The Amish-Mennonite Hertzler family probably originated in Switzerland, although subsequent migrations placed it largely in Germany and America. The earliest Mennonite or Anabaptist Hertzler was Rudolf, shown in the records of Königsschaffhausen in Baden, Germany in 1694. He was born in 1636 in Hinterweil in Canton Bern, Switzerland.

It took some searching to find a place by that name since such a village does not exist in the present-day canton. However, Canton Aargau was once a part of Bern, and investigation by the archivist of the cantonal archives in Bern in 1976 revealed a Hurzeler family from Uerkheim in present-day Canton Aargau. Near Uerkheim was an even smaller hamlet called Hinterweil. This is an area where a few other families of the Anabaptist migrations originated, for example, the Guths and Detweilers.

The Swiss records of birth for the state church are very early. There the name of Rudolf Hurtzeler was found by Dr. Siegrist of the cantonal archives of Aargau. The following was found in the church register of Uerkheim:

Hans Hurtzell in Hinterweil (Uerkheim) 1531-1542, a well-to-do farmer.

Andres Hurtzeler, mentioned in 1566, died before 1620.

Then Andres Hurtzeler changed the spelling (common to add -er to Germanic family names), baptized at Uerkheim, June 14, 1569. He was married 1) Anna Hochuli on April 29, 1611 (5 children; and m. 2) Marie Hupscher on May 31, 1630. Rudolf was a child of the second marriage and was baptized as an infant on May 24, 1635 at Uerkheim.

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Hertzler Family, the same person as the Hiderweyl was a Rudolf Herzler who was a Mennonite also lists nine children including Johannes (b. of a Mennonite Joder family, Hinderweyl, Canton Bern as 1636. The parish record also called Vogelstockerhof, and was long the home 1832). The parish record shows Rudolf's birth at renters for the past twelve years.

16'12, and Rudolf (b. at Laufen near Basel in 1661), Franciscus (1663), Severin (1665), Jakob (1672), and Rudolf (b. at Laufen near Basel in 1677). The other children were born at Königsschaffhausen.

Were these the ancestors of the Mennonite Hertzers? The connection is tenuous, although there is some reason for thinking they were. Two sons of Severin Hirzler of Königsschaffhausen, who was married to Katharina Roth, were Johannes (b. 1693) and Rudolf (b. 1697). Severin was a tailor who lived and died in Baden, but his son Hans was a farmer at Catharinenthal in the district of Pforzheim, further north in Baden, belonging to the same jurisdiction of Baden-Durlach.

What is significant is that Hans was called a Wiedertäufer or Anabaptist. His fellow-Anabaptist was Jacob Kurz at Karlsbogen, and they signed a petition together about a burying ground, recorded in the Generalandesarchiv at Karlsruhe.

Hans Hirzler's daughter, Catharina (b. 1720), married Johann Adam Büchele of Buttingen, district Pforzheim. He was an immigrant to Pennsylvania in 1751. His son, Michael (b. 1742) later married Barbara Zunin/Zug, daughter of Christian Zug, an Amish-Mennonite immigrant of 1742.

Thus there were connections with Anabaptists or Mennonites from Switzerland. The ones who stayed in Königsschaffhausen joined the State Church. But just as in Switzerland, those who moved on were the dissenters or Anabaptists.

There was a Rudolf Hertzler who was a Mennonite living in 1748 at Stockwieserhof in the southern Palatinate in Germany, along with Abraham Rocki, renters for the past twelve years. This farm was also called Vogelstockerhof, and was long the home of a Mennonite Rocki family.

At Rothenhof near Albersweller, not far away was the Christian Rocki family. This surname was spelled Rocki, Rogy, Roggi. If Jacob Hertzler, the immigrant of 1749, was married to Catherine Riegler as his second wife, could he not at least have been a relative of Rudolf Hertzler of Stockwieserhof?

The Hertzlers who live in Germany today largely come from the community of Eppstein, where they located around 1720. Most of them were Mennonite rather than Amish. Yet Rocki was Amish.

Another Palatinate minister, Johannes Hertzler, was at Staff wef west of Eppstein in 1745. There was an Amish minister Christian Joder at Ripperterhof near Ramsen not far away. Possibly the immigrant Jacob Hertzler grew up as a Mennonite and became acquainted with the Amish, especially if Rudolf, his relative, lived with them or was one himself.

The Rudolf Hertzler who lived at Stockwieser could be Rudolf, the brother of Hans (b. 1697), or the Rudolf born at Laufen, Switzerland, brother of Severin (b. 1677).

Since these people moved around a lot, Rudolf could have gone to the Palatinate and then to northern Baden. The Hertzlers who settled at Friesenheim, Gronau, and Eppstein (in the same area) might also be descended from the same family, since it is the only Hertzler family with both Anabaptist and Swiss connections. The Eppstein Hertzler records do not go before 1720. It will remain for later researchers to establish these connections.

Noteworthy Periodical Articles

Andersen, Ann W.F., "Samuel McMullen, A Scotch-Irish Dunkard," Winter 1982-3 Newsletter, Fellowship of Brethren Genealogists, pp.60-73. (FBG, 518 Miller Drive, Elgin, IL 60120)

Bowman, Robert C., "New Information on the Eichenberg (Ikenberry) and Bowman Families," Spring 1983 Newsletter, Fellowship of Brethren Genealogists, pp.4-5. (FBG, 518 Miller Drive, Elgin, IL 60120)


Slaubauch (Slabaugh), John M. "Michael Lauver of Juniata County, Pennsylvania," April 1983 Historical Center Echoes, pp.2-3. A large family genealogy chart on the Lauver family is also available for purchase from Noah Zimmerman, Director of the Historical Center. (Mennonite Historical Center, Star Route, Richfield, PA 17036)

Smith, Clifford Neal, "Pfalzdorf am Niederrhein as a Possible Staging Area for Eighteenth Century German Emigration to America," Winter 1982-83 Genealogical Journal, pp.143-147. (Utah Genealogical Assoc., P.O. Box 1164, Salt Lake City, UT 84110)