

Joseph Korn's Genealogy Affidavit

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Robin Yeamans (YRobin777@aol.com), an attorney living in California, provided the attached 1917 affidavit of Joseph Korn's (see page 3) to Korn's.org in April 2007. Robin also provided the following background information:

- *"I'm quite sure I'm descended from the Kornses who were in Holmes County, Ohio. Elizabeth Hoyman Korn's was the wife of William and the mother of Joseph Korn's who was the father of Emanuel B Korn's who was the father of Mildred Korn's Yeamans who is my grandmother."*
- *"I don't remember either parent talking to me about the deed to me at all---or the affidavit either. I ended up with a number of family papers that weren't commented on or explained. I just kept all the old, official looking papers I could because I was interested in family history."*

The Following Commentary is by L. Dietle

The Joseph Korn's genealogy affidavit adds important new material to mystery surrounding whether the maiden name of the wife of Michael Korn's, Sr. was Susanna Baker or Boucher. Here we have a grandchild of theirs who, although he was born after his grandmother's death, obviously knew people who knew his grandmother personally (i.e. his father and his father's siblings). From this he (the affiant) knew that his *"grandmother was German and in broken English her maiden name Baker, was frequently spoken or written as Boucheer or Bouchner, and affiant says that about fifteen years ago affiant obtained from his sister, Caroline Donaldson, the original baptismal certificate of affiant's father William Korn's, showing that there was born a son, William Korn's, of Michael Korn's, Sr., and his wife Susanna, born Boucheer..."* This statement makes this an important document for the entire extended Korn's family.

The Baker – Boucher maiden name problem is described in the book "A Clowes-Swanson Genealogy With Genealogy of the Korn's, Uhl and Thompson Families", which outlines some non-definitive but nevertheless useful information supporting the Boucher name supposition. Various spellings are recited in the book, including Bauscher, Boucher, Bowsher, Bousher, and Bausheer.

Olive Korn's Porter of Grinnell, Iowa, who was also a William Korn's descendant, also thought that Susanna's maiden name might be Boucher, because she said described it as "(Boucher) Baker" in her entry in the "Daughters of the American Colonists" lineage book, volume XVI.

On the spur of the moment in response to my inquiry, one day circa 1968 my grandmother Mrs. Allen Lester Korn's, who lived within walking distance of the Michael Korn's, Sr. farm, wrote me out a remarkable list of ancestors from memory. Despite having her own copy of the book "The Genealogy of Michael Korn's, Sr.", she wrote out the maiden name of the wife of Michael Korn's, Sr. as "Basher".

The Korn's section of the book "A Clowes-Swanson Genealogy With Genealogy of the Korn's, Uhl and Thompson Families" describes an organized swindle known as the Baker Hoax, that was based on a fake will that fooled people into thinking that the descendants of a Pennsylvania Baker family rightfully owned the land that the business part of Philadelphia was based on. People paid fees to register with the Baker Heirs Associations. 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, the year of the Joseph Korn's affidavit, 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*".

There was a Bakers Heirs Association meeting on June 28, 1917 in Detroit Michigan. Since Joseph's Affidavit was sworn out on June 21, 1917 in Dixon, Illinois (about 380 miles from Detroit) and mentions the "*heirs to the Baker estate of Philadelphia, Pa.*", it seems reasonable to opine that the Affidavit was prepared in response to the Baker Hoax. In the affidavit, Joseph doesn't offer definitive proof that he is a descendant of the "correct" Baker. In my opinion, from his statement about the "*tradition discussed in the family of affiant from boyhood that affiant's said grandmother was a daughter of Peter Baker, a brother of Jacob Baker, and one of the heirs to the Baker estate of Philadelphia, Pa.*", it appears that he was hoping that the Baker Heirs Association could (with the information provided by other members) help him prove his lineage.

Martha J. Moore *Joseph Korns, and his wife*
X Moore

INDIVIDUAL AFFIDAVIT OF JOSEPH KORNS.

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
COUNTY OF LEE) SS.

Joseph Korns, being first duly sworn, states on oath that he resides in the City of Dixon, in said County of Lee; that he was born in Holmes County, Ohio, on the 22nd day of May, 1831; that he is the son of William Korns, Sr., who was born February 25th, 1806, in Southampton Township, Summerset County, Pennsylvania; and that the father of said Williams Korns, Sr. was Michael Korns, Sr., who was married to Susanna Baker, in Redding, Burks County, Pennsylvania, in the year, 1783, in August, and he died in Wellersburg, Summerset County, Pennsylvania, in the year 1824, and was buried in Cook Cemetery, beside his said wife, Susanna, who died in 1811; that affiant's said father, William Korns, Sr., was married March 20th, 1827, to Elizabeth Hoyman, in said Town of Wellersburg, and he died in Holmes County, Ohio, September 1st, 1863, and was buried in the Holmesville Cemetery, four miles West of Millersburg, in the State of Ohio, beside his wife; that affiant's said grandmother was German and in broken English her ^{maiden} name Baker, was frequently spoken or written as Boucheer or Bouchner, and affiant says that about fifteen years ago affiant obtained from his sister, Caroline Donaldson, the original baptismal certificate of affiant's father William Korns, showing that there was born a son, William Korns, of Michael Korns, Sr., and his wife Susanna, born Boucheer, February 25th, 1806, and baptized by the Rev. Heins Giese in the presence of George Long and his wife Magdalena, Summerset County, South Hampton Township, Pa.; and affiant duly entered a true and correct copy of said certificate in his family Bible and the same is now on record therein; that affiant shortly thereafter took said original certificate to show it to some relative and lost it out of a pocket in the inside pocket thereof, that had a hole in the bottom; that there is a tradition discussed in the family of affiant from boyhood that affiant's said grandmother was a daughter of Peter Baker, a brother of Jacob Baker, and one of the heirs to the

Baker estate of Philadelphia, Pa.

This affiant further states on oath that he was married to Martha Jane Moore at the home of her father, John Moore two miles South West of Millersburg, Holmes County, Ohio, by Rev. Jesse Helsel, Pastor and Lutheran Minister of the Holmesville Church, on the 7th day of February, A. D. 1856, in the presence of Delila Cornell, John Moore and others and that affiant is the father of four children, namely, Lewis F. Korns, born at Dixon, Illinois, November 2th, 1856, residing at 405 W. 54th St., Station F. Minneapolis, Minnesota, Emanuel B. Korns, born November 26th, 1858, at Dixon, Illinois, now residing at Tracy, Minnesota, Emma V. Korns, born April 28th, 1867, at Dixon, Illinois, who died without ever being married and without issue, and Francis R. Korns, born January 1st, 1873, at Dixon, Illinois, now residing at Des Moines, Iowa, 1001 -29th Street. That affiant resides at Dixon, Illinois, and further this affiant saith not.

Joseph Korns

Subscribed and sworn to before me,

this 21st day of June, A. D. 1917.

E. S. Rosecrans
Clerk of the Circuit Court
of Lee County, Illinois.