



# The Historian

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## The Keims in Europe and Berks County, Pennsylvania

By Douglas B. Keim, MD

*The material in this article was presented by the author at the annual meeting of the Casselman River Area Amish & Mennonite Historians on September 16, 2005. Here is genealogical fact and social history on the background of a large Protestant immigrant family. One of their number, Nicholas Keim (1768-1830), identified with Anabaptism and affiliated with the Amish Mennonite church and settled in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Nicholas was of the fourth generation in America through this lineage: Johann, or John in this article – Johann Peter – Peter – Nicholas. See Fam. #2245 in Descendants of Jacob Hochstetler.*

*Douglas B. Keim lives in Winchester, Virginia, with his wife Pam and two daughters, where he practices medicine. The information in this article is a result of his interest in genealogy. He expresses interest especially in working through boxed computer resources. He is a gr-gr-gr-gr-grandson of Nicholas Keim (1768-1830) – Editor.*

### European Keim Origins

Our Keim ancestors originated in the Palatinate region of Germany. The earliest reference to a lineal German ancestor is that of Ludwig de Harcourt, or Hericourt, Keim. Although I found reference to other earlier Keims, nothing linked them to Ludwig.

Ludwig was born about 1598, near Speyer, Germany. It is thought that he fought in the Thirty Years War under Bernhard, duke of Saxe-Wiemar. He married "Berta" about 1618, and died about 1664. Their children were George (1623-1690) and Joseph (1625-1690). George was the father of Johan (1647-1697) who was the father of Johannes who was the first Keim immigrant to America.

### Finding the Sources

Every source I reviewed drew its information from Randolph deB Keim, *The Keim and Allied Families in America and Europe* (Reading/Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1899), referred to in this article as KAF. Kenneth Loch, a genealogist from Baltimore, in an article in 1989, questioned the German ancestors listed in this work

A legend holds that Johannes, the first immigrant to America, possessed a chest with the date 1662 inscribed upon it. However, the curator of the Washington, DC, DAR Museum, where it was housed, thought it was not made before 1750. Mr. Loch felt much of the history presented in KAF was too contrived.

### Back to A.D. 1020?

Josiah J. Keim claimed a record of the Keim clan from 1020. He records the following progeny: Gettschalch Keim died in 1070 after fathering two sons, Hinkmar and Theodabert. Theodabert, who died 1143, fathered Albertus. Albertus was the father of Anseim and Waltermar. Waltermar sired Conrad, Kuno, and Wolfahrt. Theodabert studied medicine, alchemy, astronomy, and astrology. He knew King Henry IV. Albertus studied mathematics and military engineering and followed King Conrad III on a Crusade in 1150. Waltermar became the physician for the German Emperor. But none of this is verified.

### Italian Ancestry?

According to one KAF article, the first Keim was an Italian who tired of life at court and moved to the mountains of Switzerland. He took the German name for seed, "kime," because he wanted to start over and forget his former life. This was around 1060. In the 13th century, the Keims were wiped out in a battle except for a son, Sebastian, who was staying in Italy. Eventually, the family returned to the Rhine Valley.

All of this sounds interesting, but is impossible to verify at this time. As Howard Kenneth Nixon said: "Everyone has ancestors and it is only a question of going back far enough to find a good one."

### Speyer, Germany

Before continuing, I would like to discuss the history of the region near Speyer in the 17th century. This is the region from which Johannes "Hans" Keim emigrated. Speyer is an ancient city predating the Romans, situated along the

western side of the Rhine River in the Rhineland-Palatinate state of present-day Germany. It was an independent imperial city of the "Holy Roman Empire" and served as the seat for the Imperial Chamber of Justice.

In the 1500s, Speyer saw the Reformation and eventually the counter-reformation. The Palatinate region became Calvinist when its elector converted. This area contained many different religious groups. This range of confessions in Germany, with its competing interests, contributed to the rise of the Thirty Years War, which extended from 1618 to 1648. The principal battlefield, with tremendous devastation, was in this province of Germany.

In 1685, Louis IV of France revoked the Edict of Nantes which resulted in many Huguenots immigrating to Germany. This era also saw the rise of Pietism. William Penn, an English Quaker, made a journey into Germany in 1677 to recruit for his new colony in America.

#### **The First Keim Immigrant to America**

Johannes, or "Hans," or "John," Keim is widely acknowledged as the first Keim immigrant to America. He is often referred to as "The Founder." He was born about 1675, near Speyer, Germany. It is thought that he was a "turner" or woodworker by trade. It is suggested that he was a Huguenot, but at some point became a Pietist and follower of the Quaker, Pastorius.

Around 1698, John supposedly came to America and scouted the northwest portion of Philadelphia County, present day Berks County. After three years, he returned to Germany. In 1706, he married Berta, or Katarina, DeTurk.

In 1707, Johannes returned to America with Berta and settled along the Manatawny Creek, located between present-day Pike and Lobachsville, east of Reading, Pennsylvania. This area was the frontier and the territory of the Lenni Lenape Indians, who called it "Olink" or "Oleka," meaning "hemmed in like a kettle." It became known as Oley Township.

Around 1708, Johannes built a log cabin which saw the birth of his and Berta's six children. Berta died around 1728, and Johannes built a stone house near the log cabin around 1730. On January 1, 1731, he married Maria Elizabeth Boller (Bollerin). With her, he had ten children.

#### **John's Family Record**

The evidence for Johannes' marriage and children comes from his own hand. A parchment, which survived, notes the following history:

Ich, Johannes Keim, hab mich verheiratet in dem Jahr, 1706, viertsen tag von Michels.

Katarina, geboren auf Michel's Tag, 1709.

1793, den 8 Mai begraben (Added in another hand.)

Und in dem Jahr, 1711, vier Wochen von Ostern, ist mein

sohn Johannes sur welt geboren.

Stephanus, geboren 28 ten Marts, 1717.

Hans Nickel, April den 2 ten, 1719.

Elizabeth, Februar, 1728

Jacob, October, 1794.

Und in dem Jahr 1781, den ersten tag in dem Jahr 1781, habe ich meine sweite frau Zur Ehe genommen.

Und in dem Jahr 1782, den 27 April, ist mein Sohn Heinrich sur Wikt geboren.

Translated, it reads as follows:

I, Johannes Keim, was married in the year 1706, 14 days before St. Michael's Day.

Katarina was born on St. Michael's Day, 1708. Buried the 8th of May, 1793 (Added in another hand.)

And in the year 1711, four weeks before Easter, my son Johannes was born into the world.

Stephen, born March 28, 1717.

Hans Nicholas, April 2, 1719.

Elizabeth, February 1723.

Jacob, October 1724.

And in the year 1731, the first day of the year 1731, I took my second wife into wedlock.

And in the year 1732, the 27th of April, my son Henry was born into this world.

*[See also family information in John's will which appears below in this issue.-- Editor]*

#### **Further Biography of John's Children**

The children of Johannes spread throughout Berks County and Reading, Pennsylvania, including Oley. Many of them were quite prosperous and community leaders.

Oley Township was incorporated on September 1, 1740. Pike Township was incorporated in 1812 from parts of Earl, Oley, and Rockland Townships. Present-day Oley and Pikeville Townships are in Berks County, Pennsylvania.

1. **Katarina** was the first child of Johannes "The Founder" and Katarina DeTurk. She was born September 29, 1708, and died May 6, 1728. She married John Schneider in 1728.

2. **Johannes Peter** was the second child, first son of Johannes "The Founder." Of him, I discovered only his birth, death, marriage, and children. He was born on March 4, 1711, in Oley Township and died there on October 10, 1782. He married Catherine Stump about 1732. They had the following children: Johannes (1733-1786), Hans George (1736-?), John (1737-?), Conrad (1739-?), Peter (1742-1829), Stephen (Samuel) (1743-?), Sarah (1747-?), Mary (1752-?), George (1753-1836), and William (1754-1836). There is some debate about Peter, but most genealogies place him here. As we will see, he is the ancestor

of the Nicholas who moved to Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Besides dates, the only other interesting note is that George served in the Chester County militia, Capt Griffith's company of Pennsylvania, during the Revolutionary War.

3. **Stephen**, the second son, was born March 28, 1717, and died in 1807. He married Juliana Weaver about 1759. They had one child, Jacob (1779-1845). Stephen moved to Bristol, Pennsylvania, and owned land south of Pottstown. He inherited the "turning" tools mentioned in Johannes' will.

4. **Hans Nickel**, or Nicholas was the third son. Much is known about him. He was born on April 2, 1719. He married Barbara Schneider on March 2, 1746. He moved to Reading, Pennsylvania, and purchased the Conrad Weiser store at Fifth and Penn. It became known as the White Store. At one time, there were three Keim hardware stores in Reading. Although a Quaker, Nicholas took the Oath of Allegiance during the Revolutionary War and served with Capt. Peter Grubb's Company from Warwick, Pennsylvania. As a result, the Quakers dismissed him from their membership. At some point he joined the Episcopalians. He lived in a large two-story stone house located on the northwest corner of Penn and Ninth streets in Reading. In 1785, he retired and transferred his business to his son John. He died August 23, 1802, "after a long lingering consumption which he bore with Christian fortitude and entire devotion to the will of the Almighty." He and his wife are buried on the Gheer farm near Oley. His children were: Catherine (1747-1773), John (1749-1819), and Susannah (1753-1777).

*[See a section below for more on the family of Hans Nickel Keim.-- Editor]*

5. **Elizabeth** was the second daughter and the fifth child. She was born in February 1723 and died around 1764. She married Christian Hoffert around 1745 and moved to Frederick, Maryland. According to a will, they had seven children: Christian, Christiana, Philip, Margaret, Daniel, John, and Casper.

6. **Jacob** was the last child born to Johannes "The Founder" and Katarina DeTurk. He was born October 24, 1724, and died October 18, 1799. He married Maria Magdalena Hoch in October 1746. They had the following children: Barbara (1751-1825), John Jacob (1756-1841), and Esther (1771-1843). In 1753, Jacob bought 50 acres of land from his father-in-law and built a stone house. This house, a Flurkuchenhaus style, still stands and was occupied by the Keim family until the 1918. It is now owned by the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County. Jacob's will, probated in 1799, gave to Magdalena the right to own the "lower room chamber" of the house, with rights to the stove room

and kitchen as well as "the bed and bedstead with curtains we sleep in, the cloth dresser standing in my dwelling room, her spinning wheel and a chair and so much of the kitchen furniture as she shall want, along with the cow of her choice." The will divided "the corn in the ground, the barn, and the garret," giving three-fifths to son John, who was to inherit the homestead, and one-fifth each to daughters Esther and Barbara.

7. **Heinrich** was the first child of Johannes "The Founder" and his second wife, Maria Elizabeth (Bollerin or Boller.) He was born April 27, 1732. He died in Bath County, Virginia, in July, 1802. He married Catarina Reiber on October 25, 1767. They had the following children: Conrad (1763-1832), Christina (1764-?), Catherine (1765-?), Elizabeth (1768-?), Jacob (1772-?), Valentine (1775-1850), Mary (1776-1868), Abraham (1779-1840), and Johann (1784-1799). He seems to be the first Keim to leave the Pennsylvania area.

8. **George** was the second child of Johannes and Maria Elizabeth. He was born August of 1733, but his date of death is unknown. He married Elizabeth Gheer in 1760 and had the following children: Maria (1762-?), Heinrich (1764-1834), Samuel (1769-?), John (1770-?), and Catherine (1772-?). Elizabeth died in about 1772. George married Elizabeth Musselman in about 1774. They had the following children: Susanna (1775-?) and George Musselman (1776-1859).

George inherited the Keim homestead in 1762, according to a quit claim deed from that year. The quit claim deed was an indenture, made on the 29th day of April, 1762, between John Kihm, Stephen Kihm, Nicholas Kihm, John Henry Schneider and Catherine his wife (late Catherine Kihm), Christian Hoffart and Elisabeth his wife (late Elisabeth Kihm), Jacob Kihm, Conrad Kihm, Jacob Yoder and Maria his wife (late Maria Kihm), Michale Witman and Barbara his wife (late Barbara Kihm) and Frederick Hung and Susannah his wife (late Susannah Kihm), heirs and representatives of John Kihm, late of Oley, in the County of Berks and Province of Penna., deceased, of the one part and George Kihm, of Oley, aforesaid Yeoman, of the other part.

George also purchased land from the Penn family in 1807. This land was sold to Moses Everhard, who married a descendant, in 1895.

9. **Conrad** was the third child of Johannes and Maria Elizabeth. He was born on December 3, 1734, and died on August 15, 1776. He married Anna Maria about 1757 and had the following children: Johannes (1758-?), Maria Catharina (1759-?), George (1759-?), Anna Elizabeth (1760-?), Johann Conrad (1764-1842), Sophia (1766-?), John Christina (1769-1854), and Anna Maria (1772-?).

10. **Maria** was the fourth child of Johannes and Maria Elizabeth. She was born in November 1734 and died on March 12, 1803. She married Jacob Yoder in about 1754 and had the following children: Barbara (1755-?), Esther (1756-?), Abraham (1757-?), Susanna (1758-?), Peter (1759-?), Maria (1760-?), Elizabeth (1761-?), Daniel (1762-?), Johannes (1763-1847), Magdalena (1764-1857), Catherine (1766-1837), and Jacob (1772-?).

11. **Barbara** was the fifth child of Johannes and Maria Elizabeth. She was born in Feb 1736 and died in 1795). She married Michael Wittman in about 1758.

12. **Susannah** was the sixth child of Johannes and Maria. She was born on Dec 25, 1739, and died on May 12, 1809. She married John Frederick Huft in 1757.

It is thought that there were four other children, but I have found no names or dates on them.

#### **Enterprises of One of The Keim Branches**

While not direct ancestors of Nicholas, I decided to focus on one branch of the Keim family that rose to prominence in Reading and Berks County, Pennsylvania.

The descendants of Hans Nicholas became quite prosperous in Reading and Berks County. His son John was born July 6, 1749, in Oley Township, Pennsylvania, and died February 10, 1819 in Reading, Pennsylvania. He married Susanna deBenneville in 1771. He served in the Pennsylvania militia during the Revolutionary War. As a result, he was dismissed from the Quaker church. He carried on the hardware business his father started. In 1783, he was elected Burgess of Reading, and was elected County Commissioner of Berks County from 1787 to 1790. The following is from his obituary:

Will be interred in the Episcopal burial ground, this afternoon at two o'clock, the remains of Mr. John Keim, merchant, who departed this life on Wednesday morning last, in the seventieth year of his age. He had resided in the borough for sixty-four years, during which time he amassed a large fortune, which never caused a widow's tear or orphan's execration. What he has left behind was justly his own. As a creditor, he was ever lenient, and his numerous tenantry can testify to his goodness as a landlord.

John's son, George deBenneville, (Dec 16, 1778- Aug 20, 1852) was involved with the Little Schuylkill Railroad and Navigation Company, the Mt. Carbon Mine Hill,

Schuylkill Haven Railroad, and the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad. He served as president of the branch Bank of Pennsylvania for thirty years. In 1825, he launched the first passenger boat on the Schuylkill. He was very involved in Christ Parish Episcopal Church. By 1830, he rose to the position of Major-General of the Pennsylvania militia. He married Mary in May in 1799.

George deBenneville's son George May Keim was born December 25, 1805, and died June 18, 1861. He married Julia Mayer in 1827. He was a lawyer involved in banking and in the iron and railroad industry. In 1837, he served as a delegate to the state convention to revise the state constitution of Pennsylvania. That same year, he was elected to the first of three terms as a representative in the U.S. Congress. At one time, he received 27 votes for Speaker of the 26th Congress. From 1843-1849, he was U.S. Marshall of Eastern Pennsylvania. In 1852, he was elected mayor of Reading. He was an active Mason and rose to the rank of Major-General in the Pennsylvania militia.

John's son Benneville was born November 20, 1790, and died October 30, 1872. He married Mary Hoch in 1812. From 1824-1842 he served as president of the Farmers Bank of Reading. He also was the president of Reading Water Works. He was elected Mayor of Reading three times from 1858-1860. He belonged to the Whig Party. In 1836, he founded an iron company with his nephew, George May Keim.

Benneville's son, William High Keim, was born June 25, 1813, and died May 18, 1862. He married Lucy Jane Randolph in 1819. He was elected mayor of Reading in 1848. In 1858, he was elected to the US Congress. From 1860-1861, he served as Surveyor-General of Pennsylvania. He served in the Pennsylvania militia and rose to the rank of Major-General. In this position, he fought in the Civil War.

#### **Conclusion**

The Keims were integrally involved with Berks County from its humble beginnings. From one ancestor, they spread over the county and became farmers and community leaders. Of Johannes' children, only one seems to have left this area. As we will hear in the upcoming talks, Peter, son of Johannes Peter, led the immigration of his grandchildren.

As Alex Haley said: "In all of us there is a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage - to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning." ¶

## Sources

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**Author's note on resources:** Several years ago, through an internet search of the name "Keim," I stumbled upon a vast resource formerly known as the O.M.I.I. (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois Genealogical Association). This genealogy group is dedicated to Swiss, German, French, Austrian and Eastern immigrant families with Anabaptist roots, and was begun by families in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Illinois. Founded in 1995 and based in Kidron, Ohio, it changed its name in 2002 to the Swiss Anabaptist Genealogical Association. Their online databases contain over two million names. Much of the data that I found is in the Hostetler database, which contains over 400,000 entries by itself. Several other large on-line databases which I discovered include that of Mary Lou Cook and Jeff Reimert. However, I believe all three derive much of their information on the Keims from *The Keim and Allied Families in America and Europe* (KAF), by deB. Randolph Keim. This was a genealogy magazine published in 1898 and devoted to Keim history. It is composed of factual and anecdotal information. Other sources include *Colonial Families of the United States of America* and *Annals of the Oley Valley*. Again, these books seem to derive their information from KAF. While these resources may not be perfect, I doubt that many families are blessed with such a wealth of information about their ancestors.

**Editor's Note:** In a phone conversation with personnel at The Historical Society of Berks County PA, I learned that the Society has extensive information on the Keim history, especially on those branches which were prominent in the Reading, Pennsylvania, area, including the families of Hans Nickel Keim and Jacob Keim. Pictures of early Keim houses are posted on their web site ([www.berkshistory.org](http://www.berkshistory.org)) and on the website of Berks County, Pa. Preservation Groups and Homesteads ([www.berksmuseums.org](http://www.berksmuseums.org)). These resources are informative of the early generations of the Keims in America which predate Nicholas Keim's affiliation with the Amish Mennonites. Most of the Keims of earlier generations were of Protestant faith, including Reformed, Lutheran, and Episcopalian. One exception was George deBenneville Keim (1778-1852) who reportedly was a founder of a Unitarian church in the area and preached universal salvation, according to a source quoted by personnel of the Berks County Historical Society in a phone conversation of October 11, 2005.

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## John Keim's Land Warrant

*An original land warrant and survey reportedly still resides with the Department of Internal Affairs of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. With original spellings retained, it reads as follows:*

By the Commissioners of Property, Pensilvania, ss:

(Continued next page)

[Seal] At the request of Hans Keym late of Germany, but now of this Province that we would Grant him to take up one hundred acres of Land at Oley for which he agrees to pay to the use of the Trustees of the Province fifteen pounds money thereof and the yearly quite rent of one Shilling Sterling for the same. These are to authorize and require thee to survey or cause to be surveyed unto the said Hans Keym in ye place aforesaid according to the method of Townships appointed the said One Hundred acres of Land that has not been already Surveyed nor appropriated nor is seated by the Indians and make Return thereof into the Secretary's Office, which survey in case the said Hans Keym fulfill the above agreement within three months after the date hereof shall be valid otherwise the same is to be void as if it had never been made nor this Warrant ever granted.

Given under our hands and the seal of the Province at Philadelphia the 27th day of 11th month Anno Dommo 1719-20.

Jacob Taylor, Surveyor General – Richard Hill – Isaac Norris – James Logan – This Warrant is Endorsed.

Warr't of Hans Keym—for 100 acres—Entered—Ret'd 10 June, 1735. No. thirteen Hundred fifty nine—Jon. Hughes—N.S.

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## The Will of John Keim (c.1675-c.1753)

*In this last will and testament, John refers to six children by his first wife and ten children by his second wife. However, we have yet to learn the names of all of the last ten children. The will shows that his children with Berta were: Katarina, Johannes (Peter), Stephen, Hans Nicholas, Elizabeth, and Jacob. Of his children with Maria Elizabeth, we know the following six names: Heinrich (Henry), George, Conrad, Marie, Barbara, and Susannah. The will shows that Johannes was prosperous and acquired two hundred acres of land. – Douglas Keim*

*[An attempt has been made to preserve original spellings, though punctuation, indentations, and paragraph formats have not necessarily been retained. – Editor]*

### **John Keim – His Last Will and Testament made, pronounced and sealed in the year 1747.**

Whereas I John Keim of Oly in -d County of Bercks perceive that all my Children from my first Wife leave me as soon them comes to their age saying to me, Father what you have, you have occasion for your own selfs. We will go, and see to get our Living for our self, and so did all my Six Children from my First Wife, Catharina, John, Stephan, Nicles, Elisabeth & Jacob, the youngest followed their Exemple in the Month of Octobr 1746. Then I John Keim resolved to macke My Last Will and Testament, and praise together my Whole Estate, Well knowing what the said Estate is worth. My Land and Plantation, containing Two houndert acres of land shall be praised at the sum of Two houndert & Fifty Pounds Currant money of Pensyls with all the Buildings, Corn in the Ground with the whole Improvement. And all the Mouveables in the House and out the Dor. Bras, Pewter, Iron Wooden and Earthen Things, Waggon both greath and Smal, Plows and Irons belonging to it

item. Iron Stoves suma all the Houshold goods, further the Creatures, Horses Mares, Colts, Co-- and all the Cattles, old and young, Sheeps old and young,

item Swines and all the Guears belonging to -se's and Waggons, shall be at the Time of my Decease be rated and praised at the Sum of Two houndrt and fifty Pounds Currant Lawfull Money of Pensyls.

Now At the time of my decease or not being able to Speak and my Wife charged with ten smal children, now my obligation, I therefore Will and I do order that my Dearly beloved Wife Maria Elisabeth shall be my Sole Executrix of this my Last Will and Testament. I license, Constitute, mache, and ordain Casper Creesmer of Oly in the County of Berks, Yeomen, to be Executor with my Wife, all my Whole Estate, Real and Personal,

Shall remain together in ther Hand, untill the Children of Her Comes to their Age, And my Wife Shall pay out of my Estate to the Six Children of my First Wife To each of them Ten Pounds Currant Money of Pensyls and them, who have received more, shall restitute the same to be equal parts.

I do further order When my Wife Maria Elisabeth My Children brought to their Age untill the youngest of all the Children is in age. Then She and my other Executor shall praise all my Whole Estate, Creatures, Household goods in Sumally My Mouveables, Land - Except the Turner Tools shall not be praised, My Wife shall have the Power to give the same to Who She thincks proper of my Children. Then My Wife Maria Elisabeth Shall have Thirty Pounds Currant Money in Hand paid to her out of my Estate,

item She Shall have yearly Six Pound in Money, and the Chuse of the Cows, one wich shall be feed with the rest.

Item the Bed as good we had it, with Bed stad, Curtins, four. Sheets wich she pleases Two Hand Toels, Two Table Cloaths, and her own chusing four pewter Plates, four Pewter Dishes, two Iron Pots, her Walnut Chest, Spinning Wheel, and the Side Sadle, and at least The Seat in the house where I live in during her Life, and if any of My Children then having the Possession of this My House and Place, should not licke to live with her, Then He or She the Children Shall build her an other House, Suficient to live in.

Touching the Devise of my Land, While My Children are all under Age, I Therefore give full Power to My Wife to give and Devise the Same to her Children wich She finds proper. And When them Comes to their Age, when her Portion is first deducted, Shall have equal Parts.

These have I John Keim by good Health and Perfect Memory, Thanks God to be given therefore, writ with my own Hand, and declare herewith These and no other to be My Last Will and Testament, done in -d year 1747.

The Mark of John Keim [signature in German?] -- Signed Sealed and Pronounced in -d Presence of us by the Said John Keim as his Last Will and Testament. Wiliam Pott, Petter Lobach, Johan William Pott

**Probation of the will:** Johannes died around 1753, six years after his will was written, and his will was probated in 1754 per the following record:

Reading in Berks County January the First Day Anno Domini 1754.

Then personally appeared Jn. William Pott and Peter Lobach both of the County of Berks, Two of the Witnesses to the above written Will and upon their Solemn Affirmation according to Law (being People called Mennonists, who conscientiously scruple the taking an Oath) did severally declare and affirm that they Saw and heard the above named John Keim the Testator Sign Seal publish and declare the Said Will to be his Last Will and Testament, and that at the time of Doing thereof he was of Sound mind memory and understanding, and that William Pott the other Witness was also present at the Same time and did subscribe his Name thereto as Witness, together with these Affirmants Johan William Pott and Peter Lobach, in the Presence at the request of the said Testator.

Coramme James Read D Regr

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### Historians' Meeting 2006

The 2006 annual meeting of the Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians is scheduled for September 15 and 16. The planned focus is "The Amish, Mennonite, and Brethren Experience Related to The American Revolutionary War." How did that important event in American history affect the Amish, Mennonites, and Brethren in their migration patterns (especially their move to Somerset County), their retention or loss of membership, their relationship to government and society in general, and their doctrines? How were these peace churches affected by the patriotism of the times and the recruiting efforts of the war. These are questions on the agenda of the program planners. Check the next issues of *The Historian* for more information on the program being planned by Kenneth L. Yoder and Paul H. and Marie Yoder.

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## New Historian's Committee Members

Delvin Mast of Grantsville, Maryland, and Kenton Yoder of St. Paul, Pennsylvania, were elected to the Historians Executive Committee at the annual meeting in September 2005. These men bring their interest in local and related Amish and Mennonite history to the table and add new resources to the work of The Historians.

### Previous Article to be Continued

The article, "Benedict Miller in Hard Times," which appeared in the July 2005 issue of *The Historian*, is to be continued in a future issue with observations on (1) why the 1830 letter was written at that particular time, (2) the meaning of an additional note written on the address side of the folded sheet/envelope, (3) Benedict's land holdings even in a time of economic depression, and (4) the related significance of the appraisal of Peter Beachy II's estate.

## 2006 Membership

Subscription to *The Historian* is by membership in the Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians. Membership for the year 2006 is offered now. Membership fees support the work of the Historians in preserving, discovering, and sharing the Amish and Mennonite history of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and Garrett County, Maryland, and related areas.

Members receive a year's subscription to *Mennonite Family History* magazine (in addition to *The Historian*) and can arrange to use the archives at Grantsville on a free-will donation basis.

If you have not already enrolled for 2006, fill out the enclosed card and send it with remittance to the indicated address. In the absence of the card, send remittance to the address of *The Historian* at the address given below. Individual membership fee for one year is \$20. Checks are payable to The Casselman Historians Thank you!

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## The Building Fund

The fund for the projected new Historians' archives and activities building received its first contribution in September 2004. At that point, an enthusiastic member of The Historians contributed \$500, even though the decision to build had not yet been firm. A special offering at the annual meeting in September 2005, resulted in additional funds. The balance in the fund, as of October 1, 2005, was \$7,167. This represents a significant but small beginning. The estimated cost is \$100,000.

Contributions are solicited and should be

earmarked "Building Fund" and sent to The Casselman Historians, P.O. Box 591, Grantsville, MD 21536. In addition to cash contributions, gifts-in-kind and fund-raising projects are welcome. With this being the last issue of *The Historian* in this calendar year, it is hoped that this solicitation will be remembered when readers make decisions regarding year-end giving. For more information, see the enclosed flier and future issues of *The Historian* or contact any member of the Historians Committee listed below.

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The Historian is published quarterly by the Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians. Executive Committee: David I. Miller, chairman; Kenneth L. Yoder, vice-chairman; Kenton Yoder, secretary; Bernard Orendorf, treasurer; Delvin Mast, Evan Maust, Dale Yoder, James L. Yoder, Paul H. Yoder. Address: P.O. Box 591, Grantsville, MD 21536. Phone: 301-245-4326. Subscription is by membership in the Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians. For admission to the archives at Grantsville, contact Alice Orendorf at 301-245-4326 ([christior@juno.com](mailto:christior@juno.com)) or Paul H. Yoder at 301-895-5411 ([phyoder@juno.com](mailto:phyoder@juno.com)) or Karl Westmeier at 301-895-4490 ([kwwestmeier@cs.com](mailto:kwwestmeier@cs.com)).

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