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Aaron Sussell

Ardis Sussell

Family of John Walden Meyers and Mary/Polly Gruber/Kruger

The eldest son of George and Margaretha, Johannes, married Maria/Polly Gruber/Kruger. All the references I've read say her surname was Kruger/Cruger, and some link her to a prominent New York family by that name, but I have researched that family thoroughly and do not find a link. At the baptism of their daughter, Catherine, a Tobias and Catherine Gruber were sponsors, and Maria's surname was given as Gruber. Families in that area and time period were following a naming pattern. John and Polly named their first son George after his father; their first daughter would be Catherine, after her mother; their second son was Tobias, probably after her father; and their second daughter was Margaretha, after his mother. So I believe Tobias and Catherine Gruber were Maria's parents, but I haven't had time to prove this information. When their son Leonard was born the mother's maiden name was given as Kroeger, and when Jacob was born it was given as VanHalebeck. No surname was given when the other children were baptised.

Maria's brother, John, is supposed to have accompanied her husband to Canada, and he did apply for land, but sources I've read say Crown land was never granted to him and it is assumed that he died early. However, a John Gruber received a patent from the Crown 20 November 1835 for 200 acres in Lot 6, Concession 1, Sidney, but there are records of his selling parcels of this land to members of the Walden Meyers family as early as 5 March 1827. I am wondering if Maria's brother was Paul Gruber, who is mentioned with John Walden Meyers in Jane Goddard's book, Hans Walthimeyer. It states that they received orders from Governor Haldimand to move on to areas allotted to them. They arrived at Lachine by 1 June 1784, and John and a fellow Loyalist, Paul Gruber, decided not to move any further this year but to rent a Canadian farm from a French family near Lachine. He wrote to Secretary Mathews and received permission to remain on the farm the remainder of the year.

A Paul Gruber had married a Catherine Westphal in Dutchess Co., NY, and had a son, John, born 11 January and baptised 2 February 1783 at the Dutch Reformed Church of Rhinebeck Flatts in Dutchess Co.. On 15 January 1791 at Ernest Town a Paul and Catherine Gruber had a daughter, Amy/Anny baptised by Rev. John Langhorns. They were "of Sidney".

In another case in Hastings Co., the land was patented to a son of the original settler, even though the original settler had lived on it for many years. Perhaps Paul Gruber was the original settler on Lot 6, Concession 1, very near the Walden Meyers family lands, but the patent was granted to his son, John. Family tradition could have confused the names over the years.

There is a record of a Johannes Greber (could be a misreading of Gruber on the original record) and Marytie Kilmer having a son, Jacob, baptised 28 May 1769 at Claverack Dutch Reformed Church, Columbia Co., NY. This seems more like the generation of John and Polly. Perhaps Paul was a younger brother.

An Anna Gruber married Mattheus Progue and had a son, Johan Tobias, baptised 6 February 1768 at St. Paul's Evangelical Church of Wurtemberg. Johan Tobias Gruber was a witness. This couple had other children baptised in the Rhinebeck area of Dutchess Co., NY.

An Elizabeth Gruber married Michael Ries and had a daughter, Catherine, baptised 25 June 1763 at St. Paul's (Zion's) Lutheran Church of Red Hook in Dutchess Co., NY.

I mention these names in case others are looking for clues to the parents of John's wife Polly. I plan to do further research to see if I can clear up the mystery.

It is interesting to note that neither the name Gruber nor the name Kruger appear in the 1790 Census Index for New York.

John and Polly first settled near his parents. Their first three children were baptised at Rhinebeck St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Wurtemberg. The next two children were baptised at Kinderhook Dutch Reformed Church, then Albany Co., now Columbia Co., NY. The next child was baptised at Catskill Dutch Reformed Church; the next in Coxsackie Dutch Reformed Church; and the last at Loonenberg Zion Lutheran Church—all then in Albany Co., now in Greene Co., NY. Here was where John and Polly built their house which they had to forfeit after the Revolutionary War. It was on Coeyman's Patent, on the west bank of the Hudson River.

Claim #966 said John had 200 acres in Cohenning's Patent, Albany Co., NY. (Other sources have called it Coeyman's Patent.) He went upon it in 1771, cleared 100 acres, built a house and barn, and planted an orchard. He lost 7 horses, 4 cows, 5 young cattle, 30 hogs, 17 sheep, utensils, furniture, and 140 bushels of wheat.

A statement of 1785 says he recovered nothing of his own estate, but recovered for his children his father's property and got back his bonds and notes. He said his father's lands were in Dorset and his in Manchester. Perhaps here again someone misread the original handwriting, as his father's property was in Dutchess Co., NY. Since his father didn't die until 1796, I doubt that he received his father's property for his children in 1785.

His father left a will dated 11 April 1796 and proved 12 September 1796. Since it clarifies what John was to receive from his father's estate, please refer to it on page 3.

Both Mary Beacock Fryer in The Loyalist Spy and Jane Goddard in Hans Waltmeyer have given detailed accounts of John's military career, so I will not go into detail here.

John and Mary/Polly's family consisted of:

- i. Johan George Waldemeier bapt. 13 October 1765 at St. Paul's Luth. Ch. of Wurtemberg
- ii. Catharina Waldemeier bapt. 29 March 1767 at St. Paul's Luth. Ch. of Wurtemberg
- iii. Margaretha Waldemeier bapt. 18 December 1868 at St. Paul's Luth. Ch. of Wurtemberg
- iv. Tobias Waldemeier bapt. 2 December 1770 at Kinderhook Dutch Ref. Ch.
- v. Leendert Waldemeier bapt. 13 September 1772 at Kinderhook Dutch Ref. Ch.
- vi. Maria/Mary Waldemeier bapt. at Catskill Dutch Ref. Ch. 29 May 1774
- vii. Annatje/Anna Waldemeier bapt. at Coxsackie Dutch Ref. Ch. 10 Dec. 1775
- viii. Jacob bapt. 20 April 1777 at Loonenberg Zion Luth. Ch.

John was already involved with Loyalist activities when his last child, Jacob, was born. He was stationed in New York City. His wife and all the children except the oldest son, George, joined him there in the autumn of 1778. (One source says the baby, Jacob, was left behind with the grandparents, but my original source said George was not allowed to go because he was old enough to work on the farm.) Polly had received permission for a pass to join John on 1 October 1778, and they left on 17 October 1778.

In May 1779 John reached Fort St. Johns with a letter from Henry Clinton in New York City. He was kept waiting at the fort or in Montreal for about 5 months—until October 1779—for a dispatch Haldimand was to send to New York City. From 1 July to 7 August he was involved in a plan to capture General Philip Schuyler in Albany, but the plan failed.

The family was still apart in 1783, but John resolved to move his family to Quebec in the spring. Probably they went first to Halifax, where they had to wait for a ship to Quebec City. It was probably April 1874 before they arrived in Quebec City and were soon on their way to Machiche, where John hurried to meet them.

In 1784 John tried to establish himself at Mississquoi Bay, but he was ordered to leave, as that land was not assigned to Loyalists—it was too close to the border. He requested permission to harvest his crops before leaving.

In the spring of 1785 he moved to Cataragui, at the tiny settlement of Kings Town, later Kingston. In 1786 he moved farther west to Twp. 8, unnamed and unsurveyed. In September he went to Kings Town and got a certificate for Lots 8 and 9 in the 1st Concession of Twp. No. 8, covering the lands he occupied.

In January 1788 he petitioned for 15 acres on a stream behind John Bleeker's trading post (now the Trent River) but it was refused. He had planned to build his mill there. Not being successful there, he purchased land by the stream that is now called the Moira, in Belleville, Thurlow Twp., Hastings Co., Ontario. Only a storage building from that mill is still standing. He built a home on the hill above the mill, but continued to farm land in Sidney Twp., and was active in public affairs in both townships. He became a magistrate in the newly organized region. On 13 January 1791 a notice appeared in the Quebec Gazette naming John Walden Meyers as Justice of the Peace for the District of Mecklenburgh.

Shortly before his death he was vice-president of an agricultural committee of the Midland District to plan for an agricultural fair for Belleville. Livestock he entered won prizes there.

He had been active in the Masonic order, which he had entered at Quebec City during the war, and helped to establish the first one in the new region at a meeting in the Simpson Tavern. He was chosen first Master.

He also helped to establish the St. Thomas Anglican Church in Belleville and worshipped there regularly until his death.

Polly died ca. 1814 or 1816 after several months illness.

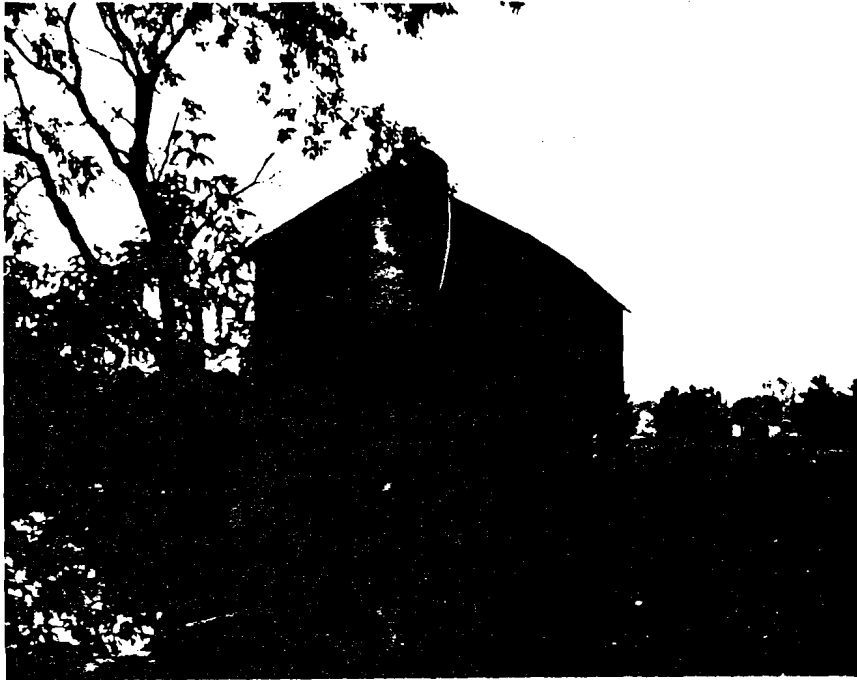
John Walden Meyers m. (2) in August 1817 Sophia A. . . ., widow of John Davey, an old friend of John's. They had several happy years together before John's death on 22 November 1821. He was buried 24 November 1821 in the Old Sidney Burying Ground located on Lot 10 on the front of Sidney, overlooking the Bay of Quinte.

(The Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records. Vol. 5-7, p. 160, says George Walter Myres and Widow Davey were married August 1817 by Rev. John G. Wigant at Ebenezer Lutheran Church at Big Creek, Fredericksburgh, Lennox and Addington Co., Ontario, Canada. However, John's will proves that it was he who married the Widow Davey. Perhaps George was a witness and whoever copied from the original miscopied.)

(John's will can be found on pages 220-221 of The Loyalist Spy, by Mary Beacock Fryer, so I will not repeat it here. It is a shortened form, but contains all the pertinent information.)

I believe Sophia is the Sophy Hoffnel, spinster, of 4th Twp., who married John Davy, widower, of 2nd Twp., Catarakwee, called Ernesttown, by banns on 22 November 1787. (Marriage records of Rev. John Langhorn) They had children:

1. Peter Davy b. 12 October 1788; bur. (perhaps the one bur. 7 September 1790, of Ernesttown, although Jane Goddard's book, Hans Waltimyer, mentions a Peter Davey, a young man, visiting John Walden Meyers.)
2. Mary b. 19 December 1790; bur. 22 September 1793.
3. Sophia Davy b. 1 July 1798; d. 28 November 1849, age 51, and bur. in the Old Sidney Burying Ground, if she is the one who m. 20 January 1816 Ira Billings.
4. Elizabeth Davy b. 5 April 1801
5. William Rombaugh Davy b. bur. 15 August 1803.
6. Benjamin Fairfield Davy b. 19 August 1804 (mentioned in John's will)



John Walden Meyers purchased land by the stream that is now called the Moira, in Belleville, Thurlow Twp., Hastings Co., Ontario, to build a mill. This stone storage building from that mill is still standing. Go up Pinnacle St. from Dundas. Turn right at the river. The stone building will be on the left.



- 7. George Hoffmail Davy b. 25 October 1807 (mentioned in John's will)
- 8. William Henry Davy b. 19 May 1813 (I believe he is the one named in John's will as William H. Wetzel and called Sophia's son. On a land record dated 9 October 1843 William Henry Davy of the town of Bath, Midland District, merchant, and George H. Davy, of Bath, merchant, Quit Claim to Benjamin Fairfield Davy of Belleville for the sum of 1,005 pounds, on the 200 acres in Lot 18, Conc. 4, Rawdon, that John Walden Meyers had willed to them. I wonder why he was called Wetzel in the will?)

(The records of these baptisms, marriages, and burials were from the Anglican records of the Rev., John Langhorn.)