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### Matthew Salfner

Roddy J. Hatch II

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MATTHEW SALFNER

HISTORICAL METHOD 300

DOCTOR WARLICK

RODDY J. HATCH, III

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Armstrong Atlantic State University. Savannah, GA 31419-1997.

Matthew Salfner was born November 20, 1737. His parents, Matthias Salsner and Agnes Zerner, moved to this country in 1752 from Wurttemberg, Germany, with a group of Protestant immigrants led by Rev. Christian Rabenhorst. They settled in the White Bluff district and had four children , Matthew being the eldest. He grew up and settled in the White Bluff district, also, on 100 acres granted to him through the English Crown grant, granted December 4, 1759. A planter, he married Dorothy Gnann of Effingham County. He and Dorothy hadf four children including Matthew III, John Isaac, Susan and Ann. Matthew died March 13, 1806. Dorothy died March 27, 1847.

So far I've found a direct desendant of both Matthew and John Isaac, William Herring and Gordon Smith, respectively. I've also located the family cemetery immediately across Abercorn from Armstrong on the edge of the woods. A little more research [this is only a brief sketch of the info I have] and my paper will be ready to roll.

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Roddy J. Hatch III

In each generation there are a few people who live spectacular, glamorous lives while the rest of the people must be contented working steadily day in and day out. In the late 1700's Matthew Salfner led the life of the average man. The following is an account of his ancestry, where he lived, his direct descendants, his occupation and how he fit into the community.

Matthias (Mathias or Matthew) Salfner (or Salsner, Salszer, etc.) was a blacksmith of Moergesletten, in the Dukedom or Province of Wurttemberg, Germany. He married Agnes Margaretha Zanner, who was born on 12 April 1712 in the court jurisdiction of Heydenhiem, Moergesletten. She was the daughter of attorney Mathias Zanner and his wife Anna. Matthias Salfner and his wife and children sailed to Georgia in 1752, being among those who came as "a colony of emigrants from Wurttemberg" led by the Rev. Christian Rabenhorst. The Salfners settled in the White Bluff district of what is now Chatham County, Georgia, where Matthias and Agnes were alive as late as 1763. The

present-day "Salfner Tract" of land in Chatham County is named for Matthias."<sup>1</sup>

Matthew Salfner II was born in Moergesletten, Germany on November 20, 1737. He was one of four children who came to America with his parents. He had two brothers, George Lionhart (17 June 1739 - 1754 or 55) and Jacob (6 September 1745 - ? ), and a sister, Anna Margaretha (24 October 1740 - ? ) who married George Nungazer in 1777.<sup>2</sup> The Nungazer's played an intricate part in the Salfner family as you will see.

Matthew's brother, George, supposedly "wandered away from home one day and was never seen again"<sup>3</sup>. I found nothing more on Jacob or Anna other than her marriage to Nungazer.

Near the end of the Revolutionary War Matthew married Dorothy Gnann of Effingham County (formerly St. Matthew's Parrish), daughter of Jacob and Mary Margaret Gnann III.<sup>4</sup> They had several children including Matthew III (1797-1832), Jacob Salfner (1796-1813), Ann Salfner (21 January 1799 - 21 December 1865) , John Isaac Salfner (22 July 1802 - 20 November 1840), Susannah Salfner (1791-1853) and two other

children the names of which are unknown.<sup>5</sup> Some of these children married into the Nungazer family. Matthew III married Mary M. Nungazer on March 1, 1823 ; Ann Salfner married Daniel E. Nungazer on May 14, 1816 ; Susannah Salfner married George Nungazer, (I'm not sure if he is the son of the George Nungazer that married Ann Margaretha Salfner) on June 11, 1807 and after his death in 1814 Susannah married Nathaniel Nungazer on September 5, 1816.<sup>6</sup> and <sup>7</sup> These ties come from the sparse population in the early settlement and the bonds that developed between neighboring families.

On December 4, 1759 Matthew II was granted 100 acres of land in the Township of Vernonburgh, Christ Church Parrish under the rule of King George II. The land was surveyed on September 7, 1756 and located as follows:

Bounded on the north by Frederick Keifer, east by Lots of Vernonburgh [Nungazer land], south by John Chapman, west by Frederick Family Plantation. The Plantation shows the 100 acres to be in two 50 acre tracts separated by the land of Adam Ordner.<sup>8</sup>

On September 14, 1784 Matthew II bought 59 acres in the Ogeechee district from William Moore.<sup>9</sup> Other than this purchase it is unknown to me when or how Matthew II accumulated the land holdings sold upon his death.

On November 6, 1821 Matthews estate was sold both to his family and at auction. Dorothy (Gnann) Salfner bought 50 acres for \$400 in the White Bluff District; Matthew Salfner III bought 50 acres at \$120 in the White Bluff District [this accounts for the 100 acres granted in the Land Grants]; Matthew Salfner III bought 120 acres in the same White Bluff District for \$400; Adam Cope bought 59 acres in the Ogeechee District for \$134; John Haupt bought 350 acres in Bryan County for \$61.<sup>10</sup>

The Most important aspect of Mathew Salfners land holdings to this class, the History department and to all of Armstrong State College is that Matthew Salfners' land is now Armstrong State's campus. Though I could not locate a map of Dutch Town [The German settlement on the Vernon River], in an interview with G.B.Smith, direct descendant of John I. Salfner, he informed me that the remains of the

Salfners' family house, several graves and possibly a water well are in the wooded area across from Armstrong, bordered by the roads Burkhalter (formerly Dutchtown road), Abercorn and Middleground.<sup>11</sup>

Matthew Salfners personal life is sketchy. He served in the Georgia Provincial Rangers during the French and Indian Wars as a private from June 1759- May 1761 and reenlisted in November of the same year to February 1762.<sup>12</sup> [Both Matthew III and his son, George Matthew Salfner, served in the Georgia Hussars].

But when the revolution set in I could find no law records (Probate, Superior courts, etc.) or land deeds of Matthew Salfner II.

In 1787, Matthew Salfner reappeared in document. March 17, 1787 Matthews neighbor, David Fisher, charged Matthew with Slander in Superior Court. The jurors ruled in favor of the defendant.<sup>13</sup>

Matthew II was also selected for jury duty in 1791 along with other Dutchtown settlers including George Nungazer,

David Keifer and Jacob Readick.<sup>14</sup> According to G.B. Smith, Matthew did not serve or attend jury duty by telling the courts he was deaf!<sup>15</sup>

Matthew was a planter in the Dutchtown which is a contradiction in terms. Dutchtown is a sandy, swampy area where very little will grow other than, say, scrub oak or wild flowers. But, according to the public notice of the sale of the property of the deceased John I. Salfner, it was quite possible to manage an existence in those times.

"Will be sold, on the 9th of February [1841], about 75 head of stock and beef cattle, 4 head of horses, sheep, hog and goat, plantation tools, house and kitchen furniture, etc.

Also a comfortable house and lot on the Vernon river, an eligible summer residence."<sup>16</sup>

Matthew's family showed nothing out of the ordinary. His wife, of course, kept the house and raised the children. His children were typical children and even appeared in the paper under a notice submitted by Matthew's neighbor, Mrs. Henry Fisher.

Be it known that on Sunday the 6th inst. [sic] that Mrs. Salfner sent her two sons and a Negro boy which I saw myself to pick my grapes and they picked them so clean that they took off about half bushel and picked the vine to peaces [sic] not satisfied with this she sends on thursday following one of her sons and a Negro boy for more myself being sick I sent Mr. Fisher and my son to see if they intended to carry away the vine...<sup>17</sup>

As you can see, Mrs. Fisher was so upset she just wrote the letter with no attention to punctuation or grammar.

Matthew's children seemed to fit into the community rather well as they grew older. They may have even prospered quite well. In an article in the Daily Georgian of 1839, a Mr. Salfner entered his boat in the Vernon River Regatta along with three others. The event was lavish according to the writer and explained that Mr. Salfner finished fourth.<sup>18</sup>

Matthew Salfner was a family man who raised his children and "Departed this life on the 13th instant, at his plantation

at White Bluff, Mr. Matthew Salfner, in the 69th year of his  
age [1861]."

## ENDNOTES

- 1 G.B.Smith, Salfner Genealogy (Savannah, Ga.: Personal research paper), 1.
- 2 Ibid., 3.
- 3 G.B.Smith. Personal Interview. Lawyer and direct desendant of John I. Salfner. May 19, 1988. 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.
- 4 Office of Vital Records for Effingham County.
- 5 Smith, Salfner Genealogy, 6.
- 6 Smith, Interview.
- 7 1840 Census of Chatham County, Georgia ; (Savannah-Chatham Library: Micro film.)
- 8 Hemperly, English Crown Grants In Christ Church Parrish In Georgia, 1755 - 1775. (Savannah-Chatham Library: Reference # 975.8 GC) , 89.
- 9 Deed Book 2L, Chatham Superior Court Land Records Office, 15.
- 10 The Settlement of the Estate of Matthew Salfner II, Probate Court Records, File #'s 78 and 204.
- 11 Smith, Interview.

12 Davis, A Researcher's Library of Georgia History, Genealogy and Records Sources. (Savannah-Chatham Library: Reference #975.8), 50.

13 Superior Court Minutes of 1782-1790 (Superior Court Records, Chatham County Courthouse), 269.

14 Minute Book #2 1790-1793 of Chatham County Superior Court Records. Juror #'s 197, 213, 199 and 215, p. 12.

15 Smith, Interview.

16 Daily Georgian; 24 January 1841, p. 3, col. 2.

17 Colombian Museum and Savannah Advertiser; 22 September 1807, p. 2, col. 3.

18 Daily Georgian; 29 August 1839, p. 2, col. 3.

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