

The Surname

The surname, of Swiss origin, has been spelled many ways, perhaps fifty. An unusual spelling is Oufensberger. In Switzerland it is WOLFENSBERGER, in Pennsylvania WOLFERSBERGER. One branch in Ohio changed the surname to Sparger.

The name originated at the village of Wolfensberg, about 25 km east of Zürich. In 1233 there is record of Baldebert von Wolfensberg. The name Wolfersberger first appears in 1446. There were many families of this name in Switzerland in early days. In German the middle name is the call name. John George Wolfersberger's wife Anna Margaret was Margaret.

THE WOLFENSBERGER WOLFERSBERGER Swiss FAMILY

The ancestry of John Wolfersberger, who came to Pennsylvania, can be traced back to Jacob Wolfensberger, who lived in Ettenhausen (27 km east of Zürich), parish of Wetzikon. Jacob was married at Wetzikon Oct 2-1575 to Elisabeth Knecht. The Wolfersbergers were living at Ettenhausen: 1467 Frederic Alsace, Ulrich 1533 Klaus Pennsylvania 1540 Bernhart

The line of John Wolfersberger of Pennsylvania is:
Ettenhausen, Switzerland Jacob m 1575 Elisabeth Knecht
Erhart m 1611 Margaretha Lutz
Hans m 1635 Margaret Banwart
Ulrich m by 55 Anna Kägi
Alsace, France Raymond Martin Bell
Jo with help from Margaret Ensminger

The Deutsch-Schweizerisches Clela W. Smith buch, vol 4, 1929, p 577 gives these data:

JACOB Wolfensberger b c1550 d 1588+ m Oct 2-1575 Elisabeth Knecht

1. Hans b Mar 15-1579 d before 1653 m1 1601 Sara Baumberger
2. ERHART see below (m2 1612 Barbara Kindlimann)
3. George b Apr 1-1583 d c1611 m1 1606 Elisabeth Erimann
4. Ulrich b May 27-1588 (m2 1609 Regula Hotz)

ERHART wolfensberger b Feb 12-1581 d c1622 m Nov 26-1611 Margaretha Lutz (of Hinwil)

1. Barbara b Jun 14-1612 d Sep 9-1629 of the pest
2. Jacob b Jan 18-1614 d Sep 19-1629 of the pest Washington, Pennsylvania
3. HANS see below (m2 1645 Barbara Müller)
4. Anna b Jul 19-1618 d Jun 28-1629 of the pest
5. Margaretha b Apr 1-1621 d Sep 4-1629 of the pest

1987

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Switzerland

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1533 Klaus

1540 Bernhart

The line of John Wolfersberger of Pennsylvania is:

Ettenhausen, Switzerland	Jacob m 1575 Elsbeth Knecht
	Erhart m 1611 Margaretha Lutz
	Hans m 1635 Margaret Banwart
	Ulrich m 1655 Anna Kägi
Alsace, France	Erhart m 1689 Ursula Emm
	John m 1721 Margaret Ensminger

The Deutsch-Schweizerisches Geschlechterbuch, vol 4, 1929, p 577 gives these data:

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4. Ulrich b May 27-1588 (m2 1609 Regula Hotz)

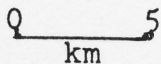
ERHART Wolfensberger b Feb 12-1581 d c1622 m Nov 26-1611
Margaretha Lutz (of Hinwil)

1. Barbara b Jun 14-1612 d Sep 9-1629 of the pest
2. Jacob b Jan 18-1614 d Sep 23-1685 m1 1637 Barbara Tobler
3. HANS see below (m2 1645 Barbara Müller)
4. Anna b Jul 19-1618 d Jun 22-1629 of the pest
5. Margaretha b Apr 1-1621 d Sep 4-1629 of the pest

○ ZÜRICH

× Wolfensberg

× Uster



Wetzikon × Ettenhausen

S W I T Z E R L A N D

GERMANY

F R A N C E

○ Mattstall

○ Langensoultzbach

○ Waldhambach

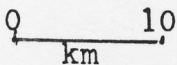
○ Durstel

○ HAGENAU

○ Metting

○ SAVERNE

○ Wolschheim



Wolfisheim ○



STRASBOURG

HANS Wolfensberger b Dec 24-1615 d Feb 15-1688 - tablemaker
m Apr 28-1635 Margaret Banwart

1. Barbara b May 15-1636 d May 15-1691
2. ULRICH see below
3. Hans b May 25-1640 d Sep 5-1690 m 1667 Barbara Knecht
4. Erhart b Oct 20-1645 d c1680 m 1673 Catharine Hartmann
5. Catharine b Jun 7-1647
6. Jacob b Aug 28-1649 d c1651
7. Adeli b Sep 14-1651 d 1670+

ULRICH Wolfensberger b Nov 14-1637 d 1678+ shoemaker
m1 Apr 3-1655 Anna Kagi d Jan 13-1673 m2 Mar 27-1673
Catharine Kindlimann d Mar 18-1677

1. Jacob b Oct 21-1655 d before 1670
2. Elsbeth b c1657
3. Mathus b Aug 28-1659 d young
4. Anna b Dec 1-1661 d Sep 29-1669
5. Hans b Oct 30-1664 d young
6. ERHART see below
7. Mathus b Jan 1-1669
8. Maria b Jan 24-1671

9. Hans b Apr 5-1674
10. Jacob b Mar 18-1677 d Dec 15-1677

ERHART Wolfensberger b Nov 18-1666 d Jul 12-1740 Wolschheim, Alsace
m May 8-1689 at Wolfisheim Ursula Emm

1. John b c1694 d c1760 to Pennsylvania 1730

Alsace

The connection with Alsace is given in Bulletin #66 of the Cercle généalogique d'Alsace (1984) by André Humm:

The family Wolfensberger is of Swiss origin. Hans Ehret (Ehrhart) Wolfesperger, son of Ulrich Wolfensberger of Ettenhausen, Canton Zürich, was married May 8-1689 at the Reformed church of Strasbourg-Wolfisheim to Ursula Emm, native of Buchiberg, near Berne. He was converted to Catholicism and moved to Wolschheim, where died Jul 12-1740.

Erhart likely migrated to Alsace in the late 1680s. He was married at 22. There is record of only one child, John, born about 1694, went to Pennsylvania in 1730.

The church records at Mattstall show:

1721, married Monday, the 27 January, Joh. Wolffisberger, son of Joh. Erhard Wolffisberger, citizen at Wolschheim, and Ann Margaretha, maiden daughter of Phillipp Entzminger, smith and resident at Mattstall. (LDS 767,276)

Margaret was a daughter of Philip Ensminger, Jr and his wife, Elizabeth. She was baptized at the church at Durstel:

1697, Feast of Matthae, Catharina Margaretha, daughter of Philip Enssmenger and Elisabetha, was baptized.

Sponsors: Johann Schmidt, smith of Wolffskirch
Bartholomaeus Eberhardt, single carpenter
apprentice of Durstel

Catharine Elisabetha, daughter of Johann George Dieter, weaver of Durstel

Anna Margaretha, daughter of Georg Nicolai Quirin, rentmaster at Wolffskirch (LDS 729,715)

Philip Ensminger, Sr 1639-1712 lived at Waldhambach.

The Mattstall records also show:

Johan Peter was born Thursday the 16th October 1721 at Mattstall; baptized there Sunday the 19 October; son of Joh. Wolffsberger and Anna Margaretha born Entzminger. Godparents were:

Joh. Peter Knobel, carpenter there

Joh. Emming, citizen and nailsmith in Uttenhofen

Maria Catharina Trauttmänn, wife of Joh. Peter Entzminger, citizen and smith in Mattstall

John and Margaret moved a few miles to Langensoutzbach where these records are found: (LDS 717,247)

On 8 September 1727 is in Soultzbach buried Maria Ursula, little daughter of Hans Wolffenberger and Margaretha Ensminger. Age 3 years, 10 days

1 June 1727 Soultzbach, Johannes Wolffsberger (farmer) and his wife Margaretha Ensminger, a little son baptized and named Jacob Frederick, Godparents:

Jacob Bohli, Gastgeber at Löwen

Anna Maria, wife of Jacob Sagerberger

Joh. Friedrich Müller, son of Hans Müller, miller

Maria Elisabetha, surviving daughter of Hans Michael Weymer

John Wolfersberger, Jr was born in Alsace shortly before the family left for America, for he was naturalized in 1761. His baptism record has not been found. The younger children were born in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania

John Wolfersberger landed at Philadelphia August 29-1730. With him were his wife, Margaret 33, sons, Peter 9, Frederick 3, John a babe. They had traveled down the Rhine to Rotterdam, Holland. Here they boarded the ship Thistle of Glasgow and crossed the channel to Dover, England. The ship cleared Dover June 19. On board were 77 men - a total of 260 passengers - 73 were from Ludwigshafen on the Rhine. When John Wolfersberger signed the oath of allegiance at the Philadelphia courthouse, he gave his name to the clerk, who wrote it as Wolfer Sperger. John made an A between the two words. The family settled near friends or relatives in Lancaster County.

John Wolfersberger was granted 100 acres in Earl Township February 20-1734. He did not carry through, perhaps because he had not been naturalized. The land was patented December 3-1741 by Ludwig Mohler. While living here, daughter Catharine was baptized at the Muddy Creek Lutheran Church on September 17-1733. Sponsor was Catharine Gröningen.

About 1736 John moved about 10 miles to the northwest, now Heidelberg Township, Lebanon County. On April 11-1744 he was naturalized and immediately applied for 350 acres. The survey showed 671 acres. He paid rent from March 1-1737. (All rents began on March 1.) This suggests a 1736 settlement. He died on this land.

In 1752 the Heidelberg tax list shows John (Sr), Peter and Frederick. John, Jr had just turned 21 and is not listed. Peter was naturalized September 24-1755, Frederick April 11-1761 and John, Jr September 13-1761. A patent was issued May 6-1761 (Patent Book AA 1, 540) to the children of John Wolfersberger, who died intestate:

Peter, Frederick, John, Philip, Catharine wife of Jacob Tuy,
Anna Maria wife of Martin Hefflefinger.

John's wife, Margaret died in 1775. She is buried at Schaefferstown, "Margreda Wolfersperger" born 21 September 1697, died December 1775.

The most prominent of the children was Philip. He was born in Heidelberg Township in 1739. He was a blacksmith. In 1763 he served under Colonel Henry Bouquet in western Pennsylvania. He was a lieutenant under Captain Henry Sheaffer in 1775 and a lieutenant under Colonel Curtis Grubb in the Flying Camp in 1776, going to Long Island. After the Revolution he became a colonel in the militia. He died in 1824 at Campbelltown. A copy of his family Bible is at the Historical Society in Philadelphia.

Peter and Frederick died in Heidelberg Township. Their wills name their children. Peter's was written March 2-1793 and probated October 14-1802. Frederick's was written April 14-1764 and probated soon after.

Migration to the South and West

(George) Michael, son of Peter went to Culpeper Co, Va. John, Jr went to Shenandoah Co, Va. Frederick's son John went to Greenbrier Co, now W Va - later to Ohio. John III went to Surry Co, N C - later to Ohio. Four sons of John, Jr went to Greenbrier Co. Three moved on. Peter died in Knox Co, Tenn; Benjamin in Wythe Co, Va; Philip in Pike Co, Ohio. Frederick likely stayed in Greenbrier.

John Wolfersberger, Jr, a wheelwright, "of Pennsylvania", bought 2 lots in Woodstock, Shenandoah Co, Va April 3-1769. When he sold them 2 years later on November 5-1771 he was "of Woodstock". On March 16-1771 he took the oath as vestryman of Beckford Parish. He died in November 1788. His children are named in Shenandoah Deed Book K, 496. All of his sons except Joseph left Shenandoah County.

Ensminger (pronounced Entsminger)
(originally Enßminger)

Philip Ensminger b c1666 Waldhambach, Alsace - in Durstel 1696-1705 - in Mattstall 1718-1723 - in Langensoultzbach 1723-1726 - in Metting, Lorraine 1731 - no further record - married (1) c1691 Elizabeth ---, married (2) Margaret Hörth

1. Philip 1692-1696
2. Peter 1694-1739 - landed Aug 17-1733 - to Lancaster Co, Pa
m 1719 Catharine Trautmann b 1700
3. Jacob 1696-1696
4. Margaret 1697-1775 m 1721 John Wolfersberger c1694-c1760 -
landed Aug 29-1730 - to Lancaster Co
5. Nicholas 1699-1786 - landed Oct 28-1738 - to Lancaster Co -
m c1724 Margaret --- b 1703
6. Elizabeth (1) 1701-1701
7. Catharine 1702- m 1731 Henry Peter b 1707 - landed Aug 17-1733
8. Henry 1705- - landed Nov 20-1741 - to Lancaster Co
9. Barbara c1707- - no record after 1719 - may have died in youth
10. David c1709-c1770 - landed Aug 28-1750 - to York Co, Pa
11. Elizabeth (2) c1711- likely m 1732 Peter Schmidt - landed Sep 18-1733

The surname is supposed to have originated at the village of Insming, Lorraine. Insming is about 25 km west of Waldhambach. The earliest record of Ensminger is at Diemeringen, near Waldhambach. Here Carl Ensminger, son of Hans (a tanner) and Christina Ensminger, was baptized July 14-1605. The deaths of Hans Ensminger in 1630 and Peter in 1633 are recorded. Jacob Ensminger was a godfather at Diemeringen March 19-1631.

Jacob may have been a son of Hans and the father of these three brothers who died at Waldhambach:

Philip (Sr) b July 1639 d January 15-1712 - father of Philip b c1666
Nicholas b October 1642 died April 21-1712
George b 1652 d July 29-1728

- John Wolfersberger b c1694 d c1760 Heidelberg Twp, Lebanon Co, Pa
 m Jan 27-1721 Margaret Ensminger b Sep 21-1697 d Dec 1-1775
1. (John) Peter b Oct 16-1721 d fall of 1802 Heidelberg Twp m1 c1744
 Apollonia Brunner; m2 Mar 6-1784 Elizabeth ---
 - a. Frederick b c1745 d 1795 m c1778 Elizabeth Neff
 - i. John
 - ii. Elizabeth
 - iii. Frederick m Sarah --- 1780-1821 Md ?son George 1808-1862
 - iv. George b Mar 4-1785 m Hannah Washington Co, Md
 - v. Philip b Feb 18-1787
 - vi. Catharine b Jun 11-1779
 - b. (George) Michael bap Mar 15-1747 d Sep 1789 Culpeper Co, Va
 m c1771 Elizabeth Wenz
 - i. Elizabeth b Aug 22-1772 m --- Hergebrode
 - ii. Catharine b 1774 m Jonas Troutman
 - iii. Sarah m Michael Baker
 - iv. George d yg
 - v. Hannah m Apr 14-1796 Peter Spangler
 - vi. John
 - vii. Margaret
 - c. Margaret m1 George Stone d 1783; m2 Daniel Henning b Jan 16-1755 /d Dec 10-1831
 - d. Peter b Apr 30-1758 d Dec 29-1812 m Catharine Burkey - no issue
 - e. Anna m 1782 John Thomas b 1761 d 1795
 - i. Margaret b Nov 3-1783
 - ii. Barbara b Jul 20-1785
 - iii. John
 - iv. Jacob
 - v. Elizabeth
 - vi. Anna
 - f. (John) George d 1816 m c1794 Eve Miller
 - i. John b Apr 23-1795 /d Aug 14-1872
 - ii. Eve b Dec 18-1796 d Jun 4-1869 m John Strohm b Jun 24-1792
 - iii. Susanna /d Jun 25-1876
 - iv. Peter b Sep 26-1800 d Aug 18-1877 m Elizabeth --- b Feb 1-1803
 - v. Catharine
 - vi. Henry b Feb 3-1805
 - vii. Sarah b Aug 7-1807
 - g. John d Mar 23-1807 m Elizabeth ---
 - i. George b May 7-1802
 - ii. Catharine
 - iii. Mary
 - h. Catharine b Jun 1768 d Mar 1769
 2. (Mary) Ursula b Aug 29-1724 d Sep 8-1727 Langensoultzbach, Alsace
 (named for grandmother)

3. (Jacob) Frederick bap Jun 1-1727 d 1764 Heidelberg Twp ml c1748
 Ann (daughter of Michael) Meiser; m2 Elizabeth Smith (Zecht);
 she m2 Michael Mayer
- a. Catharine b c1749 d 1810 m 1767 Jacob Gemberlin b c1736 d 1824
- b. John b c1751 - this may be the John who d 1827 Gallia Co, Ohio
 m c1776 Catharine --- - in Greenbrier Co, W Va c1790-c1812
- i. Hannah dead 1827 m Mar 29-1797 Jacob Hartinger
- ii. Margaret (Polly) m Jan 10-1797 Peter Black
- iii. Philip ?d 1847
- iv. Catharine m --- Koontz
- v. Elizabeth m Oct 3-1805 John Humphreys
- vi. Sarah m Aug 25-1808 John Shoemaker
- vii. John dead 1827 m Polly ---
- viii. Peggy dead 1827 m Oct 1-1812 John Nicholas
- c. (Anna) Mary
4. John b c1730 buried Nov 18-1788 Shenandoah Co, Va m c1751
 Hannah Summer - to Va c1770
- a. Peter b c1752 d 1834 Knox Co, Tenn ml c1773 Susanna Miller b c1755;
 m2 Feb 27-1807 Milly Hanson - pension R11770 - to Greenbrier
 Co, W Va c1790 - to Lee Co 1806 - to Knox Co 1813
- i. Susanna ml Apr 12-1791 Adam Fuel m2 --- McKinney
- ii. Mary m Apr 5-1795 Henry Barnheart
- iii. Joseph b Oct 12-1780 m Mar 8-1807 Nancy Hanson
- iv. Elizabeth m --- Merit
- v. Sarah m --- Highnote
- vi. Jacob b Oct 10-1786 d Aug 19-1859 Va m Nancy Sloan
- vii. Rebecca m Elisha James
- viii. Philip
- ix. Barbara m Feb 14-1814 Samuel Merit
- x. Peter Amos b 1796 ml Dec 19-1815 Nancy Dyer; m2 Anne Idol

 (May 27-1852
- xi. Milly
- xii. Catharine b 1816 m Jan 15-1835 William McWilliams
- xiii. Andrew b 1818 m Dorcas --- b 1823
- xiv. Samuel b 1820 d Jul 16-1889 Texas m May 14-1840
 Margaret Dugan - Cherokee Co
- xv. Nancy b 1822 m Aug 2-1841 Matthew Rhodes
- xvi. Rosanna b 1825 m Feb 2-1852 Matthew Rhodes
- b. John b Aug 17-1754 d Nov 17-1840 Highland Co, Ohio - to Surry Co,
 N C 1776 - m c1777 Christina (daughter of Valentine) Frey
 b Nov 22-1759 d c1830 - to Ohio c1833
 Surname changed to SPARGER
- i. John b 1778 m Sarah Lyon
- ii. Reuben b May 17-1779, single
- iii. Joseph b Mar 1-1781 m Abigail ---

- iv. Philip b 1786
 - v. Henry b 1789 m Susanna Roberts
 - vi. William b 1797 m Nancy Bryson
 - vii. Hannah b 1799 m --- Deatheridge
 - viii. Ann b 1801 m --- Jackson
 - ix. Sarah b 1803 m --- Jackson
- c. Frederick b c1756 living Greenbrier Co, W Va 1830 m c1777
Elizabeth --- - in N C 1778-82 - to Greenbrier c1790
- i. John b 1778 living Pike Co, Ohio 1850 m1 Jun 6-1806 Rebecca
Craig; m2 Elizabeth ---
 - ii. ?Hannah m Jun 1796 Henry Cary
 - iii. Philip b 1782 living Greenbrier 1850 m Oct 6-1803 Ingado Rader
 - iv. ?Joseph - living Pocahontas Co, Va 1830
 - v. Reuben b May 29-1788 m Jan 21-1818 Polly Flinn - 1830 Pike Co
and others
- d. Benjamin b c1758 d 1812 Wythe Co, Va m1 Aug 7-1780 Catharine
Brown; m2 Apr 9-1798 Elizabeth Miller - to Greenbrier c1790 -
to Botetourt Co 1806
- i. Hannah m Aug 26-1805 Jacob Farrow
 - ii. Elizabeth
 - iii. Samuel b 1804 d 1860 Bastrop Co, Tex m Dec 10-1827 Caroline
plus five sons (Fleshart)
- e. Hannah b c1760 m1 Jan 7-1778 John Gillock d 1783;
m2 Jun 1-1784 George Woods
- f. Philip b 1761 d Oct 1-1852 Pike Co, Ohio m1 May 4-1786 Catharine
Penewitt; m2 May 23-1791 Catharine Cooper b Feb 18-1774 d Feb
14-1855 - pension W6575 - to Greenbrier Co, W Va 1789 -
to Pike Co, Ohio c1812
- i. Elizabeth b Jan 23-1795 m Abraham Taylor b May 8-1787
- g. Mary b c1763 m Mar 24-1782 Martin Miller
- h. Joseph b c1765 d 1808 Shenandoah Co, Va m1 May 3-1791
Elizabeth Hoy; m2 Feb 8-1794 Ann McGovern b 1773
- i. Barbara b c1768 d bef 1795 m Apr 2-1788 Joseph Skinner
5. (Mary) Catharine b Aug 3-1733 Lancaster Co m c1753 Jacob Tuy -
naturalized 1761 - to Cumberland Co, Pa
- a. John b 1764
 - b. Eva Elizabeth b 1772
and others
6. (Anna) Mary b c1736 m c1756 Martin Hefflefinger bap Nov 22-1733 -
naturalized 1761 - to Cumberland Co, near Newville

- a. Philip b Aug 18-1757 d Dec 13-1839 m Catherine Eichholtz
 - b. Peter b Oct 19-1764
 - c. Frederick b Nov 4-1766
 - d. Jacob b Aug 24-1769
 - e. Barbara b Jan 10-1776
and others
7. (John) Philip b Feb 14-1739 d Jul 14-1824 Campbelltown, Lebanon Co
m1 c1766 Susanna --- b 1745 d Feb 8-1816; m2 May 28-1818
Charlotte Sihle b Sep 15-1783 d Jun 15-1857
- a. John b Apr 11-1767 d Sep 8-1818 m c1788 Margaret Thomas
b Nov 11-1769 d Nov 28-1832
 - i. John b Oct 6-1789 d Nov 29-1864 m Elizabeth --- b Dec 15-1790 /dFeb 25-1852
 - ii. Elizabeth b Sep 11-1792 d Dec 21-1867, single
and six others
 - b. Philip b Sep 8-1769 d yg
 - c. Frederick b Jun 20-1772 m Nov 12-1805 Sarah Nuhmann
 - d. Adam b Jan 20-1774 d Nov 15-1777
 - e. Philip b Feb 5-1778 d Aug 3-1846 m1 May 26-1799 Mary Elizabeth
Haak b Aug 30-1774 d Oct 12-1824; m2 Sep 25-1827
Barbara Stratzer
 - i. John b Jan 23-1800 d Apr 1-1867 m Mary --- 1806-1872
 - ii. Jacob b May 31-1801 d Jul 27-1868 m Susanna --- 1810-1869
 - iii. Philip b Oct 18-1802 d Mar 20-1887 Somerset Co, Pa
m Elizabeth Stauffer b Apr 8-1809 d Jul 19-1857
 - iv. Margaret b Jan 9-1804
 - v. Elizabeth b Apr 11-1805
 - vi. Sarah b Mar 17-1807 m --- Bowman
 - vii. David b Jul 1-1813
 - viii. Levi b Oct 8-1815
 - ix. Hannah b Aug 13-1817
plus one son, one daughter
 - f. Peter b Apr 12-1780 m Jun 9-1805 Susanna Dumme
 - g. Jacob b Nov 28-1782 d yg
 - h. Reuben b c1819

Sources

Egle, W H: History of Dauphin and Lebanon Cos., Pa 1883

Deutsch-Schweizerisches Geschlechterbuch vol 4, 1929

Bulletin #66, Cercle généalogique d'Alsace, 1984

Church Records, Alsace: Mattstall, Durstel, Langensoultzbach, Waldhambach;
Pennsylvania: Muddy Creek, Schaefferstown, Millbach,
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