

This story comes from Mark Benner in the USA and posted on Ancestry.com [<http://boards.ancestry.com/surnames.benner/274.295/mb.ashx>

]. it adds some interesting facts about the Palatine Benner Family who arrived in Rhinebeck in 1720.

Having researched my Benner lineage back to Herborn-Seelback, Germany to about 1640, and leading me to Waldoboro, Maine to present, I had dug up some miscellaneous Benner info dating as far back as about 1070.

I've only been researching since 1986. Written records prior to about 1640 in this area of Germany are non-existent, as many populated areas were depopulated through war, disease, floods, etc.

Families bearing the BENNER name were residents of Germany at early dates in Germany, Upper Bavaria, and Holland. These men were especially noted for their great size and strength. They wore the armor of knights from the eleventh century to the seventeenth century.

Among the early German records was an OLAF DER BENNER who lived on the BENNER ESTATE in Upper Bavaria, near the Rhine River. His name has been preserved in the chapel near his estate called the Chapel of Olaf der Benner. The date of his death was recorded as 1053. He was one of the first knights of the Benner family.

One of his sons, GURTH DER BENNER, joined the Army of the Crusaders, and in 1079 was called "Knight of the Morning Star". One of his later descendants, ODO DER BENNER, also a knight, was engaged in a contest at a tournament held at Mainz, Germany in 1263 and was awarded first prize.

The Benner family represented vast estates and great wealth at the beginning of the fourteenth century. In 1322, WALDEMAR DER BENNER was one of the leaders responsible for the rebellion against King Ludwig. The family fortune was greatly exhausted and Waldemar's four sons were obliged to enter the Venetian Army as professional soldiers. Waldemar der Benner eventually entered the Cloister of Saint Laurentius. Only one of his sons is known to have returned, WERNKER DER BENNER, and he spent a few years trying to regain his family's lost estate. He eventually failed to do so.

Wernker der Benner's son, DIETSELM DER BENNER, engaged in feudal uprisings against the petty lords. Dietselm der Benner's son, ULRICH DER BENNER, moved to Holstein, Germany about 1387, to improve his standing, served the court and earned special privileges and wealth which enabled him to regain some of the original estate. He had a son, EUSTACHIUS BENNER, whose sons and grandsons carried on the family name of its old splendor until about 1500.

The Bavarian wars of about 1520 wiped out the family fortune so that the Benner family scattered and a large gap in the family history made.

The last Benner to bear the armor of a knight was DIETRICH BENNER, who was appointed Field Marshall, and is probably the "General Benner" who is associated in the history of the Huguenots.

There was an ULRICH BENNER of Reutlingen, Germany in 1414, probably the same Benner as mentioned above.

The earliest Benner I've found in America appears in records of 1720, when Valentyn Benner made his home in Rhinebeck, New York. He and his wife, Margaret, came from Upper Bavaria, and they had children John, Henry, Margaret, Anna, and Catherine. This family lived and maintained the same homestead for four generations.

The name BENNER is believed to have been derived from the occupation of its first bearers. With the spread of printing and book binding in Germany during the 1600's, whole families engaged in the work. It may be presumed that the Benners acquired the name from the German word, benner, which means "binder", to bind, as in book binding, as in tying things together.

It could also mean "basket maker", or a large basket of the type carried on one's back, or it also describes a two wheeled basket wagon.

On the other hand, (if we have a French origin), there is a possibility of French Huguenot connection of the 1400's, (!), where the idea of "basket", (la benne), would still underlie the definition.

Hope some of this helps?

MARK BENNER