



Drawings of two medieval towns in eighteenth century Germany

PREFACE "IT ALL BEGAN WITH GEORG"

In 2001, I discovered that my paternal Grandmother's family history had been compiled in a genealogical record at the Wayne County Library in Wooster, OH. This family- the Whonsetlers, lived in Canaan Township, where my father was born. To my surprise the record began in 1744 with the immigration of Johann Jerg Vonsidler aboard the ship *Phoenix*. The family landed in Philadelphia and then settled in Bucks Co., PA. Other name variations listed were Whonsetler, Wonsetler, Wonsidler, and Wansitler. The genealogy had been done in 1989 at the request of Joe N. Whonsetler, of Avilla, IN. Joe was adopted into the Whonsetler family and became so interested in their history that he asked his wife's cousin, Bev Shank, to help him compile a genealogy of the family. She and a number of other people from as far away as CA worked on collecting the information. Bev eventually did genealogies on other related families such as the Simons. This has all been extremely helpful to me in researching the family history.

The most intriguing part to me was the date of immigration-1744. My husband, Rich, and I are living history re-enactors portraying the period from 1750 to 1840. We have the period clothing, tents, cooking equipment and all that is needed to participate in Colonial Market Fairs as well as present school programs on early Ohio history. When I put on the chemise, petticoat, stays, short gown, mob cap, and shoes I realized that my ancestral women were wearing the same thing 200 to 250 years ago. It took on a whole new meaning for me.

Thus began a search to find out more about these people. Where did they live in Bucks Co.? Were they farmers or did they have other occupations? What church

records might be found? Were any of them famous or infamous? In the genealogy there was information about the church in Red Hill, PA so I began an online search for research libraries in the area. We had a trip to the Lancaster, PA area planned in June of 2006, so by extending it a few days we could stop in the area of Bucks County. I first went to a museum and library connected with Kutztown University. There I found a very helpful staff and a lot more information than I expected.

There were church records from the New Goschenhoppen Church including baptisms, communions, marriages of two sons, and even the death Georg in 1773. I also found tax records, local information about a town in which one of the sons lived- Carl or Charles as he was known here; and Charles' record of service in the Revolutionary War Militia. We visited the church, now known as St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Red Hill. It is a newer church built in the early 1900's, but on the same site. The cemetery of the New Goschenhoppen Church lies within the present St. Paul's Cemetery behind today's building. Unfortunately the earliest grave markers have disappeared, and their location was not recorded. We could not find Georg's grave, or that of his wife Sybilla.

In the genealogy was a copy of Georg's will. I was told it was kept in the City Archives of Philadelphia because it was written and probated there. Our last stop was in Philadelphia, and with the help of a worker I was able to locate the filing number for the will, which also included the estate settlement. Before the worker copied it for me he brought it to me to see. I was thrilled to be holding documents from 1773 in my hands. The same papers Georg had signed before his death.

The first important discovery of this trip was that Johann Jerg had Americanized his name to Georg. That is the way I will refer to him throughout most of this writing.

He was my Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Grandfather, and this is the story of his family and my journey with them.

THE FAMILY NAME AND ANCESTRAL HOME

The title page of the genealogy lists four “known variations” of the Vonsidler name. I had already noticed in the reprinted and actual will of Georg that his name was spelled three different ways within one document. It begins- *I, George Wonsetler*; then his name at the end is- *Johan Gorg Wohnsitler*; and in the notice of administration it is- *George Vonsettler*. It was the last spelling under which the will was filed.

In the initial searches I found a number of spellings of the name. I quickly realized that to find any of the family I needed to look through all the W's and V's; and later found that sometimes it was with an O (On- or Onesetler). In various records I have found 35 different spellings. For a list of these please see Appendix B. I'm sure that most spelling difficulties arose from the very different German writing of the 18th Century as well as the English-Americans trying to spell what they heard a German pronounce.

There are two places that Georg's actual signature is found. One is on the ship list of passengers and the other is in his will. A facsimile of the ship's manifesto is reprinted in books of immigrants called Pennsylvania German Pioneers (pg 373). Not everyone aboard ship could write his name and many show an X between the first and

last name which was written by the clerk. But Georg's signature is there, written by him. In his will the name is much harder to read, probably because he was 74 at the time.

I had been in contact with an organization in Columbus, OH called Palatines to America. They specialize in German ancestral research and history, and have a man who is proficient in reading the old German. I sent them a copy of the signature from the list and will to decipher. They were quickly able to tell me the German spelling is *Wohnsiedler*. Also, I was told it is a very unusual name, even in Germany. They showed me how to access the online German telephone book and found there are only 36 Wohnsiedlers in the country in 2006 (and one of them is a nursing home in Berlin). The name means land settler or living settler.

I was shown how to access a directory of records in English where I could check to see if any of the towns in which the Wohnsiedlers live today held records of Georg's birth. Most of the families live in or near a town called Eisenberg in the Rhineland-Pfatz region of southwestern Germany.

I checked all the towns I could find in the area and nothing came up. At this point I decided to write a letter to every Wohnsiedler in Germany and see if they could tell me anything.

The problem- I do not read or write German. I enlisted the assistance of the German teacher, Barb Ott, from the High School in the district where I taught. She was very helpful in transcribing my letter into German. I included my e-mail address, and fairly soon I received three replies via that service. One man even wanted to know how I knew such good German- I had to admit to him I did not know it and was very glad he had replied in English. One was in German and this time Barb had her upper level

students translate the reply as a class project. All very nice, but nothing of importance came from any of the replies.

In late 2007, I contacted a woman who does German research at the library of the Latter Day Saints facility in Salt Lake City, UT. She is German although she now lives in CA, and she had done work for one of my cousins in CA on another branch of the family- the Haas of Alsace, France. She readily took on the project with as much information as I could give her about the family. Within two months I had a reply and documents showing where the family was from- Bechtheim.

This village is in the Rhineland-Palatinate State and the Alzey-Worms District. It lies about four miles west of the nearest point of the Rhine River and about thirteen miles in a straight line from Eisenberg. It is a small town- population about 1860, in an area of only 5.2 sq. miles. It is the center of a wine making area specializing the Riesling wines.



Left- A map showing Bechtheim, Eisenberg & the Rhine River. Right- The Coat of Arms of the Town of Bechtheim.



This view of Bechtheim today shows the village of close houses with the fields surrounding it.

THE OLD WINE TOWN OF BECHTHEIM

From the Middle Ages until well after Georg and his family left for America, Germany and most of Europe were a collection of feudal states. Each small area was ruled by a nobleman with the common people as his subjects. Bechtheim was no different.

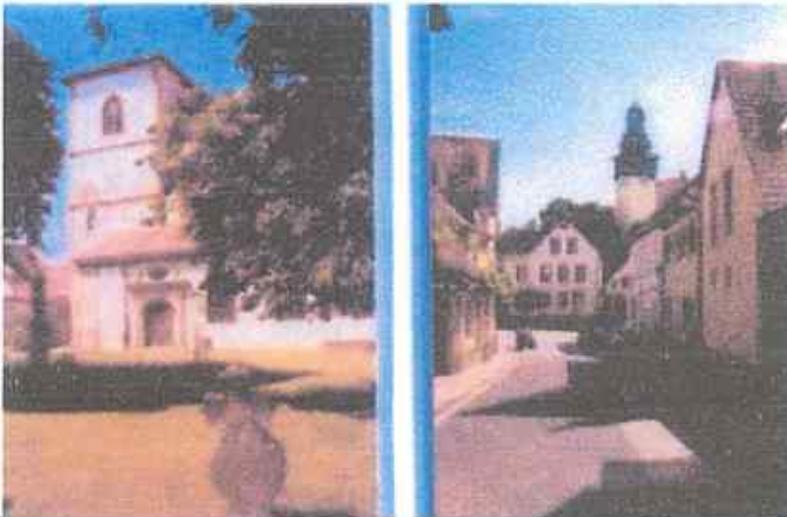


“The old wine town of Bechtheim lies in (a) hollow surrounded by vines”. Thus, begins the history of Bechtheim on the town’s website.

OCCGS REFERENCE ONLY

It is a very old village with artifacts having been found that date to the Bronze Age (2000-800 BC). There was a Roman settlement there. Two stone Roman coffins were discovered in 1919. The foundations of a Roman villa were unearthed in 1969.

“Heim” means home; and in 600AD a Franconian named Bero named the area Beroheim. In the 900’s the area came under the control of the Belgians who in 1070 named it Bertheim. Around 1020, a large Roman style Basilica was begun that wasn’t finished until the 1300’s. It drew many pilgrims to worship there from as far away as Hungary to the east and Spain to the southwest.



L- Roman Basilica

R- Lutheran Church

Sometime between 1070 and 1267, Herr von Bolanden became village fief. A fief is one who has rights to control an area of land and its people. Von in front of another name signifies nobility in German. In 1070, the church apparently decided to remove the wine growers from the area. It was noted that “in a six days journey (period of time), the church must have removed the Bechtheimer wine growers (rather) than implement a tax”.

In 1267, the village was inherited by the Counts of Leiningen. This old German family had vast holdings in Alsace and Lorraine. After a split in the family occurred in 1317, one of the branches was made a “landgrave” of Bechtheim. The term, landgrave, means a Count or Nobleman of a village. He was said to have his “house and yard” there-meaning he actually lived there.

In 1558, a huge fire destroyed much of the town. At this time there were more than 20 noble families residing in Bechtheim. After the fire these wealthy nobles decided to create a more modern town in the style of a city. After this Bechtheim became known as the “Town of Dominating Houses”. Many fairs and festivals were held by these families. Village records show great expenditures for gifts and minstrels to entertain.



L- the marketplace

R- the fountain

In 1722, the Countess of Leiningen “lent” the village folk market days. The village people could operate one market each year in either spring or fall. Today the Market is held the second weekend of September, and since 1980, has been in conjunction with the “Wine Fest of the Pilgrim’s Path”. The rule of the Counts of Leiningen ended with the French Revolution in 1795.

The French held control of all lands west of the Rhine River until after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. At that time the town of Bechtheim became part of the Dukedom of Hesse (Darmstadt). (All photos are from the website www.bechtheim.de.)

TOWNS AND FARMS IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GERMANY

Bechtheim and most other villages in what is now Germany, Switzerland and German-speaking France retained their medieval style well into the post-Reformation era. Generally the village of houses, church, markets, and merchant home/shops were tightly packed within a walled area. This was for protection from marauding groups. The peasant/farmers also lived within the village walls, but went out to their fields to work.

The fief of the village controlled the land. He was responsible for dividing the fields into plots for each peasant family. Each family received an equal amount of excellent, good, and poor quality land in a pattern surrounding the walled town and as far outward as the fief's domain extended. Each peasant also had fields that were close in to the village as well as ones that were at the extremes of the area.



The following page shows a number of drawings of villages, old buildings, and farmers going out to their fields from homes within the walled town.



Lambstein.

Lambstein in the Palatinate - from Merian's Topographia Germaniae (1672).

Town Layout of Lambstein, showing church houses, 1672 (the "Hofsch" is No. 5), three houses, and other details (from Heimb, Lambst.).



Siegen in the 17th Century, showing walls and towers of what was then still essentially a medieval town. After an engraving in Siegenland, XVI, 1 (O) 17-her, December 1931.



Village Street in Hasloch. Farmers live in Palatine villages, drive out of town to farm. Note large farmhouses (centers) with arched wagon gates to enclosed farmyards.



View of the ancient college buildings at Herborn. Drawn from a photograph taken in the 1930s.

THE WOHSIEDLERS OF BECHTHEIM

Georg (Johan Jerg) Wohnsiedler was born in October 1698. There is no record of his birth and baptism because of a church fire in the early 1700's. Records that are preserved include his marriage records, the birth and baptisms of his children, the deaths of both wives and three of his children.

Georg was first married in 1720 to Anna Sybilla Betz (b. Feb 1698). She was from Lohnheim. To them were born five children: Maria Otilia (1721), Johanna Maria (1723), Johann Peter (1725), Johann Henrich (1727), and Carl Albrecht (1733). Unfortunately Sybilla and three of her children died by 1734. Only Maria Otilia and Carl Albrecht lived.

Georg then married Anna Barbara Eberts (b. July 1705) in January of 1735. In October of that year Johann Philipp was born, and in February of 1737, Johann Nicolaus was born. Nicolaus is my G-G-G-Great-Grandfather.

Barbara died in January 1740 leaving Georg with three sons and his oldest daughter. Of Maria Otilia, no other information that has been found. She may have been married or left the village without any record being made.

The records in Pennsylvania all show a wife of Georg whose name is Sybilla. It is a lucky coincidence that it is the same as his first wife. It made the search for the family much easier. I was told by the researcher that the name Sybilla is very localized to the Bechtheim area at this time. So even though we do not know who she is or her age, we assume that Georg met her

before coming to PA. Possibly they were married on board ship since there is no record of a marriage in PA.

A transcription of all the records of the Wohnsiedlers and Eberts can be found in Appendix C.

From information on Ancestry.com's family trees it appears there were two sisters of Georg who also lived in Bechtheim. Maria Elizabeth was born in 1696. She married a Jacob Schimmel and had at least one son. They remained in Bechtheim although their descendents did move within Germany. Eventually a G-G-G-G-Grandson of Maria and Jacob emigrated to America. He was born in 1861 in Germany, and died in 1948 in Fort Atkinson, WI.

The younger sister, Anna Maria was born in 1705. She married Nicolaus Baum, and they were the sponsors of Georg's son Nicolaus' baptism. This couple had a daughter who married Philipp Schindel. This couple emigrated first to Poland where a daughter was born, then to Spain where the daughter married and moved back to Poland. From there a grandson of hers emigrated to Aurora, IL.

The reasons for emigration were many. Often land was becoming scarce, especially for the common person. What little land they "owned" had to be divided among the sons and it became too small to make a living. Outside influences also led many to emigrate. Hungary offered incentives to get Germans to settle their very empty land by eliminating taxes for a period of 15 years after moving there. Poland and Russia also encouraged emigration targeted at the Germans. This must have been attractive to the Schimmels since they moved to Poland. Russia

offered 30 years tax free as well as permission to leave if desired. Other realms offered free transportation, housing, freeman status, and even travel money.

But the most persuasive material came from William Penn. He wrote pamphlets in German encouraging settlers to come to his land in Pennsylvania. He personally went to Germany in the early 1700's to distribute his work called "The Holy Experiment". The plan was to allow various nationalities to settle in PA and all continue to practice their own religious beliefs and traditions in their own language. Letters from others who had immigrated to PA arrived in the towns encouraging friends and relatives to make the voyage and join them in America. Something moved Georg to make the journey in 1744.

The family of four or five (if Sybilla was already with them) would have gone to the Rhine River- only about 4 miles away and taken passage on a boat to Rotterdam. From there they would have booked passage aboard the ship *Phoenix*. When the *Phoenix* sailed it would have first gone to England for a brief stop, and then on to America. It arrived in Philadelphia the 10th of October 1744.

OTHER EARLY REALTED FAMILIES' ORIGINS

The Wohnsiedlers are obviously not the only family to which my cousins and I are related. As each generation married the number of ancestors multiplied rapidly. Nicholas, Georg's son to whom I am directly descended, married Anna Maria Diehl (Mary) in Bucks Co. Her parents were Peter I. and Barbary Diehl also of Bucks Co. north of the area where the Wohnsiedlers lived. Her parents' origins have not been

found. Although I have not discovered the Peter Diehl family origins, I have found many of the other families' roots in Europe.

The following map shows the locations of the towns these folks came from, the ports in the Netherlands and England from which they sailed, and the main rivers of western Germany and its neighboring countries. The most important of those rivers was the Rhine for most of the families.

Key: E- England F- France G- Germany (today)
 B- Belgium N- Netherland S- Switzerland

England: Ports at which the ships stopped to register their cargos including passengers bound for America 1- Deal and Dover 2- Cowes 3- Plymouth and Falmouth

Rivers: 1- Rhine 2- Main 3- Danube 4- Mosselle

Countries and towns: *Switzerland:* 1- Pratteln 2- Walhern

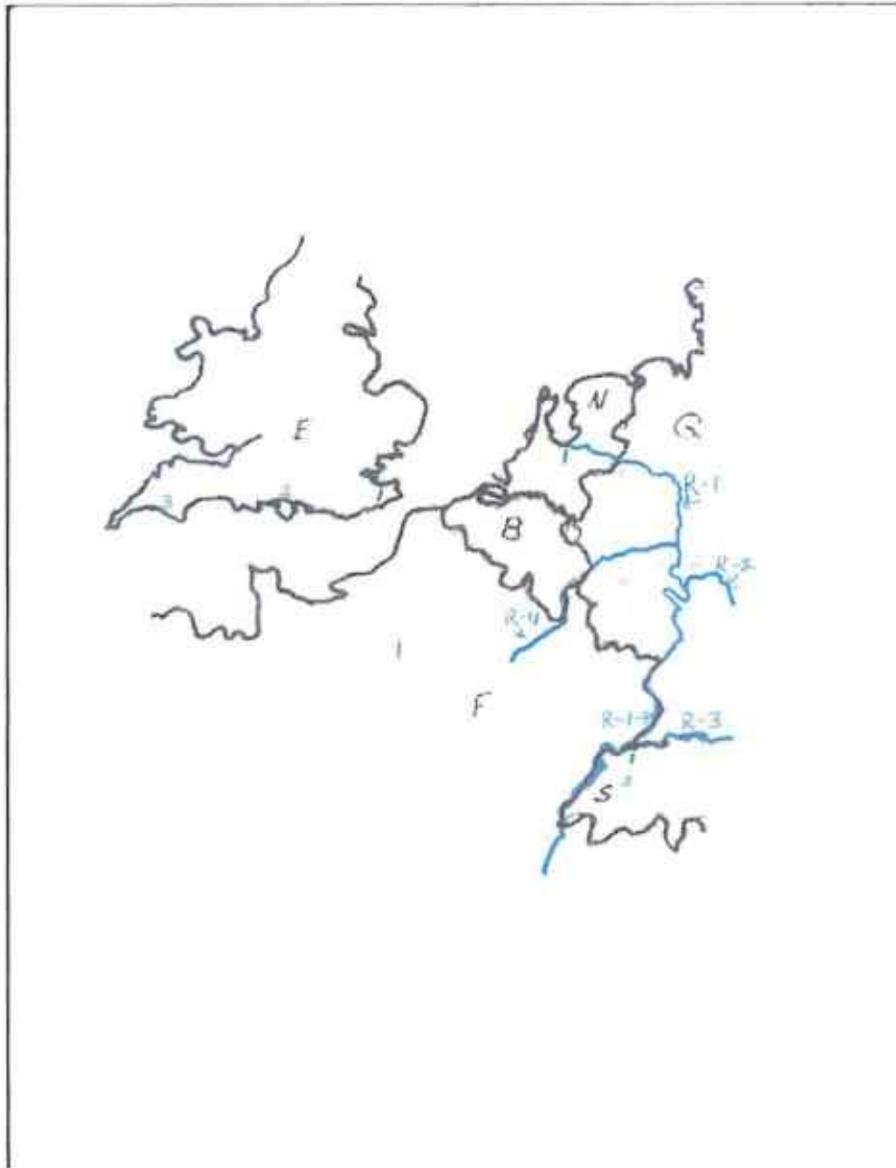
France: 1- Gy-en-Solgne, Loir-et-Cher *Netherlands:* 1- Rotterdam

Germany: 1- Kreffeld and Westrich 2- Maar Parish and Bischofsheim

3- Bechtheim 4- Brucken, Achtelsulzbach, Kappeln, Gangloff, and

Herren-Sulzbach 5- Trippstadt and Pfeddersheim

Note- Towns that are close geographically have been grouped together for the simplicity of the map. There are other maps in the sections detailing each family that show them individually. Many families married someone from a town nearby- usually one within a five mile area.



These families whose towns have been identified are listed below with the town name.

Diehl & Kreisler (a different Diehl)

Kappeln & Herren-Sulzbach

Harsh

Westrich

Hartman

Bischofsheim

Hewitt & Bruch

Brucken & Achtelsulzbach

Mong & Jesserang

Trippstadt & Gy in Loir-et-Cher

Myers

Pratteln

Oller	Maar Parish
Sellen	Kreffeld
Simon	Herren-Sulzbach
Stricker & Wolf	Pfeddersheim & Gangloff
Swalley	Walhern
Wohnsiedler	Bechtheim

Those families for whom I could not find their European roots are: Summers, Leffler, and Dege (Deger).

All of these families are related through the first three generations in America.

Nicholas, Georg's youngest son to whom we are related; then his son Philip; and finally those children of Philip who came to Ohio to settle. Those children are: Daniel, Elizabeth (the only one to remain unmarried), Susanna, Eve Marie, Samuel, Catherine, Maria Anna, and Mary Magdalena.

A WORD ABOUT NAMES:

As you may have noticed in listing Georg Wohnsiedler's children, most of the most of the males' names begin with Johann or Hans and the females' names begin either Anna or Maria. These first names are called *church names*. They are similar to baptismal or confirmation names used today. This was a period when most people had only two names by which they were known- a given name and surname. Not too many years before this many people had only one name. As the population grew it became necessary to distinguish between people with the same name.

I am going to use as an example the name Johann Nicolaus Wohnsiedler.

(A) (B) (C)

(A) Johann or Hans is John in English. This is a Biblical name and is the most common *church name* used for males in German speaking regions. The most commonly used female *church names* were Anna or Maria. Even the female form of Johann- Johanna, was used. The church name was used for the child's baptism. Usually the sponsoring male or female of the baptism was of the same name. This name was also used in legal documents such as wills and in signatures as on the ship lists, etc.

(B) Nicolaus, or Nicholas in English, is the person's *given name*. This is the name by which the person will be called. His or her friends, family, and even in legal documents such as deeds, the given name is used. There generally were no nicknames as we have them today so Nicholas was just that- not Nick or something else. In female names it is not uncommon to see Barbary used. This is an older form of Barbara.

(C) Wohnsiedler is the surname. That is the same as our surnames today and was passed through the male lines of family.

In this work I will give the full name of the person when they are first mentioned. After that I will use the simpler name with its English spelling throughout. Therefore, *Johann Nicolaus Wohnsiedler* will be referred to as Nicholas Wohnsiedler after this.

Surnames in America changed spelling over time, especially with the earliest of immigrants. Part of the reason for this was that they were saying their name in German to someone who was English and trying to sound out a spelling. This occurred throughout the early settlement and well into the 19th century. Examples are found in tax records, censuses, land deeds and even wills. In various records I have found 35 spelling variations of the original name of Wohnsiedler. If the immigrant could write his own name then it was shown in the ship lists and other documents. This helps immensely in order to decipher the original name. Georg Wohnsiedler could write and signed his name on the ship's lists. When he signed his will it was also in the original German script.

As generations moved and separated the surname spelling changed. Those descendents who remained in the eastern PA area use the spelling-*Wonsidler*. Those of Nicholas's line who went into MD and then western PA spell it *Wonsettler, Wonsetler, or Wansitler*. Those who came to Ohio and then later went to Indiana and beyond use the spelling- *Whonsetler*. From these variations one can tell which line of descent a current family member comes from even if they live no where near the origin of that spelling. Charlie Wonsettler lives in Larned, KS, while Willis Wonsidler's sons live in St. Louis, MO and New Jersey. Much later in the late 1800's there were more Wohnsiedlers who immigrated to the United States. Some settled in New York, others in Texas; while a group established themselves in Evansville, IN. They have maintained the original spelling of the family name in this country. Yet, we are all in essence the same family.

THE DECISION TO EMIGRATE AND THE JOURNEY TO AMERICA

THE DECISION

We have no written records as to why most of the families chose to leave their homes in Germany, France or Switzerland and come to America, but we can speculate.

The Thirty Years' War in Europe was from 1618 to 1648. This ravaged most of Germany as groups fought back and forth. It was estimated that the German states lost nearly one-half of their population. New settlers from Switzerland and France who were German-speaking came into this "empty" region. But often they were Mennonite and barely tolerated. Next came the reign of Louis XIV of France. He tried to outlaw any Protestant religion, but the Lutheran and Reformed churches had already established themselves firmly in the region. Religious persecution though was evident in areas controlled by those who were Roman Catholic. That practice continued under the reign of Napoleon as well.

Along with the wars being fought and religious persecution, there was also overcrowding, famine and the plague. In the 18th century there was an increase in the birth rate. Women were marrying younger, thus prolonging the period of child-bearing. Most families had a child every two and a half years. But, this did not necessarily mean larger families. One-third of newborns died of illness and another 40% of children died by age 14. Using Georg's family as an example; the second, third, and fourth children all died before emigration. Johanna Maria died at 10 months, Johann Heinrich at 2 months, and Johann Peter at 18 years. There is no record of the first daughter, Maria Ottilia's

death or marriage, so we don't know what happened to her. The last three surviving sons did live to emigrate and grow to maturity in America.

Crowded conditions in the towns led to the spread of disease. Although there was no plague during this time, the towns were filthy with sewage and garbage. High infant mortality, disease, and stillbirths were very common. The illegitimate birth rate was very high but varied with the region. In Roman Catholic Bavaria it was 20%, in Protestant Berlin it was 10%, and in the rural areas it was lowest at 6.25%.

Poverty was also a major issue. The nobility made up only 1% of the population, and although there was a merchant class, they were also in the minority. The majority of the population were peasants working for the landowner with had little to keep for themselves.

The Protestant clergy could marry and often had large families. The wealthy princes found the Protestant religion more to their liking because they could now tax the churches and church lands. There was a bit more freedom in those regions as well for the peasant population. The rise of the middle class in the Protestant areas led to a different mentality among the entire population. Still, 20-25 % of the peasants lived in poverty; with an even higher amount in Roman Catholic areas.

All these conditions led to the desire to have a new life in a new land. The first German-speaking families to leave in a large group were Mennonites living in Krefeld, a town in northwestern Germany near the border with the Netherlands. They had been expelled from France and had brought their skills and trades with them. Overcrowding in Krefeld caused them to decide to emigrate in 1683. When they reached Philadelphia they

were also periods in which other European countries such as Russia and Hungary actually recruited settlers. From 1717-26, Russia and Hungary offered land and tax incentives specifically to Germans. From 1744-48, the Wars of Austrian Succession; 1755-63, the Seven Years War in Europe as well as the French and Indian War in America; 1776-1783, the American Revolution; and finally 1806-15 during the Napoleonic Wars very few immigrants made their way across the Atlantic.

During the American Revolution 30,000 German Hessian mercenaries were sent by Britain to fight in America. After the war some of them stayed and settled here. Others returned to Germany and sang the praises of the new country to their families and neighbors. Also at this point ships could now enter the new United States from all ports including Bremen and Hamburg in Germany. 1816/17 was known in Europe as the “year of starvation”. During this period another 10,000 Germans arrived in the United States.

THE JOURNEY IN EUROPE-PART 1



The Rhine River begins at the base of a glacier in the south-central Swiss Alps. At Basel on the German, French, and Swiss border it becomes navigable for the next 500 miles to Rotterdam in Holland on the North Sea. (This is from where the Myers and Dill families would have left Switzerland.) Rotterdam was the British port of choice for immigrants since their ships had to make a stop in England before sailing to America.

The Rhine had been an important river for transportation since Roman times, and those who controlled a section of the river could charge tolls in return for safe passage. Many nobles got very rich putting toll gates or houses along the stretches they controlled.

There are three sections to the Rhine- Upper, Middle, and Lower. The Upper Rhine begins at Basel and ends at Bingen. This section is 225 miles long and fairly wide although curving. Using the current to move downstream was easy while going upstream was accomplished by either poling the boat or towing along a path by men or horses. Smaller vessels up to 50 tons could navigate this part of the river. There were attempts as early as the 14th century to straighten the river and increase flow.

Below are sketches of river boats from the period-one with sails and one being poled.



The Middle Rhine is only 75 miles, but it is the most difficult to navigate. Mountains or high bluffs are generally found on the west side and at places on the east bank. The river is very curving as it flows between the cliffs. The Romans built tow paths along the banks that still exist today. In the 1700's the local citizenry were required to maintain those tow paths for use in navigating upriver. Horses or men pulling the boats had to continually cross to the side of the river on the inside of the curve where the flow of the current was less. The outside of the curve was used for ships sailing downstream where the current was deeper and faster.



This section today is known for the Castles of the Rhine. There were nearly 40 castles in a 40 miles stretch of river. This section begins at Bingen and goes as far as Mainz and Bonn.

The Lower Rhine flows from Bonn to Rotterdam in a wide gentle path. It is 144 miles to the North Sea from Bonn. Ocean ships of the day could sail as far upriver as Cologne, not far downstream from Bonn.

The Wohnsiedler's home village of Bechtheim lies about four miles from the Upper Rhine. It is just north (downstream) of the town of Worms. The family most likely packed what they were taking with them and walked to the river to get a boat to Rotterdam. Once they got to the Middle Rhine the tolls would begin.

Castles were built on the high bluffs above the river for protection and toll towers were then built at river level to collect fees. The castles protected the occupants from marauding tribes and other enemies. There were a couple of interesting castle histories pertaining to ones the family would have passed along their journey.

One of the first toll gates was just past Bingen. This was known as *Mauseurturm*. It was a toll tower built to collect fees for the Castle of *Ehrenfels* found on the bluff above the river.



Mäuseurturm (toll tower). Source:
LAD



Legend says that both the castle and the tower were built by Archbishop Hatto II of Mainz in the 10th century. He committed a brutal murder and was forced to flee to his river tower for protection. The legend says he died there and was eaten by the mice- thus the name Mauseturm (Mice Tower).

Moving downstream another island toll castle was built in the shape of a ship, with later a wall put around it for protection. This was built by King Ludwig of Bavaria around 1326 to protect the right bank of the river. From his castle at nearby Kaub (below)



he had raised the tolls and enraged his enemies. Pope John XXII tried to have him excommunicated, but nothing ever came of that action. But as a result he decided to build a river level toll castle called *Pfalzgrafenstein*.



Pfalzgrafenstein Castle. Source: LAD



Castle kitchen

Renovations were made in 1607 and again in the 18th century. In 1970, the Baroque era colors of red and white were restored to the castle.

THE JOURNEY PART 2- THE VOYAGE TO AMERICA

When the family reached Rotterdam they booked passage on one of the vessels going to America. In 1744, the year the Wohnsiedlers made the voyage, there were five ships that arrived in Philadelphia from Rotterdam. The ship *Phoenix* was the second of the five, arriving the 20th of October. The last to arrive was on the 22nd of December. According to the website of the Progenealogists, 1744 was a year in which a number of immigrant ships were taken by French and Spanish privateers. Those folks never made it to America, and it is not known where they might have been taken by their captors.

After the ships left Rotterdam they were required to stop in an English port to register their cargo- including passengers. These ports were along the eastern or southern end of England. Some of these ports were Deal, Dover, Cowes (on the Isle of Wight), Falmouth and Plymouth. If London was listed it was only for passengers already in England, not coming from the Continent. Please see the map in the Preface.

There were a number of different types and sizes of sailing vessels used during this period of immigration. They were at the mercy of the wind and weather, so the crossing times varied. The shortest crossings were about 60 days, the longest close to 90 days. On average a crossing took around 75 days-or just over 10 weeks.

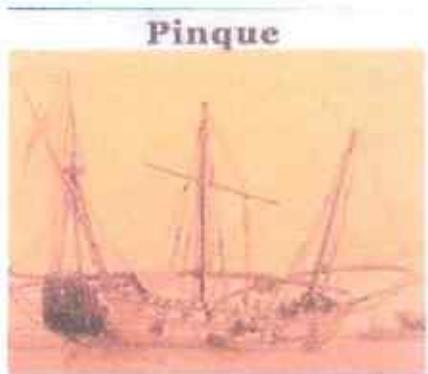
The size and types of ships varied and most were either two or three masted. Mainly these were a brig, brigantine, pink (or pinque), snow, and full rigged.

A brig and its larger sister the brigantine were 2-masted and square-rigged.



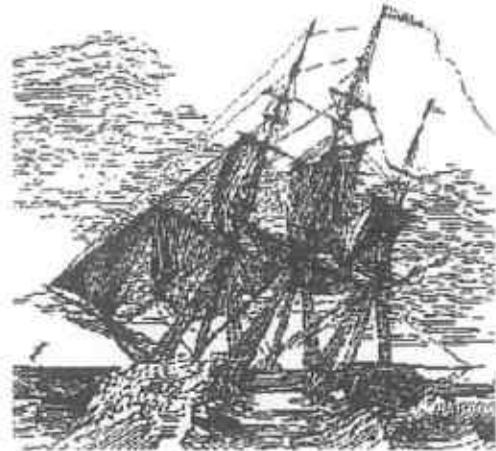
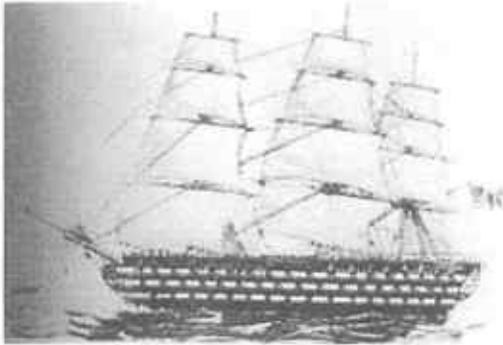
The brig was about 125 feet long in the hull and could carry around 100 tightly packed passengers. It carried canons for protection as well as long guns. The brigantine was a bit larger and might carry nearly 200 people.

The pink shown here was much smaller with a square stern that overhung the main ship.



The snow was also smaller and both of these usually carried less than 100 passengers.

The biggest ships were the full rigged. These were often referred to simply as *The Ship Samuel*, or *The Ship Pennsylvania*, etc. *The Phoenix* would have been one of these larger three masted ships which were very stable in the water.



The drawings are of the Ships *Pennsylvania* and the *Samuel*.

ARRIVAL:

Upon landing in Philadelphia all male passengers over the age of 16 were taken ashore to take and sign the "Oath of Allegiance" to the English King renouncing their allegiance to any former rulers. This occurred at City Hall in front of judges. If the person could write his own name he did, otherwise someone else wrote his name and the immigrant marked an X. Georg Wohnsiedler signed his name to this list taking the Oath.

APPENDIX

COMMON ANCESTOR	SON / DAU.	GRAND-SON	GREAT GRAND-SON	G-G GRAND-SON	G-G-G GRAND-SON	4G GRAND-SON	5G GRAND-SON	6G GRAND-SON	7G GRAND-SON
SON / DAU.	BRO / SIS.	NEPHEW / NIECE	GRAND NEPHEW	GREAT GRAND-NEPHEW	G-G GRAND-NEPHEW	G-G-G GRAND-NEPHEW	4G GRAND-NEPHEW	5G GRAND-NEPHEW	6G GRAND-NEPHEW
GRAND-SON	NEPHEW / NIECE	1ST COUSIN	1 COU 1 R	1 COU 2 R	1 COU 3 R	1 COU 4 R	1 COU 5 R	1 COU 6 R	1 COU 7 R
GREAT GRAND-SON	GRAND NEPHEW	1 COU 1 R	2ND COUSIN	2 COU 1 R	2 COU 2 R	2 COU 3 R	2 COU 4 R	2 COU 5 R	2 COU 6 R
G-G GRAND-SON	GREAT GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 2 R	2 COU 1 R	3RD COUSIN	3 COU 1 R	3 COU 2 R	3 COU 3 R	3 COU 4 R	3 COU 5 R
G-G-G GRAND-SON	G-G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 3 R	2 COU 2 R	3 COU 1 R	4TH COUSIN	4 COU 1 R	4 COU 2 R	4 COU 3 R	4 COU 4 R
4G GRAND-SON	3G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 4 R	2 COU 3 R	3 COU 2 R	4 COU 1 R	5TH COUSIN	5 COU 1 R	5 COU 2 R	5 COU 3 R
5G GRAND-SON	4G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 5 R	2 COU 4 R	3 COU 3 R	4 COU 2 R	5 COU 1 R	6TH COUSIN	6 COU 1 R	6 COU 2 R
6G GRAND-SON	5G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 6 R	2 COU 5 R	3 COU 4 R	4 COU 3 R	5 COU 2 R	6 COU 1 R	7TH COUSIN	7 COU 1 R
7G GRAND-SON	6G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 7 R	2 COU 6 R	3 COU 5 R	4 COU 4 R	5 COU 3 R	6 COU 2 R	7 COU 1 R	8TH COUSIN

RELATIONSHIP CHART ABBREVIATIONS

BRO = brother

SIS = sister

DAU = daughter

COU = cousin

R = removed (generations removed)

G-G = great-great

GRANDSON = grandson or granddaughter

SON = son or daughter

NEPHEW = nephew or niece

This chart may be extended in either direction for identifying more distant relationships.

Map I. GERMANY TODAY (state boundaries, state capitals, and cities with federal archives)



This map shows the areas of present-day Germany from which our ancestors emigrated.

WHONSETLER NAME VARIATIONS

von Sidler- thought to be the German spelling by those doing the original genealogy

variations found in documents:

Vonsetter
Vonsettler
vonSiedler

Wahnsidel
Wahnsiller
Wansetler
Wansutler
Wantsidler

Whonsetler** our family spelling
Winsetler

Wohmsiedlor

Wohnsedler
Wohnseidler
Wohnsidler
Wohnsiedel

Wohnsiedler* now recognized as the original German spelling

Wohnsiegler
Wohnsitler
Wohnsittler
Wonesitler
Wonsiedler

Wonsetlar- Nicholas's spelling and that of his wife Mary in PA
Wonsetler- Philip's spelling-used in the Gylde, PA area yet today
Wonsidler- Charles's spelling-used in eastern PA today

Wonssidler

Wonsitler
Wonsettler
Wonsutler

Wonsteller
Wonzitler
Wunsiedler

Wortsetter

Onesetler

Onesettler

Onsetter

JOHANN GEORG WOHSIEDLER OF BECHTHEIM NEAR ALZEY IN THE Rhineland-pfaltz, GERMANY

1737 Johann Nicolaus**** b. 16 Feb bp. 19th Feb
Spon: Nicolaus Baum and wife-Anna Maria

*Carl Albrecht was the first son listed with the family in the Whonsetler Genealogy

**Johann Philipp was the second son listed in the Whonsetler Genealogy

**** Nicolaus was the third son listed in the Whonsetler genealogy and is the ancestor of the Ohio Whonsetlers.

Maria Otillia- the oldest daughter may have left Germany with her Father and 3 brothers since there is no death or marriage record for her in Bechtheim. She possibly died on the voyage, or married on the voyage as there is no record of her here in America.

OTHER FAMILY IN BECHTHEIM, ALZEY WORMS, PFALZ, GERMANY

WOHSIEDLER:

Anna Maria Wohnsiedler b. 1648 d. 8 Jun 1723 age 75
Most likely Georg's Mother or an Aunt.

Maria Elisabeth Wohnsiedler b. c. 1696
Married Johann Jacob Schimmel b. c. 1695
A sister of Georg and her husband.

Anna Maria Wohnsiedler b. c. 1705 d. 30 Jan 1774
Married Johann Nicolaus Baum b. c. 1689 d. 23 Sep 1774
Another sister of Georg. She and her husband are the Godparents or sponsors of Georg's son Nicolaus in 1737.

Maria Magdalena Wohnsiedler b. 1709 d. 12 Oct 1729
Age 18 yr 3 mo
Probably another sister of Georg, Elisabeth and Maria.

Johann Peter Whonsiedler b. 1669 d. 17 Feb 1729 age 58
Likely an uncle of Georg since he was the sponsor of Georg's Son- Johann Peter (b.1725 d. 1744)

EBERTS:

Hans Jacob Eberts b. 1670 d. 17 May 1731 age 60 ½ yr
Father of Maria Barbara- second wife of Gerog.

Susanna Maria b. Jun 1676 d. 19 Jul 1744 age 68 yr 1 mo
Mother of Maria Barbara

**JOHANN GEORG WOHSIEDLER OF BECHTHEIM
NEAR ALZEY IN THE Rhineland-pfaltz, GERMANY**

<u>Johannes</u>	b. 3 Sep 1709		
<u>Anna Margaretha</u>	b. 13 Apr 1714	d. 10 May 1722	age 8 yr
Both are siblings of Maria Barbara Eberts			
<u>Hans Peter Eberts</u>	b. 1663	d. 25 Jan 1710	age 47 yr 2 mo
Possibly a brother of Jacob			
<u>Catherine Eberts</u>	b. 1657	d. 1 Jan 1715	age 58 yr
Possibly a sister of Jacob			
<u>Hans Jacob Eberts</u>	b. 1670-71	d. 17 May 1731	age 60 ½ yr
Do not know the relationship			
<u>Johann Philipp</u>	b. 1686	d. 15 May 1742	age 56 yr
Sponsor of Philipp Wohnsiedler			

WHONSETLER NAME VARIATIONS

WOHNSIEDLER- The original spelling determined from the signature on the ship *Phoenix* passenger list

von Sidler- thought to be the German spelling by those doing the original genealogy

Whonsetler- spelling found in Wayne County, Ohio and Indiana

Wonsetler or Wonsettler- spelling found sw Pennsylvania & eastern Ohio

Wonsidler- spelling found in eastern Pennsylvania & attributed to Charles, son of Johann Georg

Wonsetler- spelling attributed to Philip, son of Johann Georg

Wonsetlar- spelling attributed to Nicholas, son of Johann Georg

Variations found in documents and books during family research:

Onesetler

Onesettler

Onsetter

Vonsetter

Vonsettler

Wahnsidel

Wahnsiller

Wansetler

Wansedler

Wansidler

Wansitler

Wansutler

Wantsettler

Wantsidler

Winsetler

Wohmsiedlor

Wohnsedler

Wohnseidler

Wohnsidler

Wohnsiedel

Wohnsiegler

Wohnsitler

Wohnsittler

Wolzetler

Wolzitler

Wonesickler

Wonsickler

Wonesitler

Wonseidler

Wonsiedler

Wonssidler

Wonsitler

Wonsteller

Wortsetter

Wonsutler

Wunsiedler