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Thomas J. Beardsley

830 Seminole Blvd

Lake Park, Fla. 33403

20 March 1987

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Dear Cousin Lorraine,

II didn't find Conewango County, Pa. There is a family Bible in the Welchhans Family that belonged to Catherine Frantz, wife of David II Frantz. It lists ELIZABETH PORTMAN married to DAVID MAGINTY in New York in 1802. David Maginty was born 12 Sep 1773, married 1802, died 13 Oct 1848. ELIZABETH died in 1822 and David remarried. Elizabeth and David had 5 daughters. Catherine and Nancy were born in KANAMANGO County, Pa. it says. I can find no KANAMANGO County in Pa. But I did check an 1800 Census for Pa. and find two PORTMAN's in Warren County. The only two in the state, I believe. In Warren County, Pa. there is a creek that starts in New York and flows to the Alleghany River that is called the CONEWANGO. I believe that they were born on the Conewango Creek and not in the county listed in the Bible. I wrote to Warren county for land records, but they have no record of any Portman's owning land there.

The land that David Frantz owned first belonged to David Maginty.

There is one Portman listed in the New York Census of 1790 and he is shown in the Albany area.

Later

Have just taken mother to have a tooth pulled. She had had a root canal long ago on this tooth but her dentist thought that there might be a crack in it that was causing a low grade infection. When they got it pulled there was a crack, so perhaps she will feel better after the gum heals and she can get a bridge and tooth put in. Unfortunately it is one of the front ones, so she thinks she will look like a with until it is replaced.

There is also a Conewango, N. Y. not far from the border of Warren County, Pa. and back in 1802 that might have been Pa. I haven't looked it up.

I spent an hour this morning trying to find my file on that and my copy of the Bible Record and haven't found either one of them yet. When I do, will try to get a copy to you. Anyway, I feel that I am right even if I can't prove it.

Have about the same problem with Mariah Roberson (Maria Robertson) etc, and John Welchhans. Orange County, VA has all sorts of both names but I have yet to find a birth record for her there or any record of a male with a daughter of the right period. Her death record in Clark County, Ohio says Orange County, Va. John Welchhans' father's and Mother's wedding certificate spells Welchhans three different ways on the single sheet of paper. It is signed by 17 different people, but not by the mother and father of the bride or groom. They were married in April and John was born in October. 1798

over

Thanks tremendously for the beautiful work you are doing. I don't understand computers.

Very truly yours,
T. R. Smith

The Adam Frantz Gen was mailed yesterday. It was copied from the work book copied by Rev. Flory. I am sorry that not all of the copy is plain, but neither was the original that was made from. Rev. Flory had just died when I wrote asking for the workbook so that I could copy it and his wife was kind enough to mail it to me in that period of her own mourning.

Dear George

It was the first time I had had any proof at all of a David Frantz II. I had not yet made contact with the Welchhans in Farragut, Idaho. They were my mother's "country cousins."

Thanks again. And take your time with the Adam Frantz.

Very truly yours,
T. R. Smith

PS: I have just received a copy of the Adam Frantz Gen from the Welchhans in Farragut, Idaho. It is a copy of the original that I sent you.

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MICHAEL FRANTZ ⁷
 b. 1725 in Germany
 d. ca. 1808 Botetourt Co. Va.
 parents: Michael Frantz (1687-1748)
 mother - unknown

m. Magdalena Zug ⁵
 b.
 m. 12 June 1748
 d.
 parents: Ulrich Zug
 Barbara Bachman

Came to America when two years old - Sept. 30, 1727.
 Lived in Cocalico twp., Lancaster Co., Pa.
 Moved to Botetourt Co., Va. around 1780-1788 with at least
 some of his family.
 Buried near Tinker Creek, Troutville, Va.

Children:

1. John ⁹
2. Jacob ¹²
3. Michael ⁸
4. Abraham ¹⁰
- 11 5. Christian b. 1761 m. Mary Garst ¹⁹¹
 d. 5 Mar. 1850
- 13 6. Daniel b. 9 Feb. 1763 m. 1) Anna Garst ¹⁹³
 d. 17 May 1843 2) Magdalena Garver Minnich ¹⁷
- 14 7. Peter b. 1765 m. Catherine Garst ¹⁹⁰
 d. 1853
8. David ¹⁵ b.ca. 1766 m. Elizabeth Garst ¹⁹⁵
 d.ca. 1815
- 16 9. a daughter m. _____ Garst ¹⁹⁴

MICHAEL FRANTZ, THE IMMIGRANT

b Sept. 1, 1687, near Basle, Switzerland
Arrived in America on Sept. 30, 1727
d 1748 at Cocalico in Lancaster Co., PA

"Few men have had more influence than Elder Michael Frantz in determining the character and course of the Brethren. Michael Frantz came to Pennsylvania from Switzerland, September, 1727. He went at once into the comparative wilderness of Lancaster County. Michael was baptized by Peter Becker on Sept. 29, 1734, he was immediately appointed Exhorter. In 1735 he was made Elder of the Conestoga Church. This congregation was the third organized in America, but its position made it the real 'mother church'. Until his death in 1748 he presided over the congregation. His geographical location and his natural talents, together with his unusual force of character all combined to make him one of the most important men in Brethren Annals"Forward of "Writings of Michael Frantz" printed in magazine, SCHWARZENAU, Vol. 2, p.78-82...Editor,

Dr. Floyd Mallott

For many of the early German Baptist Brethren, Conrad Beissel was a disturbing influence. He had some different ideas. For instance, Beissel blasted marriage. He advocated that the only true marriage was a complete devotion of the soul to the service of God. Maria Christina Sower and the wife of Philip Hanselmann were two of the women who came to feel that marriage was unholy. Together they left their families and joined the Ephrata Society. The Conestoga Congregation who did not follow Beissel were ministered to by Elder Peter Becker.

An unique method was used to determine loyalty of Conestoga members: A great meeting or council was held and Michael Frantz placed a rail on the floor of the barn...He then requested all who wished to join the new congregation to step to the right side, he leading the way. He also requested all those who desired to follow Conrad Beissel to step to the left side of the rail. In this way a peaceful separation occurred and the above named members joined the reorganized congregation.

"Michael Frantz was an eminent preacher among the early Brethren, and the first settled minister of the Old Conestoga Church. He was born in the Canton of St. Jacob, near Basle, in Switzerland, in the year 1687, came to America in September, 1727, and settled in the vicinity of the Cocalico, in Lancaster County, Pa., where he soon became convinced of the truth of the doctrines as they are held forth by the Brethren. Consequently he was received into the fellowship of the 'little flock' which had been separated from the parent church of Ephrata, on account of the innovations that were being introduced by the mystic Conrad Beissel.

"He was baptized by Peter Becker on the 29th of September, 1734, the same day that Conestoga was organized into a separate church; and while it was otherwise un-supplied, This Brother Frantz was commissioned to serve them in the capacity of an Exhorter, in which he approved himself so well that he was soon ordained by the imposition of hands to be their Elder, and the next year (1735) he took upon himself the entire care of the church, which he served with exemplary zeal and fidelity, until the day of his death. His remains are buried in the old graveyard near the Cocalico. (river)

"Brother Frantz appears to have been an approved workman of the Lord, insomuch that the little church, which consisted of but 20 members when he commenced his labors in it, increased to about 200 during the years of his ministry. He was not only approved as a good and efficient preacher, but was also a very ready composer of religious hymns, poetry, and other writings. Brother Christopher Saur of Germantown published a collection of his poetic and other writings in 1770..."

From Brumbaugh's, "History of Brethren"

pp. 300-303

Mount Morris, Ill.
Brethren Pub. House
1899

MICHAEL FRANTZ,
The Immigrant

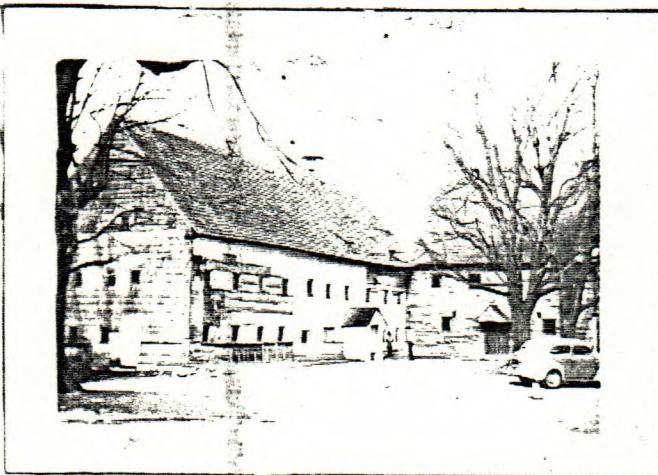
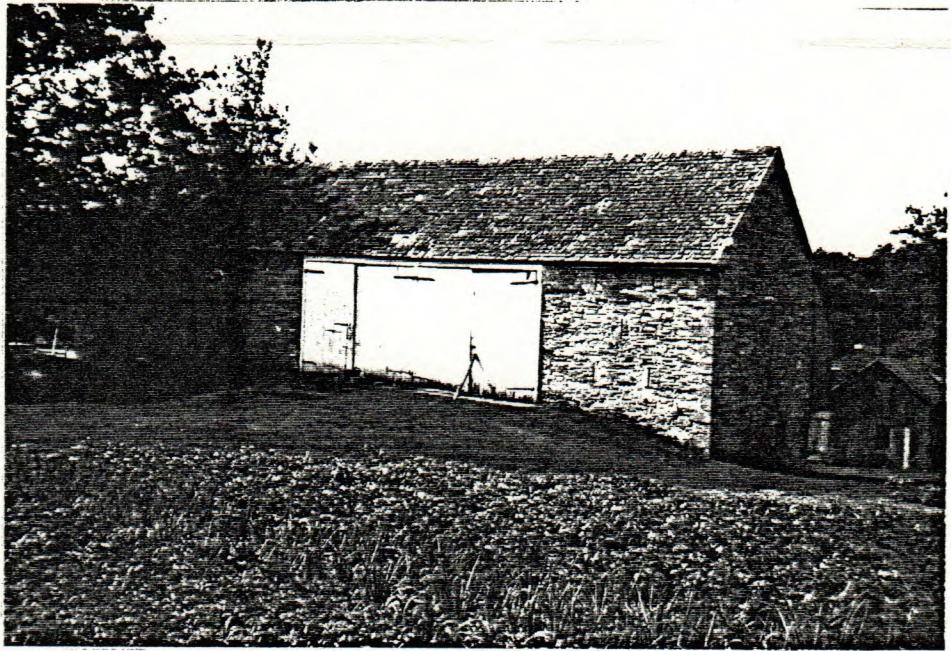
We women especially wonder if Michael Frantz brought his wife and daughter to America with him. We know he brought his two year son, Michael Jr. His wife and daughter are listed as members of Church in Europe. Michael Frantz is listed as Mennonite receiving aid from the Dutch in April, 1727.

WE FIND MICHAEL FRANTZ'S NAME ON THE PASSENGER LIST OF THE SHIP, MOLLY,

WHICH LANDED ON SEPTEMBER 30, 1727. ELDER MICHAEL FRANTZ, at a barn such as this one, placed a fence rail on the floor of the barn...He then requested all who wished to join the new Conestoga Church Congregation to step to the right side...He led the way. He also requested those who desired to follow Conrad Beissel to step to the left side of the rail. It was this unique method that was used to test the loyalty of the members.....A PEACEFUL SEPARATION resulted...Roland Flory describes it this way:

3. Flory, Roland F., "Lest We Forget and Tales of Yesteryears," Vol I "Those who stepped to the left embraced the strange doctrines of Conrad Beissel and became known as the Seventh Day Dunkers. Those who followed the leadership of Elder Frantz on that memorial day numbered only twenty-two but during the time of his leadership the church grew to a goodly number of over two hundred. His leadership came to its end at his death in 1748. Because of the influence of Michael, Sr., his two brothers Balser and Christian, united with the Church at Conestoga. Christian was baptized as a member on September 7, 1735...records also show that Balser was a member of the congregation in 1735."

Conrad Beissel with his followers started a monastic society at Ephrata, Pennsylvania. With his strange doctrines Beissel had caused much discord within the Conestoga community...he and Michael Wohlfahrt and some other friends had lived as hermits along Mill Creek. One writer said, "He was very strict in his morals and practiced self-denial and mortification to an uncommon degree. Enthusiastic he certainly was, not adept in any of the liberal arts except music, in which he excelled."



Pictured here are the old buildings of "THE CLOISTERS" - The Monastic Society which flourished for a time but died out because of beliefs about marriage and the iron-hand rule of their leader, Conrad Beissel.

A goodly number who joined the society soon became disillusioned and returned to The Brethren.



DURNBAUGH SPEAKS OF ELDER MICHAEL FRANTZ (1687-1748) AS ONE OF THE STRONG EARLY LEADERS OF THE COLONIAL BRETHREN IN PENNSYLVANIA. BORN IN SWITZERLAND, HE SETTLED IN LANCASTER COUNTY, NOT FAR FROM THE SITE OF THE EPHRATA COMMUNITY. HE WAS THE LEADER OF THAT PART OF THE CONESTOGA CONGREGATION WHICH REMAINED LOYAL TO THE BRETHREN.⁴

After the interruption with Beissel, the Conestoga Congregation again began to expand, both numerically and geographically, under the leadership of Michael Frantz until his death in 1748 and then under the leadership of Michael Pfautz.

PICTURED ABOVE IS THE FIRST "MEETING HOUSE" OF THIS PRODUCTIVE MOTHER CHURCH. As the membership increased worship in the homes became quite inconvenient. During Elder Michael Frantz's lifetime services were held in barns and homes for the most part. The old Conestoga Church—above—is located one-half mile west of Monterey on West Eby Road.

TWO-HUNDRED PEOPLE WERE BAPTIZED BY ELDER MICHAEL FRANTZ FROM THE TIME HE WAS ORDAINED AND ELECTED MINISTER OF THE CONESTOGA CONGREGATION..."Surely this is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes." Michael Frantz was not only a good and efficient preacher, but he was also a very ready writer, and a composer of religious hymns. Brother Christopher Saur of Germantown published a collection of his poetic and other writings in 1770, under the title of "Einfältige Lehr-Betrachtungen, und Kurtzgefasztes Glaubens-Bekantnisz des Gottseligen Lehrers, Michael Frantzen..."⁵.

IN 1747 THE GERMANTOWN CONGREGATION ASKED FOR HIS JUDGMENT ON A PROBLEM OF CHURCH POLITY..(BASED ON A LETTER FROM THE CASSEL COLLECTION)

Elder Michael Frantz died in 1748. He is buried in an old graveyard near the Cocalico. The following is an attempted translation of a little epitaph by an unknown hand:

In this year, 1748, our Elder and Overseer, Michael Frantz, departed this life and has exchanged Time with Eternity, after being well tried by affliction:

"Farewell, on the Chariot of God, To join in that heav'nly abode,
We do not envy thee thy rest, The host of the angelic choir,
By angels thou'rt carried the road To sing and rejoice in thy God,
Toward the abode of the blest To praise Him forever and ever."⁶