



# Dollhopf

600 Years in the Baking

## Dollhopf Women

*This is the 11<sup>th</sup> essay in a series addressing the life and times of our Dollhopf grandmothers.*

### 12th Great-Grandmother NN NN (abt 1520-aft 1556)

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

**Birth:** abt.1520

**Place of birth:** Unknown

**Parents:** Unknown

**Marriage:** bef 1539

**Husband:** Cuntz Dollhopf (bet 1498/1506 – aft 1570, ~70), miller and church warden

**Age at marriage:** ~26

**Residence:** House #57, the Dorfmühle (“village mill”)

**Number of Known Children:** 4, but probably many more (see below).

**Death:** aft 1556

**Cause of death:** Unknown

We don’t know her name, but the earthshaking Reformation occurred in Mistelbach during her lifetime.

Given that the Mistelbach church converted to Lutheranism sometime between 1528 and 1534, it is likely that she was the first Dollhopf great-grandmother to be married a Lutheran, and in a church, since before the Reformation marriage in a church was not required (See *Blog 25: Women and Marriage*).<sup>1</sup>

She gave birth to a son in 1539, so we know she was married by then. Regardless of the date of her marriage, she was our first Lutheran grandmother because the church converted in her lifetime.

The Mistelbach church records date from the year 1555, which is the reason we don’t have her name and important dates. Even though she died after 1555, her death does not appear in the church book, possibly indicating that she did not die in Mistelbach. Perhaps she died prematurely while traveling....

Unexplained is the reason why the church only began keeping records in 1555 if the margrave had begun converting the churches in the years 1528 to 1534. Perhaps the Mistelbach church lagged behind the other churches in the region. Maybe the Pastor didn’t get the record keeping memo – not altogether implausible given how fast edicts may or may not have been issued or received. Maybe he thought it wasn’t his job regardless of the edict. Maybe it took that long to replace the Catholic pastor.



*Peasant Woman Cooking by a Fireplace, Vincent van Gogh, 1885. Van Gogh painted peasants in dark and gritty tones to portray them in their coarseness. Note the small fireplace typical of peasant homes.*

<sup>1</sup> The exact date of the church conversion is not known. Some sources cite 1528, but that is before the decree of 1533. We do know that the territory was among the first in Germany to convert under

Or maybe the records were just lost or destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

There was a great deal of information that was backdated in the church books, but unfortunately not about her. She also does not appear in any court records. Alas, her name has been lost to history.

As indicated above, she married Cuntz Dollhopf sometime before the year 1539, which is an approximate date of the birth her son Georg, gleaned from court records. Cuntz inherited the Dorfmühle (“village mill”) from his father also named Cuntz. He was also the *Gotteshaus Master* (“God’s house, or church, manager”) when the church started keeping records in 1555 – this is why we know his name. Think of him as the first known “president” of the Mistelbach congregation.

They were likely a prosperous family given he operated the village mill and managed the Church – a position appointed by the Margrave. The church warden was a relatively powerful position since the church not only functioned as a house of worship, but also as a bank and collector of taxes. The annual church report of 1556 listed all of the outstanding loans taken by members of the village including the amount, interest rate, and term.

Cuntz and NN were the last Dollhopfs in our direct line to own the mill. Her third son Cuntz, our 11<sup>th</sup> great grandfather, died prematurely and the mill was inherited by his younger brother.

Court records indicate that she and Cuntz had at least four children, including the following four boys:<sup>3</sup>

1. **Georg der Ältere** (“the older”) **Übele** (abt 1539 – 06 Nov 1600, ~61), married Magdalena Hüter and inherited the mill. He was also the Gotteshaus Master following in the footsteps of his father. We can assume that he inherited the mill because he was the oldest son, and he also was known as “Übele.”<sup>4</sup> He died tragically after falling off his horse returning from Bayreuth on November 6, 1600 (recorded in the church book). He and Magdalena had 10 children. The fact that he owned a horse and had ten children is a clue of his relative wealth. Most peasants could not afford horses, and most had an average of three children because they did not have the resources to feed more. The entry for Georg in the church book:

When he rode home from Bayreuth he fell from his horse and the horse ran away. He was found dead in the field on the morning of November 6, and he had been a pious and Godfearing man. He was Christian-like and properly buried in the ground on November 8.

He was 61 years old. In his death record it also mentioned that he, like his father, was the church warden. He served in this position for 30 years, an incredibly long stretch compared to other wardens.

When Georg died, the mill went to Georg der Jünge (“the younger”), described below, because Georg *der Mitte* (“the middle”) had moved to Bayreuth, apparently not interested in the mill, and Cuntz (our 11<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather) had already died 19 years earlier in 1581. Thus, the mill exited from our branch of the family.

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<sup>2</sup> Mistelbach was ransacked in the early 1550s as a result of the Second Margrave’s War, described below.

<sup>3</sup> The first two genealogists I consulted were never able to find information about this family because of the lack of information in the church books. The third genealogist was able to piece together information about the four sons through an exhaustive study of court records.

<sup>4</sup> *Übele* or *Übellein* means “evil” or “dishonest” one. Interestingly, this nickname was given only to our great-grandfathers who owned the mill. If you are familiar with *The Canterbury Tales*, you will know that medieval millers were often characterized as dishonest. Given that peasants were forced to take their grain to the mill that was owned by the same nobleman who owned their farm, there was no competition and millers could charge exorbitant rates. I would like to think that this nickname was given in jest – why would they record it in the church books if it was an accusation?

2. **Georg der Mitte** (“the middle”) (bet 1540/1550 – ?) married Kunigunde, widow of Hans Hoffmann, and moved to Bayreuth. He and Kunigunde did not have any children, but she had at least two from her first marriage.
3. **Cuntz** (bet 1545/1550 – 07 Sep 1581, ~31), married Margarethe Gros. He died prematurely in his early thirties. He was our 11<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather. They had six children.
4. **Georg der Jünge** (“the younger”) **Übele** (04 Jun 1556 – 15 Aug 1623, 67) married Barbara Hübner and had 14 children. Four of them died as infants, and one at the age of nine. He inherited the mill since two of his older brothers predeceased him, and the third moved away to Bayreuth, apparently not interested in the mill.

These four boys were the surviving children, the ones we know about because of court records. Given that their father Cuntz was a relatively wealthy mill owner, we could easily assume that he had more children. We simply don’t know of them because the church records were sporadic in these early years of record keeping. It would seem highly unlikely that three boys were named Georg, and one Cuntz. There were likely other children, including more than one named Cuntz, as was the custom.

She and Cuntz had 30 grandchildren *that we know of*. If they had more children in addition to the above four, which I believe to be highly likely, then there would be more than 30. By the end of the Thirty Years War, there was only one Dollhopf left in Mistelbach – evidence of the utter devastation of that war and the effect on our Dollhopf family. Their one surviving great-grandson, also named Cuntz, was our 9<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather.

Because we don’t know when NN died, we don’t know how many of her 30 grandchildren she might have known. Her first grandchild was born in 1566; she would have been about 40 years old.

When NN was born, the church in Mistelbach, then still Catholic, was called St. Martin, after St. Martin of Tours. Around the time they were married, again we don’t know exactly when, the church turned Protestant and was rechristened St. Bartholomäus (Bartholomew).

Beginning in 1528, Georg the Pious, the Margrave ruling Mistelbach (reigning from 1527 to 1543), began “reforming” the parishes in his realm. He did so with the personal blessing and goodwill of Martin Luther. The Mistelbach church was certainly among the first wave of reformed parishes in all of Germany due to the proactivity of George the Pious.

Lest we be naïve, Georg the Pious and the other Franconian nobles were not doing this solely because they believed in justification by faith, one of Luther’s tenets; they were in part doing this to despoil the churches – strip them of their gold and silver trappings and anything else of value, and assume the collection of the tithe from the peasants. Because of this tithe<sup>5</sup> (or tax, a tenth of a peasant’s crops, animal production, and earnings), Catholic churches were relatively wealthy, and even small village churches had valuable communion vessels and other decorations of silver, gold, and precious gems. Georg the Pious used this “loot” to pay off the debts of his profligate father Casimir. (See *Blog #12: Feudalism and Taxes*).

He wasn’t altogether greedy, he also used the money to establish schools for his peasants.<sup>6</sup> It is likely that the school in Mistelbach dates from this time. In the first of the baptism records of 1555 there is mentioned a godmother who is the “wife of the schoolmaster.” This is the first evidence of a school in Mistelbach. The four boys above – Georg, Georg, Cuntz, and Georg were probably among the first of our Mistelbach ancestors to attend school, an important “first” in the history of our family,

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<sup>5</sup> Biblical in origin, “tithe” means tenth, or ten percent.

<sup>6</sup> In those years, so-called “weekday school” ended around the age of 12 or 13; there were no high schools.

The 1550s were turbulent times in Mistelbach. Georg the Pious died in 1541 and the crown was taken over by his 19-year-old nephew Albrecht II Alcibiades (1522-1553) who was a cruel and war-mongering margrave. Greedy for more territory, Albrecht attacked the Free Imperial City of Nürnberg, and other nearby territories held by the Bishoprics of Bamberg and Würzburg. He ignited what became known as the Second Margrave War in 1552. The war lasted only two years, ending in 1554, but in retaliation the citizens of Nürnberg and their allies plundered Mistelbach and nearby villages.

Albrecht lost the war and fled to France, where he fought in the service of King Henry II of France.<sup>7</sup>

From the Chronicle:

1553 to 1556: The many war riots under Margrave Albrecht Alcibiades also brought hardships to Mistelbach, and Albrecht's poor subjects suffered, especially after his flight to France, from hunger, misery, and from the worst cruelties of the vengeful Nurembergers, who also destroyed the Mistelbach castle.

The Mistelbach castle sat atop the hill overlooking the mill where Cuntz and NN lived, a mere stone's throw away. It is not difficult to imagine that if angry mobs from Nürnberg destroyed the Mistelbach castle, then they also plundered the mill. There is no direct evidence that the mill was raided, so perhaps it escaped destruction, but imagine our grandmother's terror as she huddled with her children as mobs ran through the village burning down random houses in addition to the castle. She witnessed the flames devour the castle – *if* she was in Mistelbach at the time.

Perhaps she fled in advance of the invading mob. Many peasants of the region fled to the Plassenburg Castle, 16 miles north of Mistelbach, for protection. This massive hilltop fortress in nearby Kulmbach was home to the margrave. As was often the case, peasants sought shelter in castles in times of war, and since the castle in Mistelbach was destroyed, it is not out of the question that they might have retreated to Plassenburg. There are reports however that peasants were refused entry to the castle during this particular siege.



*The Mistelbach Castle is a modest structure, certainly not a Bavarian castle as we might imagine with turrets, moats, and a drawbridge. The castle was destroyed in the Second Margraves War c. 1553 and again in the Thirty Years War c. 1632. It remained in ruins until the late 1700s. The date of the structure in the photo is probably from that time. It has served as a private residence, a cloth factory, a restaurant, and recently, an apartment building. The last Mistelbach knight, Christoph von Mistelbach, died in 1563. Photo by Thomas Kees, 2008.*

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<sup>7</sup> The First Margrave War (1449-1459), 100 years earlier, was also between the then Margrave Albrecht III Achilles of Brandenburg and the Free Imperial City of Nürnberg. Albrecht III was trying to unite the many principalities of the Franconian region.



The church also owned land. In 1663 our 9<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather Cuntz Dollhopf obtained a fief, or land lease, from the hospital in Bayreuth, which was a church institution. Cuntz and all of our subsequent ancestors who occupied that house (house #55) paid taxes to the hospital.

The *Dorfmühle* – the village mill operated by the Dollhopfs – was owned by the margrave, not the knight, so the Dollhopfs paid their taxes to the margrave. The peasant farmers in Mistelbach whose fields were owned by the margrave were forced to take their grain to the Dollhopf mill since it was owned by the margrave.

Farmers whose land was owned by the knight took their grain to the Schnörleins mill owned by the knight (our maternal ancestors owned this mill).

NN and Cuntz were the last Dollhopfs to have lived during the reign of the Mistelbach knights. To what extent the division of land caused problems in the village, if it did at all, we don't know. Perhaps having a knight nearby offered an additional layer of protection to the margrave. Perhaps the knight and margrave fought over land and taxes. We don't know.

After the death of the knight, the castle was inherited by several of his daughters and eventually sold off, but no longer did nobles of any significant rank occupy the building. The castle was destroyed in the Thirty Years War and abandoned until the late 1700s.

We don't know when our 12<sup>th</sup> great-grandmother died, it was certainly after 1556 when her son Georg “the younger” was born. The late 1500s appeared to have been a relatively peaceful time after the devastation wrought by the Second Margrave War, although the plague struck Mistelbach in 1585 and 1595 and caused a great many deaths. Perhaps she died then.

She lived at a time, the Reformation, when the world changed. The Reformation had a profound effect, shaking traditional belief systems, and altering government rule and economic trade. She lived near the epicenter of the Reformation; Wittenberg was not far away.

Did she have any idea?

Next in the series on Dollhopf women: 11<sup>th</sup> Great-grandmother Margaretha Groß (Gross)

Mark R. Dollhopf  
New Haven, CT  
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*Epitaph of the last Mistelbach knight Christoph von Mistelbach (d. 1563) in St. Bartholomew Church. He was the last of the Mistelbach knights.*