

Snare Family Remembrances

By Nathan Snare

From

“Snare Family Records” by Merwin and Ruth Snare, 1969
(Spelling as in the original)

Philip, John, Casper, and Henry Schnerr came to America from Germany prior to the Revolutionary War and settled in Virginia. They left Germany during the Religious persecution by the Catholics, they being Lutherans.

Philip, the eldest, was a millwright, building and tending mills. John was a ship-builder, but he got hurt when young, and was a humpback man, but could work at his trade while in Virginia. Casper was a locksmith. Henry went to Canada before the war, and was never heard from again.

The Schnerrs were rough in manners but were well educated for their day. Phillip taught school in the old country. Jared, his nephew, was a great scholar in his day, a writing book of his being in the family many years, and judging from this must have been one of the best of his day. He was also a surveyor, and was employed to survey and measure the land which his Uncle Philip picked out and it was then deeded to him by the Government, and remained in our family until John P. Schnerr sold out, to move to Illinois.

Philip Schnerr, having lost two fingers in a mill accident, was not subject to military duty, but nevertheless served as a teamster, while in the army. He was married twice while living in Virginia. (We have, so far, been unable to learn the names of either). To the first marriage were born two boys and three girls; Allen, Daniel, Margaret (Philip Curfman), Elizabeth (Jacob Curfman), and Sarah, (Aunt Sally) who married Jacob Kepler. Sarah died in Johnson County, Iowa.

After moving from James River to Strausburg, Va. his first wife died, and some time later, he married again, (Wymer). To this union were born Mary (Fisher), Eva (William Baker), Catherine (Frederick Cum) great grandfather to Karl W. Snare, Magdaline (Baker), and John Philip Schnerr, and David, who is the connecting line with the Ohio branch of the Snare family.

The elder Snares were Lutherans of the strictest kind. All children were baptized when quite young, and at an early age, were confirmed. (But John P. Snare and his sons organized the Snareville Methodist Protestant Church, at or near Castleton, Ill.) or as we would now say converted. Well, I guess it was about as good as the religious practiced at the present time. The preachers were quite zealous, especially if they had a good drink of cider or Old Rye.

Grandpa took the pick of all the land in our valley, by going around marking trees where-ever he could find the best land, then getting his nephew, Jared Snare (a surveyor) to survey and measure and

compute the number of acres, which was 149 acres. The Government gave his title deed, which remained with the family until Father sold, to move to Illinois.

Grandpa Snare (Philip) Lived to be a very old man; Died when I was still quite young, however, I can still remember seeing him. As he grew quite old, he became quite helpless. At times he would lay down under an apple tree and go to sleep. Bro. Joe (Joseph) being quite a lad, would be set to watch and help him up when he awoke. This being a very tedious job for a boy who would rather be wading in some pond, catching tadpoles and frogs, so on one occasion while grandpa slept, his mouth open, Joe first went thru this pockets, and appropriated a grasshopper, he examined its anatomy, then seeing grandpa's mouth open, he plunged the hopper right in. Grandpa soon saw from his actions how the hopper got in his mouth. He pulled himself up and grabbed the by the leg. A limb overhead being handy, there was a boy who found it very unhealthy to feed Gandpa grasshoppers while asleep. Jo straightway went to mother and complained a follows (She could then talk Dutch about as well as English) "Tot for dampt ault wicer cup slocked meh." Which being translated would read, "That damned old Whithead licked me. The boy had no idea he was using swear words, as he had often heard the word used by Grandpa himself.

As for my Grandmother Snare, Altho rough in her way, there never was a kinder hearted woman lived and I loved her about as well as my own mother. I lived, slept, and ate with her for a good many years after Gandpa died. She would persist in talking Dutch to us children, and we would answer in English. She would scold Father (John P.) for not compelling us to talk Dutch, although she could talk English well enough, she would persist in using the German to us.

Her services were much request throughout the country in attending midnight calls, which greatly added to her notoriety, and made her quite a conscious character in the community. When she would come home, I could hear her talking with mother, that such a woman had a new baby, and as she had been gone, I began to connect her in some way as being the cause of new babys sudden appearance. Then, my curiosity being aroused, questions followed, such as "Where did she get it?" Answer, "Oh, I caught it with Old Sill (her little dog) in a hollow log." Which led us boys to carefully search every hollow log, to find babies in them. Sure if Granny could find them in hollow logs, why couldn't we. Surely old Muse and Drum (two of our hounds) could run faster than Sill. I remember one evening trotting when out hunting her cows, passed a big hollow log at one end, I squatted down to have a peep in, when out popped a rabbit, nearly upsetting me, and away Sill after it. I ran to Ganny, asking was it a baby, and would Sill catch it but all the answer I got was "Say Plossy, Say Plossy" at the top of her voice. But I could see an amused twinkle in her eye. Poor silly boy. I thot I was going to be in the capture of one baby, sure. But so it is I have learned better since.

Poor old Granny died suddenly, while I was from home and my heart was sad. Well do I remember the first trousers she made me out of tow linen, and was as rough as a file, but they were my first, and I was happy, especially as she had knit me a pair of suspenders with two r ed stripes in them.

Grandma Baker was a short, sweet, mild tempered woman, and had a sweet way of always saying "youns" and Thes and "Thou", dearly loved her pipe, and to talk of Gen. Washington and the war.

We three boys would get by her and say "Now, Granny, tell us stories", and she would say, "Well, Nathan, Thee must light my pipe" Two or three puffs, and the pipe would go out then Nathan had to light it again. This was repeated so often that Nathan got to like the pipe better than Grannies stories. Quakerlike she never would wear a border on her cap, and all her clothes must be plain.

Grandfather's name was Joseph Baker. Grandfather, being a blacksmith, worked at his trade until just before the revolution, when he moved to a quaker allotment sixteen miles out from Philadelphia, right on the banks of the Schuylkill, there they remained all thru the wars with England, Grandfather serving with Washington's army as a blacksmith, Grandmother and the boys farmed the land, and assisted in every way they could to supply the army with clothes and food. At one time, the army lay encamped all around Granny's house for three weeks, Gen. Washington made his headquarters and ate and slept in her beds. I have often heard my mother tell how Gen. Washington used to give her a phipanybit every time she fetched him a fresh drink of water from the spring, and called her his little lass. (Phipanybit was a small coin worth about 6 ½ ¢) Mother was that time about six years old. They lived on the Schuylkill River till after the war of 1812 when they moved to where I was born.

Mother's oldest brother distinguished himself in the war of 1812, by taking a redoubt under very trying circumstances, Our Army must either move back or take that fort. It was such a perilous undertaking that Gen. Sullivan would not detail men for the undertaking, but called for volunteers. Uncle John was the first man stepped into the boat, and of course his company followed.

The General, after reminding them of the peril in crossing the river, in the fog, bade them Godspeed and goodnight. They shoved off and after fighting off great cakes of ice, ready to crush their frail craft, they landed, climbed the hill, took the place entirely by surprise. The English Officers had not the least idea that any sane man would attempt to cross the river, in the condition it was in. But Baker, being a river man, managed to so ward off the great cakes of ice, so they crossed without the loss of a single man. The War soon ended, and he brought home with him a shell that was thrown from this same redoubt and passed thru his tent, but did not explode. I played with it many times. It remains with our family many many years, also Uncle John's sword and canteen.