Chas. F. Cook Genealogy Document

(Starting on page 3 of this PDF)

The Korns section of the book “A Clowes-Swanson Genealogy With Genealogy of the Korns, Uhl and Thompson Families” describes an organized swindle known as the Baker Hoax, that was based on a fake will. This swindle fooled countless people across North America into thinking that the descendants of a particular Pennsylvania Baker family rightfully owned the valuable land that the business part of Philadelphia was built on. People paid fees to register with the Baker Heirs Associations, with the hope of qualifying for part of the alleged estate. To understand the swindle, here’s what one association wrote “When the estates are settled all moneys will have to be paid through this association and all… unregistered heirs will have to prove their genealogy at their own expense…”

According to the aforementioned Clowes-Swanson genealogy book, the hoax was going strong in 1917, but came crashing down in 1937 with many convictions. In one contemporaneous newspaper the hoax was called “The most magnificent swindle of the 20th century”.

Here, below, we have a one page 1933 document “The Baker Family in America”, that was “Submitted by Chas. F. Cook” on April 18, 1933 to Mrs. Nettie A. Cassell, Box 14, Forsyth, Illinois, which mentions “Henry Baker died at Philadelphia in 1801”. This is, in my opinion, a document prepared for submission to one of the Baker Heirs Associations, in order to join in the estate settlement. Like many such letters that are still to be found around the country, it was in all likelihood written in good faith, and even the recipient Nettie A. Cassell may have been working for one of the Heirs Association in good faith, unaware of the fraudulent basis of the Baker Heirs Associations.

I believe that I obtained my copy of the Chas. F. Cook document from the files of the Historical and Genealogical Society of Somerset County. I am including a copy here on Korns.org to (1) show that many descendants have different opinions on the Ancestry of Susanna, wife of Michael Korns, Sr., and (2) to reveal the probable basis and motivation for this particular document, which many people have probably encountered and copied at the Historical and Genealogical Society of Somerset County.

I must also note that some of the information in the document seems improbable. The document states “Catherine [Baker], born 1759, married Christian Hoyman, also born 1759”, then states “Among the 5 children of Christian & Catherine Baker Hoyman was one Henry who married Catherine Korns, a sister of #6. Michael Korns, and one of their children was Elizabeth Hoyman, my grandmother…” The book “The Genealogy of Michael Korns, Sr.” gives the date of birth of Catherine, sister of Michael Korns, Sr. as Aug. 24, 1759, and states that it was she who was the wife of the Christian Hoyman who was born in 1759. Obviously, either the Korns book or the Chas. F. Cook document has to be wrong. I haven’t seen any proof either way, but it seems improbable that Catherine born in 1759 would marry a person much younger than her, after all the Chas F. Cook document says that Henry’s parents were both born in 1759.

I’ll leave it to others to wrangle out the truth, and will simply note that in the matter of the wife of Christian Hoyman, the Chas. F. Cook document is in disagreement with both the 1949 “The Genealogy of Michael Korns, Sr.” by Charles Byron Korns, and the 1993 book "Some Notes, Quotes and Quips of the Hoyman Clan and Related Lines" by David L. Baldwin.

Original sent to
Mrs. Nettie A. Cassell,
Bx.14, Forsyth, Illinois.

THE BAKER FAMILY IN AMERICA

Ludwig Baker b. 1640

-George Peter Baker was born, lived and died in Strawsburg, Germany. The Year of his birth was 1680.

Five of his children came to America, namely,
1. Jacob, born 1715 (resided in Lancaster Co., Pa., & later Somerset Co., Pa.)
2. John
3. Peter, born 1710 (resided in Lancaster Co., Pa., & later Somerset Co., Pa.) & later went to Ohio
4. Henry (Col. Henry Baker died at Philadelphia, in 1801)
5. Susannah (one account says her name was Elizabeth)

1. The children of Jacob Baker were as follows, namely, b. 1715
*1. Jacob, (Pittsburgh, Pa. (a daughter Sarah married Solomon Casebeer; moved Somerset Co. to
2. John, Jan. 23, 1757, married Catherine Fritz, at St. Michaels & Zion Lutheran Church, Phila., Pa. (reference, New Berry Library, Chicago)
3. Henry
4. George
5. Philip
6. Catherine, married Henry Korns; now said to be an Uncle of Michael Korns (Sr)
7. Elizabeth
8. Ann Mariah
9. Margaret
10. Mary
11. Michael
12. Susannah

The children of * 1. Jacob Baker, Jr. were as follows, namely,
1. Jacob
2. John
3. Henry
4. George
5. Philip
6. Susannah, born 1762 and died in ~~1816~~ 1911. m. Michael Korns, Sr.
XX 7. Catherine, born 1759, married Christian Hoyman, also born 1759.

6. Susannah Baker married Michael Korns who was born ~~1757~~ 1760 at Reading, Pa., and died Nov. 5, 1824, in Southampton township, Somerset County, Pa.
Their children were as follows, namely,
1. Daniel, born Dec. 24, 1782; died Aug. 26, 1861; married Elizabeth Reiber born 1787
2. Catherine, married Jacob Kamerer
3. Mary, married John Beal who was born 11/11/1781 & died Sept. 22, 1825
4. John, twice married--(1) Rebecca Boucher; (2) a Miss Candle
5. Margaret (or Rebecca), married John Witt, son of Jacob Witt
6. Susannah, married John Shearer (spelling sometimes given Shierry)
7. Charles, married Catherine Uhl
8. Christena, married William Troutman
9. Barbara, married Charles Uhl--brother of Catherine Uhl
10. Delilah, married John Miller
11. Michael (Jr.), married Johanna Lepley
12. William, married Elizabeth Hoyman

XX7. Among the 5 children of Christian & Catherine Baker Hoyman was one Henry who married Catherine Korns, a sister of #6. Michael Korns, and one of their children was Elizabeth Hoyman, my grandmother, who married Jesse Cook (Sr.) Elizabeth Hoyman was born July 28, 1818. Jesse Cook a son of Jacob, Jacob a son of George Cook who was born 1760 in Lancaster County, Pa.

Note #6 Michael Korns, after 1816, remarried; no children. Have been unable to ascertain to whom married. Her first name was MAGDALENA.

Somerset, Pa., April 18, 1933. Submitted by Chas. F. Cook