

Individual Narrative of Benjamin⁴ Reeder (16) Son of Joseph Reeder and Eleanor³ Leverich [7]

Benjamin Reeder (16) was born on 20 May 1718 at Newtown, Queens, New York. Documentation that Jacob, Joseph, and Benjamin Reeder were brothers is found in the will of Jacob Reeder, proved 1777, Amwell, Hunterdon Co, New Jersey. No direct evidence has been found to confirm that these three brothers were the children of Joseph Reeder and Eleanor Leverich. Circumstantial evidence, i.e. repetition of given names Jacob and Joseph, location in Hunterdon Co, New Jersey, suggests that they were. Consuelo Furman's *The Reeder Family in America* adopts this position, but does not provide sources. Various other Reeder family researchers attribute other children to this couple, but there is no supporting evidence.^{1,2,3}

Direct evidence pertaining to Benjamin Reeder is limited, i.e. Benjamin's will proved in Hunterdon Co; the baptism of his daughter Rachel in Cranbury, Middlesex County; and the burial record of his wife Anne in Warren County, at that time Sussex County. The remaining information regarding Benjamin and his family is based on indirect evidence from secondary sources, which do not cite primary sources. It is likely that undocumented family bible records are the primary source.^{4,5,6}

Benjamin Reeder married Anne Bonham before 1742 at New Jersey. John Stillwell (*Historical and Genealogical Miscellany*) identifies Anne Bonham, daughter of Nehemiah Bonham, as the wife of Benjamin Reeder. Nehemiah was living in Hunterdon County about 1740, but may have later lived in Middlesex County. The marriage date would have been before 1742, the probable date of birth for Jacob, son of Benjamin and Anne Reeder.⁷ On 22 July 1749 Rachel Reeder, daughter of Benjamin Reeder, was baptized at the First Presbyterian Church in Cranbury, Middlesex Co, New Jersey.⁸ Anne Reeder, wife of Benjamin Reeder, died 25 June 1769 and was buried in the Dark Moon Burying Ground, Frelinghuysen Township, Warren Co, New Jersey (at that time Sussex Co). The surviving gravestone inscription has been transcribed as "Here lies the body of Anne Reeder, the (?) of Benjamin Reeder, in the (_____)th fifth year of her age, June 25, 1769". Secondary sources give her birth date as 18 May 1725 in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, the daughter of Nehemiah Bonham and Anne Stout.^{9,10,11,12}

Benjamin Reeder died about 1782-1783 at Hunterdon Co, New Jersey. Benjamin's will was dated 20 November 1782 and proved in Hunterdon County 5 June 1783. The will does not mention a wife. The will does mention sons Jacob and Joseph, daughters Anne, Mary, and Rachel, and son-in-law Samuel Hunt. An inventory of Benjamin's estate was prepared by Richard Hankins and Jonathan Bunn, dated 5 June 1783, and certified by the executors of the estate, Joseph Reeder and Samuel Hunt. The inventory does not list any real estate, crops, or livestock. The inventory does list carpenter and cooper tools, which suggests that Benjamin was a skilled craftsman.¹³

Jacob Reeder was likely born about 1742 in New Jersey. He was the first of two sons mentioned by his father Benjamin in his will. Jacob Reeder married about 1768 in New Jersey Eunice Hazen, daughter of John Hazen. Eunice was born 22 May 1747 in Colchester, New London Co, Connecticut and died 1817 in Trumbull County, Ohio. Jacob Reeder died in May 1826 in Trumbull Co, Ohio. Jacob and Eunice are buried in unmarked graves next to their son Benjamin in the Brookfield Cemetery, Brookfield, Trumbull County, Ohio. Jacob and Eunice had ten children born between 1769 and 1793, as per the "Old Jacob Reeder Bible": Benjamin, Elizabeth, Joseph, Deborah, Ann, Jacob, Hezekiah, John, Nathaniel, and James. Jacob Reeder and son Benjamin, as well as a Joseph Reeder (brother or son of Jacob) are found in 1799 on the list of taxables for Newport Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. By 1811 Jacob Reeder is found in Trumbull County, Ohio as mentioned in a list of designated road districts.^{14,15,16,17,18}

Anne Reeder was likely the oldest daughter of Benjamin and Anne Reeder, therefore born c 1745 in New Jersey. She is the first mentioned of the three daughters in Benjamin's will. Anne is likely the daughter that married Samuel Hunt, mentioned as son-in-law in Benjamin Reeder's will.^{19,20}

Joseph Reeder was born in New Jersey 28 May 1747. Joseph was the 2nd husband of Isabella McMurtrie. Isabella was born 9 September 1735, probably in New Jersey. She married first James Stinson, who died in 1771 in Sussex Co, New Jersey. They had three children: Sarah Stinson, Archibald Stinson, and Jacob Stinson. Isabella married a second time Joseph Reeder in Sussex Co, New Jersey. On 27 January 1774, Joseph Reeder, and Isabal his wife, late Isabal Stinson, provided an accounting of the estate of James Stinson of Hardwick, Sussex Co, New Jersey. Joseph and Isabella had one child, a son James, born on 29 September 1775. In 1786, Joseph Reeder is mentioned as associated with the Yellow Frame Presbyterian Church in Sussex Co, New Jersey. Joseph appears on a deed in Luzerne Co, Pennsylvania in 1798, identified as from Hardwick Township, Sussex Co, New Jersey. Isabella died in 1799 in Newport Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. Jacob Reeder and son Benjamin, as well as a Joseph Reeder (brother or son

of Jacob) are found in 1799 on the list of taxables for Newport Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. Joseph Reeder married for his second wife Elizabeth Courtwright. Joseph Reeder died either in 1814 in Franklin Co, Ohio or in 1816 in Hardwick, Sussex Co, New Jersey. Secondary sources conflict on the date and location of Joseph Reeder's death.^{21,22,23,24,25}

Key information about the McMurtries came from three bibles that were passed down in the Reeder family. Isabella's birth date and death year were recorded between 1840 and 1843 in a bible by Drucilla Sites Reeder, the wife of James Reeder, grandson of Isabella. This bible was dated 1834 and the entries were in a handwriting that ended in 1843 - the year that Drucilla died. Therefore, it appears that, sometime between 1840 (date of Drucilla's marriage) and 1843 (date of Drucilla's death), Drucilla copied the early dates from another bible. She recorded the birth dates and death dates or death years of her husband, her husband's siblings, her husband's mother and father, her husband's maternal and paternal grandparents. Isabella McMurtrie was identified as the wife of Joseph Reeder, the father of James Reeder (father of Drucilla's husband). Descendants of Joseph Reeder and his second wife also kept family bibles and these were probably the bibles from which Drucilla copied her husband's ancestors' dates. These bibles were referred to by the descendants of Joseph Reeder and Elizabeth Courtwright as "the bible of Robert McMurtrie" and the "Reeder Bible". These gave the dates of birth of George McMurtrie and his wife Rachel Reeder and the 1778 date of their marriage.²⁶

On 22 October 1778, Rachel Reeder married George McMurtrie, brother of Isabella McMurtrie, in Sussex County, New Jersey.²⁷

On 7 October 1780, a Mary Reeder married James Powell of Kingswood, Hunterdon Co, New Jersey. This may have been Mary Reeder, daughter of Benjamin and Anne Reeder.²⁸

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Endnotes

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