

Johannes "Hans" Gerberich

One of 12 children born to Hans Casper Gerberich & Apollonia Volz, he is considered to be the "grandfather" of the Gerberich name in America. At least 9 documented Gerberichs came to America in the 1700's that were directly related to him. Family lore states he was murdered during an Indian attack, which has never been proved or disproved.

6 Apr 1751: Hans has fallen so low in the last 40 years, that he is left out of once a considerable property, mainly 700 florins. Wants to go to Pennsylvania with his wife Christine and 6 children: Apollonia, Margaretha, Maria Margareta, Johannes, Anna Barbara and Johann Michael. Has yet to pay for his freedom from vassalage: 35 florins for his property and 6 florins for the 6 children. In the Hinke records, Hans Gerberich is shown as being allowed passage on the ship Brothers on 22 Sep 1752. No record exists of a Hans Gerberich arriving until the ship Phoenix 2 Nov 1752, also noted in Hinke. [Pennsylvania German Pioneers/ Freudenberg Govermental Protocols and Wertheim-Hinke records]

In 1751, Hans and Michael, the seventh and ninth sons respectively of Hans Kaspar (corrected spelling is Casper) Gerberich, resolved to seek their fortunes in the new world. Hans had married, on February 25, 1727, Christine Schuch, a girl from the nearby village of Remlingen and they had several children. Michael was a bachelor forty years of age. (The following has been found to be in grave error) Preparations was made for the journey then at the last moment abandoned, probably due to the fact that another arrival was expect in Hans' family and it was decided to spare his wife the rigors of the ocean voyage at that time. There has always been a persistent tradition among the Lebanon County Gerberichs that one of the family named Johannes or Hans was murdered by the Indians in an incursion during the French and Indian War. From other sources, the date of this massacre has been established as the 16th of November, 1755. That Hans Gerberich fell a victim at this time seems to be positively demonstrated by the following evidence: 1. His name does not appear on the Berks County assessment records which in 1755-56 omit the names of a number of persons who were driven from their homes or killed by the Indians. 2. His name does not appear on a petition of the year 1758 in which the inhabitants of Bern and adjacent townships in the county of Berks appeal for protection against the Indians to William Denny, Esq., Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of the Providence of Pennsylvania. The name of the brother Michael, on the other hand, is signed thereto. 3. In 1764, the name of Johannes Gerberich appears on a petition for a highway to be laid out from the city of Reading to Fort Augusta (Sunbury), and the same Johannes or Hans Gerberich is mentioned regularly in the assessment lists from 1765 to 1770. This is certainly Hans' youngest son, for the handwriting is that of a young man. [History of the Gerberichs in America]

Hans' brother Michael was well on his way to Philadelphia when Hans petitioned the court to come here with his family. Also, Christina Schuch had died shortly after giving birth to their daughter, Apollonia (who followed her father later tp PA on the voyage with her brother Andreas) and Hans had remarried to Christina Emmerich, who died on the voyage to Philadelphia.