

**THE BIOGRAPHICAL AND
GENEALOGICAL RECORDS
OF THE FITE FAMILIES
IN THE UNITED STATES**

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The Biographical and Genealogical Records of the Fite Families in the United States by
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ELIZABETH MITCHELL STEPHENSON FITE

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Arms of the Vogte of Hessen-Kassel; Frohnhausen and Treysa.

Divided: 1. Azure, a lion, leopardeé, or. 2. Checky argent and gules.

Crest: Wings, antique, sable charged by a disk with the arms of the shield.

Lambrequins: Dexter: or and azure sinister: argent and gules.

+

The
Biographical and Genealogical Records

OF

THE FITE FAMILIES
IN THE UNITED STATES

INCLUDING SKETCHES OF THE FOLLOWING FAMILIES

ARMSTRONG, COLDWELL, DONNELL, LEVERING, MERVINE,
MITCHELL, NEWTON, NORTHCOTT, ODELL, RANDOLPH,
ROBERTSON, SHEPHERD, STEPHENSON, TABB.

1907

COMPILED AND PUBLISHED
BY
ELIZABETH MITCHELL STEPHENSON FITE
102 WEST 93D STREET,
NEW YORK

If a man says that he does not care to know where his grandfather lived, what he did, and what were that grandfather's politics and religious creed, it can merely mean that he is incapable of taking interest in one of the most interesting forms of human knowledge—the knowledge of the details of the past.—"The Spectator."

WISCONSIN
LABORATORY
SYSTEMS

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F54b
1907

MAY 17 1907

TO MY HUSBAND,
CAMPBELL COLDWELL FITE, M.D.,
whose memory of his great-grandmother and her reminiscences,
and of his grandmother, and the notes he
took at her dictation, has made these
records a possibility; and to

MY SONS,
FRANK EVANS FITE,
and
JACOB NORTHCOTE FITE,
do I present this labor of love.

ELIZABETH MITCHELL STEPHENSON FITE

FOREWORD

The beginning of these records was made many years ago, when a great grandmother, at the ripe age of one hundred and more years, used to tell to the little great-grandson at her knee the story of the Revolution as she knew it. She told him of the sweetheart who marched away to fight; who promised to come back and marry her when the war was at an end; then would come the oft-repeated question—"And did he, Granny?"—and the oft-repeated answer—"Yes, he did; and I was the girl, and your great-grandfather was the soldier." This episode of her girlhood occurred in New Jersey, far from the Tennessee home where the little lad lived and where "Granny" rounded out her well-spent days.

"Granny" also told the little lad of his great-great-grandparents, Johannes and Catharine: how they had eloped and come to America from Germany because they knew they would never gain the consent of Catharine's parents to her marriage; Catharine was supposed to have been of noble birth. Told of the voyage over, of the ship with their goods not reaching port; how they spent all they had to sustain them on the long voyage, so that when they reached these shores they went to live with a millwright in Philadelphia, and Johannes learned the trade. All of this and much more besides she told the child, and when a few years later, after her death, he went to visit his grandparents, his grandmother continued the story of his ancestors, beginning where "Granny" Fite had left off. She bade him take pencil and paper and take notes of what she said. This he did, and this paper, written in the boyish hand, is still preserved, and its contents formed the basis for this book.

The original idea was to record only the direct descendants of Johannes Fite and his wife, Catharine; upon mature consideration the decision was made to record the descendants of Henry Fite and Hans Jacob Fite, and all others of the name, wherever found, in the United States. This decision has led to some interesting discoveries, and while the labor of compiling has been very great, it has been equally a pleasure, for it has been the means of bringing to the author many interesting and gracious letters and acquaintances, which otherwise she would have missed.

For all of the kindly interest expressed in this work, the author is most grateful, and sincerely hopes the contents of the book may not be of a disappointing nature to the many kinspeople who have rendered her such valuable assistance, for which she expresses here her very sincere thanks.

ADDENDA.

(280) James^s W. Lee Fite (page 55), died March 31, 1907; interred in Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Nashville, Tenn.

Mary Coldwell Evans, former widow of (276) Captain Jacob^s Cross Fite, C. S. A. (page 63), died April 23, 1907; interred in Willow Mount Cemetery, Shelbyville, Tenn.

INTRODUCTORY

The cost of a voyage from Rotterdam to Philadelphia, during the early years of the German immigration, was \$350 in copper coin, according to Acrelius' History of New Sweden. This amount was for passage alone and did not include food or provide comforts for the passenger; those things he had to provide himself, or pay for, extra. Some of the Germans came with the funds necessary to establish themselves in a new land, while a very large number spent their all for passage and necessities, or perhaps had not even the money to pay for the passage, in which event they bound themselves out to learn some trade in payment for their passage, and they were known as "Redemptioners." Geiser explains that Redemptioners "enjoyed all the privileges and rights of a free citizen," and were "regarded as laborers, at present, bound by contract to perform a specified amount of labor in a given time."

The early Germans were almost universally a religious people. In his "History of the Early Germans of New Jersey" Chambers says that the history of the Germans was largely the history of their churches. They were not only intelligent but were an educated people, and demanded from the start catechists or teachers for their children, and insisted upon an educated ministry. They came to this country, not so much because of religious persecutions, as has been supposed, but because of "the privations and restrictions of their lives at home, which had been caused through their faithfulness to the truth in previous years." They were a peace-loving people; being content to follow their professions, or to cultivate their fields, and "enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty."

The Germans cared little for political offices, but they came to Pennsylvania in such great numbers that their votes became of considerable importance; especially in the election of members of the Colonial Assembly, when, as a rule, they were cast as a unit. Their names appear seldom in the official lists, for the reason stated above, and because of "their almost exclusive use of the German language, which disqualified them from holding office." It was a rare thing for the first generation to learn to speak English; in many cases, to be found to-day, in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the descendants of these people continue to speak German, with but little knowledge of English. The better educated and more ambitious, naturally, had their children taught English, and their teachers and ministers were required to be scholarly men, with a knowledge of several languages. This is by way of leading up to the families, who bear the name used in the title of this book—namely Vogt—anglicized Fite.