

# The Proof Argument for the Pedigree of Peter Thomas or The Breaking of Another Brick Wall

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Brick walls are those points in our pedigree where the trail goes cold. There is usually little information to work with, and we are ready to concede that we probably will never advance the pedigree beyond that person. All is not lost though. Using patience and perseverance, such barriers can be removed. In this paper, I'll describe how the use of baptismal sponsors saved the day as I traced back my family history.

Building the family line from my parents back to Johannes Peter Thomas of Bethel Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, was not a great challenge. Using baptism records, wills, cemetery records, and census information, the links fell into place. They are not the main story I want to tell here (although you can view the proof for those generations in Appendix A). The story is how the research continued.

Johannes Peter Thomas would have been commonly referred to as Peter Thomas according to old German naming practices. Peter Thomas was married to an Eva Maria Sip on 6 April, 1760, in Bethel, Berks County, Pennsylvania, according to the records of Rev. John Casper Stoever<sup>1</sup>. There were 10 children baptized by this couple at the Atoltheo [Altalaha] Lutheran Church, Rehrersburg, Berks County<sup>2</sup>. A fellow researcher<sup>3</sup> passed on information he had found showing Dietrich Six was the father of Eva Maria. This was verified with some additional information. The will of Dietrich Six<sup>4</sup>, dated 3 May 1770, mentions a son-in-law Peter Domas (the surnames Domas and Thomas being interchangeable in the German language of that era). The baptism of Peter and Eva Maria's daughter Maria Margaretha shortly after her birth (17 October, 1762), was sponsored by a Fitrich Sin and wife<sup>5</sup>. This was most likely Dietrich Six, completing the case for Peter Thomas being married to Eva Maria Six.

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<sup>1</sup> Misc. Records of Rev. John Casper Stoever, *Family Archives CD #129 (Church Records: Adam, Berks & Lancaster Counties, Pennsylvania, 1729-1881)*, Version 2.0, (Genealogy.com, LLD, 1999) Record ID: 281199.

<sup>2</sup> F. Edward Wright, Berks County, Vol. 4, *Family Archives CD #166 (Church Records: Selected Areas of Pennsylvania 1600s-1800s)*, CD-ROM, Version 2.0, (Brøderbund Software, Inc., Novato, CA, 1997), based on *Berks County, Pennsylvania Church Records of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Vol. 4, (Westminster, Maryland: Family Line Publications, 1994), Atoltheo Lutheran Church, 27-463. [Hereafter referred to as Atoltheo Church records.]

<sup>3</sup> Mark Thomas, Florida, 28 November, 1999, email.

<sup>4</sup> Estate file for Dietrich Six, Register of Wills/Clerk of the Orphan's Court, Berks County Services Center, Reading, Pennsylvania.

<sup>5</sup> Atoltheo Church Records, 30. (Note regarding name spelling: Records had been both translated and transcribed from handwritten records in German, allowing possible errors to be introduced.)

Based on the contents of his estate file<sup>6</sup>, Peter Thomas died intestate before 23 December 1789 (date bond was paid for the administrators, wife Eva Maria and son Christian). The file documents mention 9 of the 10 children by name, with Johannes being the missing child. Presumably, he died before Peter. Following Peter's death, the family migrated to Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, based on analysis of baptismal records of Himmel's Church<sup>7, 8</sup>, Washington Township, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania. Two different transcriptions of the tombstones in the cemetery of Himmel's Church<sup>9</sup> shows graves for both Christian and Eva Maria. Eva Maria is erroneously listed in both transcriptions as the wife of Christian, but the dates show Eva Maria 19 years older than Christian (consistent with Peter and Eva Maria's marriage date) and the graves appear to be one position apart (not together). Dates listed for Eva Maria are 5 November 1742 – 7 July 1817. Thus, the birth date for Peter would normally be expected to fall in the 1735 to 1742 range.

To summarize, at this point there were no firm birth or death dates known for Peter, but the general timeframes were established. The first actual record of Peter was his marriage in 1760. There was no information on the parents, or when he came to America (although various Peter Thomas' appeared in ship records). Examination of baptismal sponsors did not show any Thomas relatives (Thomas surname).

The next step was to survey the various Thomas lines in the general area. There were several Thomas lines in Berks, Lebanon and Lancaster Counties, and one in Maryland. All of these were fairly well documented, and no unaccounted for Peters were found. A line of Moravian Thomas' in Lancaster County appeared to have the most promise. Two brothers had immigrated, Peter Thomas and Johannes Thomas. Of interest was the naming of this Peter Thomas' children, similar to the names used by the Peter Thomas being researched. However, none of the Peters in this line matched up. Likewise, the family of Michael Thomas in Maryland showed similar naming, with his son Christian Thomas of Frederick, Maryland, being Peter's possible father (as the Peter Thomas being researched named his first son Christian). No matching birth records could be found though.

Finally, after contacting a number of other researchers, a suggestion was made by Suzy Bettac of Texas that Peter may be the Peter Thomas arriving in Philadelphia on the ship Phoenix in 1754<sup>10</sup> along with a Gerhardt Thomas. The date lines up nicely with the

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<sup>6</sup> Estate file for Peter Thomas, Register of Wills/Clerk of the Orphan's Court, Berks County Services Center, Reading, Pennsylvania.

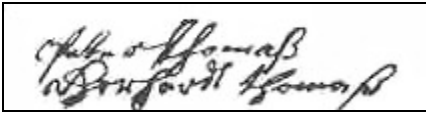
<sup>7</sup> Baptismal Records Himmel's Church, on-line file, contributed for use in USGenWeb by Bobbyetta Ganunis, <ftp://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/pa/northumberland/church/himbapt.txt>, downloaded 6/8/1999.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph A. Meiser, Jr. and Sarah Roadarmel Meiser, *A Genealogist's Guide to Burials in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania*, (Elysburg, PA: J.A. Meiser and S.R. Meiser, 1985-1990), microfiche, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, FHL US/CAN Fiche 6100178, page 236.

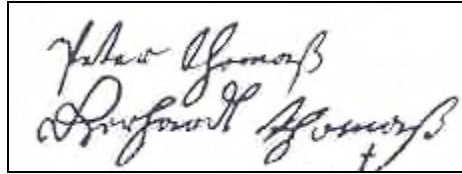
<sup>9</sup> Himmels Church Cemetery, on-line file, compiled by Ronald Updegrove and Arlen Snyder, USGenWeb, <http://searches1.roostweb.com/usgenweb/archives/pa/northumberland/cemeteries/himmorig.txt>, Row #9, persons 8 and 10, downloaded 11/1/2000.

<sup>10</sup> Strassburger, Ralph B., and Hinke, William John, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, Volumes 1 and 2, (Camden Maine, Picton Press, 1992).

marriage date of the Bethel Township Peter. There was no documented contact between Peter and Gerhardt after their arrival. Upon examination of published facsimile signatures from the ship lists, it was noticed the surname ended with the German double-S (ß) character (see Exhibits I and II.) There was only one other record with a signature found from the Bethel Twp. Peter Thomas, and that was the facsimile signature drawn by a clerk on the land purchase between Peter and Dietrich Six. This signature is shown in Exhibit III. Notice the same use of the double-S. This was relatively uncommon in colonial forms of the name, and strongly supports the Peter Thomas from Bethel Township being the Peter on the ship Phoenix with Gerhardt.



**Exhibit I - List 222 B**<sup>11</sup>



**Exhibit II - List 222 C**<sup>12</sup>



**Exhibit III - Deed Signature**<sup>13</sup>

In a book of 18<sup>th</sup> century emigrations from southwest Germany<sup>14</sup>, Professor Werner Hacker found a Johann Peter, Johann Gerhard, and Anna Elisabeth Thomas who emigrated together from Simmern in 1754. This matches the year of the ship record discussed previously. Furthermore, it provides a place of origin to Simmern, located in present day Rheinland-Pfalz. A review of the church records from Simmern<sup>15, 16</sup> produced several Peter Thomases, but none were good matches for the Peter of Bethel Township. No Gerhard Thomas was found either.

One observation commonly mentioned by more experienced researchers is that German emigrants rarely traveled alone. They liked to stay in groups, whether family or old friends from their former communities in Germany. So the next research step was to go back to the baptisms of Peter's children and reexamine the sponsors since they may be

<sup>11</sup> Strassburger, Ralph B., and Hinke, William John, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, Volume 2, (Camden Maine, Picton Press, 1992), 722.

<sup>12</sup> Strassburger, Ralph B., and Hinke, William John, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, Volumes 1 and 2, (Camden Maine, Picton Press, 1992), 730.

<sup>13</sup> Berks County, Pennsylvania, Deed Book, Volume 6, Berks County Recorder of Deeds, Berks County Services Center, Reading, Pennsylvania, 114-115.

<sup>14</sup> Professor Werner Hacker, *Eighteenth Century Register of Emigrants from Southwest Germany (to American and other countries)*, (Apollo, Pennsylvania: Closson Press, 1994), 456-457.

<sup>15</sup> Germany, Rheinland, Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirchenbuch, Simmern (KrSt. Simmern), 1616-1735, microfilm, FHL INTL 492970, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

<sup>16</sup> Germany, Rheinland, Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirchenbuch, Simmern (KrSt. Simmern), 1721-1797, microfilm, FHL INTL 492971, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

related or have long standing relationships with the family. A family line was developed for each sponsor to attempt to establish their relationship with Peter or Eva Maria Thomas. Many of the sponsors had connections to Graf/Grof families in the area. Perhaps this is the maiden name of Eva Maria's mother (the wife of Dietrich Six, for whom no information is known). Possible links for others could not be found. One such sponsor was Johannes Jacob Mühleissen and wife.

A quick search of the Internet for information on Jacob Mühleissen located a web site<sup>17</sup> giving some background on an emigrant from Pleizenhausen, Germany, to Pennsylvania in 1750. Pleizenhausen is a small village only a few kilometers from Simmern. Therefore, this clue was of high interest and proved to be a key to identifying where Peter Thomas came from.

A search of the Protestant church records of Pleizenhausen<sup>18, 19</sup> revealed a number of Thomas families. First, a Peter Thomas born in 1696 to Jacob and Elisabeth Thomas, and then various births to a Michael Thomas of Bergenhausen, a Nicholas Thomas in Rayerschied, and an Andreas Thomas (village unknown). On 2 May 1715, Peter Thomas (b. 1696) marries Anna Elisabetha Kurz<sup>20</sup>.

Peter and Anna Elisabetha Thomas had 11 children between 1716 and 1742. Among these children were daughters Maria Margaretha (born 1722<sup>21</sup>) and Anna Elisabetha (born 1724<sup>22</sup>), and sons Johannes Peter Thomas (born 1729), Johannes Peter Thomas (born 1736<sup>23</sup>), and "Henrich Geroth" Thomas (born 1732<sup>24</sup>; spelling of name shown as recorded). Of the two Peters, it is presumed the first died young although no such death record was found. There was no marriage or other subsequent information in the records for Peter, Geroth, and Anna Elisabeth. In fact, most of the area Thomas' were not mentioned after the 1750s, and none from this specific family. Of particular interest, however, was the record of the marriage of a Maria Margaretha Thomas (of Pleizenhausen) to Johann Jacob Mühleissen of Reisweiler<sup>25</sup> on 18 October 1746. This is most likely the daughter of Peter and Anna Elisabetha Thomas since no other Maria Margaretha Thomas's lived in Pleizenhausen at the time. Recall it was a Jacob Mühleissen who later sponsored the baptism of two children of Peter and Eva Maria Thomas in Berks County, Pennsylvania. It seems reasonable to assert this was Peter's sister and brother-in-law.

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<sup>17</sup> Web Site of Douglas R. Henry & Bonnie E. Hall, <http://www.ancestry.com>, contact: Douglas Henry ([douglasrhenry@yahoo.com](mailto:douglasrhenry@yahoo.com)), downloaded 8 March, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Germany, Rheinland, Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirchenbuch, Pleizenhausen (KrSt. Simmern), 1666-1805, microfilm, FHL INTL 492979, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

<sup>19</sup> Germany, Rheinland, Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirchenbuch, Pleizenhausen (KrSt. Simmern), 1732-1800, microfilm, FHL INTL 493980, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

<sup>20</sup> Pleizenhausen Kirchenbuch, 1666-1805, FHL INTL 492979, item 1, 91.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, item 2, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, item 2, 13.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, item 2, 45.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, item 2, 34.

<sup>25</sup> Pleizenhausen Kirchenbuch, 1732-1800, FHL INTL 493980, item 1, 18.

So where is Gerhardt Thomas? To complete the identification of this family group, it would be useful to have Gerhardt (or Gerhard) in the family as well. There were no Gerhard Thomases found in searches of the records of surrounding village churches at least through the 1750s.

Given the odd spelling of the name Geroth, the record of the baptism of “Henrich Geroth” Thomas was examined in more detail. During the range of a few years in which this record appears is where the person recording the church records has very poor handwriting, and perhaps is not well educated. An image of the name in this record is shown below as Exhibit IV.



Exhibit IV - Image of the Child's Given Name

In this image, even the name Heinrich has been misspelled as Henrich, as no “i” appears in the first part of the name. The second name appears to be spelled Gerog. However, Suzy Bettac and her husband noticed the last character being similar to the “h” in other words known to end in “h”, and that the writer did not cross “t”s, leaving the name Geroth. The use of shorthand forms of names is used by this particular church recorder in other names as well. In the same baptism record, one of the sponsors is named Geroth Bauermann. The image of his name is shown in Exhibit V, and can be seen to be of similar form to the child's name Geroth.

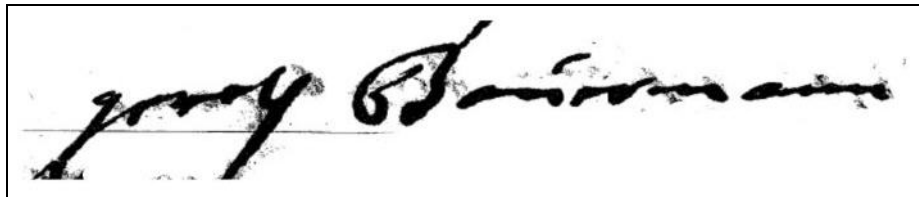


Exhibit V – Image of the Name of Geroth Bauermann

Examination of the Pleizenhausen church record revealed no other occurrence of the name Geroth Bauermann other than in the years recorder by this same recorder (1732-1736). A baptism in 1735<sup>26</sup> lists the parents as Geroth Bauermann and Eva Catharina. However, there were occurrences (both before and after the years recorded by this church recorder) of a Gerhard Bauermann, listing his wife as Eva Catharina, such as in the baptism of their son Johann Jacob in 1737<sup>27</sup>, where an Anna Elisabetha Thomasin was a sponsor. This leads to the conclusion that the name Geroth was really some shortened or misspelled form of the name Gerhard. Confirmation records for Peter and Gerhard would have provided an even stronger case for this conclusion, but all such records were missing for several years where these boys would have been confirmed into the church.

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<sup>26</sup> Pleizenhausen Kirchenbuch, 1666-1805, FHL INTL 492979, item 2, 41.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, item 2, 48.

Nevertheless, the baptism record for Henrich Geroth Thomas in 1732 is interpreted to be that belonging to Heinrich Gerhard Thomas.

The third person in the 1754 emigration group was Anna Elisabeth Thomas. There are several alternatives here. Peter and Gerhard did have a sister Anna Elisabetha (b. 1724). It is also possible the emigrant was Peter and Gerhard's mother, Anna Elisabeth, since their father had died in 1743<sup>28</sup>. However, there was an Anna Elisabeth Thomas who died in 1757 at the age of 59 years 4 months<sup>29</sup>, which is somewhat close to being the age of their mother (born in 1693). Therefore, the most likely person emigrating is considered to be their sister.

In order to complete the search for Peter Thomas (emigrant to Berks County, Pennsylvania), church records from the various villages in the area were examined to piece together all of the Thomas lines in the area. No other candidate Peter Thomases for the emigration group were found, particularly associated with a Gerhard and/or Anna Elisabeth. There were numerous Peter Thomases found, but they either had an unlikely age (too old or young), or records showed they had an established family.

In review, the following is concluded after analysis of the Pleizenhausen (and surrounding area) church records, German emigration records, and other records in Pennsylvania:

1. A Peter Thomas is born in 1736 which is a reasonable timeframe to match the age of his future wife in Pennsylvania (Eva Maria Six, born 1742),
2. His family contains an Anna Elisabeth and Gerhard, matching the record of a 1754 emigration group,
3. The relatively uncommon form of signature used by a Peter and Gerhard Thomas associated with the 1754 arrival of the ship Phoenix in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, matches the signature of Peter in a later land acquisition,
4. Gerhard and Peter were both in Berks County, Pennsylvania, at the same time (Gerhard's daughter Anna Margaretha was baptized in Hain's Church, Lower Heidelberg Township in 1764),
5. A Jacob Mühleissen marries Maria Margaretha Thomas (believed to be Peter Thomas' older sister), who apparently is the Jacob Mühleissen subsequently sponsoring the baptism of two of Peter and Eva Maria Thomas' children in Pennsylvania, and
6. Various records<sup>30</sup> indicate the appearance of both Mühlisen and Thomas families to Westmoreland County (eventual home of Gerhard Thomas) in

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<sup>28</sup> Pleizenhausen Kirchenbuch, 1666-1805, FHL INTL 492979, item 3, 67.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, item 3, 73.

<sup>30</sup> Albert, George Dallas, editor, "History of Hempfield Township", *History of the County of Westmoreland, Pennsylvania with Biographical Sketches of many of its Pioneer and Prominent Men*, (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1882), 529. Reported by Suzy Bettac.

western Pennsylvania before 1778, further supporting the connection between the families.

Thus the Peter Thomas who marries Eva Maria Six in Pennsylvania is the Johannes Peter Thomas born in 1736 in Pleizenhausen, Germany. No information has been found to conflict with this conclusion.

### Possible Additional Research:

More research could be done on the Mühleisen lines in Pennsylvania, related to the Jacob and Nicolaus Mühleisen arriving in Philadelphia on the ship *Patience* on 11 August 1750<sup>31</sup>. There is an emigration record for Johann Jakob Muehleissen of Pleizenhausen dated 1750, showing him “in the new land;” with wife and 2 children, and paying 16 Gulden for manumission tax<sup>32</sup>. The makeup of their initial families is sketchy in the first generation in America. There appears to be multiple Jacob’s, perhaps one is the son of the emigrating Jacob. The argument for the early family structure commonly presented on the Internet is non-convincing.

Another sponsor of the baptism of Peter Thomas’ children in Pennsylvania is a Jacob Staug and wife. This surname spelling rarely shows up in other Pennsylvania records. However, there are other forms of the name such as Jacob Stauch. In 1776, two years after Jacob Staug and wife sponsor the baptism of Peter’s child, a Jacob Stauch and Anna Elisabetha sponsor the son of Jacob Strunk and wife at Hains Church, in Lower Heidelberg Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania. Could this be Anna Elisabetha Thomas, sister of Peter who emigrated with Peter and Gerhard in 1754?

Finally, there may still be connections between Peter and Gerhard Thomas, and Thomas families immigrating in 1708 to New York state. The Tulpehocken area of Berks County, Pennsylvania, was settled by German immigrants moving down from the New York area, some 30 years prior to the arrival of Peter and Gerhard. There was a Casper Thomas living in the same township as Peter, but no relationship was ever established between them.

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<sup>31</sup> Strassburger, Ralph B., and Hinke, William John, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, Volume 1, (Camden Maine, Picton Press, 1992), 427. (Note: surname spelled Muehleysen)

<sup>32</sup> Smith, Clifford Neal, *Eighteenth-Century Emigrants from Kreis Simmern (Hunsrueck), Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany, to Central Europe, Pfalzdorf am Niederrhein, and North America*, German-American Genealogical Research Monograph Number 16, (McNeal, Arizona: Westland Publications, 1982), 13.

## Appendix A My Personal Link to Peter Thomas

My father was Richard Davis Thomas, born 3 January 1924, in Shamokin, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania<sup>33</sup>, and died 24 July 1967, in Derry Township, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania<sup>34</sup> (residence at the time was Palmyra, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania). His birth certificate identifies his father as William Thomas, age 33, born in Shamokin, Pennsylvania, and mother Ruth Davis, age 32, born in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. In the 1930 U.S. Census<sup>35</sup>, Richard Thomas, age 6, is listed in the household of William E. Thomas (wife Ruth S.), living at 135 Third Street in Shamokin, Pennsylvania.

An original baptismal certificate held by a family member states William Edgar Thomas was the son of Richard Thomas, and born at Shamokin, Pennsylvania, 22 June, 1890. The 1900 U.S. Census<sup>36</sup> also shows William E., born June 1890, as the son of Richard and Amanda Thomas. Richard Thomas is listed in this census as having a birth date of October 1861, and was living at 1003 W. Mulberry Street (Coal Township, present day Shamokin). The death certificate of Richard M. Thomas<sup>37</sup> lists his spouse as Amanda, and birth date as 31 October 1861, born to a Daniel S. Thomas and Kathryn Eisenhart, both of Pennsylvania.

The will of Daniel S. Thomas<sup>38</sup> refers to his wife Matilda Thomas, 2 children of his second wife, Matilda, and 3 children, including a Richard M. Thomas, of his first wife (unnamed). Richard M. Thomas is also named executor. The 1900 U.S. Census<sup>39</sup> shows Daniel Thomas, born Jan. 1834, age 65, and Matilda, living at 618 W. Spruce Street, Shamokin. The 1880 U.S. Census<sup>40</sup> lists Daniel Thomas, age 47, and wife Matilda, and

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<sup>33</sup> Certification of Birth for Richard Davis Thomas, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Health, File No. 0168260-1924, filed 4 Jan 1924.

<sup>34</sup> Certificate of Death for Richard Davis Thomas, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Health, Certificate number 066900-67, filed 25 July, 1967.

<sup>35</sup> William E Thomas household, 1930 Census of the United States, Population Schedule, Pennsylvania, Northumberland County, Shamokin Borough (Ward 6, Block No. 100), National Archives Microfilm T626-2091, Enumeration District No. 49-60, Sheet No. 12A, page 190, line 54, shown on <http://www.ancestry.com>, image 0372.

<sup>36</sup> Richard Thomas household, 1900 Census of the United States, Population Schedule, Pennsylvania, Northumberland County, Coal Township, National Archives Microfilm 1448, Enumeration District No. 115, Sheet No. 19B, page 41a, line 67, as shown on <http://www.ancestry.com>.

<sup>37</sup> Certificate of Death for Richard M. Thomas, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Health, File No. 107585, filed 23 Oct 1926.

<sup>38</sup> Will of Daniel S. Thomas, Northumberland County Will Book 14, page 15, dated 28 Nov 1904.

<sup>39</sup> Daniel Thomas household, 1900 Census of the United States, Population Schedule, Pennsylvania, Northumberland County, Shamokin Borough, Ward 6, National Archives Microfilm, Enumeration District 152, Sheet 6A (stamped 46).

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Thomas household, 1880 Census of the United States, Population Schedule, Pennsylvania, Northumberland County, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward - Shamokin Borough, National Archives Microfilm T9 Roll 1164, Enumeration District 148, page 30, line 10.

son Richard, age 18. The 1870 U.S. Census<sup>41</sup> lists the household of Daniel (age 36) and Matilda Thomas, with son Richard M., age 8. The death certificate for Daniel Thomas<sup>42</sup>, of 618 W. Spruce St., shows him to be a widower, age 77 years 3 months and 25 days (which calculates to a birth on or about 22 Jan 1834). His parents are listed as Peter Thomas, of Mahantongo, Pennsylvania [assumed to be the Mahantongo Valley area, not a town], and Julia Snyder of the same place. Himmel's Church, Washington Township, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, baptism records<sup>43</sup> show a Daniel Thomas born to Peter and Judith Thomas on 21 Jan 1834. As to the first wife of Daniel Thomas, a Catharine Thomas is buried in the St. John's Lutheran Church cemetery in Leck Kill, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania<sup>44</sup>, and listed as the wife of Daniel S. Thomas (she died in 1865, age 24). She is buried beside Jonas and Mary Eisenhart, suggesting she was an Eisenhart, thus matching the information on Daniel Thomas' death certificate.

There is a Peter Thomas born to Gottfried and Anna Maria Thomas on 18 September 1808, and baptized at Himmel's Church on 7 October 1808 (sponsored by Peter Brosius and Margaretha)<sup>45</sup>. There is also a son William B., born to Peter and Judith Thomas on 24 July 1842, and baptized at Himmel's Church on 23 October 1842<sup>46</sup> (sponsors: Georg Delp and Anna Maria). There is also a Judith Schneider born to Abraham and Susanna Schneider on 14 December 1810<sup>47</sup>, who is perhaps the wife of Peter considering the maiden name of Daniel Thomas' mother on his death certificate was Snyder. Bringing the whole family together, a comparison with the 1850 U.S. Census listing of the household of Peter Thomas<sup>48</sup> (age 43), with sons Daniel (age 16) and William (age 6) shows a fair match (exact match to birth year in Daniel's case). Peter's wife was listed as Elisabeth, suggesting Judith may have died before 1850. The 1860 U.S. Census<sup>49</sup> listed Peter (age 52) and William (age 18), giving an exact age match to birth year for both. Again Peter's wife was listed as Elisabeth. There were no other Peter Thomas' of that age group in the area, thus, the census families, and baptisms all at Himmel's Church establish the Peter Thomas born in 1808 as the father of Daniel S. Thomas.

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<sup>41</sup> Daniel Thomas household, 1870 Census of the United States, Population Schedule, Pennsylvania, Northumberland County, Shamokin Borough, National Archives Microfilm M593 Roll 1384 Part 1, page 57 (stamped 120), line 11.

<sup>42</sup> Certificate of Death for Daniel Thomas, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Health, File No. 49040, filed 20 May 1911.

<sup>43</sup> Baptismal Records Himmel's Church, on-line file, contributed for use in USGenWeb by Bobbyetta Ganunis, <ftp://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/pa/northumberland/church/himmbapt.txt>, downloaded 6/8/1999, page 185 of church book translation, page 30 of file.

<sup>44</sup> St. John's Lutheran and Reformed Church Cemetery, Lech Kill, on-line file, compiled by Harvey C. Lubold, USGenWeb, <ftp://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/pa/northumberland/cemeteries/leckill.txt>, Row #9, persons 188-190, downloaded 6/8/1999.

<sup>45</sup> Himmel's Church Baptismal Record, page 62 of church book translation, page 18 of file.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., page 228 of church book translation, page 35 of file.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., page 65 of church book translation, page 19 of file.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Thomas household, 1850 Census of the United States, Population Schedule, Pennsylvania, Northumberland County, Upper Mahanoy Township, National Archives Microfilm M432 Roll 804, page 252 (stamped 522), line 28.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Thomas household, 1860 Census of the United States, Population Schedule, Pennsylvania, Northumberland County, Upper Mahanoy Township, National Archives Microfilm M653 Roll 1149, Part 1, page 119 (stamped 346), line 10.

According to the Orphan Court Proceedings (November 1833) after the death of Godfrey Thomas, of Mohanoy Township, Northumberland County, he died intestate having a widow named Anna Maria and nine children, John, Anna Maria (married to George Depp), Michael, Catharine (married to John Bush), Elisabeth (married to Jacob Artman), Peter, Jacob, Samuel, and Christiana (minor over 14 years of age)<sup>50</sup>. The Anna Maria and George Depp match the baptismal sponsors of her brother Peter's son William, providing a link to the previously discussed family of Peter Thomas. The birth and baptism of the children beginning with Maria Elizabeth are recorded in the records of Himmel's Church. Elizabeth was born 10 December 1801, and baptized 27 December 1801<sup>51</sup> (sponsors: Christian Tomas and wife Maria Elizabeth). There is an earlier baptism of Anna Maria Thomas, daughter of Gottfried Thomas and Anna Maria at St. Paul's (Klopp's) Church, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, on 27 September 1794 (sponsor: Maria Thomas)<sup>52</sup>. There is also a baptism sponsored by Gottfried Thomas and Anna Maria at the same Klopp's Church, for Anna Maria, daughter of Christian Thomas and Maria Elisabeth, on 13 March 1796<sup>53</sup>. Finally, just across the county border, at Altalaha Lutheran Church, Rehrersberg, Berks County, Pennsylvania, a Christian Thomas is born to Peter Thomas on 10 June 1761<sup>54</sup>, and a son Joh. Gottfried also born to Peter Thomas on 30 December 1769<sup>55</sup>. There are several births to a Christian Thomas and Mariliss [Maria Elisabeth] between 1786 and 1791 at Altalaha Lutheran Church in these same records. Note the death of a Peter Thomas of Bethel Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 1789, described in the beginning of the main body of this paper. The estate file mentions both Christian and Gottfried among the 9 children. Peter was married to Eva Maria Six, who likely is the Maria Thomas sponsoring the baptism of Gottfried's daughter Anna Maria in 1794, described above.

All of the above birth and baptism events fit together nicely to suggest that following the death of Peter Thomas of Bethel Township, Berks County, the family left the area and moved west into Lebanon County a few years, and then up into Northumberland County. The continuing family interactions observed in the sponsoring of baptisms providing the linking support, as Gottfried sponsors a baptism of Christian's child in Lebanon County, and then Christian sponsors a baptism of Gottfried's child in Northumberland County. The widow of Peter, Eva Maria Thomas [Six], appears as a sponsor for the baptism of a number of her children at Himmel's Church, Northumberland County. The appearance of several of these same family members in Northumberland County (Christian, Jacob,

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<sup>50</sup> Northumberland County Orphan Court Docket 7, Family History Library microfilm, FHL 961033, page 362.

<sup>51</sup> Baptismal Records Himmel's Church, on-line file, contributed for use in USGenWeb by Bobbyetta Ganunis, <ftp://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/pa/northumberland/church/himmbapt.txt>, downloaded 6/8/1999, page 51 of church book translation, page 14 of file.

<sup>52</sup> F. Edward Wright, *Early Church Records of Lebanon County Pennsylvania*, (Westminster, Maryland: Family Line Publications, 1995). Reproduced on Brøderbund Software's Family Archive CD #166 (*Church Records: Selected Areas of Pennsylvania, 1600s-1800s*), 189.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>54</sup> F. Edward Wright, *Berks County Church Records of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Vol. 4, (Westminster, Maryland: Family Line Publications, 1995). Reproduced on Brøderbund Software's Family Archive CD #166 (*Church Records: Selected Areas of Pennsylvania, 1600s-1800s*), 29.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

Johannes, possible married daughters) further strengthens the assertion that Godfrey Thomas at Himmel's Church in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, was the same Gottfried Thomas born to Peter and Eva Maria [Six] Thomas in Bethel Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania.