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**REIFF  
FAMILY HISTORY  
1735 — — — 1982**

*FAMILY NAMES OF NINE  
GENERATIONS, APPROXIMATELY 247 YEARS*

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Family Records

1982

Printed by  
**Peques Publishers**  
Gordonville, PA 17529

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SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150





owned and farmed by Paul Z. Martin family,  
74. Elvin Nolt family.

75. New buildings on farm with 2 houses. Small  
house Edwin Reiff and dau. Barbara, Farmed by Paul H.  
Reiff family.

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## REIFF FAMILY RECORDS

### *The Reiffs in Europe*

Early Reiff family accounts in Europe are not so easy to find, they were not so readily found on Mennonite records in Europe, either in the Mennonite field or in Lutheran areas. The *Mennonite Lexicon* (A European Mennonite encyclopedia) does not list the name. A German Lutheran Encyclopedia does however list one family. (Real Encyclopedia Leipzig, 1867) The name is Jacob Frederick Reiff (1810-). He labored in the field of philosophie.

It would be hard to specify the origin of this family in Europe. The german encyclopedia gives a slight clue that it derives from the word *reif* meaning frost in english terms or it could also be interpreted to *reif* meaning ripe.

More interesting accounts are found in the Anabaptist field in Switzerland, where the name is spelled Ryf.

Hans Ryf is listed among a group of Anabaptists with Hans Haslibach when they were in disputation with the state church officials concerning their faith in 1538. Other familiar names listed to attend the disputation were, Seckler, Schnider, Muller, Aberly, [Eberly] Brugger [Bricker], Sutter, Hunzicker, Brenneman, Zaugg, [Zug], Schellenberger, Stauffer, Miesler [Mishler], Rupp, Krayenbuhl [Krabill], Kolp, Herman and others. Note that we meet many of these family names in this book. Hans Ryf is from Madisonville, in the Canton of Bern. *Bernischer Tauffer*, by Ernest Muller, 1895, PP80. See also *Die Taufgesinnten Gemeinden* by S. H. Geiser, 1971, PP192, of german ship passengers are recorded in London however.

### *The Reiffs In America*

Reiff family records are more numerous in America. It is likely that our pioneer Reiffs are first found in Franconia districts of eastern Pennsylvania. They soon spread to more western counties to Lancaster, Lebanon, York, Cumberland in Penna. As well as to Maryland, Ontario,



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Canada, Virginia and later to Ohio and west.

It has not been determined exactly when our Reiff forebearers emigrated to America, but likely before 1727, as they are not found to be listed on German shiplists. Before that time they were not required to register at the courthouse in Philadelphia upon arrival therefore there is no recorded shiplist of those who arrived at Philadelphia before that time. Some records of the Reiffs, in eastern Pennsylvania appear, however.

The Reiffs were of the German-Swiss descent. There would be quite a bit of research to be done yet to trace the full ancestry of this Abraham Reiff m Barbara Groff. We had writings handed to us from our grandparents and great grandparents that this Abraham came from Germany single. We were not able to find any immigration records to meet his year of starting and taking possession of his farm in 1757, which will be fully listed later. So we are assuming that this Abraham was the son of the Salford deacon as shown in the W. B. on page 1091, in Wenger progenition. With his name also being Abraham we can believe this possible with the above theory. Also other genealogy records such as the early Burkholder family records show that every Burkholder and Reiff marriage listed the Reiff as a descendant of the Salford deacon Abraham Reiff. This with a number of other records stating the same it appears to be very convincing of which we will now begin step by step of what we are able to find and try to piece it together.

At the Mennonite Historical Center we found a book showing when and where the early settlers took their land patents.

In Montgomery County, three Reiffs, took each a patent in the year 1734. It does not say if they were single or if they were brothers as we did have an account handed to us from our Reiff relation in Maryland as someone being on the opinion that three Reiff brothers had come over together. Abraham Reiff took a patent of 200 A. in Franconia Township, and Hans Reiff 100 A. and Jacob Reiff 150 A., both in Salford Township. Our Franconia friends tell us that Hans Reiff stayed in Montgomery

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County leaving many Reiff descendants in that area. There is a barn still standing that was built in the 1700's by Hans or his son in law and there is a Reiff road at Kulpsville Montgomery County, Penna. We were told in early history there were two different sects of Reiffs in Montgomery County, the Mennonite Reiffs and the Lutherans Reiffs. The M.R.J. of April 1964 states that Jacob also took a patent of 300 A. in Hempfield Township in Lancaster County. This was found in a very interesting account of a Minister John E. Reesor's trip to Penna., in 1854. He was from Ontario, Canada and a son of Peter Reesor, who was a son of Christian Reesor m Fannie Reiff. Christian and Fannie moved to Franklin County in 1786 and to Canada in 1804. Then this Minister John E. when visiting in Franklin County. He stopped at the old Reesor homestead and also visited a Henry Reiff and a John Reiff. Footnotes claim them to be descendants of this Jacob who first took land in Montgomery County then in Hempfield Township, Lancaster County. *See a more complete record of this Jacob Reiff in book John Jacob Martin Family of Cumberland County. He was married to a Sarah Rife.*

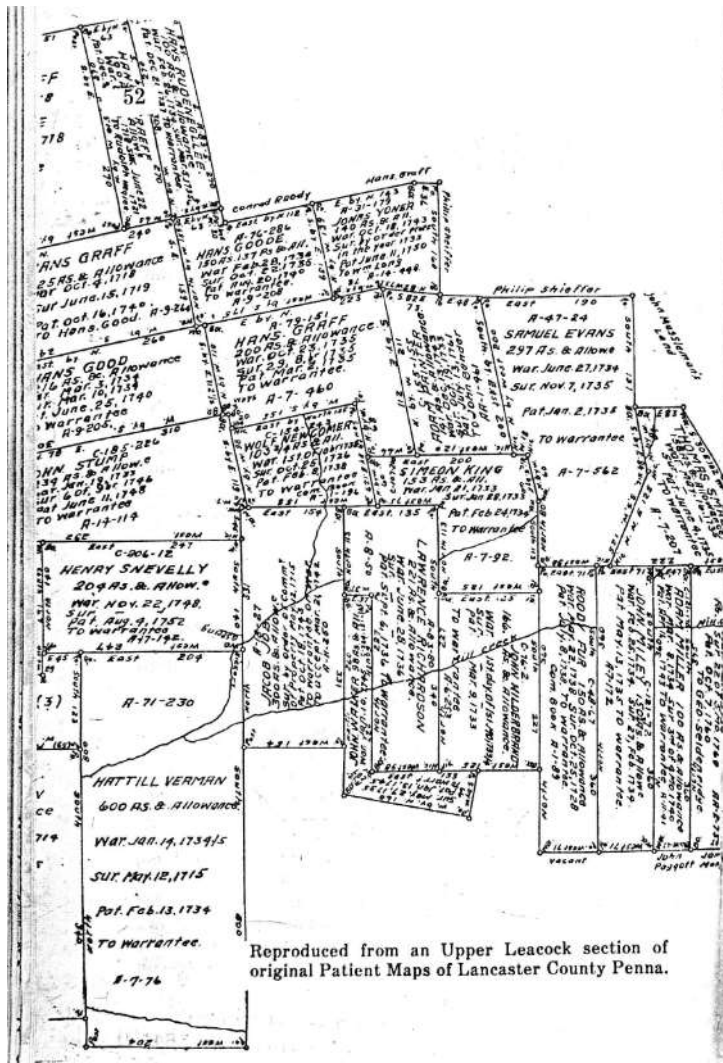
We had other information from history of that area that name Reiffs moved from Montgomery County to Union County, and later moved to the state of California.

We also followed another by name Hans Jacob Reiff who arrived in America in 1759 and bought 150 A. in Hempfield Twp. which he deeded to his son Abraham in 1758 and stayed in this family a few more generations. These recordings can be seen in the Lancaster County Courthouse, but there aren't any Reiffs in that area anymore that we know of although the Lancaster County tourist map shows a Rife Run and a Rife Run Road near Manheim.

Then Abraham Reiff as the W. B. states died in 1763, was married to Barbara Meyer, a daughter of Christian Meyer. A book of the Life of the Colonial school teacher Christopher Dock at Skipack, Montgomery County shows this Abraham Reiff as a trustee in establishing the Salford Meeting House and was then ordained deacon

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Reproduced from an Upper Leacock section of original Patent Maps of Lancaster County Penna.

there.

Records show that around 1740, Abraham Reiff and wife Barbara Meyer moved to Chester County, and later to Lancaster County, in Leacock Township. According to the research of Musser's School by friend Levi Stoltzfus on S. Groffdale Road, he found records showing that a Samuel Evans had taken a land patent in the year 1735. This map also shows some Hans Groff land which Levi claims was bought for Hans' three daughters and his own homestead he traced back to Hans' youngest daughter Susanna m Jacob Yoner. (See map on opposite page)

This Samuel Evans tract was 297 A. Today this includes 3 farms owned by Robert Martin, Floyd Nolt and Elias Beiler with the latter possibly being the homestead having the Reiff name on the house. Then Samuel Evans and wife Ann sold this farm to Abraham Reiff and wife Barbara Meyer. They then sold it to their son Isaac Reiff who was first married to Barbara Holl and second married to Rebecca Bear, according to W. B. which also states him as a brother to Abraham, married to Barbara Groff. When reading this Isaac's will at the courthouse which he wrote before having any children he had willed 100 pounds to his brother Christian's son Isaac if they don't have any children. Then records showed that Isaac and Rebecca did have a son, which they named Isaac. This son Isaac married Mary \_\_\_\_\_ and they were the ones who built the house where Elias Beiler lives, showing a reading— Built by Isaac and Mary Reiff in 1828 —. Now here we have several Isaac Reiffs listed and we are not sure which of these were the ones that their 6 children had pleaded to the Orphans Court in Lancaster for guardians due to their father Isaac Reiff being a habitual drunkard.

The court appointed Gabriel Eckert over Catherine E., Jacob E. and Gabriel E. Reiff and Daniel W. Eby over Isaac E., Levi E. and William E. Reiff. If these were the children of Isaac and Mary this may have been the reason that this Reiff homestead was next sold to a few generations of Mussers, with Reuben Roman Diller in charge of the administration. First a John Musser and wife Mary



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then a Jacob R. Musser and wife Susanna. The next owner was Minister Joseph Wenger b Aug. 31, 1829, — d November 6, 1907, m Elizabeth Musser b January 30, 1828, — d August 30, 1903, a sister to Jacob. Joseph and Elizabeth are listed in W. B. No. C7202. Joseph was ordained minister October 1, 1857. He died when struck by a train on the Lancaster and Downingtown Railroad. They had two children, one died in infancy and one daughter named Anna, married to John Martin, and they were the next to own this farm. They are ancestor to Auctioneer Bob Martin. This was probably the time when this plantation was divided into 3 tracts of which the part of the Reiff Homestead was then sold from John Martin to David and Nancy Blank and next to his son Daniel K. and Katie Blank the father-in-law of present day owners the Elias Beiler family.

According to immigration records there were many Reiffs who sailed to America and landed at Philadelphia. A Family Heritage Book available through a Beatrice Bayley shows the Reiff name scattered pretty well throughout the nation.

The German-Swiss descendants wrote their names Reiff, the same as we do to-day, except in a few cases only the last f is omitted, as Reif, then some more English speaking people wrote it Rife. This spelling appears in W. B., page 926, showing a John and Frances Coffman Whanger bought 207 acres of land in Greencastle County, Virginia, on May 31, 1796, from a Jacob Riphe.

We will now begin on the more proven records beginning with the purchase of farm No. 1 showing on map No. 5, page 44 and 45 as follows. "notes taken from old deeds." February 12, 1757, Samuel Groff and Christina his wife to Abraham Reiff and Barbara his wife a daughter of Samuel Groff and Christina for advancement in the world for a sum of 200 pence for 158 acres. Boundaries, Joseph Horst (a brother-in-law), Mark Groff (Samuel's brother) Christian Wenger (subject of W. B.) and Hans Rudolf Negley. (This was a minister in the Groffdale Church until he later joined the Seventh Day Adventist or the Ephrata Cloister. This being a part of the former transac-

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tion as follows, July 26, 1738, Hans Groff and wife Susanna sold 219 acres to son Samuel Groff for 2 pounds. This was the same tract that Hans Groff bought from John, Richard, and Thomas Penn on Nov. 18, 1737, for 1400 sterling for every 100 A. and balance 19 acres according. Boundaries, Christopher Winger, Mark Groff, Hans Rudolph Negley.