

YANKIE/YANKEY FORTUNE LETTERS

In the early part of the 1900's it was reported in newspapers that the Yankee/Yankey family of America was heir to a fortune of millions in Germany. The family was required to establish the lineage to Germany to claim this money. This era was one of hyperinflation in Germany with paper notes of 100,000 marks and one milliard marks (equivalent to one billion marks). William Henry Yankee reportedly saw initial the advertisement.

This potential for wealth prompted an exchange of letters among numerous family members in an attempt to establish a lineage. These family letters became known as the *Yankie Fortune Letters*. Some family members changed the spelling of their name to correspond with the spelling in the newspaper advertisements. The letters available began in 1911 and extended to 1924. The first to seek the Yankee/Yankey Fortune was William Henry Yankee but other writers were James Minor Yankee, Joseph Samuel Yankey, and William Riley Yankey.

The *Yankie Fortune Letters* mention Michael Yankey I and II and that the family reportedly originated in Berlin, Germany in the 1600's. The letters also include "Slabtown" as the early location of the Yankee family in Virginia. This information in the *Yankie Fortune Letters* became accepted as factual. These letters appear to be the source of the misinformation that has lead to considerable inaccuracies in the Yankee family's lineage on genealogical sites, in family histories, and on the Internet. Early researchers apparently utilized these letters as a primary source of information. The *Yankie Fortune Letters* reported that three brothers "got off a ship" but now it is assumed that the three brothers were probably Andrew John Yankee's sons, Michael, Andrew, and Jacob Yankee, born in Virginia. It is now known that on June 22, 1750, the immigrant Andreas Johan Jencke arrived on the ship, *Irene*.

A positive result from the *Yankie Fortune Letters* was that they are a source of considerable Yankee/Yankey family information including names of children. At the time of the letters the family was scattered throughout the United States and this exchange of letters allowed additional family history to be compiled. A discussion of the Yankee Fortune Letters can be found on the Yankee Cousins Web site, www.yankie.net, by Jerry Yankee. The defining work of Barbara Mahoney and Ruth Gregory is well documented on the Yankee Cousins Web site and in personal communication to the author from Barbara Mahoney. We are indebted to the Yankee family members for their diligence in establishing many family members; however, the Yankee Fortune was a scam or fraud.

It is now known that the lineage of Michael Yankee I and II is incorrect. The initial immigrant was Andreas Johan Jencke born in Upper Silesia in 1726. In 1734, he arrived with his family at the Moravian Society in Herrnhut, Germany. In 1750 he sailed to New York and traveled to the Moravian Community in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. In March of 1761 Andrew John Yankee moved to Dunmore County, Virginia that was later renamed Shenandoah County, Virginia. This book traces a portion of the Yankee/Yankey family.

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Yankey Family Researchers



Jerry and Linda Marciniak Yankie
c. 2009

Photo provided by:
Jerry and Linda Yankie



Lewis Harvey Yankey
c. 1991

Photo provided by:
Barbara H. Mahoney
by
M. L. Horton



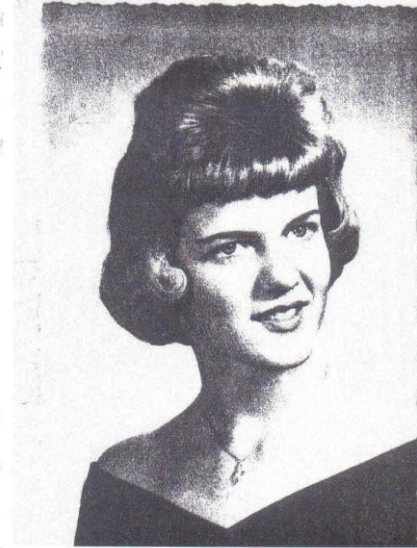
Milton and Ruth Beggs Gregory
c. 1950

Photo provided by:
Rebecca Krager



Al and Barbara Mahoney
c. 1977

Photo provided by:
Barbara H. Mahoney



Jo Caroline (Humphries) Koenig

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G. P/O Edward & Artie (Yankie) Newman*

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