

Bicentennial Celebration

A speech given by Jim Galloway (James A. Galloway) at the bicentennial celebration at Boehm's Chapel, Willow Street, PA, on June 22, 1991 (1791-1991). This speech was given at 1:30 P.M. and 4:30 P.M. in the sanctuary of Boehm's United Methodist Church.

Introduction

I am Jim Galloway from the Ohio Beams - Rev. Martin Boehm was my 5th great-grandfather. But, more about the Ohio Beams later.

First, let me tell you my life story. I met my wife, Dorothy, in kindergarten. She was a platinum blonde, wearing a blue polka-dot dress and she was licking paste from her fingers. We have stuck together and have lived happily ever since.

Second, I get very emotional when I consider the significance of this hallowed ground. In 1756, Rev. Martin Boehm was chosen by lot to be a minister in the Mennonite faith, but the first time that he was called upon to preach, all he could do was stammer and he sat down in shame. Hopefully, my heart will be warmed, as was Rev. Martin Boehm's, and I will be able to continue this message.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, this place of reverence has hosted many of the great ministers that spread your word in America - Martin Boehm, Henry Boehm, Whatcoat, Asbury, Jesse Lee, Strawbridge, Otterbein, McKendree, and many others.

The farm on which the chapel stands dates from circa 1715, or 76 years prior to the building of the chapel itself. The original immigrant, Jacob Boehm, my 6th great-grandfather, was the common ancestor for all those in our line of Boehms: John Beam of Virginia, Abrahma Beam of Ontario, Canada, and Rev. Martin Boehm, whose descendants relocated to Germantown, Ohio and Ontario, Canada.

So, this place not only has great religious significance, but it is the anchor in the sea of history for all of my Beam cousins. For creating this place of spiritual inspiration, the cradle of the Boehm family's American beginnings, we give thanks in the name of Jesus - Amen.

Cousins, I charge you here and now to enlighten your children and grandchildren as to the reason for this place being so important in our family history. Do not let the knowledge of the location of this holy and historic site be lost. Dorothy and I have worked to bring all Beams together and to educate them as to the importance of this place. The same blood that ran through the veins of your ancestors, who were born and raised on this farm, runs through your body today.

Now, to the reason for this talk - Jim McCullough, president of Boehm's Chapel Society, wanted to know what happened to the Boehms who lived on this farm for over 100 years and why today there are no persons in Lancaster county carrying the name of Boehm from our line.

There is one Boehm descendant that many of you folks know, Sara Roberts, who lives on King Street in the city of Lancaster. Sara does title research and genealogy research. Sara descends from Rev. Martin Boehm's sister, Susannah Boehm, who married Henry Resh, both of whom are buried here at Boehm's Chapel cemetery. The surname of Sara's ancestors have changed five times since Susannah Boehm. Other Boehm descendants who still live in the Lancaster county area carry the surnames Hilton and Longenecker - descendants of Rev. Martin Boehm's son, John, who moved to Canada, but left two adult daughters behind.

Our research has centered on the four sons of the immigrant, Jacob Boehm. This talk will follow the lives of these Boehm sons briefly, including a few biographical sketches.

Jacob Boehm, probably the first-born son of the immigrant, has escaped our research efforts almost entirely. We only know that this Jacob Boehm was still living in 1778 because he was mentioned in his father's will. The will stated that this Jacob had been previously provided for and would not share in the final settlement. There were so many Jacob Boehms in other generations and in other family lines that we have been unsuccessful in identifying the descendants of this Jacob Boehm.

Virginia Beam/Beahm Family

John Beam, the second son of the immigrant, had a farm and mill on Camargo Rd., just south of here. He left this property prior to 1766 and together with friend, Henry Kagy, and other Mennonites, he moved to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. John Beam was in Woodstock for a time and then along Smith Creek just east of New Market. John Beam thought that this lowland valley was unhealthy, giving him the ague and the miseries. So, John Beam purchased land on the western slope of the Blue Ridge on Rocky Branch Creek of Pass Run. There he re-established his milling business and his family and descendants thrived. The Beam clan grew in numbers and purchased property around John Beam's original holdings until the valley of Rocky Branch became known as "Beahms Holler" and extended across the top of the Blue Ridge Mts. to the eastern slope. There was a well-traveled road connecting both sides of the mountain settlements. During the 1800s, this road was as widely used as the New Market-Sperryville turnpike (now US 211) running through Luray. In our day, the Skyline Drive crosses Beahms Gap and a sign has been erected by the highway department. However, when the National Park Service formed Shenandoah National Park, Beahms Rd. was closed to all vehicular traffic and it is now used as a fire trail.

John Beam died circa 1800 and he was buried in the original family graveyard on Rocky Branch Creek. This graveyard was used by some of the family members until Beahm's Chapel and cemetery were founded early in the 1900s near Luray, VA. Yes friends, there really is another Beahm's Chapel and cemetery and it derives its name from the fact that James Ambrose Beahm partially funded the purchase of lumber and land for the frame non-denominational church, located on US 211 east of the town of Luray, VA.

The surname Boehm was little used in Virginia for this family, with the predominant spellings being Behm or Beam, depending on the whims of the English clerks. The spelling of Beahm became common prior

to the Civil War, except for those of the family who left Beahms Hollow and settled further south in the Shenandoah Valley near Harrisonburg, VA. That branch of the family continued to use the surname Beam.

One Benjamin Franklin Beahm served in the Confederate army for one year and twenty-one days, during which time he was shot in his left arm at the battle of Chancellorsville - the same arm and the same battle as the famous Stonewall Jackson. Benjamin Beahm survived, though his arm was paralyzed for life. However, General Jackson died ten days later from complications of his injury. As for Benjamin Franklin Beahm, he could not hold the reins for plowing or do manual labor, which required two good arms, so he opened a tea room and a U.S. post office on the Blue Ridge on US 211. This place was called Beahms by the U.S. government until the Shenandoah National Park was formed and all of the mountain folk in the district used Beahm's post office.

Daniel Beahm also served in the Confederate army during the Civil War. After the war, he bought a farm above Beahms Hollow on the western slope of the Blue Ridge. Dick Batman, the great-grandson of Daniel Beahm, now owns this farm. From Dick's home, you can view the town of Luray in the valley; truly a beautiful spot and a gorgeous view. At night, the town of Luray looks like the sparkling gem of the Shenandoah.

Warner Royal Beahm, another soldier in the Confederate army, was a wagon maker by trade and when that fact became known by the Quartermaster Corps, Warner Beahm was sent home to Marksville to build supply wagons for use by the army. For this service, he was paid private's pay of \$7.00 per month and he was allowed to wear his uniform. A picture, about 16 in. by 16 in., of Warner Royal Beahm in his uniform existed until it was destroyed by fire in 1984.

Uncle Sam Beahm was a rugged, well-known character in Beahms Hollow at the turn of the 20th century. He was born about 1847 and died in 1920. He never wore boots or shoes no matter the season, except when wife Betty made him go to church. On one such rare church appearance, Sam had his boots on, but he hadn't considered that there might be a foot washing ceremony. When Uncle Sam's boot was removed, a flask of moonshine fell to the floor. Result - a king-sized uproar.

I have been asked if there were or are any ministers in the family since Rev. Martin Boehm and Rev. Henry Boehm. The answer is yes. All three family branches - Virginia, Canada, and Ohio - all have had members of the clergy.

One of the most famous of Virginia's ministers was I. N. H. Beahm, born in 1859 and killed in an auto accident in 1950. He was still active in the ministry at age 91 and he was riding in the back seat of a car involved in an accident on his way to a church function. I. N. H. Beahm was killed instantly. I always thought that it was ironic that I. N. H. Beahm never owned a car and he didn't even know how to drive. I. N. H. Beahm was one of seven brothers, all of whom followed their father, Henry Abraham Beahm, into the ministry of the Church of the Brethren. I. N. H. Beahm was president of Hebron seminary in Nokesville, VA and he preached in all of the Brethren churches in the Shenandoah Valley - from Harper's Ferry to Roanoke. He was an author, lecturer, and educator.

I. N. H. Beahm, together with his son-in-law, Baxter Mow, started a Beahm/Moyer/Myer reunion in the fall of 1928 in Beahms Hollow. These reunions were held annually until 1941, when the Page county sheriff banned all meetings due to an infantile paralysis epidemic. A total of one thousand people attended the last reunion and when the hat was passed to cover expenses, the sum of eleven dollars and odd cents was collected - and we think that we have problems with finance. World War II came and went, but the reunion was never held again. However, during the heyday, Baxter Mow, interviewed the attendees to get an insight into Beahm family history. No one knew that their roots were in Lancaster Co., PA, or that they had cousins in Ohio and Ontario, Canada. We did use Baxter Mow's research material to begin our research of the Beam family in Virginia, so he was very helpful.

For several years, our research of Virginia Beahms kept turning up the name of I. N. H. Beahm. Dorothy and I called him International Harvester Beahm until one day we obtained a history that gave his full name as Isaac Newton Harvey Beahm.

Now, I. N. H. Beahm was a small man in stature, but a giant in his chosen field. He was an energetic, outgoing, well-liked, respected, and well-known personality. Since I. N. H. Beahm didn't drive, he made use of the N & W railroad to travel his circuit of churches and to attend church related engagements. All of the railroad conductors know I. N. H. Beahm on sight and would stop the train at any crossroad to let him off or on. Many of the families of railroad personnel attended Brethren churches and this fact gave I. N. H. Beahm a certain power and security during his travels on the railroad.

One day when I. N. H. Beahm was in Roanoke, he went to the N & W ticket office, located in the headquarters building of the railroad, to purchase a ticket to Nokesville ...

Dorothy and I interviewed I. N. H. Beahm's daughter, Anna Beahm Mow, in 1984 (when she was 91) at her home in Roanoke. Anna had just returned from Dallas, TX where she had a speaking engagement. She had also just published her 10th book, written since her retirement as a missionary and teacher. While I was interviewing Rev. Anna Beahm Mow, Dorothy was interviewing her husband, Rev. Baxter Mow. After our interviews were completed, Anna served spiced tea and homemade cookies and presented me with copies of four of her books, personally autographed.

Two of Anna and Baxter Mow's children were born in India, while the Mows were on mission there, and these children became missionaries.

For the past ten years, Dorothy and I have spent a part of our summers among the Beahms of Virginia and we have enjoyed every day there.

Canadian Beam Family

The next son of the immigrant to leave Lancaster Co., PA was Abraham Beam, who became the patriarch of much of the clan of Canadian Beams. The last property that Abraham owned in Lancaster

county was the one fronting on Camargo Rd., which he had purchased from brother, John Beam, in 1768. John Beam was already living in Virginia when Abraham Beam bought this land. John Beam had used the land for his mill, but Abraham Beam used it as a farm and orchard. Now, Abraham Beam had married Barbara Herr Nissley, widow of Jacob Nissley, in 1764 and together they planned and built a house on this farm in 1770. Today, this house and farm is known as Groffdale and it is owned by Bob and Millie Groff.

Barbara Herr Nissley Beam became an important addition to the Beam family. After her marriage to Abraham Beam, she was known as "Mama Beam." She developed an apple variety by grafting from trees in their orchard. This apple was known as the "Mama Beam," the Belmont, or the Gate, depending on the time-period or the location of the orchard. Barbara Beam also later became a pioneer woman in her own right, when she and Abraham Beam and their youngest son, Martin Beam, homesteaded in Ontario.

Life went well for Abraham and Barbara Beam until the Revolutionary War. During the war, Mennonites, being pacifists, were heavily taxed to support the colonial troops. When it was reported to the authorities that Abraham Beam had fed several British soldiers and had let them sleep in his barn, he was arrested and thrown in jail in 1781. A servant girl of Abraham Beam's testified against him and he languished in jail because he couldn't pay the fine of £800 levied against him. A group of friends and neighbors came to plead his case with the authorities and to bail him out. Abraham Beam continued to be heavily taxed and harassed by the authorities and scorned by his non-Mennonite neighbors until 1788, when other Mennonites in similar situations banded together and made their pioneer trek to Ontario, Canada. The story of this journey has been preserved in the book, The Trail of the Black Walnut, by G. Elmore Reamon.

If these new arrivals to Canada could prove that they had shown favor or had remained loyal to the crown during the Revolutionary War, then they were considered United Empire Loyalists (U.E.L.) and they were awarded 250 acres for each adult male. As a section of the acreage was cleared for cultivation or pasture, a man could petition for an additional 250 acres. By the time Abraham Beam died in 1799, he and his son, Martin, held title to 1450 acres. Abraham Beam settled at the mouth of Black Creek, where it empties into the Niagara River midway between Ft. Erie and Chippewa or about 15 miles south of Niagara Falls.

Abraham Beam built a new house on his homestead and he became a town warden in the village of Chippewa. By the time that Abraham Beam died, his son, Martin, had married and fathered three children and by the time that Martin Beam died, he had been blessed with thirteen children and seventy-five grandchildren.

It is very important to note that the same year that Abraham Beam died (1799), his nephew, John Beam, son of Rev. Martin Boehm, moved to Canada and acquired 200 acres behind Abraham Beam's property. Because of this second migration, the Beams of Canada include descendants of both Abraham Beam and John Beam.

After Abraham Beam died in 1799, his widow, "Mama Beam," returned to Strasburg, PA to visit her daughter Barbara Nissley Beam. Now Barbara Nissley Beam was married to Jacob Beam, son of Rev. Martin Boehm. So, "Mama Beam" was not only my great-aunt, being the widow of my uncle, Abraham Beam, but she was also my 5th great-grandmother, since her daughter had married my 4th great-grandfather. I'm glad we don't exchange Christmas cards with greetings like this.

"Mama Beam" never returned to Canada. She spent the rest of her days at Jacob Beam's home, Cherrycrest, on Cherry Hill Rd. in Paradise Twp., Lancaster Co, PA. "Mama Beam" died in 1822 at age 93.

Back in Ontario, the children of Martin Beam were growing to adulthood. In 1828, the fourth son donated land for the Stevensville Mennonite Church and cemetery. Martin Beam's 5th son, Henry, was a minister of this church. Many generations of Martin Beam's descendants were buried there and some descendants still attend church there. These attendees are "old order" Mennonites and as such, they are not permitted to attend the services in this building or in the chapel. However, some of them have visited the area to understand their roots.

Some notable Canadian Beam family descendants include:

James Lewis Kraft (1874-1953) of Stevensville, Ontario, son of Sarah Ann Beam. Founder of the Kraft Cheese Company.

Dr. Anson Buck, M.D. (1833-1919), son of Philip Buck and Julianna Beam. A member of the Trafalgar town council for 40 years.

Minnie Julia Beatrice Buck (1862-1952), daughter of Dr. Anson Buck. Minnie married Colin H. Campbell, lawyer and attorney general for the province of Manitoba and minister of public works.

Donald Carlton Beam (1899-1970). He was a building inspector and a Beam family historian.

Maj. Morris Stanley Boehm (1874-1947). Served during World War I. He worked in real estate and insurance. Maj. Boehm visited Boehm's Chapel in 1917-1919 and was present at the unveiling of the monument to Rev. Martin Boehm and Rev. Henry Boehm in 1929. He was also a Beam family historian.

Shirley Deane Briggs (1924-1986) of Abingdon, IL, wife of Lewis William Beam. Shirley was an active Beam family researcher.

Ohio Beam Family

Now to the Ohio Beam family of which I am part. That story should begin in the year 1816, when Rev. Martin Boehm's grandson, yet another Martin Beam rode on horseback to western Ohio to view the

land. During his round trip, he kept a diary chronicling his adventures and the trip whetted his appetite to move to western Ohio.

In 1823, Martin Beam sold his farm in Soudersburg, Lancaster Co., PA and moved his family, then including eight children, to Keedyville, MD, where he owned property. After seven years, Martin Beam sold his land in Maryland. Martin Beam's proceeds from the sale of the two farms was \$31,000.00. He moved his family again to western Ohio and purchased a farm on Diamond Mill Rd., just outside of Germantown, OH. As he settled into life in this new community, he called himself Martin Beam, Sr., since his youngest son was also named Martin. As the sons of Martin Beam, Sr. matured, he set up three of them with farms of their own. His fourth son, Martin Beam, Jr., became a cooper by trade and settled in Germantown.

After Martin Beam, Sr. died in 1855, the sons that had been set up with farms sold their land and moved elsewhere. The third son, A. H. K. Beam (Abraham Hershey Kagy Beam), moved to Columbus, IN, bought a farm there and became a United Brethren minister. The general hospital in Columbus, IN is now on the Beam farm and a condo development occupies the house site. The road passing the farm was named Beams Rd. in honor of the family and it is still known by that name today.

Now, Martin Beam, Jr., my 2nd great-grandfather, remained in Germantown, OH, working as a cooper and he sired ten children by the time he was 38 years old in 1861 when the Civil War started. Martin Beam, Jr. signed up for army duty and he served four years (1862-1865) as an army cook at \$11.00 per month. His wife, Lucinda, kept the family on this money plus a huge garden plot in town. Martin Beam's eldest son, Wesley, also joined the army as soon as he turned 19 years old early in 1865 and he served until late in 1865. However, to the best of my knowledge, Beams of Ohio never fought Beahms of Virginia thank goodness.

In 1856, Rev. Henry Boehm, according to his Reminiscences, made his last visit to Boehm's Chapel and the house where he was born. At that time, Henry Boehm said that there were none of his name left in the neighborhood. Later in 1856, Henry Boehm visited the United Brethren publishing house in Dayton, OH and he viewed the portrait of his father, Rev. Martin Boehm. The portrait had been painted by a German artist in Lancaster, PA and brought to Ohio by Martin Beam, Sr. of Germantown, OH. Upon the death of Martin Beam, Sr. in 1855, the portrait was presented to the United Brethren. The portrait was destroyed in the great 1913 Dayton flood. Photography was not invented until 1839, so of course, no photographs exist from Rev. Martin Boehm's lifetime, only those taken of the portrait.

Let us bow our heads in prayer. Dear Lord, we sing your praises that you brought together those persons responsible for the restoration of Boehm's Chapel, gave them insight, courage, and the tenacity to see this project completed. May it be your pleasure that this holy ground remain a monument to Methodism and to the Boehm family for all time. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.