

The Volp/Fulp/Phelps Story

T.A. Phelps revised 7/17 2017

Prelude: It is concluded that our family origins are from Italy by way of Germany. The world's largest genealogy company, "Family Tree DNA" has traced our yDNA Haplogroup from Italy to Europe during the Roman Occupation (290 BC – 235 AD). The Italian name Volpe means "The Fox". The "e" was dropped somewhere along the way to give us the Volp name. There are Volpe's in America today but their ancestors arrived much later than ours. Our name Volp is first found in German archives in the late 1500's. The name Volpp is also found today and this is mainly the result of how the name was written in different records by different people based on how it sounded. Normally, the type of record and its relationship to other records clarifies the correct spelling. Therefore, we will use the spelling that is shown on each particular document.

Introduction: This is the story of our Volp Germany ancestry which evolved to a number of American surnames such as Fulps, Fulp, Fultz, Felps, Phulps, Phelps and others. It is the result of many hours, weeks, months and yes, years of laborious but enjoyable research and is supported with family records, public documents and y-DNA. Most Germany records were taken from the Hohenlohe-Zentralarchiv in Neuenstein and the Landeskirchen Archiv in Stuttgart. First names were usually but not always hereditary in Germany during this period. The first son was named after the paternal grandfather, and so on. This naming practice was normally the decision of the priest. The result was five generations of Georg Volp's in our ancestral line. Our connection in Germany is clearly proven with German tax and court documents, church births, marriage and death records, a 1751 passenger list, a 1754 German probate record, a Pennsylvania baptismal record, yDNA, and family records.

Our Story

Let's begin in Europe in the 17th Century near the end of The Thirty Year's War which was a series of wars in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648. It was one of the longest and most destructive and deadliest conflicts in European history, resulting in eight million casualties. This war of religious differences was coming to a close when there was a frightful plague in what is now central Germany. In many places, nearly two thirds of the people died and the whole land was burdened with misery and destruction. We are very fortunate that our Volp ancestors survived these conditions.

Recent discoveries suggest that a Hanns Volp (abt 1585) was our oldest known ancestor. Hanns lived in the small town of Crispenhofen when he married Appolonia. They had several children, one of which was a son Michael who was born 8 Aug 1610. Michael's line has been traced 12 generations down to Andreas Volpp (b. 1973). Andreas and his father Horst live in Jagsthausen, Germany today. They recently provided documentation that was very helpful in our continued research. Their yDNA line was broken at one point and their last name changed from Volp to Volpp.

Michael's line also splits off to form a line to Jurgen Volpp who lives just outside Frankfurt, Germany today. Jurgen advised that his yDNA line was broken when his grandmother, Sophie Eberhardine Volpp conceived a child out of wedlock with the Lord of Trek. Her son took Sophie's maiden name Volpp. She had a second son by the Lord of Trek but this son

died after only four months. Even though Jurgen's yDNA would not be a match with ours, he was very instrumental in helping us find Manfred Volpp who was a yDNA match. In our recent visit, Jurgen also acted as a translator with Manfred who only spoke German. We are still researching to determine where Manfred's line joins ours.

Research has determined that one of Hanns sons, Friedrich Volp, is the father of the Volpp line that descends nine generations to Douglas Volpp who is one of our yDNA matches that lives in Indianapolis, IN.

These connections are discussed in the "Volpp-Fulp-Phelps Connection Document" in the Album section of our website: www.phelpsfulpancestry.com .

Hanns's wife Appolonia is thought to have died about 1638 and Hanns re-married Anna. They had a son Georg 20 Sept 1640. This was the first of five consecutive Georg's in our Volp ancestry.

Georg Volp moved about ten miles from Crispenhofen to the small town of Sindringen, Germany in about 1660. Sindringen was a town of about 300 citizens at that time. Today, Sindringen, is part of the municipality of Forchtenberg in the region of Baden-Wuerttemberg and it has a population of about 900.



Town of Sindringen, Germany (6 Jun 2017). Looking from one of the Volp family vineyards of (1665-1785)

Our first record of Georg is in 1662 when he and another man payed taxes on a barn that they were converting to a house. Georg would have been 22 years of age. He is found in many Sindringen, tax and court documents from 1662 to 1694. About 1663 he had a son who was also named Georg. When this son became of age and owned property, the records show him as Georg Volpp (the young) and his father is then recorded as Georg Volpp (the old). They both were farmers who owned and operated Vineyards. Their land was small in size but based on taxes paid, it was very valuable. Georg (the old) became a Viertelmeister in 1689. This was kind of like a community spokesman who was responsible for representing the ideas of the citizens to the town council for a quarter of the town. Georg (the old) is thought to have died before 1695.

Georg (the young) is recorded as paying property taxes between 1688 and 1732. In 1691, he became a town Viertelmeister, probably replacing his father. About 1685 he had a son

named Georg Crafft Volp who went by the name "Crafft". Georg (the young) is thought to have died in 1732 after which his widow is shown paying property taxes. Some of his children had moved to other provinces, so when he died they had to pay export tax for removing their inheritance from Sindringen. His widow paid taxes in Sindringen from 1733 to 1738, when she is presumed to have died.

Crafft Volp is seen in various court and tax records from 1719 until 1750. The court records were mostly small complaints by him and against him. For example, he complained about people driving across his field cutting a road into it when the normal road was flooded. Farmers in that area were told by the court to dig ditches to prevent the road flooding and stay out of his field. He suggested a method that would allow the farmers to prevent flooding in the common glen. He signed a petition that went to the Baron with complaints about taxes and other issues. He was one of 66 peasants that were interrogated by officials with 31 questions that he mostly replied that he did not know or did not remember

Crafft had a son in 1718 who was named Georg Crafft Volp. The son went by the name "Georg". On October 6, 1742, Maria Magdalena Guldig the daughter of Georg Guldig, a citizen of Mockmuhl, claimed to be pregnant by Georg Volp of Sindringen and she wanted them to get married and give her child a name. She said that Georg had not promised to marry her, but he did promise that he would not desert her. This was a serious offense for this small Lutheran community. Charges were made against Georg and Maria and they and their parents had to appear in court for questioning. Georg admitted this declaration completely and wanted to marry Maria but he could not afford to do so at this time unless his father gave him the customary endowment that would give him a start in his new life with a family. His father testified that he did not object to them getting married but he would pay the cost of his son's fine and nothing more. He wanted to know more about the Guldig family who lived in Mockmuhl. Mr. Guldig testified that he did not object to the marriage and he could provide his daughter the money for the fine but nothing more. The court determined that since he did not promise to marry her, they would not be forced to marry but the child would take the name of the father. Georg would pay the child 5 florins per year until he reached the age of 12. He was to also pay Maria 10 florins for defloration. The penalty to the dominion for each was 10 Reichstalers plus court costs. Both Georg and Maria had to "suffer treatment by the moral supervision court in the third degree". This was probably a lesson on the Lutheran standards for good behavior. If they married they would be allowed to live in Sindringen as by-settlers (inhabitants without citizenship). At that time, anyone who came to live in Sindringen was consider a "by-settler" and they had no rights to use any public facility such as a bathhouse and common grazing meadows nor did they have the protection of the court system. These facilities and services were for people with full citizenship which had to be purchased and approved by the town's ruling body. The city had a large wall surrounding it. Much of it still exists today.



Scene looking out our hotel window across the wall at a community garden.

We can find no marriage record in Germany for Georg and Maria because all Parrish records in Sindringen were destroyed during World War II. However, we know they got married because the court ordered that Georg could only live there if they got married and he is still there in 1750 when he applied for citizenship. Also, a 1757 church record in Pennsylvania shows that they did marry (discussed later). Georg is not seen in any tax or court records from 1742 to 1750 because he had no rights to these services since he was classified as a “by-settler”. He probably continued to work at his father’s vineyard. We know that he stayed in Sindringen because in 1750 he requested to buy his citizenship. It seems that he and his wife were still being punished for their embarrassing act, because the request was denied. Fortunately for us, Georg used his money to take the Rhine River to Rotterdam, in the Netherlands where he and his family immigrated to America.

Georg Volpp is listed by himself on the ship Patriot’s passenger list which arrived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on 25 Sept 1751. However, the passenger lists at that time did not include the names of wives and children. His name was signed on his Oath of Allegiance to the King of England as George Volpp. A clerk probably signed the name as was required on the document when the immigrant could not sign their name. An “X” was not acceptable.

Georg’s father Georg Crafft Volp died in 1754 and his Sindringen probate record shows that he had six children who were his heirs with one gone to America:

1. Susanna Maria Lentz in Waldbach
2. Sebastian Friedrich Volp
3. Georg Crafft Volp (in the New Land)
4. Elizabeth Volp, Mrs. Illinger
5. Rosina Volp
6. Martin Volp

As Georg Crafft Volp has moved to the New Land **with his family**, the local Alderman, Johann Michel Hanselmann, was officially nominated his legal representative (Curator). The term “**with his family**” seems to be suggesting that Georg, Maria Magdalena and their eight year old child immigrated together. Of course, their two daughters may have also been born in Germany and immigrated with them. Georg’s Last Will and Testament suggests that Valentine Volp was his oldest son and most likely the one born in 1743. Also, we know his other sons names and when and where they were born in America (discussed later).

One might ask why Valentine was not given the name Georg as was the tradition for the first born son. An explanation could be that some Priests during this period, named a child after the Roman Saint of the day when there was some type of illegitimacy with the conception. According to his mother's statement in court, conception was on May 1, 1742, which would make his birth in early February, 1743. Of course, February 14th, then and now is known as Valentine's Day, named for the Patron Saint Valentine.

Georg first settled in Lancaster County, PA, where his second son, Michael Volpp was born in 1755. We know this from the widow's pension application for Michael's wife. George later moved to Windsor Township in Berks County, PA. This is where his third son, Peter Volp was born on May 12, 1757. Peter's baptism record is shown in the book, "Pennsylvania and New Jersey Church and Town Records, 1708-1985" by Rev Daniel Schumacher. It shows the parents as Jurg (Georg) and Maria Magdalena Volp. His wife's name, shown as Maria Magdalena, confirms that they were married in Germany and immigrated together and likely brought their son Valentine and daughters Catherine and Mary with them. As a point of interest, Valentine named a son Michael after his brother Michael and his brother Michael name a son Valentine, as this became the family custom to use names of parents and siblings (see the album: "Volp/Fulp Naming Patterns" located in the Album section of the website). Georg moved with his family to Surry County, North Carolina about 1765, where he was encouraged to do so with the offer of free land.

We see from George's Last Will and Testament that he and his wife Mary also had two daughters, Catherine and Mary. They have not been found in any birth or baptismal records in America and are thought to have been born in Germany. Mary married a Mr. Taylor and died in Stokes County, NC in 1828, however we know nothing else about these two children.

It was common in the 1700's for immigrants to change German and other European names to ones that were easier to spell and pronounce in English. Also, names were changed to "fit in" and possibly avoid secular conflicts that were common at that time. Documents confirm that Georg changed his family name from Georg Volp to George Fulps. It is thought that this was done when he moved to Stokes County, North Carolina.

Another passenger on the same ship with George and his family was Jacob Koehler. There are some indications that this person also settled in the Stokes County area near George Fulps. Several Kohler headstones are found today in the Sindringen Cemetery.



One of several Kohler headstones

George Fulps death and funeral was recorded in the "Heritage of Stokes County, North Carolina" publication, written by the Stokes County Historical Society in 1981. It reported that the Moravian Salem Diary on October 26, 1786, read as follows:

"Br. Koehler went to Belews Creek, sixteen miles from Salem, to hold the funeral of a friend of the Brethen. George Fulps by name. This man was born in 1718 and led a Christian life. The Brethren proclaimed the Gospel several times in his house. Before his end, he arranged that a Brother from Salem should conduct the funeral."

A director at the Moravian Archive in Winston Salem, North Carolina, advised that their priest Koehler was not the Jacob Koehler on the ship with George because their priest did not arrive in America until 1763. However, there may have been a relationship between the two. The director also advised that their records did not show George as a member of the Moravian Church. However, he confirmed that their Moravian conversion of the name Volp would be Fulp. He also shared the "Salem Diary" record for the date of George's funeral and behold, the name is actually recorded as **Georg Volp** and not **George Fulps**. Someone at the Stokes County historical society, must have changed it for the publication because his friends and family in Stokes County only knew him as George Fulps. Prior to this discovery, yDNA evidence had already confirmed that George Fulps was a descendant of the surname Volp in Germany. This yDNA story is shown in the Album section of the website.

By way of explanation, Salem, North Carolina was the headquarters of the Moravian Church on the southern American frontier. They referred to themselves as "the Brethen". The Moravians are an evangelical Christian denomination with roots going back to pre-Reformation days in central Europe. It is considered to be the oldest Protestant denomination. Salem, now a part of modern-day Winston-Salem, continues to be the southern headquarters of the church.

Maria Magdalena Volp who became Mary Fulp, wife and mother, died in Stokes County about 1764. (Forsyth Co. was established from Stokes Co. in 1849, Stokes Co, from Surry Co. in 1789, and Surry County from Rowan Co. in 1771. Rowan Co. was established in 1753.)

Many descendants of George and Mary Fulp still live near Winston-Salem, North Carolina in the Forsyth and Stokes Counties in the vicinity of what is now White Road, commonly referred to as Walkertown-Belews Creek Road. Also, many Fulps participated in the westward migrations that took place throughout the 1800s. Today the Georg Volp family is spread throughout much of the United States using several spellings of the name such as Fulp, Fulps, Felps, Fultz, Phelps and other variations.

For more information on the descendants of George and Mary Fulps please see the various Profiles and other documents shown on the website: www.phelpsfulpancestry.com

Credits:

Knowing our Germany story is only possible because of the persistent detailed work of professional ancestry researcher, Friedrich R Wollmershauser.

The help of Dr Jurgen Volpp and Peter Schwaibold was invaluable in locating and acting as interpreter with our new found German families.

