The Christian Bowman Family

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If it is important that church and state keep careful records of historical facts and incidents, it is vitally more important that the family, the greatest of the three and the foundation of the others, keep careful records. Family Bibles fade and become illegible, fall to pieces, and are lost to posterity. It is a great satisfaction to trace one’s forebears back to the time when the land was a trackless wilderness and ascertain to which branch of those early pioneers one belongs, how he is related to the others, and from what type of stock he is descended. Henry Ward Beecher said: “The dry branches of genealogical trees bear many pleasant and curious fruits for those who know how to search after them.”

The surname Baumann (Bowman) is a common one in German-speaking countries. There have been several changes in the spelling of the name from medieval times to the present. For instance, Buman was used until 1617; then Buman and Bouwann, until 1650; and later Baumann or Bauman. This last spelling was changed to Bowman in the case of early American members of the family as English officials, in entering court records of legal documents, spelled the Bau as it sounded—that is, Bow. Baugman, Boughman, and Bachman are less frequent spellings.

All of the early emigrant Baumanns were Palatines of Swiss-German origin, coming from the Rhine district. Although there are records in the early eighteenth century of the landing of relatively few members of this family, Wendell, Christian, George, Daniel, and Hans are mentioned. From 1750 on, the name appears frequently. The lives of those mentioned are closely connected; their sources, arrivals, religion, locations, and dealings being closely associated, as records prove.

In July, 710, about 3,000 Palatines, having migrated to Ireland, were sent to New York as bond servants of the crown under Governor Robert Hunter. They settled at Livingston Manor and on the opposite side of the Hudson at Saugerties or Schoharie, a tract voluntarily presented to Queen Anne by Indian sachems for the homeless Palatines. Because of their condition of servitude at the first two places mentioned
and because of refusal to let them leave, some fifty families fled to Schorie in the fall of 1712 and the rest followed in March, 1713. Hardly established in the several settlements, they again found themselves in trouble with the "Gentleman in Albany." Continual conflicts made life a burden in Schorie; and despairing of justice in 1722, a large number accepted offers from Pennsylvania to settle there.

About two-thirds of the Schoharie people were not willing to buy land or settle on the Mohawk at the Governor's pleasure, so they started for Pennsylvania. From Schoharie they cut through the forests to the head waters of the Susquehanna, working down the river to the mouth of the Swatara and then ascended this river to the mouth of the Tulpehocken, where they settled. This was then the most remote outpost of white colonization in Pennsylvania. During this period many other Palatines sailed directly from Rotterdam and Amsterdam or came on ships touching these ports en route from England and bound for New York, Boston, or Philadelphia. Some setting out for one destination landed at another after many weary weeks of buffeting.

Jost (Joist) Hite (Heydt), setting out from Strassburg, the principal town of Alsace in 1710, landed at New York with sixteen families in Brigantine Swift and Schooner Friendship, ships built or purchased by Hite for this journey. They then went to Kingston. In 1716 or 1717 Hite and the families with him settled at Germantown, near Philadelphia. Becoming angry with the Governor of the province, partly because he would not give protection from the Indians, Hite purchased land in 1731 from the Van-Meters in Virginia, and, in 1732, he with his family, his sons-in-law, Jacob Chrisman, George Bowman and their families started from York, Pennsylvania, for the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia—sixteen family groups in all. Other families were migrating to the Valley. Christian Bowman entered land in 1731 or 1732. Cutting their road through the forests, they crossed the Potomac near Harper's Ferry and entered the rich and beautiful valley. Hite settled near Winchester; Christian Bowman, near Edenburg; some, near the present Stephens City; and others, at distances of a few miles apart down the valley. The later towns of Stras-
burg and Shepherdstown were founded by Peter Stover and a man named Shepherd or Schaeffer.¹

Christian Bowman, ancestor of the writer, was a native of the vineyard section of the Rhenish Palatinate. According to word of mouth, he and George Bowman, Hite's son-in-law, and probably Wendell Bowman, were related. So far the parentage of Christian has not been established nor the name of his wife ascertained. Tradition tells us that Christian and George came from York (Pennsylvania) into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia at the same time and perhaps they had been together throughout their travels. Court records show the purchase of land by Christian Bowman in May 1737; probate records show his will in 1764 and there are other references to him and his neighbors.

The Bowman family was Lutheran. In early times it had belonged to the Reformed Church, but later it accepted both of these religions and the Anabaptist, Mennonite, and primitive Baptist (Dunker) in addition. The older members of this family today are Reformed Presbyterians. The occupation of the Bowmans of earlier times was chiefly farming, but today they may be found as representative citizens in practically every walk of life. We find also that war records contain the names of members of the Christian Bowman family. In the Revolutionary War those of the first generation of Palatine emigrants were listed; in the Civil War we find them in both the northern and the southern armies—the proverbial brother against brother. In the Spanish and World Wars they were represented, some again making the supreme sacrifice.

Christian Bowman, born in Europe, came to the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. He purchased land from William Russell, May 26, 1737. He obtained 675 acres south of Strasburg on the south side of North River at the mouth of Trembling Run. He established a home and spent the rest of his life as a farmer. Later he purchased other land, and at the time of his death, about Jan., 1764, he possessed much real estate. His wife preceded him in death.

¹ Census of 1790, Pennsylvania, under heads of families, gives: Daniel and Christian Bowman, Lancaster Co.; Christian Bowman, Dauphin Co.; Christopher Bowman and Christopher Bowman, Jr., Berks Co.; Christian Bowman, Northampton Co.; Christian Bowman, York Co. The difficulty of keeping the Christian Bowmans straight is enhanced by the number bearing the name.
Children

Jacob Bowman—m. Elizabeth Keller (?); d. 1774 (possibly not till 1778). Lived for a while at and near Strasburg, Va. His wife was administratrix of his will. His children were Peter and Jacob. His widow, Elizabeth, m. Philip Huffman of Strasburg.

Henry Bowman—d. 1814. Lived on land allotted him in the division of his father's estate on the south side of the river, opposite Narrow Passage. Children: Isaac, Elizabeth, Benjamin, Stephen, Rebecca, John, and Henry, Jr.

Daniel Bowman—d. 1826; m. Anna Marie (Mary) Wakeman, Dec. 22, 1774. Anna Maria was the daughter of Conrad Wakeman. Children: Henry, Benjamin, Jacob, Samuel, Barbara, Christian, Joseph, George, Daniel, Anne. (Certified Revolutionary record for Daniel).

Christian Bowman, Jr., lived for a time on land willed him by his father, being part of the 675 acre tract near Strasburg. Little is now known of him. (Record from War Department, for Revolutionary War service).

David Bowman lived between Woodstock and Edinburg on land received from his father (now owned by the Huffmans). This he sold to Phillip Hoffman (Huffman) and is supposed to have lived many years afterwards on land owned by the late John Barton, east of Hamburg. David had a son, John (d. 1849), who lived at same place as his father. John left a will (Will Book Y, page 411), dated 1847 and probated 1849.

Benjamin Bowman received one-third of a 525 acre tract opposite Narrow Pass. Was killed by Indians.

Samuel Bowman (no record).

John Bowman received one-third of 525 acres opposite Narrow Pass. He married Barbara —— and died prior to 1816 or 1818. (Will Book Y, page 115-8 names children).

Magdalene Bowman (no record).

Catherine Bowman married Jacob Stover, brother of Peter Stover, founder of Strasburg. Her children were: a daughter (married Reuben Boehm), Barbara, John, Christian.

It is possible and likely that the first Christian Bowman was buried in the old cemetery located at Harmony Hall on the old Bowman Fort farm. True copy of will of

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*Thomas E. Cartmell, A History of Frederick County (Winchester, Va., 1909). 76.
Christian Bowman is on file in the Clerk's office of Frederick County, Virginia.8

The plantation where Jacob Bowman was living was bequeathed to him by the will of Christian Bowman and the plantation on which the father was living he gave to Christian Bowman, Jr. These two sons were to "pay to the rest of their brothers and sisters so much back as to all share equal." The children named in the will were: Christian, John, Daniel, Henry, Benjamin, Samuel, Catherine, and Magdalene. Executors named were: Jacob Bowman, Peter Stover, Henry Funk, and Jacob Stover (son-in-law). The witnesses who signed the will were: Simon Harr, Hennich Funk, and Peter Stauffer [Stover] Jr. The maker of the will signed his name Chrystian Bowman.

At a court held for Frederick County, February 7, 1764, there were present Henry Funk and Jacob Stover, executors. Witnesses, Simon Harr and Peter Stover.

In the settlement of the estate these sons appear as distributees:

Henry Bowman
Benjamin Bowman
Daniel Bowman4
Samuel Bowman
(Jacob, Christian, and John were not listed.)

Purchasers at sale were:

David Bowman
Paul Bowman
John Bowman
Christian Bowman
Jacob Bowman
Peter Bowman5

4 The line of Daniel Bowman (wife, Anna Wakeman), through his son Daniel Bowman, Jr., who came to Indiana, will be continued in the June issue of the Indiana Magazine of History.—M. T. M.
5 In 1763 rents were paid to the executors by Peter Bowman and also by George Bowman. From old deeds, we find that Jacob Bowman was the eldest son of Christian Bowman. Peter was the eldest son of Jacob Bowman.