

RAMPY FAMILY ORIGINS

The Protestant Reformation in the first quarter of the 16th century began a period of turmoil in Europe during which rulers and citizens alike were forced to declare allegiance to either the old faith or the new. It suddenly became very important that every person be able to establish, with documentary evidence, whether he was Lutheran, Reformed (Zwingli/Calvin), or Roman Catholic. This meant accurate record-keeping, so the churches began to keep more careful records of christenings (baptisms), marriages and deaths. The search for the origin of the Rampy family has been successful primarily because of the preservation and availability of those church record books. While many of those books have been lost or destroyed in the intervening centuries, we are extremely fortunate that none of the records that pertain to the Rampy line are missing. Microfilm copies of the originals on file in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, have been the source of the data that follows.

Beginning with our South Carolina immigrant ancestor Nicholas Rampay and his father, Johan Andreas, a potter who lived in Landau (Pfaltz), Germany, it has been possible to trace the family backwards through various villages in the region of southwest Germany known as "The Palatinate," and then across the Rhine river into Switzerland where we found the earliest known members of the family. There the name was spelled **Rümpi**, but in other locales various combinations of letters were used to represent the way it sounded to the writer. I have used many of the recorded variations in this article as they appeared in the relevant records of the time.

For well over a hundred years of the 16th and 17th centuries, the Rümpi family flourished in the beautiful, rolling hills about 15 miles southeast of the large, industrial city of Basel. The winding roads of this charming area of tiny villages mostly follow the valley streams, but some also lead up to more isolated towns like Häfelfingen and Wittinsburg, where the Rümпис lived and worked, most likely in the fruit-growing trade. Orchards now cover the hillsides. The population in each of these towns has doubled since the census of 1645, but even today, inhabitants number only about 300. One can still visit the Reformed Church in the nearby village of Rümplingen where the christenings and marriages of early Rümpi ancestors took place four centuries ago.

At least three families in North America can trace their origins to a common ancestor, **Christian Rümpi**, born 14 October, 1633 in the Swiss village of Häfelfingen. Christian was married in 1654 and then, about nine years later, moved to Ixheim, Zweibrücken, in the area of Germany known as the Palatinate (Pfaltz). Sometime after 1677 he moved his family again, this time to Gangloff near Meisenheim. His American descendants are (1) the **Rimby** family of eastern Pennsylvania, (2) the **Remby** family of Nova Scotia, and (3) the **Rampy/Rampey** family of South Carolina. Perhaps others remain to be revealed by further searching.

RIMBY

In 1741, **Jacob Rimbi**, 52, and **Christof Rimbi**, 18, of the village of Breitenheim, near Meisenheim, sailed from Rotterdam to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, aboard the ship Molly. **Jacob** was probably the son of **Heinrich Rempi** and the grandson of **Christian Rempi**. Young **Christof**, who traveled with him, was either **Jacob's** son or nephew. Today there are many **Rimbys** in the vicinity of Birdsboro, PA, and in other parts of eastern Pennsylvania, who descended from these two German immigrants.

REMBY

Johan Andreas Rempi, the son of **Paul Rempi** of Meisenheim and grandson of **Christian** lived with his wife and five children in Landau (Pfaltz). In 1751 the family, except for the eldest son, **Nicholas**, aged 22, emigrated to Halifax, Nova Scotia. They came to the new land with approxi-

mately 2500 other Germans. **Andreas**, who spelled his name **Rimbie**, died aboard ship or soon after arrival, but a son named **George** survived and married Anna Lesly, his niece. He joined his countrymen in the town of Lunenburg. George's descendants lived in various villages along the coast as far south as Liverpool. In the late 1830s, several members of the George Remby family emigrated to Gloucester, Massachusetts, probably to take part in the whaling trade. Their descendants may be found in Essex County today. In Nova Scotia, however, the last of the Remby name passed away in 1991. But if you should happen to visit that beautiful island and find your way along the coast road from Western Head through Black Point, Beech Meadows and Eagle Head to West Dublin, watch for the names Leslie and Wolf and Hemeon and Gardner and Mouzer on the mail boxes as you pass, and know that the blood of Johan Andreas Rempi is flowing in the veins of many who live nearby.

RAMPY and RAMPEY

In 1764, **Johan Nicholas Rempi**, the eldest son of **Johan Andreas Rempi**, believing that he, like his father thirteen years earlier, was going to Nova Scotia, emigrated with a party of over 500 Germans. With Nicholas were his wife, Catherine and their infant daughter, Maria Elisabeth. But the Germans were victims of an unscrupulous recruiter who abandoned them shortly after their arrival in London. Following a period of severe hardship and suffering during which many of the party died, the plight of these destitute people was publicized in the London newspapers and a relief committee of twenty-one gentlemen was formed. The committee collected many contributions and used the funds to provide food and clothing to the needy. The King also took pity on them and in a short time, ships were made available and the Germans, or "poor Palatines", as they were called, were sent on their way, not to Nova Scotia, but to lands in the interior, or "back country" of South Carolina. There they suffered more hardships as they found themselves between hostile Indians on one side, and unsympathetic English planters on the other. Out of gratitude for their earlier treatment in London many of the families remained loyal to the King during the American Revolution and afterward had to leave the country, some finding their way to Nova Scotia after all. Nicholas fought and died as a mounted soldier in a highly esteemed Tory regiment called the South Carolina Royalists. But after the war his family made peace with the Americans and today many of his descendants, calling themselves **Rampeys**, live in the areas surrounding Greenville, South Carolina. In the mid-1800s, some of the Rampeys from Edgefield and Abbeville Counties, emigrated to Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. The largest numbers may be found today in the state of Texas. Outside of South Carolina, the name is most often spelled **Rampy**.

Perhaps we genealogists search the past hoping to find ancestors who were giants in their times -- men and women who clearly stood, in wealth, power, rank or achievement, well above their peers. If so, this search may seem to have been in vain. But if it's God-fearing, hard-working, persevering, stout-hearted folks we were looking for, then we can be proud. The Rampys were the stuff of which our nation was made.

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