

CHAPTER ONE

The Steffen Family

Nov 2003

It must have been a beautiful late spring day in 1841 when the Peter Steffen family prepared to leave their home village of Losheim, Germany in the Saar region of south western Prussia, near the French border. Peter along with his second wife and children, and two older children (from his first wife), and their families set out from their home to come to "Nordamer", North America. They were required to sell all of their properties before they left. Peter at the time was 59 years old, a bold decision indeed. There were 21 members of his family who left Germany on that spring day.

The Peter Steffen families were to become the immigrants who populated the Four Mile Kentucky area and indeed all of Campbell County.

I started with his family since it was part of the ancestry of both my father and my mother's family. In addition, Peter and family, was to become so important in the development of the Catholic Church in Camp Springs. Peter, who bought land in Kentucky, donated a half acre lot for the construction of the first church for Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Camp Springs Ky. Peter Steffen was the oldest settler as recorded in the church records. Prior to the construction of the church, Mass was celebrated in the Peter Steffen home when a celebrant was available. Peter was to be the oldest person buried at Saint Joseph Cemetery in Four Mile.

Peter Steffen was born in Niederlosheim on November 16, 1782. He was the tenth child of Matthias Steffen and his second wife Margaretha Schwarz. His Father, Mathias Steffen * 21.11.1740, + 23.10.1804 was the second of four children of Nickolaus Steffen, 1720 and his wife, Anna Margaretha Müller. They were married about 1738. The Losheim Family Book does not record the birth and death dates for Nicholas. Anna Margaretha Müller's family is recorded on entry (389g) of the Losheim book. Somewhere in my files, I must have those dates recorded

NOTE:

(In the records from Germany the '*' is a birth date, the '+' is a death date and 'oo' is a marriage date. The date is -- day, month, and year.)

Mathias Steffen, Peter Steffen's father, had seventeen children with his two wives, sixteen of which were with his second wife, Margaretha Schwarz. He was 24 years old when he first married and 51 years old when his last recorded child was born.

Peter Steffen was the second son to be named Peter. The first was the fifth child of the second marriage; Peter *09.12.1773 + 28.10.1775. It was not uncommon to name another child the same name as a deceased sibling.

The Losheim family book records our Peter Steffen family as follows:

Peter * Niederlosheim 16.11.1782 No death recorded since he died in Four Mile.
+ 10/30/1871 (the American way to record dates).

1.-oo Losheim, 18.12.1804, Weber Margaretha, *20.09.1778
+ 08.04.1816, in Neiderlosheim

a) Michael *07.02.1806 +27.07.1806

b) Joh. Peter * 29.06.1807

c) **Wilhelm *23.06.1809 oo Losheim 1832 Dillschneider,
Angela (My maternal Great-great grandparents)**

d) Peter * 20.01.1811 oo Losheim 1834 Thiel Maria

e) Mathias * 14.07.1814 oo Saarwellingen 1838 Schmidt,
Margaretha

The families of Peter 1811 and Mathias 1814 were part of those 21 Steffens who left Germany that spring. John Peter 1807 and his family emigrated from Bachem in 1846 and Wilhelm and family left Losheim in 1852. The complete family of Peter Steffen came to America with the exception of his first wife and first child who both died in Germany.

The necessity to have live-in child care must have been more important than a long mourning process. Just five weeks after the death of his first wife, Peter Steffen, age 34, married his second wife, a nineteen year old maiden from the near-by village.

2- oo Losheim 18/20.05.1816 Bone, Anna. *26.02.1797 + 04//20/1894
(died in Four Mile)

- f) Angela * 16.05.1817
- g) Maria * 06.01.1819
- h) Nikolaus * 05.11.1820
- i) Anna Maria * 16.06.1822 (who married Isidore Baumann here in Cincinnati) (My paternal Great grandmother)**
- j) Jakob * 03.09.1824
- k) Friedr. Wilh * 15.12.1826
- l) Anna * 23.04.1829
- m) Helena *16.08.1831
- n) Catherina *17.08.1833
- o) Susan *06.10.1835
- p) Elisabeth *29.05.1838

The German emigration records list a Peter Steffen, age 59, leaving Neiderlosheim , 1841 with 12 persons, `Peter Steffen, age 30, leaving with 5 persons and Mathias Steffen, age 27, leaving with 4 persons "?". That would be 21 members of the Peter Steffen family. The? mark was in order since Elisabeth was actually the 13th member of Peter's family rather than a child of his son's family. Peter and Maria did however have a child named Margaretha born 23.11.1834. The Germany records I have do not show a death date nor do the ships records show her arrival in America. I think that Margaretha must have died before their emigration to America.

The Village of Neiderlosheim is within a very short distance of Losheim. Even the signs are confusing as to where the two villages begin and end.



An overview of Losheim as photographed, year of 2000

When the Steffen Family left this beautiful countryside, it must have been a sad experience to give up all and begin an uncertain life in the new world.

They left Germany and crossed the Saar River into Lorraine along the Alsace region of France. For whatever reason, many of our ancestors reportedly have been from Alsace Lorraine. Perhaps a German speaking person from the border could pass as a French citizen when leaving a French port. Alsace Lorraine was part of Germany and then France through the years leading to the unification of Germany

After crossing the Moselle River, their journey overland must have been very difficult. It is reported there were agents to guide them and somehow, I think they must have eventually found a tributary to the Seine River which would bring them to the port of Le Havre in France. The Seine River has very little fall from it's origin to the mouth of the river where it empties into the Atlantic Ocean. The spring rains made it ideal to navigate along the swift currents to hasten their trip.

The Port of Le Havre is still a very important shipping port in France and was of strategic importance after the D day invasion of 1944.



The port of Le Havre France 2003

When the twenty one members of the Peter Steffen family departed the shores of Europe to find their new world, I wonder what they were thinking. Did I do what is good for my family? Is America going to be what it is reported to be? What will I find when I get there? How long will we travel before we can establish a farm and get back to a normal family life? Will our friends be there or will it be up to us to find a safe and free place for the remaining family to find their way to be with us? We have heard of Cincinnati where a German family can be accepted into the American way of life. When will we be there and will we have a safe journey?

My God this might be the last sight of Europe I will ever see, the shore of France at the mouth of the Seine River at Le Havre.



Le Havre from across the Seine River at Honfleur