

Breakstone Family Holds Week-Long Get-Together in Memory of Ancestor

[Special to The Indianapolis Star.]

LAKE WAWASEE, Ind., Aug. 26. —Descendants of Beryl Breakstone, Lithuanian farmer, concluded a week's reunion at the Spink-Wawasee hotel tonight. The gathering was the second one, the first having been held in Chicago ten years ago.

The week's reunion, with all sitting together at the same table and living under one roof, was described as being "just as our common ancestor, Beryl, lived with his family of five sons and two daughters in the little town which he called Poneman."

Mrs. Max Breakstone is president of the Breakstone family; Jerome S. Breakstone, chairman of the reunion committee, and Mrs. Benjamin H. Breakstone, cochairman.

Noblemen "Left Out on Limb."

Shortly after the fall of Napoleon Beryl Breakstone established his family of five sons and two daughters on a bank of the Nemen river (called by the Germans "Memal") in Lithuania. The Lithuanian noblemen who had been operating under the feudal system had, prior to Napoleon's ascendancy, sworn fealty to the Russian czar, so that when Bonaparte was banished to Elba, these Lithuanian noblemen were politically "left out on a limb." They could not work their land without the protection of the czarist government and, having shown a lack of loyalty at a time when the Russian government needed them the most, they became outcasts.

Thus Beryl Breakstone and his five sons proceeded to work the land. They erected a grist mill to which the people of the community could bring their corn to be ground. They built a brick kiln and a sawmill and became the leaders in the community. Beryl Breakstone was not only a leader in the community, but —and what is truly unusual—was master of his own household as well. The sons and daughters married and the three generations lived in the same large, roughly hewn building which they called their home.

Patriarchal System.

The novel thing about this family arrangement was the fact that no member of the household could say that he owned any particular piece of property therein. Beryl Breakstone ran the little mansion on the patriarchal system.

This section of Lithuania has always been the battleground of Europe and time and again warring nations would drive through it and level everything before them. The grandchildren of this Breakstone finally determined to come to America, where at least they could preserve the fruits of their labor. Accordingly, along about the seventies, they began to migrate to this country.

Just ten years ago the old family spirit, after surviving approximately one hundred years, burst into flower in the form of a national reunion in Chicago with more than one hundred Breakstones attending. Four generations were represented.