

Benner Family Tree

by Floyd E. Benner Sr. 1977

First Generation:

Great great grandparents; came from Holland settled in Gettysburg, Pa.

60-11411 CLAVORACK + Reinebeck N.Y. north of N. York city on the Hudson

Second Generation:

N. York State.

Great grandparents; left Gettysburg, Pa. and became one of the first families in Bertie Township, Welland County on the Niagara Peninsula in Ontario, Canada.

Jacob Benner Born: 1812, Died: Feb. 11, 1880 *(1809-1879)*

Sophia Benner Born: 1818 - 1880

Children: William H., John, Philip, Julia Ann, Philip, Fredrick, Christina, Maty, John R, Jacob, James.

Third Generation:

Grandparents

William H. Benner Born: Jan. 31, 1837, Died: Sep. 4, 1895

Anna (Goulding) Benner Born: Apr. 17, 1837, Died: Oct. 29, 1899

Children: William A. and Edward A. (Twins), George L., Jesse W., Mary, Annie M.

3 ↑ twins 3 (May 14) 1 4 2 5

Fourth Generation:

Parents

William A. Benner Born: Jun. 11, 1864, Died: Jul. 5, 1901

Annie (Spedding) Benner Born: Oct. 22, 1866, Died: Apr. 27, 1958

Children: Walter E., Roy E., William C., Floyd E.

Fifth Generation:

4 Floyd E. Benner Born: Aug. 22, 1895, Died:

Edith (Culmer) Benner Born: Jun. 10, 1901, Died:

Children: Floyd E. Jr., Richard A.

1. Walter E.

2 Roy E. Benner, Sr. Born: 4-15-1888, Died: 1980, 92 yrs.

Elizabeth Drysdale Glen Born: 10-20-1893, Died: 1950, 57 yrs.

Children: Roy E. Jr., and Bruce Melvin

3. William C.

Sixth Generation:

Roy E. Benner, Jr. Born: 4-12-1921

Marjorie Gamble Born: 5-5-1920

Children:

Beverly Elizabeth, Born: 8-25-1951.

Kevin Roy, Born: 3-1-1954, married Sandy Giancola, Born: 7-19-??, no children.

Sheree Lyn, Born: 3-29-1957, married Ku Castano, Born: 3-22-1952, no children.

Bruce Benner Born: 4-26-1928

Geri Simmons Born: 4-4-1926

Children:

Gregory, Born: 7-31-1954, married Suzanne Van Wie, Born: 12-21-1950, no children.

Ronald, Born: 9-14-1956, married Leslie VanLoan, Born: 2-10-1957.

Children: Ronald, Jr., Born: 9-14-1977, Kathleen, Born: 12-18-1979, Brian, Born: 9-25-1984.

Patricia, Born: 10-22-1958, married Donald Schneggenburger, Born: 1-25-1957.

Children: Andrew, Born: 7-26-1987, Todd, Born: 9-14-1990, Ryan, Born: 7-23-1992. Paul, Born: 10-25-1965 married Lynn Militello, Born: 3-31-1969, no children.

Floyd E. Benner Jr. Born: Jan. 23, 1930

(scribble)

Noel (Taylor) Benner Born: Dec. 18, 1929
Children: Keith A., Eric A. Scott A.

Richard A. Benner Born: Sep. 24, 1934
Patricia (Hosterman) Benner Born: Nov. 23, 1938
Children: Richard A. Jr., Mark, Edith, Christopher, Jody

Ancestors of the Benner Family

The authenticity of this narration of our family descendants is not completely reliable at the beginning, as much of this information is handed down hearsay. But there has to be a beginning the same as the Bible had a beginning with Adam and Eve.

Many years back the Benners came from ^{Germany} ~~Holland~~, at a time in all probability, when Holland had possession of considerable territory on the Eastern seaboard. Before New York was named by the British after the Duke of York, and before it was surrendered by the Dutch, it was called New Amsterdam. The Benners settled in the vicinity of Gettysburg, Pa. during the war between England and the United States some migrated to Canada, which became a British possession.

N.Y.

They crossed over from the American side which is now known as Black Rock, to the Canadian side of Niagara River, and landed at a point on what is now Niagara Falls Boulevard at Frenchman's Creek, about five miles North of the Peace Bridge at Fort Erie. They had a son, Jacob B. Benner, who became the great, great grandfather of Floyd E. Benner, Sr.

At Black Rock, flat bottom rowboats were rented out to migrants to cross the river to Canada. It was necessary to dismantle household goods and farm equipment for the passage. Many crossings of arduous rowing against the strong currents of the river were made. They also had to transport their farm and garden seed and smaller possessions. On the last trip, the cattle and horses forded the river tied to the rear of the boat, while smaller animals and poultry were bound and carried in the boat.

They were one of the first families to settle on the Niagara Peninsula in Bertie Township, Welland County, Canada. The interior was infested with Indians and wild animals. The first night they were encamped along the creek with plenty of pasture and water for the livestock. The next day, as there were only paths leading into the woods, they used the cattle and horses for transporting their equipment and supplies. They established a camp about a mile into the woods. This necessitated someone guarding both camps while the rest moved the supplies inland, to prevent pilferage by wild animals and marauding Indians. They built a fire and camped for the night. Next morning, after traveling about a mile through the woods, they came to an open stretch of about three miles. As there was no forage in the woods they brought the livestock out first, so they could graze. Having settled the animals, they resumed hauling the remainder of the supplies.

The next day, finding the soil very rich, and the location being ideal away from the woods, they decided to make their homestead here. The Crown granted only a right of occupation, until after the conflict, when they could return to the United States. Later, however, those who wanted to stay were given full title to the land. Fortunately it was April when they arrived, providing an opportunity to plant their fields and seeds, which gave them a bountiful harvest in the fall.

Now they tackled the next big job of building their home. They cut down suitable trees which were hewn with a big broadax, squaring off two sides, then knocking them together. After the home was completed with a big stone fireplace for warmth and cooking, a barn and storage buildings were constructed. Next a root cellar with stone walls, a fitted log ceiling, and an entrance at one end, was built. This was mounded over with ground and sod to control the extreme temperatures. They dug a well and struck good

over with ground and sod to control the extreme temperatures. They dug a well and struck good underground springs. The well was walled up with fieldstones. This gave them an abundant supply of water for the home, livestock, and gardens.

By using wood ashes mixed with other home products they produced their own water softener and soap for washing. They also built other necessary items, such as a stone pit where they poured in grain and pulverized it with a hard block attached to a pole. In this way they produced their meal and flour for cereal and bread.

They were kept very busy after the construction was completed. When the harvesting was done they had to cut and store firewood for the winter. Throughout the winter they split timbers into rails for fences. In the spring the fences were erected to keep in the livestock and keep out wildlife like deer, bear, wolf, lynx, and smaller game. At that time the lakes and streams abounded with fish and waterfowl by the thousands, providing food aplenty for the table. The Indians proved friendly and provided them with corn and good advice.

Most of their clothes were homespun. Mittens and socks were made from sheep's wool. As time went on they had a happy and prosperous life as old pioneers. At that time there were few settlers and no stores,

schools or churches. My great great grandfather had a blacksmith shop and workshop. He aided other settlers in repairing their farm equipment and other home necessities.

His son, Jacob B. Benner, My great grandfather, married his wife Sophia (we never knew her last name) some years later. They built their home on what is now known as Garrison Road. He also had his own blacksmith shop and workshop. There were three sons, William, Philip, and John. ^{Carter} This home stands at the time of this writing, but has had considerable remodeling. It is about three miles from Fort Erie, across from a stone school house on the north side. By this time a school house was constructed. About a mile further west up the road a community church was erected. ^{Fredric}

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Later, William H. Benner, my grandfather, married Anna Goulding and built his home almost directly across from the church. The church had a long open front shed for a drive-in for church members' horses and carriages. William Benner also had a blacksmith shop and workshop.

A family by the name of Goulding came from England and located their homestead on what is now known as Gilmore Road. The upper part of Frenchman's Creek ran through their farm and wild rice grew along the banks. My grandmother used to gather this rice straw, steam it, then weave it into straw braid. She would form and sew this over a mold to make wide rimmed straw hats for the men working in the hot sun of the fields, or a narrower rim for dress.

There was a stone flour mill built along Lake Erie, operated by a windmill attached to a long oak shaft. Attached to the shaft with wooden wedges were two heavy stone wheels or cylinders about three feet across and eight inches wide. These wheels fitted tight against other similar wheels on a loose shaft. Grain was poured in to pass between the opposite wheels, pulverizing it into flour. Farmers would leave home by horseback, with a pack horse loaded with two bags of wheat early in the morning and return in the evening with the finished flour or meal.

At the time the Irish Finians crossed the Niagara River from Buffalo into Canada, word spread from farm to farm that they were marching up the Garrison Road from Fort Erie. My grandparents had the children hide in the wheat field, taking with them smoked hams and other possessions. Upon arriving, the Finians ate all my grandmother's fresh baked bread and butter and drank all the buttermilk from the churning. My aunt owns a dresser which has markings where the Finians used bayonets to pry open the drawers. In a few days the militia and farmers defeated the Finians, driving them back aboard their ship anchored in the Niagara River.

My grandparents had four sons and two daughters. One, my aunt Annie, is still living today (11/11/64). The sons were William A., my father, Jesse W., George L., and Edward (my father's twin brother who died at the age of five). ^{Mary}

My father married my mother, Anna E. Spedding. The Speddings came from England and built a log house off Gilmore Road, not far from the Gouldings. My great grandfather Spedding was born in 1806. His wife's name was Bedilia. They had one daughter, Mary and three sons, Leonard, James, and John R. Spedding. John was my mother's father and he married Eliza Wilds. Eliza Wilds was the daughter of John (Born 1802) and Anna (Born 1820). John Wilds was a gardener on the estate of the Rogers who was owner of the Rogers Silver Co. in Sheffield, England. He fell in love with and married Rogers daughter Anna. They were disowned and came to Canada, settling in Port Colborne, Ontario. Here they bought a fish shack, sold some of Anna's jewelry and went into the tailoring business. They were very happy and prosperous. His son Henry was a ship captain on Lake Erie.

At that time railroads were established and trains crossed the river on barges which docked at Porter Ave in Buffalo and near the Old Fort Erie in Canada. The river was previously crossed by boat powered by horses walking on horsetreads. The old Ferguson general store was established in the town of Fort Erie. James Kraft was employed here and later established and became head of Kraft Cheese Co. His parents bought their farm on the lake shore from my aunt Mary and the brick house still stands. They had a large

^{Married,}
Charlie Rose.

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family and were Dunkards. The children were ^{Mennonites} Jim, Will, Henry, George, Norm, John, Ann, and Ivy. I Robert went to school with Norm and John (the last president of the company). ^{Lewis} 4 ¹⁰ ¹¹ ³ ⁷ ¹ Charles

My parents had a farm on the Bertie Road, about three miles from Fort Erie. Monuments still stand, in the cemetery across the road with family names from my great grandfather down to the present day. About ~~six~~ ³ miles up the Bowen Road from Fort Erie, just before crossing the Queen Elizabeth highway, is a road on the north side which leads back about a mile to an old church and cemetery. In the cemetery the monuments are inscribed with the Spedding and Wilds names. The old church, now 125 years old, still stands. My mother and father married there in 1883. Fred Flow T.

My father had a blacksmith shop and workshop on the farm and a windmill which operated a gristmill, cornsheller, sawmill, lathe, and other equipment. He worked all winter long grinding feed for the neighbors, repairing all farm equipment, shoeing horses, and building furniture for the home. My mother's father lived with us on the farm and built and sold ladders to the stores. When her mother died, mother married the following year, making a home for her two sisters (6 and 11 years of age). The sisters died that year. G.

^{NR} Father had a large farm and also operated another farm, with a neighbor, where the Fort Erie Raceway is now located. The Queen Elizabeth highway now passes throughout the site of the old farm. The old plank house stands on Spear Road near the throughway. We had about fifteen acres of orchard and two large gardens. He raised horse, cattle, sheep, turkeys, pigs, and goats as well as such fowl as chickens, geese, guineas, bantams, and pigeons. Tame rabbits were also raised, the Belgian Hares.

He dug a well with a permanent spring, beyond the barn, for the livestock. He made a large artificial pond in the field. We sawed vinegar barrels in half and had tub races with the neighbors. Father was also a Reeve of Bertie Township. During a terrible thunderstorm my father was removing a bag of grist from the mill when it was struck by lightning. The lightning came down the shaft and he was killed. I was five at the time. This was the same year president McKinley was killed by an assassin at the Pan American Exposition at Buffalo, 1901. My parents had four sons, Walter, Roy, William and Floyd.

At that time farm life was still a drudgery for the women. They had the family to look after, meals to prepare, and large washings to do by hand. Children went barefoot throughout the summer. We wore cotton shirts and overalls, except on Sundays. Then they wore blouses, kneepants with suspenders, long stockings with garters, and high button shoes. Meals on the farm were of large variety. Breakfast was bacon or ham, eggs, homemade biscuits or toast (made by holding bread on a fork near the fire), johnny cake or buckwheat pancakes with maple syrup. Lunch was in good supply. Supper consisted of meat, and potatoes, several different vegetables, homemade bread, relishes, preserves, and pie, cake or canned fruit.

We always put down a big supply of food for winter use. Mother used to can about 400 quarts of fruits, preserves, jellies, relishes, and vegetables. We also stored dried corn which was dried for days in a rack over the stove in the summer kitchen. We would take a load of wheat to the mills in Ridgeway, seven miles from home and return with the winter supply of flour for baking and bran for the livestock. Bushels and bushels of potatoes and apples were stored in the cellar along with root vegetables and other fruits. We always had a couple of barrels of sauerkraut, two barrels of salt pork and a filkin of headcheese.

In the fall we would load up a double wagon box of windfall apples for cider and vinegar. I would start before daybreak and drive to the Stevensville mill, seven miles from home. Many farmers arrived during the night and when I got there it was a long line-up. I had a lunch for myself and nosebags of oats for the horses. The cider was pressed out of the apples between layers of straw and burlap. You dumped your apples into a big hopper and rolled off your three empty barrels. Later, a hand operated elevator brought up the three barrels filled with cider. You rolled the barrels into your wagon (bungs up) and started home, arriving there about 2:00 in the morning. The next day we gathered several bushels of applesauce apples and that night the family gathered into the summer kitchen. We peeled (with a machine) and cored and

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quartered several washtubs full of apples. Next morning, before daylight, we hung a fifty gallon copper kettle on a pole supported on two crotches. We built a fire under the kettle and all day added wood to the fire. Cider, which had been boiled almost to syrup the day before, was put into the kettle and this was continually stirred until late in the evening, when we had delicious apple butter filling two fifteen gallon crocks for our winter supply.

Later came the butchering season. We usually butchered about six hogs, which after slaughtering had to be scalded to remove the hair, then hung on long poles where they were cut open and disemboweled. In the workshop they were prepared for the winter. Hams and shoulders for the smokehouse, pork sausage, bacon, headcheese, and several kinds of lard were rendered out. We also slaughtered beef in the winter for table use.

We took lard, eggs, butter, poultry, apples, potatoes, and other products to the store. Some of these we exchanged for kerosene (used in the lamps and lanterns) and other household needs. We killed and dressed over a hundred turkeys, and several chickens and ducks, which we sold to the butchers at Christmas time.

We had about fifty hives of bees, for which my father built the hives. In the winters he constructed the frames and waxed on the combing for the following summer and swarming of the bees. If we were up in the field harvesting and saw a white sheet hanging in the old cherry tree, it was hung there by mother to inform us the bees were swarming. We would go back to the house and don heavy clothing, gloves, and a wide brimmed hat with netting over it to prevent the bees from stinging us. The bees swarm and when the queen lands on a limb the others all gather in a bunch around her in a mass the size of a water pail. We lay a white sheet on the ground under the tree and placed a beehive on this with the front tilted so the bees would go in easily. We attached a pail to a clothes pole, slipped this over the cluster of bees, and dumped it in front of the hive, then threw the sheet over and around it. The bees would enter the hive and if they liked it they stayed. If not, they flew off to the woods and built their nest in a hollow tree.

Our mothers, with their many chores of making clothing for the family, washing dishes, baking, churning, cleaning house, cooking, attending garden, separating the milk and cream, making cottage cheese and smearcase, canning, preparing provisions for winter, getting produce ready for the market, and in their spare time knitting socks and mittens, cutting and sewing strips for rag rugs, preparing goose feathers for pillows and ticking, quilting quilts for the bed. They found little time for loafing or leisure.

Father, from early spring to late fall was busy harvesting crops, sometimes cutting hay with a lantern attached to the mower at night. Then the spreading of manure, fall plowing, and planting of winter wheat. Next the threshing season, when hired machines came through and threshed the grain. Threshing consisted of a large water tank on wheels, threshing machines, and a wood fired steam engine for power. Wood was supplied by the farmer. During the threshing season neighbors would reciprocate back and forth to help out. Some hauled in the sheaves of grain cut and shocked in the field. Others fed the sheaves into the machine from the stacks and haylofts, others handled storage of the grain in the granary. Loose straw was stacked for winter bedding for the animals.

Mother prepared breakfast for the family and the man who traveled with the threshing machines. For dinner and supper she was assisted by neighbor women, since there were usually about twenty men to be fed.

In our boyhood days from the age of eight to sixteen we assisted with the farm chores every morning. Arise at 6:00 am, do the chores, have breakfast, and then go to school, which was about one mile from home. This same school was previously attended by my grandfather and father. It is still attended by the present generation with a large addition added. The other school I attended was three miles from home, with deep snow and blizzards in the winter time. From late March to October we were absent from school during planting, fruit picking, and harvesting seasons.

GOOD

Our school was a one room schoolhouse for all classes. Girls and boys had separate cloakrooms in the front. The pupils alternated being at the school at 8:00 am to start the fire in the stove (first wood later gas) and to fill the pot on top for humidity. Some days it was noon before our ink thawed out. The floors were badly worn through and on our lunch hour we would crawl down through a hole in the cloakroom floor, crawl over under our desk (no cellar) and retrieve pencils lost through the floor openings. Blackboards were on the back wall and both side walls. Our teacher, who always boarded at one of the farm houses, taught all classes in all grades. When you stepped on the pedal of an old obsolete organ, the mice ran out in all directions. We caught some of these and put them into the teacher's closed desk where she kept the strap. Some kid would do something warranting a ficking and when she reached for the strap, the mice jumped out and she jumped up on her seat.

PART

We had two fifteen minute recesses and one hour for lunch. School hours were from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm for all ages, as all pupils had morning and night chores to do at home. Discipline was enforced with a piece of leather belting or a long hickory pointer used for pointing out things on the blackboard as well as for putting disciplinary ridges on our backs. Some of the old games played then are played today, including prison bar, jump jump pull away, hide and seek, mumbly peg, nip and tuck, duck on a rock, shinny, old sow, hockey, crude baseball, football. Wrestling, some fighting, and other sports. Girls played the farmer in the dell, drop the hanky, hop skip jump, jackstones, and wall ball.

We carried lunch and fruit and when you went to your lunch bucket you might find it had been pilfered by other boys. During the winter one boy came quite away by dogsled. Another arrived with a sleigh and goat, with its own private odor. In the summer another drove a pony pulling a wicker cart. Bicycles were scarce. I saved up my money for three years and bought one from my cousin for two dollars. A friend of my mother's bought me a Lord Foltneroy waist with sleeves and collar trimmed in starched lace. With my chest out and my chin high I rode my bicycle to Sunday school. As I came in front of the church the kids said, "Gee Benner has a bicycle". At that point the front tire, which was puncture proofed with milk and molasses, was cut with a piece of glass. The stinky solution squirted all over me and my lace waist. I said not a word, but picked up my bike and carried it back home. A year later I had enough saved peddling milk to a neighbor at three cents a quart to buy a new tire.

I could ramble on page after page as I recall my boyhood life on the farm, but I must come to an end. Winters we went hunting rabbit, squirrel, skunk, coon, grouse, and prairie-hen. In spring we hunted muskrat. We made a seine of burlap, sewed together with binder twine pulled out of the straw stack. A rope at the top with wooden floats and metal and stone weights at the bottom completed it. We would go

down to Frenchman's Creek in early morning, with frost on the ground. Our hand wagon would be loaded with a bottle of water, lunch, and apples. The net was piled on top. At sundown we returned with a load of pickerel pike, wet tired, muddy, and hungry. We had our chores to do, fish to clean, then supper and to bed. Spring evenings we walked out to Lake Erie (four miles) with a lantern to attract the fish and speared fish. This was always a big catch.

In winter we had a steep snowbank near the house. We would make a sleigh track, pour water in to freeze, then ride down this, across a ten acre field of ice, turn around, and hold up a blanket. The wind took us back to go again. Fields flooded in winter and became a glare of ice. Neighbors would come with a pole and lantern, punch a hole into the ice for the pole, and attach the lantern. We skated on the ice at night and played games. Each week some neighbor would take their turn at their home entertaining the visiting neighbors. Men and women played euchre and pedro, or exchanged the latest gossip while the teenagers and children played old games like postoffice.

At Christmas time we tacked up a list of what we wanted Santa to bring, but we got only one or two small items. My brother Bill and I used to go down to watch the races at Fort Erie Racetrack. We also watched the auto races when Christie and Barney Oldfield were there. In 1910 we saw Beachy make the first plane flights in the area, sitting on the center edge of the wing with his feet hanging down when he took off. The engine hung in the rear of the plane. My brother built a runner in the front fork of his motorcycle in place of the wheel, added a sleigh side car, and rode it through the snow all winter. He also built a long bobsled which we rode down the Fort Erie hill. About 11:00 we hauled it the two miles back home.

Today there are many changes in all walks of life. But as we go through life we adjust to the changes, both mentally and physically.

Floyd E. Benner Sr., 11/11/64

Postlog 1965

Walter Benner, living in Fort Erie, had three children: Earl (living in Fort Erie), Gordon (in California), and Robert (deceased). Robert had three children.

Roy E. Benner, Sr. (Born 1888, Died 1980), Married Elizabeth Drysdale Glen, (Born 1893, Died 1950) lived in Kenmore, had two children:

Roy Edward Jr., married Marjorie E. Gamble (Living in Florida) Children: Beverly Elizabeth, Born 8-25-1951. Kevin Roy, Born 3-1-54, married Sandy Giancola, Born: 7-19- , Sheree Lyn, Born 3-29-57, married Ku Castano, Born: 3-22-1952.

✓ Bruce married Geri Simmons (living in Buffalo) Children: Greg, Born 7-31-54, married Suzanne Van Wie, Born 12-21-1950. Ronald, Born: 9-14-1956, married Leslie VanLoan, Born: 2-10-1957. Children: Ronald, Jr., Born: 9-14-1977, Kathleen, Born: 12-18-1979, Brian, Born: 9-25-1984. Patricia, Born: 10-22-1958, married Donald Schneggenburger, Born: 1-25-1957. Children: Andrew, Born: 7-26-1987, Todd, Born: 9-14-1990, Ryan, Born: 7-23-1992. Paul, Born: 10-25-1965 married Lynn Militello, Born: 3-31-1969, no children.

William Benner, living in Buffalo, had one son William Jr. (Living near his father). He has two children.

Floyd Benner, living in Buffalo, had two children: Floyd Jr. (Living in Ohio) and Richard (living in Florida)). Floyd Jr. Has three children and Richard has four.

At this writing in 1965 my father's sister is still living in Buffalo, is nearly 90 years old, and has over 100 children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Floyd E. Benner Sr.

Postlog Feb. 1971 by F.E. Benner Jr.

✓ It's been fun typing this again as I get a real joy out of reading it. Today Floyd Sr. Lives in Florida, near my brother Dick. He (Dick) and his wife Pat now have five children (4 sons and one daughter). I and my wife Noel live in Wilmington, Del. We have three sons.

Perhaps someday I or someone else may find the time and patience to add to this brief history. What a story it could make if, perchance, it were maintained for a hundred years. That's not so very long you know.