



# KNOW YOUR ROOTS

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## THE BEVANS AND QUAKER LINK

In writing about one of our grandmothers from the Free side, I have come across two surprising women. One is Anne Bevan who was quite exceptional for her time, but before I tell you about her, I want to give you some background on her name Bevan. Much research has been done on the Bevans who were early arrivers in Pennsylvania.

The Bevan family is Welsh in origin and goes so far back that researchers in the family have been able to find a link to King Henry III of England and perhaps even to Saint/King Ferdinand of Spain. How about that – links to royalty in both the Durland and Free lines!

Even though you might not remember the name Bevan, we are linked through Anne. However, the name itself is a combination of the old Welsh. Sons were always designated as “ab,” so son of Evan became ab Evan or eventually just Bevan. The name was already Bevan when the first ones arrived in Pennsylvania from Wales in 1683. As a note, William Penn also arrived in 1683 so you see we have another family with old roots here.

William Sharpless/Sharpus, grandfather of Anne, arrived in 1682 and settled in Haverford, Pennsylvania as a Quaker. Mary Sharpus was a child of William and his wife Blanche.

Anne’s parents, who were married in 1705, were William Bevan and Mary Sharpus, as I said, early settlers of Pennsylvania. They were both Quakers as were the other Bevans. There is a brief explanation of the Pennsylvania Quakers in Mary’s Messages for this month (July).

Abraham Free was not a Quaker, and how he and Anne Bevan found each other is not documented. Nevertheless they did, and they were married in Christ Church, Philadelphia the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1730. Abraham was a successful businessman and had been paying taxes in Pennsylvania as a single man long before their marriage. Although he was known by the name Free, his father could have been Heinrich Frey, whose story will follow next month along with the other surprising woman.

Since Anne’s parents were Quakers undoubtedly she



Christ Church

was too. However, her marriage was not approved by the Quakers and the following edict ensued and is recorded in one of their meetings.

At our Monthly Meeting held at Goshen the Fifteenth Day of the Fourth Month (June 15, 1730), the representatives all appeared. The Woman Friends acquainted this meeting that Ann Bevan now Ann Free having been educated among Friends hath joined herself in marriage with one of another society contrary to the discipline established among us having been cautioned to the contrary by the overseers and other Friends. Therefore we declare the said Ann to be no member of our Religious Society until she doth condemn her said transgression to the satisfaction of our Monthly Meeting. Evan Lewis is appointed along (with) the Women Friends to acquaint her therewith and give her a copy of this minute if she desires it.

Evidently Anne desired a copy because the next notation appeared on July 20, 1730 at one of the Quaker meetings.

At our Monthly Meeting held at Goshen the Twentieth Day of the Fifth Month (July 20, 1730), the representatives all appeared. The Friends appointed along with the Women Friends to read the testimony of our Monthly Meeting against Ann Free reports that he read the same to her and offered her a copy according to our last Meetings order.

Here is evidence that in 1730 Anne Bevan rejected the Quakers and married Abraham Free which resulted in her expulsion from the group for marrying outside of her religion. I find this very brave for her to do. Even though women had no status in English law, the Quakers believed every man and woman were equal. She must have known that marrying outside of the religion obviously was forbidden.

Anne and Abraham had five children, John, Mary, William, Abraham, and Martha, all in the eight years before Abraham, her husband, died in 1738 at age 38 just eight years into the marriage. Fortunately Abraham left his considerable holdings to Anne and she became a rich widow with five children at age 30, but not for long. She married Samuel Caley and had two more children. Anne died in 1780 and both she and her second husband are buried in the Friends cemetery in Newtown, Pennsylvania so evidently she reconciled with the Quakers and was accepted back into the group.

Of Anne's children, we are descendent from John and his son William, whose daughter Rebecca (Becky) eventually married James Youngs Durland.

With this link, it not only opens up another ethnic group to our heritage, but also tells us that along with all the Durland ancestors who arrived in the 1600s, we have many on the Free side also.