

DERR #2: The Three Principal Dreisbach Emigrants to Philadelphia (1743, 1751 and 1754)

Welcome to this research report with findings that are new for most North American Dreisbachs.

New information for DERR readers concerning all three emigrants

Simon Dreisbach: We have already mentioned in DERR #1 the recent discovery that Simon Dreisbach was imprisoned in Castle Wittgenstein. The relevant information available thus far will be presented in future DERR numbers.

Martin Dreisbach: Here in DERR #2 we present information on the children born to Martin and Anna Eva Dreisbach in Krombach before they emigrated to PA. This will call for some revisions to present data in the Martin line genealogy. We can now also supply the name of Martin's eldest son who died while the family was living on its first known American homestead in Cocalico Twp. in northeastern Lancaster Co. We also have a rare piece of information: the date on which their ship sailed *from* Rotterdam, allowing us to estimate the length of the voyage.

Henrich Dreisbach: We present here further confirmation, some revisions and also additions to the information on Henrich Dreisbach's probable origins as inserted in the Dreisbach database in July 2004. (See Resource Notes at the end for a comparison of data.) The young immigrant who signed his name *Henrich Dresbach* on arriving in Philadelphia was very likely Simon Dreisbach's only nephew!

Information on the footnotes, which are numerous in this number.

The footnotes have two purposes.

- 1) *To give sources of information for the benefit of other researchers.*
- 2) *To provide information and comments that may fall outside the purpose of the main text. Examples are notes 1, 7 and 12. Readers may therefore wish to scan the footnote sections as they proceed, or read them at their leisure.*

Information on biographical data symbols.

For biographical data, the following symbols are used:

* born ~ christened/baptized ∞ married † died

1. 1743 emigrant Simon Dreisbach (*Oberndorf, 1698 – †Northampton Co. PA, 1785¹)

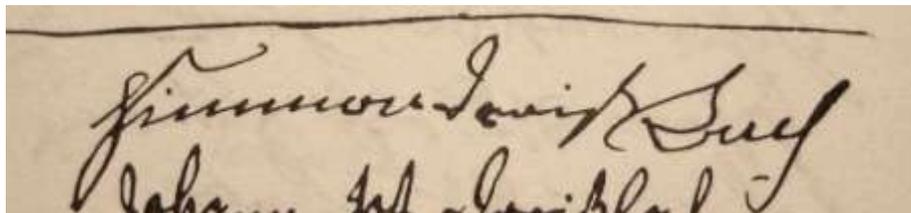


Fig. 1. Signature of Simon Dreisbach. Made when he signed the Oath of Allegiance (to the King of England) on the day after he arrived in Philadelphia, PA., 20 October 1743.²

Simon was born in 1698³ in the house "Am Aberge" in Oberndorf in Wittgenstein-Wittgenstein,⁴ and was baptized in the Feudingeng church on the 12th Sunday of Trinity, 1698.⁵ His parents were **Georg Wilhelm Dreisbach** and **Margreth Sassmannshausen**. Simon's marriage is recorded in the Feudingeng church register as taking place on 7 November 1720.⁶ He married **Maria Katharina Keller** who was born in the house "Curts" in the village of Holzhausen and was baptized in Feudingeng on 30 March 1696.⁷ She was probably the youngest of ten siblings, and moved to Simon's house in Oberndorf at the time of their marriage. Simon, as the eldest child, would one day become the Count's official householder of "Am Aberge", so by marrying him, Anna Katharina's future would have been assured.

Certainly, in 1720 at the time of their wedding, the thought of emigrating had not yet taken root among the villagers of the two Wittgenstein territories. That would soon change, with many families trying to relocate to what is now northern Lithuania in 1724-25, followed within a few years by a slowly increasing trickle of Wittgensteiners taking passage to the colony of Pennsylvania. These and other aspects of emigration from Wittgenstein will be presented in later DERR numbers. At present no single definite reason is known why Simon Dreisbach decided to emigrate, but in the past two years various contributing factors have emerged in archival documents, and we intend to present them to DERR readers.

Simon is the first known Dreisbach arrival in North America.⁸ He is amply documented, first in Wittgenstein, then as a passenger on the "Lydia", and finally as an inhabitant of Northampton County,

¹ According to Simon's second (early 20th century) tombstone in the Old Graveyard of Zion Stone Church near Kreidersville, PA, he died on 31 March 1785.

² After Strassburger, R. B., Ed. by Hinke, W.J., *Pennsylvania German Pioneers, A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia From 1727 to 1808*. Pennsylvania German Society, Norristown, PA, 1934. p. 356.

³ The birth date on Simon's tombstone at Zion Stone Church is 7 August 1698.

⁴ To differentiate between the two Wittgensteins, one should use "Wittgenstein-Wittgenstein" for the southern territory, ruled by the Counts of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohenstein, and "Wittgenstein-Berleburg" for the northern territory, ruled by the Counts of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg. Please note that for the sake of simplicity, "Wittgenstein" will at times be used in referring to persons and places in the southern territory. References to the northern territory can be expected to be far fewer in number. In these cases "Wittgenstein-Berleburg" or simply "the northern territory" will be used.

⁵ Feudingeng baptismal register 1634-1739, p. 178, no. 26.

⁶ Feudingeng marriage register 1574-1739, p. 224.

⁷ Feudingeng baptismal register 1634-1739, p. 168, no. 10.

⁸ Misleading information on the many families and individuals who emigrated or tried to emigrate from Wittgenstein in 1724-25 appeared in *The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine* in 1970 (vol. 26, no. 3), pp. 133-43, "A 1725 List of Wittgenstein Emigrants" by Hedwig Mundel, translated by Don Yoder. For reasons that will be explained in a later DERR issue, the fictive Pennsylvania goal of these persons was indeed based on an

Pennsylvania. Simon left Oberndorf secretly, by night, on 15 May 1743, accompanied by his wife and their six children, shown here with their approximate ages upon arrival in Philadelphia in September:⁹

Jost: 21 (~ 18 Sept. 1721), **Adam:** 20 (~7 Nov. 1722), **Simon:** 13 (~ 24 January 1730), **Georg Wilhelm:** 10 (~ 14 June 1733), **Johannes:** 8 (~ 6 Febr. 1735), **Anna Katharina:** 5 (~ 4 May 1738).

The Simon Dreisbach family arrived in Philadelphia on 19 September 1743 on the ship "Lydia" Their journey took them to the Rhine River, then down the Rhine by boat or barge to Rotterdam. Here they boarded the "Lydia", a small (70 tons), two-masted galley that carried 6 guns and a crew of 9.¹⁰ They sailed first to Cowes, a port city on the Isle of Wight just off the southern coast of England. A stop in this or another English port was mandatory for all shipping heading to the American colonies. In Cowes the "Lydia" reprovisioned for the trans-Atlantic voyage. The Dreisbachs' total journey from Oberndorf to Philadelphia lasted for more than four months. By the time they reached Pennsylvania, Simon had turned forty-five, and Maria Katharina was forty-seven and a half.

2. 1751 emigrant Martin Dreisbach (*Raumland, 1717 – †Union County, PA (near Lewisburg), 1799¹¹)

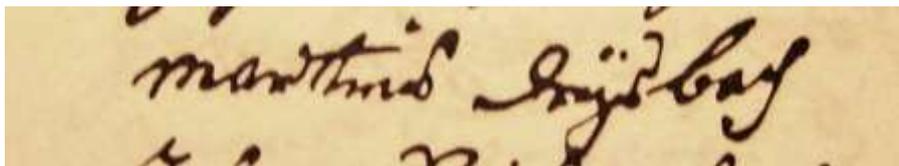


Fig. 2. Signature of Martinus Dreisbach. Made when he signed the Oath of Allegiance (to the King of England) on the day he arrived in Philadelphia, PA., 4 October 1751.¹²

Martin was born in 1717 in the house "Leie" in Raumland in Wittgenstein-Berleburg, and was baptized in the Raumland church on 23 May 1717.¹³ He was probably the youngest of nine children born to **Hans Georg Dreisbach** and **Anna Elisabeth Leyendecker**. Like many young people who could not expect to become householder in the house they were born in, Martin left Raumland to earn his living elsewhere. We can see in the Counts' lists of subjects that a number of young persons are

official archival source, but it was a falsification. No one on that list is known to have gone to Pennsylvania at that time; rather, the goal of that wave of emigration was located near the Baltic coast in what is now Lithuania.

⁹ All their baptismal page references from the Feudingingen register are grouped here. Jost: p. 255, 11th entry, Adam: p. 265, 10th entry, Simon: p. 374, 3rd entry, Georg Wilöhelm: p 334, 6th entry, Johannes: p. 344, 6th entry, Anna Katharina: p. 365, 6th entry.

¹⁰ The "Lydia" was built in Philadelphia in 1738. Wokeck (see Research Notes below), p. 261

¹¹ The date is from Martin's tombstone at the Dreisbach Church near Lewisburg, PA. There may exist legal documents confirming this date, but at present the DERR has no knowledge of their contents.

¹² After Strassburger, R. B., Ed. by Hinke, W.J., *Pennsylvania German Pioneers, A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia From 1727 to 1808*. Pennsylvania German Society, Norristown, PA, 1934. p. 558.

¹³ First-hand reference information from the Raumland baptismal records is at present unavailable to the DERR. We hope to include it, if available, in a later number on emigrant Martin Dreisbach.

recorded as working in 'Siegerland' (the adjacent Principality of Nassau-Siegen).¹⁴ His reason for going to the small town of Krombach is not known. It was there that he married **Anna Eva Hoffmann** in April 1742.¹⁵ She was born in Krombach on 16 April 1722¹⁶ and died on 10 March 1789 near Lewisburg in Union Co., PA.¹⁷

Anna Eva was the daughter of **Johannes Hoffmann** who had at times served as schoolmaster in Krombach, and who was also a church elder. The Hoffmanns were thus an established family in Krombach. Martin, whose mother had died in the house "Leie" when he was about one, and whose father died when he was about seventeen, had no material expectations in his native Raumland in Wittgenstein-Berleburg. Given that he was almost twenty-five when he married, Martin had presumably already been in Krombach for some years, working perhaps as a blacksmith.¹⁸ Anna Eva, who may have been the youngest of twelve (though four siblings had died in infancy, and two in childhood)¹⁹ can have had no material expectations either, despite belonging to a well-rooted local family. As we shall see below, their first two children died in Krombach in 1743 and 1748, so that only three of the five born to them travelled to PA. When they left for North America, both of Anna Eva's parents were still alive. Her mother, **Maria Elisabeth, nee Hadem**, lived until 1758, and her father Johannes until 1782!²⁰ Why Martin and Anna Eva decided to leave familiar surroundings and make the risky trip to Pennsylvania with small children has as yet found no explanation.

Like the Simon Dreisbach family and the majority of "Palatine" emigrants at this time, Martin and his family left from Rotterdam. There they boarded the "Queen of Denmark" and sailed to Cowes, England on 8 July 1751. Registered at 240 tons, their ship was more than three times larger than the ship in which Simon and his family traveled. They arrived in Philadelphia on 4 October 1751 after a 10 ½ week ocean voyage during which 29 passengers died, 18 of them being children under the age of 4.²¹ Martin and Eva traveled with their three children, all of whom survived the trip. They are shown here with their ages upon arrival:

Martin: 5 yrs. 11 mos (* 5 Nov. 1745), **Margaretha:** 2 yrs. 10 mos. (* 4 Dec. 1748), **Johann Jacob:** 1 yr. 10 mos. (* 7 Dec. 1750).²² Martin himself was thirty-four, and Anna Eva was twenty-nine.²³

¹⁴ The area designated *Siegerland* in earlier centuries is now, together with the two Wittgenstein principalities, part of the German district, *Siegen-Wittgenstein*. For an understanding of emigration history, some knowledge of the territorial and administrative history of this region is essential. Further aspects can be expected to appear in the DERR.

¹⁵ The marriage was in April 1742 after the bans had been proclaimed three times, starting on 4 March 1742. Krombach, marriage register (1742) p. 8b.

¹⁶ Krombach baptismal register (1722) no. 15.

¹⁷ Anna Eva died near Lewisburg in Union Co., PA, on 10 March 1789 according to her tombstone at the Dreisbach Church.

¹⁸ This was his trade in PA, according to his grandson, Reverend John Dreisbach. "Rev. John", along with an evaluation of his family information, will be presented in a later DERR. He will also be the subject of a DFA Newsletter.

¹⁹ There will be further source references, with more on Anna Eva Hoffmann and her family in a later DERR.

²⁰ See further information under Research notes.

²¹ Information from a letter home written two months after arriving in PA by Peter Recher. See the article by Klaus Hein in *Mennonite Family History*, Vol. XI, No. 4, Oct. 1992, pp. 162-164.

²² Krombach baptismal register: Martin (*1745) no. 35, Margaretha (*1748) no. 32, Johann Jacob (*1750), no. 107.

²³ It will be remembered that the October 2012 DFA Newsletter was devoted to the early part of Martin's life, from Raumland to Krombach to Cocalico Twp. in northeastern Lancaster Co., PA.

3. 1754 emigrant Henrich 'Dresbach' (*Richstein, Wittgenstein-Wittgenstein 1735 – †Rockhill Twp., Bucks Co., PA 8 January 1808²⁴)

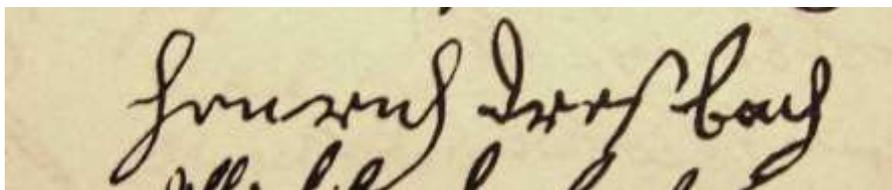


Fig. 3. Signature of Henrich Dresbach. Made when he signed the Oath of Allegiance (to the King of England) on the day he arrived in Philadelphia, PA., 7 November 1754.²⁵

We shall assume here that this Henrich was indeed Simon Dreisbach's only nephew. If this is so, then the following biographical information applies.²⁶ Emigrant Henrich seems to have been the Henrich who was the firstborn of **Georg Dreisbach**, a younger brother of Simon. Georg had left Oberndorf and gone to Richstein, near the eastern border of Wittgenstein with Hesse, and eventually married a Richstein woman, **Katharina Feuring**.²⁷ Henrich, their first child, was born in Richstein, and was baptized as Johann Henrich in the Arfeld church on 30 Oct. 1735²⁸. Henrich apparently left no further traces in Wittgenstein, though more will be said below about his family situation.

Henrich arrived in Philadelphia on the "John and Elizabeth" on 7 November 1754. A larger ship, it carried about 520 people, twice the usual load of passengers²⁹, and had sailed from Amsterdam, going by way of Portsmouth. On the passenger and abjuration oath lists, he is preceded by Daniel Leukel and followed by Philib Achebach, both possibly from Wittgenstein. Other passengers with surnames such as Frank, Dorr and Weygandt can also have been from Wittgenstein. Henrich uses the spelling "Dresbach" which is somewhat unusual, but not unknown, in Wittgenstein. Henrich had turned nineteen during the last month of the voyage.

Did these three know each other?

All three Dreisbachs had a common ancestor, **Georg Dreisbach** of Balde (ca. 1550 - ?), the probable son or son-in-law of **Abraham** of Balde. Simon's ancestors left Balde in about 1600, marrying in turn women in the southern territory who stood to inherit their houses in Amtshausen, Steinbach and Oberndorf. Martin's ancestors stayed in Balde, in the house "Wahnersch", until Martin's father married a woman in the house "Leie" in Raumland. Simon and Martin can have been

²⁴ Administration document of 25 Feb. 1808 in Bucks Co. Archives, Doylestown, PA, for the estate of Henry Driesback, File #3574, Bk. 75.

²⁵ After Strassburger, R. B., Ed. by Hinke, W.J., *Pennsylvania German Pioneers, A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia From 1727 to 1808*. Pennsylvania German Society, Norristown, PA, 1934. p. 752.

²⁶ For information on Henrich Dreisbach and his immediate family I am indebted to Jochen Karl Mehldau of Karlsruhe, Germany, who has generously sent me "Nachfahrenliste Dreisbach, Georg 1701b", an excerpt from his database of records from the Wittgenstein church registers.

²⁷ Richstein belonged to the parish of Arfeld, in which church they were married on 29 June 1734; Arfeld marriage register. 289, item 6.

²⁸ Baptismal register of the Arfeld church, p. 182, item 3.

²⁹ Wokeck, pp. 240-254. See Research Notes below.

aware of each other's existence, but they lived in separate political entities, were part of separate church districts and were only distantly related, being third cousins.

Martin probably knew nothing at all about Henrich, who would have been a child when Martin went to Krombach.

Simon had just begun a prison sentence in Castle Wittgenstein when nephew Henrich was baptized in the Arfeld church. It is possible that uncle and nephew met later, but Henrich was only seven when Simon and his family left Oberndorf. Moreover, Henrich's father Georg died in 1748, so the young man's chances of getting news of his uncle in Pennsylvania were slender indeed.

There were thus geographical and age differences. Simon was about nineteen years older than Martin, and Martin was about eighteen years older than Henrich. It is not very likely that news of Simon's departure reached newly married Martin in Krombach. Henrich, however, had certainly heard from his father that he had an uncle in Pennsylvania, but there is no documentary evidence that they ever met there.

Notes on Martin Dreisbach's deceased children and on Henrich Dreisbach's loss of both parents.

We now know the names and dates of Martin and Anna Eva's first two children. **Johann Henrich** was born in Krombach on 5 November 1743, and died on 11 October 1743 at fifteen weeks and three days. **Elisabeth** was born in Krombach on 15 October 1744 and died on 5 Feb. 1748 at three years and five months.³⁰ The next child, **Martin**, whom we have already mentioned as having survived the voyage, was in fact the unnamed son who was lost "by sudden death" during the family's stay in Cocalico Twp.³¹

As for Henrich Dreisbach of Richstein, his early life was one of loss. Though the next to be born after him, Anna Elisabeth, lived until 1792, the two little girls who followed, Maria and Luise, born in 1741 and 1743, died in 1742 and 1744 respectively. Within a few months, mother Katharina had also died, and was buried at the Arfeld church in August of 1744. Henrich was eight. It was not until December 1746 that father Georg Dreisbach took a second wife, Maria Birkelbach. Henrich and Elisabeth now acquired a step-mother who was only ten years older than Henrich. Very soon, however, father George died, on 1 Feb. 1748. He was only forty-six, and left the two children of his first marriage, his second wife and a baby daughter only six weeks old. Henrich, now twelve, had lost both parents. What he did in the next six years before leaving for North America we do not know, but it is not surprising that, having few ties in the Old World, he should take his chances in the New one.

³⁰ Ansgar Hoffmann and Anne Schulte-Lefebvre, *Ortsfamilienbuch Krombach 1461-1795*, Cardamina Verlag, Plaidt, 2009, p. 104.

³¹ Found in the "Short Family History" left by "John Dreisbach, Preacher", whose life, as mentioned above, will be presented in a future DFA Newsletter.

Research notes

- We are indebted to our distant and very helpful cousins **Martin Dreisbach of Kreuztal** and **Andreas Sassmannshausen of Hilchenbach** for supplying information that was new to us on Martin Dreisbach, Anna Eva Hoffmann and the five children born to them in Krombach. We have even received, via Andreas, extracts on the Martin Dreisbach and Hoffmann families, provided by **Anne Schulte-Lefebvre** in Switzerland from the book she co-authored, *Ortsfamilienbuch Krombach* (see note 26).

- **Jochen Karl Mehdau** has graciously shared his detailed biographical data on Simon Dreisbach's brother Georg and his family, including son **Henrich, the presumed 1754 emigrant**. (Please see footnote 23.) This information differs in some respects from that which Dr. Paul Riedesel, drawing upon Mr. Mehdau's earlier research, made available to the Dreisbach Family Association some years ago, and which was added to the DFA websites in July 2004. See:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~dreisbachfamily/henry.htm> or:

<http://dreisbachfamily.org/genealogy/buckscohenryline.html>

Note that the information given in the present report came to us from Mr. Mehdau on 3 December 2011, and must therefore supersede previous versions. Thus, the wedding of Georg Dreisbach and Katharina Feuring took place on 29 June 1734, not 29 May 1735. There was no Katharina Elisabeth born in 1734. Henry Dreisbach was the firstborn, in 1735, followed by Anna Elisabeth (1738-1792), Anna Maria (1741-1742), Luise (1743-1744) and Elisabeth (1747-1803).

- Information on the three vessels which took Dreisbachs to Philadelphia, the "Lydia", the "Queen of Denmark" and the "John and Elizabeth", was written and supplied by **Marcia Dreisbach Falconer**. In future DERR numbers she will present her investigations into the extensive area of 18th century travel conditions from Wittgenstein to North America. One of Marcia's major sources is Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers. The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA, 1999.

- The new material, and the revisions to earlier material that we present in the DERR would make no sense, were it not for the copious information that had previously been collected, sifted and shared, starting well before the 1995 revival of the Dreisbach Family Association. Gustav Schneider of Bad Laasphe not only wrote the Foreword to *The Dreisbach Book*,³² he was the first major source of information on our Wittgenstein heritage. Since then Wittgenstein historians and researchers have patiently answered our questions, shared their insights, photographed documents and scanned articles for us, and have even sent us books. The DERR editors and the DERR readers alike owe them a great debt of gratitude.

A.D.G. April 2013

³² Compiled, written and edited by Ardis Grosjean Dreisbach, Bruce Jack Dreisbach and Rev. Charles V. Dreisbach under the auspices of the DFA and published in 1998. Now out of print.