

# Benjamin Bowman and Myra (Snyder) Shantz Family History

(The information below is provided by Roger Laverne Shantz. The italicized sections are from Roger's oral history notes.)

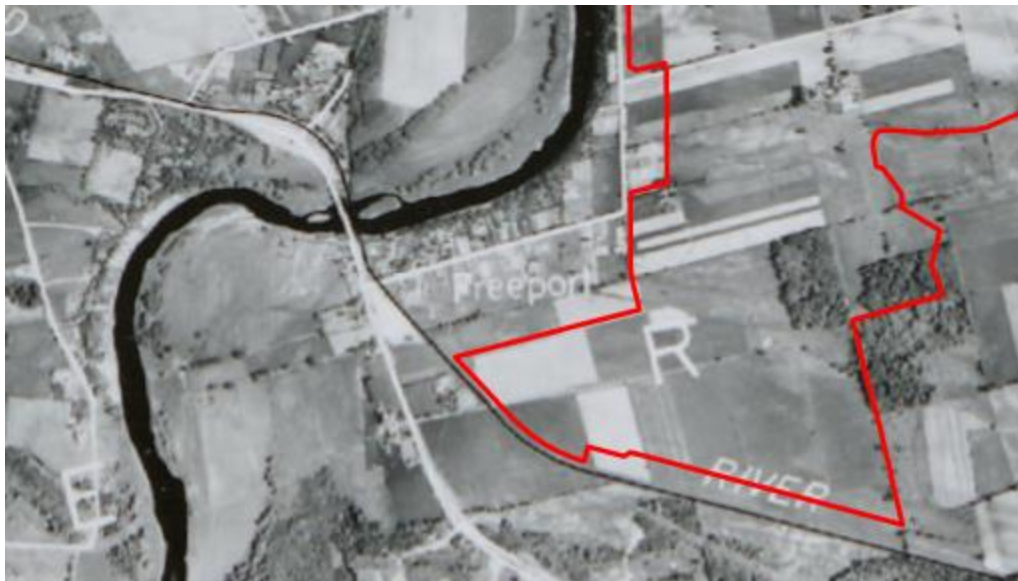
## Ancestors of Benjamin Shantz

For further information, see Chapters 2-5 in *A Shantz Family in Canada 1800-2000*  
by Lester Baer Shantz

## Purchase and Acquisition of the Farm

Benjamin had a 120 acre farm located in Freeport. His brother Ervin Bowman Shantz appeared also to have a similar sized property on the other side of Highway 8 (now King Street East).

## Aerial View of Benjamin's Farm



[https://www.cambridge.ca/en/learn-about/resources/Class-EA\\_NCBP-Appendix-B1---ASI-Stage-1-Archaeology.pdf](https://www.cambridge.ca/en/learn-about/resources/Class-EA_NCBP-Appendix-B1---ASI-Stage-1-Archaeology.pdf),  
p. 25. Accessed May 4, 2020.

For further information on Benjamin's farm, see *Shantz Farms* by Paul Gingrich, the blue button on the main website page. Scroll down to pages 13 and 14.

## Family Members of Benjamin B. and Myra Shantz

For further information, see pages 40-45 in *A Shantz Family in Canada 1800-2000*  
by Lester B. Shantz

## The Economic Life of Benjamin Shantz's Farm

It appears that Benjamin Shantz ran, what would have been considered at the time, a very modern farm. There were at least three different businesses that contributed to the economic

welfare of the family, namely agriculture, gravel and sand, as well as trucking. Benjamin utilized the natural resources of the farm while conducting all three businesses at the same time.

It appears that Benjamin was an early adapter to technology. Philip Patrick Shantz, son of Donald Roy Shantz and Elaine Rohr Shantz, recalls seeing an article in the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* newspaper indicating that Benjamin was one of the first farmers in Waterloo County to utilize a milking machine.

## **Agricultural Operations**

*Grandpa (Benjamin) used to sell milk and eggs to the Freeport Sanatorium. After the milk was delivered (often by Uncle Clayton), he would bring food scraps back to the farm to feed to the pigs. This was before milk had to be pasteurized. Grandpa worked at Chicopee to make the ski jumps. He also cut ice in Grand River, Wilson's Dam at Blair, and other places to stock the ice house at the farm. Our dads (Donald Roy and Jacob Ralph Shantz) often went along with Grandpa and Grandma (Myra) when Grandpa preached.*

## **Gravel and Sand Operations**

Benjamin Shantz carried out gravel and sand operations on the farm. At least two or more deposits of gravel and sand were excavated then trucked and sold to various businesses. These operations existed during the 1930s and 1940s (Lester B. Shantz, p. 38). According to Philip Patrick and brother, Mark Christopher Shantz, their father Roy (Donald Roy Shantz) recalled gravel being hauled to some landmark locations in the Kitchener and Preston areas. He explained that gravel was hauled to assist in the construction of the Freeport Sanatorium which was built on one of the original parcels of the Shantz Farm owned by Benjamin. Phil said that his father talked about hauling gravel to help build the silos at the former Dover Flour Mills located at the foot of Shantz Hill in Preston, Ontario beside the Knotty Pine restaurant. Mark has memories of his father describing how the gravel was hauled by the family and then used in the construction of Rockway Gardens in the south end of Kitchener. Roy also described that Rockway Gardens was constructed using German Prisoner-of-War Labour.

Phil walked with his father near the River in the 1990s and Roy pointed out at least one location where gravel was excavated. A few other locations where gravel was likely excavated are still observable today. One to the slight east of Highway 8 has become filled with rain and groundwater. Roy noted that the gravel trucks used to haul such gravel had double clutches and were not easy to drive.

*I (Roger) remember two gravel pits at Grandpa's (Benjamin's) farm, a smaller one closer to where the new highway now is (just below Ervin Shantz's house, Grandpa's brother) and a larger one below where the barn was. Dad (Ralph Shantz) also said that Grandpa had a gravel pit near Bridgeport. Grandpa hauled a lot of gravel but I'm not sure where it all went.*

## **Trucking Operations**

*Grandpa (Benjamin) was in the trucking business in a big way, bringing gravel, sand, and clay for homes, businesses, roads, livestock, and lumber from the railway station at Preston to many locations. Malt was brought from breweries to farmers, while coal and lime chips were brought*

*for roads, and sludge from Doon sewage plant was delivered to various farmers. He also had an excavating business. All these business ventures started with the horse era and continued into the motorized era. Labour originally was by hand with loading gravel and coal, etc., until more mechanized methods were available.*

## **Church and Faith**

For some information, see from middle of page 38 to middle of page 39 in *A Shantz Family in Canada 1800-2000* by Lester B. Shantz

## **Home Life**

For some information, see page 38 in *A Shantz Family in Canada 1800-2000* by Lester B. Shantz

## **Divestiture of the Farm**

The sale of the farm seems to be rather unclear except that it appeared to be sold in different land sales. The first land sale may have been for the Freeport Sanatorium (see article Roger referenced). This was confirmed in a recent article and was mentioned by Roy Shantz to his son Mark.

*I (Roger) am not sure when Grandma (Myra) Shantz moved to Fairview Mennonite Home in Cambridge, Ontario. I was born at the Kitchener Hospital in 1948 when Mom (Nelda Musselman Shantz) and Dad (Jacob Ralph Shantz) lived in the apartment at the back of Grandpa's (Benjamin's) house. Dad bought the farm at Blair in 1952. Some land was sold/expropriated for the new highway; however, even after Dad bought his farm at Blair, he continued to use the barn and some land directly below the barn for raising heifers. This did not last too long, possibly to the mid 1950s. The rest of the land and buildings could have been sold around the time that Grandpa died about 1964. By that time, Grandma would have moved to Fairview. I bought Grandma's 1956 Mercury in 1965 and she did not own a car after that.*

## **Other Potential Sources**

<http://ebybook.region.waterloo.on.ca/getperson.php?personID=I15023&tree=Eby>

<http://generations.regionofwaterloo.ca/getperson.php?personID=I6943&tree=generations>

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~onwaterl/land/>