

MY PEOPLE, THE PALATINES

Henry Mick

In the middle ages a Palatinate was a designated area over which the king had granted the local lord certain sovereign rights, such as the coining of money, the granting of titles, and the organizing of courts. A citizen of such a state was a Palatine.

In the thirteenth century such a state was created in Germany, and ultimately attained the additional privilege of being one of seven states that elected the emperor. This territory was finally divided into what were known as the Upper and Lower Palatinates. It is only with the latter of these that we are concerned here.

These designations have disappeared from modern maps, but the location of the Lower Palatinate can be easily confirmed from the fact that it included such historic cities and towns as Heidelberg, Mannheim, Speyer, Worms, Oppenheim, Bingen Baden, and Darmstadt.

When the Reformation emerged the people of this area very generally accepted the reform, with the result that they were terribly persecuted, particularly in 1622 under Count Johann Tilly, a German general, and later in 1688 under Viscount Henri Turenne, a French general. These defenceless people were unmercifully ejected from their home, their dwellings were pillaged and burned, while they themselves were hunted in the fields and woods half naked, where many of them died of exposure. Others took refuge within the battle lines of the Duke of Marborough great grand uncle of Winston who was leading the armies of the reformers at the time. I find an historian who says that at one time not more than a fiftieth part of the population of the Palatinate remained. This they endured for the faith. Of those who remained alive 7,000 found their way to Rotterdam, Holland; and Queen Anne sent shipping for them and brought them to London.

As a result of this torture the remnant of the Palatines appealed to Queen Anne of England for asylum, who graciously sent shipping for their conveyance. One part of those thus transferred remained in England proper, another part was sent to the American colonies, while a third part were settled in County Limerick, Ireland, in the vicinity of Rathkeale, Adare, Ballingran, and other places. This settlement was made in 1709, and was mainly on Lord Southwell's estate. *(also see Southwell)*

Inasmuch as my forefathers were among those settled on Lord Southwell's estate in County Limerick, Ireland, it is fitting that I should give at least a partial list of the names of those who settled there at that time. These then are some of the names: Baker, Benner, Bethel, Bowen, Bowman, Cole, Dobe, Dulmage, Embury, Fizzle, Guier, Heck, Hoffman, Lawrence, Lowes, Long, Miller, Mick (Mich) Piper, Rhineheart, Rose, Ruchle, Switzer, Sparling, Stark, Shoemaker, Shier, Shoultrace, Teskey (Tesley), Williams and Young. *(also see map of Ballingran estate)*

At the first the Palatines were treated fairly well, as living conditions for peasants were regarded at that time. They were leased eight acres of land for each man, woman, and child at five shilings per acre, and the government paid the rent for the first twenty years. But at the end of fifty years the rent was exorbitantly increased, and they had to pay all themselves, with the result that though "Everywhere they are patterns of industry and frugality" they were obliged to begin migration again. John Wesley who visited them before their leaving for the New World, as he had done many times before, wrote in his Journal: "Have landlords no common sense that they will suffer such tenants as these to be starved away from them."

Thus it was in the early summer of 1760 that Barbara Heck and her husband Paul, Philip Embury and his wife Mary (Switzer), John Lawrence, and many others of their Palatine friends set sail in the ship "Perry" for the new world, and arrived in New York on the 10th day of August of the same year.

Nor did those Palatines leave their religion behind them when they crossed the seas, though some of them for a time became indifferent and even worldly in America, but not Barbara Heck. She demanded of Philip Embury that he preached to them. At first he protested that he had no place to preach, and no congregation. To this she replied that he could conduct worship in his own home, and she would provide the congregation, which she did. Thus Philip Embury preached the first Methodist sermon in New York in 1766; and two years later he dedicated the "Wesley Chapel" on John Street, which became the cradle of Methodism in America. Embury's congregation for his first service in 1766 numbered only five, but the Methodist Church today has a membership of over 8,000,000.

In 1769 a gentleman of means by the name of Thomas Ashton decided to form a colony near Cambridge, New York, to which he gave the name Ashgrove. Many of the Palatines from New York followed him and settled on his estate. Others went to Camden, Salem, not far from Ashgrove, and among these were the Hecks, the Emburys, the Switzers, the Dulmages, the Lawrences and other families. This migration on the part of the Palatines took place in 1770. There they founded the notable Camden Colony, and there Philip Embury died at the early age of forty-five, some say in 1773, and others say in 1775. Embury had not left New York until a missionary had been sent by John Wesley to look after the noble work he started on John Street.

In his new environment Embury soon formed a "Class" made up mainly of Palatines, continued his lay preaching, and served as magistrate and "squire".

It would be pleasant to record that the Palatines were now permanently settled, but such was not the case. Already the guns of the Revolutionary War were beginning to boom, and the Palatines, at least this group of them, had to make another decision; and inasmuch as they had received shelter from the hand of the oppressor before on English soil, they decided to seek it again, and so moved to Canada. This they did by way of Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River. But on reaching Sorel conditions were so unsettled because of the war the Palatines were delayed for some time at this point, where they were well treated, and where John Lawrence served in the army of defence under Sir Guy Carleton, while Paul Heck helped the cause in "war work".

With the return of peace John Lawrence returned to Sorel, where the widow of Philip Embury and he were married, the first wedding in a small church built for the Protestant members of the forces and the community. Soon the whole company proceeded up the St. Lawrence to Augusta in Upper Canada to a point near where the village of Maitland now stands, between Prescott and Brockville. There they sought and received a grant of land from the government, realizing as they always had that they were rural and agricultural people and would be happier in that mode of life.

Here again the fires of evangelism soon began to burn, with Samuel Embury taking the active place of his late father, and becoming the first Methodist Class Leader in Canada. Others soon joined in a great company of Christian workers, expecting great things from God and attempting great things for God.

Years passed, and some of the little company in Augusta were laid to rest, and others were grown old. A new century was born and ever four years had passed, on a fine August day Barbara Heck was found asleep in her arm chair with her German Bible, which had been the inspiration of her life, open in her lap.

She was laid to rest beside her husband, Paul Heck, in the "Old Blue Churchyard" nearby on John Street, New York, and again the years passed but the congregation that she and Philip Embury founded, now grown strong, did not forget her. In due time that congregation raised an imposing monument over her grave, bearing her likeness in bronze, and this inscription: "Barbara Heck put her brave soul against the rugged possibilities of the future, and under God brought into existence American and Canadian Methodism, and between these her memory will ever form a most hallowed link." Nothing more need be said, nothing more can be said.

In 1760 we left Limerick, Ireland, with a group of Palatines for New York. We must now return for another group in 1847, who were to be the Micks of Micksburg. For a short time after their arrival it is said that they lived in the Township of Wilberforce, but later most of them moved to the fifth line of the Township of Stafford, where many of their descendents remain until this day.

The nucleus of this group consisted of Peter Mick (1780 - 1885) known as "Grandfather Mick", his wife, Elizabeth Shoemaker, his one daughter, Mary Anne (Mrs. Adam Miller), and five sons: George, John, Peter, Daniel, and Montford. Most of these had fairly large families: Mary Anne was twice married, first to the father of her oldest son, James Walsh, ^(the tailor's son) and later to Adam Miller, by whom she had at least one son and also Adam Miller, four daughters. George Mick had but one daughter, who married Daniel Sutherland, and died early, John Mick, my grandfather, was twice married, first to an Irish girl, Betsey Sheehan, my father's mother, who died when father was very young. Grandfather married again, this time to a Palatine, Anne Dobe. Thus the family that grew up were as follows: Samuel, Charles, Peter, John, Mary Anne, Jane, Maria, Adam, George, Elizabeth, William Henry and Daniel. Peter Mick had three sons, Peter, George and John, and at least three daughters. Daniel Mick had two sons, Montford and Daniel Sydney, and at least five daughters. Montfort Mick, Sr., had two sons Malcolm and Daniel,

Speaking of my own family: My father was Samuel Mick (1844 - 1912) and my mother was Elizabeth Anne Leach (1854 - 1938). They were married in 1872, and had fourteen children, twelve of whom grew to manhood and womanhood, married and had homes of their own. They were, John, Bertha, Eliza, Alma, Leah, Henry, Adam, Mary, Samuel, Nellie, Abner, Jemima, Reuben and Evelyn.

This little sketch is not to be thought of as a "Family Tree", but it could be made the beginning of one. Of course, a great deal of work would have to be done in tracing out the families, the names of some of the younger members I do not even know, or where they live. But it could be done. I have written what I know that there might be available information that would not be known to very many, perhaps to none now but myself.

Most of the older persons I have mentioned now sleep the long sleep in the United Church Cemetery, located on a farm that my brother John and I once owned, and is now in the possession of my nephew Colin Mick of Micksburg. There on the gravestones it will be seen that my great grandfather lived to the ripe age of 104, that one son Peter, lived to see 96, and that his other sons also lived well into their 80ties. Indeed the little cemetery might well be called the "Palatine Cemetery" of Stafford.

My father was a Sunday School worker for 28 years of his life; and of the twelve of us that grew to maturity eleven also worked in the Sunday School, and I like my uncle, the Rev. Daniel Mick, became a minister: and now that the years are passing I am right glad of it.

When I survey, as far as my knowledge goes, the different lines of decent from Grandfather Mick, I do so with modest pride. I cannot recall a major crime in any of the families, indeed I cannot recall a single arrest for violation of the law. There are cases, however, wherein I could wish that certain of his progeny had been more virtuous in some respects, and more God-fearing.

Most of them, especially in the earlier days, were primary producers, farmers, carpenters, builders, and the like. Then began to appear, especially among the women, public school teachers, and graduate nurses; there have been two clergymen and two doctors; several business men, with at least one particularly outstanding.