

ORIGIN OF THE SURFACE FAMILY

The name Surface, or Zerfas, is spelled sixteen or more different ways. I have a letter written Oct. 16, 1908, from Noah Surface, who was then eighty-three years of age when he wrote me. Here is the original line, according to his letter: Adam Zerfas born at Coblentz, Germany, 1742. He was married 1768 to Elizabeth Shafer. He was Captain of a company of Northhampton Co., Pennsylvania Militia, and commanded the Company in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown. Captain Adam Zerfas, after the Revolutionary War served against the Indians. George Washington was born in 1732. This would seem to harmonize the dates about right. The son of Adam Zerfas (Cap't Adam) was John Uhlrich Zerfas, born 1799; died 1866--he married Mary Wimmer. He was under 16 years of age when he sailed from Rotterdam in 1750 with other members of his family, possibly an uncle, Hans Martin Surfes, possibly on the ship "Brothers". They settled in Pennsylvania, then moved to Rockingham, Virginia. These Zerfas' had blue eyes, fair complexion and spoke German. Adam Zerfas, son of John Uhlrich Zerfas was born 1774. John Zerfas, son of Adam Zerfas, born prior to 1765 (he had a brother named Jacob). Noah Surface, or Zerfas, was the son of Noah and was the great-great grandson of Adam Zerfas, mentioned above, born at Coblentz, Germany in 1742. He had seven children and lived at Florence, Kentucky, R. F. D..

The name Zerfas comes from a family of ancient origin--the name is not typical German but Germanized Latin, and was taken in honor of Bishop Servatius after 335 A. D. Bishop Servatius, a Roman, was sent out from Rome by Constantine, Emperor of Rome, to Tonguerin in 335 A. D. to introduce Christianity to the north tribes of Germany. At that time Rome controlled all of Europe, including England. These ignorant tribes of northern Germany had never heard of Christianity. Bishop Servatius died in 384 A. D. at Maastricht, Holland, on his way home. The Zerfas family were all Lutherans and lived mostly in the Rhine Valley. They came to America for better opportunity and to escape persecution, as did thousands of families in the 18th century.

EXCERPTED FROM A GENEALOGY OWNED
BY PAUL SURFACE, ALVA, OKLAHOMA

I am sure, is the line of the Merfas or Surface family from which our family came. There are several Surface families in this neighborhood and I learned that they had a genealogy of the family, and they were kind enough to lend it to me. It was very interesting to me because it gave me much information about the family that I did not have, and proves that our ancestors came to America much earlier than I had thought. My grandfather's given name was NOAH and you will notice that the family member who gave the information for the genealogy had the same name. My grandfather had told me that his family came from Virginia but he also mentioned Pennsylvania and you will note that the original family lived in both those places. My grandfather had three brothers, their names were Amos, Andrew and Jake, he also had two sisters, Lucinda and Rhoda. I believe his father's name was Adam. Farther along in the genealogy it tells that later one branch of the family went to Ohio, and apparently this is the branch to which my grandfather belonged, as he came to Kansas in 1869 from Eaton, Ohio. I excerpted enough of the information from the genealogy that would make it possible, I am sure, for a genealogist to easily trace the family directly to my grandfather. You will notice that one member of the early arrivals served in the Revolutionary War, so if any of you girls are DAR minded, I think you wouldn't have any trouble establishing your credentials for membership--as you know the DAR is the most prestigious woman's organization in the US. There is some expense connected to becoming a member, but it offers advantages too.

I think you should keep this information in your files as you might find it useful later. There are many times when dates or other family information can be very valuable for practical reasons.

Noah S. Surface, born Feb. 23, 1845
 New Hope, Preble County, Ohio.
 Enlisted in Civil War from Upsbur, Ohio
 156 Reg. Vol. Infantry, Co. B.
 Died about May 6, 1940, age 95 years
 Buried at Brazoria, Texas.

Nell Madeline Runnels--Card
 Sept. 20, 1974

Nellie Madeline Runnels--Card
 Daughter of Ida May Surface--
 Runnels
 Born March 4, 1892

Ida May Surface--Runnels, born July 28, 1870
 Daughter of Noah S. Surface.
 Died Sept. 1954, buried at Brazoria, Texas.

Barbara Card--Dunn
 Daughter of Nellie Madeline
 Runnels--Card
 Born Aug. 20, 1923
 Died July 8, 1963