

RUSH HUDSON LIMBAUGH, III

January 12, 1951-February 17, 2021

Love him or hate him, the American people knew who he was, and what he stood for.

What folks may not be aware of is his family's connection with the Starnes family. Limbaugh was a direct descendant of Captain Conrad Hise, the officer who assumed command of the unit of Captain John Starnes, following Starnes' death in the Revolutionary War. This was a cavalry unit that participated in the disastrous Battle of Camden, South Carolina (Gates' defeat) on August 16, 1780.

The horror of this battle is captured in the testimony of Conrad Hise given in support of the pension application of John Wentz (who married Captain Starnes' daughter, Catherine) on November 13, 1802:

Conrad Hise says on his oath that he saw the said John Wentz between Rughlas Creek [Rugeley's Creek] and the Battle Ground, but somewhat nearer the Battle Ground than the Creek and saw him walking or limping along the Road and his clothing round his knee was bloody. Hise asked him if he was wounded, Wentz made no answer. Mr. Hise asked him again and again but made no answer but limped along the road without any reply. Mr. Hise told him to clear himself, the Light Horse was just upon him. Hise then cleared himself and left John Wentz there in the road.

Conrad Hise and John Starnes married sisters, Sophia and Margaret Speck (Specht), daughters of David (Dewald) Speck, who obtained land in the Mount Pleasant North Carolina area in 1762. Conrad's daughter, Mary Margaret Hise (born ca 1773) married Henry Limbaugh on December 5, 1793 in Cabarrus County, North Carolina. Henry Limbaugh is found in the 1800 Census for Cabarrus County, but by 1815, is shown in the tax list for Cape Girardeau County, Missouri as owning 225 acres of land. Cape Girardeau County, in the southeast corner of Missouri, located upon the Mississippi River, is where this branch of the Limbaugh family has resided ever since. Rush Limbaugh was born and raised in Cape Girardeau.

Through the Speck family, Rush Limbaugh was related to all of the descendants of Captain John Starnes. This includes the Union County, North Carolina branches of the family, descended from Frederick Starnes and Catherine Wentz, and the Buncombe County branch of the family (John Starnes, Jr.). In addition, John Starnes, Jr. married Mary Etta Hise, who was the daughter of George Hise, brother of Conrad Hise, creating a Hise link, as well as a Speck link to the Limbaugh family.

There are a number of additional links between the Starnes/Hise/Limbaugh families, which are too remote to discuss in the context of this article.



Photograph taken at a judicial conference in Dallas, Texas. Shown in the photograph are Stephen N. Limbaugh, Jr. (now a federal judge in Missouri), Mark Martin, Chief Justice of the State of North Carolina, and Sanford L. Steelman, Jr., judge on the North Carolina Court of Appeals. Stephen Limbaugh was the first cousin of Rush Limbaugh.

Sanford L. Steelman, Jr.

This is an expanded version of an oral presentation given at the last STA reunion in 2019, prior to the death of Rush Limbaugh.