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The People of Bowmansville, Spotts

Excerpted from The People of Bowmansville, Charles D. Spotts, Community Historians Annual, Number 9

To

The 18th Century Pioneers Christian Good

Jacob Good John Musselman

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[Note:the researcher is a descendant of both Good pioneers]

THE OLDEST INHABITANT OF THE BOWMANSVILLE AREA The story of Bowmansville begins with the fossil of a small dinosaur which lived in this area at least 200 million years ago. "In 1956 a small reptile skeleton was discovered by Norman Waltz in the Brunswick formation, near Bowmansville, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Mr. Waltz very wisely,presented the specimen to the North Museum of Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster. A photograph of the specimen was sent by John W. Price, Sr., curator of the North Museum, to the United States National Museum, where the picture was identified by David Dunkle as very probably indicating a skeleton of Hypsognathus fenneri. Subsequently Dr. Price submitted the specimen to the present writer for study, the results of which "have,classified the specimen as belonging to a new species, Sphodrosaurus pennsylvanicus."

The name for this new genus, Sphodrosaurus, means literally a "robust lizard," because of the toughness of the skeleton. Although it was less than a foot long and resembled a frog it was actually a lizard.

Dr. John Price, of the North Museum is tremendously excited about this fossil of one of the early inhabitants of Brecknock Township. It is a Triassic dinosaur. This is the only fossil of this species ever to be found. The quarry, now abandoned, where Norman Waltz found this fossil is situated about two miles east of Bowmansville, north of the road which ascends Yellow Hill. Dr. Price reports that "The quarry ... occurs in the baked portion of the Brunswick Shale; a large diabase intrusion to the east was the source of heat that baked the shale. Scattered about the quarry are rounded masses of hornfels; the spheroidal weathering caused by exfoliation of thin layers gives these objects a concretionary aspect. The quarry contains a grey shale of the Brunswick Formation, Newark Series, Upper Triassic."

CHAPTER ONE Mennonite Pioneers

Although the year 1970 represents the sesquicentennial of the founding of the village of Bowmansville, Mennonite immigrants came into the area much earlier.

Robert Warburton, a Welshman, received the first warrant for 177 acres of land within Brecknock Township, January 9, 1737, but there is no evidence that he ever settled on the land. This tract was later transferred to William Morris, who purchased extensive tracts from the Penns.

This monograph is limited to the history of that part of Brecknock Township in which the village of Bowmansville is located. Which was first settled by Mennonites from the Palatinate and Switzerland.

The first settlers in the Bowmansville area arrived in Philadelphia on the Ship Samuel, from Rotterdam, but last from Cowes in Great Britain. Professor William John Hinke'-s list of Pennsylvania German Pioneers includes among those on board the Ship Samuel, "Jacob Guth (20) and his wife

Susanna (20), and John Mosiman (25) and his wife Anna (20)." Jacob's brother, Christian Guth, does not appear on any of the ship lists, but this is not unusual; many lists are not complete. Since Christian and his wife came with his brother, Jacob, and his brother-in-law, John Mosiman, into Brecknock Township six years later, we can assume that he, and perhaps his wife, were on the Ship Samuel, when it arrived on August 11, 1732, the year that George Washington was born.

In the list of the signers of the oath of allegiance Guth is spelled "Gut"; and Mosiman, is spelled "Muselman". Guth eventually became "Good"; and Mosiman became "Musselman". These three couples-Jacob and Susanna Good, Christian Good and his wife, John and Anna Musselman, first settled near Weaverland; and later, in 1738, moved into Brecknock Township in the area where Bowmansville is now located.

Christian Good settled on the south fork of the mid-branch of the Muddy Creek, at the southern edge of the village of Bowmansville. Here he erected the first grist mill in the area. The first building may have been a combination of mill and dwelling, as well as the building in which the first Mennonite church services in the area were held.

Christian Good was married twice, reared a family of 17 children, 6 sons and 11 daughters-a good-sized family in any century. His will dated August 11, 1757, appointed his eldest son, Jacob, as one of the executors. Many of his descendents have remained in the Bowmansville area.

The land that was granted to Christian Good lay east of the Muddy Creek and included most of what is the present village of Bowmansville. The tract of about four hundred acres ran due east and west to the Muddy Creek. On this land a dam was built, with a mill race, to supply water, with which to operate the mill. The dam was some distance east of the mill.

A deed of December 4, 1784, contains a most interesting reference to the mill race, which by this time belonged to someone else's property. "Jacob Good assigns all the water (in Muddy Creek) which runs in the water race through the said Jacob Good's land to carry the water on to the said John Good's mill." Permission is given to John Good "to pass and repass a foot path up and down on the banks of the said race or water course to see whether there in any need for cleaning and repairing the said race or whatever necessities there is a wanting and to make the said water race as broad and as wide as he pleases and occasion require the water in the said mill to throw mud and earth of repairing and cleaning of the said race on the shore or bank thereof and to go with a wagon and horses up and down by and on the bank where the water breaks out to haul stones or anything there to prevent the water from breaking over the bank of said water race and to

do as little damage with the wagon and horses on the premises of the said Jacob Good as possible and the said Jacob Good his heirs Executors administrators or assigns must find a man yearly and every year just one day for to help to clean said water race or to pay the price of two shillings and six pence hard money yearly and every year hereafter."

The present mill was built in 1850 by Henry Von Neida, father of Adam Von Neida, who operated the mill when I was a boy. many times I took roasted corn to this mill in order to have corn meal ground. Mush was our stable winter breakfast. I also took weekly trips to this mill for 'chop' for the hogs, and for the horse feed for our speedy black horse. The cedar log which became the mantle for the fireplace in our summer cabin, east of Bowmansville, was sawed at the Von Neida saw mill.

This mill property is now owned by the Stewart Keans, a young couple from Elizabeth, New Jersey. The Keans own 33 acres, including the dam, the mill race and a stone house. Both the mill and the house have been beautifully restored. On route 625 the traveler drives between the mill and the house as he enters Bowmansville; the mill is on the right side when travelling north.

Jacob Good, Christian's brother, received a warrant for a tract of 628 acres, west of the Muddy Creek, adjoining the land, later settled by Casper Messner, on the south. He erected a house on the right bank of the stream, a short distance above the confluence of the two forks of the mid branch of the Muddy Creek. In building this first house Jacob Good was assisted by the Zimmermans from Weaverland, with whom he had become acquainted during the six years that he

lived in that area.

The Jacob Goods thought that they were the only settlers west of the Muddy Creek until "one day, while he was wandering through the woods some distance from his house he heard the clarion call of a rooster ... The country was a wilderness, one vast forest, inhabited by wild beasts and Indians. As yet there were no roads, no houses, gardens, fields or orchards."

I passed the location of Jacob Good's house when I walked from our home on Water Street to the White Oak one-room school, where I began my teaching career 53 years ago. An 18th century stone house stands at this place, now occupied by the family of John and Mrs. Hoover, with 13 children. The Hoovers are members of the Reidenbach Mennonite Church. To reach their house one must drive over a one-way bridge, crossing the Muddy Creek.

Jacob Good, son of the first Jacob, moved to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, where his descendents still live. Jacob was married twice; his descendents by his first wife continue to live in the area. Peter, Jacob's only other child, with his family moved to Cumberland County.

The brother-in-law of the Good brothers, John Musselman, located on a tract about one mile north of the Good mill, along the north branch of the Muddy Creek. John and Anna Musselman were Mrs. Spotts' paternal ancestor's. I therefore have the distinction of having married a descendent of one of the first three settlers in the Bowmansville area. The Musselman's have remained in this area for 232 years. One of Mrs. Spotts' sisters still lives in Bowmansville.

The 1750 Tax Returns for Brecknock Township include John Mosseman with 50 acres of land, 2 cows, and 1 horse. In the Returns for 1757 he is listed as Hans Musselman, with 100 acres, 3 cows and 4 horses. By 1758 he reports 300 acres (35 cleared). From the Tax Returns I was able to get considerable information about Mrs. Spotts' ancestor, John Musselman. He must have prospered as indicated by the fact that he was able to add 250 acres to his holdings from 1750-1758. He was the Tax Collector for Brecknock Township in 1761. Since his name does not appear on Tax Returns after 1762, we can assume that he died some time during the latter part of 1762, at the age of 55.

The widow of Christian Burkholder left Switzerland in 1755 with her six children, emigrated to the Bowmansville area. The third son of Mrs. Burkholder was Ulrich (February, 1750-September 10, 1804). He was only 5 years old when he arrived in America.

Ulrich married Ann (?) and remained on the farm on which his mother settled in 1755. One of his sons, Christian (born February 3, 1783) married Elizabeth Bauman. During 1816 they accompanied the group of Brecknock Township farmers who migrated to Ontario, Canada. He conveyed his possessions and family in a heavily loaded wagon drawn by five horses and made the journey overland. He paid \$1200 for 100 acres, 25 of which were cleared, on which stood a small house and a log barn.

Christian's father Ulrich, remained on the family farm and later became a minister in the Bowmansville Mennonite Church, having been ordained in 1785. In the 1783 Brecknock Township Tax Assessor's List he is described as a "smith", owning 100 acres, 3 houses, 1 barn, 2 horses and 9 horned cattle. The Burkholder tract of 130 acres was located about one-half mile east of where the village now stands, between the Christian Good and John Musselman tracts. The buildings, at first a log house and a log barn, were reached by a long lane.

Later, Francis Diller, another Mennonite, erected the first distillery in the area, about one mile north of John Musselman's farm, on what became the John Frees farm. During 1790 the Dillers moved to near Newville, in Cumberland County. Their house, in Cumberland County, was used as a meeting house until 1820, when the Diller Mennonite Church was built.

The reader should not be surprised that the first distillery in the Bowmansville area was started by a Mennonite farmer. I am quite certain that the Swiss Mennonites had a distillery at Schaefferstown

long before Francis Diller settled in Brecknock Township. The immigrants who came from Germany and Switzerland between 1683 and 1873 had no scruples against moderate drinking and many of them brought with them experience and skills in the distilling of alcoholic liquor.

Abraham Overholt, who was during his whole lifetime (d. 1870) an active member of the Scottdale, Pennsylvania, Mennonite Congregation, and served at different times as a trustee there, and whose brother was a Mennonite minister and Bishop, established at Broadford, nearby, in 1810, a distillery which has developed into a major industry now a part of the Schenley Distilleries Corporation, which still sells a whiskey labelled "Old Overholt," with a picture of Abraham on the label."

Notes for FRANCIS LUDWIG DILLER:

This record comes from the Diller Mennonite Church graveyard. This church was built in 1826, and before that time one of these Dillers gave their house or barn in which to hold their services. Two of the Diller farms lay near the church, and this graveyard was started as a family plot, but now is the church cemetery and is quite large. Many Burkharths, Burkholders and Dillers, as well as others, have been buried there in later years.

You can find this church and graveyard about five miles from Newville, Cumberland Co., PA. There are about twenty-five Diller gravestones (some quite small ones) erected in the graveyard.

On a new monument erected in 1907 by some relatives are these words. All other stones of the Dillers are much older. "Francis and Anna Diller, of Biglen, Switzerland, emigrated in 1754 from Lachanx, Defonds, to Lancaster Co, PA, where Francis died in 1783 and was buried near Bowmansville, PA. His wife, Anna, who died in 1810 lies here with her three sons, Francis, Peter and Abraham."

Nancy, wife of Abraham, born March 20, 1803, died June 18, 1875, age 72 years. Annie Diller, born 1707, died 1803 age 96 years. Peter Diller, born 1735, died March 1816, age 81 years. His wife, Magdalena, born 1788, died March 1814, age 82 years. John Diller, born April 28, 1788, died March 16, 1871, age 83 years. Elizabeth Diller, his wife, born 1796, died 1867, age 71 years. There are several small children to this union. Martin Diller, born 1827, died Jan. 20, 1901, age 74 years. Sarah (Burkhart) Diller, his wife, born 1824, died Sept. 27, 1903, age 79 years. No children. Francis Diller, born 1776, died May 17, 1845, age 69 years. His wife, Elizabeth, born 1779, died Feb. 2, 1846, age 67 years. Their daughter, Mary, born in 1802, died 1821, age 19 years. Also, there are several small stones which we didn't copy from, children of this family, names and dates are there. Ann Amelia Diller, wife of Amuel Diller, was born in 1783, died Oct. 26, 1857, age 26 years, 1 month, 10 days. Francis Diller, born 1743, died Feb. 24, 1814, age 71 years. Elizabeth Diller, born 1752, died Oct. 1816, age 64 years. Some of these ancestors went to Ontario, Canada, and some to Ohio, where you can find their offspring. Samuel Diller, born July 2, 1868, died Dec. 12, 1949, buried Salem Mennonite cemetery Ohio.

Sandra sandra@gemlakes.myrf.net <<mailto:sandra@gemlakes.myrf.net>> Rootsweb
Volunteer For
Bonneville County, Idaho <<