

# Funkhouser Notes from WikiTree sources

compiled by Dan Hylton, descendant of Joseph Funkhouser,  
son of Abraham Funkhouser, Jr., and Catherine Coffman

Abraham Funkhouser, Jr. 1778-1855

Catherine Coffman 1784-1870

Abraham Funkhouser Jr. lived all his life on the family homestead on Tumbling Run, having acquired part of it through inheritance and remainder he purchased from his older brother, Daniel.<sup>[1]</sup> To accommodate his growing family, Abraham built the large north wing on the house and made a number of additions and improvements in the outbuildings. The stone smokehouse, which is still standing, has the date "1831" inscribed in the lintel (the small structure at end of the north wing.)

Abraham and Catherine were among the earliest supporters of the United Brethren Church in Virginia and the Reverends Newcomer and Boehm, founders of the church, preached in their home on visits to Virginia.<sup>[2]</sup> Since no church building was erected for years, services were held in homes and the home of Abraham and Catherine was frequently used as a meeting place. Abraham was among the subscribers to "Blind's School House," built on the land of his neighbor, Michael Blind in 1828, and the school was also used as a meeting house for the local members of the United Brethren Church. When Mount Hebron Church was built nearby in 1847, Abraham Funkhouser was among those who contribute money to help cover the costs.<sup>[3]</sup>

Abraham and his family clung to their German language and customs throughout their lives and the family Bible, a large German edition, printed in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1805 contains the family record in German script and the family name still spelled *Fankhauser*.<sup>[4]</sup> Abraham and Catherine are buried in a graveyard on the hill a few hundred yards south of their house and the stones are still standing.

Abraham Funkhouser, Sr. 1742-1796

Mary Magdalena (maiden name unknown)

Abraham Funkhouser was born about 1742, son of John and Barbara, early settlers on Tumbling Run, in what is now Shenandoah County, Virginia. He grew up during the years of the French and Indian War and married about 1766. He chose a site a little way downstream from his birthplace to build a substantial log house over an ever-flowing spring. In 1776 his older brother, John, deeded him 165 acres where his home was located. <sup>[1]</sup>

Abraham was brought up in the Mennonite faith and remained faithful to it throughout his life. His name appears on the militia list of eligible men from the Strasburg area in 1775 but the list had a note at the foot of the page stating that some on the list were "Menonists" who refused to serve. Abraham was no doubt one of those because ten years later, in 1785, along with his brothers, John Jr. and David, signed a Quaker-Mennonite petition requesting exemption from compulsory militia duty.<sup>[2]</sup> Many of his children later became member of the United Brethren Church, but Abraham died before the United Brethren church was organized in Virginia.

Abraham and Magdalena were parents of eight children and in his will, written April 11, 1796, he directed that Magdalena see that the minor children, boys and girls alike, learn to read and write. He appointed his brother, David, executor of his will. The will was probated June 14, 1796.

Johannes (John) Fankhauser Sr.

Barbara (maiden name unknown)

John Funkhouser is the English name for Johannes (Hans) Fankhauser, one of the three Fankhauser men who are considered founders of the Funkhouser families of America. <sup>[1]</sup> In spite of many efforts and endless hours of research by a number of historians and genealogists, and several

erroneous assumptions, the relationship between Johannes, Jacob and Christian Fankhauser, the three pioneer founders, remains unknown and links to specific Swiss parents and ancestors are as elusive as ever. A Funkhouser Y-DNA project with FamilyTreeDNA, a Houston based company that specializes in DNA genealogical testing, has over two dozen participants with variations of the name, Fankhauser, Fanckhauser, Frankhouser and Funkhouser, from America and Switzerland. All show a close enough relationship that they share a common ancestor who lived at *Fankhaus* in the Emmenthal Valley of Canton Bern, Switzerland within the last 400 years. Several Swiss lines of the family can be traced back with confidence to fifteenth century ancestors in *Fankhaus*, and a Frankhouser family with roots in colonial Pennsylvania is descendant from two immigrant brothers, who were born in Alsace, but can be traced back to the Emmenthal Valley of Canton Bern, Switzerland. There is no such paper trail for the three Fankhauser (Funkhouser) pioneers in Virginia.

So while it can be said with confidence that Johannes Fanckhauser (John Funkhouser Sr.), has roots in the Emmenthal Valley of Bern, the existing family trees showing direct links to any specific Swiss ancestors are based on erroneous, and in some cases, totally fabricated information.

What is known is that Johannes Fankhauser arrived in Philadelphia, August 23, 1728, aboard the ship "Mortonhouse" and signed the oath of allegiance as *Johannes Fanckhauser*, the next day, in a distinctive German cursive.<sup>[2]</sup> There is a nine year gap before there is another known record of Johannes Fanckhauser. On July 23, 1737 a group of men who had recently arrived in the Shenandoah Valley signed a petition to the Orange County Court, objecting to the route chosen for a road they were required to help open. Among the fifty-one men who signed were; Johannes Fanckhauser, Jacob Fanckhauser and Christian Fanckhauser.<sup>[3]</sup>

Johannes Fanckhauser established his home on the headwaters of the south branch of Tumbling Run and was well settled there before Lord Fairfax opened his office to survey and grant patents to the settlers in 1748. John applied for a warrant and had 400 acres surveyed "where he lived and had made improvements" April 27, 1750. He received the patent for it, January 9, 1752.<sup>[4]</sup> The following month he applied for another warrant and

had an additional 294 acres surveyed. He received patent for that tract, December 28, 1762. A record of John Funkhouser's naturalization has not been found but his name appears on a list of Frederick County citizens who voted for George Washington for the House of Burgesses in July 1758.<sup>[5]</sup> John Funkhouser came to "troublesome and dangerous illness" in the winter of 1760 and wrote his will, 17 February 1760. Johann Nicolaus Becker [Baker], Adam Brodbeck and George Hottel witnessed it. He named his wife, "Bebe" [A Swiss diminutive for Barbara], referred to his five sons, but only named his oldest son, John, mentioned an unspecified number of daughters and indicated that some of his children were underage. He signed his will, *Hannes Fanckhauser*. With exception of the spelling of the first name, it matches closely the signature on the 1728 oath of allegiance and "Hannes" probably comes closer to what he was actually called in his lifetime. "Hannes" apparently recovered and lived several more years and probably died in the winter of 1764-65, since his will was not probated until March 5, 1765. An inventory of property was made April 1, 1765.<sup>[6]</sup>