweitzers in the U.S.A., please kindly let me have a copy.
I send this letter via Gunsbach, because of the interesting stamps of Africa it may be lost on the way.

With my best thoughts, Yours sincerely,
Albert Schweitzer.

"The above letter had been forwarded to Gunsbach, Alsace, France, and then re-mailed to the U.S.A.,” Miss Richardson notes in her transcription of Dr. Schweitzer’s correspondence in her work, “The Allied Families of Fry, Kline, Hawk, Secrest, Switzer.” (His biographies indicate that Albert Schweitzer was bi-lingual, French and German, having grown up in the border region of Alsace.)

As Dr. Schweitzer indicated, our surname is Swiss in origin, though our immigrant ancestor, whoever he was, could have been from either Germany or Switzerland.

Schweitzer was a not uncommon surname among the Pennsylvania Germans. Records of immigrants into the port of Philadelphia for the years 1727–1808 list 22 men surnamed Schweitzer (or variants thereof—Sweitzer, Switzer, and Switser). The 1790 United States census (the first U.S. census) of Pennsylvania lists 28 heads of households in ten counties surnamed Schweitzer or variants thereof—Sweitzer, Swisher, Swisser, and Switzer.

We should not attach too much significance to the various spellings of the surname encountered in early
records. For one thing, people were casual about spelling during this period and into the 19th century. Plus, German surnames got spelled every which way by English-speaking county clerks, tax collectors and others who wrote the names as the names sounded to them. In other words, they "anglicized" the German surnames. This writer has seen our Peter Swisher's surname, and the surname of known descendants of his, spelled Sweitzer, Swisher, Switzer, Switser, Swisser, Swiser, Swicher and Switcher. Some documents even show two different spellings of the surname within the same document. It is not until the mid 19th century that we see the name consistently spelled Swisher.
Our earliest known Swisher ancestor is Peter Swisher who is buried in a peaceful country cemetery in the scenic Lost Creek valley of Harrison County, West Virginia. His is the oldest gravestone in the cemetery. His name and vital data are crudely inscribed but are completely legible. His gravestone tells us that Peter was born 28 October 1746. We do not know where he was born, whether in Europe or America, though surely he was not born in trans-Alegheny West Virginia, as the region in 1746 was a vast wilderness, virtually uninhabited by whites.

Peter's wife was Mary. We don't know for sure who Mary was, that is, what her maiden name was. Records of a Lutheran or Evangelical Lutheran church in Middletown, Frederick County, Maryland show the wedding on 6 April 1774 of an Anna Maria Decker to a Peter Schweitzer. Germans of that era commonly were called by what we think of as middle names, so it is possible that this Anna Maria was our Mary and that the couple who married in 1774 in
Frederick County was our Mary and Peter Swisher, though there is no proof that they were.

Our Mary and Peter were living in what is now West Virginia by 1779, as records tell us that their son, Peter Swisher, was born in West Virginia. (Two of Peter, Jr.'s sons, Lewis D. Swisher and George Washington Swisher, reported to census takers in 1880 that their father was born in West Virginia. We know from his gravestone that Peter, Jr. was born in 1779.) If they were typical, Peter and Mary made the trek across the Allegheny Mountains in the company of relatives and/or friends.

In (West) Virginia the Swishers first lived in Monongalia County which borders Pennsylvania. Many of Monongalia's earliest records burned in a clerk's office fire in 1796 making it a challenge to trace the activities of the family in the county before 1796. In an apparent attempt to reconstruct land records lost in the fire the Monongalia County court later in 1796 compiled a "list of the lands processioned in Forks Precinct." Some of the names on the list: William Croll, Samuel Croll, Jacob Nuce, Sr., Peter Switzer, Michael Kerns, Sr. and Michael Kerns, Jr.

Among the records burned at the clerk's office was a "deed to Peter Switzer 'for a tract of land adjoining where Bartholomew Wickart now resides, which deed was granted on paper and the said Switzer wishing the deed to be made on parchment put the said deed in the hands of John Evans Jr.' The deed
was destroyed by fire at the time the clerk’s records burned,” according to a published abstract of an 1803 Monongalia County court record.

The matter of the missing deed came before the court again on 15 April 1806: “Clerk John Evans swore that Peter Swisher gave him a deed from Elizabeth Barnett for a tract of land where Swisher now lives adjoining Bartholomew Heckert. Evans said he could not recall the amount of acres but he was to take the deed to ‘Richmond to have it transcribed on parchment and he either lost or mislaid it and does not know what he did with it.’ ” The main point here is that the records show Peter Swisher owned land in Monongalia County before the 1796 clerk’s office fire.

In another attempted “re-recording of [a] burned instrument” by Monongalia officials we learn that on 14 September 1789 Godfrey Goosman (Gusman) bought “32 acres on Aarons Creek, adjoining Peter Switzer.” Other records placing Swishers in Monongalia County before 1800 include a 1785 personal property tax list showing Peter Switcher. John Switzer, Peter Swisher, and Ludwick (Lewis) Swisher are on land tax lists for 1788 and 1789. All three appear on lists of the same tax collector, a Mr. Daugherty, suggesting that John, Peter and Ludwick (or Ludwig) owned land in the same vicinity. From a number of Monongalia County records, dating from 1796 through the early 1800’s, we know that Peter Swisher owned a couple of tracts of land in the
county, on Deckers Creek and on Aaron Creek (sometimes called Aaron’s Run in the records).

Though it is beyond the scope of this book to document all of the children of Peter and Mary Swisher, the evidence indicates that they had a large family. One of their children was Peter Swisher, Jr. An 1801 Monongalia County court record lists “Peter Swisher, Jr.” as a witness in a trial, indicating that at that time there were two Peter Swishers in the area, father and son. Other county records that mention a Peter Swisher are less specific, so it is not always clear to which Peter Swisher the records refer.

The 1801 trial involved a charge of “trespass damage” on a farm “lying within 1 ½ miles of Morgantown.” Peter Swisher, Jr., John Wagner, and a Mrs. Wagner were among the eight witnesses who testified for the plaintiff, suggesting they were all neighbors and lived in the vicinity of Morgantown.

Morgantown began in 1783 when Col. Zackquill Morgan had a surveyor divide his land by the mouth of Deckers Creek on the upper Monongahela River into building lots and streets. The town remained small for years—by 1838 it had grown to only 650 residents.

Aaron Creek flows into Deckers Creek from the southwest. The mouths of both Deckers Creek and Aaron Creek are within the present city of Morgantown. Though we don’t know exactly where on these streams Peter’s tracts of land were located
(other than that the Deckers Creek tract was on the east, or northeast, side of that creek) it could be that they were within the present limits of Morgantown which, of course, has grown a great deal since Peter’s time.

The region drained by the upper Monongahela River and its tributaries figures prominently in the annals of the American frontier. It is said that the region in the latter decades of the 18th century experienced more violence from Indian attacks than any other region in the history of the American frontier. Though there were intervals of relative tranquility before then, the white settlers of the upper Monongahela region lived under the threat of Indian attack until the Treaty of Greeneville in 1795. In the Morgantown area Kerns Fort on the east side of Deckers Creek offered some protection, but Indian raids continued in the area until 1791.

The early settlers were always in search of good land. Peter Swisher (senior) found a tract of unpatented, virgin land fifty or so miles south of Morgantown, on Lost Creek in Harrison County, for which he applied for a grant with a payment of two pounds sterling to the commonwealth of Virginia. The land was surveyed for Peter on 19 August 1785 and included an “improvement” he had made. On 12 June 1788, in a document signed by Governor Edmund Randolph, the commonwealth of Virginia granted Peter 366 acres of land on Lost Creek.
Joseph Doddridge, in his 1824 *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania* explains the land grant process and what constituted an “improvement”:

“Land was the object which invited the greater number of these people to cross the mountain, for as the saying then was, ‘it was to be had here for taking up’; that is, building a cabin and raising a crop of grain, however small, of any kind, entitled the occupant to four hundred acres of land...to be secured by a land office warrant....the government of Virginia appointed three commissioners to give certificates of settlement rights. These certificates, together with the surveyor’s plan, were sent to the land office of the state, where they laid six months, to await any caveat which might be offered. If none was offered the patent then issued.”

Peter and Mary did not settle permanently on their Lost Creek land until years later. Perhaps, in the early years at least, they felt the area was unsafe. Indians set fire to the cabin of a Jethro Thompson on Lost Creek around 1789-90, according to Alexander Scott Withers in his 1831 *Chronicles of Border Warfare*.

Back in Monongalia County, in July 1800, the court appointed Peter Swisher (father or son, it’s not clear which) and two other men “to view and lay off [a route for] a road leading from Samuel Hanway’s mill down Decker’s Creek...to the Hog Back” and to report back to the court at its September session to be
held "at Michael Kern's Mill." (The Hogback is a ridge overlooking Deckers Creek within the present limits of Morgantown.) Peter and his colleagues reported back to the court 6 September 1800 "that the old road is very bad and extremely inconvenient to the public, that it crosses Decker's Creek at least seven times, the fords are very bad and sometimes in the winter almost impassable for a wagon or carriage and that it cannot be made good without building bridges across the said creek."

Though Peter and Mary Swisher later apparently became Methodists (probably during the Great Awakening) they started out as Lutherans. Earl Core, in The Monongalia Story, writes that they were members of a Lutheran church visited by John Stough (Johannes Stauch), a Lutheran pastor who traveled to and preached in German communities along the frontier: "Michael Kerns...built a small building across Deckers Creek from Morgantown for the use of all religious denominations. Kerns was a member of the Lutheran church and the Reverend Stough came several times, between 1788 and 1799, to preach at this church. The Swisher, Nuce, Clouse, Smith, and Kerns families were among the members here."

Another Monongalia County court record is of interest because of some of the names and a place mentioned. On 24 July 1802 John Waggoner (also spelled Wagoner and Wagner in the same document) filed a lawsuit against John Bouslog for a long list of
debts. Among the witnesses summoned to testify on the behalf of Waggoner were Regina Wagner, Frederick Swisher and Jacob Swisher. The suit also mentions "an order upon Peter Swisher for rye [valued at 13 shillings] and 1 pair of finger gloves [valued at 4 shillings]." Bouslog also owed for some "cash lent at Hagerstown" as well some as "hauling...goods from Hagerstown," suggesting commerce with that western Maryland town.

During this period in Virginia's history it took a special effort for families to obtain an education for their children, as the commonwealth had no public schools. Needless to say, under the circumstances, many did not receive a formal education. A document suggests, though, that at least some of the Swishers might have received some formal schooling in their pioneer community. Monongalia court records show Peter Swisher, John Wagoner and Zack Morgan as three of the subscribers who pledged money, materials or services to build "a school house for the use of Morgan Town and the adjacent settlement." Minutes from that "first meeting of subscribers," held 9 July 1803, show that the intent was to build a brick school measuring "30 X 30 X 9....If a convenient school house and dwelling for a teacher was erected we could no doubt procure a good one on reasonable terms." This was Morgantown's first school. Peter Swisher pledged some labor, "1 day hauling [valued at] $3," for its construction.
View of the Lost Creek Valley from the cemetery by Rockford Methodist Church, Harrison County, West Virginia. Photo 1973 by the author.
CHAPTER 3

Greener Pastures

Not long after their marriage in Monongalia County on 25 January 1801 Peter Swisher, Jr. and his wife Susanah Rinehart moved south to Harrison County (according to court, tax and census records). Perhaps they had relatives already in the area. Harrison County personal property tax records show a Christopher Swisher and a “Jacob Swiser” in the county beginning in 1799. By 1808 Peter and Susanah were in a position to buy their own farm on Hacker’s Creek, in a part of Harrison that became Lewis County in 1816.

Peter, Sr. and Mary followed from Monongalia to Harrison County around 1812. Shortly before departing for Harrison, “Peter Swisser” obtained formal title on 6 July 1812 to 130 acres of land on Aaron Creek in Monongalia County, though he and Mary may have possessed the land for many years before then without a formal title. This was probably the 130 acres that “Peter Switzer and Mary his wife” sold to Samuel Swearingen in August 1814.
For several years beginning in 1812 Harrison County personal property lists show both a Peter Swisher, Jr. and a Peter Swisher, Sr. By 1817 Peter Swisher, Jr. has disappeared from the Harrison County tax lists, confirming that he lived in the part of Harrison that became Lewis County in 1816.

Another son of Peter, Sr. and Mary, Isaac, first shows up on the Harrison County personal property tax lists in 1816. Records suggest that it was around this time that Isaac and his wife Maria Jett assumed responsibilities at his parents' Lost Creek farm. Isaac had the labor of two slaves to help with the work (as indicated by the 1820 census). With a little imagination one can picture Isaac and his slaves (a male and a female both age 14-25) all working alongside one another to clear the virgin timber for pasture land. By 1830 the female slave was gone and Isaac and Maria’s household had grown to include themselves and seven free white persons under the age of 20. A small, two-story structure built of hewn logs that stood on the farm until it was torn down around 1939 housed Isaac and his family, according to tradition.

Also by 1830 Isaac and Maria were caring for his aging parents who lived on the farm with them, perhaps in a separate dwelling. The 1830 census shows Peter, Mary and a female slave age 10-23 as a separate household from Isaac’s household.

In an agreement “between Peter Switzer and Isaac his son” made 8 February 1828 Peter deeded his Lost...
Creek land to Isaac. In return Isaac bound himself to care for "his father and mother during their natural lives – comfortably supplying them with every necessary they stand in need of [and to make] them comfortable in consideration thereof the said Peter hath deeded to said Isaac that tract of land whereon he now lives and besides said Isaac is to pay to his brothers and sisters one thousand dollars in annual payments of one hundred dollars fifty dollars in cash and fifty dollars in cattle or horses or any other trade they can agree upon...." The agreement also stipulated that Isaac was to get his parents' personal property after their deaths. (Unfortunately, the document does not name Isaac's brothers and sisters.) Isaac subsequently expanded his land holdings with additional purchases, as indicated by the grantee index to Harrison County deeds.

On 20 July 1828, "Peter Swisher sen'r & Mary his wife" sold one acre on Lost Creek "being a part of Peter Swisher tract he now lives on" to a group of 29 people that included Isaac Swisher and John Swisher. This was for the Rockford Methodist Protestant Church. (The present brick church is dated 1891 and is the third church structure on the site.)

Peter and Mary both signed the 20 July 1828 deed by making their marks. This would suggest that they were illiterate but there may have been other reasons why they made their marks rather than sign their names. It could be that they were accustomed to German-style handwriting which during that period
was quite different from English-style handwriting. Their signatures would have been illegible for an English reader had they been written in the German style ("wrote in Dutch," as an English-speaking clerk in Monongalia County phrased it in 1808 about an original signature of a neighbor of Peter's that the clerk had translated for a deed).

A clerk wrote their names for them on a 20 July 1828 deed, then Peter and Mary Swisher made their marks by their names.

Isaac Swisher owned a German Bible that has descended through a line of his descendants. The Bible, published in 1728 and printed in old-style German script, belonged to Mrs. Sherida Zimmerman Ritterbeck of Caldwell, Ohio as of 1988. In an article, "Lost then Found," in the Winter 1988 issue
of the *Hacker's Creek Journal*. Rocky Swisher describes his detective work in tracking down the Bible. (*The Hacker's Creek Journal* is the publication of Hacker's Creek Pioneer Descendants, an organization devoted to preserving the genealogies and history of central West Virginia.)

The existence of Isaac's Bible had been known to generations of genealogists from a letter dated 13 March 1933 to a "Mr. Swisher" (Carl Brent or Albert Willis) from Ellen (Swisher) McKeever who then owned the Bible. In her letter Mrs. McKeever made a tantalizing reference to a handwritten inscription in the Bible. As it turns out, there are two, brief handwritten inscriptions, both inside the front cover. They read, "Jno. Wagner property" and "Mary Hoffoner."

Mrs. McKeever wrote in her 1933 letter that Peter Swisher's wife was Mary Wagner. The Bible inscription was probably the source for her assumption that Jno. Wagner was Mary's father. Recent research by Rocky Swisher, however, has shown that Jno. Wagner (Johannes Wagner, anglicized to John Waggoner) was a friend and neighbor of Peter Swisher who married Peter's daughter, Dorothy, in Monongalia County on 14 September 1800. In other words, Jno. Wagner was Peter and Mary's son-in-law, not Mary's father. How his Bible ended up with Peter and Mary's son, Isaac, is a mystery.
The wilderness tract that was granted to Peter Swisher in 1788 became a farm that stayed in the Swisher family for over 200 years. The last Swishers on the land were the family of Lewis C. Swisher (Bill) and Alma E. Ford Swisher who were known for the prize-winning sheep and "very good Angus cattle" they raised. Another area farmer, S. Thomas Bond, author of an online book titled Farming as I Have Known It, recalled in an email to this writer that the Lewis C. "Swisher family was known throughout the state and were highly respected for their accomplishments [in stock raising], older generation and the children." None of the Swisher children chose the farm life, however, according to Mr. Bond, so following the deaths of Lewis and Alma (he died in 1995 and she in 2003) the farm was sold out of the family to a Mr. Randolph.
4 ½ miles as the crow flies from Isaac Swisher’s Lost Creek farm in Harrison County was the farm of Isaac’s brother, Peter Swisher, on Hacker’s Creek in Lewis County.

[Quotations from Albert Swisher’s 1932 history begin here. His words are in Papyrus font. Comments by Robert Swisher are in Times New Roman font.]

The first Swisher settler in what is now Lewis County, West Virginia was Peter Swisher...who was the head of the large clan that now bears that name. He was born February 23, 1779 [in West Virginia, probably in Monongalia County. On 25 January 1801] he was married to Susanah Rinehart from Hagerstown, Maryland, who was born December 1st, 1779...
In their selection of the site for their home these pioneers used the good judgment which characterized the early settlers of that day. Hacker's Creek was a favored spot for its fertility of soil and its abundance of water. It was named after the first settler, John Hacker. He too evidenced the ability of a pioneer to choose, in the heart of the wilderness, the best of locations. Just where the valley was the greatest in width and with all the surrounding favorable, this man built his cabin. A few hundred feet away, on a mound or rise of ground, was all the evidence of former Indian occupation, possibly an Indian village, but for this hunter and explorer these facts held no fears for him to prevent his choosing this favored spot where he could hew out of the wooded wilds a home for himself and his family.

About a mile further down the creek from the Hacker cabin Peter Swisher settled [in 1808] at the mouth of Stony Run, three and one-half miles from Jane Lew.
The farm on which Peter Swisher located consisted of [147] acres. It was hilly and rolling. The location of the home shows wisdom of choice. To [Peter and Susanah] were born nine children. My father, George Washington Swisher, was the youngest of the nine.

It would be interesting to know something of the home life and the hardships of Peter and Susanah Swisher. We know that they lived in their pioneer home built of logs, raised their large family and by their economy and thrift they accumulated something of the world's goods.

We are of the opinion that Peter Swisher had been educated somewhat in the German language for my father learned from him to count and to recite the alphabet in German, which he used to do for my entertainment. [Peter and Susanah's daughter, Charlotte Swisher Gaston, George Washington Swisher's older sister, "was able to speak both German and English, fluently," according to a 1911 history of Ritchie County, West Virginia previously cited. Charlotte and her parents probably spoke the so-called "Dutch" dialect that lives on in
some areas of Pennsylvania where it is still spoken in some rural homes.

It is evident that Peter Swisher was very loyal to the new homeland. He would not permit the children to speak the German language in order that they should become fully Americanized. He also named one of his sons “George Washington” in honor of the first president. This was carried out down through the generations as I have knowledge of four [other George Washington Swishers]....

[The family attended Harmony Methodist Church, a large log structure built in 1819 on a hill about two miles from the family’s home.] I have heard [my father] tell of how they used to walk from the home up the creek down to the church. The women would carry their shoes until they neared the church when they would stop and put them on.

[Peter and Susanah are buried in the cemetery by the site of old Harmony Church. Some gravestones in the cemetery are decorated with Pennsylvania German-style folk symbols indicating that a stone carver from that tradition worked in the community. The old log church was abandoned after a new, frame
church was built at the bottom of the hill, closer to the road, in 1880. The old church was being used as a sheep barn, and was the subject of a preservation controversy, when Albert last was inside it, apparently around 1901 - 1902.]

...As I looked at this quaint old house of worship I thought of what it had meant to those pioneers who had walked miles to attend the services. There was a gallery entirely across one side of the building with a stairway leading up to it at one end. The floor was of hewn puncheons. The pulpit was high, the floor of which was at least five feet from the floor. This was reached by a very narrow flight of steps.

On the ceiling of the stairway leading to the balcony there were names of early worshippers as ancient of date as 1820...Names of some of the early preachers that had occupied that high box pulpit. In later years that noted pioneer preacher, Samuel Clawson, who boasted of the Indian blood in his veins and for whom the fine church building in the town of Weston was named, preached there. It was often told of him that once in the excitement of
his preaching he leaped over the front of the high pulpit to the floor below and landed as lightly as one of his Indian ancestors would have been able to do when moccasin clad....

Old Harmony Church near Jane Lew, West Virginia. Albert Swisher and others tried to save the historic structure, but it was torn down around 1908.

That Susanah Swisher was a pioneer woman in the true sense of the word is emphasized by the story that was told by my father. On the day
before the birth of her son, Lewis D. Swisher, she planted corn all day. The field where she did this work has been pointed out to me as being located to the southeast of the home, upon the hillside.

There seems to be some difference in information as to the cause of the death of Peter Swisher, who died September 27th, 1830. I well remember that my father said his death was caused by injuries sustained when felling a tree. His death occurred when my father was 12 years of age....

[An inventory of the personal estate of Peter Swisher made February 16, 1831 lists livestock, farm implements and household articles including several books: Dictionary of the Bible first & second volumes, Geography, History of Animals, Portrait of Saint Paul, Arithmetic, Walker's Dictionary, and Methodist Discipline. Peter did not leave a will.]

It must have been [not long after] Peter Swisher died the home burned. The sympathy of the people being drawn to Susanah Swisher by her affliction in the loss of her husband, this sympathy was given expression after the burning of the home
by the neighbors coming in from miles away, even from Jesse Hughes' Run, to build for her a new home. The men were accompanied by their wives, in some cases at least, who came along to assist in the cooking.

The neighbors brought their teams [of horses], their tools and also furnished part of the supplies to feed the workmen. The men went into the nearby woodland and cut down trees and hewed the logs in making them ready for the building. At the night time they housed in the large log barn which stood near. It took them a few days to build a two-story house of large proportions, a house which stands to this day and is of such architectural planning that from the modernized outside appearance one would not think that it had been constructed more than one hundred years ago. [When Albert wrote, “modernized,” he meant the log house was later sheathed with wood clapboards.]

In the stories that my father used to tell there never came to me anything regarding one of the
boys fighting the fire, forgetting to put on his trousers, as was told to Dr. [Carl Brent] Swisher by M.L. Law, but I remember that there was staying in the home that night a peddler of foreign birth, who carried out his pack of goods and his clothes and then, just in his shirt in which he had been sleeping, he worked hard to save all he could from the burning home.

[Another story from M.L. Law, as told to Carl Brent Swisher but which Albert does not mention, concerns another incident at the farm: “Hardships were not at an end in the time of Peter Swisher, as is indicated by the story told by M.L. ‘Lute’ Law of a lamb being caught by a wolf in a pen near the Swisher house. Members of the family ran and caught the lamb, but the hungry wolf tore off a leg and ran on.” (quote from a history Carl wrote in 1932, cited in Sources section)]

I can remember visiting with my father and mother this old home while my father’s sister, Catherine [or Katherine] Law, was still living...Katherine Swisher married Thomas Law. From this union we can only mention Oscar Law and Thomas Ervin Law. If there were other children we...cannot remember them. Thomas and Katherine Law bought the
Peter Swisher farm to which they added many acres. When Oscar Law married he settled at the old home which is still owned by his son, M.L. Law (Lute). M.L. Law has a son who lives with his father in the old family home. His name is Hugh Law....

The author's friend and relative, Hugh Alonzo Law, in front of the old log barn on his farm. Hugh was the last Swisher descendant to live at the Swisher-Law farm. Photo 1973 by the author.
The Swisher-Law house. Sometime after it was built, the original, log portion of the house was sheathed with wood weatherboards—it is the two-story portion of the house to the left. Photo 1973 by the author. After Hugh Law’s death in 1978 the farm passed out of the family. The historic Swisher-Law house and barn are still standing but are not well cared for.

Hugh Law, with the help of his neighbor up the road, Boyd Rinehart Swisher, removed this 1830’s walnut fireplace mantel from the Swisher-Law house, Hugh’s home, as part of an interior renovation. Hugh gave the mantel to Boyd who gave it to this writer who has it in his house in Richmond.
...The youngest son [of Peter and Susanah Swisher was] George Washington Swisher, to whom our thoughts turn with pleasant memories. The burning of his home, when he was 12 years old, so impressed him with a fear of fire that all through his life that fear remained with him. It was always noticeable in the family that he was wont to go about the house before retiring for the night, to see if all the fires had been properly cared for.

...Wash, as he was called...married Mary Ann Boram...[They] set up housekeeping in a little log house near the home of Jane Swisher, [Wash's sister-in-law, in order to help her with the farm and her five young children following the death of her husband, Isaac R. Swisher]. (The building was
located near the road southwest of the present
farm home of Goodloe Swisher.) For some time
[Wash] helped with the work on the farm and he
always had the highest regard for his sister-in-law,
who, during all the time he was with her, never gave
him an unkind word.

Mary Ann Boram was the daughter of John and
_ Boram. This family came from eastern
Virginia....While the date of the arrival of the family
[on Hacker's Creek] is not definitely known we
would place it about 1837 or 1838. They settled
in a log house owned by Jacob Cozad situated
where Edwin Swisher later built in the village of
Berlin, after he had lived in the old home for a
number of years. This was less than two miles from
the Peter Swisher home and a mile from where
Wash and Mary Swisher first went to
housekeeping.

...we find that Wash Swisher, although only a little
more than 21 years of age when [he] married, had
already purchased a farm on which to establish a
home....The place was across the hill from his
brother Isaac...in the clearing of this place he was assisted by his brother-in-law, Jack Boram...Mary used to prepare a warm noon meal and carry it across the hill and the two men would drop astride the fallen tree on which they were working, with the dinner placed between them. For them there was no noon day rest and as soon as they had eaten they were again swinging their axes. They were both expert axmen and I can remember how, when advanced in years, my father was able to out chop others with whom he worked.

There was a little log house on the farm into which they moved. A little later they built the home which is now standing...Nine of the children of the Swisher family were born here. In 1856 Wash traded this farm for a tract of land on Buckhannon Run [a tributary of Hacker’s Creek] at the foot of the Buckhannon Mountain. His neighbors thought that he was foolish to leave his good house to go into the log house on the farm for which he traded but with his good judgment he could see that the farm for which he traded was in a better
location and had considerable narrow bottom land, or meadow land, as it was called.

The records show that he added to this first purchase until he had a farm of about 337 acres. To George Washington and Mary Ann Swisher were born twelve children. The first eight were born in the first home and the last four were born on Buckhannon Run.

...One has to wonder regarding the strict economy and good management of George Washington and Mary Ann Swisher, of whose twelve children they reared nine to manhood and womanhood at the same time accumulating personal and real property of no small proportion. This responsibility was shared by all. There was the loom, the spinning wheel, the treadle spinner, the reel, these with their accessories that were operated by the women of the family, all of which were in the home even after the use of them had been abandoned. There were also the flax brake and the hackle that were still in evidence but not in use.
There was, in the corner of the yard at the Buckhannon Run home, a loom house. In this house there were manufactured carpets, wool blankets, wool dress goods and wool jeans for men's wear. The necessities of life for the inner and outer man were grown and manufactured on the farm of the Swishers.

Detail of coverlet woven in the loom house on the Buckhannon Run farm of George W. and Mary Swisher. This coverlet was passed down through the family to the author. Another coverlet woven in the loom house belongs to Lucy Kerr Swisher.
Near the old home was built a log house. It was for the home of John and __ Turner Boram, the father and mother of Mary Ann Swisher. In this house they lived until the death of John Boram. There was then built the house that was afterwards used as a loom house and that was the home of Grandmother Boram as long as she could care for herself.

Addison Boram, one of the brothers of Mary Ann Swisher, was afflicted with tuberculosis, then called consumption. He lived in the Swisher home and was there cared for until the time of his death. I am relating these things to show that there were other financial cares assumed besides the rearing of their own large family.

It was during the Civil War that there was started the construction of the rather large southern home which for many years housed the Swisher family. In the rear of this house was the original log house which was not replaced by an ell until about the year 1870. Also some of the upper rooms were not finished until about that date. [Albert's
reference to the house as a “rather large southern home” suggests it was a two-story frame house with a two-story front porch and a galleried, two-story ell attached to the rear, that is, if it was typical of other substantial farm houses of the period in the area. The house later burned down, according to Fred Milton Swisher. This was probably after 1932, as Albert doesn’t mention the fire.

[Even allowing for the flowery language of obituaries of the period, a couple of newspaper obituaries give the impression that the Swishers were well regarded in their community. The obituary for Ardelia Swisher McWhorter states that she was “a daughter of the late esteemed George W. Swisher, an honored citizen and an upright man. She was connected by ties of blood with a large number of the best families in the interior of the state.”]

[Mary A. Boram Swisher’s obituary says that Mary “was a kind wife, loving mother and a generous and well-beloved Christian lady. Her loss will be deeply felt in the community where she resided. A large and solemn procession followed the remains to their last resting place” in the Buckhannon Run Cemetery (also known as the Rogers Cemetery).]
The tintype above passed down through the Swisher family, unidentified, to the author. The photograph below is of Thomas Ervin Swisher. Comparing his facial features with the features of the couple in the tintype and considering that the couple’s clothing places their portrait in the mid 19th century (which would be the right time period), it looks like the couple in the tintype could be Thomas’ parents, George Washington and Mary Boram Swisher.
[After Virginia seceded from the Union on April 17, 1861 and joined the Confederacy the following month, the northwestern counties of Virginia, among them Lewis County, began organizing to secede from Virginia and form a separate state that would remain loyal to the Union. The new state of West Virginia was officially recognized by the U.S. in 1863. In fact, though mostly pro-Union, West Virginia was a border state with Confederates and southern sympathizers, among them Mary Boram Swisher, in the population.]

When the war began James William Swisher, the eldest son [of George Washington and Mary Swisher], was 20 years old. There was no bitter partisan feeling existing in the Swisher family. The father reared north of the Alleghenies and the mother on the south, there was some difference of
opinion but a charitable understanding. James enlisted in the Union army...

From my earliest recollection the Swisher home was the stopping place for travelers and visitors. From the time of my earliest recollection they were still talking about the Civil War and as they sat by the fireside that was the prevailing topic. Many were the tales of war experiences told by those who had been soldiers.

It was during this that the present graded [road] was built across the Buckhannon Mountain, intersecting with the Parkersburg and Staunton Turnpike [now U.S. Route 33] at Lorentz. The building of this road was contracted in sections to local people. Washington Swisher had the contract to build the part that was, and is, known as the “Big Turn.” The old grade was so steep that four and eight horses were used in hauling loads in the direction of Buckhannon.

There were quite a few raids through that section passing by the Swisher home. When there was
advance news of troops coming, the horses, except
one that was old, were taken into the woods to a
hiding place that was in a hollow at a distance from
the road. There they were kept until all danger had
passed....

There was one day a company of Southern
soldiers came down the mountain road and stopped
at the noontime taking possession of the barn and
the surrounding ground for their horses. The
commanding officer wanted to get corn for the
horses. It was measured by throwing it from the
corn crib into the wagon bed. They offered to pay
in Confederate money. When Washington
Swisher told them that kind of money would do him
no good the commander went among his men and
collected enough of legal money to make payment
of the grain.

Some of the soldiers gathered around the kitchen
and were asking Mary Swisher and her daughters
to fry some meat for them, which she was doing,
when the officer seeing what was going on said,
"Madam, you cannot do this," and placed a guard
at the door to see that she was not further disturbed. These acts of courtesy on the part of this officer placed him in high esteem with the family. Later he went out by himself, under an apple tree near the house, where he was seen reading a letter and seemed to be sad. It is possible that the letter was from some southern home where lived his family and loved ones and his thoughts were with them. When the troops had gone there was found under the tree where he was seated a pair of gauntlet gloves with the name Col. Gray on the cuff. The family watched in the papers for the later news of this gentleman soldier and were grieved to see an account of his death.

On one occasion there was with the passing troops who stopped at the farm a sutler. This peddler of wares fed his horse in the stable and while he rested he laid aside his pack. When the troops went on he forgot his pack. This was found by the girls. They were delighted when they saw the contents, which in part could be used by them. They watched the road to see if the pack would be
missed and the owner would return. They saw, nearly a mile down the road, the rising dust which told them that a horseman was approaching rapidly. Watching from their hiding place they saw the sutler reach the home, jump off of his horse and enter the barn. When he came out he had the pack which they had hoped to keep.

At another time one of the soldiers was wearing a new pair of shoes which hurt his feet. He sat down on the door step, removed them and put on his old pair. Thomas Swisher saw that he walked away, leaving the new shoes on the step. He sat down so as to hide the soldier's shoes and remarked that he was going to have the shoes to wear. The soldier did forget his shoes and Tom wore them out on the farm.

From an early date there was in the family, for a musical instrument, a dulcimer. This was evidently bought when the eldest children were young for they could all play. It is well remembered that in the evening the family would sit in the front of the house and listen while one of the girls would play.
"The Devil's Dream," "Irish Washerwoman," "Fisher's Horn Pipe" and many other "fiddle" pieces of that day and which are still popular, together with other classes of music, the songs and hymns of that day. The tones of the dulcimer carried well and neighbors more than a half-mile away would tell of hearing the music. When the organ became introduced in rural sections there was one brought into the home and the old dulcimer rather went into discard.

The home life of the Swisher family was indeed rather above the average standard for that day in the section. There was a limited library and a weekly state and county paper, a church paper and a few story papers and magazines. Godey's Lady Book was the fashion guide for that period. There was also the "grapevine telegraph," as it was called. I have referred to the home being the stopping place of travelers. From that source came news and an exchange of views that were at times educational to the younger folks who listened in. Religion [the family were Methodists] was a strict
fundamental opinion of creeds and politics with straight partisan political views were the predominating topics of conversation.

James William Swisher, the eldest son of George Washington and Mary Ann Swisher, was born June 27, 1840. To him, as the eldest son, there came a somewhat greater responsibility in helping to clear the farm and in providing for the large family. This responsibility was fully met for his father often spoke of his willingness to do the work that came to him.

One mile from the home, on the Colonel Kee farm, was the meeting place of the settlers where they would contest in games, races and would drill. While removed from the scenes of real conflict there was the unrest that extended to even more remote districts and which brought together the people who were anxious to talk over the news from the front.

It was at one of these meetings that James and his father attended and where they were having.
running races that Wash was chosen as "whipper." The two contestants would take off their shoes or boots in readiness for the race. The "whipper" was equipped with a long hickory switch. It was his part of the game to apply the hickory around the legs of the racers as long as he could keep within striking distance. On this occasion the racers had not given proper consideration to the running ability of their six-foot, one-inch whipper-up who followed them through to the end of the race applying the switch the [Page 14 of the typescript stops here with a bit of a margin at the bottom of the page, suggesting that Albert left off some words.]
[Civil War Service records at the W.Va. Dept. of Archives and History show that James W. Swisher was mustered into service at Buckhannon on Sept. 13, 1862 at age 22 and that he died of typhoid fever July 23, 1863 at Hancock, Maryland.]

While in the service we do not think that James was in any engagements of importance. He was a private in Company E, First [Regiment,] West Virginia Light Artillery. He belonged to the Upshur Battery. Colonel Campbell was in command of the brigade. During the winter of 1862 - 1863 they were in the eastern panhandle near Romney. It was while stationed here that he began keeping a diary of daily events...a letter from James to his brother Thomas is quoted in “The War Experiences of Daniel Binegar Lawson,” [an
article] written by me a few years ago and printed in the home paper in Weston.

[James Swisher's diary and his last letter home, to his brother Tom, are published in *The Swisher Family of Harrison and Lewis Counties, West Virginia*. Fred Milton Swisher of Clarksburg, W.Va. donated the diary to the Jackson's Mill Museum in Lewis County. An official of the museum assured this writer in a 3 November 1975 letter that the diary was being held for safekeeping at the office at Jackson's Mill as the museum itself "is not heated and the humidity is not controlled..."]

Entries in the diary continued until July 12, 1863, although on July 8 James was caught beneath a caisson that fell over a creek bank during a night march, and seriously injured. The injuries and exposure in the water resulted in an attack of pneumonia fever from which he died on July 25, 1863. Some years later his father had a large stone placed at his grave instead of the small marker set by the government. The only one of the family that ever visited the grave in Hancock, Maryland Soldiers Cemetery was George W. Swisher, who once was in that section.
There is the possibility that there was with James Swisher a case of the gross inhumanity of the so-called surgeons and physicians that attended the soldiers of the armies in the Civil War. One of the privates in the same company told that James was raving in his delirium of fever. He heard the company doctor say, with an oath, that he would make him quiet. [James] was given medicine that caused him to go into a stupor from which he never roused.

Ardelia Swisher [Ardelia Adeline Swisher] was born while the brother was away in the service. He wrote to the home folks and asked that she be given the name which she bore. [Ardelia married Lucullus Virgil McWhorter, author of the classic frontier history, The Border Settlers of Northwestern Virginia.]

We can remember the conversation in the home during the years following the war, and the tears of my mother when talking of her oldest boy and of how he died away from home and the care of friends and loved ones. One of the cruelties of war.
[Some of the information for the following sections about the families of Thomas Ervin Swisher and his son Hugh Swisher was probably supplied to Albert Swisher by one of Hugh’s sons.]

Thomas Ervin Swisher was born July 27, 1842 on a branch of Laurel Lick Run, about a mile from the village of Berlin. His early years were spent in a like manner as his older brother. He had the advantage of better schooling and was quite good in the branches which were taught at that time.

[Tom] was nineteen years of age at the time the war began. [He] had a very fine horse, of which he was justly proud, and on one of the raids there was no advance notice given and this horse was grazing in the mountain pasture. One of the soldiers took
the horse and left in its place a worn out nag that
was hardly able to travel. Tom did not know that
his horse was gone until he went to the pasture to
pay a visit to his pet. He brought the poor horse
he found down to the home. When his father
looked him over he found that he was young and
sound. The time being the spring of the year the
winter usage was all that was wrong. Tom was told
to take the horse back to the good pasture and see
how he would come out.

Several weeks later Tom went up the mountain to
see how the boney nag was coming on. He was
greatly surprised to see that he had shed his
shaggy winter coat and was sleek but thin. He did
not have a bridle with him so he got on the horse
with nothing to guide him but a halter and found
that he could not control him. He ran down the
mountain road and all Tom could do was to cling to
him. His father saw him coming and opened the
barnyard gate and turned the horse into the lot.
Tom was worn out by his bareback ride on the
horse whose backbone was too prominent for
comfort. The family often teased him about his ride on his new horse. The father's good judgment was evidenced, however, for the horse got fat during the summer and in the fall Tom sold him for $110.

When Tom was in his 22nd year he taught a term of school on Life's Run and boarded at the home of John Peterson. It was during that winter that his acquaintance with Samira Peterson [her name sometimes spelled Samyra in the records] developed into a closer relationship and they were married August 30, 1864. Their first home was on the Washington Swisher farm, in the old David Hicks cabin against the mountainside along the new road. At this home there was born their daughter, Florence Swisher, on [September] 9, 1865.

One incident during the stay in the mountain cabin we shall relate. One day, when Florence was a small baby, her mother went down to visit at the grandmother's home. In the evening as she was returning she met a woman tramp. When she
reached the cabin she found that many articles of her clothing were missing. Hurriedly she started back down the mountain and when she reached the home of the grandmother she left the baby in her care and went on in pursuit of the thief. She caught her some distance down the road and brought her back to the home of Squire Thomas Hinzman, whose home was adjacent to that of Washington Swisher. There the woman was searched and all the missing articles were found. The tramp had put on Samira's clothing under her own and secreted other articles until she was a real walking clothes rack. The clothing was returned to the owner and the thief was held for the offense.

After a few years Tom and Samira moved to Jane Lew, a village eight miles from the Swisher home. There they entered into the business of operating a tannery and continued in the business for a number of years. He at one time conducted a general merchandise store at the old Blackwell Jackson stand in Jane Lew but was not successful in that undertaking.
The second [and last] child, Hugh, was born in Jane Lew. After the venture in the store business the family moved to ____, across the Ohio River from Parkersburg. At this place [Tom] also operated a tannery. Later he came back to Jane Lew and purchased a farm west of town near the West Fork River, where they lived for several years. The farm was sold and they moved back to their home in the village.

[Tom sold the farm but kept the mineral rights, which have paid royalties to his descendants into the present generation. The gas well on the farm was depleted some time ago, but it has found a new use as a gas storage facility. For his fractional interest in the well the Standard Gas Company of Jane Lew annually pays this writer $100 to lease the well for storage.

[Tom and Samira] later moved to Life's Run, where they lived with and cared for the father and mother of Samira, [John Pence Peterson and Nancy Alkire Peterson]. After the death of the father and mother they again returned to Jane Lew. Later they moved to Sutton for a time where the son, Hugh, was in business. They lived there for a few
years but again returned to the old home in Jane Lew where they lived at the time of the death of Samira.

Tom was postmaster of the village. He also engaged in the lumber business at different points along the West Virginia and Pittsburgh Railroad. His last home was with his son Hugh in Sutton but his death occurred while on a visit with his daughter Florence in Columbus, Ohio, where he had an attack of pneumonia. His body was laid to rest by the side of his wife in the Odd Fellows Cemetery at Fairview [Friendship Cemetery] near Berlin.
When this picture was taken there in the late 19th or early 20th century, Webster Springs, West Virginia was a popular mountain spa centered on a salt sulphur spring. The resort featured a hotel and plenty of natural beauty. Samira Peterson Swisher is the third person from the right. She's sitting on a rock and wearing a straw hat. Behind and immediately left of Samira, standing and leaning against a rock, is Thomas E. Swisher, Samira's husband.
[Thomas E. and Samira Swisher had two children, Florence and Hugh.] Florence Swisher married Joseph Gusman. They lived for some years near the mouth of Hacker's Creek, where it empties into the West Fork River [in Harrison County, near the line with Lewis County]. Later they moved to Chillicothe and then to Columbus. They have four daughters [Samira Adaline (Myra) Gusman, Martha Swisher Gusman, Mary Elisabeth (Lib) Gusman, and Florence Swisher Gusman] and at this date, 1932, the entire family are living in the city of Columbus. There are no further descendants in this family.

[The mineral rights to the Gusman land in Harrison County passed down through the family through Mary Elisabeth Gusman Davis to this writer. A new
well was drilled on the property in 2008 and is actively producing natural gas.]

The Gusman family in front of their house on Locust Street in Clarksburg, West Virginia. Left to right: Martha, Elisabeth (Lib), Myra, John Joseph and Florence Swisher Gusman. The fourth child in this family, Florence, born 13 July 1906, is not pictured, suggesting that the picture was taken before then.
Bicyclists in front of the Braxton County courthouse. Sutton, West Virginia. Hugh Swisher is on the far left.
A railroad station somewhere in West Virginia. Hugh Swisher is on the far right. The station sign is illegible but this could be the station at Newlon, Sutton, or Belington as Hugh worked at each of those stations.
A quilting bee. Ella May Hyer is in the center on the bottom row (with head down).
Hugh Swisher was born October 6, 1871. When he was yet in his teens he studied telegraphy under the local operator. He was a member of the local band and could play, with ability, the different musical instruments.

Hugh's lifetime spanned the era of West Virginia's industrial awakening, when the state's vast timber, coal, oil and natural gas resources began to be exploited in a big way. Hugh sought to take advantage of the greater opportunities that the era presented.

Before he was of age [Hugh] was given the place as [railroad station] agent and [telegraph] operator at Newlon, a new station on the branch line of the West Virginia and Pittsburgh R.R. which ran from Buckhannon up the Buckhannon River to Pickens.
Pickens and Newlon were at the time booming lumber towns.

After a few months at Newlon Hugh was promoted and sent to Sutton, Braxton County, in the same capacity.... Sutton was then also booming, following the erection there in 1890 of a band sawmill by the Pardee & Curtin Lumber Company. Sutton became a regional commercial center.


Beauty is in the eye of the beholder—With the hillsides stripped of their timber to supply the Curtin lumber mill, the caption of this postcard reads, “The picturesque hills at Curtin-town, Sutton, W.Va.”
Some business friends of [Hugh's in Sutton] organized a new bank and he was chosen as cashier [bank manager]. For several years he was with this banking firm and was a banker of good business ability.

While he was yet with the railroad he married Ella Hyer, a Sutton girl, on July 6, 1898. [Ella was from a prominent Sutton family. Her father, Ellis Summers Hyer, published Braxton County's first newspaper, The Mountaineer, and served a term in the state legislature before he died July 29, 1884 at age 33.]
Boomtown architecture. Within a few years of its construction the First National Bank of Sutton replaced this frame structure with a larger, brick building. Hugh Swisher, bank manager, is on the left. The man on the right may be Harry B. Curtin, bank president.

Ten-dollar bill issued in 1902 by the First National Bank of Sutton and signed by Harry B. Curtin, President, and Hugh Swisher, Cashier.
House built around 1902 by Hugh Swisher. This house in Sutton, West Virginia was the family’s home until they moved to New Mexico around 1909. John Hugh Swisher was born in this house 14 April 1903.

Hugh Swisher’s portrait from the published Proceedings of a convention of the West Virginia Bankers’ Association held in 1907. Hugh served as a vice president of the association 1907-08.
[Hugh] became interested in some lands in New Mexico [and moved his family there around 1909. Based in the small town of Willard, New Mexico, Hugh worked as a business partner of and agent for West Virginia lumber baron Harry B. Curtin in a land development scheme. The scheme ultimately failed and the family moved back to West Virginia around 1914. (A project for some future historian might be to go through the eight-pounds-worth of Hugh's New Mexico business records which this writer has in a box.)]

Postcard view with the caption, “Bird's-eye view of Willard, N.M. which has been made famous by its pure abundant and shallow water supply. The A.T. & S.F. RY. for this reason having established one of its largest pumping plants on the system here.”
Harry B. Curtin, Hugh Swisher's West Virginia-based partner in a New Mexico land development scheme, was visiting when this picture was taken at the Swisher home in Willard, New Mexico. Left to right: Thomas Hyer Swisher, Harry Curtin, Ella Hyer Swisher, John Hugh Swisher and Hugh Swisher.

"Street scene of Willard, N.M."
Pumping water at Willard, New Mexico. Hugh Swisher is on the far right.

Hugh Swisher hoped to attract farmers and health seekers to New Mexico's Estancia Valley with this brochure. A variety of crops "can be grown successfully," the brochure claims. It also touts the area's "pure mountain air, pure water and the stimulation and exhilaration of higher altitudes."
Following his New Mexico adventure Hugh moved his family back to West Virginia, where Hugh resumed his banking career. On October 31, 1914 an officer of a bank in Charleston wrote to Hugh in Sutton congratulating him on his recent appointment as cashier of "the new bank" in Sutton.

At some point during the [First World] war Hugh worked as an accountant for the government at Nitro, a town which was owned by the government and where there were large plants for the manufacturing of explosives. After the war he returned to Sutton and was again connected with a bank, as cashier, where he remained until failing health caused him to retire from business. His last months were spent in Lancaster, Ohio, where he died August 6, 1924.

Hugh Swisher's last business venture was the opening of a coal mine with some other Sutton men around 1921. (Some family correspondence from this period is on stationery of the "Aquila Coal Company, Sutton, West Virginia" with the letterhead stating, "Mines at Prestonia, West Virginia.") The venture did not go well. "Owing to sickness the plans of this company were not carried out," Hugh wrote on February 4, 1924 to someone he hoped would buy the mine. "With the crude equipment on
hand approximately 150 tons a day can now be mined.” Hugh died six months later.

Hugh and Ella Swisher’s household included Ella’s widowed mother, Edna Evans Hyer, and unmarried sister, Mamie Hyer. Mamie’s salary as a bank bookkeeper and son John’s weekend dance band jobs (he played the trombone) during his college years in Morgantown and afterwards helped with the household expenses, but the family struggled financially following Hugh’s death. A January 10, 1929 summary of her finances shows that after liabilities were subtracted from assets, Ella had a net worth of $1970.00. Her house in Sutton was valued at $6000.00 with her second most valuable asset the coal, oil and gas rights to 40 acres in Lewis County (half of the mineral rights to Thomas E. Swisher’s old farm) valued at $2500.00.

Ella Hyer Swisher, after the death of her husband, completed a course of study at the West Virginia University and is now engaged in teaching in her old home town of Sutton. [She had attended West Virginia Conference Seminary before her marriage to Hugh, graduating from there June 11, 1897. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from WVU on June 5, 1928 at age 52. The state certified her to teach home economics, Latin, French and English.]
To Hugh and Ella Swisher were born two sons.

Thomas Swisher, the eldest, is connected with the General Electric Company in Schenectady, New York. John Swisher is with the Weirton Steel Company in Detroit, Michigan. [Quotations from Albert Swisher's 1932 history end here.]

Hugh and Ella Swisher are buried alongside his parents, Thomas E. and Samira Swisher, in Friendship Cemetery near Jane Lew, West Virginia. Several miles southeast, up the Hacker's Creek valley, Thomas' parents, George Washington and Mary Swisher, are buried in the Buckhannon Run Cemetery. George Washington Swisher's parents, Peter and Susanah Swisher, are buried in Harmony Cemetery close to Jane Lew. Several miles away, in the Rockford Cemetery near Lost Creek, West Virginia, Peter's father, Peter Swisher, is buried. (This first Peter's wife, Mary, is probably also buried in the Rockford Cemetery but there is no record of a gravestone for her.) In other words, five generations of the family are all buried within fifteen or so miles of one another.
"Kappa Alpha House party, Mt. Chateau Hotel 1925." John Hugh Swisher is on the back row on the right, wearing a dark jacket and seated between the post and a chaperone. KA was John's fraternity at West Virginia University. The girl on the far left of the front row looks like Mary Esther Bull, who later married John.
Believing the climate in California would be more healthful, Albert Willis Swisher moved his family from West Virginia to San Bernardino, California in 1910. To entice his brother, Tom, and sister-in-law, Samira, back in West Virginia to visit, Albert sent this postcard from San Bernardino on 15 June 1915 writing, “We would feed you on apricots, plums, peaches, nectarines, prunes, berries and nuts and gardening all raised on our own lot. Give you chicken eggs and goats milk to make you fat.”
A meeting of the Women’s Foreign Missionary Society at a Methodist campground in Lancaster, Ohio, 1936. Samira (Myra) Gusman Fontaine and her sister Florence Gusman Kelly are on the front pew, third and second from the right.
Hugh and Ella Swisher had two sons, Thomas Hyer Swisher and John Hugh Swisher. John Hugh Swisher was born April 14, 1903 in Sutton and spent most of his childhood there. At West Virginia University he met Mary Esther Bull of Sistersville, West Virginia when the two were students there. (He graduated June 7, 1927 with a BA degree. She did not graduate.) They married August 20, 1927 in Wheeling. They had four sons: John Hugh Swisher, Jr.; Thomas Reese Swisher; James William Swisher and, this writer, Robert Edward Swisher. Jimmy (who was born severely mentally handicapped) and Tom are now deceased.

John worked 41 years for the National Steel Corporation, from 1927 to 1968. His career took the family from Steubenville, Ohio (across the Ohio River from Weirton, West Virginia, home of the Weirton Steel Company, one of the companies that merged to form National Steel) to Rochester, New York to Detroit and, finally, to Cincinnati in 1935 where John was the corporation's district sales
manager. The sales team had its offices in downtown Cincinnati’s Carew Tower, the city’s tallest building.

From 1935 until 1976 the family lived in the Cincinnati suburb of Mariemont, a planned community dating from the 1920’s (and now listed as an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places). The Swishers lived at four different addresses in Mariemont: 7063 Cambridge Street, 5 Albert Place, 6 Denny Place, and, from around 1955 until 1976, at 6606 Pleasant Street. Esther was a homemaker and active in church and community affairs. She and John both had lots of friends. The family belonged to the Mariemont Community Church, a non-denominational Protestant church.

In 1976 John and Esther, by then empty nesters, moved from Mariemont to Hendersonville, a town in western North Carolina popular with northern retirees. John Swisher died in Hendersonville April 28, 1981. Esther died December 25, 1989 in Cleveland, Ohio where her son Tom and daughter-in-law Lucy Kerr Swisher lived at the time.
John, Bob and Esther Swisher in the center flanked by guests of John and Esther aboard a National Steel Corp. iron ore boat, the *Ernest T. Weir*, on the Great Lakes in 1961. The *E.T. Weir* had a comfortable passenger suite for company executives which Mother and Dad used and enjoyed on several occasions. As I recall, in 1961 it took us several days to go from Buffalo or Cleveland to Taconite Harbor, Minnesota on the *E.T. Weir*. 

National Steel Corporation executives in their hard hats ready to tour a steel mill in Weirton, West Virginia, 1961. John Hugh Swisher is second from the right.
FURTHER READING

For anyone interested in learning more about the lives and times of our ancestors I recommend the following books and articles.

**Frontier Histories: Chronicles of Border Warfare, or a History of the Settlement by the Whites, of North-Western Virginia, and of the Indian Wars and Massacres in that Section of the State** by Alexander Scott Withers (first published Clarksburg, Va., 1831).

**Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763 to 1783, inclusive, together with a Review of the State of Society and Manners of the First Settlers of the Western Country** by Joseph Doddridge (first published Wellsburg, Va., 1824).

**The Border Settlers of Northwestern Virginia. From 1768 to 1795** by Lucullus Virgil McWhorter (first published 1915).

**History of the Early Settlement and Indian Wars of Western Virginia** by Wills DeHass (first published Wheeling, 1851). All four of these have been reprinted many times and are still in print. Also, they have all been digitized and can be read online.

The West Virginia Encyclopedia has articles on everything having to do with West Virginia including “Pardee & Curtin Lumber Company,” “Banking,” and “Natural Gas and Petroleum.” Online at www.wvencyclopedia.org.

Thomas Hyer Swisher’s Sutton Photographs: From around 1928 to 1938 Uncle Tom documented the people and places of his hometown with some wonderful photographs. The photos, with their negatives, are now in the collection of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History which has twice published selections from the collection: in the Spring 1987 issue of Goldenseal magazine and in a 2005 book, Picturing West Virginia: A Century of Collecting by the West Virginia State Archives, 1905 - 2005. Jack Swisher, Uncle Tom’s nephew, is pictured as a boy on the front cover of the Goldenseal article and on the back cover of Picturing West Virginia.

Mariemont: John Nolen and Mariemont: Building a New Town in Ohio (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). 6 Denny Place is pictured on page 141 (the house on the right).
The author, age seven, with his mother, Mary Esther Bull Swisher, and great-aunt, Mamie Hyer, decorating the graves of Mamie's Evans grandparents in the Sutton, West Virginia cemetery. From a color slide, 1954, by John Hugh Swisher. The four of us also rode up to Jane Lew every Memorial Day with peonies from Aunt Mamie's Sutton garden to decorate the family graves in Friendship Cemetery.

The stone structure of the Mariemont Community Church is a beautiful example of the old-English-style architecture that distinguishes the Cincinnati suburb of Mariemont. Photo 1960 by John Hugh Swisher.
OUR BRANCH OF THE FAMILY TREE:
ONE LINE OF DESCENT FROM PETER
SWISHER


m.

Mary ___ (Decker?): her birth date, birthplace, death date and place of death all unknown (though, she was still living at the time of the 1830 census and was then age 70-79); probably buried in cemetery by Rockford M.P. Church, Harrison Co., W.Va. though there is no gravestone for her.

↓

Peter Swisher (one of many children of Peter and Mary); b. 1779 in W.Va. (probably in Monongalia Co.); d. 27 Sept. 1830 at age 51 years, 6 months, 16 days; bur. Harmony Cemetery on Hacker's Creek near town of Jane Lew, Lewis Co., W.Va.
m. 25 Jan. 1801 in Monongalia Co., W.Va.

Susanah Rinehart (Reinhardt); b. 1 Dec. 1779 in Md. (probably Hagerstown); d. 3 Aug. 1856; bur. Harmony Cemetery near Jane Lew, W.Va.

↓


m. 26 Sept. 1839 in Lewis Co., W.Va.

Mary Ann Boram: b. 13 April 1820 (in “eastern Virginia,” according to tradition); d. 13 Sept. 1879; bur. Buckhannon Run Cemetery near Berlin, Lewis Co., W.Va.

↓


m. 30 Aug. 1864

Samira Peterson, b. 6 Feb. 1843 probably in Lewis Co., W.Va.; d. 7 April 1919 Jane Lew, W.Va.; bur. Friendship Cemetery.
Hugh Swisher (one of two children of Thomas & Samira); b. 6 Oct. 1871 Jane Lew, W.Va.; d. 6 Aug. 1924 Lancaster, Ohio; bur. Friendship Cemetery near Jane Lew, W.Va.

m. 6 July 1898


John Hugh Swisher (one of two children of Hugh & Ella); b. 14 April 1903 Sutton, W.Va.; d. 28 April 1981 Hendersonville, N.C.; ashes at mausoleum at Shepherd Memorial Park, Fletcher, Henderson Co., N.C.

m. 20 Aug. 1927 Wheeling, W.Va.

Mary Esther Bull; b. 3 April (Easter Sunday) 1904 Sistersville, W.Va.; d. 25 Dec. 1989 Cleveland, Ohio; ashes at mausoleum at Shepherd Memorial Park, Fletcher, N.C.

Children of John & Mary Esther: John Hugh Swisher, Jr. (Jack) (see below); Thomas Reese Swisher (see below); James William Swisher, b. 31 March 1942 Cincinnati, Ohio, no children, d. 3 Nov. 2003 Cincinnati, ashes scattered at garden at
Shepherd Memorial Park, Fletcher, N.C.; Robert Edward Swisher (Bob), b. 16 Dec. 1946 Bethesda Hospital, Cincinnati, no children, lives in Richmond, Va.

John Hugh Swisher, Jr. (Jack); b. 20 Dec. 1927 Gill Hosp., Steubenville, Ohio; lives at Heritage Palms, Indio, Calif.

m. June 1957 Lovers’ Lane Methodist Church, Dallas, TX (later divorced)

Richard Dean Hayes (Rickie), b. 22 Feb. 1927 Pine Bluff, Ark.; d. 17 April 2005 Houston, Texas; bur. Earthman Resthaven Cemetery, Houston


m. 20 April 1963 St. Patrick’s Catholic Church, Troy, Ohio

Lucy Lee Kerr, b. 12 March 1939 Stouder Memorial Hosp., Troy, Ohio; lives in Lexington, Ky.

Children of Thomas and Lucy: Thomas Reese Swisher, Jr., b. 29 Nov. 1963 Our Lady of Mercy Hosp., Mariemont, Cincinnati, Ohio, lives in Orient, Ohio near Columbus; Peter Kerr Swisher (see below); Matthew Will Swisher, b. 10 March 1968 University Hosp., Columbus, Ohio, lives in Vancouver, Wash.; Stephen Hyer Swisher (see below)

Peter Kerr Swisher, b. 14 June 1966 Columbus, Ohio; m. #1 on 18 March 1989 Church of Our Savior Episcopal Church, Charlottesville, Va. Victoria Ann Graham (Vikki); Vikki b. 30 Oct. 1965 Fort Scott, Kansas; she lives in Lexington, Ky.; Peter m. #2 on 4 Oct. 2008 Shannon Kay Luce (Pete and Shannon married on the lawn of their home near Midway, Ky., a Catholic priest officiating); Shannon
b. 28 March 1968 Kansas City, Mo.; Pete and Shannon live near Midway, Ky.

↓


ADDITIONS TO THE FAMILY TREE

Births:

Marriages:

Deaths:
Family reunion, 2008. Pictured on the author’s front porch in Richmond, Virginia, left to right, top row: Stephen H. Swisher; Thomas R. Swisher, Jr.; John H. Swisher III; Tena Swisher; Matthew Swisher; Ann Swisher Travis; Jack (John H. Swisher, Jr.); and Thomas R. Swisher, Sr. Front row: Pete and Andrew Swisher; Shannon Luce; Jettie; Lucy, Bob and David Swisher. Photo by David Hale.

Left: The newest members of the family: Valerie Jane Linse and Austin Law Swisher. Photo 23 October 2010 by the author.
Land Records: Monongalia County (West) Virginia Deedbook Records, 1784-1810 (Old Series volumes 1-4), compiled by Rick Toothman, 1994. Land grant on file at the W.Va. Auditor’s Office: “...is granted by the said commonwealth [of Virginia] unto the said Peter Swisher assignee of William Smith a certain tract or parcel of land containing 366 acres by survey bearing date the 19th day of August 1785 lying and being in the county of Harrison on both sides of Lost Creek including his improvement and bounded...at a poplar by the King Lick....”

Deed conveying 147 acres on Hacker’s Creek from Thomas Sleeth to Peter Swisher in 1808, Harrison Co. deed book 7, p. 285. Survey dated 8 Jan. 1811 and deed dated 6 July 1812 conveying 130 acres on both sides of Aaron Creek in Monongalia Co. to Peter Swisher (survey spells name Swiser). Articles of agreement/deed between Peter Switzer and Isaac his son. dated 8 Feb. 1828, wherein Peter conveyed to Isaac “tract of land whereon he [Peter] now lives” in return for Isaac caring for his father and mother, Harrison Co. deed book 19, p. 124. Deed dated 20 July 1828 wherein Peter and Mary Swisher conveyed one acre of their Lost Creek land to a group of
people, Harrison Co. deed book 19, p. 107. Also, Monongalia County court records include deeds.

Court records: Monongalia County, (West) Virginia Records of the District, Superior and County Courts, compiled by Melba P. Zinn, 1990. Eleven volumes covering 1776-1822. This is the source for the chapter 2 quotes from Monongalia Co. court records. Another item from this source: A Sept. 1803 Monongalia court record shows that "Susanna Rinehart married to Switzer and living in Harrison County" was a witness for the plaintiff in a case.

Tax and census records: Census records: 1790 U.S. census schedule for Pa. 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840, and 1850 U.S. census schedules for Virginia. (1790 and 1800 U.S. census schedules for Va. no longer exist.) 1880 and 1930 U.S. census schedules for W.Va. The 1850 census of Harrison Co. shows Susanah Swisher and William Law, age 15, as part of the large household of Susanah's daughter Charlotte Gaston and her husband, James Gaston.


Marriage records: Marriage records, 1743-1885, of Evangelical Lutheran Church, Middletown, Frederick Co., Md., on microfilm at Family Search library and with online transcriptions on the Family Search website. The online transcription of these records shows m. on 6 April 1774 of Anna Maria Deckern and Peter Schweitzer. Anna Maria's surname was probably Decker, not Deckern. Germans feminized surnames of women, at least in high
German, with the suffix “in.” Decker becomes Deckerin in the feminized version. Monongalia Co., Va. marriage records show m. of John Wagner and Dorothy Swicher on 14 Sept. 1800 and of Peter Swisher and Susanah Rinehart on 25 Jan. 1801. Monongalia Co. marriage bond, dated 10 April 1813, for the m. of Isaac Swisher and Maria Jett is signed by Isaac Switzer and Jno. Wagner. Virginia marriage records, 1740-1850, online at Ancestry.com, shows m. of Mary M. Boram and George W. Swisher in Lewis Co., Va., 26 Sept. 1839.

Death Records: Cemetery records: Peter Swisher’s gravestone in cemetery by Rockford Methodist Protestant Church (on County Road 48 just SE of hamlet of Rockford which is a mile or so SE of town of Lost Creek in Harrison Co., W.Va.) states b. 28 Oct. 1746, d. 18 Jan. 1832. Gravestone of Peter Swisher in cemetery by site of old Harmony Methodist Church (on a little hill above the present Harmony Church on Hacker’s Creek Road, County Road 7, a mile or so east of town of Jane Lew in Lewis Co., W.Va.) states he d. 27 Sept. 1830, age 51 years, 6 months, 16 days. Gravestone of Susanah Swisher in Harmony Cemetery states she was wife of Peter Swisher and was b. 1 Dec. 1779 and d. 3 Aug. 1856. George Washington Swisher and Mary Ann Swisher are buried in Buckhannon Run (a.k.a. Rogers) Cemetery near Berlin, Lewis Co., W.Va.; according to published transcriptions (Hacker’s Creek Journal, Oct. 1982) his stone states b. 28 May 1818, d. 20 Dec. 1888, aged 70 yrs 6 ms 22 dys and Mary Ann’s stone states b. 13 April 1820, d. 13 Sept. 1870, aged 59 yrs 5 ms. (The transcriber apparently got the year of Mary Ann’s death wrong. The cemetery is about 2.8 miles SE of village of Berlin off of Buckhannon Run Rd.; just past Buckhannon Run Church turn right on a dirt road and go 0.6 miles to the cemetery.)
Newspaper obituary (n.p., n.d.) for Mrs. Mary A. Swisher states only that she was wife of Geo. W. Swisher and that she d. on the 13th.


Other sources: History of Ritchie County, by Minnie Kendall Lowther, 1911 (has been digitized and is online). The Swishers of Lewis County, West Virginia: A Genealogy and History, typescript by Albert Willis Swisher (San Bernardino, Calif., 1932). Genealogical and Historical Information on the Swishers of Lewis County, West Virginia, typescript by Carl Brent Swisher (1932). I sent copies of Albert’s and Carl’s works in 1985 to the Mormon Library in Salt Lake City (now called Family Search), the West Virginia University Library in Morgantown, and the West Virginia Division of Archives & History in Charleston. The Monongalia Story by Earl L. Core, 1974.
SOURCE FOR THE MORE RECENT GENERATIONS

Oral history plus the following written records


Vital data sheets from a Bible that belonged to Thomas and Samira Swisher (the Bible itself is lost) show Thomas E. Swisher b. 27 July 1842, Samira Swisher b. 6 Feb. 1843, Florence Swisher b. 9 Sept. 1865. Hugh Swisher b. 6 Oct. 1871 and that Thomas E. Swisher and Samira Peterson were married 30 Aug. 1864.
**Birth Records:** Birth certificates for Ella Mary Hyer (b. 17 Sept. 1875, but the certificate is dated 17 July 1942; more reliable evidence indicates Ella’s middle name was May), Thomas Hyer Swisher, John Hugh Swisher (Senior), John Hugh Swisher (Junior), Richard Dean Hayes, Robert Edward Swisher, Ann Louise Swisher and John Hugh Swisher, III. Ohio Bureau of Vital Statistics affidavit signed 25 May 1945 by Mary E. Swisher correcting the date of birth on John Hugh Swisher, Jr.’s birth certificate. *Birth announcements* for Thomas Reese Swisher (Senior), Matthew Will Swisher, Stephen Hyer Swisher, Jette Avery Swisher, David Allen Swisher, Andrew Thomas Swisher and Austin Law Swisher. *Baptism certificates* for James William Swisher and John Hugh Swisher, III.

**Marriage Records:** Marriage license and certificate for John and Mary Esther Swisher. *Wedding invitations* for Peter and Victoria Swisher, John and Tena Swisher, Gregory and Ann Travis, and Stephen Swisher and Valerie Linse.

**Death Records:** *Newspaper obituary* (n.p., n.d.) for Ellis S. Hyer states he d. Beall’s Mill 29 July 1884, b. in this county [Braxton] 12 Nov. 1851 son of Jacob M. and Mary Hyer; in 1876 began publication of Sutton *Mountaineer*, first paper published in county, managed paper about two years then sold out, served one term in Legislature, m. Edna Louisa dau. of Henry Petro Evans, in 1874; four children; buried in graveyard near Beall’s Mill [on Rte. 4, just E. of Gassaway, W.Va.]. *Newspaper obituary* for Mrs. Ardelia A. McWhorter states b. Lewis County, W.Va. 6 Oct. 1862, dau. of late George W. Swisher, m. 17 March 1883 L.V. McWhorter; three children Ovid Tullius, Ires Oresta and Oneco, ages 9, 7, and 5 years.


Obituaries for Ella Hyer Swisher (Charleston Daily Mail, 13 May 1953; Braxton Democrat, 14 May 1953) state that she was born 17 Sept. 1875 in Braxton County, that her parents were Ellis S. and Edna Evans Hyer, that she was the widow of Hugh Swisher, and that she will be buried at the Odd Fellows cemetery at Berlin, W.Va. [Ella's and Hugh's small gravestones in the Odd Fellows, a.k.a. Friendship, Cemetery are flat on the ground and near the gravestone of Thomas and Samira Swisher; the cemetery is on Hacker's Creek Rd., County Road 7, three or so miles southeast of Jane Lew; the cemetery is across the road and a stone's throw from the Swisher-Law farm]; obits state Ella's surviving sons are Tom of Chicago and John of Cincinnati and that one sister, Mamie Hyer of


Newspaper obituary (n.p., n.d.) for Louis Bush Swisher of Morgantown; obit states b. 18 Feb. 1907 near Glenville, W.Va., son of Charles and Vinnie Bush Swisher. Obituaries for Lewis C. Swisher (Bill) (Clarksburg Exponent Telegram, 12 and 13 March 1995); states b. 1 July 1899 Lost Creek, W.Va., son of George W. and Nevada Lewis Swisher, and that he d. 11 March 1995 at his residence on Lost Creek. Obituary for Alma E. Ford Swisher (Clarksburg Exponent Telegram, 16 April 2003); states that she was of Lost Creek, W.Va.; states b. 10 Nov. 1908 and d. 15 April 2003; states m. Lewis C. Swisher 10 Nov. 1930.
Other source: An article about Ellis Summers Hyer from the Braxton Co. section of Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia Illustrated: Special History of the Virginias (1883) gives the birth date of Ellis’ daughter, Ella May Hyer, and other vital data.
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Robert Edward Swisher (Bob) grew up in Mariemont, Cincinnati, Ohio. He received a BA degree from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky in 1970. He has lived in Richmond, Virginia since 1970. Bob works as a tour guide at the Virginia Capitol.