

John William Fulbright

Johann was born on February 6, 1716/17, in Edalak-Scheswig-Hollstein, Germany. He sailed from Rotterdam to America on the ship "Robert and Alice", via Cowes (Isle of Wight, England), arriving in Philadelphia on 3 Dec. 1740. Wilhelm settled near Egypt, in Dutch Cove, Williams Township, in what is now Northampton County, Pennsylvania where he married Christina Schuck and where all ten of their children were born.

By 1765 a wave of emigrants had begun to move down the trail known as the Great Wagon Road. This "road", more like a network of rough trails than a highway, stretched from Pennsylvania to the newly opened frontier along the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The governors hoped to build a buffer of settlers against any future incursions of the Native Americans by offering land at spectacularly low prices and on easy terms to those willing to move with their families to the frontier. Johann Vollbrecht and his wife must have found the promise of this enticing, so sometime in the mid to late 1760s they and their big family joined with their in-laws to travel south.

The Wagon Road led them into North Carolina and to the friendly Germanic colony of the Moravians at Wachovia (now Winston-Salem). Moving on across the Yadkin they were now in the area of the "new lands". The Vollbrechts and their in-laws determined to leave the road here and move upriver on the Catawba toward the foot of the Blue Ridge. Here they took up land on Lyle's Creek, north of today's Conover, NC and settled. This was the far western frontier at the time. Although by 1769 there was a general peace with the Cherokee it is easy to imagine the Fulbright's concerns about the Native Americans living just across the Blue Ridge less than a days walk from Lyles's Creek.

The Americanization to the name from Volbrecht to Fulbright occurred during the period from 1760-1775. Here on Lyle's Creek the Fulbrights found "elbow room" and the freedom to raise their large families as they saw fit. In 1778 and again in 1780, William Fulbright received land grants to more land on Lyle's Creek. In order to receive these grants, he pledged an oath of allegiance to the newly created United States of America. As a result of this oath, he is recognized as a Patriot of the American Revolution.

John William Fulbright and his wife, Christina both died in 1808 in what was then Lincoln County, NC. In his 91 years he had seen much, from his crossing of the Atlantic at the age of 23 he had helped build a life for the family in Pennsylvania. With his departure down the Great Wagon Road with his family he had once again built a community "from scratch" with the help of his extended family of in-laws and many children. In his 73rd year he had seen the birth of a new nation, and in his old age he saw his children and grandchildren go forth to settle that new country.

Respectfully Submitted,
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