

## Mein Großvater Georg Sommer - [My grandfather George Summers]

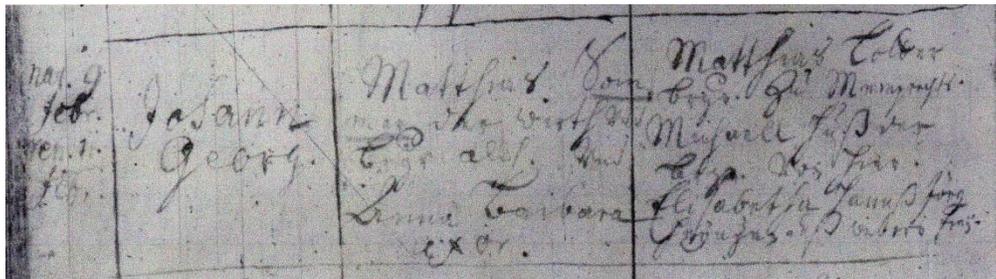
This grandfather has a special place in my heart. He was the link between his American family and the old European one. He is my 6<sup>th</sup> great grandfather.

I will begin where all stories begin, with his birth.

He was born in the little city of Freistett in Baden. It is a town located on the Rhine River and is very close to the Black Forest or Schwarzwald. The history of this town is very interesting but is going to have to be told at another time.



*The Evangelisch in Freistett. This is where we believe Georg was baptized. It is over 1000 years old.  
'Records discovered by Mary Ann Schaefer'*



*This is his baptism recorded on February 9, 1722*

George arrived on February 9, 1722 into the family of Matthias Sommer and his wife Anna Barbara Hubscher. They owned an Inn, called the Krone. Georg was baptized into the Freistett Evangelisch [Lutheran] Church. When he arrived, he already had two older sisters. Barbara who was four, Euphrosyna who was five and a brother named Matthias who was seven. When he was two years old, his brother Johannes arrived. By the time he was four, his sister Maria Catharina was born, but she must have died because two years later, another Maria Catharina arrived. The baby of the family was Johann Martin Sommer. Georg was seven years old when this baby brother arrived. The Germans

called the children by their middle names. Our Grandpa Georg's name would be pronounced with hard g's. In America he would adopt the name George Summers.



*The Krone Inn built in 1691*

Young Georg would have had to help with the care of the Inn. At the time, many Inns at the time, not only fed the traveler and housed them, but also put up the stock of the travelers,. There would have been a lot of work to do.

On November 9, 1732, when he was ten, his father passed away. His father was only 42. This was winter and no doubt was a very hard time for his family. His older brother Matthias would have been 17 and would have taken over the work of the Inn, most likely. Were there aunts and uncles around to help this family? We don't know, we have not learned much yet, about the rest of the family. Searching the records is a daunting task!

Georg's mother remarried seven months after her husband's death. She married Mathäus Haas, a butcher from Freudenstadt, located in the Black Forest region. We know that Mr. Haas did live in Freistett, because of information found pertaining to him at George and Barbara's wedding. Perhaps he stayed and managed the Inn that his wife's deceased husband left behind.

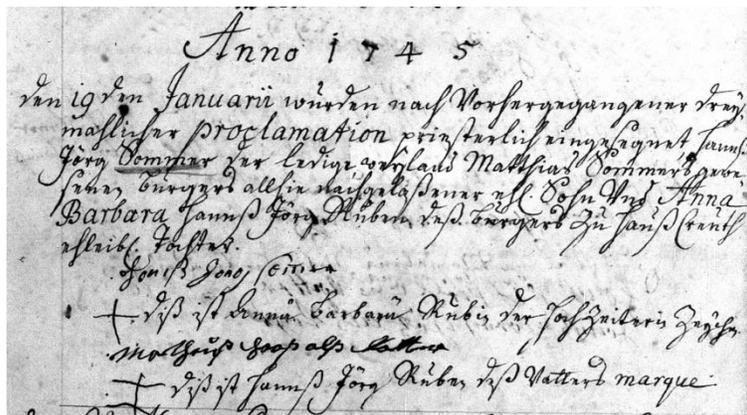
We later find a Margaret Haas[in], as a witness to the baptism of Georg's daughter in Philadelphia in 1753. Was this a sister born to his mother and the second husband or a step sister?

In 1736, Georg's older brother Matthias married the daughter of a very wealthy family who owned the Salmon Inn. The Salmon Inn was just a short distance east from the Evangelisch church. The Krone Inn was just southwest of the church.

Later on, a wealthy Frenchman came into the area and built a canal in Freistett to transport logs from the black forest to the Rhine River. His name was Georg Daniel Kückh. The description of the property he purchased in Freistett was rather grand and he built many lavish offices and buildings. Our grandfather Georg managed this man's estate in Freistett! By the time Georg and his wife and children left for America, some of the holdings of the wealthy Mr. Kuckh were facing financial difficulties. Is this why Grandpa Georg left? The canal project that Mr. Kuckh built to float wood from the Black Forest to the Rhine was very unpopular with the people. This was in 1748 and 1749. There were riots in 1750! By 1753, Daniel Kuckh was going bankrupt. By April of 1754 Mr. Kuckh was dead. There were rumors.....

But, back to our story; a much happier part.

On January 19, 1745, Georg married Anna Barbara Ruben. They were married at the Evangelisch church in Freistett. Matthias Haas, [citizen of Freistett] also Georg's stepfather at the time, and Hans Gorg Ruben, father of the bride were witness' for the marriage. Miss Ruben was born in Hausgereut, Baden, which is just a couple of miles Southwest of Freistett on the other side of Rheinbischofsheim.



On October 29, 1745, a baby girl was born to Georg and Barbara. She was either stillborn or she died very quickly that same day. The records in America show they had raised 11 children together, but we only know of 9. Johann Joerg [Jr.] was born on April 23, 1747 followed by Maria Magdalena on February 11, 1749. She is the one who married Ernst Mange/Mann in America and so is the link to this family, through our line. Then there was Anna Barbara born November 4, 1751. This is the last one we know of born in Freistett. There was room for one more child to have been born between Joerg and the unknown sister. But, we do not know of any.

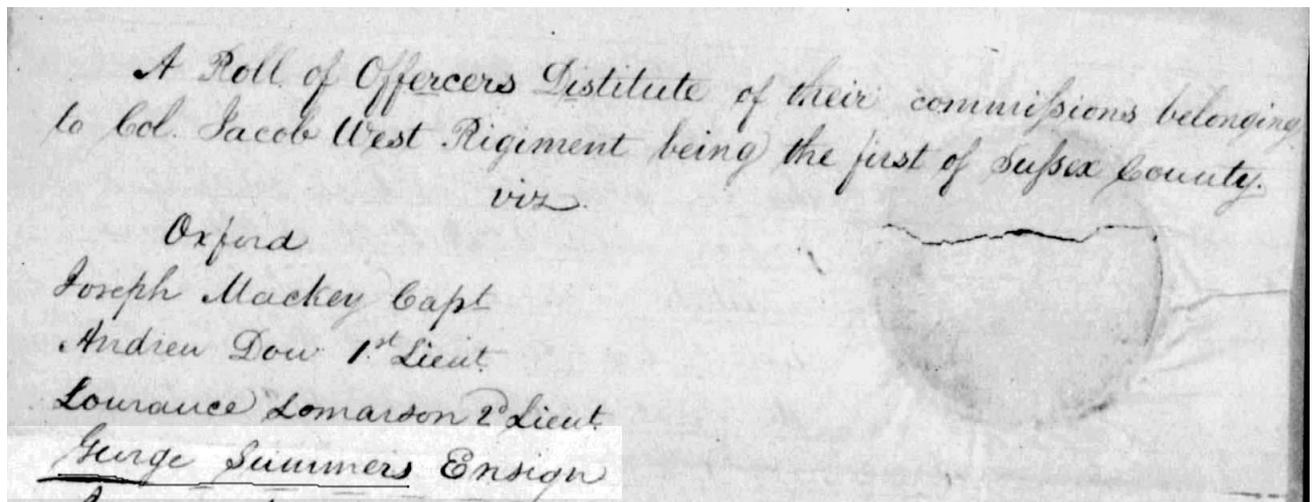
Goerg and Barbara left Freistett with their three, possibly only two, living children, and headed to America sometime in 1752. They would have traveled up the Rhine, paying tolls all the way and then would have had to wait for a ship to transport them to England. How long it took to finally arrive on the ship Brothers in September of 1752 we don't know. Most took seven weeks. But, on board was his brother Martin and Johannes, and Jacob Brown who is most likely his brother-in-law. Also on board

was Mathis Haas! I believe this was his stepfather. The trip to America was probably a rough one, depending a lot on the weather, according to the many documents written about the crossing of the Atlantic at that time. They took the 'Oath of Abjuration' on September 22, 1752 as required . [\*See Below for the oath] They arrived in Philadelphia , but we do not know who, if anyone met them, and where they stayed until they settled in. They did live for a time, about 14 miles northwest of Philadelphia in the city in Smithfield, which was being settled at least by 1746 from the Mannor of Moreland tract. The people of Philadelphia paid close attention to the arrival of ships because they brought mail and newspapers. Important ships fired their cannons when they arrived. The shore boats would quickly pull up at her side. Then, the people would flock to the coffeehouses where business was taken care of. The emigrants would often have to go before the Mayer at his house to take the oath, especially the Germans!. Physicians would check them for disease and those who could not pay were auctioned off as indentured servants. It would have been a lively scene.

Grandpa's daughter Anna Margeretha was born August 6, 1753. She was baptized on October 7, 1753. An interesting sponsor for her baptism was Margretha Haasin. [Women always had an 'in' or 'en' tagged on the end of their name.] Was this a stepsister or sister born to the second marriage of Georg's mother Barbara?] There also were two more Sommer's there as sponsors, Matthias and Christiana. Matthias was probably Georg's brother, but who is Christiana?

Catharine was born on April 27, 1755 and Anna Barbara on July 1, 1756. Johannes their last child, was born in Germantown in 1759.

Grandpa George Summers lived through our Revolutionary War and served as an Ensign under Col. Jacob West in Sussex County. It was dated June 6, 1777, so he would have been 56. New Jersey went through more turmoil than any other state during the war. What an exciting life he led!



A cropped copy of the actual document showing Grandpa George's name.

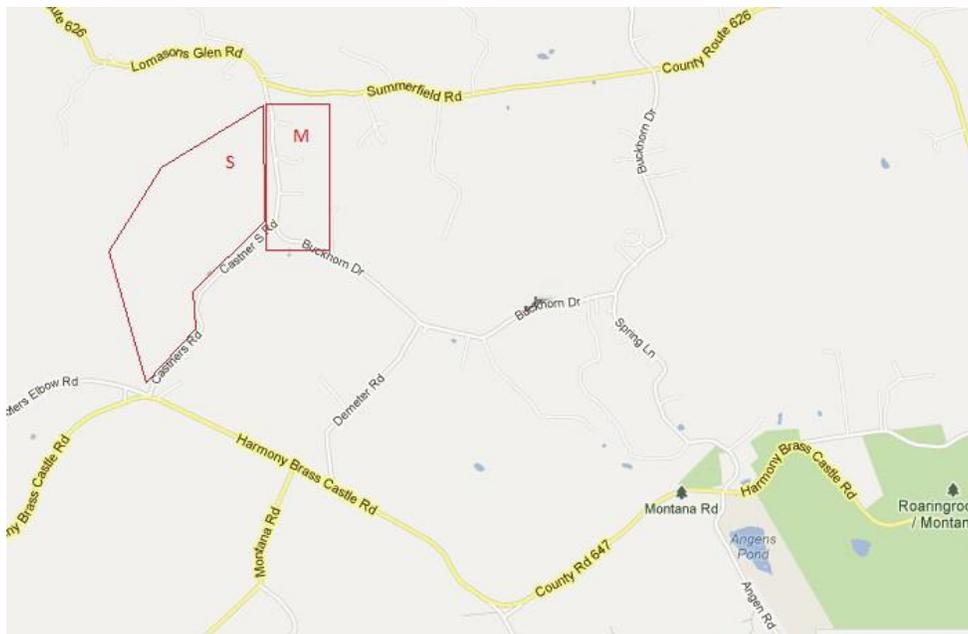
\*DAR links this to George Summer Sr., it could be George Jr. however...

His obituary was listed in the records of the Straw church, located in Greenwich. It was written in German and this is what it said.

“1785, Aug. 8<sup>th</sup> Johann Georg Summer, born at Freystadt in Alsace, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1721. Had as (a) member of our congregation in a 42 year marriage raised 11 children. Was eleven years (with) cataract(s) (at) his end blind. Died Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>. Lived 64 years, 3 months and 15 days.”

There may seem to be a contradiction concerning the information, but the calendar changed in 1754 and we believe that the person who wrote the information must have confused the birth month with his son George’s information.

So this amazing sixth great grandfather was born in Freistett, [Germany] lost his father at age 10, married at age 22, managed a fabulously wealthy man’s property, then faced with perhaps losing everything, left for America at age 30 with four children, became a citizen, lived in Smithfield, Pennsylvania for a while then purchased 414 acres of property on Scott’s mountain in Sussex County, New Jersey, raised a family of 9 children, at the age of 56 served in the Revolutionary War, suffered with cataracts until he finally went blind *and* was a faithful member of his local church, the Greenwich ‘Straw’ Lutheran church, after moving there unto his death. Sadly we do not know where this grandfather was buried for sure, or his wife Barbara’s burial spot either. We assume he was buried at the St. James Lutheran Church [Straw] since his obituary was found in the church records, but no headstone has been found.



The ‘S’ marks the land owned by George Summers in New Jersey. The ‘M’ is the Mann Property. Their children married and continued our family line.



St. James [Straw Church] Cemetery on Rt. 22 in Phillipsburg, NJ

Quite the story!

Finding his story has been quite the adventure and would not have happened without Mary Ann Schaefer, a very special cousin and a lot of hard work and luck!

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\*The Oath of Abjuration –

*"We subscribers, natives and late inhabitants of the Palatine upon the Rhine and places adjacent, having transported ourselves and families into the Province of Pennsylvania, a colony subject to the crown of Great Britain, in hopes and expectation of finding a retreat and a peacable settlement therein, do solemnly promise and engage that we will be faithful and bear true allegiance to his present majesty, King George the Second and his successors, kings of Great Britain, and will be faithful to the proprietor of this province; and that we will demean ourselves peacably to all his said majesty's subjects, and strictly observe and conform to the laws of England and this province, to the utmost of our power and best of our understanding."* [mansker.org/history/oaths.htm]

“.....Because of the fear that the Province would be saturated with German Colonists, an order of the Provincial Council of September 14, 1727 made it mandatory that German passengers be registered and administered an oath of allegiance. These oaths too were often administered at "the Worshipful, the Mayor's house." The City Archives holds a volume of Apprentice and Redemptioner Indentures for the years 1771-1773 which includes information on the name of the redemptioner, the master's name, residence and occupation, the term of the indenture and, often, the name of the ship captain, the port

sailed from, and the amount paid by the master for passage. A similar volume for other years is held by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Ships' registers for the years 1727 to 1776 and registers of German passengers, and ships' lists are held by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for the years 1727 to 1775 and 1785 to 1807. The lists of German Passengers have received a most authoritative publication in Strassburger and Hinke *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*. Although the Mayor's Court ceased its Provincial naturalization function with the demise of the 1701 City Charter, the Mayor's Court as re-established by the 1789 Charter, was engaged in the naturalization of United States citizens as were the County Common Pleas, District and Quarter Sessions Courts. All the existing naturalization papers of these Courts are now in the custody of the City Archives. Federal naturalizations and passenger ship lists are also held at the local Federal Records Center of the National Archives..... An "Act to prevent sickly vessels coming into this Government" was passed as early as November 27,1700. This was followed by a number of quarantine laws throughout the eighteenth Century that culminated in the establishment of the Board of Health by Acts of 1794 and 1803. The Board of Health (and also the Department and Bureau of Health) records for the years 1794 to 1951 are held by the City Archives”

<http://www.phila.gov/phils/Docs/otherinfo/newslet/port.htm>

[http://www.chronicsofamerica.com/quakers/life\\_in\\_philadelphia.htm](http://www.chronicsofamerica.com/quakers/life_in_philadelphia.htm) [Life in Philadelphia]

~Assembled by J. L. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> great granddaughter to George Summers. [March 29, 2014]

*-Please leave the article intact if you post it on your site.*