Early History Section

Heinrich Kunkel
(1751-1827)
Hessian Soldier from Flörsbach, Prussia
His Children
OUR KUNKEL FAMILY IN AMERICA

Wallace M. Kunkel, Historian

This Final Edition is published on the Web in 1977 (390 pages) and is the culmination of a 60-year effort. Started in the 1940s, a 1954 Edition was produced by Mr. and Mrs. Mark Kunkel. Their son, Wallace, then published a 1980 Edition which was entered into the LDS Library, the Kansas City Public Library, the California State Library (Sacramento), and the Historical Society of Holt County, MO. All editions are dedicated to Carl M. Kunkel of Oregon, MO — son of Lafayette; son of Benjamin Franklin; son of Jacob; son of Henry II; son of Henry I. (p. 115).

(Our Grandfathers are shown in RED)

KUNKEL Generations in Flörsbach, Germany

KLEINFELTER Generations in Flörsbach, Germany

KUNKEL Generations in America:

HENRY KUNKEL I

HENRY KUNKEL I m Elisabeth Christina Kleinfelter

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(Our Grandfathers are shown in RED)
He was a Hessian Soldier, captured by Washington at Trenton, NJ, 12/26/1776. His burial place and actual death date are not known.

He left Hanau as a member of the Hess-Hanau Regiment of the Crown Prince of 684 men in mid-March, 1776. Went by boat down the Main and Rhine rivers to Willemsn, Holland, then to Portsmouth, England. After a sea journey of about three months, they probably landed at Staten Island, NY. He was a Grenadier under the command of Ral—whose partying in Trenton allowed their capture by Washington's troops.

The Kunkels were from the Spessart Mountain range, noted for glass-making from the 15th Century. It is an area to the east of Frankfurt. The family name, however, means “distaff” or “spindle”, tools of the spinning trade. Whether they used them or manufactured them, is not known. Records show Kunkels back to 1400 in this region though we cannot trace our lineage beyond 1620 due to records being lost in the 30 Years’ War. Present-day “PA Dutch” still have a “Kunkelstube” — a spinning room.

Elizabeth and her father, Michael Kleinfelter, and her daughter, Rebecca Ehrman, are buried at Fissel’s (formerly Schuster’s) Church, Glen Rock, York County, PA. (Henry’s mother was a Schuster. A Melchior Schuster came to PA from Flörnsbach, with three sons, in 1766.)

Elizabeth was the daughter of Michael and Appollonia, a Susquehanna Indian, Kleinfelter. This is assumed to be factual. Our original research was done by Hulda Rock of the LDS Library. She stated that Kleinfelter had much to do with the Indians and this marriage was a result. We have nothing in writing to confirm this. If a legend, it has persisted in the family for many generations. We are also aware that the name Appollonia was a popular German given-name of the time.

One of Elizabeth’s sisters was Anna Barbara Kleinfelter (B 5/31/1761) m. John Kunkel, Jr., cooper** (B ci 1750). (They had John, Justina and Elizabeth. Our Elizabeth was godmother.) He may have been son of Gottlieb (b ca 1720) and Christine, earliest Kunkels in York. Subject’s other sisters and brother:

1) Margaret (B 1763) m. Jacob Markey; 2) Christina (B 1/31/1765); 3) Eva Elizabetha (B 1/21/1766) m. John Seitz; 4) Catherina (B 11/13/1768) m. Geo. Stovely; 5) Johan Michael Kleinfelter (B 2/20/1770) m. Magdelena Hardman.

According to a Kleinfelter descendant, many of their family names came from the Kunkels. This would stand to reason if Elizabeth’s grandmother was also a Kunkel. (See above.)

| **Flörnsbach** is 30 miles east of Frankfurt. The Protestant records for the parish of Flörnsbachtal can be found at Kempenbrunn. They have not been filmed by the LDS Church as of 1/93. Address: Evangelisches Pfarramt
| W-6487 Flörnsbach-Kempenbrunn, Germany
| My request for information was answered (12/10/1992) by H. P. Gobel, in Steingarten 3, W 6466 Gründau-Breitenborn
| (Have learned Gobel is also used by Kleinfelter researchers)

** There was a Gottlieb Kunkel family, settled in York Co, PA, 40 years before Henry. One of his sons (besides John) was Balthazar.

This was written on the back of Henry II’s family record (son of Henry I):

“King George sold the three boys, Henry, Mike and David for transportation. King of Hessen — were sent to fight. When they arrived they found they were people of their own kind so they refused to fight. Kleinfelter bought Henry I — would take seven years to pay King George the debt. Kleinfelter owned large tracts of land — the King placed such heavy duty on the landowners they could not pay it so Kleinfelter went for days trying to borrow money to pay his heavy tax, but was unable to do so, so he thought he would have to lose his land. Henry Kunkel asked how much it would take. He opened his vest — around him he had a belt in which was enough money to pay the tax. At that, Kleinfelter deeded half his land to Henry and he married Kleinfelter’s daughter, Elizabeth. Michael was sold to a man in Pennsylvania. David was sold to a man in Virginia.”

Here is Henry I’s Last Will and Testament: (Dated 4/13/1827)

“IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN. I, HENRY KUNKEL, of Shrewsbury Township in the County of York and State of Pennsylvania, Being of good health but weak in body but of sound mind memory and understanding (praised be God for it) and considering the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the time thereof. And to the end I may be the better prepared to leave this world whenever it shall please God to call me hence do therefore make and declare this my last Will and Testament in manner following (that is to say) first and principally I commend my soul and body to the care and keeping of Almighty God my Creator hoping for free pardon and remission of all my sins and to enjoy everlasting happiness in the Heavenly Kingdom through Jesus Christ my Savior my body I commit to the Earth at the discretion of my Executors herein after named Executors And to such worldly Estate wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me in this life I give and dispose of the same in the following manner to firstly bequeath and devise unto my daughter Elizabeth my house-clock and one Cow and one hafer wherein she shall have her choice and fifty dollars in cash as a free and separate gift. And my daughter Christina now entrust of James Sutton I bequeath the sum of fifty dollars in Lawfull Money of the United States to be paid to her within one year after my decease which said fifty dollars shall be in full of her share out of my estate Real and Personal. And unto my granddaughter Catharene Imfeld I bequeath one cow of which she shall have her choice after her mother Elizabeth Imfeld and fifty dollars in lawfull Money of the United States to be paid to her within one year after my decease as a free and separate gift. And the residue of my moveable effects it is my will that my Executors shall sell them at public vendue and as to my Real Estate it is my will that my Executors shall sell the same either at public or prived sale as it may be the most advatage to my heirs and the Deed or Deeds my Executors or any one of them shall give to the pourchser for the same shall be as valed in law as if I hath
given it in my lifetime and the same to be sold as soon as conveniently may be after my decease and the money accruing out of my personal and real estate shall be distrubeted in manner and form following firstly it is my will that all my Just debts and expenses shall be paid there of and all what is inwilled before is taken of. It is my will that then the residue of the money accruing there from shall be equelly devided amongst my son Michael Kunkel, Henry Kunkel, Elizabeth Imfeld. Barbara Kunkel enetermered to John Miller. Eve Kunkel enetermered to John Hise, Rebecca Kunkel enetermered to Peter Ehrman or to their heirs or legal representatives but each of the said heirs shall be charged with that which the have Red. of me in my lifetime. And lastly I nominate constitute and appoint my trust friends Peter Kleinfelter (son of Lorance Klinefelder) and Jacob Kleinfelder to be my Executors of this my will and Testament. And I do hereby revoking all other wills legacies and bequeaths by me heretofore made and declarings this and no other to be my last Will and Testament. In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the thirteenth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty seven  

(Signed) Johan Hynurich Kunchel  
Witnesses: George Kleinfelder and Philip Shaffer  

About Johan Hynurich Kunchel ...  

In September, 1990, I visited Washington’s Crossing, PA, to get a better idea of Henry’s activities as a Hessian Soldier.

I learned in the David Library (devoted to Hessian History) that Henry was a Grenadier in the Ral Battery under a Commander by the name of Boecking. The “grenadiers” were evidently chosen for their physical ability to throw grenades.

After fighting their way down from White Plains, NY, across New Jersey, the Hessians had taken Trenton on December 14. They were stationed in a two-story barracks there. The barracks still exist — in the shadow of the NJ State House where the battle was fought round about. It is now a museum.

![The Barracks at Trenton, NJ](image1.jpg)  

The Barracks at Trenton, NJ  
The Presbyterian Church of 
Newtown, Bucks County, PA  
Founded 1734. Built 1769.

After Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware on Christmas Day, 1776 (from PA into NJ), and marched eight miles down-river to Trenton, they killed 19 Hessians and captured the rest — including Henry Kunkel. It was bitter cold, snowing, and took place in a small area. The Hessians probably lost because Ral had been partying the night before and didn’t take the possibility of attack seriously. Washington was also making this a “last ditch” effort, having retreated all the way across New Jersey.
Henry was taken to Newtown, PA (about ten miles) and held in the Newtown Presbyterian Church which was built in 1769. The church still stands, is a National Historic building, and has a typical, very beautiful, pristine interior with an upper balcony around three sides. Services are still held during times of the year when heat is not required. (We have since attended services there.)

From there, it would seem that Henry was removed toward Lancaster, PA — and somehow deserted to an American group that was fighting its way toward York. That group finally disbanded at York, thus accounting for the fact that our Kunkels have their American beginnings in that area. Henry was probably very aware that he already had relatives there. (The Kleinfelters had migrated in 1751, his birth year.) (W. M. Kunkel)
Descendants of Michael Kunkel I (which follow) should contact Dick D. Heller, Jr., 3103 Granite, Mission TX 78572-9743; or David G. Smith, River Plantation, 4032 Columns Drive, Marietta, GA 30067 For 2nd marriage of Michael Kunkel II: Rebecca Golden, 10501 W. Anglia Road, Etna Green, IN 46524.

1 Michael Kunkel I m Elizabeth MYERS, dau of Michael and Elizabeth Myers.
   (B 2/12/1784, York Co., PA (D 1815)

Michael was baptized 5/02/1784 according to Birth and Baptismal Record from Shuster's Church, Springfield Twshp, York Co., Pa., and was sponsored by his uncle John Michael Kunkel (we cannot account for this Michael. wk). He was married twice. First to Elizabeth Myers -- then to Catherine Sentz. We are certain that Elizabeth had at least one son, Henry. She may also have had Michael II. However, we do not have her birthdate — and she died in 1815. Because we believe Catherine bore nine children, we have included Michael II among Catherine’s children until we learn otherwise.

(Because of a correspondence with Robin Schonewetter, 3581 Silverado Dr., Columbus, OH, we have acquired the following new information. We have always known there was a Joseph Kunkel buried next to our Grandmother Elizabeth Christina Kleinfelter Kunkel, in Fissel’s Church (aka Shuster’s). By combining her information with our own, we are now certain he was the first son of Michael I:

1 Joseph Kunkel m - 2/02/1832 Catherine SHAFFER
   (B 3/09/1809, York Co., PA (B 1/01/1812) (D 4/24/1900) Buried Glen Rock (Lutheran) Cem.
   (Note that a Philip Shaffer was a Witness to the Will of Henry Kunkel I above)

He was killed by a fall at 40 years of age. He left 11 children. Buried in Fissel's Church Cemetery, Shrewsbury Township, York County, PA.

(Previously known about Henry, his second brother: "He was brought up by his Uncle Jacob Markey's family until he was 19." We now learn that Joseph was also included. Mrs. "Markel", referred to as a "sister", was actually Margaret Kleinfelter Markey — sister of Elizabeth Kleinfelter Kunkel, wife of Henry Kunkel I. (see page 8)

1 Elizabeth "Lizzie" Kunkel m - 8/17/1956 Adam NACE
   Four children: Frank, William, Sally, Catherine

2 James Kunkel (infant death)

3 Samuel Kunkel (B 6/09/1851. D 1/06/1855)

4 William Kunkel m - 12/22/1858 Johanna ILNGENFRITZ
   (B 8/23/1833, Glen Rock, PA D 8/27/1863, in Civil War)
   Three or four children
   Killed in Civil War — 8/27/1863
   Civil War Buried in Fissel's Cemetery
   X Elizabeth Kunkel m Luther SHANCK
      1 Claude Shanck
      2 Mary Shanck

5 Polly Ann Kunkel m Jesse DECKER
   (B 9/10/1834, Glen Rock, PA D 8/04/1872)

6 Jacob “Jake” S. Kunkel m - 3/06/1859 Maria HARTMAN
   (B 1835, Glen Rock, PA) D 10/05/1923, York Co., PA)
   Died 10/05/1915

   X Emma Jane Kunkel m Lillie Bair
      1 Lillie Bair m BAHN
      2 Anna Bair m George SEITZ

Our Kunkel Family in America — W. M. Kunkel — 16 Brookside Ave., Hackettsown, NJ 07840 — 1-908-852-9199
THE NAME AND FAMILY KUNKEL

Our name, KUNKEL, is of German origin and is derived from the occupation of its first bearers as spinners or makers of spindles. The German word, “kunkel”, means "distaff", "spindle", or “spinning wheel”. Even to this day, the Pennsylvania “Dutch” set aside a room, usually upstairs, for their spinning and weaving activities. They call it the “Kunkelstube”.

In ancient European and early American records, the name appears in various spellings of Kunckell, Kunkell, Kunckel, Gunkel, Gungle, Kuncl, Kuncke, Kunckle, Gunckel, Kunkle, Conkle, etc. We have never found a spelling different from KUNKEL among our family. Other spellings have always, in our 50 years of keeping records, been associated with other families. As can be noted, on the introductory page of this genealogy, Henry Kunkel signed his will, “KUNCHEL” Starting with Henry II, it was spelled “Kunkel”.

OUR COAT OF ARMS AND CREST

Fancy or plain, our Coat-of-Arms has Unique Elements

In heraldry, it’s called “Blazoning: A proper description of embellishment.” Here’s ours:

*Per fesse or and sable, on a mound vert, a lion couchant, supporting a mullet argent in base. A demi-lion or on crest.*

OUR KUNKEL COAT OF ARMS HAS NO DUPLICATE. Every member of our family, who has purchased a 1980 book, “Our Kunkel Family in America” (and many who did not) have received a full-color copy of our Coat of Arms, as carved in mahogany and properly
polychromed, by Marc A. Kunkel (eldest son of WK). It is also included in master entries into various libraries and genealogical societies.

THE BLAZONING
of our Coat of Arms:

Per fesse or and sable, on a mound vert, a lion couchant supporting a mullet argent in base.

THE CREST:

A demi-lion or.

Translation from heraldry:

• *Per fesse* means to divide equally by a horizontal line. The upper part is called the chief — the lower part, the base.
• Per fesse *or* and *sable*: Or means gold; sable means black. This means to divide gold and black by a horizontal line.
• *Vert*, in heraldry, is the tincture green.
• *Couchant* means lying down with head raised.
• Supporting a *mullet argent* in base: Argent is the metal silver. Mullet is a star, usually five-pointed and pierced.
• A *demi-lion or*: On the helmet, a gold half-lion.

This is the end of our EARLY HISTORY Section.