

## **The Saunders Family Part 1 – German Ancestry**

This month's family history will feature the Saunders family beginning with Benjamin. He married Mary Johnston and the couple had at least four children: Aaron, George, Leonard and Mary. Before we discuss their children, we will share more about Benjamin and Mary. According to Benjamin's obituary, he passed away on December 22, 1887 in Anderdon at the age of 82. It also says that he was born in Cumberland Co., Pennsylvania in 1805 and came to Anderdon in 1857. There are fewer details about Benjamin's wife Mary, but her obituary states that she passed away at the age of 75 on Wednesday, February 4, 1891 in Anderdon.

As mentioned, Benjamin and Mary had four children who each appear in the 1861 Census and include Aaron, George, Leonard, and Mary. Just a note if you want to look them up in the Census, their last name is sometimes spelt Sanders, not Saunders. In the following Census from 1871, Benjamin and Mary are listed with Aaron (spelt Erin in Census), Leonard (spelt Lenord in Census) and Mary, but George is not listed. Interestingly, the 1881 Census lists Benjamin (spelt Bingiman) and his wife Mary, whose origin says "German." Benjamin, along with their sons Aaron and Leonard each have "Africa" for their origin.

Benjamin and Mary's first child Aaron appears in the 1891 Census as a farmer and his brother Leonard is listed under the same household, working as a vessel cook. Several years later, in 1912, Aaron's name appears on a form for US Border Crossings from Canada. At the time he was 58 years old and working as a Teamster. According to Aaron's 1930 obituary he passed away at his sister Mary's home on December 5<sup>th</sup> at roughly the age of 80. His obituary also mentions "About five years ago Mr. Saunders suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered, and in October last he was again stricken and failed rapidly from then on. The funeral was held on December 7<sup>th</sup>, from the A.M.E. church. Mr. Saunders was the son of the late

Benjamin and Mary Saunders, and was the eldest of a family of four, Leonard and George, deceased, and Mrs. Mary E. Chapman, mentioned above. Early in life Mr. Saunders took up farming which he followed until his health failed. Besides Mrs. Chapman, he leaves to mourn two nieces, Mrs. Estella Stokes, and Miss Mae E. Stokes.” Although no wife is mentioned in Aaron’s obituary, he is recorded as widowed but no name is included.

**What we publish is not a complete history of any family and is based on the documents that are available. We welcome photos and information to fill in the gaps. See you next week for part 2.**