

Valentine Volp/Fulps/Phelps – Profile

Valentine Volp was born in Sindringen, Germany in 1743 (see The “Volp/Fulp/Phelps Story” in the Album section of the website). He immigrated to America with his parents, Georg and Maria Magdalena Volp in 1751, when he was eight years. It is assumed that he was living in Lancaster County, PA in 1755 when his brother was born in 1755. Likewise he is thought to be living in the Windsor Township in York County, PA at the age of 14 when his brother Peter was born. His father changed the family name to the Moravian translation, Fulps, when they moved to Surry County (later to be Stokes County), NC. Valentine is seen there in the 1785 and 1786 tax and court records. He is later seen in a tax record in Washington County, VA.

Valentine’s brother Michael had a son in 1780 that he named Valentine. Both Valentine’s eventually end up in Claiborne County, TN, where the records are somewhat confusing and many are missing due to two fires that occurred later. Their last names are shown in various documents as Fulp, Fulps, Felps and Phelps. We know that Uncle Valentine was shown most of the time with the last name Felps. In fact, he may have never used the last name Fulp.

A family document shows that Valentine later moved his family to St Clair County, Illinois and died there prior to 1830. His son George died in St Clair County in 1849. Valentine’s son Michael married Ruth Lunceford and they had nine children. Michael’s last name changed to Felps then to Phelps. He died in 1871 and is buried in St Clair County, Illinois. Valentine’s son Henry married Rhoda Lebow and subsequently moved to Blount County, Tennessee. Henry’s last name changed to Felps then to Phelps. He had eleven children. He and Rhoda both died about 1860 and are thought to be buried in the Middlesettlements Methodist Church Cemetery in Louisville, Tennessee. The progression of name changes was from Volp to Fulps which was a decision by his father when moving to the Surry County, NC. The family name then changed for some of the descendants, from Fulps to Phelps. It is thought that this change resulted from how the name sounded and was written by census takers and public workers.

Family records show that our family patriarch, Valentine Phelps, died in Illinois. It is also thought that he owned land in St Clair County and died prior to the 1830 Census. His “family” continued to live on the farm and in 1849, his son George died, leaving two children in the care of his brother Michael. Family records tell that there was a lot of family disagreement about selling the estate and distributing the inheritance. Son Michael held off selling the estate for another three years but was then forced to sell in 1852. An 1855 lawsuit resulted from how the estate was sold but it was subsequently settled.