



Dollhopf

600 Years in the Baking

Dollhopf Women

This is the 10th essay in a series addressing the life and times of our Dollhopf grandmothers.

13th Great-Grandmother Margarethe Eck (abt 1470-aft 1534)

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

Birth: abt 1470

Place of birth: Bayreuth

Parents: Eberhard "the old Hans" Eck, tailor, and NN

Marriage: bef. 1497

Husband: Cuntz "Ullein" Dollhopf, (bet 1465/74–bet 1523/26) miller.

Age at marriage: Unknown

Residence: House #57, the Dorfmühle ("village mill"), Mistelbach

Number of known children: 4

Death: aft Jan 1534

Cause of death: Unknown

In the year 1497 our 13th great-grandparents Margarethe and husband Cuntz Dollhopf were newlyweds. They were likely the first Dollhopfs to be married in Mistelbach, in the church of St. Martin, that was at the time Catholic. In 30 to 40 years, it would be renamed St. Bartholomew when, as a result of the Reformation, it switched to Lutheran.¹ There is the possibility that she lived to see the church convert, if it converted before 1534.

They had recently moved from Bayreuth into the Dorfmühle ("village mill") in Mistelbach, which had been acquired by Cuntz's father Dietrich. They did not yet have any children, but within the next year or two they would have the first of their four children, Cuntz Jr.

In that year, as they were discovering Mistelbach – more than 500 hundred years ago – Columbus was discovering the island of Hispaniola on his third voyage to the Americas, and Englishman John Cabot was discovering Newfoundland and the coast of Maine.

It was the Age of Discovery, however modest for our peasant great-grandparents.

We don't know exactly when she was born, but if she was close to her husband Cuntz in age, she was born about 1470. We know from court inheritance records that she died after January 1534 in Mistelbach.

From those records we also know that she was born in Bayreuth, the daughter of the tailor Hans Eck, in a house that was located behind the *Rathaus* (city hall) between the houses of Contz Piderman and Hans Todtschniter. She



Peasant Woman with Two Jugs, a 1524 engraving, by Barthel Beham (1502-1540). Beham, a student of Albrecht Dürer, was an engraver and printer from Nürnberg. This is how our 13th great-grandmother Margarethe Eck may have appeared in 1524 when she was in her 50s.

¹ If they were married in a church. Prior to the Reformation church marriages were not required. See *Blog 25: Women and Marriage*.

was a close neighbor of Dietrich and Margarethe Tolhopf, and their son Cuntz, who lived at Maximilianstrasse 75 (before they moved to the mill in Mistelbach).



Gothic Fresco in St. Bartholomew Church, Mistelbach. *Cuntz and Margarethe were married sometime prior to the year 1497, perhaps under this fresco when the church, which was then Catholic, was called St Martin. They were probably the first Dollhopfs married in Mistelbach, although marriage in a church proper was not a requirement in pre-Reformation Europe. We don't know when the first church in Mistelbach was built, but we do know that a church building existed during the reign of Friedrich I, Lord of Mistelbach, who died in 1136. During restoration in the 1950s this fresco was discovered beneath layers of paint. The Bayreuth Tagblatt (newspaper) of October 1959 reported "Gothic frescoes in the church of Mistelbach were discovered in the interior of the church, which in recent weeks has been thoroughly renovated by a Nuremberg company. The frescoes were painted on the lime plaster, the rest of the paintings were found directly on the sandstone. This well-preserved fresco represents the risen Christ, with the Knight George with a dragon."*

Bayreuth, although much larger than Mistelbach (with which it shares a border) was still a rural and remote town. But unlike its smaller neighbor, Bayreuth had city walls for fortification and a market square, so it was a center for commerce.

The Dollhopfs and Ecks lived in the central area of the town near the city hall. This would have been a "prestigious" address, perhaps a clue to relative prosperity.

Margarethe married Cuntz, the neighborhood boy, before 1497, the date of a tax roll record where we learn that she and Cuntz were already living in the mill in Mistelbach with Cuntz's parents. She lived at the mill from the time she was married until she died, almost 40 years. That tax roll of 1497 also listed a maid – unmarried young girls were often engaged as maids in peasant villages, so this was not necessarily a sign of wealth, although it could have been.

She was probably about 40 when Cuntz inherited the mill from his father Dietrich, after Dietrich died around 1511. Cuntz was assisting his father in the mill from the time his father acquired it in the 1490s.

Cuntz died before June of 1529, probably in his late 50s, when court records indicate that his wife Margarethe paid a debt on his behalf.

He must have died unexpectedly because not only did he still owe money, but he was also still collecting money on the sale of the house of his father-in-law Eberhard Eck, which Margarethe had inherited.

Margarethe and Cuntz had four children:

1. **Cuntz** (bet 1498/1506 – aft 1570, ~70), our 12th great-grandfather, who married a woman whose name we don't know, and they in turn had four children.
2. **NN** (?-?) Church records indicate a child was born, but no name or dates are given, probably indicating a stillbirth, or a child that died shortly after birth. These short-lived births were often not recorded, although baptism was typically administered bedside immediately at birth so the baby, if it did die, would go to heaven (in their eyes).
3. **Lorenz** (bet 1497/1505 – ?), married Cristina NN, and settled in Creussen, nine miles southeast of Mistelbach.
4. **NN** (?-?) Same as above, a stillbirth or a child who died shortly after birth.

It is likely that Cuntz and Margarethe were relatively wealthy as millers. (I use the term “wealthy” guardedly – they were still peasants.) This we can assume since they were the subject of many court proceedings that involved fairly substantial sums of money – Margarethe settled a debt of 20 guilders in 1529 (about \$20,000 today). Apparently, her late husband Cuntz owed a certain Hans Viechtemulner money that was in dispute for many years. Cuntz died and the descendants of Viechtemulner sought payment from Margarethe. She paid the debt of 20 guilders, which included accumulated interest.

The court record follows below. Note that Margarethe is always represented by guardians, since women did not have legal standing. Margarethe's guardians are Herman Haynlein and Contz Schmid from Mistelbach. They might have been relatives or friends. (Her husband's name Cuntz, is sometimes spelled Contz, or Conz, in the records.)

The record describes how Margarethe paid a debt owed to Veit Richter (representing his cousins), a tailor from Bayreuth. Margarethe's father was a tailor, perhaps a clue to the debt. The debt was incurred by her husband Cuntz, and owed to Richter's uncle, Hans Viechtemulner. Although it is not stated in this record, it was likely a real estate debt as it was a substantial amount of money. It was in dispute for many years. As noted in the signatures, the entire city council of Bayreuth was present at this proceeding, probably indicating it was a big deal. The record:

Cuntz Dollhopf's widow,² Bayreuth, 7 June 1529
Acquittance of a debt
Stadtarchiv, D-95444 Bayreuth: Stadt- und Gerichtsbücher, Band 16.
City and court book 1524-1538. Page 249.

Veit Richter, tailor, and Margaretha, surviving widow of Contz Tolhopf, late of Mistelbach,
acquittance of a debt of 20 guilders.

Veit Richter, tailor, citizen here in Bayreuth, appeared today, on the date of this record, and stated, that he for himself, his late mother, and as the authorized representative of his cousins, regarding four quarters of an unpaid debt of 20 guilders, that derived from Mister Hans Viechtemulner, late, had previously made a claim against Contz Tolhopf, miller in Mistelbach,

² Since she was a widow, we know that Cuntz had already died.

late, during his lifetime, and therefore stood in a lengthy dispute, yet after his death and an order amicably settled the matter with Margaretha, said Contz Tolhopf's surviving widow, and her guardians named Herman Haynlein and Contz Schmid from Mistelbach, through mediation of the honorable and highly respectable Jerg Sendelbeck, treasurer in Bayreuth, and honorable councillor thereat.

It had been agreed that regarding he and his cousins' claim said Tolhopfin³ shall pay one amount of 20 guilders for capital, accumulated interests and expenses in two installments, through which all claims, none excluded, shall be satisfied, according to a record in the court book of Monday after *undecim milium virginum*⁴ in the year of 1528. He publicly confirmed for himself and on behalf of his heirs and those he has been given authorization by that Margaretha Tolhopf amicably paid and settled the said amount of 20 guilders within the determined time limits and therefore for himself and on behalf of his heirs and all those he has been given authorization by completely and absolutely exonerates and absolves said Tolhopfin, her son Lorentz and all of her heirs, also said guardians, from the amount of 20 guilders and all accumulated interests and expenses, without any malice. All parties vowed to keep this and upon their diligent request it has been documented and recorded in this city book.

Witnesses: Claus Kun, current mayor, Veit Man, Hans Hammerbach, Contz Gerhart, Jorg Steger, Balthasar Otschneider and Jorg Schamel, as the city council of Bayreuth, on Monday after Petronella⁵ in the year of 1529.

In the next court transaction, we learn that Margarethe and her sister Anna had inherited the house of their father Hans Eck, and that Margarethe's husband Cuntz Dollhopf then sold the house to Hans "the elder" Staud from the village of Laineck for 150 guilders in Rhenish currency (the equivalent of three to five years wages). The buyer Hans Staud paid part of the price to Cuntz when Cuntz was still alive, and the balance to Margarethe and her sister Anna after Cuntz's death. Cuntz apparently died in the interim.

Cuntz and Margarethe likely sold the house in Bayreuth since they were living at the mill in Mistelbach. (Margarethe's sister Anna was living in Creussen, eight miles south of Mistelbach.) They were satisfied that payment had been made in full.

In this legal "bill of sale" Cuntz is referred to as a miller in Mistelbach. This citation was how we learned that Cuntz was indeed a miller – these legal documents were full of such clues. And again, because women did not have legal standing, Margarethe is represented by two guardians – Hans Urban Mulner and Heintz Gorll. A woman would normally be represented by her husband or close male relatives; in this case she had none unless either of these two were brothers-in-law or cousins.

Cuntz Dollhopf's [598] widow Bayreuth, 26 January 1534
Sale of paternal home
Stadtarchiv, D-95444 Bayreuth: Stadt- und Gerichtsbücher, Band 16. City and court book 1524-1538. Page 543.

Purchase and receipt regarding the house behind the city hall, which had been owned by the old Eck, tailor, and was sold by Contz Ubellein [Tolhopf], miller in Mistelbach, to Hans Staud from Laineck the elder.

Before the wise mayor and city council of Bayreuth specified below today personally appeared Hans Urban Mulner and Heintz Gorll from Bayreuth, in their capacity as the appointed custodians

³ Adding "in" to the last name, as in "Tollhopfin," makes it feminine. Thus, Tollhopfin refers to Margarethe.

⁴ *undecim milium virginum* (the day of "eleven thousand virgins") is October 21, the day commemorating the massacre by the Huns of St. Ursula and her 11,000 virgin followers. All court dates were pegged to religious holidays.

⁵ St. Petronella was the patron saint of Frankish territories honored on May 31, hence it was the Monday after May 31.

and guardians of Margaretha [Tolhopf], widow of Cuntz Ubellein [Tolhopf], miller in Mistelbach, late, with their said ward; besides Anna, widow of Lorentz Preunl, late of Creussen; which two women are the surviving daughters and legal heirs of the old Hans Eck, tailor, and explained that their ward, both said women, after their friendly and dear late father, said tailor Eck's death inherited a house in Bayreuth, located behind the city hall, between Contz Piderman's and Hans Todtschniter's houses. Afterwards Cuntz Ubellein [Tolhopf], miller in Mistelbach, with the consent, knowledge and authorization of both said women, his wife and sister-in-law, regarding this same house made a solid, everlasting and irrevocable sale with Hans "the elder" Staud from Laineck and sold it to him for the amount of 150 guilders in Rhenish currency. On behalf of both women said Ubellein [Cuntz Tolhopf] during his lifetime had been amicably paid part of the purchase price and these two heirs after his death the balance, completely and absolutely, including all costs and expenses, by said buyer Staud. As they had been completely satisfied, they confirmed that regarding this sale they have no more claims against the buyer and his heirs.

Margarethe must have been fairly prosperous, since she was already living at the mill (which her son Cuntz was now operating since her husband Cuntz had died), and she thus received a substantial sum of money from the sale of her father's home. So she owned the mill, and had the additional benefit of the sale of her childhood home.

Her husband Cuntz died between 1523 and 1526, and she died sometime after 1534.

Her first grandchild, Georg, son of Cuntz, was born about 1539, so she might have lived to see a grandchild, but this is by no means certain.

Margarethe was about 47 years old, when, on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church.⁶ News about the Theses spread quickly in cities throughout Germany, but probably not so fast in peasant villages.

In January, three months after he posted the Theses, friends of Luther translated them from Latin into German, and with the aid of the recently invented printing press, copied them and distributed them widely. It is estimated that within two months after they were translated the Theses spread throughout Europe, although this is bit difficult to imagine, since that the fastest news could travel between cities was via horseback, carriage, or river boat.⁷

It is not clear when or what our ancestors heard in the village of Mistelbach. Wittenberg was 160 miles to the north of Mistelbach, a fair distance in those days. And we are not sure our peasant grandparents could read or write (no signatures appeared on the legal documents).

They were probably unaware of this event that would change the world.

News did, however, spread quickly to the major nearby city of Nürnberg, which became a hotbed of Protestant reformist ideas in the 1520s. Peasants believed that Luther's proclamation of the "priesthood of all believers" – implying that all men were equal before God – meant literally that *all* men were equal, equal to the nobility.⁸

In 1524 the peasants in Nürnberg and the surrounding region rebelled against the nobility, a forerunner to the Peasant Rebellion of 1525 that engulfed most of Germany.

Peasants were rebelling over taxes and other indignities suffered at the hands not only of the nobility, but also of the church (See *Blog #12: Feudalism and Taxes*). In addition to the taxes owed to the Margrave, they also had to

⁶ Contrary to popular myth, nailing the 95 Theses to the door was not an act of protest, it was common practice for university professors. He was simply affixing "study questions" to the university "bulletin board" so his colleagues and students could prepare for discussion and debate.

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Protestantism#Germany

⁸ This is widely considered by historians as a precursor to the American Declaration of Independence.

pay a "tithe" to the Church – one tenth of everything they produced – crops and animals. Portions of this tithe had been usurped by the nobility and the peasants were not happy that nobles were collecting double the taxes.

Margarethe and Cuntz would have heard of *this* rebellion, because one of the first clashes occurred in Forchheim, a village only 28 miles from Mistelbach. The villagers were not only upset about the tithe, but also the fact that they were not allowed to fish in ponds and streams owned by the Cathedral, nor hunt in woods owned by the Cathedral – thus denying them of valuable sources of food:

One of the most important instances of opposition to the tithe payment occurred on May 26, 1524, in Forchheim, a village north of Nuremberg. This incident was the first act of the Peasants' Revolt in which there is documentary evidence that one of the instigators was a cleric. It was also the first example of burghers and peasants working together from the very beginning to obtain their demands. The Forchheim disturbance elicited support and sympathy from both Nuremberg burghers and peasants.

Forchheim did not lie within the Nuremberg territory; rather, it belonged to the bishop in Bamberg. In May 1524 the citizens of this small town illegally fished in a pond the rights to which belonged to the cathedral prior at Bamberg. This was considered a serious offense. On 26 May the attempt of an episcopal official to take steps against such disobedience caused a public uprising. A certain peasant Ullein from Pegnitz called the crowd together in the churchyard and, with the cry "Es muss sein," ["it must be"] they attacked the public buildings, plundered the archive, damaged the town hall, and deposed the city council. That night the surrounding villages were aroused; on the next morning 500 peasants gathered in Forchheim. Within only a few days, the entire area was, as one official wrote, "surging and rebellious."

The rebels drew up a list of five grievances, 1) demanding that hunting and fishing be free, 2) that the tithe be reduced to one thirtieth of the grain (paid not to the cathedral prior but to the bishop himself), 3) that annates (papal taxes) be abolished, 4) that nobles and clerics bear civil responsibilities (including taxes) like other citizens, and 5) that clerics be tried before civil rather than ecclesiastical courts.⁹

Note that the Forcheimers recruited rebels from the entire region, which could have easily included Mistelbach. Ultimately, while this skirmish would have been one of the first in the *Deutscher Bauernkrieg* (the "German Peasants War") of 1525, the surrounding region did not experience the same great carnage as in the rest of



Three Peasants in Conversation, copper engraving by Albrecht Dürer, 1497. This is Durer's depiction of armed, rebellious, peasants from Franconia, the region of Mistelbach. One of the peasants holds a sword, another has a knife in his belt and spurs on his shoes. Peasants did not typically carry weapons. *The Met.*

⁹ Opposition to Tithes in the Peasants' Revolt: A Case Study of Nuremberg in 1524. Lawrence P. Buck. *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Oct., 1973. Vol. 4. No. 2 (Oct., 1973). Pp. 11-22.

German-speaking central Europe, where an estimated 300,000 peasants were slaughtered at the hands of the nobility. (See *Blog #12: Feudalism and Taxes*).

It should be noted that Cuntz died about the time of this uprising in Forcheim, but there is no way of knowing whether he was involved...

... or maybe he died in the uprising. Maybe he and Margarethe were indeed rebels!

From the church and civil records, we learn of no wars, climate disasters, or epidemics in the early 1500s. Because of the relatively civil relationship that the peasants in this region enjoyed with the margrave, the Peasants Rebellion of 1525 bypassed Mistelbach.

However, the Second Margrave War, which erupted in the 1550s, devastated the village, but Margarethe and Cuntz had died by then.

They might have enjoyed one of the most peaceful eras of our ancestors. And they likely enjoyed relative prosperity as mill owners.

Beginning with the Thirty Years War in the early 1600s, at which time the Dollhopf family lost the mill, and continuing through the mid 1800s, family fortunes ebbed as the Dollhopf farms became smaller and subsistence farming became increasingly difficult.

Margarethe died after 1534, during the years when the churches in Franconia were converting to Lutheranism. Did she see the changes coming? Was she among the first of our ancestors to be Lutheran?

She might have been.

Next in the series on Dollhopf women: 12th Great-grandmother NN NN (No Name).

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