



#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Charles Winthrop Sawyer, *Firearms in American History, 1600-1800* (Boston, Published by the Author, 1910, p. -).
2. Pearce, *Annals of Luzerne County* (-, -, -), pp. 359, 551; *Pennsylvania Archives*, Series 3, Vol. 19, p. 503.
3. Courtesy Thomas H. Atherton, Wilkes-Barre; historical papers read before Dial Rock Chapter D.A.R., West Pittston, Pa.; *Taylorville Journal*, August 24, 1889; and Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Wilkes-Barre.
4. Papers owned by Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.

5. Original owned by Mildred Merrell and reproduced here with permission.
  6. From a manuscript in the New York State Library: Jan. 12, 1776: Cornelius Atherton made two written contracts with bonds of £700 each for the furnishing of £700 worth of muskets with bayonets, for which he was to be allowed £314s. each.
  7. New York State Library, *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts Relating to the War of the Revolution*, Vol. 33 (1868), p. 86, 482-483.
  8. Pearce, loc. cit. 9. Atherton Genealogy, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Vol. I.E. 141, fol. 3.
  10. Hollister, *History of Lackawanna Valley* (-, -, -), p. -.
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## The Baker Family of Gunsmiths in Lancaster County, 1717 - 1754

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Samuel Baker and his brother Robert Baker and Robert Baker's son, Caleb, were among the first if not the first gunsmiths in Lancaster County.

In 1717 Robert Baker purchased 500 acres of land from Colonel French. This Colonel John French of New Castle, Delaware, secured this land for services rendered previously in keeping out Marylanders from settling on the east side of the Susquehanna. Colonel French's land was on the Susquehanna River about a mile north of the junction of Pequea Creek with the Susquehanna River. Robert Baker and son Caleb Baker paid taxes on this land from 1719 to 1727.

On August 15, 1719, Robert Baker asked Jacob Taylor, surveyor for William Penn, for permission to erect a gun boring mill on Pequea Creek on this land (Taylor Papers #2921)

On September 19, 1728, Robert Baker having died intestate, the Court ordered an inventory and Caleb Baker, his son, administrator of his estate. In this inventory among other items were gunsmith tools and other tools, totaling £295-10-7.

Caleb Baker and wife Martha sold this land (500 acres) to Jacob Good on July 4, 1741. To my knowledge no gun has been found having been made by any of these three Bakers even though the records show they were gunsmiths.

We have found gun barrels in Indian graves in this general area which are very similar to the size, weight and bore of the German jaeger rifle. We feel as though these early gunsmiths came into Chester, Pennsylvania, or New Castle, Delaware, from abroad and migrated up the Susquehanna River to where the Pequea flows into it and set up shop for making guns.

Further, in the papers of James Logan, Penn's secretary to Issac Taylor, brother of Jacob Taylor, surveyor, dated February 17, 1721, indicating that iron

ore had been found near the site of the Baker tract and that two men wanted permission to mine it for commercial use. So ore was near by and was mined and reduced to barstock available to the gun manufacturers. This was the first discovery of ore in the County and predates the later operations nearer Lancaster. This is important in establishing that guns were made in this area far before Lancaster Borough gunsmiths were operating.

A second group of Bakers, not related at this writing, to the ones previously named as gunsmiths, were located near Lancaster. Their names were John Baker and his son Joshua Baker.

John Baker of Lancaster Borough died in 1750. His will and inventory were filed March 12, 1750. Among the items were smith's tools, forge hammer, etc. He was a gun barrel forger. His son, Joshua Baker, died on July 3, 1754. In his will he is called gunsmith. His will and inventory were proved by William Henry, Lancaster gunsmith.

Like the Robert, Samuel, and Caleb Baker mentioned earlier, the John and Joshua Baker left no guns that have been found. There is a lock on an early rifle here with the name J. Baker on the plate, but not on the barrel.

We record these five Baker gunsmiths with the hope that some time, some place, someone will find an early Baker gun. If you do it will be, in the writer's opinion, almost a copy of the German jaeger rifle because these Bakers were making guns from 1717 to 1754 — the earliest gunsmiths I have found in this area of Pennsylvania.

January 1845. Henry's will was made on 15 March 1844 and probated on 10 February 1845. It named his wife Louisa and executors, sons Thomas, Joseph and Aquilla. [Northampton Will Book 6, p.284]. There was no estate inventory filed for Henry Albright.

**John Axer.** gunsmith. From 1843 through 1844 John Axer was a gunsmith in Lancaster city. [tax].

**Jacob Baer (-1880).** gunsmith. 233 Queen St., Lancaster. [Lancaster Dir., 1871-72]. Jacob Baer died on 25 November 1880. He left a wife Caroline A. and a mother Elizabeth. No children were listed in the will.

**Isaac Bair.** gunsmith. In 1802 and 1803 the tax rolls of Leacock Township, Lancaster County, showed an Isaac Bair, yeoman. In 1802 his trade appears to be "jemsmith," but may be "gunsmith." In 1803 the occupation was given as "g. smith."

**Caleb Baker.** gunsmith. On 14 April 1724 Robert Baker, father of Caleb, acquired 250 acres on Pequea Creek, in what is now Lancaster County. Robert died intestate. On 17 February 1738 John Cunningham was appointed by the Lancaster County Orphan's Court to administer Robert's estate and on 23 October 1739 granted the land to Caleb Baker. Caleb transferred the land to Jacob Good of Conestoga Township, Lancaster County, on 12 October 1748. [Deed Book B, p.577]. Caleb Baker reportedly worked in his father's gunshop at the confluence of the Susquehanna River and Pequea Creek, from 1719 through 1741.

**George Baker (-1844).** gunsmith. George Baker was born in Lancaster County, a son of Peter Backer [Baker, Becker] and died in Monongalia County, [West] Virginia on 27 June 1844. George took the oath of loyalty to Pennsylvania on 18 July 1778. In 1780 he served in Major Moore's company, First Pennsylvania Regiment. Baker was first enrolled on the Lancaster city tax list of 1782. From 1783 through 1785 Baker lived with Peter Gonter (q.v.), according to Lancaster city tax records. In 1786 the tax list showed, "Ganter removed" and Baker lived with John and Peter Ferree. In 1786 he was taxed as a single freeman, gunsmith, in Lampeter Township. By 1789 Baker had removed to Monongalia County, [West] Virginia. In March 1789 Baker was joined in Holy Matrimony with Elizabeth, daughter of William Norris, a local wealthy landowner. He purchased a lot in Morgantown, county seat of Monongalia County, for a barrel of whiskey; and bought a second lot for a good rifle gun. In 1811 Baker was one of the contractors for Virginia state militia muskets. [D.A.R. # 137775; 3 *Pa Arch* 23 at 361 and 459]. We believe that Baker taught the gunsmithing trade to Nicholas Chisler (1777-1861) of Morgantown, and that Chisler took over Baker's gunshop on High St., Morgantown. Through his wife, Baker inherited considerable land in Monongalia County and, after 1820, was increasingly a gentleman farmer and

land owner. His estate was not inventoried or probated until 29 April 1858, at the time of his wife's death. The inventory showed only tools common to any farmer's estate.

**Isaac Baker (1730- ).** gunsmith. Isaac was son of Joshua and Rebecca Baker of Lancaster County. When his father died in 1754 Isaac received £10 from his estate. Isaac's brother, Joshua, jr., worked as a gunsmith in the 1750s on the south side of the Potomac River in Washington County, Maryland. Isaac rented ground which bordered the Potomac from his brother Joshua. On September 29, 1762, Isaac and Catherine, his wife, secured a land tract of 200 acres called "Blue Hanch." On August 10, 1770, Isaac and Catherine bought another tract of 1130 acres named "Mountain of Wales." On August 11, 1767, they purchased 12 1/2 acres of land called "Luck." On January 24, 1775, a meeting was held at Fredericktown of representatives of Western Maryland to hasten arming the people and for the formation of military companies. A committee was appointed for each area, known as a Hundred. Isaac was one of three commissioners selected from the Conoccocheague Hundred. During the war he served as a soldier. He was one of the many recipients of a land bounty for his Revolutionary War services. In 1779 he sold most of his Washington County, Maryland, property and proceeded to Sullivan County, North Carolina. Later, he settled in Washington County, Virginia. The gun barrel maker Thomas Worley purchased two tracts from Baker called "Barren Hill" and "Hopewell" and later acted as power of attorney locally for Baker. [Daniel D. Hartzler, *Arms Makers of Maryland*, pp.127-28].

**John Baker ( -1750).** gunsmith. Between 1728 and 1750 John Baker was a gunsmith in Lancaster County. His shop was located on Factory Rd., south of Lancaster, near Rockford Plantation. The estate inventory was taken on 12 March 1750 by Martin Mylon and Robert Thornburgh. It showed,

cutting box, £1/12/0  
Smith Tools & piece of a forge [?], £4  
1 Gunn, £1/5/0  
a Negro Man Dick, £35; a Negro Wench Tibbe, £30  
Total of Estate, £331/5/4

**Joshua Baker, Sr. ( -1754).** gun barrel maker. 1754, Lancaster city. [tax]. "Inventory of the Goods ... of the Estate of Joshua Baker, Dec'd ... taken and valued by Thomas Butler and James Bickham ... 5 September 1754"

to a Quantity of Gun locks & old mounting, £2/10/0  
..., an old axe & cutting knife, £0/6/0

**Joshua Baker, II.** On 8 January 1763 Joshua Baker, gun barrel maker, and Elizabeth, his wife, of Canigojig [sic], Cumberland County, sold 86 acres in Lancaster County to James Davis of Conestoga Township, Lancaster County, for £300. [Deed Book H, p.138].

**Robert Baker** ( -1728). gunsmith. Robert Baker was a gunsmith between 1717 and 1728, at the confluence of Pequea Creek and the Susquehanna River in Chester [now Lancaster] County. In 1719 Robert Baker took over the shop operated by his brother, Samuel. Robert died on 19 September 1728. His son Caleb Baker (q.v.) took over the gunshop. Robert died intestate and on September 19, 1728, the Orphan's Court ordered an inventory of Robert's estate. It showed the tools of the gunsmith and blacksmith. The total value of the tools in his gun barrel boring and gun shop was £295/10/7.

**Samuel Baker**. gunsmith. Between 1717 and 1719, Samuel and Robert Baker, brothers, had a gunshop at the confluence of Pequea Creek and the Susquehanna River, Chester [now Lancaster] County. In 1719 Samuel sold his share to Robert.

**Jacob Bakerstee**. accoutrements maker. On 31 August 1776 the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety paid Jacob Bakerstee £103/1/4 for making cartridge boxes for the militia units of Cumberland and Lancaster Counties. [5 *Amer Arch* 1 at 1330].

**Samuel Barber**. gunsmith. In 1800 Samuel Barber was a gunsmith in Hempfield Township, Lancaster County. [census of 1800]. Between 1807 and 1813 Barber was taxed in Caernovon Township, Lancaster County. His name is not listed on the tax rolls of Hempfield Township before or after 1800.

**George Bard** ( -1778). gunsmith. Bard was a gunsmith in Lampeter Township, Lancaster County in 1777. [tax]. He was not listed in the tax lists of 1776 or earlier. Bard was killed in the Revolutionary War in 1778.

**Samuel Bare [Bear]**. On 10 August 1768 Samuel Bear, gunsmith, and his wife Margaret of Manheim Township, Lancaster County sold their property to Wiston & Miles, merchants of Philadelphia, for £297. [Deed Book M, p.426]. Samuel Bare was listed on the available tax rolls between 1756 and 1768. He was not on the next earlier available tax list, 1751.

**Adam Barger**. artillery artificer. Adam Barger served as an artillery artificer in Captain Jesse Rowe's Company, Continental Line, from 20 December 1777 through 22 March 1781. He was from Lebanon Township, Lancaster County [2 *Pa in the Revolution* 244; 2 *Pa Arch* 11 at 252]. The tax lists of Lebanon Township between 1771 and 1783 show an Adam Bard/ Borgad/ Baard/ Bart, a farmer who owned 100 acres of land. This may be the same man.

**John Barr**. gunsmith. N. Queen St. between Walnut and Lemon Sts., Lancaster. [Boyd's *Lancaster Dir.*, 1857].

**George Bauer**. apprentice gunsmith. On 16 July 1776, George Bauer was enrolled in Captain Graff's company,

Lancaster militia, at Philadelphia. Bauer was listed as an apprentice gunsmith on that militia list. [2 *Pa Arch* 13 at 347; 5 *Pa Arch* 7 at 1073].

**Anthony Bear**. gunsmith. Lancaster city, 1834-35 [tax]. In 1843 Anthony Bear was listed as a shoemaker [tax].

**Jacob Bear**. gun barrel maker. Jacob Bear was taxed on the trade of a gun barrel maker between 1825 and 1830 in Manheim Township, Lancaster County. In 1831 Bear was listed as a laborer; in 1835 he was listed as a gunsmith.

**Jacob Bear** (1796- ). gunsmith. Lemon between Chestnut and E. Orange Sts., Lancaster. [Gopsill's *Dir. of Harrisburg, Lebanon and York*, 1863-64; *Lancaster Dir.*, 1871-72]. Bear was noted in the U.S. Census of 1870 as gunsmith, aged 74 years.

**John Bear**. gun barrel maker. 1805-07, freeman, no trade listed; 1808-13 taxable, no trade listed; 1814-20, not enumerated; 1821-25, gun barrel maker; 1826-36, innkeeper, all in Manheim Township, Lancaster County. He was again listed as a gunsmith as late as 1846. [tax]. A receipt in the collection of the Lancaster County Historical Society shows that John Bear sold Ogelsby & Pool of Harrisburg gun barrels valued at \$75.

**Joseph Bear**. gun barrel maker. 1832-34, Manheim Township; then in Warwick Township: 1835, laborer; inmate [renter] gunsmith, Warwick Township, 1840-41; 1842, no trade given; 1844 and 1846, inmate laborer, all in Lancaster County. [tax].

**Peter Bear**. gunsmith. Warwick Township, Lancaster County: 1833-35, inmate [renter] laborer; 1840-46, inmate gunsmith. [tax].

**Samuel Bear**. gun barrel maker. Manheim Township, Lancaster County: 1802-07, no trade given; 1808-12, gun barrel maker; 1813-17, no stated trade; 1819-20, gunsmith. He was taxed as a gunsmith as late as 1836. In 1844 there was a blacksmith by that name in Manheim Township. [tax]. From 1844 through 1846, there was a Samuel Bear, gunsmith, in Warwick Township, Lancaster County. There may have been two men named Samuel Bear, and the first may have been the father of the other men named Bear listed herein.

**[John] Christian Beck, Sr.** Christian Beck, Sr. was first taxed in Lebanon Township, Lancaster County, in 1772. Tax list from 1773 through 1778 are missing. The 1779 tax listed had three "Beacks," but no trade was listed. In 1780 and 1781 Christian Back, Sr., was listed with no trade; Christian Back, Jr., was a joiner; and John Beck was a gunsmith. In 1782 the "Beacks" were listed, but not trade was given. In 1783 only John Beck was taxed in Lebanon Township.