

A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

—OF THE—

EBY FAMILY,

BEING A HISTORY OF

THEIR MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE DURING
THE REFORMATION

—AND OF—

THEIR EARLY SETTLEMENT IN AMERICA;

—AS ALSO—

MUCH OTHER UNPUBLISHED HISTORICAL
INFORMATION BELONGING
TO THE FAMILY



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THE EBY FAMILY.

IN this brief work, "HISTORY OF THE EBY FAMILY," no attempt is made to give a detailed history of the whole Family, but a mere outline is given of their origin, their primitive faith, their emigration from Italy to Switzerland, thence to the "Palatinate" or Pfaltz, thence to Pennsylvania, United States, and later on their forming settlements in different parts of other States and the Dominion of Canada.

The Ebys belong to the Celts, an ancient race of people of Asiatic origin, who formerly inhabited southern, central and western Europe. During the early ages they lived in the northern part of Italy, where they were brought from heathendom to the worshipping of the true and living God through the labors of the Vaudois (Waldenses), with whom they came in contact at a very early date. They soon became strict adherents of the Vaudois faith. While the Church of Rome was gaining power and extending her influence over western and northern Europe, these Vaudois, in their mountainous homes, were for some time left unmolested. From the eighth to the eleventh centuries these primitive worshipping and God-fearing people (Vaudois) became very numerous, and were becoming quite a power to resist the influence of the Church of Rome. In order to gain full sway over civilized Europe, the Church of Rome adopted means whereby these Vaudois were to be either subdued or expelled from their homes. But these people (Vaudois) were not so easily subdued or brought under the sway of Rome. The ministry, known as the Inquisitors, were first sent out to bring these people over from their faith to that of the Roman Catholic. This was as early as 1308. The Vaudois would not yield to the Inquisitors, and the result was, that in 1453 the whole Valley of Luzerna and all the country of North Italy and Savoy were laid under an interdict. Between the years 1400 and 1500 the Vaudois were most bitterly persecuted by their enemies, for not renouncing their primitive faith. History tells us that in 1487 Innocent XIII. fulminated against these Vaudois a *Bill of Extermination*. In 1560 the persecutions became so fierce, that quite a number fled from their homes and went to the northern parts of Switzerland, where they led a wandering life for some time. They finally settled in Cantons Bern, Luzerne, Zurich and Schwyz. Among those Vaudois who thus settled in these Cantons we find the name

EBY, then spelled EBEE. Here they led a God-fearing life, and were rigid in the keeping of their primitive faith and forms of worship.

During the Reformation they were subjected to the same persecutions as other Protestants in northern Europe. After the founding of the Mennonite Church in A. D. 1537 by one of the early Reformers named Menno Simon, a native of Holland, these Swiss Vaudois, or Swiss Protestants, as they were then called, united with the Menno Simon party, now known as Mennonites. Among the parties who thus joined the Mennonites we find the names of Herr, Graaf, Mylin, Shank, Witmer, Landis, Eby and others. Some of these names are of Teutonic origin, which proves that the Vaudois had accessions from that source after their arrival in Switzerland.

As early as 1683 we find in some old records that JACOB EBY was ordained a Bishop of the Mennonite Church in Canton Zurich. The State party again getting the ruling power into their hands, laid the Mennonites open to persecution, and not wishing to resist the authority of State, a number of these Mennonites left Switzerland and went to the "Palatinate" or Pfaltz, an old German division, now discarded on maps. The chief towns in which they settled were Manheim, Zweibruecken and Heidelberg. Here they resided for but a few years, when they were again troubled by their enemies for not conforming to the laws and church of the State. The laws of the State were not so much violated by these parties, only they would not take up arms, nor would they speak in favor of war, but took a decided stand against all manner of war, hence their frequent abuses by the State parties.

When William Penn, by his agents, offered free homes to persons of all religious denominations, quite a number of the Mennonites from Switzerland, Pfaltz and Holland, moved to America and settled in Pennsylvania. They had this assurance, that if once in Pennsylvania they could worship God according to the teachings of the Bible and the dictates of their own consciences, which they considered more than a recompense compared with their losses and privations in forsaking their native land.

Among the numerous parties thus coming to America were our Ancestors **Theodorus Eby** (son of Bishop JACOB EBY, ordained in 1683*), who came in 1715, **Peter Eby**, nephew of THEODORUS, who came in 1720, and **Nicholas Eby**, a descendant of the same family, who came more than a century thereafter.

We shall take up, first, the descendants of THEODORUS, second, those of PETER and third, those of NICHOLAS.

*From Bishop Benjamin Eby's Records.

THEODORUS EBY¹ AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

Theodorus Eby¹, son of Bishop Jacob Eby, was born in Canton, Zurich, Switzerland, on the 25th April, 1663.* He, being a strict Mennonite in faith, left his native country about the year 1704 on account of the religious persecutions. From 1704 till 1715 he resided in the "Palatinate" or Pfaltz, Germany. Finding persecutions here equally severe as in the country just left, he, in company with other co-religionists, left for Philadelphia in the Spring of 1715. Some time in August of the same year he settled on what is now called Mill Creek, at a place now known as ROLAND'S MILL, situated south of New Holland and near the line of Earl and Leacock Townships, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.† Here he resided until his death and enjoyed the privileges and freedom of religion for which he had to suffer persecutions and trials in Europe. Some time during September, 1737, he died. His end was peace.*

Theodorus' family consisted of five sons and one daughter. Their names were Peter², Hannes², Jacob², Christian² and David², and the daughter's name was Elizabeth²; she was married to a man named Hannes Baehr.* These sons were all skilled in the various mechanical arts, so that with their assistance the old ancestor THEODORUS built a mill and erected such other buildings as were needed, without employing persons outside of the family, except for the purpose of burning charcoal to supply the smith forge, which process they themselves did not sufficiently understand.†

1. PETER EBY², the eldest son, left four sons, Peter³, John³, Jacob³ and Christian³ (see pages 100-113 and 130-131).

2. HANNES EBY² left four daughters. No information received in regard to their descendants.*

3. JACOB EBY² left two sons, Peter³ and Christian³ (see pages 113-130).

4. CHRISTIAN EBY² had a family of ten children (see pages 6, 57, 60, 83 and 99).

5. DAVID EBY², the youngest son of Theodorus Eby¹, had a family of five children (see pages 49-56.)

For PETER EBY², nephew of Theodorus Eby¹ (see pages 132-134) and for NICHOLAS EBY⁵ (see pages 134-136.)

†From Simon P. Eby's Notes.

*From Bishop Benjamin Eby's Records

Christian Eby² and his Descendants.

The fourth son of of THEODORUS EBY¹, named CHRISTIAN EBY², was born in Switzerland, February 12, 1698. He was married to ELIZABETH MAYER, a member of one of the families that immigrated with Theodorus¹. CHRISTIAN² and his wife settled on Hammer Creek, in Elizabeth Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, about three miles north of Lititz. Here he died about the 15th day of September, 1756, and his wife died on the 12th day of December, 1787. They had a family of ten children. Their names, together with dates of birth, death, etc., are as follows:

	Children.	Born.	Died.	To Whom Married.
1.	CHRISTIAN ₃ .	February 22, 1734...	September 14, 1807.	Catherine Bricker.
2.	JOHN ₃	September 28, 1737.	—, 1794...	Rebecca Hershey.
3.	BARBARA ₃ ..	December 14, 1740.	May 27, 1816.....	Jacob Hershey.
4.	PETER ₃	November 11, 1742.	November 24, 1819.	
5.	ANNA ₃	January 4, 1745....	January 30, 1826...	Christian Stauffer.
6.	ANDREW ₃ ...	January 11, 1747...	August 15, 1830.	
7.	GEORGE ₃ ...	December 11, 1748.	June 10, 1800.....	Barbare Sensenig.
8.	ELIZABETH ₃	August 12, 1751...	January 21, 1835...	Jacob Hershey.
9.	SAMUEL ₃ ..	December 20, 1752.	March 28, 1824.	
10.	MICHAEL ₃ ..	December 29, 1755.	Unknown.	

Christian Eby³ and his Descendants.

The oldest son Christian Eby₃, who married Catherine Bricker, retained the old homestead on Hammer Creek. He greatly improved the dwelling house erected by his father in 1754. The dressed sandstone in front wall bears date **1754** and names of **Christian Eby** and his wife **ELIZABETH**. †The house and barn on the old homestead were in their time considered stately buildings. The house had originally a large chimney in the centre with fire place in nearly every room on first and second story; it had an arched cellar underneath, walnut and oaken paneled partitions, with some of the window sashes hung on cords with lead weights. The barn was built 99 feet long (only that long so as not to offend a neighbor who shortly before had built a barn of the boasted length of 100 feet). The walls of both, particularly so of the house, are good and solid to this day. Christian³ was a large, well proportioned and athletic man, retaining unusual health and vigor of both body and mind up to the time of his death. He was an Elder in the Mennonite Church and wore a long beard, which in his later years had turned white. Regular stated Mennonite meetings were held at his house, until a building for that purpose was erected in his neighborhood. He lived during the Revolutionary War and foraging parties took off some of his horses and cattle, carrying with them large quantities of flour and grain from his mill. On one occasion his wife's pewter dishes and spoons and an oven full of newly baked bread and pies

†From Simon P. Eby's Notes.

Christian Eby

Birth: Feb. 12, 1698, Switzerland

Death: Sep. 15, 1756

Lancaster County

Pennsylvania, USA

Christian Eby, son of Theodorus Eby, probably arrived in what was then Chester County around 1718. A miller like his father and brothers, Christian moved up the Hammer Creek to a spot several miles northwest of his brother George. A Patent (A-12-451) for these lands, consisting of two tracts totally 233 acres, was obtained on Nov. 12, 1746. He also acquired an additional 150-acre tract in Cocalico Township.

In 1754 Christian and his wife, Elizabeth Meyer, built the large homestead which still stands. Two years later, Christian died, leaving a widow and ten children. The oldest son, Christian Jr., was 22 at the time and took over the homestead and management of the estate. The youngest of the ten children, Michael, was less than a year old. Less is known about him than the others, it being alleged that he moved to Delaware.

Of the ten children, the burial places of Michael and the following three others are unknown:

Barbara Eby, wife of Jacob Hershey, was born Dec, 14, 1740 and died May 27, 1816. She was buried May 29. Her nephew, Hannes Eby described her as the "Old wife on the Chickies," referring to the Chickesalunga Creek, in his death and burial record. Her husband, Jacob Hershey died at the home of his daughter and son-in-law, Solomon and Elizabeth Longenecker, and was buried on May 4, 1821. (Hannes Eby Death and Burial Record: Life and Death in Old Warwick Township, Lancaster County, Pa., published by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.)

Andreas Eby, born Jan. 11, 1747, migrated to Ohio and died on August 15, 1831. His nephew, Hannes Eby, learned of the death in a letter he received from relatives in Canada. Andreas was 84 years and 7 months old, having been born on Jan. 11, 1747, under the Julian calendar. Andreas inherited the family Bible which eventually was returned to Lancaster County where it is now kept by the Lancaster County Historical Society.

George Eby, Dec. 11, 1748, to June 10, 1800, married Barbara Sensenig, and moved to Green Township, Franklin County, Pa.

See also Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage 26:1 (January 2003), pp. 9-17.

--Bio by Denise Witwer Lahr

Family links:

Parents:

Theodorus Eby (1663 - 1727)

Spouse:

Elizabeth Mayer Eby (1708 - 1787)

Children:

Christian Eby (1734 - 1807)*

Barbara Eby Hershey (1740 - 1816)*

Peter Eby (1742 - 1819)*

Anna Eby Stauffer (1745 - 1826)*

Elizabeth Eby Hershey (1751 - 1835)*

Samuel Eby (1752 - 1824)*

Siblings:

Jacob Eby (____ - 1745)*

Peter Eby (1690 - 1750)*

Christian Eby (1698 - 1756)

*Calculated relationship

Burial:

Eby Cemetery

Lexington

Lancaster County

Pennsylvania, USA

Created by: Denise Witwer Lahr

Record added: Oct 16, 2010

Find A Grave Memorial# 60177224

Elizabeth Mayer Eby

Birth: 1708

Death: 1787

Lancaster County

Pennsylvania, USA

Spouse:

Christian Eby (1698 - 1756)*

Children:

Christian Eby (1734 - 1807)*

Barbara Eby Hershey (1740 - 1816)*

Peter Eby (1742 - 1819)*

Anna Eby Stauffer (1745 - 1826)*

Elizabeth Eby Hershey (1751 - 1835)*

Samuel Eby (1752 - 1824)*

*Calculated relationship

Burial:

Eby Cemetery

Lexington

Lancaster County

Pennsylvania, USA

Created by: Denise Witwer Lahr

Record added: Oct 16, 2010

Find A Grave Memorial# 60177284