



KNOW YOUR ROOTS

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JUNE 2010

VOLUME XI

ISSUE 6

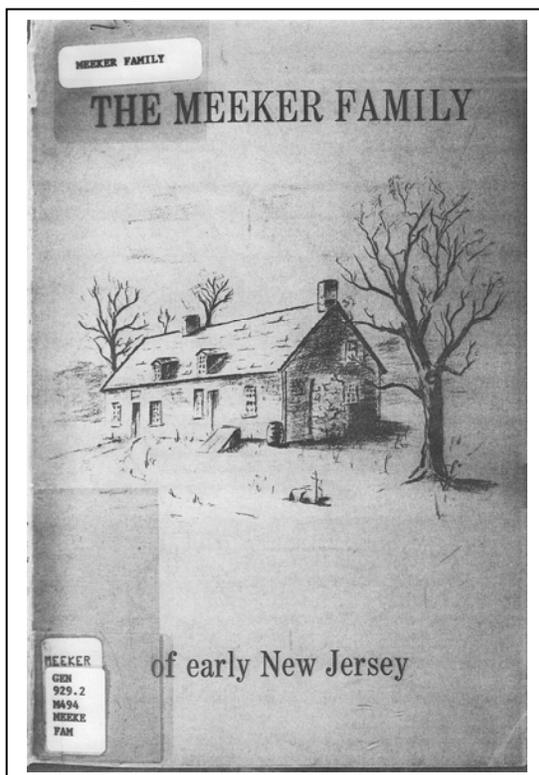
ANOTHER GRANDMOTHER, WIFE, AND MOTHER PHEBE MEEKER

Without printing another fan chart, which you can check in a former newsletter, let me reacquaint you with the name Meeker. In the past I have referred to Obadiah Meeker Crane as the father of Mary Ann Crane who was the grandmother of Harry Elson Durland and the original Crane in our family. I have also told you that family names were the custom to give to new babies. But in the case of Obadiah there is a precedent that is very strange. He was the eighth and last child born in his family but one of his brothers, Stephen (there was only one girl), who was born before Obadiah, was already given the middle name Meeker. I can't find much on Stephen, who died in 1809 according to the records, but there has to be a reason why Obadiah was also given the

middle name of Meeker, and it was lucky for us because it made it much easier to trace his heritage.

However, this story is not about Obadiah but about his mother Phebe Meeker, wife of Benjamin Crane, obviously the father of Obadiah Meeker Crane. So now we have a new family name in our lineage, a very old family name, and it all stemmed from Phebe, a Meeker whose heritage, I might add, is one that goes back as far as the Cranes and the Durlands to the beginning of our country. This is the book that tells all about the family and the picture on the cover is the house reputed to be the Meeker house.

I'm not going to tell you about the first Meeker on our soil, but I'll tell you what little I know about Phebe, the subject of this newsletter. First her name is spelled phonetically rather than the old spelling of Phoebe. She was born on the 19th of January 1743 in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Her exact



marriage date is not proven but it took place in Newark, New Jersey, and her first child and only girl was born in 1764 and named after her, Phebe. After that daughter, there were seven boys, with our Obadiah being the last one.

The marriage of Phebe to Benjamin Crane took place in New Jersey and all the children except our Obadiah and his brother David who preceded him were born in Montgomery County, New York. The question is why did Phebe's husband Benjamin Crane move to New York when, for generations, the Cranes were original settlers in New Jersey? Not only that, Phebe's father, Stephen Meeker, and other Meekers all the way back to the original William who founded Elizabeth, lived and died in New Jersey. I cannot answer that particular question, but for sure Phebe's father Benjamin Crane took his family to Amsterdam, New York where he died. So Obadiah was born in New York, and that is the answer to how Obadiah happened to meet and marry Elizabeth Shuler, another grandmother who was born in New York.

Of Phebe's sons, some remained and died in New York, and some died in New Jersey, but after marrying, son Obadiah Meeker Crane moved from New York to Indiana where Mary Ann Crane was born and subsequently married Robert Durland and moved to Flora, Illinois.

The will of Benjamin Crane, Phebe's husband, was probated 8 June 1813 in New York. At the age of 71 in 1814 it is assumed that she was going to visit Obadiah, and she and her son Jonas left for Indiana where Obadiah lived. She never made it, for she died the 26th of April along the way in Ohio and is said to be buried in Claremont near Cincinnati. How sad.

However, much can be written about her predecessors, particularly William whom I briefly mentioned as having arrived in 1630 in New Haven even before our other ancestors. He moved on to New Jersey and founded the town of Elizabeth. This is the cover of a rare book which contains stories of the Meekers. In my past newsletters there are also stories of the Meekers. Maybe one day I'll repeat them.

For the present just know that the name Meeker became part of our heritage through our grandmother Phebe, mother of Obadiah Meeker Crane, father of Mary Ann Crane who married Robert Durland.

