



Dollhopf

600 Years in the Baking

Dollhopf Women

This is the 15th essay in a series addressing the life and times of our Dollhopf grandmothers.

7th Great-Grandmother Margarethe Wedel (1652-1705)

[In the dates below abt = about; aft = after; bef = before; bet = between; c = circa]

Birth: 07 Feb 1652

Place of birth: Mistelbach

Parents: Georg Wedel, shoemaker, and Margarethe Wolf

Marriage: 15 Oct 1678

Husband: Hanss *der Jünge* ("the younger") Dollhopf (29 May 1656 – bet Jun 1705-1709, ~49), tailor

Age at marriage: 26

Number of known children: 6

Residence: House #55, next to the Dorfmühle

Death: 30 Jun 1705

Age at death: 53

Cause of death: Unknown

Beginning with this Dollhopf family, and for the next 100 years we don't know as much about the Dollhopfs as we did in the previous three centuries, or in the years since 1800. The 1700s were years of increasing poverty for German peasants, and our branch of the Dollhopfs was no exception.

We do know that Margarethe Wedel was born in Mistelbach. She married Hanss *der Jünge* ("the younger") Dollhopf from the Zeckenmühle on October 15, 1678, when she was 26 and Hanss was 20. At the time, Hanss, and his father Hanss "the older" were still using the last name of Vogel.¹

Hanss' great-great-grandmother Margarethe Groß married Hans Vogel after her husband Cuntz Dollhopf died in his early thirties. Three subsequent generations of Dollhopfs took the name Vogel, and Hanss was the last to use the name Vogel. Why they switched back to Dollhopf I don't know. We do know that the pastors had kept notes in the church book that the Vogel children were actually Dollhopfs, so we owe those pastors a note of thanks – unless you have grown tired of spelling Dollhopf ("p" as in Paul, "f" as in Frank...).

Since Hanss Jr. did not die in Mistelbach there is no death record, and hence no indication of his occupation. (Death records are typically where we learn of occupations.) He was listed as a farmer in other records, but he did not own any land, only a small house. His father Hanss Sr. had acquired a considerable amount of land – about 15 acres, mostly land around the Zecken Mill where he lived, land that he inherited from his stepfather Hans Neukam, the owner of the mill.

It is likely then, that Hanss Jr. was farming his father's land, but 15 acres was still barely enough to support a large family like his. He and Margarethe had six children, all of whom lived to adulthood. This was twice the size of the average peasant family. He must have practiced a trade to help support the family. We can assume with a high degree of certainty that he was a tailor since his father Hanss Sr. was a tailor, as was his son Conrad. It would be extremely unlikely for a trade to skip a generation.

Margarethe, then, was surrounded by tailors – husband, son, and father-in-law. Her father was a shoemaker. Strewn about their house was cloth, linen, silk, leather, buttons, hooks, thread, needles.... Can you picture it?

¹ Both Hanss the older and Hanss the younger spelled their names with the double "s." I don't know why. Perhaps it was just the quirk of the pastor who was recording the information.

Although women were not described in the church records as practicing any trade, how could Margarethe *not* have been intimately engaged in helping to measure, cut, sew, and decorate – and most probably clean up?



Traditional Peasant Wear from Ochsenfurt, Lower Franconia. Ochsenfurt is near Würzburg, about 100 miles southwest of Mistelbach. Pictured are the basics: note the dark green jackets on the men, the scarlet vests trimmed with gold cords, black scarves, and brimmed hats. The woman's costume is more elaborate than most, perhaps an indication that she is Catholic, as Protestant costumes were plainer (but not much). Costumes were for religious holidays and special events; not daily wear and varied from villaae to villaae. <https://anaiesweb.com/franconia-tracht/>

What did tailors create? The pictures in these blogs are illustrative of peasant wear – from the photos of traditional tracht (costumes) to the drab daily wear of the van Gogh paintings. Decorative costumes were reserved for weddings and other festive occasions; daily wear for toiling in the fields and around the house was far simpler, typically featuring a heavy apron for both men and women to bear the brunt of living with the soil.

The style of clothing did not differ much over the centuries. Our peasant ancestors certainly did not have much in the way of clothes, especially in the lean years of the 1700s and 1800s. When our 2nd great grandfather Johann died in 1858, he had the following in his closet: one shirt, one jacket, one apron, and a pair of pants. That's it. Assuming he was buried in his formal "costume," he owned one change of clothes.

Tailors were mostly busy repairing or replacing work clothes that were ripped, torn, or worn by heavy outdoor work. Seldom were clothes thrown away.

It is not clear if they made clothes for sale in the Bayreuth market or elsewhere outside the village. We do know that the nobility often kept tailors and shoemakers busy making uniforms for their armies (see *Blog 13: Dollhopfs and the American Revolution*).

From the Mistelbach Chronicle we find the following description of peasant costumes:

The old Hummel² costume was as follows: The shirts of the men are short with pushed up waist and inside green lined. Besides the short shirt, each had a longer one of the same or finer cloth. Both are not buttoned over each other, but only hooked together. Instead of the vest, they wear breast cloth (type of sleeveless short jacket), otherwise scarlet (seen above), now of dark green cloth, trimmed with yellow cords, and embroidered with yellow, red, and blue, flowers.

Over the vest go the broad, black-leather suspenders, intertwined several times, from which hang in brass hooks the short, black, buckled pants, tied together at the bottom of the knee over the white stockings.

Around the neck used to be a simple velvet ribbon, but now it is a black silk scarf, which in young people is interwoven with dark red stripes at the edges.

On the head, however, sits a broad black hat with a hanging brim, sometimes turned up, or a high green velvet cap with a rich trim.

The women wear a black skirt with many folds, trimmed at the bottom with light blue ribbons, a black leather belt richly decorated with metal plates, a black jacket and a hood embroidered with silk and tinsel, and a black or red headscarf over it. The maidens decorate their hoods with dark red silk ribbons artificially intertwined and wear a colorful wreath. The costume is completed by a carefully made apron, which for women is made of black silk, for girls colorful or white and embroidered.

Did Margarethe help with the tailoring? They lived in a very small house; how could she not?

As explained in *Blog #25: Women and Marriage*, our ancestors liked to party hearty at special events such as baptisms, weddings, funerals, and church fairs (called *kerwa*). These events lasted for two to three days with much food, alcohol, revelry, and flashy clothes (flashy for the Middle Ages). Must have kept the tailors busy.

It was during this time in the late 1600s that government and church authorities made one of their first attempts at cracking down on the excesses of peasant celebrations. I have to believe that as the village emerged from the trauma of the Thirty Years War, they let loose – similar to Roaring Twenties as the US emerged from the austerity of World War I. The bad times were over...let's celebrate!

From the Chronicle, as was described in *Blog #25: Women and Marriage*:

In reports of the parish office in Mistelbach [from the late 1600s] reference is made to the police regulation of extravagant clothes, which flew in the face of respectability, and the prohibition of superfluous expenditure at weddings, baptisms, and funerals.

Therefor the following regulations: No more than 42 persons should be invited to a wedding; it should not last longer than one day. Each guest should pay for his meal, not more than 50 old Franconian pennies for lunch and not more than 42 pennies for dinner. Wedding gifts were forbidden. No more than six persons should be invited to a baptism, except the godfather, and no meal should be served, but only confectionery or fruit, or cheese and bread, together with a drink of wine or beer. Only the godfather should make a small gift. Church *kerwa*³ and games of chance in which more than half a guilder could be lost, were forbidden. The officials had to pay attention to those who constantly caroused and played in the inn.

Unfortunately, these regulations had no lasting effect.

² Hummel was the immediate hilly region surrounding Mistelbach including the villages of Mistelgau, Hummeltal, Gesees, Glashütten, and Mistelbach.

³ A *kerwa* is an annual fair celebrating the founding of the church.

Hanss Jr. and Margarethe were married in 1678 at the height of this folderol. Were they guilty of such ostentatious displays?

In 1679, Hanss Jr. bought his grandfather Cuntz's small house #55, which Cuntz built in 1662, for 50 guilders. Even for the time, 50 guilders was not a lot of money, indicating that the house and property were very small. Cuntz sold it to them with the stipulation that he and his fourth wife Barbara could continue to live there until they died. Barbara died shortly thereafter in July of 1682; Cuntz died a year later in December of 1683, so they didn't have much time left in the house.

When they bought the house Hanss and Margarethe had no children, but that was about to change as their first child Elisabetha was born in October.

In 1680, easily visible from their house, there was work going on at the top of the hill at St. Bartholomew's Church.

From the Chronicle:

In 1680 the tower was very much in need of repairs; The truss was totally rotten; they had probably waited too long with repairs for fear of the costs. It was not only a matter of repair work, but the tower was "increased by a good parallelepiped"⁴, and instead of the once flat roof, the present tower spire was erected and slate-covered, the tower received "its present dashing, dainty form". Master Greissinger carried out the carpentry and the slates came from the village of Glashütten. In this revival of the tower the sacrifice [the gave their time and talent] of the community is praised.



The St. Bartholomew tower and spire were built in 1680, the year after Hanss and Maraarethe moved into the house #55..

⁴ In geometry, a parallelepiped is a three-dimensional figure formed by six parallelograms – in this case the shape of the new tower. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parallelepiped>

The tower and spire that distinguish the church to this day was built not only by carpenter Greissinger; he was assisted by Conrath Schabtach (1640-1713), our 8th great-grandfather and a shoemaker, and Matthäus Seyfarth (1647-1720), our 7th great-grandfather who owned a sawmill.⁵

In a village of fewer than 200 inhabitants, it can be safely assumed that the Dollhopfs, Greissingers, Schabtachs, and Seyfarths knew each other. What they didn't know was that they would all be great-grandparents of a Dollhopf family in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 350 years later. At the time in 1680 they were not related.

Visible for miles around, the church tower was the focal point of the village, as it was for any rural farming community. If anything happened to it, it was news. From the Chronicle:

As already reported, the tower was built in its current form in 1680. In the following 100 years, lightning struck the tower several times and caused damage. On July 31, 1734, a lightning strike knocked the tower ball and pole (*Turmknopf* and *Heimstange*) to the ground.⁶ In the death register of the parish there is the following entry: Pastor Zapf was holding a confession [church] service in which 60 people participated.

"In the afternoon at 2 o'clock when lightning struck the beams of the steeple, the bolt entered the church and into the back of the altar space. All those standing by the altar fell to the ground and many persons were struck by the lightning and they were quite burned on the legs, so that they were all presumed dead, but the Good Lord kept them alive so that they could participate in the Lord's Supper the next day, 6th Sunday after Trinity.

However, three persons died that day from the lightning:

1. Master tailor Georg Friedrich Kretschmarm climbed up the tower at the sound of the first thunderclap to see if lightning had struck. He fell down the stairs dead. From the church book: "Kretschmarm was an evil man, horribly devoted to cursing and other sins, and was warned that if he continued to curse many times, thunder shall strike him to the ground, which is just what happened to him".
2. Master weaver Georg Wagner, from the Finkenmühle (Finken mill), "a pious, good man, who also attended the church service and then went to the tower to get a better view to see if lightning had hit his house, because no one was at home."
3. Johann Wedel, a young man of 18 years. As he usually went to ring the bell, this time he did not want to stay outside, but rushed to the tower, took the big bell rope with two other boys and after saying: "Pull!" he fell down from the lightning strike, but the other two boys survived.

These three were buried on August 2 in the presence of an extremely large and populous congregation. The tower together with the cross had to be restored; they were gilded with ducat gold; the cost of which, 22 riksdaler, was raised by voluntary donations.

In 1790 lightning damaged the tower again, so that the tower ball, pole, and the cross had to again be restored. In this year it was decided to install a lightning conductor, which was installed for 78 guilders by the mechanic Gottfried Wetzei from Duben in Saxony. When this lightning conductor had to be restored in 1898, the political municipality, according to a decision of the Royal Government of Upper Franconia, had to bear half of the costs.

⁵ Master carpenter Johann Greißinger might have been our 7th great-grandfather, but I have not been able to confirm this.

⁶ *Turmknopf* and *Heimstange* are decorative elements – a gold ball and rod – extending from the top of the tower.

Hanss Jr. and Margarethe had six children, five girls and one boy, all of whom, extremely rare for the time, lived well into adulthood:

1. **Elisabetha** (12 Oct 1679 – 28 Dec 1748, 69) married Erhardt Lüchauer, had 5 children.
2. **Ursula** (30 Sep 1681 – 23 Dec 1732, 51) married Johannes Hertel, no children
3. **Barbara** (25 Feb 1683 – ?) probably left Mistelbach.
4. **Anna** (13 Jan 1685 – 16 Jul 1745, 60) married Conradt Stahlmann, had 4 children.
5. **Margaretha** (31 Oct 1687 – 11 Feb 1759, 71) married Hanss Hübner, had 4 children.
6. **Conrad** (25 Nov 1693 – 17 Sep 1759, 65) our 6th great-grandfather, had 3 children.

All of the children except Barbara remained in Mistelbach, another rare occurrence, since many girls would be married off to men in other villages. They had 16 grandchildren, but Margarethe died at the age of 53 and only lived long enough to see one of them. She died three months before the birth of her second grandchild. What a shame.

Hanss also died prematurely at about the age of 49, so none of the 16 grandchildren, save for one, knew their grandpa and grandma.

Hanss, as mentioned above, did not die in Mistelbach even though he was living there. We know from the records that he was still alive when his daughter Elisabetha married on November 7, 1701 but was already dead when his daughter Anna married on February 11, 1709. In Margarethe's death record of June 30, 1705, she was listed as "his wife", not as "his widow", which does not prove, but does suggest, that he was still alive at the time. So we can assume that he died between 1705 and 1709. She died at the relatively young age of 53. He, being six years younger, died around the age of 50. He likely died of an illness or accident while out of town, but we don't know.

He died before his father Hanss Sr. did, and therefore did not inherit any land. His only son Conrad inherited half of his grandfather Hanss Sr.'s land, the other half went to Hanss Sr.'s other son Stephen, who by this time in 1710 was operating the Zeckenmühle. (Hanss Sr. only had two children, both boys, Hanss Jr. and Stephen.)

In 1669, when Margarethe was 17, two French explorers from Quebec, Robert de la Salle and Martin Chartier, came across a settlement of the Lenape Delaware people on the south bank of a river called *Alligewi Sipo* ("best flowing water of the hills"). European settlers soon followed. They called the river Allegheny.

Ninety years later the settlement was christened Pittsburgh.⁷

Four of Margarethe's descendants would eventually call this faraway place home, including her 4th great-grandson John.

Next in the series on Dollhopf women: 6th Great-grandmother Ann Nützel

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⁷ That Lenape settlement is today the sight of Penn Avenue.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegheny_River#:~:text=The%20name%20Allegheny%20probably%20comes,to%20live%20along%20the%20river.