

Family Origin and Coat of Arms

Shield: Azure, a Snipe with striped head and back Tenne, breast Argent with wings displayed on a craggy hill

Crest: A Snipe of the shield with wings displayed

Motto: None

The origin of the Snapp family originated in the Duchey of Wuerttemberg in Germany. The original spelling of the surname in Germany was Schnepfe, Schnepff and Schnep. The surname takes its origin from a marsh bird called a "Snipe". In German the spelling is "Schnepfe" which translates into the English spelling of Snipe. In its basic sense it means "a bird which snaps up". Thence the English equivalent spelling of the surname of "Snapp".

The earliest this family can be found in Wuerttemberg is in the year 1435. Erhard Schnepf (1495-1558) lived in Wuerttemberg and was a follower of Martin Luther. Wuerttemberg was in the midst of the Reformation and Erhard Schnepf introduced the new religion into that part of Germany. He is the ancestor of the Protestant branch of the family that settled in Alsace, in the village of Duntzenheim, west of Strasbourg, now in France, but at one time part of Germany.

Not all members of the family changed their religion and followed Martin Luther. There was one branch of the family that remained Catholic and were to be found mainly in Rothenburg about 50 miles east of Stuttgart. The Protestant branch of the family came from Heilbronn, 30 miles north of Stuttgart. To distinguish the Catholic branch of the family from the Protestant, each branch assumed a coat of arms that was similar in design on the shield but had a different crest. The Protestant branch used the symbol on the shield which was the marsh bird. On the Catholic branch the symbol used as a crest was a pair of wings displayed. However, on the shield the snipe on the Protestant arms shows the bird displayed on a craggy hill. On the Catholic arms on the shield it shows the bird standing on a hill of three mounds.

The Dukes of Wuerttemberg protected the faith of Rome, but it appears that this branch of the family died out in the late sixteen hundreds. Erhard Schnepf who introduced the new religion in Wuerttemberg seemed to be well thought of.

The Schnepf family of Alsace claim their descent from Hans Schnepf, a shepherd who lived in different villages in north central Alsace. His son, Lorentz Schnepf, also a shepherd, also lived in different villages in the region. Lorentz Schnepf married Catherina Haber, had eleven children born in eight different villages. One of their children was, Johannes born 1 December 1695 in the village of Duntzenheim, west of Strasbourg, now in France. Johannes married Barbara, maiden name unknown, in Muhlhausen about 1720. The church records for Muhlhausen do not cover this period, thence no record of their marriage.

*Research
by H. W. Bly
1985-86.*

On 29 October 1725, Catherina Haber Schnepf died at Geisweiler and her son, Johannes is named as a shepherd at Muhlhausen. When he signed over his interest in the property to his sister, he signed with a mark, a large "H" with an "S" inside and intersected by a shepherd's crook. This is the same mark that he used when he signed his oath of allegiance to the British Crown when he landed at Philadelphia on 17 August 1733 coming from Germany on the ship, Samuel.

Upon arriving in America he settled in Frederick Co., VA where he bought 400 acres of land on Little North Mountain near the branch of Cedar Creek. Two of his sons, John, Jr. and Lawrence Snapp also purchased large tracts of land. John, Jr. purchased 400 acres of land on Cedar Creek on the East side of Little North Mountain adjoining his father. Lawrence purchased 400 acres on West Run, whereon he lived, and then purchased 406 acres on Funk's Mill Run.

On 21 May 1753, Johannes Schnepf, Sr. (John Snapp, Sr.) and his two sons, John, Jr. and Lawrence Snapp were naturalized in Frederick Co., VA.

The area in which the family settled was known as "Snapp Neighborhood" and they were among the first pioneers to settle in the Valley of Virginia. This famous neighborhood was begun before Winchester, VA was incorporated.

The Snapp family were Lutheran by faith and attended the St. Paul Lutheran Church in Frederick Co., VA.

It is assumed that Lawrence Snapp married a woman with the first name of Margaret and perhaps was a daughter of Peter Stephens, one of the early pioneers of the Valley. There is considerable circumstantial evidence but not any documentary proof so far to date.

Having acquired large tracts of land, well over 1400 acres of land, Lawrence Snapp, Sr., settled in Dunmore (Shenandoah) Co., VA where he made his Last Will and Testament and died in 1782. In his Last Will and Testament he divided his estate to his widow and their ten children giving large tracts of land to his children. His widow, Margaret died in 1801 and in her Last Will and Testament she divided her estate among her children.

The emigrant ancestor, Johannes Schnepf (1695-1762) and his wife, Barbara, (1696-1762) had numerous children and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, even today, claims many persons who are descended from them.

Others of the Snapp family immigrated to other areas of the United States. Many of the surname immigrated to East Tennessee whereas their descendants are quite numerous. Four of Lawrence Snapp's sons went to East Tennessee, namely, John, Sr. (1749-1818); Lawrence, Jr. (1750-1824); Abraham Snapp, Sr. (1761-1833); and Jacob Snapp (1766-). Lawrence, Jr., settled in Sullivan Co., TN, and John, Sr.; Abraham, Sr.; and Jacob Snapp settled in Washington Co., TN, also settling in Greene Co., TN along the county lines.

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Sarasota, FL 34243
14 Sept. 1988

Harrisonburg, Rockingham
Historical Society
301 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Archivist:

I am enclosing some genealogical and historical on the Rockingham County Snapp family that I wish to have placed in your files.

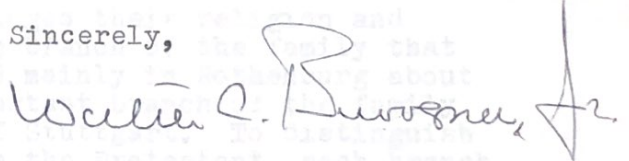
Although some of the family stayed in Rockingham County area, John Snapp, Sr. and wife, Mary and his son, John Snapp, Jr. and his wife, Elizabeth removed themselves to Washington and Greene Co's., TN in 1815.

I hope that this data will help some other person who is researching the Rockingham County Snapp family.

Other data on the Snapp family can be found in Frederick, Shenandoah, and Augusta Co's., VA.

If there are any questions, please advise.

Sincerely,



Walter C. Burgner, Jr.