

Dreisbach Family Association

January 2011 Newsletter



Photo by Tiago L. Trespach

The Brazilian Connection

We are accustomed to thinking about immigration from Germany to Pennsylvania. Simon Dreisbach Sr and family did it; Martin Dresbach did it; Henry Driesbach did it. They and many other Dreisbachs (of various spellings) immigrated – at least at first - to Pennsylvania.

But did you know that many Germans immigrated to Brazil in the early to mid 1800's – including the ancestors of some of our more distant cousins! One such cousin, Rodrigo Trespach, has written two books on the subject – both in Portuguese.



Passageiros no Kranich, is a thorough look at Dreisbach emigration, with emphasis on the stories and genealogy of the Germans who came to Brazil.

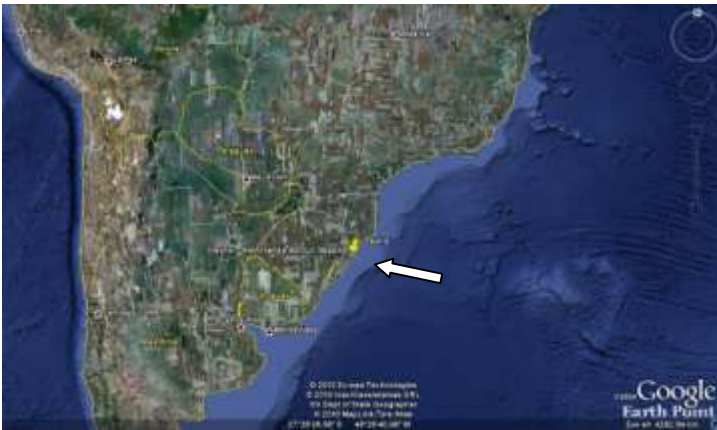
Shortly after 1822, the newly independent Brazil put out a request for German 'soldiers and farmers'. Dressbachs responded as Rodrigo will explain in the following article.

In his second book, *Borger, Justin, Schmitt e outras familias de origem germanica*, Rodrigo documents another group of German families who came to Brazil in 1826.



For those of us immersed in the genealogy of Dreisbachs from Pennsylvania or Ohio, it is a bit mind-boggling to struggle through the Portuguese only to be greeted by very familiar family names: Krämer, Zimmerman, Schäffer and more! But there they are – settled and living in Brazil.

Like the German immigrants in Pennsylvania, the Brazilian Germans clustered in their own communities, including Osorio where Rodrigo lives and the beautiful Três Forquilhas shown on the first page.



Google Earth image of part of South America showing Brazil to the East. Arrow points to a yellow tack that marks the location of Osorio, where Rodrigo lives.

Here they maintained a German dialect for many years. Gradually, Portuguese words and inflections moved into the dialect, changing the spoken word. For many years there were German language schools and newspapers. This ceased during World War II when a complete ban on the German language was implemented under threat of imprisonment! Today the old German dialect is rapidly fading away just as it is in the areas of the US where it was once firmly entrenched.

The transition from the climate and surroundings of Germany to those of tropical and sub-tropical Brazil presented extreme problems to the settlers. Heat, insects, snakes and attacks by Brazilian Indians all resulted in hardship and loss of life. Logically, the majority of German settlements were in the southern part of Brazil, the part where the seasons most resembled those of Germany.

It is estimated that about 4 million Brazilians are of German descent. This sounds like a large number until you realize that Brazil has a population of 195,000,000 people! Nevertheless, in certain regions, you can still find some old German customs preserved, especially in the area of Rio Grande do Sul where Rodrigo is from.

The Dressbach Family in Southern Brazil

by Rodrigo Trespach

The family Dreßbach (or variants in Brazil – Dressbach, Dresbach, Tresbach, and Trespach) originated in Ysenburg-Wächtersbach, which is in the district of Main-Kinzig-Kreis in Hesse, Germany. The name of the earliest ancestor of the family was Anton. He was born around 1671 and died in 1764 in Neuenschmidten, a small village in the community of Brachtal – which is also the current name of this region in Germany.

Anton was a vassal (an equerry or horseman) in the service of Count *Ferdinand Maximilian II*. Anton Dreßbach married Maria Brill (1686-1760) in 1713. Maria was 27 years old and was six months pregnant at the time of marriage. Anton was 42 years old.

In the next generation, Johann Lorenz Dreßbach (1716-1772) who was a son of Anton, migrated to the region of Gründau near Frankfurt am Main. In the town of Libelos, Gründau, the family took root and this is where it remains most concentrated in Germany.

Another branch of the family led by Johann Conrad Dreßbach (1749-1812), migrated to the area around Büdingen, specifically to Calbach. It is from this branch that all of the Dressbachs in Brazil are descended – with the exception of one family who are descended from Herbert Dressbach, a native of Cologne, who arrived in São Paulo in 1938.



Below decks on an immigrant ship bound for Brazil.

In 1824 the first Dressbach family emigrated from Germany to Brazil. Brazil was newly independent and needed settlers and soldiers. The journey to South America lasted 313 days. After a month's trip to the north of Germany, they left the port of Hamburg on the ship `Der Kranich` in November 1824. They arrived in Rio de Janeiro on January 15, 1825. From Rio de Janeiro they were sent to Rio Grande do Sul in the ship `Penha`.

On March 9, 1825, the first Dressbach family member finally disembarks with his family at Porto das Telhas in São Leopoldo. The name of the immigrant: Friedrich Dressbach (1778-1853). With him were his wife, Anna C. Kämpf (1793-1845) and his children: Johannes, Jacobina, Caroline, Dorothea and Luise. Friedrich lived in São Leopoldo until the beginning of the Revolution Farroupilha then moved to Três Forquilhas (today called Itati) where he died around 1853.



Três Forquilhas Valley where Friedrich settled in 1836.

Genealogy of Rodrigo Trespach

- 1) Rodrigo Trespach (1978) m. Gisele da Silva Francisco
- 2) Ildo Trespach (1955) m. Miriam Rosane de Oliveira
- 3) José Antônio Trespach (1927-2002) m. Sidonia Klagenberg



Feitoria Velha, São Leopoldo, first house of German immigrants in Southern Brazil. Here Friedrich lived many days. Photo taken in 1941.



Family of my grandfather, José Antônio Trespach (Rodrigo is the little boy in front).

- 4) Alfred Antônio Trespach (1901-1947) m. Olinda Schumacher

The family is now split into four branches – Dressbach, Dresbach, Tresbach and Trespach. All are descended from Friedrich through his three sons: Johann Heinrich Caspar Dressbach (1800-1843) and Johannes Dressbach (1811-1880) who were both born in Germany and were children of Friedrich's first wife, Gertraud Nazarenus (1779-1817), and Frederico Alexandre Dressbach (1833-1902), who was born in Brazil and was a son of the second wife, Anna C. Kämpf (1793-1845), his travel companion.

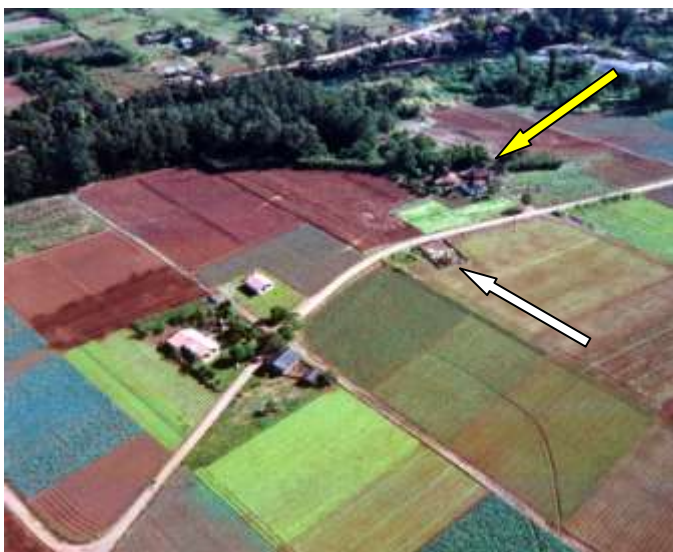


Family of my great-grandfather Alfredo Trespach (1901-1947). My grandfather José Antônio Trespach (1927-2002) is first in right hand.



Family of Arthur Müller and Leopoldina Trespach. She was the sister of my great-grandfather Alfredo Trespach (1901-1947)

- 5) João Jacob Dresbach-Trespach (1861-1924) m. Henriqueta Mauer



Maquiné. Yellow arrow shows location of the house of my great-great-grandfather Jacob Trespach (1861-1924). The white arrow shows the family cemetery.

- 6) João Luiz Dresbach (1838-1917) m. Charlotte Schneider
 7) Johann Casper Heinrich Dressbach (b. 1800 in Germany- d.about 1845 in Brazil) m. Anna Elisabeth Wilhelm
 8) Friedrich Dressbach-Dresbach (b.1778 in Germany –d.1853 in Brazil) m. Gertraudt Nazarenus
 9) Johann Conrad Dressbach-Dreisbach (1749-1812) m. Anna Margaretha Lips
 10) Johann Lorenz Dressbach (1716-1772) m. Anna Margaretha Griessman
 11) Anthon Dressbach-Trespach (1671-1764) m. Maria Brill

Editor`s note: It is interesting to look at the names of Rodrigo`s ancestors and their wives. The blending through time of German and Portuguese or Spanish names is much more obvious than we see in the history of Pennsylvania Dutch Dreisbach families.

Rodrigo comments on this: “I opted to use the name in Portuguese for people born in Brazil for many reasons. One of them - the name "João" was written in German “Johannes” and “Johann”. Because the civilian and government records used Portuguese names, having them in German can hinder identification (João, Johannes, Johann).

My grandfather was baptized (and confirmed) in church as “Josef Anton”. But it is clear that to the Brazilian government he was “José Antônio”. Luiz too, was always written in the church records as “Ludwig”. At home they probably used the name in German - they spoke in German. For the Brazilian neighbors, they used the Portuguese. To standardize the names: for the people who were born in Brazil I wrote their names in Portuguese, for those born in Germany I used German.”



Rodrigo Trespach

For more information on German emigration to Brazil go to: <http://www.auswanderung-rlp.de/auswanderung-nach-brasilien.html>

This site is in German. An understandable, if somewhat poor translation (done by computer) is available if you go to: <http://translate.google.com> then copy and paste the first URL into the appropriate box.

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