

Update on the Carl Kayser Research

July 23, 2003

In July of 2002, a group of Charles Keyser, Sr. researchers contributed to hiring a German researcher, Mr. Friedrich R. Wollmershäuser, who specializes in genealogical research in Southwest Germany, to find the origin of our immigrant ancestor. This June, Mr. Wollmershäuser contacted us with the news that he was successful in this endeavor.

A few of our contributors were curious about some of the recent findings on Carl so I thought I would take this opportunity to bring everyone up to speed and analyze the research up to date.

We begin with some of the earliest research on our Keyser/Kiser family from the book, *"Mead Relations"* compiled by A.M. Prichard in 1933. Isaac C. Dovel, a great grandson of Charles Keyser, Sr., compiled some records of the family in 1876. Most are aware of his record, so I'll just layout the facts as he knew them:

1. Charles Keyser, Sr. was born in Germany in the year 1702.
2. He was a butcher by trade.
3. Married a lady in Philadelphia by the name of Shelly.
4. He died in 1774 at the age of 72.

More was copied from his notes:

5. He was a native of Wurttemberg, near Stuttgart, Germany.
6. His wife was Elizabeth Grossgloss, also a native of Germany.
7. Immigrated to America in 1751 or 1752.
8. He was a soldier in Braddock's campaign in 1755.

The source of his information is not stated, but Prichard speculates that it most likely came from the descendants of Charles Keyser, Jr., who, as eldest son, inherited the paternal homestead and possibly the two "Large Dutch Bibles" mentioned in his father's inventory. Prichard states that these Bibles may have gone to Ohio with the sons of Charles Keyser, Jr.

Pritchard then refers to a book published in 1889 by a Charles S. Keyser, a Philadelphia lawyer, titled "The Keyser Family". On page 153 it states, "Johannes Keyser married Barbara Funk (circa 1744)" and had a son: "Charles, m. _____ Shelly, Philadelphia, moved from Germ. To Page Co., Va., prior to the Revolution." The records of St. Michael's and Zion churches in Philadelphia, Pa., record the marriage on 20 April 1747. We know that our Charles Keyser Jr., was born in 1752 according to his tombstone inscription. Our Charles Keyser Sr. therefore could not be a son of this Johannes & Barbara Keyser.

In 1892, Adam Strickler, a step-grandson of Charles Keyser, Sr., wrote a letter to Ephraim Keyser, a great-grandson of Charles Keyser, Sr. Here are the facts as he knew them:

1. Charles Keyser Sr. came to America from Germany as a hired soldier in the service of Great Britain to fight against the French and Indians.
2. He was a butcher in Braddock's army.
3. He married a Miss Shelly, in Philadelphia, Pa.
4. Settled in the Shenandoah Valley on Mill Creek.
5. Andrew, son of Charles Keyser Sr., was born in 1758
6. Charles Keyser Sr., bought property near the mouth of Hawksbill.
7. The house was built in about the year 1765.
8. Could not give account of age at death, but was an old man and died in about 1777.
9. List children as: Charles, Andrew, John, David, Joseph, Anna Koontz, Mary Kelley, Mrs. Austin and Kate.
10. Charles Keyser Sr. was buried in the old Keyser graveyard.

Pritchard quotes from Kercheval's, *"History of the Valley"* 4th Ed., page 37 which relates an incident in which Major Andrew Keyser informed the author that an Indian once visited his father's home in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

He then gives the only doubt he has in Adam Strickler's letter, that being Charles Keyser, Sr. came to America "as a hired soldier in the service of Great Britain to fight against the French and Indians". He points out that the war began in 1754. There is no record of any hired soldiers being imported for the service of Braddock's campaign in 1755. He does not however, impeach the idea or family tradition that he served with Braddock in some capacity. As is noted on our website, I believe Charles could have served as a waggoner/butcher for the army. In Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, he is asked by Gen. Edward Braddock to secure him more wagons to haul supplies for the armies march to Ft. Duquesne. One of the places he solicits from is Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. It is very plausible that Charles volunteered his service in this capacity.

He also makes known that Charles Keyser, Jr. was born in 1752 and assumes that Charles Keyser, Sr. would have married some three or four years before the French and Indian War began. I believe the marriage to have taken place sometime in 1751 in Lancaster County and I'll explain more on this later.

A record is then shown that a deed recorded in Frederick County, Virginia on 6 April 1765, deed book No. 10, page 248, Lewis Rhinehart and Mathias Rhinehart of Frederick County, Va., conveyed unto Charles Keyser, of the same place, a parcel of land on the South Fork of the Shenandoah. This deed is transcribed on our website.

Judge E. J. Sutherland submitted a record to Pritchard of the appraisement of Charles Keyser, Sr. estate dated 28 May 1778 in Shenandoah County, Virginia. It is stated that there were 10 children.

The book goes on and deals with the family of each child. Being that we're focusing on Charles Keyser, Sr., I see no need to elaborate any further on the children. For those interested in this, they can visit our website.

Back in March of 2002, I visited the Palatines to America library in Columbus, Ohio. One source I checked was, *"The Earliest Records of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, Lancaster, Pennsylvania Vol. 2"* translated by Frederick S. Weiser. It had the following two interesting entries on page 347-349 & 370:

1. "From January 1, 1750 on, the following announced themselves for Holy Communion: #55 **Carl Sebastian Kayser**, recently arrived. Servant of Jacob Eichholtz."
2. "Those who have announced themselves to go to Holy Communion on Estomihi Sunday, February 17, 1751: # 21 **Carl Sebastian Kayser**, with Jacob Eichholtz."

Those were the only two entries for Carl. Jacob Eichholtz was mentioned several times, birth of children and his death on 25 July 1760. One interesting note on the above information is the "recently arrived" statement recorded in January 1750. Our Carl arrived in September 1749, not quite 4 months before this entry.

Further research on Jacob Eichholtz revealed that he was born Johan Jacob Eichholtz on 26 March 1712 in Bischoffsheim, Germany, as recorded on his tombstone. He arrived at the port of Philadelphia on 30 August 1737 aboard the ship "Samuel". He soon purchased land in the Lancaster Township of Lancaster Co., Pa., on 14 January 1740. He became an innkeeper and **butcher** in Lancaster. The minutes of the Lancaster Boro Corp. under entry of 15 Oct 1757, included his name in the list of eleven butchers who held stalls in the public market at that time. He held stall #3 for which he paid rent of one pound seven shillings per year. This is interesting information for us due to the fact that Carl is reported to have been a butcher as well. Although Carl's name is not mentioned in the eleven, he possibly was still serving under Jacob Eichholtz.

It is here that I believe Carl married Mary Shelly about 1751. He was at this time, a servant of Jacob Eichholtz, living in the Lancaster Township and Mary's family, Christian and Magdalen Shelly were living in the Manheim Township of Lancaster County as well. We know that Carl and Mary's first child, Charles Jr., was born in 1752 as recorded on his tombstone.

One question arises, how long was Carl a servant of Jacob's? I haven't researched the usual servitude time, so this could be followed up on.

The next records found concerning this family, are the Christian Shelly to Jacob Shelly Deed, Deed Book FF, Volume 2, page 164-168, Lancaster Co., Pa., dated 15 May 1759 in which Christian and Magdalen convey 78 acres to their oldest son Jacob.

The next record is the Will of Christian Shelly dated 22 April 1760, Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania. In it he mentions his wife Magdalen, children: Jacob; Catharina (and son-in-law John Gingry); **Mary**; Anna; Margret; Elizabeth; Ester; Frena; Susanna; and Christian. Then on 6 June 1761 we have the most interesting deed of Charles Kyser to Elizabeth Shelly. Here it states that Charles Cayser and Mary his wife, late Mary

Schelly, Margaret Haldiman, widow, late wife of John Haldiman deceased and formerly Margaret Shelly, Samuel Huber and Esther his wife, late Esther Shelly, John Reisar and Catharine his wife, late Catharine Schelly and Susanna Shelly all of the County of Lancaster inherited the 78 acres of Jacob Shelly because he had died intestate and unmarried. They in turn sold their parts to Elizabeth Shelly. Charles signed the deed “**Carl Kayser**” and I compared the signature to the ship passenger list and they are *strikingly similar*. These deeds can be found on our Kayser/Keyser/Kiser website.

We know as far as the timeline goes, by 1765 Charles is in Frederick County, Virginia and he dies in 1778 on the same property that later became Page County, Virginia.

Information From Germany

The new information from the German researcher, Friedrich R. Wollmershäuser reveals that our Carl Sebastian Kayser was born 16 January 1726 around 1 o'clock AM in Möckmühl, the son of **Andreas and Catharina Kayser**. Möckmühl is about 13 miles north of the town of Heilbronn and about 38 miles north of Stuttgart in Württemberg. It is noted in his birth record that Andreas was a **butcher**.

Andreas first marriage occurred 27 May 1710 in Möckmühl to Catharina Schreibeisen, daughter of the late Sir Johann Jacob Schreibeisen, formerly a member of the municipal law-court and shoemaker in Möckmühl. Andreas is listed as a butcher and a son of **Johann Caspar Kayser**, also a **butcher** in Möckmühl.

Catharina Elizabetha, 1st wife of Andreas, died on 3 March 1721 in Möckmühl, aged 34 years, 1 month and 14 days. This would make her birth in February 1687.

The second marriage of Andreas occurred 21 April 1721 in Möckmühl, to **Anna Catharina Schuhmacher**, daughter of the late Johannes Schuhmacher, a farmer in Brettach. This would be the mother of our Carl. Catharina died on 24 August 1755 in Möckmühl at the age of 58 years, 4 months and 1 day. If my calculations are correct, this would make her birth on 23 April 1697.

The other bit of interesting information from Mr. Wollmershäuser is the marriage record of Heinrich Magasch. He was right next to our Carl on the ship passenger list. He states that Johann Heinrich Magatsch, born in Okarben, a village in the dominion of Burg Friedberg, a son of the late soldier Johann Jacob Magatsch, married Maria Barbara Kayser, daughter of Sir Johann Conrad Kayser, member of the municipal council and butcher in Möckmühl, on 16 August 1712 in Möckmühl. There is no doubt that Maria was a cousin to our Carl.

With this new information we know that Carl was 23 years old when he landed at Philadelphia in September of 1749. This makes more sense than the previous thought of him being 47, starting a new family, and performing all the other activities previously mentioned. We also now know that his family were butchers and this helps confirm the

tradition that Carl was a butcher. He was 52 years old at his death in 1778, still an old man for his time. In 1774, the average lifespan was 35!

It is also interesting to note the names of Charles and Mary's children: Charles, John, Andrew, Joseph, David, Michael, Anna, Mary, Esther, and Kate. Andrew was obviously named after his grandfather; Anna could have been named after Charles's mother or after Mary's sister; Mary after her mother; Esther after Mary's sister; and Kate could have been after Charles's mother or Mary's sister.

What about Elizabeth Grossclose? That remains a mystery. According to Clark Groseclose (www.groseclose.com), the first of that name to arrive in the colonies was Johan Peter Grossclose. He immigrated to Philadelphia on board the ship Royal Union on 15 August 1750. Peter originally settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and married Mary Magdalena Ott. Her family had immigrated from Switzerland in 1743. Peter and Mary had seven children, all born in Lancaster County: Peter Jr. (1757-1805); Adam (1759-1804); Margaret (1760-1838); **Elizabeth (1763-after 1803)**; Jacob (1765-1833); Barbara (1767-before 1803); and Henry (1771-1836). After the Revolutionary War, they all moved to Southwest Virginia, settling in what is now Bland County. This Elizabeth was born much too late to be the wife of our Charles. At this point, I'm not sure how her name came to be in the notes of Isaac C. Dovel. But, I believe he did get it right with his wife's maiden name being Shelly.

I hope that this helps out those who were a little foggy about the recent findings. I feel we have made the right connections, but please realize these are my opinions. I know there will be some who may disagree. I hope that more research in the Lancaster County area may reveal more in the future. For one, Christian Shelly was a Mennonite according to some sources. I have not confirmed this yet, but maybe searching some of the Mennonite records may reveal an entry for the marriage of Mary and Carl. This may have been the reason Carl was only mentioned twice in the Trinity Lutheran church records. Upon marrying Mary they may have begun attending with the Mennonites. Just a thought. I know that Jacob Eichholtz was meeting with the Moravians first before he showed up in the Trinity Lutheran records.

I hope the research continues to fill in some of the missing gaps. We've come along way and I appreciate everyone's involvement and contributions. It really does take all of us to make these things happen.

Mark R. Kiser