

CHAPTER I.

GENESIS AND EXODUS.

THE COONS FAMILY IN EUROPE.

The name Coons is of German origin. It signifies "bold" or "daring". Many forms of the name are found in European records, among which are Kuntz, Kuhns, Koens, Cuntz, Coens, Kuhn, Coon, and Countz. The name occurs most frequently in the Rhenish provinces; but is found also among the records of Prussia, Bavaria, and Austria.

The family which is believed to have furnished the first American progenitor lived in 1714 in Musen, a village in Nassau, part of the then German Palatinate. In the year 1900 the name of Coons was still common in the district.

Definite records of emigration to America disclose settlement at an early date by members of the various Coons families of Germany. John Christopher Kuhn was settled in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 1733. Philip Kuhns was living in Albany, New York, in 1721. Jacob Cuntz arrived in Philadelphia in 1736. His brothers Nicholas and Heinrich came to Pennsylvania in 1742 and 1744 respectively.

It is the Coons family in Musen which is believed to have first settled in America, coming to Virginia. This emigration is discussed in the succeeding section.

AMERICAN ORIGIN.

Prior to 1714 Governor Spotswood of Virginia learned of iron ore deposits in northern Virginia. There were, however, no miners in Virginia. The Governor therefore sought the aid of Baron de Graffenreid, known to the Governor to have come from the iron-mining region of Ger-

many. The Baron had recently come to Virginia from the Carolinas, whence he had fled from the Indians.

From the village of Musen in Nassau and from the village of Siegen in Westphalia, Baron de Graffenreid secured the emigration of twelve families. One of these twelve families was headed by Jacob Coons, sometimes written Countz.

In 1714 the twelve families, together with their own pastor, Henry Haeger, arrived at Virginia. There was some delay over disembarking because of an argument with the ship's captain over the fare; but the Governor compromised the difficulty, and the families landed. Settlement was established on the upper waters of the Rappahannock; and eventually Germantown was established.

One of the early marriages solemnized was that of Joseph Hitt, a son of one of the twelve families, in 1724 to Mary Coons, a daughter of Jacob Coons.

Each of these families was of the German Protestant faith. Later there was dissension between the Lutherans and the Reformed Lutherans.

The records of the family established in Virginia in 1714 by Jacob Coons are unfortunately incomplete to a large degree. The antecedent records were destroyed in the burning of the village church in Musen. Later records were destroyed in the Culpeper Court House during the Civil War.

For the Revolutionary War the Coons family of Virginia furnished several soldiers. For the cause of the Confederacy, among those of the Coons family were Sergeant Geo. D. Coons and G. H. Coons. Both were enrolled in Virginia Cavalry, Stuart's Brigade. G. H. Coons was killed in battle.

The wife of the first American Coons, Jacob, was Kath-

rena. They had issue, Mary and Joseph. The latter was the father of a son named Henry, who in the latter part of the eighteenth century married Mary Ann Allen by whom he was the father of Susan, Martin, and others.

**THE RELATION OF JOHN R. COONS TO THE COONS FAMILY OF
CULPEPER COUNTY, VIRGINIA.**

An effort has been made to establish definitely that John R. Coons, who was born in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1800, was the son of the Henry Coons last named and Mary Ann Allen. The records have not been found.* That John R. Coons was such son seems the probability, however; and for the following reasons:

1. The migration to Tennessee and Kentucky was largely from Virginia. The treaty of 1783 concluding the Revolutionary War and the defeat of the Indians by General Anthony Wayne in 1794 had by this time removed to a large extent the antagonistic influence which England exerted against the colonies among the Indians of Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio. The settlement of these regions by pioneers from Virginia proceeded rapidly after Wayne's victory.

2. The book, "Notes on Culpeper County", written by R. T. Green, and published in Culpeper in 1900, and from which much of the foregoing information is derived, mentions frequently the migration of families and newly married couples to either Tennessee or Kentucky from Virginia.

3. Henry Coons and Mary Ann Allen were married in the latter seventeen hundreds. That they had children is known; but not the names of all of them. John R. Coons was born at a time, 1800, to have made it possible, and

* The Division of Vital Statistics, Department of Commerce, reports that there are no birth records in existence for the City of Lexington at that early date.

under the other circumstances shown, probable, that he was the son of Henry and Mary Ann.

4. The recurrence of the names Henry (in the next generation), Susan, and Mary or Marie (in succeeding generations) is further evidence.

5. It may be mentioned also that Jacob Coons was a miner; that John R. Coons was a miner; that Henry and Samuel of the next generation were miners; and that descendants of Henry and Samuel have been engaged in or educated for that industry.

It is concluded, therefore, that John R. Coons, with whom this narrative really begins, was the son of Henry Coons and Mary Ann Allen and a descendant of Jacob Coons who came to Virginia in 1714.