

TRITT FAMILY Newsletter



With pertinence to the following known name variations — Tritten, Dritt, Trait, Trate, and Treat

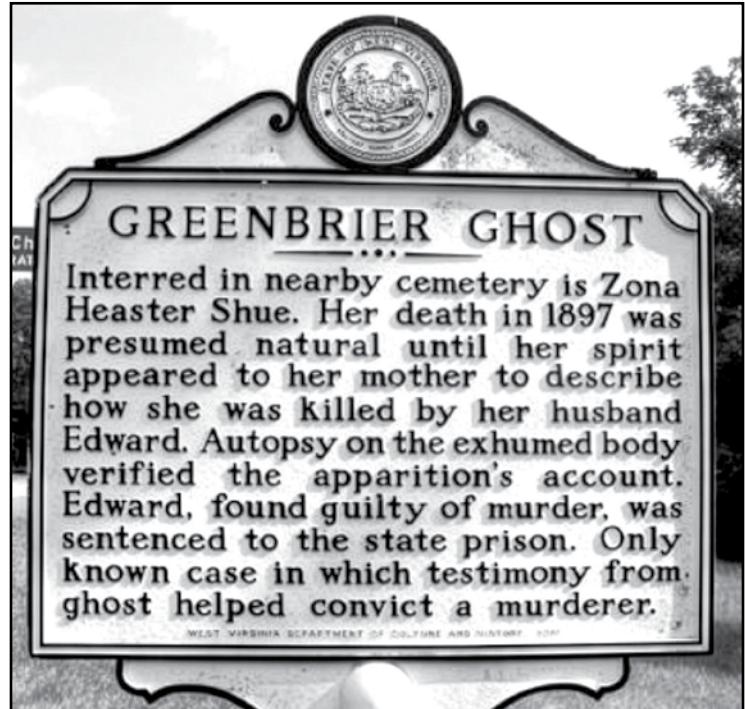
ISSUE NO. 44 - NOVEMBER 2025

PURSUING JUSTICE FROM THE GRAVE

by Jaime Dritt

When many people think of ghosts, they often associate them with spooky, abandoned houses or confine them to stories told around a campfire or at childhood sleepovers. Few people think of ghosts as playing an active role in courtroom drama. You might be surprised to learn that a ghost's accusation brought a murderer's crime to light in 1897. You might be even more surprised to learn that the murderer, Erasmus Stribbling "Edward" Trout Shue, was once married to a Tritt ancestor who died under mysterious circumstances.

Shue was born in Augusta County, Virginia, around 1861 or 1862 and grew up in Droop, West Virginia. He married Allie Ellen Cutlip in 1885, and they divorced in 1889. Shue's second wife was Lucy Ann Tritt. Lucy was born on April 8, 1871, in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. According to research done by TFR member Randy Waite, Lucy may be descended from Balshier Tritt, who is discussed on page 132 in *Tritt Family History, Volume I*. Lucy had a child out of wedlock named Lonnie Walter Tritt (1891-1928). In 1894, Lucy and Shue married and lived in Droop. However, their marriage lasted fewer than eight months. Lucy died on February 11, 1895, at the age of 23, under suspicious circumstances. There is no official record of how Lucy died, but various rumors were being circulated that Shue was responsible for it. One rumor claimed that Shue had accidentally killed Lucy by dropping a brick on her head. Another rumor said Shue had deliberately administered poison to her. However, no charges were ever filed against Shue for Lucy's death, presumably due to a lack of evidence. Lucy was buried in an unmarked grave in Whiting Cemetery in Droop.



After Lucy's death, Shue moved to Greenbrier County where he soon moved on to his third wife, Zona Heaster Shue. After knowing each other for only two weeks, Shue and Zona were married in 1896; three months later, Zona's body was found by a neighbor boy at the foot of her staircase. The boy told his mother, and she called a doctor. When the doctor arrived, he found that Shue had already taken Zona to their bedroom

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and dressed her for burial in a high-necked dress. Shue was in such distress that the doctor could not examine Zona's body thoroughly. Regardless, the doctor reported her death as being from natural causes. Shue's theatrical performance of grief continued during Zona's wake. Shue stayed by Zona's coffin and did not allow anyone to get close to her body.

Zona's mother, Mary Jane Heaster, was distressed by her daughter's death and distrustful of Shue. She had initially objected to their marriage, and she did not agree with the doctor's conclusion about Zona's death. She begged her daughter to appear and tell her what really happened. Mary Jane claimed that Zona's ghost appeared to her four times and that Zona said Shue had attacked and strangled her, breaking her neck. Mary Jane went to the courthouse to meet with Greenbrier County's prosecuting attorney, John Alfred Preston, and begged him to investigate her daughter's death. Her pleas succeeded, and Zona's body was exhumed. A thorough examination revealed that Zona's neck was indeed broken and had signs of strangulation. As a result, Shue was arrested for first-degree murder.

During the trial, Preston knew that Mary Jane's story about her daughter's ghost would not be admissible in court, so he decided to avoid it while prosecuting Shue. However, Shue's defense attorney brought up the story in order to discredit Mary Jane while she was on the stand. That strategy backfired spectacularly (or spectrally?). To the defense attorney's surprise, the jury believed that Zona's ghost had visited Mary Jane and revealed the details of her murder. The jury returned a verdict of guilty, and Shue was sentenced to life in prison.

The trial gained national attention in 1897 and is still legendary to this day. Zona Heaster Shue is now better known as the "Greenbrier Ghost". The West Virginia Department of Culture and History erected a plaque in her honor in 1991, stating that this story is the "only known case in which testimony from ghost helped convict a murderer". Did Lucy Ann Tritt also die by Shue's murderous hand? The facts around Lucy's death are buried in history and rumors that outlasted her short life. If she was also Shue's victim, hopefully she and her descendants can rest easier knowing that her murderer was brought to justice.

STATUS OF CHRISTIAN TRITT 1796 BOOK

by Richard L. Tritt

The Christian Tritt (b. 1796) book is written but still needs to be illustrated and laid out. I retired from my job as the Photo Curator at the Cumberland County Historical Society in November of 2024, a little over a year ago. One of my main retirement projects was to complete the book about my direct ancestor, Christian Tritt (1796-1871). Unfortunately, that project has not yet been completed.

Shortly after my retirement, my wife Nancy became very ill and spent six days at the Hershey Medical Center. Her condition was stabilized but she has a permanent disability that cannot be cured. I have had to take over everything in our household. Due to this situation, I have not been able to complete the Christian Tritt book. At the 2025 annual meeting of TFR, several people offered to help with the completion of the book. My hope is that the book can be completed within the next year.

I did spend several days taking photographs for the book in the area where Christian Tritt and his children once lived. It was a discouraging project. Unfortunately, much of Cumberland County has been invaded by truck terminals. Rich and valuable farmland has been lost and the air has been polluted by truck emissions. I learned recently that the Peter Tritt homestead, built c. 1790 in West Pennsboro Township, may soon be demolished for a new terminal. I also found that it is very difficult to take photos of many tombstones because the air pollution from the many trucks has covered the tombstones with black soot, making them difficult to read.

I am now working on selecting photographs and illustrations for the book. The layout design will be done by Rachael Zuch, who did the layout for Volume V. Melissa Clayton will be the Layout Editor for the genealogical data. Jane Ward and her son Shawn volunteered to be proofreaders. If all goes well, the Christian Tritt book should be finished and in your hands by this time next year.

SYNOPSIS OF AUGUST 2025 MEETING

by Connie Tritt, Secretary, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

The 47th annual meeting of Tritt Family Research ("TFR") was held in York, Pennsylvania, on August 15, 2025. Those in attendance for the meeting were, as follows:

Jaime Dritt of Blairstown, NJ	Richard Tritt of Boiling Springs, PA
Wendy Grada of Camp Hill, PA	Cindy Wagner of Harrisburg, PA
Dwight Tritt of Shippensburg, PA	Jane Ward of Delta, PA
Leonard and Connie Tritt of Carlisle, PA	Shawn Ward of Delta, PA

Our time together began at 10:30 A.M. at the York County History Center in York, Pennsylvania where we viewed Dritt artifacts donated by Frank Masters. One of the articles we viewed was a sampler done by Julianna B. Dritt, born February 22, 1816; died March 13, 1892; married June 19, 1839 to Alexander Frank, of York, PA. He was born February 14, 1813, and died April 1, 1888. The sampler was made in 1827, in her eleventh year. She was the daughter of John B. Dritt, born March 17, 1787, died March 28, 1872, and his wife was Polly Laub. They were married April 20, 1815. The granddaughter of General Jacob Dritt, born 1746, an officer in the Revolutionary War, who was drowned in the Susquehanna River near Long Level, where he lived, on December 19, 1817.

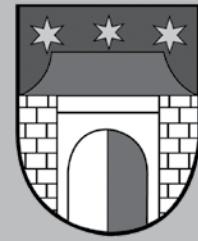
We then viewed the Dritt clock which was originally owned by Gen. Jacob Dritt, and was a part of the furnishing of the "great stone mansion" he built at Long Level, York County in 1758. It was handed down to his son, John B. Dritt, who was born March 17, 1787, died March 28, 1872. These dates were taken from the tombstone in the York Cemetery, which lot was purchased in the name of Alexander Frank (1813-April 1, 1888). He married Julia Dritt (1816-March 13, 1892), a daughter of John B. Dritt and his wife Mary. Julia Dritt inherited the clock from her father (John B. Dritt), which is how it came into the Frank family. Julia Dritt Frank and Alexander Frank's son John Jacob Frank (July 4, 1840-October 25, 1910) inherited the clock from them. John Jacob Frank and his first wife Elizabeth Danner

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BOOK SALE

Tritt Family Research recently held its annual meeting and took action to try to increase the sales of our books. To accomplish this the organization voted to reduce the price on Tritt Family History Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4 to \$10.00 apiece, with a \$7.00 cost per book for shipping. If you have any questions concerning this information, please refer to our website at www.tritt.org. As usual, to purchase any of our publications please send an order form to the following address:

Tritt Family Research
c/o Dwight Tritt
306 Amberleigh Lane
Shippensburg, PA 17257



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AUGUST 2025 MEETING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Frank (1839-January 22, 1902) had two children, Mary (Mazie) Frank (b. Jan. 1, 1870). The clock remained in the home of Alexander Frank and wife Julia Dritt Frank, occupied until her death by their maiden daughter Mary Frank. Mary Frank gave the clock to her niece, Sarah Frank Metzger, daughter of another brother, John Philip Frank (b. 1840-d.1904). When Sarah died, she bequeathed the clock to her brother George Frank. George Frank bequeathed the clock to Margaret Wilson Masters, the daughter of his first cousin, Anna Hoffman Wilson, whose mother was Elizabeth Hogentogler Hardy, a sister of George Frank's mother Catharine H. Hardy.

After leaving the York County History Center, we proceeded to Gather 256 in York where we ate lunch before beginning the meeting at 1:00 P.M.

Shawn was instrumental in getting a marker erected at the Dritt Cemetery commemorating Gen. Jacob Dritt who drowned in the Susquehanna River and, when found some months later down river, was buried in an unknown location. The marker reads:

Major General Jacob Dritt
1746 – 1817
Swope's Battalion – Ewing's Brigade
PA Militia Revolutionary War

Jaime mentioned that the tritt.org website was moved to WordPress giving the images and text a sharper

image. Jaime is to be commended in working so diligently on revamping the website and with timely posting updates.

We discussed the progress of Volume VI of Tritt Family History. You can read the article by Richard Tritt in this newsletter giving an update on its progress.

We had a long discussion about the future of Tritt Family Research going forward. Jaime has been president of TFR for the past two years and wanted to step down from that position but agreed to be a vice president. Others said they would remain in their roles. An election of officers for TFR for 2025-26 was done with the following results:

President	Shawn Ward
First Vice President.....	Richard Tritt
Second Vice President	Jaime Dritt
Treasurer.....	Dwight Tritt
Secretary	Connie Tritt

We also discussed ways to move our inventory of family history volumes and an article in this newsletter reflects our lowering the cost of the volumes to increase sales.

Although no date for the 48th annual meeting in 2026 was set, if we keep to the same schedule, the date for that meeting would be August 14 at a time and place to be determined.



DRITT CEMETERY

by Shawn Ward

The Dritt cemetery near the Dritt house in York County, Pennsylvania is aging like everything else in this world. The stones are gradually becoming less and less legible. This year the board voted to place a plaque at the entrance to the cemetery with the names and dates of all those interred there. There are 13 individuals. We discussed whether this should be a brass plaque or engraved granite marker. Of course, brass is very expensive and engraving in granite is priced by the number of letters. Considering the number of names and dates to be included, the bronze marker is the most practical solution. The cost will be somewhere between \$800 and \$1,000 plus the stone for mounting.

There are two family members not actually buried within the cemetery. Peter Dritt, 1769-1798, eldest son of Jacob Dritt, was buried near the Dritt house according to *The Pennsylvania Herald and York General Advertiser* of 31 October 1798, and that grave has not been located. Additionally, the location of the remains of General Jacob Dritt (1746-1817), who drowned in the Susquehanna, are unknown. These two names should logically be added to the list, bringing the total number of names to 15.

We did get a stone for General Jacob Dritt and placed it next to that of his wife. I was able to get it engraved and put it in place with the help of an ex-Marine friend.



FINANCIAL REPORT

Checking Account Balance August 1, 2024	\$22,337.34
Income Received	\$30,672.47
Expenses Paid.....	\$5,416.36
Checking Account Balance July 31, 2025	\$47,595.45

INCOME:

Merchandise Sale.....	\$11.00
Merchandise Shipping	\$16.00
Book Sales.....	\$180.00
Book Shipping	\$35.00
Donations – General	\$159.00
Donations – in memory of Doris Trait.....	\$50.00
Donations – in memory of Janet Roberts.....	\$100.00
Donations – Donald & Marilyn Tritt Publication Fund	\$25,000.00
Donations – Publication Fund for TFR History Vol. VI	\$5,000.00
Business Account balance from 2024.....	\$5.00
Interest Earned on Checking Account.....	\$116.47
TOTAL INCOME	\$30,672.47

EXPENSES:

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Paid</u>	<u>Donated</u>
Administration and Supplies	\$19.00	\$4.00	\$15.00
Donation to Central Ohio			
Tech. College (Donald Tritt)	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
Newsletter Printing and Scanning	940.22	940.22	0.00
Newsletter Mailing	293.14	243.14	0.00
Internet Listing Service	189.00	189.00	0.00
Internet Domain Protection	84.95	84.95	0.00
Website Expenses - Site Redesign	1,700.00	1,700.00	0.00
Website Expenses - Web Updates	200.00	200.00	0.00
Website Expenses - Web Hosting	173.92	173.92	0.00
Merchandise and Book Shipping	21.64	6.13	15.51
Tritt Family History Vol. VI Layout	450.00	450.00	0.00
Dritt Cemetery Expenses (Cemetery marker)	425.00	425.00	0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$5,446.87	\$5,416.36	\$30.51

BREAKDOWN OF ASSETS:

Checking Account Balance	\$47,595.45
Funds Designated as Patron Donors for Vol. Christian.....	8,245.00
Funds Designated for Dritt Cemetery	2,245.00
Publication Fund for Tritt Family History Vol. Christian.....	5,000.00
Donald & Marilyn Tritt Publication Fund.....	25,000.00
AVAILABLE FUNDS	\$7,105.45

PATRON DONATIONS FOR TRITT FAMILY HISTORY – VOLUME VI

Total patron donor contributions as of 7-31-24	\$8,245.00
Patron donations 8-1-24 – 7-31-25	0.00
TOTAL PATRON DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS AS OF 7-31-24	\$8,245.00

PATRON DONATIONS FOR TRITT FAMILY HISTORY – VOLUME VII

Total patron donor contributions as of 7-31-23	\$0.00
Patron donations 8-1-23 – 7-31-24	0.00
TOTAL PATRON DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS AS OF 8-3-24.....	0.00

DRITT CEMETERY FUND

Total donor contributions	
as of 7-31-24.....	\$670.00
Funds designated from	
general fund in 2024.....	2,000.00
Cemetery marker purchased in 2025...	425.00
TOTAL VALUE OF CEMETERY FUND	
AS OF 8-1-25	2,245.00

TFR DONATIONS – August 2024 to July 2025

Lennard Roberts
(in memory of Janet Roberts)
– Framingham, MA

Gary and Carol Sliffe
– Strasburg, OH

Thomas Trate for Trate Family Reunion
(in memory of Doris Trait)
– Birdsboro, PA

Donald Tritt estate
– Granville, OH

Donald and Marilyn Tritt Publication Fund

Dwight and Patrice Tritt
– Shippensburg, PA

Leonard and Connie Tritt
– Carlisle, PA

Walter and Susan Tritten
– Steffisburg, Switzerland

TRITT FAMILY RESEARCH, INC.

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Civil War Diary of William Tritt - \$4.00 plus \$6.00 shipping
(Written in 1864 by the Wisconsin Tritt patriarch while confined in Danville and Andersonville prisons)

20" x 20" St. Stephan church photo poster and history - \$20.00 (includes postage)

Tritt Cookbook - \$3.00 plus \$6.00 shipping
(Over 200 Tritt family recipes, new and old, from all over the U.S.)

Tritt Family History - Vol. I - \$10.00 (plus \$7 shipping via media mail)
(Our European origins through the first generation 'American' Tritts born to Hans Peter and Christian Tritt)

Tritt Family History - Vol. II - \$10.00 (plus \$7 shipping via media mail)
(Johann Paul Tritt, born 1752 in York County, Pennsylvania, and his descendants)

Tritt Family History - Vol. III - \$10.00 (plus \$7 shipping via media mail)
(Christian Tritt, born 1719 in the Alsace region of France, and his descendants)

Tritt Family History - Vol. IV - \$10.00 (plus \$7 shipping via media mail)
(Joseph Tritt, born 1786 in Pennsylvania and moved to Ohio, and his descendants)

Tritt Family History - Vol. V - \$40.00 (plus \$7 shipping via media mail)
(Tritten/Tritt progenitor Jacob Tritten (b. abt. 1562) and his second son, Hans Tritten (b. abt. 1589), and succeeding 11 generations)

CHANGE OF INFORMATION NOTICE

*Please detach and mail to: Connie J. Tritt, 7 Ironstone Drive, Carlisle, PA 17015-9705
OR email changes to Connie at trittfamilyresearch@comcast.net*

Your Full Name _____

Current Address _____

If moving, anticipated new address _____

Please check here if you would like to have your name removed from our mailing list.

Do you know of a family member who does not receive the Newsletter but would like to. If so, please send his/her

Name _____

Address _____

Address Service Requested

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