

Men Named Isaac Meek

By Christopher A. Meek

There are many genealogies for men named Isaac Meek who lived in the area of S. W. Pennsylvania and the West Virginia panhandle between 1770 and 1800. This was a remote hostile land that went through a very tumultuous period of development. The early settlers had to fight the Indians, the British and the environment just to survive. Very few records were kept and even fewer survived.

The area was claimed by both Virginia and the Proprietor of Pennsylvania. It was part of Augusta Co., VA as well as Bedford Co., PA. In 1776 Virginia created Monongalia County, Ohio County, and Yohogania County from the West Augusta District. Brooke Co., VA was created in 1797 from part of Ohio County. The boundary dispute between Virginia and Pennsylvania was officially resolved in 1780 and the boundaries established November 18, 1784.

Westmoreland County was formed from Bedford in 1773. Washington County was formed from Westmoreland in 1781. Fayette County was formed from Westmoreland in 1783. Allegheny County was formed from Washington in 1788. Greene County was formed from Washington County in 1796.

Following is a discussion of the various records concerning men named Isaac Meek. As in most frontier situation record keeping was limited. This information was taken from various abstracts of official records. Undocumented genealogies are not included. This author has not personally viewed any of the original documents.

Much of the information referred to came from Guy Meek of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Vol. 1, Feb. 2004 by Melton P. Meek, MD which was taken in part from the J. W. Meek Papers kept in The Texas History Center, Austin, TX and the Draper Papers kept at the Newberry Library in Chicago.

Anne Arundel Co., MD

Guy Meek II was the grandson of Guy Meek I who was the immigrant ancestor of one large Meek family¹.

Isaac Meek was born 4 Mar 1710 in Anne Arundel Co., MD. He was baptized 24 Jun 1719 at St. Anne's Parish. Parish records name his parents as Guy and Dorothy Meek. Deed Book R. B. #2 p182 dated 10 Mar 1847 indicate that he purchased 40 acres of land known as Ridsby's Beginning. He also purchased 50 acres known as Vernallas in 1745.

Deed Book B. B. #2 p113 dated 11 Jan 1757 indicates that Isaac sell all of his land to John Mercer. In April 1758 his wife Rachel gives up her right of Dower. This is the last record for Isaac and Rachel in Anne Arundel County.

There is no evidence known to this author that would indicate who Isaac's children were.

¹ Joseph L. Meek unpublished papers

Men Named Isaac Meek

Harrison Co., VA/WV

(Formed in 1784)

The following is included because of the close proximity of Harrison Co., VA to the Meek families in S. W. Pennsylvania.

Harrison Co., WV Deed Book #3 p52 dated 1778 Land Grant for Isaac Meek for 360 acres on the waters of Lost Run.

Harrison Co., WV Deed Book 1 p330 dated 1790 between Isaac Meek and wife Rachel of the County of Harrison Co., WV first part and John Duvall sold 360 acres on Lost Run and Bankleg Run.

There is no evidence known to this author that would indicate where they came from or who their children were. (Note: Harrison County existed in Virginia before it was part of West Virginia.)

Westmoreland Co., PA

This is the earliest official record of a person named Meek in S. W. Pennsylvania. However, the Virginia land grants for the Meek family in Allegheny indicated that this family settled on their land in 1773.

Isaac Meek was listed in the 1774 tax list of Tyrone TWP, Westmoreland Co., PA.

This is in modern day Fayette County. It is assumed that he was at least 18 years old and born before 1756.

Washington Co., PA

Isaac Meek was listed in the 1781 military records as being a lieutenant in the Virginia militia under Col. David Shepard where he fought the Indians between Ft. Pitt and Ft. Henry (Wheeling, West VA). Other records indicate his commission was dated 17 May 1778 and was sworn by Silas Hedges and John Wells.

Isaac Meek was listed in the 1783 in tax list for Bethlehem TWP, Washington Co., PA.

Isaac Meek was listed in the 1786 tax list Somerset TWP, Washington Co., PA

One cannot be certain how many men are involved in the above records. Isaac Meek born 1746 is usually credited with the military record.

1 Mar 1801 deed, living next to John Meek s/o Samuel in Bethlehem TWP

1 Apr 1808 buys 175 acres on Ten Mile Creek Amwell TWP

Isaac Meeks was listed in the 1810 census for Amwell TWP, Washington Co., PA born before 1765.

Isaac Meek was listed in the 1810 census for Morris TWP, Green Co., PA born between 1765 and 1784.

Men Named Isaac Meek

Apr 1812 sold land in Amwell TWP
7 May 1812 buys land on waters of Fish Pot & Plum Run
23 Jun 1812 buys 29 acres on Ten Mile Creek
Jan 1815 sold land in Amwell TWP
Jul 1816 sold land on Ten Mile Creek

Isaac Meek was listed in the 1820 census of E. Bethlehem TWP, Washington Co., PA. He was born between 1775 and 1794.

Isaac Meek was listed in the 1830 census for E. Bethlehem TWP, Washington Co., PA. He was born between 1760 and 1770. The oldest female was born between 1780 and 1790.

These records do not allow for a determination of how many different men are involved. They do indicate that there was at least one older person named Isaac Meek born before 1765 and one younger person named Isaac Meek born after 1765. It is not possible to determine if the older Isaac Meek in the 1810 census is the same person that resided in Westmoreland County in 1774.

Ohio Co., VA

(Includes Brooke County formed in 1797.)

Ohio County was immediately west of Washington Co., PA. Anyone living there would have been familiar with the Meek families in Washington County.

Isaac Meek buys 50 acres on Buffalo Creek from Derrick Hoagland in 5 Jun 1775, Deed Book 1 p13 .

Isaac Meek was awarded a land grant in Ohio Co., VA on Buffalo Creek on 10 Nov 1785. (Other references indicated he had certificate for 400 acres on the waters of Buffalo Creek to include the settlement in the year 1775. Book "S", p. 504 Warrant #42)

Isaac Meek sold land on Buffalo Creek to his daughter Elizabeth and husband, Beal Pumphrey 5 Dec 1798.

Jefferson Co., OH

The following concern Isaac Meek born 1746 based on the personal papers of his son Jacob and several grandsons who had personal knowledge of the matter.

Isaac Meek obtains 680 acres in Jefferson Co., Ohio in 1798.

Early tax lists between 1806 and 1809 list an Isaac Meek in Smithfield TWP, Jefferson Co., OH. Isaac Meek is listed in the 1810 census of Smithfield TWP, Jefferson Co., OH. However this appears to have been a tax list also according to Ancestry.com.

From 1820 to 1840 two men named Isaac Meek are listed in the census for Smithfield TWP, Jefferson Co., OH. The first was born between 1740 and 1750. The second was born between 1790 and 1794. The second person was listed in 1820 with a wife born between 1794 and 1804 and no children.

There was a third younger Isaac Meek in Smithfield TWP born about 1810. He is listed in the 1840 census with a wife born between 1810 and 1820 and four children under the age of 10. In 1850 This Isaac is residing without his family in the home of Richard Moore. In the immediate vicinity were William Meek born about 1808 and Jacob Meek born about 1810.

Men Named Isaac Meek

In nearby Washington TWP, Tuscarawas County there was another man named Isaac Meek born in 1797 Virginia. Also listed was Jacob Meek born in 1794 Virginia. Also listed was Jacob Meek born about 1785 Ohio with wife Rachel.

Discussion

Isaac Meek of Jefferson Co., OH was born 14 Jan 1746 according to family records. He married (1) Mary Robinson. He married (2) Rachel Hedges 31 Jan 1792. He died 12 Dec 1840. Census data supports his date of birth. While the family records indicated that he was born in Annapolis, MD it is not clear that this is a proven fact. Never-the-less Isaac Meek of Jefferson Co., OH and his family are well documented. That includes a son named Isaac who by most accounts was born about in 1795.

It seems likely that Isaac Meek of Jefferson Co., OH was the same man who appears in the records of Ohio Co., VA and Brooke Co., VA. Letters between his grandchildren support this. He sells land in Brooke County at about the same time he buys land in Jefferson County.

During the same time period there was a man named Isaac Meek in Washington Co., PA. He may have been the man in the 1783 tax list of Bethlehem Township. The 1786 tax list of Somerset Township also includes the name Isaac Meek. On 1 Mar 1801 Isaac Meek appears in a deed record of Bethlehem Township. The property is bounded by John Meek son of Samuel Meek. On 1 Apr 1808 he buys 175 acres on Ten Mile Creek in Amwell Township and he appears in the 1810 census of Amwell Township. The age group indicates a birth before 1765.

Also in the 1810 census of Morris TWP, Greene Co., PA is Isaac Meek born between 1765 and 1784. Subsequent census records indicate a birth between 1765 and 1769. The relationship between the two men named Isaac Meek is unknown. Again they lived in the same general vicinity as Samuel Meek and his sons.

The younger Isaac Meek was not named in the will of Samuel Meek but was about the same age as Samuel's sons. Also living in Morris Township was Elisha Meek born about 1765 and William Meek born between 1765 and 1784. Samuel's son, William, was enumerated in East Bethlehem Township. The younger Isaac cannot be the son of Isaac Meek born 1746 in Jefferson Co., OH.

Thus there was Isaac Meek born in 1746 listed in the 1810 census/tax list of Jefferson Co., OH. His son, Isaac, would only have been 15 in 1810. At the same time the census reveals that there was a man named Isaac Meek born before 1765 in Amwell TWP, Washington Co., PA and a younger man named Isaac Meek born between 1765 and 1769 living in Morris TWP, Green Co., PA.

The records are incomplete and sometimes difficult to interpret. The earliest known date for Isaac Meek born 1746 in Ohio Co., VA is 1775. He could have been the person in the 1774 tax list of Tyrone TWP, Westmoreland Co., PA. This area is east of the Washington/Greene county line. Since it is now known that a different man named Isaac Meek lived in Washington County as early as 1783 one cannot say that he was not the man in the 1774 tax list. If the Washington County Isaac was the man in the 1774 tax list that pushes his earliest possible date of birth back

Men Named Isaac Meek

to before 1756. There may well have been two men named Isaac Meek of approximately the same age living in the S. W. PA/Ohio Co., VA area.

Neither of the two men named Isaac Meek in Washington Co., PA could have been the son of Isaac Meek born 1746. One cannot be entirely certain that the man in the 1810 census/tax list of Jefferson Co., OH did not also own land in Washington Co., PA and just happened to get captured in the 1810 census of that county. However, that seems improbable to this writer. According to the correspondence of the descendant of Isaac Meek born 1746 he was very active in political and religious affairs of Ohio. It seems unlikely he would reside in Washington Co., PA.

A person named Isaac Meek purchased land in Harrison Co., VA in 1778. Harrison Co., VA was formed in 1784 from Monongalia. It was South East of Ohio Co and at that time adjoined Ohio County. This area is not as close to Jefferson Co., OH as Washington Co., PA. However, it is not a great distance away from either. Isaac sold his land in 1790 and his wife's name was Rachael. He was born before 1760. However, he could not be the Isaac Meek of Jefferson Co., OH because that person did not marry Rachel Hedges until 1792. One cannot exclude the possibility that this man could have moved to Washington Co., PA in the early 1790's.

If the person in Harrison Co., VA was Isaac Meek born in 1710 he would have been 80 years old in 1790. It is unlikely that he would have lived to be recorded in the 1810 census. Therefore it is assumed that the Isaac Meek in Harrison Co., VA was not the man in the 1810 census of Washington Co., PA. He could have been the Isaac Meek in the 1774 tax list of Tyrone TWP, Westmoreland Co., PA but there is nothing to base that on. He could have been the Isaac Meek in the 1783 tax list of Washington County but there is also nothing to base that on.

Traditional Genealogies

In his 1902 book H. B. Meek describes the children of Jacob Meek born 1698, son of Adam Meek. He provided little information about Isaac Meek except that he went to Pennsylvania and Ohio. Carleton Meek expanded on the work of H. B. Meek and concluded that this Isaac was the person born in 1746 and also lists him as a son of Jacob Meek born 1798. Neither author provided any proof of their conclusions.

Joseph Meek and others concluded that Isaac Meek born in 1746 was the son of Isaac Meek born 1710 in Anne Arundel Co., MD and the grandson of Guy Meek. Again, he did not provide any proof and there are no records of who the children of Isaac Meeks born in 1710 were. It appears that he relied on information from descendants of Isaac Meek born 1746.

There is a record of genealogical activity that pre-date the 1902 book by H. B. Meek which indicates that the descendants of Isaac Meek born 1746 were interested in their heritage. A letter dated 23 Apr 1862 from Jacob Meek son of Isaac born 1746 discusses an incident with the Indians on his father's property in Ohio. A letter dated 22 Oct 1883 from James W. Meek to Channing F. Meek indicates the descendants were working on genealogies earlier than can be found for other Meek families.

Men Named Isaac Meek

Colonel Channing F. Meek (1855-1912) and more significantly his brother Judge Edward R. Meek (1865-) were sons of Jacob Meek son of Isaac. Several pieces of correspondence between Edward R. Meek and other descendants have survived. Much of this correspondence concerned anecdotal stories about Isaac Meek born 1746 that provide few details which can be verified. However one major fact came out of this early correspondence.

It was stated that Isaac was born 14 Jan 1746 in Anne Arundel Co., MD. Further it was claimed that this fact was written in the bible in the possession of Winfield Scott Meek (1848-1910). Unfortunately there is no evidence that the bible has survived. Winfield S. Meek was the son of William son of Isaac Meek born 1746. It is not clear who the bible originally belong to and no inferences can be made as to who wrote the information or when the information was written into the bible. There is no indication that the information was a contemporaneous record of Isaac's birth which would be required for proof of when and where Isaac was born.

The statement of Isaac's birth as well as the validity of the statement is an extremely important issue because it ties Isaac Meek born 1746 to Anne Arundel Co., MD and by inference to Guy Meek. Bible records are frequently given undue weight as genealogical proof. In fact many of them are merely someone genealogy recorded in a bible. Who wrote in the bible and what sources they had are usually lost to history.

There is evidence from the correspondence that a small number of descendants born in the mid-19th century became interested in genealogy. Much of the correspondence was written in the first decade of 20th century shortly before most of these family genealogists died. Most of the correspondence is the retelling of family legend which provides little factual data. But there is evidence that one or more of the descendants did actual research in Maryland records. One letter refers to records of several men named Meek immigrating to Maryland or receiving land in Maryland. The information is recognizable as data available today in abstracted form. The data includes information on Guy Meek.

Did they focus on Guy Meek because they knew something or did they focus on him simply because there is documentation about man named Isaac Meek born 1710 who was the son of Guy Meek? Many amateur genealogists are unduly influenced by naming patterns within families. This group claimed that Isaac Meek born 1710 was the father of Isaac Meek born 1746. However this information comes later in the correspondence while earlier correspondence states that little was known about Isaac Meek before he came to Ohio Co., VA.

The largest amount of information about Isaac Meek comes from the writings of James W. Meek (1843-1919) also known as J. W. Meek. He was actually a great grandson of Isaac Meek while the others mentioned were grandchildren. It was through his letters that Isaac's place of birth is known. Once the information became known it was repeated often within the group giving one the impression that it was an excepted fact within the family. But reading the correspondence suggests that it was an unproven fact circulated later in the lives of these descendants.

Subsequent genealogist such as Dwight and Eleanor Freeburn produced typical genealogical charts which many modern genealogists are familiar with. The information about Isaac Meek

Men Named Isaac Meek

born 1746 has been repeated hundreds of times without sources and has become excepted fact for many people.

The early researcher had an advantage of knowing living relative who knew at least second hand information about Isaac Meek and they knew about the family structure. While they were able to find some factual data about Isaac Meek and his descendants they lacked an understanding of how many different Meek families there were in the United States. They also did not understand how many different Meek families lived in S. W. Pennsylvania and Ohio Co., VA including how many men named Isaac Meek lived in this area.

Not only did these early genealogist provide no proof of their claims about Isaac's birth no evidence has turned up in over 100 years of research. Could Isaac Meek born 1746 have been a son of Isaac Meek born 1710? The answer is yes. But the Isaac Meek who was born before 1765 and who lived in Washington Co., PA could also have been a son of Isaac Meek born 1710. Even if there was proof that Isaac Meek born in 1710 had a son named Isaac, and there is none, there is no evidence which Isaac Meek known today was that son.

DNA and Other Meek Families

As a result of genealogical books by H. B. Meek and Carleton Meek many people beginning a genealogy of their Meek family believe that the ancestors who settled in Allegheny Co., PA in the 1770's were brothers of the ancestors who settled nearby in Washington Co., PA. While some genealogists including this writer questioned the reliability of these early authors it was not until the Meek DNA project tested descendants that it was proven that these two groups of Meek families were totally unrelated. The group of Meek families in Allegheny County are designated as Group A and most of the men in Washington are designated Group B².

Robert Meek born about 1732 lived in Washington Co., PA and Ohio Co., VA during the same period that the men named Isaac Meek lived in the area. DNA test show that he was not related to the Meek families in Washington Co., PA or the families in Allegheny Co., PA. He was related to a number of early Meek ancestors who lived in Canada, Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas who came from Ireland. They are designated Group E.

Ancestors are grouped based on the similarity of a Y-DNA test conducted on their descendants. No man in one group can be related to a man in another group. In the case of the Meek families there is no margin of error for the analysis of DNA results alone. However, the reliability of the genealogy is critical to the task of combining the DNA results with genealogical data.

When one looks at the history of how different Meek genealogies were developed it is clear that H. B. Meek had very little information on Isaac Meek born 1746. Yet he included Isaac Meek in a group of ancestors that he erroneously identified as son of Jacob Meek born 1698. It was shown earlier that descendants of Isaac Meek born 1746 were working on the genealogy of Isaac Meek at the same time that H. B. Meek wrote his book in 1902.

² The Meek/Meeks Y-DNA Project <http://meekdna.com>

Men Named Isaac Meek

Carleton Meek expanded on the work of H. B. Meek and more clearly identified Isaac Meek as the person born in 1746. He probably had information from descendants of Isaac Meek yet he continued with the conclusions of H. B. Meek placing Isaac as a son of Jacob Meek born 1698. Joseph Meek on the other hand paid more attention to the work of Isaac Meek descendants and said that Isaac Meek born 1746 was the son of Isaac Meek born 1710 the son of Guy Meek.

Returning to DNA, there is one DNA test from a descendant of Isaac Meek born 1746 through his son Joshua. It would be desirable to have additional tests from descendants of other sons of Isaac Meek to confirm that there is no mistake in the genealogy. However at the current time there is no reason to believe that the person tested was not a descendant of Isaac Meek born 1746.

Isaac Meek born 1746 was related to the ancestors named Meek in Washington Co., PA, who have been identified as DNA Group B. How he was related to any one of them is not revealed by DNA. There is no proof of who the fathers of the men in Washington County were and there is no proof of who the common ancestor (progenitor) of the group was. There is no DNA test for a proven descendant of Guy Meek, Isaac Meek born 1710 or Jacob Meek born 1717. There is no DNA test for a proven descendant of Jacob Meek born 1698 or his father Adam Meek. Therefore DNA does not tie anyone to those early ancestors. However, Isaac Meek born 1746 was related to his contemporaries named Meek who lived in Washington Co., PA.

Conclusions

The grandchildren and great grandchildren of Isaac Meek born 1746 began working on the family history more than 130 years ago. Despite the advantage of living close in time to their ancestor they were not experienced genealogists. They made mistakes typical of amateur genealogists. They may or may not be correct about the father of Isaac Meek born 1746. Unfortunately the only proof brought forward was a statement about the date and place of birth of Isaac Meek from a family bible. The bible did not survive and genealogist today do not know what was actually written in the bible or if the person who wrote it actually had a reliable source for the information. Amateurs often copy information from a source and in so doing add identifying information on the person they believe the source referred to. Genealogist today cannot be certain what was written in the bible.

The genealogies by H. B. Meek and Carleton Meek had serious errors and cannot be depended upon. Unfortunately they actually put their genealogies in book form and sent them to libraries across the country. A review of on line genealogies shows that their version of Isaac's father is more widely copied than that of the descendants of Isaac.

Isaac Meek born 1710 in Anne Arundel Co., MD had a wife named Rachel according to deed records. There is no known record regarding his children. One cannot exclude the possibility that he is the same man who owned land in in Harrison Co., VA between 1778 and 1790 who also had a wife named Rachel. Even if that were true the fact that there is no evidence of who his children were complicates any genealogy leading to him.

Men Named Isaac Meek

The Isaac Meek who own land in Harrison County between 1778 and 1990 may or may not be the man with the same name in the 1774 tax list of Westmoreland Co., PA or the 1783 tax list of Washington Co., PA. There is no proof that he actually lived in Harrison County or if he did when he left. However, one would normally conclude that he lived in Harrison County for some part of time he owned land there. But one cannot exclude the possibility that he was a land speculator who never lived in Harrison County.

Isaac Meek born 1746 was in Ohio Co., VA as early as 1775 and was mentioned in various records including those concerning the formation of Brooke Co., VA in 1797. He sells his land and leave for Jefferson Co., OH in 1798. This man appears to have a continuous time line from 1775 to 1841 when he dies.

Just a few miles west in Washington Co., PA lived another man named Isaac Meek born before 1765 and possibly earlier. He is likely the man named Isaac Meek who appeared in the 1783 tax list of Bethlehem TWP, Washington Co., PA. This Isaac Meek is somewhat problematic. He has no real identity and there was a younger man named Isaac Meek born between 1765 and 1769 also in Washington County. By the time of the 1810 census there were Isaac Meek born 1746 in Jefferson Co., OH, Isaac Meek born before 1765 in Bethlehem TWP, Washington Co., PA and Isaac Meek born between 1765 and 1769 in Morris TWP, Greene Co., PA.

The fact that that there were two men named Isaac Meek who could have been born about the same time places a requirement on any effort to identify the father of either one. There must be recognized proof that one of the men named Isaac Meek is the son of the father or the other man named Isaac Meek must be excluded. In this case neither task can be accomplished with the documentation currently available.

Even if Isaac Meek born 1746 was born in Anne Arundel Co., MD that does not prove that he was the son of Isaac Meek born 1810. Guy Meek had other sons as well as brothers and uncles who also had children. This connection seems to be based solely on the basis of the two men having the same given name which is a dangerous assumption.

Not only is there no proof that Isaac Meek born 1746 was the son of Isaac Meek born 1710 there is an alternative possible connection in the Isaac Meek born before 1765 who lived in Washington Co., PA. Isaac Meek born 1746 was related to most of the other men in Washington County based on DNA. Both of the men named Isaac Meek in Washington and Greene counties lived in the immediate vicinity of Samuel Meek who was related to Isaac Meek born 1746. Research on Isaac Meek should include examining the origins of DNA Group B as the men who lived in Washington Co., PA appear to have been part of a large extended Meek family.

By Christopher A. Meek
Copyright Dec. 18, 2011

Other related articles

The Progenitor Myth

Early Settlers of S. W. Pennsylvania

Men Named Jeremiah and Jacob Meek

The Meek/Meeks Families of Tennessee and Arkansas

Guy Meek's DNA

Men Named Isaac Meek