

DECK HISTORY

Research in America on the Deck family has been difficult because of the many variant spellings of the name in the records, (Dek, Dak, Dacke, Dick, Tack, etc.) However, the written history of the Decks has been traced back prior to the year 1390 to the Province of Wurttemberg, Germany. The Archives of Wurttemberg* include the following, as translated from German: "25 May 1390, Balingen, Burklin der Deck, citizen of Ebigen, and sister Agnes in der Klaus sold...their portion of...estate near Weilheim..." Many years after that record the Lutheran families were being persecuted by the French Catholic King Louis XIV and many of them, including our Deck families, went to Saxony, Germany, where they were offered the opportunity of settling in the New World by the Protestant English King George II. Early ship records** show that the first Decks to arrive in America were Johan Nicholas and family, who came on the St. ANDREWS GALLEY on 12 September 1734. Matias, apparently a brother of Johan Nicholas, followed on the HARLE with his family, arriving on 1 September 1736, at age 37. Simon, who was also probably a brother, arrived on the WINTER GALLEY on 5 September 1738 at age 35. Johan Nicholas settled in Berks Co. Pennsylvania, where he evidently remained. When Matias arrived we can surmise that he visited Johan briefly but he soon went on to the coastal area of North Carolina where he fought as a Corporal with the King's troops in the Spanish Alarm of 1748 during the Colonial Wars.*** The Colonial records of that conflict list Adam and John Deck, but it appears that Matias was the Adam on the record (perhaps his middle name). Also it appears that the John Deck was the Simon on the ship list (again perhaps his second given name). This is a good example of the many confusing records of the era.

Additional notes: Johan Heinrich Deck, a son of Johan Nicholas, left Berks County, Pennsylvania before 1759 and settled in present Rockingham County, Virginia. His son Michael was born there. This Michael, who fought in the Continental Line from Virginia in the Revolutionary War**** is often confused with another Michael who lived in Washington County, Virginia. Also, the family of a Johan Frederick Deck has been well researched by Schuyler Bossman, of Berks County, and he has published a book on Deck which is in the Library of Congress.***** (1)

The name Deck is of German Dutch origin and means, one who covers roofs with tile, straw, or slate: one who came from Deck or Decker, the names of places in Germany.*****

* Report from Wurttemberg State Archives to W.S. Grimes of Alpena, Michigan
** Strassburger and Hinke, 1-137, 1-156, 1-199
*** Records of Amos Best, Bessemer City, North Carolina
**** DAR entry #114274 and Tennessee Roster of Soldiers, DAR
***** Library of Congress #CS 71.D295 1972 929'.2'0973