

Johannes Conrath (Conrad) Nicodemus (1755-1834)

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Conrad Nicodemus and Margaret were living with or near his father in Washington Co., Maryland when the first two children were born; Katherine in 1777 and Frederick in 1779. It is presumed that Conrad and family accompanied his father in 1781 to Washington Twp., Cumberland Co. (presently Franklin Co.) Pa. where the next three children were born; Elizabeth in 1782, Johannes in 1784 and Jacob in 1787.

About this time, an active church group was forming called the Evangelical Reformed Church of Irishtown and on 9 July 1786 a Call was issued in German to the first Pastor and signed by, among others, Conrad Nicodemus, Deacon, and his father, Frederick, Elder, both making annual pledges for the Pastor's salary. This church was named Besores Salem Reformed Church and is located in present day Zullinger, PA. In the records of that church, only the baptism of Jacob born to Conrad and Margaret in 1787 appears. Conrad is listed as a Deacon in these records. It is hard to imagine Conrad making a trip to Germany at this time in 1784 as Fouses Book contends.

A marriage document in the hands of Chris Davis in 1991 shows a wedding took place in Cumberland Co., PA on 24 December 1782 at which the witnesses signed - one of them being Conrad. The groom, Peter Bower married Catherine Nicodemus believed to be the daughter of Johann Adam Nicodemus - Catherine and Conrad would be second cousins.

Sometime after the baptism of Conrad's and Margaret's fifth child, Jacob on 29 April 1787, the family moved to Bedford Co., PA and located in an area called Morrison's Cove. Tax records give an estimation of the time of this move. The Pennsylvania Tax and Exoneration Lists 1762 - 1801, Pennsylvania Archives shows that Conrad was taxed in Washington Twp., Franklin Co., PA for 1788 and 1789 meaning he was a resident in 1788. On 26 January 1789 he was living in Woodbury Twp., Bedford Co., PA and subject to military duty as recorded in Penn Archives, Series 6, Volume 3, page 32. This means he moved to Bedford Co. in 1788 but appears on the 1789 Tax List in Franklin Co. and one would assume that Conrad, being a farmer all his life, moved after the Fall harvest of 1788.

A fanciful tale of this move appeared in the Martinsburg, PA Herald newspaper on March 14, 1889 telling of Conrad Nicodemus journeying to Bedford Co. with gold coins packed by horseback through bandit infested area to buy his land there. This vivid account is not doubt partially true but the newspaper errs on the dates of his birth and death. On 13 May 1790, Conrad was issued a warrant for 100 acres in Morrison's Cove on both sides of Clover Creek. This is near present day Henrietta, PA in Blair Co.

Conrad and Margaret had four more children born in Bedford Co., PA for a total of nine; Esther in 1790, Margaretha in 1793, Mary in 1797 and George in 1799. Conrad and his family were enumerated in the first US Census in 1790 in Bedford Co., PA. He was also listed in US Census reports for the years 1800 to 1830.

There are many land records of Conrad Nicodemus in Bedford Co., PA. The Pennsylvania Archives, Series 3, Volume 25, page 592 shows on May 5, 1792 a survey of 110 acres in Morrison's Cove. He went on to become a considerable landholder owning several hundred acres in Woodbury Twp. which Township was later to be split in three parts with North Woodbury Twp. being in Blair Co. when formed in 1846.

Conrad Nicodemus prospered over the years and became quite wealthy raising and