

A
GENEALOGICAL RECORD
OF THE DESCENDANTS OF
Christian and Hans Meyer
AND OTHER PIONEERS,
...
BY
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Christian Meyer / Moyer was my immigrant 8th great grandfather. He was born in 1676 in The Palatinate (now in Germany), and died in 1651 in Montgomery County, PA. Unfortunately, this book doesn't really say a lot about him, and barely even mentions his wife Barbara Bergery, noting only that "all we know is that her name was Barbara".

Their daughter Barbara (my 7th great grandmother) is also given short shrift. She is identified in Christian's will as a beneficiary and as the wife of Abraham Rieff, but the descriptions of their immediate family on the last page of this excerpt is quite sketchy at best.

THE MEYER FAMILY HISTORY.

I. Christian Meyer, the progenitor of a family numerously represented in Montgomery, Bucks, and adjacent counties in Pennsylvania, with many widely scattered throughout many of the States and Canada, settled in Lower Salford township, Montgomery county.

~~The tradition of the family point to Switzerland as the fatherland, where the Mennonites, to which sect he belonged, were unmercifully persecuted by the State church, which he, with others, unable longer to endure, abandoned their homes in the mountain fastnesses and fled for safety to the Netherlands.~~

~~From thence, about 1700 or later, Christian Meyer, of Amsterdam, sailed to Philadelphia, and later located at the Indian Creek, in what is now Lower Salford township, Montgomery county, where he had purchased his farm containing 150 acres.~~

It is not known in what year Christian Meyer purchased his land, but it is ascertained by a conveyance granted by James Steel to Henry Funk, dated December 24, 1719, that Christian Meyer already owned the land. Neither is it known from whom he purchased it, or whether he obtained it by virtue of a warrant. The latter seems to be the most probable. He received a patent therefor from the Hon. John Penn, Thomas Penn and Richard Penn, dated September 6, 1734.

His farm was in the form of a parallelogram, and was 240 perches in length and 100 perches wide. * "It extended from near the North Wales road northeast along the present Souderton turnpike, back to the line of Franconia township, and then along the said line northwest 100 perches, bounded on that side by land at first owned by James Steel, of Philadelphia. On the northwest it was bounded by land belonging to Dirk Johnson, of Germantown; on the southeast by Hans Meyer's land, and on the southwest by land belonging to John Isaac Klein."

There has been preserved a description of a cabin then and there erected by him, and which was probably the first Meyer domicile in the Western world. It was built where Joseph Drissel now lives and consisted of four forked saplings driven into the ground, and marking out a square in the forks were laid poles, and on these a roof of poles, and the walls were of upright poles. There was a single opening for an entrance, and the whole was built with an axe.

An article of furniture which probably adorned this primitive house was a large Dutch clock, brought over from the Old World, which is now a much-treasured relic in the possession of Tillman W. Moyer, of Campden, Ontario, Canada.

In 1734 Christian Meyer was rated for 100 acres in Salford township, 50 acres having at an early day been cut off from the original tract for his son Samuel, who lived where the late Joseph L. Moyer resided. He received a deed for it in November, 1741.

The remaining farm of 100 acres of the old homestead Christian Meyer conveyed to his grandson

* James V. Heckler, in history of Lower Salford township.

Christian Meyer on December 28 and 29, 1748, who added to it by subsequent purchases until he owned in all 232 acres.

It is not known by what good ship our ancestor, Christian Meyer, was brought safely over the waters, the dates of sailing or landing, or who his companions were, and there are no traditions of episodes or incidents of the voyage. These last, at least, are lost in the misty haze of unrecorded facts.

It would be interesting to know what his impressions were of the new land, and his dreams of the future. One may well believe the hearts of these emigrants were filled with emotions of mingled sadness and gladness, and that while regretting the majestic mountains, the glacial streams and the loved homeland of their fathers, they also rejoiced in the knowledge that they had found security for life, liberty and conscience, in the commonwealth of the good William Penn, and bravely plunged into the wilderness, erected their cabins amidst the howling of the wild beasts and the yells of the treacherous savages; carved out their homes, subdued the land, and made the wilderness to rejoice and blossom as the rose; built up the altars of the Lord in their midst and praised Him from whom all blessings flow, with hearts overflowing with gratitude to Him who had led them out of the house of bondage into the land of universal liberty and freedom, where they could worship the God of their fathers around their own altars without fear or restraint. And thus has the Lord led them, multiplied them exceedingly, and blessed them unto this day. Well may the descendants of to-day revere the memory of him who, with such unflinching courage, braved the perils of sea and land to find a home and found a family in this land of religious

liberty, and may they imitate the example of the worthy sire in his reverence for God and His sacred word. It would be interesting, too, to know the name of his helpmeet, his bosom companion, who shared with him the trials and sufferings of the fatherland and with equal readiness accompanied him in his flight, undaunted by the then long, tedious and perilous voyage of the ocean, to aid in making a home in the wilds of America and together finish their earthly pilgrimage in this land of the free. But all we know is that her given name was Barbara.

It would give much satisfaction, too, to know just where they were laid to rest to await the resurrection blasts of Gabriel's trumpet, that we might reverently stand within the city of the dead, at the place where repose the precious dust. But He alone knoweth who knoweth the sepulchre of Moses on Mount Nebo's top, and who in His own good time will bid the sleeping dust of His servants to arise. They were among the original worshipers at the Franconia Mennonite meetinghouse, where he and wife are probably buried.

Christian Meyer made his last will and testament, in writing, January 18, 1748. It was probated June 6, 1751, which shows that he died between the dates given, probably in the early part of 1751. Barbara, his wife, had died before he wrote the will. His eldest son, Christian Meyer, and his "loving son-in-law, Henry Funck," were the sole executors of his estate.

Following is a copy of the will :—

"Be it known unto all whom it may concern that I Christian Moyer* of Franconia in the County of Philadelphia Yoeman being aged & infirm of Body nevertheless through mercy my memory and understanding is sound and perfect and considering the uncertainty of human life do make and ordain

this my Last Will and Testament this Eighteenth day of January In the year of our Lord one Thousand seven hundred and forty eight.

"Imprime — I will and direct that all the Just debts which I shall owe at the time of my decease Together with my Funeral Charges be duly and faithfully paid & Discharged by my Executors herein named *ibid* I give and bequeath unto my Son Christian Moyer the sum of three Pounds lawful money of Pennsylvania Payable to him out of my Estate within one year next from the day of my decease *ibid* I give & bequeath unto my son Jacob Moyer the Sum of Three Pounds money as aforesaid payable within one year next from the Day of my Decease *ibid* I give & bequeath unto my son Samuel Moyer, the sum Three Pounds money as abovesaid payable within one year next from the day of my decease *ibid* I give and bequeath unto my Daughter Elizabeth Oblinger now wife of Nicholas Oblinger the Sum of Three Pounds Money as abovesaid payable within one year next from the day of my decease *ibid* I give and bequeath two Pounds money as abovesaid payable within one year next from the day of my decease and to be disposed of as my Executors shall think best for the use of the Poor belonging to the Mennonite meetings of Salford & Franconia Township and County of Philadelphia *ibid* I give and Bequeath to my Granddaughter Ester Funck the Sum of Three Pounds money as aboves'd payable to her within one year next from the Day of my decease *ibid* I give & bequeath all the remaining part of my Estate (that is to say) whatsoever that I am the proper owner of at the time of my decease (after my debts Legacies and Funeral Expenses is first deducted and paid in manner aforesaid) to my Three children viz. the said Christian Moyer. Anna Funk (now wife Henry Funk) Barbara Reiff (now wife of Abraham Reiff) to be Equally divided between them (that is to say) Each and Every one of them my last mentioned Children to have share and share alike Provided they and every one of them their Heirs, Executors Administrators Shall and will from Time to time & at all Times from the day of the date hereof well and truly equally Procure and Provide to and for my son the said Jacob Moyer Sufficient meat Drink apparel washing and Lodging fit and convenient for him during his natural life which said Legacies they the said Christian Moyer Anna Funck and Barbara Reiff shall on the above Provisor have and Enjoy from the day of my decease thence forward and for Ever and I do hereby constitute and Depute and Appoint my Eldest Son the said Christian Moyer, and my Loving Son-in-law the said Henry Funck to be Sole Executors of this my Last Will and Testament Impowering them hereby to raise and Levy all my dues and Demands as also to pay the Debts and Legacies herein mentioned utterly revoking and Disannulling all former and other Wills Testa-

* The name is written Moyer in the will, and the signature of Christian Meyer was written in German.

ments Legacies, and Executors by me before this Time Willed named and bequeathed Ratifying and confirming this and no other to be my Last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and Seal Dated the day and Year first above written.

CHRISTIAN MOYER.

{ SEAL } Signed Sealed and declared by the above named Christian Moyer the Testator that the above written is his Last Will and Testament in the presence of us the Subscribers Jacob Funck, John Frey, George Bachtell Philada June 6th 1751. Then personally appeared John Frey and George Bachtell two of the Witnesses to the within Will and on oath did declair they saw and heard Christian Moyer the Testator therein named Sign, Seal, Publish and declair the same Will for and as his Last Will and Testament, and that at the doing thereof he was of Sound Mind Memory and understanding to the best of their knowledge.

Coram WM. PLUMSTEAD, Reg. Gen'l.

The children of Christian Meyer and his wife Barbara in the order as given in the will are as follows : Christian, Jacob, Samuel, Elizabeth, Anna, Barbara.

DESCENDANTS OF BARBARA MEYER, DAUGHTER OF CHRISTIAN MEYER.

II. Barbara Meyer, d. about 1773 ; mrd. Abraham Reiff, apparently the son of Hans Reiff. He lived in Lower Salford, on the farm now owned and occupied by George P. Heckler. He was a deacon of the Lower Salford Mennonite church, and was one of the original founders. He died in North Coventry township, Chester county, about 1763. His will was probated December 7, 1763. Children : Isaac, Christian, Abraham, Franica, Anna, Barbara, Elizabeth.

III. Isaac Reiff.

III. Christian Reiff (dec'd), mrd. —. Children : Joseph, and others. (IV) Joseph Reiff, d. about 1850; mrd. — Harley (dec'd), dau. of Rudolph Harley. She was b. about 1775. He was a large landholder. Children : Christian, Rudolph, Jacob, Samuel, Barbara, Mary.

III. Abraham Reiff.

III. — Reiff (dec'd), mrd. — Hunsberger. Children : Ulrich, and others.

III. — Reiff (dec'd), mrd. Michael Sentzenich.