

**The  
German Origins  
of the  
Weisers**

**Research into the ancestry of John Conrad Weiser (1696-1760) and  
of his wife Ann Eve Feg (1706-1781).**

*by*

**FREDERICK S. WEISER**

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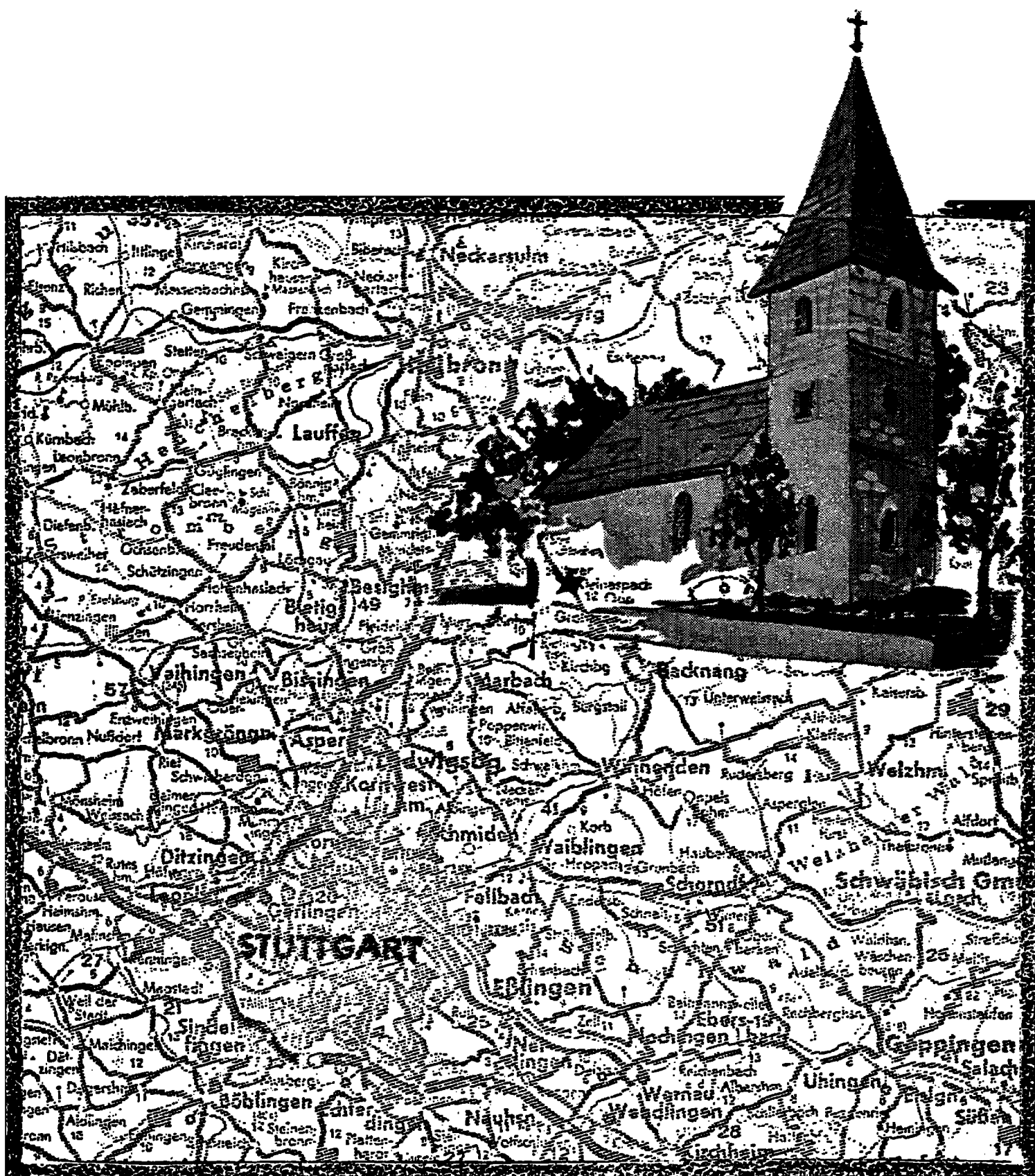


Conrad Weiser

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# The German Origins of the Weisers



# Introduction

"The origins of the John Conrad Weiser family are difficult to discern," reads the opening sentence of **The Weiser Family**, published in 1960. Hardly was the printer's ink dry on those words, when a happy chain of circumstances combined to put them to a lie. The results of research printed in this pamphlet, which is the second in a series published by the Weiser Family Association, carry the Weiser family lineages into the sixteenth century.

The compiler is widely indebted: to Fräulein Marianne Müller and Bürgermeister Hans Grass of Grossaspach, for warm hospitality and assistance in locating records in the town hall; to Herr Pfarrer Paul Schuler, for records from the parish registers of Grossaspach and pleasant hospitality in the parsonage; to the staff of the Sturmfeder Archives in Ludwigsburg and of the Hauptstaatsarchiv in Stuttgart, to Louise Stahl for designing this pamphlet, and to Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Greulich for typing the manuscript.

Chiefly, however, acknowledgment must be given to Herr and Frau Rudolf Weisser of Stuttgart. Herr Weisser's book, **Die Weisser von Kleinaspach**, lies behind many of the statements in this pamphlet; Frau Weisser's nourishing hospitality supported the researcher in his search for supplementary facts. The Weissers' warmth made one glad he is a Schwobe (a Swabian), but raised the question whether Anna Eva could prepare Conrad **Maultaschen**, the Swabian dish which everyone eats on Maundy Thursday! Or was little Conrad ever the **Palmesel**, the last one to arise from bed on Palm Sunday, a tradition which is still alive in Grossaspach!

It remains only to note that the Weiser tradition in Grossaspach is alive and strong: on Sunday, April 4, 1965, the village celebrated a Weiser Day, on which the author preached in the village's Lutheran Church, now tastefully remodelled. Later the school children gathered for the presentation of a painting of Weiser's home in Pennsylvania made by Mrs. Stahl and given to the school by the Weiser Family Association. In return, the children presented a volume they had written and illustrated themselves about the life of the Weisers. Finally, several hundred of the village's inhabitants came to a community afternoon, as a part of which slides of Conrad Weiser's life and of Pennsylvania were shown and stories and folksongs in the Pennsylvania German dialect—which has some echoes of the Swabian spoken in that region—were performed by Mr. Larry Neff, who accompanied the undersigned.

The Weiser Family Association gratefully acknowledges a special contribution from a Weiser descendant, Mr. George C. Bollman, of Geo. W. Bollman & Co., Inc., manufacturers of wool felt hats, Adamstown, Pennsylvania, which has helped to make this pamphlet possible.

Frederick S. Weiser

In his often-quoted autobiography Pennsylvania's pioneer Indian diplomat John Conrad Weiser (1696-1760) related the little he knew of his father's ancestry. His father, also named John Conrad Weiser (†1746), was a son of Jacob Weiser, whom the younger Conrad identified as a Schultheiss, or magistrate, of their tiny German village, Grossaspach, near Backnang in Württemberg. And Conrad said that his great-grandfather was also named Jacob and that he, too, had been the village's Schultheiss. Of his mother's family, Conrad related only her name, Magdalena Übelin and the date and circumstances of her death in May, 1709, immediately following which the father and unmarried children emigrated to America. And, of the wife he married in 1720, he cited only her Christian name Anna Eva.

### 1. The Weiser Family

The Weiser family seems to have had its origins in the twin Swabian villages of Kleinaspach and Grossaspach, which are about a mile apart. Definite records concerning ancestors of John Conrad Weiser (†1746) have been found in Grossaspach for the year 1591. The only precisely dated records of Grossaspach existing for prior to the year 1584 are tax lists dated 1528, 1532, 1563 and 1569, which contain no references to Weisers, and an undated record from the sixteenth century which indirectly mentions a Balthes Weyeser.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, an abundance of records from the sixteenth century for Kleinaspach support a tradition that the original home of the family was in that Dorf. Already in 1475 one Claus Weysser is identified as Kleinaspach's Schultheiss in what appears to be the earliest definite reference to someone of this name in the community. For several reasons, it seems altogether likely that the lineage of the Weisers reaches back into Kleinaspach, therefore, and that the generations between a Simon Weiser, who lived over the middle of the sixteenth century, and John Conrad Weiser, the emigrant, may be summarized as follows, with documentary proof for the relationship after c. George Weiser in existence.

- a. Simon Weiser
- b. George Weiser ([1525]—ca. 1604)
- c. George Weiser ([1565-1630])
- d. Jacob Weiser ([1595]—ca. 1675)
- e. Jacob Weiser (ca. 1625-1685)
- f. John Conrad Weiser (ca. 1667-1746)

(The bracketed dates are completely suppositional; for the others some documentary basis exists.)

### a. Simon Weiser

In a list of landholdings in the village of Kleinaspach from the year 1522, one Simon Wysser is identified together with a description of the land he held. Historian Rudolf Weisser has summarized this list: "His possessions altogether were half a house, thirty-five fields, and fourteen meadows. Since, however, the fields and meadows were frequently only part of a **Morgen** [A **Morgen** is about one acre in English measurement] and the land was shared with Jacob Klinger, the holdings of land of Simon Wysser were modest."<sup>2</sup>

Only approximations may be made about Simon's birth and death dates. He appears on a list made in 1523 of men between ages seventeen and sixty years subject to military responsibilities in the wars against the Turks.<sup>3</sup> It seems likely that he had died before 1551, when a George Weiser is mentioned in the village's list of land holders, once again in connection with Jacob Klinger. Likewise in 1568, George Weiser's extensive holdings are listed, and once again the family name of Klinger often occurs in the same entry as neighbors. For this reason it is assumed that George Weiser was one of Simon's sons. Two others may well have been Veit Weiser, whose widow is mentioned in a tax list from 1591, and Simon Weiser, whose widow Barbara is mentioned in the same list.<sup>4</sup>

Before following later generations of Weisers, it will be interesting to know something of the villages in which they lived and of the name they bore.

#### (1) The History of Kleinaspach and Grossaspach.<sup>5</sup>

That the area of these two villages was inhabited in prehistoric times is known from archeological remains. Specific settlements by the Allemani Germanic tribes, took place about 260 years after Christ. Among these tribes were the Swabians, the Germanic group which settled in the area around Stuttgart, including the vicinity of the two villages. It seems likely that at least Grossaspach developed as a tribal settlement in this period. "It is certain that Grossaspach was one of the Allemani original locations. . . . Grossaspach also possesses one of the very oldest features which go back to the Allemani times, a so-called "Maier-" or "Freihof", also known as the "Bettelhof." These were the farms (Höfe) of the former tribal chieftain and can be so designated not only because of their size, but also because of their noteworthy rights and duties (such as freedom from taxation and the right of asylum)."<sup>6</sup>

About 500 A.D. the tribes of Franks defeated the Allemani, and



Grossaspach lay on the furthest limit of the Frankish conquest. Because of this, the dialects of German spoken in the neighborhood are not pure Swabish, but a mixture with some Frankish. As a result of peace after the Frankish conquest, the area's population grew; new settlements were made, of which Kleinaspach may well have been one, an outgrowth of Grossaspach. There is every reason to believe that the ancestors of the Weisers, yet without a family name, already lived in the communities.

A succession of overlords possessed the two villages until the point at which Simon Weiser appears in the records. Grossaspach, as early as Carolingian times, was divided into two parts, on either side of the Klöpferbach, a creek which flows through it. In 1388 the Sturmfeder family purchased the village, half of which (the half in which the Weisers later dwelt) they sold to the counts of Württemberg in 1442. Kleinaspach became the property of Württemberg in 1357.

Christianity seems to have come to the area through the Franks. Just when the Allemanni tribes of Swabians were converted cannot be said, but the Christianization of the area was not accomplished at once. By the 900's both villages were owned by religious powers—Grossaspach by nearby Lorsch Cloister, Kleinaspach by the Bishop of Speyer. At least as early as 1278 a church, dedicated to Saint Julianna, was in use in Grossaspach—very likely the one destroyed by the French in 1693.

During the lifetime of Simon Weiser, the Reformation came to the area, through the influence of Pastor Valentine Wanner of Backnang. The peasants now attended Divine Service in their own language, at whose center was the sermon. "On Sundays and Festivals, in the evening, the Catechism was rehearsed: the three articles of the Creed, the Our Father, and the Ten Commandments." The Reformation era itself was also marked by the peasants' uprisings (1524-1525), some of which were played out near the villages. And a few years later the Smalcaldic War (1546-1548) brought them to poverty and left the Black Plague behind as a consequence.

By this time, however, the Weisers had become a family in Kleinaspach whose traces we may follow.

## **(2) The Weiser Family Name<sup>7</sup>**

It was in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that the need for more than personal names was felt, in order to distinguish those who bore the same name. Naturally, the higher classes in Germany adopted family names first and, naturally again, these names usually

expressed the original home or residence of their bearers. Beginning in the thirteenth century, peasant and bourgeois families also began to have such names. These were often derived from the trade or some attribute of the bearer. The name Weiser (which is also spelled Weisser, Wyser, and Weissert) is often found in Germany, without designating any genealogical relationship between the families. It clearly belongs to the peasant class of names.

Behind the name lies an activity which was found, therefore, in more than one community. "This activity could have been of two kinds in the German Middle Ages: On the one hand, the occupation—as early as the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries—as producer (Vorweiser) of something written, as the one who invited or as the official messenger who called all the citizens of a village together for various assemblies—counting those attending the "Weisung" (assembly) may also have been the "Wyser's" responsibility—; on the other hand: the activity as chairman, as "speaker of wisdom," which is something like a judge who brings previous precedents to mind in small village law cases. "In many proclamations and lists of land holdings of the late middle ages (ca. 1400-1600) and later are these words to be found: "according to old tradition" or "since men began to think" or "from old times." These definitions of rights were "gewysen" (proclaimed) to the village community from time to time. It was from the custody of these privileges, conducted by a responsible person, who in the thirteenth century may have been named the shorter form, Wyser, that the office of **Schultheiss** later grew.

Explanations of the name **Weiser** involving the color white (in German, **weiss**) do not seem to be as likely as the two possibilities discussed above.

At any rate, the family's name had likely been established some centuries before Simon Weiser's name is found in 1523.

#### **b. George Weiser ([1525]—ca. 1604)**

A series of entries in tax lists, land holding records and finally the land transactions records of Grossaspach refer to a George Weiser—**Jerg Weisser** as it is most often spelled. In 1542 and 1545 he is on the list of persons between seventeen and sixty years of age who were taxed and/or mustered for service in the war against the Turks. In 1551 he is mentioned next to Jacob Klinger in a land holdings record. In 1568 a new record of land holdings was prepared. George's holdings were extensive for the times: 14¼ Morgen of fields, about five Morgen of meadows and a small garden plot,

as well as a vineyard. In a record of taxation from 1591 "old George Weiser" and "George Weiser" were taxed in Kleinaspach,<sup>8</sup> but in the same year a George Weiser sold some land in Grossaspach.<sup>9</sup> "Old George Weiser" appears on a tax list from Grossaspach in 1603, but young George was taxed there in 1603, 1604, and 1605.<sup>10</sup> It seems highly likely, therefore, that George Weiser died in 1604 and that **while there is no proof that the George whose name occurs in Grossaspach is the same as the one who had earlier lived in Kleinaspach, they are the same persons.** A strong clue in this direction is the following record from Grossaspach, which shows that the George who had lived there had a son named Simon:<sup>11</sup>

### **In the year 1605**

On the 12th day of January there occurred a taxable division before both **Schultheissen** and the **Weysen Richtern** (the magistrate position from which the name Weiser might be derived) concerning the late George Weiser's estate. Herein Michael and Simon Weiser, brothers, and, Anna, the late Hanns Weyeser's widow. First their deceased father's house and garden was registered. . . . Jacob Brunn, the late George Weiser's son-in-law [had received certain property] and the other five heirs are treated equally in the division . . . Jacob must give the other five heirs. . . .

Although the record is hard to read, it seems clear, therefore, that old George Weiser had six children, four of whom (Michael, Simon, Hanns, and Jacob Brunn's wife) are named in the record.

### **c. George Weiser ([1565-1630])**

One of the unnamed ones must have been "Young George" Weiser, whose name occurs in the 1591 Kleinaspach tax list,<sup>7</sup> in the 1603, 1604, and 1605<sup>9</sup> list from Grossaspach, and in an entry in the land transactions of Grossaspach dated 22 April 1602. Whether he is the Jerg Weyeser who sold property in Grossaspach in 1591<sup>9</sup> is uncertain. George's name occurs again in 1602 and 1608,<sup>12</sup> and then again in an extremely important entry in 1624:<sup>13</sup> On November 15 old George Weiser sold certain property to his two sons Hanns and Jacob Weiser. This record establishes beyond question that George was the father of the first Jacob Weiser named in Conrad Weiser's autobiography. The fact that George is designated as "old" George probably means he had a son of the same name. There is, in fact, a George Weiser on a tax list from 1632.<sup>14</sup>

(The other son Hanns Weiser is probably the Johannes Weyser mentioned as a judge in a record of 1620<sup>15</sup> and again in a land transaction of 1636.<sup>15</sup>)

The records cited thus far suggest that there were a large number of male Weisers living in Kleinaspach or Grossaspach early in the seventeenth century. Yet, only the family of Conrad Weiser's grandfather Jacob Weiser and of his supposed brother, Johann Konrad Weiser (1642-1720) the town clerk of Backnang, survived. This fact is best explained by an event which may very well have contributed to the death of George Weiser. Since the records of land transactions for the years 1625-1632 (fifty-one pages) have somehow been cut from the Grossaspach record book, no clue as to when George Weiser died is to be found.

The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) had a profound effect upon the population of Germany. The usual suffering an economy undergoes in war was intensified by plundering and robbing. And, even worse for the population itself, the troops invariably brought the "black death" with them. As a result, whole villages in some sections of Germany died out and universally the population was reduced. It is estimated that one-third of the population of the area around Backnang had died by the end of the year 1626. Even sharper are statistics from Kleinaspach. In 1654, six years after the war's end, the population in Kleinaspach and the settlements which belonged to it was 251. Twenty years before it had been 1075!<sup>16</sup>

Pastor Hägelin in 1693 wrote something of Grossaspach's fate in his statement at the beginning of the new church register:

"Most of the parishioners, on account of war and merciless hunger, died of starvation or sought food and shelter elsewhere. The few left worshipped in the neighboring churches wherever one or another clergymen could get along. As late as 1653 the local vineyard was still uncultivated because of the wretched war and lack of manpower. In a great part of the fields nothing could be cultivated because of the scarcity of citizens and because of the wild game."<sup>17</sup>

What is more, the population after the war consisted also of immigrants from other villages and other parts of Europe. Some family names simply disappear from Grossaspach's land record book and others just as abruptly appear. In fact, only a few of the families active in Grossaspach about 1700 are listed in the records for the periods prior to 1625.

It is more a wonder, therefore, that Jacob Weiser, George's son, survived this holocaust, than it is that all of the others of this name disappeared from the records. And it is most interesting that the Weisers—unlike countless other families—lived in the same village before and after the Thirty Years War.

#### **d. Jacob Weiser (ca. 1595-1675)**

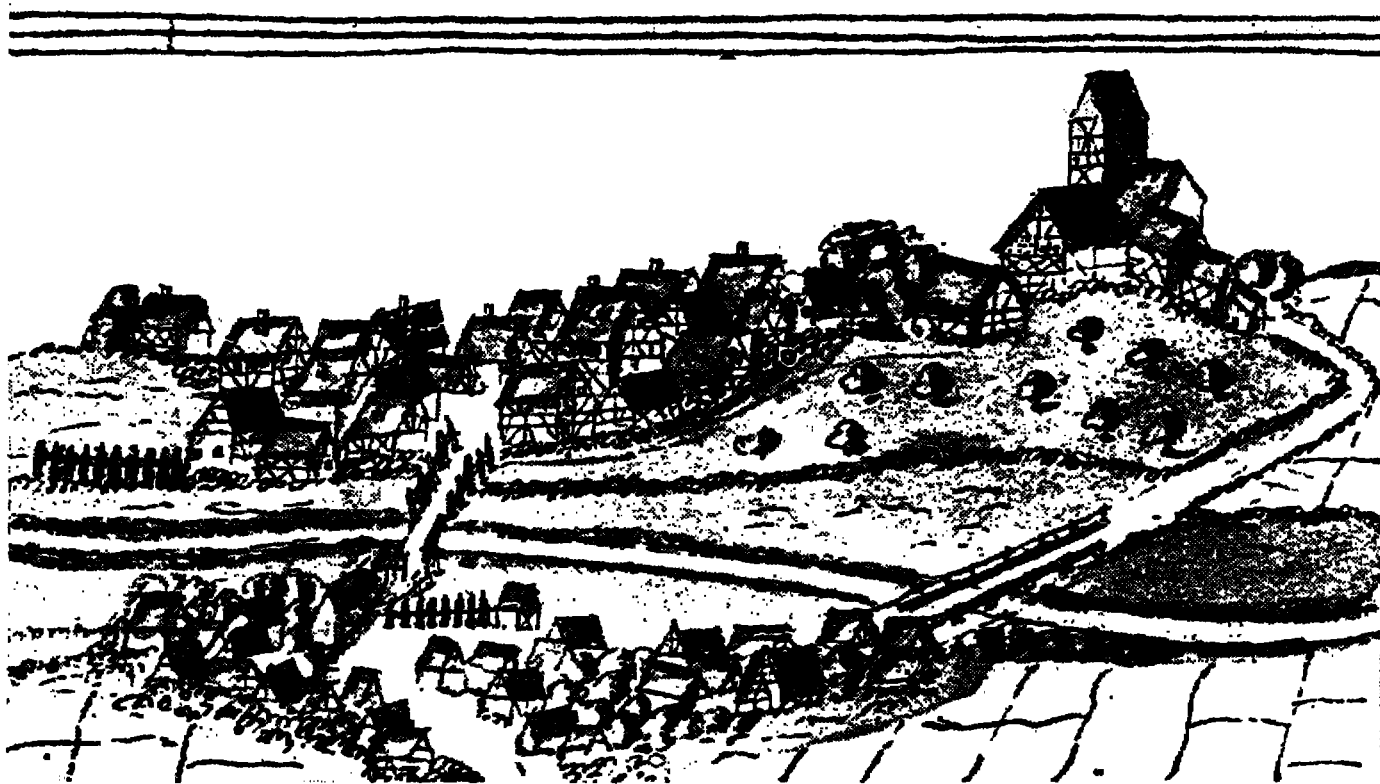
The record of 1624 in which George Weiser sold land to his two sons, Hanns and Jacob, may not be the first reference to Jacob Weiser. An entry in the record of judgments rendered in the village from 1614 to 1702 dated November 26, 1618 mentions Jacob Weiser.<sup>18</sup> In 1632 he is mentioned again as a "Richter" or judge.<sup>19</sup> His name occurs in tax lists of the same period.<sup>20</sup> In 1633 and 1635 records identify him as "Bürgermeister." In June 1636 he is identified as Württemberg Schultheiss for the first time, a position he held until he died.<sup>21</sup>

Jacob Weiser was married to a daughter of Hanns Mayer. On February 2, 1735, Mayer sold some land to his daughter's husband, Jacob Weiser.<sup>22</sup> Her first name does not occur in the entry. A later record may contain the missing information. In 1677, a land transaction mentions Anna Maria, Wolff Weiser's widow.<sup>23</sup> Whether Wolff was another name by which Jacob was known cannot be said. At any rate, Jacob Weiser must have died about 1676, for there is a clear reference to Schultheiss Jacob Weyeser's widow in a deed dated May 21, 1676.<sup>24</sup> He could not have died before 1668, for he and his son Jacob are mentioned in a deed together in that year.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the son Jacob, one old deed mentions (in 1660) a son-in-law Michael Miller.<sup>26</sup> And traditionally Johann Konrad Weiser (born August 2, 1642, in Grossaspach, died 13 February 1720 in Backnang) was a son of the elder Jacob. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate this in the Grossaspach records. Johann Konrad was an important personality in Backnang's life, a fact partly borne out by the fact that he used a personal coat-of-arms (which, somewhat adapted, is the arms of the Weiser Family Association).

Jacob Weiser Sr. is mentioned from time to time in land transactions with brothers-in-law. In 1654 there is reference to Jorg (George) Meyer<sup>27</sup> and in 1673 to Jacob Treffs, who may have been married to one of his sisters.<sup>28</sup>

# *Grossen Aspach.*



## GROSSASPACH IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

(A drawing, the original of which is in the Hauptstaatsarchiv, Stuttgart, showing the two parts of Grossaspach before it was burned by the French in 1693.)



## GROSSASPACH TODAY

(The exact location of the Weisers' home is unknown. The house locally known as the Weiser house was last occupied by descendants of Hans Michael Weiser and is not that in which Conrad Weiser lived as a boy.)

### e. **Jacob Weiser (c. 1625-1685)**

The personality of Jacob Weiser, grandfather of the Indian diplomat Conrad, emerges clearly from the existing records. There are references to him as "Jung Jacob" Weiser from the years 1653, 1660, 1664, 1668.<sup>29</sup>

Jacob was Schultheiss of Grossaspach, very likely from shortly after his father's death until his own. In this connection his name occurs frequently in the village's records. We have several examples of his signature. We know that his wife's name was Anna, although her family name does not appear. We know the names of all of his children who survived to adulthood.

And we know that on May 29, 1685, shortly before his death, Jacob sold some of his property to his son Hanns Michael and to his sons-in-law Hans Michael Brodt, Michael Niethammer and Hans Michael Fritz.<sup>30</sup> He must have died before November 9, 1686, when his widow sold another piece of land to the son Hanns Conradt.<sup>31</sup>

It was during the widow Anna's lifetime that the French invasion of Germany which resulted in burning out and impoverishing Grossaspach took place. The Pastor of the village, then Erhard Hägelin, described this in the new church records which he began after the war.

"In addition to the parsonage and barn, the tithe barn as well were among the twenty-four houses and barns which went up in smoke. Together with the parsonage, all of my best furniture, the sacred vessels, the church registers, my complete library, and all of my written material—of which not even the tiniest could be saved on account of the entirely too sudden attack of the enemy and the lack of peasants, of whom none could be persuaded to take them away in a conveyance; one in fact had promised to do it, but out of deliberate wickedness did not keep it, leaving me short and needy in the lurch—were burned and nothing of it brought along, but on the night of the 18th of July I had to flee empty-handed and had to turn my back on everything which had been lost and ruined, partly because of the plundering and partly because of the fire."<sup>32</sup>

Anna, Jacob's widow, died on April 7, 1696,<sup>33</sup> at the age of sixty-eight years. She would have been born, accordingly, about 1628. At least seven children survived their parents to adulthood:<sup>34</sup>

1. **Anna Barbara Weiser**, born about 1654, married Hans Michael Brodt about 1680, died 19 November 1706, according to her obituary "a very pious, upright and well-bred woman." Her husband remarried on 20 May 1707 Anna Maria Ulmer, who died in childbirth

about June 22, 1712. Brodt, a son of Hans Brodt, died May 31, 1729, aged 71 years, 2 months and 19 days (born, therefore March 12, 1658). His obituary states that he was generous to the poor and faithful to the church. They had six children, the names of five of whom survive:

- 1a. Hans Michael Brodt, born ca. 1681-1682.
- 1b. Anna Barbara Brodt, born ca. 1682-1683.
- 1c. Hans Jacob Brodt, born ca. 1687-1688.
- 1d. Margaretha Brodt, born ca. 1689-1690.
- 1e. Hanns Casper Brodt, born ca. 1691-1692, died January 22, 1699, aged 7 years.

2. **Anna Maria Weiser**, born about 1656, married Michael Niedthammer about 1680, and died January 6, 1729. Niedthammer was also born about 1656, a son of Hans Niedthammer, a miller, and his wife Anna, and died August 4, 1727. They had nine children, only three of whom survived to adulthood.

- 2a. Anna Barbara Niedthammer, born St. James 1682, married April 17, 1703 Hanns Jerg Heintz.
- 2b. Jerg Adam Niedthammer, born December 25, 1688, married January 17, 1713 Anna Catharina Vischer, died December 4, 1737.
- 2c. Albrecht Niedthammer, born October 13, 1695.

3. **Hans Michael Weiser**, born about 1657, married first 1680, Anna Maria, daughter of Ulrich Aichele, and second, ca. 1686, Maria Magdalena—. Hans Michael was Grossaspach's Württembergian Schultheiss for many years. He died August 3, 1721, the father of at least eight children:

- 3a. Anna Margaretha Weiser, born December 2, 1681, married November 18, 1721 George Frederick Fritz.
- 3b. Hans Michael Weiser, born February 4, 1684, died young.
- 3c. Hans Michael Weiser, born September 21, 1687.
- 3d. Hans Jacob Weiser, born July 12, 1689.
- 3e. Hans Adam Weiser, born April 12, 1691, married April 30, 1715, Klara Anna Ulmer (December 14, 1684-July 14, 1758), died September 14, 1768. His descendants were the last persons named Weiser to live in Grossaspach.
- 3f. Hans Erhardt Weiser, born February 24, 1694, married first, October 7, 1721, Anna Maria Wolff (September 15, 1699-May 30, 1729); second, Anna Barbara—.



He died December 11, 1751.

- 3g. Anna Christina Weiser, born October 20, 1696, married July 16, 1720, Ulrich Strecker.
- 3h. Anna Catharina Weiser, born December 20, 1699, married April 28, 1722, John George Niethammer.

4. **Anna Catharina Weiser**, born "Christmas" 1661, married Hans Michael Fritz, a son of Bartlin and Catharina Fritz, "after Easter 1683." Fritz was born on Saint Michael's Day, September 29, about 1660, and died on May 25, 1733. She died on January 2, 1723. He is listed as a judge and as proprietor of the Adler Inn (still an institution of Grossaspach) in the records. They had a large family.

- 4a. Hans Jacob Fritz, born ca. 1684.
- 4b. Anna Catharina Fritz, born St. Lawrence's Day, August 10, ca. 1685.
- 4c. Anna Barbara Fritz, born at the beginning of Advent, ca. 1686.
- 4d. Hans Michael Fritz, born at Candlemas, February 2, ca. 1689.
- 4e. Hans Conrad Fritz, born at the beginning of Advent, ca. 1690.
- 4f. Christina Fritz, born on Candlemas, February 2, 1693.
- 4g. Johanna Fritz, born January 19, 1695.
- 4h. Juliana Fritz, born April 30, 1699, died May 17, 1699.
- 4i. Maria Jacobina Fritz, born January 27, 1701, died February 16, 1701.
- 4j. Maria Veronika Fritz, born June 23, 1704, died July 18, 1704.

5. **Hans George Weiser**, born March 1665, married May 19, 1685 in Kleinaspach Anna Rosina Müller, who was born November 4, 1663. He was Schultheiss in Kleinaspach from 1692 until 1722. He died at Kleinaspach on April 12, 1740, aged 75 years and 1 month. At least some of their children were:

- 5a. Anna Katharina Weiser, born February 20, 1687.
- 5b. Rosina Weiser, born December 16, 1690.
- 5c. Elizabeth Weiser, born May 22, 1692.
- 5d. Konrad Hans Weiser, born May 12, 1695.
- 5e. Angelika Weiser, born June 13, 1697.
- 5f. Matthäus Weiser, born and died November 12, 1698.
- 5g. Matthäus Weiser, born October 20, 1703, married June 19, 1731, Anna Katharina Dorn. He died on June 9, 1775, in Kleinaspach. See Appendix.

5h. **George Ludwig Weiser**, born February 12, 1709.

6. **Hans Conrad Weiser**, born about 1667, married first Anna Magdalena Übelin, whose family also lived in Grossaspach (see below). A biographical sketch of Hans Conrad appears in **The Weiser Family**, pp. 3-6. Whereas his two older brothers began public careers comparatively early, each as Schultheiss of his village, Hans Conrad embarked on a military career. Though he likely considered Grossaspach his home, his name does not appear in the church register at Grossaspach at least until 1699, although in a civil record dated 20 April 1696 he is listed as a resident. At any rate, he found himself a third son, his two older brothers well settled in the village's life. For a time he was the village's baker, a position his brothers had also held, but he likely was dissatisfied. This and the circumstances of the economic and political situation of the neighborhoods plus the death of his wife combined to persuade him to wipe the slate clean by emigrating. His family's history in America is recorded in **The Weiser Family**.

(One daughter of Hans Conrad remained in Grossaspach, the eldest named (6a) Maria Catharina, who on 19 May 1705 married Hans Conrad Boss, son of George Zacharias Boss. He died on 15 June 1753, aged 71 years, and was therefore born about 1682. His wife died on February 25, 1761, aged 74 years, which means she was born about 1686 or 1687. Her obituary states that she was for many years the village's midwife! Twelve children are listed in the records of Grossaspach:

- 6a-1. Hanns Jerg Boss, born March 1706.
- 6a-2. Catharina Boss, born 17 September 1707, died 30 July 1711.
- 6a-3. Anna Magdalena Boss, born 1 August 1709, died 25 June 1732, unmarried.
- 6a-4. Johann Conrad Boss, born 20 May 1711.
- 6a-5. Catharina Margaretha Boss, born 28 August 1713.
- 6a-6. Anna Dorothea Boss, born 2 September 1715.
- 6a-7. Anna Margaretha Boss, born 25 September 1717.
- 6a-8. Maria Barbara Boss, born 7 September 1719, died 21 December 1719.
- 6a-9. Maria Barbara Boss, born 8 September 1720.
- 6a-10. Joseph Boss, born 29 October 1722, died 27 December 1749.
- 6a-11. Christina Boss, born 25 July 1725, died 19 September 1729.

6a-12. Friedrich Jacob Boss, born 10 July 1728.)

7. **Hans Casper Weiser**, perhaps born about 1669, was still single in April 1696, at the time his mother's estate was settled. The record bears the notation, "der Wanderschaft schon 7 Jahre"—wandering already for seven years. Though there are some early references to a Casper Weiser in colonial Pennsylvania, there is no evidence at all that he emigrated. There is simply no further reference to him at Grossaspach.

The records of the estate settlement of Anna, widow of Jacob Weiser, were dated 20 April 1696, and fill pages 134 to 141 of the record book. The available evidence confirms again what a local historian, Pastor E. Schopf, wrote in 1925:

The Weiser family was a comparatively wealthy, respected peasant family, related to the best families of the section. It was from these families that the judicial court and the council drew members. . . . The Weiser family also constantly contracted marriages with the Sturmfeder village magistrates. . . . Furthermore the Weiser family was honored by having as godparents not only the local pastors, but also the illustrious patrons of the village, the Counts of Sturmfeder. It was a family in which there was no lack of forward looking, aware, energetic and strong personalities who were suited to assume leadership.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. The Übelin Family

Among the family names which appear in Grossaspach records for the first time after the Thirty Years War is that of the Übelins. Apparently Hanns Übelin, (or Übela, as it is occasionally spelled, echoing the Swabian pronunciation of the name) was born about 1625 in a neighboring village or elsewhere, and emigrated to Grossaspach after the war. His wife's name was Anna Magdalena Müller, a daughter of Michael. Hanns died 31 December 1693, his obituary bearing a poignant witness to the circumstances of the day, described above: "an old citizen, starved, to be sure mostly from hunger and without care." His widow survived until 7 December 1697.<sup>36</sup>

They had eight children, seven of whom lived to adulthood:<sup>37</sup>

1. Michael Übelin, born about 1648; in 1698 listed in Grossaspach as "married and living here," but no records of his family survive.
2. Leonhard Übelin, married Anna . . . . ., about 1674 and died about 1693. They had twelve children, five of whom survived. His wife remarried on 24 April 1694 Hans Jacob Hornberger. Their children:

- 2a. Maria Magdalena Übelin, born about 1678.
- 2b. Hanns Leonhard Übelin, born about 1680.
- 2c. Hanns Conrad Übelin, born about 1682.
- 2d. Anna Übelin, born about 1685.
- 2e. Anna (or Maria) Barbara Übelin, born about 1688.
- 3. Hans George Übelin, born about 1653, married Anna Maria . . . . ., who died 17 August 1709, aged 50 years. He died on 13 December 1722. Their children:
  - 3a. Hanns George Übelin.
  - 3b. Anna Margaretha Übelin.
  - 3c. Johannes Übelin.
  - 3d. Anna Maria Übelin, born 29 June 1696.
  - 3e. Anna Catharina Übelin, born 25 February 1699.
- 4. Hanns Jacob Übelin, born about 1657-1663, married St. Michael's Day (September 29) 1681 Margaretha Zügel, who died February 21, 1734, aged 70 years. He—listed as a judge—died on 1 May 1737, aged 80 years. (His age in 1693 was given as "about thirty years.") He is elsewhere designated as a tailor. Their children:
  - 4a. Hans George Übelin, born in Advent, 1682.
  - 4b. Anna Magdalena Übelin, born at Christmas, 1685.
  - 4c. Jacob Übelin, born on St. Lawrence Day, (August 10), 1688.
  - 4d. Hanns Leonhardt Übelin, born on St. Martin's Day (November 11), 1691.
  - 4e. Margaretha Übelin, born 23 April 1696.
  - 4f. Johannes Übelin, born 27 October 1698, died 12 October 1719, unmarried.
- 5. Hanns or Johannes Übelin, born about 1666, married Anna Catharina, widow of Fritz Schöneck on 5 November 1696. He died 5 August 1714, aged 48. Their children:
  - 5a. Hanns Jerg Übelin, born 1 July 1696, died 23 August 1696.
  - 5b. Hanns Lienhardt Übelin, born 16 August 1698, died 31 December 1699.
  - 5c. Anna Maria Übelin, born 7 March 1700, died 28 January 1728, unmarried
  - 5d. Johannes Übelin, born 24 September 1701.
  - 5e. Maria Catharina Übelin, born 2 March 1704.
  - 5f. Maria Barbara Übelin, born 2 March 1704, died 9 May 1705.

6. Anna Magdalena Übelin, born about 1668, married about 1686 Hans Conrad Weiser.
7. Agnes Übelin, born about 1670, married 15 September 1696 Thomas Ebinger of Haubersbronn. He died 3 September 1740, aged 65, and was born, therefore about 1675. She died 12 September 1728.

### 3. The Feg Family

The wife of John Conrad Weiser, the Indian diplomat, is designated in his autobiography simply as "my Ann Eve." A long-held assumption that she was an Indian girl was destroyed when her father's will was discovered and her family name cited as Feg or Feck. Ann Eve, who married Weiser on November 22, 1722, must have been born about 1706, but where is not known, and died on June 11, 1781, in Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania, at her son Peter's home. Her father signed his will "Peter Feck"<sup>38</sup> before he died on December 5, 1744.<sup>39</sup>

#### 3a. John Peter Feg

John Peter Feck (or Feg, Feeg, Faeg, Feech, Veech or Veeck—the latter being the spelling in use in Germany today) was baptised on November 17, 1672, at Vollmersbach near Idar in the German state of Rheinland—Westphalia.<sup>40</sup> He was a son of Nicholas and Anna Margaretha (Koch) Feg. On November 26, 1697, he married Anna Maria Risch. (Presumably baptisms were performed a few days after birth.) The marriage record (which also contains the marriage of John Jacob Risch, to Margaretha Petri, daughter of Conrad Petri, on the same day) bears the notation, "Both these couples have left here and moved to Pennsylvania." Just where Feg—and for that matter Risch and an uncle of Feg, Johannes Feg, were between 1697 and their appearance in New York in 1710 is a question. There are no children recorded as baptised at Idar to Peter and his wife (or to Risch and wife). Perhaps they lived in a nearby village during these years and perhaps they had emigrated part of the way prior to 1709. At any rate, there is no clear indication of which shipload they boarded in Rotterdam, but in the list of rations for 1710,<sup>41</sup> Peter Faeg is included with two persons over ten years of age and three under it. Two years later there were three over ten. Later in the second decade of the eighteenth century he is listed as a resident of Weisersdorf with his wife Anna Maria and four children. He was one of the first group to migrate from Schoharie to Pennsylvania,

which arrived in April or May 1723. There Peter acquired land and there he died, by this time a member of Reed's (Lutheran) Church, on whose cemetery he is likely buried. Where his wife died is uncertain. They had several children:<sup>42</sup>

- a. Anna Catharina, married Peter Reed.
- b. Anna Eva married John Conrad Weiser.
- c. Eva Elizabeth.
- d. Elizabeth (d. 1777) m. 1729 Peter Shaffer (December 8, 1703-March 1775).
- e. Anna Margaretha (December 18, 1715 - d.y.)
- f. John Leonhard, m. November 2, 1742 Janige von Hussen.
- g. Peter, m. May 2, 1743 Christina Kerr.

### **3b. The Risch Family**

Anna Maria Risch, the wife of John Peter Feg, was baptised May 1, 1681, a daughter of Johannes and Anna Margaretha Risch. Johannes was an agatecutter (an industry still prominent in Idar). He died in June 1717, and was buried June 13, aged 71 years, which means that he was born in 1646. His wife died May 26, 1728, aged 77 years and 26 days, which would make her birthdate about April 30, 1651. Their children were:

1. Johan Peter Risch, baptised January 16, 1672, buried March 6, 1672.
2. Johan Jacob Risch, baptised May 15, 1675, emigrated to America. The Simmedinger list of colonists places him, about 1717, "auf dem Rarendantz"—on the Raritan River, in New Jersey. Apparently his wife Margaretha died, for he and wife Eva are mentioned in early New Jersey Lutheran records.<sup>43</sup>
3. Johann Franciscus Risch, baptised January 19, 1679.
4. Anna Maria Risch, baptised May 1, 1681, married John Peter Feg.
5. Johan Nickel Risch, baptised April 2, 1683.
6. Johann Georg Risch, baptised August 28, 1686.

(Since the church records at Idar begin about 1670, there is no further information concerning this family. Evidently Johannes Risch's parents lived in another community, as he is the only person of this name in the records.)

### **3c. Nicholas Feg**

Johan Peter Feg's father was named Nicholas Feg. At least that

is the name he bore at the time of his death, on April 27, 1724, at the age of 76 years, 1 month, 3 weeks and one day (which puts his birthdate on March 5, 1648). At the time of marriage to Anna Margaretha Koch September 28, 1671, he is identified as Nicholas **Schneider!** As a matter of fact, all records concerning the family cite the name as Schneider until about 1692. Thereafter the name Veeck appears and records dated prior to that are corrected to read Veeck. This abrupt change in name cannot be accounted for from the church records. A possible explanation is that there had been a member of the family who was a "Schneider" (tailor) by trade, to whom Schneider became attached as a family name until one day someone pointed out the error involved at which time the name Veeck was (re) adopted.<sup>44</sup>

At any rate Nicholas Schneider was married in a double wedding, in which his sister Maria Barbara married Hanns Diboldt (Theobald) Koch. Schneider lived in Vollmersbach, a village of several hundred inhabitants near Idar. Anna Margaretha, his wife, died in November 1697 (buried November 16), aged 45 years (born ca. 1652). Their children:

- a. Johann Peter Schneider, bap. November 17, 1672.
- b. Agnes Schneider, bap. 12 December 1675.
- c. Johannes Schneider, ca. 1677-October 27, 1747, married January 31, 1702 Anna Christina Becker (who died November 24, 1756).
- d. Anna Margaretha Schneider, bap. January 11, 1680.
- e. Anna Elizabeth Schneider, bap. February 12, 1682.
- f. Maria Catharina Schneider, bap. February 1683.
- g. Johann Nicholas Schneider, bap. March 28, 1688—d. March 21, 1757.

### **3d. The Koch Family**

Anna Margaretha Koch, wife of Nicholas Schneider, was a daughter of Wilhelm Koch, who died aged 59 years in September 1674 (born ca. 1615) and his wife Lucia, who died September 29, 1679. They were residents of "Alchert" (today Alchenrodt) part of Idar-Oberstein today.

### **3e. Johannes Schneider**

Nicholas Schneider's father—who himself never appears in the church register—was Johannes Schneider, also of Vollmersbach. Of

his wife nothing is known. But several of their children's names are known:

1. Nicholas Schneider (1648-1724).
2. Johann Otto Schneider, b. ca. February 1655, died May 7, 1738; he married 1) September 14, 1683 Anna Clara Kruger (d. December 29, 1683); 2) 1687, Barbara . . . . .
3. Johannes Schneider married April 12, 1689 Anna Margaretha Becker (baptised October 28, 1672, a daughter of Martin and Elizabeth Becker). One child is recorded in the Idar church book in 1693 with the notation, "N.B. Joh. Veeck ist mit Weib und Kindern in Pennsylvanien gezogen" (John Veeck has moved to Pennsylvania with wife and children).

Actually, he lived in Schoharie, New York, until his death, about 1715. His widow survived until as late as 1745, when she was living in Tulpehocken. Their known children:<sup>45</sup>

1. Elizabeth Barbara Feg (b. December 25, 1693) m. March 31, 1714, Franz Finck. Remained in New York.
2. Leonhard Feg (d. 1743) m. November 1, 1715, Anna Catharina Schultz. Leonhard was one of the early settlers in the Tulpehocken.
3. Maria Barbara Feg m. May 15, 1717, Michael Rieth (1693-1754). Tulpehocken.
4. Maria Margaretha Feg, bap. September 24, 1710, m. July 10, 1728 Hermanus Walborn, b. ca. January 29, 1708, Wiesbaden, Germany. d. January 10, 1747. Tulpehocken.
- (5. John Nicholas Feg)
- (6. Jacob Feg).
4. Maria Barbara Schneider, b. October 10, 1647—d. October 28, 1729, m. Hanns Theobald Koch (buried 27 August 1707, aged 60 years).
5. Margaretha Schneider m. February 13, 1672, Frantz Ritz.

## APPENDIX

### The American descendants of John George Weiser<sup>46</sup>

John George Weiser (or Weisser), (p. 13) brother of the elder John Conrad Weiser, has a large number of descendants in the United States. Albert Christian Weisser (1872-1944), his brother Gustav Adolf Weisser (1870-1915), a sister Hedwig Luise Weisser (1873-1931)—in Gustav's instance with several children—settled in the Buffalo, New York vicinity (Williamsville) and New York city. Later a grand niece, Marieluise Weisser, wife of Werner Schwab,



joined the family in Williamsville. Full genealogical listings are to be found in the narrative and charts of Rudolf Weisser, **Die Weisser von Klein-aspach**. The line of descent follows.

John George Weiser (1665-1740) m. 1685 Anna Rosina Müller (1663- ).

1

Matthaus Weisser (1703-1775) m. 1731 Anna Katharina Dorn.

1

Ludwig Georg Weisser (18 July 1750, Kleinaspach—July 7 1820, Kleinaspach) m. April 19, 1774, Anna Maria Häussler (September 7, 1757—Kleinaspach March 27, 1829, Kleinaspach) Schultheiss in Kleinaspach.

1

Johann Georg Weisser December 31, 1780, Kleinaspach—December 22, 1827, Kleinaspach m. November 12, 1801 Maria Katharina Wolf (August 5, 1780 Kleinaspach—March 16, 1829 Kleinaspach).

1

George Ludwig Weisser (May 12, 1814, Kleinaspach—July 8, 1867, Stuttgart) m. July 24, 1842, Christine Bausch (April 15, 1812, Lustnau bie Tübingen—February 8, 1879, Stuttgart).

1

2. (Christine Marie Luise Weisser, b. November 20, 1844, Stuttgart—c. 1920, New Jersey) m. Johann Bausch (from Durkheim, Pfalz, d. ca. 1906; no children).

1. Georg Ludwig Wilhelm Weisser (December 1, 1842, Stuttgart—March 10, 1919, Stuttgart—Degerloch) m. 1) September 21, 1868 Margarete Barbara Luise Loser (October 29, 1843, Stuttgart—August 23, 1881, Stuttgart); 2) 3 November 1883 Marie Lautenschlager, widow of Wilhelm Weiss (October 28, 1845, Stuttgart—January 1, 1930, Stuttgart—Degerloch).

1

Children of Wilhelm and Luise (Loser) Weisser:

1. Marie Luise Wilhelmine Weisser (January 24, 1866, Stuttgart—September 21, 1951, Stuttgart) m. April 18, 1896 Julius August Wagenmann (July 12, 1869, Stuttgart—January 30, 1926, Uhlbach).

2. Martha Christiane Dorothea Weisser (June 25, 1867, Stutt-

- gart—January 18, 1951, Cologne Germany.) Sister of the Convent of the Good Shepherd, Cologne.
3. Wilhelm Christian Ludwig Weisser (April 17, 1869, Stuttgart—February 23, 1919, Stuttgart) m. August 23, 1897 Karoline Helene Hartmann (October 24, 1868, Schweinfurt—September 23, 1919, Stuttgart).
  4. Gustav Adolf Weisser (August 22, 1870, Stuttgart—January 17, 1915, Buffalo, N. Y.) m. November 7, 1895 Friederike Emilie Schneider (January 30, 1866, Cannstadt—December 5, 1908, Buffalo, N. Y.)
  5. Christian Albert Weisser (February 9, 1872, Stuttgart—February 13, 1944, Bowmansville, N. Y.) m. April 8, 1901 Selma Katharina Gessert (July 3, 1868, Buffalo, N. Y.—Sept. 11, 1943, Bowmansville, N. Y.)
  6. Louise Hedwig Weisser (October 24, 1873, Stuttgart—October 2, 1931, New York, N. Y.) m. March 7, 1910, Paul Kosubek (October 19, 1868, Oberglogau in Upper Silesia—1932, New York, N. Y.)
  7. Rudolf Weisser (November 6, 1878, Stuttgart) m. July 20, 1920 Helene Wanner (March 27, 1892, Stuttgart).

## NOTES

1. Records in Sturmfeder Archives, Ludwigsburg and Hauptstattsarchiv, Stuttgart.
2. Rudolf Weisser, *Die Weisser von Klein-Aspach* (Stuttgart-Dagerloch, 1959), p. 11.
3. Weisser, p. 12.
4. Weisser, p. 10.
5. Weisser, pp. 3-5, 16-20; Marianne Müller, *Aus der Geschichte der Gemeinde Grossaspach* (MSS, 1962).
6. Müller
7. Weisser, p. 21-24.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
9. Kaufbuch I, Grossaspach, 17 February 1591.
10. Sturmfeder Archives, B139a, 382.
11. Kaufbuch I, Grossaspach, 12 January 1605.
12. *Ibid.*, 22 April 1602, 9 October 1608.
13. *Ibid.*, 15 November 1624.
14. Sturmfeder Archives, B139a, 381.
15. Kaufbuch, 21 February 1620, 14 June 1636.
16. Weisser, p. 20.
17. Seelenregister, Grossaspach.
18. Urteilbuch I, Grossaspach, 26 November 1618.
19. *Ibid.*, 1632.
20. Sturmfeder Archive, B139a, 381.
21. Kaufbuch, 1633, 16 November 1635; 4 June 1636.
22. Kaufbuch, 2 February 1735.
23. *Ibid.*, 1677.
24. *Ibid.*, May 21, 1676.
25. *Ibid.*, 16 February 1668.
26. *Ibid.*, 27 August 1660.
27. Kaufbuch, 21 December 1654.
28. *Ibid.*, 22 November 1673.
29. *Ibid.*, Urteilbuch, and Sturmfeder Archive, B139a, 381.
30. Kaufbuch, May 29, 1685.
31. *Ibid.*, November 9, 1686.
32. Seelenregister.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Erbbuch, Seelenregister and Weisser, p. 54ff.
35. E. Schopf, "Hans Conrad Weiser, Father and Son," *The Galleon*, 1956; tr. Wm. H. Oldenbrook.
36. Seelenregister
37. Erbbuch and Seelenregister.
38. Philadelphia, County, Pa., Wills.
39. Tulpehocken Church book, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa.
40. Parish records, Idar.
41. W. A. Knittle, *Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration* (Philadelphia, 1937), p. 284.
42. Tulpehocken church book; Peter Feck's will.
43. Knittle, p. 211; *Year book of the Holland Society of New York*, 1903.
44. I owe this suggestion to Dr. Fritz Braun, director of the Heimatstelle Pfalz, Kaiserslautern.
45. Tulpehocken Church book; Leonhard Feck's will.
46. Weisser, charts inserted in a pocket in the volume.

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style. The name 'Jacob' is written on the left, and 'Weiser' is written on the right, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**The signature of Jacob Weiser (d. ca. 1685), grandfather of Conrad Weiser, the interpreter. (Original in Hauptstaatsarchiv, Stuttgart.)**