

Will the Real Jacob Lautermilch Please Stand Up

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by

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Background

All of us are here today because of a German immigrant named Jacob Lautermilch, but in the more than 250 years that have passed since his arrival in America practically every detail of his life has been forgotten, or clouded by erroneous information. He presumably lived to the age of 71—or 81 according to some sources—but we don't know anything at all about where he was or what he was doing for more than half of those years. We don't know anything about his wife other than her name; we don't know how many children he had; we don't know whether he had any education; we don't know whether he had an occupation; we know don't know what he looked like; we don't know anything about his personality or personal habits; and we don't know whether he was a good husband and father. And, despite the marker out there in the church's cemetery, we really don't know where he's buried, either.

What little we know about Jacob Lautermilch, outside of his name appearing in a handful of legal records, may be partly wrong because it is mostly third-hand information. For example, while a lot has been written about Jacob during the last century, he never wrote anything about himself. In fact, no one who ever knew him wrote anything about him either. Thus, all we know about Jacob comes from church and legal records, or from recollections by some of his grandchildren that were

written down by his great-grandchildren, or from the research of amateur genealogists. And, despite the good intentions of those who compiled this information, some of it is clearly wrong.

Let's start with his name. We know that he was called Jacob, but did he have another name? Most likely he did. In fact, several sources refer to him Johann Jacob Lautermilch, and some refer to him Hans Jacob Lautermilch. Both "Johann" and "Hans" are the German forms of the English name "John," but it is improper to refer to Jacob by that name. It was a common practice among German-speaking people at the time, when a child was baptized, to give two Christian names. The first Christian name was a "spiritual" name, usually bestowed in honor of a favorite saint. A particularly popular male saint at the time was St. John, whose name in Latin is spelled *Ioannes* ("Johannes" in German), but when used as a spiritual name was usually spelled "Johann," or even abbreviated as "Hans." It should be noted, however, that the spiritual name was never used by relatives or friends, nor did it appear in any "secular" (*i.e.*, legal or census) document.

The second Christian name was the *rufnamen*, or the name the child was called by his or her friends and family. Thus, to the world outside of the church, Johannes Jacob Lautermilch was simply Jacob Lautermilch.

One of Jacob's great, great-grandsons, Henry Clay Lowdermilk (a son of Alfred J. Lowdermilk), recalled a different first name for Jacob. Henry, who was born 51 years after Jacob died, referred to him "Ananias" in a letter written to his granddaughter, Westher Lowdermilk Hess, in 1943. Some people have supposed that "Ananias" was actually a nickname. If so, it was not a complimentary one since it is defined in the dictionary as "habitual liar" (after the New Testament character with the same name who was struck dead for lying).

With respect to Jacob's surname, there is general agreement that it was originally spelled "Lautermilch," despite the fact that it was spelled

in a myriad of ways in legal documents in America during his lifetime, and is spelled "Laudermilck" on his tombstone. The name is a combination of the German words *lauter*, which can mean "whole" or "pure," and *milch*, which usually means "milk." According to family lore, which is probably apocryphal, the first to bear the name was a dairy farmer who was so honest that he did not add water to his milk. However, the word *lauter* can also be translated as "clear," so the name may have been used sarcastically to refer to someone who added so much water to his milk that it was almost as transparent as water.

It is also possible that the surname was descriptive in origin, and first used to describe a person with very pale, milky-white or alabaster skin. It is further possible that the name was a hybrid locational/occupational name. The locational part of the name could have derived from the nearby Lauter River (sometimes called the Glan Lauter). The occupational part of the name may have referred to someone who sold eggs from fish in the Lauter River since the word *milch* can also be translated as "roe."

Casper Waldo Cox, a great, great, great-grandson of Jacob Lautermilch, wrote a book entitled *Hoot Owls, Honeysuckle and Hallelujah* about 45 years ago. In it, Casper states that his mother's family

was descended from the proud family of Lowdermilks, who had escaped from Bavaria way back in 1595 under the despotic rule of King Frederick, because they had the courage to express religious view at variance with the accepted order. Some of her antecedents, unable to escape, were mercilessly persecuted and even burned at the stake.

Casper then goes on to say that the Lowdermilks escaped Germany and settled in the Netherlands.

It is not known where Casper got his information, but no record could be found of any Lautermilchs either living in or being burned at the stake in Bavaria in 1595. Instead, the Lautermilchs appear to be natives of the nearby German provinces of Baden, Württemberg (now called Baden-Württemberg), and Alsace (now part of France), although more recent speculation is that they were originally of Swiss origin. One of the first to bear the Lautermilch surname was Leonhard Lautermilch, who was born in Neckarwimmersbach, Baden in the early seventeenth century. There was also a Hans Veltin Lautermilch, born about 1655 in Alsace, and a Johann Jacob Lautermilch, born about 1644 in Württemberg.

Most published information on our Jacob Lautermilch states that he was born in Baden. In fact, everyone who has studied Jacob and his life agrees that he came from Baden, an area in present-day Germany that, in the eighteenth century, was a part of the Palatine region (or Palatinate). At the time Jacob Lautermilch was born, and for over 60 years after his death, Germany did not exist as a country. Like Italy, Germany was nothing more than a group of independent and semi-independent states. The Palatine region was in southwestern Germany, along the upper Rhine River, and near the borders of Switzerland and France.

Most researchers claim that our Jacob Lautermilch was born in Kirchardt, Baden on either April 8, 1716 or June 15, 1716, and was the son of a shepherd named Hans Melchoir Lautermilch (or Loudermilch). There was a man named Melchoir Lautermilch. He lived in the village of Kirchardt, Baden, was a member of the Reformed Church, and was born on April 16, 1665 and died on June 19, 1733. He was married to a woman named Anna Margaretha Grabenstein in 1694 and had at least nine children born between 1695 and about 1711 (Melchoir, Jr., Barbara, Adam, Johannes, Magdalina, Wendel, Gottfried, Antonius, and

Wilhelm). Unfortunately, there is no record in Kirchartd of Melchoir and Margaretha Lautermilch ever having a son named Jacob.

A handful of researchers claim that our Jacob was the son of Emil Lautermilch, but no one by that name can be found anywhere in the existing German church registers. Therefore, Emil appears to have been made up—perhaps by an over eager genealogist.

Thanks to some diligent research by family members, particularly Max Lowdermilk, it appears the leading candidate for our Jacob Lautermilch is one who was born in the village of Michelfeld (about 11 miles from Kirchartd) on June 6, 1726. According to the Michelfeld Lutheran Church *kirchenbuch* (church register), this Jacob was actually a junior, being the son of Johann Jacob Lautermilch. John Jacob Lautermilch, Sr. was one of nine children born to Johann Valentin Lautermilch, a shoemaker. Valentin Lautermilch was born in Switzerland in 1674, died on December 15, 1724, and married on July 22, 1694. He was a shepherd. He was married to Anna Christina Dorner, who died on December 29, 1723.

The Michelfeld Lutheran *kirchenbuch* also reports that Jacob, Sr. married a woman named Maria Katriana Röckel on August 21, 1725. She was the daughter of Erasmus Röckel, who was deceased. In addition to Jacob, who was the oldest son, there was a daughter, Anna Catherine, born January 13, 1728/29, and Johann Michel, born May 7, 1733 and died April 14, 1745.

Departure from Baden

Beginning around 1690, and continuing up to about 1750, the first of an estimated 80,000 German-speaking Protestants from the Palatinate began making their way to America—the vast majority of them to William Penn's newfound Pennsylvania. Penn had founded the colony in 1681, primarily as a refuge for his fellow Quakers, who had been severely persecuted in England, as well as in Britain's other American colonies.

But he welcomed German Protestants, too, because his mother was of Dutch (*i.e.*, part-German) descent, and made several trips there beginning in 1677 to actively recruit them.

In response to Penn's call, several Lautermilchs made their way from the Palatinate to America during the eighteenth century, but because only a handful of ships' passenger lists from that period have survived it is difficult to tell exactly how many came, or when they came. Another source of information on Palatinate immigrants is the Oath of Abjuration list. All non-British male immigrants were required to "qualify," *i.e.*, take an oath of abjuration (allegiance) to the ruler of Great Britain at the time. According to the surviving passenger records, a Georg Wilhelm Lautermilch, age 27, and a Magdalena Lautermilch, age 22, were aboard the *Britannia*, when it arrived in Philadelphia from Rotterdam on September 11, 1731. Another list states that a Wendel Lautermilch was also on board, and he qualified in Philadelphia on September 21, 1731. Wendel's age wasn't given, but only those over the age of 16 were listed.

Many of the researchers who believe our Jacob was the son of Melchoir Lautermilch state that he was also aboard the *Britannia* with Wilhelm and Magdalena (and possibly Wendel), but that his name doesn't appear on the passenger list because he was under the age of 16. They list no sources for this claim, and it is impossible to prove one way or another.

A Johannes Lautermilch arrived on board the ship *Mary of London* and qualified on September 26, 1732. Finally, a Gottfried Lautermilch came aboard the ship *Princess Augusta* and qualified on September 16, 1736. Interestingly, these Lowdermilks appear to be the children of Melchoir Lautermilch and Margareta Grabenstein Lautermilch of Kirchartt since they had children with the same names, even though the ages given on the passenger manifests don't exactly match the ages of

Melchoir and Margareta Lautermilch's children from the Kirchartd church records.

The Jacob Lautermilch who was born in Michelfeld in 1726 made his way down the Rhine River, to the Dutch port of Rotterdam in early 1749. There, on or about April 15, 1749, he boarded a 200-ton British ship named *Phoenix*, under the command of Captain John Mason, that was bringing somewhere between 257-270 German settlers to America. After a brief stop at the port of Cowes (pronounced "Coos") on the Isle of Wight in the English Channel, the *Phoenix* arrived in Philadelphia on either Friday, September 15, 1749, or Sunday, September 19.

Annette K. Burgert had this information on the Jacob Lautermilch from Michelfeld in her 1983 book, *Eighteenth Century Emigrants from German Speaking Lands to North America, Vol. 1: The Northern Kraigau*. Interestingly, however, Burgert reports that the passenger list from the *Phoenix* has 23-year old Jacob Lautermilch traveling along with his parents, Jacob and Mary Catharina Röckel Lautermilch. Obviously, this appears to be the same Lautermilch family referred to in the Michelfeld Lutheran Church *kirchenbuch*, since they are reported to be from Michelfeld, except for one small problem—the *kirchenbuch* also notes that a Johann Jacob Lautermilch died on March 14, 1735. Either the register is incorrect, or someone was posing as Catharina's husband aboard the *Phoenix*.

The only account we have regarding Jacob Lautermilch's arrival in America from one of his family members is not in accord at all with the tradition that our Jacob first settled in Pennsylvania before coming to North Carolina. On January 26, 1930, four years before he died, Richard Claude Lowdermilk of Galena, Kansas (the son of Ransom Lowdermilk), a great, great-grandson of Jacob, wrote to his cousin, Joseph Alfred Lowdermilk of Greensboro (the son of John Harrison Lowdermilk, Jr. and a great-grandson of Jacob) regarding Lowdermilk family history. Richard

stated in this letter that his father told him that Jacob left “Germany” in 1760 and arrived in Charleston, South Carolina. Ransom Lowdermilk was born on January 18, 1827, only twenty years after Jacob’s death, and it is possible that he heard this account from his grandfather, John Harrison Lowdermilk. There is reason to doubt this recollection because, as a rule, German immigrants did not come to South Carolina. However, there is sometimes a kernel of truth in all of the old family lore. If Ransom’s story is true then it turns just about everything we know about our Jacob on its head.

Many have asked the question why our Jacob and his family—or any of the Lautermilchs—left Baden. Despite frequent reports to the contrary, *e.g.*, Casper Cox’s book, the reason was not religious persecution. Although there had been previous religious persecution, it was a thing of the past in the mid-eighteenth century.

At the time Jacob and his family left in 1749, Baden was ruled by Grand Duke Karl Friedrich. Karl was an absolute monarch, but he was very liberal and benevolent. The reason the Lautermilch family left was more than likely due to overpopulation. While there were periodic famines, things were going fairly well in Baden when Jacob was living there. However, no war and no famine meant that the population was growing by leaps and bounds. With more people living, land was being more and more subdivided. Economic opportunities were poor.

Even though the Jacob Lautermilch from Michelfeld is the only Jacob Lautermilch appearing on a passenger list from the eighteenth century (aside from one other on a 1772 oath of abjuration list who arrived aboard the *Crawford*), some people are still skeptical that this was our Jacob. However, there is a compelling bit of evidence that the Jacob who was born in Michelfeld, Baden in 1726, and who came to Pennsylvania aboard the *Phoenix* in 1749, was our Jacob that is often overlooked. It is the appearance on Randolph County maps of a crossroads not too far from here called “Michfeld.” It is more than

coincidental that the name of an obscure village in Baden would appear in an area of North Carolina where very few German families settled. It thus seems fairly obvious that Jacob, or perhaps one of his sons, derived the name from his home village in Baden.

Pennsylvania

Assuming that the Jacob Lautermilch who arrived in Pennsylvania aboard the *Phoenix* in 1749 was our Jacob, his whereabouts between that time and 1776 are a complete mystery. Burgert's 1983 book states that the Lautermilch family from Michelfeld went to Lancaster County (where practically every immigrant after about 1730 went due to overcrowding in the eastern part of the colony). A possible scenario to explain what Jacob was doing during that time is that he spent somewhere between 5-7 years working off his passage as an indentured servant (assuming that the Quakers did not pay his passage). When he completed his service, which would have been somewhere between about 1754-56, the French and Indian War had broken out between Great Britain and France. At first, there was fierce fighting all along Pennsylvania's western border.

It is believed that Jacob Lautermilch, who was between 20-30 at the time, probably wound up in the Pennsylvania militia during the French and Indian War, and was stationed—at least for a time—in the area around Cumberland, Allegany County, Maryland, which was the far western outpost for the British during that war. This is based on a few tantalizing clues. First, when Jacob became a member of the German Battalion during the Revolutionary War, he was immediately appointed a sergeant in charge of recruiting. His rank and his role in recruiting suggest some prior military service. In other words, it is highly doubtful that he would have automatically become a non-commissioned officer without some previous experience. The commanding officer of Jacob's company in the German Battalion, David Woelper, had served in the

French and Indian War, so it is likely that Jacob had served under him at that time. Second, it is widely reported that one of Jacob's sons, John Harrison Lowdermilk, was born in Cumberland, Maryland in 1763. Plus, there were several people named Lautermilch in the vicinity of Cumberland, Maryland in the years following the French and Indian War. Jacob was supposed to have lived in the Cumberland, Maryland area from at least 1760-63, and perhaps longer. This was certainly possible. In 1878, a man named William Harrison Lowdermilk wrote a history of Cumberland, Maryland. It was founded as a trading post by German and Scottish settlers, and was the primary staging and supply point for British forces on the western frontier.

At this point I would like to mention a bit of erroneous information I came across about Jacob Lautermilch on the Internet recently, just in case anyone has seen it. One of the well-known Lowdermilk researchers posted a note that said Jacob Lautermilch was in Cumberland in 1766, but she said it was actually Cumberland County, North Carolina. As evidence, she said that he witnessed the will of Henry Shamborger. I looked up the will, which is dated September 29, 1766. However, the name of the witness was actually Jacob Raudenmile, not Jacob Laudermilch.

Jacob's Wife

We know Jacob Lautermilch was married to a woman named Mary Rebecca Myers (or Meyers), at some point between his arrival in America in 1749 and the birth of one of his sons, John Harrison Lowdermilk, in 1763, but we don't know when the marriage occurred. Most researchers claim, without any evidence, that he was married before he came to America, but this seems to be belied by the facts—assuming that our Jacob was the Jacob from Michelfeld. The passenger manifest from the *Phoenix* in 1749 shows clearly that he was traveling in the company of his parents, and not with a wife.

Most men in the eighteenth century married young, but Jacob Lautermilch probably did not. Assuming our Jacob was the Michelfeld Jacob, who was born in 1726, we know that he was single and 23 when he arrived in Philadelphia in 1749. If, as we suspect, he had to work several years paying off his passage, he was in no position to get married during that time period. Also, if he served during the French and Indian War, he was again probably in no position to marry.

Thus, the best guess is that he got married around the time hostilities began to wane in the Pennsylvania-Maryland border area about 1759. This date dovetails very nicely with the most commonly reported birth date for his eldest son, Jacob Lowdermilk, Jr., which is 1760.

We know even less about Jacob's wife than we do him. Assuming that she was of German-Swiss descent, the "Mary" in her name may have been a corruption of "Maria," and therefore was probably a spiritual name, since the most common names of saints for German women at the time were "Maria" and "Anna." If that is the case, her *rufnamen* was probably Rebecca, or even "Becky," since nicknames were almost universal in eighteenth century America.

On the other hand, Mary may have been her actual name. If that is the case, then she was probably the daughter of a German-Swiss father and an English (possibly Quaker) mother. So, until we know more about her, we will continue to call her Mary Rebecca.

According to family tradition, Mary Rebecca Myers was born in Switzerland in 1714. However, there are a number of reasons to doubt both her birth date and place of birth.

With respect to her birth date of 1714, it is highly questionable that she was born that early. Her first known child by Jacob was not born until about 1760, when she would have been 46, and it is known that she had another son, John Harrison Lowdermilk, in 1763, when she would have been 49. And there is at least some circumstantial

evidence—most notably the 1790 Census—that she had more children after 1763. While it is not biologically impossible for a woman to have a child at 46, or even 49, it would have been highly unlikely for her to have had any more children after 1763. So when was she really born? More than likely she was born about 1740-41. This might explain the 1714 date. If the source of the date was word-of-mouth, 1714 sounds a lot like 1740. If the source was a written record—such as on old Lowdermilk family Bible—then 1741 might have been mistakenly transposed as 1714 when the record was copied.

There are also other clues that 1740 or 1741 were closer to Mary Rebecca's actual birth year. For one thing, most women at the time married between the ages of 16-18 and had their first child within a year of marrying. If Mary Rebecca was born in 1740-41, then she probably married in 1756-59. Mary Rebecca's first known child, Jacob Lautermilch, Jr., was born in about 1760, making 1759 a reasonable guess for the year of her marriage to Jacob. This also fits nicely with the assumptions about Jacob. If he did have to work off his passage and then served during the French and Indian War, then he would have been unlikely to have married before his service ended. Although the French and Indian War was not officially concluded until 1763, the fighting in the Maryland/Pennsylvania area was over for all practical purposes in 1758.

With respect to Mary Rebecca's place of birth, it is doubtful that she was born in Switzerland, but probable that she was of Swiss descent. This is based on the fact that name Rebecca is relatively rare among German Protestants, but it was not all that uncommon among English Protestants. Therefore, Rebecca was probably the daughter of a Swiss-German who married an English woman. Although there were several families with the surname Myers (or Meyer, or Moyer, or one of the other variants of the name) living in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century, one interesting candidate is Christian Meyer. Christian was the son of

Hans Johannes Meyer, was born December 10, 1708 in Basel, Switzerland, and died on March 13, 1798 in Pennsylvania. Christian also had a brother named John who lived in York County, Pennsylvania. However, there is no record of either Christian or John Meyer having a daughter named Mary Rebecca.

It is interesting to note that when Georg William (or Wilhelm) and Magdalena Lautermilch arrived aboard the *Britannia* in 1731, they were accompanied by eight men and women between the ages of 21-29 whose last name was Meyer. Also, when Gottfried Lautermilch arrived aboard the *Princess Augusta* in 1736 he was accompanied by Jacob and Georg Meyer.

Finally, I want to mention that some family members have postulated that Mary Rebecca Myers was Jewish. This belief is apparently based solely on the fact that Myer is a common surname among German Jews, and the fact that Rebecca is a traditional name for a Jewish woman. However, there is absolutely no evidence that Rebecca Myers was Jewish. Moreover, Myers is the most common surname among Germans—and includes mostly Protestants and Catholics. It should also be noted that it is doubtful that a Jewish woman would have the first name “Mary” because of its association with Christianity.

The Revolution

On May 25, 1776, the Second Continental Congress authorized the formation of a battalion to be formed of eight companies of German-speaking troops from Maryland and Pennsylvania. On July 17, 1776, Congress authorized the formation of a ninth company under the command of Lt. John David Woelper, formerly of the 3rd Pennsylvania Regiment, and a veteran of the French and Indian War. The men enlisted for three year terms, although most served four or five years. A battalion of German-speaking soldiers from Pennsylvania for the Continental Army, which became known as the German Battalion.

Jacob Lautermilch enlisted within a week of its authorization and was appointed sergeant in charge of recruiting on July 24, 1776. Jacob's rank strongly suggests that he had substantial prior military experience. Indeed, his company commander Captain John David Woelper, was formerly a lieutenant in the 3rd Pennsylvania Regiment and a veteran of the French and Indian War. It is likely that Woelper organized a group of his old comrades-in-arms as the key officers and enlisted personnel as the nucleus for his new company.

Jacob Lautermilch received two promotions during the approximately two years he spent in service. On November 19, 1776 he was commissioned as an officer with the rank of ensign (flag-bearer). On May 15, 1777 he was promoted to second lieutenant. This was the highest rank he achieved. Some have wondered why Jacob did not achieve higher rank in view of his age (50 at the time he enlisted). There are a myriad of reasons that this may have happened, but the most likely explanation is that Jacob was a non-combat officer. There is at least some reason to believe that he was a supply officer, and this is based on his later quarrel with a fellow officer.

Jacob's service record indicates that he participated in the crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776, and in the subsequent Battle of Trenton—one of the few American victories. However, the German Battalion reportedly disgraced itself at Trenton on January 2. One of its colonels, Nicholas Haussegger, who commanded the unit from July 19, 1776 to March 19, 1777, either surrendered to the British or defected to them.

After that, Jacob was in the Continental Army's winter camp in Morristown, New Jersey. He was also present for the Battle of Short Hills (now Piscataway), New Jersey on June 26, 1777, which was another American victory. There is no indication that Jacob participated in the battles that occurred during the fall of 1777 (Germantown and Brandywine), but he was with the Continental Army at its winter camp at

Valley Forge beginning on December 19, 1777. Valley Forge is often described as the worst winter the Continental Army endured during the Revolution, but that was not the case. The cold was much worse at Morristown during the winter of 1779-80. But Valley Forge was bad because the army was inexperienced and the men were not used to the harsh conditions.

Jacob Lautermilch received a furlough in January 1778, but resigned his commission on April 8, 1778. Most of the fighting in the North was practically over at the time, and that may have been why he resigned, but it may have had something to do with a little dispute he had with a fellow German officer, Lt. Martin Shugart. According to George Washington's own notes from Monday, January 26, 1778, while the Continental Army was still in its winter encampment at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania:

Lt. S[h]ugart of the German Battn. tried by a brigade Court-Martial for challenging Lt. Laudermilk of the same Battalton [to a duel] is found guilty of a breach of 7th. Section of the Articles of War and therefore sentenced to be "cashiered." The Commander in Chief approves the sentence but in consideration of the recommendation of the Court is pleased to restore him to his rank, hoping at the same time that His LENITY in this and some other particular Instances will not be construed into his giving countenance to a practice, not only directly repugnant to his own Articles of War but discouraged by all Military Nations as subversive of good order, discipline and harmony.

Martin Shugart was a second lieutenant in one of two companies of Germans raised in Baltimore County, Maryland. (Interestingly, the first lieutenant in Shugart's company was named Christian Myers, who may or may not have been related to Jacob's wife.) Shugart resigned in June 1781.

George Washington's journal is silent on the reasons for Shugart's challenging Jacob Lautermilch to a duel, but there is some discussion preceding it regarding problems with supplies—particularly with suppliers overcharging men for certain items. Since conditions were harsh at Valley Forge that winter, and with soldiers blaming their supply officers for shortages of everything, it would not be surprising if Shugart took offense at Jacob's perceived inability to supply his men—or perhaps Shugart believed that Jacob was overcharging his men for certain supplies (such as liquor).

Jacob was listed as being "on Furlow" (furlough) in January 1778. He is not on the list of those who took the required oath of allegiance on February 3, 1778 (although Shugart is). Jacob was back at Valley Forge in March, but resigned his commission on April 8, 1778. He gave no reason for his resignation—at least one was not recorded—but the best guess is that he was miffed Shugart was reinstated. Other reasons he may have resigned include his age, the inability to cope with harsh conditions, and the desire to get back to his family.

North Carolina

Within one year of resigning his commission, Jacob was in Randolph County, North Carolina. It is not known why he came to North Carolina, but a lot of Germans and others in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania had already made the trip. Most of the Germans chose to settle in what is now eastern Guilford and western Alamance counties, but, oddly, Jacob chose southern Randolph County.

The majority of the Germans who came to central North Carolina in the second half of the eighteenth century settled along the creeks of what is now eastern Guilford and western Alamance counties. Only a few ventured south into Randolph County, and most of these settled in the northeastern part of the county, near Liberty. Some came farther south, including Andreas Huber, the great, great, great-grandfather of

President Herbert Hoover, who arrived around 1774. Andreas was about the same age as Jacob Lautermilch and was also from Baden (the village of Ittlingen). He came to Pennsylvania as a teenager aboard the ship *Two Sisters*, which arrived in Philadelphia on September 9, 1738. After staying a few years in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Andreas moved south into Maryland, and from there came to Randolph County.

Jacob apparently came to Randolph County immediately after he left the Continental Army because he appears on the 1779 Randolph County tax list. He appears on the Randolph County tax list again in 1785, in Captain Garner's district. A Jacob Lautermilch also appeared on the 1779 tax list for Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, but this may be the other Jacob Lautermilch, *i.e.*, the one who arrived in 1772. It is also possible that it was the senior Jacob Lautermilch who had arrived aboard the *Phoenix* in 1749. It is doubtful, but not impossible, that it was our Jacob Lautermilch.

Interestingly, Jacob's name also appears on a 1782 tax list entitled "A List of Quakers Who Are Over Fifty Years of Age and By Law Are Liable to Pay Only a Two-Fold Tax." A little farther down on the list, shortly before his name, there is the notation "Those Who Was Remited to A Singel tax by order of Court: 1 pound, 8 shillings, 6 pence." It is not known why Jacob's name appears on the list. He was over 50 years of age, but he certainly wasn't a Quaker. More than likely the list was meant to include all of those who paid taxes at a special rate, both Quaker and non-Quaker. Jacob may have received some special dispensation from the court due to his prior military service.

On the other hand, it is interesting to speculate whether Jacob was claiming to be a Quaker for purposes of the tax. He was born a Lutheran, but there were no Lutheran congregations in this part of Randolph County at the time. The first (and only) Lutheran church for many years anywhere in the area was Richland Lutheran Church, near Liberty, which was established in 1787. It is doubtful that Jacob could

not have seriously claimed to have been a Quaker in light of his military activities, but he may have developed Quaker sentiments.

If Jacob was hoping to escape the fighting by coming to North Carolina, he chose the wrong place. The Revolution had stalemated in the North by the end of 1778, and the British decided to try their luck in the South, which was overwhelmingly Tory, in 1779. They invaded South Carolina in February 1780, and captured Charleston and the entire American army in the South on May 12. Another army was hastily raised under General Horatio Gates, the hero of Saratoga. It camped for a while during June and July near Cox's Mill in Randolph County before heading into South Carolina later that summer. During that time, on June 14, 1780, Jacob was "appointed Constable in Esq[ui]re [Windsor] Pearce's District to warn in the inhabitants of said District."

On the evening of August 15, 1780, British and American forces stumbled into each other. The resulting Battle of Camden was one of the greatest defeats suffered by the Americans during the Revolution. Gates fled on horseback and rode 60 miles before stopping.

A third American army was authorized under the command of General Nathanael Greene, but when he arrived in Charlotte to take command he found that he didn't have much of anything with which to fight the British. He decided to lure the British into North Carolina, far from their base of supply in Charleston, while building up his own forces. The disaster at Camden was partially avenged by British defeats at Cowpens and King's Mountain as 1780 came to a close. An enraged Cornwallis decided to pursue Greene into North Carolina, which is just what Greene wanted him to do.

Greene managed to stay one step ahead of Cornwallis all winter. Cornwallis stopped in present-day Snow Camp in Alamance County, just a few miles northeast of here, to make his winter quarters. When the weather turned warmer in February, Cornwallis continued to chase Greene all the way up to Dan River, in Halifax County, Virginia. The

Americans escaped across the river at Boyd's Ferry at present-day South Boston. The Americans had taken every boat for miles, so the British had no choice but to turn back. Greene soon followed and decided to give battle at Guilford Court House, just a few miles north of present-day Greensboro on March 15, 1781. The battle was a tactical defeat for Greene, but so many British soldiers were killed that Cornwallis had no choice but to go back to the coast for resupply. He then gave up on North Carolina and decided to try Virginia. He and his entire army were surrounded and surrendered at Yorktown in October 1781.

Most history books end the Revolution at Yorktown, but it continued on for nearly two more years. There were no major battles, but there was plenty of fighting—especially here in Randolph County. Loyalist forces under Captain David Fanning began raiding Randolph County when Cornwallis was here, and his raids continued after Cornwallis left. Quite a few people, mostly innocent civilians, were killed.

Jacob Lautermilch, Jr., who was about 21 at the time, was nearly one of the victims. (Some claim he was only 13, but that would have been impossible—or it might have been one of Jacob Lautermilch's unknown younger sons.) One day Jacob, Jr. was returning from what is now Alamance County driving a yoke of oxen pulling a sled. He was captured by Fanning's men but released a short time later.

Upon arriving in Randolph County in 1779, Jacob Lautermilch no doubt found a parcel of land on which to settle, but it is not clear exactly where he first lived due to problems with the old land records. My best guess is that he established his home about five miles southeast of here, somewhere along present-day Waddell's Ferry Road in Pleasant Grove Township, just west of Deep River and north of Fork Creek. That guess is based upon old Randolph County land records, as well as the spot where Jacob was supposed to have been first buried when he died in 1807.

Unfortunately, old land records don't help much because the descriptions of the parcels contained therein are often vague and boundaries hard to discern. Also, these records were in a state of disarray in North Carolina during the Revolution and for many years thereafter. It wasn't until North Carolina became a state in 1789 that they began to get sorted out, which is why Jacob does not appear in land records until 1789.

One of the first land entries for Jacob Lautermilch is dated March 30, 1789, and is for 200 acres along Crooked Creek (now called Fork Creek) and bounded by Charles Moffitt's property. Charles Moffitt was a Scots-Irish immigrant who owned a lot of land in the Buffalo Ford area of Pleasant Grove Township. He established a mill there along Batchelor's Creek, and the area became known as Moffitt's Mill (or Mills).

It is not known whether this March 30, 1789 land entry for Jacob Lautermilch is for his home place, but it would make sense that the first thing he did was get legal title to the land on which he lived. He also bought 100 acres of land on Crooked Creek from the State of North Carolina on or about August 28, 1793, although it wasn't recorded until August 14, 1799. The land was next to that of his son Jacob, Jr.

Over the next 12 years or so, Jacob Lautermilch bought and sold several parcels of land amounting to roughly 550-650 acres. The 1799 Randolph County tax list states that Jacob owned 400 acres and his son John owned 250.

Jacob's Children

As far as anyone knows, Jacob and Rebecca Myers Lowdermilk had only two children. One was a son named Jacob Lautermilch, Jr. after his father, and the other was a son named John Harrison Lautermilch. Both eventually altered the spelling of their last name to "Lowdermilk" by about 1800.

Jacob Lautermilch, Jr. is always listed as the oldest child. His date of birth is usually given as 1760, although some sources give earlier dates—1751 and 1756 being the most common. John Harrison Lowdermilk was born on June 10, 1763. Both sons were reportedly born in Cumberland, Maryland.

But there is some evidence that Jacob had more than those two children. For example, the 1790 U.S. Census (the first made) shows Jacob Lautermilch (spelled “Lodermilk”) with one free white male over 16 (Jacob himself), four free white males under 16, and five free white females (one of whom was Mary Rebecca Myers Lowdermilk). There were two other categories in this Census, one for all other free persons, and one for slaves. Both of these boxes were blank. Since the male over 16 was Jacob himself, and one of the females was his wife Mary Rebecca, that leaves four males under 16 (*i.e.*, born after about 1774) and four females (of unknown ages). Unfortunately, the 1790 Census did not require a listing of names and relationships of members of a head of household’s family, so we do not know whether these eight individuals were Jacob and Mary Rebecca’s children or not, but there is a strong possibility that they were.

Assuming that these eight were children of Jacob and Mary Rebecca Myers Lowdermilk, all we know about them is that the four boys were all born after about 1774. (This would certainly put a damper on Mary Rebecca Myers Lautermilch being born in 1714.) Interestingly, in his January 26, 1930 letter to his cousin Joseph Alfred Lowdermilk in Greensboro, Richard Claude Lowdermilk stated that Jacob Lautermilch had five sons. Specifically, he noted that “[o]ne settled in Maryland, one in Alabama, one in Penna., while John settled in Randolph County, N.C.” Unfortunately, he did not name these other sons. There was a Peter Lowdermilk in Cumberland, Maryland in the 1800 Census, and he also appears there in the 1810 Census. Also, there was an Adam Lowdermilk in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania in the 1800 Census, and he is still

there in 1810 Census. However, there is no proof that these two men were sons of Jacob Lautermilch.

All we know about the females is that there were four of them. They could have been born anywhere between about 1761 and 1789. On May 14, 1785, a man named Jesse Tucker married a woman whose last name was Lowdermilk. Her first name is unknown, but since the only Lowdermilk family here at the time was that of Jacob Lautermilch, it seems more than likely that she was his daughter.

On November 24, 1788, a petition was circulated to move the courthouse in Randolph County. Jacob, Sr., Jacob, Jr., and John Harrison Lowdermilk all signed it, but beneath their names was a Phillip (spelled "Philop") Lowdermilk. Phillip was over the age of 21 at the time, making his date of birth prior to 1767, and he could very well have been another son of Jacob, Sr. He never again appears on any record in Randolph County, or anywhere else for that matter.

A writ of capias (an order by a court commanding the sheriff to seize the person) was issued against a man named George (although the name in the document looks more like "Jorge," or even "Jesse") Lowdermilk on November 15, 1795 on the charge he stole the pocket book of William Smith the previous Saturday. Uriah Marsh was the witness against George. This is the only time George Lowdermilk appears on the records in Randolph County.

At this point I want to mention a comment made by Henry Clay Lowdermilk in his June 20, 1943 letter to Westher Hess. Henry stated that Jacob Lautermilch had a brother who came south with him to North Carolina, but that this brother eventually settled in Georgia. Perhaps this was the mysterious Phillip Lowdermilk, or even George Lowdermilk? This is the only known reference to an alleged brother, but if he did exist it raises a problem regarding our Jacob being from Michelfeld because that Jacob did not have a brother.

Jacob's Death

Mary Rebecca Myers Lautermilch reportedly died on July 10, 1805, but this date is suspect because some researchers claim that is actually the date that her son, Jacob Lautermilch, Jr., died, supposedly in Burke County, North Carolina. However, since it is believed that Jacob, Jr. lived until 1843, this may actually be her date of death.

Jacob Lautermilch died on June 15 (or 16 or 17), 1807, but he wasn't originally buried outside in this cemetery. The first burial here did not occur until nearly a half-century after his death. Jacob was apparently buried initially in a cemetery on Waddell's Ferry Road (NC-2874), in Bennett, a few miles east of here. It is not known whether the cemetery was a church cemetery, or simply the Lowdermilk family cemetery, but at least 50-55 graves have been identified there. The cemetery is located approximately seven-tenths of a mile southeast of Riverside Church, on the east side of the road, behind a hedge, at the edge of a field. All of the graves that have been located there are marked by field stones with no inscriptions.

According to a posting on the Internet made by one of Jacob's descendants, Jacob lived near Deep River and was buried at a church there. Flood waters threatened the church and cemetery at a later date, requiring the bodies to be moved to Pleasant Hill. Since the area is not too far from the water, that is certainly possible, but it is unlikely.

The story about Jacob being moved is also repeated at page 93 of Casper Cox's 1966 book, *Hoot Owls, Honeysuckle and Hallelujah*, where he states:

Some years before, when Nancy [Lowdermilk's] father [Emsley Lowdermilk] had donated land on his plantation for a church and graveyard, he was instrumental in having the body of Jacob Lowdermilk brought from another place and buried there.

But at least part of Casper's story is also incorrect since the land for the cemetery was donated by the Upton family, not Emsley Lowdermilk.

While it is certainly possible that sounds more plausible than the flood story, but I have my doubts that Jacob—or anyone else—was disinterred from the Waddell's Ferry Road cemetery and brought here for reburial. My personal theory is that Emsley Lowdermilk, when he became somewhat prosperous around the turn of the last century, decided to honor his father's family in the cemetery out front. However, I believe he simply had stones erected to their memory, rather than disinterring their remains. First of all, I think it would have been impossible to discern where Jacob and Mary Rebecca Myers Lowdermilk were buried in the Waddell's Ferry Road cemetery since all of the grave markers are identical. Secondly, I don't think he would have gone to all the trouble of digging up—not only his great-grandparents, but his grandparents as well. After all, neither John Harrison Lowdermilk nor any of his wives were originally buried here, either. In any event, I don't think the other Lowdermilk relatives would have permitted it. Perhaps one day we can prove if Jacob and others were moved by having the grave sites outside examined by ground penetrating radar, which would indicate whether the ground had been disturbed. Until then, we should be skeptical regarding whether some of those graves outside actually contain remains.