

Beam Branches

(pp. 58-60)

R. Robert Mutrie

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Sponsored by Lawrence R. Beam

John Beam of Bertie

Early Life

2. John Beam was born at the homestead of his Palatine immigrant grandparents at the village of Willow Street in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania to Martin and Eve (Steiner) Beam. John's father served as a Bishop in the Mennonite Church then converted to the United Brethren.

Before John was born in 1754, his father purchased the old homestead established by his grandfather immigrant Jacob Beam. On June 20, 1783, Martin deeded to John a part of the farm for £800, described as follows (Lanc. Deed Bk II, Vol 2, p. 387-392):

"... Beginning at a post & corner of Henry Rush's [John's uncle] land thence North eighty two degrees West sixty six perches to a Pine Tree, North thirty degrees West twenty seven perches to a Hickery, thence by other land of the sd Martin Beam North thirty six degrees East two hundred perches to a post South sixty five degrees East seventy four perches to a post, South twenty degrees West ninety perches to a post, thence by land of the sd. Henry Rush South forty two degrees & a half West one hundred and two perches & a half of a perch to the place of beginning."

This Lot contained 96 acres, 100 perches. John was listed on the Lancaster tax lists of 1779-82.

In 1789, John purchased from his uncle Abraham Beam, a 48 acre home lot and mill in Bart Twp., Lancaster Co., but continued to live at Conestoga Twp. where he was recorded in the 1790 Census with 3 males aged under 16 (Jacob, Adam and John Jr.), 2 males aged over 16 (himself and one other), and 4 females (his wife and daughters Mary Catherine, Barbara, and Eve). The two other males were possibly his brothers Henry and Jacob.

East Pennsborough, Pennsylvania

On October 3, 1791, John mortgaged his Conestoga Township land to his brother Jacob for £872 in gold and silver coin (Lane Deed Bk OO Vol 2, p. 1-5). He then moved north to the area of Harrisburg. On March 31, 1792, John Beam of East Pennsborough Twp., Cumberland County mortgaged his Bart Township property to his brother Jacob Beam for £614 in gold or silver coin (Lane. Deed Bk. OO, p. 79). He then purchased 174 acres at East Pennsborough Twp. and operated a mill. In 1795, John's brother Jacob took over the Bart Township property.

The Move to Upper Canada

In the spring of 1802, John with his family, excepting two daughters moved to Upper Canada (Ontario), arriving on March 4, 1802 (UCLP of son John, Jr. B12/86). Descendant family historian, M. Stanley Boehm wrote of this trek:

"They travelled by covered wagon and on horseback along the Susquehanna River, over the Conestoga Trail to

Buffalo, and there crossed the Niagara River and settled at the forks of the Black Creek about one mile inland."

A year after his arrival, John purchased on April 16, 1803 from Edward Carney 200 acres in Lot 22, Cross Concession of Willoughby Township and the adjoining Lot 16, Concession 9, Bertie Township. The home that John built was of typical colonial Georgian construction, two stories, each with a single large room. This homestead served as the continuously occupied residence of his descendants until 1923, and still standing at the time of a visit by Stanley Beam in 1946:

"The original house is still standing, and was occupied by members of the family until 1923. The building was of logs and consisted of a large kitchen and living-room combined, occupying the whole ground floor, with a cellar beneath with clay floor. Above the living room, reached by ladder, was a room corresponding in size to the living room but divided by a board partition, on one side of which slept the women and girls of the family, and on the other the men and boys."

The Inventory of John Beam's Estate

John Beam died on January 11, 1813, and his son Adam petitioned for the administration of the estate. He prepared an inventory on February 8, 1813. (OA RG 22, Series 6-2, Box 2). During the administration Adam paid out funds to his siblings: Jacob £150, Barbara £100, and John £150.

The long list of effects accumulated over the lifetime of the deceased were impressively recorded on five pages on February 8, 1813. Much of one page was taken up with livestock indicating the thriving nature of the farm for its pioneer times- a mare, a colt, a yoke of oxen, a yoke of steers, 5 cows, 5 heiffers, 19 sheep, 8 "fatting hogs to weigh 1000 lb", 8 other hogs, 10 shoats and 12 pigs. For their transportation, the family had one "old" wagon, an ox sleigh, and one "old" horse sleigh. The farm was worked with an ox plough, a horse plough, and a harrow. In all the livestock and farm equipment was valued at £225.1.8, an impressive sum for the times.

John Beam left a well stocked larder and the appraisal provided an idea of the value of staples in 1813. A barrel of salt was valued at £3.4, four bushels of flax seed at £2, five and a half bushels of buckwheat at £1.2. There was a 60 bushel stack of oats at £12, a 200 bushel mow of wheat at £100, a 200 bushel stack of oats at £40, and an 18 bushel stack of wheat at £76.6.

In the kitchen were inventoried many necessities of everyday pioneer life- a copper kettle, a churn, a washing tub, two wooden pails, a Dutch oven, a frying pan, a table and five chairs, a spinning wheel, ten Delph plates, four tin cups, a coffee mill, two coffee pots, a tea kettle, and a candle mold.

John was also a lender of funds to his neighbours having £22 outstanding at the time of his decease. In all, his moveable estate stood valued at £664.1, and this did not include the property and buildings. Many of his neighbours had less than £100 in assessed assets.

While John Beam left a substantial estate, he incurred heavy debts in building it. Against this estate there were accounts to be settled. The Surrogate settlement fees were £5.3.2, and a mortgage from financiers Clark & Street was settled in three payments of £26, £33.9.5, and £38.7.2. Another mortgage from Thomas Cummings of £91.13 was also paid, as well as £150 to Adam's brother Jacob to settle his share. A further bond of £361.7.8 from Benjamin Pawling was settled. The legacies of Barbara Beam of £100.4.9 and that of John Beam of £150 were settled. The total of all debts was £1231.12.1½.

Epilogue

After John died, his widow Barbara went to live with her daughter Barbara Relyea at Nelson Twp., Halton Co. near Hamilton. Barbara and her family traveled from time to time. About 1830, she and her children Jacob, John and Samuel visited with relations in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Remarking on another visit, Adam Beam on the homestead at Bertie Township noted in his journal that, "July 4th, 1837 Mother came here to board and lodge with us, and left the 19th day of September."

The family of John and Barbara (Walter) Beam became quite scattered early on. Daughters Mary Catherine (Beam) Longenecker and Eve (Beam) Hilton married and remained in Pennsylvania. Following John's death, his widow Barbara (Walter) joined her daughter Barbara (Beam) Relyea who had settled at Palermo (Burlington) in Nelson Twp., Halton Co. Another daughter, Juliana (Beam) Buck lived near Palermo. Son John remained in Bertie Township at Stevensville, and sons Jacob and Adam lived on their father's farm. Jacob later joined his mother at Palermo. Their brother Samuel moved to Owensboro, Kentucky in 1819.

Barbara was buried in the graveyard of the old stone church at Palermo (later restored by her great-granddaughter Julianna Campbell), and her stone reads: "Barbara Beam died July 21st, 1851, aged 96 years. Death is a debt to nature due, which I have paid and so must you." Beside Barbara lies her daughter named for her and with whom she lived after her husband's passing. That stone reads, "In memory of Barbara, wife of Daniel Relyea, died June 17th, 1883, aged 95 years. As a wife devoted, as a mother affectionate, as a friend ever kind and true." In the same plot beside his mother and sister lies Jacob Beam, "In memory of Jacob Beam who died 10th June 1867, aged 82 years, Friends or physicians could not save This mortal body from the grave, Nor can the grave confine it here When Christ, our Savior, shall appear.