

The Fraleigh Family

The Fraleigh family tree goes back to the Palatines who originally lived in Germany along the Rhine River. They were not only discontented because the French were raiding the area and their taxes were high, but an unprecidented freeze set in to ruin their grape vineyards.

In 1709, the Palatines left Germany for England where they were not welcome. They were fed at public expense, costing four pence a day, and were given lodging by the people of England. Mob violence resulted and England decided to send the Palatines to the Hudson River frontier. The English said, "Let the Germans fight it out with the Indians where we have not done so well."

Stephanus Froelich arrived in New York with his wife and three children in 1710. When he and the other Palatines arrived, they were given land to settle. The land given the Palatines was held by the Crown. At the suggestions of the Governor Hunter, the Palatines were placed under contract like "indentured servants" to work out their time making tar out of pitch for the Crown. This project failed because they were agriculturalists and did not know how to make tar from pitch.

After Governor Hunter's project failed, the Palatines began to scatter in all directions. Stephanus Froelich settled in the town of Hardscrabble, whose name was eventually changed to Red Hook.

The records do not refer to the Fraleigh family again until 1775 when Putnam Fraleigh, also known as Petrus Froelich, was elected a member of the County Committee of Safety to put down the Tories who were causing trouble. It is speculated that Petrus Froelich changed his name to Putnam Fraleigh to win favor with the English.

None of the family members contacted could remember too much about Phillip Fraleigh or Peter H. Fraleigh, however, my Great Aunt, Jane Fenner, fondly remembers Captain Irving Fraleigh, her grandfather. He owned a night boat called the "Sarah Lawrence" which went from Albany to New York. The night boat made regular trips to New York City, stopping along the Hudson River to pick up farmers' produce. Barrytown was one of the stops that was used to pick up the produce.

The original Fraleigh home was burned in the early 1800's and was rebuilt in 1854. The house is made from brick which was drawn by sleigh and oxen from Barrytown. There have been many generations of Fraleighs who have lived in the house. In fact, we lived there for a year when we first moved back from Kansas. There are seven fireplaces and twenty-two steps from the first floor to the second floor.

My grandparents, Irving and Kay Fraleigh, are residents of the farm which was selected several years ago among those recognized for being a Century Farm. A Century Farm is a farm which has been in a family for a minimum of one hundred years.

Another interesting ancestor is my great great uncle Sheridan Shook, who was chosen treasurer of the Relief Fund during the Civil War. In 1861, he was appointed by President Lincoln to the position of Internal Revenue Collector. At the same time he was elected to the Board of Supervisors in New York City. In 1865, at an outlay of \$40,200, he fixed up "Gilmore Gardens" in New York which he conducted for two years. In 1871 he built the Union Square Theater, at the corner of 14th Street and Broadway. He was owner and proprietor of the Morton House, which was one of the leading hotels in New York City.

Sheridan Shook Fraleigh was the son of Irving P. Fraleigh and Almina Cookinghand Fraleigh. He is mentioned in the newspaper clipping on the Mausoleum. He died in the creek which flows through the farm. My mother tells me how she remembers when her Grandfather, Irving P. Fraleigh, would always remind her to be very careful of that creek. Sheridan, or Sheddy as he was referred to by the family members, was Irving P. Fraleigh's older and only brother.

Palatines planted local family trees

By LESLIE COONS

Correspondent

RED HOOK — Although their historical presence is widely publicized in other parts of the state, the Palatines' local influence often goes unnoticed in this, the very area the German immigrants first settled.

"The Palatines were so significant in this area, yet we have very little indication of them," Nancy Kelly told members of Red Hook's Egbert Benson Historical Society. Kelly, a Rhinebeck resident, and her husband, Arthur, have researched the 18th century Germanic

immigrants and their geneology for 18 years.

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frame, actually describes inhabitants of part of Germany, known as the "Pfalz," near Heidelberg and the German-French border. Living under the rule of the Palatinate Electors — European royalty — the local townspeople became known as Palatines, she said.

The impact of plundering French armies during the 30 Years' War and the Spanish War of Succession left Palatines living in small towns and villages "ripe for

emigration," Kelly said.

The severe winter of 1707-08 froze grape vines, a main source of income, and was "the straw that broke the camel's back," she said.

The English Queen Anne, whose husband was a Protestant of German descent, was sympathetic to the Palatines' plight, Kelly said. England also wanted more trade and settlements in the New World. After diplomatic negotiations with the Palatine Electors, a deal was worked out that would allow some Germans to emigrate. The English set to work promoting the idea of life in the New World.

Records show that it was mostly those in smaller villages in the Pfalz region, hard hit by economic difficulties, who decided to emigrate, Kelly said. Whole families and closely-knit groups of townspeople decided to leave. "It was very rare to find anyone who came by himself," Kelly said.

The Palatines traveled the Rhine River in tents aboard rafts to the Dutch port of Rotterdam. There, they boarded English ships and traveled to London to await passage to the New World.

Extensive lists were kept by the English, identifying emigrants by religion and occupation, Kelly said. Catholics and Baptists as well as Lutherans and members of the Reformed Church were listed, which shows that religious persecution did not cause the emigration, Kelly said.

Finding themselves with at least 11,000 Germans awaiting passage to the New World, Queen Anne reverted to religious distinctions and decided that Catholics would be sent back to Germany or to Holland or Ireland, Kelly said. "Some people decided to change their religion" so they could go to the New World, she said.

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the English government shipped the Palatines to the area where Germantown and West Camp are located today. At that time, the land belonged to Robert R. Livingston, who sold 6,000 acres making up East Camp (Germantown) and West Camp, to the English government.

Each Palatine family was promised 40 acres of land after they completed payment of their passage and subsistence, Kelly said. As part of the deal, the immigrants would be required to produce tar and other supplies for the English Navy from nearby pine forests.

In summer of 1710, about 3,000 immigrants arrived on 10 ships in New York harbor after a rough passage that claimed about 400 lives, Kelly said. Arriving at East and West Camps in late September, the Palatines hurried to build sod- or bark-roofed shelters before winter set in.

The settlers at East Camp had to travel to Livingston's mill on the Roe Jan to receive their daily rations of bread, salted meat and beer, she said.

The tar-making project lasted only two years. Contributing to its failure was the fact that the thick local pine forests contained the wrong kind of trees for harvesting tar, and the Palatines' dissatisfaction with the arrangement, Kelly explained.

Just before the winter of 1713, the English government announced the end of the tar-making project and the Palatines were on their own. Some of the settlers moved to the Schoharie Valley, which they had seen on an English-led expedition to Quebec in 1711.

Others moved to the Red Hook/Rhinebeck area,

where Henry Beekman offered to rent his land. They settled in the area north of Rhinebeck near today's intersection of Routes 9 and 9G, and established the first community called Rhinebeck. The small cemetery off Route 9 is all that remains of the original settlement, Kelly said. German gravestones can still be seen in the Stone Church cemetery, she said.

Examples of early Palatine architecture can be seen throughout the area, said Kelly, who shared slides of several homes and barns. A living reminder of the Palatines exists today in their many local descendants. These include both Rhinebeck's Mayor Peter Sipperley and Town Supervisor David Traver, and Red Hook Town Justice Elmore Fraleigh, she said.