



Dollhopf

600 Years in the Baking¹

Welcome to the Dollhopf Blog

This is the story of a Dollhopf family from Germany.

But it's not a story of just *one* family. It is the chronicle of a *people* connected because one person, or a few, in the late Middle Ages, somewhere in central Europe, decided to name themselves after a type of cake.

Yes, "Dollhopf" was dialect for a type of yeast cake, or *napfkuchen*. It developed in the 14th century, about the time in central Germany when yeast was first introduced to dough. This type of pastry evolved, eventually to include candied fruit and nuts – a fruitcake. Dollhopf is an antecedent of the German *Gugelhupf*, recognized in America as a Bundt cake. (See *Blog #3: The Dollhopf Name*, and *Blog #15: Dollhopf Name Update*.)

Dollhopf is an odd, and oddly regional, surname. According to www.forebears.io, there are only 360 living individuals worldwide with the surname Dollhopf. In addition to several Dollhopf branches in Germany, and one other in Pittsburgh, there are branches in Wisconsin, Michigan, Tennessee, and New Zealand.

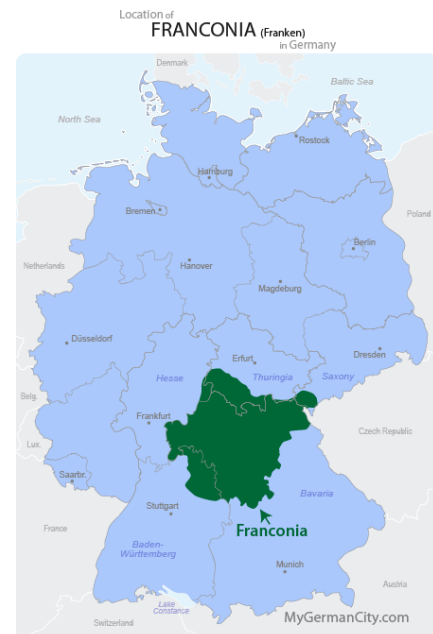
Of the known branches (to me), all trace their lineage to Franconia, an area of central Germany that occupies the northern third of Bavaria.

In the fifth century, central Europe was invaded by a Germanic-speaking people called the *Franks*. Over the next 500 years, the Franks living in the western part of Europe evolved into French-speaking France.² Those in central Europe, now mostly a part of northern Bavaria, evolved into German-speaking *Franken* (English: Franconia).

In 1806, Napoleon conquered the sovereign territories of the Franconian region. He sold those territories to Maximilian I Joseph, King of Bavaria, in 1808. Those territories – divided today into Upper, Middle, and Lower Franconia – are now regions of the state of Bavaria.

Franconia has a culture and dialect of its own, distinct from Bavaria. Franconians prefer *not* to be called Bavarians; they are Franconians!

The name Dollhopf is decidedly "Frankish." The earliest known individuals who adopted the name Dollhopf – most likely in the 1300s – came from this region. Before the 1300s, people in this area of Germany had not yet adopted the practice of using surnames, so we are not likely ever to extend the Dollhopf tree before this date.



Franconia is located in central Germany, the northern half of Bavaria.

The name appears to have originated in the region surrounding Bayreuth, a city in eastern Franconia near the Czech border. There may indeed be other onomastic epicenters for Dollhopf, but this area represents the best research to date.

¹ Dollhopf means *gugelhupf*, a type of fruitcake that was, of course, baked. More on the baking in another post.

² The French language only developed in the 8th century with the decline of Latin.

For the purposes of tracing family history, we are fortunate. The mostly rural areas of Franconia, especially eastern Franconia, largely escaped the devastation of World War II. When cities were destroyed, so were family records. In the Bayreuth area there are extensive medieval church and civil records that survived. The church records mostly date from the mid-1500s, as mandated by the Council of Trent (1545-1563); some civil records date from the late 1300s.



The surname Dollhopf seems to have originated in the area of Bayreuth, indicated by the circle above.

The largest threat to record keeping, as far as the Dollhopf family was concerned, was the Thirty Years War, which raged from 1618 to 1648. There were a number of years during this period when records were lost, or simply never recorded because of marauding armies and the plague.

This blog will depict all things “Dollhopf,” which includes the many maternal branches – those who married Dollhopfs – and their ancestral trees. As of this writing there are more than 44,000 ancestors in this database.

We will explore the people, the traditions, the culture, and the historical circumstances that shaped their lives, 600 years in the baking.

I am Mark Dollhopf (b. 1955), a great-grandson of John Dollhopf (1852-1934), who emigrated in 1871 from Mistelbach, a small village next to Bayreuth.

John settled in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

I live in New Haven, Connecticut. Over the past 40 years of research I have been informed by many family members, both here and in Germany, and by several professional genealogists – Cornelia Schrader-Muggenthaler (info@muggenthalerresearch.com) in the 1980’s, Peter Bardischewski (peter.bardischewski@online.de) in the 2000’s, and most recently Uwe Porten (uporten@t-online.de).

I welcome, indeed encourage, your questions, comments, and most especially your stories. I am interested in anyone even remotely connected to the family or with knowledge of the surname Dollhopf – you never know what seemingly inconsequential bit of information can shed new light on research.

You can post to this blog, or email me at mark.dollhopf@dollhopf.us, or, please feel free to call me at +1 (203) 982-3442.

Vielen Dank für Ihr Interesse!

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