



Dollhopf

600 Years in the Baking

Dollhopf Women

This is the 19th essay in a series addressing the life and times of our Dollhopf grandmothers.

2nd Great-Grandmother Margarethe Bär (1829-1891)

Birth: 25 Jan 1829

Place of birth: House #64, Schnörleinsmühle ("Schnörleins mill"), Mistelbach

Parents: Peter Bär and Margarethe Kauper

First marriage: 11 Nov 1856

First husband: Johann Dollhopf (22 May 1830–06 Dec 1858, 28), farmer

Age at first marriage: 27 (had four children with Johann out of wedlock before the age of 27, all born at the Schnörleinsmühle, House #64)

Number of known children with Dollhopf: 4

Residence: House #19 after marriage to Johann Dollhopf

Second marriage: 06 Jun 1859

Second husband: Johann Hacker (12 May 1815–07 Oct 1882, 67) (14 years older), farmer

Age at second marriage: 30

Number of known children with Hacker: 7 (Hacker had

Residence: House #8, Oberwaiz (5 miles from Mistelbach), after second marriage to Hacker

Residence after death of Hacker: #25 Mistelbach, house of her daughter Anna Barbara Hacker Stahlmann

Death: 02 Apr 1891, Mistelbach

Age at death: 62

Cause of death: Pneumonia crouposa¹

Margarethe Bär was the mother who gave permission to her oldest son, our great-grandfather, to follow his dreams in America.

During her lifetime Otto von Bismarck masterminded the unification of Germany in 1871, bringing together 39 formerly independent German speaking principalities under the king of Prussia. At the time, Mistelbach was a territory of the kingdom of Bavaria.

This was the birth of the German nation state and was the start of the German industrial revolution, an economic juggernaut that disastrously ended with the warmongering of Kaiser Wilhelm and his defeat in World War I.

Change came slowly to rural, isolated, Mistelbach, and despite the advances of the industrial revolution, farmers continued to use oxen to plow their medieval-sized small fields, continued to pay feudal taxes, and continued to cling to ancient customs and superstitions – witchcraft persisted until the mid 1900s.²



Peasant Woman Sewing, 1881, watercolor by Vincent Van Gogh in a. N. de Boer Foundation, Amsterdam.

¹ Also known as lobar pneumonia. It is an aggressive form of pneumonia affecting a lobe in the lung.

² See *Blog #22: World View, Way of Life, and Witchcraft.*

- ...an excruciatingly slow recovery from the utter devastation of the Thirty Years War. It is estimated that four to 12 million people died in the Thirty Years War, or 20% of the overall population of Europe. In Central Europe, where the carnage was the greatest (including the Franconian territories around Mistelbach) up to half of the population died from war or the ensuing plague. Mistelbach indeed lost half and took more than three generations to recover.
- ...the severe political fragmentation of the Holy Roman Empire, contributing to a lack of unified and stable governance. In the 18th century, the Holy Roman Empire consisted of roughly 1,800 independent principalities, the majority owned by the families of Imperial Knights. These principalities were often feuding with one another. Noble families and the church competed for land and tax-paying peasants.
- ...continuing wars and the increasingly oppressive taxes levied on the peasants to support the militaries. Many principalities of the Holy Roman Empire maintained large standing armies not only for their own defense, but also for the purpose of selling their services as mercenaries.
- ...lack of centralized monetary controls. There were no central banks controlling interest rates or the money supply to solve for inflation or recession, which were severe.
- ...no standardized measurements for goods and services that would allow for unimpeded trade and economic growth. A bushel of wheat varied in size from principality to principality, as did the size of an acre, the value of a coin, or the length of a mile. It was difficult to conduct trade or business outside of one's region.
- ...a changing climate. Europe experienced the so-called "Little Ice Age" in the 17th century, which shortened the growing season on average by three weeks and lowered by 500 feet the altitude at which crops would ripen. "With most of the population living near subsistence level and depending upon cereal crops, the effect was most severe on those who farmed marginal land, especially on northerners for whom the growing season was already short."³
- ...overpopulation. Better farming techniques (although not in Mistelbach), better knowledge about health, industrialization, and a more regular food supply led to a dramatically lower death rate and overpopulation.
- ...partible inheritance. In Mistelbach as well as in many other villages, partible inheritance (splitting the inheritance of the farm equally among all heirs) caused the continuous subdivision of farms from one generation to the next, making it difficult for our farming-great grandparents to accumulate enough land to eke out an existence.

The Mistelbach Chronicle described life in the village of Mistelbach in the 1800s as "barren," causing, of course, the mass immigration to America.

What did the village of Mistelbach look like when Margarethe was a young woman? In 1855, the year before she married Johann, the Chronicle reported the following:

Only two horses are kept in the village, but a "handsome number of cattle, partly of the Swiss and Allgäu breeds, but for the most part of the Ansbach breed. Sheep, goats and rams are abundant. Also many pigs are fattened. The piglets are mostly bought from the cattle markets in St. Georgen (town in southwest Germany). Important is the breeding of geese, which can be sold for good money in Bayreuth. There are chickens and pigeons in every house".

³ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Europe/Climate>

The fact that there were only two horses in the village is a clue to Mistelbach's relative poverty. Horses were costly because they had to be fed grain to supplement their diets, and people would be reluctant to feed the horses with what they needed for themselves. Cattle survive on forage alone.

All inhabitants of Mistelbach practice agriculture. However, of the 73 homeowners, only 40 are engaged exclusively in farming and animal husbandry. They [among the remaining 33] are engaged in these trades on the side: ...one innkeeper who was also a butcher and grocer, four master weavers, five master millers, two master tailors, one master blacksmith, two master shoemakers, one master saddler, six journeyman weavers, five journeyman bricklayers, one journeyman carpenter, one stone crusher, one glass cutter and one hired coachman.⁴

Margarethe is the first of our great-grandmothers for whom we have a description of the house in which she grew up – the Schnörrleinsmühle ("Schnörrleins (unknown name origin) mill") identified as house #64 in village records. It was a more substantial property than most in the village; the property included a house, several outbuildings, and most importantly a separate stable for the animals, spacious by 1800s standards.

Following is a description and inventory of the Schnörrleinsmühle when she was a child. The inventory is from the inheritance contract that her grandparents filed in court to establish inheritance rights for her parents:⁵

- *Structures and property*: mill with two "courses,"⁶ dwelling house, stable, oven (outdoor brick or stone structure), yard, garden; and fields and meadows totaling 30 *Tagewerk* ("acres").
- *Household goods*: food, bedding, hay, straw, and potatoes.
- *Livestock*: 2 four-year-old oxen, 2 two-year-old bulls, 2 one-year-old bulls, 2 dairy cows, 1 one-year old bullock,⁷ 1 one-year old cow, 1 calf, and 4 chickens.⁸
- *Tools*: 1 equipped cart, 1 wheelbarrow, 1 wooden sledge, and *Backschanzen* ("baking basket").⁹

⁴ Mistelbach Chronicle. A journeyman was typically a day laborer, or an apprentice working for a master.

⁵ On December 20, 1795, Konrad Kauper, Margarethe's grandfather and owner of the Schnörrleinsmühle, died unexpectedly at the age of 27. He left no will. His only legal heirs were his wife Katharina née Beyerlein, then age 20, and their one-year-old daughter Margareta [sic] Kauper, who eventually married Peter Bär and was the mother of Margarethe Bär, the subject of this chapter. The property was inventoried at the time of Konrad Kauper's death in 1795 so that their daughter's inheritance rights could be established. The mayor at the time ruled that Konrad's wife Katharina and her new second husband Friedrich Kannhäuser could own and operate the mill for a period of 20 years until June 1, 1816, at which time the daughter Margareta would be old enough to inherit the mill. A year after Margareta inherited the mill, on April 1, 1817, she married Peter Bär, who had been living at the mill as a farmhand for three years (and with whom she already had one illegitimate son). Peter and Margarete then became joint "owners" of the mill (the mill was actually owned by the church in Bayreuth – Margarethe inherited the fief, or right to lease the mill).

⁶ A course, or race, was a wooden trough-like aqueduct that delivered a constant stream of water from the Mistel brook to the mill to power the water wheel. The mill had two such courses, probably one to power the flour mill water wheel, and another to power the sawmill water wheel.

⁷ A bullock is a young, neutered bull. An adult neutered bull is an ox.

⁸ Ten cattle were a lot – an indicator of their comparative wealth.

⁹ *Backschanzen* ("baking basket") is a colloquial term from Upper Franconia. It is a rattan basket used for baking bread giving it a unique shape.

This paints a picture of a childhood spent in more comfortable surroundings than other Mistelbach children.

She was the fifth of eight children of Peter Bär and Margarethe Kauper – five boys and three girls. All survived into adulthood except for her youngest brother, Georg, who died at the age of one when Margarethe was 11.

As desperate as conditions were in Mistelbach, Margarethe's childhood was probably not as dire as the Dollhopf children who lived up the hill in Dollhopf house #19, where only five

children survived out of ten, or the other Dollhopf family in house #55, where only five survived out of nine. The mill-owning Bär family was probably better off than most as evidenced by the fact that seven of their eight children survived.

I posit that "better off" meant adequate and more nutritious food, more spacious living quarters (reducing the level of filth and the spread of disease), and, since they had a separate stable, the animals – and their filth, flies, fleas, rats, and other insects and vermin – were removed from the immediate house.

It was the custom in medieval Mistelbach (as it was in many other parts of peasant Europe) to keep livestock in the house – half of the first floor of Dollhopf house #19 was a living area for humans, the other half for livestock, separated by a wooden barn-like door. House #19, rebuilt in 1823 after it burned down in 1822, measured 30' by 51' or about 1,500 sq. ft. per floor (there were three floors, plus a cellar). The first floor included a living chamber/kitchen, a stable for 8 head of cattle and other livestock, and a staircase; the second floor included one living chamber and two bedrooms; the third-floor attic used for storing fodder for the animals; and there was a cellar presumably for storing root vegetables and other perishables. Animal dung was piled outside the front door.¹⁰

Despite what seemed like an extremely spacious house, it was crowded. In the 1820s and 30s Eberhard and Margaretha Dollhopf had ten children, in-laws, eight head of cattle, hogs, a goat or two, and assorted fowl, living under the same roof. (Remember, only two bedrooms.)



The Schnörrleinsmühle, birthplace of our 2nd great-grand-mother Margarethe Bär, as it appears today. She was born in 1829, but this structure dates from 1835, built when she was six years old after a fire destroyed the existing house. Here the unwed Margarethe gave birth to our great-grandfather John in 1852 and his three siblings. Mother and children lived here for four years until 1856, at which time Margarethe and John were finally able to marry and move to the Dollhopf house #19. Today the house is owned by Hans Wolfgang Bär, our third cousin. Photo Mark Dollhopf, 2022.

¹⁰ See *Blog 11: Doorway* for a full description of the house and property.

The animals lived in the house despite the fact that the Dollhopfs also had a one and a half story stone barn, 32' by 36,' steps away from the house. The barn was used for the storage of wagons, ploughs, harnessing gear, farm implements, hay, straw, and grain, and had a large threshing floor used to thresh wheat (striking the wheat sharply with a flail to separate the chaff from the seeds).

Why did the animals live in the house?

Historians suggest several reasons:

- Animals were extremely valuable commodities – sources of food necessary for survival, and sources of power (oxen) to plow fields and pull carts. You dare not leave your animals outside where they could wander off.
- This was a wild land in the Middle Ages. Wolves, bears, and other animals of prey roamed the woods, ready to pounce on an easy meal. The animals had to be closely guarded.
- Guarded not only from animals of prey – livestock had to be protected from thieves and roving gangs, especially in the aftermath of the many wars suffered by our great grandparents. Desperate peasants – hungry and homeless – stole whatever they could. A stolen chicken, goat, or cow could be the difference between starvation and survival. Thievery was endemic and mentioned many times in the Mistelbach Chronicle. It was easy to pillage and steal in the days before there were local police.
- For warmth. The Chronicle describes years when cattle froze to death. Mistelbach is in southern Germany, but it is in *northern* Europe. Mistelbach is further north than Maine or North Dakota; it is on the same latitude, approximately 50 degrees, as Winnipeg, Manitoba. While central European weather was moderated by the Gulf Stream, it was still cold. Brrrr.
- Large livestock could also keep the house warmer because of their large body mass.

Keeping animals in the house, especially cattle, presented challenges. As noted above, animals attracted disease carrying flies, fleas, rats, and other vermin. Remember, there was no running water to clean or flush out the stalls; they were shoveled and swept, but much of the filth remained.

This was compounded by the fact that the house had no indoor toilet facilities. Peasants relieved themselves in buckets that were often dumped onto the dung heaps to be used as fertilizer for the gardens and fields. Some



A side view of Dollhopf House #19 as seen from the steps of the St. Bartholomew Church across Bayreuther Strasse ("street"). Note the three-story stone barn (with the rusted tin roof awning) to the right, which is the rear of the house. The barn was used for storage, but not animals. The animals lived inside the house on the first floor on the opposite side of the picture. Margarethe lived here for only two and a half years, from 1856 to 1859. She inherited the house after husband Johann Dollhopf died in December of 1858, but she moved to the village of Oberwaiz when she married Johann Hacker in June 1859. She kept the house, and rented it to farmer George Zimmerman. It was inherited by her son Johann Konrad Dollhopf, our great grandfather's younger brother, after she died in 1891.

houses had small privies located next to the dung heaps, or men *and* women simply relieved themselves directly onto the dung heaps.

There was no knowledge that human, or animal, waste caused disease – particularly dysentery, the cause of death of many of our ancestors. They did not understand that germs could be spread by not washing one’s hands, and hand washing was not easily done since there was no running water.

I mentioned that Mistelbach was slow to change. The animals were not removed from the Dollhopf house until 1971. That’s nineteen seventy-one. In that year a bathroom and separate kitchen were finally added to the house.

The fact that Margarethe enjoyed a house with a separate stable in the 1820s was probably a relative luxury, and no doubt a factor for the relatively low mortality rate of the children in that household.

In 1835, when Margarethe was six years old, the Schnörrleinsmühle burned down.¹¹ At the time of this disaster her siblings and their ages were: Johann 19, Katharina 15, Johann Peter 11, Margareta 10, Johann 4, and Johann 1 (the four boys were all named Johann; two of the girls Margarethe!)



I visited the Schnörrleinsmühle in 2017. With me are the owners, Hans Georg Wolfgang Bär (b. 1946), our third cousin, and his wife, Ingrid Meyer. Hans is the great-great grandson of Peter Bär.

Her parents, Peter and Margarethe, who were described in the church records as an “industrious and capable” couple, built a new stone house (seen in the photo). And not only did they rebuild the house, but they also added a sawmill in 1837, obtained the rights to a stone quarry, and increased their land holdings from about eight acres to 35 acres. The Schnörrleinsmühle was thus a substantial operation including businesses for milling flour, sawing lumber, quarrying building stones, and farming (even today it remains a large complex of buildings).

It appears that Margarethe’s family was bearing up relatively well under the strain of poor economic conditions, easier perhaps for a miller’s family. While other families were moving away, they were building, at the very least, a sustainable if not a more comfortable life.

Not all of her siblings, however, remained in Mistelbach. Her younger brother Johann, a cabinet maker and godfather to our great-grandfather John, left for America in 1851 when she was 22 and he 20. He settled in Neosho, Wisconsin, 50 miles northwest of Milwaukee, and started a furniture business.

Why did he settle in Neosho, Wisconsin? I have no idea.

¹¹ It was not part of the Mistelbach “Great Fire” of 1821 as the mill is located in the Mistel valley about half a mile from the center of the village where the fire occurred.

When our great-grandfather John applied to the civil authorities in Bayreuth for permission to emigrate, his mother Margarethe reported that her brother wrote to her several times inviting his godson Johann to join him in his furniture business.¹²

Margarethe and husband Johann Dollhopf bear the dubious distinction of our only Dollhopf grandparents to have children outside of wedlock – four, one died as an infant. They were, however, not the only ones to *conceive* out of wedlock, there were at least two other couples who did that.

Arguably, as with her parents (who also had their first child before they were married) this was not due to immorality. One child born out of wedlock is an oops! – but four? To be sure, in early nineteenth century peasant Germany, children born out of wedlock were nearly the norm. From the Mistelbach Chronicle:

Since about 1800, the number of illegitimate births has increased throughout our region. In the annual report of the Mistelbach parish office of 1859, it says: "The highly deplorable phenomena of immorality with regard to illegitimate births have their reason in government legislation and the social conditions of our time. It would therefore be desirable that marriage should not be made so difficult and that the rulers should be made more responsible for their 'servants' [meaning the peasants]"

The legislation of that time allowed marriage only to those persons who had the civil right of a municipality [so-called "residency"]. This right of residency had to be purchased, but this was not possible for many young people. "More correctly, therefore, the causes of irreligion, immorality, and unchurched life are...the character of our time and century."

Johann and Margarethe were victims of these governmental marriage restrictions and onerous fees aimed at the lower classes. Many of their siblings and cousins were victims too; they also had illegitimate children. Johann's oldest sister, Catharina, had a child out of wedlock and never did, or could, marry. Her child kept her last name Dollhopf, and to this day her living descendants use the name Dollhopf, not the name of the father.

These restrictions, so-called *Ansässigmachungs- und Verehelichungsgesetz* ("Laws of Establishment of Residency Marriage") were enacted in Bavaria in 1825 and emended in 1855, and were designed to discourage marriage because of the intense poverty, overpopulation, and scarcity of food.¹³

A couple wishing to marry had to provide proof that they would be able to support themselves and not need public assistance, which in those days was provided by the local church, not the local or state government. To marry they had to apply for residency and pay a residence fee. The law stated that a peasant could "live" in a community but could not be an official "resident" – and therefore not allowed to marry – unless they filed for permission and paid the substantial fee, which many couples could not afford.

Johann and Margarethe had to provide the following documentation to the authorities for their "Establishment of Residency and Marriage." These original documents survive to this day:

- Proof of property Johann testified that he would be inheriting house and farm #19 from his mother in a few months.
- Proof of income – Johann's mother Margaretha (his father had already died) contributed 700 guilders and Margarethe's father Peter Bär (her mother had already died) contributed 1,000 guilders to the marriage.
- Attestations of parental permission.
- Birth or baptism records.

¹² When our great-grandfather Johann (John) left the Harmony Society in March of 1874, he traveled to Neosho and worked in his uncle's shop for two years. It is there where he learned the furniture-making trade. He returned to Pittsburgh in 1876 to marry Elizabeth Bender.

¹³ Europe was plagued by famines and overpopulation in the early 1800s; the Irish potato famine was perhaps the most infamous.

- Certificates – official pronouncements – of strong moral character.
- School report cards.
- Johann’s military discharge papers.
- Proof of vaccination (how ironic given COVID vaccinations in the year 2021).

Following is a translation of their “Establishment of Residency petition, filed on October 1, 1856, obtained from the state archives in Bamberg, Germany:

Johann Dollhopf
Bayreuth, 1 October 1856
Purpose of Document: Establishment of Residency
Staatsarchiv, D-96047 Bamberg: ANSUV K 6, "D", 127/1856/57.

In presence of Herr Hirschbeck, the royal court assessor, there appeared:

- 1) The unmarried farmer's son Johann Dolhopf [sic] from Mistelbach.
- 2) The unmarried miller's daughter Margaretha Bär from the Schnörleins Mill.
- 3) Her father Peter Bär from there.
- 4) Johann Dolhopf's mother Margaretha Dolhopf from Mistelbach.

The former [Johann Dollhopf] went to record as saying:

Based on a secure income I intend to establish myself in the town of Mistelbach according to §2 no. 4 of the Law of Establishment of Residency and Marriage¹⁴ from September 11, 1825, and July 1, 1855, and marry Margaretha Bär from the Schnörleins Mill, present. For this purpose, I submit:

- 1) My military discharge papers.
- 2) Certificate of good character.
- 3) Leaving certificate [report card] from the Sunday school.
- 4) Certificate of vaccination.
- 5) Me and my fiancée's certificates of birth.
- 6) My fiancée's certificate of good character.
- 7) Leaving certificate from weekday and Sunday school.

For further explanation I respectfully make the following statements. From my father’s estate I will be given 700 guilders and my fiancée Margaretha Bär brings a dowry of 1,000 guilders into the marriage. This total fortune of 1,700 guilders shall be sufficient to ensure me and my future family's subsistence, all the more as in about half a year I will take over my parental home in Mistelbach, namely my deceased father's peasant farm¹⁵, which will even considerably increase my state of wealth.

This Dolhopf's mother, present, confirms her son's statements. She commits herself to give him 700 guilders at the time of his marriage and the fiancée's father, Master Miller Bär, commits himself to give his daughter 1,000 guilders.

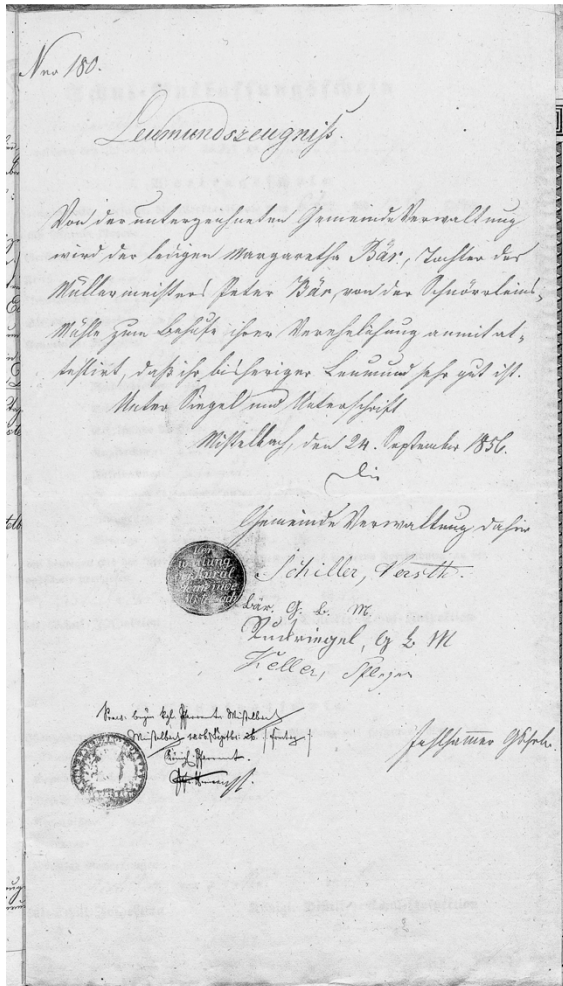
The parties declare that they want to establish a conjugal community of property and the present parents give their consents to their children's decision. Requester Dolhopf promises to hand his father's required certificate of death in later and requests: To grant him the official permission to establish his residency in Mistelbach and marry Margaretha Bär from the Schnörleins Mill.

Signed:

Johann Dollhopf , Margaretha Bär, Peter Bär, Margaretha Dollhopf, Royal provincial court,
[2 signatures]

¹⁴ The original text read: *Ansässigmachungs- und Verhelichungsgesetz*, or “Settlement and Marriage Act.”

¹⁵ The original text read *Söldengut*, meaning “small peasant farm.”



Margarethe Bär's Certificate of Good Character, filed on September 26, 1856. Margarethe had to offer proof that she was a woman of "reputable renown" before she could marry. Her fiancé Johann Dollhopf also filed a similar statement. State Archives, Bamberg.

In addition, Margarethe and Johann both had to file a "Certificate of Good Character," even though, of course, they immorally had four children out of wedlock – evidence that that this was a formality and that such out of wedlock births were common. Following is a translation of Margarethe's good character certificate, a photo of which is at left:

Margaretha Bär
Mistelbach, 24 September 1856
Certificate of Good Character
Staatsarchiv, D-96047 Bamberg: ANSUV K 6, "D",
127/1856/57.

The unmarried Margaretha Bär, daughter of Peter Bär, master miller at the Schnörrleins Mill, for the purpose of her marriage is hereby testified by the undersigned local administration that her previous renown has been very good. Under seal and signature.

Mistelbach, September 24, 1856.

The local administration.

Signed: Schiller, [mayor of Mistelbach] (town seal), Bär [member of the Mistelbach town council], Ruckriegel (also member of the council), Keller [Mistelbach caretaker]¹⁶

Presented to the royal parish office Mistelbach. (church seal) Mistelbach, September 26, 1856.

Royal parish office, signed:

Pastor Hermann (Pastor of St. Bartholomew Church, Mistelbach) and Fehlhammer (Mistelbach town scribe)

We know more about Johann and Margarethe than any other great-grandparents because of these legal filings,

and for several additional reasons:

- Because Johann died two years later at the age of 28, Margarethe inventoried the entire "estate" for the purpose of determining the inheritance rights of her children before she remarried. We have a complete list of *everything* they owned when Johann died in December of 1858. This inventory is a genealogical treasure trove.¹⁷
- When our great-grandfather decided to immigrate to America, he had to produce documents explaining his reasons for leaving, again providing us with a trail of legal documents.¹⁸

¹⁶ I don't have the first names of the signatories, but is likely that Schiller, Bär, Ruckriegel were relatives of Margarethe, so it paid to have relatives in high places!

¹⁷ See *Blog 11: Doorway*.

¹⁸ See *Blog 4: Coming to America*.

- Centuries of continuous settlement in Mistelbach brought the two together by more than marriage; they were third cousins – sharing the same great-great-grandparents, Stephan Bär and Helena Schiller. This fact provides a mountain of family information since both share so many common ancestors. They were the last of our great-grandparents to marry in Mistelbach.¹⁹

Margarethe was truly, truly, a sturdy woman.

She had four children with Johann, seven with her second husband Johann Hacker, and was stepmother to five more children from Hacker's first marriage. In the 1870s, she was mother to 14 children (14 out of 16 – her second child died at the age of seven months; her 11th child died at the age of seven).

She gave birth to her first child Johann (our great-grandfather) at the age of 23, to her last child Barbara at age 43, so she was pregnant every other year for 20 years. As soon as she finished nursing one child, she conceived another. When she married Johann Hacker at the age of 30, she began caring for eight children – and then bore another seven! Imagine taking care of those children, tending the house and stable, and helping with the garden and crops, *while pregnant*, into her 40s!

As mentioned, her first four children – the only children with Johann Dollhopf – were born at the Schnörrleinsmühle. I doubt that Johann moved in with her since they were not married, and he had to care for his house and farm #19.

They were married two weeks after the birth of their fourth child. Her children with Johann:

1. **Johann** (24 May 1852–28 Mar 1934, 81), our great-grandfather. He left for America at age 19.
2. **Johann** (25 May 1853–19 Jan 1854). He died at seven months from “feverish hydrocephalus with convulsions,” a cause of death commonly attributed to premature birth.
3. **Sophia** (09 Nov 1854–21 Jul 1902, 47). She married Johann Friedrich Martin Guthmann in 1888 and moved to Wallstrasse 7 in Bayreuth. We do not know if she had children. Apparently, her husband predeceased her because her death was reported to the authorities by Johann Hacker, probably her stepbrother.
4. **Johann Konrad** (29 Oct 1856–14 Jan 1947, 90). Since his older brother, our great-grandfather, left for America, he inherited house and farm #19. He married Anna Katharina Böhner in 1881 and they had three children, Adam, Sophie, and Barbara. Adam, who fought in WWI and permanently injured his ankle, inherited the farm. Our living third cousins – Bernd and Gunther Hammon, Alfred Dollhopf, and Jurgen and Ursula Dollhopf – are Adam's grandchildren.

Since they were not married, the children were baptized with the surname Bär. They took the name Dollhopf after the marriage in 1856. Johann Dollhopf died at age 28 of pulmonary consumption (tuberculosis), which lasted an excruciating five months. Six months after he died Margarethe married Johann Hacker and had 7 more children. Hacker had been previously married to Anna Barbara Kufner and had 5 children. Margarethe and Johann had a blended family of 16 children.

Her children with Johann Hacker:

1. **Margaretha** (13 April 1860-?). She married Johann Roß prior to 1891, no further information is available.

¹⁹ See *Blog 7: Pedigree Collapse*.

2. **Anna** (1 Nov 1861 -?). Married Georg Albrecht Stahlmann in 1884 and lived at house #25 in Mistelbach, where they had seven children. After her father died in 1882, her mother, our Margarethe Bär, moved in with her. Margarethe died in this house in 1891.
3. **Katharina** (21 Dec 1862 -?). Married Johann Hacker (same last name) and moved to Bayreuth, no further information.
4. **Adam** (20 Jul 1865-19 Dec 1950, 85). Married Anna Margaretha Friederike Grölk in 1890 and moved to Hamburg, Germany, where he became a butcher. His granddaughter was Erica von Jetmar, first cousin to our grandfather Edward, who visited the Edward Dollhopf family in West View in the 1950s, and whom I visited in June 1977 when she was living in Klagenfurt, Austria.
5. **Johann** (04 Oct 1867-?). In 1891 he is listed as a soldier in the 2nd riflemen battalion in Aschaffenburg. He married a woman named Maria NN and had seven children, no further information.
6. **Margaretha** (29 Oct 1868-?). No further information.
7. **Barbara** (06 May 1872– 09 Jan 1879, 6). Died at age six of “cramps in the neck.”

Her stepchildren (children of Johann Hacker and his first wife Anna Barbara Kufner, who died at age 36):

1. **Barbara** (30 Apr 1842 – 13 Mar 1916, 73). No further information.
2. **Anna Barbara** (07 Apr 1844–24 Aug 1888,44). Married Johann Nicklaus (aka “J.N.”) Schmidt on October 18, 1865.

Anna and J.N. were very close to our great-grandfather John; Anna was his eight-years-older stepsister. Anna and J.N. left for America – with Anna’s cousin Johann Georg Holl – aboard the *USS Main* arriving in New York City on April 8, 1870. With them on that trans-Atlantic trip was their four-year-old daughter Barbara.

For reasons I do not know, the four made their way from New York City to the Harmony Society in Economy, PA, near Pittsburgh. They arrived there in the spring of 1870, roughly a year before our great-grandfather immigrated in the fall of 1871. JN and Anna’s second and third children, Johann Adam and Anna, were born in Economy, PA.



Johann Nicklaus (J.N.) Schmidt and Anna Barbara Hacker in a photo taken between 1870 and 1873 when they lived and worked at the Harmony Society in Economy, PA. Anna was our great-grandfather’s eight-year older stepsister (they did not share a biological parent; she was the second oldest daughter from Johann Hacker’s first marriage.) In this photo they are about 25 or 26 years old (Can you believe that?). They must have been close to our great-grandfather John because he named his fourth child – Johann Nicklaus – after J.N., the child’s godfather, and who apparently was not present at the baptism. From letters that our great-grandfather wrote in 1910s, we know that when J.N. left Economy in 1873 he never heard from him again. J.N. and Barbara settled in Lincoln County, Kansas, where both died – Barbara in 1888 at age 44, and JN in 1922 at age 77. This is the oldest photo we have of any relative (although they are not blood related).

The reason that we are a family today with Pittsburgh roots is because those four left an impoverished Mistelbach in March of 1870 and found their way, for some unknown reason, to Economy (now Ambridge), home of the Harmony Society near Pittsburgh. Our great grandfather followed them.

Sometime after the birth of their third child in 1873, the family of five, along with Georg Holl, left for St. Louis, eventually settling 450 miles further west in Lincoln, Kansas. Holl and JN were both coopers (barrel makers) at the Society, as was our great-grandfather. In Kansas they took up farming.

Our great-grandfather asked J.N. to be the godfather of his fourth child, Johann Nicholas Dollhopf (1884-1915), our great uncle. By that time J.N. and his family were in Kansas, so he was unable to attend the baptism in 1884.

In the years 1910 to 1912, our great-grandfather wrote to Holl inquiring about J.N. We have copies of those letters. Holl responded, but we do not know if J.N. ever responded. Did they ever see each other after they parted in 1874? We don't know.

3. **Margaretha** (06 Mar 1846–?). No further information.
4. **Johann** (24 Sep 1848–?), No further information.,
5. **Margaretha Barbara** (21 Sep 1854–22 Jun 1855). Died at age nine months.

After giving birth to four illegitimate children with Johann Dollhopf and enduring the frustration of not being able to establish residency in order to marry, things began to look up for Margarethe. In November of 1856, a mere two weeks after the birth of their fourth child, they finally were able to wed.

I imagine that Margarethe spent the next few weeks moving her household belongings up the steep hill to house #19 across from the church. I imagine that she did so with a spring in her step, because, as a prerequisite for marriage, their parents gave them 1,700 guilders, or about \$15,000 to \$20,000 in today's dollars,²⁰ a substantial amount. In a few months they would inherit house #19 and about 30 acres of land, one of the larger farms in Mistelbach. Family members and neighbors were leaving for America in increasing numbers, but apparently, they were determined to stick it out in Mistelbach. The two must have been happy, or at the very least, happier.

Then disaster struck.

In July of 1858, shortly after they inherited the house, Johann contracted tuberculosis, known in that time as the "white plague." According to the church book, he spent five months wasting away in bed. The disease was also called "the consumption" because one of the symptoms is severe weight loss due to a lack of appetite – the body appears to be "consumed." Other symptoms included fever, chills, night sweats, and in latter stages severe chest pain and coughing up blood. Agonizing. He died on December 6, 1858.

He had to know he was dying, because there were no known cures other than herbal concoctions, and he had witnessed his younger brother die of the illness seven years earlier. His older sister Barbara died on December 5, *the day before he died*. Although we don't know the cause of her death, if they were living in close proximity, one could easily presume that she died of the same disease.

Hauntingly, the church graveyard was visible from his bedroom window; the church was directly across the path from the house. Those five months in bed must have been awful.

²⁰ It is difficult to calculate comparisons; there are many different inflation calculators online.

His illness, of course, had dire consequences for his family and the farm since he was laid up during the fall harvest and the winter planting. There were no other men living at the house. I would like to think that their neighbors or relatives helped with the harvest.



A view of the farmland surrounding Mistelbach. At the time of his death, Johann owned a total of 17 fields, totaling about 25 acres. The steeple of St. Bartholomew, the Mistelbach church, is visible in the distance to the right.

An inventory of the house a month after his death showed how dire the situation might have been. The couple possessed about a ton of hay and 6 bales of straw for the animals; and, for their food supply, 11 bushels of wheat, two bushels of rye, and a bushel of barley – no mention of any vegetables (it was January, after all).

In the stable on the first floor of the house were two oxen,²¹ three cows, a bull, a goat, and two hogs – no chickens, ducks, geese, or fowl of any kind. Sufficient, but not much considering that the wheat, rye, and barley had to last them for an entire year until the next harvest, and with Johann now dead, who was going to do the spring plowing and planting? Desperate times.²²

Margarethe was obviously preparing for his death. On December 8th, only two days after he died, Margarethe received instructions from the court for the preparation of an inheritance settlement agreement. The purpose of the agreement was to determine the inheritance rights of Johann's mother (Margarethe, who was still living in the house), his two living sisters, (Catharina and Margarethe), and her three children (Johann, Sophie, and Johann Konrad). She must have requested these instructions well in advance of his death.

The farm was encumbered by some debt, owed exclusively to Johann's two living sisters – Catharina and Margarethe (as mentioned above, his third sister Barbara died the day before he did) – as part of their father's inheritance.

To attract a husband, Margarethe wanted to clear up the question of how much debt was owed, and to settle in advance the inheritance claims that her three children would have on the property when they reached adulthood.

In this way, a future husband could enter into a marriage agreement with Margarethe without fear of taking on indeterminate liabilities, and without fear of diluting his own estate. The purpose of the inventory was to establish the value of his "estate" to divide it accordingly among his sisters and children. She wanted to remarry quickly.

The instructions given to her by the court:

²¹ Oxen were neutered steers (tamer and therefore easier to handle) used for plowing.

²² For the complete inventory of the house, and the events surrounding Johann's death, see *Blog 11: Doorway*.

8 December 1858

Settlement of Inheritance Citation.

Letter by the Provincial Court of Bayreuth to Margaretha Bär.

Regarding the adjustment of the estate of Johann Dollhopf, farmer in Mistelbach, house #19, date was set for Tuesday, December 28, 9 o'clock in the morning. The surviving widow is being cited and instructed:

1. To provide attestation from the parish office about her husband's death and the births of all their children.
2. To suggest a guardian for the underage children; if possible, a relative of the testator.
3. To prepare together with the guardian an inventory of the deceased's estate with estimated values, whose accuracy she is able to testify under oath, if necessary.
4. To also provide documents about her dowry and the children's own property.
5. If a marriage contract was made between she and her husband, or he made a will or other disposition, to provide these as well as an excerpt from the register of properties and purchase deeds.
6. To declare whether or not she wants to be her husband's heir.

Bayreuth, December 8, 1858.

Royal provincial court, [official's signature]

The date of the settlement hearing was delayed until January 8th. Following are the "minutes" of that meeting. The first page of the three-page document is shown to the right:

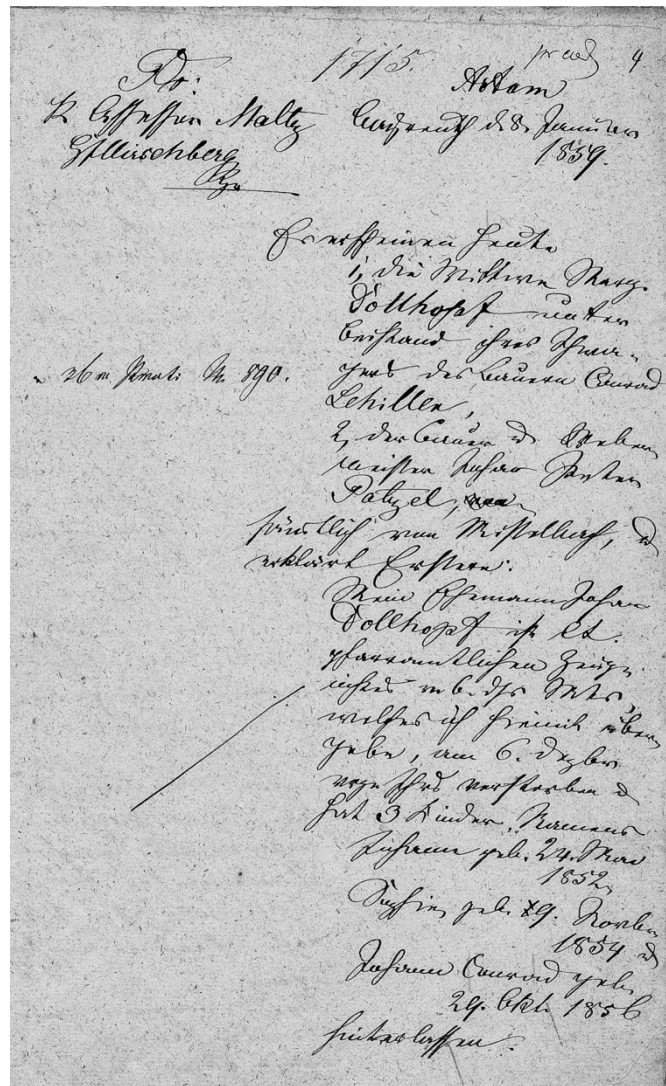
In presence of: Royal assessor, Maltz G. F. Hirschberg, today appear in Bayreuth, January 8, 1859:

The widow Margarethe Dollhopf, assisted by her brother-in-law, Conrad Schiller, farmer, and Johann Peter Potzel, farmer and master weaver; all from Mistelbach [she appointed Potzel as guardian of the children to represent them in court].

The former declares:

My husband Johann Dollhopf died on December 6th of the previous year, according to attestation from the parish office which I hereby submit. He left behind 3 children, namely:

- Johann, born May 24, 1852;
- Sophie, born November 9, 1854;
- Johann Conrad, born October 29, 1856.



This is a photo of the first page of the minutes of the settlement meeting (translated to the left of the photo). The document is dated January 8, 1859. As was the law and custom, Margarethe could not represent herself in court; she had to have her brother-in-law Conrad Schiller, and farmer Johan Peter Potzel (relationship if any unknown) present to stand in for her. She also appointed Potzel as guardian of the children.

In consideration of my children's young age and as my deceased husband's estate includes a peasant farm of considerable size, it will certainly not be possible for me to lead the household and raise my children without the help of a husband. Therefore, I would like to immediately adjust my children's claims to their paternal inheritance and request to set a date in Mistelbach to draw up an inventory of my husband's estate to which I submit to the tax collector Herr Meier from Gesees [a village abutting Mistelbach). As there is no brother to my husband I elected Johann Potzel, present here, as the guardian of my children.

Thereupon said Potzel, who was willing to become the guardian of the three underage Dollhopf children, after proper instruction about his duties, was formally appointed with solemn promise in lieu of an oath. He confirms the widow's statements and agrees to the mother's request.

Signed:

Johann Peter Potzler, Konrad Schiller, Margaretha Dollhopf
Royal Provincial Court, [court seal] Maltz Hirschberg

On January 24, 1859, two tax assessors came to the Mistelbach house to itemize and assess the value of everything they owned – field by field, building by building, room by room.

What is absolutely stunning to this 21st century observer is not how much stuff there was, *but how little*. The inventory is evidence of how poor they were. This list appears in *Blog 11: Doorway*.

Margarethe lived in house #19 for two and half years, a short time. Six months to the day after Johann died, she married Johann Hacker, a widower farmer from Oberwaiz, an even smaller village than Mistelbach, about six miles away. She had three children, he had five, together they would have another seven – all living in a house about half the size of house #19.

Our great-grandfather spent his childhood in Oberwaiz, itching to leave perhaps, since he took off for America at the age of 19. He traveled to America with a teenage friend.

With 15 children you can imagine how many grandchildren Margarethe might have had – but since I don't have complete descendant records on the Hacker side of the family, I don't know how many. But there were at least 17 born while she was still alive, six of whom she never saw because they were born in Pittsburgh – the first six of the 13 children born to her son John Dollhopf.

At least five of her grandchildren fought in the first World War, including our grandfather Edward's brother Albert.

Cousins fighting cousins across the trenches.



At least five of Margarethe's grandchildren fought in the first World War – on opposite sides! One of them was our great uncle Albert Dollhopf (1891-1957), who fought, of course, on the American side.



House #8, Oberwaiz. In June of 1859, six months after her husband Johann Dollhopf died, Margarethe married Johann Hacker, a widower farmer from the village of Oberwaiz, about six miles from Mistelbach. She moved to this house #8 in Oberwaiz with her three children in tow; he had five, together they had seven more. In this photo you can see the stones that comprised the original first floor. The original structure was likely only one and half stories; you can make out the wood stable and barn attached to the house on the left.

They raised 15 children in this small house, including our great-grandfather, John Dollhopf. Margarethe lived here for 25 years, from 1859 until 1884, the year that she moved back to Mistelbach after her husband Hacker died in 1882. Our great-grandfather grew up here –from the age of seven until he left for America in October of 1871 at the age of 19. After Hacker died, Margarethe moved in with her stepdaughter, Anna Barbara Stahlmann, in house #25 in Mistelbach. She died of pneumonia there in April 1891 at the age of 62.

Despite the tumultuous political and economic changes swirling around Margarethe, life in Mistelbach did not much change. The Revolution of 1848, the Bismarck unification of Germany in 1871, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the end of most feudal laws, the German industrial revolution – all occurred in her lifetime.

...peasants were generally not more than reluctant witnesses of changes designed by officials and intellectuals in their interest. Economic and fiscal considerations apart, the reformers aimed to absorb the rural population into a new liberal and rational social order, which was their ultimate goal. In the process a complex series of personal relationships was overthrown, and in its place was put the legal and political equality of all before the law. Yet, as an early sociologist observed in a much-quoted phrase, ‘for the peasant custom takes precedence over the law’; changes in

the law of inheritance did not, as a rule, cause a break with inherited ways of doing things.”²³

She endured the burning down of her house as a six-year-old. She was likely the first of grandmothers to attend school. She was mother to four children without the benefit of marriage. One of those babies died because of a premature birth. Shortly after being granted permission to marry, she became a widow at 28. She then married a man with five children and moved to another village, where she and her new husband would have another seven children. She cared for a brood of 15. Her oldest son left for America when she was 42. Her youngest daughter, born after her son left, died at the age of six. She became a widow again at 53, with four of her 15 children still at home. She returned to Mistelbach at the age of 55 to live with daughter Anna and three grandchildren.

She died of pneumonia in April of 1891 at the age of 62 – by today’s standards a relatively young woman. She experienced a lot of life in a short time.

And she touched a lot of lives. I only have grandchild records for six of her 15 children, but of those six she had 37 grandchildren (six of them were step grandchildren). Assuming that some of the nine other children had children, a safe bet, she had far more than 37.

Yet she only lived long enough to see maybe four or five of them. 18 of them were born in America; she would never see them. 12 were born in Pittsburgh, two were born in Economy (Beaver County), and three in Lincoln, Kansas.

For all of the third cousins now living in Germany and the US (including us), she is our common great-great grandmother.

I wonder. Did she ever hear from her oldest son John in Pittsburgh, or her stepdaughter Anna in Lincoln, Kansas, or her younger brother Johann in Neosho, Wisconsin (who left when she was 25)?

John Dollhopf had six of his 12 children, including our grandfather Edward, before she died. Did she know of Edward, or any of her American progeny?

Imagine if they had celebrated holidays together – 15 children and 37 grandchildren, that we know of!

Where would you sit the five cousins who fought against each other in the trenches of the Western Front? All would not have been “quiet.”

I wish I knew her.

Next in the series on Dollhopf women: Great-grandmother Elizabeth “Lizzie” Bender

Mark R. Dollhopf
New Haven, CT
January 2, 2023.

²³ *A Social History of Germany, 1648-1914* by Eda Sagarra.