

## **THE MERTZ FAMILY OF ALSACE AND MENIZKEN SWITZERLAND**

A woman named Annette Burgert wrote a series of books about very specific geographic areas of Germany that she knew as a place where early American immigrants had originated. Her methodology was to study church and local records in the German place and try to find names of heads of families which she could match to names of heads of families of early German immigrants in early American Colonial records.

One such book was Eighteenth Century Emigrants from Northern Alsace to America. Before I ever saw or heard of that book, I had already come to the conclusion, based on my own research, that my immigrant ancestor was David Mertz who arrived America on the Ship Richard & Elizabeth 28 Sep 1733. He was listed as age 44 upon arrival and the presumption was that the other Mertzses on the same ship were his family: Veronica 40, Johan Nicholas (Hans Nickel) 18, Johan Peter 13 3/4 and Christina 3 3/4.

So imagine my delight when I picked up this one particular Burgert book and there she identified David Mertz of Hangviller, Alsace as one such emigrant and found evidence that indeed his wife was Veronica Schneider and their children were Nicholas, Peter and Christina.

Burgert also identified another emigrant, Abraham Vautrin, who came to America on the same ship as David and whose wife was Anna Margaretha (nee Mertz) age 32. Anna Margaretha was known to be the daughter of Peter Mertz. Peter was said to be of Bust, a village not far at all from Hangviller.

Annette Burgert did not say so, but I began to think that it was quite possible that Peter might also have been David's father.

Sometime after all of this, I learned of a man named Jacob Mertz who had come to Alsace from Menziken, Switzerland in the late 1600's and who apparently had a son Peter. Things seemed like they were coming together and I was getting a bead on my European ancestors. There were a few things that seemed inconsistent but I felt I was close to finding the truth of things.

Burgert, in fact, had planted the idea that perhaps my ancestors came to Alsace from Switzerland. She described Alsace as the area just west of the Rhine River, near Strasbourg, in what is now France, but back then would have been considered part of the German Empire, described as a *"loose-jointed but not ineffective constitutional edifice within which could coexist 300 large and small, secular and ecclesiastical principalities, 51 imperial cities, and nearly 2,000 imperial counts and knights, each of whom possessed the same territorial sovereignty as an elector or a duke. Germany was a working federation of these distinct sovereign entities."*

Burgert went on to say, specifically about this region of Alsace:

- In the 18th century, this area was divided into small domains such as those belonging to the Counts of Hanau-Lichtenberg or the Counts of Nassau and it

was German territory until 1793 when it was annexed to Alsace, which later became part of France.

- As early as 1559, these Counts granted refuge in the area to Huguenots who were expelled from French territory for religious reasons.
- The area was occupied by France and Lorraine from 1649-1670 and during this period the Lutheran religion was forbidden and the Catholic Church was the official church. In 1698, after the defeat of Louis XIV, the area was returned to its former jurisdictions and the Lutheran religion was once more the official religion.
- About this time came an influx of many Reformed (Lutheran) Swiss families to repopulate the area and they appear in large numbers in parish records [the ones studied by Burgert].

So Burgert did not specifically say that John David Mertz or his forbears were of Swiss origin, but she did document that his wife, Veronica Schneider, was the daughter of Joseph of Diedendorf (Alsace), originally from Melchnau, Bern, Switzerland.

The idea that we had possible Swiss origins was reinforced when I read about the Mertz Glacier Polynya in the Antarctic named after Xavier Mertz who was Swiss. I have no idea if he is related to me-- but it documents Mertz as a Swiss name too. Xavier was from Basel, not too far from the canton of Aargau.

And that is where things stood then for several years. Then in 2013, a Frenchman named Fredy Mertz, who had just a few years before been the Mayor of Hangviller, contacted me and told me more about Jacob Mertz and Peter Mertz. But there were still a few discrepancies between things I thought I knew and things Fredy knew that were finally sorted out when another Frenchman, Robert Mertz, entered the picture.

Robert found the key document which allowed Fredy and me to totally sort things out — and prove that Peter, son of Jacob, was David's father. Robert had done extensive research with Swiss church records where the name was spelled Merz and also told us that Jacob was the son of Peter Gerber Merz who in turn was the son of Fridli Merz.

I start this family history with Fridli.

**Name: 10G GF Friedrich (Fridli) Merz**

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Death: 1602 Menziken, Switzerland

I believe I can now document that my ancestor David Mertz, who emigrated to America in 1733 from Hangviller, Alsace, was the son of Peter. I always had suspected so because they both lived in about the same place and Peter was for sure the father of Anna Margaretha Mertz who married Abraham Vautrin and she and her family came to America on the same ship as David and his family. The theory was that David and Anna Margaretha were brother and sister.

The problem was it was only a theory (albeit one I believed had solid evidence in support of it) and in any event there seemed to be multiple men named Peter Mertz in that time and place and multiple women named as Peter's wife. But research by Robert Mertz of Sarreguemines, Lorraine, France (a distant cousin of mine) uncovered the key document that solved the puzzle.

Robert has further told me that my Peter was the son of Jacob, he the son of Peter Gerber and Peter Gerber the son of Friederich (Fridli) Merz. So that makes Fridli my 10-great-grandfather. Fridli and Peter Gerber lived in Menziken, Switzerland where the name was spelled Merz.

What fun it is to think that I can trace my ancestry that far back. But I have largely taken Robert's word for everything from Jacob to Fridl. I have no reason to doubt it, I just haven't followed the documentation of those relationships step-by-step. But I trust Robert's thoroughness since the key document he uncovered for me to link David to Peter was not easy to find, I don't think. I believe it took a real through researcher to find it.

I have also learned from Robert's work that apparently the Merz name in Switzerland in the late 1600's was maybe even more popular than the Mertz name in Berks County 100 years later.

Robert has identified 14 different Jakob Merz born in three little towns in the district of Kulm in the canton of Aargau, Switzerland (the area a little north of Lucerne) in the years 1680-1795. The three towns were Beinwil, Reinach and Menziken. A circle with a radius of about five kilometers would encompass the entire area. So he has had to be diligent enough to differentiate these different Jakobs and tell them apart one from the other.

I have identified three Jacob Mertz born in Berks County in 1735-1755 and then seven more of that exact name born in the 1770's in Berks County. And in my work I have had to be able to tell them apart one from the other. In my case, I also have Census and tombstones (in a few cases) and I can use the names of their wives and children to track the different Jakobs, in addition to church records and wills. I am sure Robert had plenty of church records to draw from but I'm not sure what additional resources were available for him.

**Name:** 9G GF Peter Gerber Merz

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Birth: 23 Jul 1592 Menziken, Switzerland  
Father: 10G GF Friedrich (Fridli) Merz (-1602)

I know of this person only due to the very through research of Robert Mertz of Sarreguemines, Lorraine, France. He says Peter Gerber was the son of Fridli and father of Jacob.

Robert says his wife was Barbara Bleuler.

So Jacob, my ancestor, was the son of Peter Gerber Merz and Barbara Bleuler. And my Jacob had a son Peter, also my ancestor.

Because of the work I've done with people named Mertz or Martz who have had their y-chromosome-DNA tested at Family Tree DNA, I am aware of a different Peter Mertz who fits into this extended family one way or another. I don't think it has yet been figured out exactly the relationships but just so I can mention this other Peter, I have arbitrarily placed him as another son of Peter Gerber. I don't think he was, but it keeps him handy in my database.

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**Spouse:** 9G GM Barbara Bleuler  
Marriage: 2 Jul 1622 Menziken, Switzerland

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**Name: 8G GF Jacob Mertz**

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Birth: 7 May 1626 Menziken, Switzerland  
Birth Memo: (Fredy Mertz, descendant living in France today)  
Death: 23 Mar 1712 Cossweiler, Alsace  
Death Memo: (Fredy Mertz, descendant living in France today)  
Father: 9G GF Peter Gerber Merz (1592-)  
Mother: 9G GM Barbara Bleuler

**Parent-Proof**

Robert Mertz says that Jacob was the son of Peter Gerber Mertz and Barbara Blueler.

**My Comments**

I first heard about Jacob Mertz of Menizken, Switzerland and later Alsace as a result of correspondence in 2006 with a man named Ron Mertz, whose DNA matches mine indicating that we share a common Mertz ancestor in modern history.

Ron descends from Gottfried Mertz, an immigrant who came to Missouri in the late 1840's — from Alsace. Ron had traveled to Alsace in search of his ancestry, met his distant cousins who still live there and learned from them his ancestry back to Jacob (and wife Anna Fuchs) who came from Menziken, Switzerland to Alsace in the mid-late 1600's. Ron descends, they told him, from Jacob's son Peter who married Maria Brandi. Ron's Alsace ancestors lived in Mitschdorf and Preuschdorf, Alsace.

My known immigrant ancestor David, born about 1690, came to America in 1733 from the village of Hangviller, Alsace. The distance from Hangviller to Preuschdorf is about 35 miles. Moreover, it was my theory that David's father was Peter so I came to believe it was quite possible that Ron's ancestor Peter was in fact my ancestor Peter and therefore that I too descended from Jacob of Menziken.

Fast forward to 2013. A man named Fredy Mertz who lives today in Alsace contacted me. Fredy descends from Martin, son of Jacob who had come from Menziken to Alsace in about the 1680's and became the Mayor of Rosenweiler, Alsace. Fredy obviously knew a lot about the Mertz family of Alsace. Fredy and I discussed at length what I knew of David and his possible father Peter and what I knew of Ron's ancestry and how it might tie in with Fredy's. In fact, according to Fredy, Martin had a brother Peter and Fredy had found a marriage certificate of Peter, son of Jacob of Rosenweiller, to Barbara Zimmerman.

So was it one Peter with two wives or was there more to this story? It remained a confusing picture until yet another Frenchman, Robert Mertz, entered the picture and told us he had found what for me has become an absolute key document proving that David's father was indeed named Peter and that Peter had two wives: Barbara Zimmerman (my ancestor) and Susanna Braconnier. (And no wife named Maria Brandi.)

I finally felt like things had come into focus. I now accept as fact that my David descends from Peter and his first wife Barbara. Peter was born in 1662 in Menziken

and was the son of Jacob of Menziken who came to Rosenwiller, Alsace in about 1685. We do not yet know how to reconcile Ron's ancestry with mine. There is no doubt Ron believes his ancestor is the same Jacob who I believe was my ancestor -- the key being that Anna Fuchs was the name of Jacob's wife.

So I do also now believe that there must be an error with Ron's version of his ancestry. Certainly Ron and I both descend from this same extended family but we do not descend from the same Peter. Whether there was another Jacob who also came to Alsace from Menziken and who also had a son Peter, I don't know. I think it more likely that Ron's ancestor Peter who married Maria Brandi was misidentified as a son of Jacob and an indication of that is that Ron believes his Peter had the same birth date as mine.

For the time being, I have placed Ron's Peter as brother to Jacob, but I have no idea if that is the case. Clearly my Jacob and Ron's Peter are closely related (DNA proves that), we just don't now know exactly how.

### **Relocated**

Fredy Mertz says Jacob and his family moved from Menziken, Switzerland to Alsace perhaps in the mid-1680's. We know Jacob was still in Menziken when his son Daniel was born in 1675 and the earliest mention of anyone of this family in Alsace was in 1689. Jacob settled in Rosenwiller. Fredy also found his death information, saying: "*Jacob, previous inhabitant of Rosenwiller, died in the village of Cosswiller on March 23rd 1712 aged 85 years*" Fredy adds: "*My understanding is that when his wife passed away he went close to a person from his family because he could not stay alone. And the most probable would be that George Mertz who signed the death document (together with Nicolas Zimmermann) would be another son, maybe the elder one.*"

So it seems pretty well proven that my Mertz/Merz ancestors of Alsace came there from Menziken, Switzerland -- in the time period that Burgert was referring to.

It would be nice if this complete migratory route was confirmed by my DNA, which purports to tell me my ancestors' migratory journey, but it is unfortunately not so complete. My DNA test was done by the National Geographic Genographic DNA project. They told me that I belong to Haplogroup J2 (M172) meaning my direct male ancestors long ago came out of Africa into the Golden Crescent and from there stayed along the Mediterranean coast moving west (over many, many generations) ultimately to (what is now) Italy. Remember, we're talking here about my direct male ancestors and theirs of 15,000-60,000 years ago. So, in the next several thousand years, they had to find their way from Italy to Alsace and it makes sense (to me at least) that the initial move may have been through the Alps and into Switzerland.

### **Known Sons**

The two sons of Jacob I am concerned with are my ancestor Peter and his brother Martin.

Martin was born in 1664 in Menziken and came with his parents to Alsace. Fredy Mertz says that Martin, his ancestor, moved from Rosenwiller to the village of Bust close to Hangviller where he married a first time with Anna Gangloff on 28 Nov 1690. The church record of their marriage in Bust says he was the son of Jacob of Rosenwiller.

Martin then married a second time Juliana Maria Engler on 3 Jun 1720 in La Petite Pierre. Juliana is Fredy's ancestor. In fact, she and Martin are double ancestors for Fredy as his mother also descends from the brother of the son of Martin and Juliana that Fredy's father descends from.

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**Spouse:            8G GM Anna Fuchs**

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Birth:            23 Oct 1631     Reinach, Switzerland  
Birth Memo:     (Fredy Mertz, descendant living in France today)  
Marriage:       16 Mar 1657     Menziken, Switzerland  
Marr Memo:      (Fredy Mertz, descendant living in France today)  
Death:           19 Feb 1699     Rosenwiller, Alsace  
Death Memo:    (Fredy Mertz, descendant living in France today)  
Father:          9G GF Rudlof Fuchs (-1679)  
Mother:          9G GM Margreth Meyer

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**Name:** Peter Mertz<sup>1</sup> (Ron's ancestor)

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Father: 9G GF Peter Gerber Merz (1592-)

Mother: 9G GM Barbara Bleuler

### **Parent-Proof**

Ron learned that he descended from Peter Mertz, son of Jacob, who was born 10 Aug 1662 in Menziken and died in 1725. Peter married Maria Brandli on 8 Apr 1687.

I believe, based on the research of Fredy Mertz and Robert Mertz, that there was some confusion on the part of whoever informed Ron of his ancestry. It seems accurate that Ron's ancestor was indeed Peter Mertz whose wife was Maria Brandli but they confused that Peter with a different Peter Mertz, the one born 10 Aug 1662 son of Jacob.

I list Ron's Peter as the son of Peter Gerber Mertz but that is most likely not true and I do it just to keep him around in my database.

### **My Comments**

Ron Mertz, my DNA cousin, travelled to Alsace in search of his ancestry and this is what he wrote me (in 2006):

*"According to information from some third cousins in Alsace which I obtained about 15 years ago, my earliest known Mertz ancestor was Jacob Mertz (one reference spelled it Merz) born in Menziken, Switzerland. I do not have his birth date, but he married Anna Fuchs on March 16, 1658. They had 10 children including a son, Peter, who was born August 10, 1662 in Menziken and died in 1725. He married Maria Brandli on April 8, 1687. They had 12 children. One son, Hans Heinrich (my direct ancestor), was born April 4, 1697 in Menziken and died on March 3, 1763 in Alsace.*

*Hans Heinrich had two wives. His first was Anna Catharina Pfenner. They had 6 children before she died and he then married Ursula Weiss and had 5 more children, but I believe only two or three lived to adulthood. I see in my notes that one, Anna Marie Mertz, b.24 Dec 1737 married a Philipp Jacob Dufene and at some point went to America.*

*One son of Hans Heinrich and Ursula Weiss was Hans Heinrich Herman Mertz, who was born May 2, 1746 in Mitschdorf, Alsace and died April 28, 1795 in Alsace. He was my direct ancestor. Hans Heinrich Herman married Maria Dorothea Fettig on August 14, 1769 in Alsace. They had five children. Heinrich (Henri) Hermann, born April 25, 1786, in Preutschdorf, Alsace was my father's father's father's father (my great-great grandfather) and another son Johann George Mertz was my father's mother's mother's father's father (my great-great-great grandfather).*

*When we first visited Alsace, one of my third cousins (same great-great grandfather) took me to some of the old family homes. Apparently when Hans Heinrich came to Preuschdorf, Alsace he was a weaver and had a loom in his home.*



*My father's father's father (Gottfried) was born in 1812 and came to St. Louis County, Missouri in the late 1840's along with a brother and sister. At about the same time, four first cousins (all males) came to the same area. One of these first cousins (also Gottfried, born in 1816) was my father's mother's grandfather. Therefore, I have a double line going back."*

I "met" (via email) Ron as a result of the fact that my DNA is stored at Family Tree DNA and they continuously compare it to new DNA that is submitted to them for testing. And it turns out that my 12-marker DNA test matches his exactly. This exact match means that there is a 100% chance that Ron and I share a direct ancestor in the not too distant past.

My French cousins, Fredy and Robert Mertz, have basically confirmed all of the above information about Ron's ancestry with the very important exception that Ron's ancestor Peter who married Maria Brandli was NOT the son of Jacob who married Anna Fuchs. Ron's Peter did truly exist and is documented but his father was most likely Jacob's brother or someone else closely related. Clearly, Ron's cousins, by misidentifying Peter, have given him an erroneous birth date as well.

Robert Mertz has listed all the Menziken area births of persons named Peter Merz in the right timeframe, he is probably one of these. The list shows birth date, place, father's name and mother's name.

Merz Peter	1651-09-21	Reinach	Hans, Ludimoderator Meyer Salome
Merz Peter	1653-10-02	Menziken	Melchior Lüscher Anna
Merz Peter	1654-06-04	Beinwil	Ulrich [Huldrich] Härdi Elisabeth
Merz Peter	1657-11-05	Menziken	Fridli Ryser Anna
Merz Peter	1659-05-08	Beinwil	Fridli Frey Magdalena [Madlena]
Merz Peter	1663-01-11	Beinwil	Rudolf
Merz Peter	1644-10-06	Menziken	Heinrich Isenschmid Barbara
Merz Peter	1646-02-08	Kaspar	Brunner Katharina

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**Spouse:            Maria Brandli**

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Marriage:            8 Apr 1667            Menziken, Switzerland  
Marr Memo:            (acutal marriage record documented by Robert Mertz)

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**Name:** 7G GF Peter Mertz<sup>2,3,4</sup>

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Birth: 10 Aug 1662 Menziken, Switzerland  
Birth Memo: (Fredy Mertz, descendant living in France today)  
Death: Oct 1728  
Death Memo: (Alsace estate file found by Robert Mertz)  
Father: 8G GF Jacob Mertz (1626-1712)  
Mother: 8G GM Anna Fuchs (1631-1699)  
Other spouses: Susanna Braconnier

### Parent-Proof

Swiss records indicate the Menziken, Switzerland birth of Peter Merz, son of Jacob.

### My Comments

For a long time, I only suspected Peter was David's father but I didn't know much more about Peter and it seemed there may have been as many as three different Peter's of that place and time, at least there were three different women married to one.

Fredy Mertz found a document of the wedding of Peter MERTZ son of Jacob MERTZ mayor in Rosenwiller native from Menziken in the Berner area with Barbara Zimmermann daughter of Benedict Zimmermann on May 1st 1689 in a Reformed church of Strasbourg.

He also found the signature of Peter MERZ (without T) son of Jacob MERTZ from Rosenwiller, as godfather at a baptism in the registers of Rosenwiller collected in Detwiller. It was on 23 Feb 1689 and it was for the daughter Anna of (unknown).

Rom Mertz, whose DNA links him to me as some kind of distant cousin, thought he descends from Jacob's son Peter who married a woman named Maria Brandli in 1687

But it wasn't until Robert Mertz found the notarial act listing two wives for Peter (neither being Maria Brandli) and that David was the son of Peter by his first wife Barbara Zimmerman that everything came together.

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**Spouse:** 7G GM Barbara Zimmerman

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Marriage: 1 May 1689 Strasbourg, France  
Marr Memo: (Fredy Mertz, current resident of Alsace)  
Father: Benedict Zimmerman

### Parent-Proof

We know the name of her father from the notarial act.

### **My Comments**

Over the years, suspecting Peter was David's father, I had a long list of possible candidates to be David's mother, Maria Brandli being one of them. Before her, I thought that a woman named Christena Rueckler may have been. That idea came from a document titled "*Descendants of Joseph Schneider*" which my genealogy friend Patty Mertz sent me, and which she found at the Berks Historical Society (I believe). In places, this document is well researched and well sourced, but there seem to be plenty of mistakes too in delineating the Mertz family once it arrived in the New World. The fact that David named a daughter Christina gave some credence to this theory.

But all those theories were wrong. Peter's first wife, mother of David, was Barbara Zimmerman.

**Name:** **6G GF John David Mertz**<sup>5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13</sup>

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Birth: abt 1690 Alsace, Germany  
Birth Memo: (age 44 upon 1733 arrival in America, his parents married in May 1689)  
Death: bef 1752 Longswamp Twp, Berks Co, PA  
Death Memo: (not listed as a taxable in 1752)  
Father: 7G GF Peter Mertz (1662-1728)  
Mother: 7G GM Barbara Zimmerman

### **Parent-Proof**

In 2014, my Alsatian friend/cousin, Fredy, heard from another Frenchman named Robert Mertz. Robert had found in the departmental archives a notarial act dated 8 Nov 1728 that was done about 3 weeks after the death of Peter (thus in Oct 1728).

That act listed Peter's heirs:

1) children from his first wedding with Anna Barbara ZIMMERMANN, daughter of Benedict ZIMMERMANN from Schoenbourg, these represented by Johann ZIMMERMANN

- David inhabitant of Hangviller
- Hans Jacob inhabitant of Siewiller
- Anna Barbara married with Ulrich BURCKHALTER inhabitant of Hangviller
- Anna Margaretha married with Abraham VAUTRIN miller in Hirschland
- Johann Peter 22 years Soldier in the Swiss Regiment

2) children from his second wedding with Susanna BRACONNIER living assisted by Heinrich DIFFORT from Schoenbourg, these were represented by Martin MERTZ from Bust (Fredy's ancestor, brother of Peter)

- Anna Catharina 17 years
- Hans Nickel 15 years
- Johann 12 years
- Anna Magdalena 9 years

This fabulous find confirms everything I had come to believe, that David was the son of Peter and brother of Anna Margaretha.

We do not know exactly when David was born, no baptism record has been found. Upon his arrival, his ship's captain gave David's age as 44. That cannot be considered as exact but is presumably reasonably close. But we have found record of his parents' marriage 1 May 1689. So I am using abt 1690 as David's birth. And most certainly Peter was living in Alsace at the time.

### **Relocated**

IMMIGRANT. On Strassburger's lists of immigrants to Philadelphia, we find as passengers on the Ship Richard & Elizabeth arrived Philadelphia 28 Sep 1733 from

Rotterdam last from Plymouth: David Mertz 44, Veronica 40, Johan Nicholas (Hans Nickel) 18, Johan Peter 13 3/4 and Christina 3 3/4.

David apparently could not read and write and so on the loyalty oaths all adult males had to sign when arriving Philadelphia, David made his mark -- a clear printed M. This same mark appears as well on the notarial act naming David as one of Peter's heirs. There was always sufficient evidence that David of Longswamp was certainly David of Hangviller -- but the M mark just is icing on the cake.

### **Research**

Burgert documents: Ship Richard and Elizabeth 1733: David Mertz, age 44, with Veronica, 40, and Joh. Nicholas 18, Joh. Peter 13 3/4 and Christina 3 3/4. Diedendorf Reformed Kirchenbuch (Church Book): David Mertz from Hangviller and wife Frena (Veronica) nee Schneider had a son Johannes, baptized 20 Sep 1722. Longswamp Reformed: David Mertz, Nicholas and Peter listed as Deacons of this church and contributors to the original building fund in 1748.

M L Kueker found the original warrant granted "David March" 12 Oct 1738 for 150 acres on Longswamp Creek.

### **Notes**

Fredy Mertz gave me this geography lesson. Today France is divided in Departments and Regions. The Region Alsace has 2 Departments: BAS-RHIN (lower Rhine) and HAUT-RHIN (upper Rhine). The Region LORRAINE has 4 Departments: MOSELLE, MEUSE, VOSGES and MEURTHE-ET-MOSELLE.

The village of Hangviller is in the MOSELLE and Bust is in the BAS-RHIN. Bas-Rhin has all people records since the revolution (1793) available on the Internet as well as church records from before the revolution. Moselle is not yet there and thus you need to go to the specific places to find data.

The importance of this is that while we may find many records we need of this family -- the ones from Bas-Rhin, it may well be that we will be missing those from Moselle.

### **My Comments**

I have a pretty good idea of the birth year of John David as he was 44 upon arrival in America in 1733. What I don't know is when he died. He contributed to the building fund in 1748 and that may be his last mention in official records. He was not listed as a taxable on the 1752 records of Longswamp Township. Peter and Nicholas were, as were Henry and Jost (both really of Rockland at the time). There was a David mentioned as a baptismal sponsor at Longswamp Reformed in 1764, but this could have been a grandson of John David. So, for now, I am stating his date of death as before 1752.

A final note on John David. In actual American records and even the European records found by Burgert, he was always David, never John David. Yet, the Mertz/Mertz chapter in Meiser's "*Northumberland County Pioneers*" gave his name as John David.

Now it was common practice among early German families to give their sons a Christian or baptismal first name – and it was almost always Johann (John). So John Jacob, John Henry, John Philip and John David are a few examples of early German names. The first name was John but it was not used in conversation or for other purposes. Thus John Jacob was generally called Jacob and so forth. [Another common name was Johannes in which case these men did not have an additional Christian name – they were called Johannes or in English, John.]

For that reason, I always chose to call this most important of our Mertz ancestors, John David -- as it made it easy to then be clear when I was referring to him versus several of his descendants named David. But it turns out there is one Alsace church record where he was named Hans David — the 28 December 1717 baptism for Peter, son of Hans David and Verena. (This is the only mention we have ever found indicating David indeed was John David). But John David it is.

Many descendants of John David Mertz eventually settled on the alternate spelling Martz (perhaps because the German pronunciation sounds like Mairtz) and so it is interesting to observe that it was uniformly spelled M-E-R-T-Z in the Diedendorf and other Alsace records. Also, when passengers landed in Philadelphia, adult males were required to sign two separate oaths of allegiance: John David made his mark but the person who signed for him clearly thought it was M-E-R-T-Z, Nicholas (Hans Nickel) actually signed his name though his signature is hard to decipher.

### **Known Sons**

David came to America with his two surviving sons: Nicholas and Hans Peter.

It is Nicholas and Peter who I treat as “original Mærtz ancestors” in the Mærtz Hierarchical Project. Nicholas is given the single-letter designation N and Peter the single-letter designation P.

This is not to dismiss David, in fact I consider him my immigrant Mertz ancestor. Had I instead given David the single-letter designation D, Nicholas would then have been D1 and Peter D2. That would have made perfect sense but it is simply that the coding becomes cumbersome down five more generations. The person now designated P4a4d (my great-great grandfather) would instead have been D2d1d4. So it was for the sake of not being overly cumbersome with the codes as well as the fact that, indeed, Nicholas and Peter really were immigrants, albeit teenage immigrants, that is the reason I did what I did.

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**Spouse:**           **6G GM Veronica Schneider**<sup>14,15</sup>

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Birth:                abt 1693            Alsace, Germany  
Birth Memo:        (Age 40 upon 1733 arrival in America)  
Marriage:           abt 1714            Alsace, Germany  
Death:              abt 1750            Longswamp Twp, Berks Co, PA  
Father:             7G GF Joseph Schneider (-~1735)

## **Parent-Proof**

The Burgert book on Alsace immigrants specifically identifies Veronica as the daughter of Joseph Schneider and wife of David Mertz -- all based on church and other public records found in Alsace. Burgert also cites the 1764 county records of Saarwarden (Alsace) pertaining to Joseph Schneider which state that his daughter Veronica and her family including their three named children had emigrated to America.

## **Pedigree**

I know nothing more about Veronica's father Joseph, nor the name of her mother, so other than noting his name, nothing more on this surname will be reported. I do find probably that the Mertzses may well have come from Switzerland among a whole group of associated families.

## **Research**

Burgert writes this concerning the emigration of the family of David Mertz: "Verification of this emigration supplied by Dr. Bernd Golzer, from the county records dated 18 Oct 1764 of Nassau-Saarwerden for Kirberg, compiled by Dr. Gerhard Hein -- contemporary table of descendants of Joseph Schneider of Diedendorf originally from Melchnau, Bern, Switzerland. David Mertz of Hangweiler and wife Veronica have moved to the new land with three children Hans Nickel, Hans Peter and Christina."

Burgert also documents that two men named Johannes Schneider emigrated to America. One arrived in 1738 and he was a brother of Veronica. He appears in the American records of the Egypt Reformed Church. Another Johannes arrived in 1741 and was a nephew of Veronica, son of her brother Ulrich. This younger Johannes went on to marry Anna Margaretha Votrin daughter of Abraham Votrin and wife Anna Margaretha Mertz (sister of Veronica's husband).

## **My Comments**

I do not know the exact marriage date of David and Veronica but the oldest child I am aware of was Nicholas who was 18 upon his arrival in America in 1733, thus born about 1715, and so I have assumed the marriage date was about 1714 when Veronica would have been 21 and David 25.

## **Children Names**

In addition to the three children who arrived on the same ship as David and Veronica, there was one other whose birth was recorded in the Diedendorf Reformed KirchenBuch in Alsace. It says: "1722, 20 September — [two unreadable words] David Mertz von Hangeviller frau Frena Schneiderin. Infant Johannes." But since Johannes was not named on what appears to be a complete listing of passengers on the ship, my assumption is that he died young before the family emigrated.

**Name: Anna Margaretha Mertz**

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Birth: abt 1701 Alsace, Germany  
Birth Memo: (Age 32 upon 1733 arrival in America)  
Marriage: 19 Mar 1723  
Death: Northampton Co, PA  
Father: 7G GF Peter Mertz (1662-1728)  
Mother: 7G GM Barbara Zimmerman

**Parent-Proof**

Burgert documents that she was the daughter of Peter of Hangviller and that she came to America with her husband and children on the same ship as John David Mertz.

**Relocated**

IMMIGRANT. Abraham and Anna Margaretha Votrin came to America with their four children on the ship Richard and Elizabeth in 1733. Once in America, Abraham and Anna Margaretha Votrin settled near the Egypt Reformed Church in Lehigh County.

**Spouse: Abraham Votrin<sup>16,17</sup>**

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Birth: 11 Jul 1700 Alsace, Germany  
Birth Memo: (Age 34 upon 1733 arrival in America)  
Death: 28 Nov 1752 Egypt, Whitehall Twp, (now) Lehigh Co, PA  
Death Memo: (Vautrin Family History)  
Father: Henry Peter Votrin  
Mother: Catharina Brot

**My Comments**

A family history entitled "*Vautrin, Wotrin, Wotring Family from Alsace-Lorraine to Pennsylvania 1632-1987*" compiled by a descendant identified the Votrin family as French Huguenots which caused me to look up exactly what that means. Huguenots were the French followers of Calvin's Reformed movement, so while I don't think the term applies to our Swiss-Alsace ancestors, once in Alsace, our ancestors were closely associated with them geographically and of a similar religious mindset.

**Children Names**

According to the records of Egypt Reformed Church, Johannes and Anna Margaretha had sixteen children in total. We know from ships records that Hans Peter age 9, Anna Margaretha age 7, Maria Magdalena age 5 and Anna Elisabetha age 2 came to America in 1733 with their parents.

Their daughter Anna Margaretha married Johannes Schneider and they were the victims of a fatal Indian attack in 1763.



## Sources

- 1.** E-mail Author: Dr. Ron Mertz, "Mertzes of Preuschdorf, Alsace and Menziken, Switzerland," 2006, Ron matches my DNA exactly (12 markers), Ron has documented his line from Gottfried, immigrant from Preuschdorf, Alsace to Jacob of Menziken, Switzerland.
- 2.** Published Book. Author: Annette Kunselman Burgert, 1992, "18th Century Emigrants from the Northern Alsace to America," Repository: NHCL, Matches German Church records, ship's passenger lists and early American records, This book covers the Mertz, Schneider and related families of Alsace and Berks County.
- 3.** Published Book. Author: IBID. Burgert. "Alsace Emigrants". Peter Mertz of Hangenweiller was the father of Anna Margaretha whose marriage to Abraham Vautrin is documented in the Diedendorf Church records.
- 4.** Internet Family Trees. Repository: Ancestry.com, Author: Various Authors, Random facts from specific trees, may be erroneous, Many trees show Peter as the father of John David, not a one gives an actual source, except sometimes citing another such tree.
- 5.** Published Family Histories. "Martz/Mertz Genealogy -- A Northumberland County Pioneer Family," Author: Joseph A Meiser, Richard J Martz, Repository: North'd Co Hist Soc, Includes too much of J L Floyd's misinformation about the earliest Mertzes of North'd Co. It is more accurate on the Mertzes born in North'd Co, Written 1990, Acknowledges David as an immigrant but only associates a very few North'd County Mertz Pioneers as his descendants.
- 6.** Published Book. Author: IBID. Burgert. "Alsace Emigrants". David Mertz of Hangeweiller is named in Diedendorf Church records, is listed on the ship Richard and Elizabeth in 1733 and is named in the records of Longswamp Reformed Church.
- 7.** Published Book. Author: Ralph Beaver Strassburger, "Pennsylvania German Pioneers," Repository: LDS Microfiche 6051507, This is the most authoritative work on early German Palatine ships arriving Philadelphia, David Mertz 44, Veronica 40, Johan Nicholas 18, Hans Peter 13 3/4, Christina 3 3/4 -- ship Richard and Elizabeth 28 Sep 1733.
- 8.** Church Records: Longswamp Reformed, Berks Co, PA, Baptisms, mostly, Repository: Genealogy.com CD 166, LDS Microfilms 20350 (Hinke)/1294878 (Butz)/1750734 (Ziegler), I have exhaustively studied these records to identify every Mertz mentioned (including married daughters) -- as a parent or a sponsor, The 1762 history of the church by Jacob Weimer, pastor, says that the church was founded in 1748 and Nicholas and Peter Mertz were Deacons and both they and David were founding contributors.
- 9.** Published Family Histories. Author: IBID. Meiser "Martz/Mertz". This is the only source I have ever seen that lists David Mertz as John (Johann) David. The citation concerns his arrival in 1733.
- 10.** Published Book. Author: J L Floyd (Publisher), 1913, "Genealogical and Biographical Annals of Northumberland County," Repository: North'd Co Genweb Site, This book is OK on contemporary people and perhaps people born in North'd Co in decades earlier, but when it tells the story of ancestors from other counties, it is almost always wrong. Worse, it was believed by many later genealogists, Floyd details the lives and ancestries of perhaps two dozen Mertzes of Northumberland County, all of whom descend from John David, and never acknowledges his existence.
- 11.** Published Family Histories. "Martz/Mertz Family," Author: Allen Donald Tallman, Repository: LDS Film 1597538, Tallman also wrote mertzdav.txt on North'd Co GenWeb, Tallman builds on Meiser, corrects some things, but at times finds the contradictory evidence but then misses the point and things stay erroneous, Acknowledges David as an immigrant but only associates a very few North'd County Mertz Pioneers as his descendants.
- 12.** Land Records Berks County Tax Lists , Longswamp Township, David is NOT listed, nor was he listed among the 1752 taxables.
- 13.** Church Records: IBID. Longswamp Reformed. David Mertz was a sponsor of the 8 Apr 1764 baptism of David Hener but this might well have been a grandson of David the immigrant.

**14.** Published Book. Author: IBID. Burgert. "Alsace Emigrants". David Mertz of Hangenweiller and wife Frena [Veronica] nee Schneider baptized son Johannes 20 Sep 1722.

**15.** Published Book. Author: IBID. Burgert. "Alsace Emigrants". Documents relationship of Veronica to her father Joseph and to her husband David and their children.

**16.** Published Book. Author: IBID. Strassburger. "PA German Pioneers". Abraham Wootring 33, Anna Margaretha 32, Hans Peter 9, Anna Margaretha 7, Maria Magdalena 4 1/2, Anna Louisa 2 -- Richard and Elizabeth 28 Sep 1733 .

**17.** Published Book. Author: IBID. Burgert. "Alsace Emigrants". Anna Margaretha d/o Peter Mertz married Abraham Vautrin 19 Mar 1722 (Diedendorf Church). She later is a named on the ship Richard and Elizabeth in 1733. They are later named in the records of the Egypt Reformed Church in Lehigh County.