

The Paternal Lineage of Maria Ursula Spörer in Württemberg

by Joseph B. Everett, 5 December 2018

Objective

The purpose of this research was to trace four generations of Maria Ursula Spörer's paternal line, beginning with her father, Johann Georg Spörer. Ursula was born 11 October 1815 in Scheinhardsmühle, Württemberg. Her father, Johann Georg, was from nearby Niederrimbach.

Background Information

The impetus for this project was the prior discovery of Maria Ursula Spörer, half-sister to Johann Friedrich Fehser, who was an original settler of Mt. Pleasant, Utah¹ and one of the first seventeen Latter-day Saints to emigrate from Germany.² Decades ago, descendants had traced the Fehser line to the early 1500s in Weikersheim, Württemberg, but there was an apparent gap in Johann Friedrich's generation: he was the only known child in a time when single-child families were rare.

The question whether Johann Friedrich Fehser had any siblings led to a reexamination of his 1825 illegitimate birth in the Nassau, Württemberg Lutheran parish registers, showing a neglected detail: his mother, Anna Maria Kiesecker, was divorced.³ This clue prompted a search in the supplementary section of the Nassau family register, yielding an entry for Anna Maria Kiesecker as the unwed mother of Johann Friedrich Fehser.⁴ It showed she had divorced [Mr.] Spörer in 1823, their marriage was recorded in Nassau in 1814, and they had a daughter, Maria Ursula Spörer, born 11 October 1815 at the Scheinhardsmühle, a nearby mill farm. So, Johann Friedrich Fehser did have at least one half-sibling.

The family register confirmed other prior research, including the mother Anna Maria Kiesecker's 26 October 1792 birth at Scheinhardsmühle to Johann Georg Kiesecker and Ursula Fertig.⁵ It further noted that she and the father of Johann Friedrich Fehser were married in Hamburg sometime after his 1825 birth, consistent with family records.⁶

¹ Mount Pleasant Historical Association (Mount Pleasant, Utah), "Genealogy and Family Pioneer History," record for Fehser, Johann Friedrich; FHL microfilm 1,841,763. DOC 4.

² Karl-Werner Klüber, "Die ersten deutschen Mormonen wanderten 1853 nach Amerika aus: Mit Ahnen- und Verwandtschaftslisten des Bischofs Daniel Friedrich Lau," *Genealogie*, vol. 9, issue 7 (July 1969), page 625-638. DOC 5.

³ Evangelische Kirche Nassau (Nassau, Württemberg, Germany), Kirchenbuch, 1556-1876, Bd. 6, Taufen 1808-1851, Johann Friedrich Fehser birth (19 Jul 1825); FHL microfilm 1,732,380, item 3. DOC 1.

⁴ Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 15 Familienregister II, Scheinhardsmühle, p. 501, Anna Maria Kiesecker family register; FHL microfilm 1,732,382, item 3. DOC 6.

⁵ Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 5, Taufen 1792-1808, unnumbered page, Anna Maria Kiesecker birth (26 Oct 1792); FHL microfilm 1,732,380, item 2. DOC 2.

⁶ Johan Frederick Fehser, "Biography of Johan Frederick Fehser," mimeographed copy of typescript by Clyde Isaac Fehser [of Provo, Utah, ca. 1950], page 1; privately held by [Name withheld], [address for private use], [Place withheld], 2018. States that his parents moved to Hamburg when he was 7 ½ (late 1832 or early 1833). DOC 3.

The discovery of Maria Ursula Spörer led to more questions about her. Her original birth⁷ and confirmation⁸ records in Nassau gave her legitimate father's name as Johann Georg Spörer of Niederrimbach. Her birth record showed her parents were separated by then and already planned to divorce, although per the family register, the divorce took place eight years later. Her confirmation and first communion⁹ records proved that she lived to be at least 13 ½ years old, until 3 May 1829, in Nassau. However, an exhaustive search of the registers of Nassau, Niederrimbach and neighboring parishes had failed to produce a marriage, death, or any other record of her after that.

As the search for more information on Maria Ursula Spörer's later life had run dry, the focus shifted to her father, Johann Georg Spörer. Did he and her mother have any other children? Did he remarry after the divorce? What became of him? And could the Spörer paternal line be traced back to four generations? These are questions that this research project sought to answer.

⁷ Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Taufen 1808-1851, unnumbered page, Maria Ursula Spörer birth (11 Oct 1815); FHL microfilm 1,732,380, item 3. DOC 7.

⁸ Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 12, Konfirmationen 1810-1832, unnumbered page, Maria Ursula Spörerin confirmation (26 Apr 1829); FHL microfilm 1,732,382, item 1. DOC 8.

⁹ Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 12, Kommunikanten 1828-1834, unnumbered page, Maria Ursula Spörerin first communion (Dom. Misericordias [3 May] 1829); FHL microfilm 1,732,382, item 1. DOC 9.

Generation One – Johann Georg Spörer

Johann Georg Spörer and Anna Maria Kiesecker

From prior research, Johann Georg Spörer and his wife Anna Maria Kiesecker were already known to have one daughter:

- Maria Ursula, born 11 October 1815 at the Scheinhardsmühle (Nassau parish)¹⁰

The only other record found in the Nassau parish registers pertaining to Johann Georg Spörer was nonetheless an important one: an entry for his marriage to Anna Maria Kiesecker recorded on 14 August 1814, which gives the following information:

Table 1. Abstract of Marriage of J. G. Spörer to Anna Maria Kiesecker¹¹

Groom's Name: J. G. Spörer Parents: Joh. Nicol. Spörer, citizen and vineyard laborer in Niederrimbach and Ann Catharina born Dürr Birthdate: 26 March 1789 Status: citizen and Häcker [vineyard laborer] in Niederrimbach, Lutheran	Bride's Name: Anna Maria Kiesecker Parents: J. G. Kiesecker, citizen and miller at the Scheinhardsmühle and Ursula born Fertig from Steinmark Birthdate: 26 October 1792
Marriage Information Marriage Date: 14 August 1814 Banns Read: In Nassau and Niederrimbach "Dom. 7.8.9 p. Trin." 1814 Marriage performed by the priest in Niederrimbach Marital Status: "Scort: miteinander" [in fornication] Family Register: Page 449 [Refers to the bride's father's family register.]	

This record confirms Johann Georg Spörer's Niederrimbach origin as stated in his daughter's birth record and provides his parents' names as Joh. Nicol. Spörer and Anna Catharina Dürr. It confirms Anna Maria Kiesecker's birth and parentage from prior research. The couple was "Scort: miteinander" meaning they were involved in fornication, a hint that they may have had at least one other child besides Maria Ursula, as she was born legitimately more than a year after her parents married.

A search of the Nassau births from 1814-1836, including the months immediately prior to their marriage until well after their divorce and her move to Hamburg, yielded no other children to either Johann Georg Spörer or Anna Maria Kiesecker.¹² Anna Maria does appear as a witness in a 4 January 1814 birth of another Kiesecker where she is referred to as the legitimate, single, youngest daughter of J. G.

¹⁰ Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Taufen 1808-1851, unnumbered page (11 Oct 1815). DOC 7.

¹¹ Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 8, Heiraten, unnumbered page, Johann Georg Spörer and Anna Maria Kiesecker marriage (14 Aug 1814); FHL microfilm 1,732,381, item 7. DOC 10.

¹² Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Taufen 1808-1851; negative search for other children of Johann Georg Spörer or Anna Maria Kiesecker 1814-1836; FHL microfilm 1,732,380.

Kiesecker,¹³ suggesting she probably had no children born prior to that date. As she and Spörer's marriage took place in his place of origin, Niederrimbach, that was the place to look next.

The original marriage of this couple was recorded in Niederrimbach on 31 July 1814. It spells the surname "Spoerer" and the groom's father as "Nicolaus." It indicates the bride and groom were previously unmarried and makes no mention of premarital relations. Johann Georg's birthdate is given as 26 March 1790, one year later than the Nassau record said. Otherwise, the information matches their Nassau record. There is also a reference to page 234 in the family register.¹⁴ That family register, although a secondary source, is very helpful in revealing information on this family.

Table 2. Transcription of Family Register of Johann Georg Spoerer (aka Spörer)¹⁵

Spoerer					234a
Geburtstag, Monat und Jahr.	Hausvater.	Copulations-Tag, Monat und Jahr.	Hausmutter.	Geburtstag, Monat und Jahr.	
<u>Dahier</u> d 26 ⁿ Maerz 1790.	Johann Georg <u>Spoerer</u> Häkker Sommer 1852 nach Amerika ausgewandert.	<u>dahier</u> d. 31. July 1814	Anna Maria, geboren <u>Kiesecker</u> wurde geschieden	in <u>Nassau</u> 26 ⁿ Octbr 1792	
		<u>dahier</u> 23 1819	Anna Margaretha, ge boren <u>Hertlein</u> † 30 Okt. 1851.	<u>dahier</u> d 9n Septbr. 1792.	
Vater.	† Nicolaus <u>Spoerer</u> , Häkker dahier S. S. 232.		† Johann Georg Kiesecker, Mühler auf der <u>Scheinhartsmühle</u> bei <u>Nassau</u>		I Vater.
Mutter.	Anna Catharina, geboren <u>Dürrin</u> von hier wahrscheinlich 1752 geboren.		† Ursula, geboren <u>Fertigin</u> , von <u>Steinmark</u>		I Mutter.
			† Johann Georg Hertlein, Häkker		II Vater
			† Rosina Barbara, geboren Plank von hier		II Mutter
Zahl der Kinder.	Namen.	Geburt.	Confirmation oder Erste Communion.	Verehelichung.	Tod.
I †. 1.	Anna Barbara	d. 26 ⁿ . August 1814	-----	-----	15 ⁿ . Sept. e.a.
II †. 1.	Georg Stephan	-19 ⁿ . Juny 1825	-----	-----	2 ⁿ . July. e.a.
†. 2.	Marg. Barbara	-28 ⁿ . July 1826	-----	-----	2 ⁿ . Aug. e.a.
†. 3.	totdgeborenen Sohn	-6 ⁿ . Octbr. 1827	-----	-----	-----
†. 4.	Maria Elisabetha	-24 ⁿ . Juny 1829	-----	-----	5 Jan. 1836.
†. 5.	Georg Martin	14 April 1835.	-----	-----	26 Dec. 1835.

¹³ Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Taufen 1808-1851, unnumbered page, Maria Sophia Kiesecker birth (4 Jan 1814); FHL microfilm 1,732,380, item 3. Anna Maria Kiesecker appears as a witness, referred to as the legitimate, unmarried, youngest daughter of J. G. Kiesecker. DOC 11.

¹⁴ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach) (Niederrimbach, Württemberg, Germany), Kirchenbuch, 1698-1876, Bd. 6, Heiraten 1808-1876, Johann Georg Spoerer and Anna Maria Kiesecker marriage (31 Jul 1814); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7. DOC 12.

¹⁵ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 8, Familienregister I, page 234, Johann Georg Spoerer family register; FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 9. DOC 13.

Significantly, this record reveals that he had a second marriage and additional children. More about them will be provided below. First, the focus is on the information about him and his first wife. Note that the document corroborates his birth and marriage date to Anna Maria Kiesecker as found in their Niederrimbach marriage record. It repeats that they were divorced and matches the information on the couple's parents as found in both of their marriage records. Beyond that, it lists another child, whose information is also confirmed in the original birth and death records:

- Anna Barbara, born 26 August 1814,¹⁶ died 15 September of the same year.¹⁷

This explains the "Scort. miteinander" status in their Nassau marriage record and proves another half-sister for Fechser.

A search of the Niederrimbach birth registers from 1809-1824, five years prior to the couple's 1814 marriage and birth of their first known child, and ten years after the 1815 birth of the last known child (up to a year after their 1823 divorce) found no other children of this couple.¹⁸ Likewise, a search of the deaths of other children, in case of a missing birth record, was negative for 1809-1841.¹⁹

Anna Maria Kiesecker

As noted from prior research, Johann Georg Spörer's ex-wife Anna Maria Kiesecker moved to Hamburg with Johann Friedrich Fechser's father in 1832 or 1833 where they supposedly married, albeit a marriage record had not been found. Family records gave their death dates, but without sources. A search of Hamburg marriage records was negative,^{20 21 22} however her 4 March 1863 death record was found which names her as "Frau" Fechser and lists the deceased Johann Georg Fechser as her spouse.²³

¹⁶ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1808-1877, Anna Barbara Spörer birth (26 Aug 1814); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 4. DOC 14.

¹⁷ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Tote 1808-1876, page 16, Anna Barbara Spörer death (15 Sep 1814); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7. Lists father's surname as Spörer. DOC 21.

¹⁸ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1808-1877, negative search for births 1809-1824 for additional children to Johann Georg Spörer or Anna Marie Kiesecker; FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 4. Searched 5 years prior to oldest known child and 9 years after youngest known child, up to one year after their 1823 divorce.

¹⁹ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Tote 1808-1876, negative search for deaths 1809-1841 for additional children of Johann Georg Spörer or Anna Maria Kiesecker; FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7.

²⁰ Geesthacht (Hamburg). Standesamt, Zivilstandsregister, 1827-1874, Heirats-Protokolle 1827-1874 (Index), negative search for Johann Georg Fechser and Anna Maria Kiesecker or Spörer; FHL microfilm 577,720.

²¹ Hamburg (Hamburg). Standesamt Sankt Pauli, Zivilstandsregister 1828-1865, Heirats-Protokolle 1817-1865 (Index), negative search for Johann Georg Fechser and Anna Maria Kiesecker or Spörer; FHL microfilm 577,700.

²² Beyond History, "Report 01 FECHSER," page 2; report prepared for [Name withheld], [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], January 2016; copy privately held by [Name withheld], 2016; citing Staatsarchiv Hamburg, general register of marriages 1831-1865, negative search for Johann Georg Fechser and Anna Maria Kiesecker or Spörer.

²³ Beyond History, "Report 01 FECHSER," page 2; citing Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 512-5 St. Jacobikirche A VII c 13, page 213, No. 64/1863, Anna Maria Fechser death (4 Mar 1863). DOC AMK-6.

Marriage and Death of their Daughter Maria Ursula Spörer

Note that there is no mention of their younger daughter Maria Ursula in the Niederrimbach family register. The recorder was probably unaware of her, because she was born in the Nassau parish after her parents had separated and lived there until at least age thirteen. Her mother likely never returned to Niederrimbach, having later moved to Hamburg.²⁴

The last known record of Maria Ursula's Spörer was her 1829 first communion record at age 13 ½ in Nassau.²⁵ Prior research had already exhausted efforts to find a marriage or death record for her in either Nassau or Niederrimbach. A clue from family records that she may have gone to Stuttgart led to some fruitless searching there.²⁶ It was only after most of the research on her paternal line had been completed, in going back to flesh out information about her parents, that evidence of Maria Ursula Spörer's adult life was found. While searching unsuccessfully for her mother's marriage to Fehser or for any trace of her father in Hamburg, Maria Ursula Spörer's marriage to Carl Wilhelm Nitsche was found, on 12 March 1841.²⁷

Ursula's death record could not be found in Hamburg church or civil registers.^{28 29} She survived her husband, who died in 1853,³⁰ when she was just 37, but no second marriage could be found for her in Hamburg.^{31 32 33 34} Her children's records provide secondary, indirect information on her death, placing it in Hamburg, sometime after the birth of her youngest child Anton on 12 September 1853³⁵ (six months after her husband's death) and before the second marriage of her oldest child Caroline on 11

²⁴ See background information above. Also, Anna Maria Kiesecker is not found in Niederrimbach records after her daughter's 26 August 1814 birth, except for the reference in her ex-husband Spörer/Spoerer's family register.

²⁵ Evangelische Kirche Nassau, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 12, Kommunikanten 1828-1834, unnumbered page (Dom. Misericordias [3 May] 1829). DOC 9.

²⁶ See "Research Log – Maria Ursula Spörer."

²⁷ Geesthacht (Hamburg). Standesamt, Zivilstandsregister, 1827-1874, Heirats-Protokolle 1838-1841, No. 496, Carl Wilhelm Nitsche and Maria Ursula Spörer marriage protocol (12 Mar 1841); FHL microfilm 577,704. DOC MUS-2.

²⁸ Beyond History, "Report 02 SPÖRER/ NITSCHÉ," page 3; report prepared for [Name withheld], [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], October 2017; copy privately held by [Name withheld], 2017; citing Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 332-5 Standesämter, death register 1876-1900, negative search for death of Maria Ursula Nitsche (born Spörer).

²⁹ "Hamburg, Germany, Deaths, 1874-1950," database online, *Ancestry.com* (<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=60505> : accessed Sep 2017), negative search for Maria Ursula Nitsche or Spörer.

³⁰ Beyond History, "Report 01 FECHSER," page 5; citing Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 513-3 Dreifaltigkeitskirche in Hamm VII A 37, page 47, No. 15/1853, Carl Wilhelm Nitsche death (25 March 1853). DOC MUS-11.

³¹ Beyond History, "Report 02 SPÖRER/ NITSCHÉ," page 3; citing Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Kirchengeneralregister, marriage register 1853-1865, negative search for Maria Ursula Nitsche or Spörer.

³² Beyond History, "Report 02 SPÖRER/ NITSCHÉ," page 3; citing Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 332-3 Zivilstandesamt, marriage register 1866-1875, negative search for Maria Ursula Nitsche or Spörer.

³³ "Hamburg, Germany, Marriages, 1874-1920," database online, *Ancestry.com* (<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=60504> : accessed 12 Jul 2016), negative search for Maria Ursula Nitsche or Spörer; citing Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 332-5 Standesämter, Personenstandsbücher, Heiraten, 1874-1920.

³⁴ Hamburg (Hamburg). Bürgermeisterei Wedde II, "Verheiratuings-Protokoll, 1816-1865," Heirats-Verzeichnis, L-Z (1831-1865), negative search for Maria Ursula Nitsche or Spörer; FHL microfilm 561,265-561,266.

³⁵ Beyond History, "Report 01 FECHSER," page 4; citing Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 513-3 Dreifaltigkeitskirche in Hamm VII A 6, page 230, No. 94/1853, Anton Martin Wilhelm Nitsche birth (12 Sep 1853). DOC MUS-18.

October 1887.³⁶ Her children's records mention nothing about her being married to anyone other than their father or living anywhere besides Hamburg.³⁷

Johann Georg Spörer and Anna Margaretha Hertlein

Returning to Johann Georg Spörer's Niederrimbach family register, it shows that he was married again in 1823, to Anna Margaretha Hertlein, daughter of Johann Georg Hertlein and Rosina Barbara Plank. Johann Georg Spörer's original marriage record to Anna Margaretha Hertlein indicates that the couple was married after issuing the banns three times, starting on Easter and ending on Rogate, which was on 4 May 1823. The record does not mention Johann Georg's birth or parents, but it confirms his wife's father's name, indicating that he was her legitimate father and deceased.³⁸

The family register lists five children, all of whom died young.³⁹ Their names, births, and deaths were also confirmed in original records in Niederrimbach:

- Georg Stephan, born 19 June 1825,⁴⁰ died 2 July of the same year⁴¹ [age 1 week, 6 days]
- Margaretha Barbara, born 28 July 1826,⁴² died 2 August of the same year⁴³ [age 5 days]
- Stillborn son, 6 October 1827^{44 45}
- Maria Elisabetha, born 24 June 1829,⁴⁶ died 5 January 1836⁴⁷ [age 6 ½]
- Georg Martin, born 14 April 1835,⁴⁸ died 26 December 1836⁴⁹ [age 1 ½]

³⁶ "Hamburg, Germany, Selected Marriages, 1874-1920," database online, *Ancestry.com* (<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=60504> : accessed 13 Nov 2015), Johann Julius Bangemann and Caroline Auguste Wilhelmine Nitsche marriage (11 Oct 1887); citing Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 332-5 Standesämter, 332-5_2714, Nr. 1188. List her mother Elisabeth Maria Ursula, born Spörer, deceased in Hamburg. DOC MUS-8.

³⁷ See further research on her children in "Research Log - Maria Ursula Spörer."

³⁸ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1780-1834, page 67, Johann Georg Spörer and Anna Margaretha Hertlein marriage (by banns lastly on Rogate 1823 [4 May]); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 15.

³⁹ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 8, Familienregister I, page 234. DOC 13.

⁴⁰ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1808-1876, page 26, Georg Stephan Spörer birth (19 Jun 1825); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 4. DOC 16.

⁴¹ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Tote 1808-1876, page 30, Georg Stephan Spörer death (2 Jul 1825); FHL microfilm 1,732,387 item 7, image 25. DOC 22.

⁴² Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1808-1877, page 28, Margaretha Barbara Spörer birth (28 Jul 1826); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 4. DOC 17.

⁴³ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Tote 1808-1876, page 33, Margaretha Barbara Spörer death (2 Aug 1826); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7. DOC 23.

⁴⁴ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1808-1877, page 29, birth of stillborn son of Johann Georg Spörer (6 Oct 1827); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 4. DOC 18.

⁴⁵ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Tote 1808-1876, page 35, death of stillborn son of Johann Georg Spörer (5 Oct 1827); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7. DOC 24.

⁴⁶ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1808-1877, page 32, Maria Elisabetha Spörer birth (24 Jun 1829); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 4. DOC 19.

⁴⁷ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Tote 1808-1876, page 47, Maria Elisabetha Spörer death (5 Jan 1836); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7. DOC 25.

⁴⁸ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1808-1877, page 42, Georg Martin Spörer birth (14 Apr 1835); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 4. DOC 20.

⁴⁹ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Tote 1808-1876, page 47, Georg Martin Spörer death (26 Dec 1835); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7. DOC 26.

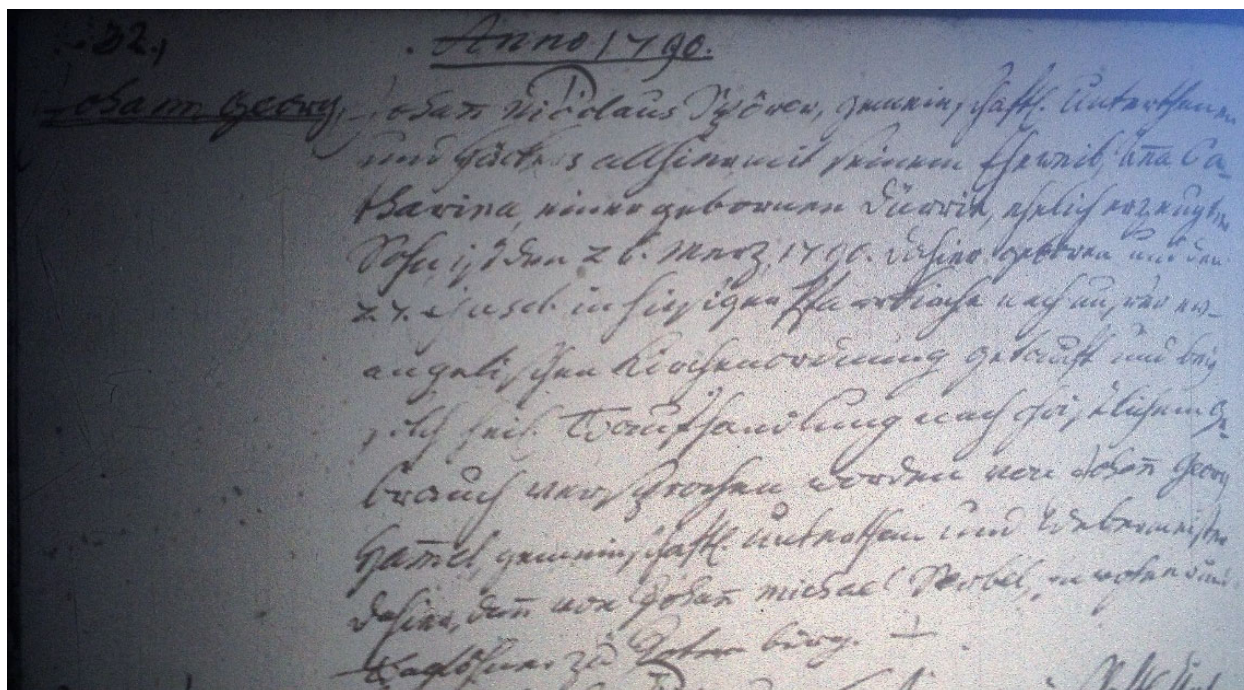
A search of the Niederrimbach birth and death records for ten years prior to the first child of this couple (8 years prior to the marriage), going back to 1815, when Maria Ursula was born, found no other children born to either parent in this couple. There were also no other children found in the gaps between the known children or for 6 years after the birth of the last child.^{50 51} Apparently, the family register included all his children from his second wife.

The original birth and death records confirm Anna Margaretha Hertlein's information from the family register on her parents and 9 Sep 1792 birth in Niederrimbach⁵² as well as her death here on 30 October 1851.⁵³

Johann Georg Spörer

The discrepancy in Johann Georg Spörer's birth date between his Nassau and Niederrimbach records was settled by finding his original birth record. (See Image 1).

Image 1. Birth of Johann Georg Spörer⁵⁴



⁵⁰ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1808-1877, negative search for births 1815-1841 for additional children to Johann Georg Spörer or Anna Margaretha Hertlein; FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 4.

⁵¹ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Tote 1808-1876; FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7, negative search for deaths 1815-1841 for additional children of Johann Georg Spörer or Anna Margaretha Hertlein.

⁵² Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1780-1826, page 40, Anna Margaretha Hertlein birth (9 Sep 1792); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 27.

⁵³ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Tote 1808-1876, page 47, Anna Margarethe Spörerin (nee Hertlein) death (31 Oct 1851); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7. DOC 28.

⁵⁴ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1780-1826, page 32, Johann Georg Spörer birth (26 Mar 1790); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 29.

Transcription

Anno 1790.

Johann Georg Johann Nicolaus Spörer, gemeinschaftl. Unterthanen und Häckers allhier mit seinen Eheweib, Anna Catharina, einer geborene Dürrin, ehelich erzeugte Sohn ist den 26. Marz 1790. dahier geboren und den 27. ejusd. in hiesigen Pfarrkirchke nach unsrer ew.-angelischen Kirchenordnung getauft und beij solch heil. Taufhandlung nach christlichen gebrauch verschprochen worden von Johann Georg Hammel, gemeinschaftl. Unterthan und Webermeister dahier, denn von Johann Michael S?bel, Inwohner und Taglohner zu Rotenburg.

Translation

Year 1790.

Johann Georg Johann Nicolaus Spörer, common subject and vineyard worker from here with his wife, Anna Catharina, born Dürr, legitimately conceived son was on 26th March 1790 here born and on the 27th of the same month in this parish charge after our evangelical [Lutheran] church order baptized and by such holy act of baptism according to Christian custom sponsored by Johann Georg Hammel, common subject and master weaver from here, as well as by Johann Michael S?bel, resident and day laborer in Rotenburg.

This confirms his birthdate as 26 March 1790, and his parents as Johann Nicolaus Spörer and Anna Catharina Dürr. Johann Georg Spörer's own fate, after the death of his wife and all his children from his second marriage, is not entirely known. His family register indicates that in the summer of 1852, less than a year after his wife's death, he emigrated to America.⁵⁵ This is also documented in the original emigration records in the Oberamt Mergentheim, to which Niederrimbach belonged, which gives the date of his removal from Württemberg as 7 July 1852.⁵⁶ However, efforts to research his passage to America and subsequent life and death have so far been negative. Though he was granted permission to emigrate, it is unclear whether he was successful. Research in Württemberg, where he may have remained, and extensive research in Hamburg, where he may have gone to emigrate has also been negative.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 8, Familienregister I, page 234. DOC 13.

⁵⁶ Mergentheim (Württemberg). Oberamt, Auswanderungsakten, 1835-1902, Bd. 310-321a (1835-1896), year 1852, entry 86, Johann Georg Spörer [sic] Entlassung [removal] (7 Jul 1852); FHL microfilm 838,303. DOC 32.

⁵⁷ See "Research Log – Johann Georg Spörer."

Generation One Summary

After the difficult background research that had led to finding Maria Ursula Spörer herself, documenting the first generation in her paternal line was fairly straightforward. Prior research had already placed her father Johann Georg Spörer in Niederrimbach. Documenting him and the rest of his family was done using his Niederrimbach family register and verifying and completing information using parish registers and other original sources.

Johann Georg Spörer was born 26 March 1790 in Niederrimbach, the son of Johann Nicolaus Spörer and Anna Catharina Dürr, also of Niederrimbach. From prior research, he was known to have been married to Anna Maria Kiesecker and to have a daughter, Maria Ursula, born 11 October 1815 at the Scheinhardsmühle in Nassau parish. New research found their marriage on 31 July 1814 in Niederrimbach and another daughter, Anna Barbara, born in Niederrimbach just one month after their 1814 marriage, who died in infancy.

After his 1823 divorce, Johann Georg remarried the same year in Niederrimbach to Anna Margaretha Hertlein. They had five children, four of whom died in infancy and one who died at the age of 6. After his second wife died on 30 October 1851, Johann Georg reportedly emigrated from Württemberg to America in 1852, as documented in his family register and in original Württemberg emigration records. His first wife, Ann Maria Kiesecker died in Hamburg on 4 March 1863.

Maria Ursula was the only child in this family to survive to adulthood and marry. After some difficulty, and by chance while searching unsuccessfully for her mother's second marriage to Johann Georg Fechser in Hamburg, Maria Ursula's original marriage record to Carl Wilhelm Nitsche on 12 March 1841 was found. Her death in Hamburg between 1853 and 1887 is estimated from original birth and marriage records of her children.

Generation Two – Johann Nicolaus Spörer

Johann Nicolaus Spörer and Anna Catharina Dürr

Johann Nicolaus Spörer and Anna Catharina Dürr, both of Niederrimbach are recorded as Johann Georg Spörer parents in his birth record, two records of his first marriage, and his family register, which also provides a reference to Johann Nicolaus Spörer's family register, on page 232.

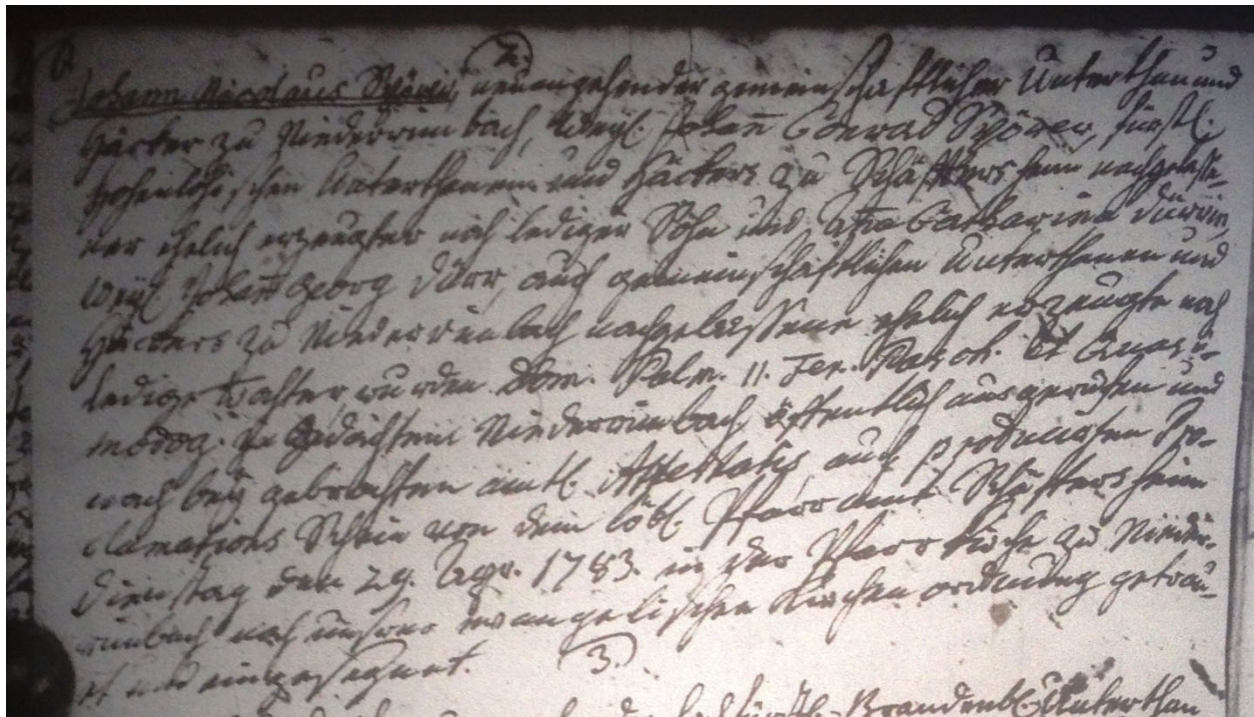
Table 3. Transcription of Family Register of Johann Nicolaus Spoerer (aka Spörer)⁵⁸

Spoerer					234a
Geburtstag, Monat und Jahr.	Hausvater.	Copulations- Tag, Monat und Jahr.	Hausmutter.	Geburtstag, Monat und Jahr.	
In <u>Schaefters</u> <u>heim</u> den 21 ⁿ Novbr 1753 ----- - in <u>Reins</u> <u>bronn</u> den 17. Jan 1767.	Johann Nicolaus <u>Spoerer</u> , Hakker † den 20. Octbr. 1800. ----- Johann Michael Beck Schumacher M. (entfernte sich kurze Zeit nach den Verehelichung und gab nie ein Nachricht von sich	<u>dahier</u> d. 29. April 1789 ----- <u>dahier</u> d. 21. Febr. 1802	Anna Catharina, ge- borne <u>Dürrin</u> † d. 13	dahier den 19 ^{ta} Novbr. 1755	
Vater. I	Johann Conrad <u>Spoerer</u> , Häcker in <u>Schaeftersheim</u>		Johann Georg <u>Dürr</u> , Häcker da hier		Vater.
Mutter.	[blank]		Barbara		Mutter.
<u>Vater II</u> <u>Mutter</u>	Johann Jacob <u>Beck</u> , Schneider- M. in <u>Reinsbronn</u> Eva Barbara, geborne <u>Geislinger</u>				
Zahl der Kinder.	Namen.	Geburt.	Confirmation oder Erste Communion.	Verehelichung.	Tod.
1.	Johann Georg	d. 26 ⁿ Maerz 1790.	1807	Dahier S 234 31n July 1814	
2.	Anna Barbara	21 ⁿ Juny 1792.	1804	in Creglingen d. 11. April 1826	
†3.	Maria Veronica	2 ⁿ . Novbr. 1794	-----		24 ⁿ Janr. 1795
†4.	Joh. Georg Leonhard	19 ⁿ Mai 1796	-----		16. Decbr. e.a

⁵⁸ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 8, Familienregister I, page 232, Johann Nicolaus Spoerer family register; FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 9. DOC 30.

The family register of Johann Nicolaus Spörer provides detailed information about the family, verified and in some cases corrected, through research in the original records. The family register states their marriage was 29 April 1789, but their original marriage record proves they were married on 29 April 1783. (See Image 2.)

Image 2. Marriage of Johann Nicolaus Spörer⁵⁹



Transcription

2.) Johann Nicolaus Spörer, neuangehender gemeinschaftlicher Unterthan und Häcker zu Niederrimbach, weyl. Johann Conrad Spörer, fürstl. Hohenlohischen Unterthanen und Häckers zu Schäfersheim nachgelassener ehelich erzeugter noch lediger Sohn und Anna Catharina Dürrin, weyl. Johann Georg Dürr, auch gemeinschaftlichen Unterthanen und Häckers zu Niederrimbach nachgelassene ehelich erzeugte noch ledige Tochter wurden Dom. Palm. II. Fer. Pasch. et Quasimodog. zu Gedächtnis Niederrimbach öffentlich ausgerufen und nach bey gebrachten amtl. Attestates auch produzierten Proclamations Schein von dem löbl. Pfarramt Schäfersheim Dienstag den 29 Apr. 1783 in der Pfarrkirche zu Niederrimbach nach unsrer ewangelischen Kirchenordnung getrauet und eingesegnet.

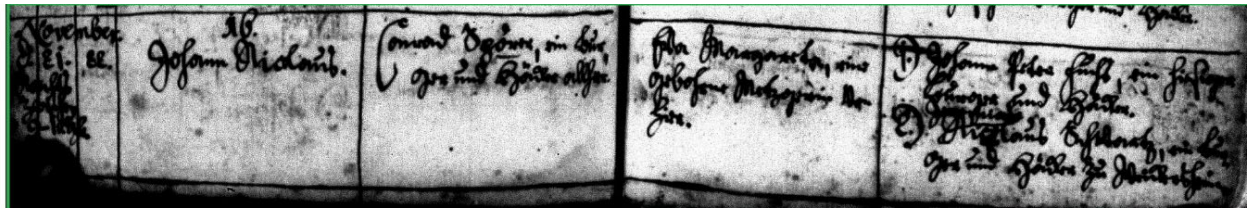
⁵⁹ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1780-1834, page 7, marriage of Johann Nicolaus Spörer to Anna Catharina Dürr (29 Apr 1783); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 34.

Translation:

2.) Johann Nicolaus Spörer, newly established common subject and vineyard worker in Niederrimbach, the deceased Johann Conrad Spörer's, princely Hohenlohe subject and vineyard worker in Schäftersheim surviving legitimate unmarried son and Anna Catharina Dürr, the deceased Johann Georg Dürr's, also a common subject and vineyard worker in Niederrimbach surviving legitimate still unmarried daughter were on Palm Sunday, Easter, and Quasi modo geneti [Octave of Easter] to the memory of Niederrimbach publicly proclaimed and after delivery of official attestations and a proclamation document from the the honorable parish of Schäftersheim Tuesday the 29th of April 1783 in the parish church in Niederrimbach after our Lutheran church rites, married and blessed.

The marriage confirms the bride's and groom's father's names, matching the information in their family register, but it is silent about the identity of their mothers. The family register only gives the first name of Barbara for Anna Catharina's mother. The family register also lists a second marriage in 1802 for Anna Catharina Dürr, to a Johann Michael Beck, who soon left her without a trace, with no further children.

Image 3. Birth of Johann Nicolaus Spörer⁶⁰



Transcription

November. d. 21. 22. Nachts zwischen 9-10. Uhr	16. Johann Nicolaus.	Conrad Spörer, ein Bürg., ger und Häcker allhier.	Eva Margareta, eine gebohrne Metzgerin von hier.	1.) Johann Peter Fuchs, ein hieseger Bürger und Häcker. 2.) Johann Nicolaus Schwartz, ein Bürg., ger und Häcker zu Weikersheim.
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Translation

November. the 21. 22. At night between 9-10. o'clock	16. Johann Nicolaus.	Conrad Spörer, a citizen and vineyard worker from here.	Eva Margareta, one born Metzger from here.	1.) Johann Peter Fuchs, a resident citizen und Häcker. 2.) Johann Nicolaus Schwartz, a citizen and vineyard work in Weikersheim.
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⁶⁰ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim (Schäftersheim, Württemberg, Germany), Kirchenbuch, 1556-1876, Bd. 1, Taufen 1560-1753, page 607, Johann Nicolaus Spörer birth (21 Nov 1753); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 1. DOC 53.

The original birth record for Johann Nicolaus Spörer helps to confirm his birth and parentage. He was born 21 November 1753 in Schäftersheim, son of Johann Conrad Spörer and Eva Margaretha Metzger, both of Schäftersheim. (See Image 3.) He died 20 October 1800 in Niederrimbach, age 46.⁶¹ Anna Catharina Dürr was born in Niederrimbach 19 November 1755, daughter of Johann Georg Dürr of Niederrimbach and mother Barbara.⁶² Her mother's surname is not given in either the family register or her original birth record. She died on 13 April 1834 in Niederrimbach at age 78.⁶³

The family register lists four children, whose information is proved and expounded in original records:

- Johann Georg, born 26 March 1790,⁶⁴ married in Niederrimbach 1) Anna Maria Kiesecker 31 July 1814⁶⁵ and 2) Anna Margaretha Hertlein 4 May 1823,⁶⁶ emigrated to America 7 July 1852.⁶⁷ This is the father in the first generation.
- Anna Barbara, born 21 June 1792,⁶⁸ married in Creglingen 1) Johann Nicolaus Müller 12 April 1826⁶⁹ and 2) Johann Michael Daib 5 June 1833,⁷⁰ died 27 November 1861 in Niederrimbach.⁷¹
- Maria Veronica, born 2 November 1794,⁷² died 24 January 1795.⁷³ [age 1]
- Joh. Georg Leonhard, born 19 May 1796,⁷⁴ died 16 December the same year.⁷⁵ [age ~7 months]

⁶¹ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1780-1834, page 33, Johann Nicolaus Spörer death (20 Oct 1800); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 52.

⁶² Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1698-1779, page 66, Anna Catharina Dürr birth (19 Nov 1755); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 2. DOC 35.

⁶³ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, page 44, Anna Catharina Spörer death (13 Apr 1834); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7. DOC 36.

⁶⁴ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd.2 Taufen 1780-1826, page 32, Johann Georg Spörer birth (26 Mar 1790); FHL microfilm 1732387, item 3. DOC 29.

⁶⁵ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 6, Heiraten 1808-1876, page 6, Johann Georg Spörer and Anna Maria Kiesecker marriage (31 Jul 1814); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 7. DOC 12.

⁶⁶ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 8, Familienregister I, page 234. DOC 13.

⁶⁷ Mergentheim (Württemberg). Oberamt, Auswanderungsakten, 1835-1902, Bd. 310-321a (1835-1896), year 1852, entry 86. DOC 32.

⁶⁸ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1780-1826, page 40, Anna Barbara Spörer birth (21 Jun 1792); FHL microfilm 1732387, item 3. DOC 37.

⁶⁹ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 4, Heiraten 1780-1834, page 16, Anna Barbara Spörer and Johann Nicolaus Müller marriage (12 Apr 1826); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 38.

⁷⁰ "Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500-1985," database online, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/61023/1732356-00175> : accessed 4 Nov 2016), marriage of Johann Michael Daib and Anna Barbara Müller, born Spörer (5 Jun 1833); citing Evangelische Kirche Creglingen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 9, Heiraten 1833-1875, page 5; FHL microfilm 1,732,356, item 3. DOC 43.

⁷¹ "Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500-1985," database online, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/61023/1732357-00387> : accessed 4 Nov 2016), Anna Barbara Daib (born Spörer) death (27 Nov 1861); citing Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 12, Tote 1831-1876, unnumbered page; FHL microfilm 1,732,357, item 2. DOC 42.

⁷² Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1780-1826, page 46, Maria Veronika Spörer birth (2 Nov 1794); FHL microfilm 1732387, item 3. DOC 44.

⁷³ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1780-1834, page 20, Maria Veronika Spörer death (24 Jan 1795); FHL microfilm 1732387, item 3. DOC 45.

⁷⁴ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1780-1826, page 91, Johann Georg Leonhard Spörer birth (19 May 1796); FHL microfilm 1732387, item 3. DOC 46.

⁷⁵ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1780-1834, page 25, Johann Georg Leonhard Spörer death (9 Jul 1796); FHL microfilm 1732387, item 3. DOC 47.

As they were married in 1783 and their first child listed in the family register was born in 1790, searched for additional children to this couple, going back to four years before their marriage. Two additional children were born in Niederrimbach that died in infancy:

- Maria Kunigunda, born 3 February 1784,⁷⁶ died 21 March 1784⁷⁷ [age 6 ½ weeks]
- Johann Georg, born 4 November 1788,⁷⁸ died 6 November 1788⁷⁹ [age 2 days]. (This child is the namesake of his younger brother, Johann Georg Spörer the father in the first generation.)

Five years prior to the oldest child were already searched without finding others. There were also no other children found for this couple in a search after the birth of the youngest child in 1796 until nine months after the October 1800 death of the father Johann Nicolaus Spörer.⁸⁰

Generation Two Summary

Research in this generation established that Johann Nicolaus Spörer was born on 21 November 1753 in Schäftersheim, the son of Johann Conrad Spörer and Eva Margaretha Metzger, as documented by family registers and original parish registers in Niederrimbach and Schäftersheim. His original marriage record confirms that Johann Nicolaus Spörer married Anna Catharina Dürr on 29 April 1783 in Niederrimbach, not in 1789, as the family register erroneously indicates.

Johann Nicolaus and his wife had six children born in Niederrimbach, only four of whom are included in the family register. These were confirmed by searching original parish registers. Two additional children were found by searching the original births in the gap between their 1783 marriage and the first known child. Of their six children, four died in infancy, including the two that had been omitted from the family register. Their deaths are also documented by original parish records. One of those was an elder Johann Georg, for whom the Johann Georg in generation one was named. The only other surviving child was Anna Barbara, born 21 June 1792, who married twice and died at the age of 69 in Niederrimbach. The father in this generation, Johann Nicolaus, died 20 October 1800 in Niederrimbach. His wife died 12 April 1834, also in Niederrimbach.

⁷⁶ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1780-1826, page 9, Maria Kunigunda Spörer birth (3 Feb 1784); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 50.

⁷⁷ "Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500–1985," database online, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/61023/1732387-00489?pid=16174627> : accessed 23 Feb 2016), Maria Kunigunda Spörer death (21 Mar 1784); citing Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1780-1834, page 5; FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 51.

⁷⁸ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1780-1826, page 26, Johann Georg Spörer birth (4 Nov 1788); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 48.

⁷⁹ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1780-1834, page 9, Johann Georg Spörer death (6 Nov 1788); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 49.

⁸⁰ "Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500–1985," database online, *Ancestry.com* (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61023> : accessed 23 Feb 2016), negative search for births to Johann Nicolaus Spörer and Anna Catharina Dürr 1796-1801; citing Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1780-1826; FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3.

Generation Three – Johann Conrad Spörer

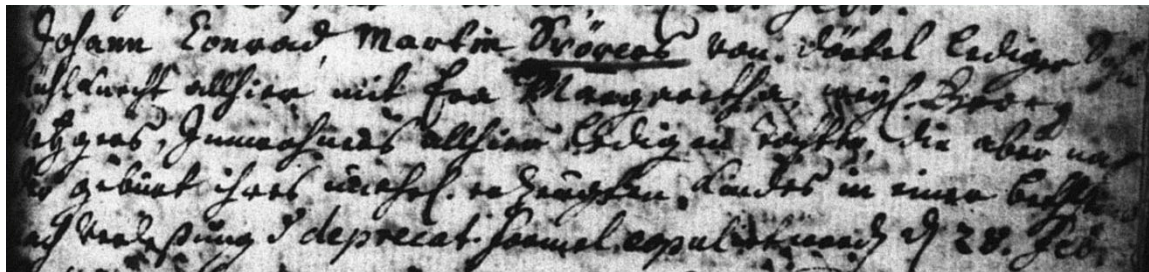
Johann Conrad Spörer and Eva Margaretha Metzger

Johann Conrad Spörer and Eva Margaretha Metzger are proven as the parents of Johann Nicolaus Spörer in original records. Johann Nicolaus' birth record in Schäftersheim gives his father as Conrad Spörer and his mother as Eva Margaretha Metzger.⁸¹ Johann Nicolaus's Niederrimbach family register clarifies that his father's name was Johann Conrad Spörer.⁸² This is also confirmed in his marriage record, which adds that his father was deceased by the time of Nicolaus' marriage in 1783.⁸³

There is no family register for Johann Conrad's family as the Schäftersheim registers do not begin until 1776.⁸⁴ With the aid of an Ortsfamilienbuch (town lineage book),⁸⁵ this couple and their children were researched in the original parish registers of Schäftersheim.

Johann Conrad married Eva Margaretha Metzger in Schäftersheim on 28 February 1748. He was son of Martin Spörer from Dörtel and she was the daughter of the deceased Georg Metzger of Schäftersheim. The mothers' names are not given. The original marriage indicates they were not previously married, but they had a child born out of wedlock. (See Image 4.)

Image 4. Marriage of Johann Conrad Spörer⁸⁶



Transcription

Johann Conrad, Martin Spörer's von. Dörtel lediger Sohn
Mühlknecht allhier mit Eva Margaretha, wey. Georg
Metzgers, Inwohnern allhier ledigen Tochter, die aber nach
der Geburt ihres unehel. Erzeugten Kindes in einr Bethaus
nach verlassung d deprecat. Formel copulirt word. d 28. Febr. [1748].

⁸¹ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1560-1753, page 607. DOC 53.

⁸² Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 8, Familienregister I, page 232. DOC 30.

⁸³ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1780-1834, page 7, Johann Nicolaus Spörer to Anna Catharina Dürr marriage (29 Apr 1783); FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 34.

⁸⁴ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 7, Seelenregister 1767-1870, negative search for Johann Conrad Spörer family; FHL microfilm 1,732,408, item 4.

⁸⁵ Helmut Walz, Schäftersheimer Familien : Aufzeichnungen 1556 bis 1910 (Nürnberg: Gesellschaft für Familienforschung in Franken, 2006), (Deutsche Ortssippenbücher. Reihe A; Bd. 293), page 291; FHL Call no. 943 B4do ser. A v. 293. DOC 54.

⁸⁶ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1556-1752, page 187, Johann Conrad Spörer and Eva Margaretha Metzger marriage (28 Feb 1748); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 2. DOC 67.

Translation

Johann Conrad, Martin Spörer's from Dörtel bachelor son
mill servant here with Eva Margaretha, the deceased Georg
Metzger's, an inhabitant here legitimate daughter, who however after
the birth of their illegitimate child in a prayer house
after forsaking their deprecation were formally married the 28 February [1748].

Johann Conrad Spörer's Birth and Parentage

Johann Conrad Spörer was born ca. 16 July 1713, based on his age of 58 years, 6 months, and 14 days at his 30 January 1772 death in Schäftersheim.⁸⁷ His birth record is not found in Schäftersheim.⁸⁸ His 1748 marriage record in Schäftersheim said his father's name was Martin Spörer from Dörtel, so Johann Conrad was likely born there.⁸⁹ However, there was a major problem to overcome: the birth records for the parish of Wachbach, which includes Dörtel, are missing for the years 1694-1730, almost two decades on either side of Johann Conrad's birth. Proving his birth date and place beyond the indirect evidence given in his marriage and death records would likely not be possible. Proving his parentage would not be impossible, but it would be the most difficult part of this research project, requiring an exhaustive search in records of multiple candidate parents and other relatives across multiple generations and parishes, applying indirect evidence and detailed analysis. This research is outlined in Generation Four.

Eva Margaretha Metzger's Birth and Parentage

Eva Margaretha Metzger was born ca. 25 September 1724, based on her age of 79 years, 3 months, and 18 days at the time of her 12 January 1804 death in Schäftersheim.⁹⁰ Though her father, Georg Metzger, deceased by the time of her marriage, lived in Schäftersheim, Eva Margaretha original birth record is not found there. Serendipity (or divine intervention) played a role in proving her birth and parentage though a piece of secondary evidence found quite unexpectedly.

The discovery was made while searching for the original birth records of her and Johan Conrad's children, including checking the gaps for additional children not found in the Ortsfamilienbuch. At the end of the Schäftersheim births/christenings from 1560-1753 there were, as is often the case, some miscellaneous end papers. In rapidly searching for the children in this family, the first impulse was to skip these end papers and move on to the next item, because they are difficult to read,⁹¹ with little chance of any benefit as they usually do not contain relevant information. Such end papers might have a note about some visitation of a higher religious authority, or about repairs made to the church, or merely some documentation attesting to the authenticity of the foregoing records. There did not seem to be a point to search them, but the thought came to check them anyway. Despite some initial resistance, the idea to check them persisted and prevailed.

⁸⁷ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1754-1837, page 396, Conrad Spörer death (30 Jan 1772); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3. DOC 72.

⁸⁸ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen, 1560-1753, negative search for birth of Johann Conrad Spörer in 1713; FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 1.

⁸⁹ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1556-1752, page 187. DOC 67.

⁹⁰ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1754-1837, page 453, Eva Margaretha Spörer death (12 Jan 1804); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3. DOC 73.

⁹¹ In fact, the camera operator had marked these images as "Schwer lesbar."

Surprisingly, the first document in the end papers contained a secondary birth record for Eva Margaretha Metzger, the mother in this family. The document explains that she was born 27 Sep 1724 in Schireupihn, Lithuania to parents Georg Metzger and Margaretha Hoffmann, of [Nieder] Rimbach. Her parents had moved to Lithuania earlier that same year but returned to Germany in 1726 and after two years (in 1728) came to live in Schäftersheim. The document was signed on 9 Feb 1735.⁹² Interestingly, her father died just two weeks after this document was signed, on 24 Feb 1735, at age 38.⁹³ Eva Margaretha Spörer (nee) Metzger died in Schäftersheim on 12 Jan 1804 at age 79 years, 3 months, and 16 days, matching her birth date given in the secondary birth record.⁹⁴

Children of Johann Conrad and Eva Margaretha

Johann Conrad and Eva Margaretha had seven children, all born in Schäftersheim, as listed in the Ortsfamilienbuch and documented in original records. They were:

- Maria Barbara, born 7 January 1748.⁹⁵ Her original birth record indicates she was born out of wedlock. Information on a marriage or death was not found.^{96 97} She may have left the parish.
- Anna Maria, 26 October 1749,⁹⁸ married Johann Andreas Meister on 23 August 1785 in Oberstetten,^{99 100} died on 6 February 1819 in Oberstetten.¹⁰¹

⁹² Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1560-1753, page 521, secondary birth document for Eva Margaretha Metzger (born 27 Sep 1724); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 1. DOC 63. The document gives the mother's origin as "Rimbach." Her original birth record is found in 1688 in Niederrimbach: Evangelische Kirche Creglingen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen (Niederrimbach) 1633-1732, page 364, Margaretha Hoffman birth (? Mar 1688); FHL microfilm 1,732,353, item 7. DOC 75. This matches her age at death of 61 years 3 months and 14 days: Source: Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1690-1754, page 364, Margaretha Metzgerin death (17 Jan 1749); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 2. DOC 68.

⁹³ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1690-1754, page 321, Georg Metzger death (24 Feb 1735); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 2. DOC 69.

⁹⁴ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1754-1837, page 453. DOC 73.

⁹⁵ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1560-1753, page 450-451, Maria Barbara Spörer birth (7 Jan 1748); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 1. DOC 60.

⁹⁶ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1754-1837, negative search for death of Maria Barbara Spörer 1748-1837; FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3.

⁹⁷ "Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500-1985," database online, Ancestry.com (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61023> : accessed 7 Nov 2016), negative search for marriage of Maria Barbara Spörer 1763-1803; citing Lutherische Kirchenbücher, 1500-1985, Evangelisches Landeskirchenamt, Stuttgart, Deutschland.

⁹⁸ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1560-1753, page 466-467, Anna Maria Spörer birth (26 Oct 1749); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 1. DOC 61.

⁹⁹ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Heiraten 1754-1837, page 278, Johann Andreas Meister and Anna Maria Spörer marriage (23 Aug 1785); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3. DOC 77.

¹⁰⁰ "Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500-1985," database online, Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/61023/1732396-00230> : accessed 7 Nov 2016), marriage of Johann Andreas Meister and Anna Maria Spöhrerin (23 Aug 1785); citing Evangelische Kirche Oberstetten (Oberstetten, Württemberg, German), Kirchenbuch, 1601-1876, Bd. 4, Heiraten 1601-1876; FHL microfilm 1,732,396. DOC 78.

¹⁰¹ "Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500-1985," database online, Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/61023/1528614-00682> : accessed 7 Nov 2016), Anna Maria Meisterin death (6 Feb 1819); citing Evangelische Kirche Schrozberg (Schrozberg, Württemberg, Germany), Kirchenbuch, 1634-1961, Bd. 9, Tote 1771-1839; FHL microfilm 1,528,614, item 3. DOC 79.

- Johann Leonhart, born 11 February 1752,¹⁰² died 17 Dec 1752, age 10 months, 6 days¹⁰³
- Johann Nicolaus, born 12 November 1753,¹⁰⁴ married Anna Catharina Dürr 29 April 1783 in Niederrimbach,¹⁰⁵ died 20 October 1800 in Niederrimbach.¹⁰⁶ This is the father in Generation 2.
- Anna Margaretha, born 4 June 1756,¹⁰⁷ died 16 June 1756, age 18 days¹⁰⁸
- Johann Georg, born 7 June 1757¹⁰⁹ Information on a marriage or death was not found.^{110 111 112} He may have moved from the parish.
- Maria Magdalena, born 28 April 1760,¹¹³ married Georg Jacob Hoz on 8 October 1784 in Schäftersheim,¹¹⁴ died 23 March 1820 in Schäftersheim.¹¹⁵

The birth records were searched for 1743-1765, in the gaps between the children and five years before and after the oldest and youngest, but no other children were found for this family.^{116 117}

¹⁰² Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1560-1753, page 488-489, Johann Leonhart Spörer birth (11 Feb 1752); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 1. DOC 62.

¹⁰³ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1690-1754, page 373, Johann Leonhart Spörer death (17 Dec 1752); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 2. DOC 70.

¹⁰⁴ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1560-1753, page 607. DOC 53.

¹⁰⁵ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1780-1826, page 7. DOC 34.

¹⁰⁶ Evangelische Kirche Creglingen (Filiale Niederrimbach), Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1780-1834, page 33; FHL microfilm 1,732,387, item 3. DOC 52.

¹⁰⁷ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1754-1837, page 7, Anna Margaretha Spörer birth (4 Jun 1756); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3. DOC 64.

¹⁰⁸ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1754-1837, page 367, Anna Margaretha Spörer death (16 Jun 1756); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3. DOC 71.

¹⁰⁹ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1754-1837, page 9, Johann Goerg Spörer birth (7 Jun 1757); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3. DOC 65.

¹¹⁰ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1754-1837, negative search for death of Johann Georg Spörer 1757-1837; FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3.

¹¹¹ "Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500-1985," database online, Ancestry.com (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61023> : accessed 8 Nov 2016), negative search for death of Johann Georg Spörer (born 1757); citing Lutherische Kirchenbücher, 1500-1985, Evangelisches Landeskirchenamt, Stuttgart, Deutschland.

¹¹² "Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500-1985," database online, Ancestry.com (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61023> : accessed 7 Nov 2016), negative search for marriage of Johann Georg Spörer 1772-1813; citing Lutherische Kirchenbücher, 1500-1985, Evangelisches Landeskirchenamt, Stuttgart, Deutschland.

¹¹³ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1754-1837, page 15, Maria Magdalena Spörer birth (28 Apr 1760); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3. DOC 66.

¹¹⁴ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Heiraten 1754-1837, page 277, Jacob Hoz and Maria Magdalena Spörerin marriage (8 Oct 1784); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3. DOC 76.

¹¹⁵ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1754-1837, page 484, Maria Magdalena Hoz (nee Spörer) death (23 Mar 1820); FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3. DOC 74.

¹¹⁶ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1560-1753, negative search for additional children of Johann Conrad Spörer and Eva Margaretha Metzger 1743-1753; FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 1.

¹¹⁷ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Taufen 1754-1837, negative search for additional children of Johann Conrad Spörer and Eva Margaretha Metzger 1754-1765; FHL microfilm 1,732,407, item 3.

Generation Three Summary

Documenting the marriage and children in this generation was fairly straightforward, thanks in part to the presence of an Ortsfamilienbuch (town lineage book) for Schäftersheim and confirmed by original parish registers in Schäftersheim. Johann Conrad Spörer married Eva Margaretha Metzger in Schäftersheim on 28 February 1748. They had seven children. Two died in infancy. Three, including Johann Nicolaus of generation two, were married. The fate of the other two is as yet unknown as no marriage or death records could be found for them. It is possible that they both moved from the parish.

Johann Conrad and Eva Margaretha's birth and parentage would be harder to prove. Indirect evidence from his death and marriage record indicate he was born about 16 July 1713, the son of a Martin Spörer from Dörtel, also his likely birthplace. However, his birth falls in the middle of a thirty-seven year gap in the birth records of Wachbach parish, which includes Dörtel. The research to sort out which one of multiple Martin Spörers of Dörtel was his father, and to find his mother, is described in the fourth generation. Johann Conrad died on 30 January 1772 in Schäftersheim.

Eva Margaretha's birth on 27 Sep 1724 in Schireupihn, Lithuania, the daughter of Georg Metzger and Margaretha Hoffman, was proven by a secondary birth record found in the end papers of the later Schäftersheim birth records. This is corroborated by her death record on 12 Jan 1804, which gives her exact age. Her parents were colonists from Württemberg who lived in Lithuania only temporarily.

Generation Four – Martin Spörer

Which Martin Spörer was the Father in this Generation?

The thirty-seven-year gap in the Wachbach parish birth records meant that proving who the parents were in the fourth generation, the father and mother of Johann Conrad Spörer, would require indirect evidence. From his marriage record, it was known that his father was a Martin Spörer from Dörtel, but as it turned out, there was more than one person by that name from there. The lack of information about his mother would add further difficulty to determining which one was the father.

An exhaustive search was made for Spörers living in the Wachbach parish in the births 1638-1807 (minus the missing years of 1694-1730), marriages 1640-1807, and deaths 1687-1807.¹¹⁸ These were grouped into candidate families based on the clues provided in each record found. This effort was aided for the later years by compiled extracts of the births 1731-1807 and marriages and deaths 1694-1807¹¹⁹ verified against the original records. Records as late as 1807 were consulted in case of clues in the records of other candidate children and even grandchildren. Note that both the extracts and the originals were also checked for a second copy of Johann Conrad Spörer's marriage in the Wachbach records, as marriages were often recorded in both the bride's and groom's parishes, just in case it might hold further evidence of his parentage, but there was none found.¹²⁰

From this research, there were three Martin Spörer's found in Wachbach parish, all from Dörtel:

- Martin Spörer der Ältere (Sr.), born about 1635,¹²¹ married Barbara Hohlen 27 Jan 1657 in Wachbach,¹²² died 2 December 1708 in Dörtel.¹²³ It was easy to rule out this Martin Spörer as the father of Johann Conrad, because he died five years before Johann Conrad's 1713 birth.
- Martin Spörer der Jüngere (Jr.), born 13 December 1661 in Dörtel, son of Martin Spörer Sr. and Barbara Hohlen,¹²⁴ married Benigna Rosina Hertlein 9 August 1686 in Wachbach,¹²⁵ died 20 May

¹¹⁸ See details in "Research Log-Martin Spörer."

¹¹⁹ Max Cramer, *Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1604-1804 (Ettenhausen und Wachbach), Wachbach Taufen 1731-1807, Heiraten und Tote 1694-1807*; FHL microfilm 575,064.

¹²⁰ *Evangelische Kirche Wachbach (Wachbach, Württemberg, Germany), Kirchenbuch, 1623-1921, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1694-1749*, negative search for marriage of Johann Conrad Spörer on or around 28 Feb 1748; FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. Also: Max Cramer, *Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1604-1804 (Ettenhausen und Wachbach), Wachbach Heiraten 1694-1750*, negative search for marriage of Johann Conrad Spörer; FHL microfilm 575,064.

¹²¹ *Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749*, page 250, Martin Spörer death (2 Dec 1708); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. Gives his age as 74 years, less 3 months. DOC 88.

¹²² *Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Heiraten 1623-1693*, page 129b, marriage of Martin Spörer and Barbara Hohlen (27 Jan 1657); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 1. DOC 95.

¹²³ *Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749*, page 250. DOC 88.

¹²⁴ *Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-1693*, page 68, Martin Spörer birth (13 Dec 1661); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 1. DOC 96.

¹²⁵ *Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Heiraten 1627-1693*, page 140, Martin Spörer and Benigna Rosina Hertlein marriage (9 Aug 1686); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 1. DOC 94.

1729 in Dörtel.¹²⁶ He could possibly be the father, because he was still living in 1713, although at age 51, he was relatively old.

- Johann Martin Spörer, born 18 January 1687 in Dörtel, son of Martin Spörer der Jüngere (Jr.) and Benigna Rosina,¹²⁷ married Sophia, widow of Andreas Ehrmann of Herbsthausen, 16 August 1718 in Wachbach. The marriage indicated he was the oldest son of Martin Spörer.¹²⁸ At age 26 when Johann Conrad was born, he is also a candidate to be the father, though his marriage was five years later.

Initially, there was some question as to whether Johann Martin Spörer, married in 1718, oldest son of Martin Spörer of Dörtel was in fact the same person as the Martin Spörer born in 1687, son of Martin Spörer Jr. and Benigna Rosina. While this would eventually be proven in the course of the research, there was sufficient indirect evidence already to conclude this. As there were no other children born to Martin Spörer Jr. and Benigna Rosina prior to Martin's birth in 1687, he was indeed their oldest son.¹²⁹ If they were not the same person, Johann Martin would have had to have been born in 1694 or later, during the gap in the birth records, and be the son of the Martin who was born in 1687,¹³⁰ but at age 31 in 1718, that Martin was too young to have a married son.¹³¹ Furthermore, in the exhaustive search of extant Wachbach records mentioned previously, there was no evidence to suggest that there was a fourth Martin Spörer family in this parish in this time period.¹³²

In an effort to prove whether Martin Spörer Jr. or Johann Martin Spörer was the father of Johann Conrad Spörer, each was documented insofar as possible, including tracing their children in some cases and even some grandchildren through to their deaths, hoping for any evidence to point either way.

Evidence for Johann Martin Spörer

Johann Martin Spörer would have been 26 at the time of Johann Conrad's birth in 1713, making him a plausible candidate to be Johann Conrad's father, though he could have also been his oldest sibling.

¹²⁶ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1694-1749, page 285, Martin Spörer death (20 May 1729); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. DOC 90.

¹²⁷ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-1693, page 9, Martinus [Martin] Spörer birth (18 Jan 1687); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 1. DOC 92.

¹²⁸ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1694-1749, page 167, Johann Martin Spörer and Sophia Ehrmann marriage (16 Aug 1718); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. The marriage record indicates he was the oldest son of Martin Spörer. DOC 80.

¹²⁹ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-[1693] negative search for children of Martin Spörer Jr. and Benigna Rosina 1675-1686; FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 1. Searched 12 years prior to the birth of Martin Spörer born in 1687.

¹³⁰ The only other Martin in this time and place was Martin Spörer Sr., who would have been 93 in 1718 had he still been living. He could not have been the father of Johann Martin because his son was Martin Jr. who was still married to Benigna Rosina at the time of Johann Martin's marriage in 1718.

¹³¹ He would have been age 15-16 (or younger) at his son's birth and his son would also be marrying at age 15-16 or younger—both extremely unlikely.

¹³² In searching through the extant Wachbach parish registers, no marriage or death of another Martin Spörer was found in this time period, nor any death of a spouse of another Martin, nor any children. See "Research Log-Martin Spörer."

In Johann Conrad's marriage record, his father is referred to as simply Martin Spörer not Johann Martin,¹³³ but it was common for German men to go by only their second given name, especially when their first name was Johann. While Johann Martin's marriage lists both given names, his birth record included only the Latin name Martinus,¹³⁴ so he was also known simply as Martin Spörer.

Johann Martin was not married until 1718, five years after Johann Conrad's birth. It was possible Johann Conrad had been born out of wedlock. His marriage record says that he was the "lediger Sohn" (bachelor son) of Martin Spörer. It does not say he was illegitimate, however four out of five of the other grooms whose marriages are recorded on the same page say, "ehel. lediger Sohn" (legitimate bachelor son).¹³⁵ The omission of "ehel." for Johann Conrad could possibly imply that he was not legitimate. If so, it would strengthen the case for Johann Martin as the father, as Johann Conrad born was prior to Johann Martin's marriage and at a time when Martin Jr. was still married. However, this is very indirect and rather weak evidence.

Another indirect clue that Johann Martin could be the father was that Johann Conrad's father is not indicated as deceased in his 1748 marriage record, whereas his wife's father is, as are several of the fathers of others married on the same page.¹³⁶ It could be that Johann Conrad's father was still alive or that the priest simply failed to indicate whether he was deceased. It could also be that the priest forgot to ask, and as Martin was from Dörtel, the priest in Schäfersheim may not have had personal knowledge of his condition. Whether he was living or dead in 1748 could make a difference, as Martin Jr. was known to have died in 1729.¹³⁷ That said, it was not yet known whether Johann Martin was still living in 1748 himself as there was no death record found for him in the Wachbach records.¹³⁸

Another possibility is that Johann Martin Spörer had a prior marriage, although no other marriage could be found for him in Wachbach.¹³⁹ Because his death was not found in Wachbach, nor any record of his children, whether from his known marriage or any other,^{140 141 142} it was evident that he moved elsewhere, probably to Herbsthausen, where his wife was from. It would be necessary to trace him to look for further evidence that might prove how he was related to Johann Conrad.

Herbsthausen was in the parish of Adolzhausen. Sure enough, Johann Martin was found there with his wife Sophia. Their Wachbach marriage is also recorded in the Adolzhausen records. It names him as

¹³³ Evangelische Kirche Schäfersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1556-1752, page 187. DOC 67.

¹³⁴ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-1693, page 9. DOC 92.

¹³⁵ Evangelische Kirche Schäfersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1556-1752, page 187. DOC 67.

¹³⁶ Evangelische Kirche Schäfersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1556-1752, page 187. DOC 67.

¹³⁷ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1694-1749, page 285. DOC 90.

¹³⁸ Cramer, Max, Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1604-1808 (Ettenhausen and Wachbach), Wachbach Tote 1694-1807, negative search for death of Johann Martin Spörer; FHL microfilm 575,064.

¹³⁹ Cramer, Max, Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1604-1808 (Ettenhausen and Wachbach), Wachbach Heiraten 1694-1807, negative search for another marriage for Johann Martin Spörer; FHL microfilm 575,064.

¹⁴⁰ Cramer, Max, Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1604-1808 (Ettenhausen and Wachbach), Wachbach Taufen 1730-1807, negative search for children of Johann Martin Spörer; FHL microfilm 575,064. Albeit births were missing for 12 years after his 1718 marriage.

¹⁴¹ Cramer, Max, Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1604-1808 (Ettenhausen and Wachbach), Wachbach Heiraten 1694-1807, negative search for marriages of children of Johann Martin Spörer; FHL microfilm 575,064.

¹⁴² Cramer, Max, Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1604-1808 (Ettenhausen and Wachbach), Wachbach Tote 1694-1807, negative search for deaths of children of Johann Martin Spörer; FHL microfilm 575,064.

simply Martin Spörer and states that there was “1 Sohn”.¹⁴³ Was this a son from his wife’s prior marriage? Or was it his son, possibly even Johann Conrad? In fact, she did have two sons from her first marriage in 1713 to Georg Andreas Ehrmann:¹⁴⁴ Johann Michael Ehrmann, born in 1714¹⁴⁵ and Johann Martin Ehrmann, born in 1716 who apparently died in infancy. Fascinatingly, he was the namesake of his godparent, Johann Martin Spörer from Dörtel!¹⁴⁶

It seemed certain that the one son noted at Johann Martin Spörer’s marriage to Sophia was her four-year-old son from her first marriage, Johann Michael Ehrmann. Although it is intriguing to see that Johann Martin was already close enough to Sophia to be her child’s godparent two years before their marriage, if Johann Conrad had been with this family in Herbsthausen, the marriage would have noted two sons. In any case, it was clear that Sophia was not the mother of Johann Conrad, for if she had been seven months pregnant with a son by another man at her marriage to Georg Ehrmann, surely that marriage record would have made note of that. But there was no mention of any premarital impropriety in either of her two marriage records. It was still possible, however, that Johann Conrad could have been born to Johann Martin by another woman, and possibly living with her back in Dörtel.

As Johann Martin was already in the Adolzhausen parish to serve as godparent for his future wife’s son in 1716, it was possible he might have had a prior marriage there. The records of his marriage to Sophia do not indicate whether he was previously married or single. However, there was no marriage found for him in the Adolzhausen 1700-1718.¹⁴⁷ Just in case Johann Conrad might have been born there out of wedlock, checked the births for 1713, yielding nothing. Nor were there any births of any children born to Johann Martin Spörer there from 1700 to 1718.¹⁴⁸ There were also no deaths of a former spouse or children found in that time period.¹⁴⁹

Additional research on Johann Martin Spörer included finding his death on 1 April 1757 in Herbsthausen at age 70 years 3 months (born ca. Jan 1687), proving he is indeed the same as the Martin Spörer born 18 Jan 1687 in Dörtel, son of Martin Spörer Jr.^{150 151} This also proved that he was living in 1748, at the time of Johann Conrad’s marriage in 1748, though in Herbsthausen, not Dörtel. That said, Johann

¹⁴³ Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen (Adolzhausen, Württemberg, Germany), Kirchenbuch, 1579-1889, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1167-1741, page 700, Martin Spörer and Sophia Ehrmann marriage (16 Aug 1718 in Wachbach); FHL microfilm 1,732,350, item 2. DOC 98.

¹⁴⁴ Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1667-1741, page 692, marriage of Georg Andreas Ehrmann to Sophia Maroffska (30 May 1713); FHL microfilm 1,732,350, item 2. DOC 102.

¹⁴⁵ Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1656-1741, Johann Michael Ehrmann birth (13 Jun 1714); FHL microfilm 1,732,350, item 2. DOC 101.

¹⁴⁶ Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1656-1741, Johann Martin Ehrmann birth (2 Aug 1716); FHL microfilm 1,732,350, item 2. DOC 100. His birth record includes a cross with no date, indicating he likely died the same day, though no death record was found for him in the Adolzhausen death records. (Had he survived, as his older brother had, Sophia’s marriage would have listed two sons.)

¹⁴⁷ Cramer, Max, Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1558-1808, Adolzhausen Heiraten 1579-1807, negative search for Johann Martin Spörer 1700-1718; FHL microfilm 575,063, item 1.

¹⁴⁸ Cramer, Max, Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1558-1808, Adolzhausen Taufen 1579-1807, negative search for children of Johann Martin Spörer 1700-1718; FHL microfilm 575,063, item 1.

¹⁴⁹ Cramer, Max, Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1558-1808, Adolzhausen Tote 1662-1807, negative search for deaths of a former spouse or children of Johann Martin Spörer; FHL microfilm 575,063, item 1.

¹⁵⁰ Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1742-1801, page 358, Martin Spörer death (1 Apr 1757); FHL microfilm 1,732,350, item 3. DOC 106.

¹⁵¹ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-1693, page 9. DOC 92.

Conrad's marriage says his father was "von Dörtel" (from Dörtel),¹⁵² as opposed to "zu Dörtel" (in Dörtel), so it could still fit.

In the event that he was the father of the fourth generation, and also hoping to find any clue to his relationship to Johann Conrad, continued to search for information about his family, including his wife Sophia's death¹⁵³ and one son, Georg Martin Spörer,¹⁵⁴ a candidate to be a (half) sibling to Johann Conrad. A thorough search of the births of Georg Martin's children (grandchildren of Johann Martin) in Herbsthausen and Johann Conrad's children in Schäfersheim showed that neither of them appeared as a witness for each other's children. None of the records of Johann Martin's family yielded any further clues to the relationship to Johann Conrad.¹⁵⁵

Evidence for Martin Spörer der Jüngere (Jr.)

At age 51 at Johann Conrad Spörer's ca. 16 July 1713 birth, Martin Spörer Jr. was still capable of being the father, although it would seem less likely. His wife Benigna was 46,¹⁵⁶ which was rather old to be still having children, but not impossible. In fact, the couple were still having children when she was in her forties, as evidenced by the death of a stillborn child in 1707.¹⁵⁷

Johann Conrad's 1748 marriage record says that he was "Martin Spörers von Dörtel lediger Sohn" (bachelor son of Martin Spörer from Dörtel). On the one hand, it did not say "Johann Martin," on the other it also did not include "der Jüngere" (Jr.), but the omission of either does not necessarily prove anything. Johann Martin Spörer was also known simply as Martin Spörer at times. And Martin Spörer Jr. was also known simply as Martin Spörer, the "der Jüngere" designation being used when necessary to distinguish him from Martin Spörer der Ältere (Sr.), but otherwise could be omitted.

Martin Jr. and his wife Benigna both died in 1729, less than two months apart, she on 27 March¹⁵⁸ and he on 20 May.¹⁵⁹ As noted before, Johann Conrad's 1748 marriage does not indicate that his father was deceased even though other grooms and brides on the same page do. The omission might imply that his father was still living, which would disqualify Martin Jr., or it could have been an inadvertent omission.

Also as noted before, Johann Conrad's marriage does not say he was the legitimate son of Martin while other grooms and brides do state they were legitimate. Again, the omission does not prove that he was illegitimate as it could be that the priest just forgot to record the information. Martin Jr. was still a married man in 1713, so if he was the father, that would make Johann Conrad legitimate.

¹⁵² Evangelische Kirche Schäfersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1556-1752, page 187. DOC 67.

¹⁵³ Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1741-1801, Margaretha Sophia Spörer death (23 Feb 1758); FHL microfilm 1,732,350, item 2. DOC 105.

¹⁵⁴ Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Taufen 1656-1741, Georg Martin Spörer birth (14 Feb 1720); FHL microfilm 1,732,350. DOC 99.

¹⁵⁵ See "Research Log – Martin Spörer" for details.

¹⁵⁶ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-1693, page 71, Benigna Roßina Hertlein birth (7 Dec 1666); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 1. DOC 97.

¹⁵⁷ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749, page 244, Spörer stillborn child death (29 Jun 1707); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. DOC 87.

¹⁵⁸ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749, page 284, Benigna Rosina Spörer death (27 Mar 1729); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. DOC 89.

¹⁵⁹ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749, page 285, Martin Spörer death (20 May 1729); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2.

Johann Conrad's father was "von Dörtel." Martin Jr. resided his entire life in Dörtel while Johann Martin was originally from Dörtel, but had moved to Herbsthausen by 1718, about 30 years prior to Johann Conrad's marriage. This didn't necessarily strengthen the case for Martin Jr. The fact that it says "von" (from) rather than "zu" (in) could also point to Johann Martin, who was not in Dörtel by this time, but was indeed from there. This information may have more to do with communicating Johann Conrad's origin than where his father was currently residing. Presumably, at the time of Johann Conrad's birth, his father was living in Dörtel.

Hoping to find any further possible clues among witnesses or otherwise, consulted the birth, marriage, and death records of children of Martin Jr. found in Wachbach parish and even traced those who moved to other parishes. If he was the father, this information would be needed anyway for documenting the fourth generation. Even some records of grandchildren of Martin Jr. were found and checked for clues in the witnesses or otherwise. However, there was nothing in any of these records that might help prove or disprove the relationship to Johann Conrad.¹⁶⁰

Proof for the Right Martin Spörer

Researching in the church records of Wachbach and other parishes had so far yielded enough information to document three Martin Spörer families from Dörtel and to exclude one of them as the father of Johann Conrad. But so far, there was nothing but weak and inconclusive indirect evidence that might point to either Martin Spörer Jr. (born 1661) or Johan Martin Spörer (born 1687) as the father. If any proof was to be found, it would be necessary to consult archival sources beyond the parish registers.

The *Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek*, an online catalog of over 24 million objects in archives across Germany, was searched for documents that might contain any information about Johann Conrad Spörer's parentage. The Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg held a couple of promising-sounding archive files. One was a collection of Ehepakten (marriage pacts) from Dörtel for 1706-1809. Via correspondence with an archivist, searched this collection for a record of Johann Martin Spörer's marriage to Sophia Ehrmann, which in turn might mention if he had a prior son out of wedlock or a prior marriage. However, there was no marriage pact record found for this couple.¹⁶¹

Another item of interest in this archive was a Wachbach inventory of goods for Spörer heirs. A digital copy of twenty pages of these documents was obtained, but a thorough search yielded no evidence regarding Johann Conrad Spörer's parentage.¹⁶²

Finally, another archival record was found, from the Hohenlohe-Zentralarchiv Neuenstein, which looked very promising. The rather lengthy title of the item is: "Begangene Stupra (=Ehebruch mit einer ledigen

¹⁶⁰ See Research Log-Martin Spörer.

¹⁶¹ Dr. Maria-Magdalena Rückert, Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg (staludwigsburg@la-bw.de), to [Name withheld] [email address for private use], email, 26 March 2015, "Ehepakten Johann Martin Spörer und Maria Sophia Ehrmann;" citing "Ehepakten etc. von Dörtel," Deutscher Orden: Odenwäldisches Amt (Wachbach), 7. Testamente und Ehepakten, 1706-1809, negative search for Ehepakt for Johann Martin Spörer and Sophia Ehrmann (nee Maroffska); Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abt. Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg, B 340 Bü 115; Johann Martin Spörer File, Spörer 4 Generation Project, [Name withheld] Research Files; privately held by [Name withheld], [address for private use], [Place withheld]. DOC 112.

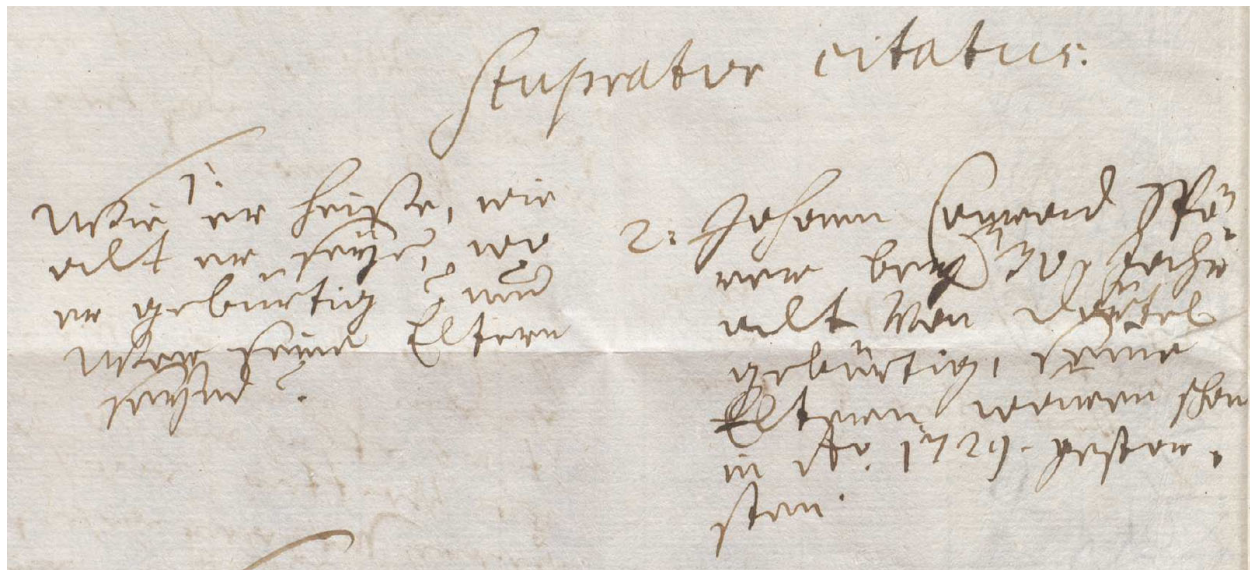
¹⁶² "Messung der Güter von Spörers Erben," Deutscher Orden: Odenwäldisches Amt (Wachbach), 8. Civilia von Wachbach, Prozessbeginn 1707-1760, negative search for information regarding Johann Conrad Spörer's parentage; Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abt. Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg, B 340 Bü 142. DOC 113.

Person) des Elias Barth von Neubronn, Bauernknecht zu Ebertsbronn, mit Anna Catharina Schuhmann, von Elpersheim gebürtig, Dienstmagd zu Ebertsbronn, und des Knechtes des Klostermüllers von Schäftersheim, Johann Conrad Spörer von Dörtel gebürtig, mit Eva Maria Metzger von Schäftersheim, deren Verheiratung und Strafe, 1747-1748." (Committed rape (=Adultery with an unmarried person) of Elias Barth of Neubronn, farm laborer in Ebertsbronn, with Catharina Schuhmann, born in Elpersheim, serving maid in Ebertsbronn, and the servant of the priory mill of Schäftersheim, Johann Conrad Spörer, born in Dörtel, with Eva Maria Metzger from Schäftersheim, their marriage penalty, 1747-1748.)

A digital copy of this twenty-two page case file was obtained from the archive and thoroughly searched. It contains information about two cases of fornication, the second one involving the parents of the third generation in this report, Johann Conrad Spörer and Eva Maria Metzger. They were already known from earlier research to have a child, Maria Barbara, born six months before their marriage and to have married "nach Verlassung d. deprecat." (after forsaking their deprecation), so these documents elaborate on that information. The file includes documentation of the charges of fornication and conceiving a child out of wedlock, their punishment including a fine, and the resolution of their situation by their marriage. Among the documents are affidavits of witnesses and a questionnaire.

These documents were searched thoroughly for any clues to Johan Conrad's parentage. While they are never mentioned by name, there is a response to one question in the questionnaire, dated 31 October 1747, that provides the conclusive indirect proof needed as to who his parents were. On the twelfth page of the file, there was this question with the accompanying response. (See Image 5.)

Image 5. Excerpt of Documents Regarding Johan Conrad Spörer Fornication¹⁶³



¹⁶³ "Begangene Stupra (=Ehebruch mit einer ledigen Person) des Elias Barth von Neubronn, Bauernknecht zu Ebertsbronn, mit Anna Catharina Schuhmann, von Elpersheim gebürtig, Dienstmagd zu Ebertsbronn, und des Knechtes des Klostermüllers von Schäftersheim, Johann Conrad Spörer von Dörtel gebürtig, mit Eva Maria Metzger von Schäftersheim, deren Verheiratung und Strafe, 1747-1748," We 41, 19. Weikersheimer Konsistorial- und Ehegerichtsakten 1743-1749, Schubl. 49, Fasz. 577, page 12; Kanzlei betreffend Amt Weikersheim II, Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Hohenlohe-Zentralarchiv Neuenstein. DOC 114.

Transcription

[Question:] Wie er heiße, wie alt er seye [sic], wo er gebürtig und wer seine Eltern seynd [sic]?

[Response:] Johann Conrad Spörer bey 30 Jahre alt von Dörtel gebürtig, seine Eltern waren schon in Ao. 1729 gestorben.

Translation

[Question:] What is his name, how old is he, where was he born and who are his parents?

[Response:] Johann Conrad Spörer around 30 years old¹⁶⁴ born in Dörtel, his parents had already died in the year 1729.

This was the needed proof that the parents of in this generation were Martin Spörer Jr. and Benigna Rosina Hertlein, as it had already been determined that they both died less than two months apart in the year 1729. While indirect, this is conclusive evidence as no other Martin Spörer of Dörtel died that year and none besides him had a wife who died that same year.

A review of all previously examined indirect evidence confirmed that it is consistent with this conclusion. There is nothing that is, in fact, inconsistent and each point of indirect evidence can be explained to fit into the context of Martin Spörer Jr. as the correct father.

Martin Spörer Jr. and Benigna Rosina Hertlein

In the process of establishing the correct parents in this generation, original records were found to prove their birth and marriage information. Martin Spörer Jr. was born 13 December 1661 in Dörtel, son of Martin Spörer Sr. and Barbara Hohlen.¹⁶⁵ Benigna Rosina Hertlein was born 7 December 1666 in Wachbach, daughter of Leonhardt Hertlein (or Härtlein) and Veronica Hohl.¹⁶⁶ They were married on 9 August 1686 in Wachbach.¹⁶⁷

As previously noted, Martin Jr. and his wife Benigna died in Dörtel less than two months apart, she on 27 March 1729¹⁶⁸ and he on 20 May 1729.¹⁶⁹

Children of Martin Spörer Jr. and Benigna Rosina Hertlein

The children of the parents in this generation were found during the process of researching the generational link between the third and fourth generation. Now that they are known to belong to this generation, their details can be provided. As some children were born during the gap in the Wachbach parish birth records, their birth information had to be proven with the help of secondary, indirect sources. Those born before 1694 could be proven directly with the original birth registers.

¹⁶⁴ Note that Johann Conrad's age given here is "about 30 years old," when he would actually have been 34. The questionnaire evidently wasn't meant to be precise about the age, for on the same question on page 11 of this document, for Eva Margaretha Metzger, who was 23, she was said to be "etlich und 20. Jahre" (twenty something years). Source: "Begangene Stupra ... des Klostermüllers von Schäfersheim, Johann Conrad Spörer von Dörtel gebürtig...", We 41, Schubl. 49, Fasz. 577, page 11; Kanzlei betreffend Amt Weikersheim II. DOC 114.

¹⁶⁵ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-1693, page 68. DOC 96.

¹⁶⁶ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-1693, page 71. DOC 97.

¹⁶⁷ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Heiraten 1627-1693, page 140. DOC 94.

¹⁶⁸ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749, page 284. DOC 89.

¹⁶⁹ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749, page 285. DOC 90.

The following are the eight children know to have been born to Martin Spörer Jr. and Benigna Rosina Hertlein, all in Dörtel:

- Johann Martin, born 18 January 1687,¹⁷⁰ married Margaretha Sophia Ehrmann (maiden name Maroffska) 16 Aug 1718 in Wachbach,^{171 172 173} died in Herbsthausen 1 April 1757 at age 70.¹⁷⁴ This is the Martin Spörer who had been the other candidate to be the father of Johann Conrad, but turned out to be his oldest sibling.
- Maria, born 24 September 1689,¹⁷⁵ married 1) Johann Barthel Ruck 13 August 1715 in Wachbach¹⁷⁶ and 2) Johann Paul Truffel 29 Jan 1721 in Neunkirchen,¹⁷⁷ died in Neunkirchen 3 February 1735.¹⁷⁸
- Maria Barbara, born 14 October 1693,¹⁷⁹ married Johann Barthel Leyßer 20 November 1731 in Wachbach,¹⁸⁰ died in Wachbach 17 March 1748.¹⁸¹
- Anna Sybilla, born about July 1699,¹⁸² married Johann Michael “Hans” Müßig 8 June 1728¹⁸³ in Wachbach, died 3 January 1754 in Unterkessach at age 54 ½. ¹⁸⁴ Her birth falls within the gap in the birth records of Wachbach, so her birth date is calculated from her age at death.

¹⁷⁰ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-1693, page 9. DOC 92.

¹⁷¹ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1694-1749, page 167. DOC 80.

¹⁷² Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1667-1741, page 700. DOC 98.

¹⁷³ Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1667-1741, page 692. Johann Martin Spörer's wife's first marriage provides her maiden name. DOC 102.

¹⁷⁴ Evangelische Kirche Adolzhausen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1742-1801, page 358. DOC 106.

¹⁷⁵ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-1693, page 92, Maria Spörer birth (24 Sep 1689); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 1. DOC 91.

¹⁷⁶ Evangelische Kirche Neunkirchen (Neunkirchen, Württemberg, Germany), Kirchenbuch, 1649-1876, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1695-1735, Barthel Ruck and Maria Spörer marriage (13 Aug 1715); FHL microfilm 1,732,385, item 3. DOC 81.

¹⁷⁷ Evangelische Kirche Neunkirchen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1695-1735, Johann Paul Truffel and Marria Ruck marriage (29 Jan 1721); FHL microfilm 1,732,385, item 3. DOC MS-5.

¹⁷⁸ Evangelische Kirche Neunkirchen, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1695-1735, Maria Truffel death (3 Feb 1735); FHL microfilm 1,732,385, item 3. DOC MS-7.

¹⁷⁹ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 1, Taufen 1623-[1693], page 143b, Maria Barbara Spörer birth (14 Oct 1693); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 1. DOC 93.

¹⁸⁰ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1694-1749, page 180, Barbara Spörer and Joh. Barthel Leyßer marriage (20 Nov 1731); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. DOC 83.

¹⁸¹ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749, Maria Barbara Leyser death (17 Mar 1748); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. DOC 110.

¹⁸² Evangelische Kirche Widdern (Widdern, Württemberg, Germany), Kirchenbuch, 1591-1908, Bd. 10, Tote 1664-1868, Anna Sybilla Müßig death (3 Jan 1754); FHL microfilm 2,271,087, item 2. DOC ASS-1.

¹⁸³ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1694-1749, page 177, Hanß Michel Müßig and Anna Sybilla Spörer marriage (8 Jun 1728); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. DOC 82.

¹⁸⁴ Evangelische Kirche Widdern, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 10, Tote 1664-1868, Anna Sybilla Müßig death (3 Jan 1754); FHL microfilm 2,271,087, item 2. DOC ASS-1.

- Anna Barbara, born about 22 September 1702, married Michael Hohl 3 July 1736 in Wachbach,¹⁸⁵ died 25 June 1770 in Wachbach, age 67 years, 9 months, 3 days.¹⁸⁶ Her birth date is also calculated from her death, due to the missing birth years.
- Stillborn daughter, 28 December 1705.¹⁸⁷ Found only in Wachbach deaths, as births are missing.
- Stillborn child, 29 Jun 1707.¹⁸⁸ Also found only in the deaths, due to the missing births.
- Johann Conrad, born about 16 July 1713, married Eva Margaretha Metzger 28 February 1748 in Schäftersheim,¹⁸⁹ died 30 January 1772 in Schäftersheim, age 58 years, 6 months, 14 days.¹⁹⁰ This is the father in the third generation. His birth date was also during the period of missing births, and is calculated from his age at death.

There were no other children found belonging to this family. The birth records for 1675-1693, including twelve years prior to the oldest child's birth, were already searched, finding none. Given the couple's ages, the six-year gap between children in 1707 and 1713 is not surprising nor would it be unexpected for Johann Conrad to be their last child. That said, given the missing birth records from 1694-1730, it is possible there could have been more children born then, but if so, they would had to have left the parish, because there were no marriages or deaths found in the Wachbach parish for other children in this family.¹⁹¹

Generation Four Summary

After extensive research of multiple Martin Spörer families and their posterity across multiple parishes, Martin Spörer Jr. and Benigna Rosia Hertlein were finally proven to be the parents of Johann Conrad Spörer. This was accomplished using secondary, indirect evidence in original archival records and parish registers, despite a thirty-seven-year gap in the birth records. Once the generational link had been proven, documenting the family was fairly straightforward as they had all been found in the process of researching that link. However, finding marriage and death information for some of the children required research in a few other parishes.

Martin Spörer Jr. was born 13 December 1661 in Dörtel, son of Martin Spörer Sr. and Barbara Hohlen. Benigna Rosina Hertlein was born 7 December 1666 in Wachbach, daughter of Leonhardt Hertlein (or Härtlein) and Veronica Hohl. They were married on 9 August 1686 in Wachbach.

Martin Jr. and Benigna Rosina had eight children who are well documented in the original parish registers of Wachbach and other parishes where some of them subsequently lived, despite the missing

¹⁸⁵ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1694-1749, page 186, Michael Hohl and Ana Barbara Spörer marriage (3 Jul 1736); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. DOC 84.

¹⁸⁶ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1750-1807, page 37, Anna Barbara Hohl death (25 Jun 1770); FHL microfilm 1,732,415, item 1. DOC 111.

¹⁸⁷ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749, page 240, Spörer stillborn daughter death (28 Dec 1705); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. DOC 86.

¹⁸⁸ Evangelische Kirche Wachbach, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Tote 1694-1749, page 244, Spörer stillborn child death (29 Jun 1707); FHL microfilm 1,732,414, item 2. DOC 87.

¹⁸⁹ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 2, Heiraten 1556-1752, page 187. DOC 67.

¹⁹⁰ Evangelische Kirche Schäftersheim, Kirchenbuch, Bd. 3, Tote 1754-1837, page 396. DOC 72.

¹⁹¹ Max Cramer, Evangelische Kirchenbuchauszüge, 1604-1804 (Ettenhausen und Wachbach), Wachbach Heiraten und Tote 1694-1807, negative searches for other candidate children of Martin Spörer Jr. among marriages and deaths (births missing 1694-1730); FHL microfilm 575,064.

birth records for five of them. Where birth records could not be found, marriage records (where applicable) and death records provided secondary, indirect proof of their birth dates as well as linking them to their parents. The oldest, Johann Martin, was researched thoroughly to rule him out as a candidate father in this generation, including finding his marriage and child. The youngest, Johann Conrad, is the father in the third generation, who moved to Schäftersheim. Besides these, there were four daughters who married, three of whom moved to other parishes, and two stillborn children.

Martin Jr. died on 20 May 1729 and Benigna died 27 March 1729, both in Dörtel.

Conclusion

The objective to trace four generations of Maria Ursula Spörer's paternal line, starting with her father Johann Georg Spörer, was successfully accomplished. Spouses and children in each generation were also documented, including information about their marriages and deaths, insofar as could be found. Maria Ursula, having been born at the Scheinhardsmühle in Nassau parish, traces her paternal line to Niederrimbach, in the parish of Creglingen for the first two generations, then to Schäftersheim in generation three, and to Dörtel, in the parish of Wachbach, in generation four and beyond.

Nearly all research conclusions were made using direct evidence in primary sources, with the aid of family registers for the first two generations and an Ortsfamilienbuch (town lineage book in the third). The generational link between the third and fourth generation proved to be the most difficult, as secondary and indirect evidence from multiple primary and secondary sources was required to overcome a thirty-seven year gap in Wachbach parish records. A summary for each of the four generations is provided at the end of each generational section above.

Future Research Recommendations

The following are possible avenues for future research on this family in each generation:

Generation One

- Johann Georg Spörer reportedly emigrated to America, however so far, no trace of him has been found after his 7 July 1852 emigration record in Bad Mergentheim. Efforts to find him in United States passenger and immigration records and exhaustive research in Hamburg records including passenger lists, residency and citizenship, city directories, and church and civil records have so far been negative. It would be interesting to find out if he ever succeeded in making it to America and, if so, what became of him there. However, as initial efforts have shown, this will likely entail a lot more negative searches before any evidence, if it exists, might be found.
- The one surviving child in this family, Maria Ursula Spörer, was married in Hamburg and had multiple children there. A promising avenue of future research would be to trace more of her descendants in Hamburg, as there are good records available there, both church and civil.

Generation Two

- Johann Nicolaus Spörer's wife, Anna Catharina Dürr, married again after his death, but her husband left her soon afterward without a trace. This could be an avenue for further research to determine what became of him and why he did not return. That said, as the priest and family in Niederrimbach never heard from him, that might be a difficult research problem.

- Anna Catharina Dürr's mother's name is only known as Barbara. Her surname is not given in Anna Catharina's birth, marriage, or family register. It is likely that Niederrimbach records could include records of her parents' marriage, as well as their births and deaths, which would give her maiden name. Searching for her possible siblings could also yield indirect evidence of her mother's maiden name.

Generation Three

- There are two children of Johann Conrad Spörer whose birth records were found, but no marriage or death information. It may be that their death records are missing, or they may have moved from the parish and married and died elsewhere. If so, finding them would require a search in other parishes, looking for marriage and death records. This would be made easier by the fact that the Württemberg parish registers are now indexed online on Ancestry.
- Johann Conrad's wife, Eva Margaretha Metzger, was born in Schireupihn, Lithuania. Future research might include locating her original birth record there, if records exist. Finding records would require researching the history of this place, including where it is located today. It might also be interesting to try to document more of the family's move to and from there and the broader historical context for this short-lived colonization.

Generation Four

- In the fourth generation, there are some large gaps between the known children. It is possible that there could have been additional children born during the period of missing birth years in the Wachbach parish registers, and who moved from the parish prior to their marriage or death. If so, finding them would require a search in other parishes, looking for marriage and death records that could link them back to this family in Dörtel. The Württemberg parish registers database on Ancestry would help, but unlike the two children in generation three, their given names are not known, if they existed at all, so this would not be an easy task.
- In researching to prove which of the Martin Spörers was the father in this generation, Martin Spörer Jr.'s parents were found, as well as several apparent siblings. This information is in the Research Log for Martin Spörer. It would be fairly simple to complete the research on this family to extend it a fifth generation and possibly even a sixth. As the records for Wachbach begin in 1623, that's as far as it is likely to go.

Beyond these opportunities, there is also good potential, given the availability of records, to research the maternal lines extending from each generation as well as to trace descendants from collateral lines in each, if desired. While the missing years of Wachbach births would present some difficulty for a significant period, there are ample other records to enable family relationships to be constructed using secondary sources and indirect evidence where necessary.