Funk (Funck)

Funk, a Swiss Mennonite family name, was native to the canton of Zürich, probably in the Kronau district, and was found in the Palatinate in the 17th and 18th centuries. Henry Funk, a preacher of the canton of Bern, was scourged and expelled from Bern about 1671. Records show Mennonite Funks living in places near Heidelberg: Michelfeld 1662, Schaffhausen 1685, Richen 1717, Reihen 1724, Rohrbach 1752, and later in Eppingen 1778, where families of Funcks are listed from that time until recent times. In every generation there have been preachers and elders among the Funks (Funcks). In 1710 Hans Funk was one of the original settlers in what is now Lancaster County, Pa. Pioneer Henry Funck (d. 1760) located in what is now Franconia Township, Montgomery County, Pa. in 1719. A Jacob Funck was living in the Palatinate in 1753. The name Funk has been fairly common among South German Mennonites; Christine Funck of near Heilbronn in Württemberg married the church historian John Horsch (1867-1941). In North America Henry Funk of Franconia served for many years as bishop in the Franconia Conference, and was the author of two books, Spiegel der Tauffe (1744) and a posthumous work, Eine Restitution (1763). His son Christian Funk (1731-1811) was a Mennonite minister in the Franconia Conference (1756-?) until the Funk schism, when he was excommunicated with his uncle Christian; he later served as a minister in the Virginia Conference of the Mennonite Church (MC), having moved to Virginia in 1786. His son Joseph (1778-1862) became "the father of song in northern Virginia," among the Mennonites by establishing his music publishing house, which later became Ruebush, Kieffer and Co., at Singers Glen in Rockingham County in 1847. One of the most prominent descendants of Pioneer Henry Funck was John F. Funk (1835-
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1930), who was born in Bucks County, PA but who did his lifework in Elkhart County, IN. Launching the *Herald of Truth* and its companion *Herold der Wahrheit* in 1864, Funk was soon a powerful influence in the Mennonite Church. He was ordained as preacher in 1865 and as bishop in 1892. He organized the Mennonite Publishing Co. in Elkhart, IN in 1875. The Mennonite Publication Board bought Funk's publications in 1908 and the *Herald of Truth* was merged with the new *Gospel Witness* to form the organ of the MC denomination, the *Gospel Herald*. There have been numerous other ministers named Funk among the North American Mennonites. Mention should also be made of Isaac Kauffman Funk (1839-1912) of Funk, Wagnalls, and Co., who was of Mennonite descent. The founder of the noted Funk Hybrid Corn Company of Bloomington, IL, was a son of a Mennonite formerly in Baden-Württemberg.

The name Funk (Funck) was also found in West Prussia, appearing in all Frisian as well as in the Old Flemish congregations. At Danzig it has been mentioned since 1674. In 1776, 15 families of this name were counted (without Danzig), and in 1935 there were 35 persons (including Elbing). Stephan Funk was a prominent 18th-century Prussian Mennonite minister. In 1953 seven Funks were serving as Mennonite ministers in Canada, five in the United States, and seven in Paraguay. A principal center of the Funk family is Hillsboro, KS, where 37 were listed in the 1949 telephone directory.

As of 1956 the relation between the Prusso-Russian Mennonite and Swiss Mennonite Funk families had not been clarified, but it seems probable that emigrants from Switzerland, South Germany, or Moravia carried the name to Danzig, since the name is not otherwise found in Holland or North Germany. One theory holds that the West Prussian Funks derive from Hutterite immigrants from Moravia. The name appears in the Thorn area in 1700. Another theory holds that they derive from Swiss Mennonite immigrants to Lithuania. The Waterlander (also called Frisian) congregation of the Kleine Werder near Elbing, which was formed directly of immigrants from Lithuania in 1732, had several Funck preachers: Peter Funck, after 1755, and Adam Funck, after 1751.