

Dreisbach-Dresbach Family Association Newsletter

July 2020

Genealogy for Sale on eBay



Jeff Dreisbach

No, you can't buy ancestors on eBay - but you can rescue items that once belonged to them. Jeff Dreisbach, a descendant of Simon Dreisbach Sr, has been doing this for years. Jeff has a deep interest in history and genealogy and monitors eBay and similar sites. Over the years he has acquired many items that are part of our family heritage. This newsletter is about four Dreisbach heirlooms Jeff brought back into the family.

It is always interesting to get a phone call from Jeff because the chances are good he has found something of interest for sale on the internet. Recently he called to ask about a Dreisbach Fraktur he'd found on eBay. With some research it became clear it would be great to bring this back into the family. Jeff put in a bid and won (see Fig. 1) then sent it away for conservation and framing. It will be safe, now, for a long time to come.

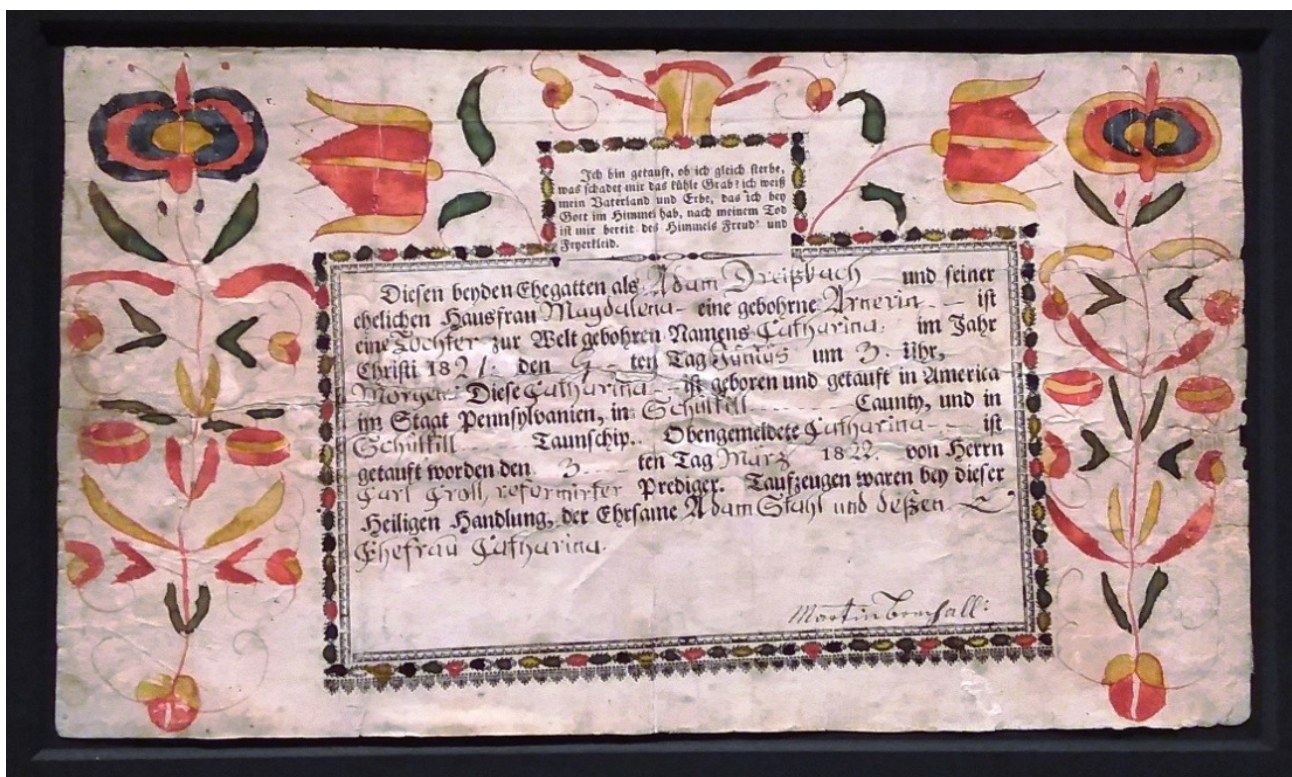


Fig. 1. Baptismal certificate for Catharina, the daughter of Adam Dreisbach and his wife, Magdalena (Arner) Dreisbach. Catharina was born June 9, 1821 at 3:00am in Schuylkill Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. She was baptized by the Reformed minister Rev. Karl Groll. Her baptismal sponsors were Adam Stahl and his wife, Catharina (for whom the baby was named). The *Taufschein* was done by Martin Brechall, a well known scrivener and designer of Fraktur documents. Now in the collection of Jeff Dreisbach.

A previous DDFA Newsletter discussed Fraktur at length. To learn more go to:
<http://www.dreisbachfamily.org/images/2013 - 11 Fraktur.pdf>

"Fraktur" is a German word that refers to a style of writing where the form of an alphabet letter is 'broken up' or 'fractured'. However the term has come to signify an art form depicting important events in the lives of Pennsylvania Germans. The most common Fraktur celebrated the birth (*Geburtschein*) or baptism (*Taufschein*) of a child. Fraktur were done by local artists, each with their own style. The documents often were stored in the family Bible which helped to preserve these fragile works of art.

The most commonly found Pennsylvania German Fraktur is the *Taufschein* or Baptismal Certificate such as seen in Fig. 1. It was mainly used by German Reformed and Lutheran groups. The Amish, Mennonite, and Brethren communities did not practice baptism of children and used a *Geburtschein* or Birth Certificate. Until the mid- to late 1700's virtually all Fraktur were hand written and hand painted by traveling scribes many of whom went from community to community selling their art. As a result, we often see a number of Fraktur pieces that were done at the same time and in the same place for different families.

Demand exceeds supply! By the end of the 1700's, Fraktur had become increasingly popular. People wanted a *Taufschein* not only for their new baby, but also for older siblings and sometimes even for themselves!¹ Fraktur artists could not keep up with demand and prices for their works skyrocketed. Partially printed texts were introduced to save the scribes time. Printers, who had been producing single page announcements and small newspapers, realized there was a market for printed Fraktur and broadened their printing capabilities. One of these printers was John S. Dreisbach who is featured in the previously mentioned DDFA newsletter but who did not print any of the Fraktur shown in this article.

The earliest printed Fraktur were still decorated by hand and were horizontally oriented. In Fig. 1 the text was printed by Ehrenfried & Co. of Easton, PA, but the artwork was done by Martin Brechall,² a famous Fraktur artist. It's a good example of combined printed text and original hand decorating. Brechall (1757-1831) was a school teacher in Weisenberg Township, Lehigh County, PA and the baptismal certificates that he drew were for families who lived nearby. He also created Fraktur for families living a little farther away in Penn Township, suggesting Brechall either traveled there frequently or may have taught school there for a period of time. Penn Township was where George Dreisbach, the 4th son of Simon Dreisbach Sr, and a number of George's sons lived in the late 1790's and early 1800's. Many of the Dreisbach family Fraktur that have been discovered were made for grandchildren of George Dreisbach and some of the pieces (such as Fig 2) were done by Martin Brechall.

Brechall's Fraktur work followed the traditional pattern, naming the child, the parents, the sponsors and the clergyman as well as the place and date of birth and baptism. Brechall added his own artwork of hearts, rectangles, stylized flowers and occasionally the head of an angel to decorate the printed Fraktur. His colors were restricted to red, yellow, and black and he usually signed his name, thereby becoming one of the most well known Fraktur artists of his time. Brechall got most of his commissions through the recommendation of parents of his pupils, or people who had previously acquired one of his pieces.³

In 2019 Jeff Dreisbach was scanning eBay and discovered the Brechall *Taufschein* made in the year 1821 for Catharina Dreisbach, the daughter of one Adam Dreisbach. The main portion of the text was printed, leaving spaces for names and dates to be filled in. Oddly, it was printed at an angle. Paper of the quality used for Fraktur was expensive so the document was sold to Brechall regardless of this. One wonders if Adam Dreisbach got a reduced price for his *Taufschein* because it was not printed straight.

Translation of the *Taufschein* (Baptismal Certificate) for Catharina Dreisbach:

To both of these spouses, Adam Dreisbach and his lawful wife, Magdalena, nee Arner(in) a daughter is brought to this world, Catharina, in the year of our Lord 1821, the 9th day of June at 3 o'clock in the morning. This Catharina is born and baptized in America in the State of Pennsylvania, in Schuylkill County and in Schuylkill Township. The above

named Catharina was baptized the 3rd day of March 1822 by the Reverend Karl Groll, Reformed Minister. The baptismal sponsors at this holy event were the honorable Adam Stahl and his lawful wife, Catharina.

Martin Brechall's signature is at the bottom right. Above the main text, in a decorative partial 'box', are the poetic words: *I am now baptized, when I meet death, the shallow grave will not bother me, I know my Fatherland and (know) that I will soon be in Heaven, after my Death I will have Heaven's Peace and Joy.*

Who were Adam Dreisbach and Magdalena Arner, the parents listed on the *Taufschein*? The late Corinne Earnest and her husband, Russell Earnest, experts on Fraktur, assembled booklets for specific families which include "*Dreisbach's on Fraktur*" published in 2014.⁴ The *Taufschein* that Jeff bought (Fig. 1) was not known to the Earnests, but the booklet contains a description of a *Taufschein* for Magdalena Arner, the mother of baby Catharina! Magdalena's *Taufschein* gives not only the dates of her birth and baptism, but on the back someone wrote the date of her marriage and her husband's name. Most likely it was Adam himself who wrote this. Until the late 1800's, Magdalena and virtually all Dreisbach women were illiterate. From this document we know that Magdalena, the daughter of William and Magdalena Kramer Arner, was born 29 Dec. 1798, baptized 27 Feb. 1799, and married Adam Treisbach (sic) on 10 Aug. 1817.

In 1820, the year before Catharina was born, the US Federal Census showed Adam and Magdalena Dreisbach were living in Schuylkill Township, Schuylkill County, PA with their two little daughters, Lydia (1815-1891) and Maria (1817-1874). Interestingly, Adam's occupation was not 'farmer' but 'manufacturing'. The same census shows Adam Stahl and his wife, who were the sponsors for Catharine's baptism, listed closely to the Dreisbachs suggesting the couples lived near each other.

Ten years later^a, things had changed. Adam and his family had moved and were living in West Penn Township, Schuylkill County where Adam was now a 'farmer'. The family has grown and consisted of two boys younger than 5 years, 1 boy between 5 and 10 as well as the two girls, Lydia and Maria, who were now listed as between 10 and 15 years of age.

Adam and Magdalena's family would continue to grow and change. In the 1840 census, Lydia and Maria are "gone" having married Reuben Leiby and Nathan Mantz, respectively. However three young daughters and four sons are living at home. The oldest son, John, was 20. He is followed by Daniel age 14 and William age 12. There was also a young boy under the age of 5 who must have died young because there is no trace of him in any later document.

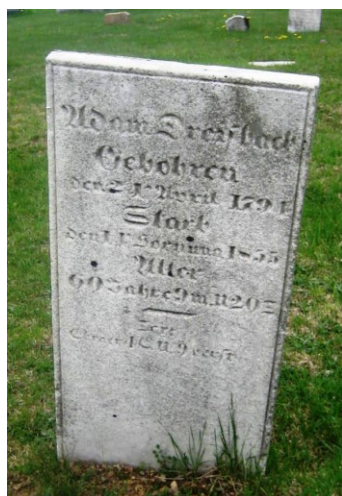


Fig. 2. Tombstone of Adam Dreisbach in the cemetery of St. Peter's UCC, Mantzville, West Penn Township, Schuylkill

The later years: By the 1850 census, the name of each person living in the household is listed. Now we see 54 year old Adam and his 52 year old wife, called "Molly", living with their 21 year old son, William (identified as a stone mason) and their two daughters, Anna, 19, and Matilda, 12. Five years later, on 14 January 1855, Adam died, without a will, and was buried at St. Peter's Reformed Church in Mantzville, PA, (Fig. 2) presumably not far from his Penn Township farm. His widow, Magdalena, did not want to administer Adam's estate and the administrator became Amos Miller.⁵ Magdalena took some pieces of furniture from the estate, but most of Adam's belongings were put up for auction. After this their youngest daughter, Anna, and her husband William Fenstermacher, moved into the house that had belonged to Adam and Magdalena.

The farm appears to have been divided into two, one part given or sold to their son William, the other part, which included the house, was given or sold to William Fenstermacher. Magdalena continued to live in the house and, in the 1860 census, had a personal worth of \$300, while William Fenstermacher's worth was \$700. Ten

^a The 1839 US Federal Census for Brunswick Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania.

years later in 1870, Magdalena is still living with the Fenstermacher family, in Penn Township. She disappears from the census records after 1870 and we assume she died. She was buried in the cemetery of St. Peter's Church, Mantzville, beside her husband. From the appearance of her tombstone (Fig. 3), her the son-in-law did not spend much money on his mother-in-law's monument. Most tombstones from the 1870's, when Magdalena would have been buried, are still in good shape. Magdalena's is not, suggesting low quality, inexpensive stone.



Fig. 3. Tombstone of Magdalena Dreisbach, in the cemetery of St. Peter's UCC, Mantzville, Schuylkill County, PA. Photo: Find-A-Grave.

In 2011 Marcia Falconer and her sister, Ardis Grosjean, visited the cemetery of St. Peter's Church in Mantzville, West Penn Twp. PA. Among the many Dreisbach tombstones they found the one for Adam Dreisbach (see Fig. 2). At that time Magdalena's marker, which is beside Adam's grave, was not visible. It was overgrown with grass. It has only recently been unearthed, lies flat and is in very poor shape. On a photograph from the Find-A-Grave website, one can make out her name, but not the date of her death. Death and burial records for St Peter's Church Cemetery are not, to my knowledge, currently available on line to establish a firm date for Magdalena's death.

Who was Adam Dreisbach's father? The fact that Adam lived in West Penn Township, Schuylkill County, PA puts him squarely in the category of Georg(e) Wilhelm Dreisbach descendants. But which one? A number of genealogists report documentary evidence that Adam was the son of Simon Dreisbach who in turn was one of the sons of Georg Wilhelm Dreisbach. I accept this which confirms that Adam was a grandson of George Dreisbach.

George was the 4th son of 1743 immigrant Simon Dreisbach Sr. George led a more peripatetic life than his brothers, living on several different tracts of land in Lehigh Township, Northampton County, PA. In 1786 when he was 53, George bought a large piece of land in West Penn Township, PA.⁶ This was located relatively far from where his brothers and their families lived. Their land holdings lay in the Lehigh Valley, south of Blue Mountain and on the east side of the Lehigh River. George's newly purchased land lay on the north side Blue Mountain (out of Lehigh Valley), on the west side of the Lehigh River and up a small stream called Lizzard Creek. This isolation from other Dreisbachs means that even today any "Dreisbachs" who live in this small area are almost certainly descendants of George Wilhelm.

A new *Taufschein* emerges: I was researching the story of baby Catharina Dreisbach's *Taufschein*, when I got a phone call from Mike Dreisbach, the son of Jeff Dreisbach. Mike had just discovered another Dreisbach *Taufschein* was up for auction. Mike asked if this Fraktur would be worth getting to give to his dad as a Father's Day present. I looked at the photo Mike sent and immediately recognized this was a larger and even more beautiful *Taufschein* by Martin Brechall. I knew Jeff would love it and it would make a great Father's Day gift for Jeff - if Mike could put in the winning bid.

The auction was scheduled only a few days away, on the day before Father's Day to be specific! Mike went to the Pook & Pook Auction House that Saturday. He reported that the bidding for the *Taufschein* was fast and furious. There was another person who also wanted this particular piece. The bidding went back and forth, going higher and higher. Mike was determined and persevered. Fortunately for Jeff, and for the Dreisbach family at large, Mike won the auction! The following day Jeff's family gave him a surprise Father's Day present - a beautiful Dreisbach *Taufschein* Fraktur made for a little girl named Prisila who had been born in 1821 (Fig. 4).

Translation of the *Taufschein* for Prisila Dreisbach: To the lawfully married Simon Dreisbach, and his wife Rebecca, born Sassamann, a daughter has been brought to the world, Named Prisila Dreisbach, in the year of our lord 1821, on the 16th day of September, at 1:00am. This is evidence that this Prisila Dreisbach is born and baptized in America, in the State of Pennsylvania, in Schuylkill County and in Brunswick Township. The above named Prisila Dreisbach has been baptized on the 12th day of December 1821 by Rev. Mayer, Reformed minister. Sponsors were Jost Sassamann and Eva Hoffman, both single^b.



Fig. 4. Prisila Dreisbach *Taufschein* Fraktur by Martin Brechall, given as a Father's Day 2020 present to Jeff Dreisbach from his family and now in the collection of Jeff Dreisbach.

The cheerful design in red, yellow and black was all done by the hand of Martin Brechall while the text and the outlines of the two small hearts and large central heart, were done by printer Christian Jacob Hütter of Easton, Pa. Martin Brechall had three similar *Taufschein* editions printed by Hütter, the one shown in Fig. 4 was the earliest edition.⁷

^b Jost Sassaman and Eve Hoffman were neighbors. They eventually married and had at least two sons: William Sassaman 1830-1908 and Daniel Sassaman 1835-1916. All are buried Zion Stone Cemetery in New Ringgold, Schuylkill Co. PA.

The *Taufschein* printer, Christian Jacob Hütter, born into a Moravian family in Germany, and immigrated to the Moravian community in Bethlehem, PA in 1789. He married, moved to Lancaster, Pa and became a printer. There he produced the *Lancaster Correspondent* Newspaper from 1799 to 1803. In 1804 he moved to Easton, PA where he (and later also his sons) published five newspapers, *Der Northampton Correspondent*, *Pennsylvania Herald*, *Easton Intelligencer*, *The People's Instructor* and the *Centinel*.



Fig. 5. Portrait of the printer Christian Jacob Hütter.

By the 1820's, Hütter (later written Hutter), was printing baptismal certificates, such as the one in Fig. 4 that had been purchased by Brechall who later decorated it. Hutter was deeply invested in his new country. He served as Lieutenant-Colonel in command of the Northampton, Lehigh and Pike Counties' Militia. From 1822 to 1825 he served as a member of the PA House of Representatives and he became County Recorder of Deeds in 1829. Hütter's first two wives died young and he married a total of three times. He died in Easton on 10 January 1849.

Simon Dreisbach and Rebecca Sassamann Dreisbach were the parents of baby "Prisila" - who were they? The answer is not simple and more research needs to be done but it's a fascinating story. The family of baby Priscilla lived in Brunswick Township which is right next to West Penn Township where George Dreisbach and his sons owned land. This makes it likely that Simon was a grandson of George Dreisbach. However, which of George's many son's was the father of this Simon? Jeanne Finley, a genealogist, descendant of George Wilhelm Dreisbach and an accomplished artist, has done much research on the sons and grandsons of George. She suggests Simon was the son of John Dreisbach, who in turn was the second born son of Georg Wilhelm Dreisbach.

The Simon/Samuel Dreisbach dilemma: On Priscilla's *Taufschein*, her father is listed as SIMON Dreisbach. But there is a *Taufschein* for Priscilla's older sister, Lydia, which lists the father as SAMUEL Dreisbach. (Lydia's *Taufschein* is in unknown private hands but is described in the Fraktur book by the Earnests)⁸. The sisters did not have two different fathers. Their father used two different names. This newly discovered fact was found in the estate papers where the names Simon and Samuel Dreisbach are used interchangeably.

It's not hard to suggest a reason for this. By the 1820's when Priscilla was born, there were many, many men named Simon Dreisbach living in southeastern Pennsylvania! There must have been a great deal of confusion. It is just possible that this Simon decided to adopt the name Samuel, which was close enough to Simon but still different, in order to differentiate himself from all the other Simons. Samuel was a unique name - at that time there were no other Dreisbach men named Samuel who lived in Southeastern PA.

Simon's birth date is not known but may be recorded in St. Peter's Reformed Church in Mantzville. Best estimate is that he was born between 1790 and 1795 in West Penn Township. If they followed tradition, Simon Dreisbach and Rebecca Sassamann married about the time their first child, Lydia, was born in 1815. The 1820 US Federal Census finds the young family living on or very near the farm of Frederick Sassamann, Rebecca's father. Simon is not farming though. The census says he is engaged in manufacture. We don't know what he was making nor where he was working. There is a possibility he was working for his father-in-law. In fact Simon may have met his future wife through his employment with her father.

The 1820 census^c paints an interesting picture of Frederick Sassaman. He has a rather large household: two boys between 10-16 years of age, 1 boy who is 16-18 years old, two young men between 16 and 26, plus himself - a man over the age of 45. Also living there is a girl age 16-26, and a woman over 45 who would be Frederick's wife. Additionally there are three 'foreigners, not naturalized' living on Frederick Sassaman's farm. These were probably indentured servants or worked under some similar arrangement. Two people were "engaged in agriculture" and one person was "engaged in manufactures". This is the same appellation given to Simon's employment in that same year. Given that Simon/Samuel lived quite near Frederick, it is plausible that Simon/Samuel was working at making 'something' for Frederick. Exactly *what* was being manufactured is unknown.

Together Simon/Samuel and Rebecca had four known children: Lydia (b. 1815), Priscilla (b. 1821), Cathrin born between 1822 and 1829 and a son, name unknown, born between 1825 and 1830. Simon/Samuel died when he was about 35 years old. His date of death is unknown but was not too long before July 18, 1829 at which time his widow, Rebecca Sassaman Dreisbach, signed a document indicating she would not serve as administrator of her late husband's estate. Instead, she chose her father, Frederick Sassaman to act on her behalf as estate administrator. Simon/Samuel did own land but the value of his estate was minimal - \$724.90 at a time when many estates were valued between \$2000 and \$3000. His widow claimed a few pieces of furniture for herself from the estate, but everything else was sold at auction to raise money.

Simon's wife, Rebecca Sassaman, was descended from one of two 1773 immigrant brothers, Heinrich Sassmanshausen (1736-?) or Friedrich Sassmanshausen (1749 - ?). The brothers were born in Wittgenstein, not too far from where the Dreisbachs came from but it is not likely they knew of George Dreisbach who lived some distance away from them in Pennsylvania.^d

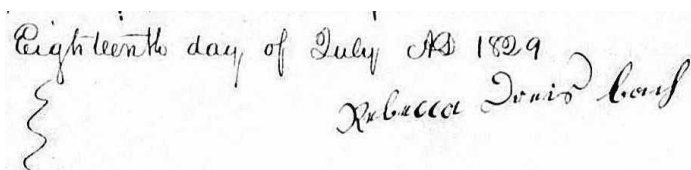
A handwritten note in cursive ink. The text reads "Eighteenth day of July AD 1829" followed by a signature that appears to be "Rebecca Dreisbach". There is a wavy line to the left of the signature.

Fig. 6. Signature of Rebecca Dreisbach on the estate proceedings of her late husband. Dreisbach women generally were illiterate. Rebecca was raised as a Sassaman who educated their daughters.

Rebecca's parents were Frederick Sassaman and Rebecca Volmer.^e It is uncertain *which* Frederick Sassaman was her father. It could have been the 1773 immigrant Frederick, but more likely the father of Rebecca was a son of 1773 immigrant Heinrich Sassaman(shausen). Rebecca was born sometime between 1795 and 1800. Unlike Dreisbach wives of that time, who were illiterate, her father saw to it that she could both read and

write. We have her firm signature (Fig 6) on the estate proceedings for her husband in 1829.⁹

After Rebecca became a young widow, she moved back to the Sassaman farm. There, she must have had her own house because she is separately enumerated on the 1830 US Federal Census. Her house seems to have been between the houses of her father (who was then between 60 and 70 years old) and the house of her brother, George (1794-1866). In the 1840 Census a young woman^f was living in this house. She was probably Rebecca's daughter, Cathrin Drisbauch, (sic). Also living there were two teenage girls of unknown identity. We suggest that Cathrin was the youngest daughter of Simon/Samuel and Rebecca.

^c 1820 US Federal Census of Brunswick Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. Ancestry.com.

^d Simon Dreisbach Sr's mother was Margreth Sassmanshausen (1679-1726). We do not know how she was related to the 1773 immigrant Sassmanshausen brothers.

^e The Volmers are another family from Wittgenstein. We do not know how Frederick Sassaman met Rebecca Volmer.

^f 1840 US Federal Census of Brunswick Twp, Schuylkill Co. Cathrin Drisbauch is between 20 and 30 years of age.

In any event, Rebecca was no longer living on Sassaman property. She may have died between the 1830 and 1840 Census - or - she may have gotten married again and her nearly adult children stayed behind in her former house. Either of these situations is probable. The tombstones of Simon/Samuel Dreisbach and Rebecca Sassaman Dreisbach, which could help to clear up this dilemma, have not been found.

What about Priscilla for whom the *Taufschein* was made? Priscilla's father died when she was about 8 years old. Within a short period of time, the house she knew as home was sold and she moved with her mother, her older sister Lydia, her younger sister Cathrin and her baby brother to a house on the land of her grandfather, Frederick Sassaman, where she grew up.

At some point relatively late in her life Priscilla met and married Jacob Miller Bachman, (b. 2 June 1828, d. 29 Oct. 1912, buried Friedens Church Cemetery, New Ringgold, PA.) Their first child, Albert David Bachman was born 30 Dec. 1858 when Priscilla was 37 years old. At that time this was an unusual age for a woman to be having her first child. Priscilla's husband was seven years younger than she, which also was unusual for that time period. They continued living together, possibly quite happily, and had two more children.

Their second child, Samuel P. Bachman (b. 24 July 1860, d. 11 Jan 1931, buried Friedens Church Cemetery, New Ringgold, PA) must have been named for Priscilla's father. Her father may have officially gone by his birth name of Simon Dreisbach, but it's clear that in everyday life he was called "Samuel". Priscilla and Jacob had one more child, James Monro Bachman who died young (b. 2 Mar 1863, d. in 1870). He also is buried in Friedens Church Cemetery). There are no records of any other children.

It's interesting to know that having a *Taufschein* was important to Priscilla - she had one made for her son, James Monro Bachman, which currently is in unknown private hands¹⁰. Priscilla died on 9 Aug 1899. Like all of her family, she was buried in Friedens Church Cemetery in New Ringgold, PA where she has a fine tombstone. (See Fig. 7). After she died, her husband Jacob moved in with their son Samuel, Samuel's wife, Riley, and his grandchildren Harry (age 14) and Estella (age 9)[§]. Jacob died on the 29th of October in 1912. His tombstone has not been found.



Fig. 7. Tombstone for Priscilla Bachman in Friedens Church Cemetery, New Ringgold, PA. Photo from Find-A-Grave.

There is another *Taufschein* - and a very different one at that! Jeff has a *Taufschein* in his collection that is worth discussing (see Fig. 8). Like all later *Taufschein*, this one was entirely produced by a commercial printer, John Ritter of Reading, PA. The ornamentation was not done by hand but was done using a design that was cut into a wood block. The decorations now were part of the printing but done with a second "press". The first "press" printed the text and the second printed the decoration. Only the names and other information and the coloration were added by hand. Like all later *Taufschein*, this one now is oriented vertically instead of horizontally.

[§] 1910 US Federal Census for Brunswick Township, Schuylkill County, PA. Ancestry.com

Development of Pennsylvania German Fraktur. As we've noted, the earliest, and least common Fraktur, were entirely done by hand. As the demand grew, Fraktur artists realized they could produce more *Taufscheins* (and make more money) if they didn't have to do the tedious lettering so they approached local printers asking for partly printed *Taufschein* forms. Printers were happy to oblige. It did not take long for printers to realize that production of *Taufschein* and other Fraktur documents (house blessings, marriage certificates, etc.) were a good source of revenue. The three types of Fraktur, that which was completely hand done, that which was partly printed and Fraktur that was completely printed coexisted, but there was a progression from single works of art to mass produced documents. All the *Taufschein* we've discussed so far had printed elements as well as hand drawn designs. Fig. 8, however was entirely printed - only the personal specifics were written in and only the coloration was added by hand.

Fraktur was once horizontally oriented, typeset in a block like a half page of a book laid sideways (see Fig. 1) but to facilitate economical printing it became vertical in orientation (see Figs. 4 and 8). In 1790 the heart came into use as the central design and was widely adopted, with a large central heart and two smaller hearts left and right below, was the most usual form. It was replaced by two standing angels first in 1810 and by 1830 this was the dominant design.¹¹

The printed *Taufschein* were done in two separate processes. The text and border were printed as one piece while the designs of angels, cherubs, birds, etc. were added afterwards by wood block printing. Fraktur pieces, made after 1830 or so were printed in one piece, with text and design done at the same time. The pre-printed *Taufschein* were purchased (and even occasionally commissioned) by scribes, who were mostly schoolmasters in rural areas¹².

Johann Ritter, the printer in Reading: Many printers were active in the late 1700's through the mid 1800's and they produced a variety of *Taufschein* designs. Monetary success for the printer depended not on the artistic design but upon the ability of the printer to market his documents. John Ritter was one of the best marketers and one of the most prolific printers of *Taufscheins* - and Jeff's next piece was, indeed, printed by him.

A very unusual *Taufschein*: John Ritter's prints are very well documented and from variations in the of the standing angels design, we know that the *Taufschein* in Fig. 8 was printed in 1834. This makes the work very interesting. The *Taufschein* is for Jost Dreisbach, the second son of John Dreisbach who in turn was the youngest son of Simon Dreisbach Sr, the 1743 immigrant. Jost was born in 1764 but this particular *Taufschein* was printed in 1834, seventy years after the birth of Jost. Not only that, but the date of Jost's marriage is written on the *Taufschein*, 15 May 1788. What is going on?

We don't know, of course - but there are two possibilities that come to mind. Jost may have purchased this *Taufschein* for himself sometime after 1834 but there is another possibility, one that has the 'feel' of being correct. We suggest the *Taufschein* was a 70th birthday present for Jost Dreisbach from his family. Jost was born on 11 April 1764. In the year 1834, when this *Taufschein* was printed, Jost was 70 years old. His children were then in their 20's and 30's, the age at which people were purchasing *Taufschein* for their own children. Many *Taufschein* were purchased by people born around 1800. They were the first generation who had time and money to choose this way to commemorate the most important event in the life of their child, baptism. Many people in Jost's generation, who had been born before 1770, were struggling to make a living at the time their children were born. Spending money for a *Taufschein* would not have occurred to most of them.

The Taufschein text reads: *To the lawfully married couple, Johannes Dreisbach and his wife Elizabeth, born Waldman, a son is brought to this world on the 11th day of April in the year of our Lord 1764 in Lehigh Township, Northampton County, in the State of Pennsylvania in North-America; and through Holy Baptism he received the name, Jost. He was baptized on the 2nd day of June in the year 1764 by the Reformed Minister Hicker (Hecker). The baptismal sponsors were Jost Dreisbach and his wife Elizabeth. - He joined himself in marriage to his wife Margaret Solt in the year of our Lord 1788 on the 15th of May.*



Fig 8. *Taufschein* for Jost Dreisbach, born 1764 - but the *Taufschein* was printed in 1834, 70 years after Jost's birth. It is in the collection of Jeff Dreisbach.



Fig. 9. Tombstone of Jost Dreisbach, Bunker Hill Cemetery, Weissport, PA.

This *Taufschein* was clearly done after Jost got married, and, we suggest, it was purchased and filled in while both Jost and his wife, Margaret, were still alive. They both died at a nice old age, Jost died at 89, on 18 March 1854 and Margaret died at 81 on 16 April 1846. They are buried at Bunker Hill Cemetery in Weissport, Carbon County, PA. (See Fig. 9)

The type of angel on this *Taufschein* is typical of an 1834 printing. It could have been purchased then and presented later, at Jost's 75th or 80th birthday but this is perhaps unlikely. By the 1830's *Taufschein* had become fashionable, and the fashion changed almost yearly. If the *Taufschein* was bought and then saved for 5 or 10 years, it would be 'old-fashioned' looking. It seems more likely that the Fraktur was purchased from a bookstore in 1834, with the not-too-neat coloration already done. One of Jost's adult children would have filled in the form. The handwriting, while serviceable, it not that of a professional scrivener. We can imagine Jost's adult children wondering how to celebrate their father's significant birthday and deciding that it would be good to present him with a *Taufschein*, just like they were currently buying for their own children.

An English language Birth Certificate: Jeff has another Dreisbach baptismal certificate in his collection which is typical of documents from the mid- to the end of the 1800's. Unlike the previous *Taufschein* which were in German and had at least some form of hand decoration, this one was completely done by a printing press and is totally in English. It is from the 1860's by which time larger printing houses were producing great quantities of certificates. While it was possible to find documents printed in German, more and more were done in English. The Pennsylvania German dialect was still in use in homes, schools and churches, but English was used as well. Many churches had a German service and an English service. Depending upon the area where one lived, day to day business might be conducted in English or in dialect or, quite often, in a mixture of both.

The birth certificate shows Levi Ransom Dreisbach was born on 23 January 1863 in Black Creek Township, Luzerne County, PA. While his parents spoke the Pennsylvania German dialect, his birth certificate is in English. A look at the 1860 US Federal Census for Black Creek shows almost half of the township residents have English or Scottish surnames while the remainder are German. This suggests that both English and German were widely spoken. In the case of the baptismal certificate, it may be that the minister of the church where the baptism was performed gave out English language baptismal certificates.

Genealogy of Levi Ransom Dreisbach: Tracing the ancestors of Levi Ransom was fairly straight forward. Although access to the records for St. Paul Reformed Church in Numidia would be ideal, the US Federal Census, plus information from previous personal research¹³, corroborates the following genealogy.

Levi Ransom Dreisbach was born in Red Rock, Sugarloaf Township, Luzerne County, PA on 23 Jan 1863 and was baptized in St. Paul's Reformed Church in 8 Feb. 1863 by Rev. Hoffman. Levi's father died when he was 10 and his mother quickly remarried to Thomas Aten. In 1870^h Levi was living on a farm in Black Creek with his parents and three sisters. In 1880 he was working on the farm and by 1886 he married Louisa Jane

^h 1870 US Federal Census for Black Creek, Luzerne Co. PA, p. 13 of filmstrip, Ancestry.com



Fig. 10. Baptism certificate with no hand decoration, typical of the mid to late 1800's. Certificate was for Levi Ransom Dreisbach, a descendant of Simon Dreisbach Jr.

Drum (1862-1918), daughter of John Drum and Marial Fritzingler, and their son, George was born.¹⁴ By 1910 Levi was living in Butler Township, had become a blacksmith working for a coal company, rented his house and had four children. Things weren't going too well, he was out of work, but in the next ten years he made a change. He quit the mine and opened his own blacksmith shop and bought his own house. Levi and Louisa had the following children: George Stephen Dreisbach, Gertrude Anna Dreisbach, Levi James Dreisbach, John David Dreisbach and one more unlisted child. Louisa died on 3 March and Levi remained a widower for

the rest of his life. He died 11 March 1951 at the age of 88 and was buried in St. John's Cemetery, Butler Township, Luzerne Co., PA. Levi was the son of Stephen Dreisbach and Mary Ann Bittenbender.

Stephen Dreisbach was born 14 May 1840, probably in Black Creek Township, Luzerne County, PA. By 1863 he was married to Mary Ann Bittenbender (1 Jan 1840 - 17 Aug 1890), the daughter of Jonas James Bittenbender (1817-1903) and Caroline Lutz (1817-1888)¹⁵ and their first child, Levi Ransom was born. Also in 1863 he registered for the Union Army draft for the Civil War. The draft card showed he was a farmer and was married, but it is unclear if he ever saw military service during the Civil War.¹⁶ Stephen died at the age of 34 on 3 Jan 1875 and was buried in Red Rock Cemetery, Luzerne Co. PA. His wife remarried within a few years to Thomas Aten and she was buried with her second husband, Thomas, in Red Rock Cemetery. Stephen was the son of Isaac Dreisbach and Mary Shellhammer.

Isaac Dreisbach was born in 30 May 1807 probably in Black Creek Township. He married Mary Shellhammer (4 July 1804 - 10 July 1881), the daughter of Georg Shellhammer 1777-1850). In the 1830 Census for Black Creek Township, Isaac is married and has two little daughters under the age of 5. In the 1840 Census he has four daughters. 2 under 5 years, 2 between 10 and 15 years. Mary was pregnant and their son, Stephen, had not been born when the census taker came around, but would arrive shortly.

Oddly, Isaac is not enumerated in the 1850 Census for Pennsylvania at least according to the Ancestry.com search engine. Jacob Dreisbach, age 50, his presumed wife, Mary, age 58, George 21, John 18, and Ann 11 are listed in Black Creek Township, but the people enumerated around him are not the same names that are found on pages where Isaac is listed, so Jacob was probably not living in the same area where we previously found Isaac and his family. Moreover we do not know if there was a relationship between the two. So where was Isaac living in 1850? Or was his farm somehow missed by the census enumerator? We don't know. Ten years later, in 1860, Isaac and his family are again on the census list of Black Creek inhabitants.

Isaac and Mary had the following children: Catherine (1829-1899) nothing else known about her, Mary Margaret (1830-1910) m. Shelly, Sophia Margareta (1836-1903) m. Schad, Christiana (1838-1908) m. Shuman, Stephen (1840-1875), Rosetta (1846-1904) m. Seiple, Stephen (1840-1875), Rachel (1842-1909) m. Lewis Frederick on 15 Sept 1855, Rosetta (1846-1904) m. Seiple.

Isaac continued farming until about 1880 at which time he and Mary were living with their daughter, Sophia who had married John Shad (born in Hesse, Germany) and their grandchildren, none of whom were being educated in school!

Isaac died 12 December 1894 at the age of 87. He, like many of his family, was buried in Red Rock Cemetery, Luzerne Co. PA. Isaac was the son of Yost Dreisbach and Christean Hoppes.



Rachel (Dreisbach) Frederick
Photo thought to have been taken about 1865/1870.

Fig. 11. Rachel, daughter of Isaac and Mary, (23 Aug 1842-20 May 1909). Probably her wedding photo when she married Lewis Frederick (1841-1884) on 15 Sept 1855.



Fig. 12. Tombstone of Yost Dreisbach, millwright. Photo from Find-A-Grave

Yost Dreisbach was a millwright, a person who builds and repairs the wooden workings of grist mills. He was born 9 January 1775 in Nescopeck Township, currently in Luzerne County but which then was part of a larger Northampton County. He married Christean Hoppes (27 Aug 1779 - 11 Feb 1857), the daughter of J. Michael Hoppes (1753-1833). Yost and Christean had seven known children: Jacob (1797-1888), Rosanna (1803 - 1888) married to Naugle, Isaac (1807 - 1894), George W. (1811 - 1892), William (1812 - 1893), Nathan (1816 - 1906) and Elizabeth (1818 - 1898) married to Houck.

Yost died 18 Jan 1857 at age 82. He is buried in Numidia Bible Fellowship Cemetery, Catawissa, Columbia County, PA. He was the son of John George Dreisbach and Sophia Jung.

John George Dreisbach was born 31 Jan 1756 in Lehigh Township, Northampton County, PA. George was born deaf, or mostly deaf. Just a month before his birth, Indians attacked Northampton County. There had been rumors of trouble that summer and fall so it is likely that John George's mother had gone to stay with her parents or her brother, who lived in a much safer area close to Philadelphia, before the birth of her second child. She would have taken her two other children, 4 year old John and 2 year old Simon III, to safety as well. John George was baptized in the Reformed Church in Philadelphia by Rev. Steiner and his sponsors were Peter Döss (the brother of his mother) and Elizabeth Hart.¹⁷

Between 1759 and 1761, John George and his family returned to their home in Lehigh Township, Northampton, PA. In 1774 John George's father, Simon Dreisbach Jr, moved most of his family south to Allen Township but he left three sons behind, John and John George, and their younger brother, Jacob, to take care of his extensive farm in Lehigh Township. The boys also ran a tannery that their father had started on this property as well. They were busy One can imagine that the boys wanted a woman to prepare their food and take care of them and they fixed this rather quickly. On the 17th of March 1774, John married Catharina Nagle and a few months later, on the 10th of June 1774, John George married Sophia Catherine Jung (1 Feb 1755 - 31 Mar 1834).

The Revolution began a few years after this and both John and John George served in the militia from 1778 to 1782.¹⁸ In spite of his deafness, John George served as a 2nd Class private in William Kromer's 4th Company, 4th Battalion and also in Frederick Coon's 3rd Battalion, 6th company.

By 1790 John George, his wife and family, left Lehigh Township and moved south to his father's land in Allen Township where he helped with the large tannery that his family was running. John George and Sophia had the following children: Yost William, who is discussed above, and Abraham who married Mary Drum and moved to Tarlton, Pickaway County, Ohio, and Jacob born 15 Feb 1779. Both Yost and Jacob moved west to Nescopeck Township, Luzerne Co. in the 1820 census.

John George and his family continued to live on the farm and tannery in Allen Township, PA. John George died on 1 Aug 1826 and was buried in the cemetery of Zion's Stone Church in Kreidersville, PA. His wife died in 1834. Her tombstone has not been found. John George was the son of Simon Dreisbach Jr and Maria Dorothea Dies (Döss).

Simon Dreisbach Jr was the most illustrious person of the Simon Dreisbach line. A book is available at cost. for about \$15. that details his life: <https://www.lulu.com/shop/marcia-dreisbach-falconer/shop/marcia-dreisbach-falconer/simon-dreisbach-jr-1730-1806-a-most-interesting-life/paperback/product-1ngnvww7.html>

In this article we can give only a short summary of his life. Simon Dreisbach Jr was born 18 Jan 1730¹⁹ in Oberndorf, Wittgenstein and baptized in St Martin's Church in Feudingen, Wittgenstein on the 24th of January in that same year. Simon Jr was the middle child of 5 sons plus a younger sister and immigrated with his family in 1743. His early years were spent in Germantown, PA where he met and married Maria Dorothea Dies on 7 April 1752 in St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, PA. They immediately moved to Alsace Twp. in Berks Co., PA.

Meanwhile Simon Jr, his father and his brothers were buying land in Lehigh Township, Northampton Co. PA. He brought his family to live in Lehigh Township where he set up a tannery on his property. In 1770 he was appointed a Commissioner for Northampton County²⁰ and began a career in public service'



Fig. 13 Account of building of Zion Stone Church written and decorated by Simon Dreisbach Jr. Photo Marcia Falconer

In 1771 Simon Jr was one of the founders of the Reformed Congregation of Zion's Stone Church in Kreidersville, PA. On July 8, 1773, his beloved wife, Maria Dorothea, died while delivering twins. The three were buried together in the old cemetery adjacent to the original church.

Simon Jr and Maria Dorothea had the following children: John (1752-1825) m. Catherine Nagle, Simon III (1754-1769), John George (1756-1834) m. Sophia Jung, John Peter (1757-1810) m. Susanna Beisel, Jacob (1759-1817) m. Anna Margaret Bieber, Adam (1761-1842) m. Catherine Leidig, Elizabeth (1762-1829) m. Nicholas Hower, Daniel (1764 -?), Sophia (1766 - 1834) m Frederick Bethold, Maria

Magdalena (1768- 1825) m. John Hagenbuch, Mary Catherine (1769-1849), m. George Butz, Susanna (1771 - 1851) m. George Deshler.

After the death of his wife, and with a family of young children, Simon Jr married a widow, Anna Maria Gucker. By 1775, Simon Jr moved his family to what had been the Gucker farm in Allen Township, PA. There he established a large tannery that functioned throughout his whole life. Allen Township was a hotbed of revolutionary fervor and Simon Jr was quickly caught up in this. In July 1776 he was named a "Judge of the Election", his first foray into revolutionary politics. Within months he was elected as a representative to the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention where, under Benjamin Franklin, Simon Jr would vote to approve the Pennsylvania Declaration of Independence on 25 July 1776. Simon Jr also participated in drawing up the Constitution of Pennsylvania, sitting in Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia to do so. He retired from politics in 1794 and spent the last years of his life running his tannery. Simon Jr. died on 17 Dec 1806 at his home in Allen Township. He is buried in the cemetery of Zion's Stone Church, Kreidersville, PA. Simon Jr was the son of Simon Dreisbach Sr and Maria Katharina Keller.

Simon Dreisbach Sr was born in Wittgenstein in what is now Germany and baptized on 7 Aug 1698. He married Maria Katharina Keller on 7 Nov 1720 in Feudingen and settled on a farm in the small village of Oberndorf. There is an interesting history of his life in Wittgenstein prior to emigrating to Pennsylvania which can be accessed through the Dreisbach website: <https://www.dreisbachfamily.org/thederr.html> After many difficulties and hardships, Simon and his family sailed across the Atlantic on the ship Lydia, arriving in Philadelphia on Thursday, the 19th of September, 1743.

By 1746 or 1747, Simon Sr and his two oldest sons, Jost and Adam, had moved north to what was known as the "Forks of the Delaware". There they cleared wilderness, built shelters and planted crops on land that would become Lehigh Township, in Northampton County, PA. On 25 May 1749, Simon Sr took out his first warrant to own land, a tract of 50 acres.²¹ The second piece of land warranted by Simon Sr was for 25 acres in what is now Moore Township.²²

As early as 1747, Simon Sr, his oldest son, Jost, and their neighbor, William Dieter started a Reformed congregation and built a small log church with an adjoining cemetery on the property line between Jost and William. Simon became active in local affairs. In 1752 Simon Sr was instrumental in getting up a petition for the formation of what would become Lehigh Township and his signature is the first one on the petition. In 1754 he served as a Tax Collector for the area that would become Lehigh Township.²³

The French and Indian War resulted in Indian attacks in Northampton County between 1755 and 1758, laying total waste to the area of Lehigh Township and adjoining regions. Simon and many of his family fled south to Tohickon near Quakertown, PA, not returning to the lands they had warranted until 1759. Simon Sr's wife, Maria Katharina, died on 22 May 1768 and was buried in the cemetery of the little log church on Jost's land. Later her tombstone, along with others, was moved to the "new" cemetery adjacent to Zion's Stone Church, Kreidersville, where it is embedded in a large monument.

Simon Sr died on 31 March 1785. We don't know where he was living at the time of his death, or his state of health. He was buried in Zion's Stone Church Cemetery, Kreidersville. Unfortunately his original tombstone was removed and replaced by the current one. The location of the original tombstone is unknown, nor is it known if it still survives. Simon Dreisbach Sr. was the son of Georg Wilhelm Threisbach, of Steinbach near Feudingen, Wittgenstein, Germany (1669-1712) and Margreth (Marta) Sassmanshausen of Oberndorf (1679-1726), Wittgenstein, Germany.



Fig. 14. Zion's Stone Church, Kreidersville, PA. The church founded by Simon Dreisbach Sr and his sons, Jost Dreisbach and Simon Dreisbach Jr. Many early Dreisbachs are buried in its cemetery.

References:

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- ¹ Stopp, Klaus, *The Printed Birth and Baptismal Certificates of the German Americans*. Pub. by the Author. Available from R. D. Earnest Assoc., P.O. Box 1132, Clayton, Delaware 19938. Vol. I, p.86
- ² *Ibid.* p.152.
- ³ Weiser, Frederick S., in *Encyclopedia of American Folk Art*, Gerard C. Wertkin and Lee Kogan, Editors. in association with the American Folk Art Museum, pub. New York, 2004.
- ⁴ Earnest, Corrine and Russell Earnest, "Dreisbach's on Fraktur", pub. 2014 by Russell D. Earnest Assoc., PO Box 1132, Clayton, DE, 19938. p.9.
- ⁵ Estate Files, 1811-1885; Index 1811-1891; Author: Schuylkill County (Pennsylvania). Register of Wills; Probate Place: Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, for Adam Dreisbach, Ancestry.com
- ⁶ Penna. Archives, Ser. 3 Vol 1, pp576, 577 and Deed Book B-1, pp 145, 146 located in the Archives of Northampton County, PA.
- ⁷ Stopp, Klaus, *The Printed Birth and Baptismal Certificates of the German Americans*, Vol. 1, pub. by the author, Mainz/Germany and East Berlin PA/USA. 1997. p.49.
- ⁸ *Op. Cit.* Earnest, p. 11.
- ⁹ Ancestry.com, Simon/Samuel Dreisbach: Estate proceedings: Ancestry.com, Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683-1993 for Saml Dreisbach, Schuylkill, Estate Files, 1828-1930 Diehl-Fenstermacher. Probate date 1830.
- ¹⁰ *Op. Cit.* Earnest, p. 11.
- ¹¹ *Op. Cit.* Stopp, p. 52.
- ¹² *Op. Cit.* Stopp, p. 41
- ¹³ See newsletters pertaining to Simon Dreisbach Jr at <https://www.dreisbachfamily.org/ddfanewsletter.html>
- ¹⁴ Information from Find-A-Grave, has not been confirmed by primary documentation.
- ¹⁵ Information from Find-A-Grave, has not been confirmed by primary documentation.
- ¹⁶ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Consolidated Lists of Civil War Draft Registration Records (Provost Marshal General's Bureau; Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865)*; Record Group: 110, *Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War)*; Collection Name: *Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865 (Civil War Union Draft Records)*; NAI: 4213514; Archive Volume Number: 1 of 4
- ¹⁷ Dreisbach, Simon Jr. His own handwritten account of births and baptisms of his children. A poor photo copy of this document is in the archives of the Lehigh County Historical Society in Allentown, PA.
- ¹⁸ Ancestry.com, Pennsylvania Veterans Burial Cards, 1777-2006, Series 1 (French and Indian War to WWII) Doyne to Dreisbach; George John Dreisbach.
- ¹⁹ Baptismal records were seen and photographed at the archives of St. Martin's Church in Feudinggen, Wittgenstein, Germany in 2012.
- ²⁰ Provincial Delegates Collection, filed under John Tennings, Vol 2. p. 133. Hist. Soc. Penna., Philadelphia, PA.
- ²¹ His land is listed in the Bucks County Warrant lists as Warrant #80 under the name Simon Tricebough. The tract was not surveyed and no map exists.
- ²² Warrant T-93 from the Pennsylvania Archives in Harrisburg. Seen and photographed on a visit in 2011.
- ²³ Source: Hist Soc Phila, Northampton County Collection #456, a book "Northampton County Treasurer's Reports 1754-1770, page 2: 1754. The cash paid to Simon Triesbach (sic) was likely because he was the Collector for this region.