

## SCHNEIDER/SNYDER FAMILY

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A Snyder/Schneider family history summary is included because descendants of the Schneider family intermarried with the family line of Peter Fike and Magdalena (Arnold) Fike. They are therefore an important part of our genetic and religious heritage. Schneiders also had migrated with the Fikes from Somerset County to Eglon.

Christian Fike, (June, 2 1761-Feb. 8, 1851) married Christina Liven-good (Mar. 2, 17\_\_,-May 5, 1857). They are the parents of seven children as listed on the first page of Chart 1 (center). One of these children was Peter Fike who married Magdalena Arnold daughter of Elder Samuel Arnold of Beaver Run Church near Burlington, W. Va. Her dates are 1791-1884. Their family is described elsewhere in the Bittinger-Fike essay.

In this essay, we mention the three children of Peter and Magdalena who married into the Snyder family, namely, Susanna Fike, (b.1819) who married John Snyder; Rachel Snyder (Feb. 19, 1824-Dec. 4, 1884) who married Elder Samuel A. Fike (Dec. 22, 1820- Mar. 7, 1905) in Fayette County, ; and David Fike (1823-1907) who married Elizabeth Snyder. All dates not available. Other children of Peter and Magdalena were, Lydia, Christina, Mary, Anna, Madalin, and Aaron. Aaron (1810-1916,) married Rebecca Roudolph, and they had Pheonas, Emra T., and Lorenzo.<sup>1</sup>

Another son, Moses, (1837-1934) married Sophia Roudolph, and they are the writer's great grandparents. After Sophia bore and raised their children, she died. Moses then married Rebecca Beaghly and then Betty Digman. Moses was born 1837 and died in 1934 at the age of ninety-four.

Peter and Magdalena Fike's large family at Eglon have been a great asset to the church. Their children included three ministers, their names being 1) Samuel A., 2) Moses, (father of Etta Fike Bittinger, wife of Jonas Bittinger), and 3) Elder Aaron Fike.

We will focus on Samuel A., because his wife was Rachel *Snyder*, *Snyders being the topic of this Essay*. (Our line of Moses Fikes is discussed in a different essay).

After the family had moved from Fayette or Fayette County Pennsylvania to "The German Settlement" (Eglon) in 1854. Elder John Kline of Broadway, Virginia, visited the area in 1854 at the request of Peter Fike. On that occasion, Samuel A. was elected to the office of deacon. In October

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<sup>1</sup> The principal source for the Eglon Fike family line is late Edwin and Maye Fike whose massive compilation of Fike and Rogers family materials was personally researched, published, and spiral bound and released in 1987. They lived in Flemington, W. Va. We shared information for many years.

after his marriage to Rachel Snyder occurred. In the following year, 1855, he was elected to the ministry on the occasion of the second visit by Elder Kline. Thus, he became the first minister of the Congregation. Deacons also were elected on this occasion. This marks the beginning of the Maple Spring Congregation. Elder Samuel A. presided over the rapidly growing congregation, and may be credited faithfully nurturing it into one of the most influential congregations in the state, rivaling only Beaver Run and Sandy Creek.

Jonas Fike, son of Elder Samuel A., and Rachel Snyder, succeeded his father as presiding Elder in the Maple Spring Church. Jonas was born December 22, 1851 and died June 24, 1925). He led an active ministerial life and kept a record of his remarkable ministry.<sup>2</sup>

Grandmother Etta Fike Bittinger took great pleasure in keeping track of the number of Brethren ministers in her Fike and Bittinger family lines. Before her death ca 1971, she had counted more than one hundred.

The German word “schneider” means tailor, or more generally, one who cuts, makes, concocts or, forges). Elder Emra T. Fike spoke of the Fikes as “weavers”, which if correct, would be a related occupation of tailor and would tend to suggest a common background for the Fikes and Snyders in Germany and in Berks County. This county was adjacent to Germantown, Pottstown and other German settlements, and was the arrival point for many Palatine immigrants including those fleeing religious intolerance. Residents often were hosted there by relatives or church people while they recovered from their arduous journey, adjusted to their new location and made plans for their future.

Grandma Etta’s father Moses, and her Uncles, Elder Jonas, Elder Aaron, Elder Samuel A., and Elder Jeremiah Miller (the latter marrying into the Snyder family), made up a team of ministers that were mainly responsible for the rapid growth of the congregation.

A picture of four of these preachers, bearded and dressed in the required “Dunker Garb.” Their fame was acknowledged by the title fondly assigned to them—The “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”. It was taken in 1908 and may be seen on page 129 of the book, *History of the Church of the Brethren in the First District of West Virginia* by Rev. Foster M. Bittinger. (Brethren Publishing House, 1946). This book provides much of the data in this essay.

A team of ministers familiarly known as the “Four Snyders lived in Somerset County before some of them moved to Preston County (Eglen).

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<sup>2</sup> See Bittinger, Foster M Bittinger; *History of the....First District of West Virginia*, 1946, p. 134b .Cited below.

(see my Snyder Folder.) See also below for a history of the older generations back to Germany below for the older history of the family, leading down to the Peter Fike generation.

Source: *Mennonite Family History*, July 1993, page 139 for the older generations.

- I. Hans Schneider b. 1534, m. Catherine Hans
- II Jacob Schneider, b. 1561, m. 1586 Anna Maria Brech
- III Peter Schneider, 1590-1663 m. Susanna Reisz. (Remember, Heinrich Bittinger, s/o Heinrich & Anna Catherine Schaeffer, married a Reis.)
- IV Jacob Schneider, 1524-1679 m. Anna Maria Muller, 1626-1679
- V Jacob Schneider 1663-1727 n. Veronica Schmidt, b. 1662
- VI John Schneider, immigrant, married Susan Bauman
- VII Christian Schneider m. \_\_\_\_\_?
- VIII Herman Schneider (1767-1851), a Mennonite Bishop, married Magdalena Graybill (1774-1851)
- I X Jacob I. Snyder (1793-1865) married Hannah \_\_\_\_\_ (1795-187\_).

Snyders arrived at different times in the early years, and we have not yet made connections to those listed above. They were mostly Mennonites.

Some Fikes and Snyders were converted to the Brethren Faith in Somerset County where they came under the influence of Peter Livengood, an Amishman who had converted to the Dunker faith, and brought other Amish families with him. It was there that Christian Fike married Christina Livengood, a Dunker, who by her own loyalty and example inspired Christian himself to become a Dunker. It was sometime later that the family migrated to the Eglon community with the Fike clan ca. 1850.

When did our Schneider ancestor immigrate to America? For the answer we again must resort to the ship lists. The list of immigrants must be surveyed since many arrived and at different times.

On October 31, 1765, the ship *Betsey* arrived at the port of Philadelphia carrying 75 named immigrants. Women were not named. The ship carried four Schneiders (spelled variably), John Adam, John Philip, John George, and Peter Schneider. We do not know if or how they might have been related to each other. The ship also carried William and John Frederick Schaffer and Hans Merkle, All these names are prevalent in our family and widely distributed among the Appalachian Plateau Dunker Congregations. Schaeffer and Schneider immigrants were numerous in the ship records.

As suggested by Edwin Fike's research, *Fike and Rogers*, 1989, p. 94, our Snyder immigrant most likely was "Devalt (H) Snyder". He immigrated

on the ship *Dragon* that arrived at the Port of Philadelphia on September 26, 1749 (S&H, (Vol. I, pp. 413-14) in company with “John Nicholas Schneider” and “Michael Schneider,” the latter standing beside two Schaffers, “John Nicklas” and “George Jacob”. Both of these family names were present in the Bittinger-Fike family background and common in in Somerset County.

Devalt was born November 2, 1755 in Walabar, Germany and died December 17, 1828 in Somerset County about three miles from Rockwood not far from where Middle Creek and the Casselman River intersect. The family graveyard of a half dozen stones overlooks the Casselman River. The old house, no longer standing, was located nearby. (Edwin Fike, p. 94)

Devalt was married in 1786 to Anna Clarissa Fader (Feathers) born April 21, 1768 and died July 17, 1819 at Frankenthal along the Rhein. Edwin Fike reported the family tradition of the Feather family arrival in America in 1775. In checking the ship arrivals that year, I found that “Xtian” and Jacob “Vätter” [Fäder in German=Feather] had arrived at Philadelphia on October 17, 1775 on the ship *King of Prussia*. Only heads of families and males of age were named on the ship list. (S&H, Vol. I, pp. 762-3.). Other “Fetters-Feathers, John Bernhart and John Peter Fetter with Snyders (Vol. I, p. 363 ship *Neptune*, Oct. 6, 1746); and Ludwig; (Vol. I, 689), with Schäfers on ship *Chance*), on Aug.8, 1764. Feathers families still lived in the Eglon community when our family lived there on the Bittinger farm in 1938-1941.

We cannot say with certainty just how our Eglon Snyders are connected to Devalt or just how the line comes down. Did our ancestor arrive later on a different ship? A possible clue is in the names. Among these Schneider immigrants were John and Peter. Several children of Peter and Magdalena Arnold Fike married into the Schneider family and are buried in the Snyder Cemetery east of Maple Spring Church near the site of the old Orphans Home that operated in the 1930s. John Snyder, who had married Susanna Fike, daughter of Peter and Magdalena (Arnold) Fike, is buried there also. Other Snyders, including Silas, Noah, Rachel, Levi, Magdalene, Lydia, Susanna, and Jonas married into the local Winters, Calcamp, Wolfe, Glass and Ford families, having moved there with or shortly after the Peter Fike family moved there in the mid-1850s.

The Snyder family had migrated from Berks to Somerset County where Peter was born in Turkeyfoot Township on August 14, 1797. He died on December 23, 1871 near Donagal and is buried in Fayette County, Pennsylvania in the Lutheran Cemetery. He was married to Susanna Weimer, born December 25 or 27, 1803 and died July 22, 1867 and was buried beside her husband. (Source, Edwin Fike, *Fike and Rogers*, 1987, page 68) They and

their descendants became an important constituency of the Maple Spring Church and were well integrated into the Brethren and other families in the Eglon community.<sup>3</sup>

End—June 29, 2015

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<sup>3</sup> See S. & H, *Penna. German Pioneers*, Vol. I, pp. 706-7; and E. F. Bittinger, *Allegheny Passage*, pp. 539-540. See also Elder Emra T. Fike's small booklet, *History of the Ancestry of the Fikes, 1927* and also, Edwin Fike, *Direct Line History and Genealogy of John T. Fike and Dylvia Rodger's Children and Children of Reva Espage Fike Findley*; pages 94-97, etc.