

The Fischer Family – The Identity of Andreas Kilian’s wife

The marriage record of Andreas Kilian only identified his wife as Magdalena Fischer from Steinbach. It did not name her parents or provide their place of residence or her father’s occupation, as was customary for marriage records. This was probably because of the circumstances of the marriage. All three baptismal records for Andreas’ children born in Germany give their mother’s name as Margaretha Fischer. No burial record was found for Magdalena and no marriage record was found for Margaretha.

I believe Magdalena and Margaretha were the same person. Most people could not read or write and the pastors wrote what they were told, spelled the way it sounded to him. There was no standard spelling and mistakes in names were common, especially when a person had multiple names and used one at one time and another, or even a nickname, on another occasion. This particular marriage was a forced marriage and these marriages were performed in a jail. After the marriage the partners were released, without a police record, and the pastor returned to the church and entered what he was told into the church book. In one such case I found the church book was written weeks after the event. If this was not fresh in the pastor’s memory he may have made mistakes.

To identify Andreas’ wife I examined 176 Fischer baptismal records and 149 marriage records in the Feuchtwangen area.

I found 4 Magdalenas. All but one were born between 1537 and 1673. Only one is a possibility and she was born in 1708, the daughter of Hans Peter Fischer and his wife Margaretha in Mögersbronn. She was only fourteen years old in the year Andreas married and this was under the legal age for marriage in Bavaria at that time.

I searched the same records and found nineteen Margarethas. Twelve were born between 1538 and 1683. Five were children who had not reached puberty when Andreas married. Two were possibilities:

1. Margaretha Elizabetha born 1689 in ‘Mögersbronn, daughter of Andreas Fischer and his wife Eva. She was 33 years old when Andreas married at the age of 20.
2. Margaretha born 1696 in Dürnhof, daughter of Leonhard Fischer and his wife Margaretha. She was 26 years old when Andreas married.

The Margaretha born in 1696 was one of seven siblings. All of their records say they were the children of Leonhard Fischer and his wife Margaretha in Dürnhof. These records give various occupations for Leonhard Fischer: Distiller, Carpenter, messenger and day laborer. He could very well have been all of these at the same time and stated a different occupation at some baptisms.

The seven children were:

1. Margaretha baptized 9 September 1696, (Feuchtwangen Taufbuch Thürnhofen 1696 number 110)
2. Elizabetha baptized 28 August 1698, (Feuchtwangen Taufbuch Thürnhofen 1698 number 85)
3. Hans Georg baptized 5 December 1700, (Feuchtwangen Taufbuch Thürnhofen 1700 number 100)
4. Hans Michael baptized 5 January 1703, (Feuchtwangen Taufbuch Thürnhofen 1703 number 3)
5. Maria baptized 8 April 1707, (Feuchtwangen Taufbuch Thürnhofen 1707 number 39), married Hanns Bayer
6. Kunigunda baptized 5 August 1712, (Feuchtwangen Taufbuch Thürnhofen 1712 number 71)
7. Catherina Barbara Married 31 January 1730 (Feuchtwangen Traubuch Thürnhofen 1730 number 8), married Johann Jacob Walther. Witness Andreas Kilian from Steinbach.

I believe this Margaretha was Andreas' wife. She is the only one found old enough to marry and near Andreas' age. She was six years older than Andreas and would have been 26 years old at the marriage. More important Andreas was a witness at her sister's wedding, which took place eight years after Andreas' own wedding and two years before he immigrated to America. This is of course not absolute proof, but I believe of the nineteen Margarethas born in the vicinity of Feuchtwangen up to the time Andreas married, she is the only likely candidate.

By Bill McCreight

12/12/2009