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# Biographical Sketch of Jacob Schoff, First Settler of Franconia, New Hampshire

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By Jeffrey S. Bartlett

*The first settlers of Franconia, New Hampshire, were a collection of hearty German immigrants who previously founded Ashburnham, Massachusetts.*

Jacob Schoff the Senior, a master baker from Hornberg, Wurtenburg, Germany, and his family immigrated to America in 1752. His eldest son, Jacob, sailed on the "St. Andrew" reaching Boston on 19 September 1752. His sons Rudolph and Friedrich arrived at Philadelphia on 23 September 1752 on the ship "Ann Alley," and Johann Henrich Schoff, age 13, came in November 1752 on the "Phoenix" with at least one of his parents. Young Johann's name was Anglicized to John Henry Shoaf.<sup>1</sup>

Jacob the younger was born about 1725 in Hornberg, Wurtenburg, Germany. He married Elizabeth Darrow, his German sweetheart, in Boston, in October 1752. Jacob was one of a party of seven German immigrants who purchased land in Lexington in the Province of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1757. He acquired 1,000 acres of land in the plantation known then as Dorchester, Canada, now the town of Ashburnham, in the northern part of Worcester County.<sup>2</sup>

The country north of the White Mountains was the object of speculation by a group of German immigrants from Broad Bay, now Waldoboro, Maine. The naming of Franconia, first chartered in 1764, is evidence that the group planned a settlement there. However, a conflicting charter and adverse conditions stalled that effort. The German settlers from Ashburnham also shared an interest in the Northern lands.<sup>3</sup>

The proprietors of the original Franconia grant failed to act on their obligations for various reasons, and on 8 June 1772, Governor John Wentworth re-granted the Franconia land under the new name of Morrystown so named for Corbyn Morris, one of the grantees. The new grant was more extensive than the original, consisting of 35,000 acres, and included Lincoln, what is now Easton,

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<sup>1</sup> Roxie Sides, *Early American Families: Sides, Spach, Nading, Rominger, Longworth, Foltz, Rothrock, Shoaf, Vogler*, Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Moravian Archives, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> William H. Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff: With an Account of the German Immigration into Colonial New England*, 1910, Revised and Updated by Alvin Schoff Whitmore, Ellsworth, Maine, 1987, page 5. Publication in the possession of the Franconia Heritage Museum, Franconia, New Hampshire.

<sup>3</sup> Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff: With an Account of the German Immigration into Colonial New England*, page 53.

and part of Landaff.<sup>4</sup> After the re-grant, Jacob Schoff became a land representative for a speculator named James Richardson. Schoff had begun selling his land in Ashburnham in 1770, and in 1772, he migrated north to start the laborious task of turning the Northern wilderness into a home. He was joined by several of the Ashburnham Germans; Philip Verbeck went to Haverhill and later Franconia, the Whitemans to Warren, and the Selhams to Thornton and later Stewartstown. Jacob Schoff was also joined by his sons-in-law, Philip Grapes and Aaron Sampson.

The route between Haverhill, New Hampshire, and the cities to the South was well established. Along this route, Jacob Schoff, Philip Verbeck, and Philip Grapes built their homes in Morristown, the first settlement in the Franconia Valley on what is now Route 116.<sup>5</sup> James Richardson had been contacting the proprietors of the grant, and by 1773, had acquired the entire Morristown grant. On 3 November 1773, he sold 500 acres to Jacob Schoff, who had already carefully selected the land.<sup>6</sup> Jacob and his family settled on land where Coppermine Farm, owned by the Hamilton Ford Family, now stands. A plaque placed in a large stone marks the site.



Jacob and his wife Elizabeth had eight children born between 1754 and 1764, most born in Ashburnham. Their firstborn, daughter Elizabeth, married Philip Grapes in Ashburnham in 1767. A deserter from the German Army, Grapes had changed his surname from Chriger to avoid detection. Philip Grapes, his wife Elizabeth, and three young children settled in Morristown with Jacob.

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<sup>4</sup> Phyllis Bond Herbert, *The Early History of Franconia, New Hampshire*, Franconia Area Heritage Council & The Town of Franconia, New Hampshire, Sherwin Dodge Printers, Littleton, New Hampshire, 1987, page 9. Booklet in the possession of the Franconia Heritage Museum, Franconia, New Hampshire.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert, *The Early History of Franconia, New Hampshire*, pages 9-10.

<sup>6</sup> Herbert, *The Early History of Franconia, New Hampshire*, page 10.

Philip Verbeck, an Ashburnham German and a friend of Jacob's, also moved to Morristown along with his wife Lois and at least eight of their children. The Verbeck family settled on Route 116, not far from Jacob.

Schoff divided his 500 acres with his family, presumably keeping 300 acres for himself as he later mortgaged that amount for one thousand pounds. In addition, he purchased farmland in Gunthwaite, now Lisbon. Jacob and his son-in-law Philip Grapes established a busy grain trade with the Army, with Grapes eventually trading some of his lands for "six hundred dollars in wheat at six shillings per bushel."<sup>7</sup>

The Revolution was fast approaching, and the unrest was being felt even in these remote areas. Philip Grapes left his wife and three young children in the care of her father, Jacob Schoff, to enlist in the Army on 14 July 1775 under Col. Timothy Bedel. The regiment marched through the woods into Canada, joined General Montgomery's command, and took part in the siege of St. John's. He returned to Gunthwaite on 31 December 1775 and was discharged, making him the first veteran of Morristown.<sup>8</sup>

In July of 1775, the New Hampshire Council asked for a census of all towns in the Province. Jacob Schoff made out the report for Morristown. The original, in his handwriting, is on file in the New Hampshire State Archives.<sup>9</sup>

| Males under 16<br>years of Age | Males from 16<br>years of age to 18<br>to be included<br>in the Army | All males<br>above 18<br>years of age | Persons sent<br>to the<br>Army | All<br>Females | Slaves<br>and<br>Indians | Total |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------|
| 10                             | 5  | 0                                     | 1                              | 13             | 0                        | 3     |

3 Guns 3 and 1/2 of Powder  
10 Pounds of Lead and 20 flints

The Above ~~is~~ is an exact Account of the Souls  
that belong to Morristown of Arms & Ammunition  
Signed Jacob Schoff

Lond<sup>on</sup> Sep<sup>r</sup> 20. 1775  
I then personally appeared the above written Jacob Schoff  
and made solemn oath that the above account is a true  
account of all the souls in Morristown -  
before me - Nath<sup>l</sup> Hovey Town Clerk

<sup>7</sup> Herbert, *The Early History of Franconia, New Hampshire*, page 10.

<sup>8</sup> Herbert, *The Early History of Franconia, New Hampshire*, page 13.

<sup>9</sup> Herbert, *The Early History of Franconia, New Hampshire*, page 12.

The 1775 Morristown census is transcribed as follows:

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| <i>Males under 16 years of age</i>                                 | 10    |
| <i>Males from 16 years of age to 50 inclusive, not in the Army</i> | 5     |
| <i>All males above 50 years of age</i>                             | 0     |
| <i>Persons gone in the Army</i>                                    | 1     |
| <i>All females</i>   | 13    |
| <i>Negroes and slaves for life</i>                                 | 0     |
|  | ----- |
|  | 29    |

*3 Guns, 3 lb. and 1/3 of powder  
10 Pound of Led and 20 flints*

*The above is an exact Account of the Souls  
that belong to Morristown and of Arms and Ammunition*

*[Test] Jacob Schoff*

*Landaff, 20 September, 1775*

*Then parsonally appeared the above writen Jacob Schoff  
and made Solom oath that the above account is a true  
account of all the Souls in morristown*

*before me Nath<sup>ll</sup> Hovey - Town Clerk*

The five males aged 16 to 50 were Jacob Schoff, Sr., Jacob Schoff, Jr., Philip Verbeck, Nathaniel Rogers, and Joseph Sinclair. Rogers and Sinclair lived in the section of Morristown that later reverted to Landaff.<sup>10</sup> The one male "gone in the Army" was Philip Grapes.

That same year, Jacob's youngest daughter, Katherine, died at the age of 16. Her grave has not been found but could be one of the unmarked stones in the Willow Cemetery, the first cemetery established in the settlement. Thus, Katherine was the first death in the town.

Schoff family tradition holds that Jacob and his son John were the first party who penetrated the Notch and made the entire journey from the Merrimac to St. Francis.<sup>11</sup>

Jacob served as a commissary for the troops gathered at Gunthwaite, and as charged, bought and delivered grain for their use. Jacob Schoff, Jr. enlisted and fought in the Battle of Bennington on 16 August 1777. Jacob's second son, John, enlisted with a Massachusetts regiment and served

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<sup>10</sup> Herbert, *The Early History of Franconia, New Hampshire*, page 14.

<sup>11</sup> Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff: With an Account of the German Immigration into Colonial New England*, page 57.

throughout the war, taking part in several of Washington's campaigns. He spent the winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge and is said to have served in Washington's bodyguard.<sup>12</sup>

Morristown had no town officers, no town meetings, and no representative to the New Hampshire Legislature, but Jacob Schoff was the de-facto head of the Morristown group. He took an active role in the territorial disputes of the frontier towns in the New Hampshire Grants along the Connecticut River. He attended a meeting on 10 February 1777 as the delegate from Morristown, protesting the lack of representation in Exeter. At a meeting in Cornish on 11 March 1778, sixteen New Hampshire towns, known as the United Towns, voted to leave their State and join the Vermont Republic. The New Hampshire State Legislature took notice and was not prepared to relinquish all of its Connecticut River towns to a political body that had yet to achieve Statehood. Meshesh Weare, then President and eventually the First Governor of New Hampshire, protested and wrote letters to the Continental Congress and Governor Thomas Chittenden of the Vermont Republic that such action would only delay Vermont's admission to the Union. Under the influence of Ethan and Ira Allen, the Assembly at Bennington voted against admitting the New Hampshire towns east of the River to the Vermont Republic. Technically, if not legally, however, Morristown was part of the Vermont Republic for four months.

In 1779, the United Towns petitioned the New Hampshire Assembly to take over the whole of the New Hampshire Grants. In parallel, they developed a plan for the Northern settlements to join together to form a new State called New Connecticut. However, General George Washington and the Continental Congress intervened again, and the borderlines were re-drawn by 1782. As a result, the United Towns was dissolved, and Morristown was again under the control of the New Hampshire Government.

Jacob Schoff, his family, and the other early Morristown settlers were undoubtedly frustrated with the failure of the United Towns undertaking. Schoff became an activist on the wrong side of an unpopular political issue. However, he felt the need to protect his interests in the face of questionable land grants. In December of 1779, the New Hampshire Legislature disavowed many of John Wentworth's original land grants, returning the rights to the original grantees. A contributing factor, perhaps, was the arrest and conviction of James Richardson for counterfeiting three-pound notes. He was imprisoned in Dover for three years in 1777-1779 while still owning most of Morristown.

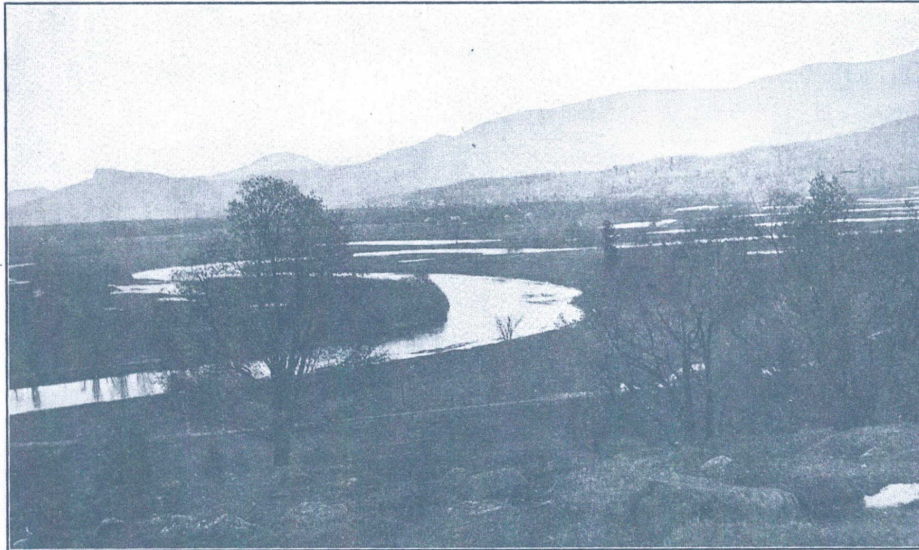
The Schoff and Grapes families quickly sold their homesteads and moved further North. In 1782, Jacob Schoff moved on to North Stratford, New Hampshire, where he farmed the land. He later moved to Maidstone, Vermont, and Brunswick, Vermont, where he died about 1810.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff: With an Account of the German Immigration into Colonial New England*, page 58.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert, *The Early History of Franconia, New Hampshire*, page 16.





Looking eastward across the farm in Maidstone, Vt., owned by Jacob Schoff after 1785. The terrace in the middle of the picture, across the Connecticut River, was the site of his home in Northumberland, N. H.

The date that the land grant controversy was finally settled is unknown. However, the tax books of the New Hampshire treasury first mention Morrystown in the year 1777, and Franconia is not named from the year 1775 to 1781, inclusive.<sup>14</sup>

#### GENEALOGY OF JACOB SCHOFF<sup>15</sup>

1. JACOB SCHOFF, the first settler of Franconia, was born about 1725 in Hornberg, Wurtenburg, Germany. He came to America in 1752 and married in Boston in October 1752, ELIZABETH DARROW.

Children of Jacob and Elizabeth:

- i. Elizabeth b. 1753, Boston, Massachusetts; m. Philip Chriger Grapes 30 July 1767; d. March 1848, Bloomfield, Vermont. She m. (2) James Rider.
- ii. Lena, b. 1754, Boston, Massachusetts; m. Aaron Samson 9 November 1768.
- iii. Jacob, b. 2 May 1756 (See 2).
- iv. Katherine, b. 6 July 1759, Ashburnham, Massachusetts; d. 1775 Franconia, New Hampshire. Hers was the first death in Franconia.
- v. John, b. 15 August 1761; m. Priscilla Chase.
- vi. Daniel, b. 26 August 1764 (See 3).
- vii. Henry, b. 9 August 1766 (See 4).
- viii. Isaac, b. 1768 (See 5).

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<sup>14</sup> Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer of Grafton County, New Hampshire, 1709-1886*, Syracuse, New York, June 1886, page 266, History of Franconia, NH, [http://www.nh.searchroots.com/documents/grafton/History\\_Franconia\\_NH.txt](http://www.nh.searchroots.com/documents/grafton/History_Franconia_NH.txt); accessed 29 September 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Wilfred Schoff, *The Schoff Genealogy*, Philadelphia, PA, 1910; Thompson, Jeannette R., *The History of Stratford, NH, Concord, NH, 1925*.

## SECOND GENERATION

2. JACOB SCHOFF, JR. (Jacob) was born in Lexington, Massachusetts 2 May 1756. He moved to Franconia with his father in 1773. On 14 February 1780, at the home of Nathan Caswell, known as the first settler of Littleton, New Hampshire, he married ANNA FRENCH, daughter of John and Anna (Haines) French. Anna was born in Maidstone, Vermont 18 July 1759, and died in Northumberland, New Hampshire in 1848. Jacob and Anna lived in Franconia for two years before moving to Northumberland. Jacob died 17 January 1848 in Northumberland.

Children of Jacob, Jr. and Anna:

- i. Haines French, b. 15 December 1780 (See 6).
  - ii. Fanny, b. 21 Jul 1782, Franconia; d. next day.
  - iii. Fanny A. b. 18 September 1783, Northumberland; m. 10 April 1805 Rich Stevens; d. 4 October 1874.
  - iv. Eli, b. 9 December 1784; m. Eliza Gardner of Louisiana.
  - v. Anna, b. 30 August 1786; m. 25 February 1814, Edward Smith, d. 1851
  - vi. Jacob, b. 17 July 1788, Stratford, New Hampshire; d. in infancy.
  - vii. Abijah French, 6 February 1791, Maidstone, Vermont; m. Anna Pratt, d. in Michigan. He m. (2) Mrs. Nancy Seymour.
  - viii. Orpha, b. 6 July 1792, Stratford, New Hampshire; d. next day.
  - ix. Ahaz, b. 3 March 1794; d. in infancy.
  - x. Sarah, b. 17 September 1795; m. Martin French.
  - xi. Orpha, b. 14 April 1797; m. John Cargill.
  - xii. Jacob, b. 22 January 1800, Maidstone, Vermont; m. Mary Chase, d. 1859 Birmingham, Ohio. He m. (2) Sallie \_\_\_\_.
  - xiii. Horatio Nelson, b. 30 June 1802; never married; d. 1872.
  - xiv. Elmina, b. 27 February 1806; m. Victory Gamsby.
3. DANIEL SCHOFF (Jacob) was born 26 August 1764 in Ashburnham, Massachusetts. He lived in Franconia as a child and moved to Vermont with his father. He married there, LUCY MERRILL. He died in Maidstone, Vermont, in April of 1843.

Children of Daniel and Lucy:

- i. Jeremiah, b. 28 April 1787; m. Sophia Woodbury; d. New York.
- ii. Elizabeth, b. 10 March 1789; d. 14 August 1791.
- iii. Nancy B., b. 17 December 1791; m. John Cummings; d. in Michigan.
- iv. Ruth, b. 4 October 1793; m. John Ameyl d. Michigan.
- v. Lucy, b. 23 January 1796; m. Hardin Willard.
- vi. Sarah, b. 23 Jun 1799; m. Bishop Lamkin
- vii. Daniel, b. 17 Jul 1801; m. Annie Lamkin
- viii. John, m. 1 October 1805; m. Fannie Lamkin; d. Compton, Que.; he m. (2) Mrs. Eliza T. Lyford.

4. HENRY SCHOFF (Jacob) was born 9 August 1766 in Ashburnham, Massachusetts. He lived in Franconia and moved north with his family when they re-settled. He married about 1787 MARY FRENCH, daughter of John and Anna (Haines) French. She was born 25 April 1766 and died 8 December 1820 in North Stratford, New Hampshire. After her death, Henry married Lydia Hilliard, widow of Timothy Bailey. He died in North Stratford 27 December 1838.

Children of Henry and Mary, all born in Northumberland:

- i. Henry, b. 17 August 1788; m. Mary Hurlburt.
- ii. Catherine, b. \_\_; m. Nathan Baldwin.
- iii. Mary, b. 18 May 1793; m. George Kimball.
- iv. Seneca A., b. 29 November 1794; m. Susanna French.
- v. Elizabeth, b. 1796; m. Warren Bennett.
- vi. Hazen, b. \_\_; d. young.
- vii. John Warren, b. 18 January 1801; m. Clarissa Center.
- viii. Thomas Jefferson, b. 24 November 1803; m. Sally R. Washburn.
- ix. Berenice, b. 26 May 1807; m. George Blake.
- x. Edward Hudson, b. 1808; m. Anne Washburn.
- xi. Daniel Brainerd, b. 30 Nov 1810; m. Anna Stevens.
- xii. Emily, b. \_\_; m. John S. Lyman, Columbia, New Hampshire.
- xiii. Clarinda, b. \_\_; m. Dr. B. Franklin Hatch.

Children of Henry and Lydia:

- xiv. Jane, b. 16 September 1823; m. John Partridge.
- xv. Annie, b. 1828; d. 25 January 1846, North Stratford.

5. ISAAC SCHOFF (Jacob) was born in 1768 in Ashburnham, Massachusetts. He lived in Franconia as a boy and was married about 1789. His first wife's name is unknown. He married his second wife, Amarilla Fuller, in 1801. She was born in 1780 and died in Stratford in 1821. Isaac died in a log jam on the Connecticut River.

Child of Isaac and his first wife:

- i. Henry D., b. Jun 1790; m. Tamson Lamkin; d. 7 April 1877.

Children of Isaac and Amarilla, born in Maidstone, Vermont:

- i. Hiram, b. 8 April 1802; m. Rebecca Brainerd; d. 18 June 1830.
- ii. Amarilla, b. 22 January 1804; m. James Waldron.

### THIRD GENERATION

6. HAINES FRENCH SCHOFF (Jacob, Jacob) was born on 15 December 1780 in Franconia. He was the first Schoff child born here. He went north with his family and was married 30 April 1804 to LOIS WEBSTER. She was born in 1785 and died 12 May 1852. Haines died 25 November 1851 in Brunswick, Vermont.

Children of Haines and Lois:



- i. Orlando, b. May 1805; m. Harriet Johnson.
- ii. Amanda P., b. 20 May 1807 in Brunswick, VT; d. 12 July 1897; m. Abdial Blodgett.
- iii. Fanny S., b. 15 November 1809 in Brunswick; d. 30 August 1881 in Wisconsin; m. Selden Burbank.
- iv. Daniel H., b. 17 January 1812; m. Fanny Stevens.
- v. Martha P., b. 1814; m. 25 December 1845, Milton Cook.
- vi. Anna F., b. 1818; d. Sep 1847.
- vii. Abijah P., b. 1820; d. young.
- viii. Rollin, b. 22 April 1822; d. 4 December 1843.
- ix. Julia Lois, b. 12 August 1826; m. George Blodgett; d. 1868

### THE SCHOFF FAMILY IN THE FIRST CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES<sup>16</sup>

The census of 1790, which was taken by the heads of families, provided an opportunity to verify town and family records. The returns of the Schoff family are as follows:

|  | Males<br>Over 16 | Males<br>Under 16 | Females |
|--|------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Orange County Vermont                        |                  |                   |         |
| Maidstone Town (total 125)                   |                  |                   |         |
| Schoff, Daniel                               | 2                | 1                 | 2       |
| Schoff, Isaac                                | 1                | 1                 | 1       |
| Schoff, Jacob                                | 1                | 1                 | 1       |
| Samson, Aaron (husband of Lena Schoff)       | 1                | 2                 | 1       |
| Brunswick Town (total 66)                    |                  |                   |         |
| Grapes, Philip (husband of Elizabeth Schoff) | 1                | 2                 | 3       |
| Grafton County, New Hampshire                |                  |                   |         |
| Stratford Town (total 144)                   |                  |                   |         |
| Shuff, Jacob (probably Jr.)                  | 1                | 3                 | 3       |
| Essex County, Massachusetts                  |                  |                   |         |
| Bradford Town (total 1,371)                  |                  |                   |         |
| Shuff, John                                  | 1                | 2                 | 2       |

The omission of Henry Schoff may be because he was not yet in a home of his own, although married and having at least one child. He was possibly enumerated in the household of his brother Daniel, his father-in-law, or somewhere else.

<sup>16</sup> Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff: With an Account of the German Immigration into Colonial New England*, page 77.