

The making of an emigrant, part one.

Simon Dreisbach's life 1721-1727, and the lure of Pennsylvania.

This chapter in Simon Dreisbach's life must remain open-ended. How many persons did he know, or know of, who left for Pennsylvania? What had he heard about the conditions they found there? We can never know the full extent of his awareness. Nor, after almost three hundred years, is there any hope of fully defining the ebb and flow of departures from Wittgenstein to North America.

More Wittgenstein emigrants' names, more life stories and more family histories will come to light, but information on many emigrants is irretrievably lost. Not all ship's lists have been preserved, and extant lists generally contain only the names of adult males. The surviving letters sent home from Pennsylvania in this period are few. Land records in the Pennsylvania State Archives can help to some extent, but they only show us those former Wittgensteiners who have been recorded in one or more of the stages leading to full land ownership. What we do sense, however, is the development of what might be termed a Pennsylvania fever, beginning in the late 1720's and escalating to major proportions in later decades.

Let us be clear. It is not for the DERR, with its special focus, to attempt an overall presentation of emigration from Wittgenstein to Pennsylvania. We do recognize, however, that those who chose to leave their homes and sail to the New World did not make that choice in a vacuum. There were certainly strong reasons, mostly unknown to us, why our three documented Dreisbach emigrants decided to relocate to Pennsylvania. Of the three, it is only Simon, born in 1698, who can have had some personal awareness of the early departures for Pennsylvania, in particular those in the period 1727-1735.

What then shall be our focus? This DERR will try to show the intersection of events in two spheres: that of Simon Dreisbach's life as a family man and subject of Count August, and that of the larger emigration-from-Wittgenstein context. 1727 is our cut-off date, albeit with a glance forward to 1735, the year when Simon Dreisbach's life underwent a dramatic change.

Two of the possible factors leading to Simon Dreisbach's emigration.

Although we can never be sure of what lay behind Simon Dreisbach's decision to emigrate, we can suggest two likely contributing factors: firstly, the long-hidden connections between Simon and certain other emigrants to East Prussia which we recently uncovered; secondly, the role that legalized serfdom played as a catalyst for revolt and emigration.

As presented at length in DERR no. 8 we have ascertained that several of Simon Dreisbach's and his wife's relatives attempted to emigrate before them.

- **Johann Jost Göbel from Count August's estate, Schönstein, his wife Susanna and son Jacob**, age 2½, were captured in Marburg in the spring of 1725. Johann Jost Göbel was a first cousin of Simon Dreisbach's wife, Anna Katharina (nee Keller), whose mother was a Göbel.
- Susanna, wife of Johann Jost Göbel above, was born a Gerhart in Grossenbach, and had four Gerhart siblings who successfully completed a separate journey to East Prussia. The senior member of this group was **Hans Wilhelm Dreisbach, also of Grossenbach**. He was a distant cousin of Simon's, and his wife, Anna Gertraut, was the eldest of the Gerhart siblings.

- **Paul Dreisbach of Hesselbach, his wife Katharina and two sons**, appear in the sheriff's lists of 24 and 30 May 1725 as having left Hesselbach for East Prussia but having subsequently returned. Though his father and grandfather had lived in the village of Schameder, not far from Simon's ancestral Balde, no documented family links are at present known.
- **Anna Catharina Stenger, nee Dreisbach, wife of Evert (Eberhard) Stenger of Weidenhausen**, was possibly the emigrant who was closest to Simon Dreisbach, for she was his aunt, next in age to Simon's father, Georg Wilhelm Dreisbach. The Stengers and their two sons got only as far as the town of Battenburg, not far from Wittgenstein's eastern border, where they and others were captured, taken back to the border and handed over to the Wittgenstein authorities. Ebert Stenger was imprisoned, tried and fined. His fate and that of many other returnees and captives would have been widely discussed in the villages.

Serfdom's role in arousing civil unrest, revolt and emigration.

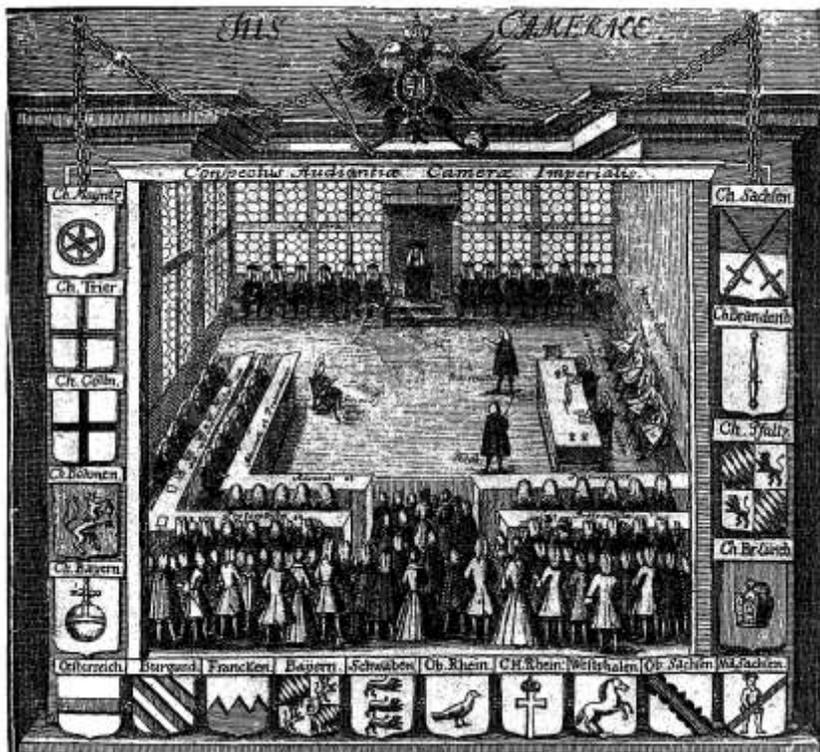


Fig. 1. The Imperial Court in session in the city of Wetzlar. Here, on 31 Oct. 1724 the Court ruled in favor of Count August and decreed that his subjects were in fact veritable serfs.¹

In DERR no. 6 there was brief mention of the court decision of 1724 which, in accordance with Count August's wishes, decreed that his villagers were serfs (thus the legal 'property' of the Count) who owed him unlimited service. This decision took place in the Imperial Court of the Realm, meeting in Wetzlar, south of Wittgenstein. Despite the arguments presented by lawyers representing the Wittgenstein villagers, the Court

ruled in August's favor on 31 October 1724. This decree was then put into practice by Count August's administrators who had the legal right to demand the forced labor of the villagers six days a week. The villagers, despairing of having time to raise their own food and crops, eventually complained to the Court that they could only work their own farms "by moon-light".²

The immediate effect of the Imperial Court's ruling was to encourage flight from Wittgenstein to escape from these harsh and limiting conditions. In the following year, 1725, many villagers turned to the escape route most readily at hand and heeded the Prussian general invitation to move to East Prussia and

¹ An 18th century print now in the public domain. Source: Wikipedia Commons.

² From a complaint of the Wittgenstein villagers to the Imperial Court in the year 1731, cited in Werner Troßbach, "Widerstand als Normalfall: Bauernunruhen in der Grafschaft Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohenstein 1696-1808", *Westfälischer Zeitschrift*, vol. 135 (1985), p. 91.

repopulate its abandoned farming districts. Simon Dreisbach was not among those who left, nor was he in a position to leave. His life in this period comprised a series of births, deaths and new responsibilities in a difficult social and economic context.

Major events in Simon Dreisbach's economic and family life in the years 1720-1727.³

The events of the period 1720-1727 included various likely influences on Simon Dreisbach's attitude toward emigration. The economically and politically challenging times in Wittgenstein can have pushed Simon to wish to leave. At the same time, however, the family experienced births and deaths that can have constituted a 'pull' to remain at home. After the deaths of the older generations, Simon and Kette were in a position to exercise their own authority in the management of the "Am Aberge" house and its associated tracts of land. To speak of reasons for and against emigration in terms of "push/pull" factors is common in emigration studies, and the new authority structure in "Am Aberge" was an clear pull factor.

1720: Poor grain harvest and the marriage of Simon and 'Kette'.

In the summer of this year there was a poor grain harvest in Wittgenstein; even the wealthy went hungry.⁴ Nevertheless, on 7 November the marriage of Simon Dreisbach to Maria Katharina Keller from Holzhausen took place at the Feudingeng church.⁵ Neither of the spouses had a father still alive who could perform the usual bargaining over the dowry and agree on future practical living arrangements. Simon's father had died before 1712, and his step-father, Jost Wied, was quite possibly also dead by this time. In the years that followed, Simon, though he was the eldest son and was married, was still far from the top of the household's chain of command. His seventy-two year old grandfather Johannes Sassmannshausen, master builder, lived until 1722. Moreover, at the time of Simon's marriage his mother Margreth, who presumably ran the household, was only forty-two.

1721: Count August acquires more power. A Dreisbach birth, a Sassmannshausen death.

Throughout southern Wittgenstein the villagers were beginning to feel the unpleasant effects of Count August's accession to a position of power after he joined his brother Henrich Albrecht as co-ruler in 1719. August assumed special responsibility for administering the extensive forests in the Counts' domain, and instituted many new rules, taxes and fees for gathering wood, leaves, etc. that went counter to time-honored tradition. In addition, the previous year's harvests had been so poor that for lack of oats the villagers' horses could not do the work the Counts required.⁶

On 18 September Simon's firstborn, Johann Jost was baptized in Feudingeng. With five baptismal sponsors, this was a middle-sized though not an unusually large occasion. Most of the sponsors were similar in age to the parents, give or take some years, and two were close relatives, as one might expect in a young family not particularly well connected. On the one hand, the event of a new birth would have been a joyful occasion in the household. Previously, Simon's mother Margreth had borne two children in her second marriage (to Jost Wied), but they had died very young in 1716 and 1717. On the other hand, it

³ This overview has expanded on the brief chronology of Simon Dreisbach's family life as given in DERR no. 6 by including political and social events.

⁴ Troßbach, op. cit., p. 51.

⁵ See DERR vol. 1, no. 6, p. 1 for a photo from the Feudingeng Reformed Church marriage book.

⁶ Troßbach, op. cit. pp. 51-53.

was sad that Simon's grandmother, Susanna Sassmannshausen, had died at age sixty-seven on 3 July and therefore had just missed the birth and baptism of her first great-grandchild.

1722: Another Sassmannshausen death, another Dreisbach baptism.

On 28 August, Simon's Sassmannshausen grandfather died. Twice-widowed Margreth was now the senior person in the "Am Aberge" household. Simon's wife Kette would have to wait until 1727 to exercise authority within the house. Likewise Simon, who turned twenty-four in this year, would have to wait until 1727 to become recognized as the Count's householder with official title to farm the "Am Aberge" property. In the meantime, Adam was born. At his baptism on 7 November, two of the four baptismal sponsors were close relatives of his Keller mother. Given the prevailing economic/agricultural conditions, it is not likely that the celebration was a lavish one.

1723: Death of Duke Henrich Albrecht. Soldiers attack villagers.

Count August's enforced changes had not passed without incident. Since 1721 there had been collective actions by the Wittgenstein villagers against the new forest laws and excessive mandatory work for the Counts. When Henrich Albrecht, the more moderate of the two ruling brothers, died suddenly on 13 November 1723, August, the ruthless younger brother, obtained complete control of the territory. Just a month later this led to armed encounters in the Banfe district between the Count's soldiers and protesting villagers, and on 16 and 17 December Elsoff villagers were killed in what has been called the slaughtering of the peasants (*Bauernschlachten*).⁷

1724: An Imperial Court decision seals the fate of the Wittgenstein villagers. A Dreisbach girl is baptized.

Starting in about February, general invitations to settle in East Prussia were widely distributed in German-speaking territories. In the course of spring and early summer a number of Wittgenstein families left their homes and set out, hoping for a better life in what was popularly known as Prussian Lithuania. On 31 October the Imperial Court in Wetzlar handed down its fateful decision, confirming Count August's system of exploitative serfdom, a system which would continue unchanged until August's death in 1735.⁸ Meanwhile, in the Dreisbach household there was another baptism, that of Maria Katharina on 15 October.

1725: Emigration resumes. August brutally silences the opposition in Elsoff. A Dreisbach child's death, soon followed by another christening.

Discouraged by Count August's victory at the Imperial Court, and fired by the hope of a better life in East Prussia, many Wittgenstein families chose to emigrate during the spring, often without paying the heavy exit duties imposed by the Count. (All the emigrants mentioned in part 1 above as having connections to Simon and his family, left Wittgenstein during these spring months of 1725.) In October a final brutal display of power on August's side ended the villagers' direct protest actions. He sent an "execution squadron" to silence the open opposition that had its stronghold in the village of Elsoff. On 11 October they killed five village men. Henceforth the only avenue of protest left was that of passive resistance. In the Dreisbach household, little Maria Katharina, born the previous year, lived to be only a year and a

⁷ Troßbach, op. cit., pp. 76-77 and 83.

⁸ Even in the judicial world the Imperial Court's decision was viewed as being without precedent in its partiality to a ruler. Troßbach, op. cit., p. 81.

month old and was buried on 16 November. About two weeks later third son Alexander was born, and was baptized on 4 December.

1726: Emigration figures drop. Simon's carting trip to Cologne and a death in "'Am Aberge'".

Emigration to East Prussia came to a standstill. In the coming years, however, the attraction of Pennsylvania would grow stronger and Wittgensteiners would find their way there. The principal events of this year in Simon's life are presented in detail in DERR no. 6. During the spring he and his horse delivered a load of tanning bark to Cologne. This would have been bark from the Count's forests, and we can assume that Simon would have been part of a larger convoy delivering bark that a Cologne tannery had ordered from the Count or his agents. Simon's mother, Margreth Sassmannshausen-Dreisbach-Wied, died on 27 April. It is possible that she died during Simon's absence. If Simon was making this delivery at the order of the Count or his administrators, then he may well have had to leave for Cologne whether or not his mother was ill.

1727: Simon enters a new stage of life as the Count's feudal householder in the house "'Am Aberge'".

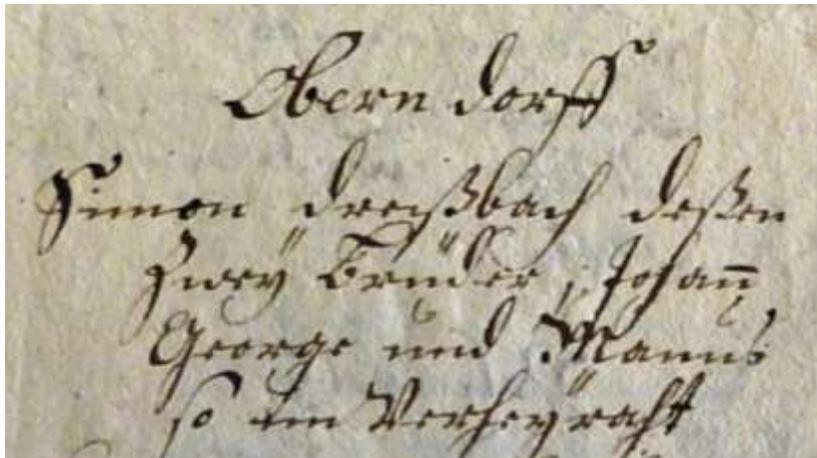


Fig. 2. Detail of a 1727 list of the Count's householders in Oberndorf, including other adult male inhabitants of the house, in this case Simon's younger brothers Johann George and Manus.⁹

At some time before 9 December 1727 Simon Dreysbach became the official "tenant in fee" of the house where he had been born.

His entry in the Count's list of Oberndorf tenants and other adult males in the household says "Simon Dreysbach, his two brothers, Johan[n] George and Manus, unmarried". Simon now gained new status in the village and could participate in the village council, but he was also responsible for meeting the heavy requirements placed on the householders in the form of contributions both monetary and in kind, and many days of obligatory labor on the Count's properties, including construction work on Castle Wittgenstein. Such labor was a consequence of the "unlimited serfdom" as defined by the Imperial Court, generally three full days a week, but six during harvest and the like. Other family members were expected to do the normal farm work at home. How much help Simon got from his two brothers would have depended on when they did their obligatory service to the Count. Young adults in "householder" families, both sons and daughters, were required to do service for three years at the Count's various properties and enterprises or in the militia.

⁹ Detail of the list of the Count's subjects (Untertanenverzeichnis) as of 9 December 1727, village by village. Princely Wittgenstein Archive, document W 51 p. 21b. Photo courtesy of Heinrich Imhof.

Whether, after becoming the "Am Aberge" householder, Simon continued to be a part-time carter must remain an open question. It is possible that the Count or his administrators continued to make use of Simon to deliver further loads of bark or to transport other materials. His new status as householder, despite all its burdens and obligations, can have reduced the attractiveness of emigration. East Prussia was no longer an option. The way to Pennsylvania was as yet being traveled by relatively few. Kette, with three small boys and a household of which she was at last the mistress, can hardly have wished to pack up and leave. For the time being the pull factor exerted by "Am Aberge" can be deemed stronger than the push toward emigration that would gradually intensify under Count August's regime.

The lure of Pennsylvania and a Sassmannshausen example.

Documentation is regrettably scant on the early Wittgenstein individuals and groups who settled primarily in Pennsylvania. We can nevertheless safely assume that none of the early emigrants from Wittgenstein discussed in DERR no. 7 had any known connection with the later Dreisbach emigrants. Information did of course filter back to the homeland from persons who had survived the voyage and begun a new existence, generally somewhere in or near Germantown or areas to the north or west of it. Letters from Christopher Sauer and his traveling companion Georg Käsebier, written in late 1724, arrived in Wittgenstein in 1725 and were widely copied. Unfortunately, most of those who took passage to Philadelphia before 1727, when captains were required to establish lists of their passengers, will never be identified. Nor has much information survived on those who landed at the port of New York.

We have however identified one early emigrating family that we believe was known to Simon and Kette Dreisbach. The two couples were of similar age and had children who were also similar in age. This was the family of Jost Henrich and Anna Catharina Sassmannshausen.

Jost Henrich and his wife Anna Catharina, nee Strack, of Maxatawny in Berks County, both originally from the Feudingingen parish.

Jost Henrich Sassmannshausen (1696-1767) and his young family in all likelihood departed for Pennsylvania in early 1727. It is interesting to compare his early life with that of slightly younger Simon Dreisbach, born in 1698. The two men grew up in neighboring villages, about a mile apart: Jost Henrich in Rüppershausen, and Simon in Oberndorf. Although Simon's mother was born a Sassmannshausen, it has now been shown that hers was a separate line from that of Jost Henrich, though both lines can be traced back to the village of Sassmannshausen.¹⁰ In any event the paths of the two young men would have crossed frequently, not only at the Feudingingen church services which all were expected to attend, but also in the course of village life.

Jost Henrich was the first of the two young men to marry – on 17 September 1717, in the Feudingingen church – having chosen as his wife Anna Catharina Strack. Her father was originally from Simon's village, Oberndorf, but she herself grew up in Amtshausen, where Simon had many relatives. The Sassmannshausen couple soon established themselves in northern Wittgenstein, in Berghausen, in a house called "Böhls" where Anna Catharina's uncle Johan Jacob Zode was the householder. The baptismal record of their first child, Andreas, has not been located, but three other baptisms were recorded in Berghausen in 1719, 1722 and 1725. By 1725 Jost Henrich had become the "Böhls" householder. Yet, barely two years late, in early 1727, he departed for Pennsylvania with his wife and children.

¹⁰ The various Sassmannshausen lines were sorted out by Jochen Karl Mehldau and Andreas Sassmannshausen and were communicated to me by Andreas on 15 March 2013.

Von Abzug und Erlaßungs-Jeldern		
L. F. 1726	Abzug fünf von vierzig R. M. und sechs S.	15 -
	Abzug fünf von vierzig R. M. und sechs S.	7 -
L. F. 1727	Johannes Walter Metzger alle für Jost Henrich	8 -
	den nach Pennsylvania gegangen Jost Henrich	
L. F. 1728	Abzug fünf von vierzig R. M. und sechs S.	9 22
	und 10 R. M.	

Fig. 3. Detail, tally sheet of receipts 1 March 1726 to 1 March 1727, in the Princely Archive, Berleburg, showing emigration duties paid on behalf of Jost Henrich Sassmannshausen, "gone to Pennsylvania".¹¹

The text of Fig. 2, cited in full in the Research Notes, indicates that Jost Henrich's exit fees were paid for him by one Johannes Wetter Metzger after the Sassmannshausen family had departed.

As for Simon Dreisbach, he remained a bachelor until 1720, when he married Maria Katharina Keller. Being one of the younger Keller siblings, she was fortunate to marry a man who could look forward to one day becoming the householder of "Am Aberge" in Oberndorf. Kette would hardly have encouraged Simon to think of emigrating. Moreover, the "Am Aberge" house ought to have been quite comfortable, as Simon's Sassmannshausen grandfather had been a master builder.

Nor do we know whether Anna Catharina Sassmannshausen fully concurred with Jost Henrich's plans to leave Berghausen with their young children, undertake an overseas journey and start anew in a setting that was unknown to her. Jost Henrich, having become a householder under the much milder northern Count Casimir of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg, seems to have had every reason to stay where he was. Perhaps he had enthusiastic connections in the New World who sent him favorable information about the opportunities across the sea. In any event, as Fig. 2 shows, he left northern Wittgenstein at some time before 1 March 1727.

In southern Wittgenstein, Simon continued his life under the harsh rule of Duke August, who lived until 27 August 1735. August's death was of little help to Simon, who was at that time in deep trouble, as a later DERR will reveal.

In Pennsylvania, Jost Henrich had become securely established in Maxatawny Township in what was then a newly settled part of Philadelphia County. By 1734 he was occupying at least three tracts of land near the county's eastern border. These tracts, the first of quite a few more he would acquire, comprised a total of about 250 acres, as we know from the surveys that were conducted in the autumn of 1734. Having so much land was definitely something to write home about. There can be no doubt that Jost Henrich and Anna Catharina Sassmannshausen's relatives in Oberndorf, Ruppershausen, Amtshausen and other villages received occasional news of events in Maxatawny. Simon Dreisbach, too, could have heard

¹¹ Document R 14 in the Princely Archive of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg, Bad Berleburg. Photo: Heinrich Imhof.

about the Sassmannshausens' new life through a number of channels. When his own fortunes were at their lowest ebb, from 1735 to 1737, news of Jost Henrich's three recent land acquisitions can have made a powerful impression and encouraged Simon to think of one day taking his own family to Pennsylvania.

In 1727 the lure of Pennsylvania was effective in the case of the Berghausen Sassmannshausens. It was otherwise with Simon Dreisbach, at least for the time being. We have suggested that the idea of leaving Wittgenstein was not new to Simon. His relatives who had set out for East Prussia in 1725 demonstrated that emigration was an option, even if not always successful. However, Simon's responsibilities as family man and his new status as householder can have seemed to him cogent reasons for remaining where he was. Prior to 1727, in addition to their performing obligatory work elsewhere for the Count, Simon and his younger brothers had had to work the various pieces of land belonging to "Am Aberge" without exercising any kind of authority. Moreover, though there were some hereditary lands which the Dreisbach brothers and their Sassmannshausen uncles had inherited from master builder Sassmannshausen, Simon could not single-handedly turn his share into ready money. Thus we can conclude that whatever power of attraction Pennsylvania may have had, the period following 1727 was not a time when Simon would be planning for immediate emigration.

Yet the Dreisbachs' voyage to Philadelphia did take place. Six years after 1737 (the year when the life circumstances of Simon and Jost Henrich are known to have been hugely different), Simon and his family did leave Oberndorf. They made their way to Rotterdam and there took passage to Philadelphia. Within four years of arriving, Simon warranted his family's first tract of land in Pennsylvania. Simon's land was in Bucks (later Northampton) County, and Jost Henrich's land was in Philadelphia (later Berks) County, but the distance between them was only about twenty-five miles. Did they know of each other's whereabouts? Did they ever meet? We do not know. The Reformed churches that the two families attended were on occasion served by the same minister, and news of one another can have circulated in this way. Further, in 1756 and 1773 two daughters of Jost Henrich Sassmannshausen married men who were known to the Dreisbachs (one a shipmate on the 1743 voyage, the other a Reformed minister). Though we might expect that there was some mutual awareness, there is as yet no known documentary evidence of interaction between the Dreisbachs and the Sassmannshausens in Pennsylvania.

The question of contacts among Wittgenstein settlers in Pennsylvania and its nearby areas is a significant one, and has its place in the larger field of emigration/immigration history. Evidence of such interaction will continue, one hopes, to come to light, and where relevant will be communicated to DERR readers.

Research notes

1. The case of wily Count August and the 'false' Pennsylvania emigrants, including Dreisbachs.

The problem:

For several decades it has been circulated among North American researchers that in 1725 numerous Wittgensteiners went to Pennsylvania, including **the families of Paul Dreisbach of Hesselbach and Hans Wilhelm Dreisbach of Grossenbach**. These are of course the very same families who are documented as going or trying to go to East Prussia in 1725. The source of this misinformation is a list, falsified in the 18th century, where one also finds the other emigrating relatives of Simon and Kette as going to Pennsylvania, though we have evidence that they were captured in German towns on their way to

East Prussia! The list itself is seemingly authoritative, as it stems from Count August's own officials, and is preserved in the State Archive of North Rhine-Westfalia in Münster. How was this possible?

The false information was published, in good faith, in Germany (1967) and then in the U.S. (1970).

There seemed to be no reason to doubt the authenticity of the Münster-based archival information when it appeared in an article by Hedwig Mundel, translated and edited by Don Yoder and published in *The Pennsylvania genealogical Magazine*, vol. 26, no. 3 (1970), pp. 133-143, "A 1725 List of Wittgenstein Emigrants". This article was a version of Mundel's earlier German article in *Zeitschrift Wittgenstein*, vol. 55 (1967), pp. 32-37. In both the English and German articles Mundel published *in extenso* the lists of emigrants she had found in the Münster Archive. Henceforth, researchers had to deal with a long list of documented 1725 emigrants to Pennsylvania who could be found nowhere in the Pennsylvania records.

A correct presentation of the information, appearing in 1957 and 1960, went mostly unnoticed.

A different, and correct designation of the emigrants' goal was in fact already available, but in a journal that was not likely to be much read in Wittgenstein.¹² In 1956 and 1960 Rolf Farnsteiner, a German researcher interested in East and West Prussian genealogy, published the results of his research visit to the Princely Archive of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohenstein in Laasphe (today Bad Laasphe), and thus in the home territory of the emigrants. The names he found were very nearly identical to the names of the so-called Pennsylvania emigrants in the Münster Archive document. The main difference was that in the Laasphe archive, the emigrants listed are correctly described as going to (Prussian) Lithuania, with the exception of a few who had other destinations. In some cases Farnsteiner even gives the names of the East Prussian villages where they eventually settled! Not one of these migrants can be shown to have gone to Pennsylvania in 1725.

The confusion is sorted out in 2009.

There can be no doubt that the lists now in the Princely Archive in Bad Laasphe are the original, authentic documents. The lists preserved in Münster, therefore, must have been copied from the earlier lists which were at that time in Count August's headquarters in Castle Wittgenstein, high above the town of Laasphe. The problem of the two sets of lists was studied by genealogist and researcher Karl Jochen Mehldau and was published as "Auswanderung nach Pennsylvanien?" ("Emigration to Pennsylvania?") in *Zeitschrift Wittgenstein*, 2009, no. 4, pp. 138-141. Mehldau, who was familiar with both the 18th century population records in Wittgenstein and with Farnsteiner's publications, established that the Pennsylvania destination ascribed to the 1725 emigrants was a falsification. According to Mehldau, in 1726 Count August was litigating against the town of Laasphe at the Imperial Court in Wetzlar. It was to his advantage to be able to document that many faithless subjects had fled their duties to him and left the territory in early 1725. Therefore he presented to the court a freshly copied list of these emigrants. Mehldau does not theorize, however, about why Pennsylvania had been inserted as the emigrants' destination.

Conundrum: Why Pennsylvania instead of East Prussian Lithuania?

It will be remembered that DERR no. 7 presented the Prussian general invitation of February 1724 to artisans and farmers to move to East Prussia under favorable circumstances and repopulate its abandoned

¹² Rolf Farnsteiner, "Namensliste der Auswanderer, Rückkehrer und Verdächtigen aus der Grafschaft Wittgenstein" in: *Altpreussische Geschlechterkunde, Neue Folge, Blätter des Vereins für Familienforschung in Ost- und Westpreussen*, (Hamburg), vols. 5/8, 1957/60.

areas. Now it was just those Wittgensteiners on the original 1725 lists who were the ones who had responded to this or a similar Prussian invitation. Count August already had an unfavorable reputation at the Prussian court in Berlin, having been sent away in disgrace some years previously. To use in a court case a list of emigrants who had responded to the Prussian invitation and present it as evidence of the fickleness of August's subjects would hardly have been well viewed in Berlin. Our theory, until disproved, is that unscrupulous August, acting in character, gave orders to recopy the original list of emigrants but to insert a new destination, one that could not offend the Prussians. It was thus, we propose, that the Dreisbachs and many other families were "documented" as having gone to Pennsylvania in 1725.

2. Translation of the text in Fig. 3, documenting that exit fees had been paid on behalf of Jost Henrich Sassmannshausen following his departure for Pennsylvania.

The last four lines in Fig. 3 refer to our Sassmannshausen emigrant, Jost Henrich.

*Johannes Wetter Metzger allhier zahlet vor
den nach Pensylvanien gezogenen Jost Henrich
Sassmannshausen zu Berghausen vor Abzug
und 10. den Pffennig] 9 Reichstaler 22 Albus 4 Pfennig¹³*

(Johannes Wetter Metzger of this place (Berghausen)¹⁴ has paid for Jost Henrich Sassmannshausen of Berghausen for his departure/emigration and for the tenth part of the value of his wealth, 9 Reichstaler, 22 Albus, 4 Pfennig.)

Thus (an otherwise unknown) Johannes Wetter Metzger was recorded as having paid the two types of exit taxes after the Sassmannshausen family had left Berghausen: the regular exit tax, and also one tenth of what he could expect to inherit from his parents. We do not know who this man was nor why he was paying the exit fees for Jost Henrich Sassmannshausen.

As this list of receipts in the Princely Berleburg Archive covered the period 1 March 1726 to 1 March 1727 it is certain that the Sassmannshausen family left Berghausen during that time. Most emigrants to North America left in the spring, hoping to find passage by early summer and arrive in the early autumn. There being no known ship's lists containing the name of Jost Henrich Sassmannshausen, we can only posit that he left Berghausen in either the spring of 1726 or 1727. As his wife had given birth in September 1725 they may have chosen to wait until early 1727 to leave.

In any event these Sassmannshausens must be included in Simon Dreisbach's emigration history, as they are probably the earliest Wittgenstein settlers in Pennsylvania that he knew personally. The news of them that reached family and friends in both Wittgensteins, north and south, would eventually also have reached Simon and his family, if only by word of mouth, and at several removes.

A.D.G. 16 May 2014

¹³ Text graciously transcribed by Heinrich Imhof.

¹⁴ Or, Johannes Wetter, butcher in this place (Berghausen).