

Are We German?

(Quick answer: Probably not)

There is no hard evidence which tells us where the first Shugart immigrant came from. It has been assumed by many, that the first Shugart that came to America came from Germany, however the case for this is very weak.

- 1) There is a story that has been passed down through the generations that there were three brothers who came over together from Germany. I have heard this story from three different people over the years and we do have Old John, Sheriff Peter, and Sheriff Zachariah running around in the early 1700's in Pennsylvania.
- 2) The name sounds German.
- 3) You can find many family trees on the internet that have our first immigrant being from Germany (with no source)
- 4) In my notes, I have a note from Thomas D. Hamm:

"In a letter written in 1878 a grandson of Zachariah stated that Zachariah was a German and spoke very broken English."

I followed up with T. Hamm to find out that the grandson who wrote the letter was Thomas Shugart, son of Eli, who was born in 1818 in Kentucky. His grandfather Zachariah was living in NC at the time of his birth. Zachariah moved to Indiana around 1830, and died two years later. The distance between young Thomas' location and his grandfather Zachariah was close to 400 miles. Rhetorically, how many times could Thomas have met Zachariah, *if he met him at all*, and how good would a young boy's memory of him have been fifty years later?

- 5) As member of the 1st Reformed Church of Philadelphia, Zacharias Schuckert signed a call to Rev Boehm dated March 24, 1734. (From Doterer's Historical Notes on the Reformed Church, Vol1/66. This Zachariah was almost certainly a German. But the only link of this record to one of the Shugart lines is the sounding of the names.

- 6) From the Holy Trinity Evang. Lutheran Church, Lancaster PA, Baptism of Anna Maria Bentz, d/o Philip Bentz on December 2, 1738, witnessed by Zacharias Schuecker and wife (one version) and wife Anna Maria (another version). This Zachariah's last name is clearly German. But the only link of this record to one of the Shugart lines is the sounding of the name.

This is the entirety of the 'evidence' of that I am aware would argue we have a German ancestry.

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Having gone through my paternal review during Covid, I do not believe that we are German. In fact, I have come to believe that we are of English heritage.

- A. This dawning of awareness came to me when I discovered and read a sentence in Representative Cornelius Shugart's official biography, published by the State of Indiana:

"His parents were of American birth and English extraction."

(Cornelius, was my great, great grandfather) If Cornelius thought he had some German roots, it would be reasonable to think his biography would have included this, rather than the way it was worded.

- B. Cornelius' parents were John Shugart and Sarah Ratliff, and his grandparents were George Shugart and Mary Davis, and his great-great grandparents were John Shugart and Susannah Tarkington. The Ratliff family and the Davis family came from England several generations back. Tarkington's, as well, were from England. These Shugart men were all marrying English women, suggesting the men were living in English communities, not German communities, perhaps marrying women of the Same nationality.

- C. The original Shugart settlers in Concord, Pennsylvania were in dominant English Quaker areas.
- D. Let's consider John Shugert (See DNA link). From *Ancestry.com*, his DNA suggests 40% England and NW Europe, 34% Scotland, 18% Ireland, 4% France, 2% Sweden, and 2% German. From *MyHeritage* he is 54% Scandinavian, 24% English, 11% Balkans, 10% Iberian (southern Europe). Here we see almost no trace of German. Since half of John's genetic make-up is from his father (which went father to son to son to son....), we can be confident that John Shugert does not have an original German immigrant coming to America. And since we have some reason to believe that John Shugert (see DNA write-up) shares a common grandparent with me, nor do we.
- E. The *23andMe* results on me are:

French and German	36%
NW Europe	23%
British and Irish	20%
Ashkenazi Jewish	15%
...	...

We know that the 15% Ashkenazi Jewish comes from my mother's side. We also know that, on my mom's side they were in Germany in the late 1800's, so that most of the 36% comes from her (to make up a total of ~50%).

Thus, the **British (20%)** and probably most of the **NW Europe (23%)** is coming from my dad's side. This too suggests the original Shugart ancestor was a non-German.

- F. The Appendix labeled 'Some of my Grandparents' in the book that I wrote shows an abundance of English immigrants. It is reasonable to think that the original Shugarts would have congregated with like-minded people.

G. Finally, the literacy rate in early America was reasonably high. The spelling of our name has never been with the German 'Sch'. In fact, from the earliest records that I am aware of in Concord, PA to the records showing up when the men bought land in North Carolina generations later, we see various spellings, none of which are remotely German. Apparently, 'Sugar' is an English name, based upon a very quick look-around on the internet. Some of the earliest spellings we have are:

Zacharia	Sugert	Concord Twp	1724
Zachariah	Sugar	Concord Twp	1725
Zacharias	Sugart	Concord Twp	1729
Zachariah	Sugar	Concord Twp	1730
Leakery	Shugare	Concord Twp	1732
Jno	Sugar	Concord Twp	1739
John	Shugert	Concord Twp	1740
John	Shugars	W. Bradford Twp	1747
John	Shugers	W. Bradford Twp	1749

This last point doesn't prove we are English, but suggests we aren't German and furthermore, I think 'Sugar' might be a path to follow which might bear some genealogical fruit.

Concluding remarks

I believe it is highly likely that my ancestor, 'Old' John, who was a Pennsylvanian Quaker and was a grandparent to the Cornelius who claimed to be of English descent either came from England or his father came from England. What early records that do exist about the Shugart lines **never** have used the German spelling 'sch' in any of the documents.

If it is true that the two Sheriffs were brothers to my Old John, then they too would be of English descent.

Eric Shugart 4/14/2025