

# **ANCESTRY OF THE KERCHNER FAMILY**

**(of Lehigh County, Pa.)**

**-- plus --**

**connections by intermarriage to the early families**

**of**

**Fetterman, Keiser, Egner, Griesemer, Koser, Miller, Wetzel,  
Fegely, Gaumer, Rischell, Shankweiler, Berger, Schaub, Fretz,  
Stahlnecker, Young, Becker, Truckenmiller, Schwartz, Hittel,  
Seibert, Diefenderfer, Derr, Hill, Leinbach, and Lashel.**

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Upper Milford Township PA Historical Society  
Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center  
National Society Sons of the American Revolution**

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**Charles F. Kerchner Jr.**

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## ANCESTRY OF THE KERCHNER FAMILY

It is a rare individual who does not at some point in their life ponder some of the great questions of life. Where did I come from? Why am I here? Who am I? And when we reach that point we are not seeking simplistic answers. There is a yearning from within that seeks more.

Who am I? When someone asks you that question, they will probably be told their name as the answer. So your name is one answer to that question. Thus, part of who we are as human beings is our name. But where did we get this name? The answer given is - from our parents. But where did they get their name? They got theirs from their parents. And their parents got theirs from their parents. And so on, and so on. But where did they get their name originally and who were they?

And so the search begins. To learn more about whom we are. And to do that we must learn more about our name and the people who came before us who bore that name and passed it on to us. So we pursue the trail of who we are in part by tracing our name and the ancestors who bore that name. So in particular, what do we know about our family name - Kerchner?

The science of onomastics is the study of the meaning of names. Etymology is the study of etyma or roots of words since their earliest recorded occurrence in the language where it is found. Using such analysis techniques, what then is the meaning of our name Kerchner? The Kerchner name, according to family tradition and discussions with some German language experts, and learned members in the field of onomastics, is believed to be derived either from the German word "Kirche" which means "church" or from the German word "kärcher" (with an umlaut over the letter "a"), otherwise spelled as "Kaercher" or "Kercher", which means "carter", as in cart driver or puller. But regional variations in the various German dialects are important to this discussion. Very interestingly, with the Pennsylvania German dialect, which is mostly derived from "Middle-lander German" which is the German dialect spoken in the middle land areas of Germany between the lowland regions in the north and the highland regions in south Germany, the word for church is "kärliche" (with an umlaut over the letter "a"), otherwise spelled "kaerriche". Thus a "kaerricher / kaerrichner" would be a church worker in the Pennsylvania German dialect.

The first theory is that our name was spelled "Kirchner" or "Kircher" and was misspelled by the English as "Kerchner" when our ancestor settled in Pennsylvania and since he was not literate, he simply continued using the misspelling. Therefore, our name if originally spelled "Kirchner," would be translated to mean "of the church", "church worker", or "churchman." Our immigrant ancestor's name was spelled "Kircher" in two transcriptions of the original ship lists, but he did not personally write his name. He made a mark with an (A) next to his name. So, one person who heard him say his name wrote it down as "Kircher". Other ship list recorders heard him say his name and have his name spelled as "Sercher" and "Cheniker". The "Kircher" transcription was made by two different German script experts in two separate works and is considered to be the most accurate. However, we shall also see that the name Kerchner does exist separately, even to this day as a distinct spelling in Germany. It is treated by some experts in onomastics as a spelling variation of Kirchner with the same meaning, i.e., a person who worked at or lived near a church.

A second theory is the name evolved from Kärchner, with an umlaut, i.e., Kaerchner, and then the "a" got dropped along the way. Another theory as to how the name would have been changed from Karchner, with an umlaut, to Kerchner is that spelling was difficult to maintain when translating from German to English and the name was spelled as close to how it sounded in English. The pronunciation of the name Karchner, with an umlaut over the "a", changes the sound of the "a" to a short "e" sound, and thus the name was spelled Kerchner since that is how it sounded in English.

The third theory is that the name is a misspelling of the Pennsylvania German dialect word for church and church worker. The Pennsylvania German dialect word for church worker is Kaerrichner. So one can also see how this spelling could have evolved from that to Kerchner.

Hand me down oral history and family tradition indicated that the name was derived from the German word "Kirche" meaning church.

If from the German word Kirche, the name is thus an occupation-derived name relating to a person who worked at a church. The most logical English translation of the closest occupation relating to our name would be "sexton." The original ancient form was probably in the form of a given first name separated from the newly proclaimed law that all males must adopt a surname. Originally the first and last name would have been separated by the German word 'der'. For example, using Adam given name and Kirchner as the last name, it was likely Adam der Kirchner, meaning Adam the "church worker". The definite article 'der' in the name eventually was dropped, and the name became Adam Kirchner. At some point in history, the 'i' was changed to an 'e' and our surname became simply Kerchner. The most common theory is that our name was misspelled by the English registrars when the family settled in America, although this is not certain. It is possible the 'i' evolved to an 'e' in Germany. This possibility will be discussed in further detail later in this report. The family name being associated with churches correlates well with the lifestyle of the early Kerchners since they were, as were many of the early immigrants who came to Pennsylvania, religious people. You will find several elders, deacons, and trustees of churches among our forefathers.

For more information concerning occupation-related names such as ours, consult the German-English Genealogical Dictionary by Ernest Thode, German-American Names by George F. Jones, the Dictionary of German Names by Hans Bahlow, published 1993, English language edition, and the Pennsylvania-German Dictionary by Marcus Bachman Lambert, M.A.

Six generation Descendant's Chart for our ancestor: [Adam Kerchner.](#)

When researching this name expect to find it misspelled phonetically in many ways in early ship lists, church records, census records, land records, tax records, newspaper accounts, etc. It is also often confused with other similar-sounding or similarly-spelled names.

Some examples I have found in my research are Kercher, Kerger, Kergher, Kergner, Karchner, Kaerchner, Kershner, Kerschner, Kerschler, Kelchner, Kirchner, Kirchmer, Kircher, Kirkner, Kurchner, Kariger, Karriger, Karrichner, Karrickner, Carrickner, Carricker, Carchner, Churchner, and there are likely others. Some of these misspellings occasionally confuse our family surname with other similar-sounding surnames. Also, it is often found misspelled in public records with an s' in it. In addition, I have found some records with (at first glance) very far-off misspellings such as "Keiser(?)" and

"Churchner". Sounds way off, but if one says the names Kerchner, Kerschner, Kercher, Kersch, and Keiser over and over in one's mind, with various accented variations of the Pennsylvania German dialect, one can easily imagine how the Keiser misspelling came about. In the specific example where Keiser was recorded instead of Kerchner, even the transcriber was not sure of the name when he wrote down Keiser which is why he put the question mark after the entry. When the original script was carefully double-checked by myself it was clear that the name written down was Kercher and not Keiser. Concerning the Churchner entry, interestingly, Churchner is the half-English and half-German translation of our name since, as I said before, "Kirche" means church in German. The compound noun literal English translation of our name would be "Churchman."

The Pennsylvania German dialect, which evolved in Pennsylvania, is rich with a mixture of English and German words. It should be noted that the English language evolved from German many, many centuries ago. One can see how the person (scribe) who recorded or translated that record of our name got the name Churchner out of Kerchner by mentally translating a name said in German to one written in English meaning. One must have an open mind when researching this family name, and any Pennsylvania German family name. As to the theory of the English registrars misspelling our root name from "Kirchner," virtually all tombstone inscriptions, and most legal records of the family found to date in the United States, have consistently been spelled "Kerchner." All personal family records found in the Lehigh County branch of Kerchner descendants, after the 1768 Will and estate file of our progenitor Adam spelled the name as Kerchner, continued to spell the surname as Kerchner. Therefore, I am not 100% convinced of the misspelling explanation, especially since allegedly another clan that exists in Germany spelled their name our way. I will report on this further in subsequent pages.

A brief comment is in order regarding the similarly spelled and sounding, but different, family names such as Kershner, Kerschner, and Kirschner. In all my research so far, in general, except for the occasional misspellings mentioned above, I find that the Kerchner / Kirchner clan is not related to the Kershner / Kerschner / Kirschner clan. Their names appear to be derived from the German word "Kirsche" which means cherry as in the word Kirschbaum which means cherry tree. In German, our family's root name "Kirch" is pronounced "Kirk" or "Kirc" with the 'c' on the end sounding like the 'c' in the word can. In German, the root name Kirsch is pronounced "Kirss" with the 'ss' sound at the end pronounced 'sh', as in the word she. Unfortunately, many English-speaking people in the USA over the centuries eventually began pronouncing both names the same way; that is with the 'sh' sound. The 'sh' sound is easier on the American English tongue to pronounce. Being raised with very little Pennsylvania German language spoken in our home, and being under the influence of an English-only education, I have been guilty of this mispronunciation and thus frequently have to correct people in the way they spell our name, i.e., telling them no 's' is in our name spelling. If I pronounce it correctly, with the hard German sounding of the 'ch' in our name, saying are name rhyming with 'church', they usually ask me how to spell it. This confusion in the correct pronunciation of our name could explain the occasional misspelling of our family name (with an "s" in it) by recorders in the past. Therefore, in researching our family name, one must use extra care if one finds a record that spelled our name with an "s" in it. If you find different recorders spelling that target person's name in different ways but mostly our way without the "s", and find other records of the same person occasionally spelling it with an "s", then that person could be part of our clan. However, if the person being researched personally spelled their name with an 's' in their signature written by them and if various recorders predominantly used the 's' in the name, they are probably not of our clan.

Now having stated the above general rule, I have found one Kerchner group who descend from Isaac Harry Kerchner who changed the spelling of their last name to Kershner in the late 1800s. Isaac Harry Kerchner moved west to Ohio sometime after the Civil War. For whatever reasons, his descendants changed the spelling of their surname to Kershner, with an "s". I was contacted by a descendant and researcher from this family group who knew about their surname spelling being changed. We checked his research and historical records and verified their family's oral history information.

Then in very early 2001, a new tool came on the scene to scientifically aid genealogy research. Y chromosome Y-DNA genetic genealogy tests were conducted by me between 2001 and 2004 for my family, the Isaac Harry Kerchner family, and also for descendants of the large Kershner/Kerschner clan in the USA.

Incidentally, the newly started in March 2001 Kerchner Surname YDNA Genetic Genealogy was one of the first 10 such YDNA projects in the world using these newly economically available and practical scientific tools for family name genealogists. It became a widely known early example in the new field of genetic genealogy as to what could be accomplished with the new tool. Comparisons were done between a direct male line descendant of this "Kershner" clan with the Y-DNA YSTR markers of the other Kershner / Kerschners and with various members of our known Kerchner clan in the USA. The results showed a 36/37 nearly exact match to me of the Isaac Harry Kerchner branch and very close matches to other known Kerchner cousins of mine who agreed to be tested. And the tests showed the Isaac Harry Kershner line did not match at all the Kershner / Kerschner clan males tested. Thus, the Y-DNA testing confirmed the Isaac Harry Kershner family's oral history that their family indeed originally was a Kerchner descendant branch and they are not genetically related at all to the Kerschners. The YDNA YSTR Haplotype was not even close. Thus, the story of the permanent surname spelling changes of their branch as that branch of our Kerchner extended family moved west is true. This spelling change by this Kerchner branch will undoubtedly confuse future inexperienced Adam Kerchner descendant family researchers in the USA who repeatedly at first think that the Kerchner and Kershner families are the same family. But we are not the same Germanic family. The onomastics tell us they are different rooted Germanic family names, the traditional research proves the main Kerchner and Kershner families are different families, and now the new scientific Y-DNA testing also proves they are different families too. Thus, we now know this one small group of Kerschners are Kerchners, as their personal family oral history had stated all along. So, in this case the exception breaks the rule. See the Kerchner Surname Y-DNA Project for more details about genetic genealogy.

### [Kerchner Surname Y-DNA Genetic Genealogy Project](#)

Another point I wish to mention regarding the surname spelled Kershner is that there is a group of Kerschners who lived in the Windsor Township and Lenhartsville area of Berks County, Pa., who intermarried with the Kerchners. These Windsor Township Kerchners descend from, Johan Jacob Kerchner, the son of an immigrant named Johan Andreas Kerchner. Johan Andreas Kerchner arrived in Philadelphia on the ship Edinburgh on 15 Sep 1749. He settled in Rockland Township, Berks County, PA. His occupation was listed as a shoemaker in the 1767/1768 proprietary tax records. His descendants later settled in the Richmond, Perry, Greenwich, and Windsor Townships region of

Berks County. To this date, I have found no relationship between our Kerchner clan and the Windsor Township and environs Kerchner clan, at least not on this side of the ocean. It is possible that our progenitor, Adam Kerchner, who I will discuss more a little later in this report, and Johan Andreas Kerchner could have had a common ancestry in Germany. So, we could be very distant cousins. Research note: YDNA direct male line tests have been done on Kerchner descendants of Andreas. They did not match the YDNA haplotype of our Kerchner male line. More direct male line descendants of Andreas will continue to be tested to refine and further verify their YDNA YSTR Haplotype and the non-match observed for the first subsequent YDNA tests done on that male line thus far.

Here is a six-generation Descendant Chart for [Johan Andreas Kerchner](#).

As I said before, some of Johan Andreas Kerchner's descendants in Windsor Township intermarried with the Kershner family of that same area. The Kershners of Windsor Township were the descendants of Johannes Kirschner / Kershner, the son of Conrad Kirschner/Kershner I. This makes research into our clan all the more complicated. The confusion caused by the intermarrying of this Windsor Township Kerchner clan and the Conrad Kershner / Kerschner / Kirschner descendants has led some earlier researchers to confuse the Kerchner and Kershner families in the USA altogether, thinking that they have common lineage in Germany. They do not have a common lineage. The Kerchner and Kershner families are two completely different German family surnames. For more information on the Kershner / Kerschner family, consult the report "The Kershner Families of Maryland 1731-1977" by Mary Kershner Maxwell or contact the Kershner Family Association, c/o William E. Kershner, Jr., 1449 Fox Run Drive, Charlotte NC 28212.

Another family group, with a name spelled similarly to ours, is the Kelchner family. Though similarly spelled, they are a completely different family from ours. The root of their family name appears to be from the German word "Kelch" which means cup, goblet, or chalice. Therefore, their name possibly means cup maker or chalice maker. Again, the Kelchners are not related to us.

Another family group, with a name spelled similarly to ours, is the Karcher family. Occasionally one will find our Kerchner name misspelled in records as Karchner or Karcher. Even more confusing is that in one case, some descendants of an immigrant name Johan Andreas Kerchner who lived in Berks County, Pa., later moved to Luzerne County, Pa., where they locally adopted the spelling/misspelling of their name as Karchner in subsequent generations. The family members who remained in Berks County retained the Kerchner spelling. Though similarly spelled and sounding, the German family name of Karcher is a completely different family from ours, at least in this country. The name Karcher is occupation-based and means freight hauler, as in a cart or wagon, a carter. Research note: Interestingly, as mentioned earlier, some believe that the Kerchner surname could have been derived in Germany from the German name for a carter, i.e., wagon or cart puller or driver.

Another family group, with a name that sounds, and is spelled, similar to ours, is the Kurschner or Kursener family. Though similar in sound and spelling, this family is completely different from ours. Their name is occupation-based and means furrier.

The Kerchners, according to family tradition, emigrated in the mid-1700s from the region of the former Reich State of Palatinate in Southwest Germany. However, it is not certain our family came specifically from the Reich State of Palatinate. They could have been from Baden too or another principality in southwest Germany. Early immigrants from the southwest region of Germany were known as "Palatines" even though many did not come specifically from the Reich State of Palatinate.

#### [Map of Southwest Germany c1711](#)

As an example of another province of Germany our ancestors were thought to possibly have originated from, I had found a later clan of Kerchners, with their surname spelled exactly like ours, who arrived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1832. The surname of this immigrant was Michael Anthony Kerchner. He was a Shoemaker. He first settled in Philadelphia. Later he moved to Wilmington, Delaware. Finally, he relocated and settled in Baltimore, Maryland. Michael Kerchner emigrated in 1832 from the village of Freudenberg. It is a village along the Main River near present-day Wertheim, Reich State of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany. With traditional paper trail research, I could not tie our clan into this clan although some German family names found in their ancestry were the same as those found near our ancestor in PA. And since the Palatinate and Baden-Wuerttemberg border each other along the Rhine River I thought possibly there could be a connection. But there was one major and noteworthy difference. This later arriving clan was of the Catholic religion for many generations while our clan was German Reformed and/or Lutheran. Despite the difference in religions, I thought we might have come from the same area. Therefore, I thought, it was possible that our family did not originate from the Palatinate specifically but instead may have come from Baden-Wuerttemberg. If so, we could also be very distant relatives of Michael Kerchner's clan. But the YNDA testing project proved that thought wrong. Y-DNA testing in 2004 and 2005 proved that our Kerchner clan in the USA is not related to the Michael Kerchner clan of Baltimore MD and/or Freudenberg Germany. See the following linked chart for more details about the Kerchner family of Freudenberg, Baden, Germany.

#### [Some Descendants of Kerchner clan of Freudenberg, Baden, Germany](#)

I also have subsequently found via the internet a group of Kerchners in Germany who spell with the surname spelled exactly as we do. Their family is from the town of Spesbach which is near the city of Kaiserslautern in the southern part of Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. Unfortunately, they did not know anything about their ancestry nor was the contact very interested in genealogy. Research follow-up note: After re-contacting them a few years later he had since married and I was then able to convince him to do the YDNA test to help me. I had to pay for the test of course. The Y-DNA testing in 2004 and 2005 proved that our Kerchner clan in the USA is not related to the Kerchner clan of Spesbach, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. It turned out that he was however related to the Kerchner clan of Freudenberg, Germany.

Another possibility was brought to my attention by another Kerchner researcher. See this Fraktur Taufschein for Anna Maria Truckenmiller, a granddaughter of Adam Kerchner.

#### [A Fraktur Taufschein \(handmade baptismal certificate\) for a granddaughter of Adam Kerchner named Anna Maria Truckenmiller](#)

She was born on 7 Oct 1787 in or near Upper Milford Township in what is now Lehigh County PA. The Fraktur Taufschein was prepared by a minister who was writing in the lowlands Old Dutch / Deutsch language type per the language and genealogy experts in Germany that I consulted about this Fraktur. The Fraktur Taufschein has the phrase "Adam Kerchner in Dessen" written at the end. If this means "of Dessen" then it could be a reference to a village or town of origin in Germany. I searched for a village named "Dessen" but found none. But I did find a small village named "Deesen", in Westerwald, Rheinland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz), Germany. With the help of some individuals in Westerwald, Germany, who I found via the Internet, I pursued this "in Dessen" lead. No records of any Kerchner or Kirchner families were found in or near the village of Deesen, Westerwald, Germany, showing any connection to our Adam Kerchner. I then emailed a scan of the Fraktur Taufschein image to several German genealogy researchers who live in Germany. After examining the Fraktur Taufschein image they said that in their opinion the "in Dessen" absolutely does not refer to a village or place but that it is an early lowland Dutch, i.e., Holland Dutch, language formal grammatical and legal type phrase meaning "in this case". According to these correspondents, one of whom was an expert in early Dutch writing and language, the "in Dessen" is not referring to a village but is a formal, legal grammatical phrase being used in this formal Fraktur baptism document. The official who prepared this Fraktur in Pennsylvania was probably Dutch, i.e., Holland Dutch, or was from the low Deutsch areas of Germany near Holland. Several early ministers in Pennsylvania were from the Dutch Reformed Church of Holland which was sending ministers to Pennsylvania to minister to their German Reformed brethren. Thus the "in Dessen" lead turned into another dead end regarding finding a village of origin in Germany for our immigrant ancestor, Adam Kerchner.

In November 2005 it was learned by me that the person registered next to our immigrant ancestor in the 1741 ship list, Jacob Fortineux, was from the town of Otterberg, Rheinland-Palatinate, Germany. This Jacob Fortineux also had a cousin who married a Kirchner. This was an exciting discovery when I first learned about it as finding the home village of other passengers on the same ship is one way to sometimes find the home village of one's ancestor too. However, research of the microfilmed church records yielded no specific information familiar to me and/or no information related to our Kerchner line. There were very few Kirchner or Kircher entries in the church record. Thus, the Kirchner family mentioned in the marriage to the Fortineux family must have been from another area.

In February 2006 a friend and fellow researcher and friend named Ann Thompson, by pure serendipity while looking at some microfilmed church records for the Auenstein, Baden-Wuerttemberg area, noticed that there were quite a few Kirchner and Kircher records at that church and nearby churches. She then checked the Auenstein records to see if there was an Adam Kirchner / Kircher baptized in the records, circa 1704. And excitedly to her and I, she did find a 'Hans Adam Kircher' baptized on 4 Aug 1704, a son of Georg and Barbara Kirchner. After very much initial excitement, subsequent research indicated this Adam Kircher was a descendant of the Kircher family with earlier connections to the towns of Ziegelbronn and Geisselhardt, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. With the help of a Kircher contact I made in that area; I was able to get four males named Kircher to do the YDNA test at my expense. We got two sets of YDNA haplotype profiles. Two males matched each other. And the two others matched each other. And neither one matched my YDNA haplotype profile. The YDNA testing led to another dead end in the search for our Kerchner male line origins. But the



tests did help local genealogists in Germany with my help to sort out the various Kircher male branches intermixed over generations in that area.

### [Kerchner Surname Y-DNA Genetic Genealogy Project](#)

Many early immigrants came to America because of religious persecution, political tyranny, poor economic conditions, and frequent wars, all of which were the rule rather than the exception in this area during the 1600s and 1700s. Catholic monarchs and electors fought Protestant princes and electors to gain control of the south and western areas of Germany and in particular the Palatinate.

The "Thirty Year War" (1618-1648) destroyed most of this area and much of Europe. Over 70% of the population of the Palatinate was lost in this struggle. The "Thirty Year War" ended in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia. The treaty guaranteed peaceful co-existence between all religious denominations. However, peace did not prevail. Many territorial and politically motivated religious wars occurred in this area of Germany in the late 1600s and early 1700s. During the last decade of the 1600s, King Louis XIV, the ruthless Catholic monarch of France, succeeded in the destruction of the Palatinate. He wiped out its military power and installed Roman Catholic control in the area. This, plus the unexpected conversion to Roman Catholicism (for political reasons) of Frederick Augustus I, Elector of Saxony, had reduced German Protestant political and military power to a low point.

Another war, the "War of Spanish Succession" (1701-1714), saw armies marching back and forth across this region. The "War of Polish Succession" (1733-1738), resulted in French armies again overrunning and occupying this area. Catholic French officers were forcibly quartered in Protestant homes. Protestant cities and churches were destroyed and the persecution and economic hardships became unbearable. This, plus the economic opportunities of the New World, set the stage for what was to become a massive emigration from the region.

Another interesting side note I learned very early on in my research into why they came to Pennsylvania was that William Penn's mother, Margaret Jasper of Rotterdam, Holland, had German cousins. This may have also played a part in why Pennsylvania in 1682 was offered as a haven for the religiously persecuted of Germany. Once it started, what started as a trickle ultimately led to 10's of thousands of German Palatines traveling down the Rhine River to the ports of Holland such as Rotterdam. Here they boarded ships for immigration to Pennsylvania. Some stayed in Rotterdam for a while until they could earn enough money for their passage to America. Some traveled to England temporarily until transportation to the New World could be arranged. Upon arrival in Philadelphia, they had to sign an oath of allegiance to the British Crown. Then they probably walked the six miles to Germantown, now part of Philadelphia, to be with their kind. From here they settled in the inland counties now known as Lancaster, Berks, Lehigh, Bucks, and Northampton. These Pennsylvania Germans eventually became known as the "Pennsylvania Dutch" possibly from a rendering of the German word "Deutsch" which means German. See the following linked report for more details on that.

To learn more about how this [Pennsylvania Dutch](#) misnomer came about, read the report I have written on the subject.

The Pennsylvania Germans also didn't discourage the confusion of their true nationality during the two World Wars with Germany when a public backlash against people of German sympathy

and/or ultimate nationality occurred in this country. However, we of the PA Deutsch ethnic group are mostly of German or German speakers' heritage such as Swiss, not Dutch. And we've been in America since before the Revolutionary War that founded the USA and many of us are now descendants of "the sons and daughters of the revolution", of the men and women who served their new country in the Revolutionary War.

Over the early years of my research I have had two candidates for the patriarch of our family in America:

Candidate No. 1:

The first early candidate I will write about has since been proven to NOT be our family's progenitor but the information on this individual is provided herein for research evolution continuity purposes and to correct prior published information claiming this individual as the progenitor of Kerchner our family which may still be circulating or may turn up as a suggestion in the future.

Johan Philip aka Philip Kerchner was incorrectly assumed, according to brief information collected by George F. Kerchner, Sr. in 1909 and presented at a Kerchner family reunion held in the summer of that year, to be the progenitor of our family. I have a copy of his hand-written report. In it, he reports the speculation that Philip Kerchner was the progenitor of our family but he admits in the same report he can't prove it. He offers no circumstantial or anecdotal evidence. However, the late E. Jesse Kerchner, my cousin once removed (SAR#99810), who gave me a copy of the report, believed that at the time of the report, George F. Kerchner, Sr. (1868-1929), who was his father, could have had personal recollections of conversations with John F. Kerchner (1804-1888), and other Kerchner's from the 1800s, who would have personally known Frederick Kerchner (1750-1828). Thus, he believed it entirely conceivable that the theory could be true. But it appears from the 1909 report that the real reason George F. Kerchner, Sr., speculated that Johan Philip Kerchner, aka Philip Kerchner, was the progenitor of our family was that he was the only immigrant ancestor with the surname spelled as Kerchner which was listed in a reference book available in 1909, "Thirty Thousand Names of Immigrants in Pennsylvania", second edition, by Professor Daniel Rupp, published in 1876 and frequently used in the very early 1900s. The three-volume set of books named "Pennsylvania German Pioneers" written by Strassburger and Hinke was not published until 1934, so that work was not available to George F. Kerchner, Sr., in 1909. Also, it appears that George F. Kerchner, Sr., never checked Berks County PA courthouse records for early wills and estates or he probably would have found the will of Adam Kerchner therein, with his name spelled exactly the way we do and in which it mentions his son named Frederick Kerchner. There are no mentions of any son named Frederick in the church, or any other records, of Johan Philip Kerchner, aka Philip Kerchner.

George Kerchner in his otherwise very useful report in 1909 never mentioned doing any courthouse estate file or early church original records research in his 1909 report and subsequent letters to cousins. Of course, we cannot be too critical. Today we have many more powerful research tools available to us such as microfilmed and indexed early church records, census records, and easier access to courthouse records than George did in 1909.

To conclusively prove to myself and others that Adam Kerchner was our ancestor and Philip Kerchner was not, I did exhaustive research over several years of the historical records of both male lines in all records available to me or that I could dig up somehow.

The following is what I have compiled on Johan Philip Kerchner. Some of it I obtained from the 1909 report which was a very good starting resource for many names of distant cousins, some was obtained verbally from E. Jesse Kerchner, and some was obtained from my research in an attempt to conclusively prove or disprove the 1909 theory of George F. Kerchner, Sr., as to who was our immigrant ancestor.

The immigrant to Pennsylvania named Johan Philip Kerchner is recorded to have emigrated from the Palatinate, Germany, to Pennsylvania in the year 1744. He sailed from the port of Rotterdam, Holland, on the ship Phoenix. He landed in Philadelphia. The following is an excerpt from the book, "A Collection of Upwards of Thirty Thousand Names of German, Swiss, Dutch, French, and Other Immigrants to Pennsylvania from 1727 to 1776", Rupp, 2nd Edition, published 1876, page 169: "October 20, 1744: Foreigners imported in the ship Phoenix, William Wilson, Captain, from Rotterdam, last of Cowes." Appearing in the list of 104 immigrants on page 170 is Johan Philip Kerchner. A facsimile of his original signature attesting his oath of allegiance and abjuration is found in Pennsylvania German Pioneers, Strassburger and Hinke, (3 volume 1992 reprint of 1934 edition), Vol. 2, published 1934, p.374. I have a copy of the reprint. Because the immigrant Philip's surname is spelled in the 1876 Rupp book exactly as ours is now, I believe this was the main reason why in 1909 George F. Kerchner, Sr. incorrectly picked this immigrant as the likely candidate to be our progenitor. The Strassburger and Hinke work, which is today generally believed to be more accurate, was not completed until 1934, so it was not available to George F. Kerchner, Sr. In Strassburger and Hinke's work Johan Philip Kerchner's name is translated, transcribed, and spelled as Johan Phillib Kercher (sic), without the "n", not Kerchner. But name spelling in a single record is never a deciding factor in genealogy work. We must at all sources and look at other facts.

I have found records of a Johan Philip Kerchner/Kercher/Kerger and wife named Catharina Eisenmen(in) (Note: The 'in' on the end of the name denotes feminine gender in the German language) baptizing their children circa 1755-1761. The children were: "Andreas", born 5 Dec 1755 at home, per the records of the Rev. Daniel Schumacher, "Ana Cath. Kerchner," born about 30 Apr 1757, baptized 29 May 1757, Moselem Zion Lutheran Church, Richmond Township, Berks County, Pa.; "Catharina Kercher," born 25 Mar 1759, baptized 29 May 1759, Old Goshenhoppen Lutheran Church, Salford Township, Montgomery Co., Pa.; and "Henricus Kerger," born 1 Jan 1761, baptized about Apr 1761, Old Goshenhoppen Lutheran Church.

I have found no records to support the 1909 speculation that Philip Kerchner was the father of Frederick Kerchner from whom we have descended, or even that Philip Kerchner ever had a child at all named Frederick. Research note: Even though George got it wrong per my research, his 1909 report is still a very useful tool in that it provided dozens of names and relationships to the various Kerchner branches in existence that George Kerchner was able to track down that time without the aid of modern communications technology such as the internet. For that, I am forever grateful to George and also to Jesse who saved the copy and gave me a copy of that 1909 report.

## **Where was Our Immigrant Ancestor Buried?**

Our family's progenitor, according to some theories related to me by E. Jesse Kerchner, is allegedly buried on the old Rauch Farm cemetery plot located east of Huffs Church, Pa. The plot is accessed via the Cloud Nine Kennels driveway. He remembered visiting the site with his father when he was an 8-year-old boy but did not remember seeing a specific grave site. Jesse took me to the alleged burial location. The burial plot is on private property at the top of a lightly wooded, weed-overgrown, knoll a quarter mile east of the village of Huffs Church, Hereford Township, Berks County, Pa. It is a few miles west of Seisholtzville, Pa., which is the area not very far from where our original progenitor settled. Allegedly about 100 people were buried in this plot. Whether our progenitor is buried there or whether E. Jesse Kerchner's father was speculating on that, one will never know for sure. I have visited and photographed the site. Only six or so inscribed markers remain. All the rest must have been destroyed or carried off by vandals.

Additional research by me has located another possible burial location for our Adam Kerchner. There was a very early cemetery known as God's Acre associated with the Upper Milford Reformed Congregation, now known as Old Zionsville UCC Church. Our Adam Kerchner was affiliated with that congregation. This old cemetery is in the village of Old Zionsville, Lehigh County, PA. Only a couple of tombstones remain. The rest were carted off by vandals. But the cemetery land is still maintained by the cemetery association of Old Zionsville UCC Church. More on this old cemetery and its connection to our Adam Kerchner is discussed later (on page 10) of this report.

Jesse Kerchner had a remarkable memory. His recollections of family history and events occurring during his lifetime have checked out to date during my subsequent research. Therefore, I was initially reluctant to discount completely his theories and recollections concerning certain of the information passed on to him by his father. However, at this point, I do not believe the validity of his father's claim that Johan Philip Kerchner is our immigrant ancestor and progenitor. The evidence is now overwhelming to me that Philip Kerchner is not our family's progenitor and that Adam Kerchner, candidate #2 hereafter described, and subsequently later was proven definitely to be our immigrant ancestor and progenitor.

I have also speculated that Adam Kerchner could have been buried on his farmland. More on that later.

### **Candidate No. 2:**

Adam Kerchner (c1704-1768), according to my research to date, is the most likely candidate for the progenitor of our family. I have found very strong evidence pointing to him as the immigrant ancestor and progenitor of our family in early Pennsylvania and that he is the father of Frederick Kerchner (1750-1828), the Revolutionary War militiaman.

That evidence is herein listed:

- (a) Adam Kerchner's will, recorded in the Berks County Courthouse in 1768, lists a son, Friedrich Kerchner.

(b) One of Adam Kerchner's daughters, Eva Elizabeth Kerchner, married Johan George Wetzel. The Wetzel family-owned land next to the farmland of Frederick Kerchner (the only known son of Adam) when Frederick sold his farmland in 1830.

(c) When Anna Barbara (nee Fetterman) Kerchner, wife of Frederick Kerchner (1750-1828), died in 1841, her death notice stated she was living in the home of Peter Wetzel. Peter Wetzel was the son of Johan George and Eva Elizabeth (nee Kerchner) Wetzel. Eva Elizabeth Kerchner was the daughter of Adam Kerchner. Thus, Peter Wetzel was the grandson of Adam Kerchner. Anna Barbara (nee Fetterman) Kerchner, the widow of Frederick Kerchner, was Peter Wetzel's aunt-in-law. Peter Wetzel lived very near the farm formerly owned by his deceased uncle, Frederick Kerchner, which was located north of Seisholtzville, Pa. Frederick Kerchner was the brother of Eva Elizabeth Kerchner.

(d) When Adam died, his wife, who was named Anna Barbara, remarried Conrad Schaub / Shoup (his best friend according to Adam's will). Conrad Shoup's 1806 Last Will and Testaments lists Frederick Kerchner as a debtor to him. It is easily conceivable for him to have loaned money to a stepson.

(e) Adam Kerchner and the Fetterman family were members of the "Schoolhouse Near the Old Spring" congregation, the predecessor to the Upper Milford Lutheran Congregation, which then became the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Old Zionsville, Pa. Adam was listed as a sponsor at the baptism of Anna Barbara Fetterman, daughter of Balthaser Fetterman. This same Anna Barbara Fetterman later became the wife of Frederick Kerchner, the son of Adam.

(f) A sister of our known and proven Frederick Kerchner baptized a daughter in which record she named her father as being named Adam.

For the above reasons and my having found no other historical evidence contradicting that evidence and/or linking any other colonial times immigrant to our Frederick Kerchner, born 1750, I have concluded that Adam Kerchner is definitely the father of our Frederick Kerchner, and thus the progenitor of our Kerchner family in America.

### **When Did Our Immigrant Ancestor Adam Arrive in Pennsylvania?**

Given that Adam Kerchner is our progenitor, when did he arrive? My research on a possible Adam Kerchner migrating to America listed in "Pennsylvania German Pioneers", by Strassburger and Hinke, the 2 Volume 1980 reprint version and the 3 Volume, 1992 reprint version of 1934 original edition, yields two possible Adam Kerchners.

The first prospect is Johan Adam Kircher, on page 316 of the 1980 version: "At the Courthouse Philadelphia, Nov 7, 1741. Present: The Honorable George Thomas, Esquire, Governor, William Till, Esquire. The Palatines whose Names are underwritten, imported in the snow Thane of Fife, William Weems, Master, from Amsterdam, but last from Aberdeen, did this day take the Oath to the Government, viz."

Appearing in the list of 19 men who took the oath that day was Johan Adam (A) Kircher. A facsimile of his original signature and mark attesting his oath of allegiance and abjuration is found in the same reference (3 volume 1992 reprint of 1934 edition), Vol. 2, page 325. His age was listed as 37.

### [Sketch of a typical snow sailing ship in the 1700's.](#)

The second prospect is Adam Kirchner on page 371 of the 1980 version: "At the Courthouse at Philadelphia, 5th Sept 1748. Present: William Attwood, Esq., Mayor, William Allen, Esq., Recorder, Robert Strettell and Benjamin Shoemaker, Esq. The Foreigners whose Names are underwritten, imported in the Edinburgh, James Russell, Master, from Rotterdam, but last from Portsmouth, did this Day take the foregoing Oaths to the Government." Appearing in the list of 127 men who took the oath that day was Adam (X) Kirchner. A facsimile of his original signature and mark attesting his oath of allegiance and abjuration is found in Pennsylvania German Pioneers, by Strassburger and Hinke, 1934, (3 volume 1992 reprint of 1934 edition), Vol. 2, page 403. I have a copy of that reprinted set.

Which Adam became our Berks County PA Adam? One very significant point is that in our Adam Kerchner's Last Will and Testaments, which was signed in August 1768 and recorded in the Berks County Courthouse in October 1768, shows his signature with an (A) mark. Adam was illiterate and sign with a mark. This is a very, very strong link of our Adam Kerchner to the 1741 ship list immigrant prospect I discussed earlier who also made his mark with an (A) in the ship/snow Thane of Fife list. No other immigrant named Adam with any surname remotely similar to our surname made his mark with an (A).

Other tidbits of information suggest slightly confusing and possibly contradicting theories. An Adam Kerchner in Berks County was the sponsor at the baptism for Anna Barbara Kurchner, daughter of Friederich Kurchner, at the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church on Oct 7, 1764. What do we know about this Frederick Kerchner?

A Friederich (O) Kirchner arrived in Philadelphia on the Ship Brothers on Sept 16, 1751, embarking in Rotterdam. If related to our Adam; possibly brothers, uncle and nephew, or cousins, it would seem likely that they both would have embarked from the same port, i.e., from Rotterdam. Also, the 'ner' in the surname at registration could be significant or just a variation due to the spelling difference done by different registrars. This data could suggest a link between this Frederick Kerchner with the later arriving Adam (X) Kirchner, the one who made his mark with an (X). His surname was recorded with the 'ner' suffix in the surname. While our Adam was recorded with an 'er' suffix in his surname, this is all weak circumstantial evidence. Also, it should be noted, that another group of Kirchners claim the 1748 Adam Kirchner immigrant who signed his mark with an (X) as being their progenitor.

Also, we must consider that the person who wrote these names could have used the "er" or the "ner" suffix based on their German province spelling of this occupational surname rather than the way the immigrant would have written it if they were literate in writing their name, which these immigrants were not since they made their mark and someone else wrote their names. Thus, the suffix could be the scribe's spelling and not the immigrant's correct name spelling.

At this time, I am convinced that the immigrant Adam who arrived in 1741 is our immigrant ancestor. The use of the "A" mark by him when he signed the ship list and when he signed his 1768 Will is a very, very strong piece of evidence that this is the correct immigrant ancestor for our Kerchner line. That and he had a son mentioned in his Will named Frederick. And in addition, while someone else claims the 1748 Adam as their immigrant ancestor, no one besides us claims the 1741 Adam. He is our guy.

That our ancestor Adam and the later arriving Frederick in 1751 are related somehow (proven via YDNA testing via direct male line descendants of both immigrants) is also suggested by the fact that the immigrant Adam Kerchner had a son named Frederick and the immigrant Frederick Kerchner had a son named Adam. This younger Adam Kerchner was very likely missing in action and later presumed killed at the Battle of Long Island in the Revolutionary War, where an Adam Kerchner was reported as missing after the battle and never returned per any records to be found in history. If he was captured, he would have very likely anonymously died on one of the British prison ships anchored in the New York harbor. This Adam who was lost to war may have been the one married to an Elizabeth. The connection between the two Kerchner immigrant lines, Adam 1741 and Frederick 1751 was only a theory early on by myself and others. But as was shown in my later YDNA genetic genealogy project, the YDNA testing proves these two immigrant lines are related via the direct male line somehow and somewhere back in Germany.

Another point to be noted is the age factor. Our Adam appears to have been significantly older than the immigrant Frederick.

Research also indicates that the 1751 immigrant Frederick Kerchner is the one who later moved to Bedford County, Pennsylvania, where the surname was misspelled as Karriger and Kariger. Some of his descendants then moved to Ohio where the name was further misspelled phonetically as Carriher. Later descendants moved to Indiana where the surname became misspelled again as Carrier. This is an interesting evolution of the surname. For a researcher starting with the surname Carrier, it would at first glance be a real leap to surmise that this surname evolved from Kerchner. But the evidence seems to indicate this is true.

And then science moves dramatically forward and comes to help us sort things out. In 2001 and 2002 Y chromosome DNA testing of direct male descendants of Frederick Kerchner, the only known son of our Adam Kerchner, the immigrant, and the descendants of the immigrant Frederick Kerchner family who went west to Bedford Co PA and then who subsequently changed their surname spelling to Karriger, showed a very close match in their YDNA YSTR haplotypes. This indicated that the immigrants Adam Kerchner and Frederick Kerchner were indeed related. See the Kerchner Surname Y-DNA website for more details.

[Kerchner Surname Y-DNA Genetic Genealogy Project](#)

[Some Descendants of the 1751 Frederick Kerchner immigrant](#)

Our Berks County Adam Kerchner was still siring children in the years 1750-1763. If it was the first immigrant prospect, who was age 37 in 1741 when he arrived, then he would have been about 59 in 1763 when his youngest proven daughter, Anna Maria, was born. Adam's wife is surmised to have been significantly younger than him since she remarried a friend of Adam Kerchner, Conrad

Schaub / Shoup, a year or two after Adam's death. She also lived until sometime after 1790. She was deceased by 1797 when Conrad Schaub sold his land. It certainly is possible for a much younger wife to be bearing children with an older husband. Sometimes I also have speculated to myself that maybe Adam may have been married twice with an unknown earlier family remaining back in his German home village or dying on the ship voyage over. All things considered; one must pick a preference. At this time, based on the similar signature mark (A) recorded at his arrival and the (A) in his Will, I have strongly decided the 1741 Adam prospect, the one who arrived in Philadelphia in 1741, is the correct immigrant candidate for our progenitor. Since he sort of disappears between 1741 and the early 1750s, I have assumed he was sold as an indentured servant to someone and was lost to history for a while until he worked off his ship passage debt. Since he had his only known son in 1750 at an unknown location with my research thus far, he likely married circa 1749 after completing his indentured servitude. Indentured servants were not allowed to marry until they had served their contract.

Nothing is known as to the exact date or location of his marriage in PA, but we do know the names of his wife and children from his August 1768 Will and other records. His wife's full given name appears to be Anna Barbara, maiden name unknown. She was mentioned in Adam's will simply as Barbara. However, when she served as a witness at the baptism of Anna Barbara Fetterman in 1753, her given name was recorded as Anna Barbara.

According to "The Journals and Papers of David Shultze", a Surveyor, our Adam Kerchner died on 26 Aug 1768, "on old Seiler's place." His Will was signed and witnessed the same day he died. Something very sudden or accidental must have happened, in my opinion.

His five known children who grew to adulthood were: a son Friederich, (1750-1828), married c1773 Anna Barbara Fetterman, died in Longswamp Township, Berks County, PA; and the daughters Eva Elizabeth, (c1753- c1829), married c1773 George Wetzel, Sr.; Anna Barbara, (1758-1829), married c1782 Johannes Schaub, died in Hereford Township, Berks County, PA; Anna Margaret, (c1760- ), she may have died young as nothing is known as to what happened to her nor has any marriage record been found; and Anna Maria, (1763-1843), married c1782 Jacob Truckenmiller, died in Delaware Township., Northumberland County, PA.

Another child once thought to be a possible daughter, but not ever proven, is Elisabetha Barbara Kirchner (sic), (May 1767- \_\_\_\_), baptized at Upper Milford Zion Lutheran Church, U Milford Township, Lehigh County PA. The uncertainty in assuming that she is a child of our Adam and Anna Barbara is that the mother of this child was recorded as Elisabetha Barbara while the earlier records indicate the wife of Adam Kerchner was named Anna Barbara. Also, there was no child, Elisabetha Barbara, listed in Adam's Will dated 1768, only one year later. This child could have died soon after birth, or she could be from a different Adam Kerchner/Kirchner family such as the Adam who was lost at the Battle of Long Island. There was more than one Adam Kerchner/Kirchner in Eastern Pennsylvania at this time. For example, an Adam Kerchner was reported missing and presumed killed at the Battle of Long Island in 1776 in the Revolutionary War. Another possibility is that Anna Barbara's full given name could have been Elisabetha Anna Barbara which would explain the various name variations. But I believe we are dealing at times with two different Adam Kerchner persons in the church records. Further research is needed into this May 1767 birth and who historically were her parents and what



happened to this child. But my instincts at this time point to this Elisabetha Barbara Kirchner, born May 1767, is the daughter of Adam Kerchner lost at the Battle of Long Island.

### **Where exactly was Adam Kerchner's farm and land?**

To date, I have now been able to precisely locate the exact location of approximately 50 acres of land that Adam Kerchner owned in the mid-1750s in Upper Milford Township, Lehigh (then Northampton) County PA. To date, I have not been able to precisely locate the 200-acre farm of the 1767 and 1768 tax records citations as owned by him. Specifically, the 1767 tax records for Hereford Township, Berks County, PA, reported he owned 200 acres, 4 horses, 3 cattle, and 4 sheep. The tax amount paid was 10 - which is assumed to be 10 English Pounds.

Based on old survey maps by the early surveyor, David Shultze, one can locate the properties of many families associated with Adam Kerchner's family and that was mentioned in his recorded legal documents over time. Based on the location of these properties, early on I had surmised that Adam Kerchner's 1767 200 acres of taxable land were probably located about one-mile south-east of Seisholtzville, Hereford Township, Berks County, PA, along the upper reaches of the eastern branch of the Perkiomen Creek and very near the border with Lehigh County, PA. I have surmised that at one time he may have owned or rented the land which at one time was owned by Jacob Christman or George Seiler. It is recorded in the early Surveyor David Schultz's diary, that in August 1768 Adam Kerchner died on the "Old Seiler" property. The early surveyed plots also verify that Adam Kerchner owned land just across the border in Upper Milford Township, Lehigh (then Northampton) County, PA, adjacent to and east of a tract of land owned by the widow Catherine Eck.

Another possibility I had considered about him owning 200 acres in 1767 and 50 acres in the mid-1750s is that instead of those being two separated and different farms, he may have added acreage to his Upper Milford Township tract which abutted it but was across the very nearby county line. A person was assessed and taxed for contiguous land based on the location of the owner's master bedroom. Thus, if Adam had added land which crossed the county line and by 1767 had built, or moved to, a new residence across the county line in Berks County, either because it was a nicer, flatter location for a home, or maybe Berks County's taxes were lower, he would have been recorded as a Berks County resident and taxpayer even though he still owned the tract across the border in Upper Milford Township, Lehigh (then Northampton) County PA. But this speculation would only apply if his 200 acres of land in 1767 were contiguous with and included the 50 acres of land he owned in the mid-1750s.

In my search, the first specific location reference made for any land owned by Adam Kerchner was in the deed for the land owned by the widow Catherine Eck. Her land straddled the county line between Lehigh (which before 1812 was Northampton and before 1752 was Bucks) County and Berks County PA. His name, recorded in her deed description meets and bounds, was spelled as Adam Kargher/Karghner/Karcher/Kergher. The last name was not written very clearly in the handwritten deed. This mention of Adam's land correlates well with the survey map found by me in 2007 and in other survey maps found later and shown via the links below.

[Schultze 1768 Survey Image:](#)

A survey map dated 1768 made by early surveyor David Schultze found in 2007 by Charles Kerchner of Emmaus PA shows Catherine Eck's tract of land in Upper Milford Township and depicts thereon where Adam Kerchner's land is mentioned in the Meets and Bounds description of the Eck Property as meeting "Karghner" land. I made some annotations on this old survey such as showing the creek to help orientate the reader such that it is easier to find on modern maps.

[Schulze 1767 Survey Image:](#)

A survey map dated 1767 made by surveyor David Schulze found in June 2015 by researcher Ursula Wacht of Germany shows part of the Adam Kergher/Kercher (Kerchner) tract of land in Upper Milford Township abutting land of Catherine Eck, Jacob Christman, and Sebastian Truckenmiller. Note: The Eck tract of land was later owned by John Shoup who married Anna Barbara Kerchner, a daughter of Adam Kerchner.

[1828 Deed Survey Map Image:](#)

Survey map dated 1828 found in June 2015 in PA Archives by researcher Michael Miller of PA shows the Meets and Bounds and acreage of the entire tract of land in Upper Milford Township which was owned in the mid-1750s by Adam Kergher (Kerchner).

[1860 Lehigh County Map:](#)

1860 map of the southwest corner of Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County PA with overlay plot thereon showing the location of Adam Kerchner's land. Overlay on the 1860 map made and provided on 23 Jan 2017 by Roy Shreffler of Bethlehem PA.

[Google Earth Satellite View of Adam Kerchner's Land Location:](#)

This is a plot I did on 13 June 2015 of Adam Kergher / Kerchner's original tract of land in Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County, PA, onto a modern satellite view map of the area. I also noted the name of the current owner of the larger portion of Adam Kerchner's original tract north of Salem Bible Church Road, which at the time of my making this plot was the John A. Whitenight Family Trust. Most of the portion of the original Adam Kerchner tract south of Salem Bible Church Road is part of the Victory Valley Campgrounds which in 2015 was owned by The Mennonite Brethren Church of Allentown, Lehigh County, PA.

### [Google Earth Plot Showing Adjacent Landowners c1750-1760:](#)

This is a plot I did on 30 July 2017 of Adam Kerchner's tract of land on a modern map. With this satellite view map, one can see that this area is and was a mountainous and wooded area in Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County, PA. On this plot, I annotated the family names of adjacent historic early land owners c1750-1760 which abutted Adam Kerchner's land in the 1750-1770s time frame. When you look at those adjoining property family names you can easily see and understand where and how Adam's children and grandchildren met their future spouses. The relative location of the land of abutting land owners' family names such as Fetterman, Truckenmiller, Shoup / Schoup / Schaub / Schoub, and Christman (into which the Kerchner family intermarried) are shown along with some other early landowners adjacent to the Kerchner land.

We also know Adam's son, Frederick Kerchner, in the 1780s had a farm about 1/4 mile north of Seisholtzville, just across the border in Longswamp Township, Berks County, PA. Today there is a large mobile home and pre-engineered home park located on his farmland.

We also know, Adam Kerchner's daughters married into well-known, local families, such as the Wetzel, Schaub, and Truckenmiller which also owned land southeast of Seisholtzville. Adam's only known son, Frederick, married a daughter of the Fetterman family of that area. The Fetterman farm was to the north of and abutted the Adam Kerchner land.

Therefore, from all the information I have compiled over the decades, I have concluded Adam lived at various times on two different tracks of land located southeast of the village of Seisholtzville, in or near what is now known as Victory Valley or Sigmund, parts of which are in Hereford Township, Berks County, PA, and other parts are across the county line in Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County PA. The names of neighboring or nearby families back in the 1700s at various times were named Eck, Schaub / Shoup, Truckenmiller, Christman, Seiler, Rauch, Fetterolph, Rothenberger, and Marsteller.

### **Where was Our Adam Kerchner Buried?**

I do not know where for certain Adam or his wife is buried at this time. It could be at the old Rauch Farm burial plot mentioned earlier. But no solid evidence exists to support this theory other than the possibility that at least that part of the family oral tradition was true. Another likely possibility is that he was buried on his farmland. More on that possibility later. However, another clue that we do know, based on his estate papers, which show a small fee paid to the Reverend Leydich, is that Adam was probably buried by the Reverend John Philip Leydich, pastor of Upper Milford Reformed Congregation from 1766-1771. The Reverend could have performed the burial service on Adam's farmland, but there is also an old cemetery located southeast of the current church building of the Upper Milford Zion Reformed Church (now a UCC church). Research note: Some historical accounts indicated this cemetery was located northeast of the church. But it should be noted that there were various locations for the various church building for that church. From the location of the church

building known as the "brick church" to the congregation, that old cemetery would have been northeast of that church building which was located on the south side of the cemetery. The newer church building is on the north side of the cemetery. Also, it should be noted that the magnetic north pole has moved over the last few hundred years. This old cemetery, called God's Acre, is about 1/2 mile off the main King's Highway Road and can only be accessed via a small alley and then crossing over private property. This cemetery, which is on private property, was adjacent to the original location of the first log church in use when Adam Kerchner died. For whatever reason, the early church when it moved the church location to along King's Highway never obtained title to the land on which the cemetery is located. Probably because the owner of the land at that time said the church could use it in perpetuity and said restrictions were in the deed when the church member sold it. Since Rev. Leydich was pastor of this church at that time, our Adam Kerchner may be buried in that old God's Acre cemetery. I have visited the site and only a couple of gravestones remain. Allegedly the gravesite was not being maintained for many years. Then at some point in the past, most of the old stones were stolen by a contractor, per an old-timer's account, who said someone allegedly used them to decorate a stone fireplace. Also, the person wanted the existence of that old cemetery to disappear so it could be more easily sold. No one to date has been able to learn the name of the person who allegedly did this. The person who claimed to know the name would not tell me. If true, this is a terrible thing for a person to have done.

Research note: I became a member of this UCC Church circa 1998 and when I learned of the problems then ongoing with access to the God's Acre Cemetery to do routine maintenance. I helped the church and cemetery association document the deed easement record and obtain a court recorded and perfected legal easement over the private property to the old cemetery to be able to maintain it. It took several years to accomplish due to strong attempted legal opposition from the private property owner. But at the end of the litigation, the church won.

### **Some Thoughts Passed Along To the Reader**

Due to some early 1900s antidotal research and comments suggesting a different immigrant being our ancestor, I will remark here and say at this point, that of course it is remotely possible that neither of the Adam immigrant candidates aforementioned in this report is our ancestor and progenitor, the father of our Frederick. No one can be 100% sure of such matters until they can find conclusive primary source proof such as Frederick's birth and baptism records. And I will keep searching for that. However, at this point as of 2014, I am 99.99% sure that Adam Kerchner who died in 1768 in Hereford Township, Berks County, PA, is our progenitor, and that he is the one who arrived in PA in 1741, and that the Friederich mentioned in his Will is our Frederick, the Revolutionary War militia soldier. All the other Adam Kerchner or Kerchner/Kirchner immigrants are claimed by others and all the facts found in decades of research by me indicate the 1741 Adam Kerchner immigrant is our immigrant ancestor. Where he was between 1741 and 1750 is unknown. Since he was illiterate and unable to pay for his ship's passage fare, he was probably sold to some wealthy master upon arrival as an indentured servant to work off the debt he likely incurred for his passage via ship from the Old World to the New World. I am convinced he is my direct male ancestor. I will have to leave it to others once I am gone to continue to look for the primary source evidence here in Pennsylvania or Germany. More and more records are digitized and put online each year. One never knows what will turn up in the future and change my 99.99% conviction to 100% proven.

Here is a four-generation Descendant Chart for: [Johan Adam Kerchner](#).

Here is a three-generation Descendant Chart for: [Johan Jacob Wetzel](#).

Frederick Kerchner (1750-1828), my 4th great-grandfather, was born on March 15, 1750, per his gravestone. The exact birth location is unknown but it was probably near the area of what is now Hereford Township, Berks County, PA, since his probable father, Adam, was taxed on a 200-acre farm there, near the Berks County and Lehigh (then Northampton) County line, until 1768 when Adam died. Frederick married in c1773 to Anna Barbara Fetterman a/k/a Barbara Fetterman, the daughter of Balthasar and Catharina Margaretha (nee Hufft) Fetterman. She was born on 7 Jun 1753 in Upper Milford Township, then part of Northampton County, but now part of Lehigh County, PA. She was baptized on 1 July 1753 by the "Schoolhouse Near the Old Spring Congregation", the predecessor of the Upper Milford Zion's Church.

### [The Schoolhouse Near The Old Spring](#)

In 1772, Frederick Kerchner is recorded as a laborer on the tax rolls of Upper Milford Township. My theory is that he left his home in Hereford Township to find work nearby in Upper Milford Township. He possibly could even have been working for Balthaser Fetterman since Balthaser and Adam Kerchner knew each other and Adam Kerchner was a sponsor for Anna Barbara's baptism. Frederick Kerchner and Anna Barbara Fetterman as neighbors grew up knowing each other. They probably went to the same church, Upper Milford Zion's Church. The Reformed and Lutherans shared a church building at that time. Thus, while working in Upper Milford Township in 1772, Frederick probably courted Anna Barbara. This then resulted in their marriage in c1773 with their first child, Johan George Kerchner, being born in 1774. It was a fruitful marriage. According to Barbara's death notice published in the May 4, 1841, issue of the Reading Adler, they had a total of 8 children. However, to date I have only found records of 6 who grew to adulthood: Johan George, a/k/a George, (1774-1835), married Elizabeth Keiser c1800, died in Snyder County PA; Frederick Wilhelm, a/k/a William, (1776-1841), baptized at Longswamp Reformed Church, married Salome Egner circa Jul 1800, died in Macungie Township, Lehigh County PA; Philip Peter, a/k/a Peter, (1778-1822), baptized at Longswamp Reformed Church, married Catharina c1799, died in Longswamp Township, Berks County PA; Elizabeth, (1783-1833), baptized at Lehigh Zion Lutheran Church, married Abraham Griesemer on Jun 7, 1801, died in Hereford, Berks County PA; Jacob, (1787-1836), baptized at Longswamp Reformed Church, married Catharine Koser on Jan 26, 1808, died in Towamensing Township, Carbon County PA; and Maria, (1796-1873), married Jacob Miller in 1816, died in Hereford Township, Berks County PA. Barbara's death notice indicated they had 52 grandchildren and 57 great-grandchildren.

Frederick Kerchner owned a 123-acre 98 perch farm divided in 3 tracts. He undoubtedly farmed his land but his main occupation, which was listed in his 1796 land purchase deed and on 1779, 1780, and 1784 tax lists for Longswamp Township published in the PA Archives Vol. 18, was that of a turner (wood lathe worker). His farm was in Longswamp Township straddling the Maxatawny Township to Philadelphia Road just north of the village of Seisholtzville, Hereford Township, Berks County, Pa. The farm is on or very near the border of the two townships. The home and woodturning

shop were on the 10 acres on the east side of the road. The barn and the rest of the tract were on the west side of the road. I have traced the prior ownership and later ownership of the largest parcel on the west side of the road as follows: Peter Fetterolf (c1752), Christopher Bittenbender (1777), Frederick Kerchner (1796), John Reiter (1833), Jacob Moll (1855), Franklin Moll (1881), Angeline Moll (1892), Sylvester Schmoyer (1905), George Fisher (1907), Willis F. Walker (1907), Willis B. Walker, and recently to Donald Nielson (c1968) who built the Mountain Village Mobile Home Park on the property. The 10-acre tract on the east side of the road on which the home was situated went to the brothers William and Jacob Kerchner who then sold it in 1831 to John & George Moll. The barn on the west side of the road was torn down when the mobile home park was built. The residence became unoccupied and was allowed to deteriorate and eventually it was set afire a couple of times by local vandals.

[Location of Frederick Kerchner's Farm per Deed Meets and Bounds.](#)

[The plot of Land Purchased in 1796 in Longswamp Twsp, Berks Co PA](#)

[c1942 Aerial View of Frederick Kerchner Farm Land He Owned in 1796](#)

I have photographed the tracts as they appear today, including the burned-out home. I have also obtained photos from the Walker family of the home that shows the home when the Walkers owned it. The photo, taken in the early 1900s, shows the home with what looks like an addition on the southern most end that was probably added in the mid-1900s. You can see the shop building in the rear. Frederick Kerchner was a wood turner and that was likely the purpose of that outbuilding and shop. There also was a bake oven outbuilding on this property south of the main residence at one time which was used for baking and cooking during the hot summer months. From the size of the building, I have at times speculated that there may have once been a tavern in this building. It would have been an ideal spot since it is along a reasonably flat area of the top of the mountain where you can imagine that teams of horses pulling wagons could have stopped to rest the horses and the owner or teamster stopping to wet his whistle before making the journey down the other side of the mountain. The tavern thought is only speculation at this time on my part. No evidence have I found to indicate such other than the size of this building and the strategic location at the top of the mountain along one of the King's highways. This highway ran between the fertile land of Maxatawny Township, Berks County, PA, and larger towns of the southern part of Montgomery and Philadelphia counties PA, and of course, the city of Philadelphia PA.

A three-generation Descendant's Chart for [Balthaser Fetterman](#), father and immigrant ancestor of Anna Barbara Fetterman, is provided on a separate page.

Frederick Kerchner (1750-1828), 4th great-grandfather continued:

Frederick served in the Revolutionary War. According to the Pennsylvania Archives, 5th Series, Vol. 5, he served in various Berks County militia companies from 1780-1781. In 1781 he received pay as a private in Captain Jacob Ladich's Company of the Berks County Militia. His battalion commander was Colonel Samuel Ely. His name appears on the payroll record listed in the Pennsylvania Archives,

5th Series, Vol. 5, Pg. 280. His name also appears with spelling variations on pages 221, 223, and 235 of the same reference.

Frederick Kerchner is listed in the Pennsylvania Septennial Census 1779 of Berks County. He is recorded as a married taxable inhabitant of Longswamp Township in this census. His name appears on page 20 of the 1989 reprint of this census published by the Berks County Genealogical Society. Frederick's family is listed in the first U.S. census in 1790. It recorded 3 males aged 16 and over, 2 males under 16, and 2 females. At the time of completion of the census, Maria had not been born. One must remember that ages were often recorded incorrectly or were deliberately misstated to census takers for various reasons. Therefore, it is this researcher's best estimate, that the 3 recorded males over 16 would have been Frederick and his sons Johan George and Frederick Wilhelm. His second son's (Frederick Wilhelm) age was probably recorded wrong as being 16 when he was only 14 at the time. The males under age 16 would have been sons Philip Peter and Jacob. The 2 females would have been his wife and their first daughter Elizabeth.

Frederick died Aug 10, 1828. His death notice was published in German in the September 2, 1828, issue of the Reading Adler. A copy of the paper is on file at the Historical Society of Berks County, Reading, Pa. Frederick, and his wife are buried at Huff's Church Cemetery located in the village of Huffs Church, Berks County, Pa. His grave (#M22) is in the 13th row of the "old cemetery" on the left side of the church. It has a soldier's marker beside it. He is listed in the historical records of the church. His wife Barbara died April 26, 1841, and is buried in grave #M18 which is located in the same row about twenty feet to the right of Frederick's grave. Frederick's tombstone is barely readable. Barbara's is still in good shape. However, both tombstone inscriptions are recorded for posterity in a book entitled, Tombstone Inscriptions, by Raymond E. Kiebach, Reading, Pa. I have a copy of the inscriptions. I have also photographed the gravestones. A copy of Longswamp Reformed Church and Lehigh Zion Lutheran Church records are on file at the Lehigh County Historical Society, Allentown, Pa. His will, written in old German script, was recorded in 1828 in the Berks County Courthouse, Volume 6, Page 223. I have had his will translated into English. It lists his wife and children's names and the husbands of his daughters. It is very interesting reading the detailed instructions he provided for the disposal of his assets and the care of his wife.

Johan George Kerchner, aka George Kerchner, (1774-1835), the first known child and son of Frederick Kerchner, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-granduncle, was born March 3, 1774, in Berks County, PA. Baptized as Johan George Kerchner, he chose to use his middle name as his legal name. This was a common custom with early Germans. He signed all his documents George Kerchner, but on his tombstone, it is engraved, "John G. Kerchner," according to Snyder County Tombstone Inscriptions by George W. Wagenseller. To date, I have found no record of his baptism although his brothers were baptized at Longswamp Reformed Church in Longswamp Township, Berks Co., PA. About 1800, he married Elizabeth Keiser, born January 30, 1783, the daughter of Peter and Gertraut Keiser. She was also baptized in April 1783 at Longswamp Reformed Church. They settled in Longswamp Township where four of eight of their known children were born: Johan George Jr. (Dec 15, 1802 - Nov 21, 1889), died in Keokuk County, IA; Lydia Kerchner (Dec 22, 1804 - Sep 11, 1883), died in Perry Township, Snyder Co PA; Judith Kerchner (Jan 2, 1807), and Elizabeth (Jun 12, 1809), allegedly died in Liverpool, Perry Co PA. These four children were all baptized at Longswamp Reformed Church. His family is listed in the 1800 and 1810 censuses of Longswamp Township, Berks County, Pa. About 1811 he moved with his family to Beaver Township, Union County, Pa.,



where he was listed in the 1820 census. He later was located in Perry Township, Union County, Pa., later known as Snyder County. His family was listed in the 1830 census of Union County. In this area he had the last four of his eight known children, all boys; the water must have been different in that area. The boys were: Solomon (Feb 20, 1812 - Feb 7, 1883), who probably died in Perry County, PA; Augustus (Feb 19, 1815 - Jan 18, 1855), who died in Wheatfield Township, Perry County, PA; Reuben (Apr 7, 1818 - Sep 12, 1883), died in Delaware Township, Juniata County, PA; and Benjamin (Oct 19, 1820 - Aug 18, 1898), died Walker Township, Juniata County, PA. His last known son, Benjamin, was baptized at Grubb's Church (Botschaft) Lutheran Church, Chapman Township, Snyder County, PA. Johan George, Sr., died November 10, 1835. His wife died on November 25, 1849. They are both buried at Grubb's Church Cemetery. A baptismal record, an old German Taufschein, has been found for Augustus Kerchner on which his mother's maiden name is recorded as Kayser which is a slightly different spelling but phonetically the same name. I still believe Keiser is the correct spelling of her maiden name. The Taufschein was purchased for the sum of about \$800 and was donated to the collection of the Perry Historians, New Castle, PA. I have a photographic copy of it.

While researching this branch of descendants, I have located two 3rd great-grandsons of Johan George Kerchner. They have also done research into this branch of descendants of Frederick Kerchner. The first individual is a direct male descendant of Benjamin Kerchner, the youngest son of Johan George Kerchner. His name is Jerome E. Kerchner, Jr. He resides in Stevensville, MD. The second individual is a descendant of Augustus Kerchner, the 3rd son of Johan George Kerchner. His name is Clifton P. Hyatt. He resides in Newville, PA.

Frederick Wilhelm Kerchner, aka William Kerchner, (1776-1841), second known child and son of Frederick Kerchner, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandfather, was born March 12, 1776, in Berks County, PA. He was baptized "Frederick Wilhelm Kerchner" but chose to use his middle name as his legal name as was the custom of those times. He signed all his documents, "William Kerchner" but on his tombstone, it is engraved "F. Wilhelm Kerchner." I have photographed the tombstone. The record of his baptism at the Longswamp Reformed Church is on microfilm with a facsimile copy on file at the Lehigh County Historical Society, Allentown, Pa. He also may have chosen to use his middle name to distinguish himself from his father. He was a farmer. In July 1800, he married Salome Egner (aka Saloma Egner), born November 12, 1779, the daughter of Henry Egner and Susanna Romig.

For more about the Egner family, visit my [Egner](#) web page.

This Kerchner family moved to what is now the Lower Macungie Township area of Lehigh (then Northampton) County, PA, where they owned a large farm. They had 4 children who were: Henry (Apr 29, 1802, died age 18), never married; John Frederick (Feb 12, 1804 - Jul 25, 1888), married Maria Christman; died in Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh Co PA, Hanna (Feb 5, 1806 - May 6, 1844), married Thomas Eisenhart, died in Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh Co PA; and Susanna (Sep 19, 1811 - Apr 18, 1894), married Daniel Christman, died near Macungie, Lehigh County PA. Daniel Christman and Maria Christman were brother and sister and were the children of Johan Henry and Anna Maria (nee Roeder) Christman. Wilhelm, or William as he was known in English, built the home located about one mile north of Macungie on the right-hand side of the road, immediately after the entrance to the Mack Truck assembly plant. It was later owned by the Faust family which is related to the Kerchners by an earlier generation marriage. You can easily see the large "WK" with the year "1835" at the apex of the north wall. I have a photograph of it. This house and other small



buildings on the property were torn down circa 2005 during the development of the land for residential units in the interior portion and commercial properties along Route 100. Today a McDonald's Restaurant and a bank are located near where the home stood. William Kerchner is listed in the 1810 Census of Longswamp Township, Berks County, PA. On page 792 we find Wm. 'Kircher'. He is also listed in the 1820 Census of Macungie Township, Lehigh County, PA, on page 171, William 'Kercher'. Thus he moved from Berks County to Lehigh County sometime between 1810 and 1820.

William died on Nov 22, 1841. He was the first person buried at Solomon's Reformed Church Cemetery in Macungie, Lehigh County, Pa., which was completed that year. He was active in the establishment of this church and his untimely death is recorded in the historical records of the church. His grave is in the second row, far left, of the "old cemetery". His wife, Saloma, who died June 5, 1870, is buried by his side. I have photographed the tombstones. Records of his children's baptisms were recorded at Lehigh Zion Lutheran Church near Macungie, Pa. A microfilm copy is on file at the Muhlenberg College Library, Allentown, Pa. A facsimile copy is on file at the Lehigh County Historical Society, Allentown, Pa. His will, written in German, was recorded in 1841 at the Lehigh County Courthouse, File #1586. I have had it translated into English. It lists his 3 surviving children, plus the 2 daughters and their husband's names. Like his father's Will, it is very interesting in the detailed explanation of exactly how his wife is to be taken care of until she dies. She lived almost 30 more years, until 5 Jun 1870, so the final account to the court of his estate was not done until 10 May 1871. When William died on 22 Nov 1841, he was serving as the administrator for his mother, Barbara Kerchner's estate in the Berks County court system. She had recently died on 26 April 1841. This caused a very complicated estate for William's son, John F. Kerchner, and the other executors to resolve.

#### [Gravestone for F. Wilhelm Kerchner at Solomon's Church Cemetery, Macungie PA](#)

#### [Gravestone for Saloma \(nee Egner\) Kerchner at Solomon's Church Cemetery, Macungie PA](#)

Philip Peter Kerchner, aka Peter Kerchner, (1778-1822), the third known child and son of Frederick Kerchner, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-granduncle, was born February 11, 1778, in Longswamp Township, Berks County, Pa. He was baptized on March 15, 1778, at Longswamp Reformed Church as Philip Peter, but chose to use his middle name as his legal name. This was a common German custom. In about 1800, he married Catharina (last name unknown). They settled in Longswamp Township. His family is listed in the 1800 and 1810 censuses of Longswamp Township, Berks County, Pa. They had ten children of which the names of eight are known. They were: Catharina (Jun 7, 1801), Salome (Apr 1805), Patty (Mar 27, 1807), Anna (Apr 30, 1809), Lydia (Sep 3, 1810), Judith (Aug 24, 1812), Mathilda (c1815), and Peter (c1817). Some of the children were baptized at Longswamp Reformed Church and some were baptized at Zion Lehigh Lutheran Church, Macungie Township, Lehigh County, PA. Philip Peter died about 20 Oct 1822. His estate was administered in the Berks County Courthouse in Reading, Pa., under the name Peter Kercher. His last name was misspelled. However, his name is spelled correctly in several of the estate documents such as the inventory and in the petition signed by his wife to appoint guardians for the minor children. His wife, Catharine, and his brother, William Kerchner, were the administrators. I have not found a record of Catharine's death. As of this date I have not located where they are buried.

Elizabeth M. Kerchner (1783-1833), the fourth known child and the first known daughter of Frederick Kerchner, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandaunt, was born May 25, 1783, in Longswamp Township, Berks County, Pa. She was baptized on July 6, 1783, at Lehigh Zion Lutheran Church, Macungie Township, Lehigh County, Pa. The daughters were baptized as Lutheran since the mother was Lutheran while the sons were baptized as Reformed since the father was of the Reformed religion. This was common with German "mixed religion" marriages. On June 7, 1801, she married Abraham Griesemer, born April 16, 1777, the son of Leonard and Elizabeth (nee Lefebre) Griesemer. They had nine known children: Rebecca Margaret (Mar 6, 1802), Elizabeth (Dec 22, 1803), Catharine (c1805), Maria Magdalena (1808), Jennike Eunice (Mar 7, 1810), and John (Aug 26, 1812), Julia Ann (Aug 1, 1816), Mary (c1820), and Abraham (Nov 7, 1822). Elizabeth died on January 18, 1833. Her husband died on October 15, 1823. They are buried in the same row as her parents at Huffs Church Cemetery, Huffs Church, Hereford Township, Berks County, Pa. Her maiden name was misspelled as Kergner on her tombstone.

Jacob Kerchner (1787-1836), the fifth known child and the fourth known son of Frederick Kerchner, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-granduncle was born November 28, 1787, in Longswamp Township, Berks County, Pa. He was baptized at Longswamp Reformed Church. On 26 Jan 1808, he married Catherine Koser, born on August 17, 1788, the d/o Johan George and Elizabeth Barbara (nee Peters) Koser. Initially, Jacob and his family lived in Longswamp Township but later moved north of the Blue Mountain to Towamensing Township, Carbon County, and then part of Northampton County, Pa. His family is listed in the 1820 and 1830 censuses of Towamensing Township. They had nine known children: Jacob Jr. (28 Jun 1808-26 Oct 1831), never married; Benjamin (8 May 1810-5 Apr 1896), married Elizabeth Box; Anna Maria (b. 5 Apr 1812), married George Greenzweig; Catherine (4 May 1814-7 Apr 1882), married George Ziegenfuss; Judith (27 Mar 1816-2 Jul 1903), married Joseph Christman; John (24 Mar 1819-27 Mar 1889), married Susannah Serfass; Salina (9 May 1822-27 Jul 1896), married first to Mr. Arner, married second to Mr. Wagner; Daniel (1827-12 Mar 1900), married Fannie Hawk; Susann (c1831), married Peter Meixel; Jacob Kerchner, Sr., died about March 1836 in Lower Towamensing Township, Carbon (then Northampton) County, Pa. His estate was administered at the Northampton County Courthouse, Easton, Pa. His wife, Catherine, died on October 2, 1867. It is not known where Jacob, Sr. is buried. His wife is buried in the Salem Church Cemetery in Gilbert, Chestnuthill Township, Monroe County, Pa. Several of their children are buried in the cemetery at Gilbert. She was probably living with one of her children in that area when she died. Their first son, Jacob, Jr., who died young at age 23, is buried at St. John's Union Church Cemetery, Palmerton, Lower Towamensing Township, Carbon County, Pa.

Maria Kerchner (1796-1873), the sixth known child and the second known daughter of Frederick Kerchner, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandaunt was born January 20, 1796, in Longswamp Township, Berks County, Pa. I have found no baptismal record for her as of this date. In 1816 she married Johan Jacob Miller, aka Jacob Miller and/or John Miller, born Sep 22, 1786. They had nine known children: Caroline (Oct 1, 1817), Jacob (1818), Lydia (Aug 13, 1819), Judith (Sep 11, 1821 - Nov 25, 1895), William (Aug 25, 1823 - Feb 2, 1881), Charles (Aug 26, 1826 - Jun 10, 1898), a female child (c1833), Edwin (c1835), and Franklin (c1838). Some of the information on these children was found with their burial records in the private burial records of Rev. Eli Keller, CLDS Film No. 1305843-05. Maria (nee Kerchner) Miller died February 19, 1873. She is buried in the same row as her parents at Huff's Church Cemetery, Huffs Church, Hereford Township, Berks County, Pa. Her maiden's name on her

tombstone is spelled, Kergner. Her tombstone inscription states she was married to Jacob Miller. However, as of this date, I have not found the burial location of her husband.

John F. (Frederick) Kerchner (1804-1888), my 2<sup>nd</sup> great-grandfather, son of F. Wilhelm a/k/a William, and grandson of Frederick Kerchner, was born February 12, 1804, in Macungie Township, which was then part of Northampton County, Pa. Lehigh County was not created from Northampton County until March 6, 1812. He was a farmer. On March 7, 1830, he married Maria Christman, who was born November 4, 1805, the daughter of Johan Henry and Anna Maria (nee Roeder) Christman. They had 9 children who were: William Henry (Mar 6, 1831 - Feb 4, 1879), married Levina Laros; Mary Ann (1832), married John Bastian; Thomas Franklin (Nov 9, 1833 - May 31, 1884), married Eliza Miller; Sarah Amanda (Feb 8, 1836 - Feb 3, 1895), married Peter Faust; Salome Caroline (c1838), married William Eberhard; Eliza Catherine (c1840), married John Schantz; John Addison (Feb 10, 1844-Jan 21, 1926), allegedly served in the Civil War, died in Ohio, married first to Louisa Schwartz and second to Emma Weidner; Susanna Rebecca (Oct 9, 1847 - May 30, 1854), died age 7; and Jacob Benjamin (Dec 27, 1849 - Nov 20, 1870), never married. John Kerchner and his family are listed in the 1850 Census of Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh County, Pa., page 161, line 17, John Kercher (sic), age 46, farmer. According to A History of Lower Macungie Township, published in 1976, and on file at the Lehigh County Historical Society, there were two iron ore mines located on his property. John Kerchner was active in community affairs. He was one of the 16 original shareholders in the establishment and building of the "Macungie Institute" school in 1856. The Borough of Macungie was known as the village of Millerstown back then. The school was named after the township of Macungie since it served the whole township area and not just the village of Millerstown. The original building still stands today with large additions made in 1871 and 1941, and renovations completed in 2002. Today the Macungie Institute building serves as a community center and the home of the Macungie Historical Society. John F. Kerchner died Jul 25, 1888. He left an estate of record valued by the court at more than \$20,000, a considerable sum for those times. \$20,000 invested at 3% interest would be worth about \$582,000 in 2002. It was divided between the children and one grandson. He and his wife are buried at Solomon's Church Cemetery. His grave is in Section A, Lot 54, Grave #7. His wife, Maria, who died February 15, 1874, is buried by his side. I have photographed the tombstones. They are heavily weathered. His will, written in English, was recorded in 1888, at the Lehigh County Courthouse, File #7028. It lists his surviving children and the husbands of his surviving married daughters. Also, it names one of his grandsons, Morris R. Schantz. His daughter, Eliza Catherine, who married John Schantz, had predeceased him. Several other children, including his oldest son, William Henry, also predeceased him.

[Gravestone for John Kerchner at Solomon's Church Cemetery, Macungie PA](#)

[Gravestone for Maria \(nee Christman\) Kerchner at Solomon's Church Cemetery, Macungie PA](#)

Here is a four generation Descendant Chart for [Jacob Christman](#)

William Henry Kerchner (1831-1879), my great-grandfather, son of John F., was born March 6, 1831, in Lehigh County PA. His occupation in the 1850 census was listed as apprentice (wagoner?). In 1853, he married Lovina (aka Levina) Laros (aka Larosch, Larrash, Laurisch), born October 16, 1833. Lovina was a descendant of an early settler in the Macungie Township area Ludwig Larosch. Lovina Laros was the daughter of Jesse and Lydia (nee Siegfried) Laros. William and Lovina had 9 children. They were: Oscar Llewelyn (1855), Mary Alice (c1857), John Henry (Oct 28, 1860 - died age 24, studying for the ministry), William Jesse (Sep 26, 1862 - was a blacksmith by trade and owned a blacksmith shop in East Macungie, PA). The blacksmith shop was continued by his son, William Jesse, Jr. An account of their shop and their skills appeared in A History of Lower Macungie Township, published in 1976, Ellen Louisa (c1866), George Franklin (Apr 21, 1868), Jacob Benjamin (Dec 13, 1870), Edwin Alfred (Jan 6, 1873), and Margaret Lydia (Jan 26, 1877). He was a farmer, carpenter, and made furniture. A cane chair he made was owned by his grandson, the late E. Jesse Kerchner. He is listed in the 1850 Census of Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh County, Pa., page 161, line 13, William 'Kercher', age 19, apprentice. He was living with his sister, Mary Ann, who married John Bastian, occupation wagoner. Since William's father, John, owned two iron ore mines on his property, the wagons were probably used to haul iron ore to Lockridge Furnaces in Alburtis. William, according to the deed description for the property he owned, probably lived in the house located at the 'V' intersection of the road to Alburtis and the road to Trexlertown immediately north of the entrance to the present Mack Truck facility. The present-day location of this road has been relocated from its former location. William Henry died, at the rather young age of 47, on Feb 4, 1879. His father outlived him. William Henry is buried in the Solomon's Church Cemetery, Section A, Lot 44, Grave #5. His wife, Lovina, who died July 20, 1902, is buried by his side. I have photographed the tombstones. A copy of Solomon's Church records are on file at the Lehigh County Historical Society, Allentown, Pa. His estate was administered at the Lehigh County Courthouse in 1879, File #5385.

[Gravestone for William Henry Kerchner at Solomon's Church Cemetery, Macungie PA](#)

[Gravestone for Levina \(nee Laros\) Kerchner at Solomon's Church Cemetery, Macungie PA](#)

Here is a three generation Descendant Chart for [Ludwig Larosch](#)

Jacob Benjamin Kerchner (1870-1941), my grandfather, son of William Henry, was born December 13, 1870, on the "Kerchner Farm" near Macungie, Lehigh County PA. On January 2, 1897, he married Emma M. C. Derr, who was born September 7, 1877. Emma was the daughter of John and Lucy Ann (nee Walbert) Derr. Jacob and Emma had 8 children: Irvin Jacob (was in business as a painter and paper hanger), Levina Estella (died in childhood), Verna Ella (married James Heil of Macungie), John Oscar (died in childhood), Edgar Harold, George Paul, Mildred Emma (never married), and Charles Frederick (my father).

Jacob was a farmer but for a time it was alleged by my aunt that he worked in Ohio as foreman at a pipe factory for a short time. But thus far I have found no additional evidence of that. At various times in his life he managed sewing mills in Lehigh and Northampton Counties. In later life he owned a home on the west side of the Main Street in Macungie PA, across from the hardware store.

His obituary states that for 12 years he was proprietor of the Sunset Shirt Manufacturing Company near Vera Cruz. He was also in partnership with William Kern in a glove making business in Macungie, Pa. My father, Charles (Sr.), remembers that for a while he managed several shirt manufacturing businesses in Emmaus, Pa. and in Danielsville, PA (where my father was born while he worked up there). He also was in partnership with William Kern in a shirt factory in Emmaus, Pa. He was a church elder for many years at Solomon's Reformed Church in Macungie, Pa. He died on October 3, 1941. He is buried in Solomon's Church Cemetery, Section B, Lot 23, Grave #5. His wife, Emma, who died November 20, 1956, is buried by his side. I have photographed the tombstones. A copy of Solomon's Church records is on file at the Lehigh County Historical Society, Allentown, Pa. His will was recorded in 1941 at the Lehigh County Courthouse, File #32110.

Charles F. Kerchner, Sr. (my father) was born 28 Jun 1915 in Danielsville, Northampton County PA. He worked as a farmer, a painter, a trouble shooter for the electric trolleys at the Lehigh Valley Transit Company, and then as a maintenance man for Western Electric in Allentown PA, before retiring. He died on 6 Jan 1992 at the Fellowship Manor Nursing Home in Whitehall, Lehigh County PA. He married on 3 Jan 1942 in Macungie, Lehigh County PA to my mother, Beatrice Brown Laudenslager. She was born 30 Jul 1911 in Allentown, Lehigh County PA, the daughter of Raymond Austin Laudenslager and Eva Catherine Brown. She worked most of her life as a sewing machine operator at various clothing manufacturing mills in Allentown, Lehigh County PA. She was a Union Steward at several mills associated with the International Ladies Garment Workers union. She also was a founding member of the Queen City Chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police Ladies Auxiliary. She died 14 Nov 1982 at the Lehigh Valley Hospital Center in Salisbury Township, Lehigh County PA. They are buried at the Northwood Cemetery in Emmaus, Lehigh County PA.