



Dollhopf

600 Years in the Baking

Coming to America

Johann Bär “John” Dollhopf (1852-1934)

Johann Bär Dollhopf, or “John” as he was known in America, was born on Monday, May 24, 1852 in the middle of a mass migration. A mass *emigration*.

Between 1846 and 1857, the height of the German exodus, over *1.1 million people* left Germany for America. Of those, 21,000 left from Oberfranken, the region that includes the village of Mistelbach, John’s birthplace. *Oberfranken* (“Upper Franconia”) is a region not much larger than a US county.

The pastor in Mistelbach made the following entry in the church books in the mid 1870s:

The first emigrant who left his home village of Mistelbach on June 29, 1839, was Johann Weidenhammer. He was followed by at least 180 villagers, and from 1840 to 1866 frequently whole families, and even some with eight children. These names are no longer present in our village: Bickel, Rogner, Roßner, Schabtach, Gehauf, Weigel and Birkel. So the population decreased to 450.

In a brief 25 years, a third of the village left. Most of the people listed by the pastor above were our relatives.

John Dollhopf was our great-grandfather. He was born in the (roughly translated, “flour mill”), one of four mills in the small farming village of Mistelbach, Germany. All of the mills were located on the *mistel* (“mistletoe”) *bach* (“stream.”)¹ The stream flows into the Red Main River in Bayreuth, eventually into the Rhine River. The mill was “powered” by a water wheel, which turned two large stones to grind wheat and other grains for bread.

John’s father was also named Johann Dollhopf (1830-1858); his mother was Margarethe Bär (pronounced “bear”) (1829-1891).

The Schnörleinsmühle was owned by Peter Bär, Margarethe’s father. As a young boy John lived at the mill along with his mother and three younger siblings – Johann (born 1853 but died at seven months), Sophia (born 1854), and Johann Konrad (born 1856). All three boys were named Johann, and all four children were baptized Bär since their parents were not married.

John’s parents, Johann and Margarethe, were peasants and did not have the requisite financial resources to marry. In the early to mid 1800’s, in most of Germany, local governments imposed financial hurdles to prevent people from marrying – and therefore having children – because of severe poverty and food insecurity.



The Schnörleinsmühle, John Dollhopf’s birthplace. The mill was established on this site in the late 1300s or early 1400s. The current buildings date from 1835, after a fire had destroyed the existing house.

¹ Yes, there is mistletoe in the trees...

As it turns out, the financial hurdles were a failed attempt at social engineering.

You can't stop love.

Shortly after the birth of their fourth child (four children in four years!) Johann and Margarethe, together with their parents, were finally able to demonstrate that they had sufficient financial resources to support a family, so the couple was permitted to marry on Tuesday, November 11, 1856. Margarethe and the three children (their second child died at the age of seven months) moved from the Schnörleinsmühle into the Dollhopf house, house #19, next to the Church of St. Bartholomew. Bernd Hammon, the great-great-grandson of Johann lives in the house today.



Dollhopf house #19 is on the left, St. Bartholomew's Church in the center, and the school house on the right.

When John was six his father contracted "consumption," today known as tuberculosis, a severe lung infection. He became ill in June of 1858, and church records indicate that he spent the next five months in bed. He died on December 6th. He was not able to tend to the crops that summer, and the family suffered.

It is understandable that Margarethe would have been in a panic. Six months later she married the widower farmer Johann Hacker from the neighboring village of Oberwaiz. They were married on June 6, 1859 at St. Bartholomew's. John was seven.

Johann Hacker and his first wife, who died the year before, had five children. Margarethe and her three children moved in with Johann Hacker and his five.

Margarethe subsequently rented house #19 and the farm to George Zimmerman, a distant relative. John's younger brother, Johann Konrad Dollhopf (1856-1947), would eventually inherit the house.

The new family of ten lived in a *very* small house, #8, in Oberwaiz, seen on the next page. The farmhouse had four rooms and a stable under the same roof (the cows and other livestock lived in the house with the family, as was the custom). Over the next 12 years Johann welcomed *seven* new brothers and sisters to the family, in addition to the seven he already had. When John left for America in 1871 there were two adults and 14 children living in that four-room house along with oxen, cows, and other livestock.² No wonder he left.

John's godfather was his uncle Johann Bär, Margarethe's two-year younger brother.³ He was a cabinet maker, also born in the Schnörleinsmühle. He left for America in 1852 at the age of 20, shortly after his godson John was born. He settled in Neosho, Wisconsin (near Milwaukee), and there established a small furniture making business. He wrote to his sister several times over the next two decades inviting his godson to come to Wisconsin because he did not have any children, and he needed help in his furniture shop. (We will return to Neosho at the end of this story.)

When John turned 19 in May of 1871 he made known his desire to go to America. In June his mother wrote to the Royal Court in Bayreuth, "even though I need my oldest son to stay and work on the farm, I know he could make a better life for himself with his godfather in Wisconsin."

She and her husband gave John permission to leave.

² One sibling, Barbara, was born in 1872, seven months after Johann left for America.

³ Have you tired yet of the name "Johann?"

On Wednesday, August 16, 1871 John's mother, his stepfather, Johann Hacker, and his guardian Johann Zeuschel (women, who did not have legal standing in court, needed at least two guardians to appear in court on their behalf), appeared at the Royal Court, about six miles from their farms in Oberwaiz.

Following is the entry in the court records:

Johann [John] Dollhopf
 Bayreuth, 16 August 1871
 Request for approval of emigration
 Royal Provincial Court, Assessor *Strehl Renzel*
 [This is the court official's name.]

Johann Zeuschel takes over guardianship of Johann from Johann Hacker, for the purposes of emigration. Regarding guardianship over the children of Johann Dollhopf, farmer at Mistelbach house #19, the following individuals appeared today before the court:

1. The farmer Johann Hacker, Oberwaiz house #8, stepfather of said children, current husband of their mother Margaretha widowed Dollhopf;
2. The farmer Johann Zeuschel, from there (Oberwaiz), house #1.

Johann Hacker made the following sworn statements:

"My stepson Johann Dollhopf, born May 24, 1852, wants to travel to North America, because his godfather and maternal uncle, Johann Bär from Mistelbach, who has been living there in good circumstances as long as 17 years and has no own children, invited him already several times to join him and find a good advancement there.

Although my wife herself could urgently need this son for our own farm, we could not deny our consent to his trip, because with his insignificant fortune he could find a better advancement in North America with his godfather than here. We want to give him 300 guilders from his estate for his trip and most urgent needs in America and therefore requests, as his previous guardian Johann Potzler has died, to appoint Johann Zeuschel, here present, as this son's – and his younger siblings Sophia and Johann Konrad Dollhopf's – guardian, and to question him about son Johann's intention and grant the approval hereto from the superior guardian."⁴

Thereafter Zeuschel took this guardianship over, and after his instruction was appointed by solemn pledge in lieu of an oath. Then he declared that he considers his ward Johann Dollhopf's intention as useful and beneficial for the reasons already presented by his stepfather, and therefore, as his guardian, agrees to it and also requests the approval hereto from the superior guardian.

[Signed] Johann Hacker and Johann Zeuschel

Resolution:



House #8 in Oberwaiz where Johann lived from age 7 to 19. When he lived there the house was one story, and the animals lived on part of the first floor.

⁴ German sentences are long, very long.

1. Upon the request of those stated above the trip of Johann Dollhopf to North America is hereby approved by the superior guardian.
2. The farmer's son Johann Dollhopf, born in Mistelbach on May 24, 1852, now in Oberwaiz, is to be informed via his stepfather Johann Hacker, farmer thereat, that upon their request his intended trip to North America to join his godfather and maternal uncle Johann Baer has been approved by the superior guardian today.

August 17, 1871
Royal Provincial Court
[court stamp] Strehl Renzel

A little over two weeks later on September 4th Johann was issued his "Certificate of Denaturalization," essentially his passport. He left within days. He would be traveling with his neighbor and friend, Johann Zeuschel, his guardian's son, also 19 years old.

They boarded a train in Mistelbach – in front of the village mill that Dietrich Tolhopf, John's 10th great-grandfather, acquired in 1499 – bound for America. He was leaving the Old World behind.

To our knowledge, he would never again see his mother, stepfather, or 14 brothers and sisters.

He had 300 guilders in his pocket, about \$75 in today's currency. The cost of the ship passage was about 120 guilders – or \$30.

John and friend Johann were headed for the city of Bremen and its port, Bremerhaven, 350 miles away. The trip took two or three days, a combination of train, stage coach, and walking. On October 4th, exactly one month after Johann received permission to emigrate, the two boarded the ship *SS Baltimore*. They left Bremerhaven that day,



A photo of the SS Baltimore in the port of Bremerhaven c. 1871. The trip from Bremerhaven to Baltimore took about 19 days, and the Baltimore would make that trip 51 times in its career.

bound for Southampton, England on their way to Baltimore, Maryland. There were 605 passengers and crew members aboard under the command of Captain Fischer.

The *SS Baltimore* was an iron-clad passenger steamship of the North German Lloyd Line (*Nordeutscher Lloyd*), built in Greenock, Scotland and launched in 1867 (*SS* stands for “steamship”). Most of its career was spent bringing German immigrants to America and hauling US goods back to Germany. The *Baltimore* made the trip to Baltimore 51 times; the first trip was on March 3, 1868 and the last trip was on March 5, 1884.

That first trip in 1868 took 20 days, arriving on March 23rd at the Locus Point immigration dock on the south shore of the Baltimore harbor. It was only the second iron steamship – a modern technological miracle – to be seen in the port of Baltimore, and apparently it made quite an impression. The governor of Maryland led a parade in honor of the ship’s arrival, schools and markets closed, and Fort McHenry, located at the entrance to the Baltimore harbor, fired a salute. It wasn’t only about the ship – it was also in celebration of the first arrival of a *Nordeutscher Lloyd* ship and the expected economic boon it would bring to Baltimore.

In 1867, immigration jumped when the North German Lloyd Steamship line entered into an agreement with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, allowing immigrants to purchase one ticket that would take them across the ocean to Baltimore and inland by train. Ships laden with tobacco, lumber, and cotton goods from Baltimore’s textile industries arrived in Bremerhaven and returned with European immigrants and goods.

That year more than 10,000 people passed through the port, more than doubling the 4,000 immigrants of the previous year. In 1868 immigrants began arriving at the new B&O piers at Locust Point. Immigration inspections required for steerage passengers were conducted on board the ships as they made their way into Chesapeake Bay. When they docked at the pier, immigrants could go directly to the B&O trains that would take them on the next leg of their journey.⁵

The B&O Railroad connected directly to Pittsburgh. It is hard not to imagine that Johann took advantage of this connection, purchasing a ticket directly to his new home.

The record from the ship’s manifest:

Passenger's Name: Johann Dollhopf
Age: 19
Occupation: Cooper (barrel maker)
Last Residence: Germany
Date of Arrival: Oct 23, 1871
Final Destination: Pennsylvania
Ship's Name: Baltimore
Port of Embarkation: Bremen
Port of Debarkation: Baltimore



An advertising poster for the Norddeutscher Lloyd company – a 19th century cruise line!

In 1854, 17 years before he left for America, his cousins Barbara Dollhopf (1828-?) and Anna Dollhopf (1833-1916) along with Katharina Schilling (possibly a distant cousin) left Bremen aboard the tall ship *Aeolus*, also bound for Baltimore.

⁵ Posted by Juliana Szucs on May 29, 2014 in Ask Juliana, Moments in Time, Research, Ancestry.com

The Mistelbachers emigrating in the years 1840 to 1866 – almost all of them related to us in some way⁶ – were sailing to America on three-masted wooden sailing ships, a trip that on average took about 36 days. In 1871 John would have been among the first to travel on a state-of-the art iron steamship, a trip that took about half as long.

But steerage, the area below deck for peasants who couldn't afford above deck accommodations, was no less crowded, and conditions aboard steamships could be just as brutal.

Gustav Götze, a 33-year-old doctor from Butjadingen, Germany, made the trip in 1856 aboard the *Aeolus* – the same ship that Barbara and Anna Dollhopf took two years before in 1854. It was an awful journey – children died on the ship because of sickness. On this voyage the ship sailed from Bremen to New York City. Following is his account of that crossing.

An Account of the Journey to America aboard the Ship Aeolus in the 1850s

(Excerpt of a letter by Gustav Götze translated by Gene Janssen from the OGF [*Oldenburgische Familienkund*] *Jahrbuch* 2009)

Gustav Götze emigrated from Butjadingen, Germany, to the United States aboard the three-master *Aeolus* arriving in New York from Bremerhaven on September 22, 1856. The ship was built in 1849. It was a relatively small sailing vessel, only 38 meters long and 9 meters wide. Gustav wrote a letter back home about the voyage.

At the beginning he writes:

I soon noticed that we were approaching the sea [North Sea] because the water was a bright green color and there were more waves. Finally, the harbor pilot left us and we were really at sea. I still felt well but many, especially the women, began to complain of seasickness, and one after another fell victim to it. But then me too!

Ach, it's such a miserable condition! After having emptied stomach and bowels in every possible way, I staggered to the bunk. I lay there half conscious. About midnight I was suddenly awakened with the words, "Doctor, doctor, (only the devil knows who had made it known that I was a doctor going to America!) please, come to the second cabin.⁷ There is a woman there in labor." The person who woke me was a young man from Berlin, a



Deck of a similar immigrant ship Artesisia, c. 1855.

⁶ It is estimated that we are related to 80% of people born in Mistelbach at that time.

⁷ The doctor was in the "first cabin", above deck. The "second cabin" was second class, but still above deck. Down below decks was steerage, the worst way to travel. Men, women, and children would sleep five or more to a bunk.

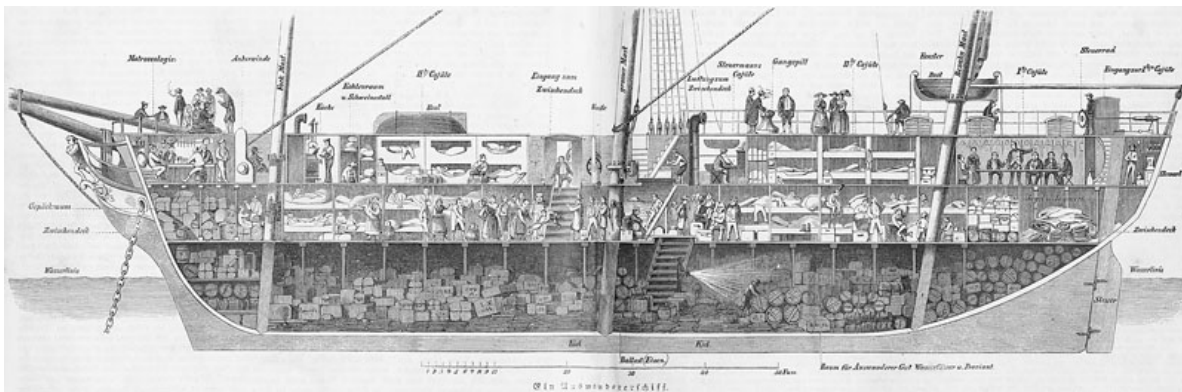
pharmacist, with whom I had become acquainted some evening previously, and his cabin was adjacent to that of the woman.

So, I was supposed to get up, and, worse, to help – I, who lay there so miserable and barely able to stir myself. I tried to excuse myself as best I could because of my seasickness. I enquired about the situation: how old is the woman, whether she had had previous deliveries, etc. The answer: “The woman is 41 years old and has other children.” I replied, “so then let nature take its course, we cannot intervene at this point.

The next morning, after much urging from the captain, I was persuaded to leave my bunk, and, with a great deal of effort, to go out on deck, where, to my great relief, the news was that everything had gone well, and mother and child were doing well, considering the circumstances.

Götze had listed himself in the ship’s manifest as a merchant so that no one would know he was a doctor, and he would not be expected to be the non-salaried ship’s doctor for the voyage. But, the jig was up. Götze reports further about life and people on the ship in the first and second cabins:

There was no lack of company on the after deck of our ship. Every morning when I came up there was a certain group of people already gathered or soon to be gathered. The main ones were two apparent revolutionary minded Rheinländer who amused me greatly with their ultra-democratic, uniquely racy, but inane talk about the 1848 Revolution in Prussia; and the above-mentioned, useless pharmacy kid, who, according to others, was being sent to America by his



The inside of a packet ship. Anna and Barbara Dollhopf would have been below decks in steerage.

relatives in the hopes of improving himself. Then there was a woman from Danzig with two extremely bratty children whose bad behavior provided the entire company with ample opportunity to converse about the consequences of such a lack of upbringing.

Because of the continual southwest wind, the *Aeolus* was not able to sail through the English Channel toward the Azores but had to take a course through the North Sea, north of Scotland. The choppy journey in the stormy North Sea is, of course, like a virus for landlubbers on board and created tumult and noise, fear and confusion throughout the entire ship. Götze, still seasick, writes:

But even in my bunk I had no peace and quiet. Because of the rolling and pitching of the ship, I was only able to remain in my very flat bunk bed with the utmost of effort. At the same time, one was beset with fear and trembling because of the continual, terrible racket caused by the roaring wind, the pitching of the ship, the crashing waves, and the sliding and rolling of various items not fastened down on deck, in the cabin, or in steerage and the shuddering of the entire vessel. In

addition, there were anxious cries of the women and children from the second cabin. Put this all together into one continuous noise and you have some idea of the awful tumult.

What it was like in steerage and in the second cabin, I know not from firsthand information, but I heard from others, that there was an awful confusion. Most of the chests and boxes filled with food for the passengers and placed before the cabins had been tossed around, mixed up and even broken so that broken eggs, bottles, ham, sausages, bread, etc. lay about the floor and the owners had great difficulty sorting out what belonged to whom.



Steerage passengers had no running water or bathroom facilities, and slept in large wooden bunks as seen in this photo. No windows for fresh air. A rolling, pitching ship. They had to bring their own food to last four to six weeks. All of their worldly possessions (they weren't going on vacation) were stored below in the hold.

Things calmed down a bit after the North Sea stretch. Scotland was rounded and the Atlantic reached. The people could finally leave their cabins and bunks and catch a breath of fresh air on deck.

Our letter writer [Götze] is also over his seasickness and begins to observe life on board. He had promised to tell his friends about the voyage as in the following:

In order to keep my spirits up I often went to the second cabin to play a few hands of Whist or "66," [card games] and so I could also observe the goings on around me. It always seemed to me like a large, open campground. Men, women and children could be found lounging around on the deck chairs or they sat on boxes or chests. One man calmly smokes his pipe, another feasts on a bologna sausage brought from home or a piece of ham and chews on his biscuit. A little one sits on a pot (to relieve himself) while another one is deloused; a half dozen children in dirty and torn clothing with unkempt hair are crying or howling; a group of younger people gathered around a box play cards; a pleasant conversation in Bavarian dialect is going on next to sharp word exchanges in the Berlin dialect.

There is laughter and screaming plus quarrels and squabbling, scolding and cursing, or miserable complaints about wrongs, bad air and poor food. A woman combs her hair and washes herself, scattering hair and splashing water all over while nearby someone prepares a noon or evening meal or a family sits around a steaming pot of potatoes and another eats her homemade bread soup. Everything is as disorderly and messed up as possible.

In addition, there is a constant, pungent odor [there were no bathrooms, people went in pots and tossed it overboard, or just relieved themselves over the side of the ship], a bouquet of all possible smells, which is indescribable. And none of this compares to the situation between decks (steerage) where more than 200 people are confined in close quarters in contrast to the second cabin where there are perhaps only 70 people. What a throng in the deep, dark belly of the ship. At the departure from Bremerhaven, steerage seemed to be a multicolored spectacle yet somewhat orderly, but imagine what it was like four to six weeks later with the addition of dust, dirt and filth among 200 people—you would not recognize the place. The flooring is more slippery [from sewage] than the smooth marsh paths after a rain.”



Conditions in steerage.

After this description of conditions in steerage, Götze writes about the ship's crew including the captain whom he describes as an unrefined person, surly and disagreeable, so that everyone steered clear of him. Only the boatswain and the junior helmsman were good seamen and nice in the eyes of the letter writer:

In my opinion the junior helmsman has the most difficult and unpleasant job on the ship. He is entrusted with dispersing all provisions on the ship – not a simple matter for so many passengers on our ship. Twice weekly he distributes the ship's bread to various passengers; he portions out water for each, and every noon divides meat or bacon [speck]; portions out weekly vinegar and herring. In addition, he must inspect the kitchen and organize the meals for the first cabin making sure everything is in order and well prepared. He gets a needed reprimand from the captain when something is burned or if the kitchen did not produce as expected. Also, he had to see that the second cabin and the between deck was cleaned every morning by the passengers. Plus daily he had to provide juniper berries and occasionally lime for both decks and had to keep watch day and night so that some days he would get only five or seven hours of sleep.

Since everyone on board knew that Gustav Götze was a doctor, whether he liked it or not, he had to deal with sick passengers, as he described:

Many people who had stayed out in the cool evening breeze got colds. At any moment they would come for help for their coughing, sore throats or toothaches. Ammonium chloride and liquorice, poultices, Spanish fly, castor oil, Epsom salts, etc. were the usual remedies. Seldom were others necessary.

At any rate there were many children on board who were sick and a number of them died [buried at sea]. In the last weeks measles broke out among many children. Five children whose relatives turned to me were cured and others were still sick upon arrival. In addition, I treated a boy who had fallen on his head and others who had chest colds as well as others battling severe toothaches.

Toward the end of the journey, on the other side of the Atlantic, the *Aeolus* came into contact with another emigrant ship, the three-master *Rhein*. Such encounters were, of course, a welcome diversion during the long sea journey. If the winds were favorable, visits were made between the ships and various pleasant exchanges came about. However, only the captain and some chosen passengers from the first-class cabin were permitted to take part. The crew and all other passengers had to remain in their quarters. Götze writes:

Suddenly we saw a boat leave the *Rhein* and soon Captain Spier from the *Rhein* was aboard our ship along with two of his passengers. One can easily imagine the joyful greeting and the questions about how things had gone for both ships, etc.

Right after the noon meal we (that is, our captain and some passengers) went back with our guests to the *Rhein* which lay near our *Aeolus*. Our reception was very friendly and we were entertained royally. We were even offered vegetables prepared better than we ever had on land as well as coffee with milk, and soda water with wine, almonds, and raisins, and evenings, besides cheese and sausage smoked meat Hamburger style, veal, sardines in oil, etc. We were also entertained by some women who flirted and carried on with lots of hugs and kisses all in great fun.

But the good times lasted briefly. During the return visit the pilot boats arrived suddenly and the pleasantries came to an end, and things progressed rather rapidly. America [New York] the goal of the difficult journey, came into view. Götze then uses some English terms, probably to impress his friends with his worldly experience and knowledge. We read in his letter:

As darkness descended we saw "revolving fire" [a lighthouse] on Fire Island southeast of the coast of Long Island. Because the south wind was so strong, we had to keep our distance from the land so that by daybreak the next morning we had hardly gone any further than where we had been the night before.

At 11 o'clock a tugboat appeared and soon it circled around us and came alongside in order to persuade our captain to let them tow the ship to the harbor. After coming to an agreement it was only a few hours before we arrived in the bay at New York.

A magnificent panorama beyond all description gradually rolled before us. Everyone was amazed at the unimaginable number of sailing ships and steamers which we met or passed, and when, finally, the distant horizon of Jersey, New York and Brooklyn came into view a cheer went up from all on board. I have never seen such a wonderful sight.



A Currier and Ives lithograph of New York harbor in 1875. Broadway is seen running down the center of the island. Most Germans to the US in the mid 1800's came through New York, and many settled in Kleindeutschland ("Little Germany"), in the Bowery, on New York's Lower East Side, circled above. By 1850 New York was the third most populous German city in the world after Berlin and Vienna. Johann Dollhopf's in-laws, the parents of Elizabeth Bender, met and married in 1856 in Kleindeutschland.

At Staten Island a doctor came on board and in an unbelievable short time determined the state of health of all the passengers and gave permission for our ship to drop anchor. Along with the doctor there were two customs officers and two policemen. The former were there to inspect the cargo and the latter to make sure that unauthorized persons could not come aboard to swindle the passengers.

The first footsteps on the streets of the worldly city of New York—which already had a population of 500,000 around 1850—impressed Götze and he wrote:

This evening I explored a few miles of Broadway; there is nothing like it in all the world. Everything is very large, except for the people moving about. He who knows Broadway and the two harbor streets knows all of New York. Trying to describe this mighty city to you, my friends, is presumptuous because it would be impossible for you to comprehend. What are Bremen, Hamburg, Berlin? – miserable nests! They are not worth mentioning alongside New York if you see the hustle and bustle, the business, and the indescribable tumult and feeling in every street and every square. In contrast, however, if one compares paved/cobblestoned streets and the order and cleanliness of the same, then New York is far behind even the small cities of Germany. All of this and more that I would like to tell you, you would count as exaggeration.

If I tell you, for instance, that hundreds of horse-drawn omnibuses for those who don't want to walk ply up and down Broadway every minute, all day long, from morning to evening one after another so that one can barely cross the streets. If I tell you that the most outrageous fraud, and deceit, yea even fighting and murder occur under the eyes of the policeman without him interceding until it is too late — would you believe me? Certainly not!



Broadway c. 1860.

Nevertheless, New York is supposed to be the most infamous place in all of North America. I speak not, thank God, from experience because nothing untoward has happened to me yet...all things are so immense and curious. Certainly one could not do better anywhere in North America for learning the language, customs, business, and transportation conditions than in New York.

Today, September 24th, I earned my first dollar on American soil. How? I made arrangements for help through a German pharmacy for two children suffering from measles. After eight days sojourn here herein I have paid out \$8 and earned only \$1. I have come to the decision to travel further west.

I have more to tell, but since I leave today, time is short and I must rest before writing again. And then I'll be able to give you a definite address. Yours, Götze⁸

No further letters of Götze surfaced. The US Census of 1860 locates him in Ozaukee County, Port Washington Township, Wisconsin. His name appears in a local history as one of the founders of the Port Washington *Gesang Verein*, a German singing society organized in 1859.

And less than 30 miles away, in his furniture shop in Neosho, Wisconsin, waiting for his nephew to come to Wisconsin, was Johann Bär.

John Dollhopf arrived in Baltimore, not New York, but if you visit the Statue of Liberty, his name is etched on the Wall of Immigrants in remembrance of our family and the millions of Germans who came to America — to any port — seeking a better life.

John arrived with his friend Johann Zeuschel in Baltimore on Monday, October 23, 1871.

⁸ Translation copyright 2010 by Ostfriesen Genealogical Society/America, used by permission. National Archives and Records Administration, Film M237, Reel 167, List 962. Transcribed by Gene Janssen a member of the Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild 20 September 2010.

Less than two weeks later he was already at work as a cooper (barrel maker) at the utopian Harmony Society, the German factory town of Economy, Pennsylvania. Economy is situated on the banks of the Ohio River, 16 miles downstream from Pittsburgh, and was located on...a spur of the B&O Railroad! He *must* have bought that combo ticket.

The Harmony Society operated a number of substantial businesses in Economy, including a cotton and woolen mill, granary, brewery, distillery, vineyard, winery, silk factory, several farms, and oil wells. All of their manufactured goods were sold in barrels, hence a need for many coopers. (John was a cooper.) The cooper's shed has been restored and today can be viewed as part of the exhibit at the Old Economy Museum.



Johann disembarked here, the immigration pier at Locus Point, on the south shore of the Baltimore harbor. He likely boarded the B&O Railroad on the same pier. This photo is from c. 1892.

Years later we discovered the reason that John stopped first in Pittsburgh rather than traveling directly to Wisconsin to see his uncle.

The year before John left Germany, two of his friends – Johann Georg Holl and Johann Nicklaus (aka J.N.) Schmidt – left Oberwaiz for America, and both traveled to Pittsburgh to work at the Harmony Society. They were also related to John:

- J.N. Schmidt was John's brother-in-law; he married John's stepsister Anna Barbara Hacker. J.N. was 24, Anna Barbara 24 when they traveled to Economy with their first-born daughter Barbara, age four.
- Johann Georg Holl was Anna Barbara's cousin, so he was a half-cousin of John. He was 19 when he left Mistelbach.

In the 1870 Census there were others from the Mistelbach area at the Harmony Society as well, including an Adam Hacker and a Johann Bernreuther. We are not certain at the moment how they are related to John, but they are family names. So...when John arrived at the Society, there were six friends and/or family members waiting for him.

Like John, Holl and Schmidt were coopers. Years later, John asked Schmidt to be the godfather of his third son, after whom he is named, Johann Nicholas Dollhopf, born in 1884.

It is not known how his friends from Oberwaiz knew of the Harmony Society, or why they chose to travel there. The Harmony Society was indeed well known around the world for its industrial output, especially in Europe. It is entirely likely that they might have heard of the Society, if not in their home village of Oberwaiz, then perhaps on

the docks of Bremerhaven, Baltimore, or New York. Perhaps there were others from Mistelbach who predated this group.

The Harmony Society, founded in 1785 by George Rapp in Iptingen, Germany, was already waning in the 1870s. By 1890 it was hopelessly in debt and was dissolved in 1906. A major reason for its decline was the members' belief in celibacy – they believed in the imminent Second Coming of Christ, and since the End was near, the bearing of children was deemed unnecessary and, perhaps more telling, they considered procreation an impure act.

By the mid 1870's Holl, Schmidt, Hacker, and Bernreuther had all left Economy for St. Louis. There they likely joined Johann Zeuschel, John's traveling partner, who had gone directly to the St. Louis area after he and John arrived in Baltimore.

In March of 1874, almost three years after he arrived, John left Economy. The owners of the Harmony Society wrote him a letter of recommendation dated March 9, 1874 (still in our possession):

Johan Dollhopf, born May 24, 1852 in Mistelbach, Oberfranken, Kingdom of Bavaria, has been in our employment for two years, four months, during which time he has shown himself to be a well-behaved, industrious, worthy, young man. He now intends to go farther west our best wishes accompany him. Economy March 9, 1874 (I believe the German version of this note says he is going to see his godfather).

Fourteen days later in a letter dated March 25, 1874, he wrote the Harmony Society from Neosho, Wisconsin, so we know that he joined his uncle, and perhaps there learned the furniture making trade.

Two years later he returned to Pittsburgh to marry the 18-year-old girl he met at the Society – Elizabeth Bender.

Elizabeth, known as "Lizzie" had been indentured to the Society – given up for adoption – in 1864 when she was seven years old, along with her twin sister Mathilde. Their father Georg Bender signed the twins over to the Harmony Society, then he disappeared. We have no further trace of Georg Bender. The twins were free to leave the Society when they turned 18.

John and Lizzie married on December 12, 1876. Their first child, Johann Heinrich "Henry" Dollhopf was born on August 12, 1877; they would have 11 more children.

John became a cabinet and furniture maker himself, taking after his godfather Johann Bär in Wisconsin. In 1891 he built a house at 22 Iona Street on Spring Hill, then a part of Allegheny City, today the "North Side" of Pittsburgh.

He started several small furniture making businesses, including the one shown in the advertisement above.

What happened to his traveling companion and the friends and relatives he met at the Harmony Society?

- Johann Zeuschel, Johann's boyhood friend who traveled with him on the voyage, died in St. Louis in 1923 at age 71. He had a large family too, 10 children.
- Johann Georg Holl, his half-cousin, became a farmer and died in 1946 at the age of 95 in Shady Bend, Kansas, about 400 miles further west of St. Louis. He had six children.



Furniture company ad from the 1908 Pittsburgh Press.

- J.N. Schmidt, his brother-in-law, also turned farmer, died two miles away from Holl in Beverly, Kansas in 1922 at age 77 with four children. We don't know when Anna Barbara, his wife and John's stepsister, died. Their daughter Barbara, who left Mistelbach at age four, died in December of 1944, also in Beverly.

Four teenage friends from a poor German farming village, who made an adventure for themselves in the New World, seeking a better life. We the descendants are better for it.

John died in Pittsburgh on March 28, 1934, at the age of 81. He is buried in the St. Paul's (aka Weitershausen) Cemetery on Troy Hill in an unmarked grave.

There is much more history to be told – the life and times of John Dollhopf are rich with the trials and tribulations of an immigrant forging a new life in America. Stay tuned.

Mark R. Dollhopf
New Haven, CT
April 16, 2020
In anno corona virum.



Johann Dollhopf c. 1880.