

The Weyerbachers of Indiana

By Terry J. Lee

March 2010

While searching for descendants of Johann Nicholas and Catharina Magdalena Weyerbacher, who emigrated from Baumholder, Germany to Philadelphia, PA in 1751 aboard the ship Edinburgh, Warren Wirebach found many Weyerbachers in Indiana who are descendants of a later immigration to America.

One such immigration event occurred in the mid-19th century, according to the *History of Warrick, Spenser and Perry Counties, Indiana*¹ (*The History ...*).

JACOB WEYERBACHER was born in Germany January 27, 1832, being the third of eight children of John P. and Catharine (Immech) Weyerbacher. The father immigrated to America in 1852, settling in Warrick County and buying a farm in Boon Township, upon which he lived until 1866, when he moved to Boonville and retired from active business. His death occurred June 3, 1873, but his widow still survives him at the age of eighty-one years. Jacob received a fair education in Germany and upon the arrival of the family in this county lived upon his father's farm until 1857, when he moved to the county seat and engaged in the toy and confectionery trade ; also the barber business. He has since been thus engaged. He has accumulated a comfortable home and a fine business. He is a stock-holder in the Boonville National Bank, and is Vice-President of that corporation. He married Margaret Kautz September 15, 1857, who bore him eight children, six now living. His wife died July 30, 1881, and September 12, 1882, he married Caroline Goerlitz, and by her is the father of one child. He is a Mason, a Democrat, and he and wife attend the Unitarian Church. In 1860 his brother was accidentally shot on the farm by a hired hand².

[Note: The tombstones of Jacob and his wives are displayed at the end of this article; all are buried in the Plainview Cemetery, Warrick County, IN]

Although the descendants of Johann Nicholas and Catharina Magdalena Weyerbacher rather quickly adopted many different spelling variations of their surname, the descendants of this later immigration have largely kept the original spelling up to the present day.

Are these two Weyerbacher lines, with immigration separated by 100 years, related, and if so, how?

The answer appears to lie in the church records found by Warren Wirebach during his 1973 trip to Germany. Among the descendants of the earliest known Weyerbacher, Hans Otto (abt 1640-1714), as traced through the church records, is found Peter Weyerbacher (born about 1803) who married Catharina Elisabetha Immig (also born about 1803) on 5 December 1826 in Ellweiler³. This Peter Weyerbacher was a third great grandson of Hans Otto Weyerbacher. By comparison, Johann Nicholas Weyerbacher, who immigrated in 1751 was a grandson of Hans Otto and was a brother to the great grandfather of Peter, Johann Henrich Weyerbacher (1697-1771).

See the diagram at the end of the article.

These names and dates are consistent with the information found in *The History ...*, above. That 1885 source however is not without its inconsistencies with other historical sources.

¹ History of Warrick, Spenser and Perry Counties, Indiana; Chicago; Goodspeed, Bros. & Publishers; 1885; p. 182;
<http://books.google.com/books?printsec=frontcover&pg=PA182&id=kOTVAAAAMAAJ#v=onepage&q=&f=false>

² This appears to be August "Weierbacher" (1842-1860 – see tombstone at
<http://marshaswarrickweb.com/cemeteries/images/plainview/weierbacheraugust.jpg>)

³ Church book of Achtelsbach (Attached to 10 June 1976 letter from W. Wolfgang Munzert to Warren W. Wirebach), (Translated from the German): c) Church Book Achtelsbach; marriage Ellweiler 5 Dec 1826; Peter Weyerbacher, 23 years old; son of Peter Weyerbacher and Catharina Müller, Neubrücker Mill; Catharina Elisabetha Immig, 23 years old, daughter of Phillip Peter Immig and (der +) Elisabetha Gerhard, field people in Enkirch (a municipality in Rhineland-Palatinate, western Germany)

The 1850 Federal Census for Boon Township, Warrick County, Indiana (23 August 1850) lists the following (name, age, sex, occupation, place of origin):

Weyerbacher, Peter	50	m	farmer	Germany
Weyerbacher, Catherine	50	f		Germany
Weyerbacher, Jacob Sr.	75	m	farmer	Germany
Weyerbacher, Jacob Jr.	28	m	farmer	Germany
Weyerbacher, Mary	26	f		Germany
Weyerbacher, Peter	20	m	farmer	Germany
Weyerbacher, Jacob	4	m		Germany
Weyerbacher, Adam	3	m		Germany
Weyerbacher, Elizabeth	3/12	f		Indiana (born October)

Other sources for this census give the surname for this family as “Wyerbacher.” It should be noted that although this 1850 census contains “Peter” and “Catharine” consistent with *The History ...*, the “Jacob Jr.” listed age 28 could not be Jacob born 1832 who would be 18 in 1850. There were in fact **two** Peter Weyerbachers, both born about 1803 and both married to wives named Catharine, who were also both born in 1803. These “Peters” were, in fact, first cousins.

Thus, it appears that this immigration occurred no later than 1850. In fact, the 1900 census lists Adam Weyerbacher as born 1848 “at sea,” suggesting 1848 as the year of immigration. This same census, however, also lists Jacob Weyerbacher, who was born January 1832, as having immigrated 1853. This strongly suggests there were multiple immigrations. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any passenger lists to clarify these details.

An undated document provided to Warren Wirebach from Shelby Brask in 1989 contains the following:

Jacob Weyerbacher with his parents left Germany in the fall of 1849; On the ocean in sailing vessel for 69 days. Stood still for 13 days in a calm. Rations were short before landing. Each family brought their own food and had a certain time allotted to do their own cooking. Landed at New Orleans in December 1849. Arrived Newburgh, Ind. by steamboat Jan. 1, 1850. Took out land in Rocky Branch neighborhood, about six miles from Boonville, immediately and a couple of years later moved to Boonville and built a hotel and tavern on the east side of the public square. In 1853 Dad³ moved to the North West corner of the public square and form [sic] then on with the exception of a very short time the Boonville Post Office was on that corner until last December when it was moved into its new home. The present buildings at First and Main Streets were built in the early '70s.

Jacob Dad⁴ was married about 1857 and again in 1882 and eleven children were born on that corner.

The reason for coming to America is interesting. The family owned and operated the biggest water power mill on the Nahe River near Birkenfeld, a four story stone structure. They were considered comfortably fixed but not rich. The Dutchy of Birkenfeld paid tribute to Bavaria which was ruled by one of the crazy Ludwigs. The Ludwig we are interested in was strong on culture and had the idea that he wanted the old Roman Road, which ran from the Rhone to the Rhine, restored. This road ran thru Birkenfeld and Grandfather secured the contract for the excavation. The work was to cost in the neighborhood of \$60,000 a lot of money then. Midway during the excavations Ludwig sold the province of Birkenfeld to Oldenburgh of course the inhabitants were not consulted and Ludwig then lost all interest in the Roman Road and declared off all contracts. Grandfather thought he ought to be paid for the excavations and sued King Ludwig for his money. He also went security for a couple of government bridges and got no where on that deal, and soon was told to leave the country. Within a day the family converted everything into cash and left for the French border. They were still in a hurry when they got to Le Havre and took the first boat out. The boat went to New Orleans. Some cousins had settled in Warrick County some years before this and that is the likely reason for choosing the place on Pidgeon Creek. This spot was just five miles below the place where the Lincoln family had once lived.

⁴ These references to “Dad” suggest that the account is written by a child of Jacob (b. 1832). Shelby Brask was a granddaughter of John P. (b. 1868), who was a son of Jacob (b. 1832). The document might well have been written by John P. (b. 1868) and handed down to his granddaughter.

In 1886 when Anna Boluss⁵ and Lena Moore visited Germany, the old mill was still in use but in 1927 when Malle⁶ and I were there a railroad was built on the site of the river bed and part of the mill was used as a saw mill. Some years ago part of the mill burnt, and when we were there, a man took us through the old wine cellar and what had been the living quarters, although empty the perfect condition of the floors impressed me very much, and the beauty of the surrounding country was just as picturesque as Dad had described it to me.

Just how it happened none of us seem to know now, but the sudden leaving from German was in some way tied up with the so called Revolution of 1848. At any rate Ludwig's refusal to pay for the excavations in some way hinged on the "rev." It might be of interest to know that in 1918 Major Weyerbacher was in command of Base Hospital 52 which was located on the Old Roman Road at Rimacourt, Fr. Somewhere we have a Fr. Map which shows Birkenfeld⁷ with the towns marded [sic] "Ludwig weyerbacher"⁶ & "Georges Weyerbacher"⁶. [sic] Thers [sic] are the towns that Dad called Weyerbach and Uberbach.

This account is consistent with the 1850 census information. The reference in this account to "Some cousins had settled in Warrick County some years before this" indicates previous Weyerbacher immigrations. *The History ...*¹, page 127 describes,

"The German settlement, about two miles east of Boonville, was begun in 1838 by George Seitz and Louis Baum, and in 1840 was increased by Christian Kissel, Louis Keller and Charles Nonweiler. The next year the families of Frederick Siegel, Jacob Huegel and Peter Hebner moved to the same locality."

That there were numerous Weyerbacher immigrations to America is supported by this account⁸ which indicates an 1847 immigration to Ohio, where descendants of Johann Nicholas and Catharina Magdalena Weyerbacher had moved in the early 1800s and taken the surname "Wirebaugh."

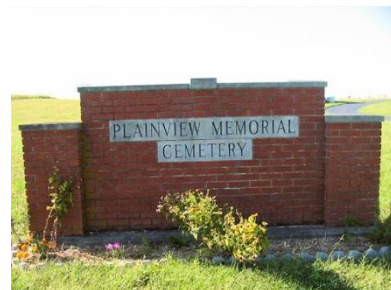
Weyerbacher, Adam

February 23, 1900 Boonville Enquirer

Adam Weyerbacher was born on Aug. 24, 1820, in Helmbach, District of Birkenfeld, Prussia. At the age of 27 he crossed the Atlantic and settled first in the state of Ohio. After he was located in that state for a short time he moved to Indiana. For many years he lived on a farm near Boonville, and in the latter part of his life he made his home in Boonville. In November, 1850, he married Miss Elizabeth Schwinn; to them were born 7 children of whom one has left for a better world. There are the deceased's wife, 6 children, 17 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren who are mourning over his departure. For many months Uncle Adam has been suffering from infirmities of old age. He was more or less bedfast all winter until he was softly called away on February 14th, at noon. He reached an age of 79 years, 5 months and 21 days. The funeral took place February 16th, Rev. J.J. Meyer officiating. His remains were laid to rest at the cemetery of St. John's German Evangelical church, which lost in Uncle Adam one of its oldest and most faithful members.



Tombstones of many Indiana Weyerbachers buried at the Plainview Cemetery, Boon Township, Warrick County, Indiana can be viewed from *Marsha's Warrick Web*⁹. Viewers should be alerted that there are numerous inconsistencies between text information and the actual tombstone inscriptions. Because of the repeated use of given names, it is not always easy to determine which individuals belong to which families.



⁵ Anna Boluss is Anna (b. 1864), daughter of Jacob Weyerbacher (b. 1832) and Margaret Kautz.

⁶ Malle is Margaret, daughter of William F. Weyerbacher (b. 1860), who is a son of Jacob (b. 1832) and brother of John P. (b. 1868). This suggests that Malle and her uncle John P. visited Birkenfeld in 1927.

⁷ Birkenfeld is located about 8 miles WNW of Baumholder; Georg-Weierbach and Weierbach, Idar-Oberstein (also known as Weierbach-Fischbach and possibly formerly known as Ludwig Weyerbacher) are located about 8 miles NNE of Baumholder on opposite sides of the Nahe River.

⁸ Boonville Enquirer, February 23, 1900, <http://marshaswarrickweb.com/resources/newspapers/1900news.htm>

⁹ <http://marshaswarrickweb.com/cemeteries/plainviewcem.htm>

Tombstones



Descendants

Hans Otto Weyerbacher (1640-1714)
m. Martha (-1711)

Hans Nickel Weyerbacher (1665-1710/11)
m. Maria Margaretha Fries (1668-1708/09)

Johann Henrich Weyerbacher (1697-1771)
m. Maria Catharina Schug (1711-1775)

Hans Nickel (Johann Nicholas) Weyerbacher (1700-1777)
m. Cathrina Magdalena Hermanni (1704-)
(immigrated to Philadelphia 1751)

Johann Jacob Weyerbacher (1741-bef 1802)
m. Maria Louisa Werkhäuser (1748-1802)

John Peter Weyerbacher (1773-aft 1820)
m. Catharina Müller (- aft 1820)

Peter (John P.) Weyerbacher (1803-1873)
m. Catharina Immig (1803-1885)
(immigrated to Indiana 1852)

Jacob Weyerbacher (1832-1913)
m1. Margaret Kautz (1836-1881)
m2. Caroline Goerlitz (1850-1936)

The author is Vice President of the Weyerbacher Family Reunion, webmaster for Weyerbacher.net, and an 8th great grandson of Hans Otto Weyerbacher.