

Life of Andrew Byerly

By C. H. MARTIN

SOMEWHERE in or about Strasburg, Pa., evidently in an unmarked grave lie the remains of Andrew Byerly. This man, of eventful and spectacular life, lived in Lancaster about fifteen years.

To recite in somewhat chronological order some of his experiences, I refer first to Rupp's 30,000 names from which I quote as follows: "November 9, 1738, Palatines imported in the ship "Charming Nancy," Charles Stedman, Commander, from Rotterdam, last from Cowes—200 passengers." Among this list appears the name of Andreas Beyerle. The spelling of this name has been considerably varied, but was finally anglicized as "Byerly." In quoting from records for this paper, I have used the original varied spelling.

From information received following the death of Mr. Byerly's first wife, he married Phoebe Beatrice Gulden, Swiss native of the Canton of Berne, Switzerland. Mr. Byerly evidently came to Lancaster within a reasonably short period of time following his landing at Philadelphia as his name with that of his wife appears as Sponsor for the Baptism of several children in the Dutch Reformed Church, now the First Reformed Church, as follows:

1. Andrew Byerle, sponsor, February 3, 1744, for the baptism of Andrew, son of Veit Mueller and Ann Maria Mueller.
2. Andrew Byerly's wife, sponsor, June 3rd, 1750, for the baptism of Magdalen, daughter of Andrew Houck and Dorothea Houck of Strasburg Twp.
3. Andreas Byerly and wife, sponsors, February 4, 1753, for the baptism of Andreas, son of Jacob Backenstoss and Elizabeth Backenstoss.

These baptisms were made under the pastorates of Reverends Schnorr, Vock and Otterbein.

In the office of the recorder of deeds of Lancaster County in Book "B," page 391, is transcribed the deed by James Hamilton, Grantor, to Andreas Byerly, dated October 25, 1746, recorded November 24, 1746, for a lot of ground on the east side of North Queen Street fronting on said Street 64 feet 4½ inches, extending 245 feet deep to a 14 foot alley. This lot was bounded as follows: On the north by lot of Philip Ramegh, on the east by a 14 foot alley, on the south by a lot of William Ouster (name not clear), and on the west by Queen Street.

A stipulation in the deed required on the first of May, annually, the payment of 14 shillings sterling money of Great Britain

as ground rent, and that Mr. Byerly was permitted to erect, at his expense, a house at least 16 feet square with a good brick or stone chimney, within the period of two years from the date of conveyance. I quote these two most interesting stipulations from the Deed.

In the same office is recorded a release to Andrew Byerly by William Carpenter's heirs dated July 9, 1751, recorded August 21, 1751. The record also shows that under date of August 31st, 1752, Mr. Byerly and wife gave a mortgage to Christian Hare (Herr?). This mortgage was recorded September 16, 1752.

Mr. Byerly was a baker by trade and moved westward with the army in the Braddock Campaign, baking for the army. Prior to his leaving Lancaster as shown in Book "D," page 398 of the Recorder's Office, Andreas Byerly and wife made a bill of sale dated May 3, 1754, to Bernard Hubley. This bill of sale, however, was not recorded until January 14, 1757. This bill refers to Mr. Byerly as baker and innholder, the consideration named being £100 lawful money of Pennsylvania.

As an interesting comparison with an inventory of household goods and chattels of today, let me read the following schedule of Mr. Byerly's personal effects:

- 8 Double Beds
- Bedsteads and Furniture
- 1 dozen pair sheets
- 2 dozen table cloths
- 31 yds. of coarse diaper for table cloths
- 41 yds. of ten hundred cloath
- 31 lbs. flaxen and bow yarn
- 10 pewter dishes
- 1 large walnut press
- 1 kitchen dresser and cupboard
- 1 brass brewing kettle
- 1 brass washing kettle
- 1 iron washing kettle
- 5 iron pots
- 4 dozen and half pewter plates
- 9 pewter soup dishes
- 2 tea kettles
- 3 pewter teapots
- 1 tea chest and cannisters
- 2 dozen china cups and saucers
- 9 silver tea spoons
- 3 dozen and 9 delph bowls of sundry sizes
- 3 china bowls
- 2 dozen pint and quart bottles
- 2 dozen drinking glasses

2 walnut tables
 4 long tables and benches
 1 doz. chairs
 1 brass coffee pott
 6 wooden chests
 1 cow, spotted black and white, and a black and
 white yearling heifer
 5 washing tubs
 4 hoggs
 5 brass buckets
 1 large brass strainer
 1 dozen and half pewter quarts and pints
 2 dozen of knives and forks
 2 dozen baker's tinns
 6 frying pans
 4 dozen of small and large looking glasses
 2 cradles and beds belonging thereto
 100 gallons of Vidona Wine in 3 pipes in cellar
 1 riding slay
 5 spinning wheels
 1 plush side saddle
 3 brass scales
 1 money scale and weights
 1 round iron stove
 1 hogshead of beer
 6 roasting pans

Mr. Byerly next appears at Fort Cumberland, now Cumberland, Md., where he did baking for Braddock's army in 1755. While it lay there previous to its ill-fated expedition, an Indian Chief of the Catawba Tribe laid a wager of 30 shillings that one of his warriors could beat any white man in a foot race. Col. George Washington, then on the staff of General Braddock, took the bet and persuaded Andrew Byerly to run, which he did, and defeated the Indian. I have been unable to determine definitely whether Mr. Byerly was with the Braddock expedition to the ill-fated field or not. If he was, he returned to Bedford, Penna., where he again did baking for the British garrison stationed there. Here his son, Jacob, was born in 1759. This same year, Mr. Byerly located on a grant made by the commandant at Fort Pitt, of 230 acres of land located on Bushy Run, now Westmoreland County, near the present site of Harrison City where he erected a log house and established a station to accommodate express riders and government agents traveling between Fort Pitt and the Eastern Forts-Ligonier, Bedford, Loudon, Carlisle, etc. His was the first settlement away from the vicinity of the forts and the only one on Forbes road between Fort Pitt and Fort Ligonier. While living there, the Pontiac

Indian outbreak occurred in 1763. While Mr. Byerly was away from his cabin assisting in the burial of persons massacred by the Indians a few days earlier, a friendly Indian whom the Byerly family had befriended warned them of imminent danger. In a letter by Captain S. Ecuyer from Fort Pitt to Colonel Henry Bouquet written May 29, 1763, he mentions the great danger encompassing Byerly and his family at Bushy Run and gave warning that unless they left their house within a few days, they would all be murdered. Colonel Bouquet was a native of the Canton of Berne from which came Mrs. Byerly and he frequently stopped with the Byerly family on trips to and from Fort Pitt. Acting on the warning given, Mrs. Byerly mounted a horse with a babe three days old in her arms and one 18 months old fastened to her back, with Michael, a boy 12 or 14 years old following, leading his brother, Jacob, a boy of 4 years of age, and made the perilous journey through the wilderness to Fort Ligonier. Mrs. Byerly upon leaving the cabin, left a note of her flight to the fort and when Mr. Byerly returned from assisting in the burials of those murdered, followed to Fort Ligonier. Following this a scouting party was formed by Mr. Byerly and 18 others and on the opening of the battle of Bushy Run, August 5, 1763, they were fired upon by Indians in ambush. At the first volley, 12 of them fell. Mr. Byerly and the remaining six succeeded in getting back to the advancing forces. He participated in the two days' fighting at Bushy Run which, according to Parkman, was the hardest battle ever fought by the Indians. He assisted in giving the Indians the most decisive beating they had ever received, the result being that they were kept back of the Allegheny River thereafter. A great part of the Battle of Bushy Run was upon the grant of land to Mr. Byerly and during and after the battle he assisted in relief work by creeping to a little spring at the foot of a hill and carried water to the wounded in his woolen hat.

Rev. Cyrus Cort, who died a few years ago, a descendant of Mr. Byerly, made an extensive study of his life, stated that Mr. Byerly died during a visit to Lancaster County just previous to the Revolution, and was buried at Strasburg. Within the last year, I made an extensive search to locate his grave, but have been unable to do so nor do I know the purpose of his visit to our county at that time. It is possible, however, that he was visiting friends or relatives among whom may have been the Houck family in Strasburg Township, and for whose daughter's baptism in 1750 Mr. Byerly's wife acted as sponsor. In my search for his grave, I found no burials in the Lutheran cemetery at Strasburg dating prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution, but was advised that when the pavement was laid some tombstones at graves of earlier burials near the street had been removed, but upon learn-

ing that the old Lutheran-Reformed cemetery about a mile and one-half or two miles southwest of Strasburg contained burials from 1741 down to about 1850, though it is reasonable to conjecture his remains lie there, in view of his affiliation with the Reformed church while living in Lancaster. Rev. Shepherdson, present pastor of the Reformed Church at New Providence, the Reformed branch of the Lutheran Reformed congregations following separation, has the record of the early burials of the members. The names of non-members do not appear in said record, and of the scores of burials in this old cemetery, only about one-half dozen are identified. The remaining graves simply are designated by unlettered flagstones.

Later Mr. Byerly's widow married an Englishman, named Benjamin Lord and still later married a Mr. Mechling. Her remains lie among those of her children at the old Brush Creek graveyard, now Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Mr. Andrew Byerly and wife had a family of five sons and several daughters. The sons names being Michael, Francis, Jacob, Andrew and Joseph. To George W. Flowers, Esq., Frick Bldg., Pittsburgh, a descendant of the eldest son, Michael, I am indebted for some of the information contained in this paper. Francis Byerly, the second son, died from the effects of a cold contracted while wading the Kiskiminetas River with a deer on his back, January 1, 1805. Jacob, the third son, married Elizabeth Harmon, by whom he had twelve children. He belonged to Colonel John Gibson's 13th Virginia Regiment stationed at Fort Pitt, and served under Generals Hand and McIntosh, and Colonel Brodhead, on the Frontier. His son, Andrew, a grandson of the Andrew Byerly of this paper, was a major in Colonel Reese Hill's regiment of the Pennsylvania troops in the War of 1812, and commanded a detachment that marched from Greensburg to Erie in 1813, and guarded the fleet of Commodore Perry while being built. From lack of proper camp equipment and exposure incident to the service, he contracted inflammatory rheumatism and died at Vermilion, Ashland County, Ohio, on May 18, 1845, following great suffering. He has many descendants near Mansfield, Ohio.

Andrew, the fourth son, was a justice of the peace for many years in Westmoreland County. He married Christina Fruit of Lancaster, Penna., and of a family of twelve children, raised nine to maturity.

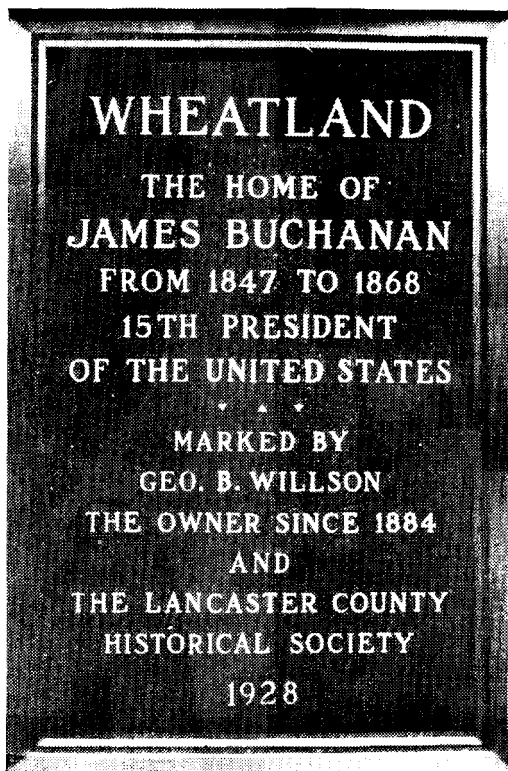
Of Joseph Byerly, the fifth son, very little information is had. Likewise, of several of the daughters. Jacob Byerly, son of Jacob, and grandson of Andrew Byerly, was buried at sea on a trip home from New Orleans, after taking a load of grain down the river from Pittsburgh on a flatboat. His son, Benjamin, was a lieutenant in the War of 1812, and later a member of the Pennsyl-

vania legislature. Some of his descendants, as do those of other members of the family, still reside in Westmoreland and surrounding counties, of Pennsylvania.

Much more might be said of the members of this notable family, but I do not desire to make this paper one of family genealogy, nor are the experiences of a number of them appropriate among the annals of this Society. In addition to the life of Andrew Byerly, in closing, I briefly referred to the position attained and the experiences had of a few of his most notable near descendants.

The Wheatland Tablet

The marker on the driveway post of Wheatland, the home of President James Buchanan, was placed there and informally unveiled September 27, 1928. It is a bronze tablet, twenty by thirty inches, made by James H. Matthews and Co., of Pittsburgh, Pa. The inscription is



The cost of the tablet, \$161.00, was paid by the Chairman of the Committee.

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