EARLY ANABAPTIST RESEARCH

MICHAEL HOCHSTAEDTER ON THE “HARLE” IN 1736

Research by Paul Hostetler

# Reference: *Descendants of Jacob Hochstetler, the immigrant of 1736.*  By Harvey Hostetler

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Our ancestor, Jacob Hofstedler, arrived at Philadelphia September 1st, 1736, on the ship Harle, Ralph Harle, Master, from Rotterdam, last from Cowes, England. The captain reported that he brought one hundred and fifty-six men, sixty-five women, one hundred and sixty-seven boys and girls, in all three hundred and eighty-eight. Only one hundred and fifty-one of the men made their declaration of allegiance, the other four being reported sick and unable to leave the vessel.

Our ancestor being unable to write, his name was written for him on the ship captain's list by the captain or his clerk, and the name was pronounced so that the writer thought it should be written Hofstedler, and this list gives his age at landing as thirty-two years. The passengers were taken immediately to the Court House and made their declaration of allegiance, and again his name was written for him, Hofstedler, which might be termed his legal or official name. A recent examination of these two lists shows the name was thus written on both lists in a clear and unmistakable hand. The name is incorrectly given in Rupp's list and also in one list of Pa. Archives, Second series, Vol. 17. The ship captain's list contains the name Michael Holsacker, written by the captain or clerk, with age column left blank. This is the name that appears in Rupp's Thirty Thousand Names as Michael Hochstaedter, and may be the unmarried brother of our ancestor, who according to tradition came to this country with his brother, but being dissatisfied with the treatment accorded him by his brother's wife, returned after a short time to the old country. He was among those reported sick and his name does not appear among those who declared their allegiance.

Reference: Mathiot, Charles. Recherches historiques sur les Anabaptistes: de l'ancienne principauté de Montbéliard, d'Alsace et des régions voisines ; avec des documents inédits et des Tableaux des principales familles anabaptistes installées au pays de Montbéliard. Belfort: Editions de la Mission Intérieure, 1922. Reprinted: Flavion : Éditions "le Phare", Librairie des Éclaireurs unionistes, 1969.

Notes of Paul Hostetler

“There can be little doubt that our ancestors were Anabaptist and from Canton Bern—in the Guggisberg, Wahlern, Albigen, Nydegg region (these all being very close together). Last summer Virgil found an Uli Hostettler (as the name is still spelled in Switzerland) in Nydegg, who had sons Jacob, born 1669, and Michael born 1672. At St Imier (which is about 50-75 miles asay, he found a Michael who in 1733 had been there for 23 years, had three children the oldest being 13. This, of course, could be Michael (of Harle). Mathiot published a book in French on Anabaptists. In his list of St Marie-aux-Mines (Alsace) in 1704 appear the names of Hans, Jacob, and Christian Hochstetler; with a Peter joining them in 1708. From there the Anabaptist group splits some going north toward Strasburg, other going south to the Montebeliard region. At Weierhof (Pflaz) Virgil interviewed a widow Hochstetler who still lives on the farm settled by her husbands ancestor, Jacob, son of Isaac. She explained that Jacob came there in 1795, but since Anabaptists were not permitted to own land, they could not buy it until 1805 when Napoleon gave permission by decree. This, the, is our main difficulty because of religious persecution, the Anabaptists had to “keep on the move”; there are no land transaction; church & civil records have to be checked in a painstaking manner (by someone who can read the early script). “

Reference: Stahley, *Mennonite Family History*, April 1993, p. 52:

"The Swiss origins of the Amish Mennonites in America is immediately apparent in their family names. Specifically, they come from the environs of Thun in Canton Bern, just north of the mountains of the Oberland.

By the time Jakob Ammann began preaching about 1690, there was a movement to go abroad, to the French-speaking Jura, then under the Bishop of Basel, to Canton Neuchatel, then a possession of Prussia,, to Montbéliard, now France but then a dependency of Württemberg, and especially to Alsace under the King of France.

The Anabaptists, or Täufer (more specifically Wiedertäufer, or rebaptized), had been in Switzerland since the Reformation, and there was continous persecution by the State and the Reformed Church, which was an arm of the State. A large emigration had left around 1671 and settled in the Palatinate in Germany. They were not affected by the Amish movement.

There were congregations in the Emmenthal which did not respond favorably to the more conservative emphases of Jakob Amman and his fellow-preachers. But in the hills behind Steffisburg and Diessbach were families who had fled persecution, and many followed their preaching. By 1700, a rather sizable group from Switzerland gathered at Ste. Marie-aux-Mines, Alsace, under the leadership of Ammann and others."