

(BORN c. 1782, DIED 26 DEC., 1842)

THE ELUSIVE ELIJAH SHAW

The reason we call him the "Elusive Elijah Shaw" is because we can't seem to find enough records about him to bring his family from England or even from Long Island, New York. Jeanette Greenwell, Bob, Mary Lou Shaw, and Gayle Soren have researched this ancestor. We are grateful for the written histories Jeanette has prepared about Elijah I, II, and III. Thanks to Gayle's diligence and her work with the Vineland, New Jersey, Ass'n., the puzzle is progressing, lending some evidence that Richard Shaw may have been Elijah's grandfather.

Elijah Shaw, of Cumberland County, N.J., was born about 1782. The will of John Cornwell names Sarah Shaw as his daughter, so we think Edmund Shaw and Sarah Cornwell were Elijah Shaw's parents. Edmund Shaw and Sarah Cornwell were married 13 Sep 1774. Also, when the Elijah Shaw family migrated to the Ohio Valley, the Cornwell's and Bowen's also went to Ohio.

Lydia Bowen and Elijah Shaw were married, 6 Feb. 1805, in the Bridgeton, Cumberland Co. Courthouse. Lydia's parents were Dan Bowen and Lydia Yapp, who were married in the Presbyterian Church at Deerfield, Cumberland Co., N.J. (Bob and Mary Lou viewed these records personally. The church records were shown to us by Rev. Koop, who is the son of C. Everett Koop, who was the Surgeon General under Pres. Reagan.)

The ancestral Bowen family was of Welsh Origin, living in Glamorganshire and Pembrokeshire, Wales. In the fall of 1639, Richard Bowen and his wife, Anne, came to America. They arrived in the colony of New Plymouth and began a new life in what is now called Swansea, Bristol, Massachusetts.

In 1687, Dan and Samuel Bowen moved to Salem County, New Jersey, settling Bowentown.

One day, when Bob and Mary Lou Shaw and daughter, Gayle Soren, visited New Jersey, we learned what life was like in the 1700 and 1800's. Flies were rampant and screens were not allowed to be placed on the open windows because of the belief that screens would take away from the purification of the air. Therefore the windows were closed to keep out the flies. Baths were uncommon. The only baths one got for sure, were at birth and death. Also, for a man to smell of sweat was complimentary...for then he "smelled like a man". Deodorants for men were not popular until the Second World War!

In N.J., we noticed by the land records, Elijah Shaw bought several farms, some from Dan Bowen. We learned the farmland would become depleted of nutrients, and farmers would need to obtain new land to make a living. It wasn't until 1818, soon after the Shaws, Bowens and Cornwells migrated to Ohio, that "bird guano" was discovered. This fertilizer revolutionized the quality and use of the "spent up" farms by refurbishing the soil.

It's interesting to note their travel to the Ohio Valley. They packed what belongings they could carry in a wagon drawn by either oxen or horses. They traveled across rivers by flat boats or rafts. The roads were bumpy, sometimes not much more than a buffalo trail.

In Ohio, the Shaw, Cornwell and Bowen families settled in the town of Mechanicsburg, later called Chilo. It is believed Elijah



worked as a ship builder. He purchased 4 lots on the Ohio River. (Deed Book, U-19, pg. 18, Feb. 9, 1820)

In 1829, the family is found in Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio, living in a small suburb called Fulton. (Deed Book, 33 pg 276, 5 May 1829). Elijah's brother, Daniel Shaw, lived close by on Vine St. Lydia's cousin, Samuel Bowen, lived next door.

In the spring of 1832, there was a great flood, covering most of the city of Cincinnati and the surrounding towns. Fulton, being on the river, got the worst of it. After the flood, cholera broke out and took many lives.

Samual Bowen, Elijah and their families decided that was not the place for them... too much water.

On April 20, 1833, Elijah and Lydia sold their property for three hundred dollars and made preparations to move.

It has been said that the families moved on westward into a new territory that was being settled in Daviess County, Missouri, and that Elijah owned 900 acres in said county near Adam-Ondi-Ahman.

In 1838, a steady stream of Mormon immigrants, from the East began arriving in Daviess, Ray, Carroll and Caldwell Counties. By summer, the numbers in Northern Missouri totaled about 15,000. There was such an influx of people that the loyal citizens became afraid that the Saints could dominate the state. Persecutions began and became so violent that the Saints and many other people left to find another place to live.

They went to Illinois and received a welcome to settle in the vicinity of Quincy, Adams Co., about 35 miles south of Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois. There are no records of Elijah and his wife joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. However, they are found with the LDS group in the 1840 census of Hancock Co., Illinois. Also, stated in the New Jersey Gensis, April, 1969, Vol 16 #2, pg. 707, "Dan Bowen IV, son of David Bowen, (who was the brother of Lydia) went west and joined his Uncle Thomas Bowen, and his Aunt Lydia Bowen, wife of Elijah Shaw at Nauvoo, Illinois, where they united with the Mormons."

It has been said that Elijah Shaw II worked on the Nauvoo Temple, 1841-1845. He married Martha Ann Thomas, the widow of John Whitstein Shupe, and went to Utah with the Saints. However, he wasn't baptized until 29 Sep. 1856, after being healed of mountain fever, a serious illness.

Elijah Shaw died 26 Dec., 1842, in Nauvoo Illinois.

In 1845 and 1846, the Saints were still being persecuted by the Anti-Mormons. Most of them left for Winter Quarters, Iowa, and other points.

The Shaws were not members of the Church. Lydia's son, Elijah II, and her daughter, Lydia, remained at home to take care of their mother. She passed away 17 Nov 1848, in Nauvoo, Illinois.

(Major source of information: "BIOGRAPHY OF ELIJAH SHAW II" by Jeanette Shaw Greenwell, a great granddaughter.)