

The History And Genealogy
Of The
John Henry German Family



Compiled and Written by
Donald R Williamson
Grandson of
John and Elizabeth German



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Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Introduction	7
The Roots of John German	9
The Roots of Elizabeth Sutherland	28
John and Elizabeth	38
Maps of Oxford County	55
The Family Tree	58
George	68
Catherine	72
Mary	78
John	86
James	93
Nina	98
Sarah	105
Harold	112
Alice	122

The Roots Of John German

The German clan has solid roots in Canada dating back to the late 1700s and can be traced to two major family groups. The first group, which has been well recorded, is the German family of Adolphustown. In this group are the descendants of John German and his family who fought for George III, the King of England, in the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), and fled to Canada as British Empire Loyalists at the end of the war. For their loyalty, the family was awarded land grants in the Adolphustown area on the Bay of Quinte in Ontario.

The second large German family group to be established in Canada are the descendants is that of James German of Nissouri, Ontario. James immigrated to Upper Canada from New York State in 1818 and settled in Oxford County, Nissouri Township in 1823. It is this second family that is of importance to the descendants of John Henry German of West Zorra Township, Oxford County. He was a great grandson of James German.

It is the assumption of George German, author of *The Genealogy Of The Family Of James German*, that the family of James German originally came to the New World from Germany as did John German of Adolphustown. No data has been found to prove or disprove this theory.

In the late 1600s and early 1700s there was a mass migration of Paletine Germans from Southern Germany. The journey was long and difficult. The Paletines travelled down the Rhine River to Holland and departed for the New World either directly from Rotterdam or via England. The German Paletines settled throughout New York and Pennsylvania. The majority of those who remained in New York settled in the Hudson and Mohawk River Valleys.

JAMES AND BETSEY GERMAN

Interestingly, both James and Betsey German were born and lived in America prior to George Washington becoming that nation's first President. According to an earlier brief German history, prepared by William Morrison German of Peterborough, Ontario, James German was born 2 January 1782 and Betsey Brown, wife of James German, was born 9 May 1784. In the Autobiography of Thomas Brush Brown we learn that Elizabeth (Betsey) Brown married James German. No other details are given. George German, author of the James German genealogy, continues to search the archival data of New York State to learn more details about James and Betsey.

THE BROWNS

In the writings of Thomas Brush Brown, we find considerable detail about the Brown family. Thomas Sr., a comb-maker by trade, was born in Northumberland, England. He immigrated to America and lived in Scituate Township, Rhode Island. By his first wife he had three daughters. He married, for his second wife, a lady who had been captured as a child by the Indians, and had been in captivity several years. The Rhode Island archival data shows that Thomas Brown and his wife Elcy had six children, all born in Scituate Township, Rhode Island: Fleet b. 17 Jul 1746, Judith b. 3 Jun 1748, Job b. 29 Apr 1750, Deborah b. 11 Jan 1754, Thomas (Betsey's father) b. 18 Oct 1755, and Joseph (Thomas Brush Brown's father) b. 28 Sep 1761.

Betsey's grandfather and father both fought in the American Revolutionary War. Thomas Sr. was wounded. Her father, Thomas Brown Jr. (1755-1838) enlisted in George Washington's Army at Richmanton, Rhode Island on 1 January 1776, at twenty-one years of age.

After their years in Rhode Island the family moved north through Vermont, where some members of the group married and settled. But others accompanied Thomas Sr. on through the Lake Champlain district, settling at Caldwell Manor, a farm in Lower Canada close to the Richelieu River, the Vermont border and the historic military garrison at Fort Lennox.

An indenture dated October 1789 shows that Thomas Brown (Sr.) purchased 100 acres of land at Caldwell Manor, Lot No. four in the fourth Concession, north of forty-five degrees of latitude. The indenture shown below is reproduced in part, including the signature of Thomas Brown shown in the lower right.

THIS INDENTURE, made the
 Day of *October* in the *Seventh*
 Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord GEORGE the
 Third, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and
 Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c. and in the Year of
 our Lord 1789 between Henry Caldwell, of Beloeil near Quebec,
 Esq; of the one Part, and *Thomas Brown*
 of the other Part, WITNESSETH, that for and in Consideration
 of the yearly Rents, Covenants, Provisions, Conditions, and
 Agreements herein-after referred and contained, on the Part and
 Behalf of the said *Thomas Brown*
 his Heirs and Assigns, to be paid, kept, done, and performed,
 he, the said Henry Caldwell, hath granted, conveyed, and confirmed,
 and, by these Presents, doth grant, convey, and confirm, to the
 said *Thomas Brown* his Heirs and
 Assigns, all that Piece or Parcel of Land, containing *One*
Hundred Acres English measure, being
 Part of Caldwell Manor, Lot No. *four* in the *fourth*
Concession north of *45* by five Degrees of
latitude

Signed *Henry Caldwell*
 In the presence of
Henry A. Miller
Patrick, Brown
Thomas Brown

Brush Brown writes how his father fought with a bear in his cornfield. Although he had no weapon but his hoe, he was able to kill the animal. Their family lived in terror of Indians. They well remembered the fate of their grandmother and the many others who were captured and scalped. With growing signs of war between the American and British forces, Joseph decided to leave the country during the war and move to a more thickly

settled place, where there would be less danger from the Indians. He and his family moved to New York State and settled near Plattsburg, remaining in that part of the country during the War of 1812 (1812-1815). Thomas Sr. remained in Lower Canada until his death, leaving a large family of sons and daughters.

Thomas Brown Jr. married Hannah Spencer. They had a family of six children: Varnum, James, Russell (who died young), Martha, Elizabeth (Betsey), and Abigail.

JAMES AND BETSEY IN NEW YORK

How James German and Betsey Brown met or where and when they were married has not been determined. According to William Morrison German, James and Betsey had a child named Ashel Morris German, born in Montgomery County, New York, somewhere near Fonda, on 13 February 1813. He also states that they came up the Hudson River and along the Mohawk Valley. They worked their way along, stopping at places enroute.

At some point between 1813 and 1817, the James German family arrived in the Buffalo area where it is known they resided in 1817. Thomas Brush Brown, a cousin of Betsey, writes: "Father (Joseph) . . . started westward in 1815. With a team of old horses and wagon, mother (Rebecca Brush Brown) and the children, bed and bedding, all in one craft, making our way slowly on, when money failed stopping and laboring to earn more, we pursued our journey, stopping sometimes longer and sometimes shorter, until in 1817 we reached the western part of New York State, near Buffalo." The move for the German family must have been equally difficult, especially since they were travelling with several young children. Betsey's father and her sister Abigail also accompanied them.

JAMES AND BETSEY MOVE TO UPPER CANADA

Brush Brown writes that in 1817, "While residing near Buffalo father found an elder brother (Thomas--Betsey's father) of his about to move into Upper Canada with his son-in-law J. German. Having the same predilections as ourselves for British

rule, he encouraged us to return with him to Canada, which we all did in the winter of 1818. My uncle moved first into Canada, settling in a place called Short Hills. Then father joined him there, crossing at Black Rock. For the first time we beheld that wonderful cataract--Niagara Falls. Halting in our journey for a few days at uncle's we then travelled to what is now Smithville."

The Short Hills area is twelve miles west of Niagara Falls and was later called St. Johns. This is the place where James German and his family first settled in Canada. James probably worked for a local farmer in exchange for provisions. During this period, their last three children were born. By 1823 he had assembled his family and new possessions and started the trek to Nissouri to establish his homestead.

After working to clear thirty acres of land for another man, and receiving a yoke of oxen, two cows and some provisions for doing so, Betsey's Uncle Joseph and family made the trip to Nissouri the previous year, starting for their new home in March 1822.

This journey is also described by Thomas Brush Brown: "Our route was then over the mountain road, Hamilton at that time comprised only a few houses. We continued on by way of Brantford, which was mostly peopled by Indians. We crossed the river on ice, there being no bridge; then through the Burford Plains, which proved to be the finest wheat land in that part of the country; thence to Oxford to the south branch of the River Thames, following it down to Chote's Tavern; then turning north in the Township of Nissouri."

THEIR NISSOURI HOMESTEAD

In 1823, James German settled three miles east of the Joseph Brown family in Nissouri, which at the time was an almost unbroken isolated wilderness. This territory, which had previously been Indian land, had only been surveyed and opened for settlement in 1820. The Oxford County land registry records show that James purchased 100 acres of land in East Nissouri, Concession 11, Lot 29, from Adam Killman 9 February 1824.

The deed was not registered until 23 June 1835. The price paid for the land was twelve pounds and ten shillings in the lawful money of Upper Canada--the 1824 equivalent of fifty cents per acre.

The home built by James German is described in the "Collectors Lists For Taxes" of 1841 as a one storey, squared or hewed timber house with two fireplaces or stoves. The Collectors Lists indicates that, as of 1841, he had cleared seventy acres of land. Other records also show that James German has the distinction of being the first nurseryman in the township. He had carried seeds of apple, pear and plum from the Short Hills, which he planted to form the first orchard in the area.

THE FAMILY OF JAMES AND BETSEY

Betsey's father returned to Buffalo c.1833 where he received a military pension from 1833 to 1838 for having fought in the Revolutionary War of Independence. Brush Brown states: "He afterwards drew a pension of \$80 a year by returning to his native land, which he did in his advanced years, dying near Buffalo."

The George German genealogy of the James German family credits James and Betsey with raising twelve children. The first nine children are believed to have all been born in New York State. The last three children were born in Short Hills, Upper Canada. Birth years shown for the twelve children are based on information from gravestones, obituaries and census data. Dates may differ from previous family records. The children and their birth years are:

Horace	c. 1805
Hiram	c. 1807
Pamelia	1808
Symanthy	c. 1810
Francis A	1811
Ashel M	1812
Eliza	c. 1814
Varnum	1815
Lyman	1817
Jacob G	1819
Luannie	c. 1820
Mary E	1822

The East Nissouri 1851 census shows: the religious denomination for James as Universalist and for Betsey as Baptist; their age as seventy and sixty-nine years, respectively; his occupation was shown as a farmer; both declared that they were born in the United States; and that they were now living in a frame house. A stream flowing through the property of James German was named German Creek on Tremaine's Map of Oxford County, Canada West, published in 1857.

Jacob Grant German, son of James and Betsey, helped found the near-by town of St. Marys along with Squire Ingersoll and his party. In Jacob's diary, he writes: "We discovered a good location for grist mills shortly before dinner time on Tuesday, Sept 7th, 1841. We were soon busy setting up our shanty." This was the first building to stand on the St. Marys site. The full story by Morrison German was published in the London Free Press 7 March 1964. Another son, Ashel Morris German operated a livery stable business in St. Marys and also became Justice of the Peace in that community.

The Oxford County land registry records show that, on 17 September 1858, James and Betsey German disposed of their Nissouri farm. Fifty acres was sold to Varnum L. German the Elder and the other fifty acres was leased to Richard Drake German.

THEIR DEATH AND BURIAL

East Nissouri was the final home for James and Betsey German. Both died in 1860 and were buried in the Lakeside Methodist Church Cemetery. Although a grave marker can no longer be found, German relatives recall seeing the marker. Other evidence substantiates the year of death and place of burial.

In the 1861 East Nissouri census, accompanying the Varnum German family information, is the following notation: "Deaths in 1860--one male age seventy-nine and one female age seventy-seven, both died of old age." William Morrison German records that both their deaths occurred in October 1860 and that both were buried in the Lakeside Cemetery. The Oxford County Library

records for the Lakeside Methodist Cemetery has the following entry: "In memory of James German aged 78 yrs." The grave is within three lots of Abigail Brown's grave, Betsey's sister. Abigail died Apr 27, 1857 age 76 yrs and 11 dys.

One of James' and Betsey's sons, Francis A. German donated part of his land to form the Lakeside Methodist Cemetery. Another son, Jacob G. German invented the wire fence that was used throughout East Nissouri. Jacob's fence was installed around the Lakeside Cemetery.

THOMAS BRUSH BROWN

It would be unjust not to write a few brief words about Thomas Brush Brown (1804-1893), who contributed so much to the knowledge of our ancestral families and devotedly served as a minister for the King of kings.

In 1822, he, with his father's family, moved into the Township of Nissouri, Oxford County. Seven years later at a Methodist camp meeting held in Westminster Township, Thomas Brush Brown went forward and knelt at a crude altar and there became a new creature in Christ Jesus. The minister called on Thomas to lead in prayer and he hardly had opened his mouth when the Lord so abundantly blessed him that he could not contain himself. He writes, "I sprang to my feet, clapping my hands and shouting at the top of my voice Glory to God!"

Immediately after his conversion he commenced serving the Master. He was appointed leader of a Bible class ten miles distance from his home; and he walked that distance every Sabbath and, frequently during the week to prayer meetings. He soon received his license as a Methodist Episcopal Preacher. Often he travelled ten to twenty miles from home, preaching regularly once or more often, every Sabbath. Without any roads he found his way to his appointments, at first on foot and then sometimes on horseback, crossing creeks and swamps on fallen timber through the unbroken forest. In the beginning, there were no churches or school houses. He held his meetings in the crude shanties of early settlers. Thomas