



Dollhopf

600 Years in the Baking

Dollhopf Women

This is the 14th essay in a series addressing the life and times of our Dollhopf grandmothers.

8th Great-Grandmother Dorothea Neukam (1620-1687)

First wife of three of Hanss *der Ältere* ("the older") Dollhopf

[Abbreviations: NN stands for "no name," In the dates below abt = about; aft = after; bef = before; c = circa]

Birth: 01 Dec 1620

Place of birth: House #63, Zeckenmühle, Mistelbach

Parents: Hans Neukam, miller, and Margaretha NN

Marriage: 13 Jun 1654

Husband: Hanss *der Ältere* ("the older") Dollhopf (09 Mar 1629 – 16 Mar 1710, 66), tailor¹

Age at marriage: 33 (9 years older than Hanss)

Number of known children: 2

Residence: Zeckenmühle, ("Zecken Mill") House #63

Death: 01 Feb 1687

Age at death: 66

Cause of death: Unknown

Dorothea was born in the Zeckenmühle – a mill, likely a sawmill, about one mile downstream from the Dorfmühle. She was 12 years old when Mistelbach was destroyed by the Croats in the spring of 1634. We don't know if the Zeckenmühle was razed, but given the fact that all but eight houses were left standing, and that the mills were the likeliest of targets, we can reasonably assume that Dorothea and her family fled.

If their mill was destroyed, we don't know where the family sought refuge, or for how long. Perhaps they fled to another village, perhaps they "camped" in the woods, as many did.

She spent most of her adult life in wild, immoral times. The Mistelbach Chronicle:

From 1653 to 1672 [Dorothea was 23 to 42 years old] in Mistelbach things continued to look rather bleak and desolate for a long time; a rough, wild, immoral life prevailed among the inhabitants; on Sundays and holidays people reveled, gambled, cursed, and fought; it had become almost the general fashion to challenge each other to duels without fear. The consequence was strict police regulation "and such offenders were publicly locked in crowbars at the church doors." In the following years there were repeated hours of prayer, in which one prayed for relief from the plague.

During these bleak and treacherous times Dorothea married Hanss *der Ältere* ("the older") Dollhopf on June 13, 1654. She was 33; Hanss was only 25. He was a tailor, like his father, and a farmer. Hanss was described by the Pastor as an "honorable and industrious man."

He must have been industrious because he purchased a significant amount of land during his lifetime – he owned more land than any Dollhopf previously, and his holdings would not be exceeded until Eberhard Dollhopf acquired more land 150 years later in the early 1800s.

He must have been honorable – and popular – because when he died in 1710 the church book made a special note that a "great number of people attended his funeral."

¹ For some reason Hanss spelled his name with a double "s." He and his son were the only ancestors who did.

The Zeckenmühle, located about a mile downstream from the Dorfmühle, was owned by Dorothea's father Hans Neukam. After they married, Hans moved out of the Vogel house, (his grandmother had married Hans Vogel) and into the Zeckenmühle, where he and Dorothea would live their entire lives.²



Eine Dorfschlägerei ("A Village Brawl") by Flemish painter Sebastian Vrancx (1573-1647), Vrancx offers us first-hand depictions of the Thirty Years War including the chaos in the aftermath of the War – a village brawl. As described in the Mistelbach Chronicle, for several decades our ancestors lived a rough, wild, immoral life. In the aftermath of the war there was no housing, little food, no laws, no government, rampant disease – every person for his or herself. It took decades to rebuild Mistelbach.

Curiously, Dorothea and Hans might have been the first of our great grandparents who did not have to have the direct permission of the margrave to marry. The margrave of the Mistelbach territory from 1603 to 1655 was Christian I. From the Mistelbach Chronicle we learn:

The margrave, who had spent a large part of the Thirty Years War in Berlin and Dresden, now tried to help the country with his means after the end of the war. It should be mentioned in particular that he granted the serfs a more dignified life, "by finally liberating them from the unnatural restriction of neither learning and doing crafts nor marrying without a manorial permit."

² The Zeckenmühle (Zecken = "tick;" mühle = "mill," was also known as the Fichtenmühle (Fichten = "spruce"). I don't know why it was called the tick mill. Perhaps it was called the spruce mill because it was a sawmill rather than a flour mill. Today it is a private home, but in the recent past it had been converted to a restaurant and event catering venue.



The Zeckenmühle ("spruce mill") in a photo from 1920. The mill was first mentioned in the Lehenbuch ("feudal tax book") of 1398. The mill was inherited by Stephan Dollhopf, our 8th great uncle, in 1705 and remained in that branch of the family for 115 years until 1820. The little girl in the foreground is Margarete Dörnhöfer (a sixth cousin) with a servant named Käferlein (first name unknown). In recent years the former mill housed a clock museum, a restaurant called "Museumsstuben," and a catering venue for weddings and special events.

As has been previously described, peasants had to have permission to marry, and among many other restrictions, men had to have the permission of the margrave (or administrators working on his behalf) to practice a trade. If, for example, there were already two tailors in a village that could not support a third, the margrave denied permission to any man seeking to become a tailor. Trades were typically inherited as well as fiefs, so men had very little say, or choice, of a "career."

It is not clear if the margrave's grant of more freedom in marriage or occupation stuck. A similar edict was again decreed in the early 1800s, so perhaps not all villages benefitted from the relative freedom, or successive margraves reinstated the more restrictive policies. Traditions and customs took *centuries* to change. Although they may not have needed manorial permits to marry, it is likely that town councils – and parents – still played a strong role in arranging marriages.

As described in the previous blog, Hanss' father Cuntz built house #55 in 1662. We do know from records that it was a very small house. For whatever reason, Hanss did not remain at #55 when he married Dorothea, deciding to move to the Zeckenmühle. Father Cuntz therefore sold house #55 to his grandson, Hanss "the younger", in 1679, with the stipulation that he and his wife (fourth wife) could continue to live there with Hanss and his wife until they died. Cuntz died five years later in 1684.

Dorothea and Hanss had two children at the Zeckenmühle:

1. **Hans der Jünge** (“the younger”) (29 May 1656 – Jun 1705, 49). He inherited his father’s tailoring trade and moved into house #55 in 1679 (the house that that his grandfather Cuntz built in 1662). He died prematurely in 1705, predeceasing his father Hanss the older by five years. He did not die in Mistelbach because his death was not recorded in the church book. From this we can infer that he died in an accident or unexpected illness while away from Mistelbach.
2. **Stephan** (06 Sep 1661 – 19 Dec 1733, 72). Stephan remained at the Zeckenmühle and inherited it in 1705, roughly the year his older brother, Hanss *der Jünge*, died. In all likelihood Hanss, because he was the older brother, would have inherited the mill, but since he predeceased his father, the mill went to Stephan. It remained in that branch of the Dollhopf family until the 1820s. Given the relative prosperity of millers, perhaps our lives today would be different had Hanss the younger not died before his brother. Maybe John Dollhopf would have remained in Mistelbach instead of leaving for America....



The Zeckenmühle as it appears today, a private home. Photo taken August 2022 by Mark Dollhopf.

Dorothea’s father Hans Neukam died in 1654 when she was 34, the year she married. Her two younger brothers both died in the year 1652 in their 20s, *on the same day*. They were so young – it suggests that it was an accident or perhaps murder. She therefore became custodian of the mill, and would eventually pass the mill to her son Stephanl. Interestingly, her husband Hanss “the older” Dollhopf was never listed as an owner.

She died on February 1, 1687, at age 66, her husband Hanss was 57. Presumably, Hanss the older oversaw the operation of the mill; their son Stephan, 26 at the time, was preparing to be the master miller. Stephan inherited the mill 18 years later in 1705, five years before his father Hanss died.

After Dorothea died, Hanss Sr. married wife number two, Barbara Richter (Jan 1642 – 16 Feb 1703) nine months later on November 21, 1687. He was 58 and she was 35. This was also her second marriage; she had been married to Hans Hagen from Schobertsreuth and they had one daughter, Anna.

Hanss and Barbara remained married for 16 years until she died at the age of 61 in 1703. Hanss and Barbara did not have any children.

On August 3, 1706, when he 77 years old, Hanss married for a third time, this time to the widow Margaretha Hess, who was born in 1662 and formerly married to Georg Hess, a herdsman from Pittersdorf. A May-December marriage separated by 33 years; she was 44 at the time they were married. We don't know her maiden name or when she died. They also did not have any children.

Hanss died in 1710, and for reasons we don't know, the Pastor noted that he was celebrated with a very large funeral. Pastors did not make such comments gratuitously. It must have been a *really* large funeral.

Was he popular? Was he wealthy? Was he a prominent citizen? Was there another reason for such a large gathering? Why does the Pastor hold us in such suspense?

As can be seen by the size of the mill, it must have been a substantial operation. I suspect, given the name "spruce" mill, that it was a sawmill. There would have been a tremendous demand for wood as these were the rebuilding years in the post Thirty Years War period, and perhaps the mill was churning out construction materials to help rebuild Mistelbach. Maybe this is why Hanss was so popular.

Despite the chaos of her time, Dorothea likely lived a comfortable life because of the mill. She raised two boys – Hanss and Stephan – who fostered extended families of their own, a sort of reconstruction of the Dollhopf family after every Dollhopf except one disappeared because of the war.

Her family was a fork in the road – Dollhopfs who continued as tailors, and those who continued as millers.

And her husband was a popular man. No doubt she had something to do with that.

Next in the series on Dollhopf women: 7th Great-grandmother Margarethe Wedel

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