

## Eller History

First, let me say that this information was compiled by myself, Kitty Smith and Doris Duncan and it is our contention that the content is about as accurate as we can get it without having the luxury of passed-down-the-line information, although Alice Coffey provided much of the color.

As a bit of background, the following is an excerpt from *Early Germans in America and Why They Came*, by J. Gerald Eller.

The Mennonites, who arrived aboard the Concord in 1683 were soon followed by many others of the same faith. This sect founded Germantown, the first town in Pennsylvania after Philadelphia. As more Mennonites arrived, they spread into what became Montgomery and Lancaster Counties and beyond, as did other members of Anabaptists sects, particularly the German Baptist Brethern, also known as the Dunkers. By the mid-1700s two distinctly different religious groups of Germans had arrived in Pennsylvania, 1) members of the various persecuted religious sects: **Mennonites, Amish, Dunkards, Schwenkfelders** <sup>1</sup>, and **Moravians**, and 2) and members of the sanctioned **Reformed, Lutheran and Catholic** (very few Catholic) churches. Pennsylvania, more than any other colony, became a melting pot of various religious groups, where unlike in Europe, were free to practice their religious beliefs.

For the 1708-1720 period of German immigration to Pennsylvania, Rev. Henry Melchior Muehlenberg, the patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America, called attention to the great exodus from the German Palatinate <sup>2</sup> to England which occurred during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). The people of the Palatinate and the adjacent province of Wurttemberg had lived for generations in a land with near constant wars, which made battlefields of villages, towns and whole regions.

The emigration of 1709-1710 from the German Palatinate is without parallel in the history of emigrating people. Forced from their homes in the dead of winter by ravaging soldiers, the only hope of thousands was to escape down the Rhine River to Holland and to reach England where they hoped to find shelter. Eventually, many thousands ended up settling in Pennsylvania. By 1727, Philadelphia required that the names of all immigrants be recorded. Prior to 1727 there were approximately 20,000 German in Pennsylvania, after 1727 an additional 68,872 Germans were registered.

Eller Immigrants to America before 1800, from the files of J.G. Eller, source The Eller Chronicles, vol. IX-4. The earliest record of **Christian Eller** was in 1747 in Philadelphia.

### Eller Pioneers and Frontiersman By J. Gerald Eller

Jacob, **Christian** and Melkior Eller, all German settlers in Rowan County North Carolina, arrived to find the most fertile lands already occupied by the Scotch-Irish and English. They were forced to settle east and southeast of Salisbury on a less fertile strip extending along the western bank of the Yadkin River. Their farms were located a few miles from the famed Trading Fort (or as I have seen in other sources this might have been the Trading *Path*) and a few miles downstream from where Squire Boone and his son Daniel lived.

These early Ellers settled on Crane Creek, a tributary that flowed east into the Yadkin River. Plat maps show that Jacob's land was at the mouth of Crane Creek while **Christian's** and Melkior's were farther upstream. Less than fertile soil conditions was probably the determining factor for some of the Eller families, especially the second generation, to move elsewhere before 1790. First to depart Rowan County were the eldest sons of immigrants Jacob, **Christian** and George Michael Eller. They moved westward while still young.

Jacob Eller Jr., son of Jacob Eller Sr. was apparently the first to leave followed by **George Eller<sup>2</sup>**, son of **Christian Eller<sup>1</sup>**, and Peter Eller, son of George Michael Eller. The earliest and most extensive genealogies were compiled by the descendants of those departed first. Descendants of Peter Eller, son of George Michael, are thought to be the first to compile their history. J.W. Hook, a Peter Eller, descendant published two books, one in 1925 and one in 1957. J.W. Eller of Indiana, a descendant of Christian Eller, published a small booklet in 1918.

According to J. W. Hook, 1957, Peter Eller was living in the Blue Ridge Mountains of what is now Ashe County, NC, as early as 1773. Jacob Eller Jr. settled on the western frontier beyond the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina in what is now the state of Tennessee as early as 1779. In that year he and his father-in-law, Adam Biffle (Buffle?), received land warrants for adjacent tracts on the Holson River. **George Eller, Sr.<sup>2</sup>**, was living in what is now Grayson County, Virginia before 1790.

The history of the descendants of these and other early Eller immigrant families in America is part of the history of the western expansion of frontier America in that period when “manifest destiny” was a cornerstone of the United States policies for the Western Territories. Descendants of these three second generation Ellers were soon joined by other Eller families who followed the frontier as it moved westward. Seeking out those early pioneer Eller families and their descendants who ventured westward is one of the major goals of the editors of the Eller Chronicles.

**George Eller Sr.<sup>2</sup>**, eldest son of **Christian Eller<sup>1</sup>** left Rowan County NC before 1790 to become an early settler in the New River Valley in what is now Grayson County VA. He and Peter Eller of Ashe County lived in adjacent counties and visitation between the two families is documented to have occurred. **George Eller Jr.<sup>3</sup>** and his brother John Eller, sons of **George Eller Sr.<sup>2</sup>**, grandsons of **Christian Eller<sup>1</sup>**, later pushed on from Grayson County VA to Wagner County, KY. (Note: county is listed as Wagner, but I think that is an error, it should have been listed as Wayne County).

John moved on to Indiana in 1833 where he became the progenitor of a host of descendants, one being J. W. Eller who wrote a family genealogy in 1918 which still has most of what is known about the **Christian Eller<sup>1</sup>** line. (Note1: Ft. Wayne has a very large Genealogy Department and it's possible this book is there; Note 2.: According to Ramsey's *Carolina Cradle*, a Christian Eller, a son of Michael Eller was born in the Algau District of Bavaria in 1724, there is no definitive proof that this Christian is our Christian).

Doris Duncan's information lists **Christian Eller<sup>1</sup>**, born 1724 in Germany, died 1804, married Mary Biffle (Buffle?), who died sometime before 1800. They had the following children: John, **George<sup>2</sup>**, Frederick, Henry, Susanna, Mary Eller (Wattinger), Barbara Eller (Hess).

**Christian Eller<sup>1</sup>** came to America on a ship named Restauration from Rotterdam and took the oath of Allegiance on October 9, 1747. Source: J.W.Cook, *George Michael Eller and His Descendants in America*. Deed Book 5, pp. 347-348 indicates **Christian Eller<sup>1</sup>** bought land on Crane Creek in Rowan County, North Carolina on January 28, 1762. The will of Paul Biffle (Buffle?) of Rowan County dated December 15, 1762 mentions **Christian Eller<sup>1</sup>** as one of his sons-in-law. The will of **Christian Eller<sup>1</sup>** was dated April 30, 1804 and proved in May session, 1804, of the Probate Court of Rowan County North Carolina (Will Book C, p 277, Rowan Co.). It made no mention of a wife, no doubt deceased, but mentioned children, John who was designated as executor (he married a Margaret and had no children, he died in 1820), **George<sup>2</sup>**, Henry (he married a Jane and had no children, he died in 1839 in Wyeth, VA), Frederick (born 1765, married Margaret Long, he died in 1838 in Grayson Co. VA), Susanna Eller (married John Eller), Mary Wattinger, Barbara Hess. Andrew Draner and James Fisher were witnesses.

**George<sup>2</sup> Eller Sr.** born 1752 and died in Virginia on December 25, 1808 married Christena Yost who died after 1833 in Monroe County, Indiana. They had the following children: John (married Susan Smith and had 11 children), Christian, **George<sup>3</sup> Eller Jr.** and possibly an Andrew.

A thirty-eight page “History of the Eller Family” by J.W. Eller, published in 1918 says that **George<sup>2</sup> Eller**

**Sr.** married Christena Yost, and that she died at her son John's home in Monroe County, Indiana sometime after 1833. This "History" also indicates that **George<sup>2</sup>** was a Revolutionary Soldier and that he died on Christmas Day in 1808, though there is no evidence of Revolutionary War records to verify this.

According to J.W. Eller's "History" **George<sup>2</sup> Eller Sr.** was an itinerant preacher. It is also said he moved to Virginia because of what he thought was persecution by the courts for his refusal to renounce an Oath of Fealty he'd once made to the English Crown. (Note: This must be the Oath of Allegiance he took). He was warranted 100 acres of land by the Commonwealth of Virginia, May 8, 1783 for which a grant was issued July 29, 1796 (VA Treas. Warrant 16064). This land was located on Elk Creek in the part of Montgomery County that became Wyeth County in 1790 and then Grayson County in 1793. He acquired additional land later as recorded deeds in Grayson County show. Neither **George<sup>2</sup> Eller Sr.** nor Christena left a will but J.W. Eller's "History" gives them two children **George<sup>3</sup> Eller Jr.** and John, no mention of Christian or Andrew. However, the Federal Census of Lawrence County, Indiana in 1850 shows the family of Christian Eller. Lawrence County adjoins Monroe County, where John Eller, a known son of **George<sup>2</sup> Eller Sr.** and Christena lived.

Anecdotal comment from Alice Coffey: While in the library Alice found in a deed book a mention of **George<sup>2</sup> Eller Sr.** and Christena Eller's slave named Buck age 50, who they brought with them from Virginia, was being given his freedom in 1842. Their son John Eller, a Justice of the Peace in Monroe, Indiana prepared the papers and it was recorded in 1846.

**George<sup>3</sup> Eller Jr.** born 1777 in North Carolina and died October 19, 1851 in Kentucky married Polly Oaks who was born May 6, 1782 in Virginia, she died December 19, 1871 in Texas. He settled in Wayne County KY around 1819. They had the following children: Henry (married an Elizabeth), **John<sup>4</sup>**, Washington (he married Malinda Jones), Wilkerson (who died of palsy on September 22, 1859), Harrison (Doris Duncan's Line – he married Margaret J. Allen), Peggy, Susan (Susannah is her name listed in book of marriages – she married Andrew Gadberry), Betsy (she married Jonathon Gadberry) and Mary (she married 1<sup>st</sup> Archibald Price, then 2<sup>nd</sup> Solomon Shearer). **George<sup>3</sup> Eller Jr.** is buried in the Morrow Cemetery on Union Ridge in Jabez, KY in Wayne County. Polly Oaks Eller is buried in Bethel Cemetery in Frisco, Texas, Collin County. According to Alice Coffey, John and Betsy were the youngest and were twins.

**John<sup>4</sup> Eller** born 1804, married 1<sup>st</sup> Cynthia Goodrick, who died before 1844, on December 28, 1831. They had the following children: Polly **Mary Eller<sup>5</sup>** born 1833, Henry Eller born 1835, George Eller born 1838 and John Eller born 1840. On March 19, 1844 **John<sup>4</sup> Eller** married 2<sup>nd</sup> Serena Wilson, July 26, 1821 – September 20, 1904. They had the following children: Wilson Eller born 1846, James Eller born 1847, Elizabeth (Sarah?) Eller born 1849, Washington Eller born September 1850, Malinda Eller born August 6, 1853, and William Eller born November 1856.

Polly **Mary<sup>5</sup> Eller** was raised by her grandparents **George<sup>3</sup> Eller Jr.** and Polly Oaks Eller. **Mary<sup>5</sup> Eller** gave birth to three sons: James Eller born June 1852, William Eller born February 1851 and **Daniel<sup>6</sup> Green Eller** born March 21, 1867.

With regard to Polly **Mary<sup>5</sup> Eller**, daughter of **John<sup>4</sup> Eller** and Cynthia Goodrick, she was raised by her grand parents because after **John<sup>4</sup> Eller** married Serena Wilson, the children he had with his first wife were no longer welcomed in the home, Serena did not want them there. **Mary<sup>5</sup> Eller** was raised at the 'Old Place' according to Alice and lived there until it was sold.

According to Alice Coffey, though we have no further documentation, **Mary<sup>5</sup> Eller** had two other children, Sarah who married Charlie Mullins and Henry who was 18 when he left with a wagon train heading for Missouri and was never heard from again. Alice said Sarah lived in Lexington, KY and came down to Wayne County and got **Daniel<sup>6</sup> Green Eller** when he was old enough to go to school and took him to Lexington with her. William Eller, Daniel's brother was working in as a clerk in a shoe store in Lexington. Daniel was home sick and went to his brother William to ask if they could go back to Wayne County. It would appear from Alice's letters that the two brothers walked home, begging for food at farms

and sleeping in barns.

**Daniel<sup>6</sup> Green Eller** born March 21,1867 and died July 24,1944 married Mary Ashurst, born 1871 and had the following children: William Edward Eller born March 18,1890 died November 26,1959; Lula May Eller; Milton Green Eller born December 24,1894 - died January 27,1967; Luther Selvidge Eller born October19, 1897 died? Maud Eller born January 6,1900 died August1,1959.

Mary Ashurst Eller died in 1904 after giving birth to twins, who both died shortly after their births. Daniel then married widow Emily Burton Decker born August10, 1852 died July 31,1969.

**Daniel<sup>6</sup> Green Eller** and wife Emily Burton Decker Eller had the following children: Josephine Eller, Alma Lee Eller, Alice Marie Eller, Woodrow Wilson Eller.

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William Edward [Ed] Eller (son of Daniel and Mary Ashurst Eller) married Myrtle Upton on 1/29/1913 and had the following children:

Lillian Irene Eller 8/30/1914 - 2/23/1950 married Hubert Gossage  
Thelma Ellen Eller 4/21/1917 - married John Kleinknight  
Elsie May Eller 2/19/1921 - 4/3/1964 married Henry Keesling

Lula May Eller (daughter of Daniel and Mary Ashurst Eller) married John Upton and had the following children:

Roy Upton	married Marie?
Alta May Upton	married John Pranger
Alvie Ellen Upton	married Willard Hamilton
Verla May Upton	married Lee Oliver
Ray Upton	?
Ralph Upton	?
Robert Upton	?

Milton [Mitt] Green Eller (son of Daniel and Mary Ashurst Eller) married Stella Daffron and had the following children:

Carl Eller	married Vercie?
Edna Married (Bee) Eller	married Clyde Winchester
Retha Madge Eller	married Ralph Green
Letha Myrtle	married Robert Coomer
Grace Eller	married Kenneth Burton
Everett Eller	died at age 2
Phyllis Eller	
Phillip Eller	

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Luther Selvidge<sup>7</sup> Eller (son of Daniel and Mary Ashurst Eller) married Florence Horde Hopper and had the following children:

**Wanda Hord<sup>8</sup> Eller** 3/12/1924 -  
1.married William Stampfli  
2.married William Max Bruner  
Anita Lee Eller married Robert Hammerlund

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Lillie Maud Eller (daughter of Daniel and Mary Ashurst Eller) married William Burton and had the following children:

Mossie Burton  
Osborn Burton  
William Joseph Burton  
Lillard Burton  
Audrey Burton  
Odis Burton  
Flossie Burton  
Danny Burton  
Mary Burton

Josephine Eller (daughter of Daniel and Emily Eller) married Taft Ramsey and had the following Children:

Pearl Ramsey  
Pauline Ramsey  
Wanda Ramsey  
Doris Ramsey  
6 - 7 more children

Alma Eller (daughter of Daniel and Emily Eller) married Hubert Morrow and died in childbirth.

Alice Eller (daughter of Daniel and Emily Eller) married Claude Coffey and had the following children:

Sybil Coffey  
Peggy Coffey  
Scott Coffey  
Steve Coffey  
Danny Coffey

Woodrow Wilson Eller (son of Daniel and Emily Eller) married someone named Stringer. They had one child. He was killed in a saw mill accident.

- 1 Kaspar von Schwenkfeld was in the court service with the Duke of Lienitz from 1510 - 1522. After meeting with radical reformers Thomas Munzer and Carlstadt, he devoted himself to the reform movement in Silesia. Martin Luther suspected Schwenkfeld of Anabaptist leanings and opposed his belief that the Eucharist was only a spiritual symbol. An important part of his belief was the distinction between outward and transitory word of God as given in the Scriptures and an inward spirit, device, eternal, and necessary for salvation. His followers known as Schwenkfeldians or Schwenkfelders, were persecuted and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century many of them fled to other parts of Europe, some to North America. Schwenkfeldians emigrated to Pennsylvania and there the sect still exists today.
- 2 The Palatinate consists of 2 regions in Germany. The Rhenish or Lower Palatinate, or often called simply the Palatinate, is a district of 2100 square miles of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate. The Upper Palatinate is a district of 3725 square miles of NE Bavaria. Both Upper and Lower became integral parts of Bavaria over time.