

## Chapter 8. The Imm and Zelger Families: from Hartheim and Biengen, Germany to Cincinnati, Ohio

### THE SEARCH FOR MY IMM ANCESTRY

For several years after I started doing genealogy in 1999, I did not know that I had ancestors named Imm.

From family records I knew that I had an ancestor Johann 'John' Thiel, whose daughter, also my ancestor, was Catherine Thiel. The first census record for John Thiel was from 1860, and by then he was living in the Town of Hamburg, Bad Ax (now Vernon) County, Wisconsin, a farmer, with wife Ann 30 b. Bohemia, Catharine 8 b. OH, John 4 b. WI, and Frank 1 b. WI. His wife Ann was Anna Maria Pompe, who was born in 1829 in Schokau, northern Bohemia<sup>1</sup>. She is buried beside John in the Koethe Cemetery (Salzer German Methodist) in the Town of Hamburg. I concluded that Anna was the mother of all the children listed in the 1860 census.

<b>Marriage Certificate.</b>	
(TO BE RETURNED TO THE REGISTER OF DEEDS BY THE PERSON OFFICIATING.)	
1. The Color, .....	White.
2. Full name of husband, .....	Alexander Durrwachter.
3. Full name of the wife previous to marriage, .....	Catharine Thiel.
4. Occupation of said husband, .....	Day laborer.
5. Residence of said husband, .....	La Crosse City.
6. Birthplace of said husband, .....	Knittlingen, Württemberg, Germany.
7. The place, town or township, and county where the marriage was contracted, .....	Town of Hamburg, Vernon Co. Wisconsin.
8. Time when marriage was contracted, .....	The 12 day of August A. D. 1871.
9. By what ceremony contracted, .....	by the rites of the German Ref. Church.
10. Names of subscribing witnesses, .....	Gunther Kothe, & John Dell.
11. Date of certificate of marriage, .....	The 14 August 1871.
12. Name of the father of said husband, .....	Jonathan Durrwachter.
13. Name of the mother of said husband, .....	Catharine born of Nidermaier.
14. Name of the father of said wife, .....	John Thiel.
15. Name of the mother of said wife, .....	Theresia born of Ihm.

This certificate for the marriage of Alexander Durrwachter and Catharine Thiel shows that her parents were John Thiel and "Theresia born of Ihm."

Later, however, I obtained the marriage certificates of my great-grandmother Catharine Thiel and her brother John Thiel. They both name their mother as "Theresia Ihm," and the death affidavit of John Thiel states her name as "Theresia Ihm," born in Baden, Germany. That's where things stood for several years -- a single name, Theresia Ihm or Imm, from Baden.

Eventually I returned to the clue

that Catherine Thiel was born in Cincinnati. I found an online marriage record from St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church in Cincinnati; it lists names of the couple as Johan Thiel and Susanna Imm. Susanna is probably Theresia. Witnesses were Jacobus (Jacob, Johan's brother) Thiel and Carolus (Carl, Charles when Americanized) Imm. Carl was, logically, the brother of

Theresia. I then found an 1860 census record for an Imm family in Cincinnati: Charles Imm 37 b. Baden, grocer, lived in dwelling-place 100 in Cincinnati Ward 12 with Catherine [wife of Charles] 27 b. NY, Rossa 5 b. Ohio, Charles Jr. 2 b. Ohio, and Michael 67 b. Baden, weaver. In dwelling-place 101 were Catherine Imm 74 b. Baden, Bernhard Imm 33 b. Baden, laborer, and boarders.

Evidence suggested, at that point, that Michael and Catherine Imm were the parents of Charles, Theresia, and Bernhard. Michael, Charles, and Bernhard are all buried in Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati. A Joseph Imm was also living in Cincinnati at that time and enlisted in 1861 in the 6<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry for the Civil War. As it turns out, Joseph was killed in 1863 in the Battle of Mission Ridge in Tennessee. In 1867 his father Michael filed a claim for a pension because of Joseph's death. The claim names **Michael Imm** and **Catherine Zelger** as father and mother of Joseph.

In the same time period that I made those discoveries, my DNA profile on ancestry.com showed two matches as 4<sup>th</sup> cousins to people who were descendants of Charles Imm, strongly suggesting that my inferences had been correct. I am also a DNA 4<sup>th</sup> cousin with a descendant of Katharine Imm Kircher, whose family lived across the river from Cincinnati in Covington, Kentucky. Thus my list of children expanded to include **Theresia, Charles (Karl), Bernard, Joseph,** and **Catherine.**

## **WHERE IN BADEN WERE THE IMM AND ZELGER FAMILIES FROM?**

German church records are excellent sources for genealogists, somewhat surprisingly, in view of the extensive destruction many towns have suffered in a series of wars over centuries. But the only way to access those records is to know the exact town or parish in which ancestors lived. Searches for my Imm family on internet sources did not narrow down the choices. I next turned to a professional genealogist in Germany, Friedrich R. Wollmershäuser. In short order he found the family from Hartheim, Baden: Michael Imm married to Katharina Zelger, with children Karl, Katharina, Theresia, Bernard, and Joseph. Images of all five baptism records appear in this report. Their birthdates are entirely consistent with the 1860 census. Moreover, the birthdate for Karl, 28 Jan 1823, is the same as in the ancestry.com tree of my DNA 4<sup>th</sup> cousin. Friedrich found the 1819 marriage document of Michael Imm and Katharina Zelger, which showed that they were married in **Hartheim**, but she was from the nearby town of **Biengen**.

With two towns in hand, research into Baden ancestors could proceed using church records both online and at the Catholic Bishop's Archives in Freiburg.<sup>2</sup>

27. Am zweyten October darrir Kirch, Zofe Doffe unnd Johanna  
 Michael Jue, der darrir Kirch Michael Jue darrir Kirch unnd darrir Kirch  
 darrir Kirch unnd darrir Kirch Maria Friderich darrir Kirch  
 unnd Maria Katharina Zelger, der darrir Kirch darrir Kirch, darrir Kirch  
 in darrir Kirch unnd darrir Kirch darrir Kirch darrir Kirch darrir Kirch  
 darrir Kirch darrir Kirch. darrir Kirch darrir Kirch unnd darrir Kirch  
 darrir Kirch darrir Kirch unnd darrir Kirch in darrir Kirch, unnd  
 Philipp Glockner, Ludwig darrir Kirch unnd darrir Kirch  
 darrir Kirch in darrir Kirch.  
 Am zweyten October 1820. darrir Kirch darrir Kirch darrir Kirch

The marriage certificate of Michael Imm and Katharina Zelger. Translation: The marriage between Michael Imm, son of Michael Imm, weaver in Hartheim, and of Maria Friderich, both deceased, and Maria Katharine Zelger, born in Biengen, daughter of Anton Zelger, teacher in Biengen, and of Regina Wenger, has been performed on 2 Oct 1820 at 10 o'clock a.m. in Hartheim [at that time in Feldkirch parish]. Witnesses: Dominikus Beck, farmer in Biengen, and Philipp Glockner, an unmarried farmhand from Biengen.

## GEOGRAPHY AND BRIEF HISTORY, UNTIL ABOUT 1860, OF THE BADEN TOWNS

Hartheim is on the Rhine River in far southwestern Germany, near both France and Switzerland. Biengen is about 10 km east; Breisach, also on the Rhine, is 14 km north, and the city of Freiburg is 22 km to the northeast. The Meyer Gazetteer in 1912 listed Hartheim as a village in the State of Baden, today Baden-Wuerttemberg, and in the Government District of Freiburg, with a population of 695 and one Catholic parish church. Biengen was in the same District with a population of 603 and one Catholic parish church, Saint Leodegar. Today Hartheim has been combined with nearby towns of Feldkirch and Bremgarten into the town of Hartheim am Rhein. Biengen has been incorporated into the spa town of Bad Krozingen.

In the 15th century Hartheim and Biengen came under the rule of the city Breisach, which by the early 16<sup>th</sup> century was a significant stronghold of the Holy Roman Empire. The Holy Roman Empire was nominally controlled by an emperor from the House of Habsburg in Austria, but in fact was a collection of semi-autonomous states. The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) started as a battle between Catholic and Protestant states in the Holy Roman Empire but evolved into a series of political conflicts involving all of Europe. The War resulted in an estimated eight million casualties from battle, famine, and disease. During that war, in 1635, Breisach was completely destroyed. In villages such as Biengen half to two-thirds of the people died, and the houses and

churches were severely damaged or destroyed. After the end of the war, in 1648, under the Peace of Westphalia, Hartheim was incorporated together with Breisach to France. Between 1670 and 1714 Breisach was traded back and forth between France and the Holy Roman Empire but by 1790 was again part of the Empire. The Feldkirch records reflect Austrian rule, because beginning in 1784 the priests had to record on regimented forms. Unfortunately, for the genealogist, the forms did not allow inclusion of birthplaces or parents of brides and grooms.

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The German Mediatization of 1806 saw the absorption of a large number of self-ruling entities of the Holy Roman Empire into a small number of German states, including Baden. That movement was forced by pressure from Emperor Napoleon I of France. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 loosely united those states into a German Confederation. That Confederation dissolved with the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. Baden sided with Austria in the war, but after Austria's defeat, Baden allied with Prussia, the principal state of a new North German Confederation that had formed in 1866. In 1871 four southern German states, including Baden, joined the North

German Confederation to form the German Empire. That empire lasted until the First World War.

My ancestors all left Baden during the period of the first German Confederation, when Baden was a semi-autonomous duchy. Its government was that of a hereditary monarchy. Baden was seldom free from conflict, however, including invasions by Prussia, culminating, after they left, in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866.



*Hartheim on the Rhine*

## IMM AND ZELGER ANCESTORS IN GERMANY

I have chosen to show my Imm and Zelger ancestors in a chart (Appendix I) starting at my 2nd great-grandmother Theresia Imm. The chart ascends from Theresia Imm at the bottom to the two boxes at the top, who are my 9<sup>th</sup> great-grandfathers: Bartholomäus Stud from Hartheim, parent of Johannes Stud, and Johannes Grotwohl from Bremgarten, parent of Anna Maria Grotwohl. Monica Heitz<sup>2</sup> wrote me that the Grotwohl family, today spelled Grathwohl, was always a well-respected family in Bremgarten, perhaps since before the Thirty Years War, and provided mayors and other well-situated persons.

Details on people in the chart, along with the many children, siblings, and relatives not listed, can be found in my ancestry.com tree Nearly All Our Ancestors 2.

The Imm line, all from Hartheim, ascends from **Michael Imm** b. 1793 (Katharina Zelger) → **Michael Imm** b. 1744 (Maria Anna Friderich) → **Anton Imm** b. 1719 (Franciska Saeger) → **Gervas Georg Imm** b. 1695 (Anna Haessler) → **Gervasius Imm** b. 1660 (Catharina Ritzenthaler) → **Johannes Imm** b. 1629 (Catharina Straumayer). Johannes and Catharina were born during the Thirty Years War.

Friedrich Wollmershäuser mentioned an emigration book that suggested that the original home of the Imm clan, in a spelling like Emm, originated in a small region near the source of the Danube River, which is in the Black Forest. He also pointed out that Saint Gervasius was the patron of only one church in Baden, namely of the church in Breisach. During the worst times of the Thirty Years War, Breisach was the only working parish. The name of the church patron was given to children at baptism such as Gervasius and Gervas Georg Imm.

Birth records of four of the children of the younger Michael Imm say that he was a day-worker in Hartheim. The fifth says he was a weaver, the same occupation listed in the 1860 US Census. His father Michael was a weaver. Gervasius Imm was a farmer.

Michael Ritzenthaler, the grandfather of Gervas Georg Imm, was the sheriff in Hartheim.

My Zelger ancestors came from the town of Biengen. The line ascends from **Katharina Zelger** b. 1785 (Michael Imm) → **Anton Zelger** b. 1751 (Regina Catharina Wenger) → **Joseph Anton Zelger** b. 1721 → **Franz Anton Zelger** (Margaretha Schnetzler). Anton Zelger was a long-time teacher in Biengen. He retired in 1809, whereupon he became a community advisor and writer. The government of the Upper Rhine then awarded the school service to his son Joseph Anton Zelger (1780-1869), the brother of Katharina Zelger.

Katharina Zelger emigrated to Cincinnati with her husband Michael Imm and their children. Her brother Johannes and her sister Maria Rosalia Zelger Bleyle also emigrated to the Cincinnati area, as detailed below.

My other ancestors, filling the center of the chart, ascend from Maria Ann Friderich b. 1757, the wife of the older Michael Imm. They have surnames Friderich, Scherrer, Stud, Grotwohl, Kaufmann, and Miller.

## THE IMM AND ZELGER FAMILIES IN CINCINNATI

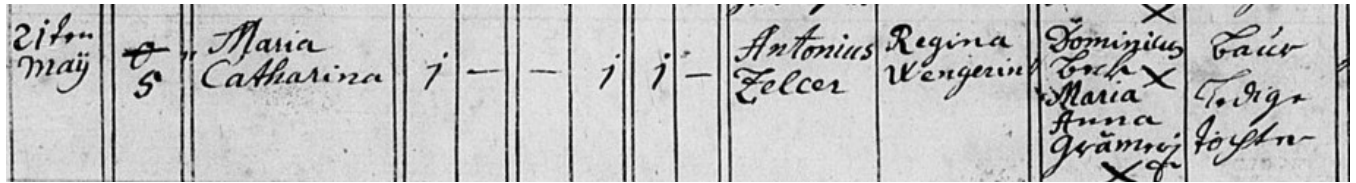


*Cincinnati was first settled in 1788 at the confluence of the Licking and Ohio Rivers. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was an American boomtown in the middle of the country, listed among the top ten United States cities in population. After completion of the Miami and Erie Canal to Middletown in 1827, businesses expanded, and there was a labor shortage, until thousands of immigrants arrived in the late 1840s from Ireland and Germany. The German immigrants settled on the outskirts of the city in an area north of the Canal where there were abundant cheap rental units. That area came to be known as Over-the-Rhine, Rhine being a sarcastic name for the Canal. Along with immigrants, the area attracted a concentration of bootleggers, saloons, gambling houses, and dance halls. In 1850 approximately 63 percent of its population had come from German states. They brought a variety of customs, attitudes, and dialects of the German language. The community was served by its own churches and clubs and several German-language newspapers. German entrepreneurs also established a very profitable brewing industry in Over-the-Rhine. By 1880 Cincinnati was recognized as the “Beer Capital of the World,” with Over-the-Rhine at its center.*

*The population density in the city was extreme, about 32,000 people per square mile. That density, along with poor sanitation facilities and periodic flooding of the rivers and Canal, contributed to epidemics of cholera, smallpox, and typhoid.*

*In 1867, when his pension was granted, Michael Imm lived at 145 Mulberry St. At his death in 1871 he lived at 455 Baymiller. In 1861 and again in 1863 Charles Imm lived at the corner of Poplar and Linn, and he died at the corner of Dalton and Poplar. All those addresses are either within or immediately adjacent to Over-the-Rhine.*

## Michael (1793-1871) and Katharina Zelger (1785-1861) Imm, my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandparents



*Baptism record of Maria Catharina Zelger on 21 May 1785 in Biengen, parents Antonius Zelcer and Regina Wengener. It follows the ruid Austrian style.*

Michael Imm applied for a pension following the death of his son Joseph in the Civil War in 1863. The various application papers say that Joseph arrived in America with his father in 1847, and worked for two years on a farm near Milton, New York. There he earned, besides board, only \$3 a month, which he regularly gave to his father, Michael. His father therewith paid the debts incurred by immigrants. The son then learned the shoemaker trade and, being an apprentice, earned no money for two years, and subsequently earned generally \$5 a week, which he delivered each week to his father. After he had enlisted for the Civil War, he sent money to his father three times that witnesses knew of, twice \$25 and once \$40. By the aid of this money the old man could support himself and his wife.

An emigration date of 1847 is consistent with an 1847 Baden Emigration Index entry for Michael Imm. It cannot be determined if Joseph's father, mother, and brothers and sisters also lived near Milton for a time, or if they in short order moved on to Cincinnati.

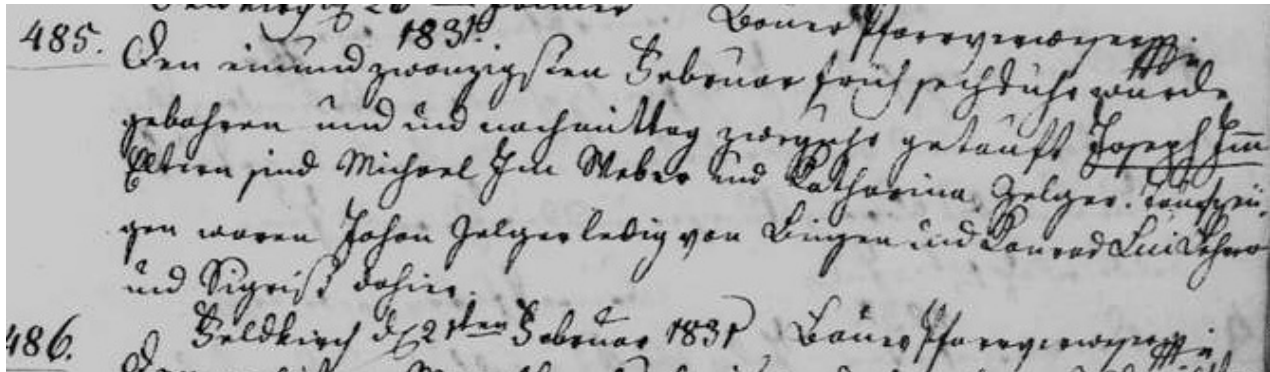
Michael and Katharina may have emigrated to Cincinnati because her brother **Johannes 'John' Zelger** and his wife **Franciska 'Frances' Kaufman** were already there. I will provide details on the Zelger families in Cincinnati later in this article. They were married in Biengen in 1831 and had their first child Franciska there in 1832, but their next child was born ~1834 in Cincinnati, and all subsequent children in Cincinnati. We can infer that they emigrated to Cincinnati in ~1834, 13 years before Michael and Katharina Imm. A sister of Katharina Zelger Imm also emigrated to America in 1846, about the same time as Michael and Katharina. She will be discussed in the Zelger families section.

The 1860 census discussed above lists Michael as a weaver, which was the occupation of his father Michael in Hartheim. By contrast, medical testimony entered into the pension applications alleges that Michael had been disabled since 1857, was totally infirm, partially blind and deaf, and had no property except for bed and trunk. Michael was granted the pension that he applied for, \$8.00 per month, starting in November, 1867. He died 16 September 1871. The death record on the Spring Grove Cemetery website says that he died of old age and dropsy (edema).

Katharina Zelger Imm died before Michael, on 10 December 1861. The pension application papers imply that they were not on the best of terms, because two citizens of Cincinnati had to testify that they knew the couple both in Germany and in America and that they had always been considered, at least, to be married. In the 1860 census they appear in separate, although apparently adjacent, dwelling-places, Michael with his son Charles and family, and Katharina with son Bernard.



**Joseph Imm (1831-1863), son of Michael and Katharina Zelger Imm, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-uncle**

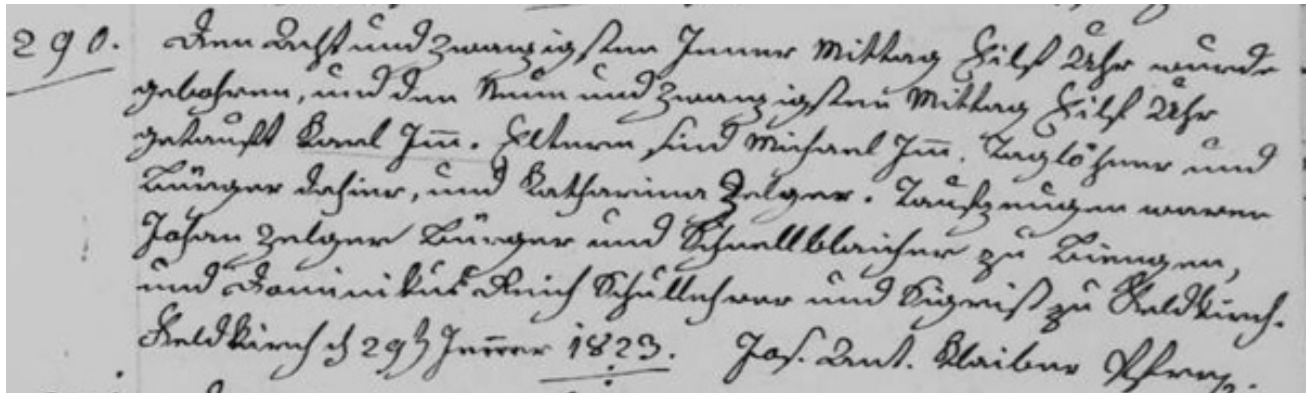


*Translation of the baptism record of Joseph Imm: The 21st of February, early [in the morning] at six o'clock was born and in the afternoon at two o'clock was baptized Joseph Imm. Parents are Michael Imm, weaver, and Katharina Zelger. Witnesses of the baptism were Johan Zelger, unmarried, of Biengen, and Konrad Louis, each and sacristan of Feldkirch. Feldkirch, the 21st of February 1831. Bauer, parish administrator [curate]*

The history of Joseph Imm, upon coming to America, was discussed in the first paragraph of the section above on Michael and Katharina Zelger Imm. After his shoemaker apprenticeship, Joseph enlisted in the Sixth Ohio Infantry in 1861. He fought in the Battle of Missionary Ridge in Tennessee and died in the Regiment Hospital on November 25, 1863 from a “wound in the thigh,” according to the pension application papers filed by Michael Imm.

The Battle of Missionary Ridge was part of the Chattanooga Campaign of the Civil War. Following a Union victory in the Battle of Lookout Mountain on November 24, 1863, Union forces in the Military Division of the Mississippi under Major General Ulysses S. Grant assaulted Missionary Ridge and defeated the Confederate Army of Tennessee commanded by General Braxton Bragg, forcing it to retreat to Georgia.

**Charles ‘Karl’ Imm (1823-1876), son of Michael and Katharina Zelger Imm, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-uncle**



*Translation of the baptism record: Karl Imm was born on 28 Jan 1823 at 11 o'clock a.m. in Hartheim and baptized on 29 Jan 1823 at 11 o'clock, a son of Michael Imm, day-worker in Hartheim, and of Katharina Zelger. Sponsors: Johann Zelger, teacher in Biengen, and Dominikus Reich, teacher and a sacristan in Feldkirch.*

In the baptism document, this Imm child was Karl, but the family Americanized Karl to Charles. Karl was a witness at the 1851 marriage of his sister Theresia, in Cincinnati, to John Thiel. In the 1860 census he is listed as a grocer. His 1863 Civil War Registration says he was a paper-carrier. Charles married Catherine ‘Kate’ Yeager, who was born ~1833 in New York. Charles died at a relatively young age of consumption (tuberculosis).

The children of Charles and Catherine Imm were Rosa Katherine, Charles Jr., Jacob Henry, and Catherine ‘Kate’.

**Rosa Katharine Imm** (1855-1938) married **Conrad Schmidt** (1854-1943), who had emigrated from Hesse-Darmstadt, in 1873 in Saint Peter German Evangelical Church in Cincinnati. Conrad was a millwright in a carpenter shop. Their children were: Rosa Schmidt (1874-1957, 1st, Frederick T Brauns, 2<sup>nd</sup>, John Gerdes, a printer); Charles B Schmidt (1877-1956), an expressman; Ida Schmidt (1878-1954, Charles Roepke, a clothing manufacturer cutter); Matilda ‘Tillie’ Schmidt (1881-1953, George W Kling, shoemaker in a shoe factory); John Schmidt (1883-1967, pattern maker in a machine shop, 1st Julia Kling, 2<sup>nd</sup> Martha M Huskemeyer); and Jacob Schmidt (1887- ), a printer.

**Charles Imm, Jr.** (1861-1954) married **Mary Kuhlenberg** (1863-1946) in 1883 in Saint Augustine Catholic Church in Cincinnati. He was a furniture maker and finisher. Their children were Joseph Henry Imm (1883-1948, Mayme Scott), a glass worker; Lawrence G Imm (1888-1926), a silver and glass buffer in Cleveland; Edward Henry Imm (1890-1968, Elsie Catherine Uphaus), a silver industry buffer and polisher; William Charles Imm (1892-1918, Sophie Anna Gabel), a horseshoer; Elmer Imm (1894-1907); Harry Arthur Imm (1895-1946), a truck driver in Cleveland; and Estelle A Imm (1900-1985, John Joseph Rohmann, a machinist).

Edward Henry Imm and Elsie Catherine Uphaus had a daughter Dolores Anna (1916-2001). Dolores married Herbert R Jung (1914-1992), and they had a daughter whose DNA profile on

ancestry.com matches my DNA as a 4<sup>th</sup> cousin. She is in fact my 4<sup>th</sup> cousin, not proof, but pretty close to proof, that this Imm genealogy I have built from a slim beginning is correct.

**Jacob Henry Imm** (1861-1954) relocated from Cincinnati to Scioto County, Ohio, some time after his father died in 1876. He had a career in Scioto County as a shoe worker in a shoe factory. In 1883 in Portsmouth, Scioto, Ohio he married **Emma Bodmer** (1862- ). Their two children were Emma (1885- ) and Carrie L 'Clara' (1888- ). Carrie married, 1st, Reuben Smith in 1907 in Scioto County and, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Fred Hanna in 1944 in Detroit, Michigan.

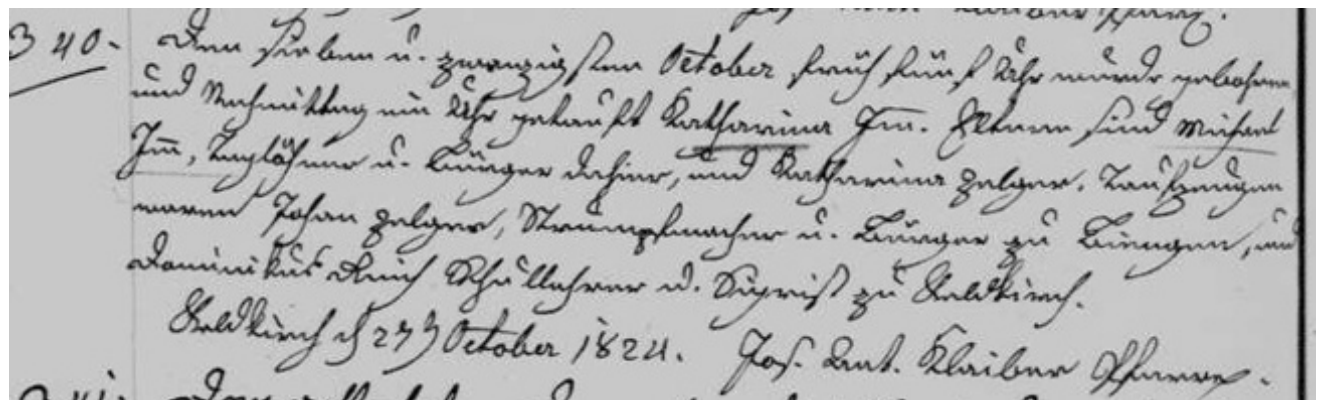
The second wife of Jacob Henry Imm was Mary **Schernberger** (1874-1955). They married in Scioto County in 1895. Their children were Margaret E Imm (1897-1990, 1st, George Erisel Gammon, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Edward D Boone); Lucille Rocena Im (1900-1966, Kenneth Grant Crawford); Edward George Imm (1903-1977, Jeanette Elizabeth Bibbey); Leroy 'Roy' W Imm (1906-1977, Emma A Luther); and Gerald Imm (1911-1940, Edna Shaffer).

Kenneth Grant Crawford, the husband of Lucille Rocena Imm, was a metal worker in Springfield, Ohio. They moved from Springfield to Provo, Utah between 1935 and 1940 and later settled in the area of Ogden, Utah. They had two children, Doloris (William Weeks) and Joseph Leroy Crawford. I am a DNA 4<sup>th</sup> cousin of a child of Joseph Leroy Crawford.

Leroy 'Roy' Imm was a policeman in the city of Portsmouth, Scioto, Ohio. He and Emma Luther had five children: Robert Roy Imm (1931-2005), Ramona Imm (1929-2011, Otto J Casciato), Jerry Lee Imm (1932-2016), and Greta Imm (1935-2012, Richard 'Fed' Jones).

**Catherine 'Kate' Imm** (1865-1924) married **William Clark Rittenhouse** (1863-1910) in 1893 in Cincinnati. He was an iron works molder. Their children were Leonora Rittenhouse (Alfred B Kleinmann), William Clark Rittenhouse, Jr. (Marie Koehler), Clifford Richard Rittenhouse (Margaret Meyer), and Clarence John Rittenhouse (Violet Clarice Decker).

### **Katherina 'Katie' Imm Kircher (1824-1898), daughter of Michael and Katharina Zelger Imm, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-aunt**



*Baptism of Katharina Imm in Hartheim. Translation: The 27th of October early [in the morning] at 5 o'clock was born and in the afternoon at one o'clock was baptized Katharina Imm. Parents are Michael Imm, day laborer, and Katharina Zelger. Witnesses of baptism were John Zelger, stocking-maker [knitting stockings/ lace-maker], citizen of Biengen and Dominikus Reich,*

*schoolteacher and sacristan of Feldkirch. Feldkirch, the 27th of October 1824. Joseph Anton Klaiber, Priest.*

**Katherina Imm** married **John Adam Kircher** (1820-1897) on 19 May 1849 at Old Saint Mary Catholic Church in Cincinnati. He was born in Fulda, Fulda, Hessen, Prussia. Censuses and city directories list his occupation as iron finisher and locksmith. At some point they moved from Cincinnati to Covington, Kenton, Kentucky, which is across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. Their children were Michael, Theresia Catherine, Amelia Emily, Joseph Edward, William F, Catherine 'Kate', John, and Odelia, each of whom is discussed below.

Several family trees in ancestry.com contain Katherina and John Adam Kircher, and most of those incorrectly state the birthplace of Katherina. Those mistakes appear to derive from ship records for Katharina Kircher. Katharina did not emigrate as Katharina Kircher. She emigrated as Katharina Imm, because her marriage was in Cincinnati, after her family had arrived in America in 1847. She in fact was born in Hartheim, as stated in her baptism record:

**Michael Kircher** (1850- ) was born in Cincinnati. He married **Louisa Kuester** in 1878 in Covington, Kentucky. He was an iron foundry finisher and pattern maker. He and Louisa had two children, Alexander Joseph (Marguerite Cunny) and Louisa.

**Theresia Catherine Kircher**<sup>3</sup> (1851-1929) was also born in Cincinnati. In 1875, in Colbert County, Alabama, she married **John Bernard 'Barnie' Swager**. He was a farmer in Colbert County, where they spent the rest of their lives. Their children were Charles Francis Joseph (Anneta Magdalene Hagler), Frank Victor, Odelia, Katharine, Benjamin, Mary, Leccetta, Sadie (Oscar McMahon), Amelia, and Mildred.



*Theresia  
Catherine Kircher*

**Amelia Emily Kircher** (1853-1918) was born in Covington, Kentucky. She married **Frank Henry Wilberding**, and they had three children: Amelia (Branham Grimes), Alfred (Millie Brennan), and Odelia Teresa (Charles Menifee Doty). He had a grocery store in Covington.



*Amelia Emily Kircher*

**Joseph Edward Kircher** (1856-1908) was born in Covington, where in 1888 he married **Johanna Ravensburg** (1865-1936, photo to the right<sup>3</sup>). The couple went west to Routt County, Colorado, where Joseph was a ranchhand, then back to Covington, and, about 1901, to Colbert County, Alabama, where his sister Theresia Kircher Swager lived. There he was a farmer for a few years before his death. Their children were Eleanor Mary (Robert Richard Vogan), Leonard Adam (Clara Starmann), Lillian (John R Novak), Odelia Catherine (George William Crook), Joseph Ferdinand (Samantha 'Mancy' Caraway), and Herbert Edward (Verna Beverly Kegley).

I am a **DNA 4<sup>th</sup> cousin** of a child of Odelia Catherine Kircher and George William Crook, descendants of Joseph Edward Kircher. That is confirming evidence, in general, of my place as an Imm descendant and, in particular, of the place of Katherina ‘Kate’ Imm Kircher as a child of Michael and Katharina Zelger Imm.

**William F Kircher** (1857-1931) was born in La Crosse County, Wisconsin. That birthplace seems anomalous, because every other Kircher child that came before and after him was born in Covington, Kentucky, but the Kentucky Death Record is quite clear. His birthplace in the censuses is consistently Wisconsin. It is conceivable that the whole John Adam Kircher family made a brief excursion to Wisconsin, or it is more likely that Katharina Imm Kircher gave birth there while visiting. Recall that Theresia Imm Thiel, my 2<sup>nd</sup> great-grandmother, and the sister of Katharina ‘Katie’ Imm Kircher, died ~1858 in Bad Ax (now Vernon) County, Wisconsin. Vernon County is immediately south of La Crosse County. It is conceivable that Katie Imm Kircher journeyed west to help her sister in a time of difficulty.

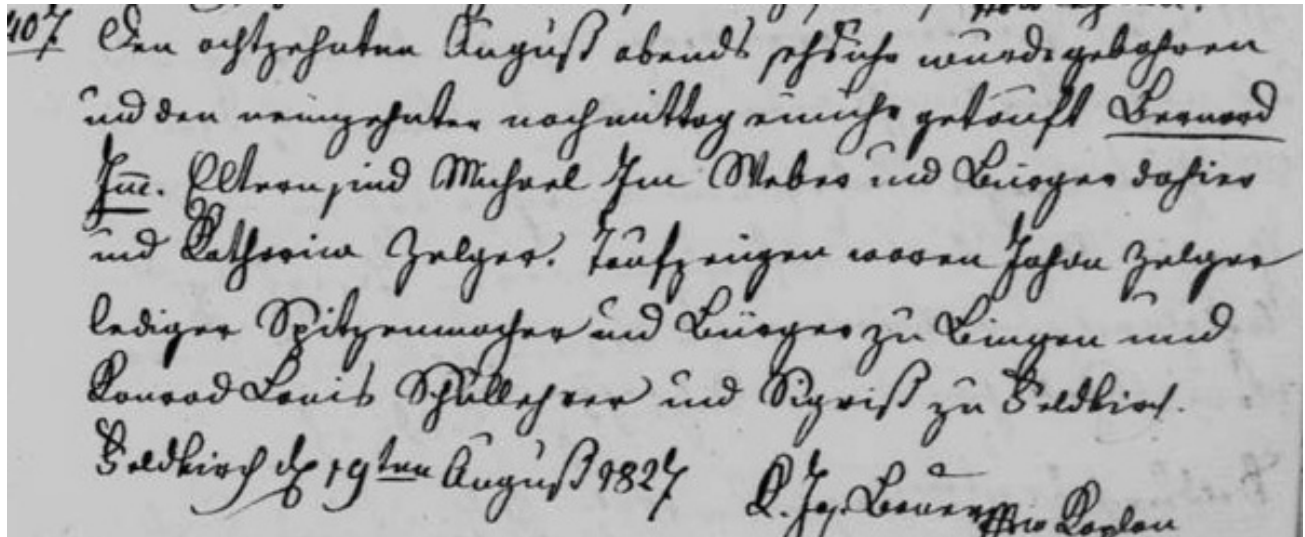
William F Kircher married **Catherine ‘Katie’ Etler** in Covington in 1886. Their children were Charles Bernard, Henry, Irene, Edward A (Eleanor Strategier), Theresia (Leo Nienaber), and Amelia M (Theodore J Kruetzman). William F Kircher was a stone mounter in a factory.

**Catherine ‘Kate’ Kircher** (1860- ) was born in Covington. She apparently never married. In 1900 and 1910 she was living with her sister Odelia in Covington. No death record was found, but searching is difficult, because there were several women named Catherine or Kate Kircher in the Cincinnati or Covington area.

**Odelia Kircher** (1868-1953) was born in Covington. She was a grocery store clerk for several decades, living with her widowed mother or her sister Catherine ‘Kate.’ Then in 1935 she turned up in Lake County, California, living with her niece Odelia ‘Della’ Swager. In 1940 she was 71 and single, and her niece was 58 and single, a manager. The younger Odelia was the daughter of Theresia Catherine Kircher Swager, the sister of the older Odelia. Odelia died in 1953 in Sonoma County, California. The California Death Index says “father Kircher, mother Emm.”

Theresia Catherine Kircher Swager also lived in California for the last five years of her life, returning to Alabama only a month before she died.

**Bernard Imm (1827-1880), son of Michael and Katharina Zelger Imm, and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-uncle**

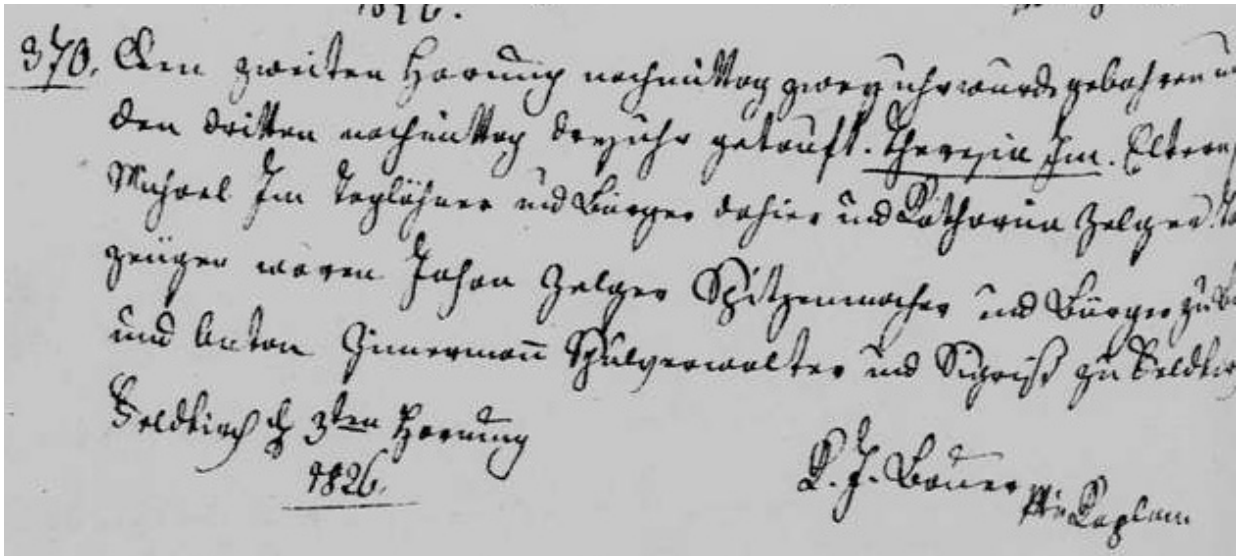


407 Ein achtzehnter August abends sechs Uhr wurde geboren  
und den neunzehnten nachmittags um eine Uhr getauft Bernard  
Imm. Eltern sind Michael Imm Weber und Bürger hier [Hartheim] und Katharina  
Zelger. Zeugen sind Johann Zelger, lediger, Leinwandmacher und Bürger von  
Biengen und Konrad Louis, Lehrer und Schatzmeister von Feldkirch.  
Feldkirch, den 19ten August 1827 D. J. Bauer, Kaplan

*The Hartheim baptism record of Bernard can be translated: The 18th of August, in the evening at six o'clock, was born, and the 19th in the afternoon at one o'clock was baptized Bernard Imm. Parents are Michael Imm, weaver and citizen here [Hartheim] and Katharina Zelger. Witnesses were John Zelger, unmarried, lace-maker [or lace-weaver] and citizen of Biengen and Konrad Louis, teacher and sacristan of Feldkirch. Feldkirch, the 19th of August 1827, K Bauer, chaplain.*

There is little paper record for Bernard in Cincinnati. He appears in the 1860 census that I have cited several times, a laborer living with his mother Catherine. I have found no other record until his death. An online annual report of the city departments of Cincinnati, City Hospital: Bernhard Imm d. 4-22-1880 of pneumonia, 53 y. old. A record from Spring Grove Cemetery says that he died on 22 April of dropsy (edema) at City Hospital, father Michael, grave ordered by Charles Imm.

**Theresia Imm Thiel (1826- ~1858), daughter of Michael and Katharina Zelger Imm, and my 2<sup>nd</sup> great-grandmother**



*Translation of the baptism record of Theresia Imm: Theresia was born on 2 Feb 1826 at 2 o'clock p.m. in Hartheim and baptized on 3 Feb 1826, a daughter of Michael Imm, day-worker in Hartheim and Katharina Zelger. Sponsors: Johann Zelger, lace-maker in Biengen, and Anton Zimmerman, teacher and sacristan in Feldkirch.*

And finally we turn to my 2<sup>nd</sup> great-grandmother. I introduced her in the beginning of this article. I have also covered her brief life in Chapter 7 and in Chapter 9. The life of **John Thiel** was explored in the first of those two chapters. Briefly, he was born in Ittersdorf in the Saar region of Germany. He emigrated in 1840, joining his parents and younger siblings in the area south of Buffalo, New York. Subsequently he moved on to Cincinnati and in 1847 enlisted to fight in the American-Mexican War. He never fought a battle in that brief war and returned to Cincinnati, where he married Theresia in 1851.

After marrying John Thiel, Theresia had two children, **Catherine** on 25 Sep 1852 in Cincinnati and **John Jr.** on 25 April 1856 in the Town of Hamburg, Bad Ax (now Vernon) County, Wisconsin, which is immediately south of La Crosse. John probably followed some of his war buddies who had moved west to farm in Wisconsin. By 1860 John Thiel was living in the Town of Hamburg with his second wife **Anna Maria Pompe**, from Schokau in northern Bohemia (then part of the Austrian empire), and children Catherine, John, and Frank, age 1. Theresia must therefore have died between 1856 and 1858. John and Anna were married in 1858. As I discussed above, Katharina Imm Kircher gave birth to a son in 1857 in Wisconsin, possibly when she journeyed there to help her sister Theresia.

John Thiel converted from Catholicism to the German Methodist Church in 1859 and, according to accounts, gave up a life that included drinking and gambling. After Anna Pompe Thiel died in 1897 John lived with his daughter **Catharine Thiel Duerrwaechter** in La Crosse. He died in 1816 after being hit by a streetcar.

The document inserted at the beginning of this article shows that Catharine Thiel married Alexander Ludwig Duerrwaechter. Their descendants, as well as descendants of John Thiel Jr., are discussed in Chapters 7 and 9.

## **An Extended Zelger Family in Cincinnati**

**Johannes ‘John’ Zelger**, my 4<sup>th</sup> great-uncle, was born in Biengen in 1794. On 30 May 1831, in the Catholic Church in Biengen, he married **Franciska ‘Frances’ Kaufmann**. She was born in 1805 in Feldkirch, the daughter of Michael Kaufmann and Franciska Krezmaier. They had eight children. The first was born in Biengen in 1832 and all the others in Ohio. Accordingly, they must have emigrated about 1833. That date considerably predates the emigration of Michael Imm and his wife Katharina Zelger, the sister of Johannes, in 1847.

Johannes does not appear in the 1850 census or any census thereafter. His wife is listed in Cincinnati City Directories up to 1898 as Franciska or Frances, “widow of John.” In the 1880 census she is noted as divorced. Women in city directories were usually listed as widowed, even when they were divorced. We do not know when Johannes was divorced or died. Franciska is listed numerous times from 1850 up to 1898 in censuses and City Directories, always living with one or more children, and with Johannes apparently out of the picture. In 1850 she was living with her daughter Franciska and husband Ferdinand Zelger and all of her other children, the youngest being two, but no husband.

**Franciska ‘Frances’ Zelger, daughter of Johannes Zelger and Franciska Kaufmann** was born in Biengen in 1832. She emigrated with her parents shortly thereafter. On 22 April 1849, in St Peter German Evangelical Church in Cincinnati, she married her first cousin **Ferdinand ‘Ferd’ Zelger**. Note that the church was not a Roman Catholic church. Ferdinand was born in 1820 in Biengen. He was the first cousin of Franciska because his father, Joseph Anton Zelger (1780-1869) was the brother of Johannes ‘John’ Zelger, the father of Franciska. Joseph Anton and Johannes were also brothers of my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-mother Katharina Zelger Imm. The mother of Ferdinand was Maria Magdalena Hanser (1789-1854). Frances died ~1886 and Ferd ~1899, both in Cincinnati.

Ferdinand had various jobs listed in censuses and City Directories, principally laborer.

The children of Franciska and Ferdinand Zelger were: **Susannah ‘Susan’ Zelger** (1850-1936), a book binder; **Rosa Zelger** (1856- ), a press feeder; Joseph (1859-1924), a blacksmith; **Albert Zelger** (1861- ), a porter; **Amelia ‘Emily’ Zelger** (1863-1941), a seamstress and dressmaker; and **Jacob William Zelger** (1877-1935), a porter and salesman. Only Jacob was married, to **Mary A Suchanek** (1891-1925). They had two children, Martin and Regina. The other Zelger children through the years lived with their mother Franciska, each other, and their uncle Martin Zelger.

**Amelia Zelger (1834-1910), daughter of Johannes Zelger and Franciska Kaufmann.** Amelia was a dress maker. She lived with her brother Martin on his farm and then with her brother Edward in Cincinnati in her later years.



**Regina ‘Rachel’ Zelger (1838-1883 ), daughter of Johannes Zelger and Franciska Kaufmann,** married **August Paul** (1832-1888) in 1855 in Old Saint Mary’s Catholic Church in Cincinnati. Born in Hesse-Kassel, Germany, he was a veteran of the Civil War and a shoemaker.

**Caroline ‘Carrie’ Zelger (1840-1938), daughter of Johannes Zelger and Franciska Kaufmann,** married **Jacob Zahn** (1840-1901), a cabinet maker, in 1864. Their children were Robert M Zahn (1870-1939, Emma Feinfelder), Laura A Zahn (1872-1951), and Edwin Jacob Zahn (1877-1922).

**Edward Zelger (1842-1912), son of Johannes Zelger and Franciska Kaufmann,** was a driver most of his life except for a short period around 1900, when he joined his brother Martin on Martin’s farm in Campbell County, Kentucky.

**Anna Zelger (1843-1923), daughter of Johannes Zelger and Franciska Kaufmann,** married Valentine Boehm (1845-1923) in 1870 in Cincinnati. He was born in Hoerd, Pfalz, Bavaria and was a butcher. Their children were Ferdinand Boehm (1872-1947), Edward V Boehm (1875-1943), Valentine Boehm Jr. (1879-1944), and Jacob Boehm (1881-1907).

**Mary A Zelger (1846-1932), daughter of Johannes Zelger and Franciska Kaufmann,** married **Heinrich ‘Henry’ Joseph Diehl** (1841-1907) in 1867 at St. Francis Seraph Catholic Church in Cincinnati. He was a saddler. Their children were Amelia, George Joseph (Margaret Kees, Mildred Abbott), Josephine (Joseph Adam Gass), Bertha (Bernard Louis Dennig), Harry Adolph (Anna Borgmann), Mary, Ottilia Caroline (Edward Schmidt, Lawrence G Volz), Cornelia (Lawrence G Volz), William, and Estelle Florence (Charles Hall Krebs).

**Martin Zelger (1848-1936), son of Johannes Zelger and Franciska Kaufmann,** married **Caroline Ahrens** (1847-1900) in 1878 at St. Paul German Evangelical Protestant Church in Newport, Campbell, Kentucky. For much of his life he was a machinist, first in Cincinnati and then in Newport, Campbell, Kentucky, which is adjacent to Covington and across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. By 1900, when his wife died, he had a farm in Campbell County. By 1910 he had a farm in Clermont County, Ohio, where he lived until his retirement and death. Clermont County is just north of the Ohio River and just east of Cincinnati. Living there at various times were his nieces and nephews who were children of his sister Franciska Zelger.

**Maria Rosalia Zelger (1791-1860), the sister of Johannes Zelger and Katharina Zelger Imm,** married **Felician Bleyle** in 1822 in Biengen. Maria Rosalia is recorded on a passenger list for ship arrivals in New York in 1846 with her children Felician Bleyle (1826-1892), Roman Bleyle (1828-1902), and Maria Juliana Bleyle (1832-1865). The younger Felician is recorded in the 1850 census with his mother and sister Maria Juliana, who by then had married Johan Louis Gutzweiler, a tailor. The younger Felician married Maria Katharina ‘Catherine’ Walters. He was a tailor in Newport, Campbell, Kentucky, where he and Catherine raised a large family.

## FOOTNOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

<sup>1</sup>There is a longer discussion of Anna Maria Pompe in Chapter 7. Her Bohemia birthplace came from notes of Elmer Thiel, sent to me by Rose Thiel. The exact birthplace was determined from records of the Sandau (Zandov) Catholic Church, Czech Republic, available at familysearch.org.

<sup>2</sup>Records of Hartheim and Biengen beginning in 1810 are held in the Staatsarchiv Freiburg and can be accessed online from the Landesarchiv Baden-Wuerttemberg ([www.landesarchiv-bw.de/web/47231](http://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/web/47231)); when at the page, click on recherche, then suche, then search Hartheim or Biengen). Older Roman Catholic records can be read on microfilm at the Freiburg Bishop's Archives. **Friedrich R Wollmershäuser** from Oberdischingen searched the Hartheim records for the Imm line. A similar, but not exactly the same, set of records is available on LDS microfilms 1186052, 1186053, and 871375. LDS microfilms could once be rented from Salt Lake and viewed at a local Family History Center. Now they can viewed online, but only at a FHC. The film with data before about 1810 is 871375, the records of Feldkirch Parish including the towns of Feldkirch, Hartheim, and Hausen. Baptisms are available from 1661, marriages from 1664, and deaths from 1665. The dates are all after the Thirty Years War. I searched the Feldkirch records, at my local State College FHC, to supplement the findings of Mr. Wollmershäuser. At about the time that I had essentially finished my research, Film 871375 was indexed, and that indexing can be viewed as entries in the Collections on familysearch.org.

Biengen records, in addition to those on the Landesarchiv Baden-Wuerttemberg, are on LDS Films 870255 and 870256. Records start a few years earlier than for Feldkirch: baptisms in 1654, marriages in 1661, and deaths in 1661. I researched ancestors of Katharina Zelger. **Monika Heitz** from Bad Krozingen very kindly supplied me with her tree on the Zelger line and answered my questions on specific Biengen records. She also helped me with translations of Bremgarten and Hartheim records.

After a few months of research, I discovered some early ancestors who came from Bremgarten, which was south of Hartheim and is now part of Hartheim am Rhein. Its earliest records starting in 1650, including a very useful Familienbuch, are on LDS Film 885958.

<sup>3</sup>The image of Johanna Ravensburg Kircher is from the Chambers Vogan Work in Progress tree on ancestry.com. The image of Theresia Kircher Swager is from the Swager Family Tree on ancestry.com.

