

COMMENTS ON ITEM ON PAGE 22 OF THE SHERBONDY BEACON

In the item on "Jean Cherpantier" the comment is made "... We do not know why John gave his children German names. This seems unusual since other records of the Family indicate that John was originally French..."

An article I recently ran across titled Surnames in the United States Census of 1790 (An Analysis of National Origins of the Population by the American Council of Learned Societies) published by Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc. in 1971 contains some statements that might account for the Germanizing of Family names. In part it states:

Page 121 "...the French stock (was) not easily recognizable because of the conditions under which it was introduced and because of its more uniform distribution. Its numbers can not be compared with those of the British or the German. There was no mass migration. The French trickled in, not only from France, but also from Switzerland, Great Britain, Germany, and Holland, countries in which they had taken temporary refuge, and were distributed in the settlements which people from these countries had established...The French settled in groups, broke into smaller groups and following the geographical tendencies prevalent in each particular community were scattered from Maine to the Carolinas. Another cause of their dispersion was colonial hostility preventing the establishment of French colonies, and preventing also the settlement of French in certain colonies already established...Most of these French settlers were Huguenots."

Page 381 "...The process of denationalization had commenced before their arrival on American shores. Residence in the low countries, in England, and on the Rhine had already caused a readjustment of French manners and ideas and subordination of the French language. Necessity had forced adaptation upon them, and in America they conformed to the prevailing American environment. Being rebels in religion at a time when state and church were closely allied, they had no patriotic motives for retaining the characteristics of their nationality, and it has been suggested that they entered the more readily into the new life because they deliberately sought to forget the language and the customs associated with the land from which they felt they had been unjustly driven."

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Tieing in with these statements of seeking refuge before coming to America and also giving a possible clue as to the Germanizing of Family names (as well as an indication of where the Family point of European departure might have been) is a statement made in the Centennial History of Summit County Ohio.

In a biography of Harry Nelson Sherbondy, son of Hiram and Louisa (Sherbondy) Sherbondy, it reads in part:

"...The father of Harry N. Sherbondy...was a son of Peter Sherbondy, who was the first settler on Sherbondy Hill. Peter Sherbondy was born in Germany and after coming to the United States, lived for a time in Pennsylvania and then took up a large body of land in Portage Township, where he built his log cabin..."

We know that Harry Sherbondy had garbled his genealogical information as Peter was born in Pennsylvania and followed brothers John and George to Ohio only after some period of time. However, his comment that the Family came from Germany might very well be true in view of the Huguenot dispersion immediately following their flight from France and could also account for the general Germanizing of the Family in different aspects of their life.

Comments By
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