

## Essay on the Continuing Evolution of Our Haldeman History

Several years ago, I took up Aunt Betty's search for our lost GGGGF Christian Haldeman, his wife Susannah Spohn, and, in particular, his father John of Lancaster Pa. Finding records of these folks would hopefully allow us to connect our branch of the family tree to some of the older generations that have been documented by others. Through a series of fortunate events and a remarkable resource; that goal has been advanced. It is a complicated story and Betty's remarkable book will be helpful in understanding this history. Before reading any further, please get your little red book and warm up your internet browser, there is quite a story to our family.

First let us review the easy stuff. Stuff, I'm certain you can recite from memory.

- Hershel b 1886 and Bea (Dobson) b 1892 were the children of Samuel and Elizabeth Davies
- Samuel b 1852 and his twin brother Edward along with Mary (Reasoner) b 1843 and Ardelia (Gigax) were the children of Dr. John Spohn Haldeman and Abigail Williams
- Dr John Spohn Haldeman b 1818 and his sister Caroline bc 1835 (Steele) were the children of Christian b 1792 and Susannah Spohn b 1793 both of Lancaster County. Dr John was an accomplished physician and a published biography (red book pg 14) stated that his grandfather John, was also from Lancaster.

This is where Betty hit a bit of a dead-end. As she discovered and I have confirmed, there are ample John Haldemans born in Pennsylvania between 1700 and 1780 but none with a son named Christian born circa 1792. Failing to find this John left us with three possibilities: we hadn't yet found the right record, there were no records (which could mean we came from a Mennonites line or another sect that shunned church records) or the least likely, we were looking for the wrong person.

Our first breakthrough was through an acquaintance in Maryland, but first, allow me to digress and to establish an appropriate context.

Elaine and I living in Columbia Maryland circa 1980 and we go out to buy a Christmas tree. Being of frugal Swiss-German stock we shop for several hours before finding a THE tree. Going to "settle-up" I came face to face with a "ringer" for our Uncle Art. Turns out this guy is also a Haldeman; he has a tree farm in Lancaster and because we were family he overcharged us and insisted on cash. I knew at that point we were somehow related. Fast forward to 2004 where I posted a question about Dr John Spohn on a geneological website and receive in return an e-mail from a Patty Haldeman Wise. We exchanged some information and she forwarded me some information her cousin had received from a lady named Betty Slocum. I explained my relationship to Betty, described her work and we discussed our missing John. She shared portions of her lineage and revealed her ancestors were also from the Lancaster area. She went on to ask something to the effect: *Did I believe I was going to find some long lost relatives?* I responded in typical Haldeman fashion...with a tongue in my cheek...and mentioned running into the Uncle Art look alike while buying a Christmas tree. It turns out that we had bought that tree from her father.

Patty is the remarkable resource. She began helping us by looking for our Christian b 1792. Through her efforts we located three Christian Haldemans living in Lancaster County per the 1820 census. None had a father named John but one did live "down the street" from a Gottlieb Spohn. A parallel search then produced that Gottlieb was Susannah's brother. It seemed to be a reasonable operational assumption that this Christian was our best suspect. He was the right age, had access to Susannah and with respect to his age he clearly also had motive. This Christian and his brother, Jacob (who is Patty's 4GF), were thought to be sons of another Christian Haldeman who had moved his family to Shenandoah Va. Christian and Jacob were his oldest sons and they remained in Lancaster. (Subsequent research found that the Christian who moved to Va. had a family of 10, including, another wrong John).

There is a web site called Haldeman Hollow ([www.scioto.org/halterman/lineages](http://www.scioto.org/halterman/lineages)) that has a plethora of information. On that site, there are several deeds posted. One shows a Christian and Eve selling 150 ± acres of Lancaster land in 1797, land that was formally owned by a John Haldeman. Although this looked quite promising this John is not our Christian's father, however, the deed will but support a theory that will emerge in a couple paragraphs.

In the back of the little red book in the insert is a two sided chart. The one side contains many people that you know and is correct back to the Christian and Susannah Spohn generation. Now turn the chart over and look for Jacob's oldest son Christian. There is little information known about this man but we now know this Christian was b 1745 in Lancaster, and is the one who moved to Shenandoah Va. in 1784 with his wife Eva. Christian and Eva purchased and sold land in Virginia until his death circa 1803. As you will recall, his two oldest children, (Christian and Jacob) remained in Lancaster

This is where it gets fun:

On June 28, 2005, I visited the Lancaster Historical Society and asked to review their Haldeman file. The archivist produced a four inch thick file of loose papers accumulated over the last thirty plus years. There were newspaper clippings about some Megan Haldeman winning a softball game, articles about other notable Haldemans, letters from people looking for Haldeman relations, research papers and notes by other members of this obsessed (and as some of our spouses may say; obsessive) clan. I'm reading through these papers and learn that General Haldimand, commander of all the King George's troops in Canada came to Lancaster to visit his relative Jacob and offered to adopt one of Jacob's children as his heir (Jacob and many others were soon to become Americans and he apparently declined the offer). I turn another page and find a letter from a Mrs. E. Gard Slocum of Glen Haven Drive Pittsburgh. She had stopped by two year ago (1976) but the Society was closed for renovations and she was wondering if ..... A pencil note in the margin indicated the society responded to her requests by sending her a copy of the chart pocketed in the back of the book entitled "Descendents of Jacob Haldeman".

The very next page in the file, filed next to Betty's letter, in the handwritten scrawl of another researcher were two lists of children of two Christian Haldemans. The first list starts Christian, Jacob and lists 10 children in total. The second list was titled Children of Christian and Eve Souder m 9-29-1789. The list of children begins: *John b 1790 – Perry Co. Pa* followed by ***Christian 1792 – to Ohio 1830s*** and continues down to child number 14.

Betty had our Christian b 1793 moving to Ohio 1828 but as the son of John not Christian. Nevertheless, this reference was just too close to ignore. I wrote to Patty again. She responded immediately and confirmed the first list was the family of the Christian and Eva who moved to Shenandoah Va. The second list was new to her but the name Eve Souder was remarkably close to a reference she had as Eve Sando, the wife of the Christian who stayed in Lancaster when his father moved the family to Va.. Considering this information, we postulated the following history:

Jacob b 1722 & Maria Miller  
Christian b 1745 & Eva \_\_\_\_  
Christian b 1767 & Eve Souder  
Christian b 1792 /3 & Susannah Spohn  
Dr. John b 1819 & Abigail Stevens Williams  
Samuel b 1852 & Elizabeth Davies  
Hershel b 1886 & Edna Digby

This proposed line is credible with respect to the age of parents in each generation and each link has some historical documentation to tie it to the adjoining generations, (although we are leveraged from some anonymous handwritten notes). It does not have the complete "primary sources" that researchers want to validate the line and tie it directly to established records. Unbeknownst to me Patty (who is now a distant cousin, explaining why she is so helpful) had sent the information I transcribed to 12 other Haldeman researchers. Twenty-four hours later we received notice from one; that a Dauphin

