

## "HISTORY OF THE BOEHM (BEAM) FAMILY"

When the ancestor of this family came to America his name was Bohm or Bohme, written also Boehm or Boehme. The form with the ending "e" seemed to have been used interchangeably with the shorter form, which was the one that survived in this country. Both forms of the name are not uncommon in Germany and German-Switzerland today. As far as we have been able to discover, these were the only forms of the name, when the immigrants arrived in America, of those families now called Beam.

It is very difficult for an English speaking person to pronounce Boehm or Boehme correctly. It is this difficulty which led the family's English-speaking neighbours and the officers of the Courts to find as a substitute the name sounding nearest like the German name as they heard it. After the accepted pronunciation had become a settled thing, the bearers of the name changed the spelling to agree. Very few branches of the family have kept the original name unchanged though some members have returned to it after their immediate forbears had used other forms for several generations. Lancaster and Berks Counties were early officered and controlled by English agents of the Penns. Therefore, the English spelling of the name in the very earliest entries in the Court records is Beam or Behm. The name Boehm or Boehme is the German for "A Bohemian or the Bohemian" that is, a native of Bohemia which was until lately a part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy but now, since the Great War, a part of the newly constructed state of Czechoslovakia. The German for Bohemia is Boehmen. When the German name began to be applied to the people of the country they were, as they still are, Czechs. The very name, therefore, shows racial origin. The Beams are Slavic Czechs by race, but long residence in Germany or German-Switzerland has given rise to the belief that the family is German. Of course it must be admitted at once that inter-marriage with Germans has actually brought German blood into predominance.

The name began to be used as a family name in Switzerland in some such way as this: A wanderer from Bohemia, in search of better fortunes or a fugitive from religious persecution, with an unpronounceable Czech name, came across the Border and settled among his new German-speaking neighbours. They commonly and most conveniently called him "ein Boehm" or "der Boehm(e)". The real name, if ever known, was forgotten and soon the bearer of the name preferred to be known by the new name in order to avoid explanation or confusion. Even now we call this or that person "The Duchman" or "the Russian", etc. Only in these days the unconscious process does not go so far. Naturalized foreigners with unpronounceable names change them by legal process to a simpler form.

The name of Boe(h)mus is very old in the Canton of St. Gall. An extract from the Historic Biographical Lexicon of Switzerland in the great library at St. Gall reads as follows: "Boehm--Knights in the Gallischen Rhine Valley -- Coat-of-Arms -- two towers connected by a wall. First or earliest known ancestor was ULRICUS BOEMUS de NIEOVENBACH. References to one by the name of Wernhorns Boemus occurs from 1267 on, amongst the monks of the Monastery of St. Gall. At this time the family held as an Abbatial freehold the Castle of Bernaug, later known as Rosenberg. About the year 1290 the Castle was returned or surrendered to the Abbey by the widow of one of these Knights and her children. At this time also they were made Burghers of the city of St. Gall and lived there."

According to a Herr O. Boehm, now living in Zurich, there are few Boehms now resident in Switzerland and most of them originate from Wilchingen, a village in the Canton of Schaffhausen, situated between St. Gall and Basle, quite close to the German border. The ancestors of these Boehms appear for the first time in the family registers of Wilchingen in the year 1620, which leads us to believe that they were fugitives from Bohemia during the Thirty Years War when thousands of Hussan Heretics were expelled and found new homes in the neighbouring countries of Saxony, Silesia, and Switzerland.

The spread of the name Boehm is beyond all doubt connected with the beginning of the Reformation, for the name appears in several forms in the countries bordering Bohemia at that time. The religious history of English Protestantism goes back to Wycliffe, whom we call the morning star of the Reformation; but Wycliffe himself had received the impulse and inspiration from abroad, from the distant Bohemian nation. A Queen of England, the wife of Richard II, had come from Bohemia, and with her came the knowledge of the teachings of John Huss, the very first of the Protestants. Huss was also a great patriot. The religious movement which he led was only part of a great national movement for establishing the full freedom of the Czech nation. This was a whole century before Germany hailed Luther as its great teacher, reformer, and patriot. Huss was burned at the stake in 1415 and a death similar to his befell also the Bohemian nation. More than two centuries later in the great war which was fought on the soil of Europe for religious liberty - the Thirty Years War - the first blow was directed by the Austrian Catholics against the people of Bohemia. The Bohemians were defeated ~~hard~~ and crushed, many of them were driven out to be wanderers on the face of the earth and from that time the name and nation of the Bohemians - or as they called themselves the Czechs - were wiped out as it seemed forever from the map of Europe. However, within the last few years, it was reconstituted and is now recognized as a part of the new nation of Czechoslovakia.

In their new home in Switzerland our ancestors for a while lived and thrived but not for long were they left in peace, at least some of them. A certain Jacob Boehm was living at peace with the community somewhere near the German border, probably in this same Canton of Schaffhausen. He was, to quote a family historian (the Reverend Henry Boehm, his great great grandson) "a well connected and strict member of the reformed Lutheran Church, which was the name of the State Church formed by that doughty reformer John Calvin. Jacob had a younger son who was named after his father. In common with other young men of the time, he learned a trade and, as was the custom, he was required to travel for three years through the country as an itinerant journeyman before he had completed his apprenticeship. No man could enter into business for himself, no matter how well qualified, until he had pursued this course. In his wanderings, young Jacob fell in with the people called Pietists and was converted among them. Pietism was a reform movement, again within the Lutheran Church, which had already become a creed bound theological institution ruled with almost the absolutism of the Papacy. Pietism insisted on a new birth and a separation of Christians from worldly things such as dancing, the theatre, and public games. Among their principles were earnest study of the Bible, participation by the Laity in the government of the Church, the practice of Christianity as an indispensable sign and supplement to knowledge, of it and the sympathetic and kindly treatment of unbelievers - something new to the religions of the times. Among the forerunners of the Pietists was another Jacob Boehme 1575-1624, the great Protestant Mystic, theologian, and Philosopher, who started out as a shoemaker in Gorlitz.

Continuing to quote the family historian (Rev. Henry Boehm) "the change in young Jacob was so great when he returned home, his language so strange, that his friends could not understand him. His singular experience, his exposure of formal religion, his boldness in reproving sin, raised a storm of persecution. The minister withstood him and denounced him as a heretic. His answers were so pertinent that his father gave him a severe reprimand, enquiring "Boy, do you answer a minister in that way". The Church exercised Civil as well as Ecclesiastical authority and young Boehm was convicted of heresy and sentenced to prison. An older brother was appointed to conduct him to the prison-house; he did not watch his brother very closely and as they were near the line that separated Switzerland from France the prisoner crossed over and was forever free from his domestic and priestly persecutors.

He journeyed along the banks of the Rhine "till he entered the Dukedom of Pfaltz". This was the Palatinate bordering on Belgium. There young Boehm became acquainted with a people called Mennonites. They took their name from Menno Simons who was contemporary with Luther. They were a simple-hearted people and he united with them and became a lay-elder. He had several children, the third of whom, also named Jacob, was born in 1693 and in 1712 was induced to come to America by the glowing description of the country given by Martin Kendig who, in September of the year 1710,

had arrived at Philadelphia in a sailing vessel called the "Mary Hope", John Annis, Master, which had sailed from London on the 29th of June with 94 passengers, and after a stormy passage of nine weeks and four days, first saw the land of America. Two days before they sailed from London, the following letter was written to their brethren in the Faith in Amsterdam and is headed "Worthy and beloved friends".

This letter is #2253 Amsterdam Archives, and is signed by six persons, Martin Kendig appearing second on the list, and was issued in thankfulness for the financial aid extended by the "Dear friends out of their great kindness of heart toward our journey", and is an acknowledgment of an appeal which they made to their Dutch sympathizers for contributions, "because the journey cost more than we had imagined".

All of these six signers of the letter referred to Martin Oberholtzer, Martin Kendig, Christian Herr, Jacob Muller, Martin Meili and Hans Herr, appear to have set out for Lancaster County Pennsylvania where they arrived in October, except Martin Oberholtzer who seems to have remained in Philadelphia, and the five men were there joined by four others and these nine men selected a spot stretching from West Willow Street to Jackson Street, near the Centre Square, in Strasburg borough, Conestoga County, and was, roughly speaking, five miles long by three miles wide, ten square miles or 6,400 acres, and for which they paid 500 lbs. sterling \$2433. These were the first settlers in the County of Lancaster which is today the wealthiest farming county in the United States.

It is not a question of mere coincidence that the County of Waterloo, Ontario, should be the banner farming county of Canada. The descendents of these Mennonite farmers, who chose the beautiful rolling land of Lancaster, were largely responsible for the selection settlement and development of this beautiful county of Waterloo. It is a certainty that these men not only knew how to choose the best land, but they also knew how to farm it.

Driving today through Lancaster County, Penn., one cannot help noticing the frequent recurrence of the same names of villages, the same names for the creeks and rivers, the same names on the signs on the stores in the villages and towns, and the similar type of farm houses with the old-fashioned stoop and the barns with the projecting roof protection for the cattle, as one sees in the County of Waterloo, Ontario. Farm land in Lancaster County is seldom in the market for purchase; it is handed down from father to son. On a recent visit to Lancaster, one was informed that the only sales of land in the last few years brought \$300 per acre.

Martin Kendig seems to have been possessed of more financial worth than his associates as he took title to nearly 2000 acres.

History is silent about their struggles and trials in these early days, but the Colonists were evidently well pleased with their new home and this, despite the fact that they were in the very heart of Indian territory and that with the exception of a few scattered Scotch-Irish hunters and fishermen, they were the only white men for many miles around, but they had happily escaped the religious persecution to which they had been subjected in their old home. They immediately decided to send for their relatives and friends in the Old Country.

A voyage across the ocean in those days was no small undertaking and consequently they agreed to cast lots to decide who should carry the word to Europe. It fell on Hand Herr, but either because he was their preacher whose services could not be dispensed with or for some other reason, Martin Kendig offered to take his place.

He succeeded in his mission and sometime during the year 1712 brought back with him a considerable number of immigrants, most of them with their families, among whom was his brother Jacob Kendig and probably several sisters. Martin Kendig became William Penn's Agent and for many years was responsible more than any other one man for the introduction of German-speaking immigrants into Pennsylvania.

We mentioned before that Jacob Boehm had been induced to come to America by Martin Kendig. He also was one of this party. On his arrival in Philadelphia he first went to Germantown, now a fashionable suburb of Philadelphia, then to Lancaster and finally settled in Pequea, Conestoga Township, six miles from the present city of Lancaster. Soon afterward he married Barbara Kendig, probably one of the young ladies who had accompanied him on the journey from Europe.

To again quote the Rev. Henry Boehm, whose Reminiscences, written when he was ninety years of age (he died at the great age of one hundred years and six months and preached in New York City on his Centennial), "My grandfather was a lay-elder in the Mennonite Society. Soon after his arrival from Europe he bought a farm and built him a house; he also did blacksmith work, the first in all that region. His wife was very indistrious and, when necessary, she would leave her work and blow and strike for him. He died in 1780, aged eighty-seven." His Will is deposited in the Courthouse in the City of Lancaster and disposed of his considerable estate among his numerous family, of whom six daughters and four sons were then living. Following the German custom, his farm was left to his youngest son, Martin. He was born November 30th, 1725, and in 1753 married Eve Steiner who was born on Christmas Day 1734. Her ancestors were from Switzerland and settled near his father's. He built himself a large stone house in which his children were all born. "He was a short, stout man, with a vigorous constitution, an intellectual countenance, and a fine flowing beard, which gave him in his later years a patriarchal appearance. He had strong common sense and well understood the science of family government. The order and discipline of the family attracted the attention of Bishop Asbury and he made mention of it in preaching Martin Boehm's funeral sermon."

Martin Boehm was first a Mennonite preacher for he embraced the religion of his fathers.

The following from the history of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, of which denomination he and the Rev. William Otterbein were founders and the first Bishops, well describes this devout man and early missionary in the New England Colonies. "The name of Martin Boehm must ever occupy the honoured place in United Brethren History on account of his prominence in the great revival movement and in the subsequent organization of the Church as well as from the fact that the people among whom he was for many years a greatly esteemed minister contributed a considerable number to the early adherents of the Church".

We have already seen that among the Protestant Germans and Swiss who, toward the close of the 17th Century forsook their homes in the Old Country to escape persecution and enjoy the blessings of religious freedom, were large numbers of Mennonites. By 1735, as many as five hundred families were found in Lancaster County alone, while many besides found homes in other counties in Pennsylvania and also in Maryland and Virginia. It will be noted that in many things they bore a marked similarity to the Friends or Quakers with whom many of them by their residence in William Penn's Colony, were brought into close relation, but with the almost universal low condition of spirituality which prevailed among them, it became an occasion of surprise and sometimes of alarm, and even anger, when their members found their way to a better religious life and made declaration of the fact. It was among these people that Martin Boehm was born.

The opportunities for education in America in the early part of the 18th Century were few, and Martin Boehm's education was accordingly limited, being mostly received in the home, in the German language. But he possessed, happily, a vigorous mental, as well as physical constitution, a clear grasp of ideas, and sound judgment; was gifted with a graceful and easy flow of speech and had a pleasing personal bearing, which would make him naturally a favourite. Later in life he acquired a fair knowledge of the English language, with ability to converse with ease, and became possessor also of a number of English books. His father, being a devout Mennonite, and as we have seen, an officer in the Church, Martin Boehm was brought up as a true son of the Church. Possessing all these qualities, it is not surprising that, when a vacancy occurred in the pulpit of the local Church, of which the Boehms were members, the thoughts and hearts of the people should have turned toward this gifted and pious young man in their midst.

The method of choosing a minister among the Mennonites was by lot.

Martin Boehm's conversion presented an interesting illustration of the manner in which the Holy Spirit moved upon the hearts of men in different Churches and in different localities, independent of any personal contact of those who were thus affected. Martin Boehm, when he was called to become a minister, felt that he had no message for his people. Under these circumstances, he found himself presently under the greatest embarrassment and mortification. Again and again, according to the custom of his Church, he arose to add an exhortation after an elder minister had preached and found himself able only to stammer out a few incoherent ~~sentences~~ sentences. He read diligently the Scriptures that he might have something to say, but when the trial came his memory would not call up a single passage and he was obliged to sit down in confusion. Some months passed in this way with only failure to reward his efforts and he began to be in despair.

To be a preacher and have nothing to say he felt to be a deep reproach. Yet he did not doubt that he was genuinely called to the work of the ministry, because the Church had laid its hand upon him after the Divine Order as understood by his people. He believed also fully in the efficacy of prayer and he availed himself earnestly of this refuge of troubled souls. While he was thus engaged, he tells us the thought presented itself to him as though one had audibly spoken "You pray for grace to teach others the way of salvation, and you have not prayed for your own salvation". This thought clung to him day by day until he felt himself to be a poor lost sinner. His agony, he says, now became very great. One day, he continues, when he was plowing in the field; he could go on no farther; he sank down by his plow and cried "Lord save, I am lost." Then came to him the answer "I am come to seek that which is lost". His heart took hold of those precious words of the Mighty Saviour; and "in a moment", he says "a stream of joy was poured over me". Thus, as a result of prolonged struggle and in answer to unceasing prayer there came into his heart the blessing of an unutterable peace.

Martin Boehm at once left his plow in the field and proceeded to his house to tell his wife the joyful news. Now he found, too, that his tongue was loosened. With the emancipation of the heart came liberty of utterance. The live coal from the Altar which touched the Prophet's lips inspired his lips also with a new found eloquence, and now, while he had wished the Sabbath far away, he wished it were already here. When the day came, and the elder brother had preached, he arose and told his experience. He felt that he now indeed had a message to deliver. To his people it was as novel as to him it was joyful. Many, as they listened to his story, were deeply moved, and attested their feeling with weeping. On the following Sabbath, as he was speaking, his soul was aflame with his theme and soon he found himself in the midst of the congregation while the people about him were weeping aloud.

To see this plain, simple-hearted young man, who before had been so reserved and unable to speak connectedly even a half dozen sentences, now suddenly stand forth with rich gifts of speech with Scripture ready to support every utterance, and with power to stay the hearts of the people in a manner they had never before witnessed, occasioned among his listeners the profoundest surprise.

In the year 1759 he was advanced to the rank of a Chief Pastor or Bishop, as the office of a Full Pastor among the Mennonites was called. He continued to preach with much fervour and with evident results following to his own congregation, but it was not long until he found occasion to make visits elsewhere and preach to others of his own denomination. The first of these visits of note was made to some Mennonite settlements in what was then called New Virginia. From 1750 ~~onward~~ onward there was a considerable immigration from Pennsylvania across Maryland into the inviting valley of the Shenandoah River. Among these people were numerous Mennonite families and among them some of Martin Boehm's relatives. The Mennonites in the valley were not yet organized into congregations and were without preaching by ministers of their own Church. They resolved to send to Pennsylvania for some minister of their own people who should give them the counsel they needed. Their request

was brought to Lancaster County and to Martin Boehm's Church. On the advice of his brethren, Martin Boehm responded to their call. He found himself impelled to extend his labours to other fields beyond the limits of his own neighbourhood and congregation. He visited other Churches of his own people, preaching to them the same doctrine as he preached to the people of his own charge and as he had preached on his visit to Virginia, and similar results everywhere followed. In the year 1768 Martin Boehm first met the Rev. Philip William Otterbein, a minister of the Lutheran Church at York, Pennsylvania, and a man of similar power from the pulpit to himself. The meeting took place at Isaac Long's in Lancaster County, in a large barn capable of accommodating a numerous congregation. The people assembled in great numbers from Lancaster, York and Lebanon Counties, too many for all to find room in the barn, and an overflow meeting was held in the orchard. At this meeting Martin Boehm proceeded with his discourse, his heart glowed with spiritual fervour. Otterbein's soul kindled with responsive feeling. The great ~~burning~~ burning truths which Martin Boehm proclaimed were the same which he himself had long been accustomed to declare and he felt that there indeed stood before him a fellow-apostle of the same Gospel. When Martin Boehm ceased and before he had time to sit down, Otterbein arose and with a heart filled to overflowing, cast his arms about Martin Boehm in warm embrace and exclaimed, "We are brethren". The incident was a remarkable one, truly dramatic and impressive. Much historical significance has been attached to this incident as it suggested the name of a Church when some years later was brought about the actual organization of the Church of the United Brethren.

The home which Martin Boehm built in 1750 must have been of considerable size as on frequent occasions, according to his son's statements in his "Reminiscences" he had entertained gatherings of more than one hundred at a time. When the writer of this sketch visited the old homestead in 1917, he was told by the present owner of the farm that Martin Boehm's house had been demolished some forty years before and that much of the stone is now in a wall which is built about the garden. All that remains of the old house is a peculiar large stone-arched chamber and the remains of the stone fireplace which are underneath the present large barn. The prospect from the house must have been a very beautiful one, looking down the valley of the Pequea River. The farm is now given up largely to the cultivation of tobacco and fruit.

On the writer's second visit to the old homestead in 1918, he discovered in a dense thicket of locust trees and brambles a half mile distant from the house the old family burying ground and the graves of twenty-five of his ancestors. The graves were marked with headstones of field slate, with the names cut in with a cold chisel. It is of interest to note the various spellings of the name there, which includes "Beam", "Behm", "Bohm" and "Boehm". The earliest stone bore the date 1725.

In May 1929 the writer accepted an invitation to unveil a monument erected by the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in honour of Bishop Martin Boehm, his great, great grandfather. The ceremony took place beside the old stone Church erected in 1791 and known as Boehm's Church, because it was built upon Boehm's land in the Boehm neighbourhood, and because the different members of the family did much towards its erection and were regular attendants there. Beside the Church lie buried Martin Boehm and his wife Eve. The building is now under the care of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

Large numbers attended from Lancaster and the surrounding counties and many were present from Philadelphia. In his remarks on this occasion, Bishop H. H. Fout of the United Brethren Church, said "The plan for a Union service on this occasion was happily conceived. The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ are united in a very similar origin. Otterbein, Asbury, and Boehm, Prophets of God, and pioneers in American Christianity, lived and wrought in the most intimate fellowship. The inscription on the monument reads as follows: "Sacred to the memory of Rev. Martin Boehm, born November 30, 1725, died March 23, 1812, and to his wife Eve Boehm, born December 25, 1734, died November 26, 1822. For 55 years Martin Boehm laboured in the vineyard of the Lord Jesus Christ and preached the Gospel to thousands in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia among many denominations, particularly among Mennonites, Methodists and United Brethren. Martin Boehm was for

some time a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was elected a Bishop in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ when that denomination was founded in the year 1800. The United Brethren Church honoured him with the office of Bishop until his death. This saint of God gave himself and his services unselfishly to the Church. His end was Peace."

The will of Martin Boehm is deposited in the Registry Office in the city of Lancaster. In one clause he bequeaths such of his books as she may choose to take to his wife Eve and all the remainder of his books to be equally divided between his four children, John Beam (my great grandfather), Jacob Beam, Henry Beam, and Barbara, the wife of Abraham Keagy. We do not know what eventually became of Martin Boehm's books, but I have a letter written on the 1st of May, 1826, by the daughter of Martin Boehm's son John to her brother Adam Beam (my grandfather) in Canada, suggesting that the books left by Martin Boehm "ought now to be divided and, as you are the oldest son of John Behm, you ought to write or let me know how the division should be made."

Martin Boehm had eight children, of whom the youngest, Henry, was born in the year 1775. In 1800 when he was twenty-five years of age, he became a minister of the Methodist Church. Eight years later he was invited by the Rev. Francis Asbury, the first Bishop of the Methodist Church in America to accompany him as his companion on his constant rounds of the enormous diocese under his charge. This included the whole of the United States and Canada and extended from Canada to Georgia and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. During the five years he was with the Bishop, they rode on horseback forty thousand miles and Henry Boehm in his "Reminiscences", states that he himself during his ministry rode one hundred thousand miles. His book, from which we have frequently quoted is a volume of five hundred pages of reminiscences and is an intensely interesting account covering a period of nearly one hundred years of the early history of New England and Upper Canada; it is a fascinating narrative of the travails and hardships of a pioneer missionary.

Abraham, the third son of Jacob of Pequea, (the First American Boehm) and elder brother of Martin, married previous to 1750 but does not seem to have owned any land until 1768, when he bought 221 acres and a grist mill in Bart Township, a few miles south of the old homestead in Willow Street. Abraham, like his father, was a Mennonite, and in common with many other members of that peace-loving sect became involved with the rebels during the war of the Rebellion. The rebels looked upon these people, who would not bear arms against the flag that had given them tolerance and freedom of belief, as enemies and treated them accordingly. By means of fines, requisitions, and general persecution, they made life miserable for this simple miller. A last fine of 800 lbs. in Pennsylvania currency left him in a desperate position. The sum was borrowed from a friend, a weaver by name of Jacob Morgansturn. The situation was intolerable. A momentous decision was made and again the Boehms were on the trek in quest of freedom. One generation of this branch of the family had found sanctuary in their new American home, but they had learned that freedom was to be found under the British flag: so on to Canada. In 1787 Abraham sold or turned over his farm to a John Boehm, who may have been his elder brother but more probably was a married son. It is known that he left a married daughter in Pennsylvania and it is likely there were other grown-up children. With his wife Barbara and his youngest son Martin, he loaded what he could on a Conestoga wagon, tied a cow or two behind, hitched up his horses, and began the long trek to a new home in the promised land. Abraham was over sixty years of age, a ripe age to begin pioneering in a new country. At the time of his arrival at Niagara, the only settlers on the upper part of the river were the recently disbanded soldiers who were making improvements on certain sections of land fronting on the river. Abraham chose a site which is still a beauty spot on the comparatively flat, low-lying land, at the mouth of Black Creek, approximately half way between Chippawa and Fort Erie. He built his house just north of the mouth of the creek and obtained a right to 250 acres of land bordering on the river and on both sides of the creek. Six years later he petitioned the Government for a further location of land for himself and family and was granted the 400 acres adjoining the

rear of his first property, and a further 200 acres down the river, one parcel opposite the foot of Navy Island near Chippawa and another parcel on the Chippawa Creek.

The following is Abraham Beam's petition to the Government for this additional land:

"To His Excellency John Graves Simcoe, Esqu. Governor and Commander of Upper Canada, etc. In Council.  
The petition of Abraham Beam humbly shows that your petitioner was an inhabitant of Pennsylvania before the late rebellion in the Colonies. That during that period he experienced all the sufferings generally inumerated in the catalogue of Loyalists and at one time was fined 800 lbs. Pennsylvania currency. In a word everything he possessed was sacrificed to the fury of an unnatural rebellion, except his life and his integrity. Six years since he removed with his family into this Province and now enjoys the happiness of that Government which was always dear to him and for which he has severely suffered.

Your memorialist begs leave to inform your honours that since his removal he has purposed an improvement on 250 acres of land and obtained a right to the soil which is all the encouragement he has received from Government since he has been in the Province.

Your petitioner agreeably to the example of others in similar circumstances begs leave to approach Your Honours on the present occasion and most humbly requests that Your Honours would grant him a further location of land for himself and family as much as Your Honours in your wisdom shall see fit and as in duty bound he will ever pray.

Abraham Beam.

Newark June 4th 1794

(The entire petition is in the handwriting of the petitioner)

Endorsed;- Granted 400 acres and referred to Surveyor General to locate the same.

Read in Council July 8th 1794.

Extract - Ontario Historical Society papers and records Volume 24, Page 24."

Other Pennsylvanians from Lancaster and Berks Counties followed, among whom was Abraham's friend, Jacob Mornigsturn (now Morningstar) the weaver who also had been in difficulty with the rebels. After sinking his machinery into the river, he gathered his numerous progeny together and followed his friend to Niagara. On his arrival, Abraham turned over some 200 acres on the south side of Black Creek to him as part payment on the 800 lbs. debt. After settling his family in their new home he started back to Pennsylvania with one horse and a light wagon to retrieve his weaving machinery, sorely needed in the new country. On the way back to Niagara his horse departed for the road of lighter loads and Jacob was left axle deep in mud with no money and no beast of burden, but his face was his fortune and a kind Quaker lent him a yoke of oxen to complete his journey and thus bring in the first carting and weaving machinery in the district.

Abraham's young son, Martin, who was only fifteen when he came to Canada, married Rebecca, one of the daughters of Jacob Morningstar, when he was seventeen years old. They wasted no time helping the young country to acquire the much needed increase in population. No doubt having the probable size of his future family in view, Martin applied for another six hundred acres of land in his own name and received the same from a beneficent Government.

Abraham lived and worked as few of us know how to these days, on his farm until his death in 1799, eleven years after his arrival in Canada. During this time he and his son, starting with nothing but a wagon load of chattels, a few head of livestock, the strength of their



own arms, and the courage of their hearts, built themselves a home that still stands, a barn and various shelters, acquired the rights to 1450 acres of land by clearing and breaking several acres in each parcel, increased his stock of cattle, pigs, and sheep, raised wheat, buckwheat, rye, corn, flax, potatoes, and the various vegetables common to the gardens of the time. In between times they helped build houses and barns for their friends upon arrival from Pennsylvania, and Abraham, on occasion, acted as town warden for the neighbouring village of Chippawa. In his will he left his property in trust with his son for the three grandchildren who had been born at that time. His wife was amply provided for but she was anxious, after eleven years absence, to see the rest of the family back in Pennsylvania, so she returned to visit her married daughter and others at Strasburg in Lancaster County. She never returned.

Martin Beam carried on; he lived in the old homestead and most of his ten children were born there. When the war of 1812 broke out, the river front was an uncomfortable spot and he built himself a large log house on his tract of land about five miles west on the Bertie-Willoughby Township line. A typical pioneer home of the better class, this house was built of large logs and had three rooms downstairs, two bedrooms and a huge room nearly 30' x 40' used as a kitchen, dining and living room, with an annex shed for wood and supplies. The upstairs space was one large attic room, used by the boys of the family. The logs for the second floor projected 8' to 10' beyond the wall of the house and were roofed over to form a verandah, running the full length of the house. The rafters and floor joists were smaller logs, hewn one side to take the sawn floor lumber.

Martin Beam, being a Mennonite, was exempted by the Government from bearing arms, but nevertheless was drafted into a transport service, teaming supplies and equipment for the various military manoeuvres along the border, as were other non-combatants in the district. During that troubled period they lived alternately in the new and old homes, usually spending the summer on the river and the winter in the warmer and more comfortable home back in the bush. Eventually the three oldest children married, just before the twenties, and settled on the land they inherited from their grandfather, and Martin settled permanently on the new home with the rest of the family. Shortly after the war, Martin and his wife Rebecca went back to Pennsylvania to visit their relatives. They made the journey on horseback, a brave undertaking for the mother of nine children, but on their return they rode in a beautiful Phaeton, the first in all that district and a wonderful thing it was in those days. While there they also bought four shiny new side saddles at a cost of \$25 each, one for each of their daughters - lucky girls to have such generous parents.

As the rest of his ten children grew up and were married Martin made each of them a gift of 200 acres of land, two cows, a yoke of oxen, six sheep, a wagon, a plow, a harrow, and other lesser incidentals. These children were still pioneers for most of them had to hew their farms from virgin forest lands.

Martin's children followed their parents' religion - Benjamin, the fourth son, donated the land on which the first Mennonite Church was built in 1838, just west of Stevensville on the banks of Black Creek. The fifth son, Henry, was a minister in this Church. All except one of Martin's sons and daughters married and raised large families. Martin Beam had seventy-five grandchildren. Of the generation that has just past beyond, there are only a half dozen left. One of these, Benjamin Beam, Jr., has left a detailed account of the pioneer life of his mother and father, Benjamin and Mary Stoner Beam, in the form of long letters to his grand nephew Donald C. Beam, but that is a long story in itself. Nearly all of these grandchildren lived in or in the vicinity of the original grants of land. Many of them went to the Church of their forefathers, but others broke away to other denominations. A very few of their children and grandchildren gather together on the occasional meeting in the old Church. Many of the present younger generations, the seventh and eighth in America know nothing of the hardships their forebears suffered and the seemingly impossible things they accomplished because they wished to lead simple good and honest lives according to

their conception of what was Christ-like.

We will return now to the family of Bishop Martin Boehm of Lancaster; his eldest son, John, influenced probably by reports sent back from Niagara by his Uncle Abraham and dissatisfied with conditions in the new republic and determined to live under the Flag which had given protection to his grandfather nearly one hundred years before, set forth with his family for the new land of freedom. He located at the Forks of Black Creek and immediately adjoined the rear of his Uncle Abraham's land.

John Beam was born in 1755 and married Barbara Walter who bore him eight children, all of whom came to Canada with their parents, excepting the two eldest daughters who were married. Adam Beam (my grandfather) was the eldest. Among his papers, which I now have, is a note in the writing of his grandmother, the wife of Martin Boehm, reading as follows: "Adam Beam was born in the year of our Lord 1793, in the month of May, the 29th day (signed) E. Beam, June 4th, 1783". The baby was the first grandchild in the family. Another of his children, Julianna, married Phillip Buck, the son of one of the very first settlers on the Niagara Frontier, who later took up land and settled on the Dundas Road near Palermo. One of her granddaughters is Mrs. Colin H. Campbell, O.B.E., of Winnipeg. She was married in 1820 when fifteen years of age. Her husband Philip Buck was thirty. She bore him eleven children.

John Beam died intestate in 1812 and Adam, his eldest son, was appointed administrator of the estate. The constant struggle to new a home out of the buck, the lack of the smallest luxury, the never ending toil is only too apparent in the written records which have come down to this generation. The inventory of the goods and chattels of John Beam is eloquent of the lack of luxuries, though he had evidently a ~~xx~~ well stocked farm. On November 17th, 1813, when thirty-five years of age, Adam Beam was married by a Justice of the Peace to Catharine Gonder ~~xxxxxxxx~~ a girl of fifteen, born in 1803. She was a daughter of Captain Jacob Gonder who served in the Lincoln Militia in the war of 1812 and whose father Michael Gonder was one of the earliest settlers on the banks of the Niagara River. He came as a U.E. Loyalist in 1789. First settling at Niagara, later he built himself a comfortable log house on the river bank about a mile north of Black Creek. When the Niagara Boulevard was built a new years ago the old house, which had never gone out of the family was demolished. During the war of 1812, it was for a time the headquarters of General Sir George Drummond. Michael Gonder came from Strasburg a few miles from Lancaster. His house had been burnt by the rebels because he was a Loyalist and had frequently sheltered British officers in his home. He came with two of his children to Canada. His wife and the remaining children stayed in Pennsylvania. He never returned and never saw them again.

Among the items in Adam Beam's account book, begun in 1813 when he took over the administration of his late father's estate, we find reference on June 5th, 1815, to the addition which was then made to the original log house which had been the first home of the family in Canada. This building still stands in excellent condition. The carpenter, David Demud, who helped in the work of the building, was paid eight York shillings per day. On February 9th, 1821, Adam Beam paid for chopping thirty-five and a half cords of wood, one shilling and nine pence York currency per cord. On December 14th, 1819, Captain Jacob Gonder gave Adam Beam, his son-in-law, nineteen feet of Walnut board for a cradle. This cradle already has served three generations and the fourth, the writer's grandchildren, are now using it.

Adam Beam died in 1863 aged eighty years. His widow died in 1883, also aged eighty years. The eldest son, Aaron, was one of the early settlers in Norfolk County. Adam Beam, like many of the first settlers and their sons, during the war of 1812-14, defended his home against the Invader. Again, during the MacKenzie Rebellion of 1837, he served as a Sergeant in the Militia. His son, Joseph, (my father) held the King's Commission during the Fenian Raid, and of the present generation, a number of his grandsons had the honour and privilege of serving their King and Country during the Great War.

M. Stanley Boehm and Donald C. Beam  
Authors