

OCCGS REFERENCE ONLY

## LEARNING THE HISTORY OF ANNA CATHARINA RUBY

**By Verna Forbes Wilson**

Verna Forbes Wilson was born in 1921 in Burbank, California. She worked at Lockheed Aircraft in 1942 as a "Rosie the Riveter" and retired from there in 1978 as a military aircraft specifications engineer. She began her hobby of genealogy in 1946 and has not stopped yet. She is a grandmother of five and great-grandmother of three. She has published several short articles over the years, and has compiled a book on the Forbes, Burwell, Whitman and related families.

The 1907 obituary of Anna Catharina Ruby, my paternal great-grandmother, from an old Illinois newspaper, was what started the search that led us back to 17th century Switzerland. It was not only a great tribute to a wonderful woman, but it included so many small details about her family.

Locating her German baptismal records was quite difficult until we realized that the family oral history, which had led us to Alsace Lorraine, was in error.

Discussing that problem with a researcher at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah led us to Pirmasens. We learned that Catharina Ruby was born 14 July 1817 and baptized on 16 July 1817 in the parish of Walhalben, a very rural wooded area not far south of Landstuhl in Germany where there is



18, Mayagruenly in der Weyern  
Walhalben, am 16 des Jaly  
Michael Ruby, Bischler  
und die Tochter Mayagruenly und Sohn  
Catharina Catheina (Mittel),  
am 14 des Jaly geboren den  
14 des Jaly und getauft den 16  
Paul Jean Koelsch  
Catharina  
Tht t, Jacob Mittel, wappelt  
mit des Leygauwale  
2, Catharina Ruby, geborene  
Mittel mit des Leygauwale  
Koelsch.

Figure 1: Parish records of Rieschweiler, Walhalben, Pfalz. FHL #01931256.

### Ruby-Familien in Hochspeyer

Die ersten Namensträger kamen 1714 aus der Schweiz in die Pfalz

wt. Hochspeyer. Zu sieben großen Familien trafen sich in der Gießstätte Maria etwa hundert Angehörige des seit über zweihundert Mitglieder zählenden Hochspeererhauses Ruby, der seit 1854 besteht und alle drei Jahre solche Treffen durchführt.

Der bisher älteste fassbündige Ursprung der Familie Ruby reicht nach Angaben des Vereinsvorsitzenden des Familienvereinandes, Robert Ruby aus Bad Godesberg, in das Jahr 1208 zurück. Im Jahr 1714 stieß die ersten Ruby's aus dem Kanton Bern in der Schweiz in die Pfalz ein.

In der Pfalz gibt es drei größere Ruby-Linien, die Hochspeerer, die Geisenberger und die Neubruckner. In der Bundesrepublik bestehen außerdem noch vereinzelt andere Ruby-Linien. Mitglieder der Hochspeererlinie haben sich in der Schweiz, vier in Frankreich, zwei in Kanada und vier in den USA.

Im Verlauf des Familientreffens werden verschiedene Reden gehalten und eine Fülle von Erinnerungen ausgetauscht. Mit bewundernsem Beifall wurde die prächtige Wappensteinplatte Gertret Kriegshausen begrüßt, die als Geschenk zum Familientreffen verwezt.

Figure 2: Newspaper clipping from Pirmasens area.

now a large American base and military hospital.

Her parents were Johan Michael Ruby and Catharina Mattil. Her birthplace was the mill known as the Weyermuhl near Walhalben where her father was the worker/manager and her maternal grandfather was the custodian. The grandfather, Jacob Mattil, and grandmother, Catharina Koelsch, were her sponsors (Figure 1). It is interesting to note that, although

she was always called Anna Catharine by the family, the baptismal records do not include the name Anna.

Once her baptismal record was found, all of the Ruby family's history began to open up. Correspondence with people in the vicinity of Walhalben was very helpful. An excerpt from Die Geschichte des Muhlen un des Muhlerhandwerks der Pfalz ("The History of the Mills and Mill Workers of the Pfalz") mentions that Benedikt Ruby had been involved in the operation of the mill at Geiselberg in the mid 1700s.

Also a newspaper clipping about the Ruby family in Hochspeyer traced them back to the Canton of Bern in Switzerland (Figure 2).

Microfilm from Geiselberg, Pfalz (Family History Library) includes the 1785 baptismal record of Michael Ruby. It also, separately, lists his parents Johann Jacob Ruby and Maria Elisabetha Schaaf and Michael's younger brother and three sisters. A later parish recorder had made those records much easier to comprehend by appending lists of the families and their offspring

BAP 1-26-1650 UPPINGTON, BERN	
RUBY Benedikt, Müllermeister	Died 11.2.4. 1745 Hochspeyer
SCHAAF Anna Catharina, ~ 11.01.1695 Gei.Müh., + 05.08.1762	
Gei.Müh., (S.375) bzw. (1.ref.KB Waldf.), Wwe.d.Joh.Jacob	
STEIN, T.d.Hanß Caspar SCHAAF. Geiselberger Müller	
RUBY Joh. Daniel, Müller a.d.Gei.Müh., + 20.05.1789 Gei.Müh. (S.34)	
52J. 5M. 8T. alt	
BRÜGEL Maria Eva. + 15.12.1774 Gei. (S.391), 33J. alt	
Susanna	x ? oo 21.11.1780 Wa. (S.286) mit Joh. Henrich LAUDEMANN, Wwer.
Joh. Jacob.	oo 01.02.1785 Gei.Müh. (S.292) mit Maria Elisabetha SCHAAF
Anna Eva	oo 28.04.1789 Gei.Müh. (S.299) mit Joh.Martin KLEIN
Maria Eva	x 04.02.1770 Gei.Müh. (S.67)
Maria Elisabetha	x Nov. 1767 (err.) + 05.12.1770 Gei.Müh. (S.385)
Elisabetha	x 16.08.1771 Gei.Müh. (S.73) + 13.09.1777 Gei.Müh. (S.399)
Maria Catharina	x 25.03.1774 Gei.Müh. (S.86)
RUBY Joh. Jacob, S.d.Joh. Daniel RUBY, Müllermeister a.d.Gei.Müh	
oo 01.02.1785 Gei.Müh. (S.292)	
SCHAAF Maria Elisabetha, T.d.Johannes SCHAAF, Müllermeister	
zu Stein.	
Joh. Michel	x 16.11.1785 Gei.Müh. (S.180)
Anna Maria	x 02.08.1787 Gei.Müh. (S.196)
Daniel	x 20.05.1789 Gei.Müh. (S.213)
Maria Catharina	x 02.01.1793 Gei.Müh. (S.246) + 13.06.1793 Gei.Müh. (S.353) als Maria Elisabetha
Margaretha	x 09.06.1794 Gei.Müh. (S.259)

Figure 3: Recopied church records of Waldfischbach, Pfalz for 1758-1798.

Ges. David Görig, Müllerschreiber,  
wurde im ersten Februar 13. Jahr  
in S. Körper, wo er auch ist. Jahr 13. Febr.  
Görlitzburg. Lebe; im Februar 13. Jahr  
auf Leben, d. ist nicht 6. Februar.

Figure 4: Parish records of Waldfischbach, Pfalz. 1785-1798 FHL #0193205.

written in the modern alphabet rather than the old script. From those lists we were able to also go back another generation to Johann Daniel Ruby and his wife Maria Eva Brugel, parents of Johann Jacob Ruby.

The church records of Waldfischbach, Pfalz for 1758-1798 had also been amended by later typed lists of families showing descendants and were very helpful. The Ruby family was shown starting with Benedikt and ending with the 1785

very helpful because it listed the names and birth dates of those eight children and enabled us to place Johann Daniel's son Johann Jacob, our ancestor, in context as the third child and second son.

Going back to Swiss genealogy to search parish records for Wichtrach parish in Bern turned up a Hans Ruby who had married Christina Hofer on 3 January 1689 at the village of Opplingen. They had five children of whom the eldest was a Benedikt Ruby baptized 26 January

Liffine Biab: Jy: Jacob Mallek Lz.  
you and wife you  
at ejas door  
Maria Liffine

Figure 5: Parish records of Lembrech, Pfalz. 1788 FHL #019393.

birth of Anna Catharina's father Michael Ruby and his siblings (Figure 3).

Those parish records also yielded the 1789 obituary of Johann Daniel Ruby (Figure 4) which described him as being a master miller who, in his first marriage of fourteen years, fathered three sons and five daughters, one son and three daughters of which survived him. His second marriage of thirteen years was childless but he was also survived by six grandchildren.

The IGI (International Genealogical Index) at the Family History Center was

1690. (Those records are on Microfilm #2005824 at the Family History Library.) The fact that the Benedikt mentioned in Figure 2 above was born in Switzerland seems to indicate that this is the same Benedikt Ruby who would have been Anna Catharina Ruby's great-great grandfather.

Because Anna Catharina's obituary also indicated that her father, Michael Ruby, had been in the Napoleonic wars as a young man, we searched diligently for any records on that service but have found nothing thus far. The search did lead, however, to locating his marriage

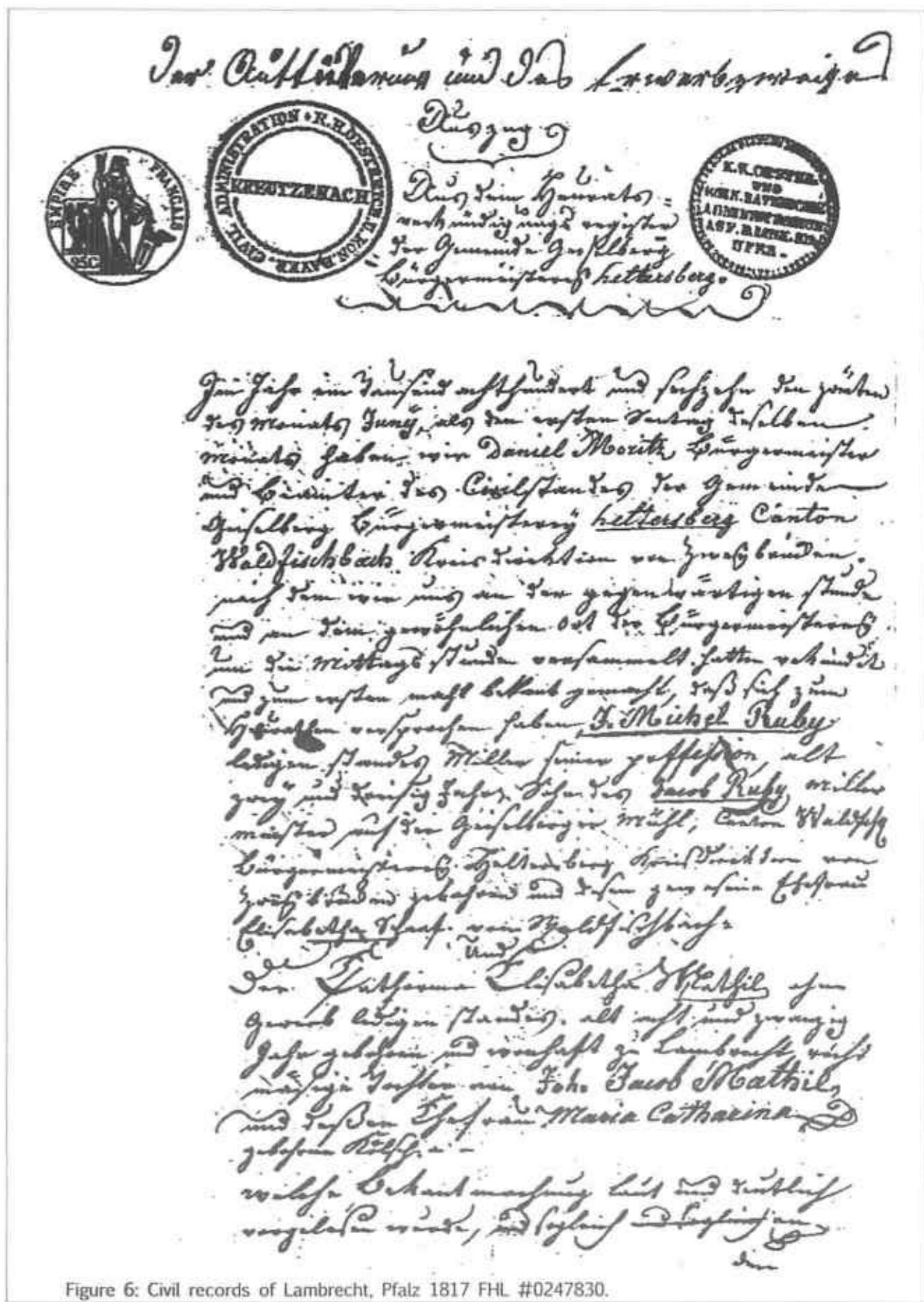


Figure 6: Civil records of Lambrecht, Pfalz 1817 FHL #0247830.

to Catharina Mattil. That took place in Lambrecht, a number of miles east of the mill where Johann Michael worked and Anna Catharina was born.

There we found Catharina Elisabetha Mattil's baptismal records in the Rheinland-Pfalz for the city of Lambrecht (Family History Center) which show that, in 1788, Johann Jacob Mattil was a Burger and Metzger, a butcher, in that city (Figure 5).

(Johann Jacob Mattil and his wife were the same persons who, as shown in Figure 1, sponsored Anna Catharina Ruby at her baptism in 1817.)

It appears that the Mattil family had moved from Lambrecht to the Weyermuhl before Anna Catharina's father met her mother, Johann Jacob Mattil's daughter Catharina Elisabetha. Why they moved and why Mattil's occupation changed from butcher to mill custodian is unexplained.

By the time that Johann Michael Ruby and Catharina Elisabetha Mattil

were married, records in the Pfalz were being written in both French and German. That, in many ways, makes them easier to translate since the French used the modern English type alphabet while the Germans were still utilizing the old German script.

Those 1816 civil records of Lambrecht, Catharina Mattil's place of birth, show that J. Michael Ruby, son of Jacob Ruby of the Geiselberg Mill, parish Heltersberg, Canon Waldfischbach, was married to Catharina Elisabetha, daughter of Johann Jacob Mattil and his wife Maria Catharina, born Koelsch, at Lambrecht on 9 June 1816 (See Figure 6).

Other records in the packet include copies of both Michael and Catharina's birth records and a sworn staemtnt in French from Jacob Ruby that his wife, Elisabetha Schaaf had died on the fifth day of May 1807 around six o'clock in the evening, and that she was the daughter of Johann Schaaf and his wife Elisabetha

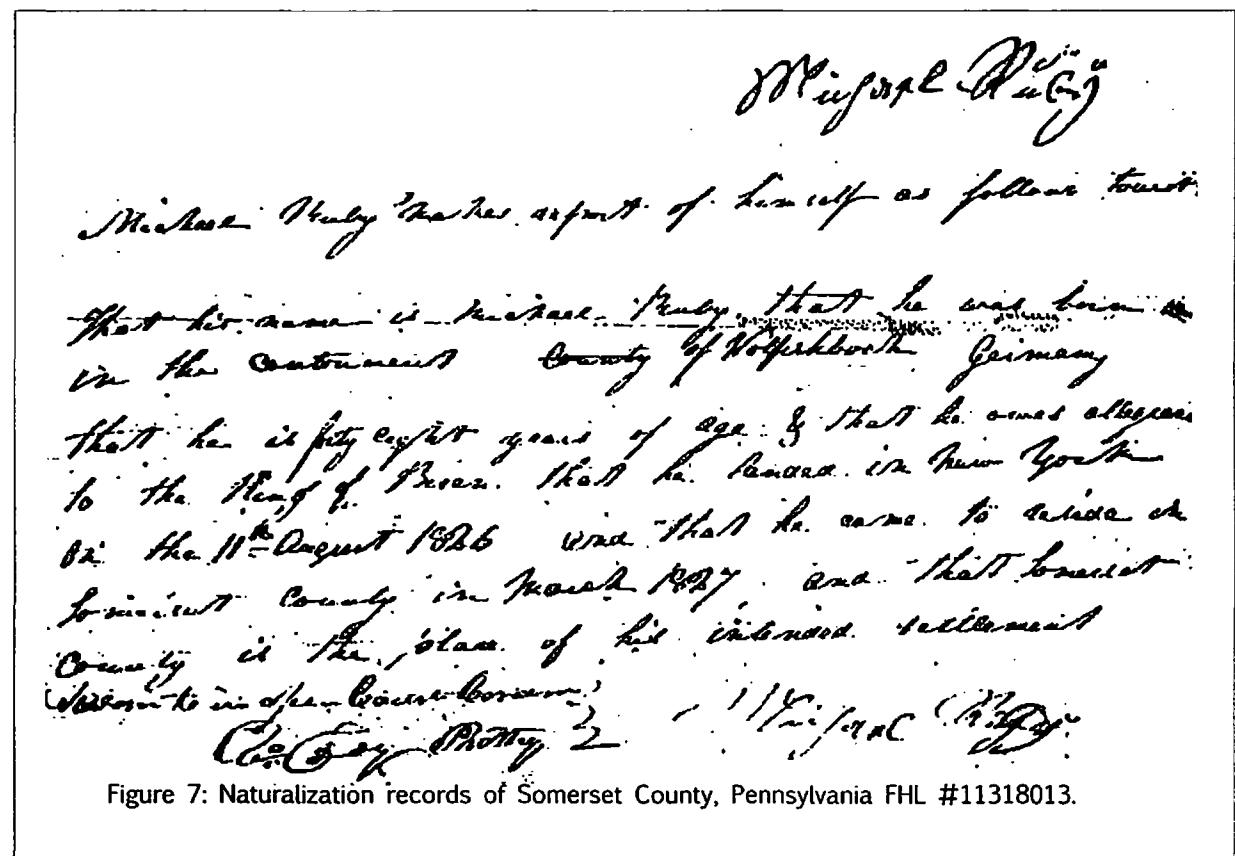


Figure 7: Naturalization records of Somerset County, Pennsylvania FHL #11318013.

Stein. This was required because both father and mother, if living, needed to attest in the civil record to the legitimacy of their children when such children were to be married.

Michael Ruby's family, consisting of himself, wife, daughters Anna Catharina, Anna Maria and Elisabetha and infant son Michael emigrated to the United States in 1826. Unfortunately, there is no record known of the ship on which they traveled. The only record of their ship is contained in a statement which was part of Michael's application for citizenship (Figure 7).

At the time of their arrival here, family oral history records that the whole family had suffered from smallpox during the voyage. Apparently the mother was so ill that she died soon after the family disembarked. The same oral history indicates that son Michael was drowned in a mill race as a child. Whether that was in Somerset County, Pennsylvania where the father applied for citizenship or in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania where they were living and Michael was again working as a miller by at least 1836 is not known.

Although the Walker Family Bible shows that Anna Catharina Ruby was married to John Walker, Jr. in Westmoreland County in 1836, baptismal records of St. John's Lutheran and Reformed Church in the town of Mount Pleasant there show that their first child, daughter Barbara, was born 2 November 1834 and baptized 15 November 1835. No church record of the marriage exists but it is assumed that the year was actually 1834, not 1836. Anna Catharina was 17 at the time and John Walker was 26 years old. That daughter died in infancy; son George born 1837 died in 1839. They subsequently became the parents of seven more children born between 1839 and 1862: Mary, Nancy, Thomas, Barbara Anne, John Ruby,

Katherine, and Jessie Rowe. (Nancy was my paternal grandmother.)

Michael Ruby was married for the second time on 18 March 1838. His new wife was a widow, Catherine Kaiser, and they apparently lived on her property in Mount Pleasant Township, Westmoreland County. A footnote to page 242 of the "History of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania" indicates that Michael Ruby was an Elder of St. John's Church near Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania at the time that the *Westmoreland Classis* convened on 28 May 1843.

The last recorded data regarding Michael Ruby was his listing in the 1850 census there. At the time, one of John Walker's nephews was living in his household. Michael's actual date of death is unknown but occurred before the 1860 census in which Catherine Kaiser Ruby is listed as a miller's widow.

Anna Catharina, her husband and their children all moved to McLean County, Illinois around 1855. John Walker homesteaded there and farmed. She was, as noted in her obituary, well known in the area as a midwife and, in fact, delivered all of the eight children of her daughter, my grandmother, Nancy Walker Forbes. John Walker died there 18 February 1886 but Anna Catharina lived another twenty-one years, dying on 2 July 1907 of cancer. She was survived by all but one of her seven younger children.

Tracking down this great-grandmother and her antecedents was a real exercise in how to and how not to properly do genealogy. So much of the many years' effort was simply fishing for evidence that did not exist. However, the experience gained has been extremely valuable. I would recommend trial and error to any beginning genealogist as a way to extend that learning curve sky high.