

BARBARA HOTTEL
ORIGIN OF THE KELLERS
GEORGE KELLER, JOHN KELLER

According to their historians, the first Kellers that came to the United States were from Switzerland where their ancestors lived for centuries. Amos Keller of Tiffin, Ohio (who collaborated with the Rev. E. S. Shumaker, D. D., of Indianapolis, Ind., writer of the Henry Keller genealogy) visited Switzerland in 1903. While there he found a marble slab in the basement of the Minstral Cathedral in Basel bearing the following inscription: "Jacob Keller, the butcher, died Oct. 13, 1572." It is said there are hundreds of inscriptions on slabs marking Keller graves in that country. In Prof. I. D. Rupp's "30,000 Immigrants" Dr. Shumaker found fifty-six bearing the name of Keller who came to Pennsylvania from Switzerland, from the Palatinate and other parts of Germany. It is probable they were all related or were descended from one common ancestor. When Rev. Eli Keller, D. D., (historian of the Joseph Keller lineage) told Prof. A. L. Koeppen, a Dane highly educated and especially well versed in ancient history, that he traced his family to Bavaria, Prof. Koeppen said: "Ah, no, never. The name Keller is Swiss. Why at Bavaria?" "Easily enough. At the time of the great plague in the fourteenth century your ancestors, with many others, moved down from the mountains into the Rhine countries to escape the so called Black Death." "Thus, then like the noted Rhine having its sources in the snow capped Alps, we as a family have our source far back in the country of Tell and Zwingli. The blood in our veins and the thoughts of our minds may still have, after so long time, some affinity with the past—how much we cannot know, much less describe." Along with the Kellers came other families nearly all of whose surnames will be found in this genealogy. These were closely associated by intermarriages in this country with the Kellers, Hottels, Rinkers, Fravels, Sagers, Funkhousers and probably others. Our Swiss ancestors had much in common in Switzerland and in Germany. They were related to each other by marriage and religious ties in Europe and came to America together because of these relationships, seeking a peaceful home in the New World.

BARBARA ANN HOTTEL, (only daughter of Johannes (John) and Margaret Hottel) was born in Europe about 1730. After her arrival in the United States she married GEORGE KELLER.

George Keller, according to Prof. I. D. Rupp's "30,000 Immigrants" came from the Palatines on the ship "Pleasant", J. Morris, Captain. Points of departure were Rotterdam, Holland and Deal. They arrived at Philadelphia, Pa., Oct. 11, 1732, with 150 passengers. He landed just one month later than John Hottel, his father-in-law. It seems almost certain that these immigrants had much in common in Europe and came to America because of association in the old country, as well as for opportunities which the new world afforded. It is probable that on his arrival George Keller was associated with his brother Joseph in Northampton Co., Pa., and perhaps with the Hottel family. During their eighteen-year sojourn in Bucks County of the same state, and emigrated with them to Shenandoah Co., Va., in 1750. He settled permanently on the headwaters of Toms Brook in Stonewall District near the original Hottel homestead not far from Mt. Olive. The same year the Hottel family emigrated to the Shenandoah

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Valley. George Keller purchased from Lord Thomas Fairfax 400 acres of land lying on the South Shenandoah River. By inheritance through his wife, Barbara Anna, he came into possession of a part of the original Hottel homestead where they lived for the remainder of their lives. Many of the descendants of George Keller still reside in the vicinity of the old family home, and much of the land is still in their possession. He died late in 1782 or in the early part of 1783, leaving a will in which he provided for the comfort of his widow and left much land to his children. He was an outstanding citizen in the early history of Shenandoah County, having been one of the justices of the first court. He was also a prominent churchman. In one instance where reference is made to a land deal, George Kelley mentions John Hottel as his father-in-law. In another when referring to his wife he call her Barbara, while the immigrants register has the name Anna. Her full name therefore must have been Barbara Anna Hottel. The children of George and Anna (Hottel) Keller were born in the seventeen-forties and fifties. The Keller family record could not be found.

George Keller, he eldest son of George and Barbara Keller is mentioned in deeds, etc., but the name of his wife is unknown. From the marriage records we find names of his children: James; Anna, who married Jacob Baylor; Frederick m. Barbara Baylor; Charles m. Barbara Smith; George; m. Sophia Mowery; and Sarah. Frederick and Barbara Baylor are the ancestors of Helen Keller, the young lady who, through deaf and blind, is now so very famous. John Keller, second son of George and Barbara Keller, after selling his farm which he had inherited from his father, to Russell Bordon, moved to Tennessee, but was in Virginia at time of Revolution, for the furnished rations to the soldiers and also served as guard to the jail wherein British prisoners were incarcerated. In an old paper, we have the amount of the personal property due his children. It is dated Nov. 8, 1800. He names sons, George, Daniel, Jacob, Henry and David and sons-in-law, Frederick Parrett and David Kee. He also names Mary, who must have been his wife, as David Kee m. Mary Keller Sept. 17, 1797 in Greenville, Tenn. Judge Kee in Knoxville is his grandson. Dr. Rufus Keller in Greenville, Tenn. Is a descendant of Daniel. Frederick Parrett married Elizabeth Keller and their descendants may be found in Parrett history.

Elizabeth Keller, daughter of George and Barbara, married Joseph Snapp, June 15, 1784.

Margaret Keller m. Mathias Wilkins, eldest son of Godfrey Wilkins, Sr.

Mary Keller m. Col. Jacob Rinker

Jacob Keller m. Catherine Borden.

Henry Keller m. (1) Margaret Snapp (2) Mary Snow.

John Keller, according to an old Minute Book at Woodstock, furnished food for the Revolutionary Army, this entitling his descendants to admittance to D. A. R., but George Keller, whom we presume was

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his father, was a member of the first Committee of Safety in Dunmore Co., Va. The Rev. Twyman Williams of Hampton and Sidney College went to Woodstock before the ancestral home of Abram Bird was as torn down and in the attic found many old records, among them this record of George Keller, and also Abram Bird. These papers are now in a museum at Richmond, but for ten dollars you can get either a photostatic or certified copy from Rev. Williams. George, the son, also served in Revolutionary War.