

Dechert Family

Pickaway County Genealogical Society News Letter

A Chapter of The Ohio Genealogical Society

Dechert Family Descended from Peter Dechert of Germany

By ROBERT T. PONTHEIU

The first Dechert in America was Peter Dechert. He was born November 9, 1736 in the city of Darmstadt, state of Hesse, Germany. He emigrated from his homeland in the Platinate, from the port of Rotterdam, Germany, arriving in Philadelphia on the ship "Neptune," under Captain Waire, on September 30, 1754. It is believed that all Decherts in the United States are descended from Peter Dechert.

On arriving, Peter Dechert located first in the Schukill valley and then to Cumru¹ Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania (near Reading) where he purchased a farm of 185 acres and later the hotel at Sinking Springs in 1768. Peter married in 1760 and he and his wife, Elizabeth, raised a family of seven boys: George, born 1762; John, born Nov. 23, 1764; William, born c 1766; Jacob, born Apr. 22, 1767; Peter, born 1769; Michael, born c 1771; Daniel, born c 1773.

Peter Dechert and his family were eminent in public affairs in both Colonial and Revolutionary days. As the Revolutionary war began, Peter raised a company from Berks County of which he was commissioned Captain on January 5, 1776. His company was incorporated in the Fifth Battalion under Colonel Robert Magaw and took part in the campaigns of Long Island and Fort Washington. They were defeated due to the treachery of Adjutant Demonte, and Fort Washington was captured on November 16, 1776, by British General William Howe. Captain Peter Dechert was among the prisoners taken by the British. He was later paroled and resigned from the service on February 1, 1777. After his resignation from the regular service, Captain Dechert became an officer of the Berks County Militia and was commissioned a major of the Fourth Battalion on May 17, 1777. He died December 9, 1783, at the age of 47 on his farm in Cumru Township and was buried there. He died intestate and letters of administration were granted to his widow, Elizabeth Dechert, on March 29, 1784.

(In perspective, the lives of Peter Dechert and George Washington illustrate the period in which Peter Dechert lived. George Washington was born February 1732 and so was about four years older than Peter. Washington married Martha Custis on Jan. 6, 1759, and was named Commander in Chief of the Continental Army June 15, 1775. It was during this period that Peter Dechert began to raise his company. The first outbreak of the American Revolution and the war of Independence began April 18, 1775, with Paul Revere's famous ride at Lexington to warn of the British approach. The Continental Congress passed the Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776. War continued until the British agreed to recognize independence of the Colonies in March 1782, which was ratified by Congress Jan. 14, 1784. Peter Dechert, who strongly believed in independence, lived just long enough to see this independence realized. His son, Peter, the subject of this study, was 15 at Independence and 20 years of age when George Washington was elected the first president on Apr. 30, 1789.)

Peter Dechert, the fifth son of Captain Peter Dechert, was born in Berks County, Pennsylvania in 1769. George and John Dechert remained in Berks County and raised families who generally remained in Pennsylvania. Jacob married Lucy Spycker of Reading on April 6, 1794, and also remained in Pennsylvania. Michael married Elizabeth Spycker, sister of Lucy, on Jan. 6, 1793, in Berks County. In the late 1790's, William, Peter and Michael all removed to Washington County, Va.² where they farmed. About 1800, Peter married Margaret (?) and all of their children were born in Virginia. They had seven known children: two boys and five girls. They were: Peter, born 1800; Rebecca, born 1805; Elizabeth, born 1807; William, born Feb. 9, 1809; Rachel, born 1811; Jane, born 1813; and Esther, born 1814. In 1820, Peter and Margaret, their children, and Peter's brother, William, removed from Virginia to Pickaway County, Ohio.

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where Peter purchased several hundred acres one half mile west of Genoa³ in the township of Scioto⁴. The wagon journey from Virginia was very difficult and along the way Margaret broke her leg. On arriving, they stayed at the home of William Miller in the northwest part of Scioto Township until a log home could be built and clearing of the land could begin. Peter's older brother, William, lived with them and died in 1830, unmarried. Other early families from Virginia to settle in Scioto Township were the Coontz, Beavers and Gochenour. Two of Peter's daughters, Rebecca and Esther, married Anthony and Absalom Coontz. Another two daughters, Elizabeth and Jane, married William and Elisha Beavers. The oldest son, Peter, married late in life in 1844 to Nancy Ady and died in 1848 without issue. Peter died at his home on March 18, 1840, at the age of 71. His wife, Margaret, died at the age of 79 years on January 15, 1843. Both were buried at the Presbyterian Cemetery in Scioto Township.

Of the two sons of Peter and Margaret Dechert, the youngest was William Dechert who was born in Virginia on Feb. 9, 1809. He was 11 years of age when he made the difficult journey from Virginia to Ohio with his family. He worked with his father on the farm growing wheat and corn. Then when he was 26 he married Anna VanVickle on Apr. 2, 1837, in Pickaway County. His father deeded a portion of his farm to William and he built a home for he and his new wife. Anna was the daughter of Absalom VanVickle and Elizabeth Dulgar. Absalom VanVickel was born in 1787 in Virginia and came with his parents in 1806 to Jackson Township, Pickaway County. He was a soldier in the War of 1812 and in 1819 married Elizabeth Dulgar, born in 1791 in Virginia. They had two children, the oldest being Anna. Absalom VanVickel died in 1863 at the age of 75 and his wife, Elizabeth, died in 1873 at the age of 82. Both are buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery in Scioto Twp. Anna VanVickel was born in Pickaway County on September 20, 1820, and was 16 when she married William Dechert. William and Anna Dechert had 10 children, seven of whom reached maturity, four boys and three girls. They were: Elizabeth, born 1838; Peter, born 1840; Absalom, born Jan. 3, 1842; John, born 1846; Daniel Boone, born 1849; Harriet, born 1851; and Alice, born 1856. They lived and worked the farm for almost 37 years. William took sick in the winter of 1873 and died at his farm on Jan. 30, 1874, just shy of his 65th birthday. Anna Dechert was 54 when her husband, William, died, and she stayed at home until 1880 when she went to live with her daughter Harriet, and her husband, Robert Beavers. Anna died September 21, 1910, at the age of 90 and was buried at

Muhlenberg Twp. Cemetery, Darbyville, Pickaway County, Ohio.

Absalom Dechert was the third child and second son born to William and Anna Dechert. He was born Jan. 3, 1842, and was named after Anna's father. Absalom married Delilah S. Beavers on Oct. 1, 1863, in Pickaway County. Delilah, born 1845, was the daughter of James Beavers, born Jun 1807, Ohio, and Delilah Glick, born July 1813, Ohio. James Beavers died Nov. 11, 1851, and his wife died March 5, 1855. James and Delilah were friends of William and Anna Dechert and after their deaths they took Delilah who was ten years of age to live with them. It was in this way that Delilah Beavers and Absalom Dechert met and later married. Absalom and Delilah Dechert had three children: William, born July 28, 1864; Louella, born 1865; and Anna, born 1867 before Absalom Dechert died on August 5, 1867. He was 25 years old and the reason for his death is unknown. He named his first child William after his father. William was about three when his father, Absalom died. Absalom's father, William, was named executor of Absalom's estate since he died intestate. The estate was settled in 1869 and resulted in net proceeds of \$266.39. On March 6, 1869, Delilah remarried to William Morris, born 1841 in Ohio. In addition to the children Delilah and Absalom had, Delilah had children by William Morris. The three children of Absalom and Delilah Dechert retained the name Dechert. Absalom Dechert was buried at the Presbyterian Cemetery, Scioto Township.

William M. Dechert, the first child of Absalom and Delilah Dechert, was born July 28, 1864, in Pickaway County, Ohio. He attended school in Scioto Township and in 1877, when he was 13 years of age, he removed from Ohio with his mother and stepfather and went to Texas. William had inherited land from his namesake grandfather which was settled leaving Ohio. In Texas he was a carpenter and worked for the Denver Railroad as a bridge builder. It was in Weatherford that he met and married Margaret Ann "Maggie" Darnell about 1889. Maggie Darnell was born February 17, 1864, in Town Creek Township, Lawrence County, Alabama. Her father was William Alfred Darnell born November 26, 1831, in Lawrence County, Alabama, the son of John Darnell, a carpenter, who was born in 1791 in South Carolina and Barberry (?) who was born in 1798 in South Carolina. Maggie's mother was Elizabeth Ann Tucker, born 1831 in South Carolina, the daughter of (?) Tucker and Jane (?), born 1806 in South Carolina. William Alfred Darnell and Elizabeth Ann Tucker were married on Oct. 30, 1851, in Lawrence County, Alabama and had seven children, five boys and two girls. They were: Marion Humphries,

Acquisitions

By CHARLENE WOOLEVER

Edna Tatman — "Looking Back 50 Years," seven pages from The Logan Daily News.

John and Martha Beck — News clippings and obits and Leist scrapbook.

Ruth Montelius — Copy of scrapbook of Harry Montelius.

Miriam C. Briner — Goldcliff Park brochure; "Ohio Landscapes," Winter 1992; Photos of Vieth, Brown Bartley, Pettit, Helwagen, Graumlick, Wood, Howard, Stour, Baker, Lumpe, Turner, Wrightzel, Brinks, Martin, Moore, Rooney, Ruggles, Sealock and Foust. Funeral cards for Pontious, Briner, Coffland, Rooney, Turner, Holland McNichols, and Brungs. Obituaries, Ted Lewis tickets and brochure.

Annabelle Creager — History of Fairfield County and Representative Citizens. Alexander Brown and his descendants, 1764-1916. Two chest warmers.

Walter Knauff — Bertha Seaburn Class Record Book, Williamsport School, 1928-29. Copies of Mary White family mansion on Court Street.

Lillian M. Kenney — Borrer's Corners, a newsletter of the Borrer Family, Vols. 1-30.

Carolyn Weigand — Branches of Berks; Winter 1997, Spring 1997, Fall 1996, Summer 1996, Summer 1995, Spring 1996, Fall 1996. Berks County Genealogy Society Newsletters, Summer 1996, Spring 1996, Fall 1996, March 1962 Pickaway Quarterly.

Raymond and Burla Barr — Ohio Corn Tour photo (1917), brochure, button and list of names.

Beverly Brown — Russell, Overly, Watts, and miscellaneous death and birth records from Ross County.

Mary Grubb and Rose Roundhouse — Jackson-Roundhouse Family History.

George Sowers — Certificates of Merit for Laura Rush, grade card of Laura Rush.

Vera Kraft and Mary Lands — Chart of descendants of David Bowman.

Pauline Clifton — Clifton Clan Chronicle, May 1997.

Elnoma Wilson — Preparations of 1864, scrapbook of

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born 1852; John Henry, born 1854; Alexander Sidney, born 1856; William Henry, born 1859; Susan Katherine, born 1862; Margaret Ann, born Feb. 17, 1864; and Franklin H., born 1868. Margaret Ann or Maggie was the sixth child born. Elizabeth Ann Darnell died in 1868, probably from complications with her last child, Franklin H. Darnell, born March 15, 1868. Following the death of his first wife, William Alfred Darnell remarried on December 24, 1870 to Molly Patrick, born December 10, 1844, in Alabama. Molly was 26 and William was 39 when they married. They had three children, two boys and one girl, the last being born February 1876.

William Alfred Darnell died on his birthday, November 26, 1878, at the age of 47 in Town Creek Township, Lawrence County, Alabama. Following the death of her husband, Molly took her children, her step children, except for the eldest, Marion Humphries Darnell, and her brother Frank Patrick and removed to Weatherford, Parker County, Texas, about 1880. Marion Humphries followed with his family about 1886. Molly died in Weatherford, Texas, on July 12, 1901, at the age of 56. William and Maggie Dechert had nine children, eight of which reached maturity, five boys and three girls. They were: Mary Serena, born 1889; Alvin, born 1891; Etta May, born 1892; Alexander Sidney, born November 5, 1894; Dewey, born 1897; Albert "Jack" born 1899; Earl, born 1902; Ruth, born 1905. A daughter born in 1903 died as an infant. They continued to live in Weatherford until Maggie died March 14, 1917, at the age of 53. Following Maggie's

death, William Dechert moved to Ft. Worth, Tarrant County, Texas, probably to be closer to his children. William Dechert died at his home in Ft. Worth on May 3, 1951, at the age of 86. Both William and Maggie were buried in Weatherford, Texas.

Alexander Sidney Dechert, the fourth child and second son of William and Maggie Dechert, was born in Weatherford, Texas, on Nov. 5, 1894. He likely was named after his mother's (Maggie) older brother, Alexander Sidney Darnell, who also moved to Weatherford from Town Creek, Alabama with the family in 1880. He died in Weatherford May 9, 1930, at the age of 76. Alexander Sidney Dechert married on December 18, 1921, in Ft. Worth, Texas, to Ophelia Ashabranner. They had three children, Doris Ann, Mary Ruth and Alexander Sidney. Alexander Sidney Dechert Sr. lived in Ft. Worth and worked as a butcher. He became sick and died Nov. 18, 1936, at Methodist Hospital, having just reached his 42nd birthday. He was buried at Greenwood Cemetery, Ft. Worth, Texas.

Footnotes

1. Cumru Township pronounced Koom-ru.
2. The state of Virginia included what is now West Virginia which was separated in 1861.
3. The town of Genoa was founded in 1841 and in 1872 the name was changed to Commercial Point.
4. Scioto Township pronounced See-o-tow, sic.

The First Schools in Circleville

Taken From The Democrat Watchman
February 4, 1876

The following account of the schools in Circleville, before the adoption of present Graded System, is from the "History of Circleville Public Schools," now in preparation for Educational Department of Centennial Exposition:

Previous to 1820, according to the recollection of the oldest inhabitant, all the schools held in Pickaway County were sustained entirely by subscription and the only branches taught were reading, writing and arithmetic. The school houses, even in Circleville, were log houses of a single room. These made comfortable by seaming the cracks with tempered clay, and light, by pasting oiled paper over the latticing in the window holes cut through the unhewn logs. Slaps on rude legs supplied sittings, and other slabs along the walls, supported on pins fixed at a proper slope in the logs beneath the windows, were the convenient "writing benches" of that day.

Dilworth's Spellers, Readers and Arithmetic were among the first text books used here, unchanged from before the adoption of our federal currency. The first reading classes began with the New Testament. The introduction, later, of Webster's Speller and the Columbian Orator, helped greatly to a more definite grading of classes. Lindley Murray's works afterwards gave an impetus to improved teaching.

Johnston Hunter was a successful teacher of this earlier time down to 1818. He taught in a log house of the kind described just south of the present market space. In another similar building, not far south of the Present High Street Building, Hans Hamilton kept school. Hugh Hannagan is spoken of as a teacher of excellent parts, but as often partaking too freely of the "liquid hospitality" of the country. Marked improvement in the schools took place after 1820, when teachers of superior class, of professional pride were employed. Of these, we name Hon.

ACQUISITIONS: Continued

obituaries, marriages and items of interest.

Mary Ann Hatfield — "Ancestral Tracks to Clermont & Beyond;" Hutchinson, Abernathy, Shade, Needham.

S. Arthur Hall — Hall papers including receipts, tax papers, letters, turnpike toll receipts, subscriptions, stage coach receipts, road and school receipts and miscellaneous.

James Thorson — Copies of Civil War era letters from William H. Pontius to Catherine Ann Morral of Pickaway County, Ohio.

Joseph Olds, Dr. Edson B. Olds, Dr. M. Brown and Hon. J.C. Groom.

No common schools, entirely free, can be said to have been established here until after the passage of the School Law of 1838. Soon after, the Little Academy was built by the district. It stood beside the Circleville Academy, the best private school here at that time or afterward, and consisted of a single room. By the boys who went to the pay school it was mockingly denominated the "Kitchen School." Pine desks ran around the walls, behind which, raised a step or two above the floor, sat the larger scholars, while the little ones were seated on benches ranged in front upon the floor, and facing the middle of the room. Other District Schools were held in rooms about town wherever they could be had.

Until 1849, male teachers were mainly employed at about \$20 per month. The county examiners tested them by law only in the three R's, but added their qualifications in other branches if they desired to teach them. For such extra teaching the scholars were required to pay.

There were three directors elected by the people. George Gearhart, of whom mention will again be made, was a director from 1838 to 1849. The school funds were derived from the State School tax creating a fund of \$200,000; from township school lands, and from interest on proceeds of "Section 16." No special provision was made for the books or tuition of indigent pupils. The charity of the benevolent afforded some help of this kind. Judge H.N. Hedges, George Gearhart, Esq., and the "Ohio Common School Director" conducted in 1838 by Hon. Samuel Lewis, first State School Commissioner, are the sources of the facts narrated under this topic.

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