William Graham Sr. and his wife Ester (or Hester) Reid were never members of the Children of Peace, although many of their children were. They were married in Ireland and immigrated to New York state, settling finally in East Gwillimbury in 1811. They had 4 sons and 4 daughters. William died 4 Feb. 1837 aged 87 years, and Hester 20 Sept. 1849 aged 80 years 4 months, 11 days. They are both buried in the Selby cemetery.

Children:
- Richard Graham
- Jeremiah Graham, born 1801; married Jane Burr.
- William Graham, born 1806; married Elizabeth Doan.
- John Graham
- Hannah Graham, married William Soules.
- Jane Graham
- Margaret Graham
- Hester Graham

1) Richard Graham was never a member of the Children of Peace. He joined the Rebellion of 1837 with his brothers William, John and Jeremiah, later fleeing to the U.S. to escape detention. He farmed Lot 25, Conc. 4.

Children:
- Mary Graham married John Dunham, son of Thomas.
- Nelson Graham, married 1863 Elizabeth Travis, daughter of Jacob.
- Harvey Graham
- Jane Graham

2) Jeremiah Graham was born 1802. He married Jane Burr, born 21 Aug. 1806 of Reuben and Elizabeth Cleaver Burr (Yonge St. Quakers). Her family had immigrated to Upper Canada in 1805, settling first in Whitchurch, later near Richmond Hill, and finally, on Lot 18, Conc. 2 of East Gwillimbury. 2 lots from her future husband who was settled on Lot 15. She was disowned by the Yonge St. Meeting 13 Sept. 1827 for marrying a non-Quaker. 1 Jeremiah was a member of the Children of Peace for only a short period. Like his brothers William, Richard and John, he joined the Rebellion in 1837, later fleeing to the U.S. with Richard to escape detention. They returned after the amnesty was declared. He later became a minister of the Christian Church. Jane was a teacher before she married. Jane died 2 April 1886; Jeremiah died 14 Aug. 1891. Both are buried in the Queensville Cemetery.

Children:
- John Jeremiah Graham owned a farm south of Baldwin.
- Nancy Graham, married Jesse Tatton, minister in Christian Church in Toronto.
- Ester Graham, married William Percy, a minister in Stouffville.
- Rebecca Graham, born 1850 on Lot 15, Conc. 2 of East G., died March 1919; married Thomas Belfry Doan, son of Judah and Joanna Belfry Doan (see above).

3) William Graham was born Oct. 1807, in New York state, near the Mohawk river. He married, first 27 April 1833 in the Meeting House of the Children of Peace, Elizabeth Doan, born 30 Oct. 1811, died 25 Nov. 1866, daughter of John and Elizabeth Stockdale Doan (see above). She is buried in the Children of Peace cemetery. He married secondly, in 1868, Rachel Hughes born 12 June 1813, daughter of Amos and Rebecca Chapman Hughes (see above).

William was a participant in the Rebellion of 1837; he was jailed for a short period in the Presbyterian church in Newmarket, but later released on bail, and never tried. See “Letters to the Children in Prison, 1838” (York Pioneer 1987, pages 29-36) for a series of letters from William and Elizabeth to William’s brother John, who was not as lucky and spent months in the Toronto Jail. In one of these letters, Elizabeth asks for a “Rebellion Box”, a small carved memento made by bored prisoners. One of the boxes made as a result of this appeal is now on display at the Sharon Temple.

Their farm of 75 acres was on Lots 15 & 16, Conc. 2 which they purchased in 1835 for $500. They added 10 acres on Lot 16, Conc. 5, and 1 acre on Lot 9, Conc. 3 by 1865, when their total assessed property was worth $1,890. They remained on the farm on Lot 15 until retiring in 1868. William and Rachel then moved to the village of Sharon, where they purchased a number of house lots on Lots 9, 10 and 11, Conc. 2. For more than 50 years Rachel served as caretaker of the Meeting House and Temple, as well as managing the Feasts and Christmas Dinner. William was one of the Charity Fund trustees. They became Presbyterians by 1881. He died 16 April 1888. Rachel died 4 May 1903. They are both buried in the Children of Peace cemetery.
The Graham Family

William Graham & Rachel Hughes Graham

Children

a) Maria Graham born 20 March 1834; married Job Willson, son of John D. and Maria Thorpe Willson, 21 Nov. 1858 (see above).

b) Polly B. Graham

c) Mary Ann Graham born 18 June 1836, died 18 March 1923; married 16 Oct. 1856 Amos Hughes Willson, son of Israel and Mary Hughes Willson (see below).

d) Charles Graham born 17 March 1839, died 2 Feb. 1888; married 21 May 1863 Phoebe Willson, daughter of John D. and Maria Thorpe Willson (see below), born 1845, died 15 April 1868. He was a dentist and played bass horn in the Children of Peace band. After 1872, he disappeared from township records. They are both buried in the Children of Peace cemetery.

Children:

i) John Herbert Graham, born April 1864, died 18 May 1867. Buried in the Children of Peace cemetery.


iii) Elizabeth Graham, born ca. 1868, appears to have been raised by her grandparents, John D. and Maria Willson.

iv) Gertrude Sylvia Graham


f) John Doan Graham: The musical accomplishments of the Children of Peace were remarkable for a small, rural group which never had more than 350 members. They formed the first civilian band in Canada, long acknowledged throughout the nineteenth century as one of the best in the country. It was said that “Popular music was whistled in Sharon a year before first heard in Old Toronto”? Surprisingly, only one member of the group made a living from music: John Doan Graham. He was born 11 Jan. 1846. The Grahams were an obviously musical family with at least three of the five children joining the band; John D. Graham was eventually to replace his uncle, Jesse Doan, as leader of the group in 1866. Four of the five siblings married grandchildren of David Willson, leader of the Children of Peace; John married 20 Oct. 1869 Elizabeth, daughter of John D. and Maria Thorpe Willson, died 23 Oct. 1915 (see above). The couple remained members of the Children of Peace until the group disbanded in 1889. Although little is known of his life outside of his musical career, one friend noted that he was an ardent admirer of Mark Twain: “He sounded like Mark Twain, he looked like him almost to the point of being his double, he dressed like him and even named his son, Mark Twain Graham.” 3 Although Graham initially earned a living farming like most other residents of Sharon, by the time of his marriage he choose to work as a musician, music teacher and piano tuner. Such were his teaching and leadership skills that the band could “transpose the music as they played, thereby saving the trouble of rewriting the original score in a different key”. Under his leadership, the band became semi-professional. They purchased silver instruments in the United States for about $1,500, and donned blue uniforms. Due to the new instruments, they were later known as the Sharon Silver Band. They would play in nearby towns, as well as on the pleasure cruises then plying
Lake Simcoe during the summer months. The band also competed in a competition at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, at which they won a cash prize. Graham made frequent fall trips to New York and Boston to learn the lastest music. He purchased a “single selection, and each bandsman’s part was copied by their leader into books of blank forms… Overtures, serenades, and selections from standard operas are among their repertoire”. The archives at Sharon contain books like the “Vineyard of Song” and the “Boston Anthem Book” which attest to the range of music they mastered. However, Graham was not satisfied to merely play the works of others; he was also a composer in his own right. At least three published works are known: Canada’s Jubilee Greeting to her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria (1897), The Flag of Canada (1899), and the Doan Centennial Hymn (1908).

The nationalistic fervour of his work was typical of most sheet music published in Canada at the time. He died in 1923.

Children:

i) Mark Twain Graham, born ca. 1872.
ii) Gertrude Sylvia Graham, born ca. 1 April 1873, died 22 March 1895. Buried in the Children of Peace cemetery.
iii) Elizabeth Graham married Jeremiah Graham of Sutton.

4) John Graham. Little is known of John Graham other than that he participated in the Rebellion of 1837. A Rebellion box made by John for his sister Hester is on display at the Temple. Letters from his brother William, sister-in-law Elizabeth, and mother, Hester, addressed to him while he was in prison were published in the 1987 issue of the York Pioneer. He appears to have left the sect after the rebellion. It may be he who is buried in the Newmarket cemetery, died 14 May 1885 aged 75. These records state he was born in Ireland of John & Phoebe Graham. He is buried with his wife Mary Young, died 15 Feb. 1874 aged 65.

5) Hannah Graham, married William Soules, son of Daniel Soules of Yonge Street. He received the land grant for services in the War of 1812.

Children:

a) Daniel Soules, lost his arm in an threshing machine accident, 30 Jan. 1852.
b) William Soules
c) John Soules
d) Sarah Soules, born ca. 1816, died 4 Oct. 1860 and buried in the Selby cemetery; married John Fletcher, son of Silas.
e) Margaret Soules never married.