

THE
BOWSER FAMILY
HISTORY

BY

ADDISON BARTHOLOMEW BOWSER, A. M.

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CHAPTER VI

MATHIAS BAUSSER, JR., IN YORK COUNTY

Mathias, Jr., lived at Lancaster until after 1739. He made a permanent settlement in Paradise Township, York County, about one mile north of Abbottstown, which is now in Adams County. He also owned land in Berwick Township which adjoins Paradise. Since 1800 when Adams County was formed out of York County, Berwick Township has been in Adams County. The original grant at Abbottstown contained 235 acres. This tract is now the Paradise Church property, at first called Brandt's Chapel. The Catholic Church which is also on land owned by Mathias Bowser, lies just across the line in Paradise Township, York County. Near this land is the old "Beaver Creek Mill," a three story stone grist mill. On a corner stone is the inscription, John Nawgel Mason,—built by Abraham Swigart, 1794. John Nawgel was probably a son of John Nawgel, Sr., who appointed in his will Mathias Bowser and Wm. Mummert as executors Jan. 15, 1770.

In the York County records, book 2 B., page 13, is recorded the sale by sheriff of "Goods and Chattels, Lands and Tenements of Mathias Bowser, late of said County, Yeoman in his Bailiwick, he should be caused to make as well a debt of 64 pounds 9 shilling and seven pence, etc., which Francis Jacob may for the use of Nicholas Bittinger, etc.—one plantation and mill in Berwick Township containing about 100 acres and *one* plantation and mill in Paradise Township containing 200 acres—taken on the 22nd of Sept., 1775, at Yorktown—estate sold publicly to William Baily at Yorktown for 555 pounds, May 1, 1779." This shows Mathias Bowser had been an enterprising and wealthy citizen until about the time of his death; that he had the mental acumen to locate on one of the fairest spots on Pennsylvania soil. The record shows his death at about 1775.

The tax lists of 1769 show the original settlers of Paradise and Jackson townships. The names of Mathias Bowser, with 150 acres of land, and Samuel and Jacob Bowser, single men evidently sons of Mathias. In 1779-82 Samuel was in Paradise Township. In 1782 Jacob was in Dover Township which adjoins Paradise. Jacob owned land in Bedford County in 1783, and there is no record of his being in York County after that year.

In the muster roll of the 6th Company of York County Militia for 1785 among the privates is Samuel Bowser. This company was from Paradise Township. Samuel is again mentioned in the assessment roll of 1799 for Berwick Township, having an assessed value of \$528, and Samuel, Jr., \$52. In 1811 Samuel, Sr.'s, property was assessed at \$2,294. In the York County muster roll, 1777, and 1778,

Captain Peter Zollinger's Company belonged to the 7th Battalion of York County Militia and contained the names of Abram Bowser, Daniel Bowser, Noah Bowser and Jacob Bowser; also the names of John Nagle, Mr. Mummert, and these are residents of Paradise Township. Evidently Noah and Jacob were brothers. Noah is recorded in the tax lists of Berwick Township, 1779, 1780 1781, identically with Samuel, which together with the fact that Mathias owned property there prior to his death in 1775 indicates they were sons of Mathias. Noah owned 100 acres there in 1779 and 1780, no doubt being the 100 acres mentioned in the sheriff's sale after Mathias' death. In 1781 he had no land, and that year was the last record of Noah in York County. But in 1785 Noah bought land in Frederick County, Md., and was there in 1790, when the first census was taken. In 1796, he was in Bedford County, and moved to Armstrong County in 1802. This Noah was the father of "Steam John," Joseph and other children. His descendants are numbered in many hundreds. Many are still living in Armstrong County, Pa., but others are located in western and other states.

John Bowser and Jacob Bowser were in the same company, the Fifth Battalion, from Paradise Township. Valentine Bowser was another son of Matthias, Jr., born about 1745. He moved to Armstrong County, locating in Sugar Creek, now Washington Township, midway between Montgomeryville and Sherrett, taking up 400 acres of land. He died there in 1836. Mathias Bowser, Jr., and his wife, were members of the Reformed Church when they came to America, but they were members of the German Baptist Brethren (Dunker) Church in 1770. Brumbaugh, speaking of the Little Coneways Congregation near Hanover, says that in 1770 there were 70 members in communion in this congregation among whom were Mathias Bowser, wife and daughter. Jacob Sweigart (Swigart) was one of the first members. Bowsers still cling to this locality, of so great interest to the history of our family. Andrew Bowser lives here. He is a son of Joseph E., who is a grandson of Daniel. These facts gleaned from court records, tax lists and census records, the testimony of many of the aged of our family, and a tradition, that "our ancestors, came from Germany and settled at Little York," corroborate the writer's early belief that Mathias Bowser, Sr., and Esther, his wife, with their children, were the first of our family to come to America. We have given considerable space to Mathias Bowser, Jr., and his family, because he is the connecting link between the vast and thrilling history of the home land beyond the sea and the great Bowser family now numbering thousands and living in many parts of the United States. He was a young man just past his majority with his young wife by his side when the good ship Richard and Elizabeth brought them up the Delaware to Philadelphia in September, 1723, with his father, Mathias, and mother, Esther, and brothers, Christian and Daniel,

and other members of that, to us, historic family. After a brief sojourn among friends and neighbors from the homeland now preparing a new home at Lancaster, he followed the trail of the frontiersman to the newly found Paradise of York County. And somewhere within the limits of Paradise Township lies the dust of the indomitable pair, Mathias Bowser, Jr., and his wife, Ann Elizabeth, in graves unmarked and now unknown, who braved the horrors of a voyage across the Atlantic for Liberty and a home.

The descendants of Daniel Bowser of York County affirm that Daniel with two brothers, John and Henry emigrated to this country in 1733, landing at Baltimore. Daniel settled in Manheim Township, York County, Pa. In June, 1774, he bought a tract of 263 acres, about 10 miles south of the land owned by Mathias Bowser. Daniel became a wealthy land owner and reared a large family. The connection between Daniel and Mathias, Jr., we have been unable to ascertain. But it is safe to presume they were closely related. They came to America from the same place, in the same year, 1733. But we can readily understand owing to the urgency of the large numbers of the Palatines at that time seeking passage across the sea and the inadequate sailing accommodations, where a considerable family arrived at Rotterdam they were compelled to separate and one part sail on one ship, while the others came on the next. Mathias, Sr., brought with him several children who must have been children of a close relation. That Daniel moved into York County and settled in the same neighborhood with Mathias, Jr., and several of his children came to Armstrong County and settled in the same locality as the descendants of Mathias, would seem to prove our assumption correct. The other large branch of the Bowser family reared chiefly in Bedford County, whose connection with Mathias, Sr., is a presumption equally obvious,—viz., the family of John Bowser, b. about 1730; d., 1809, and Eve Maria of Lancaster. Their children were Eve, Magdalena, Michael, Elizabeth (married John Mock), and George. George was born about 1755; was a taxable in Lancaster County, 1776. According to the 1790 census he was in Bedford County. In the 1800 census he was in St. Clair Township with a family of nine.

George married Margaret Swartz. One of the sons of George Bowser, Isaac, married Sarah Berkheimer, whose mother was Catharine Bowser, sister of "Commissioner" John, and daughter of David, son of Mathias. Thus establishing a connecting link between the children of George and Mathias Bowser though we do not know certainly what relation the parents were.