

THE BURKHARDT - BURKETT FAMILY
IN AMERICA

A HISTORY OF THE ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS
OF
JOHANN JACOB BURKHARDT
BORN 1712 - DIED 1794

By
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To the memory of my very dear friend

MARY MELLON McJUNKIN

without whose interest and encouragement
this history would never have been started

and

To my Husband

IRA R. HILL

without whose help in the legal aspects of
research this history would never have been
completed.

INTRODUCTION

On October 6, 1975, my husband, Ira, and I left for a trip to Germany and Austria in celebration of our "Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary". I had a great desire to see the little village of Herbrechtingen and the church where my ancestors lived and worshiped so long ago.

Since Heidenheim is just six miles from Herbrechtingen our plans included spending several days there at the Hotel Ochsen and driving through the area.

Walking through the town, shortly after our arrival in Heidenheim, we were attracted to a large, new, modern building which proved to be the Rathaus (Town Hall) of Heidenheim. Thinking that it might contain ancestral records we went in but were immediately frustrated by the language barrier. However, we were quickly introduced to Mr. Maucher, who is in charge of the cultural development of Heidenheim and speaks German, French and English fluently.

There are no records in the Rathaus at present, but they have an archivist on the staff who expects to have the records of the churches in the surrounding villages compiled and made available to the public at some future time.

Mr. Maucher arranged for the archivist, Mr. Akerman (who also speaks English) to take us to Mr. Weyhreter's home that evening. Mr. Weyhreter does not speak English but he is engaged, as an avocation, in copying the church records of the villages in the Heidenheim

area. Fortunately, he had the records of the Evangelican Church of Herbrechtingen and we were able to get copies of his records pertaining to the Burkhardt and Schneider families - some dating back to 1615 and 1617. I am attaching hereto, as part of this history, copies of these records, in German with English translations, which contain complete data on each individual; i.e., date and place of birth, names of parents, occupation, date and place of marriage, names of children and date of death.

The following day we drove to Herbrechtingen (still a small village of approximately 4,000 people) and were shown through the little church and cemetery by the minister's son, a student at the University of Munich, who spoke English. We learned from him that there were Burkhardts - Hans and George - living in Herbrechtingen and presently members of the church.

We drove to the home of Hans and his wife Emma and found them working in their garden. They were both in their early sixties; Hans - tall, blond - a fine looking man; Emma - pleasant and friendly - a typical German housewife. Unfortunately, due to their language problem, it was not possible to communicate freely with them. However, I showed the records to Hans and he became very excited and interested as he recognized the familiar names. We left our name and address, hoping to establish a contact, but regretting our inability to speak German.

In January, 1976, we received a letter from Lore Burkhardt, a copy of which I am also attaching to this history addendum. It is

self-explanatory and we have been corresponding regularly ever since. We hope to make a return trip to Germany and have the pleasure of attending a Burkhardt family reunion.

This history, limited to one branch of the Burkett family, has taken many years of research. Tracing the family from the time of their arrival in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1754, westward into Jefferson, Armstrong and Westmoreland counties and into Perry and Sandusky counties in Ohio, involved much time and travel which was not possible until my husband's semi-retirement from the practice of law.

It is my hope that some member of the present generation of this branch of the Burkett family will continue this history as a legacy for future descendants.

Bess Burkett Hill

1977

	<u>Page</u>
The Old Farm	49
The Oldest House	51
George W. and Mary Elizabeth (Schall) Burkett	68
The family of George W. and Mary Elizabeth Burkett	70

Addendum

Ancestral Records in German and English	92
Letter from Lore Burkhardt	103

LINE OF DESCENT

Prior to 1649 in Niederstotzingen

"
Jorg (George) Burkhardt m. Appolonia Meyer
(From Landshut to Niederstotzingen) (Lived in Niederstotzingen)

11-1-1670 in Herbrechtingen

Andreas Burckhardt m. Anna Maria Brachold
(From Niederstotzingen to Herbrechtingen) (Born in Herbrechtingen)

1-21-1702 in Herbrechtingen 10-14-1721 in Herbrechtingen

Andreas Burckhardt (m.1st) Margaretha Schneider - (m.2nd) Anna Preiss
(Born and lived in Herbrechtingen) (Born in Fleinheim) (Born in
Dettingen)

1751

Johann Jacob Burkhardt m. Sabina Dorthea Naegeli
(Born in Herbrechtingen - came to America 1754) (Presumably of Swiss parentage)

1-30-1776 - Reading, Pa.

11-11-1792 - Reading, Pa.

John Burkhardt (m.1st) Mary Barbara Fox - (m.2nd) Catherine Fox
(Born in Switzerland - came to America with his parents 1754) (Born in Reading, Pa.) (Born in Reading, Pa.)

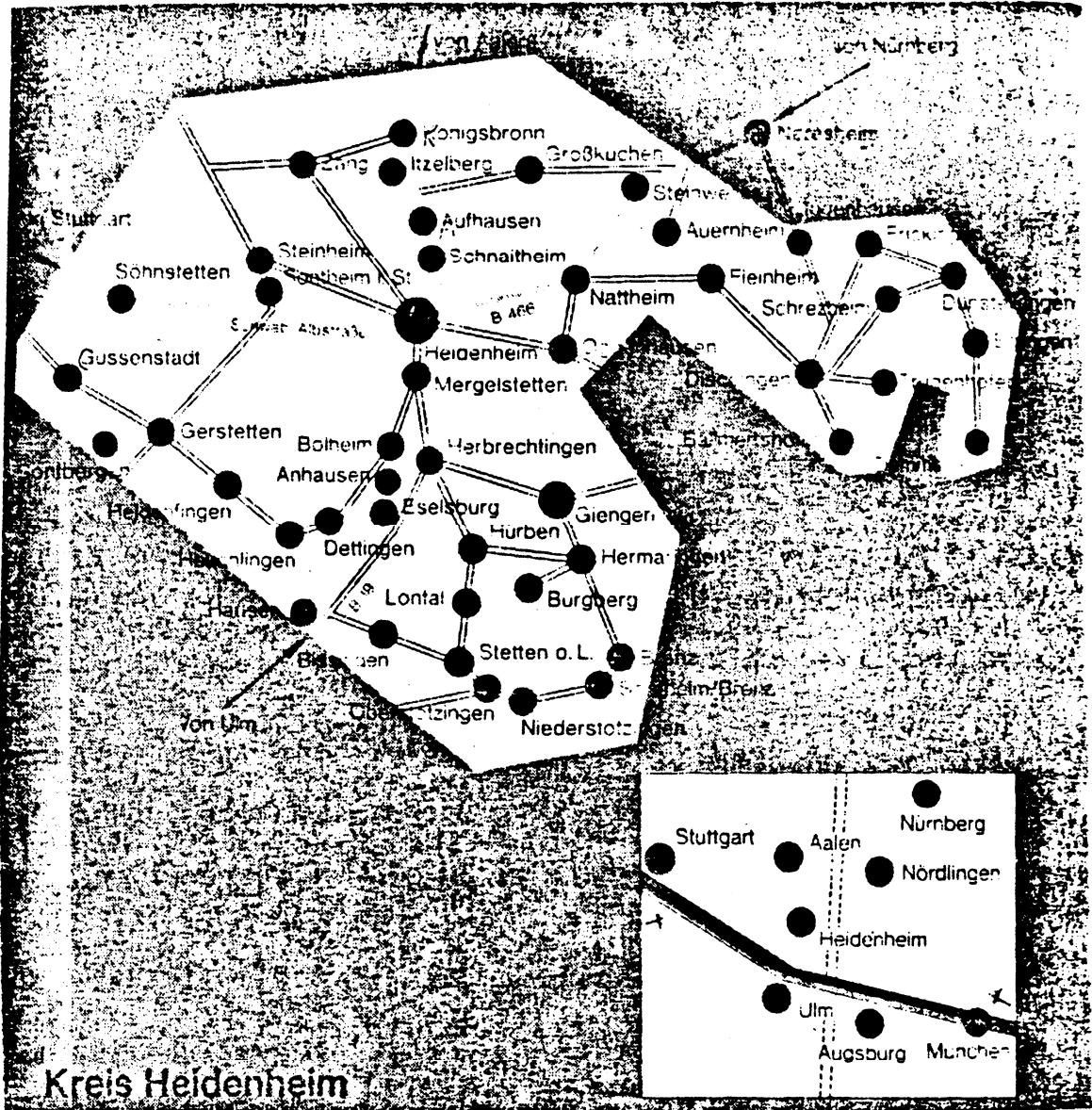
David Burkett m. Christine Bates

(Born in Reading, Pa. - moved to Jefferson Co. Pa.)

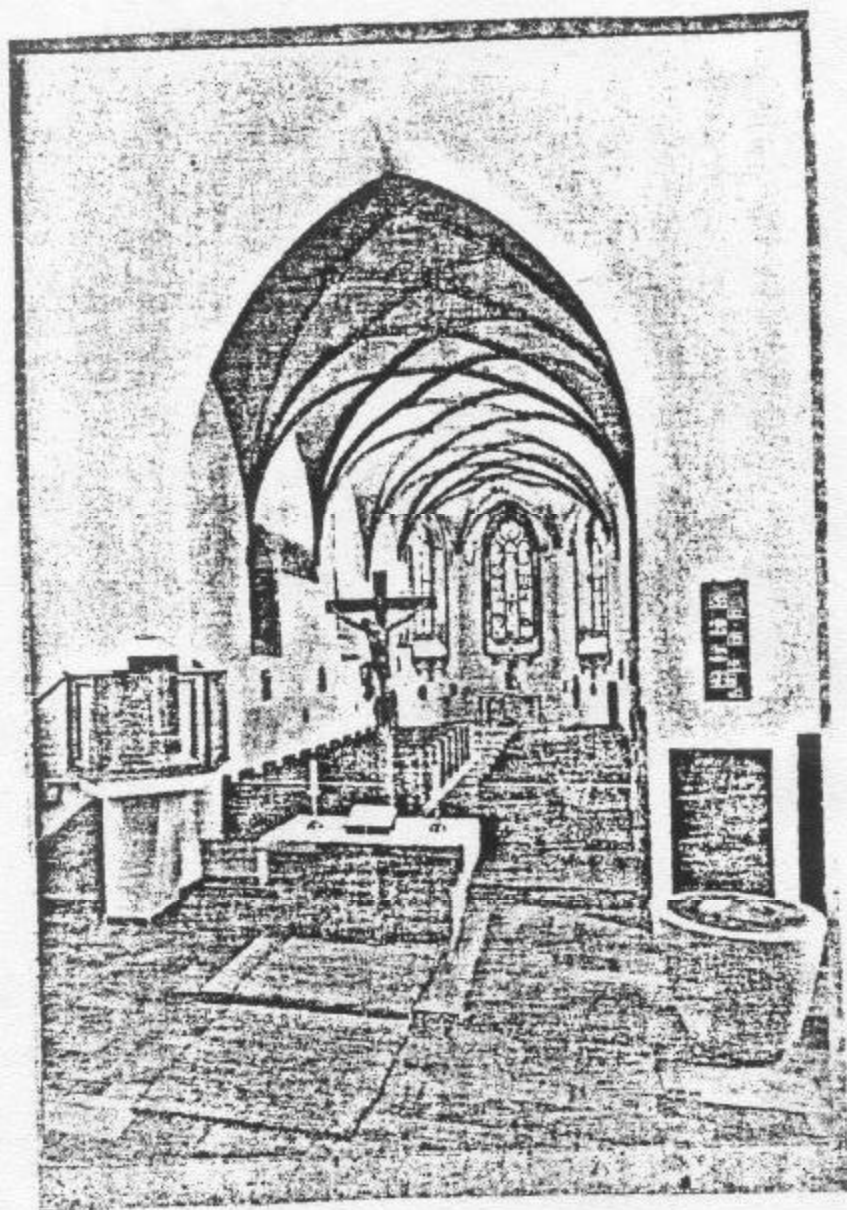
John Burkett m. Mary (Polly) Stout

(Moved from Jefferson Co. to Armstrong Co., Pa.)

David-William-Eliza-James-Polly-John-Henry Harrison-Mary Jane-George
Washington



Map showing the route of the Burkhardt family from Landshut, Bavaria, through Niederstotzingen to Herbrectingen and the location of the villages of Dettingen and Fleinheim relative to our history.



Interior of the Evangelical Church,
Herbrechtingen, Germany where our
Burkhardt ancestors were recorded
as members shortly after 1649.

CHAPTER I

THE BURKETT FAMILY (BURCHARD - BURKHARDT)

ANDREW BURKHARDT - OUR GERMAN ANCESTOR AND THE PALATINATE

For many generations the Burkhardt family lived in the Palatinate area of Germany, but this history begins with Andreas (Andrew) Burkhardt living in the village of Herbrechtingen, Duchy of Heidenheimer, Wurtemberg, Germany, in the latter part of the 17th Century.

Andrew was born April 4, 1676 in Herbrechtingen, son of Andreas and Maria (Bracholdt) Burkhardt. He became a master mason (contractor) in Herbrechtingen and later a schoolmaster in Dettingen, a village nearby.

On January 21, 1702, Andrew married Margaretha (Margaret) Schneider (born April 21, 1678), daughter of Jörg (George) and Maria (Lutz) Schneider of Fleinheim. Margaret's father was an assistant judge, an iron master and a weaver at various times, according to the records of Fleinheim.

Andrew and Margaret were the parents of nine children, namely: Johann George, Anna Maria, Andreas, Johannes, Catherina, Johann Jacob, Margaretha and Samuel (twins) and a boy dead at birth. Anna Maria and Margaretha (one of the twins) died in infancy. Johann Jacob, born October 9, 1712, was the German immigrant ancestor of our branch of the Burkhardt family in America.

Margaret died on March 22, 1721 and Andrew later married Anna Preis, daughter of Hans and Dortha (Rabausch) Preis of Dettingen. They were the parents of three children: Johann Martin, Margaretha and Johann Michael.

Since Johann Jacob, our German ancestor, was just 10 years old when his mother died, it seems logical to assume that he went to live with his grandfather Schneider in Fleinheim and there learned the art of weaving, for when he arrived in America in 1754, he was listed as a master weaver.

The Palatinate (German Pfalz) was formerly an independent state of Germany and consisted of two territorial divisions called the Upper, or Bavarian Palatinate, and the Lower, or Rhine Palatinate.

The Lower or Rhine Palatinate was situated on both sides of the Rhine River, bounded by Wurtemberg and Baden on the east; Baden and Lorraine on the south; Alsace and Lorraine on the west. It extended north as far as the cities of Treves and Mainz.

There is nothing in all of German history of greater interest than the story of the Rhine Palatinate or Pfalz. In that beautiful area dwelt the ancestors of the Pennsylvania Germans almost three centuries ago, before persecution drove them from it.

A journey through the valley of the Rhine at the present time will suggest the inquiry - why a people should wish to leave

so fair a land. Nowhere has nature been more lavish in bestowing its bounties. Here are to be seen the highly cultivated fields, vine clad hills, enchanting scenery and ruined castles that tell of a once feudal dignity and glory. The valley of the Rhine is indeed "The Garden of Germany", if not of all Europe.

The causes, however, which led to the enormous emigration from this beautiful valley were insurmountable. For more than a thousand years the Rhine was the prize for which the Romans, Gauls and the Germans contended. There is no other region on the globe of equal size that has witnessed so many devastating conflicts as the Palatinate of the Rhine. The many strategic points along the Rhine made it always a rich prize to be coveted by European nations when at war with each other, which was most of the time. No matter what nations were engaged in war, the scene of conflict was invariably transferred to the Upper Rhine country.

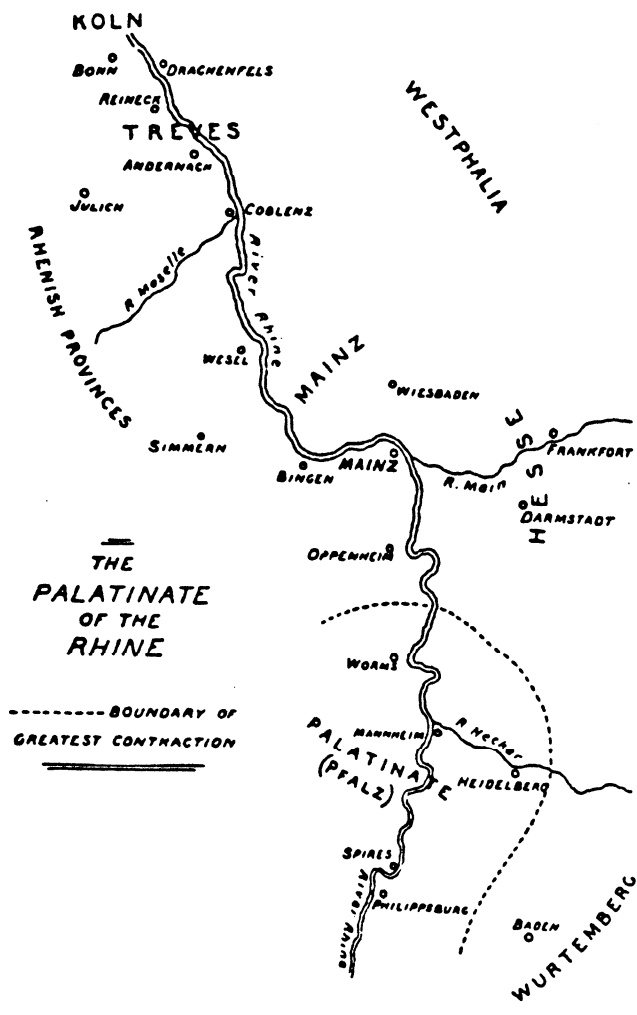
France had always coveted the Palatinate and from no other nation did the Rhine provinces suffer more than from the French. In the latter part of the 17th Century (which history recounts and would be too lengthy and detailed to relate here) the French invaded the Palatinate many times, burned and sacked scores of cities and towns, among them the beautiful Heidelberg, and committed such atrocities and persecutions until the area and its peoples were completely devastated.

Despaired of ever being freed from the horrors of war and invading armies, the Palatines began to look for homes elsewhere.

Many of them had scattered to other parts of Germany; some sought homes in Holland and other parts of Europe. The new province of William Penn was brought to the attention of the troubled Palatines and it was not long before the exodus across the sea began.

The history of the crimes committed in the Palatinate in consequence of religious intolerance, fanaticism and political persecution gives an understanding of the causes that stimulated the emigration to America. Life in their own country became intolerable and Pennsylvania offered asylum.

During the period of the largest emigration from the Palatinate, which was from 1730 - 1750, a period of twenty years, the ships crossed the Atlantic between Rotterdam and Philadelphia with such frequency that it is estimated the number of Germans in Pennsylvania immediately preceding the Revolution numbered not less than 200,000.



Map of the Palatinate of the Rhine during the period of the large Palatine emigration to America.

CHAPTER II

JOHN JACOB BURKHARDT - THE IMMIGRANT - FIRST GENERATION IN AMERICA

John Jacob Burkhardt, born October 9, 1712 in Herbrechtingen, Germany, married Sabina Dortha Naegeli in 1751. Sabina was born December 28, 1721, presumably of Swiss parentage. At some point, John Jacob and Sabina moved into Switzerland for their first child John was born August 21, 1753 in Canton Basel, Switzerland, just across the Rhine River from Wurtemberg.

John Jacob, his wife Sabina and young son John, sailed for America on the ship Phoenix - John Spurrier, Master - from Rotterdam, and arrived in Philadelphia on October 1, 1754.

After taking the Oath of Allegiance in Philadelphia, they proceeded to settle in Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania, where they joined former friends from Germany.

The first settlements within the present limits of Berks County were made between the years 1707 and 1712. During this period, some English members of the Society of Friends, French Huguenot and German immigrants from the Palatinate settled in Oley, a name which signifies in the Indian tongue "a tract of land encompassed by hills". From the beginning, immigrants came to Berks County in ever increasing numbers, primarily Germans from the Palatinate.

A settlement was begun in Tulpehocken in 1723 by Germans who, guided by a friendly Indian to the head of the Tulpehocken Creek,

settled on Indian lands about 18 miles west of Reading. A few years later, fifty other families joined the Tulpehocken settlement and this new accession aroused the hostility of the Indians. At a council held June 5, 1728, in Philadelphia, one of the chiefs of the Delawares complained of the encroachment by the Germans upon the lands of his people.

In 1729, there was yet another accession of Palatines into this area, prominent among whom was Conrad Weiser, who afterwards played a very important part in the colonial history of Berks County. To quiet and fully satisfy the Indians, Thomas Penn, son of the Proprietary of Pennsylvania, purchased the lands in this region from the Indians in 1732 and from him the settlers derived valid titles to the lands they occupied.

The attempts to preserve peace between the German settlers of Berks county and the Indians, however, proved futile. In 1744, when war was declared between Great Britain and France, the latter easily succeeded in exciting the hostility of the Indians against these early settlers and the French found them not only willing, but eager to join them in their acts of plunder and destruction.

Soon after Braddock's defeat at Fort Duquesne, in July, 1755, the Indians made frequent raids into Berks county from the direction of the Blue Mountains. They devastated by fire and slaughter many parts of the county. Hundreds of houses were

burned, hundreds of persons scalped and slain, and many without distinction as to age or sex were taken captives by the savages and subjected to tortures from which death was a blessed release.

Conrad Weiser, who was then commander of the Provincial forces in Berks County, wrote numerous letters, which are still in existence, to Lieutenant-Governor Morris, giving full accounts of the deplorable conditions of the settlements, imploring help and protection for the settlers. In one letter, dated the latter part of 1755, he wrote: "This county is in a dismal condition. It cannot hold out long. Consternation, poverty, confusion everywhere." Alarms of this kind continued in Berks and other counties until 1778 when the Indians were finally driven beyond the Allegheny mountains.

What irony that Jacob and Sabina, fleeing from persecution and oppression in their own homeland, should arrive in America at the very beginning of the French and Indian War! Reading as a town with a more concentrated population was probably a less likely target for Indian raids than were the outlying villages and settlements and the scattered, isolated farms in the lonely countryside. The times, however, were critical, affecting everyone and survival was their prime concern.

The town of Reading was "laid out" in the fall of 1748 and named after the ancient borough of Reading and county town of Berkshire, in England. The plan comprised 520 town lots and 204 out lots numbered consecutively. The Penns appointed three promi-

ment representative men of the surrounding settlements as commissioners for the purpose of making a prompt sale of these lots. The commissioners were Conrad Weiser, Francis Parvin and William Hartley. Publication of the proposed sale was made and on the 15th of June, 1749 (doubtless in Penn Square), the conditions of the sale were read to a great number of people. In pursuance of the conditions named, town lots were sold and patents were issued to purchasers. It seems appropriate to include this brief history of the beginning of Reading since Jacob, our first Burkhardt immigrant ancestor, chose Reading for his home in America and lived there until his death.

The early purchasers of lots consisted mainly of merchants, inn-keepers and tradesmen, and among these were tanners, cordwainers, blacksmiths, tailors, potters, bakers, weavers, brewers, saddlers, joiners, wheelwrights, tobacconists, millers, coopers, slaughterers, carpenters, turners, etc. Several justices, esquires and ministers were also among the early inhabitants.

There is nothing of record to identify the number or exact location of the lot purchased by Jacob when he settled in Reading, but proof of purchase lies in the fact that his name appears on the list of taxables in the assessment of the town for the year 1759. It is the earliest list of taxables among the county records in the Berks County Court House.

Jacob Burkhardt was a master weaver and no doubt established himself in his occupation as soon as possible. It seemed

to be the custom to combine shop and living quarters in one building, using the remainder of the lot for garden, orchard or other purposes pursuant to the particular trade of the individual.

The original settlers of Reading were principally Germans who had emigrated from Wurtemberg and the Palatinate and Jacob and Sabina were very fortunate in having friends already settled in the Reading area.

What a comfort they must have been to the weary couple after the long, arduous trip across the ocean!

Among their close friends were John George Duffel and wife Elizabeth; Valentine Coerfer and wife Anna; Adam Koch and wife Anna Margaret, and especially, Andrew Fox (Fuchs), his son David, and David's wife Catherine and their young family. Andrew and David Fox were coopers (makers of barrels and casks) and were established on Lot 148 E. Penn Street between Duke and Earl Streets.

The Fox family becomes an integral part of the Burkhardt history at a later date.

Jacob and Sabina very promptly became affiliated with the Trinity Lutheran congregation, and as in most early settlements, the church served as the center of the religious, educational and social life of the community. The development of the church from this small congregation through the war years to the impressive Trinity Lutheran Church, wealthy and powerful, bespeaks of the

character, strength and devotion of the early German immigrants and a short account of the church history follows.

The records of Trinity Church begin with 1751 and the first entry is the baptism of Henry, son of Abraham and Margaret Brosius, born August 20 and baptized August 24 by Reverend Tobias Wagner, who served congregations in a somewhat irregular manner in this and neighboring counties. Religious services at first were held in private homes, but steps were speedily taken for the erection of a church building. A meeting of members for this purpose was held on January 6, 1752 and Peter Schneider and John Oerlin were appointed a building committee. The building was begun in the spring of 1752 on ground comprising lots 406-407, situated on the northwest corner of Prince and Thomas Streets (now Sixth and Washington Streets). It was built of logs and was surmounted with a steeple having a bell. Reverend Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America was appointed by the Evangelical Lutheran Ministeriam to preach the first sermon in the church on October 15, 1752.

Pastoral changes were frequent in the early history of the congregation and the records kept often fragmentary. Notwithstanding these frequent changes, and the distress which prevailed during and subsequent to the Revolutionary War, the congregation grew in numbers and wealth and in 1790 determined to erect the large and stately edifice now standing on the northwest corner of Sixth and Washington Streets. The erection

of a building of such dimensions, strength and beauty, at that early date, bears testimony to the enlarged ideas, culture and liberality of the congregation and its pastor, Rev. C. F. Wildhahn. The subscription list was started in 1790, the corner stone was laid in 1791 and the building was completed in 1793 with the exception of the spire which was added later.

About 1831-33 the very fine spire, which is still the pride of the city and its most prominent landmark, was erected and two large bells placed therein, additional to the smaller one which had been in use while the first church was yet standing. This first bell was cast by Henry Kappel in Philadelphia in 1755 and for many years was rung daily at 8:00 A.M. and at noon - the custom continuing as late as 1844. When St. Luke's Chapel was built, this bell was placed upon it and used about 10 years when it cracked and was replaced in the tower of Trinity Church where it is kept as a relic of "ye olden times". The spire of the church is over 200 feet in height and for a long time was the highest in the state.

The services had been conducted almost exclusively in the German language until 1859. By that time the congregation had grown very large and many believed the time had come for a division on the basis of language, but various difficulties arose and the plan was temporarily abandoned.

Rev. F. J. F. Shantz was elected pastor in 1857 and officiated in both languages for two years. Finally, the division or separation of the English and German portions of the congregation took place. The old graveyard at Sixth and Walnut Streets was sold and with the proceeds, the German portion erected St. John's German Lutheran Church and Trinity Church became exclusively English in its services.

The records of the Trinity Lutheran Church from its beginning are available for research at the Berk's County Historical Society in Reading. The first volume containing the very earliest records is divided into three categories: baptisms, marriages, burials and genealogy. The records are unique in that the baptismal records include name of child, date of birth and baptism, parents' names (very often the mother's maiden name) and the names of the two sponsors. The marriage records occasionally include the names and place of residence of the parents of the couple. The burial records include not only the date of death, but also a few pertinent facts about the individual or his family that are invaluable to the researcher. These records have all been translated from the German originals and recopied in English over the years so a variance in dates and spelling of names may occur, but when one considers the hardships the settlers endured in the struggle to build a new life for themselves and their families, one must be ever grateful to the German Pastors through whose diligence these records have been preserved for posterity.

The very early records of Trinity Church show that Jacob and Sabina had a daughter Margaret Catherine, baptized in 1755, and a son John George, in 1756. Both, however, died in infancy. Another son, John Jacob, was baptized in 1758 and although there were three sons and four daughters born to Jacob and Sabina, no other names are recorded.

Jacob pursued his trade as a weaver for many years, operating a little shop alone at first, but joined later by his sons John and Jacob, Jr., who learned the art of weaving from their father as he had learned it as a boy from his grandfather Schneider in Germany.

In the Pennsylvania Archives, 3rd Series, the earliest tax records show Jacob being taxed in 1767 and 1768 as a weaver in Reading. Then in 1779 the records show Jacob, Jr. and John as partners in the business and being taxed accordingly through 1785. There were no further records available so it is not known how long Jacob continued as an active participant in the business. However, it is known that at the time of Jacob's death, he and Sabina were still living in their home built on the lot he had purchased upon his arrival in Reading.

Jacob died and the account of his death, as recorded under "Burials and Genealogy", in the records of Trinity Lutheran Church, follows:

"John Jacob Burkhardt, born October 9, 1712. His father was Andrew Burkhardt, a master mason of Wurtemberg, Germany and his mother was Margaret, nee Schneider. Married to Sabina Dorthea Naegeli for 42 years and 6 months.

Seven children - 3 sons and 4 daughters.

Two sons and one daughter still living and married.

Died - April 12, 1794 - aged 81 years, 6 months, 2 days."

Jacob left a Will, dated April 23, 1791, which is recorded in the Register of Wills Office of Berks County, in Will Book Vol. 3, page 218, and Letters of Administration, c.t.a. were granted to his widow Sabina and son John Burkhardt. His Will, as recorded, is in the German language, but the Register also has on file a translation into the English language.

The Will is as follows:

"I, Jacob Burkhardt, have resolved to make my last will because I am much of age and in years, that, after my death, no difference or disturbance may arise between my children, therefore, I will that my wife Sabina Dorthea by writing shall grant all that I have after my death as namely, the house and the half lot whereon the house stands and from the other half lot the half of the apple trees and also what I have shall remain in her hands until her decease and my children shall have no demand