



Dollhopf

600 Years in the Baking

Dollhopf Women

This is the ninth essay in a series addressing the life and times of our Dollhopf grandmothers.

14th Great-Grandmother: Margarethe NN (abt 1445-bef 1511)

[Abbreviations: *NN* stands for “no name,” thus, in this instance her maiden name is unknown. In the dates below *abt* = about; *aft* = after; *bef* = before; *bet* = between; *c* = circa]

Birth: abt 1445

Place of birth: Probably Bayreuth

Parents: Unknown

Marriage: c. 1460

Husband: Ubelein¹ Dietrich Tollhopf (bet 1435/45-bet 1497-1511), miller.

Age at marriage: Unknown

Residence: House #57, the Dorfmühle (“Village Mill”), Mistelbach

Number of known children: 2

Death: bef 1511

Age at death: ~65

Cause of death: Unknown

She was our first great-grandmother to live in the village mill.

We know her given name Margarethe from court records. She married Dietrich probably in the late 1460s. As cited above, Dietrich was a miller and owner of the *Dorfmühle* (“village mill”) in Mistelbach, which he acquired on or before 1499. At the time, Mistelbach was a mere hamlet of 19 farming families according to the 1398 book of fiefs.² The Dorfmühle remained in the Dollhopf family for 150 years until 1649, at which time it the fief was assumed by Wilhelm Drechsel, our 9th great-grandfather through a maternal line.

In 1499 there were two mills in Mistelbach; eventually there would be five. The Dorfmühle was owned at that time by the Margrave Friederich III the Elder. Dietrich was *enfeoffed* with the mill; that is, the Margrave granted Dietrich a *fief* to occupy and operate the mill.

The other mill in Mistelbach was the *Schnorleinsmühle*, which was owned by a knight of the *von Mistelbach* family, a noble of lower rank than the margrave. The von Mistelbach’s occupied a small castle in Mistelbach, a few hundred yards from the church. About two thirds of the land in Mistelbach belonged to the margrave – peasants who farmed those acres had to use the Dollhopf Dorfmühle, which was owned by the margrave, to grind their flour.

The other roughly one third of the land (there were a few “free” farmers who owned their land outright) was owned by the knight, and those peasants had to use the Schnorleinsmühle. Peasants did not have a choice of which mill to use, which of course led to higher prices and the bad reputations of mill owners.³

¹*Ubelein*, or alternatively spelled *Ullein*, means the “evil or dishonest one.” It was a nickname given to the mill owners in our family, so I assume it was a name given in jest to millers who, in the Middle Ages, enjoyed a reputation for being dishonest. Or maybe it wasn’t in jest....

² A fief is a lease on land granted from a noble to a peasant, hence a fiefdom is a territory of fiefs ruled

by a noble person. A fief was more or less a permanent lease. Peasants did not actually “own” the buildings or land they occupied.

³ Dietrich Dollhopf, and his descendants who each later inherited the mill, went by the nickname *Übellein*, which means the “evil” or “dishonest” one. I hope it was only a nickname....

Dietrich was listed as the owner and resident of Maximilianstrasse 75 in Bayreuth in a tax document of 1475-1477, so we know that his father Hans and his mother were likely deceased by this time. He and wife Margarethe are later listed in the 1497 tax-roll of Mistelbach. The tax roll entry read:

Übellein Tolhopff, wife, his son, son's wife, 1 maid.⁴

So we can deduce that Dietrich and his family moved to Mistelbach between 1477 and 1497, probably in their 40s or 50s, and that their son Cuntz and his wife Margarethe Eck were living with them, but did not yet have any children. Dietrich was probably in his 50s when he acquired the mill in Mistelbach, so it is likely that they raised their children in Bayreuth, most probably in a mill that he inherited from his father.



This is the oldest known photo of the Dorfmühle ("village mill") probably taken in the late 1800s or early 1900s. It is not known when this structure was built. It was acquired by Dietrich and Margarethe Tolhopf in 1499 and remained in the family for 150 years. It was destroyed and abandoned in 1634 during the Thirty Years War, and remained abandoned for 14 years until 1648, when it was acquired by Wilhelm Drechsel, our 9th great-grandfather through a maternal line. The operation of the mill ceased in 1971 and is today a private home owned by Georg Weydenhammer, also a distant relative of ours. Since 1499 the mill has been owned by families related to us.

The fact that he acquired the mill when he was older strongly suggests that he was already a miller in Bayreuth, since the margrave, who owned the mill in Mistelbach, would likely not allow someone without experience to operate it.

⁴ Here Dietrich is referred to as Übellein. His wife was Margarethe, his son was Cuntz "Ullein," and his son's wife was Margarethe Eck. We don't know the name of the maid.

The above mentioned tax roll was the *Gemeiner Pfennig Tax* of 1495 ("Common Penny" tax). This was an imperial tax levied by Emperor Maximilian (not the local Margrave Friederich III) to raise the funds needed to wage wars against France and the Ottoman Empire. The tax was an income/property tax and was based on personal status and wealth – another clue that Dietrich and his father might have been relatively wealthy.

Margarethe and Dietrich had two known children that reached adulthood; information gleaned from court records:

1. **Cuntz**⁵ (bet 1465/74 - bet 1523/26), married Margarethe Eck and inherited the mill from his father.
2. **Kunigunda** (female), married Hans Heckel and moved to Pottenstein, 12 miles south of Mistelbach.

As did their parents, Dietrich and Margarethe experienced their share of terror and devastation.

In the year 1462, when Margarethe was about 17, a mere 30 years after the Hussite War, Mistelbach was "badly taken" – plundered and raided – by various militias and roving gangs from the regions of Bohemia, Bamberg, and Bavaria.

This carnage occurred because of The Bavarian War of 1459-1463, a feud between Margrave Albrecht II Alcibiades, then the ruler of the Bayreuth and Mistelbach, and Duke Louis "the Rich" of Bavaria-Landshut. Each was vying to acquire more land, wealth, and power – the more peasants you owned, the more taxes you collected. The peasants suffered as the armies of the Margrave and Duke crisscrossed the territory raining death and destruction.⁶

Again, we don't know exactly when Dietrich and Margarethe moved to Mistelbach, and we don't know if Bayreuth, which abuts Mistelbach, was also devastated. Given their proximity it likely was. Invading armies knew no boundaries.

Ten years later in 1474, when she was 29 with two young children in tow, Mistelbach suffered yet again, this time at the hands of soldiers from the Wirsberg Castle in nearby Glashütten, a mere four miles from Mistelbach. These soldier thieves, who could best be described today as a criminal gang, made it a habit to rob and steal from travelers and nearby peasants.



The Dorfmühle was an "overshot" mill. This photo is of another mill, but it is an accurate depiction. "Overshot" means that the water flowed down a chute and poured over the top of the wheel (as opposed to flowing beneath the wheel and turning it in the opposite direction). Above the wheel is the horizontal chute directing the flow of water. To stop the wheel from turning, the chute was pushed to the side and the water dropped directly to the pool beneath the wheel. Inside the house the machinery turning the grinding stones was noisy and there was flour dust everywhere. Dietrich, Margarethe and family lived in the house next to the machinery. It was cramped, noisy, and dirty.

⁵ Cuntz is pronounced "koontz" and is a nickname for *Conrad*. In the records it variou spelled *Contz* and *Conz*.

⁶ Chronicles of Mistelbach.

The times were so treacherous that the local churches instituted a special evening service in 1471 to pray for safety and deliverance from the thieves, and a separate bell was rung, a tradition which continued into modern times.

And to make matters even worse, when Margarethe was about 48, in 1493, the plague struck the Mistelbach area. From the Chronicle:

In 1493 the whole country was once again struck by the plague. In order to avert the plague, a solemn procession was undertaken to the village of Mengersreuth [13 miles from Mistelbach], where there was a famous chapel of the Virgin Mary; people turned there for all kinds of needs that affected people or livestock.

Although we don't know how many deaths in Mistelbach were caused by the plague, it was not unusual for a village to lose a third or more of its inhabitants.

Margarethe lived with intense fear and trepidation for much of her adult life. Perhaps this is a reason she had only two children, a relatively small family for a miller.

In the midst of this great turmoil, Dietrich and Margarethe lived at the height of the German Renaissance, the epicenter of which was in Nürnberg, 50 miles from Mistelbach.

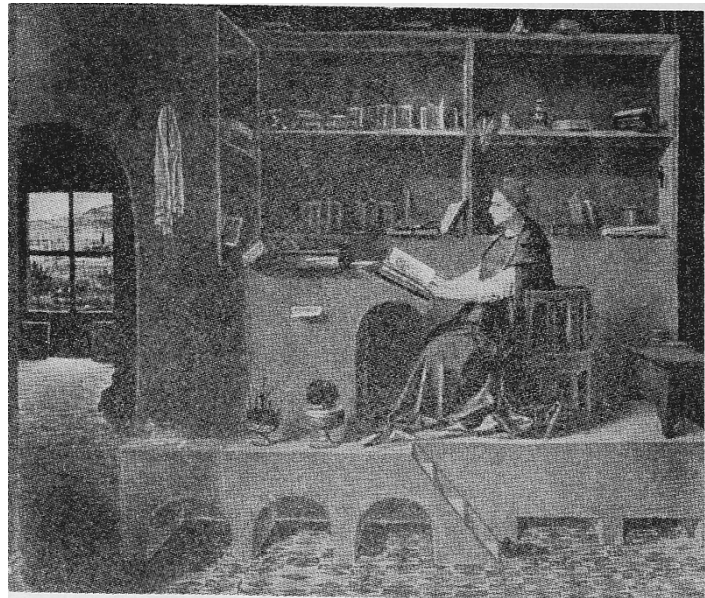
The Renaissance began in Florence in the early 1400s and spread throughout Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Renaissance marked a renewed interest in, and appreciation for, Greek and Roman culture, and how contemporary medieval culture could be interpreted through that lens.

In Nürnberg there were Renaissance poets, theologians, artists, scientists, et al. – who formed a tight knit circle, regularly corresponding with one another.

Among them was the famous humanist and astronomer Johann Tolhopf, professor and founder of the University of Ingolstadt, and the Canon of the Cathedral in Regensburg (see *Blog #19: Coat of Arms*). Johann was born in Kemnath, possibly the birthplace of Dietrich's grandfather or great-grandfather, our 17th or 18th great-grandfather.

So...this renaissance scholar might have been a cousin. Did they know each other?

Did they make a pilgrimage to Regensburg to visit Johann? Did Johann stop by Mistelbach or Bayreuth on his many journeys across the territory? As owners of the mill, Dietrich and Margarethe enjoyed a lifestyle moderately better than the poor farmers. Perhaps they were able to travel, but alas, this is mere speculation.



Johannes Tolhopf in his library c. 1490. Johann lived at the same time as Dietrich and Margarethe. Did they know each other? Were they related? This contemporary sketch is from a tract of the Gesellschaft für Familienforschung in Franken (Society for Family Research in Franconia). It is uncredited. This is probably the oldest depiction of anyone named Dollhopf.

Their daughter Kunigunda confirmed receipt of her inheritance in a court document dated March 20, 1511, so we can deduce that Dietrich “Ubelein” and wife Margaretha had both died by that time.

It is likely that Margarethe lived long enough to witness the birth of two grandchildren, Cuntz and Lorenz, both of whom were born before 1511. Unbelievably, everyone – three generations – lived together in the mill with the machinery.

To put their lives into sharper historical focus, Christopher Columbus was voyaging to America when they moved from Bayreuth to Mistelbach.⁷

Next in the series on Dollhopf women: 13th Great-grandmother Margathe Eck.

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New Haven, CT
January 2, 2023.

⁷ Of course we know that Columbus did not discover America – there were millions of indigenous people already here!